

# Tollcross Town Centre Guidance

January 2025

# INTRODUCTION

Development plans guide decisions on applications for planning permission. The statutory development plan comprises the National Planning Framework (adopted February 2023) and the local development plan, namely City Plan 2030 (adopted November 2024).

This guidance sets out the approach to the change of use of shop units within Tollcross Town Centre and assists the implementation of development plan policy.

Tollcross is one of Edinburgh's nine town centres (including the City Centre) defined and protected in the City Plan 2030 as a hub for a wide range of activities including shopping, providing local services and as a leisure destination.

The Local Development Plan provides a framework for a tailored approach to assessing proposals for change of use applications in individual town centres. This guidance was originally prepared, as statutory supplementary guidance, in accordance with the superseded 2016 Local Development Plan, prior to the National Planning Framework forming part of the statutory development plan. However, the substance of the planning guidance remains valid in the context of the current statutory development plan, and is unchanged by the update.

The guidance has been updated only to reflect:

- Statutory changes to permitted development rights
- The overarching Policy framework of the current statutory development plan, both in terms of:
  - National Planning Framework 4; and
  - City Plan 2030, including Policy Re 4: Alternative Use of Shop Units in the City Centre and Town Centres,
- Revisions to town centre boundaries to accord with the boundaries defined by City Plan 2030.

The updated guidance is no longer statutory supplementary guidance, but will remain as planning guidance and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.



# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This Guidance assists the delivery of National Planning Framework 4 objectives and policies, in particular to ensure town centres are vibrant, healthy and resilient places for people to work, enjoy and visit.

This guidance assists the City Plan 2030 aim to support the existing network of city, town and local centres which are an important focal point for people who live and work in Edinburgh, providing shopping, leisure and community facilities in locations which are easily accessible by walking, wheeling and cycling or public transport. They also contribute to local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods.

This guidance is a material consideration for planning applications seeking consent for a change of use of a retail unit where permitted development rights do not apply.

This document will support the vitality of Tollcross town centre as well as contributing to the success and vision of Edinburgh.

The Guidance supports Tollcross town centre in being inspired, connected, fair and thriving through:

- Creating a thriving town centre through supporting a mix of uses, whilst retaining retailing as the primary function of the town centre
- Consider the contribution of the use of units can make to placemaking
- Providing a flexible approach to change of uses to meet the demands of a growing economy and changing society and
- Contributing to the quality of life of Tollcross residents and visitors.



# TOLLCROSS TOWN CENTRE

Tollcross Town Centre area is shown on the map at the back of the document. A mix of uses currently exists within the town centre including shops, cafes and pubs.

The continued existence of a variety of shops is seen as critical to the health of Tollcross. However, there are also benefits in allowing shops to change to other uses that maximise the Town Centre's easily accessible location for the community. It is therefore felt that, in certain areas, permitting a change of use to a office or a cafe/ restaurant use would enhance the town centre.

To prevent non-shop uses that detract from the streets' liveliness, changes to uses such as residential are not acceptable. To prevent excessive concentration, no new hot food takeaways will be allowed. New cafes and restaurants must not lead to an unacceptable impact on living conditions for nearby residents.

## Strengths and weaknesses

The Supplementary Guidance has been informed by a 'public life street assessment' carried out by design consultants for the Council. Some of the findings are shown here:

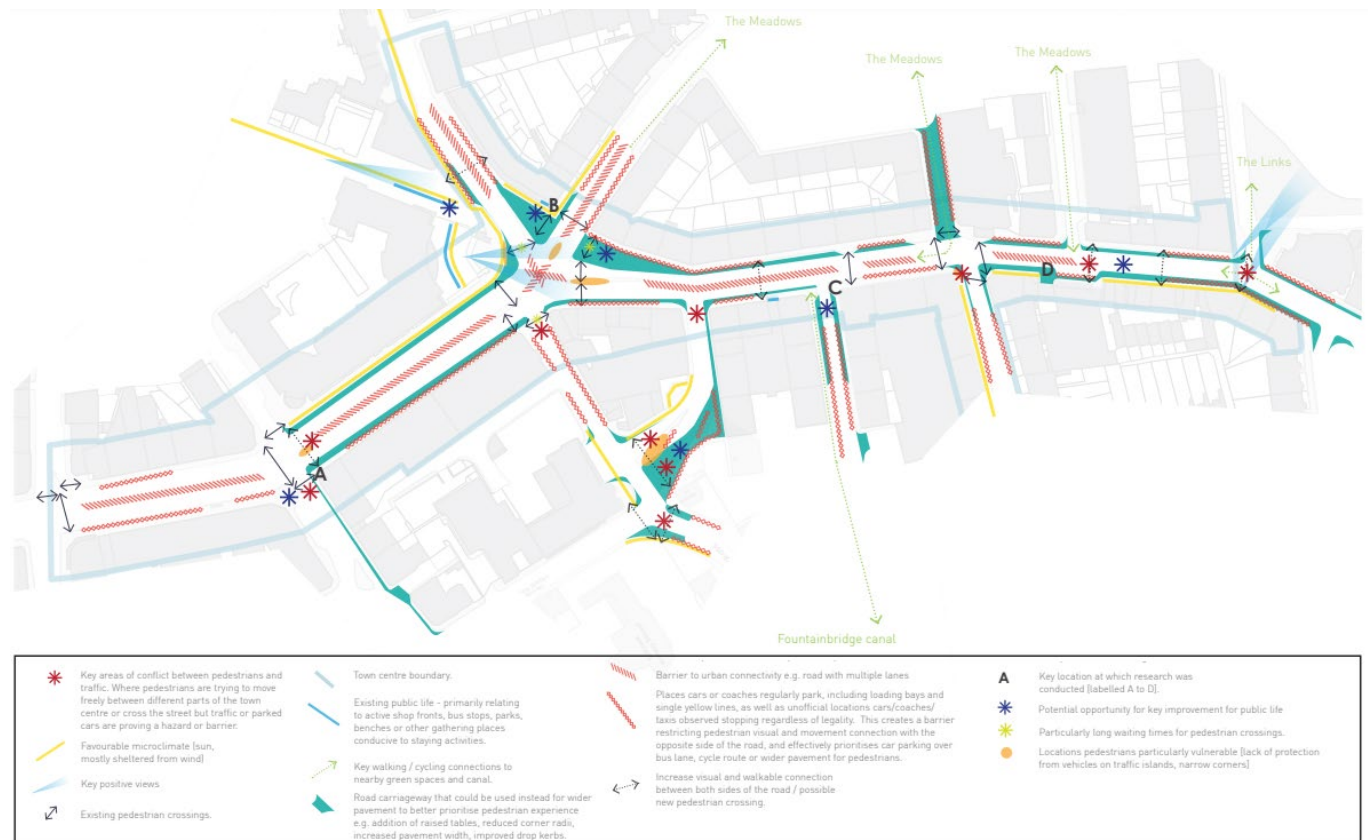
## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Small scale active independent shops
- Proximity to larger open spaces
- High footfall
- Vibrant, young, diverse and multi-cultural community

### Weaknesses

- Lack of planting and street trees
- Poor pedestrian priority at crossings
- Large bins and insufficient bike parking
- Uneven pavement surfaces



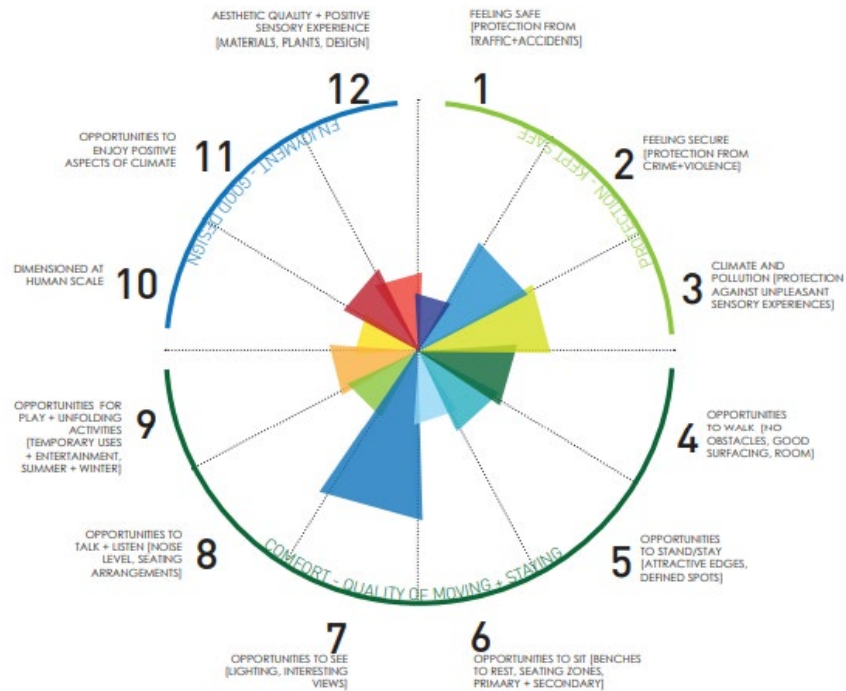
## Opportunities

- Enhance pedestrian and cycle connections
- Addition of seating and street trees
- Opportunities for redesign of Tollcross Junction
- De-clutter town centre

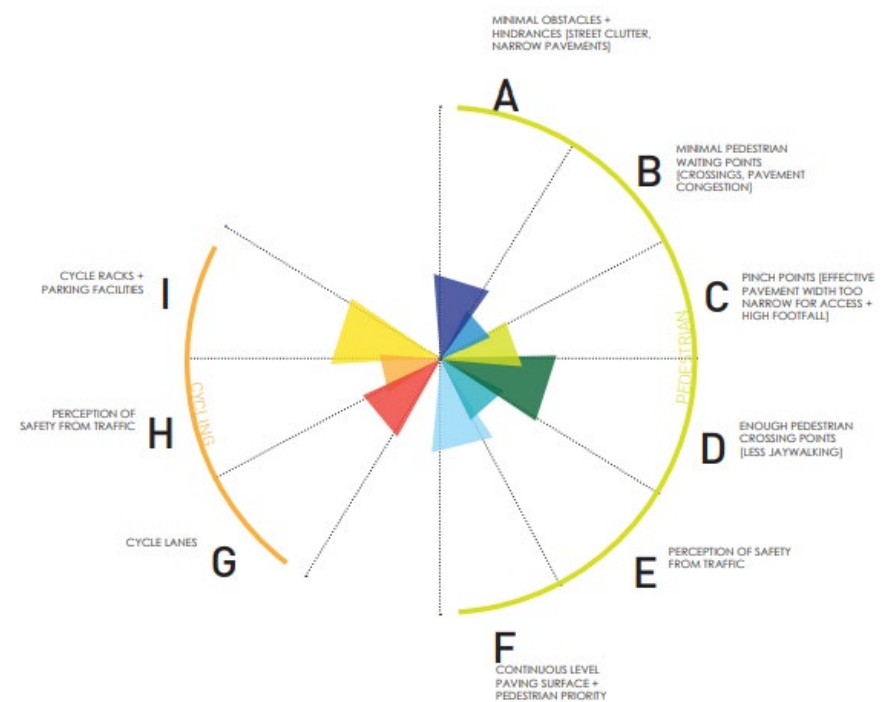
## Threats

- Street clutter
- Lack of safe, easy, walking routes
- Uneven surfaces
- Traffic volume

## FINDINGS FROM PUBLIC LIFE STREET ASSESSMENTS



Place Function



Movement Function

# CHANGE OF USE POLICIES

**The policies in this guidance apply to shop units.**

**What is a shop unit?** Premises accessed directly from the street and designed primarily for shop use. In some locations the shop unit can be above street level or at basement level but still have direct access and be visible from the street.

**What is a shop use?** Shop use is now included within the Class 1A (shops, financial, professional and other services) as set out in the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992, e.g. charity shops, tattoo parlours, beautician, estate agents etc.

Other uses falling outwith the definition of class 1A include:

**Food and drink (class 3)** – Use for the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises e.g. restaurants, café.

**Business use (class 4)** – general office, light industry or research and development, which can be carried out without detriment to the amenity of any residential area.

**Assembly and leisure use (class 11)** – e.g. cinema, and gymnasium.

**Sui generis uses** – e.g. betting shops, pay day loan shops, pubs and hot food takeaways.

## Permitted Development Rights

Class 11A of the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 does allow the change of a use of a building/shop unit within Class 1A to Class 3 (food and drink) without planning permission. However, change of

use is not permitted by this class if it involves a unit directly below a residential dwelling or within 1 metre of a residential dwelling. In the case of Tollcross Town Centre, Class 1A does not apply to the majority of shop units.

Class 11B of the amended General Permitted Development (Scotland) Order 1992 allows the change of use of a building unit from Class 1A to Class 4 (business) without planning permission if the building or unit is 300sqm or less.

## Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of this town centre guidance is to assist planning officers and applicants in determining whether a change of use of a shop unit would undermine the retail function of the centre. It has been prepared to support the delivery of Policy Re 4 of the City Plan 2030.

### **Policy Re 4: Alternative Use of Shop Units in the City Centre and Town Centres**

*In the City Centre Retail Core and town centres, changes of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that:*

- a. *The change would not undermine the retailing function of the centre, and*
- b. *The proposal is for an appropriate commercial, community or business use, which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.*

*The Council's city centre and town centre planning guidance will be used to assess whether the change of use would*

*undermine the retail function of the centre. These guidelines have been prepared following detailed analysis of each centre and set out detailed advice tailored to identify the appropriate balance of uses within each centre to maintain their vitality, viability and deliver good placemaking.*

Planning applications should be assessed against the policies in this guidance. Where a proposal meets the requirements of the policies, a change of use is not expected to undermine the retail function of the centre. Where a proposal is contrary to the policies, there is a risk that a proposal would undermine the retail function of the centre, unless there are other material considerations that outweigh the loss of the retail unit, for example, a significant number of vacant units exist in the same retail frontage.

## Guidance Policies

### Policy TC1

The change of use of a shop unit to a non-shop use will not be permitted, (with the exception of the corner units where Class 3 Food and Drink uses are considered appropriate) on the following frontages:

120 – 148 Lothian Road

2 – 48 Earl Grey Street

1 – 65 Home Street

### Policy TC2

Elsewhere within the defined boundary of Tollcross the change of use from a shop unit to a non-shop use will be permitted provided the proposal is:

- a. Class 3 – Food and drink uses
- b. An appropriate commercial or community use which would complement the character of the centre and would not be detrimental to its vitality and viability.



## Other Relevant Information

### National Planning Framework 4

#### City Plan 2030

Other relevant policies in City Plan 2030 include:

- Re 1** Town Centres First Policy
- Re 3** Town Centres
- Re 9** Entertainment, Leisure and café/restaurant developments – Preferred locations
- Re 11** Food and Drink Establishments
- Env 13** Shopfronts
- Env 9** World Heritage Sites
- Env 11** Listed Buildings – Setting
- Env 12** Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions
- Env 13** Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings
- Env 14** Conservation Areas – Development
- Env 15** Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

Policy Re 3 generally supports shop uses in town centres. Policy Re 9 supports leisure and entertainment facilities in town centres. Policies Re 11 considers the impact on nearby residents for proposals such as public houses and hot food takeaways. Env 13 supports improvements to shop fronts.

**Guidance for Businesses** – non-statutory guidance to assist businesses in preparing applications to change the use of a property as well as providing guidance on shopfront design.

**Edinburgh Design Guidance** – sets out the Council’s expectations for the design of new development in Edinburgh.

**Licensing** – Food and drink, public house and hot-food takeaway uses will often require other consents and are subject to separate controls by licensing for: alcohol; hours of operation and outdoor pavement seating. For more information on these, see the Council’s web site on [licenses and permits](#).

## Definitions

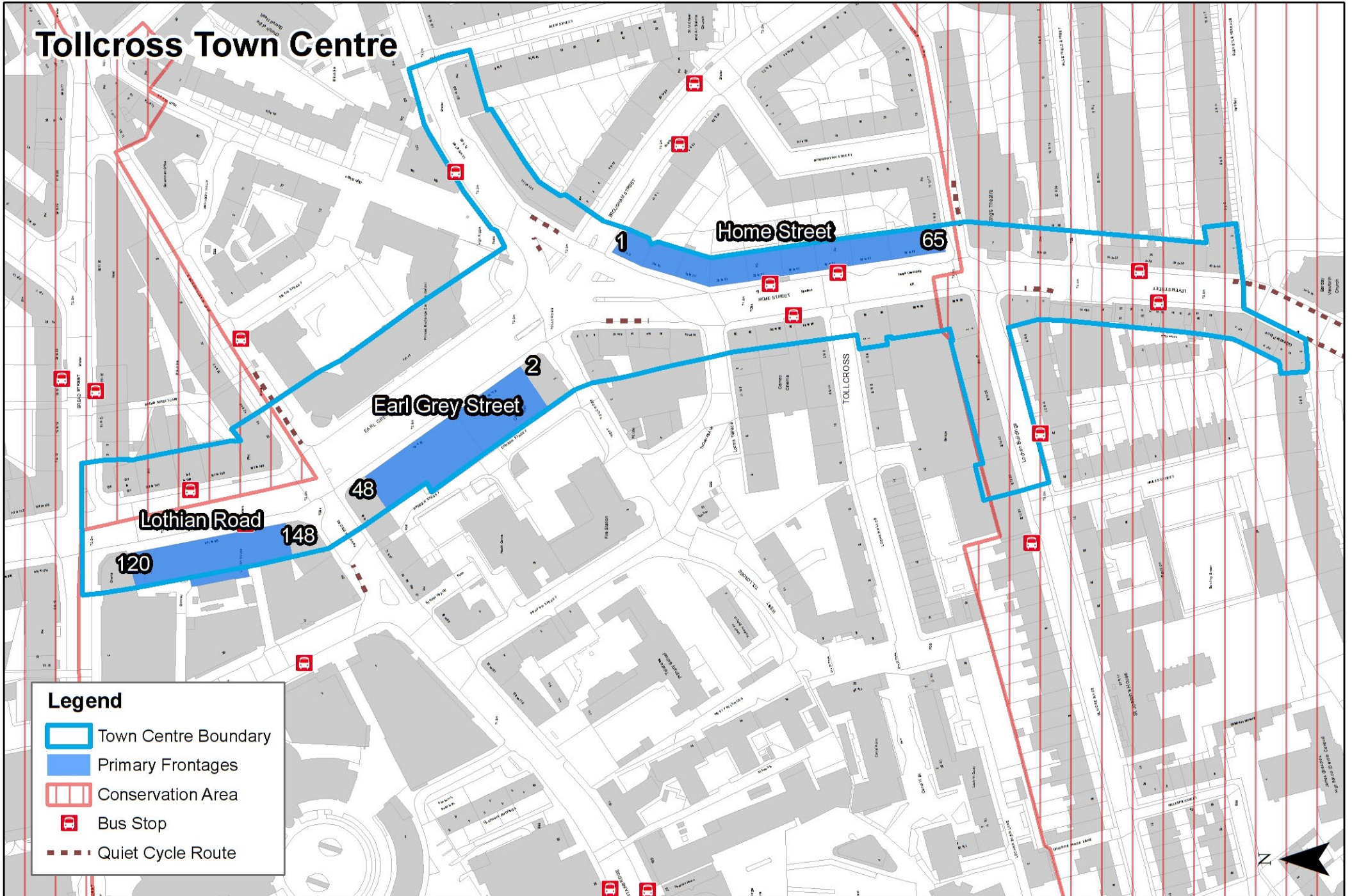
**Shop unit** – As defined in the City Plan 2030, a shop unit is a premises accessed directly onto the street and designed primarily for shop use.

**Primary Retail Frontage** – a group of shop units that has been identified as providing a focus for retail within the town centre.






**Class 1A** – are shops and financial, professional and other services. Uses under Subsection 1 are; retail sale of goods other than hot food, a post office, sale of tickets, a travel agency, sale of cold food for consumption off the premises, hairdressing, direction of funerals, display of goods for sale, hiring of domestic or personal goods or articles, a launderette or dry cleaners, for reception of goods to be washed, cleaned or repaired. These uses are where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public. Uses under Subsection 2 are; provision of financial, professional or any other service, which is appropriate to provide in a shopping area and where the sale, display or service is principally to visiting members of the public.



# Tollcross Town Centre



**Legend**

-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Primary Frontages
-  Conservation Area
-  Bus Stop
-  Quiet Cycle Route

Contact us:

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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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