

DRAFT
FOR ENGAGEMENT

LEEDS
OUR SPACES
STRATEGY

CITY CENTRE

Our Spaces Strategy will embody our vision for the creation of vibrant, inclusive, world class city centre public realm.

Our ambition is that through Our Spaces Strategy our public realm becomes the city's greatest cultural asset.





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Please join the conversation around this draft strategy from the 27th November 2018 at www.leedsourspace.co.uk until mid-February 2019. The final strategy will be available later in 2019.

This project is a collaboration between:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Our Spaces Strategy sets out our vision and ambition for the creation of city centre public realm. It is a route map to ensure that the delivery of new public realm meets our vision for the creation of world class, inclusive and vibrant spaces and that through the delivery of the strategy, our spaces become Leeds' greatest cultural asset. In so doing we will create a city centre that feels as good as it looks.

The Strategy sets out how the city centre will develop as a result of significant work programmes such as the Leeds Public Transport Improvement Programme (LPTIP), City Centre Transport Package, Housing Infrastructure Bid (HIF) and ongoing regeneration proposals including South Bank, Hunslet Riverside, The Waterfront, Quarry Hill and HS2.

We have identified seven new principles for the design benchmark for our spaces – our principles. We will apply these when developing proposals, designing schemes and reviewing developments. Through our ambition for a strong economy and compassionate city both the Inclusive Growth Strategy and the Our Spaces Strategy set out a 'people first' approach for our ambition and vision, where the benefits and outcomes of the public realm schemes can directly improve the lives, health and wellbeing of the citizens of Leeds.

In this strategy, we are setting out our vision and ambition for the future delivery of high quality public realm as part of a challenging programme of work over the next five to ten years. We will be seeking the views of businesses, visitors, residents and stakeholders as to the content and context of the Our Spaces Strategy as it develops to ensure it is as informed as possible with the diverse views, requirements and experiences of the citizens of Leeds.

This is truly a landmark moment for Leeds. The first time that the city has brought together and articulated the importance of our spaces and the role they play in positioning Leeds as the Best City now and in the future.





01

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Leeds sits at the heart of the UK's Northern Powerhouse, at the centre of one of the strongest and most resilient economies in Europe and within one of the most beautiful regions in the world. Leeds truly is a special place to be. Built on a heritage as a financial sector, a leading manufacturing base and healthcare innovator, Leeds has seen growth of over 40% across all business sectors in the last decade alone.

Leeds is a growing city with a population estimated at 781,700 (ONS 2016), an increase of around 50,000 in the last decade. Over this time, our city has experienced a rapid transformation, with urban regeneration accompanied by a flourishing cultural scene, thriving entertainment and nightlife and an unrivalled retail offer, alongside a growing independent food and drink reputation. All of this is set within a city centre with a stunning built heritage, with more listed buildings than any other English city outside of London.

With over 90 ethnic groups representing approximately 11.6% of the total population, Leeds has the greatest national diversity in the UK outside of London. The city positively embraces its diverse and rich heritage. We put children and young people at the heart of what we do, supporting them through their education, sporting and musical ambitions and ensuring that we are developing and creating a city for them and future generations.



Corn Exchange © Vagabrothers



© Hannah Webster for Visit Leeds



The Arlun © Sarah Zagni

Leeds is a special place to be; within the region that inspired Hepworth, Hockney and Moore. There is a unique quality to Yorkshire and Leeds. Just a short journey from the city takes you into moorland, mountains and rivers of the North Yorkshire Moors, the Yorkshire Dales and the Peak District. The reputation of the city and its offer to businesses, residents and visitors has raised its profile above and beyond expectations. In Summer 2017, Lonely Planet voted Leeds as one of the top five European cities to visit, and was followed shortly by The Times who listed Leeds as the number one cultural place to live in the UK.

Building on this phenomenal foundation, we intend to transform how our city looks and feels, through the adoption of the Our Spaces Strategy alongside the widespread redevelopment of our public spaces and the creation of new cultural facilities. We will also continue to engage with our residents and businesses to create a place that can balance a strong economy with a compassionate city, embrace being a Child Friendly city and setting this at the heart of everything we do. The Our Spaces Strategy study area is defined by the extent of the Leeds Core Strategy City Centre Map.



Dancers outside Victoria Gate © Giles Rocholl



Malham Cove, Yorkshire Dales © VisitBritain Lee Beel



© Royal Armouries Museum

1.1 LEEDS: THE CITY

Leeds lies within the United Kingdom's fourth-most populous urban area, with a population of 2.6 million within West Yorkshire.

As one of the most diverse economies of the all the UK's main employment centres, Leeds has seen the fastest rate of private-sector jobs growth of any UK city. It also has the highest ratio of private to public sector jobs of all the UK's Core Cities, with 77% of its workforce working in the private sector. Leeds has the third-largest jobs total by local authority area, with 480,000 in employment and self-employment at the beginning of 2015. Leeds is home to over 119,000 companies generating 5% of England's total economic output of £64.6 billion, and the country's fourth largest urban economy. It is also ranked as a gamma world city by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network. Leeds is also served by four universities, and has the fourth largest student population in the country.

Today, Leeds has become the UK's largest legal and financial centre outside London, with the financial and insurance services industry worth £13 billion to the city's economy. This accounts for 38% of total output with more than 30 national and international banks located in the city, including an office of the Bank of England. Leeds is also the UK's third-largest manufacturing centre with around 1,800 firms and 39,000 employees. Leeds manufacturing firms account for 8.8% of total employment in the city and are worth over £7 billion to the local economy.

Leeds is one of the few cities to have its own opera and ballet companies (Opera North and Northern Ballet) as well as the City Varieties Music Hall (Grade II* Listed) and Leeds Playhouse. The Royal Armouries, Henry Moore Institute and Thackray Medical Museum are some of the international cultural brands making up our impressive list of 17 museums and 27 galleries, including Leeds Art Gallery, sitting alongside home-grown favourites such as The Tetley, Sunny Bank Mills, Left Bank and Gallery Munroe House.



Leeds first direct arena © Hannah Webster for Visit Leeds



Parkinson building © Carl Milner



Guiliano Contadini, Hannah Bateman & Northern Ballet : The Great Gatsby © Bill Cooper2

The extensive retail area of Leeds is identified as the principal regional shopping centre for the whole of the Yorkshire and the Humber region with a catchment of 5.5 million people spending of £1.93 billion annually. There are a number of indoor shopping centres in the centre of the city, including the Merrion Centre, St John's Centre, The Core, the Victoria Quarter, The Light, the Corn Exchange and the recently delivered Trinity Leeds (£350m) and Victoria Gate (£150m). In total there are well over 1,000 retail stores, with a combined floorspace of 3,660,000 square feet (340,000 m²).

The principle retail areas are Briggate with many well-known High Street stores, including Harvey Nichols and Victoria Gate with John Lewis and Partners. Complemented by Victoria Quarter with its high-end luxury retailers and impressive architecture. Home to seventy stores such as Louis Vuitton, Vivienne Westwood, Paul Smith and Diesel contained within two iron-wrought Victorian arcades. A new arcade formed by arcading Queen Victoria Street boasts the largest expanse of stained glass roof in Britain. Trinity on the western side of Briggate brings a mix of high street favourites and higher end brands.

Leeds displays a large variety of built landmarks. These include Leeds Town Hall, Corn Exchange and Leeds City Museum by the architect Cuthbert Brodrick. The two iconic white buildings on the Leeds skyline are the Parkinson building of University of Leeds and the Civic Hall, with golden owls adorning the tops of the latter's twin spires. Armley Mills, Tower Works, with its campanile-inspired towers, and the Egyptian-style Temple Works hark back to the city's industrial past. In 2013 the first direct arena was built, Europe's first purpose built state of the art 'super theatre'. Notable churches in the city centre are Leeds Minster (formerly Leeds Parish Church), St John's Church (built in 1634, Grade I Listed) and Leeds Cathedral. Notable non-conformist chapels include the Salem Chapel, dating back to 1791 and can claim the birthplace of Leeds United Football Club in 1919.



Victoria Gate © Giles Rocholl



Victoria Quarter © Giles Rocholl



Temple Works

1.2 LEEDS: ITS PEOPLE

Leeds is changing rapidly and will look and feel vastly different by 2030. There are 781,700 people living in Leeds and it is estimated that the population will grow to 819,000 by 2024 and exceed 1,000,000 by 2030. Of the current population, over 90 ethnic groups are represented. There are 170 languages spoken, the most common other than English are Polish (6,717 people), Urdu (4,989 people) and Punjabi (4,537 people).

With such a large and diverse population, it is no surprise that Leeds' cultural offer is world class. It includes a number of large organisations that have been generations in the making. Leeds College of Music gave Europe its first Jazz qualification and celebrated turning 50 in 2016, with Phoenix Dance blowing out the candles on 35 years the same year. Leeds West Indian Carnival, Europe's oldest carnival, celebrated 50 years in 2017, alongside 40 years of the Henry Moore Institute. Over the next five years Leeds Grand Theatre will be 140 years old, Opera North will turn 40, Northern Ballet will celebrate 50 years, Leeds Playhouse will turn 30 and the Northern Film School will hit half a century.

Our city has also continually created space for new voices to add to this vibrant tapestry. The Tetley has just turned three after repurposing the city's iconic brewery, Transform Festival has flown the Leeds Playhouse nest and has just completed its second year as an independent festival and Leeds Indie Food Festival has just completed its fourth year celebrating the city's growing independent food and drink culture. Not only does this vast range of organisations present remarkable shows, the majority also run extensive engagement programmes benefiting millions of people every year. Organisations such as Duke Studios, East Street Arts and FutureLabs are creating space for individual artists, designers, illustrators and producers, helping their creativity and businesses to thrive.



Leeds West Indian Carnival © M Spadafora



Leeds Indie Food Festival © Tom Jay



Northern Ballet © Guy Farrow

This year some of our community galas will celebrate twenty years come rain or shine and the famous Leeds Festival will turn 20. On any weekend from May through to August there will be a number of festivals, fairs and feasts to choose from – helping build communities through huge amounts of mostly voluntary effort, from Garforth to Farsley and Otley to Morley and others across the city. Alongside this, Leeds has one of the largest celebrations of social history celebrating an industrious past filled with pottery, ceramics, tailoring and engineering through hundreds of community and volunteer events as part of the annual Heritage Open Days initiative, which was founded by the Council of Europe 22 years ago.

In addition to the range of cultural venues, green spaces, historic mills and community venues, the city is also home to some of the region's best known sporting achievements; from world-class Test Cricket at Yorkshire County Cricket Club's Headingley home, to their neighbours Leeds Rhinos and Elland Road home to Leeds United. More recently the city has taken sport to the streets with the hosting of the Tour de France Grand Départ in 2014, city-wide celebrations for the Rugby World Cup in 2015 and successfully becoming the new home for the UK leg of the World Triathlon Series from 2016 onwards. It is this unique cocktail of ingredients that make our city an exciting place to build a life, create work, learn skills, and grow a business.

In recognising the importance of the city's people and its unique culture, in 2017 Leeds adopted its first co-produced Culture Strategy. We intend to work with communities, artists, partners and stakeholders to create a central role for culture, placing it at the heart of the City's narrative and decision making across every estate, every street and every neighbourhood. Central to the Culture Strategy is ensuring that placemaking is considered throughout the development of the city, from major regeneration projects to new housing, transport and education. Through Our Spaces Strategy we have set ourselves a challenge for our public realm to become the City's greatest cultural asset. The Culture Strategy will create a six year £35m cultural investment programme and in 2023 Leeds will host a yearlong celebration of our diverse culture in Leeds.



Headingley Stadium © Alex Whitehead SWpix



Roundhay Park, World Triathlon



The Headrow, Grand Départ © Welcome to Yorkshire

1.3 OUR SPACES

Our spaces are the streets and places between buildings. They are continually interconnected spaces including streets, squares, parks, cycleways and the waterfront. Our spaces positively support commerce, reflect our culture and heritage, provide opportunities for relaxation, events and social interaction and they speak of place and community.

One of Europe's greenest cities, Leeds City Council manages over 4,000 hectares of green space encompassing parks, woodland, nature reserves and 101 allotments across the city. These include Roundhay Park (Grade II Listed 'Registered Park & Garden') which has over 1 million visitors annually. The park has more than 700 acres of parkland, lakes, woodland and gardens. Other parks in the city include: Middleton Park, Temple Newsam, Woodhouse Moor, Meanwood Park, Beckett Park, Bramley Fall Park, Horforth Hall Park, Potternewton Park, Golden Acre Park, East End Park, Cross Flatts Park, and Western Flatts Park. There are many smaller parks and open spaces scattered around the city, which made Leeds one of the greenest cities in the United Kingdom in a 2017 survey. Leeds was ranked at number seven, ahead of northern neighbours Bradford, Manchester and Liverpool. A relatively healthy city, life expectancy in Leeds has increased with people living an average of 81 years and the city has renewed its efforts to ensure that Leeds can be enjoyed at any age. Leeds is perceived to have a good quality of life, reflected by the 82% of residents satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

In the city centre, spaces are a unique mix of old and new, where no two spaces are the same. They include formal Georgian squares, such as Park Square, Queen Square and Hanover Square, informal parks such as St John's churchyard, Penny Pocket Park and Lovell Park, Woodhouse Moor, a historic parkland on the fringe of the city centre, and event spaces such as Millennium Square and Victoria Gardens. There are also new and improved spaces such as Sovereign Square, the first new piece of green space within the city centre for decades which is over half a hectare in size, alongside the recently improved Bond Court. In addition, as part of South Bank, the council in partnership with Vastint are bringing forward proposals for the delivery of a new City Park using land holdings at Meadow Lane and the former Carlsberg Tetley site, to create a new piece of green infrastructure in the city centre of over 3.5 hectares.



Temple Newsam © LCC



The Tetley © Tom Joy



Temple Newsam © Sarah Zagni

Whilst there are 19 green spaces, parks or formal civic spaces within Leeds city centre, all but the new green space outside The Tetley is situated to the north of the River Aire. In aiming to address this, the council delivered the Sovereign Square redevelopment and the Planning Framework for South Bank, which is now being brought forward following extensive consultation. As part of the consultation, several comments were raised about the requirement to improve the connectivity of South Bank to the central city core through new and improved footpaths, spaces and bridges over the River Aire that are high quality and make people feel comfortable to use at any time day or night. This will be one of the key challenges we will be looking to overcome as part of the Our Spaces Strategy.

Our existing spaces are not without issues. The public realm and connecting routes within Leeds currently lack a distinct sense of place and quality, with a range of issues such as being in poor condition, narrow footpaths, street clutter, dead or dying trees and shrubs and decommissioned water features to name but a few. Through Our Spaces we will be looking to address these issues and put in place a more robust maintenance programme with clearly defined revenue budgets to ensure that these spaces meet the expectations of 21st Century city centre infrastructure.



Sovereign Square © Carl Milner

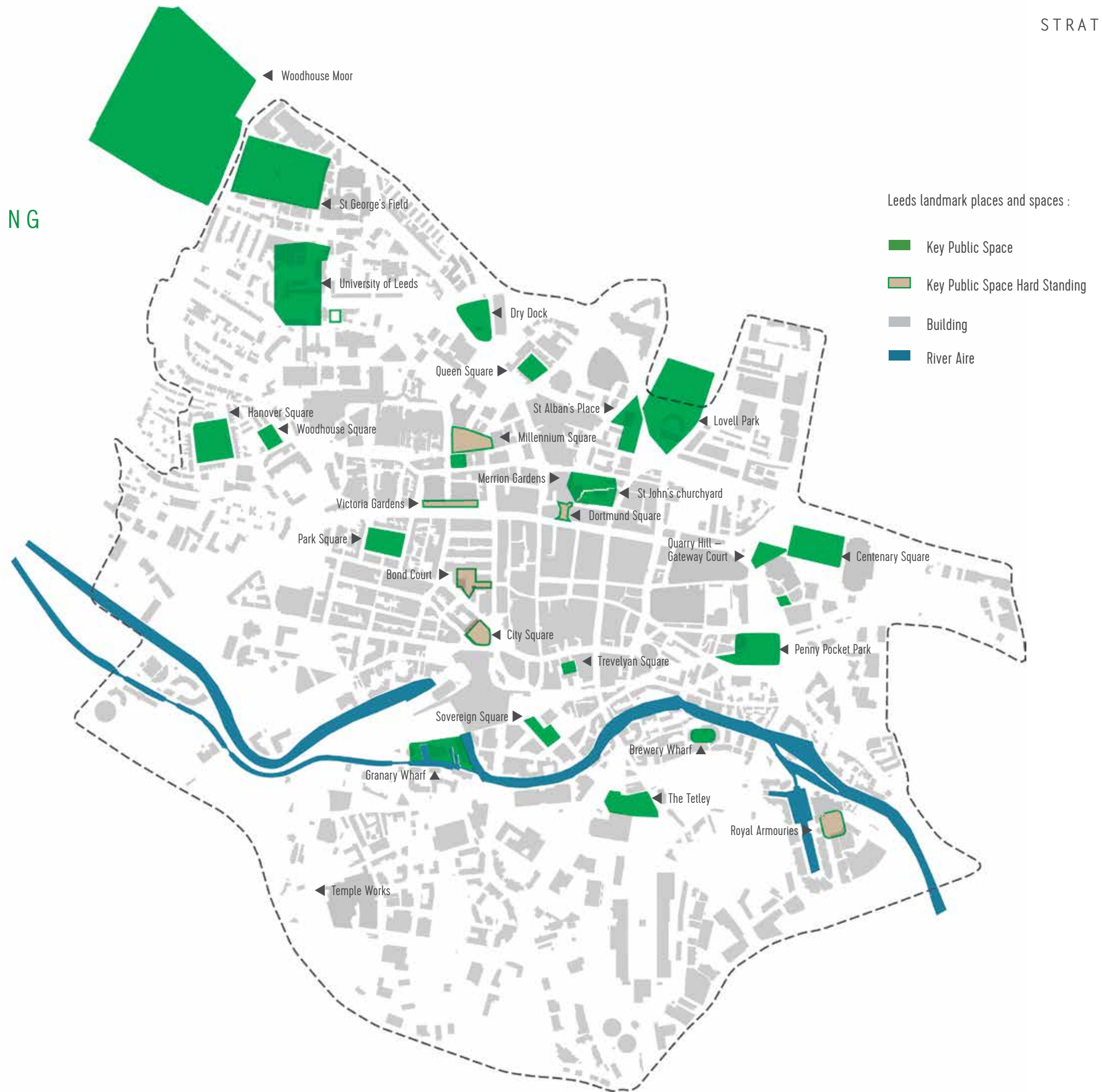


St John the Evangelist Churchyard



Park Square © Carl Milner

1.4 OUR EXISTING SPACES



1.5 EXISTING GREEN SPACES



1.5 THE BENEFITS OF GOOD PUBLIC REALM

The health, social, environmental and economic benefits of high quality public realm cannot be over stated. More so now than ever, it is understood that access to nature and open space positively affect people's health and wellbeing, bringing cities and spaces to life as well as creating more resilient and sustainable cities.

High quality spaces can:

- Create an environment for social interaction, physical activity and quiet contemplation
- Make a positive contribution to health and reduce stress
- Provide cultural opportunities encouraging investment and development of high quality facilities of national and international significance
- Create a wide and varied contrast of wildlife habitats
- Improve air quality through the planting of native trees and shrubs which absorb harmful emissions as well as cooling air
- Assist with city resilience such as flood control
- Increase visual continuity and connectivity for the pedestrian through the provision of linked footpaths
- Attract investment and spur rejuvenation of commercial activity
- Contribute to a city's attractiveness as a tourist destination
- Add value to land and property
- Reinforce sense of place and increase dwell time



53%

increase in residential values due to new public realm in retail district, Place du Marche Saint-Honore, Paris

also

166%

increase in retail values



35%

reduction in air pollution resulting from the restoration of a city centre stream, with new habitats and improved public space at Cheonggyecheon River Park, South Korea



35%

increase in footfall in the Sheffield City Centre and a net increase in spending of £4.2m after public realm improvements

(Genecon, 2010)



17.5%

increase in retail rents against 7.4% decline across the city from Liverpool One – new retail development supported by significant public realm investment



13,000

children a year would be saved from death or injury by accommodating pedestrians and enforcing reduced speed limits across the country's residential areas

(Living Streets 2001)



27.59 MILLION

tourists welcomed to Leeds in 2016 an increase of 4.2%



55%

increase in pedestrian flow following redesigned public square and market in Israel Square, Copenhagen



1

large tree can supply a day's supply of oxygen for four people.

1.6 WHY ARE OUR SPACES IMPORTANT?

Leeds is a diverse and vibrant city that is looking to the future as an economic centre and capital of the Northern Powerhouse and Leeds City Region.

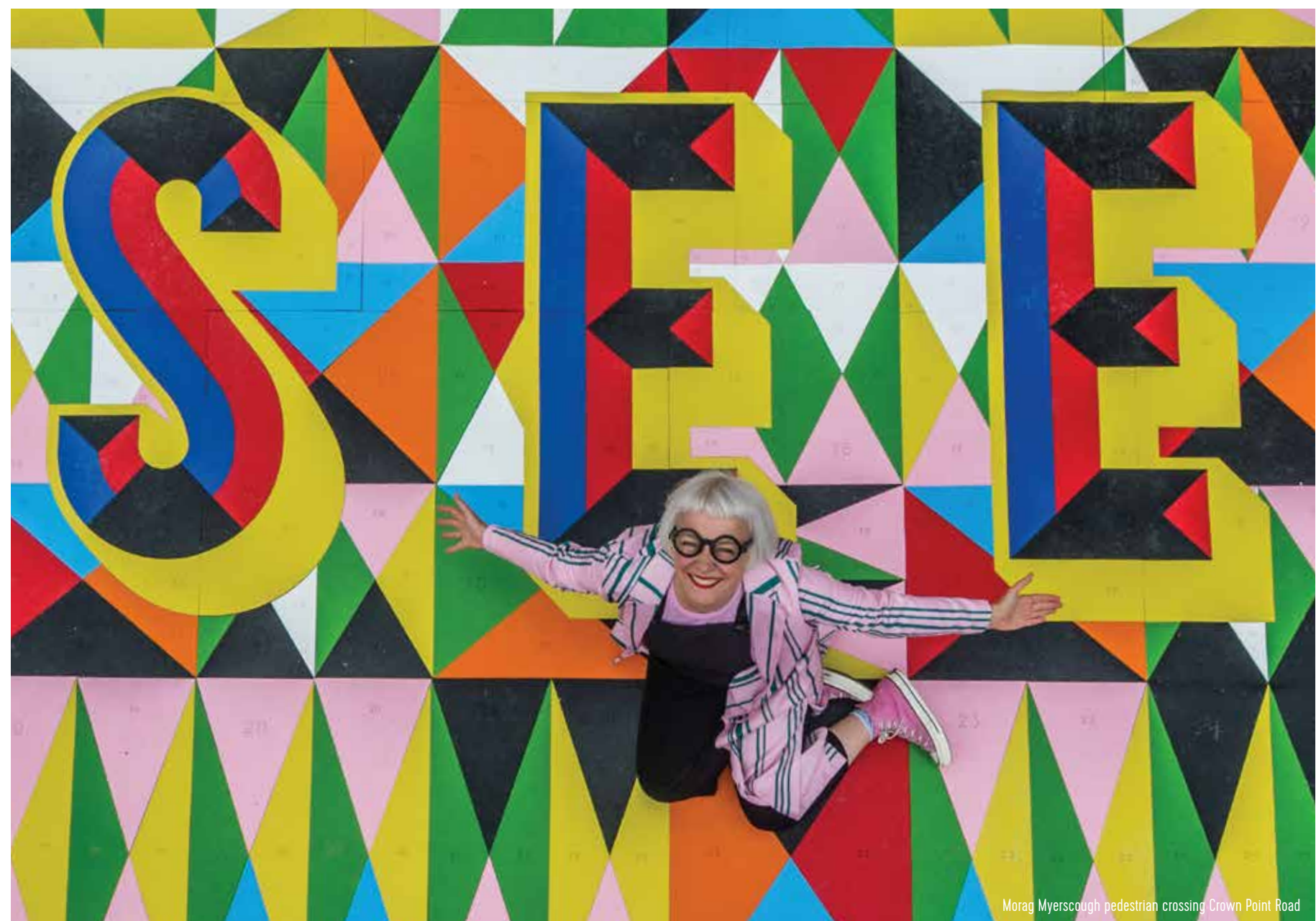
Central to this city positioning is the drive to create world class public realm across Leeds, which responds to the city's diverse population, cultural significance and the effects of climate change. Our spaces are often people's first encounter with the city. They are our 'front door' to visitors, businesses and residents and ensuring we design, deliver improvements and then maintain our spaces to the highest standards possible, is essential to our city's profile locally, nationally and internationally.

Celebrating Identity

The gateway to the Yorkshire Dales and internationally recognised for its varied Victorian architecture, parks and green spaces, Leeds has established itself as a city that offers unique built and environmental attractions. Leeds is also known as being a city with a strong sporting heritage, a vibrant music and arts scene and is renowned for its commerce, retail, educational institutions and digital industries. Leeds has an opportunity to celebrate and showcase these unique attributes through our spaces, which we will animate and bring to life through our programme of temporary/pop up installations and events.

Promote Culture and Diversity

In 2017 Leeds adopted its first ever Culture Strategy 2017-2030. Alongside a city wide cultural celebration and events in 2023, our spaces have a crucial role to play in the delivery of the Culture Strategy. Through the installation of appropriate infrastructure and programming, our streets and public spaces will facilitate and inspire cultural activity, foster collaboration and provide cohesion and coexistence between communities and individuals.



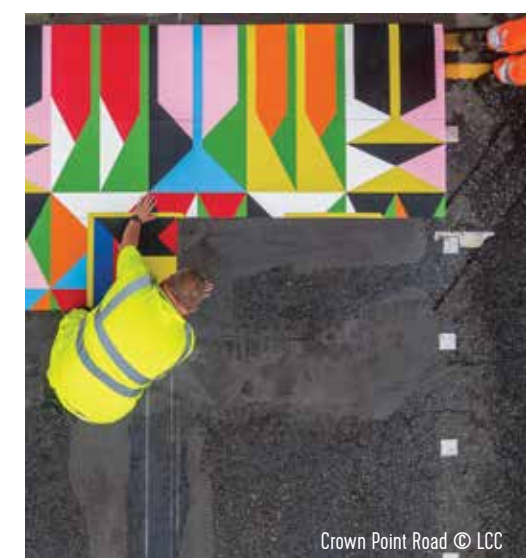
Morag Myerscough pedestrian crossing Crown Point Road



Pop-up and Play, Victoria Gardens © DLA Design



World Triathlon, Millennium Square



Crown Point Road © LCC

Build Resilience

Like many cities Leeds experiences the challenges of climate change. A recent Local Climate Impact Profile (LCIP) for Leeds identified that the most common severe weather events in the city include strong winds and flooding of the River Aire. It is imperative that Leeds explores opportunities through Our Spaces, to mitigate the impacts of climate change through the use of sustainable urban drainage systems, rain gardens, tree planting etc to make the city more resilient and be its environmental benefactor.

Support Growth

Leeds has a long history of collaboration between the public and private sector to unlock opportunities and deliver economic growth. Using an array of joint venture vehicles and working in partnership with developers Leeds City Council have collaboratively delivered our corporate estate and grade A schemes such as 3 Sovereign Square and first direct arena, created bespoke investment packages to share risks and rewards such as at Merriam House and unlocked areas of the city such as the Aire Valley Enterprise Zone.

Yet our future has only just begun. Our city's transport agenda is facing a once in a generation level of change. High Speed Rail is due to arrive in the heart of Leeds city centre in 2033 and proposals for Leeds Integrated Station are being developed. Redevelopment proposals for the M621, Armley Gyrotory Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme and the city centre Gateways (which aims to double bus patronage by 2026) will all play a significant role in redefining the city centre and provide opportunities to create new city centre spaces through the re-allocation of highway space. Other major regeneration initiatives will deliver a major step change in dynamic of the city centre. South Bank will double the size of the city centre, providing 4000 new homes and 35,000 new jobs.

The Leeds Public Transport Improvement Programme (LPTIP) is a £174m programme of investment from the Department of Transport to improve public transport across the city by 2021. Part of this work includes the city centre Gateways which will potentially see the release of highway infrastructure and in places the closure of roads, releasing space for new public realm.

The Leeds Housing Infrastructure Fund bid will be submitted in March 2019 to Homes England. The ask is for new and improved infrastructure, including greenspace, improved connectivity through pedestrian bridges, improved pedestrian infrastructure and environment by 2021 to support future city centre housing growth planned to be delivered over the next 10 years.



Leeds Integrated Station – Bishopsgate



Leeds Integrated Station



Leeds Integrated Station

1.7 THE STAGE IS SET

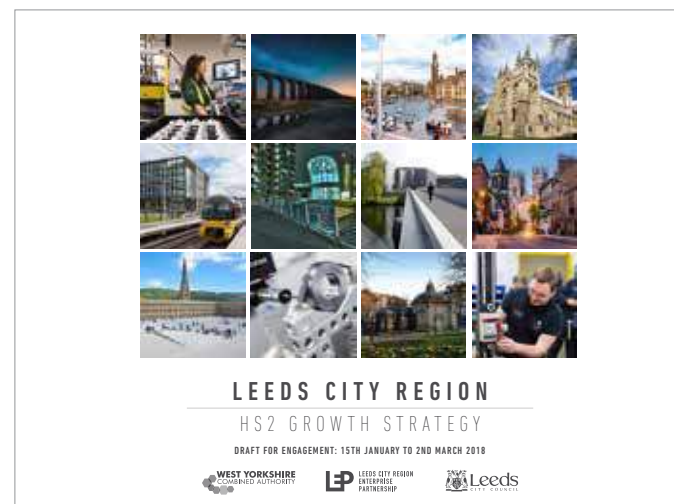
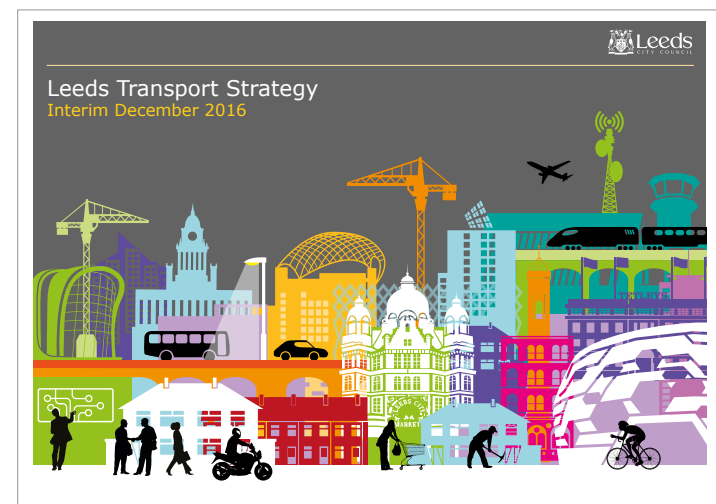
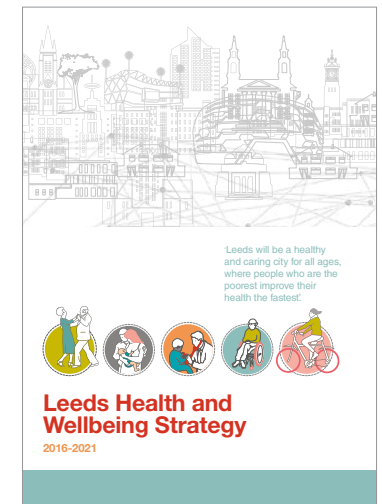
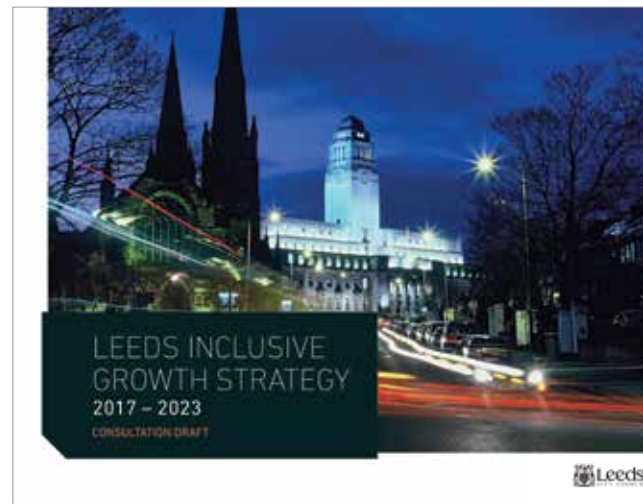
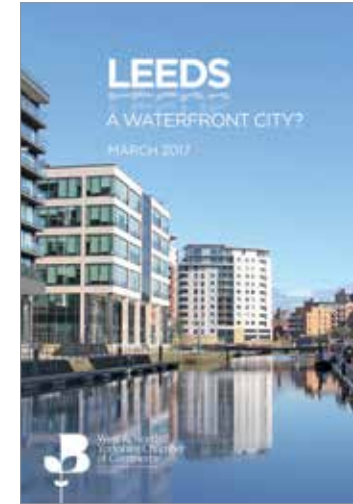
Following the 2008 and 2010 city centre conferences in Leeds, the lack of high quality green space in the city centre was raised. In giving due consideration to this issue, the delivery of new green space to the south of the River Aire was identified with the proposed creation of a new 3.5ha City Park as part of South Bank. In tandem with this 0.6ha of new green space at Sovereign Square was delivered alongside new office headquarters for KMPG and Addleshaw Goddard in 2016.

In 2015 the council brought forward the Leeds Public Realm Design, Ideas and Opportunities discussion document to further understand people's requirements and expectations of green space in the city centre and where the future opportunities may come from. Leeds City Council's Executive Board endorsed the document and recommended that a 'Public Realm Strategy' was produced alongside a public realm work programme that identified our priority schemes. The Our Spaces Strategy is the product of the work that has taken place since then.

Our Spaces Strategy has not been developed in isolation however. It has evolved from a solid foundation of key interventions, regeneration programmes and influential city projects and developments that have interdependencies with Our Spaces and combined delivery objectives.

These include:

- Leeds: A Waterfront City? – West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce
- South Bank Leeds Regeneration Framework – Leeds City Council 2017
- Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan – Atkins 2017
- Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy – Leeds City Council
- Leeds Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021
- Best Council Plan 2018/19-2021 – Leeds City Council
- The Leeds Transport Strategy (Connecting Leeds) – Leeds City Council
- HS2 Growth Strategy
- Leeds Culture Strategy 2017-2030
- Housing Infrastructure Fund Bid
- Leeds Waterfront Charter – 2018



1.8 WHAT WILL OUR SPACES STRATEGY DO?

Our Spaces Strategy will:

- Set out our vision and ambition for the development of all green space within the city centre;
- Provide a baseline for the development of all future public realm interventions in the city centre;
- Provide a tool to test the robustness of site specific projects and how these integrate with wider public realm aspirations;
- Reflect upon the current public realm offer in the city centre and identify opportunities to improve it.

Using Our Spaces Strategy as the starting point, we will engage with the people of Leeds, key stakeholders, visitors, residents and businesses to seek their views on the strategy. The feedback will help to shape the content and the look of the final strategy to ensure it is suitably robust to inform the planning and design of our spaces over the next 5-10 years.

In addition to directly addressing the quality of the city's public space. The strategy will also help to achieve some of the city's other targets. These include 2020 Eurozone 6 Targets for air quality, plans to double bus patronage as part of the investment in public transport and associated infrastructure, City Connect 2, the continuation of the city's cycle superhighway and Child Friendly Leeds.



1.9 FUNDING AND TIMING

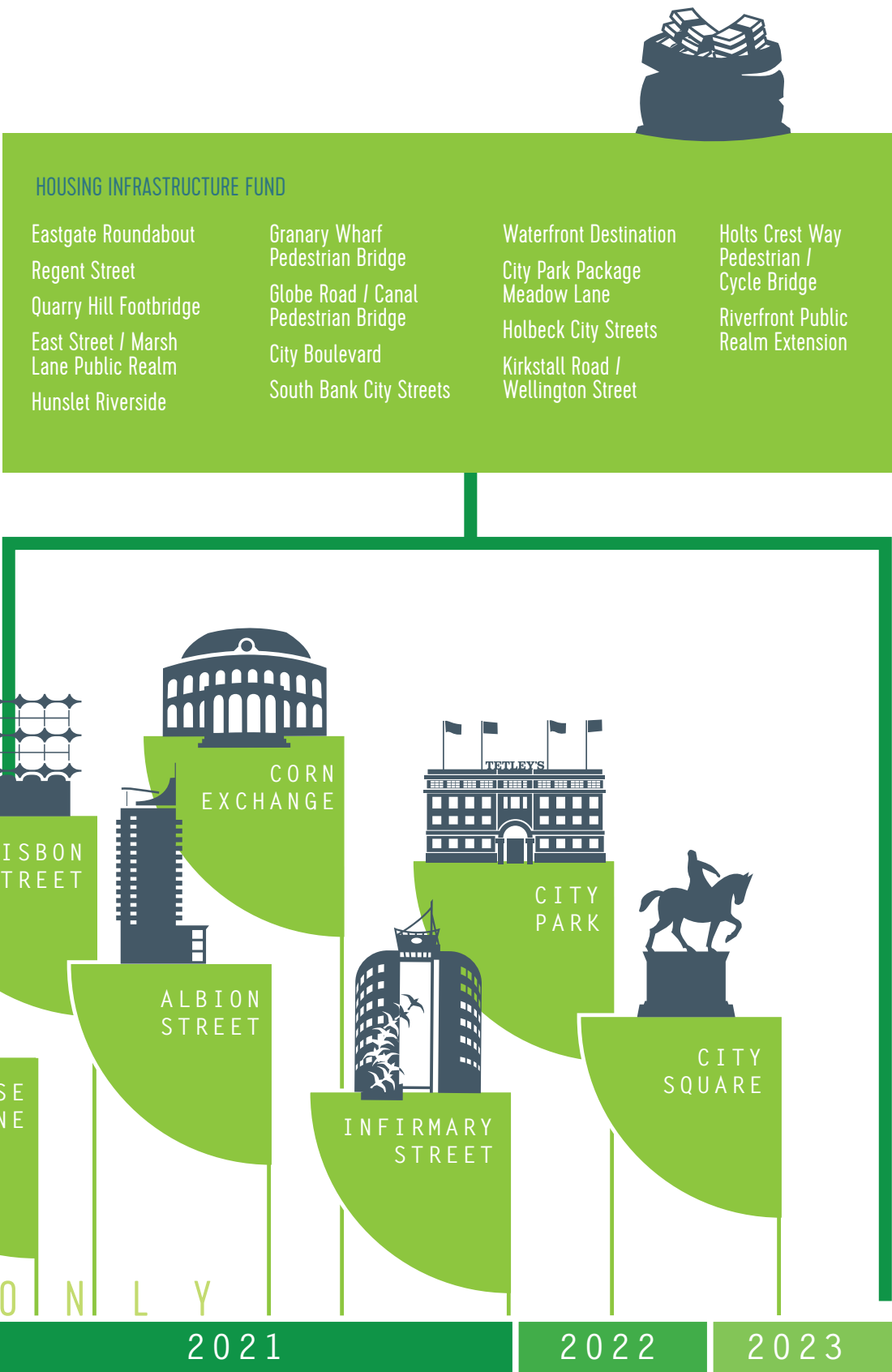
The timing and purpose of investments in Leeds city centre and its wider environment provide a unique opportunity to bring forward Our Spaces and set out a new vision for public realm quality and quantity moving forward. We will take an ambitious approach to changing the interface between pedestrians and vehicles on some of the city’s most important and well used streets and spaces.

There are significant funds in place to deliver a city centre package of highway improvements, which will see major changes to the Armley Gyratory and the M621. The outcome of this will provide the city with an opportunity to divert general traffic around the city core, allowing the complete redevelopment of City Square which will see it increase in size to 1.4ha (larger than Trafalgar Square).

In addition there are several other major development proposals and regeneration programmes being brought forward for delivery such as South Bank Leeds (which has developments including CEG, Tower Works and the former Carlsberg Tetley sites within it), MEPC (Wellington Place) and Hunslet Riverside (CITU).

Development proposals are being brought forward by companies such as CEG and Vastint, whose developments will contribute to the city centre’s green infrastructure. In the west end, sites such as Monkbridge and Wellington Place have been and are being developed with connectivity, a sense of place and city greening at the forefront. In the east, areas such as the CITU site, Hunslet Riverside and Leeds Dock will all add to the city centre offer with proposals for a new school and a new pedestrian footbridge over the River Aire. Increased connectivity and public realm improvements are all being progressed across the city centre.

All together, the investment into Leeds’s city centre infrastructure over the next five years will be transformational – potentially involving expenditure of as much as £0.5bn. Never before has the city centre seen such a catalytic investment into its infrastructure and spaces. It is a defining moment for Leeds and one that, as a city, we need to be ready for and work together to deliver.



02

OUR CHALLENGES

2.0 OUR CHALLENGES

Leeds is justly proud of its reputation and achievements for progress and innovation. However amongst the variety of world class and award winning assets that the city offers, it also has some challenges that need to be overcome in relation to its spaces, if it is to meet its vision for the creation of world class, vibrant, inclusive public realm. Given the city's exciting opportunities that are being developed around South Bank, HS2, transport proposals and Housing Infrastructure fund, now is the chance to increase and improve our spaces to deliver on our vision and ambition for our public realm to become the city's greatest cultural asset.

Our Spaces Strategy explores a series of key themes that represent the broad challenges we will look to overcome around the quality and quantity of our public realm. These include:

1. The Identity of Leeds – How does Leeds present itself?
2. The Experience of Leeds – How does it feel to be in the city?
3. Crossing Leeds – What is it like to cross roads and rivers?
4. Leeds in Green and Blue – Is Leeds a Green City with the River at its heart?
5. Growing a Leeds – How is Leeds expanding?



2.1 THE IDENTITY OF LEEDS

The character of the city is diverse in appearance, density and use. However, the public realm often lacks distinctiveness.

Challenges

1. The design of principal streets, such as the Inner Loop Road and The Headrow, assist in dividing rather than connecting a number of character areas throughout Leeds, including the Innovation District, Civic Quarter and the central Retail and Leisure Core, creating a sense of severance and disconnection.
2. The public space offer around a number of landmark buildings, including the Corn Exchange, Town Hall, Tetley's Brewery and Tower Works is often limited in extent or quality, offering a poor setting to the building and its use.
3. Public spaces and streets near to transport hubs, including Leeds Train Station and Leeds Bus Station, could more effectively create a defined sense of arrival within Leeds and a more positive impression of the city.
4. The South Bank has less diversity and definition of character in comparison to city areas to the north of the river, with more homogeneous and widespread areas of lower density industry and commercial development – this results in the South Bank expressing a character which is not identifiably unique or 'of Leeds'.





1



2



3

THE IDENTITY OF LEEDS

1. The Headrow
2. The Corn Exchange
3. City Square
4. South Bank



4

2.2 THE EXPERIENCE OF LEEDS

People perceive and experience the true nature and qualities of Leeds when on foot or bicycle. However, the city centre is fundamentally designed around vehicle travel.

Challenges

1. Leeds is a city where 53.6% of commuters still drive to work, describing itself as the 'Motorway City of the North' in the 1970s – this legacy continues to make the city centre heavily focused around vehicle travel.
2. Principal city streets such as Park Row, Boar Lane, New Market Street and the Headrow are key points of arrival for many people entering the city by bus or train – however, they are largely compressed by highway and bus service infrastructure.
3. Landmark spaces such as City Square and Victoria Square (and a number of smaller spaces including Dortmund Square and around the Corn Exchange), are negatively impacted upon by the presence of higher traffic volumes, associated noise levels and vehicle movement.
4. Wide spread and large scale highway infrastructure is prominent on South Bank, detracting from the overall pedestrian and cyclist experience and sense of place.
5. Many of the pedestrianised streets provide a better quality experience for pedestrians and cyclists, which partially highlights the challenge – we need to create high quality pedestrian and cyclist experiences along side other modes of transport.





THE EXPERIENCE OF LEEDS

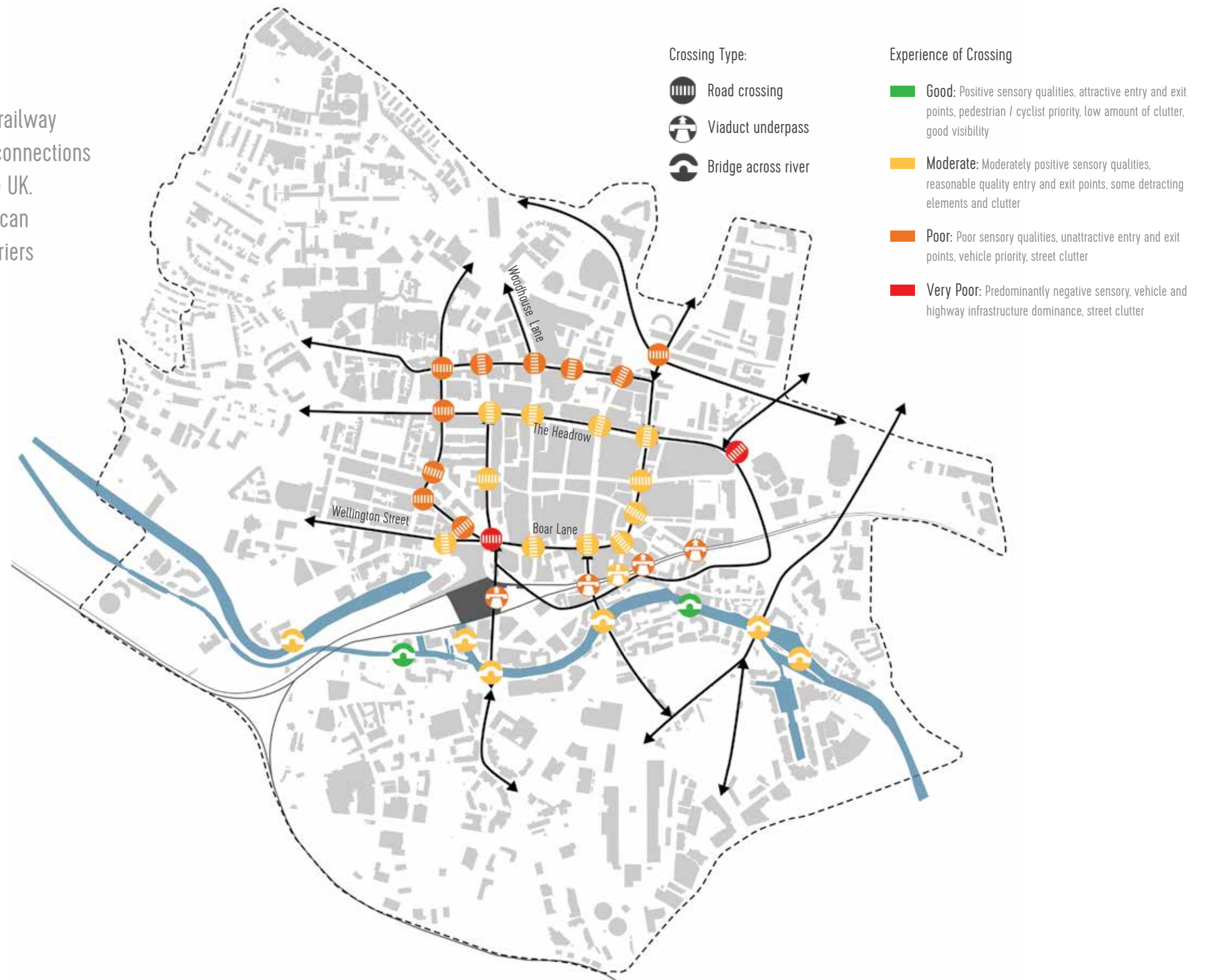
1. New York Street
2. Park Row
3. City Square
4. South Bank

2.3 CROSSING LEEDS

Several major transport corridors and the railway pass through Leeds city centre providing connections to the wider city region and the rest of the UK. However, to pedestrians and cyclists they can often be unpleasant to cross or create barriers to the flow movement within Leeds.

Challenges

1. A number of viaduct under passes, including at Kirkgate and Call Lane have narrow footways passing beneath them, with uninviting entry and exit points dominated by car parking and street furniture such as guard rails and traffic signage.
2. Large scale advertisement boards are attached to the side walls of some viaduct underpasses, which detract from the visual characteristics and identity of the viaduct.
3. Bridges over the River Aire offer unique views of the city and opportunity to experience the river, however the experience of crossing some bridges, including along Crown Point Road and Neville Street are influenced by significant traffic level and noise.
4. Pedestrian crossings within the city are often dominated by large quantities of street furniture associated vehicle infrastructure and restrictive measures such as guard rails, sign posts and signals.
5. The viaduct presents a particular challenge, that will require collaboration with Network Rail to overcome, so that these vital pedestrian connections become enticing places to use.





CROSSING LEEDS

1. Viaduct
2. Advertising boards
3. Bridges – Lower Briggate
4. Corn Exchange

2.4 LEEDS IN GREEN AND BLUE

Leeds is situated amongst a variety of parks, gardens and nature reserves, and is within a short distance of the Yorkshire countryside. However, Leeds does not taken advantage of its river side location and access to nature within the city is limited and dispersed.

Challenges

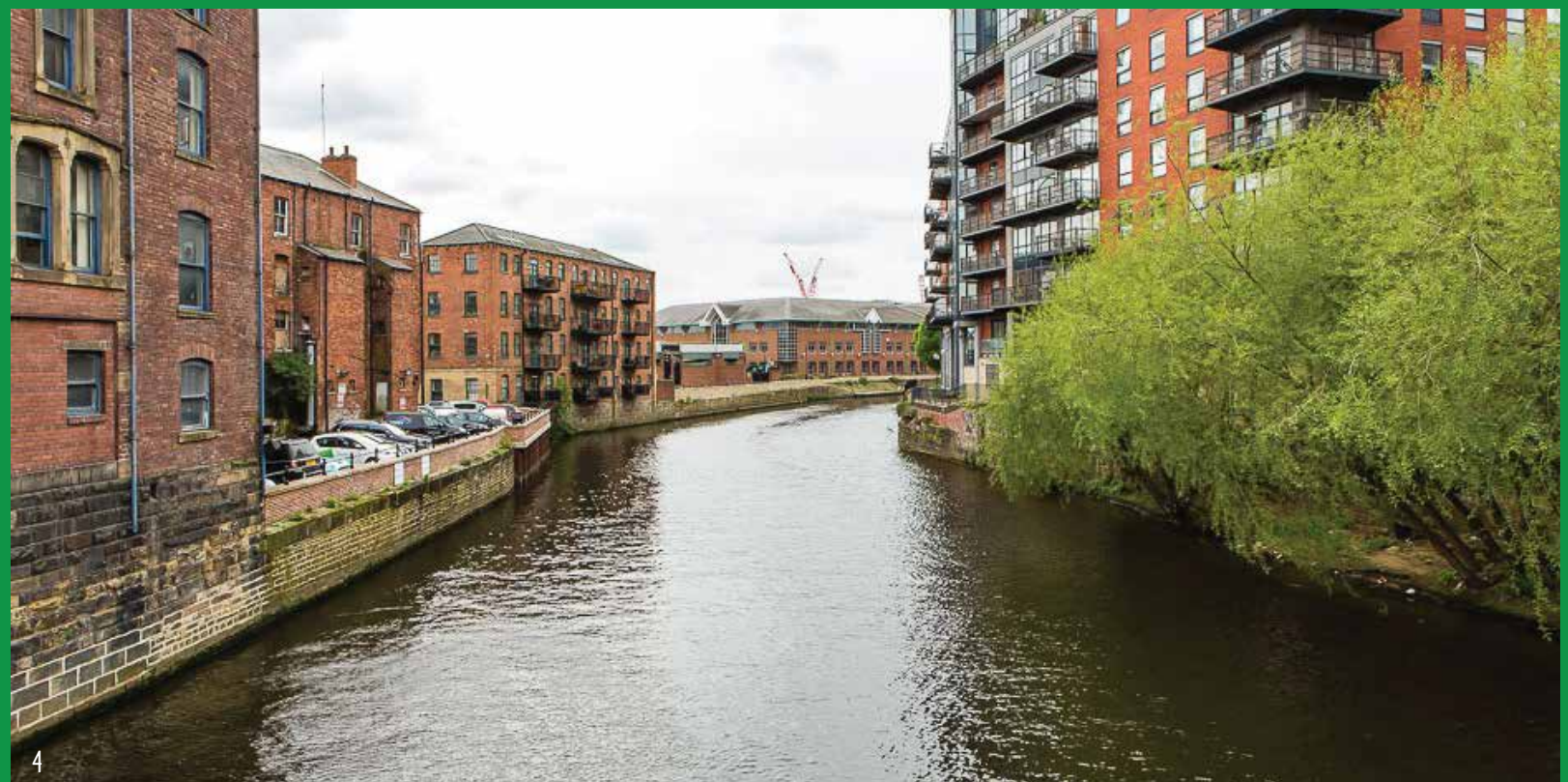
1. Leeds city centre includes a relatively low quantity of green spaces, the vast majority of which are situated to the north of the river. The South Bank currently has no significant green space provision. Overall there is a notable lack of nature.
2. The city offers limited variety of green space typologies, primarily comprising lawns, trees or planting and some pathways and seating. There is little provision for children's play, physical activity and habitat diversity.
3. Leeds has only 6% tree cover within the city centre, which is significantly less than the European average of 23%.
4. The banks of the River Aire provide limited and infrequent opportunities to positively engage with the waterfront.
5. Large sections of the River Aire are culverted within the city and offer limited opportunities for biodiversity.





LEEDS IN GREEN AND BLUE

1. South Bank
2. Hanover Square
3. Millennium Square
4. River Aire



2.5 A GROWING LEEDS

Leeds is evolving and expanding, particularly within South Bank, to provide more opportunities for people to live, work and learn within Leeds.

Challenges

1. South Bank is to undergo extensive regeneration as part of the South Bank Leeds Regeneration Framework and is to include the Integrated Station Masterplan.
2. Ensuring that proposed development areas on South Bank are well connected to the city core for pedestrians and cyclists is important to their future success.
3. New development will need to overcome major highway infrastructure to be well integrated within the city.
4. The HS2 connection segregates South Bank into two areas and ensuring interconnectivity between the these areas is crucial.





A GROWING LEEDS

1. Leeds Integrated Stations Masterplan
2. Globe Road
3. Quarry Hill – Gateway Court
4. HS2



03

OUR PRINCIPLES

3.0 OUR PRINCIPLES

Our Principles aim to address the various challenges that the city faces both at present and in the future in relation to its public realm.

The principles are ambitious but present a realistic picture of what Leeds will look like as a world class city. Leeds will be a substantially greener and better connected city that is more accessible to more people and recognisable as a unique place to be.

The principles have been developed in consultation with Leeds City Council and the Quality Spaces and Places Forum of the Leeds Chamber of Commerce.





PEOPLE FIRST

Our spaces will be designed for people. They will be comfortable, stimulating, relaxing and safe

Through our 'People First' principle, we will:

1. create public spaces that are stimulating and comfortable for everyone and offer well integrated and welcoming opportunities for relaxation;
2. design streets as public spaces which are easy to navigate, enjoyable to move through for pedestrians and cyclists and create a canvas for public life, with places to meet, eat, drink, work and play;
3. provide more seating opportunities within appropriately scaled, hospitable and visible environments, with attractive views and interesting things to see such as planting, integrated public art or simply people walking by; and
4. reduce and rationalise excessive street clutter relating to vehicle infrastructure to ease movement for pedestrians and cyclists, and more effectively integrate signage and furniture into the street setting and aesthetic.





THIS IS LEEDS

Our spaces will celebrate Leeds' built and natural assets, from the edges of the River Aire to the magnificent architecture of the city centre

Through our 'This is Leeds' principle, we will:

1. reveal and celebrate the rich history, cultural significance and broad demographic of Leeds within the design of public spaces and streets to reinforce the city identity;
2. provide exceptional public spaces and settings around landmark buildings, such as the Corn Exchange, Town Hall and the former Leeds General Post office;
3. positively set the tone for Leeds as people arrive by train or bus, focusing on streets forming the 'Public Transport Box', including Park Row, The Headrow, Vicar Lane / New Market Street and Boar Lane;
4. provide more opportunities for activity next to the river and promote engagement with the waterfront, celebrating Leeds as a city with a river at its heart; and
5. reconfigure vehicle infrastructure including bus lanes and cycle ways to positively contribute to a sense of place, to form an integrated part of the public realm environment.





EVERYONE WELCOME

Our spaces will be inclusive, designed for all ages, abilities and reflect Leeds' diverse communities

Through our 'Everyone Welcome' principle, we will:

1. create a legible, accessible and comfortable city for everyone – the needs of the elderly, those with a disability and families with young children will be integrated into the design of the public spaces;
2. integrate more opportunities for play and playfulness, cycling and physical activity throughout Leeds, with incidental 'moments' that engage people and allow them to interact with the public realm to the benefit of their mental and physical health and wellbeing and assist in meeting our Child Friendly Leeds ambition;
3. provide more attractive places to stop and rest within public spaces and principal streets such as the Headrow, Park Row, Boar Lane and Woodhouse Lane; and
4. Engage in meaningful dialogue with representatives of Leeds diverse communities who can contribute to the design of public spaces in the city.





BETTER CONNECTED

Our spaces will be highly connected, considering pedestrians first, clearly legible and easy to navigate

Through our 'Better Connected' principle, we will:

1. create high quality public realm that permeates the River Aire, railway viaducts and central road infrastructure throughout Leeds, making journeys across the city and from South Bank more enjoyable and safe for pedestrians and cyclists;
2. reinforce local character and wayfinding, with river crossings and viaduct underpasses that provide clearly recognisable gateway elements within the city;
3. ensure the experience of transitioning through viaduct underpasses is positive for pedestrians and cyclists, with attractive approaches to encourage onwards movement;
4. integrate cycle routes, such as those proposed as part of the City Connect scheme, as an attractive part of the street hierarchy and aesthetic;
5. transform the River Aire into a new linear pedestrian and cyclist corridor through the city, comprising a series of linked public spaces, such as the future City Park;
6. offer greater pedestrian and cyclist priority, with pedestrian crossings within the city forming an integrated part of the public realm environment; and
7. clearly connect to future city developments such as City Park, Quarry Hill and emerging residential neighbourhoods with high quality pedestrian and cyclist routes.





GREENER FUTURE

Our spaces will be resilient to climate change, with green environments cooling the air, sustainably managing surface water and absorbing carbon

Through our 'Greener Future' principle, we will:

1. integrate diverse planting into the city's principal streets and public spaces where appropriate to improve the urban microclimate, utilising topography for sustainable water management;
2. create a series of 'Urban Sponges' that capture and slowly discharge rainwater before it is released into the sewer system;
3. embrace nature and consider the needs of wildlife as residents of the city;
4. reintroduce new habitats to sections of the River Aire as it passes through the city, increasing biodiversity, whilst also providing more widespread opportunities to engage with the waterside for pleasure and physical activity; and
5. clearly integrate 'Active Transit' opportunities, including walking and cycling, into the design of principal streets and afford them greater priority within the street use hierarchy.





BRING IT TO LIFE

Our spaces will be places for cultural activity, from small interactions to major events

Through our 'Bring it to Life' principle, we will:

1. create street environments and spaces that foster a street culture, allowing people to participate in public life;
2. transform key city locations including City Square, Dortmund Square, Victoria Square and the Corn Exchange, along with principal streets such as the Headrow and Boar Lane into places that offer increased opportunities for a variety of programmable and incidental public activities;
3. form a network of interconnected public spaces rather than a series of assets, offering a greater variety of uses, including play, physical activity, temporary installations and access to nature; and
4. provide new opportunities to engage with the waterfront and experience Leeds as a 'City by the River'.



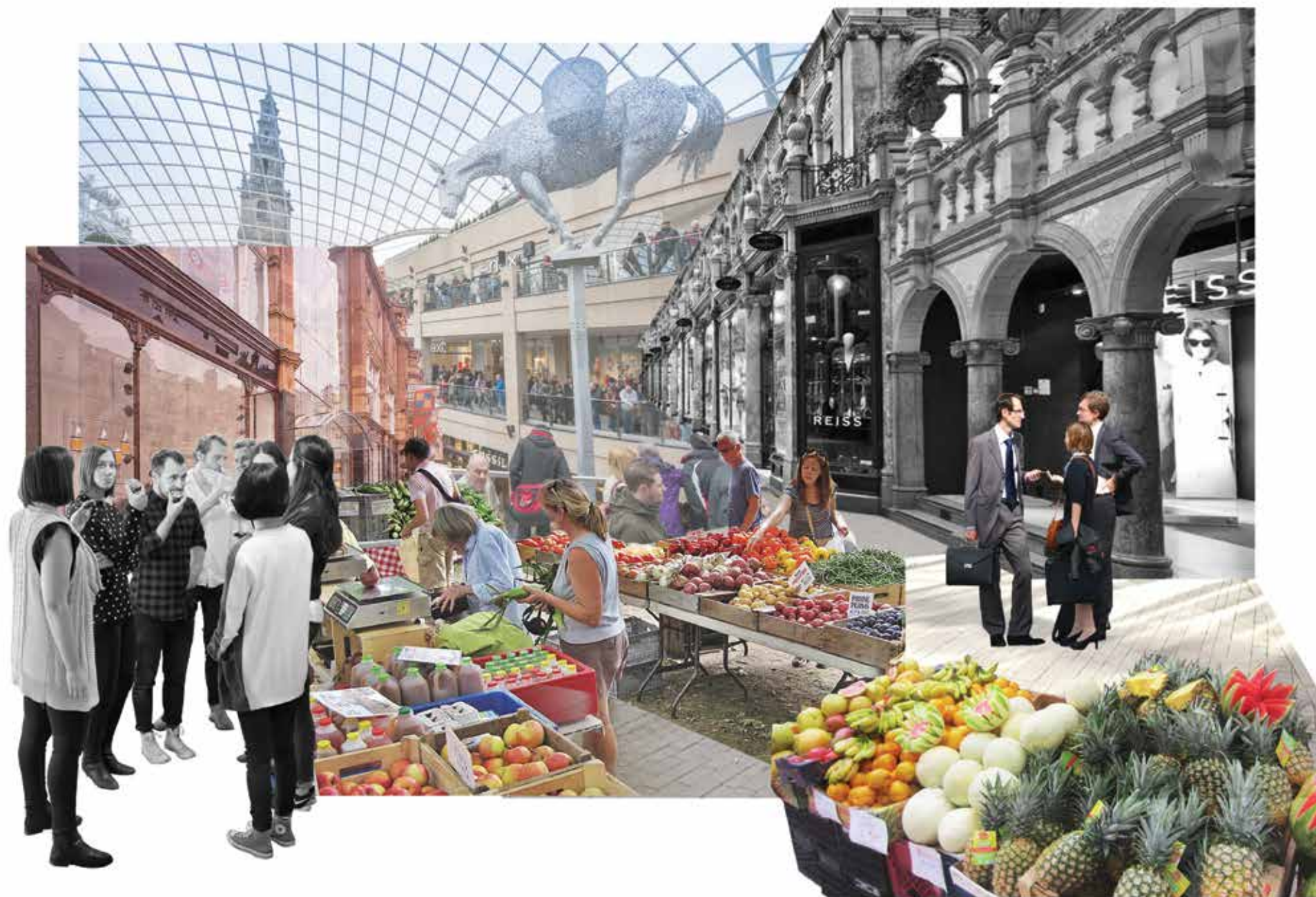


ECONOMIC SENSE

Our spaces will be valuable economic infrastructure that supports businesses and provides a canvas for new investment

Through our 'Economic Sense' principle we will:

1. ensure that Leeds is a vibrant and attractive city to live, work, visit and invest in, where people can enjoy opportunities to shop, socialise, attend events, participate in physical activity and visit attractions;
2. support the programmes set out for the lead up to and year of 2023 cultural activities by ensuring the delivery of a variety of event 'spaces' and associated infrastructure;
3. ensure that we support the development of public realm by both developers and the council in a way that positively supports and promotes businesses and provides a setting to attract new investment into the city centre; and
4. attract visitors, families and event organisers into the city centre to access a wide range of events and activities through the animation of our spaces, programmable events, sporting activities and promotions.



A vibrant park scene with people sitting on benches and grass under large trees, with a black fence in the foreground.

04

TRANSFORMING THE CITY

4.0 APPLYING OUR PRINCIPLES

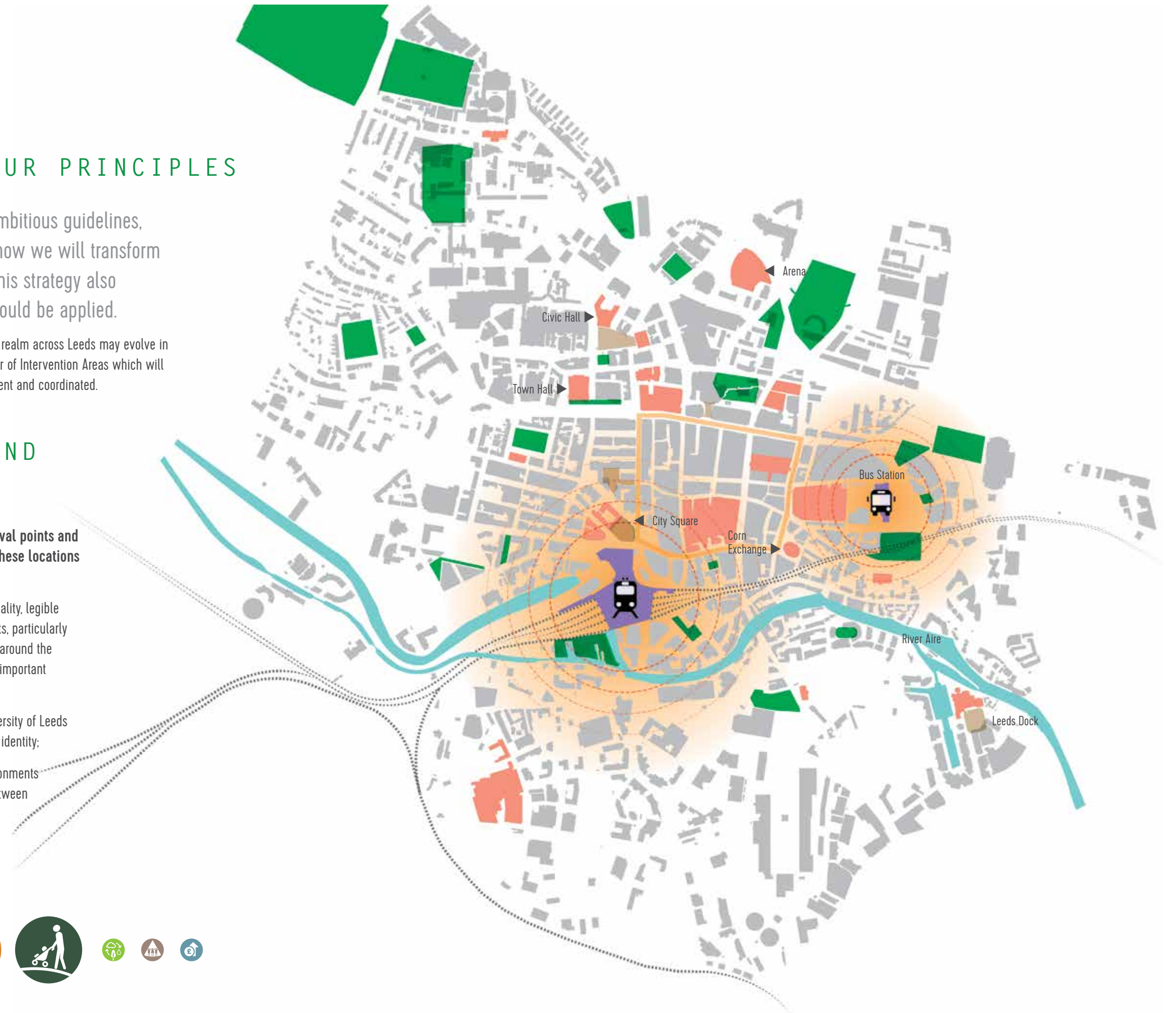
Our Principles are broad and ambitious guidelines, which aim to set a course for how we will transform our spaces in years to come. This strategy also considers how our principles could be applied.

This part of the strategy illustrates how public realm across Leeds may evolve in relation to our principles and defines a number of Intervention Areas which will allow the delivery of public realm to be coherent and coordinated.

4.1 GATEWAYS AND LANDMARKS

The plan shows the city centre's key arrival points and gateways. In applying our principles to these locations we will:

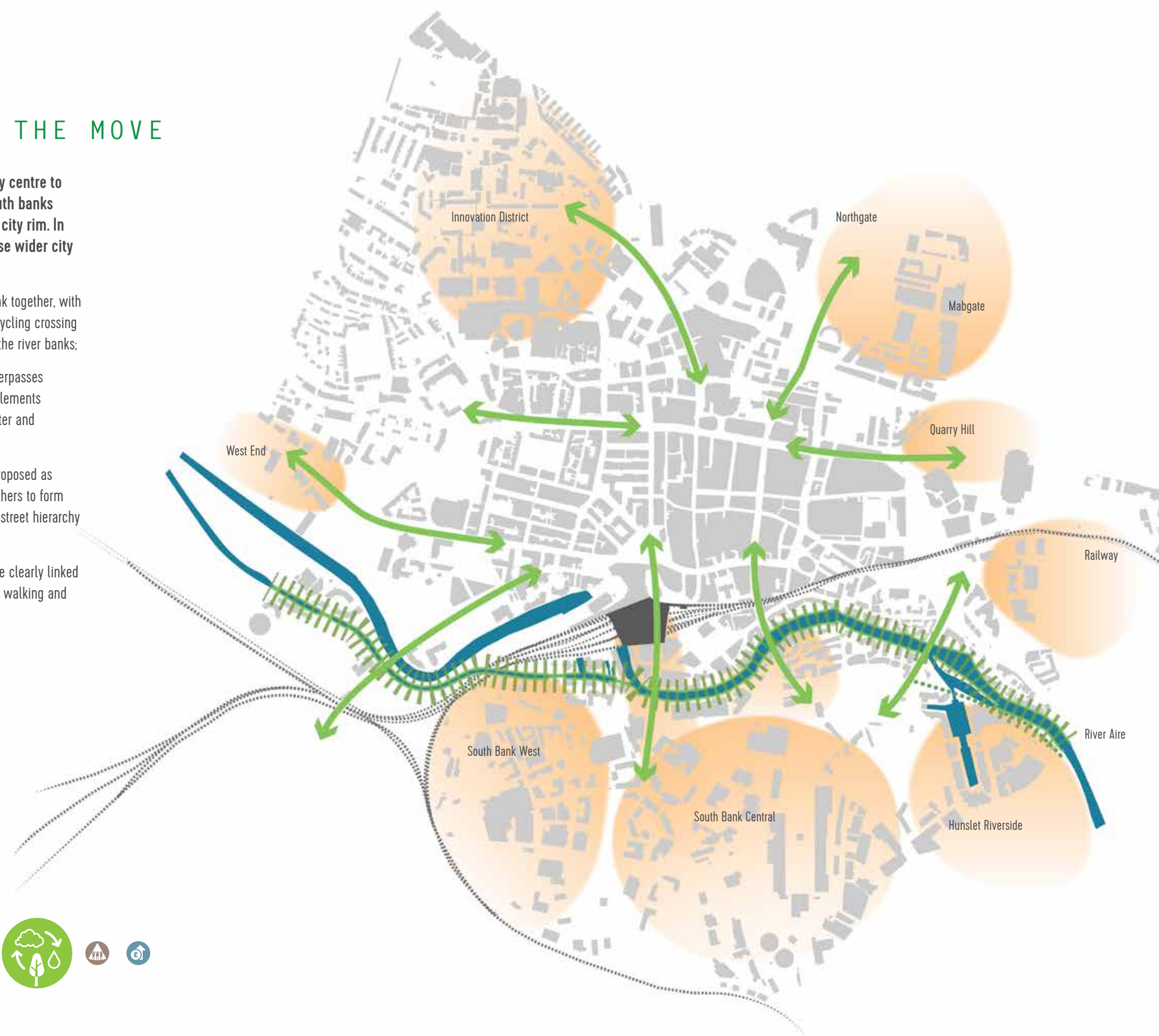
- create public spaces that are of a high quality, legible and accessible for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly where people arrive in the city, including around the central 'Public Transport Box' and around important landmark buildings;
- celebrate the rich history, culture and diversity of Leeds within public space to reinforce the city's identity;
- Provide comfortable and hospitable environments for people and readdress the interface between vehicle, cycle and pedestrian access.



4.2 A CITY ON THE MOVE

The plan identifies key areas of the city centre to reconnect, including the north and south banks of the River Aire and outer edge of the city rim. In applying our principles to address these wider city connections we will:

- stitch the city centre and the South Bank together, with attractive and inviting pedestrian and cycling crossing opportunities and public spaces along the river banks;
- ensure river crossings and viaduct underpasses provide clearly recognisable gateway elements within the city, reinforcing local character and wayfinding to aid walking and cycling;
- provide cycle routes, including those proposed as part of the City Connect scheme, and others to form an integrated and attractive part of the street hierarchy and aesthetic;
- ensure peripheral city developments are clearly linked to the city centre by attractive and safe walking and cycling routes.



4.3 CITY RESILIENCE

The plan identifies specific sites and areas where significant contributions can be made to support city resilience. In applying our principles to these locations we will:

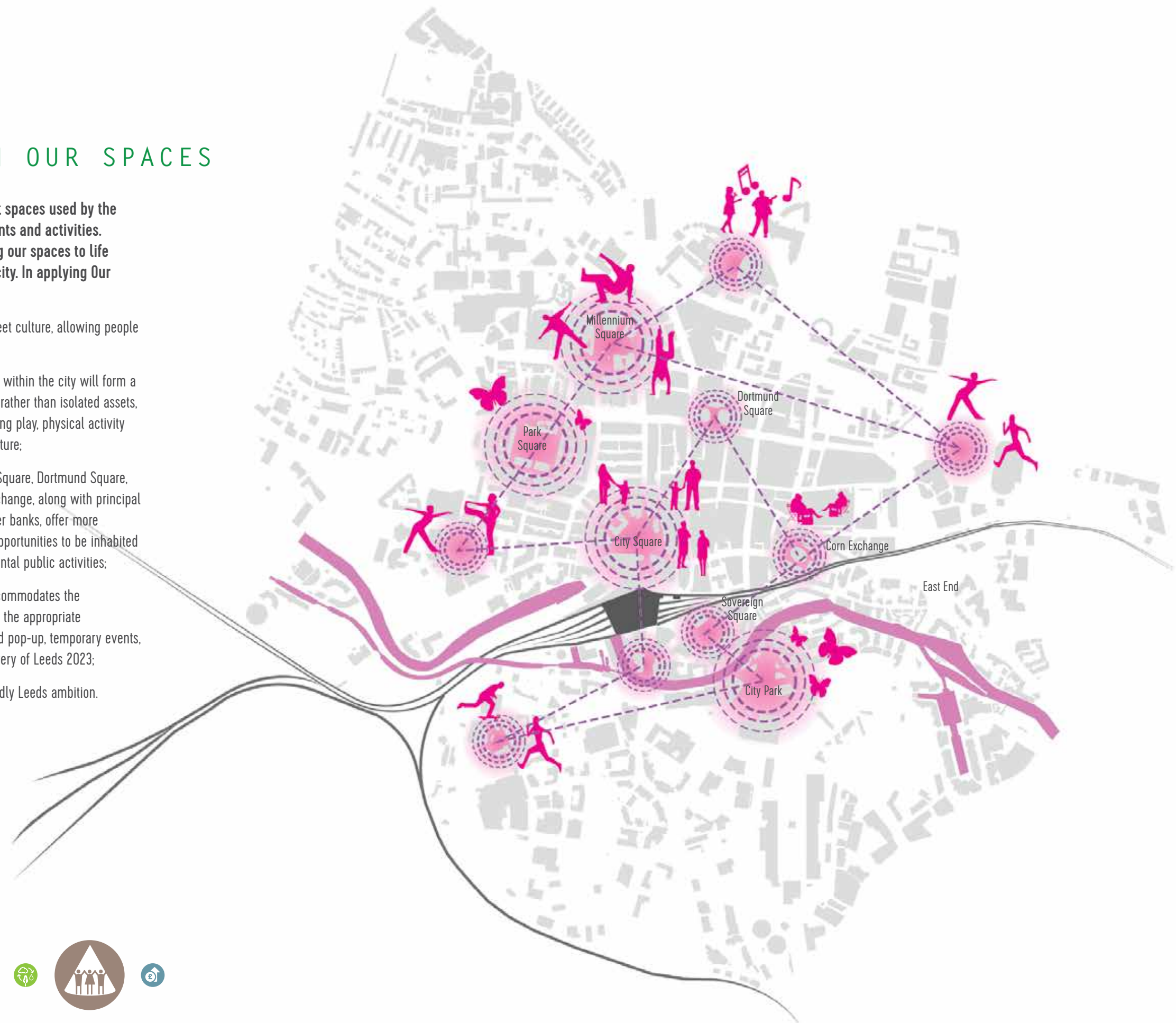
- integrate ambitious and landscape-led surface water management approaches into streets and public spaces, including sustainable drainage systems, tree planting and more extensive areas of planting, utilising the city's sloping topography to create inter-connected systems;
- ensure key public spaces such as City Square and the future City Park are to be designed as 'Urban Sponges' that attenuate and slowly discharge rainwater before it is released into the sewer system;
- clearly integrate 'Active Transit' including walking and cycling, into the design of principal streets and afforded greater priority within the street use hierarchy;
- explore the potential for Leeds to become an exemplar city in the use and provision of rain gardens to aid surface water storage and management following on from the successful delivery of Sovereign Square rain garden.



4.4 CULTURE IN OUR SPACES

The plan identifies the city centre event spaces used by the council and other organisations for events and activities. These play an important role in bringing our spaces to life and promoting a positive image of the city. In applying Our Principles we will:

- design streets and spaces to foster a street culture, allowing people to participate in public life;
- ensure existing and future public spaces within the city will form a network of interconnected public assets rather than isolated assets, offering a greater variety of uses, including play, physical activity temporary installations and access to nature;
- ensure key city locations including City Square, Dortmund Square, Victoria Square and outside the Corn Exchange, along with principal streets such as the Headrow and the river banks, offer more attractive environments and increased opportunities to be inhabited by a variety of programmable and incidental public activities;
- ensure that the design of our spaces accommodates the requirements of a digital SMART city and the appropriate infrastructure for both programmable and pop-up, temporary events, thereby supporting the lead up and delivery of Leeds 2023;
- assist the city in meeting our Child Friendly Leeds ambition.



4.5 SETTING THE BENCHMARK

The quality of public realm relates to the physical and psychological comfort it offers people. It also reflects aesthetic enjoyment from public art, architecture and history, a sense of belonging and civic pride.

A diverse range of optional activities such as physical activity to quiet relaxation take place in high quality environments. In ensuring that we deliver inclusive, vibrant and world class public realm we need to ensure that we embed an integrated, sustained and visionary approach to urban design focused on public realm. Using this approach we will increase economic performance, increase activity and occupation, increase cycling and walking activity and create a more liveable city centre.

Jan Gehl says that whilst people will only do what they need to in poor quality public spaces, an additional 'wide range of optional activities' will occur in high quality spaces 'because place and situation now invite people to stop, eat play etc.'

Gehl 2001.

Using renowned international, national, local and regional exemplar public realm examples as benchmarks, alongside our principles we will be guided by quality and good practice to ensure that our spaces become instantly recognisable and play a part in shaping the vision for other towns and cities public realm as well as our own.



PEOPLE FIRST



© HafenCity Hamburg GmbH/Thomas Hampel



THIS IS LEEDS



Champs de Mars and the Eiffel Tower, Paris



EVERYONE WELCOME



Central Park, New York © Shutterstock.com



Brygge harbour, Copenhagen © Henning Thomsen



Peace Gardens and Town Hall, Sheffield © Shutterstock.com



Spiral Fountain at Darling Harbour, Sydney, Australia © Shutterstock.com



BETTER CONNECTED



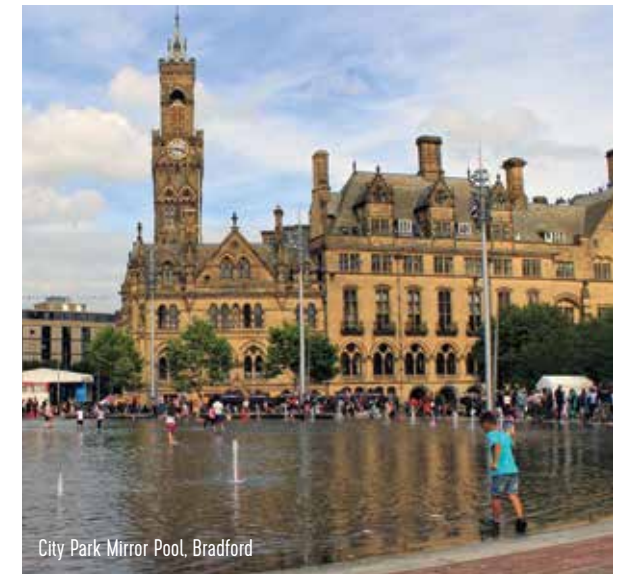
GREENER FUTURE



BRING IT TO LIFE



ECONOMIC SENSE

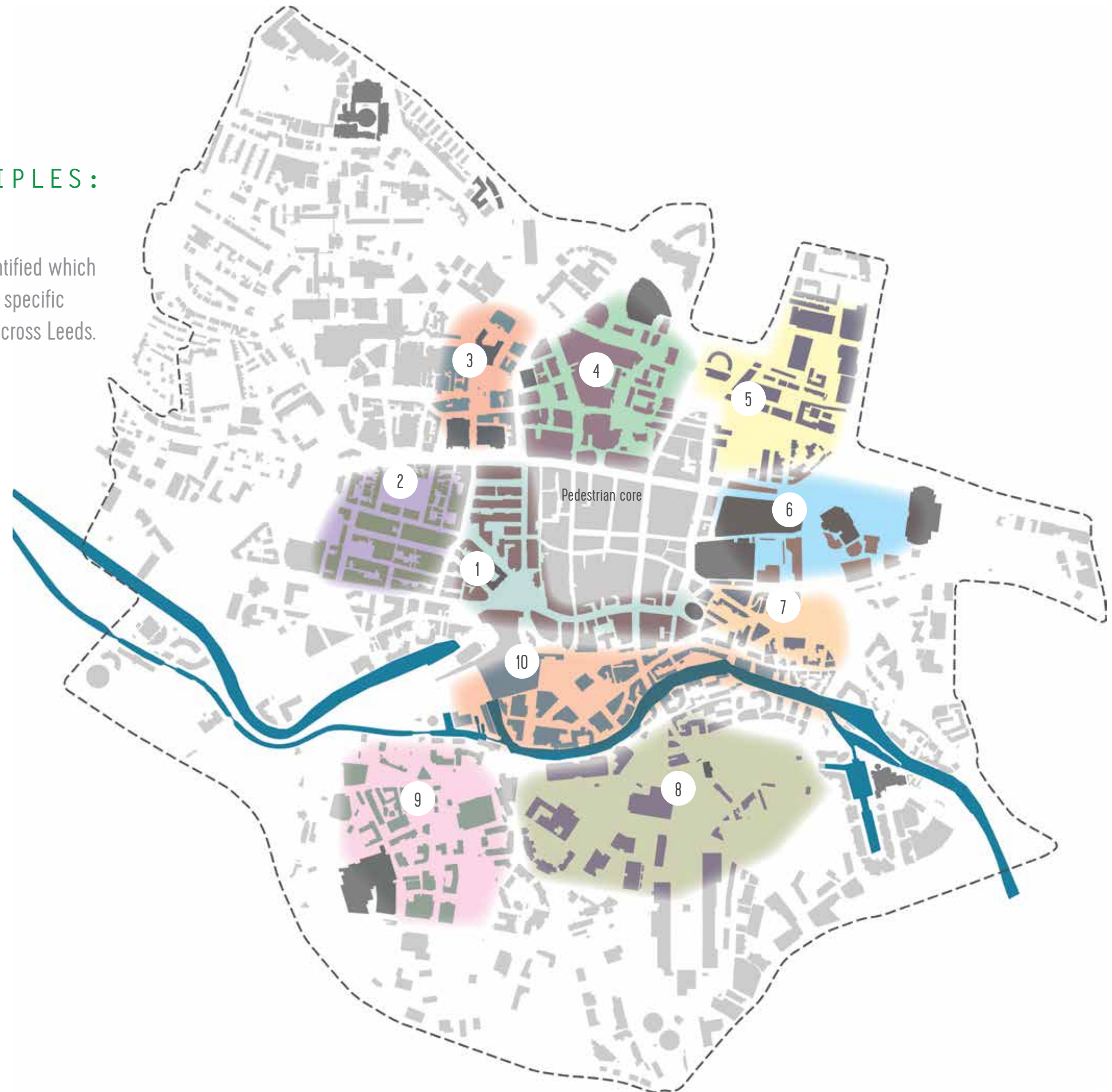


4.5 APPLYING OUR PRINCIPLES: KEY INTERVENTIONS

A number of key intervention areas have been identified which provide opportunities to introduce our principles to specific streets, public spaces and highway infrastructure across Leeds.

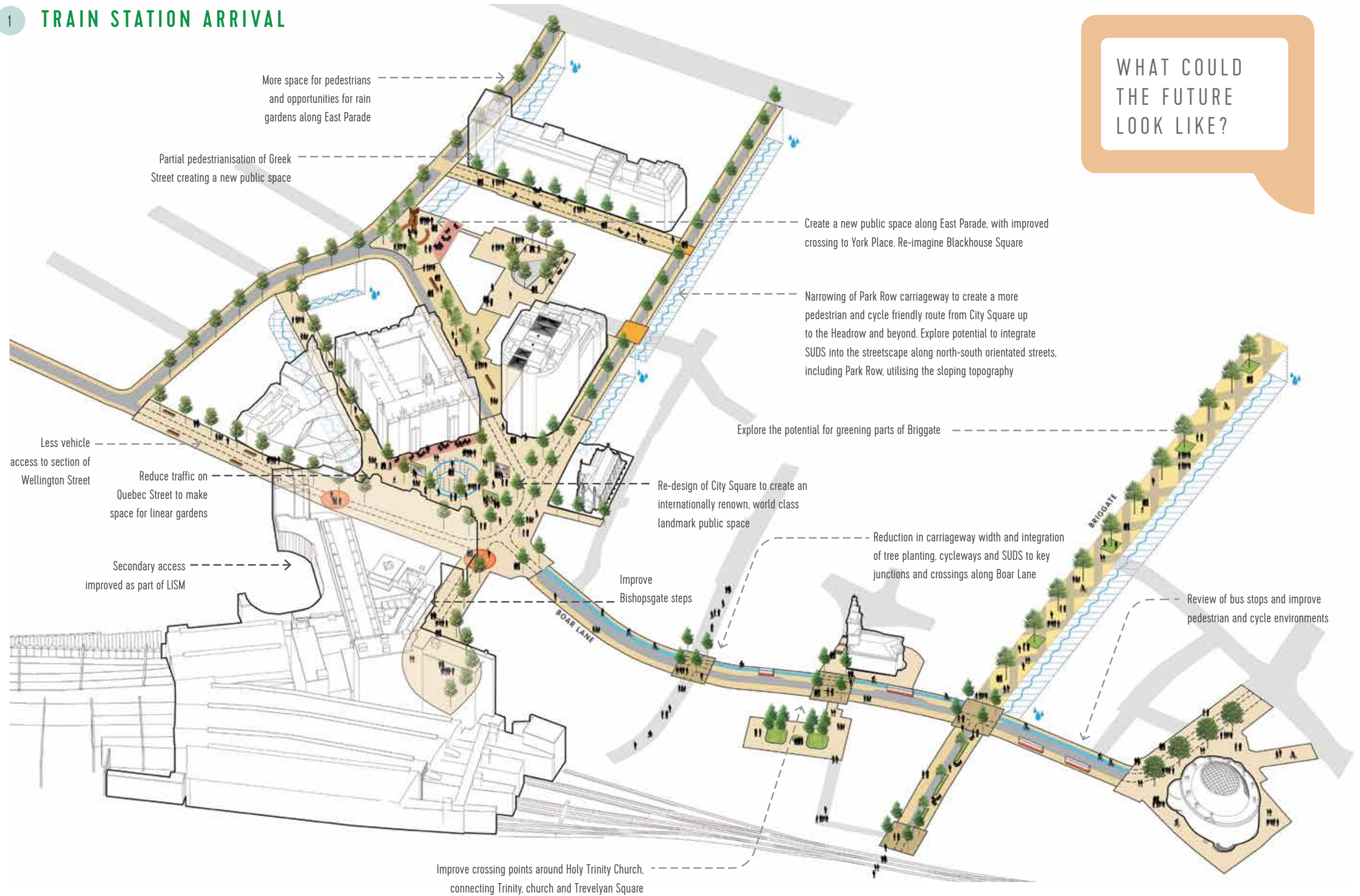
The intervention areas are separated into distinct parts of the city with their own unique characteristics, use and function. Individually, each area has the potential to integrate a range of city principles, applying these to the future design of the areas to transform them into more inclusive, vibrant, world class public realm.

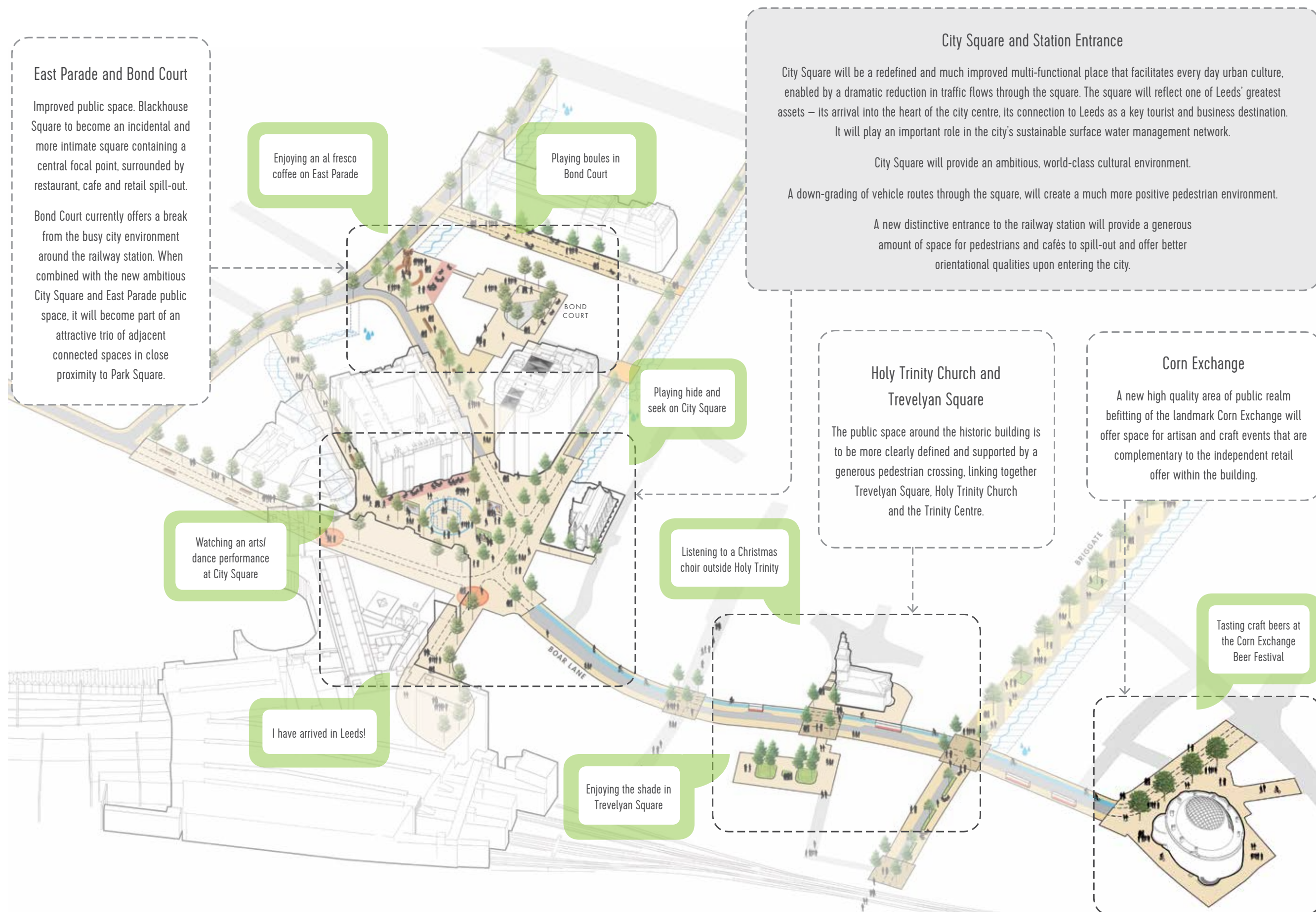
- 1 Train Station Arrival
- 2 Western Business District
- 3 Civic Heart
- 4 Arena Quarter
- 5 Mabgate
- 6 Cultural Quarter
- 7 Kirkgate and The Calls
- 8 South Bank: City
- 9 South Bank West: Holbeck
- 10 City Riverside





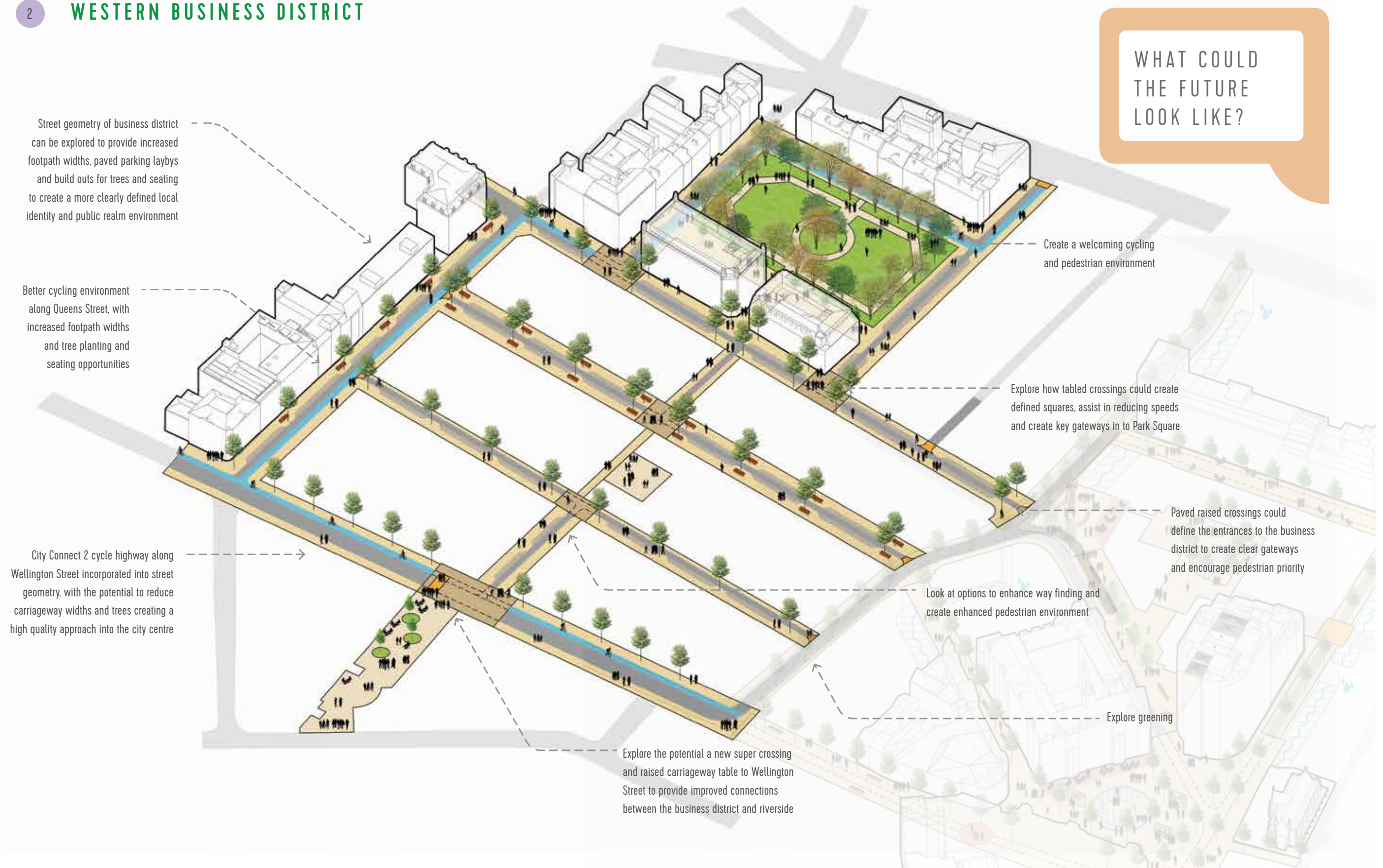
1 TRAIN STATION ARRIVAL





2 WESTERN BUSINESS DISTRICT

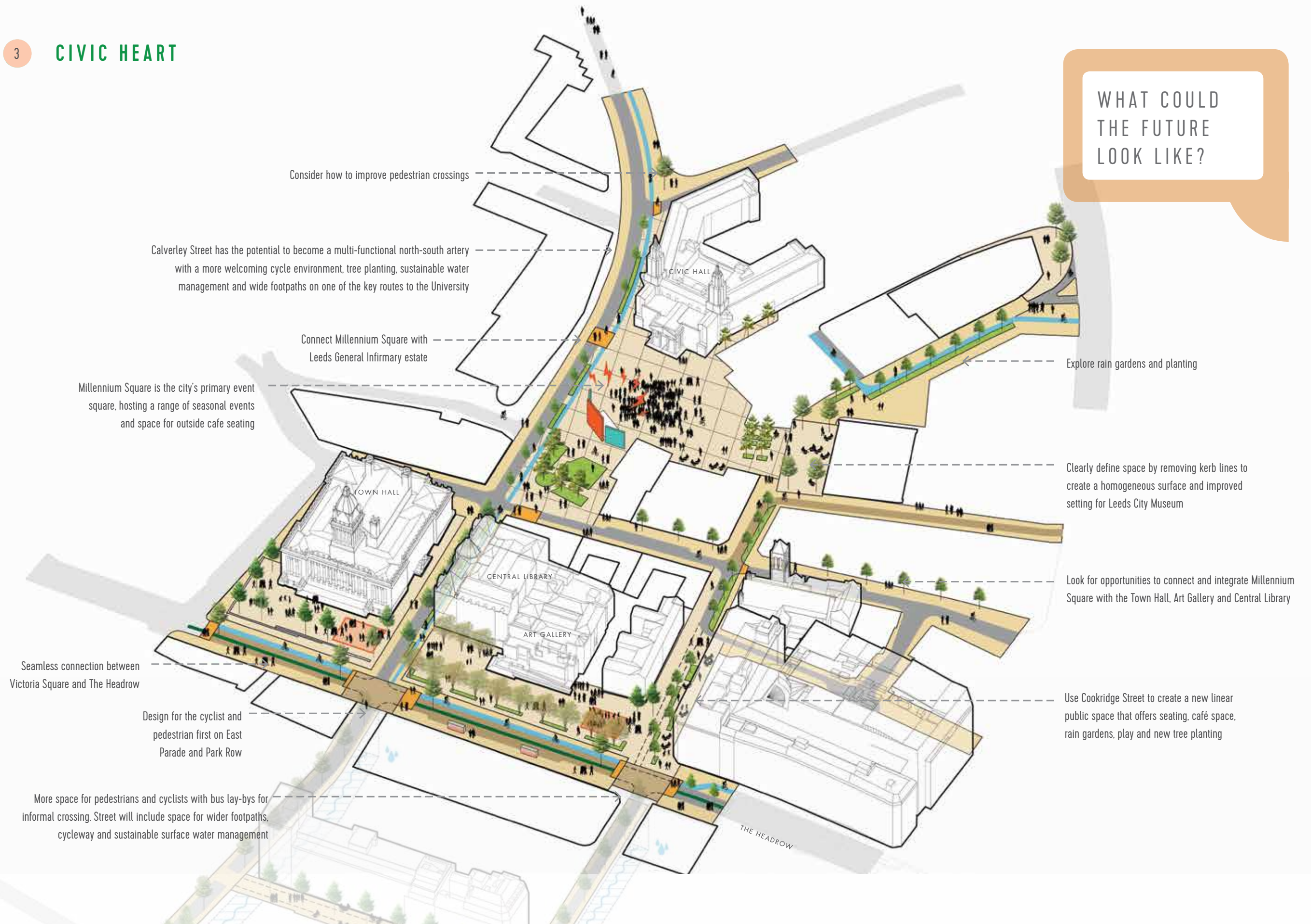
WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?





3 CIVIC HEART

WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?



Victoria Gardens

Victoria Square has potential to become a new landmark public space that provides a more appropriate and attractive setting to some of the city's most iconic buildings, including the Town Hall and Art Gallery.

There is opportunity to extend the character of the square across the Headrow, transforming the existing conventional highway arrangement into an integrated part of the public realm and promoting a truly civic environment at the heart of Leeds.

Millennium Square

Millennium Square is the city's primary event space that is capable of hosting a variety of programmed events from sport, play to civic receptions and seasonal activity such as the beach and the Christmas market.

The square also provides space for bars, restaurants and cafés to spill out and activate the edges, creating a city environment used in different ways throughout the day.

Cycling up to the university for a lecture

Watching the Wimbledon final on a large screen in Millennium Square

Sat on the steps of the Leeds City Museum people watching

Sipping a cocktail overlooking Millennium Square

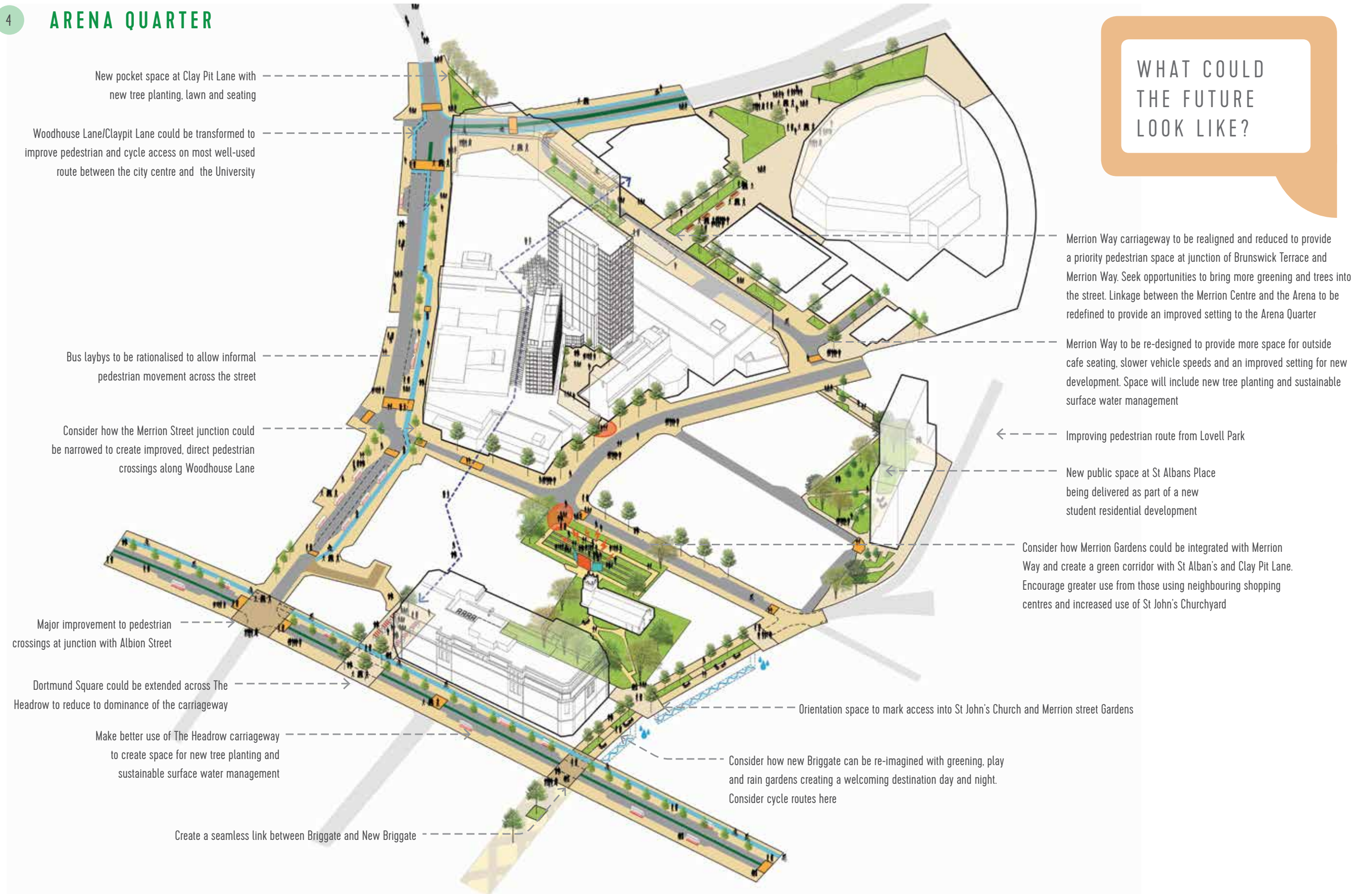
Enjoying an interactive installation outside the Art Gallery

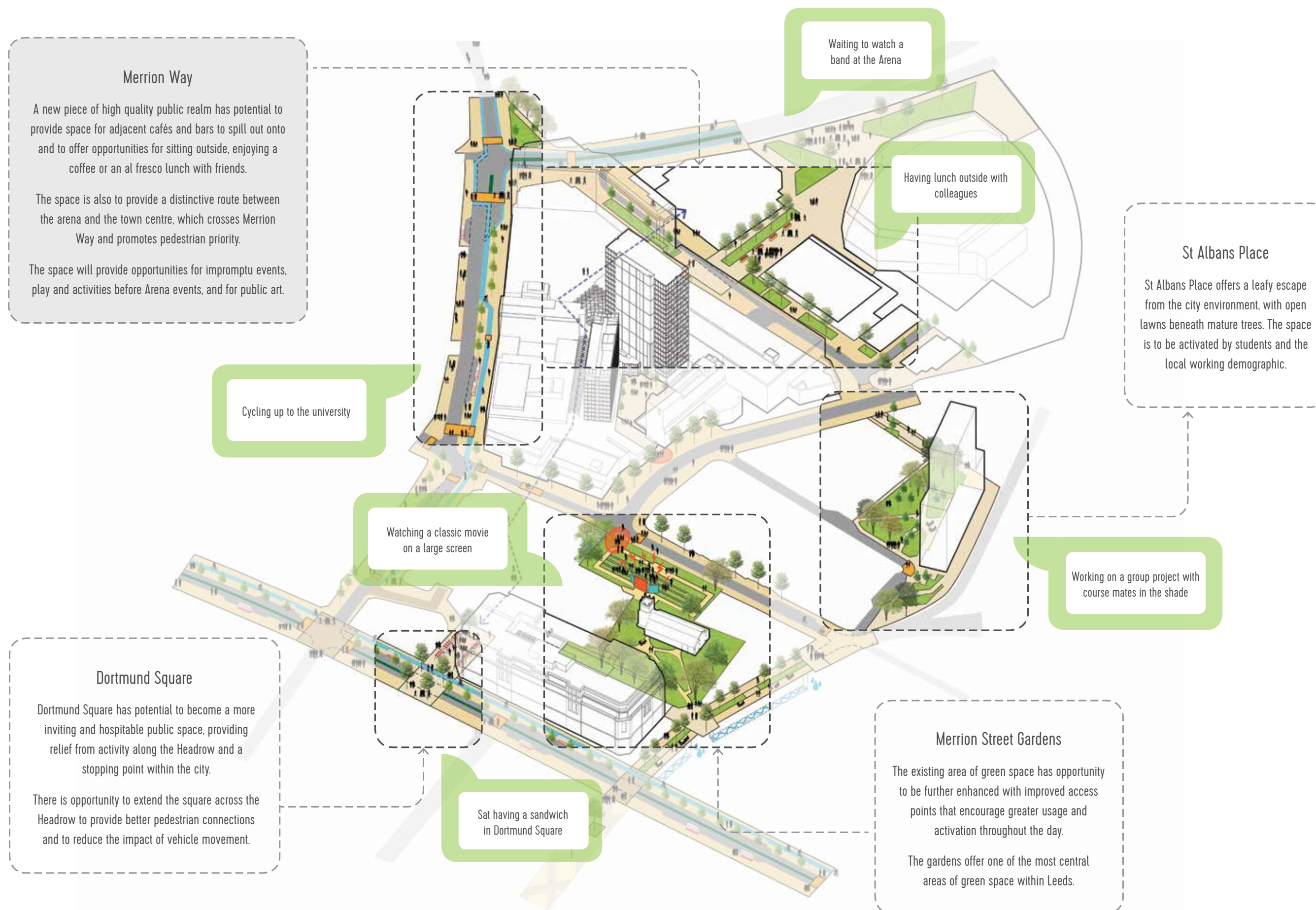
Playing on Victoria Gardens

Resting and enjoying the water feature in Mandela Gardens

Stood outside the Town Hall on a site seeing tour of Leeds

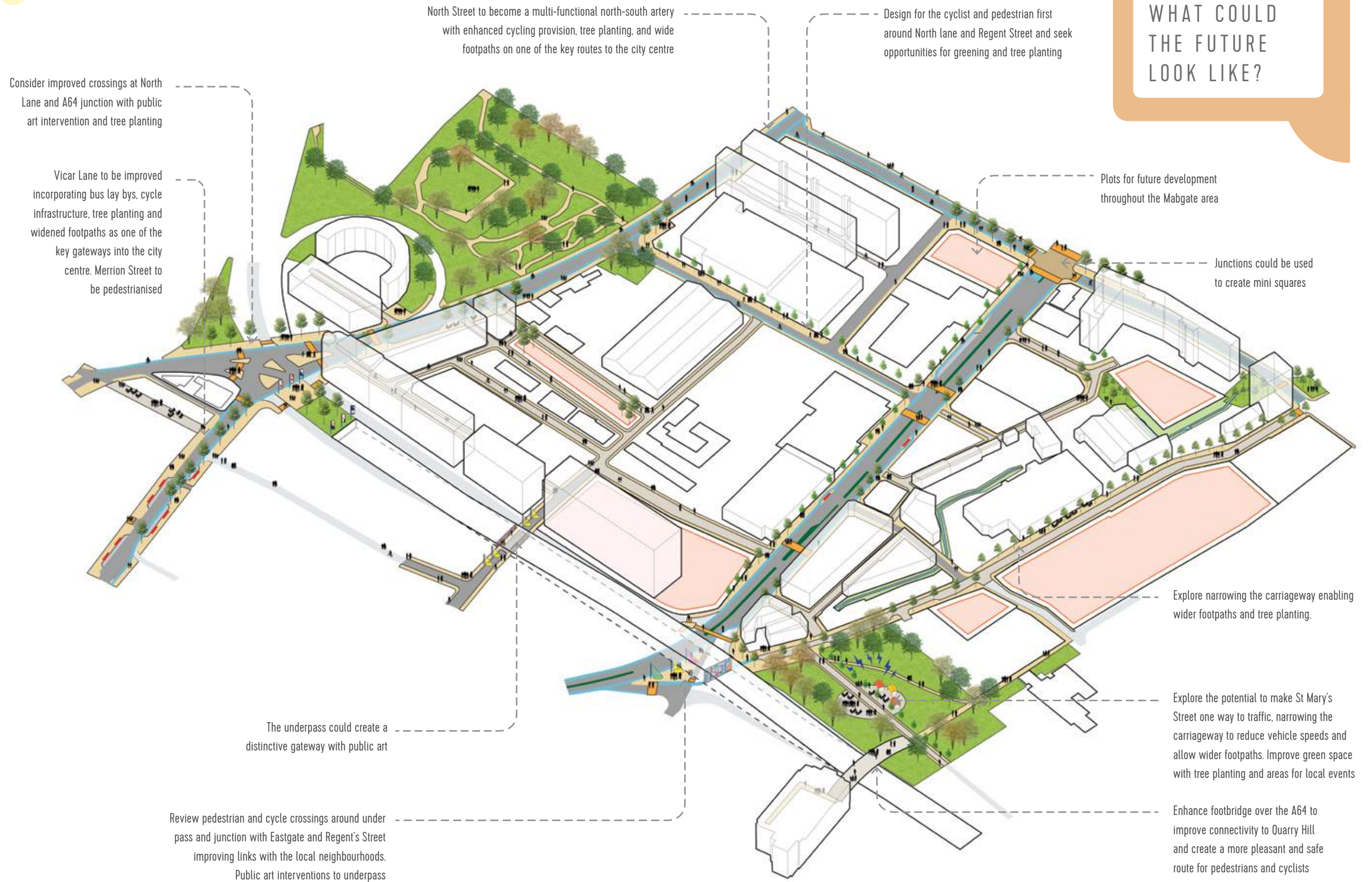
4 ARENA QUARTER

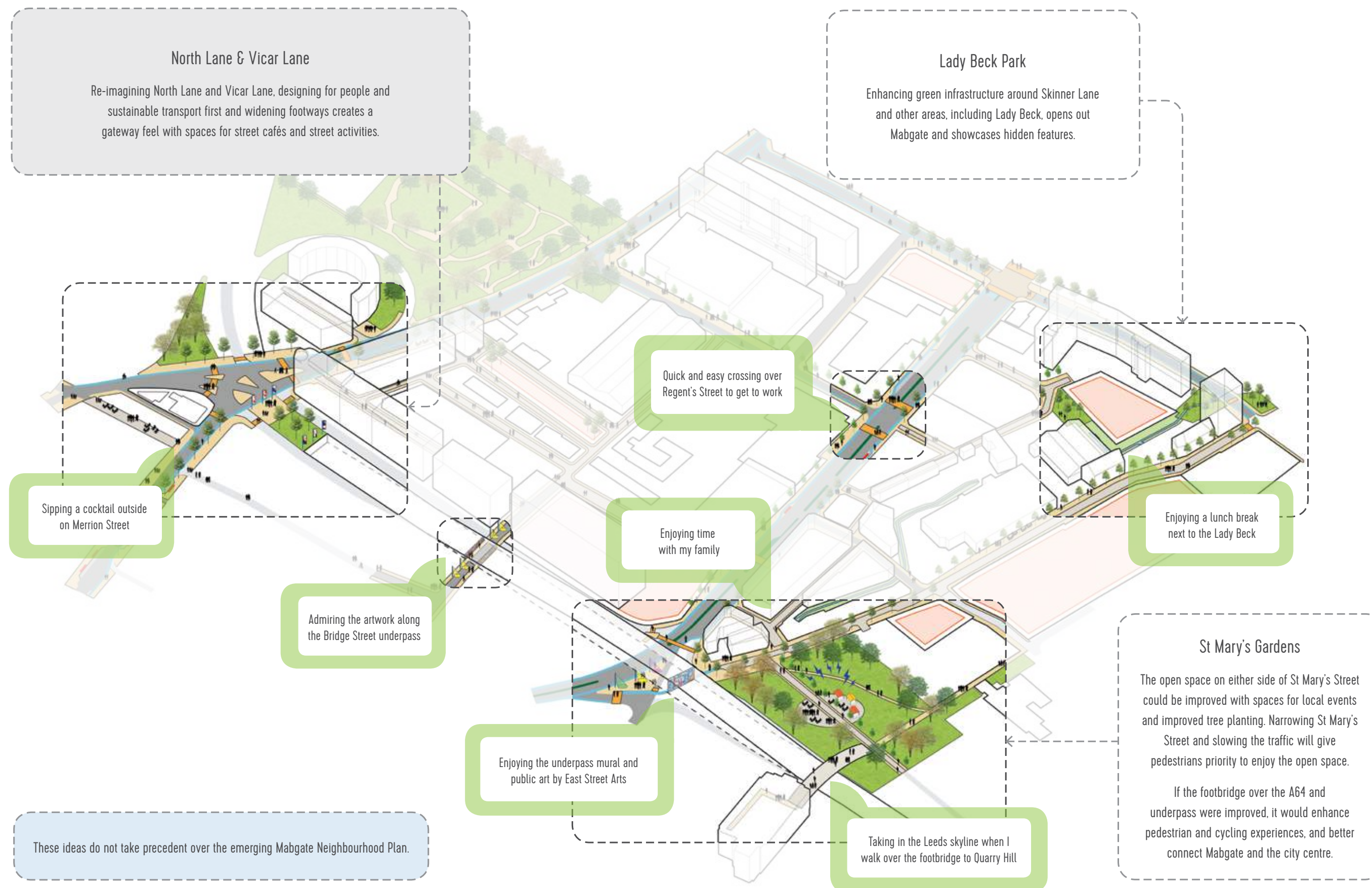




5 MABGATE

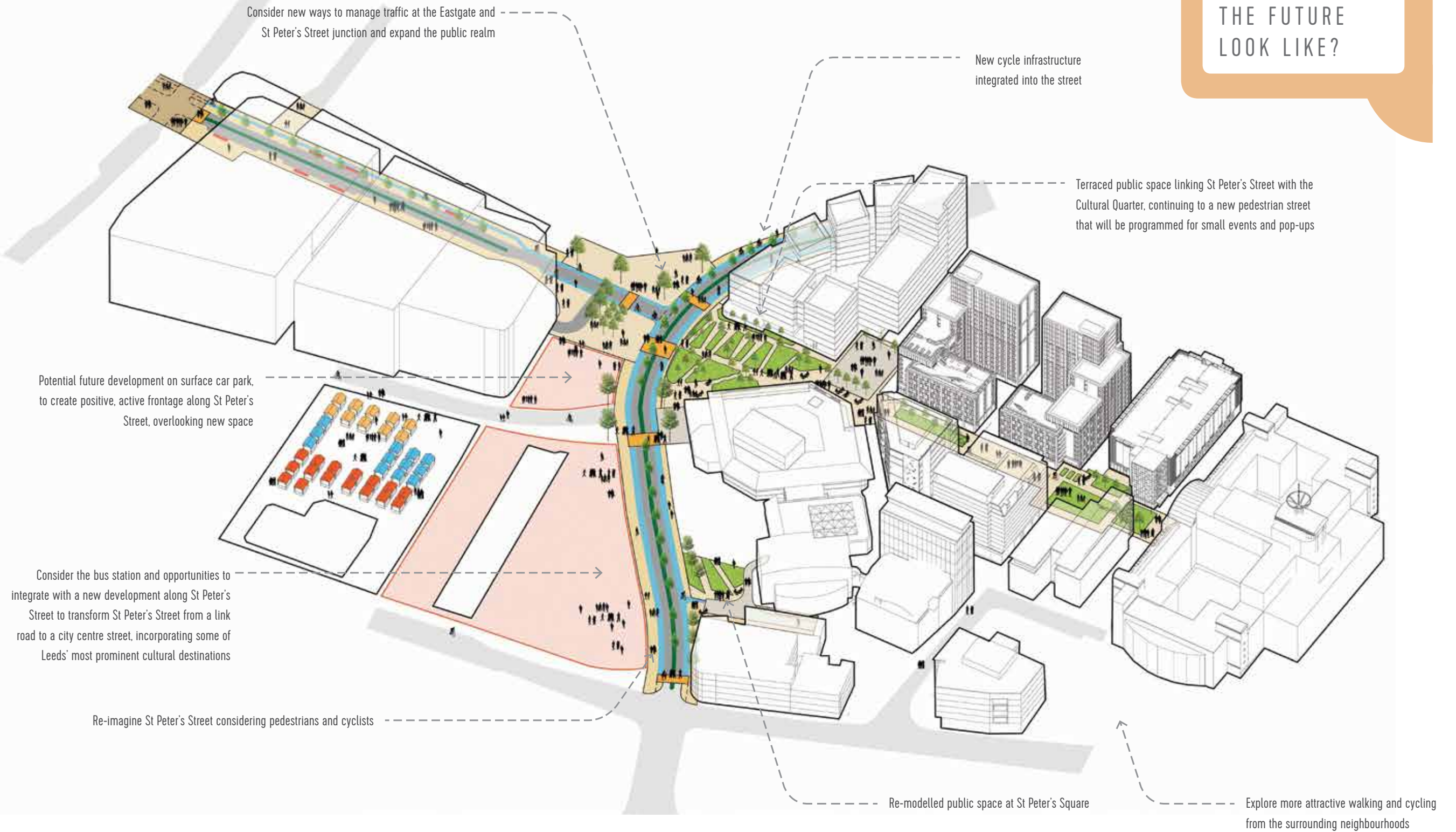
WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?





6 CULTURAL QUARTER

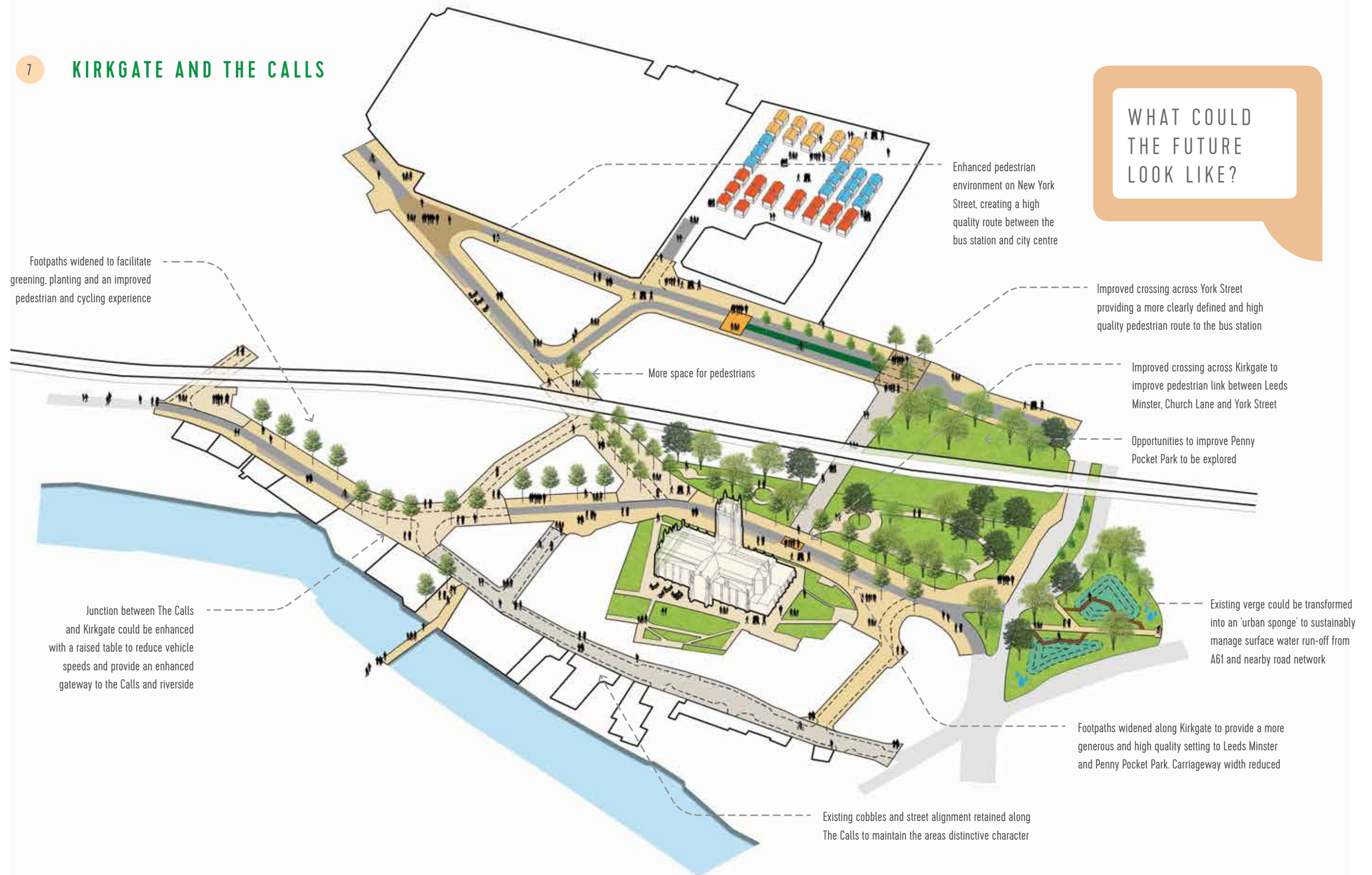
WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?





7 KIRKGATE AND THE CALLS

WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?





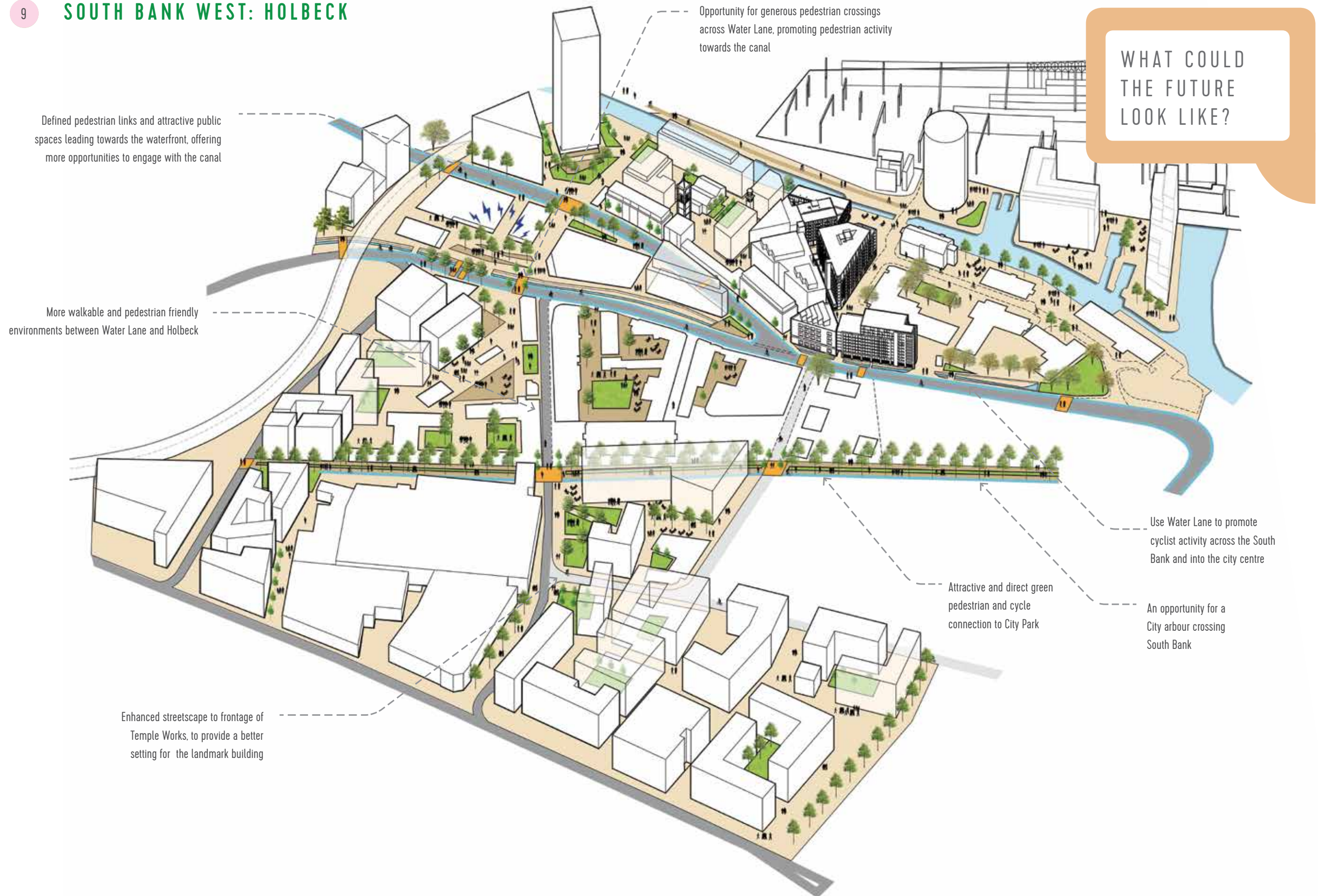
8 SOUTH BANK: CITY

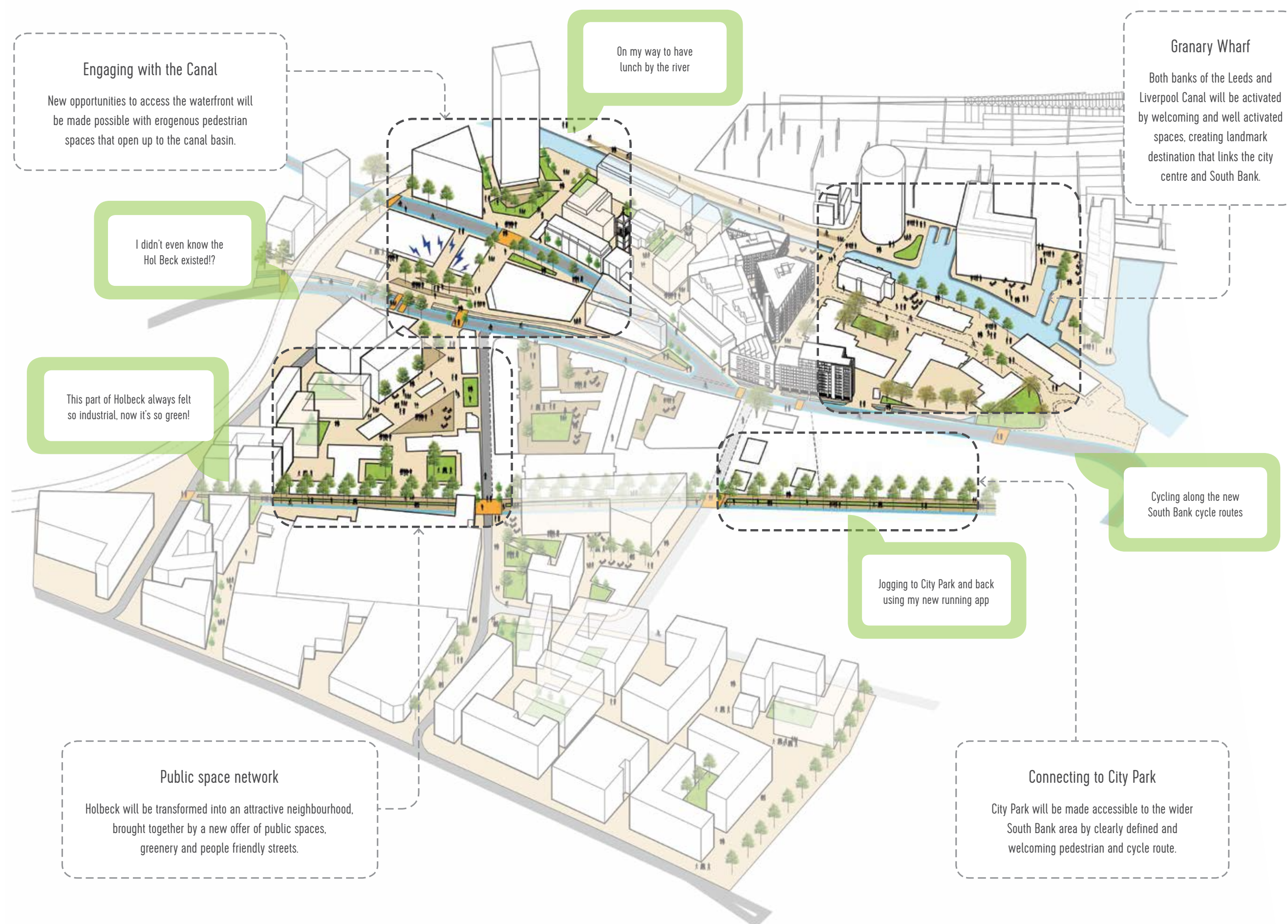
WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?





9 SOUTH BANK WEST: HOLBECK

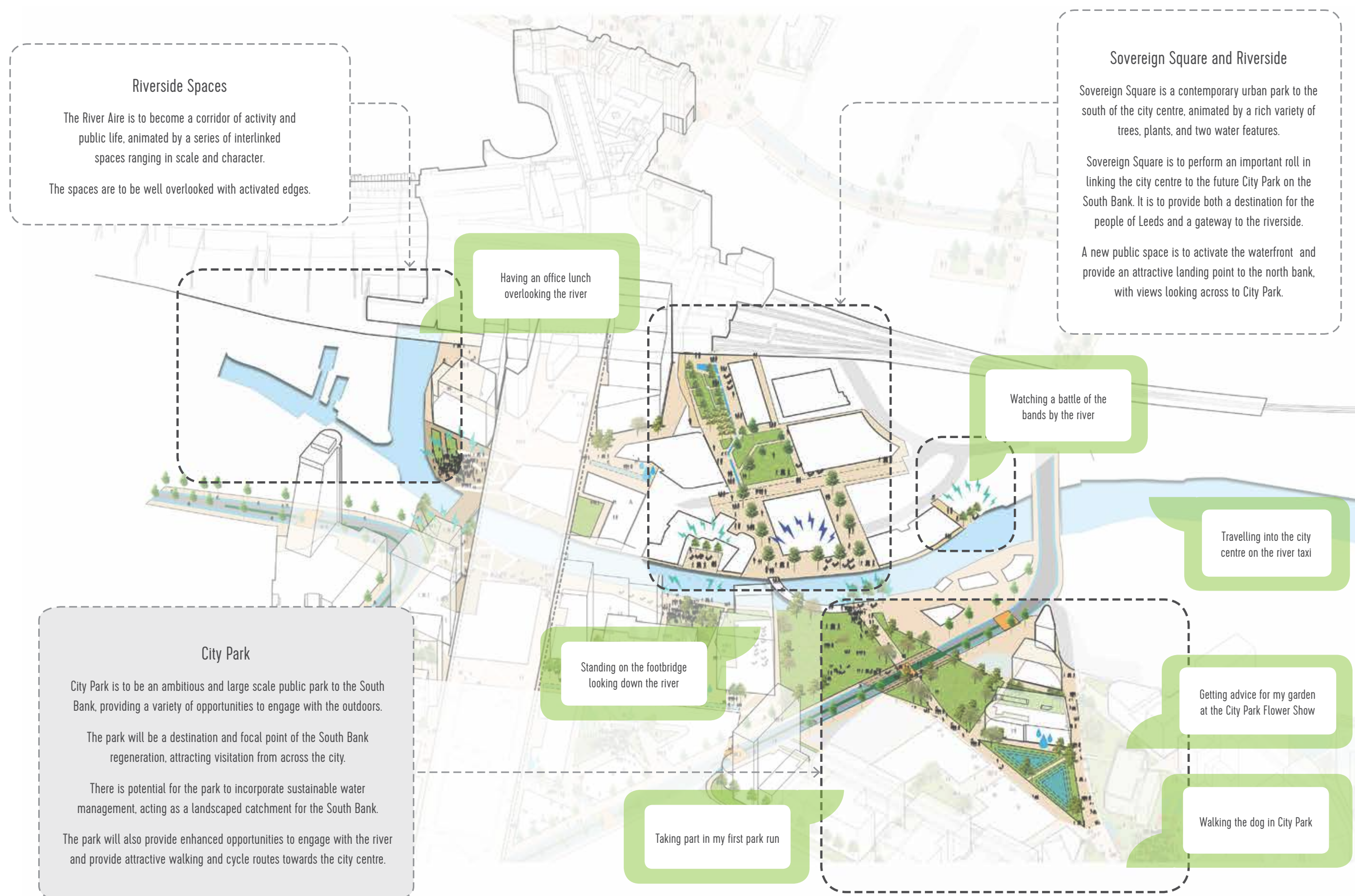




10 CITY RIVERSIDE

WHAT COULD
THE FUTURE
LOOK LIKE?





TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHEMES

4.9 DELIVERY PROGRAMME

This map captures developments currently in progress or existing funding streams.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND TRANSFORMATIONAL SCHEMES

- 1 City Square
- 2 Sovereign Square Footbridge
- 3 Meadow Lane
- 4 City Park
- 5 Quarry Hill
- 6 VG2
- 7 Belgrave Square
- 8 Merrion Way
- 9 Mabgate
- 10 Town Hall / Victoria Gardens
- 11 Innovation District
- 12 Lisbon Street
- 13 Monkbridge
- 14 CEG South Bank
- 15 Tower Works
- 16 Waterfront
- 17 Dandarra Site
- 18 Mustard Wharf
- 19 Evans Halshaw Site
- 20 Arbour – South Bank
- 21 Temple Works

LP TIP

- 22 The Headrow
- 23 Woodhouse Lane
- 24 Albion Street
- 25 New Briggate
- 26 Vicar Lane
- 27 Corn Exchange
- 28 Boar Lane
- 29 Infirmary Street

HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

- 30 Eastgate Roundabout
- 31 Regent Street
- 32 Quarry Hill Footbridge
- 33 East Street / Marsh Lane Public Realm
- 34 Hunslet Riverside
- 35 Granary Wharf Pedestrian Bridge
- 36 Globe Road / Canal Pedestrian Bridge
- 37 City Boulevard
- 38 South Bank City Streets
- 39 Waterfront Destination
- 40 Holbeck City Streets
- 41 Kirkstall Road / Wellington Street
- 42 Holts Crest Way Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge
- 43 Riverfront Public Realm Extension

— UDP City Centre Inset

Transformation Area



4.6 THE CITY TRANSFORMED

PUBLIC REALM

- 1 City Square
- 2 Sovereign Square Footbridge
- 3 Meadow Lane
- 4 City Park
- 5 Quarry Hill
- 6 V62
- 7 Belgrave Square
- 8 Merrion Way
- 9 Mabgate
- 10 Town Hall / Victoria Gardens
- 11 Innovation District
- 12 Lisbon Street
- 13 Monkbridge
- 14 CEG South Bank
- 15 Tower Works
- 16 Waterfront
- 17 Dandarra Site
- 18 Mustard Wharf
- 19 X One
- 20 Arbour – South Bank
- 21 Temple Works

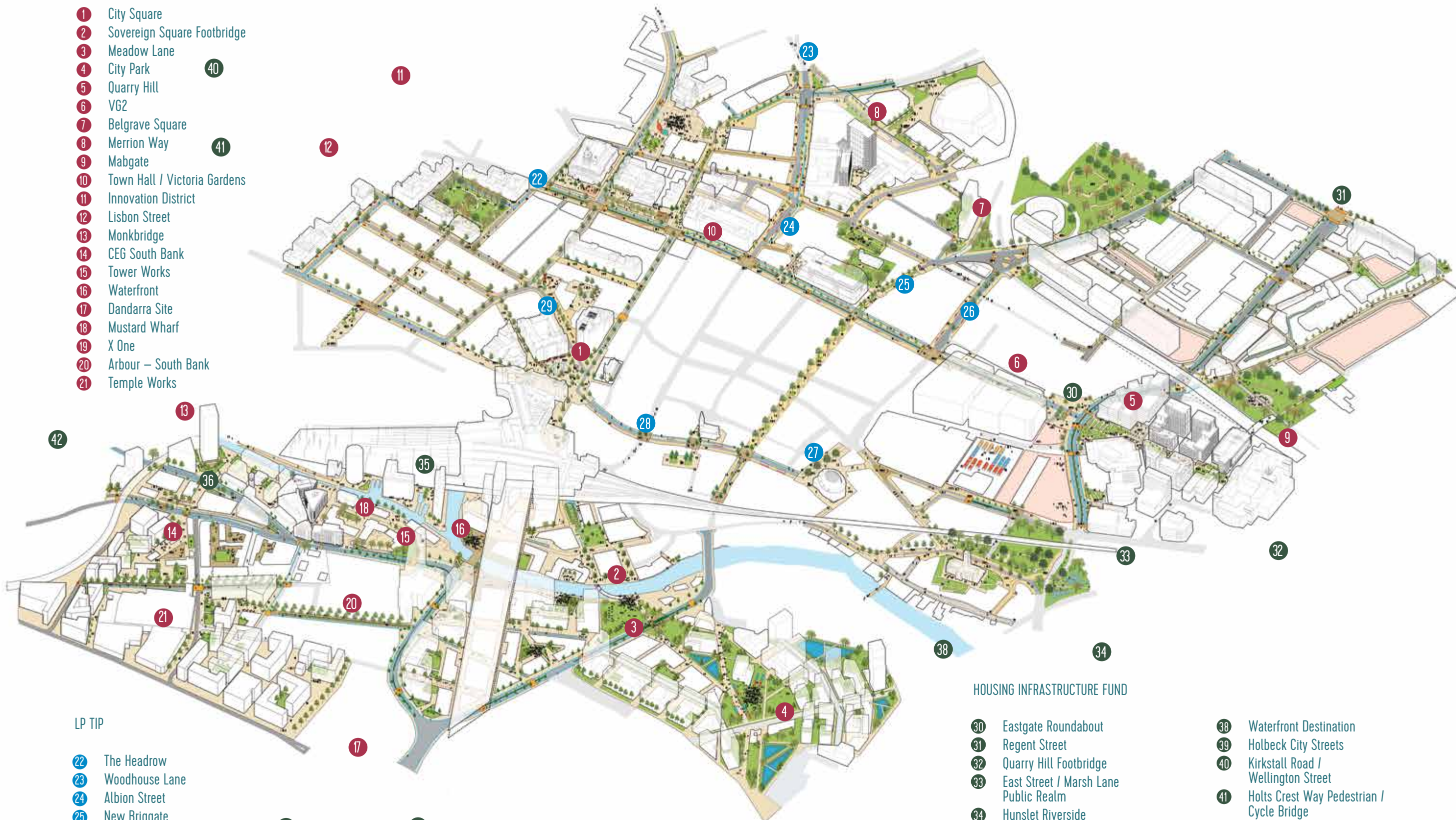
LP TIP

- 22 The Headrow
- 23 Woodhouse Lane
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- 37 South Bank City Streets

- 38 Waterfront Destination
- 39 Holbeck City Streets
- 40 Kirkstall Road / Wellington Street
- 41 Holts Crest Way Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge
- 42 Riverfront Public Realm Extension



4.7 HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS

ECONOMIC SENSE

Our spaces now :

- Showcase Leeds as a vibrant attractive city
- Are ready for 2023, a year of celebration
- Are positively supported by developers and businesses
- Attract visitors from all over the world



PEOPLE FIRST

Our spaces now :

- Offer welcoming opportunities to pause
- Have streets designed as public spaces
- Provide more seating
- Have less street clutter



THIS IS LEEDS

Our spaces now :

- Celebrate Leeds' heritage and identity
- Provide exceptional spaces around our landmark buildings
- Celebrate key city arrival points
- Engage more positively with the waterfront

BRING IT TO LIFE

Our spaces now :

- Are alive with events and activities that people participate in
- Offer a wide variety of uses from play, physical activity and temporary installations
- Have an active waterfront in the heart of the city centre
- Supported Child friendly Leeds activities



EVERYONE WELCOME

Our spaces now :

- Are legible, accessible and comfortable for all
- Integrate more playful elements and opportunities for physical activity
- Provide more opportunities to sit and rest
- Are more representative of the Leeds' diverse communities



GREENER FUTURE

Our spaces now :

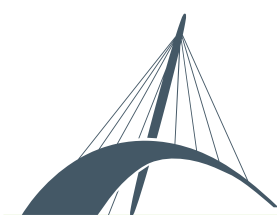
- Integrate planting into the streets and spaces to improve the city's micro climate
- Use urban sponges and rain gardens to manage surface water
- Embrace and attract nature
- Provide increased alternative transport modes such as cycling and walking



BETTER CONNECTED

Our spaces now :

- Permeate the River Aire, viaduct and road infrastructure with easier crossing points
- Reinforce local character
- Ensure a positive experience for people moving around the city
- Integrate cycle routes through spaces
- Offer greater pedestrian and cyclist priority



SOVEREIGN SQUARE FOOTBRIDGE

- New 4.5m wide pedestrian footbridge to be constructed over the River Aire between ASDA and 2 Sovereign House
- New and improved public realm will be created to improve the settings of the landing points



WOODHOUSE LANE

- Removal of general traffic reserving Blenheim Terrace for buses, access and cyclists
- Removal of one lane of highway between Clay Pit Lane and Albion Street
- Safer, more attractive environment with wider footways, improved pedestrian crossings and segregated cycle lanes
- New streetscape and public realm
- Street clutter reduced



CITY SQUARE

- To be redeveloped with significant reduction in traffic and highway infrastructure converted to public realm to create a new City Square that is larger than Trafalgar Square



THE HEADROW

- Increased footways
- Integrated cycling
- New public squares at Cookridge Street and New Briggate



CORN EXCHANGE

- Part of Call Lane closed to traffic in the evenings
- Public realm enhancements to significantly improve the setting around the spectacular Corn Exchange
- High quality bus stop facilities in keeping with the Corn Exchange setting
- Access for cars reduced through footway widening and removal of on street parking
- Highway infrastructure converted to public realm



TOWN HALL/ VICTORIA GARDENS

- Footways widened creating opportunities to increase public realm and provide greening
- Improved pedestrian crossing points to provide safer access to exceptional cultural offers in the Town Hall and Art Gallery
- Create a new public square to enhance the setting of world class heritage assets at the southern end of Cookridge Street



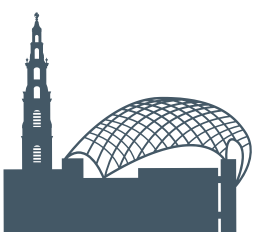
NEW BRIGGATE

- Bus services relocated to Vicar Lane and vehicles removed up to Harrison Street
- New pedestrian square created linking Briggate to New Briggate
- Enhanced pedestrian crossing between Briggate and New Briggate
- Settings of Grand Theatre and St John's Churchyard to be significantly enhanced
- Potential for larger café/bar external seating areas



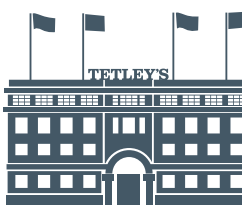
MERRION WAY

- Merrion Way narrowed to one lane at the western end and two way at the eastern end
- New square introduced at the crossing between the Merrion Centre and the arena
- Increased opportunities for new public realm and public art



VICAR LANE

- Highway infrastructure will be reduced to two lanes only with two way traffic
- Improved cycling
- Increased space for pedestrians and public realm



CITY PARK

- Meadow Lane to be downgraded, and highway infrastructure converted to new public realm which will connect seamlessly to City Park being brought forward by Vastint to provide an area of almost 4 hectares
- Cycleways and improved pedestrian crossings between Sovereign Square footbridge and City Park



INFIRMARY STREET

- Reduced to two lanes for buses and taxis and to be two way
- Bus stop infrastructure reduced to increase connectivity and legibility
- Highway infrastructure released and transformed into new public realm
- Improved connections made through Toronto Street
- Enhanced linkages to City Square



QUARRY HILL

- Improved greenspace to be delivered by 2019 between the Leeds Playhouse and City College
- New tree and shrub planting and tiered access to improve accessibility
- Potential for the integration of public art

4.8 WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

The development of the Our Spaces Strategy is a landmark moment for the city. Yet the absence of a strategy that paves the way for the development of key public realm intervention has not been a hindrance. We inherently understand the importance and value of high quality spaces to the people and success of the city.

Following the delivery of the new greenspace at Sovereign Square, a number of public realm schemes have been developed that are now either on site or in design.

These include:

1. **Quarry Hill, Gateway Court** – on site, due for completion September 2019
2. **Clay Pit Lane** – on site, due for completion end 2018
3. **Queen Square** – a new family friendly space
4. **Merrion Way** – narrowing of Merrion Way to increase public realm offer for 2021
5. **Sovereign Square footbridge** – construction 2019
6. **Meadow Lane** – Leeds City Council's contribution to City Park, design ongoing but potential delivery for 2021
7. **New Briggate** – closure of part of New Briggate to create new space by 2021



1 Gateway Court



2 Clay Pit Lane



3 Queen Square





05

ANIMATING OUR SPACES

DRAFT

5.1 TACTICAL URBANISM

Tactical urbanism will contribute to making Leeds city centre more vibrant. The animation of public realm or Tactical Urbanism is defined as the 'deliberate', usually temporary employment of festivals, events, art installations, programmed activities or pop-up leisure activities to transform, enliven and alter public spaces and stage public life.

Leeds city centre contains a variety of public parks, squares and outdoor seating opportunities. In addition there are other spaces such as streets, the waterfront, abandoned buildings and roundabouts which can play just as important a role in the animation and identity of a city. Over the last few years Leeds has explored the potential for all 'space in between buildings' to be considered in the development of a city centre wide programme of tactical and temporary animation.

In 2016 we brought forward temporary road closures at Cookridge Street to enable the opening of our first pop-up park, and at Greek Street to provide a new city centre night time destination for socialising. These interventions have proved successful and have become part of the annual temporary public realm works programme and proposals are currently being developed to deliver these as permanent changes.

Our activity programme is not limited to pop-up parks however. In 2017 in partnership with DLA and Playbox we held 'Park Here and Play', transforming Victoria Gardens in front of Leeds Art Gallery into a pop-up pavilion with sociable and playful spaces enclosed by brightly coloured Lego like blocks and structures. The space created a family friendly and fun environment in the heart of Leeds for children and families.

Such was the success of this event (over 4,800 visitors over the two weeks) that it was held again in 2018 and the number of visitors was equally as high this summer.



5.2 WHY USE TACTICAL INTERVENTIONS?

The use of tactical interventions is a fast pace, low cost way of creating moments filled with surprise, awe, fun and inspiration. It creates positive activity and vitality and provides meaning and value, enriching people's emotions and engagement.

There are many ways we can enrich and enliven our existing spaces such as art installations, street furniture, pop-up spaces, musical performances, exercise classes, etc. As part of the ongoing development of the Our Spaces Strategy, we will be further exploring opportunities to bring more of these interventions forward.



5.3 CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE

Leeds has set a bold new vision for public space to become its greatest cultural asset, embedding culture into streets, parks and urban space. The city will be unapologetic in its appreciation for art and culture, setting it apart as a destination where local and global artists, directors, makers and creators come to collaborate, building an international reputation which attracts future investment and ensures that the communities of the city have a civic sense of pride and ownership in our urban environment.

Leeds seeks to embrace the value of cultural and public life through its Culture Strategy for 2017-2030. This sets a broad definition of culture and challenges people to think beyond the traditional confines of what is perceived to be cultural; embracing art, performance, music, food, sport, architecture, language, design and identity and reflecting it throughout public spaces.

Through the creation of the new spaces outlined in this strategy and the re-imagining of existing public space, Leeds will employ a range of temporary, tactical, pop-up, and permanent solutions to embed culture across the diverse ecology of spaces.

To help shape and guide how public areas are animated by culture, a series of Cultural Standards have been developed. A summary of the five Cultural Standards is below.

- 1 Playful and Permissive:** Leeds is to become a child-friendly city, welcoming children and young people into the city centre and its public spaces. This is to be achieved through offering engaging and exciting streets and spaces that can be enjoyed with carers, parents and grandparents, creating welcoming and enjoyable intergenerational experiences.
- 2 Collaborative and Curious:** In commissioning events, festivals and art works, Leeds will promote collaboration, bringing together different worlds and creative practices to create unique experiences. The city's communities will be at the heart of programming; involving, engaging and representing our people in our spaces.
- 3 Experimentation and Expression:** Public space will be used to bring together technology, art, science and culture, creating opportunities for

the city and its people to decide whether or not a gallery can be in the open air, or whether bandstands and quiet corners can become the scene of world class theatre.

- 4 Local and Global:** As Leeds expands, there is a unique opportunity to reconnect communities through the spaces, streets, avenues and squares of the city. Having created world class cultural events and festivals from comics and food to film and art, Leeds has the chance to create a public realm that is a fitting platform for both local and international talent and creativity.
- 5 Excellence of Experience:** A show is only as good as its stage and Leeds intends to ensure that public space becomes the greatest stage in the city, offering small moments of joy and delight alongside large scale spectacle.



5.4 KEY EVENTS

One of the most unique ways that the city embraces tactical urbanism is Light Night – our annual free multi-arts and light festival which takes over Leeds city centre on two nights in early October. The city comes alive with an exciting programme of spectacular projections, interactive installations, exhibitions, dance, music and street performances. As darkness falls the city is seen in a new light. There are over 60 events over the two nights and the event regularly has over 60,000 visitors.



5.5 ART IN OUR SPACES

Historically, Leeds has embraced formal artistic commissions for remembrance or celebration of people in the form of statues, such as the Black Prince in City Square, the Arthur Aron Statue at Eastgate Roundabout and the Barrel Man at Dortmund Square.

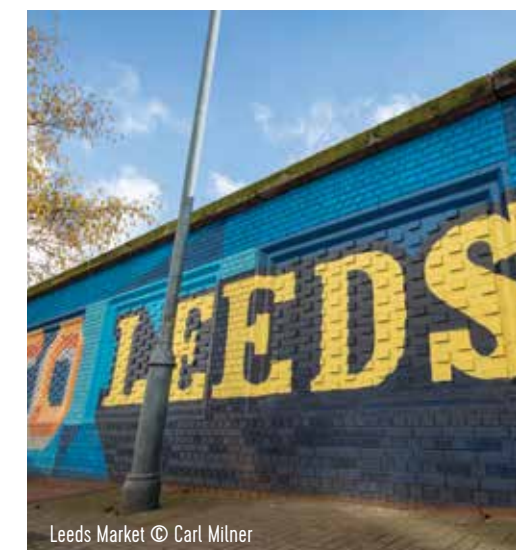
More recently, recognition that public art adds a sense of vibrancy, fun and intrigue to public spaces depending on the type of artistic approach taken, has led to a much broader approach to public art being taken by the council and partners including Leeds BID and University of Leeds. This approach has seen the temporary installation of artwork in empty shop frontages and buildings, the LEEDS sign and SPIRIT in Leeds Station.

Leeds BID in partnership with East Street Art developed the 'A City Less Grey' project with a series of commissions being delivered on hoardings at Sovereign Square, Athena Rising on the recently completed Platform. Leeds City Council has brought forward commissions including art in empty units and the Bishopgate Steps.

Public art is an essential ingredient for the city to consider as a part of the Our Spaces Strategy. As part of the wider approach to the animation of public realm, we can incorporate art in its widest sense at the earliest opportunity as schemes are developed and as concepts for the spaces emerge.



Bishopgate Street steps



Leeds Market © Carl Milner



Spirit, Leeds Station © Tom Joy



Leeds Station © Carl Milner



Empty shop frontage artwork Harper Street



Athena Rising and Sovereign Square 'A City Less Grey'

5.6 CHILD FRIENDLY LEEDS

Leeds has an ambition to be a Child Friendly City. Putting children and young people at the heart of a strong economy in a compassionate city is an essential element of the Our Spaces Strategy.

From a city centre perspective, the 'Child Friendly' offer to children and young people has been historically poor, with little in the way of fixed play, free family friendly activities of children's entertainment.

Through a citywide competition (open to 4-18 year olds) Child Friendly Leeds identified a number of projects which were delivered in the city centre. From this has grown a programme of free child friendly events across the school holidays.

The competitions projects included:

- A Harry Potter workshop hosted by the Leeds Library service
- A 'roller' disco at Kirkgate Market
- Indoor playhouse sessions in the St John's Centre
- The development of the 'Snapp App' @snappleeds an interactive picture taking activity in the city centre
- The Mister Tumble festival held in Millennium Square in August 2018
- Pop-up parks across the city centre including Cookridge Street, Town Hall, Victoria Gardens and Briggate
- The 2nd hand park held at the Cookridge Street Pop-Up organised by SCRAP
- CBeebies live

With summer activities and events such as the City Beach at Millennium Square, New Briggate pop-up play zone, the Ice Rink, Light Night, child friendly Sundays and the Child friendly Leeds city centre map there are many more family and children focussed activities in the city centre. Using the Our Spaces Strategy alongside the Child Friendly Leeds ambition, we are exploring other ideas for parks and play spaces around the city centre which we hope to be delivering over the next two years.

In recognising the significant amount of housing growth being planned over the next five to ten years, provision for children, young people and families will be an essential requirement and the Our Spaces Strategy is the perfect tool through which the Child Friendly ambition will be further explored.



© Playful Anywhere



Victoria Gardens © Nat Walton DLA Design



© Playful Anywhere



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06

CONCLUSION

6.0 CONCLUSION

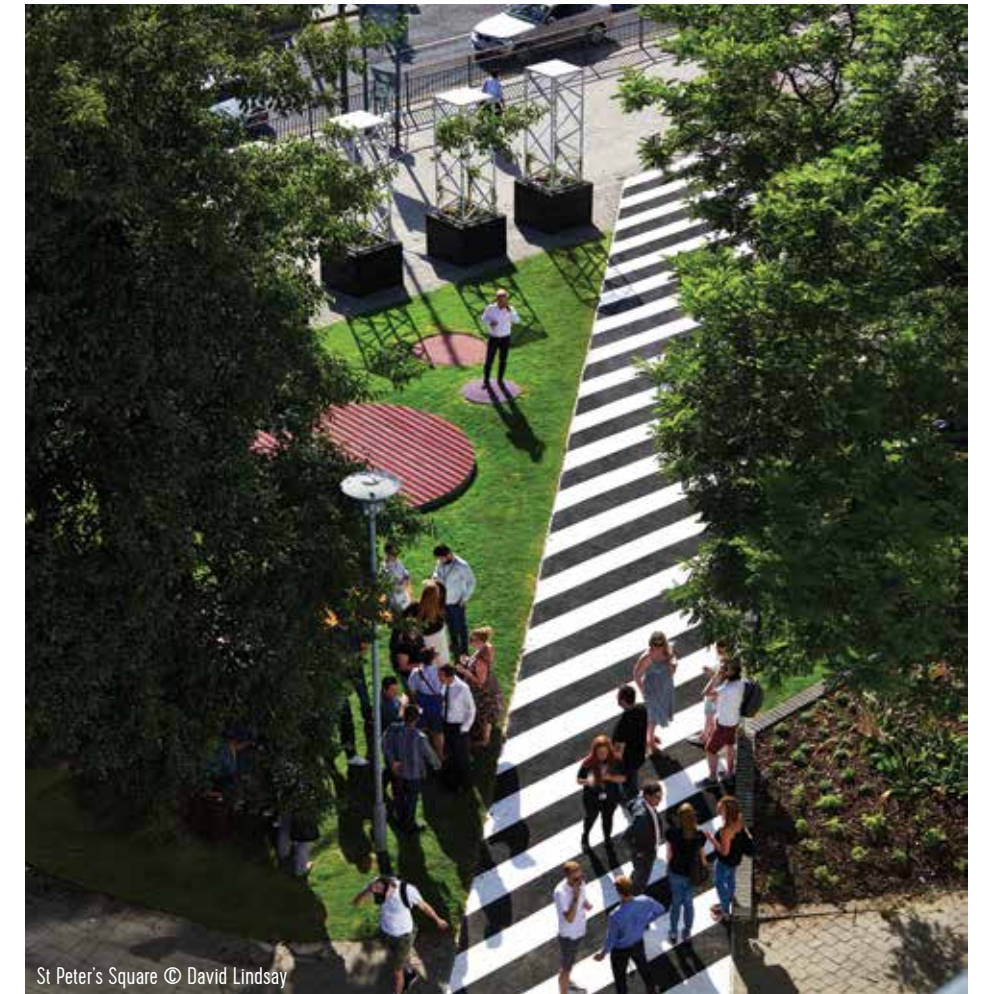
Leeds is in an exciting position. It is a thriving city with a strong and proud heritage, but it is also a city that will develop dramatically over the next fifteen years.

Significant growth is planned across the city, with the redevelopment of the city's train station, introduction of High Speed Rail and redevelopment of South Bank alongside many other major sites. The Our Spaces Strategy creates an overarching vision for Leeds' streets and spaces and sets out the role they will play in the future of the city. It considers the diverse areas around the city centre, including South Bank and the River Aire, as important and interlinked contributors in making Leeds an enjoyable and enticing place to live, work and visit.

The overarching principles will guide public-sector investment over the next five to ten years and provide a framework within which private-sector investment can flourish. The strategy seeks to inspire people, provide a forum for discussion and change the way public space and highways are designed. Leeds' public realm will be inclusive, hospitable, engaging and sustainable. Streets and spaces will be designed for people, enabling a greater range of activities and create environments where they choose to stay for longer. Leeds' public realm will celebrate the city's built and natural assets and become a place where culture – from big events to every day street culture – can happen.



Monkbridge



St Peter's Square © David Lindsay



Belgrave Square



Woodhouse Lane

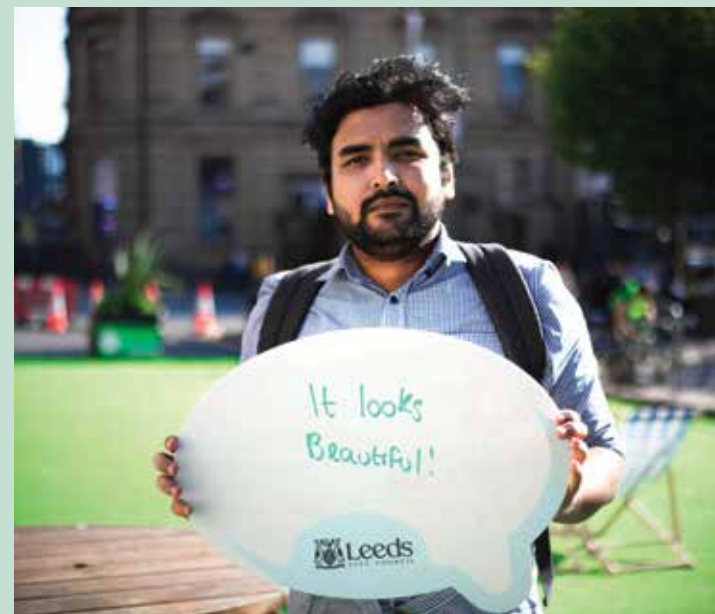
HAVE YOUR SAY

The socially conscious approach to public space within the Our Spaces Strategy will enable key aspirations relating to inclusivity, accessibility and culture to be more comprehensively realised in the future and tailored to the people of Leeds.

Please join the conversation around this draft strategy from the 27th November 2018 at www.leedsourspaces.co.uk until mid-February 2019. The final strategy will be available later in 2019.



© Richard Wilson Photography



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project is a collaboration between:



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LEEDS
OUR SPACES