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York Street Interchange

Placemaking & Active Travel Review

Annex D – Placemaking Appendices

October 2022

York Street Interchange

Placemaking Review Appendices

Department for Infrastructure

October 2022

Quality information

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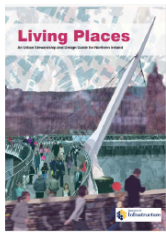
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Appendix A Policy Documents & Summaries

Overall key placemaking objectives and aspirations:

-  Remove severances and improve connectivity and accessibility.
-  Improve the quality and attractiveness of the built environment.
-  Encourage a mix of uses and activities.
-  Encourage active and sustainable travel.
-  Celebrate local heritage.
-  Use greenery to deliver health, biodiversity, and climate adaptation benefits.
-  Foster inclusiveness in economic growth, the design of public spaces, and decision-making.

National



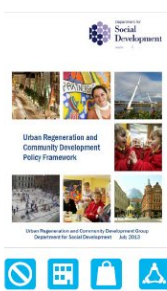
What is 'Placemaking'?

Creating somewhere with a distinct identity through urban design:
 The collaborative and multi-disciplinary process of shaping the physical setting for life in cities, towns and villages.

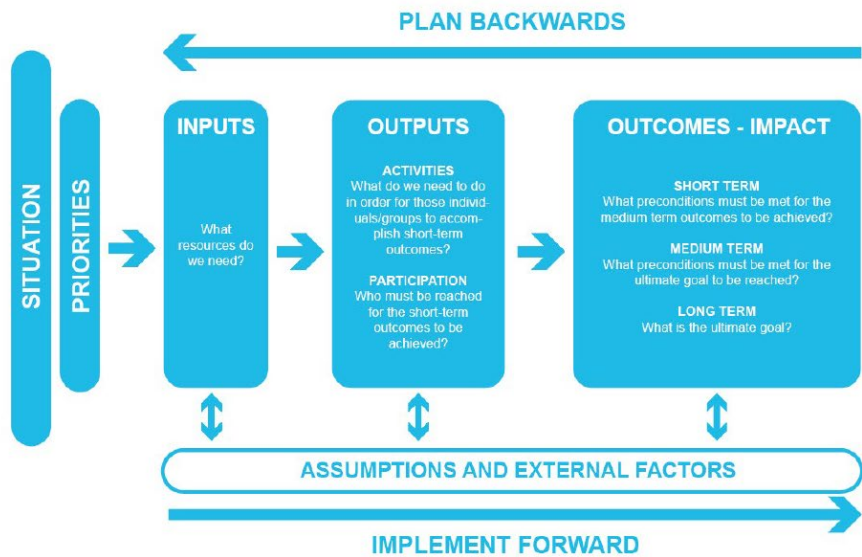
10 primary ingredients for good placemaking:

Vision	Clarity of purpose and direction	Hospitable	Welcoming, safe and healthy
Collaborative	Shared in use, management & planning	Vibrant & diverse	Alive with centralised activity
Contextual	Reinforcing sense of place	Crafted	Of excellent design quality and aesthetics
Responsible	Resource efficient, minimising impact	Viable	Functional, flexible and lasting
Accessible	Easy to access for all users	Enduring	Continued understanding and interpretation

National

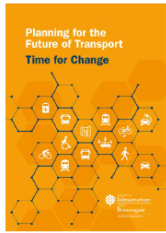


Outcome-focused approach to placemaking (The Logic Model tool):



National

Key actions for placemaking:



Carbon reduction

Using existing policy tools and emerging technology



Proactive planning and design

Taking direct steps towards desired outcomes



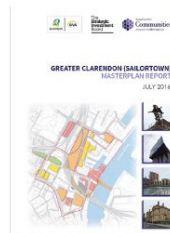
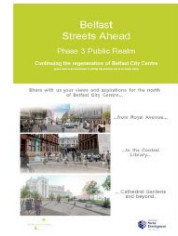
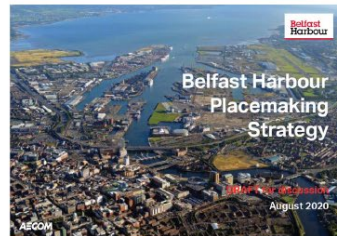
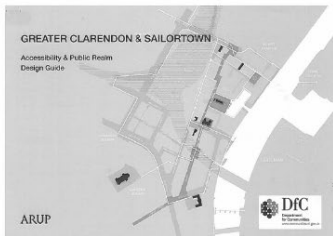
Integrate land use and transport planning

Securing short, medium and longer term changes if we start now

Citywide

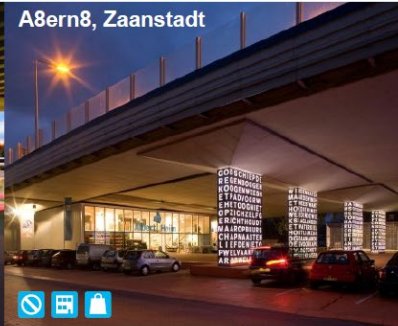


Local plans and strategies



Appendix B Best Practice Precedents

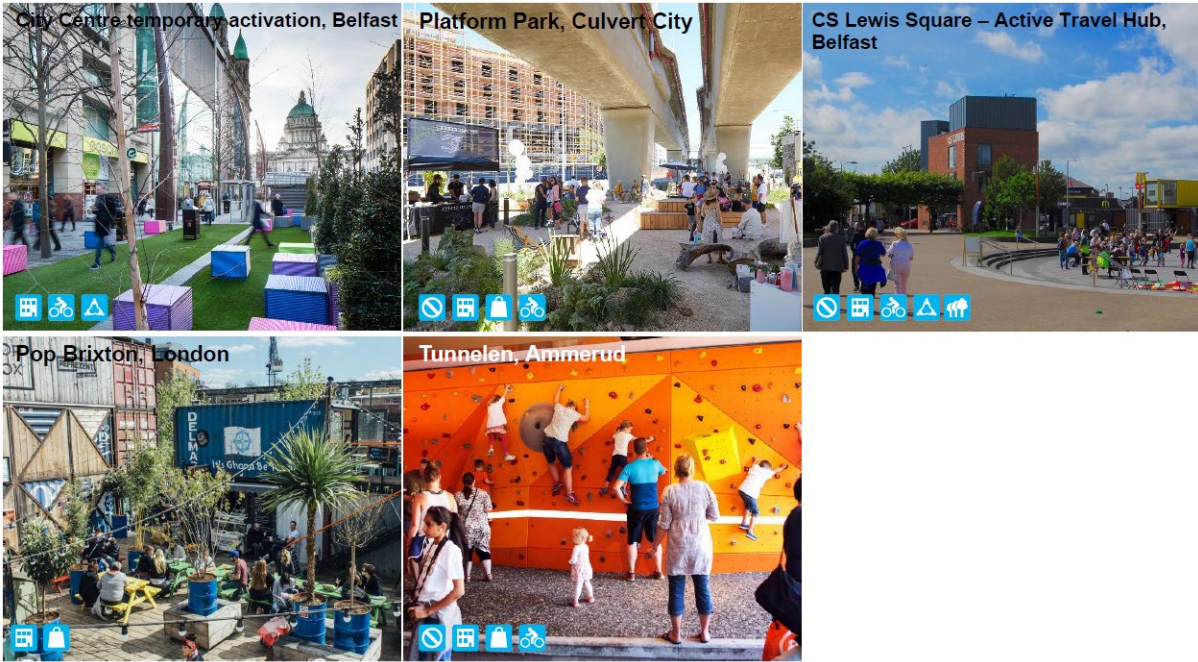
B.1 Spaces Under Elevated Infrastructure



B.2 Overcoming Severances



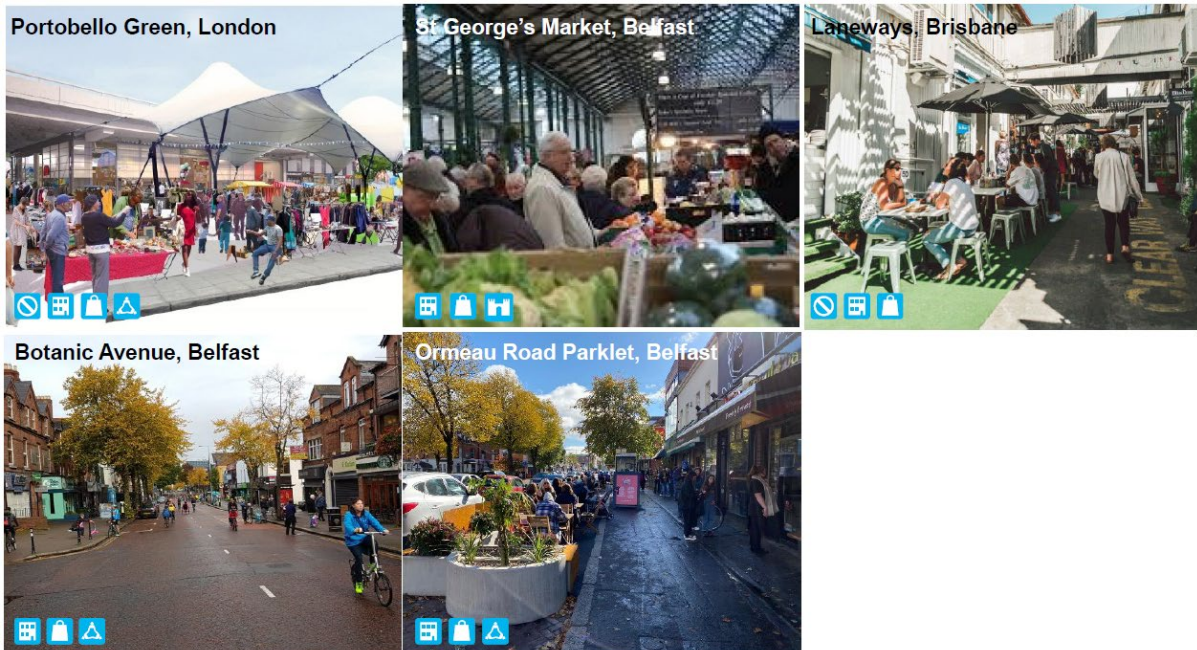
B.3 Activation of Spaces



B.4 Urban Greening



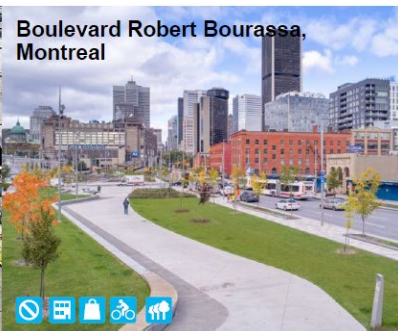
B.5 Creating Vibrant Neighborhoods



B.6 Decking Over Strategic Highways

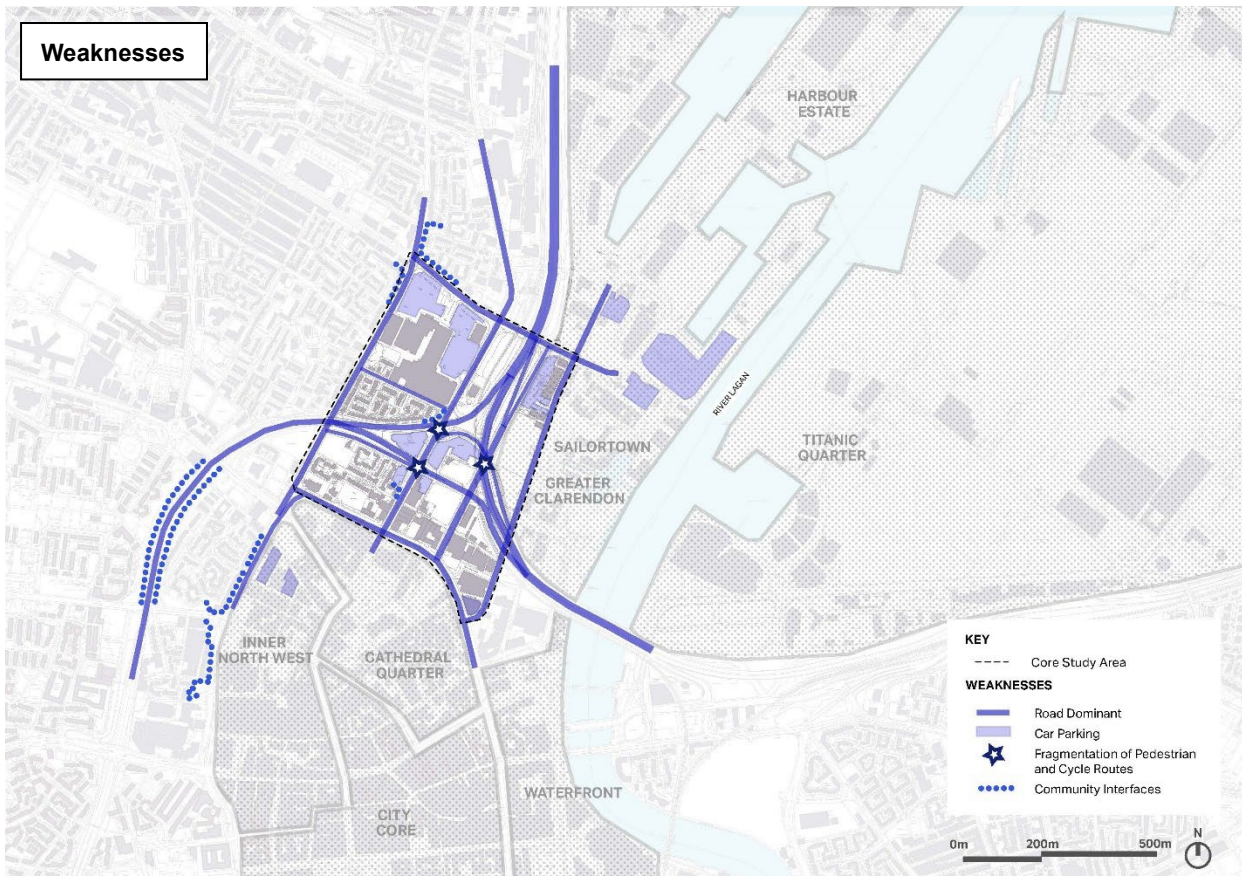
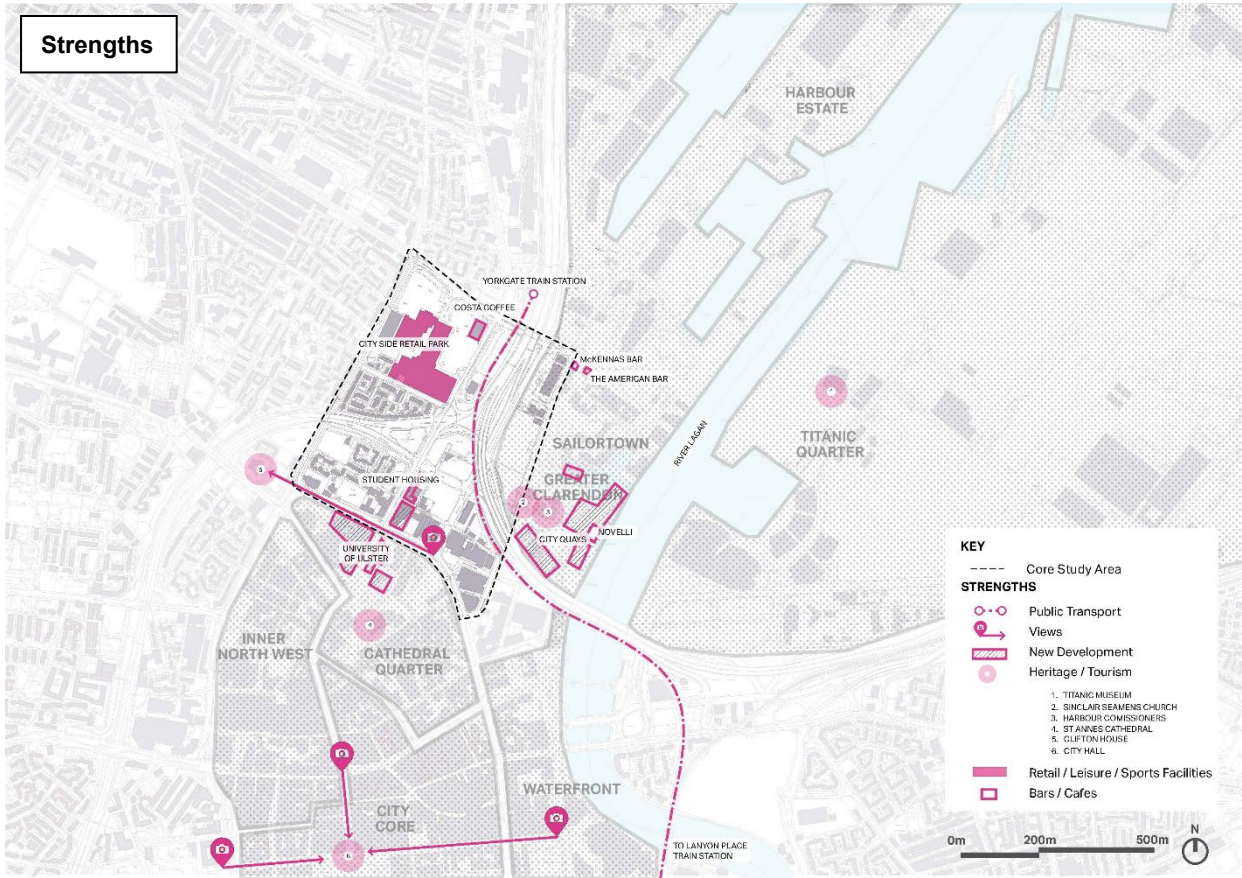


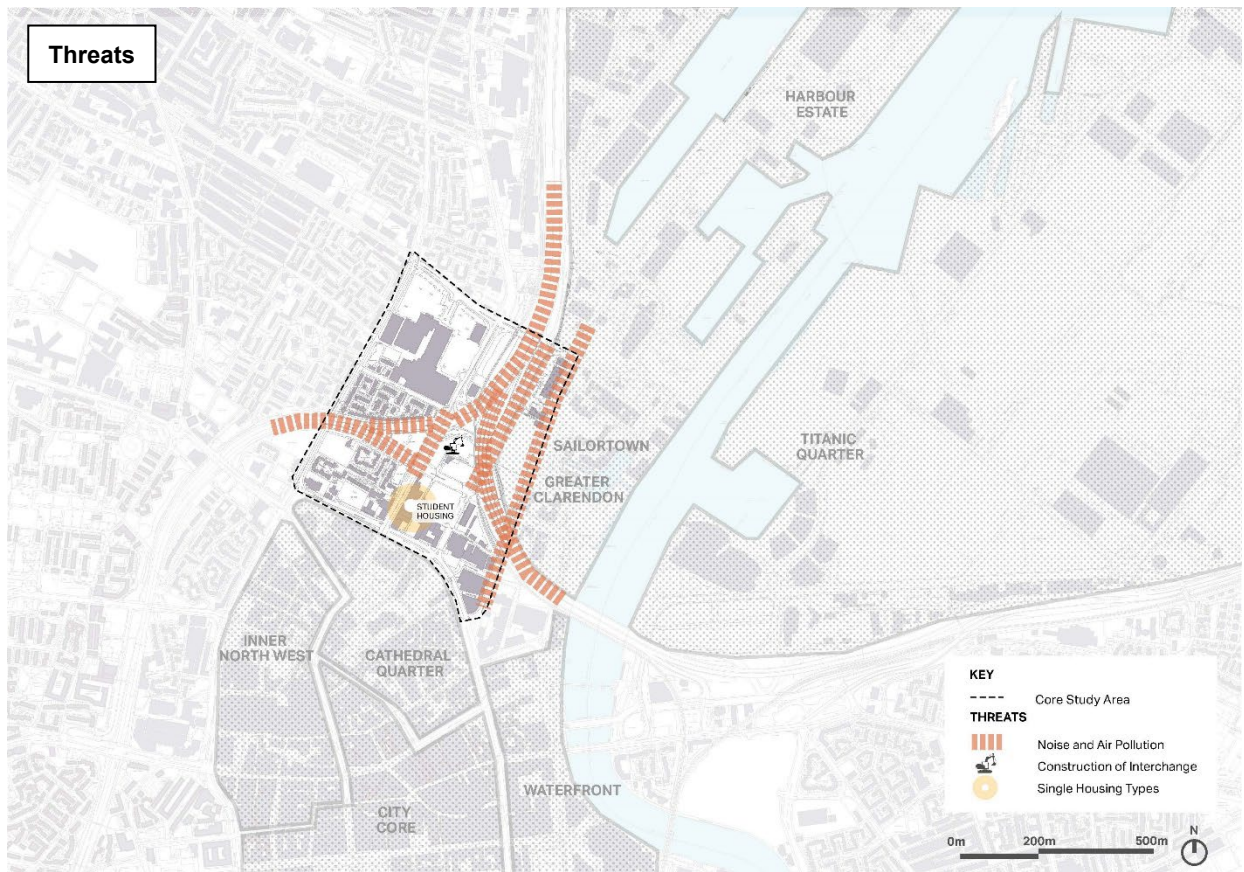
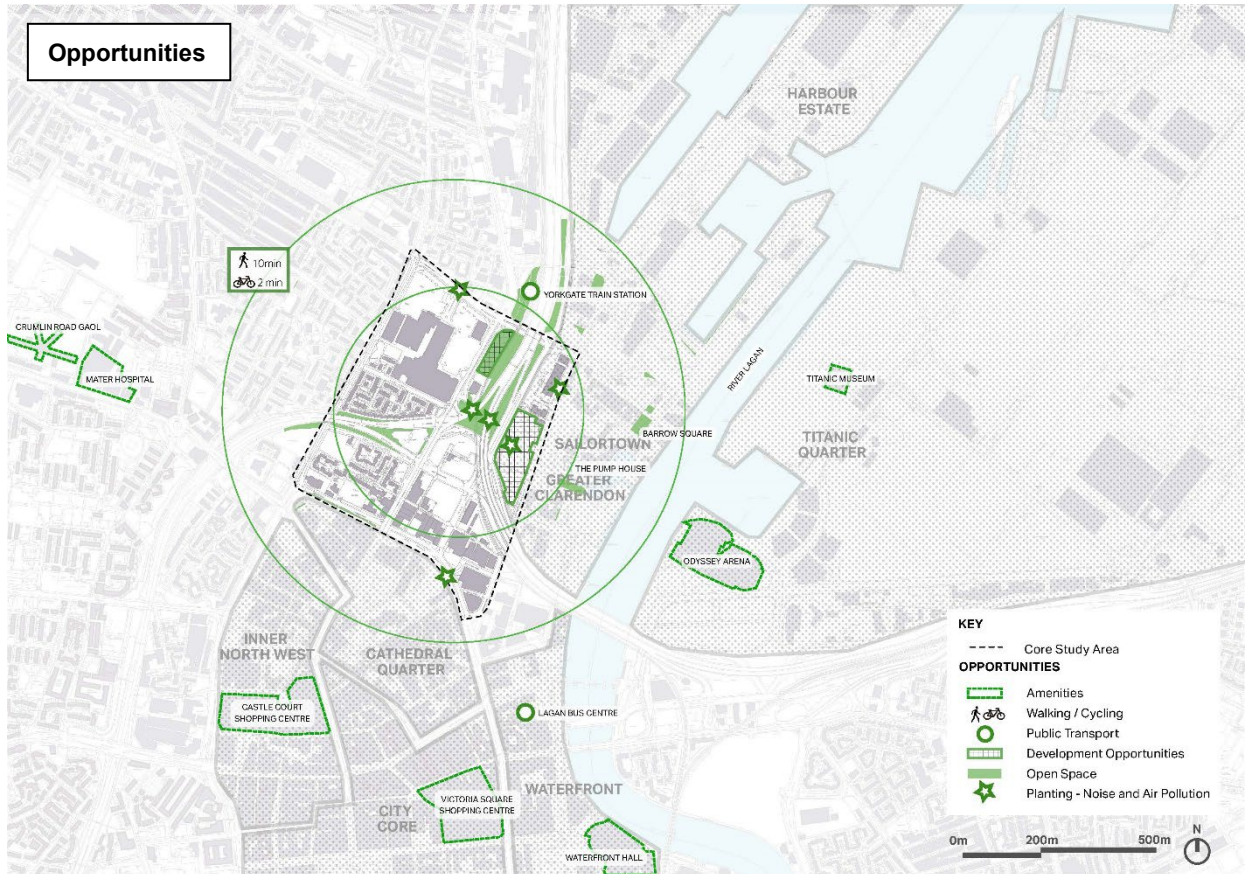
B.7 Reallocation of Road Space



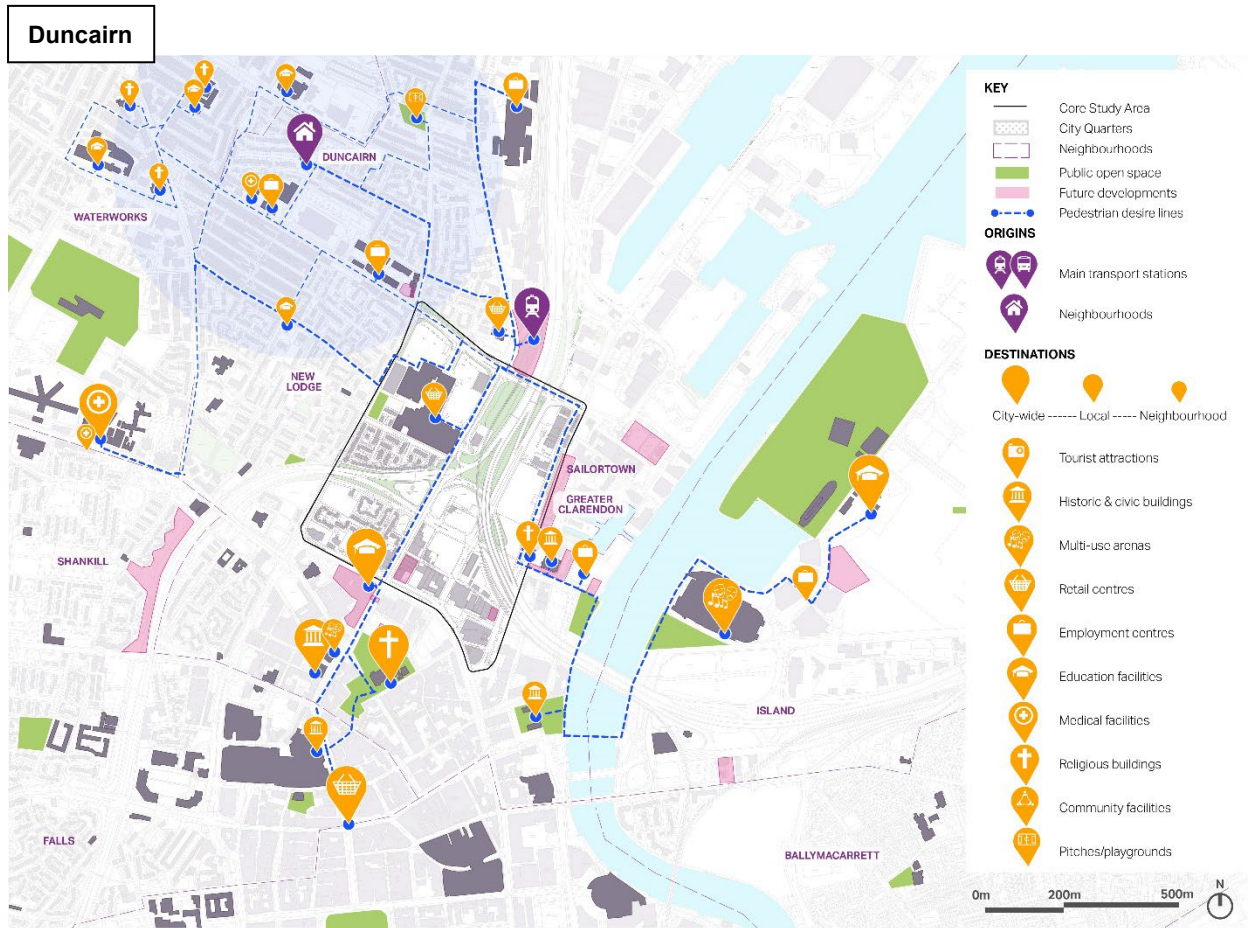
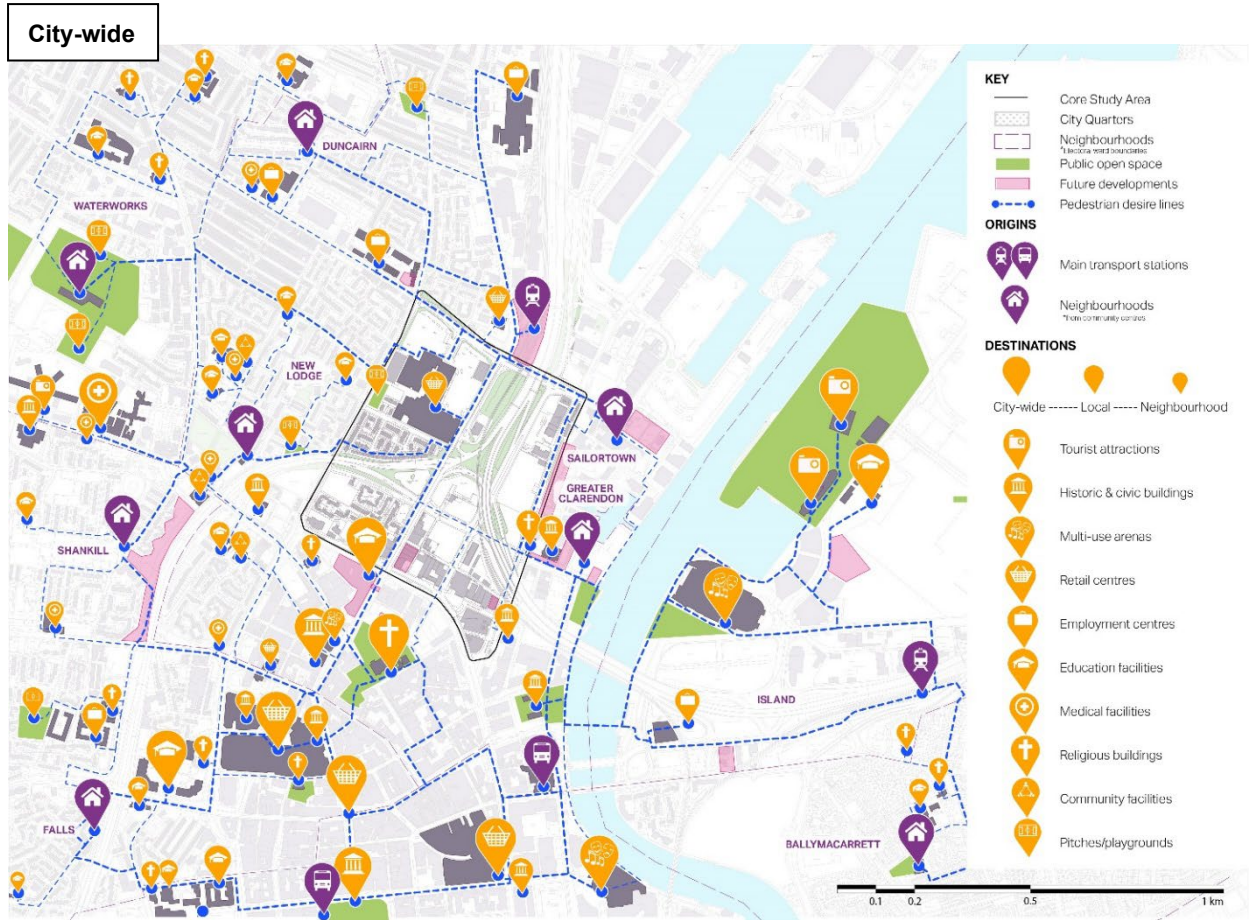
Appendix C Spatial Analysis

C.1 SWOT Analysis

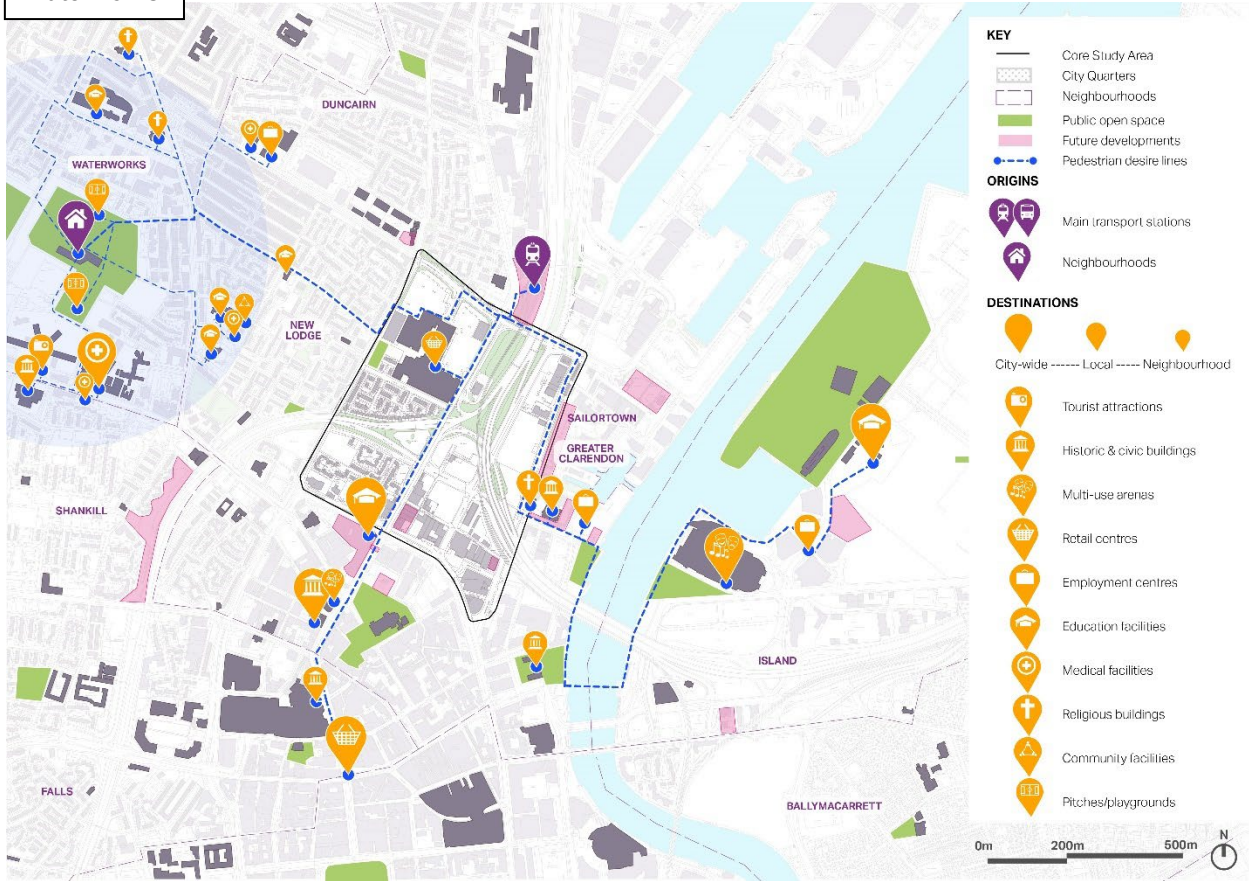




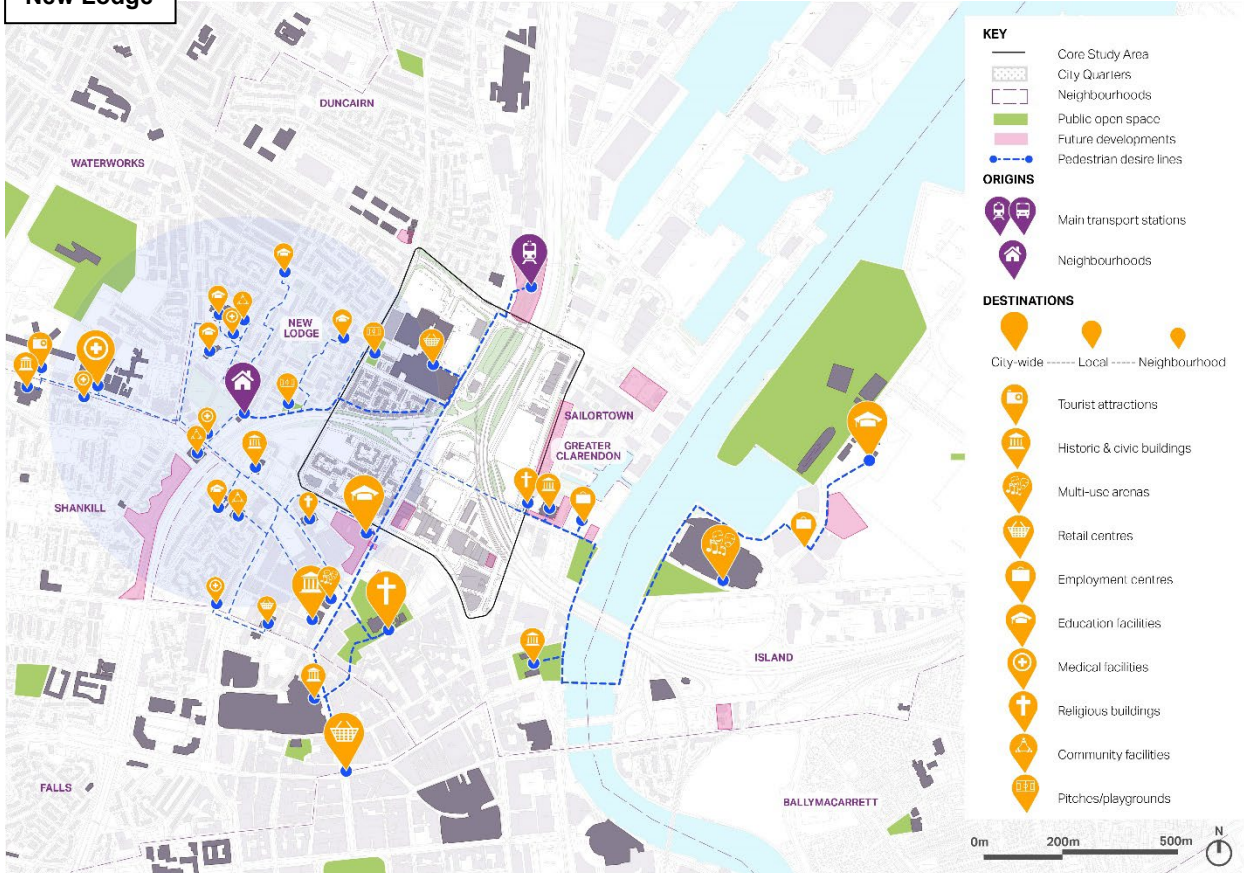
C.2 Origins-Destinations Desire Lines Analysis



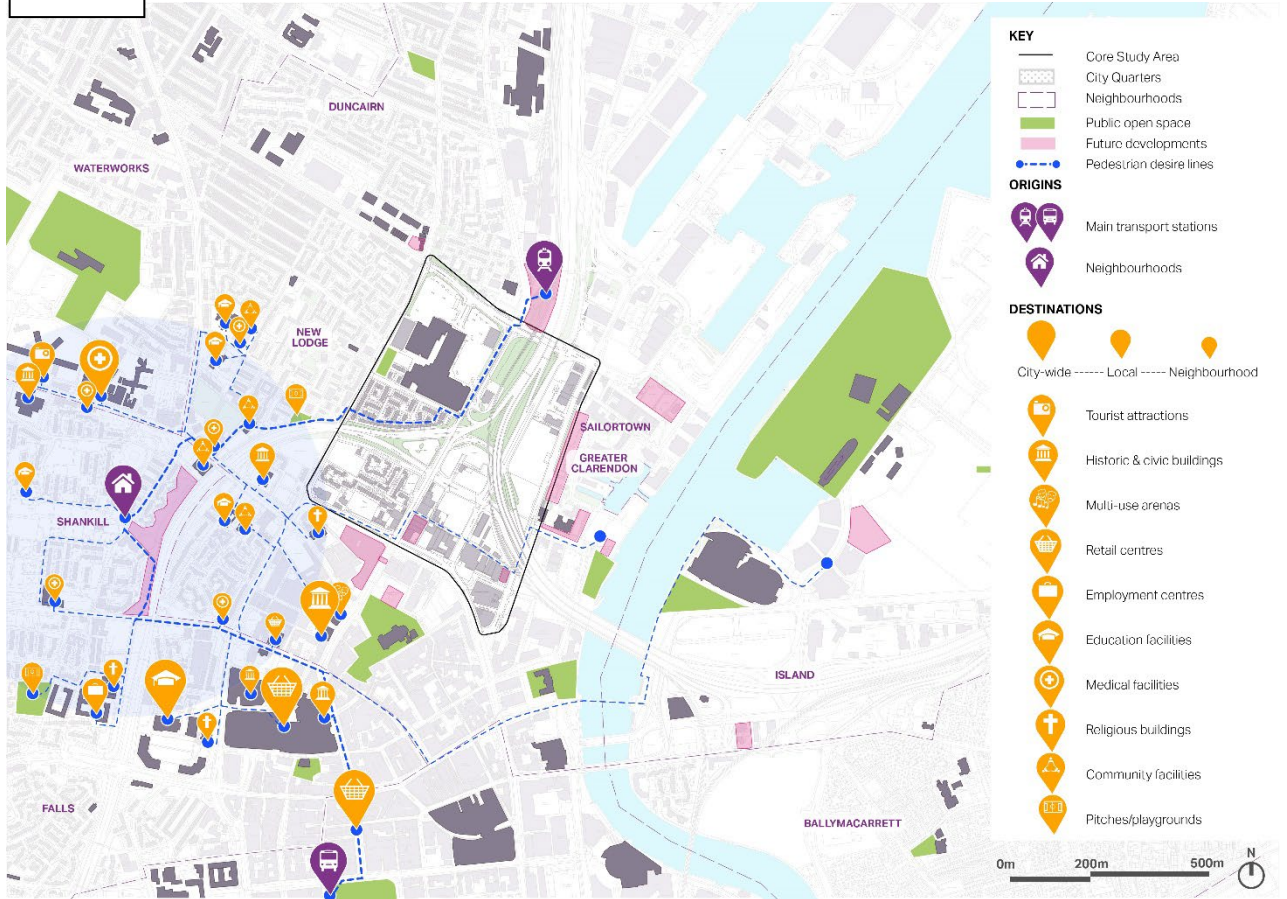
Waterworks



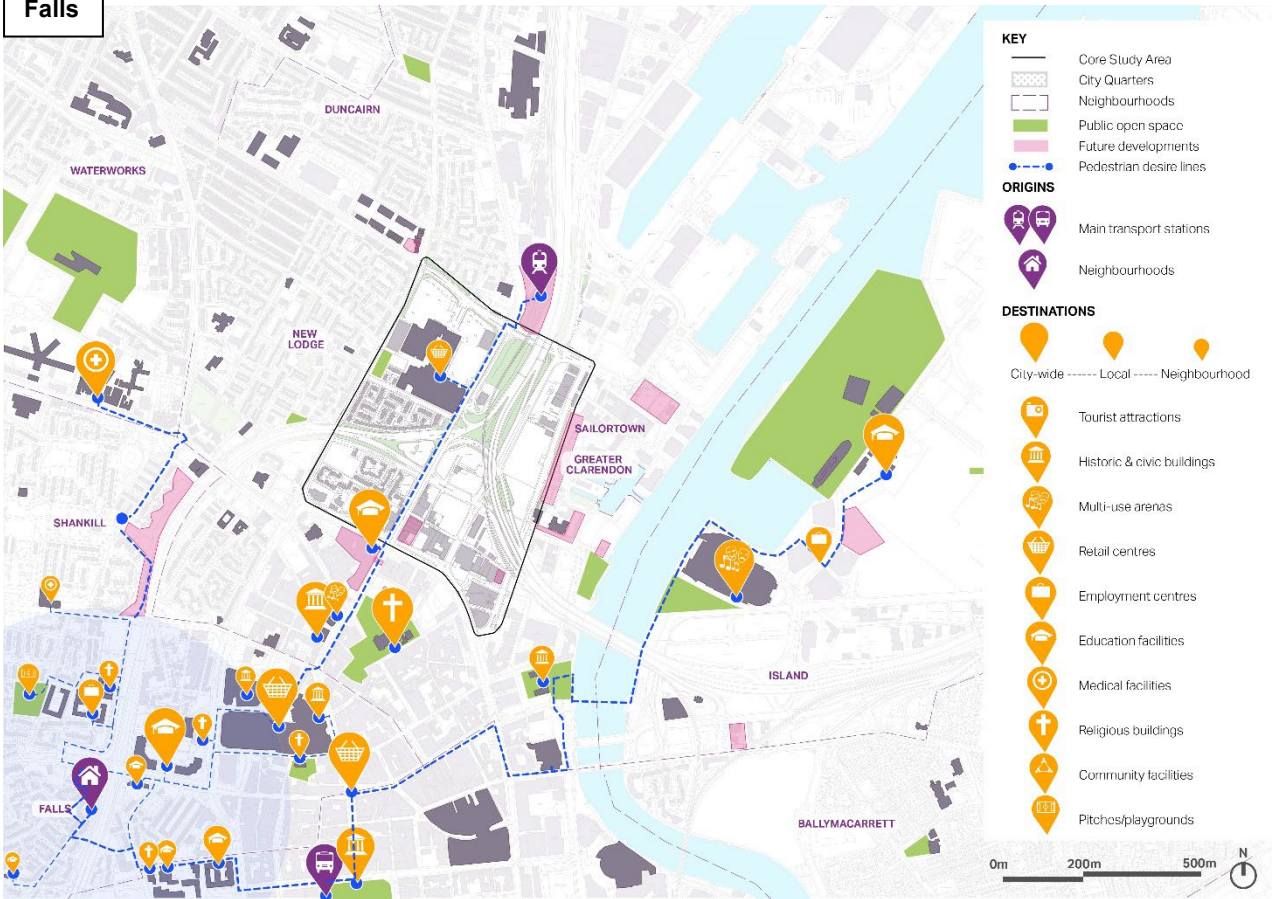
New Lodge

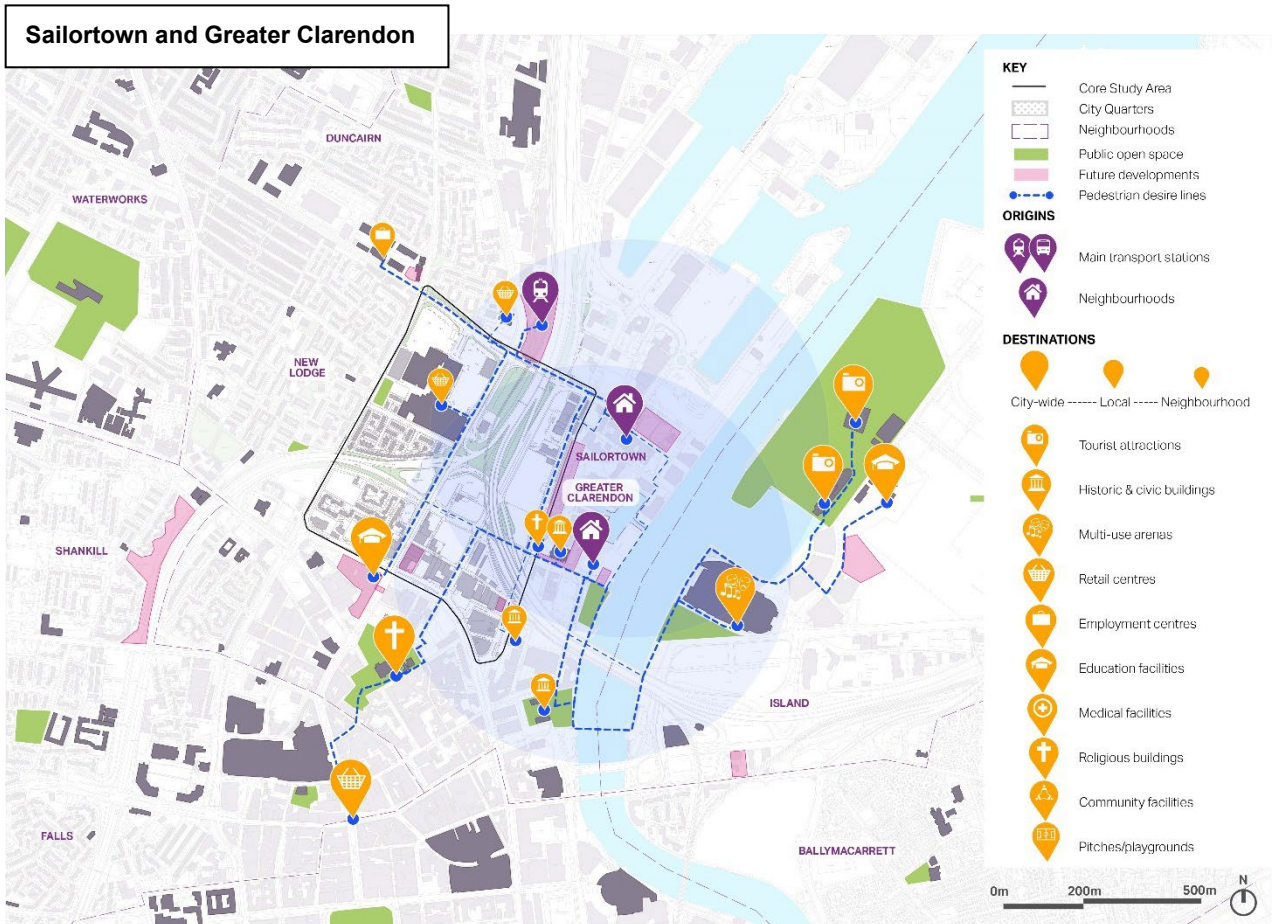


Shankill

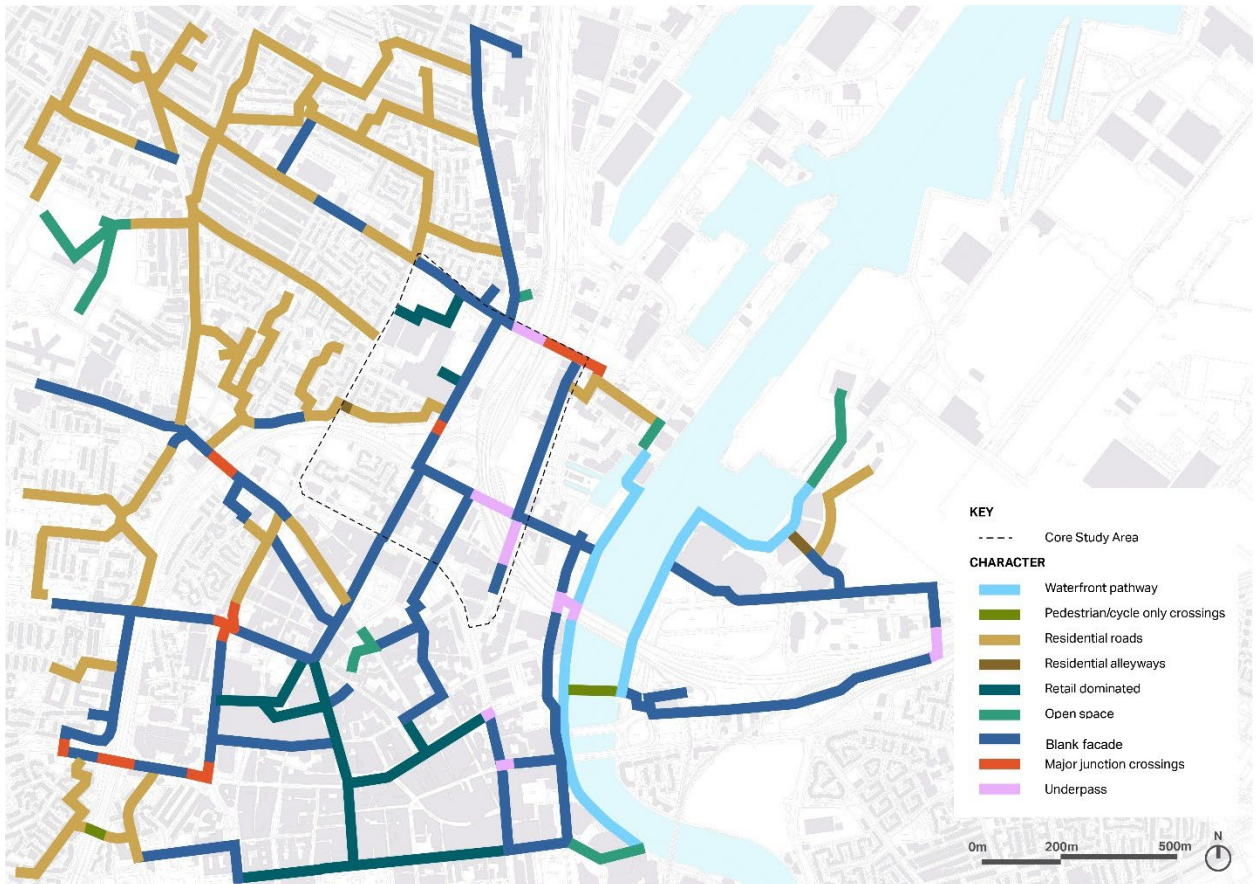


Falls

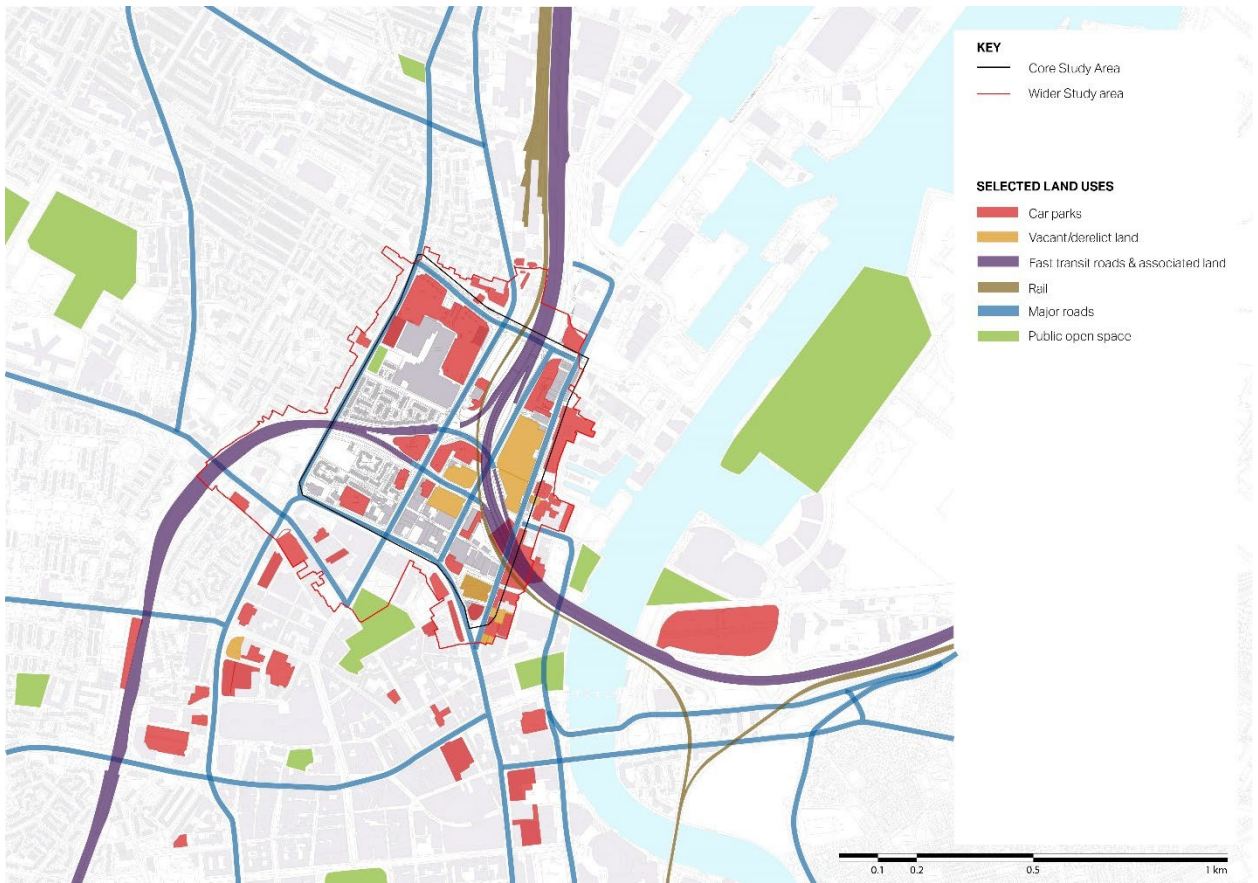




C.3 Street Character Assessment



C.4 Distribution of Land Use



Appendix D Stakeholder Engagement Summary

D.1 YSI Stakeholder Interview Summary

- There is a general support for the presentation's analysis and objectives, including the connection between placemaking, health, and wellbeing as well as a change in the transport hierarchy. Some however acknowledged potential practical challenges in softening the impact of the proposed scheme and delivering the improvements.

I. Baseline issues and themes

- **Connectivity and physical severances.** The YSI has separated communities from each other and from the city centre for decades, losing much of the connectivity of the pre-existing street grid. There are many wide car-oriented surface roads that are difficult to cross and unpleasant to walk along. More people would walk and cycle if provided with safe infrastructure. Residents need better access to essential services. There is a fear that the proposed widening of elevated motorways and underpasses would increase severances.
- **Pedestrian access and convenience.** The area is both uncomfortable and unattractive for walking, especially for those affected by any form of impairment. Improving pedestrian access to Yorkgate station is required. One of the main desired outcomes is to connect North Belfast to the city centre.
- **Built environment quality.** The area is unattractive and poorly maintained, with few accessible green spaces. There is a sense that the area has been left to deteriorate. This contributes to a low sense of ownership and the perception of the area as unsafe. The area is not a destination, only a space to pass through. Some properties in the area, especially the Yorkgate Shopping Centre, provide low-quality edges and interfaces with the public realm.
- **Land use mix.** The speculative nature of land values has resulted in vacant lots and car parks.
- **Transport hierarchy.** The area is traffic-dominated, with motor vehicles prioritised over other modes. There is however a desire to emphasise active and sustainable modes of transport and reduce car dependence.
- **Public transport.** Yorkgate is the main train station in the area and improvements to pedestrian access are needed. Many bus routes cross the study area and construction will bring years of disruption to bus traffic. There is a concern that walking and cycling improvements could come at the expense of buses.
- **Safety.** The area is perceived as unsafe. The unattractiveness, lack of maintenance, and low sense of ownership of the public realm contribute to antisocial behaviour. Improving night-time safety is important. Areas such as the Dock Street underpass have been identified as areas in critical need for safety improvement.
- **Health and wellbeing.** The construction of the YSI has had a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the local communities, both directly (air pollution and noise) and indirectly (poor walking and cycling environment and lack of accessible open spaces). The lack (real or perceived) of safety and of access to essential services does not encourage active travel.
- **Social exclusion.** The local communities were the most heavily impacted by the construction of the motorway system (Mark Hackett describes it as "structural violence"). Those who do not own a vehicle are the most impacted. They have been physically separated from the city centre, and the severance has exacerbated their sense of exclusion and isolation. There is a sense of being neglected by the current reconstruction process and frustration at the perceived slow pace of change. As a result, there is a low level of trust and a high degree of scepticism about the government led YSI scheme.

II. Considerations raised by the stakeholders

- **Connectivity and accessibility.** There is a concern that the proposed widening of elevated motorways would create longer underpasses (for example on Dock Street), resulting in even greater severances. Improvements to accessibility would also deliver health benefits. The concept of the 20-minute neighbourhood, where most services and shops are accessible by foot, should be examined.
- **Land use.** There is a potential for city-owned car parks to be converted to different uses. The edges of some properties such as the Yorkgate Shopping Centre could be activated to provide a more positive interface with the public realm.
- **Sustainable transport.** Future development should contribute to a shift towards sustainable modes of transport and away from motor vehicles, especially because development will attract more people. Ulster University is promoting a car-free campus. Yorkgate Station will be more heavily used and intermodality

should be improved. Walking and cycling improvements should avoid causing a deterioration of the quality of bus service (Translink). Disabled access improvements should be prioritised.

- **Placemaking.** Public art should be integrated into the public realm strategy. The need for an explicit public art strategy was suggested (Arts Council for Northern Ireland) There also needs to be consideration about how public spaces be animated and programmed.
- **Biodiversity and climate change resilience.** Climate change interventions such as SuDS should be integrated into the placemaking strategy, and it must contribute to the local biodiversity.
- **Social integration.** Development will bring an influx in residents, workers, and students. Integrating the new population into the existing communities and fabric is key. University- and student-related development must avoid creating a housing mix that caters to students only. Reflexion should be given to the social value of future projects. (Department for Communities and Urban Regeneration)
- **Timing and seasonality.** Construction will take several years. Tangible benefits in the forms of quick wins must be delivered early in the process to retain community trust. University calendars will bring a seasonality effect that must be mitigated when term ends.
- **Engagement.** The local communities want to be active participants in the decision-making process. Projects will need to overcome the high level of scepticism among the local communities.
- **Stewardship and management.** A stewardship model, potentially involving the local communities, should be set up to ensure that the new spaces and public art items are well-maintained. A curated programme of events could contribute to ensure that the new spaces are animated. An adequate budget should be allocated for construction and maintenance.
- **Deliverability:** there is a need for more effective cross-departmental collaboration (it is not just about roads). There is a concern that Belfast is behind other cities with bolder visions and a stronger political will to implement them. Catalyst and quick win projects are important to build trust and confidence among stakeholders. There needs to be adequate institutional capacity and budgeting to deliver new public spaces. The communities will need reassurance that the proposals are deliverable and that they will bring tangible benefits early on. The delivery of the proposed improvements should be coordinated.

III. Interventions that were directly suggested by stakeholders

- Greenways and green trails
- Lower York Street: pedestrianisation or shared space (Ulster University)
- Areas under elevated motorways: activation through public art.
- New pedestrian and cycle bridge across the river.
- Nelson Street should not be closed off and should be fronted with a row of noise-cancelling flats (Sailortown & Ashton Centre).
- Yorkgate Shopping Centre: active edges (Belfast City Council).
- A healthy corridor connecting the City Centre to North Belfast to encourage walking and cycling.
- More protected cycle lanes (Sustrans).

IV. Potential actions for the study

- **Study area boundaries:**
 - The core study area should include Corporation Street and the harbour estate (Sailortown & Ashton Centre), as well as Custom House Square and the future pedestrian bridges across the river (MAG).
 - The wider study area should include more of the neighbouring communities (Sailortown & Ashton Centre).
- **Mapping:**
 - The analysis and SWOT maps must show:
 - Less information on one map, and instead be divided for better legibility.
 - All of the proposed bridges across the river (Sailortown & Ashton Centre).
 - Coastal and surface water flooding. This would strengthen the case for SuDS (MAG).
 - The movement networks of various forms of transport on a wider scale. This could help identify how the same might improve connectivity for different modes (MAG).
 - The pedestrian route maps must better reflect:
 - Routes that the locals would (or wouldn't) take (Sailortown & Ashton Centre).
 - The relative importance of existing and proposed desire lines (MAG).
 - Future maps showing the proposed benefits should reduce the depiction of the overpass elements and highlight how the scheme could help improve permeability and connectivity (MAG).
- **Case studies and potential interventions:**

- Consider classifying the proposed interventions between what is critical and what is nice to have (Belfast City Council).
- Be clear about the environmental, public health, and social benefits (Belfast Healthy Cities).
- The case studies analysis should align with the format of the desired outcomes and measured outcomes (MAG).
- Consider using graphical illustrations of the proposed public realm interventions to give a visual impression of what they could look like (MAG).
- **Guiding themes and principles:**
 - Should include: “sustainable,” “environmentally sensitive,” and “crafted.” (DfI)
 - Should include “response to the climate and biodiversity crisis.” (MAG)
 - Should put a greater emphasis on bringing the community back together (IMTAC).
 - Could the presentation show the alignment of the objectives with the Bolder Vision report? (Belfast City Council).
- **Active travel review:** should also cover public transport, especially how to improve bus service (Belfast City Council).

D.2 Review by MAG

- The study should expand the hierarchical framework into 1. Aims and Objectives 2. Key Placemaking Objectives 3. Measurable Outcomes:
 - The three tiers of the hierarchical framework would be used to measure the baseline situation, the proposed YSI scheme, and the alternative scheme.
 - Measurable outcomes suggested by MAG:
 - Net increase in biodiversity
 - Air quality
 - Whole life carbon
 - Embodied carbon
 - Percentage canopy cover
 - Improved accessibility times
 - Compliance with LTN1/20
 - Average distances to green amenity space
 - Active frontages
 - Surface water retention
 - At risk flood areas under specified periodic events as a percentage of the site area
 - Project health benefits
 - Potential site values
 - Potential uplift in surrounding site values
 - Proposed building capacities
 - Employment
 - The outcomes could be presented together on a radial scale to measure the relative performance of each option, from 0% at the centre to 100% at the circumference.
- Consider extending early consultation to private sector groups, who may be able to comment on procurement-related issues, with a view to improve the deliverability of the proposals.
- Consider seeking stakeholder engagement with respect to the main options which the design team are likely to suggest.

D.3 Review by Sailortown & Ashton Centre

- The street grid that existed prior to the YSI must be shown to demonstrate the higher degree of street connectivity that could have remained if the YSI had not been built (Sailortown & Ashton Centre).
- The analysis and SWOT maps focus too much on the city centre and the YSI and leave out the surrounding communities, which conveys the sense that they are neglected (Sailortown & Ashton Centre).
- The study should compare:
 - The situation prior to the construction of the motorway system (“what was lost”)
 - The existing situation
 - Any alternatives, including Mark Hackett’s 2 sub-options
 - The currently proposed YSI scheme
 - A “do minimum” scenario: active travel improvements without any full road scheme.
- These comparisons should be mapped at 2-3 different scales, from local to city-wide.
- The maps should show where people should be able to access but currently can’t, for example showing the lack of good street connection between New Lodge, the riverfront, and the Titanic Quarter. Connection

should only refer to built and occupied streets that feel safe and do not impair safety or make pedestrian access difficult, from which areas with blank walls, blight, and other blockage points should be excluded.

- The business case for the YSI must be entirely revisited because it is out of date and the context has changed, especially in terms of national, city, and climate change policies.
- Mark Hackett sent additional material showing the severances and blight caused by the construction of the motorway system in Belfast, as well as old plans showing the street grid that existed before.
- Mark Hackett has shared his proposals for an alternative YSI design that includes:
 - Retaining Nelson St
 - Reinstating old street ends along Corporation St
 - A walking and cycling elevated park on York St
 - A different development model in which the land would be transferred to an ethical and non-profit guardianship.
 - Existing underpasses should not be widened. Widening them would make them objectively worse and mitigation measures (as seen in the case studies) does not address the real issue.
 - The memorial at North Queen Street should be left untouched, and the adjacent Westlink underpass should not be widened.

Appendix E MAG Briefing Review



York Street Interchange, Belfast Analysis Stage

Briefing Review Report

24 | 9 | 21

York Street Interchange, Belfast

Analysis Stage

BRIEFING REVIEW

24 | 9 | 21

Aecom Project Team:

Andy Patterson	Landscape Architect
Sheina Rijanto	Urban Designer (not present)
Patrick Clarke	Urban Designer / Masterplanner

MAG Review Panel:

Panel Chair	Alex Wright, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 1	Phil Jones, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 2	Sharon McClements, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 3	Eoin Farrell, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 4	Ciaran Mackel, MAG Expert Advisor

1.00 General

- 1.01 In 2006, the Northern Ireland government adopted the Policy for Architecture and the Built Environment, and in 2007 established a publicly selected group of professionals – the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) – to advise on the implementation and development of the policy. MAG promotes the highest quality of places for all those involved in using and shaping them.
- 1.02 A central part of our work is providing direct advice on new development schemes by means of undertaking a design briefing or review. This is a method which can play an important role in creating better developments and improving people's quality of life.
- 1.03 The design review offers independent, impartial advice on the design of new buildings, landscapes and public spaces. The Planning or Design team are not bound to act on any of the recommendations made by the MAG Design Review Panel (hereinafter called 'the Panel').
- 1.04 The Panel's main terms of reference are those of the Architecture and Built Environment Policy for Northern Ireland. Planning policies are not generally referenced.
- 1.05 The report on the review, which is classed as 'Restricted', will be issued to Andy Patterson for distribution. The Department for Communities' Architecture and Information Management Branches will independently consider whether disclosure should take place in response to any Freedom of Information requests, and will consult with MAG before finalizing its decision on disclosure. If the Project Team choose to bring the report into the public domain, it must be published in its entirety.

2.00 Preamble

- 2.01 The MAG welcomes the opportunity to be able to review this important project at an early stage.
- 2.02 The Panel is grateful for the information provided prior to the meeting, for presentation from the design team and for their open and constructive engagement throughout the briefing.

3.00 Context

- 3.01 The YSI is intended to resolve the junction of 3 motorways to better facilitate the smooth movement of vehicular traffic. Prior to entering into discussion with contractors the Minister asked that a review of active travel and placemaking be undertaken, in order to identify any potential opportunities for community benefits to be realised as part of the project. Aecom has undertaken both the road design and is undertaking the requested review, the process for which includes consultation with the Design Briefing and Review Panel and engagement with other stakeholder groups.

4.00 Structure and impact of the report

- 4.01 The scope and desired outcomes were articulated in the report and the design team's presentation help provide the Panel with additional clarity as the overall scope and purpose of the report. Through discussion at the meeting our understanding of the brief for the project and purpose of the report was clarified as follows.
- 4.02 In summary we understand that the intention is for this body of work to clearly set out the existing site conditions. It is also intended to provide part of the evidence base that will inform the decision-making process with regard to which options for the site offer the most overall benefit, in terms of economic, social and environmental value.
- 4.03 Currently these options are likely to include the status quo, the current YSI proposals, various variants currently being proposed that meet the overall traffic objectives, or other as yet unidentified possibilities. As such the final report is likely to some form of evaluation framework, presented as a comparative analysis. The existing site condition appears to be the best baseline condition for the benefit analysis.
- 4.04 In this context we suggest that the hierarchical framework currently proposed is developed further. We have suggested minor revisions to the first tier of this framework, the Aims and Objectives (section 7.01). We suggest the desired outcomes are the next tier in this framework and these should expand on the current "Key Placemaking Objectives". The final tier of the framework would be the measurable outcomes. Ideally these tiers should all be constructively aligned. The Project for Public Spaces structure, illustrated in your report, provides a potentially useful example. We suggest you employ this example and develop your bespoke hierarchical categories, suited to the particular nature of this project. Ideally the measurable outcomes would employ existing commonly used metrics, but we appreciate it may be preferable to devise your own forms of measurement in some instances.
- 4.05 Within the current report you have already included some measures, such as the green space as a percentage of the site area, and the percentage of the site given over to car use. Potential other measures are varied and diverse and subject to how you wish to structure the evaluation. However, we suggest that the following may be worth considering, although we appreciate that each is potentially time consuming and may require external consultancy support. The intention is that the options for the site could, at least in part, have some shared based of approximate measurement.
- Net increase in biodiversity
 - Air quality
 - Whole life carbon
 - Embodied carbon
 - Percentage canopy cover
 - Improved accessibility times
 - Compliance with LTN1/20
 - Average distances to green amenity space

- Active frontages
- Surface water retention
- At risk flood areas under specified periodic events as a percentage of the site area
- Project health benefits
- Potential site values
- Potential uplift in surrounding site values
- Proposed building capacities
- Employment

- 4.06 In order for the report to maximise its potential impact we suggest consideration is given to how its findings might be made most readily accessible to a diverse readership. We suggest that the roundel previously mentioned as an example (section 4.04 above) could be employed to give a ready visual comparison of the relative performance of each option. Examples of this employ a radial scale from 0% at the centre, to 100% at the circumference, on which each measure can be plotted. By joining these plot points a rosette is created that gives an immediate impression of the summary performance of each option. We appreciate that this can be a demanding and complex task, and that the design team may wish to employ other forms of graphic representation to summarise their findings.
- 4.07 Consideration should be given to the use of graphical illustrations of the public realm proposals, possibly highlighting landmark locations, and/or significant proposed changes to the streetscape to give the reader a visual impression of what the potential place making benefits of the YSI scheme could be.
- 4.08 In addition, the mapping currently used to present the YSI road scheme is black, and the impact of the graphic accentuates the physical barrier that the Motorway currently creates, cutting through the centre of the study area. This is very useful to illustrate the current problems, however it detracts from presenting the potential benefits of the scheme when mapping the proposed options. By reducing the depiction of the overpass elements of the Motorway (perhaps to an outline), and profiling the design of the undercroft (underpass) elements of the scheme, it would be easier for the reader to understand how the scheme could assist in reopening the area, and improving permeability / connectivity – (e.g. between York Street and Sailortown area).

5.00 Analysis to date

- 5.01 The Panel appreciates that the analysis to date has covered a significant part of what is required for a project of this type. The following suggestions are made in this context and with a view to helping the design team prepare a comprehensive area analysis that can fully inform the project as it proceeds.
- 5.02 The Panel suggest that the context of the site with respect to coastal and surface water flooding is included within the analysis. We understand that under current projections for climate change the site falls within the moderate risk category for both of these flood conditions. It was reported that a coastal flood wall is currently proposed off site. This may form part of the analysis together with the location of any proposed flood gates, which might impact the pedestrian permeability of the site in its context.
- 5.03 The extent of projected surface water flooding may inform the priority given to SuDS provisions within the site. It was noted and reported by the design team the extent to which some of the precedents cited had offered significant gains with respect to surface water flood resilience. This project appears to offer a significant opportunity for such resilience to be provided through the creative improvement of SuDS infrastructure in the area.
- 5.04 Ideally such measures, including rain gardens and general grey-to-green interventions, should be integrated with the placemaking strategy and within the proposals for enhanced green space. These in turn should ideally be integrated with the movement strategy to ensure the landscape is part of the revised pedestrian and cycle routes within the site, and any areas which seek to offer public amenity.
- 5.05 The Panel noted the extensive engagement activity which is included within the propose study. We suggest that there might be benefit in extending early consultation to private sector groups. These groups may be able to comment on procurement related issues, with a view to the eventual deliverability of the proposals, and the extent to which any constraints related to this may inform the proposals.
- 5.06 The Panel noted that the stakeholder engagement to date had understandably focused on the existing site conditions. When appropriate we suggest it would be helpful to seek stakeholder engagement with respect to the main options which the design team are likely to suggest. If this is the case it may be helpful to prepare a schedule of engagement activities at this stage, which allows for the results of that engagement to inform the final report.
- 5.07 The Panel commented that the Belfast CC Bolder Vision document and the City Centre Living strategy may be applicable to the project and that these could be useful references for it.
- 5.08 There has been a considerable amount of analysis undertaken by the design team, for what is a particularly complex context. Whilst the report illustrates this analysis, the information in some illustrations is presented in a relatively dense graphical style (e.g. the SWOT analysis). We suggest that, given the likely audiences for the final report, further

consideration is given to how the analysis might be presented in a manner that is more readily accessible.

- 5.09 Considerable work has been carried out at the site scale with regard to desire lines and connectivity. However, from the current report illustrations the relative importance of these desire lines is not apparent. Showing the relative importance of proposed and existing desire lines may help inform the design, or peoples understanding of it.
- 5.10 Although some illustrations shown connectivity with adjoining neighbourhoods, we suggest some additional illustration at a wider scale showing the movement networks for various forms of transport may be helpful. This could more clearly identify how the YSI interchange might improve critical pedestrian, cycle and vehicular connectivity within the city. This could also be usefully integrated with proposals for active transport, micro-mobility or other initiatives.
- The Panel suggest that some consideration could be given at this stage to any smart city infrastructure that could usefully fall within the scope of the proposals.
- 5.11 The Panel noted that the current analysis did not appear to include the foreseeable student and staff population associated with the Ulster University development.
- 5.12 The wider study area might be usefully extended with respect to some elements of the study, so that it captures some key elements of existing or proposed infrastructure that currently lie outside the wider study area. This might include Corporation Square to Customs House Square and the future pedestrian bridges across to Titanic Quarter.

6.00 Precedents

- 6.01 The design team have identified extensive and varied precedents within their report. The Panel noted that some of these, such as the Sheffield's Grey to Green project, appeared to have direct applicability to the site. In some other instances the scale and nature of the precedents suggest they may only be partially applicable.
- 6.02 We suggest that as part of the constructive alignment of Aims & Objectives, Desired Outcomes and Measured Outcomes (suggested above section 4.04), the precedent analysis should be prepared so that these examples also align with this format. This would allow third parties to readily understand what aspect of the proposals the precedent was employed to inform, the outcomes it had delivered, and ideally the various measures of success or failure related to it.

7.00 Guiding themes and principles

- 7.01 The Guiding Themes and Principles appeared well-considered and they provided suitably broad themes at a strategic level. However, we noted that the climate crisis and biodiversity crisis issues were embedded as elements within one or more of the 5 key themes. Given the importance of this aspect of the project we suggest consideration is given to revising the 5 themes so that response to the climate and biodiversity crisis might be included within one of the Aims and Objectives headlines.

8.00 Conclusions

- 8.01 We congratulate to team on the work complete to date. We appreciate our comments above are relatively wide in scope and we appreciate that it may not be possible for the project team to implement all of our suggestions. However, we hope they prove useful in undertaking this highly complex project.
- 8.02 The Panel shares the broad aspirations of the project team. This site offers enormous potential for the surrounding neighbourhoods and the City. Ensuring that the project realises the maximum potential, economic, social and environmental benefits is a demanding undertaken, and we hope our comments are helpful and we look forward to seeing the scheme later in its development.

Prof Alexander Wright

MAG Expert Advisor, Chair of the MAG Design Review Panel

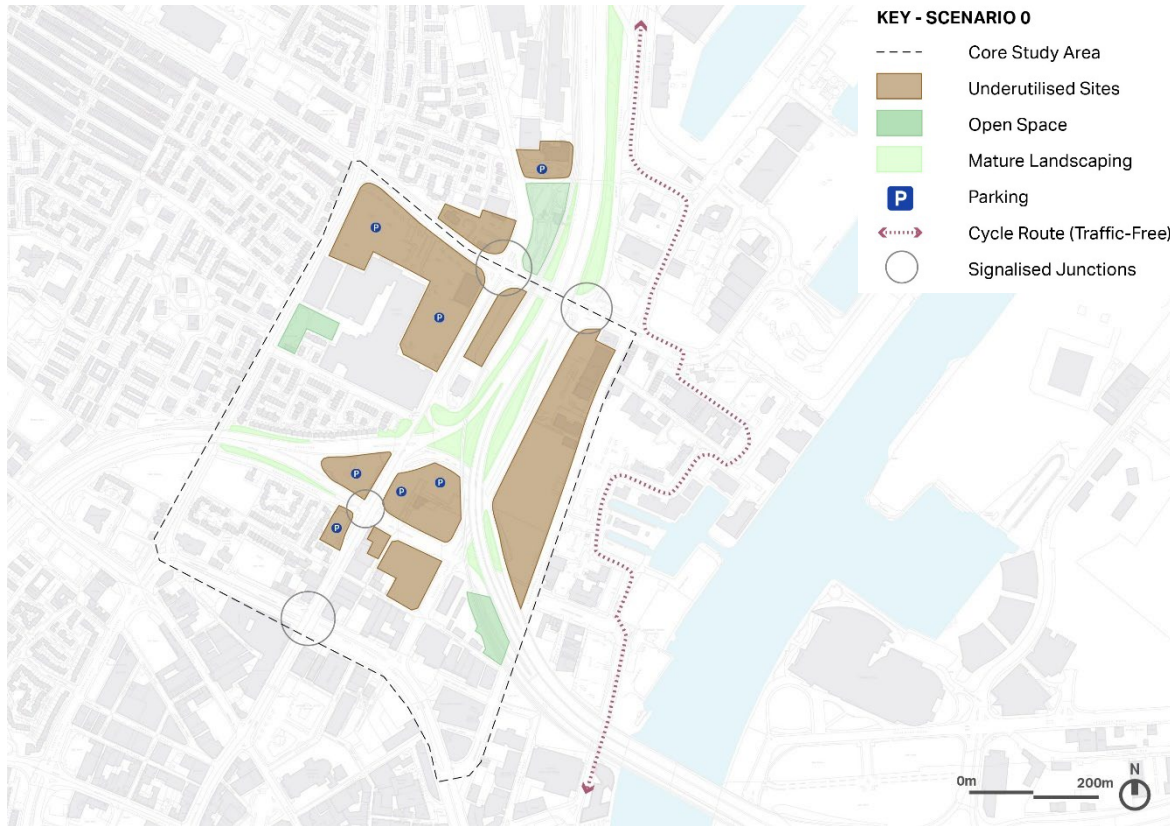
06 | 10 | 21

Appendix F Evaluation Matrix Table

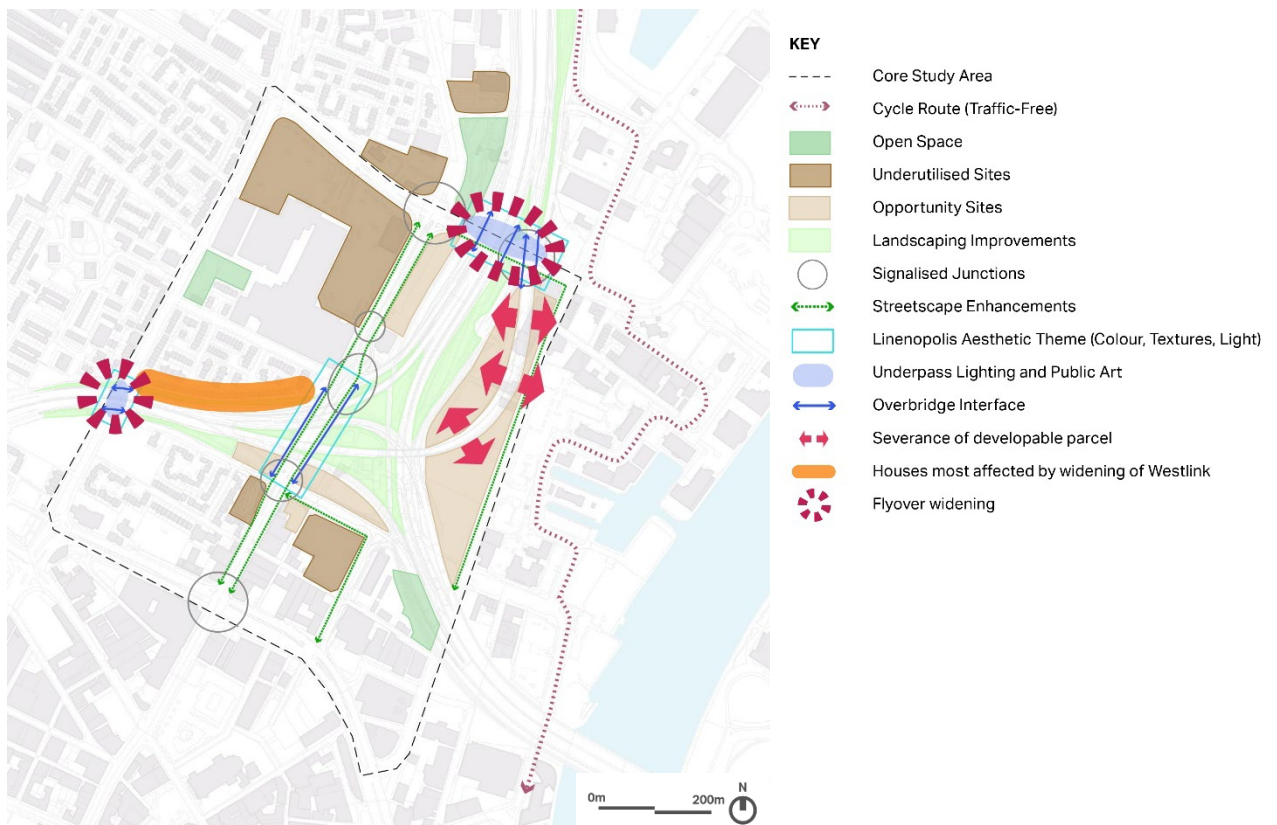
Assessment of YSI scheme for Placemaking			0. Baseline (current situation)		1. YSI scheme (without active transport)		2. Mark Hackett Alternative		3. Enhanced 1 (with active transport and placemaking)		3A. Enhanced 2 (with active transport and placemaking)		4. Enhanced 3 (with active transport and wider area placemaking)	
GUIDING THEME	GUIDING PRINCIPLE	DESIRED OUTCOME	Color Rating	%	Color Rating	%	Color Rating	%	Color Rating	%	Color Rating	%	Color Rating	%
Balanced and connected	Adopt a people-first approach and rebalance the needs of the local community with other users	Human-scale and people friendly urban environment (reduce visibility of scheme)	0%	0%	17%	4%	50%	13%	34%	9%	100%	25%	100%	25%
		Road space reallocated from cars to pedestrians, cyclists and PT	0%	0%	17%	4%	67%	17%	84%	21%	100%	25%	100%	25%
		Space reclaimed from car parking/infrastructure for green space, community facilities and development	0%	0%	17%	4%	84%	21%	84%	21%	84%	21%	100%	25%
		Increased accessibility and proximity to green amenity space and other community facilities	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	17%	50%	13%	100%	25%	100%	25%
	Total			0%		13%		67%		63%		96%		100%
	Prioritise a sustainable and inclusive transport hierarchy	Safe, direct, legible and comfortable pedestrian and cycle connections between key destinations	0%	0%	17%	6%	50%	17%	84%	28%	100%	33%	100%	33%
		Accessible and high-quality public transport services	34%	11%	34%	11%	50%	17%	67%	22%	67%	22%	67%	22%
		Physical barriers and severances removed	17%	6%	17%	6%	50%	17%	50%	17%	67%	22%	84%	28%
	Total			17%		23%		50%		67%		78%		84%
	Resilient, contextual and crafted	Enhance quality and attractiveness of public realm	Enhanced public realm that is comfortable and inclusive	0%	0%	34%	11%	67%	22%	67%	22%	84%	28%	84%
Sustainability integrated in the public realm			0%	0%	34%	11%	67%	22%	67%	22%	84%	28%	84%	28%
Well-designed buildings with urban street frontages where possible			17%	6%	17%	6%	67%	22%	67%	22%	84%	28%	84%	28%
Total			6%		28%		67%		67%		84%		84%	
Celebrate heritage and community		Enhanced public realm setting around heritage assets	17%	4%	17%	4%	50%	13%	67%	17%	84%	21%	84%	21%
		Clear and integrated signage and wayfinding	34%	9%	34%	9%	67%	17%	67%	17%	84%	21%	84%	21%
		Public art that celebrates heritage and community	34%	9%	67%	17%	67%	17%	84%	21%	84%	21%	84%	21%
		'Gateways' into the area	0%	0%	50%	13%	67%	17%	67%	17%	84%	21%	100%	25%
Total			21%		42%		63%		71%		84%		88%	
Create resilient and future-proofed places		Net zero carbon achieved in the long term	100%	50%	50%	25%	50%	25%	50%	25%	50%	25%	50%	25%
	Climate resilient/responsive	0%	0%	34%	17%	84%	42%	67%	34%	100%	50%	100%	50%	
Total			50%		42%		67%		59%		75%		75%	
Vibrant, productive and prosperous	Activate streets and spaces	Activation of blank facades and transient spaces through public art, al fresco dining, creating new entrances, etc.	17%	9%	34%	17%	50%	25%	50%	25%	84%	42%	84%	42%
		Repurposed vacant and derelict sites	50%	25%	34%	17%	84%	42%	67%	34%	100%	50%	100%	50%
		Total			34%		34%		67%		59%		92%	
	Foster inclusive economic growth	Prioritising and encouraging local businesses, maker-spaces and entrepreneurs	17%	9%	34%	17%	67%	34%	67%	34%	67%	34%	67%	34%
		Community spaces for co-working, collaboration, education and mentorship	34%	17%	50%	25%	67%	34%	67%	34%	67%	34%	67%	34%
	Total			26%		42%		67%		67%		67%		67%
	Create a 'place of choice'	Mix of high quality facilities, services and amenities to support existing residents and attract new ones	0%	0%	34%	17%	67%	34%	50%	25%	84%	42%	84%	42%
		Strong connections to surrounding attractors in the City and Harbour	0%	0%	17%	9%	67%	34%	67%	34%	84%	42%	100%	50%
	Total			0%		26%		67%		59%		84%		92%
	Safe, healthy and inclusive	Supporting healthy and sustainable lifestyles	Encouraged use of active modes of transport and public transport over private vehicles.	0%	0%	34%	17%	67%	34%	84%	42%	84%	42%	84%
Increased provision of open space for outdoor exercise			0%	0%	17%	9%	67%	34%	50%	25%	84%	42%	100%	50%
Total			0%		26%		67%		67%		84%		92%	
Enhance quality of life and support well being		Reduced noise and air pollution	0%	0%	17%	4%	67%	17%	50%	13%	84%	21%	100%	25%
		Increased Urban Green Factor and habitat creation	17%	4%	34%	9%	67%	17%	67%	17%	100%	25%	100%	25%
		Places of respite, relaxation and contemplation	17%	4%	17%	4%	67%	17%	67%	17%	84%	21%	84%	21%
		Opportunities to engage with nature, support mental health, well being	0%	0%	17%	4%	67%	17%	67%	17%	84%	21%	100%	25%
Total			9%		21%		67%		63%		88%		96%	
Foster a sense of belonging		Shared spaces where all are welcome	34%	11%	50%	17%	67%	22%	67%	22%	67%	22%	67%	22%
		Places that include people with impairments or reduced mobility	17%	6%	34%	11%	50%	17%	84%	28%	84%	28%	84%	28%
Total			0%		17%		50%		73%		78%		78%	

Appendix G Placemaking Scenarios

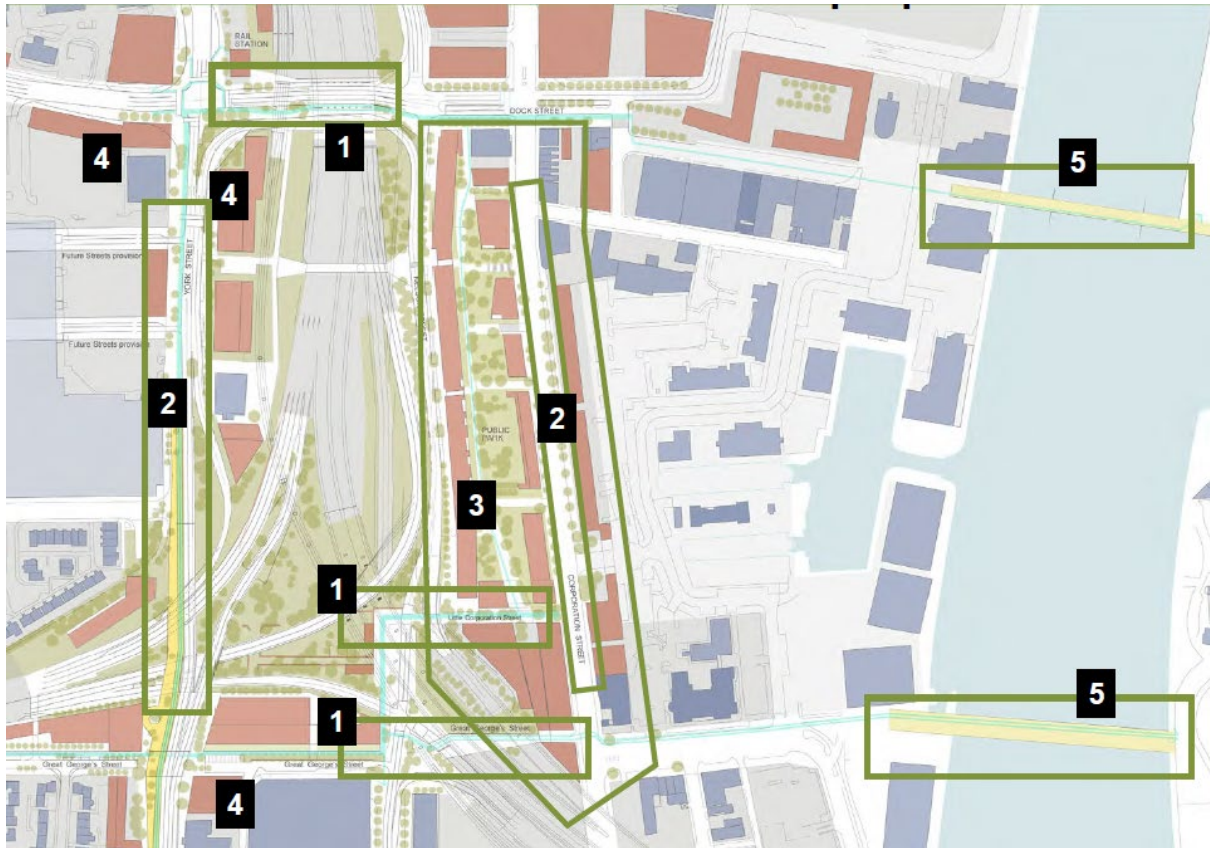
G.1 Scenario 0 – Baseline Conditions



G.2 Scenario 1 – Current YSI Scheme



G.3 Scenario 2 – Alternative Proposal



1. E-W connections
2. N-S connections: York Street (elevated) pedestrian connection and new building frontage on Corporation
3. Well-planned urban village community on Corporation Street
4. Re-development of underutilised sites
5. New bridges across the river

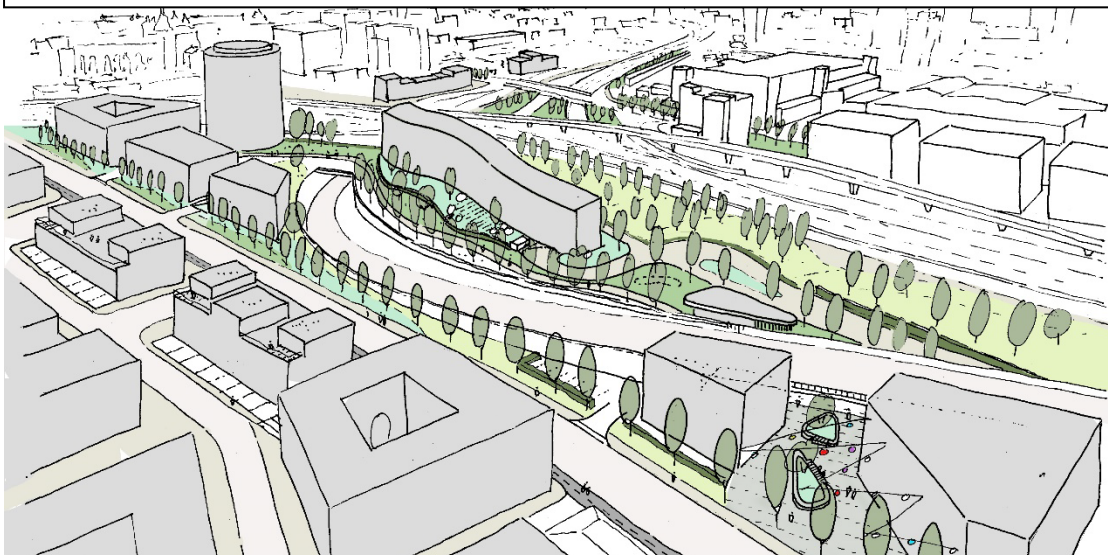
Appendix H Illustrative Materials

H.1 Scenario 3 Sketches

York Gate Station Area



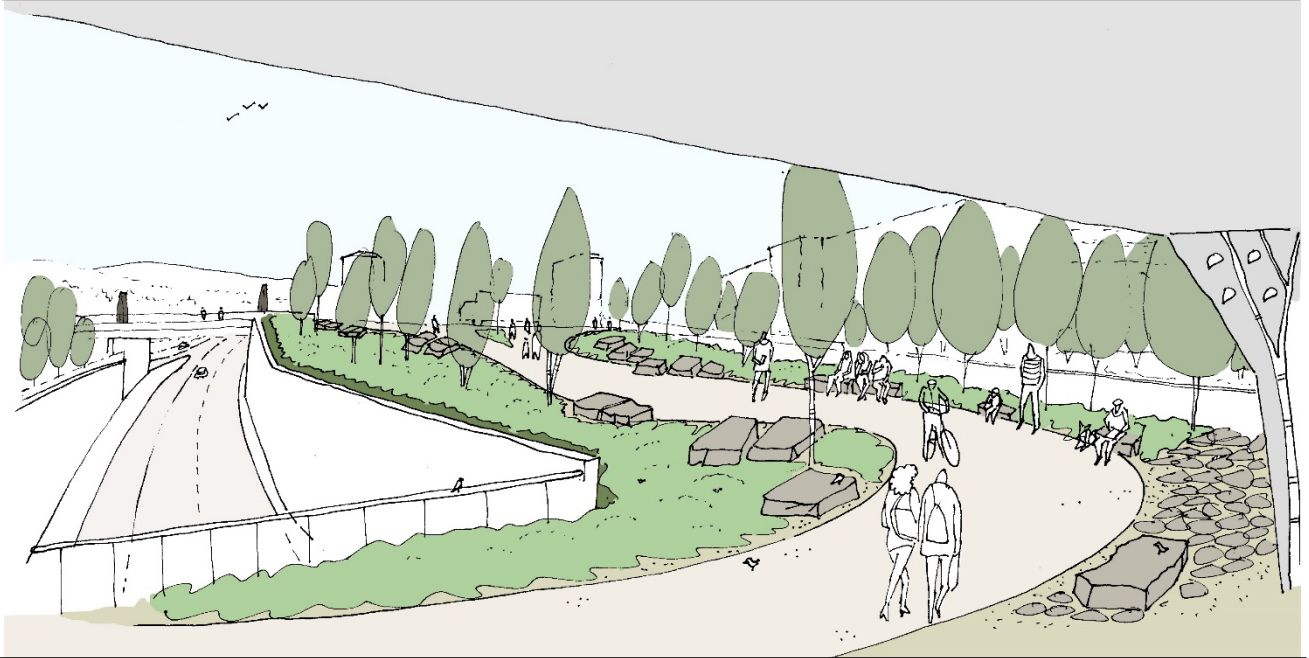
Corporation Street Development Opportunities



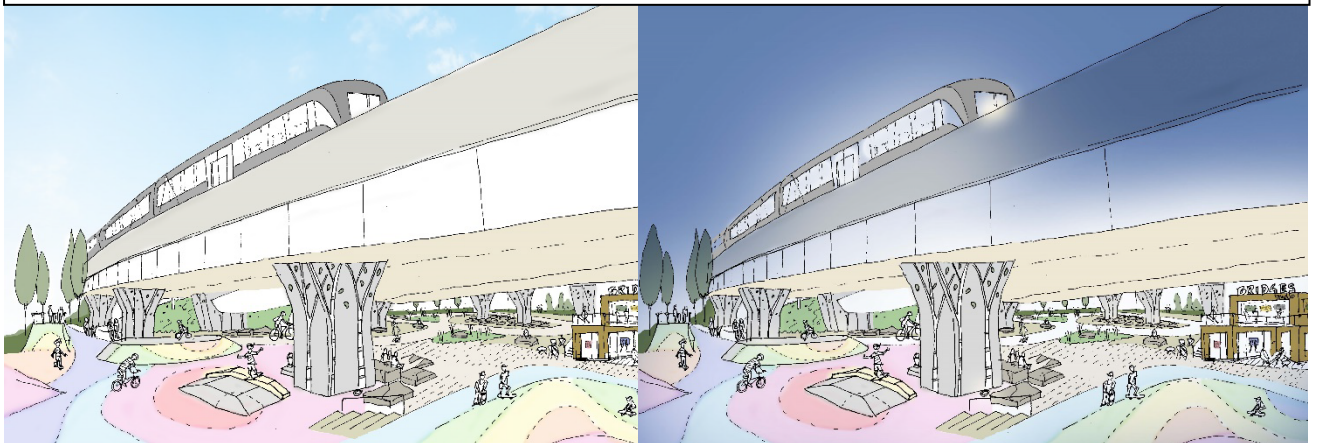
York Street Looking Towards the City



York Street Green Link



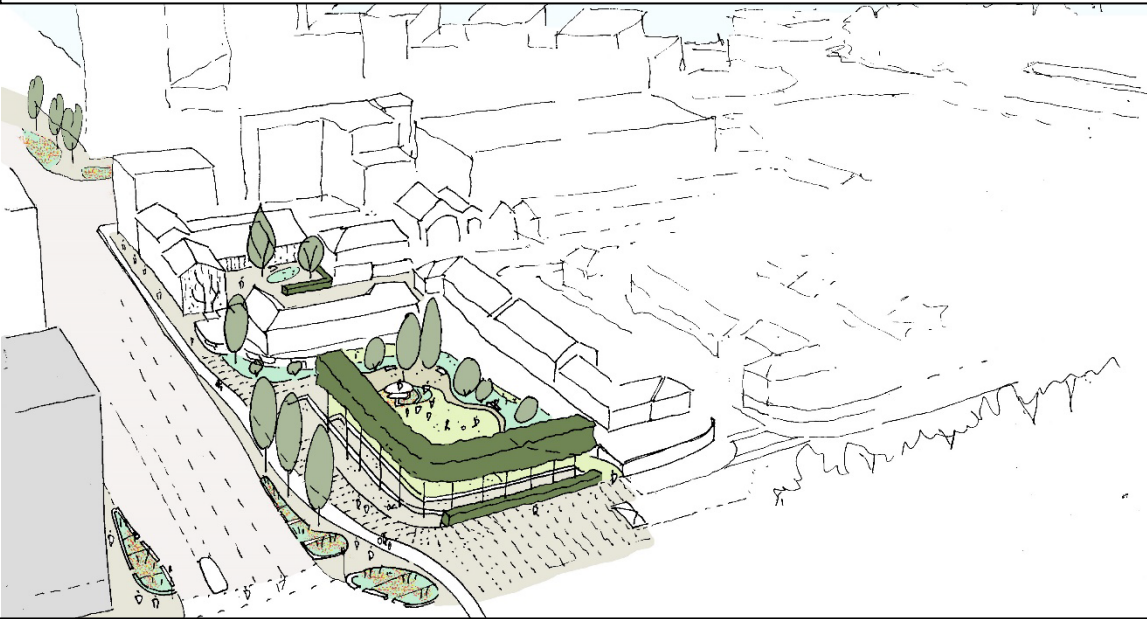
Bridges Urban Sports Park Daytime & Night-time View



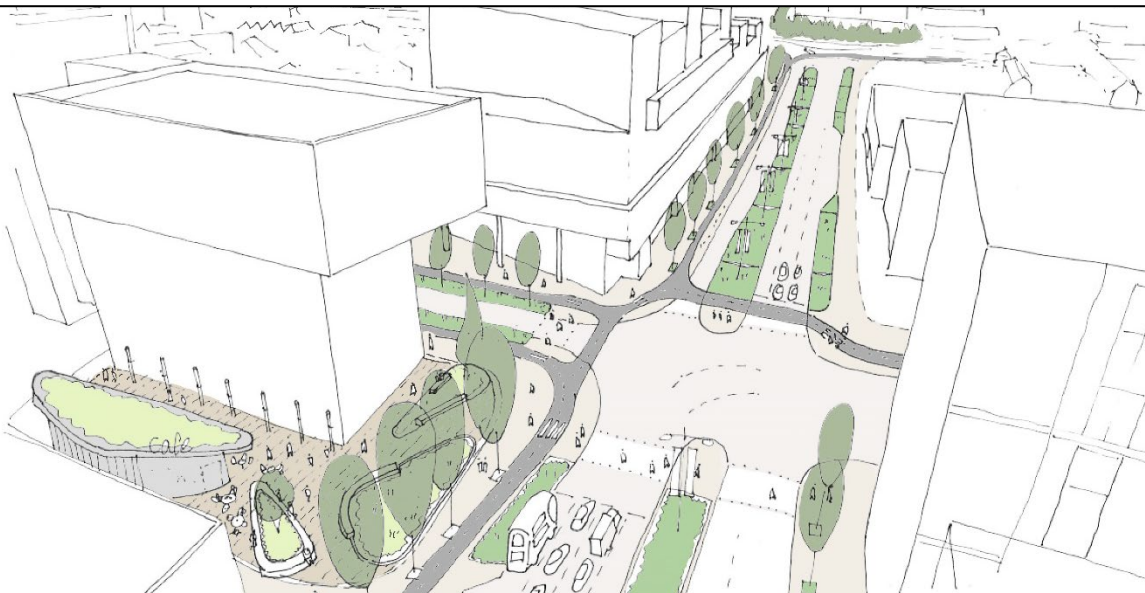
Pedestrian Connection to Sinclair Seamens Presbyterian Church



York Street Gateway Pocket Park



Ulster University Rain Garden

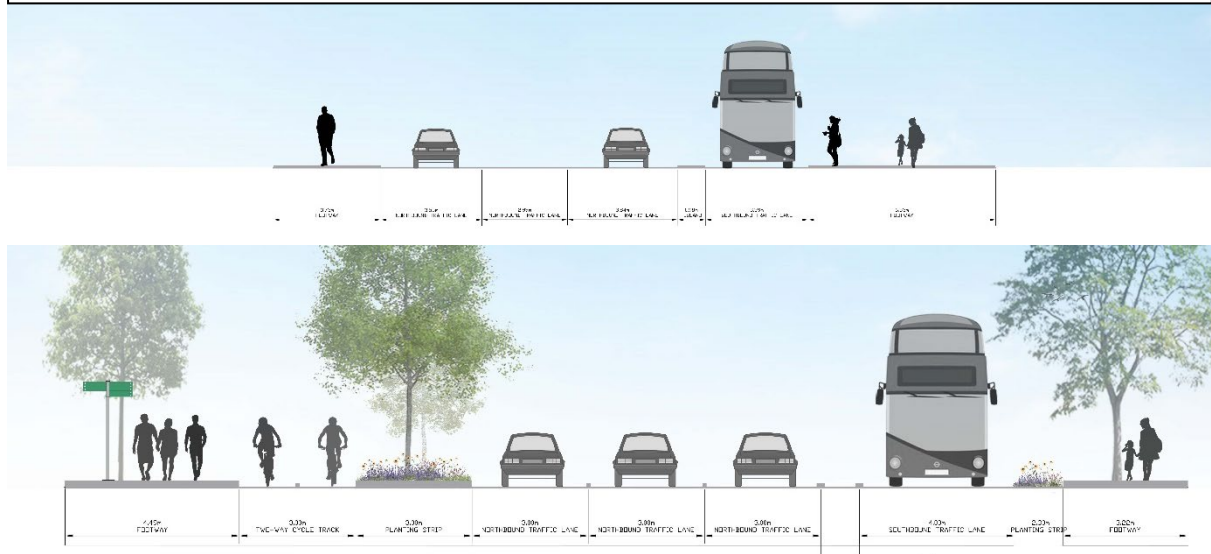


Enhanced North Queen Street Steps

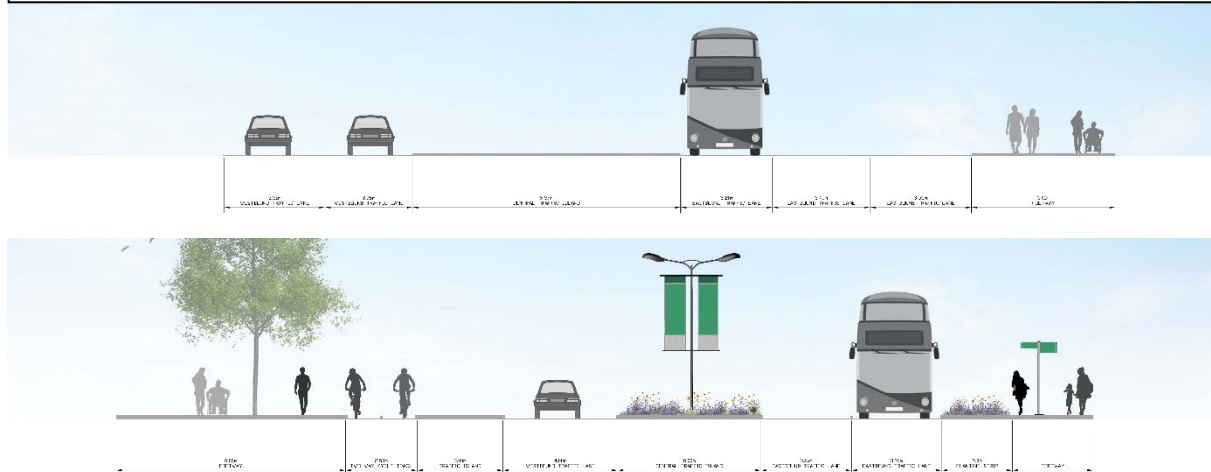


H.2 Scenario 3 Street-Sections

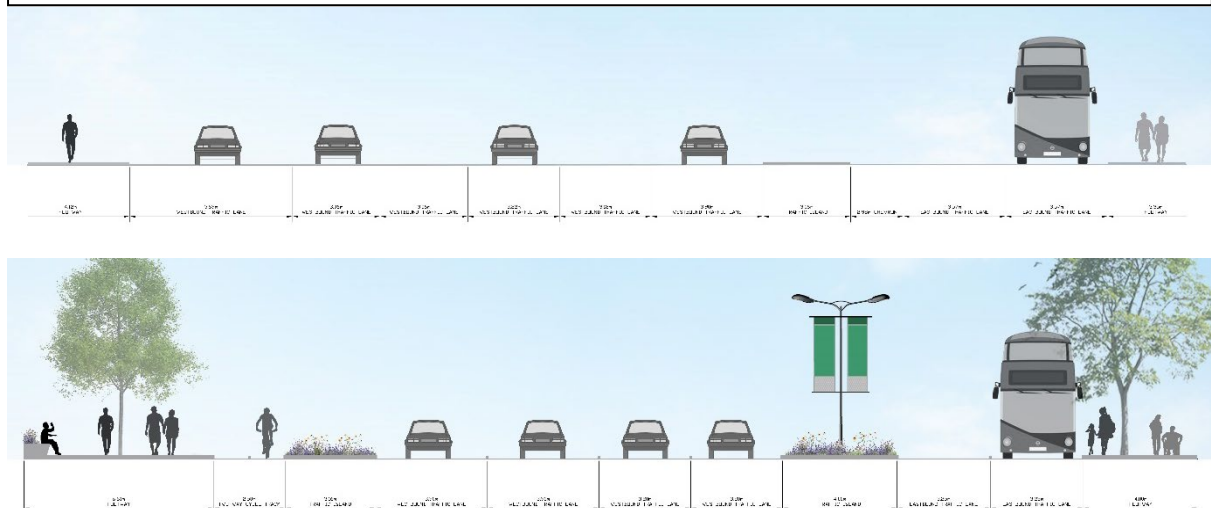
York Street Before & After



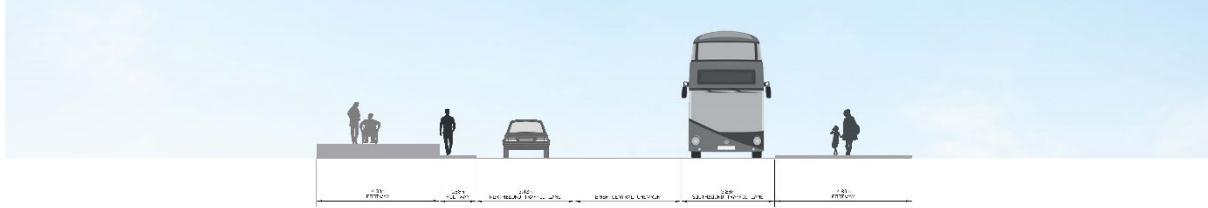
Frederick Street Before & After



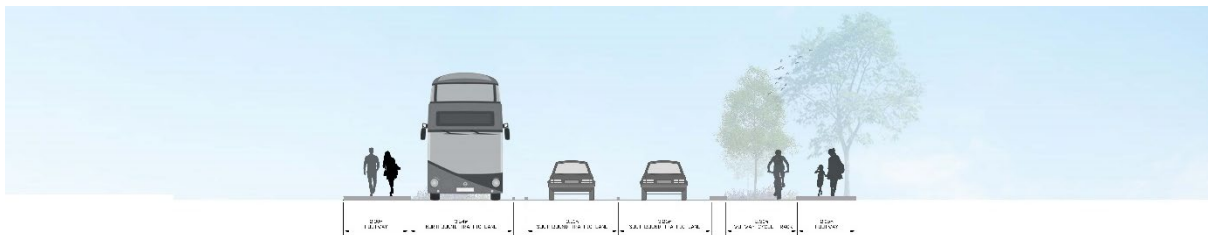
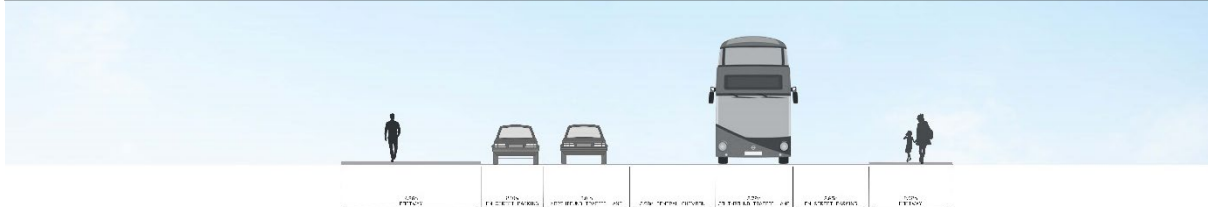
Dunbar Link Before & After



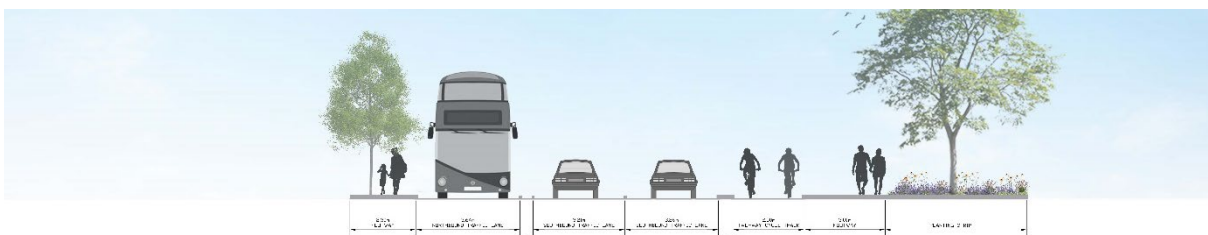
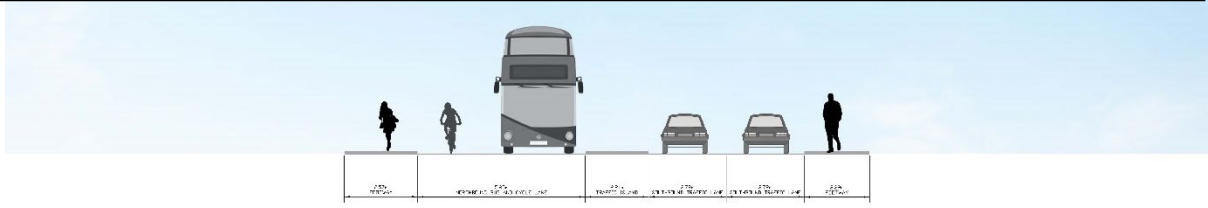
North Queen Street below Henry Street Before & After



North Queen Street above Henry Street Before & After

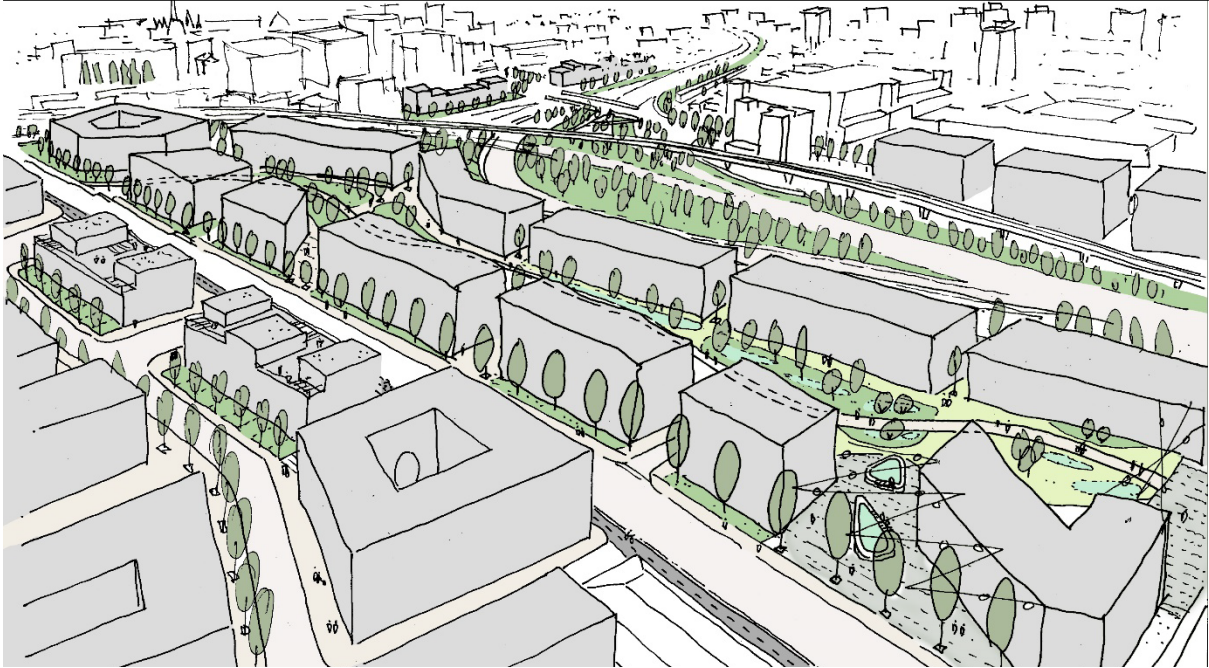


North Queen Street above Henry Street Before & After



H.3 Scenario 3A Sketches

Corporation Street Development Opportunities

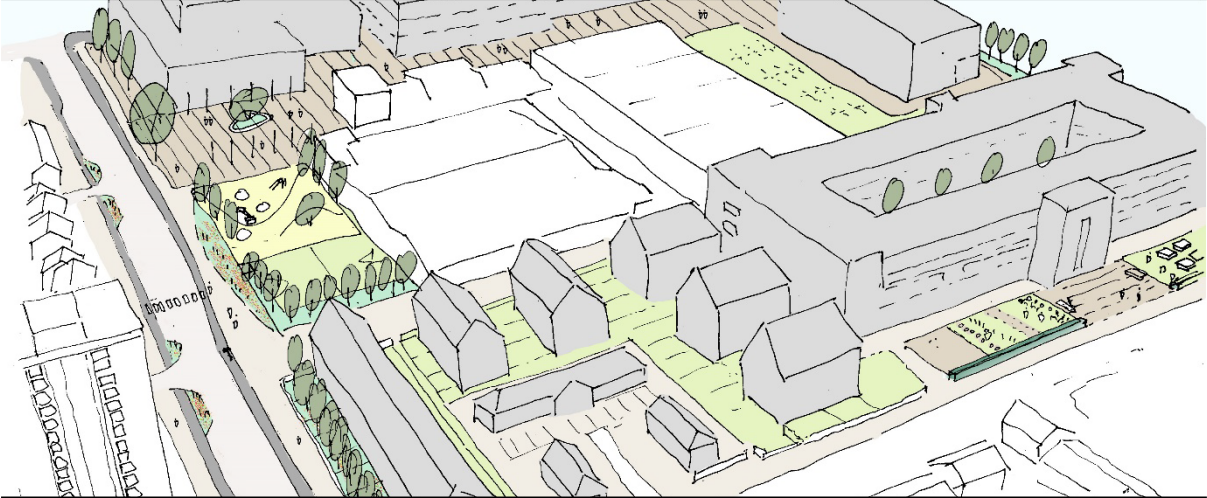


York Street – Henry Street Junction



H.4 Scenario 4 Sketches

Redevelopment of Cityside Shopping Centre



Green Roof Over Westlink



Dunbar Link Pocket Park



Appendix I Costing Analysis

I.1 Exclusions/Limitations

- VAT;
- Inflation from December 2021;
- Site acquisition;
- Finance Charges;
- Opportunity Sites Costs;
- Adoption fees and commuted sums in relation to all works; and
- Estate management costs in relation to new open spaces and landscape works.

I.2 Preliminary & Adjusted Preliminary Costing

Scenario	Placemaking and Active Travel Enhancements	Civil Engineering Savings	Preliminary Costing	Cost Sharing Opportunities		Other potential benefits		Adjusted Prelim. Additional Costs
				Opportunities	Potential value	Opportunities	Potential value	
3	£35.6 M		£35.6 M	- Developer contributions (BCC, UU) - DfC Clifton Gateway - DfC BSA3	-£5 M			£30.6 M
3A	£54.3 M	-£4 M	£50.3 M	- Developer contributions (BCC, UU) - DfC Clifton Gateway - DfC BSA3	-£5 M	- Additional land available for disposal to developers	-£4.3 M	£41 M
4	£137.8 M	-£4 M	£133.8 M	- Developer contributions (BCC, UU) - DfC Clifton Gateway - DfC BSA3 - BHC southern bridge across Lagan - BCC Dunbar Link pocket park	-£28 M	- Additional land available for disposal to developers	-£4.3 M	£101.5 M

Appendix J MAG Briefing Follow-Up Review



MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP
FOR ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

York Street Interchange, Belfast Design Review Report

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York Street Interchange, Belfast

DESIGN REVIEW

21 | 2 | 22

Aecom Project Team:

Andy Patterson	Landscape Architect
Sheina Rijanto	Urban Designer
Patrick Clarke	Urban Designer / Masterplanner
Jimmy Lu	Urban Designer

Design Review Panel:

Panel Chair	Alex Wright, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 1	Phil Jones, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 2	Sharon McClements, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 3	Eoin Farrell, MAG Expert Advisor
Member 4	Ciaran Mackel, MAG Expert Advisor

1.0 General

- 1.01 In 2006, the Northern Ireland government adopted the Policy for Architecture and the Built Environment, and in 2007 established a publicly selected group of professionals – the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) – to advise on the implementation and development of the policy. MAG promotes the highest quality of places for all those involved in using and shaping them.
- 1.02 A central part of our work is providing direct advice on new development schemes by means of undertaking a design briefing or review. This is a method which can play an important role in creating better developments and improving people's quality of life.
- 1.03 The design review offers independent, impartial advice on the design of new buildings, landscapes and public spaces. The Planning or Design team are not bound to act on any of the recommendations made by the MAG Design Review Panel (hereinafter called 'the Panel').
- 1.04 The Panel's main terms of reference are those of the Architecture and Built Environment Policy for Northern Ireland. Planning policies are not generally referenced.
- 1.05 The report on the review, which is classed as 'Restricted', will be issued to Andy Patterson for distribution. The Department for Communities' Architecture and Information Management Branches will independently consider whether disclosure should take place in response to any Freedom of Information requests, and will consult with MAG before finalizing its decision on disclosure. If the Project Team choose to bring the report into the public domain, it must be published in its entirety.

2.00 Preamble

- 2.01 The MAG welcomes the opportunity to be able to review this important project for a second time, following the early-stage review in September 2021.
- 2.02 The Panel is grateful for the information provided prior to the meeting, for presentation from the design team and for their open and constructive engagement throughout the review.

3.00 Context

- 3.01 The YSI is intended to resolve the junction of 3 motorways to better facilitate the smooth movement of vehicular traffic. Prior to entering into discussion with contractors the Minister asked that a review of active travel and placemaking be undertaken, in order to identify any potential opportunities for community benefits to be realised as part of the project. Aecom has undertaken both the road design and is undertaking the requested review, the process for which includes consultation with the Design Review Panel and engagement with other stakeholder groups.
- 3.02 Following the early-stage design review the project has undergone substantial development and been subject to numerous on-going consultations with stakeholder groups.
- 3.03 The final report is anticipated to be submitted to the Department of Infrastructure in approximately three weeks, with the report intended to help inform the decision as to the nature of the next stage of the project.
- 3.04 The analysis and design options prepared by Aecom have been carried out in accordance with the brief provided to them regarding the scope of the report. Possible revisions to the strategic objectives for the transport interchange were not included within this scope of work. Whilst the Panel appreciate the need to address the transport priorities relating to the project, we noted that the existing strategic objectives were reported as precluding any obstruction to the free flow of traffic at the interchange. We suggest that there may be overall benefit in considering options which may create some control of the free flow of vehicular traffic, but which may offer significant benefits in relation to cost, land, use, sustainability, connectivity or placemaking. Although consideration of such options is understood to be outside the scope of the current Aecom report, we suggest the scope of future work might usefully include consideration of other possible options which may provide greater overall benefit.

4.00 Traffic modelling

- 4.01 The Panel queried the scope and nature of the traffic modelling that was being used to inform the proposals. There was concern that the modelling may not be employing appropriate methods of traffic prediction, which had taken into account anticipated levels of changes in modes of transport away from private car use, together with managed reductions in travel per se. The modelling may also not take into account the additional traffic which will be induced by the additional capacity, which could quickly erode any congestion and economic benefits of the scheme. We suggest the methodology of the traffic modelling is confirmed and that a description of this is included within the final report, along with any assumptions underlying the projected traffic flows, so that these can be readily understood.
- 4.02 The Panel questioned the type of modelling that was currently being undertaken as part of the assessment of the various options. We have some concerns that this modelling assessment is not been undertaken on a whole-city basis. We suggest that the scope of the modelling is confirmed and make clear in the final report.

5.00 Assessment of the options

- 5.01 The project team explained the development of the criteria that were being used to assess the options for the project and the methodology used in preparing the summary assessments. The Panel welcomed the development of the criteria in a manner bespoke to the project. We also appreciate that providing quantifiable assessment against such a range of parameters is not possible within the time available and that the methodology that has been employed is appropriate. This methodology uses assessments by the project team, which are inevitably, to some extent, subjective. We therefore suggest that it may be helpful to ask other stakeholder groups, or the public, to assess the various options using the same methodology, so that the comparative assessment of the various options by different constituencies could be clearly presented.
- 5.02 The Project team explained that cost would form part of the assessment, but as yet no costs were in the public domain as they have some elements of commercial sensitivity attached to them. The Panel appreciated the need for confidentiality but suggested that a clear cost benefit analysis for each option on a common basis, would be key in informing any decision. Making as much as possible of this analysis publicly available would aid transparency in the decision-making process. The Panel expressed some concern regarding possible cost increases and therefore affordability, as this may lead to what could be seen as non-core expenditure (i.e. placemaking) being cut.

- 5.03 The project team report that in order to place a value on the more intangible benefits of the various options they had been in contact with the Department's Economist. For example, benefits related to health and well-being or those related to a positive sense of place, could be substantial. It was noted that revisions to the Treasury rules on such evaluations were likely to apply in this instance and that clarity was being sought as how these recent revisions would be applied in NI. The Panel welcome the engagement with the economist to help ensure the quantification of the full range of benefits associated with each option was generated using an accepted methodology.
- 5.04 We await with interest the evaluation of the revised option 2 and its most recent iteration with input from Alan Baxter Associates.

6.00 Placemaking

- 6.01 The project team outlined the importance of placemaking within their analysis and in the development of the proposed options. The Panel appreciated the emphasis which had been given to placemaking but had some related observations. In some areas, such as the area in front of the railway station, or the public park parallel to Corporation street, there appeared to be a relationship between the space created, the surrounding buildings, and their use, which offered a good prospect for successful placemaking. However, in some areas dominated by the highways infrastructure, these components appeared more absent, in whole or in part. The challenge of creating successful places in such areas is extremely difficult. We appreciate the intended use of landscape elements and public art to help engender a sense of place. However, we remain concerned that in various areas across the site there is a danger that the quality of routes and connections may deteriorate over time, especially in areas which don't benefit from possessing the core characteristics of successful urban spaces. In such liminal spaces the challenge of placekeeping can be as high as that of placemaking, and any degradation in the environment can all too quickly result in routes which may appear unwelcoming, or even threatening after dark.
- 6.02 Large deck areas can be very difficult to make welcoming places, as can areas beneath major road infrastructure. We suggested the project team may wish to refer to Michael Sorkin Studios proposals for sports facilities under a section of motorway, which was prepared relatively recently for the Dept of Finance.
- 6.03 The project team presented the improvements to the street sections. The Panel support this approach and welcomed the more appropriate distribution of uses for cars, cyclists and pedestrians across the available street widths. In order to help deliver successful streets as part of a successful public realm, we suggest rebalancing the emphasis away for highways use as far as possible. This may relate to reduce

design speeds, but also to maintaining scrutiny of the required number of carriageway lanes, reducing these where ever possible.

- 6.04 The Panel welcome the greatly improved cycle infrastructure provided and the compliance with LTN 1/20. We noted the significant increases in student population in the area and likely increase in residences. We encourage the design team to make generous provision for pedestrian use as part of the street design and at major crossing points, particularly those close to the University of Ulster.
- 6.05 The street trees are likely to be important parts of the enhancements to the streetscape and the extent of these, as illustrated was also welcomed.
- 6.06 The Panel suggested that the report make clearer reference to the presence of the Ulster University campus, and specifically to the pedestrian access needs of up to 5,500 students living in the area directly adjacent to YSI.

7.00 Engagement

- 7.01 The project team reported the extensive range of stakeholders with whom they had been in contact in the process of preparing the proposals. The Panel welcomed the extensive consultation already undertaken. We suggest that in addition, given the nature of the proposals, it may be helpful at this stage to consult with representatives from the private sector, including housing associations and contractors.

8.00 Phasing

- 8.01 The project team outlined their consideration of phasing and the opportunities for fast, early measures to provide tangible improvements that might help encourage community buy-in. The Panel suggest the strategic approach to phasing is included within the report, as this is likely to be key in successful implementation of the project.

9.00 Climate change/Sustainability

- 9.01 The site lies substantially within areas of coastal and surface water flood risk. The project team explained that flood protection measures from the river were being design under a separate project. It was reported that a coastal flood wall is currently proposed off site. As mentioned previously the location of any proposed flood gates might be usefully ascertained at this stage, as these might impact the pedestrian permeability of the site networks in their wider context.
- 9.02 The project team also outlined the SuDS measures included within the proposals. The Panel suggest that the scale of the surface water

flooding issue is quantified so that it can be assessed against the measures currently included. Resilience of this area of the city to surface water flood events would appear to be one to the major potential benefits of the project. Such provisions are also likely to improve to ecology and biodiversity in the area. We suggest these provisions should be as ambitious as possible and could offer valuable use for residual areas of land that exist within the site area.

- 9.03 Although we understand the wider traffic management context is outside the scope of the Aecom report, the Panel expressed concerns regarding the priority given to increasing road capacity within this urban area. Many major cities internationally are currently looking holistically at development options to help balance their economic, social and environmental targets. Transport in the UK is currently reported as representing 27% of total carbon emissions. Various policy and other measures are being actively pursued in other cities to promote a significant modal shift in transport patterns towards more sustainable modes, to help meet challenging overall carbon targets. Within this context carrying out infrastructure projects aimed at increasing road capacity in urban areas for private car use, appears to go against the grain of initiatives elsewhere. We therefore welcome the review of these proposals, but suggest that the report makes explicit the priorities and strategic objectives on which they are based, so that these may be clearly understood by those using the report.

10.00 Presentation and Communication

- 10.01 The panel appreciates the careful work that has already gone into presenting the proposals. We suggest the following minor points that may help third parties access the information most efficiently.
- 10.02 The sketch views are very informative, but we suggest that it would be helpful to include an orientation arrow so that it was clear from where the views were taken. Similarly, it may be helpful in some instances to include a photo of the existing condition next to the proposal sketch, so that the extent of the improvement can be easily understood.
- 10.03 We support the proposal for co-design, but would like the project team to add which projects could be identified to take forward on this basis and to suggest models for participative design.

11.00 Conclusions

- 11.01 We congratulate the project team on the progress of their work to date. We appreciate the project team's responses to our previous comments.
- 11.02 The Panel shares the broad aspirations of the project team. This site offers enormous potential for the surrounding neighbourhoods and the

City. Ensuring that the project realises the maximum potential economic, social and environmental benefits is a demanding undertaking, and we hope our comments are helpful as you look forward to completing your report.

Prof Alexander Wright

MAG Expert Advisor, Chair of the MAG Design Review Panel

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