

Liveable City Workshop : Summary of group discussions at workshop on 12th February focusing on the Eastside area of the city

Problems/Issues with the Eastside area

- Need for an overall plan for the area looking at the next 10 years which integrates planned development and provides a vehicle to capture funding: transport and planning needs to come together
- The existing/proposed buildings are too inward looking
- Difficult to cross the roads/pedestrian desire lines badly catered for
- Public transport poor
- Too much traffic and too fast - needs reducing
- Dangerous for cyclists
- A highway infrastructure from the 1960s
- Focus should be on people living/working there - inconvenience should be for though traffic not pedestrians
- Heritage is hidden or under-appreciated (e.g. Kirkgate)
- Lots of wasted space

Solutions

Traffic/highways

- Take out loop traffic with an ambitious temporary scheme (as done in Ghent) - don't wait for expensive scheme
- Institute a 20mph limit across the whole of the Eastside
- Remove all through traffic
- Undertake "random" temporary road closures to see what happens
- Car free weekends and events
- Put in place obstructions (planters etc) to immediately calm traffic

Put pedestrians first

- Model people movements not cars
- Create pedestrian route along south side of railway viaduct, opening up arches to provide north south routes
- Provide more benches for older/disabled pedestrians
- Need to develop a "pedestrian first" approach. E.g. slow traffic by introducing right angled bends. Make it more difficult for cars
- Pedestrian crossing timings - improve with pedestrians being prioritised
- Undertake proper testing by people with mobility challenges to identify issues and problems
- Connect islands of development by wide crossings

Land use and greenspace

- Aim for a 50% decrease in tarmac across the area by a radical reconfiguring of the road space
- Institute a "massive" tree planting programme taking advantage of the narrowing of highways/recovery of wasted land
- Opportunities for new green streets public spaces/avenues e.g:

- “Green” St Peters Street – potentially with an exposed Lady Beck (currently underground). Reduce road capacity to encourage drivers not to use the road. Could be the focus of a new “green boulevard” running past the Palace Public House and over Crown Point Bridge to the new Aire Park. Could extend through Quarry Hill and over footbridge to Mabgate or take in mini-Holland scheme
- Create “Minster Park” - taking advantage of proposals to sever the city’s loop road. This could be the focus for a hub of green streets. Could be funded by release of development plots
- St Cecilia Street – this should be treated and laid out as a proper public square
- Eastgate Roundabout. Create a T junction to release land
- East Street to be pedestrianised/calmed
- Identify other “leftover” space for pocket parks
- Open up the area to the river more effectively

A sense of place

- Create a sense of orientation – difficult to navigate the area (e.g. the pedestrian bridge to the Royal Armouries is not currently signposted) through more effective wayfinding
- Bus station – an important focus for the area but it needs to be given more presence and more activity needs to be created (current refurb plans are modest). Potential for reconfiguration/release of land for building which in turn would generate revenue for improvements
- Improve links to wider city (e.g. Kirkgate could become a pedestrian street linking the market to the Minster and Crown Point)
- Create a “network” of historic buildings in the area
- Marsh Lane – should this go underground or be lowered and a (garden) bridge created to link with the higher points on Quarry Hill
- Mabgate footbridge – transform to provide a “super Disney” link to the area
- Create a new cultural hub in the Brick Street/Brussels Street area
- Provide opportunities/locations for small businesses/shops/cafes including pop ups and street markets (should be located within existing communities)

Other issues

- Consider re-opening the Marsh Lane station
- Cycle lessons to encourage people to cycle in busy areas
- Should some form of road charging be introduced?
- Shared bicycles for the area would be a positive
- How can we ensure that the area has a diversity of uses (e.g. a quarter of the land occupied by buildings should be non residential)