



Sunderland Central Area urban design strategy

July 2008

Sunderland Central Area Urban Design Strategy

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Preface

Introducing the Urban Design Strategy

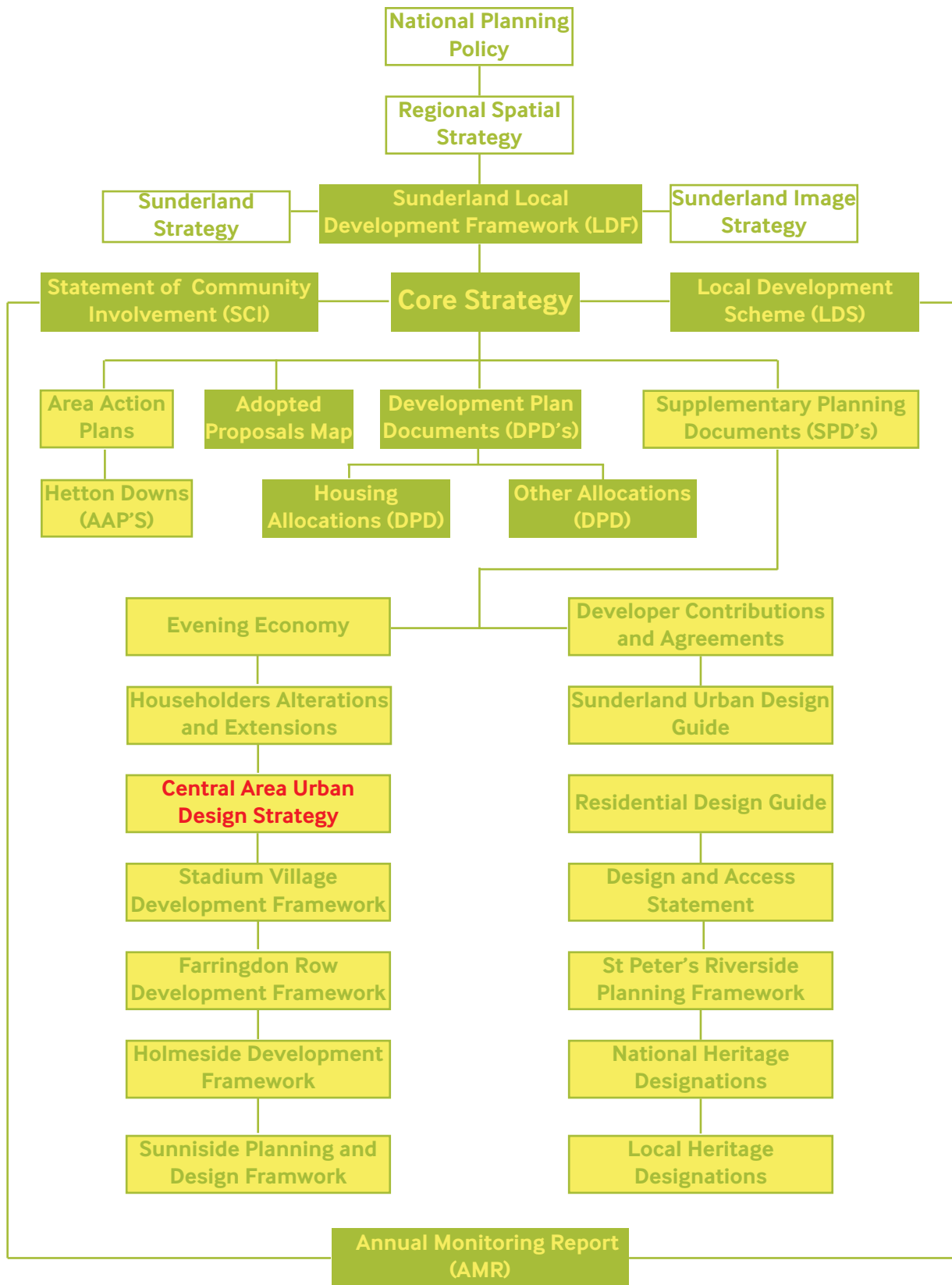
- i The Urban Design Strategy for the City of Sunderland's central area is an important step in reshaping the city's heart. The strategy establishes a clear vision for the type of place the City Council wants the central area to be, drawing together development proposals and draft design guidance.
- ii The aims of the Urban Design Strategy are threefold:
 - establish a strong urban form that delivers quality and reflects the needs of the central area today
 - define clearly the role of the central area and to describe a range of opportunities that will contribute clearly to that role
 - deliver positive change that revitalises the central area and accelerates image change
- iii The Urban Design Strategy for the central area has been prepared by David Lock Associates for Sunderland City Council, Sunderland ARC and the Sunnyside Partnership.
- iv There is a strong commitment from Sunderland City Council and its partners to first class urban design, prioritising the design of the city's central area for people, allowing all users to move around easily, conveniently and safely without getting lost or confused, and without feeling intimidated by traffic. In order to achieve this commitment the central area must be clearly structured around easily identifiable places, streets and landmarks.
- v A top quality built environment within the central area also draws upon the considerable history and identity of Sunderland. All new development that takes place should be of the highest architectural and design standards. New development must conserve and enhance the existing character and cityscape qualities of the central area, carefully repairing and stitching together those areas that have become fragmented by previous large scale re-development.
- vi This Document was formally adopted by the City Council as a Supplementary Planning Document on the 25th July 2008 it is intended to:
 - Inform development control decisions, guiding opportunities as they come forward in the central area
 - Reinforce emerging planning policy for the central area
 - Establish design principles and guidance for built form and the public realm against which all proposals within the central area will be assessed
- vii Importantly, the strategy provides guidance for developers to respond to, and for the City Council to use as a basis for decision making. The strategy is necessary in raising design awareness but should not hinder design creativity. Strategic design objectives are set out for built form and public realm, and design principles for key sites are also identified. These are informed by a detailed appraisal of the city's central area and its context.
- viii The illustrations and diagrams which are used in the strategy are indicative and do not preclude the promotion of alternative proposals where these meet the strategic design objectives. Schemes which differ from the objectives or the site-specific design principles will have to demonstrate and justify the reasons for this difference including robust design analysis.
- ix The strategy sets out a vision for the central area, supported by a contextual analysis. It introduces a clear structure for the central area and provides strategic design guidance for built form and the public realm to underpin the vision. Area-specific proposals are intended to help deliver the vision.
- x It is anticipated that the strategy will be of significant value to the citizens of Sunderland, developers, investors and all those interested and involved in the development process in the central area.

Policy background

- xi The Urban Design Strategy supplements policies within the adopted City of Sunderland Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1998 and in particular policies contained within UDP Alteration No.2 (Central Sunderland). Policy B2A relates to the built environment and sustainable urban design. The Urban Design Strategy has been prepared in response to this policy which states:

"Specific guidance for the central area/city centre will be prepared in the form of a city centre design strategy"
- xii Preparation of the Central Area Urban Design Strategy began before the Planning Inspector's final report on UDP Alteration No 2. The Inspector's report concluded that the sections of supporting text to policy S2A relating to the Central Area should be deleted and that the policy should only refer to the retail core, city centre and Grove local centre. The boundary to which this document refers is contained within the previous version of UDP Alteration No 2. It is not considered appropriate to amend the boundary of the Central Area Urban Design Strategy to reflect the Inspector's report given that the strategy seeks to provide design guidance for sites on the northern and southern side of the River Wear. In addition it is impossible to fully consider the long term potential of the river corridor without taking account of key development sites such as Stadium Village, Sheepfolds, Bonnersfield and St Peter's. For these reasons that central area boundary as identified in the previous version of UDP Alteration No 2 has been used to define the study area for this Supplementary Planning Document.
- xiii The strategy must be considered within the policy context set by the adopted UDP and UDP Alteration No.2. An overview of the central area planning policy context is given in section 2 of this strategy.

LDF family tree



- Optional
- Required

Masterplan



1.0 The vision for Sunderland central area

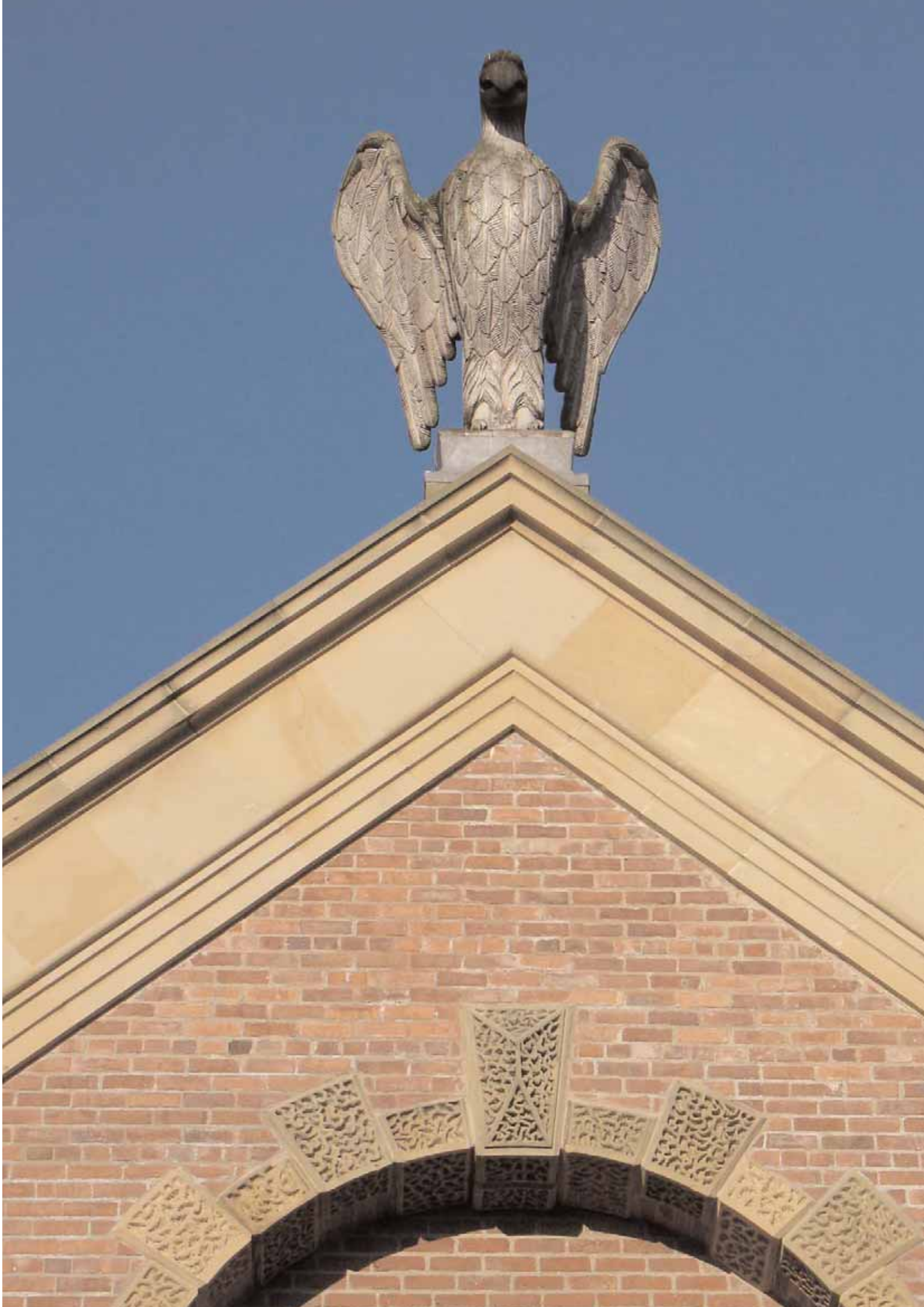
Sunderland - a great city for living.

Vision - The City of Sunderland is prosperous, vibrant and attractive. The central area is an economic driver of investment and regeneration, a place that is valued by the whole community where people want to live, study, work and visit. Architectural and urban design excellence underpins a first class environment with a distinctive character and identity that draws on a rich heritage of innovation and learning. Great streets and walks, beautiful squares and parks provide the setting for a lively and dynamic mix of uses which are safe and accessible to all. As a leader in the North East of England, Sunderland is the great city for living.

- 1.1 The vision will guide the ongoing development of Sunderland central area. It aims to meet the economic and social needs of all those who live, work and study in Sunderland, as well as those who visit the city.
- 1.2 Fundamental to the success of the vision is the creation of a recognisable, positive image for Sunderland. This will be achieved through a clear structure for the central area that draws on, and celebrates, Sunderland's heritage. It will embrace elements which contribute to the intrinsic character of the city but also address those areas which have been less successful over the years.
- 1.3 In addition, the success of the vision will involve improving the physical accessibility of the central area, maximising sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. It will ensure that a vibrant mix of uses are offered within Sunderland central area, reducing the need to travel between services, amenities and employment opportunities.

Vision objectives

- 1.4 The vision for the central area is supported by four key objectives. The objectives reinforce the city's identity and structure to make Sunderland an easy place to visit and spend time in. The vision objectives must be reflected in all proposals within the central area and will be used as a means of assessing whether schemes contribute towards achieving the vision.
- 1.5 The vision objectives will:
 - Create a clear, people-focused and distinctive identity for the central area through careful restructuring of the city's urban form, establishing city districts and stitching disjointed locations back together with distinctive buildings of the highest architectural and design standards that front the public realm
 - Make it easy to arrive at the central area and move around by introducing clear approaches and gateways and by reinforcing a connected network of beautiful city streets and walks identifying straightforward and legible linkages to all parts of the city beyond the centre
 - Enhance the experience of being in the central area by capitalising on the city's heritage and attractions with new mixed use opportunities; enhance the public realm to create a safe, high quality, welcoming and distinctive character; promote the necessary mix of uses to establish a vibrant central area that is safe and well used by everyone at all times of the day and into the evening
 - Bring forward major regeneration projects underpinned by robust strategic central area design guidance that will ensure architectural and urban design excellence



2.0 Context analysis and appraisal

The development of Sunderland central area

- 2.1 The urban form of Sunderland central area can be traced back to the three separate settlements of Monkwearmouth, Bishopwearmouth and Old Sunderland.
- 2.2 **Monkwearmouth** - although the greater part of Sunderland lies to the south of the River Wear, one of its earliest settlements grew around the ancient monastic centre of St Peter's. The settlement of Monkwearmouth dates back to 674 when Benedict Biscop, a Northumbrian nobleman, was granted land on the banks of the River Wear to establish a monastery.
- 2.3 **Old Sunderland** - some years after starting his monastery, Benedict was granted more land on the south bank of the river. This separated or 'sundered' land beyond the river was probably the origin of the name Sunderland. The riverside settlement of Sunderland developed to become an important centre of shipbuilding and a thriving coal exporting port. The area was also the commercial centre of the city before later becoming established along Fawcett Street as part of the 19th century development of Sunderland.
- 2.4 **Bishopwearmouth** - during the Middle Ages, Bishopwearmouth developed as a farming community and religious centre. The area today, centred round Sunderland Minster, retains some evidence of its historic street pattern.
- 2.5 Until the middle of the eighteenth century half a mile of fields and gardens separated the settlements of Old Sunderland and Bishopwearmouth. Eventually the areas merged as development continued along the major thoroughfare linking the two areas. The thoroughfare remains today as High Street West and High Street East.
- 2.6 The construction of the first Wearmouth Bridge in 1796, midway between Sunderland and Bishopwearmouth, accelerated the development process and provided a crucial link between the settlements on the north and south banks of the river. The bridge also created a strong north-south axis for future development.

The 19th Century

- 2.7 In 1810 a new north-south road to the south of the new bridge was constructed on land owned by the Fawcett family. This road (Fawcett Street) proved to be a catalyst for development and in 1814 William Jameson was commissioned to lay out the Fawcett Estate in the form of a substantial area of high quality terraced housing on both sides of Fawcett Street. By 1840 the development of John Street, West Sunnyside and Frederick Street was substantially complete.
- 2.8 By 1835, the three Wearmouth settlements had developed to such an extent they were formally linked under the Municipal Corporations Act.
- 2.9 The residential character of Fawcett Street began to change almost immediately. When a new link to Stockton Road was opened in 1836, Fawcett Street became a busy thoroughfare that was soon to become a focus of the city's retail and commercial activity.
- 2.10 The latter half of the 19th century was a period of rapid change. Major civic and commercial buildings included Sunderland Museum (1879, the first local authority museum outside London), Central Station (1879), and the Town Hall (1890).



Sunderland Museum - civic architecture of the highest quality

The 20th Century

2.11 The commercial and retail centre of the city has continued to move progressively westwards and southwards over the last two centuries. During the 1960s and 1970s the west side of the central area was radically transformed. The Bridges shopping centre with its three residential tower blocks was completed in 1969. Other significant developments around this period included the new Central Station and Crowtree Leisure Centre. These developments, in an area of 19th century housing, which had suffered from serious bomb damage during the second world war, led to the establishment of a new street pattern and block structure.



The Bridges - large scale redevelopment from the 1960s

2.12 Recent developments include the restoration of Mowbray Park (2000), the refurbishment of Sunderland Museum and new Winter Gardens (2001), and Park Lane Transport Interchange (1998). Whilst these and other recent developments have made a positive contribution to the city's environment, other areas will be subject to significant change and improvement. Notable areas of change will include the river corridor, the former Vaux brewery site, Stadium Park and Sheepfolds, the Holmeside Triangle and the Sunnyside area.

2.13 The maps and aerial photograph opposite show the historic evolution of the city's street pattern, blocks, plots and buildings.



Winter gardens and Mowbray Park - a popular city destination



1856

1856

- Gridiron street pattern is established throughout the central area
- High Street East and High Street West established as the major east-west thoroughfare
- Fawcett Street and the Wearmouth Bridge established as the major north-south thoroughfare
- Evidence of early street patterns at Bishopwearmouth and Old Sunderland retained



1919

1919

- Intensification of development includes the Vaux brewery



2007

2007

- The Bridges shopping centre has established a large-scale block structure to the east side of the central area
- The Inner Ring Road has a major impact on the historic block structure
- Vaux brewery site cleared for redevelopment
- Large scale buildings in the central area have altered the historic block structure. These include Crowtree Leisure Centre, Civic Centre and Park Lane Transport Interchange

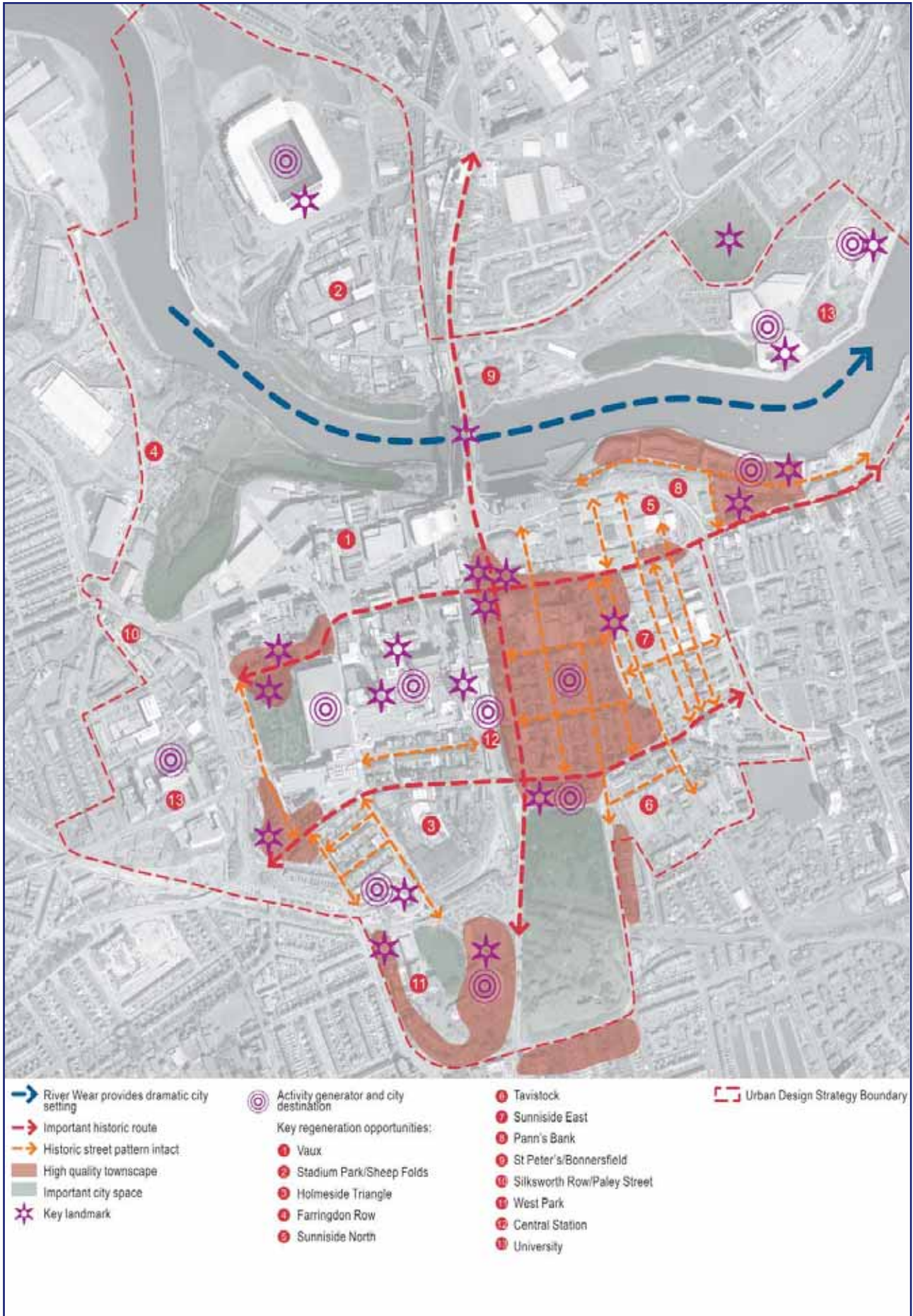
Urban design analysis

2.14 The urban design analysis is structured around three topics:

- Arriving in Sunderland - exploring the experience of approaching and arriving in the central area by foot, public transport and car and the places where all users become pedestrians
- Moving around Sunderland - considering the experience of walking around the different parts of the central area - streets and spaces as links
- Being in Sunderland - the quality of the city's attractions, mix of uses and places and spaces - streets and spaces as settings

2.15 Together, each of these elements contributes towards generating the central area's sense of place. They are assessed on the following pages and summarised on the diagrams shown.

Urban design strengths



Arriving in Sunderland

- 2.16 Approaches, city gateways and key points of arrival have a significant impact on the perception and image of the city - they determine first impressions. Journeys into the central area by public transport, car, cycle and on foot should be an uplifting experience. All too often the poor quality design of transport corridors, including related buildings and spaces, public transport stops and car parks have a detrimental impact on this experience.
- 2.17 The central area is well served by key routes from the north, west and south including Chester Road, Durham Road, Pallion New Road, Newcastle Road and Ryhope Road. However, many of these key approaches do little to communicate anything positive about Sunderland as a place, with few buildings of quality fronting and overlooking the routes, heavily engineered junctions and roundabouts with poor pedestrian provision, and areas of left-over space with no positive function.
- 2.18 The issue is exemplified by the arrival experience from the west, crossing Queen Alexandra Bridge. Here, unattractive industrial and retail units dominate the environment and underplay the importance of the route as an important approach route and gateway to the central area.
- 2.19 Elsewhere important gateway locations and buildings fail to create or signal a distinctive identity that marks arrival into the central area. This is particularly true of the sequence of nodes on the ring road circling the central area, the quality of which is generally poor and dominated by extensive traffic junctions. Buildings do not address the junctions and there are servicing and parking areas, truncated elevations and awkward left-over spaces which fragment the fabric of the central area in these key locations.



The ring road - important traffic function that fragments the structure of the central area



Park Lane transport interchange - a modern, high quality facility



Approaching the city centre via the Park Lane interchange

2.20 The ring road provides access to the city's major transport interchange at Park Lane as well as key multi-storey car parks around the central area. The majority of parking is provided to the west of the central area (St Mary's Way, The Bridges and the Civic Centre) where retailing is now concentrated. All of the city's car parks must provide a safe, welcoming and convenient environment to encourage drivers to become pedestrians in the central area.

2.21 In terms of public transport access the picture is mixed. There are important points of arrival at St Peter's and the Stadium of Light Metro stations, Central Station and Park Lane transport interchange. The Metro station and Park Lane transport interchange are attractive, modern facilities. Park Lane is busy at all times of the day with clear pedestrian entrances and a direct and wide route towards The Bridges along Park Lane.

2.22 In contrast, the Central Station is dated, dark and cramped offering poor passenger facilities. The underground platform spaces are harshly lit and utilitarian. The main station building is meanly appointed and has been unsympathetically managed and extended through the years. The entrances open onto formless spaces surrounded by buildings which do not provide a positive sense of arrival into the central area. However, major improvements are being carried out to transform the station including the installation of an escalator, alterations to the layout and appearance of the platforms including new lighting, and installation of real time service information.

2.23 On the basis of this analysis it will be critical for the Urban Design Strategy to address the following issues:

- Ensure that approach routes leading into the central area are of a consistent quality in terms of public realm and adjoining built development
- Poor design underplays the quality of junctions around the ring road. These areas should be designed as proper gateways announcing arrival into the central area including the environment around the city's landmark bridges to provide a positive first impression of the city
- Enhance Central Station and the surrounding environment to match the quality of the Park Lane interchange and improve the arrival experience by public transport
- Provide accessible, convenient 'gold standard' parking facilities focusing on the quality of the pedestrian environment into the central area

Moving around the central area

2.24 The central area has retained much of the historic gridiron street pattern that characterises its development - straight streets, consistent frontages, clear views and corners marked by distinctive buildings. There is a good level of pedestrian permeability in many areas with several primary east-west and north south streets crossing the central area, in particular Fawcett Street and Burdon Road, High Street East and West, and Borough Road and Holmeside. The gridiron pattern is particularly intact around Sunnyside and provides a strong character and sense of place to the eastern part of the city centre. Generally the compact nature of the central area makes it easy to walk around.



A fine network of streets in Sunnyside

2.25 Whilst the historic street pattern to the eastern side of the central area provides a good level of access and legibility, large-scale redevelopments on the western side, including The Bridges and the Crowtree Leisure Centre, have diminished permeability by creating large blocks with managed routes that are no longer part of the public realm. The closure of routes through these buildings in the evening and at night minimises pedestrian access.



Crowtree Leisure Centre provides a barrier with limited, low quality pedestrian environment

2.26 Other connections in the central area particularly between key points of arrival and major attractions are poor. For example, some poor quality buildings and spaces, as well as inconvenient road junctions, diminish the quality of routes from Central Station to Mowbray Gardens and Sunnyside, as well as Sunnyside to Panns Bank and the riverside.

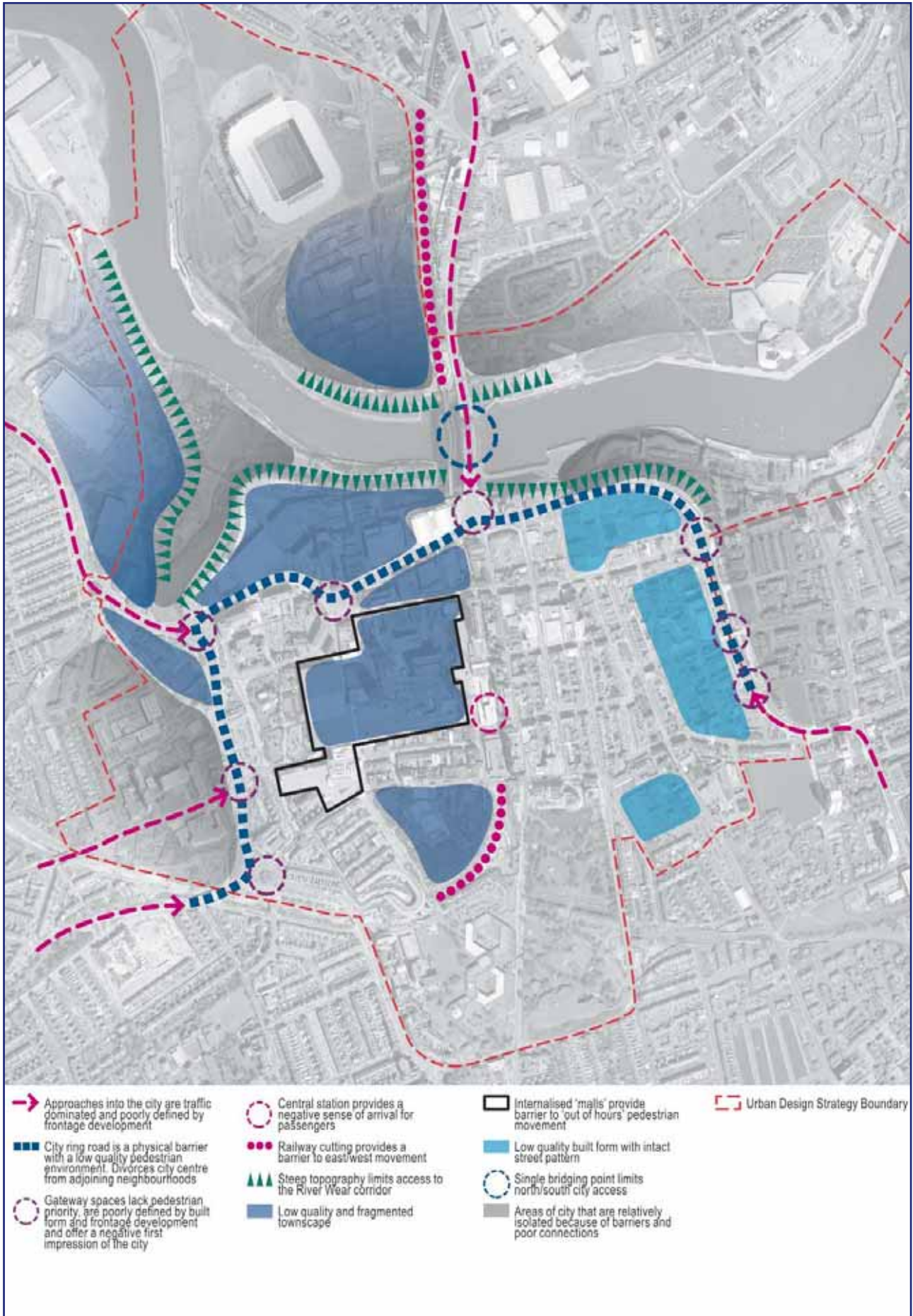
2.27 There are few connections between the central area and the riverside corridor and key attractions such as the proposed World Heritage site around St Peter's church, the National Glass Centre, the University of Sunderland St Peter's campus, the Stadium of Light, and Festival Park. Both the river corridor and the city's ring road make it difficult to access other parts of the city.

2.28 Cultural attractions such as the Empire Theatre, Mowbray Gardens, City Library and Art Gallery are all found close to one another. However, poor signposting and the low quality of many of the streets and walks do not reinforce the connections between these attractions. Poor surfacing, weakly defined built form - including blank elevations and façades, and highway infrastructure particularly associated with the ring road - create barriers to movement.



Pedestrian barriers discourage easy access into the central area

Urban design weaknesses



2.29 On the basis of this analysis it will be critical for the Urban Design Strategy to:

- Overcome barriers including the ring road, the River Wear, and large development blocks to enhance permeability and ease of movement
- Define a structure of streets and walks across the central area through a clear public realm framework for the central area
- Ensure that streets and walks are well defined and overlooked by a high standard of built development
- Improve signposting and waymarking within the central area making it easier for people to find their way around and to make connections



The Empire Theatre and Dun Cow public house are important city buildings of distinction

Being in Sunderland

2.30 The experience of being in a city is made up of interrelated elements. The mix of uses at different times of the day and into the evening; the attractions that are unique or special to the city; and the quality of the buildings and the public realm that provide the physical setting and backdrop to activities.

2.31 Sunderland is fortunate to have many features that add to its appeal. The central area is built on a riverside and is close to the sea. The physical environment is extremely attractive in parts with a mix of distinctive buildings, elegant streets and beautiful parks. Landmarks such as the Stadium of Light and Wearmouth Bridge reinforce the identity of the city. In addition the National Glass Centre, St Peter's church and the proposed World Heritage Site, the stunning 19th century Empire Theatre which is well programmed and attracts a wide audience, the Winter Gardens and the distinctive form of the Civic Centre add to the quality and richness of the built environment and contribute to the vitality of the city. All of these attractions are located within a central area that is compact and potentially walkable.

2.32 Sunderland offers a good mix of retail, service and employment uses, and has a lively evening economy focused around Vine Place, Park Lane, Low Row and Green Terrace. The regeneration of Sunnyside has provided the city with a range of unique and more upmarket retailers, bars and restaurants, and the historic riverside area is growing in popularity as a destination.



The National Glass Centre - a contemporary city destination



Public art in Mowbray Gardens



'Anywhere' architecture at a key city gateway



Street clutter diminishes the spatial qualities of the central area environment

2.33 However, although there is much that is positive about the central area, there are areas where significant improvements should be made. Many of the city's attractions are dispersed, poorly signposted and hard to get to. Although the overall mix of uses is good there are still areas where single uses tend to dominate, for example the retail area around The Bridges, High Street West and Brougham Street which 'shut down' after closing hours becoming quiet with little street activity. This is compounded by the limited opportunities for people to live within the central area and by the nature of the evening economy which is dominated by drinking establishments that appeal to a narrow age group. Whilst it is important to retain and encourage continuous retail frontage in certain areas, where opportunities arise a greater mix of uses will be encouraged.

2.34 In terms of the central area's built environment the many outstanding individual buildings and areas of strong collective townscape are diminished by large scale redevelopment from the 1960s and 1970s that have no local character. Even some later redevelopment is unremarkable and does little to enhance the character and sense of place of Sunderland. Industrial premises, small warehouses and workshops contribute to the mix of uses and employment opportunities available but do not make the best use of potentially valuable central area sites.

2.35 The central area also has a poor quality public realm in places, with few public squares and spaces of note which allow people to stop and linger. Where space is made and seats are provided in busy and well connected places, such as the junction of Maritime Place and Crowtree Road, people will stop and sit even if the quality of the environment is quite ordinary. Several important junctions between key streets are identifiable, particularly around the ring road, where enhancement to create a positive public space rather than a space dominated by traffic must be targeted. These places have the potential to be great, vibrant places within the central area.

2.36 Finally there is the visual clutter of uncoordinated street furniture, paving, signposts, lighting columns, bus shelters, seating, planters and litter bins, whilst poor maintenance in certain areas detracts from the overall environmental quality. There are also very few street trees in the central area.

2.37 It will be important for the strategy to deal with the following issues:

- Structure the central area around identifiable places and districts each offering a complementary but distinct mix of uses catering for a wide range of age groups and interests
- Introduce new opportunities for central area living
- Ensure that the public realm is well overlooked and safe, simply detailed utilising high quality materials, and well maintained
- Make sure that all new development is of a high architectural standard and contributes to the character and identity of the central area
- Identify new spaces in key locations that will be busy, well used and provide a focus for development

Analysis summary and conclusions

2.38 The urban design analysis has shown that although Sunderland has many significant strengths and assets, problems tend to combine giving the central area an ambivalent identity without a sufficiently strong or distinctive sense of place. These may be summarised as:

- The central area needs to strike a better balance between the interests of drivers and pedestrians, at present the balance is skewed in favour of traffic
- Shoppers, workers and visitors value the ability to drive or take the bus into the central area, but the experience of pedestrians - especially on Fawcett Street - is uncomfortable
- The sense of arrival to the central area is poor, particularly from the north and via the Central Station
- Sunderland does not match the best British and European cities in terms of creating a welcoming environment for pedestrians and encouraging activity in streets and public spaces
- Key pedestrian links are hostile, confusing and traffic dominated
- The central area has very few quality public spaces for orientation, relaxation, social interaction and formal and informal events
- There are very few places - public or semi public - to sit in comfortable, safe, and sheltered settings
- Sunderland has a quality architecture and cityscape that has been neglected in places and is waiting to be rediscovered and celebrated
- Sunderland has yet to realise the full potential of its unique riverside and coastal location
- The central area has some high quality architecture and areas of strong cityscape value (Sunnside for example) but many fine buildings are under used, while key open spaces have been neglected

- The Bridges shopping centre has protected the retail function of the central area, but at the expense of the integrity and continuity of the central area's urban form and movement routes

- Out of business hours, substantial tracts of the central area are almost deserted

2.39 All the key ingredients of a great city are there but they need to be made stronger and work together through a clear structure and framework within which development proposals can be brought forward and progressed with confidence.

2.40 The Urban Design Strategy focuses on:

- Establishing a clear identity for Sunderland central area by providing a strong structure that draws on its many strengths and assets
- Making it easy and attractive to arrive at and move around the central area
- Enhancing the experience of being in Sunderland central area through opportunities for a greater mix of uses and improvements to the quality of the built environment and public realm

2.41 These key elements of the Strategy and the new structure for the central area are set out in Section 3 'Structuring the Central Area'.



The Winter Gardens are distinctive and well detailed

Planning policy context

2.42 National, regional and local planning policies provide a highly supportive context for this guidance document. The relevant policies establish the broad framework within which this guidance has been produced as well as indicating the future direction of development in the city. In addition, the statutory development plan will also act as an important implementation tool to this guidance so that planning decisions can be made with confidence in the city.

National policy

2.43 Current national planning policies place urban design at the heart of the Government's objectives for sustainable development. Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) sets out the Government's planning objectives and encourages local planning authorities not to accept development which fails to improve the character and quality of an area (paragraph 13). The key themes are context, avoiding segregation, and providing public spaces which bring people together and promote physical activity and recreation (paragraph 35). In addition, importance is placed on connecting the needs of people, whether it is jobs, homes or services, to the nature of places.

2.44 PPS3 sets out priorities for the provision of new housing giving particular emphasis to sustainable locations which have good access to jobs, services and public transport such as town and city centres. Enhancing opportunities for the introduction of new places for people to live in Sunderland's central area and city centre is a key feature of the Urban Design Strategy.

2.45 A key theme of PPS 6, which sets out the Government's priorities for planning for town centres, is the need to create attractive and safe environments in order to enhance the competitiveness of town centres. (paragraph 2.19). In this regard, it is important to locate and design development so that it functions well and improves character and quality.

2.46 More specific guidance is provided through the supporting guide to PPS6 on design and implementation tools. In the guide, specific advice is provided to ensure that developments: front the street; respect building lines of the existing street and build up to the edge of the curtilage; maximise active street frontages; avoid inward looking facades and blank frontages; and provide level access from the public realm.

Regional policy

2.47 The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North East provides a strategic framework for Sunderland up to 2026. The plan was tested at an Examination in Public in 2006 and the Panel has published its recommendations. The Secretary of State will publish the proposed changes in spring 2008 and the plan will be adopted later in the year.

2.48 The RSS provides substantial strategic support for promoting high quality urban design through plans, programmes and strategies at the local level. In particular, this should contribute to the creation of sustainable communities (Policy 25).

2.49 Central Sunderland is identified as a key location for major mixed use development and regeneration as part of the Tyne & Wear City Region and there is a presumption that major economic development, retail and leisure development and knowledge-based small-medium sized enterprises will locate in central areas such as Sunderland central area, before more peripheral locations are considered (Policy 5; Policy 6; Policy 12; policy 18A).

2.50 Furthermore, strategic support is given to:

- ensuring and enhancing accessibility to centres by walking, cycling, and public transport and encouraging a network of green spaces across cities (Policy 2)
- concentrating development at public transport nodes and improving interchange facilities (Policy 3, Policy 6 and Policy 52)
- designating Monkwearmouth as a World Heritage Site (Policy 6)
- identifying, managing and regenerating valuable historic areas (Policy 34)
- reducing crime and the fear of crime through good design (Policy 2)

Supportive local policies

2.51 The City of Sunderland Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 1998 and remains the statutory plan until the Local Development Framework (LDF) is adopted. For the central area of Sunderland covered by this guidance, the City of Sunderland UDP Alteration No 2 for Central Sunderland (UDP Alteration No2) was adopted on 26th September 2007 and has become a development plan document, as part of the Local Development Framework, for the central area.

2.52 Policies of the UDP Alteration No2 currently provide unequivocal support for 'raising the bar' in the standard of urban design in the central area. A critical policy is B2A, to which this guidance document is supplementary, because it seeks to secure the highest quality possible of built environment and new development.

2.53 All new developments must conform to existing design guidance and any new guidance adopted and will be required to:

- reinforce or enhance the established (or proposed) urban character
- respond to and reinforce scale, form and massing to make a positive contribution to a distinctive townscape
- ensure buildings enclose streets with continuous street frontages
- contribute to safety and security through natural surveillance
- integrate with the existing street pattern
- ensure parking is considered as integral
- respect and enhance the best qualities of nearby properties
- provide a minimum of 10% energy supply from renewable sources and achieve high energy efficiency in buildings

2.54 Another highly relevant policy relates to tall buildings (Policy B2B) which will only be permitted where they make a positive contribution to the character of the site and area, form a positive relationship with the skyline, will not detract from established views of important buildings and other features, have a proper relationship with the street and avoid generating adverse climatic conditions. Further guidance on tall buildings is given in Section 4 of this strategy document 'Central Area Strategic Design Guidance' (paragraphs 4.11 to 4.20).

2.55 The adopted UDP also contains policies guiding the nature of development and design. Policy CN14 stresses the importance of enhancing the image of the city through the quality of schemes in key prominent locations. Policy B19 requires measures to be included in developments to create a user friendly environment for pedestrians. Policy B20 encourages developers to include public art in schemes and policy B23 requires street furniture and signage to be designed in relation to both environmental and safety considerations. Policy B3 protects public and

private open space from harmful effects of development.

Local spatial policies

2.56 Spatial policies in the UDP Alteration No2 and adopted UDP identify comprehensive development sites, strategic locations for change evening economy character areas, retail development areas, transport investment priorities and environmental designations. Generally, according to policy EC5A, development on comprehensive development sites should deliver a "fine grained intensive pattern of development appropriate for an inner urban setting and making effective use of previously developed land".

2.57 In addition, a wide range of uses are acceptable, specified infrastructure should be provided and measures to promote cycling, walking and public transport should be incorporated. In strategic locations for change, Policy EC5B requires the diversification of uses, environmental and or major transport improvements and a comprehensive masterplan to be prepared. New development will need to contribute to intensifying development around public transport nodes, create linkages between uses and take account of prominent locations in enhancing the image of the city.

2.58 Policy S2A identifies the retail development areas with a defined retail core as the preferred area for new retail development. Policy EC6A encourages major regional development (such as large tourist attractions or conference centres) to be located on the Vaux site, Stadium area or Sheepfolds area. Policy SA74A identifies specific areas within which evening economy uses are already clustered and further encouraged. These are the night life quarter (the areas east and west of Park Lane); the theatre quarter (west of Crowtree Leisure Centre), Sunnyside and the cultural quarter (including the museum, Winter Gardens and the area north of Borough Road). A separate Supplementary Planning Document has been produced to provide further guidance on these character areas.

2.59 New transport investment in the central area is prioritised (in Policy T1A) to achieve the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor, a new pedestrian bridge from the Vaux site to Sheepfolds and a multi-user route on both sides of the River Wear.

2.60 Policies relating to existing environmental designations, such as Conservation Areas, other historic sites and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, provide a framework for this guidance and an opportunity to enhance the built and natural assets of the central area.

Interim and Supplementary Planning Documents

2.62 Besides this urban design guidance there are various other interim planning documents which will be brought forward as Supplementary Planning Documents following the adoption of UDP Alteration No.2.

2.63 A number of these are relevant to the detailed implementation of design policies in specific districts of the central area or specific types of development. These are:

- Residential Design Guide (Sept 2008)
- Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework (July 2008)
- Vaux Masterplan Strategy (May 2004)
- Farrington Row Development Framework (July 2006)
- Stadium Village Development Framework (October 2006)
- Evening Economy SPD (March 2007)

2.64 There are also existing conservation area character appraisals and management plans relevant to the four conservation areas which lie (at least in part) within the central area: Ashbrooke; Old Sunderland; Central and Bishopwearmouth. A management plan is also in preparation for St Peter's candidate World Heritage Site.

Tyne & Wear Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

2.65 The Tyne & Wear Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out visions and strategies for transport up to 2021 and an implementation programme for planned investment through the first five years (2006-2011). The objectives of the plan are to: maintain and improve personal accessibility; ensure existing public transport networks are effective; tackle transport inefficiency; and reduce the adverse environmental impacts of transport. Policies for Sunderland relate to congestion, road safety, accessibility, air quality and public transport. In

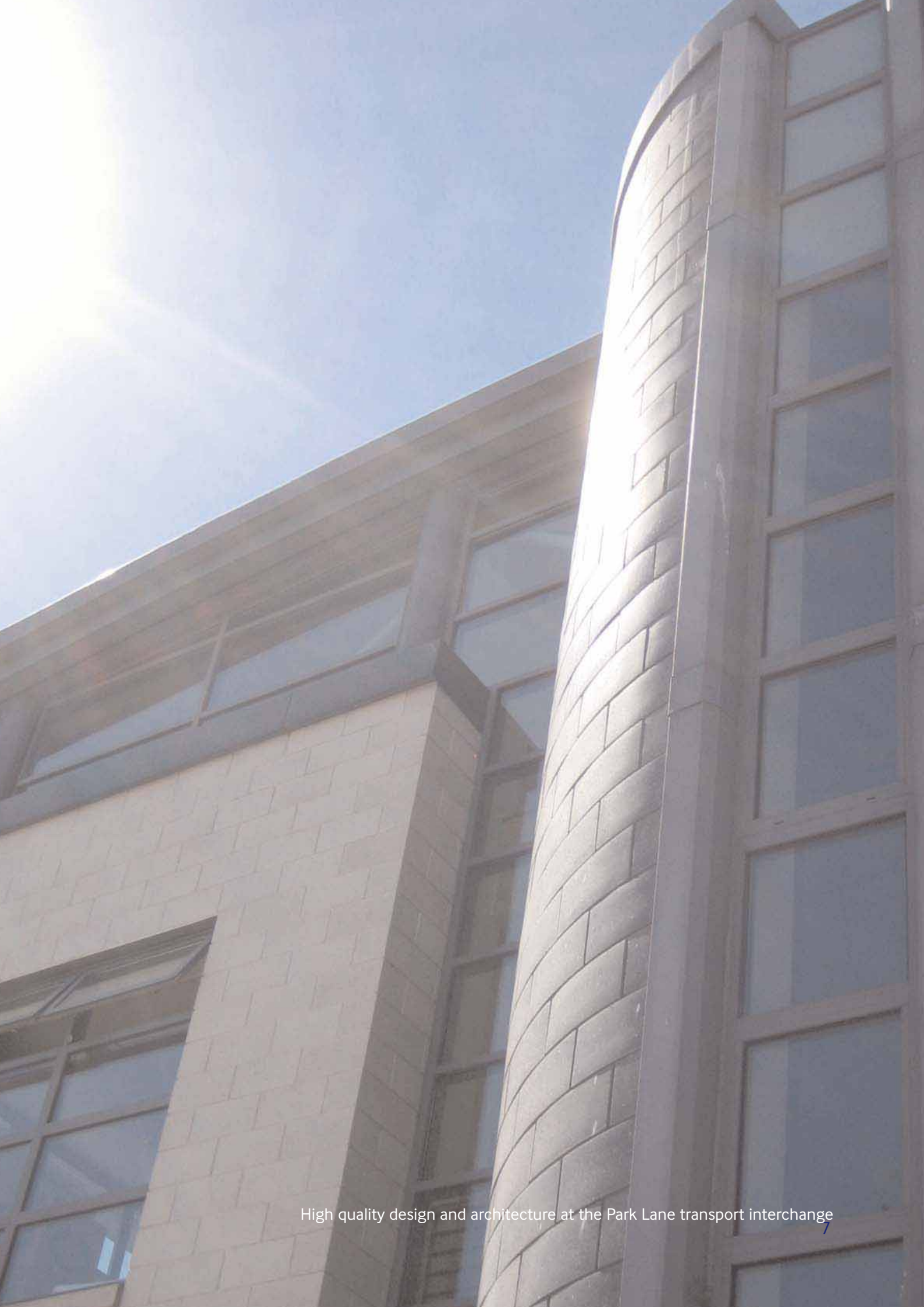
particular, Sunderland has been identified as a 'Historic Urban Centre in which tackling congestion should include road space re-allocation, travel planning, promoting walking & cycling, managing parking standards, supporting Park & Ride, improving public transport facilities and encouraging high density mixed use development on accessible brownfield sites'.

2.66 A key proposal of the LTP affecting Sunderland Central area is Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor (SSTC) which provides a strategic link from the A19 to the Port of Sunderland and is intended to provide a new gateway into the city and additional road and public transport capacity. It passes many of the key development opportunities identified by Sunderland arc and it is therefore critical that the SSTC is integrated as an urban road in the central area in order to enhance development opportunities.

2.67 The LTP cross-refers to the Sunderland Strategy 2004-2007 and the importance of transport in enabling people to access services and jobs, promoting economic prosperity and in contributing to tackling climate change. Moreover a programme of themed walks can contribute to the cultural opportunities in the city.

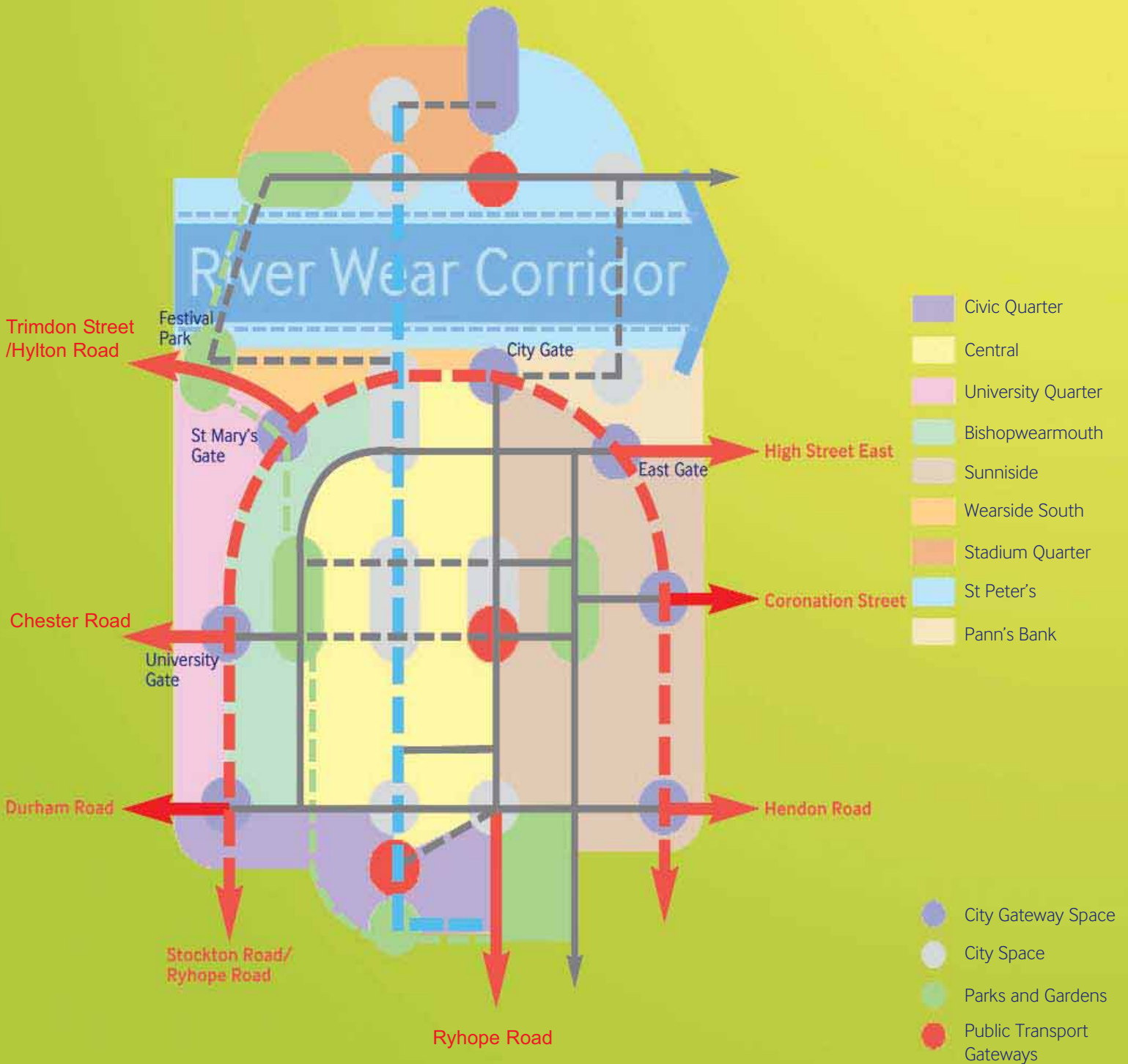
2.68 The Walking Strategy of the LTP reinforces the urban design objectives for the central area. It aims to provide a high quality walking environment for all pedestrians, to bring about a modal shift from vehicles to pedestrians and to prioritise pedestrians at all times.

2.69 In this context, the Plan Partners aim to raise the standard of public spaces, improve pedestrian access from arrival points to main destinations, and require new developments to front the street. Infrastructure measures to encourage walking include replacing street lighting, widening footways, improving surface materials, removing street clutter and replacing roundabouts with signalised junctions where they are well used by pedestrians or near to key destinations.



High quality design and architecture at the Park Lane transport interchange

Concept diagram



3.0 Structuring the central area

3.1 It is important to provide a clear structure for Sunderland central area. This helps to provide a basis for implementing the objectives of the Central Area Urban Design Strategy vision by providing performance criteria for development opportunities and public realm projects. A clear structure for the central area will have four key components:

- Central area districts - the destinations and areas of the central area that people want to go to. Nine distinctive districts have been identified
- Arriving in the central area - the quality of central area approaches and gateways. There is no second chance at first impressions
- Moving around the central area - a connected network of great walks and great streets that make it easy for people to move around the central area and find their way around
- Being in the central area - the great places, parks, squares and streets that make being in the central area attractive, convenient and enjoyable.

3.2 The nine districts each have a character and identity. They have distinctive cores but overlapping edges. They are destinations which together make up the central area and its wealth of activities, facilities and attractions. The purpose of identifying different districts is to make the various parts of the central area more memorable, reinforcing the identity of the central area as a whole, and helping to ensure that there is a better range of joined-up destinations available for residents, workers and visitors, and opportunities for investors.

3.3 Key approaches that lead into the central area must be attractive and convenient for everyone.

Crossing the ring road is an important part of this, linking the central area to adjoining neighbourhoods with safe surface-level pedestrian and cycle crossings. Gateways into the city on the key approaches, at points around the ring road, and public transport stops and stations around and within the central area, must positively announce arrival into Sunderland and create a welcoming first impression of the city.

3.4 At the intersections between districts and at the junctions between different routes important places occur which must be enhanced to reinforce the role and character of the central area and locations within it. These will be places of choice and decision, marking the points where transition is being made from one district to another. They must be designed to be attractive, usable and of the highest quality, enhancing the experience of being in Sunderland and encouraging people to linger.

3.5 The places of choice and decision will include the city's great streets, walks and public squares, both existing and proposed, which must be carefully designed to ensure ease of mobility for everyone, maximising accessibility around the central area. Collectively they make up the central area's primary public realm.

3.6 This clear structure of districts and public realm (approaches and gateways, squares and spaces, walks and streets) will help to guide the location and layout of new development in the central area. The structure will provide a clear framework within which potential opportunities can be progressed in a co-ordinated way bringing maximum benefit to Sunderland and helping to realise the vision for the central area.

3.7 The structure is illustrated on the concept diagram opposite.

Central area districts: connected destinations

- 3.8 The central area can already be thought of in terms of a number of different quarters or 'districts', principally defined by land uses and characteristic built form. These include Sunnyside, Bishopwearmouth, and the main retail area around The Bridges for example. Other districts can also be identified with a character based on the pattern of land uses, built form, public squares, or other spaces and streets.

In order to introduce a more cohesive identity for the whole of the defined central area it will be considered in terms of nine interlinked districts. The districts, which are shown on the diagram opposite, represent important city destinations around which the central area will be structured. The districts are:

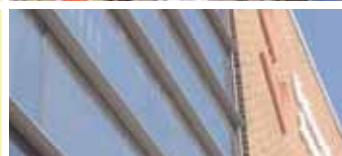
1 Civic quarter is focused on the Civic Centre, West Park and Park Lane including the transport interchange. The southern end of the 'Great Walk' proposal is anchored within the district. The district also encompasses Mowbray Park which is one of the city's major attractions and includes Sunderland Museum and the Winter Gardens.



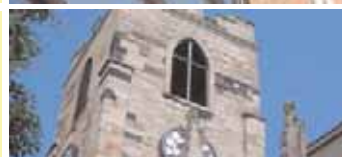
2 Central district is the main retail core of the central area including The Bridges shopping centre and the historic route of High Street West. Central Station is a principal point of arrival into Sunderland, and there are close links to the Park Lane Interchange. Holmeside Triangle represents a significant mixed-use development opportunity within the district.



3 University Quarter The University of Sunderland is a key facility within the central area which plays an important role in the life of the city. The Chester Road campus will be a significant focus for the continued growth and development of the university.



4 Bishopwearmouth is one of three early settlements that expanded to form Sunderland as it exists today. Town Park, the Empire Theatre and Sunderland Minster are important historic and cultural attractions that form an important focus for the district.



5 Sunnyside has a distinctive character and a vibrant atmosphere focused around a strong gridiron of well proportioned streets fronted by many fine Georgian and Victorian properties. The focus of major regeneration activity led by the Sunnyside Partnership has been recent and on-going investment in the streetscape. There are also significant opportunities to strengthen the role and identity of Sunnyside as a key destination within the city.



6 Riverside South comprises much of the central area's riverside area. A dramatic green space which includes Festival Park is located between two principal city development opportunities at Farringdon Row and the Vaux site.



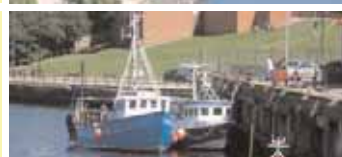
7 Stadium quarter is prominently located on the northern riverside. Stadium Park and Sheepfolds provide opportunities for a lively mix of sporting, leisure and city living close to the central area and to the Stadium of Light.



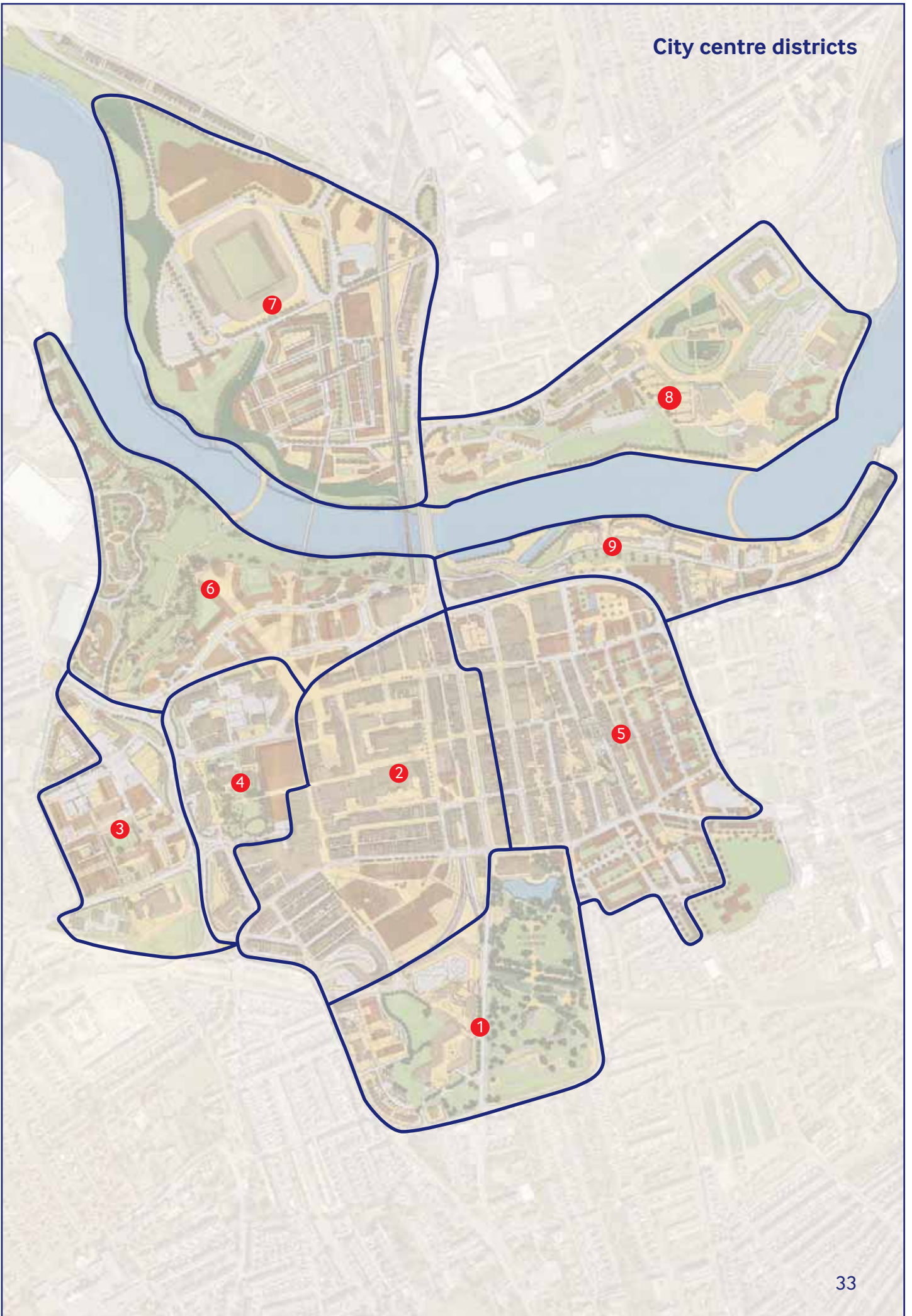
8 St. Peter's has an attractive southerly aspect overlooking the River Wear. An enviable collection of city destinations including the university, the National Glass Centre, and the proposed World Heritage Site which includes St Peter's church make the district a key opportunity and city destination.



9 Panns Bank adjoins the southern bank of the River Wear. Dramatic topography, river views and a historic pattern of streets will provide the setting for a growing mix of cafes, bars, restaurants and apartments.



City centre districts



3.9 The districts reflect the history and functions of different parts of the central area, the age and type of building and built form, the location relative to and relationship with natural features (most notably the River Wear and Galley's Gill) and the mix of activities and uses that take place within them today. They will play a vital role in considering the potential for future uses and anticipated changes in order to structure and co-ordinate development opportunities and public realm priorities.

3.10 More detailed information on the key characteristics of each district and their development opportunities and public realm priorities is given in Section 5 of this strategy.

3.12 A number of priorities and interventions are set out on the following pages. They represent vital structuring components for the central area and are focused on locations where existing streets or spaces must be enhanced or where a new area of public realm must be created in order to overcome poor connections, provide a focus for development and create a sense of civic pride.

3.13 The priorities and interventions are supported by the strategic design guidance set out within Section 4 of this document with further details on district development opportunities and public realm priorities set out in Section 5.

Great walks, great streets and great places - the city's public realm

3.11 It is critical to establish a distinctive and attractive public realm that knits the central area districts together effectively. The public realm must create a positive impression of the central area, helping to deliver the vision and, most importantly, ensure that it functions seamlessly.

In order to establish a distinctive public realm the Urban Design Strategy will focus on the importance of:

- **Arriving in Sunderland** - ensuring that the quality of central area approaches and gateways creates an outstanding first impression of the city;
- **Moving around Sunderland** - supporting a connected network of great walks and great streets that make it easy for people to move around the city and find their way around; and
- **Being in Sunderland** - identifying the great places, parks, squares and streets that make being in the city attractive, convenient and enjoyable.



Distinctive and attractive public realm is well used in Mowbray Gardens

Arriving in Sunderland central area

3.14 Making it easy for everyone to get to and from the central area is critical. First impressions count and arriving in the central area must be attractive, safe and convenient. This means improving accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and people using public transport as well as motorists. Servicing and delivery vehicles will also need to be accommodated. Crossing the ring road is a key part of the overall strategy, linking the central area to adjoining neighbourhoods effectively with safe surface-level pedestrian and cycle crossings.

In order to enhance the experience of arriving into Sunderland's central area three elements will be given priority:

- Approaches to Sunderland - the principal streets that lead to the central area
- Gateways into the city at key intersections of streets, at car parks, and at public transport stops and interchanges
- Transforming the ring road from traffic dominated highway into a pedestrian friendly, tree lined street - a 'Great Street'

3.15 The above elements are shown on the diagram opposite.

Approaches to Sunderland central area

3.16 The central area is compact and walkable. That compactness is also reflected in the proximity of extensive residential communities close to the central area and easily within walking distance. The main approaches and streets that lead into the central area must be enhanced, improving 'walkability' by making them attractive and convenient for pedestrians, ensuring ease of mobility for everyone and maximising accessibility into the central area.

The main approaches into the central area will be defined as:

- North Bridge Street (northern approach)
- Trimdon Street (the western approach to Sunderland central area)
- Durham Road and Chester Road (south western approaches)
- Burdon Road and Ryhope Road (southern approach)
- Hendon Road (south eastern approach)
- Stockton Road and Ryhope Road (south area approach)
- Coronation Street (eastern approach)
- High Street East (eastern approach)

3.17 A consistent design response will be required on all central area approaches. A unified palette of surfacing materials, distinctive street furniture, and tree planting should be introduced to ensure that they create a welcoming and high quality first impression. The removal of large advertising hoardings on key approaches into the central area will also be a priority.

3.18 Wide pavements, surface-level pedestrian crossings which reflect desire lines, and frontage development opportunities should be pursued in order to enhance the quality and safety of the pedestrian environment encouraging people to walk into the central area. Further details on the design of the public realm are given in Section 4 'Central Area Strategic Design Guidance'.

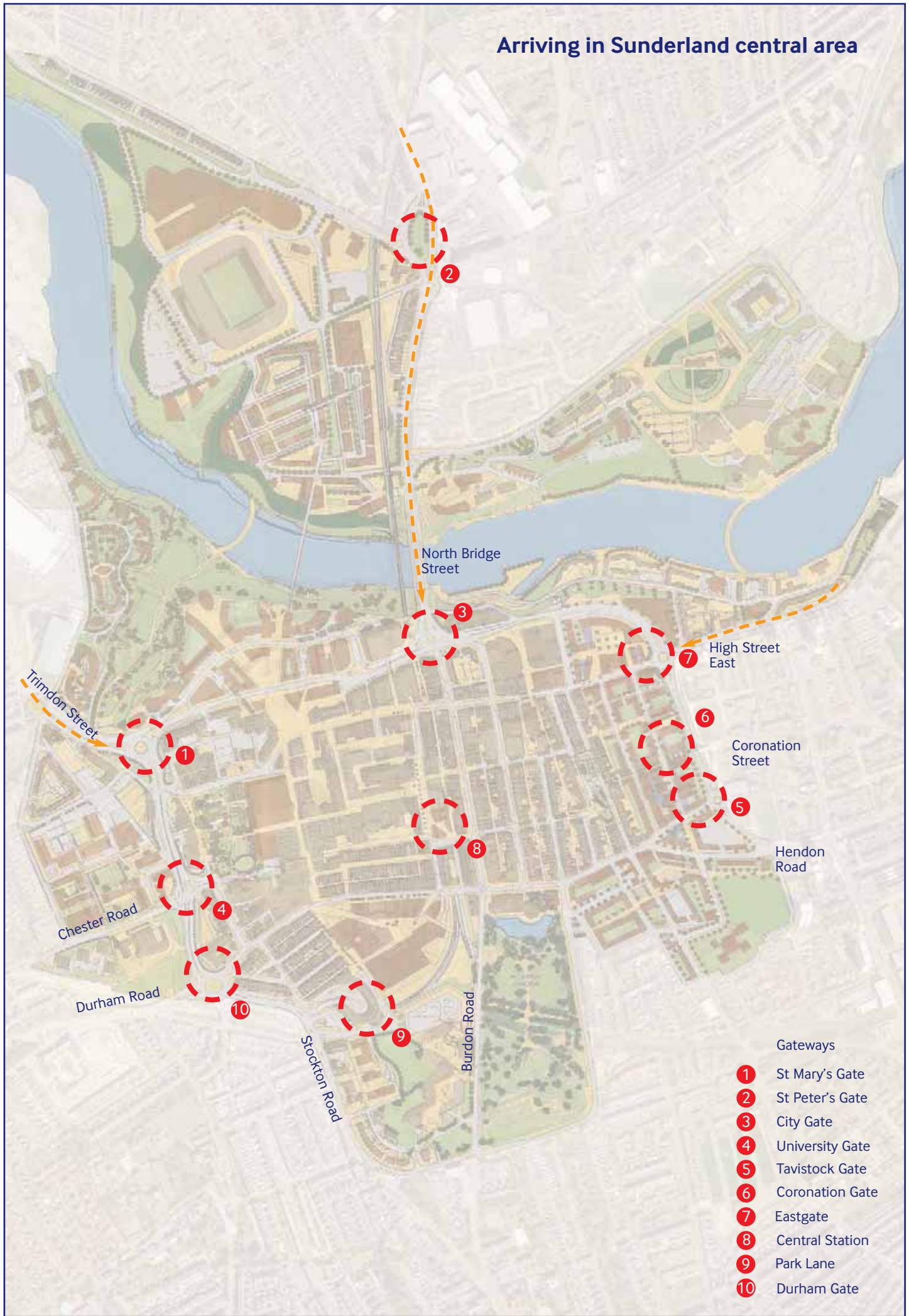


Arriving in Sunderland along Trimdon Street - a low quality environment



A green boulevard transforms an urban street

Arriving in Sunderland central area



Gateways

- 1 St Mary's Gate
- 2 St Peter's Gate
- 3 City Gate
- 4 University Gate
- 5 Tavistock Gate
- 6 Coronation Gate
- 7 Eastgate
- 8 Central Station
- 9 Park Lane
- 10 Durham Gate

City gateways

3.19 The role and function of a gateway is to provide a clear point of transition and arrival into the central area. All gateways must symbolise the aspirations of the city through the high standard of design of the public realm and gateway spaces, adjoining buildings and landmarks, public transport and interchange facilities, and car parks.

The main gateway spaces into the central area will be clearly defined at:

- **St Mary's Gate:** on the western approach into the central area from the Queen Alexandra Bridge located at the junction between Livingstone Road, St Michael's Way, and Trimdon Street
- **St Peter's Gate:** on the northern approach into the central area at the junction of Newcastle Road, Kier Hardy Way, Southwick Road, and North Bridge Street and the Wheatsheaf one way system. The area is a key entrance and approach into the city centre. It falls just outside the defined central area but should be considered as an important opportunity
- **City Gate:** at the southern end of the Wearmouth Bridge at the junction of the ring road and Bridge Street.
- **University Gate:** on the south western approach into the central area adjoining the University of Sunderland city campus at the junctions of St Michael's Way, with and Chester Road
- **Durham Gate:** also on the south western approach, at the junction of Durham Road, Stockton Road and St Michael's Way
- **Tavistock Gate:** located in Sunnyside on the south eastern approach into the central area at the junction of Borough Road and Sans Street
- **Coronation Gate:** located in Sunnyside on a key pedestrian approach from the east which crosses Sans Street
- **Eastgate:** is located on the north eastern approach into the central area at the junction of High Street West and East and Sans Street
- **Central Station** and the **Park Lane transport interchange**



Gateway space opportunity at 'St Mary's Gate'



An example of a multi-use gateway space defined and overlooked by adjoining development



Echo 24 provides a landmark adjoining 'City Gate'



Park Lane interchange provides a high quality facility and positive first impression of the city



Covered walkway and seating at Park Lane interchange

3.20 Gateway spaces will be characterised by a consistent approach to the detailing of the public realm, and a strong built form that defines and fronts the gateway. A landmark building or piece of public art may also help distinguish a gateway space within the wider structure of the central area. The removal of large advertising hoardings at gateway spaces will be considered a priority.

3.21 Further details on gateway development, city landmarks and tall buildings are given in Section 4 'Central Area Strategic Design Guidance'

3.22 Central Station and the Park Lane interchange are also important central area gateways. The two facilities offer contrasting experiences for those arriving into Sunderland. The Park Lane interchange is modern, airy and communicates a positive message about the city. Sunderland's Central Station is dated and is set within a low quality public realm, yet ostensibly it is the more important.

3.23 A scheme of enhancements to the platform areas at Central Station is being implemented by Nexus who operate train and Metro services through the station. It will be vital to build on this positive scheme to further enhance the experience of using the station

Enhancements to Central Station will be carried out using the Park Lane interchange as a benchmark and will include:

- Refurbishment or redevelopment of the station building to provide enhanced passenger facilities;
- Provision of a new station square offering a high quality entrance point into the city

3.24 Further details are given in section 5 'Delivering the Vision' (Central district).

3.25 The City of Sunderland has an extremely comprehensive and well used bus service. Although the Park Lane interchange provides a large bus facility many services use Fawcett Street, Holmeside, Vine Place, High Street West and John Street attracting significant numbers of customers. As such these streets are key gateway locations. Waiting facilities present a mixed picture with uncoordinated designs of stand, offering limited passenger seating or information and being in varying states of cleanliness and repair. The stands also contribute to visual clutter and limit available pedestrian space for passers by, particularly along Holmeside and the western side of Fawcett Street. Finally the distribution of stands and services across the relevant streets does not facilitate easy interchange between different routes.



Fawcett Street is a key gateway for visitors arriving by bus

3.26 Consideration should be given to reviewing the way services use these areas, such as the benefits of clearly and comprehensively signposted and branded modern stands to a bespoke design. The removal of clutter from the street and raising the profile of bus provision within the central area would be key benefits. This must be accompanied by careful signage and the use of comprehensive real time information so that passengers know quickly when a service is approaching.

3.27 Enhanced information and customer waiting areas could also lead to operational efficiency measures for Nexus and the local bus operators. Clearly the detailed design of replacement facilities would need to be discussed with Nexus and the bus operators and would be subject to a detailed design exercise. The exercise would also need to consider the comprehensive re-provision of bus stands and real time information in other key locations, particularly Holmeside, Vine Place and High Street West.

3.28 As part of a comprehensive review, consideration could also be given to re-routing some services towards new facilities on St Michael's Way, Livingstone Road and St Mary's Way for example. This would need to be carefully considered within the context of the 'Great Street' project (see paragraph 3.30), the ongoing City Centre Bus Review, and in close consultation with bus operators in order to ensure that convenient, useable and accessible facilities were guaranteed for customers.



An example of simple seating and high quality shelter provided at a public transport stop

Bus service provision within the central area will be maintained and enhanced through the design and layout of modern, efficient and contemporary bus stands with real time information. The City Council will work closely with Nexus and bus operators to ensure that operational efficiency measures are considered from the outset.



Natural daylight and direct pedestrian route to adjoining shops make this car park attractive and safe to use.

- 3.29 Car parking is a key asset within any central area. The first impression that many people have of a place will be determined by their experience as a car driver or passenger arriving at a car park, and subsequently as a pedestrian leaving the car park. If the overall experience is poor, through the inconvenience of the design and layout, lack of quality and maintenance, or perceived lack of personal safety, then the remainder of the visit will be influenced and the overall perception of the central area and the city adversely affected.

High quality, safe, and convenient car parking provision will be a principal component of arriving in the central area. Facilities will be attractive and well designed providing:

- pedestrian entrances at key central locations and with direct and clear access onward into the central area
- good quality lighting and signage
- generous circulation and lobby space within lift and stair towers

- 3.30 Further details on parking provision within the central area are given in section 4 'Central Area Strategic Design Guidance'.

Transforming the inner ring road - creating a 'Great Street'.

3.31 The transformation of Sunderland's inner ring road is a key project. At present the ring road, which comprises St Michael's Way, Livingstone Road, St Mary's Way, West Wear Street and Sans Street, is an engineered traffic conduit which moves vehicular traffic around the central area effectively but creates a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists trying to cross it and get into the central area.

3.32 In addition many of the junctions along the ring road are unattractive places, with wide expanses of road and roundabout carved into the surrounding cityscape. This represents a potentially inefficient use of land and creates problems where, for example, buildings have been removed to make way for the ring road leaving behind an awkward relationship of blank side elevations and servicing and parking yards fronting the street. These do not provide an attractive or welcoming impression of the central area and leave hostile, poorly overlooked 'no-go' places that are devoid of vitality and pedestrian activity. The overall environment feels fragmented and poorly maintained as a result.

3.33 In order to address the problems created by the ring road it should be transformed into a 'Great Street'. The 'Great Street' must still function as a key traffic and public transport route around the central area but design interventions will aim to redress the current imbalance between vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist priority at important junctions and other significant places around the ring road.

3.34 In addition, it will be important to overcome the severance of the central area from adjacent parts of the city that is currently caused by the ring road.



Large junctions and indirect crossings make the inner ring road difficult for pedestrians to negotiate.



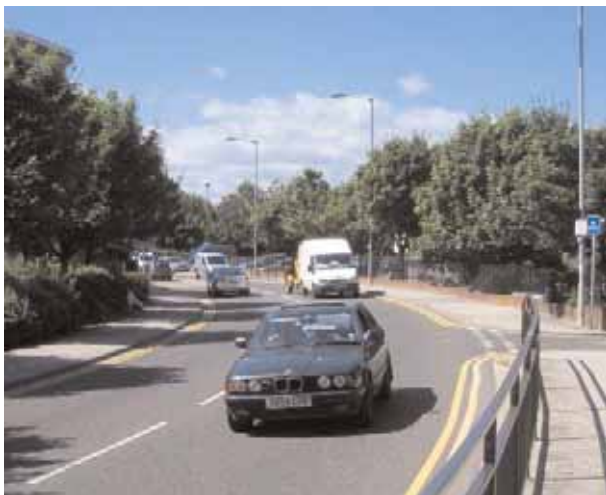
Here, a roundabout has been replaced with a simple junction with direct crossing points.



. while new street trees and high quality paving and street furniture create an attractive environment



A new surface crossing at West Wear Street replaces an underpass



West Wear Street improvements should feature trees and wide pavements as part of the Sunderland Strategic Transport corridor (SSTC)

Key design aims of the 'Great Street' project will be to achieve:

- Higher levels of pedestrian activity and pedestrian priority with broader footways, a well detailed, designed and maintained public realm, and direct signal controlled crossings that follow logical desire lines with guardrails removed wherever practicable
- Surface level at-grade pedestrian and cycle links between the central area and adjoining districts, communities and regeneration sites

- Re-modelling of existing junctions and roundabouts to create tighter, more land efficient junctions and form public gateway spaces (see City gateways, paras 3.13-3.30)
- Better, direct access by bus exploring opportunities for the re-direction of services away from streets such as Fawcett Street and onto the Great Street and providing on-street bus stop and associated passenger facilities including real time information
- Slower but consistent traffic speeds achieved through traffic management modifications including improved signalling and signage, dynamic advance car park information, and consideration of a reduced speed limit to 30mph
- Frontage development of a height and character that respects adjoining building heights and adequately contains the width of the street
- The introduction of boulevard tree planting, distinctive lighting and coordinated street furniture

Development proposals adjoining the 'Great Street' and all public realm works associated with the 'Great Street' will be required to comply with the Strategic Design Guidance set out in section 4 of this Strategy.

- 3.35 The overall character of the 'Great Street' should be broadly consistent in terms of the quality of paving materials and street furniture, the pedestrian environment, tree planting, and frontage development. However variations must allow for the character of different locations to be distinguished and for particular site specific development and regeneration requirements to be achieved. This will be particularly important at the Vaux site for example, where comprehensive redevelopment and re-routing of the street is proposed. It will also be important at West Wear Street where part of the route of the SSTC will be constructed and where pedestrian access from Sunnyside north to the River Wear cliff tops and Panns Bank should be achieved.

Moving around the central area

3.36 Once people have arrived in the central area it will be vital to encourage them to stay by making sure that the experience is easy, clear and attractive. A network of elegant streets and walks must enable people to access all parts of the central area, creating a legible pattern that will allow everyone to walk around easily without getting lost or confused.

3.37 In order to achieve this, a clear pattern of key strategic streets, walks and routes will be established across and around the central area linking important destinations and places such as The Bridges, Sunnyside, Central Station and the Park Lane interchange, the riverside, and important regeneration sites such as Vaux.

3.38 The pattern must build on the clearly defined gridiron pattern of streets that is part of the central area's distinctive heritage and which remains clearly evident, particularly around Sunnyside, but that has broken down around the western part of the area.

3.39 Between the key strategic streets, walks and routes a fine - grained pattern of secondary streets will provide choices across the central area, through major regeneration sites and between central area districts to make it easy and pleasurable to walk around. It will be vital to ensure that a safe and convenient pedestrian network is achieved across the central area.

3.40 Provision for cyclists will also be important in order to enable a choice of sustainable transport modes to be made. Sunderland has National Cycle Routes 1 and 14 running through the central area supported by a number of local routes and connections. The national routes are focused along the St Peter's and Sheepfolds riverside, the Wearmouth Bridge, High Street West, Low Row and along Durham Road (a key central area approach).



The River Wear walkway and cycle route at St Peter's provides a key central area link



An example of cycle parking is carefully integrated and centrally located in this busy shopping street

Moving around Sunderland central area



Key strategic streets, walks and routes will be defined across the central area:

- East and west routes along High Street East and West and between Sunnyside, Bishopwearmouth and the University of Sunderland
- North and south routes along Fawcett Street, Bridge Street and Burdon Road; John Street, the 'Great Walk'; and the Green Arc
- Crossing the River Wear through construction of a high level pedestrian bridge
- The River Wear corridor to include the riverside walkways, cliff tops, and St Peter's Walk.

Key strategic streets, walks and routes within the central area will be regarded as linear public spaces and considered as a single 'design unit'. Individual proposals will be evaluated on their merits and in terms of how they relate to the design and structure of the whole.

A unified and co-ordinated approach to the design and detailing of the public realm will be required along all key strategic streets, walks and routes.

Cycle provision will be reinforced across the central area including signage of local and national routes and cycle parking. This is supported by policy T1A and T2A of UDP Alteration No.2.

3.41 In order to achieve a safe and convenient pattern of streets and walks it will be important to:

- Overcome pedestrian barriers through the structure of development sites, reinstating a fine grain of city blocks, and improving crossings, pavements and signage
- Ensure that the street is safe and well overlooked by introducing frontage development and providing opportunities for a mix of uses thereby extending the times during which the central area is perceived to be safe and populated
- Co-ordinate street furniture and paving making streets easy and attractive to move around, reducing the clutter of signage and other street furniture and introducing a simple, co-ordinated and robust design response to new street furniture and paving
- Re-enforce linkages along important central area approaches and to the wider city movement network, and introducing new routes through development and regeneration sites. This must include cycle routes (both local and national) which run through the central area

3.42 Further built form and public realm principles and guidance are provided in Section 4 'Central Area Strategic Design Guidance'. Specific development opportunities and public realm priorities relating to the central area districts are set out in Section 5 'Delivering the Vision'. Each of the key strategic streets, walks and routes are described on the following pages.

East - west links

- 3.43 **High Street East and High Street West** - form a historic thoroughfare linking the original settlements of Old Sunderland to the east of the central area near the coast and the river, and Bishopwearmouth to the west. At present the quality of much of the public realm and adjoining development tends to diminish the quality and identity of the street. New development proposals must ensure that there is a clear and continuous street frontage with minimal set backs, providing opportunities for a mix of uses which ensures that the street is lively and well used.
- 3.44 **Sunniside to Bishopwearmouth** - East and west movement across the central area is generally easy around Sunniside and more difficult to the west around The Bridges. However, a series of key attractions are to be found along east-west routes between Sunniside and Bishopwearmouth. These include Market Square, Sunniside Gardens, Town Park, the Bridges, the City Library and Art Gallery, the Winter Gardens and the University of Sunderland city campus.
- 3.45 In order to improve east-west connections through the central area attention must be focused on two main strategic routes. The first is a sequence of streets that connect and follow the routes of Coronation Street, Sunniside Gardens, Athenaeum and St Thomas Streets, Fawcett Street, Market Square, The Bridges and Brougham Street, Town Park and the University of Sunderland. It will be important to work with the owners of the Bridges shopping centre to promote pedestrian permeability at all times of the day and into the evening. The second is Tavistock, Borough Road, Holmeside, Vine Place and the University of Sunderland.
- 3.46 Enhanced signage, new surface-level crossings, and a clearly defined public realm that is safe and overlooked from adjoining development will help to reinforce these strategic east-west routes.

North - south links

- 3.47 **Fawcett Street and Bridge Street** - Fawcett Street is a major central area asset containing many historic and architecturally significant buildings. However, the quality of this route is diminished by excessive street furniture, high volume of buses and poorly maintained buildings. Further investment and improvements to Fawcett Street and Bridge Street would help reinforce this as a key north-south pedestrian route and help connect areas on the north and south sides of the River Wear corridor.
- 3.48 **John Street** - also provides a key north-south link through Sunniside connecting Borough Road and High Street East.

The 'Great Walk'

- 3.49 The proposed 'Great Walk' is an important city route that will connect together significant regeneration sites, open spaces and landmarks, and will bridge the River Wear. It will also help to redefine the urban structure of the western part of the central area particularly where major redevelopment has, in the past, caused the fine-grain block structure to be disrupted.
- 3.50 The 'Great Walk' will run from the Civic Centre, West Park and the Park Lane interchange in the south, through The Bridges and the Vaux site, and link to the Stadium of Light across a new, high-level pedestrian bridge over the River Wear.
- 3.51 A simple palette of high quality materials will be used to define the principally pedestrian route which could also include tree planting and distinctive lamp standards specially commissioned for the 'Great Walk'. Large scale public artworks will anchor either end of the 'Great Walk' at West Park and a new open space at Sheepfolds. North of the river the 'Great Walk' will form a strong processional route to the Stadium of Light.
- 3.52 Delivery of the 'Great Walk' will depend on a number of redevelopment proposals on key regeneration opportunity sites, notably Holmeside Triangle, Vaux, and Stadium Park. In addition the route passes through the Bridges shopping centre which is closed during the evening. Agreement will need to be reached with the owners of the Bridges to ensure a reasonable amount of access.
- 3.53 Finally, where the 'Great Walk' meets existing highways, (St Mary's Way, Cowan Terrace and Vine Place for example,) direct surface-level pedestrian crossings will need to be provided.
- 3.54 The detailed design of the 'Great Walk' will be subject to the Central Area Strategic design Guidance contained in Section 4 of this strategy.



A high level pedestrian bridge will link the north and south side of the River Wear.



Public art should 'anchor' either end of the great walk. This example is from Canary Wharf in London's Docklands



Bespoke seating adds character and encourages people to linger

The 'Green Arc'

- 3.55 The proposed 'Green Arc' is a broad, sweeping route that will connect the central area's principal green spaces together. The 'Green Arc' will run from Mowbray Park in the south, through the Civic Centre and West Park at the southern most point of the 'Great Walk'. It will then link into the Town Park and across to Festival Park and Galley's Gill, and down to the riverside. A low level river crossing (West Bridge - refer to Crossing the River Wear, below) would finally link to the Sheepfolds riverside to the north.
- 3.56 The 'Green Arc' would rely on a clear signage and public realm design strategy to guide people along its route, effectively signposting the green spaces as jewels along a necklace. In this way people will be drawn to the spaces to make the most of a sequence of important city assets that are currently undersold.

Crossing the River Wear

- 3.57 At present there are only two river crossings in the central area, the spectacular Wearmouth Bridge and the adjoining rail and Metro bridge.
- 3.58 In order to significantly enhance north-south movement across the River Wear a new pedestrian crossing will be provided in the form of a new high-level bridge that will carry the 'Great Walk' from the Vaux site to the Stadium of Light. The bridge must be lightweight and elegant, spanning the river between belvederes located at each end. Café's and restaurants at each belvedere will draw people across the bridge offering dramatic views along the river and over the city's skyline. The high-level Bridge must be a priority.
- 3.59 In addition, consideration should be given to two low level bridges providing connections between the north and south riversides. The 'East Bridge' will connect the Old Sunderland Riverside at Old Port Square at Panns Bank with the University and other attractions at St Peter's. The 'West Bridge' will connect Festival Park and Galley's Gill with the Sheepfolds riverside. Both must be designed to allow the River Wear to remain navigable.
- 3.60 All new pedestrian bridges should be the subject of a design competition to ensure that only structures of the highest architectural and engineering merit are considered, complementing the Wearmouth Bridge and providing the city with new icons.

The River Wear corridor

- 3.61 The River Wear corridor is an important city asset that is significantly underplayed. Access along much of the north and south banks is poor and disjointed. In order to improve access to the river three main elements must be explored.
- 3.62 **Sunderland Riverside Walkway** - this forms a section of a long distance footpath, the Weardale Way, which extends from Roker on the coast to Chester-le-Street. The route currently follows the south bank of the River Wear through the central area. Key enhancements along the riverside walkways must provide a clear planting, surfacing, seating and lighting strategy extending the route to both the north and south banks of the River Wear. New low level footbridges will enhance accessibility and an interlinked series of hard surfaced squares and terraces associated with development opportunities will provide new foci for activity, (at Panns Bank, Old Port Square and St Peter's for example).



Any proposed pedestrian foot bridge should be of the highest quality



A rising footbridge enhances access to the waterside



St Peter's riverside



The riverside at Panns Bank



Public art enriches St Peter's riverside



Great views are available from the riverside cliff tops

3.63 The northern banks of the River Wear also provide an extensive walkway and cycleway forming part of routes 1 and 14 of the National Cycle Network. The area between Bonnersfield, Sunderland University's St Peter's campus, and the National Glass Centre has been attractively paved to a high quality and features bespoke art works and detailing which enliven the public realm. This section should be used as a benchmark for other parts of the River Wear corridor.

3.64 **St Peter's Walk** - provision of a broad pedestrian walkway to link Sheepfolds with St. Peter's under the arches of the Wearmouth Bridge. This will be a spur to the 'Great Walk' and the materials and lighting will be designed to reflect and complement those on that new route. Development at Bonnersfield will be important to the implementation of this proposal (refer to Section 5, St Peter's district).

3.65 **Riverside cliff tops** - offering spectacular views of the River Wear and the city skyline, cliff top walkways will define the edges of development at Sheepfolds and Stadium Park to the north of the river and the Vaux site and Farringdon Row to the south. The cliff top walks will also be extended along the route of West Wear Street adjoining Panns Bank, Numbers Garth and Sunnyside north.

3.66 Seating will be provided at strategic locations offering viewing points along this well lit, hard surfaced route. The walkways must be overlooked by adjoining mixed-use development to ensure that they are perceived to be safe. Connections to the lower riverside walkways should be provided by way of carefully detailed stairs and ramps with wide surface-level crossings also provided at key points to connect to adjoining central area districts.

3.67 Routes from the cliff tops into the city centre will need to be carefully signposted and designed, for example the links between Panns Bank, Numbers Garth and Sunnyside, and from the Echo 24 development adjoining the Wearmouth Bridge and Bridge Street.

Being in the central area - city squares, parks and spaces

- 3.68 Beautiful cities benefit from a strong, positive image and are better able to attract visitors and investors. As well as gateways, fine streets and walks, a series of beautiful squares, parks and spaces will make being in the central area an enjoyable and attractive experience.
- 3.69 The central area already has a number of squares and parks. It will be vital to ensure that these spaces are as attractive and well used as possible through management, maintenance and programmed events. In addition opportunities for new open spaces will be sought. The aim is to identify a range of different places to rest and linger in, spaces that form the focus for a city district or regeneration opportunity, and that support a mix of uses at key locations on the movement network.

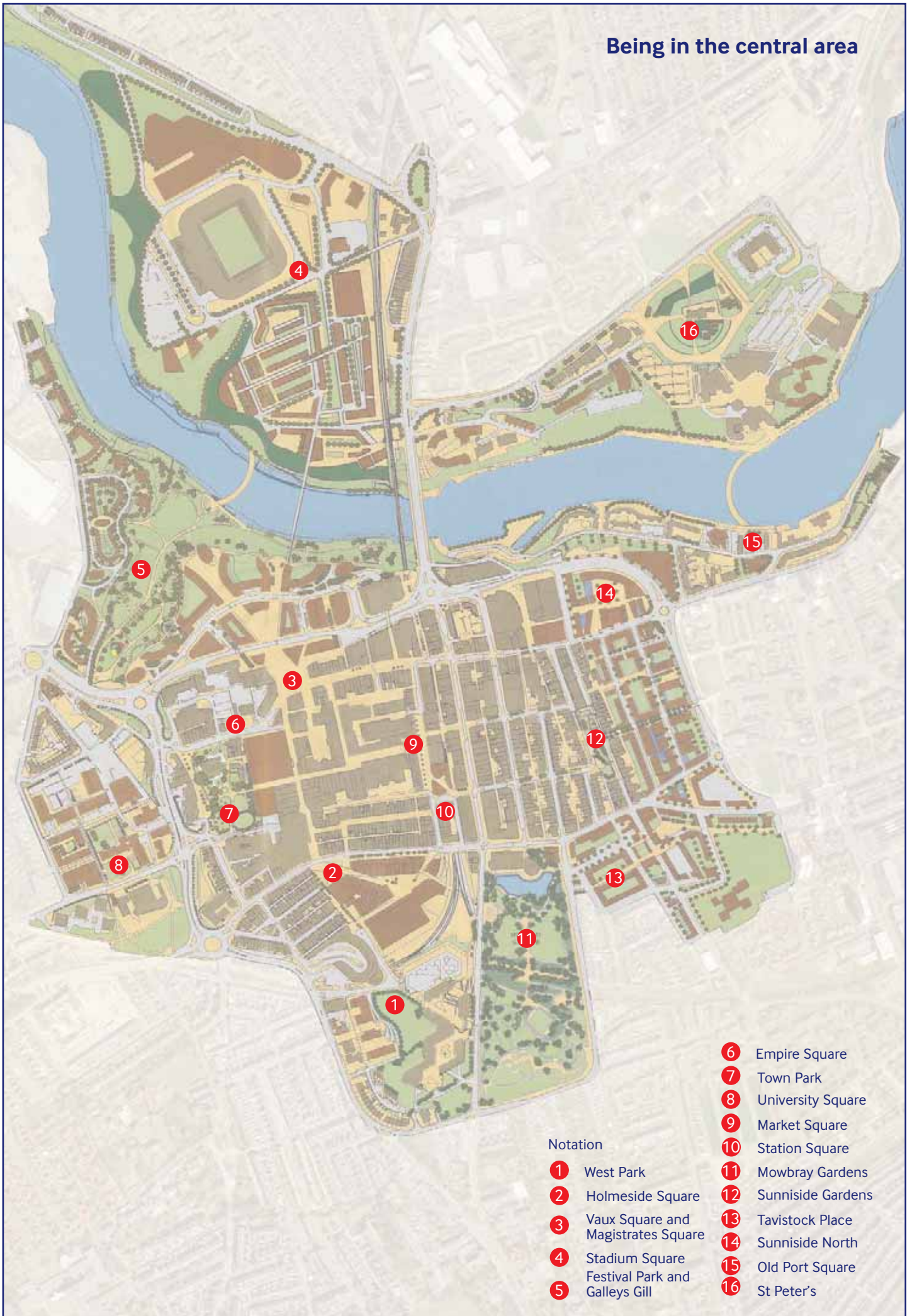
16 key squares, parks and spaces will be provided or enhanced within the central area:

- 1. West Park**
- 2. Holmeside Square**
- 3. Vaux Square and Magistrates Square**
- 4. Stadium Square**
- 5. Festival Park and Galley's Gill**
- 6. Empire Square**
- 7. Town Park**
- 8. University Square**
- 9. Market Square**
- 10. Station Square**
- 11. Mowbray Park**
- 12. Old Port Square**
- 13. Tavistock Place**
- 14. Sunnyside North**
- 15. Sunnyside Gardens**
- 16. St Peter's**

- 3.70 Each of the squares, parks and spaces are described below and shown on the diagram opposite. Section 5 'Delivering the Vision' indicates where the open spaces will need to be provided or enhanced as part of the design or delivery of key regeneration and development proposals. City squares, parks and spaces will be

secured through developer contributions via section 106 agreements and through the detailed design and layout of new developments. Further guidance is given in Section 6 'Implementation' below.

Being in the central area



West Park

3.71 West Park should be enhanced to provide a fitting entrance and welcome to Sunderland's Civic Centre. A simple, clean geometric design should be sought to reflect the characteristics of the Civic Centre which was designed by the architect Sir Basil Spence. Landscape elements in high quality materials such as local stone or geometric glazed paviers, picking up the design from the Civic Centre's courtyard spaces, with formal tree planting should be considered to contrast with softer lawns. A water feature or major piece of public art would create drama and provide an anchor to the southern end of the 'Great Walk'.

Holmeside Square

3.72 This important space between The Bridges and Holmeside Triangle, located on the junction between Holmeside and Park Lane, and on the route of the 'Great Walk', should be a busy meeting and gathering space. The square would be hard surfaced with plenty of seating to allow people to linger. Formal tree planting, possibly in a pleached form, could help define the space and provide shade, shelter and some enclosure for groups of seating. The space would need to accommodate bus movements along Holmeside and Vine Place.

3.73 Small scale events and street entertainment could take place here, with further everyday animation provided through active development edges fronting onto the space. A freestanding pavilion building within the space - an 'architectural gem'- could provide opportunities for a café, florist or news stand to further enliven the square.

3.74 Holmeside Square would also link into the Holmeside Triangle development which will include an arcade and plaza that will form a key part of the regeneration proposals for that site.

Vaux Square and Magistrates Square

3.75 Within the Vaux redevelopment site a large public space will be provided. The square, potentially covered by a massive glass canopy, will create a premier performance and gathering space and a major gateway to the central area on the route of the 'Great Walk'. Enclosed by the proposed new development, it will be surrounded by cafes and bars, with tables and chairs lining the space. The design should be contemporary with sculptural lighting, possibly including coloured LED floor lights and video/projection art. Adjoining it, Magistrates Square will provide an enhanced setting for the courthouse with improved pedestrian crossing and circulation space into Crowtree Road and High Street West.



A southern 'anchor' for the Great Walk. This water feature is at Millennium Square, Bristol



Holmeside, Vine Place and Park Lane is a very busy pedestrian location in the central area



Sheffield Winter Gardens provides a glazed backdrop to a new square



A grid of oak trees provides a sheltered location at Piccadilly Gardens in Manchester



Green space attracts all types of formal and informal uses and activities

Stadium Square

- 3.76 At the northern end of the 'Great Walk' adjoining the Stadium of Light a large plaza is proposed that can accommodate larger numbers of people gathering before an event or provide a venue for events outside the stadium. The design of the space should be simple and robust. A formal grid of trees should be planted within a hard paved surface and lighting should be distinctive and contemporary in style incorporating space for flags and banners.

Festival Park and Galley's Gill

- 3.77 This substantial green space on the south bank of the River Wear provides an important transition between the central area and the river and an attractive environment for many residents. Access to the park can be gained direct from St. Mary's Gateway and also from the developments on the former Vaux brewery site and Farringdon Row. The area should be designed to be informal in character. Much of the landscape design will be naturalistic with use of native species and development of attractive wildflower meadows. Vegetation should be carefully sited to ensure good visibility across the space and natural supervision from the surrounding residential areas. Seating offers good views to the river and of sporting activities. The park must be perceived to be safe with good lighting on the main routes that mean that it could also be used after dark.
- 3.78 The park will be a popular venue for those seeking sporting activities. It is envisaged that people will gather on its broad green spaces to kick a ball, throw a frisbee or to visit one of the many sporting clubs offering either water based sports, outdoor climbing, BMX, skateboarding or rollerblading. The sloping landform of the space allows for the creation of a grass amphitheatre that could provide a popular destination for outdoor cultural activities in summer.
- 3.79 Overlooking the park and the River Wear will be 'belvedere' spaces associated with the Vaux development. Three new spaces will be created providing opportunities to relax and enjoy the view, Galley's Belvedere, Bridge Belvedere and Green Cascade. All will be fronted and overlooked by development to ensure a safe and attractive environment is created.

Empire Square

3.80 Empire Square will form a new space within Bishopwearmouth and will take its character from the quality of the surrounding buildings including the former fire station, Sunderland Minster, the Dun Cow public house and the Empire Theatre itself. The square will use high quality materials such as local stone, appropriate for its Conservation Area designation, and be a focus for the evening economy with upmarket restaurants, cafes and bars fronting onto the space.

Town Park

3.81 The Town Park forms a quiet oasis in the heart of Sunderland's historic Bishopwearmouth and provides a setting for Sunderland Minster. The existing space has recently been revitalised through simple, understated, quality landscape design. Paths provide a more direct route between the University of Sunderland's city campus to the 'Great Walk' and Central district. The potential reconfiguration of the Crowtree Leisure Centre would provide opportunities for new pedestrian connections and active development frontages to overlook and spill out into the Park.

3.82 Trees have been managed to open up views of the Minster which itself could be sensitively lit to pick out its fine architectural detail, and canopies of specimen trees could also be up-lit.

University Square

3.83 This existing space at the Chester Road campus has recently been substantially upgraded to provide an appropriate point of arrival and welcome to the University. Enclosed and fronted by major university buildings, with the library building facing across Chester Road, the square's character is contemporary and simple with good quality seating, paving, planting and lighting. Improved and direct at-grade road crossings at Chester Road and St Mary's Way should be implemented to improve the connection between the University facilities and the central area.



The former fire station (left) should be converted to a mixed use building to enliven 'Empire Square'



Town Park - award winning and recently refurbished to a high standard



Investment and refurbishment at the University of Sunderland provides a high quality frontage development



A simple surface treatment with seating and tree planting provides a setting for city activities in Market Square, Nottingham

Market Square

3.84 The existing Market Square is a busy but relatively uninspiring city space located between the Bridges and the Central Station. The square has recently been improved to form a suitable venue for a farmers', Christmas or other specialist market. Further opportunities should be considered including new hard surfacing in robust, simple materials that help to unify the varied collection of architectural styles that define it. In addition the square would be enlivened through new active, mixed use development opportunities providing spill-out space and seating. Market Square will then provide welcome respite for shoppers with seating and tree planting allowing people to linger and rest from shopping.



The station entrance and plaza at Canary Wharf, London make a strong, positive statement

Station Square

3.85 Close to Market Square, Station Square will be a new hard surfaced space that forms an arrival and welcome for visitors emerging from an enhanced Central Station. Surrounded by major retail and commercial buildings, Station Square will be a busy, bustling place at the centre of major pedestrian routes from The Bridges, Brougham Street, Waterloo Place and Sunnyside. Materials will be high quality and simple, with excellent light levels at night to reflect its role as a transport interchange. Plentiful seating and kiosks for newspapers, snacks and possibly tourist and travel information, would provide useful services for visitors and travellers. Opportunities to reconfigure the buildings surrounding the square should be pursued to provide more animated edges to the space. Station Square could be extended to create an adjoining space immediately to the south at Waterloo Place.



Mowbray Gardens is well used, lively and attractive

Mowbray Gardens

3.86 This recently refurbished city centre park is one of Sunderland's greatest assets and is included in English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. A popular facility for residents and visitors seeking the peace and tranquillity that its well maintained landscape offers. The park is already well integrated into the structure of the city. A series of year-round events attract additional visitors to the park.

Old Port Square

- 3.87 Old Port Square will be a key link between the University of Sunderland St Peter's campus on the north bank of the River Wear and the student accommodation on the south bank.
- 3.88 The space will provide a setting and embarkation/arrival point for the low-level bridge crossing which will effectively link together key city destinations including the Old Sunderland riverside, National Glass Centre, and proposed World Heritage Site. The character of the square should respond to the surrounding historic architecture and be hard landscaped in robust, simple materials.

Tavistock Place

- 3.89 A new open space will provide a development focus for the regeneration of Tavistock which forms the southern-most part of Sunnyside.

Sunnyside North

- 3.90 A new open space will also be provided at the heart of the redevelopment of Sunnyside North, an important regeneration opportunity within the city centre.

Sunnyside Gardens

- 3.91 This existing space is at the heart of the historic core of Sunnyside. The Gardens have recently been extensively refurbished to an extremely high award winning standard, providing a green oasis away from the bustle of the central area where residents, visitors and workers can rest and watch the world go by. The refurbishment of Sunnyside Gardens provides a benchmark against which other public realm projects should be measured.

St Peter's

- 3.92 The area around St Peter's church is a key area of public open space. This space will be protected and enhanced to reflect the important role it plays in preserving the character of St Peter's Church and the wider area and reflecting its potential World Heritage Site status.



Sunnyside Gardens must be a benchmark for other spaces within the central area



Simple high quality detailing in Sunnyside Gardens



Water feature - a focus in Sunnyside



New tree planting and variety of places to linger and rest in Sunnyside



Museum

4.0 Central area strategic design guidance

Underpinning the vision

- 4.1 It will be critical to ensure that development of the highest architectural and design standards is achieved in Sunderland that builds upon the city's strengths, characteristics and heritage. Adherence to the design guidance will be important for the successful implementation of the Urban Design Strategy.
- 4.2 The strategic design guidance for the central area is structured around built form and public realm. It sets out key design parameters that developers must address. The guidance will be used to assess proposals coming forward, including the development opportunities and public realm projects identified and described in section 5 'Delivering the Vision'.

All development proposals and public realm works will be required to conform with the central area urban design strategy and strategic design guidance as required by policy B2A of the UDP Alteration No.2.

Inclusive Design

- 4.3 Consideration must also be given to the importance of inclusive design within the central area. Inclusive design breaks down barriers and exclusion, focusing on the needs of the diverse groups of people who use the central area.
- 4.4 Compliance with the Disability Rights Commission guidance on inclusive design will ensure that new development complies with the statutory requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995. The guidance states that an inclusive environment will be:
- Easily used by as many people as possible without undue effort, special treatment or separation
 - Able to offer people the freedom to choose how they access and use it and allow them to participate equally in all activities it may host
 - Able to embrace diversity and difference;
 - Safe, legible and predictable
 - Of consistently high quality

- 4.5 Inclusive design is about providing the widest possible access to the full range of services, amenities and facilities offered within the central area and close to it. Measures such as significantly enhanced pedestrian and cycle accessibility across the ring road, form a key part of the proposals within the Strategy. The provision of level and accessible disabled parking is another important consideration.
- 4.6 In addition the Strategy identifies a number of opportunities for offering a wider range and mix of uses within the central area that will improve choice and enable people to access more facilities locally. Finally, the greater mix of uses will also improve the range of employment opportunities on offer and help make the central area a thriving destination to enjoy spending time in.

Built form design guidance

- 4.7 Built form design guidance for the central area is structured around seven key design objectives
- Promote a strong built form of the highest architectural and design standards
 - Ensure streets and spaces are well connected;
 - Encourage a mix of uses
 - Use quality materials and robust detailing
 - Discretely accommodate service access, cars and bicycles
 - Manage and maintain the central area
 - Achieve environmental sustainability
- 4.8 Each objective is underpinned by specific guidance against which development proposals will be assessed. The guidance is illustrated using examples from Sunderland and elsewhere.

Development proposals within the central area will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to built form design objectives and built form design guidance.

Objective 1: Promote a strong built form of the highest architectural and design standards.

- 4.9 Over time the central area has undergone significant change. New development has replaced the original with mixed success. There is now considerable scope for new buildings to provide high quality, contemporary additions to the existing built form of the central area adding greatly to its attractiveness, character and distinctiveness. This will help to stitch together areas where the urban form has become fragmented (such as around the Bridges for example) and strengthen the qualities of more distinctive districts such as Sunnyside, creating a pattern of well defined frontage development.
- 4.10 In order to help achieve a high quality architectural and design response within the central area the following specific guidance must be considered as part of the design process.

All development within the central area must be of the highest architectural and design standards. In order to achieve this:

- Innovative architectural interventions will be encouraged and the City Council and its partners will seek to secure the highest possible standards of design to secure prestigious development of national and international status
- New development must be contextually sensitive making references to the design vernacular found in the central area through built form and use of materials. Pastiche of traditional built forms will not be considered as an acceptable design response in the central area

Landmarks, building heights and tall buildings

- 4.11 Development in the central area is generally within a range of 3 to 5 storeys in height. Important streets, such as Fawcett Street and the High Street, are marked out as key locations within the city because they are fronted by buildings of 4 and 5 storeys in height. Other parts of the central area derive a significant part of their character through the consistency of the height of buildings (parts of Sunnyside, for example, where many of the grand terraced streets are between 2 and 3 storeys in height).



New apartments adjoining the Winter Gardens are well detailed and contemporary



The distinctive 'Elephant Tea Rooms' building on the corner of Fawcett Street, part of the city's rich architectural heritage



Crown House - a central area landmark with significant refurbishment potential



Echo 24 - a new landmark for the city

4.12 Landmark buildings can help signal important locations in the central area, such as the corners of junctions between main streets, or key public spaces, and they emphasise the role or status a particular building has within the city. Landmark buildings are those of special architectural quality and character, those that have distinctive and memorable features (clocks, statutory, etc.) or house special and unique uses.

4.13 Landmark buildings can also be tall buildings. At present there are very few tall buildings within the central area. They are:

- The three residential towers above the Bridges
- Crown House on Borough Road
- Echo 24 adjoining the Wearmouth Bridge
- Helios scheme on High Street West

4.14 There are also three residential towers located to the south of High Street East, although these are located just outside the central area.

4.15 The existing tall buildings tend to be 'point' rather than 'slab' blocks, that is, they are slim towers with a small footprint. This is a design response that should be maintained within the central area as it helps to reduce the visual impact of development and allows for a more elegant built form which is already a characteristic of the city.

4.16 The pattern of different building heights and the location of landmarks play a significant role in helping people to understand the central area, making it easier to locate important places, making it 'legible'. New development proposals must reinforce this pattern, adding to the character, identity and legibility of the central area as a whole.

4.17 The distribution of existing tall buildings within the central area is currently associated with significant structural change (the Bridges in the western half of the central area) or adjoining gateway locations (Echo 24 close to City Gate and Crown House close to Tavistock Gate). This suggests where new tall buildings may be suitably located close to city gateways and in locations, particularly to the western half of the central area, where the townscape qualities have become substantially fragmented and may benefit from a legible structure of new landmarks.

4.18 However, tall buildings are not a feature of most of the central area, where the uniformity of the building heights contributes significantly to the character and townscape qualities of Sunderland, (much of Sunnyside, Bishopwearmouth, and Panns Bank, for example). Proposals for tall buildings in these locations are likely to have a negative impact on the character of the central area and will therefore be resisted.

4.19 In addition, the St Peter's area provides a setting for the proposed World Heritage Site. Tall buildings are unlikely to be acceptable in this location because of the potential impact on views from and into the proposed World Heritage Site. Further guidance on development opportunities around St Peter's, including appropriate building heights, is given in Section 5 'Delivering the Vision'.

4.20 In considering proposals for tall buildings in the central area, the City Council will have regard to policy B2B of UDP Alteration No.2. In addition, proposals will be assessed against CABE and English Heritage's joint 'Guidance on Tall Buildings' (July 2007) and any subsequent revisions. The draft guidance states at paragraph 4.4:

"In order to be acceptable, any new tall building should be in an appropriate location, should be of first-class design quality in its own right and should enhance the qualities of its immediate location and wider setting. It should produce more benefits than costs to the lives of those affected by it. Failure on any of these grounds will make a proposal unacceptable to CABE and English Heritage."



Well scaled and detailed development at St Peter's riverside



Modern apartment building creates a distinctive high quality landmark at no.1 Deangate in Manchester



Warm materials and modern forms create a stylish elevation to these apartments at 'Ice City' in Nottingham



A service tower at this hotel in Nottingham creates a landmark at a site close to the station



Careful attention to detail enlivens these mixed use buildings in London

The height of development proposals within the central area will be assessed having regard to the following criteria:

- Buildings within the central area will be acceptable within the range of 3 to 5 storeys in height having regard to the context of the area
- Buildings up to 6 storeys in height will be acceptable at important corners, gateway spaces and junctions to ensure a strong sense of enclosure and continuity having regard to the context of the area
- Storey heights will be assessed having regard to the building shoulder height which is the height of the front façade above the main building line. Top floor set backs from the front building shoulder height can allow for a greater number of storeys, through the introduction of penthouses and studios set back from the main building line and having regard to the context of the area and longer distance views
- Landmark buildings will be acceptable on key city approaches, at city gateway sites to signal points of arrival (see gateways below) and adjoining public squares and spaces
- Tall landmark buildings over 6 storeys in height will be acceptable if they are of outstanding architectural quality and add positively to the townscape qualities of the central area. The location of tall landmark buildings will reflect the distribution of existing tall buildings in the central area which are generally located adjoining gateway spaces and towards the western half of the central area on sites that have been the subject of major redevelopment. Tall buildings will not be acceptable in areas where the townscape of the area is derived in part from the uniformity of building heights including the historic core Sunnyside, Bishopwearmouth, and Panns Bank. Tall buildings will not be acceptable in St Peter's where they have an impact on the setting of the proposed World Heritage Site
- In considering tall buildings, careful attention will be paid to accommodating parking and servicing requirements, pedestrian entrances, the mix of ground floor uses and their relationship with the public realm and wind and micro climate around the base of the building. Reference will also be made to the CABE/English Heritage 'Guidance on Tall Buildings' (July 2007) and any subsequent relevant guidance
- Tall buildings shall be designed in the form of slim point blocks which are a design characteristic of the central area and can help to reduce the visual prominence of development

Key building elevations

- 4.21 Blank elevations, particularly on ground floor frontages, create monotonous and hostile environments, "no go" places with reduced legibility. Particular attention must therefore be paid to all building elevations that are visible from the public realm within the central area, particularly where buildings turn a corner and address two spaces or streets. This helps to:
- define the public realm in a positive way
 - improve the legibility of the central area
 - ensure that there is a clear distinction between the public and private aspects of a building
 - establish a positive relationship between the activities within a building and the public realm outside
- 4.22 By establishing frontages which are both animated and active, the character of an area is enhanced. Active frontages feature a high frequency of doors and windows and include shop windows, cafes, and restaurants, entrances to commercial premises, balconies and the front doors to residential accommodation, for example. Actual and perceived surveillance of the surrounding area is increased and the opportunities for anti-social behaviour to occur reduced.

Within the central area the following design criteria will be used to assess development proposals.

- Key building elevations must be designed so there is a clear and identifiable 'bottom', 'middle' and 'top', adding visual interest.
- The bottom of the building should meet the ground and enliven adjoining streets and spaces through the positioning of doors and windows and the formation of an active frontage. This section of the elevation is most visible to users of the public realm and requires the most attention to detail
- The middle section of the building up to shoulder height should give clues to the activities within. This can be achieved through the design and detailing of fenestration and, for example, use of balconies and upper floor terraces in residential buildings which provide opportunities for the street to be overlooked, increasing passive surveillance and safety



Blank elevations fronting an empty space - a 'no go' place in Milton Keynes



The ground floor of this hotel in Nottingham features cafes and restaurants



A carefully detailed middle section adds variety to this residential scheme in London



The top of this office building in Newcastle contributes to the character of the development



Ventilation stacks at the National Glass Centre are an integral part of the design of the building



In Nottingham the ground floor of this mixed use building can accommodate a variety of occupiers

- The top of the building must be carefully considered. Ventilation arrangements, air conditioning, lighting, servicing and any telecommunications equipment must be carefully designed and integrated into the overall structure of the building and should be masked from public viewpoints
- Opportunities for incorporating green 'living roofs' photo voltaic cells and solar water heaters must be considered to enhance the environmental performance of development within the central area
- Where required, signage must be discretely integrated into the overall design of the elevation and comply with the requirements of policy B21 of the UDP.

Adaptable and flexible buildings.

- 4.23 Adaptable buildings and layouts will provide opportunities for the central area to evolve and to change over the longer term without the need for its building stock to be rebuilt, increasing flexibility and choice.

In the central area consideration must be given to the potential future use of buildings, particularly at ground floor level. In all key frontage locations a floor to soffit height of around 3.5 metres should be specified to accommodate a variety of ground floor uses, for example commercial retail, bars, restaurants and cafes. In historic street frontages the floor to soffit height should reflect the prevailing character of the location.

- 4.24 Where flexibility for future uses is considered for buildings (for example conversion of offices to apartments or vice versa), care must be taken to ensure that a good standard of residential amenity is achieved, particularly with regard to the issues of noise and vibration, smell and light pollution and the provision of high quality private and shared amenity space. Further details are given below in the section on encouraging a mix of uses.

Gateway development

4.25 In order to signal arrival into the central area particular attention should be paid to the design of gateway areas. At present important gateways into the central area are underplayed. New gateways will be established at key points of arrival:

- St Mary's Gate
- St Peter's Gate
- City Gate
- University Gate
- Durham Gate
- Tavistock Gate
- Coronation Gate
- Eastgate

4.26 These are described in more detail in paragraph 3.18. The following criteria will be used to assess development at or adjoining city gateways.

Gateway development must be defined through:

- The formation of a defined gateway space with clear surface level pedestrian crossings where necessary
- Buildings following the edges of the gateway space with active frontages opening at ground floor level
- A prominent built form signalling the importance of the gateway as a point of arrival through an increase in relative building height



This gateway at the junction of High Street West and Sans Street says little that is positive about Sunderland



Gateway development adjoining a major junction in Nottingham fronts and contains the space



Outdoor seating at the junction of Mary Street and Stockton Road overlooks and enlivens the street



Well detailed and sympathetic extensions give these buildings a new lease of life in Foyle Street and Villiers Street



Historic environment and heritage.

- 4.27 The central area has a rich and varied historic environment. It contains three conservation areas (Sunderland Central, Old Sunderland Riverside, and Bishopwearmouth) and many listed buildings and structures. These are protected by law. The area around St Peter's church is a proposed World Heritage Site and will be the subject of a management plan and action programme. The City Council is currently in the process of producing conservation area character appraisals and management strategies for the three conservation areas within the central area. These documents will have an important role to play when assessing the context of a development site.
- 4.28 The established and mature scale, form of development, and street pattern of many other parts of the central area also contribute significantly to the character and identity of the city.

In order to ensure that the essential character of the central area heritage and townscape is considered as an integral part of the design process, all development proposals must:

- Respond to their context including any distinctive townscape and streetscape features, buildings, structures and landscape planting
- Respect the prevailing scale, form, plot size, block structure and urban grain of the vicinity ensuring that the integrity and setting of key historic buildings and areas of historic townscape value are respected

The riverside.

- 4.29 At present the River Wear is an underexploited asset within the central area. Establishing a strong relationship must therefore be an important design consideration.

In order to establish a strong relationship between the central area and the River Wear all development proposals along the river corridor must:

- Take advantage of riverside views and vistas through the orientation of buildings
- Reinforce the distinctive topography of the river gorge
- Establish pedestrian routes linking the central area with the river corridor through the layout of new development
- Present an active frontage to new riverside public spaces and key pedestrian routes including riverside walks

Objective 2: Ensure streets and spaces are well connected

- 4.30 The central area has a strong structure of streets and walks, particularly around Sunnyside, where the city's gridiron network is largely intact. Grandly proportioned historic streets, notably Fawcett Street, Bridge Street, Borough Road, High Street West and High Street East provide direct and clear access across the central area.



An active frontage at the National Glass Centre overlooking the River Wear



Ample seating provides an opportunity to linger at Gunwharf Quay in Portsmouth



Well detailed balconies overlook the waterfront at Bristol



Crossing Stockton Road



This wide, at - grade crossing provides a safe pedestrian environment in Portsmouth

4.31 Elsewhere pedestrian movement around the central area is more compromised. The ring road presents a major barrier for people trying to get into the central area, with limited and indirect crossing points and a hostile character which is poorly overlooked from adjoining development. East-west connections around the Bridges are limited, particularly as the centre is not open 24 hours. North-south routes across the central area and River Wear are also limited, with the Wearmouth Bridge providing the only pedestrian route across the river.

4.32 The quality of the streets and spaces in the central area also limits their attractiveness to pedestrians because of poorly specified and maintained surfaces in places, indirect crossing points, and blank elevations which limit surveillance and interest in adjoining buildings. Guidance is set out in this section on key building elevations and encouraging a mix of uses, detailing the public realm and the provision of crossing points.

4.33 Movement through and around the central area must increase its 'walkability' and maximise opportunities for walking and cycling which are highly sustainable forms of transport. There are also significant health benefits associated with making walking and cycling as straightforward and safe as possible.

In order to enhance sustainable patterns of movement within and around the central area which maximise opportunities for people to use alternatives to the private car, development layouts must:

- Ensure that the relationship between vehicular traffic, pedestrians, and cyclists maximises accessibility for all users
- Design streets and walks to ensure that people can easily and conveniently get to where they need to be
- Establish a formal, permeable and legible pattern of streets and spaces that connects effectively with the existing street network
- Provide attractive and convenient pedestrian and cycle links to adjoining areas enhancing the overall accessibility of the central area

Objective 3: Encourage a mix of uses

4.34 A mix of different uses helps to ensure that the spread of activity in an area is extended across the day and evening. New homes within the central area for example will provide a local resident population that can help support existing services and facilities. Provision for a greater mix of uses can also enhance the range of employment opportunities on offer. The creation of a complementary range of land uses will make the central area a vital and attractive place to spend time.

4.35 In addition, the introduction of a wider mix of uses can help to informally 'police' the central area during the evenings and periods when shops and other businesses are closed. Increasing the actual and perceived surveillance of the central area can play a role in crime prevention and reducing the fear of crime, encouraging a greater proportion of visitors to spend time there. This must be supported through design measures such as ensuring that all streets and open spaces are fronted by development.

4.36 The central area must offer a broad range of facilities to all potential users including families, children, young people and the elderly. Everyone should feel safe and welcome at all times of the day and evening. Mixed-use development should not concentrate exclusively on bars, pubs and shops, but also provide other leisure opportunities that can be enjoyed by everyone. Consideration must be given to broadening the mix of uses when new development proposals come forward in the central area.

4.37 This broader mix of uses could include internet cafés, supervised play facilities where parents or guardians could confidently leave their children whilst shopping for example, alternative sport facilities such as a climbing wall or dedicated skate park (see Galley's Gill and Festival Park), quality restaurants that appeal to a broad range of people, and arts and performance venues. These opportunities would complement the existing leisure facilities within the central area including the Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens, the National Glass Centre, and the Empire Theatre.



A cinema and other leisure and retail uses are accommodated



Good sized balconies provide private amenity space and enliven this building's appearance

A mix of appropriate uses must be provided across the central area. Mixed use developments and vertical mixed use within buildings will be encouraged, with ground floors accommodating a different use to upper floors. The following design issues will need to be taken into account when designing for a mix of uses within a development or individual building:

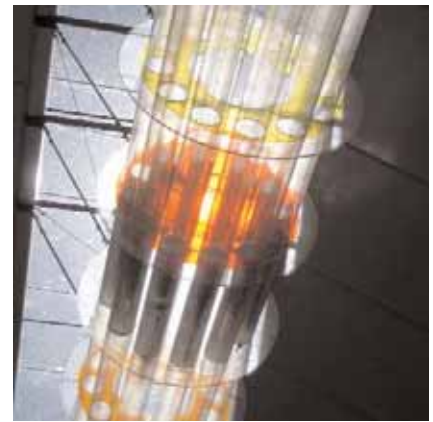
- Potential conflicts between uses must be minimised through the careful design and siting of servicing areas, ventilation and mechanical extraction, and external light sources
- Particular attention must be given to the amenity of future residential occupiers by ensuring issues of potential noise and vibration transmission, smell and light pollution are all adequately addressed
- The design of residential development must ensure the provision of appropriate, defensible private amenity space for all occupiers in the form of a garden, courtyard, balcony or roof terrace. Reference should be made to the City Council's adopted 'Residential Design Guide' (Sept 2008)
- The siting of extraction equipment and external lighting sources must be carefully considered to minimise visual intrusion from the street

4.38 Within a busy, mixed use central area environment a degree of disturbance from streets, squares and walks is to be expected, but care should be taken in the design and layout of new development to sensitively place livelier uses, such as cafes, bars and restaurants, sensitively relative to the places where greater numbers of people will live, thereby reducing the likelihood of excessive disturbance and future problems.

Objective 4: Use quality materials and robust detailing

- 4.39 A palette of high quality materials will help to firmly establish the character and identity of the central area, both in terms of built form and the public realm
- 4.40 High quality materials that are unique to the central area, or emphasise a particular location within it, must be specified. This helps build upon the existing character of the central area, for example around Sunnyside, Bishopwearmouth, Fawcett Street or the Riverside. It also introduces colour and texture, enriching the perception and appreciation of sense of place adding to the character and special place identity.
- 4.41 A restrained palette of materials is a particular feature of the central area. These include the extensive use of local sandstone, intricate stone and terracotta detailing, and brown brickwork. The pallet has been enriched through the introduction of more modern materials, particularly glass and steel as exemplified by the recent conversion of the former post office buildings overlooking Sunnyside Gardens, and the dramatic Winter Gardens. Sunderland has a long association with the glassmaking industry and the use of glass can create exceptional architecture, urban spaces, streetscape, landmarks, evening skyline and night time vitality.
- 4.42 Built form details, construction materials, decorative detailing such as towers and rotundas at prominent corners, balconies and railings, public art, and even basic features such as windows and shopfronts, entrances and doorways all help reinforce the image of place. They help to make a place legible, familiar and distinctive. As a result particular attention must be paid to the design and detailing of these important aspects of the building.





Objective 5: Discretely accommodate servicing access, cars and bicycles

4.43 The design and layout of service yards, bin storage and access points are often overlooked yet they can significantly detract from both the attractiveness and usability of a particular development proposal and the central area as a whole.

Within the central area:

- Service yards must be unobtrusively sited and designed in order that they are hidden from view. This can be achieved through locating them within the centre of development blocks
- Servicing access points must be discretely located in places where there is minimum conflict with key pedestrian routes. When not in use they should be gated to provide a continuous frontage within the streetscene and shield the yard from view
- Bin and recycling storage must be provided within plot or building envelopes for all new developments to ensure that it is obscured from adjoining streets and the public realm.

4.44 The location, design and layout of car and cycle parking must ensure that it is both safe and useable, yet does not become a dominant or intrusive element within the central area.

4.45 The overall balance of parking provision must be maintained within the central area in terms of numbers, particularly where existing areas of car parking are proposed to be redeveloped. Parking standards for the central area are set out under policy T23A of the UPD Alteration No.2.



Car parking is shielded behind a gate at Panns Bank



Servicing for a major retail scheme accommodated within this building in central Milton Keynes



Bin storage and services are integrated into the design of this building at Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth



A multi - storey car park is 'wrapped' by apartments in Brierley Hill in the West Midlands



A car park entrance is discreetly accommodated in High Street West



Cycle stands form an integrated part of the layout at Sunnyside Gardens

In the central area the design of new parking provision must ensure

- It is discreetly provided away from the immediate street scene - this can be achieved using undercroft parking areas or multi-storey structures wrapped by single aspect development
- An element of on street parking is provided for groups of users for whom accessibility is particularly important
- It is carefully distributed giving easy and convenient access to car-borne visitors and ensuring that pedestrian linkages into the central area are of the highest quality
- It is modern, well lit and safe - first impressions are very important and many visitors will be strongly influenced by the quality of parking facilities and the connections into the central area
- Cycle parking is incorporated into new development schemes as part of the built structure ensuring that facilities are safe, secure and the entrance point is well overlooked
- Public cycle parking stands are incorporated into the design of the public realm in key locations across the central area, particularly adjoining major retail and leisure areas as well as new squares adjoining the ring road.

Objective 6: Manage and maintain the city

- 4.46 Management of the central area will be an important consideration. Well cared for and attractive places are always more positively viewed than shabby, poorly maintained areas which can feel unsafe and give a poor first impression.
- 4.47 The environment of the central area must be seen to be carefully managed on a day to day basis. This will encompass functional activities such as litter control, graffiti removal, maintenance of landscaped areas and street cleansing, through to the organisation of programmes of active events for key public streets and spaces, as well as promotion and marketing of the of the central area and city centre.
- 4.48 In this way the central area will be viewed as a key community asset for the whole of Sunderland and valued appropriately.

Objective 7: Achieve environmental sustainability

- 4.49 Sustainable development aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs. In practice this means ensuring that new development makes the most efficient use of resources such as land, building materials, energy and water. It also means designing places which are 'walkable', where local services are available close by, thereby reducing reliance on motorised transport. Good urban design has an important role to play in creating sustainable neighbourhoods.
- 4.50 It will be important to actively promote the regeneration of previously developed and vacant land in the central area and the re-use and refurbishment of existing buildings. The retention of existing buildings is often a more sustainable solution than demolition and new build due to the embodied energy within existing buildings.

In the central area, development must be constructed to the latest standards of resource efficiency, demonstrated not only through the design process but also the construction phase and subsequent occupation - the whole 'lifetime' of a building. All proposals within the central area will be assessed having regard to:

- Ecology and land use; this encompasses the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the city and the safeguarding of soil quality in relation to potential contaminants associated with land remediation



Park Lane is enlivened by a mix of uses and the streetscape is well maintained



Minimal overlooking of this cliff top space in has resulted in neglect and vandalism



Rainwater harvesting in Milton Keynes



Solar water heating panel in Milton Keynes



Shade from the sun at Chiswick Park in London

- Reducing energy usage is a key aim in terms of minimising greenhouse gas emissions associated with the construction and operational needs of new buildings. It will be important to increase the supply of energy from renewable or more sustainable sources including on-site micro generation. Policy B2A of UDP Alteration No.2 requires 10% of the embedded energy supply of new major development to be provided from renewable sources unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible
- Sustainable construction in terms of high quality sustainable buildings; new development within the central area should employ modern methods of construction which maximise resource efficiency and minimise waste during the construction phase. Materials should be sourced, manufactured and transported to minimise negative environmental impacts.
- Code for Sustainable Homes; the code was introduced in April 2007 and replaces the EcoHomes standards. The code is designed to provide a sustainability rating for the overall performance of new dwellings. There are six star ratings for all new homes from one star (which includes a minimum carbon emissions standard that is 10% lower than Part L Building Regulation requirements) to 6 stars (zero carbon homes). Policy B2A of UDP Alteration No.2 requires an EcoHomes rating of very good or excellent which equate to 3/4 stars under the new code
- Waste - associated with both the construction and subsequent operation of a building, must be minimised. Design should actively seek to promote sustainable waste management through providing suitable, well designed facilities for the storage and recycling of domestic and commercial waste including on-site composting facilities for larger schemes
- Water conservation - in Sunderland is a significant aspect of the new code for Sustainable Homes. It will be essential that all new development minimises consumption of water resources and incorporates facilities for rainwater harvesting and storage. In addition, water management must ensure the maintenance of groundwater quality, and help to reduce the risk of flooding through on-site rain water storage and management and the provision of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems where achievable. This is a requirement of Policy B2A of UDP Alteration No 2.

Public realm design guidance

4.51 The public realm comprises the streets, footpaths and open spaces of the central area. These in turn are defined and contained by buildings and other elements and structures. The relationship between buildings and the public realm should ensure that streets and spaces are busy, overlooked by the public fronts of buildings, and perceived to be safe throughout the day and into the evening.

4.52 The quality of the public realm shapes people's perceptions of place. Well designed and cared for places are more attractive and active than tired, run down areas. The design, quality and appearance of the public realm is a component of this urban design strategy with the potential to create long term value that underpins investment in the central area.

4.53 The public realm therefore has a key role to play in:

- Linking the various development sites within the central area, both visually and physically
- Unifying the central area through a coordinated design approach that utilises the best contemporary modern materials and street furniture
- Creating an environment that is busy, overlooked and safe through the relationship with adjoining buildings
- Contributing to the character and identity of the central area, helping to instil a strong sense of place and underpinning investment
- Improving opportunities for sustainable forms of transport, particularly walking and cycling, through enhancements to the connectivity and legibility of the area and identifying new and enhanced linkages across and around key development opportunity sites

4.54 In order that Sunderland's central area has a public realm of the highest quality eight key objectives have been identified:

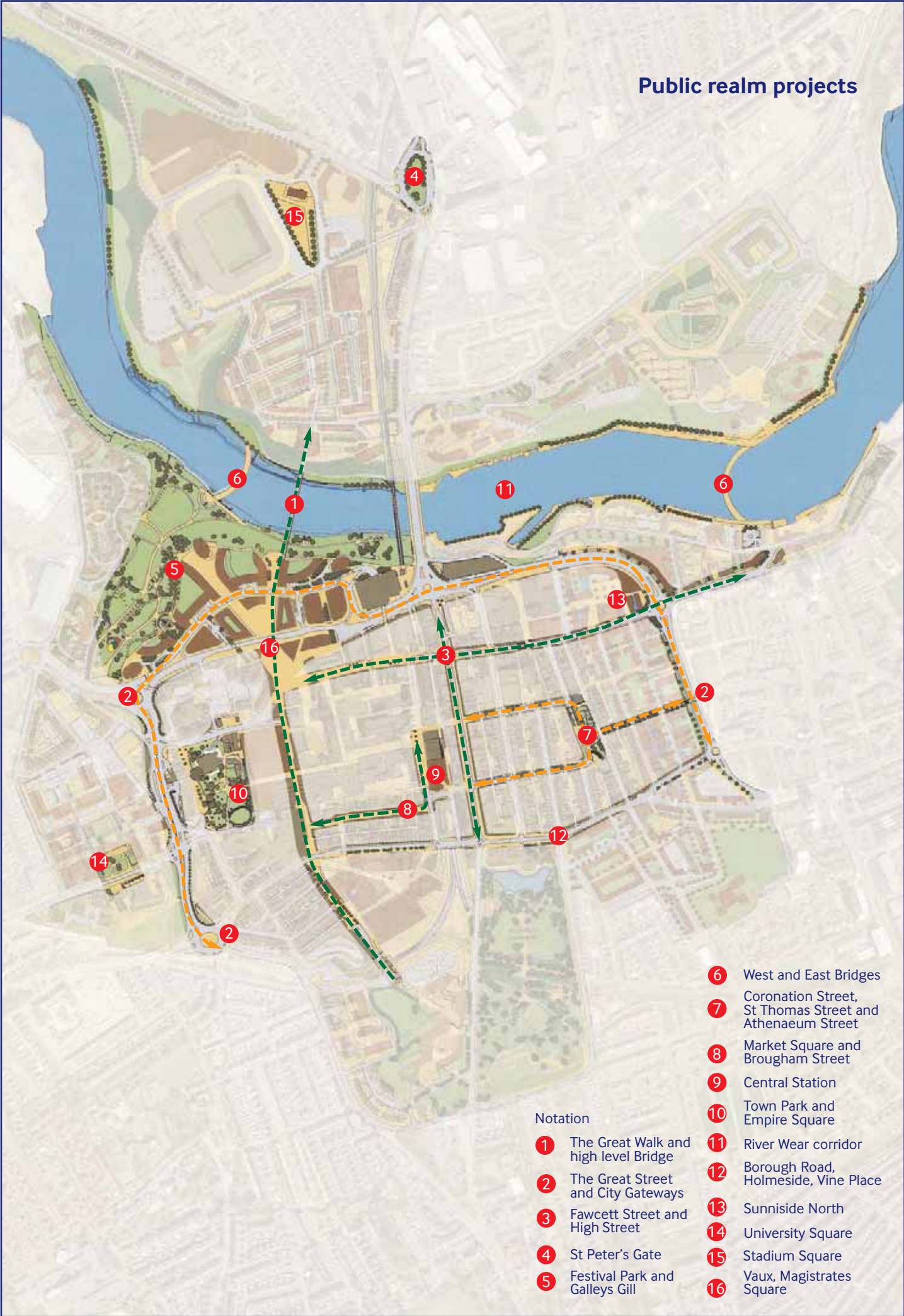
- Restore character and identity through the design of the public realm
- Ensure a people focused, pedestrian friendly environment
- Provide pedestrian routes and crossing points which reflect desire lines
- Simplify layout and eliminate street clutter
- Specify high quality materials with simple detailing
- Introduce tree planting
- Animate the public realm
- Enrich the public realm with artistic intervention and establish a city of light

4.55 Each objective is underpinned by specific guidance against which proposals will be assessed. The guidance is illustrated using examples from Sunderland and elsewhere.

Public realm proposals within the central area will be required to demonstrate how they have responded to the key design objectives and public realm design guidance.

4.56 The principal public realm projects identified within the central area are shown on the diagram opposite.

Public realm projects



Notation

- 1 The Great Walk and high level Bridge
- 2 The Great Street and City Gateways
- 3 Fawcett Street and High Street
- 4 St Peter's Gate
- 5 Festival Park and Galleys Gill

- 6 West and East Bridges
- 7 Coronation Street, St Thomas Street and Athenaeum Street
- 8 Market Square and Brougham Street
- 9 Central Station
- 10 Town Park and Empire Square
- 11 River Wear corridor
- 12 Borough Road, Holmeside, Vine Place
- 13 Sunnyside North
- 14 University Square
- 15 Stadium Square
- 16 Vaux, Magistrates Square

Objective 1: Restore character and identity through the design of the public realm

- 4.57 The character of the streets, squares and spaces plays a large part in people's understanding of, and identification with, a particular place. A negative impression is given where they have become downgraded through insensitive development and poor surface materials, or broken apart with blank or interrupted frontages. It is therefore vital to restore character and identity, providing a positive setting for development and inward investment.
- 4.58 The character and identity of the central area is strongly rooted in its history, particularly evident in grand streets such as Fawcett Street, the regular and strongly defined gridiron of Sunnyside, Town Park and Bishopwearmouth, and the civic splendour of Mowbray Gardens. This legacy must be celebrated through the design of the public realm, both the renewal and continued use of existing streets and spaces and in the creation of new squares and public places.
- 4.59 A continued focus on restoring civic pride in the central area will continue to make it memorable and distinctive. Important locations within the central area, such as the riverside, High Street, West Park, and St Peter's, must be emphasised and distinguished through the restoration of existing streets, squares and spaces and the creation of new ones.
- 4.60 The restoration of Sunnyside Gardens provides an outstanding example of the renaissance of a key public space within the central area and provides a benchmark against which other proposals will be assessed.



Sunnyside Gardens - a distinctive space unique to Sunderland



Convenient surface level crossing and wide pavements make it easy to get around in Nottingham (above) and Croydon (below)



Simple high quality way marking in Nottingham

Objective 2: Ensure a people focused, pedestrian - friendly environment

- 4.61 The public realm must link the central area together both visually and physically, helping to make it easy for pedestrians to move around and distinguishing the central area from the wider area.
- 4.62 The broad grid of north-south and east-west streets must be made clear and unambiguous. The streets must be convenient and accessible, linking together key locations, squares and spaces across the central area, and beyond, in a clear and direct way.
- 4.63 They must take the form of pedestrian friendly central area streets that are generous and well paved; lively and well overlooked by adjoining development.
- 4.64 Vehicles will continue to have access to streets in the central area, and the use of shared surfaces can also help control traffic speeds in key locations such as where pedestrian routes will cross Fawcett Street.
- 4.65 Vehicular access during the evening can also contribute to a livelier night - time environment by making it easy to get to a particular place outside the busiest times of the day.

Objective 3: Provide pedestrian routes and crossing points that reflect desire lines

- 4.66 Over time the layout of the central area has become fragmented with key north-south and, in particular, east-west routes becoming convoluted and unclear. In addition the key destinations-main shopping areas, evening leisure areas, etc - have moved. All too often pedestrians are obliged to navigate the city, and cross roads and other public spaces, by routes that are less than direct.
- 4.67 A basic principle in the design and layout of all routes, crossings and public spaces should be following the lines that pedestrians want to take, not forcing alternatives. This will help to join together different parts of the central area, increasing permeability, and overcoming the barriers created by busy roads, such as St Mary's Way and Sans Street.
- 4.68 In addition, it helps to strengthen the natural and logical movement patterns that people will make across the central area particularly between districts and foci of activity (University, the Bridges, the Park Lane interchange and Sunnyside for example).
- 4.69 It is also critical that waymarking and signage across the central area is improved to assist visitors, residents and shoppers easily find their way around. This must include pedestrian and cycle routes, key public transport stops including the bus, Metro and rail stations, and principal central area car parks.

Objective 4: Simplify layout and eliminate street clutter

4.70 An uncoordinated proliferation of signs, bollards, service boxes, raised planters, lampposts and pedestrian barriers not only undermines the quality and attractiveness of the public realm but confuses people wishing to access a place. The removal of unnecessary street clutter and the coordination of signage and street furniture components is an important aim.

4.71 The specification of street furniture components such as seating, lamp stands, bus shelters, and litter bins, must add to the overall identity, quality and character of the central area. Modern and contemporary designs should be specified that are unique to the central area.

4.72 A programme of signposting and waymarking across the central area should be adopted to include pedestrian and cycle routes, key public transport stops, car parks, and important facilities and destinations. This should be combined with a concerted campaign to de-clutter the streets by removing unnecessary signs, street furniture and railings. In this way a streetscape which reinforces the integrity and axial nature of the grid street network will be created.



Litter bin, Sunnyside Gardens



A bench as public art, Portsmouth city centre



Well detailed street furniture at the University of Sunderland

Objective 5: Specify high quality materials with simple detailing

- 4.73 Robust and timeless design must be a key component of any public realm works in the central area. Materials add variety and visual interest through texture, tone and pattern but too many materials create visual chaos. Details, such as boundary walls, railings, and entrance gateways, also contribute towards establishing identity and sense of place.
- 4.74 A co-ordinated but limited palette of durable surface materials will provide a strong setting for development. This will include the use of Yorkstone paving and granite sets and kerb stones although other high quality paving materials may also be specified. In addition, Sunderland has a strong history and association with glassmaking

and the imaginative use of glass will also be sought across the central area in the form of paviers and street furniture for example.

- 4.75 Select, high quality materials will help to give image and identity to the central area unifying overall appearance and character and distinguishing the central area from other locations. Although the initial outlay for higher quality street furniture and materials can be relatively high the longer term ongoing maintenance savings can be even greater thereby minimising lifetime costs.
- 4.76 As the overly complex design and layout of spaces can also lead to clutter and confusion, simplicity must be a key design objective. Sunnyside Gardens provides a benchmark for all landscape design within the central area.



Objective 6: Introduce tree planting

- 4.77 The introduction of street trees can play a vital role in establishing a distinctive, high quality environment. They contribute to the appearance and character of an area, filter dust and pollution, and help make streets feel quieter and calmer. At present there is limited street tree planting in the central area, although new trees have been introduced into Sunnyside Gardens, and there are fine stands of mature trees in Mowbray Gardens.
- 4.78 There is a significant opportunity to introduce further street tree planting particularly where existing streets and spaces are proposed to be re-configured. Tree planting should be a priority along the ring road as part of its transformation into a 'Great Street'. They should also be introduced along key streets and within public spaces including the 'Great Walk'.
- 4.79 A limited number of species that are distinctive to the central area should be specified to include aphid resistant species of lime (*Tilia x euchlora*), as well as London Plane (*Platanus x acerifolia*) for example. The presence of underground utility services will need to be carefully considered as part of the tree planting process.



Tree planting in Low Row, Sunderland



Outdoor spaces can accommodate a variety of activities,



A mix of places to linger and enjoy the city - Southbank (above) and Nottingham Playhouse Square (below)



Objective 7: Animate the public realm

- 4.80 Well designed streets and spaces should be busy and attractive places, used as a backdrop for informal activities, as meeting places for friends, as a stage for special events and festivals, as places for trade and for debate, and as places to relax and observe the world around.
- 4.81 Activity is one of the key generators of a sense of vitality in streets, squares and open spaces or within buildings and covered places. Where there is an interface between the two an active edge is formed such as a street café, bar or restaurant, a busy doorway or entrance point, or a shop window.
- 4.82 Enhancing and extending the range of uses increases the amount of activity and the hours during which it takes place. This ensures that the environment is perceived to be safer, increasing surveillance and deterring anti-social behaviour. This Strategy identifies places where a range of different uses and activities could be introduced within the various central area districts.
- 4.83 It will also be important to identify other opportunities to animate the public realm at various times of the day and night. This could include markets, festivals and open air performances, animating streets and spaces particularly around the Market Square and along the 'Great Walk'. It will be important to ensure that the design and layout of spaces takes account of programming for events, markets and festivals to allow adequate, level surfacing, power points and functional lighting for example.

Objective 8: Enrich the public realm with artistic intervention and establish a city of light

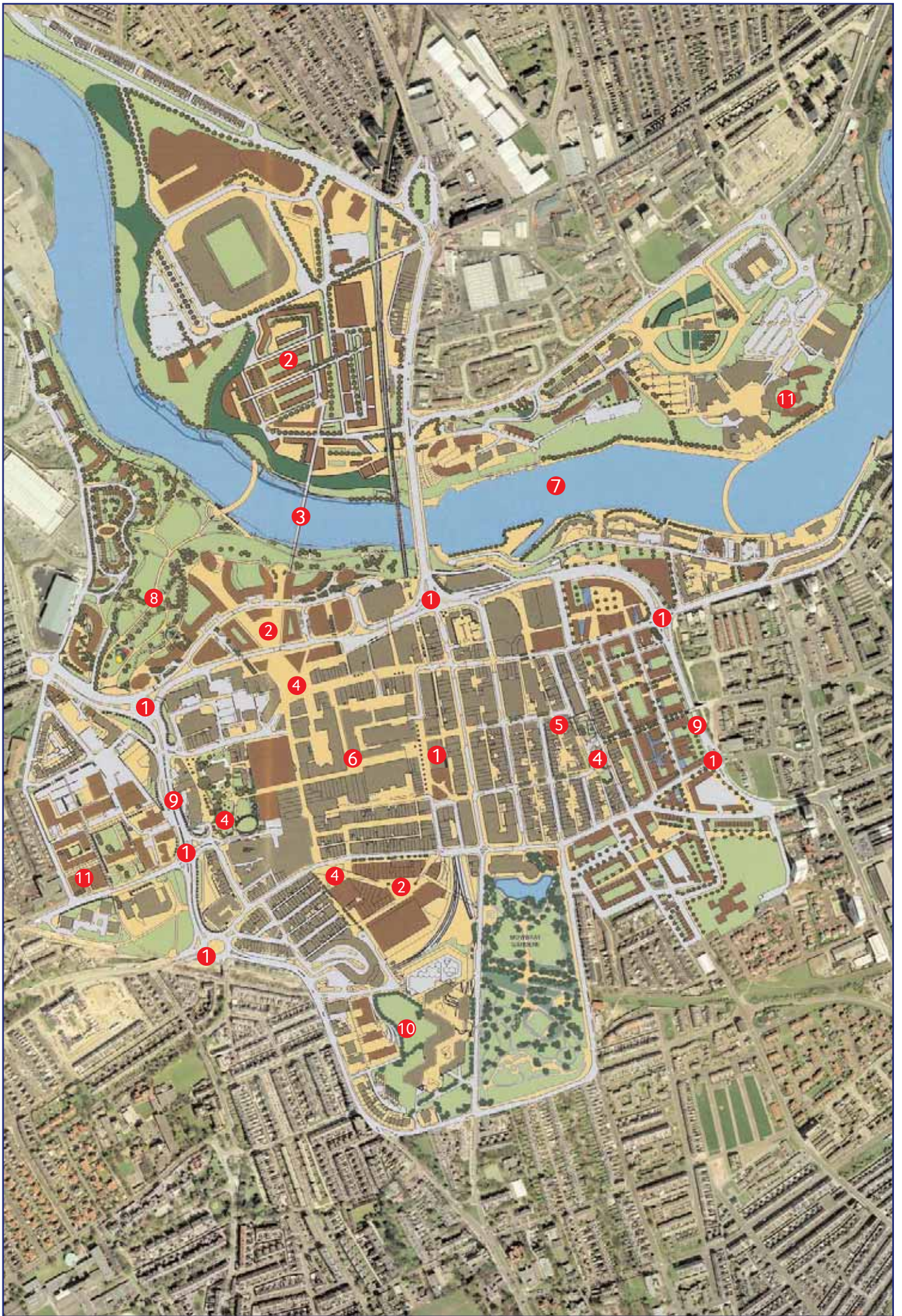
- 4.84 The involvement of artists from the outset of the design of a proposal, and in the creation of both place and space, can dramatically transform the identity and quality of that design, engage the community and support the creative industries within the city. The creative industries, including the arts, design, architecture, research and development for example, have a vital economic role to play within the city and represent one of the nation's key growth sectors.
- 4.85 The Cultural Masterplan for Sunderland (2004) sets out a number of mechanisms through which artists should become involved with the regeneration of the city and become engaged at every stage of the development process. Reference must be made to the recommendations contained within the Cultural Masterplan.
- 4.86 At a more basic level the introduction of public art into the public realm can contribute towards giving the central area additional character and identity as well as providing local landmarks to improve legibility. This can be achieved through relatively modest outlay when compared with the overall cost of public realm enhancements. Gateway locations within the central area, new public squares, and either end of the 'Great Walk' would all provide excellent locations for major new works.
- 4.87 Public art nearly always attracts the attention of the local community and can provide a talking point, raising interest in and the profile of the area. It can also be a good way of engaging people through, for example, the selection process, and through collaboration between artists, community groups, or school children.
- 4.88 Dramatic and innovative lighting is another way in which the public realm can be literally made to shine. Sunderland's history of glass making began when Gaulois craftsmen produced the first stained glass in Britain for St Peter's church in AD 674. Sunderland became one of the earliest glassmaking centres in England - an industry that continues to the present day.

- 4.89 Light is essential for appreciating the translucent and optical qualities of glass. The elements of light and glass form a strong identity for the central area and the use of glass and light can create exceptional architecture, urban spaces, streetscape, landmarks, evening skyline, and night time vitality. There are many layers to a cohesive, successful lighting strategy. These include the lighting of key city streets, bridges, gateways, buildings and landmarks, pedestrian squares and parks, artworks, and vistas such as the River Wear corridor. Further information is contained within the 'Lighting Strategy for Sunderland' (Final draft, March 2004).



St Peter's riverside public art





5.0 Delivering the vision

- 1 Provide an impressive series of central area approach streets and gateway spaces, including enhancements to Central Station, to establish a positive first impression and welcome people into Sunderland.
- 2 Maximise the redevelopment potential of key regeneration sites across the central area to establish new mixed-use districts with architectural and urban design standards of the highest quality. Key sites include Stadium Park, Vaux and Holmeside Triangle.
- 3 Better connect the northern and southern parts of the central area across the River Wear gorge at high and low levels, linking key destinations and attractions together via new pedestrian bridges that are innovative icons of engineering and design excellence.
- 4 Create a world class public realm for the central area making it easy and attractive to move around through an interlinked sequence of fine streets and walks, lively public squares and beautiful parks.
- 5 Reinforce the character and identity of Sunnyside through enhancing the historic environment and targeting key redevelopment opportunities ensuring that the district continues to make a strong contribution to the life and identity of the central area.
- 6 Improve Sunderland's central shopping district through identifying opportunities to enhance the area around the Bridges, improving the quality of the pedestrian environment and providing opportunities for a new mix of uses including development of Holmeside.
- 7 Enhance the River Wear corridor by introducing riverside and cliff top walks and ensuring that high quality new development addresses the river enhancing its dramatic gorge setting.
- 8 Rejuvenate the area around Galley's Gill and Festival Park bringing forward key regeneration opportunities at Vaux and Farringdon Row, providing new leisure opportunities within the park, and enhancing access to the River Wear.
- 9 Transform the city's inner ring road into an attractive, tree lined boulevard fronted by development with pedestrian crossing points that seamlessly and conveniently connect the central area to adjoining neighbourhoods.
- 10 Reinforce the role of the Civic quarter within the central area through new development overlooking West Park, and establishing stronger linkages to Mowbray Gardens.
- 11 Maximise opportunities for enhancing the University of Sunderland's Chester Road campus and St Peter's campus reflecting the status of the University within the city.

The indicative layouts shown on the plan opposite are for illustrative purposes only.

Development opportunities and public realm priorities

- 5.1 Across Sunderland central area there are a number of significant development opportunities. These are outlined on the following pages.
- 5.2 The opportunities reinforce the structure of the central area districts together with the key public realm priorities focused on arriving in, moving around and being in the central area.
- 5.3 A broad set of objectives are established for each district and opportunities are identified relating to the potential for development as well as key public realm components.
- 5.4 More detailed development briefs will be drawn up for key sites which will further shape the broad opportunities outlined here. The development opportunities may be brought forward individually or as part of a more comprehensive scheme. The aim is to:
 - Provide realistic and attractive investment opportunities
 - Contribute towards the enhancement and growth of the city
 - Deliver the vision for the central area
- 5.5 Prioritising the projects and interventions is an important next step to develop an overall implementation programme. It will also enable a number of early projects to be implemented which will engender confidence in this strategy. Further details on implementation are given in Section 6 including priorities, delivery agencies and funding opportunities through developer contributions.
- 5.6 The district-focused opportunity areas identify locations where new development and a broad mix of uses can be accommodated. In this way it is anticipated that the attractiveness of the central area will be enhanced helping to achieve the vision.

Civic Quarter

5.7 The Civic quarter is focused around the Civic Centre, Park Lane and the Park Lane interchange, and Mowbray Gardens. The area occupies a high point in the southern part of the central area and there are good views to the north, particularly from the top of Park Lane. The quarter is bounded by Stockton Road to the west, Park Road to the south, Toward Road to the east and Vine Place to the north.

5.8 The quarter has a varied townscape character comprising the distinctive terraced Civic Centre, (which includes substantial areas of green open space at West Park) Mowbray Gardens, the modern steel and glass sweeping roof of the Park Lane interchange, and the recently enhanced streetscape of Park Lane.

5.9 There is a high level of daytime activity in the area supporting a mix of uses. With the completion of Park Lane transport interchange, Park Lane has become a major pedestrian route linking into The Bridges shopping centre to the south. Restaurants, bars and café/bars, particularly along Park Lane and Holmeside, mean that the area also contributes to the city centre's evening economy.

5.10 Mowbray Gardens provides the largest area of green open space in the central area and is bounded to the west by Burdon Road, to the north by Borough Road, the east by Toward Road, and to the south by Park Road. Mowbray Gardens is a significant city asset. The carefully restored and maintained Victorian municipal park is located in the southern part of the central area. Originally called the 'People's Park', the original Mowbray Park was laid out by a Mr Lawson, gardener to Lord Londonderry. His approach was to partially level the site retaining the hill around which winding paths were incorporated providing views of the city and surrounding areas.

5.11 The original Victorian park was recently restored and contemporary features such as artworks and play areas added. The restoration works were completed in 2000. The park is carefully programmed with events throughout the year including open air performances in the summer.

5.12 The National Heritage Act of 1983 enabled English Heritage to compile a register of parks and gardens of special historic interest. The historic importance of Mowbray Gardens has been recognised by its inclusion on the register.



Mowbray Gardens



Civic Centre



West Park

5.13 Two key city attractions - Sunderland Museum and the Winter Gardens - are located within close proximity making it a popular destination for both local residents and visitors. Sunderland Museum (originally Sunderland Museum and Art Gallery) was the first local authority museum outside London. The oldest part of the building dates from 1879 with a substantial extension added in the 1960s. The building was recently refurbished to meet the demands of a contemporary museum facility and reopened to the public in the summer of 2001. The refurbishment also included the addition of the Winter Gardens, a 28 metre diameter glass rotunda, housing 1500 species of semi-tropical plants. The museum is a Grade II listed building.

5.14 The following issues are of particular importance in the Civic Quarter:

- The quarter is well served by modern public transport facilities and supports a broad mix of uses
- Important development opportunities exist around West Park
- As a gateway into the city the quarter must present a more positive first impression particularly to bus, Metro and rail passengers. Parking at the Civic Centre has poor surveillance and is underused
- Variable quality street frontages, particularly to Park Lane and Holmeside, and a number of poor quality and vacant buildings detract from the character and townscape qualities of the area
- Many of the pedestrian routes through the quarter are unattractive and poorly overlooked
- East-west movement through the quarter is limited by the rail/Metro cutting
- West Park is relatively underused with limited surveillance from adjoining buildings

Objectives for the Civic Quarter

5.15 In order to address the issues affecting the Civic Quarter the following objectives have been identified:

- Capitalise on the quarter's accessibility to create a modern gateway into the central area
- Provide opportunities for a mix of city uses including new retail, bars, cafes and restaurants, civic and residential development to extend the times when the quarter is busy and active
- Ensure that pedestrian routes are safe and overlooked by adjoining development and clearly link the quarter with adjoining areas, particularly the central district and Central Station
- Introduce substantial public realm enhancements including West Park, the creation of new areas of public space and the 'Great Walk'

5.16 Mowbray Gardens will be an area of limited change within the City. Objectives for the Gardens will therefore aim to:

- Protect the character and appearance of the park and its important features
- Protect the park from development in the surrounding area which may adversely affect its setting
- Preserve the character and appearance of Sunderland Museum in accordance with its listed status
- Promote events and initiatives to attract visitors
- Ensure public spaces within the park are safe, accessible and attractive
- Improve links to the park particularly from Holmeside Triangle across the rail/Metro line and over Burdon Road.

Civic Quarter



Key development opportunities

- 1 West Park

Public realm priorities

- 1 The Great Walk
- 2 Cowan Terrace
- 3 Burdon Road and Civic Centre
- 4 West park



West Park church

Key development opportunities

- 5.17 **West Park** - is an important area of open space within the city that provides a setting for the Civic Centre buildings. The park will become the 'anchor' at the southern end of the 'Great Walk'. Although the space is currently underused and poorly overlooked, a significant opportunity has been exploited to redevelop the University of Sunderland's Benedict Building which adjoins the space to the west and provide a new mixed use scheme which better defines and fronts West Park.
- 5.18 The built form of proposals takes account of the existing buildings that front Stockton Road including the West Park United Reform church that occupies a prominent site at the corner of Cowan Terrace and Stockton Road.
- 5.19 Key pedestrian routes around the site will be improved to include links to the Park Lane transport interchange and the Civic Centre.

Key public realm priorities

- 5.20 **The Great Walk** - part of the proposed cross city centre pedestrian promenade runs through the Civic quarter along the route of Park Lane, linking through West Park to the Civic Centre and Mowbray Gardens. A simple palette of high quality materials will be used along the route including specially commissioned distinctive landmark lighting columns
- 5.21 **Cowan Terrace** - public realm improvements will limit vehicle speeds, with the extension of the Park Lane surface treatment to form part of the Great Walk and link into West Park. These works

may be subject to future access requirements for the Holmeside Triangle site, where the requirements of pedestrians and vehicular traffic will need to be carefully considered.

- 5.22 **Burdon Road and the Civic Centre** - public realm improvements to the north section of Burdon Road will improve the quality of the pedestrian environment.
- 5.23 Co-ordinated sympathetic improvements to the upper levels of the Civic Centre car park, the tiered and interlinked courtyard spaces within the Civic Centre complex, including surface materials, hard and soft landscape elements and lighting, will improve pedestrian safety and enhance the character of an important and distinctive central area building. The tiled floorscape of the Civic Centre is an important element of the complex's landscaping.
- 5.24 Pedestrian links between the Civic Centre and Holmeside Triangle along Park Lane and the lower levels and access routes to the Civic Centre car park will be well lit.
- 5.25 **West Park** - the quality of pedestrian environment around West Park will be improved. Consideration will be given to a new formal hard surfaced space that forms a fitting entrance and welcome to Sunderland City Council offices and anchors the 'Great Walk' at its southern end. A major piece of public art should be considered here as a focus to the Park Lane/Great Walk axis and to terminate the view looking south from Park Lane.

Implementation issues

- 5.26 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
 - Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No.2 including policy SA55A.1.
- 5.27 The open space is subject to UDP policy SA75. This policy aims to retain central area parks and public open space. Policies B3 and L7 also apply to the loss of open space. Policy L7 states that land allocated for open space will be retained in its existing use. Permission for other uses will only be granted if alternative provision, of an equivalent scale, quality and accessibility is made.

Central District

- 5.28 The Central District covers much of the principal retail heart of Sunderland. The area is dominated by the Bridges shopping centre, a purpose-built centre originally constructed in the 1960s. The Bridges is popular with shoppers and has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment including an extension linking to Holmeside and Park Lane. The centre includes a covered market hall and provides a substantial number of multi-storey parking spaces accessed from St Michael's Way to the west, and West Street to the north. Three residential tower blocks, rising to 20 storeys, which are extremely popular with residents, provide a distinctive iconic city landmark.
- 5.29 The Bridges provides important pedestrian links during opening hours between Market Square and Central Station to the east, Park Lane and Brougham Street to the south, High Street West to the north, and Crowtree Road to the west. However, the centre has a large-scale block structure which is not typical of the central area's historic urban grain. Much of the historic street pattern in the area has been obliterated and this has impeded the pedestrian circulation pattern in this part of the city, particularly when the Bridges is closed at night.
- 5.30 Servicing and vehicular access points and areas of blank elevations create a hostile and uninviting environment in places, a problem that is synonymous with development of the period.
- 5.31 The Central District provides many visitors with their first impression of the central area. Multi storey car parks are located at the Bridges (one above the 'market hall' accessed from St Mary's Way at Gillbridge, the second accessed from St Michael's Way at Green Terrace which was completed as part of the Bridges Phase 2 development.
- 5.32 In addition the Central Station is a major gateway although first impressions are affected by the bleak station concourse and the poor quality of the pedestrian environment. Substantial investment is being made to the platform area of the station including new lighting, escalators, and service information for passengers.



Large scale block structure creates a harsh pedestrian environment



Central Station forecourt



Market Square



Elephant Tea Rooms



Fawcett Street

- 5.33 Adjoining the Central Station, Market Square is a principal hard-surfaced space within the city centre. The quality of the surrounding built environment contributes to a poor sense of place and does not reflect the area's status as one of Sunderland's few public squares.
- 5.34 To the north and east of the Central District are High Street West and Fawcett Street. High Street West is an historic thoroughfare linking the historic settlements of Old Sunderland and Bishopwearmouth. Fawcett Street's origins can be traced back to 1814 when William Jameson was commissioned to lay out the Fawcett Estate, now known as Sunniside.
- 5.35 The character of both streets has changed over time. Each now fulfil an important retail function and serve as major pedestrian and public transport routes. High Street West is pedestrianised and is characterised by larger scale retail stores dating from the later half of the 20th century. The upper floors offer little in the way of architectural interest.
- 5.36 In contrast Fawcett Street is characterised by architectural diversity and quality on a grand scale. The oldest properties date from the mid 19th century and many were originally built as residences. Of particular note are the richly detailed Sydenham House and Corder House both originally commercial properties designed by Frank Caws, which feature terracotta panels and mouldings. Several impressive 'classical' style buildings occupy prominent corner sites, at the St Thomas Street junction for example, and Hutchinson's Buildings on the corner of Bridge Street/High Street West.
- 5.37 However, Fawcett Street's historic role as one of the city's principal shopping areas has diminished as many major retailers have relocated to the Bridges. Value retailers, poor quality shop frontages and underutilised upper floors now give the street an air of neglected grandeur.

5.38 The southern-most part of the Central District is occupied by Holmeside Triangle. The site represents a significant city redevelopment opportunity. It has little in the way of existing townscape quality. The area is dominated by a substantial railway cutting and various unremarkable buildings, including a large convenience retail unit. Many of the existing buildings are vacant. In addition there are more intimately scaled two-storey terraced shops and business premises along Derwent Street and Olive Street.

5.39 The following issues are of particular importance in Sunderland's Central District

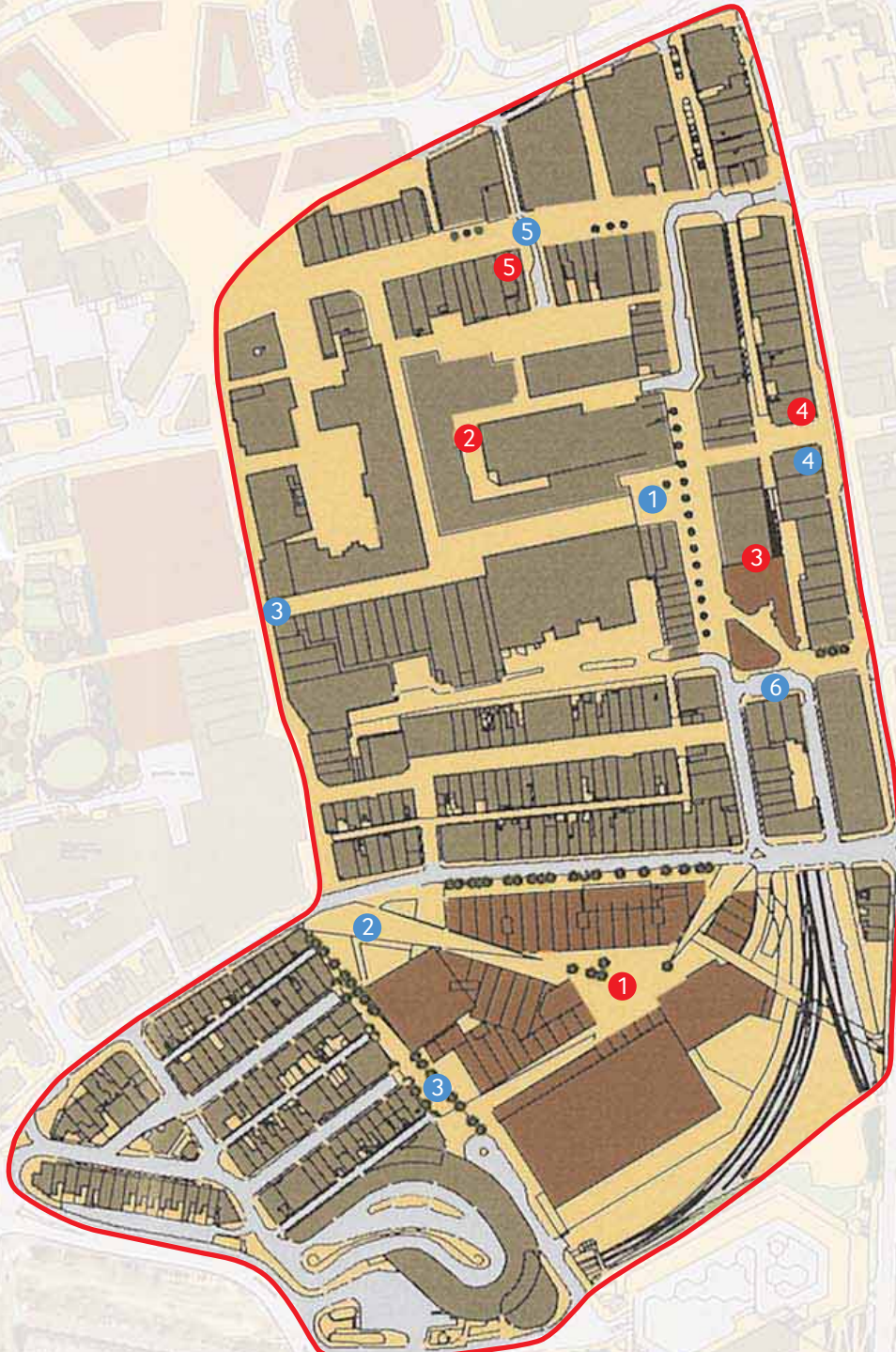
- The Bridges provides a high quality internal shopping environment that is popular and well used but the inward looking nature of the design creates blank external elevations in places and presents a barrier to pedestrian movement across the district, particularly east-west
- Servicing and parking arrangements associated with the Bridges are difficult to access, visible from a number of locations, contributing little to the quality of the built environment, and create conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at key locations along High Street West, Station Street, Union Street, York Street and West Street
- Much of the public realm in the Central District is tired and of a poor quality, particularly Market Square, Station Street, High Street West and Waterloo Place
- Central Station is a dated facility and provides a poor quality city gateway
- Fawcett Street is an historic route on a grand scale but lacks a strong and cohesive identity and function

Objectives for the Central District

5.40 In order to address the issues affecting the Central District the following objectives have been identified:

- Bring forward major redevelopment at Holmeside Triangle to establish a distinctive built form that reinforces the role of the district within the central area and signposts the adjoining Park Lane Interchange gateway
- Work with the owners of the Bridges to enhance the centre by providing improved pedestrian accessibility around the Central District
- Improve accessibility to other parts of the central area through providing safe and well overlooked pedestrian routes to the Vaux site and the Galley's Gill district to the north, Sunnyside to the east, Bishopwearmouth to the west, and the Civic quarter and Holmeside Triangle to the south
- Enhance the mix of uses on offer, including above ground floor level, by strengthening retail provision, new restaurants, cafes and bars, leisure uses, and further opportunities for people to live in the city centre thereby extending the times during which the Central District is busy, active and safe
- Establish a major city gateway at Central Station through enhanced passenger facilities, a stronger built form and public realm improvements, building on investment which is already being implemented
- Restore the character and identity of Fawcett Street and High Street West as important historic routes and significant locations within the central area

Central District



Key development opportunities

- 1 Holmeside Triangle
- 2 The Bridges
- 3 Central Station
- 4 Fawcett Street
- 5 High Street West

Public realm priorities

- 1 Market square
- 2 Holmeside square
- 3 The Great Walk
- 4 Fawcett Street
- 5 High Street west
- 6 Station square

Key development opportunities

- 5.41 **Holmeside Triangle** - this area is one of the principal development opportunities within the central area. Comprehensive redevelopment will establish a major mixed-use 'city gateway' scheme including a new square at the heart of the development on the route between Park Lane and Waterloo Place, public realm enhancements to Park Lane and Holmeside including a square at the junction (Holmeside Place) and pedestrian routes through the site connecting the Park Lane interchange to Waterloo Place.
- 5.42 Proposals must also consider possible opportunities to link Holmeside Triangle to Mowbray Gardens and the Civic Centre.
- 5.43 Key elements of any proposed scheme should include:

- **Active frontages** - to Holmeside, Park Lane and new pedestrian routes through the site. Set back building line on Holmeside to allow for increased pavement width
- **Storey heights** - new development to range from 3 to 5 storeys above street level. Opportunities for a landmark tower to be established at a key central area location adjoining a public transport gateway up to 20 storeys in height, subject to detailed investigation of the micro-climate effects. A taller landmark may be considered acceptable if outstanding in architectural quality and having regard to issues of servicing, parking provision and micro climate
- **Mix of uses** - required uses are A1 retail and C3 housing other acceptable uses are A2 financial and professional services, A3 restaurants and cafes, A4 drinking establishments and D2 leisure
- **Pedestrian access** - development proposals to provide a primary pedestrian route through the site linking Park Lane to Station Square. Main pedestrian entrances to clearly address the Park Lane transport interchange, the Bridges and Station Square
- **Vehicle access** - should be provided to the south of the site to be provided from Cowan Terrace and Park Lane. Servicing access is likely to be provided via Burdon Road and Holmeside. The detrimental impact of vehicular access to the site on the public realm and pedestrian movement must be minimised
- **Public car parking** - to be provided at lower levels at the southern end of the site.

- 5.44 **The Bridges** - the principal opportunity relating to the Bridges relates to enhancing the shopping centre through selective redevelopment opportunities so that it better relates to adjoining streets and public spaces. In the short term, opportunities must focus on key entrance points around the Bridges enhancing important spaces and the public realm and creating a better interface between the external façades of the centre and its surroundings.
- 5.45 Over the much longer term, consideration could be given to exploring opportunities to re-establish a more fine-grained urban form for the Bridges that is more outward looking and which promotes pedestrian permeability at all times of the day and night.
- 5.46 Any development associated with the Bridges must include a mix of city centre uses. A1 Retail will continue to be the predominant use. This will be supported by A3 restaurants and cafes and A4 drinking establishments where appropriate. B1 Office and C3 residential will also be acceptable on upper floors.
- 5.47 **Central Station** - this is a key location and gateway within the central area. Significant enhancements are being implemented to improve the platform area of the station. A significant opportunity also exists to consider the whole area around the station in order to significantly enhance the status and profile of the city. This includes redevelopment not only of the existing station building but also the single storey properties adjoining Market Square. Key elements of any proposed scheme should include:

- **New passenger facilities** - within an outstanding new station building. The building should be contained within the existing station footprint and any proposals will be required to reinforce linkages to Fawcett Street, Station Street, Market Square and Station Square through the positioning of entrance points
- **Key frontages** - must address Market Square, Station Square, and Station Street to ensure an active, overlooked and safe public realm
- **Mix of uses** - A1 retail will be the predominant uses with A2 financial and professional services; A3 bars and restaurants, and A4 drinking establishments will also be acceptable. B1 office and C3 housing will also be acceptable above ground floor level
- **Storey height** - development of up to 5 storeys will be acceptable responding to the massing and scale of development in Fawcett Street

5.48 **Fawcett Street** - and Bridge Street form a grandly proportioned processional route from the Wearmouth Bridge into the central area. Key opportunities must focus on:

- Management and re-use of the historic built fabric, redeveloping poor quality infill buildings and encouraging a sustainable mix of new uses. These will include principally A1 retail uses. Some A2 financial and professional services, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 bars and drinking establishments may also be acceptable providing the principally retail character of the street is maintained. B1 office and C3 housing will also be acceptable above ground floor level
- Treating Fawcett Street and Bridge Street as a single design entity as a key part of the public realm that demands an uncluttered uniform landscape treatment while also assessing individual development proposals by how they relate to the composition of and character of the whole
- **Storey heights** - development fronting Fawcett Street and Bridge Street of between 3 and 4 storeys will reinforce the existing scale and character of the street
- A consistent approach to building maintenance which will mean working with owners and landowners where appropriate
- Ensuring that shopfronts relate to the Victorian upper floors and are well proportioned and detailed using complementary, high quality materials
- Improving the quality of the public realm.

5.49 **High Street West** - although High Street West is an important historic route within the central area, the section running from Fawcett Street west to the junction with West Street has little that is distinctive. Although a large number of shoppers use the street and support a range of retailers, the quality of the built form and the public realm is poor. Key opportunities must focus on:

- Diversifying the mix of uses to ensure that the Street is busy outside shopping hours. The A1 retail use must continue to predominate but other uses including A3 cafes and restaurants and A4 drinking establishments should be encouraged. Subject to issues of noise and disturbance, opportunities for including C3 residential on under-used upper floors should also be explored
- Maintaining active frontages along the entire length of the street
- Selective redevelopment to provide a stronger built form and support a greater diversity of uses
- Ensuring that shopfronts are of a consistently high standard utilising high quality materials and simple detailing
- Improving the entrance to the Bridges as part of the "Great Walk" to ensure a stronger interface between the street and the shopping centre
- Consider a cohesive structuring element to tie together the various architectural styles along the street such as a glazed canopy or arcade, or through use of a consistent palette of materials when redevelopment is considered (see section 4,

5.50 Strong pedestrian linkages must be established to:

- the Vaux site to the north particularly across St Mary's Way
- Market Square and Central Station to the south,
- the route of the 'Great Walk' and the Bishopwearmouth district which are both to the west
- Sunnyside to the east, particularly ensuring that the identity and linearity of High Street West is maintained

Public realm priorities

- 5.51 **Market Square** - must clearly emphasise its location on major east-west and north-south pedestrian routes across the central area enabling people arriving at the Central Station to clearly find their way around. Links to High Street West, the Bridges, Holmeside, Fawcett Street, and Sunnyside via Athenaeum Street and St Thomas Street will be particularly important.
- 5.52 Major refurbishment of Market Square must therefore take place to include improved repaving, new street furniture, and the potential for public art to act as a focal point. Traffic access will be restricted throughout Market Square with pedestrian priority measures including shared surfaces, wide crossing points and limited servicing and delivery times considered.
- 5.53 **Station Square** - this is an important pedestrian route that links Market Square and Central Station with Holmeside, Brougham Street and Park Lane. The redevelopment of Holmeside Triangle will include a new pedestrian linkage from the Park Lane interchange to Station Square and Waterloo Place which could adjoin it to the south.
- 5.54 Station Square should therefore be considered as an important public space but is likely to remain a longer term aspiration. Public realm enhancements should include wide pedestrian crossing points at Holmeside, strong frontage development to ensure that the space is well overlooked and safe, and a seamless paving and street furniture design that visually reinforces the linkages between different parts of the central area.
- 5.55 **Holmeside Triangle** - establish a high quality public space within the heart of the scheme around which development can be focused. The primary pedestrian route through the site linking the Park Lane interchange and Station Square should be partially covered to create a glazed arcade. It should provide linkages to Mowbray Gardens and the Civic Centre.
- 5.56 'The Great Walk' follows the alignment of Park Lane through the Bridges along Crowtree Mall and into Crowtree Road. A simple palette of high quality materials will be used along the route including distinctive landmark lighting columns. The Great Walk will run through the Vaux site to the north and across the River Wear on a new pedestrian footbridge. It will be important to ensure that the route remains accessible throughout the day and into the evening. The City Council will work closely with the owners of the Bridges to ensure that pedestrian access is available outside normal shopping hours.
- 5.57 **Fawcett Street** - the grand scale of Fawcett Street and Bridge Street must be complemented through the implementation of a unified, simple and high quality streetscape design. Planting in moveable boxes and 'heritage style' street furniture should be rationalised and replaced along with signage, street lighting and railings. Wide, surface-level crossings linking the streets with Sunnyside should be implemented to improve east-west pedestrian access at St Thomas Street and Athenaeum Street.
- 5.58 Fawcett Street has an important role as a bus through-route. At times, the number of waiting vehicles can have a serious impact on pedestrian accessibility, presenting a 'wall' of buses. Rationalising the number of stops and enhanced real time information could improve interchange efficiency between Fawcett Street, John Street and Central Station and allow for an enhanced pedestrian environment. The role of Fawcett Street as a public transport gateway must be carefully considered. Opportunities are set out at paragraph 3.25 in Section 3 'Structuring the Central Area'.
- 5.59 **High Street West** - at present High Street West has a dilapidated, anonymous appearance. Poor quality utilitarian street furniture, tired raised planters and dying trees, and a mismatch of direction signs and street lighting create a poor impression.
- 5.60 In order to reinvigorate the street a comprehensive programme of public realm enhancements is required including new paving and rationalised and co-ordinated street furniture. Alteration to the existing pattern of vehicle movement, particularly access to the servicing and parking areas of the Bridges, would significantly improve the pedestrian environment and facilitate significant environmental improvements.



Crowtree Road, part of the route of the 'Great Walk'

- 5.61 Clear pedestrian links between High Street West, the Bridges, Market Square, the Vaux site and Sunnyside must be provided. In addition, as High Street West is also part of the national cycle network which passes through Sunderland, improved signage and cycle parking facilities must also be introduced as part of wider public realm enhancements.

Implementation issues

- 5.62 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No.2.
- 5.63 Development of Holmeside Triangle will also be the subject of a detailed design and development framework to be prepared by Sunderland arc in consultation with the City Council.
- 5.64 The Holmeside Triangle comprehensive development site is subject to UDP policy SA55A.1. Required and acceptable uses set out within the policy are retail and housing (required), financial and professional services, food & drink, business, assembly and leisure, and theatre uses. Infrastructure and design requirements include the provision of a pedestrian link to Burdon Road and a car park integrated into the site in multi-storey or undercroft format.

University Quarter

5.65 The University of Sunderland is a key facility within the central area and the University quarter recognises the important role that the institution plays in the life of the city. The University of Sunderland is located on two main sites, the St Peter's campus on the north bank of the River Wear (see St Peter's district) and the city or Chester Road campus off Chester Road in the west of the central area. The University quarter is focused on the city campus.

5.66 The city campus comprises a number of buildings principally dating from the 1950's and 1960's. The piecemeal growth and development of the site has resulted in a relatively fragmented built form which has a limited relationship with adjoining streets and spaces. Pedestrian movement around the campus and links into the rest of the central area, including the University Metro station, are compromised by the heavily engineered road network. Students bring activity into the area during the day, although at other times, particularly out of term, the quarter is quiet.

5.67 The recent growth of the University has led to increased pressure on existing facilities. The university is currently in the process of making a multi-million pound investment to create a 'one stop shop' for student services and information at the city campus that will help students get the most out of student life. Other state-of-the-art facilities include the Murray Library and the science complex comprising a modern range of laboratories for students undertaking science programmes.

5.68 The following issues are of particular importance:

- Many of the university buildings do not front surrounding streets and do not provide a positive first impression of the campus
- Chester Road divides the campus and although it provides ready vehicular access it is detrimental to the quality and ease of pedestrian movement
- University Square is currently underused and along with other spaces and walks across the campus would benefit from extensive refurbishment
- St Michael's Way is a major barrier to pedestrian movement between the campus and the rest of the central area to the east
- The western boundary of the campus along Wharncliffe Street has a poor relationship with the residential areas beyond



The gateway, University of Sunderland



University Design Centre, Johnson Building

Objectives for the University Quarter

5.69 In order to address the issues that affect the University Quarter and ensure that major development is facilitated to meet the needs of an expanding and changing University, the following objectives have been identified:

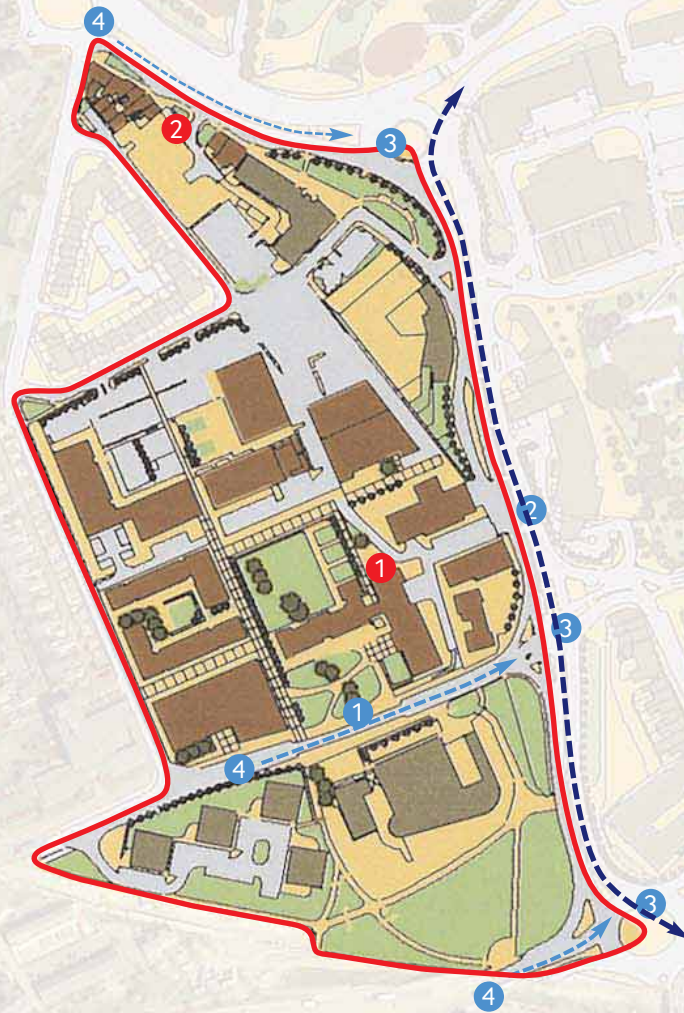
- Locate new buildings fronting the existing streets, walks and spaces within the University campus and onto key central area approaches including St Michael's Way, Durham Road, Chester Road and Trimdon Street/Silksworth Row to make a positive first impression and effectively signpost the campus
- Improve the pedestrian environment within the campus and improve pedestrian links between the campus and the central area across Chester Road and St Michael's Way
- Create a 'Great Street', transforming St Michael's Way with enhanced public realm and frontage development
- Provide a new St Mary's Gateway by reconfiguring the junction of Trimdon Street and Silksworth Row and defining the space with high quality frontage development and a landmark building

Key development opportunities

5.70 **City campus** - the University of Sunderland is making a significant investment at the City campus. A wider master plan for the University quarter is being developed that will help to provide a comprehensive strategy for taking forward development. Key elements that may be considered as part of the comprehensive master plan should include:

- Retaining the current land uses on the city campus ensuring that new uses are compatible with and support the future development and expansion of the University
- Reinforcing the edges of the city campus adjoining St Michael's Way and Chester Road with frontage development of a high architectural standard
- Enhancing pedestrian movement around the campus including linkages to the University Metro station, the city centre to the east, and Galley's Gill and Festival Park to the north
- Reinvigorating the squares, walks and spaces within the campus to ensure that they are safe, attractive, consistently detailed and well overlooked by adjoining development

University Quarter



Key development opportunities

- 1 City campus
- 2 Silksworth Row

Public realm priorities

- 1 University square
- 2 The Great Street
- 3 City Gateways
- 4 City Approaches

5.71 **Silksworth Row** - the area adjoining Silksworth Row is prominently located on a key approach into the central area from the Queen Alexandra Bridge and overlooking Galley's Gill and Festival Park. It is also located opposite the first phase of proposals for Farringdon Row (see the section on Riverside South). There is an opportunity to consider a landmark development on the site which will signal arrival into the city's central area. Key elements of a proposed scheme should include:

- Landmark of architectural quality. Given the prominence and importance of the gateway site only development of the highest architectural and design standard will be acceptable
- Assessment of the character and value of existing buildings on the site if more comprehensive redevelopment is envisaged. Although some are in a dilapidated state of repair they may have historic or townscape value
- Storey height - landmark development of between 6 and 10 storeys in height will be acceptable reflecting the width of the street and the open aspect of Galley's Gill with views to the river gorge and Stadium of Light to the north-east
- Key frontages must address Silksworth Row
- A mix of B1 office and C3 housing above ground floor of either A1 retail, A3 cafes and restaurants or A4 Food and drink would be considered

Public realm priorities

- 5.72 **University Square** - introduce public realm improvements to University Square. Establish a high quality, flexible space that can accommodate a wide range of University functions, activities and events. Introduce traffic calming measures on Chester Road including wide shared surface crossings which will improve access to the University Metro station and the central area along Chester Road.
- 5.73 **Great Street** - transforming St Michael's Way into St Michaels Boulevard, including new built frontages to the street, tree planting, distinctive street lighting and improved surface level pedestrian crossing facilities that follow desire lines into the central area.

- 5.74 St Mary's Gate, University Gate and Durham Gate - reconfiguring these key junctions into gateways with enhancements to the pedestrian environment and enclosure of the space with frontage development and buildings of a high architectural standard. A major piece of public art or landmark lighting scheme announcing arrival into the central area could be sited here.
- 5.75 **City approaches** - key approaches into the central area include Chester Road and Trimdon Street/Silksworth Row. A consistent palette of surfacing materials, distinctive street furniture, and tree planting should be introduced on city approaches. Wide pavements, surface level pedestrian crossings which reflect desire lines, and frontage development opportunities should also be pursued in order to enhance the quality and safety of the pedestrian environment, encouraging people to walk into the central area.

Implementation issues

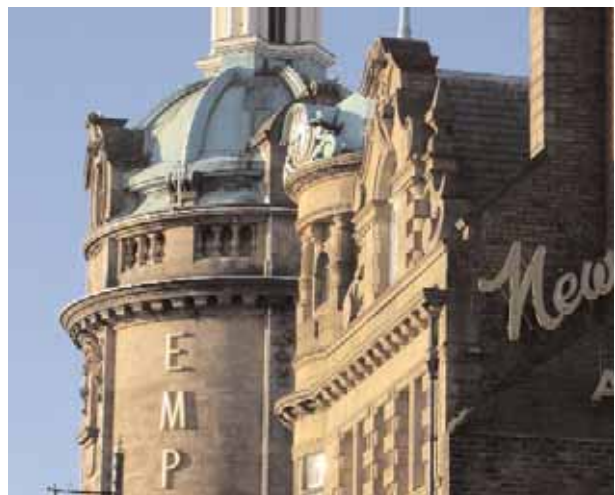
- 5.76 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP Alteration No.2 including policy SA55B.3.
- 5.77 Development of the Silksworth Row site will be the subject of a detailed design and development framework to be prepared in collaboration with the City Council and Sunderland arc.
- 5.78 The UDP identifies the University as a strategic location for change. Required and accepted uses are assembly and leisure, non-residential institutions, business and student housing. Infrastructure and design requirements are the provision of active development frontages to the ring road and Chester Road.

Bishopwearmouth

- 5.79 Bishopwearmouth is one of three early settlements that developed to form Sunderland. Parts of the district have retained the historic pattern of streets and alleyways of the early settlement and key historic buildings, notably Sunderland Minster (which is grade II* listed) and the Empire Theatre, contribute to the townscape quality of the area. Much of the district has conservation area status and is the subject of a detailed conservation area appraisal.
- 5.80 Bishopwearmouth district also includes Town Park, an important green open space within the central area which was extensively refurbished in the 1990's and further improved in 2007. The Empire Theatre and a number of bars and café bars mean that the district is a focus for the evening economy.
- 5.81 Later development associated with the city's ring road, the construction of the Crowtree Leisure Centre, the Bridge's multi storey car park and areas of surface car parking around the theatre and the old fire station have eroded the character of the area and disrupted pedestrian movement patterns. The Crowtree Leisure Centre in particular presents blank elevations on all sides, and the design of the building contributes nothing to the character of surrounding streets or the setting of the Town Park and Conservation Area.
- 5.82 The following issues are of particular importance:
- The area has a strong historic character that has been eroded through changes to the highway network and large scale redevelopment
 - Sunderland Minster and the Empire Theatre are both important city landmarks
 - The area forms a major pedestrian route linking the University of Sunderland's Chester Road campus with the central area
 - East-west movement between the University, Bishopwearmouth and the Central District is limited by the Crowtree Leisure Centre, The Bridges car park and St Michael's Way
 - Town Park has a quiet tranquil quality but is largely under-used with low levels of pedestrian activity particularly in the evening
 - Crowtree Leisure Centre and the Bridges multi-storey car park present unattractive and inactive frontages to Town Park which results in a lack of natural surveillance raising public safety and security issues
 - Significant opportunities exist for sensitive redevelopment on cleared sites around the Empire Theatre and former fire station which are currently utilised for surface car parking.



Sunderland Minster



Empire Theatre and Dun Cow Public House



Blank elevation of Crowtree Leisure Centre

Objectives for Bishopwearmouth

5.83 In order to address the issues affecting Bishopwearmouth the following objectives have been identified:

- Recognise the historic and cultural role of the area by introducing opportunities for a mix of new uses and ensuring that new development respects the townscape qualities of the area
- Enhance Town Park through new frontage development and improving pedestrian accessibility and introduce a new public space to enhance the setting of the Empire Theatre
- Consider opportunities to redevelop the Crowtree Leisure Centre improving east-west linkages and creating an outward looking and sympathetic contextual built form
- Redevelop areas of surface car parking around the Empire Theatre to stitch back together the built form and character of the area and re-establish a strong frontage to High Street West. Proposals should include conversion and restoration of the former Fire Station building
- Improve crossing points along St Michael's Way where feasible and establish a 'Great Street' which is fronted by development
- Enhance the public realm of High Street West (Low Row should provide a quality benchmark for the public realm in Bishopwearmouth)

Key development opportunities

5.84 **Theatre village** - the area of surface parking around the Empire Theatre and the former Fire Station, north of High Street West, represents an inefficient use of valuable central area land and does nothing to provide a setting for two significant buildings. Comprehensive proposals for the restructuring and repair of the built form in this location should include the following key elements:

- A mix of uses to complement the development of the area as a centre of culture and the performing arts. D1 non-residential institutions and D2 assembly and leisure to be supported by A3 Cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments, B1 offices and C3 residential
- Retention and conversion of the former Fire Station to another use
- A new public space at 'Empire Square' (see public realm priorities)
- Re-establish street frontages along High Street West and Empire Square

- New development up to 4 storeys will be acceptable in order to allow the Empire Theatre to remain the dominant landmark in the immediate locality
- Pedestrian linkages establish a permeable block structure that improves north-south pedestrian links to the Vaux site
- Parking - surface parking will be removed and re-provided within new multi-storey facilities at the adjoining Vaux site redevelopment (see Galley's Gill district).

- 5.85 **Crowtree Leisure Centre** - is a well used facility but is now dated, not only in terms of the range and quality of activities on offer but also the fabric and appearance of the building, particularly the way it addresses adjoining streets and spaces.
- 5.86 Should the opportunity arise to consider the redevelopment of the existing building, following the completion of a 50 metre pool at Stadium Park, the following key elements will need to be considered as part of the design process:

- **Key frontages** - must address Town Park, High Street West and Crowtree Road part of the 'Great Walk'
- A mix of A1 Retail, D2 assembly and leisure, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments and C3 residential on upper floors overlooking Town Park. A1, A3 and A4 uses to be located along the key pedestrian routes and on key frontages facing onto public spaces and adjoining streets
- **Storey height** - development proposals must take account of the change of levels between Crowtree Road and Town Park and be in the range of 4 to 6 storeys with up to 4 storey development adjoining Town Park and 6 storey development adjoining Crowtree Road and the corner of Crowtree Road and High Street West
- **Sunderland Minster** - development proposals must preserve or enhance the setting of the listed Minster and adjoining Alms Houses particularly maintaining a positive built form edge to Town Park
- **Pedestrian linkages** - proposals must provide east-west linkages through the site to improve the pedestrian movement between the University Chester Road campus, the 'Great Walk' and the Bridges

Bishopwearmouth



Key development opportunities

- 1 Theatre Village
- 2 Crowtree Leisure Centre

Public realm priorities

- 1 Town park
- 2 Empire Square
- 3 High street West
- 4 The Great Street

Key public realm priorities

- 5.87 **Town Park** - improve the interface between the Crowtree Leisure Centre and Town Park through enhanced built form, active ground floor uses and a paved seating area along the western building frontage and the grassed area of the park. Town Park has recently been refurbished to a high standard.
- 5.88 **Empire Square** - a new area of open space must be incorporated into the design and layout of redevelopment proposals around the Empire Theatre associated with the 'Theatre Village'. The square will be accessed from High Street West and provide a high quality setting for the Empire Theatre and the converted fire station building. Pedestrian linkages to the Vaux site to the north will be provided via Magistrates Square.
- 5.89 **High Street West** - introduce substantial public realm improvements to High Street West including pedestrian priority measures such as wider pavements and shared surface crossings. The surface detailing along Low Row should provide a benchmark for public realm enhancements in Bishopwearmouth.
- 5.90 **Great Street** - Bishopwearmouth is severed from the adjoining university by St. Michaels Way. The transformation of the ring road into a 'Great Street' will enhance the pedestrian environment, improve crossing facilities and provide frontage development opportunities.

Implementation issues

- 5.91 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No. 2.
- 5.92 Potential redevelopment of the Crowtree Leisure Centre will be subject to a development brief to be prepared by the City Council. Development proposals within the Bishopwearmouth area must also have regard to the detailed Conservation Area appraisal carried out by the City Council.
- 5.93 Town Park is subject to UDP policy SA75. This policy aims to retain central area parks and public open space. Policies B3 and L7 apply to the loss of open space. Policy L7 states that land allocated for open space will be retained in its existing use. Permission for other uses will only be granted if alternative provision, of an equivalent scale, quality and accessibility is made.
- 5.94 UDP Policy SA55B.2 relates to the city centre west strategic location for change. The policy identifies retail, financial and professional services, food & drink, non-residential, assembly and leisure uses as being acceptable. Infrastructure and design requirements ensure that the character and scale of the Bishopwearmouth Conservation Area is respected.

Sunniside

5.95 Sunniside is located to the east of the central area and is bounded to the north and east by West Wear Street and Sans Street, which form the inner ring road, Fawcett Street to the west and Hudson Road and Murton Street to the south. The formal gridiron street pattern and historic terraced properties, many of which are listed and date from the early and mid 1800's, are major influences on the built form character of Sunniside, particularly the western part. The area includes two conservation areas; the Sunderland Central conservation area, declared in 1968; and part of the Old Sunderland Riverside Conservation Area, declared in 1993.



Residential conversion of the former post office, Sunniside

5.96 Although the historic street pattern has largely been retained in the eastern part of Sunniside the quality of the built form is weakened by more recent development including low quality warehousing, industrial buildings and derelict sites used for car parking. The area supports a diverse mix of uses, including a range of small and medium- sized businesses, residential, retail and leisure (including food and drink premises) and is the ongoing focus for high quality streetscape enhancements and regeneration activity.



High quality and sensitive re-use of a building on West Sunniside

5.97 Since 2003 the Sunniside Partnership has helped to drive forward significant and successful regeneration, particularly in the western part of the area, supported by funding from its founding members including Sunderland City Council, One NorthEast and English Partnerships. The remodelling of Sunniside Gardens and the conversion of a number of historic buildings for residential use, including the former Post office headquarters, exemplify the high standard of development that has been achieved within the area.

5.98 Sunniside Partnership and Sunderland City Council have produced the Sunniside Planning and Design Framework (2008) Supplementary Planning Document. This document builds on the earlier interim planning guidance which aims to protect and enhance the historic assets of Sunniside and includes more detailed analysis of urban design issues identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the area. The document incorporates the East Sunniside Masterplan which provides a clear and comprehensive framework to support the regeneration of the eastern part of the area as a lively, distinctive, mixed-use urban area.



Sunniside Gardens



Re-use and high quality extension of buildings on Foyle Street



Sunnside North adjoining High Street West and West Wear Street

5.99 There are six distinct character areas in Sunnside. Fawcett Street is probably the grandest historic street in Sunderland with a diverse range of distinctive 3-4 storey, high quality buildings. The street has an important retail function at the eastern edge of the city centre retail core, with some office space on upper floors although many upper floors are not fully utilised.

5.100 The Historic Core encompasses the area between John Street, Norfolk Street, High Street West and Borough Road. The area is extremely attractive with a vibrant mix of uses including small offices, for commercial and professional services, houses and apartments and increasing numbers of niche

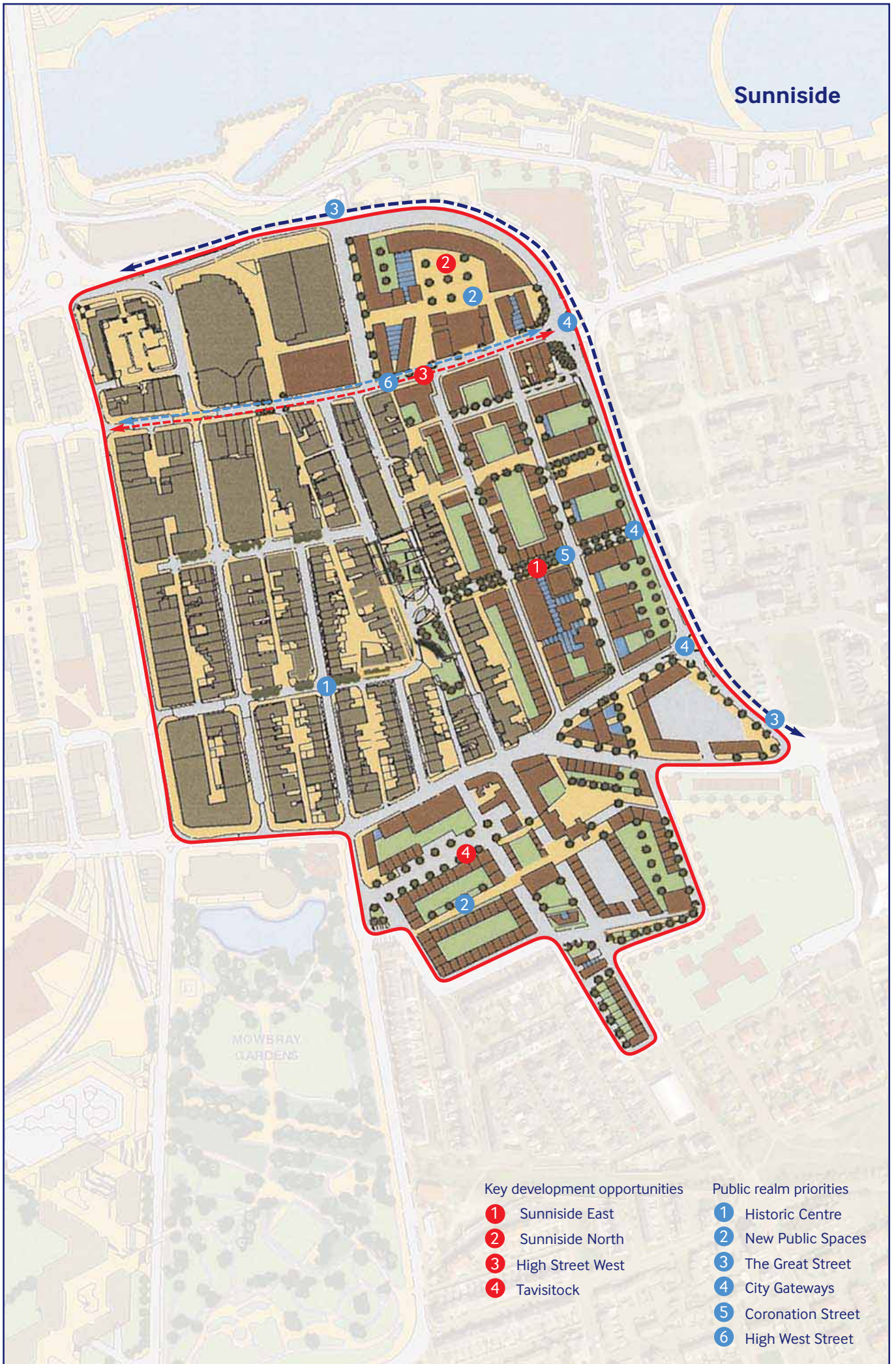
retail uses, bars and restaurants. There has been significant heritage-led investment in this area over recent years. The overall quality of the townscape is exemplified by the recently refurbished Sunnside Gardens, which provides a high benchmark standard for development across the whole of the central area.

5.101 The North-West sector is located between Back of Bridge Street, High Street West, West Wear Street and William Street. Extensive redevelopment in the last few years has introduced a range of leisure and entertainment uses, including cinema, casino and a bowling alley complex nearing completion, supported by a multi-storey car park. Some historic buildings remain along High Street West which make an important contribution to the overall townscape qualities of Sunnside. These buildings must be retained as part of any proposals to redevelop the adjacent Bridge House Site which occupies a key location at this gateway to the city centre and offers an important redevelopment opportunity.

5.102 The North-East sector occupies the area between William Street, High Street West and West Wear Street. Although there are several attractive buildings which make an important contribution to the overall townscape qualities of Sunnside, including Virginia House and Lambton House which front High Street West, the area as a whole has a fragmented, low quality built form. The proposed widening of West Wear Street to accommodate the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor (SSTC - policy T1A of UDP Alteration No. 2) will also have an impact on the design and layout of proposals in this part of Sunnside. The area provides stunning views across the river to St Peter's church, the proposed World Heritage Site.

5.103 Eastern Sunnside is located within the area to the east of Sunnside Gardens focused around Nile Street, Coronation Street, Villiers Street to the east, High Street West to the north, and Borough Road to the south. The area retains a very strong gridiron street pattern although the built form is much weakened by demolitions and more recent redevelopment including light industrial premises, garages and workshops, and areas of semi-derelict and vacant land. Recent piecemeal developments in the form of apartments is slowly introducing a new residential population into this area.

Sunniside



5.104 Finally, to the south of Borough Road is Tavistock which is characterised by a diverse built form and mix of uses which includes listed and unlisted historic buildings and groups of buildings which have an important townscape quality. The retention and re-use of these buildings will be encouraged. In addition Crown House, a 1960's built office block, provides a distinctive but somewhat unattractive landmark at a key gateway into the central area. The street pattern is still evident around Tavistock, particularly around Borough Road, Tatham Street and Tatham Street Back, and Laura Street.

5.105 The following issues are of particular importance

- Fawcett Street provides a distinctive shopping environment but there is a need to address the issue of vacancy on the upper floors of many buildings. The public realm is dated and there is an opportunity to provide a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly environment that will encourage footfall and increase connectivity between the city centre and Sunnyside
- The Historic Core has a strong identity with a significant number of listed buildings, a distinctive urban form of fine terraces, a good mix of uses, and high quality public realm, all contributing to a positive character. The area provides a benchmark for the rest of Sunnyside and should be protected and enhanced
- The North-West sector has largely been redeveloped apart from the Bridge House site which offers a significant redevelopment opportunity at a prominent entrance to the city centre
- The North-East sector is a prominent gateway area with the opportunity for high quality contemporary architecture that protects significant views across the River Wear to St Peter's church. Low quality built form, inappropriate infill development as well as vacant buildings diminish the character of the area particularly along the High Street West frontage
- Eastern Sunnyside retains a distinctive street pattern but the overall built-form character of the area has become fragmented with a mix of standard industrial buildings and workshops, vacant, derelict and under-used sites. This has diminished the continuity and enclosure of the public realm
- In Tavistock significant historic buildings remain and their contribution to the townscape should be protected, although the need for refurbishment works and new uses will provide a challenge. More recent low quality buildings and uses diminish the townscape value of the area and provide the opportunity for a comprehensive approach to regeneration

Objectives for Sunnyside

5.106 In order to address the issues that affect different locations within Sunnyside the following urban design strategy objectives have been identified that reflect the vision for Sunnyside as set out in the Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework:

- Ensure that all proposals are of the highest architectural and design standards and are contextually sensitive to the historic form and townscape qualities of the area. Development proposals must be considered in terms of their wider contribution to the character and identity of Sunnyside as a whole and should demonstrate a contemporary design response to the distinctive architectural and townscape qualities of the area
- Secure the repair and restoration of the historic environment, including key buildings of historic or townscape value, and ensure that new development reinforces the strong gridiron pattern of streets through the form and layout of proposals and the relationship of building frontages to the public realm
- Support the ongoing regeneration of Sunnyside as a dynamic and distinctive mixed-use destination within the central area. Expand the growing niche retail sector, the lively and varied restaurant, café and bar scene, and support creative and cultural activity. Introduce new places for people to live and work, extending the times during which Sunnyside is lively, populous and safe
- Establish strong linkages with other parts of the central area particularly along High Street West and across West Wear Street to Number's Garth and Pann's Bank, St Thomas Street and Athenaeum Street to Fawcett Street and Market Square, and Coronation Street across Sans Street to make Sunnyside an easily accessible destination at the heart of the city.

Key development opportunities

5.107 All development opportunities in Sunnyside should be considered within the context of the Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework (2008) which has been adopted by Sunderland City Council as a Supplementary Planning Document and forms a material consideration in determining planning applications. Key opportunities are briefly summarised below.

5.108 **Fawcett Street** - the City Council will encourage uses that support the eastern edge of the city centre retail core together with 'living over the shop' and other opportunities. It is important that the vibrancy of Fawcett Street as a primary city centre shopping street is not diluted by the introduction of inappropriate uses, particularly where ground floor activity is reduced. The quality of the historic buildings should be reinforced and encouragement given to improving the quality of shopfronts. Opportunities for public realm improvements at key gateways will be sought through new development and City Council led improvement works.

- **Mix of uses** - preferred uses A1 Retail (excluding retail warehouses), A2 Financial and professional services (upper floors only on Fawcett Street), C3 Housing (upper floors only - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted)

- **Acceptable uses** - A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and bars (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), B1(a) Offices not in use class A2 (upper floors only), D2 Health and fitness (upper floors only), C1 Hotel, D1 Non-residential institutions falling within Class XVI (art galleries, exhibition space and civic functions)

5.109 **North-West Sector** - Along High Street West between William Street and Fawcett Street the City Council has encouraged the development of leisure and commercial uses that complement the multiplex cinema development, with an emphasis on developing the evening economy and night time uses, together with residential development opportunities above ground floor. High Street West is a key movement corridor and the City Council will promote improvements to the public realm and legibility of the street. Towards the west, historic frontage properties remain and these should be retained as important visual assets.

- **Mix of Uses** - Preferred Uses A1 Retail (excluding retail warehouse) A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and Bars (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines)

- **Acceptable Uses** - A2 Financial and professional services (upper floors only), B1(a) Offices not in use class A2 (upper floors only), C3 Housing (upper floors only - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted), D2 Health and Fitness (upper floors only), D2 Nightclubs (subject to Evening Economy SPD guidelines), C1 Hotel

5.110 **Historic Core** - Two distinct areas of use can be identified within the Historic Core. On John Street and Frederick Street to the west, (Historic Core West) reflecting its proximity to the City Centre commercial uses predominate. To the east of the Frederick Street properties (Historic Core East), there is a greater mix of both commercial and residential use. This mix of uses is considered beneficial to the character and distinctiveness of the Historic Core and the aim should be to reinforce and add to these patterns of use.

Historic Core (West)

- **Mix of uses** - preferred Uses A2 Financial and professional services, Acceptable Uses, A1 Retail (specialist and non chain), A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and bars (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), B1(a) Offices not in use class A2 (upper floors only), C1 Hotels, C3 Housing (upper floors only - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted). Basement level uses will be encouraged

Historic Core (East)

- **Acceptable Uses** - C3 housing (on all levels - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted), A1 Retail (specialist and non chain), A2 Financial and professional services, A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and bars (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), B1(a) Offices not in use class A2 (upper floors only), C1 Hotels, D1 Non residential institutions falling within Class XVI (art galleries, exhibition space and civic functions)

5.111 **North-East sector** - A mix of uses will be supported with offices predominating together with some apartment accommodation. Provision is made for a leisure based use that would complement a potential hotel development. Active ground floor frontages are required, particularly along High Street West and facing the new public open space where retail, and food and drink uses will be promoted in order to encourage footfall and support an evening-based economy. A key landmark building provides the opportunity for a prestige hotel development. Development proposals should be of the highest architectural and design standards setting a benchmark for elsewhere in Sunnyside. The retention and conversion of notable buildings will be supported, including upper floors, which front the street and make a contribution to its historic character.

- **Mix of use** - preferred uses-B1a Offices not in use class A2, C1 Hotels, C3 Housing (on upper floors only - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted), D1 Non-residential institutions falling within Class XVI (art galleries, exhibition space and civic functions)
- **Acceptable uses** - A1Retail (specialist and non chain), A2 Financial and professional services, A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and bars (in accordance with Evening, Economy SPD guidelines), D2 Health and fitness, bingo (upper floors only)
- **Storey heights** - Development of 4 storeys in height will correspond to the prevailing cityscape and built form qualities of High Street West rising through 6 to 7 storeys along the north and east perimeter of the site with a landmark 9 to 10 storey block at the north-eastern corner.
- **Gateways** - junctions of Sans Street and High Street West; Sans Street and Borough Road; and Sans Street and Coronation Street provide important entrances to the area that should be enhanced
- **Layout** - new public space will provide the focal point for large scale redevelopment that is required to deliver the vision for a revitalised, mixed use area
- **Key frontages** - development must front both High Street West, William Street and East Cross Street to re-establish continuity and enclosure. A

new pedestrian public space will provide the focus for a range of uses around it that will enliven the space

- **Key linkages** - it will be important for the development to respond to any development proposals at Number's Garth to include a surface level at-grade pedestrian crossing at West Wear Street close to the junction with High Street West and also providing access to the Cliff Top Walkways to the north
- **Servicing and vehicle access** - main vehicle and service access into the area shall be provided via William Street. Parking should be provided at basement or sub-basement level where practicable to take advantage of the change in levels between High Street West and West Wear Street

5.112 **Eastern sector** - retains the historic street pattern that characterises the development of the wider Sunnyside area although the built form has been significantly eroded. Opportunities within the area focus on bringing forward redevelopment within the gridiron layout re-establishing frontage development and introducing a greater mix of uses. The aim is to establish a balanced mix of places that will encourage people to live and work there. Innovative design responses to layout and the arrangement of public and private spaces will be supported that provide an attractive and sustainable environment whilst respecting the historic street pattern and maintaining views into the area. A combination of existing historic buildings combined with more recent developments, some of which are currently under construction or have received planning consent, provides an interesting basis for the development of proposals to revitalise this part of Sunnyside.

5.113 **Mixed use** - redevelopment of the Eastern sector is proposed with commercial development towards the east of the area. Towards the western boundary with the historic core the area around Nile Street will comprise principally residential townhouse development with the opportunity for apartment blocks marking selected corner sites and along the eastern perimeter at Villiers Street. Provision for ancillary leisure and retail uses to encourage the provision of active frontages at ground floor level will enliven the streetscene. The ambition to stimulate creative activity in Sunnyside is supported by the provision of a cluster of creative industrial uses including an arts complex that will extend the cultural offer of Sunnyside.

- **Preferred Uses** - C3 Housing (on all levels - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted), B1a Offices not in use class A2,
- **Acceptable Uses** - A1Retail (specialist and non chain), A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and Bars (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), B1b/c uses associated with creative industries' activities, including artist studios, workshops and managed workspace, D1 Art galleries and exhibition space D2 Health and Fitness (upper floors only)
- **Storey Heights** - scale should respond to the existing urban grain and generally rise from west to east in order to integrate with the lower scale of the adjoining Historic Core. Building heights along the west side of Nile Street will not exceed 2/ 3 storeys (9 metres maximum). Building heights along the east side of Nile Street will not exceed 3 storeys (9 metres maximum) Building heights along the west side of Villiers Street will not exceed 3-4 storeys (12 metres maximum) Building heights along the northern side of Brough Road must respect the height of existing historic buildings. Building heights along the south side of High Street West must respect the heights of adjacent historic buildings and any proposals to increase building heights approved as part of any existing planning consents will be resisted. Increases in scale will be permitted along the eastern perimeter at Villiers Street between High Street West and Coronation Street rising to 5/ 6 storeys (15 metres maximum). Should any new proposal be put forward for a site with the benefit of an existing planning consent, the City Council will wish to ensure that the new proposal is appropriate in terms of scale and massing notwithstanding any existing consent
- **Gateways** - there is an opportunity for greater scale at gateway and corner sites at the junctions of Sans Street and High Street West and Sans Street and Coronation Street.
- **Layout** - new development must maintain or re-establish the historic grid-iron street pattern although the need for permeability along the eastern perimeter should be encouraged.
- **Key frontages** - development must front the street and re-establish continuity and enclosure. Establish active frontages in the form of shop windows to High Street West, Coronation Street and Borough Road

5.114 **Tavistock** - has a less coherent identity than other parts of Sunnyside due, in part, to the less well defined gridiron of street. There is an opportunity to re-establish the block structure to the eastern part of Tavistock. There are significant redevelopment opportunities within Tavistock which will support the continued regeneration of Sunnyside as a vibrant, mixed use urban area. Reflecting the vision to create a new and distinct residential quarter within Tavistock, the East Sunnyside Masterplan promotes a range of predominantly family oriented housing types located in an attractive urban setting. Provision will be made for a significant commercial gateway development at the Sans Street/Borough Road junction. Existing buildings, particularly around the junction of Borough Road and Tatham Street, will be retained, providing valuable commercial and community opportunities to serve the development of the new residential community.

- **Mix of Uses** - preferred uses-C3 Housing (on all levels - hostel or bedsit type accommodation will not be permitted), B1a Offices not in use class A2
- **Acceptable Uses** - A1Retail (specialist and non chain), A2 Financial and professional services, A3 Restaurants, snack bar, cafes (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), A4 Pubs and bars (in accordance with Evening Economy SPD guidelines), B1b/c Uses associated with creative industries, including artist studios, workshops and managed workspace, D1 Non-residential institutions falling within Class XVI (art galleries, exhibition space and civic functions)
- **Storey heights** - development will generally be low rise, between 2 and 4 storeys in height. Development of 4 storeys will be acceptable at significant gateway and corner sites including the commercial blocks at the gateway site between Borough Road and Hudson Road. An increase in scale to 5 storeys at the Borough Road/Toward Road corner will address the gateway entrance to Mowbray Park. Redevelopment or refurbishment of Crown House will not exceed the height and scale of the existing 10 storey point block incorporating a plinth of up to three storeys
- **Gateways** - Sans Street and Borough Road junction. In order to create a central area gateway the corner of Sans Street and Borough Road should be reinforced through an exemplar development up to 4 storeys in height

- **Key frontages** - development must front the street and re-establish continuity and enclosure. Establish active frontages in the form of shop windows to Borough Road
- **Open space** - establish a high quality, pedestrian-friendly public realm throughout Tavistock incorporating a new public space between Tatham Street and Tatham Street Back that will provide a focus for development
- **Crown House** - developed in the 1960's Crown House is a prominent landmark close to the gateway at Sans Street and Borough Road which provides a marker placing Sunnyside within the wider context of the city. The building is tired and dated and there is a significant opportunity to redevelop or refurbish the structure to a high standard providing an appropriate mix of new uses. The ground floor must present frontage development to Borough Road

Key public realm priorities

- 5.115 Public realm projects will be assessed within the context of guidance contained within the Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework (2008) which has been adopted by Sunderland City Council.
- 5.116 **Historic core** - the award winning Sunnyside Gardens represents the first phase of a programme of public realm improvement works. Funding has now been awarded from One NorthEast to carry out the next phase of works to improve key streets in the historic core, creating safer, more attractive pedestrian-friendly connections between Sunnyside, the city centre and the East End. This phase of the work will be completed by 2010 and efforts will continue to secure further funding and contributions to complete the programme of works throughout Sunnyside. The works and the palette of materials, including street lighting and street furniture, will complement the areas' status as a Conservation Area. Public art and architectural lighting will be incorporated into the design to enliven the streetscene.
- 5.117 **New public spaces** - two new public spaces will provide a focus for development in the North-East sector of Sunnyside and in Tavistock. Clearly defined pedestrian-oriented streets must link the spaces with the surrounding street network.
- 5.118 **The Great Street** - the 'Great Street' project will transform the inner ring road into an attractive-tree lined boulevard fronted by high

quality development with wide pavements and convenient surface level crossings. Key opportunities to reduce the severance between Sunnyside and the residential areas and communities to the east of Sans Street must be a priority particularly at gateway locations.

- 5.119 **City gateways** - gateway spaces at High Street West/West Wear Street, Borough Road/Sans Street and Coronation Road/Sans Street should be emphasised through a coordinated surface and paving treatment and the use of features such as unique lighting columns, public art, and tree planting. Convenient surface level pedestrian crossings must be incorporated into the design and layout of gateway spaces to reduce the severance currently caused by the heavily engineered nature of the ring road and its junctions.
- 5.120 **Coronation Street** - Coronation Street is a key east-west route through Sunnyside. New development must front the street to ensure that it is safe and overlooked. Public realm enhancements must focus on unifying the appearance of Coronation Street, improving the quality of the pedestrian environment, and coordinating street furniture including lighting columns.
- 5.121 The environment around the Sans Street foot-bridge must be significantly improved to include re-surfacing, new lighting, clear signage and ensuring that the bridge is safely overlooked by adjoining gateway development on Villiers Street.
- 5.122 **High Street West** - The grand scale of High Street West must be complemented through the implementation of a unified, simple and high quality streetscape design. Street furniture should be rationalised and replaced with simple, coordinated and contemporary designs. Wide, surface-level crossings linking the central area with Sunnyside should be implemented to improve north-south pedestrian access particularly at John Street, Norfolk Street, Nile Street and Villiers Street.

Implementation issues

- 5.123 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Revision No.2 including policy SA55B.1
 - The Sunnyside Planning and Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document

Riverside South

- 5.124 The Riverside South district occupies a prominent site on the southern banks of the River Wear. The district is bounded by the River Wear to the north, by the Wearmouth Bridge to the east, St Mary's Way and Livingstone Road to the south, and by Farringdon Row to the west. Dramatic topography comprising magnesian limestone cliffs, the Wear gorge, the landscaped valley of Galley's Gill, Festival Park, and the Wearmouth road and railway bridges contribute to make a distinctive area, easy to access from many locations.
- 5.125 The area is made up of three main parts. Galley's Gill and Festival Park which are important if underused areas of open space; Farringdon Row which occupies a prominent location atop the western side of Galley's Gill; and the site of the former Vaux brewery. The Vaux site is at present cleared and offers a major redevelopment opportunity to create a vibrant mixed-use quarter, with close links to the riverside and other parts of the central area. The present location of St Mary's Way, part of the central area's ring road together with Livingstone Road to the immediate west, and the location of rear servicing areas of the shops of High Street West fronting the ring road in this location, makes pedestrian movement between the Central District and the Vaux site unattractive and circuitous. Everything about the layout and detailing of the environment conspires against connection.
- 5.126 This extensive district represents a significant opportunity for restructuring an important and prominent part of the central area.
- 5.127 The following issues are of particular importance to the Riverside South district:
- The Vaux and Farringdon Row sites represent significant and substantial gateway redevelopment opportunities within the central area offering spectacular views across the River Wear
 - Existing links to the central area and the river corridor are relatively poor. The ring road is a major barrier to north-south pedestrian movement and there are limited routes available down the steep cliffs to the riverside
 - Galley's Gill and Festival Park are significant green spaces within the central area offering a high landscape value with dramatic magnesian limestone escarpments. The spaces are nevertheless underused because of limited access and poor surveillance
 - Low quality built form at Farringdon Row contributes little to the overall appearance of the area



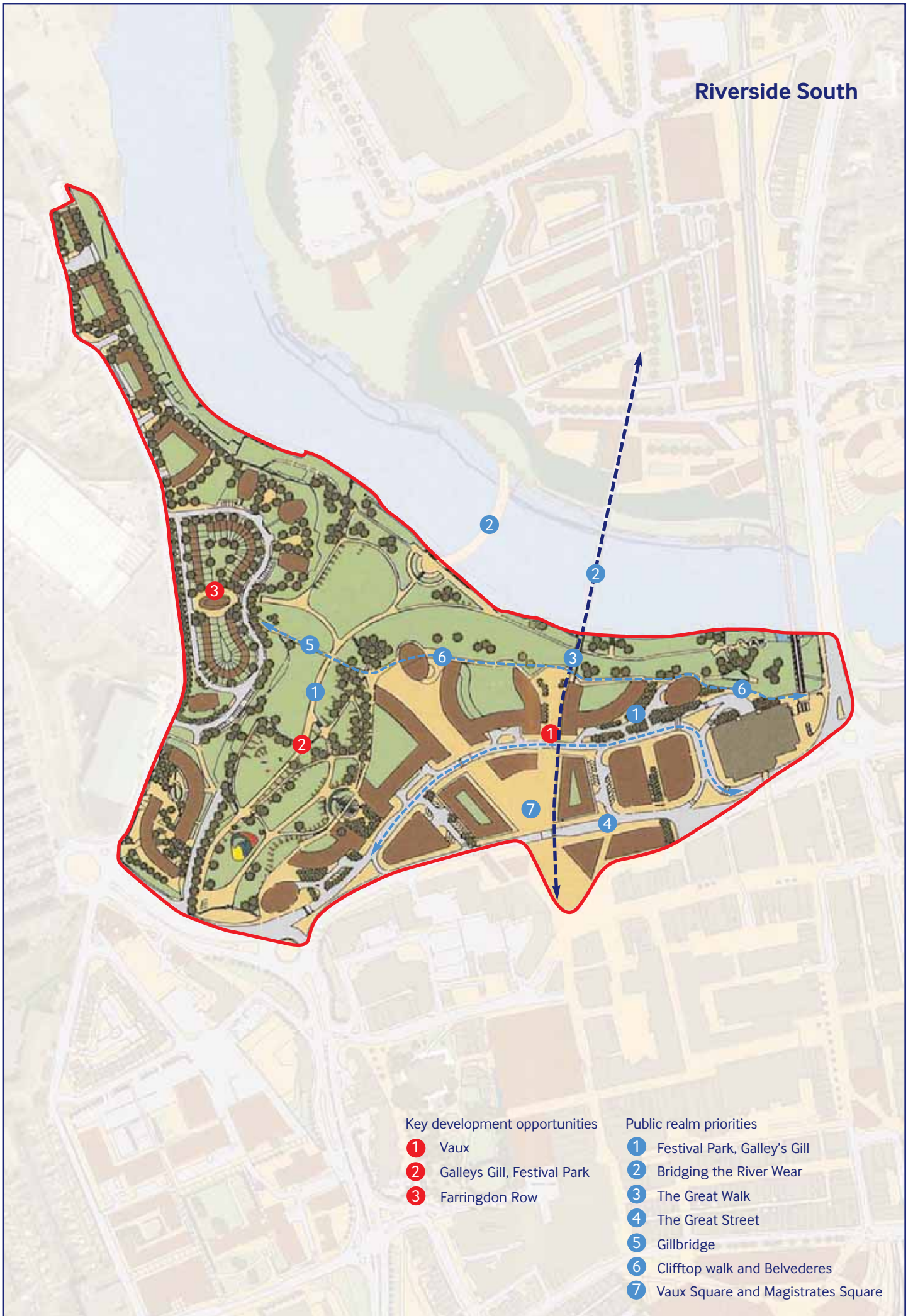
The Vaux site is a major development opportunity within the central area

Objectives for Riverside South

5.128 In order to help address issues of importance relating to the Riverside South district the following objectives have been identified:

- Bring forward development opportunities at the former Vaux site and at Farringdon Row to establish prestigious city landmark development of the highest architectural and design standards that opens up access to the river from the central area and takes advantage of riverside corridor views and vistas
- Establish a vibrant, mixed-use area with opportunities for new restaurants, cafes and bars, leisure uses, hotel accommodation, modest but quality retail (subject to the requirements of UDP Alteration No. 2 Policy S2A) and places for people to work and live, thereby extending the times during which the Riverside South district is busy, active and safe
- Improve accessibility to other parts of the city through providing safe and well overlooked streets, open spaces and pedestrian routes around the Vaux site, Galley's Gill and Festival Park, the riverside area, across to Sheepfolds via dramatic new pedestrian footbridges, and to the Central district to the south
- Enhance the appeal of the significant open space at Galley's Gill and Festival Park through improving accessibility from the city and to the riverside, ensuring that adjoining development fronts and overlooks the space, and by promoting a range of events and activities through effective management and programming

Riverside South



Key development opportunities

5.129 **Vaux** -the development of the former Vaux brewery site is of fundamental importance to the regeneration and status of the central area. This dramatic site offers a unique opportunity to link the central area to the river and to establish high quality spaces and buildings of national and international architectural importance. Development should open up access to the river and take advantage of the fine views that the location offers. Development will also deliver the high level bridge that will link the Stadium of Light with the Great Walk.

5.130 The entire Riverside South district is the subject of a high level development framework (the Vaux/Galleys Gill/Farringdon Row Master Plan Strategy) drawn up by Sunderland arc and endorsed by the City Council. Within this context a more detailed master plan has been developed by Sunderland arc for the Vaux site. The master plan forms part of the outline planning consent for the Vaux site approved by the Secretary of State. The illustrative diagrams that form part of this Urban Design Strategy have also been based on this master plan. Development proposals will be expected to respond to the master plan strategies and key components of any scheme must consider:

- **Mix of uses** - establishing a viable mix of uses that contribute to the vitality and viability of not only the development but the whole central area is a vital requirement. The following uses will be required: B1 office and C3 residential (subject to the requirements of UDP Policy HOU 2). Other acceptable uses will include A1 retail (subject to the requirements of UDP Policy RET 2), A2 financial and professional services, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments, C1 hotels, D1 non-residential institutions, D2 assembly and leisure
- **Key frontages** - new development must present an active frontage to new public spaces and key pedestrian routes linking the central area with the river corridor, St. Mary's Way (part of the Great Street proposals, see public realm priorities) and Galleys Gill/Festival Park
- **Storey heights** - development of up to 5 storeys will be acceptable on the southern side of the site increasing to up to 15 storeys on the northern side adjoining the River Wear gorge cliff edge. Proposals must be contextually sensitive to adjoining sites particularly to the south

- **Landmarks** - development overlooking the River Wear between the existing Galley's Gill footbridge and the proposed high level pedestrian footbridge over the River Wear provides an opportunity for a new strategic city landmark close to important gateways (St Mary's Gate and City Gate) and approaches into the central area from the north and west. Development of up to 25 stories will be acceptable in this location. Taller landmark development must be of the highest architectural and design standards and have regard to issues of servicing, parking provision and micro climate (see section 4 Strategic Design Guidance)
- **Pedestrian accessibility** - establish a formal, permeable and legible pattern of streets and public spaces which connect the central area to the river corridor and Galley's Gill/Festival Park and Farringdon Row across and around the site. A new high level footbridge link should be provided along the route of the Great Walk connecting to Sheepfolds and Stadium Park
- **Public space** - development will be structured around the provision of public spaces along the 'Great Walk', adjoining and overlooking Galley's Gill/Festival Park at the Gillbridge, and at the northern clifftop overlooking the River Wear gorge (Galley's Belvedere, Green Cascade and Bridge Belvedere). Major enhancement to the junction of St Mary's Way, High Street West and Livingstone Road will provide an important square to the south (Vaux Square/Magistrates Square).
- **Access and parking** - access through the site on St Mary's Way will be redesigned and realigned through the Vaux site to maximise regeneration and development potential, provide potential for frontage development along the route of the new city boulevard (see the 'Great Street' proposal in public realm priorities), and enhance accessibility around the Central District. At-grade pedestrian crossings will be provided at key locations connecting north and south through the site. Grade separated solutions will be resisted. Car parking provision will be in the form of multi-storey car parks matching the scale and form of other buildings or to be underground. St Mary's multi-storey car park to be retained. Surface parking to be restricted.

- 5.131 **Festival Park and Galley's Gill** - are significant and important areas of open space within the central area that benefit from dramatic topography and views to the River Wear. The area will remain as predominantly open green space but with opportunities brought forward to enhance the way the park is used, particularly by improving accessibility from adjoining central area districts and by introducing appropriate development opportunities around the edges of the parkland that front and overlook the space. This will include development associated with the Vaux site and the Farringdon Row redevelopment area.
- 5.132 There may also be potential for individual pavilion buildings to be introduced into the park itself associated with the establishment of riverside sport and leisure activities. These should be carefully designed as individual 'architectural gems' placed within the landscape. It is acknowledged that the development of these structures may be a longer term aspiration and will need to be carefully assessed within the context of preserving open space provision within the central area.
- 5.133 **Farringdon Row Site** - this site is prominently located to the west of Galley's Gill and benefits from expansive views overlooking Festival Park and the River Wear corridor. It is within easy walking distance of the University and the central area's Central District. There is a footbridge link from the Vaux site to Farringdon Row at Gillbridge.
- 5.134 The Farringdon Row site was previously dominated by a mix of industrial and bulk retail activities including scrap yards and garages, and lacks a strong or coherent built form or identity. The site also previously housed an area of allotment gardens which have now been cleared. Farringdon Row itself provides access to a retail park that lies adjacent to the redevelopment site and, further north, to a mix of industrial buildings and popular public houses.
- 5.135 The Farringdon Row site is the subject of a detailed development framework drawn up by Sunderland City Council and Sunderland arc (Farringdon Row Development Framework, July 2006) which has been adopted as interim planning policy by the City Council. Future proposals must have regard to the framework, providing development of a high architectural and design standard that takes advantage of the riverside corridor views and vistas. Key elements should include:

- **Mix of uses** - the following mix of uses will be acceptable: B1 offices; and C3 housing. Other acceptable uses will include C1 hotels, limited ancillary scale A1 retail, A2 financial and professional services, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments, and D2 assembly and leisure
- **Key frontages** - development must front Galley's Gill/Festival Park, Farringdon Row and the River Wear corridor. Active frontages will be required to Farringdon Row, new public spaces and key pedestrian routes to link the central area with the river corridor
- **Storey heights** - development should be up to 3 and 6 storeys in height with 3 storey development fronting Festival Park and development up to 6 storeys fronting Farringdon Row
- **Landmarks** - a landmark building should be provided at the junction of Silksworth Row and Trimdon Street up to 10 storeys in height. Adjoining development should 'build up' from 3 storeys to the landmark. The landmark will complement development on the eastern edge of the Vaux site to frame the southern entrance to Galley's Gill / Festival Park and create a prominent gateway to the central area on the important approach from the Queen Alexandra Bridge
- **Pedestrian access** - the layout of development should facilitate the provision of a public walkway on the Galley's Gill/Festival Park boundary of the site. Direct pedestrian access must also be maintained between the Vaux site and Farringdon Row across the Gillbridge footbridge

Key public realm priorities

5.136 **Festival Park and Galley's Gill** - there is significant potential to establish a high quality urban park at Festival Park and Galley's Gill. Transformation of this relatively neglected open space would provide a major recreational asset for the city. The waterside park must be well lit and overlooked by new development. Key elements of enhancing the appeal of the park could include:

- Programming the space more effectively with events and festivals within a high quality urban park setting
- Broadening the range of leisure activities. This might include an outdoor climbing wall on existing retaining structures, or provision of a skate-park for example. Leisure provision will need to be carefully assessed within the context of the needs of new communities at Vaux and Farringdon Row as well as other users of the space
- Sheltered seating areas where people can enjoy the riverside views
- Improved pedestrian links to the Vaux and Farringdon Row sites. As well as elegantly detailed stairs and ramps, imaginative solutions should be explored which may include a funicular or elevator
- Safe and accessible pedestrian routes within and around the area, particularly to the riverside and riverside walks

5.137 **Bridging the River Wear** - proposals to bridge the River Wear at both a high and low level must be explored as part of any development proposals for the Galley's Gill area. The priority will be a new high level bridge linking the Vaux site with Sheepfolds along the route of the proposed 'Great Walk'. The bridge should be subject to a design competition to ensure that a structure of the highest architectural and engineering excellence is procured giving the city an iconic landmark.

5.138 A second low-level 'West Bridge' should also be considered linking Festival Park/Galley's Gill to the Sheepfolds riverside. The low-level bridge will also need to be a high quality structure designed to allow the River Wear to remain navigable. It too should be the subject of a design competition. The low-level bridge must be considered as a longer term priority (see section 6).

5.139 **The 'Great Walk'** - the central area's 'Great Walk' will link key sites, and passes through the Vaux site. New development should address the route of the 'Great Walk' with active frontages ensuring that it

is lively, safe and overlooked. A simple palette of high quality materials will be used to define the route including specially commissioned distinctive landmark lighting columns.

5.140 **'Great Street'** - this project will transform Livingstone Road and St Mary's Way into a grand city boulevard with new development fronting to the street, tree planting, distinctive street lighting and an improved pedestrian environment including wider pavements and surface-level crossings at key locations.

5.141 St Mary's Way will be realigned through the Vaux site to maximise the regeneration and development potential across the site, provide potential for frontage development along the route of the new city boulevard, and enhance accessibility around the central area.

5.142 **Clifftop walk** - a clifftop walk must be an essential structuring element of the development at the Vaux site and Farringdon Row. The route of the walk will follow the edge of the steep cliffs that define the River Wear gorge to the north of the Vaux site and around the top of Galley's Gill/Festival Park to the west of the Vaux site and along the eastern and northern flank of Farringdon Row as far as Hanover Place.

5.143 The route of the walk should include a distinctive and imaginative scheme of hard and soft landscape elements and incorporate a series of viewing points and spaces at Bridge Belvedere, Green Cascade and Galley's Belvedere. It will be important that the clifftop walk is fronted and overlooked by development to ensure that the route is safe.

5.144 **Gillbridge** - the Gillbridge forms an important east-west high level link between the Vaux site and Farringdon Row across Festival Park/Galley's Gill. The existing bridge should be carefully relit with clearly defined public spaces created at its landing sites. Development at the Vaux site and Farringdon Row should be clearly structured around these spaces and provide clear pedestrian routes linking into them.

5.145 Vaux Square and Magistrates Square, a major new space, is one of the network of open squares and spaces to be provided within the central area. It will be formed through a major enhancement to the junction of St Mary's Way, High Street West and Livingstone Road. The design and specification will be assessed against the design objectives within section 4 'Strategic Design Guidance' and must be of a high quality.

Implementation issues

5.146 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:

- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
- Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No.2 including policy SA55A.2 referring to the Vaux/Galley's Gill/Farringdon Row Comprehensive Development Sites

5.147 The entire Vaux and Farringdon Row sites are the subject of high level design and development frameworks that have been drawn up by Sunderland arc and endorsed by the City Council (Farringdon Row Development Framework, July 2006 and The Vaux site Development Framework). Development proposals will be assessed against the details set out in the framework documents. Within this context a more detailed master plan has been developed by Sunderland arc for the Vaux site which forms part of the outline planning consent for the site approved by the Secretary of State.

5.148 The proposed 'high level bridge' for the Great Walk and low level 'West Bridge' should also be the subject of design competitions to ensure the development provides new city icons of the highest engineering and architectural excellence.

Stadium Quarter

- 5.149 The Stadium Quarter occupies a prominent and dramatic location on the north bank of the River Wear. The Stadium of Light is at the heart of the area and provides a distinctive landmark located above the steep sides of the Wear gorge. The Quarter is bounded by the River Wear to the south and west, Kier Hardie Way to the north and the railway line to the east.
- 5.150 The Quarter comprises two distinct areas-Stadium Park which is focused around the Stadium of Light, and Sheepfolds which is to the south and east and includes the Sheepfolds riverside area adjoining the River Wear.
- 5.151 Stadium Park covers a large, level area that includes the 48,000 seat Stadium of Light (home of Sunderland Association Football Club) as well as substantial areas of surface car parking. The Stadium of Light is visible from many locations around the central area including key approaches into the central area from the north and towards the Queen Alexandra Bridge.
- 5.152 Sheepfolds is dominated by a fine street grid accommodating a range of commercial and industrial uses including a large scrap-metal yard, small industrial units and warehouses. The Sheepfolds riverside is at a lower level at the base of the gorge. Pedestrian and vehicular access around the area is relatively poor, particularly to the river and adjoining parts of the central area including the St Peter's area to the east, although there are Metro stops serving both the Stadium and St Peter's.
- 5.153 Stadium Quarter as a whole represents a significant opportunity within the central area to establish a mixed-use development quarter which is compatible with the sporting function of the Stadium of Light.



Sheepfolds



St Peter's Metro station

5.154 There are a number of key issues of importance to the Stadium Quarter:

- The dramatic setting of the area means that development will be extremely prominent when viewed from locations across the city
- Much of the area around the Stadium of Light is undeveloped and substantial areas of surface parking are largely unused other than on match days
- Although there are two Metro stations close by the Quarter these are difficult to access particularly on foot because of the heavily engineered nature of the surrounding road network
- Sheepfolds riverside is difficult to access and is consequently underused
- The public realm is of a low overall quality with some derelict and vacant sites. The commercial and industrial buildings around Sheepfolds are utilitarian in character.

5.155 In order to address the issues that affect the Stadium Quarter the following objectives have been identified:

- Establish a robust architectural and built form response of a high design standard to create a contemporary and stylish quarter that occupies a prominent city gateway location
- Enhance the mix of uses on offer by strengthening leisure and entertainment uses, providing new restaurants, cafes and bars, and delivering opportunities for people to live in the central area thereby extending the times during which the Stadium Quarter is busy, active and safe
- Improve accessibility to other parts of the central area through providing a network of safe and well overlooked pedestrian streets, public spaces and new footbridges linking the Quarter with the St Peter's and Stadium of Light Metro stations, the St Peter's campus and St Peter's district to the east, and the Vaux site and the Galley's Gill district to the south
- Strengthen the relationship with Sheepfolds riverside through improving pedestrian access, establishing a new low level river crossing and creating a riverside park that is safe and well overlooked by adjoining development

Stadium Quarter



Key development opportunities

- 1 Stadium Park
- 2 Sheepfolds

Public realm priorities

- 1 Great Walk
- 2 Stadium Square
- 3 River crossing
- 4 Clifftop
- 5 Sheepfolds riverside
- 6 St Peter's Gate

- 5.156 The Stadium Park area is one of the most significant development opportunities within Sunderland. Clearance of the site and the construction of the Stadium of Light have already had a substantial regenerative impact that has benefited the whole city. A new 50 metre swimming pool has recently opened on the site.
- 5.157 Now there is an opportunity for Stadium Park to be further developed to accommodate a range of sports, leisure and business uses. Given that the Stadium of Light and the Stadium Park area are visible from many locations around the central area, including key approaches from the north and towards the Queen Alexandra Bridge, the architectural style and built form of the area will play a role in the branding and identity of the city.
- 5.158 Stadium Park is the subject of a detailed Development Framework that has been prepared in collaboration with Sunderland City Council and Sunderland arc (October 2006). All development proposals will be assessed against the Development Framework. Key elements of any proposed scheme should include:

- **Mix of uses** - a mix of the following uses will be acceptable at Stadium Park: D1 non-residential institutions, D2 assembly and leisure, C1 hotel, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments, and B1 business. C3 housing will also be acceptable in order to extend the times during which the area is populated and safe.
- **Landmarks** - a landmark development should be located to the north east quarter of the site comprising a hotel of between 15 and 20 storeys in height. The prominent location offers a prime site for a hotel close to the Stadium of Light and the conference facilities offered there. A slender form will be required in order to punctuate and act as a counterpoint to the broad dome of the Stadium.
- **Storey heights** - the scale and height of new development should otherwise respond to the Stadium of Light. Proposals up to 6 storeys will be acceptable allowing the Stadium to remain the dominant built-form element.
- **Pedestrian access** - major pedestrian routes should be established linking Stadium Park with the St Peter's and Stadium of Light Metro stations. The 'Great Walk' will link Stadium Park to the Vaux site and the southern central area via a new pedestrian 'high level bridge' across the River Wear. Further details are set out in the section on public realm priorities
- **Key Frontages** - development should front the river corridor and all major pedestrian routes and public spaces within Stadium Park. Active ground-floor uses will ensure that the public realm is safe and overlooked
- **Public space** - an important area of open space should form a focus for development. 'Stadium Square' will adjoin the Stadium of Light close to Millennium Way and provide a grand gathering and events space
- **Vehicular access** - a realignment of Kier Hardy Way, which defines the northern edge of the Stadium Park, and the replacement of an existing roundabout with a traffic signalled junction, will provide the principal means of vehicular access into the site

5.159 **The Sheepfolds** - area will be redeveloped as an attractive mixed-use neighbourhood with close linkages to the St Peter's Metro station, the new 'high level bridge' and the riverside. Development should take advantage of the southerly aspect and spectacular views over the River Wear towards the rest of the central area. Existing businesses within the area will be encouraged to relocate to ensure the continuation of established employment uses within the city.

5.160 Sheepfolds is also subject to the detailed Stadium Park Development Framework that has been prepared in collaboration with Sunderland City Council and Sunderland arc (October 2006). All development proposals will be assessed against the Development Framework. Key elements of any proposed scheme should include:

- **Mix of uses** - within the Sheepfolds area the following uses will be required: B1 Business, C3 housing. Acceptable uses will include small scale A1 retail (units not exceeding 250m²), C1 hotels, D1 non-residential institutions, D2 assembly and leisure
- **Storey heights** - development of between 3 and 6 storeys in height will be acceptable with proposals up to 6 storeys giving emphasis to entrance points, corners and gateways
- **Key frontages** - new developments must present a high quality frontage to the river corridor and the proposed gateway square with particular attention paid to views from the central area, the Vaux site and Festival Park
- **Pedestrian access** - provision of a new pedestrian link to Bonnersfield, through St Peter's Metro station railway arches and below the road level of the Wearmouth Bridge. Pedestrian routes must integrate with and give access to Stadium Park
- **Public space** - a gateway square will form the focus for development at the northern landing of the proposed high-level bridge

Public realm priorities

5.161 **The Great Walk** - (also referred to as 'The Way of Light' in the Sunderland arc and Sunderland City Council's Stadium Village Development Framework (October 2006) links the northern and southern parts of the central area together and the northern end is anchored at the Stadium Quarter. A high quality gateway public space will be formed at the northern end of the proposed high-level bridge crossing the River Wear. This should be anchored by a major piece of public art, or 'Great Icon' that would be specially commissioned.

5.162 The 'Great Walk' forms a processional route toward the Stadium of Light. Fronted and overlooked by new development that could include a mix of cafes, restaurants and small retail units, a simple palette of high quality material will be specified including specially commissioned distinctive landmark lighting columns.

5.163 **Stadium Square** - a high quality public space is to be provided as gathering space around the Stadium of Light. The square will be accessed from the 'Great Walk' and from Millennium Way.

5.164 **River crossings** - in order to enhance wider accessibility between the north and south banks of the River Wear, consideration should be given to two new footbridges. Priority must be given to a high-level bridge that will connect key development opportunities at Sheepfolds and the former Vaux site.

5.165 In addition, consideration should be given to a low-level 'West Bridge' which would connect Sheepfolds Riverside with Galley's Gill. The design would need to allow the River Wear to remain navigable. Development of the low-level bridge is likely to be a long-term proposal.

5.166 Both bridges should be the subject of a design competition to ensure the development provides new city icons of the highest engineering and architectural excellence.

- 5.167 **Cliff top** - establish a cliff top east-west walkway around Sheepfolds that is well overlooked by adjoining development. Viewing areas could be provided at strategic points to make the most of the view and its southerly aspect. The eastern end of the cliff top walk must link under the railway line to North Bridge Street and through to the St Peter's Wharf development proposed at Bonnersfield (refer to St Peter's district).
- 5.168 **Sheepfolds riverside** - Sunderland's extensive riverside is an important asset that is currently under-exploited. Major physical improvements will be required to improve access to the riverside area and encourage greater use. A high quality landscape scheme would create a linear park environment. Better connections under the Wearmouth bridges would improve accessibility between Sheepfolds and St Peter's (University proposed World Heritage Site and National Glass Centre).
- 5.169 **St Peter's Gate** - located on the northern approach into the central area at the junction of Newcastle Road, Kier Hardy Way, Southwick Road and North Bridge Street. St Peter's Gate has the potential to be a key entrance and approach into the central area. At present the massive round-about junction arrangements leads into a gyratory system where traffic is directed along Roker Avenue, Church Street North and Dame Dorothy Street. This is confusing and disorientating for visitors to the city, deflecting people away from the direct route. Routes should be direct and legible and the creation of a direct access onto North Bridge Street should be investigated.

Implementation issues

- 5.170 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No.2 including policies NA3A.1 and NA3A.2 relating to the Stadium Park and Sheepfolds comprehensive development sites.
- 5.171 In addition, development of Stadium Park and Sheepfolds are the subject of a detailed design and development framework that has been commissioned by Sunderland arc and prepared in collaboration with the City Council (Stadium Village Development Framework, October 2006). Development proposals will be assessed against the details set out in the framework.
- 5.172 The high-level bridge for the Great Walk should also be the subject of a design competition to ensure the development provides a new city icon of the highest engineering and architectural excellence. This requirement will also be applied to the design of the low-level bridge.

St. Peter's

5.173 The St Peter's riverside, on the north bank of the river to the east of the Wearmouth Bridge, was a major site of ecclesiastical learning in Europe. Parts of St Peter's church, which is located overlooking the river, date back to 674 AD. Over recent years the area has been subject to considerable change. Once an important centre of shipbuilding and port activities, the St Peter's riverside area now contains a diverse range of uses including the University of Sunderland's St Peter's campus, the National Glass Centre, open spaces and riverside walks.

5.174 There is a good level of activity within the area associated with the university, and the attractive southerly aspect of the site which slopes towards the River Wear provides good views south across the river to the main central area skyline. Significant development opportunities exist to better integrate the area with adjoining parts of the central area, particularly Sheepfolds to the west and Panns Bank to the south across the river.

5.175 The St Peter's area also provides a setting for the proposed World Heritage Site focused on the ancient and historic church of St Peter's, part of the settlement of Monkwearmouth. The proposed World Heritage Site is subject to an emerging strategy including a careful assessment of viewsheds. Reference must be made to this important emerging guidance as protecting the setting of the proposed World Heritage Site will be a vital consideration in the design and layout of adjoining development proposals.



St Peter's riverside

5.176 The potential World Heritage Site, the National Glass Centre, and the nearby Museum at Monkwearmouth Station together form an important cluster of visitor attractions.

5.177 However, the area does have a fragmented character particularly in terms of built form. Architectural styles vary from the ancient and historic as exemplified by St Peter's church, the modern and contemporary at the National Glass Centre and St Peter's campus, to simple single storey industrial premises. There are also significant areas of previously developed land that have been simply landscaped but lack a clear functional role or identity, and extensive areas of open car parking.

5.178 The following issues are of particular importance:

- St Peter's is relatively poorly connected to the rest of the central area and feels peripheral despite having a number of important attractions and destinations
- The area is largely underdeveloped, particularly around Bonnersfield, and could better exploit its attractive south facing riverside setting and mix of attractions
- The mix and variety of architectural and built-form styles lack coherence despite the presence of very high quality architectural 'gems'
- Pedestrian accessibility to the west and south are poor meaning the area is not well linked to adjoining areas including Sheepfolds, the Stadium of Light and Panns Bank
- Open spaces lack a clear role and are poorly overlooked because of limited adjoining development

Objectives for St Peter's

5.179 In order to address the important issues affecting the St Peter's district the following objectives have been identified:

- Ensure that all development proposals have careful regard to the setting of the proposed World Heritage Site and the associated Management Plan and Action Programme
- Celebrate the architectural quality and diversity of the area ensuring that all development proposals are stylish and contemporary and of a very high quality contributing to St Peter's identity of history and innovation
- Reinforce the mix of uses in the area to expand the range of activities available and extend the times during which St Peter's is busy and populated
- Promote the development of St Peter's church as a major visitor attraction and education facility in line with the site's potential designation as a World Heritage Site
- Ensure that St Peter's church remains as the key landmark within the district with views from the River Wear and the south of the river maintained and preserved
- Explore the options for linking St Peter's with Panns Bank and the historic riverside via a ferry service or footbridge improving accessibility and better linking the district to the rest of the central area
- Better connect St Peter's with Sheepfolds, the St Peter's Metro station and the riverside to enhance accessibility and ensure the area is fully integrated with the central area.

St Peters



Key development opportunities

- 1 St Peter's Wharf
- 2 St Peter's Campus

Public realm priorities

- 1 Upper East and West link (St Peter's walk)
- 2 River crossing
- 3 St Peter's Riverside



St Peter's Wharf



St Peter's campus



National Glass Centre

Key development opportunities

5.180 **St Peter's Wharf** - the St Peter's Wharf area is prominently located adjoining the Wearmouth Bridge between Dame Dorothy Street, Palmer's Hill Road and the riverside at Bonnersfield. There is a significant opportunity here for the development of a substantial mixed-use scheme comprising apartments above commercial ground floor uses that overlook the River Wear and front the St Peter's riverside walkway. Key elements of any proposed scheme will include:

- **Key frontages** - development must front the River Wear and the St Peter's riverside walk
- **Public space** - publicly accessible riverside squares and terraces should be provided to take advantage of the southerly aspect, provide views back towards the central area and Panns Bank and enhance pedestrian accessibility
- **Mix of uses** - the principal use of the site must comprise C3 residential. In addition ancillary A1 retail (not exceeding 250m²) and A3 bars and restaurants (both A1 and A3 to serve the needs of local residents and employees only), D1 non-residential institutions, D2 assembly and leisure, B1 business, and C3 student housing will also be acceptable as part of a mixed-use scheme
- **Density** - because of the proximity of the St Peter's Metro Station higher density development will be appropriate at a minimum average of 50 dwellings per hectare
- **Storey height** - development should be in the range of 6 to 10 storeys having regard to the gradient and topography of the site, preserving views towards and the setting of St Peter's church, and complementing the setting of the Wearmouth

5.181 **St Peter's campus** - expansion and development of the University of Sunderland will be encouraged as an important economic and cultural driver for the city. Significant investment has already been made at the St Peter's campus and additional facilities that are compatible with the university could include D2 assembly and leisure, B1 research and development, studios, laboratories and other high tech facilities, and additional student accommodation.

5.182 Development proposals will need to:

- address the River Wear taking advantage of the southerly aspect
- ensure that streets, footpaths and walkways are well overlooked by adjoining buildings to maintain an attractive and safe pedestrian environment
- preserve or enhance the setting of St Peter's church and the proposed World Heritage Site.

5.183 It will be important to retain and diversify employment generating activities within the area particularly through exploring the potential for closer ties with the Sunderland Science Park at St Peter's Gate, part of the University's St Peter's campus. A stronger and more distinctive built form will be a priority when considering redevelopment proposals.

Public realm priorities

5.184 **St Peter's Riverside** - the River Wear corridor is a key asset within the city. St Peter's riverside should be significantly enhanced to provide an attractive and generously proportioned waterside promenade linking together a series of discrete new public spaces at key locations. These will include:

- St Peter's Wharf and Bonnersfield
- St Peter's Campus
- The National Glass Centre

5.185 The waterside promenade will need to connect under Wearmouth Bridge to the Sheepfolds riverside area beyond. Design proposals for the waterside promenade will also need to include measures to improve accessibility and safety of footways and steps leading down to the riverside area establishing a stronger connection between the city and its river.

5.186 **Upper east-west link** - a new east-west pedestrian and cycle link should be established below the road level of the Wearmouth Bridge and through the Metro station railway arches. This will improve pedestrian movement through the area, enhance the existing footpath and cycle network and better link key destinations including the St Peter's campus and Stadium Park. Care will need to be taken to ensure that the route is well lit and safely overlooked by adjoining development at St Peter's Wharf and Sheepfolds.

5.187 **River crossing** - in order to enhance wider accessibility between the north and south banks of the River Wear, consideration should be given to a low-level 'East Bridge' that would connect Panns Bank and the fine historic riverside. The bridge would also enable students to access the central area more easily but is likely to be a long term aspiration.

5.188 The design of the bridge would need to allow the River Wear to remain navigable and should be the subject of a design competition to produce an innovative new city icon. It could draw inspiration from the National Glass Centre which would be close to the northern landing of the bridge.

- 5.189 As an alternative, in the medium term, a small ferry crossing could be established between St Peter's and Panns Bank. This would help to establish demand for the connection and raise the profile of the area.
- 5.190 The 'East Bridge' would be complemented by the construction of high and low level bridges between Sheepfolds and Galley's Gill (see the relevant sections on Riverside south and Stadium Quarter for further details).

Implementation issues

- 5.191 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:
- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
 - Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No.2 including policy NA3B.1 relating to the Bonnersfield/St Peter's university strategic locations for change
- 5.192 Development of the St Peter's Wharf area will be the subject of a detailed design and development framework to be prepared in collaboration with the City Council and Sunderland arc. The proposed low-level footbridge should be the subject of a design competition.
- 5.193 In addition, the proposed World Heritage Site around St Peter's church will be the subject of a comprehensive management plan against which relevant proposals will be assessed.

Panns Bank

- 5.194 Panns Bank and the Old Sunderland riverside areas are located within the north-eastern quarter of the central area. The district extends from the east of Wearmouth Bridge along the riverfront to Fish Quay. The district is underlain by a dramatic topography formed by limestone cliffs which form the gorge of the River Wear. As a result, steep streets lead north-south down to the riverside with others - notably Pann's Bank and High Street East - following the contours east-west.
- 5.195 Old Sunderland riverside is a Conservation Area containing a number of restored listed buildings and good quality contemporary developments. The historic street structure of High Street East and Low Street has largely been retained. There are a number of very fine buildings along High Street East, particularly on the north side of the street, which reflect the historic significance of the route and the association with the port. Large scale redevelopment in the 1960's has eroded the character of the street along its south side and the general quality of paving and street furniture is poor.
- 5.196 A number of recent developments in the Panns Bank areas have increased the level of activity and introduced a mixed range of uses particularly focused on new hotel accommodation and the evening economy. Some of the University of Sunderland's student housing is located within the area.
- 5.197 At present, the riverside area is still relatively underdeveloped with a number of vacant development sites. There is considerable scope to extend the range of uses and development within the area to exploit its riverside location and contribute to its historic character.
- 5.198 The following issues are of particular importance:
- Underdeveloped and underused riverside area with vacant development sites available
 - Poor visual and physical connections between the central area and the riverside area
 - Poor physical connections to the north bank and St Peter's
 - Quality of the pedestrian routes is variable with some steep gradients, a mix of paving and street furniture, and poor surveillance in places from adjoining buildings
 - High Street East is an historic route on a grand scale but lacks a strong and cohesive identity and has suffered from insensitive redevelopment, particularly on the south side of the street



Echo 24



High Street West



University of Sunderland student accommodation

Objectives for Panns Bank

5.199 In order to address the issues affecting Panns Bank the following objectives have been identified:

- Reinforce the fine grained and historic pattern of streets within the area through contextually sensitive infill development that fronts the public realm
- Increase the mix of uses in the area to expand the range of activities available and extend the times during which Panns Bank is busy and populated
- Explore the options for linking Panns Bank and the historic Sunderland riverside to St Peter's via a ferry service or footbridge improving accessibility and better linking the district to other parts of the central area
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity between Panns Bank, the riverside and Sunnyside across West Wear Street and enhance the role of the cliff top walkways along the southern side of the River Wear gorge
- Restore the character and identity of High Street East as an important historic route and a significant location within the city
- Ensure that all development proposals have careful regard to the setting of the proposed World Heritage Site

Panns Bank



Key development opportunities

- 1 Numbers Garth
- 2 Fish Quay
- 3 High street East

Public realm priorities

- 1 High Street East
- 2 Great Street
- 3 Clifftop Walks
- 4 River Crossing

5.200 **Numbers Garth** - this site represents a significant opportunity at an important and prominent central area gateway. It adjoins the junction of High Street East and West and West Wear Street and Sans Street which form part of the inner ring road. The triangular site is bounded to the east by Russell Street, to the north by Panns Bank, and to the west by West Wear Street.

5.201 Development proposals must help to define and contain the existing junction to establish a more robust gateway. This will contribute to the proposed transformation of the ring road into a 'Great Street' which is fronted by high quality development.

5.202 Key elements of any proposal should include:

- **Mix of uses** - ground floor A1 retail, A2 financial and professional services, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments. Upper floors B1 office, C3 housing
- **Key frontages** - proposals must address West Wear Street, High Street East, Russell Street and Pann's Bank with active frontages that will to improve surveillance of the public realm along High Street East and West Wear Street
- **Storey height** - development should be up to 4 storeys adjoining Russell Street and Pann's Bank and up to 6 storeys in height adjoining the High Street East and West Wear Street junction ensuring that river views are maintained from Sunnyside
- **Important corners** - a prominent built form detail will be required at the corner of High Street East and West Wear Street
- **Key linkages** - it will be important for the development at Number's Garth to respond to development proposals at Sunnyside North to include a surface level at-grade pedestrian crossing at West Wear Street close to the junction with High Street East and also providing access to the cliff top walkways to the north.

5.203 **Fish Quay** - located within the Old Sunderland Riverside conservation area Fish Quay is accessed from Low Street. The area has benefited from significant regeneration and contains a mix of uses including bars, restaurants, offices and apartments. The historic built environment is complemented by more contemporary development although there are important infill opportunities available to the north and south of Low Street. The Sunderland riverside walkway runs the length of the area and should provide a focus for development.

5.204 The key elements of proposals for development at Fish Quay should include:

- **Mix of uses** - C1 hotels, C3 housing, B1 office, D2 assembly and leisure, A3 cafes and restaurants, and A4 drinking establishments
- **Key frontages** - proposals must address Low Street and the riverside with active uses located on the ground floor improve surveillance of the public realm
- **Storey height** - development within Fish Quay must be contextually sensitive to the historic environment. Proposals should be between 4 and 6 storeys in height have regard to adjoining buildings and the topography of the area
- **Open space** - a publicly accessible terraced square shall be provided on the route of the Sunderland riverside walk. 'Old Port Square' could be the southern landing point of a low level pedestrian footbridge from St Peter's
- **Access and parking** - vehicle access on the riverside area to be limited to essential users only, no parking to be permitted on the riverside area

5.205 **High Street East** - in order to reinvigorate the street a comprehensive programme of public realm enhancements is required including new paving and rationalised and coordinated street furniture. Part of High Street East has already been subject to an enhancement scheme utilising Caithness stone (adjoining the Eagle Workshops). This material should be used as part of further enhancements works. In addition, the following opportunities should be explored:

- Diversifying the mix of uses to ensure that the street is busy outside shopping hours. Acceptable uses will include A1 retail, A3 cafes and restaurants, A4 drinking establishments with B1 office and C3 residential on upper floors
- Maintain active frontages along the entire length of the street
- Selective redevelopment and infilling to provide a stronger built form and support a greater diversity of uses. Development proposals must reinforce the spatial quality of the street with frontage development of a high architectural standard that reflects the scale and height of the historic buildings on the northern side of the street
- Ensuring that shopfronts are of a consistently high standard utilising high quality materials and simple detailing
- Treating High Street East and Low Street as a single design entity considering individual proposals not just on their own merit but also how they relate to the composition of and character of the whole
- A consistent approach to building maintenance which will mean working with owners and landowners where appropriate

Key public realm priorities

5.206 **Sunderland riverside** - the River Wear corridor is a key asset within the city. The riverside should be significantly enhanced to provide an attractive and generously proportioned waterside promenade linking together a series of discrete new public spaces at key locations. These will include:

- Old Port Square at Fish Quay
- Panns Bank South

5.207 Design proposals for the waterside promenade will need to consider opportunities to connect to the Riverside South district under the Wearmouth Bridge and to include measures to improve accessibility and safety of footways and steps leading down to the riverside area establishing a stronger connection between the City and its river.

5.208 **High Street East** - introduce substantial public realm improvements to High Street East to provide a cohesive identity and provide a setting for the historic city buildings along its northern side. In addition it will be important to introduce pedestrian priority measures along the street including wider pavements and shared surface crossing points at key locations to improve access to the riverside.

5.209 **Great Street** - Panns Bank is severed from Sunnyside North by West Wear Street, part of the inner ring road. The transformation of the ring road into a 'Great Street' will enhance the pedestrian environment, improve crossing facilities and connectivity between the central area and riverside, and provide frontage development opportunities.

5.210 **Cliff top walks** - the southern side of the River Wear gorge provides opportunities for a cliff top walk extending from Panns Bank to Galley's Gill. Pedestrian connections to West Wear Street and across to Sunnyside should be provided as part of redevelopment proposals. The connections could take the form of elegantly detailed steps and ramps to the riverside with wide pedestrian crossings provided as part of the Great Street project. Wider pavements along West Wear Street

and enhanced signage will emphasise the route of the cliff top walk.

5.211 **River crossing** - in order to enhance wider accessibility between the north and south banks of the River Wear consideration should be given to a low level 'East Bridge' that would connect Panns Bank and the historic Sunderland riverside with St Peter's and Bonnersfield to the north. The bridge would also enable students to access the central area more easily.

5.212 The design of the bridge would need to allow the River Wear to remain navigable and should be the subject of a design competition to produce an innovative new city icon. The bridge's southern landing would form the focus of a new public space at Old Port Square, part of the sequence of interlinked spaces along the riverside promenade.

5.213 As an alternative in the short to medium term a small ferry crossing could be established between St Peter's and Pann's Bank.

5.214 The 'East Bridge' would be complemented by the construction of high and low level bridges between the Stadium Quarter and Riverside South (see the relevant sections on these central area districts for further details).

Implementation issues

5.215 All development proposals and public realm enhancements will be considered against:

- Strategic central area design guidance in section 4 of this document
- Policies within the adopted Sunderland UDP and Alteration No. 2.

5.216 The design of a new footbridge should be the subject of a design competition.

Key regeneration opportunities



Notation

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|---|
| 1 | Vaux | 6 | Tavistock |
| 2 | Stadium Park, Sheepfolds | 7 | Sunnside East |
| 3 | Holmeside Triangle | 8 | Pann's Bank |
| 4 | Farrington Row | 9 | St Peter's, Bonnersfield |
| 5 | Sunnside North | 10 | Silksworth Row, Paley Street |
| | | 11 | Central Station |
| | | 12 | West Park |
| | | 13 | University Chester road and St Peter's Campus |
| | | 14 | Crowtree and Town Park |

6.0 Implementation

Managing beneficial change

- 6.1 Sunderland City Council, Sunderland arc and the Sunnyside Partnership will provide strong and consistent leadership for the Urban Design Strategy using resources and project management skills to drive through complex projects.
- 6.2 Implementation also demands genuine co-operation between the public sector authorities and agencies, private sector developers and owners, and the wider community of Sunderland. Isolated improvements on individual sites will not transform the central area. They need to contribute to a wider strategy for regeneration. The Urban Design Strategy provides an overarching strategy to ensure an integrated approach to the revitalisation of the central area.
- 6.3 The Urban Design Strategy also demonstrates that the City Council and its partners are serious about delivering change in the central area. This will be achieved through the central area vision embodied within the Strategy and also by demonstrating that Sunderland City Council and its partners are committed to delivering change and investment.
- 6.4 There are also development situations that would benefit from the confidence and certainty that a strong partnership of public sector organisations, including One NorthEast, would inject. Clear support from these agencies increases confidence in Sunderland.

Development frameworks for key sites

- 6.5 The Urban Design Strategy identifies a number of opportunity sites within a structure of central area districts. These will require the preparation of detailed Development Frameworks including funding strategies that identify any requirements for gap funding. This has already been achieved on a number of key regeneration sites. These have been adopted as interim planning policy and can be taken forward as SPDs following adoption of the UDP Alteration No.2.
- 6.6 Within UDP Alteration No.2 Policy EC5A (comprehensive development sites) and policy EC5B (strategic locations for change) refer to the preparation of masterplans for key sites. For the purposes of the Central Area Urban Design Strategy the term Development Frameworks has been used to reflect work that has already been undertaken by Sunderland arc and the City Council.
- 6.7 Development frameworks for these key sites will continue to be prepared to shape the principles and requirements presented within this strategy and drive change forward. The frameworks may be prepared in support of planning applications by developers and investors and must show how the design and layout of proposals respond to the details and guidance given in this strategy.
- 6.8 During the course of implementation these will be kept under review so that changes and amalgamations can be made to respond to changing conditions.

Funding through section 106 agreements

- 6.9 The Urban Design Strategy proposals are a way to structure and facilitate the bringing forward of individual sites. The public realm elements of the Urban Design Strategy provide the physical context for the development of individual sites. As quality of the public realm will influence the quality of the eventual built development, it is appropriate that development projects contribute to the funding of essential new public realm infrastructure.
- 6.10 Section 106 contributions are one key mechanism through which the funding of key public realm proposals will be achieved. All central area uses and users benefit from high quality public realm and all developments will place some demands on the public realm within the central area. All central area developments should therefore contribute to public realm improvements. As a general principle, public realm contributions should be proportionate to the scale of development. The larger the development the more the contribution should be.
- 6.11 The main purpose of collecting developer contributions is to fund an agreed programme of works that has been identified in the Urban Design Strategy. The value of individual contributions to the provision of essential public realm and infrastructure works within the central area will be set according to the type, scale and location of development. The amount required will take into account contributions, whether in kind or by planning obligation, to the public realm or infrastructure works within a particular development site, or to works outside the development site, which are needed to enable development to take place.
- 6.12 Large scale developments, of over 0.5 hectares, can radically change the nature and character of significant parts of the central area. Their influence visually and functionally is likely to extend over a large area. These are the type of schemes that have most to gain from public realm improvements and have a sizeable influence on general perceptions of the city.
- 6.13 As such, large scale developments should contribute to the wider public realm as well as provide new public spaces. However, there will be recognition of the degree to which the design and layout of a major development scheme can be said to contribute to broader central area public realm aspirations. For example, major new areas of public space are an integral part of many regeneration sites, including Vaux, Holmeside, and Stadium Park. This can be taken into account and maybe discounted against the full public realm contributions that will be expected.
- 6.14 The project priority table on page 149 lists key public realm projects set out within the Strategy and indicates which are likely to be delivered as part of a large development scheme. Other projects will be funded in part or wholly through pooled contributions collected within the central area to which the strategy relates.
- 6.15 In the case of smaller development there will be a cut off level below which contributions are not sought to reflect economy of scale issues. The cut off point for this will be 200 sq m (gross minimum floorspace). Generally individual extensions of less than 200 sq.m to all categories of existing development will be exempt from contributions.
- 6.16 Contributions will also be sought from development proposals comprising a change of use above 200 sq m (gross minimum floorspace). In Sunnyside, change of use developments are discounted by 50% against public realm contributions. The circumstances in Sunnyside that have given rise to this approach are not considered applicable across the rest of the central area. Within Sunnyside there is an emphasis placed on retaining the existing fabric of buildings that gives rise to the unique character of the area, and there is a differential in costs and rental expectations compared with the remainder of the central area, that justifies a discounted approach to change of use.

- 6.17 There will be a general exemption for Listed Buildings in recognition of the increased cost often associated with developing them.
- 6.18 The level of a developer's contribution is likely to be set at the time when construction starts on site, not necessarily when planning consent is obtained, although the grant of planning consent will be the main trigger for establishing a legal agreement.
- 6.19 In addition, saved policy R3 of the UDP places a responsibility on any development to make a financial contribution of £661 per family dwelling to the City Council in lieu to upgrade the existing play facilities in the vicinity of the site (note a family dwelling is classified as two or more bed spaces). This requirement will be discounted by 25% for residential developments within the central area in recognition of the requirement there will be for a contribution towards the wider public realm.
- 6.20 The total costs of central area public realm requirements and demands will be the subject of further work. It is intended to identify and draw up a programme of works, which will be attached as an annex to this document in due course. The programme of works will be updated annually. A Supplementary Planning Document on developer contributions and agreements is also being prepared by the City Council.
- 6.23 The ability of a development to cover the cost of contributions will always be a consideration. Reductions from contribution may be considered if it can be demonstrated that the level of contribution required individually, or in combination with other contribution priorities, makes the development financially unviable. There is a need to ensure that contributions are balanced against other benefits being sought.
- 6.24 Different types of use can and do place different demands on the public realm. The ability to contribute to public realm improvements is very much weighted toward the more commercial schemes. By definition they can and should be more viable schemes that are capable of bearing the additional cost. At the other extreme of the development viability spectrum there are types and classifications of development that by their very nature don't generate high commercial returns such as those meeting social, cultural, educational, welfare and religious needs. These uses and activities occur and expect to be located within the central area and add to the richness and mix of uses on offer. Their commercial viability will not be comparable with the high value uses of residential, office and retail. It is also recognised that the market in Sunderland in terms of office, residential and commercial floorspace is weaker than other centres such as Newcastle and yields and rental values are lower than many other cities. This will be reflected in the scale of contribution sought.

Viability issues

- 6.21 Viability considerations are expected to be a key part of the ODPM Good Practice Guidance still to be published, although Circular 05/2005 covers some limited and general aspects of good practice about the section 106 contributions process. The public realm contributions sought in this SPD will incorporate those principles and advice set out in the recommended good practice guidance.
- 6.22 There is recognition that a number of factors can affect the level of contribution sought and a number of those issues are raised below. The purpose of this document is nevertheless intended to offer some certainty to the process of public realm contributions. What is sought is considered to be necessary from a planning point of a view and can be justified by Policy R3 of the saved UDP.

Identifying priorities

- 6.25 Each project now needs to move to a more detailed level of definition and assessment as part of the implementation process. A broad programme for the key sites is set out in the following table. In order to focus activity and provide an indication of project milestones the programme has been distilled into those projects which might be anticipated to be started within the short (up to 5 years), medium (between 5 and 10 years) and longer terms (10+ years).
- 6.26 The key projects are broken down into three project areas: development projects, transportation projects, and public realm projects.

Development Projects	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Implementation lead
Vaux Development framework prepared and planning permission granted.	x			Sunderland arc
Stadium Park and Sheepfolds Development framework prepared.	x			Sunderland arc
Farringdon Row Development framework prepared.	x			Sunderland arc
Holmeside Triangle Development framework under preparation.	x			Sunderland arc
Sunnside East Planning and design framework prepared, detailed projects coming forward. Development masterplan prepared focused around Villiers Street and Nile Street (East Sunnside masterplan).	x			Sunnside Partnership
Tavistock Planning and design framework prepared, development master plan prepared (East Sunnside masterplan).	x			Sunnside Partnership
Sunnside North Planning and design framework prepared; development master plan prepared (East Sunnside masterplan).	x			Sunnside Partnership
St Peter's/Bonnorsfield Development framework to be drawn up		x		Sunderland arc and City Council
Panns Bank, Numbers Garth Development framework for key sites to be drawn up	x			Private landowners
Silksworth Row Development framework to be drawn up	x			Private landowners
Crowtree Leisure Centre Redevelopment requires re-provision of existing facilities and a development framework to be drawn up.	x			Sunderland arc and City Council
Transportation Projects				
High-Level Bridge Proposals to be the subject of a design competition	x			Sunderland arc and City Council
The Great Street Reconfiguration of junctions required at St Mary's Gate, City Gate, University Gate, Eastgate, Durham Gate, Tavistock Gate,		x		Sunderland arc and City Council
Central Station redevelopment Proposals already progressed with initial enhancements programmed. Further development likely to be longer term		x		City Council, Nexus, Network Rail, Northern Rail, ONE NE and English Partnerships
St Peter's Gate Reconfiguration of key junction and gyratory required		x		City Council
East and West Low level Bridges Proposals to be the subject of a design competition.			x	Sunderland arc and City Council
St Peter's Walk Proposals subject to a feasibility study and part of development at Bonnorsfield		x		Sunderland arc, City Council and private developer

Public Realm Projects	Short term	Medium term	Long term	Implementation lead
Coronation Street/Thomas Street/Athenaeum Street Sunniside planning and design framework established, public realm enhancement	x			Sunniside Partnership and City Council
Sunderland Riverside Corridor Implementation plan and detailed design specification required	x			City Council
West Park Detailed proposals to be prepared		x		City Council
Fawcett Street and High Street Sunniside planning and design framework established, public realm enhancement strategy drafted.	x			Sunniside Partnership and City Council
The Green Arc Signage and branding strategy required linking together Sunderland's green spaces.		x		City Council
The Great Walk Implementation plan and detailed design specification required.			x	Sunderland arc and City Council
Market Square and Brougham Street Implementation plan and detailed design specification required.	x			City Council
Festival Park/Galley's Gill Landscape design specification required and programming strategy required		x		Sunderland arc and City Council
City approaches Unified paving, street tree planting and street furniture enhancements at North Bridge Street, Trimdon Street, Durham Road, Chester Road, Burdon Road, Ryhope Road, Stockton Road, Ryhope Road, Hendon Road, Coronation Street, High Street East		x		Sunderland arc and City Council (Coronation Street with Sunniside partnership)
Holmeside Square Delivered as part of development scheme	x			Sunderland arc and developer
Vaux Square and Magistrates Square Delivered as part of development scheme	x			Sunderland arc and developer
Stadium Square Delivered as part of development scheme	x			Sunderland arc and developer
Empire Square Part of High Street public realm works		x		City Council
Town Park Refurbishment works undertaken	x			City Council
University Square Refurbishment works undertaken	x			University of Sunderland
Station Square		x		City Council and Nexus
Old Port Square Part of Riverside Corridor		x		Sunderland arc and City Council
Tavistock Place Delivered as part of development scheme	x			Sunniside Partnership and developer
Sunniside North Delivered as part of development scheme	x			Sunniside Partnership and developer

Procuring and presenting good design

- 6.27 The City Council is committed to the implementation of the strategy across the central area. A high quality environment will be secured by clear guidance on the procurement of design and the presentation of development proposals for the purpose of public consultation and determination of planning applications.
- 6.28 The central area is the city's most precious asset, the only one that is common to all its citizens. It is critical that proposals to change the central area are of the highest quality and are capable of assessment against clear design criteria.
- 6.29 The following guidance sets out the form and content for the preparation of any proposals for development.

Employing an appropriate design team

- 6.30 Without exception, developers and property owners commissioning development proposals within the central area must ensure that:
- All buildings are designed by appropriately skilled and experienced architects;
 - All landscape is designed by appropriately skilled and experienced landscape architects; and
 - Where the proposal is for more than a single building, all site plans are prepared by appropriately skilled and experienced planners and urban designers.
- 6.31 Appropriate skills and experience should include the design of developments in complex and sensitive central area urban settings. The importance of an appropriately skilled and experienced design team is now recognised in national policy statements and guidance to best practice published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE).

Analysing the site and agreeing a statement of development principles

- 6.32 Before any concept or design for a site becomes fixed, developers and property owners should agree the scope of a site analysis and statement of development principles with the Local Planning Authority (as required by paragraphs 33-39 of PPS1).
- 6.33 This will require a comprehensive urban design assessment of the site in its context, and should make clear reference to the criteria set out in relevant guidance.
- 6.34 This will include a detailed examination of adjoining and surrounding development in terms of:
- connections and circulation
 - block size
 - general building heights
 - roofscape
 - building depths
 - frontage widths and street rhythms
 - street sections
 - boundary treatments
 - building features
 - building materials
 - fenestration and building entrances
 - car parking
 - design and furnishing of external spaces
 - planting regimes

Setting the design in context

- 6.35 All design drawings must put the design in the context of adjoining development by use of:
- plans wider than the site area, to include all main connections
 - elevations wider than the site area to show any proposed building facades in the context of existing facades
 - sections to include adjoining streets and other spaces and buildings
 - 3D representations (see below)
- 6.36 In particular any anticipated impact on strategic or local landmarks needs to be assessed in the context of those views, including the use of photomontages of viewpoints in front of or behind the landmark, as appropriate. In the case of panoramic views, wider photomontages should be used to reveal the impact of new development in identified panoramas.

Revealing the three dimensional relationships

- 6.37 As part of any public consultation and planning submission, development proposals must be tested through three dimensional representations as viewed at eye-level. These could include, in descending order of usefulness:
- photomontages
 - perspective sketches
 - manipulalable digital models in context, in a format capable of insertion in the digital model of the central area to assess strategic visual impact (a full, digital central area model has been produced on behalf of the City Council and Sunderland arc)
 - physical scale models
 - aerial views and axonometric drawings

Preparing a design and access statement

- 6.38 All planning applications must be accompanied by a full design and access statement. These will take the criteria set out in the Urban Design Strategy and demonstrate through text and illustration how the proposals meet the agreed criteria. The main considerations will include:
- site context
 - physical characteristics
 - constraints and opportunities
 - land uses and options for development
 - sustainability
 - accessibility
 - design

Planning application contents

- 6.39 The detailed content and presentation of any planning application must be discussed and agreed with the City Council prior to any planning application submission. The criteria to be applied will reflect the requirements set out above and in all guidance relevant to the site, and the City Council's current requirements for a valid planning application.
- 6.40 Failure to observe this process and these requirements may result in a planning application being deemed incomplete and therefore not registered as a valid application. The statutory period for consideration of a planning application does not commence until a valid and complete application has been registered.

All information correct at time of going to press

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