



The Liveable City: Eastside

Leeds Civic Trust
Competition Results

July 2020



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Competition

Leeds Civic Trust launched the Liveable City Competition in March 2020 to identify ways in which the Eastern side of Leeds City Centre, currently dominated by road space, can be made more people friendly.

The competition was open to anyone: from Leeds community of professionals to students and other people who live and work in the city and in Leeds Eastside. The challenge was to generate ideas: big and small, radical or tactical, temporary, short, medium or long term.

The Context

The Eastside area sits immediately to the east of the city centre. Historically, much of the land was occupied by industry and some was the subject of slum clearances. It now has a mix of uses: heavy and light industry, homes, hotels, education, office and cultural venues, including the Leeds Playhouse. Leeds Minster on Kirkgate is Leeds' principal church and is Grade 1 Listed.

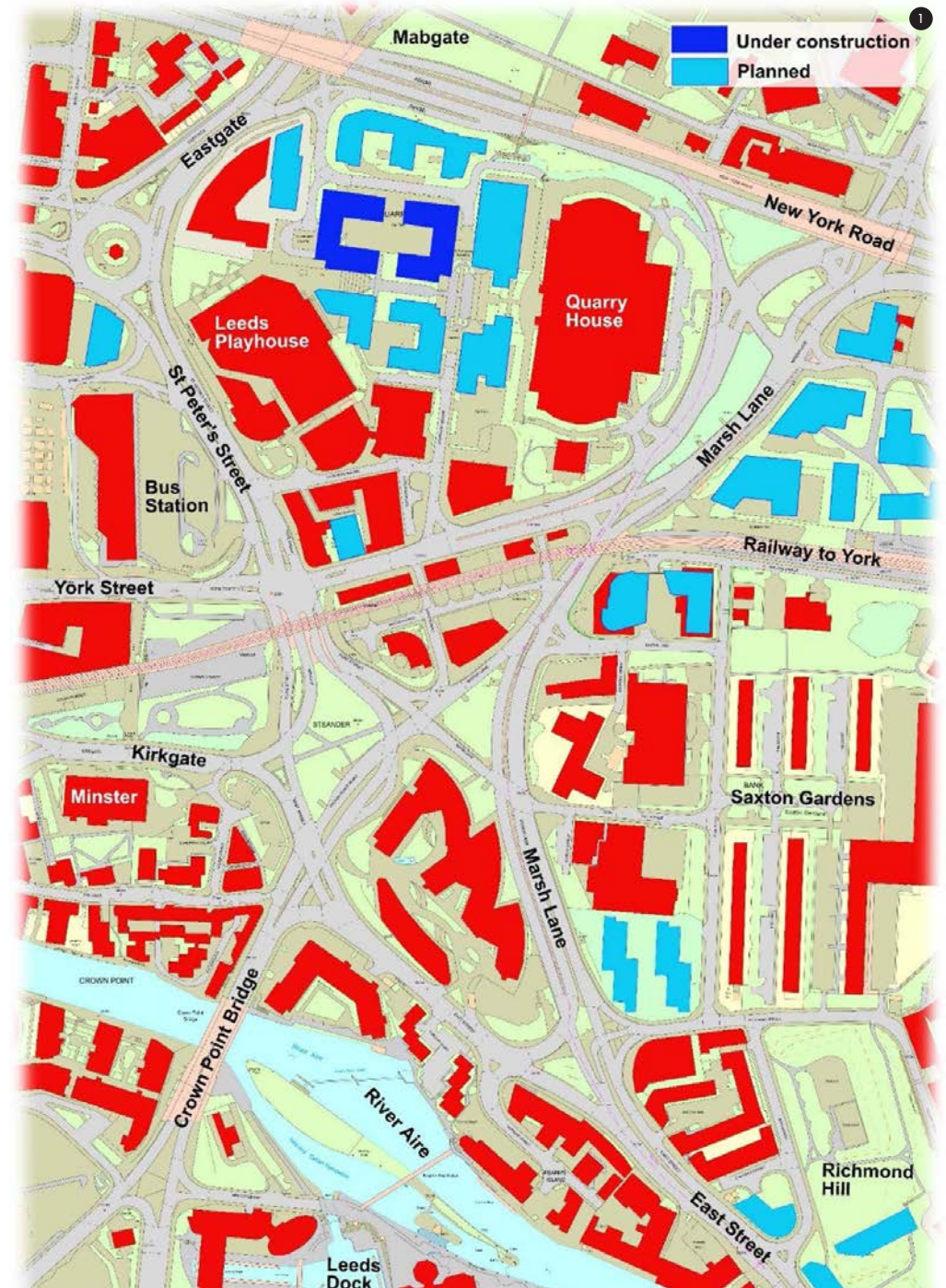
The Problem

Cut up by major highways, the area currently provides a poor setting for some of Leeds' most important institutions and attractions. It isolates communities and provides a poor environment for the large new residential schemes being planned in the area.

The Challenge

Leeds Eastside could become an exemplar for liveable cities. If the traffic system could be simplified to reduce its impact, land could be released for new green spaces, better pedestrian and cycle routes and bus priority, as well as other new facilities.

Leeds City Council has already made a start with its plan to take out the City Centre 'Loop' road. This presents a fantastic opportunity for dramatic improvement and changes to traffic flows.





¹ Eastside Leeds, currently dominated by traffic and difficult to cross on foot or by bike

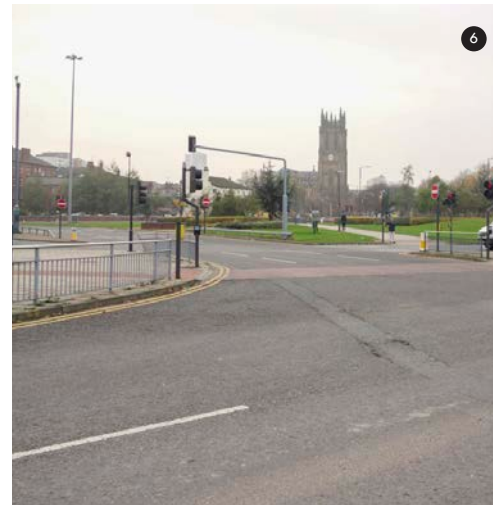
² Existing Marsh Lane

³ Existing Crown Point Road

⁴ Historic Kirkgate in disrepair

⁵ The Calls

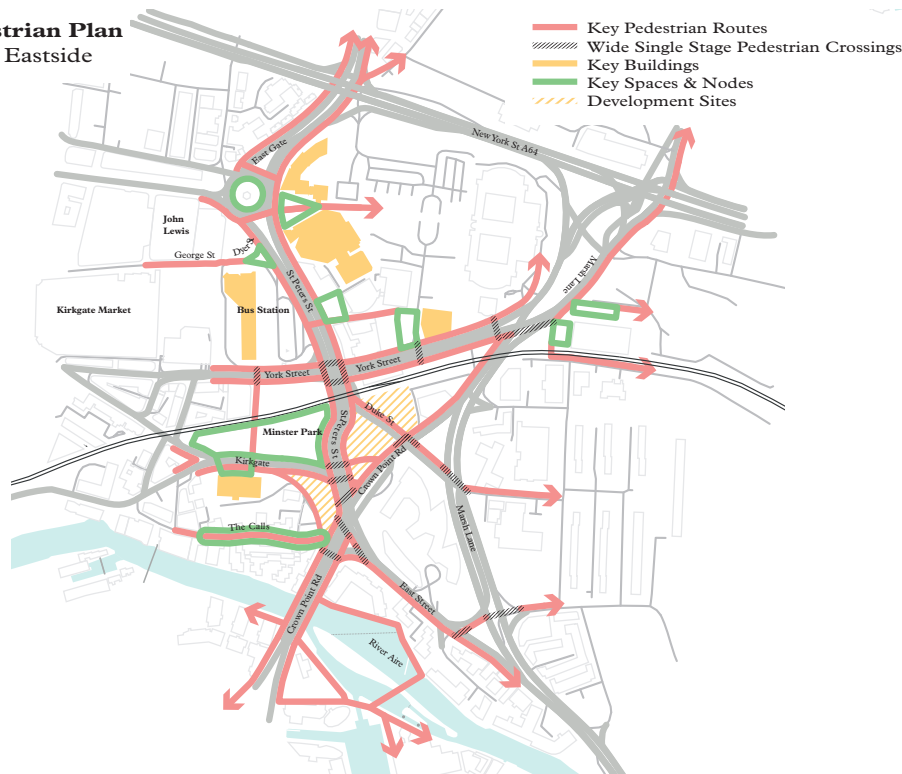
⁶ The gateway to the Minster



2 COMPETITION ENTRIES

All entries are available to view in full at liveable-leeds.org.uk

Pedestrian Plan Leeds Eastside



Chris Matthews & Adrian Jones: Here's a plan for Eastside

The judges said “this practical and well researched entry presented a clear vision of a City Boulevard incorporating Eastgate, St Peter’s Street and Crown Point Road, with spurs to York Street and Kirkgate. Marsh Lane is addressed by reducing speeds and introducing direct pedestrian crossings. Bus movement has been rationalised. We particularly liked the identification of parcels of land which could be released from highways ownership for new development.”

Finn Cawley

The judges said, “Finn has presented some great ideas for incorporating hi-tech items within the streets. Finn has thought carefully about vulnerable people, those with disabilities, residents and visitors. This is a clever response to the diversity and demographics of the city centre.”

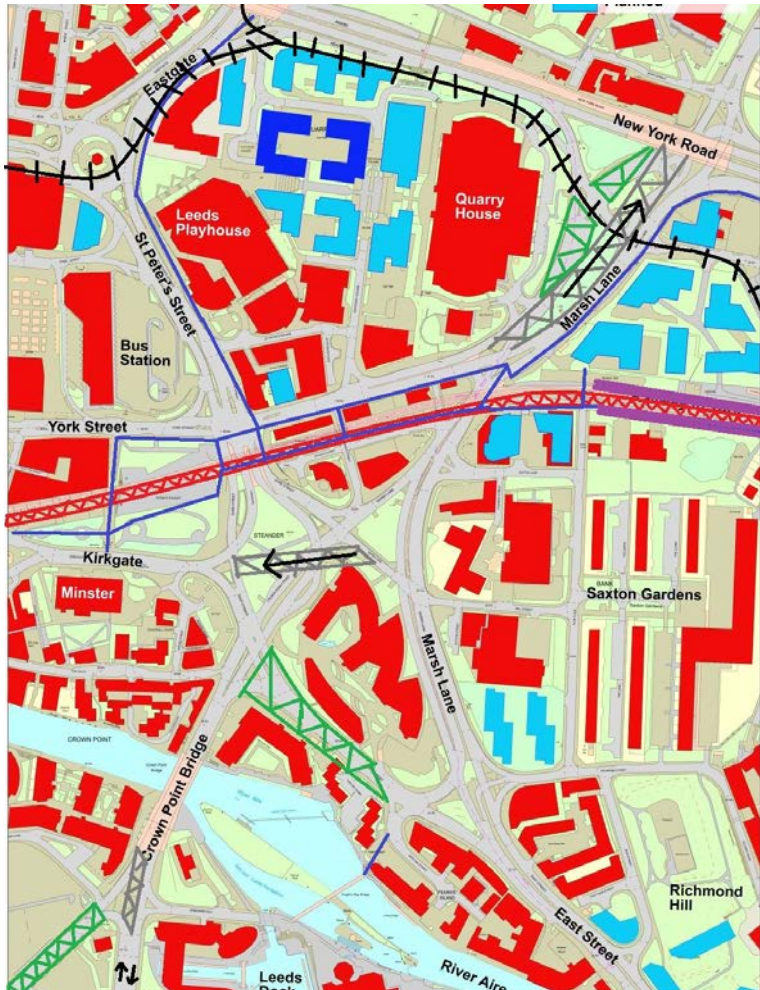
Finn proposed smart pedestrian crossings, powered by solar panels set into the road:

“

My name is Finn Cawley. I am 9 years old. My mommy works in Leeds and I want her to be safe doing her job.

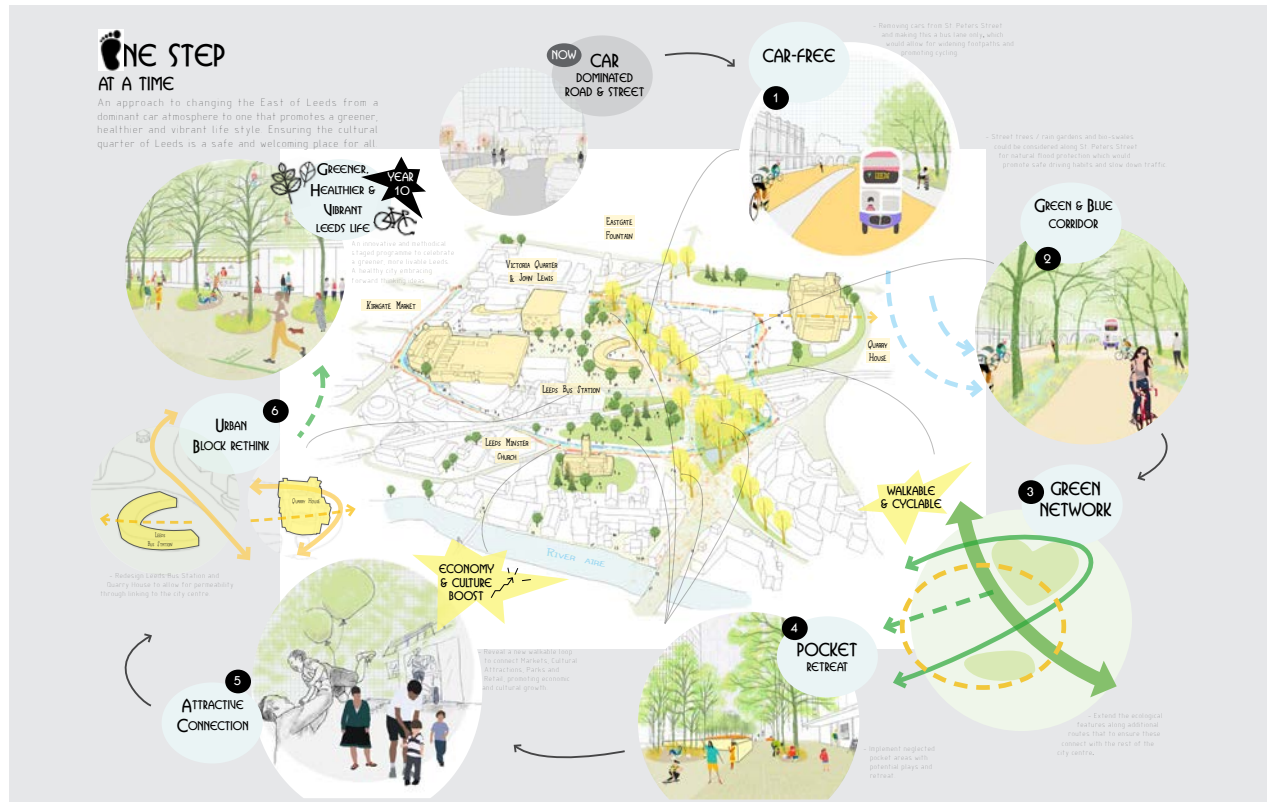
The crossing will light up red on the floor of the crossing from one side of the road to the other if you cannot cross and green if you can and orange if its moving between the colours, like a traffic light. The crossing will talk to warn pedestrians to stop and wait and when it is safe to walk. This will help those who are blind, and the visual colour across the road will help those who are deaf and people with learning disabilities

”



Gareth Brown

The judges said, "Gareth's entry focusses on transport and movement through the area. He has thought about rail, road, trams, and cycles. Working with existing infrastructure, Gareth has looked at making existing movement corridors work harder, identified areas which should be reserved for future routes and areas which can be converted to green space."



Gillespies: One Step at a Time

The judges said, "The ideas were beautifully and intricately presented with clear goals and aspirations, as well as smaller, short term interventions, all set out in a 10 year timeline. The big idea is to remove cars from St Peter's Street, add street trees and SUDS to create a north-south biodiverse boulevard."

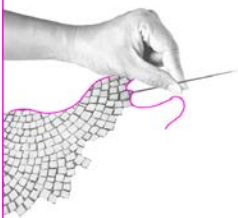


CONCEPT



1. REMOVE CARS & RAISE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Traffic is tirelessly severing us from the city, creating fragmented islands of space within a dominating road infrastructure network. What would happen if we removed cars and reclaimed back the space, creating a safer, exciting landscape for people?



2. THREAD A COMMON GROUND

Leeds, a city built from the development of the textile industry. Now in 2020, can we weave again, but this time a shared, coherent network of space throughout Eastside? One which connects us with the site's existing assets, with each other, and with nature?



3. PLANT 1000 TREES

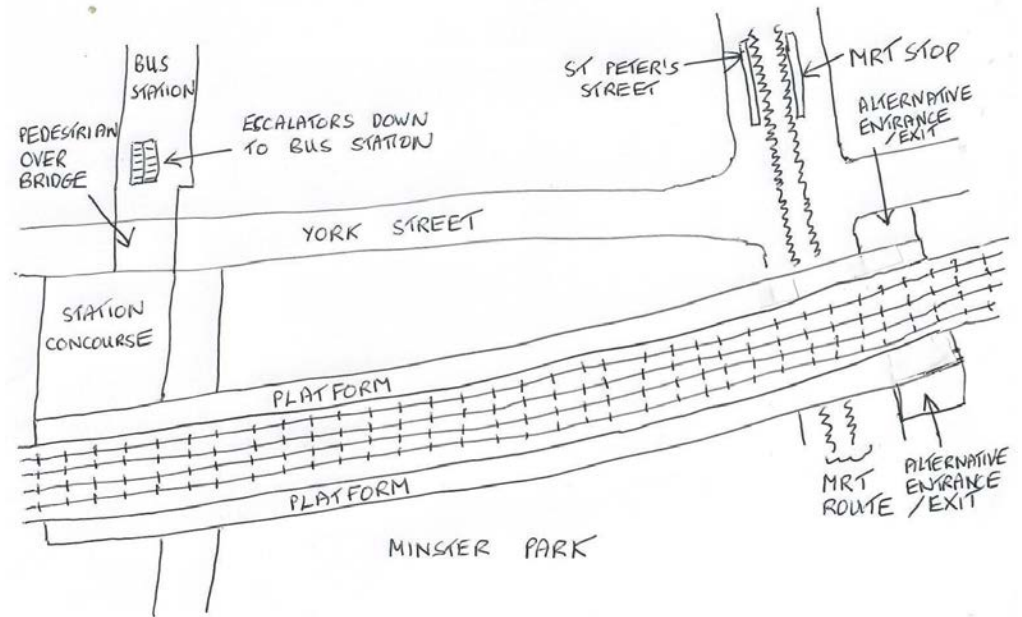
Trees are the lungs of the earth. We all know that as humans, we have a deep affiliation with trees and that being immersed in nature is beneficial for our well-being. Urban tree planting can also significantly reduce air pollution and surface water run-off, as well as off-setting CO2 emissions. What would Eastside look like if we planted 1,000 trees, establishing a linear green spine which formed part of a wider city urban forest?

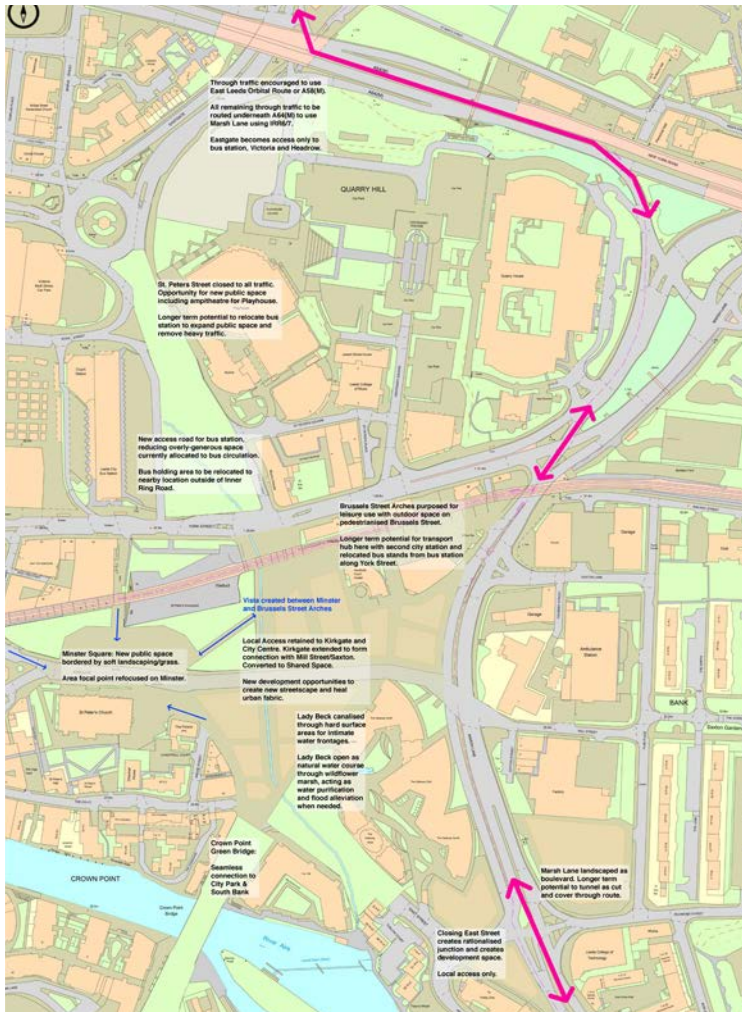
Hannah Beard: A Common Ground

The judges loved this entry. "Hannah sets out a clear concept and vision for the area with a series of focussed interventions to achieve this. She has considered people at the heart of her proposals, putting forward ideas that will make Eastside an attractive place to live and visit. Hannah brought her plan to life with a delightful audio piece."

Howard Dews: Transport In Eastside

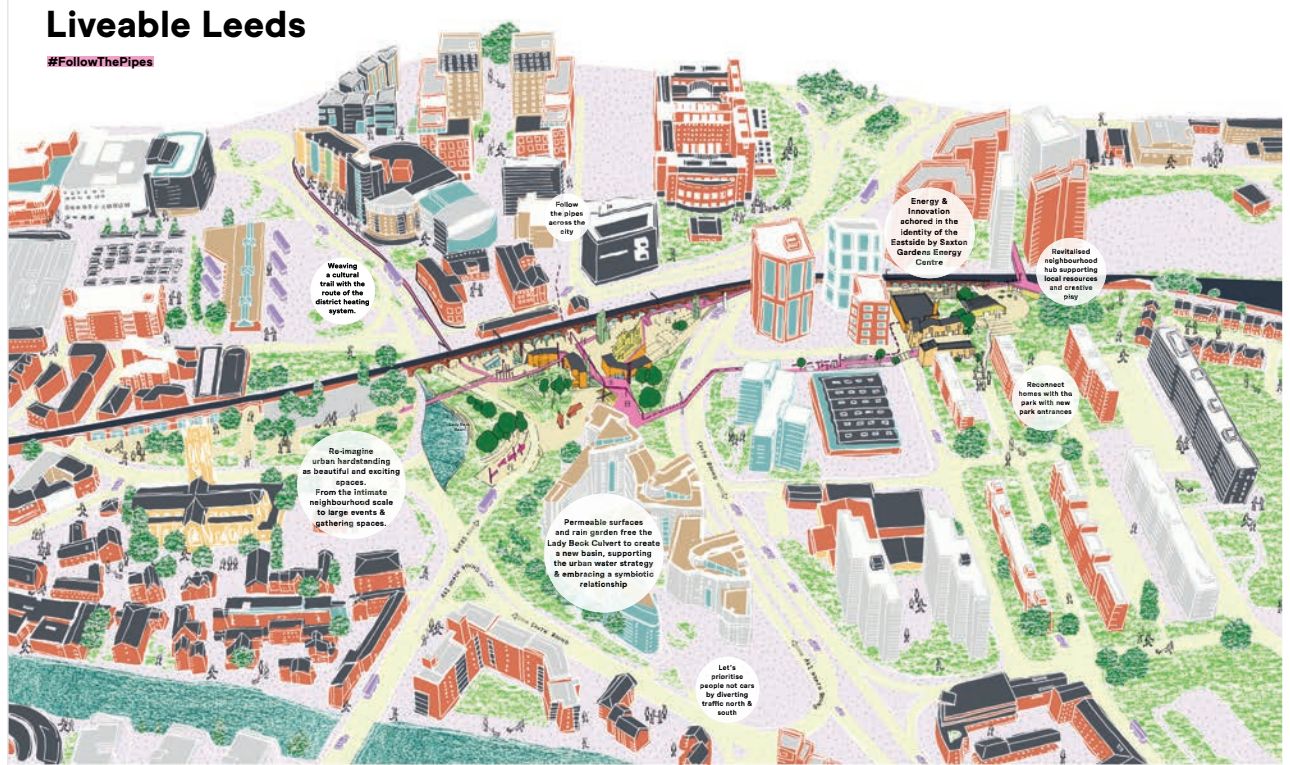
The judges said, "Howard has conducted a thorough appraisal of transport opportunities in East Leeds and considered opportunities for new office and residential development. There is a particular focus on rail travel, exploring locations and layouts for a potential rail halt at Eastside."





Jason Lowe: Healing Leeds' Eastside

The judges said: "Jason has carefully analysed existing movement patterns and considered precedents. He has presented a thorough set of practical proposals for the entire masterplan area, giving road space back to the city, so that this part of Leeds can flourish and thrive."



Page/Park: Follow the Pipes

The judges said "Page/Park set out a playful multi-level strategy embracing new energy infrastructure to create a route through Eastside. They focus on communities, connecting homes with green spaces and revitalising archways. This animated entry is an integrated concept, encompassing great ideas and great branding."





Stewart Kelly, Toby Putnam, Jack Barratt, Pierce Johnstone: Local Leeds 2040

The judges said “this was a very well researched submission and manifesto for positive change throughout the city, with a clear vision of a low-carbon, socially just and a fully accessible future. Methodologies and timelines for delivery and suggested funding mechanisms sat alongside some suggestions for the Eastside area. The visionary photoshop images were particularly effective.”



Matthew Mills: The Liveable City Open Competition

The judges said, “Matthew’s design incorporates green and blue infrastructure, events space and an elevated cycle highway. He has presented a solid vision for Eastside with well-researched precedent images and consideration of all aspects of the brief.”





Planit-IE Buro Happold: Leeds Liveable Cities Manifesto

The judges thought this entry was “thoroughly researched, beautifully written and presented with great aspirations, and a focus on community and inclusivity. The animation and accompanying audio cleverly set out the proposals in a playful and accessible way. As well as delivering infrastructure, this plan sets out a vision for a democratic, participative Leeds with Eastside spaces that work in all seasons.”

Richard Butterfield: Leeds Minster: Keeping Faith with the City

The judges said, “this entry provides a welcome perspective emphasising Leeds Minster’s status as the heart of Eastside, recognising its historical and architectural importance as well as its community outreach into the wider parish. It highlights the value of culture and tourism in Eastside and how the area operates at different times of day and night.”

6. Linkages to the waterfront

Looking to the south, further connectivity can and should be made with the south bank of the river. The character of Dock St is very similar to the Calls, and more could be done to reinforce the connections between the two. The redevelopment of the Tetley site will further inform ‘what works’ and the planned incorporation of green spaces is to be welcomed.



How do others do it?

There are numerous examples of cities that have attractive outdoors spaces the support the visitor economy as well as creating great places to live. Here are a few examples where churches and projects which provide a focus for liveable city centres:

City of London Churchyards

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/planning/heritage-and-design/Documents/hes-churchyards-intro.pdf>

Birmingham Cathedral Square

<http://www.birminghamcathedral.com/cathedralsquare/>

Leeds Anglican Diocese

<https://www.leeds.anglican.org/environment>

3 COMMON THREADS

Ten common threads have emerged across the submissions and these could form a more detailed brief for an Eastside Masterplan. Each key theme is set out below and illustrated by images taken from the different competition entries. These showcase the ideas and different ways in which they have been interpreted.

1. Downgrade St Peter's Street as a corridor for private vehicles.

Different options were explored from focussing purely on walking and cycling, to perhaps allowing public transport only.

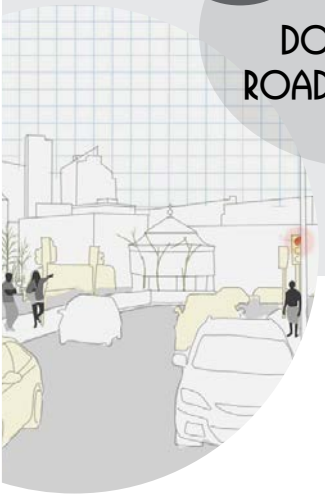


¹ St Peter's Street as a conduit for Active Travel (before) by Stewart Kelly, Toby Putnam, Jack Barratt, Pierce Johnstone: Local Leeds 2040

² St Peter's Street as a conduit for Active Travel (after vision) by Stewart Kelly, Toby Putnam, Jack Barratt, Pierce Johnstone: Local Leeds 2040

³ St Peter's Street reimagined as a tree-lined, bus only boulevard by Gillespies: One Step at a Time

NOW
CAR
DOMINATED
ROAD & STREET



CAR-FREE

1



- Removing cars from St. Peters Street and making this a bus lane only, which would allow for widening footpaths and promoting cycling

- Street trees / rain gardens and bio-swales could be considered along St. Peters Street for natural flood protection which would promote safe driving habits and slow down traffic.

EASTGATE
FOUNTAIN

VICTORIA QUARTER
& JOHN LEWIS

LEEDS BUS STATION

QUARRY
HOUSE

LEEDS MINSTER
CHURCH

**GREEN & BLUE
CORRIDOR**

2



2. Remove through traffic

Strategic journeys should be diverted around Leeds Outer Ring Road. Local traffic should be pushed to the Inner Ring Road on Marsh Lane. Vehicle speeds should be slow on roads within Eastside, to improve safety and reduce the dominance of traffic.



¹ A 20mph inner ring road takes most of the traffic by Chris Matthews & Adrian Jones: Here's a plan for Eastside

3. Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport

Making walking routes more direct and cycling routes safer is essential to the success of Eastside as place for people. As well as a strong emphasis on healthy, active travel, the submissions explored ideas including free public transport, safeguarded future routes for mass-transit, new rail stations and river travel.

PRIORITISE PEDESTRIANS

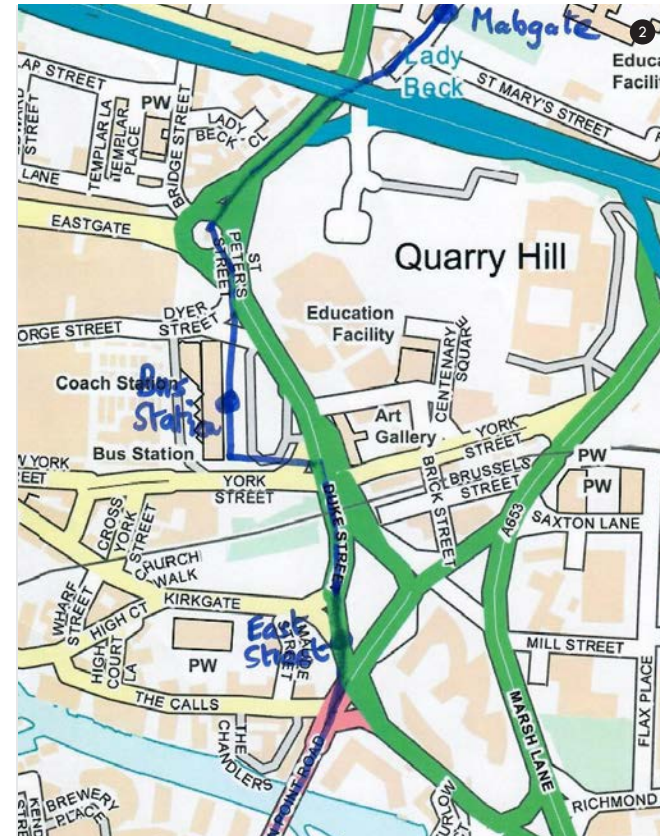
A coherent network of shared routes and spaces where pedestrians and cyclists take priority. Some could take the form of structures spanning roads and some could be temporary...



Luchtsingel Bridge, Rotterdam



The High Line, New York



¹ Putting pedestrians and cyclists first, promotes Active Travel by Hannah Beard: A Common Ground

² Safeguarding a route for mass-transit by Howard Dews: Transport In Eastside

³ A Transport Hub and Cycle Highway pulls the focus away from private cars, Matthew Mills: The Liveable City Open Competition

4. Release highway land for development

Wrapping the bus station with development on its eastern side or building on plots around the Minster will help to fund wider public realm work and provide a visual transition between historic low-rise and newer high-rise development.



- Main Pedestrian Routes
- Segregated Cycle Routes
- Pedestrian Street
- Green Space
- New Mixed Use Development
- 1** Bus Station Concourse
- 2** Bus Bays
- 3** Layover Bays
- 4** New Entrance
- 5** Shops & Cafes
- 6** Prominent Corner Building



- Main Pedestrian Routes
- Segregated Cycle Routes
- New Sites for Development
- Extension to Park

¹ Wrapping the bus station with new buildings provides a strong frontage to St Peter's Street by Chris Matthews & Adrian Jones: Here's a plan for Eastside

² Providing less space for cars gives opportunities for development by Chris Matthews & Adrian Jones: Here's a plan for Eastside

5. Improve the setting of the Minster

A Grade I Listed building, the Minster deserves a majestic setting, providing a destination for visitors and locals alike



1

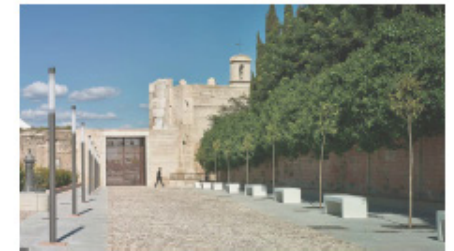
CELEBRATE HERITAGE

2

Re-landscape the 'heritage quarter' using materials, building techniques and installations that compliment the existing architecture and are reminiscent of the city's past.



Almohade Wall, Palma del Rio, Spain



Southgate, Bath



¹ Celebrating the value of this Grade 1 Listed Building by Richard Butterfield: Leeds Minster: Keeping Faith with the City

² Improving the public realm to a standard which befits a building of national importance by Hannah Beard: A Common Ground

6. Revealing and enhancing Lady Beck

Hidden in a culvert at the moment, Lady Beck could be revealed to provide a fantastic amenity and help manage surface water, linking to a wider Sustainable Urban Drainage System and the River Aire.

DAYLIGHT THE LADY BECK

Reveal two sections of the Lady Beck which are currently culverted underground. Bank re-profiling and planting could create a lively, active waterside edge.



Cheonggyecheon Stream, Seoul



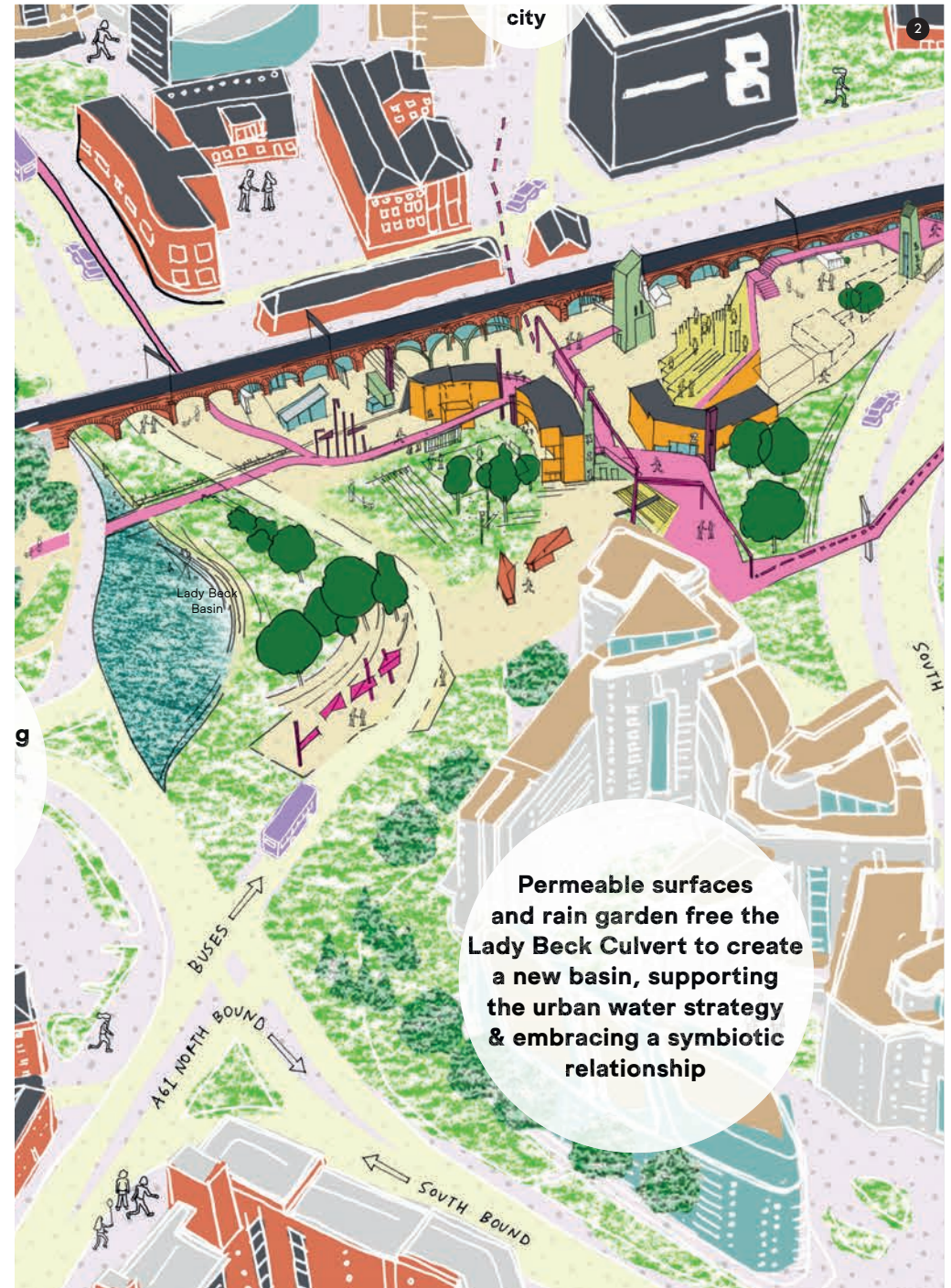
Sheffield & Tinsley Canal, Yorkshire



¹ Daylighting the Lady Beck by Hannah Beard: A Common Ground

² Creating a new basin and managing surface water by Jess Davidson Page\ Park: Follow the Pipes

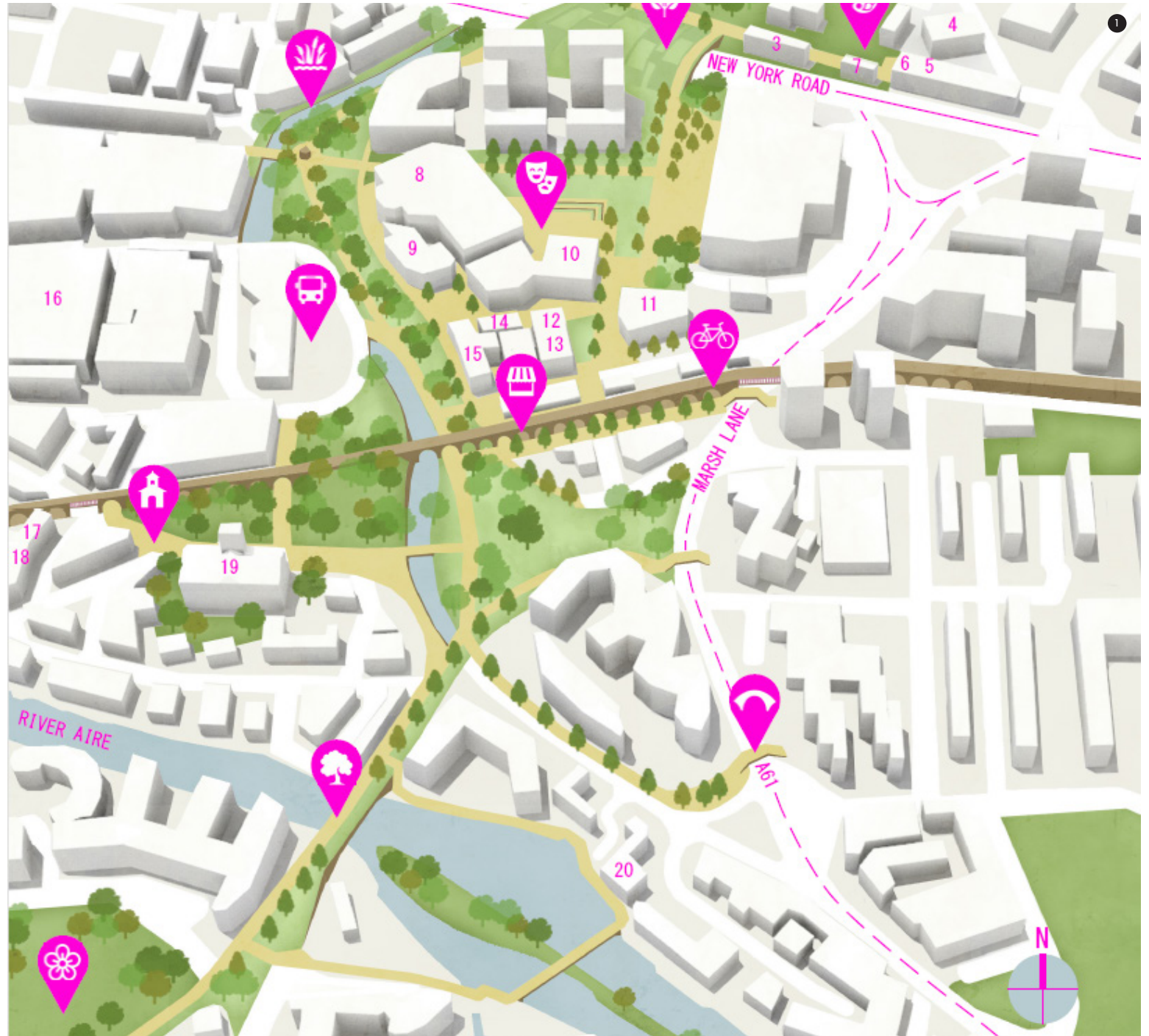
³ Spaces that function effectively when wet or dry Matthew Mills: The Liveable City Open Competition





7. Links to the City Park over Crown Point Bridge

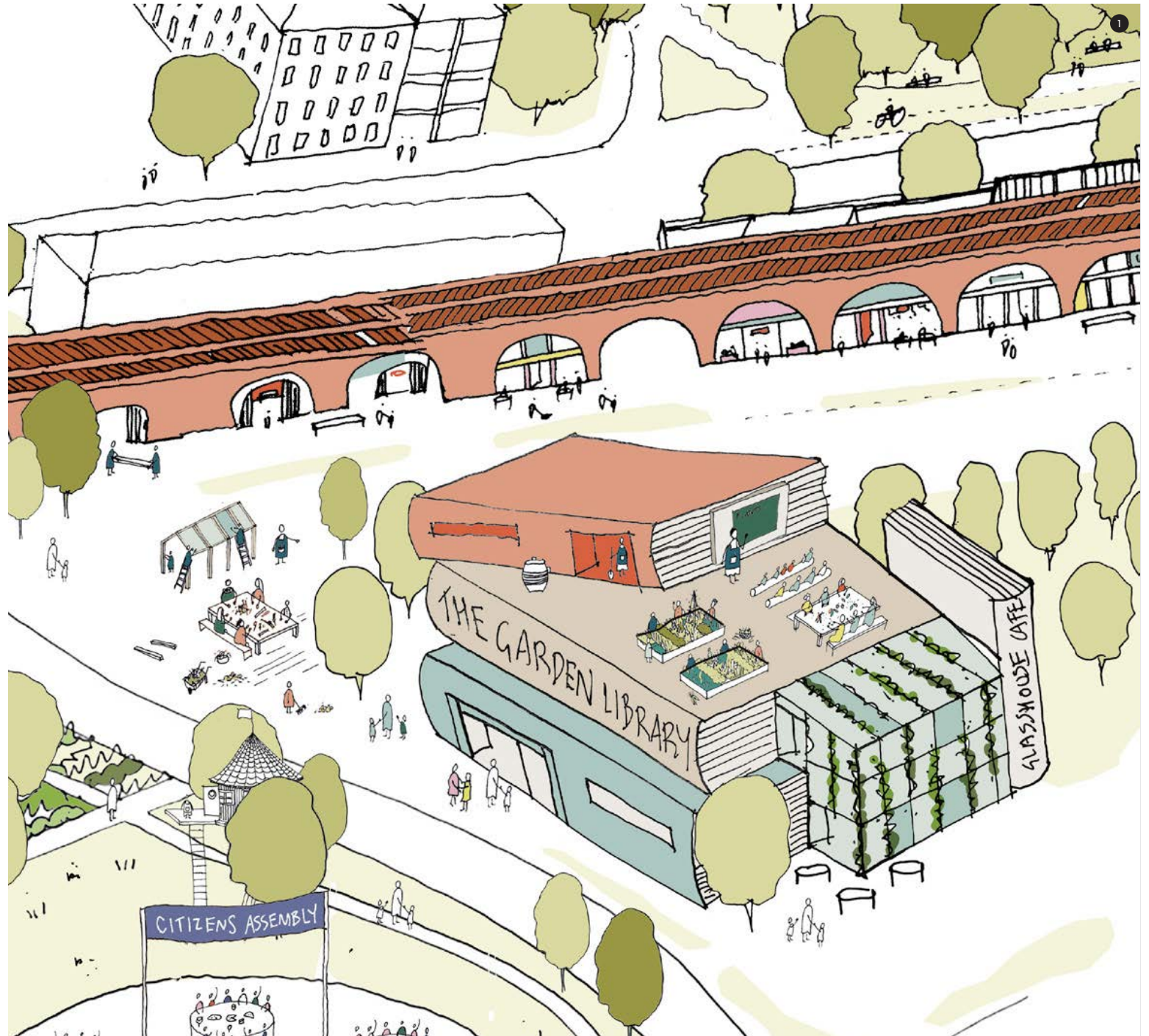
Connecting green spaces within Eastside to the new park on the south of the River Aire will enhance biodiversity and create a recreational route for people to enjoy. This could involve a visual trail, linear planting scheme alongside the existing movement corridor or a complete closure to traffic, which would of course need to be considered in the context of the wider transport network.



¹ A greenway links Eastside across Crown Point Bridge to City Park on the Southbank by Hannah Beard: A Common Ground

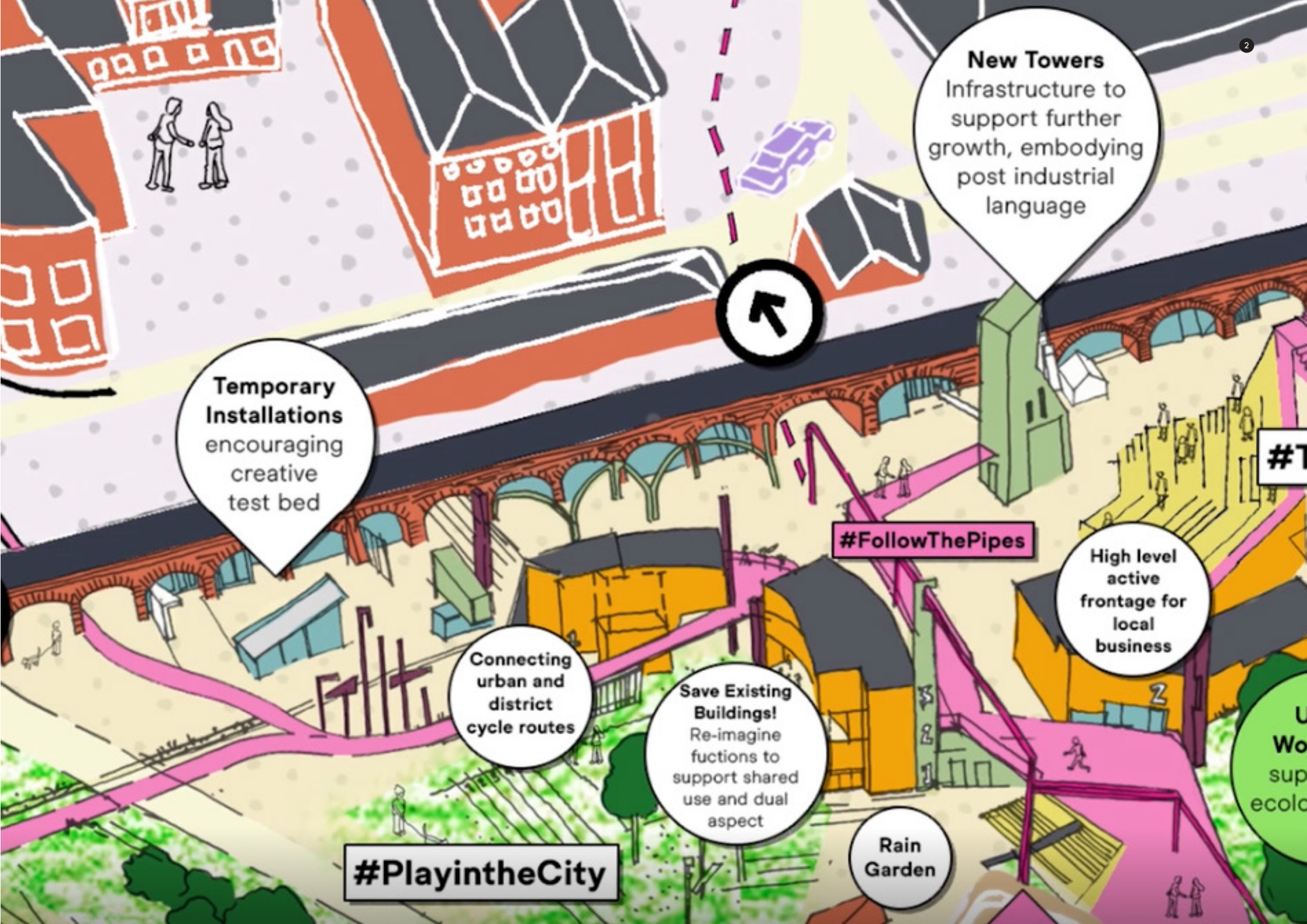
8. Regeneration and repurposing of Brussels Street Arches

The arches under the railway track could be home to workshops, start-up businesses, cafes and community uses, animating this space so that it functions as a movement corridor which also provides enjoyment, social interaction and productivity.



¹ Activated Arches by Planit-IE Buro
Happold: Leeds Liveable Cities
Manifesto

² Creating a play area by Jess Davidson
Page\Park: Follow the Pipes



New Towers
Infrastructure to support further growth, embodying post industrial language

Temporary Installations
encouraging creative test bed



#FollowThePipes

High level active frontage for local business

Connecting urban and district cycle routes

Save Existing Buildings!
Re-imagine functions to support shared use and dual aspect

Rain Garden

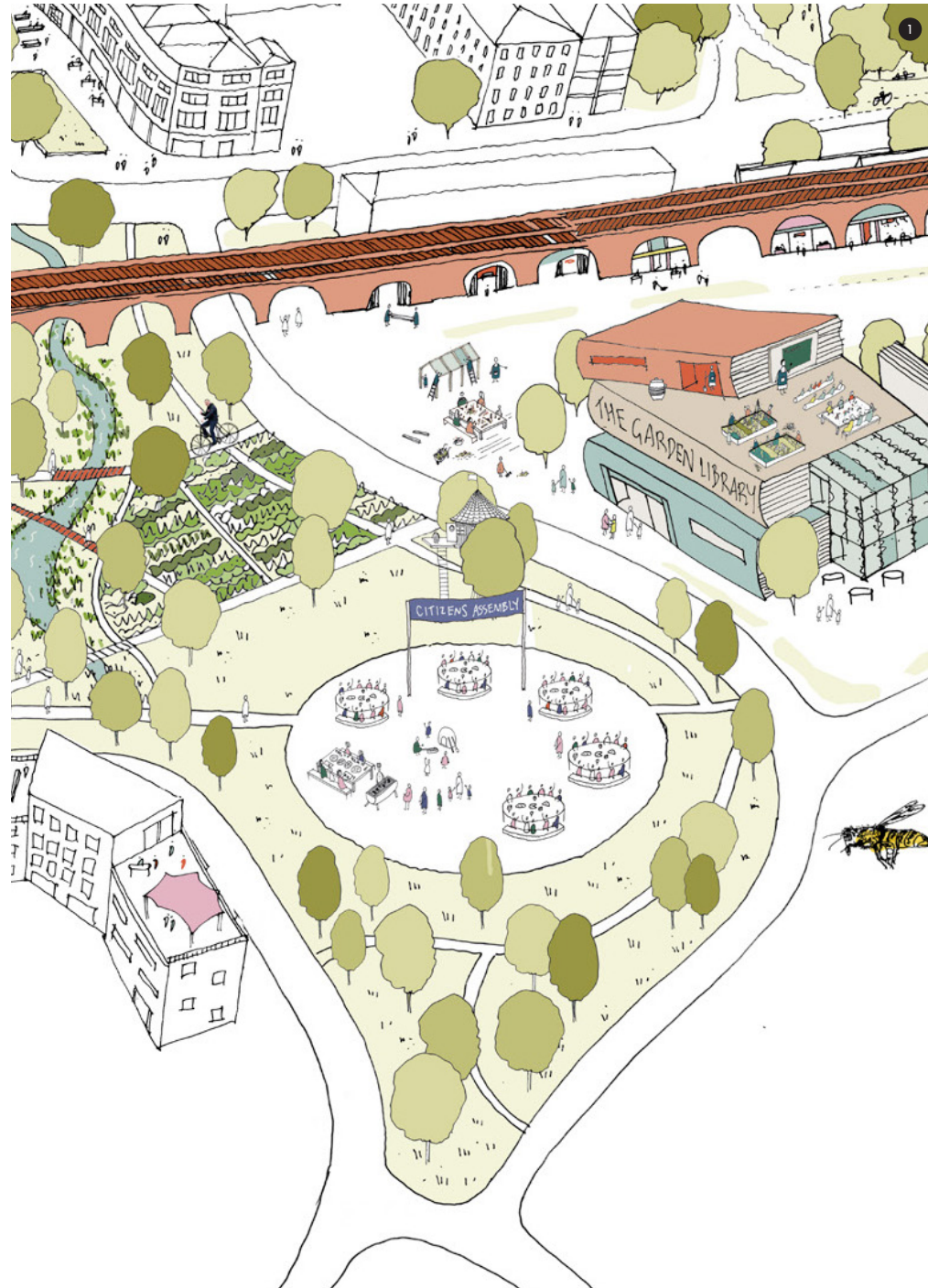
#PlayintheCity

#T

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sup
ecolo**

9. Community

Inclusivity and social justice should be built into the physical fabric of Eastside, with opportunities for play, events, discussion and growing.



¹ The Commons (a commonly owned urban space for events and citizen participation) by Planit-IE Buro Happold: Leeds Liveable Cities Manifesto

² Community amenity could include an Urban Farm as demonstrated by Hannah Beard: A Common Ground

FARM URBAN

Spaces dedicated for urban agriculture. These could consist of rooftop farms, small edible pocket gardens, urban orchards and a new urban farm flyover.



Luchtsingel Rooftop Farm, Rotterdam



Public Farm One, New York



10. Quick Wins

Simple and easily implemented changes animate Eastside in the short term, creating a sense of identity and fun, bringing joy to people who move through and attracting visitors to the area. There is also opportunity to temporarily trial new ideas, like cycle lanes or removing through traffic. Pop-up Parklets create spaces to socialise, providing colour and activity. Why not test new technology, for example electricity-generating pavements and intelligent crossings, as suggested by Finn Cawley?



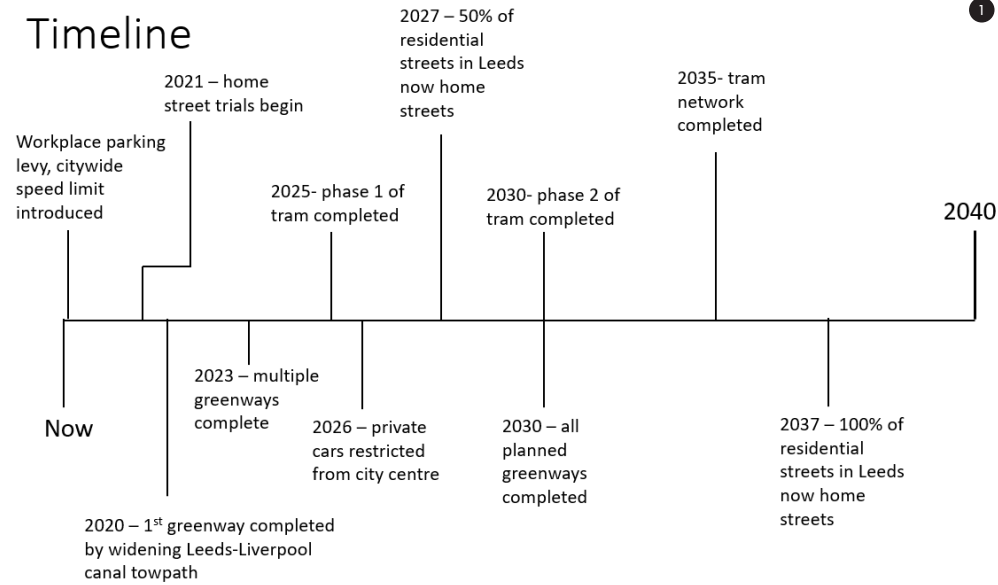
¹ Creating a sense of identity with a Leeds Owl on pedestrian crossings by Stewart Kelly, Toby Putnam, Jack Barratt, Pierce Johnstone: Local Leeds 2040

4 EASTSIDE, TIME FOR CHANGE

Eastside is part of the wider city system, and some changes proposed are interdependent with interventions and initiatives across Leeds. For example, introducing a workplace parking levy or the Leeds Clean Air Zone, may enable changes to be made around Eastside by generating funding or reducing pollution. A Leeds mass transit system would encourage people out of their cars, releasing highway space for movement and development.

Starting with the quick wins, the Eastside Masterplan needs to include short-, medium- and long-term measures to build a framework for sustainable regeneration, linked to all new development in the area.

Timeline



1



2

¹ A timeline for change in Leeds by Stewart Kelly, Toby Putnam, Jack Barratt, Pierce Johnstone: Local Leeds 2040

² Gradual interventions over a 10 year period will improve lives by Gillespies: One Step At A Time



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