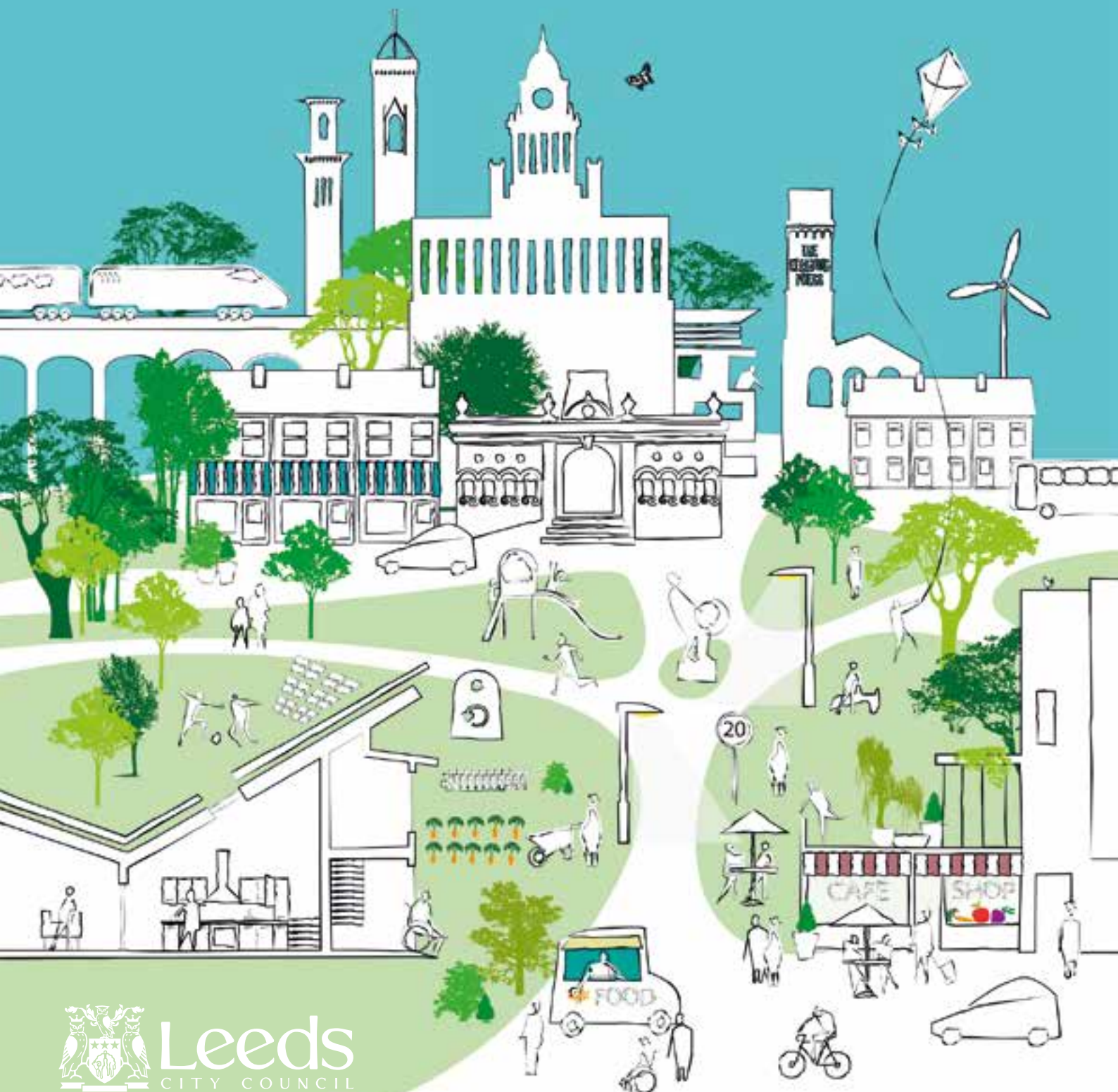


# Planning a Healthy City

## Housing Growth in Leeds

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2014-15



**A summary of this report can be made available in large print, Braille, on audiotape or translated, upon request. Please contact the public health intelligence team [PHI.Requests@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:PHI.Requests@leeds.gov.uk)**

**This report is available online at [http://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/Leeds\\_DPH\\_Report/](http://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/Leeds_DPH_Report/)**

**We welcome feedback about our annual report or any of our other documents. If you have any comments please speak to Kathryn Williams, Information Manager on 0113 3957341 or email [Kathryn.Williams2@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Williams2@leeds.gov.uk)**

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Thanks  
to Lilac  
residents

# Foreword

## Welcome to my latest Public Health Annual Report

The focus of my report last year was health protection. I have been grateful for the positive reaction to that report – including an email from a professor in Japan who is researching Leeds in the 1860s and 1870s! In last year's report I deliberately made a comparison with one of my predecessors' Annual Reports, that of 1877. This was because that report reflected the first hint of optimism that the overall health of Leeds was improving. That optimism was justified, and improvement in the health of the people of Leeds overall continues to this day. However, as I've highlighted many times in previous reports, we still have significant health inequalities within the city – gaps that are proving hard to narrow.

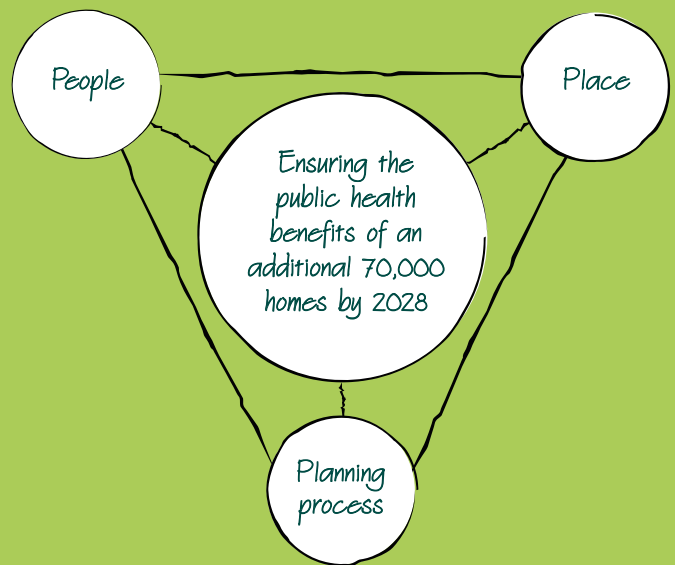
This year, though, I too am able to sound a note of optimism. We have seen a narrowing in death rates between our more disadvantaged areas compared to the rest of Leeds. The major reason for this has been an improvement in mortality from cardiovascular disease. There has also been a small improvement for lung disease. In addition, over the last few years we have made progress in narrowing the gap for infant deaths. I know a lot of work has been undertaken by a lot of people over a long period – and it's good to report tangible progress. My message here is that, although narrowing the death inequalities gap is the major challenge for our city, we can do it. We must continue to believe, and act in ways that improve the health of the poorest fastest – and improve the health of all the population of Leeds.

That is the challenge for today. However, the focus of my report this year is on the future. On 12th November 2014 Leeds City Council adopted its Core Strategy. This is an extremely important event as Leeds City Council has now set out how the city will develop over the next decade or so up to the year 2028. Included within the Core Strategy is an additional housing requirement of 70,000 new homes to be built between 2012 and 2028.

By any stretch of the imagination this is a large increase. Currently there are around 345,000 properties in Leeds, so this represents a 20% increase. There will be a 150,000 increase in the population from the current 750,000. So the face of Leeds will change forever. I want to make sure that these additional 70,000 homes are developed in ways that improve health and wellbeing – and not make health inequalities worse.

To achieve this, I want to connect the public health benefits of good urban design and planning to people, place

and the planning process. Furthermore, I want to help make sure that individuals, families and local communities have their voice heard, and influence felt, in the planning process, alongside the voices of the developers and officials – so that these public health benefits come to pass.



My report begins with more detail about what will happen in Leeds in future – and why linking health and planning is so important. After that we will explore further the specific health benefits of good urban design. Case studies from across Leeds will help show what is happening in Leeds now. There then follows a section, again drawing on personal experiences, on how individuals, families and communities can get involved in the planning and development of their local neighbourhoods. Details of useful websites are included.

I am indebted to the many people who have supported and contributed to my report. They are listed at the end of the report. I would particularly like to thank Kathryn Williams, project manager, and Barbara MacDonald, editor.

I also want to thank all my Public Health staff for their hard work and support. Many thanks too to Catriona Butt, my Personal Assistant.

I hope you find my report of interest. As in previous years I would welcome your feedback, comments and suggestions.

Dr Ian Cameron



# Introduction

Leeds is a successful and thriving city, able to compete regionally, nationally and internationally. The Tour de France, the Leeds Arena, the Trinity Shopping Centre, are just some examples of how Leeds is working to be the 'Best City in the UK'. However, the longer term ambitions of the city need forward planning.

As the regional capital and the main economic driver for Yorkshire and the Humber, Leeds wants to ensure longer term economic prosperity, but to do this alongside social progress and maintaining and enhancing a quality environment. A strong economy and a compassionate city. In other words, true sustainable development. But all of this has to take account of the changes going on around us. Our population is changing within Leeds due to an increasing birth rate, an ageing population, new migration, and changing expectations. Leeds is part of a global economy with new technology and innovation happening all the time. And our city also has to take account of the consequences of climate change.

Lead responsibility for shaping the future of our local neighbourhoods, communities and the city as a whole lies with Leeds City Council. For example, there is a Leeds Housing Strategy in place for the period 2015–18. Through its forward planning, Leeds City Council will be responsible for delivering economic, social and environmental benefits – for all communities and for all ages, as Leeds residents are born, grow, learn, work, live and age. To do this Leeds City Council will be seeking, as far as possible, to create stable and predictable conditions for investment and development, secure community benefits from development, and promote prudent use of land and natural resources for development.

In the past, such a forward plan would have been called town planning or land use planning. A criticism of land use planning was that there was too much emphasis on the regulation and control of land. So the term used

now is spatial planning, which reflects a wider, more inclusive approach that better enables councils and other organisations to promote and manage change in their area.

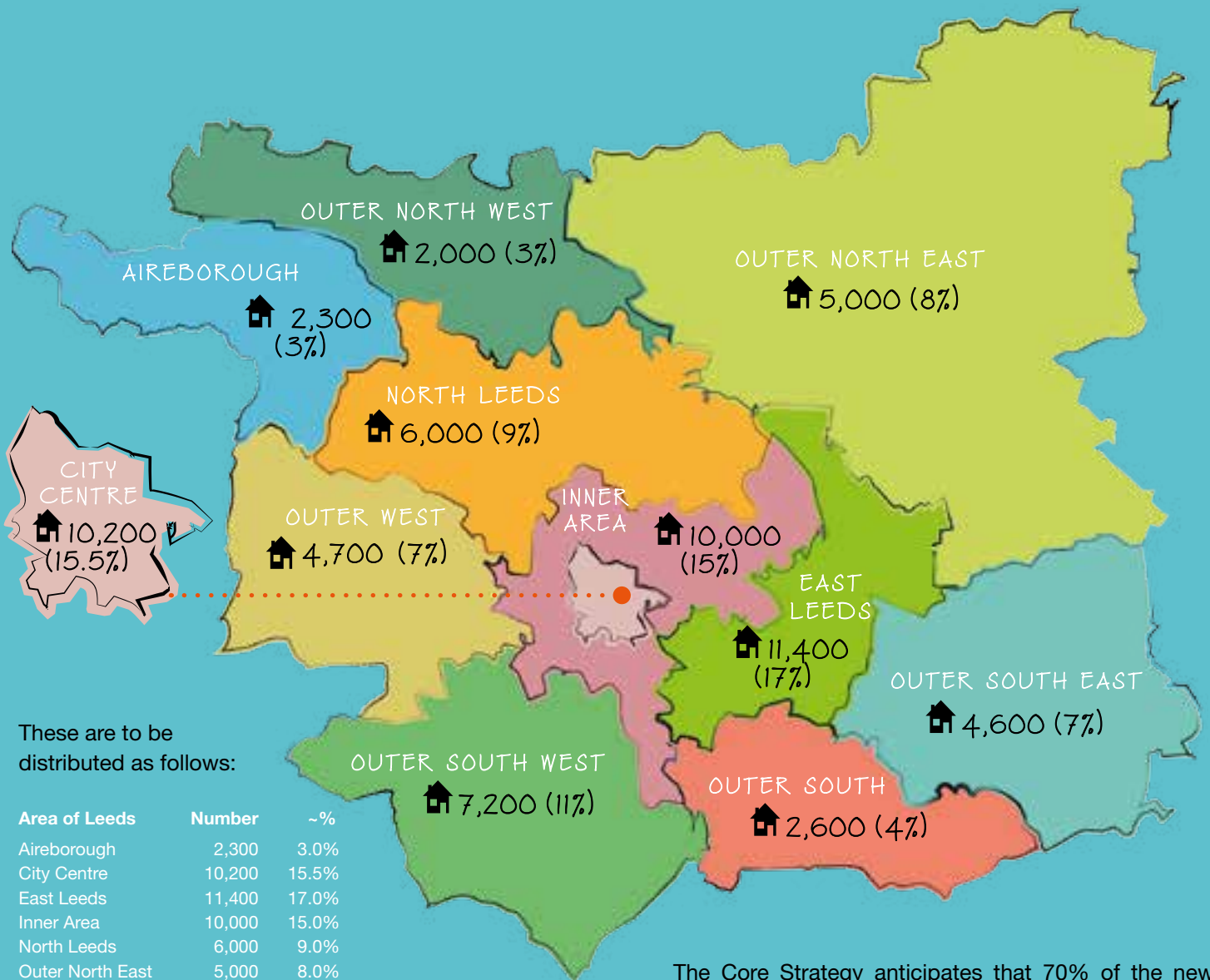
Our government has defined spatial planning as 'going beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function'.<sup>1</sup> This would include housing, transport, schools, employment, energy, green space, natural resources and health facilities. The spatial plan for Leeds is therefore critically important for everyone living in the city, now and in the future.

Leeds City Council has to follow national guidance which has meant the council developing the so-called Core Strategy. This important document was adopted on 14th November 2014 and sets out the spatial planning framework for the district up to 2028. In doing so, it sets out the vision and policies to guide the delivery of development and investment decisions and the overall future for our city. Following on from the Core Strategy are a series of Development Plans which include plans for specific neighbourhoods and specific sites, for example the Aire Valley.

Included within the Core Strategy is the intention for Leeds to have an additional 70,000 new homes to meet the housing demands and job growth aspiration in the city. In addition to this, around 4,000 poor-quality homes will have to be demolished and replaced, taking the total number of new homes to 74,000.

Some new homes will be built more opportunistically, outside of any formal new plans – for example on previously developed land. Leeds City Council estimates that there will be 8,000 such 'windfall' houses. This leaves 66,000 houses to be planned.





These are to be distributed as follows:

Area of Leeds	Number	%
Aireborough	2,300	3.0%
City Centre	10,200	15.5%
East Leeds	11,400	17.0%
Inner Area	10,000	15.0%
North Leeds	6,000	9.0%
Outer North East	5,000	8.0%
Outer North West	2,000	3.0%
Outer South	2,600	4.0%
Outer South East	4,600	7.0%
Outer South West	7,200	11.0%
Outer West	4,700	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

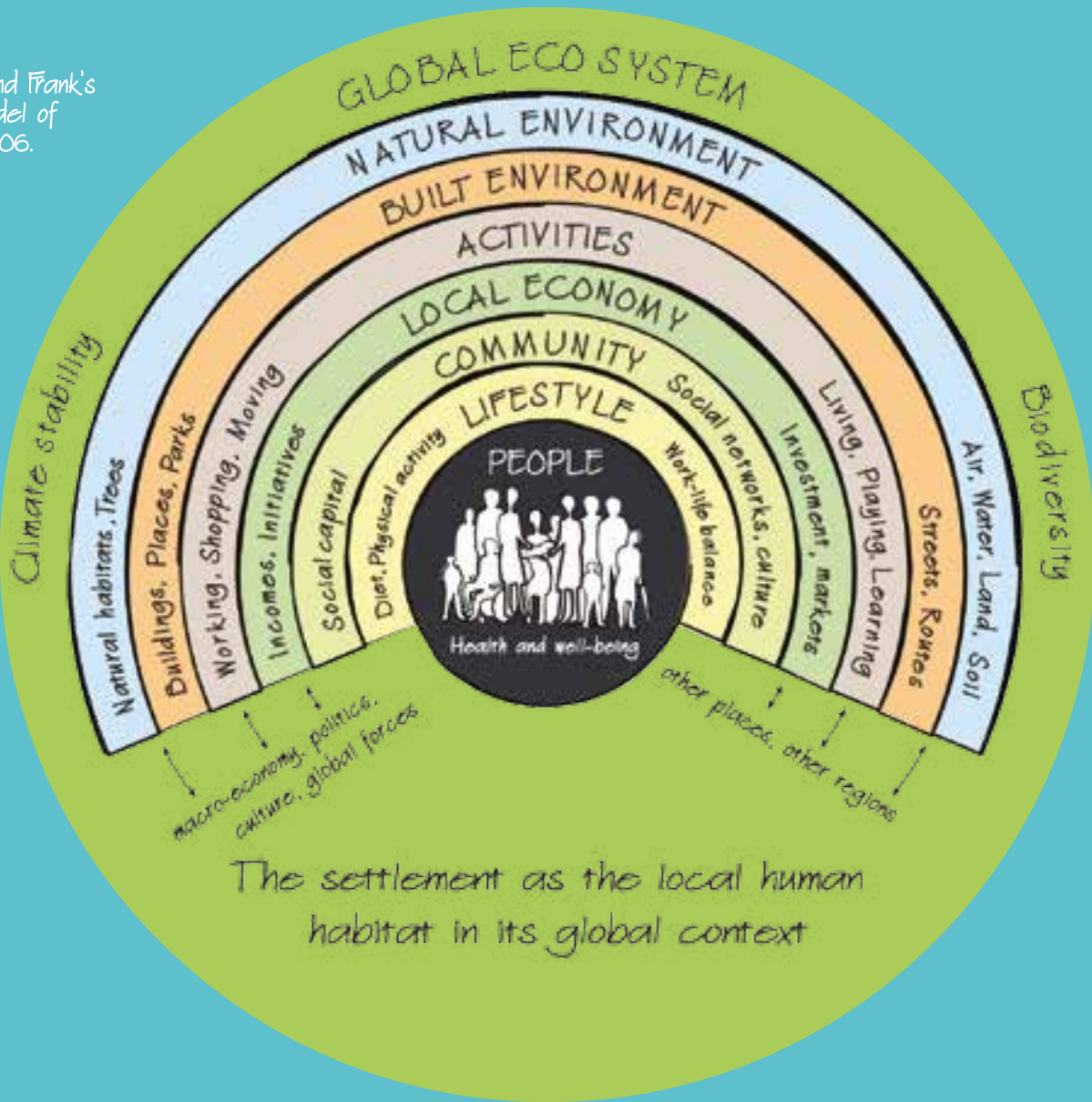
There is a Site Allocations Plan which sets out the process for deciding where development should take place. (See the summary at the end of this introduction.)

The Core Strategy anticipates that 70% of the new housing will be in 'existing settlement' but that some 'urban extensions' are needed. The preference is to build on brownfield and regeneration sites, but some development will be on greenfield and Green Belt land. The council wants to enhance both the distinctiveness of existing neighbourhoods and the quality of life of local communities through the design and standard of these new homes. The council also recognises the importance of providing additional affordable homes.





Barton and Frank's social model of health 2006.



The settlement as the local human habitat in its global context

I could list the potential economic, social and environmental benefits of good spatial planning – but this can end up just as a ‘wish list’. The reality is that there are a huge number of tensions and conflicts: developing new business versus impact on the transport system and air quality; the need for developers to make profits versus affordable housing; the value of additional green space versus pressure on land for development. Different people, different motives. Reconciling these competing viewpoints through a formal process lies at the heart of spatial planning – and there is no getting away from the difficulties of doing

this. Nevertheless I want health and wellbeing to be a key consideration for the future development of our city.

The Core Strategy does describe the health challenges of the city. More significantly, there is an acknowledgement that Leeds City Council has, through the Health and Social Care Act 2012, a duty to improve public health. To quote,

*‘An integral part of the Core Strategy is to improve public health and wellbeing.’*





Why is this acknowledgement so important? One reason is that housing developments can go wrong – and result in huge, long-term health harm for those living there. As a medical student learning about general practice, I lived and worked on the Southgate estate in New Runcorn – a 1,500-unit, 6,000 population, cold, concrete jungle with raised walkways, built in the 1970s. The shopping mall did not materialise so the sense of isolation just increased. International critics loved it, but the reality was families moving in and out, an oil-based heating system that was too expensive to use, crime, drug use – and boredom. Southgate became a dumping ground – a last resort. Needless to say, I would see the consequences for health and wellbeing in general practice. The entire housing estate was demolished in 1990.

Further support for the importance of health and wellbeing as a critically important purpose of the Core Strategy comes in a 2012 World Health Organisation (Europe) report called *Addressing the Social Determinants of Health: the Urban Dimension and the Role of Local Government*.<sup>2</sup> Included in this document is the powerful statement that:

*'Local councils can have their most important long term effect on health through the decisions they take about spatial planning.'*

However, the report goes on to say that 'Health was rarely a key focus for action in spatial planning and the built environment' and there is further criticism that not enough is being done to tackle health inequalities. Yet, ironically, modern town planning (or spatial planning) originated in the nineteenth century in response to basic health problems – such as those I covered in my last Annual Report. In the intervening years town planning became largely divorced from health, but that is now changing. There is growing recognition (again) that the environment in which we live is a major determinant of health and wellbeing. Put simply, health is back on the planning agenda. To help stimulate that change, Barton and Frank in 2006 adapted the well-known social model of health produced by Dahlgren and Whitehead in 1991 to the planning of cities, towns and neighbourhoods (see opposite). This model was intended to provoke discussion amongst professionals such as planners, public health, urban designers and ecologists

across such topics as transport, air quality, green space, road safety, crime and the fear of crime, community development, economic development, and facilities such as schools and health services. All of which have an impact on health and wellbeing. But Leeds must aspire to more than having discussions between professionals – individuals, families and local communities must play their part in those discussions.

I want to use another 'personal' example to show why planning cannot just be left to the experts. In Liverpool there were three notorious 15-floor blocks of flats known locally as 'The Piggeries'. These were a by-word for the worst in tower flats and were the subject of important legal cases that deemed them unfit for human habitation. Built in 1966 and knocked down in 1988. What is often forgotten is that these tower blocks replaced slums that were themselves condemned as unfit for human habitation. People queued up to get one of the new flats. The publicity photos of the new views, the new living accommodation, the new heating systems, were proud visions of the future. I'm sure the planners didn't intend it all to go horribly wrong, but shoddy building and maintenance did for all their good intentions. Those people in the queues waiting to escape the slums had optimism and trust – and they were let down. As I said earlier, the inevitable differing views and opinions on how to take the planning of Leeds forward up to 2028 and beyond, makes a formal planning process a necessity. A planning process that is fair, accountable and transparent. To help make this a reality, there are laws, there are requirements that certain documents be produced, there are decision-making arrangements, there are sanctions, there are assessment and monitoring requirements.

So the challenge is to ensure that, as part of the planning process, the public can have their voice heard on the developments planned for where they live. That voice is needed in different ways at different times. People must be able to:

- participate in discussions on developing proposals and help find more creative solutions
- be consulted upon preferred options
- voice objections, opposing and testing out proposals
- appeal against development proposals.

This engagement has to cover people from all walks of life and people of all ages and must happen in ways that acknowledge and celebrate our diversity.



Leeds has proclaimed its wish to be a Child Friendly City – a UNICEF initiative. That means working every day in the best interests of children and being committed to fulfilling the rights of children. This includes maximising potential and health and wellbeing. One important strand of a Child Friendly City is ensuring children and young people influence decisions that affect them. Leeds City Council Children’s Services are leading the way for the city on this. To give an example, Children’s Services, City Development and Public Health have worked together to engage young people in how the city’s design might support them to lead healthy lifestyles. The intention was to influence urban design and planning to create a Leeds where children can be physically active and travel ‘actively’. This also involved young people forming a judging panel for the prestigious Leeds Architectural Awards.

settings and structures that support people to age actively. This includes housing and outdoor spaces along with the important principle of anticipating and responding flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences.

Child Friendly and Age Friendly are just two examples of priorities for the city that must be woven into the delivery of the additional 70,000 homes – in ways that promote health and wellbeing.

In the next section, we will look at how Leeds City Council approaches urban design and planning through its key document, *Neighbourhoods for Living*, with a particular focus on the implications for health and wellbeing. As *Neighbourhoods for Living* will guide the development of the new 70,000 homes – and remembering that there are many different views on what is a priority – then it is important that all critical aspects of health and wellbeing are included.

This section is followed by a series of case studies showing how the principles set out in *Neighbourhoods for Living* can work in practice.

The subsequent section will provide examples of how Leeds City Council has engaged with local communities and with other stakeholders such as land owners. The intention is to highlight the different ways this has happened and encourage even greater and better engagement in the future.



Leeds is also committed to becoming an Age Friendly City. To help with this, Leeds has become a European member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. We need to remember that people over 65 spend 80% of their time at home, rising to 90% for those over 85. Being an Age Friendly City means that Leeds has places, services,

## References

- 1 Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations (2008) *Spatial Planning: Key Instrument for Development and Effective Governance* [www.unece.org](http://www.unece.org)
- 2 *Addressing the Social Determinants of Health: the Urban Dimension and the Role of Local Government* [www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/addressing-the-social-determinants-of-health-the-urban-dimension-and-the-role-of-local-government](http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/addressing-the-social-determinants-of-health-the-urban-dimension-and-the-role-of-local-government)





# The Leeds Site Allocations Plan

## How does the council decide which sites to develop? And what part do public health considerations play in this process?

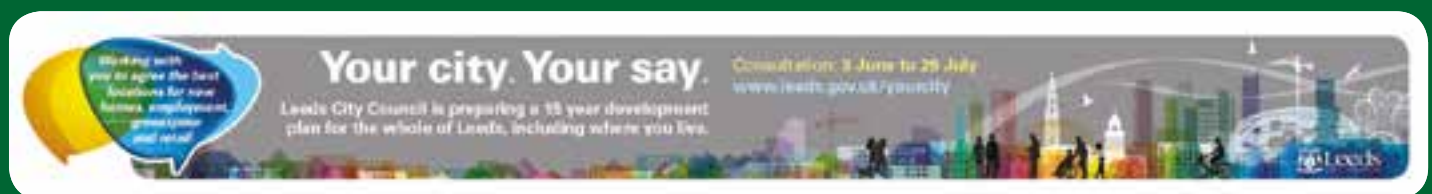
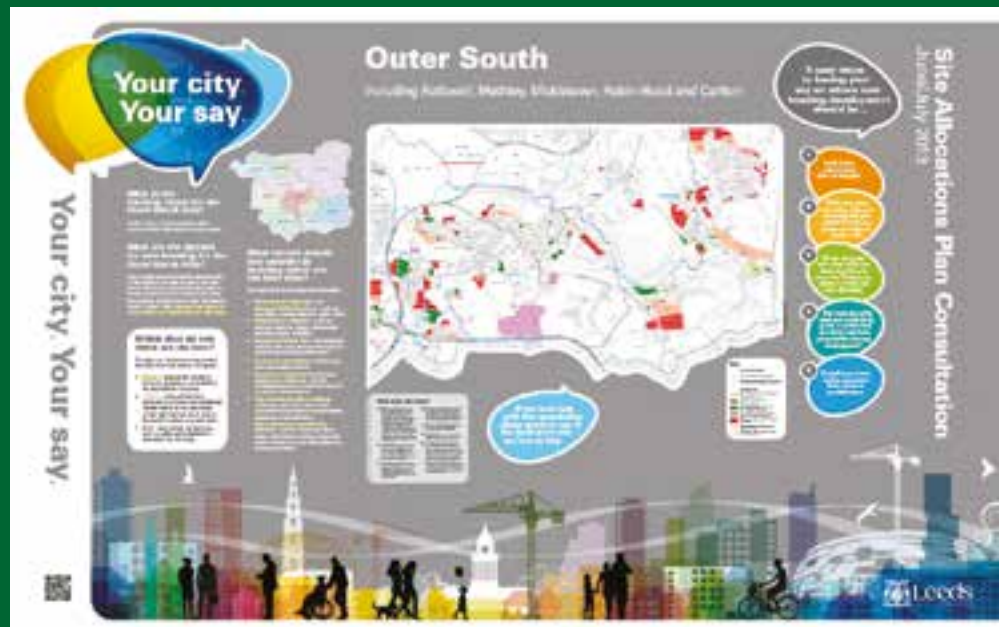
The health and wellbeing of a community is a key consideration for planning. The Core Strategy is the strategic planning document for Leeds for 2012–28 and the aims of the Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013–15 are embedded within it.

The Leeds Site Allocation Plan, as the name suggests, allocates land for housing, employment, retail and green space over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. Sites are assessed for their suitability for development against a number of objectives as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. These objectives include: promoting good health and reducing health inequalities; improving housing quality; promoting social inclusion/participation and community cohesion; increasing access to green space; and air quality. Each of these has implications for the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

There are a number of key milestones in the preparation of the Site Allocations Plan. In 2012 the council consulted on Issues and Options for the Site Allocations Plan to gauge opinion on potential housing, employment, retail and green space sites. A draft publication taking into account these findings will go out for consultation in 2015. The document will then go to the Secretary of State. After an examination in public, the council will adopt the

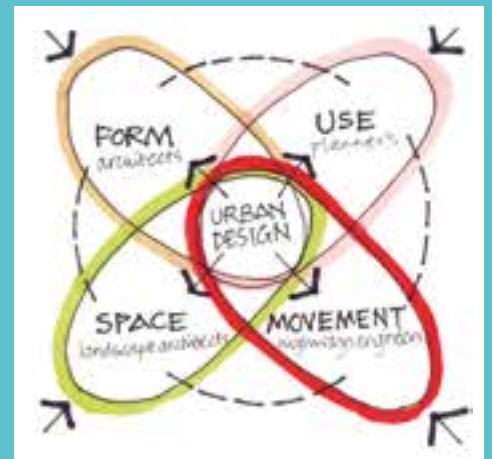
plan subject to the Secretary of State's approval.

From April 2015, all developments will have to contribute towards the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This will help fund infrastructure improvements, including the highway network, education provision, green space improvements and health facilities. All of which will benefit the health and wellbeing of Leeds residents and visitors to the city.





# Healthy planning and urban design



Developing strong, healthy and vibrant communities is crucial to ensuring the wellbeing of people in Leeds. The new homes that will be built in Leeds over the next few years – whether through new development or ‘retrofit’ of existing properties – must be healthy homes in healthy communities. So how can we make this happen?

It’s now widely recognised that the nature of the built environment impacts on people’s health.<sup>3</sup> A well-designed ‘healthy development’ can improve people’s health in a number of ways:

- Minimising the impact of climate change and ensuring low levels of air and water pollution and noise.

- Healthy design and lifetime homes.

- Ensuring access to high-quality public and private spaces and natural habitats.

- Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.

- Providing access to health services, community facilities, and retail and employment locations.

- Increasing access to healthy food.

- Encouraging physical activity and active travel.

- Improving community safety.

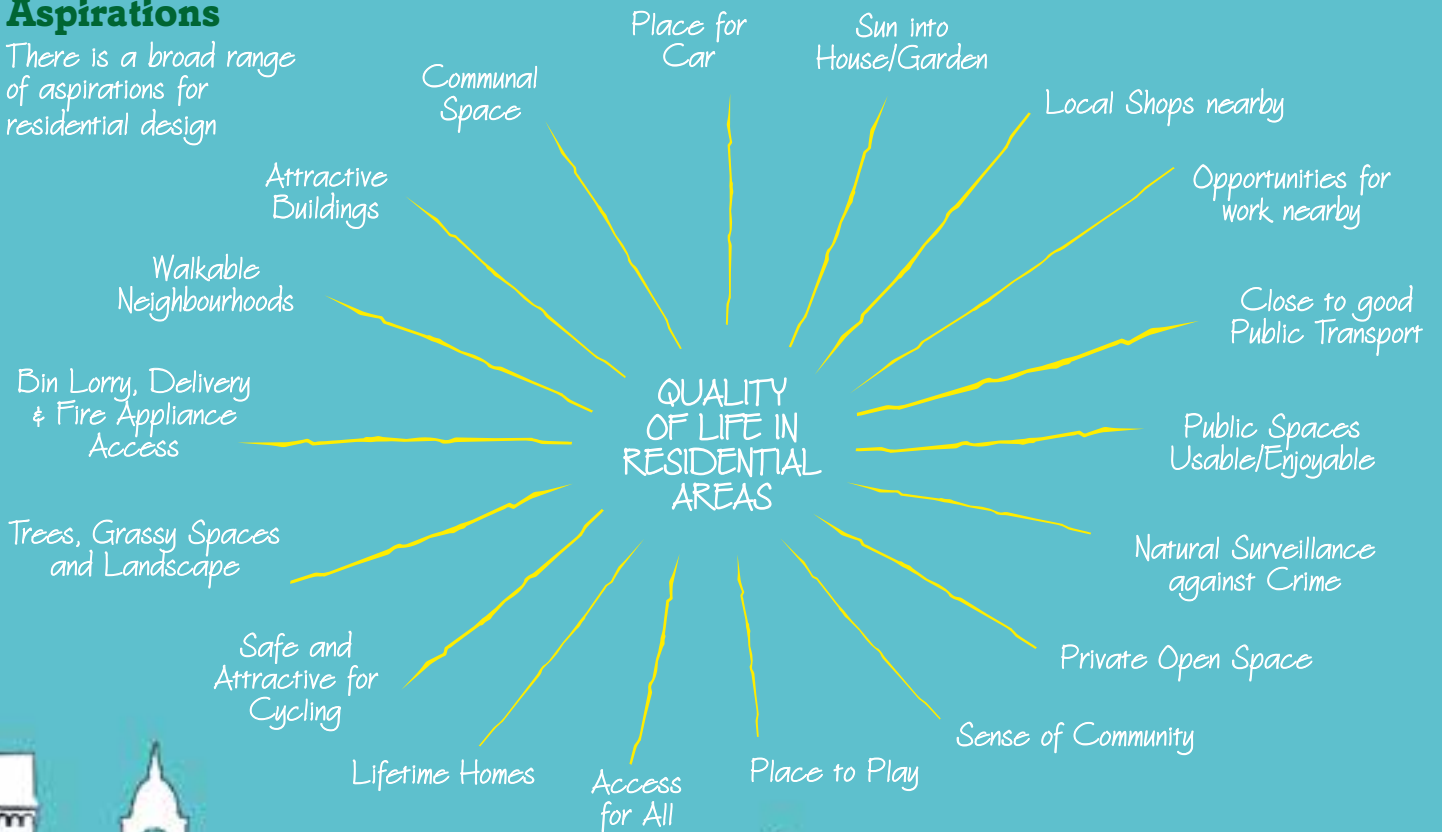




Alternative approaches to multidisciplinary working

## Aspirations

There is a broad range of aspirations for residential design



These aspirations are reflected in Leeds City Council's *Neighbourhoods for Living* guide.<sup>4</sup>







*Neighbourhoods for Living* has four key themes, each of which relates to the work of one of the built environment disciplines:

- **USE** – town planners
- **MOVEMENT** – highways engineers
- **SPACE** – landscape architects
- **FORM** – architects.

## Neighbourhoods for Living themes, key objectives and potential health benefits

### USE

#### Key objectives

- **creating neighbourhoods** – to create neighbourhoods that respect the local context, offer a choice of housing and provide good access to complementary local facilities within walking distance.
- **density and mixed uses** – to create vitality, with increased development densities supporting a range of services, mixed uses and public transport.

#### Potential health benefits

- Providing access to health services, community facilities, and retail and employment locations.
- Increasing access to healthy food.
- Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.
- Encouraging physical activity and active travel.

### SPACE

#### Key objectives

- **making attractive spaces that work** – to create people-friendly places that allow for necessary vehicular access.
- **safer places** – to create safe and secure places with effective natural surveillance.
- **private spaces** – to provide well-designed private and semi-private open space for all dwellings, appropriate to the design character of the area.
- **publicly accessible spaces** – to provide a varied network of attractive, usable and safe publicly accessible spaces as part of a hierarchy of places.
- **designing for parking** – to provide appropriate parking at discreet but safe locations within the development.
- **wildlife** – to retain existing important species and habitats and maximise opportunities for habitat enhancement, creation and management.

#### Potential health benefits

- Ensuring access to high-quality public and private spaces and natural habitats.
- Improving community safety.
- Increasing access to healthy food.
- Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.
- Minimising the impact of climate change and ensuring low levels of air and water pollution and noise.





If you look at the diagram below you'll see that each of these themes is broken down into key objectives and a series of design principles for residential development. The majority of these principles carry potential benefits for the health and wellbeing of Leeds residents. This could be through creating focal points to promote a sense of community, providing people with the space to grow their own food, or creating wildlife corridors to enhance the

natural environment and so support good mental health and help mitigate the effects of climate change.

*Neighbourhoods for Living* summarises its findings into 119 design principles for urban planners and developers. For the purposes of this report we've highlighted those that directly impact on residents' health – and made some extra recommendations specific to public health which you'll find at the end of this report.

## MOVEMENT

### Key objectives

- **making connections** – to create connected layouts that provide choice and improve access to facilities and public transport.
- **developing the movement network** – to develop a framework of connected spaces that respect all users by offering a safe, attractive environment for all.

### Potential health benefits

- Encouraging physical activity and active travel.
- Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.

## FORM

### Key objectives

- **local character** – to ensure that proposals respect the local character by enhancing the positive attributes whilst mitigating negative aspects.
- **scale and massing** – to provide built forms that contribute positively to the townscape whilst respecting the scale of adjacent spaces.
- **landmarks, views and focal points** – to take every opportunity to create good design that respects key views, landmarks and focal points.
- **quality buildings** – to create high-quality building design with appropriately designed elements.
- **homes for the future** – to develop wherever possible on brownfield sites with efficient energy use, minimising waste production and pollution.
- **privacy and intrusion** – to safeguard privacy and amenity.

### Potential health benefits

- Healthy design and lifetime homes.
- Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience.



# Providing access to health services, community facilities, and retail and employment locations

When people think about ‘health’ in terms of new housing developments, one of the first questions they probably ask is ‘Where will I find my nearest GP?’ Being able to access health and social care services easily and conveniently supports people both to stay in good physical and mental health and to cope with acute and chronic disease. Residents need good connections to GPs, dentists and other health and social care services, as well as to community centres, leisure centres, day care for adults and children, and schools. But they also need to access local facilities like shops, workplaces, parks, play areas, community space and cafés. This is because, as well as producing direct health benefits, convenient access to community facilities promotes social interaction and fosters a sense of community. This in turn is beneficial to health.

Here are some recent comments that older people made about community services:

“ I wanted to be on a bus route - to be in the right place and right community.”

“ We want to be within easy distance of shops, on the level and have people around us to look out for us.”

Considering community infrastructure needs, including health facilities, is an important part of the local planning process. Like most local authorities, Leeds has produced

an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to support the Core Strategy. The problem is that populations and their health needs change – or there are changes in policy, in the financial and organisational environment, or in the way care is provided. So the planning and nature of health services and related facilities has to be able to evolve to take account of this changing environment. In the case of population growth due to new development, local authorities can charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on new development to fund the demands placed on an area. The Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan case study (see page 39) gives some examples of how this funding may be used.

For example, most people’s access to the health care system starts with a visit to their local GP (known as primary care). However, in many areas there are already pressures on GP services. So what happens to GP services when there is a major new housing development? A full-time GP looks after around 1,800 registered patients so some new residential developments’ primary care needs can be absorbed by existing local GP services. This is expected to be the case in the Northern Quadrant of the proposed East Leeds Extension, for example (see page 28), although initial plans have allowed for an additional new health centre should it be required. However, some GP practices have merged or co-located and/or are providing an extended range of services to meet changing local health needs. In some cases, NHS England, the body currently responsible for commissioning GPs, dentists and opticians, may decide to establish a new or additional medical centre, for example where plans for new housing would create an entirely new community in an area with no existing GP service. (This commissioning responsibility will transfer to the three Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups or CCGs in due course.)

## How can planners and urban designers help?

Avoid sites without easy access to existing local facilities.

- Link development into the overall network of facilities.

Ensure good access to a balanced range of services.





## Increasing access to healthy food

A healthy diet reduces the risk of stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, reduces levels of childhood and adult obesity and helps protect against certain cancers. Growing food contributes to active lifestyles, healthy diet and tackling food poverty. It provides employment, supports urban sustainable development and promotes links within and between communities. Providing healthy food locally can also have wider benefits in terms of so-called 'social capital'. This refers to the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, helping that society to function effectively.

Food-growing on suitable safe sites such as allotments and in community gardens provides a means of involving community groups and promoting inclusion and social interaction, but it doesn't have to be a communal activity. Providing growing space in private gardens enables people to grow food at home and this too can have a positive impact upon physical and mental health. There is increasing evidence highlighting the impact that gardening and growing plants can have on mental health and recovery from mental ill health.

Within Leeds a number of projects exist to encourage people to participate in growing their own food.



For example, for the last two years Feed Leeds and Leeds City Council Parks and Countryside department have run a successful edible bed competition. The idea is to design a bed from edible plants to show how attractive these can be and to inspire people to grow more edible plants even within an ornamental setting.

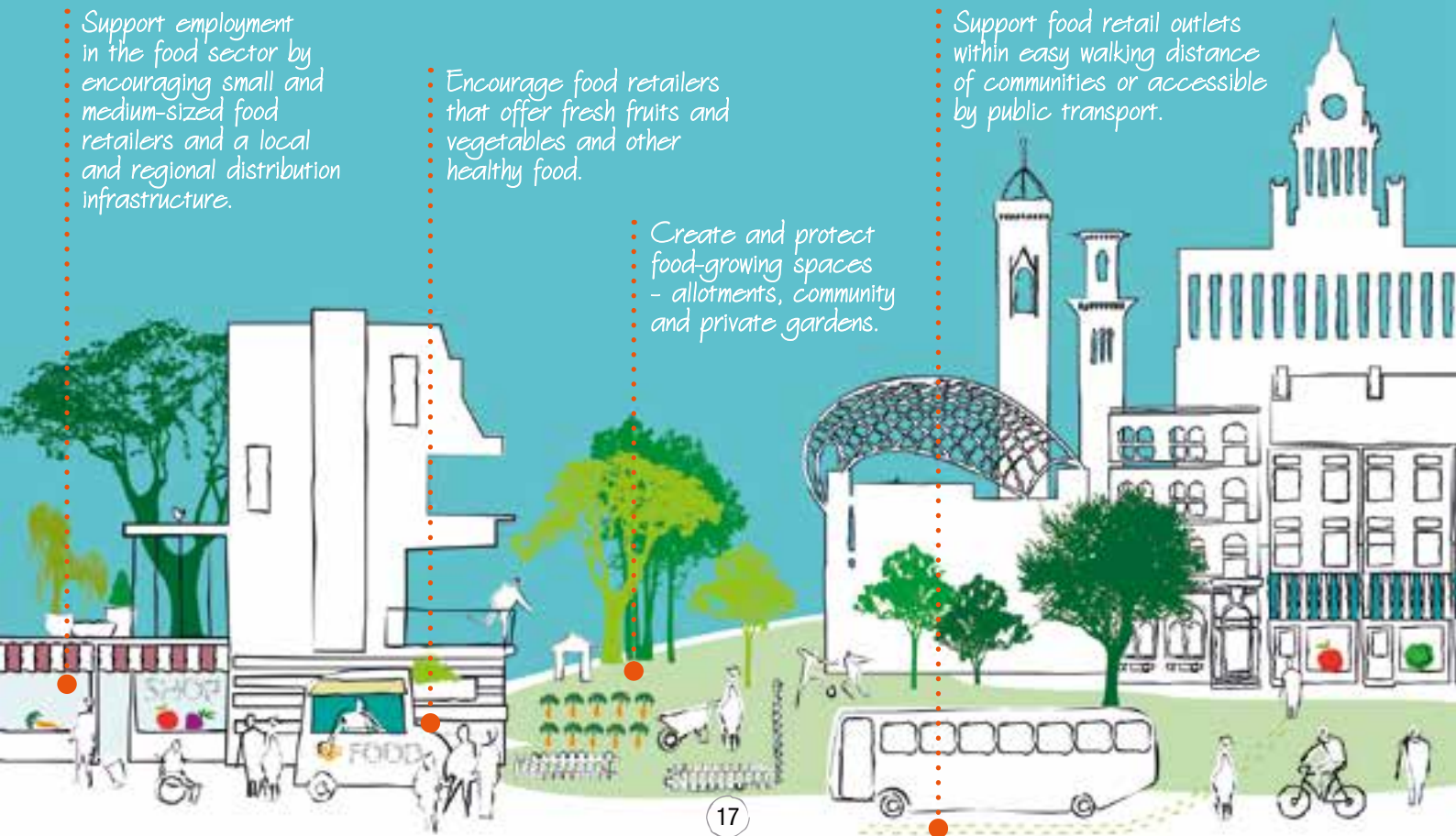
## How can planners and urban designers help?

- Support employment in the food sector by encouraging small and medium-sized food retailers and a local and regional distribution infrastructure.

- Encourage food retailers that offer fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy food.

- Create and protect food-growing spaces - allotments, community and private gardens.

- Support food retail outlets within easy walking distance of communities or accessible by public transport.





# Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience

A sense of community identity and belonging is important for health. People who are socially engaged with others and actively involved in their communities tend to live longer and enjoy better physical and mental health. Ill health is made worse through loneliness and lack of social contact. Planning policies and development alone cannot create strong communities. What they can do, though, is to create communities that respect diversity and make it easier for people to get together and become involved, for example by designing streets that function as social spaces or assigning landmark buildings for community use.

Providing a mixture of housing types and tenures to meet local need can help to reduce health inequalities. For example, provision of affordable housing helps to avoid people being excluded from the housing market, which could be a cause of poor physical and mental health.

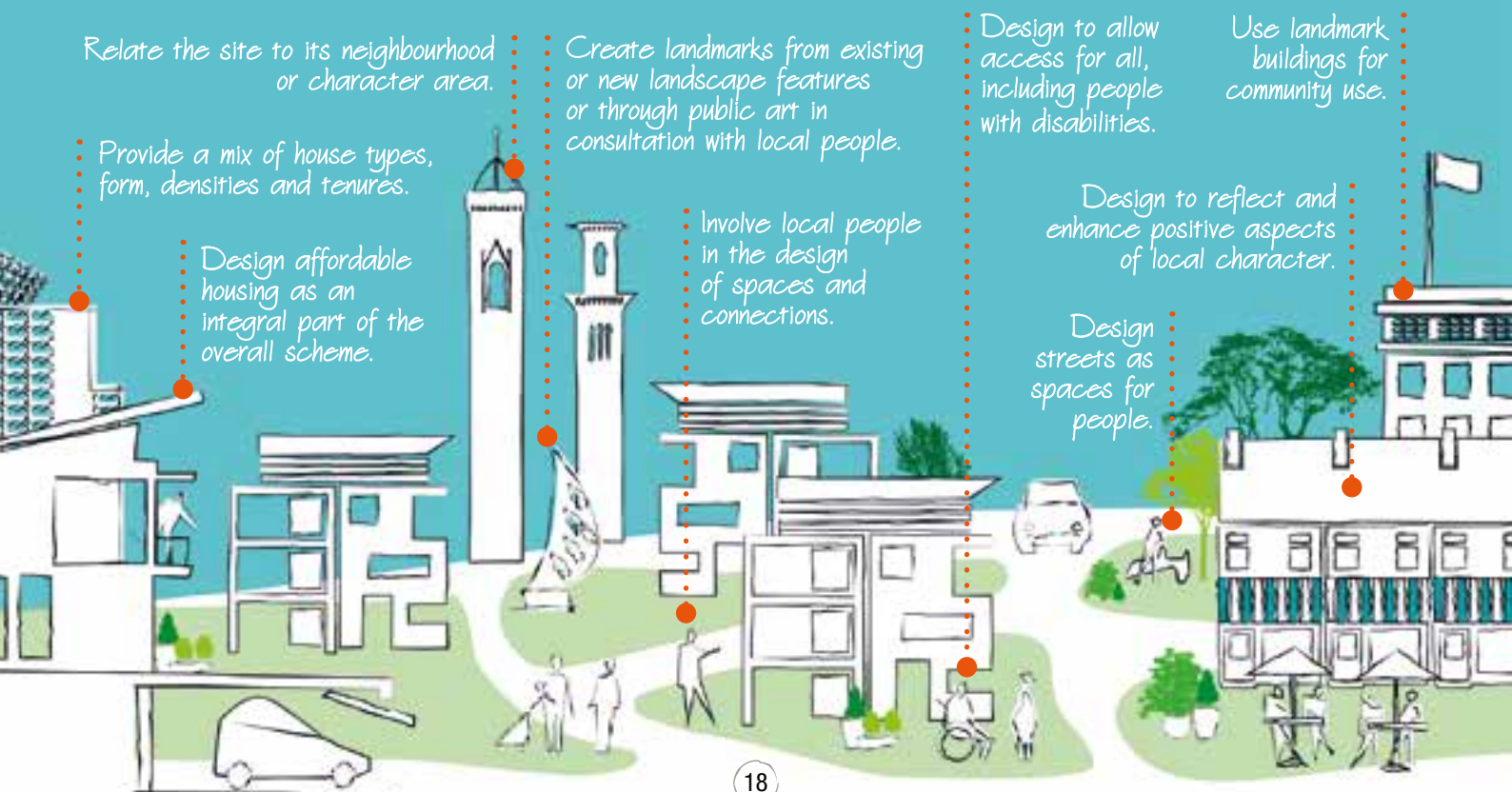
A socially inclusive community is one in which everyone, especially those in poorer health, can access the facilities they need. Layouts and designs should provide for safe and easy access to facilities and services, including open space for people with disabilities. Plenty of places to sit and rest, dropped kerbs and good surfaces all help make buildings, streets and spaces easier to navigate for older people, people with young children and those with disabilities. A socially inclusive community also shows understanding and respect for the cultural diversity of the people living within it and ensures that no-one is prevented from accessing key services, for example because of language barriers.

Giving communities the opportunity to help shape their surroundings empowers local people, promotes a sense of place and ownership and may have direct health benefits. This means engaging local people in the design and development of their environment, involving residents in the design of spaces and connections, or inviting local people to come up with ideas to enhance spaces, for example through creating landmarks or public art. There's more about engaging communities later in this report.



Planners can play a role in shaping communities by designing locally distinctive buildings that acknowledge the historical character of the neighbourhood. Also by finding ways to forge physical and social connections with existing communities. The industrial heritage of Yarn Street (see page 26), for example, inspired the new development in terms of the forms of buildings and the materials used to build them. This has helped reinforce the unique and distinctive quality of the area.

## How can planners and urban designers help?



# Encouraging physical activity and active travel

People who do regular activity are at lower risk of many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers. Physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing the risk of stress, depression and dementia.<sup>5</sup>

Actions to encourage physical activity can also help build social cohesion and community resilience. Walking is one of the most accessible forms of physical activity and is a particularly good introduction to exercise for those who have previously been inactive. People who live in walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods have better social connections and resilience compared with those living in areas of heavy car use. They are more likely to know their neighbours, participate politically, trust other people and be socially engaged – all of which has a positive impact on their health.

The urban design approach as suggested in *Neighbourhoods for Living* can play a key role in creating the kinds of environments that support people to be more active, particularly in terms of encouraging walking, cycling and play. In 2008 the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) produced the first evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the built environment to encourage physical activity.<sup>6</sup>

Four of the seven NICE recommendations made reference to promoting walking, cycling or using public transport. This is sometimes called 'active transport' because it involves physical activity.

The NICE recommendations refer to:

- Ensuring planning applications for new developments prioritise the need for both adults and children (including residents whose mobility is impaired) to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life.
- Planning and providing a comprehensive network of good, well-maintained routes for active transport, so that all residents can enjoy convenient, safe and attractive access to workplaces, homes, schools and other public facilities.
- Ensuring public open spaces and public paths can be reached by active transport.
- Prioritising active transport in the development or maintenance of streets and roads, for example by widening pavements, introducing cycle lanes, restricting motor vehicle access, introducing traffic-calming measures and creating safe routes to schools.

Public transport is an important element of active transport. Good connections to public transport enable people to access schools, jobs, health services and shops. Using public transport rather than a car has many health benefits including improving fitness and reducing stress. Walking to and from public transport stops can help inactive populations achieve the recommended amounts of physical activity. It also leads to improved air quality and reduced congestion. Public transport can support disadvantaged groups to access services, make local communities more inclusive and contribute to reducing inequalities.

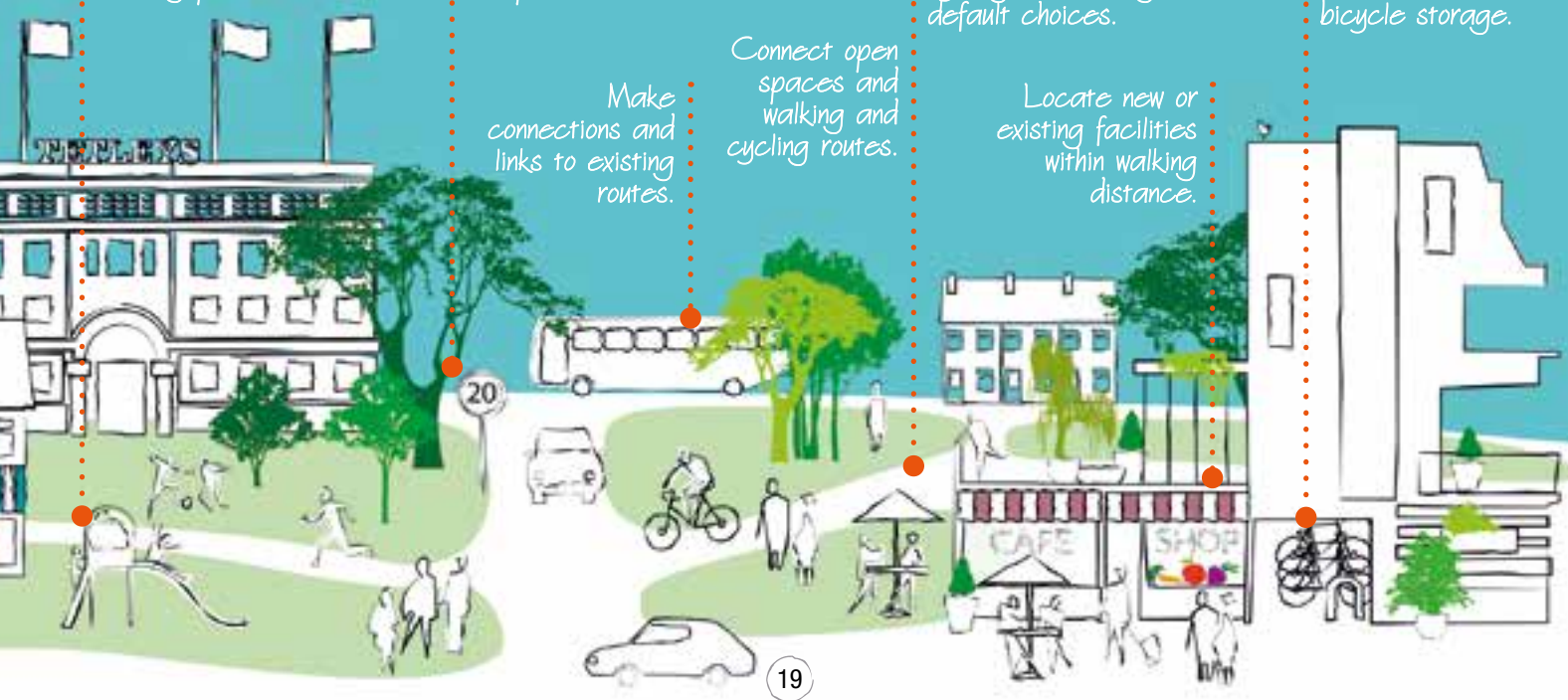
## How can planners and urban designers help?

• Create children's play space or link to existing provision.

• Design streets to ensure child- and pedestrian-friendly 20mph urban environments.

• Create street patterns and layouts which make cycling and walking easier default choices.

• Provide secure, sheltered, and accessible bicycle storage.





# Ensuring access to high-quality public and private spaces and natural habitats

Access to high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities.<sup>7</sup>

Evidence suggests that people with access to high-quality green space are healthier. Being outside can promote better mental health, decrease stress, reduce isolation, improve social cohesion and ease physical problems. For example, the green corridor behind Stainbeck Road which connects Beckhill with Meanwood Valley Urban Farm will not only form part of the local cycle network but also provides a wildlife habitat for local people to enjoy.

Provision of trees, natural habitats, cycle paths, parks and walkable green spaces helps promote physical and mental wellbeing, improves air quality and reduces perceived noise levels in urban areas. Outside space provides children with the opportunity for active play. Investing in green infrastructure is important in our attempts to mitigate and adapt to the impact of climate change.

A review of the spatial planning implications by the Marmot Review<sup>8</sup> team points out that:

*Spaces need to be flexible to meet the needs of a diverse community... It is also advocated that in areas with a shortage of green space, the creative use of temporarily vacant spaces, such as development sites, should be supported... Accessibility is also important – design should take account of the 3 ‘A’s’: accessibility, attitudes and adaptation. These are particularly relevant for those who may not otherwise access the space – families on low earnings, those with disabilities, etc.*

Later in this report there’s a case study showing how residents, particularly children, became involved in designing a new-look East End Park.

## City Park

The projected City Park just south of the River Aire, at around 3.5 hectares, would be a green public space of a type not currently provided in the city centre or its fringes, with strong pedestrian links across the river into the heart of the shopping and commercial area, and to the South Bank and wider Aire Valley. The idea is to balance the passive and active recreational needs of day visitors, office workers and city centre residents, and add to the city’s cultural and visitor attractions.

The park would integrate functional recreation space with a park landscape including substantial large canopy trees and extensive grassy spaces, possibly with a civic-scale event space and opportunities for active ground floor building uses. This would be designed with sustainability, climate change and flood alleviation in mind, e.g. incorporating surface run-off in its green space design. It would provide a safe and secure green space that is easily accessible from the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists. It would also connect with potential new developments and green space at Sovereign Street, via a new bridge and linear greenspaces.

## How can planners and urban designers help?

- Create green infrastructure networks including parks, play areas, open spaces, private spaces or gardens and street trees.

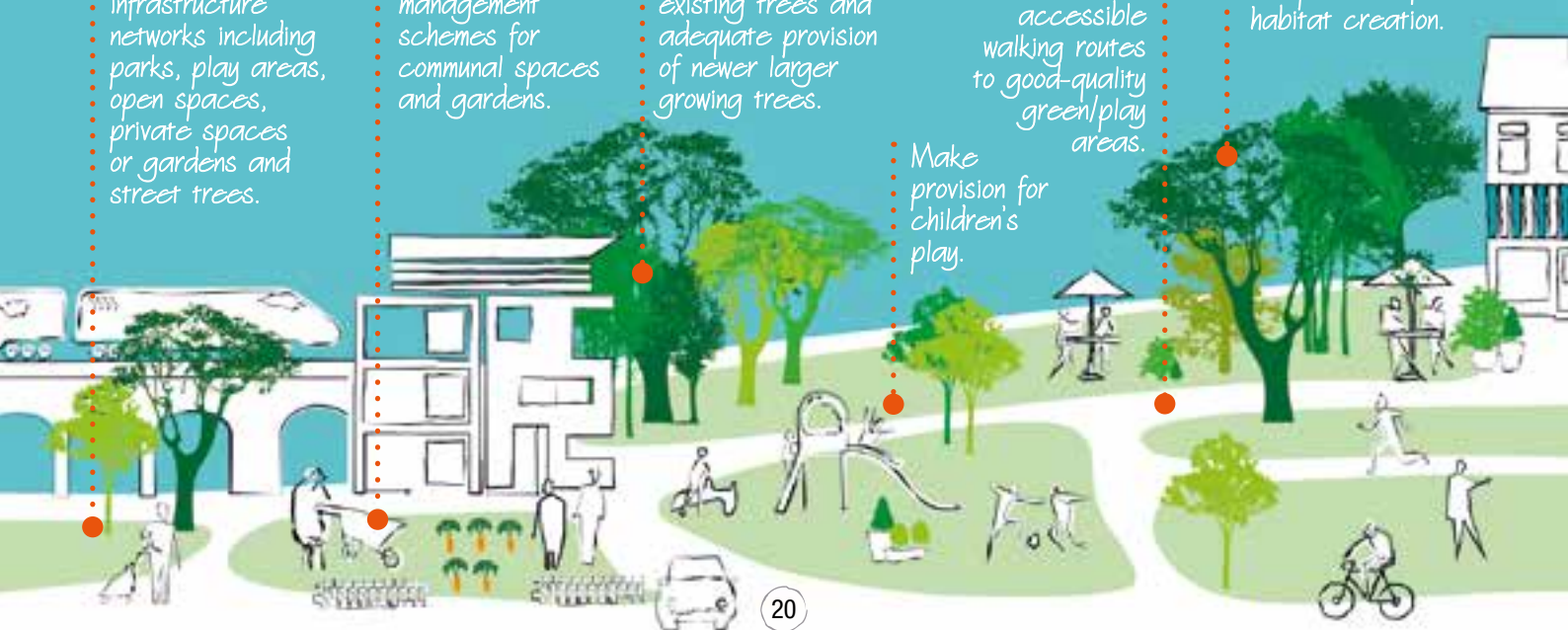
- Ensure good management schemes for communal spaces and gardens.

- Allow for retention of existing trees and adequate provision of newer larger growing trees.

- Develop continuous and accessible walking routes to good-quality green/play areas.

- Retain existing habitats and features or consider the potential for habitat creation.

- Make provision for children’s play.





## Improving community safety

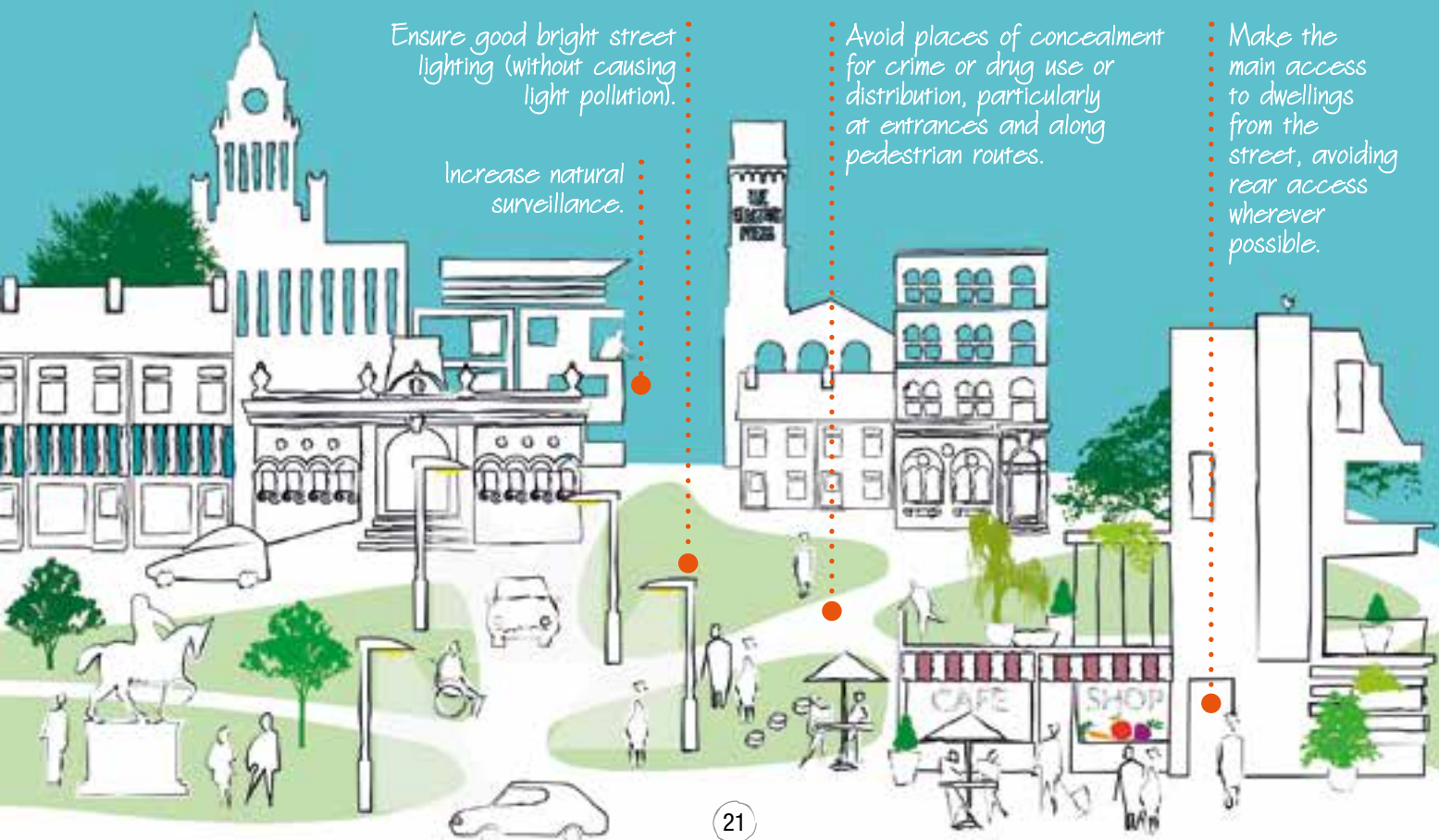
Urban design should both help people to feel safe and reduce the risk of crime. Reducing the fear of crime improves mental health and wellbeing. Feeling safe both by day and by night also has a big impact on residents' levels of physical activity and social interaction. Research suggests that if people don't feel safe they are less likely to walk in their communities. Fear of crime in public spaces often stops older people from reaching services and community groups, and from taking advantage of social interaction with neighbours and retailers. Design measures to prevent drug use are also important to reduce the physical, mental and social harm caused by drugs.

Levels of crime can be reduced by interventions such as improving street lighting, making places more attractive and maximising natural surveillance. Providing a mix of uses, dwelling sizes and types means that there are people about throughout the day and evening. Planners can also create 'eyes on the street' by making sure that kitchens and living rooms overlook it. Secured by Design is a national police initiative to incorporate crime prevention measures in the specification, design and build of new homes.<sup>9</sup> In 2007 Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Police produced a guide called *Designing for Community Safety*.<sup>10</sup>



Both of these guides demonstrate how good design and good physical security can complement the environment and create safe, sustainable and healthy communities. They detail ways of 'designing out crime' within new developments, and focus on a design-led approach to reducing crime by limiting the opportunities for crime to occur. Leeds expects developers to follow the principles set out by both these initiatives.

## How can planners and urban designers help?



# Minimising the impact of climate change and ensuring low levels of air and water pollution and noise

Climate change is one of the biggest threats to human health. Extreme weather conditions such as heat waves, drought and flooding are already impacting on health and health inequalities. People on low incomes are more likely to live in areas which are warmer during summer, more exposed to weather extremes and more likely to flood.<sup>11</sup> Poor air quality, a significant issue for parts of Leeds already, particularly affects people with cardiovascular and respiratory conditions and is linked to reduced life expectancy. Noise is linked to poor mental health. Climate change and its impact on health was the focus of the 2010 Public Health Annual Report, *Sustainable Living, Healthy Lives*.

Key design considerations include:

- **Energy efficiency.** Design specifications should be used to build in features that allow residents to control their internal environment, but that's not enough on its own. Residents need to be able to access energy efficiency data and helped to understand it. Some pre-1919 properties in Cross Green (see page 32) have recently been refitted with new roofs, windows, doors and boundary treatments, and work to improve energy efficiency (e.g. through provision of internal or external insulation) is in progress. Research is being done to determine the health benefits of these measures in this area of high deprivation. There is increasing evidence of overheating in some homes, particularly newer houses which meet more demanding standards of energy efficiency. Overheating of homes over long periods can have serious health consequences, particularly for older people who tend to be in during the day when the heat is likely to be greater.

Measures to prevent overheating including passive ventilation, providing cool and attractive outdoor areas and the use of plants to create shade. As one older person told us:

“ Old buildings can be too cold and damp and the new ones are too hot and dry. Heat and cold kill.”

- **Water use and flood protection.** Measures to minimise water use could include exploring systems for re-using rainwater and waste water. There is also a need to protect schemes from flooding and to minimise water run-off.
- **Noise control.** Stressful noise is detrimental to people's health. Soft lawns and dense, tall vegetation can reduce the extent to which sound carries and help limit perceived noise levels.
- **Air quality.** The West Yorkshire Low Emissions Group, representing five West Yorkshire councils, has produced *Air Quality and Emissions: Technical Planning Guidance*. This includes guidance on when an air quality assessment is required for housing developments. Locating houses away from main roads helps to ensure good air quality. As a rough guide, houses should be approximately 80 metres from motorways and 30 metres from A-roads. Planting street trees can also help improve air quality.

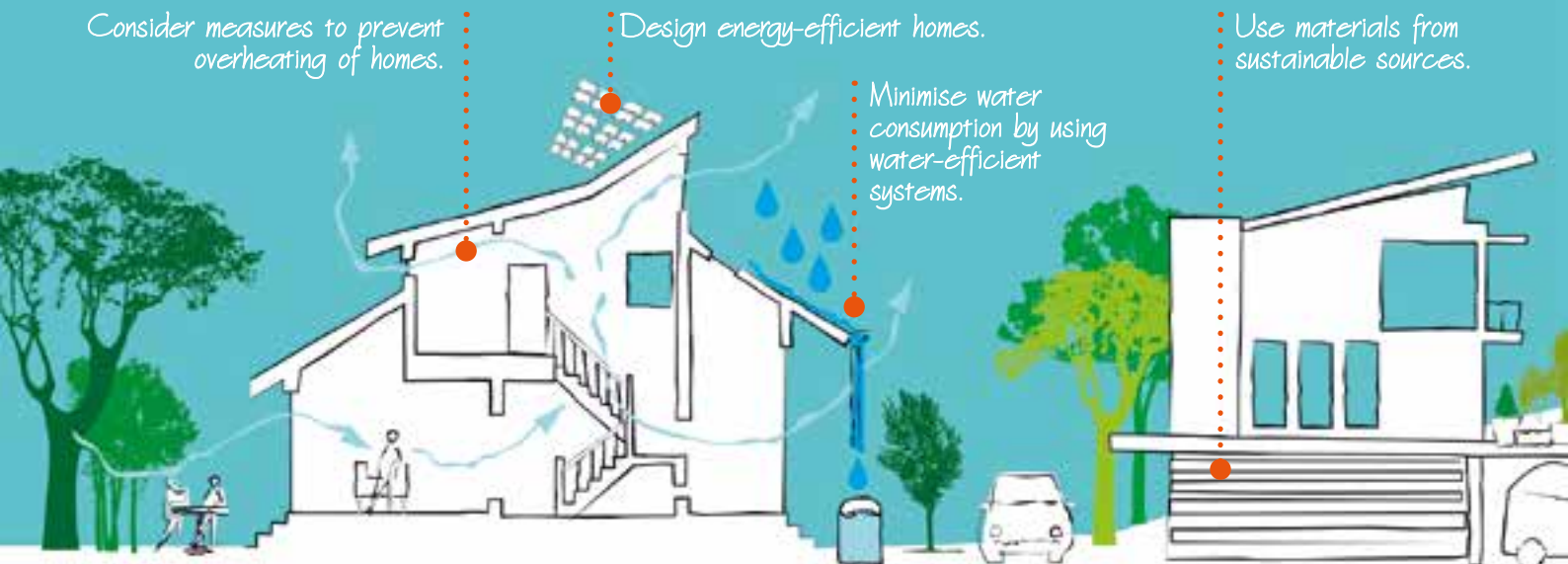
## How can planners and urban designers help?

Consider measures to prevent overheating of homes.

Design energy-efficient homes.

Minimise water consumption by using water-efficient systems.

Use materials from sustainable sources.





# Designing to improve air quality

It makes strategic sense to locate new housing developments and communities within previously developed inner city areas. This not only protects greenfield sites, but also contributes to the wider benefits of connecting and re-integrating existing communities (see page 34, Hunslet).

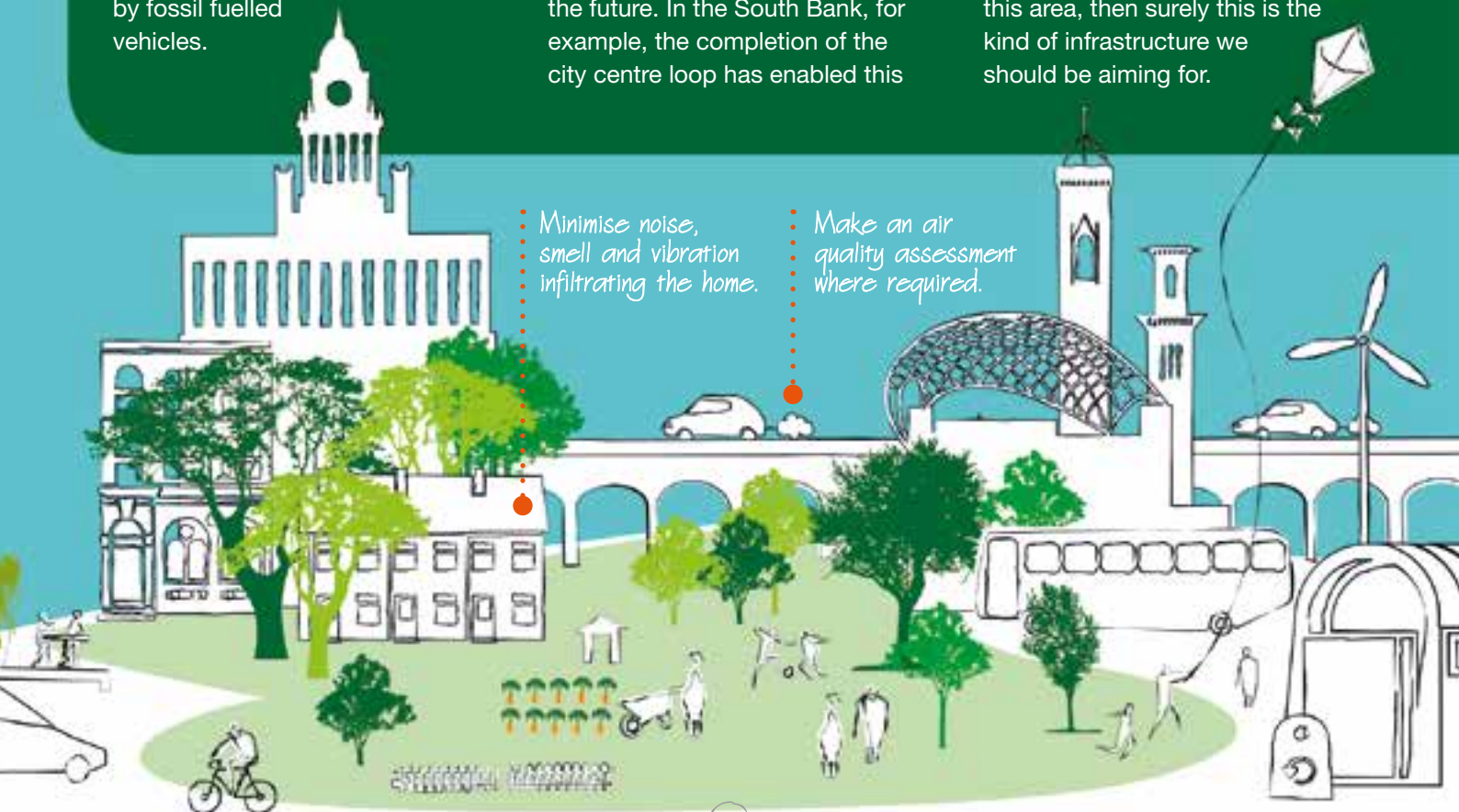
However, inner city areas, where industry and housing once stood side by side, are now often dominated by a vast array of roads and highways that have grown up around planning for the private car. This is a legacy of Leeds as 'Motorway City of the 1970s'. Mass clearance schemes and the building of major roads and dual carriageways to serve this aspiration have caused serious obstacles for future generations and contributed significantly to poor air quality within these areas. This in turn contributes to health problems including respiratory disease and other conditions related to pollutants created by fossil fuelled vehicles.

One of the significant challenges for future planning in inner city areas is how to reduce the dominance of the motor vehicle. There is never an easy option and approaches often require a range of initiatives from physical improvements to education and awareness-raising. One problem is that industrial and distribution firms that have been present in the area for years may rely on vehicle access and the use of heavy goods vehicles. This causes potential conflict between new residents and more established industries. These relationships need to be very carefully managed in order to ensure that the various land uses are compatible.

There are ways to mitigate the dominance of the highway and tackle air quality. Initiatives like the Cycle Superhighway and City Connect, as well as the more conventional method of building relief roads or by-passes, are all tools that need to be employed in the future. In the South Bank, for example, the completion of the city centre loop has enabled this

to happen. Although this new road still contributes to poor air quality and noise issues, it enables traffic to move through the area quicker and more efficiently. Whilst this 'displacement' of traffic is not ideal, it does mean that the sheer physical scale of other highways can be reduced to a more sociable level. Or the extra space can be used for cycle and pedestrian infrastructure or landscaping.

In Hunslet the concept of a landscaped 'boulevard' could be an opportunity along Hunslet Lane and this could mitigate the air quality impacts significantly (see page 34). Many developments within the area are now required to establish tree planting and landscape edges but there is still a long way to go before we see the classic European-style boulevard in the south of Leeds. However if we are serious about creating a more physically, psychologically and socially friendly city, and also cutting pollution and creating a more attractive feel to this area, then surely this is the kind of infrastructure we should be aiming for.

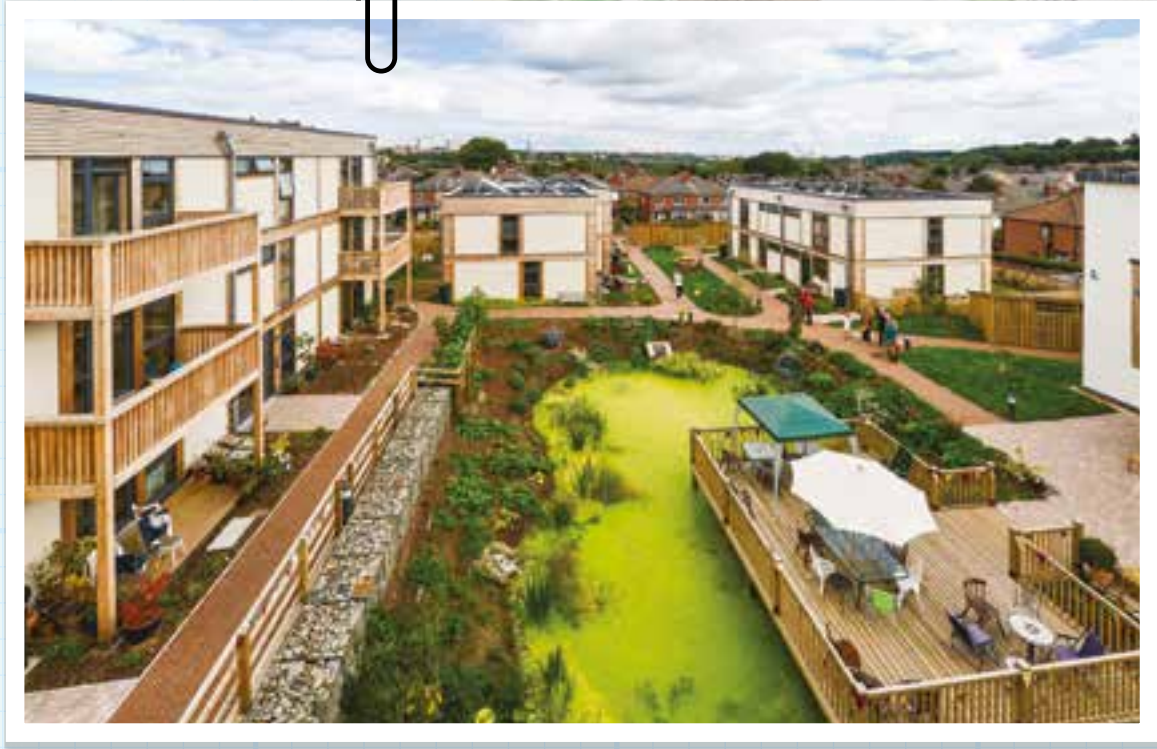




# CASE STUDY

## LILAC

LILAC is a development of 20 straw bale homes on the site of a former school in Bramley.



General plan of site

LILAC means 'Low Impact Living Affordable Community' and is founded upon sustainability, mutual ownership and community living:

- 'Low Impact Living' features include the construction of homes at Lilac Grove from natural materials (straw, timber and lime), reducing greenhouse gas emissions and conserving energy. Residents reduce their impact by sharing washing machines, lawnmowers, tools and cars. Cycling is promoted and each household has an allotment.
- 'Affordability' is reflected in the MHOS (Mutual Home Ownership Society). Members contribute about a third of their monthly income to help pay the mortgage and build up shares in the Society, which they sell back when they leave. Because of its environmental features, bills at Lilac Grove are also much cheaper.

- 'Community' is achieved through the co-housing project where residents have their own private home but share facilities like the common house, gardens and workshop. The common house is the site of regular community events and meetings, with a shared laundry, kitchen, dining room, post room, office and multi-function room.

The main purpose of LILAC is to provide a new model for housing based on sustainability, low-impact community living, equality, social justice and self-management. Members are driven by concerns over the need to respond to climate change and energy scarcity, the limits of the 'business as usual' model of pro-growth economics, and the need to develop resources and skills so that communities can determine and manage their own land and resources.



# Healthy design and lifetime homes

Many factors influence health in homes, including how the house is designed and constructed, the presence or absence of safety devices, indoor air quality, water quality, exposure to chemicals, resident behaviour, and the immediate surroundings. Poor housing conditions are linked to respiratory disease, excess winter deaths and falls. Good-quality housing, on the other hand, can help to reduce health inequalities, tackle fuel poverty and reduce excess winter deaths.

Planners can 'build in' certain aspects of a healthy home, for example by:

- using non-toxic building materials and products to minimise exposure to chemicals (e.g. volatile organic compounds in adhesives, sealants and paints; pesticides, fungicides and heavy metals used to treat wood)
- employing proper building techniques and materials from foundation to roof to mitigate damp and mould
- proper placement of windows and doors to facilitate passive airflow, daylighting and fresh air exchange.

Adaptability of design is key to making sure that homes continue to meet occupiers' needs as those needs change, perhaps to accommodate children or space for working at home or to meet the needs of old age or disability.

An ageing population is a challenge both to health professionals and planners. Older people value their independence and want to remain fit and healthy for as long as possible. At the same time, there must be provision in appropriate community settings to meet the changing health and social care needs of older people. The benefits of planning neighbourhoods and homes with an ageing population in mind have been specifically



recognised through a variety of initiatives such as *Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods*<sup>12</sup> and *Lifetime Homes*. The *Lifetime Homes Design Guide*<sup>13</sup> sets out 16 design criteria that should be implicit in good housing design to boost utility, independence and quality of life and covers five overarching principles: inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability, sustainability and good value.

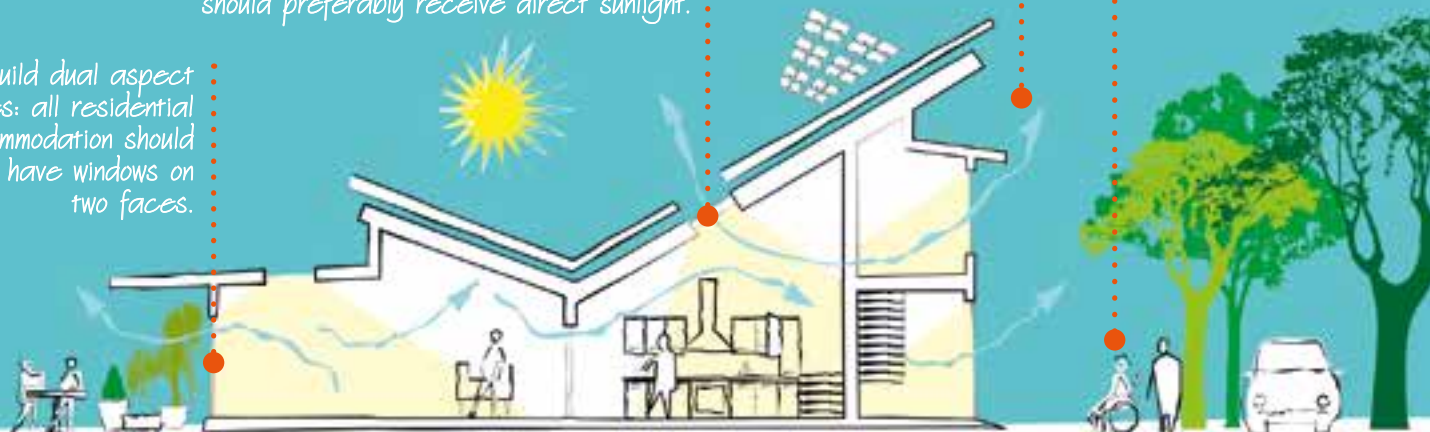
## How can planners and urban designers help?

Optimise daylight and solar gain by providing for direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day. Living areas and kitchen dining spaces should preferably receive direct sunlight.

Build dual aspect homes: all residential accommodation should have windows on two faces.

Ventilate all buildings naturally.

Ensure homes are adaptable to changing needs.





# Yarn Street

- putting *Neighbourhoods for Living* into practice

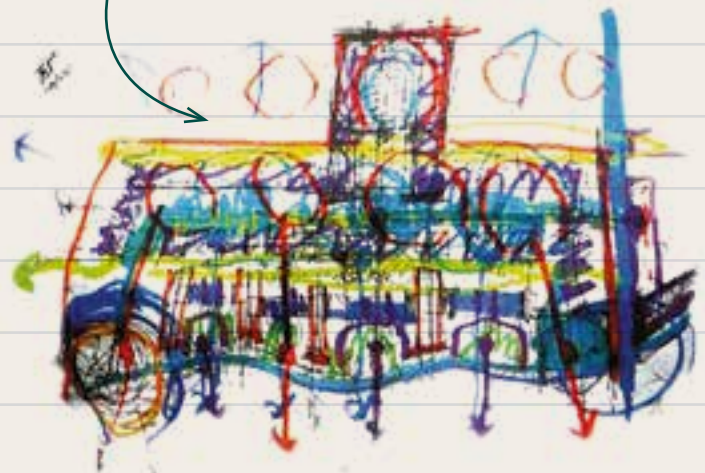
The Yarn Street development in the Hunslet Riverside Area demonstrates how many of the principles of *Neighbourhoods for Living* can be put into practice to create a healthy community that integrates well with its environment and with existing communities.

Yarn street is located in the South Bank area of the city. The Grade II listed Hunslet Mills, built between 1838 and 1842 by engineer William Fairbairn (creator of Armley Mills and Salt's Mill), was saved from demolition in the 1980s and now provides both a focal point for the new development and a source of architectural inspiration. This key building from Hunslet's cultural and historical past has largely dictated the scale, architectural forms and materials of the Yarn Street development. The simple red brick with slate grey cladding and cream render, says 'This is Leeds'.

In terms of the outdoor environment, the limited space available uses a mix of green spaces, verge planting and child-friendly spaces.



Concept sketch by John Thorp, Civic Architect



Hunslet Mills

Residents and visitors can enjoy the natural habitat of the River Aire, which is very still in this part of the city, and see rabbits, otters and kingfishers within a short distance of the new development. The challenge will be to maintain this natural habitat in subsequent developments.

The plans for development embed Secured by Design principles. Rear gardens abut neighbouring gardens and large or gable windows provide active frontages to the public spaces, green spaces and river frontage, creating important natural surveillance.

Car-taming initiatives such as changes in surface materials, narrow road widths and subtle segregation of pedestrian space from vehicle space, keep speeds low and give the pedestrian a stronger sense of 'ownership' over the spaces than in a more conventional highway layout.



Layout - TPM Landscape 3Ds & photos - PRA Architects





A hidden aspect of Yarn Street is its innovative use of heating technology. The onsite CHP (Combined Heat and Power) facility provides affordable, renewable heat and energy for residents. The houses themselves are already built to a high standard of building regulations, but the CHP attempts to 'design out' fuel poverty. The CHP scheme is linked to adjacent sites, such as Hunslet Mill, so that they will be able

to benefit from affordable heat and power in the future when they develop.

The lesson from Yarn Street, then, is that is possible to design and build a new development to integrate with its wider context and provide the ingredients for a safe, healthy, family-friendly and sustainable development close to the city centre. There is now a new community in Hunslet and the emerging Area Action Plan will endeavour to enable further, similar developments so that residents can travel safely and actively between the city centre and Hunslet district centre.





This section of the report has looked at some of the ways in which planners and urban designers, in consultation with Leeds City Council, can plan for a healthy community, and is followed by some case studies showing how this is happening in practice across Leeds. But this can't happen effectively without also engaging individuals and groups from within those communities. Finding out why people behave the way they do can help those responsible for planning to identify ways of meeting their needs – for example by making it easier and safer for older people to access shopping areas rather than having to rely on others. That is why it's so important to engage members of the public at an early stage in the planning and urban design process. The next section of this report is therefore about how residents and future residents of both existing and new communities can make their voice heard.

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## CASE STUDY

# East Leeds Extension - Northern Quadrant

The East Leeds Extension is a major urban extension to the east of Leeds. The expectation is that this development will provide around 5,500 new homes, together with related infrastructure. The residential proposals seek to create a new 'liveable' and sustainable neighbourhood which is an attractive place to live for people of all ages and abilities. Consequently a great deal of time has been spent on working up a number of key design principles.



The current outline planning application seeks approval for a residential development of around 2,000 dwellings in the 'Northern Quadrant' – the area of the urban extension between Wetherby Road (A58) and York Road (A64). Some of these new homes will be affordable housing for those who would otherwise be unable to obtain housing and so improve their life chances.

Access to the site will be via the East Leeds Orbital Road (ELOR) – a new strategic highway that will stretch from the existing outer ring road at Red Hall all the way around to Thorpe Park at junction 46 of the M1. This new highway, expected to open in 2021, will ease congestion on the existing outer ring road as well as serving the new development, and will define the outer edge of the housing development.

The layout in the illustrative master plan indicates a series of perimeter blocks of development across the site, linked by a central spine road. This will enable the development of housing areas which are safe and secure,





with no exposed rear gardens or vulnerable routes. The block structure responds to the nature of the site and the existing built-up area, for example working with the steeper gradient adjacent to Grimes Dyke. The idea is to reinforce existing connections in order to try and join old with new and promote community identity and cohesion. The local centre will be at the intersection of the internal spine road, with a connection through to the Grimes Dyke development of 372 houses, currently under construction. No detailed plans or elevations of buildings are available as yet, but some key features of the development include:

- a new two-form entry primary school located in the north-western part of the site
- space for a health centre (although early indications suggest that existing facilities will be sufficient)
- fully accessible public buildings.
- a 20 mph speed limit, ensuring that streets are child-friendly and usable for all age groups and abilities
- provision of safe and accessible pedestrian footpaths, cycle routes and informal recreation areas, in addition to the country park, to promote physical activity
- formal play areas with equipment that all children can use, irrespective of ability.

The landscaping element of the scheme knits together the various green spaces (including formal equipped playgrounds), the country park and the wider landscape setting. The cycle and pedestrian routes will connect these

spaces and also link the development to the existing urban area and the wider countryside to enable commuting as well as leisure use. The area is close to the new 23km City Connect Cycle Superhighway which will provide a direct route from East Leeds to Bradford via the city centre. It is important that cycle and pedestrian routes are safe and accessible to ensure maximum use and participation.

The country park element of the scheme lies outside the ELOR but will be accessible by bridge, as well as via crossings at the nearest roundabout junctions with the ELOR. The country park will provide a significant area of informal green space and sit adjacent to the council's Whinmoor Grange site, providing access to sports facilities, a visitor centre and a plant nursery.

Finally, it is important to recognise that economic opportunities arising out of new development can benefit communities and indirectly contribute to improved physical and mental health. The construction of the overall development presents a significant opportunity for training and employment initiatives, which will be secured by legal agreement. Involving local schoolchildren will provide a positive educational experience for children, as well as fostering civic pride. The training and employment opportunities have the potential to create a significant number of jobs, which will help improve the socio-economic profile of the area and provide people with transferable skills which will make them more employable in the future.



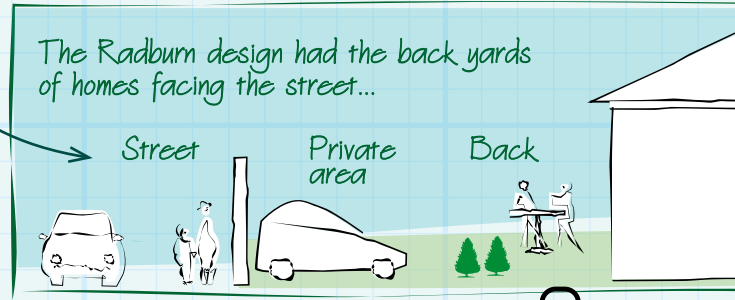


# Beckhill

The UK Radburn design

Beckhill lies between Meanwood and Chapel Allerton in North Leeds on a site dominated by the natural peak of Miles Hill. The area is characterised by the 'Radburn' style of development popular with architects in the 1970s.

The estate's designers attempted to deal with the steep hillside by constructing a series of terraces with large retaining walls, with houses and flats staggered or running with the contours of the land to maximise the number of dwellings. Unfortunately, this had the effect of isolating the estate from its natural environment and from surrounding communities. The Radburn method aimed to keep pedestrians separate from cars and create car-free open spaces. However the design decisions made to deal with the hilly nature of the site meant that the end result was rear parking courts, a network of alleyways serving the houses, and undefined public spaces. This created an environment that encouraged crime and anti-social behaviour and one that was likely to lead to health problems arising from fear of crime and social isolation.



The central area between these two sites contains rows of terraced-type houses built to stagger up the hillside. There are a large number of properties and the area

undoubtedly represents an efficient use of land. However, it suffers from a lack of identity and the narrow alleyways running between the houses create an insecure environment for pedestrians and for residents, whose rear gardens have little security apart from small fences and hedges.

Beckhill has the potential to be a prosperous and desirable place to live. It is close to shops and services and the views from Miles Hill are unique within Leeds. Leeds city centre, Woodhouse Ridge and Headingley are all clearly visible from its summit.

*So what urban design solutions are available for the Beckhill Estate and how can these promote the health and wellbeing of local residents?*

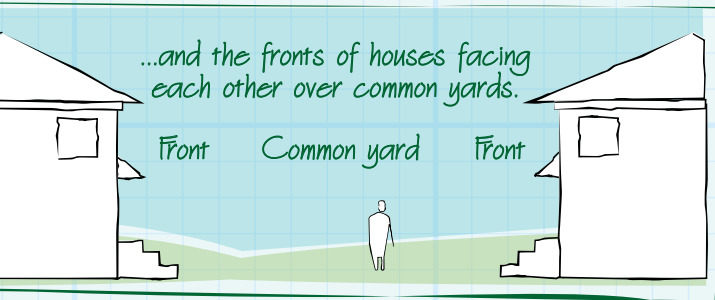
The clearance of the lower part of the site has created an opportunity for a housing development with a mixture of tenures that will link to Beckhill but also prove attractive to new residents. This part of the site is the easiest to develop because it is relatively flat and lies within walking distance of bus



The 'banana block'

Also, where people feel reluctant to walk to the shops or other facilities, there are likely to be physical ill-effects too.

Beckhill comprises three main areas. The lowest site within the estate, recently demolished, was the only flat area of the site. This was an area of low-quality flats and a rambling and confusing layout of linear blocks. Further up the hill, the so-called 'banana block' on Beckhill Avenue effectively separates the estate from the open green space of Miles Hill. As a result, the Miles Hill playground has become isolated, under-used and prey to anti-social activity. The paths running around the 'banana block' often lead to dead ends, creating a threatening environment for pedestrians in this part of the estate.



stops and the shops on Stainbeck Lane. This means that health, community and other facilities can be close to one another, allowing for active travel. Residents can also walk to the nearest district centre of Meanwood where there is a range of supermarkets and a health centre. This promotes physical activity and enables residents to benefit from social contact and a sense of wellbeing from feeling part of a wider community, both key *Neighbourhoods for Living* principles. Urban design analysis has identified an area around the existing shop on the estate as the 'heart' of the area. This is important for giving residents a sense of local identity and for helping people to navigate an area that can be quite confusing, especially for visitors, children or older people.

Planners are working on ways of integrating existing routes into any future layout. These routes must meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and car users and must be and feel safe. There will be provision for car use, but parking will not dominate any new development and vehicle speeds will be kept low. Walking will be encouraged through the use of good-quality surface materials, provision of wider footpaths or pedestrian spaces, tree planting, and perhaps most importantly, active overlooking from buildings along the routes. A through route will link Beckhill Approach to

Potternewton Lane but to avoid 'rat running' (where cars use residential streets as shortcuts) the streets will be designed to minimise speed and create spaces for all.

Promoting community safety is another key principle of *Neighbourhoods for Living* and is paramount in any development. Indicative designs provide for integrated spaces that are well overlooked, safe and secure. In the lower part of the site a covered beck runs behind houses on Stainbeck Road, creating a green corridor. It is not possible in the short term to re-open this beck but a generous green space will link to the Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and form part of the local cycle network, as well as providing a valuable space for wildlife. New houses will face on to this space to ensure continued security. Houses will also overlook the existing multi-use games area – near enough for residents to supervise their children but far enough away to retain privacy, peace and quiet for other residents.

There are also proposals for the removal of the 'banana block' on Beckhill Avenue. This would enable people to view the important natural landmark of Miles Hill properly for the first time and allow neighbouring communities to overlook the Beckhill site. Opening up the Miles Hill space in this way should discourage anti-social behaviour because the site will now be visible from the road and other houses in the area. Local people should therefore feel safer and more comfortable whilst using this space.

A distinctive local character is important for fostering a sense of place, which in turn contributes to feelings of belonging and identity and so to good mental wellbeing. The poor-quality materials and grey concrete of the 1970s houses don't relate to the local historic character, where buildings were mostly constructed of red brick or local sandstone. The 1970s houses have proved difficult to maintain, hard to heat and the design of windows and openings created confusing forms.



Any proposal for new housing should be based upon an analysis of locally distinctive forms of architecture – preferably red brick dwellings with simple pitched roofs. The aim is to achieve simple architectural forms and well-insulated buildings that are adaptable for all occupiers, look like they belong in the local area, and overlook the spaces around them.

Demolished 'banana block' to expose view



# Cross Green

## CASE STUDY

Cross Green is a mixed tenure area of 450 properties just south of East End Park and adjacent to the East Leeds Link Road. Most of these properties are in the private rented sector. The majority of the housing was built before 1919, including a significant number of back-to-back properties. Prior to regeneration, the properties were in a poor condition with high levels of damp, inadequate fire precautions and poor heating.

The health issues experienced in the area reflect the high deprivation rates. Hospital admissions for respiratory and cardiovascular disease in Cross Green are higher than the city average. Both of these conditions are associated with cold, damp homes. The average life expectancy is 74 years compared to the city average of 80.

Due to the high number of rental properties there has been considerable turnover of residents in the area which has created instability in the housing market. The rental levels are amongst the most affordable in the city and there is a large number of housing allowance tenants.

## So what has already happened in the area?

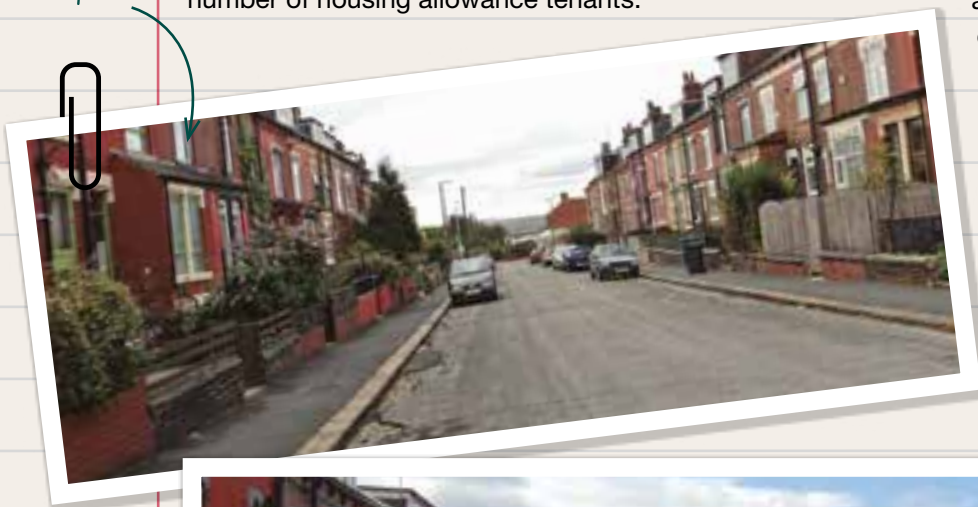
The area is a priority for the council and partners because it forms part of the Aire Valley Enterprise Zone. The Aire Valley is also an Urban Eco Settlement location. In the early 2000s 18% of the housing stock was long-term empty homes. Using the then Private Sector Renewal Grant, the council targeted these empty properties with a programme of acquisition and demolition. This cleared a development site which allowed Chevin Housing to build 21 affordable homes for social rent via the Homes and Communities Agency affordable housing funding.

In addition to the new building, the council began improving the privately-owned properties through a £2.6 million block improvement programme known as Group Repair. A total of 79 properties received new roofs, windows, doors and boundary treatments as well as energy efficiency measures.

The next step was to bring empty homes that weren't part of the new build project back into occupation. The council engaged with the owners and offered help to return their homes to occupation. Most owners did engage but those that failed to do so were subject to compulsory purchase actions.

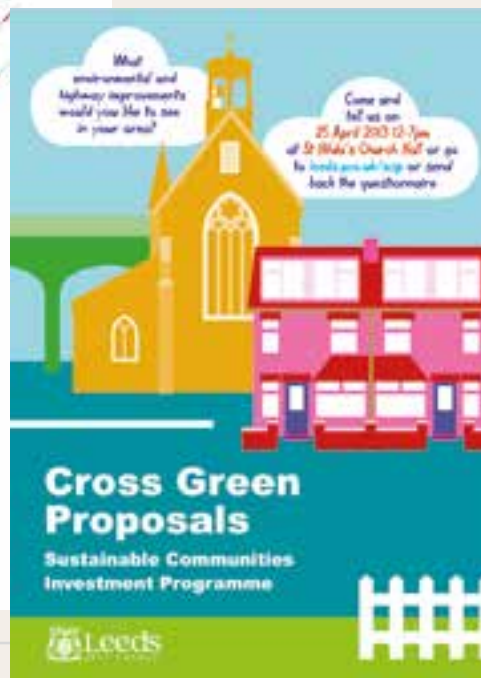
The area was designated a discretionary selective licensing area for five years from October 2009. This required all private landlords to hold a licence with conditions to improve the management of their property and the area in general. Failure to do so was a criminal offence.

Before



After





During selective licensing 580 licences were issued in the area including Cross Green. Council officers provided education and advice to landlords to improve their understanding of their business. Every privately rented property received a visit to ensure that landlords were complying with the licence conditions and the Housing Act. The main issues found on these visits were poor fire safety, housing conditions increasing the likelihood of falls, excess cold, dampness and dangerous electrics. The designation ended in 2014 but the council is continuing to work with partners to maintain improvements to the area.

### What is currently happening in Cross Green?

In 2013 the council provided further investment for the area through the Sustainable Communities Investment Programme. Over £6 million is being invested to renovate the housing stock and to address energy efficiency in all the remaining pre-1919 stock. Around 220–240 properties will receive works to their homes by March 2016. The project involves targeting all blocks, as in the previous investment, but will also provide energy efficiency measures supported by Green Deal/Energy Company Obligation. All pre-1919 properties will receive either internal or external cladding wall insulation, depending on the property type, to help address cold homes and fuel poverty. The council and Leeds Beckett University are doing research to assess the effect of the works on energy efficiency and fuel costs.

There are three remaining development sites which can support further affordable housing. On completion of the current improvements to the existing stock it is proposed that these will be developed and additional new affordable quality homes provided for the area.

Empty homes continue to be targeted. A number of owners who have failed to deal with their properties have been subject to compulsory purchase. This proactive approach has reduced the number of empty homes to only 4% of the stock.

A research project into the health of the area is also under way. All occupiers of properties receiving works to their homes will be asked to complete a health questionnaire. This looks at the potential benefits of the works and at issues around alcohol, smoking, diet and mental health. Health care services will work with occupiers to address any issues raised. In addition, property owners will get help with financial and employment issues, fire safety and security through partnership working with the Police, Fire Service, Jobs and Skills and the Leeds City Credit Union.

Highway improvements along Cross Green will seek to improve safety and pedestrian access through traffic calming measures, road resurfacing, provision of parking bays, pavement improvements and an improved public environment.

Part of the funding also looked at community projects. These have included giving back gardens to a number of properties, improving the allotments to allow residents to grow their own food, and a play area for children.

In conclusion, there has been considerable investment in the Cross Green area to remove properties no longer fit for purpose, develop new high-quality affordable homes and to improve the existing housing stock, all of which contributes to the provision of safe, warm, secure homes. Combined with improvements to the environment, these initiatives are expected to improve both physical and mental health and wellbeing for the residents of Cross Green.



# Hunslet Riverside

Hunslet is an inner-city area bounded on the east by the river Aire a mile south-east of the city centre. Hunslet itself was a medieval town that at one time equalled Leeds in importance.

The historic character of the Hunslet Riverside area was defined by distinct communities within a landscape of heavy industry. The area was connected to the city centre by Hunslet Lane, a thriving road of trams, mills, houses and shops. In the nineteenth century, large-scale industry evolved from the old water-powered mills along the River Aire, on Old Mill Lane. This led to massive increases in population as people moved to the city to find jobs. The much older urban form was altered beyond recognition by Victorian urban expansion, mainly in the form of terraced houses, mills and factories. This was an area where you could witness the massive engineering prowess of Leeds at first hand. The steelworks and textile industries around Hunslet Lane were

world-famous and Hunslet exported its heavy steam engines as far afield as India, Africa and South America.

The working-class communities that emerged were largely self-contained with strong social connections.

Although their homes often lacked the basic space standards and sanitary conditions that civic reformers later came to expect. Allotments and market gardens were common and the area was rich in local facilities such as cinemas, libraries, schools, shops and sports clubs, like the Hunslet Hawks rugby team. These are all features that *Neighbourhoods for Living* seeks to design back into communities.

The post-industrial era was a complete contrast. Slum clearance programmes moved the old communities away and whole areas of Hunslet (such as Leek Street) were rebuilt in the 1960s and 70s. Communities broke up and lost much of their identity, the replacement buildings were of poor quality, and the social infrastructure became fractured. The old industry declined and the area was divided by extensive highway schemes and



planning around the private car. This all resulted in much of the social and geographical disconnection that we see today.

Hunslet Riverside covers much of this post-industrial area. The 1990s development at Leeds Dock and a subsequent spur of developer interest extending from the city centre towards Hunslet centre has led to some of the disconnections being healed but there is still much to do. The potential for large-scale regeneration represents a great opportunity, however. The area is largely flat, which is extremely suitable for active travel; the River Aire provides a biodiversity and amenity corridor and a much-needed natural environment; and the magnificent heritage of buildings such as Hunslet Mill provides a unique sense of place and a direct link to the social and economic history of the area. All of these factors can contribute not only to social cohesion, but also to physical activity, community resilience and sustainability.

The first task of the Hunslet Riverside project was for the urban design team to gain a thorough understanding of the area by making several visits





Create new route to existing Hunslet Centre  
 - Approach to it vitalised, power, attractive business areas  
 - IMAGINATIVE ONLY -



Hunslet Riverside analysis

at different times of the day and year. We started by looking for the pre-1960s buildings. Only a handful remain, but once identified they enabled us to 'join the dots' between these high-quality heritage buildings and reconnect them with new development. It also enabled us to understand the 'centres of gravity' to which any new development naturally relates. For instance, many new sites along the river are actually more physically related to Hunslet than to the city centre. It is now possible to think of development here as re-linking Hunslet to the city centre – geographically, socially and historically – for the first time in 60 years. New development that directly responds to and improves the area will not only overcome the barrier of social isolation, but will also give residents direct, safe and accessible routes to work and leisure facilities in the city centre and the surrounding areas.

The Hunslet end of Yarn Street is just 200 metres from the point of arrival into Hunslet itself.

The redevelopment of the older people's home at Hemingway House, and the conversion of the old pub at the corner of Old Mill Lane, have created a powerful street presence that signposts the way in to Hunslet itself by directing the view to the historic church steeple to the south west. This sense of arriving somewhere encourages new residents to walk to the local district centre at Hunslet.

Further along Hunslet Road, the recent redevelopment of the Grade II listed Alf Cooke Printworks as the new Leeds City College Printworks Campus, and the opening of the new Leeds College of Building, Hunslet campus, has created vibrant educational and community facilities where previously there were only car showrooms and light industrial warehouses. Links with the remaining local industry are giving students important vocational skills and the area is becoming another centre of learning for the city.

The final piece in the Hunslet Riverside puzzle is the area north of the River Aire towards Cross Green and Richmond Hill. What used to be railway goods yards and the small, ancient settlement of Knowsthorpe is now the Cross Green Industrial Estate. There are serious barriers to overcome here, not least the East Leeds Link Road and the railway spur. If these barriers can be overcome, Hunslet, Cross Green and local employment opportunities could be connected through safe walking routes once more. The end result will be a community that is less isolated and less reliant on the private car – a community that builds upon its historic assets, celebrates its industrial heritage, and is once again connected both to the city centre and to itself.





# Engaging local communities

The challenges facing public services mean changing relationships between residents, services, the third sector and businesses. All of us are ambitious for the city's future and want to do things differently in building upon past and ongoing public and partnership consultation, and we recognise that local people's input must be at the heart of change. 'Community engagement' is the overarching practice of achieving that ambition.

Community engagement means informing local people about the choices available and helping people influence what happens in their community and the services they use. It also means helping people achieve more for themselves. 'Working with communities, not doing things to them' is a core council value.

Community engagement benefits the council and the communities of Leeds in many ways:

- diverse voices having an influence
- better service design
- better decision-making
- targeting resources more effectively
- more successful local democracy
- stronger communities.

Whatever way we at Leeds City Council work with communities, we aim to:

- make it easy for everyone to take part
- make the engagement meaningful and honest
- involve people at the earliest possible stage
- show everyone the impact the engagement has had.

Working with communities could mean talking to local landowners, as we have done in the Aire Valley and on the South Bank (see pages 48 and 50), engaging with local people through the Neighbourhood Plan (see pages 39) or holding drop-in events (see page 42) so that anyone with an interest in a development or regeneration project can have their say. We've also gone into schools and involved children, for example in trying to make their local park a healthier, safer place (page 46).



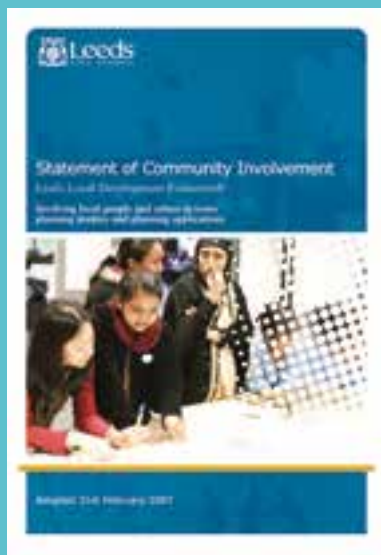
If we're to put into practice the recommendations of key documents like *Neighbourhoods for Living*, we need to talk to people about their experience of living in communities – what is making it difficult for them to enjoy the best possible physical and mental health and wellbeing and how we can work to create healthy new environments or improve existing ones.

Managing the regeneration and growth of the city raises a number of challenges and opportunities. As part of this process, Leeds has many opportunities for residents to engage with the planning process and, crucially, is rich in people who want to make a difference. To deliver positive outcomes for communities when resources are under pressure, we need to make sure these opportunities join up, increase the use of community-led engagement approaches and, when we want to find new ways to be the best, trust that service-users hold the most valuable insights of all. As one older person said:

*'The Council needs to be aware that everyone has different requirements. They need to speak to older people to understand their needs and involve them in each step of the process.'*



## ‘How can I influence what happens in my local area and my city?’



Leeds City Council’s Statement of Community Involvement or SCI sets out a framework for community participation in the planning process. There is a two-page leaflet summing up what the SCI is all about – and much more information – on the council website. You’ll find a link to this, and a range of other useful documents, at the end of this section.

The SCI tells you the who, how and what of community involvement – who can be involved, how you can be involved and what you can be involved in. For example, you could get involved with drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan for your area. Or you might want to comment on the early stages of a new planning application. We’ll engage and consult with any individual, group or stakeholder who wants to be involved. And it’s not just the council that has to listen to you – we make sure that developers take your views into account in their development proposals and planning applications.

***Remember you can always contact your local councillor if there is an issue that particularly concerns you. Follow the link at the end of this section to find out who your local councillor is and how you can contact them.***

## ‘What’s a Neighbourhood Plan and how do I know if my area has one?’

The Localism Act 2011 enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for their area. This gives communities a say in the development of their local area – where new development takes place and what it should look like.

The NP is prepared by the community, consulted on by the community and then submitted to the council which appoints an independent examiner to check that the plan is sound and conforms to local and national planning frameworks. The final stage is a local referendum at which 50% of voters have to support the plan for it to be adopted. If adopted, the plan becomes part of the council’s statutory Local Development Plan.

Although the NP is primarily a land-use planning document, there is also an opportunity to seek ways of delivering sustainable development. This is where local health and wellbeing needs – both now and in the future – can come into play. This isn’t just about providing convenient GP surgeries and dentists. It’s about giving people access to reliable public transport and safe walking and cycle routes, providing green spaces for children to play and people to exercise, making sure that people can feel safe and secure as they move around the neighbourhood, thinking about opportunities for allotments and food growing, and much more. These are often aspirations rather than specific proposals, but nonetheless the NP allows local people to have a say.





## LEEDS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GUIDANCE

Guidance for local communities and others who are interested in neighbourhood planning in Leeds



Leeds has one of the highest levels of NP activity of any city across the country. So far, we've designated 22 Neighbourhood Areas (this is the area covered by the NP) and another 20 areas have expressed an interest. Both 'inner' and 'outer' areas are well represented and communities are active across the district as a whole. The council is promoting pilots in Otley, Beeston & Holbeck, Kippax and Boston Spa. Usually, the town or parish council provides a focus for preparing the NP. Occasionally, in non-parished areas like Holbeck, the city council, in discussion with the local community, will designate a Neighbourhood Forum, made up of a minimum of 21 people who live, work or do business in the area, to lead the work.

You can contact the group for your area, if there is one, directly or via Leeds City Council. There's a list of useful links at the end of this section.

*'Having lived and worked in the market town of Otley for over 30 years, I have come to value its rich and varied history, its remarkable community spirit and its delightful semi-rural environment. It is my view that all of these come together to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of Otley's residents.*

*In recent years, Otley has seen a significant amount of windfall housing and there are proposals for several large-scale developments which clearly have the potential to substantially affect the*

*dynamics of the community. So, when the opportunity arose to be involved in developing the town's Neighbourhood Plan, I volunteered in the hope that features of the town that I, and many others, value might be conserved or even enhanced.*

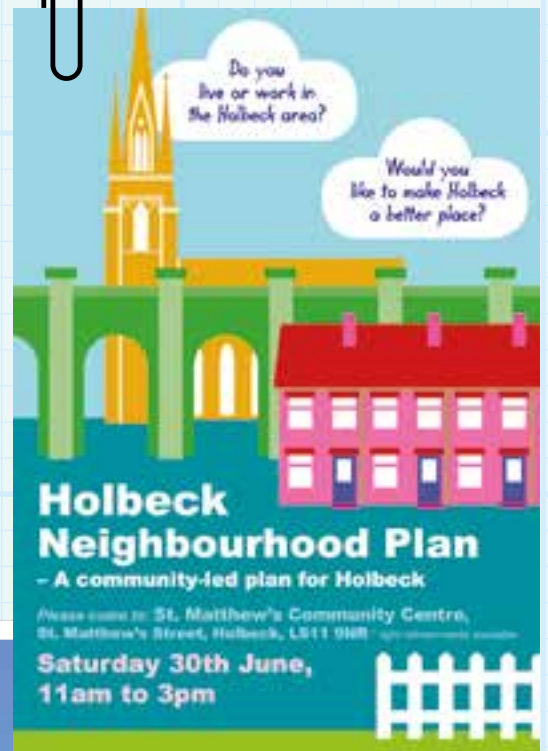
*It is my hope that the Neighbourhood Plan will be instrumental in developing communities that provide for a healthy and rewarding lifestyle for all. For example, ensuring that any further new housing meets the various needs of the existing community, is built to high sustainability criteria and also takes fully into account the infrastructure limitations of an essentially medieval town; that children have quality places to engage in active outdoor play near to their homes; that teenagers and adults can access a wide range of recreational facilities; and that there are havens of tranquillity throughout the town where people can escape the stresses and strains of life and enjoy the natural world.'*

Jenny Watson



# Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan

## CASE STUDY



got the chance to say what they like and dislike about the neighbourhood. The event also included a 'History of Holbeck'. A popular aspect of the event was a set of 50 captioned A3 photos showing some of the opportunities and challenges in Holbeck, with space for local people to add comments and ideas.

Local volunteers then did a series of walkabouts, camera in hand. All the feedback from the

Holbeck is an inner city area of Leeds, just south of the city centre. Holbeck has a lot going for it. Its industrial heritage is reflected in some wonderful listed buildings. It has an identifiable centre and an engaged, multicultural community, but its community identity has got rather lost in recent years despite a number of previous regeneration initiatives. The Neighbourhood Plan is an attempt to reinvigorate the area and re-connect with its history.

The council approached local community groups to promote the idea of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. This led to a successful bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government for Holbeck to become a Neighbourhood Planning pilot area, securing in the process £20,000 funding to assist with preparing the plan.

To get the process started, the council and local community leaders organised a drop-in event at St Matthews Church. This included an interactive exhibition explaining what neighbourhood planning is and how it could benefit Holbeck. Local people

public engagement was reported to a public meeting four weeks later (the interim Neighbourhood Forum).

Intensive early support from the council was critical to success during the first year but as time went by the council was able to take a step back and allow the community to take more control. This was ultimately achieved when the interim forum applied to the council for Neighbourhood Area designation and appointment of a Neighbourhood Forum to prepare the plan.





# CASE STUDY



The Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum was designated in April 2014. It has received significant support from the council, Planning Aid England and local volunteers in addition to the £20,000 pilot funding and a £4,000 bridging grant to help with consultation, engagement and plan preparation. The Neighbourhood Forum has forged links with a range of local community groups and other organisations including housing developers and social housing managers, the local primary school, the Holbeck Gala, Holbeck in Bloom, Holbeck Working Men's Club (WMC), Messy Play, Holbeck Elderly Aid, Holbeck Feast, Slung Low theatre and St Matthews Community Centre.

The draft Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan was published in June 2015. This starts by setting out the vision for Holbeck, describing the aspirations for Holbeck over the next 15–20 years:

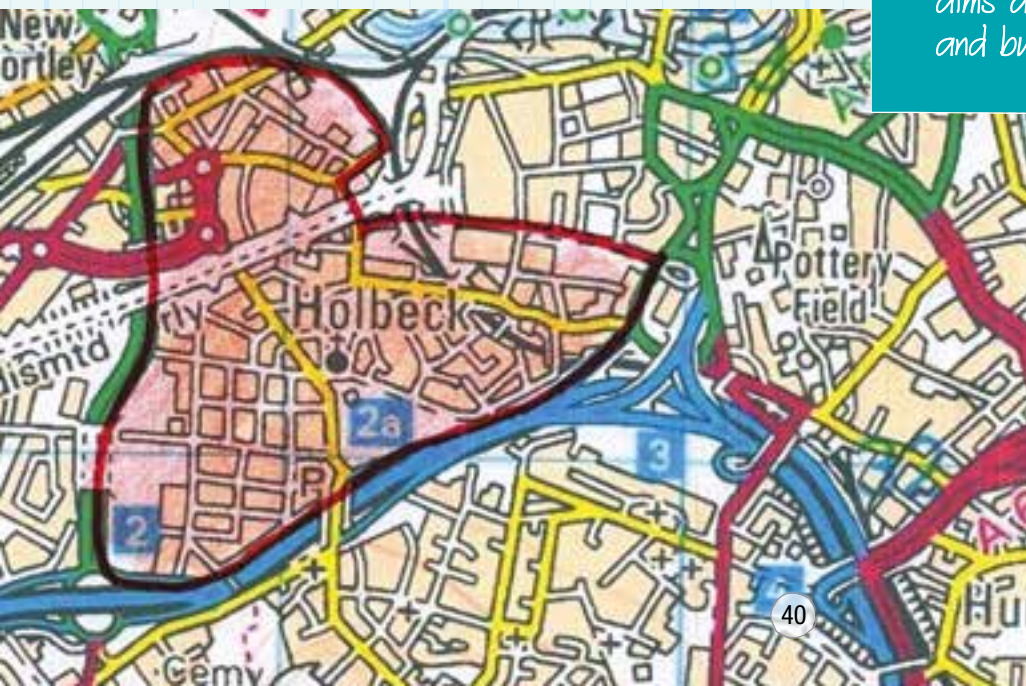
*To make Holbeck a more attractive and healthier place for everyone, it will have a thriving local centre with a range of community facilities, a choice of quality but affordable housing, a variety of local job opportunities, all set in a green environment, respecting the heritage and local character of the area, and well connected to the city centre and adjoining neighbourhoods.*

*'When we embarked on setting up a Neighbourhood Plan for Holbeck our ambitions were simple: to improve perceptions of Holbeck and to seek to provide facilities and programmes that would enhance the area.*

*Putting in place a NP has already improved perceptions, helped by the recent activities of the SC4L (Sustainable Communities for Leeds) development and the Brown Lane development by Unity Housing. Further work on perceptions is needed but it's within our grasp.*

*Improving facilities and programmes is proving more difficult. We are now meeting various City Council departments and discussions are progressing, but with hindsight these discussions should have taken place at the beginning when we were setting up the NP.*

*On a positive note we are optimistic and continue to make our modest aims a reality for residents, visitors and business partners.'*



The plan sets out in some detail a range of objectives, policies and projects aimed at achieving this vision. Policy C3, for example, goes to the heart of this report:

*Development which contributes to the health and well-being of the community will be supported.*



This is particularly important for a neighbourhood that lies within an area with the highest level of deprivation in terms of health.

The plan lists partners, funding proposals and expected delivery time for a range of projects. To give a flavour of the range of activity, here are just a few examples:

- Short-term – improve lighting on footpaths, particularly on Holbeck Moor, in underpasses and along roads past undeveloped sites (Leeds City Council (LCC) budget); promote use of existing community facilities such as Holbeck WMC and St Matthews and Holbeck community centres (LCC grants).
- Medium-term – carry out improvements to back-to-back streets, back lanes to terrace streets, etc. (LCC grants, Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL); support temporary uses of vacant shops and other premises within the Holbeck Historic Core (Townscape Heritage Initiative).
- Long-term – create job opportunities by working to restore the old mill buildings in Holbeck Industrial Heritage Area for mixed uses (CIL, Heritage Trust); improve existing green spaces, particularly for children’s activities (LCC Park and Open Spaces budget, CIL).

The next steps are a pre-submission consultation to make any necessary changes to the draft plan before submitting it to the council for a final period of consultation before it goes to the independent examiner. If the examiner is happy, a referendum on the plan could take place by the end of 2015.

To find out more about the Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan, see:

[www.holbeckneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.holbeckneighbourhoodplan.org.uk)



## ‘How can I influence planning applications?’

Leeds City Council actively promotes engagement between developers and communities, city, town and parish councillors and the Neighbourhood Forum (if there is one), preferably at an early stage in the development – before the final scheme is prepared but at a point where there is some clarity around the key design and planning issues. Community engagement is a requirement for major proposals but also for smaller proposals that are likely to prove sensitive, have a significant impact or be of considerable public interest.

Early engagement allows communities to:

- help shape a proposal and address its likely impact
- understand what is being proposed
- make developers aware of community needs and aspirations.

This could include a public exhibition of the proposals, a questionnaire and feedback form and/or information leaflets. For very large or significant developments, a community forum might be set up to tap into local knowledge and networks and help build a long-term relationship between the developer and the community.

Pre-application engagement represents the ideal but you can also have your say about planning applications that have already been submitted through Public Access. The council’s User Guide tells you how to access planning information past (from 1974) and present. (You’ll find a link to the User Guide at the end of this section.) Amongst other things, you can comment if you feel that a proposed development might be detrimental to your health, for example because of noise, disturbance or odour or its impact on accessibility.



Planning Aid England offers free and independent professional planning advice and support to individuals and communities, subject to certain eligibility criteria. There is a free web resource called Planning Aid Direct and an Advice Line. Volunteers are available to help you understand the planning system and get involved with planning in your area.

You can find out more at [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)





# Enlivening a community

## - regenerating Holt Park District Centre

The Holt Park District Centre dates back to the early 1970s. The retail element, including ASDA, opened in 1974. At that time, the council opened the Ralph Thoresby High School and Holt Park Leisure Centre. Thirty years on, both these buildings had become outdated, so the first stage in the centre's regeneration was to replace them.



Following extensive public consultation, the new Ralph Thoresby High School opened in 2007 and the replacement leisure centre, Holt Park Active, opened in autumn 2013. Demolition of these old buildings left unsightly semi-derelict spaces behind, but also created the potential to change what had been a compact but quite 'hard' space into a 'softer' space that re-connected with surrounding neighbourhoods.

The next stage of the regeneration project was to identify development sites and prepare a planning statement setting out the council's vision. The project goes to the heart of the community so the council set up a public consultation exercise at the draft stage. The first event was a public meeting

with the Holt Park Forum at Holt Park Active. This was followed by a drop-in event, again at Holt Park Active, where officers displayed the proposals and made themselves available to discuss issues raised by members of the public. The information was then displayed in the Planning Services reception throughout the six-week consultation period.





'Having multiple sclerosis means that walking and exercise are difficult and it's really hard to keep fit. Swimming is one of the things I can manage to do and, for me, it is essential to have an accessible pool. I was really disappointed when I heard that the old Holt Park was going to close, as it had been so easy getting in and out of the pool. But now that Holt Park Active has opened, I love it! The disabled parking spaces are right outside the front of the centre and I always manage to get one. Manoeuvring is easy because there is lots of space between the parking bays. It's a short flat walk from there to the front door, with no steps and a coloured crossing area which makes it safer for people who walk slowly.'

Most people attending these engagement events were supportive of the scheme. An amended planning statement taking account of the public consultation will now provide the basis for future redevelopment and regeneration proposals.

The design principles set out in the planning statement address several of the issues identified in *Neighbourhoods for Living*:

- creating and enhancing links to and from surrounding areas to make the centre a walkable place that respects both the 'leafy' nature of Holt Park and its rural origins
- keeping vehicle intrusion to a minimum so that the pedestrian is in charge and people feel they can move about the centre safely
- ensuring natural surveillance of the site so that users of the site can feel safer and more secure
- creating good pedestrian links between key facilities to promote physical activity and a sense of community
- softening existing 'hard' spaces to create a more relaxed and greener outdoor environment that is child- and pedestrian-friendly and offers full access for people with a disability.

The community served by the centre has been, and will be, consulted at every stage of the regeneration project.



'A lift takes me straight down to the floor where the swimming pool is. I use the accessible changing room which has a shower, a shower chair and a bed which I sit on. It's hard because there are no rails to hold onto to get from the shower to the bed. Once I'm at the poolside, there are steps to get in and out rather than just a ladder, so I can manage that. I need my stick to get to the pool but I just leave it on the side. My fatigue is too bad to go shopping after swimming, but it is useful to have the big Asda close to the leisure centre. All in all, the new leisure centre has been a really positive development for me and for others with limited mobility who want to keep themselves fit.'

Carole Bennett



## 'Are there any other ways of getting involved?'

Some areas in Leeds have a Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS) or a Village Design Statement (VDS). These are all about identifying, protecting and enhancing the character of your local environment and fostering good design that fits in with the local context. They are promoted by Natural England, the Countryside Agency and other bodies and are produced by local communities, supported by Leeds City Council.

Local consultation normally also plays an important part of the process of designating a Conservation Area. These are areas of special historic or architectural interest. Designation means we can manage change so as to preserve or enhance an area's special character.

'Planning for real' is a positive technique we use with community groups to simulate a planning task, such as the potential layout of a development or developing planning options for an area.

## 'How can children and young people make their voices heard?'

Wish 11 of Child Friendly City is 'Children and young people express their views, feel heard and are actively involved in decisions that affect their lives'. This includes providing 'More opportunities for all children and young people to get involved in decision-making and influence change in the city centre and local communities'. Leeds is addressing this wish in all sorts of ways. For example, in 2014 Leeds Youth Council was consulted on proposals to increase opportunities for children and families to cycle in parks by piloting 'cycle friendly' areas in parks and looking at the byelaws that currently restrict cycling in parks.

James Brent of Bardsey Primary School was a candidate for Children's Mayor 2014-15 and in his manifesto he had some ideas for how we can make Leeds a safer, healthier city:



*'I want to be Leeds Children's Mayor, because Leeds is a great place to live and I want to make it better!*

*What Leeds needs is more youth centres, where you can go to make friends, go after school to be safe until someone can collect you, get a healthy meal as many children in Leeds do not get healthy food at home, play sport, get fit and help the community. The centres could have indoor and outdoor space. Lots of children don't have a garden or space to play. If the centres had their own grounds, there would be no dog fouling so children would be safe there. The centres could be used for Scouts, Cubs, Guides and Brownies. There are already several centres for preschool children, which could be expanded to be used after school time for older children. School grounds are safe and have gates, but are often not used after school and in school holidays.*





# CASE STUDY

## Getting children and young people involved

In 2013 the Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, Ed Vaizey MP, invited the architect and planner Sir Terry Farrell CBE to undertake a national review of architecture and the built environment. His wide-ranging report focused on five themes: Education, Outreach and Skills, Design Quality, Cultural Heritage, Economic Benefits and Built Environment Policy.

The review stressed the vital role of education, outreach and custodianship within the built environment – in other words, involving people of all ages in the design of their own environment and helping them to realise what's possible rather than just asking them what they think.

In its response to the review, Leeds City Council highlighted the part that urban design-led education and awareness-raising amongst children and young people is playing in determining the environment that Leeds residents will live in – an economic, social and physical environment that can significantly affect people's physical and mental health. For example:

- Between 1995 and 2011, the council hosted a schools design competition inspired by a former director of planning, Stan Kenyon. The Stan Kenyon Challenge encouraged young people to engage with local environment issues, think about all aspects of living and create ideas for making Leeds a better place to live in.

There are 170 days a year when these school buildings are not used and this is a waste of money. We could easily use them for very little cost. Also we could use school sports halls to provide sports clubs and help improve the health of the community. There are many sports centres around the city which could offer free sessions after school to keep young people entertained rather than sitting playing video games and being lazy. Centres could also be used for older people and young people could learn skills from them as well. Hopefully, the National Lottery and Children in Need could help with projects. Also, fund raisers in school and working with local businesses with vouchers to get equipment. Working as a team, the impossible can be possible! I want to be part of a better Leeds.





# 'Design, a Park' - children's voices

More than 100 schools completed the challenge and over 3,000 school children and staff received awards during 16 years of activity. The overall winner for 2010-11 for the topic 'Healthy Communities' used the challenge to encourage pupils to think about their ideal community and supported them to interview local people of all ages to design their ideal community, using recycled materials for much of the construction.

Ashfield Primary's winning design



In the run-up to the London Olympics 2012, officers from NHS Leeds, Parks and Countryside and the Urban Design Team asked pupils at Richmond Hill, Victoria Primary and All Saints Schools in Richmond Hill to 'Design a Park' based on East End Park in Leeds 9.

All three schools were asked to think about ways of making the park healthy and accessible for everyone. Pupils watched a slideshow of 32 different parks from around the world to inspire them and stimulate ideas. This was followed by a quick photographic tour of East End Park to show children how the park once looked and make them aware of the important aspects of the park that remain.

The pupils began by looking at what they would like to see in a park.



Richmond Hill pupils Abi, Daisy, Jayden and David

- The bi-annual Leeds Architecture Awards is a key calendar event for designers and architects in the city. As part of the 25th anniversary event, a young people's panel – 10 young people aged between 11 and 18 – visited award-winning buildings from previous years and assessed each one against set judging criteria on quality, design and environmental impact. They shortlisted over 100 projects to get three winners – conserved, landscape and new. The young people presented their award on stage, speaking to an audience of renowned designers and architects from across the country. The intention is to continue to involve young people in future years of the award.

Despite the health focus, they inevitably wanted roller coasters and fast food stands! But they also had some inspiring ideas – everything from a bicycle-powered roller coaster to a nature park for the world's ten most endangered species.

All three groups appreciated the need for nature, gardens, trees and opportunities to promote physical activity and health. The project drew out information about how children currently use the park and how they would like to





East End Park in 1900 (left) and 2015

'I can remember East End Park when it looked like this. What appears to be people dotted about, to the left of the cottage, is actually the swings and roundabout and slides, etc. Us kids used to go there every day during the summer holidays, with a picnic of bread and jam and a milk bottle full of water! If you walked down the banking you could watch the trains chugging by, and our mother never had any need to worry about us back then. You had to behave yourself though, or the park keeper would come out of his cottage and tell you off and if you had been particularly bad he would send you home. Imagine that now! We used to go and knock on his door and ask when the swing would be fixed and things like that, and he'd say, 'I'll do it tomorrow... Those were the days.....'

- Victoria Primary School focused on their likes and dislikes in the park. They designed new entrances and came up with innovative bin and seat designs.

Two of the girls made models (one at home in her own time). Persuasive writing was a subject topic that term so the class designed posters to promote the Olympic torch relay event at the park and wrote letters to Leeds City Council to campaign for improvements and better facilities. These were sent to the MP and local councillors along with an A3 folder of work after the event.

- Richmond Hill Primary took a plan of East End Park and sketched in what they would like in their ideal park. Nature areas, conservation areas, tree houses and even a costumed character were all sketched onto the plan. Pupils then drew out their own little park area and during a class visit considered what apparatus they would like and how this could help promote physical activity and access for all. The result was a series of group models focusing on their ideas, from zip wires (very popular) to climbing frames. Finally, pupils considered their wider class theme of fashion and the involvement of Stella McCartney in designing the outfit for the British Olympic team. They made T-shirts to be worn as the Olympic torch made its way through East End Park on 24th June 2012.

Following on from the project it is hoped that pupils will feel more comfortable using the park in the future. We hope to repeat the project, with more of a focus on activity and wellbeing, food production and nature, as well as fun!

use it in the future. It also made them aware that East End Park is a valuable resource that needs constant looking after. Each school worked to a particular theme:

- All Saints School produced a class model of their ideal theme park in a park. They considered the health possibilities of a theme park (it was this group who came up with the idea for a bicycle-powered roller coaster and running track) but also did an excellent job of marketing and presenting a pitch to promote their theme park.



# 'What can I do if a new development is likely to affect my business?'

Community engagement isn't just about talking to members of the general public. New developments, particularly in inner city areas, affect local landowners too and this section of the report concludes with two case studies to show how Leeds City Council involves key stakeholders in the planning process.

## CASE STUDY

### Aire Valley landowner engagement

It is crucial for officers to see at first-hand how change is affecting an area by talking to business owners who identify with the area and its past and who care for and want a say in its future. During work on the Hunslet Riverside Area, Leeds City Council urban design officers contacted owners of sites identified as having some strategic importance to the area, including the owners of Tetley's Coaches, British Waterways, Hunslet Mill and Corrocoat.



Aire Valley Leeds AAP | Map 3: Strategic Plan







# South Bank strategic landowner partnership

South Leeds is poised for dramatic transformation, with an enormous potential despite years of disinvestment, disconnection from the city centre, and the loss of industries which once made it vibrant. Without a meaningful vision for the area, however, that potential could be lost – the opportunity to create positive spaces, and to link and build upon remaining assets in the area, connecting them back to the north side of the river, and to each other.

The initial South Bank area was centred around Meadow Lane and included the Tetley Brewery and ASDA's headquarters, but continuing developments and opportunities mean that the council is now looking at a much wider area. The boundary now runs from Temple Works and Holbeck Urban Village, across to Hunslet Mill on the River Aire. New development (including building colleges and new offices), the planned Next Generation Transport route (NGT), and the announcement of HS2 have all had significant impacts on thinking for the future and the area's prospects. Ultimately, however, the success of the emerging vision for the area is reliant upon the interest and support of stakeholders, including local landowners.



In 2010 the city's Executive Board agreed the creation of a Planning Statement for the South Bank. This gained approval as informal planning guidance for the area in 2011. Following an initial process of consultation which included key landowners, a set of design and development principles was created which included key links and routes, indicative building plots and heights, and the creation of a new City Park (see page 20).





## Getting involved – useful websites

*Making Leeds a Child Friendly City:* [www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/CfL%20Children%20Young%20People%20Leaflet.pdf](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/CfL%20Children%20Young%20People%20Leaflet.pdf)

Conservation Areas: [www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Conservation-areas.aspx](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Conservation-areas.aspx)

Design Neighbourhood and Village Design Statements: [www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Design-Neighbourhood-and-Village-Design-Statements.aspx](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Design-Neighbourhood-and-Village-Design-Statements.aspx)

Farrell Review: [www.farrellreview.co.uk](http://www.farrellreview.co.uk)

Find your local councillor: <http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx?XXR=0&AC=USERSEARCH&sPC=Enter%20postcode&CL=235&>

Forum for Neighbourhood Planning (supports community groups and individuals to develop a Neighbourhood Plan): [www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk](http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk)

Leeds Neighbourhood Planning Guidance: [www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Leeds%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20Guidance.pdf](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Leeds%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20Guidance.pdf)

Planning Aid [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

*Pre-Application Engagement: A Guide to Best Practice:* [www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Pre-Application%20Booklet%20LRW.PDF](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Pre-Application%20Booklet%20LRW.PDF)

Statement of Community Involvement: [www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Statement-of-community-involvement.aspx](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/council/Pages/Statement-of-community-involvement.aspx)

*Using New Public Access to Planning User Guide – How to Access Planning Information:* [www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/New%20PA%20manual%202%20Feb%202010.pdf](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/New%20PA%20manual%202%20Feb%202010.pdf)

Ultimately a green corridor will thread through the city centre, improving connectivity, particularly between the north and south banks of the River Aire, and acting as a catalyst for further sustainable regeneration and brownfield redevelopment opportunities beyond.





# Recommendations

The move from the NHS to the local authority in April 2013 was seen by many of us in public health as an exciting opportunity. The reason was the chance to better influence, through the council, the wider determinants of health – both now and looking into the future. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than the Leeds City Council plan for an additional 70,000 homes by 2028.

On the one hand we have the World Health Organisation stating that ‘local councils can have their most important long term effect on health through the decisions they take about spatial planning’. On the other hand we probably all know of housing developments that turned out to be, in health and wellbeing terms, good, bad or ugly. This results from the inevitable pot pourri of different motives, viewpoints, influences and finances of the huge range of individuals, communities, businesses, politicians and officials, amongst others. All of these differences come together through the formal planning process. Therefore, in my report I have wanted to raise the profile of the public health benefits of good urban design and planning. I want to see these benefits realised through strengthening the voice of individuals and communities in shaping their local area through all aspects of the planning process.

I hope the case studies illustrate the different ways that Leeds City Council is seeking the influence of citizens and communities. No-one, least of all the authors of these case studies, claims there isn’t room for improvement. However, I hope my report has provided more understanding about opportunities for engagement and influence.

Leeds City Council demonstrated its ambition by leading a national commission on the future of local government <https://civicenterpriseuk.wordpress.com/> This explicitly called for the mobilisation of the talents of citizens and communities. Let’s ensure that these talents are maximised in determining how the 70,000 homes help power the economy forward, improve health, reduce health inequalities and contribute to the sustainability of our city.

## These are my recommendations:

- 1** Leeds City Council Public Health Directorate should be involved in early discussions relating to all new major housing developments, ideally at the pre-application stage, to ensure that health impacts are considered.
- 2** Developers should follow the principles set out in the *Neighbourhoods for Living* document and use this Annual Report of the Director of Public Health as a complementary guide that draws out the public health benefits of good design.
- 3** The three Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) should actively engage with the planning process in their areas as they take on responsibility for the commissioning of primary health care services.
- 4** Leeds City Council Public Health Directorate should promote the NICE recommendations on physical activity and the environment.
- 5** Developers should consider design principles around food and climate change that are not covered specifically in *Neighbourhoods for Living*:
  - Avoid the local food supply being monopolised by a single provider, enabling choice.
  - Wherever possible, safeguard allotments, good agricultural land, gardens or other growing land.
  - Wherever possible, build cooking facilities into community facilities and schools.
  - Consider measures to prevent overheating of homes including passive ventilation, providing cool and attractive outdoor areas, and the use of plants to create shade.



# NOTES



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Andrew Graham

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[PHI.Requests@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:PHI.Requests@leeds.gov.uk)

This report is available on line at

[http://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/Leeds\\_DPH\\_Report/](http://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/Leeds_DPH_Report/)

We welcome feedback about our annual report or any of our other documents.

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