Section 4  Urban Core Policies

This Section outlines the policies for the Urban Core, recognising the role of the area for delivering economic growth for Gateshead and Newcastle.

Chapter 14 Urban Core
14. Urban Core

This section of the Plan is concerned specifically with the Urban Core (Figure 14.1). The Urban Core is the focal point of the Tyneside conurbation. It stretches approximately 3.6km from the north to the south, extending from Newcastle’s Town Moor to Gateshead’s Durham Road, and from 4km from west to east, extending from the edge of Elswick in Newcastle, and the Redheugh Bridge on the Gateshead side, to Ouseburn and Gateshead Quays. The total area covered by the Urban Core is over 6 square kilometres.

14.2 Policies CS1 and CS2 set out that the Urban Core will be the priority location for major development. The area is the regional focus and the most sustainable location in the wider North East area. Full advantage needs to be taken of this not only to grow the local economy, but also to stimulate growth of the wider regional economy.
Over the past 20 years the area has been dramatically transformed and we have established a good reputation for cultural-led regeneration. There is still significant growth potential in the Urban Core and the Plan sets the framework within which we want to see this realised. Major development here will reinforce its continued success by bringing new businesses, particularly in science, retail, digital, creative and tourism sectors to the area.

We are planning for significant change by 2030, including the extension of Newcastle’s Primary Shopping Area into the East Pilgrim Street area, a new and revitalised centre for Gateshead, science and research led development at Science Central, major office development at Baltic Business Quarter and a new residential area in Gateshead at the Southern Gateway.

Given its importance as a driver for our economic growth, this section of the Plan contains a number of policies specific to the Urban Core which by their very nature are more detailed than those presented earlier in the Plan. These policies are important for delivering our vision for the Urban Core to be a prosperous and sustainable place. This section of the Plan sets out Urban Core specific policies for:

- offices and business development, new retail (A1), leisure, culture and tourism
- homes
- pedestrian routes, cycling, public transport, freight and servicing, general traffic, car parking, gateways and arrival points
- urban design, views, heritage, urban green infrastructure, public realm and public art

These are further supported by Chapters 16 and 17 which contain the Sub-Area specific policies and land allocations policies including those for Gateshead’s and Newcastle’s Key Sites.

The Newcastle Central Sub-Area is the regional focus for retail, commercial and leisure uses. The historic cityscape reflects development over the past centuries: from remnants of the city walls and the Black Gate, to Blackfriars, to churches and cathedrals and Victorian rail infrastructure. There is also a high density of Georgian buildings within Grainger Town, 20th century additions when ambitions were for a Brasilia of the North and most recently new modern architecture such as the City Library. In this Sub-Area the main focus of development activity will be on the expansion of the Primary Shopping Area through the development of a major new retail scheme in the north of the East Pilgrim Street Key Site. The rest of the East Pilgrim Street area will be developed predominantly for a mix of commercial and residential uses. New bus facilities are proposed to serve buses travelling to the east and south of the City reducing through traffic. The improvement of the arrival experience at Central Station, together with wayfinding and public realm initiatives, are important in this Sub-Area. Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Routes will be enhanced making the area more accessible and connecting Central Station to the surrounding area.
14.8 The Civic Sub-Area wraps around the northern edge of the Urban Core and contains major institutions which are vital to the region’s prosperity. The Sub-Area includes two universities, the Royal Victoria Infirmary and the Science Central Key Site. Science Central is the focus for future development in this Sub-Area and will be predominantly developed for knowledge based industries associated with the universities, learning and research together with a range of supporting uses. These uses include new University science and research facilities, businesses and homes for students and families. Within this Sub-Area there are historic townscapes which provide distinctive, high quality housing areas and there will be opportunities to further improve these areas.

14.9 The Discovery Sub-Area is characterised by major development sites which provide opportunity for western expansion of the Urban Core. The Discovery Sub-Area is a transition area between the City Centre and the residential areas of the west end. The major driver for change in this area is to the south of Central Station which contains the Stephenson Quarter Key Site. The site has south facing slopes, Tyne views, industrial heritage, is next to Central Station and has the potential for office led mixed-use. In this Sub-Area the Forth Yards Development Opportunity site in the west will be unlocked by improving access across major highways and rail infrastructure, integrating the area into the Urban Core. Work has already started on both the transformation of the area around Central Station and the first phase of Stephenson Quarter. The continued development of Newcastle College’s campus will be supported and the important gateway to the Urban Core improved through future development of the Forth Yards area. The Summerhill area is one of our high-quality historic residential areas and the environment will be maintained and improved.

14.10 The Quayside and Ouseburn Sub-Area contains distinctive vibrant areas defined by their historic legacies, topography and riverside location. The Quayside is one of the most recognisable locations in the UK and is a major attractor for culture, living and as a business location. Over the last decade the Ouseburn has been transformed into a creative, cultural urban village which now also has major attractions such as Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children’s Books and creative business clusters. Both are popular leisure and tourism destinations which attract a wide range of visitors and we will promote the Quayside and Ouseburn as places to live, work and visit.

14.11 The Gateshead Central Sub-Area extends from Regent Street/Charles Street north to Askew Road and from Prince Consort Road east to the railway line. It will be the focus of considerable change. The redeveloped Trinity Square shopping centre provides new shops, student accommodation, cinema and health care facilities as well as new streets and a public square. This area forms a new heart for Gateshead Central and provides the catalyst for further retail and leisure led regeneration in the immediate area. A network of high quality green and pedestrian friendly spaces and streets will complement the new retail offer. Improved connections from Gateshead Interchange, a major arrival point; through to Trinity Square and adjacent Sub-Areas including the Quays will be vital to attracting visitors to the Centre. The new retail and leisure offer and environmental improvements will attract new and existing residents to the Centre and will draw visitors from neighbouring Sub-Areas.
14.12 The Southern Gateway Sub-Area, the most southerly edge of the Urban Core, wraps round Gateshead Centre to the west and south, extending east to the A184. It marks the transition from the residential neighbourhoods of Gateshead into its shopping and commercial centre. This area provides a major opportunity to provide a wider housing offer for the Urban Core. A new residential neighbourhood, the Exemplar Neighbourhood Key Site will provide homes that are attractive to families. We will remove the elevated highway and create a tree lined boulevard that reconnects this area to Gateshead’s Centre and its office and leisure area at the Quayside and Quays. A green infrastructure network will be created throughout the Sub-Area, providing safe, usable and accessible green spaces and routes, connecting this area to the surrounding areas and River Tyne.

14.13 The Quays and Baltic Sub-Area is at the heart of Urban Core and offers a great opportunity for large-scale redevelopment. At the Quays we will continue to expand the commercial and cultural quarter. We have ambitions for a conference venue to complement the space already available at the Sage Gateshead and the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art which will be the catalyst for further redevelopment of the area. Development of the site will also provide the opportunity to create essential links between Gateshead Centre and the river-front through improved pedestrian, cycle and vehicle connectivity via a network of public spaces and routes. To the south east of the Quays, the Baltic Business Quarter is Gateshead’s premier office location and development is already underway. The site will be prioritised for office accommodation with hotel and ancillary retail uses although it could support a range of complementary leisure, education, tourism and sport uses. Improved links from the Baltic to the Exemplar Neighbourhood will provide people with the opportunity to live and work in the Urban Core.

Policies for the economy in the Urban Core

14.14 This section of the Plan contains policies for activities which are the main drivers of our economy: offices and business, retail, and leisure, culture and tourism. The Urban Core is highlighted as the main focus for such activity and there are major benefits in promoting a critical mass of such uses here. The Urban Core is the most accessible place for business, shopping and entertainment.

14.15 The majority of office development will be promoted in the Urban Core and it is anticipated that approximately 75% of office needs will be met within the area.
Policy UC1 Offices and Business Development

Office and business development (B1a and b of the Use Classes Order) will be promoted. This will be achieved by:

1. Provision of at least 380,000 square metres (gross internal area) of new office space.
2. Prioritising large scale office development in the following allocated mixed-use sites:
   i. East Pilgrim Street
   ii. Gateshead Quays
   iii. Baltic Business Quarter
   iv. Stephenson Quarter
   v. Science Central

Figure 14.2 Office and Business Development

East Pilgrim Street, Gateshead Quays, Baltic Business Quarter, Science Central and Stephenson Quarter are identified (Figure 14.2) as the main focus for offices and business development. These locations provide the greatest opportunity to enhance the portfolio of employment premises by providing a range of employment and economic development opportunities.

East Pilgrim Street and Gateshead Quays will be mixed-use areas with a strong office component. East Pilgrim Street will have a retail focus while Gateshead Quays could support a new conference venue.

Baltic Business Quarter and Stephenson Quarter will be office led mixed-use areas. Baltic Business Quarter has potential to become a high quality office park that can quickly respond to changing economic circumstances, capable of providing large office floorplates, small office suites for SMEs or provide for a large single user. The focus for Stephenson Quarter is very much high density Grade A city centre office accommodation.

Science Central is prioritised for science and research led uses including offices supported by a mix of uses including residential and higher education.

The five priority locations offer the greatest opportunity for large scale mixed-use schemes and together with some smaller sites will provide at least 380,000 square metres (GIA) of office space. Ancillary complimentary mixed-use development (A1, A2, A3, A4, C1, C2, C4, D1 and D2 of the Use Classes Order) will also be encouraged to provide active and vibrant frontages as well as a suitable proportion of housing (C2 and C3 of the Use Classes Order). These are large sites and will take time to complete but they are our priorities which may be developed, if necessary, beyond the plan period.

A clear co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to the planning of development on these sites is required to ensure that these largely mixed-use schemes deliver high quality offices and business developments in attractive environments. These sites will all need to be supported by a mix of facilities and services.

Funding from our ADZ is targeted to the delivery of these development areas and will help provide infrastructure and stimulate early delivery of office accommodation on some of our Key Sites. While it should be noted that these five identified sites are the focus and priority for office and business development, other sites will be considered on their individual merits.

The support of entrepreneurship and business start ups is an important component of securing sustainable economic growth. We will continue to promote SMEs through the provision of managed workspace and small office units, including business incubators and move-on accommodation across the Urban Core.

There is potential for major growth to improve the range of retail space in Newcastle’s Retail Centre and also for enhancement of Gateshead’s Primary Shopping Area.
Policy UC2 New Retail (A1) in Newcastle and Gateshead

Major new retail (Class A1) development will be in the designated Primary Shopping Areas and at East Pilgrim Street northern area (Figure 14.3) and will improve the quality, quantity and range of comparison and convenience shops. This will be achieved by:

1. Maintaining and enhancing Newcastle Retail Centre’s position as the regional retail centre through the protection of the Primary Shopping Area and through future development in the East Pilgrim Street northern area. Retail development in the Primary Shopping Area and at East Pilgrim Street will provide at least 50,000 square metres additional gross retail (A1) floorspace. For East Pilgrim Street this is subject to proposals having no significant adverse impact on the Primary Shopping Area.

2. Redefining and revitalising Gateshead’s Primary Shopping Area through retail-led mixed-use development, focused on Trinity Square, including the provision of further floorspace.
14.25 There are approximately 37 million visits to intu Eldon Square every year\(^5\). The retail core is compact and performance is strong but when compared with other UK regional centres there is scope to improve. Newcastle Retail Centre is defined as the Primary Shopping Area and the northern area of East Pilgrim Street (see figure 14.3 and Policy NC2). The northern area of East Pilgrim Street Key Site (Policy NC2), once developed for primary retail uses, will form part of an extended Primary Shopping Area through a review of the Plan. The retail function of Newcastle’s Retail Centre will be protected and enhanced as the sequentially preferable location for not only retail uses but leisure and other uses as retail development takes place. For proposals at East Pilgrim Street northern area, assessment of impact will be required which is proportionate to the scale and type of retail development proposed, in order to consider the impacts of the scheme proposal(s) at the time of submission on the Primary Shopping Area.

14.26 Newcastle is one of eight Core Cities in England. Five of the eight are in the top ten of shopping venues as determined by Venuescore\(^24\). Newcastle was ranked 11th in 2013 maintaining its position from 2011 but down from 10th in 2009. Recent schemes at Eldon Square and Monument Mall have attracted new retailers and the performance of the centre has improved but further retail growth is needed to strengthen the role of the centre and diversify the range of shops.

14.27 Newcastle has consistently been identified for future growth and the latest 2012 Strategic Comparison Goods Retail Capacity Study has identified capacity for at least 50,000 square metres additional gross retail floorspace by 2018/19 with further capacity being identified by 2030. This study was completed in an economic recession. Further studies will be carried out over the plan period and it is likely that additional capacity will be identified as market conditions improve.

14.28 Gateshead Centre serves the surrounding residential areas and has recently benefitted from a major redevelopment at Trinity Square. Gateshead Primary Shopping Area still has scope for significant improvement. This includes the need for investment in the range and quality of retail accommodation, refocusing the retail area and improvement of the wider shopping environment. The delivery of these improvements will attract additional retailers to the centre, and will better cater for the needs of workers, visitors and residents during the day and into the evening.

14.29 Trinity Square is the focus for redevelopment in the short-term (Policy GC1). The redefined Primary Shopping Area is shown in Figure 14.3. In addition to the redeveloped Trinity Square which provides new retail units and a new foodstore, a requirement for additional retail floorspace by 2030 is currently forecast. For Gateshead, High Street (South) is prioritised in terms of a sequential approach to accommodate a large floor area, which cannot be accommodated within the identified Primary Shopping Area. This area benefits from a high level of accessibility and strong links with the Primary Shopping Area.
14.30 In addition to the Primary Shopping Areas and at East Pilgrim Street, there are a number of opportunities for small-scale retail on our Key Sites and Development Opportunity Areas. Retail will need to be complementary to uses and could include niche retailing and convenience outlets as a component of mixed-use sites or to meet people's everyday need for food provision within walking distance of their homes.

14.31 In recent years the range of leisure, culture and tourism uses has expanded drawing more visitors to the area. Major attractions such as the Sage Gateshead, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, the Centre for Life, the Great North Museum and St. James' Park have played a vital role in increasing our attractiveness. Pedestrian routes along the River Tyne have been extended and the river banks are an important attraction. Events at the riverside have grown in importance and are major attractions including the City Games and the Evolution Music Festival which have brought and continue to bring thousands of visitors to the Urban Core.

**Policy UC3 Leisure, Culture and Tourism**

Development which enhances and diversifies leisure, culture and tourism will be achieved by:

1. Extending the offer across the daytime and night time to a broader range of visitors through:
   i. Business visitor uses and conference facilities,
   ii. Family-friendly visitor attractions, and
   iii. The provision of a range of hotels.

2. Supporting proposals to improve the appearance, use and accessibility of attractions including:
   i. Creating a riverside leisure route along the River Tyne from the Swing Bridge to the Gateshead Millennium Bridge,
   ii. Relocating Keelman’s Way to follow the river’s edge, providing pedestrian access to Gateshead Quays between the Swing Bridge and the Millennium Bridge.

14.32 Visitors are attracted to the Urban Core from the region, UK and beyond. We have a diverse range of attractions including modern museums, theatres, historic areas, music and nightlife venues and sporting facilities. Our historic assets are particularly attractive and we have a rich historic and cultural legacy including the iconic riverfront area and a wealth of historic buildings, streets and spaces together with archaeological remains. Heritage led and cultural led regeneration and investment within Gateshead and Newcastle has made a huge contribution to the area.

14.33 Heritage led regeneration in Grainger Town has already extended our variety of leisure, culture and tourism uses and we will seek to maintain the momentum of regeneration and promote a range of uses here. Further diversification of these uses will be promoted to increase the number of visitors into the Urban Core providing they do not have an adverse impact on surrounding uses.
There are key sectors which will be the focus for our future expansion. At Newcastle Quayside and the Ouseburn we will be promoting family friendly uses, diversifying facilities and promoting the use of the river. In the Ouseburn a vibrant daytime and evening economy has developed and we will seek to promote further similar attractions. At Gateshead Quays business tourism uses including conference facilities will be promoted, complemented by a range of family-friendly uses. Hotels will also be promoted to increase the choice and range of provision.

The Quayside and Quays are iconic waterfronts which contain many tourist attractions and the completion of a riverside loop walking circuit and improved pedestrian access along the river has potential to improve the visitor experience. Building on the success of Newcastle's Quayside, the route will extend public access along Gateshead Quays and activity on and along the riverside will help animate the area.

Policies for homes in the Urban Core

The Urban Core is already home to approximately 23,000 people, and has the potential to grow over the plan period by providing a range of housing choices to meet market demands. The Urban Core provides a range of homes in a variety of forms including apartments above shops in Grainger Town and in converted buildings, together with student housing and a large amount of social housing (there are also some neighbourhoods, such as Summerhill and Windmill Hills). There are many sites and vacant properties which have great potential for a variety of residential development over the plan period.

**Policy UC4 Homes**

A range of size, types and tenure of housing will be promoted to diversify the housing offer through:

1. Development of approximately 3750 new homes.
2. Allocating the Exemplar Neighbourhood in the Southern Gateway Sub-Area for approximately 1000 new homes predominantly for families.
3. Allocating mixed-use sites which will include homes in the following Sub-Areas:
   i. Newcastle Central,
   ii. Civic,
   iii. Discovery,
   iv. Gateshead Central,
   v. Quays and Baltic, and
   vi. Southern Gateway.
4. Promoting residential development as part of mixed-use schemes in the Quayside and Ouseburn Sub-Area.
5. Supporting conversions and redevelopment of upper floors for homes.
Housing has an important role in ensuring activity and vibrancy and in stimulating and supporting the evening and weekend economies. Housing in the Urban Core benefits from its proximity to leisure, shopping and employment opportunities.

Policy CS2 identifies the Urban Core as a key area for growth and provision of approximately 3,750 new homes in the Urban Core by 2030. These will support sustainable economic growth ambitions, accommodate increases in population, and attract and retain economically active residents.

In addition to promoting apartments, we will diversify housing in the Urban Core by developing family housing, predominantly in the Southern Gateway Sub-Area. The Exemplar Neighbourhood will be developed with at least 60% of properties being 3 and 4 bedroom family homes. Science Central will also provide a range of housing alongside science-led mixed uses.

In many areas new housing development will be part of a mix of uses. In the Key Sites and large mixed-use sites residential use will be promoted in order to meet our Urban Core housing needs.

The re-use of properties for housing throughout the Urban Core including upper floors in historic buildings will be promoted, bringing empty floorspace back into use. In Grainger Town there are many successful housing schemes which provide a range of both social and private housing and further conversions will bring much needed activity to upper floors.

The large student population makes a vital contribution to the local economy and vibrancy of the Urban Core and many students also live in the area. We will continue to support purpose built student housing in suitable and accessible locations supported by access to local services and in line with Policies CS9 and CS11.

Policies for transport in the Urban Core

The Plan provides for significant changes in order to improve movement into and around the Urban Core. While many of these changes will be the responsibility of the Local Authorities and their partners, new development will also be expected to contribute to these improvements.

This section of the Plan sets out what changes we propose to make to the Urban Core to improve the environment and increase the priority given to pedestrians and cyclists and manage vehicular movements to, within and around the Urban Core.

The Urban Core is compact, which makes walking and cycling attractive. We have excellent public transport links and facilities are used by large numbers of people every day travelling into the Urban Core. The challenge is to develop and manage streets and places to cater for growth while creating a vibrant modern centre with an attractive environment.
14.46 The policies reflect the needs and characteristics of the dense, busy heart of the conurbation. Policies will

- Promote an age friendly place ensuring accessibility for all,
- Focus on conditions for pedestrians and cyclists making the environment more attractive and safer, with clearly defined routes to provide easy interchange between modes,
- Support and in some cases re-organise priorities so that buses bring people into and distribute them around the Urban Core more efficiently,
- Manage vehicular traffic to minimise its impacts while maintaining the vibrancy of the Urban Core, and
- Make arrival points and gateways more attractive and better connected.

14.47 Walking as the most sustainable mode of travel will be encouraged and developed through increased pedestrian priority, improved public spaces, seating, accessible pedestrian crossings, footways, legibility and signage: all making the Urban Core easy to get around, adding vitality, and encouraging visitors to spend more time in the area.

14.48 The streets in the Urban Core vary in character and the pedestrian environment must reflect its surroundings and be relevant to its use. Assessment of movement patterns has led to the identification of Primary Pedestrian Routes and Secondary Pedestrian Routes.
Policy UC5 Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Routes

Sustainable modes of travel will be promoted by giving priority where appropriate to pedestrian links and facilities to ensure an attractive, safe and better linked area. The routes identified below will be the focus for improvement over the plan period.

1. The Primary Pedestrian Routes (Figure 14.4) are designated as:
   i. Barras Bridge to Central Station,
   ii. The Monument to the Gateshead Millennium Bridge,
   iii. Pilgrim Street to Gallowgate,
   iv. Gateshead Primary Shopping Area to Gateshead Quays,
   v. Gateshead Interchange to Gateshead College,
   vi. Through East Pilgrim Street Key Site,
   vii. Newcastle Central Station to the Science Central Key Site,
   viii. Central Station to High Level Bridge,
   ix. Central Station to Stephenson Quarter Key Site,
   x. Central Station to Newcastle College,
   xi. The Bigg Market to Gateshead Centre,
   xii. Linking Gateshead Primary Shopping Area and the Exemplar Neighbourhood,
   xiii. Linking Gateshead College to the Exemplar Neighbourhood,
   xiv. Northumberland Road, and
   xv. Along the River Tyne in Gateshead.

2. The Secondary Pedestrian Routes (Figure 14.4) are designated as:
   i. Science Central to Newcastle University and the RVI via Strawberry Place and Leazes Park Road,
   ii. Barras Bridge to Newcastle University,
   iii. Barras Bridge to Sandyford Road and Jesmond Road West,
   iv. Grainger Street to Pilgrim Street,
   v. Bigg Market to Pilgrim Street,
   vi. Central Station to Pilgrim Street,
   vii. Pilgrim Street to Ouesburn,
   viii. Pilgrim Street to Oakwellgate,
   ix. Quayside to Gateshead Quays,
   x. Baltic Business Quarter to Gateshead Quays and The Sage Gateshead,
   xi. The Haymarket to Grainger Street via Percy Street,
   xii. Newcastle Civic Centre to Shieldfield and Sandyford,
   xiii. Gateshead Primary Shopping Area to Riverside Park, and
   xiv. Abbots Road to South Shore Road.
3. Development will be expected to contribute towards improving the routes by providing direct routes to and through the following sites and links to surrounding areas:
   i. The Science Central Key Site,
   ii. The East Pilgrim Street Key Site,
   iii. The Gateshead Quays Key Site,
   iv. The Exemplar Neighbourhood Key Site, and
   v. The Baltic Business Quarter.
14.49 The Primary Pedestrian Routes link the main transport hubs, the Key Sites and major attractors. The character of the network differs between Newcastle and Gateshead. In Newcastle the majority of the network follows established routes whereas in Gateshead many of the pedestrian routes will be established when new developments come forward. In Newcastle they typically support pedestrian flows over 1,000 pedestrians per hour at peak times and at the Haymarket there are over 2,000 pedestrians per hour at peak times. In Gateshead, pedestrian flows are lower.

14.50 The Primary Pedestrian Routes will be a focal point for public realm investment. Over the plan period we will seek to upgrade the network of routes to a minimum footway width of 3 metres where possible. New development will be expected to contribute to this.

14.51 Secondary Pedestrian Routes experience lower pedestrian movements than the Primary Pedestrian Routes but provide key connections and permeability through the Urban Core. Opportunities to improve the Secondary Routes will be considered as development sites come forward. Over the plan period we will seek to upgrade Secondary Routes to a minimum footway width of 2 metres where possible.

14.52 Development of the Key Sites and the Baltic Business Quarter will be expected to provide pedestrian routes through the site and link into the existing routes.

14.53 Over 1700 people cycle into the Urban Core each day and this Plan seeks to increase the number of trips by creating a network of cycling routes across the Urban Core. This is reflected by the policies and targets of both Councils’ cycling strategies and recent investment. Improvements will support existing coverage, such as Hadrian’s Cycleway which forms part of the National Cycle Network, creating safe, clearly signed routes that are supported by accessible cycle parking and facilities.

Policy UC6 Cycling
Sustainable modes of travel will be promoted giving priority where appropriate to cycling. Cycle infrastructure will be developed by promoting cycle improvements and links to the surrounding area. This will be achieved by:

1. Completion of the Great North Cycleway,
2. Improving links to the Newcastle Strategic Network,
3. The improvement of cycle routes and cycling priority inside the Urban Core Distributor Route (UCDR), and
4. Development at Science Central, East Pilgrim Street, Forth Yards and The Quays connecting to the surrounding cycle network.
Figure 14.5 Cycling

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14.54 There have been many cycle routes developed and improved in Gateshead over the past few years, and in Newcastle there will be schemes which continue to enhance cycling infrastructure. There are further proposals for route improvements (Figure 14.5) and the policy promotes cycling in accordance with both Councils’ Cycling Strategies.

14.55 It is expected that there will be a considerable increase in cycling over the next few years and many routes will be in place. The Councils will improve conditions for cyclists through alterations to general traffic movement as outlined in Policy UC9. Vehicle speeds will be reduced and the volume of traffic minimised within the area bounded by the Urban Core Distributor Route (UCDR). This will encourage cycling as there will be greater priority and a more attractive environment for cyclists.

14.56 The Great North Cycleway (GNC) is a nationally designated cycle route which will eventually run from Darlington to Blyth through Durham, Gateshead and Newcastle via the Tyne Bridge, Pilgrim Street and John Dobson Street to the Civic Centre and then further north. The route will bring visitors into Gateshead and Newcastle and link the new student accommodation in Gateshead to the universities. Improvements will be carried out in conjunction with wider schemes including a cycle lane on John Dobson Street, crossings at the bottom end of Pilgrim Street and at the junction of St Mary’s Place and John Dobson Street.

14.57 The Newcastle Cycling Strategy includes a Strategic Cycle Network. This includes Strategic Cycle Routes to connect the surrounding areas to the Urban Core. They will be direct links to the Urban Core providing greater cycling priority. Although the majority of the Strategic Cycle Routes are outside the Urban Core all of the routes lead there and many more will be completed over the next ten years. Both routes to the Strategic Cycle Network and the Strategic Cycle Network itself will be developed. Cycle interchanges will be provided at Metro Stations and a central cycle hub is proposed to support network development.

14.58 In Newcastle improvements inside the UCDR will be made to a number of routes that link to main attractors such as the universities and leisure facilities or to transport interchanges such as Central Station. New investment in Newcastle, particularly inside the UCDR to improve cycling conditions will be considered, including junction improvements and contraflow arrangements, allowing cyclists to use one-way streets in both directions. In Gateshead a small number of route improvements are identified and the policy focuses on key infrastructure improvements to complement the existing network.

14.59 Major development will be expected to provide links to the cycle routes including at Science Central, East Pilgrim Street, Stephenson Quarter and Forth Yards.

14.60 Public transport is a vital element of a modern vibrant city. Approximately 80,000 people travel into the Urban Core and over 24,000 commute by public transport each day. There are strong links to, around and through the Urban Core, and accessibility from across Gateshead and Newcastle is high.
Policy UC7 Public Transport

Sustainable modes of travel will be promoted and public transport infrastructure will be enhanced by:

1. Improving stops, facilities, increasing bus priority and creating bus-only links including:
   i. Bus facilities at the Bigg Market, and
   ii. Improved bus facilities at Haymarket.
2. Providing new bus facilities as part of the comprehensive development at:
   i. East Pilgrim Street, and
   ii. Baltic Business Quarter.
3. Designating a Bus Loop (Figure 14.6) on Market Street, Durant Road, John Dobson Street, St Mary’s Place, Percy Street, Newgate Street and Grainger Street.
4. Development proposals allowing for and contributing to the implementation of improved bus infrastructure.
5. Supporting proposals to deliver Metro re-invigoration.
14.61 Maintaining public transport accessibility will be key in supporting the levels of development proposed. The challenge will be to improve accessibility while managing bus movements to reduce visual impact, manage congestion and improve air quality. This will require a refocusing of bus movements within Newcastle City Centre over time.
14.62 Access to the Urban Core by bus for commuters, shoppers and tourists will help reduce car based trips and as a result improve the overall experience for people in the area. Additional on-street priority will be provided in some locations through the extension of bus lanes and the creation of bus only links. The enforcement of bus lanes and minimising general traffic will contribute to the overall enhancement of bus services. Red Routes will be introduced on major bus routes providing bus priority to improve bus reliability. New bus facilities at Central Station and new bus facilities/interchanges at East Pilgrim Street, Bigg Market and the Baltic Business Quarter will support services by reducing at-stop dwell times and delays. This will bring benefits for the local environment, users and non-users. The Haymarket facilities will be improved as part of Barras Bridge and Percy Street improvements. This is further explored in the Civic Sub-Area.

14.63 In Newcastle the intention is to move towards redefining bus movements within the Urban Core. In the long term, we will refocus routes so that they provide good service around and to the edge of the retail area with less reliance on the routes that cut across. This will be achieved by the formation of a bus loop. This loop will provide single direction working for the majority of its length, although some sections will require two way running to facilitate service loops for terminating services (Figure 14.6).

14.64 The bus loop must be delivered in conjunction with operators and minimise impacts on journey times for established cross city routes. It will need to be delivered as part of a package of works and improvements. Development of major schemes will be expected to include elements of the new bus network and/or contributions to its implementation.

14.65 The Councils will work towards the introduction of Low Emission Routes for public transport. Potential routes include John Dobson Street, Blackett Street, Grey Street, Quayside (from Copenhagen House to Horatio Street), South Shore Road and Mill Road. Vehicles within the low emission route will comply with the latest emission standards for transit vehicles.

14.66 The Quaylink bus service provides a flagship service linking Gateshead Central, Gateshead Quays, Newcastle Quayside and Newcastle City Centre and by the end of the plan period we expect to have extended emission restrictions to sections of this route. The intention of this is to improve air quality and maintain the high quality of the vehicles that operate the service.

14.67 The Metro plays a key role bringing people into the area. Monument is the busiest Metro station in Tyne and Wear with approximately 4 million people using it per year, followed by Haymarket, Central Station and Gateshead Interchange. Proposals for improvement of the network to enhance its operation and make it more attractive to users will be promoted.

14.68 All premises within the Urban Core require access for deliveries. Freight movements add to levels of traffic and congestion within the heart of the conurbation, and space is required within developments or on the highway for loading and unloading. The Councils will manage servicing traffic to limit its impacts upon the environment, promoting more attractive conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and the smooth flow of public transport.
Policy UC8 Freight and Servicing

To promote sustainable freight movement and minimise the impact on the environment and quality of place, major new development in the designated Freight Management Area (Figure 14.7) will be required to provide a Delivery Service Plan.

Figure 14.7 Freight and Servicing

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The impact of servicing will be minimised through Delivery Service Plans. They will be required for major new developments within the Freight Management Area (Figure 14.7) and they will be used to control servicing through measures such as restricting hours for deliveries and requiring the use of more environmentally-friendly delivery vehicles. Together with extension of bus lanes and driver awareness campaigns the impact of freight will be managed moving towards use of low emissions vehicles and electric vehicles. Management of freight will help to meet our objectives by reducing congestion and improving air quality within the Urban Core.

Major growth is proposed and will inevitably create travel demand. However, even with considerable success in pursuing a shift to more sustainable modes, there will still be some traffic travelling to and through the Urban Core. This Plan seeks to balance those traffic demands whilst creating a more efficient and attractive Urban Core environment.

**Policy UC9 General Traffic**
Traffic access in and around the Urban Core will be managed to minimise through traffic and improve the local environment by:
1. Focusing traffic onto the designated Urban Core Distributor Route (UCDR) (Figure 14.8). This comprises parts of: A189, A167, A184 (Askew Road) that links the A189, and the A167, Skinnerburn Road along the Close /Quayside, Prince Consort Road, Charles Street, A167 Gateshead Highway to Askew Road.
14.71 Traffic will be managed by focusing the main traffic movements within the Urban Core onto defined routes, re-defining the use of some streets and by minimising traffic flows and speeds. This will significantly enhance the pedestrian and cycling environment within the UCDR.
14.72 The destination for much of the traffic currently travelling through the area is not the Urban Core itself but areas beyond its boundary. Often such trips use central streets and contribute to high traffic levels. By directing traffic onto the UCDR (Figure 14.8) there will be a reduction in traffic travelling straight through the heart of the Urban Core. Motorists will be signposted from the UDCR and certain areas of the Urban Core will be accessed from a designated point only, reducing the need for trips through the central areas. We will use the UTMC to reduce traffic speeds and minimise the volume of vehicles. UTMC is an electronic system designed to manage the flow of traffic by making the most effective use of our existing highway network. This will significantly reduce congestion, particularly at peak times.

14.73 Within and around the area formed by the UCDR we will seek to minimise the volume of vehicles. This will be achieved by firstly reducing speeds making routes through the Urban Core (as opposed to around it) less attractive. Currently average vehicle speeds across the Urban Core are lower than 30 miles per hour and stretches of the core are advisory 20 miles per hour zones. In order to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists we will seek to reduce speeds to improve safety and encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes for journeys within the Urban Core. Secondly, we will restrict the capacity of some junctions within the Urban Core in favour of sustainable modes. This will be achieved using a combination of public realm improvements and use of UTMC.

14.74 Fostering behaviour change such as travelling outside peak times, car sharing, parking on the edge of the Urban Core and switching to modes other than the single occupancy car has an important role in reducing through traffic, limiting congestion and improving the environment. In developing solutions for the major redevelopment areas, traffic restraint has been a key element of recent masterplanning.

14.75 In Newcastle, additional capacity for east/west movements north of the Tyne will be achieved by enhancements to the route along Skinnerburn Road, the Close and the Quayside. This will link the A695 Scotswood Road with the A186 City Road. This route has the potential to accommodate traffic and provide direct connections at the east and west of the UCDR. This will be managed and controlled by our UTMC system. As part of this we expect to enhance traffic signals from Skinnerburn Road, through the Quayside to City Road. Improvements to Skinnerburn Road and traffic light enhancements along the corridor will be carried out in the short term.

14.76 In Gateshead in the medium term, we will extend the boulevard approach proposed for the Gateshead Highway (see Central Gateshead Sub-Area) to the section of Askew Road between the High Level and Tyne Bridges. This will retain most of the capacity of the existing link but will also provide a step-change in the local environment and public realm on both sides of the road and re-develop the railway arches on the north side of the road. It is a long term aspiration to reduce the capacity of this section of Askew Road and we will explore options for this over the early part of the plan period. A number of factors will guide options including the potential closure of High Level Bridge to road traffic and the opportunities provided by the potential for additional cross-river capacity to the east and west of the Urban Core. A wider review of traffic movement in the Tyne Bridgeheads area (including the Oakwellgate junction) will be undertaken as part of this process.
In the long term a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) for all transport modes will be introduced in Newcastle. This includes the area inside the UCDR. The intention of the Zone is to enhance the environmental quality of the area, discourage travel across the Urban Core and unnecessary journeys within the UCDR. This will be supported by Low Emission Routes restricting emissions in Newcastle.

A balance will be maintained between an appropriate supply of car parking while encouraging travel by sustainable modes.

**Policy UC10 Car Parking**
The location and supply of safe, secure car parking will be managed by:

1. Minimising car parking for development reflecting the highly accessible nature of the location,
2. Siting car parks close to the UCDR or on the edge of the Urban Core,
3. Managing the pricing of new car parks to promote short stay car parking over long stay car parking, and
4. Restricting the development of temporary car parks.

In order to meet accessibility and sustainability objectives and allow economic growth the location of new commercial car parks will be carefully managed. For new development the needs for car parking will be assessed and the minimum for operational needs will be permitted, while promoting shared facilities where appropriate.

Any new car parks will be focused in locations either close to UCDR with easy, direct access or on the edge of the Urban Core. Over time surface car parks and on street car parking will be more restricted.

In general, short stay parking will be promoted for shopping and leisure through the management of pricing in new car parks and longer stay parking will be encouraged on the edge of the area. The “Alive After 5“ initiative has been a great success in promoting use of car parks outside of peak times and further opportunities will be explored.

In the Urban Core there are sites that will not be fully developed in the short term. We will resist proposals for temporary car parks on these sites unless they are short term and would not prejudice regeneration or development of the sites themselves or the surrounding area. In assessing the suitability of such proposals we will also consider the impact on our ambitions for greater access to the Urban Core via sustainable modes of travel, the impact on pedestrians and cyclists, the quality of place and the local environment.

A joint car parking strategy will ensure that all parking policies, strategies and action plans will be developed on a partnership basis between Newcastle and Gateshead and that there is a common approach to car parking provision.
Gateways are the points where changes in the environment create a sense of moving from one distinct area to another. They are transition areas where there is a clear change of use and function. There are various indications that the traveller is moving through a gateway including a change in scale, the character of the built form, a change in traffic speed as well as of the environment itself. Arrival points are where there is a change in transport mode, for example changing from Metro to foot. The defined gateways and arrival points are illustrated by Figure 14.9.

**Policy UC11 Gateways and Arrival Points**

To ensure a strong, distinctive entrance and sense of arrival, development will be required to:

1. Improve and enhance the area in and around the following gateways:
   i. Forth Yards,
   ii. Westmorland Road,
   iii. Westgate Road,
   iv. Barrack Road,
   v. Richardson Road,
   vi. Great North Road,
   vii. Sandyford Road,
   viii. Camden Street Bridge,
   ix. Northumbria City Campus East Bridge,
   x. New Bridge Street West / Manors Bridge,
   xi. Swan House,
   xii. Askew Road / Prince Consort Road,
   xiii. Oakwellgate,
   xiv. Mill Road,
   xv. Felling Bypass,
   xvi. Bensham Road, and
   xvii. Sunderland Road.

2. Improve the pedestrian and cycling environment and experience in and around the following arrival points:
   i. Haymarket Metro,
   ii. Haymarket / Eldon Square Bus Station,
   iii. St James Metro,
   iv. Monument Metro,
   v. Manors Metro,
   vi. Manors Railway Station,
   vii. Central Station, and
   viii. Gateshead Interchange.
Urban Core

Gateway
1. Forth Yards
2. Westmorland Road
3. Westgate Road
4. Barrack Road
5. Richardson Road
6. Great North Road
7. Sandyford Road
8. Camden Street Bridge
9. Northumbria City Campus East Bridge
10. New Bridge Street West / Manors Bridge
11. Swan House
12. Askew Road / Prince Consort Road
13. Oakwellgate
14. Mill Road
15. Felling Bypass
16. Bensham Road
17. Sunderland Road

Arrival Point
A. Haymarket Metro
B. Haymarket / Eldon Square Bus Station
C. St James Metro
D. Monument Metro
E. Manors Metro
F. Manors Railway Station
G. Central Station
H. Gateshead Interchange

Figure 14.9 Gateways and Arrival Points
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14.85 Many of the gateways do not provide a positive transition into the Urban Core and development within and around these areas offers great opportunity for enhancement. This can be achieved by creating strong urban frontages and providing new high quality landmark buildings for example. Emphasising our gateways and arrival points is important for adding to the sense of arrival to the Urban Core and presenting positive first impressions. The ability to find your way from your arrival point is critical. It should be intuitive and it should be a pleasant and safe experience. In Newcastle the Legible City Project has secured major improvements working closely with the Business Improvement District (NE1) and the universities. Further schemes will be promoted.

14.86 Through development opportunities, wayfinding initiatives and public realm improvements, the area will become easy to navigate and a safe and pleasant place.

Policies for people and place in the Urban Core

14.87 The diverse architecture and landform together with the historic environment contribute to the Urban Core’s distinctive quality of place. Development proposals must consider their setting looking beyond boundaries to the wider context. The Urban Core has a strong identity, and is one of the most instantly recognisable places in the country. We will seek to:

• Maintain local distinctiveness,
• Increase the range of activities and uses,
• Improve the design of the built form and public realm,
• Protect and enhance the historic and natural environments, and
• Improve the quality of public spaces and routes.

14.88 Policies for the improvement of quality of place within the Gateshead and Newcastle Urban Core are: Urban Design (Policy UC12), Respecting and Managing Views (Policy UC13), Heritage (Policy UC14), Green Infrastructure (Policy UC15), Public Realm (Policy UC16) and Public Art (Policy UC17).

14.89 It is important that as the Urban Core continues to develop, buildings, routes and spaces work together to support a vibrant social and economic centre, delivering high quality design appropriate to its context.

Policy UC12 Urban Design
To deliver higher quality locally distinctive places in terms of architecture and public realm, development will:

1. Be designed to respect and enhance the positive characteristics and context,
2. Provide a co-ordinated approach that reinforces and creates linkages to its surroundings,
3. Provide strong urban frontages and an appropriate urban grain reinforcing continuity and enclosure at a walkable urban block scale,
4. Ensure active frontages along Primary and Secondary Pedestrian Routes, and
5. Incorporate high quality, durable and sustainable materials appropriate to the character of the area and the use envisaged for the site.
It is important that development proposals respect the positive elements of their context, working with the unique topography and landscape, architecture and public realm to create distinctive quality buildings befitting their setting comparable with other major European cities.

All development must look holistically at the site, promote high levels of design quality, enhance character, and create as appropriate new urban form. By taking a co-ordinated approach to development there will be opportunities to create strong, continuous frontages, have shared access, shared spaces and provide communal benefits. Buildings and spaces in the Urban Core must contribute to social inclusion and sustainable environments and we expect them to be designed and managed to take into account all users and their accessibility needs.

Strong urban frontages together with active uses will contribute towards lively and diverse urban streets. They should present clearly defined ‘fronts’ and ‘backs’. For example, good shop front design should be visually stimulating and well proportioned in relation to the building and the street.

Development will be expected to plan for existing and proposed pedestrian flows around the site and support and enhance these through the proposed scale of development. Smaller block sizes and strong visual connections will be sought in areas of high pedestrian flows. Achieving these will deliver a safer and more attractive walkable Urban Core.

The legibility of the Urban Core needs to be obvious and instinctive. The network of routes between key destinations must be clear. The Sub-Areas sections set out proposals for how this will be achieved in different areas.

To ensure high quality design standards befitting the Urban Core are achieved, residential development will apply the latest national design standards. Residential density, whether it is a wholly residential proposal or part of a mix of uses, will be at a level appropriate to its Urban Core location. High quality materials will be required which reflect the positive features of the surrounding area and reinforce character.

Policy UC13 Respecting and Managing Views Within, From and Into the Urban Core
To respect important public views there will be a presumption against development proposals that would cause significant harm. Views that will be respected include those:

1. From or across or into the Tyne Gorge,
2. From defined major movement corridors/routeways, and
3. Of designated heritage assets, other distinctive landmark buildings and structures.
Figure 14.10 Respecting and Managing Views within from and into the Urban Core
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In the Urban Core, important, memorable views form a major part of the positive visual experience. In particular, views along the Tyne Gorge, from major movement corridors and of major landmark structures (Figure 14.10) and buildings are unique to the Urban Core. These views must be carefully managed to protect the visual experience.

Impact on important views into, out of and within the Urban Core must be considered. New development will change views but these changes must not cause significant harm. Development will be evaluated to determine the nature and extent of impact and attention will also be given to views that affect designated heritage assets and distinctive landmark structures. Views from or across the Tyne are defined in the Urban Landscape Study of the Tyne Gorge which provides detailed guidance on views which must be protected.

The Urban Core has historically been the focus of the most intensive periods of Gateshead and Newcastle’s development. The legacy is extensive including buildings and features from Roman, Medieval, 16th and 17th century, Georgian, Victorian and 20th and 21st century periods. The layers of all of these periods can be read clearly over the top of each other. For example the monumental railway bridges which sit literally over the top of the earlier development of the merchants’ houses in Sandhill on the Quayside, and the railway arches which dominate the Bridges Conservation Area, or the route of Hadrian’s Wall which is believed to sit beneath the Norman Castle Keep.

Policy UC14 Heritage
To respect the historical legacy, varied character and appearance of the historic environment development will:

1. Maximise opportunities to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets and their setting,
2. Deliver high quality in the design of new buildings and conversions reflecting the rich historic fabric, and
3. Include opportunities for the contemporary interpretation of heritage assets including Hadrian’s Wall and associated features.

The historic environment makes a major contribution to the economic, cultural and visual vibrancy of the Urban Core. There are a rich variety of assets including: seven Conservation Areas (Newcastle Central, Summerhill, Framlington Place, Leazes, Lower Ouseburn, Bridges and Walker Terrace/Regent Street) numerous listed buildings which are vital to the character of the area and Hadrian’s Wall World Heritage Site. Development within and adjoining these areas will need to be especially sensitive to their context.
14.100 Development needs to carefully consider and respond to heritage assets, spaces and streets and be of a high standard befitting the regional centre. Regeneration within the Urban Core is critical to the delivery of the wider area plan objectives. It should build upon the legacy of successful, award winning schemes such as the Grainger Town Project, the Ouseburn and the Bridges Conservation Area Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme. Integrating historic buildings into urban regeneration is proven to create successful, popular urban quarters with character, where people enjoy living, working and visiting. Contemporary interpretation of heritage assets is important allowing people to understand the history of the area acknowledging and providing links with the past.

14.101 As sites in the Urban Core are developed, it is important that briefs and masterplans are based upon a sound understanding of the history of the sites and that an early approach is taken to establish any archaeological potential. The re-use of historic buildings will ensure that the quality of the historic environment is maintained and enhanced while preventing buildings from becoming ‘at risk’.

14.102 We have identified an Urban Green Infrastructure Network and Policy UC15 seeks to enhance provision within the area and links to the wider Strategic Green Infrastructure Network.

**Policy UC15 Urban Green Infrastructure**

Development will protect and enhance the Urban Green Infrastructure Network, address gaps and improve linkages to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network at:

1. Ouseburn,  
2. Jesmond to Quays,  
3. Universities,  
4. Exhibition Park to Redheugh Bridge,  
5. Riverside Park to Windmill Hill Park,  
6. Regent Street,  
7. Exemplar Neighbourhood,  
8. Gateshead Quays and Baltic Business Quarter,  
9. Exemplar Neighbourhood to Gateshead East Cemetery,  
10. Exemplar Neighbourhood to Saltmeadows Riverside (and River Tyne),  
11. Gateshead Quays to Saltmeadows Riverside, and  
12. Southern Gateway to Saltwell Park.
1. Ouseburn
2. Jesmond - Quays
3. Universities
4. Exhibition Park - Redheugh Bridge
5. Riverside Park - Windmill Hill Park
6. Regent Street
7. Exemplar Neighbourhood
8. Gateshead Quays and Baltic Business Quarter
9. Exemplar Neighbourhood - Gateshead East Cemetery
10. Exemplar Neighbourhood - Saltmeadows Riverside
11. Gateshead Quays - Saltmeadows Riverside
12. Southern Gateway - Saltwell Park

Figure 14.11 Urban Green Infrastructure Network
14.103 The Green Infrastructure Strategy Report identifies the Strategic Infrastructure Network for Gateshead and Newcastle. Although, the majority of this falls outside the Urban Core boundary, Leazes Park, Exhibition Park, the Ouseburn and the River Tyne all form part of the network. The Urban Green Infrastructure Network is the fine grained and locally significant element of green infrastructure within the urban area, including existing and proposed links to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network as shown on Figure 14.11.

14.104 We will address the gaps in the network which exist due to the densely developed nature of the Urban Core. The Urban Core contains large areas of formal green space including Exhibition Park, Leazes Park, Windmill Hills Park and more informal green spaces in the Ouseburn Valley and Riverside Park. These are supported by smaller green spaces throughout the Urban Core. Together with the Ouseburn Valley and the River Tyne corridor, this provides the base on which to further develop this network.

14.105 A range of measures will be supported, including climate change mitigation or adaption measures to address the gaps in our Green Infrastructure Network and to enhance, protect and increase the multifunctionality and biodiversity of green infrastructure in the Urban Core. These include:

- The creation of new green spaces,
- The temporary greening of vacant medium/long term development sites,
- Creating or improving connections between green spaces and to the wider Strategic Green Infrastructure Network,
- Surface water storage and sustainable drainage systems, and
- Street trees and planting, living roofs and walls.

14.106 In Gateshead there is greater opportunity to provide significant new green infrastructure. This will be achieved through redevelopment proposals and development of a green and sustainable urban landscape which is a fundamental element of the vision for the regeneration of central Gateshead. Green spaces in key locations connected by green routes, alongside the incorporation of green design measures in new development will distinguish central Gateshead from other urban areas, and provide an attractive sustainable and adaptable environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

14.107 In Newcastle the value of green infrastructure is also highly regarded, although the more limited scope for new green infrastructure provision means that solutions will be smaller in scale and more urban in nature.

14.108 Further details of projects that will improve the quality of existing spaces and opportunities for the provision of new green infrastructure can be found in the Sub-Areas sections.
An important element of the quality of place in the Urban Core derives from the network of linked public open spaces and the routes that connect them. The Plan promotes the Urban Core as an area in which walking and cycling are both safe and enjoyable recognising that attractive and economically thriving cities are those that encourage public life and recreation.

Policy UC16 Public Realm
The network of public open spaces and routes will be enhanced by:

1. Development improving the existing public spaces and creating new spaces,
2. The provision of spaces which are flexible and adaptable to a range of uses,
3. Incorporating high quality, durable and sustainable materials appropriate to the character of the area and the use envisaged for the site, and
4. The provision for temporary spaces and for events.
Urban Core

Section 4

Existing Public Open Space

Public Open Space to be Improved

Potential Public Open Space

Primary Pedestrian Routes

Future Primary Pedestrian Routes

Figure 14.12 Public Realm
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14.110 Both enhancements to the quality of the public spaces in existing areas and the provision of new spaces will improve the users’ experience and the local environment. (Figure 14.12).

14.111 The identification of new spaces in Key Sites and Development Opportunity Sites will complement the existing network providing much needed space within development sites. The provision of spaces that allow for a diverse range of uses and events will maximise opportunities for social engagement and increase public activity.

14.112 Materials and streetscape products proposed for public open spaces and routes should be of high quality befitting of the Urban Core, sustainably sourced, durable, and easily maintained. They should be of an appropriate design to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the Urban Core. High quality materials can make a major positive contribution to the perception of areas and materials will be chosen which reflect the character of the area. Materials in Performance Square outside the Baltic and in Grainger Town have greatly improved these areas and helped to attract events and visitors.

14.113 The opportunity for temporary public realm such as the successful Quayside Beach and Pocket Parks will continue to be promoted. The provision of spaces that allow for a diverse range of uses and events will maximise opportunities for social engagement and increase public activity.

14.114 Public art has successfully created a strong sense of place within parts of the Urban Core. We will explore opportunities for further public art as it adds value and brings distinctiveness to the area. It can raise public awareness, boost a place’s identity and image, engender civic pride and attract inward investment.

Policy UC17 Public Art
To enhance character and local distinctiveness, development of Key Sites and Development Opportunity Sites will include public art.

14.115 Public art can be integrated into the architectural fabric, street floorscape or street furniture, and it can take a variety of forms including physical pieces, creative lighting, performances, creative consultation and processes, and temporary installations. In its physical form public art can aid way-finding (legibility) across the Urban Core and add to the enjoyment of this experience.

14.116 The process of introducing public art should also provide the opportunity for individuals and organisations to collaborate, working creatively to maximise the use of resources and bring individuality to a scheme at a variety of stages.