

York Street Interchange Placemaking and Active Travel Review

Presentation to Belfast City Council
City Growth and Regeneration Committee

22nd February 2023

Agenda

01 Background

02 Overview of the PATR process and summary of the report

03 Ongoing work to develop the Placemaking and Active Travel proposals

04 Next Steps

01

Background

Background

- Project Assessment Review instructed by Minister Mallon in 2020:
 - To examine how and to what extent the proposed scheme reflects and accommodates key Ministerial, Executive and Belfast City Council objectives and priorities (or could be adjusted to do so)
 - 6 recommendations arising from Project Assessment Review accepted by Minister Mallon in 2021
- Recommendation 1 of the Project Assessment Review:
 - The YSI project brief should be reviewed and revised to ensure it aligns with the concept of “place making” and new best practice in terms of urban transport design, and with the Minister’s agenda.
- AECOM commissioned to carry out a Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) of the scheme in 2021 to address this recommendation

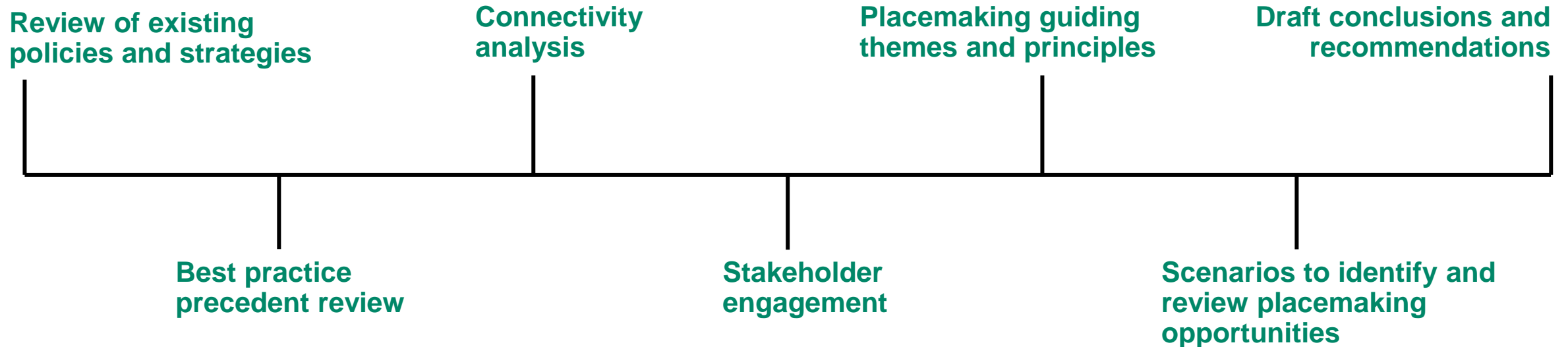
02

Overview of the PATR process and summary of the report

Overview of the PATR process and summary of the report

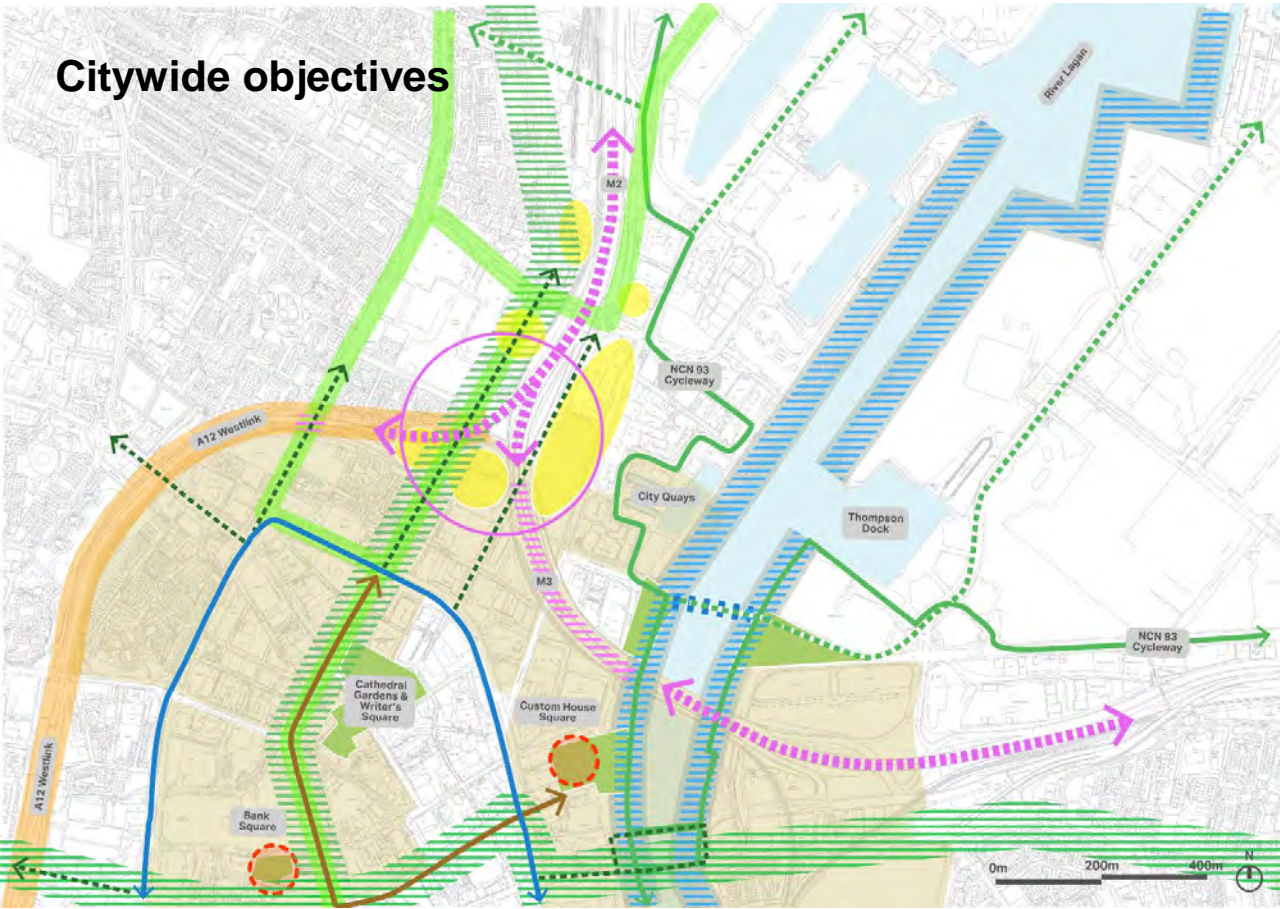
Purpose of the study

- To undertake further analysis around placemaking to identify opportunities to deliver benefits for communities, particularly in terms of connectivity and the wider living places agenda
- To consider how DfI can maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits of the project and its contribution to the future development of Belfast

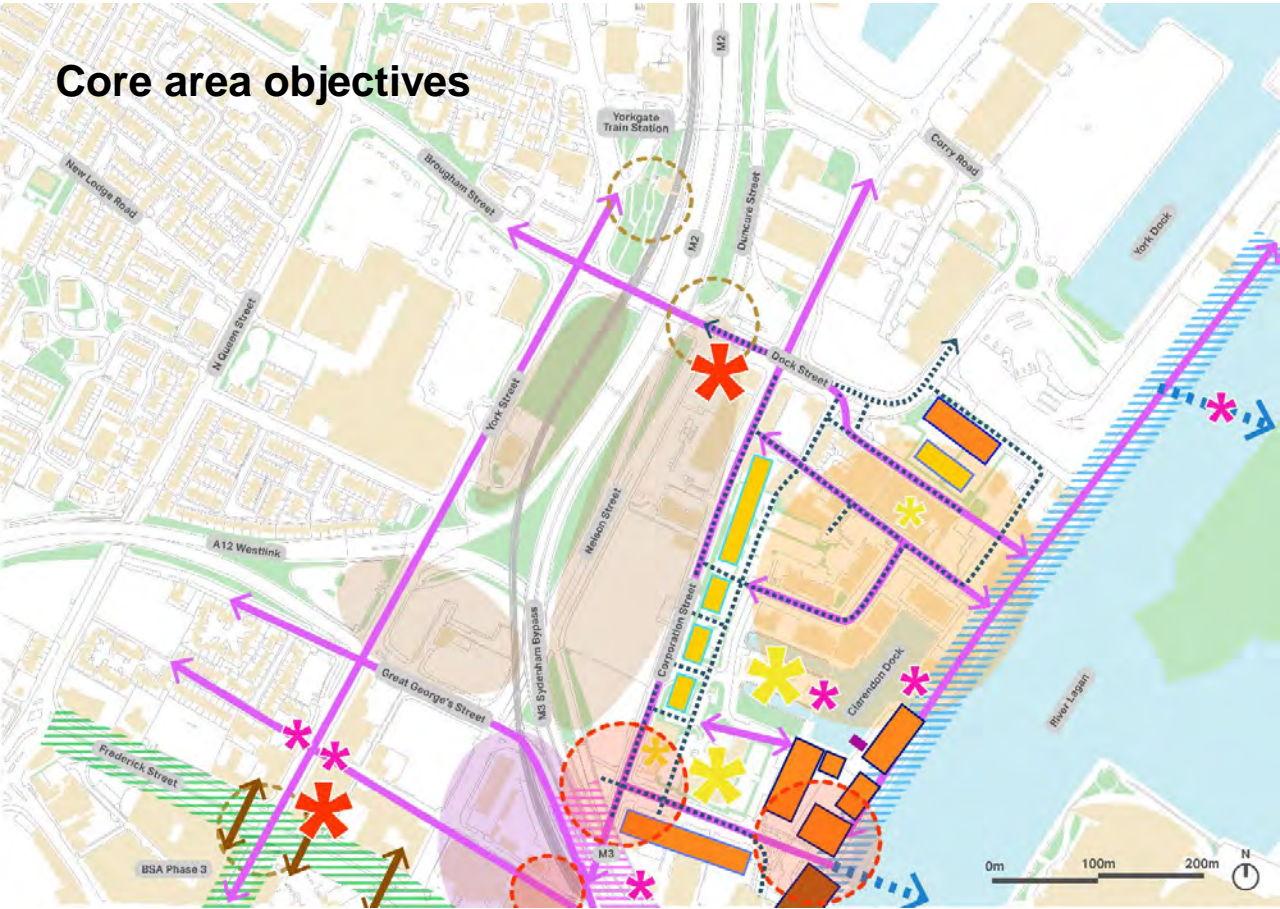


Policy & strategy review

Citywide objectives



Core area objectives



Summary of key issues identified from review and alignment with A Bolder Vision for Belfast (highlighted in green)



LEVEL	ISSUE TO ADDRESS
City-wide	Poor air quality around the Interchange
	Underutilised sites due to severance by roads and infrastructure
	A focus on green and active corridors
	A focus on waterfront regeneration
	A focus on improving public realm quality
Wider study area	A focus on key attractors at the City Centre and Titanic Quarter
	A focus on activating gateways around transport hubs and key walking routes
	A focus on overall urban quality enhancements
	A focus on active routes throughout the city
Core study area	The waterfront is a key attractor for the Sailortown & Greater Clarendon area
	A focus on reviving the historic city-grid of smaller blocks and higher permeability for better connectivity
	A focus on new pedestrian connections connecting east and west Belfast
	A focus on urban quality enhancements through green corridors and new public squares
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Bolder Vision for Belfast Principle 1

Creating a **healthy, shared, vibrant** and **sustainable environment** that promotes wellbeing for all, inclusive growth and innovation.

Bolder Vision for Belfast Principle 3

Providing **lively, safe and green streets** linking inclusive shared spaces to promote resilience and enhance our **built heritage**.

Best practice review



Space under elevated infrastructure - London



Overcoming severances - Hamburg



Activating spaces - Belfast



Urban greening - New York

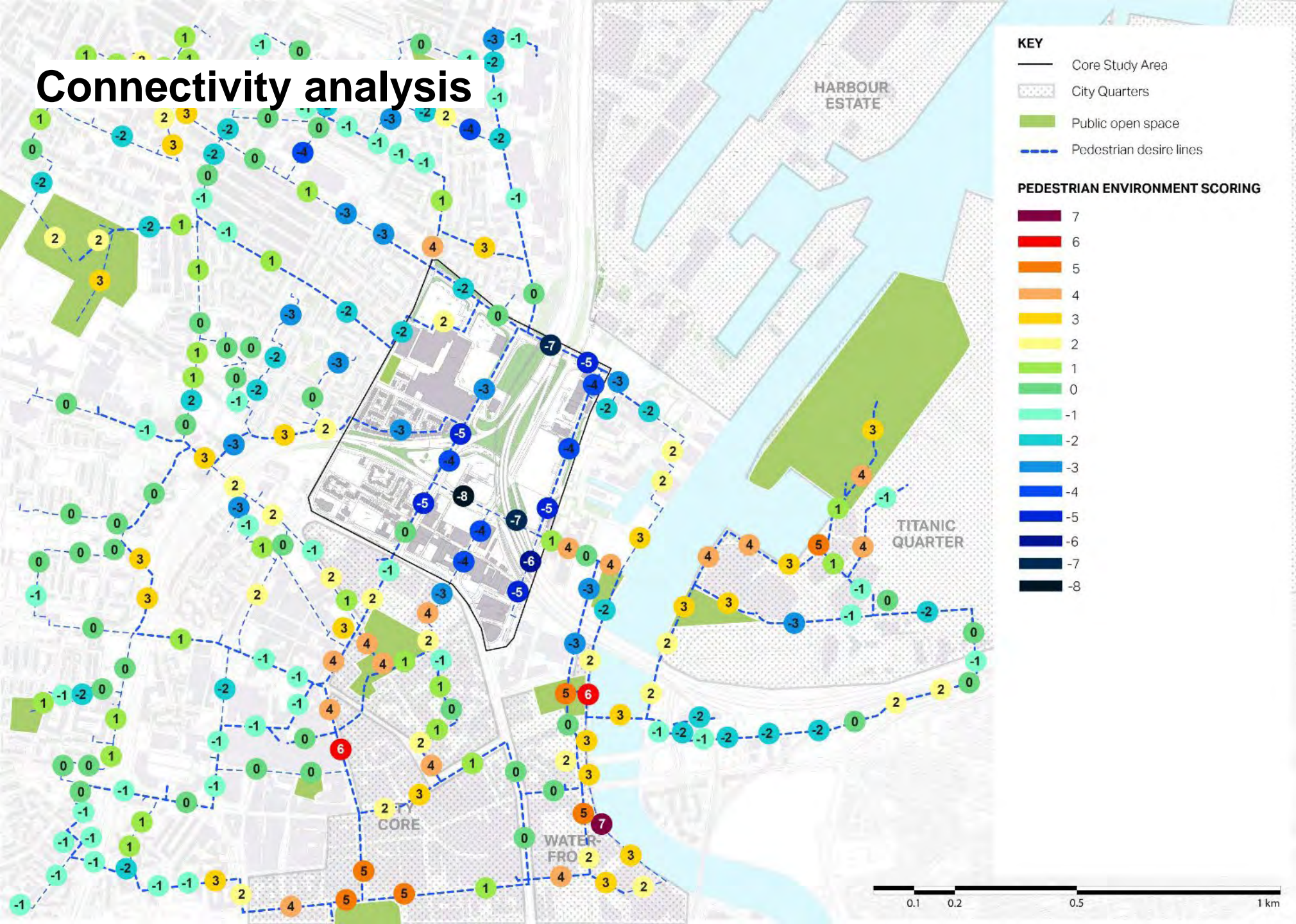


Reallocating road space - New York



Vibrant neighbourhoods - Belfast

Connectivity analysis



Stakeholder engagement



Department for
Infrastructure
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk



Belfast
City Council



DfC
Department
for Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk



arts
council
of Northern Ireland

ashton
Supporting
North Belfast



SAILORTOWN
REGENERATION



Ulster
University

Belfast
Harbour



MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP
ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND



Belfast
A World Health Organization
Healthy City



sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

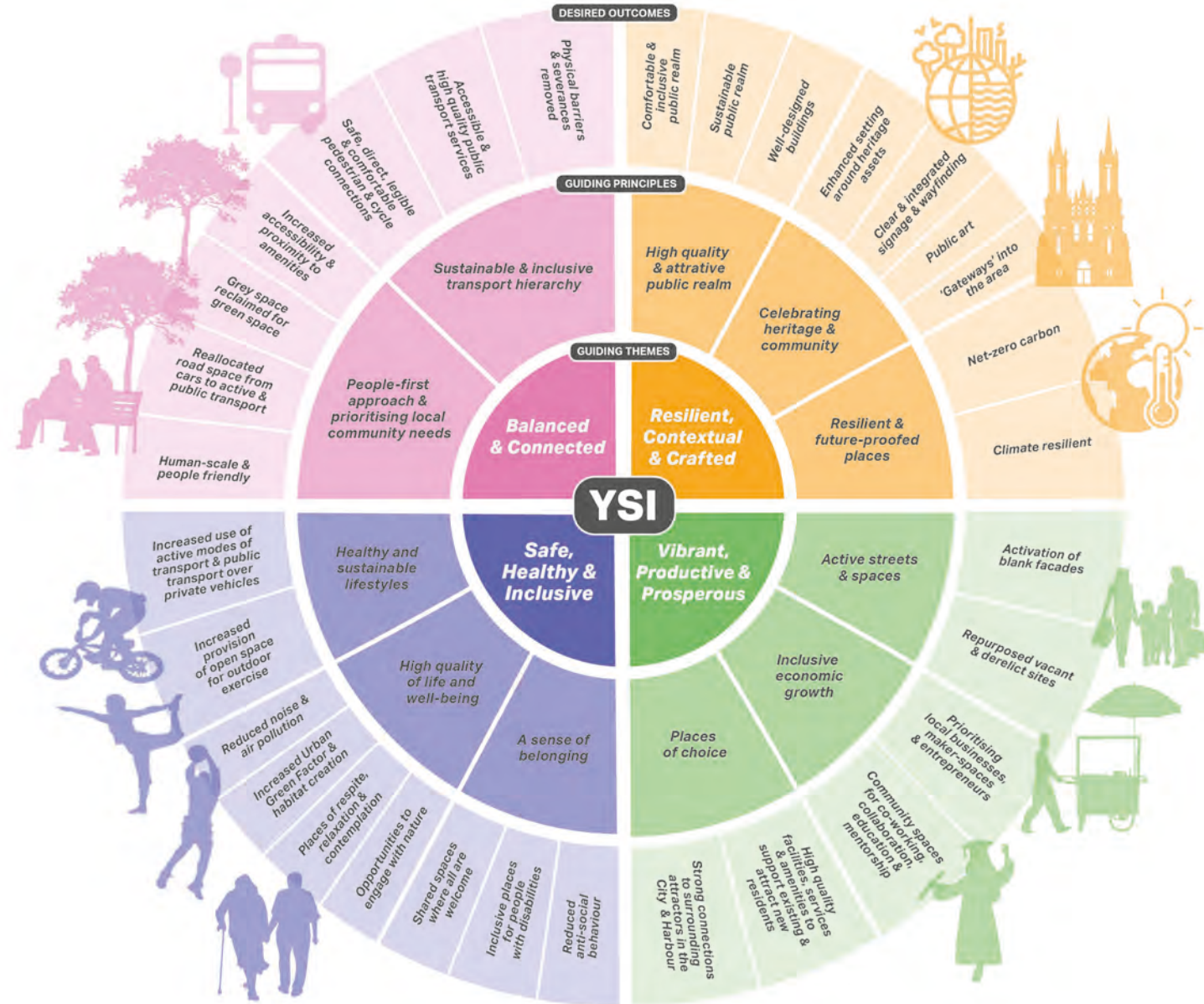


imtac



Translink

Placemaking guiding themes, principles and desired outcomes for study area



Alignment with A Bolder Vision for Belfast (highlighted segments)



Bolder Vision for Belfast Principle 1

Creating a **healthy, shared, vibrant** and **sustainable environment** that promotes wellbeing for all, inclusive growth and innovation.



Bolder Vision for Belfast Principle 2

Fundamentally **changing** the centre of Belfast to **prioritise integrated walking, cycling and public transport** and **end the dominance of the car**.

Active Travel Review

Summary of Active Travel Review (ATR) process

Cyclists must be physically separated and protected from high volume motor traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them.

1

Audit existing layout

- Undertake Cycle Level of Service (CLOs) + Junction Assessments (JAT) of existing network against LTN 1/20
- Undertake pedestrian comfort and mobility impaired review of existing network

2

Active Travel feasibility design (YSI+)

- Amend YSI scheme design to incorporate largely segregated cycle facilities in accordance with LTN 1/20 + enhanced pedestrian facilities

3

Audit proposed YSI+ scheme

- Repeat CLOs, JAT, pedestrian comfort and mobility impaired review of proposed YSI+ scheme *with* Active Travel enhancements

Proposed YSI+ scheme | Summary of audit outcomes

Cycle Level of Service

Existing

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							

Proposed YSI+

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							

Critical Fail	1 or more
Fail	<70%
Pass	≥70-100%

C1	North Queen Street
C2	York Street
C3	Frederick St / Dunbar Link / High Street
C4	Brougham Street / Dock Street
C5	Garmoyle Street / Corporation Street
C6	Whitla Street Subway
C7	Clifton Street

Cycling Junction Assessments

Existing

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
J1							
J2							
J3							
J4							
J5							
J6							
J7							

Proposed YSI+ (Belfast Cycle Network)

	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7
J1							
J2							
J3							
J4							
J5							
J6							
J7							

Red	Suitable only for confident existing cyclists
Amber	Likely to be acceptable for most cyclists but may pose problems for less confident cyclists
Green	Suitable for all potential and existing cyclists
* Grading reflects lowest scoring movements at junction	

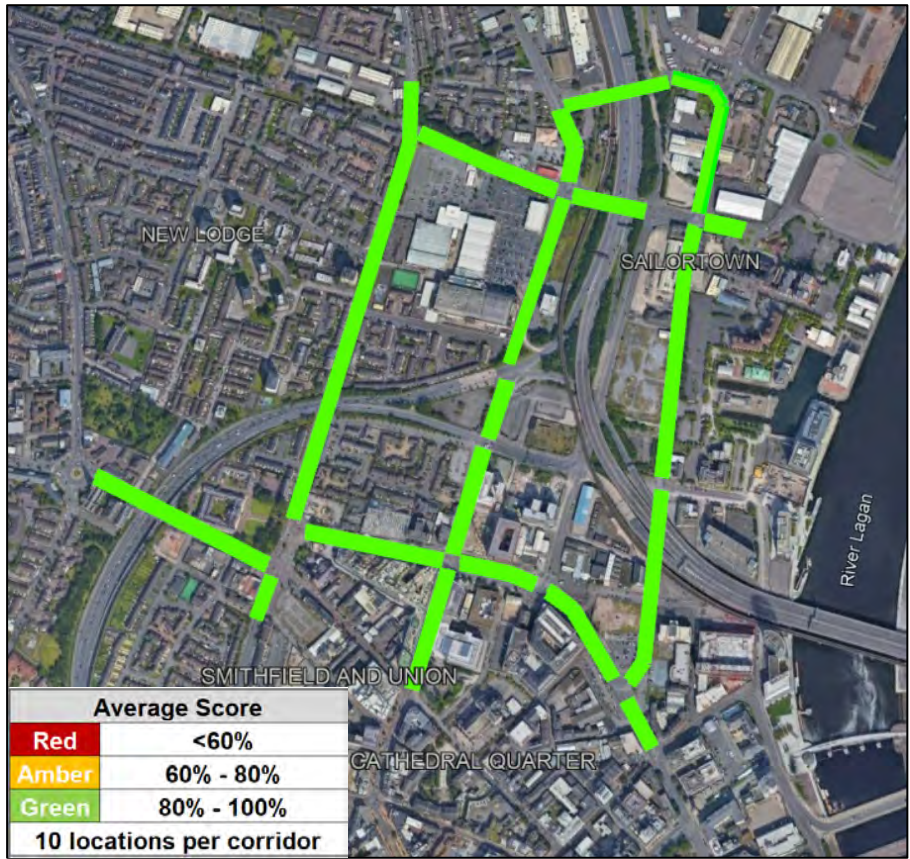


- Active Travel Review Corridors:**
1. North Queen St
 2. York St/York Rd
 3. Frederick St/Dunbar Link/Waring St
 4. Brougham Street/Dock St
 5. Garmoyle St/Corporation St
 6. NCN Route 93
 7. Whitla St subway
 8. Little Patrick St
 9. Clifton St

Proposed YSI+ scheme | Summary of audit outcomes



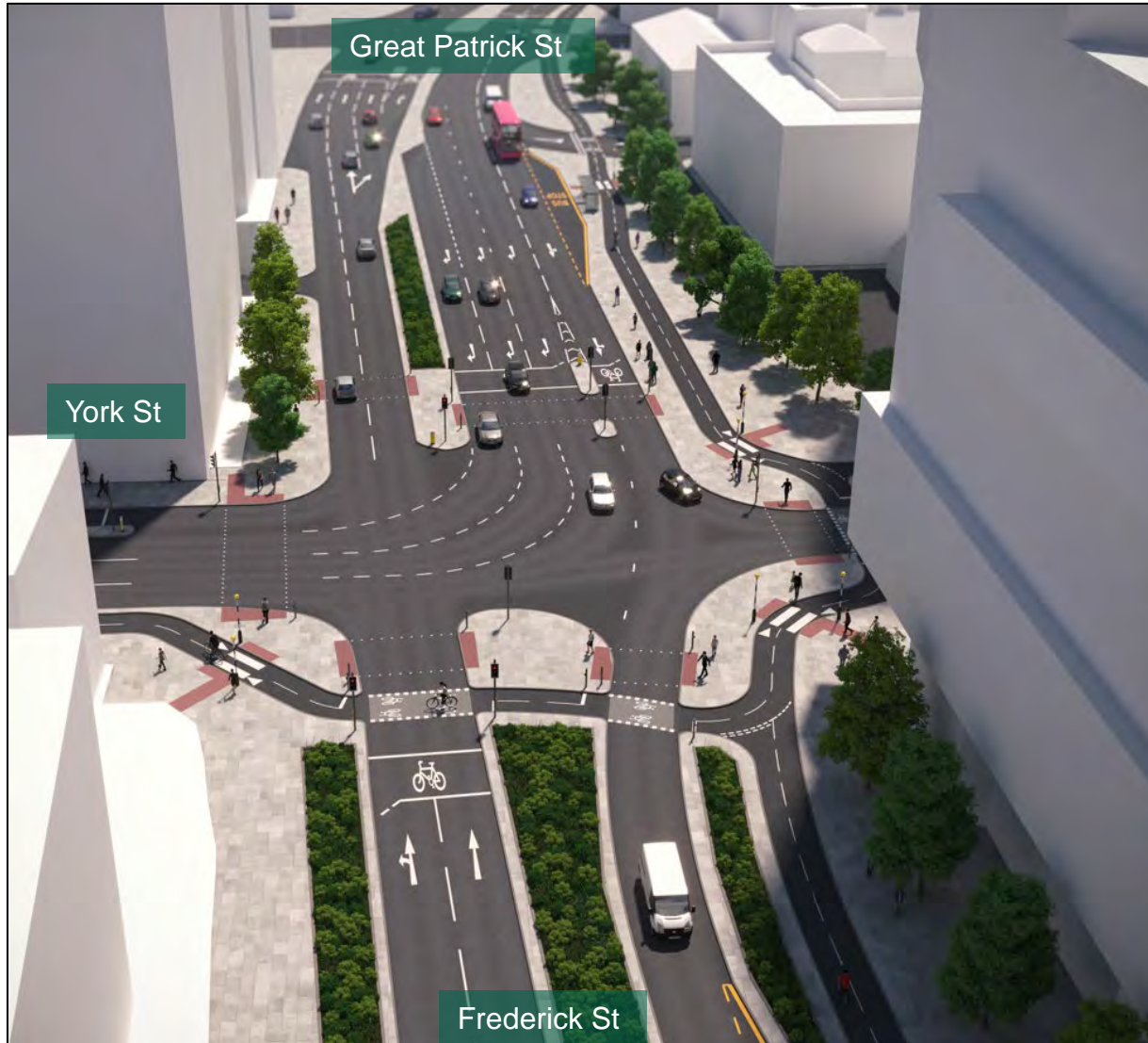
YSI+ Pedestrian Comfort Review



* Assessment reflects pedestrian comfort / level of service based on effective footway width and volume of pedestrians

Proposed YSI+ scheme | Visualisations

Great Patrick Street / York Street / Frederick Street junction



York Street looking towards Great Georges Street

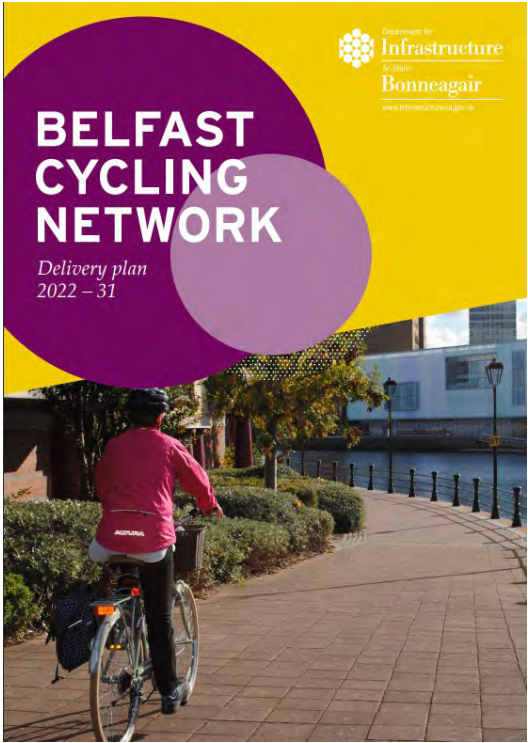
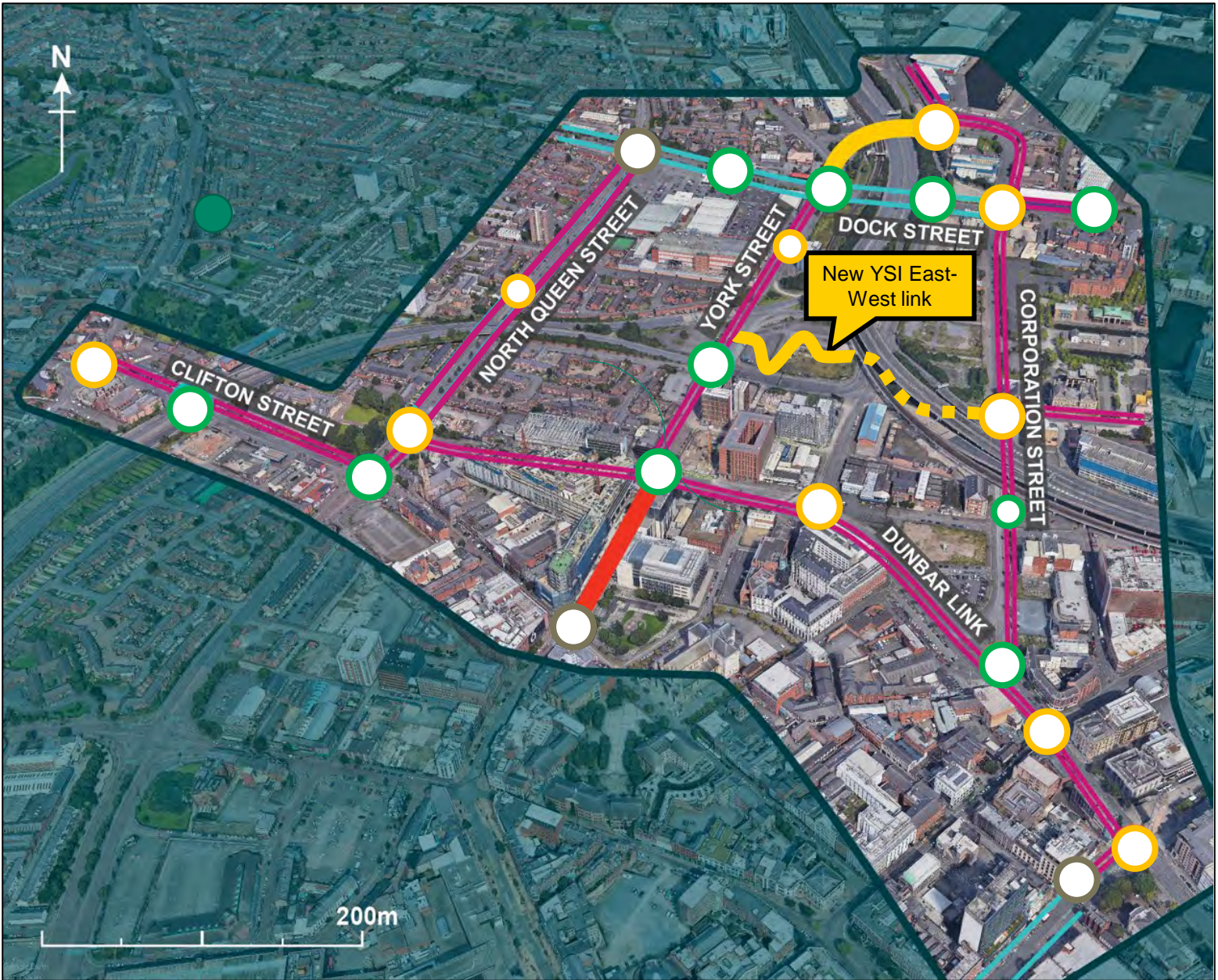


North Queen Street looking south towards Westlink Bridge



Proposed YSI+ scheme

- Key:
- One-way Cycle Track
 - Two-way Cycle Track
 - Shared Use Footway/Cycleway
 - On-Street Quiet Route
 - Fully segregated cycling crossing facilities
 - Partially segregated cycling crossing facilities
 - Shared crossing facilities



Placemaking Analysis

Placemaking scenarios

0

Baseline

1

Current YSI scheme

2

Ashton Centre / Mark
Hackett alternative
proposal

3

Refined YSI scheme
within current parameters
with active travel and
placemaking
enhancements

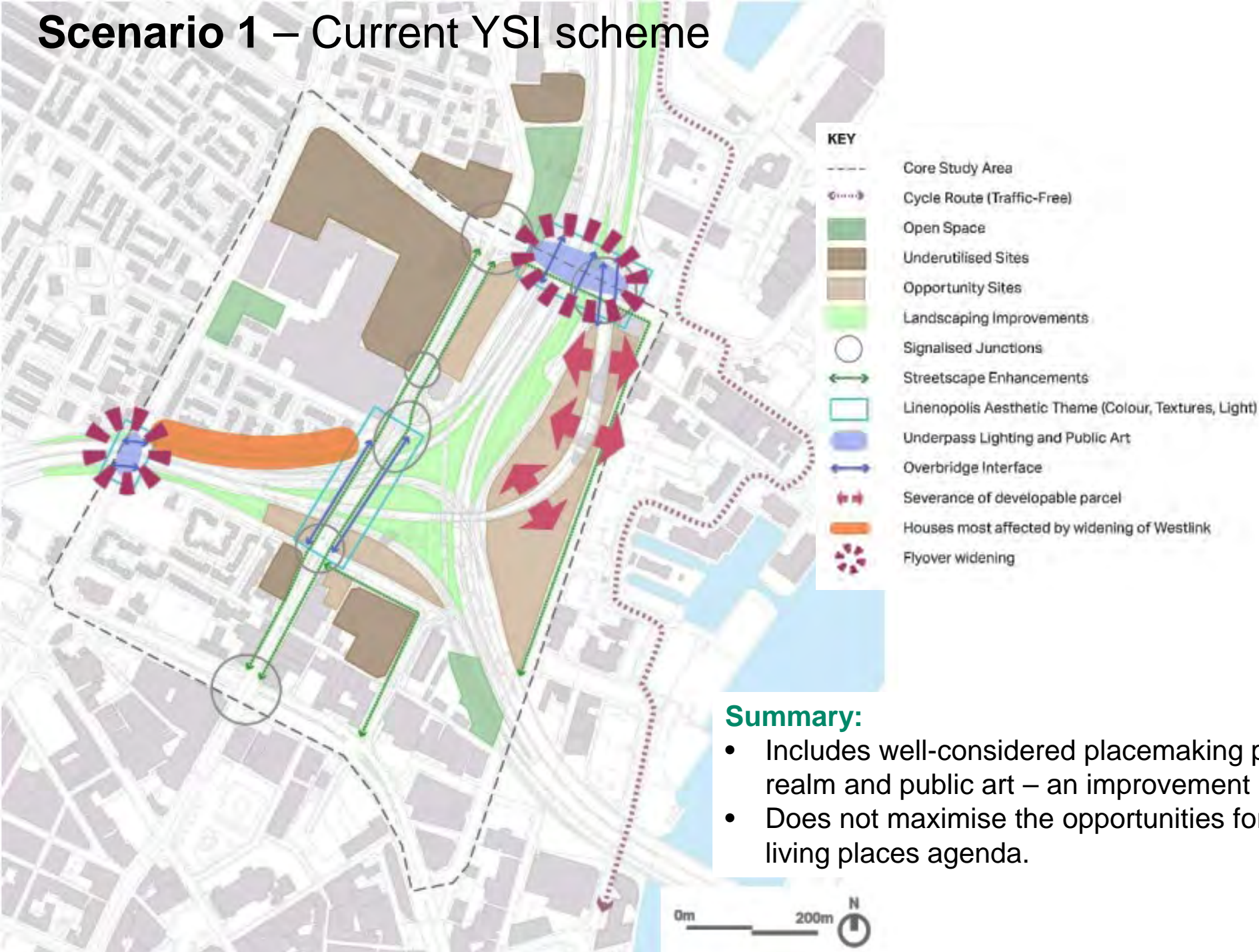
3A

Scenario 3 + substantial
refinements to YSI
scheme

4

Scenario 3A + wider area
opportunities

Scenario 1 – Current YSI scheme



North Queen St Bridge



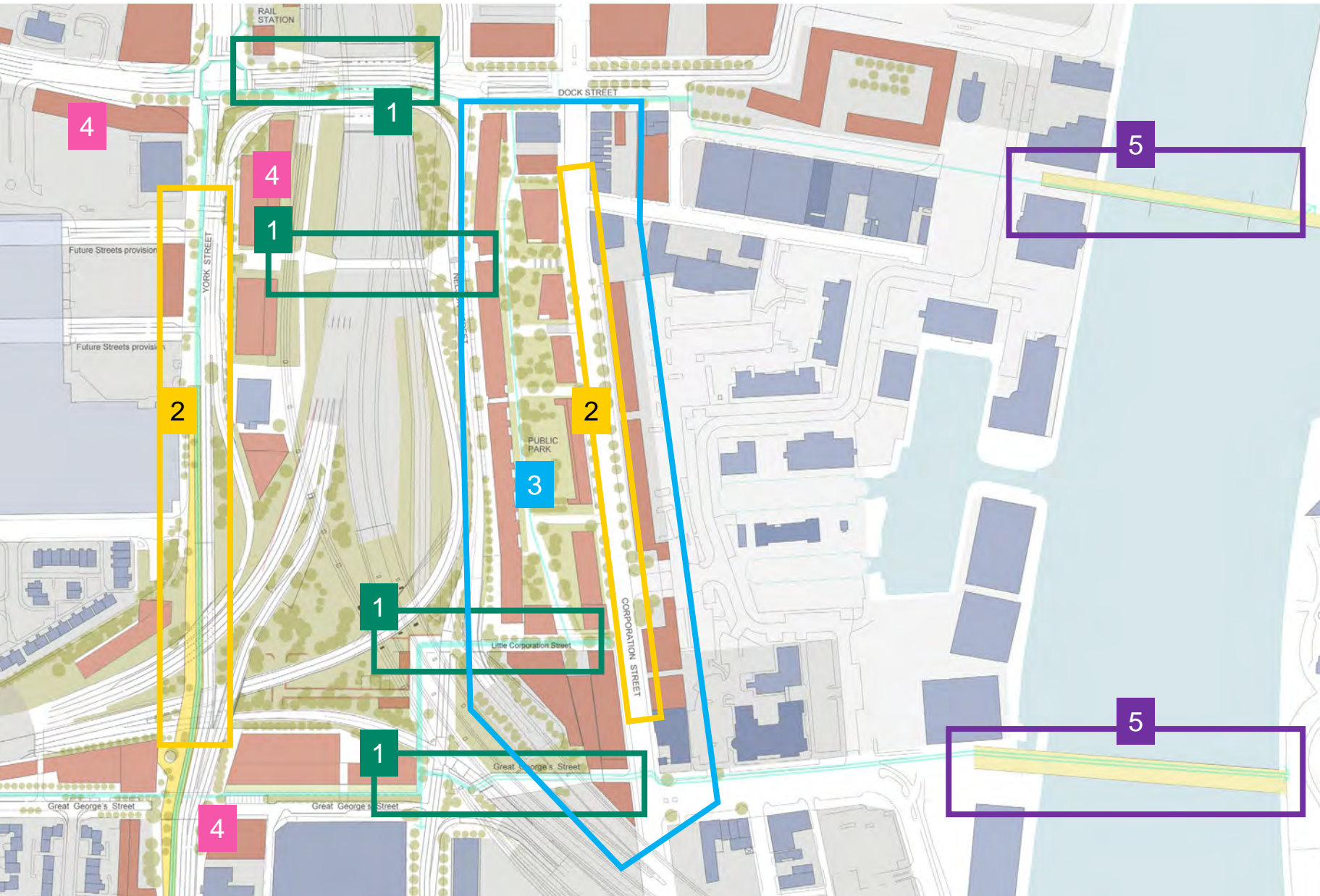
Dock St Bridge



Summary:

- Includes well-considered placemaking proposals for landscape, public realm and public art – an improvement compared to the baseline;
- Does not maximise the opportunities for connectivity and the wider living places agenda.

Scenario 2 – Ashton Centre/Mark Hackett alternative proposal



Key:

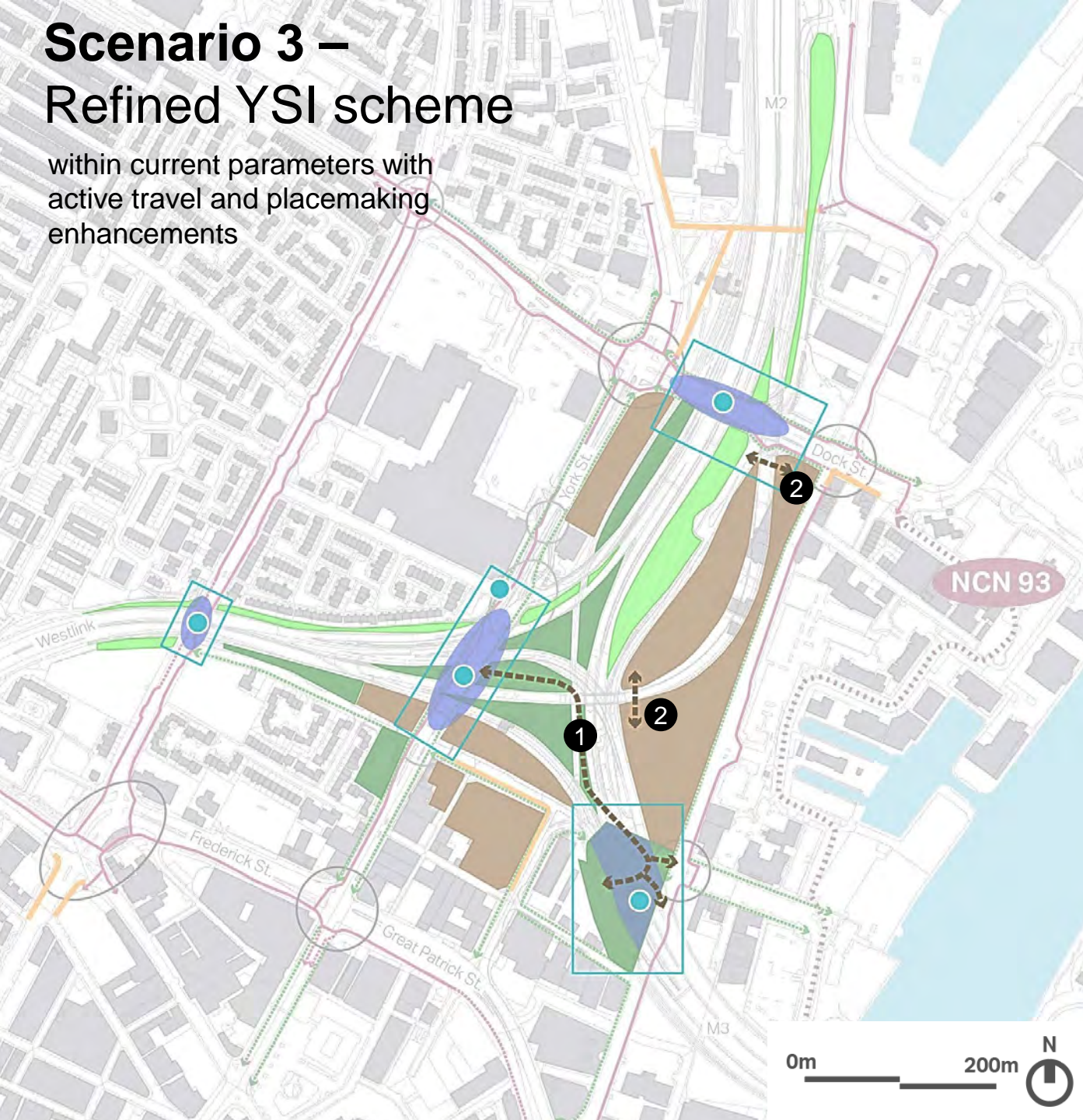
- 1** E-W connections
- 2** N-S connections: York Street (elevated) pedestrian connection and new building frontage on Corporation
- 3** Well-planned urban village community on Corporation Street
- 4** Re-development of underutilised sites
- 5** New bridges across the river

Summary:

- Much greater placemaking benefits compared to the current YSI design
- A number of areas could be improved upon
- Does not meet the stated strategic transport objectives of the scheme (separate engineering assessment report presented to Ashton Centre)
- Some principles have been carried over into other Scenarios

Scenario 3 – Refined YSI scheme

within current parameters with
active travel and placemaking
enhancements



KEY - SCENARIO 3

	Opportunity Sites
	Open Space
	Landscaping Improvements
	Cultural & Heritage Aesthetic Theme (Colour, Textures, Light)
	Underpass Improvements
	Overbridge Interface
	Pedestrian Connections
	Highway Adjustments
	Existing Cycle Route (Traffic-Free)
	Kerb-Segregated Cycle Lanes
	On-Road Segregated Cycle Lanes
	CYCLOPS Junctions
	Widened Pavement & Shared Surface
	Streetscape Enhancements

Potential Interventions

- 1 East/west pedestrian/cycling connection under Lagan / Dargan Bridges
- 2 Connections across M2 to Westlink underpass to reduce severance of land parcels

Summary:

- A substantial uplift in placemaking benefits compared to the current design;
- Placemaking benefits come close to the Alternative Proposal (Scenario 2);
- This scheme however meets stated transport objectives
- Active travel and related placemaking elements are a key enabler of this uplift in overall placemaking benefit and should be prioritised.

Scenario 3 illustrative placemaking sketches



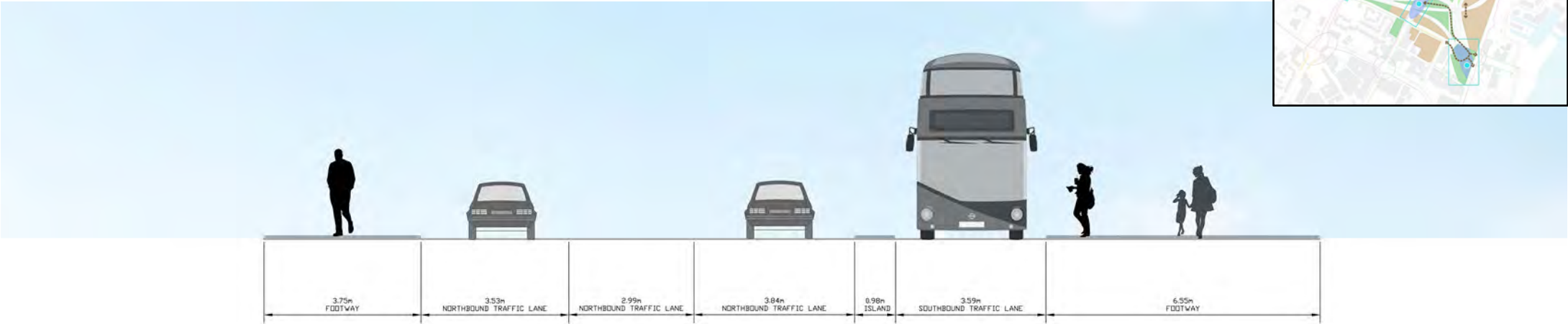
New E-W pedestrian/cycling connections across YSI



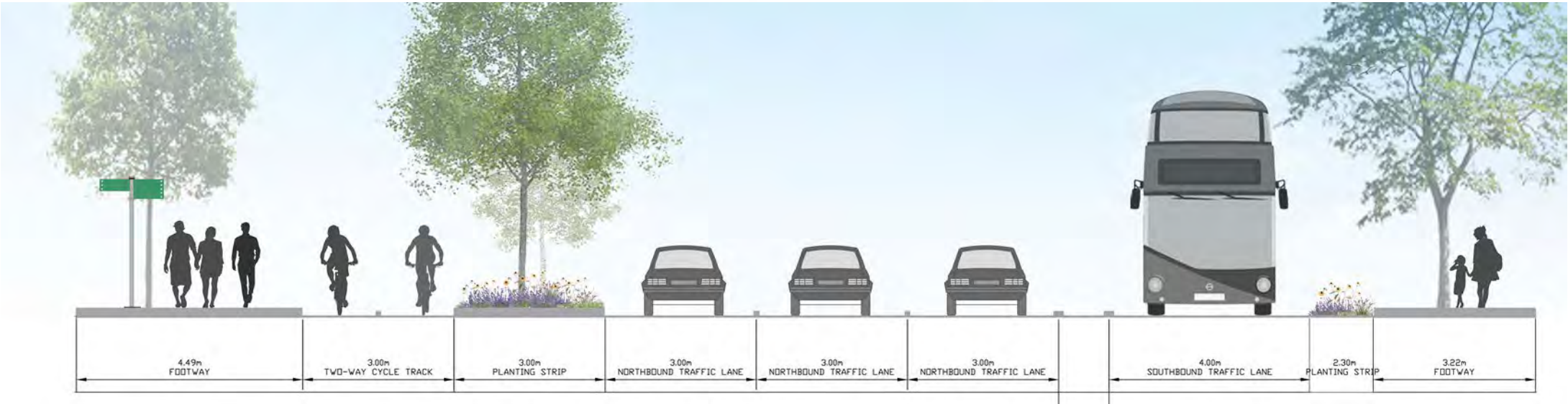
Corporation St. development opportunities

Scenario 3 – Active Travel + Urban Greening – York Street

Before



After



Scenario 3A – Scenario 3 + substantial refinements to YSI scheme

KEY - SCENARIO 3A

- Opportunity Sites
- Open Space
- Landscaping Improvements
- Shared Space Deck
- Active Travel and Placemaking Enhancements
- Underpass Improvements
- Pedestrian Connections
- Highway Adjustments

Potential Interventions

- 1 Revised M2 to Westlink alignment to create development parcel for Sailortown urban village
- 2 East/west pedestrian/cycling connection under Lagan / Dargan Bridges
- 3 Widening of York St bridges / **minimum** green roofing of underpasses to create amenity space

Summary:

- The more substantial refinements to the current YSI scheme alongside the proposals for active travel and enhanced placemaking;
- Could deliver a higher level of placemaking benefits than the alternative proposal while also meeting the strategic transport objectives of the project;
- This conclusion is subject to cost assessment and more detailed consideration of the proposals.

0m 200m 400m



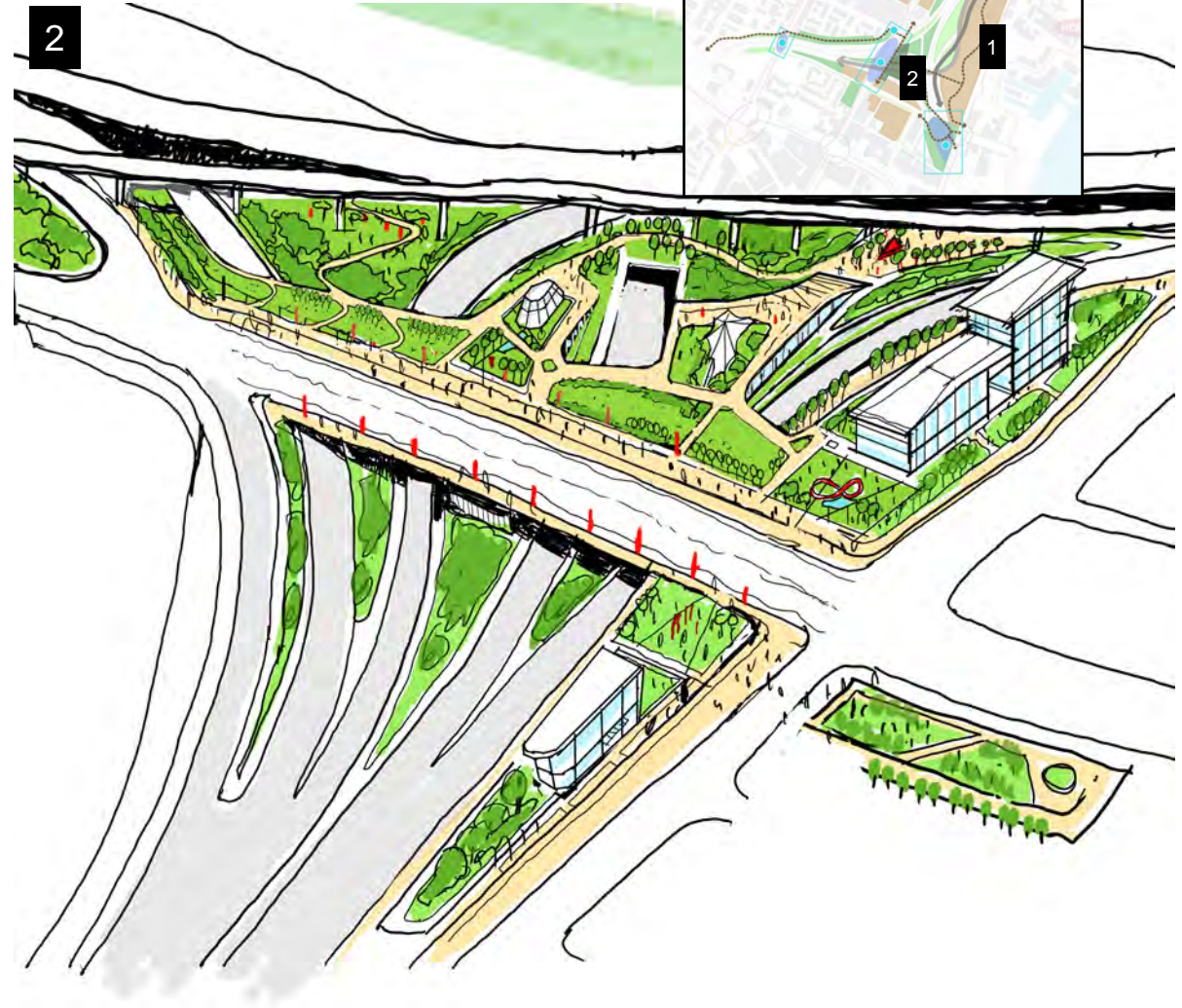
Scenario 3A illustrative placemaking sketches

1



Corporation Street development opportunities

2



Green roof east of York Street

Scenario 4 – Scenario 3A + wider area opportunities

KEY - SCENARIO 4

- Opportunity Sites
- Long-Term Opportunity Sites
- Open Space
- Landscaping Improvements
- Shared Space Deck
- Active Travel and Placemaking Enhancements
- Underpass Improvements
- Pedestrian Connections
- Highway Adjustments

Potential Interventions

- 1 Revised M2 to Westlink alignment to create development parcel for Sailortown urban village
- 2 East/west pedestrian/cycling connection under Lagan / Dargan Bridges
- 3 Widening of York St bridges / **maximum** green roofing of underpasses to maximise amenity space
- 4 Green roofing of Westlink at Clifton St underpass
- 5 Additional foot/cycle bridges over River Lagan

Summary:

- Land owned by DfI, DfC, BCC, the Harbour Commissioners and others has the potential to improve placemaking and strategic connectivity across the wider area, and enhance its liveability & attractiveness;
- DfI could support delivery of placemaking benefits by other agencies through release of lands post completion of YSI;
- If the refinements to the YSI scheme and/or proposals identified in Scenario 3A cannot be achieved, then Scenario 4 could become critical in counter balancing the reduced placemaking benefits of the project through improvements across the wider area.



Scenario 4 illustrative placemaking sketches

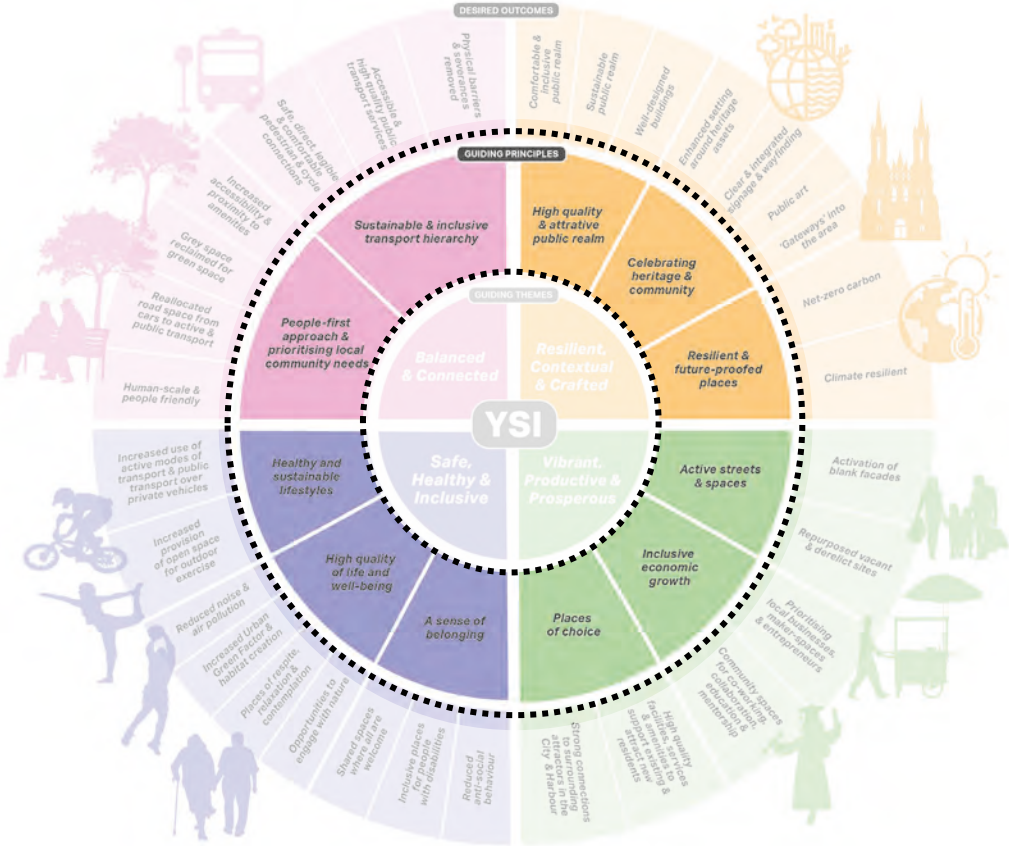
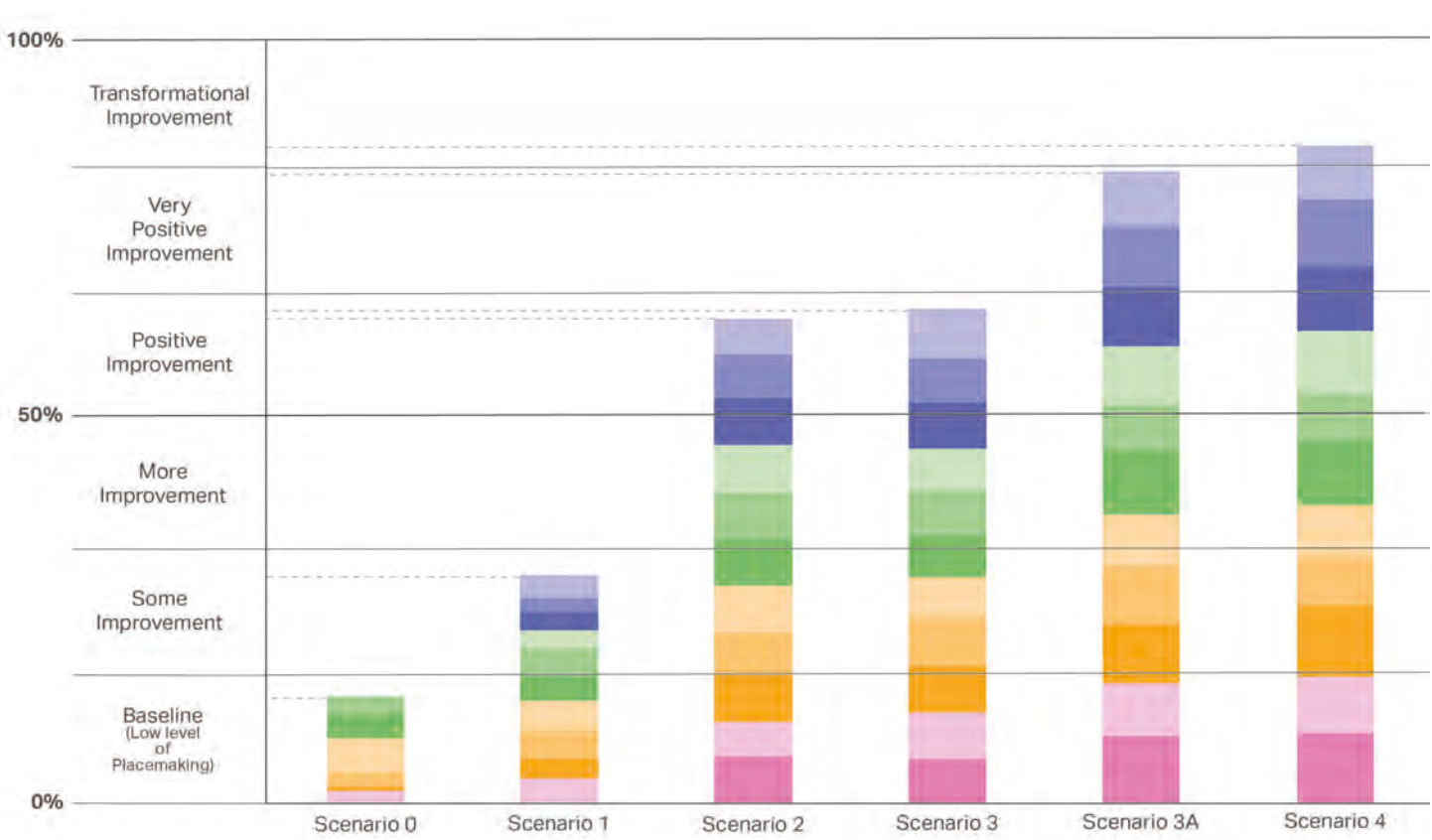


Extended green roof & potential connections to Corporation St



Redevelopment of Cityside Shopping Centre

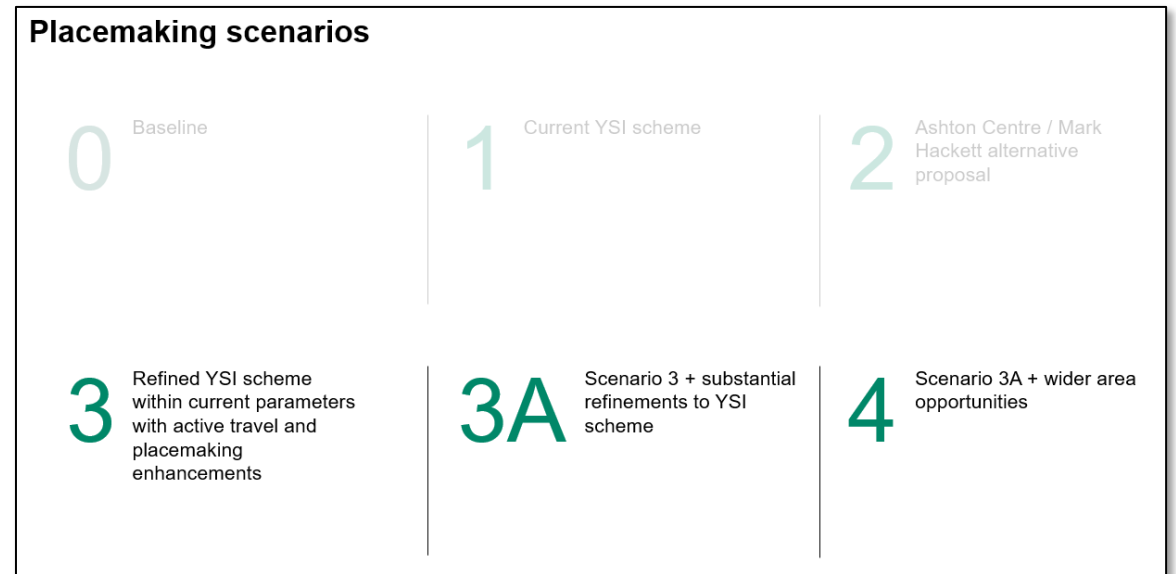
Evaluation against 11 Guiding Principles – overall comparison



Overall conclusions and recommendations

1. The current YSI design does not maximise placemaking benefits for communities or satisfy LTN 1/20 requirements for active travel.
2. The alternative proposal by Ashton Centre / Mark Hackett is good for placemaking **but does not meet the stated transport objectives of the YSI project.**
3. The placemaking and active travel analysis undertaken in Scenarios 3, 3A and 4 confirms that there are significant opportunities to increase the placemaking and active travel benefits of the YSI scheme **while meeting the stated transport objectives.**

It is recommended, from a placemaking and active travel perspective, that DfI continue to develop and refine Scenarios 3, 3A and 4 at this stage.



Stakeholder Engagement - Recommendations


1. The current commission has included a very productive round of consultation with stakeholders representing different interests across the City and Northern Ireland. It will be important to share the findings of the work with them to ensure that they continue to support the initiative taken by DfI. **It is recommended that an engagement strategy be developed so that this can follow on DfI and Ministerial review.**
2. Effective placemaking needs to include active involvement from people who live, work or study in the area. **As part of the engagement strategy, it is recommended that consideration is given to the potential for a programme of stakeholder consultation, community involvement and co-design that could unlock further local insights, support buy-in and create long term social value.**



Placemaking and Active Travel Review: report publication

“I see the publication of this report as the crucial next step in the York Street Interchange project. It will allow public debate and engagement. Not everyone will agree with the three shortlisted options in the report. However, I would encourage people, elected representatives and community organisations, particularly in the areas most affected, to engage with my officials as they work to refine those options and explore any implementation issues. This stakeholder engagement will help to deliver for communities, connectivity and the wider living places agenda.”

Infrastructure Minister John O'Dowd



Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair
Department for
Infrastructure
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

York Street Interchange

Home


About the Scheme

Scheme Development


Public Inquiry


Project Documents

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Co-financed by the European Union
Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)





Scheme Homepage

Latest News

Update: 11th October 2022

O'Dowd publishes the Placemaking and Active Travel Review report for the York Street Interchange project

Infrastructure Minister John O'Dowd has today published the Placemaking and Active Travel Review (PATR) report for the York Street Interchange project.

PDF Document	File Size
The Inspector's Report	2.1 MB
Summary Considerations and Recommendations	3.2 MB
Departmental Statement	3.2 MB

03

**Ongoing work to develop the Placemaking and
Active Travel proposals**

Corporation Street urban village

LEVEL	ISSUE TO ADDRESS
City-wide	Poor air quality around the Interchange
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Core study area	The waterfront is a key attractor for the Sailortown & Greater Clarendon area
	A focus on reviving the historic city-grid of smaller blocks and higher permeability for better connectivity
	A focus on new pedestrian connections connecting east and west Belfast
	A focus on urban quality enhancements through green corridors and new public squares
	A focus on activation of underutilised spaces
	A focus on key entrances to the City Centre and waterfront.

15 key issues addressed



ST.2



**30 desired
outcomes
addressed**

**City-wide level
of benefit:**



Contribution to housing delivery

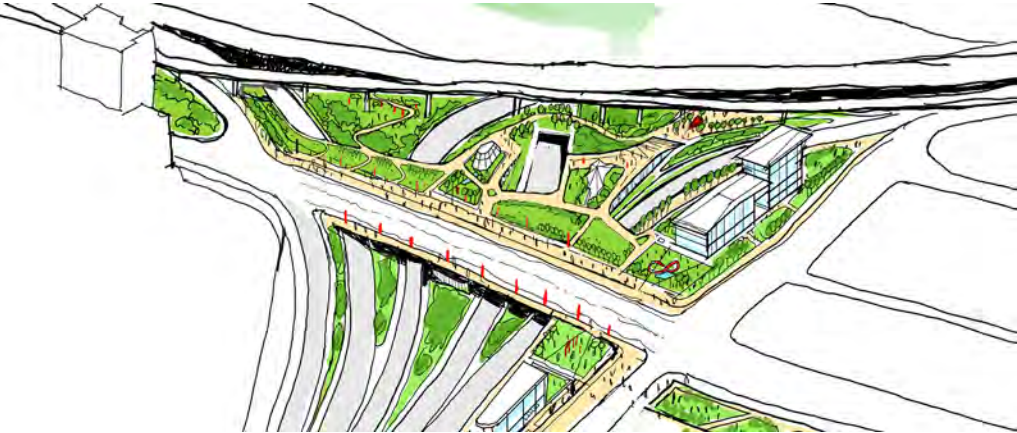
$(30+15+3) \times 3 = 144$ overall score

Evaluation of selected placemaking interventions

Central green deck – “do max”

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15 key issues addressed



City-wide level of benefit:



30 desired outcomes addressed

(30+15) x 3 = 135 overall score

Evaluation of selected placemaking interventions

York Street below Frederick Street streetscape enhancements

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	A focus on key entrances to the City Centre and waterfront.

11 key issues addressed



City-wide level of benefit:



29 desired outcomes addressed

$(29+11) \times 3 = 120$ overall score

Evaluation of selected placemaking interventions

North Queen Street streetscape enhancements

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11 key issues addressed



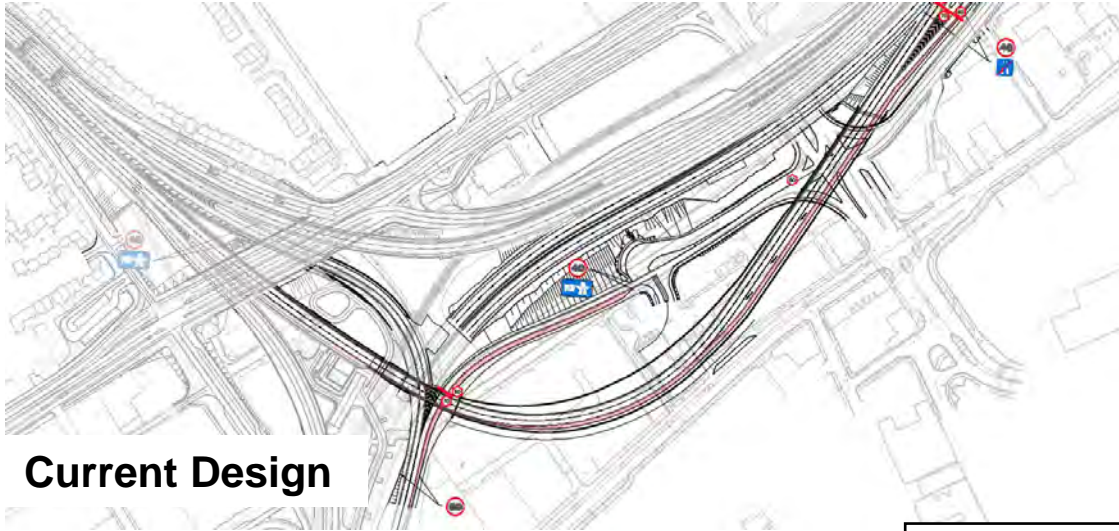
City-wide level of benefit:



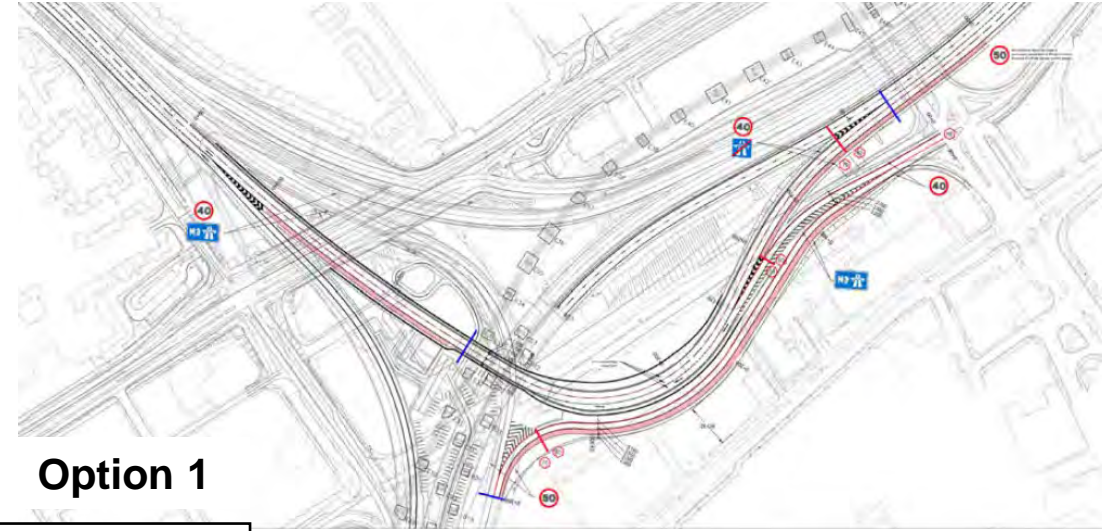
28 desired outcomes addressed

(28+11) x 3 = 117 overall score

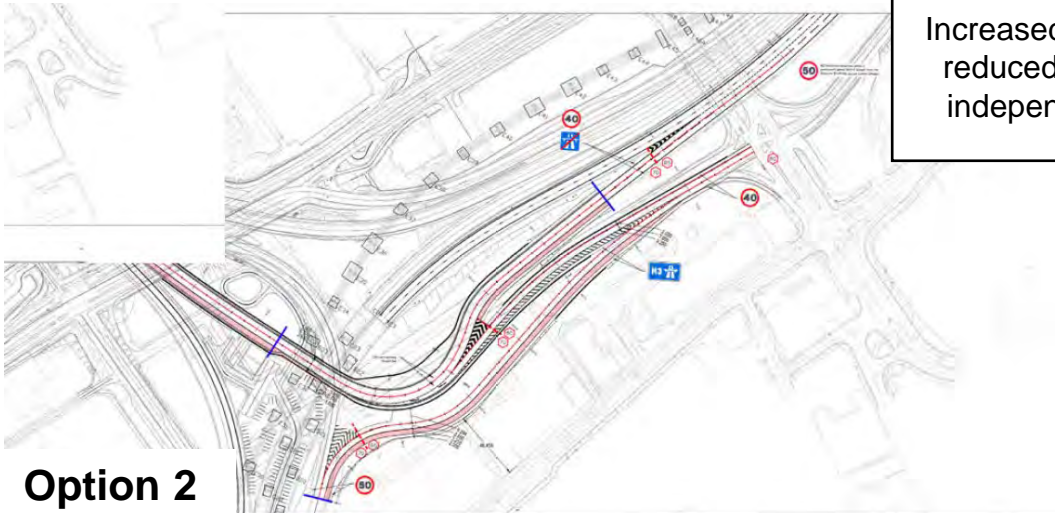
M2 to Westlink Realignment Options considered



Current Design



Option 1



Option 2

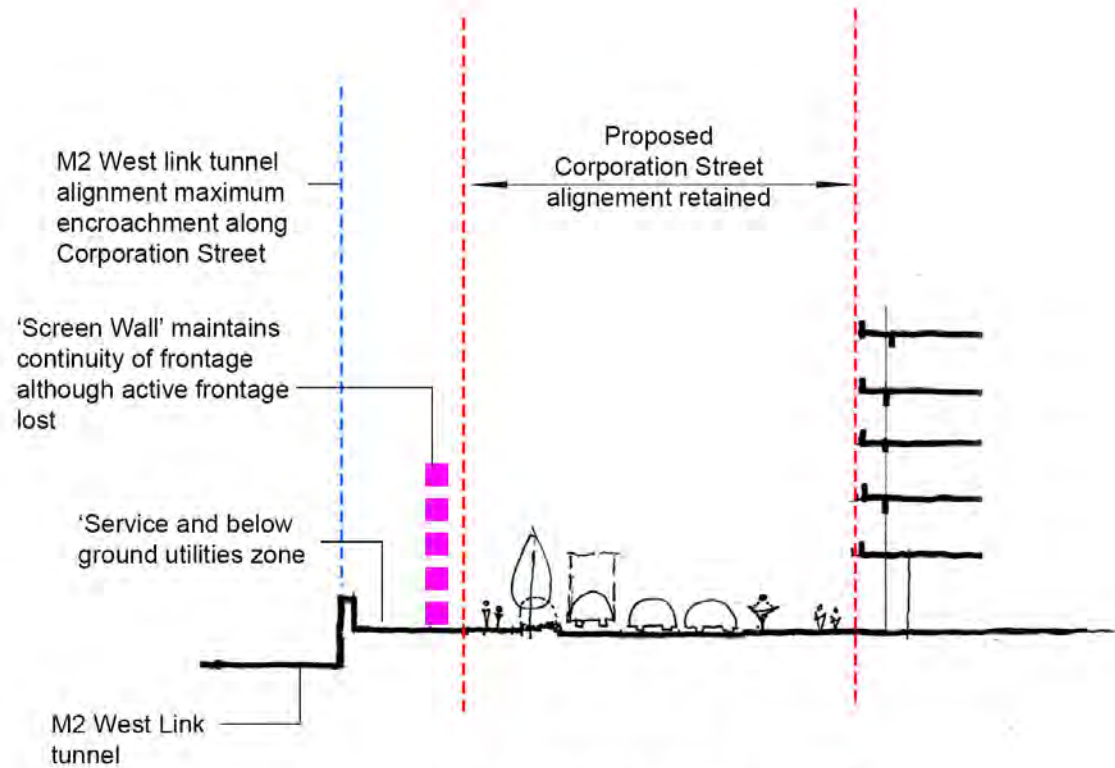
Note:
Increased risk to road user safety with
reduced road geometry – subject to
independent review/decision by DfI



Option 3

Corporation Street

West Link Edge Study 01

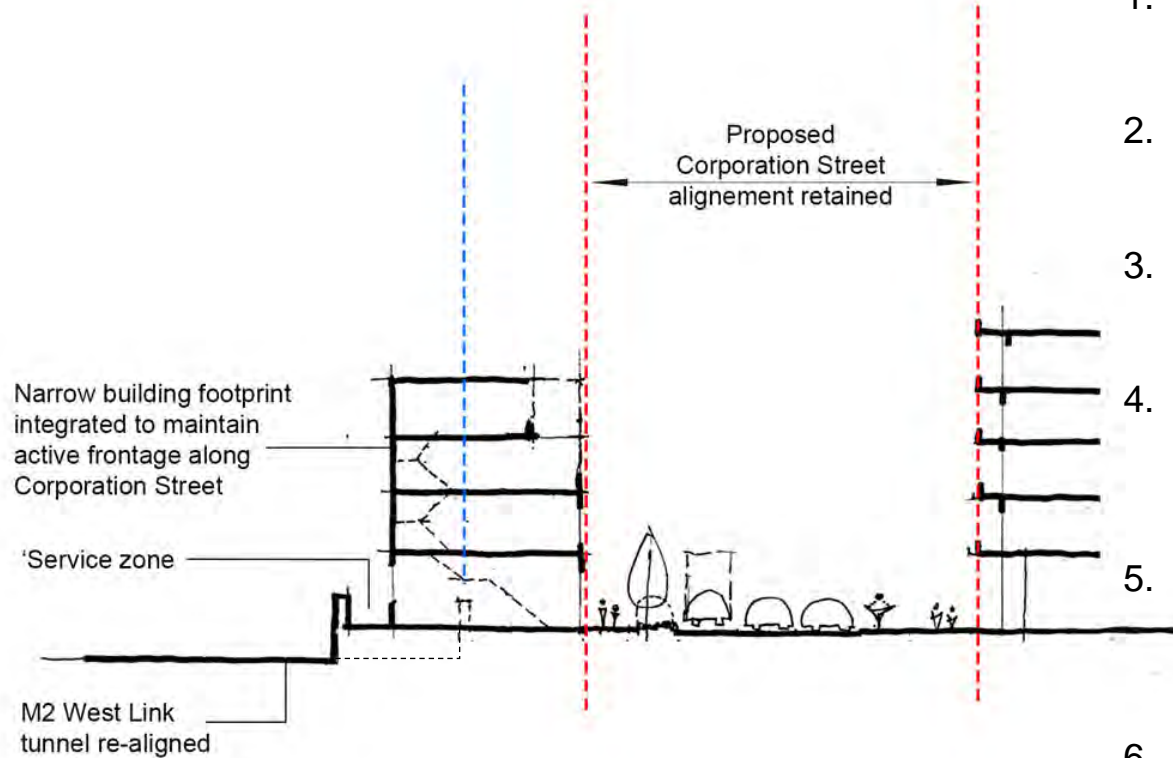


1. Corporation Street alignment retained
2. Westlink tunnel alignment retained
3. Existing Sinclair Seamens Church
4. Island Site options
 - Car parking
 - Relocated weighbridge
5. 'Screen wall' incorporating false façade or green-wall
6. Existing weighbridge site redeveloped

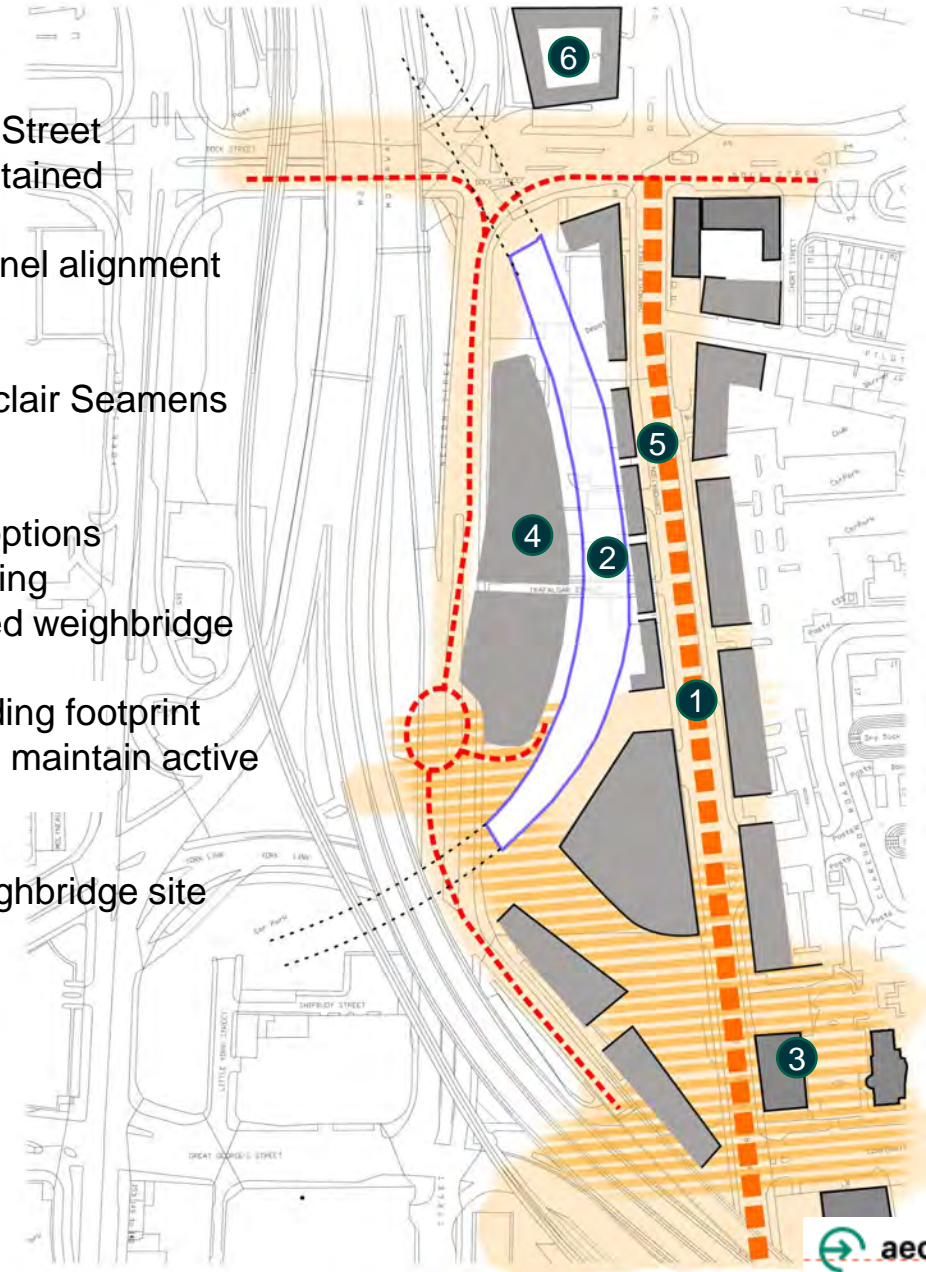


Corporation Street

West Link Edge Study 02



1. Corporation Street alignment retained
2. Westlink tunnel alignment re-aligned
3. Existing Sinclair Seamens Church
4. Island Site options
 - Car parking
 - Relocated weighbridge
5. Narrow building footprint integrated to maintain active frontage
6. Existing weighbridge site redeveloped



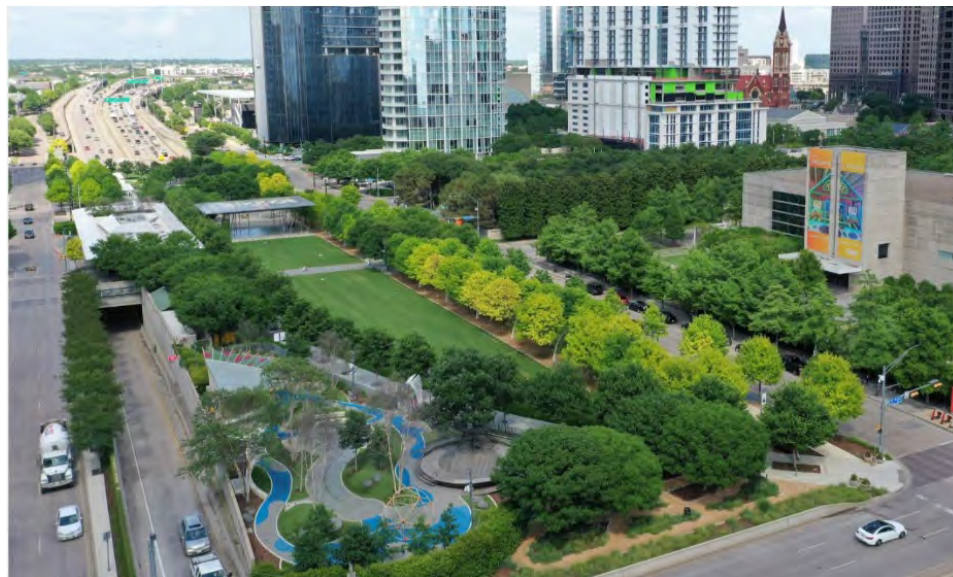
Development of Placemaking Interventions

York Street Green Roofing (S3a & S4)

International precedents



Freeway Park, Seattle



Klyde Warren Park, Dallas

A7 Deckel, Hamburg



Spatial Framework

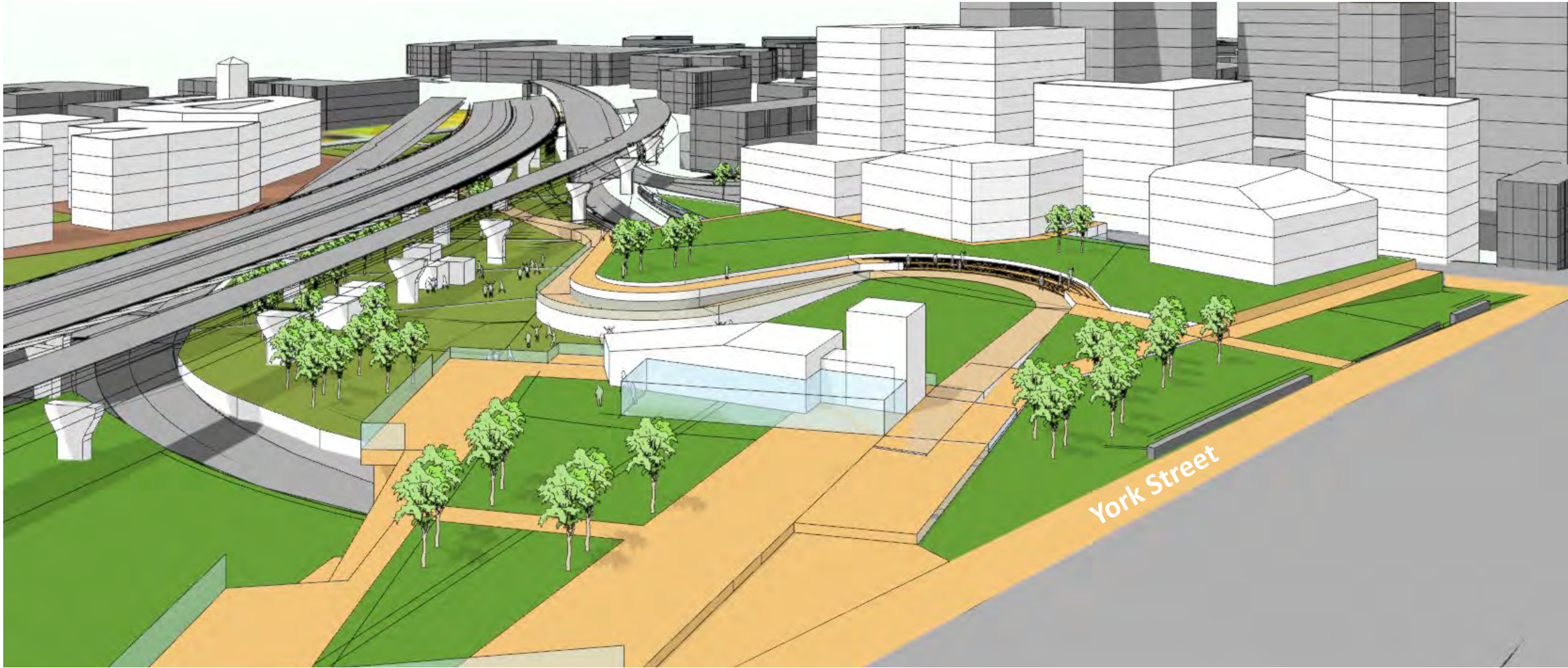
From York Street to waterfront



- An approx. 500m walk from City Quays to the extended green roof
- Active street frontage on York Street, linking Yorkgate station to the city centre
- Active street frontage on Corporation Street with current alignment of M2 to Westlink slip road
- Open spaces and opportunity sites linked into one pedestrian network

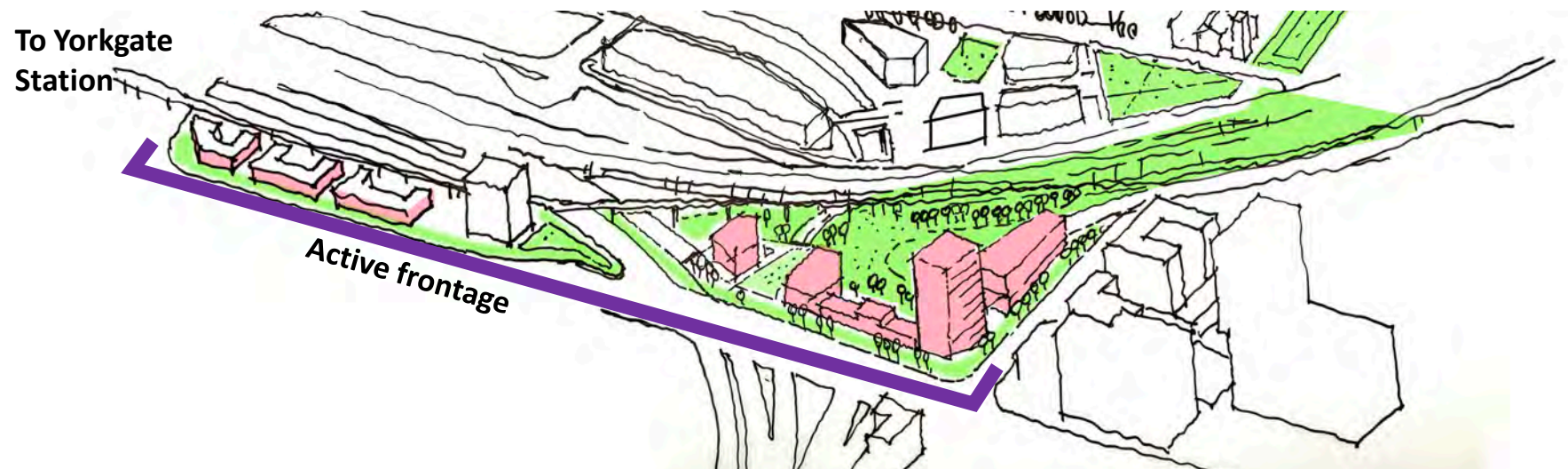
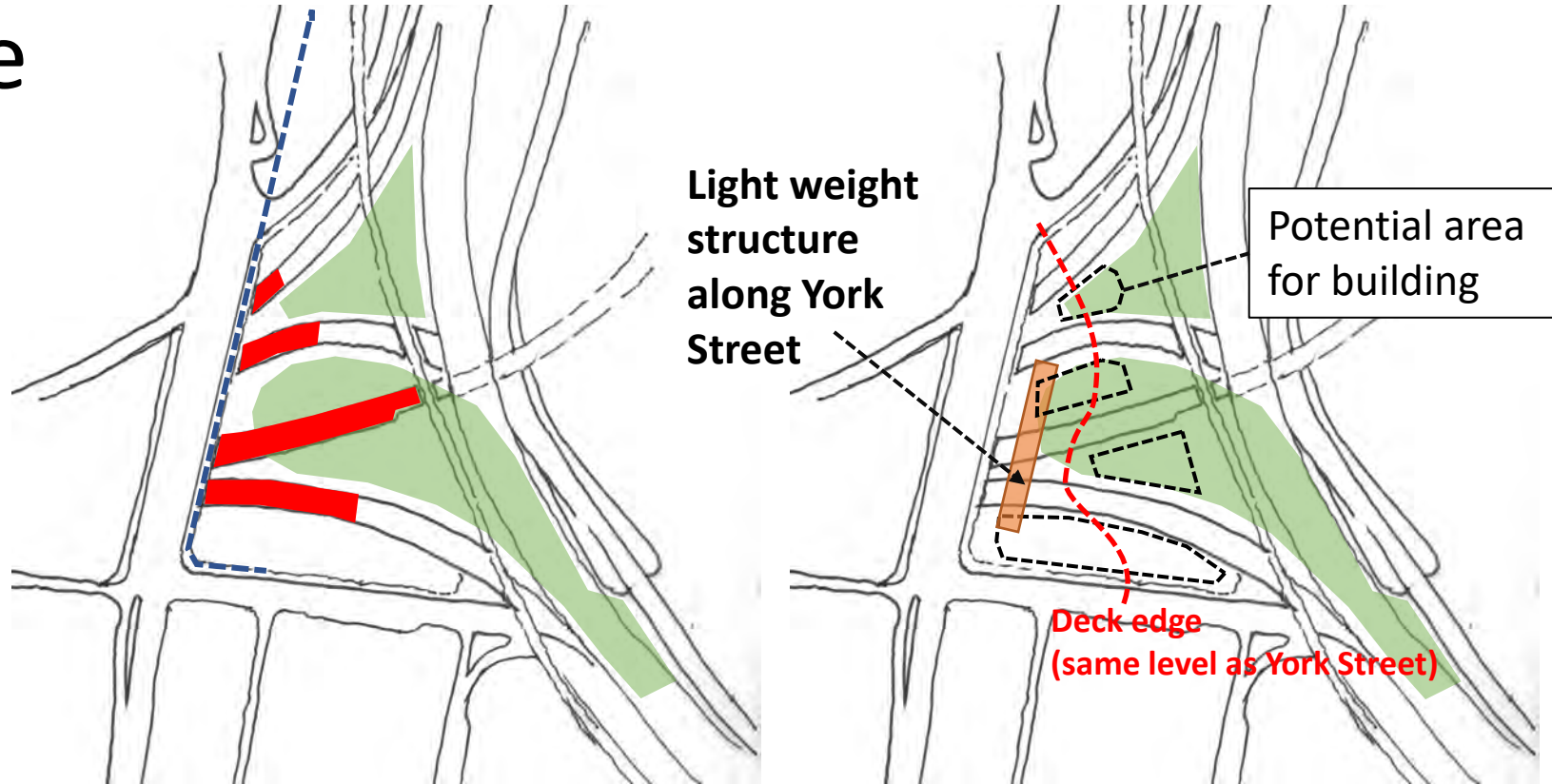


Early concept design showing green park linking York Street to Corporation Street



York Street frontage

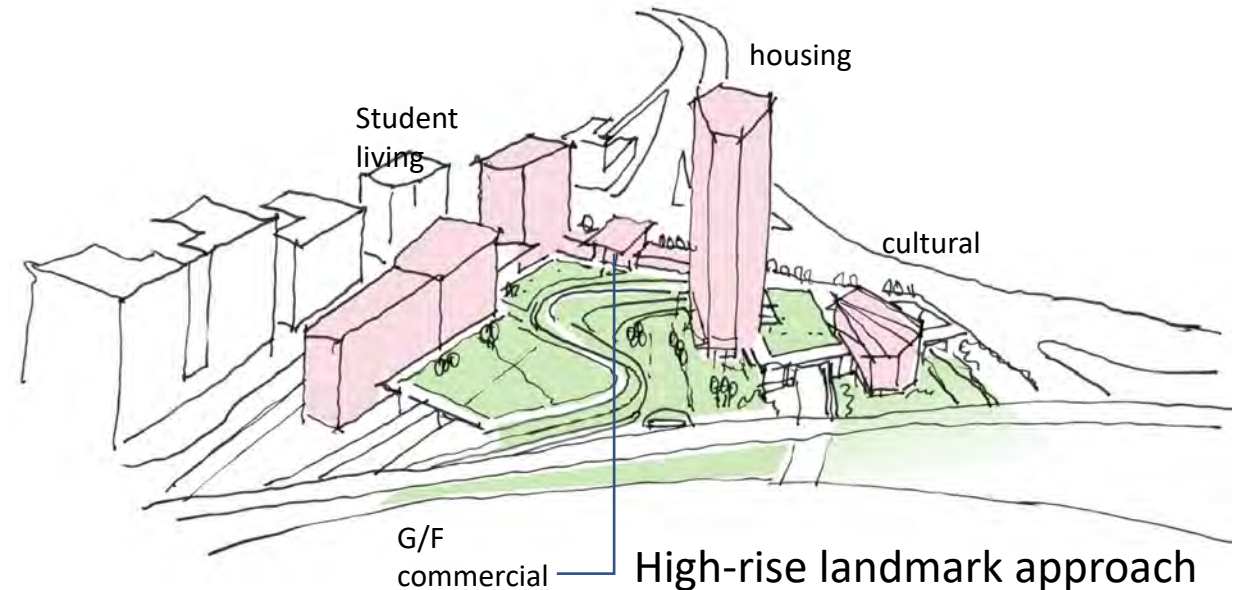
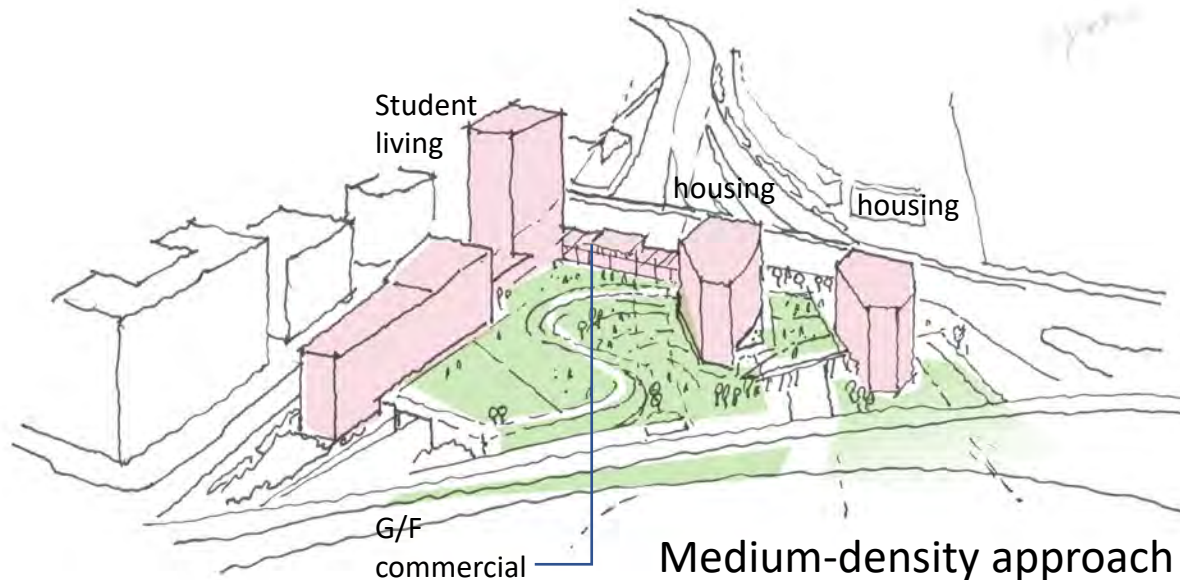
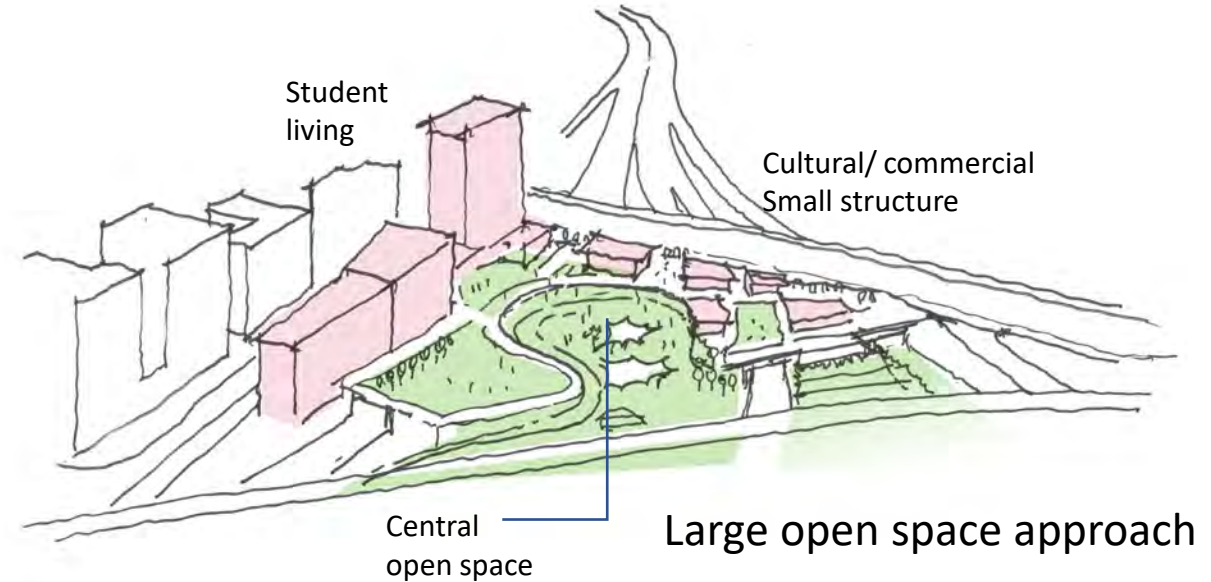
- Widened bridges provides cover for the 4 underpasses below York Street.
- Major buildings would be built on the land between the underpasses only
- Only light weight structures would be built on top of the underpass roof slabs



Extended Green Roof

Open space and massing density study

- **Large open space approach** – provides the largest area of public open space
- **Medium-density approach** - provides more development floor area, with residential upper floors, and more active frontage on deck level
- **High-rise approach** - provides more development floor area. The high-rise also becomes a city level landmark



04

Next Steps

Next steps

1

Packaging and phasing of delivery

2

Engagement with delivery partners around delivery and long-term maintenance

3

Cost analysis of the interventions and wider economic benefits assessment

4

Further engagement with stakeholders on selected topics

5

Development of preferred strategies for recommendations to DfI Minister

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Evaluation of selected placemaking interventions

Corporation Square streetscape enhancements

LEVEL	ISSUE TO ADDRESS
City-wide	Poor air quality around the Interchange
	Underutilised sites due to severance by roads and infrastructure
	A focus on green and active corridors
	A focus on waterfront regeneration
	A focus on improving public realm quality
Wider study area	A focus on key attractors at the City Centre and Titanic Quarter
	A focus on activating gateways around transport hubs and key walking routes
	A focus on overall urban quality enhancements
Core study area	A focus on active routes throughout the city
	The waterfront is a key attractor for the Sailortown & Greater Clarendon area
	A focus on reviving the historic city-grid of smaller blocks and higher permeability for better connectivity
	A focus on new pedestrian connections connecting east and west Belfast
	A focus on urban quality enhancements through green corridors and new public squares
	A focus on activation of underutilised spaces
	A focus on key entrances to the City Centre and waterfront.

15 key issues addressed



City-wide level of benefit:



SS.4



29 desired outcomes addressed

(29+15) x 3 = 132 overall score