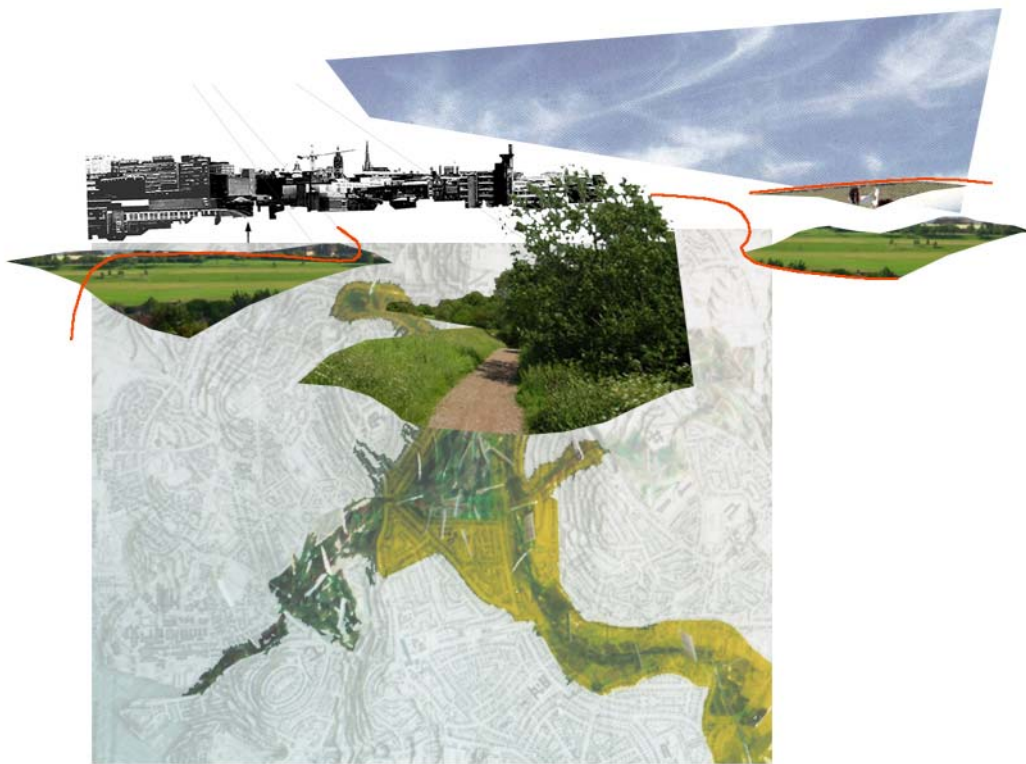




PARSON CROSS NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY



SOUTHEY OWLERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGIES

VOLUME 1
MAY 2002



SUPPORTED BY SOUTHEY /
OWLERTON AREA PANEL

soar

Parson Cross

“ Parson Cross is by far the largest of the neighbourhoods in Southey Owlerton- it feels more like a small town than a village- and the one facing the most dramatic changes including the closure of the Sheffield College’s site and significant demolition of Council housing. There is something about the scale and ambition of the main sites in the neighbourhood that set it apart.

It is also the neighbourhood that feels most clearly defined by its landform and landscape- the three ridges with their municipal green spaces visible on the skyline, surrounding the Tongue Gutter “valley”, an astonishingly rural feature that predates the housing.”

INTRODUCTION

Parson Cross Community Development Forum was established in September 2000 from the local TARA's and community groups to form a representative organisation to ensure that the community could take ownership of regeneration in the neighbourhood. The Forum decided to work on a vision to change the physical appearance of the area and to improve the delivery of Council services, with a commitment to involve as many local people as possible.

At the same time the SOAR Board was developing its plans for the Neighbourhood Strategies process. In April 2001 at an event facilitated through the SOAR team, it was agreed that Parson Cross Forum would be the group that would lead on the development of the Strategy for Parson Cross. Since then the Forum has been working hard to develop and consult on ideas to improve the neighbourhood.

The issue of neighbourhood boundaries has arisen in Parson Cross, as parts of the area wanted to work with the Southey & District Action Group and parts of what we call the Southey neighbourhood wanted to work with Parson Cross Forum. We have kept to our neighbourhood boundaries on the maps (which are defined by major topographical features) but encouraged groups to choose the neighbourhood group that they work with. This has led to continuing discussions within the two groups and they have decided to work together in the overlapping areas.

This is the largest neighbourhood in Southey Owlerton - it combines both "old" and "new" Parson Cross - and has a population of some 19,000. It is also an area facing major change, including the closure of Parson Cross College and significant demolition of Council housing. The size of the area and the complexity of the issues have presented challenges to all involved in the process resulting in a thorough, far-ranging and lengthy period of consultation, which will continue into the next months.

We in the Council should like to express our thanks to the Forum for their commitment to and support of the process so far and our admiration for the way in which they have tackled and led the discussion throughout. Over the time period the group has developed to become a well recognised group in the area and have recently received funding through the main SRB5 programme.



Postcard activity at Parson Cross Festival

THE PROCESS SO FAR

At the first meeting in April 2001 to discuss the Neighbourhood Strategies process local groups agreed on the key issues for the area:

1. The future of the houses and, in particular, plans for demolition
2. The environment (parks, streets and maintenance)
3. Community facilities especially the two hub projects, Lytton/ Buchanan & Montenev
4. Transport, road safety and street lighting
5. Support for the elderly

It was agreed to invite the full range of local groups in the area to a further meeting where senior Council officers would answer pre-prepared questions on housing, the environment and regeneration. This meeting took place in July 2001. In parallel the Forum decided to work with the Neighbourhood Strategies team on a consultation event at the Parson Cross Festival in July 2001. For the purposes of the consultation the area was divided into 6 sub-neighbourhoods.

The team were taken on a walkabout of the neighbourhood (with short trips by mini-bus because the neighbourhood is so large) on a lovely sunny day in June 2001. Out of this they developed materials for the Festival event:

- A model of the neighbourhood on which people could mark their houses with a pin (see Appendix) and identify their sub-neighbourhood
- A postcards activity colour-coded for each of the sub-neighbourhoods with a separate colour for people who don't live here but visit frequently - people were invited to complete a series of statements accompanied by an illustration of their answers (see Appendix)
- Trigger boards based on places photographed on the walkabout
- Historical map of the area

The postcards activity was a great success and the Forum were pleased because the postcards showed how positive local people felt about living in Parson Cross. Most people who came into the postcards tent were not ones who get involved actively in their community. The postcards therefore gave us a good insight into what "ordinary" people think about the area.

There was a lot of consistency across the sub-neighbourhoods with detailed comments about parks, play areas and people's immediate environment. There were also positive comments about neighbours and the community; and others about "bad neighbourliness", litter, dog mess etc. However there were very few comments about some of the larger scale issues for the neighbourhood such as the future of the College.

Because of the size of the area it began to feel as though there were two layers to the strategy – the overall framework for the neighbourhood and the details at the sub-neighbourhood level. The postcards had provided some of the latter; but it was felt that something different was needed to explore the former.



Collage produced at workshop

It was therefore suggested to hold two workshops, one for “new” Parson Cross and one for “old” Parson Cross. The Forum would invite key stakeholders in the area to these, to find out more about their plans and discuss ideas for the neighbourhood framework. At the same time, the Forum requested the Housing Service to do detailed mapping work against their sustainability criteria to provide a picture of the demand for Council housing in the neighbourhood. A recent sample stock condition survey of 8% of the whole of Sheffield’s council stock indicated that the majority of the traditionally constructed properties were structurally sound but had significant investment needs.

The two workshops were held in September 2001 and October 2001. They both followed a similar format. The SOAR team introduced work to date and the questions that had emerged in relation to the framework. Eventus and the University’s School of Architect helped with producing materials and facilitating at the events. Stakeholders then discussed in small groups (each of which included Forum members) questions relating to their individual projects/activity. After this the stakeholders each agreed two aspirations for their group or organisation and represented these graphically on base maps of the area using a range of collage materials. The maps were then presented back to the whole meeting.

The workshops were very enjoyable and produced some lovely collages (see Appendix). It was agreed that these could provide the basis for proposals for the neighbourhood framework on which to consult with the sub-neighbourhoods. The University’s School of Architecture, in their role as independent advisors, worked up this information, together with the postcards, into a series of display boards. The SOAR team and independent advisors proposed to the Forum their ideas on how to take this consultation process wider and deeper with the sub-neighbourhood groups.



Consulting at the SOAR Celebration Day

At this point (just before Christmas 2001) the Forum felt that the process was becoming rushed and too led by professionals – they decided to slow the process down and take time to plan how they wanted to consult. At the same time the information from the housing mapping exercise was becoming available. The Forum therefore decided to wait till the decisions on demolition had been made (April 2002) and for warmer weather to take their display boards to a range of community venues and to different age groups. They felt it was important to feed back the information from the Festival the previous summer and to test out specific proposals rather than ask open-ended questions again.

In May 2002 the Forum held 8 sessions around the neighbourhood, using different buses and mini-buses to house the displays and the volunteer facilitators. People were asked to:

- Comment on the map produced from the postcards and add their own comments using a series of icons (see Appendix)
- Answer questions relating to the proposed overall framework for the neighbourhood (see Appendix)
- Answer questions relating to the proposals for two more detailed parts of the framework – the areas around the proposed Montenevy and Lytton/ Buchanan hubs – including good practice examples of what the physical projects might look like (see below)

These events started slowly but built up over the 2 weeks. The final 2 days were well attended and successful events. In all 100 people attended and the majority were new faces.

The Forum plans to feed back their recommendations and conclusions to the wider community at the Parson Cross Festival in July 2002.



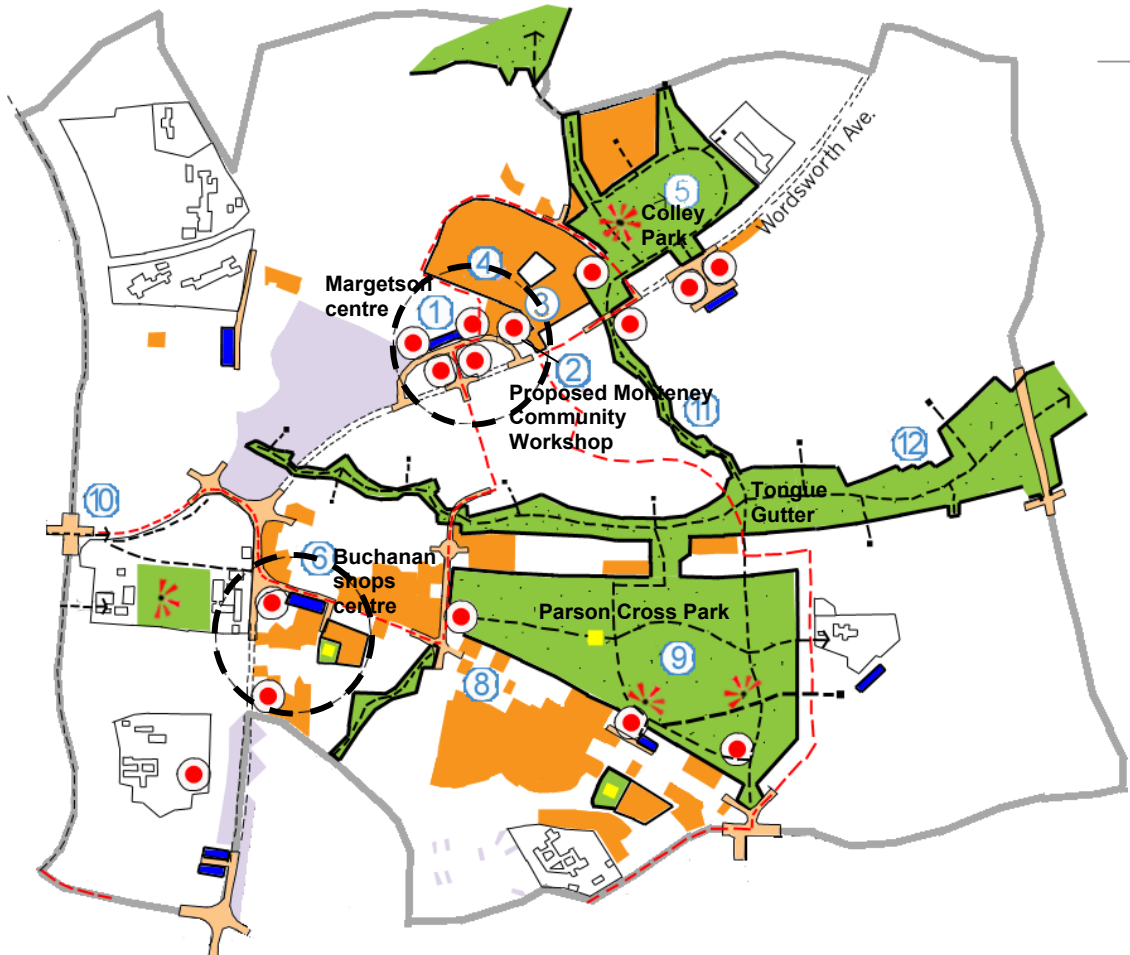
The green ridges and valley form define the shape and character of the neighbourhood

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY FOR PARSON CROSS

Impressions of the place













General impressions about Parson Cross that have emerged from conversations over the last year are:

- The neighbourhood is in many ways more like a small town than a village.
- People in the neighbourhood are very committed to working together and to making sure that decisions are made at the grass roots. Groups in the area have a well-established feel, with individuals who have been actively involved in their community for a long time.
- When the estates were built people moved in from all over and so neighbours and friends play as important a role as the extended family. There is concern for all age groups and the sense that people need to look out for each other, especially for the elderly.
- The churches are active in this area and play an important part in community life.
- The range of local facilities is important to people – schools, transport, being close to the shops and the medical centre, the parks. There are some well-established facilities in the area and people's expectation of what is provided locally is therefore high.
- Larger facilities like the College also bring people to Parson Cross from further afield in the city. Local people see the economic benefits of drawing in more people to the area.
- As well as facilities, the postcards showed the importance that people attach to the everyday details of their personal environment – their homes, their streets, lighting, litter, feeling safe, speeding cars, overgrown hedges.
- The physical situation of the neighbourhood sets it apart from the others – its valley form surrounding ridges and being at the edge of the Southey Owlerton area. This, combined with its size, gives a feeling of the neighbourhood being self-contained, of being its own place.
- At the same time people see the bigger picture within the city and want to make the most of the opportunities for jobs and investment in the area. There is a willingness to engage with the key partners like the College and the Council in order to get what is needed for the neighbourhood.



-  Existing community facilities
-  New & improved community facilities (indoor)
-  New & improved play, sports & youth facilities (outdoor)
-  New and improved shopping
-  Streetscape improvement
-  New & improved pedestrian & cycle routes/links
-  New community transport
-  Improvement to key open spaces
-  Landmarks and viewpoints
-  Housing investment areas
-  Potential for new development
-  Hubs & neighbourhood centres
-  Demonstration projects

Demonstration projects:

-  1 Margetson Centre
-  2 Montenev hub
-  3 Market garden
-  4 New housing on college land
-  5 Colley Park
-  6 Buchanan shops Centre
-  7 Lytton hub (site not yet known)
-  8 New housing round Parson Cross Park
-  9 Parson Cross Park
-  10 Halifax Rd junction and other entrances
-  11 The Parks route
-  12 Tongue Gutter route

Neighbourhood Strategy Diagram for Parson Cross

The diagram

Rather than trying to map all of the issues and activities the framework diagram for each of the six neighbourhoods in Southey Owlerton identifies priorities for action. Each of the six diagrams has a standard key or checklist so that when they are pieced together they will form a coherent framework.

What has emerged in terms of a physical plan for Parson Cross is the need to:

- Support and further develop the two main centres for shops and local facilities (Margetson Crescent and Buchanan Road shops) through new housing, new hub projects (Monteney and Lytton) and environmental improvements
- Develop the two main parks (Colley and Parson Cross) as focal points for the neighbourhood, through the design and layout of new housing/buildings around them and through implementing the masterplans for each
- Continue the investment in sustainable Council housing
- Enhance the image of the neighbourhood by improvements to the streetscene, especially at the entrances and along Wordsworth Avenue and Buchanan Road
- Develop a network of footpath links within the neighbourhood, making the most of the green spaces including Tongue Gutter, as well as links to adjacent areas
- In all of the above make sense of the layout of the neighbourhood that is the key to its identity (see below) – the parks on the ridges, Tongue Gutter in the valley bottom, the centres in hollows, the key features all linked by the two main roads and green footpath links

The closure of Parson Cross College (which will release land for new housing), the development at the Chaucer school site and the planned programme of demolition of Council housing are significant changes for the neighbourhood. The social and economic impact of these changes will be assessed in a study to be commissioned by the SOAR Board and Southey Owlerton Area Panel in the summer of 2002. This will inform the development briefs for land that will be released in both “new” and “old” Parson Cross.

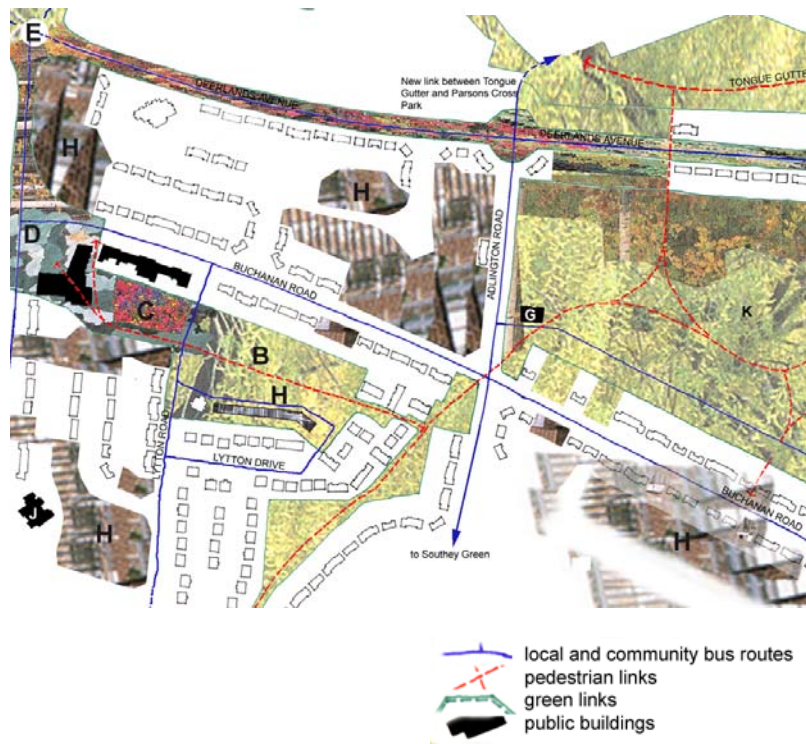
The changes in housing affect all of the key issues in the diagram listed above, so they need to be described first.



If the **new housing** is built around the perimeter of the park, facing into it, this gives better supervision, access and visual connection



The **new connecting space** aims to provide improved links from the Buchanan Road shops to the community centre for the wider community. The new space also responds to the rear of the shops that should be opened up to face onto it.



Details of diagram for Buchanan shops centre

The detailed mapping exercise of **housing** undertaken by the Housing Service analysed the level of turnover in Council properties over the last 5 years. This was correlated with physical information about the properties – whether they had been modernised and whether they had two or three bedrooms – and with external factors such as the potential for new development to support local centres. The results showed that there were problems with demand, particularly with two-bedroom properties in “old” Parson Cross and with one-bedroom flats in “new” Parson Cross. The structural condition of other non-traditional housing types in “new” Parson Cross is still being assessed.

As a result 920 households received letters from the Housing Service in February 2001 explaining that their property was in a block affected by high turnover. 24 block meetings were held by the Housing Service (with a representative from the Forum also in attendance) in February to discuss whether people wanted to stay or leave the area. The turnout to these meetings was 72%. In addition, individual home visits were carried out in the Lytton and Adlington areas and two tenants groups held drop in sessions at their meeting rooms. The results were fed back into the mapping exercise and where blocks of people were clear that they wanted to stay, groups of houses have been taken out of the proposed demolition programme.

Demolition proposals in areas of high turnover where the majority of people agreed to move were approved by Sheffield City Council Cabinet in April 2002. In total 676 properties will be demolished over the next two years, of which 132 are one bed flats, 540 are houses (mainly two bedroom) and 4 are maisonettes. Delegated authority was given in the cabinet report to include up to 84 additional properties subject to further consultation. The remainder of the Council housing has been agreed to be sustainable and investment will continue in these areas. It is important to point out that further detailed mapping work has not yet taken place in the Lindsay area.

Areas of potential new development (areas where Council housing and Parson Cross College have or will be demolished) are shown on the diagram as well as areas of housing investment. The position of these sites is critical: they focus around the two centres and the two main parks. Development briefs need to ensure that the design and layout of new buildings will maximise the benefits to the centres and the parks. The housing will be special needs housing for rent or other housing for sale. It would be beneficial to have elements of mixed use development around the centres to increase the range of facilities and provide local jobs.



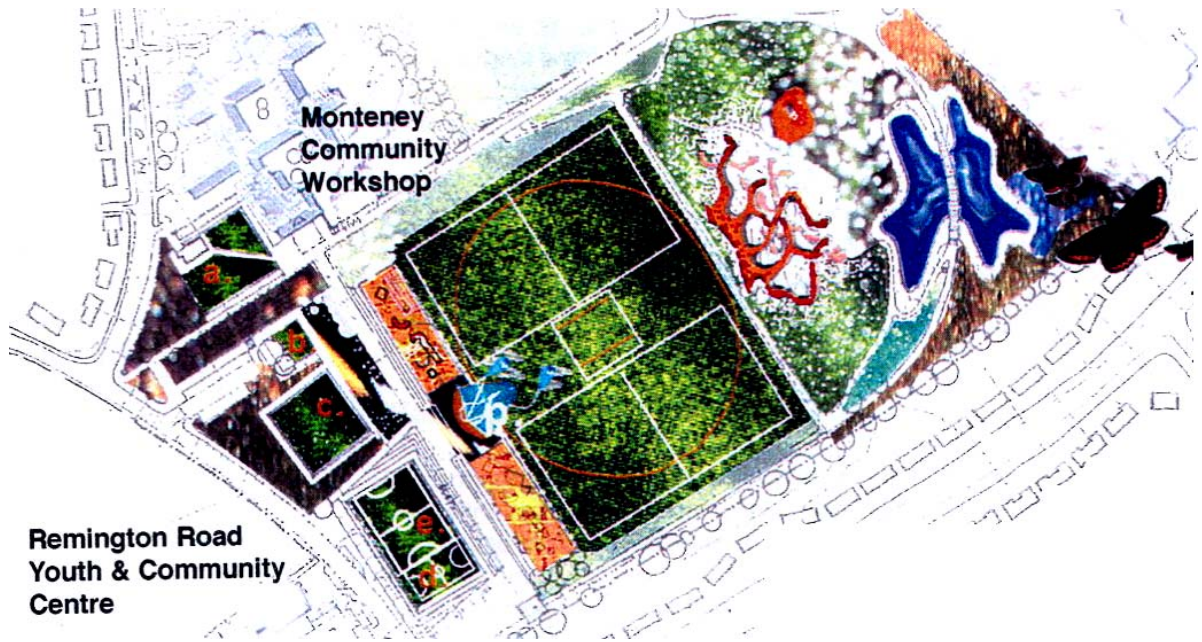
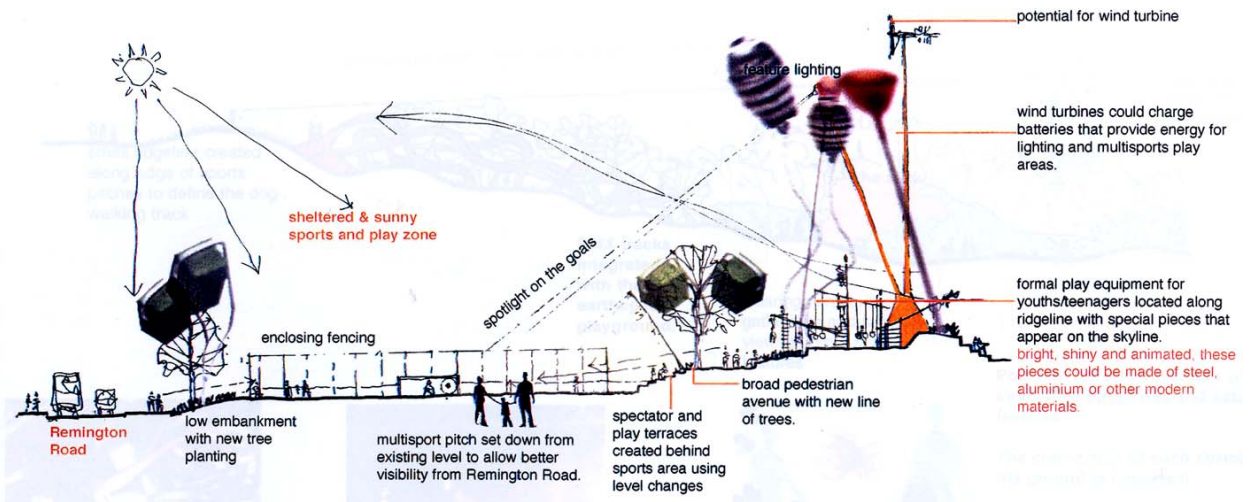
Detail of ideas for Margetson Centre

Community facilities are located around the two centres and the parks. There are two points where the facilities cluster together with shops and other services: Margetson Crescent and Buchanan Road. These form the centres for “new” and “old” Parson Cross respectively, as well as the proposed location for their hub projects – Montenev and Lytton/Buchanan. Proposals for a new Montenev building on land at Margetson Crescent are currently being developed through a separate SRB funded project. The future of the Lytton project is uncertain at present, as the original site of the Lytton Nursing Home is no longer deemed viable. It is possible that a site at the edge of Parson Cross Park but close enough to Buchanan Road shops could be found.

However developments in parks and a new relationship between the parks and housing and other buildings around them will also make them a focus for new facilities. Examples include Wheata Road shops, Remington Youth & Community Centre, Parson Cross pavilion, Buchanan Road surgery and Adlington Community Centre. Balancing the role of the parks and the role of the centres is an important issue for this neighbourhood, especially as they are physically separate.

Both **centres** are affected by imminent changes: Margetson Crescent by the closure of the College, which supplies a lot of trade, and Buchanan Road by the housing demolition programme. These changes impact on schools, GP’s, community facilities as well as shops. The two centres are also different in character and face different issues. Margetson feels thriving, it is surrounded by sustainable housing and its shops are well-used and popular. Colley Club, St Thomas More’s, the Library and the health centre are all investing in their premises or developing new plans for the future and Montenev will relocate here. The layout of the Crescent lends itself to the creation of a friendly market square and an environmental scheme here could transform the feel of the centre. There is an idea for a market garden or garden centre nearby on part of the land currently occupied by the College.

At Buchanan the shops are all taken, but the physical condition of the property looks poor. Also the layout and traffic movements of the road will require bigger changes to make an attractive square and a lot of the housing around it will be demolished. It feels as though a more radical solution is needed here - new mixed use and higher density housing development linked to the improved Chaucer site could create a thriving, more urban centre.

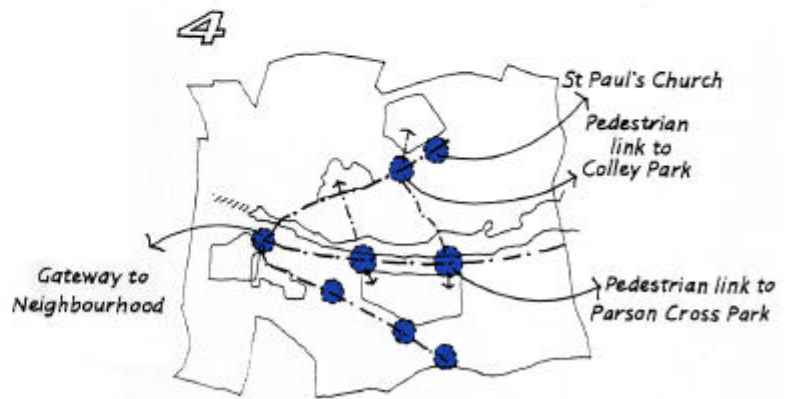
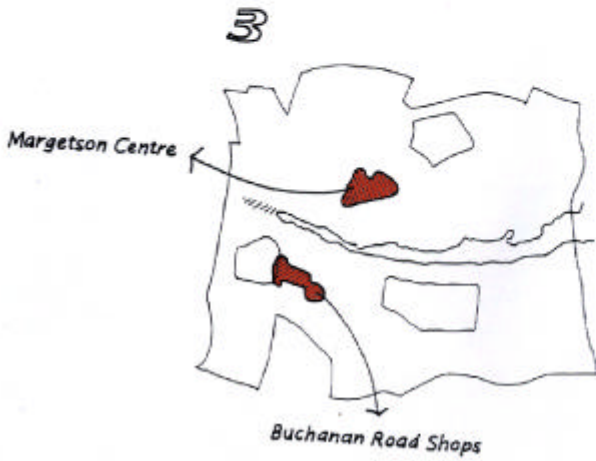
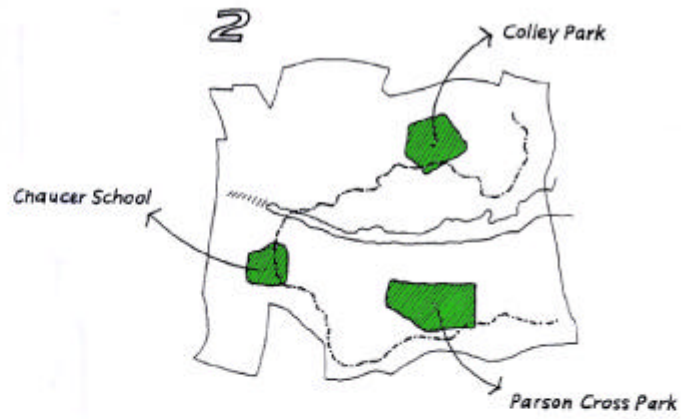


The two **parks** are major assets for the neighbourhood. However they were designed with housing and other buildings backing onto them. As a result they are not visible, do not feel safe and are under used. Both parks have local groups working on plans to develop and improve them. Each has a different role and character – Colley Park is a local park with a range of sport and play facilities in a formal layout; whereas Parson Cross Park specialises in sports (it has the only flat pitches in Sheffield!) and has naturalistic areas linking into Tongue Gutter. Both parks are on the skyline and have fantastic views. Because they are built on slopes they are also very visible within the neighbourhood, as are the grounds and playing fields of Chaucer school.

As well as supporting and improving the centres and parks, the layout and design of new development needs to promote the links between them. At present the parks and centres are rather separate but creating new pedestrian routes and a coherent approach to the streetscene on the two main roads could help connect them both physically and visually.

Improvements to the **streetscape** are shown on the diagram at the two main centres and where other community facilities connect to the two parks. They also mark the entrances to the neighbourhood including an important link between Parson Cross Park and Longley Park. Because these points mainly lie on the two main roads through the neighbourhood – Wordsworth Avenue and Buchanan Road – their design provides an opportunity to present a new and positive image to the outside world.

Two sorts of pedestrian **routes** are shown on the diagram: new routes through built up areas (existing and new) and routes that join up the main green spaces – Tongue Gutter and the two parks. The latter are potentially really special as they provide a network of pedestrian/cycle paths running east-west and north-south across the neighbourhood, separate from and at right angles to the roads. Where these paths intersect the main roads, smaller focal points occur such as shops and community buildings. The routes also link to adjacent neighbourhoods: through the Chaucer site to Foxhill, south-west to Southey Green and south to Longley via Longley Park.



The sequence of diagrams shows the main elements of land form

Identity

At present Parson Cross can be a confusing place for outsiders to find their way round. This is because much of the housing and streetscape looks the same and because the centres and parks are not given enough prominence. The design of all of the key elements of the diagram therefore needs to promote a distinctive identity for Parson Cross.

We believe that this identity is rooted in its distinctive landform. The sequence of diagrams opposite explains the main components:

1. Tongue Gutter runs through the middle of the neighbourhood, a piece of countryside that existed before houses were built here and that defines the valley bottom. Unfortunately this feature is not very visible at present, as houses back onto it. It also “fizzles” out near Chaucer school. The diagram shows green space at intervals connecting the park to the Gutter where houses will be demolished in the future. Opening up Tongue Gutter will make it feel safer; promoting the route should also make it better used. (This route is part of the Trans Pennine Trail that runs from Liverpool to Hull and beyond to St Petersburg!)
2. There are three sites that are conspicuous on the skyline: Chaucer School grounds, part of Parson Cross Park and the skyspace at Colley Park. These three sites connect the ridgeline of the valley around Tongue Gutter. They are sites that are visible beyond Parson Cross and at least two of are probably known to people from all over the city: most people driving down Halifax Road (A61) would know Chaucer School as a landmark and Parson Cross Park is used by sports groups from across the city.
3. The two main centres for community facilities – Margetson Crescent and Buchanan Road shops – are settled in hollows rather than on the ridgeline. You come upon them, rather than seeing them from a long way off.
4. The Chaucer site forms an entrance to the neighbourhood from Halifax Road, from which three parallel roads lead through the neighbourhood. At present the road network does not make it clear that all three roads come together here nor that this is where Tongue Gutter emerges from the housing. The roads follow Tongue Gutter in the valley bottom, and lead via the main centres to the two parks on the ridgeline. Separate pedestrian links cut across the roads at right angles, linking the parks and, potentially, the two centres and making sense of the valley form.



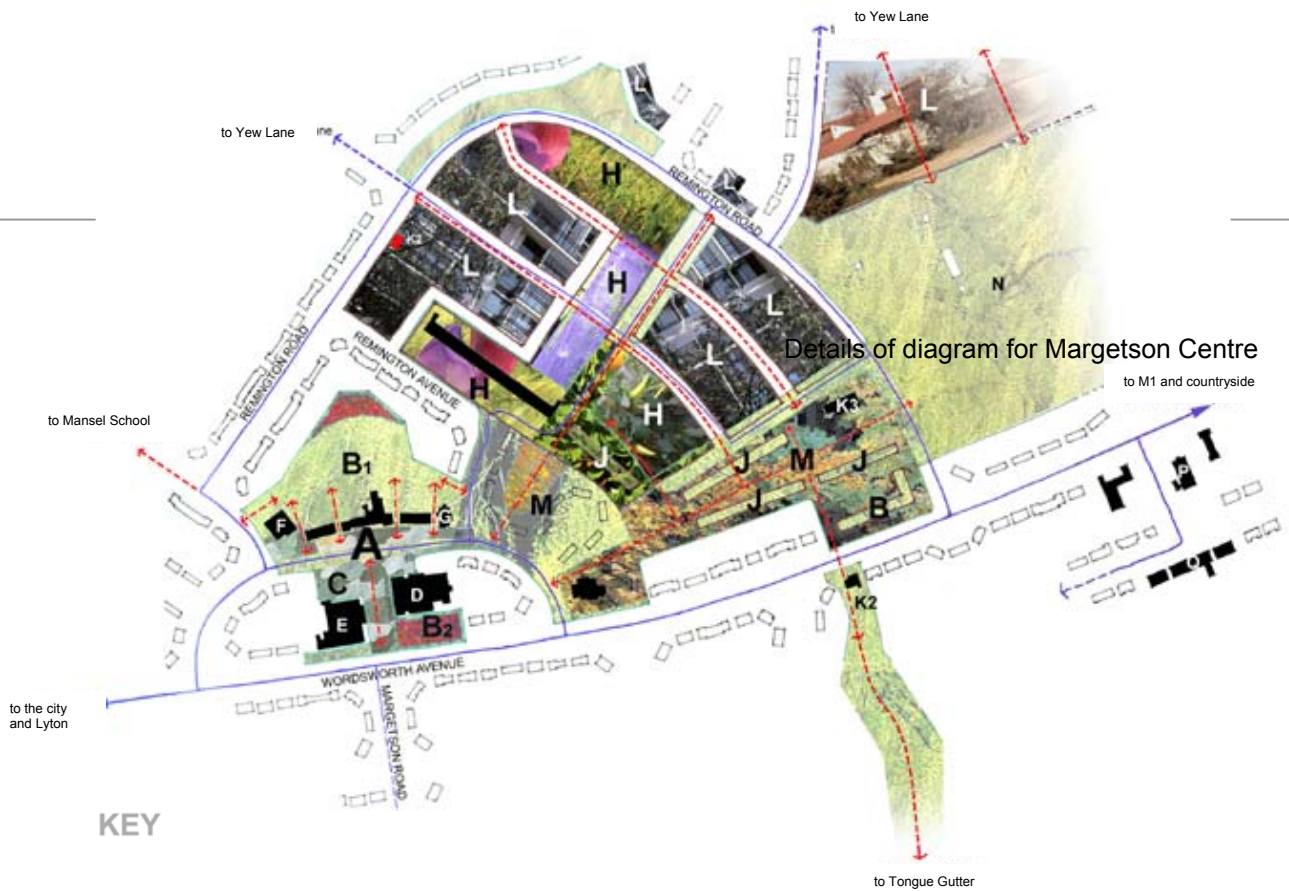
Tongue Gutter is an astonishingly rural feature
A garden city estate

As well as the defining character of the landform there are three other images that stand out.

The first is of a council estate built within living memory over countryside, some of which remains visible today. Tongue Gutter is an astonishingly rural feature to find in this part of the city, a swathe of naturalistic grassland and scrub with a dyke running through it. It also links the neighbourhood to the countryside via the Trans Pennine Trail. This is a feature that needs to be opened up, celebrated and shown off. Similarly place names evoke a rural past including the name Parson Cross itself.

The second is of an area with generous amounts of municipal green space – the two parks and the Chaucer playing fields – that are visible to and in some cases used by people outside the neighbourhood. There is something about the scale and ambition of these sites that is reflected in local people's aspirations for their neighbourhood facilities and their awareness of the bigger city picture. That said, the original design of the sites did not meet these aspirations; the new masterplans need to be implemented for the potential of these sites to be realised.

The third is of a garden city estate, built as a piece (or rather two pieces), that did not plan for car ownership at the level that we have today. In parts the well-kept houses, pleasant gardens and secluded centres evoke the garden city's ethos of securing "the best of town and country". People show their pride in their homes and gardens by installing their own railings and by clipping hedges into interesting shapes. Elsewhere inadequate parking arrangements, particularly on the two main roads, and poorly maintained houses and gardens (that are too big for their occupiers) contribute to the poor image of the estate.



KEY

- A: Margetson village Centre
- B: Sites of interest to reinforce village centre
- C: Market Square pedestrianised area with trees, more structured landscape, seats and other market activity
- D: St Thomas Moore Parish centre with improved visibility towards the centre
- E: Working Mens Club with improved relationship to village centre
- F/G: Community library and doctors surgery buildings with improved landscaping to form village bookends
- H: Market garden/ garden centre with potential re-use of some college buildings
- J: Sheltered housing in park/ green avenue
- K1: Colley Youth Community centre
- K2: Community centre for elderly
- K3: Remington Youth Community centre
- L: Potential sites for new housing
- M: Potential site for new Montenev centre
- R: Tree lined pedestrian link to from green avenue
- N: Colley Park to have improved access and facilities
- P: St Paul's Church by Sir Basil Spence is an architectural landmark for the area
- Q: Wheata Road Shops: empty shops are ideally placed as live/work start up business

Detail of diagram for Margetson Centre

The Bigger Picture

In the main Neighbourhood Strategies report we describe a number of “big ideas” and development principles that together could establish a positive identity for the Southey and Owlerton area. At the next stage of developing design briefs for individual projects, it will be important to reflect these ideas and principles.

The relevance of the "big ideas" for Parson Cross is as follows:

- Using the green routes in the neighbourhood to join up the parks, to join the parks to the centres and community facilities and to link to adjacent neighbourhoods will help create a green backcloth to everyday life that could become a hallmark of this part of the city. (*Park city and Green arteries*)
- The route along Tongue Gutter already forms part of a long distance route, the Trans Pennine Trail. The route linking the two parks, if it extended north of the neighbourhood and south through Longley Park, Bagley Dyke and beyond, could form a route from the city centre to the countryside. Both could attract people from the rest of the city. (*From city to country and back again*)
- These two routes would have contrasting characters that encompass the distinctive vegetation patterns of Southey Owlerton. Tongue Gutter would be part of a “watery” route with a sheltered, naturalistic feel; whereas the parks route would link the key formal facilities in the area including the Northern General Hospital and would be characterised by climbing up from wooded banks in the south to grassy ridges with spectacular views in each of the parks. (*Identity from land form*)
- New features on these key parts of the skyline – whether new buildings, planting, lighting or art works – also need to celebrate the views and make Parson Cross visible from beyond the neighbourhood. (*See and be seen*)

courtyard

provides secure area for workshops, and safe haven for children. could provide space for 'farmers market' and to sell produce from the market garden.

community leisure facilities

a mixture of leisure facilities would be available, affiliated to the college and new community leisure centre.

**community centre**

provides for a mixture of uses, including workshops, IT access, local clubs and monteney newspaper.

link to high street

path linking colley park with high street.

The demonstration projects should express the new identity for Southey Owlerton as well as the special character of the Parson Cross neighbourhood:

- New areas of housing have the opportunity to explore new garden city prototypes for the 21st century that address issues of sustainability and seek to overcome some of the shortcomings of the original garden city designs, such as the lack of facilities, the poor relationship between housing and parks and inadequate parking arrangements. Mixed-use development and increased densities around the centres will create livelier and more visible focal points for the neighbourhoods. All new development should have a more formal relationship to the street, to increase the feeling of safety in the public realm. Around Margetson a market garden or garden centre could introduce a productive industry that would fit perfectly the nature-technology ethos.
- The design and layout of new development should also reflect the character of the landform where it is located, since this is such a key part of the neighbourhood's identity. For example housing overlooking Colley and Parson Cross Parks should reflect the high ground, big skies and extensive views of these sites. 3-storey housing (or higher in parts) would also provide good overlooking of the parks that is so essential to their success. Similarly new development at Chaucer should emphasise the high ground and landmark qualities.
- The friendly, secluded feel of Margetson could contrast with the main road location of Buchanan. New housing around Buchanan needs to raise the profile of this area – literally – by signalling the centre with taller buildings. Both Montenev and Lytton could explore in their design and construction the relationships between nature and technology that could become a hallmark of the city's image.
- The highest quality of design is needed for all of these schemes to capitalise on this distinctive identity: this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Parson Cross to regenerate itself by marketing itself as a new and successful garden city.



GOOD PRACTICE DOC. 1.1
new housing needs to address new innovative ideas that are sustainable environmentally, particularly as a new prototype for the **garden city**. A taller element like a tower would provide an interesting landmark



GOOD PRACTICE DOC. 3.1

It is possible that the new **community building** is constructed with the involvement of the local community. One possible example is the Robin Hood Chase Neighbourhood Centre in Nottingham, which was a self build scheme developed by the local community. It incorporates ecological and environmentally conscious strategies in its use of materials and energy consumption

PROJECTS THAT THE COMMUNITY WOULD LIKE TO TAKE FORWARD

The priorities that local people have identified are set out below.

We want the Forum to continue to lead on neighbourhood regeneration in Parson Cross

A funding bid has been submitted for the Forum to employ a team of workers for the next three years. In addition the SOAR community elections will link the Forum formally to the theme groups and Board. These are big steps forward. However the Forum is also very aware of the further work that is needed to make it a success.

We want to continue to work with the Council on housing issues

The immediate priorities are to:

- agree the details of housing investment in the next 2-3 years and
- plan the process of rehousing, demolition and interim treatment of vacant land so as to provide maximum support to tenants and residents

We want to make sure that new development brings maximum benefits to the neighbourhood

The two diagrams prepared by the University's School of Architecture in their capacity as independent advisors highlight the opportunities for new physical development around Margetson and Colley Park and around Buchanan Road and Parson Cross Park.

The Montenev Community Development Project has already appointed managing architects to test the Margetson diagram, refine it and help local groups to prepare a series of individual site briefs and funding strategies for the projects within the area. The Forum is a partner in this process.

In "old" Parson Cross a similar process is needed. It is proposed that the Forum works with local groups and stakeholders in a continuing partnership with the SOAR Board and Area Panel to develop and test the diagram for this area and bring forward proposals for the individual sites or elements. It is envisaged that the Neighbourhood Strategies team and process would continue to help this happen with input from all Council directorates and the independent advisors.

It is vital that local people are involved in these development briefs to ensure that they bring maximum benefits to the neighbourhood, including funding and investment, better facilities and parks, more people to support local facilities, types of housing that are missing from the area (including special needs), construction and other jobs – and to ensure that they all promote a real Parson Cross identity based on high quality.

Both diagrams will be informed by the social and economic impact assessment of the Neighbourhood Strategies that will be commissioned by the SOAR Board and other partners over the summer of 2002.



Colley Park phase one

We want to see the two hub projects built!

The Forum is already a partner in the Montenev Community Development Project that is developing proposals for a new building at Margetson Crescent. The Lytton project has had to review the site and brief for its new building, following the decision to abandon the planned conversion of the former nursing home. It is important that the Forum engages with this project, as it has the potential to form an asset base for the neighbourhood. It may be best to link this work directly to the development brief for the Buchanan/Parson Cross Park area, if the Lytton Project group are happy to join this process.

We need funding to implement the masterplans for our two parks

Both parks have masterplans that have been implemented in part but that need further funding to be completed. The plans may also need adapting to accommodate the proposals for new built development around them.

It is hoped that new development will also bring higher levels of investment than the parks currently attract. Hulme Park in Manchester, which we visited together, cost £3M. Whereas the budget for the Colley Park masterplan was £2.5M, only a tenth of this has been secured to date. Again, the importance of these two parks for the identity and image of the neighbourhood and the link between parks and property values mean that the resources are justified. Finding new ways of securing investment and maintenance funds for parks is something that needs to be addressed at the city level.

The proposed footpath link between the parks is something that both Friends groups could work on together. The plans should link into their masterplans and be included in their funding bids. The link between Longley Park and Parson Cross Park is a key proposal that will make sense of the Three Parks Programme.

We want to do more to support young people in our community

The Forum has met with local youth providers. It is interested in undertaking training through the Youth Empowerment Project and working with the providers in the area to ensure young people are involved in the process and improvements.

We want to do more to support the elderly in our community

The Forum is undertaking a feasibility study into the provision of a befriending service in the area and will be working to take forward the recommendations. Six hundred questionnaires have been completed and demand appears high for the service.

The lack of suitable residential accommodation for the elderly has also been highlighted through the consultation.



Ideas for topiary hedges explored at the SOAR Celebration Day

We need to improve transport across the estate

The diagram shows the proposed community transport route. This will link the two centres and the parks.

Both the Margetson and Buchanan diagrams show a transport and information hub in each of the centres. These need to be linked to both the mainstream and community transport routes.

Improving the streetscene would really change the image of the neighbourhood

There is a need for improvements to the streetscene that will:

- Improve the image for those living/driving through and give a clear message that Parson Cross is a good place to live.
- Retain the garden city feel of the estate whilst providing for organised car parking, pedestrian movement and even, in some streets, play.

Ideas include:

- Streetscene improvements at key points of the diagram, especially at the two centres, the entrances to the neighbourhood and along Wordsworth Avenue and Buchanan Road
- Focus on seats and meeting places where the pedestrian green routes cross the main roads
- Improvements to the facades of local shops
- Gardens project – including food growing in front gardens?
- Topiary project for privet hedges to match the exuberance of Parson Cross households Christmas decorations!
- Local style for railings where people choose these for their front boundaries
- Better links with the Council over fly tipping etc especially on Tongue Gutter
- Local environment maintenance team with opportunities for local training, jobs and enterprise

A further piece of work is needed to develop the “look” of these improvements. This will relate to the development of the two key bits of the diagram around Buchanan and Margetson. For example if a market garden or garden centre was developed at Margetson, fruit trees or “productive” plants might look best on Wordsworth Avenue or around new Parson Cross.

NEXT STEPS

We believe that the priorities for the next twelve months in the Parson Cross Neighbourhood Strategy process are:

1. Continue to develop the Forum and the Neighbourhood Strategy

The recruitment of a team of workers will greatly help the development of the Forum and its ability both to consult on the Strategy and to convert it into an Action Plan. The bids are in place and the Forum is ready to start the recruitment process, as soon as they are approved.

2. Continue to talk to the Council about the issues it can influence

These are:

- The housing investment programme in the neighbourhood
- The details of the demolition programme and process
- Briefs for new development and the detail of the two key bits of the diagram, most of which will take place on Council land
- New ways to get investment into developing and maintaining parks
- The idea to set up a local environment maintenance team
- The future of Colley Neighbourhood Centre

3. Develop further the ideas for support to the elderly

The final report from the feasibility will be completed by mid July and the Forum will work on taking forward the recommendations.

4. Develop further the ideas for support to the young

The Forum will continue to work with the youth providers in the area and undertake the training through the Youth Empowerment Project leading to an action plan for the involvement of young people with the Forum.

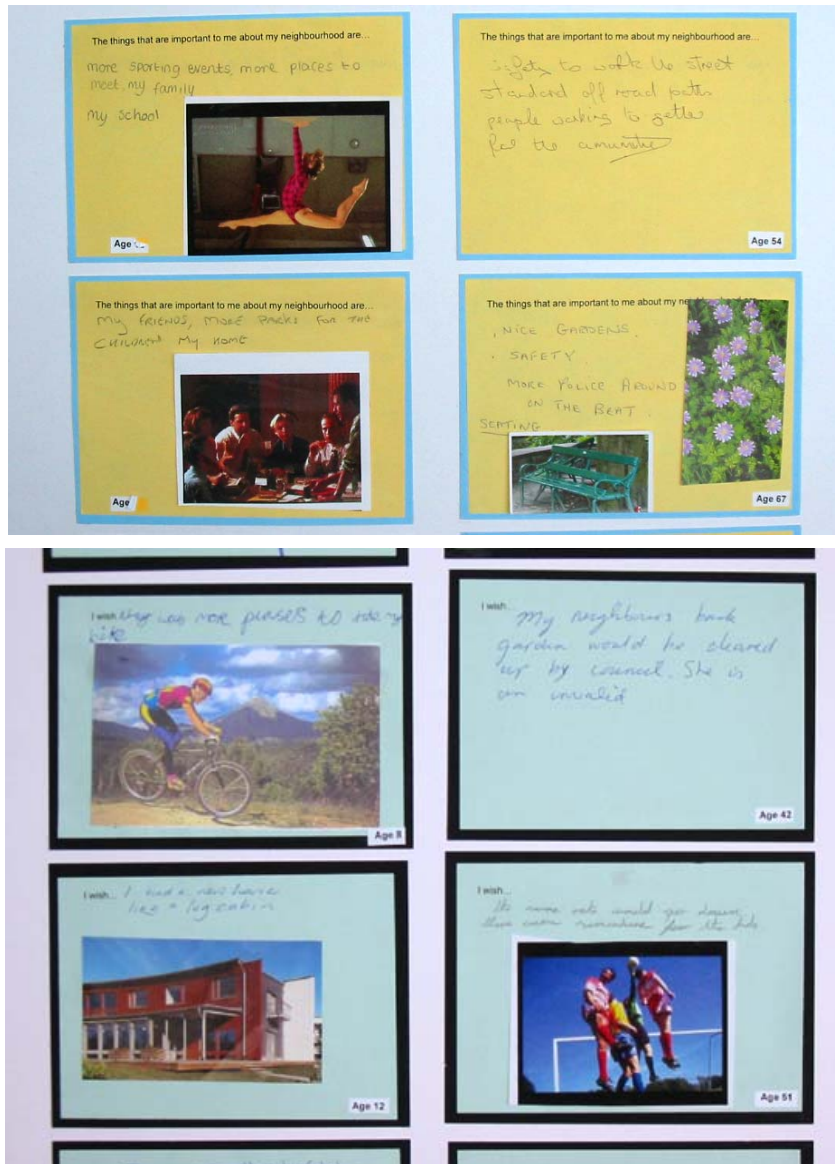
5. Help to develop the new Lytton/Buchanan project

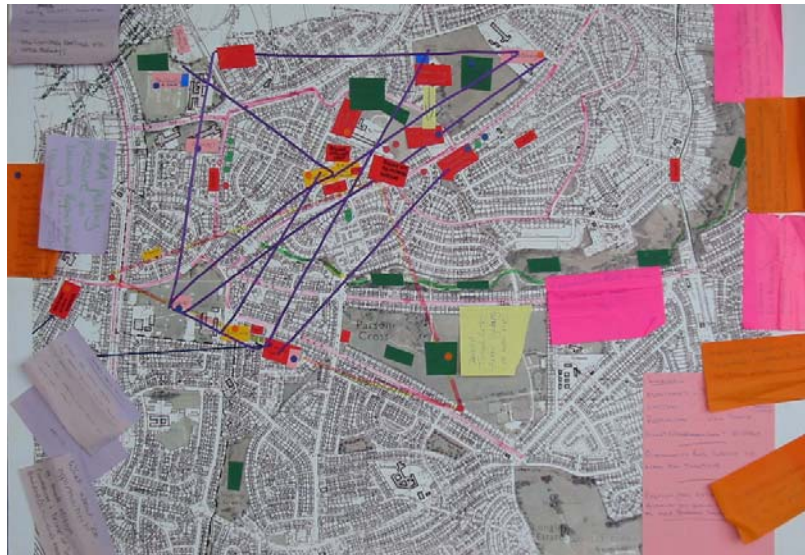
The Forum will take a lead in the development of this project. It may be that Northern Clusters, an SRB funded project to develop hub projects and the social economy, can assist with the next stages of feasibility.

6. Develop a local identity project for the key bits of streetscene in the neighbourhood

Doing something about the streetscene would be a good, visible project with high local impact. It would also complement the work that has been done recently, as part of the SRB funded capital housing improvement scheme, to improve front garden boundaries in “new” Parson Cross. The impact would be greater if the project was also seen as an opportunity to develop a distinctive Parson Cross “look”. It is suggested that funding is sought to commission artists and designers to work up proposals with the community.

APPENDIX





Parson Cross Workshop collages



Key

-  Places to play, sport and ball games
-  Libraries
-  Places to meet people over a cup of tea
-  Places for learning and education
-  There are many nice places in the area
-  Cleaning up is needed in certain areas
-  Burnt out cars are a problem
-  Motorbikes are ridden too fast in the parks
-  Drug use in the area is a real problem
-  There are many nice parks with flowers and trees
-  Hedges need trimming on some streets
-  Fast cars are a danger on certain streets. Need to slow them down
-  Better street lighting is needed on many streets

Icon map from smaller events



Parson Cross model showing the homes of people who came to the Parson Cross Festival Postcard Event



Parson Cross neighbourhood strategy diagram
 Developed for SOAR by the University of Sheffield, School of Architecture
 in response to the Parson Cross participatory workshops.

proposed/potential

- proposals
- public green space
- new public green space in area where houses may be demolished
- semi-public outdoor space
- potential for new development
- farmland
- new + improved playgrounds
- streetscape improvements
- existing community facilities
- potential/proposed community facilities
- entrances
- viewpoint/landmark

routes and connections

- main/important roads
 - trans-pennine trail
 - proposed/improved cycle route
 - community bus route
 - area boundary
 - new connections
-
- new housing
 - "village" centre with extra care housing and new monteney workshop
 - Buchanan Road/ Lytton community shops and centre
 - housing in relation to the park
 - doctors' surgery centre and its relationship to the park
 - entrances into Parson Cross