

# REGENERATION FRAMEWORK



SUPPORTED BY SOUTHEY  
OWLERTON AREA PANEL



SOUTHEY OWLERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGIES

VOLUME 1 MAY 2002



Shirecliffe in the spring

## With thanks

We should like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the Neighbourhood Strategies process over the last year. Local people have been extraordinarily generous in their time and energy; and this commitment has been echoed by the independent advisors, by our partners and by officers across the Council. In particular we should like to celebrate the work as a successful collaboration between the SOAR Board and the Southey Owlerton Area Panel.

### Neighbourhood Groups:

Foxhill Forum  
Hillsborough Neighbourhood Strategy Group  
Longley Neighbourhood Strategy Group  
Parson Cross Community Development Forum  
Shirecliffe Forward  
Southey and District Action Group

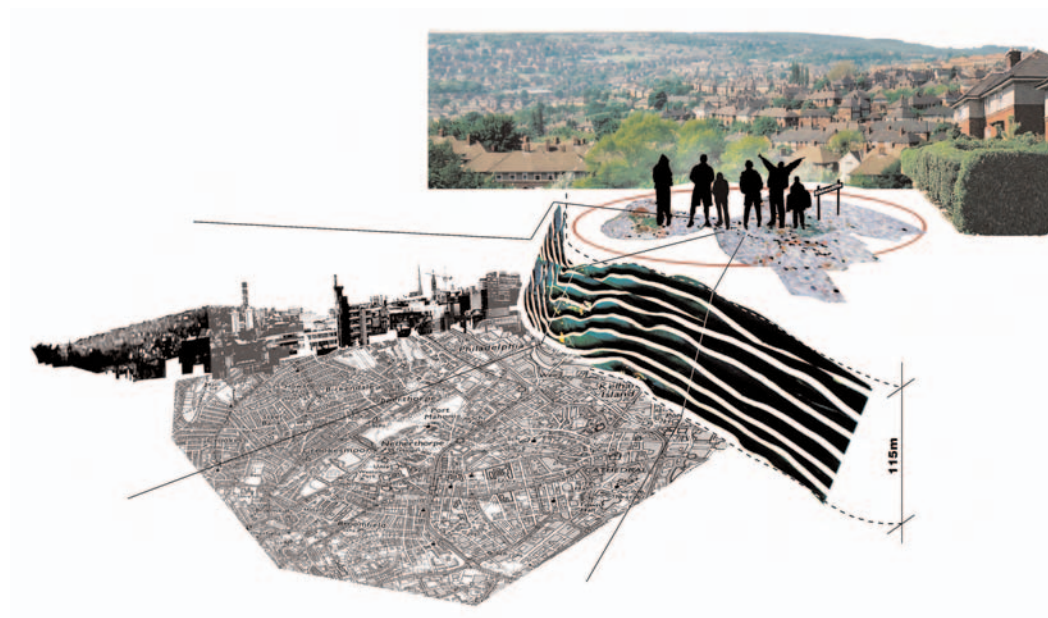
### Sheffield City Council's Officer Support Team:

Miranda Plowden	Chief Executive's
Chloe Aspinwall	Chief Executive's
Lisa Lyon	Chief Executive's
Jane Anslow	Housing & Direct Services
Fariba Gharai	Development, Environment and Leisure
Chris Bailey	Development, Environment and Leisure
Sharon Ellis	Education

### Independent Advisors:

Prue Chiles & Post Graduate Students	School of Architecture. University of Sheffield
Andrew Grant	Grant Associates
Mike McCarthy, Trish O'Shea, Ruth Ben Tovim	Eventus
Ian Smith	Ian Smith Associates

## Preface



“Southey Owlerton is a very special place. We have had the opportunity to discover its many qualities over the last two years – its people, its community networks, its greenness, the collective activity of projects and partners who are tackling the many problems it faces. We have been struck by the potential it has to transform itself, because of the strength of its partnership working and the commitment from people who live and work here, but also because of its amazing physical attributes – its size, its topography, its fantastic views, its special landscapes.

Because of the level of deprivation in the area (Southey Green is the most deprived ward in Sheffield and all four wards are in the top 8% of deprived wards in the country) it is essential that these opportunities be seized. This will require a process as special as the place itself. We have through the Neighbourhood Strategies started a dialogue with local people and partners that combines the economic, social and physical; and uses creativity to generate a forward-looking agenda for the next 10 years that can form the basis of a new image by which to market the estate. We want to continue with this process as we start to implement the proposals.

Southey Owlerton occupies approximately a tenth of the city and therefore has an important role to play in its regeneration – successful neighbourhoods will be as much the key to the city’s economic future and its competitiveness as a vibrant city centre and a thriving industrial valley. We believe that the approach we have used and the ideas it has generated about image and identity have relevance elsewhere within the city and can support Sheffield First Partnership’s approach to city marketing. We therefore see this report as one step in connecting Southey Owlerton to the wider picture of the city.”

Miranda Plowden  
SOAR Team

# Introduction

## Aims of the process

Over the last 12 months the Southey & Owlerton Area Regeneration (SOAR) Board has been working with local people and partners, jointly with the Southey & Owlerton Area Panel, to develop a Neighbourhood Strategies process. The aims of the process are to agree:

- A regeneration framework for the Southey Owlerton area that will guide the allocation of future funding and feed into parallel planning activity such as the review of the Unitary Development Plan and Housing Investment and Service Plans
- A series of neighbourhood strategies that will identify the priorities at a neighbourhood level
- A positive identity for the Southey Owlerton area and for its individual neighbourhoods
- An ongoing process that will ensure the ideas get implemented.





2. The process is being developed within six neighbourhoods

### Coherent framework

- The Southey Owlerton area includes some 48,000 people, in nearly 30,000 households covering an area one tenth of the city (1). Because of the scale and complexity of the area, the process is being developed within six neighbourhoods (2). However it is important that once the six neighbourhood strategies are brought together, they form a coherent and sustainable framework for the whole area.

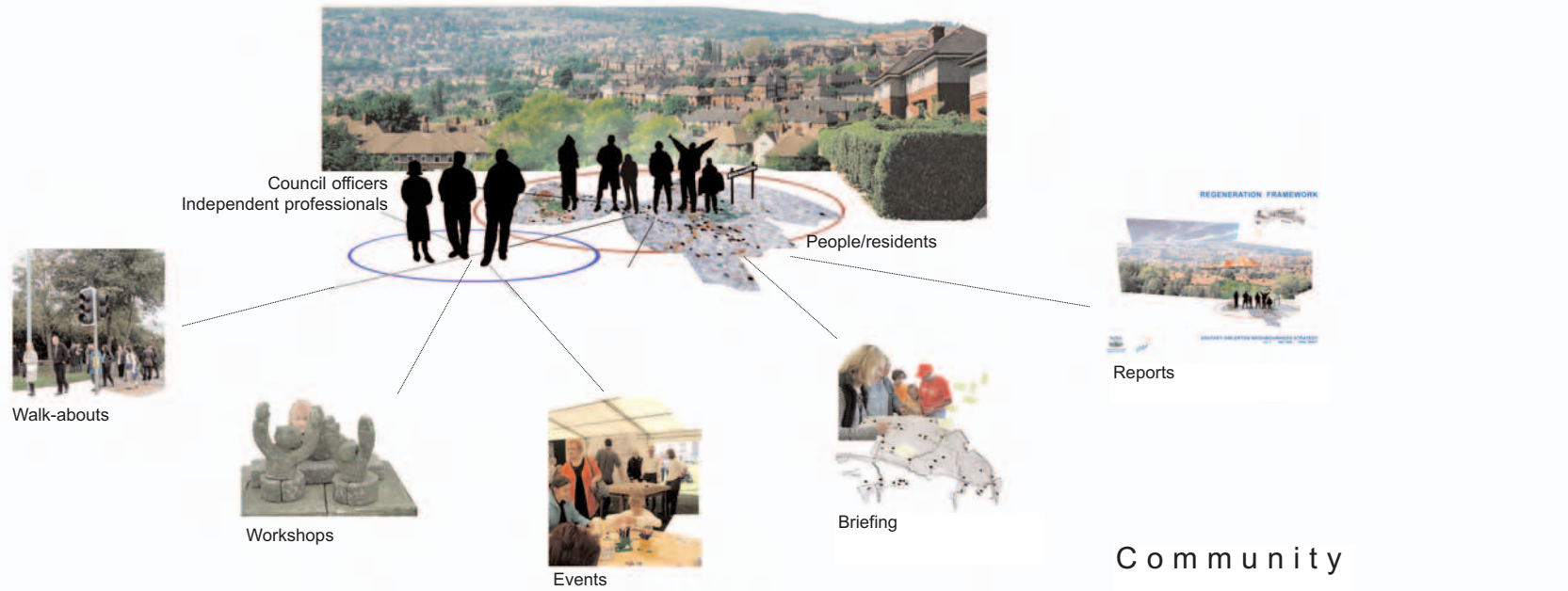
### This report

Volume 1 of the Southey Owlerton Neighbourhood Strategies comprises the Regeneration Framework (this report) and individual Neighbourhood Strategy reports for five neighbourhoods: Foxhill, Longley, Parson Cross, Shirecliffe and Southey (broadly the area covered by the Southey & Owlerton Area Panel)

Volume 2 will comprise the Regeneration Framework for the Upper Don and Parkwood Springs, with an individual Neighbourhood Strategy report for the parts of Hillsborough included within the SOAR boundary. (The neighbourhood referred to in this report as Hillsborough only includes a small part of what most people think of as Hillsborough.) We shall need to engage a broader partnership to develop ideas for the Upper Don and Parkwood Springs, because they have a city wide role, and this work will therefore follow in the autumn.

The purpose of this report is to present to “the outside world” ideas and plans that have been developed locally that we believe will transform the Southey Owlerton area over the next 10 years in order to:

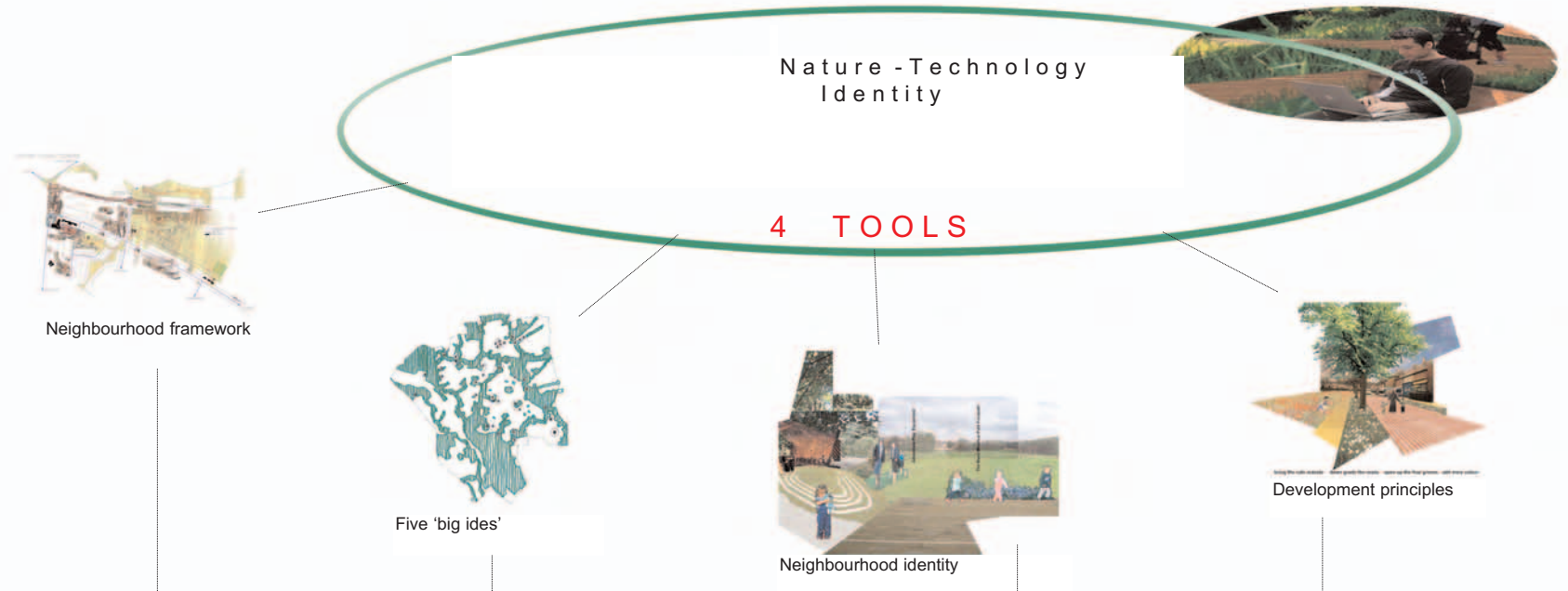
- Start a dialogue with our partners over the proposals contained in Volume 1 of the report and
- Ask them to join forces with us to implement them.



Ecology

Opportunity

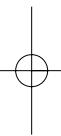
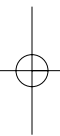
Community



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How have the strategies been developed?

# 1. Process

## Background

In 1999 the SOAR Board was awarded £20.83M of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding (Round 5) to spend in the 7 years up to March 2006. One of its first projects was to commission consultants to prepare a physical development framework for the area. The idea was that this would provide the context for SRB and other spend over the life of the programme.

The plan was finished in autumn 2000 and contained many sound proposals. However it was poorly received locally, mainly because it recommended widespread demolition of Council housing in three neighbourhoods. The SOAR Board rejected the plan in November 2000 and decided to embark on the Neighbourhood Strategies process instead.

In developing this process the Board recognised a number of difficulties with the first plan:

- Because of the size of the Southey Owlerton area, the plan was extremely diagrammatic – more detail was needed at a neighbourhood level to flesh out the ideas
- The plan was short on visual information and this limited its potential to communicate ideas
- Local people had not led the process by which the plan had been developed.

As a result the Board committed itself to a process that would be led by local people through neighbourhood groups with support from a team of Council officers and other partners.

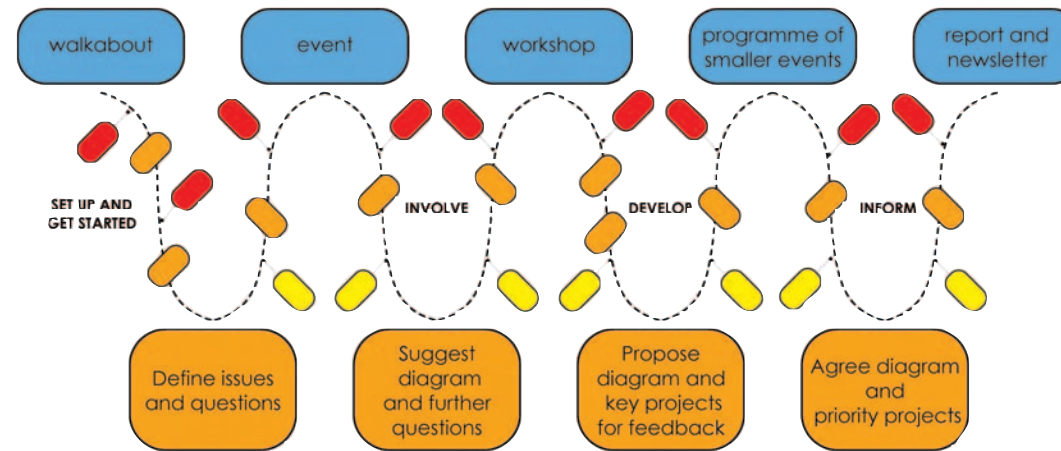
The process would not be “handed over” to consultants – instead consultants would be brought into the neighbourhood /Council team to fill specific gaps in expertise. These gaps focused on creativity in terms of tools for engaging local people (Ian Smith Associates and Eventus) and for developing and communicating their ideas (University of Sheffield’s School of Architecture and Grant Associates).

## The role of creativity

The political and social think tank Demos’s report in 1995/6 *The Creative City* by Franco Bianchini makes the clear and simple point that creativity in all its forms is imperative to the successful development of a city. It points to the need for new tools and techniques in city development to address the issues that cities face today.

In the 19th century the particular creativity of engineers, planners and scientists was needed to tackle physical infrastructure for sewage, transport and rapid housing development. They used rational, analytical thinking grounded in science and logic. In the 20th century planners continued to interpret social problems in physical terms and use analytical tools.

Today there is however a recognition that cities need to embrace social, environmental and economic issues and to cope with periods of dramatic change. To do this they will need new tools that make connections between problems, rather than separating them into boxes, that open up new ways of looking at issues and that respond to the personal, the local and the everyday, as well as the strategic and visionary.



3. The Southey Owlerton Neighbourhood Strategies process

Ideas about creativity in planning city neighbourhoods have influenced our process in the following ways:

- **New ways of working** – we are putting local people at the centre of a partnership with the Council, other agencies, professionals and city-wide institutions (eg the University); the Council team includes officers from each directorate so we can make links between issues; we are piloting joint working between the Board and Area Panel (between regeneration and the mainstream)
- **New ways of talking** – we have used artists and facilitators to open up a dialogue between local people and professionals. Games and structured events are used to generate programmes, whilst new types of visual information test out ideas. The events become a focus for discussion.
- **New ways of mapping** – we have taken as our starting point what local people tell us about their neighbourhood, not what a professional analysis would tell you; we are moving from the local and everyday, to principles that apply across the Southey Owlerton area, to ideas about how Southey Owlerton connects to the city and back again. New maps investigate and analyse these responses drawing out themes and important information missed by conventional reports.

**The generic process**

- Although each neighbourhood chooses to consult and develop its strategy in its own particular way, there are some common features that can be described as a generic process. These are illustrated in the process diagram (3).

## Process

### The key players in the process are:

- The neighbourhood group – local people, councillors, local partners and other stakeholders
- The Neighbourhood Strategies Steering Group - including a worker and resident representative from each neighbourhood along with representatives from the North Sheffield Primary Care Trust, Board and Panel.
- The Officer and Senior Officer Support Teams within the Council – including a representative from each directorate
- The independent advisors – Ian Smith Associates, Eventus, University of Sheffield's School of Architecture and Grant Associates.

Together they plan how to engage the wider community in the development of the strategy.

There are a number of key points in the process and these are highlighted on the diagram. In between these there are numerous smaller meetings that may involve just the neighbourhood group, just the officer support teams or just the independents, as well as joint meetings. The transfer of skills to local people has been a theme running all through the process.

The aim of this part of the process is to arrive at an agreed diagram or “game plan” for the neighbourhood that identifies the key projects (both physical and non-physical) that will make a difference, as well as some thoughts about the overall identity of the neighbourhood.

The intention is to use creative tools to reveal and highlight issues and open up dialogue. This section describes some of the tools that have been used over the last year. Examples of the consultation materials and a record of the different events are being collated in a separate archive report.



### 1. The Walkabout

- The walkabout is the point at which the neighbourhood group introduces its neighbourhood to the council team and the independent advisors. The local group takes the professionals on a guided tour of its area to point out the things that are both good and bad about the neighbourhood, things that could be improved and things that need changing. It is also an opportunity to get to know each other and to record and take photographs of the place that can be used at later stages of the consultation.

We have found this to be a really effective way of getting a feel for the issues, especially for officers and independents who may not know the neighbourhood well. It works best if the whole tour can be done on foot (without needing a minibus) and if the sun is shining!

Following the walkabout the key players meet to agree the issues for the neighbourhood and the specific questions that need to be asked of the wider community. The issues and questions reflect the perspective of all of the key players. Once they are agreed visual material is prepared to use at a community event. This will include a model of the neighbourhood.

- 



• Hillsborough walkabout



• Parson Cross model with residents marking their homes during a workshop activity

# Process

## 2. The Event

The event is an opportunity for those in the neighbourhood group to talk to the wider community about the issues and questions they have identified. In some cases the purpose of the event may be to check out what local people feel are the issues. For example, in Parson Cross the neighbourhood group wanted to do this and they used a postcards activity at the Parson Cross Festival to do so.

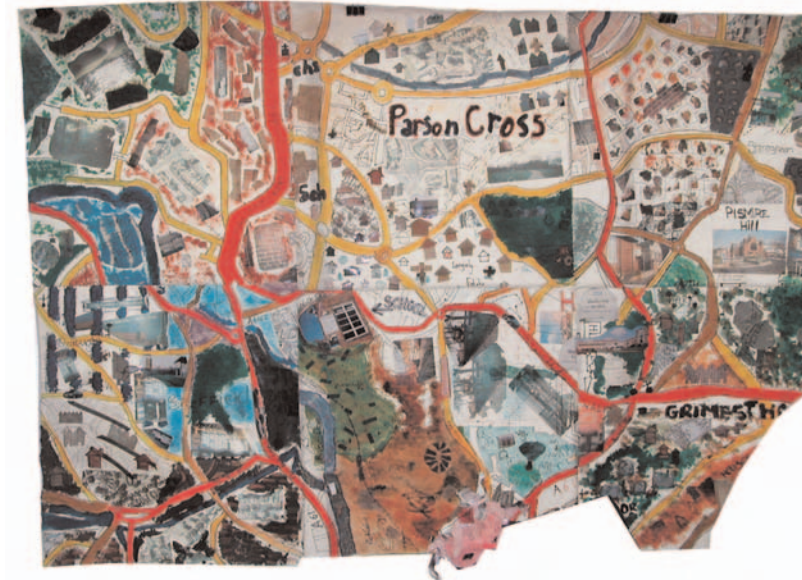
In Southey people knew the area felt unsafe and used part of their event to find out exactly what improvements were needed. A time-line photo activity was used in Longley and Shirecliffe to explore people's personal experiences of living in the area.

In other cases the event may be to test out ideas for improvements with the wider community. For example in Shirecliffe the neighbourhood group felt that people had been questioned extensively in the past and that it would be better to test out specific ideas for change using trigger boards rather than ask the same questions again. In other words local people in the group felt they knew what changes people wanted to see, but they needed the wider community to confirm these.

Following the initial event, the key players meet to discuss responses to the questions asked, what the diagram for the neighbourhood might look like and what the key issues and projects seem to be. In some cases there may be a need to ask further questions about the diagram and associated projects. These can be explored at a more focused workshop event. Following this meeting further consultation tools are then developed for the workshop.



Parson Cross festival tent



Parson Cross collage by school children



Make your own topiary - SOAR Celebration Day

### 3. The workshop

The workshop is an opportunity for the neighbourhood group to explore specific issues with key stakeholders. For example in Parson Cross after the Festival, we had a broad-brush picture from local people of the issues and some thoughts about the diagram. However we needed to explore with partners such as The Sheffield College and major projects such as the Three Parks Programme and Montenev Community Development how their plans might influence the diagram.

Once a draft diagram has been agreed and the key projects identified that would make a difference in the neighbourhood, the neighbourhood group needs feedback from local people. Again, further visual material is needed before a programme of one or more smaller events.

### 4. The smaller events

The smaller events are an opportunity to take the consultation wider and/or deeper. In Shirecliffe the proposed diagram was displayed on the model of the neighbourhood and the trigger boards were presented with a record of people's comments and Shirecliffe Forward's recommendations. In Parson Cross, because the neighbourhood is so much larger, a series of workshops was held at the sub-neighbourhood or TARA level. The events asked for feedback on the ideas brought out at the workshops and asked the sub-neighbourhoods to consider how they link into the main diagram or framework for Parson Cross.

### 5. The report

Following the smaller events the key players meet to agree the diagram and the list of key projects. These are then written up in the form of a report that is circulated to key partners and stakeholders, following approval by the SOAR Board and Area Panel, and a summary newsletter that is delivered to each household in the neighbourhood.

Progress on the neighbourhood strategies was also presented at the SOAR Celebration Day on 18 May 2002.



One of the maps for recording ideas and comments - SOAR Celebration Day

## Process

### Ongoing process

Once the strategy is agreed, the process continues with developing the brief for individual projects. For physical projects, this stage is concerned with ongoing development of the neighbourhood's identity and implementation of the demonstration projects. These are explained in more detail in sections 6 -10 of this report.

### Lessons Learned so Far

The process is still very much in its early stages and continues to evolve. Some of the lessons we have learnt so far that will inform the future are:

- The need for very regular communication between all the key players – information and ideas can change from week to week
- The value of using new tools to draw the creativity out of the community and communicate it to others
- The need for the Council officers and independents both to build on and learn from all of the neighbourhoods whilst remembering to go back to the beginning of the process in each
- The difficulty in judging how and when professionals present their ideas and observations and how to develop a strategic view whilst responding sensitively to the small detail.

### Top Down Bottom Up Vision

We started the process with no preconceptions about what would come out of it in terms of the ideas or the ways of communicating those ideas. We began with what local people had to say about their neighbourhood and have developed ideas together from there. Now that we have started the process in all of the neighbourhoods we are learning that:

- There are some themes that are important to all of the neighbourhoods
- Where one neighbourhood focuses on a particular theme, that theme often has relevance for all of the other neighbourhoods too.

As a result we are getting a multi-faceted view of each neighbourhood, as well as a feel for some strategic or overarching issues. We can often relate these overarching issues to themes that are relevant across the city.

We find therefore, that our ideas move from the neighbourhood level to the Southey Owlerton framework level to a city-wide perspective and back again. The diagram (4) illustrates how a vision for individual sites and projects at the grass roots can be brought together into a vision for Southey Owlerton that is in turn responding to a vision for the city.

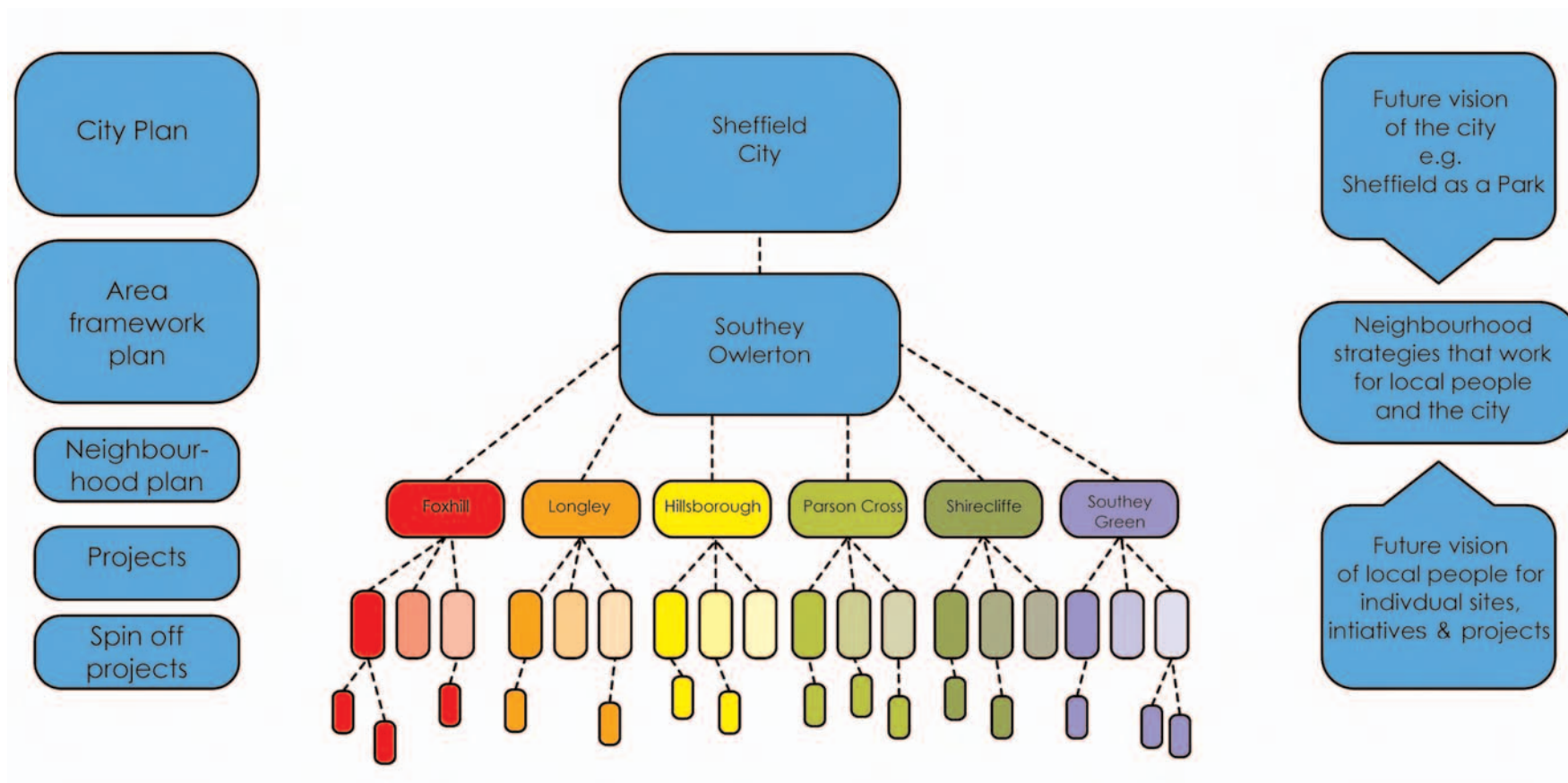
We have started to recognise in this process a dynamic that we refer to as the Top Down Bottom Up Vision: at a city level there are strategic (top down) opportunities to be seized by communities, so long as they fit the needs and aspirations identified locally (bottom up). The role of the Southey Owlerton framework is to bring these two together into a single vision. What is important is that the Southey Owlerton vision is rooted in the vision and good ideas of local people.

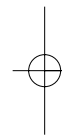
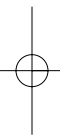
### Link with Sheffield First Partnership

In this report we present principles for the Southey Owlerton framework. These have emerged over the last twelve months from conversations with local people about neighbourhood details, but also reflect themes that sum up the character of the whole city.

In order to move this Top Down Bottom Up vision forward into implementation and maintenance, the decision-making structures within Southey Owlerton need to be connected to each other and to city-wide decision-making bodies; in particular the Sheffield First family of partnerships that together form the Local Strategic Partnership and the route into discussions with for example Yorkshire Forward and Objective One. The final section of this report explores this issue further.







What is it like in Southey Owlerton ?

## 2. Themes from the community consultation

What local people tell us about Southey Owlerton

### We like living here !

At Parson Cross Festival in July 2001, we invited people who live locally, or visit it frequently, to create a series of postcards by completing a number of statements:

- My favourite place/facility in the area is...
- I wish...
- The things that are important to me about my neighbourhood are...
- We should improve...
- I would get involved if...

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 living in Parson Cross.

In general people were overwhelmingly positive about living in the area. People from all of the sub-neighbourhoods were appreciative of their good neighbours and the strong sense of community. The aspects most valued by people were: their home, their local school, good public transport, being close to shops and a medical centre, a clean and safe environment and within parks the views, the wildlife and the openness.



Consultation exercise in Shirecliffe

### These are the things we need to improve

In terms of improvements people wanted to see the priorities were:

#### Safety

People asked for: more police presence in the neighbourhood; more action on drug use, vandalism, crime, motorbike problems; speed ramps on some streets; better lighting in the parks and streets; safe places for children to play.

#### Environment & management of the estate

People asked for: improvements to council houses including modernisation; tidying up of front and back gardens; trimming of bushes, weeds and trees to improve visibility and their sense of safety; repairs to pavements and roads; improvements to verges to provide space for parking cars; more bins and dog bins.

#### Community & social facilities

People asked for: play facilities for children and teenagers; meeting places for community groups, especially the elderly; better support and environment for local shops

#### Parks

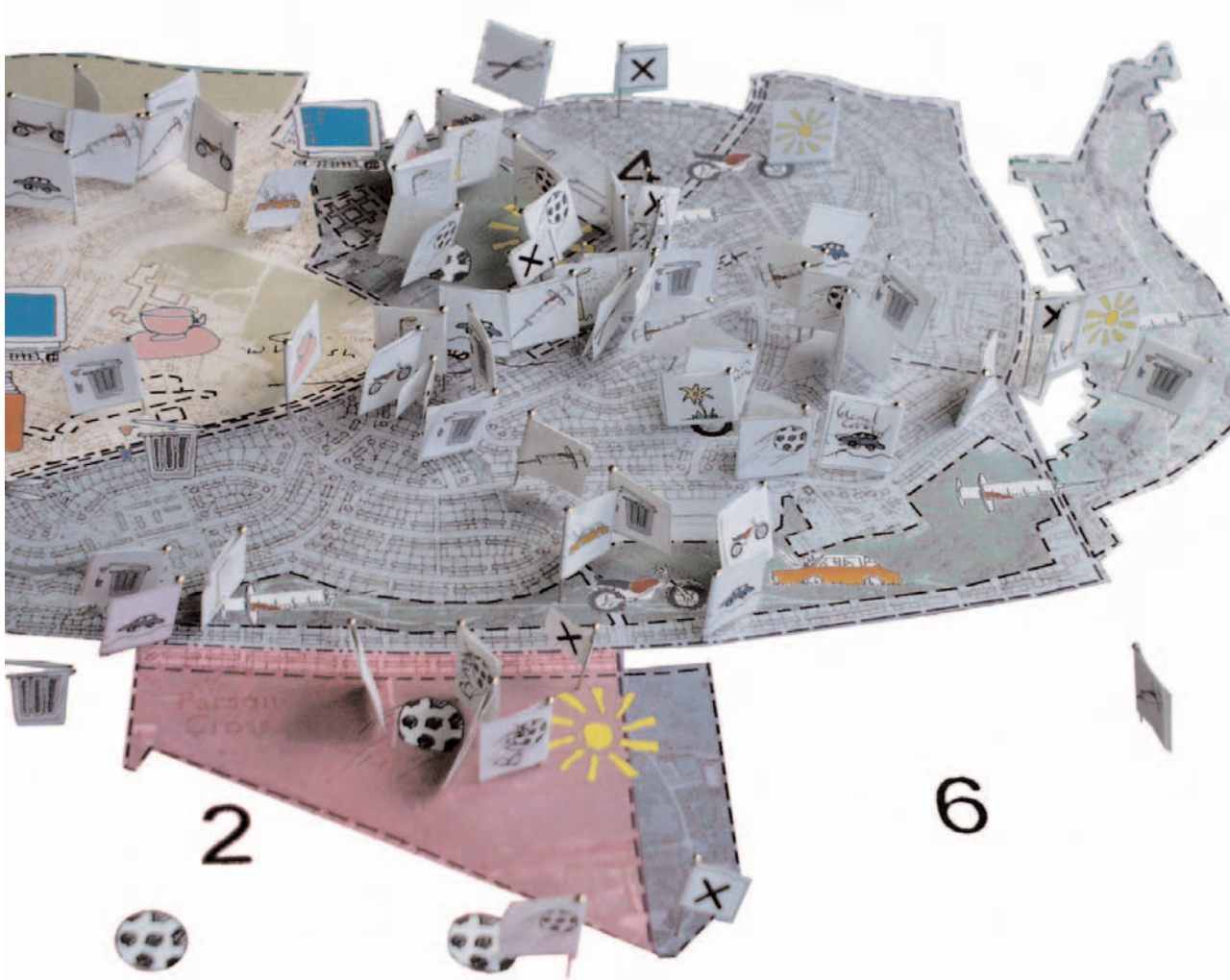
People asked for: children's play areas; sports facilities; pathways and cycle routes; toilets; better lighting and less rubbish; colourful features such as planting and flowers.

- The map (5) shows by using icons, the comments people made about specific places in the neighbourhood. Although this example is from Parson Cross the comments are typical of those given at events across the area.

# Themes from the community consultation

**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



5. People's comments about specific places in the neighbourhood

## Themes from the community consultation

People who are active in their neighbourhood very much echo these views. For example, Shirecliffe Forward's top five issues that they wished their Neighbourhood Strategy to address were:

- Modernisation of houses
- Environmental improvements
- Relationship with Council officers
- Future of the tips
- Community facilities

Those in the neighbourhood groups also focus on some of the less visible features of the neighbourhoods – health issues, the need for people to be able to access training and jobs, and resources to allow people to get involved. In particular people cite that for a place the size of Guildford there are very few amenities and opportunities for local people to get work – you cannot even get an MOT for your car on the estate.

### We can show you the good, the bad and the ugly

On the walkabouts, more than anything people talked about the views: how these change from one street to the next, the panoramas across the neighbourhoods, out to the countryside and back to the city centre. Invariably we were shown the main vantage points in each neighbourhood as some of its prize assets. People are very proud of their views and see them as a special feature of the area. However the hilliness also makes getting about difficult.

Other things we were always shown were the open spaces, local shops and community facilities, some useful, most, though, in need of improvement. People pointed out well-tended houses and gardens, as well as local eyesores.

Generally great concern was expressed about the poor state of the verges, parking problems and the look of the streets, as well as evidence of lack of investment in housing and open spaces. People feel strongly that this tatty image gives a very poor and unfair impression of the area to outsiders. Some sites, such as the Dumpit in Shirecliffe, are of major concern locally.

People new to the area tend to find it very confusing and get easily lost, as neighbourhoods can look very much the same. Local people find this odd, as they are very clear on the differences between neighbourhoods.

### We are proud of our neighbourhood but recognise its problems

Conversations with local people at other events and workshops suggest that there is pride in the area, but equally sadness at its decline. This is associated partly with the contraction of the steel industry in Sheffield and the resultant loss of jobs and partly in the decline in the level and quality of public services that has happened over the same period.

People comment on the importance of family and friendships that help create a sense of community and in particular the role of the extended family that is crucial to many. At the same time some people feel isolated and the elderly in particular are being left behind by younger families leaving the estate. Schools and community meeting spaces are seen as vital parts of neighbourhood life and many bemoan the lack of local facilities, especially for children and young people.

Although many people feel committed to the area and are willing to tackle the problems it faces, others are ready to move to other parts of the city, which they perceive to have better schools and facilities with less crime and nuisance.

## Themes from the community consultation

### Summary

Thus although people have much to celebrate about life in Southey Owlerton, they are also acutely aware of the improvements that are needed to the social, environmental and economic fabric of the area.

### Things people like about the area:

1. The open spaces, the views and the contact with nature
2. The type of housing
3. A sense of community, their networks of family and friends
4. Well-established local facilities

### Problems that need resolving:

1. How run-down the area looks, especially on the streets where parking is a problem
2. How poor the footpath links are
3. Empty and/or poor quality community buildings and shops create a poor image for the area
4. Much of the open space consists of swathes of underused playing fields and mown grass
5. It can be hard to tell one neighbourhood from another
6. Access to good quality local services is patchy
7. Few opportunities for work locally



Long view from Shirecliffe



Street where parking on verges is a problem

### 3. Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

What an analysis of the place can tell us

#### It's big!

The Southey Owlerton area represents about one tenth of the city's population and area. However it is easy sometimes to lose sight of the links between the estate and the rest of the city, not least because there are few reasons at present to go there unless you live there - it is a sea of housing, the largest council housing estate in Europe, with few facilities that have anything other than very local use.

The Northern General Hospital is one exception, but it is located right at the edge of the area and in some ways turns its back on it. The Sheffield College is another, but it is due to relocate out of the estate itself (into the valley). The Upper Don valley by contrast has many facilities that attract people from all over the city. However the topography of the area makes the valley very separate from the estate.

#### It feels cut off from the rest of the city

There are good reasons why the estate feels quite separate from the city. Within living memory most of the area was countryside and even in Abercrombie's plan for the city in 1924, this part of the city was not proposed for new housing. However in the late 1920's the first estates were built and the programme continued through until the 1950's spreading gradually north. It was developed "as a piece" on a distinct series of hills, with major roads and topographical features separating it from neighbouring areas.

In addition communities moved here together. The occupants of the new houses were mainly families where the breadwinner was employed in the steel or engineering industries. For example, in Shirecliffe, three streets

from Darnall (in the Lower Don valley) were moved together into the new estate. In other areas, like Parson Cross, people moved from a wider range of places, but this shared history on the estate and the shared culture through the steel industry explains the strength of neighbourhood feeling today.

#### It's almost all housing

Overall the "diagram" for Sheffield in the 19th and early 20th centuries was of an industrial zone along the Don valley, the city centre at the bend in the river and residential areas on the surrounding valleysides. As a result residential areas like Southey Owlerton were developed with little other than housing and everyone went elsewhere for work or community facilities. Today the lack of community facilities, shops, office space and commercial/business space is thus a direct result of the broader pattern of development across the city.

The decline of the steel and engineering industries in the early 1980's had a major impact on the communities of Southey Owlerton. This coincided with a marked decline in public sector investment in the area. Together these two factors have resulted to the changes in the area and have seen once pleasant and well-maintained housing areas transformed into areas of multiple deprivation.

One of the challenges for the area therefore is to introduce a mix of uses and services that can provide for a range of needs within the neighbourhoods, whilst still retaining the area's qualities as a residential area. Another is to make better connections with the rest of the city that will provide a broader range of opportunities for local people in all areas of life.



## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

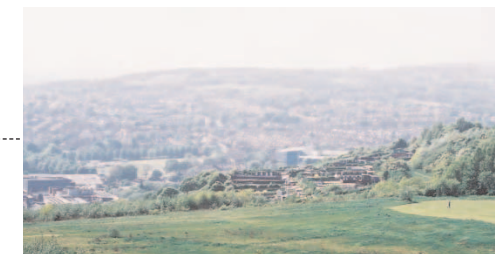
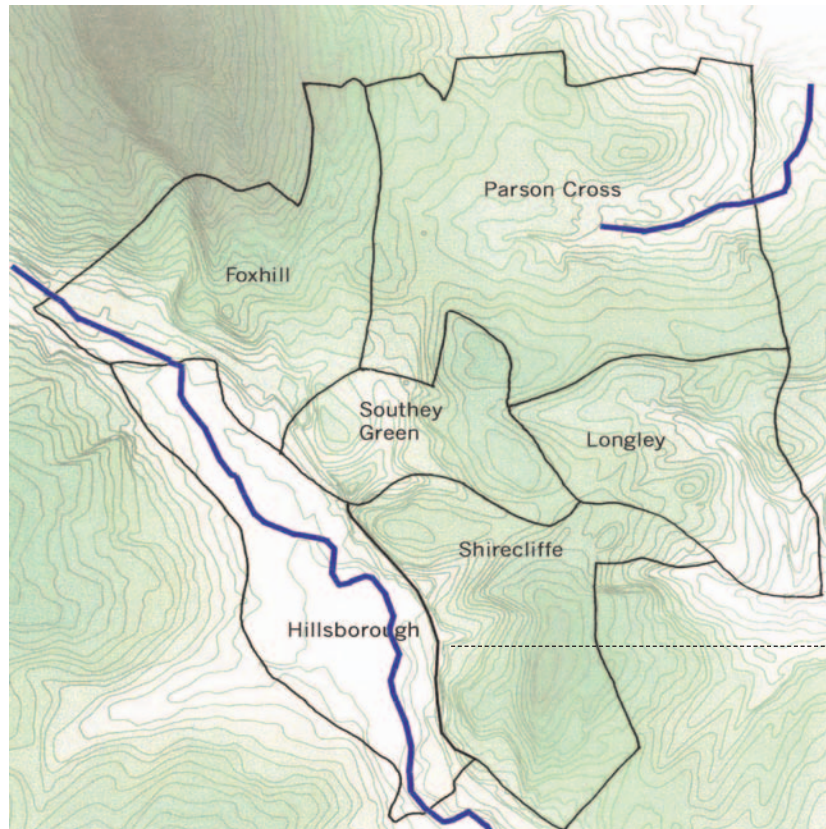
### It's hilly!

- The contour map (6) shows how complex the topography of the area is, with its knolls and edges and valleys. It is this complexity that makes it so hard to orientate oneself. It is also what creates the fantastic sequence of changing views that local people celebrate so much. The landform is distinctive within the whole of Sheffield and gives the area a very specific feel. Making the most of the ridges and views is therefore one way of developing a special character for this part of the city.

### A river runs through it

Like the Lower Don Valley, the Upper Don was, and still is, associated with the steel and engineering industries, with an emphasis today on precision engineering. There are land and premises available for expansion of this work and the opportunities are being explored within the context of the South Yorkshire Technology Corridor. In addition the valley has attracted a wide range of leisure uses.

Although this process has not really considered the valley part of the area yet, it is clear that the role of the river and the valley is fundamental to the identity and structure of the wider area.



Long view from Shirecliffe edge

- 6. The landform is distinctive within the whole of Sheffield giving the area its special feel.

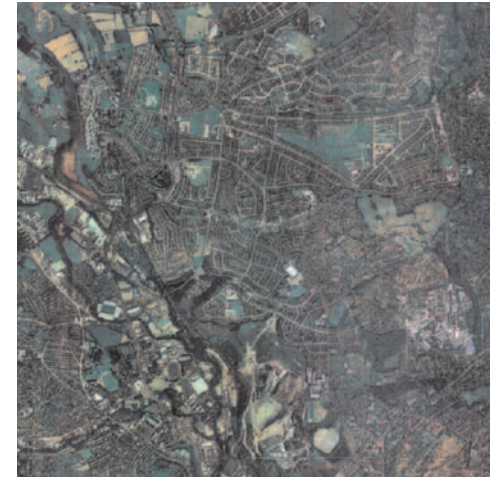
## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

### It's very green

- The diagram (7) shows the area and its main green spaces set within the context of the city. Two things stand out: how near the countryside is to many parts of the area (and to many other neighbourhoods in the city); and the number and size of the major green spaces, especially when compared to other parts of the city, including the famously green and leafy suburbs in the south-west.
- The aerial photo (8) confirms how green the area is. However in some ways this greenness is deceptive as not all of it is available and sites are not well connected to each other. The next diagram (9) shows land that is countryside, semi-public (schools and colleges) and private (gardens) as well as public open space. The last category includes parks and informal or incidental open spaces.

A key issue is that in general wherever a public open space was created as part of the estate, the gardens were laid out around the space and backing onto it. This has the effect of making the open space feel more like an extension of private back gardens, rather than public. As a result it is hard to see into the public spaces from the streets and because they are not overlooked, they can feel unsafe. The parks, though large and with the potential to be connected, are therefore not very visible and feel separate.

The incidental open spaces are not generally developed or maintained. This means they are more natural feeling, but also less accessible as they lack paths, gates and facilities. Several of the public spaces include remnants of the countryside that pre-dates the housing development. These provide important links with the past and with a more natural environment. Gardens, both front and back, make up a considerable proportion of the green space, along with the street trees and verges.



7. This part of the city is surprisingly green. ●

8. The aerial photograph confirms how green the area is. ●

## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton



### Habitat

- Trees / Shrubs
- Grasslands

### Ownership

- Trees / Shrubs
- Grasslands
- Semi-public open spaces e.g Schools
- Countryside



9. This greenness is deceptive as many sites are closed off to the public

### The woodland and grassland are special

The habitats most represented in the area are woodland and grassland. In the south of the area there is a significant group of old and ancient woods that have survived on slopes too steep to develop. Street trees and parkland trees are a key feature in some parts of the estate, especially Longley. The river is also clearly visible on the air photo as a line of mature trees. In the north, where the countryside was mostly fields, the dominant habitat is grassland, often close mown and ecologically dull. There is little in the way of colour, flowers or flowering bushes.

Despite the shortcomings of much of the green space,<sup>(9)</sup> there is the potential to develop the area's green assets into a coherent and beautiful network that could become a hallmark of its character.

### Maintenance of the physical environment is a problem

The garden city layouts, characteristic of the inter and post war housing development, have generated major problems with estate maintenance – especially as they were not planned with the level of car ownership seen today. The large gardens also require commitment from people living in the area to maintain them, and this has become a problem with an ageing tenant/resident population and where there is frequent turnover of tenants.

Maintenance of all of the green space, as well as the roads, is a major issue and one that needs resolving at both a strategic and local level. The area has suffered decades of inadequate maintenance and this history of neglect will not be put right overnight. What is needed is a sustained programme of repair, improvement and careful maintenance and management. Regeneration funding will not cover this sort of investment: sorting out sensible parking arrangements for example involves major redesign of the streetscape at significant expense. However the solutions to these problems could create local jobs.

## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

### There is a lot of the same sort of housing

The estate was built as a garden city estate in the inter-war and post war periods. The Council still owns some 10,500 houses. Approximately 4,250 have been bought by former council tenants and are scattered in amongst the Council's property. Some older houses exist that pre-date the building of the estate and a small amount of housing development has taken place in recent years, but the vast majority of the housing is on garden city principles and much of it is unmodernised. Just as the layout of streets and gardens did not anticipate changes in the way people want to live now, the large proportion of 2-bed properties has resulted in low demand and high turnover in places. More recent types of housing, such as flats and maisonettes, also have structural problems.

Some of the housing types are really striking, especially the semi's that form corner blocks; and where houses and gardens are well tended the estate looks cared for and pleasant. However the quality of the initial building programme was variable and where properties have not been maintained, they can look dreary, especially if the garden and verges are also neglected. Most of the houses lost their garden railings in the war and privet hedges that are hard to keep tidy have replaced these. The "sameness" of so much of the housing visually makes it hard to tell one part of the estate from the other.

The future of housing is a key issue for the area, especially with an over-supply of Council and other social rented housing. The Council does not have the resources to carry out necessary repairs and modernisation of properties. Finding tenants to fill the properties is also becoming increasingly difficult, as young people aspire to buy their own homes. As the amount of housing to buy is limited in the area, those who do want to buy



## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

are leaving the estate. As a result, reducing the amount of housing in Council ownership, improving the physical state and management of housing that continues in Council ownership and developing a mix of tenures are key aspects of the local housing strategy.

A major issue for Southey Owlerton is to decide how any new housing can contribute to the future of the estate. There are opportunities for new developments to bring jobs and new spending power to the area; equally they bring opportunities to improve the relationship between housing and parks, to enrich the area visually and to build a distinctive character. However recent housing development has not brought many positives like these to the area. The challenge now is for local people to shape the development briefs for new housing so that they see the benefits.

### It's hard to get about

Getting around in Southey Owlerton is not easy. Because the area is hilly, walking and cycling between neighbourhoods is difficult, especially for the elderly. It is also difficult to get across the estate by bus. The plan (10) shows how the footpaths and cycle ways form an incomplete network and one that is not sufficiently linked into public transport routes. This is a problem in an area where 60% of households do not have access to a car. Joining up this network and linking it more frequently to public transport, as well as providing bus links across the estate will be essential elements of the framework.



Transport

- Bus routes
- Cycle routes
- - - Cycle routes recommended
- Pathways



10. The network of footpaths and cycleways is incomplete

## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

It can be hard to find your way around the estate as a newcomer, because the roads all look very much the same. In reality they have different functions and should look different (11). Halifax Road (A61) is an old road and one that provides a major route in and out of the city. Its character should introduce the city as a whole. Some roads, like Herries Road and Barnsley Road provide main routes around the estate to other parts of the city.

Other roads connect up the neighbourhoods within the estate. However these tend also to be residential roads and this immediately creates conflict between the needs of people and traffic. They will need careful design and probably downgrading in parts. The remaining roads are generally used only by residents and their visitors.

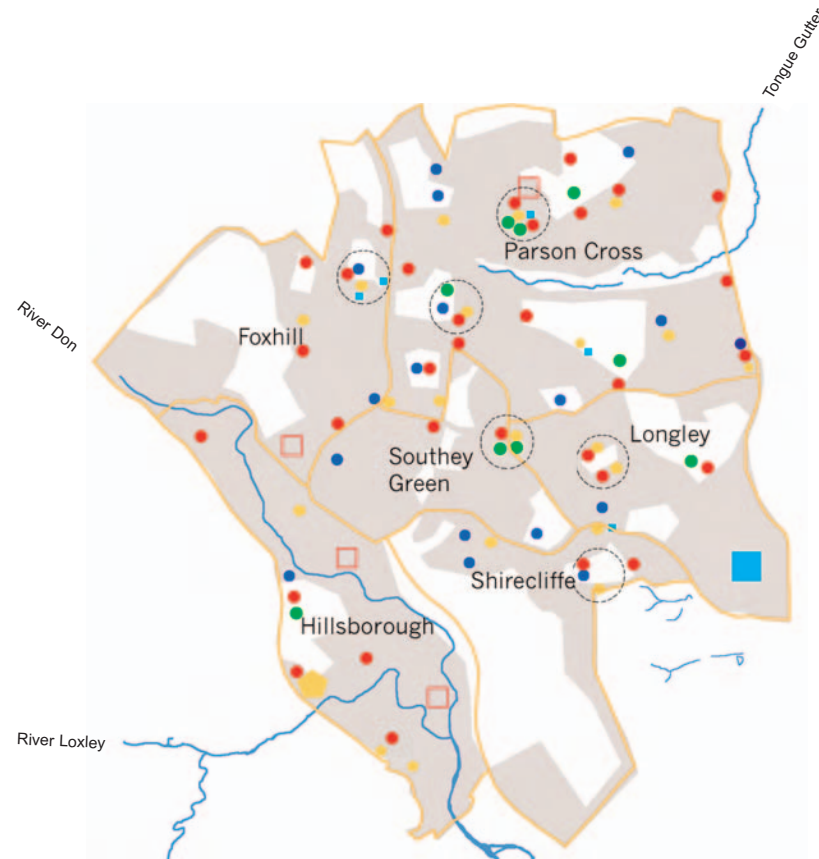
The roads within the estate could through their design present the special character both of Southey Owlerton as a whole and of the individual neighbourhoods. Renovating the road network and improving the streetscape is a huge undertaking. The priority for the framework is to identify the key bits of road and streetscape that could contribute to neighbourhood character.

### Parts of the area don't feel safe

Because of a number of the issues already identified parts of the area feel unsafe. These include areas of open space that do not have houses fronting onto them; poorly designed play areas; housing types, such as flats, where public and private space is not clearly defined; areas where vacant houses are boarded up or where larger public buildings are empty; footpaths that are poorly lit or overgrown by shrubs; roads where pedestrians come into conflict with cars. Better design and management in the future could address many of these.



## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton



- Local Facilities
- School
  - Shop
  - Health Service
  - Other public services
  - Community Building / Church
  - Major Employers
  - Clusters



12. Local facilities are scattered across the area and the major employers are on the edge

The lack of things for young people to do means that they often congregate in streets and public spaces and this can feel frightening for older people and young children. They can also turn to anti-social behaviour for lack of more interesting things to do. Better facilities for the young, with appropriate staffing and management, are needed in all neighbourhoods.

### Local facilities are scattered across the area

- The plan (12) shows the location of the range of facilities available to the area: schools; shops; health centres; other public services; and community facilities. At present these are scattered across the estate. However in each neighbourhood there is at least one cluster of facilities that looks like a focal point or neighbourhood centre and these can form the core of a network of centres for the area. Some of the centres are well established; others are emerging and may change if facilities relocate.

A key issue for the area is to establish the level of facilities that can be sustained. At present some of the facilities are isolated and scattered about; some are obviously well used, others appear to be “hanging on”. Although all the facilities will have some use, it is important to consolidate those that are able to thrive as well as just survive. If not, boarded up and poorly maintained buildings will remain a feature of the area.

Groups of facilities clustered together (ie a number of different coloured dots) are likely to be more sustainable and will create more vibrant parts of the neighbourhood. Where these can be linked to the footpath/cycle network, public transport and green space, they will be even more viable.

## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton

There are 19 schools in total in the area that represent a major resource to the community. They can be physically quite separate from other facilities. Making the most of schools and connecting them to other areas of community life are opportunities not to be missed. Equally assessing the impact of possible housing demolition on schools G.P's and other facilities must be done as soon as possible.

### There are few opportunities for work in the area

Because the area was developed as a housing estate, it includes few workplaces. The exceptions are the Upper Don Valley, historically a location for the steel industry and increasingly now also for the leisure industry; the Northern General Hospital and the proposed Medipark (incubator space for high tech bioscience companies); The Sheffield College; as well as the schools, small shops, businesses and services within the neighbourhoods.

The big employers, apart from the College, (which is due to move shortly to the valley) are located on the edge of the estate rather than within it. This makes it easy for people to come to work from across the city without really venturing into the neighbourhoods. There will be benefits to drawing some of these to new facilities within the area.

There will also be opportunities to attract new employers to sites within the estate, as land becomes available. In addition the development of social enterprises in the neighbourhood centres and the expansion of local services will bring with them new jobs and a greater mix of uses. However it will be important to balance the quality of the neighbourhoods as residential areas, with the economic elements of mixed use.

Other physical aspects of the place may well provide opportunities for jobs. New housing development and a greater emphasis on the quality and maintenance of the public spaces and streets could generate jobs for local people. Again project briefs need to make sure these opportunities are seized.

### Some physical projects are happening now

Some physical projects are being planned or are already underway. These present a major opportunity both to put parts of the framework in place and to promote a new character and image for the area. The next stage of the process needs to prioritise these and treat them all as demonstration or best practice projects.

- The plan (13) shows those physical projects that have had SRB funding approved. It is worth noting that the Wild Web sites generally involve small-scale access improvements rather than play and sports facilities, which are concentrated in the parks. In this respect Foxhill, Southey and Shirecliffe are under provided for as neighbourhoods.

No funding has been allocated to date for townscape improvements in the neighbourhood centres and entrances; for routes that join up the open space network; or for the major sites in the Upper Don valley, such as the river corridor and Parkwood Springs.

The housing investment is being targeted initially in three neighbourhoods over the next two years. Thereafter it will be targeted at the remaining ones. Only two community buildings have received capital funding so far from the scheme – Wolfe Road Healthy Living Centre and LOCAL.



## Understanding the ecology of Southey Owlerton



### Physical Projects

- Parks
- Wild Web Site
- Community Buildings
- Housing investment areas

— Picasso Community transport route

● 13. Some physical projects are happening now



### Summary

The analysis of the physical fabric of the area bears out and explains many of the aspects identified by local people in the previous chapter as positives and negatives.

#### The positive aspects of the area include:

1. It's big!
2. It's hilly! (and this means fantastic views)
3. A river runs through it
4. It's very green
5. The woodland and grassland are special
6. Some physical projects are happening now

These highlight the potential of the landform and green environment, that local people also commented on.

#### The negative aspects include:

1. It feels cut off from the rest of the city
2. It's almost all housing
3. Maintenance of the physical environment is a problem
4. There is a lot of the same sort of housing
5. It's hard to get about
6. Parts of the area don't feel safe
7. Local facilities are scattered across the area
8. There are few opportunities for work in the area

These echo local people's concerns about the poor quality and "look" of much of the area, the lack of neighbourhood identity and the shortage of local facilities and jobs.

## 4. Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

What SOAR's theme groups tell us about local service needs

### The role of the theme groups

In the late 1990's two community audits were carried out in Southey Owlerton – the NEST (North East Sheffield Trust) Community Audit in 1997 and the Health Needs Assessment (Healthy Cross) in 1999. Both of these audits helped to highlight the needs of the area and led to the area being selected for a bid to Round 5 of the government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). In order to develop the themes within the bid, a series of "Have Your Say Days" were organised across the estate.

The SRB5 strategic objectives and subsequent Delivery Plans have followed closely the priorities local people identified in the "Have Your Say Days". The activity to be funded was divided into seven themes and a local group was organised around each theme. These are known as the SOAR theme groups and include local people, funded projects and agencies. The seven themes are: Community Empowerment, Housing, Environment Leisure & Transport, Health & Social Care, Crime & Community Safety, Lifelong Learning and Employment & Economic Development.

The theme groups meet monthly to consider strategy for the theme across the whole of Southey Owlerton and to endorse projects seeking SRB funding. SOAR is currently undertaking an evaluation of the first half of the programme with a view to agreeing priorities for future funds and tools for measuring progress. The main development since the "Have Your Say Days" has been the Neighbourhood Strategies process, in which local people and partners consider all of the themes within their patch (as opposed to a single theme across all neighbourhoods). The evaluation process therefore provides an opportunity to compare and merge the neighbourhood and theme group priorities.

Because the theme groups are rooted in local people's ideas, it is not surprising that the activity they are supporting is very much in line with what local people have said they need when consulted about their neighbourhood strategies. The previous chapter focused on an analysis of the physical aspects of the area. By mapping the activity funded to date by the theme groups, this chapter focuses primarily on the non-physical improvements that are needed and how these connect to a neighbourhood perspective.

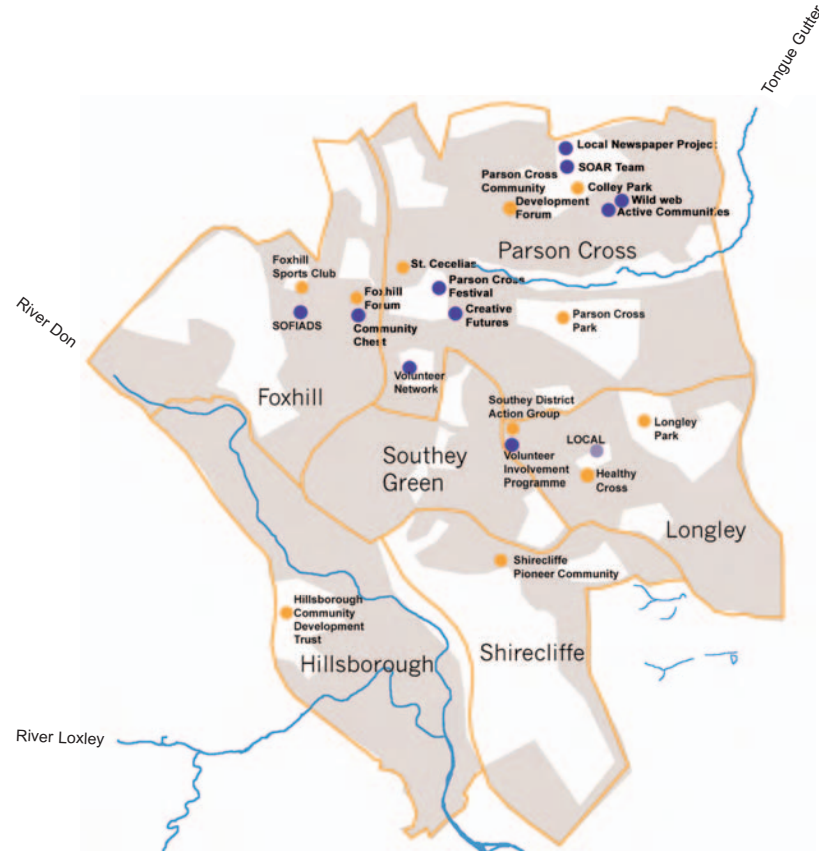
### We need to make it easy for everyone to get involved

People will want to get involved in their area in different ways. Some people will be interested in a particular topic or issue, something that cuts across a number of neighbourhoods – for these the SOAR Board or the theme groups may be the best forums. Others will only be interested in their own neighbourhood, or a small part of their neighbourhood, and will want to join a group that is active in their patch.

Wherever people get involved they are likely to need support: volunteer expenses; transport to meetings and events; small grants to get going; venues and information that are accessible to all; new skills and training programmes; help and technical support from paid workers; tools for communicating and measuring progress; places to meet and work together.

The plan (14) shows the location of community organisations in Southey Owlerton who have received SRB funding. It also shows SRB funded groups and projects that are available to help people get involved that operate across the whole area. A known area-wide gap is a positive action programme to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to get involved including physical access improvements to community buildings.

## Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton



### Groups and Projects

- Projects covering all neighbourhoods
- Projects covering one neighbourhood



- 14. Groups and projects have been funded to help people get involved

Winn Gardens is the main neighbourhood gap. The bases for area-wide projects illustrate clearly that the level of development varies between neighbourhoods, with Shirecliffe, Southey & Winn Gardens having the least infrastructure at present in terms of office space, meeting space and community led activity, although these neighbourhood have been successful in receiving grants from the Community Chest.

The SOAR Board has been clear, in embarking on the neighbourhood strategy process, that all neighbourhoods will need a core group supported by workers and running costs in order to implement their strategies over the next three years. Each group will need somewhere to meet, an information/communication point and a base for workers, as well as access to area-wide support services for training, technical aid and grants.

A parallel piece of work is currently underway to audit all of the community buildings in the area with a view to establishing how well the resource can meet the needs of local groups. This is likely to show that the quality and amount of meeting places varies a great deal between neighbourhoods.

Although there will be a finite number of community buildings that the area can support, the importance of neighbourhood to most people suggests that a minimum level and quality of community space is needed in each. These will be most sustainable where they offer a mix of uses and services, where they are clustered with other local facilities and where they connect to footpath and open space networks.

# Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

## Childcare is a big issue

The number of childcare places is very low in this part of the city. This makes it hard for parents to enter training or work; it also means that parents get little respite from childcare and that young children have few opportunities for structured play with others. This is therefore both a social and an economic issue for the area.

- The plan (15) shows the range of activities and childcare available in the area for under 5's and for children aged 5-13. It highlights a number of issues: the provision has some significant geographical gaps; as many community buildings are not suitable to provide childcare for working parents, schools have a key role to play and may offer a sustainable future for childcare, linked to play care in the community; community transport will be needed to link up existing provision and fill gaps; and the relationship between indoor and outdoor play and facilities could be strengthened.

The provision needs co-ordination and long-term support if it is to survive and meet the future needs of the area. The proposed extension of Sure Start to cover almost the whole SRB5 area is very welcome news.

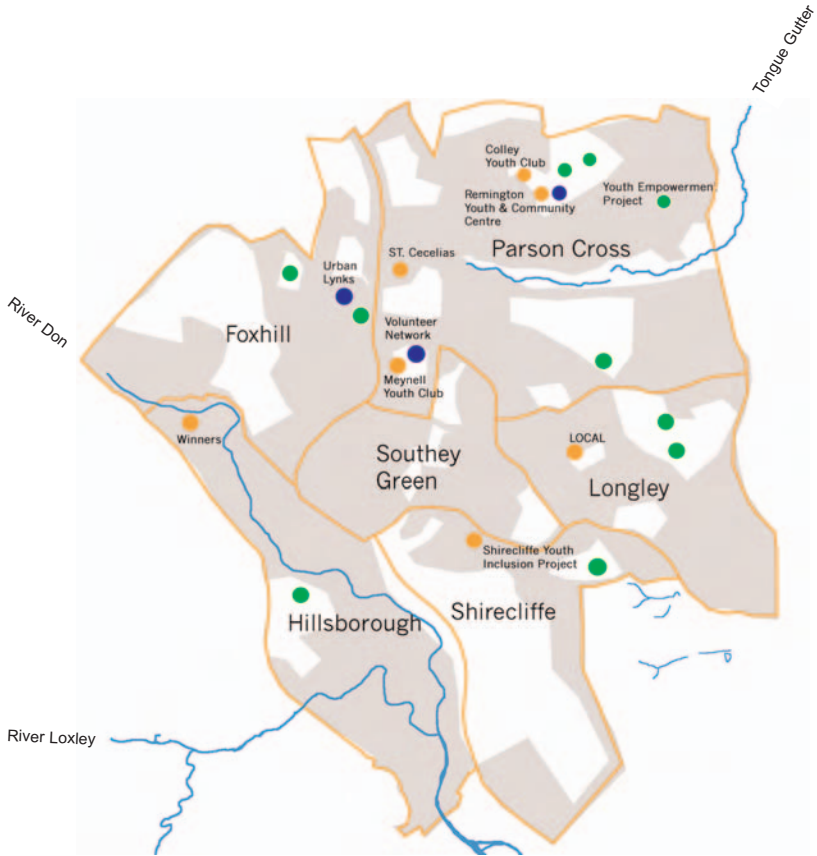


**Childcare**

- Nursery provision ■
- Parent and toddler group ■
- Out of school term / holiday ■
- Playgroups ■

15. The number of childcare places is very low ■

# Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton



- Youth Projects**
- Outdoor play and sport facilities
  - Youth related buildings
  - Projects offering support to young people across the area



16. Support for young people is unevenly spread across the area.

## Young people need things to do and a say in the area

The plan (16) shows the support that is available to young people, from both the youth service and the voluntary sector. The provision is unevenly spread across the area and the link with outdoor facilities is generally poor.

Issues and concerns around young people have been highlighted in every neighbourhood and form a theme running throughout the consultation process. On the one hand everyone recognises that young people need things to do that will engage them in constructive activity; on the other hand people express anxiety and fear about youth nuisance. In general people wish to see them positively involved in making decisions about their needs and the future of the area.

Again some level of provision both indoors and outdoors in each neighbourhood is likely to be essential, with support from workers based in area-wide projects. Young people do not always want to be located with younger children or adults, so their activities are likely to happen alongside other community uses. However a close link to the main green space and pedestrian/transport networks will be helpful.

# Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

## We need to make extra help available to the vulnerable

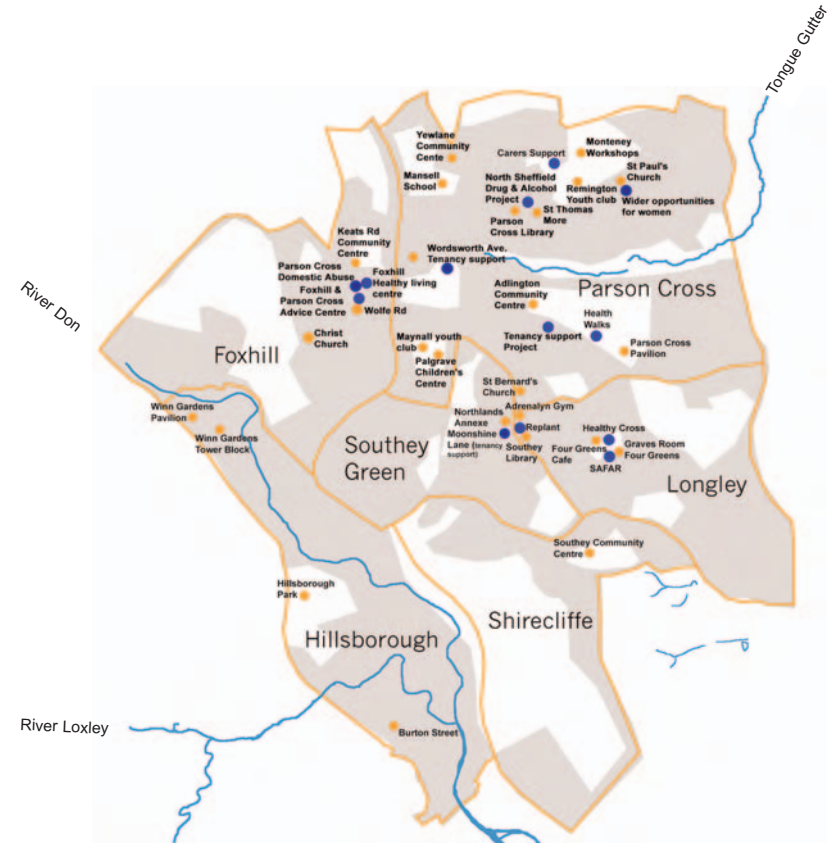
A number of the theme groups have developed projects that target vulnerable groups or individuals. These are shown on the plan (17). This shows that although the activity is area-wide, it is based in only a few neighbourhoods. Although these projects work across the area, they require neighbourhood contacts and venues in order to reach their target audience, whether as outposts of their services or as communication points.

The Family Support project is likely to develop a programme of activity in the second half of the SRB scheme. Provision for the elderly is a gap at present and one that local people have highlighted in the neighbourhood strategies consultation. Another gap is support for the disabled.

## We need to work alongside agencies to combat poor health in the area

A local community Health Needs Assessment showed that local people see health in the broadest sense, as one of the main factors determining quality of life. The Healthy Living Partnership (HeLP) is a joint venture between Healthy Cross and the Wolfe Road Healthy Living Centre in partnership with North Sheffield Primary Care Trust. These two projects are working together to ensure that health information, activities and treatments are available across the area at a wide network of community venues.

The same plan (17) shows the venues where they currently operate. This shows that the lack of community venues in some neighbourhoods is limiting the availability of these services. Good community transport and fully accessible community buildings are essential to enable this activity to be delivered in all neighbourhoods and accessed by everyone who needs it.



- Support for vulnerable groups
- Projects targeted at vulnerable groups ●
- HeLP venues ●
- Groups based out of the area ●
- Carers support ●
- NANRO target hardening ●
- Supporting families supporting children ●

17. Support for vulnerable groups and individuals is limited by a lack of suitable community buildings

## Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

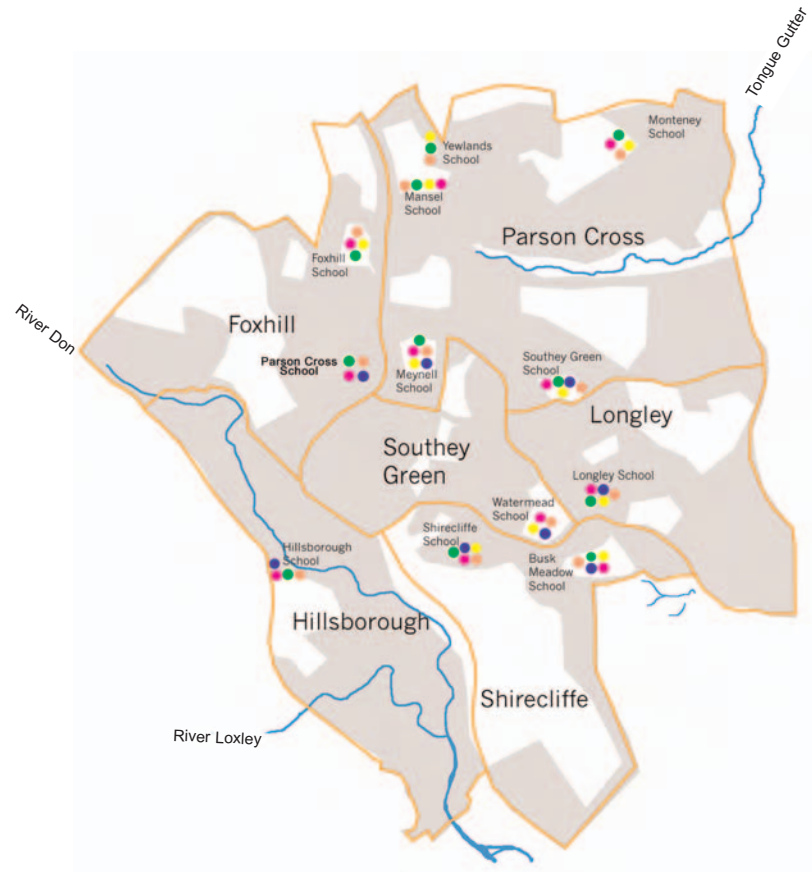
### We need to make the most of our schools

There are 19 schools in the area that together create a fantastic resource. In the previous chapter we talked about making the most of their buildings and grounds by connecting them to community networks such as footpath links and open spaces. They also need to be connected to social networks, such as childcare provision and family learning, so that everyone in the neighbourhood, not just school children, can benefit.

- The plan (18) illustrates the range of extra activity that regeneration funding is bringing to the schools in the area. The Raising Attainment project supports local families through school-based family learning development and home-school link workers. Together with learning mentors they deliver a range of learning opportunities and support for families, as well as for school-children. Good schools will also be vital in attracting new residents to the area and will play a big part in raising its image.

### We need to engage adults in learning and training

Many adults in the area will have had a bad experience in school of formal learning and will have left early with few qualifications. It is estimated that 25% of the adult population (or some 9,000 people) are in need of basic skills training. Supporting People into Employment and Life Long Learning (SPELL) has developed an innovative approach to recruiting and supporting new learners: an organised team of mostly local people knock on doors across the area and offer people learning (and ongoing support if they enrol). SPELL also co-ordinates the delivery of basic skills and other first rung learning in neighbourhood venues as well as helping students progress to higher level provision with, for example, The Sheffield College. The plan (19) shows the range of venues where SPELL currently delivers learning.



- School delivered services
- Family learning access
  - Family support access
  - Childcare, nursery, out of school
  - Learning mentor
  - EAZ



- 18. Schools deliver a range of opportunities for families as well as school children

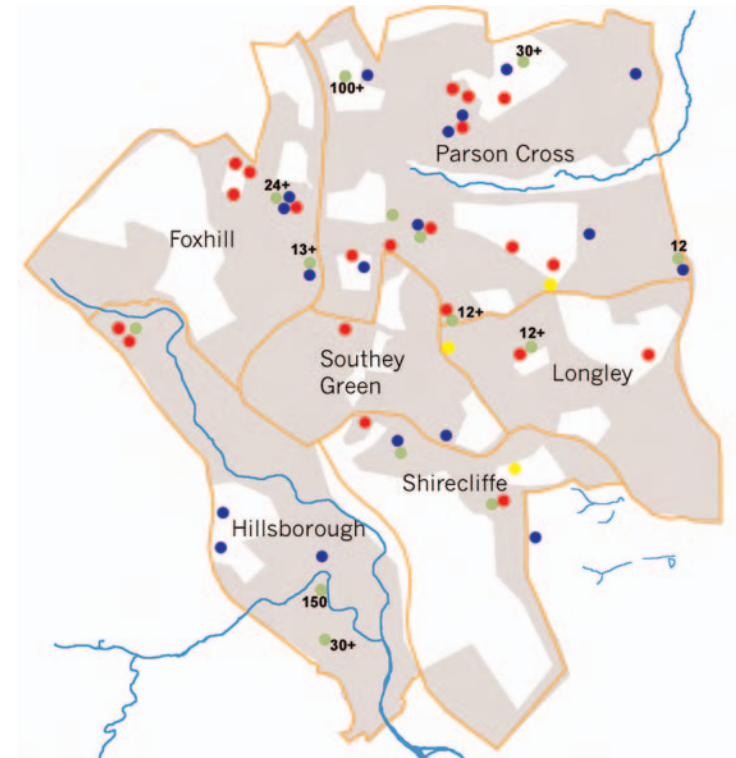
## Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

The development of a range of learning centres across the area is required to enable neighbourhood learning to take place (for those reluctant to re-enter formal learning institutions at the first rung stage); to raise the level of IT skills in the area and to provide access to IT based services within neighbourhoods, particularly those linked to training and employment. The current level of IT/learning centre provision is shown on the same plan (19). What is needed is some provision in all neighbourhoods that gives local people access to these services.

### We need to help people get jobs

Southey Owlerton is an area of the city where unemployment persists at a high level. Extra effort is therefore needed to develop local people's skills, get them "job ready" and connect them to opportunities in the world of work. A number of SRB funded projects are working to achieve this and these are illustrated on the plan (20). In addition the theme group is working to influence Yorkshire Forward and Objective One plans for developments in the Upper Don and to maximise the opportunities for Southey Owlerton residents to get jobs there.

What is clear from the plan is that some neighbourhoods are much better served than others, with Shirecliffe and Southey being very poorly served at present. The Employment Unit within the Council is developing through the Job Net project, a notion of "entitlement" – in other words every resident in areas of high unemployment across the city should have access to a basic level of services to help them get into work. Some provision will therefore be needed in each neighbourhood, probably outreach services operating from a community venue, with co-ordination between those outreach points. Linked projects that address the barriers to employment include childcare and tackling public transport.



Venues  
 Training venue ●  
 Childcare venues ●  
 Training and childcare venue ●  
 Community access to computers (Nos available) ●



## Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

### We need to support community enterprises

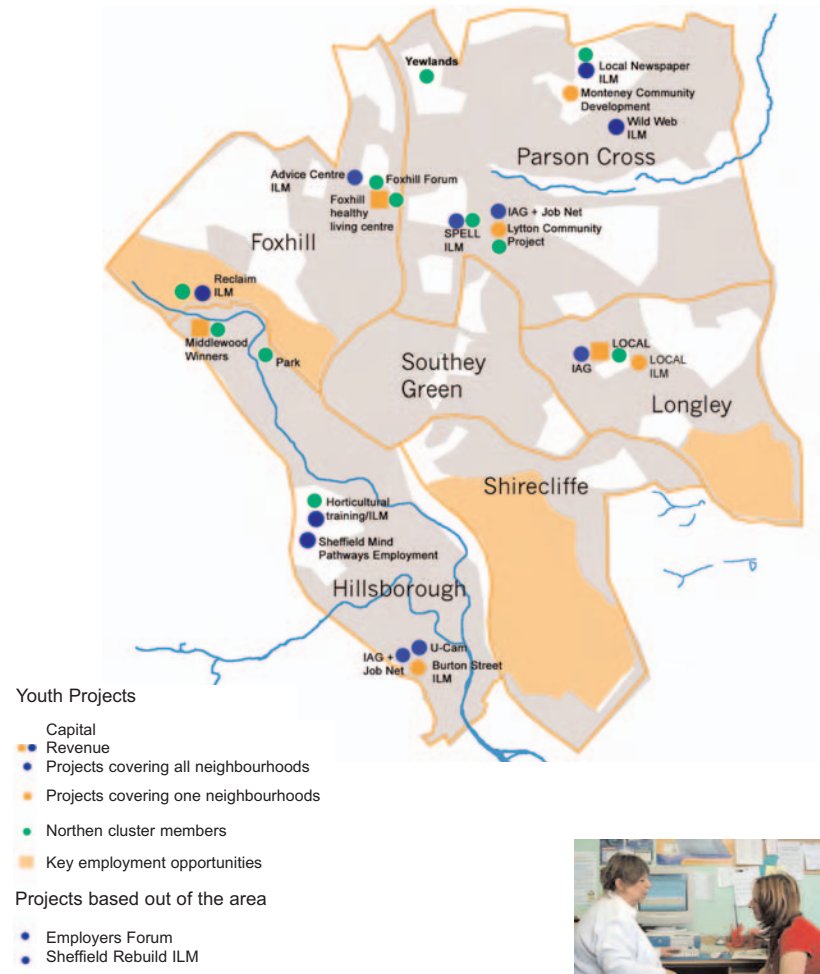
It is hoped that new developments in the future will bring new jobs to the estate itself, rather than just the valley. However the development of the social economy is another important strand of activity and one that can create jobs and enterprises that benefit local people. The Northern Clusters project works with a number of existing local projects to support them in developing enterprises using the network as an internal market. The same plan shows these projects.

Again, there are gaps across the area. Every neighbourhood should be developing the social economy, with support from nearby projects. Ideas to date include catering and cleaning, environmental services, health and social care, digital media and 'green' industries such as recycling.

### We need hub projects and neighbourhood centres

Running all through this chapter is the idea that some locally delivered services need to be available at the neighbourhood level to ensure that everyone who needs to is able to benefit from them. An issue for the neighbourhood strategies therefore is to ensure that sites, premises and resources are available in each neighbourhood to allow this to happen.

At the same time the sustainability of the whole network of facilities is a major issue. Many facilities are competing for resources and it will be important not to end up with vastly more facilities than anyone can afford to run and manage. This will do nothing to improve the quality of the neighbourhoods. We are not therefore proposing that the same level or range of services will be available everywhere; but each centre will need some point of delivery of core services, with IT and community transport links to other centres



20. Extra effort is needed to connect local people to jobs

## Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

As a result SOAR has developed the concept of hub projects – projects that can provide a minimum core of services in each neighbourhood that would fit our ideas of equal access to services regardless of where you live – set within a distinct neighbourhood centre. These are based on the projects currently being supported through the Northern Clusters project (initially one hub project per neighbourhood).

The concept for the neighbourhood centre is of a “Community High Street” where, for example, shops, other businesses and responsive community & public services are delivered alongside each other in a high quality setting, usually linked to a prominent green space.

The hub projects will be community owned and managed. They will form the core economic project in each neighbourhood and the focus for local services, jobs and enterprises – a kind of local one-stop shop. As well as the first point of access for local people to a range of services, the hubs are also a physical focus for their neighbourhoods and the future asset base to underpin neighbourhood organisations. They therefore have a combined community development and economic role. It is important that their catchment is truly local. Someone described them recently as “a place where someone might know you by name” rather than as a number or an output.

The intention is that each of the hubs, whilst delivering a range of services (eg lifelong learning, access to Job Net, learning centre/IT facilities, community café, community health & advice, community meeting space, youth provision), will also have a strength that is linked to a growth sector in the job market. For example, Montenev has a specialism in digital media that links to the cultural industries; Wolfe Road healthy living centre links to the health sector etc. For this reason the hubs and centres are also seen as the place to develop startup, incubator and managed workspace in the estate.

In addition the hubs are being developed as a network so that key city-wide services such as Job Net can be delivered at a number of points across the area and so that they can work collectively with partners on issues such as basic skills. The hubs are also connected to other community buildings and services within their neighbourhood as part of a broader cluster of facilities.

The plan (21) shows the hub and neighbourhood centre concept. Where neighbourhoods do not yet have a clear hub, for example Shirecliffe, this is likely to be a priority for their strategy. The hub concept does not necessarily mean a single new building. It may be that existing buildings can be converted or improved or that clusters of activity can be developed across a number of venues in a hub and spoke model

### Is there a need for a bigger centre ?

Nowhere in the estate is there a clear overall focal point or central shopping area. Main leisure activities and shops are located in Hillsborough, but these can be hard to access both in terms of transport and cost. The Council has an idea of a network of one-stop shops for services across the city. It may be that one of the neighbourhood centres – one that is accessible to most of the area - takes on this kind of function in due course. This is an issue that the framework needs to resolve.

# Creating opportunity for people in Southey Owlerton

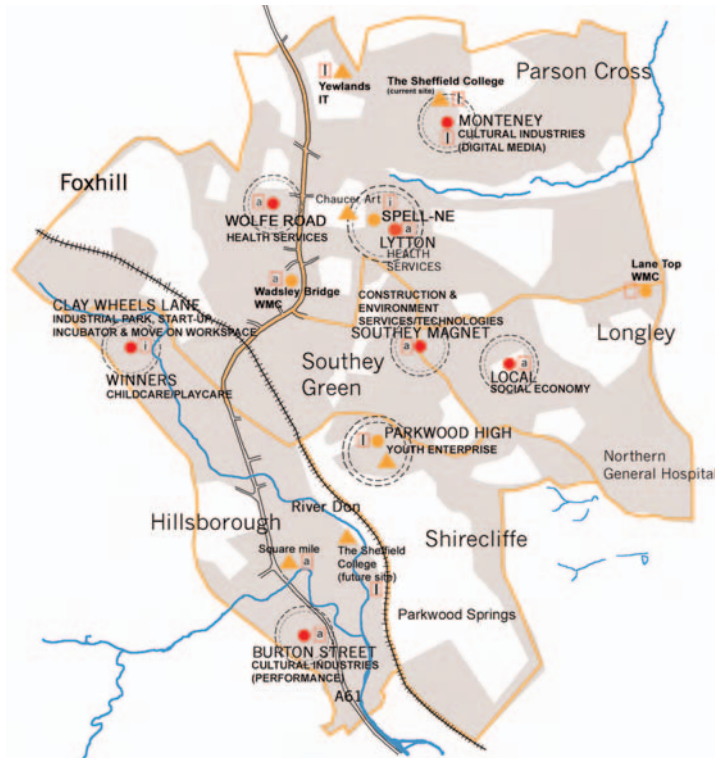
## Summary

The list of service needs identified by the theme groups is long, as you would expect in an area of multiple deprivation:

1. We need to make it easy for everyone to get involved
2. Childcare is a big issue
3. Young people need influence and things to do
4. We need to make extra help available to the vulnerable
5. We need to work alongside agencies to combat poor health in the area
6. We need to make the most of our schools
7. We need to engage adults in learning and training
8. We need to help people get jobs
9. We need to support community enterprises
10. We need hub projects and neighbourhood centres
11. Is there a need for a bigger centre?

The list of needs also reflects a balance of social, economic and environmental issues that again echo what local people said about living here:

1. The importance of family and social networks and “neighbourliness”; the need to support certain groups such as children and young people, the vulnerable, the elderly and unwell
2. The need to support local people to get work and increase their wealth
3. The need for physical places – buildings and open spaces – in order to deliver services and the importance of neighbourhood focal points in improving the image of the area.



### Hubs and Centres

- Neighbourhood centres, hubs and strengths
- School pyramids
- Proposed learning centre hierarchy
  - Learning Centre
  - Learning access point
  - Information centre



- 21. SOAR has developed the concept of hubs and neighbourhood centres

## 5. The garden city idea revisited

What the history of the estate can tell us about planning its future.

### The past can give us clues about the future

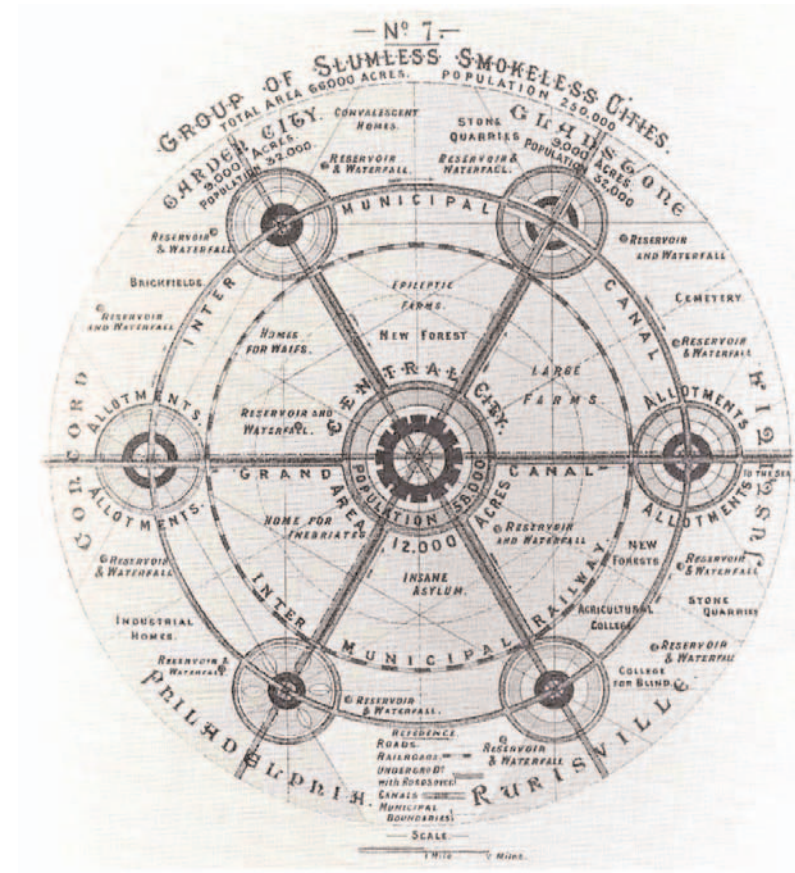
In examining the area's history as a garden city estate, there is no intention to return to this way of planning or to undertake a historical restoration of the original vision. Instead the aim is to reflect on the good and bad aspects of the garden city movement and to see how we can reinterpret its ideas in the light of contemporary thinking.

When Southey Owlerton was built it was planned on the garden city movement principles. The intention was that by combining the best of town and country in garden cities of limited size, the problems of city overcrowding and rural depopulation would be overcome. Today the area has aspects of the city and the countryside, but not the best ones. It needs to decide what it wants to become: more urban, more rural or perhaps something that combines the best of both.

A group of residents and workers involved in the neighbourhood strategies across the area has considered what the garden city movement was trying to achieve and how this relates to contemporary good practice for planning in cities, as well as how the individual neighbourhoods in the area look and feel different. The discussion from these workshops has informed the ideas in this section, along with all of the thoughts and conversations over the last year.

### Ebenzer Howard's original ideas

The visionary town planner Ebenezer Howard, born in London in 1850 into a family of shopkeepers, experienced conditions of city living at that time. However, he married a country girl and so also got an insight into country living. Whilst living in America he witnessed ambitious building projects and creating new communities from scratch. These experiences led him to the idea of garden cities – an idea that was to make him the most important figure in the history of town planning across the world.



Howard's garden city concept diagrams

## The garden city idea revisited



● Detailed section from Howard's garden city diagram

The essence of his idea was to combine the best of town and country – to integrate rural and urban patterns of life by bringing nature and healthy living into cities and by bringing intellectual and social dimensions to life in the country. For Howard garden cities had three key objectives:

- To create self-contained **communities for work and living** - so as to reduce the need for commuting and optimise resources. Limited town size would enable inhabitants to be close to work, shops and social facilities but also near to open country. Small neighbourhood units would foster social identity. However sufficient densities would generate support for local facilities and services.
- To have **development harmonised with nature** – by allowing for a linked network of green space within the town fabric (private gardens, school grounds, parks, parkways or linear walks); and by reserving land for agriculture and primary industry at the edge of the town.
- To **improve the local economy and foster partnership** – by a unified approach to land ownership; and by experimenting in new forms of social enterprise.

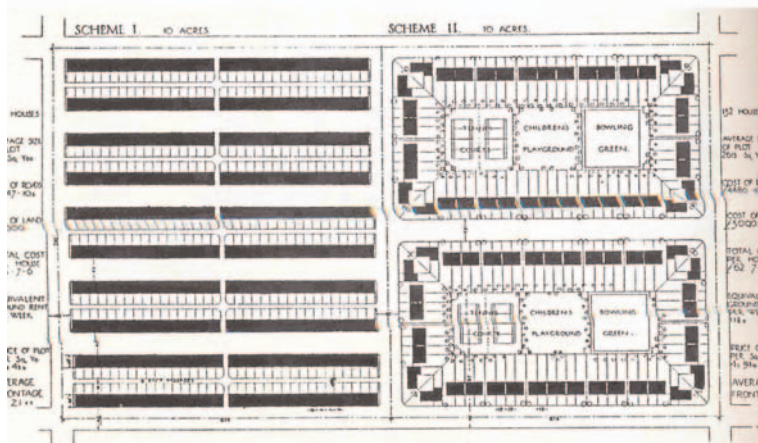
The physical elements are summarised in his garden city diagram, which shows a network of six towns (population 32,000 each) around a central town (population 58,000) with more specialised services. A detailed section shows how the green space is a key part of the town – countryside at the edge, a grand avenue forming a belt in the middle for schools and churches etc and a more formal park near the central shopping and cultural facilities. Howard envisaged housing densities of 20 houses per acre (twice as dense as Southey Owlerton). Priority was given to pedestrian routes (all facilities were seen as being within walking distance) and all towns were envisaged as linked to a rapid-transit rail network.

## The garden city idea revisited

### Garden cities

The first garden city was built in Letchworth in 1903, with Unwin and Parker as architects. They concentrated on the physical aspects of Howard's ideas and in particular the residential environment. However they modified his ideas in two critical ways: first they reduced the densities from Howard's 20 houses per acre to 10-12 houses per acre; second they laid out the housing in semi-detached units around and backing onto public space, rather than in terraces with back gardens between them fronting onto the public space. In addition, more radical ideas such as unified land ownership were overlooked. Contact with nature was a key element of the marketing campaign for these early garden cities.

A subsidised council housing programme of mass low-density suburban settlements was rolled out across the country. However because these were conceived as satellite developments whose residents would shop, work and be entertained in nearby city centres, they also focused on residential development with only minimal facilities provided locally.



Unwin's layout of housing round open space



Abercrombie, the famous town planner, in his plan for the Sheffield of 1924, recommended 12 houses per acre close to the city centre with densities as low as 8 to the acre in the western suburbs. His proposal was the creation of satellite suburbs or communities, revolving around the city centre as their sun. Plans for 2000 houses at Longley were approved in 1926 and the programme continued into the 1950's across Southey Owlerton.

Although not shown on Abercrombie's plan, the estates in Southey Owlerton are classic examples of this period. They also demonstrate the flaws in Unwin's interpretation of Howard's ideas: low density housing; housing backing onto parks and open spaces, not fronting onto them; an emphasis on residential development and a lack of local facilities or centres; and no real connection with the local economy.



Marketing image for the garden city

## The garden city idea revisited

### The 21st century planning agenda

Recent trends in town planning have originated mainly from a concern with the environment and the principles of sustainable development – planning for today without compromising the future in a way that combines the economic, social and environmental. Interestingly, much of contemporary good practice in relation to residential areas reflects closely Howard's original ideas behind the development of garden cities. We have grouped the key ideas under three headings that reflect Howard's original three objectives:

- **Successful public places** – this includes ensuring local people are involved in the design, development and management of public buildings and spaces; ensuring that physical and social aspects are considered together; creating mixed-use areas that combine residential units with shops, office space and other workplaces; increasing the density around mixed-use areas so that they feel busier and safer; ensuring that all buildings front onto streets, squares and green spaces; allowing for different uses of public spaces, for example streets for parking and play; developing pedestrian routes that feel safe because they are overlooked, busy and connect to other routes.

- **The importance of the relationship with nature** – this includes protecting and promoting natural assets; developing park systems and green corridors; designing landscapes that reflect and work with the natural conditions, thereby promoting local identity; developing brown-field, not green-field sites; local food growing; recycling and reusing buildings and landscapes; and building new ones that can easily be adapted in the future; promoting energy efficiency through the layout and orientation of new development and through the design of new buildings; reducing the need for travel by providing local facilities, jobs, services and large stores in amongst housing areas; making walking and cycling easier; exploring green and more effective types of public transport; using materials that can be recycled, allowing for separate rubbish collection and water recycling.

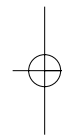
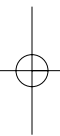
- **Local people see the economic benefits** – this includes community participation in all aspects of design so that the end results are what local people want and will use; vesting land in community organisations so that they have an asset base and future income stream; local labour compacts with construction companies; resident service organisations are responsible for long term maintenance of buildings and open spaces; support to the social economy; local jobs for local people.

A fourth idea has also emerged which develops further the garden city idea of using the natural qualities of an area as a tool for marketing:

- **The importance of local identity** – this includes protecting the built and natural heritage; identifying the character of an area and using this as the basis for new design; using the arts to uncover the “story” of a place and incorporating that narrative into new developments; using local distinctiveness to create an authentic marketing image to change both internal and external perceptions.

The first three ideas underpin most development being planned today. It is the fourth, the development of a particular identity, that will allow Southey Owlerton to position itself within the city as a distinct place. Although Howard used the environment as part of the marketing of garden cities, it is only really in recent years that people have recognised the importance of local identity in place marketing and the need for that identity to originate in local people's experiences.

It is therefore critical to find an image that is both authentic and competitive in the market place. Having found this image physical projects are a key tool in communicating it, but only if they are of exceptional quality and if they demonstrate the new identity in their conception, design and detailing. These can be a powerful way of changing local people's confidence in the area as well as an inspiration to the city and the external market.





What kind of place could Southey Owlerton become?

## 6. Nature-technology identity

Why an overarching identity for the area should inform all new development.

### A new identity for Sheffield

The Sheffield First Partnership aims to create a “new” vibrant city by attracting high technology and e-technology companies to Sheffield as well as retaining the talent emerging from the two large universities. Sheffield has to compete for these companies with cities all over Europe if not the world. How is it going to attract them?

As well as its high quality workforce and strong technological base, it could market itself as a city where quality of life is paramount – a vibrant and accessible city centre, pleasant residential neighbourhoods, friendly people, good schools and local facilities, lovely park systems, easy access to the countryside. If the expectation of a high technology city is placed against another trend for a healthier, more natural way of living and a more responsible attitude to the planet, we have an interesting set of relationships that is almost unique.

In other words the city’s potential as a technological centre and its qualities as a place to live could join forces with an agenda for sustainability to form an identity for the city that is distinctive, innovative and forward looking. We call this forging of ideas nature-technology and see it as an image that could underpin the marketing of the city.

One of the attractions of the nature-technology identity is that it links to the qualities that made Sheffield special in the past (the woods, hills and rivers that allowed it lead the world in steel skills and technology) with a vision for the future where new technologies, creativity and craft skills go hand in hand with respect for equity, everyday life and the environment.



Office to let in delightful ancient woodland setting !

# Nature-technology identity

## A new identity for Southey Owlerton

The regeneration programme currently underway is a once in a lifetime chance for Southey Owlerton to decide what kind of place it wants to be in the future. We believe there is an opportunity to take the city's technological ambitions, the best of Howards' ideals and align these with current thinking about sustainable development to create a new kind of neighbourhood that can be successfully marketed to local people, as well as to investors and new residents.

The analysis detailed in earlier sections shows that the social, environmental and economic cannot be easily separated out: if you talk to local people, study the place or look at service needs you end up considering all three aspects of life in the area. It is clear that for the neighbourhoods in Southey Owlerton to succeed the wealth of those living here needs to increase and the social and environmental problems that deter new people from moving into the area need to be overcome - poor schools, crime & social nuisance, the lack of facilities, the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables, the quality of the environment, the type and range of housing. We believe that the nature-technology identity, by bringing together the social, environmental and economic, can provide a reference point for the changes that need to take place and the basis for a new image for the area.

This identity is about the physical place but also about the history, the culture and the aspirations of the people and organisations who live and work here. It relates directly to the one proposed for the city as a whole, thereby connecting the area to the citywide agenda.



Trigger board asking if more use could be made of the green space around Shirecliffe - maybe a windfarm ?

## Nature-technology identity

For example, the hub projects and the neighbourhood centres (the “Community High Street”) could provide start-up, incubator and managed workspace for technology businesses in those sectors that the city is targeting – such as cultural industries, bio-sciences, environmental technology – without compromising the quality of the neighbourhoods as places for people to live. (Grow-on space and advanced manufacturing industries would be targeted in the Upper Don corridor.) Schools and training providers could specialise in these areas too, thereby developing the creativity and craft skills of the workforce from this area.

Similarly the environmental qualities of Southey Owlerton, which echo the environmental attractions of Sheffield as a place to live, if realised, could improve the quality of life and change the way that people see the area. Local people value the environment and local groups have progressive ideas about environmental sustainability. New attitudes to the environment, making the most of environment technologies and thinking about new ways of managing assets would also have economic spin-offs.

The social identity of the area is also distinct, perched somewhere between the rural and the urban. In parts, because people moved into the area as a community with a shared steel industry culture, there is an almost villagey feel; even where people came from all over, social and family networks are still an important part of every day life. Great emphasis is placed on the needs of the elderly and young people and on the role of churches, schools and community organisations. But people are also attuned to bigger opportunities within the city. A continued emphasis on community participation and decision-making, securing local benefits from new development and the importance of neighbours and family networks would put equity at the heart of neighbourhood life.

### Physical development and the new identity

The Neighbourhood Strategies process is about improving quality of life. In general the proposals in the remainder of this report focus on the physical regeneration of the area, partly because this is the gap in the regeneration strategy for the area; but also because in most cases improving buildings and open spaces is essential in improving the delivery of local services, both social and economic. At present support for social and economic aspects of community life is uneven across the area, with some neighbourhoods having lots going on and others very little. In the latter the provision of revenue-based activity is often limited by the lack of suitable premises; and where the activity is taking place it is largely invisible.

In addition physical changes, because they are visible, are a key factor in improving the image of the area. Local people during the consultation highlighted the importance of improving the look of the place, so as to communicate that it is a good place to live, with good community values and opportunities for the future.

The remainder of this report therefore focuses on how physical development can support social and economic activity in each neighbourhood and at the same time project the new identity for the area. We focus on four tools for securing this identity through physical development:

- Neighbourhood and framework diagrams
- Five “big ideas”
- Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects
- Development principles

These tools need to be supported by a clear process for implementing the Neighbourhood Strategies that focuses both on a continuing dialogue with the people who will design, build, inhabit, use and manage the schemes and on raising the quality of everyone’s ambitions for the area and their personal futures.

## Nature-technology identity

### Design quality

We believe that the four tools described below can together make a transformational difference to the quality of life in the neighbourhoods and change external perceptions of the area – but only if the physical projects achieve a step-change in quality, particularly the demonstration projects.

The SOAR Board has already agreed that in future all projects seeking its approval for capital funding will need to demonstrate that they have secured the highest quality of design input. The Board has also undertaken in principle to fund the appropriate technical aid to enable projects to meet this challenge. Support is needed in three areas:

- Development of the design brief for all physical projects
- Selection of an appropriate designer through a competitive process
- Review of designs as they develop

It is critical that this support, likely to be a combination of Council officers and independent advisors as per the Neighbourhood Strategies process, is provided consistently and as a matter of course to all physical projects coming forward in the area, regardless of landowner, sponsor group or funding support. In other words projects should not be able to choose whether or not they take up this help – it will be expected that they will.

Design quality in itself will not be enough – we shall also need the appropriate level of funding in the area to see high quality projects built.

### What we need from our partners

- Support from Sheffield First Partnership for the nature-technology identity as a marketing tool for the area, and a discussion about the relevance of this identity for the image and marketing of the wider city
- A commitment to embrace the nature-technology identity as a theme running through all future projects, both physical and non-physical
- An undertaking that all physical projects will work with the technical aid team to be funded through the Neighbourhood Strategies process on design briefing, selection of designers and review of designs.



## 7. Neighbourhood and framework diagrams

The physical interventions that will make a difference over the next ten years

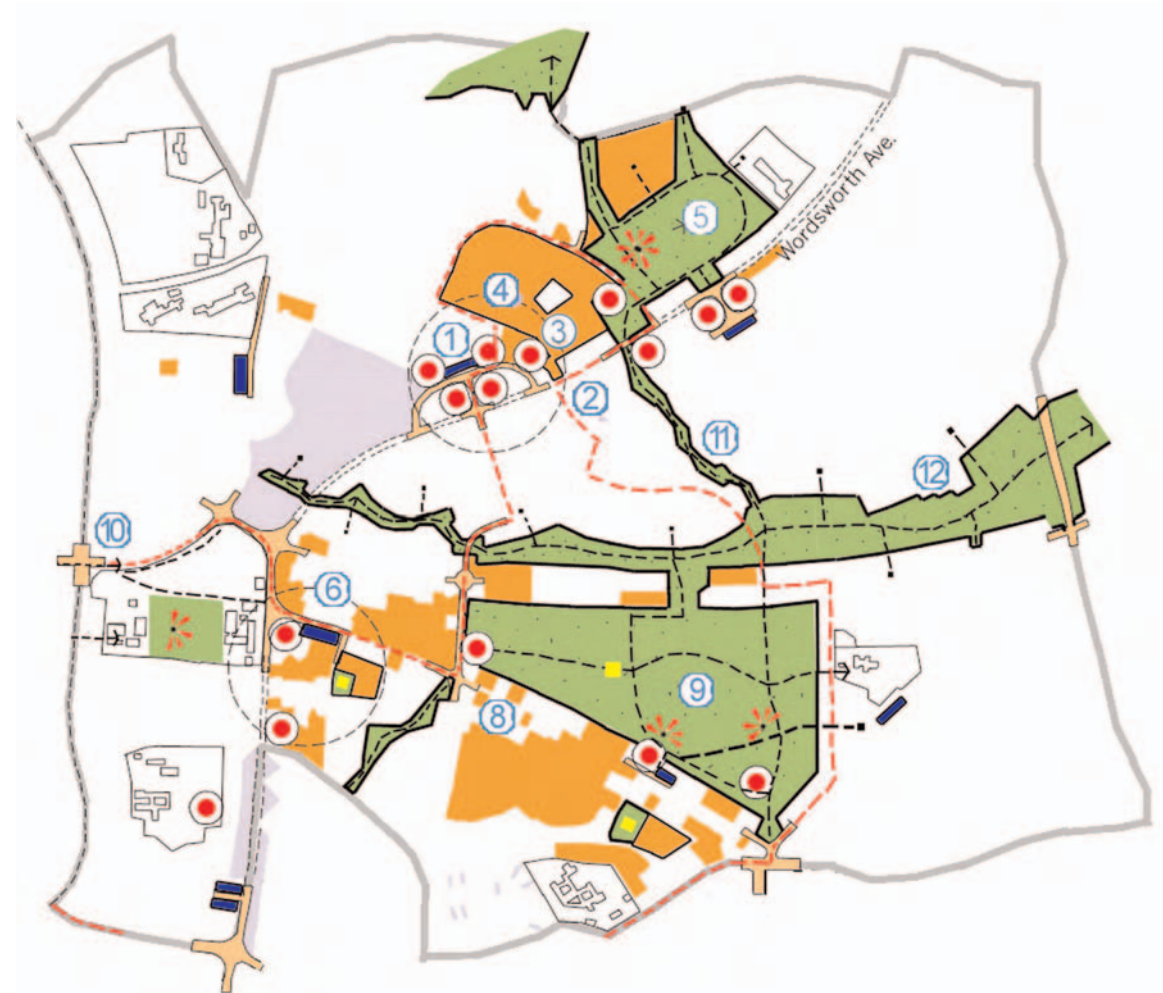
### Neighbourhood diagrams (22)

Taking all of the information from:

- the consultation
- the analysis of the place
- the priorities identified by the theme groups and
- the research into garden cities and contemporary planning ideas

we have formulated a diagram for each neighbourhood.

It is essential that the diagrams identify priorities for action, rather than trying to map all the issues and activities because they must select and highlight those interventions that will make a difference. From the information gathered to date across all neighbourhoods the following themes are relevant in each of them. We have therefore used these as the checklist for each diagram. We are showing the Parson Cross diagram as the example; a similar diagram has been prepared for each of the five neighbourhoods in Volume 1.



## Neighbourhood and framework diagrams

### Key to neighbourhood diagram opposite



#### New and improved community facilities (indoor)

Each diagram should show: a community meeting place, information point and base for workers; childcare provision; youth facilities; services for vulnerable groups & health services; schools; venues for basic skills and first rung learning; learning centre/IT provision; points to access information advice & guidance, Job Net etc; social economy development. In some cases these will be existing – shown in white; many will need creating or improving – shown in red. Priorities for investment will be those locations that also connect to other parts of the checklist such as key open spaces, footpath links, shops etc.



#### New & improved play, sports & youth facilities (outdoor)

These need to be located on the main routes linking the key open spaces to make them as safe as possible. Wherever possible they need to relate well to indoor community facilities, especially where these include childcare & youth provision.



#### New and improved shopping

Again priority for investment will go to those shops that relate directly to other parts of the checklist such as community facilities, key bits of streetscape and open spaces.



#### Streetscape improvements

In an ideal world the diagrams would show improvements to every road that needs it. In the first instance they need to highlight those bits of the streetscape that can really make a difference to the image of the neighbourhood and improve the quality of public life. These will be the neighbourhood centres (the setting for community facilities, shops and the entrances to the key open spaces), entrances to the neighbourhood and the main routes through it.



#### New and improved pedestrian & cycle routes/links

These need to link up the key open spaces and connect to the main bits of streetscape. They also need to link each neighbourhood to its neighbour.



#### New community transport

The routes for this need to complement existing public transport; fit well with the main pedestrian and cycle routes across the neighbourhoods; and take people to the core facilities within the neighbourhood – shops, community buildings, schools and parks.



#### Improvements to key open spaces

Not every bit of open space in the area can be improved and maintained to a high quality. The diagrams therefore need to select those areas of open space that will really make a difference and that can be well managed: ones that can be connected to each other, to the key bits of streetscape and community facilities; those that offer the best views; those that include remnants of old countryside; those with the best sports and play facilities; those that will be safest, because they are criss-crossed by the footpaths and cycle routes; those that are the best loved by local people.



#### Landmarks and viewpoints

The landform and views are such a key aspect of this area that they need to be celebrated. Every diagram should therefore show within its key green spaces the best viewpoints and the ridges or highpoints of the neighbourhood. These need to be linked by the main pedestrian routes and related to other community facilities wherever possible.



#### Housing investment areas

The areas proposed for housing investment need to be shown on each diagram.



#### Potential for new development

All neighbourhoods are likely to have some areas with potential for new development as a result of the proposed demolition of council housing, the closure of part of the Sheffield College and removal of buildings in private ownership such as the Magnet Pub. This might be new housing or new mixed use development including start-up, incubator and managed workspace.



#### Hubs & neighbourhood centres

Where community facilities, schools, shops, key bits of streetscape and open spaces come together the diagrams can identify their hubs of activity or neighbourhood centres. Normally there would be one of these per neighbourhood.



#### Demonstration projects

All of the physical projects identified in the diagram will have the opportunity to build a new image for the neighbourhood. Some of these are happening now and present an opportunity to demonstrate high quality design and promote the area's identity. These are singled out as demonstration projects and will be prioritised in the implementation stage of the process.

## Neighbourhood and framework diagrams

### Framework diagram (23)

By using the checklist for each diagram it is possible to stitch the individual diagrams together into a framework for the whole area. The patchwork of neighbourhood diagrams developed to date is shown as a single drawing.

The framework diagram assumes a 10-year plan for the area. It aims to seize the opportunities and tackle the problems identified in the first half of the report. The overarching objective is to draw new people into the estate to live, work and visit. This will increase the wealth and spending power within the area so as to support new and higher quality facilities and in time will it is hoped generate neighbourhoods that can flourish without any more public sector support than any other part of the city requires. The diagram encompasses eleven development aims:

#### 1. Create development opportunities within the estate

The framework diagram shows in orange the parts of the estate with potential for new development. This results from proposals for demolition of Council housing, from the planned closure of the Parson Cross campus of the Sheffield College and from clearance of buildings on private land such as the Magnet pub.

Detailed work on the turnover in Council housing has been undertaken across most of the estate (except for in Southey and part of Parson Cross – this will follow later in the year). This information has been correlated with physical information about the properties – whether they had been modernised and whether they have two or three bedrooms – and with external factors such as the potential for new development to support

local centres and open space proposals. The results are described in detail in the individual neighbourhood reports. In general, they show that there are problems with demand, particularly with two-bedroom properties and one-bedroom flats. In some cases there are also structural problems with the properties which make them unsustainable.

#### 2. Introduce non-housing development into the area to provide work and services/facilities within the estate as well as on the edge

When the estate was first built it was conceived as a residential area, on the assumption that people would access work and services/facilities elsewhere in the city. Although the area will still mostly be housing, this diagram aims to bring work and services/facilities into the estate as well. In order to do this, the opportunity needs to be seized to introduce non-housing uses into parts of the area where housing and the College buildings will be cleared – the orange parts of the diagram. With the exception of Longley (where no redevelopment is planned), the orange areas all abut existing or proposed neighbourhood centres. It is therefore proposed to focus non-housing development around the centres.

#### 3. Use non-housing development to target growth sector industries

Some of the non housing uses will bring everyday facilities that the estate lack (like somewhere to get a MOT done and office premises for local projects). But introducing non-housing uses to the neighbourhood centres also creates opportunities to link the estate to the local economy and make a connection with the economic agenda of the city and the sub-region. Sectors that are being targeted within the sub region and that



Neighbourhood and framework diagrams



23. Southey Owlerton Framework diagram

**Key**

- 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

## Neighbourhood and framework diagrams

would be compatible with being located within residential areas include cultural and digital industries, biosciences (for example the proposed Medipark) and environmental technologies. These also fit the nature-technology identity and would have the advantage of bringing people who live elsewhere in the city into the estate to work, as well as providing local jobs.

Advanced metals & manufacturing is a sector that is strong and has further potential in the Upper Don Valley. This will be explored in Volume 2, but it is possible that start-up/incubator or supply chain businesses could be located within the estate.

Southey Owlerton has good links with the Cultural Industries Quarter Agency in the city and a developing creative base supported by, for example, Montenev, Burton Street, Chaucer School and SPELL. There is also a City Learning Centre located in the area at Yewlands School and a network of learning centres developing across the estate. The pressure on rents in the city centre, the appeal to people in those industries of “green” bits of the city, the local emphasis in schools and adult education in developing skills, the interests of young people in these sectors and the developing network of contacts all provide a real opportunity for cultural and digital industries to flourish in the area and bring enormous benefits, not least in improving its image.

There is the beginning of an environmental recycling cluster in the Upper Don. The scope for environmental technologies within the estate needs to be explored further. Some of these are relatively low in skills and will provide job opportunities to complement the higher skilled jobs associated with the cultural and digital industries.

### 4. Develop facilities and services in the centres that will also bring in people living elsewhere in the city

The primary focus of the neighbourhood centres will be the people who live and work in and around them. However by including some specialist or niche elements – a learning centre for digital media, a fantastic play area, a specialist plant nursery - they could also attract people from across the area and even the city. At the same time these can reinforce the nature-technology identity of the area. The hub projects provide an opportunity for this as they form “centres of excellence” in particular activities or sectors, such as health, media, enterprise, childcare etc. This will also strengthen the social economy, as it is envisaged that the hubs will be community owned.

### 5. Take the opportunity to create a larger focus that will draw in passing traffic

The size and scale of the estate suggests that, with new housing coming in alongside other new development, we can develop a “critical mass” of activity that can change the economy of the area. But the neighbourhood centres are unlikely to do this by themselves – a larger focus, such as a superstore with associated facilities like a larger post office, may well be essential to draw in people from a wider catchment, as well as to make the area more attractive to new residents.

The location for this will almost certainly have to be on the A61, Halifax Road, as developers will be reluctant to risk locating such a facility within the heart of the estate. If this is the case, location near a neighbourhood centre to boost its passing trade would be beneficial. The exact location of such a centre needs further discussion with developers/operators. To date no clear proposals have emerged for Halifax Road, probably because we have focused on neighbourhoods and it attracts through traffic and passing trade, as much as if not more than local trade. We expect

## Neighbourhood and framework diagrams

that ideas for this corridor will come out in Volume 2 when we look at the parts of the area (the Upper Don corridor) that have a more strategic or citywide role.

### 6. Maintain or increase the residential population

Although it is proposed to release some land for non-housing uses, this does not mean that we intend the residential population to decrease over the 10-year period. In fact we would expect it to remain the same or, ideally, increase. This can be achieved by higher densities, which will be needed, especially around the centres, to support local facilities. Low densities was one of the flaws in the original design of the estate and one that can now be remedied, at least in parts of the estate, to create a range of densities across the area.

### 7. Create a self sustaining local economy

The development sites provide a major opportunity to increase land and property values across the patch, partly through non-housing development but also through providing different types of private housing that will attract new people to live in the area. The environmental qualities of the area suggest that higher value and more innovative types of housing could be developed (although public pump priming will almost certainly be required to achieve the quality needed in the early years) such that over 10 years Southey Owlerton could reposition itself in the housing market. Higher values will bring greater spending power to the area and increased demand and support for local facilities.

In the past there has been resistance to the idea of new types of people moving into the area. People felt that they would live in privatised estates isolated within the neighbourhoods, drive out of the area to work and

shop and could actually reduce the resources available to the estate, by improving the statistics for the area without bringing any benefits. However if local people are engaged in the briefs for cleared land, they can influence the design of new development such that it supports the neighbourhood, rather than detracts from it.

### 8. Support the remaining areas of Council housing with a rolling programme of investment

The diagram shows areas where the Council has agreed to invest in housing that it owns over the next three years. These complement areas of development and support the neighbourhood centres. Further investment areas will be identified within the 10-year period. As well as tackling the houses and gardens, an investment programme is needed for the streetscene. This is partly about redesign and partly about better standards of maintenance.

### 9. Capitalise on the area's environmental assets to bring new people into the area

The diagram shows the key greens spaces in the area. Together these form an impressive network. Investment in the environment could pay dividends by raising the attractiveness of the area for new development (housing and non-housing). Because of the extent of the green space and the potential for joining it up across the area, it could also be marketed to people living and working outside the area as somewhere to visit in their free time. The five "big ideas" described in Section 8 explain how to make the most of these assets.

## Neighbourhood and framework diagrams

### 10. Use new development to improve the quality of the environment and strengthen neighbourhood identity



The early part of the report showed how when the estate was developed one of the main flaws was that houses were built backing on to the open spaces. New development, much of which takes place around green space, provides an opportunity to put this right and create active frontages onto the parks. It can also help join up the open spaces into a network and create footpath/cycle links across the estate, as well as providing funds for improvements. The demonstration projects and improvements to the key green areas and streetscape can help make the neighbourhoods look and feel different. Sections 9 and 10 explain how development can achieve these improvements.

### 11. Use local centres to support community life

The strength of social and family networks and the culture of supporting people within the neighbourhoods are key elements of life in Southey Owlerton that must not be lost in the changes described above. For this reason the framework proposes that the focus for community facilities and services should be in the neighbourhood centres, alongside new workplaces and types of housing, and integrated within the open space network along strategic routes that will attract visitors as well as locals. In addition it is proposed to target the needs of the elderly and of children and young people, groups that people focused on in the consultation.

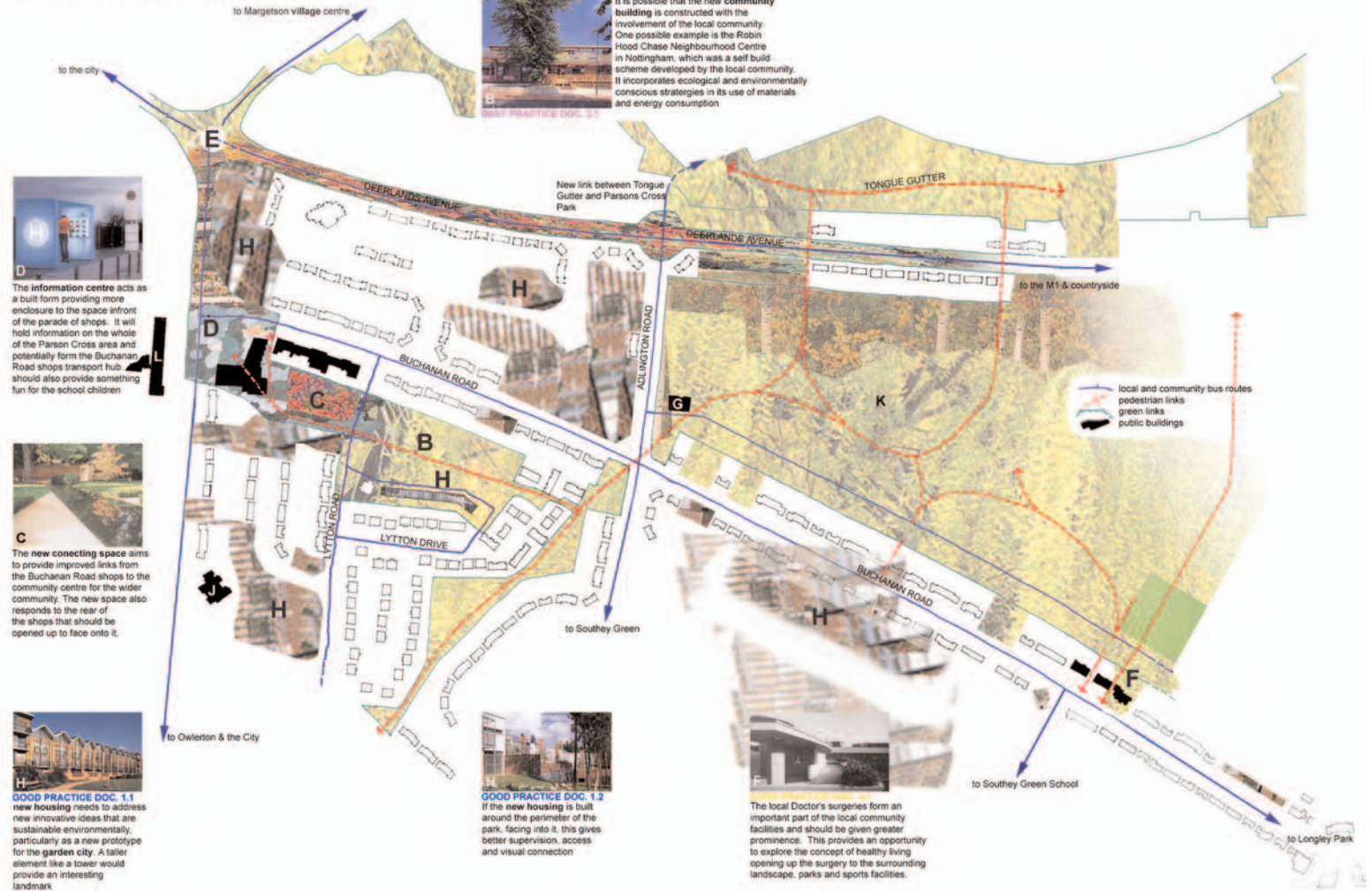
### What we need from our partners

- The neighbourhood and framework diagrams to be accepted by the City Council as Southey Owlerton's input into the review of the Unitary Development Plan
- Influence on the briefs for areas of new development so that we can maximise the benefits for the area and promote the new identity
- Support for the marketing of the area for cultural and digital industries, biosciences and environmental technologies, as well as advanced metals and manufacturing activity linked to activity in the Upper Don

#### KEY

- A:** Lytton local retail centre
- B:** New sheltered housing
- C:** New **connecting space** providing improved links to adjacent green space and shops
- D:** **Information centre** for Parson Cross
- E:** **Gateway** roundabout to Parson Cross with clear signage to various local centres
- F:** **Surgery** with improved links to adjacent park and sports facilities
- G:** Community centre to be improved, seen as a villa in the park
- H:** Potential sites for new housing
- J:** Mount Tabor Methodist Church
- K:** Parson Cross Park to have improved access and facilities
- L:** Chaucer School

# LYTTON "LOCAL" CENTRE



## 8. Five “big ideas”

Five overarching themes in the framework that also reflect five distinctive aspects of the city as a whole

### Five “big ideas” for Southey Owlerton

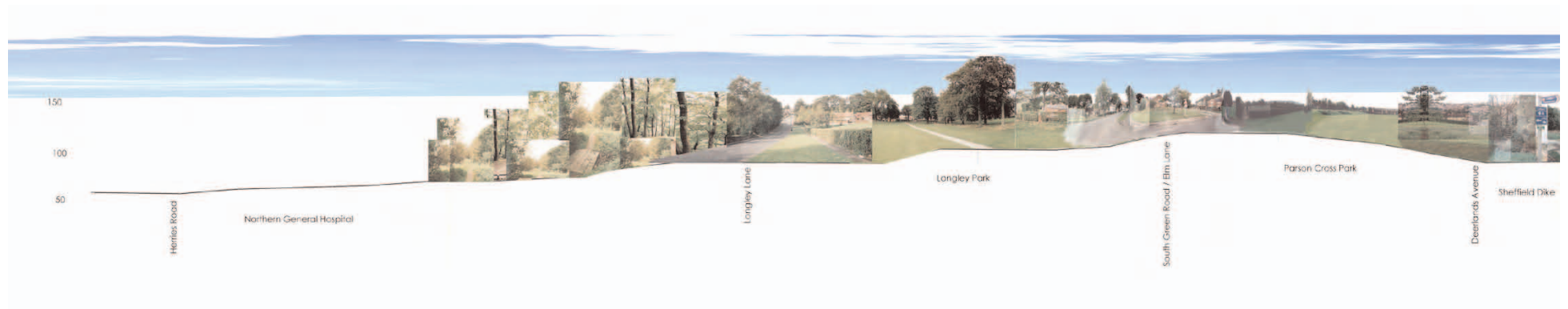
If you take one step back from the detail some overarching “big ideas” emerge that together form the diagram for Southey Owlerton as an area. In every case the themes of the area diagram reflect a distinctive aspect of the city. This illustrates how the Southey Owlerton vision combines the Top Down Bottom Up Vision that was discussed earlier. (Where appropriate these ideas are shown in the Upper Don area too. These will be tested and further explored in Volume 2.) The five “big ideas” are:

1. Park city
2. See and be seen.
3. Identity from landform
4. From city to country and back again
5. Green arteries

### Changing perceptions

Putting the “big ideas” into practice would help change people’s image of this part of the city: they would highlight and celebrate its special character and history; they would give people who don’t live here reasons to visit and explore the area; and they would provide a connection between this area and the rest of the city.

At first glance the “big ideas” are concerned primarily with the natural environment, rather than the built environment. However in each case the idea is about making a connection between the natural and built environments: joining the green spaces and key routes to centres of community activity; using built form to make the area visible to the rest of the city and reflect neighbourhood identity; and using the green web to support local facilities and enterprises. In section 9 we explore how both the built and green environment can present a new image for the area.

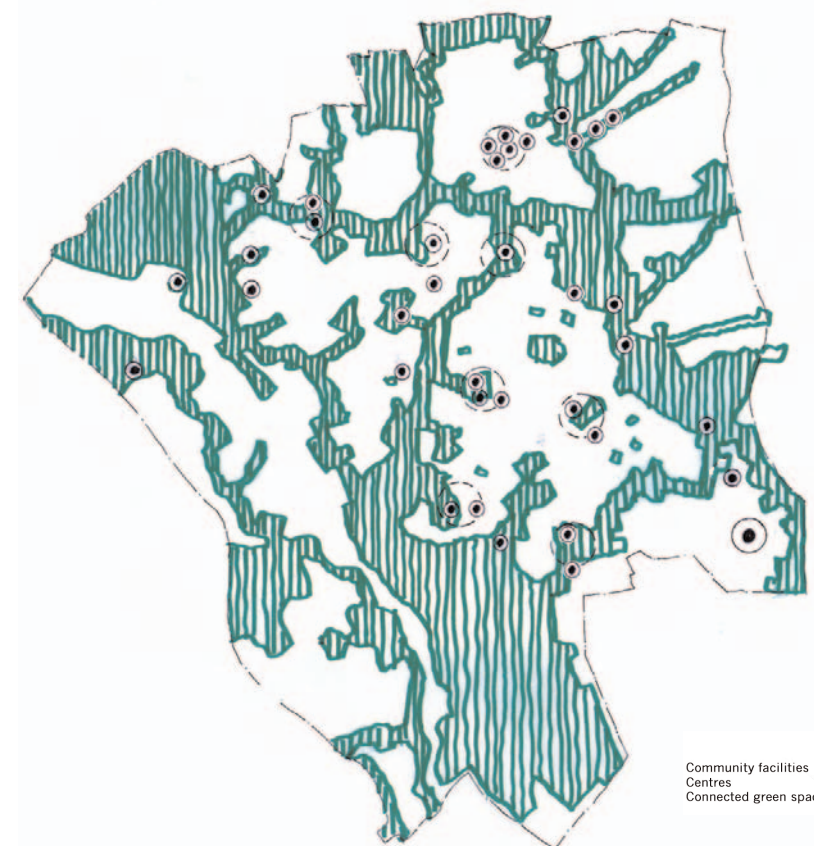


1. Park city

The key open spaces of the neighbourhood diagrams taken together could form a green web across the area that connects the community facilities, hubs and neighbourhood centres. By joining up these spaces the apparent greenness of the area could become a reality and the backdrop for every aspect of daily life – the walk to school or to work, the trip to the local shops, lunch at the neighbourhood café. All new community and work places could be required to front on to and link into the green web.

The special feature of neighbourhood life in this part of the city could be the quality, connection and greenness of its physical setting – whether formal parks, school grounds, natural spaces, pleasant shopping areas or “squares” around community buildings. This is not about increasing the amount of green space but about improving its quality and connectedness.

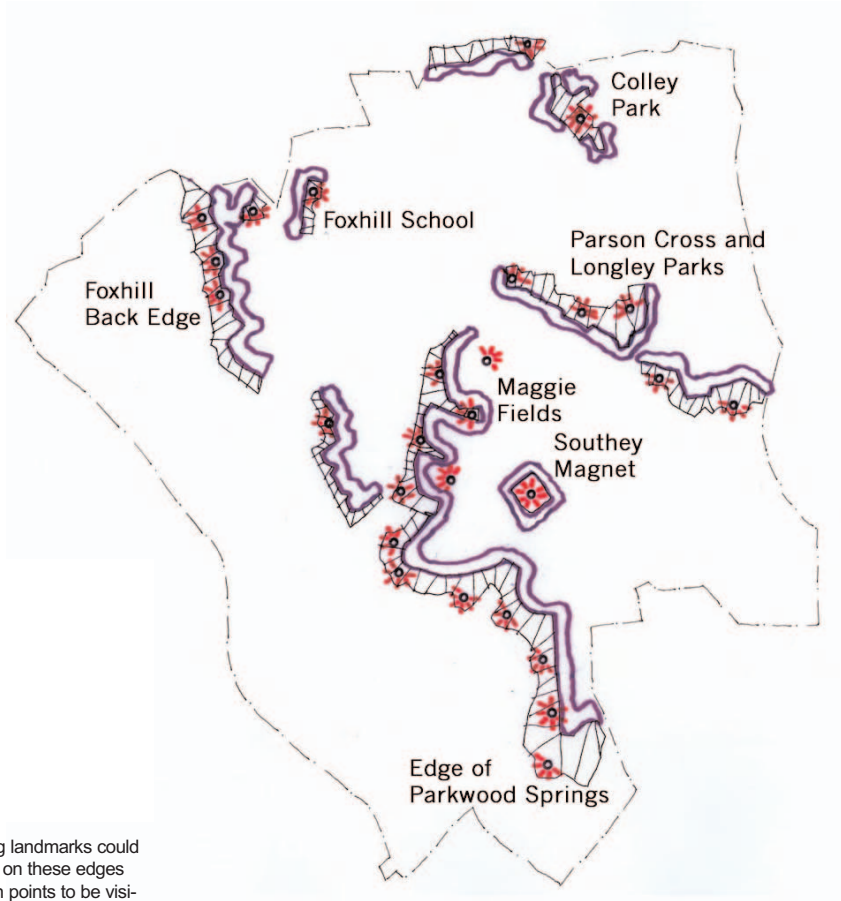
*Sheffield is known up and down the country for the extent and quality of its green spaces, for example its linear parks, and the contribution these make to the quality of daily life. It is a real selling point for the city.*



24. Park City

The key open spaces of the neighbourhood could form a green web across the area that connects the community facilities, hubs and neighbourhood centres

## Five “big ideas”



Stunning landmarks could be sited on these edges and high points to be visible from city centre

### 25. See and be seen

Taken together the key ridges and edges in the area link up to form major topographical features at the city scale

### 2. See and be seen

The special topography of the area creates amazing panoramic views across the city, to the city centre and out to the countryside. It also makes the area very visible from the city centre and other parts of the city. Taken together the key ridges and edges in the area link up to form major topographical features at the city scale, not unlike the edges in the Peak District such as Froggatt Edge and Stanage Edge.

The neighbourhood diagrams suggest how the views can be celebrated by developing the main footpaths, play facilities and open spaces around the best viewpoints. At the same time Southey Owlerton can use these edges to let the rest of the city know it is there – with lighting to create night landscapes, with art works and monuments and by using built form to draw attention to them. These could showcase new technologies and new forms of building construction.

Because the city centre is right at the heart of the city most of the neighbourhoods have a sense of being “on the edge”. This is especially true in Southey Owlerton where some neighbourhoods are physically on an edge (Foxhill and Shirecliffe) and where others look out over the countryside (Parson Cross). Others lie on the edges between different bits of the city (Longley, Owlerton).

*One of the most unusual features of Sheffield as a city is that, wherever you are in it, you can see across the city and out to the countryside beyond. This feeling of being able to see the edge of the city is part of its special character.*



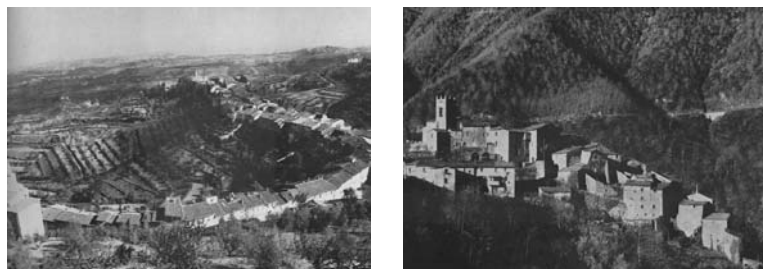
3. Identity from landform  
Grassy tops, wooded slopes, sheltered river

The vegetation patterns in Southey Owlerton are distinctive and linked both to its history and to its landform. By respecting and enhancing the existing patterns the area can keep its open grassy ridges and thereby make the most of the views whilst consolidating and extending areas of woodland on the lower slopes and bottoms.

The water features can be kept special by enhancing their sheltered, naturalistic character whilst opening up a series of glimpses and views. Celebrating the river will be a key initiative for the Upper Don. Again new technology can be highlight differences in landform. i.e. Wind Power on the hilltops, solar power on the slopes and water power in the river valley. This could encourage new companies to become part of the strategy.

At present the built environment does not reflect landform and history in the same way as the green environment does. The same type of housing was built regardless of the natural qualities of the site – aspect, landform and vegetation. This is a shame and is one reason why the neighbourhoods are hard to tell apart. In the neighbourhood identity section we show how making the built environment respond to the natural qualities of a site will be an important step in changing the image of the area and its neighbourhoods.

*Sheffield's origins as a city and its special expertise in steel manufacturing and engineering stem directly from its hills, river valleys and woods. Today these features are still a key part of its landscape and identity.*



Built form reflects dramatic landform



26. Identity from landform

The vegetation patterns in Southey Owlerton are distinctive and linked both to its history and landform

# Five “big ideas”



- **27. From city to country and back again**  
 By joining up the footpaths across the neighbourhoods it is possible to create some longer routes that would link the most special and distinctive parts of the green web.

- **4. From city to country and back again**

By joining up the footpaths across the neighbourhoods it is possible to create some longer routes that would join up the most special and distinctive parts of the area: the hospital and the park system (Colley, Parson Cross and Longley with spurs to the Four Greens and Busk Meadow); the edges (Parkwood Springs with a fork through Southey Green and another to Foxhill Back Edge); the valleys or watery bits (the Upper Don and Tongue Gutter).

These routes can be connected to each other and to the hubs of community activity. In each case they connect to longer distance routes to the city centre and the countryside and in one case to east and west coasts and beyond to St Petersburg! Alongside these routes there is an opportunity to experiment with alternative and green forms of transport.

*One of the amazing features of Sheffield as a city is that you can walk from the city centre to the countryside almost without having to use roads. It also has a great collection of round walks.*



## Five “big ideas”

### 5. Green arteries

These routes, because they link the key open spaces and community facilities, become centres for activity and the drivers for new projects. By linking play areas, new facilities, housing and workplaces to them the green character of the area will be emphasised. In addition it creates reasons for people from other parts of the city to walk/cycle the routes and visit the area. This green character could also be expressed in the construction of the buildings and the green spaces in the specialist types of work and technology being explored.

*Sheffield has generally developed along radial routes, but these are mostly roads, rather than green corridors (which is what could make Southey Owlerton special). Where the linear parks have cafes, play areas and other features attached to them they attract people from across the city at weekends and holidays.*

### What we need from our partners

- Everyone engaged in any physical project over the next 10 years to consider how they can contribute to the “big ideas” so that over time we piece together like a jigsaw the green web, the link to community facilities and new development, the habitat matrix, the strategic routes and the sequence of views.



### 28. Green arteries

These routes become centres for activity and the drivers for new projects

## 9. Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects

The demonstration projects that will give each neighbourhood a specific character

### Each neighbourhood is different

Southey Owlerton as a whole has a rich and distinctive physical identity based on its landform, its natural qualities and its garden city legacy, that is summed up by the five “big ideas”. However the individual neighbourhoods each have a separate and more specific identity that also needs to be reflected in new development.

The individual Neighbourhood Strategy reports summarise the impressions we have gleaned about life in each neighbourhood as well as the physical characteristics that make each neighbourhood different. Here we draw together the themes that have emerged across the neighbourhoods that can influence new development.

### Physical identity comes from landform

We showed in the third “big idea” how the patterns of vegetation in the area are distinctive and reflect the landform. At present these patterns are not reflected in the built environment: the same kind of housing was rolled out across the neighbourhoods regardless of the topography or orientation.

However in the workshops we discussed how, even though the housing is the same in each neighbourhood, each feels different. This suggests that it is the underlying qualities of the landscape that make the neighbourhoods distinct – whether they are on the tops of hills, on slopes or in hollows; whether they face north or south; whether they have big views or enclosed ones; whether they are mainly wooded or open and grassy. We believe that if new built development and landscapes were to reflect these differences, then the differences between neighbourhoods would be made clearer.

This idea relates to the nature-technology identity. In the past man sought to dominate the environment, but today is exploring a different relationship that harnesses, responds to and respects the environment. So new development should also explore this relationship.

There are some key sites and opportunities that together could transform the image of the area and the individual neighbourhoods, if the design briefing is right. The framework diagram shows these as demonstration projects. This section therefore focuses on these key sites. They can be divided broadly into two groups: those on the tops of the hills and those on the lower slopes. The sites in the bottom of the river valley (the Upper Don and Hillsborough) will be explored in Volume 2. The text and diagrams on the following pages (70-74) explain the differences.

### The three strategic routes also need to look different

The three key routes wend their way across the estate and cover the full range of landform between them. However each has an overarching character that needs to be made explicit: the Hospital and Three Parks route explores the managed landscape of the estate; the edges route the open and more natural sites; and the river route the industrial and leisure corridor of the valley. In general the first will alternate in character between the hilltop and valley slope identities, whereas the second will epitomise the hilltop image. The river character of the valley bottom will be explored in Volume 2.

## Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects

### Working from the big picture to the smallest details

The different identities described below illustrate how the nature-technology identity can be adapted to highlight differences in character across the area. These are linked to the demonstration projects in the individual neighbourhoods and so provide a basis for neighbourhood identity. However the process of developing briefs for individual sites needs to start with this initial image and then work down to the fine detail to refine and develop a more particular character.

For example in Shirecliffe the Busk Meadow Park area includes housing and a number of local facilities around an open space. The whole area was once woodland and some lovely clumps of ancient woodland and bluebells still remain. The design philosophy for this site is to create the feeling of a single piece of woodland with meadow glades that spans both sides of Shirecliffe Road.

The buildings, both new and existing, would be set back from the road in glades, giving the feeling of buildings in a wood. Trees would be incorporated in amongst the play equipment, perhaps

including a tree house for young people. The woods would be extended where possible and more woodland flowers introduced at the edges of mown grass. More formal planting at the entrances would include flowers and low shrubs typical of woodland edges. The boundary fencing would be more like a country field than park railings. Entrances would use dry stone walls like those left nearby and field gates, rather than arches. All the details of the design flow from the original concept of a woodland.

As well as working down from the initial idea to the fine detail, the design needs to reflect on how the character in Southey Owlerton also relates to the special character of the city. For example Busk Meadow should take its cue from Ecclesall Woods, the city's most famous bluebell wood and one of the most extensive pieces of urban ancient woodland in the country. Local people should be involved in the design briefing of all key sites. Making these links is therefore another way of connecting residents to citywide facilities and groups.

In the final section we explore further how the process for implementing the strategies needs to emphasise identity and link the local to the citywide.

## Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects

### ● Hilltops, ridges and edges (29)

We have identified three sorts of site on the high ground in the estate and the **massing** of new development needs to respond to the three different situations. On steeply sloping hills, like at Foxhill Back Edge, the development should step down the slope; on edge sites, like overlooking Parkwood Springs or around the three ridges at Parson Cross, the development should encircle the ridge; on high knolls, like Southey Magnet it should push up into the sky. Examples from Italian hill towns, (refer to pages 64-65) where development complements perfectly the landform, show the differences.

The visual connection with the city centre is critical on these sites. In all cases the **form** of development needs to highlight the connection. This means making the most of the views – higher buildings and structures oriented to the best panoramas – and a dynamic relationship with the edge that accentuates the contours, rather than masking them, even at night. Special buildings in the area, like the Basil Spence church and College building, already use towers and glazing to interesting effect. We would expect new buildings to do the same. New buildings should be encouraged to take the same approach

The connection should also be reflected in the **building type**, as these are the most outward looking areas of the estate. These sites should have the most urban qualities and to include innovative housing and building types that will attract new people and businesses to the area. These might include live-work units, wired workplaces, artists' studios, a garden centre and cultural buildings. Just as the city centre forms an acropolis or high point within the

wider range of hills that forms the city, so at Southey Magnet we would expect to see the most urban facilities and forms of development. (This also makes it the most logical location for a building for SOAR.)

The character of the **civic spaces** in the neighbourhood centres will also differ according to location. In general the spaces on the higher ground will be more urban and bustling, more market square than village green. The **entrances** too will suggest entering a piece of "town" rather than a "village".

The landform should be reflected in the **technology** of new buildings and parks, for example making use of wind power on the tops, collecting water, using larger areas of glazing. The hilltop feel should also be reflected in the choice of **building materials and details** with large windows, glass balconies, roof gardens, towers and lookout points, windmills, dramatic night lighting, laser beams, sculptures that push up above the skyline.

The differences can also be reflected in **landscape details**. for example metal play and sports equipment; metallic, light coloured and even galvanised finishes; things that move and jangle in the wind and shine in the sun. Naturalistic planting would emphasise grassland and heath; ornamental planting would include silvery foliage and stems, columnar white-barked trees and bright flowers.

In both buildings and landscapes the **colours** would express the importance of light and the relationship with big open skies: silver and blue with accents of yellow, scarlet and orange.

# Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects



Dramatic skylines, interesting forms



Taller tower to define the area,



Building on the edge - interesting forms, like this nursery school.



Tall look out point



Housing fronting on to the park, dense but light, with large areas of glazing

(29) The kind of development what would emphasize the landform of hilltops, ridges and edges

## Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects

### ● Slopes and hollows (30)

In general these sites have enclosed views and a feeling of seclusion and self-containment rather than expansive horizons and a connection with the city. This gives them a quieter, more “villagey” character that needs to be reflected in the **massing** of new development: closer-knit terraces stepping down the slopes that give a feeling of shelter, enclosure and warmth, especially around the green spaces. The importance of trees and woods on these sites is the key to the overall character. Near woods new buildings should give the impression of being sited in glades or within the woodland edge. Similarly the **form** of new development should suggest the connection with the locality rather than the city: views framed of key local landmarks, special trees highlighted, buildings to enclose the main open spaces and local routes.

This local feel should also be reflected in the **building types**. Here we would expect to see extra care housing and housing for the elderly, as well as childcare facilities and offices for social enterprises, along with the lowest densities of residential development in the area. The **civic spaces** would be more like a village green than a market square and the main **entrances** would celebrate the countryside qualities of the landscape, especially the woods.

The **technology** of the new buildings and parks should make use of the slopes, for instance solar power, terracing and rainwater collection. The narrower views would be reflected in smaller windows, steeper roofs and a feeling of cosiness in the **building materials and details**: earth coloured render, timber and brick, trellises and pergolas. In general the **landscape details** will have an earthier character to

emphasise the connection with the ground rather than the sky: boulders and dens, timber seats and stone walls. Because the former countryside is more evident on the lower slopes – the woods, bluebells and old walls – the open spaces will generally have a more natural character. In both buildings and landscapes the **colours** would be warm and earthy.

The identity is described for these two sorts of site as a group. The briefing for individual sites needs to draw out their particular character. A design statement for each of the demonstration projects will be prepared over the summer.

### What we need from our partners

- A commitment to design quality and promoting the new identity from everyone engaged in any physical project over the next 10 years including involving us in the design briefing for all projects the selection of designers and design reviews for the demonstration projects.
- Support to “bend” mainstream activity, such as highway / environment improvements to complement the “big ideas” and the demonstration projects



## Neighbourhood identity and demonstration projects



Coloured render reflecting dappled light



Housing incorporating solar panels and water collection, timber wooded feel



Wooded timber feels more villagey



Connecting to the ground in the landscape



Cascading terrace, using brick

## 10. Development principles

Guidelines for new development to promote the nature-technology identity

### A list of principles

The previous section set out the “headline” identity for the demonstration projects. This section proposes principles that should apply to all new development in the area in order to ensure that the social, environmental and economic benefits are maximised.

There is a danger with any list of principles for new development that you end up with a list of “good things to ensure” that would apply anywhere in the world, rather than actions that are specific to your area. Our list is therefore rooted in the particular concerns that have emerged from the neighbourhood strategies process and in the five “big ideas” that are the key to its physical identity, as well as in promoting the nature-technology image. They are divided into three strategies which focus in turn on social, environmental and economic objectives.

1. A vibrant residential community
  - i Hubs and centres
  - ii New housing
  - iii Streets and movement
  - iv Links with city centre
2. A community committed to environmental quality
3. A community that benefits economically from changes taking place.

### 1. A vibrant residential community

The framework diagram proposes substantial new development (housing and non housing) as well a series of neighbourhood centres. These should include local facilities, meeting and work places with strong connections with the city centre both physical and other

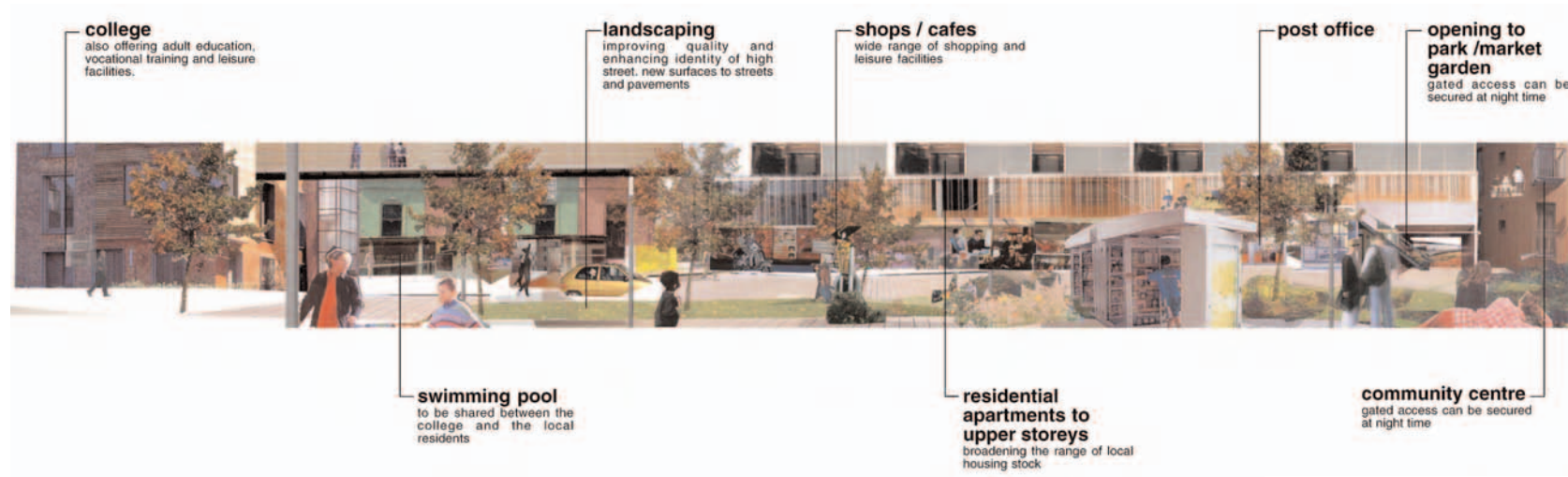
These proposals are considered essential in increasing the economic profile of the area as well as its vitality as a residential area. However vitality is not just about land use, essentially a two dimensional view it is also about how physical development is conceived and put together - the three dimensional view.

The **Park city** and **Green arteries** ideas also have a key role in this: the centres and facilities must be located in high quality settings that connect to the web of green space across the area. **From city to country and back again** and **See and be seen** both emphasise the need for physical and visual connections with the city and countryside.

Physical development can help make Southey Owlerton a vibrant place to live:



## Development principles



Ideas for a “Community High Street”

### Hubs and centres

#### 1.1 Give each neighbourhood a centre that is a “Community High Street”

We need to provide local facilities and services to enrich the economic, cultural and social aspects of every day life. This fits with our ideas about inclusion and neighbourhood entitlement of core services. There should be at least one centre in each neighbourhood.

#### 1.2 Connect the centres to the green space network

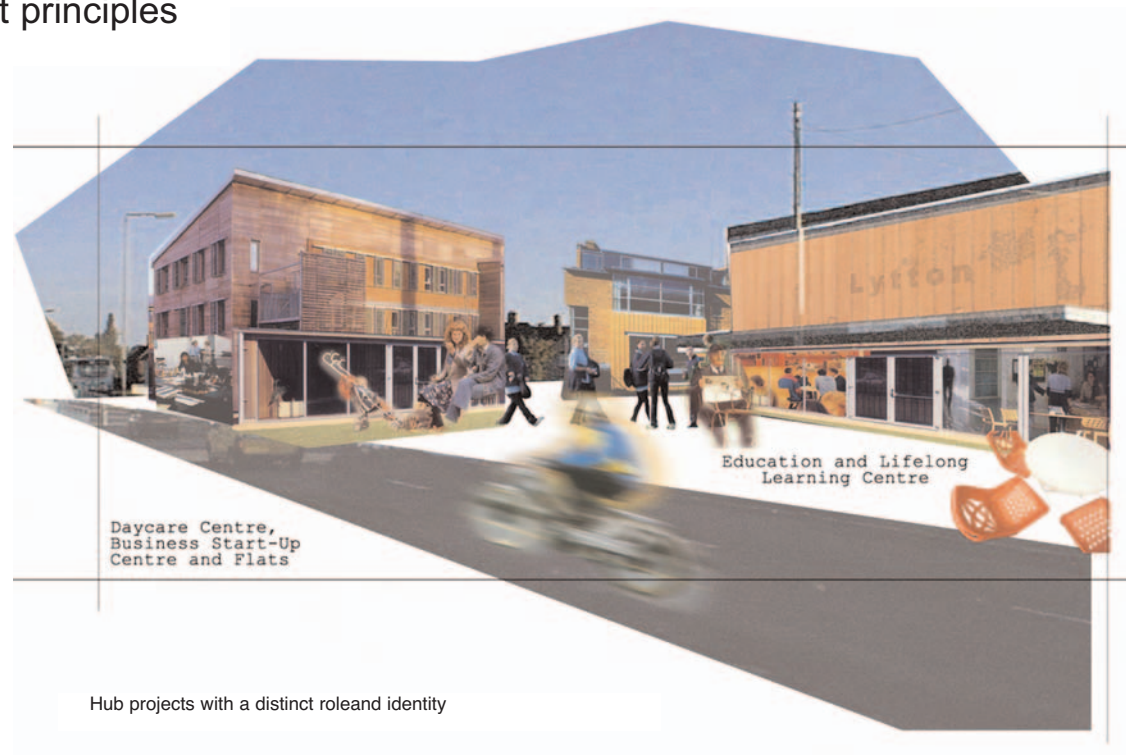
The idea of connecting up the open spaces and creating long distance routes is partly about attracting people from elsewhere in the city to come to the area. The centres need to be connected to this network so that there are more reasons to visit. They also need to have an attractive townscape setting that forms part of the green web so that the greenness of the area becomes a defining feature.

#### 1.3 Include mixed-use development and a hub project in these centres

A mix of residential and office/work uses means that people will be in the centres 24 hours a day. The centres will therefore feel busier and safer. Scope for incubator, start-up and managed workspace needs to be explored as part of the mixed use development in each centre to provide an economic dimension to the neighbourhoods, without compromising their appeal as residential areas. The nature-technology identity suggests that cultural and digital industries, biosciences and environmental industries should be targeted.

A hub project needs to be included in each centre: a community-owned building, a kind of one-stop shop for local services and a base for the social economy. If it is a mixed-use building, it will be more viable. Each of these should be an inspirational building that expresses the community's confidence in and ambitions for the future.

## Development principles



### 1.4 Give each centre and/or hub a distinct role & identity

As well as being a focus for its own neighbourhood a centre and/or hub project should have a reason for people from other neighbourhoods to visit. These reasons should reflect the nature-technology identity. For example a specialist fishing or bike repair shop, a special garden or play area, a place to learn about digital media, a market garden, an eco school, an organic café, a farmer's or local market, a wet fish shop second-hand shops. The hub projects also need to consider how they can connect to city-wide organisations and activities and so forge links with the rest of the city.

### 1.5 Make the buildings in the centre special & make the hub project a landmark building

The design of the buildings in the centres should reflect this specialism and promote a particular identity. We will look for a greater range of materials and colours in these buildings, more imaginative approaches to design with craftsmen and artists involved from the start to help make them special. The hubs need to form a physical focus for the neighbourhood and a positive statement about its future and they should set the standard for other buildings in the centre. Nature-technology suggests that these buildings would be at the cutting edge of eco-construction and (participative) design and include "new" high performance building materials such as timber cladding.

### 1.6 Join the hubs and centres as a network

Because each hub and centre will have a different strength, they can come together as a network of services. The network should also have a physical side such as IT connections, information points and public transport links.

## Development principles

### 1.7 Increase the density of housing around the centres

At present most of the shopping areas or centres for facilities don't look or feel any different from the housing areas. Increasing density is achieved by taller buildings with a mix of housing units and building layouts. This will make the centres more visible, make them busier (and therefore safer) and will provide more users for the shops and other facilities. It will also make them feel more urban, giving physical expression to the idea of combining the best of town and country.

### 1.8 Create a 'civic' space in each centre

Roads and traffic dominate most of the centres at present. The streets and open space within the centre should be specifically designed as something special to that area. The majority of buildings should front onto this space, with non residential uses at ground floor level to bring more activity during the day. They need to be sufficiently tall to have a presence on the "square". The design of these spaces needs to suggest new relationships between indoors and outdoors, people and traffic with an emphasis on integrating public transport (routes, stops etc) into the urban landscape.

### 1.9 Make sure people overlook these public spaces

As well as fronting onto streets and open space the layout of buildings needs to ensure that people are looking out over the public spaces. Details like large windows and balconies can help with overlooking and at the same time emphasise the connection with the outdoors.



Coin Street housing with good connection to park

## Development principles

### New housing

#### 1.10 Create a mix of types and styles of housing

One of the problems in Southey Owlerton is the sameness of the housing. It looks the same but also it is designed with only certain sorts of families in mind. New housing should cater for different needs – single people, elderly, large and small families – that recognise changes in the way we live now. This variety will in itself lead to different densities and building types, such as flats, special needs housing, family housing. New development will mainly be private for sale, thereby ensuring a mix of tenures across the area. There should be a coherent character to the housing in each neighbourhood, that responds to its particular identity, rather than a feeling of completely separate “estates”.

#### 1.11 Give priority to the elderly

Many elderly people live in Southey Owlerton who moved here in the inter-war period and do not want to leave. The housing types do not necessarily work well for them and many neighbourhoods have identified the need for specialist housing and other support services. Giving the elderly a special place in the community could be part of the particular character of this area.

#### 1.12 Create a range of densities across the area

Higher densities are needed around the centres and main open spaces to ensure that they are busier and well overlooked. This will mean increasing the height of buildings next to parks and centres, for example to 3 storeys, and organising them in terrace layouts with smaller gardens. Elsewhere gardens can be larger and densities lower, thereby providing variety in the housing market. Some people will want to live a “town” lifestyle, others a “country” one.

#### 1.13 Make sure all houses front onto public streets and spaces

Southey Owlerton suffers from housing backing onto public spaces in many places. This makes them feel like an extension of the private space rather than truly public. In future all public spaces must have houses fronting onto them.

Perimeter block or courtyard development is the best way to achieve this, with private space within the block (gardens or parking areas). This will require a grid layout to the streets, not cul de sacs. Sometimes it will not be possible to get housing to front onto the street as well as onto public space. Even where housing backs onto streets or parks you can ensure that people are looking over them by making large (bay) windows, (glass) balconies, doors and small private gardens at the “back” elevation. Again this will emphasise the connection with the green web.

#### 1.14 Create tighter frontages and smaller front gardens near centres and parks

A more urban feel is needed near the public spaces to make them feel safer. Keeping the building line closer to the street will help achieve this. Parking within the curtilage should be avoided in these areas. Where garages are provided they should be set back or concealed as part of the building line, to avoid blank elevations onto the street. Alternatively cars could drive through archways in the building line to parking at the rear.



Sheltered housing

## Development principles



### 1.15 Create on-street parking for new housing as part of the landscaping

Although there may be scope for gated car parking within courtyards, on-street parking must also be included, to ensure that people are using streets and pavements. This will make them livelier and safer. Many of the streetscape problems in Southey Owlerton stem from inadequate parking arrangements, because the garden city design did not envisage car ownership at the level it is today. New on-street parking therefore needs to be accommodated within the landscaping and design of the street. An innovative approach to designing car parking could become a feature of the area.

### 1.16 Explore alternatives to private cars

Car ownership in the area is low and many of the single households are elderly people. New development should look at other forms of transport such as community taxis, car sharing etc. Again a more radical approach to car use could become a feature of the area.

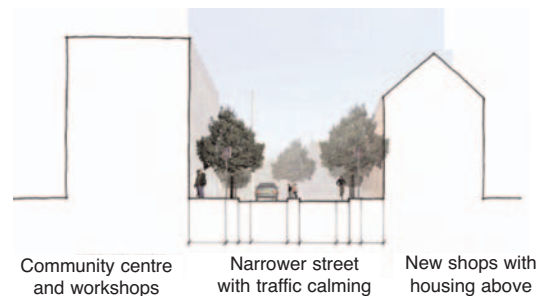
## Streets and movement

### 1.17 Design different streets for different functions

Main routes like the A61 are major thoroughfares for the city whilst quiet residential streets are the focus of everyday life for groups of families. The scale of building elevations and landscaping needs to reflect these differences. Four sorts of road exist in the area: arterial city route, roads linking Southey Owlerton to other neighbourhoods, roads that link neighbourhoods within Southey Owlerton and residential streets.

### 1.18 On the main city routes combine traffic flow with safe junctions and a good image

Halifax Road is a main arterial route into the city from the motorway, designed for free and easy movement of traffic. Barnsley and Herries Roads both provide important links between Southey Owlerton and other parts of the city. Where these roads join the main neighbourhood routes the junctions will need careful design for car and pedestrian safety but also to promote the new image of the area.



Design residential streets for shared use by people and cars

### 1.19 On the main roads between neighbourhoods slow down traffic and provide landmarks

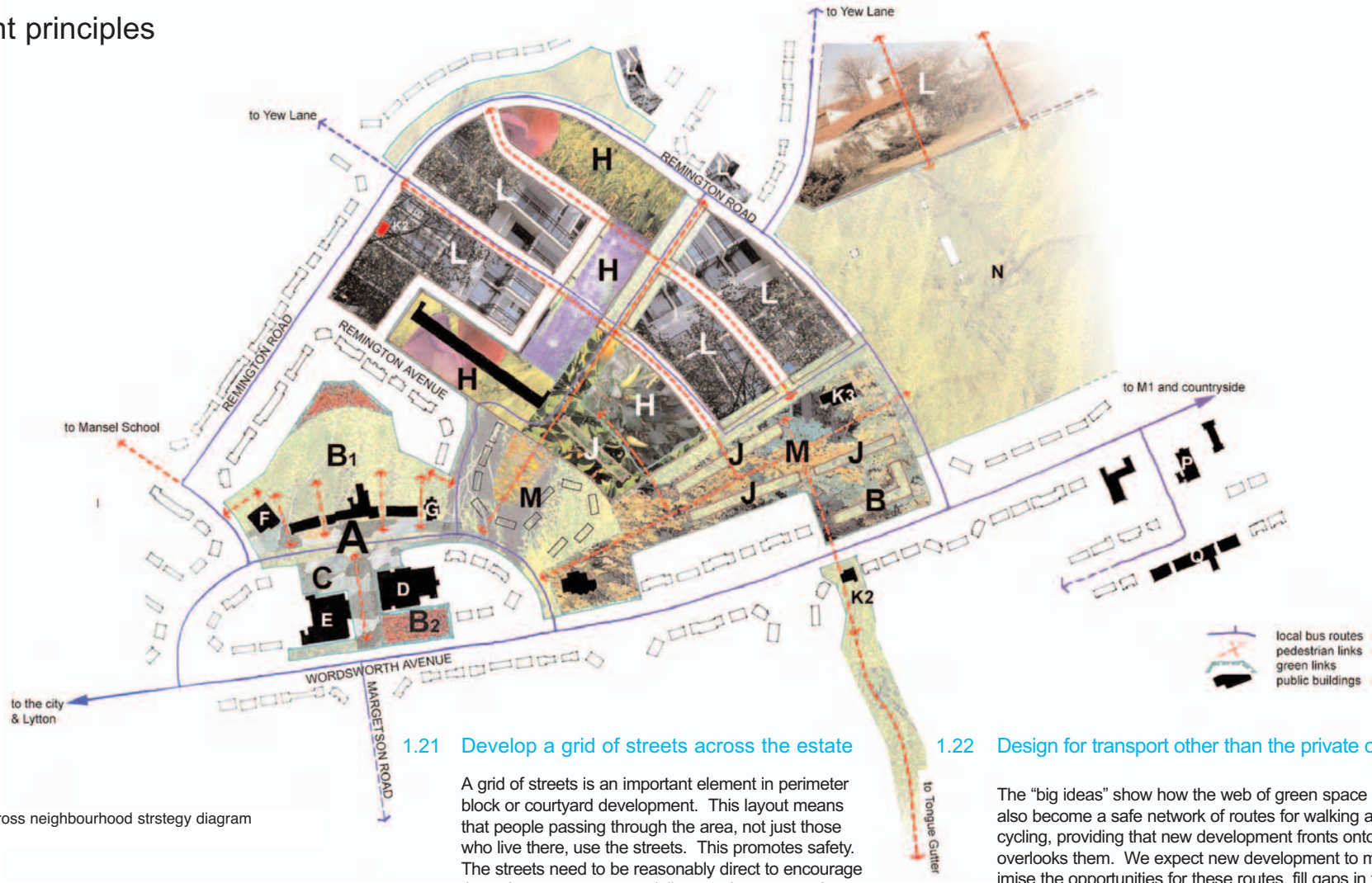
In housing areas, the roads that link the neighbourhoods (such as Wordsworth Avenue, Buchanan Road & Moonshine Lane) need to be designed to slow traffic down, as they are also residential streets. Measures could include speed tables, changes in road surfaces and, in places, tighter corners and limited sight lines. This traffic calming should be integrated with the streetscape, rather than bolted on.

Landmarks are needed along them so that people can orientate themselves easily and distinguish the different neighbourhoods. The landmarks are most needed at key points on these roads, for example where a pedestrian route crosses, to make the most of corner sites or where a public use is located on the road frontage. They should promote the new image: interesting landscape features, safe crossings, public buildings, new (technology) workplaces.

### 1.20 Design residential streets for shared use by people and cars

Residential streets need to provide for on-street car parking and traffic calming, landscaped as part of the streetscape. However they also need to accommodate people (including children and the elderly) and shared uses, such as play space, walking (including the less mobile) and cycling. New approaches to the design of streets need to be considered as part of new housing developments, especially in the lower density areas. Roads should follow the lines of buildings, rather than buildings being laid out to reflect a road design.

# Development principles



Part of the Parson Cross neighbourhood strategy diagram

### 1.21 Develop a grid of streets across the estate

A grid of streets is an important element in perimeter block or courtyard development. This layout means that people passing through the area, not just those who live there, use the streets. This promotes safety. The streets need to be reasonably direct to encourage through movement, especially near the centres. A denser network of streets is needed near the centres to reflect the increased housing densities and the variety of uses proposed in them.

### 1.22 Design for transport other than the private car

The “big ideas” show how the web of green space can also become a safe network of routes for walking and cycling, providing that new development fronts onto and overlooks them. We expect new development to maximise the opportunities for these routes, fill gaps in the network and make them more attractive by locating public facilities, such as play areas, along them. This network should also be designed to connect with public transport. New development should prioritise public and community transport routes and stops and integrate these within the design of public spaces.



## Development principles

### Links with the city centre

#### 1.23 Connect the area to the city centre

Public transport and community transport links, as well as footpath and cycle routes, are needed to take people to and from the city centre. New development needs to plug gaps in the networks. These physical links are needed between the neighbourhood centres and the city centre, as well as with the area as a whole.

#### 1.24 Celebrate the viewpoints to and from the city centre

The places with the best views need to be marked and celebrated in creative ways. The ridges and high points also need to present the new image to people looking at the area from the city centre.



Dramatic shelter framing view of city centre

## Development principles

### 2. A community that is committed to environmental quality

All of the “big ideas” have a key role to play in projecting the value and potential of the environment to improve the quality of life and image of Southey Owlerton. The nature-technology identity suggests that new ways of managing natural resources and new forms of eco-construction should be adopted throughout the area to create a new kind of urban form and ecology.

Physical development can emphasise this by taking a strategic approach to the environment:



## Development principles

### 2.1 Create a web of green space that is public and safe

Joining up the green spaces across the area, making them accessible to the public and ensuring that development fronts onto them will create a green backcloth to everyday life that could become a hallmark of life in this part of the city. All physical development will be expected to connect to and add the remaining pieces in this green jigsaw. The web should include a range of landscape types – countryside, naturalistic landscapes, formal open spaces and civic “squares” in the neighbourhood centres – and connect to the countryside at the edge of the city.

### 2.2 Prioritise facilities for children and young people

The needs of children and young people have emerged in every neighbourhood, particularly in terms of play, sports and outdoor activities. Already people from across the city visit some of the open spaces such as Longley Park and Parson Cross Park. Raising the quality of the facilities in open spaces could bring more visitors to the area. Ideas in the individual neighbourhoods include special play at Colley Park, sports at Parson Cross Park and a climbing wall in the Upper Don near Foxhill.

### 2.3 Link the green web by strategic footpath/cycle routes running from city to countryside

All new development will be expected to add missing sections of these strategic routes and to respond, in design and construction, to their particular identity. In addition new facilities like play areas and public buildings should wherever possible be located on these routes so as to promote their use and bring them to life. The aim is to make these routes and the green web a popular citywide attraction.

### 2.4 Develop links with the countryside

Just as the neighbourhood centres need to foster links with the city centre and citywide organisations and activities, so do they need to consider how best they can link with activities and organisations in the surrounding countryside. The idea of a farmer’s market and the role of farmland and forestry need to be explored.

### 2.5 Celebrate the views to the countryside

Just as some of the viewpoints provide a visual connection to the city centre, so others provide a visual link with the countryside. These also need celebrating.

### 2.6 Plan and manage the woodlands and grasslands as a matrix

The area has some very special areas of woodland and grassland with a distinctive pattern of distribution – woods on the valley slopes and grassland on the open ridges and edges. These habitats and patterns need to be retained, enhanced and carefully managed as a set rather than a series of individual sites. Many of the grasslands are visually and ecologically dull and need improving. New development should retain existing mature landscapes, especially pieces of countryside and those that are distinctive to the area, and develop new nature sites.



Trigger board through green areas illustrating better links

## Development principles

### 2.7 Develop street trees as part of the urban woodland

Some neighbourhoods, such as Longley, have a number of forest-size trees that add maturity and scale to the streetscape. More large street trees are needed in the neighbourhoods, particularly in the centres and along the main roads. In other parts of Sheffield street trees are so extensive that hillsides of housing look like woodland. This leafiness could be part of Southey Owlerton too.

### 2.8 Create urban meadows as temporary treatments for derelict land

Land in store that is awaiting redevelopment should be developed as temporary urban grasslands that are visually pleasing and require little investment and maintenance. This will add a grassland habitat to the matrix of grasslands in the area.

### 2.9 Make the most of all new development

New development, as well as adding to the green web and the canopy of street trees, should explore all opportunities to enhance the greenness of the area – with balconies, window boxes, trellises, roof gardens, other gardens – especially where these front onto public space. These elements should all allow for people to personalise their private space.

Trigger board emphasising how important street trees and road improvements would be

### 2.10 Improve existing streets and small pieces of green

The main way of improving existing streets is to reorganise the parking. This is a huge undertaking and will take many years to achieve. Any changes need to follow the principles for new housing development. Small pieces of green in housing areas often cause conflict because young people want to play there or because they are poorly maintained. Solutions should respond to the identity of the wider neighbourhood.

### 2.11 Make gardens and other pieces of land productive

The original estate provided large front and back gardens for most houses. In some cases these are now a burden to their owners. However the look of the streets would be greatly improved if they were planted and well cared for. One solution may be to use them for growing cut flowers and food. The potential for productive use of larger pieces of land should also be explored.

### 2.12 Plan and design with maintenance in mind

The design of landscapes in streets and green spaces should involve simple, high quality, durable, easy to maintain materials and construction details. New buildings should also be designed for ease of maintenance with a view to refurbishment in 50 years time.

### 2.13 Do something about the privet hedges

Garden railings were generally removed in the war and replaced with privet hedges. As a result there are miles and miles of privet hedge in the area. Some of these are well clipped and add something to the streetscape; elsewhere they are overgrown and unsightly. Either way there is too much of the same look about the streets.

Improvements to the Council housing generally include replacing the hedges with railings and low walls, which adds to the diversity of the streets. Where hedges are not going to be replaced, however, clipping them into different shapes could dramatically alter them. A topiary stall at the SOAR Celebration Day explored the possibilities and came up with some wonderful results, suggesting there is scope for a project that trains and employs local people and makes a big difference to the look of the area.

### 2.14 Plan for environmental sustainability

All development should be designed to work with the climate, use sustainable construction techniques and recycled materials. New buildings should be energy efficient and cheap to run. They should meet the current standards for CO2 emissions, the use of sustainable materials, water conservation and the avoidance of materials that are harmful or emit CFC's and HCFC's. They should allow for segregating waste to make recycling easier. Non-housing buildings should be of a flexible layout so that their use can change easily in the future. All development should reduce air, acoustic, ground and visual pollution.



Trigger board showing how the streets could be improved around Shirecliffe

## Development principles

### 3. A community that benefits economically from changes taking place.

Southey Owlerton is investing in community structures at the grass roots, neighbourhood and area level to ensure that local people are actively involved in decisions about the future of the area in partnership with local and city agencies. These structures also need to ensure that local people benefit economically from the changes to the area.

Physical development can help with this:



Local people making decisions about their own homes

## Development principles

### 3.1 Local skills through participation

All new development should allow local people the opportunity to gain new skills and confidence through the process of securing physical projects including project development and management, design briefing, selecting and overseeing professionals, fund-raising, running new facilities.

### 3.2 Develop local skills and jobs in construction and maintenance

Southey Owlerton is working with Sheffield Rebuild and as part of the city-wide construction compact to ensure that local people can get training and jobs from the future building programme. Opportunities for self-build will also be explored wherever people express interest in this. Several neighbourhoods are interested in developing local facilities management and environment maintenance teams and the opportunities for these services to be delivered locally will be explored as part of new development.

### 3.3 Develop the community's asset base

The development briefs for new sites will include looking at transfer of ownership to the community to ensure a future income stream for local organisations. SOAR will be looking to develop an office building to secure its asset base. The other neighbourhood groups will generally be looking to the hub projects to form their asset base.

### 3.4 Use public and community assets to develop the social economy

We shall be looking for opportunities to develop local enterprises as part of any new development. These might include food growing, a garden centre, recycling, resident service organisations linked to the hub projects and environment, catering, cleaning, security, rangering & stewardship etc. New workspace development should also provide for enterprise start-ups in target sectors for the city such as cultural industries, IT & biosciences.

### 3.4 Local jobs for local people

In addition to construction and maintenance jobs we shall be working with the occupiers of new developments to target local people for local jobs. An example would be Tesco, if it were to open a new store in the area, who have shown at Seacroft in Leeds their commitment to local recruitment of staff.



IT workshops

### 3.5 Use the hub projects to link local people to wider job opportunities

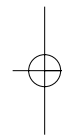
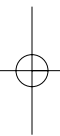
The hub projects will be the sites for services that reach out to people in neighbourhoods to connect them to the job market throughout the city and indeed the sub-region.

### 3.6 Promote the Upper Don for inward investment

Volume 2 of the report will focus on the potential of the Upper Don. However clearly there is a link between the potential of the neighbourhoods for start-up space and the valley floor for grow-on space and larger scale industrial development.

### What we need from our partners

- The “big ideas”, neighbourhood identity and development principles to be adopted by the City Council as supplementary planning guidance





How do we make it happen?

## 11 The continuing process

### Implementing the strategies with Sheffield First Partnership

This report, along with the five individual Neighbourhood Strategies completed to date, has been endorsed by the Neighbourhood Groups and approved by the SOAR Board and the Southey Owlerton Area Panel for discussion with to the Council and other partners. The reports collectively represent the views of the Southey Owlerton partners – local people, Councillors, officers and independent advisors – on what needs to happen over the next ten years. (These views are, of course, a statement of what we think at the moment of issuing the report. As the discussions move forward and as things change around us, these views will be further developed, refined and amended.)

The Strategies comprise an ambitious programme of improvement and change for the whole area over a 10 year period. Having spent the last year developing the ideas, we now need to agree the process for implementing them. This section sets out the challenges we foresee in taking the Strategies forward into implementation.

#### Will the Strategies work?

The first step is to test the Strategies to find out:

- Whether they will actually deliver the regeneration impact that is needed in Southey Owlerton
- The levels and phasing of the investment required, especially in light of the demographic changes that will result from demolition of housing in parts of the area

We shall do this by commissioning an independent review of the Strategies over the summer.

#### Who will take the Strategies forward?

Responsibility for implementing the Strategies needs to be clearly identified. Although the Neighbourhood Groups are new and need time to grow and develop, through their links to Board and Panel, they provide an opportunity to continue the Top Down Bottom Up approach.

We shall therefore carry forward the Neighbourhood Strategies structures, which were established for the planning phase.

- Joint sponsorship by Board and Panel
- Neighbourhood Groups given “executive responsibility”, in partnership with a corporate team of Council officers, other agencies and funded projects
- The Steering Group and the Council’s Senior Officer Support Team as mentors for the process.

#### How can we achieve a step-change in quality?

Because of the extent of housing and other change, and the opportunities afforded by the natural qualities of the area, we believe physical projects can make a big difference; but only if they achieve a step-change in quality.

In order to achieve this step-change we need to:

- Ensure via the Panel’s sponsorship of the process that the ideas influence the mainstream, in particular around maintenance and management
- Continue with a policy of effective corporate working at both the strategic and project level
- Develop project criteria that ensure all projects (whether revenue or capital) combine social, environmental and economic benefits and reflect the nature-technology identity
- Ensure best design standards by funding technical support for Neighbourhood Groups for design briefing, the selection of designers and design review
- Explore new funding strategies and develop a link with Sheffield First Partnership to focus resources on the area at the city level
- We shall build these actions into our implementation process

## The continuing process

### How can we change external perceptions of the area?

The proposals put forward are based on an “internal” view of the area and it is perhaps not surprising that they are extremely positive. However unless we can overcome external perceptions of the area and halt the drift to the south of the city, the area will never change. This is partly about improving everything that we do in the area, but it is also partly about marketing the new image and identity.

If Southey Owlerton is to market itself successfully this identity needs to underpin everything it does in the future. All projects would require community involvement, decision-making and management and a commitment to inclusion in order to get funded; all physical projects would be tested against the framework’s five “big ideas” and showcase new ways of bringing nature and technology together; and all projects would need to show how they help bring opportunities for training and jobs in new technologies, such as digital, cultural and environmental industries. We shall incorporate these ideas into the scoring criteria of all bids to soar.

### How can we connect Southey Owlerton to the regeneration agenda for the city?

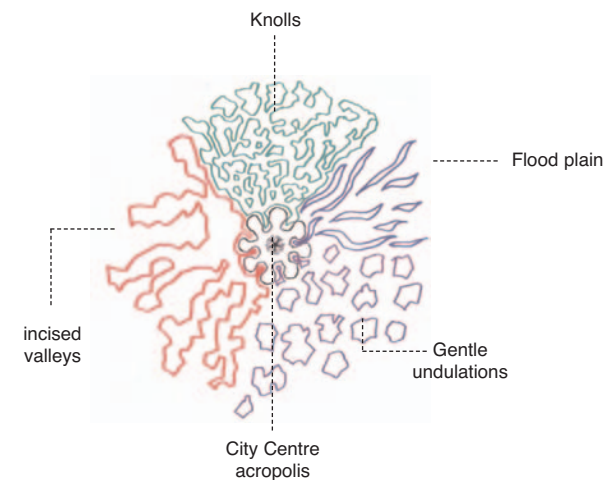
Southey Owlerton cannot do this on its own: it needs to be plugged into the Sheffield First Partnership’s vision for the future of the city.



The Partnership has already identified that the city’s future prosperity depends not just on the city centre and the Don Valley but on developing successful neighbourhoods, which will give the city competitive advantage through the skills of the workforce and the quality of life offered to investors. This is partly about linking into the Partnership’s decision-making structures and partly about a joint approach to identity and marketing.

We have already shown how the Southey Owlerton nature-technology identity links directly to the identity of the wider city. If we place Southey Owlerton within the context of the city, we can distinguish four “quarters” – the knolls of the north, the floodplain to the east, the more gentle undulations of the south and the incised valleys to the west. The city centre rises like an acropolis at the centre. The “big ideas” could be explored within their particular context to create a special identity for each, which taken together could link the different parts of the city into a coherent image.

We shall present these ideas for establishing links with the Partnership as the first step in what we hope will be a long-term dialogue and relationship.



The nature -technology identity can define four “quarters” of the city formed around the city centre

## 12. Summary

### What we need from our partners

#### What we need from our partners

- Support from Sheffield First Partnership for the nature-technology identity as a marketing tool for the area, and a discussion about the relevance of this identity for the image and marketing of the wider city
- A commitment to embrace the nature-technology identity as a theme running through all future projects, both physical and non-physical
- An undertaking that all physical projects will work with the technical aid team to be funded through the Neighbourhood Strategies process on design briefing and selection of designers.
- The neighbourhood and framework diagrams to be accepted by the City Council as Southey Owlerton's input into the review of the Unitary Development Plan
- Influence on the briefs for areas of new development so that we can maximise the benefits for the area and promote the new identity
- Support for the marketing of the area for cultural and digital industries, biosciences and environmental technologies, as well as advanced metals and manufacturing activity linked to activity in the Upper Don

- Everyone engaged in any physical project over the next 10 years to consider how they can contribute to the "big ideas" so that over time we piece together like a jigsaw the green web, the link to community facilities and new development, the habitat matrix, the strategic routes and the sequence of views.
- Support to "bend" mainstream activity, such as highway / environment improvements to compliment the 'big ideas' and the demonstration projects
- A commitment to design quality and promoting the new identity from everyone engaged in any physical project over the next 10 years including involving us in the design briefing for all projects and in the selection of designers for the demonstration projects.
- The "big ideas", neighbourhood identity and development principles to be adopted by the City Council as supplementary planning guidance

