



# Wicker Riverside **Action Plan**

2007-2017



# FOREWORD

Wicker Riverside is one of Sheffield's best-known and most distinctive gateways.

It has played a key role in the city's history and after a period of decline and change is now re-emerging once again as an important and attractive place to do business, to live and spend leisure time. It is also a critical area in spreading economic regeneration into Burngreave and the Upper and Lower Don Valley.

The Action Plan details the potential of the area and takes on board the aspirations of local businesses, inward investors and communities, compiled over 3 years of consultation and dialogue. It provides guidance for further transformation and regeneration, particularly by opening up its extensive river frontages to redevelopment and public enjoyment. At the same time the Plan seeks to protect the townscape of the area and to emphasise the importance of those businesses and community facilities already established there.

I look forward to seeing this vision realised and invite local residents, businesses and investors to join the City Council in this exciting renaissance.

**Councillor Tim Rippon**

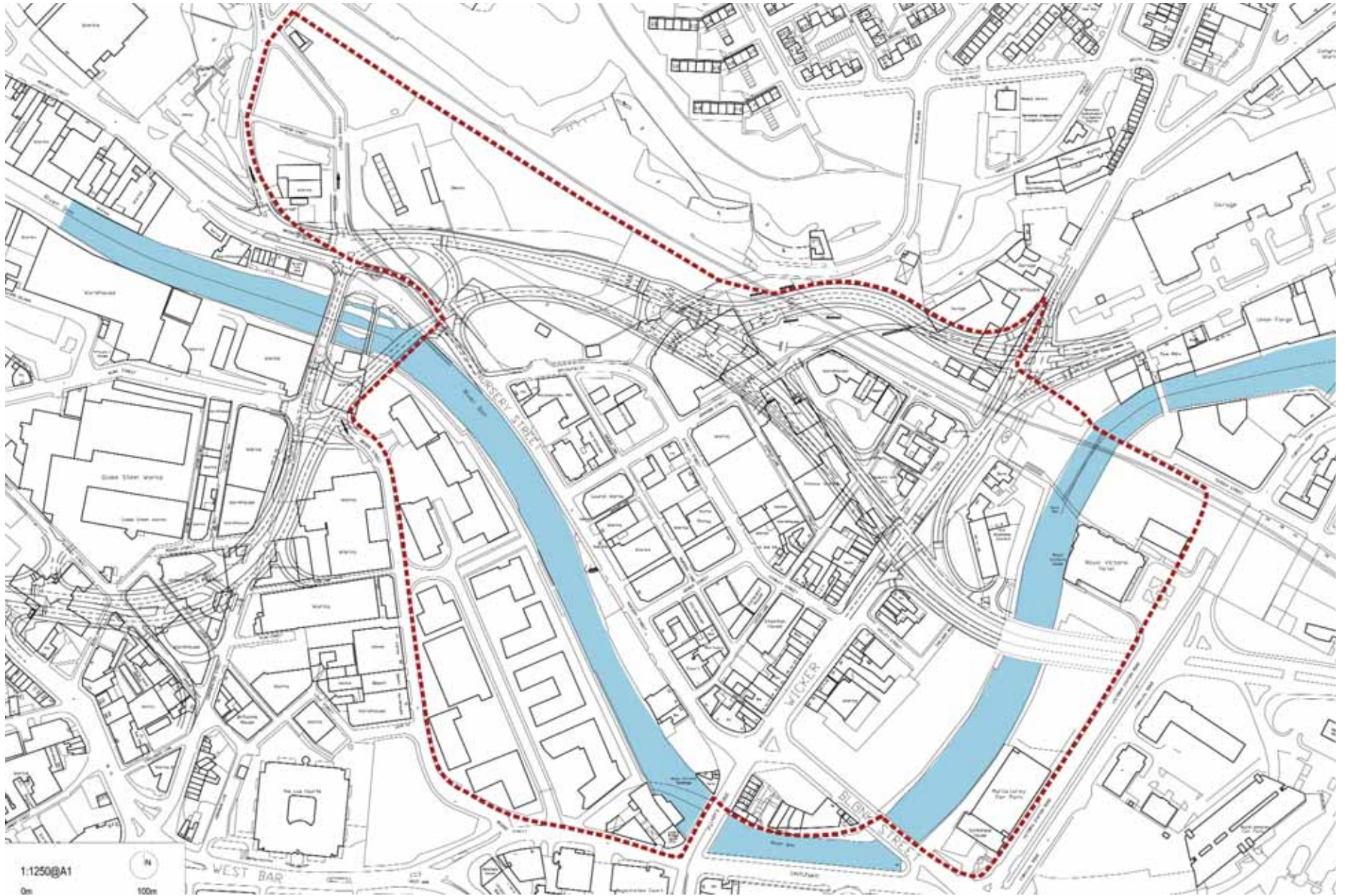
*Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, Culture & Planning*



# WICKER RIVERSIDE ACTION PLAN

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AREA BOUNDARY WITH INNER RELIEF ROAD

# 1. INTRODUCTION



WICKER

The Wicker Riverside Action Plan was commissioned by Sheffield City Council and Renaissance South Yorkshire. It sets out a long term (10 years) framework to guide public and private development and investment decisions in the Nursery Street and Wicker area.

The Action Plan brings together information from local consultation with latest policy in the emerging Sheffield Development Framework and City Centre Masterplan and forms part of a suite of area-based plans which cover the City Centre and the Lower Don Valley, including the Cathedral Quarter and St Vincents and Castlegate.

## WHY AN ACTION PLAN?

The Action Plan has been drawn up to serve the following purposes:

- ◆ Provide a clearly defined guide for development and investment decisions within the area by the public and private sectors.
- ◆ Promote and inform economic regeneration in this part of the City Centre to ensure a sustainable future for this mixed-use city area by promoting new sites for development.
- ◆ Supplement and update existing planning guidance for the Nursery Street and Wicker area prior to completion of the new Sheffield Development Framework (SDF).
- ◆ Add local detail and proposals to the City Centre Masterplan.
- ◆ Establish key public space and environmental projects which can lead regeneration in the area and provide a catalyst for change.
- ◆ Identify design guidance for all key sites within the context of the Urban Design Compendium.
- ◆ Propose ways of tackling local problems of public safety, crime, cleansing, river management and parking.

The Action Plan is not simply about guiding change. It also has a role to play in ensuring that the intrinsic character of the Wicker Riverside area is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

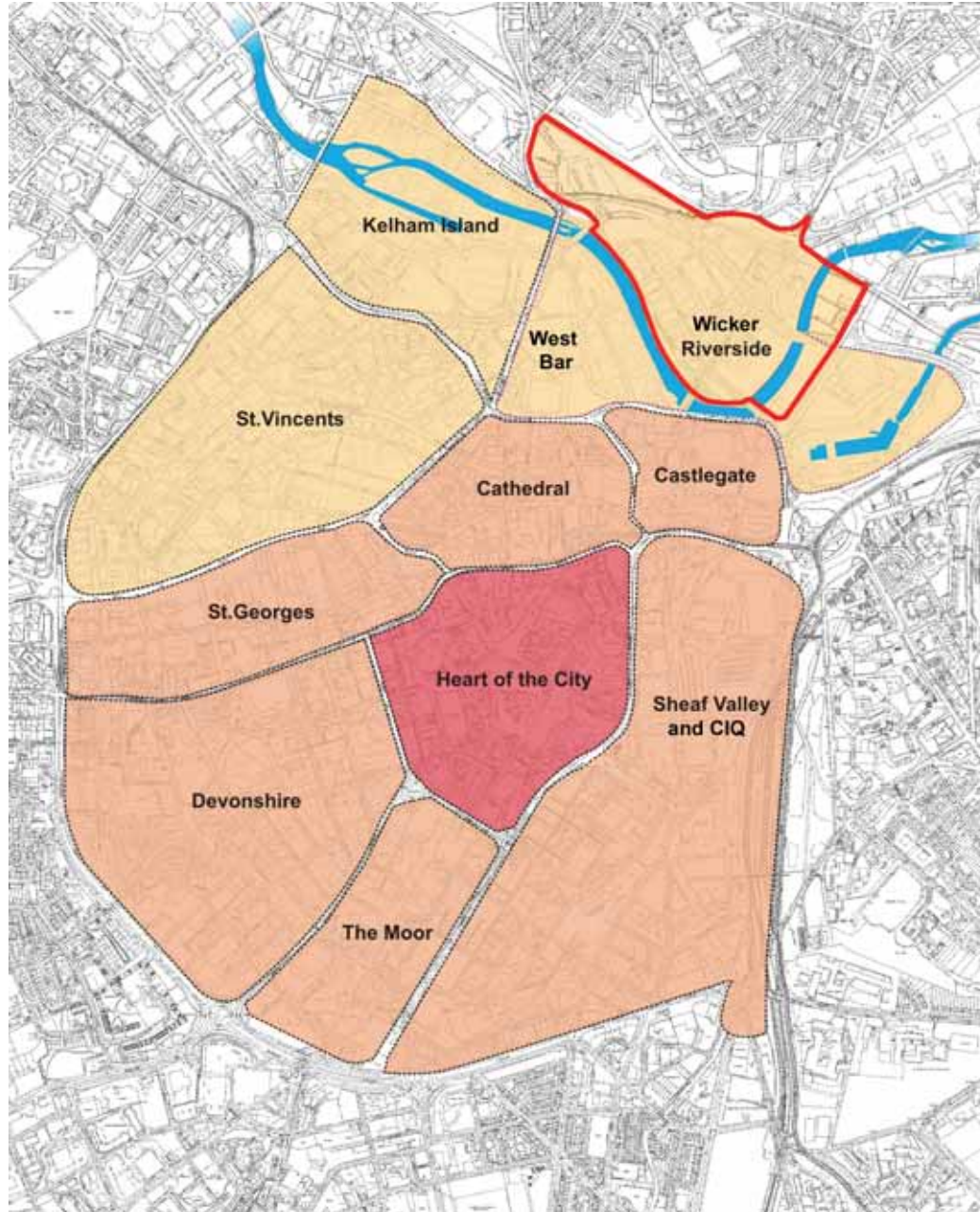
## WHO IS IT FOR?

- ◆ Local residents existing and new
- ◆ People who work in the area
- ◆ New businesses or existing businesses who wish to expand
- ◆ Developers wanting to invest in the area
- ◆ Architects and agents
- ◆ The wider Sheffield community

## STATUS OF THE DOCUMENT

The Wicker Riverside Action Plan is a delivery vehicle for a 10 year vision for the area, and as such will be referred to when determining planning applications and allocating public investment. The Action Plan also works within existing local, regional and national policies and will inform the Sheffield Development Framework.

It will be approved by the Council's Cabinet as a material consideration in determining planning applications pending the adoption of the relevant SDF documents.



CITY-WIDE SETTING/CONTEXT

## OVERVIEW



WICKER 1905

The Wicker Riverside area lies on the northern edge of Sheffield City Centre, and comprises land on the banks of the River Don, stretching from Borough Bridge in the West to the Wicker viaduct. This area has always been an important gateway to the City – as early as 1350, Sheffield Castle stood opposite at the confluence of the Don and the Sheaf. The first of Sheffield's bridges (Lady's Bridge) was originally constructed in the latter part of the 15th Century.

During the 18th, 19th and for much of the 20th Centuries, the Wicker Riverside area was a dense, bustling network of streets and lanes serving the City's silversmiths, steel manufacturers and other industries gathered there. The area was served by Bridgehouses Station and Goods Yard and Victoria Station

which were principal stations during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

The internal core of the study area has a strong urban form, framed by the northern slopes of the Don Valley and the railway embankment/viaduct and comprises 19th and 20th Century industrial buildings. Some have fallen into disuse or are not used to their full potential.



TYPICAL VIEW ALONG LANES BEHIND NURSERY STREET

Once the most important gateway to the City, the Wicker Riverside area is both literally and metaphorically at a crossroads. The area has stagnated, partly as a result of more than 20 years of blight and uncertainty arising from previous proposals for the Inner Relief Road – but also because it no longer makes a strong economic, cultural or spatial contribution to the City Centre.

The Wicker Riverside area forms part of an increasingly important axis of development for the City although it has yet to fully realise the benefit of its relationship with the river or the City Centre. The river is unexploited as a recreational resource, as a broader amenity for the area or as a setting for new development.



NURSERY STREET

The construction of the Inner Relief Road, presents an important opportunity for the Action Plan area. The project will relieve the majority of through traffic that currently passes along Wicker and Nursery Street, reducing traffic flows and creating opportunities for environmental improvement.



## 2. ACTION PLAN VISION & OBJECTIVES

### THE VISION:

#### WICKER RIVERSIDE IN 2017

In 2017 Wicker Riverside will be a new mixed-use neighbourhood within the City Centre with a distinctive character and identity.

More than 3000 residents live in a mix of waterfront apartments and residential conversions of existing buildings. A range of residential and student accommodation has

been developed. The area is a centre for local employment with new offices and commercial premises taking advantage of the good links to the City Centre and the Inner Relief Road.

The River Don and adjoining waterfront has been transformed into a succession of riverside terraces and parks with improved maintenance, management and habitat-reconnecting the area with adjoining developments at Riverside Exchange and Victoria Quays and creating a new focus for leisure and recreation for the northern part of the City Centre. The reprofiled river also contributes to the flood protection of the area by providing a wider channel.

Cafes and bars associated with City Centre living and working extend along the waterfront and along Wicker. Wicker is the heart of the area; it has been revitalised by new neighbourhood shops, specialist retailers and leisure and community facilities which also serve Burngreave and adjoining neighbourhoods. It is also a major public transport hub. Investing in the quality of the public realm provided the catalyst for the regeneration of the Wicker.

The area contains a diverse mix of businesses occupying new offices and older industrial accommodation. Through its new offices, shops and services the Wicker



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF NURSERY STREET IN 2020

Riverside area forms part of a seamless office quarter with West Bar/Riverside Exchange, connected via new bridges over the Don at Nursery Street and Victoria Quays. Wicker Riverside is no longer at the crossroads – it has regained its role and identity as a vibrant part of the City. It is reconnected to the City Centre and Burngreave, providing easy access to jobs, services and facilities for local residents. The mix of land uses and activities complement and sustain each other.

## **REALISING THE VISION: THE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Action Plan are to:

### **Objective 1**

Seize the challenges and opportunities presented by the Inner Relief Road, including improved pedestrian access between Spital Hill/Burngreave, Wicker and the City Centre whilst achieving radical improvements in the quality of the public realm throughout the area.

### **Objective 2**

Re-connect the area with the River Don and in turn with the City Centre, enhancing the role of the river as a recreational and

amenity resource – indeed as a core element of the public realm – whilst realising the development value and opportunity created by a waterfront location, particularly as a focus for business and city living.

### **Objective 3**

Capitalise and build on the increasing demand for city living in this part of the City Centre whilst ensuring that the area provides the broader mix of facilities and services to sustain an urban community.

### **Objective 4**

Develop a new role for Wicker as a more diverse retail/leisure axis, increasing the quality and range of specialist/independent shops and food and drink outlets whilst providing new shops and facilities for residents. Improve the links with existing businesses on Spital Hill.

### **Objective 5**

Build on the role of Wicker as a centre for Sheffield's Afro-Caribbean and other BME communities and place SADACCA, SYAC and other community organisations at the heart of plans for the future.

### **Objective 6**

Improve the environment for existing businesses and stimulate further development for small and medium enterprises/start up businesses and for larger scale office development.

### **Objective 7**

Promote sustainability and manage in a sustainable way the regeneration of the area and the overall mix of uses.

### **Objective 8**

Improve management of the area including the introduction of a City Centre Ambassador scheme and River Stewardship scheme.

### **Objective 9**

Resolve issues of flood risk and protection in a positive and creative way which also improves the environment.

### 3. AREA ANALYSIS

#### CHARACTER AREAS

Wicker Riverside can be subdivided into 4 distinct character areas:

- ◆ Wicker and Walker Street Arches
- ◆ Nursery Street
- ◆ Stanley Street
- ◆ Bridgehouses

#### *Wicker and Walker Street Arches*

- ◆ Wicker continues to be characterised by its role as a through route to the City Centre and this is reflected in the predominant mix of shopping and food and drink uses. The area is also home to a number of specialist retailers and community facilities, most notably SADACCA and SYAC.
- ◆ The medieval street width/profile and the townscape quality of some of Wicker's key buildings/structures, including the Wicker Arches, SADACCA and the Station Public House contribute to the townscape character of the area.



WALKER STREET

- ◆ The Wicker viaduct crosses the street at its northern end and constitutes a very important gateway both for the study area and indeed for the City Centre as a whole. The Arches themselves provide inexpensive workspace/retail accommodation for a diverse mix of



THE ARCHES

businesses and have potential for re-use in this regard. The Inner Relief Road (IRR) proposals and associated site assembly/clearance on the Spital Hill side of the Arches will recreate a double frontage aspect - this is an important opportunity to open the Arches on both sides.

- ◆ At the southern end of Wicker, Lady's Bridge not only provides an important link across the River to the City Centre, but is also surrounded by a number of buildings which create a distinctive townscape. The IRR will remove much of the through traffic which has a negative impact on the environs of Lady's Bridge. This will provide a significant opportunity to improve the local environment around Lady's Bridge and should allow the surrounding buildings to re-assert their position in the townscape – a potential already being realised by the market through the development of City Wharf and the Iquarter buildings.
- ◆ Iquarter  
The Iquarter development consists of a large Grade II listed building, Castle House, together with a range of ancillary buildings and a listed crucible stack. The developer and his architect will refurbish Castle House to form office accommodation, convert the existing adjacent town house to residential apartments, and build three new

striking buildings with A1/A3 at ground floor level with residential above. The 16-storey glass tower will be a new urban landmark in Sheffield.

◆ North Bank - Priority Sites Development

The North Bank Development consists of a 4/5 storey office building with A1, A2, A3, A4 and/or B1 use at ground floor level and associated car parking accommodation. The development is located on a key gateway site opposite Lady's Bridge, on the corner of Blonk Street and Wicker and the modern architecture reflects the potential for future developments in the Wicker and Nursery Street area.



PRIORITY SITES

- ◆ Development by Artisan at Blonk Street  
This £20m mixed-use commercial and residential development will be situated next to the River Don. The 10 storey scheme will house 132 apartments and

retail space and includes car parking facilities for 160 cars. Urban regeneration specialists Artisan will be the developers on this, their first development in Yorkshire. Once built this prestigious development will overlook the river providing a distinctive place to live and work. It will enhance links to Victoria Quays and to the Five Weirs



ARTISAN

**Nursery Street**

- ◆ Nursery Street has a strong character formed by its riverside frontage along the entire length of its south-western edge and by its strong built edge to the north. This area contains a number of important and attractive buildings including Aizlewoods Mill and the adjoining Church. The character of land uses along this side of the street is predominantly industrial with a small amount of office and other community uses.

The market has already recognised the potential quality of place associated with the riverside through recent development on both sides of the Don. The Riverside Exchange is six storeys high and provides physical and visual containment of the south-western side of the riverside/Nursery Street area.



VIEW ALONG NURSERY STREET

- ◆ The existence of a small area of open space towards the south-eastern end of Nursery Street could provide the opportunity to create an attractive green south facing open space and pedestrian access to the river at this point. This would provide physical and visual links to developments on the opposite side of the river and a destination for city workers and residents.
- ◆ Nursery Street forms the edge of the grid street pattern that characterises much of



AIZLEWOODS MILL, NURSERY STREET

the study area. The grid pattern provides particular structure for the ‘central core’ of industrial buildings – some of which are Victorian, some more recent. The IRR will impact on the integrity of this grid pattern.

- ◆ Nursery Street enjoys good accessibility from other parts of the City Centre from the Inner Relief Road. The IRR offers significant potential to reduce through traffic, improve pedestrian amenity and to create a dramatically improved waterfront environment which connects both sides of the river. This is recognised in the Council’s Urban Design Compendium.

### **Stanley Street**

- ◆ This area is currently occupied by light industrial uses, but with a predominance of vacant or underused sites.

- ◆ Once traffic and bus routes are diverted from along Nursery Street, Stanley Street will become the main access spine from Spitalfields to the Wicker.

### **Bridgehouses**

- ◆ This part of the Action Plan is currently separated from the remainder of the area by its steeply sloping topography and the presence of the railway viaduct which serves as a barrier between this part of the study area and Burngreave.
- ◆ The derelict and open nature of many of the sites means the townscape character of Bridgehouses is weak, although it does benefit from panoramic views over the City Centre to the south and potential access to extensive greenspace to the north.

## **STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE WICKER RIVERSIDE AREA**

*The principal strengths of the study area include:*

- proximity to and views of the River Don.
- the historic grid pattern within the central industrial core of the study area.
- the historic street profile of the Wicker.
- landmark historic buildings including Wicker Arches, SADACCA, Aizlewoods Mill and the Station Public House, as well as some striking new ones.

- a mix of storey heights to provide visual interest; storey heights generally rise around gateways and key ‘corner’ buildings – Lady’s Bridge, Wicker Arches, corner of Spitalfields and Nursery Street.
  - bridges – including Lady’s Bridge, the Iron bridge linking Kelham Island with Bridgehouses, the Cobweb Bridge under the Wicker Arches over the River Don, a new bridge linking Riverside Exchange/West Bar with Nursery Street and a new bridge over the River Don at Wiley Street/Smithfields.
  - an increasingly diverse mix of land uses and activity – retail, leisure, office and now residential uses.
  - the three different character edges of the site with a heart that is well-defined by the historical grid pattern.
  - well established mix of ethnic minority business and community facilities.
  - pedestrian accessibility to and within the area and the links to the Five Weirs Walk and Upper Don Walk.
  - Good vehicle access to the IRR and M1.
- The principal weaknesses of the study area can be summarised as:*
- severance from the City Centre land uses and activities.
  - severance effect of railway viaduct/Wicker Arches.

- impact of traffic on pedestrian movement and amenity of Nursery Street and Wicker.
- limited pedestrian access to the river.
- a predominance of vacant or under-utilised sites.
- poor quality public realm and lack of a clear hierarchy of civic spaces.
- buildings of townscape significance that are in disrepair.
- poor quality shop fronts and signage.
- prevalence of on-street car parking in industrial area and lack of off-street parking.
- crime and drug abuse.
- poor maintenance and management of public spaces and river environment.
- shortage of good quality short stay car parking.
- flood risk issues

## ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

### Existing Network

- ◆ Wicker, Nursery Street and Blonk Street all carry heavy flows of through traffic as part of the Inner Relief Road. Stanley Street divides the area bounded by Nursery Street and the Wicker and is a local distributor road offering access to streets forming the internal grid pattern. Stanley Street has also been used as a rat run to

avoid the traffic signal junction at Wicker/Nursery Street.

### Inner Relief Road

- ◆ The Northern section of the Inner Relief Road has been designed to relieve all through traffic that currently passes along Wicker and Nursery Street; this will significantly reduce traffic flows on both routes as through traffic is effectively encouraged onto the IRR through associated traffic management measures.
- ◆ Under the adopted IRR proposals, Nursery Street will become two-way for access traffic only and access to Wicker will be controlled via a bus gate at its intersection with the IRR, thus preventing through movement along Wicker for the private car. The proposed IRR to the west near Corporation Street allows for good access to the study area via Nursery Street and will be the main signed gateway to the area. Access from the City Centre will take the route along Wicker and again along Stanley Street.

### Public Transport

- ◆ The Action Plan area is particularly suited for pedestrian access to the City Centre, and the Transport Interchange giving access to local and regional buses, rail and

Supertram. Wicker is on a core cross-city bus route providing good public transport access to the city centre, the Don Valley (including Meadowhall) and to Burngreave, Pitsmoor, Fir Vale and the Northern General Hospital. Stanley Street is also used as a bus route. The removal of through traffic will improve bus speeds and accessibility considerably.



VIEW ALONG WICKER FROM WICKER ARCHES

### Pedestrian Movement

- ◆ The area is a busy pedestrian through route used by residents from Burngreave and other residential areas north of the City Centre to access the Castlegate markets and the City Centre as a whole. The area also has potentially good connections to Victoria Quays and along the river walkway to the Kelham Island area and beyond, subject to key severance problems being solved.

- ◆ Pedestrian access between Spital Hill and Wicker has been identified as an important concern during community consultation for this study. The IRR provides for access to Burngreave and the linear footway along Wicker to Spital Hill will be preserved and improved. The encouragement of active ground floor uses around the Wicker Arches is also of key importance.
- ◆ Continued permeability of the area following implementation of the IRR is a key objective. The area surrounding the Wicker Arches may be accessed by pedestrians and cyclists via Wicker and from Brunswick Road. Access into the Wicker Arches area from the west will direct pedestrians and cyclists across the IRR at the dedicated pedestrian crossings and along the footway proposed, onto Walker Street.

### Cycling

- ◆ Full cycle facilities in the form of cycle lanes, are included in the IRR proposals and the riverside route provides an effective leisure cycling opportunity with access to employment in the Don Valley and links to the Trans Pennine Trail and National Cycle routes.



COBWEB BRIDGE

### FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY

- ◆ The Wicker Riverside area is bounded along a substantial part of its length by the River Don. The morphology of the river – in particular its many weirs and canalised channel – is a reflection of its former role as a source of power for the City’s iron and steel industry. The stonework river walls were constructed to contain the course of the river and to prevent the erosion of the banks as the adjacent land was developed.
- ◆ The majority of the Action Plan area is defined by the Environment Agency as falling within Flood Zone 3a, which has a high probability of flooding. This zone comprises land assessed as having a 1% or greater chance of river flooding occurring in a given year (a 1 in 100 year event).

- ◆ The Action Plan identifies Nursery Street in particular as a key area for regeneration comprising a mix of uses including retail and food and drink at ground floor with office and residential above. Residential development is currently identified within Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) as a ‘more vulnerable’ use that will only be permitted in Flood Zone 3a if the proposal can address both the Sequential and Exception Tests, as set out in PPS25. The Sequential Test must demonstrate that there are no reasonably available sites in areas with a lower probability of flooding that would be appropriate to the type of development or land use proposed. The Exceptions Test then provides a method for managing flood risk, whilst still allowing necessary development to occur.
- ◆ At the time of publication of this document, it is considered that the high probability of flooding in this location and the events of June 2007 significantly hinders the prospect of securing residential development to the Nursery Street area through the successful application of the Sequential and Exceptions Test on the grounds that flood risk must be addressed at a more strategic level.
- ◆ The Council is working with the Environment Agency to commission a study that will re-assess the data used to

establish the predicted flooding levels in the area and will identify a comprehensive solution to the problem of flooding, including re-profiling the river and other flood alleviation measures. This will become part of a much wider assessment of flood control in the Don Catchment following the extreme weather conditions experienced in June 2007. It is recommended that the any proposals for residential development within the Action Plan area await the outcome of this study.

- ◆ For clarification, other principal uses within the Action Plan – buildings used for shops, restaurants and cafes, offices etc are deemed as less vulnerable in PPS25 but are also subject to the Sequential Test and the constraints outlined above.



VIEW OF RIVER DON

- ◆ For further advice, not available at the time of publication of this document, please contact the City Development Division at Sheffield City Council on 0114 205 3076.

## RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### *Canoeing and Boating*

- ◆ There is some potential for the River Don in this area to be used for recreational boating and canoeing. The River channel has silted up over the years so shallow-bottomed vessels such as canoes would be best suited to the water. Landing jetties could be provided at key points to enable easy access to the water.
- ◆ While the Upper Don is already navigable by canoe to a certain extent, this urban stretch of the river creates a series of barriers for less experienced canoeists, most notably the numerous weirs. The British Canoe Union is involved in developing a loop from Tinsley to Meadowhall via Victoria Quays, utilising both the Lower Don and the Sheffield Canal.
- ◆ Canoeists require portage, getting out of the river to navigate the obstacle before re-entering the water and this currently is a problem in the Nursery Street and Wicker stretch of the River. There is no portage for Lady's Bridge, meaning that the weir is

only navigable for the most skilled canoeists. As such, whilst Blonk Street and areas downstream are comparatively accessible, there is a break in the navigable river from here to Kelham Island. The potential for portage in a dry area at Lady's Bridge needs to be investigated.

- ◆ The potential for rowing and other boating activities is constrained by the limited depth of water in this part of the river. A significant de-silting exercise and a programme of continued maintenance would be required to provide a suitable depth of water.

### *Walking*

- ◆ Lady's Bridge is the starting point for the 7.5km Five Weirs Walk, which follows the River Don canal towpath to Meadowhall. At Lady's Bridge the Five Weirs Walk also links to the Upper Don Walk, which runs along the Riverside and to Kelham Island Museum and beyond.
- ◆ These walks cater for pedestrians and cyclists and include information boards, artist designed railings and seating and planting. A footbridge across the River Don links the beginning of the walk to Nursery Street and the proposed pocket park on the opposite side.



- ◆ The river provides a strong linking element for the leisure and heritage assets of the wider area from Kelham Island Museum to Victoria Quays, taking in a number of historic sites such as the Flood memorial, Marshalls Furnace, Ladys Bridge and the Blonk Street Crucible Stack as well as a growing number of distinctive pubs and restaurants.

### **Hotels**

- ◆ There are six hotels located in and around the Wicker/Castlegate area, the largest concentration in the City Centre, with at least three more planned for Smithfields and West Bar.
- ◆ It is essential that the area becomes safer, more welcoming and attractive so that this cluster of visitor facilities is better supported.

### **Fishing**

- ◆ With better controls over pollution sources, initiatives to improve the water quality of the Don and better maintenance of the River and its banks, fish species will return and flourish. Jetties and safe access points to the water's edge can be provided for fishing activities along the River Don in this area, giving opportunities for quiet and attractive oases with good views of the water for fishing enthusiasts.

### **Habitat and Biodiversity**

- ◆ Better maintenance of the river and its banks will give opportunities for trees and plants to grow in turn providing habitat for otters, voles and birds.

## 4. LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

### UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (UDP) 1998 AND SHEFFIELD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (SDF)

The UDP provides the land use planning framework for the City. The UDP policies which are particularly relevant to the Wicker Riverside area are as follows:-

- IB5 Development in General Industry Areas**
- IB6 Development in Fringe Industry and Business Areas**
- S3 Development in the Central Shopping Area**

Policies IB3, IB9 and IB11 also refer.

The UDP was adopted in 1998 and work is now in hand to replace this with the Sheffield Development Framework (SDF), in keeping with current legislation. The initial city-wide policy documents and proposals plan will be followed by more detailed Area Action plans, as required.

In the case of Wicker Riverside, pressure from development and regeneration, the Action Plan is required in advance of that programme. The objectives of the Action Plan are fully supportive of the policies of the emerging Sheffield Development Framework and it will act as an intermediary document while the SDF is being prepared, as well as being material consideration in the planning process.

Page 5 of the UDP acknowledges that its policies are statements of principle and other material considerations must be weighed before reaching a decision. The Wicker Riverside Action Plan will be an example of this and it recommends a departure from the existing UDP framework as follows:-

The UDP seeks to protect the predominantly industrial nature of much of the study area under policy IB5. Policy S3 includes Wicker within the 'Central Shopping Area' and states that the preferred uses shall be shops, offices used by the public, food and drink outlets and housing. Achieving an appropriate mix of land uses in the secondary/tertiary retail area is vital and whilst future SDF policies must protect Wicker's retail role they also require sufficient flexibility to facilitate change between A1 – A3/A4 uses where there is a

strong regeneration case for doing so. Currently Wicker is predominantly A3.

Given the mixed use nature of the opportunities at Blonk Street, Nursery Street and along the Inner Relief Road, the Action Plan proposes principles for the development of the area in terms of:

- ◆ land-use – creating a presumption in favour of development predominantly within the Classes B1(a) and C3, and open space particularly in the areas shown on the Proposed Land Use Plan. Other uses could also be promoted as part of the wider mix, such as small scale shops (A1), other business uses (B1b and B1c) and open space.
- ◆ mix of uses – encouraging developers to bring forward proposals for mixed use development encompassing a combination of the above uses and promoting the mixture of uses both vertically and horizontally within blocks; however the new policy framework will encourage small scale A1 and A3/A4 uses to locate in Wicker, Nursery Street and the Arches in preference to other parts of the area.
- ◆ active frontages – encouraging developers to make provision for active ground floor frontages to animate the street and create a vibrant, safe environment for pedestrians.

- ◆ development density, height and massing – promoting higher density development along the edges of the area and lower density development within the central core.
- ◆ movement and circulation – establish the principle of Stanley Street and Wicker as the local distributors of the area and access arrangements for parts of the Action Plan area.
- ◆ public transport – establish good public transport access to the area and create a presumption in favour of developments which minimise use of the private car and demonstrate how they will encourage sustainable transport.
- ◆ off-street parking – maximum parking ratios in accordance with the SDF for all developments and accessible and inclusive design of parking facilities for disabled people.
- ◆ public realm – creating a policy environment for new public realm proposals including Nursery Street Riverside Open Space.
- ◆ flooding – new developments will require comprehensive flood risk assessment, especially in the light of the June 2007 flooding in Sheffield, and be designed to protect against high risk flooding but in a comprehensive framework.

Developers will be required to make significant contributions to deliver the infrastructure and facilities required to deliver the successful regeneration of the Wicker Riverside area under Section 106/Section 278 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The SDF allocates land uses in Wicker Riverside as shown on the Proposed Land Use Plan at the end of this section. Wicker Riverside area is shown split into 3 distinct allocations, a description of which follows:

#### **Priority Office Area**

- ◆ Offices (B1a) forming at least 70% of gross floor space  
Further Offices (B1a), Small Shops (A1) and Housing (C3) could make up the rest.

#### **Business Area**

- ◆ Offices (B1a) forming at least 50% of gross floor space  
Further Offices (B1a), Small Shops (A1), other Business Uses (B1b and B1c) and Housing (C3) could make up the rest.

#### **Business and Housing Area**

- ◆ Offices (B1a) forming at least 20% of gross floor space  
Housing (C3) forming at least 30% of gross floor space

Further Offices (B1a), Small Shops (A1), other business uses (B1b and B1c) and open space could make up the rest.

### **City Centre Master Plan 2007**

The 2007 City Centre Master Plan Review proposes the creation of a number of new or extended business areas, including Central Riverside which would comprise the West Bar, Exchange Riverside, Nursery Street and Blonk Street sites and would particularly provide for the professional, legal and financial sectors.

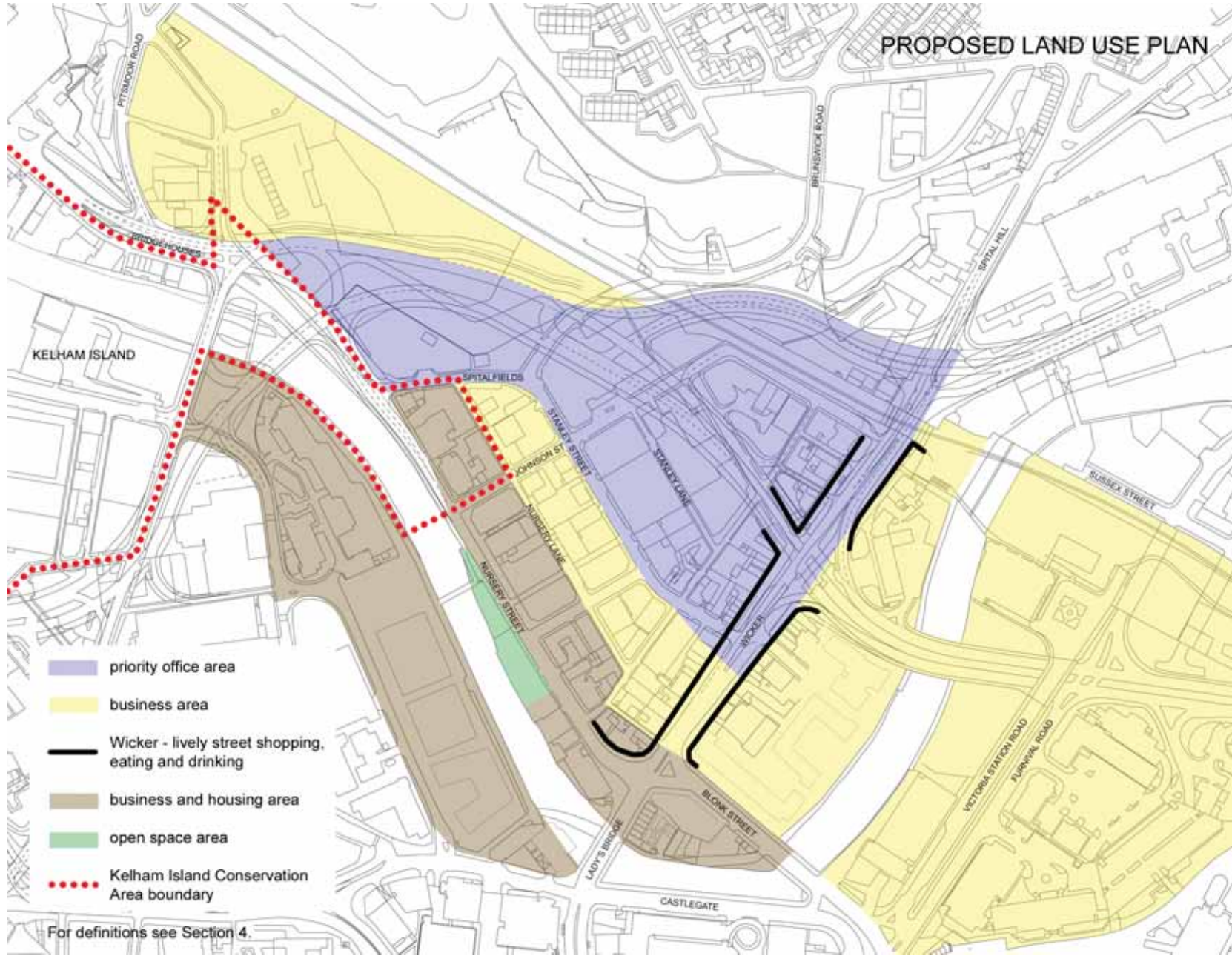
The Master Plan also recognises the importance of improving pedestrian links to and within the Central Riverside area and the role of enhanced public realm in stimulating confidence and investment.

### **Urban Design Compendium**

The UDC identifies some important principles for the Wicker Riverside Area.

These include:

- ◆ encouraging active ground floor uses where appropriate.
- ◆ ensuring all new river-front buildings address the river in their siting and design.
- ◆ retain references to the City's industrial/riverside heritage through



PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

conservation and re-use of historic buildings and structures.

- ◆ utilise the opportunities presented by the Inner Relief Road to reclaim streets and spaces for the pedestrian and cyclist.
- ◆ encourage innovative architecture, which complements the historic urban form/character of the area and helps to establish a new identity.
- ◆ use consistent building materials which reflect the character of the area.
- ◆ create a sense of enclosure and continuity through built form.
- ◆ the scale and form of the traditional works and warehouses could be adopted as the basis for new buildings to achieve this – generally buildings should be 2 – 6 storeys in height.

Affordable Housing Interim Planning Guidance (1996)

This document sets out the City Council's requirements for the provision of affordable housing across the city, which in brief is that affordable housing will be negotiated for development which deliver more than 25 residential units or for a development on a site in excess of 1Ha. The full policy can be found at [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk).

## 5. REGENERATION CONTEXT

### **Burngreave Ward**

Wicker Riverside falls within the Burngreave Ward, which incorporates two neighbourhoods to the north and west of the city. The residential community of Burngreave lies to the north and east of Wicker and Nursery Street, severed from the area by the Wicker Arches and steeply rising topography.

The area has a large ethnic minority population, mostly Afro-Caribbean and Pakistani. There are also a number of Somali and Yemeni communities in the area.

Private sector housing in Burngreave is of variable condition with some in a poor state of repair. The commercial heart of Burngreave lies around the District Centre of Spital Hill, to the north east of Wicker.

In 1999 Burngreave secured a £52 million New Deal for Communities programme to target the physical, economic and social regeneration of the area. The masterplan for the area includes proposals to develop a more specialist range of shops and leisure facilities for Spital Hill reflecting the needs of the local minority community as well as a large supermarket serving the wider North Sheffield District, development of the evening economy and provision of workspace.

There is a strong synergy between the vision for Spital Hill and that for the Wicker and the two streets are seen as an axis of regeneration giving Burngreave and its communities access to, and a share in, City Centre regeneration.

The masterplan also identifies proposals for the redevelopment of the Woodside area which lies above the slope to the north of Wicker Riverside. These include development of over 300 new dwellings, creation of a new civic space and workspace.

### **West Bar Development Brief**

In 2005 Sheffield City Council appointed a developer to deliver a mixed-use development at West Bar in the City Centre. The aim is to create an exciting extension of the City Centre, linking to Kelham Island and Wicker.

### **Kelham Island**

This is a fast developing business and residential community. Part of the Kelham Island Conservation Area boundary runs across the river and along Johnson Street, Nursery Lane and Spitalfields.

### **Castlegate**

The Castlegate area lies immediately to the south of the river and is currently characterised by retail uses although it is increasingly home to a broader mix of hotel/leisure development. Lady's Bridge forms an important link between Wicker, Nursery Street and Castlegate.

The markets will be relocating to the Moor in 2009 and this will create an opportunity to reconsider the long-term future of the area, to enhance the interpretation of the historic Castle and to strengthen its relationship with the River Don.

### **St Vincents**

Consultants have prepared an Action Plan for this area which seeks to retain a mix of industry and housing, bring forward new development sites including a major opportunity at Hoyle Street and promote restoration of the former St Vincent's Church.

## Cathedral Quarter

The Cathedral Quarter was the centre of medieval Sheffield, later becoming the city's first middle class suburb and is now the City's main professional and business quarter. This area forms a link between the Heart of the City and Riverside/Nursery Street and Wicker.

The Cathedral Quarter Action Plan was produced in 2004, drawing on consultation and existing policy to provide a 10 year vision for the area.

## Victoria Quays

To the east of the Wicker Riverside area lies the Victoria Quays area which has capitalised on its location around the canal basin and has become a focus for hotel/leisure uses and activities, around the restored canal. However, like Wicker Riverside, it has suffered from severance and isolation by being 'outside' the operational Ring Road route.

This situation will be rectified by the completion of the Northern link of the Inner Relief Road and both Wicker and Victoria Quays will then have an opportunity to be fully integrated into the extended City Centre.

## 6. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



PUBLIC CONSULTATION 2004



### COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

#### History

A wide range of community organisations, businesses and individuals were consulted to inform the development of the strategy. Visioning events were held at SADACCA in November 2003, at Forum House in April 2004 and at SADACCA again in September 2005 and May 2007. The local press was also used as a consultation vehicle. These events demonstrated a strong consensus on the challenges facing the area:

- ◆ identity – the area lacks a clear focus or role;
- ◆ environmental quality – key buildings have been neglected and are falling into disrepair and litter/graffiti reinforces poor

perceptions of the area;

- ◆ traffic – Wicker and Nursery Street have operated as a de facto ring road for the City Centre and the volume of through traffic has created a poor environment for pedestrians; there is a lack of short stay parking and widespread illegal parking on footways especially on the Wicker;
- ◆ traffic flows – the one way system also complicates traffic movement within the study area and some retailers report poor access for deliveries or customers;
- ◆ safety – some respondents perceive the area to be unsafe, particularly at night; others perceive a lack of secure car parking, there are also acute problems of drug abuse along the riverside;
- ◆ shopping – a lack of diversity in the range

of neighbourhood services and facilities available, particularly convenience shops;

- ◆ community – uncertainty over the future of key community organisations (eg SADACCA) and how they would fare if the area was 'gentrified'.

Many of those consulted remembered the Wicker Riverside area as a vibrant part of the City Centre, and wanted to see the area returned to its former role. Their aspirations for the area included creating:

- ◆ a place for people with a distinctive sense of character and identity, informed by local history;
- ◆ a safe, well managed and friendly environment for all users (including streets and riverbanks);
- ◆ a high quality public realm with appropriately scaled and designed streets and spaces including Wicker and Nursery Street;
- ◆ the restoration and maintenance of townscape assets including the Wicker Arches and the Station Public House.
- ◆ a more diverse mix of shops in the area building on the success of some of the Wicker's independent traders;
- ◆ more local employment – new office/industrial development and retention of existing businesses;



- ◆ mixed-tenure new housing to attract a balanced new residential community, bringing life to the area outside business hours and help to sustain neighbourhood shops and facilities and more access to and use of the river as a recreational asset.

## URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

### Introduction

The Action Plan sets out an overall direction for the future regeneration of the Wicker Riverside area. However, regeneration will be a long-term process and the Action Plan must be a flexible framework for development, capable of responding to wider changes in the property market and economy.

The Urban Design Framework is a key strand to the Action Plan. It sets out guiding principles for the future development of the area, encompassing:

- land use and built form.
- access and movement.
- public realm.

The Urban Design Framework builds on the established urban form and character whilst creating opportunities for more contemporary architecture and urban design in accord with progressive, urban character of the City Centre.

### Mixed use

The land use strategy aims to strengthen Wicker Riverside area's role and contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the City Centre. This will involve encouraging a more diverse mix of land uses which aim to

- ◆ extend the legal/professional office core of the Cathedral Quarter/West Bar/Riverside Exchange into the study area, both along Nursery Street and along the Inner Relief Road.
- ◆ increase the residential population of the area, building on sustained developer/occupier interest in waterfront housing.
- ◆ build on the increased activity/footfall that this will generate to introduce and support a more diverse mix of retail/leisure provision on Wicker.
- ◆ connect the area with Victoria Quays and the adjoining City Centre hotels to ensure the waterfront provides amenity for visitors to the City.

Adopting a mixed-use approach seeks to prevent 'mono-culture' and to create a stronger mutual dependency between different user groups in the area – e.g. office workers sustaining local shops and services during the day, residents/workers using public transport. However, the area is not self-contained and the extension of activity and footfall from Victoria Quays and the Castlegate area, is critical to the future regeneration of the area.

The strategy also seeks to encourage a mix of uses both horizontally within the blocks and streets and vertically within buildings. This will help to promote active – and safe – streets beyond 9 to 5 hours. Active frontages will be encouraged on Wicker, Blonk Street, Nursery Street and gateway junctions.

The planning system will have a key role to play in encouraging new development and a broader mix of land uses within the area.

### Layout and urban form

Wicker Riverside already has many of the assets – the river, historic townscape etc – to be a memorable place in the mental map of the City Centre. Creating a hierarchy of streets and spaces is a key element of this approach.

Successful city quarters are often arranged around a 'public face' – one or two primary streets lined with commercial uses, off which smaller streets lead into other, often less public areas. This hierarchy is familiar and easy to understand and allows public transport and other major public facilities to be located where they are accessible – and where people expect them to be.

The urban design framework seeks to emulate this, concentrating development and public realm improvements to reinforce the primary role of Wicker and Nursery Street/Blonk Street and the new frontage of the Inner Relief Road:

- ◆ the waterfront – the edge of the study area – is the primary location for housing and associated leisure users where developer/occupier demand is also strongest.
- ◆ office uses are proposed to take advantage of the high profile that the Inner Relief Road will lend to the corridor of buildings on either side.

Within the context of a mixed use approach, the spatial distribution of land uses seeks to minimise conflicts between different land uses/user groups (e.g. residential/leisure) through:

- ◆ promoting the use of ground floor corner buildings as appropriate locations for food and drink or entertainment uses which do not always co-exist comfortably with housing; these locations are also highly appropriate for leisure uses in their own right as important nodes on pedestrian desire lines.
- ◆ promoting greater storey heights along both sides of the IRR, buffering the core of the site from intense traffic movement and associated noise.

## Sustainability

Sustainable development is one of the fundamental principles of the current planning system and it is important that all new



NORTHBANK DEVELOPMENT

development in the Wicker Riverside area is sustainable and meets the challenge of climate change. Sustainability needs to be considered at the beginning of the design process not only through high quality design and construction and the protection and enhancement of Sheffield's natural environment but also in terms of providing a range of transport options, reinforcing the City's communities and revitalising the local economy.

Any development in Wicker Riverside must therefore meet the City Council's aspirations in terms of sustainability. For specific guidance please refer to the Council's website [www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/development-control/making-an-application/sustainability-guidance](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/development-control/making-an-application/sustainability-guidance).

### *Energy efficiency ICO2*

At least 10% of the predicted annual energy requirements of new developments should be met by local renewable or low carbon energy sources. There are a number of different technologies available including solar (thermal panels, photovoltaic panels), bio-mass fuelled community heating and combined heat and power (CHP).

**Water efficiency**

New developments must implement water use minimisation design and management both for internal and external water consumption. Rainwater harvesting, grey water recycling and low water use toilets, showers and taps should all be considered. For further information see [www.breeam.org](http://www.breeam.org)

**Surface Water Management**

Drainage systems should be developed in line with the ideals of sustainable development by balancing the different issues that should be influencing the scheme design. Surface water drainage methods that take account of quantity, quality and amenity issues are collectively referred to as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS). Urban drainage is moving away from the conventional thinking of designing for flooding to balancing the impact of urban drainage on flood control, quality management and amenity.

**Materials**

Developers will be expected to use building materials and construction and management techniques that use high recycle content and low embodied carbon materials, including

the use of recycled aggregates.

Developers should also consider the environmental impact of construction and finishing materials, eg ensuring up-to-date and authentic timber certification, locally sourced natural materials etc.

**Waste Management**

Developers should have a site waste management plan in place during construction of new developments in the Wicker Riverside area. At least 10% of the total value of materials used in construction projects must be derived from recycled and re-used content in the products and materials selected. Developers should also demonstrate that they have identified and implemented the most effective opportunities to increase the value of materials derived from recycled and reused content, and quantify the improvement made. Developers will be expected to use the Waste and Resources Action Programme's (WRAP) recycled content tool kit, or similar, at the design stage.

**Building for Life**

Developers should incorporate the principles recommended by CABE in their 'Building for Life' guidance. These principles set standards for building design in four areas:

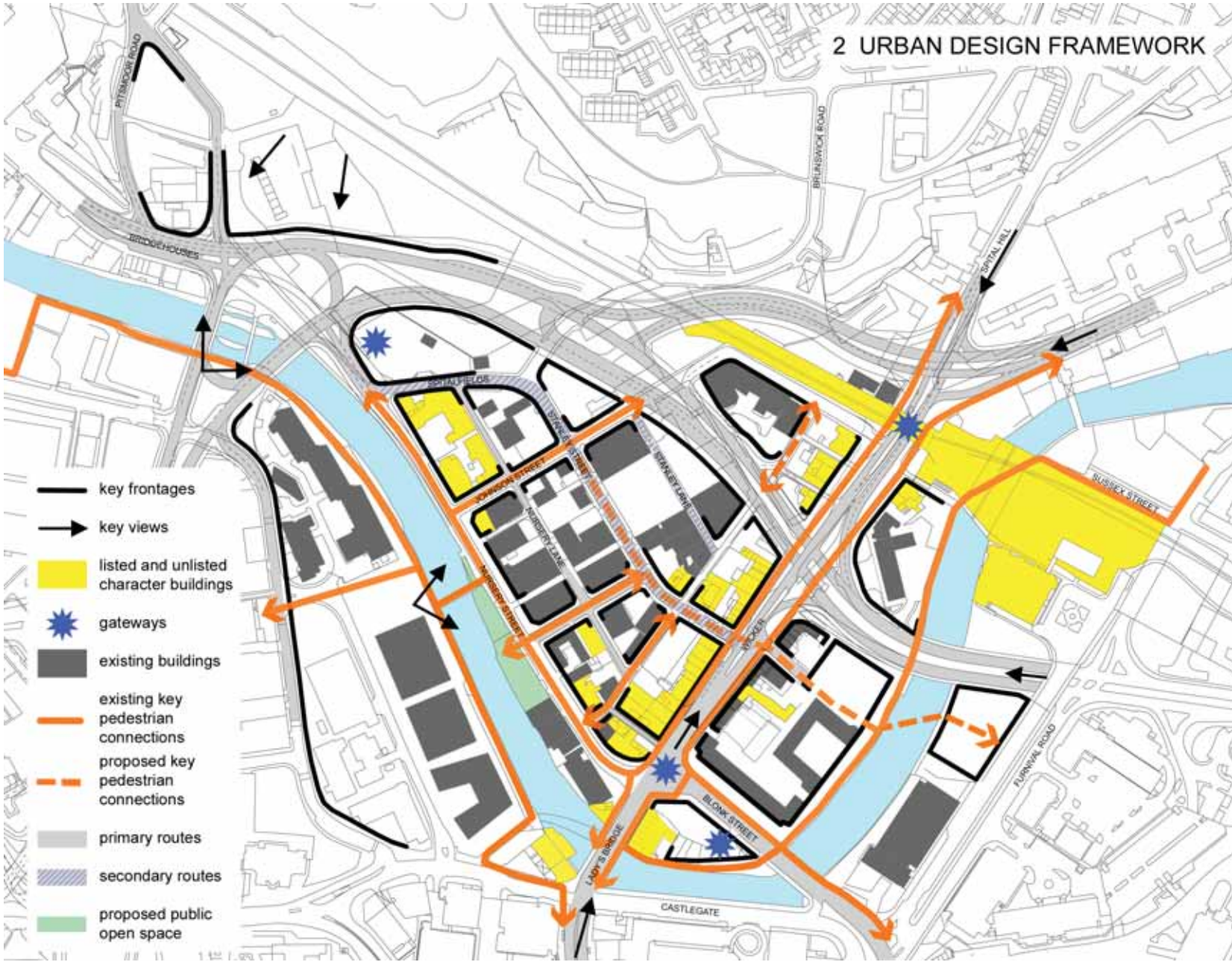
- the character of the development
- design and construction
- roads, parking and pedestrianisation
- environment and community.

See [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk) for further information.

**Density, height and massing**

The relationship between development density and built form is critical and neither can be considered in isolation. Current development densities are comparatively low for an edge of City Centre area and this is a contributing factor to the lack of activity/vibrancy at street level.

There is potential to incorporate more intense forms of development in parts of the study area, particularly where this will support or reinforce the provision of local shops/services or public transport nodes. The Action Plan seeks to achieve a balance between encouraging higher densities/taller buildings and retaining and protecting key views, including those along Wicker to the Wicker Arches and from Nursery Street across the river.



2 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

2 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Five or six storeys would be acceptable in those parts of the area more able to absorb taller buildings, primarily along the ring road and at Bridgehouses where the topography is more steeply sloping.

The IRR presents an opportunity to gain a front window to the area by breaking up the built form along its length to allow views in. The IRR proposals and associated site assembly/clearance on the Spital Hill side of the Arches will enhance the setting of Wicker Arches and this is an important opportunity.

### Preserving townscape character

A number of key buildings are proposed for enhancement/improvement and/or re-use, particularly along the key spines of Wicker and Nursery Street. Priorities include:

- Wicker Arches – repaired in 1990 but in need of enhanced maintenance.
- Station Hotel and 85-93 Wicker
- SADACCA building on Wicker
- The Riverside Hotel at the junction of Wicker/Nursery Street
- Various art deco industrial buildings with the potential for conversion.

## Access and movement

### Strategy

The Inner Relief Road will significantly reduce through traffic in the area – which should allow improved access for pedestrians, public transport and the private car. Some of the shops/food outlets on the Wicker are dependent on passing trade, whether by car or on foot. The aim is to compensate for losing passing traffic by creating an improved environment, parking and signage.

The access and movement strategy provides for a high level of accessibility by all modes and connectivity with adjacent parts of the City. The aim is to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists take priority over the car, which currently dominates the area. The objectives are to

- ◆ retain vehicular access and improve parking within the area whilst reducing the negative impacts of through traffic.
- ◆ optimise the regeneration benefits of high levels of public transport accessibility/connectivity.
- ◆ enhance levels of pedestrian accessibility and permeability through and within the area and reduce obstacles to movement.
- ◆ extend the Connect Sheffield project to make the IRR, other routes and car parking provision more legible for visitors.

Building on the framework established by the IRR, a clear hierarchy of routes is proposed to allow easy access to all parts of the area; this will be reinforced through the design and public realm treatment for these routes:

- ◆ The Inner Relief Road, which has the primary function of removing traffic whilst facilitating appropriate levels of access to the area; the IRR will serve as an important corridor around the edge of the City Centre, creating new development sites along its length. This will retain the design and appearance of a major urban route defined by landscaping, quality materials and well-designed street furniture (including lighting), but will not form a barrier to movement on foot.
- ◆ As the waterfront is opened up for development over the next five years, Nursery Street will be downgraded from being the main vehicular route to provide local access only and a part-pedestrianised space, with a dramatically improved relationship with the river.
- ◆ Wicker – its role will be reinforced as a key spine for public transport/pedestrian/ cycle access to the City Centre through the Action Plan area via Lady's Bridge; although local access will remain available for the private car, through traffic (except buses) will be discouraged by a bus gate; this affords a significant opportunity to

redistribute road space to the pedestrian through wider footpaths and provide limited on-street parking.

- ◆ Stanley Street will function as the access loop for the area following the downgrading of Nursery Street and as such, a consistent treatment of materials, lighting and street furniture is required. Stanley Street can provide for ample public realm, pedestrian and cycle space along both sides and lighting/street furniture will help to create a coherent space with special attention to detailing at pedestrian crossings.
- ◆ Other routes will see a deliberate restraint on traffic movement, with reduced carriageway widths and reduce vehicle speeds to 20 mph where possible.

### **Public Transport**

The integration of public transport with the built environment and with the lifestyles of those living, working and visiting the area can play a major role supporting the regeneration of the area. Most of the Action Plan area lies within 200 metres of a bus stop.

Wicker is soon to be part of a Quality Bus Corridor in Sheffield, which links Barnsley Road to Burngreave Road, Spital Hill and Wicker. Based on current timetables around 60 buses per hour in each direction would

pass through the proposed Wicker bus gate. When Nursery Street is downgraded, it is proposed to transfer the bus routes currently using Nursery Street to Stanley Street.

The City Centre Transport Strategy proposes a bus mini interchange on the Wicker, comprising high quality bus stops/shelters and 'Connect' passenger information. This has the potential to make a strong contribution to the regeneration of Wicker. Contributions to the extension of the system will be sought from major developments.

The location and design of new bus stops along Stanley Street and elsewhere in the Action Plan area will be critical. Where possible, they should be fully integrated with new development to provide ready surveillance for those waiting for services.

### **Walking/Cycling**

Wicker Riverside is the focus of pedestrian routes to the City Centre, to the canal basin and along the river walkways to Kelham and to the Lower Don Valley and the Trans Pennine Trail for walkers and cyclists. These routes have previously been severed by traffic.

Strengthening linkages between the area, the City Centre and adjoining neighbourhoods will

play a critical role in increasing footfall and revitalising the area. It is proposed to expand the network of pedestrian and cycle routes within and through the area, including:

- ◆ improved quality connection to the Upper Don Walk (through lighting, paving etc) and extending pedestrian access to the waterfront along the eastern bank of the Don along Nursery Street and to the rear of Blonk Street. The aim is to create a green open space adjacent to the River at Nursery Street.
- ◆ a new footbridge as part of the Blonk Street riverside site proposals to improve links between Kelham, Wicker and Victoria Quays.
- ◆ pedestrian/cycle routes which connect with the planned pedestrian crossings of the IRR, including the linear footway along Wicker to Spital Hill and Burngreave; cycle lanes are included in the IRR proposals and the riverside route provides an effective leisure cycling opportunity.
- ◆ cycle parking provision is recommended throughout the area within developments and adjacent to key points of activity.

The Sheffield-Manchester railway line that lies along the Wicker Arches is currently used for freight. South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and other parties have identified the potential to re-open the line for passenger

services to provide additional capacity on the pressurised trans-pennine route. There are competing proposals to close the link and integrate it with the network of cycle paths. This would create new opportunities to connect the area with other parts of the City Centre.

### **Car Parking**

The IRR will increase the accessibility of the Wicker Riverside area for public transport and pedestrians. At the same time the regeneration of the area is also stimulating new development and creating confidence in the property market. A balanced approach to car parking is proposed which:

- ◆ retains the confidence of existing retailers and other businesses operating in the area.
- ◆ meets the reasonable requirements of future developers, investors and occupiers subject to national, regional and local guidance.
- ◆ delivers an appropriate balance of short and long-term provision to meet local needs.
- ◆ recognises the practical limits of private car use and promotes other choices of travel, eg bus, walking, cycling.

Parking guidelines in the UDP and SDF for new office developments in the City Centre specify a maximum of 1 space per 100 sq metres of gross floor area.

However, in the long term this is not sustainable – and more recent government guidelines and trends in city living suggest a much lower level of provision is appropriate. Car Clubs and car sharing schemes are a sustainable alternative, with growing success and popularity among city dwellers and will be encouraged in future developments for both residents and business.

A mix of on-street and consolidated public off-street parking is proposed, much of which will replace car parking lost through redevelopment (eg Blonk Street). The action Plan proposes a new multi-storey car park off Stanley Street to the rear of Aizlewood's Mill to serve the core of the Action Plan area. This has a potential capacity of up to 500 spaces and should form part of the private development of the Stanley Street site.

### **Public Realm**

The study area has suffered from poor quality spaces which have typically presented a hostile environment to pedestrians and cyclists. The predominance of traffic and the inhuman scale of the local highway network are major factors.

The area lacks a clear hierarchy of public spaces or consistency in the treatment of the public realm. The public realm opportunities associated with the waterfront are not being realised, with notable exceptions including the Cobweb Bridge.

It is proposed to redress this position and to place high quality public realm at the very heart of the regeneration strategy for Wicker Riverside. This is not just because the public realm can play a major role in creating a new structure for the area. Investment in the quality of the public realm will help sustain and enhance development values over time.

The concept of permeability is critical to the creation of successful places. Permeability is enhanced where development blocks are smaller, thereby increasing the frequency and choice of routes and creating a finer grained environment. It is proposed to create a hierarchy of new and improved streets and public spaces which will become a focus of activity and interaction – and improve pedestrian permeability through the area.

Key public realm areas are:-

- **Wicker – which retains its role as the focus of the area, including Lady’s Bridge**
- **Wicker Arches - Gateway to the area**
- **Nursery Street Riverside**
- **Inner Relief Road**
- **Blonk Street Riverside**

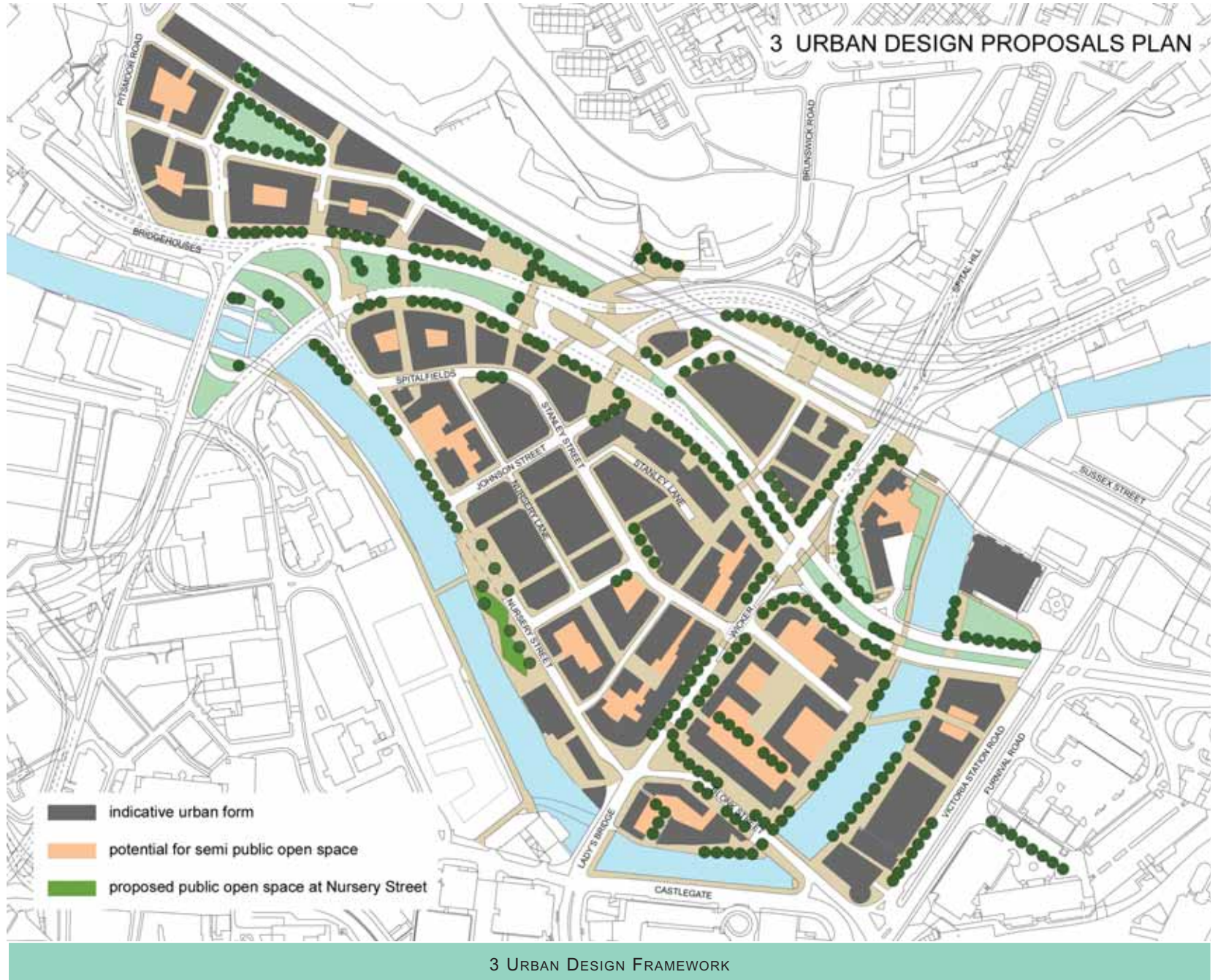
The proposals create a range of spaces of different scales and for a variety of activities. They are predominantly hard landscaped areas with more limited soft landscaping. These spaces will naturally vary in design according to the character of surrounding development.

The new spaces are proposed to be enclosed by a range of uses so that as far as possible, they are in active use for at least 18 hours a day. This is achieved through enclosure and a continuous built frontage around the edge of the block, which also encourages casual surveillance of the space.

It is also proposed to create a number of smaller scale/informal public spaces including:

- ◆ Small formal spaces created by deliberately increasing the setback of one or more buildings, including planned spaces at street junctions and/or linked to corner buildings, for example at the corner of Blonk Street and Lady’s Bridge.
- ◆ Gentle pavement widening created by a curved building line to provide an informal space.
- ◆ Public art and lighting as integrated street features – including the replacement of lighting at Lady’s Bridge.
- ◆ Street trees and planting beds to enhance the quality of the street scene;
- ◆ Small designated areas for on-street parking.





# 7. DELIVERY

## PRIORITY PROJECTS

### Introduction

This section of the Action Plan identifies a series of transformational projects that, collectively, can kick-start regeneration of the Wicker Riverside area over the five years from 2007/8. Some represent short-term opportunities for private sector development /investment building on prevalent market conditions across the City and increasing developer interest in the study area.

Others – for example public realm proposals – are unlikely to generate a commercial return for the private sector by themselves and will

require public sector pump priming. There may also be a role for the community or voluntary sector – for example Burngreave NDC, Groundwork Sheffield, the River Stewardship Company the Five Weirs Trust or Upper Don Trust – in taking forward some of the proposals and attracting additional resources.

Individually and cumulatively, these proposals will play a major role in building developer/investor confidence and certainty in the long-term prospects of the area. They will also help existing retailers and businesses to remain, and encourage others to relocate.

The Inner Relief Road will result in a major reduction in through traffic using Wicker and will create the opportunity to re-instate Wicker

to its former prominence as an important gateway to the City for public transport and pedestrians. Wicker will continue to be an important public transport route and will also provide access to Stanley Street for visiting vehicles.

The challenge is multi-dimensional: to optimise the benefits of the IRR proposals for an improved pedestrian environment and to achieve increased footfall and to revitalise the economic role of the area, attract more businesses and create more jobs.

The vision for Wicker encompasses a street which retains its core functions – food and drink and specialist retail – but has developed a much more diverse mix of activity encompassing new bars, cafes and convenience stores serving City Centre offices and housing. The aim is to bring back uses to upper floors of buildings on Wicker and to gateway key buildings. More specialist independent shops are also proposed. The key interventions are:

- 1 Wicker Smithfields Streetscape Programme**
- 2 Wicker Facelift Scheme**
- 3 Wicker Arches**
- 4 Nursery Street Riverside**



ARTISTS IMPRESSION OF VIEW ALONG WICKER

A clear public realm strategy is required to demonstrate that change is taking place, building developer / investor / occupier confidence in the future of the area.

Management and maintenance of the public realm and river areas is important and it is planned that large developments will contribute through S106 contributions and voluntary subscriptions to the River Stewardship Company.

These investments will be required to provide the catalyst for the economic benefits – new businesses and jobs that will flow from them.

## 1: Wicker Smithfields Streetscape

High quality streetscape improvements will provide an appropriate setting for Wicker's historic buildings and structures, redefining Wicker as a high quality, multi-functional space with a stronger focus on the needs of the pedestrian. Wicker will be transformed from a heavily trafficked thoroughfare into an attractive, linear urban space and gateway to and from the City Centre.

The IRR scheme will deliver the first stage of traffic improvements to Wicker and the new bus gate. These will be augmented through

proposals to widen footpaths and create consistent treatment of the streetscape and by introducing street trees and high quality street lighting. Funding has been obtained from Yorkshire Forward to extend treatment to Lady's Bridge and Blonk Street and a new footbridge to Smithfields.

The proposals will provide a consistent streetscape treatment with widened footpaths to accommodate pedestrian flows, particularly



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF WICKER AS A BUS-ONLY  
ROUTE WITH MAJOR PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

at the key nodes of the Lady's Bridge junction and the junction of Wicker and the IRR. Within this framework, a degree of sub-division is proposed to create a series of distinct but related spaces – Wicker Arches, the bus gate area and Lady's Bridge. The sub-division of Wicker will help to promote pedestrian movement along the street and address the severance effect of the IRR, particularly for the spaces to the north of the new road.

Delineation of the road space will be required to reflect the high frequency of buses using the space. Detailed design of the proposals will also accommodate short term on-street parking between the junction of Wicker/IRR and the bus gate at Stanley Street, specifically for customers of the Wicker businesses.

It is proposed that a new pedestrian bridge will be built over the River at the Northbank development to link Victoria Quays and

## 1: Wicker Smithfields Streetscape

**Next steps:** City Council to commission enhanced streetscape proposals to build on IRR works.

**Total cost:** £2.8 million + bid to Yorkshire Forward S106/S278 contributions required from adjoining developments.

**Funding:** City Council

**Phasing:** 2007/8

Smithfields with the Wicker Riverside area. This new linkage will also form part of the Kelham Island to Victoria Quays pedestrian route.

## 2: Wicker Facelift Scheme

Many premises on Wicker are in disrepair or display poor quality shop fronts or signage. Property facelift schemes remain a popular means of encouraging landlord investment in the built fabric and improving the appearance of retail and other business premises, particularly in areas where there is a strong conservation interest.

A variety of works can be grant aided where they will improve the appearance of the property, enhance the commercial floor space of the business or support provision of disabled access to meet the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.



TYPICAL BUILDING ON WICKER SUITABLE FOR THE FACELIFT SCHEME

Implementing a pilot facelift scheme would complement proposals for streetscape enhancements in Wicker. It is proposed to establish a three year pilot programme targeting 20 properties and providing grant support of up to 75% of capital costs to a ceiling of £10,000 per unit. The programme should include local landmark buildings such as the Riverside Hotel and Station public house.

## 3: Wicker Arches

Railway arches are an important form of affordable workspace in many UK cities and there have been a number of successful regeneration schemes. In Wicker, the Arches are an important visual gateway to the City Centre and a key element of the townscape character.

Many of the Arches are currently unused and suffer from extensive graffiti, overgrowing vegetation and problems of damp. The IRR has exposed an unattractive facade of the viaduct but also affords the opportunity for restoration and refurbishment of the Wicker Arches, recreating a dual aspect through the works on the Spital Hill side and using their new prominence on one of the main gateways to the City Centre.



VICTORIA QUAYS, SHEFFIELD - EXAMPLE OF USE OF ARCHES

### 2: Wicker Facelift Scheme

**Next steps:** City Council/Renaissance South Yorkshire/SY Business Link to identify target properties and design grant scheme.

**Total cost:** £250,000 inc management.

**Funding:** City Council

**Phasing:** 2008/9

Refurbishment of the Arches for a mix of workspace/studio space and food and drink provision would form the centre piece of a comprehensive scheme for the northern end of Wicker that would also encompass:

- ◆ comprehensive public realm works to the area between the IRR and the Arches, including the part closure of Walker Street, with controlled access for service vehicles only, this would allow some of the activity contained within the Arches to spill out onto the street.
- ◆ development of the gap site on Walker Street created by the construction of the IRR (situated between the new road and the Arches). Development of this site will require sensitive treatment to minimise visual impact on the arches.



ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE ARCHES

### 3: Wicker Arches

**Next steps:** City Council to liaise with owners and prepare development brief for the Arches and Walker Street site.

**Total cost:** Arches refurbishment £2.5million; public realm £750,000

**Funding:** City Council/Renaissance South Yorkshire/Transform South Yorkshire/Burngreave NDC/private sector

**Phasing:** 2007/8 to 2009/10

Enhancements of Wicker, investment in the Arches and the creation of a new pedestrian terrace will act as a catalyst for the refurbishment and re-use of properties adjoining the Arches, most notably 85-93 Wicker which makes an important contribution to the townscape of the area and lends itself to more intensive leisure or community use. The scheme will create a new focus for the area to the north of the IRR which could suffer from a degree of isolation without intervention.

### 4: Nursery Street Riverside

The IRR will significantly reduce through traffic on Nursery Street and create the opportunity for a high quality waterfront, connected visually and physically to Riverside Exchange and the south side of the Don.

Whilst initially, Nursery Street will continue to

provide the main access to the study area following the opening of the IRR, it is proposed that Stanley Street will become the primary access loop by 2010.

This will create a new and very different setting for development on Nursery Street and will allow a re-balancing of priorities to return street space to the pedestrian. Nursery Street will become a pivotal destination of the riverside axis from Victoria Quays to Kelham Island and from Cathedral Square to the River, via West Bar.

The river wall which abuts Nursery Street is in poor condition and substantial reinstatement works will be required as part of the proposals for Nursery Street Riverside Open Space. Discussions with the Environment Agency will also be required to address the flooding/hydrology issues associated with

proposed terracing. However the scheme has the potential to contribute positively to flood prevention if it is designed to decrease flood risk in other parts of the Action Plan area.

The public realm proposals for Nursery Street could be centred on three main locations; together these areas will form a major linear space although each will be defined separately to promote interest and movement along the street:

- ◆ Mill Place: a relatively intimate space and setting, private with limited public access and closely framed within the built form of the church and the Aizlewood's Mill buildings.
- ◆ Bridge Crossing: focussed on the footbridge over the Don linking Nursery Street to Riverside Exchange, this space could be created by stepping back the existing building line on any new development to allow for better definition of space on Nursery Street.
- ◆ Nursery Street Riverside Open Space: an area of informal greenspace and landscaping created on the riverside and framed to the south east by built frontage creating a protected area for waterside leisure use; part of the area will be stepped down to the river to improve access for fishing and water sports.

The public realm and flood control proposals will serve as a catalyst for redevelopment. Nursery Street already has a number of townscape assets – Aizlewood's Mill, the Church, Old Coroners Court etc – which should be retained and enhanced as part of the scheme. The main development opportunity on Nursery Street is the bounded site by Johnson Street, Nursery Lane and Joiner Street.

Development of this site, alongside the City Wharf scheme and the proposed public realm works, would play a major role in transforming Nursery Street and creating coherent waterfront environment to complement and enhance Exchange Riverside. Formerly in industrial use, this has the potential for mixed use conversion or redevelopment providing a mix of office, residential and leisure uses. Based on a five storey scheme, the site could accommodate up to 14,500 sq.m of new floorspace. Part of the frontage should be developed for A1/A3 uses following the highways downgrading of Nursery Street; these will be encouraged to spill out onto the street creating a continental 'street café' atmosphere.

There is an opportunity to improve access for canoeing upstream from Lady's Bridge to connect with existing trails both upstream and downstream of the Action Plan. This could encompass improvements to the Lady's Bridge Weir – which could impact on the overall hydrology – or to create improved portage at Nursery Street and Blonk Street – to allow safe progress around the weir for canoeists. The Nursery Street Riverside Open Space proposals will include provision of an access ramp to the river.



EXAMPLES OF RIVERSIDE PUBLIC REALM

#### 4: Nursery Street Riverside

**Next steps:** City Council to consider highway proposals for Nursery Street post completion of IRR. City Council/YF to procure detailed public realm design.

**Total cost:** Public realm works up to £8 million, excluding service diversions; potential private investment (Johnson Street site) £18 million.

**Funding:** City Council/YF/SRIP/Interreg3/Environment Agency/Lottery/private sector

**Phasing:** 2008 to 2009/10

## 8. MAKING IT HAPPEN

### FUNDING

The Action Plan identifies 4 priority projects for implementation over the initial five years of the Wicker Riverside regeneration programme.

The regeneration strategy will underpin detailed funding bids to a range of public sector sources including the City Council's own capital programme, Objective 1 and transitional European funding post 2006/07, including Interreg3, Yorkshire Forward, SRIP, the Environment Agency and National Lottery sources. The private sector will also make a significant contribution to the range of facilities serving the area through S106 contributions.

### Phasing

This is a ten-year strategy and it is anticipated that full-scale regeneration of the area will require that timeframe. Whilst there is clear evidence of growth across various sectors of the City's economy and property market, phasing of the development opportunities in the study area will avoid over-supply and fragmenting market interest. Likely phasing of

development activity is as follows:

- ◆ 2007/8: Iquarter redevelopment
- ◆ 2007/8: North Bank redevelopment I & II
- ◆ 2007: completion of Inner Relief Road
- ◆ 2007/8: completion of Wicker streetscape works
- ◆ 2009: North Bank III
- ◆ 2008/9: initial IRR sites come on stream
- ◆ 2009/10: Nursery Street streetscape works
- ◆ 2009/10 Nursery Street/Johnson Street redevelopment
- ◆ post 2010: redevelopment of Bridgehouses sites

### Area management

Evidence from other successful regeneration schemes highlights the importance of long-term area management to coordinate investment in the public realm; provide fine-grained management of the mix of land uses within the area and to animate through events and other activities. The City Council's own approach to the regeneration of the Cultural Industries Quarter provides evidence of the success of this approach.

Wicker Riverside is a small part of the City fabric and in itself is unlikely to be a viable

'neighbourhood unit' to merit a dedicated management programme. However, similar regeneration proposals are emerging for West Bar, Kelham Island, Neepsend and St Vincent's – and this does represent a realistic 'geography' for such an initiative.

The City Council is exploring how it will work with local residents and businesses to improve local management arrangements for the Central Riverside area.

It is proposed that the City Centre Ambassadors scheme will be extended into the Wicker Riverside area in due course. There are also plans to extend the City Centre Street Cleaning regime into this area.

The River Stewardship Company has been set up to manage the River in the Wicker area. Their role will include general maintenance, providing information and advice regarding the river and general control of the area to ensure it can be enjoyed by tenants, visitors etc. Core funding will be obtained from SCC, Interreg3 and the EA.

Voluntary subscriptions from developments in the area will be sought to ensure the



Company's future and continued stewardship of the River.

**Community Involvement**

The preparation of an Action Plan and increased activity in other City Centre areas has often led to the formation of a local forum, and this will be encouraged by the City Council.

The early formation of a Wicker Riverside Forum could help to steer the Action Plan delivery process. The forum would be composed of residents, voluntary/community groups and businesses in the area and other key stakeholders and will play an important role in guiding the delivery of key projects and the overall vision.

The forum could be closely involved in shaping decisions that affect the Wicker Riverside area and will feed up news to the Burngreave Area Panel.

Sheffield City Council, in its role as the planning authority, will strive to ensure all developments are consistent with the vision for the area.

The City Council's City Development Division will also explore all private and public funding opportunities for delivery of this vision, both in terms of physical improvements and business support.

## Action Plan Timeline

Project	2007	2008-2010	2010-2017	Lead Organisation	Potential Funding Source
<b>SHORT TERM</b>					
Final Consultation on Action Plan	✓			SCC	SCC
Adoption of Action Plan	✓			SCC	N/A
Promotion of Action Plan	✓	✓		SCC and Community Groups	
Identify Potential Funding	✓	✓	✓	SCC and YF	N/A
Design and Feasibility Work for Public Realm and Environmental Improvements	✓			SCC	
Local Wicker Riverside Forum to be established		✓		SCC and Community	
IRR construction finishes	✓			SCC, Birse	DTR
Priority Sites development at Blonk Street completed, Phase I, Phase II	✓	✓		Priority Sites	N/A
Artisan development at Blonk Street commences	✓	✓		Artisan	N/A
Investigate flooding and hydrology issues around Nursery Street and Blonk Street riverside bid to YF	✓			SCC	SCC,EA,YF
Bid to YF for Wicker/Smithfields work to start on site	✓			SCC	YF
Partnership to develop key IRR and Riverside sites including multi-storey car park at Spitalfields	✓	✓		SCC	
River Stewardship Company establishment	✓			RSC/Groundwork/SCC	Interreg3, SY Key Fund, EA, SCC private subscription

### Key

EA – Environment Agency • Obj 1 – Objective 1 funding • RSY - Renaissance South Yorkshire • SCC – Sheffield City Council  
 S106 – commuted sums from developers • TSY – Transform South Yorkshire

Project	2007	2008-2010	2010-2017	Lead Organisation	Potential Funding Source
<b>MEDIUM TERM</b>					
City Centre Ambassadors scheme to be extended to Wicker Riverside area		✓	✓	SCC, Local Forum	SCC, private sector
Wicker Facelift Scheme implementation		✓	✓	SCC, RSY	SCC, RSY, English Heritage
Wicker Smithfields Streetscape Programme	✓	✓	✓	SCC	YF
Public Realm Works around Wicker Blonk Street riverside area including new footbridge over River Don	✓	✓	✓	SCC	SCC, S106 contributions, private, sector, SCC LTP
Highways improvements, based on detailed public realm designs, to Nursery Street and Stanley Street, after completion of IRR		✓	✓	SCC	SCC, RSY, Obj 1, Interreg3, EA
Nursery Street Riverside Open Space			✓	SCC	SCC, S106 contributions, YF, Interreg3
<b>LONG TERM</b>					
Wicker and Walker Street Arches refurbishment project		✓	✓	SCC	SCC, RSY, TSY, Burngreave NDC, private sector
Spitalfields Development			✓	SCC	Private Sector
Bridgehouses Site			✓	SCC and National Grid	Private Sector



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