

The Groves Community Plan





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1 Foreword

It's not just about bricks and mortar though: it's about improving people's life chances through better health, well-being and access to services, as well as helping people to build on the sense of community and identity that is seen in The Groves.

Welcome to The Groves Community Plan. Please enjoy reading and thank you very much for taking an interest in the ideas and proposals.

The plan builds on the many lively events and discussions with residents over the last two years and aims to generate thought and activity among people living and working in The Groves, as well as interest and backing from potential funders and supporters of regeneration.

We know that there are great assets and opportunities in The Groves. Many people have emphasised the character and diversity of the area as a strength, and have backed a re-imagining of housing, streets and public open spaces. Evidence from across the United Kingdom shows that good quality housing plays an essential part in helping people to have successful lives.

This community plan sets out a framework for regeneration of The Groves. It draws together ideas for new development and revitalised streets and spaces. There are a number of opportunities for housing-led improvements that would not only meet the needs of residents but also have the potential to reduce public spend. For instance, spaces between buildings could be better utilised by creating new affordable housing, community gardens, outdoor activity areas or playfriendly spaces. These in turn can help to address loneliness and isolation, improve mental well-being and togetherness, increase activity, improve air quality, and increase property value by improving the local environment.

The plan represents a statement of intent on the part of the stakeholders and residents involved. Investment opportunities will be developed further through a focused business and investment plan, and a rolling delivery programme of improvements will be agreed as funding opportunities emerge.

Community-based and Housing-led Regeneration

The importance of housing-led regeneration has never been greater in providing the stimulus for improvements to health and well-being. Health awareness and well-being, loneliness, food instability and homelessness are all high on the agenda of national and local government concern.

A commission for addressing loneliness was set up in 2017 in order to understand the scale and extent of the problem, following the work of Jo Cox MP. According to the work of the commission, more than nine million people in Britain always feel lonely. Three quarters of older people in the UK say they are lonely, and a half have been for years.

This shocking fact is not confined to older people though, and the Jo Cox commission highlights how social isolation cuts across all levels of society with poor, unemployed, disabled and migrant populations tending to suffer the most. Parenting can also be a lonely and isolating experience, with more than half of British parents feeling isolated after the birth of their first child, and this plan proposes a range of new activities and spaces for residents of all ages and backgrounds to come together, socialise and support each other.

Stronger neighbourhoods have significantly less crime and improve our chances of good health. The York Ways to Well-being² project has seen a 32% reduction in doctor appointments through a process of talking to residents about their life, what is important to them and discussing ideas of what might help. Twenty-one percent of residents increased their physical exercise after accessing the service.

The Groves Community Plan builds on national discussions and concludes that there is a very high cost attached to doing nothing. The time is now right to create a better environment and community for everyone in The Groves.

Design interventions, activities designed to create cohesion, opportunities to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers and places to

meet all have the potential to address loneliness, improve mental and physical health and decrease anti-social behaviour.

Even reducing inactivity by 10% could save around £330,000 every year in The Groves, and this community plan put forward a range of improvements and opportunities in order to build on work already happening.

The Groves Community Plan has happened because of the hard work of many members of the local community over the last two years, especially residents, The Groves Association, St. Thomas' Church, Door 84, Park Grove Primary School and the John Lally International Foundation. With this community plan we are now building on that valuable work with our joint desire to see change and make things happen.

Upon request this report can be made available in various languages.

¹ Case Study: The Frome Model of Enhanced Primary Care <https://shiftdesign.org/case-study-compassionate-frome/> ² York Ways to Wellbeing 'The Impact of Social Prescribing in York', January 2019. https://www.yorkcvs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/WTW_Evaluation_A4_FinalPDFElectronic.pdf



Fig. 1 Resident comments from the first engagement event

2 Summary

The Groves Community Plan recognises the importance of the local community in leading improvements to the area. Five key themes have been identified through ongoing discussion and consultation with people who live and work in The Groves and our collective ambitions for these are summarised here.

Green Spaces

We have known for some time now that good quality natural landscape in urban areas can affect how people feel. It can help reduce stress and sadness, lifts the mood and makes us feel better.

There are physical benefits from green space, to improved air quality, reduced wind speeds, less noise pollution and reduced risks from flooding and heat-waves. There are also benefits to active users of these spaces, whether that is physical recreation, community gardening or through children and adults connecting and interacting with nature.

Health & Well-being

Good health and well-being is of central importance to The Groves Community Plan and to the people who live and work in The Groves. We know that well designed activities, services, homes, streetscapes and green spaces can improve health and well-being.

Research shows that people are at their happiest living in inclusive communities, both socially and also spatially, with open and accessible amenities, ensuring that the whole community benefits.

Community Hub

Recent consultations with the local community have made it clear that Lowther Street has become a community focus for The Groves. The community plan intends to strengthen this by



proposing plans for a new community and well-being centre and by strengthening the primary functions of Lowther Street as the focus of social activity.

Residents are very keen to see Lowther Street developing as a community hub, and initiatives to enable this are being supported. The feasibility and viability of a new community

centre is being investigated, and potential improvements to the street are being assessed.

Movement Network

It is clear that there are many benefits associated with clear movement and good connectivity. Less congested car dominated streets lead to much improved safety, air quality and an increased desire for residents and workers to walk and cycle. The benefits of regular walking and cycling are well documented in terms of improved physical and mental health, and can also boost mood and alleviate depressive symptoms.

As well as improving individual health, less car dominated streets can help to make an area more attractive and improve safety for walking and cycling through. Safe and attractive links to green spaces could be created and existing desire lines enhanced.

Homes

Creating safe and decent homes can have incredibly positive effects on a family's health, on the study habits of students, and on a neighbourhood's overall attractiveness and stability.

With so much at stake, it is time for our definition of decent housing to expand to include a range of solutions: new housing, housing repair and renovation, improvements to the local environment. This is what we are working towards in The Groves with a community backed and housing-led regeneration approach.

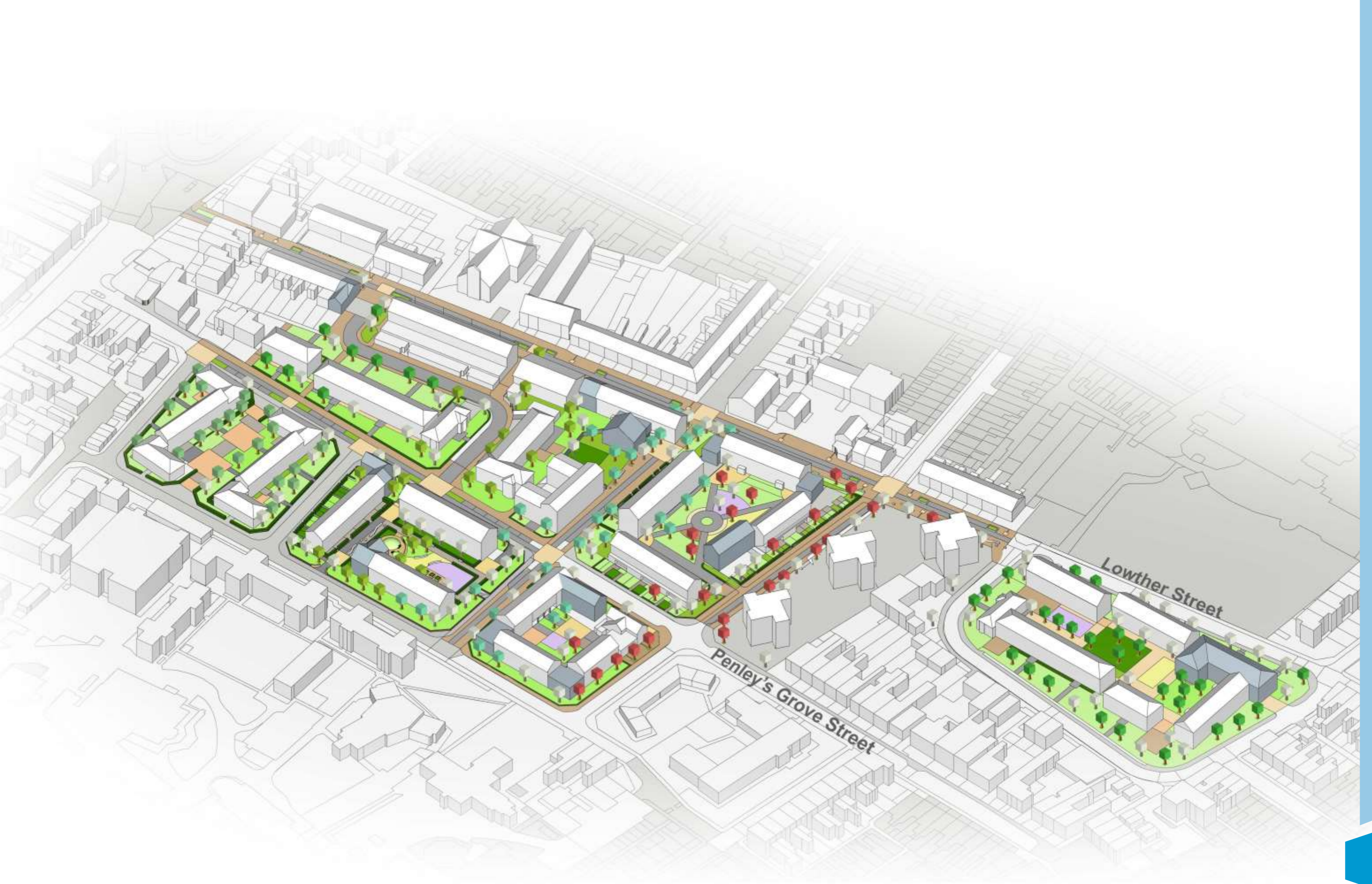


Fig. 2 Aerial view of the complete community plan



Health & Well-being

More events and activities will be aimed at addressing inactivity, loneliness and isolation in The Groves. This has started already with the funding of Move the Masses, a physical activity initiative set up in The Groves and tailored to suit people who are inactive, lonely and often with poor mental health and low income. This has been developed alongside community planting projects which are involving local residents in a friendly and supportive environment.

Activities and learning opportunities will be advertised and organised through the community website Live Well York³, The Groves Association newsletter and website and The Groves Community Partnership emails. In addition to the Move The Masses initiative, a project to develop child and parent self-esteem, resilience and increased awareness of options for education, employment, training and volunteering, Bright Sparks, has also been funded and is now running in The Groves.

It is a priority ambition of The Groves Association to set up a new health and well-being hub in the heart of The Groves, with services accessible for everyone. There are venues for community activities, at Door 84 and St. Thomas' Church. A new health and well-being hub would complement these.

The health and wellbeing consequences of heavy traffic passing through The Groves is a big concern within the community, with standing traffic causing pollution and the community being effectively divided by through traffic. Many residents have suggested the closure of estate roads to through traffic to improve air quality and provide safer, more sociable streets.

³Live Well York website for information and advice on local activities and services <https://www.livewellyork.co.uk/s4s/WhereILive/Council?pageId=2251&lockLA=True>

In response to this strong message, studies have started to examine and assess the potential to reduce traffic around the estate to inform future options to reduce traffic and make The Groves a healthier, more pleasant place to live.

'Safer routes for all' and more pedestrian priority routes are planned to encourage residents to select the more healthy transport options of walking and cycling and to improve the environment and sociability of the local streets.



Fig. 3 Healthy community



Fig. 4 An early sketch of an improved Lowther Street



Green Spaces

Work with residents has highlighted the need for better green spaces in The Groves and, in response to this, the proposals include greatly improved areas to grow and tend gardens, socialise, play, meet together, sit and relax.

Building on existing community gardening activity there will be new community growing schemes. Many residents, as well as local groups and businesses, have backed this and the current Greening The Groves initiative will be developed further in order to support this work. Proposals will include planting trees, shrubs and growing edible plants in planters, as well as areas for community barbecues, picnics and possibly market stalls.

Growing initiatives are also being developed through a community fund grant to support the Flower Power of The Groves project. This will help encourage the growing of seasonal wildflowers and herbs in previously uninspiring spaces as well as pop up flower stalls, lonely bouquet friendship sessions, community lunches and cooking on a budget with grown spice workshops.

Other opportunities will be explored with Tremendous York, Edible York, York Unifying Multicultural Initiative, John Lally International Foundation and other environmental organisations and forums that can contribute to the overall Greening The Groves initiative.

Opportunities are being developed in the area for eco-friendly initiatives such as rainwater harvesting and the planting of more street trees, where technically and financially feasible. Smaller growing trees in tubs will also be considered where it is not possible to plant at ground level, although it is recognised that this does present maintenance challenges.



Fig. 5 Community gardening

An effective and efficient waste management system is also being advanced, in discussion with The Groves Association and others, with more bins for dog walkers and a wider variety of recycling options, including composting and green waste bins.

A new adventure park in Clarence Gardens, designed in close consultation with local schools as part of this regeneration work, was opened in November 2019. For safer access to the park a new pedestrian crossing will be installed across Haxby Road.



Fig. 6 An early sketch idea of an improved courtyard



Movement Network

Residents are keen to see the removal of traffic from beyond The Groves, which currently use Lowther Street, Penley's Grove Street and Townend Street as a through-run. In response to this, and as part of the wider regeneration work, the city council has given the go ahead for an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to run for 18 months from Spring 2020. This will monitor the impact and practicality of removing through traffic on the businesses and the local community.

The area has very narrow carriageways and footways and, due to substantial on-street parking, many streets are only wide enough to accommodate a single vehicle width, creating an unpredictable and unsafe environment for cyclists and pedestrians. To address this the community plan proposes safe routes for all with encouragement given to walking and cycling.

Proposed measures to make the area safer and more sociable include the development of a pedestrian and cycle route, linked to the wider cycle and walking network, new traffic calmed streets and more pedestrian focused street layouts. This is especially important along Lowther Street where the shops are located.



Fig. 7 Road safety

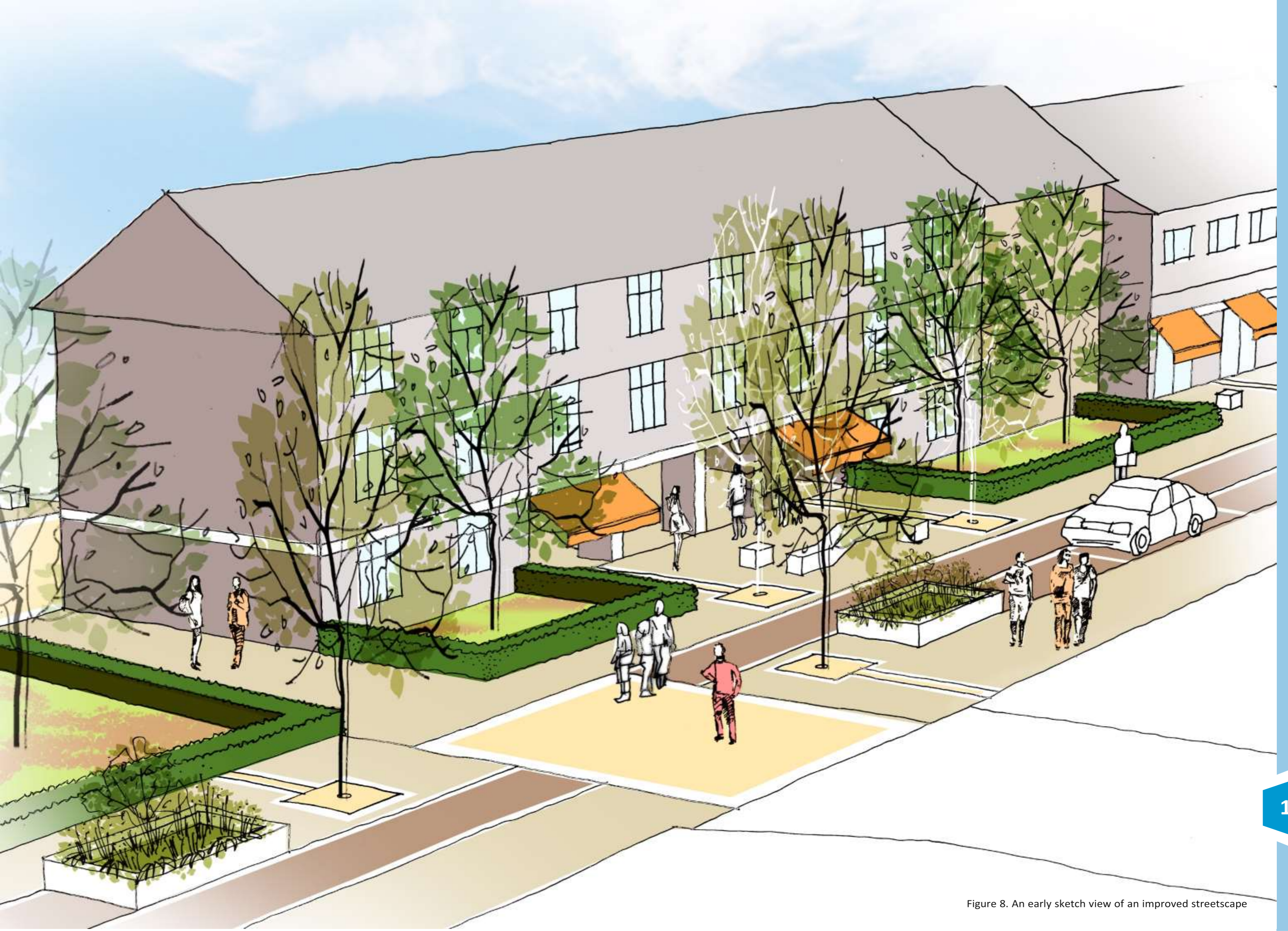


Figure 8. An early sketch view of an improved streetscape



Homes

From feedback through resident surveys and local engagement it is clear that many

residents are open to seeing underused garages and other spaces in The Groves redeveloped for affordable housing. Almost 40 new affordable homes could be built within the estate, making use of unused and underused land, and with the potential to enhance local space and amenity. Investment options are being evaluated, and it is crucial that the opportunity from investment is used to improve existing and create new public spaces around homes.

The open spaces between blocks will be used to create space for play and for residents to relax, surrounded by wild flowers and community food gardens to grow local produce.

As well as improvements to buildings and communal spaces around homes, better and safer connections between homes and shops will be made throughout The Groves. A condition survey of some homes in the area has been undertaken and this work will help to inform decisions on future repairs, modernisation and options for redevelopment.

Residents have options available to be supported, live comfortably, save money and reduce energy consumption in The Groves. These include the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grants for eligible private households to fund cavity wall and loft insulation and City of York Council (CYC) grants for installation of first time gas central heating and boiler replacement, where households have a disabled resident.

The city council can also help residents with making adaptations in their homes in order to reduce the threat and incidents of trips and falls, and to help residents stay safely and comfortable in their homes as they get older.



Fig. 9 Housing



Fig. 10 An early sketch view of a proposed corner site



Community Hub

The feasibility and viability of providing a new community centre and health & well-being hub is being investigated. Residents are very keen to see Lowther Street developing as a community hub around the shops, and initiatives to enable this will be supported.

St Thomas' Church, in Lowther Street, already offers a range of services and activities for residents, and further opportunities will be explored with them. Door 84 Youth Centre provides a very successful hub for younger people, with space for organisations to meet. Continuing close collaborations with Door 84 will help develop more tailored opportunities for the wider community.

Live Well York is an information and advice website for adults and families. It provides a directory of community events and services across York, as well as information and advice on well-being, mental health, supportive care, education, training, employment, volunteering, housing, travel, money and benefits. We will use this service to identify and target activities in The Groves in order to improve the local environment for health and well-being.

To help promote The Groves reinforce its strong identity and encourage those visiting to be considerate, the possibility of "Welcome to The Groves" signs at the entrances to the area will be discussed with The Groves Association and others.

To celebrate the area's heritage and character, research on a community trail through the area is being progressed and, as part of this, local stories are being collected and brought to life. If funding can be confirmed, the trail would bring together a range of local stories and histories, which can be seen, heard or read, at various locations throughout the area. As with the popular Seven Seas Fish Trail in Hull, this initiative will help to acknowledge the unique history of the area and, at the same time, keep people of all ages engaged, active and inspired as they walk around The Groves.



Fig. 11 Community activities at St. Thomas' and Door 84, together with Hull Fish Trail detail



Fig. 12 An early sketch of an improved community hub (Lowther Street)

3 The Groves History

Grove Terrace and several short terraces running north from Lowther Street were the only residential streets in York in the 1850s'.

As York grew during industrialisation so did The Groves. Before demolition of many of the small houses in the 1960's the area was criss-crossed with streets containing numerous shops of every description. Many of the inhabitants had large families and were quite poor but there was a close community spirit.

There is no evidence of prehistoric activity or settlement in The Groves, apart from a probable burial and occupation in the form of ditches and pottery found during several watching briefs on Clarence Street. Evidence for Roman activity is confined to the line of a road located by the presumed North East gate of the legionary fortress. Groves Lane and Grove Terrace Lane may lie on this route, and The Groves Community Heritage Trail could note and display this information.

The area remained largely undeveloped and agricultural throughout the medieval period. Investigations at Union Terrace have provided archaeological evidence of a 13th century Carmelite Friary, superseded in the late 13th century by St. Mary's Hospital and in the 16th century by St. Peter's School. The medieval Horse Fair located on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map may have extended towards Gillygate.

A pepper mill shown on the 1852 map existed in some form until the 1930s, giving its name to Pepper Mill Lane, now known as Haxby Road, which led to the medieval village of Haxby. It was not until the 19th century that large scale expansion began between the city walls and Lowther Street, containing working class and middle class terraced housing.

Nineteenth century York saw the development of clearly defined areas. At the bottom of the social scale were tightly packed districts like Walmgate, whose population was increased by the arrival of Irish people. Although numbers were falling, the Irish population still made up a considerable amount of the population. In 1901, people living in these areas made up part of the 20,302 persons living in conditions defined by Rowntree as "primary or secondary poverty"⁴ and who formed 28 % of the city's population.

Elsewhere, in the newer working-class districts such as The Groves, there was a substantial proportion of similarly defined "poor"³ inhabiting the long rows of back-to-back houses. However, in these areas they were mixed with some of the 26,452 persons whom Rowntree regarded as "working classes above the poverty line"³. These people lived either in the same sort of back-to-back house or in the rows of working-class houses among the best of which were those of the well-to-do artisans with bay windows, little railed-in front gardens, and small backyards.

Grove Terrace and several short terraces running North from Lowther Street were the only residential streets in the 1850s. By the mid-19th century development extended to Lowther Street, including Harrisons almshouses, a hospital for widows, on Garden Street. Another building of note, the Militia Stores Depot, stands on the North side of Lowther Street, and is now occupied by Door 84 youth club.

While the Irish immigrants had helped to swell the ranks of the really poor, the skilled railway workers and clerks who formed the other main class of immigrants became the backbone of this

⁴"Poverty, a study of Town Life" B.S. Rowntree, 1901,

class of prosperous artisans. They lived not only alongside the poorer classes in The Groves and Clementhorpe, but in their own colonies near the railway works, out along the Holgate and Acomb Roads.

During the late 19th century terraced housing was constructed to the West of the workhouse off Haxby Road. Further terraces were constructed to the North, next to the railway line, which created a boundary between this emerging residential area and the agricultural land to the North. A football ground was in use in the 1890s off Wigginton Road as well as St. Thomas' Church on Lowther Street.

By 1912 the construction of terraced housing in the Northern half of this area was complete. Terraces occupied the sites of Grove Lodge and Grove House and up to the boundary with the railway. Two schools were constructed on Haxby Road and Park Grove, both still extant and Grade II listed. Clarence Gardens and Bowling Green, situated at the junction of Wigginton Road and Haxby Road, were created at this time. The gardens have been suggested for inclusion on the local list of heritage assets as they have provided a peaceful, green space in the centre of an increasingly busy urban landscape for over 100 years.

By the 20th century York suburbs had extended further out in order to house the rapidly increasing population, with space to build larger three and four bed semi-detached and detached houses. The Groves remained a largely working class area of small terraced houses until the early 1960's when the decision was made to demolish areas of deteriorating housing and replace with new low rise council flats and maisonettes which were built between Garden Street, Penley's Grove Street, Townend Street and Lowther Street.

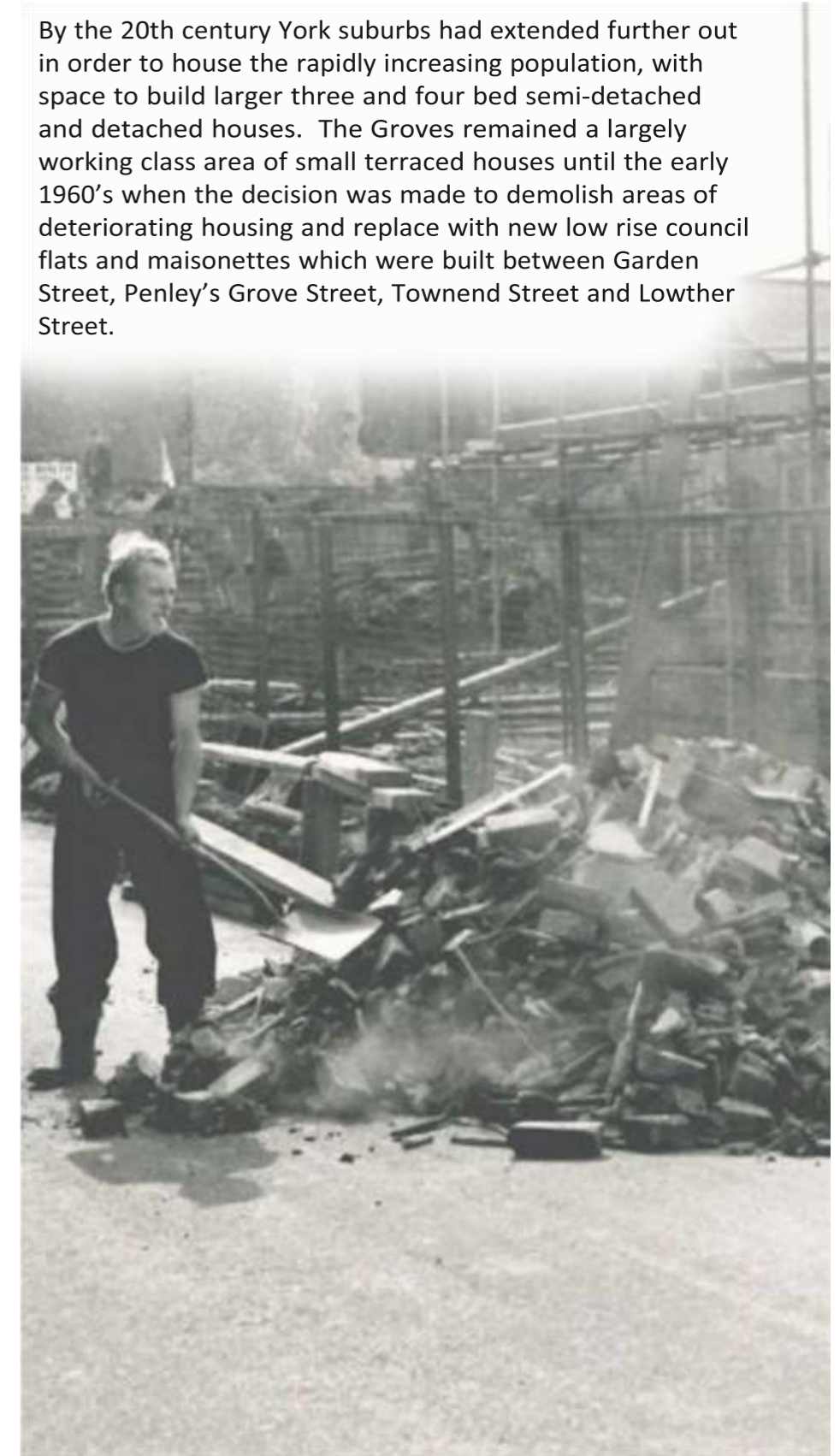


Fig. 17 Building work and the older terraced housing in the Groves



THE GRAYES REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME
FOR THE CITY OF YORK
SORRELL
SORRELL LIMITED 95 HERBOTH VILLAGE
BUILDING CONTRACTORS YORK TEL 246045

4 Vision and Context

The council has worked together in close partnership with community groups and residents to develop this community plan, a shared vision of the future of The Groves.

The Groves Community Plan has been informed by a comprehensive analysis of the area through walkabouts, asset mapping studies, surveys and meetings with local residents, and through indepth technical studies of buildings, streets and spaces that have explored how residents use them and think of them.

The vision for The Groves is to facilitate estate renewal in housing and the local environment, while making a positive and lasting difference to the lives of residents.

The Groves estate is very close to the city centre, just a ten minute walk from York Minster and the main shopping area of York. This central location allows for easy access to bus routes and to the railway station as well as city centre amenities and services.

The proximity to the city centre also brings with it some negative aspects such as busy roads, a relative lack of green space, limited development opportunities and some antisocial behaviour. Despite this, residents frequently mention the positive community feel in the area and that the spirit of The Groves provides the potential to create a more active and engaged community area.

The area is bounded by key roads leading out from the city centre and has a distinct character of its own. Many residents have mentioned the city centre location and diversity of the area as positive benefits of living in The Groves. York Hospital is close by, as is St. John's University and Nestle (formerly Rowntree's) Chocolate Works.

The Groves consists mainly of Late Victorian terraced homes, but also contains council-built flats and maisonettes from the 1960's in the area between Lowther Street and Penley's Grove Street. It is this area that is the subject of the housing and courtyard proposals in this plan. There are 29 blocks of Council homes built 60-70 years ago. These are a mixture of two, three and four storey homes but with no lift access. There are some warden assisted homes but, for the most part, they are general needs housing. Within the Council housing sector there are 332 flats, eight maisonettes and eight houses, mostly one or two bedrooms.



Fig. 13 The Groves area and The Groves Community Plan site

Council Plan

The Council has worked together in close partnership with community groups and residents to develop this Community Plan, a shared vision of the future of The Groves. It reflects the support for good quality of life set out in the Council Plan. (see Council Plan illustration on page 28)

Climate Change

In July 2019 the City Council declared a Climate Emergency, aiming to make York carbon neutral by 2030. As the largest single landlord in the city the Council is uniquely placed to take a lead role in achieving this target.

The Groves Community Plan recognises the importance of the local community in leading improvements to the area. Five key themes have been identified through ongoing discussion and consultation with people who live and work in The Groves and our collective ambition for these are summarised here.

These five key themes will contribute to the Councils commitment to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030.

An Understanding of the Local Area

The residential blocks in general appear in good condition but some key issues have emerged from an analysis of the area:

Wayfinding- Although the corners of blocks are visually emphasised with stairs, this does not correspond with any type of hierarchy - a main entrance for instance. This leads to a disorientation and a difficulty in navigating the area.

Ownership- The external areas, particularly to the street side, are unclear as to whether they are private or public areas, leading to a confusion over ownership.

Courtyards- The courtyard areas suffer from a lack of definition as welcoming community spaces with a lack of play spaces, seating areas, planting and adequate bin storage.

Lifts- The lack of lift access restricts the use of the apartments.
Traffic- The frequent standing traffic in the area is a hazard for the residents.

Demographics

Just over a half of the 16,650 residents in Guildhall Ward are single and half of the council homes in The Groves are either bedsits or one bed flats. 37% of residents own their own home, either outright or with a mortgage, 38% are private renters and 22% are social tenants.

16% of residents are above retirement age. 56% of people are economically active (40% full-time, 9% part-time and 7% self-employed) and 26% of residents are long-term unemployed.

Although many people surveyed mentioned that they had friendly neighbours and a good community feel, others said there is a need for a community centre and green space for the community to socialise further. Most residents surveyed are in favour of a community café.

One concern frequently mentioned by residents is the level of crime and anti-social behaviour, both perceived and experienced in The Groves. Whilst Guildhall Ward's crime rates, at 58 per 1,000 population, are almost five times higher than the York average of 13 per 1,000 levels of crime are reducing as a result of community collaboration, and the area is no longer designated as a 'hotspot crime area'. We believe that crime and anti social behaviour will reduce further as a result of this community plan.

A major concern for some residents is noise from the student population, as well as general anti-social behaviour. Guildhall Ward is ranked in the bottom five Wards of York for its rate of anti-social behaviour with 38 per 1,000 population in comparison to the York average of nine per 1,000.

12% of Guildhall Ward homes are in fuel poverty in comparison to the York average of nearly 9%. 15% of children in Guildhall Ward are in child poverty compared with the York average of nearly 9%.

Traffic through the area impacts on health, and specific concerns have been raised about air quality, safety, and noise. Where air pollution has been measured, The Groves has levels of 35µg/m³ or less, which is considered to be a safe level. However, the average air pollution concentration across the UK in 2018 was 18.6 µg/m³. Therefore, although the levels of air pollution in The Groves are considered safe, they are double the average and should be kept under review.

Another serious concern of residents is people's safety whilst crossing roads, especially by the school in Lowther Street. In 2014 there was a fatal incident outside Park Grove Primary School.

62% of residents say the local area is a good place for children and 81% of residents believe York is a safe place to live - in comparison to the York average of 70%

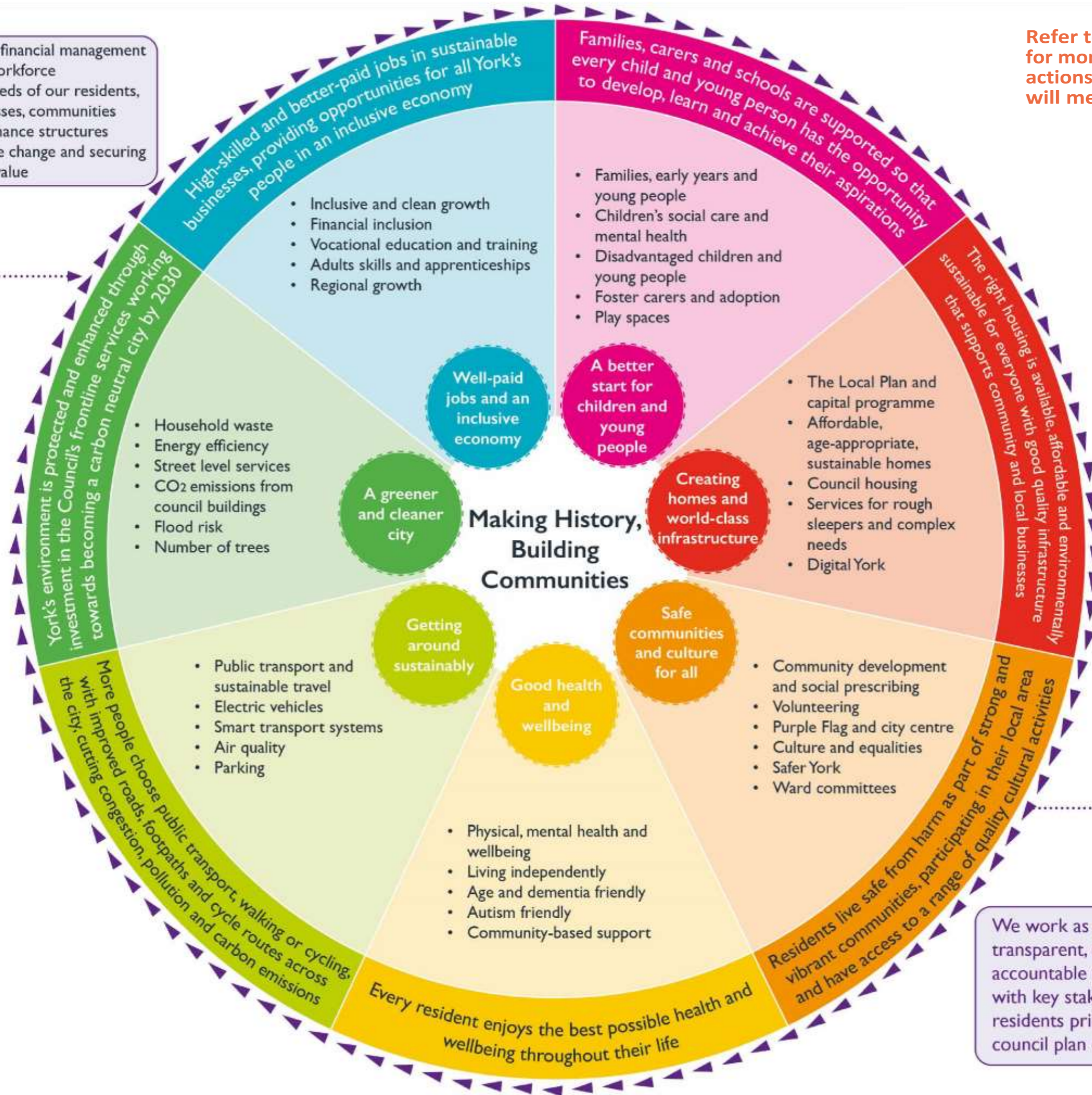
61% percent of all people who took part in the survey supported new green initiatives and play equipment for children. People also backed more pubs and shops and wanted to see history and archaeology explored. To further support this, two out of five residents of The Groves who came to the public meetings volunteered to maintain and manage the courtyard spaces, and The Groves Association offered to recruit volunteers to help manage the area.

Giving people opportunities to volunteer in activities such as maintenance of The Secret Garden (a community garden in The Groves), and providing employment opportunities within shops and community café, can help improve people's career prospects and chance of securing employment that is more permanent.

One of the many things celebrated by residents is how multicultural and diverse the area is. Historically, many homes in The Groves have existed since the mid-19th century. With the local and extensive Joseph Rowntree Cocoa Works site opening in 1890 and York Hospital in 1977, replacing numerous other facilities including York City and Council Hospitals, this would have been an ideal spot for workers from all backgrounds to live in.

The Groves continues to be a multicultural and lively area. Lowther Street acts as The Groves High Street, where there are shops from many different cultures, including a shop specialising in food from the Baltic countries, a Turkish barbers, an Indian restaurant and takeaway, an Asian grocery store and a Chinese takeaway.

- An open and effective council**
- Strong financial management
 - Our workforce
 - The needs of our residents, businesses, communities
 - Governance structures
 - Climate change and securing social value



Refer to the full Council Plan for more information about the actions we will take and how we will measure progress

We work as an efficient, open, transparent, democratically-led and accountable organisation, in partnership with key stakeholders, to deliver on residents priorities and achieve the council plan outcomes for our city.

5 Groves Community and Character

Community and character is displayed daily, often taken for granted and rarely celebrated. We are fortunate to have a local storyteller in The Groves who is encouraging stories to be told and heard.

It is very clear that this small community very close to the Bar Walls and city centre has a unique history and character. Time has been spent with residents to find out what the area means to them and how we might reflect the character of The Groves going forward.

A healthy, thriving community is welcoming and curious. The opportunity and space for every resident to find a purpose and know they have a positive contribution to make is important but not easy to achieve.

Resident stories have been transcribed and a local storyteller is helping to explore how this legacy can be captured and carried forward in The Groves. The potential for a community trail to the Groves is being developed with help from York St. John's University, The Groves Association, and Park Grove School, local artists, storytellers and residents.

Storytelling workshops have been held with residents in order to share insights on five community themes:

- Stories of acceptance. Everybody belongs and is known. We all have a purpose within the community.
- Welcoming diversity. A wide range of backgrounds to be revealed and celebrated.
- Intergenerational connections and influences. Arguably less pronounced these days but still appreciated and evident in the stories of families and friends.
- Childhood memories of the environment. Sweet shops, fish and chip shops, tanners yards, funeral directors, stories of moving in with grandparents, aunts and uncles during war years. Demolitions, playing in the rubble, toilets out back and bathing in a metal tub.
- The Secret Garden and Greening The Groves. Stories of community help and support as these initiatives gain more and more support.

We would like to create a sensory timeline to capture the smells, sights, touches and textures linked with different areas within The Groves. Community and character is displayed daily, often taken for granted and rarely celebrated. We are fortunate to have a local storyteller in The Groves who is encouraging stories to be told and heard and who would like to write and perform a collaborative tale of how the area has developed into the current community over the last 200 years or more.

Through research and interviews local storyteller Althea Thall has identified many colourful and intriguing stories including the Fowlers, the Lovelys, Wally the tattooist, the Panther by the River, and a possible link with the Sioux native American Indians. Over the next year and beyond we hope to extend this further, recognising the importance of storytelling in bringing residents together.

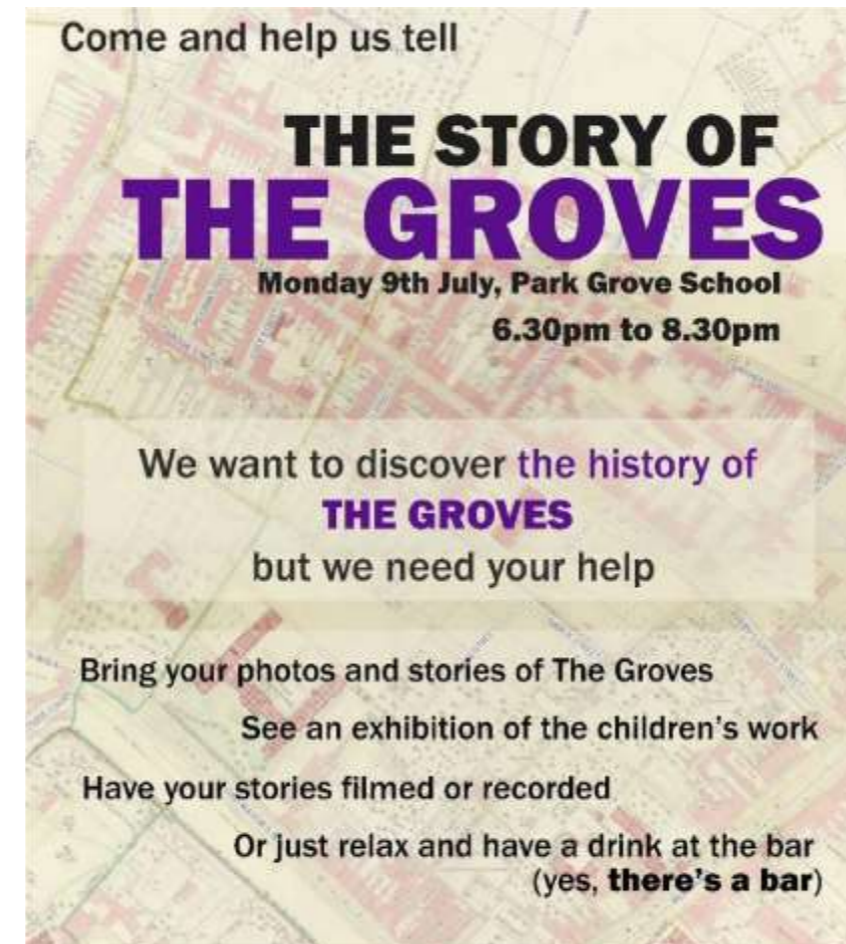


Fig. 18 'The Story of The Groves' event at Park Grove School

Stories from The Groves

Wally the tattooist, York's first tattooist, lived with his wife at 65 Union Terrace, now the Union Terrace coach park, with long queues stretched around the yard as servicemen from various wars waited to get themselves tattooed, mainly to be recognised should they be ill-fated. Wally's son Ted, now 84, remembers coming home from school with his brothers and having to make their way through the line of servicemen waiting to have their tattoos done in his Mum's parlour.

A book by Avril Webster Appleton "Looking Back at Monkgate and The Groves" also sheds light on the area and on its many characters. Local residents and traders bore the scars of the First World War. Mr Millard, the newsagent from Garden Street, had one good arm and another amputated, under which he tucked his newspapers when he delivered them. The barber Mr Nicholson had a badly ulcerated foot and used a swivel chair while cutting the hair of his customers.

Horse-drawn carts frequently came round The Groves. "There was the man who sold herrings, twelve for a shilling, the coal man who rang a little bell, selling coal at two and six, and the rag and bone men who gave goldfish for payment for rags. There were also the shops where you could get a halfpenny on a jam jar and four pence on an undamaged rabbit skin," recalls Avril.

Frank Fowler grew up in The Groves and was a celebrity in the 1920's. He was an excellent boxer. "He attributed his prowess at boxing to the fact that he was once set on in The Groves by a rival gang from the Walmgate area. He obtained his revenge by tackling each one as they left work," notes Avril Webster. He also took part in blind boxing matches in the York Gala. He did a lot of his training at the back of the Exhibition Pub at the corner of Bootham and Gillygate. He fought as a light heavyweight and held the record for beating the most champions of other countries in the 1920's. He featured on cigarette cards of the age.



Althea Thall's research carries on from this to note that in 1928 Frank 'Young' Fowler married Elsie Lovely. "Her family owned the fish and chip shop in Penley's Grove Street. Elsie was a good swimmer who won many swimming championships, swam against men, and won. As a young woman she was keen on riding motorbikes and once went through the window of a Chinese restaurant in Gillygate on a machine loaned from Syd Haw who owned a garage at the end of Lowther Street."

Avril Webster recounts that "When Alderman Hutchinson was elected in 1937, one of his first duties was to help distribute food parcels to the unemployed. Four tons of tea, margarine, sugar and liver were given out to unemployed people who had to queue in Exhibition Square. In December 600 poor children were given a Christmas treat. They saw the western film "Laramie" at the Grand Cinema in Clarence Street and were given sweets and toys."

"Soon war broke out, and the area was hit by bombs from a number of air raids. Park Grove School and the gasworks were damaged in an air raid in December 1942. That night, Amos Watson was returning from choir practice with his wife. They had just opened the door to their Monkgate home when Amos was flung forward by the blast of the gasworks bomb. He was unharmed, but his hat had vanished. It was not until springcleaning the following year that it was discovered neatly perched out of sight on the top of the grandfather clock in the hall. Just where the blast had carried it."

Research with residents carried out on behalf of The Groves Regeneration Project has revealed that a popular talking point for long-standing residents is the heritage of shops and pubs in The Groves. There used to be multiple family-owned shops on any one street and on most corners. On Lowther Street alone residents recalled chip shops, a bakery, a coffee shop, and a butcher. According to archives, there were even more. Over the years these individual shops disappeared and now very few remain besides the group of shops along Lowther Street and the chain retailers Spar and Londis. This trend has also occurred with pubs. There used to be many but, now, only one remains; the Punch Bowl Inn.

Fig. 19 Boxer Frank 'Young' Fowler

In the many interviews and focus groups residents recalled many sounds associated with living in The Groves over the years. When there

were football teams playing at Bootham Crescent, residents could hear the cheering. Several different people highlighted that, when the wind is in the right direction, you can hear the Minster bells. Another prominent sound was that of children playing on the field at Park Grove School and, outside of school, kids would always be playing in and out of each other's houses.

Another memory from many residents was of animals kept in The Groves. The sound of horses' hooves pulling a cart of coal along the cobbled street, pigs snorting in backyards and ganders wandering at the top of Lowther Street. Such memories reinforce the sense of The Groves as a tightly knit, diverse and surprising place.

The Groves community will continue to change, and we think for the good if community values can be retained and we can celebrate the pulse we have created by welcoming and supporting each other over the last 200 years and more.

The focus going forward relies on children, students and elders sharing their stories over the last 200 years and celebrating The Groves' unique history and character.

6 Community Plan Overview

At the heart of this plan is community engagement. The framework for the development strategies of The community plan have evolved through **The Great Groves Get Together** in September 2018 and a second engagement event in May 2019 to the current community plan.

The five key themes of Health and Well-being, Green Spaces, Movement Network, Homes and the Community Hub have been the subject of discussions and the outcomes of these are summarised below:



Health & Well-being

The Groves is in need of better infrastructure and more activities aimed at addressing health & well-being. The community plan looks to provide more green spaces, safer streets, improvement to existing houses and the construction of new affordable housing, as well as more community based activities. Achieving these changes will help improve the neighbourhood's physical and mental health.

Residents are very aware of the problems of loneliness in the area for elderly and disabled people in particular, and many support the idea of a new community and well-being hub close to the shops along Lowther Street.

The notion of Lowther Street as a community focus has a great deal of local support. The community plan proposes a more pedestrian friendly redesign of the street in order to encourage more activity and socialising.

The community plan also proposes Safe Routes For All in order to encourage walking and cycling, including:

- Reduction of cross traffic to Lowther Street and Penley's Grove Street.

- Reduction of traffic along all other roads in The Groves.
- Development of a pedestrian priority route.



Green Spaces

A glance at a map of The Groves shows a large proportion of shared open space. Whilst a number of existing residents use some of these areas for small community gardening projects it is clear that many more residents want these supported and developed further. Many residents have also said that they would be happy to join in and maintain community gardens.

The desire to develop these areas, particularly within the courtyards, has inspired a number of ideas, including:

- Open space for play.
- More seats.
- Adult outdoor gym.
- Games courts.
- The provision of play equipment.
- Space for growing plants and flowers.
- Provision of garden rooms and somewhere to put chairs out.

- The provision of electrical charging points and outdoor water supplies.
- Opportunities for residents to rent raised beds in courtyards.

The residents also realise the importance of long-term maintenance and management of the courtyard spaces to help maintain local pride and respect.

The community plan proposes the development of the existing green spaces to provide a variety of features to encourage use by more residents. These include:

- Improvements to existing courtyards to provide features appealing to all age groups. These might include:
 - children's natural play features, seating spaces, community patios, raised planters for resident food growing and additional trees, shrubs and herbaceous planting.
- Encouraging community ownership for the maintenance of communal spaces.
- The creation of new courtyards between some of the housing blocks which currently have side street frontages.
- The provision of new front garden spaces along street frontages for ground floor flats.
- An increase in the number of street trees to both individual front garden space and communal gardens which face the street. Tree planting to enhance the streetscape and increase habitat and biodiversity.



Movement Network

The community engagement events made clear the residents' desire to address the traffic problems in the area. The area has very narrow carriageways and footways which are frequently clogged with standing traffic using the area as a cut through. Resident suggestions ranged from closing Lowther Street to traffic completely to restricting vehicle access to residents only.

The community plan proposes **Safe Routes For All** with encouragement given to walking and cycling. Proposed measures to make the area safer and more sociable include the development of a pedestrian and cycle route, linked to the wider cycle and walking network as well as new traffic calmed streets for a more pedestrian focused street layout. This is especially important along Lowther Street where the shops are located.



Homes

Residents have been keen to say that any new development must be for affordable homes. There is also support for the demolition of garages and external stores to allow this kind of development.

For many, the number of homes proposed is about right. However, it is important to many of the residents that there are more family homes in the area, some saying that they feel as though houses are more appropriate than flats to accommodate families.

The community plan proposes a development of the existing urban blocks, closing the corners of the courtyards and building on garage sites. In addition, this plan investigates the use of public space and connectivity through and between the courtyards.

It has been assumed that all works to the existing properties, which would complement the regeneration work, would be from a separate maintenance budget and do not form part of this study.





Fig. 22 Sketch of proposed community centre

7 The Cost of Doing Nothing

Our community plan recognises that the time is now right to create a better environment and community for everyone in The Groves.

The community plan builds on national discussions and concerns and concludes that there is a very high cost of doing nothing new in places like The Groves where there is enthusiasm and opportunity to improve what is already there.

An analysis of public spend shows that there are relatively high levels of mental ill health in The Groves, with associated allowance and universal credit payments. Anecdotal evidence also suggests high levels of inactivity and isolation amongst residents. Coupled with the cost of poor air quality and dealing with anti-social behaviour, the cost of doing nothing is estimated at between £2 million and £5 million a year.

Public Spend Analysis

It is a challenge to understand actual public spend in The Groves without access to specific neighbourhood data. In some cases data has been extrapolated from Ward level data and some assumptions made based on anecdotal or statistically derived information.

More work is needed to access neighbourhood level data in terms of public spend. Data at Local Super Output Area level has been used where available. However, The Groves area includes three areas which are different in their deprivation ratings, so that any one of the three area datasets may not fully represent the other two.

Employment Support Allowance

The cost of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) per person per year is around £10,000. Data for The Groves shows a much higher number of claims compared to the York average, and more claiming for longer than two years.

The average number of people on ESA per 1000 is 43, costing around £440,000 per year, and it should be noted that the three areas in The Groves have a significantly higher average than York as a whole, and so ESA spend in the area is likely to be much higher

Mental Health

Mental health issues are often the reason for claiming ESA and in the middle of The Groves, where a majority of the council properties are, the number of such claims is almost five times greater than the average claims in York.

Spend on mental health related ESA claims are therefore extremely high in The Groves and well above the city average. According to the Mental Health Foundation⁵, in the UK one in four people suffer mental health issues in any given year and it is estimated one person suffering from a mental ill health disorder, including depression and anxiety, and claiming ESA, could cost the public purse £12,428 per year.

⁵Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/fundamental-facts-15.pdf>

Although we can only estimate the costs of mental health issues based on data we have for The Groves, if one in four people suffer mental health issues in any given year, we can predict the cost in the area to be at least £1,602,678 per year, and it is understood that referrals to mental health services from The Groves are in fact nearer one in two people.

Calculating the cost of instances of mental ill health, which have led to an ESA claim using the unit cost of £2,197, for service provision for people suffering from mental health disorders, per person per year, including dementia, gives a cost of £38,475 on top of the cost of the ESA claims. The cost for one person suffering from a mental health disorder and claiming ESA is £12,428 per year. Given this, the predicted cost of mental ill health costs in The Groves is around £1.6 million per year.

Loneliness and Isolation

Calculating the fiscal cost of loneliness and isolation has been attempted through a cost benefit analysis, social return on investment and other systems. For the purposes of The Groves Community Plan, the estimated costs of loneliness and isolation is based around the paper, "Making the economic case for investing in actions to prevent and tackle loneliness: a systematic review", London School of Economics 2016. The report concludes that:



“Conservatively we estimated that, over a ten year period, these costs could be in excess of £1,700 per person. Costs for older people who are most severely lonely would be in excess of £6,000. If measures can be taken to reduce loneliness then potentially some of these costs might be avoided.”

Research reveals that over half of all people aged 75 and over live alone (Office for National Statistics 2010. General Lifestyle Survey 2008), and half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing anyone at all (Age UK 2016). Loneliness is now considered worse for you than obesity and as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad, 2010). Lonely people are more likely to suffer from dementia, heart disease and depression.

The evidence base on the best ways to tackle loneliness is growing and there are various promising approaches. Strong communities like The Groves can make a considerable contribution to addressing loneliness. Social isolation and loneliness have been highlighted in discussion and consultation with residents of The Groves as issues of concern, and this community plan begins to consider approaches that would best suit the area with resident support.

Through proposed improvements to courtyards, streets and spaces, new community gardening and other communal activities, we expect to bring this cost and the stigma of loneliness down significantly.

Physical Inactivity

Research has suggested that the cost of physical inactivity, specifically relating to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression and anxiety, in the UK is £12.5 billion per year. This is calculated from healthcare costs attributable to physical inactivity of 37% of the population, specifically with regards to colorectal cancer, breast cancer, coronary heart disease and Type II diabetes.

If 37% of The Groves population is inactive, in line with national trends, there is a cost of £1.2 million per year. However, initial feedback suggests that inactivity levels in The Groves are much higher, and potentially costing over £2 million pounds per year.

Crime and Policing

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) covers a wide range of unacceptable activities that cause harm to an individual, their community or to their employment.

There has been a 36% reduction in ASB in the area since 2015, with ASB spend for 2017 at £191,805. It is the ambition and intention to bring this spend further down through new housing layout and focus on anti-social spaces, improved streets and public spaces and access to new sociable activities.

Pension Credits

Another area of concern is the level of Pension Credits being claimed in The Groves, well above the York average, and an indication that a number of elderly residents may be struggling financially.

Universal Credit

Universal credit is a single monthly payment for unemployed people or those on a low income. It replaces housing benefit, jobseeker’s allowance, employment and support allowance, income support, working tax credit and child tax credit.

An assessment of spend in The Groves shows considerable benefit spend over the average in York which is being addressed through various initiatives, including:

- Helping people into work from school
- Promoting apprenticeships for school leavers
- Community Job Fairs throughout the city, which could be extended to The Groves.



Dementia

One in 5,000 people in England suffer from dementia and York Learning offers 6 week courses to help people look **Statistically** other memory related illnesses. In the Groves, this is 25 for jobs and match skills and interests with employment. **Derived** times higher, at one in 200 people. Between August 2018. Apprenticeships for young people are offered, and and July 2019, 12 referrals to memory and dementia based initiatives focusing on The Groves are being developed. A services were made in The Groves. New community hub, as proposed in this plan, will help to

In summary, an assessment of The Groves shows considerable additional Benefit spend compared to the average in York. Known costs for conditions or situations where it is possible to improve conditions and reduce spend total is £1,794,483 per year. Statistically derived costs where it is possible to improve and reduce spend totals is £5,212,955 per year, as illustrated by the charts to the right.

It is acknowledged that these are statistically derived and, therefore, indicative costs – but it is clear that there are substantial costs of doing nothing which can to some extent be addressed through the proposals of this plan.

Helping People

These challenges set out here are reflected in the Government's national Civil Society Strategy, Building a Future That Works for Everyone, Loneliness Strategy and A Connected Society, which recognise that communities with and address bad behaviour. strong connections between people are and happy.

This connection is supported and improved public funding, private investment, and other spaces for a community to use. It includes trust and goodwill, and the organisations and partnerships that bring together.

establish a base for this work. Action Towards Inclusion, currently based in Colliergate, also offers traineeships and work tasters for young people, and this will be developed further to see how people in The Groves can be helped into work.

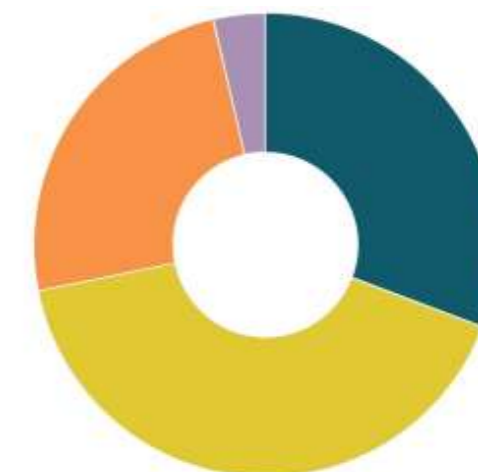
Complementing this thinking, the Groves Community Plan recognises that the time is now right to create a better environment and a supportive community for everyone in The Groves.

A full cost benefit analysis of proposed interventions is required but it is clear there are some very high costs within The Groves, which could be substantially reduced by a small

number of projects that address all of them. For instance, greening The Groves with outdoor activities and food growing could reduce air pollution, improve mental health, encourage physical activity and reduce the likelihood of ASB by creating a resilient community more likely to challenge.



Costs



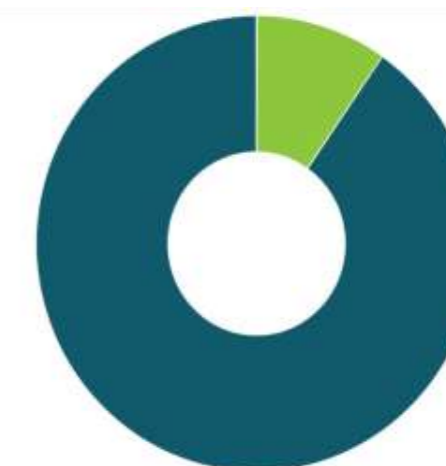
● Cost of Mental Health
£1,602,678

● Cost of Air Pollution
£1,280,000

● Cost of Inactivity
£2,139,384

● Cost of Isolation
£190,893

Known Costs



● Cost of Anti Social Behaviour

● Cost of Mental Health

healthy

through
buildings,
also

people



Fig. 23 Community feedback after resident engagement day

8 Health & Well-Being

Well designed, sustainable homes and public spaces with good light, space, movement, inclusivity and being close to nature can have a profound effect on health and well-being, with the ability to create better conditions for healthy, active and sustainable living.

Good health and well-being is of central importance to The Groves Community Plan and to the people who live and work in The Groves. We know that well designed activities, services, homes, streetscapes and green spaces can improve health and wellbeing.

Research shows that people are at their happiest living in inclusive communities, both socially and also spatially, with open and accessible amenities, ensuring that the whole community benefits.

Well designed, sustainable homes and public spaces with good light, space, movement, inclusivity and being close to nature can have a profound effect on health and well-being, with the ability to create better conditions for healthy, active and sustainable living.

Loneliness is now recognised nationally to be a public health priority, which can lead to severe mental health problems as well as affect physical health and lead to depression and extreme stress. The British Red Cross research suggests nine million adults in the UK do not have friends and feel lonely

A study for the Jo Cox Commission on loneliness found that 35% of men feel lonely at least once a week and scientists are learning more and more about the damage chronic loneliness does to our bodies: it is as bad for you as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, is as dangerous as obesity and increases the likelihood of an early death by 26%.

According to the Campaign to End Loneliness, loneliness has been found to speed up cognitive decline in older people, with one study concluding that it can increase your risk of dementia by 64%.

Zoe Abrams, executive director of communications and advocacy at the British Red Cross says “Life circumstances can change in the blink of an eye, meaning it can happen to anyone, no matter your age or background.” There is a greater than average proportion of certain groups who are at increased risk of loneliness in The Groves, including victims of crime, people who live on their own, people with disabilities, mental health issues and people with alcohol problems.

Many local people have highlighted the issues of loneliness and isolation as a priority challenge for the area. However, 82% of adults who believe there is a division between people also think that moments of connection, such as making small talk in public

spaces or smiling at people, can break down those divisions. Work in The Groves aims to build on that hope.

Poor physical health and long-term conditions that limit daily functioning are risk factors for poor social support and less frequent social contact. Adults with poor physical health and disability are more likely to have less social contact with friends, family and neighbours and less social support.

Adults with poor physical health are also at greater risk of loneliness. Survey data from Glasgow and other areas in the UK suggest that those with physical health problems, longterm conditions or disabilities are two times more likely to report severe loneliness than the general population.

Survey data from Scotland and other areas of the UK also reveals that children between the ages of 11 and 15 years old with a limiting long-term condition or disability are at greater risk of peer relationship problems and being bullied.

Addressing mental health is especially important. Survey data shows a strong link between mental health and well-being and the number and quality of friendships. Adults with poorer social support are more likely to have mental health problems and those experiencing anxiety, depression or stress are at increased risk of severe loneliness.

Local Area Coordination

Local Area Coordinators work with individuals and families of all ages and abilities. They take time to get to know and support people with a wide range of issues. Based in the Guildhall ward, including The Groves, the local area coordinator will get the right help, develop relationships and community networks, and help to find volunteering opportunities.

Community Projects and Services

There are very many established groups, community projects and services in The Groves that support and serve the community well. The Groves Regeneration Project has recently funded several local projects in order to widen that work and help address loneliness, health and well-being. These include:

The Secret Garden – The Groves Association has been funded to revitalise and rejuvenate The Secret Garden for residents to enjoy

relaxing in. With planters full of fruit and vegetables many resident volunteers enjoy helping to grow and tend the plants as well as chatting and sharing their home grown produce.

Flower Power in The Groves –Resident volunteers and Flower Power York have brightened up underused spaces throughout The Groves with planted flowers. They are also holding flower arranging and cookery stalls along with workshops aimed at addressing loneliness, isolation and healthy eating.



Fig. 24 Flower Power York montage

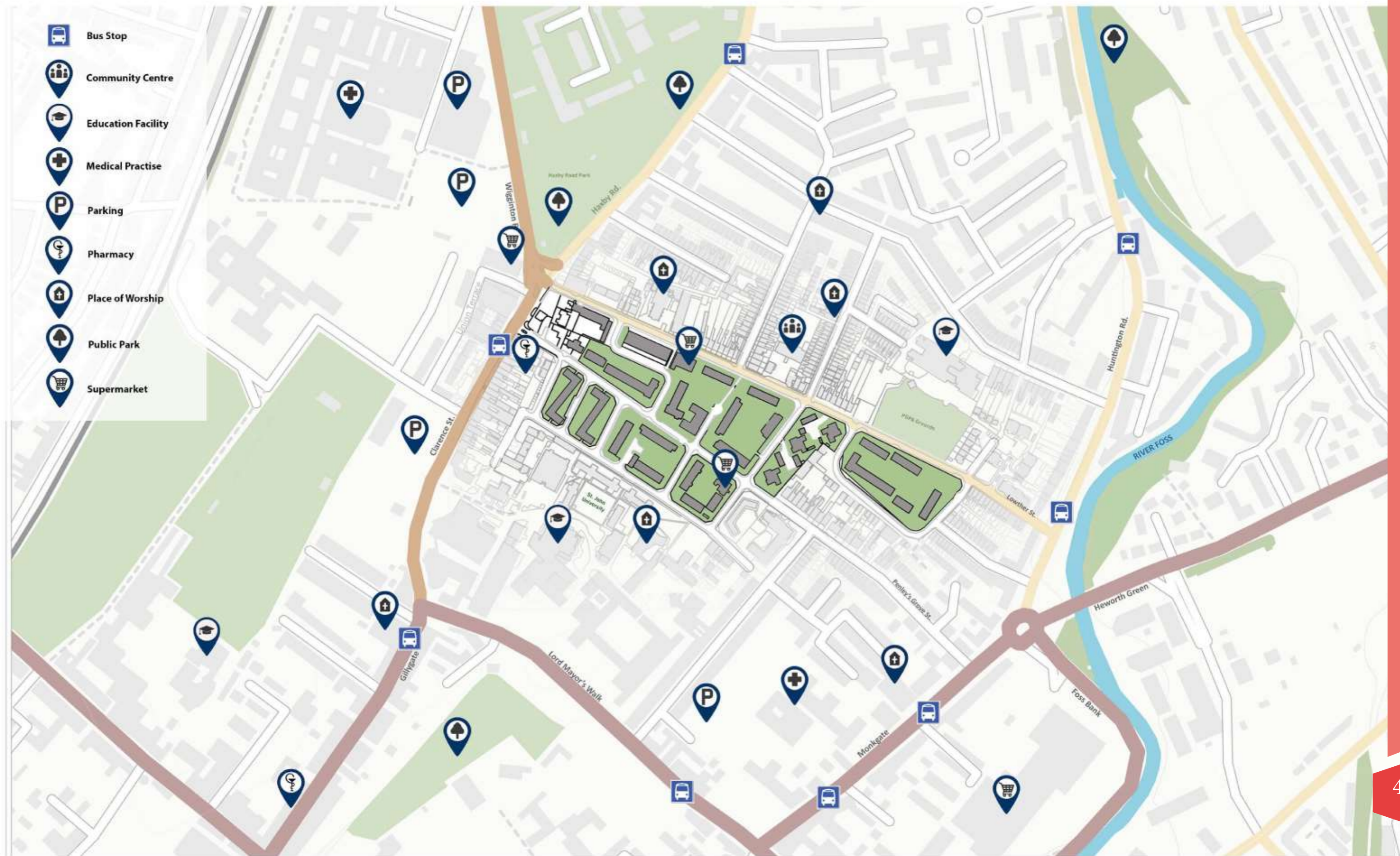


Fig. 25 Map showing services available in and around The Groves

The project runs until Summer 2020 and, so far, 150 local residents have attended the following events:

- Door 84 celebration, a seed planting activity.
- Park Grove summer fair and Halloween Disco.
- Creative Café at St Thomas' Church.
- Natter Group at St Thomas' Church.
- York St John University student volunteering event.

These activities have enabled Flower Power York to spread the word about the project, speaking to residents to see what areas they would like to see brightened up with flowers and specifically what flowers they would like to see.

A small group of residents have been involved in activities outside Sinnington House, Pickering House and the corner of Brownlow Street and March Street. They have shared with us details of the flowers they would like to grow, which has fed into the growing plan for 2020. Summer 2019 saw us work with these residents to plant cornflowers, calendula, dahlias and lambs ear, which, despite challenges with the weather, provided a little pop of colour on Lowther Street in late summer.

It has been an opportunity to address loneliness and social isolation, developing connections and making them feel valued by the process, as shown in the following quotes from participants:

"It's nice that someone cares enough about us to want to do something like this here."

"I love snap dragons, let's have some of them, they remind me of my Nan's garden."

The engagement with local residents has also enabled the project to focus on areas that past residents used to maintain but have since been neglected as residents move on or pass away. Through the process they have started to engage with new residents in the flats and will continue to encourage them to get involved and develop relationships with their neighbours and the green space outside their home.

The project is potting on seeds, to include sunflowers, cornflowers, ranunculus, antirrhinum, love in the mist and calendula (which have been requested by local residents) that will be planted in areas along Lowther Street including outside Sinnington House. The Brownlow Street and March Street area will be the main focus, starting with narcissi and muscari in February and early March, leading into tulips (1200 bulbs were recently planted), sweet peas and wildflowers in early to mid-summer and dahlias in late summer through to October.

These relationships with residents will continue to be nurtured and grown to include the following activities to increase the number of residents engaged in the project:

- Bulb planting with pupils from Park Grove Primary Academy.
- Community curry night and Christmas crafts, in conjunction with The Secret Garden, at Door 84.
- Christmas wreath making workshop with the Creative Café group at St Thomas' Church. ■ Promotional stall at the Park Grove Primary Academy ■ Christmas Fair.
- Christmas wreath making workshop at Door 84.
- Community seed swap and coffee morning at St Thomas' Church.
- Weekly gardening sessions.
- Cooking on a budget workshop at Door 84.
- Tulip flower stall on Lowther Street.

In terms of legacy, Flower Power York have been approached to participate in York's Bloom! Festival of Flowers and is encouraging activities to focus on The Groves. They are seeking funding to run workshops with local residents during British Science Week to be displayed as part of Bloom! In the late spring. The Bloom! Festival aims to encourage more planting within urban areas as a means of improving the urban environment and community and individual health and well-being. It is a high-profile event in York's calendar, attracting huge audiences of thousands of people.

Ultimately, the project would like to extend the growing areas to take in more of The Groves and to work in collaboration with more local residents and groups.

Move the Masses in The Groves – Free activity sessions being held in several locations in The Groves by Move the Masses have been designed to help address inactivity, selfconfidence and loneliness.



Fig. 26 Move the Masses montage



Fig. 27 'One Planet York' community art by local artist Stephen Lee Hodgkins



Fig. 28 Community based organisations in The Groves

The project has run 20 sessions so far in The Groves and has had 93 attendances by 62 individuals. A filming day and filmed workouts in Clarence Gardens and Park Grove Academy has been completed and available to view on:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3v2UXLOELtWEpy9sKnpPQ>.

The project has partnered with the True Story Cafe, which sits just within The Groves, and they are promoting the Move Mates project. They have also partnered with the York LGBT Forum and have run inclusive social walking and fitness sessions from their Human Rights Garden in Clarence Gardens.

In terms of the Move Mates project, six volunteers live within The Groves. A grant was awarded from the Adult Commissioning team to continue to run the Move Mates project until September 2020. A Video about the Move Mates project can be seen at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xlp4nMxalFU&t=4s>

Emotional Resilience for Parents in The Groves – BrightSparks have delivered a series of workshops in The Groves to help and support families. The final course took place in November and December 2019.

The strengths of the project have been working with the community and in community locations to build trust. The project has been able to guide people to support services and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with the exception that people feel the project should have been longer. The course is interactive, with a range of books, resources and toys to share with the parents to give them ideas and confidence in relation to developing emotional resilience.

Groves Group Virtual Partnership – A new way for groups to work together has been established in this virtual network of Groves based groups. It gives groups the ability to share news of their events, hear about, and share potential opportunities. This can help groups be more up to date, better supported by each other and help them to respond more effectively to community need.

Local Green Space

The idea to improve local green space is very popular in The Groves. Much of the existing green space lacks quality and is often the site of anti-social behaviour in the area. Evidence on the various benefits of green spaces and green infrastructure, particularly in respect of mental health and well-being, provides very clear evidence and support for investment.

A welcoming playground, well-tended green space with trees, flowers and seats all make a difference. Just as playgrounds bring us together so do local markets and community events, shopping streets, small planting areas, even shared dustbins. This plan aims to build on that knowledge and continue to support local activities as well as looking to design spaces, which encourage people to do things together.

The community plan aspirations for health and well-being are:

Support Local Networks and Activities

Source funds grants, which will continue to be made available to groups and organisations based in The Groves, throughout the period of regeneration, will help people to be part of small-scale, grassroots regeneration of the local area and encourage communities and individuals to engage with and support each other in an inclusive way.

The groves would benefit from a capacity building resource to help maintain community assets, capacity and resilience.

Create a Community Well-being Hub

Throughout a series of workshops and walkabouts residents and groups have told us that a community base would be brilliant. A socially inclusive and accessible hub in the centre of The Groves would provide a flexible, multi-use space and be designed to complement and extend the existing activities of local groups who are providing services to the community.



Fig. 29 Community art by local artist Stephen Lee Hodgkins of Park Grove Primary Academy



There is great potential for the hub to help improve health and well-being locally in direct ways such as providing a base from which to host specific community health and wellbeing services.

The community hub would also provide a great opportunity to improve health and well-being by providing an inclusive place for cross-generational and cross-cultural meetings, a place to share ideas and be creative, have fun and support each other in a friendly environment. It could provide meeting places for local groups and a community café.

Build Healthy New Homes

New homes will prioritise sustainability, quality of space, accessibility and mobility (including consideration of lifts) ground floor storage, Lifetime Homes Standards, Nationally Described Space Standards, along with

age friendly and dementia friendly design. Where possible, new and existing ground floor flats will have an enclosed outdoor area of defensible space for an improved public and private balance, with accessible, landscaped courtyards conducive to an environment with space for quiet reflection, play, community interaction and activity.

Improve Streets and Spaces

The community plan seeks to create safer, greener and more vibrant streets with quieter traffic and cleaner air. Several sculptural benches are proposed to make the area more attractive, accessible, age friendly and provide informal meeting places. The newly installed planters along Lowther Street provided by the John Lally International Foundation (who have the It's Donated charity shop on Lowther Street) and maintained by local businesses are already making for a greener and more inviting high street area.

There are proposals for streets to be lined with more trees where technically possible and viable. It is proposed that the Lowther Street shops will have the ability to access funds for street improvements such as new signage, awnings, outdoor tables for displaying goods outside and outdoor seating.

Sustainable modes of transport including cycling and walking will be prioritised over cars and other vehicles and a dedicated pedestrian priority route is proposed along Del Pyke to Lowther Street. Purposely redesigned streets are proposed to be accessed only by the vehicles of people who live or work in the area. This will remove through traffic and remove the physical divide of traffic through The Groves, which has often been mentioned by residents. It will help to create a much calmer and safer environment with cleaner air for the community to enjoy their streets.

Provide New Wayfinding

Good quality wayfinding throughout The Groves will help those walking through to stay orientated. It will give small areas character and the journey some variety. Urban design and signage should be age and dementia friendly, and all current signage will be assessed to decide whether changes should be made. Street trees, with different character and colour, have also been considered as a way to identify and differentiate local areas.

The Groves Community Heritage Trail

The University of York has worked collaboratively with the council, local residents, community groups and local artists to listen to and record stories of people who know The Groves. From these stories a brief for local artists has been produced with the aim to create a series of sculptures and installations throughout The Groves.

Through this work we aim to reinforce a shared identity and showcase this to others.

9 Green Spaces

The community engagement events over the last two years have illustrated the importance and benefits of green space to residents and inspired a drive to improve and take advantage of the relatively large amount of open space available in the area.

We have known for some time now that good quality natural landscape in urban areas can affect how people feel. It can help reduce stress and sadness, lift the mood and make us feel better.

There are physical benefits from green space too: improved air quality, reduced wind speeds, less noise pollution and reduced risks from flooding and heat waves. There are also benefits to active users of these spaces: whether that is physical recreation, community gardening or through children and adults connecting and interacting with nature.

The Landscape Institute publication “Health and Landscape; creating healthy places”, states that “Healthy places make people feel comfortable and at ease, increasing social interaction and reducing anti-social behaviour, isolation and stress”. It goes on to say that “Healthy places are restorative, uplifting, and healing for both physical and mental health conditions”.

The Landscape Institute offers many examples of the important role that the natural environment can play in supporting principles of good design including examples of community gardens, landscape design reconnecting communities with green spaces, and the use of green space to improve well-being and mental health.

More recently, we have seen renewed interest in how the natural environment can be used effectively to treat some mental health problems and assist the care and management of dementia. Examples include group activities outdoors, structured walks, horticulture and green gyms.

This potential therapeutic benefit for mental illness and dementia is based on evidence that acute hospital patients feel better and are discharged sooner when they are able to see greenery outside their window or enjoy a hospital garden.

The added bonus for public health is that retaining and developing the natural environment in our urban areas helps us to combat climate change and enhance biodiversity. Trees and shrubs help to capture carbon and other pollutants such as particulates, while providing habitats for insects, birds and other fauna.

Green spaces also help absorb water and capture run off from heavy storms. Tree canopies can slow the intensity of rainfall reaching the ground while roots and soil help absorb run off. Sustainable urban drainage schemes using landscape features such as swales, detention basins and retaining ponds can act to slow run off to the sewer systems.

So, there is a wealth of evidence of how the public’s health can be improved by increasing access to green space and improving the quality of our natural environment. Through engagement and support from local residents, we aim to incorporate the benefits of green space in The Groves and have already funded various local initiatives to grow more plants, vegetables and flowers and involve more residents in that work.

Detailed research by the University of York, funded by this regeneration work, demonstrates that there is clearly a positive relationship between green spaces and health. There is some evidence that the pleasurable sensory experience of green space gives people more incentive to continue with walking programmes. It is also worth noting that green space proposed in The Groves comes free to users. A walk in the park costs nothing, compared to the costs for example of joining a gym or going swimming.

The Go York research also highlights the restorative effects of green spaces. Experiencing green space has a positive effect on levels of stress. Evidence from surveys conducted in the UK demonstrates that green spaces are able to support a wide variety of uses and users.

Studies show that green spaces can define places and make them more memorable. They are often the focus for conservation or volunteer activities that offer opportunities to meet others, develop interests and share goals. Importantly studies also report that perceptions of green space indicate almost entirely positive attitudes and connotations.

The community plan proposal for The Groves include enhanced green spaces for play, relaxation, community gardening and general community activity and enjoyment. Enhancement of community courtyards seeks to create pleasant environments that address and enhance wellbeing, social interaction and mitigate against environmental pollution.

Greening of the streets with trees and improving existing connections to local green spaces will also help to address increasing levels of inactivity in The Groves. It will help to promote all forms of outside activity as well as benefiting the local economy, specifically Lowther Street, as people linger in a more attractive and comfortable street environment to shop, rest and chat.

The community engagement events over the last two years have illustrated the importance and benefits of green space to residents and inspired a drive to improve and take advantage of the relatively large amount of open space available in the area.

The community plan proposes to develop the existing green spaces to provide a greater variety of features to encourage use by more residents of all ages and abilities.



TREES CAN BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY



TREES SHADE AND COOL



TREES REDUCE STRESS



TREES REDUCE VIOLENCE

TREES IMPROVE THE SOIL



TREES CLEAN THE AIR



TREES REDUCE STORM WATER RUNOFF

TREES ENHANCE THE VIEW



TREES BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

TREES REDUCE NOISE POLLUTION



TREES SUPPORT WILDLIFE



TREES PROVIDE FOOD

Courtyards

One of the key features of The Groves is the arrangement of accommodation around courtyard spaces, intended for use by the residents. Many of these original features no longer cater for modern day to day requirements, are unattractive, have become dno longer function as originally intended. Such features and issues include:

- A significant area of brick built stores and garage courts.
- Some areas of planting. However, in general easily maintained lawns predominate.
- Some mature trees, which may have originally been planted too close to buildings or are in a poor condition.
- No suitable bin storage facilities.
- Extensive provision of washing lines.

Some residents have attempted to develop gardens outside their door but, in general, there is little private space.

The community engagement made clear the expectation that the courtyards needed to be updated to better suit the needs and aspirations of today's residents, ideas include:

- Play areas for all ages.
- Areas to socialise.
- Areas to relax.

- Flower, fruit and vegetable growing.

The Groves Community Plan proposals show the garage and store buildings demolished and improvements to provide features that appeal to all ages. These could include: children's natural play features such as logs and grass mounds for informal play; seating spaces in both sun and shade; community patios where residents might be encouraged to have communal barbeques or simply enjoy a pot of tea together; raised planters for resident food growing and more planting to include trees, fruit trees, shrubs and flowering plants. Current research suggests that views of and contact with green space and the natural world has a positive impact on our well-being and the community plan will encourage residents to get outside and enjoy their courtyards.

As previously highlighted, the proposals incorporate a range of features to encourage activities for all ages within each courtyard. These will encourage children's play while older residents and parents chat in a quiet seating area, preventing isolation and encouraging a stronger sense of community. The intention is to encourage community ownership for the maintenance of the communal spaces and resident garden clubs to improve social cohesion.

The proliferation of different bins has a significant impact on the space available within the courtyards, with bin stores currently taking up too much communal space. The proposed use of communal underground bins will significantly improve the quality of the areas, freeing up space for more attractive and useful facilities.

Some courtyards already have strong community involvement, a good example is The Secret Garden. It is important to retain these existing gardens where possible, and incorporate the existing community features within the proposed new garden layout while allowing more diverse uses by all of the surrounding residents.

A new courtyard will be formed by demolishing a garage court and forming an area for use with the community centre as a community events area, whilst still allowing more intimate spaces to be used by the surrounding residents. Used as a community events space, the area could accommodate anything from a marquee for a wedding or birthday party to a stage for a children's show.

It is proposed that each courtyard has a unique layout and character to distinguish between each housing block and to encourage community ownership and pride in residents' communal gardens. An arrangement of communal patios, pathways, sheltered seating areas, growing spaces and play features are provided, with the planting helping to reinforce courtyard identities. This planting could be a flowering tree species, formal hedges or naturalistic planting, with each courtyard differing from the next.

Planting can be equally important for biodiversity, with the recent dramatic decline in insect and garden bird numbers across the country the planting within the courtyards will be selected to help provide valuable habitat, cover, nectar and food plants for both birds and pollinating insects. Consideration will also be given to providing bird nesting boxes either in existing trees or located on the buildings.

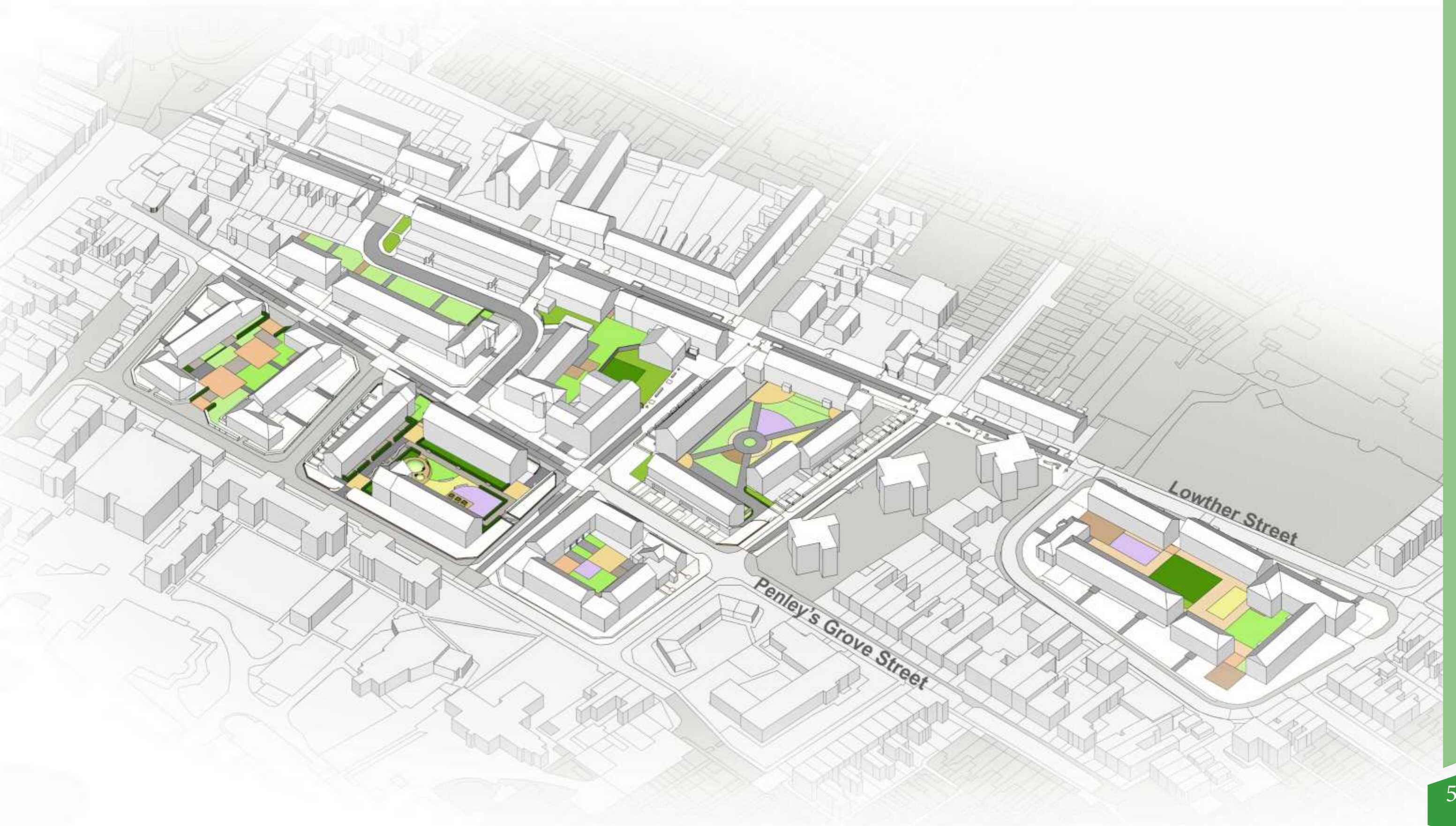


Fig. 30 Aerial view of proposed courtyard improvements

Courtyard Improvements

The current state of the courtyards is fairly poor, they mostly consist of an excessive amount of washing lines, bin stores and tarmac paving. The small amount of green space that is present mostly consists of lawns and badly maintained planting, which doesn't offer any interactive activities to the community.

The community plan proposes the removal of the bins and washing lines to maximise the potential of the courtyards. The plan aspires to offer the local residents a variety of features intended to encourage socialising, exercising and play in these locations, which will improve their general health and well-being.

In order to achieve this, the plan proposes the implementation of more community planters, planting trees (including fruit trees to encourage interaction), a variety of seating, multi purpose lawn space and natural play areas. With the courtyards offering a diverse range of activities, people of all ages and backgrounds will be able to use that space and thrive.





Fig. 31 Proposed improved courtyard visualisation, before/after

Defensible Space

Residents of The Groves have commented on anti-social behaviour taking place in the area. The Groves Community Plan seeks to help address this by closing off communal courtyards to make them more private, revitalising Lowther Street and creating defensible space to the front of the houses.

Defensible space is an area for which a local resident feels responsible, such as a small front garden or yard, which provides a buffer between public and private areas. By taking responsibility, the resident is more likely to maintain it as well as watch over it.

In neighbourhoods that have defensible space, for which residents feel a sense of ownership, there is likely to be more activity and natural surveillance. This sense of ownership in turn discourages anti-social activities and residents are more likely to challenge anti-social behaviour.

Where ground floor properties are accessed directly from either the courtyards or the street it is proposed to provide small private gardens both to encourage residents to customise their own gardens but also to provide a buffer between ground floor windows and the communal garden. Equally, even if ground floor accommodation does not have direct access to the courtyard it is proposed to provide ground floor privacy space outside of ground floor windows, again to give a buffer between residents' windows and the communal gardens. Any boundaries will incorporate gaps in garden fencing to allow free movement for the local hedgehog population.





Fig. 32 External front gardens visualisation, before/after

Residential Streets

The existing buildings in The Groves are set back from the road with a small area of green space acting as a buffer between the public footpath and ground floor properties, providing more privacy. These green areas are a mixture of private gardens and underused communal spaces. Where there is direct access at ground floor to outdoor space, residents often enjoy having their own personal outdoor area in which to create a garden. Some gardens are wonderfully maintained and loved by the residents, adding much needed planting and colour to the streets. This strong sense of pride is often an inspiration to others.

The communal front garden spaces, which do not have access from ground floor properties, are generally not adopted by residents and mostly consist of grass maintained by the local authority.

During the engagement events, residents continually expressed a desire for a general greening of the area and specifically called for an increase in the number of trees, where this was possible.

The proposals will provide a greener outlook to the local streets adding colour and seasonal interest, improving the view for ground floor properties and the general appearance of the local streets.

The proposals allow for the creation of new garden spaces along street frontages, especially for residents of ground floor flats. New low-level easily maintained planting, where this does not exist, is provided to small private gardens for residents to enjoy and look after.

Where there is no direct access for ground floor residents to tend a garden, it is proposed to improve the communal front gardens with areas of low maintenance planting to provide a green and colourful flowering boundary to the properties and to minimise the requirement for local authority maintenance.

The existing front boundary treatment provides a definite, well maintained division between the street and the front gardens, usually a low brick wall, occasionally with a small steel fence on top. However, this can cause confusion as to where you are in The Groves. It is proposed to incorporate some changes to these boundaries, specific to each road, to enhance a street's

character and identity. In addition to the existing boundary walls, the use of additional low hedges or planting, railings or a combination of low walls and low railings would be used to help find ones way around.

The Groves are home to a number of existing mature trees, many of which line the streets, which were probably planted shortly after the properties were built. These trees now add maturity to the area and are a valuable amenity asset. Recent studies have shown that mature trees are a valuable resource for carbon removal and storage, with large trees being more efficient at capturing and storing carbon than smaller sized trees. The community plan recognise the value of the existing tree stock and all existing street trees will be protected, retained and incorporated within the new proposals unless the tree's health or safety condition would require removal. In very limited locations it might be necessary to remove an existing tree to allow some development of affordable homes. In such cases the planting of additional trees would help mitigate the loss.

While it is important to retain the existing trees, it is also proposed to introduce new street trees, where possible, to strengthen the existing tree cover and add amenity value. It is preferred to incorporate ground level tree planting within the highway as part of the improvements to the surrounding roads, for instance at road narrowing or raised crossings, however, this will be dependent particularly on the location of underground services. Where it is not possible to provide additional tree planting as part of the street improvements, smaller growing trees will be incorporated within the front garden spaces. Although these species might not be as grand as large growing tree species, they would add to the visual quality of the street and gardens.

The species selection of new trees would also be a valuable tool in helping wayfinding around and through The Groves. Where tree planting is possible, streets would be identified with different species of trees, so for instance Townend Street might be identified by trees with red leaf colour or white blossom and Abbot Street might be lined with white stemmed trees.



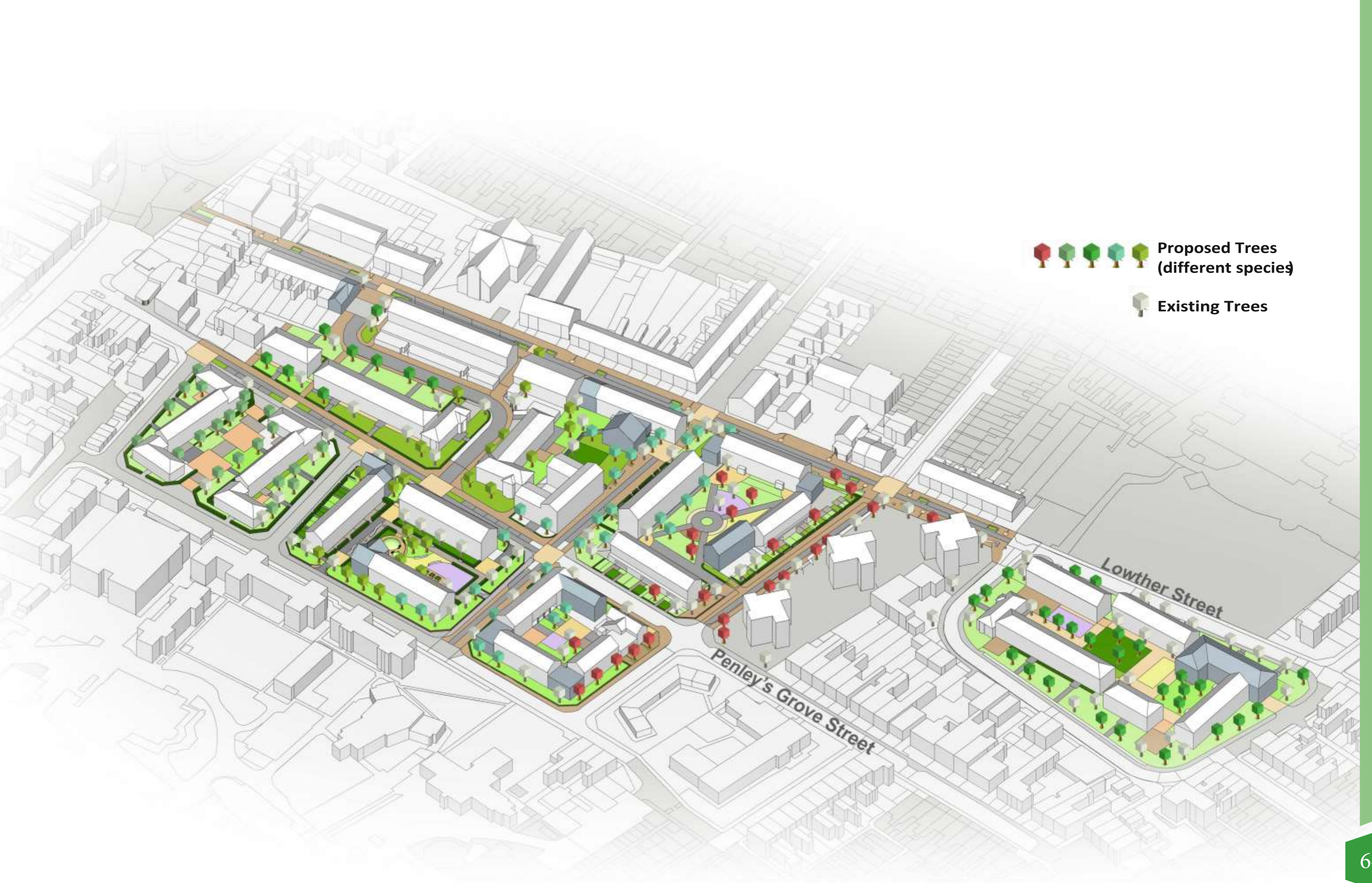


Fig. 33 Aerial view of new street tree planting to aid wayfinding

10 Movement Network

With the careful re-design of road surfaces, restriction of motorised traffic, traffic calming measures and the careful arrangement of parking areas, the community plan aims to provide a more pedestrian and cyclist focused movement network, that encourages cycling and walking throughout The Groves.

It is clear that there are many benefits associated with clear movement and good connectivity. Less congested streets lead to much improved safety, air quality and an increased desire for residents and workers to walk and cycle. The benefits of regular walking and cycling are well documented in terms of improved physical and mental health, and can also boost mood and alleviate depressive symptoms.

As well as improving individual health, less car dominated streets can help to make an area more attractive and improve safety for walking and cycling through. Safe and attractive links to green spaces could be created and existing desire lines enhanced.

The community engagement events held over the last two years have demonstrated a clear desire to solve traffic problems in The Groves. Resident ideas to address this vary from the pragmatic to the radical, and include the following:

- Closing Lowther Street and Penley's Grove Street to through traffic.
- Restricting vehicle access to The Groves for residents only.
- Creating shared surface roads.
- Consider how and where streets could be improved for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Groves area is quite constrained with minimal pedestrian and cycle facilities and very narrow carriageways. Many of the footways are also narrow and do not safely accommodate more than one pedestrian at a time. This can result in pedestrians being forced to use the road.

In addition, due to substantial on-street parking, many streets are only wide enough to accommodate one vehicle width, creating an unpredictable and unsafe environment for cyclists.

To address this the community plan proposes Safe Routes For All with encouragement given to walking and cycling. Measures proposed include:

- The reduction of cross traffic to and from Clarence Street and Wigginton Road from and to Huntington Road, via Lowther Street and Penley's Grove Street.
- The reduction of through traffic to all other roads in The Groves.
- The development of a pedestrian and cycle priority route along Del Pyke.
- The creation of new, traffic calmed streets, especially Lowther Street.
- Providing clear on-street resident only parking.

In preparation for these measures, the engagement work with residents has been successful in persuading The City of York Highways Authority to consider the closure of certain roads to through traffic. The principle of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was approved in October 2019, and is aimed at trialling the removal of through traffic from The Groves in order to assess the levels of improvement to the street environment for local residents.

Modelling suggests that the impact on the surrounding road network could be acceptable in principle. It is proposed that driver behaviour will be monitored throughout the experimental road closures. These experimental closures will begin in spring 2020 for a period of 18 months.

With the careful re-design of road surfaces, restriction of motorised traffic, traffic calming measures and the careful arrangement of parking areas, the community plan aims to provide a more pedestrian and cyclist focused movement network, that encourages cycling and walking throughout The Groves and provides space for people, not just cars.

The existing motorised circulation network consists of two one-way streets, Lowther Street passing from East to West and Townend Street and Penley's Grove Street passing from West to East. Both Lowther Street, Townend Street and Penley's Grove Street are extensively used as short cuts, particularly during peak traffic periods. The problem of through traffic was a recurring issue identified throughout the public engagement events with people expressing concerns about safety and the constant flow acting as a barrier to pedestrian movement, particularly along Lowther Street and around Park Grove Primary School.

The remainder of the streets within The Groves are twoway with extensive parking, both for residents and pay and display parking. This has created congested roads with limited space for passing vehicles and a difficult environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

In order to address current concerns the community plan aims to create a new hierarchy of streets with a strong focus on creating space for people rather than vehicles. Pedestrian and cycle routes will be clear and legible to improve safety and encourage greater use. The following locations have been identified for improvements:

- Lowther Street, to be developed as the high street for the area.
- Residential Streets, all of the other existing streets around The Groves estate.
- Del Pyke, to be developed as a shared pedestrian and cyclist route.
- Pilgrim Street, to be developed as a Home Zone.
- Pedestrian only routes to be developed throughout the estate.

The diagram below shows how some of the movement network issues mentioned by residents will be addressed. Improvements to the street layout include clearly defined parking bays, a new cycle route, added street planting and traffic calming measures such as chicanes and changes to the roads surface. These suggested developments aim to provide a safer movement network for pedestrians, cyclists and cars alike, as well as a change in the hierarchy, meaning more space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Lowther Street in particular is in need of change. Residents are keen to see Lowther Street become the new community hub of the neighbourhood. This change would lead to an increase in footfall, as well as a desire to linger along the high street. To accommodate this aspiration the development of the streetscape is essential.

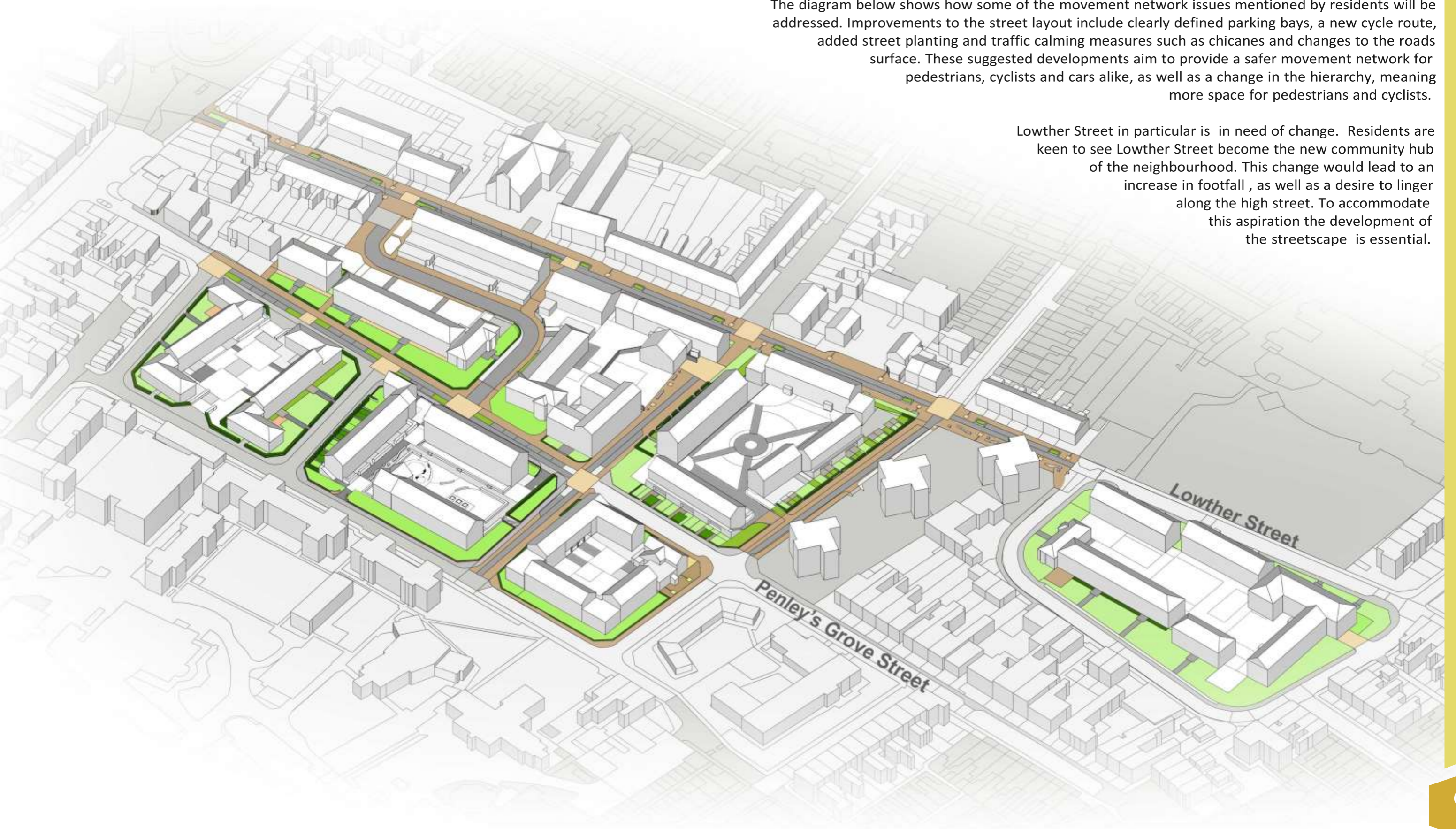




Fig. 34 Aerial view of proposed streetscape

-  Existing One Way Street
-  Existing Two Way Street

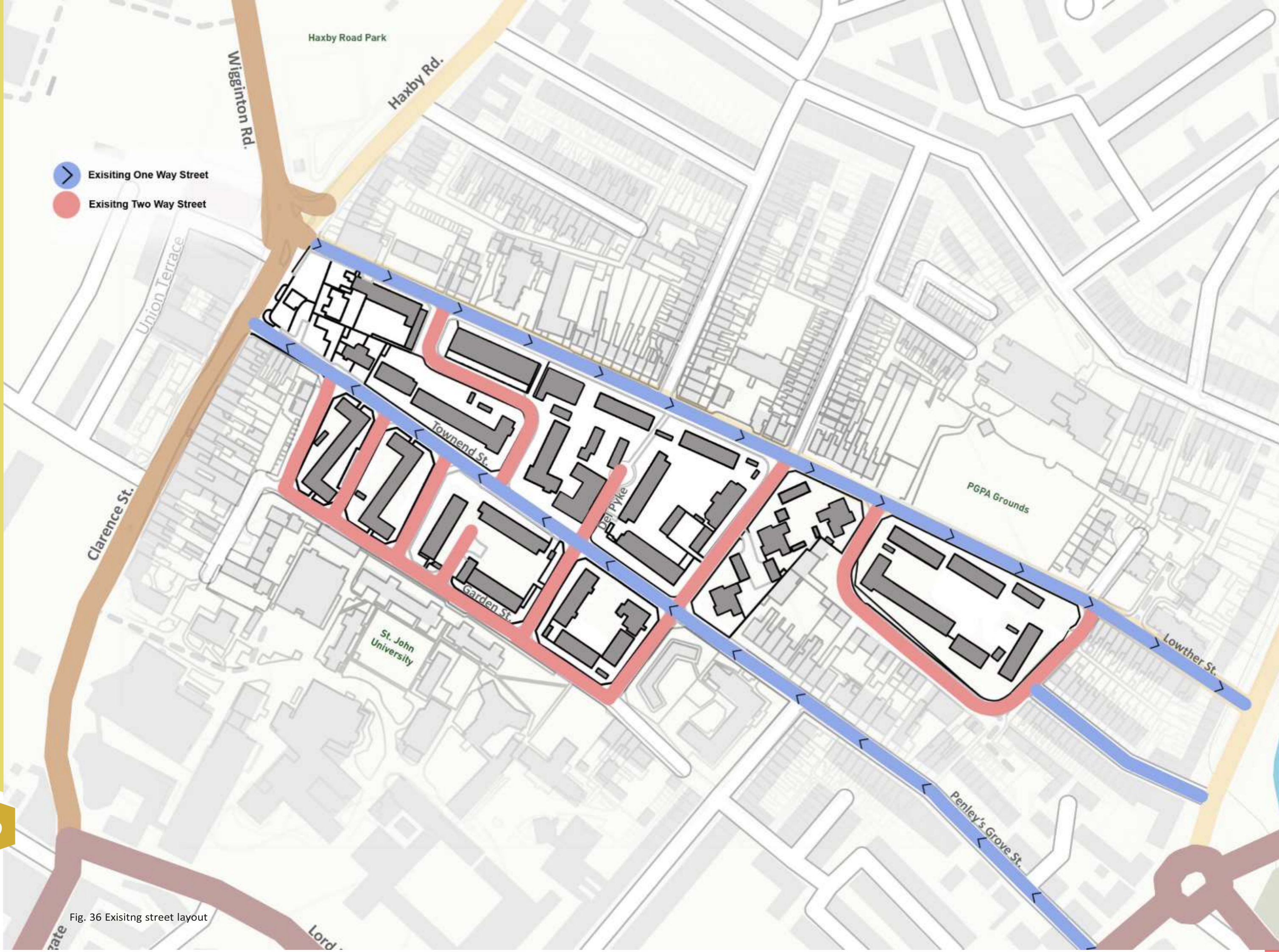
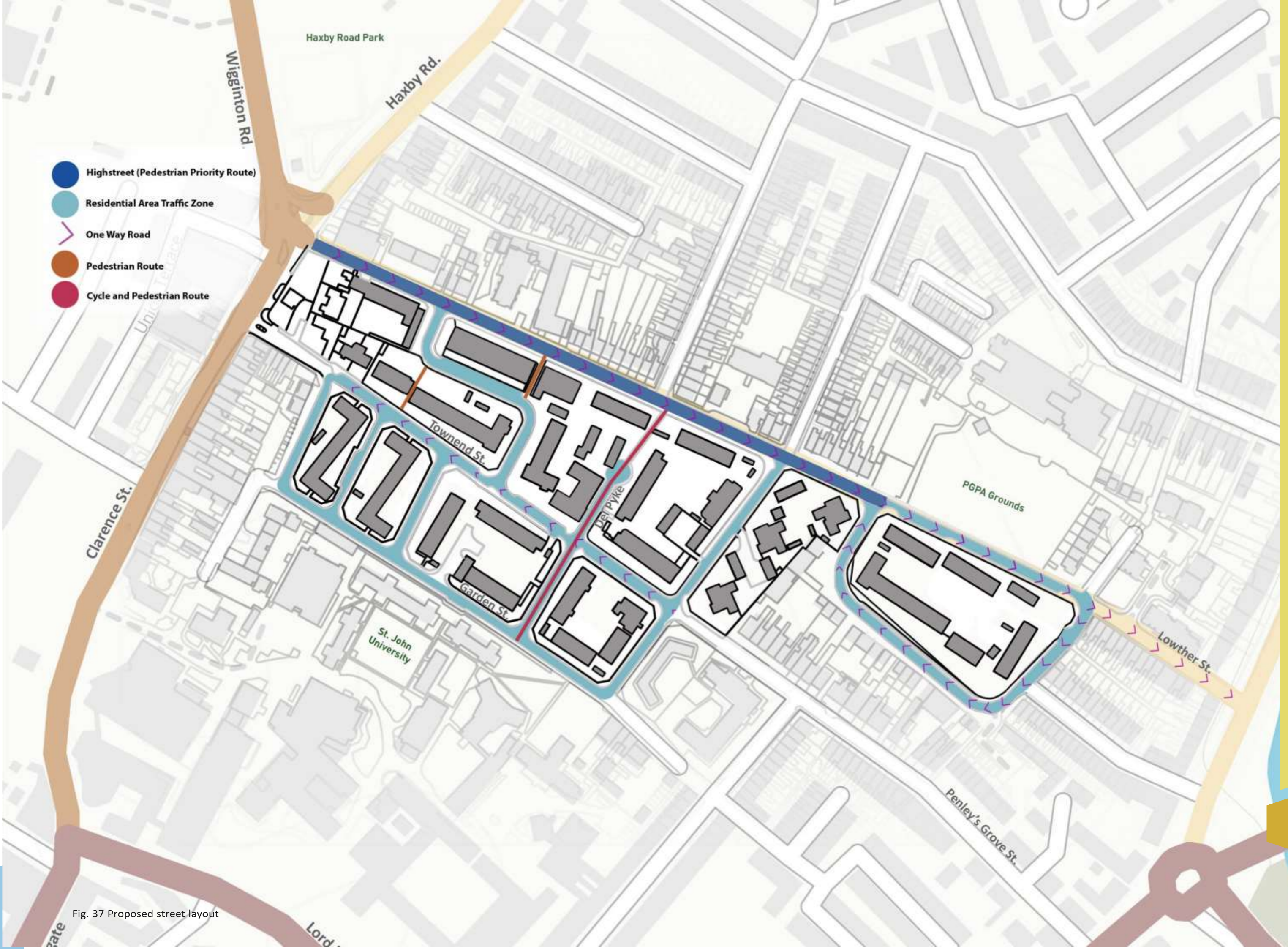


Fig. 36 Existing street layout



- Highstreet (Pedestrian Priority Route)
- Residential Area Traffic Zone
- ↗ One Way Road
- Pedestrian Route
- Cycle and Pedestrian Route

Fig. 37 Proposed street layout

Lowther Street

Lowther Street is one of the main movement routes within The Groves. It contains the following main trip attractors for residents within The Groves: the parade of shops, restaurants and takeaways, community facilities at Door 84 and St Thomas' Church and Park Grove Primary School. Lowther Street also offers a pedestrian route to other trip attractors outside of The Groves and access to public transport routes on Clarence Street and Huntington Road.

Throughout the public engagement process, residents expressed views that the use of Lowther Street for through traffic and the lack of defined or controlled crossing points is a major barrier to easy and safe pedestrian and cycle journeys.

The community plan proposes that Lowther Street should have significant improvements to address the residents' concerns and should provide a more attractive high street destination for The Groves. Proposals include:

- The creation of an attractive public area outside of the shops.
- Additional retail space for the existing shops to display goods.
- Space to allow for community events such as pop-up markets.
- Informal seating for people to meet.
- New tree planting in the wide pavement, subject to technical feasibility.

- Improved road and pavement surfacing to help visually and physically separate the road from parking and pedestrian zones.
- Traffic calming measures to slow the traffic speeds, this could include raised junctions and crossings, chicanes, road narrowing and pavement buildouts.
- The provision of safe links and raised crossing points from the shops to community spaces and the primary school.
- New street tree planting, both within the street, where technically feasible, and within the adjacent gardens and communal green spaces.
- The provision of additional planting or raised planters as part of the traffic calming measures.

Fig. 35 Improved Lowther Street Visualisation



Residential Streets

The Groves is bisected by a number of smaller streets with Townend Street, Penley's Grove Street and Garden Street providing the main routes running East to West, Abbots Street, Cole Street, Del Pyke, St Thomas' Place, Pilgrim Street, Backhouse Street and Jackson Street running North to South and connecting to the East to West streets. It is proposed that Del Pyke and Pilgrim Street are treated as a different part of the street hierarchy and are described separately. All other routes are classified as residential streets in the movement hierarchy, providing access to properties and on street parking.

The community plan proposes that all the residential streets are focussed on providing safe access to residential properties and associated resident-parking areas for local traffic only. Proposals include:

- Improved road and pavement surfacing to visually separate the moving vehicle environment from parking and pedestrian areas.
- Traffic calming measures to slow the traffic speeds, which could include raised junctions and crossings, chicanes, road narrowing or pavement buildouts.
- On street, resident only, permit parking.
- New street tree planting within adjacent gardens and communal green spaces where space exists.
- The creation of an attractive public area outside of the Londis supermarket in which to accommodate space for informal seating for people to meet and planting new trees.
- Additional planting or raised planters as part of traffic calming measures where space allows.

Del Pyke – a People Focused Street

During the public engagement events, the route through Del Pyke was identified as a key link to access the city centre via other walking routes. This route is particularly popular with students accessing York St John University. Access along Abbots Street to Lord Mayors Walk via St John Street is

identified as an advisory route for cyclists on the City of York cycle network. However, site observations indicate Del Pyke is also a popular route for cyclists and pedestrians, particularly leading to York St John University.

As part of the community plan proposals, it is recommended that, Del Pyke be upgraded to provide a pedestrian and cycle focused route linking with the city's wider sustainable transport network, while still allowing resident vehicle access and parking for the adjacent properties.

Proposals aim to accommodate the movement of all users including pedestrians, cyclists and residents' vehicles. Features to reduce traffic speed and make the route pedestrian and cyclist friendly might include a raised junction with Townend Street, and changes in surfacing to visually identify the route as pedestrian friendly. Wider footpaths or a shared surface would help create a more welcoming and attractive public space for people rather than just a road just for cars.

Pilgrim Street as a Home Zone

Pilgrim Street currently separates two blocks of residential accommodation. It is proposed that this street forms a new courtyard environment, similar to the other courtyards in The Groves. It would then be able to provide an enclosed communal space for residents rather than simply another street.

If it is not possible to close Pilgrim Street, an alternative option could be the development of a Home Zone, which introduces attractive paving materials, planting and street furniture to create a safe and welcoming environment for the surrounding residents.

Pedestrian Only Routes

There are currently a number of walking routes that pass through courtyards, and the status of these routes is ambiguous as they pass through some areas of the courtyards, which might otherwise be considered as private spaces for residents. This situation has encouraged anti-social behaviour in some locations, and discourages residents from making full use of and taking ownership of the communal courtyard gardens.

The development of the courtyard spaces as communal gardens and the provision of some infill housing development gives the opportunity to make the courtyards less permeable to public access and to create an image that these are private spaces for the surrounding residents and so deter the wider public.

However, it is recognised that there are a few pedestrian routes that do pass through courtyards and link the main residential streets, it is proposed to retain these as quiet pedestrian only routes.

11 Homes

The Groves Community Plan looks to provide housing-led regeneration using a neighbourhood regeneration model. This focuses on improving the living conditions of people living within the area with success measured by improvements in the welfare of the community

Creating safe and decent homes can have incredibly positive effects on a family's health, on the study habits of students, and on a neighbourhood's overall attractiveness and stability.

With so much at stake, it is time for our definition of decent housing to expand to include a range of solutions such as new housing, housing repair and renovation and improvements to the local environment. This is what we are working towards in The Groves with a community backed and housing-led regeneration approach.

There is growing evidence that housing-led regeneration benefits all other areas of regeneration and can enable a range of changes including improvements to:

- The street scene.
- Green spaces.
- Community facilities.
- Other services such as shops.

The Groves Community Plan has placed housing at the centre of the plan. In addition, the engagement events made it clear that residents were keen to see affordable housing development within the area.

The Groves Community Plan looks to provide housing-led regeneration using a neighbourhood regeneration model. This focuses on improving the living conditions of people living within the area with success measured by improvements in the welfare of the community. The new housing within the plan provides accommodation for the existing community, allowing them to remain and grow within the area. Affordable family housing will attract new households whilst accessible housing units aid an aging population to remain and prosper within the area.

The Groves Community Plan uses lessons learnt from housing-led regeneration schemes in Glasgow. However, whereas the Glasgow example concentrates on improvements to the existing housing stock The Groves Community Plan looks to provide targeted new build housing interventions that will provide a catalyst for a renewal of the wider external environment.

A glance at a map of the wider Groves area shows housing of two distinct types:

- Victorian terraced housing.
- Social housing constructed in the early 1960's.

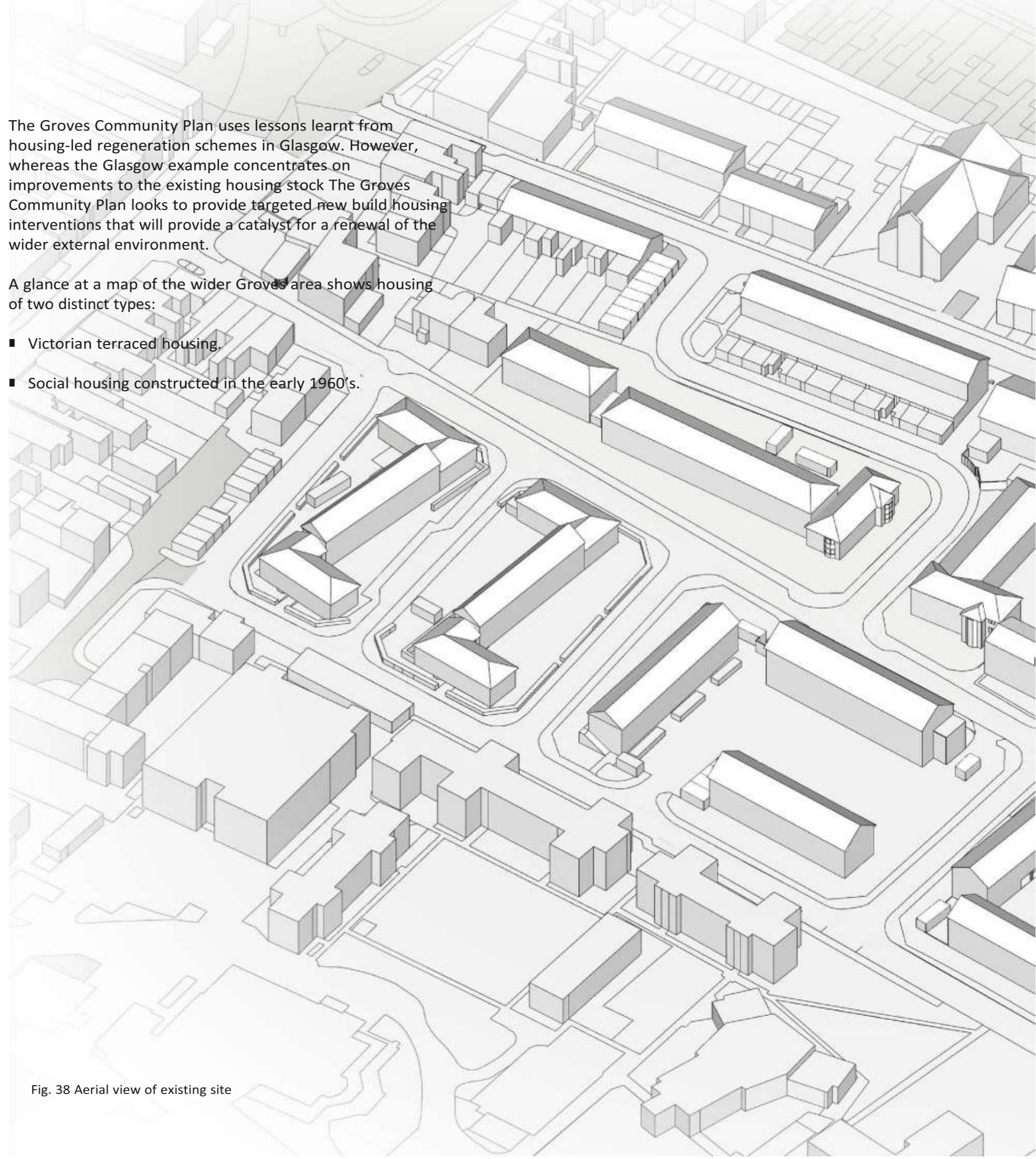
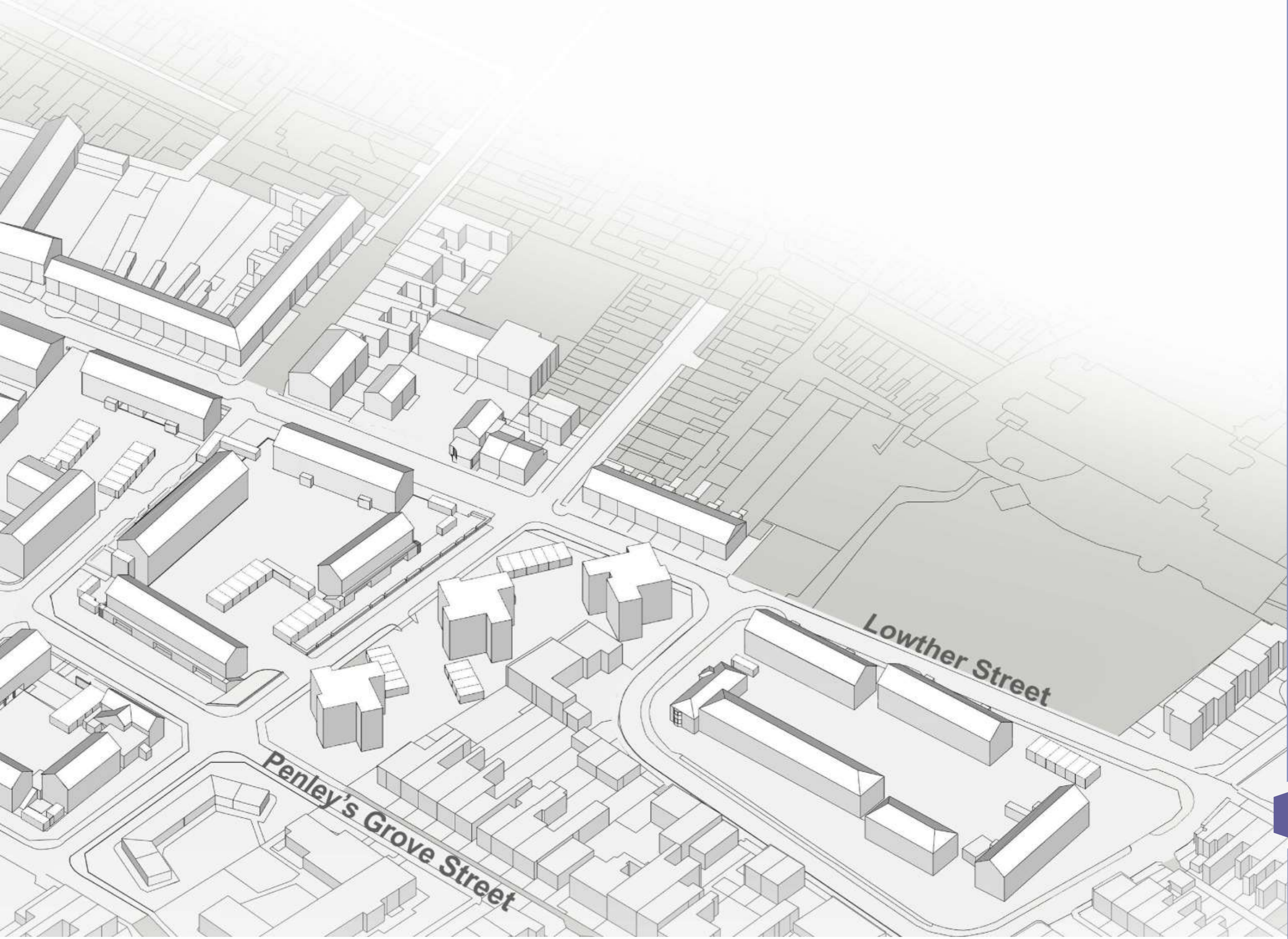


Fig. 38 Aerial view of existing site



Penley's Grove Street

Lowther Street

The area of social housing is the subject of this plan and consists of three and four storey brick built accommodation blocks arranged, in general, around a courtyard. Although the courtyards are an attractive feature they are underused, occupied with washing lines, and brick built stores. In addition, there are several garage court areas containing brick built garages that are underused.

Engagement and consultation with residents reveals a desire to remove the brick garages and store buildings and use the land to build affordable housing. Some of the washing lines might be kept or improved to encourage drying clothes outside. Doing this would reduce the risk of mould build up, which can form when drying clothes inside. The community plan proposes a development of the existing urban blocks enclosing the courtyards, a densification of the existing accommodation. This is achieved by closing the corners of the courtyards and building on the garage court sites. In addition, it is proposed that existing staircases are enclosed and provided with a lift.

The corner infill developments are of two types:

- Flat roofed blocks providing two storey family accommodation and direct access to gardens to allowing children to play.
- Pitched roof extensions of the neighbouring blocks providing wheelchair accessible two-person accommodation with lift access and direct access to the courtyard areas.

The new housing is arranged to preserve as many existing trees as possible. This is a particular issue with the corner infill blocks, many of the flat roof blocks are pulled back to avoid the existing trees.

The accommodation proposed to the demolished garage court sites is in general wheelchair friendly two-person apartments with lift access. In addition, open staircases on the ends of the housing blocks have been enclosed and provided with a lift to access second and third floor flats. This combination of accommodation will provide 27 one bed, two-person flats and 12 two bedroom, four-person houses for The Groves community.

As well as providing a catalyst for the redevelopment of The Groves, the new housing will provide an opportunity to improve wayfinding within the area. When Walking around The Groves, it is easy to become disorientated. This is in part due to the lack of variation within the building street frontages and the lack of landmarks of sufficient contrast within the area. The provision of good quality street planting will go some way to solving wayfinding, different areas will be identified with different tree species. In addition, contrasting corner blocks will provide easily recognisable landmarks. Providing some additional variations within the street frontages, and refurbishment of the existing balustrades to provide a more active street frontage for instance, will also aid wayfinding.



Fig. 39 New housing, sketch visualisation of potential developments

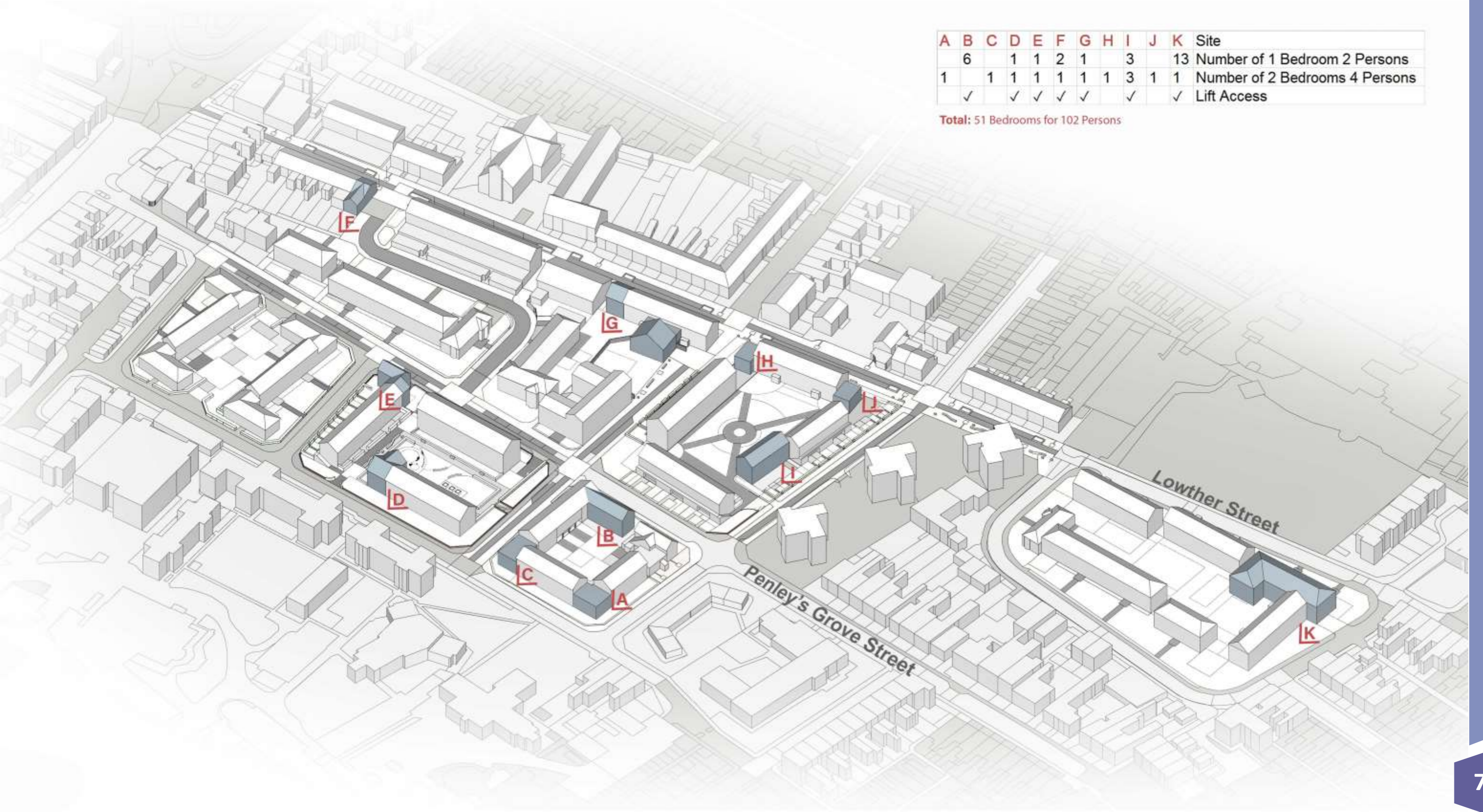


Fig. 40 Aerial view of new potential housing

12 Community Hub

Nearly half of residents contributing to the options appraisal survey work commented on the need for more community facilities, with a strong desire for a community centre that could serve residents of all ages.

Recent consultations with the local community have made it clear that Lowther Street has become a community focus for The Groves. The community plan intends to strengthen this by proposing plans for a new community and wellbeing centre and by strengthening the primary functions of Lowther Street as the focus of social activity.

Residents are very keen to see Lowther Street developing as a community hub, and initiatives to enable this are being supported. The feasibility and viability of a new community centre is being investigated, and potential improvements to the street are being assessed.

Community Centre

Nearly half of residents contributing to the options appraisal survey work commented on the need for more community facilities, with a strong desire for a community centre that could serve residents of all ages.

The Groves is served by both St Thomas' Church Hall and Door 84 as community facilities. These organisations provide a valuable resource but the community are clear in their desire for a new, purpose-built facility that would serve the whole of the community, as a group-meeting place and a place for activities.

The plan proposes the development of a facility that could include:

- A community café.
- A catering kitchen.
- Activities hall.
- A community courtyard for events.
- Direct access from the hall to the courtyard to allow joint use.

It is hoped that The Groves community themselves will be involved in designing the layout of the community centre but it is envisaged that the hall will be centrally located and adjacent to a courtyard, which could also be used for outdoor community events. The hall would open directly into the courtyard, thus enabling the two to be used together for larger events.

The community centre is shown located in the redundant entrance to Aberford House. A café area, located to the front, could spill out onto the pavement along Lowther Street while the hall to the rear could open onto the courtyard behind.

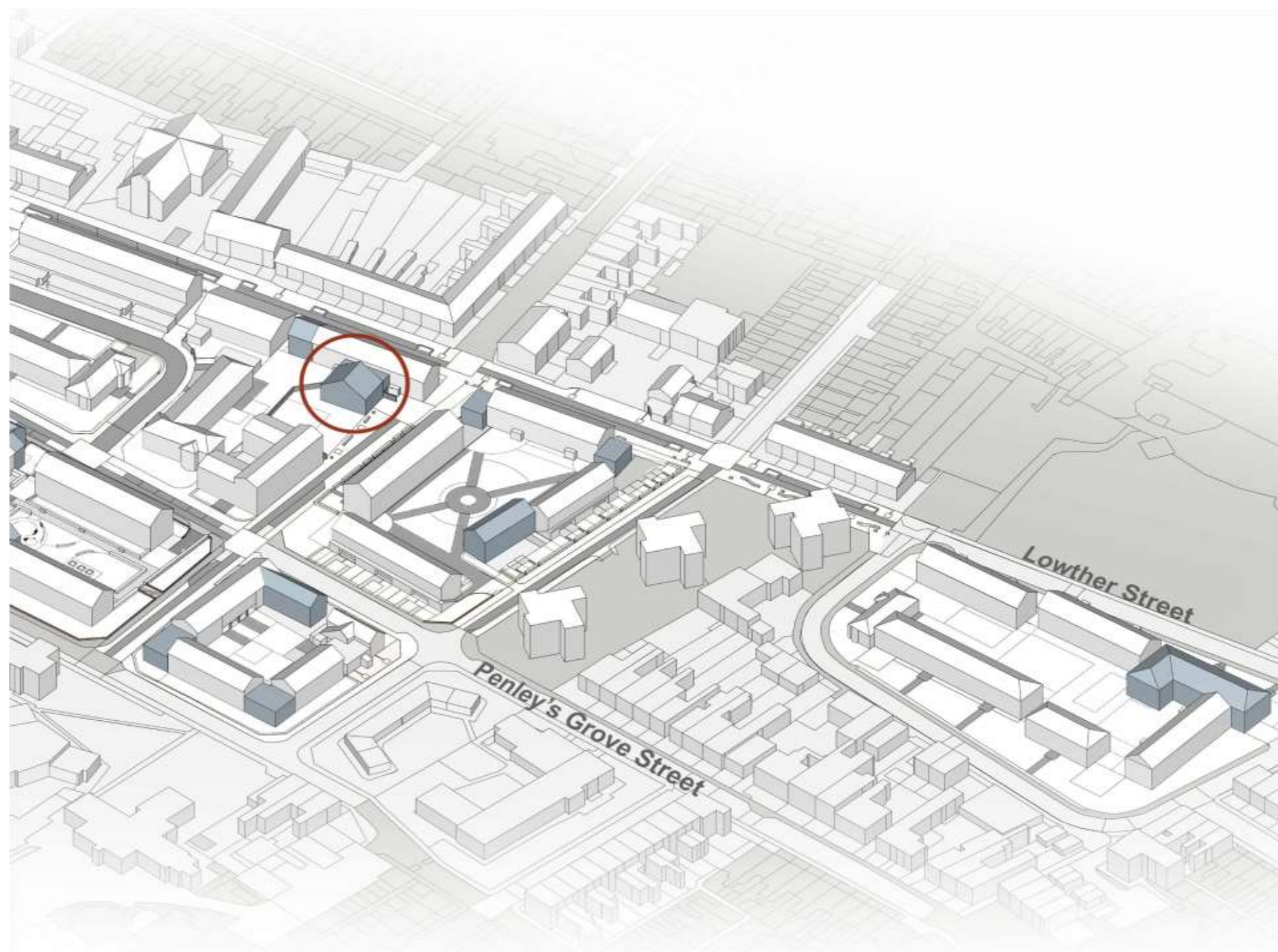


Fig. 41 Aerial view showing the location of the proposed community centre



Fig. 42 Visualisation of the interior of a typical the community hub

Lowther Street

Lowther Street is the main area for local shopping, with two small supermarkets, a shop specialising in Polish food, an Indian restaurant and takeaway, a Chinese takeaway, a Turkish barbers, and a charity shop. It is a strong focal point for the community, although feedback from resident surveys and walkabouts suggest that the street could be improved and there should be more shops, especially a bakery and grocers.

The community plan proposes to make Lowther Street a more vibrant and attractive shopping space, encouraging local residents to make full use of the facilities currently offered and help encourage a greater variety of shops and businesses to serve local needs.

Lowther Street is currently a through traffic route and is consequently dominated by traffic. The proposals aim to radically change this space by improving the quality of the street and creating a pedestrian focused environment.

It is proposed to widen footways, particularly outside of the shopping areas. Attractive new paving materials will help strengthen the pedestrian focus and provide outside space for the shops to spill out onto or accommodate pop-up markets or community gatherings.

Where space and utilities allow, the introduction of street trees will help green the street and establish new avenue planting. Seating would form an integral part of the new streetscape encouraging residents to stop and socialise.

Changing the street with the introduction of traffic calming features such as raised traffic tables, chicanes, road narrowing, raised pedestrian crossing points and on street parking, would help slow traffic speed and shift the focus to a more pedestrian friendly space. Using a palette of different coloured paving and introducing changes in paving size and texture will add to the improvement of Lowther Street from a standard road to an attractive welcoming place where residents feel safe and comfortable and want to visit and use.

The proposals also include for the incorporation of well designed and coordinated street furniture, seating, signage, cycle parking and bollards to complete the transformation from a car dominated road to a people focused space for all of the community.

Further tree or shrub planting in raised beds, or at ground level, if technically possible, on both sides of the street would provide the following benefits:

- Introduce more colour and seasonal interest.
- Help reduce wind speeds and provide shade.
- Reduce the effects of traffic pollution.
- Soften the predominantly hard surrounding landscape. ■

Provide an attractive setting for residents.

These principles established around the shopping parade on Lowther Street would continue further along the street to create an attractive pedestrian friendly environment for residents all the way past the Primary School and including a small public space in front of the proposed community centre.

Where communal gardens front onto Lowther Street it is proposed to introduce further tree planting, where possible, to continue and strengthen the tree-lined avenue and improve the outlook for residents.





Fig 43. Visualisation of Lowther Street as the community hub

13 Going Forward

There has been a great deal of community involvement throughout the regeneration project, and the continuation of this through to delivery will help to address the council plan priorities to build strong communities and protect vulnerable people.

The community plan for The Groves puts forward imaginative and ambitious ideas to build new affordable housing on unused and underused land and to improve the use and appearance of local streets and spaces.

The plan identifies strong connections between housing, public space, health and well-being. It proposes that a new community health and well-being centre be built close to the shops on Lowther Street, where local services and activities can develop further from those already happening.

There are various potential ways to fund The Groves regeneration work, including City of York Council (CYC) Housing Revenue Account (HRA), CYC Right to Buy (RTB) receipts, Section 106 developer contributions, Homes England Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAHP) general grant, Homes England Small Sites Fund, Local Growth Fund and cross subsidisation through market homes revenue.

A robust business case for the proposals set out in the Plan is being finalised and will be presented to CYC Housing Delivery Board for consideration early in 2020.

There will also be emerging grants, Town Funds for example, which might be applied for, including those more obviously related to health and well-being, loneliness, environmental sustainability and climate change (which is being addressed throughout this regeneration work) as well as housing delivery.

It is likely that the funding will be made up from a number of or even all of these sources, and developed over several years, possibly courtyard by courtyard.

Costings

A budget cost estimate has been prepared for review and discussion with the City of York Council. Works are summarised as new infill housing, improved courtyards, streets and spaces, and new community centre.

Total development costs in the nine courtyards comprise of:

- Demolition of garages, stairwells and sheds.
- New build construction of 39 one and two-bed apartments together with stair core and lift shafts in six of the seven courtyards.
- External works, including new amenity grass and planting, bonded gravel, flag paving, benches, raised planters, tree planting and garden boundary walls and hedges.
- New lift access to existing flats, where external staircases are to be enclosed.

Improvements to existing streets throughout The Groves is a key objective of the community plan and the budget cost estimate also includes new bonded gravel, flag paving, drainage, raised planters, timber benches and tree planting, especially along Lowther Street.

Following local engagement and consultation, the site for a new community centre has been identified on Lowther Street and is included in the costings report.

Funding Options

The potential funding avenues to consider are described in the following paragraphs:

HRA

The HRA Business Plan sets out priorities for maintaining the CYC housing assets as well as improving its homes and neighbourhoods. It determines how the council will meet the needs of present and future tenants whilst ensuring the longterm viability of the housing stock.

Delivery of affordable homes in The Groves is not yet included in the list of sites set out in the HRA plan, and it is recognised that this housing-led regeneration represents a new way of thinking and planning for new affordable homes.

The community planning and design work reports that around 40 new one-bed and two-bed apartments could be built in The Groves. The regeneration proposal also includes substantial improvements to the local neighbourhood, which is very much in line with HRA Business Plan objectives.

There has been a great deal of community involvement throughout the regeneration project, and the continuation of this through to delivery will help to address the council plan priorities to build strong communities and protect vulnerable people.

Protecting the environment is another priority for the council, and this area regeneration work is revolutionary in identifying existing assets and looking to improve the local environment (streets, courtyards and other public spaces), as well as exploring energy efficient measures, local recycling initiatives and community gardening.

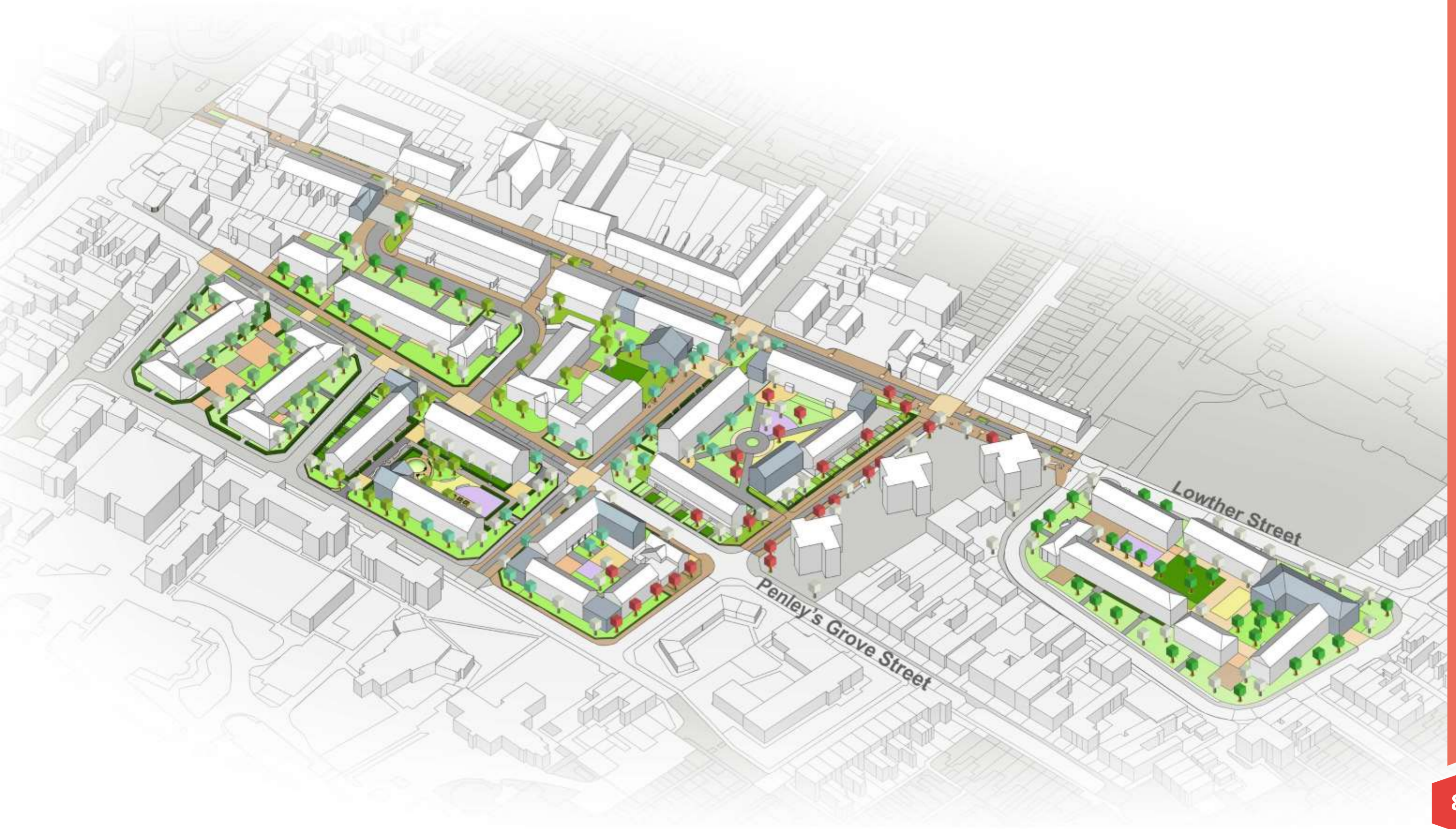


Fig. 2 Aerial view of the complete community plan



Fig. 32 External front gardens visualisation



Fig. 31 Improved courtyard visualisation



Fig. 35 Improved Lowther Street Visualisation

Recycled Capital Grant Fund

Borrowing can be used alongside RTB receipts or SOAHP grant, but not both, and can be used for social and affordable rent. The receipts cannot be used for intermediate rent, rent to buy or for market housing sale or rent. **Section 106 Contributions**

In exceptional circumstances, in lieu of on-site provision, developer payments can be used to provide affordable housing on suitable sites in York, and it is considered that the planning and provision of affordable housing as part of The Groves regeneration is an appropriate activity for these payments.

Homes England SOAHP Grant

Between 20 and 25 homes are due to be delivered by March 2021 and Homes England have been open to transferring grants to another programme if desired. They have also said that more units could be delivered at the same grant rate per unit.

It is predicted that there will be future affordable programmes, beyond March 2012, where grants will be available at similar rates per unit, and any new shared ownership homes in The Groves would be eligible for that grant.

Homes England Small Sites Fund

Discussions have progressed with Homes England with regard to the Small Sites Fund, which is grant funding for preparatory and infrastructure costs associated with emerging development proposals.

Homes England agree that many of the proposals set out in The Groves Community Plan could be considered for Homes England grant funding. These include demolition costs, site clearance, land assembly, service diversions and street works.



39 New housing, sketch visualisation of potential developments



Local Growth Fund (LGF)

The York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) administers the LGF and currently has a programme of approved works due for completion by March 2021.

It has been forecast that there will be some slippage of the current LGF programme and the LEP expects, therefore, to open for substitute applications to deliver before March 2021.

It is envisaged that only the groundwork would reasonably be completed by the fund closure date and partial funding of the total site would preclude a further submission being made in future rounds for the same site.

Towns Fund

The Government has recently pledged to give the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government £241M from the Town Fund as part of a spending review. This is to support regeneration of high streets, town centres and local economies.

Market Housing Cross-Subsidy

The proportion and type of housing to be built in The Groves is a decision to be made based on evidence of need and viability. The Local Plan policy target is 20% affordable housing (16% social rent, 4% shared ownership or discounted sale), but there is a clear opportunity to provide up to 100% affordable housing on this CYC owned land.

It is well documented that regeneration brings with it increased house and land values as areas improve. The proposed housing-led regeneration in The Groves could be viewed as a pioneering study in terms of providing a mix of affordable, intermediate and open market housing.

Community-led Housing

The Council is keen to support community-led initiatives to build new housing in the city and will work with individuals in The Groves to explore national grant funding options.

Acknowledgement

Figure 3. Healthy community

(top, left): Flea market www.timeout.com (21.5.19) <https://www.timeout.com/berlin/things-to-do/best-markets-in-berlin>

(top, right): Litter Picking www.nwemail.co.uk (29.7.19) <https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/17800833.24-rubbish-bags-cones-hoover-collected-community-litter-pick/>

(bottom, left): A Community Choir with Chorus UK www.alderhey.nhs.uk (25.7.19) <https://alderhey.nhs.uk/contact-us/press-office/latest-news/community-choir-chorus-uk>

(bottom, right): Walking Group www.getactive.io <https://www.getactive.io/london/sport/walking>

Figure 5. Community gardening

(top, right): Parkfields community centre clean up www.leaderlive.co.uk (5.5.19) <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/17619877.mold-community-garden-spruced-up/#gallery0>

(bottom, left): Diversity. Curiosity. Community www.westcountyschoolgardens.org <http://www.westcountyschoolgardens.org/mira-vista-school-garden-education-center.html>

Figure 7. Road safety

(top, left): Shared Surface www.bucksfreepress.co.uk (3.8.18) <https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/16395029.major-road-overhaul-unaffected-by-government-calls-to-halt-shared-space-schemes/>

(top, right): Richard Atkins traffic calming www.transportxtra.com (17.8.17) <https://www.transportxtra.com/publications/local-transport-today/news/54351/new-street-design-changing-driverbehaviour-outside-school/>

(centre, left): Safer Routes in Communities www.flintshire.gov.uk (13.3.19) <https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Council-Apps/NewsPortlet.aspx?id=2478>

(bottom, left): "We have to test the limits" www.smart-magazine.com (13.11.14) <https://www.smart-magazine.com/interview-ben-hamilton-baillie/>

(bottom, right): New Road Brighton www.izgiuygur.com (28.11.16) <https://www.izgiuygur.com/2016/11/28/conjunctiveskin/>

Figure 9. Housing

(top, right): Level Access www.bigstockphoto.com <https://www.bigstockphoto.com/image-10567895/stock-photo-wheelchair-user-in-front-of-nursing-home>

(bottom, left): Social Neighbours www.alamy.com <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-good-neighbours-talking-over-fence-in-back-garden-femaleneighbors-29407787.html>

(bottom, right): Family Home www.mirror.co.uk (31.7.14) <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/uk-homes-shrinking---families-3940453>

<https://www.google.com/maps/@53.967025,-1.0776777,3a,75y,12.24h,95.11t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1srHNsT4PDfQfZpLDB3tnijw!2e0!7i13312!8i6656>

Figure 11. Existing and proposed community features (top, left):
Community Event www.stthomaswithstmaurice.org.uk
<https://www.stthomaswithstmaurice.org.uk/index.php/natter>

(top, right): Hull Fish Trail www.public-art.shu.ac.uk <https://public-art.shu.ac.uk/other/hull/fi/00000011.html>

(bottom, left): St. Thomas Church www.historicengland.org.uk <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/20553>

(bottom, right): Door 84 www.google.com

Figure 17. Building work and the older terraced housing in The Groves Stephen Lewis www.yorkpress.co.uk (21.3.18) <https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/16099789.a-new-view-of-york-minster-and-other-old-photos-from-thegroves/#gallery1>

Figure 19. Boxer Frank 'Young' Fowler www.frankfowler.co.uk http://frankfowler.co.uk/frankfowler.co.uk/FRANK_FOWLER.html

Figure 23. 'Be Part Find Shelter Join In Love Play' Stephen Lee Hodgkins community art <http://stephenleehodgkins.net/my-work>

Figure 27. 'One Planet York' Stephen Lee Hodgkins community art <http://stephenleehodgkins.net/>

Figure 28. Community based organisations in The Groves Flower Power York <https://www.givingtuesday.org.uk/partners/flower-power-york/>

Move the Masses <https://www.movethemasses.org.uk/>

Door 84 <https://www.door84.co.uk/about-2/letters-forms/>

Bright Sparks <https://www.brightsparkscic.org.uk/>

John Lalley International Foundation <https://johnlallyinternationalfoundation.com/>

St. Thomas' Church <https://www.stthomaswithstmaurice.org.uk/>

Figure 29. Stephen Lee Hodgkins community art of Park Grove Primary Academy <http://stephenleehodgkins.net/>

