



REFERENCE
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PROJECT

BACK OF ANCOATS NEIGHBOURHOOD

DOCUMENT

PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CLIENT

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

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1.1 Introduction

This Public Realm Strategy builds on the ambitious placemaking vision outlined for the neighbourhood in the Poland Street Zone Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) (2020), providing a narrative on how the design principles set out in the NDF can be realised through the detailed design of streets and spaces.

This opportunity is to effectively complete Ancoats as a sustainable urban neighbourhood. It is a significant plan to continue driving Manchester forward as a city over the coming decade.

Investment has delivered award-winning public realm and buildings¹, revitalising Ancoats and New Islington. With further committed investment within the neighbourhood it is necessary to ensure that the public realm is grounded in a strong, flexible, place-specific strategy that looks to the past as well as the future, and at the detail as well as the masterplan. These qualities are why Ancoats works so well as a neighbourhood. The evolving approach to development requires a reciprocal approach to detailed thinking about the public realm and infrastructure within which around 1500 new homes will be sensitively integrated. The Ancoats Mobility Hub is the catalyst for these innovative, practical and deliverable proposals.

¹ - 2020 PROPERTY AWARDS "PLACEMAKING AWARD"

- RIBA NORTHWEST SUSTAINABILITY AWARD - WINNER 2021 - THE OGLESBY CENTRE AT HALLE ST PETERS BY STEPHENSON, HAMILTON RISLEY STUDIO

- RIBA NORTH WEST AWARD WINNER - 2021 MURRAYS MILLS - FIELDEN CLEGG BRADLEY STUDIOS.

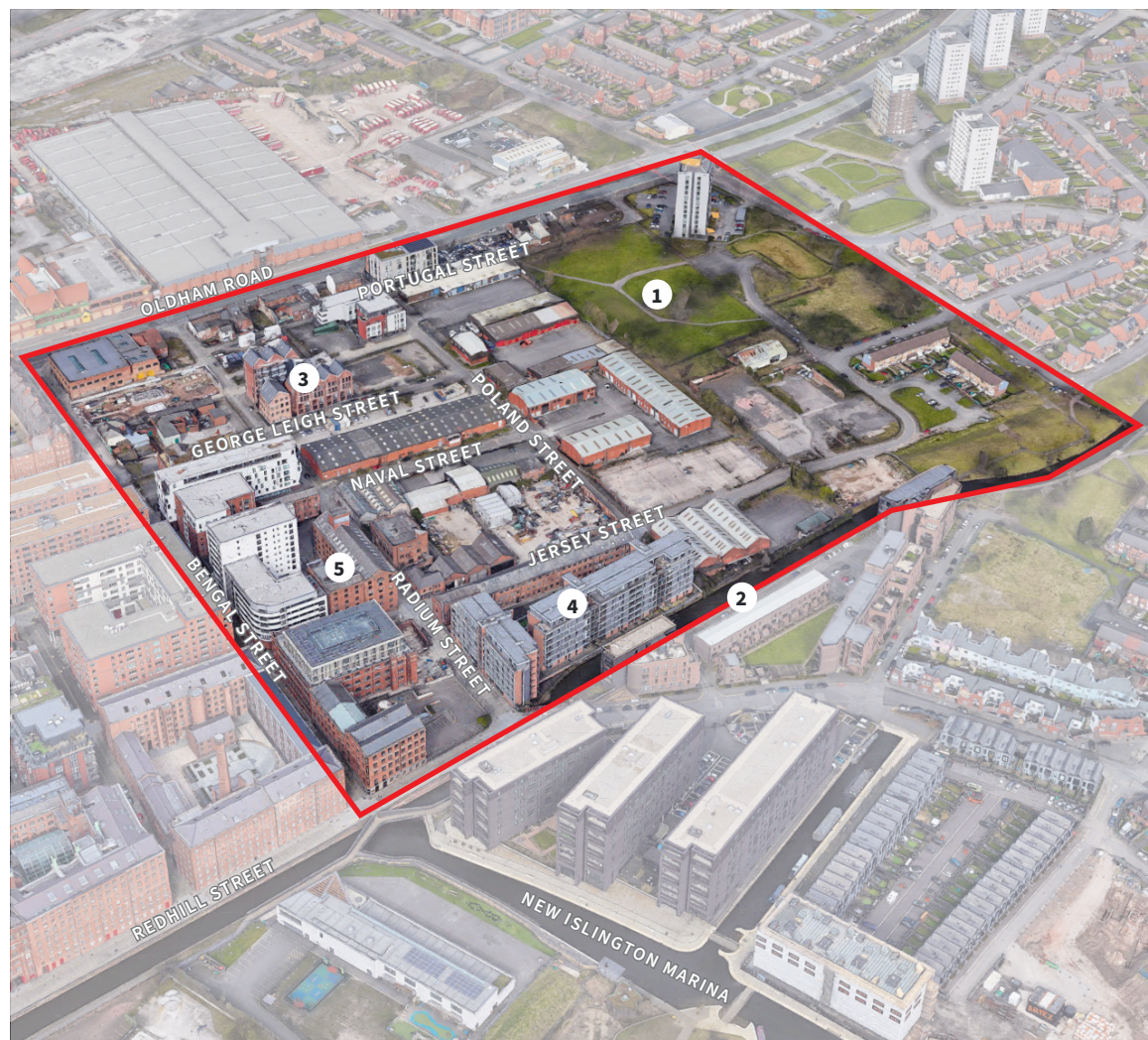


FIGURE 1 - NEIGHBOURHOOD BOUNDARY

1 Ancoats Green

A substantial historic green space located to the north east of the neighbourhood.

2 Rochdale Canal

A popular blue link running along the southwestern boundary of the neighbourhood

3 Warehaus

Mid-rise residential buildings fronting George Leigh Street.

4 Flint Glass Wharf

Significant canalside residential development, with offices and studio spaces activating Jersey Street.

5 Beehive Mill

Grade II* listed Cotton Mill on the corner of Jersey Street and Radium St.

1.2 Public Realm Vision and Objectives

To support the creation of a sustainable urban neighbourhood of 1,500 homes through the delivery of a public realm which supports life and celebrates place.

This will be achieved by rebalancing movement to promote active travel; and through the delivery of an enhanced green heart at Ancoats Green.

The green character will extend into the adjacent streets and spaces to create a liveable healthy environment, which is climate resilient and supports the moves towards a zero carbon future.

The public realm will be locally distinctive; utilising the existing industrial heritage of Ancoats to create a unique sense of place, enhancing the character of the Ancoats Conservation Area and facilitating the creation of a canal edge walk.

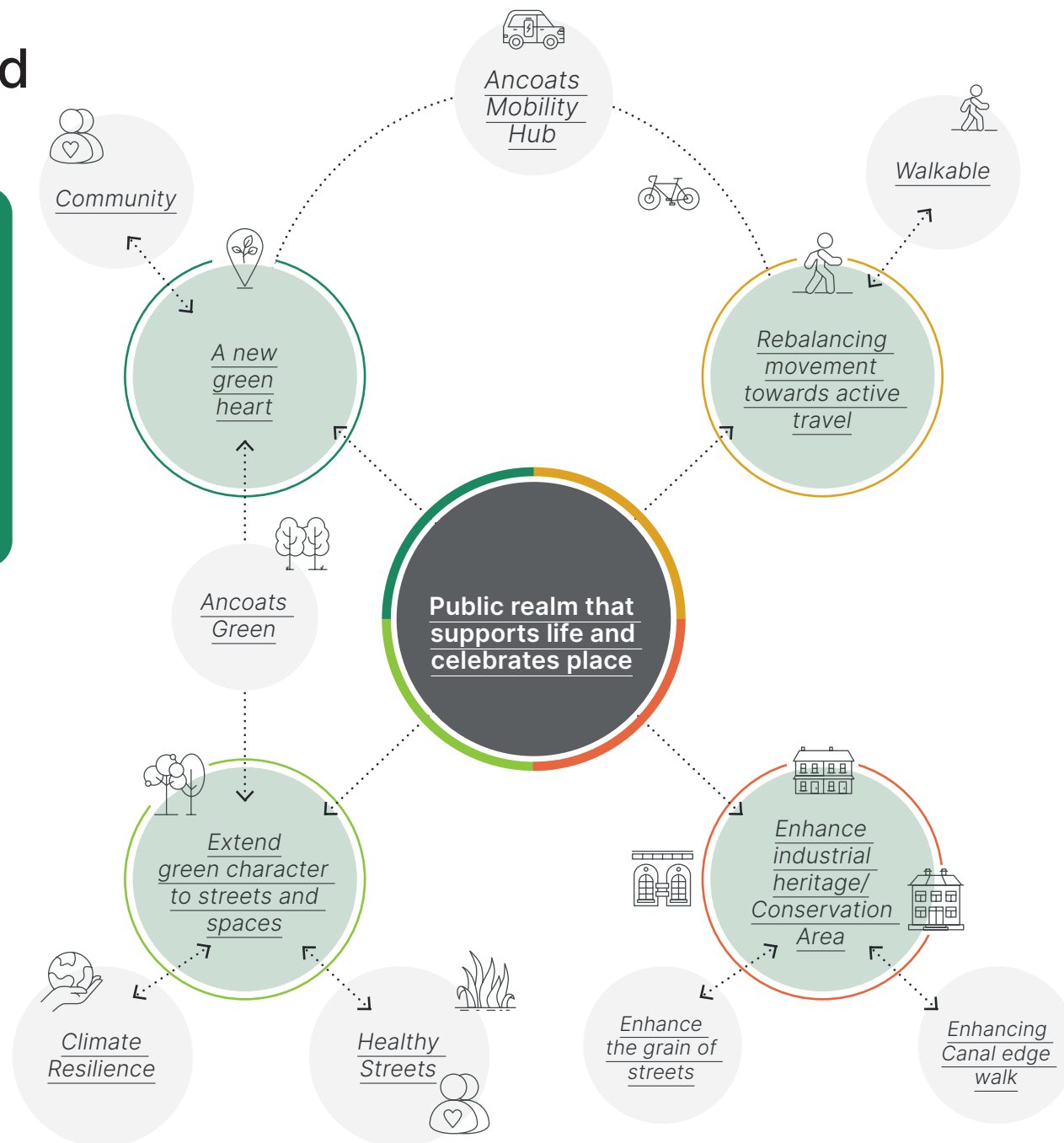


FIGURE 2 - VISION AND OBJECTIVES DIAGRAM

1.3 Building on the Neighbourhood Development Framework

"The vision for the Poland Street Zone is to *bring forward an authentic evolution of Ancoats; a form of urban development and mix of uses, rooted in the area's past but driven by a sense of the future.*"

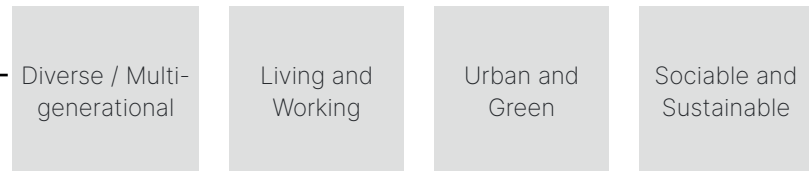
Poland Street Zone NDF, 2020

Evolution

The Public Realm Strategy evolves some of the detail set out in the 2020 NDF in six key areas:

1. Refine the **street hierarchy** - many of the streets proposed in the NDF shared similar characteristics. The strategy refines this to three street types, based on a common design language and philosophy.
2. Create a **movement strategy** which rebalances the streets, favouring active travel for pedestrians and cyclists, exploiting the sustainable movement opportunities generated by the Mobility Hub.
3. Place a **higher degree of emphasis on Naval Street** as the direct pedestrian route linking Ancoats Green and Cutting Room Square.
4. Refine the **design of the Prussia Street green link**, creating a wider range of uses and heritage references. The removal of the remnants of Jersey St Bridge is considered key in creating a level, pleasant and safe connection to the Rochdale Canal.
5. Add **design detail showing how the influence of Ancoats Green can be extended through the neighbourhood**, along streets and beyond its current boundaries.
6. Explore **how the benefits of extending Ancoats Green can be maximised**, placing a strong emphasis on walking, cycling and healthy lifestyles.

Poland Street NDF Ambition



NDF Principles

- Authentic evolution of form and use
- Communities and healthy lifestyles
- A green neighbourhood resilient to climate change
- Connecting and contributing

Public Realm Strategy will...

- **Build on the positive groundwork laid by the NDF**, providing a narrative on how the ambitions set out in the NDF can be realised through the detailed design of streets and spaces.
- **Create a public realm framework that supports the creation of a liveable neighbourhood** as envisioned.
- **Evolve the NDF illustrative masterplan** and public realm principles, to align with the changing spatial context of the neighbourhood, and the opportunities that have arisen since its adoption
- **Provide design detail** to guide the future design of key streets and spaces within the neighbourhood area.

FIGURE 3 - NDF REVIEW DIAGRAM

1.4 An Evolving Spatial Context

Poland Street Zone NDF (2020) Illustrative Masterplan



FIGURE 4 - NDF ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN

The NDF illustrative masterplan indicated potential for:

- A re-orientation of Ancoats Green along east-west alignment. New buildings proposed within previous Ancoats Green footprint.
- A significant linear green space along former Prussia St canal arm
- A large green space along Rochdale Canal at southernmost tip of the Prussia Street green link.
- Assumptions on what can be delivered within future development parcels - including new connections, open spaces and buildings.

Evolving Development Context



FIGURE 5 - NDF EVOLUTION PLAN

Strategy evolution:

- Historic area of Ancoats Green utilised to create a new green heart.
- The consented Mobility Hub sits at the interface of the park, providing opportunity to create new, safe, green street connections. Streets rebalanced for active travel and a reduction in vehicular traffic.
- The removal of Jersey St Bridge remnants will deliver safe, level and pleasant access to the Rochdale Canal along a new greenway.
- Revitalised Ancoats Green informs evolution of the greenway concept.
- The materials palette will be influenced by the industrial aesthetic of the Front of Ancoats.
- A green character could extend along three key east-west streets.
- The strategy will inform the design of future development parcels.

1.5 Opportunities

A series of key opportunities can be drawn from the analysis, helping to ensure the emerging strategy captures the unique elements of the neighbourhood.

The analysis shows...

- A key strategic location within the wider regeneration context.
- Located at interface of various existing communities.
- Several city linkages feed into the neighbourhood (with scope to extend).
- Front of Ancoats to the west presents a hard, urban streetscene.
- Ancoats Green along the western edge provides a substantial green space.
- The range of functions provided in local green spaces is limited.
- The area is used as a transient neighbourhood by cars, with vehicles rat-running between Oldham Road and Great Ancoats Street.

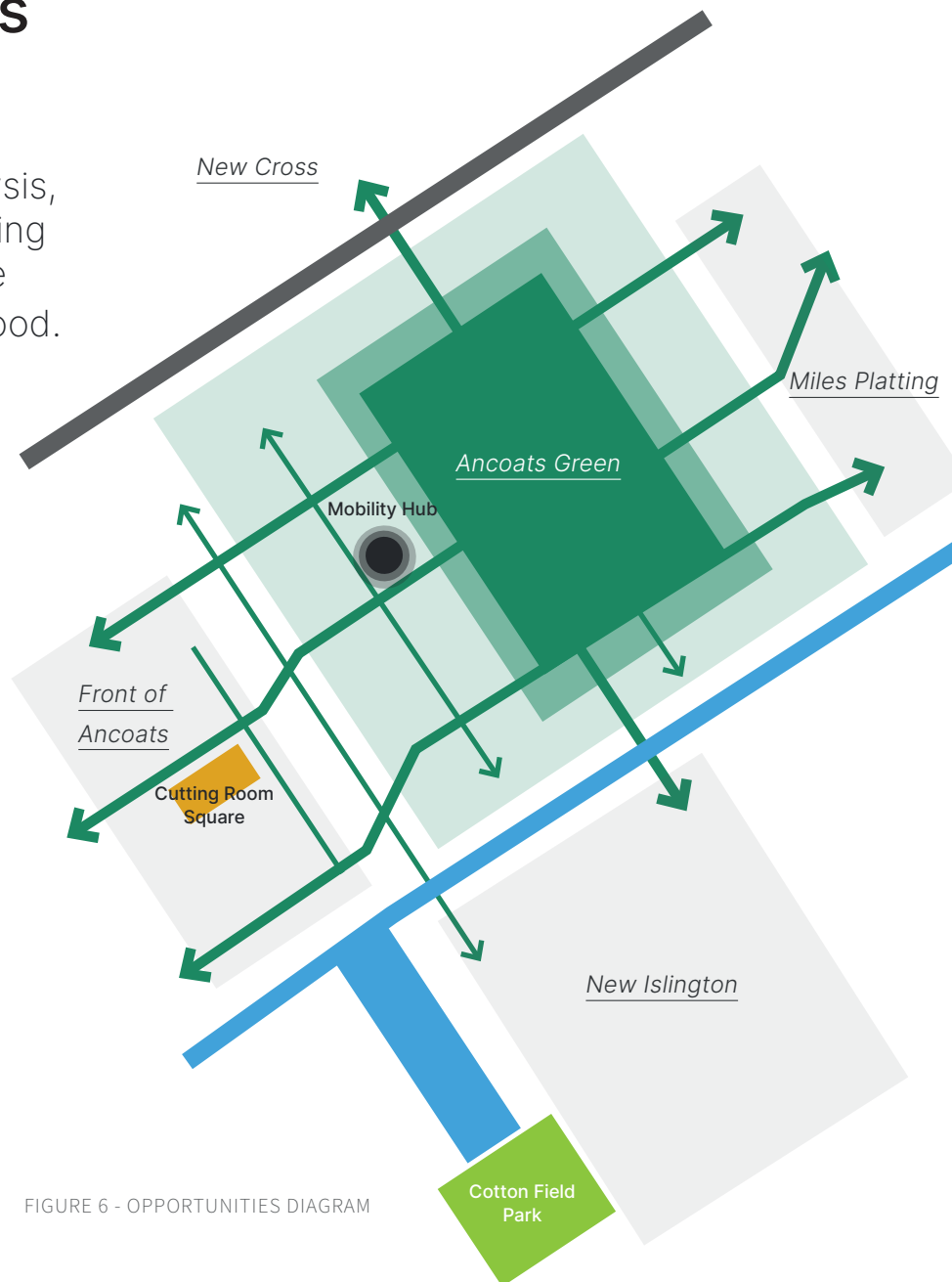


FIGURE 6 - OPPORTUNITIES DIAGRAM

Opportunities

There is a **real opportunity to extend the influence of Ancoats Green through the neighbourhood**, enhancing its functions and providing future residents opportunities for play and amenity.

The area sits at the interface of several existing and future communities, and as such **creates a space where communities come together - encouraging integration, interaction and conviviality.**

To improve the range of functions and activities available in the public realm, including space for active play, biodiversity, local events and outdoor sport.

The Mobility Hub provides the opportunity to rebalance the streets in the area in favour of active travel, reducing car dominance and prioritising the health and wellbeing of people. It also allows for the relocation of highway over to green space, planting and tree, in the form of Green Streets, which will in turn emphasise the grain of the streets.

Create strong pedestrian and cycle connections through the neighbourhood, connecting the neighbourhood with its neighbours and key city spaces and the strategic cycle network.

1.6 Public Realm Strategy and Concept

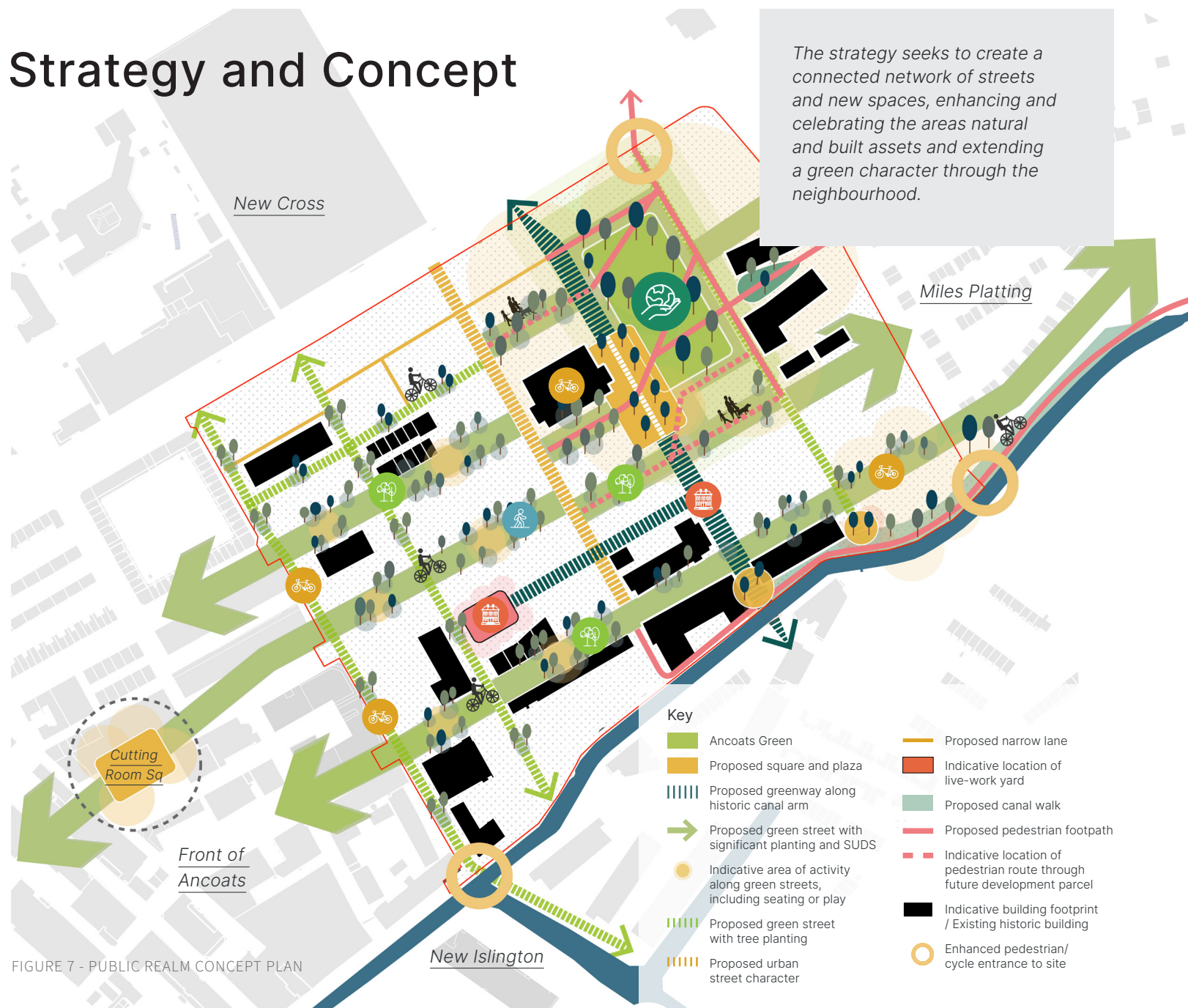
Figure 7 illustrates the application of the Public Realm Strategy objectives spatially, capturing the following design features.

The importance of Ancoats Green as a focus/conduit for key routes between communities and destination points within the City.

Strengthening desire lines as they permeate Ancoats Green, integrating them with the overall design and function of the space.

A new plaza and playground around the Mobility Hub provides a focal point of activity, enhancing the active setting of this key building. The space connects the Mobility Hub and future developments to the park and becomes the centre of a new Greenway, along the alignment of the old Prussia Street Canal Arm, which informs the character of this space.

The diagram also indicates a potential green connection along the Bengal Street Canal Arm, along with other potential green corridors whilst through private development plots, which would help to develop a more permeable neighbourhood; however, these form guidance principles only.



1.7 Illustrative Public Realm Masterplan

Figure 8 provides further detail on the design of streets and spaces, illustrating how the public realm strategy objectives can be achieved through detailed design.

The masterplan has evolved to:

- Incorporate the historic orientation of Ancoats Green;
- Integrate the Mobility Hub around an active space, which also links to the future development plot to the south. It also looks to integrate with the landscape proposals and desire lines created at Rodney Street; and
- Evolve the design of the linear park, responding to Ancoats Green to create a character space - 'Prussia Street Greenway'. The removal of the remnants of Jersey Street Bridge would extend the greenway through to the canal, creating a safe, level and pleasant pedestrian and cycle connection.

Finally, the masterplan indicates a detailed but flexible approach to delivering Green Streets across the neighbourhood.

The implementation of the illustrative masterplan will provide opportunities for future development to contribute to a sustainable urban neighbourhood. Interventions will not only create a green, safe and active setting for new homes, but would provide wider social, health and economic benefits for existing communities.

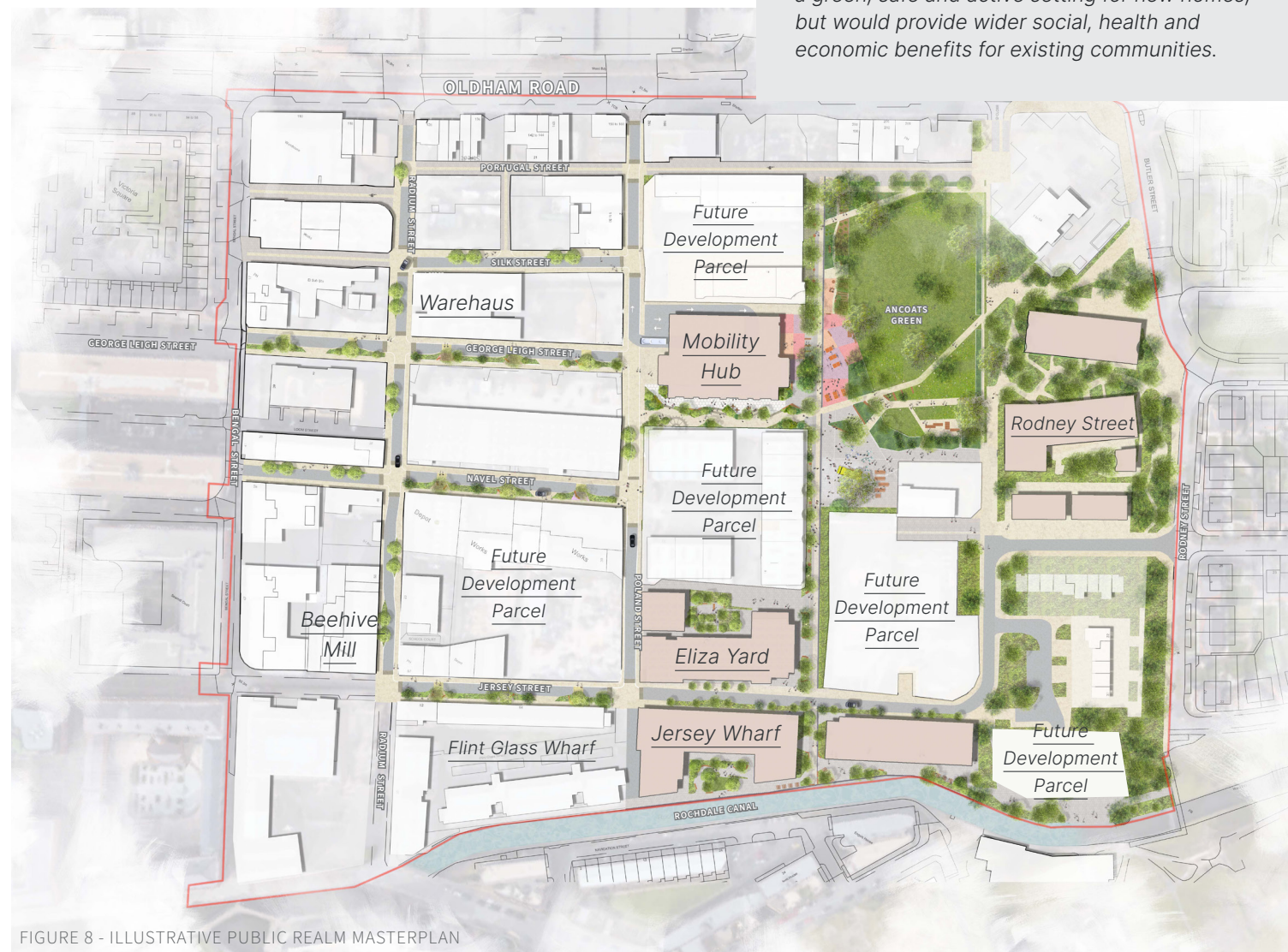


FIGURE 8 - ILLUSTRATIVE PUBLIC REALM MASTERPLAN

1.8 Ancoats Green



FIGURE 9 - ANCOATS GREEN LOCATION PLAN

What are we trying to achieve?

An activated Ancoats Green, creating a multi-functional, green heart to the neighbourhood that fosters a sense of community.

Key requirements include:

- A refinement of the NDF masterplan, reflecting emerging plot designs and land ownerships and reinstating the historic alignment of the green.
- Provide a direct connection and setting for the new Mobility Hub.
- Create new pedestrian/ cycle connections along key desire lines through the park.
- Provide a range of park spaces from public squares and gardens through to open grass lawn and fenced dog run areas.



FIGURE 10 - PROPOSED ANCOATS GREEN ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

1.9 Prussia Street Arm Greenway

Rebalance streets

The greenway promotes cycle and pedestrian movement, terminating at an enhanced crossing point at Jersey Street.

Enhance industrial character

A green channel and a range of industrial materials celebrate the old canal arm.

A green heart

The greenway creates a verdant amenity space and green setting for future homes.

Extend green character

Pockets of wildflower and grasses, linear tree planting and an interpretive SuDS feature establish a new green axis.

Active, healthy, walkable

A significant new footpath/ cycleway connects with the existing network, encouraging active travel.



FIGURE 12 - PROPOSED GREENWAY ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW

Removing the former Jersey St. Bridge

A heritage report has been produced, concluding the benefits of removing the remnants of Jersey St Bridge outweigh the heritage impact. The following benefits underpin the proposed removal:

- Legibility and permeability - enable views and physical connections
- More successful re-interpretation of the heritage of the area
- Landscape connectivity / ecology
- Accessibility to the water
- Deliver a range of functions

1.10 Green Streets

Rebalance streets

The movement framework enhances the historic grid, creating permeability and encouraging two-way cycle movement.

Lane width encourages two-way cycle movement to all streets, ensuring streets creating pedestrian and cycle priority.

Enhance industrial character

Street furniture could reference the uses of historic buildings on adjacent plots, creating and enriching Ancoats' industrial narrative.

Extend green character

Significant green verges are proposed along streets, creating opportunities for a range of planting, SuDS features and street trees.

Active, healthy, walkable

Seating and informal play features are proposed within the green channel, encouraging interaction with nature. Streets prioritise pedestrian movement.

Community

Flexible street furniture proposed in green verge creates opportunities for dwell, interaction and play.



FIGURE 13 - GREEN STREETS LOCATION PLAN



A range of native and ornamental tree and shrub planting along the length of a meandering green channel.



Multifunctional street furniture fixes creates pockets of spaces at crossing points, referencing building heritage.

FIGURE 14 - PROPOSED GREEN STREET SECTION

