

Garston
Masterplan
Round Table Workshop 2
Briefing Note

This briefing note has been produced by URBED to summarise the second consultation workshop which took place on Tuesday 16th April 2013.

This work will direct the production of masterplan options for the Garston area.

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Introduction

Background

URBED were appointed by Liverpool City Council in January 2013 to develop a masterplan for the Garston area.

For this project we teamed up with market development and asset analysts Eye, and transport planners and engineers Fore Consulting.

Public Consultation is a key part of all of URBED's work and for this project we intend to hold three events to direct the development of our masterplan options.

The first event was designed to engage with local residents, groups, businesses and stakeholders to appreciate their views and aspirations for Garston. The feedback from this session has been written into a briefing note and can be found on our blog for the project under downloads:

www.urbed.coop/projects/garston-masterplan

The second event, described in this document, was designed to get feedback on our analysis of the area and engage participants views on our recommendations for Garston.

The recommendations presented at the workshop have been briefly summarised below:

Recommendations for Garston

1. Revive Garston Urban Village

- > Revive the village concept, unite Under the Bridge and the Village but retain the historic character of Garston.

2. Small-scale Works

- > Our research suggested that housing neighbourhoods in Garston were fundamentally sound but small works could be carried out to improve areas, such as planting trees or creating homezones.

3. Rationalising Industry

- > Our analysis showed that most industry was doing well in Garston and providing employment but some activities could be consolidated and land freed up for housing.

4. Building Houses for Sale

- > We would like to encourage more house-building in the area to increase local spending power and build up financial benefits through section 106 agreements for example.

5. Housing for Rent

- > There is demand for housing associations to grow in Garston, this could be an opportunity to fill empty sites and develop vacant land.

6. St Mary's Road: Recommendations to reverse the decline include;

- > Encouraging a new anchor store to open on the high street.

- > Setting up the Garston Space Agency which would encourage small businesses (especially those selling online) to rent out shop space at a reduced rate. This would reduce vacancy and encourage vibrancy along the high street.
- > Research suggested the road should stay the way it does - open to traffic from both sides and accessible for buses, but the team identified that its image could be improved cheaply and reversibly by providing planters and spray painting the surface to prioritise pedestrians. This could also incorporate an improved cycle route connecting the high street to Liverpool South Parkway.

Workshop format

The second roundtable workshop took place at the new Enterprise South Liverpool Academy, situated off Horrocks Avenue in Garston.

Following ideas generated at the first consultation workshop in March, URBED and the team put together a full analysis for the Garston area and came up with a number of recommendations. The full presentation can be read on the urbed website under downloads:

<http://www.urbed.coop/projects/garston-masterplan>

Around 45 people attended the event, and participants were split into four groups to answer a number of questions on our analysis and recommendations for the Garston area.

Each group was asked the following questions to understand what they thought:

VISION

- > Are we right in our analysis
- > How do you feel about the Urban Village a concept?
- > What care and maintenance projects should we prioritise for the housing neighbourhoods?

PLANNING

- > Which sites should be allocated for; housing, industry, open space?

ST MARY'S ROAD

- > Do you agree with the idea of consolidation?
- > What about a new supermarket?
- > What should we do with the market?
- > Is the Space Agency a good idea?
- > What should happen to the road?

Feedback from each group is provided in the tables below.



Participants at the workshop event.

Group Feedback

The table below lists comments and suggestions from the roundtable discussion for each group. Feedback is purely based on individual and group opinions of those participants who attended the workshop.

TOPIC					
Question	1/ Neil*	2/ David*	3/ Paul*	4/ Sange*	5/ John*
VISION					
Are we right in our analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed with the analysis of the problems but felt that we should have mentioned the quality of the infrastructure, in particular the poor condition of the road surfaces e.g. on Church Road, Long Lane and Window Lane. It was accepted that the housing stock is generally ok but there was concern about the blight in isolated pockets caused by vacant & derelict sites and buildings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed with the analysis. The group voiced their concerns about parking in the village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed that the analysis was correct and suggested it was 'succinct, realistic and encouraging'. The group emphasised the need to improve the bridge physically to remove the perception of separation between under the bridge and the village. They also emphasised the need to tackle landlords who don't maintain their properties and encourage the tidying up of shop fronts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed with the analysis of the problems and emphasised the need for St Mary's to attract more people. The group suggested that the high street needed to offer a wider variety of useful and higher quality shops such as a supermarket, grocers, and a wine shop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed that the analysis was correct.
How do you feel about the Urban Village as a concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that the 'Urban Village' concept had merit but the group felt that a single brand to unite the village with 'under the bridge' would be difficult to achieve. How do you overcome the barrier created by Garston Way and the railway line? The communities have been divided for a very long time so perhaps the way forward would be to emphasise the unique aspects and the value of each community. For example the quality of the schools in each area; the quality of the housing stock; the recreational amenities in each area (e.g. GUVH, Coastal Reserve, Eco-Park, ESLA, Long Lane Recreation Ground). This may in turn encourage visits between the areas by residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested that a competition should be held to re-name the Garston Village. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group mentioned that there was a need to remove the image of two separate areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were unsure about the 'urban village concept'. They agreed that the history of the area should be acknowledged and the village feel should be retained but Garston needed re-branding to improve its image. Some members thought that the 'cultural urban village' should be updated and re-invented - as it did not work previously. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested that the name of Garston had been lost and a re-brand needed to remember Garston's history. It was felt that the 'urban village' concept was in the past, and something new needed to be invented. The group mentioned that new housing should retain the Garston character and should be designed for the people we are wanting to attract to the area. They identified the need for signage to advertise and direct people into Garston.

TOPIC					
Question	1/ Neil*	2/ David*	3/ Paul*	4/ Sange*	5/ John*
What care and maintenance projects		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested that plants and re-painting along the high street could improve the image of Garston. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested Blackburne Street could be tidied up to improve its image. The group suggested that Window Lane and Ship Streets were in need of care and maintenance to improve their appearance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested improvements to cycle lanes on St Mary's road and Horrocks Avenue could benefit the area. Removal of buildings which were falling down should be a priority - removing this blight would improve the image instantly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested that it was important to improve the public realm by creating amenity spaces with facilities for young families.
PLANNING					
Which sites should be allocated for; housing, industry, open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group expressed strong feelings about the need to retain and improve the Eco-Park Site in its entirety owing to its special status as a Site of Nature Conservation Value. They did not agree with the suggestion of allocating part of the site for housing even if this would generate income as this would devalue the site. It was suggested that the adjacent Gas Works site (once decommissioned) could be put to use as an incubator site for small businesses. Weaver Industrial Estate serves a purpose but something needs to be done to improve the environment to help attract new businesses into the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were keen to see the removal of the Gas tank structures and suggested this land should be used for new development, such as housing, recreation land, school playing fields and park land. They also suggested part of the docks and Dinglebank would be good locations for new housing. Following information on the possible re-opening of the tannery, the group suggested that activity could be consolidated and more housing could be provided near the site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested bike parking, street furniture, courtyards, seating and coffee shops would improve the area. Getting rid of waste/ derelict/empty land was suggested as a priority. This land could be used for housing, or creating play facilities for young families, the group suggested using the old market site for housing or providing an observatory on the Dinglebank site linked to the University. The group also mentioned that access to the river should be opened up. Possible future uses of the gas works site was discussed and re-use of the actual gas works structure as a shell for housing, theatre or cultural centre was mentioned. The group suggested a mix of housing and open space/park would be suitable on this site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group emphasised the need to promote development on sites which were vacant, derelict and under-used. It was suggested the Gas Works site could be brought forward for housing. The eco-park next door could also be linked with local schools for education and conservation purposes. Some members mentioned there was conflict between walkers along the nature reserve path and the airport, these areas could be better managed to reduce this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were keen to see access improved to and along the waterfront with a cafe and play area to attract people into the area. This should be well connected to the Garston area and a walk linking this to the coastal path could be designated to improve connectivity. This walk could also incorporate Dinglebank as a park and play area.
HIGH STREET					
Do you agree with the idea of consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group began by agreeing that it was correct to place the emphasis of the masterplan process on St Mary's Road (the clearance of the derelict buildings should be an absolute priority). Although consolidation may be the answer how do you do it and what happens to the Asda if the emphasis shifts to the other end of the high street? If we went down the consolidation route it was suggested that any vacant shop units could be changed to residential use and converted to one bedroom flats by the local RPs. It was felt there is a greater demand for this type of flat following the introduction of the Bedroom Tax. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were keen to see 'eye-sore' shops removed but were uncomfortable with the idea that the high street should be consolidated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed that the quality of shop-fronts needed to be controlled and shopkeepers should join a Business Community Association to encourage them to participate and take ownership. The group mentioned that there were some nice buildings on the high street which could be refurbished such as the old bank building, which would improve the character of the high street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were happy to see the high street more focussed in one area and some members suggested that empty shops could be turned into small flats, which would benefit those hit by the bedroom tax. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group felt that any consolidation of the High Street should be focussed at the Northern end of St Mary's Rd
What about a new supermarket			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were quite happy with the idea of a new supermarket coming in as it would bring more life to the High Street. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group would be happy to see a supermarket such as an Aldi or Lidl in Garston, one member mentioned he drove out of Garston to do his shopping as the high street did not offer what he wanted. One member suggested 'Home Bargains' should take over the co-op premises or a business like Clas Ohlson would provide really useful shopping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested B+M could be the new anchor store. The Asda at the top of the high street was also discussed and it was mentioned that this was 10 times busier than the Netto which it took over.

TOPIC					
Question	1/ Neil*	2/ David*	3/ Paul*	4/ Sange*	5/ John*
What should we do with the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that the market is a real positive and perhaps it should open on Tuesdays again as it did before it moved to its current location. The current location was also a topic for discussion and it was generally agreed that it would be better to relocate the market. Suggested locations were the old Baths Site and the Coop Site (e.g. the Coop building could be retained and used as an indoor market). The group also suggested that the market could be renamed a 'heritage market' and more parking could be accommodated opposite the church on the Garston under the bridge side. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some members of the group suggested using the old baths site for the market which would provide more space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group raised the issue of parking on market day and suggested the Old Baths site could be used for temporary parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group seemed happy with the market in its current location, the only problem was there was not enough parking close by. The group seemed happy to see the market open on more than one day, mentioning it used to be open on a Tuesday as well as a Friday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested the market could be re-located on the old co-op site.
Is the space agency a good idea?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Liverpool Cake Fairy' Shop was accepted as a good example of the way forward for local businesses. However, the point was made that really good internet access is essential for businesses like this to flourish. The idea of the Space Agency is something new and the group was uncertain whether something like this would be a success in Garston. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed that the space agency was a good idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were weary about this idea as they didn't want to see another failure. They were concerned with the sustainability of the scheme over time and whether the landlords could be persuaded to participate in the scheme. Some of the group expressed frustration with the landlords of shops on the high street, there was a perception that properties were just being sat on and there was a lack of investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of the group were happy with this idea and thought attracting artisan type businesses would be a good idea. Discussion emphasised the need to get businesses online to make them more competitive. The group suggested that Garston could be an 'incubator' for small businesses and as they grew they could move onto bigger premises in the Speke business parks for example. 	
What should happen to the road?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Something needs to be done with the high street itself but the group did not believe that road narrowing and the creation of a one-way system was the answer. Parking problems, especially on market days, need to be addressed and it was felt that this could partially be resolved by relocating the market. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group were happy to see changes to the road brought forward to encourage walking and cycling in particular. They wanted to see bins and lights which were decorative and functional. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed that the road could be tampered with, and highlighted that anything to improve it would be better than seeing it in its current state. Members were keen to see the cycle ways improved along St Marys road and Horrocks Avenue, it was mentioned that cyclists had no priority at some junctions and were often under cut by drivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group mentioned that access and parking on St Marys road was awful and people didn't know that the old co-op car park was public. The group emphasised that St Marys road needed to be 2 way and access to side-streets needed to be improved. The group identified that they did not know what the space in between Garston Way and St Mary's road was used for and suggested more parking could be provided here if possible.
GENERAL					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group was comfortable with the idea of gentrification as they felt it may help the long term sustainability of the shops on St Mary's Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group mentioned that energy efficiency was a priority for new housing and refurbishment of old housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group suggested people needed to take ownership of the high street. This notion could be created through competitions such as 'Village in bloom' or 'Best kept shop-front'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group agreed that gentrification of the area is a good thing, improving the area will get more people in spending on the high street. The group mentioned that the Topaz Dance Centre, situated upstairs on St Marys Road was really popular and attracting many young dancers. This emphasised there are things to attract and pull people into the area. Other members also suggested more restaurants would bring vibrancy to the high street. Some members mentioned that the bus route could better serve the industrial park so employees didn't have to walk so far to get into the site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some members suggested that setting up an energy coop could bring people together. It was also mentioned that the re-opening of the tannery site could tie in with the school by providing training. The group mentioned there was a lot to Garston; an amazing history, the library was an amazing building, there were artisan traders - cakes, dress maker ect. which made the high street different, and more speciality shops could build on this feature. The group also suggested that school activities could be located on the high street, for example pupils could run a real working hair salon there.

Summary of Findings

TOPIC	Summary	Further Information
Question		
VISION		
Are we right in our analysis	Most groups agreed that our analysis was correct and were encouraged by our recommendations. Some participants were cautious due to the failure of regeneration projects in the past.	
How do you feel about the Urban Village as a concept	There was a mixture of views, some groups liked the idea of keeping the village concept for the area, but others felt the area needed a brand new concept to regain momentum. One group mentioned the need to unite both areas but also emphasise what was attractive and unique in each, to maintain each neighbourhoods identity. Participants also emphasised the need to celebrate Garston's History and keep the Garston name alive.	
What care and maintenance projects	There were a range of responses but an occurrent theme was the priority to get rid of vacant and derelict buildings as these were creating a really bad image for Garston. This included demolishing the Old Baths site, improving Window Lane and tidying up Blackburne Street. One group also suggested brightening up the bridge on Church Rd and providing more street furniture and signage to improve the quality of public realm.	
PLANNING		
Which sites should be allocated for; housing, industry, open space	This question generated a number of ideas from the groups. Most members were generally favourable to new housing on available sites. There was a mix of views concerning using part of the Eco-Park site for housing; there were some strong feelings against this but some groups though this was a good idea. It was agreed that vacant or derelict buildings should be cleared as soon as possible for new housing and cycling routes could be better allocated through the area to connect business, housing and leisure areas. One group suggested there should be more facilities for young families such as playgrounds and open space.	Since the workshop, interest has been expressed in the Dinglebank site to turn it into a skate park and youth hub. This will be looked into further.
HIGH STREET		
Do you agree with the idea of consolidation	4/5 groups were in agreement with this view and proposed that leftover shops could be turned into flats. Concerns were raised about where the centre would be and what would happen to left-over shops.	
What about a new supermarket	Groups were happy for a new supermarket to move into the area, either taking the place of the old coop or being located elsewhere. One group mentioned it could be a 'Home Bargains' type store or a B&M.	
What should we do with the market	There were mixed views on the market; some groups thought the market was fine where it is; some thought it could be moved to the coop site and promoted as a 'heritage' market. Most groups agreed it should be more frequent with Tuesday and Friday openings.	
Is the space agency a good idea?	Generally, the response to the agency idea was positive, people thought this would encourage the vibrancy of the high street and some suggested Garston's role would be to 'incubate' small businesses and start ups. There were however concerns about the deliverability and long term sustainability of this scheme especially as it required money to be put in.	More information on the business plan will be provided to ensure the scheme is suitable.
What should happen to the road?	Most groups were happy to see improvements to the road as long as vehicle and bus access was maintained both ways and parking was sorted out.	
GENERAL		
	Two groups suggested that there needed to be more 'ownership' of the high street, especially from the landlords perspective. One group mentioned competitions such as 'Village in Bloom' or 'Best kept shop-front' could provoke this 'ownership' of the high street and improve it for everyone. In group discussions on gentrification, it was acknowledged to be a good thing as it could increase demand for services on the high street if people were attracted into Garston. There was an emphasis that 'blight' needed to be removed asap from the high street by demolishing run-down structures.	

Next Steps

Following the positive feedback on our recommendations, URBED and the team will be taking on board new comments and putting together the final plan for the area. This will allocate land and projects which will provide opportunities for regeneration in Garston.

We will be holding an exhibition during the South Liverpool Home's 'Neighbour's Day' on Friday 31st May at the Enterprise South Liverpool Academy. The exhibition will give you a chance to view the proposals and tell us what you think!

Our third and final workshop will take place on Tuesday 4th June, also at the Enterprise South Liverpool Academy. The session will start at 5:30pm, with half an hour to view the proposals over tea and coffee. This will be followed by a short presentation at 6pm and an hour of roundtable discussion in groups to get your thoughts. The session will end at 7:30pm.

If you would like to be kept informed of these forthcoming events, please sign up to our [mailing list](#).