

THE PEDESTRIAN POUND

3RD EDITION

CASE STUDIES



LIVING

STREETS

Photo credit: Ivon Bartholomew for Living Streets

SHREWSBURY

SCHEME NAME

Tactical
Pedestrianisation

LOCATION

Shrewsbury, England

COST

£20k

PARTNERS

Shrewsbury Business
Improvement District,
Shrewsbury Town
Council, Shropshire
Council

OTHER FUNDERS

Department for
Business, Energy &
Industrial Strategy,
Ministry of Housing,
Communities & Local
Government

DATE

2021 to date

SCALE

Town (pop. 76,782)

IMPACTS

Economy

LOCAL ECONOMY

Mixed

INTERVENTION TYPE

Deprioritisation of
vehicles

Taking the opportunity to trial pedestrianisation during the pandemic – building public support and an evidence base for permanent change



Photo credit: Shrewsbury Business Improvement District

AS ITS COUNTY TOWN, SHREWSBURY IS A KEY ECONOMIC CENTRE FOR THE LARGELY RURAL COUNTY OF SHROPSHIRE. HISTORICALLY, PLACEMAKING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE TOWN WERE LED BY SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL.

In 2018, the Council began working with Shrewsbury Town Council and Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID) to co-develop the ‘Shrewsbury Big Town Plan’ – a new collaborative way of working with a holistic vision for developing the town up to 2036. This Big Town Plan Partnership then co-authored a ‘Masterplan Vision’ in 2020. Although the town’s economy has remained largely buoyant, the partners realise that it will increasingly be affected by the wider social trends affecting high streets. They want to take proactive steps to futureproof the town centre and keep it thriving.

During the pandemic, the partnership quickly mobilised a COVID-19 Task Force, which decided to close key town centre streets to traffic in order to facilitate government mandated social distancing. These closures also provided the opportunity to trial the Big Town Plan’s vision for a new approach to movement in the town centre. Evidence from this trial would inform plans for longer-term, permanent changes.

Intervention

During an initial three-month trial in summer 2020, High Street, The Square and Shoplatch, Shrewsbury’s busiest pedestrian streets, were closed to traffic every day from 10am to 4pm, using just a temporary traffic regulation order, moveable planters and signage.

Feedback from the public and local businesses (collected via Commonplace) showed widespread support for continuing the closures even after social distancing restrictions were lifted – as a café culture had begun to flourish, with its outdoor seating, music and public art bringing a new vibrancy to the town.

During a second trial period, restrictions were tweaked based on local feedback. For example, five additional disabled parking bays were provided in neighbouring streets, and access created to the loading bay outside The Lion Hotel on Wyle Cop. To enable public transport to access the town centre on weekdays, the planters were removed and the restriction relied on self-enforcement with signage and a traffic camera. When numerous car drivers used this as an opportunity to flout the restrictions and drive in to the closed streets, it became clear it was necessary to keep using the moveable planters as a physical barrier.

From November 2021, Shropshire Council decided that Shrewsbury’s trial road closures would continue but would only apply on weekends. In early 2023, they made these closures semi-permanent. For the time being, while the partnership progresses plans for long-term changes to the town centre’s road network, Shrewsbury’s ‘rangers’ move the planters at the start and end of each closure period. During these times, through traffic is able to circumvent the town centre using the ring road. However, town centre traffic continues to be displaced to Town Walls, a narrow, historic street, a situation which it is widely agreed needs to be addressed as part of any permanent change.

Complementary initiatives

The Shrewsbury BID facilitates, often in conjunction with a range of partners such as the local tourism association and police, a range of other placemaking initiatives which also help to make Shrewsbury town centre safer, more engaging and more pleasant for people walking and wheeling around it. For example:

- Town 'rangers' patrol during the daytime and weekend evenings to discourage anti-social behaviour and crime.
- Volunteer town 'ambassadors' provide information to visitors at key arrival points on weekends.
- The high street is dressed with bunting and lamp post flags, displays are put in empty shop windows, and mini murals have been painted to create a town trail.
- Events are held, such as an Easter egg trail, jubilee weekend, live music, and screenings of major cultural and sporting events.
- A paper-based town map is made widely available and on-street totems have been put in.

Outcome

Aside from the predominantly positive feedback from the community received as part of on-going consultation throughout the trial, there is clear evidence that Shrewsbury's timed pedestrianisation has helped to boost town centre business. Data analysts Beauclair were commissioned by Shrewsbury BID to compare weekly sales data from before the pandemic with the data from 2022 to 2023, for both the pedestrianised and non-pedestrianised areas of the town.

As a whole, sales in the town rose on average by 14%. However, growth in the pedestrianised areas was 25 percentage points higher than in the non-pedestrianised areas (37% compared to 12%). The most significant growth in the pedestrianised areas was in the 'grocery', 'general retail' and 'food and drink' sectors (which respectively grew 30%, 45% and 66% more than in non-pedestrianised areas). The high growth of the latter suggests that the road closures have helped to create a more experiential high street which encourages people to spend more time and money relaxing in the space.

Compared to the non-pedestrianised areas, sales growth in the pedestrianised areas has been significantly higher among customers from outside the town. (Growth from 'neighbours' was 40% higher, from 'region' was 44% higher and from 'rest of GB' was 32% higher; compared to '15-minute towns' and 'doughnuts' being 7% and 20% higher respectively.) This highlights the importance of ensuring that pedestrianised areas are part of a legible, wider walking network which connects key arrival points for out-of-town visitors, such as train stations, bus interchanges and car parks.

Next steps

The Big Town Plan Partnership is now consulting the local community on a 'Movement and Public Space Strategy', which will be a blueprint for a 10-year plan to evolve the town's transport network. With the success of the timed road closures, this is likely to advocate for the permanent pedestrianisation of a large part of the town centre, as well as for complementary measures to remove through traffic and create a bus corridor through the town centre, which will improve both accessibility and journey times.

The positive impact of the trial road closures has also helped to galvanise support for the partnership's wider plans for the town, such as redeveloping the riverside area to create a link between the town centre and the River Severn using high quality public realm and green space.

Tips for success

- Focusing on the benefits for the hospitality sector (in creating a more experiential high street), and on the experimental nature of the trial, was key to generating initial support for road closures from the community.
- Using signs, planters and traffic regulation orders was an agile and cost-effective approach to pedestrianisation.

Further information

www.shrewsburybid.co.uk
www.shrewsburybigtownplan.org
www.shrewsburymoves.com

UPLANDS

SCHEME NAME
Uplands Market

LOCATION
Swansea, South Wales

COST
£5k-£10k (initial set-up)

PARTNERS
Urban Foundry,
Swansea Bay Street
Markets

DATE
2013 – to date

SCALE
Neighbourhood centre
(pop. 14,099)

IMPACTS
Community / Economy

LOCAL ECONOMY
Mixed

INTERVENTION TYPE
Cultural, community
and local business
engagement / Tactical
urbanism

Using a temporary street market to improve the local economy and encourage more walking in the neighbourhood



Photo credit: Swansea Bay Street Markets Limited

CREATIVE REGENERATION AGENCY URBAN FOUNDRY SAW THE POTENTIAL FOR A FRENCH-STYLE STREET MARKET TO HELP CREATE A SENSE OF PLACE IN ITS HOME SUBURB OF UPLANDS, SWANSEA.

It is a largely 'walkable' neighbourhood and densely populated with a broad spectrum of residents from students and those on low incomes to more affluent households. The local high street had good footfall and used to have a range of independent shops, but these had dwindled over time in favour of more cost-conscious national retailers.

Gwydr Square, a car-dominated side road just off the main street, was seen as an ideal location for a market. Urban Foundry believed it could easily be made traffic-free, becoming a space for people, by temporarily removing a handful of parking spaces for a few hours each month.

After trying, unsuccessfully, to persuade other local stakeholders to trial a market, Urban Foundry decided to set it up themselves – to test the benefits of fast, light and cheap 'pop-up urbanism'. If successful, the plan was to hand over the running of the market to local volunteers.

Supportive local politicians helped to dispel initial resistance to road closures and parking disruption from some council officers and local businesses. Flyers were delivered to every house in affected streets to warn them of the potential for short-lived disruption. The temporary nature of the market was helpful for advocating an approach of "it's just one morning, once a month, so let's just try it".

Intervention

The first Uplands Market was held in July 2013. Apart from the pandemic, the market has been held on every last Saturday of the month ever since (or in December, on the last weekend before Christmas), providing retail space for small, independent artisan producers of high-quality, locally made food, drink and craft items.

Making fresh produce available to the local community, lowering food miles and supporting producers from the Swansea Bay area are key aims of the market. Some traders sell larger and more expensive items, such as garden furniture. Customers can spend anywhere from a few pounds to well over £100.

The market intentionally doesn't have a refreshment stand and some adjacent local businesses offer special market day deals, both of which help to support the commercial vitality of local cafes and shops by bringing increased trade on market day. According to one local restaurant owner: "The Uplands Market has been a massive boost to trade and to the Uplands in general. Market days are lively and vibrant, there is always a really good atmosphere and the huge increase in footfall is good for everyone."

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Alongside local produce, the market provides a regular neighbourhood meet-up point. Community groups, local councillors and charities take stalls to promote local initiatives or consult with local people and it is also common to see people handing out flyers, collecting signatures for petitions or holding informal protests.

For example, the local Living Streets group has spent time at the market asking people for their views on the walking-related issues they are campaigning on, and have found it an incredibly useful sounding board, with people keen to engage with them. The market also provides space for local musicians to busk, and for open-mic performances by the local Poets' Collective – building on the area's cultural heritage as the birthplace of Dylan Thomas.

The first market attracted 30 stallholders and was so successful that there was a waiting list of 200 traders for future markets. It was immediately clear that running the market would be too large a job for volunteers, so a community interest company (CIC) was set up (now Swansea Bay Street Markets) with an employee managing the market's operations and marketing and the local volunteers acting as stewards on market days. At its peak, the market averaged 65 stalls but has settled at about 45, in part due to many producers ceasing to trade during the pandemic.

Despite a handful of objections from local businesses to the annual application for the road closure licence, local residents are overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the market.

Outcome

Footfall at Uplands Market is weather dependent but there can be over 3,000 people on warm sunny days – far more than in the area on a usual Saturday morning. It has been ranked as one of the top ten street markets in the UK by The Daily Telegraph and has twice been runner-up in The Observer Food Monthly awards. Even in the wet winter months, traders still find it profitable to keep attending.

The market also operates as an incubator space for local traders – as a cost-effective place to trial new products and services. At least four have outgrown the market and set up their own shops or become suppliers to local businesses.

The CIC doesn't have the resources to conduct regular formal evaluations of the market's success, but they regularly get good feedback from traders and customers. With the market financially self-sufficient, and traders and customers continuing to come each month, its success is self-evident.

In 2018, local university students conducted surveys with about 300 visitors at Uplands Market and its sister market in the marina. 67% of people had specifically been attracted by the markets. A fifth of people also spent money in surrounding local businesses, typically spending in the region of £10 to £25. Additionally, 77% thought the market had given them a more positive view of the Uplands area. Anecdotally, many people originally attracted by the market now also shop in Uplands on non-market days.

Uplands has experienced some gentrification in the last decade and the market, along with the refurbishment of a local pub and the opening of a high-end café bar, has undoubtedly contributed to this change. The CIC also believe that the market has helped to shift perceptions towards Uplands as a walkable place – with more people now walking around the area on non-market days.

To underpin commercial viability, the CIC set up a second monthly market at Swansea Marina, then took over the ailing ‘Mumbles Market’. Swansea Bay Street Markets has created one full-time-equivalent role, works with teams of local volunteers, and offers internships to university students.

Tips for success

- See all the learnings from setting up and running the Swansea Bay markets which are captured in the Welsh Government’s [Street Market: In-depth Guide](#).

Further information

- www.swanseabaystreetmarkets.co.uk

BOGNOR REGIS

Enhancing the public realm to boost the town centre economy

SCHEME NAME

Town Centre Public Realm

LOCATION

Bognor Regis

COST

£2.8m

PARTNERS

Arun District Council,
Bognor Regis Town Council,
West Sussex County Council

OTHER FUNDERS

Coastal Communities Fund,
Portas Pilots,
Section 106

DATE

2013 – 2017

SCALE

Town (pop. 25,021)

IMPACTS

Economy

LOCAL ECONOMY

Less affluent

INTERVENTION TYPE

Creation of walking networks linking key trip attractors / Improved connectivity to other sustainable transport modes / Improvements to pedestrian comfort, convenience and personal safety / Deprioritisation of vehicles



TO ADDRESS HIGH RETAIL VACANCY RATES OF 13% AND A STRUGGLING RETAIL CORE, A STAKEHOLDER FORUM LED BY ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL DEVELOPED PLANS TO IMPROVE THE TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM AND CREATE STRONGER LINKAGES BETWEEN THE SEAFRONT AND TOWN.

These aimed to attract more visitors and new businesses to the town centre, and to encourage existing businesses to improve their frontages. Overall, there was a desire to make Bognor Regis town centre a nicer place to live, work and visit, and to build a greater sense of civic pride. There was extensive engagement with local community and stakeholders throughout the design process, as cooperative working was seen as vital to maintaining the public realm once it was improved.

Intervention

The public realm improvements were funded and delivered in three phases over the period 2013-2017, using the same high-quality materials throughout (e.g., wayfinding monoliths), to create consistency:

- 1.** The retail core of London Road precinct was largely pedestrianised, with more seating, dwelling spaces and outdoor spaces for café tables, and new walking routes to link to the seafront and railway station. Events were put on, including themed markets, children's fun days and live music, with large scale events attracting up to 20,000 visitors.
- 2.** Station Square, the rail station forecourt, was transformed into a gateway to the town, with walking links leading visitors towards the precinct and seafront. This kickstarted separate projects to refurbish the neglected Grade II listed station building and introduce new cafes and a shared workspace into derelict spaces.
- 3.** A safer, pedestrian-friendly route was created to link Station Square to the London Road precinct. Traffic was slowed with narrower carriageways, raised tables and coloured surfaces at junctions. Pedestrians were made to feel safer with widened and resurfaced pathways, new and realigned pedestrian crossings, new seating and tree planting. Railings and street clutter were taken away. The High Street was also enhanced with new pavements, road surfaces and street furniture to attract people to this key east-west axis of shops and food and drink outlets.

Alongside these physical improvements, a Business Improvement District was formed and a small grants fund for shopfront improvements was created from business rates income.

Outcome

The enhanced public realm, in combination with the town centre management initiatives, enabled Bognor Regis to remain economically stable at a time of decline for many town centres. A number of good quality independent food and drink outlets and mid-range stores have since opened in the town centre. Vacancy rates halved between 2012 and 2018, and in 2019 were below the national average (7.5% compared with 10.3%).

Over 60% of town centre properties made significant improvements to their outward appearance with some also investing in internal shop-fitting and their upper storeys. Some converted this from storage into residential accommodation, bringing new permanent footfall into the town centre. Overall, the value of privately funded improvements to these premises is conservatively estimated to have been £5m.

Before-and-after surveys of local traders (in 2014 and 2018) showed that 75% agreed that the town looked and felt better than before, and 25% thought the improvements had had a positive effect on their business. Despite an overall downturn for town centres nationally, there was an increase (+9 percentage points) in the proportion thinking that Bognor Regis is a good place to do business, and business confidence (expressed in the likelihood of employing more staff) remained consistent.

Resident and visitor surveys overwhelmingly showed that people thought the town centre looked and felt better than before the improvements (88%). Although they reported spending less on household goods in the town, their spend on food and drink rose significantly – indicating a shift to a more experience-based town centre.

Further information

[Bognor Regis Town Centre Public Realm Scheme – Final Evaluation Report](#)

NAIRN

A business improvement district working to create a more vibrant town centre through both physical improvements and soft initiatives

SCHEME NAME
Nairn Connects

LOCATION
Nairn, Scotland

COST
£100k annually

PARTNERS
Nairn Connects, local businesses

OTHER FUNDERS
Historic Environment Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Paths for All, The Highland Council and others

DATE
2018 to date

SCALE
Town (pop. 9,773)

IMPACTS
Economy

LOCAL ECONOMY
Mixed

INTERVENTION TYPE
Improvements to pedestrian comfort, convenience and personal safety / Improvements to route appearance / Improvements to wayfinding / Cultural, community and local business engagement



Photo credit: Alexander Williamson Photography

NAIRN, A SMALL MARKET TOWN ON THE MORAY FIRTH, IS THE SECOND LARGEST SETTLEMENT IN THE HIGHLANDS. FORMERLY RELIANT ON FISHING, IT NOW HAS A MORE MIXED, TOURISM-LED ECONOMY. IT IS BISECTED BY A TRUNK ROAD CONNECTING ABERDEEN AND EDINBURGH, SO ALTHOUGH THE TOWN IS IN ITSELF A 20-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOOD, IT IS DOMINATED BY HEAVY ROAD TRAFFIC.

In the early noughties, The Highland Council made the high street one way and installed traffic calming and dedicated disabled parking. However, the local view is that the positive benefits of such improvements will always be limited until such time as the town gets a bypass and the parallel main road of King Street can be detrunked. The town centre has also been undermined by out-of-town retail developments and the wider trend towards online shopping.

In 2015, The Highland Council consulted on a Community Town Centre Plan to identify the best ways to increase footfall in Nairn and deliver town centre regeneration. Although developed with the best of intentions, there has, to date, been little progress implementing the priority actions identified.

In 2018, local businesses voted to create a business improvement district (BID) – which is funded by a levy (minimum £125) on all local businesses based on their rateable value. This funds 1.5 FTE members of staff so that the town itself can take proactive steps towards improving Nairn’s reputation and making it a more attractive place to shop, visit and do business.

Intervention

Alongside wider marketing, tourism promotion and business support activities, Nairn Connects (the BID) delivers initiatives to attract people to the town and improve the public realm.

Events

The BID coordinates several annual events. For the last five years, they have put up the Christmas lights and made an event of their switch on, with ‘Countdown to Christmas’ offering a market, pipe band and festive refreshments. ‘Taste of Nairn’ (a three-day food and drink festival with market, cookery demonstrations and events such as The World Tattie Scone Championships) and ‘Wheels of Nairn’ (a classic car rally) have been run for the last four years, and summer-time street markets are held once or twice a year.

Shop local incentives

To highlight the importance of keeping spend local to Nairn, local businesses are encouraged to take part in national ‘shop local’ campaigns, such as Fiver Fest (when local businesses each set a special offer for £5). The BID distributes the free marketing materials around the town and coordinates overall marketing locally.

As having a town-specific gift card was too expensive, there was widespread take-up of the Highlands gift card by Nairn's shops until it was discontinued due to external factors.

Physical improvements

The BID has helped to create a more pleasant streetscape. Example measures include increasing signage, installing and maintaining 70+ planters and hanging baskets, deep cleaning pavements, fixing gates and painting passageways and shopfronts, and deterring seagulls where they present a health and safety risk.

The BID has secured an additional £200k in grants to fund specific projects, such as installing a permanent electricity supply to the high street, to power lights, stalls and music. Working with other local stakeholders on such projects is critical to Nairn Connects' success. For example, working with Nairn PLAY and the Community Payback Team, it installed or renovated 30 benches at locations around the town. It also helped the Nairn Access Panel secure funding from Paths for All for an accessible pathway around the harbour.

To support the implementation of The Highland Council's recent Active Travel Masterplan for the town, the BID is currently leading the town's efforts to secure Places for Everyone funding for a traffic control scheme on The Brae (which links to High Street).

Outcome

Nairn Connects is planning to monitor on-going town-wide footfall trends using mobile phone data from a specialist data provider.

Counts of visitors to recent events show that these attract significant numbers of people to the town. 'Taste of Nairn' and the street markets average around 8,000 people. Of the 7,800 people at the 2022 Countdown to Christmas, 600 were new visitors who had never been before. More than 10,000 people were attracted by the 2023 car show, with more than 80% of those surveyed saying they would return to Nairn even without the lure of a special event.

The biggest indicator of Nairn Connects' success is that its mandate was renewed in 2023 – with businesses that collectively represent 85% of rateable value in the town voting to continue paying the levy and funding the BID's activities for another five years.

Further information

www.nairnconnects.com

LONDON

SCHEME NAME

Baker Street Two-Way

LOCATION

London, England

COST

£16.2m

PARTNERS

[Westminster City Council](#), [Transport for London](#)

OTHER FUNDERS

[Baker Street Quarter Partnership](#), [The Portman Estate](#)

DATE

2019

SCALE

City (pop. 8.8m)

IMPACTS

Economy /
Environment /
Health & Wellbeing

LOCAL ECONOMY

Mixed

INTERVENTION TYPE

Creation of walking networks / Improved connectivity to other sustainable transport modes / Improvements to route appearance / Reduction of traffic speeds / Deprioritisation of vehicles / Healthy Streets and placemaking

Removing a one-way system to reduce traffic dominance and speeds, and better balance the needs of pedestrians and cyclists

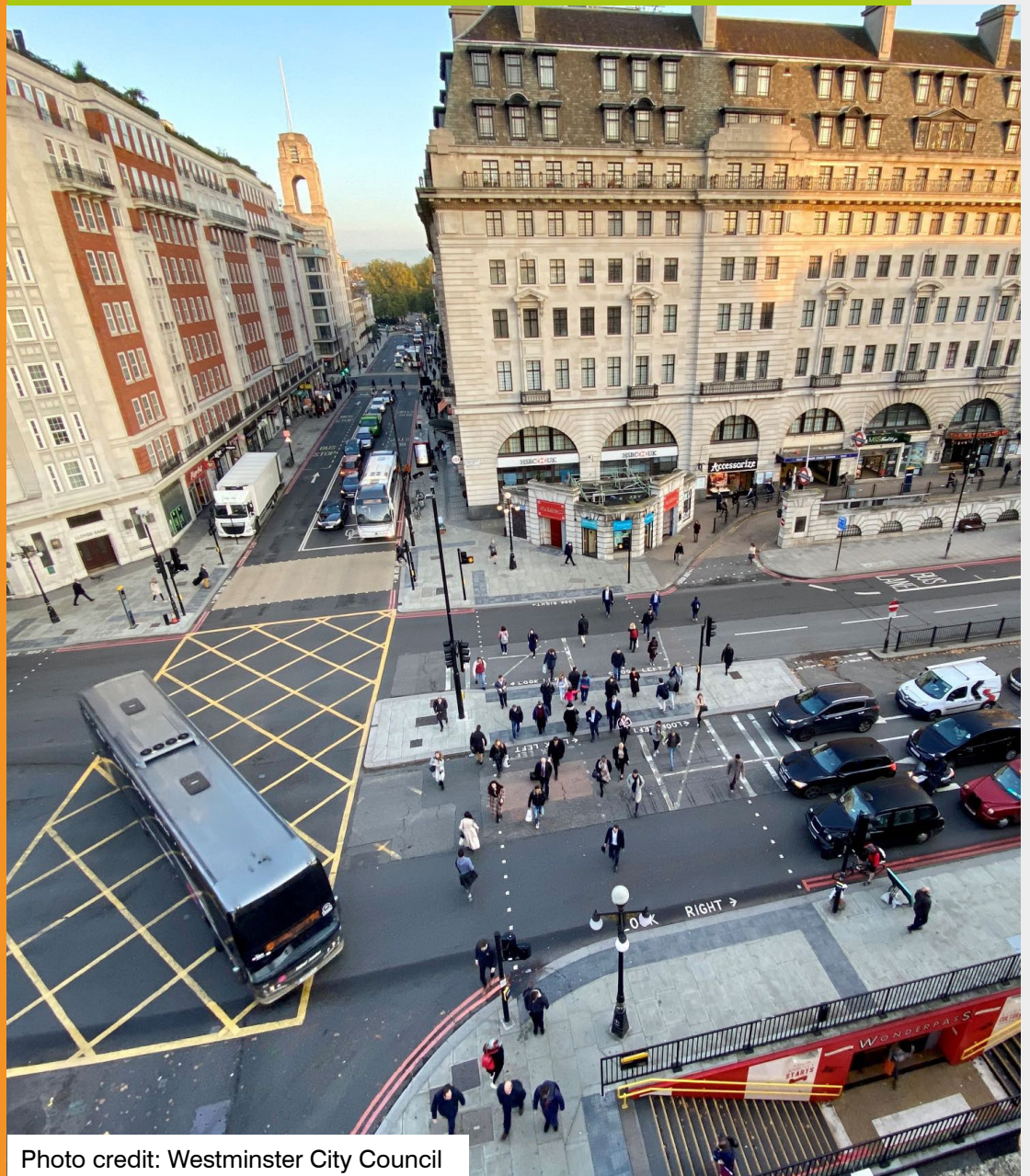


Photo credit: Westminster City Council

THE AREA AROUND BAKER STREET AND GLOUCESTER PLACE IN LONDON IS A RETAIL, LEISURE AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICT IN ITS OWN RIGHT. IT DRAWS IN VISITORS TO WORLD-RENOUNDED ATTRACTIONS SUCH AS MADAME TUSSAUDS AND THE SHERLOCK HOLMES MUSEUM, AS WELL AS SERVING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

It is also a major public transport interchange and part of a major traffic corridor, used on a daily basis by tens of thousands of pedestrians, cyclists, bus passengers and commercial and private drivers travelling to other parts of the capital. In the 1960s, a contraflow system was created along Baker Street and Gloucester Place in a bid to move road users swiftly through the area and ease congestion. With the growing volume of traffic, this system had become counterproductive. At peak times, single file traffic was sitting bumper to bumper, acting as an impermeable barrier to pedestrians and cyclists. In quieter periods, vehicles were using the one-way routes at high speed, making the space dangerous for more vulnerable road users.

Westminster City Council and Transport for London worked with the Baker Street Quarter Partnership (a business improvement district) and The Portman Estate (a significant local landowner) to develop a scheme to revert the area back to a two-way system. The aim was to provide simpler and easier to navigate routes around and through the Marylebone area for all road users, while reducing both vehicle speeds and the dominance of traffic. The scheme also aimed to provide the opportunity to improve the local public realm and access to public transport – while reducing air and noise pollution.

Intervention

The completed traffic management and public realm scheme has improved over 2km of Marylebone's streetscape – creating 1,600m² of new pedestrian space.

The scheme has used re-engineering to provide slower, two-way traffic flow on the parallel streets of Baker Street and Gloucester Place. This reduces vehicles on the connecting residential streets and reduces the volume of vehicle turning movements at junctions, lessening the potential for conflict with pedestrians.

Pavements have been widened and resurfaced, and pedestrians can safely cross the carriageway at 50 new or upgraded signalised crossings in the area. Some of these have 'all-green' crossing phases (i.e. traffic on all arms is stopped at the same time) or replace convoluted staggered crossings with straight-ahead crossings. A central reservation provides a refuge for those choosing to cross in other places. Provision for disabled users has been made throughout, with dropped kerbs and tactile paving. Along with new trees, improved street lighting and the removal of street clutter, these new pedestrian spaces help to create a sense of place where people can relax and spend time.

To enable interchange between sustainable transport modes, the bus route network has been simplified, with north and southbound services on the same routes now accessible to more people in the core Baker Street district. Cycle parking is available at frequent intervals. Cycle lanes and advance stop lines along the quieter Gloucester Place route clearly segregate bikes from pedestrians and increase cyclists' safety and priority.

Outcome

The Baker Street two-way project was monitored with before-and-after traffic surveys, as well as video surveys and site visits. Pedestrian activity on Baker Street increased by an average of 28% between 2017 and 2019 – with increases as high as 84% outside of peak times. During the same period, there was a 25-30% average drop in vehicle speeds and a 15%-20% uplift in cycling volumes on Gloucester Place and Baker Street.

Traffic volumes and air pollution also decreased in this period, but London's Ultra Low Emissions Zone was introduced across this area at the same time – so it isn't possible to say what, if any, proportion of this decrease was due to the Baker Street scheme alone.

Since the scheme was introduced, it is estimated that there are about 5,870 additional pedestrian trips in the area each day, as well as about 53 extra cycling trips, which equates to £20.2m in active travel and health impacts (using the Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit). This uplift in active travel and the introduction of new pedestrian crossings has been achieved with only a negligible impact on vehicle journey times.

When the scheme was completed, it was estimated that the land value within the intervention boundary totalled £7.28bn. If the scheme made the area more desirable and led to Wider Land Value Uplift (WLVU) of 1% to 4% (in line with similar schemes), this would be a £68m-£272m increase in land value. Overall, compared to its cost and 10 years of maintenance – even in a conservative scenario of a 1% increase in WLVU – along with its projected active travel, health and crime reduction benefits, the scheme has generated a Benefit Cost Ratio of 3.8 (which represents very good value for money).

Tips for success

- Using the [Healthy Streets](#) approach during the design process so that the partners knew, and the local community were reassured, that the scheme would not only result in benefits for drivers but lead to the area becoming a more pleasant and healthier space.
- Private partners, namely Baker Street Quarter Partnership and The Portman Estate, were crucial investors in the early design and championing the scheme. They secured buy-in from local residents and businesses, ensuring that the scheme was ready for delivery once funding became available.
- Ongoing local communications during the construction phase, and using traffic marshals when the scheme opened, to help road users get used to the new layout.

Further information

[Healthy Streets Assets: Guidance for Effective Public Private Partnerships in Delivering Healthy Streets Projects](#) (report by Momentum Transport Consultancy and Volterra for the Cross River Partnership)

LEICESTER

SCHEME NAME

Braunstone Gate

LOCATION

Leicester, England

COST

£1.75m

PARTNERS

[Leicester City Council](#)

OTHER FUNDERS

[Department for Transport](#)

DATE

2022

SCALE

Neighbourhood centre
(pop. 15,795)

IMPACTS

Community / Economy
/ Environment / Health
& Wellbeing

LOCAL ECONOMY

Less affluent

INTERVENTION TYPE

Creation of walking networks / Improved connectivity with other sustainable transport modes / Improvements to pedestrian comfort, convenience and personal safety / Improvements to route appearance / Deprioritisation of vehicles / Healthy Streets and placemaking

Removing through traffic and parking to create a local centre that works for people rather than vehicles



Photo credit: Leicester City Council

BRAUNSTONE GATE IS WEST OF LEICESTER CITY CENTRE AND SERVES AS THE HIGH STREET FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. IT IS IN A POPULAR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD, WITH A MIX OF PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND STUDENTS.

Historically, Braunstone Gate was part of the transport corridor from Hinkley into Leicester. Since the area last had major highway improvements in the 1970s, much of the through traffic has diverted onto new ring roads. However, some remains, mainly heading for the nearby De Montfort University campus. The area has also traditionally been a key part of Leicester's night-time economy – with several restaurants, bars, nightclubs and takeaways drawing in large numbers of people and traffic from the evening until the early hours.

In 2020, as part of its Transforming Cities Fund programme, Leicester City Council began to look at how it might re-engineer Braunstone Gate. Its aim was to reduce traffic flow, keep buses moving through the area, and to make it more accommodating and safer for pedestrians, both during the day and in the evening.

A [Healthy Streets](#) audit was completed and several design concepts developed, which were then re-tested against the Healthy Streets indicators to ensure that they would result in improvements. These options were shared with local residents and businesses through mailings and drop-in consultation events. Delivery of the project was delayed by the pandemic, but social distancing requirements meant that wooden planters were temporarily put along Braunstone Gate to widen pedestrian space into the carriageway. This helped to bolster support for the scheme, as it demonstrated that parking demand wasn't as high as some local businesses thought, and that people were fine with parking on side streets.

Intervention

At the south end of Braunstone Gate, the left turn slip road onto the A5460 was removed and turned into a large, paved area, with trees and plenty of space for adjacent businesses, with street café licences to put out tables and chairs. At the north end, the southbound carriageway was closed to traffic except buses, taxis and cycles, and the northbound exit made left turn only. These changes have discouraged university-bound traffic from cutting through the area (keeping this on the A5460 and New Park Street/Western Boulevard) and slowed down turning traffic.

The pavements have been widened and resurfaced. Rather than bollards or railings, cycle racks are utilised to provide functional barriers between pedestrians and vehicles at key points. Pedestrians have been made to feel more welcome, with a variety of seating and the hoardings that shield the Old Great Central Railway Viaduct (a future development site) decorated with images of old Leicester.

The existing pedestrian crossing was removed in favour of frequent informal crossing points along the street, which enable pedestrians to cross the road wherever they need to. These crossings are demarcated with tactile paving and the carriageway edge with a reduced kerb profile, which creates the feel of a more shared space while providing a physical cue for the visually impaired and guide dogs. A red road surface and large cycle symbols on the carriageway reinforce the perception that vehicles should proceed with care for other road users.

Most of the parking along the carriageway has been permanently moved to side streets to allow for the wider pavements. To satisfy the minority of businesses which were opposed to this, a small number of parking spaces and a loading bay were kept adjacent to the launderette and flower shop – where loading and unloading is most frequent.

Outcome

The pandemic was disastrous for the UK night-time economy and Braunstone Gate was no exception. The local pubs and restaurants are now faring better, but most of the nightclubs have remained closed. Consequently, night-time footfall is not as high as it once was and there has been no reason to completely close the road to traffic in the evenings – as was originally planned. However, the daytime economy in Braunstone Gate is thriving.

An unintended consequence of the scheme is that, as traffic volumes have decreased, traffic speeds along Braunstone Gate are perceived to have increased. The Council is now considering adding in a buildout and traffic priority signs to create a pinch-point giving precedence to southbound traffic (which is predominantly buses and cycles). This will further benefit bus passengers, who have already seen average journey times through the area reduce by between 1 and 4 minutes during peak times. This is a good example of why new schemes should be monitored after implementation and, where necessary, adapted to local circumstances and concerns. This is more cost effective than abandoning them wholesale.

The Council had previously focused on improving the public realm in the city centre. Braunstone Gate was its first foray into applying learning from that in a local centre. The well-received improvements to both the appearance and operation of Braunstone Gate mean that now, funding permitting, the Council will begin to roll out similar schemes in other neighbourhoods.

Tips for success

- A well-respected local businessman, who was prepared to vocally champion the project, was helpful in building support to counter-balance initial opposition from some parts of the local business community.
- Several existing trees were removed due to invasive root systems, so planters and tree pits were used for new trees and planting – to ensure that, in the future, roots don't create trip hazards by raising or cracking the pavement.
- Designing using a standard palette of materials and colours across the city is cost-effective and makes maintenance cheaper and easier.

Further information

www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-plans-and-strategies/transport-and-streets/transport-bids/transforming-cities-fund-bid/fund-projects

CALDICOT

SCHEME NAME

The Cross

LOCATION

Caldicot, Wales

COST

£1.6m

PARTNERS

[Monmouthshire County Council](#) (design and construction by [Chris Jones Regeneration](#), [Roberts Limbrick](#), [Capita](#))

OTHER FUNDERS

[Welsh Government](#)

DATE

2021

SCALE

Town (pop. 9,815)

IMPACTS

Community / Economy / Environment / Health & Well-being

LOCAL ECONOMY

Mixed

INTERVENTION TYPE

Creation of walking networks linking key trip attractors / New or refurbished open or green space / Reduction of traffic speeds / Deprioritisation of vehicles / Development of commercial, retail, leisure, residential, civic or historic buildings

Investing in the public realm to help kick-start improvements to the quality of a town's offer, so it thrives in the next phase of its history



Photo credit: Roberts Limbrick

THE VILLAGE OF CALDICOT, IN SOUTH WALES, ORIGINALLY GREW AROUND ITS NORMAN CASTLE, WHICH SITS IN A COUNTRY PARK AND REMAINS A KEY FEATURE OF THE TOWN TODAY. IN THE 1960S, CALDICOT RAPIDLY EXPANDED INTO A TOWN ON THE BACK OF THE GROWTH OF THE LOCAL STEELWORKS.

Today, it is an expanding commuter settlement, well placed alongside the South Wales Mainline (which links it to Cardiff, Newport, Gloucester, Bristol and London) and the M4/M48.

The commuter population is expected to continue to grow, with two sites in the town earmarked for housing in Monmouthshire's Local Development Plan. Caldicot's local centre needs to meet the needs of both this expanding population and its existing community. It needs to encourage new arrivals to spend money on retail and food and drink in the local community, rather than in the urban centres where they work. However, the town centre is relatively small, and the building stock rather tired, with the aesthetics of the 1960s to 1980s still very evident in the urban design. Combined with vacant units and a lower-end retail offer, its draw has been limited compared to competing centres nearby.

With many people commuting by rail, and the castle and country park becoming a greater part of the town's 'offer' and hosting an increasing number of events, Caldicot's streetscape also needs to facilitate quick and easy active travel connections between the town centre, country park, train station and outlying residential areas. Otherwise, there is a danger that growing traffic levels will lead to periods of congestion and parking issues.

Enhancing quality

With most of the town centre's building stock in private ownership, the Council's options for enhancing the quality of the urban fabric are limited. But it has seen an opportunity to potentially stimulate private investment by improving the quality of the public realm and transport network – as landowners may then be more confident and motivated to match this uplift in quality.

The Cross, an open area at the eastern end of the pedestrianised high street, was identified as a prime location to begin these improvements. Although home to key elements of the town's historic identity (such as The Cross Inn, war memorial and village sign), it was a dated and unloved public space with badly located street clutter that didn't encourage people to stop and relax. Traffic on the adjacent Sandy Lane/Chepstow Road dominated the area and cut it off from Church Road, which leads up to the castle and country park.

Intervention

The Cross is now an inviting destination in its own right. The central area is an attractive, level square, ideal for holding outdoor events and markets. Around the edge, there is space for café style seating outside neighbouring businesses. Updated and better positioned seating encourages pedestrians to not pass straight through but to stop and appreciate their surroundings. Trees and planting soften the space and provide a habitat for wildlife. Trees are planted in tree pits, which will accommodate their root systems and absorb rainwater run-off (from which pollutants will be naturally filtered by the soil).

To help pedestrians with their onward journeys, the space has been re-engineered to better facilitate interchange with other sustainable transport. The bus stops have been relocated to be less visually intrusive and now meet current accessibility standards. Intuitive links for pedestrians and cyclists connect the square to local and national active travel routes – in particular, Church Road.

A moratorium on shared spaces put in place by the UK Government during the design process meant that the design team had to think creatively about how to overcome the severance effect of Sandy Lane/Chepstow Road. Signage and a high contrast block paved raised table decrease vehicle speeds and heighten drivers' awareness of other road users. A zebra crossing across the raised table gives pedestrians priority, while low profile, 60mm chamfered kerbs (which can be detected by guide dogs), tactile paving and the high contrast carriageway surface help people with visual impairments to move safely through the space. Design elements from the square are mirrored in the public realm space on the opposite side of the road, such as in the paving, seating and planting. The overall effect is of a single cohesive space, where pedestrians have priority.

A subsequent scheme has created a safe pedestrian route all the way along Church Road, past the primary school, to the castle and country park. Three side roads have their Give Way line set back from their junctions, with the pavements on either side connected by raised tables, creating some of the first continuous footways in Wales. Church Road's pavements have been widened, in places creating informal crossing points. Build-outs force drivers to slow down and yield to oncoming traffic. Planting strips and buildouts have provided space for rain gardens. These have made the street more attractive while providing natural drainage and enhancing biodiversity. This new pedestrian route brings residents and school children up from the town centre and encourages visitors to the castle and country park to walk down and spend time and money in the town.

Outcome

Since The Cross re-opened, traffic speeds along Sandy Lane/Chepstow Road have reduced, with the 85th percentile speed dropping from the top of the 30-40mph bracket to the middle of the 20-30mph bracket. The mean speed through the Church Street junction is now just 18mph. These reductions are greater than speed reductions recorded in other parts of Caldicot since Wales introduced a default 20mph speed limit on restricted roads.

Stimulating an uplift in Caldicot town centre's offer and motivating private landowners to invest in their own properties is a long-term process. However, the enhanced look and feel of The Cross has already influenced surrounding businesses. The owners of The Cross Inn renovated the outside of this historic building, while the sandwich shop, opticians and two restaurants have all taken advantage of an ongoing council grant scheme (funded by the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme). This has helped the owners of these commercial buildings in the town centre to improve their frontages and feel part of the enhanced public realm experience.

The design standards used for The Cross have been integrated into a 'design toolkit' for Caldicot's town centre buildings. This encourages landowners to use higher quality materials and design standards, and to ensure that the changes they make contribute to creating a unified look and feel for Caldicot town centre. This will help to make it as desirable and buoyant as other towns in this southeast corner of Wales.

Tips for success

- The council fostered a collaborative approach to design and delivery, involving local groups and organisations with a long-term interest in the area. The design team embraced a holistic and cross-professional approach that helped when facing unexpected issues during construction and the need to change the design.
- Keeping the bigger picture aims in mind was important when balancing progressive design ideas and new best practice (such as the [Active Travel Act Guidance](#)) with traditional design tools (such as road safety audits and the [Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#)), which are inherently risk averse.

Further information

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/caldicot-regen/the-cross/

CARDIFF

SCHEME NAME

Cardiff Bus Interchange

LOCATION

Cardiff, Wales

COST

£11m (fit out only)

PARTNERS

[Cardiff Council](#),
[Rightacres Property](#),
[Transport for Wales](#)

OTHER FUNDERS

[Network Rail](#), [Welsh Government](#)

DATE

2024

SCALE

City (pop. 362,400)

IMPACTS

Community / Health & Wellbeing

LOCAL ECONOMY

Mixed

INTERVENTION TYPE:

Improved connectivity to other sustainable transport modes / Improvements to pedestrian comfort, convenience and personal safety

Designing an accessible new bus station so that all passengers can travel through it independently, comfortably and safely



Photo credit: Transport for Wales

CENTRAL SQUARE AND WESTGATE STREET ARE IN THE HEART OF CARDIFF, LINKING BOTH CARDIFF CENTRAL TRAIN STATION AND THE CITY'S MAIN BUS STATION TO THE CITY CENTRE. AT THE START OF THE CENTURY, THE AREA WAS RUN DOWN AND OVERSHADOWED BY THE PRINCIPALITY STADIUM.

In 2010, Cardiff Council and Rightacres Property began developing a new masterplan for the area. This aimed to create a welcoming gateway into the city for bus and rail passengers, in keeping with the urban design principles being used elsewhere in the city centre.

As part of this redevelopment, plans were made to replace the existing open-air bus station. This was no longer fit for purpose, unable to cope with the volume of bus traffic and lacking in modern technology which would help both its operation and its passengers. The 'Interchange' building was designed into the Central Square redevelopment. This would be built on the site of a former multi-story car park to house a new bus interchange and retail concessions on the ground floor and commercial and residential space above.

The existing bus station was demolished in 2015, and a temporary on-street bus interchange was set up nearby. Although the new bus interchange was initially due to open in 2017, the Central Square masterplan wasn't agreed until 2018, and then construction was delayed by the pandemic. Nearly a decade after its predecessor's demolition, Cardiff Bus Interchange finally opened on its new site in 2024.

Designing in accessibility

Transport for Wales, which operates the bus interchange, was keen to make the new facility accessible to as many different types of people as possible, and to ensure they would be able to seamlessly continue their journey into the city centre by foot or on wheels – thereby supporting the fifth of Welsh people who are disabled (21%, 670,000 people).

In addition to wider public consultation about the development, Cardiff Council's Access Focus Group was asked to feed into a Diversity Impact Assessment and the interchange's initial design process. An 'engagement group' of about 65 people, including representatives of disability and older people's charities, the LGBTQ+ community and walking groups, was consulted regularly throughout the design process.

Intervention

The new Cardiff Bus Interchange welcomes passengers living with dementia and other long-term illnesses, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and neurodiversity, as well as able-bodied passengers. Pedestrians are able to walk or wheel comfortably, independently and safely through the bus station – as they either arrive to visit the city centre, or interchange with connecting rail services at the adjacent station.

The bus interchange is open 22 hours a day and is staffed at all times by 'Interchange Ambassadors' (specially trained in disability equality) who can help people with onward travel. A central Passenger Assist meeting point is easily accessible to anyone needing help, and a Passenger Assist service is available on request for passengers needing to transfer to/from the railway station.

The 14 bus bays are static (i.e. services always stop at the same bay), to give passengers certainty about where they will find their bus. High contrast grey flooring and tactile paving, as well as clear customer information signs, help people with visual or learning disabilities, dementia or neurodiversity to navigate independently through the space. Digital displays show real-time bus arrival and departure information, as well as times for connecting train services. Pictograms of the building and its facilities are displayed at each end of the bus interchange. These are tactile so they can be deciphered by braille users. They also include QR codes so that passengers can use their smartphones (which will be set up to suit their specific audio-visual needs) to link to further information or specific services.

The main toilets are a bank of large, unisex cubicles so that disabled people or children may be accompanied by their carers. Fully accessible toilets and baby change facilities are included. For ease of access, a separate [Changing Places](#) toilet is centrally located. This is specifically designed to meet the needs of people with multiple, complex disabilities. In line with best practice guidance, it is large enough for a disabled person and up to two assistants, and is fitted with a height adjustable, adult-sized changing bench, a centrally located toilet with space both sides for assistants, a privacy screen, a height adjustable sink, a wide paper roll, and a large waste disposal bin.

Seating is spread throughout the bus interchange and includes both perch benches and ergonomically designed full seats. The latter have side tables and electric points for charging mobile phones and laptops, which can connect to free Wi-Fi. There are also three hydration stations spread throughout the building, dispensing free water.

The whole space has been designed to maximise natural light, which is helpful to those with dementia or visual disabilities and can discourage antisocial behaviour. The main pedestrian entrance leads to Central Square's new piazza, where barriers and level changes have been minimised, so that pedestrians can easily walk or wheel into the rail station, or head into the city centre. The piazza benefits from natural surveillance because it is overlooked by the neighbouring BBC Cymru Wales building as well as a hotel, offices and student accommodation, which occupy the upper storeys of the Interchange building. As a result, pedestrians can feel safe stopping to spend time in the square, visiting one of the food and drink concessions, or waiting in the fresh air for friends or their connecting bus or train.

Outcome

At the time of writing, the Cardiff Bus Interchange was so new that there hadn't been time for usage or impact data to accumulate. Transport for Wales plans to monitor how it operates and to continue to develop the facilities to meet even more passenger needs. It also wants to replicate, and improve upon, its accessible facilities in other Welsh public transport hubs, like the new Cardiff Crossrail tram stops (funded by the Levelling Up Fund) which will open in 2028. These will link Central Station with Cardiff Bay, giving passengers even more choices for their onward travel from Cardiff Bus Interchange.

Tips for success

- Early and ongoing engagement with as many different types of people as possible, with varying disabilities or other needs, meant that a wide variety of voices were able to ask for the facilities and support they need when travelling.
- Colleagues from across the partner organisations remained open minded and willing to try to meet as many needs from different user communities as possible. They were bold and proactive when they could meet these needs, and honest and transparent when they couldn't.

Further information

www.tfw.wales/projects/metro/south-wales-metro/metro-central/cardiff-bus-interchange

CAMPBELTOWN

SCHEME NAME

Campbeltown Town Centre Regeneration Project

LOCATION

Campbeltown, Scotland

COST

£3.4m (+ £9.5m match)

PARTNERS

[Argyll & Bute Council](#) and a range of private, community and third sector partners

OTHER FUNDERS

[European Commission](#), [Heritage Lottery Fund](#), [Highlands & Islands Enterprise](#), [Historic Environment Scotland](#), [Scottish Government](#)

DATE

2007-2024

SCALE

Town (pop. 4,852)

IMPACTS

Community / Economy

LOCAL ECONOMY

Less affluent

INTERVENTION TYPE:

Development of commercial, retail, leisure, residential, civic and/or historic buildings

Investing in town centre buildings and increasing the breadth of the town's offer for the benefit of residents and visitors



Photo credit: Argyll & Bute Council

CAMPBELTOWN IS A SMALL RURAL TOWN, LOCATED ON THE WEST COAST OF SCOTLAND. BY THE 1990S, CHANGES TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY AND THE CLOSURES OF THE RAF BASE, SHIPYARD AND CLOTHING FACTORY HAD ALL LED TO A SHORTAGE OF HIGH VALUE JOBS AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

Along with depopulation and a lack of inward investment, the local economy was increasingly fragile. Consequently, the town had fallen into disrepair, with a growing number of deteriorating and derelict buildings. These reinforced the community's feeling that their town was tired, in need of investment and had been forgotten.

In 2005, a public-sector consortium, led by Argyll and Bute Council, came together to consult the community and develop a regeneration strategy for Campbeltown and the surrounding peninsular. This helped to kickstart a series of investments in the town, such as the redevelopment of the leisure centre, health centre and police station and create a new dental surgery and an affordable housing development.

With maritime transport key to the local area, the quay was extended to better serve a range of industries, and an enhanced berthing facility was opened to provide facilities for 54 yachts and cruisers to encourage people to disembark, restock and spend time in Campbeltown. These improvements boosted the town's morale and built momentum for other initiatives relying on community involvement and investment.

Intervention

Since 2007, Argyll and Bute Council has obtained a series of grants which have enabled it to seed-fund improvements to rejuvenate the building stock in Campbeltown town centre. Funding totalling £3.4m was leveraged mainly from the [Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme \(CARS\)](#), [Townscape Heritage Initiative \(THI\)](#), [Town Centre Fund](#) and the Council's CHORD project (to aid regeneration and economic development in its five major waterside towns). This core funding was complemented by £9.5m match funding from the private, public and third sectors, enabling a £13m programme of investments in town centre premises.

Over 230 grants were awarded via a 'small grants scheme' for owners repairing residential and commercial properties, and a 'shopfront improvement scheme' helping businesses upgrade their frontages. Grants were typically in the range of £1k-£5k, although some were notably more (£25k+). Jointly, these grants benefitted about 30 commercial and 60 residential premises and were used for more than 75 shopfront improvements.

A key outcome is the investment in 11 prominent tenement buildings (i.e., ground floor commercial space with flats above) that were repaired using CARS and THI grant funding, with match funding from private sector housing grants and the private owners' contributions. Thirty new owners' associations were set up to enable these renovations and to facilitate ongoing maintenance works to keep the buildings in good repair.

Some building improvements were relatively small-scale, such as painting and repairing traditional timber frontages, while others were more extensive. Derelict buildings were assessed with detailed feasibility studies to identify how they might be repurposed to best serve the needs of the town. In particular, a number of significant but derelict listed buildings in the town centre and harbour were brought back into community use:

- The former town hall was converted into a community hub, with office space for rent, conference and meeting facilities. The main hall is now hired out for events such as concerts and weddings (by South Kintyre Development Trust).
- The old schoolhouse was converted into a backpackers' hostel (providing an income for Kintyre Amenity Trust).
- The Picture House cinema was reopened after a 12-year, £3m renovation (by Campbeltown Community Business).
- New owners invested £3m in the Royal Hotel, reopening it as a four-star, 23 room hotel with pub and restaurant.

A series of 21 community training events were held in parallel to the building renovations. These taught nearly 300 participants from local trades, contractors and housing agencies the skills to repair and maintain traditional building features such as stonework, leadwork and sash windows. More than 2,000 participants took part in another 22 community events, which included training on fundraising, marketing, archaeology and genealogy, to help community groups deliver local projects.

Complementary initiatives

A part-time handyman is employed during the summer months to keep the town centre looking its best during the visitor season. They litter-pick, remove flyposting, weed green space and water hanging baskets, clean the windows and paint the railings of public buildings.

Small-scale public realm improvements, such as fingerpost signs and dropped kerbs, have improved navigation and accessibility. A cross-town active travel route is in development, which will support the town's 20-minute neighbourhood, from the hospital and secondary school in the south through the town centre to the supermarket and primary school in the north. The 'Discover Campbeltown' app (approximately 500 downloads per year) features walking and cycling routes around the town, including a whisky-themed trail and scavenger hunt. Free guided walks (self-led or with volunteers) showcase the town's architecture and heritage.

Outcome

Thanks to these works, the fabric of much of the town centre's building stock has been safeguarded for the long term. Campbeltown is now a more desirable place to live and work, with a more vibrant retail and leisure offer, enhanced visual appeal and a café culture.

The number of vacant units decreased from 20 in 2010 to 3 in 2021. The small grant scheme alone enabled 15 units and over 3,700 m² of vacant floorspace to be brought back into use. Due to their success in Campbeltown (and Rothesay), Argyll and Bute Council began similar grant schemes in other towns.

Twenty new businesses opened in the town between 2018 and 2022, 13 of which are still trading in 2024. Informal feedback from one local business, which relocated to newly renovated premises in 2019, is that it has expanded from two employees to a team of nine, and annual turnover has more than doubled. Two other local businesses report increases in turnover of 10%-15% in the last two years.

In 2020, consultants Stantec carried out an evaluation of the economic impact of building improvement works in Campbeltown to date. They estimated that:

- The re-opened floorspace would have created 51 new jobs, generating the equivalent of £2.4m of gross GVA per annum.
- The equivalent of 114 temporary construction jobs were created, generating over £4m in gross construction GVA.

In the results of a survey of more than 400 local people:

- 90% said regeneration works had led to Campbeltown being an improved place, with 62% more likely to visit the town centre and 64% likely to spend more money there.
- 90% of businesses said the regeneration works had been transformative to their business.
- 70% of beneficiaries said they wouldn't have been able to fund works without the grant they received. On average, they spent nearly 85% of their renovation budget with other businesses in Campbeltown.
- 88% of participating contractors said grant funded renovations had generated follow-on work, based on their improved profile and experience.

According to Stantec's research, another key outcome of the scheme has been the empowerment of the Campbeltown community. It has reinforced a sense of local pride and community spirit and given local people the confidence and ability to achieve their own change. For example, South Kintyre Development Trust is now running a community gardening project, which brings older and young people together to care for the town's public green space.

While the area still suffers from a lack of high-quality jobs and a shortage of construction contractors, the local housing market remains buoyant and, in 2020, SURF named Campbeltown 'Scotland's Most Improved Place' (in its awards for best practice in community regeneration). The town's regeneration continues, with the three whisky distilleries beginning to invest in themselves as visitor destinations, and plans for more distilleries and a golf course and leisure complex in the pipeline. It is once again seen as a place worth investing in.

Tips for success

- Ensuring that all building improvements were done to conservation area standards has preserved the town's heritage and unique character.
- To avoid uniformity, no design standards were set for shopfronts, but the use of pastel colours was encouraged to create visual harmony.
- The project's public, private and third sector partners were adaptable in leveraging funding from new sources. Initial quick wins helped to build trust and get the local community on board with a shared vision of what needed to be done.
- The same Project Officer provided continuity throughout the project. For more than ten years, the council team worked from a town centre office building shared with local community groups. This provided an informal 'regeneration HQ' where information was shared and networks were built.

Further information

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/planning-and-building/growth-and-development/campbeltown-regeneration

ALLOA

SCHEME NAME

Living Alloa

LOCATION

Alloa, Scotland

COST

£1.1m (plus £9m for Primrose Place)

PARTNERS

[Alloa First](#),
[Clackmannanshire Council](#),
[Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface](#),
[Kingdom Housing Association](#)

OTHER FUNDERS

[Architecture & Design Scotland](#), [Scottish Government](#)

DATE

2019

SCALE

Town (pop. 20,417)

IMPACTS

Community / Economy / Health & Wellbeing

LOCAL ECONOMY

Less affluent

INTERVENTION TYPE:

Creation of walking networks linking key trip attractors / Improvements to route appearance / Development of commercial, retail, leisure, residential, civic and/or historic buildings / Policy development and awareness raising / Healthy Streets and placemaking

Using the Place Standard Tool to turn a conversation about a town centre living development into a shared vision for regeneration



Photo credit: Alloa First

WHEN CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL ACQUIRED THE SITE OF A FORMER DEPARTMENT STORE IN ALLOA, IT WAS WARY OF SIMPLY REDEVELOPING THE COMMERCIAL SPACE – AS THERE WERE ALREADY A NUMBER OF VACANT RETAIL UNITS IN SURROUNDING STREETS.

As an alternative, discussions began with Kingdom Housing Association about re-purposing the site as a multi-generational housing complex for older, physically disabled and learning-disabled people.

Design workshop

With the support of Architecture & Design Scotland, the council held an initial design workshop, involving professionals from the planning, health and social care, dementia care, housing and transport sectors, as well as stakeholders representing local businesses. Using the [Place Standard Tool](#), this workshop helped to identify simple but effective design measures for the complex which would benefit older residents and those with dementia. It also led to the realisation that local services and infrastructure would need to be improved to meet the wider needs of these residents.

Community consultation

The Council and Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface (with support from the Place Standard Conversations Fund) then conducted a consultation with residents, local businesses and third sector stakeholders – to gather views on the town centre and priorities for change in the vicinity of the development.

The consultation included a three-day drop-in event in a vacant town centre shop and an online survey, as well as focus group workshops and one-to-one sessions in local venues such as libraries, community centres and even a pub. The Place Standard Tool was used as the framework for all of these.

Demographic information was collected with responses, which allowed for targeted outreach to key under-represented groups such as older people, mental health groups, disability groups, ethnic minorities and younger people. In total, around 300 people took part.

Community concerns

The process highlighted the community's concerns, including the need for communal and green space for residents to enjoy, perceptions of public safety at nighttime, and a car-centric culture making it unsafe for vulnerable pedestrians. Local businesses were also concerned about loss of trade if new residents weren't able to use the town's facilities, and because the cleared site was currently used as informal parking by their customers. These concerns and the community's shared vision for improvement were fed into development of Living Alloa.

The five priorities for action were all relatively small-scale but would enable residents to get about safely and would bring active travel benefits for the whole community.

They were:

1. To refurbish the recently closed public toilet next to the bus station (the closure of which had discouraged older people from coming into town) to create a community hub, the 'Alloa Hub', where residents could integrate with local people.
2. To remove a labyrinth of tall brick walls and dog legs which were preventing residents from easily and safely navigating their way into High Street.
3. To re-model the poorly functioning and disconnected public space at Bank Street.
4. To ensure that residents weren't cut off from their local park, supermarket and health centre by King Street, the inner ring road.
5. To re-model the public realm along Shillinghill, to provide a more appealing and safer feeling pedestrian route to Forth Valley College.

Intervention

Primrose Place provides 60 purpose-built flats specifically designed for people with dementia and disabilities. Generous corridors provide space for people with sticks, frames or mobility scooters, while leaving plenty of space for people to personalise their front doors and make them easily recognisable. There are two lifts and, to help navigation, each floor is differentiated by a colour and symbol. Every flat includes a large cupboard for charging a mobility scooter or storing other mobility aids.

The complex has a communal sensory garden but doesn't have any formal internal shared spaces – so residents are encouraged to get out into the community. To help with this, as part of their welcome pack, new residents are given a booklet on shops and services available in the town. Some shops have taken part in training to learn how to make their spaces and customer service more dementia friendly. For example, by removing dark coloured doormats, which people with dementia can mistake for holes.

Townscape adaptations

Using Town Centre Fund Capital Grant funding, the Council was able to swiftly mobilise designs and approvals to deliver all the community's priorities before the complex opened:

1. The Alloa Hub is now much more than just a public 'lavvie'. It is an orientation point for people arriving in the town by public transport or bicycle. It offers community and travel information and sells a range of books and merchandise related to the local area and active travel. It hosts 'Made in Clacks' (a retail space for local crafters) and the Clackmannanshire Tapestry (part of the Great Tapestry of Scotland) – promoting the creativity and history of the community. At particular times of the year, it becomes a centre for festive activities, such as pancake tossing and Santa's Grotto.

2. A legible pedestrian route, with single line of sight, leads from Primrose Place to the town centre. It is decorated with an iconic mural created by two local artists.
3. Bank Street square has been revitalised and is now more accessible due to buildouts and a raised table providing a safe crossing point, as well as additional dropped kerbs.
4. On King Street, informal crossing points have been created using raised tables and narrowed sections of carriageway, to ensure pedestrians can safely follow desire lines.
5. Walls and railings have been removed along Shillinghill, and replaced with steps, a ramp and green space. It is less intimidating now that seating, which was a honeypot for antisocial behaviour, has been relocated.

Outcome

An impact study of the social and health benefits of Primrose Place for its residents is planned for the future. Anecdotally, the Living Alloa project has been very well received by the local community. One Primrose Place resident thanked those who worked on the project for “giving him his life back”, now he can go out unassisted. The mural remaining vandalism-free for more than two years is one small indicator of the sense of community pride the town’s residents have in the changes they brought about.

The visitor book at the Hub is full of effusive comments. Primrose Place residents regularly attend its lively ‘Thursday Club’ for socially isolated older people.

When Primrose Place opened, the local electrical shop sold out of TVs and fridges. Residents, their visitors and carers all continue to shop in the town and make use of its food and drink outlets. Only one retail unit on Primrose Street remains empty.

There is still plenty to deliver – with next steps being shopfront improvements and repurposing vacant units, and development of a longer-term masterplan for the town centre.

The Council’s experience with Primrose Place has shown that expanding town centre living could be key to the future of its towns. It has been using the Place Standard Tool with other communities, to understand their priorities too.

Further information

www.ourplace.scot/resource/place-standard-and-its-use-alloa-clackmannanshire-council

STOBSWELL

Creating pocket places helped to empower a neighbourhood and stimulate on-going community participation in regeneration projects

SCHEME NAME

Pocket Places for People, Stobswell

LOCATION

Dundee, Scotland

COST

£350,000

PARTNERS

[Dundee City Council](#), [Stobswell Forum](#)

OTHER FUNDERS

[Scottish Water](#), [Sustrans](#), [Transport Scotland](#)

DATE

2023

SCALE

Neighbourhood centre (pop. 2,458)

IMPACTS

Community / Environment

LOCAL ECONOMY

Less affluent

INTERVENTION TYPE:

New or refurbished open and/or green space / Improvements to pedestrian comfort, convenience and personal safety / Improvements to route appearance/ Reduction of traffic speeds / Deprioritisation of vehicles



Photo credit: Dundee City Council

ALBERT STREET IS THE LOCAL CENTRE FOR DUNDEE'S STOBSWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD. IT IS HOME TO A NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT AND LONG-STANDING RETAILERS WHO SERVE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, WHERE A HIGH PROPORTION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE LIVE IN HIGH DENSITY TENEMENTS IN THE STREETS ADJACENT TO ALBERT STREET.

The road is a major transport corridor into the city – so it experiences heavy traffic and high parking demand. Several of these side streets had previously been closed to traffic at their Albert Street end, creating a continuous footway along the main road and preventing rat running. Some limited planting and seating had been provided alongside these modal filters but the redundant road space they created was mainly taken up by parked cars.

Dundee City Council started to think about how it could use its District Centre Fund to make these spaces, and other junctions in the vicinity, work better for the local residents, not least since many of the tenements don't have their own outside space.

Intervention

In partnership with Stobswell Forum, a local community charity, a consultation period began. During this, temporary planters (made of durable and easy to procure concrete piping, painted by a local artist) were placed at the closed end of Craigie Street – to get residents thinking about the road space which could be converted and how it might be altered to revitalise areas around dull, grey tenement buildings.

Ultimately, five neighbourhood locations benefitted from permanent streetscape changes: Arthurstone Terrace, Balmore Street, Craigie Street, Langlands Street and Park Avenue. At each location, space has been reclaimed from parked or moving vehicles, in the process improving road safety and creating pockets of pedestrian-friendly spaces for people to move through or spend time in. The changes have included:

- Injecting colour with trees and planting, murals, painted pavements and light projectors.
- Providing seats, bins and cycle parking – to make more useable spaces for pedestrians and cyclists transferring to foot.
- Putting in raised tables, build-outs and/or advance stop lines at three side roads – to slow turning traffic and improve the visibility of vulnerable road users, while also creating space for planting and seating.
- Creating continuous footways along Albert Street across these three side roads and installing dropped kerbs and tactile paving throughout – to give pedestrians priority and improve accessibility.
- Designing all planted areas as rain gardens (where rainwater run-off is channelled directly into the soil) – for ease of maintenance and to help prevent flooding.

At Craigie Street, the dead end created by the existing modal filter has been turned into a pocket park, which is Dundee's first large-scale rain garden. A 30,000-litre storage tank beneath is fed by run-off and downpipes from the surrounding buildings. The tank is emptied slowly back into the city's drainage system. It provides flood defences sufficient for a '1 in 1,000 year storm' and will help to protect the city centre downhill from extreme weather events brought on by climate change.

Above-ground improvements at Craigie Street include trees and planting, high quality seating and tables suitable for wheelchair users, a mural and community notice board, and resurfacing to provide a continuous walkway across what was the old road surface. This surface is made of loose blockwork, which provides gaps for drainage, and has been laid to create patterns which tie into a pre-existing mural on the gable end of an adjacent building.

Outcome

A Town Centre Health Check was completed for Albert Street before the pandemic. A follow-up will be completed when time and resources allow. For the time being, the Council is reliant on upcoming student projects and internships to monitor the impact of the scheme. In the meantime, it is reassured that the rain gardens functioned as planned during the four named storms the city has experienced since the project was completed.

Locally, it is clear that the most significant impact of the Albert Street improvements has been on community empowerment and participation, engendering a belief that change is achievable. This has been reinforced by the prestige of the scheme, which has won, and been shortlisted for, several national awards.

The absence of graffiti and vandalism in any of the new spaces suggests that the community is proud of its new assets, and it is certainly making use of them. For example, pupils from the secondary school at the top of Albert Street now spend money in the takeaways at the bottom of the street, and then use the newly created spaces to socialise.

The local community has since led projects to install four more murals in the Stobswell area, using street art to create vibrancy and a greater sense of place. It is working with the Council to create another pocket park in nearby Eliza Street, where the Stobswell Forum (supported by the local housing association) has opened a previously vacant shop. This space serves as a much-needed community hub, where residents can drop in, and get support and advice.

The recently launched Stobswell Albert Street Action Group is now campaigning for improvements on Albert Street itself. It wants to make further progress towards community regeneration by reducing the dominance of traffic and HGVs, drawing in a wider range of shops and making the street somewhere pedestrians feel safer and want to spend more time.

Tips for success

- Online and face-to-face conversations with residents and local businesses helped build a belief that change was possible and worth the impact of construction works and further road closures.
- Renovating overgrown planting around a nearby car park was a low-cost solution to improve natural surveillance, make it more useable, and placate residents concerned about the loss of on-street parking spaces.

Further information

www.showcase-sustrans.org.uk/news/dundee-community-at-heart-of-neighbourhood-transformation

SHEFFIELD

Creating a sense of place using green and blue infrastructure

SCHEME NAME
Grey to Green

LOCATION
Sheffield, England

COST
£9.9m

PARTNERS
[Sheffield City Council](#),
[South Yorkshire](#)
[Mayoral Combined](#)
[Authority](#)

OTHER FUNDERS
[European Regional](#)
[Development Fund](#),
[Canal and Rivers Trust](#),
[Yorkshire Water](#)

DATE
2016 – 2022

SCALE
City centre (pop.
555,000)

IMPACTS
Economy /
Environment

LOCAL ECONOMY
Less affluent

INTERVENTION TYPE:
Creation of walking
networks linking
key trip attractors /
Improved connectivity
to other sustainable
transport modes / New
or refurbished open
and/or green space
/ Deprioritisation of
vehicles



Photo credit: Sheffield City Council

CASTLEGATE WAS HISTORICALLY THE HEART OF SHEFFIELD BUT FEWER SHOPS AND BUSINESSES, INDUSTRIAL DECAY AND THE RELOCATION OF CIVIC FUNCTIONS LED THE AREA INTO ACCELERATED DECLINE. VACANT BUILDINGS, AN INCREASINGLY CAREWORN CHARACTER AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ALL UNDERMINED THE REMAINING BUSINESSES AND DISCOURAGED NEW INVESTMENT.

With the opening of a new inner relief road in 2008, traffic on the dual carriageway, which cut through the area, was reduced dramatically. This presented the opportunity to reclaim two traffic lanes and reverse severance, to reconnect Castlegate with the riverside business district, and Victoria Quays canal basin.

Grey to Green was conceived as a transformative environmental project to create a linear park along the redundant carriageways, forming a safe and accessible route through the area and creating a more appealing environment which would attract new footfall, investment and jobs. Critically, the park would be designed with a focus on its function as a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS), more naturally routing cleaned rainwater slowly back into the River Don. It was created in two phases of works, which took place between 2016 and 2022.

Intervention

The resulting linear greenspace stretches over 1.3km – giving Castlegate a unique sense of place. Covering 3 hectares, it is a wildlife corridor which is home to 40 semi-mature trees and swathes of low maintenance, high impact perennials and bulbs. The diverse, multi-layered planting is designed to protect pedestrians from air pollution, absorb carbon, cool ambient temperatures and create year-round interest – for both people and wildlife. It provides a habitat for birds, bats and insects, who are encouraged to nest and hibernate using sculptural totems, which include ‘bug hotel’ design features for the likes of ladybirds, lacewings and bees.

Rainwater runs off from the adjacent highway and the walking and cycling paths, flowing over flush kerbs into the planting – diverting it away from the sewer so it can be used within the landscape. The majority of planting areas act as rain gardens, absorbing run-off into the soil. This benefits the plants and allows water to return to the air naturally through plant evapotranspiration. The rain gardens run in sequence, with more intense rain retained on the surface by check dams, which control the water flow. This is passed from one check dam to the next before finally being discharged slowly into the river.

Pollutants such as oils, heavy metals and microplastics are naturally filtered from the rainwater by a layer of sandstone, aggregate mulch and soil, where they are broken down by natural processes.

The green and blue functions of the space have been designed alongside provision for bus, pedestrian and cyclist movements. For example, a wide pavement with regular resting places makes traversing the park more amenable for pedestrians. The totems and elements of the engineering deliberately left on display provide focal points and celebrate Sheffield’s history as a city of makers.

Outcome

Since Phase 1 of Grey to Green was completed in 2016, a number of businesses have relocated to previously vacant office buildings and warehouses in the area. The improvement to the area has created at least 540 jobs and is projected to create more than 1,600 in total. These include nearly 200 in Castle House, an empty listed building re-developed to accommodate start-up and scale-up businesses and the National Videogame Museum. It is also home to the Kommune food hall, which is part of the area's expanding food and drink offer, serving workers and people from newly opened residential developments.

The environmental benefits of the scheme are the subject of long-term monitoring by the University of Sheffield. Early indicators of success are heartening:

- 24,000 bathtubs worth of water diverted from sewage treatment annually.
- 561% increase in biodiversity in just one part of the scheme.
- Positive reductions in ambient temperatures potentially already reducing the urban heat island effect.

Locally, it has also made the case for more investment in transforming tarmacked areas into green public spaces that encourage walking and cycling, with one local survey showing that 98% of people want to see more green streets in the city.

Further information

www.greytogreen.org.uk