

Garston Village Masterplan



How to use this document:

This documents forms part of the Garston Village Masterplan, a suite of documents which have been produced for Liverpool City Council (LCC) by URBED (Urbanism, Environment, Design Ltd) with input from Eye and Fore Consulting.

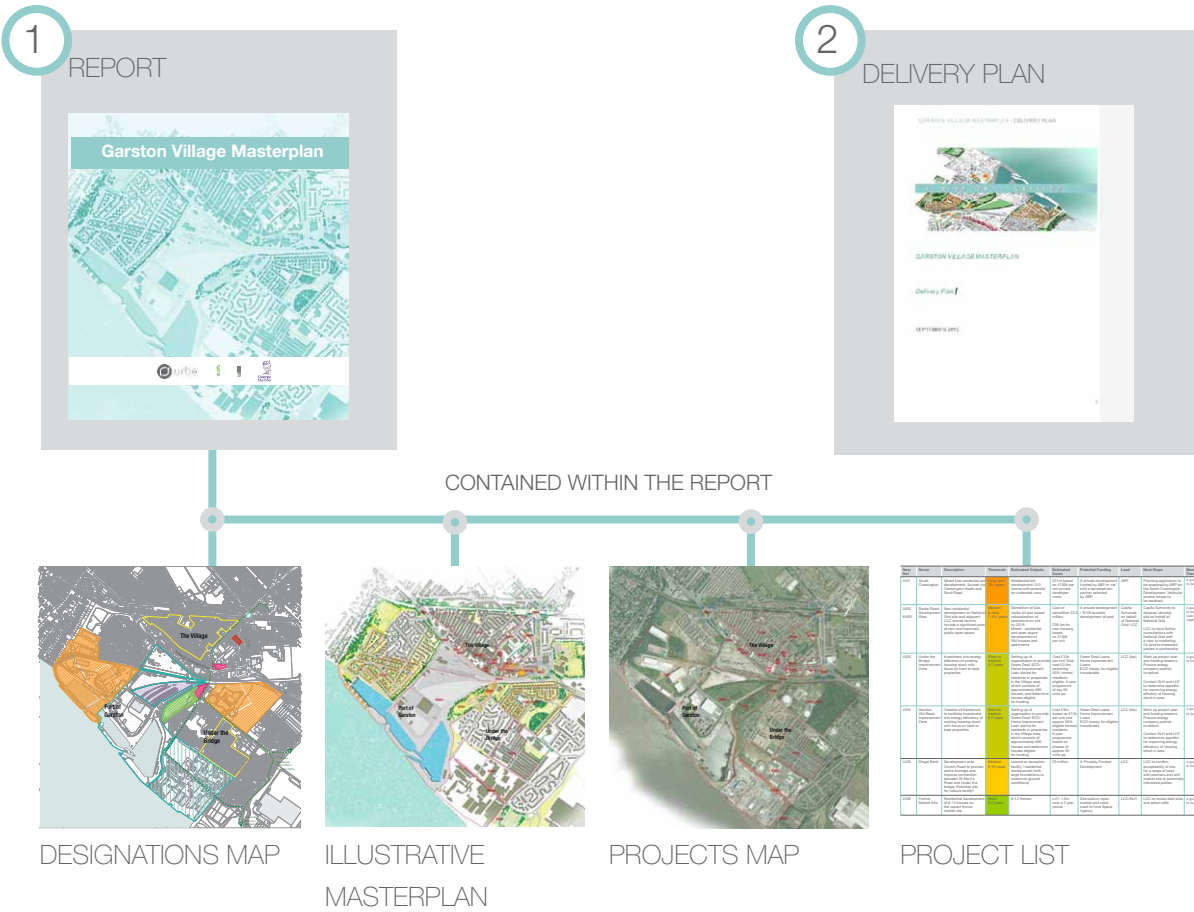
The Masterplan consists of two parts, the Report (this document) which tells the story of Garston, setting out our analysis of the area along with what local people think, and our recommendations for regeneration. It also sets out a list of projects and illustrates these on an illustrative masterplan.

The second part of this Masterplan is the Delivery Plan. This is a working document which will be updated by LCC. This document goes into more detail about the delivery of each project and how it will be funded, as well as identifying who will be responsible for bringing each project forward.

These documents should be read in conjunction with each other.

This document should be printed double sided on recycled or FSC certified paper.

GARSTON VILLAGE MASTERPLAN



This framework for Garston has been undertaken by a team headed by URBED. It was commissioned by Liverpool City Council following a recommendation in the South Liverpool International Gateway: Strategic Regeneration Framework. This identified Garston as a priority area and recommended that a more detailed strategy for the area should be commissioned. This strategy has been undertaken over the first half of 2013 and has involved extensive discussions with stakeholders, three community workshops and one public exhibition.

Our approach to the development of a neighbourhood strategy is based on an approach similar to a medical process.

We start with a diagnosis of the health of the neighbourhood, look at the prognosis if nothing is done and then suggest a set of proposals as treatment. If we don't fully understand the reasons why Garston is how it is today we risk wasting money on things that don't work or worse still end up creating more problems. Our diagnosis of Garston is in four parts:

- We conclude that the Village, to the north of St. Mary's Road is a stable housing area with some signs of gentrification as people move into the area from other parts of the city and take advantage of proximity to the Parkway station. House values are starting to rise and while there remain a few properties in poor condition our judgement is that this area is stable and improving.
- We conclude that the Under the Bridge area has turned a corner. The area was showing signs of market failure a few years ago but the removal of the

worst stock and the injection of new housebuilding has changed the image of the area and the population profile which in turn has helped the older housing stock.

- We conclude that the industry and the port is also doing reasonably well. The major employers are stable or looking to invest and while the port is interested in rationalising its land holdings this is part of long term investment strategy. Demand for smaller scale employment space is also holding up.
- We conclude that the main problem is with St. Mary's Road, which is in a poor physical condition and has high levels of vacancy. This unfortunately colours the image of the whole of Garston so that the improvements elsewhere are overlooked.

Our prognosis is therefore that the housing and industrial areas are in a stable and improving condition and that this is likely to continue. There is scope to accelerate this improvement through measures to improve the housing stock

and the environment and to promote further housebuilding. The prognosis for St. Mary's Road is less promising. At best it will continue to experience a long slow decline, at worst the recent loss of the Cooperative Store as an anchor could cause it to collapse. This strategy is therefore based on consolidating the improvements in the housing and industrial areas and developing a strategy to address St. Mary's Road.

We start by suggesting a vision for Garston based on the idea of an urban village; a place with a mix of people living and working with a strong distinctive identity and a revived high street. However we stop short of suggesting that the term 'urban village' be used as part of the marketing of Garston, suggesting instead that it be branded simply as Garston Village. This identity is proposed to cover the whole of the area, allowing the perception of two separate communities 'Under the Bridge' and 'The Village' to be phased out.

The vision is developed into five strategic themes which are used as the basis for 18 recommended projects:

- 1. A good place to live:** This includes two proposed sites to be allocated for new housing, the western parts of the docks and the Gas Works on Banks Road. It also includes a scheme to promote the eco-retrofit of older housing stock in the area.
- 2. A place to do business:** This is based on the consolidation and protection of the remaining industry in the area. It includes investment in the port and the protection of the industrial estates on Blackburne Street together with environmental improvements.
- 3. A green, well connected neighbourhood:** This includes the creation of two major new open spaces; Dingle Bank which is proposed as a new leisure area to include a skate park and Banks Road which is to become a park which conserves areas of ecological importance. The plan also includes a new cycle route through the area from the station to the river, part of which would be an environmental scheme to improve the environment on Church Road under the bridge.
- 4. A thriving high street:** The most important part of the strategy relates to St. Mary's Road/Speke Road. The starting point is to attract a new supermarket to anchor the

high street, where we have made considerable progress in discussion with a major convenience-retail chain. This is linked to proposals to develop the former baths site and to make minor improvements to the layout of the market to safeguard its success. A further set of proposals is to suggest a market mechanism to encourage the occupation of vacant shop units, which we have called the Garston Space Agency. Linked to this are proposals for a low cost scheme to improve the appearance of the street.

- 5. A distinctive image and strong identity:** The final set of proposals is meant to communicate the change that is being brought about in Garston with a programme of branding and signage. This would use the brand Garston Village and would include signs at the three main entrances to Garston as well as the possibility of a way marker on the bypass to help identify Garston.

These five strategic themes are developed into 18 proposals and the final part of the report develops these into a delivery framework. This covers priority, timing, costs and funding and is meant as a practical set of tools for the council and other stakeholders to take the strategy forward.

What could this mean in reality?

- 1. £109 million private investment in new housing on under-used or vacant land in the area;**
- 2. Safeguarding of employment land along Blackburne Street - to allow industries here to grow;**
- 3. Investment into 62,000 sq m of green space - areas for leisure on Dingle Bank and a new park on Bank's Road;**
- 4. A thriving high street - aided by the Garston Space Agency - to bring vacant units on St Mary's Road back into use;**
- 5. A re-invented high street - widening the pavements and painting the road to attract people onto St Mary's Road and make it better for pedestrians;**
- 6. 2km of new cycle routes right through the heart of Garston, to connect South Parkway with the coastal reserve and employment areas;**
- 7. A new identity - Garston Village - to unify the whole area. Installation of signs and artwork to let people know Garston Village is there and open for business.**