
The SQ

Setting the framework for the
future of Williamson Square and
surrounding streets

Publication The SQ
Date of Publication October 2022
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Lee's Building and St Johns Beacon · Williamson Square





Williamson Square

Summary

The SQ is the name that has been given by Liverpool BID Company to a historic area of Liverpool City Centre focussed on Williamson Square and the streets that radiate from it. Arguably one of the most important public spaces in Liverpool since it was first laid out as a residential square in 1745, Williamson Square and surrounding streets have connected communities, businesses, and cultural institutions in the heart of the city for three centuries. The layout of Williamson Square and surrounding streets has changed little in all that time, and today's eclectic mix of buildings flanking Williamson Square and surrounding streets reflect the ever-changing architectural fashions and economic fortunes of the area in the intervening years.

Vacancy levels and reported anti-social behaviour within the SQ are increasing, accelerated in part by people being drawn away to parts of the city centre that have experienced higher levels of investment and regeneration over the last two decades. This coupled with changing retail conditions means that the future of the SQ is uncertain.

To address the challenges of the SQ, the Liverpool BID Company is seeking to understand the current policy framework for the area so that it can better promote Williamson Square and surrounding streets as a new vibrant cultural district

in the heart of Liverpool. The new cultural district will actively build on the ideas contained in the *Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square Strategic Regeneration Framework* (published in March 2020), policies contained in the *Liverpool Local Plan* (adopted in January 2022) and emerging Supplementary Planning Documents as well as fresh place making ideas drawn from best practice examples.

In doing so the Liverpool BID Company believe that they can stimulate meaningful change across the SQ that will create a healthier, safer, greener, and more inclusive environment in Liverpool City Centre that benefits everyone. These changes will not be focussed solely on public realm and streetscape, but will include for the activation of vacant and underutilised buildings and roof spaces together with the identification of wider regeneration opportunities across the SQ.

The SQ: a new vibrant cultural district in the heart of Liverpool

The Study Area

Physicality

The SQ has at its core Williamson Square, a major civic space in the heart of Liverpool City Centre from which a series of pedestrianised streets radiate. Covering 20 hectares (50 acres) of Liverpool City Centre the SQ comprises the predominately pedestrianised historic retail core of the city. Its proximity to the main rail line terminus at Lime Street, the Queens Square Bus Station, Haymarket Bus Hub, three of Merseyrail's city centre underground stations including Moorfields, Liverpool Central and Lime Street, numerous bike and scooter collection points, several taxi ranks, together with access to several multistorey car parks means that the SQ is highly accessible. As well as covering St John's and Clayton Square shopping centres and touching on the Grosvenor Liverpool One estate, the SQ contains a number of national and independent retailers as well as public houses, restaurants, churches, offices, hotels, convenience stores and other businesses.

Cultural Offer

The SQ also contains a series of cultural institutions which run along the cities 'Cultural Mile' from William Brown Street through Williamson Square and down to the Royal Albert Dock. Cultural institutions along the 'Cultural Mile' include but are not limited to: The World Museum, Liverpool Central Library, the Walker Art Gallery, The Empire Theatre, St George's Hall, the Royal Court, the Liverpool Playhouse Theatre, Liverpool's contemporary arts centre The Bluecoat, The International Slavery Museum, the Maritime Museum, the Museum of Liverpool, and the Tate Liverpool at the Royal Albert Dock.

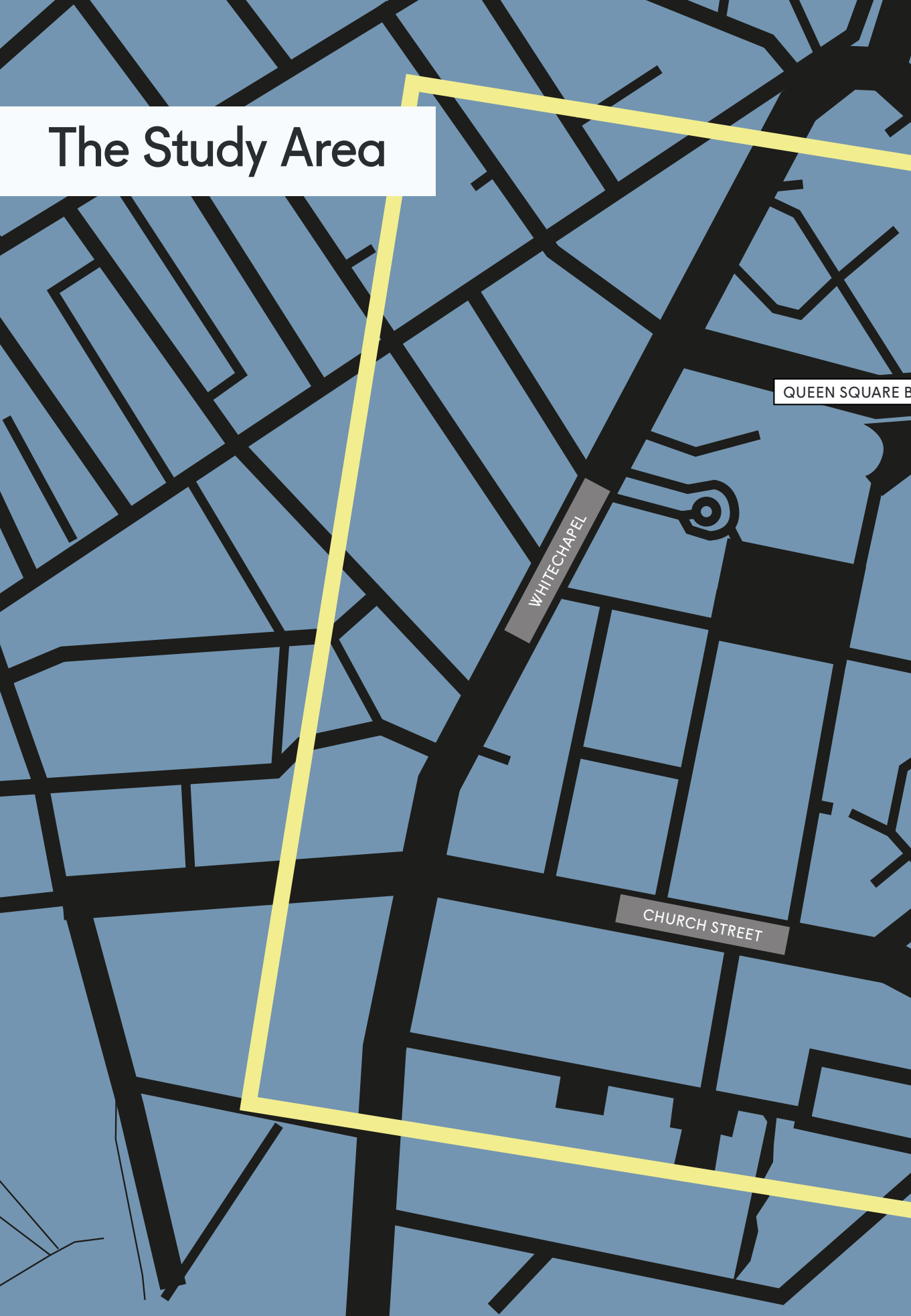
Movement

A number of these cultural institutions sit within the SQ or are directly accessed through key transit streets, public squares and incidental spaces that combine to create a distinct cultural district in the heart of Liverpool City Centre.



The Playhouse Theatre · Williamson Square

The Study Area



QUEEN SQUARE B

WHITECHAPEL

CHURCH STREET



BUS STATION

LIME STREET STATION

CENTRAL STATION

The Liverpool Local Plan

MAIN OFFICE AREA

Policy CC1 & EC5

MIXED USE AREA

MAIN RETAIL AREA

Policy CC7, CC8

1

● Main Office Area: page 27

● Main Retail Area: page 27

● Mix Use Area: page 28

AREA

Policy EC6

PRIMARY STRATEGIC
ROUTE NETWORK

Policy TP1

, CC9 & SP3



SRF's in relation to the SQ

LIVERPOOL COMMERCIAL
BUSINESS DISTRICT SPF

CAVERN QUARTER AND
WILLIAMSON SQUARE SRF



UPPER CENTRAL SRF

UPPER CENTRAL SRF

City, District & Local Squares



QUEEN

FALL WEL

DAWSON
SQUARE

WILLIAMSON
SQUARE

WHITECHAPEL

WILLIAMSON ST

TARLETON ST

BASNETT ST

HOLY
CROSS PLACE

CHURCH STREET

CHURC



SQ

L SQ

HOUGHTON ST

ELLIOT PLACE

PARKER STREET

CH ST PLACE

CENTRAL SQ

Liverpool BID Company

The Liverpool BID Company is a private, not-for-profit limited company, working on behalf of our 1,000 BID levy payers in Liverpool across two Business Improvement Districts which comprise the Liverpool Retail & Leisure Business Improvement District and the Liverpool Culture & Commerce Business Improvement District.

Constituted by UK Law in 2004, a Business Improvement District (BID) is a powerful, independent voice representing the interests of a varied community of organisations, committed to working together to ensure that the area continues to progress whilst providing the best possible trading and working environment for its occupiers.

The Liverpool BID Company provide added value around 4 key drivers:

-
- ① **Managed District**
improving the environment and safety
 - ② **Promoted District**
animating and promoting the BID areas
 - ③ **Connected District**
improving opportunities for connectivity
 - ④ **Working District**
providing business support to BID levy payers

Liverpool BID company has a proven track record over the past 18 years in delivering projects and campaigns to make Liverpool a more attractive place to work, live and thrive. Developing ambitious regeneration projects, transforming and improving the public realm, Liverpool BID Company lobby on behalf of levy payers to provide a voice and future for businesses. Liverpool BID Company work to shape the future of Liverpool, creating engines for growth and recovery.

Liverpool BID Company
works to deliver a
thriving city *bringing
additionality through street
transformation, connectivity
and collaboration to enhance
our community. We are
passionate about what we
do, strategic, resourceful,
visionary and here to support
you when you need us.*



Williamson Square

Context and Aims for the Study

Urban spaces in our cities have an important social function to bring people together and to act as a focus for civic and community activities.

Well-designed public spaces support a variety of activities and encourage social interaction to promote health, well-being, social and civic inclusion. They are intrinsic to creating pride in our places, reflecting the unique culture and heritage of the place. The SQ is made up of a series of civic spaces, key streets and incidental spaces which together create the sense of place that exists in the minds of people who use and visit the area.

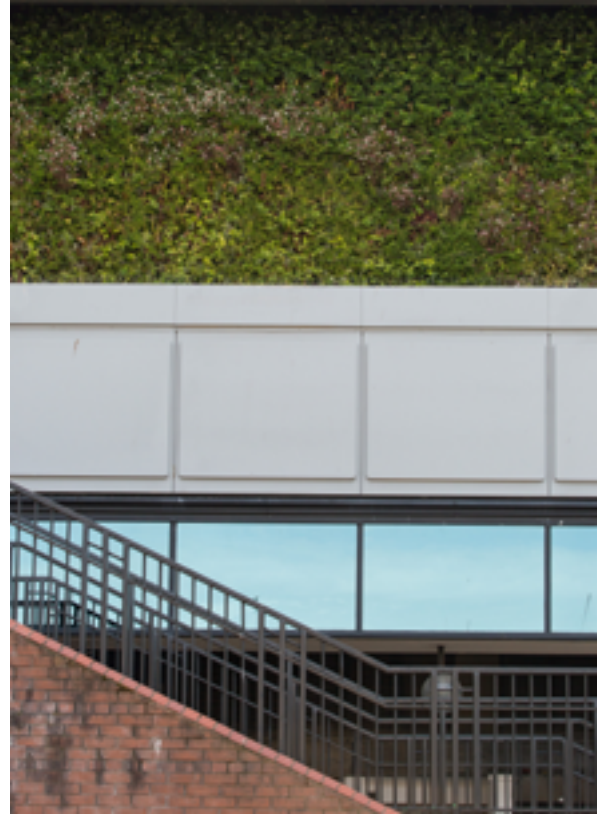
This study has been commissioned by Liverpool BID Company to focus resources and deliver positive change across the SQ to improve business confidence and to encourage quality investment from private and public sectors into the area. It will be used by Liverpool BID Company to inform future decision making and to co-ordinate activities across the study area to achieve complementary improvements. Through collaboration with partners this

study will assist the Liverpool BID Company in the promotion and marketing of the area as a distinct cultural district in the heart of the city.

Previous published studies have focused on Williamson Square and how to draw people to it, rather than the role Liverpool BID Company see for Williamson Square as a catalyst for the wider city centre and the connections offered by the streets that radiate from it. By expanding the study area beyond the confines of Williamson Square, the Liverpool BID Company believes that there are economies of scale and physical changes to the public realm that could deliver more meaningful positive change across the SQ. The challenges identified through previous studies of Williamson Square still stand but they are amplified by the challenges that exist in the streets and incidental spaces that radiate from it.



Tarleton Street



St Johns Centre

The identified challenges being:

-
- How do we make the area a place where people want to stay and spend time
 - How might we improve the night-time economy in the area to support cultural institutions and local business
 - How do we utilise existing and future public art within the area
 - How to use lighting to make the area feel more attractive and safer all year round
 - How can we improve connectivity through the area to other parts of the city centre
 - How to address increasing vacancy rates and underutilised upper floors of buildings
 - How to green the area in a meaningful way

This study is intended to identify interventions and activities to promote and nurture the SQ as a cultural district within Liverpool City Centre. The intention is for interventions and priorities to be developed by the Liverpool BID Company into an action plan for the SQ, from which a series of projects will be identified and taken forward in the coming months and years. This study is a non-statutory document that is not intended to form part of the council's planning policy framework; however, it does align with the council's plans and strategies for the area in the adopted local plan and a series of published spatial frameworks that cover the study area.

Liverpool BID Company intends to work in partnership with key civic and cultural institutions based within the SQ together with local businesses and the third sector to deliver positive change across the SQ.



Whitechapel

The future of the SQ *will be guided by adopted and emerging planning policy*

To assist the Liverpool BID Company in targeting resources that align with adopted and emerging policy, it is first important to understand the policy context within which the area currently exists. The following is not a comprehensive account of all planning policy as only those key policies which will guide the future of the SQ have been included within this study. National and local policy should be read in more detail along with the relevant supplementary planning documents where appropriate.

Key Planning Policy and Guidance for the SQ include:

1

The Liverpool Local Plan

2

Regeneration Frameworks

Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square Strategic Regeneration Framework – *March 2020*

Upper Central Spatial Regeneration Framework – *July 2019*

Liverpool Commercial Business District Spatial Regeneration Framework – *October 2019*

The Liverpool Local Plan

The Policy Analysis

1 The Liverpool Local Plan 2013-2033*

The Local Plan provides a long-term spatial vision, strategic priorities, and policies for future development in the city over the next 15 to 20 years, specifically regarding the quantity and location of new homes, employment provision, shops, facilities and other services, transport and other infrastructure provision, climate change mitigation and adaption and the conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment.

The SQ is washed over by **three city centre character areas**, these include:

-
- (1) **Main Retail Area:** The Main Retail Area (MRA) within Liverpool City Centre is the principal retail destination within the city and the City Region for comparison shopping. The key planning issues for the MRA include: Protecting and enhancing the retail function of the MRA; Focusing on qualitative improvements to the retail offer and investment that ensures a high quality of provision across the whole MRA, including within areas around Williamson Square, Whitechapel, Bold Street and the Bluecoat area; Ensuring a vibrant and diverse Cavern Quarter; Maximising the contribution the Cavern Quarter makes to the City's visitor economy; Improving key arrival points, pedestrian access and movement, and public realm within and around the MRA; and Ensuring that any proposals safeguard those elements which contribute to the significance of the City's other heritage assets.
- (2) **Main Office Area:** Includes the City's Commercial District. The key planning issues for the area being: A limited supply of Grade A commercial space; High demand for smaller units leading to the sub-division of larger floorplate office buildings; Ensuring office space is energy efficient; Enhancing public realm, environmental quality and pedestrian and cycle links to the Waterfront and other parts of the City Centre; and ensuring that any proposals safeguard those elements which contribute to the City's heritage assets.

* The Local Plan was adopted at the City Council's full council meeting on Wednesday 26th January 2022.

* See the plan on: liverpool.gov.uk

- (3) **St George's Quarter:** This area forms the cultural and historic 'heart' of the city where the iconic St George's Hall is complemented by the World Museum, Walker Art gallery and the new Central Library. In terms of the SQ it also includes Queen Square, the Empire Theatre, Lime Street Station and a number of hotels and restaurants. The key planning issues for the area include: Supporting existing cultural facilities; Ensuring that any new developments respond to their local context and safeguard those elements which contribute to the significance of the City's heritage assets; Enhancing connectivity across the area; and Enhancing the use, accessibility, safety and security of St John's Gardens.

Key planning policies contained within the adopted Liverpool Local Plan that apply to the SQ are:

Policy CC7
*Protecting & Enhancing the
Main Retail Area*

Liverpool City Centre's Main Retail Area (MRA) as shown on the City Centre Policies Map, will be protected and enhanced by:

- a. Granting planning permission for new non-food retail development
- b. Granting planning permission for other town centre uses as defined by national planning policy subject to the criteria in Policy CC8
- c. Ensuring that it is the priority location for major non-food shopping facilities by requiring out of centre retail proposals to demonstrate compliance with the sequential approach and no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the MRA, and
- d. Ensuring that non-food retailing is the primary use within the MRA, particularly within the Primary Frontages (as defined on the City Centre Policies Map)

Policy CC8
*Non-retail Use within
the City Centre MRA*

Where Permitted Development Rights do not apply, proposals for non-retail uses at ground floor level within the City Centre MRA will be granted planning permission provided:

- a. Within Primary Retail Frontages the proposal will not result in:
 - i. The proportion of units for convenience and/or comparison retail falling below 70% of the total frontage length
 - ii. More than 30% of the total frontage length in non-retail use
 - iii. More than 2 non convenience and/or comparison retail units adjacent to each other
 - iv. The provision of a hot food take-away or public house/ bar, and
 - v. The loss of a retail frontage of 10 metres or above
- b. Within Secondary Retail Frontages the proportion of units within convenience and/ or comparison retail use does not

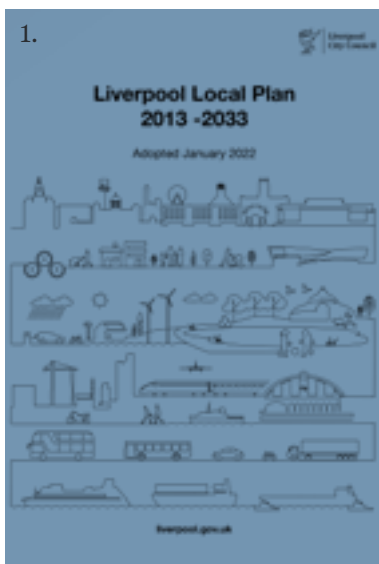
- fall below 50% of the street frontage length; and in the case of Hot Food Takeaway it is demonstrated it would not result in:
- i. More than 2 adjoining hot food take-aways in a frontage length
 - ii. Less than 2 non-Hot Food Take-Away units between individual or groups of hot food take-aways, and
 - iii. The total hot food takeaway frontage being more than 5 metres in length
- c. The proposal complies with the criteria in Policy CC22 in respect of food and drink uses and hot food takeaways.
 - d. The proposal:
 - i. Maintains a ground floor window display and/or shop frontage appropriate to the use of the premises at all times
 - ii. Enhances the general appearance of the existing shopping frontages in the design and materials used in any external alterations to the building façade, and
 - iii. Establishes access to upper floors, where practicable

Proposals for non-retail uses outside primary and secondary frontages in the MRA will be permitted subject to other Local Plan policies.

Primary Retail Frontage - The Primary Retail Street frontages will be restricted to a high proportion of retail uses; the aim is to protect and enhance the dominant retail character of the City Centre, but to allow some scope for the development of ancillary non-retail uses, with exception of drinking establishments and hot food takeaway uses. It is considered that such uses would adversely impact on the dominant retail character of the primary retail frontages. In the context of the SQ the primary retail frontages run along key streets including: Whitechapel / Lord St / Church Street / St Peters Lane / Parker Street / Elliot Street

Secondary Retail Frontage - These are where a wider range of non-retail uses would be allowed in recognition of the fact that it is appropriate to allow a diversity of uses within the wider MRA which do not unduly detract from the essential shopping function of the City Centre MRA. These locations relieve pressure from an excessive quantity of non-retail uses in primary frontages which might otherwise undermine the dominant retail function of the MRA, and the policy therefore sets a lower threshold for these areas. In the context of the SQ the only street covered by a secondary retail frontage designation is Ranelagh Street.

The remainder of key streets within the SQ study area sit outside the primary and secondary retail frontage as designated by the adopted local plan.



Policy CC18
St George's Quarter

Proposals within the St George's Quarter should:

- a. complement the area's existing cultural, education/university and other uses;
- b. contribute to improving linkages between cultural hubs in the City Centre;
- c. contribute to enhancing the public realm, important open space assets and environmental quality; and
- d. conserve the historic fabric of the area



Regeneration Frameworks

Cavern Quarter and Williamson
Square Strategic Regeneration
Framework – *March 2020*

Upper Central Spatial
Regeneration Framework
– *July 2019*

Liverpool Commercial Business
District Spatial Regeneration
Framework – *October 2019*

The Policy Analysis

2 Regeneration Frameworks

In Liverpool there are a series of regeneration frameworks covering the city centre that have been prepared collaboratively by the council and its partners to guide future investment and development, as well as to facilitate regeneration of the areas which they cover. In the context of the SQ, there are three key regeneration frameworks:

- A. Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square Strategic Regeneration Framework – *March 2020*
- B. Liverpool Commercial Business District Spatial Regeneration Framework - *October 2019*
- C. Upper Central Spatial Regeneration Framework – *July 2019*

It is understood that it is the council's intention to take the *Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square Strategic Regeneration Framework* the *Commercial Business District Spatial Regeneration Framework* and the *Upper Central Spatial Regeneration Framework* back to Cabinet in late 2022 for formal adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). SPDs seek to build upon and provide more detailed guidance about policies in the Local Plan. Legally SPDs and regeneration frameworks do not form part of the Local Plan itself and they are not subject to independent examination, but they are material considerations in determining planning applications.



* Find A & B plans on liverpool.gov.uk

* Find C plan on uppercentral.co.uk

A Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square Strategic Regeneration Framework

In summary the document seeks to guide future development and investment as well as supporting regeneration. It includes strategies for music and art, as well as tourism, heritage, connectivity, the public realm and mix of uses. The document seeks to identify and provide strategies to overcome challenges in the area's functionality, representation, and identity. To do this the document draws on the innate qualities and assets of Williamson Square and the Cavern Quarter to ensure that they make a great contribution to the life of the city and its economy. The vision for Williamson Square within the document is for:

Williamson Square to become Liverpool's civic and performative space, a square for all

Whilst the SRF looks at the Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square the **objectives** it seeks to deliver are applicable to the streets that radiate from Williamson Square covered by the SQ. These include:

- a. **Wider Connectivity** – the creation of strong visual and physical linkages to and through the area to improve how people arrive at and move through the area to draw people in and encourage movement.
- b. **Hierarchy of Streets & Spaces** – public realm improvements to improve the street character as well as improvements to lighting, activation of streets, public art, and a programme of events to stimulate the area visually and physically during the day and night through active frontages.
- c. **Diversifying the Offer** – creating a more diverse offer to enrich both the daytime and night-time activity, to attract a wider range of people and make the area more lively, interesting, and economically competitive. Diversifying the offer would also have beneficial impacts on the health, social and cultural well-being of visitors to the area.
- d. **Built Heritage** – improving the quality of the built environment and enhancing the use of historic buildings to add to the character and attractiveness of the area, bringing more footfall and activity into the area.
- e. **Dwelling Opportunities** – offering a range of dwelling opportunities by increasing the number of meeting points and creating places to rest and spend longer time in and to promote social interaction. Supported by quality lighting together with active routes and active ground floors.

- f. **Active Upper Floors** – activating upper floors of vacant buildings would lead to improved building facades, lighting, activity and overlooking of the streets.
- g. **Development Opportunities** – the identification of sites for re-development around Williamson Square.
- h. **Culture** – opportunities to enhance and exploit the rich cultural heritage of the area. Potential to contribute to the social and physical health of the city through the provision of successful civic spaces and institutions, as well as opportunities to green up the area.

Whilst published the *Cavern Quarter and Williamson Square Strategic Regeneration Framework* is not yet a Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). Once it does become SPD, there are key policies contained within it which will guide development across parts of the SQ covered by the framework. [A summary of the key policies that would be applicable to the SQ include:](#)

Area Strategic Policies

These include a series of strategic policies to create diverse, safe, and vibrant destinations for a local, national, and international audience. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Commercial Uses** - proposals within Williamson Square should add to the vibrancy of the square and have no detrimental impact on amenity, character, and the operation of the Playhouse Theatre. Proposals for bars and nightclubs will be resisted, unless it is clearly demonstrated that there will be no adverse cumulative impacts or over-concentration of such uses.
2. **Residential Development** – the conversion of existing and underused buildings and upper floors within Williamson Square and Whitechapel for residential development. Proposals should consider the Agent of Change principle to ensure there is no adverse impact including on the character and amenity of the area and the operation of existing businesses when considering proposals for residential development. Proposals for residential use will be supported where:
 - a. It would not compromise the cultural or tourism facilities in the area
 - b. Would not have a detrimental impact on existing businesses
 - c. Does not have a detrimental impact on heritage of the area
3. **Agent of Change** – all development proposals within the area should take account of the Agent of Change principle. Existing uses, specifically noise generating uses, should be taken account of in a sensitive manner when considering new proposals, particularly where residential development is proposed nearby. Development proposals should mitigate and minimise noise. Development should be designed to ensure that established noise-generating venues remain viable and can continue without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them.

4. **Key Development and Design Principles** – public realm improvements which enhance linkages, and the attractiveness of the area will be supported. Tall buildings will not be encouraged in any new development within the area as they are not considered to fit in with the immediate and wider setting of the urban grain of the area. All development proposals should:

- a. Be sensitive to conservation areas
- b. Be of a high-quality contextual design which reinforces the vibrancy and uniqueness of the area whilst conserving and enhancing built and cultural heritage assets.
- c. Fit in with the character, massing, and urban grain of the existing built environment
- d. Be well located and connected to support access for all
- e. Make provision for green infrastructure where appropriate
- f. Have a positive impact on health and wellbeing of workers, residents and visitors through well designed buildings and innovative design.

Diversifying the Daytime and Night-time Economy

There are also a series of policies focused on diversifying the daytime and night-time economy to encourage active ground floors to facilitate animation of public spaces during both day and night. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Retail within Williamson Square** – retail proposals should have a positive impact on the square’s public realm and contribute to the creation of a high-quality environment. They should contribute to the square’s vibrancy and mixed use offer and contribute to improving connectivity and dwell time within the Square. They should not create an adverse impact on the existing character of the area.
2. **Complementary Uses** - development proposals for non-retail uses should contribute to the creation of a vibrant area, with a diverse mix of uses.
3. **Active Frontages** - ground floor development within the area which encourages active frontages and does not create any adverse impact to the existing area will be supported and where there is a need to re-activate spaces to improve the pedestrian environment.
4. **Night-Time Economy** – all proposals for night-time economy uses should clearly demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact on the amenity and character of the area. Within Williamson Square night-time economy uses will be required to close by midnight to protect amenity and character.

Rich Programme of Performances and Events

There are a series of proposed policies which would transform Williamson Square as a location for large gatherings and celebrations aimed primarily at the people of Liverpool. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Cultural and Entertainment Uses** – the development of proposals that enhance and promote culture. Entertainment and public engagement within the area through events and performances. Proposals that provide new cultural facilities and spaces for arts and performances, which reflect and promote the cultural heritage of the area will be encouraged. Developments that offer community facilities, complement the area’s vibrancy and provide uses that support social interaction and promote community performances and events will be supported. Proposals will be supported for facilities located within Williamson Square that make use of the public space sensitively and encourage activity through a range of events and performances. Proposals that enhance the vibrancy of the area both within the day and night-time will be supported.

Heritage and Design

The area contains valuable placemaking and tourism assets which must be managed carefully to fully reveal and celebrate them. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Whitechapel** – sited at the top of the original tidal pool, which formed the strategic and economic basis of the city, Whitechapel is the point from which modern Liverpool has grown and evolved. This should be celebrated as the Pool of Life through events, information points and upgraded design of public realm.
2. **Williamson Square** – there is an opportunity to align the square with events and art strategies, to bring the life of the Playhouse Theatre out into the public realm to animate it and encourage dwell time and interaction through spectacle.
3. **Conserving the Area’s Built Heritage** – development proposals should conserve and promote the area’s historic environment and sense of place created by these assets through sensitive design and enhancement of key character areas. With new developments reflecting the local character of the area, respecting
 - a. Existing building height
 - b. Street patterns
 - c. Building lines, and
 - d. Materials
4. **Conserving the Area’s Cultural Heritage** – proposals which promote and complement the cultural importance of Whitechapel as the ‘original pool of Liverpool’ will be welcomed, as will proposals that will support and enhance the performance culture around Williamson Square.
5. **Shop Frontages and Signage** - appropriate development proposals should give careful consideration to the proposal’s frontage in relation to the existing character of the area and streetscape.

Place-Specific Art Strategy

All artworks should be location specific, context sensitive and respond and contribute to a ‘spirit of place’. Celebrate heritage in an original and experimental way fitting of an artist-rooted quarter. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Art and Culture** – proposals which enhance the area’s cultural, art and music attractions and encourage further visitor activity and public interaction within spaces will be supported. Temporary art and cultural uses will be supported within existing upper stock or vacant units around Williamson Square which reanimate and add activity to the street scene.
2. **Public Art** – development proposals should consider the opportunity to integrate artist’s ideas and visions into the design process and should take opportunities to incorporate public art within the public realm where relevant and appropriate.

Place-Specific Art Strategy

There are opportunities for a number of anchor trees within the area, as well as trees and planting along Whitechapel in order to enhance the pedestrian experience. Even more opportunities existing in Bassett, Tarleton and Williamson Streets as trees and improved street furniture could be a tool for activating them and extending their dwelling capacity. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Green Infrastructure** – new development proposals should include green infrastructure where appropriate, such as green walls/roofs, street trees and landscaping using native species. Greenery should be viewed as an essential part of infrastructure across the area.
2. **Public Realm Improvements** – proposals that improve the area’s public realm will be supported where they seek to:
 - a. Retain the open character of Williamson Square
 - b. Contribute to the enhancement of the environmental quality of the area
 - c. Contribute to the enhancement of legibility and ease of movement for all users, reflecting specific characteristics of the area, and
 - d. Making a positive contribution to health and wellbeing

New street furniture should respond to its context and contribute to a sense of identity and the area’s built and cultural heritage. Any new or upgraded street furniture should be of a robust, high-quality design using durable materials and components.

Regenerating with Light

Lighting of the area should be one of the tools to giving an overall sense of safety, vibrancy, and intrigue. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Feature Lighting** – lighting improvements to animate and enhance key focal areas to promote the public realm. Lighting should not neg-

actively impact on existing residential or night-time users and should be sensitively designed to protect amenity.

Maintenance Lighting facilities, installations and structures must be robust, and able to stand up to the demands of the volume of users. Maintenance strategies must be considered well in advance of procurement and installation. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Waste Management** – all proposals need to ensure adequate waste storage and management is identified as part of development. To reduce the visual impact, the storage of waste should not be located in areas of public access and should be located where it would not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area.
2. **Maintenance of Temporary Installations** – temporary installations that encourage public interaction and help enhance the vibrancy of the area will be supported. Installations should not have any detrimental impact on the existing area and should be located in spaces which encourage public interaction whilst not adding to street clutter.

Accessible Destinations Good wayfinding is key to the experiential quality of spaces for pedestrians. The area must be legible and easy to navigate for users of diverse needs. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Connectivity** – all new development proposals within the area should:
 - a. Seek to define public realm within the area
 - b. Establish connections to the surrounding area
 - c. Seek to repair local grain wherever possible, and
 - d. Contribute to enhancing connectivity and promote physical activity and sustainable transport

Connectivity should be carefully designed to encourage interaction and community cohesion and prioritise pedestrians over vehicles.

2. **Inclusive Design** – inclusive design principles should be considered in all public realm schemes and should minimise physical barriers and visual clutter to allow space for all users to move through the area safely, and should:
 - a. Reflect the overall movement hierarchy of the area
 - b. Allow for the safe movement of all users of the area, and
 - c. Consider strong inclusive design principles, including minimising street clutter

Improvements to the public realm should be carefully designed to encourage interaction and community cohesion, prioritising pedestrians over vehicles.

3. **Pedestrian Priority** – to improve accessibility and ensure sustainable transport is prioritised, proposals for the enhancement of pedestrian and cyclist provision throughout the area will be supported.

Perfecting the Tourism Offer

Proposals which encourage visitors to come and use the area's facilities in both the day and night-time will be supported. Development which enhances the visitor's experience safely, awareness of the local character and cultural and overall enjoyment of the area will be supported. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Promoting Cultural Tourism** - improve areas of associated public realm allowing visitors to relax and enjoy spaces throughout the day. Enhancements should be carefully considered to prevent street clutter and congestion and reanimate underused spaces. Provide ancillary commercial uses that encourage activity throughout the day and into the evening.

Digital Interaction

In a global drive towards improving the legibility of our cities and competing to deliver world-class visitor experiences, the need for coherent and robust digital infrastructure is crucial. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Digital Interaction** – proposals which involve digital interaction through the use of smart technology will be encouraged where it enhances the use of the area's relevant history.

2. **Infrastructure for Digital Interaction** – the infrastructure to support this technology should be carefully and sensitively designed so not to negatively hinder the way people use the space. Where possible, all infrastructure should be hidden from sight or in keeping with the character of local areas.

3. **Locations for Digital Interaction** – locations for digital interaction should be considered carefully and relate to key nodes and public open spaces and should not add to street clutter or negatively impact on the urban grain of the area.

B Liverpool Commercial Business District Spatial Regeneration Framework

in summary the document seeks to guide new development opportunities within Liverpool's historic commercial district. It seeks to ensure that the commercial business district (CBD) will be the prime location for professional and business service sectors, attracting prominent companies in these industries. The enhanced public realm will create a vibrant, sustainable place for businesses, residents, and visitors to enjoy throughout the day and evening.

The Commercial Business District will be an innovative and world class location for a wide range of businesses to grow

Commercial Office Opportunities

Whilst the SRF focusses on the Commercial Business District the objectives do cover parts of the SQ study area. Key objectives from the SRF that are applicable to the SQ include:

Professional and business services should be focussed within the commercial business district to ensure that the area continues to grow as the commercial heart of the city. Detailed policy includes:

1. **New Grade A High Quality Office Buildings** – all developments within the CBD should contribute to climate change adaptation and look to enhance public-realm including walking and cycling routes and green infrastructure.
2. **Existing Office Renewal** – opportunities to sustainably renew and repurpose existing stock for office use should be sought wherever possible.
3. **Small Business Model** – small to medium sized business ventures are encouraged to identify pocket spaces across the area.

Public Realm Opportunities

High quality public realm, improved public spaces and the enhancement of green infrastructure will keep the area vibrant and improve the level of amenity in the area. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Pocket Squares** – these areas present opportunities for ground floor amenity, cycle stands to reduce the amount of street clutter elsewhere, public art, feature lighting, and greenery.
2. **Civic Square** – ground floor uses should create animation and amenity in the city centre. Opportunities for regular events and pop-up attractions to encourage a better sense of vibrancy and in the case of the CBD potentially enhanced weekend offer.

3. **Pedestrian Routes and Connectivity** - landscape should be of a high quality with integration of planting, seating, and amenity kiosks where possible.

4. **Greening the City** - delivery of specific areas of greenery should be encouraged wherever new building opportunities exist outside of the right urban grain.

5. **Rooftop Opportunities** – re-imagination of the fifth elevation of buildings can create welcome greening and animation at an upper level of buildings and ultimately create an attractive alternative offer to commercial locations.

Complementary Use Opportunities

A mix of ancillary uses will support and complement office growth within the city and will be supported. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Food and Beverage** – encouraging the use of the ground floor of buildings for ancillary complementary uses, together with the introduction of kiosks on routes identified as key pedestrian connections.

2. **Retail Amenity** - complementary ancillary uses and services to be encouraged in similar locations to food and beverage establishments.

3. **Leisure Use** – larger ground floor units within historic buildings should allow fitness and wellbeing to become a wider offer in the city centre.

4. **Residential** – the re-use of existing buildings which cannot be proven for modern commercial viability, or have remained uninhabited for some time, should be encouraged as residential repurposing to ensure an enhanced vibrancy of the area. New build which is solely residential should be resisted in lieu of growth opportunities involving new office stock.

C Upper Central Spatial Regeneration Framework

In summary the document seeks to guide the regeneration and future development of the unique Upper Central site and its surrounds as part of the ongoing expansion and evolution of Liverpool's Knowledge Quarter and city centre. The Upper Central SRF presents a vision, illustrative masterplan and set of design and development principles to guide the future development of the framework area over the next 15 – 20 years. The SRF responds to existing and emerging planning policies and seeks to develop a world leading innovation and mixed-use district whilst fostering and enhancing the built environment and opportunities that are exclusive to this part of the city – comprised of unique architecture, important heritage assets and key transport infrastructure, including Lime Street Station and Central Station.

...This gateway project is now the final piece in the jigsaw to connect the site to the rest of the city centre and complete the wider regeneration of Lime Street, Mount Pleasant and Brownlow Hill...

Whilst the SRF focuses on Upper Central the objectives do cover parts of the SQ study area. Key objectives from the SRF that are applicable to the SQ include:

Public Realm Framework

The site-wide public realm framework builds upon and provides future detail on the key public realm interventions envisaged within the SRF area. Detailed policy includes:

1. **Key Public Realm Interventions** – connected by walkable streets and active corners, with opportunities for dwelling and pausing and an overall sense of place, this will transform the area from a space of passing through, to a place of meeting and staying.
2. **Trees, Planting and Green Connections** – the use of trees and planting is an intelligent way, both for the area's beautification, as well as in the form of sustainable urban drainage solutions. Trees as a key element of design will line main streets to form urban boulevards and announce destinations with anchor trees accentuating corners.
3. **Materiality** - the choice of paving materials and treatment will reflect the street hierarchy and enhance the dwelling quality of streets and spaces. A choice of high quality and robust, but modern and eclectic paving materials will support street life, complement the architecture, and reflect the innovativeness of the area.
4. **Street Furniture** – public realm will be supported by a selection of simple and multifunctional furniture which will support everyday

dwelling, and also provide opportunities for temporary and performative installations. Street lighting will help extend the use of streets and lighting into the late hours and building lighting will be used to accentuate the facades of historic and new buildings.

5. **Art Installation** – visual art can be included in the very design of the public realm and the new buildings.



Supplementary Planning Documents

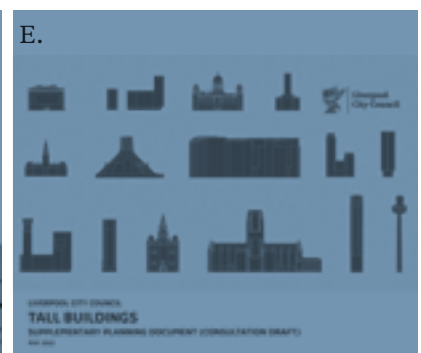


Consultation Documents

There are two consultation documents that will become supplementary planning documents to the adopted Liverpool Local Plan in due course. Whilst neither of these documents have yet been adopted, they will both have a bearing on the future of the SQ, and therefore have been referenced within this study. The two documents referenced are:

- D. Liverpool Public Realm Strategy – *March 2022*
- E. Liverpool Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Document - *May 2022*

It is understood that it is the council's intention to take these documents back to Cabinet for formal adoption as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) following the end of their respective consultation periods. SPDs seek to build upon and provide more detailed guidance about policies in the Local Plan. Legally SPDs do not form part of the Local Plan itself and they are not subject to independent examination, but they are material considerations in determining planning applications.



D Liverpool Public Realm Strategy

The primary function of the document is to ensure the design and delivery of high-quality public realm throughout Liverpool. It covers all public realm, including spaces within development proposals, to ensure the delivery of quality streets and open spaces throughout the city for all, now and in the future. However, it is not a delivery document. Once adopted it will set a planning framework for the design of public realm, including principles and policies for design, implementation, management, and maintenance of public realm across the city. In the context of the study area:

... It is important that priority is the delivery of well-designed, functional, and contextually responsive public realm design within development proposals and across the city...

E Liverpool Tall Buildings Supplementary Planning Document

The document has been produced to guide the development of tall buildings in the city in a proactive and positive manner. It seeks to identify what parts of Liverpool are sensitive to tall buildings in principle, to highlight the sensitive elements that must be considered in relation to tall building proposals, to identify advisory locations appropriate for tall buildings, and to provide clear objectives and design guidance for tall buildings. In the context of the study area:

Tall buildings will not be encouraged in any new development within the site area as they do not fit in the immediate and wider setting of the urban grain of the area.

Further analysis of the impact of these two documents on the SQ is provided in the subsequent area analysis section of this study.

Church Street



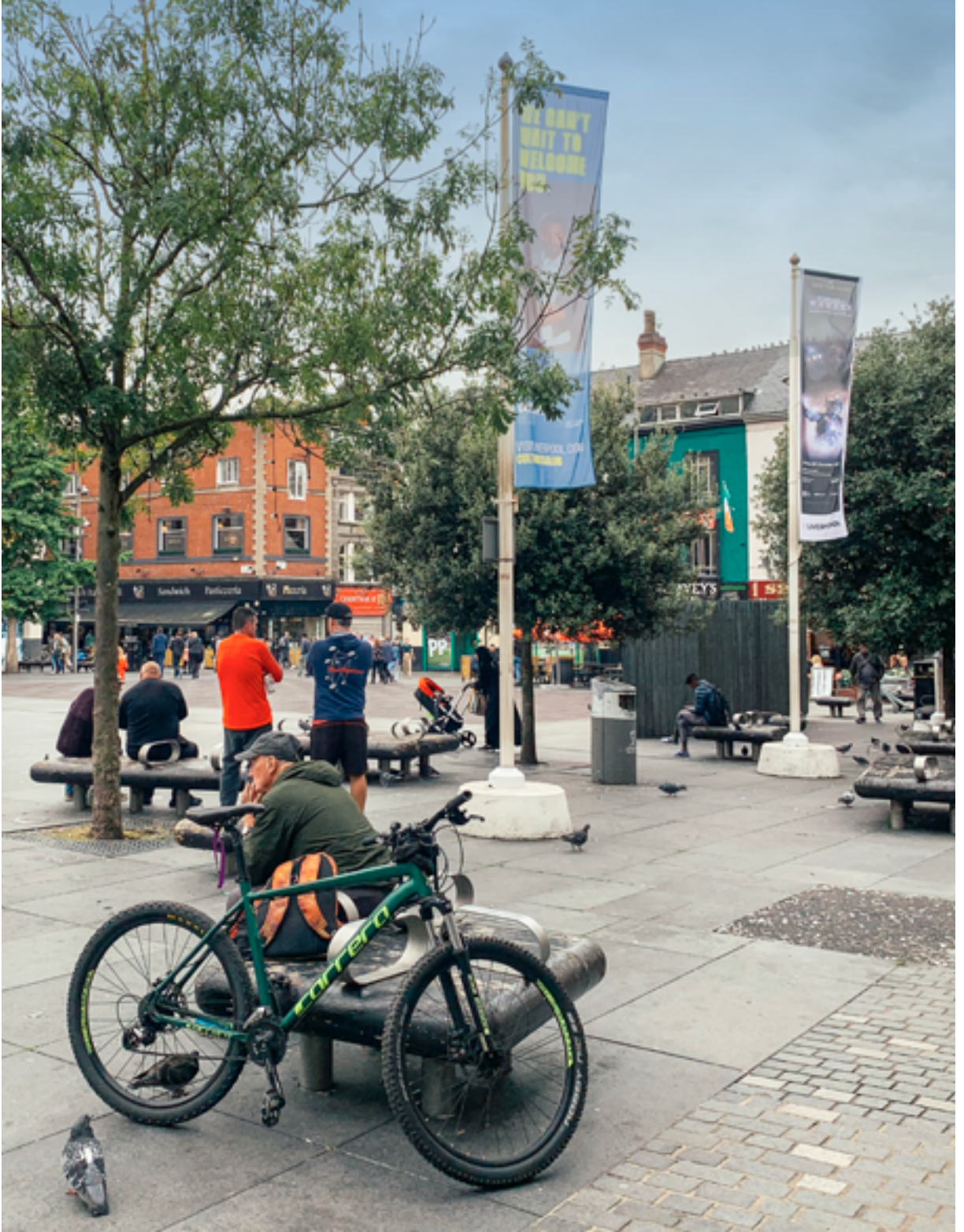
The SQ has been further broken down into a series of existing and proposed public squares and spaces.

Analysis of each of these areas against adopted and emerging policy is provided to understand how these areas perform and to understand plans for their future.

City Square(s)

City Squares are major civic spaces of city-wide importance. These spaces create a focal point for the city and reflect the cities heritage and culture. City Squares are destination places for residents and visitors to the city. Williamson Square is the only space within the SQ of a scale to be considered as a City Square.





Williamson Square



Williamson Square

Williamson Square

Access & Linkages

Williamson Square is highly accessible and well connected to other parts of the city centre, however it is not fully activated on all four sides and suffers from a lack of critical mass of activity during the day and night.

Uses & Activities

The Playhouse Theatre elevation of the square is predominately active during the evening when the retail elements of the square are closed. In the daytime when the theatre is closed this means the eastern side of the square has little in the way of animation or engagement with the public space. The southern elevation to the square suffers from the rear extension to the Marks and Spencer's unit having never been occupied since it was constructed. The western side of the square is active and houses several bars that have spilled out into the square whilst the northern elevation contains larger retail units. There are series of temporary stalls and food trucks in the square. Upper floors of units are predominantly vacant.

Comfort & Image

Whilst Williamson Square was the subject of £5.75m of regeneration in 2004 to create a new fountain, paving, seating, and tree planting the area has become tired. The fountain has been decommissioned, the paving damaged, street furniture showing signs of neglect and trees that are struggling with the conditions. There are visible signs of problems with vermin in and around the square.

Sociability

Williamson Square is one of the largest civic spaces in the city, and one of the few capable of accommodating larger HGV vehicles and installations. The space provides for a series of activities and events throughout the year.

The Cavern Quarter & Williamson Square SRF, sets out for Williamson Square to become Liverpool's key civic and performative space, a square for all. The intention is for the historic Playhouse Theatre to become the anchor of Williamson Square, developing a close interdependent relationship with the square, blurring the lines between 'civic' and 'art' through a carefully curated programme inside the theatre and out on the square. The surrounding ground floors of Williamson Square, its outdoor café seating and public informal seating will accommodate the Theatre, while encouraging population of Williamson Square as a key public area within the city centre

The draft *Public Realm Strategy identifies Williamson Square* as a strategic space that provides a key civic space for the city and the focus for informal events. The *Public Realm Strategy* seeks to:

- activate edges, provide space for the theatre to spill out, enhance dwell time, increase planting and green space, improve integration with surrounding quarters, enhanced arrival.

As a City Square the expectation for the future of Williamson Square in line with the Public Realm SPD Toolkit is as follows:

Layout

- Prioritise space for pedestrians
- Offer public space for local businesses such as food and beverage premises, to spill into and occupy
- Be well connected and integrated into the surrounding movement network particularly in relation to sustainable modes of transport
- Hostile Vehicle Mitigation measures may be required to protect users of city squares
- Have self-enforcing low speed, 5- 10mph environment when vehicles pass around the space with tight highway geometry offering regular and intuitive places to cross from the surrounding street network
- Vehicular movement through the space should be restricted to service and emergency vehicles only
- Have provision for safe cycle parking and storage, adjacent to arrival points or key buildings to encourage active travel
- Incorporate free Wi-Fi and provide/ enable use of digital technologies

Appearance

- Materials used in City Squares need to align with City Council palette, and should be of the highest quality in terms of robustness, design ingenuity and execution
- Materials should create and emphasise a distinctive character to distinguish city squares, from one another and other public realm within the city
- Moveable furniture should be considered to allow maximum flexibility of the space aiding the programming and curation of events

< Appearance

- Public art could be integrated through lighting, surfacing and furniture to enrich the public realm
- Objects such as statues and sculptures may provide a focal point for the space and provide a draw for people
- Formal play spaces will meet the needs of a wide range of users, delivering a fully inclusive space
- The design of street furniture within city squares provides opportunity to emphasise local character and distinctiveness
- Street furniture should be carefully considered and positioned to limit street clutter and obstructions to movement
- Pattern variation and material changes are encouraged to provide design interest, and sensitively address the intersection between buildings and surrounding streets
- The use of formal and informal play is encouraged and must meet the needs of a wide range of users, including ability and age
- Where feasible, appropriate tree species should be used to maximise benefits including provision of climate change mitigation, shade, shelter, and visual amenity.
- The inclusion of planting including trees should be carefully considered along with the proposed capacity of City Squares for events
- Incorporate wayfinding in street furniture or public art to reduce clutter
- Planting should be carefully located and selected to avoid hiding spaces and risk of anti-social behaviour

Delivery Consideration

- Materials used in City Squares need to align with City Council palette, and should be of the highest quality in terms of robustness, design ingenuity and execution
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- Planting should be carefully located and selected to avoid hiding spaces and risk of anti-social behaviour

District Squares

District Squares are primarily designed for and to be used by people, where there are few to no vehicles. These places should provide space for people to meet and socialise. They may provide opportunity for play and space to host events. There are two existing and one proposed 'District Squares' covered by the SQ. The first district covered by the SQ is Queen Square.



Queen Square

Access & Linkages

Queen Square provides a key access link between the St Georges Quarter, the Commercial Business District, Queen Square Bus Station, and Lime Street Station.

Uses & Activities

The square is surrounded by a series of restaurants and a hotel that spill out on the edges of the square. The square also provides a connection through to a multi storey car park. Upper floors of buildings are occupied.

Comfort & Image

The square suffers from visibility. Surface material choices make for a difficult space to pass through and open bin storage, poor maintenance and ground level air conditioning units combine to have a negative impact on the overall image of the space. There are visible signs of problems with vermin in and around the square.

Sociability

The existing commercial activities on two sides of the square create activity during fine weather, but there is a lack of planned or informal activity in the space.



Queen Square



Queen Square

Queen Square is referenced in the *Cavern Quarter & Williamson Square SRF* as part of the wider Liverpool City Centre Connectivity Scheme – projects for which are now nearing completion. The SRF focuses on the Queen Square Bus Station rather than Queen Square as a District Square. In the draft *Public Realm Strategy Queen Square* is identified as a centrally enclosed space in the city centre. The square is currently identified as underutilised space and a key arrival location for people using the bus network. Plans are to increase greenery and attractiveness of Queen Square for food and beverage in the city centre.

- The second district square covered by the SQ is identified in the draft Public Realm SPD strategy as Central Square:

Central Square is identified as the site of a key public realm intervention in the Upper Central SRF. Proposals include for a new area of public realm outside the Lyceum at the Central Station junction. The square is identified in the SRF as an important public space, to be supported by adjacent de-cluttering of bollards, signage, and guard railing at the bottom of Bold Street. The draft Tall Buildings SPD identifies two locations around Central Square for tall buildings of between 15 and 25 storeys. This being the only location directly adjoining the SQ that has been identified by the council for tall buildings.

- The third district level square is that of the proposed Dawson Square:

Dawson Street currently creates a negative edge to Williamson Square and Whitechapel, detracting from the quality of the public realm in the area. Dawson Square is identified in the *Cavern Quarter & Williamson Square SRF* as a “missing piece in the townscape of the Williamson Square and Whitechapel area”. Plans contained in the SRF look at the future redevelopment of the existing building on the northern side of Williamson Square to accommodate a potential extension to St John’s Market directly onto Williamson Square, which would also offer an opportunity to redevelop Dawson Street into a new district square or a development block. This proposal can only come forward once the existing taxi rank on Dawson Street has been successfully relocated. Dawson Square represents an opportunity to repair the frontage along Whitechapel and provide additional improvement to the street scene and quality of Whitechapel and Williamson Square.

Central Square

Dawson Square

Access & Linkages

Central Square sits at the junction of Church Street, Bold Street and Ranelagh Street and provides a link between the retail core of the city centre, Central Station, and the Ropewalks area of the city. Central Station is one of the busiest underground stations on the network.

At present Dawson Square consists of Dawson Street which provides a city centre taxi rank and hard landscaping, together with a service road which runs under Williamson Square and connects to Compton House.

Comfort & Image

The square is currently dissected by a transit street that brings pedestrians into potential conflict with vehicles. The area contains some street furniture and trees.

The area is predominately hard standing with little street furniture or greening.

Uses & Activities

The square contains a number of retail units together with food and beverage units that spill out onto the existing areas of public realm. Upper floors of buildings are predominately vacant.

Whilst the area is predominately used as a taxi rank, there are a number of retail units and a church on its southern elevation.

Sociability

This is a key gateway and transition area between the retail core of the city centre and Bold Street. It is also the key access point into Central Station, but little by way of street furniture to promote dwell time in the area.

The area has a role as a taxi collection point but offers little in the way of active space.



Dawson Square



Dawson Square



Central Square



Central Square

As District Squares the expectation for the future of Queen Square, Central Square and Dawson Square in line with the Public Realm SPD Toolkit is as follows:

- Prioritise space for pedestrians
- Offer public space for local businesses such as food and beverage premises, to spill into and occupy
- Be well connected and integrated into the surrounding movement network particularly in relation to sustainable modes of transport
- Have self-enforcing low speed, 20mph environment when vehicles pass through District Squares
- Tight highway geometry offering regular and intuitive places to cross from the surrounding street network
- Have provision for safe cycle parking and storage, adjacent to arrival points or key buildings to encourage active travel
- Incorporate free Wi-Fi and provide/enable use of digital technologies

Appearance

- Materials used in District Squares should be of high quality, robust enough to withstand continued use by the wider community, and align with City Council palette
- Paving materials should be used to reinforce pedestrian function of these spaces
- A simple palette of materials should be used to provide cohesion and consistency between District Squares and their surrounding streets, reinforcing local character and identity
- The use of street furniture and signage should be limited and organised within these spaces to prevent clutter and obstacles to movement
- Art may be used to reflect the aspirations of the local community and heritage of the area, reinforcing civic pride and identity
- Planting should be used to create a comfortable human scale
- Where feasible, use appropriate trees species should be used to maximise benefits including; provision of shade, shelter, and visual amenity
- Sustainable drainage systems are to be incorporated in the form of rain gardens to attenuate storm water and provide greater biodiversity

Delivery Consideration

- Specialist management and maintenance contractors may be required to maintain these spaces and achieve the long-term ambitions of the design
- Local community and/ or businesses to be engaged to animate the space on a regular basis through events or activities, e.g. outdoor cinemas, food markets and pop-up play
- Consultation required to determine the HVM and safety requirements of the space
- Ensure alignment with strategic planning policy and associated supplementary guidance
- Use robust materials and easily maintained planting to ensure space is easily managed and verdant throughout the year

Local Squares

Local Squares can be formal or informal incidental spaces. These spaces provide communal outdoor space for residents and businesses and can provide space for social interaction as well as areas for food and beverage businesses and space for communal events. There are currently no local squares identified or promoted within the draft *Public Realm SPD* within the SQ despite there being a series of incidental public spaces in the city centre. A number of these spaces are identified within the SRF's that cover parts of the SQ. This study proposes four new 'Local Squares':



Four New 'Local Squares'

Fall Well Square

forms part of Queen Square in the *Cavern Quarter & Williamson Square SRF* as being part of the wider Liverpool City Centre Connectivity Scheme. In the context of this study Fall Well Square provides a key linkage along the 'Cultural Mile', providing a communal outdoor space at the junction of Queen Square, St Georges Plateau and Williamson Square. It is the site of a well that once fed into the Pool at Whitechapel and the fountains and gardens of Queen Square. It is a strategically important space for social interaction.

Holly Cross Place

is the name that has been given to the junction of Whitechapel, Lord Street, Church Street and Paradise Street. It is the cross point of the main retail streets in Liverpool and considered the heart of the retail area. Cross Place is identified in the *Cavern Quarter & Williamson Square SRF* as a key gateway location to help integrate the streets surrounding Williamson Square with the main shopping area of the city. There is little in the way of street furniture or greening in this area to reflect the important role it has as a connector space in the city centre. There exist opportunities to mark and celebrate this space as the heart of the shopping area.

Church Street Place

is located at the junction of Parker Street and Church Street connecting two key pedestrianised routes through the city centre. Larger than Cross Place, Church Street Place is the location of the annual city centre Christmas tree as well as other seasonal activities. There is little in the way of street furniture or greening in this area to reflect the important role it has as a connector space in the city centre. There exist opportunities to mark and celebrate this space as well as the roll it has in connecting to the proposed Central Square, Elliot Place and Cross Place.

Elliot Place

is located at a key junction linking St Johns and Clayton Square shopping centre as well as the new Flannels department store. Once the site of a large video information screen, the area has been subject to some landscape works in recent years to introduce new seating at Elliot Place as well as street trees, but this intervention is not entirely successful. There exist opportunities to mark and celebrate this space as well as the roll it has in connecting to Williamson Square, Church Street Place and Lime Street.



Fall Well Square



Fall Well Square



Cultural Quarter
Lime Street Station
Queen Square
Empire Theatre

City Centre
Piccadilly
Piccadilly Gardens
Piccadilly Station
Piccadilly Bus Station

Spinning Wheel
Piccadilly
Piccadilly Station
Piccadilly Bus Station

Pedestrian Zone
At any time
No loading
10am - 6pm

NatWest

NatWest

Litter

Holly Cross Place



Epstein Statue · Holly Cross Place



Church Street



Moores Brothers Statue · Church Street



Elliot Place



Elliot Place

As Local Squares the expectation for the future of Fall Well Square, Holy Cross Place, Church Street Place and Elliot Place in line with the *Public Realm SPD* Toolkit is as follows:

Layout

- Prioritise space for pedestrians
- Create a variety of spaces in which to sit and dwell
- Incorporate intuitive play features and spaces to encourage children to interact with their environment
- Restrict or prevent vehicular access, vehicles passing through local squares should be limited to services and emergency
- Limit forward visibility and constrain vehicle geometry to create
- Self-enforcing very low speed, 5mph environments on the edge or leading to the space
- Offer public space for local businesses such as food and beverage premises, to spill into and occupy
- Have provision for safe cycle parking and storage to encourage active travel
- Be visually and physically connected to the surrounding neighbourhood movement network, clear sight lines, crossing points, connective routes
- Incorporate public transport stops within or adjacent to the square

Appearance

- Be of high quality and robust enough to withstand continued community use.
- The quality of materials may be of a higher standard in local squares than the surrounding neighbourhood streetscape, to highlight the significance of these spaces,
- The materials used need to align with City Council palette requirements
- Use paved surfaces to reinforce the pedestrian function of these spaces.
- Implement a simple palette of materials to provide cohesion and consistency between local squares and their surrounding streets, reinforcing local character
- Limit street clutter by rationalising signage and street furniture
- Street furniture should be designed/ selected to create a cohesive family of street furniture items, that reinforces local character or distinctiveness
- Planting in local squares is encouraged, depending on the size and function.
- Any planting within local squares will be more ornamental in appearance and exude a more urban character
- Use tree planting to provide shade, shelter, and structure to the space

Delivery Consideration

- The re-development or creation of local squares should be designed and delivered in collaboration with local resident's groups/ communities where possible
- The local authority, developers, designers, and residents should encourage and facilitate stewardship of local parks by the local community, such as 'friends of' groups made up of people who will champion the future of the space

The SQ is also dissected by a series of district level transit streets and local level streets that define it as an area. Transit streets are key routes through the city which connect centres, landmarks, and destinations. Key Transit Streets running through the SQ include [Whitechapel](#), [Church Street](#) and [Parker Street](#). In the context of the *Public Realm SPD* Toolkit the expectation is that these routes will deliver high quality, healthier streets which attract investment in the built environment. They will create opportunities for green infrastructure through tree planting and rain gardens, supporting the natural network. There are also a series of Local Street's running through the SQ including [Williamson Street](#), [Tarleton Street](#), [Basnett Street](#), [Houghton Street](#), and [Church Alley](#). These are streets not open to general traffic and provide pleasant and safe routes for people to travel locally by means of active travel and can be used by the community to socialise and play on. There are opportunities to use street trees and planting to soften the street scene as well as the encouragement of street furniture in a clustered or paired approach to provide places to sit and socialise.

Albert Dock & Pier
Cavern Quarter
Convention Centre
Beatles Story
Liverpool One
James Street Station

CONSERVATION



Coach Station
Millennium House

Coach Station
Family Centre
One Stop Shop
Post Office

CENTRE

The Liverpool BID Company
*works to deliver a thriving
city through street
transformation, connectivity,
and collaboration to enhance
our community.*

Next Steps

By better understanding the policy framework for the SQ, the Liverpool BID Company can seek to stimulate meaningful change across the area that will transform Williamson Square and surrounding streets into a new vibrant cultural district in the heart of Liverpool.

The Liverpool BID Company will work in partnership with key civic and cultural institutions in the city, together with local businesses and the third sector on a series of targeted commissions to further develop the concept of the SQ as a new cultural district within Liverpool. Studies currently being considered include:

Williamson Square Activation Study – looking to explore how the refurbishment of the Liverpool Playhouse Theatre could facilitate wider aspirations for activation of Williamson Square and surrounding streets within the SQ. The study will sit alongside and be informed by the Liverpool Playhouse Theatre Capital Refurbishment BID.

Reinventing Public Spaces - a place making project with actionable research and data collection elements to create a blueprint for public spaces across the SQ that would showcase how to address

sustainability issues including digital innovation, greening, and improving wellbeing. The strategic objective is to establish a ‘critical mass’ of cultural businesses in the heart of an innovative, safe and attractive area, providing a catalyst for inclusive growth and encouraging more people to visit, live and work in the city centre.

Greening the SQ – exploring opportunities and locations for greening and other nature-based green infrastructure solutions that can offer innovative approaches to enhance local resilience and to improve health and the well-being within the city centre.

Co-Designing Equity in the Public Realm – to see the creation of temporary small-scale intervention(s) and activations across the SQ – to explore inclusive design, equity, and public space. The idea being to develop a deeper understanding of



Williamson Square

the streets and spaces and how interventions could bring the area together as a new cultural district.

The Liverpool Cultural Mile – exploration of the concept of a ‘Liverpool Cultural Mile’ that would run from the St Georges Plateau through the SQ and down to the waterfront as a means of linking a series of cultural institutions in the city along a single route. The route would connect and celebrate these cultural institutions as well as providing opportunities for the animation of the public realm along the route together with blank and/or underutilised walls to provide a new axis for visitors to the city to explore the history and cultural offer of Liverpool.

The intention is for interventions and priorities identified through these commissions to be developed by the Liverpool BID Company into an action plan for the SQ.

The action plan will seek to identify a series of projects that could be taken forward in the coming months and years across the SQ to create a healthier, safer, greener, and more inclusive environment in Liverpool City Centre that benefits everyone.

As well as physical interventions into the spaces and buildings across the SQ there could also exist a series of events and activities with partner cultural institutions to support the needed seed change in perceptions of the area. To test out project interventions in a range of locations throughout the SQ a series of pilot projects and events will be developed. Pilot projects will initially test out parameters of scale and form, location and frequency of intervention and ultimately determine success and overall contribution to the cultural district and inform more permanent interventions.

Pilot projects by their nature will be of a temporary timescale ranging from 3-6 months. Following their review, such projects may be considered for more permanent or expanded measures, as either interim interventions (1-3 years) or more permanent (over 3 years). In the case of more physical interventions, it is likely that planning or listed building consent may be required even for temporary or interim interventions. Having tested scale, form and location, attention for interim and long-term interventions will need to focus on robust, affordable, and maintainable material palettes that respond positively to adopted and emerging landscape and public realm guidance for the city centre.

1

Pilot

up to 6 months

Temporary ▶ Vibrant ▶ Seasonal ▶ Easily Removed

2

Interim

1–3 years

Permanent ▶ Easily Removed

3

Long Term

3+ years

Permanent

Suggested activities and events, that could start as pilots and move through to permanent interventions across the SQ could include:

- **Pop Ups** - A range of temporary art installations and activities within the public realm and within vacant buildings and spaces throughout the SQ as the first steps in the animation and transformation of the area and to help test and explore long term solutions.
- **Events** – a series of coordinated events and activities within the public realm and vacant buildings that celebrate the cultural identity of the SQ
- **Programming** – a programme of coordinated events across partner cultural institutions located within the SQ and along the Liverpool Cultural Mile.

Liverpool BID Company works
to deliver a thriving city.

*We are passionate about what
we do, strategic, resourceful,
visionary and here to support
you when you need us*



The SQ

*A new cultural district in the
heart of Liverpool*

