
Revitalising Wavertree – the Lost Village in the City of Liverpool



A **Community Street Audit** report on the quality of the walking experience in the Wavertree local shopping centre

Liverpool City Council **South Suburbs**
Neighbourhood Management Service

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Living Streets

Living Streets (formerly The Pedestrians Association) promotes the development of streets and public spaces that people on foot can use and enjoy. Formed in 1929, its aims are to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of clean, attractive public spaces for local quality of life, urban regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion;
- Promote the importance of high density, mixed use developments to create walkable communities;
- Promote good practice in design, maintenance and management through conferences, seminars and training; and
- Empower the public through the provision of advice and information.

Community Street Audits were developed by Living Streets to improve local conditions for people on foot, by assessing the existing walking environment. Living Streets has undertaken audits for a wide range of clients including local authorities, Government agencies and private sector developers.

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Registered Office 31-33 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ

Executive Summary

The Brief

This report, commissioned from Living Streets by the South Suburbs Neighbourhood Management Team of Liverpool City Council, looks at the quality of the street environment in the Wavertree area of Liverpool, from the perspective of people on foot.

Liverpool City Council is seeking to encourage more people to choose to walk in their local area, and particularly to walk to and from the local shops, community facilities and nearby open space.

Liverpool City Council's South Suburbs Neighbourhood Management Team is committed to encouraging walking as a sustainable and inclusive transport mode and as an enjoyable, healthy and safe activity. Good quality public space has an important impact on our decision to walk, as well as supporting local quality of life, urban regeneration, crime reduction, neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion. It also recognises that local District Shopping Centres are important to the vitality and sustainability of communities and that pedestrian access to and around these Centres is critical to their long-term viability.

The audit, conducted in November 2005, identifies where problems and opportunities exist and recommends works for improvement or remediation. It covered the key walking route along the B5178 Picton Road and High Street from the railway bridge near Tiverton Street in the west, to the junction with Childwall Road/Mill Lane to the east. It also included an overview of selected residential streets north and south of Picton Road, including routes to schools and open spaces.



The auditing process, and this report, is not intended to balance the needs of pedestrians with the needs of traffic. Rather, the aim is to provide an assessment of what makes for good and bad walking conditions in the Wavertree area from the perspective of the end user, and what can be done to attract more people to walk and use local facilities in this area, rather than driving at all times.

The Method

The audit routes, based on Picton Road / High Street and selected residential side streets, were suggested by officers from the City Council, and refined at a local stakeholder consultation meeting, which identified the priority links for local residents. They were then walked with groups of local people and Council officers during the week in daytime, at the weekend, and in the evening, identifying good and bad points along the way. An overview was also carried out on the northern residential streets between Sandown Lane and Chestnut Grove. An open Consultation Meeting was held prior to the audits, at which the key issues were discussed. A debriefing session concluded each audit. Informal customer input was also sought at other times during the audit period, from local businesses, people using the streets at differing times of day, and those visiting local facilities.

Our Findings

There were many positive findings. Wavertree is an area of contrasts: on first impressions Picton Road / High Street is yet another run down suburban main road leading from the City Centre to 'somewhere better'; somewhere to pass through as quickly as possible. Yet a closer look reveals many clues of a glorious past, hinting at a lost era, now engulfed but once the 'Village in the City'. This dichotomy is reinforced when wandering away from the main road, and encountering an attractive and popular residential area, many local facilities and a thriving and committed business and residential community. Its role as a District Shopping Centre seems obscure, but a closer examination reveals a number of new businesses serving local needs, and a strong evening economy culture.



However, this intensity of use also brings increased pressure on the street, in terms of parking, refuse, and anti-social behaviour.

To the west, from the industrial area beyond the railway bridge towards Wellington Road, there is a poor quality of public realm when approaching the Rathbone Road junction, with many commercial buildings in poor condition, vacant, or boarded up. In the centre of Picton Road, the combined architectural heritage of the Library and the One Stop Shop in the former Public Baths brings a welcome and dignified elegance to the street. The B5179 Wellington Road / Rathbone Road is a busy north-south route linking Smithdown Lane in the south to Wavertree Technology Park and Edge Lane to the north. To the east of Rathbone Road, land uses intensify to create a potentially vibrant local shopping area leading further east to the historic core of 'Wavertree Village', with many historic buildings now in use as licensed premises.



The Clock Tower and Village Green to the east of the audit area indicate the end of the historic village, with the residential areas of Church Road North, Childwall Road, Mill Lane Lance Lane and Olive Mount beyond. Picton Road / High Street serves a dense residential area to the north, and local community facilities to the south, including the vast open space of 'The Mystery' or Wavertree Park, and the new leisure centre. It is also used as an east-west link to the City Centre, although is not designated as one of the City's Gateways, but lies between the main arterial roads of Edge Lane and Smithdown Lane.

The overall quality of the public realm on Picton Road / High Street is poor. The western section from the railway bridge to the Wellington Road/Rathbone Road junction has a narrow aspect with narrow footways, old paving and street furniture. The pedestrian realm is characterised by older style residential frontages, leading to poor quality commercial units and many vacant first floor properties. The predominant building uses are local retail and services, including a number of takeaways. However, the proximity of Hey Green Road Primary School ensures that this area experiences significant levels of footfall by day.

The central section of Picton Road / High Street from the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road junction east to Grove Street includes the frontages to the Library and One Stop Shop amid an eclectic mix of uses. These elegant buildings are set in attractive frontages, which give a pleasing feeling of space to the street. The building layout here again reflects the higher 'turn of the century' density associated with city centre fringe areas. The pedestrian realm is very 'tight' in this section, with few other frontages or open spaces to break the massing of buildings. Many people were seen walking in this section by day, but far fewer by night. Overall, the road corridor is tight and dominated by traffic, with narrow footways, poor surfaces, and street furniture clutter. This section of the route experiences the highest levels of footfall, primarily due to the concentration of retail and service uses, and the many bus stops serving routes to/from the City Centre, a mere 15 minute journey away.



The eastern section of High Street from Grove Street to the Wavertree Clock Tower has a more open aspect, with wider footways on the southern side outside the Abbeygate Apartments. The small area of open space east of Grove Street provides a valuable green oasis in a generally hard built environment. There are attractive residential terraces on the south side and a continuation of fringe retail service uses on the north, including a number of pubs, takeaways and restaurants.

The pedestrian realm is still characterised by poor surfaces, clutter and neglect, despite housing some iconic old buildings such as the former County Police Station and Old Town Hall. The area around the Clock Tower is dominated by traffic and road space, as is the remnant of the Village Green before the major junction of Childwall Road and Mill Lane. However, the proximity of Somerfield in the former Abbey Cinema building ensures that the area is reasonably well used by people on foot, particularly during the day.

In general terms, Picton Road / High Street is a lively road with a potentially good mix of activities and a number of attractive properties that could contribute to an attractive street scene. However, its character is spoiled by the excessive nature of through traffic, a severe lack of maintenance, a lack of respect for the heritage of the area and inadequate provision for people on foot.

Most of Picton Road / High Street east of Wellington Road / Rathbone Road lies entirely within the Wavertree Village Conservation Area. The northern residential area east of Rathbone Road contains a pleasing mix of terraced and larger properties in good condition, with attractive frontages and trees.



To the south of Picton Road, and west of Rathbone Road, the side streets are typical 'turn of the century' grid layout terraced streets, with buildings in reasonable condition. However, all of the residential streets are dominated by relentless on-street parking and, in some instances, excessive through traffic or 'rat-running', despite many being designated at 20mph streets.



Overall, as is often the case in city centre fringes, there is a sense of neglect in both the public and private realm in most of Picton Road / High Street, which is in contrast to the high quality of the private realm in the residential hinterland it serves. This sense of neglect is intensified by the constant traffic using the road as a convenient through route to the city centre. The 'car culture' remains strong, with many people observed using cars in preference to walking.



Whilst any change in modal choice will not be achieved overnight, improvements to the pedestrian realm can herald a gradual change to a point where people *choose* to walk to local facilities, the shops, the park and the bus stops to town, if the walking environment is attractive, accessible, and safe.

Major problems for pedestrians are:

- A traditional road layout favouring through vehicular movement over the needs of local people on foot;
- Inadequate crossing facilities and poor pedestrian linkages to The Mystery and other community attractions;
- A lack of private investment resulting in poor quality building frontages adjoining the main street;
- Lack of public space to accommodate all demands, and particularly parking;
- A changing economic culture that places additional burdens on the street;
- A severe legacy of neglect such as uneven and broken footways, redundant posts and damaged street furniture;
- Sometimes narrow, obstructed footways, which could be improved by the thoughtful reallocation of public space and proactive enforcement to remove obstructions such as advertising clutter;

- Aesthetic quality that is compromised by eyesores and poor maintenance;
- A hard pedestrian environment with few trees or open spaces;
- A lack of promotion and signage of the area, and particularly its role as a 'village' in its own right, whilst also forming a secondary gateway to the City Centre;
- Dead commercial frontages by night, which can create fears for personal safety;
- A failure to implement best practice in street design, particularly in respect of designing for people with disabilities. Poor conditions for the mobility-impaired impact upon all users. Improvements for wheelchair users would be of great benefit to all pedestrians.

Recommendations

Recommendations in this report have not been prioritised. It is for the Council and its residents to decide what is right for the Wavertree area. Some suggestions may be considered unachievable for financial, political or technical reasons.

However, certain issues surfaced which warrant careful consideration, and might have the most positive impact on walking in the Wavertree area. These have been drawn together and presented as priority Projects and are summarised below in this section as Key Recommendations. Despite the potential problems entailed in undertaking these projects, it is important to recognise that, should they not all be implemented, there is much else that can be done to significantly enhance walking conditions in this area.



Other issues, of less obvious concern to local people, but which cumulatively have an impact on the quality of the public realm, lend themselves particularly well to a task-based approach to problem solving. These have been highlighted in the final section of this report entitled General Recommendations.

Readers are encouraged to consider the range of suggestions contained within the Main Findings section – these are worthy of implementation in their own right, and may also form the basis for other projects and recommendations.

Summary of Key Issues and Recommendations

The following Key Issues have emerged as the priority topics that impact upon the pedestrian realm, and are discussed in depth in the main sections of this report.

Key issues

- **Traffic Space, Volume and Speed:** Picton Road / High Street carries a very significant level of traffic, as does Wellington Road / Rathbone Road, and with side roads such as Sandown Lane and Prince Alfred Road acting as unofficial fast links to the north and south. Outside the peak periods, flows on the main road are slightly lighter and vehicle speeds consequently increase. Considerable space is allocated to vehicle movement in comparison to pedestrian use.
- **Side Roads:** None of the side roads adjoining Picton Road / High Street have dropped kerbs, thus creating a multi-stepped route across a total of 43 separate junctions between the railway bridge and the Clock Tower. Street furniture frequently obstructs the direct route on side road junctions, as does parking close to junctions.
- **Crossing Points:** Picton Road / High Street has a limited number of protected crossing points, with few safe places to cross between the crossings. Critically, the main signalled crossroad junction with Wellington Road / Rathbone Road has no pedestrian phase at all, and no protection for those trying to cross in any direction, despite being on a popular route to a primary school and the leisure centre.
- **Pavement Obstructions:** street furniture and parking often combine to create a potentially hazardous situation on Picton Road / High Street, particularly in the sections of narrow footway.
- **Quality of Maintenance and the Street Environment:** Picton Road / High Street has not experienced the investment seen in areas closer to the city centre, and thus has a severe legacy of maintenance to redress. It also appears to receive sporadic enforcement. The built fabric of many sections of the road is equally poor, reflecting the lack of investment in the public realm, and with little to encourage private investment in buildings. There are few trees or green spaces to enliven the walking environment.
- **The Mystery:** Wavertree Park has poor physical links with its surrounding streets. There are few quality access routes to the park, its setting is compromised by excessive parking, permeability and means of escape are restricted, those links that do exist are not on direct or step free routes, and do not relate to the street approaches. Signage and information outside the Park is inadequate.
- **Identity and Investment:** The heritage value of Wavertree Village has been largely ignored, and its status as a Conservation Area often disregarded in decision-making that affects the public realm. Yet this heritage value may be a key tool in harnessing greater area promotion, community support and the attraction of inward investment as has happened in the residential areas surrounding the main road, and elsewhere within the City.

Key Recommendations

The following Key Recommendations are summarised from comments made by the volunteers during and after the audits and from observations made by audit leaders. Further recommendations are made throughout the main section of this report.



Consider reallocating under-used road space to pedestrian use where inadequate footway widths exist, at side road junctions, such as Prince Alfred Road, and at pedestrian crossing points.

Widen the footway in Lake Lane to extend the Village Green and to provide an attractive pedestrian route from the Olive Mount area.



Install side road entry/exit tables at all accesses and junctions along Picton Road / High Street to create a step free route, to slow vehicle speeds and to deter parking on junctions.

Consider narrowing the road space at junctions of side streets that are one way in or out, or which are used as rat runs, such as Sandown Lane and Prince Alfred Road, to one traffic lane only.



Install two additional crossing points, as a minimum a refuge, or preferably a raised zebra crossing, in Picton Road by Hey Green Road, and across the Clock Tower Island to Somerfields.



Review traffic signal timings, crossing provision and detailing on all signal-controlled crossings. Include a pedestrian crossing phase on the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road junction. Consider installing shallow raised tables at crossings, to provide a step free crossing and to act as a means of reducing traffic speed.



Undertake a targeted maintenance regime to redress the legacy of significant maintenance defects, which cumulatively combine to create a very poor and unattractive walking environment. Consider tree planting in wider sections of footway. Review enforcement procedures. Consider introducing short stay off peak parking in peak hour bus lanes and vacant sites, to support local businesses.



Review and upgrade walking links to The Mystery, introduce signage and promote greater use by improving links from nearby residential areas.

Upgrade the small area of community space near Grove Street to create a more attractive and usable public space.



Develop initiatives to promote the Wavertree area and to increase inward investment. These could include a Greening Strategy encompassing 'Wavertree in Bloom', a Conservation Area Character Appraisal to highlight the heritage value of the area, and a Business Support package to help boost the economic viability, vitality, and appearance of Picton Road / High Street as a District Shopping Centre.

How to read this report

The Introduction contains background information on why walking matters, and the policy context.

General Principles and Observations gives a short overview of the audit area, its pedestrian problems and challenges.

The Main Findings section gives a detailed analysis of the street environment, from the perspective of people on foot.

Key Projects present challenging ideas for project-based improvements to the audit area.

General Recommendations presents task-based suggestions for improvement.

Why walking matters - What pedestrians need

The Government wants to make walking easier, more pleasant and safer. In the DETR document *Encouraging Walking: advice to local authorities*, four main reasons for this are cited:

- Walking is good for people. Getting out for a walk occasionally is better for most people than sitting in an armchair all the time.
- Walking is good for communities. Streets are safer with people in them.
- Walking is an essential part of most public transport journeys, and of some journeys mainly by car.
- There is a lot of it about. Walking accounts for more than 25% of all journeys, and for some 80% of journeys less than a mile. Anything that makes those journeys easier, more pleasant, and safer is benefiting a lot of people.

Specific qualities have been identified as conducive to increased levels of walking. To encourage walking, the pedestrian environment should be:

- **Connected.** A comprehensive network, with few or no dead-ends, avoiding or reducing the number of busy roads to be crossed, which can be a significant deterrent to walking.
- **Convenient.** Direct paths and routes without detours or diversions from desire lines and without restrictions. Avoidance of underpasses and footbridges.
- **Comfortable.** Smooth surfaces, more than adequate widths, absence of obstructions, avoidance of steep gradients and steps, good microclimate, good lighting, separation from vehicular traffic, or a traffic-calmed environment, a feeling of safety and security, provision of adequate seating and interpretation centres in appropriate locations.
- **Convivial.** Pedestrian areas and routes should be spaces that encourage human interaction and improve personal security. Key elements include diversity of streetscape, landscape, buildings, activities and furnishings, frequent passers-by, space for relaxation and enjoyment, interesting ground floor activities, views in and out of buildings.
- **Conspicuous.** Legibility of routes through design and through signing of streets, destinations, public transport stops and buildings.

“The Five C’s” - especially ‘convivial’ – indicate that walking is about stopping, as well as moving. In addition to transport, walking is about:

- **Meeting** friends and neighbours;
- **Watching** people;
- **Recreation** and play;
- **Commerce**; and
- **Eating and drinking.**

Essentially, walking is about **places** as well as **routes**.

Above all, pedestrians need:

- Enough space;
- A sense of safety, free from fear of crime or traffic;
- Clean, well-managed and well-maintained environments;
- Short distances and direct routes, with minimum detours and waits;
- Places to stop and basic facilities like benches and toilets;
- Information and signage;
- Beauty and interest – art, trees, fountains; and
- Proper planning, not afterthoughts.

The national policy context

The growth in the attention given to the walking environment reflects the shift in the climate of opinion on transport and in particular the car/pedestrian balance. Encouraging walking is seen as a way to reduce the number of trips made by car, thus reducing congestion and improving the health of the individual. More pedestrian movement increases the vitality of an area and contributes to its social and economic regeneration.

The 1998 **Transport White Paper**, *'A New Deal for Transport: better for everyone'* represented a change in national transport policy to include an emphasis on improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Among other measures, local authorities would be expected to give **more priority to walking** by:

- Reallocating space to pedestrians;
- Providing more direct and convenient pedestrian routes;
- Improving footpath maintenance and cleanliness;
- Providing more pedestrian crossings where pedestrians want to cross;
- Reducing waiting times for pedestrians at signals and giving them priority in the allocation of time at junctions where this supports more walking;
- Dealing with those characteristics of traffic that deter people from walking; and
- Introducing 20mph zones.

The **Prime Minister**, in his speech on Liveability in April 2001, identified the quality of streets as vital to stronger local communities and an improved local quality of life:

"...the one public service we all use all the time is the streets where we live. And in too many places, streets and public spaces have become dirty, ugly and dangerous. Britain needs to feel proud of its public spaces, not ashamed. We need local parks which are well looked-after and easily reached with a pushchair. We need streets to be free of litter, dog mess and mindless vandalism."

In November 2001, in response to the Transport Select Committee's report on Walking in Towns and Cities, the Government agreed that action is needed to increase walking in our urban areas; that local transport plans should adopt a formal order in which the needs of pedestrians are placed first; that more pedestrian-friendly crossings should be provided and environments where guardrails are not needed should be created; and that walking should increase as:

"...people choose to walk more often, both as a means of transport and as something that is enjoyable in its own right."

The Health Benefits of Walking

Recently, awareness about the need for people to take more exercise to maintain good health has increased. On reading medical experts' recommendations for type and quantity of exercise, walking seems a perfect fit:

- Build up gradually to accumulate half an hour of moderate intensity physical activity on five or more days of the week
- The 30 minutes of activity can be accumulated throughout the day, for example through 2 x 15 minute or 3 x 10 minute bouts of activity. There is increasing evidence that the health benefits of physical activity are linked to the total amount of physical activity performed. Evidence suggests that several short sessions of moderate intensity physical activity during the day can have a positive influence on health when they contribute to a higher energy expenditure (Hardman, 2001).
- As well as making people feel better, this amount of exercise actually reduces their risk of serious disease. The Chief Medical Officer will shortly release his first ever report on the risk of being inactive. It is likely to include that:
- One in three deaths in the UK are due to cardiovascular disease (CVD). Daily exercise approximately halves the risk of developing and dying from CVD.
- The number of people classed as 'obese' is projected to rise to one in four of all adults in the UK by 2010 (this is the current rate in the US). Obesity is linked to diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, high blood pressure and premature death. Obesity is estimated to cost the NHS at least £0.5 billion a year and in excess of £2 billion to society in England.
- 1.4 million people in the UK have diabetes. This is expected to rise to 3 million by 2010, largely due to lifestyle factors including lack of exercise, poor diet and associated weight gain. Obesity is leading to more and more people developing type 2 (non-insulin dependent) diabetes at a younger age, even during childhood. Exercise can help to protect against the development of this disease.
- One in three of the UK population will get cancer. Two-thirds of cancers are linked to lifestyle factors, such as diet, smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. Being physically active can reduce the risk of dying from some cancers by a quarter.
- One in four of the UK population will at some point suffer from mental illness, typically depression. Mounting evidence shows that exercise can help to relieve moderate and more severe depression.
- There is good evidence that being physically active provides therapeutic effects for low back pain, osteoarthritis and protective effects for osteoporosis.

Clearly, walking has a role to play in increasing people's activity levels.

Liverpool City Council policies

The Council recognises the importance of walking and it has a significant role to play in the development of the town. The Council's strategy for walking was developed in two principal strategies:

Improving conditions for pedestrians is integral to many council policies. From the current Merseyside Local Travel Plan 2001 - 2006 four key objectives support this:

Objective One: To ensure that transport supports sustainable economic development and regeneration;

Objective Two: To moderate the upward trend in car use and secure a shift to more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport;

Objective Three: To secure the most efficient and effective use of the existing transport network;

Objective Four: To enhance the quality of life of those living or working in, or visiting Merseyside.

The Merseyside Local Transport Plan Progress Report July 2002 incorporates the Merseyside Walking Strategy adopted in 2002 and reiterates these core objectives in relation to countywide measures for walking:

Walking

In the five-year programme, many highways and traffic management schemes will offer the opportunity to enhance the safety and facilities for pedestrians.

Measures for pedestrians include:

- The introduction of pedestrian priority areas across the city centre – featuring improved paving and lighting, priority over traffic at junctions, and improved signing;
- Greater priority for pedestrians with particular attention to access points into local centres (shopping, leisure, employment, education);
- Improving and extending the pedestrian environment (new footways and footpaths, maintenance, signage, cleanliness, removal of obstructions and personal security).

Together with the Local Transport Plan, the Merseyside Walking Strategy 2002 provides the framework for improving conditions for people on foot, yet there are few proposals that would be of direct benefit to the Wavertree area within the current five-year programme.

The Provisional Second Local Transport Plan for Merseyside, to cover the period 2006 – 2011, has been prepared for submission to the Government in March 2006. This reiterates the support for the Merseyside Walking Strategy and states:

“More walking and cycling as part of a successful transport plan will be achieved through better environments, reduced traffic, better information and marketing. Through these we have the potential to create high quality, liveable, sustainable communities, which focus on providing people's needs

locally, and to create pleasant local neighbourhoods where it is safe and attractive to walk, cycle and to play in the streets.”

“Merseyside enjoys reasonably high levels of walking, but low levels of cycling in the majority of the area. The emphasis on walking requires the creation of environments where people chose to walk because it is pleasant to do so, feels safe and presents a direct and easily navigable option. This requires integration of a range of infrastructure programmes, information and promotion. There are particular demands for people with disabilities. The Merseyside Walking Strategy provides an existing framework for action cities.”

There are no specific proposals within the Provisional Second LTP to benefit the Wavertree area.

The South Suburbs Neighbourhood Management Area Neighbourhood Renewal Delivery Plan 2005/06 sets out the challenges, priorities and opportunities for the audit area. This recognises that:

“Traffic dominated street environments detract from urban quality around Picton High Street and Wavertree’s High Street.”

“Wavertree High Street and Village is an historic conservation area with an array of residential, commercial and civic uses. There is the opportunity to complement the characterful architecture with an improved public realm. This would support business growth and residential quality through the provision of a distinctive high quality environment across the area.”

However, there is little evidence to demonstrate that the laudable aspirations of the Local Transport Plan, the Walking Strategy and the Neighbourhood Renewal Delivery Plan have reached the Wavertree area yet. This further fuels local auditors’ perceptions that the area is low priority in the eyes of the City Council, despite its heritage status and its popularity as a good place to live.

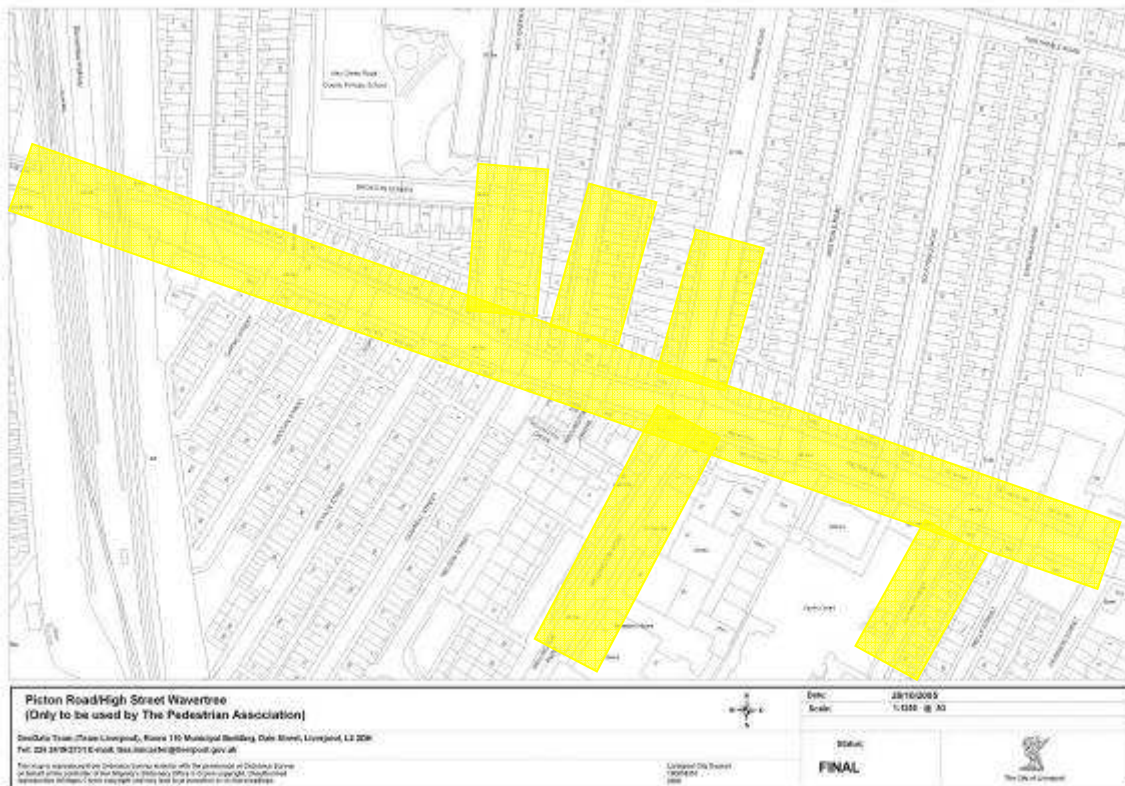


The Wavertree Community Street Audit

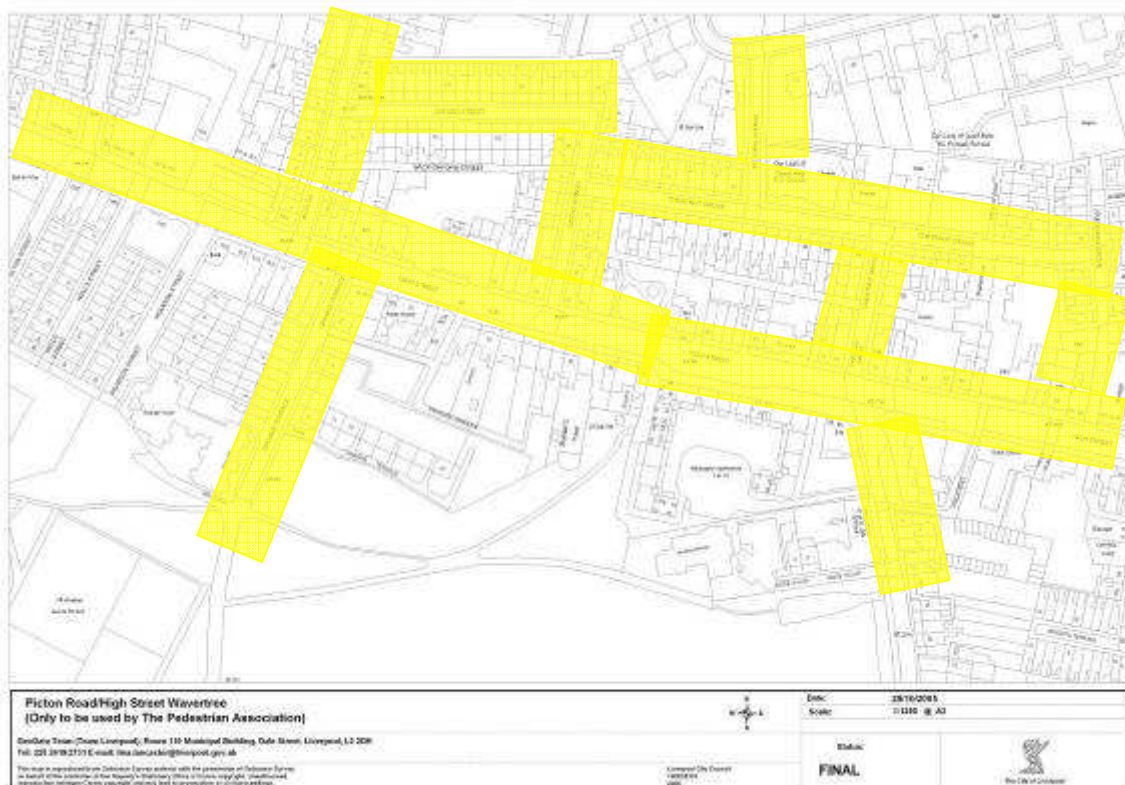
This Audit is intended to provide an analysis of the local walking environment, from the perspective of people on foot. The audit identifies problems and suggests possible improvements. We hope the report will provide a positive input to future plans for improving pedestrian links and the public realm in the Wavertree area.

Extent of Audit Area

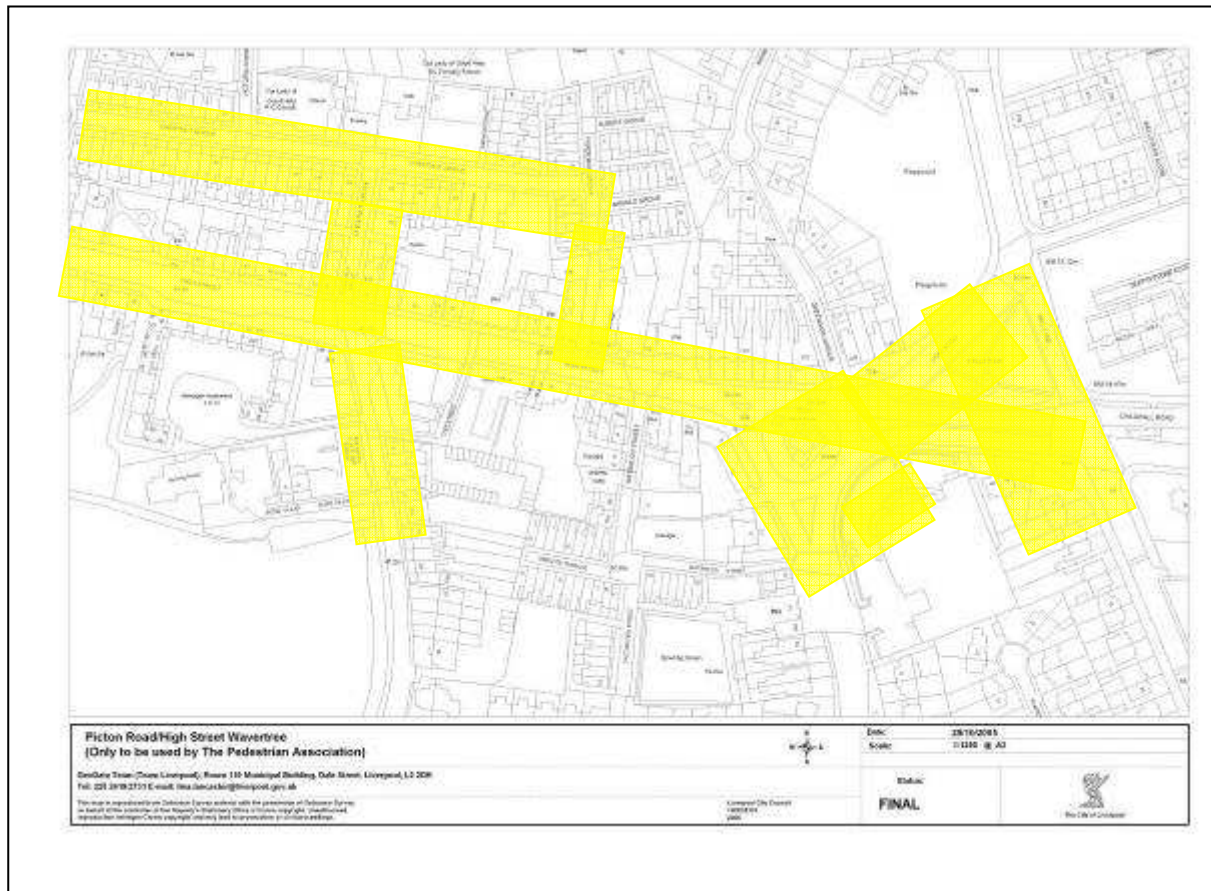
Section 1: Railway Bridge to Pearson Street (audit routes highlighted in yellow)



Section 2: Pearson Street to Frederick Grove (audit routes highlighted in yellow)



Section 3: Frederick Grove to Mill Lane (audit routes highlighted in yellow)



Location Plan, indicating the extent of Wavertree Village Conservation Area
 (Courtesy of The Wavertree Society)

General Principles and Observations

Balancing the needs of people and traffic

Picton Road / High Street is a busy east - west route in Liverpool linking the City Centre to the west with the residential hinterland to the east. For decades the combined role performed by Picton Road and High Street in accommodating through traffic, parking, public transport, local employment and retailing, homes, and people on foot have been maintained in an uneasy balance. The road corridor is particularly narrow in places, thus intensifying spatial demands and inevitably squeezing the pedestrian into the space not occupied by other uses. This has also resulted in a rather hard and anonymous street environment in the local shopping street, with little space for lingering or tree planting, for example.



Through recent decades there has been a presumption that, although people in cars are not always more numerous, they are somehow more 'important'. As the Select Committee report on urban walking, "Walking in Towns and Cities" says:

"In contrast to the changes made to every town and city to ease motor transport, walking has been made ever more unpleasant. Pedestrians have been treated with contempt. In a myriad of ways when we walk we are treated with less respect than when we drive. Engineers and economists have even considered our time less valuable when they assess new projects."

Walking in Towns and Cities, Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee, May 2001

If walking is made difficult, people are less likely to do it, particularly when they do not have to. The more hurdles you put in their way, the more you will discourage them. We need to make it easy and safe for people to follow the route they want. A living street is designed around the needs of the people who use it on foot. Over time, people who are walking on a street will change the way they use it - which means we need to constantly review and update the street, to meet their needs.

More recently, there has been a shift away from merely accommodating car use to managing it, coupled with a determination to actively encourage more walking in recognition of the key role walking has in building strong, safe, inclusive and healthy communities. However, the needs of free-flowing traffic continue to inconvenience and endanger those on foot in Picton Road / High Street, particularly at crossing points. This audit highlights some of the ways in which the balance can be redressed.

There are various opportunities to improve the balance of provision for different transport modes in the audit area. But the challenge of implementing desired changes should not be underestimated. Many of the problems pedestrians face in the Picton Road / High Street area are a result of a century of making uncompromising provision for motor traffic – since the historically generous village footways were first narrowed in 1900 to make space for the trams - and, more latterly, of making timid gestures to tame it.

But attitudes are slowly changing. The latest report from the Urban Task Force, chaired by Lord Rogers of Riverside, summarises this new thinking:

“...urban neighbourhoods should be vital, safe, and beautiful places to live. This is not just a matter of aesthetics, but of economics. This demands that ever greater significance be given to the design and management of the public realm. Well-designed and maintained public spaces should be at the heart of any community. They are the foundation for public interaction and social integration, and provide the sense of place essential to engender civic pride.”

“Urban streets are over-engineered to maximise traffic flow. Pedestrians and cyclists are still treated as second or third-class citizens, and public transport in most cities is un-integrated.”

"In our vision, public space takes priority over the car, well designed and complementary public and private realms create a sense of place, and the built environment is fertile ground in which communities can flourish.”

‘Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance’; The Urban Task Force
November 2005

Some enhancements will of necessity reduce traffic speeds and perhaps the traffic capacities of streets and key junctions. However, the timing has never been better if people are to be encouraged to walk more for health and social reasons, rather than relying on the motor vehicle for every small journey.

If some of these challenges prove too great at present, then the Picton Road / High Street area of Wavertree should not miss out on some of the less dramatic changes which can start the process of tilting the balance of provision back towards this most vital and inclusive transport mode.

Planning for people

A good walking environment may encourage people to walk more, but the provision and accessibility of local facilities within a reasonable walking distance is essential to developing walkable neighbourhoods. In this context, the role of the land use planning system must be to ensure that the essential facilities exist within an area. Too often in the past, the trend has been to plan primarily for those in cars, with relatively recent developments for shopping and leisure divorcing people from essential facilities.

In the traditional street layout of the Wavertree area, there are a wide range of local facilities within easy walking distance, including shops, schools, places of worship, open spaces, public transport, sports, social and health facilities. More distant facilities can easily be reached through good bus links to the city centre and elsewhere. However, the constant volume of traffic on Picton Road / High Street presents a barrier to accessing some of these essential facilities.



The challenge in this area is to ensure that walking routes to these vital community assets are safe, attractive, accessible and usable by all sections of the population. This must include those who for whatever reason cannot or do not drive, such as the young, the old, people with disabilities, and those on low incomes. Redressing this imbalance is particularly relevant in the context of social inclusion, as those not accessing private vehicles have few options but to walk, or use public transport.

Being evidence-based - the case for network analysis, pedestrian flow and activity counts:

Even today, the relative 'invisibility' of pedestrian movement, compared with the high profile of the private car, which utilises large amounts of space, whether moving or sitting idle, can result in a misperception of the relative economic and social importance of different transport modes. Measurement of pedestrian and vehicle flows in the audit area, both in terms of numbers and of their local economic and social impact, are invaluable in providing a robust, objective response to any presumption in favour of motor traffic. There is a need to re-measure traffic and pedestrian volumes to inform any decisions about transport needs in the area.

There is also a need to clearly establish where people may want or need to walk to, using an audit of facilities, trip generators and destinations. Links to and from these key walking elements should be assessed on the ground, and taking account of the likely profile of the user. The use of 'average walk times' and 'straight line' distances

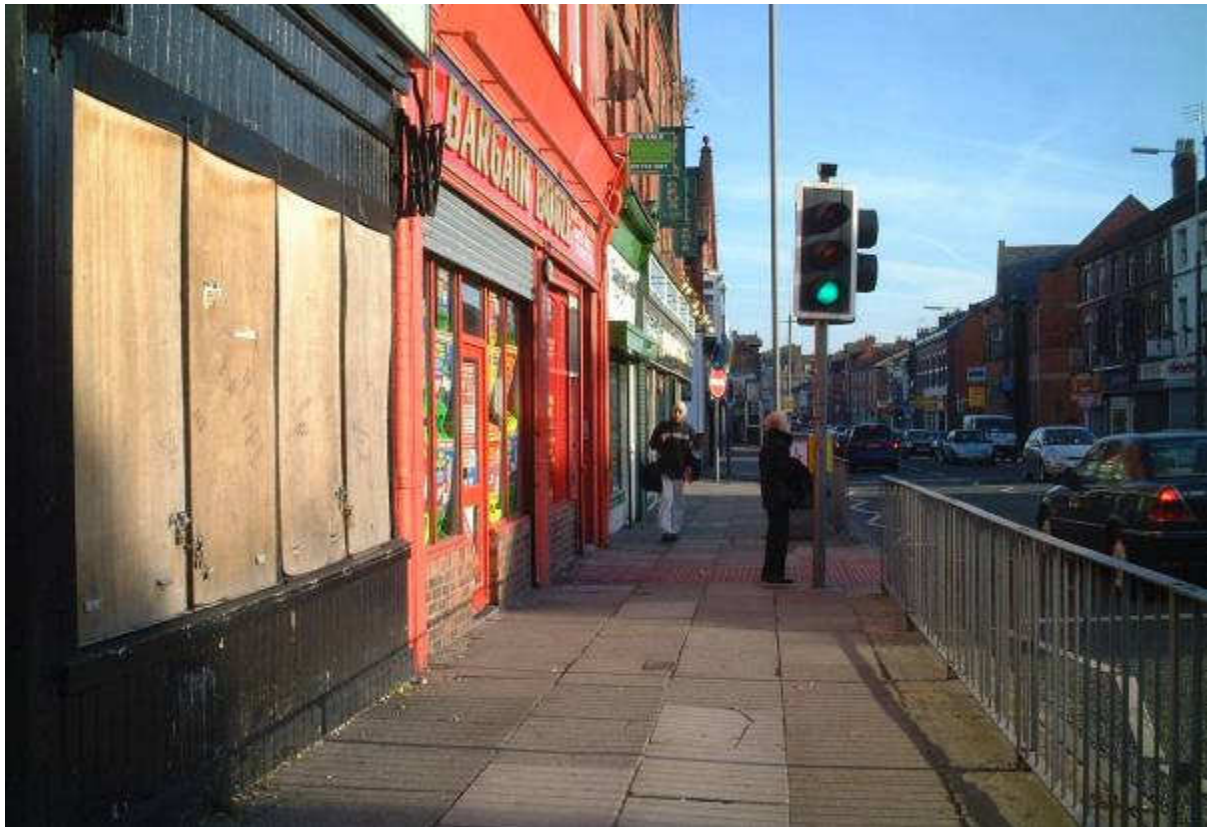
can sometimes conceal local variations that influence walkability: in reality, some facilities are less accessible than they may first appear, particularly for people with mobility problems, or if faced with the barrier of a busy road or tortuous crossing arrangements.

“The big issue is that most people live to the north of Picton Road, yet the places we want to go to are to the south, and it’s so difficult to get across.”

Local Auditor

The Future for the Picton Road / High Street area of Wavertree.

The Picton Road / High Street area of Wavertree is a potentially viable commercial centre serving a strong and committed residential catchment, despite its somewhat inappropriate dual role as a through route. It is reasonably well used by people on foot, particularly for accessing local facilities such as schools, shops, the park, jobs, buses to the City Centre and other transport links.



However, the economic vitality of the audit area is finely balanced, as evidenced by a number of vacant commercial and upper floor units, a lack of key services and facilities such as banks, and some evidence of vandalism or other anti-social behaviour in the street. There are no off street parking areas to serve local shoppers, with the consequent impact of parking on the residential side streets and main road footways. Its attractiveness to investors is also fragile; the confidence displayed in the nearby residential areas is not reflected in the main road.

“It’s just depressing – the condition of some of the buildings, the fabric of the footway, the hoardings and empty frontages... I wouldn’t shop around here, there’s nothing to draw me here and it just looks a mess.”

Local Auditor

It may also appear as a transitional area, one to pass through quickly in order to get to somewhere 'more affluent'. By night, it can also appear somewhat anonymous and unsafe in places; yet another city centre fringe area dominated by traffic and parking, takeaways and trouble. These initial perceptions do not do the area justice, as reflected by a local resident:

On reflection, I really feel that the High Street/Picton Road lets the area down terribly. The side streets, be they large or small houses, are generally very well looked after - it is the PUBLIC realm which really lets the whole area down - and this is most noticeable in High Street/Picton Road.

This main road is actually the key reason why I would leave the area, it is an embarrassment for me to have to direct visiting friends and relatives along this road and I try to minimise the amount of it they need to see. I do not feel like this about the side streets. Therefore, the poor state of the public realm of the main road must be adversely affecting the economy of the area as I am sure people decide NOT to live (or invest) in the area because of its terrible state, or alternatively to leave the area because of it.

Local Resident

In places, particularly to the west of Wellington Road / Rathbone Road, the public and private realm has a significant air of neglect; commercial frontages are uncared for and become dumping places, and properties are inadequately maintained. Elsewhere, in the vicinity of Sandown Lane, for example, people use the street because they have to, in the course of everyday life, but it is not attractive, comfortable, or safe for all user groups. In particular, young children cannot even walk to school or their local park without risking danger from traffic, due to unresponsive crossing facilities, excessive traffic and inadequate provision for people on foot. There is little provision to encourage people to stop and enjoy the environment they use.



The area is now seeing the benefits of recent investment, with the creation of the One Stop Shop, the renovation of the Library, and the construction of the new Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre. However, the success of these projects and

the continued regeneration of the Wavertree area will depend primarily on people: residents and visitors walking to use and enjoy the new and improved local facilities.



Will the Wavertree area continue to treat the majority of its public places as primarily traffic spaces, or should people on foot be better provided for? A vibrant and safe residential and commercial area depends on more people on the streets at all times of the day. A successful walkable neighbourhood will be one where its users feel confident, comfortable and safe in visiting it at differing times of the day and year. Will those who can continue to make every trip by car? Or could a more people-friendly environment deliver greater social vitality and inclusiveness? More pedestrians and fewer cars could mean more space for everyone - including for those motorists who cannot change to more sustainable transport modes.

Local aspirations and the tempo of change

Inevitably, the process of changing the physical structure of public space can never keep pace with the changes in community priorities. Demands for improvement to the streetscape will continue, while local people will continue to be dissatisfied with the pace and extent of that change, or cling to outdated beliefs in the primacy of the motor vehicle over those on foot.

This is not the result of unrealistic local aspirations, or a lack of action by the relevant local authorities. It reflects the constantly changing demands placed on public space, and the need for studies, like this one, that raise the profile of walking and make a case for increased spending on this vital component of all our lives.

I do hope that the community spirit, dynamic business and housing market will be supported by the provision of a high quality streetscape. It seems a real pity that the local community put so much into the private realm and yet the City Council lets the public realm fall into such a disgraceful state not even providing so much as dropped kerbs for disabled people or being able to keep cars from parking on the footpaths.

Much of what needs to be done would appear to be just part of normal routine maintenance. Creating a functional space for all would be a good start. However, I hope that the Council / Community partnership will be able to go further than this and create, not just a functional High Street, but a public realm of which the local community can be proud of. This would help local residents to not feel that they need to 'aspire' to live in a 'better' area.

Local Resident

In 2004 A national survey including questions for the Department for Transport found:

"When asked what physical qualities people looked for in a street when choosing a place to live, the three attributes chosen by the largest proportion of respondents were: feeling safe when walking around, a good general environment and a well maintained street."

Office for National Statistics Omnibus Survey October 2004.

The creation of a walkable neighbourhood in the Wavertree area is achievable if sufficient attention can be paid to the factors that matter – accessibility, safety, and attractiveness. Cracking the most significant problem of a public realm maintenance legacy must therefore be a priority.

Local involvement in the Wavertree area Community Street Audit

Thanks go to the local people who came to and participated enthusiastically in the Consultation Meeting and the Audits, and also to the many people who spontaneously gave comments during the audit period. These including the parents with children, disabled users, park users and local shopkeepers, who gave their time to set out what should be done in the area.

"This has been a real eye opener, because it's not something you usually do, and it's been great to share views with other people."

"It's made me realise how much the area has got going for it, and I'm keen to work together with other groups and people to campaign for better things – we should all be 'Working for Wavertree'..."

"Thanks for all your efforts and enthusiasm at Wavertree over the last few days... I think it is a fantastic opportunity and it is critical that the political leaders understand and back it. I think I will get in touch with them to tell them how good the consultation process has been and the benefits we hope to see - it might help them to see that the locals are interested."

"Thanks for organising the community consultation for improving Wavertree for walkers over the last few weeks. I found it a very interesting exercise and it made me realise how much Wavertree has going for it thanks to the local community of residents and businesses. However, it was also evident that the public realm really lets the area down. The area would benefit enormously from improvements to the pedestrian environment and I am glad that the City Council has recognized this and taken this first step to address this by commissioning this consultation and audit."

Local Auditors

Main Findings

Analysis of findings

The findings of our audits have been assessed to form the basis of an analysis of the audit area under eight headings, as follows:

A) Area analysis, road layout and space allocation

The existing network of pedestrian linkages, the share of space allocated to different users and the relationship of different elements of the streetscape to each other

B) Crossing points and desire lines

Both formal (Zebras, Pelicans, Puffins) and informal (no specific provision), including consideration of desire lines, i.e. the routes people most want to take

C) Facilities and signage

Toilets, benches, litterbins, lighting, trees, and signs for pedestrians.

D) Footway surfaces and obstructions

Quality and mix of materials; footway condition; positioning, alignment and condition of street furniture; and temporary obstructions including cars, advertising boards, shop front displays and road works

E) Maintenance and enforcement issues

Litter; footway cleanliness; repair and patching; flyposting and graffiti; street furniture maintenance; highways and parking enforcement

F) Personal security

Lighting levels, sightlines, natural surveillance, exit routes, and anti-social behaviour.

G) Aesthetics

Beauty and interest, public art, fountains, statues, green space - noise, smell, and ugliness

H) Traffic

Traffic speed and volume, air pollution, noise and smell



Where recommendations are included within this section, they are marked by the Living Streets logo.

A) Area analysis, road layout, and space allocation

Area analysis

A starting point for the creation of a walkable neighbourhood should be a people-focussed analysis of the existing and potential facilities, the barriers, the links between them, and the quality of these links. Local considerations should be taken into account. Psychological barriers such as busy traffic routes or convoluted crossing arrangements can significantly add to walking times, if not distances, and consequently influence the attractiveness of a walking route to its users.

Consider the range of people who will use the links, who will be of differing ages, and with varying levels of mobility, for example. Assess routes from the widest perspective, and especially from the view of people with disabilities, carers with young children, schoolchildren, or older people – those who are more likely to be walking, and who may need most reassurance when walking and crossing roads.



Review all potential walking destinations within the neighbourhood, mapping existing routes and identifying gaps in provision. Factor in local constraints such as diversions and barriers. Consider likely user profiles and ensure that the needs of all users can be met.

Road layout and space allocation

Road layout and space allocation in the audit area reflects the historical trend to maximise the priority and space given to vehicles, as private car ownership and usage has increased.

Streets should be designed for more than transportation. That means pavements need to be wide enough for people to walk along comfortably with space for resting and meeting, for street furniture and traders' displays. If necessary, space will need to be taken from the carriageway to make sure this can happen. We recommend that as much space as possible is allocated to walking and the creation of living streets. As people, we each feel the need of a clearly defined personal space, and having 'elbow room' for wandering is enjoyable. Having insufficient space is uncomfortable.

The historical development of the audit area itself (as an historic village engulfed to become a typical 'turn of the century' city centre fringe link road, with a grid layout of side streets) pushes its many users into defined corridors. Through traffic is awarded the most space, followed by parking and servicing, with the pedestrian zone squeezed into and around the spaces that remain. Picton Road / High Street is three lanes wide, with the inner lanes also accommodating bus lanes, plus unauthorised parking, and servicing areas for the businesses which do not have rear access.



Space in the road corridor is at a premium throughout the area. From the east, the main junction at the Clock Tower and Mill Lane intensifies the fragmentation of the pedestrian space. Vehicles go smoothly on to their destinations with minimal wait or deviation, whereas those on foot are left to negotiate the spaces left by years of traffic priority, with inadequate crossing facilities and with little protection from incessant traffic. This is particularly evident in Lake Road, where a wide junction to a one-way street encourages fast turning movements directly onto the zebra crossing.

Similarly, the many side road junctions on Picton Road / High Street provide adequate facilities for vehicles, with ample space to enter or leave the street, even when it is one-way in or out, yet make little provision for the needs of the pedestrian.

In the west, Picton Road is tightly constrained by the built form, widening only at the generous crossroads with Wellington Road / Rathbone Road. In the eastern section beyond Grove Street, the High Street is of a more generous width, yet retains the traditional 'narrow pavement – road – narrow pavement' layout for much of its length, which does not reflect the variations in use between vehicles and those on foot.

Throughout the area, far more space is allocated to accommodate vehicles and their needs than the movement needs of people.

There are few opportunities in the audit area to reallocate road space to create a better pedestrian environment, but where they do exist, they should be treated as priority projects. In particular, the road space around the Clock Tower and Lake Lane should be re-engineered to provide a better eastern gateway to the village, and to provide a more fitting setting for the iconic Clock Tower.



This idea is developed further in the Section of this report entitled Key Projects: *Enhancing Wavertree Village and Green.*



Review the balance between carriageway, parking provision and footway space in the area around the Clock Tower and in Lake Road.

Devise an enhancement scheme to create a new 'plaza or gateway' by significantly narrowing Lake Road, and extending paving and grass

to link the Village Green, the shopping parade, and the Playground.

Improve links to the Clock Tower in a sensitive way to give greater pedestrian access to this facility.

Consider reducing the splay on the junction of Lake Road and Greenside Avenue as part of any enhancement scheme.

For most of Picton Road / High Street (from Tiverton Street to the Abbeygate Apartments/ Grove Street), the road corridor is particularly narrow, with barely adequate footway widths to cater for the many demands placed upon them in some sections. The denser urban form of terraced shops directly fronting the street gives little opportunity for space reallocation. The priority should therefore be to ensure that the available space remains accessible, and is not obstructed by street furniture, pavement parking, refuse bins, or advertising boards.

Pedestrian space is particularly inadequate on the south side between the Library and Grange Terrace. Here, the footway width of barely 2 metres in a busy local shopping area is further reduced by extensive guardrailing and other street furniture. In contrast, the road corridor accommodates through traffic comfortably. There are few opportunities to physically increase pedestrian space here due to the dense building pattern, but opportunities do exist to remove or reallocate street furniture to free up walkable space for pedestrian use.



Review clutter on the footways along Picton Road and High Street and remove all non-essential elements to create a minimum clear footway width of two metres.

Similarly, the eastern footway in Sandown Lane south of Orford Street is barely one metre wide, and rendered unusable by the juxtaposition of old concrete bollards, sign posts and high kerbed accesses. Footway widening may be possible here if the junction with High Street can be constrained.





Consider widening the eastern footway in Sandown Lane between Orford Street and High Street to create a usable route. Remove all street clutter and ramp over access ways.

In other parts of the audit route, outside the refurbished Abbeygate Apartments, and the Rose Garden near Grove Street, for example, potential public space is unimaginatively designed and inadequately maintained, thus failing to maximise its potential to provide a break in an otherwise narrow and visually hard road corridor. Similarly, the boundary of Somerfield's store contributes little to the active use of pedestrian space, and could be enhanced to give valuable facilities to the street scene. These ideas are pursued further in Section C of this report: '*Facilities and Signage*'.

The junction of Prince Alfred Road and High Street presents one of the few opportunities to reallocate under-used road space to pedestrian use. This wide bell mouth junction encourages fast turning movements, and favours Prince Alfred as a rat run to the south. However, it is also a key walking route to a local Primary School, but there is no usable footway on the eastern side, just a narrow margin that is permanently parked on.

Whatever the future of the adjacent vacant site, and its consequent access requirements, consideration should be given to narrowing the junction through kerb build outs and carriageway realignment, to create a better walking route to the school, and to reduce its attractiveness as a rat run.





Consider narrowing the junction of Prince Alfred Road and High Street through carriageway realignment and footway widening. Introduce a raised table on the narrowed junction to provide a step free route and slow turning traffic. Create a usable footway on the eastern side of Prince Alfred Road.

Consider planting trees on the widened footways to add interest and colour in this section of High Street. Possibly add a seat.

There are few other opportunities to radically reallocate road space in the audit area; therefore, consideration should be given to other ways of increasing pedestrian space. The main gains for pedestrians can be realised through utilising wider traffic management techniques, redesigning junctions, accesses, and other crossing points, and through proactive enforcement to remove obstructions.



Junction layouts along the audit route compromise and fragment pedestrian movement and would benefit from reconsideration. These junctions will be discussed in detail in Section B: '*Crossing Points and Desire Lines*', which looks at junctions in more detail, and especially how they can connect – or obstruct – pedestrian routes.

B) Crossing points and desire lines

Overview

A major challenge in improving conditions for people on foot in the Wavertree area is the poor connectivity of pedestrian routes. This is caused by inadequate crossing arrangements, particularly across Picton Road / High Street itself, and at the many side roads along its entire length.

The historical emphasis on through vehicle movement over the needs of people on foot has resulted in disconnected pedestrian routes. In summary, there are only four signal-controlled pedestrian crossing points and one zebra crossing on the audit route, and no other informal protected crossing points on the 1000-metre stretch of Picton Road / High Street considered in detail in this audit. Critically, the main signalled crossroad junction with Wellington Road / Rathbone Road has no pedestrian crossing phase at all, and no protection within any of the turning phases for people to cross in safety.

From the west, the four protected signal-controlled crossing points are located between the junctions of Tiverton Street and Taunton Street, outside the One Stop Shop between the junctions of Southdale Road and Eastdale Road, by the junction of Sandown Lane, and near the junction of Chestnut Grove and Prince Alfred Road. The solitary zebra crossing is located west of the Clock Tower Island. There are no other central refuges elsewhere on the route to give protection when crossing Picton Road / High Street. None of the 43 side road junctions and accesses have flush dropped kerbs, with some having quite high kerb faces, and most are further obstructed by badly-positioned street furniture.

Wheelchair users are especially sensitive to conditions at formal and informal crossing points – having no dropped kerbs can make crossing doubly difficult, as can steep ramps, poor reinstatements, broken surfaces, thoughtless obstructions and high kerbs. But provision of smooth and even crossing points should not be seen solely as the concern of people with ‘special’ needs – parents with baby buggies, visitors with wheeled suitcases, delivery drivers and shoppers using wheeled trolleys all need similar provision to wheelchair users.

Ultimately we all suffer some impairment from time to time – whether we are loaded with heavy shopping, distracted by our companions, or unable to see the footway due to bad weather or poor lighting.

The haphazard positioning of bollards or the encroachment by shop front advertising boards can create significant trip hazards at junctions as well as obstructing direct crossing routes.

Walking along Picton Road / High Street from the railway bridge in the west to the Clock Tower and back again, what is it like to cross the roads?

Crossing Picton Road near Tiverton Street

Walking from the west, the first protected crossing point in the audit area is a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing linking Tiverton Street across Picton Road to Carno Street. This is the only crossing for some distance that serves the area west of the rail bridge, and links the residential areas to the north and south, including the route from the west to Hey Green Road Primary School. During the audits, there was a steady flow of people on foot using this crossing to reach homes, the school, shops,

and public transport both during the afternoon and the evening. It was busiest at the time of the afternoon visit when many carers with primary school children and young people were using it.

This crossing has flush dropped kerbs and tactile paving, but no rotating cones or audible warnings. During the afternoon, there was quite a long wait time of 35 seconds. In contrast, Department for Transport guidance suggests an optimum wait time of 21 seconds. Critically, there was only 8 seconds to cross, which was inadequate for all but the fastest walkers. Schoolchildren were observed being urged to run to cross before the lights changed, people with buggies and pre-school children were crossing diagonally to get across in time, and an older couple only reached the halfway point before becoming visibly intimidated by encroaching traffic.



Later in the day, a solid line of traffic paid little regard to the crossing's existence, blocking the route and creating difficulties when crossing on the green man. Later in the evening, traffic speeds were quite fast in this three-lane section of road. The narrow footway on the southern side of the crossing is cluttered with posts and old bollards. Commendably, there is no guard railing at this crossing.



Review signal timings at this crossing and increase its responsiveness for those on foot by reducing the wait time and increasing the crossing time.

Replace rotating cones, include an audible warning system.

Remove unnecessary posts and bollards on the southern footway.

Introduce a shallow raised table at this crossing to slow off peak traffic speeds, to create a step free crossing point and to overcome the problem of peak hour traffic queuing across the crossing.

Consider reducing the total carriageway width to two lanes only, and constructing narrow build outs to give greater priority to pedestrians on the crossing. Alternatively, as a short-term improvement, resurface the carriageway in a contrasting material to highlight the crossing and dissuade vehicles from queuing across it.

Crossing Picton Road near Hey Green Road and Goswell Street

There is a strong pedestrian desire line across Picton Road from Hey Green Road/Stevenson Road to Goswell Street. In part, this reflects the difficulties of crossing at Wellington Road / Rathbone Road, but also represents the line that most people, including many from Hey Green Road Primary School, wish to take. The only School Crossing Patrol in the audit area is here, operating from 8.30 to 9.10, from 11.55 to 12.20, and from 3.10 to 3.50. Outside of these times, people take their chance and cross here in between the constant stream of vehicles in both directions.

People had plenty to say about crossing in this location, and in the area in general.

“I’m the only one on this road now, although there are other primary schools further up, it’s a horrendous road to cross for kids and adults alike. It’s really awful and the traffic is always like this every day – we need a zebra crossing here but they say it’s too expensive. I see as many grown ups as children across when I’m here, which isn’t a long time. It’s a long way between crossings and you can’t cross at the Wellington Road crossroads because it’s too dangerous. It’s really unsafe there, because the cars come at you from all directions.”

School Crossing Patrol

“You really need a crossing here between Hey Green and Goswell Street, and preferably a zebra crossing because drivers seem to respect them more. The traffic’s fast now, but from 2pm it gets really busy, and the schools don’t come out till nearer 3. It’s a really long way between crossings. The lollipop lady is very good and the locals do take notice of her, but she’s the only one since the one further up went.”

Local auditor



Given the popularity of this informal crossing point, and its significance of serving the local Primary School, there is a strong case for introducing an additional protected crossing facility in this location, regardless of what might be done at the crossroads.



Preferably, consider installing a new zebra crossing on a shallow raised table in Picton Road between Hey Green Road and Goswell Street.

Alternatively, consider installing a central pedestrian refuge in this location.

Crossing Picton Road at the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road junction.

The main crossroads of Picton Road, Wellington Road and Rathbone Road is a major barrier to pedestrian movement as, despite being a signal-controlled junction, has no crossing phases for people on foot. Consequently, there is no safe time to cross. The heavy traffic is always running and turning movements take place from all four directions simultaneously, with traffic queuing in two lanes across all arms of the junction.

Many people were observed avoiding this junction, even though it was on their direct route, and taking a chance in crossing away from the crossroads. Those who did try to cross on the junction were seen to make numerous aborted attempts before successfully crossing even one arm. Reflecting this frustration, many people on foot were seen to dodge between the waiting traffic to make their journey without further frustrating delays. A person using walking sticks barely reached the centre of the road before being helped by a passer-by who halted the traffic to enable them to cross.



This is the most significant junction in the Wavertree shopping centre, yet the one that presents the greatest barrier to pedestrian movement. The opening of the new swimming pool and Leisure Centre, with its main access off Wellington Road, will increase pedestrian use and flow at this location, yet there are no plans to improve it.

“You can see the fear and trepidation on peoples’ faces when they try to cross here. The traffic’s bad now at 2pm, and it gets much worse in the evening, there’s no way you can cross here.”
Local auditor

Users felt very strongly that there should be an improved pedestrian crossing facility in this location, preferably with an all green phase to enable two arms to be crossed in one movement or with a diagonal crossing facility. There is probably enough space to install a pedestrian refuge in each of the approaches to the junction on Picton Road and Rathbone Road, but not Wellington Road. This may also serve to reduce traffic dominance in this locality and reduce the crossing distance for those on foot. Unsurprisingly, the footway surfaces are poor, kerb faces are quite high, and there are no dropped kerbs or tactile paving either. The northeastern corner of Rathbone Road and Picton Road is more spacious than the other corners, but is cluttered with street furniture, posts and control boxes, restricting clear walking routes on the junction.

There are no short-term measures that might improve accessibility on this junction; it needs a major redesign to include a proper pedestrian crossing phase.



Review the layout, operation and signal timing of this junction to make it more responsive for those on foot.

PREFERABLY, and in the longer term, consider a total redesign of this junction to incorporate a full arm or double diagonal pedestrian crossing on an extended all green pedestrian phase. Consider installing a shallow raised table at the junction to create a step free crossing, and to slow traffic when turning to give greater priority to pedestrians.

Install flush dropped kerbs with tactile paving, rotating cones, and introduce an audible warning system.

Repair damaged paving and kerbs, and mark carriageway crossing zones in a prominent wearing course colour to aid visibility.

Consider installing pedestrian refuges on the Picton Road and Rathbone Road arms of the junction, with flush centres and tactile paving.

Consider tightening the radii of the junction to reduce the distance to be crossed by pedestrians, and to slow traffic speeds when turning.

Remove clutter on the northeast corner to open up routes to the crossing point.

Crossing Picton Road at the One Stop Shop between Southdale Road and Eastdale Road

The next protected crossing point when walking towards the east is a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing in the busy area of Picton Road by the One Stop Shop. Excluding the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road junction, (which has no pedestrian crossing facilities) this gives a distance of over 300 metres between safe

crossing points. This is excessive given the many community facilities located and accessed from this three-lane section of Picton Road – schools, the pool and Leisure Centre, the park, the library and the One Stop Shop – and strengthens the case for a new zebra to Goswell Street and/or improvements at the crossroads.

This crossing has (almost) flush dropped kerbs and tactile paving, but no rotating cones or audible warnings. During the day, there was a slightly long wait time of 25 seconds. In contrast, Department for Transport guidance suggests an optimum wait time of 21 seconds. By night, response times were shorter at 15 seconds. Crossing times were variable, in the day, there was 10 seconds to cross, which was adequate for fast walkers but not everyone. The narrow footways on either side of the crossing are uneven and cluttered. There is an excessive stretch of guardrailing on the north side, but none at all on the south, which questions its need and effectiveness...

“It doesn’t make sense to have these railings on one side but not the other - I don’t think you really need them here.”
Local auditor



Review signal timings at this crossing and increase its responsiveness for those on foot by reducing the wait time and increasing the crossing time to cater for all users, including those with restricted mobility.

Replace rotating cones and ensure that there is an audible warning system in place.

Remove guard railing on the north side.

Remove unnecessary clutter on the adjacent footways and install a smooth trip-free surface.

Resurface the carriageway to highlight the crossing.

Consider the introduction of a shallow raised table at this crossing junction to slow off peak traffic speeds, and to create a step free crossing point.

Consider reducing the carriageway width to two lanes at the crossing, and constructing two kerb build outs to give greater prominence to the crossing.

Crossing Picton Road / High Street near Sandown Lane

The next crossing point walking from west to east is a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing at the point where Picton Road becomes High Street near Sandown Lane. This crossing is on a key pedestrian route from the residential area centred on Sandown Lane to the community facilities south of the main road, including the main entrance to The Mystery via Grange Road, and is located in a particularly narrow stretch of road, with consequently narrow footways.



“I think this guardrailing is just to stop cars parking, as there isn’t any on the other side.”
Local auditor

This crossing has flush dropped kerbs and tactile paving, but no rotating cones or audible warning system, and there is ponding on the crossing point. The carriageway surface on the crossing is very uneven, as are the footways on either side, and the call post is defaced by graffiti.

The response time was variable, from 12 seconds in the evening, which is good, to a long 35-second wait during the afternoon, which is excessive. At all times, the crossing time of 8 seconds is too short for many users to cross in comfort. There is no guardrail on the north side, but an excessive run of around 50 metres on the south side (from Pearson Street to Grange Terrace), which makes the already narrow footway even narrower. Street clutter adds to the problem.



Review signal timings at this crossing, decrease the wait time during the day and increase the crossing time to cater for all users, including those with restricted mobility.

Replace rotating cones and ensure that there is an audible warning system in place.

Remove guard railing on the south side.

Remove unnecessary clutter on the adjacent footways and install a smooth trip-free surface.

Resurface the carriageway to highlight the crossing and resolve ponding problems.

Consider the introduction of a shallow raised table at this crossing junction to slow off peak traffic speeds, and to create a step free crossing point.

Crossing High Street near Chestnut Grove

The next protected crossing point is 240 metres east near the junction of High Street and Chestnut Grove. This crossing provides the only safe crossing point to the Wavertree Primary School in Prince Alfred Road to the south, and Our Lady of Good Help RC Primary School off Chestnut Grove to the north.



This signal-controlled pedestrian crossing has dropped kerbs and tactile paving, but no rotating cones or audible warning system. One call sign failed to illuminate. A variable wait time of 25 – 45 seconds was excessive, given the DfT guidance of 21 seconds, and the crossing time of 8 seconds was woefully inadequate, even for brisk walkers.

There is extensive guardrailing (16 metres) on three sides of the crossing, but none on the fourth side nearest Chestnut Grove. The road is three lanes in width.

“There’s not enough time to cross here – we only got to the middle before the lights changed.”

“We walked briskly across but didn’t make it all the way over.”

“Loads of school kids use this route, but if you’re second or third to go across you struggle.”

“Again, it seems pointless to have the railings on some sides and not others.”

Local Auditors

For many users, including people with young children and buggies, older people, those walking back from Somerfield with heavy shopping, or people with mobility problems, the crossing time was inadequate, particularly as the green man started to flash and intimidate users after around 5 seconds.



Review signal timings at this crossing, decrease the wait time during the day and increase the crossing time to cater for all users, including those with restricted mobility.

Replace rotating cones and ensure that there is an audible warning system in place.

Remove or reduce guard railing on the three sides that currently have it.

Remove unnecessary clutter on the adjacent footways and install a smooth trip-free surface.

Resurface the carriageway to highlight the crossing and resolve ponding problems.

Consider the introduction of a shallow raised table at this crossing junction to slow off peak traffic speeds, and to create a step free crossing point.

Consider reducing the carriageway width to two lanes only in this location, and constructing two kerb build outs to reduce crossing distances and give more space to pedestrians.

Crossing High Street near the Picton Clock Tower

The last formal crossing point on the audit route is a zebra crossing to the east of the Picton Clock Tower roundabout near the junction of Lake Road – a distance of 270 metres from the last signalled crossing. This crossing point provides a vital link between the surrounding residential areas and Somerfield, the only supermarket in the area, and a number of bus stops.



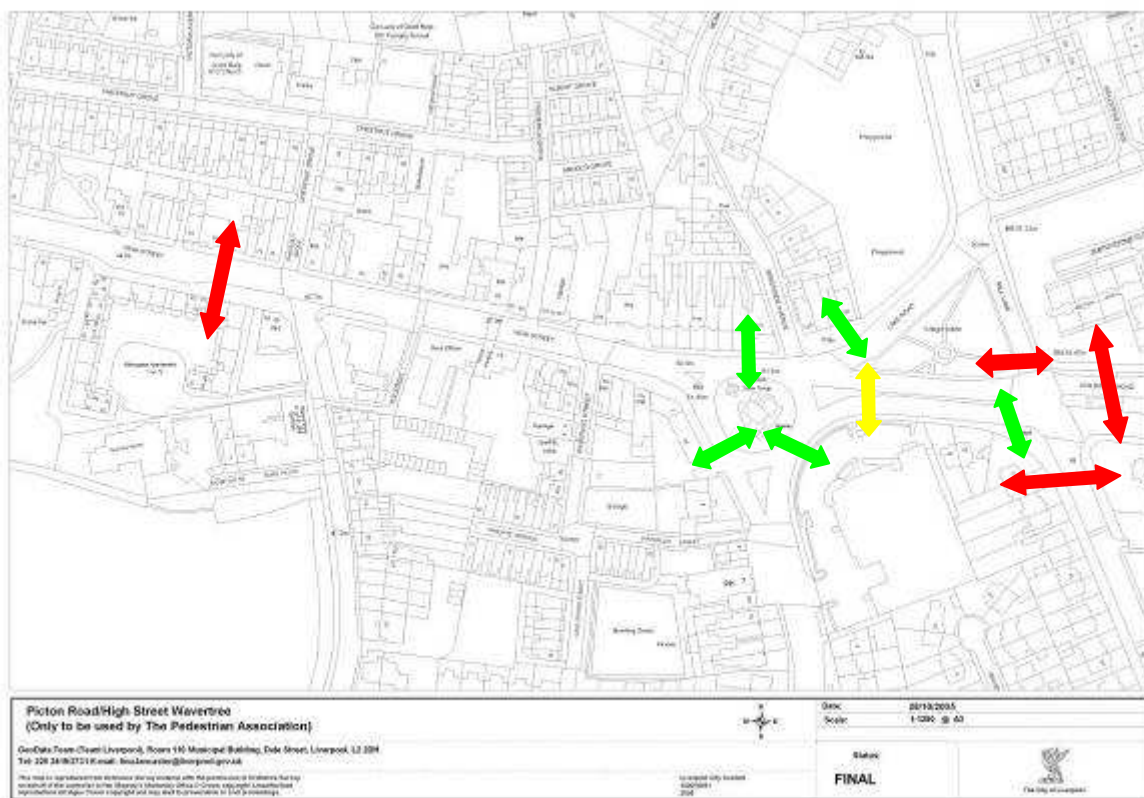
There are no corresponding protected crossing facilities across Church Road North or the High Street west of the Clock Tower, resulting in a tortuous route to cross in safety on a very busy junction and section of dual carriageway.

The carriageway markings for the zebra crossing are badly eroded, and three out of four belisha beacons were not working at the time of the audits, making the crossing difficult to see for motorists by day and by night. Consequently, there were high traffic speeds in both directions approaching the crossing.

It is also quite dangerous on the north side as it ends abruptly on a very narrow strip of footway in Lake Road, with no continued protection across Lake Road, which in itself attracts fast turning movements by being one-way in and with a very wide junction splay.

Just beyond the audit area to the east, the signalled junction of Mill Lane, Childwall Road and Lance Lane has a staggered signal-controlled pedestrian crossing phase on three arms. Critically, there is no corresponding phase across the end of High Street west of Mill Lane, making the zebra crossing the only safe crossing point on a complex and heavily trafficked gyratory system. Extensive guardrailing and oversized traffic signs mark an abrupt change from urban village to urban superhighway.

The signalled crossing points are illustrated below in red, with the existing zebra crossing shown in yellow. Ideas for better crossing points are shown in green.



The iconic Picton Clock Tower is currently an isolated monument in the centre of a heavily trafficked and cluttered roundabout, with little encouragement to view this attractive structure at close quarters. One auditor counted 25 separate items of clutter. The long-closed public toilets are equally isolated with little chance of positive re-use, being divorced by roads from any source of trade, as is the historic Village Lock Up on the remnant of the Village Green – the only village green in Merseyside.



There are many opportunities to reconnect these local features through the creation of positive public space, and to re-integrate the Clock Tower with its surroundings, as discussed in Project 2: *Enhancing Wavertree Village and Green*, but it will be essential to improve crossing facilities for people on foot in this location first.



“If you could get across through the Clock Tower Island you wouldn’t need to worry so much about the fast traffic coming up Church Road.”

Local auditor

As with the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road junction, there are no short-term measures that might improve accessibility on this key gateway to Wavertree; it needs a major redesign to include a proper pedestrian crossing network.



Review the layout, operation and use of this entire junction to make it more responsive for those on foot.

PREFERABLY, and in the longer term, consider a total redesign of this junction to incorporate a series of zebra crossings linking through the Clock Tower Island. Extend the existing zebra crossing across a narrowed Lake Lane.

Add a pedestrian crossing phase on the western arm of the Mill Lane / High Street junction.

Consider installing shallow raised tables at the crossing points on the junctions to create step free crossings, to slow traffic when turning, and to give a visible priority to pedestrians.

Install flush dropped kerbs with tactile paving on all crossing points.

Repair damaged paving and kerbs, and mark carriageway crossing zones in prominent markings, or with a contrasting wearing course colour to aid visibility on the signalled part of the junction.

Consider installing pedestrian refuges where needed on all arms of the junctions, with flush centres and tactile paving.

Consider tightening the radii and extending the kerb lines of the junction of Lake Lane to reduce the distance to be crossed by pedestrians, and to slow traffic speeds when turning into this one-way street.

Reduce the width of Lake Lane to enable footway and grassed areas to be extended.

Remove clutter on all areas of the junctions, including guardrailing and unnecessary signs.

Crossing Side Roads and Accesses on the north side of Picton Road / High Street

Walking through the audit area along the north side of Picton Road / High Street from the railway bridge in the west to Picton Clock Tower in the east, the person on foot must cross a total of 18 side roads and accesses.

Crossing the side roads is often an uncomfortable and unpleasant experience. Most are one way in or out, (apart from Sandown Lane and the closed Hey Green Road). Traffic flows can tend to be fast, despite most being designated as 20mph zones and calmed with humps, and some of the side roads are quite generous in their dimensions for vehicles.

Not one of these junctions has dropped kerbs. This failing is coupled with many instances of poor drainage and ponding at junctions, broken paving, obstruction by often-obsolete street furniture and eroded carriageways. In many locations, illegally parked vehicles block the direct route across side streets.



A particular conflict exists at the petrol filling station near Sandown Lane, where vehicles use both crossovers to enter and leave the site, often queuing over the footway. The person on foot is left in no doubt that vehicles have priority of movement in this area.



There is a real opportunity to improve the walking environment for all users here, and to create a continuous smooth walking experience along this section of Picton Road / High Street. The introduction of a comprehensive series of kerb extensions, with raised side road entry tables would create a step free route, overcome ponding at junctions, and deter parking.



As a minimum, consider introducing flush dropped kerbs, tactile paving, and carriageway resurfacing for the side roads along this section of Picton Road / High Street. Resolve any drainage and maintenance problems and remove street furniture clutter.

PREFERABLY, construct kerb extensions to restrict the carriageway to one traffic lane in or out where streets are one way. Install raised side-road entry tables in a smooth and durable material on the direct pedestrian desire line at the junction across ALL side road junctions and private accesses off Picton Road / High Street, to create a seamless step-free route along the road. Ensure that materials used in the Conservation Area east of Rathbone Road are appropriate, and resist introducing a range of colours or modern small-scale paving units.

This would create an overall sense of the route as a pedestrian promenade and redress the balance in favour of those on foot. Any localised drainage problems can be rectified during these works. Review, remove or relocate any street furniture that is required but creates obstructions to a more suitable location.

Consider narrowing the entrance to the two-way Sandown Lane with a kerb build on the eastern side to facilitate footway widening north to Orford Street. Incorporate a raised table on the junction with High Street to reduce traffic speed when turning into or out of the road, and to reduce its attractiveness as a 'rat run'.

Define a clear entrance and exit at the petrol filling station by Sandown Lane.

Crossing Side Roads and Accesses on the south side of Picton Road / High Street

Walking west along Picton Road / High Street from the railway bridge through the local shopping centre to Church Road in the east, the person on foot must cross a total of 23 side roads and accesses.



Few of these serve any through traffic function, some are unadopted as public highway, and most are short dead end two-way 20mph residential streets. None of these have good provision for pedestrians; there are no proper dropped kerbs anywhere on the route.

The only through road, at Prince Alfred Road, is quite dangerous, particularly for children walking to school or people who may have mobility problems, as it has a wide junction with generous radii, and is consequently used as a rat run to the south. As on the north side, most side road junctions and private accesses are sadly characterised by raised kerbs, broken paving, eroded carriageway, illegal parking, obstructions from obsolete street furniture and ponding.



As a minimum, consider introducing flush dropped kerbs, tactile paving, and carriageway resurfacing for the side roads along this section of Picton Road / High Street. Resolve any drainage problems and relocate any essential street furniture away from the desire line.

PREFERABLY, construct a comprehensive series of kerb widening and raised side-road entry tables in a smooth and durable material on the direct pedestrian desire line at the junction across ALL side road junctions and accesses off this section of Picton Road / High Street, to create a seamless step-free route along the road.

This would create an overall sense of the route as a pedestrian promenade and redress the balance in favour of those on foot. Any localised drainage problems can be rectified during these works. Relocate any street furniture that creates obstructions to a more suitable location.

Materials used in the area to the east of Wellington Road should be unobtrusive and reflect the Conservation Area status of the locality.

Redesign the junction of Prince Alfred Road and introduce wide kerb build outs to reduce the junction width, increase pedestrian space, slow turning traffic and reduce its attractiveness as a 'rat run'.

Crossing Points within the Residential Streets

Crossing streets within the residential area is as challenging as crossing on the main road, with no dropped kerbs and frequent obstructions from street furniture and parked vehicles. In some places, such as Grove Street, there is no opportunity to use the narrow obstructed footways, so people have to walk along the road in the rutted carriageway, which is very unpleasant.

Whilst footway conditions are discussed in subsequent sections of this report, it is worth highlighting the problem of crossing residential streets, and to suggest that dropped kerbs be comprehensively installed in priority walking routes such as Sandown Lane, routes to schools and other local facilities.

Tactile paving is often not required in areas of lighter use, and consideration should be given to using a sympathetic material in those streets in the Wavertree Village Conservation Area.

Where speed humps or tables are used for traffic calming, they should be constructed flush with the adjoining kerb and footway to provide a step-free crossing point.



As a minimum, consider introducing a programme of flush dropped kerb installation on all streets in residential areas.

Use the opportunity to resolve any drainage problems, upgrade eroded road surfaces at crossing points and relocate any essential street furniture away from the desire line.

Ensure that materials used in the Wavertree Village Conservation Area are sympathetic to the surroundings and its heritage status.

Construct speed humps and raised tables to be flush with the adjoining footways to provide informal step-free crossing points.

Informal Crossing Points in Picton Road / High Street

There are no opportunities to cross Picton Road / High Street Road safely and in comfort in the stretches between the signalled junctions, which are spaced at 300, 110, 240 and 280 metres respectively in the section from the railway bridge to the Clock Tower. The continual stream of traffic evident during the daytime and early evening does little to encourage informal crossing and re-crossing, even within the core shopping area, and traffic speeds can be quite high outside the peak hours.

The location of many community facilities including the Library and One Stop Shop, the park, swimming pool and Leisure Centre, chemists, doctors and dentists in Picton Road / High Street generates a significant demand for crossing facilities. It is unreasonable to expect people on foot to walk a detour of up to 150 metres just to cross the road in safety, when for a number of people; research has shown that 400 metres is the maximum walking journey they can undertake in total.



The only option is to cross away from protected facilities, taking a chance with the constant flows of traffic. These conditions are not good for people with disabilities, carers with young children, schoolchildren, or older people – those who may need most reassurance when crossing a busy road.

To have no protected crossing points in a road length of over 250 metres is inadequate if greater walking is to be promoted, and particularly as there are facilities on both sides of the road for young and older people, such as shops, bus stops, and local facilities such as surgeries and post boxes. Two locations in Picton Road / High Street were noted as attracting most informal crossing movements:

- In the vicinity of Hey Green Road and Goswell Street, as previously discussed, and,
- In the vicinity of the Old Town Hall opposite Pye Street.

Consideration should therefore be given to installing a further protected crossing point, ideally a zebra crossing on a shallow raised table, near Hey Green Road, as recommended earlier in this report. Consideration should also be given to introducing a pedestrian refuge in the vicinity of the Old Town Hall by Pye Street, which may also reduce vehicle speeds in this straight section of High Street.



Consider introducing additional crossing points in Picton Road / High Street, such as a new zebra crossing by Hey Green Road and a central refuge by the Old Town Hall and Pye Street.

Guard railing

A common feature of the signal-controlled pedestrian crossings in Picton Road / High Street, and the main junction at the eastern end of the audit route, at Mill Lane / Childwall Road, is the inconsistent use and extent of ugly and unnecessary guardrail. This adds little to the quality of the street scene, particularly at crossings and on the Mill Lane junction, where its ineffectiveness is demonstrated by the numerous people merely walking in the road around it to reach the nearby shops, or to continue their journey on foot. Moreover, it is ineffectual in preventing people crossing where they wish to cross, and gives little benefit to pedestrian movement or street quality, particularly within the Wavertree Village Conservation Area east of Wellington Road / Rathbone Road.



The problem is often one of creeping incrementalism – guardrails are there because they have always been there, or they are installed as a matter of course, and the opportunity to review their effectiveness and necessity has not been taken.



It is suggested that a review be undertaken of the need for all guard railing, and, particularly if better crossing facilities are installed, there is no reason why the guard railing should not be removed in these locations. This will create a more attractive pedestrian environment, and one that allows people to move freely where they wish, rather than where vehicle needs prefer to dictate they should be.

“There seems to be no available statistical evidence about crashes to support the general use of these railings... In some instances, they increase the likelihood of injury. The evidence which we received indicated that danger reduction is probably a more effective way of reducing pedestrian casualties.”

“Walking in Towns and Cities”, Transport Select Committee Report, May 2001

A good example of the positive impact of guardrail removal is on Kensington High Street in central London, where contrary to initial concerns, traffic engineers now believe pedestrian safety has improved on the High Street. People are delighted with the clean, uncluttered look. Similarly, the diagonal crossing outside Balham Station in South London has been installed with no guardrailing at all. By matching crossing provision to pedestrian desire lines, the need to herd people into pre-defined waiting areas has been removed, to the benefit of users and the visual quality of the street scene alike.



Review the need for all guard railing at the four pedestrian crossings in Picton Road / High Street, and at the junction of Mill Lane, Childwall Road, High Street and Lance Road.

Plan for a significant reduction where safety will not be compromised, particularly when upgrading crossing points. Where guard railing is deemed essential, replace damaged and tired panels with the minimum of railing, and in a design more in keeping with the Conservation Area.

C) Facilities and signage

Provision of facilities for pedestrians – toilets, benches, bins, places to rest and signage – in the Wavertree area is variable. Those facilities that do exist are either time-limited, such as the frontages to the Library and One Stop Shop, which are gated when the buildings are closed, or as a result of sporadic installation over time, and do little to enhance the pedestrian environment.

A living street is more than simply functional. It is also beautiful, carefully designed to increase people's enjoyment of the space and help people feel comfortable. This is important for people travelling at walking speed. The same care and attention should be given to designing a street as somebody would give to designing their living room.

When the facilities in the street are brought together in a considered and effective way, they can help create a strong sense of place that actively encourages us to walk, but also to linger, to stroll, to talk and play.

Places to linger in the Audit area

There are very few quality places to stop and linger in the Picton Road / High Street area. The best places are the frontages to the Library and One Stop Shop, where thought has been given to their design, layout and facilities. Elsewhere, where spaces do exist, they are not attractive or particularly pleasant to spend time in. However, these spaces have the potential to become valuable pedestrian enclaves if attention can be given to them through sensitive recognition, re-design, and better linkages.

Three areas in Picton Road / High Street have the potential to be enhanced as real places for people. These are the Rose Garden Open Space near Grove Street, the Clock Tower / Lake Road area, and the wider pavement outside the Abbeygate Apartments and the Prince Alfred Road junction.

Rose Garden Open Space

The small area of open space near Grove Street was laid out some years ago by the Wavertree Society. The area is raised and grassed with poorly planted beds that have real potential to add colour and space to the generally hard street scene. There is no sense of place here, people are not really encouraged to enter the grassed area, and there are no seats to provide a welcome resting place on the route to the east. There is no information to interpret the nearby area's many heritage assets, or to guide those on foot to explore and discover the wealth of opportunities that lie within the residential areas or the nearby park.

“This is terrible – I’ve never really looked closely at it before, but it’s the only green bit on the street yet it is so poorly maintained, there are no seats, and why have the bit of guardrailing there?”

“It’s sad and neglected, but you could make it a real haven.”

Local auditors

The spaciousness of the area provides a welcome break in the generally tight street scene. However, the whole atmosphere of this area is rather sad. An unsightly stretch of guardrailing nearby serves no purpose, but visually encloses the area and divorces it from the street, and street furniture is randomly sited and unsightly. However, the area is quite clean but the quality of the planting is unimaginative, resembling old municipal planting beds. With careful redesign, it could become a place to linger, meet, and enjoy the unique heritage of the area.

This area is one of the very few within the audit area where buildings do not directly abut the footway, thus giving space for people to use.



This site presents a good opportunity to create a high quality landscaped ‘breathing space’ for people to use and enjoy. This could be achieved through the removal of some of the raised sections of grass and the installation of an all-weather paved area with seats, an interpretative board featuring aspects of the Wavertree Village Conservation Area, and more striking planting.

Complementary works to remove or upgrade street furniture, and perhaps relocate the nearby bus shelter to a more subtle location could be undertaken, plus better landscaping to reinvigorate the planted areas.



Consider the potential of the underused space in this area to become a positive community area for people to meet and linger, and to improve the visual setting of the Conservation Area.

The Picton Clock Tower and Lake Road Area

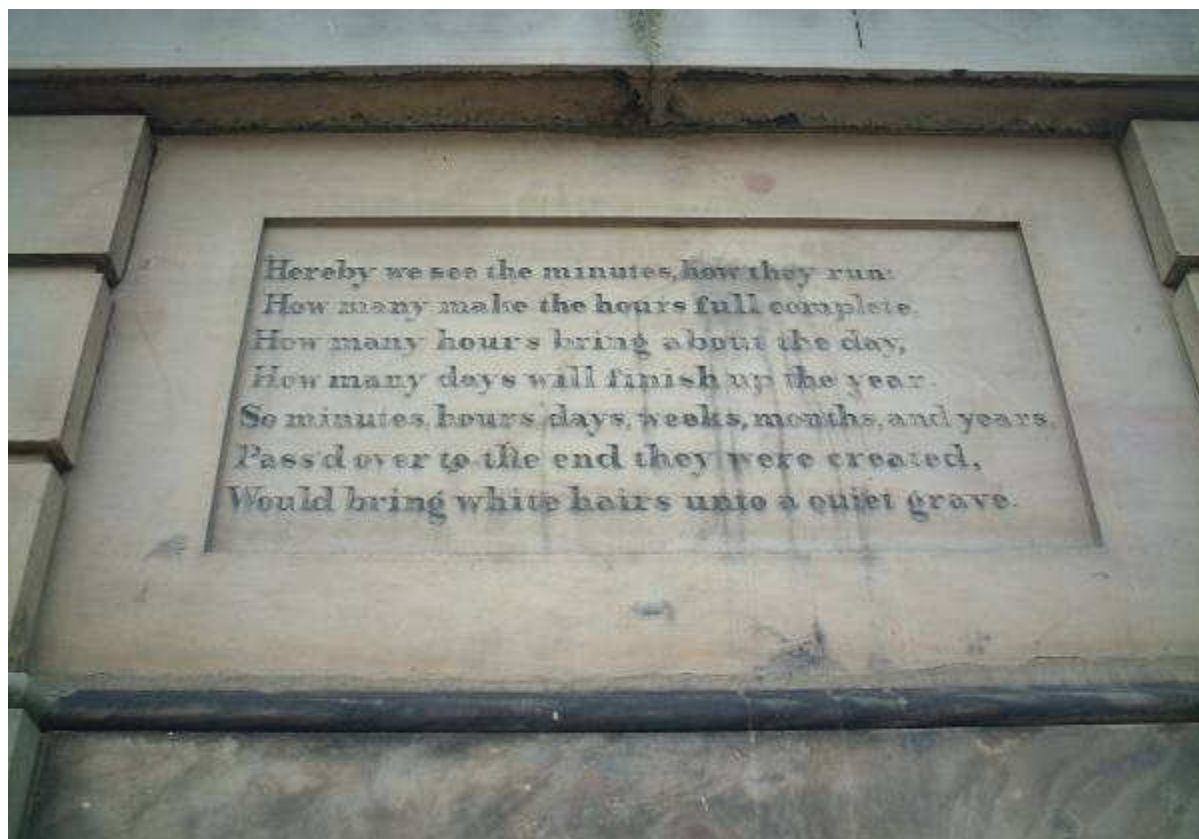
The Picton Clock Tower and the remnant of the Village Green, complete with its 18th Century listed Lock Up, provide a strong link to Wavertree’s more illustrious past, as does Lake Road, built near the original Wavertree Lake, now a children’s playground. Unfortunately, the area is bisected by busy roads and over-generous highway space in Lake Road.

Access to the Clock Tower Island is very difficult as it is merely a traffic roundabout now, with no encouragement to reach it and read its many inscriptions. There is a wide but cluttered footway adjacent to the Lake Road shops, which does not provide a very attractive gateway to Wavertree Village for those walking from the residential areas to the north and east. On-street parking completes the picture.

“It’s a shame nobody comes to look at the Clock Tower and its inscriptions. It’s just a roundabout now, but there must be a way of making it accessible and linking it so people can enjoy it.”

If I cross here I never really notice the Clock because I’m too busy watching the traffic, but when you see it close up it’s really fascinating. The decorative lights are also listed but urgently need maintenance before they rust away.”

Local auditors



At present, the Lake Road area is a mixture of grass and old paving, with few trees, no seating and un-coordinated street furniture. The bland railings of the playground frontage add little to the street scene, nor does the tired planting in the boundaries to Somerfield’s store opposite. The surfacing and street furniture in this area both reflect the neglect that is apparent in so many parts of the Wavertree area; neither have been the subject of attention but are the result of sporadic installation and minimal repair over a long period of time. The old slab footways are uneven and cracked. However, the area around Lake Road has the potential to be a much livelier and welcoming space.

“This whole corner is an opportunity to link the two green spaces, create some pedestrian space, make it better for the shops and link the crossing to Somerfields. You could also link it better to the new sheltered housing opposite.”

“This is the only Village Green left in Merseyside. You could remove the fencing to the playground to link it better, as it’s of no value and only traps litter. If you widen the pavement, you can cut down the speed of traffic as they come into Lake Road, but still leave enough space for parking to help the shops. You could plant a nice line of trees here.”

Local auditors

This is a potentially valuable pedestrian asset and a gateway to the local shopping centre, but it lacks heart, and feels like a soulless area. It could be so much better. This idea is developed further in Key Project Two: *Enhancing Wavertree Village and Green*.



Consider a total re-design of this area to create a pleasant pedestrian space and gateway to the district shopping centre.

Reduce the carriageway in Lake Road and reconnect the Village Green to the playground.

Improve crossing facilities to include links to the Picton Clock Tower.

Consider upgrading the planting, introduce more unusual specimen trees or single high impact shrubs to break up the monotony of the street frontage.

Install more seats, litterbins and local information and interpretative signs and maps for 'Wavertree Village'.

Abbeygate Apartments Frontage and Prince Alfred Road

The only area of Picton Road / High Street to enjoy a generous frontage is the section outside the refurbished Abbeygate Apartments near Prince Alfred Road. Here the footway is around 7 metres wide but often used for unauthorised parking. The nearby junction of Prince Alfred Road and High Street is an excessively wide junction, which encourages use as a rat run with fast turning movements. It is also the key walking route to Wavertree Primary School. To the east is the fenced vacant site of a former filling station, which suffers from littering. Notwithstanding the likely development of this site, the two areas to the west of it lend themselves to a cohesive treatment to create some positive and usable public space.



Some people consider that the widened footway should be reduced to create on-street parking spaces, but the proximity of the signalled crossing make this less feasible. Instead, the area could be redesigned to create an asset for people on foot, with street trees to add vitality and seating to provide a resting place.



Reduce the width of the Prince Alfred Road junction by constructing kerb build outs. Install a raised crossing table to slow traffic and provide a step free crossing route. Plant suitable street trees on the widened footways at the junction.

Consider installing seating and street trees in the section of footway outside Abbeygate Apartments to the east of the pedestrian crossing. Install selective high quality bollards if needed to restrict footway parking.

Seating

On-street seating is conspicuous by its absence in the Wavertree area. In a long route along Picton Road / High Street totalling over one thousand metres, very few seats were noted in the entire area. Two areas have public seating: the Library frontage and the adjacent One Stop Shop frontage, both located in the western section of the audit route, but these are only available for use when the buildings are open. There are no seats in other locations or on the street itself. Most of the bus shelters have high perch benches, but these are not suitable for all users, particularly older people and those with young children.

Whilst it could be argued that in an urban fringe area there is little need for outdoor on-street seating, it is a facility that may encourage greater walking and lingering if provided correctly, and is of particular benefit to older people, those with movement restrictions, and people with young children. The lack of usable benches at bus stops and in bus shelters also reduces the opportunity to rest, particularly if laden with heavy shopping.



The provision of public seating is an important consideration for a significant proportion of pedestrians. Without regular opportunities to stop and take a breather, many people cannot make anything but the very shortest trips on foot. Guidance on inclusive mobility from the Department for Transport¹ recommends public seating should be available at 50 to 100-metre intervals along key pedestrian routes such as Picton Road / High Street. Whilst the narrowness of the footway in places may preclude a 50-metre spacing, there is no reason why seating should not be installed wherever space permits, utilising wider sections of footway and private forecourts for example.

Seating should be positioned as close to pedestrian routes as possible, without blocking them. Approach from behind should not be possible, and views should incorporate plenty of interest and human activity, which would not be difficult in this busy area. Seating should be warm to the touch (wooden, not stone or metal) and incorporate backrests and armrests. The provision of chairs as well as benches can permit the provision of seating in small spaces, and increase the variety and attraction of sitting places.

More seats should be installed throughout the audit area where footway width is adequate, or where space can be reclaimed through junction improvement works, to create informal 'resting areas'. A priority location may be at the Prince Alfred Road junction, and the Rose Garden, where the open grassed area adjoins the footway, and creates adequate space for seating without blocking the through route.

Another potential location is in the wider sections of footway by the Lake Road shops, and at the top of Church Road North by The Coffee House pub. New seats serving the footway could also be introduced as part of any enhancement or extension of the Village Green, and on the Clock Tower Island.

¹ DfT, 2002, 'Inclusive Mobility: a Guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure'

Whilst the introduction of seating is always an emotive issue in urban areas, it is a facility that can encourage more walking, and walking longer distances. Accordingly, the installation of a network of seats rather than a few individual placements may help to diffuse local concerns about their potential to attract anti-social behaviour.



Consider possible locations (where footway widths permit), for more seating to create a network of seats on the audit route, ideally at intervals of around 100 metres.

As a minimum, consider installing useable seats at all bus stops, or cantilevered benches in shelters where space is restricted, to provide for those who cannot easily use the perch benches.

Bins

In some places, windblown litter appears to be a slight problem in Picton Road / High Street, suggesting that litterbin provision and street cleansing may be inadequate in areas of higher use such as takeaways. Some bins were observed to be overflowing, such as the bin in the Library frontage, which was full on Friday morning and still full on Saturday afternoon.



Rubbish from hot food takeaway shops was also evident around the vacant site by Prince Alfred Road, in the railings of the Old Town Hall, in the recess next to the Wellington pub, in the access to Abbeygate Apartments and behind temporary hoardings west of Wellington Road. These hotspots should be reviewed for more frequent cleansing, and the frequency of bin emptying may also need to be reviewed in this area. The positioning of large square bins in the centre of narrow footways should be reviewed, and bins relocated to the kerb edge where possible, to reduce street clutter.

The presence of litter can add to the feeling of neglect, particularly when coupled with more serious instances of dumping. There may be a case, therefore, to review litterbin provision and install additional bins in key locations such as at bus stops, near takeaway premises, and at shopping parades. The practice of the litter picker leaving their blue rubbish sacks by bins gives the impression that it is acceptable to leave bagged refuse on the footway. It might be preferable to review the contract specification to ensure that collected litter is removed from streets more promptly rather than being left for later collection.



Not all of the bus stops have bins nearby, and litter accumulation was more evident in these locations. Any new bins should include stub plates, particularly at bus stops, to minimise smokers' litter. The residential streets had localised litter problems, which were exacerbated by heavy leaf fall and cleansing difficulties caused by relentless on-street parking, which restricts effective street sweeping.



Review existing provision and consider installing additional litterbins in key locations such as near shops and takeaways, and at bus stops.

Regularly inspect bins as part of a 'Street Check' to enable defects to be rectified promptly. Relocate any bins that obstruct the footway to a kerbside clutter zone. Consider tailored bins with stub plates at bus stops.

Cycle Facilities

There are very few facilities provided on Picton Road / High Street for cyclists, which can result in bicycles being chained to any available object, such as a lamp column or guard railing. This practice often causes an obstruction on the footway and damages the paint finish of items of street furniture. The only on-street cycle stands observed during the audits were by the former Post Office at 20 High Street, near KFC, and outside the Job Centre. Some of these were damaged and located in narrow sections of footway – had a bicycle been chained outside the old Post Office it would have blocked half of the footway.

Elsewhere there are other low hooped structures, but they appear to be for restricting parking rather than cycle use.

Local people considered that there could be more positive use of the park as a traffic free cycle route to link to routes to the city centre, if the opening and closing times were more consistent.

There may be opportunities to provide visible and secure cycle parking facilities near community facilities such as the Library and One Stop Shop, and in the open spaces previously identified, as part of any enhancement works.



Review the provision of cycle parking facilities in the vicinity of the shops and community facilities. Consider installing suitable contrast banded stands near the Library and One Stop Shop, on wider sections of footway where pavement width permits, and in the spaces identified as possible opportunity areas.

Pedestrian Signage and Information

As is the case throughout most of the country, pedestrian signage in the Wavertree area is non-existent. There are very few signs to indicate the directions to local destinations for those who do not know the area, and especially to the community facilities and the park. Conversely, an old sign near Somerfields points to the long-closed public toilets on the Clock Tower Island. The park itself has no signage, nor has the Wavertree Village shopping centre, save one tiny Conservation Area sign.

Surprisingly, there are no signs for the Library or the various churches and church halls, although it is likely that these facilities may be visited by people from further a field, and may be used for celebratory events. In contrast, directional information for vehicles is consistent, prominent and clear.

Ideally, navigation for people on foot should be intuitive, with signage of secondary importance. Most of us navigate instinctively, following broader routes towards centres of activity, but there is a case for improving the legibility of this area to aid those who do not live there or who may be visiting for a specific function.

Any signage should be as clear as possible and use internationally recognisable symbols. As a minimum, consideration should be given to the introduction of a network of sensitively located pedestrian signs to community facilities such as parks, places of worship and gathering. These should include distance and time, and incorporate clear symbols.

None of the bus stops display local maps and few show bus routes, which is regrettable, and there are no maps of any description in the audit area. There is a case for introducing local area maps (again using clear and easily recognisable symbols) in key locations such as the Library or One Stop Shop frontages, by the Rose Garden, in the park, at Lake Road, and at the Rathbone Road / Picton Road junction.

Within The Mystery, there are no park maps by the entrances from Grange Terrace. Critically, there is no information regarding opening and closing times, which is a frustration to those using the park as a car-free walking or cycling route, who often find that gates are open on one side of this extensive area of open space, but not the other.



Consider introducing a network of pedestrian signs to community facilities. Signs should include distance and time, plus internationally recognisable symbols.

Consider installing clear local maps in key locations such as the frontage to the Library and One Stop Shop, by the Rose Garden, in Lake Road, in the Mystery, and at the Rathbone Road junction. Maps should include “You Are Here” logos and be correctly orientated (features to the top of the map are in front of the viewer, those at the bottom of the map behind).

Install signage from Picton Road / High Street to The Mystery. Within the park, provide maps and local information in respect of opening and closing times.

Specific points noted about existing traffic signage during the audits are set out in Section E – ‘Maintenance and Enforcement’ under *Street Furniture maintenance*.

Street nameplates are important too. They enable visitors to navigate easily, and ensure emergency services can get to destinations promptly. Most street nameplates are in average to poor condition, and some are not installed at highly visible locations, making it difficult for them to be read above parked or passing vehicles. Others such as at Wesley Place, are defaced by graffiti.



The old style street nameplates may be a feature of the Conservation Area, but occasionally they are difficult to read because they are extremely dirty (as at the Rathbone Road / Wellington Road junction) or have been painted over, as in Waterloo Street. Some aspects could be improved, particularly where side roads join Picton Road / High Street, as there are few street nameplates along Picton Road / High Street itself. Occasionally street nameplates are mounted very low (less than 1 metre) and are consequently harder to see. A full survey should be done of this area for consistency.



**Review street nameplates and clean or replace illegible signs.
Relocate low-level signs to positions that are more visible.**

Install new plates where needed, but replicate the older style signs in the Conservation Area.

Check locations and conditions of street nameplates as part of a regular ‘Street Check’. They should be installed on every arm of every junction and opposite all side entries, as far as possible.

Bus Shelters and Bus Stops

The Picton Road / High Street area is reasonably well served with four pairs of bus stops between the railway bridge and Mill Lane. All have a shelter, some have perch seating, some have bins nearby, but none have a full range of information, route and area maps. Discarded chewing gum is a big problem at most bus stops.

Most shelters are located on raised pavements or bus boarders to aid mobility, which is commendable, except for the one outside the Library. Most shelters are modern or 'smart' cantilever shelters, which allow those on foot to pass by without obstruction.



However, one shelter opposite the Library has an obtrusive solid end advertising panel, which blocks the footway and can cause unease for users. The positioning of a solid end shelter in the centre of the narrow footway leaves inadequate space for people to pass by, and blocks sightlines. The lighting was not working on this shelter, creating a gloomy environment for users.



“It’s really stupid putting it (the shelter) in the middle – you have to squeeze past either side. It should be on the kerb like the (cantilevered) one opposite!”
Local resident

None of the bus shelters observed in Wavertree have route and area maps. If we are to encourage greater use of public transport, we should ensure that the best information and facilities are available. All bus shelters should contain seats or perches, have a litterbin nearby, (ideally with a stub plate and gum receptacle) and display clear route and destination information including timetables and local area and route maps.



Carry out a review of all bus stops in Picton Road / High Street.

Consider the removal or replacement of the solid end advertising panel in the shelter opposite the Library.

Review opportunities for installing integral benches in all shelters, or provide usable on street seating nearby if it cannot be included in shelters.

Consider providing additional litterbins where they are not located nearby, with stub plates for smokers’ litter and chewing gum receptacles.

Ensure that all bus stops carry a full range of information including local area and route maps, and current timetables.

Toilets

There are no public toilets in the audit area, with those on the Clock Tower Island having been closed and not replaced some time ago. This is typical of most city fringe areas. However, it would be advantageous to have an automatic toilet in the vicinity of the Rathbone Road junction, if resources permitted, to provide a facility for bus users and people on foot.



Consider the opportunities to install an automatic public convenience in the vicinity of the Rathbone Road junction.

Telephone Boxes

There are seven telephone boxes in the audit area, including a listed K6 red box on High Street, which adds to the quality of the Conservation Area. They are in reasonable condition, sensibly located and do not unduly block pedestrian routes.

D) Footway surfaces and obstructions

An Overview of Footway Surfaces

Smooth, even footways are a basic requirement for people on foot. Fear of a footway fall is the number one concern for older people making a decision to walk or not. Ten times as many people are admitted to accident and emergency departments due to footway falls as from car crashes.²

Footway width and surface condition varied through the detailed audit area. In a few sections of Picton Road / High Street, some footways are of a generous 3 to 4 metre width, whereas the majority are barely 2 metres, with some sections a scant 1.5 metres wide. The predominant paving material is old rectangular concrete slab, mixed with old sections of concrete and asphalt. The best sections are on the perimeters of the audit area to the east and west, where the surface is old but relatively free from disturbance.

Elsewhere in Picton Road / High Street, the majority of surfaces are uneven time-expired sections of traditional slab that have often been subjected to vehicle overruns and parking, or asphalt that has been excavated and re-laid too many times, with consequent scarring and ponding. The worst section is the old section on the south side between the Library and Pearson Street, which is narrow, uneven, and with many cracked old slabs. Elsewhere, there are numerous instances of damage from pavement parking and heavy vehicle overrunning, and poor trench reinstatement.

The condition of the carriageway is very poor in places, including many side road crossing points, with defects such as erosion from ponding, holes and rutting in many locations. Road markings are often badly eroded, including essential warning markings at crossings and yellow lines.

In many instances, footways near side road junctions are particularly poor, having been subjected to trenching, vehicle over runs and parking, which has resulted in areas of deformation, particularly on the side road junctions themselves.

Unauthorised pavement parking has damaged many areas, including the uneven corner points at the side road junctions. Ponding is a problem everywhere.

In the eastern section on the north side from Grove Street, the many private crossovers and accesses collectively create a visually and psychologically disjointed route. In total, Picton Road / High Street is punctuated with eighteen side road junctions and accesses on the north side, and twenty-three on the south, all of which involve a change in level for the person on foot.

“All these side roads are the same – awful to cross, especially with the pushchair, and there are big puddles when it’s rained.” *Local auditor*

Another shortcoming of most footway surfaces in the audit area is the legacy of poorly executed repairs, coupled with long-term damage from pavement parking and on-street servicing. This report has not attempted to categorise each and every defect noted in the many metres of footway walked during the audit period. Better maintenance provision would transform the walking experience for everyone in the area, not just wheelchair users – almost everyone prefers step-free environments.

² DETR, March 2000, ‘Encouraging Walking: Advice to local authorities’



As a minimum, and in the short term, review all footways and promptly make good temporary repairs, particularly where gaps and deformations present a significant trip hazard, and where ponding occurs. Seek permanent reinstatements following trenching and replace areas most damaged by parking with a resistant slab surface or asphalt. Undertake carriageway repairs where defects impact upon pedestrian crossing points.

Install raised side-road entry treatments at all side roads and access ways, to create a seamless route along both sides of Picton Road / High Street.

Preferably, introduce a phased programme of footway resurfacing, taking the opportunity to make good temporary reinstatements, eliminate drainage problems, minimise changes in levels, and working towards the creation of a step free environment along all key pedestrian routes. Ensure that all footways have a smooth and durable surface, which will accommodate vehicle crossovers and the inevitable over runs.

Materials should reflect the heritage status of the Wavertree Village Conservation Area covering both sides of Picton Road / High Street east of Wellington Road / Rathbone Road.

Footway surfaces are variable in the residential streets. The streets to the south of Picton Road are very poor, and in some instances unadopted for highways purposes. This is regrettable as it includes Glynn Street, one of the pedestrian access routes to the Mystery and the new swimming pool. Poor uneven surfaces in these side streets are further compromised with relentless car parking and there is no space to walk. Similarly, the route to the main park gate via Grange Terrace takes in the whimsically named Paradise Gardens – but there is little paradise to be found here, just more neglect, uneven surfaces and a route often obstructed by parking.



The residential streets to the north of Picton Road / High Street are variable in surface quality. Some streets, such as Stevenson Street, have been treated with modern slab paving with an asphalt margin to accommodate the inevitable pavement parking. Further east, the attractive streets within the Wavertree Village Conservation Area retain traces of their illustrious past, with sections of original York Stone paving in Orford Street.

Elsewhere, the mix of old slab, concrete and asphalt displays the symptoms of the whole area – inadequate maintenance, short term patch repairs, and a failure to resolve the cause of problems, such as barrel deliveries to local pubs, or vehicle overrunning.



Local residents had plenty to say about footway quality on the audits, both on the main road and in the residential streets.

“I think all the footways in the Conservation Area should be real or mock York Stone, or old-style artificial stone slab, but definitely not tarmac.”

“You don’t look at the shops or up at the buildings because you’re too busy looking at the ground to avoid tripping up.”

“These pavements are so up and down and always patched up rather than being properly repaired.”

Local Auditors

Obstructions

Everything placed on the footway is an obstruction – every sign, utility box, lamppost and parked car. Some obstructions are tolerable – most people appreciate that essential street items such as bus shelters must by necessity be on the footway, so long as there is space to get past. However, some obstruction is seen as much less acceptable – illegally parked cars, badly placed street furniture, or bags of rubbish, for example.

Many sections of the audit route were not particularly cluttered and the Council is to be praised for this. In other sections, however, the often narrow footway width is exacerbated by the installation of street furniture such as guardrailing, bus shelters and posts, the presence of A Boards, old signs, and parked vehicles.

These critically reduce footway widths, restrict crossing opportunities, and create a less pleasant walking environment. The worst example of footway obstruction is caused by the guard railing between Pearson Street and Grange Terrace, which creates a severe pinch point and attracts other clutter.



The main problem is that things appear over time, and nobody ever reviews whether they are needed, or could be located more sensitively. This legacy is particularly evident in Picton Road, and on the Clock Tower Island.



Reduction of street clutter in the audit area should be an ongoing priority, as footway widths are already narrow in places. Every bollard, sign, rail and post should earn its place on the street.

Undertake a street clutter reduction survey and draw up a schedule.

Instigate a monthly 'Street Check' inspection to minimise delays in removing temporary obstructions and rectifying defects.

The main footway obstructions observed on the audits are discussed in the following sections. Specific examples are included to demonstrate the problem, but this is not necessarily an exhaustive list of obstructions – an audit is not a comprehensive survey, but a snapshot of the key issues facing pedestrians at a certain point in time.

- **Cars parked on the footway** – a significant problem for much of Picton Road / High Street, (due in places to shallow kerb heights), and the most intrusive and damaging obstruction when it occurs. Many instances of convenience

footway parking were noticed during the audits, even on double yellow lines, with vehicles parked part on the footway, particularly near side road junctions. This creates real obstructions to pedestrian movement and potentially serious hazards for people with vision restrictions.



Review parking control arrangements for Picton Road / High Street and the residential side streets, and prioritise enforcement.

- **Traffic signs, poles, lamp columns and other posts**– these can cause localised obstructions where their siting on a narrow section of footway clashes with other obstructions such as bins, guard railings, A boards or service cabinets.



There are many instances of obstruction from traffic signs and posts, such as by the Tiverton Street / Carno Street crossing, where the combination of posts, a lamp column and old bollards severely restricts the footway.



Review, reduce and remove traffic signage as far as possible, seek to reduce posts by using higher cantilever signs from a single post for essential traffic signs, by relocating away from the pedestrian desire line or affixing to adjacent structures.

- **Bollards** – there are many old concrete bollards blocking the desire line across the side road junctions as at Chestnut Grove. Many bollards are old and cracked and have no clear visibility banding, and some are severely damaged. Whilst these may serve to restrict pavement parking, they can create a serious problem for those on foot, and their relocation or removal would create a much better walking environment.



Review the positioning of all bollards in the audit area.

Where bollards are considered essential to restrict pavement parking, ensure they are located away from the direct pedestrian route, are of a suitable colour and height, preferably black, and with gold contrast banding to aid visibility, and reflect the heritage status of the Conservation Area.

- **Street Furniture** that is poorly sited and/or difficult to see. The main areas where street furniture interferes with pedestrian movement are around the bus stops, such as opposite the Library, where the solid end panel shelter severely restricts pedestrian space and visibility. The corner of Rathbone Road and Picton Road is similarly cluttered.



Elsewhere in Picton Road and High Street, the existence of A-boards outside commercial premises creates another temporary obstruction to clear pedestrian routes.



The guard rail used at signalled crossings causes a significant obstruction to pedestrian movement, particularly in the narrower sections of footway opposite the Library, opposite Sandown Lane, and under the railway bridge.



Inconsiderate contractors can also cause obstructions when replacing shop fronts or carrying out works to street furniture.



Review the need for each item of street furniture, particularly in the vicinity of the bus stops, and re-site if required to give more space for footway users. Convert the solid end panel bus shelter to a cantilever shelter.

Remove guard railing by signalled crossings.

Review the need and location of all aspects of street furniture as part of a regular 'Street Check'.



Ensure that all street furniture is clearly visible through the use of contrast colouring and visibility marking, and is appropriate for use in the Conservation Area.

Use highways enforcement powers to achieve the removal of unauthorised A-Boards and unauthorised temporary works on the footway.

- **Rubbish sacks on the footway** are an example of a temporary obstruction that can cause problems, particularly for people with restricted sight. Although not a serious problem in the Picton Road / High Street area, there were enough instances to of collected rubbish left by bins to impact on the walking environment.



Ensure that rubbish sacks left on the footway are removed as a priority.

E) Maintenance and enforcement issues

Maintenance and enforcement issues can have a major impact on the quality of the walking environment. Well-maintained streets generate quality walking places, whereas poor maintenance is often responsible for many of the problems that discourage people from walking. The biggest single issue raised by local people during the five audits was the appalling legacy of maintenance in the public realm.

“Having been out today, I’m amazed at just how bad the pavements and street furniture are.”

“There are so many of these pointless patch repairs – they don’t look at the causes.”

“These footpaths all need serious attention, de-clutter it by getting rid of all the unnecessary obstructions, and scrub the streets. The whole area needs a good sweep.”

“You have your head down all the time and don’t look at the shops.”

“Everything’s just patched up, and there is no attention to detail. There’s too much patching – the Council needs to do the repairs properly.”

“You can’t walk on either pavement in Grove Street, because they’re always blocked, so you walk in the road but that’s really bad too – really uneven.”

“It’s not got any sign of love; it’s all neglected on the High Street.”

Local Auditors

Cleanliness

Street cleanliness is average to good in the main section of Picton Road / High Street. In the western section, it is best described as ‘average’, with instances of littering particularly near shops and takeaways. In addition, some litterbins were in need of more frequent emptying, such as the one in the Library frontage, and there were problems of refuse accumulation in entrances and boarded properties.



Footway cleanliness is sometimes poor around bus stops and crossing points, where detritus from ponding, chewing gum and smokers’ debris can make walking unpleasant.



Litter on fenced private frontages also create a poor walking environment, such as in the recess by the Wellington pub, and the pile of debris by the low wall on the vacant site by Prince Alfred Road.



Review street cleaning, bin emptying and refuse collection programmes as necessary to deal with any localised hotspots.

Consider using legal powers to tackle unsightly forecourts such as the area by the Wellington pub, and the vacant site at Prince Alfred Road.

Drainage

The Picton Road / High Street audits were conducted during a period of mixed weather conditions, which highlighted numerous drainage defects in the area. There is also evidence of ponding on footways and long-term water erosion of the carriageway at many of the crossing points, entrances and side road junctions.



Any footway and carriageway works should take the opportunity to design out drainage defects, and to ensure that new features operate adequately in all weather conditions. Gullies should be cleansed regularly to maintain efficiency.



Review drainage problems and resolve them either as part of any resurfacing proposals or as needed.

Graffiti and Fly-posting

The detailed audit area demonstrated a few instances of graffiti and fly posting, for which the council is to be commended. However, the area of Picton Road west of Wellington Road had more fly posting, mainly for city centre music events, and particularly on service cabinets. Some localised graffiti was noted on solid shutters, litterbins, service cabinets and other street furniture.

Any graffiti and fly-posting can give the impression that the area is not cared for, and should be removed as a priority. Furthermore, graffiti and fly posting add to the feeling of disorder in locations that may already feel unsafe for pedestrians, particularly after dark. (see also Section F '*Personal Security*')



Ensure that graffiti and fly posting are removed promptly from street furniture and service cabinets.

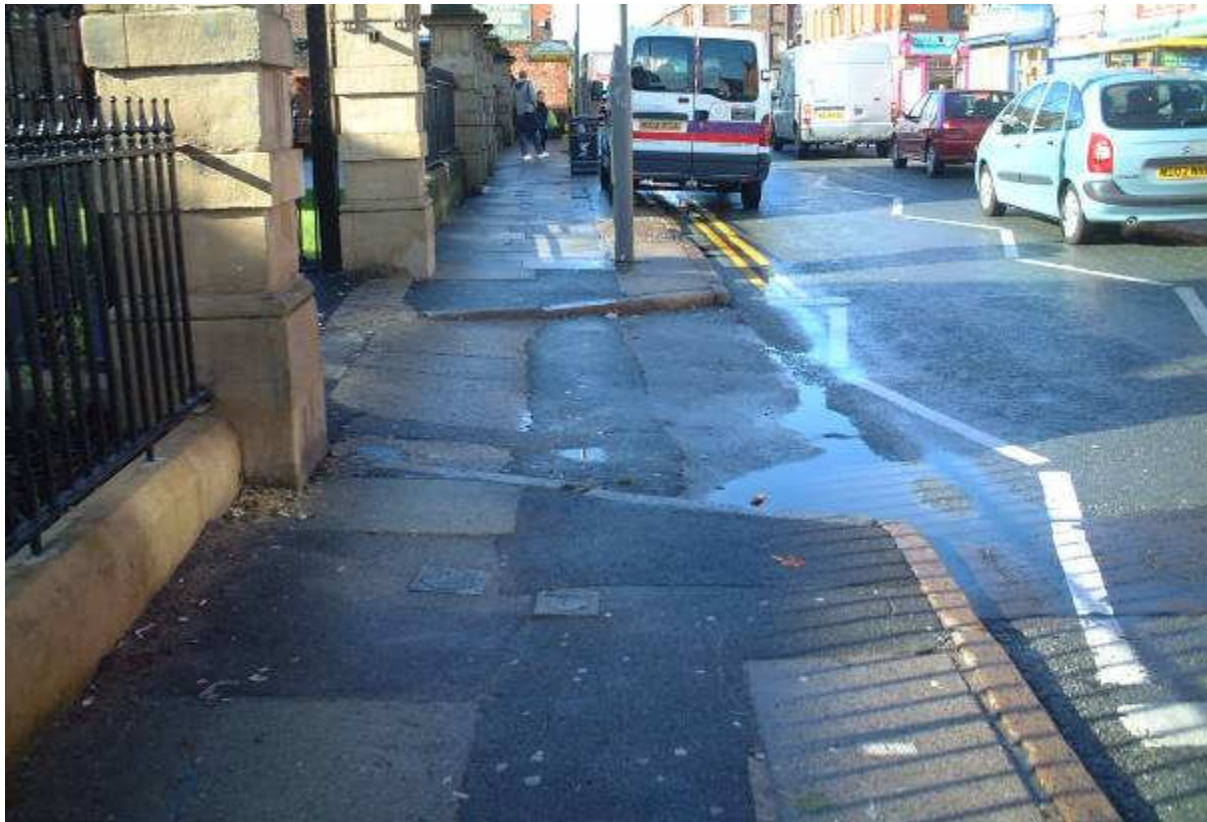
Consider the use of an anti-stick coating on service cabinets.

Discourage the use of solid shutters on shops.

Footway and Carriageway Maintenance

As stated elsewhere, surface quality is generally poor in the detailed audit area, with a few good sections of relatively undisturbed surfacing in the extreme west and east of the audit area. Footway maintenance throughout the audit area is also poor, with many broken slabs, trenched and ponded sections of asphalt, and crumbling old concrete margins, particularly where temporary reinstatements have been undertaken to a poor standard and often become permanent.

In some locations, the poor reinstatement of paving has resulted in quite significant trip hazards. Elsewhere, uneven older surfaces look and feel unattractive to use. The main problem is one of a legacy of inadequate maintenance, worsened by continual excavation and patching, often with inadequate permanent reinstatements.



“When you stop and look at it, you notice that nearly all of these pavements need some sort of maintenance – we haven’t seen a good bit this morning.”

Local auditor

These are not good conditions to encourage more walking. Where used, the traditional artificial stone slab paving adds character to the area, but suffers from poor reinstatement and damage by pavement parking and vehicle overrunning. Its conversion to the universal 400 x 400 slab or asphalt may be an improvement, but at the expense of loss of visual quality, particularly in the Conservation Area, and other Victorian side streets.

Residents felt strongly that the area warranted high quality surfaces, preferably either real or artificial York Stone in the Conservation Area. Elsewhere, there was a preference for old-style artificial stone paving, but laid with a reinforced margin to accommodate the inevitable vehicle overruns. Nobody favoured asphalt or small element block paving, having seen how vulnerable they were to inadequate reinstatement after trenching.

Carriageway maintenance is particularly poor at junctions and crossing points, with patched and uneven surfaces, which are exacerbated by long-term water erosion from ponding. Kerbstones are frequently dislodged and inadequately reinstated, creating further trip hazards, and road markings are often unclear and eroded. In particular, the carriageway in Grove Street is severely rutted, yet forms the main walking route due to the narrow and obstructed footways.



Many stretches of cracked paving by the kerbside were noted. Unless significant improvements can be made in respect of parking enforcement any new footway surface will need to be designed to accommodate constant vehicle overruns, particularly at side road junctions and near commercial premises. Particular attention needs to be paid to the quality of reinstatement after street works, to ensure footway quality is maintained.



Ensure that footway and highway maintenance is carried out to a high standard, particularly following the temporary reinstatements by statutory undertakers that seem to become permanent.

In the longer term, develop a phased resurfacing programme to renew all damaged footway surfaces in an appropriate, attractive and durable material.

Review procedure for checking work, through a footway condition survey, or as part of a regular 'Street Check' for example, and if needs be review contracts to achieve the desired outcome.

Lighting Maintenance

The overall standard of lighting maintenance is reasonable in the audit area, although some problems were identified with lighting equipment. At the time of the

audits, very few defective lights were observed in the 1000-metre stretch of Picton Road / High Street that was the subject of the detailed audit, which is very positive. However, the evening audit did not cover the whole of the northern residential section of Wavertree Conservation Area and the side streets, so any problems in these locations have not been taken into account.

Where lighting defects were noted, they had a significant impact on the street:

- Streetlight not functioning outside 238B Picton Road, creating a very dark stretch of street,
- Streetlight not functioning in Picton Road by the junction with Tiverton Road,
- Streetlight not functioning under the railway bridge, creating a very dark and uninviting route,
- Streetlight not functioning opposite Somerfields,
- Interior light not functioning in the bus shelter opposite the Library,
- Two floodlights and three out of four Belisha beacons were not working at the zebra crossing by the Clock Tower Island.

Lighting provision and impact is another matter. Street lighting is adequate in Picton Road and High Street, but some places feel rather gloomy, where basic highway lighting provision fails to adequately light the footway to the same level. In these locations, such as by Sandown Lane and near the Rathbone Road junction, gloomy patches are accentuated by narrow footway widths, dark buildings and dead frontages. The area from the railway bridge to Grove Street has the worst overall lighting provision. The frontage lighting to the Library and One Stop Shop makes the area much brighter by night.

Elsewhere, on the south side of Picton Road west of Wellington Road, for example, dead commercial frontages and the use of solid shutters in the shopping parades creates a variable overall impression. In these circumstances, and given the relatively low level of pedestrian lighting in general, the loss of even one street light can have a significant impact on the perceptions of safety in an area, as at Tiverton road. Issues were also noted in respect of some unattractive old concrete columns and rusting illuminated traffic signposts. The quality of lighting installations in the Conservation Area was raised as an issue during the audits.

“These old concrete lamp posts are really inappropriate, we should have heritage lights here in the Conservation Area.”

Local auditor

The best area of lighting for those on foot is where the old yellow highway lighting is replaced by high-pressure white lighting, from near Grove Street east to the Mill Lane junction. Here, better highway provision and a more open aspect ensures that the footway is as well illuminated as the carriageway.

Footway lighting is particularly poor on the southern side streets leading to The Mystery, such as Glynn Street and Grange Terrace. Elsewhere south of Picton Road the old wall-mounted lighting is poor, as in Colville Street and Goswell Street. In the northern residential side streets, low-pressure yellow sodium lighting barely gives enough light for facial recognition.



Ensure that any repairs to streetlights are carried out swiftly.

Consider upgrading lighting to give greater light spill on the footways, particularly in the sections of footway in Picton Road and High Street from the railway bridge east to Grove Street.

Review the condition of all columns and control panels on streetlights and illuminated traffic signs. Repair those where cracked, rusted or defective.

Review lighting provision in the side streets south of Picton Road, and particularly the routes to The Mystery via Glynn Street and Grange Terrace.

Ensure that all streetlights are numbered to help people identify them when reporting defects.

Planting Maintenance

There is little on street planting in the audit area, other than the newly created municipal planting at the Library and One Stop Shop frontages, and the less attractive planted area of the Rose Garden. The private planting on the Somerfield frontage is poorly maintained, with many empty sections of raised planter creating a somewhat forlorn aspect.



There are no street trees in Picton Road and High Street, and the only side roads to enjoy street trees in the audit area are Sandown Lane and Victoria Avenue. The main issue of note to arise during the audits in respect to tree maintenance is the need to ensure that streetlights and street nameplates are not obscured by branches, as in places in Sandown Lane, for example. Tree root deformation and the lifting of footway surfaces in Victoria Avenue should be monitored to avoid trip hazards.



Cut back trees where street lighting or nameplates are compromised.

Review root deformation and tree grille lifting in Sandown Lane and Victoria Avenue.

Encourage replanting of the empty raised planters on the Somerfield Car Park boundary.

Street Furniture Maintenance

A characteristic of the Picton Road / High Street area is the generally poor quality of street furniture maintenance. Most items feel 'tired and neglected' with ugly railings, faded street nameplates, dirty traffic signs, leaning posts and crumbling concrete bollards. In part, this reflects the national maintenance legacy whereby items such as traffic signs, posts, and bollards have been in place for a considerable time, and have not benefited from planned review, cleansing, or replacement. As well as often obstructing the footway through insensitive installation, some traffic posts and signs are faded, wrongly orientated, leaning or lacking plates, again generating the feeling that the area is not cared for. This is not conducive to encouraging more walking and less car use.



Numerous of old concrete bollards are in evidence at along Picton Road and High Street, at side road junctions or on private forecourts. These are in a variety of colours, sizes and heights, none of which meet current guidance in terms of contrast, visibility banding, and location. The best solution for essential bollards is for them to be around 800 to 1000mm high, set in a defined 'clutter zone' with other street furniture, the be of a durable material such as cast iron or steel, and painted black with a gold contrast banding. This would also reflect the Conservation Area status of much of the Wavertree area.

The street furniture in Picton Road and High Street adds little to the visual quality of the walking environment, and has not benefited from review or regular maintenance.

Some essential road signs (one way / no entry) are wrongly angled, proving pointless for traffic. Others are totally redundant, such as the sign to the long-closed public toilets on the Clock Tower Island, or the 'bus lane' sign in dead end streets.



The remains of concrete bollards by the Tiverton Street crossing present a trip hazard, and there are redundant posts in many streets such as Chestnut Grove.



“It’s a lot of the same – a legacy of maintenance problems that come together to make it feel a really neglected area.”
Local auditor

The worst areas for general maintenance are the sections of Picton Road between the railway bridge and Grove Street. Here, the street furniture is often dirty: traffic signs are faded, concrete bollards are leaning and crumbling, and many posts are rusty. Elsewhere, street furniture such as guardrailing is un-coordinated and tired.



Ensure that street furniture maintenance is carried out to a high standard.

Review the need for each item of street furniture, adopting an ‘invest to save’ approach by removing non-essential items to reduce future maintenance implications.

Remove unnecessary street furniture and guard railing, upgrade essential guardrailing.

Set up a regular ‘Street Check’ system to pick up defects.

Review procedures for checking work and if needs be review contracts to achieve the desired outcome.

Parking and Highways Enforcement

Parking enforcement in the Picton Road / High Street area appears to be carried out very sporadically, and determined motorists were observed parking wherever space permitted, regardless of yellow lines or whether it would inconvenience pedestrians or not. No parking enforcement officers were seen in the Wavertree area at all during the period of the audits.

“We need more Traffic Wardens and Police here – you never see a uniform because they’re all over at Mossley Hill!”

Local auditor

Parking occurs on footways all along the main road. At side road junctions it is a particular problem. The parking restrictions in Picton Road and High Street are largely ignored, particularly near the shopping parades in the central section by day, and by the many licensed premises to the east by night. Many vehicles were observed parking close by the signalled crossings and in the bus lanes regardless of the waiting restrictions in force.



Parking by vehicles belonging to the car dealership is a significant problem in the residential streets north of Picton Road / High Street particularly as there is inadequate parking for residents and legitimate shopping centre users. Elsewhere, cracked paving testifies to the regular use of footways for parking.



There is an evident need for greater parking enforcement to maintain pedestrian routes along footways in the Wavertree area, to ensure that pedestrians have an unobstructed route through the area.



Introduce parking enforcement officers to control footway parking, to reduce footway damage, and to ensure clear pavements.

Review persistent parking problems arising in the residential side streets from the car dealership and take enforcement action if the problems persist.

Highways enforcement can be used to tackle issues of obstruction such as the unauthorised display of A-Boards on the public highway. A-Boards are a particular problem for people with vision difficulties by virtue of the fact that their location is not fixed and they tend to be moved across the footway at will.

There are particular problems created by the insensitive positioning of A-Boards outside the shops and cafes in Picton Road and High Street, where already narrow footways and existing street furniture clutter is exacerbated by the random positioning of A-Boards, further narrowing the footway in an area of pedestrian use.



Monitor the locations of A-Boards, use Highways enforcement to seek the removal of unauthorised signs, and to prevent unauthorised working on the footway.

F) Personal security

The decision to walk is strongly influenced by perceptions of how safe the journey will be. While danger from traffic is important, fear of street crime and anti-social behaviour is probably an even greater concern.

How safe a place feels is heavily influenced by the presence of other people nearby. The most effective initiative that can reduce fear of street crime is to encourage higher levels of legitimate pedestrian activity in public space throughout the day and evening.

In general, the Wavertree area has a regular flow of people on the street, often alighting from buses, going to shops, the park, the many bars, restaurants and takeaways, but the central section would benefit from more people to boost natural surveillance and security later at night. It seems to be quite a safe place to walk, even at night, but there are some instances where it feels less safe for walking. These include the dead end streets to the south between Picton Road and the park, and the western section beyond Wellington Road, where there is less activity, more vacant and boarded buildings, and where anti-social behaviour is likely to be more prevalent.



It is important to address these concerns as a priority, to avoid a deterioration in perceptions of safety and a downward spiral in walking activity after dark.

It must be stressed that the decision to walk is often based on people's perceptions of safety – they may not be justified by local crime statistics. Decisions on whether to walk or not are made in response to these perceptions – local people do not check local crime statistics before using a particular walking route. If walking and public transport use is to increase in the audit area, these local perceptions must be addressed by making places feel safer.

For an environment to feel safe, it needs five key characteristics:

- 1. Good lighting levels**
- 2. Clear sightlines**
- 3. Natural surveillance**
- 4. The presence of exit routes and**
- 5. A lack of anti-social behaviour**

Lighting

Lighting is a key issue for pedestrian security – improved lighting can be more effective than CCTV, and in itself makes CCTV more effective.³ Ideally, pedestrians need illumination at a lower level than the carriageway that assists facial recognition, to maximise the sense of personal security. Street lighting design tends to be compromised by the need to provide for the very different needs of pedestrians and vehicles.

A useful source of diffused lighting at the appropriate level for people on foot often comes from windows of adjoining buildings, and the use of open grille shutters on commercial premises. The latter is not always present in the shopping street due to the excessive use of solid shutters at night, and dead frontages such as the section from Wellington Road to Goswell Street, so the pedestrian is totally reliant on the quality of the streetlights, or light spill from commercial premises.

In general, the lighting in the Picton Road / High Street area is adequate for most of its length, but with gloomy patches where solid shutters are used, where there are dead frontages such as brick walls or flank walls, or where streetlights were not functioning. Particular instances of poor lighting were observed by the dead end streets south of Picton Road such as Glynn Street, Grange Terrace (the main pedestrian routes to 'The Mystery'), Colville Street and Goswell Street.

Other gloomy places included the section of Picton Road opposite the Library by Southdale Road, the alley to Paradise Gardens by 22 High Street, at the side of Abbeygate Apartments, at Pye Street, by Frederick Street, at the Rose Garden, and at the railway bridge, where one failed light really affected perceptions of safety.



³ NACRO, May 2002, 'To CCTV or not to CCTV?'

“This is horrible – the guardrailing makes you feel trapped, the light isn’t working, there’s a lot more traffic noise and it smells.”

Local auditor

Many of the northern side streets, such as Grove Street and Chestnut Grove, appear gloomy and unwelcoming by night, due to much lower levels of lighting than on the adjoining section of High Street. The many private accesses to commercial properties in the section of High Street between the Rose Garden and The Lamb pub were particularly gloomy.

The variation in lighting quality is primarily due to the presence of older light fittings in Picton Road and the residential streets compared to the eastern section of High Street to the Mill Lane junction, and the existence of dead frontages and shutters.

Most bus shelters (except the one opposite the Library) had reasonable levels of lighting, which is to be welcomed. The issue of lighting in the park was raised, plus the fact that it was closed at dusk, with mixed views expressed from those on the audits.

“It feels quite safe in some places here, but not others, such as the bit near Sandown Lane, where the lighting is worse; there are narrow pavements and lots of solid shutters.”

Local auditor



Adequate lighting will not encourage more people to walk at night, but good lighting will. A full evening survey should be undertaken and further lighting improvements included in any street works, including the replacement of any rusting and damaged columns. A programme of tree pruning should also be undertaken to clear obstructive foliage near streetlights where this is an issue, in Sandown Lane, for example.

There are always opportunities to improve lighting specifically to benefit pedestrians. The route would benefit from the introduction of more high-powered lighting, ideally affixed to buildings to maintain clear footways and highlight the routes to and from bus stops and the park, for example.



Consider further lighting upgrades to benefit pedestrians as part of any mainstream highways proposals, including the addition of lower level footway lights on street light columns, and upgraded lighting on the routes to The Mystery, in Picton Road between Glynn Road and Wellington Road, and near alleyways and recesses.

Cut back trees where they compromise lighting.

Carry out a detailed evening survey of lighting. Resist solid shutters in planning applications, and encourage any existing users to change to open security grilles.

Where one of the five key personal security characteristics of a location is compromised (in these instances lighting, or dead frontages), extra care should be taken to minimise problems with the other security elements on that route.

Sightlines

Sightlines in an area with a traditional linear street pattern like Picton Road / High Street are usually very good. If one can see the route ahead, it is easy to judge whether danger will be encountered in good time (this is why blind corners feel so unsafe - one can literally walk into trouble).

Sightlines in the audit area are generally good – even walkers accessing the street from the side roads can see through to the other end of the street before starting to walk through. The significant exception to this is when sightlines are blocked by rows of parked cars, walls, or intruding street furniture, which restrict through views and can create unease. The solid-end bus shelter panel opposite the Library is another obstruction to good sightlines. The alley through to Paradise Gardens is another point of unease by night, due to the blind corner at its end, as is the area beyond Wellington Grove.





Review pedestrian level street lighting in the vicinity of the alleys, and consider whether additional columns are justified.

Convert the bus shelter opposite the Library to a cantilever shelter to open up sightlines on this section of Picton Road. Review lighting by the alley to Paradise gardens and beyond Wellington Grove.

Natural Surveillance

In the main section of Picton Road / High Street, natural surveillance from adjoining buildings is reasonably good in the daytime, particularly from those properties nearest the road. However, this is less good at night, particularly when businesses are closed, where solid shutters are used, or where parked vehicles obscure views.

The many 'dead' commercial sections of street on both sides of Picton Road west of Rathbone Road give no natural surveillance. The sense of unease experienced in this location at night is compounded by the gloominess of the surrounding buildings, with excessive fly posting and hoardings.

Similarly, the eastern section of High Street from Prince Alfred Road to Church Road North has little natural surveillance by day or night. Dead or vacant sites and frontages with high flank walls combine uneasily to ensure that there is no visible human activity beyond the street, and few people looking into it.

Consideration should be given to ensuring that lighting levels on the footway in this section of High Street are as high as possible in these locations, to compensate for the lack of active frontages providing natural surveillance. An imbalance in natural surveillance will detract from constant levels of pedestrian movement at all times, which is essential for a sense of safety.

The significant impact of solid shutters and little illumination from shop fronts on the shopping area create another area of unease once the shops have closed. This is offset to some extent by the continual flow of traffic.

"I'm surprised that the traffic is still so heavy at this time of night, but it is a benefit as it gives a sense of protection."

Local auditor

By far the most valuable natural surveillance comes from other people on foot. Any measure that encourages walking in the audit area will make it a safer place for everyone.



Seek to implement measures to encourage more people to walk in the Wavertree Village area to boost natural surveillance.

Consider lighting improvements where dead frontages impact upon the street, such as the section of Picton Road west of Rathbone Road / Wellington Road, by the vacant site and Job Centre near Prince Alfred Road, and by shops where solid shutters are used.

Exit routes

Exit routes provide people with the opportunity to avoid confrontation or other potential danger. They are typically missing from pedestrian subways, footbridges and alleyways. The predominantly straight traditional street layout of Picton road and High Street and its many side streets offers multiple exit routes from the main road.

The detailed audit route did not include any rear accesses and alleys beyond Picton Road and High Street. From anecdotal comments and a review of street plans, those that exist are primarily behind residential properties, and appear to be predominantly for access and servicing rather than through routes, and not subject to high pedestrian flows. The exceptions are the alley by 22 High Street through to Paradise Gardens, and the section of Frederick Grove from High Street to Chestnut Grove, which would benefit from improved lighting to compensate for their gloominess and lack of through vision. Local people commented that most alleys in the residential area have really benefited from the City Council's alley-gating project.



However, the condition of all alleys and accesses should be regularly monitored to avoid any build up of refuse or maintenance problems and to reduce their attractiveness for anti-social activities. The often unsightly appearance of private access routes can influence perceptions of safety on the street, particularly if they are strewn with refuse, as at the former entrance to The Mystery just west of the Abbeygate Apartments, for example.



Review lighting provision in the alley to Paradise Gardens and the southern section of Frederick Grove.

Monitor maintenance in private accesses to avoid creating negative feelings of safety on the streets.

Encourage owners of commercial premises to keep their accesses and frontages clean and well maintained.

Anti-social behaviour

There is some localised physical evidence of anti-social behaviour in the Picton Road / High Street area, with incidences of graffiti and fly posting noted during the audits. Broken glass by Greenside Avenue and dumping of bottles, wrappers and other refuse by Prince Alfred Road tends to reinforce local concerns that the changing local evening economy has an adverse impact on the area.



Taken together, these activities detract from the quality of the pedestrian environment, and can convey a sense of neglect. This in turn can compromise perceived safety at night, particularly for older people. The prompt removal of rubbish, graffiti and fly-posting, and the repair of damage will give the message that the Council is dealing with these problems, and will prevent an escalation to more serious acts – the ‘Broken Window’ Theory.





Local residents cited instances of anti-social behaviour, ranging from the depositing of takeaway food containers to street urination and pavement vomit outside the many pubs in the eastern section of High Street as examples of this trend. Other people expressed concern about the large numbers of young people gathering near Lake Road, and of under-age drinking in the playground. The Youth Service is running a Youth Engagement and Diversion programme, which is tackling this issue and should be continued. A key issue is the early closing of The Mystery at dusk, which reduces the places for young people to go at night.

This also impacts on the level of dog fouling in the area, as in winter, the park is closed before many dog owners return in the evening from work, and consequently there are few places to take their dogs for a walk. Residents had mixed views on the use of anti-dog fouling logos on the footways, particularly in the Conservation Area, with most feeling they were not effective and detrimental to the character of the locality. More dog bins may be an alternative approach.



Ensure that graffiti, fly posting and damage to street furniture are rectified as soon as possible. Encourage local residents to report damage.

Support the Youth Engagement work of the Youth Service and include young people and dog owners in discussions about The Mystery and its opening times.

Consider the introduction of dog bins in strategic locations where a particular problem is identified, but minimising clutter with other street furniture.

Work through the Licensing Act to ensure that managers of licensed premises are mindful of their responsibilities for the areas immediately outside their premises, and that remedial measures are included in their Operating Plans. Encourage pavement washing in areas of abuse.

G) Aesthetics

The beauty and interest, vitality and variety of the streetscene are what make people slow down and enjoy themselves. The sense that public space is valued by those who live in it, use it and care for it encourages us all to value it too.

Built Form

The Wavertree area has developed from a historic village through to a typical late 19th / early 20th century city centre fringe commercial and residential area, with adjacent densely developed homes adjoining streets that carry far more traffic than ever envisaged. The commercial buildings in Picton Road and High Street are in a varying condition. Many historic buildings have found new lives as licensed premises, with some stylish new shop fronts giving a pleasing contrast to the ugly and utilitarian standards found elsewhere, particularly to the west of Wellington Road. Regardless of age or heritage interest, most buildings, such as the Old Town Hall, would benefit from some basic maintenance, if only a fresh coat of paint.



The Wavertree Village Conservation Area includes the main road frontage east from Rathbone Road / Wellington Road, yet many developments show scant regard to the heritage of the area, with unsightly shop fronts, brash advertising, and inappropriate urban form. Design quality and maintenance is often poor, signifying a lack of commercial confidence and investment in the commercial realm, which is a contrast to the generally pleasing and well-maintained buildings in the northern residential areas.

The restored facades of the Library and the One Stop Shop add elegance and attractiveness to the street scene, particularly as their frontages are no longer car parks but landscaped pedestrian places. However, the adjoining Citizens Advice

Bureau at 242 Picton Road detracts from this elegance, with a frontage dominated by ugly railings and parked cars. This building has the potential to be the 'Third Grace of Picton Road' if its frontage could be similarly enhanced. A Conservation Area Enhancement Strategy or master plan could help to raise awareness of design issues and contribute to a better public realm, to the benefit of those on foot.



The local shopping parades add vitality to the street, but may generate clutter that obstructs the footway, such as A boards, have unattractive shop fronts and many use solid shutters at night, which detract from the quality of the area after dark.

“These solid shutters are never cleaned – they look dingy, shut out light, and the dirt rubs off on to your clothes.”

“I never realised till today just how awful some of these shop fronts are – you wouldn’t believe it was a Conservation Area.”

Local Auditors



Work proactively with local enterprises to reduce or minimise frontage clutter, upgrade existing shop fronts and replace solid shutters with open grille security shutters.

Work with the building owners of 242 Picton Road to upgrade the frontage and reduce car parking in this location.

Commission a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Enhancement Strategy to provide a framework for improvement.

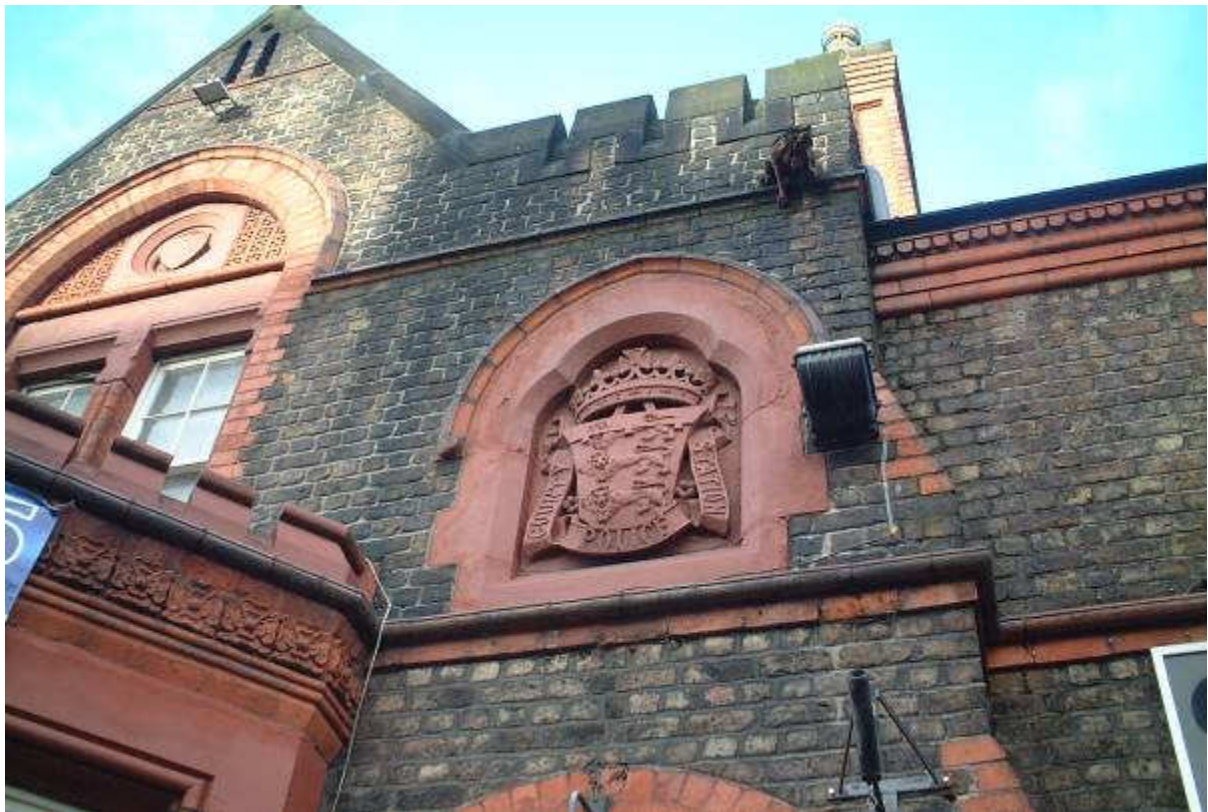
Consider whether legal powers under conservation legislation can be used to upgrade facades in the Conservation Area.

Human interest and Identity

Aesthetic pleasure is also derived from the presence of others and human activity. Most people can be seen finding their greatest pleasure on foot from the presence of friends, neighbours and strangers, or watching children at play, for example.

The main thing lacking in parts of the Wavertree area is a sense of identity. Away from the civic icons of the central section, and the remains of the old village to the east, it can easily appear identical to any other city centre fringe street in any urban area in the country, and perhaps somewhat bland and soulless by virtue of its lack of character, particularly in the western section. This underplays the fact that it is home to many close-knit communities, and valuable local facilities.

This local distinctiveness could be achieved through the rediscovery of Wavertree's historic 'village identity' to boost the distinctiveness of the area and encourage greater civic pride. This could include improved 'gateways' to the village at either end of the shopping centre, for example, based on an upgrading of the ugly railway bridge in the west, and a linked pedestrian space around the Picton Clock Tower to the east.



Such a project could include Improved signage (including simple 'Welcome to Wavertree Village' signs), with interpretative maps and panels, upgraded surfacing material, high quality maintenance, clutter reduction and distinctive and appropriate street furniture. Any enhancements should be undertaken in tandem with a co-ordinated signage and identity policy, including local area maps at junctions, community facilities, and in the shopping areas.



Consider the introduction of a themed identity for the Wavertree Village area, to promote and explain the historic origins of the area, add interest, boost local distinctiveness and pride.

Detailing

At walking speeds, detail becomes all-important. This is just as valid when considering the aesthetics of place as it is for the functionality of walking routes.

In the audit area, real pleasure could come not just from the vibrancy of this historic area, but also from the details that distract and delight. For example:



- The 19th century granite drinking fountain clinging grimly to the railway bridge,
- The stunning skyline of the Library and One Stop Shop,
- The many historic building names still visible above 21st century facades,



- Colourful shop window and frontage displays,
- The Picton Clock Tower gracefully closing the vista to the east,
- Colourful tiling on Victorian public houses, and,
- Graceful street trees framing attractive houses.



Sometimes these details come together to improve functionality and enhance the street-scene. However, care should be taken to ensure these facilities do not also hinder those on foot.



Excessive shop front displays, whilst attractive, can also become obstructions when they spill over on to the pedestrian space, for example, and fallen leaves can make pavements slippery if not removed promptly. As with the bigger things, such details need co-ordination and integration to maximise their value in the walking environment.

Planting

The traditional urban form of the audit area inevitably means that space for planting is at a premium, particularly in the western section beyond Pearson Street, where footways are narrower, there are no front gardens and the few private forecourts are used for retailing.

The most noticeable thing about the Picton Road / High Street area is the absence of street trees, a contrast to many other streets in the area. Without the glimpse of greenery near the Rose Garden, this would be a totally hard and unattractive area.



“We’ve seen very few trees or greenery on this audit. Perhaps there could be more trees in the street, or hanging baskets?”

Local auditor

There are some opportunities for tree planting in High Street in the wider sections of public footway by the Abbeygate Apartments, on the parade at Lake Road, and on housing land in Wellington Road. The introduction of suitable species of small street trees may be possible in these locations, if service runs permit, and provided lighting levels and footway widths are not compromised. Elsewhere, the introduction of hanging baskets could be good.

The planting at the Rose Garden by Grove Street could be significantly upgraded with the introduction of some more exotic specimen planting. The boundaries to the Somerfield car park could be similarly enhanced through quality planting in the empty raised planters bounding the site.

The Council could consider developing a Greening Strategy to maximise opportunities to include planting in the audit area, perhaps in the context of a future 'Wavertree in Bloom' initiative.



Develop a Greening Strategy and review opportunities for street tree planting.

Consider the introduction of suitable specimen street trees near the Abbeygate Apartments, by Lake Road shops, and in Wellington Road.

Work with Somerfield to enhance their boundaries through improved planting.

Consider developing a Wavertree in Bloom initiative to encourage private sector interest in improved greening.

Aesthetic challenges

The Picton Road / High Street area faces a number of challenges. Its aesthetic potential as a great place for people to live, visit and walk in is compromised by:

- The dominance of motor traffic provision, and on-street car parking,
- Few spaces or 'natural meeting points' to rest and linger en route,
- A severe legacy of maintenance in the public realm, particularly in Picton Road,
- The narrow footways in some places, particularly in the central section, which reduces opportunities to stop, chat, and stare,
- The visual dominance of traffic-related street furniture – e.g. traffic signs, bollards and commercially brash advertising panels on bus shelters,
- Areas of neglect such as some of the commercial frontages in the central section near the garage and car dealership, for example, where poor maintenance, and inappropriate accesses create a very negative environment for those on foot,
- The impact of vacant and boarded up frontages,
- The intensity of use in the central section, where aesthetic aspirations are outweighed by the functionality of the area, and lack of investment confidence.



Carry out an enhanced maintenance regime to redress the worst issues in the public realm.

Develop a comprehensive project to create more small opportunities for people to linger and enjoy the route along Picton Road and High Street.

Consider installing railings or a low wall to separate the petrol filling station from the footway.

Consider making grants to target the worst commercial frontages, through measures such as painted hoardings for vacant premises and enhancement schemes for inappropriate designs and signage.

Target works at the most prominent eyesore sites, including private frontages and vacant commercial sites.

H) Traffic

In keeping with the traditional street layout of this historic city centre fringe residential and commercial area, and its proximity to Liverpool City Centre, the motor vehicle is particularly dominant along Picton Road and High Street. At certain times, it is also dominant in the grid of side streets, such as Sandown Lane and Prince Alfred Road, which experience 'rat running' problems. Overall, the very high traffic flow and speed have an adverse impact on the experience of people walking in the area.

There are many non-traffic related opportunities to improve conditions for people on foot, but ultimately, it will be necessary to address the impact of traffic as well.



In considering how to improve the walking environment of the audit area, a decision needs to be taken as to what level of provision for traffic is appropriate, now and in the future. Are the mutual aims of social inclusion, quality of life and personal safety best pursued by maintaining provision for past and present traffic capacity, or by improving walkability? Do the vehicles currently using the Wavertree area need to be there, or is it yet another example of traffic invading a residential area to save a few minutes on a much longer journey, or to access the city centre more quickly?

The timing may be right to be more radical and to advocate constraint through congestion. Narrower roads, improved crossing facilities and less tolerance of the right of the private vehicle to park 'at will' could be combined to make this a less attractive route for through traffic. In time, this may force drivers to go back to the main city gateways, if measures such as carriageway build outs, and longer crossing times can be achieved.

From local knowledge and observation on the audits, it was evident that local drivers had refined the knack of taking the shallow speed humps in the residential streets at speed. Nevertheless, auditors generally considered the northern residential streets to have the best environment.

Issues relating to traffic have already been mentioned in the foregoing sections, with specific recommendations where relevant. In summary, the problems are:

- Severe congestion for most of the day, which compromises crossing movements,
- A very straight road alignment for most of Picton Road and High Street, that positively challenges drivers to travel at inappropriate and excessive speeds when congestion eases,
- A traditional grid layout of side streets that are sometimes of generous dimensions for traffic and thus attractive for 'rat-running' to avoid congestion on the main roads,
- Poor road layout at key junctions, with little consideration of the needs of pedestrians, particularly when crossing Wellington Road / Rathbone Road crossroads, the many side roads and accesses that adjoin Picton Road and High Street, and where two traffic lanes exist at the entrance or exit of a one way side street.



- Many instances of excessive on-street (and on-pavement) car parking that appears to go un-reprimanded, and which impact upon scarce pedestrian space. Also parking very close to side road junctions, blocking direct routes.
- The presence of commercial properties particularly in the narrow central section of Picton Road, which create localised problems through delivery and servicing requirements, and generate increased levels of heavy goods vehicle traffic.



Consider the feasibility of introducing shallow raised tables at all crossing points on Picton Road and High Street. These may slow traffic in the off peak hours and also provide informal step free crossing points if constructed flush with each adjoining kerb.



Review traffic movement patterns to assess current rat-running routes such as Prince Alfred Road, and consider further measures to reduce speed in these streets, such as kerb build outs.

Install side road entry tables at all junctions in Picton Road and High Street.

Consider whether the side road junctions can be narrowed to one traffic lane only or could be made one way in or out.

Develop a Parking Strategy to consider the problems of on street and pavement parking in the whole area, rather than tackling problems on a piecemeal basis.

Consider measures to deter unnecessary commercial vehicles from using Picton Road and High Street as a convenient route to the city centre.

Traffic dominance

The problems created by traffic will need to be addressed as part of wider programmes to reduce car dependence across the country. Traffic generated by issues like employment and personal travel preferences cannot be resolved simply by changing the way public space is managed in the Wavertree area.

However, it is important to recognise the opportunities that exist to start changing conditions in our neighbourhoods to encourage walking right now, particularly following the introduction of traffic restraint successfully in other areas through techniques such as calming, 20 mph zones and Home Zones.

Where traffic restraint and calming has been introduced in the northern residential areas, the difference in environmental quality is astounding.

“It’s nice and quiet here, such a contrast to the main road.”

“It’s so beautiful here in Orford Street.”

“The big question is, should all this traffic be here at all ?”

Local auditors

Perhaps the timing is right to extend this approach to the commercial areas too?

Liverpool City Council has the expertise and overview required to review its area-wide traffic planning and calming options in the light of this changing shift of thinking about residential areas. In a dense urban area such as this, decisions about individual streets obviously cannot be taken in isolation, as the impact of any change need to be considered in the wider context. This knowledge should be used to support the concept of further traffic reduction in the wider area through the introduction of measures to reduce traffic flows to those vehicles that need, rather than choose, to drive through this residential area. This would also benefit public transport users, by freeing up valuable road space for greater bus use.

By seeking to improve conditions for pedestrians and to encourage walking throughout the audit area, the Council is working to create a better balance in transport choices that will reduce our over-dependence on the car, and work towards living streets we can all visit, live in, use and enjoy.

Key Projects

Project One: Reconnecting The Mystery

The major challenge to increasing walking in areas such as Wavertree is the historically piecemeal approach to public realm improvement. As a result, physically isolated pedestrian attractions, facilities, and spaces are more commonplace than well-designed, coherent and connected pedestrian routes. One way in which many of the suggestions in this report might be implemented would be as part of a project working towards the reclamation of these isolated areas through better physical access and visual integration. One such opportunity is the reconnection of The Mystery open space with its immediate catchment and Picton Road / High Street. The Mystery is an extensive area of open spaces and sports facilities bequeathed to the local populace in 1895 by a mystery benefactor.

In May 1895, it was announced that an anonymous donor had purchased the former Grange estate together with some adjoining properties, and was presenting the whole 108 acres to the City of Liverpool. The donor had levelled and grassed the area. It was to be a venue for organised sports, and a place for children to run about in, not a park for 'promenading' in the Victorian tradition. The new park was immediately nicknamed 'The Mystery'. At the time the Press speculated that the donor might be Philip Holt - a ship owner who himself lived on the edge of Sefton Park - but this was neither confirmed nor denied. Looking across the park (and the newly built Athletics Centre) towards the city centre skyline, the foresight of preserving such a 'green lung' can be appreciated today just as it was in 1895. If Holt was indeed the Mystery man, Wavertree has a lot to thank him for. (Courtesy of the Wavertree Society/Mike Chitty)

It is soon to be the home of an improved Leisure Centre and Swimming Pool.



Problems

Regardless of which direction The Mystery is approached on foot, the potential user faces the prospect of uncertain safety, a tortuous route, difficult crossings and domination by the pattern of traffic movement and parking. This in turn could dissuade people from using it to its full potential.



Children living just a few streets away may not be allowed to walk to the park unaccompanied, older people are hesitant to use inadequate crossing points, and users may be concerned about aspects of anti-social behaviour which have been generated in part by a legacy of maintenance neglect, and an increase in high impact evening activities nearby.

The approaches to The Mystery from the Picton Road / High Street area are via the unadopted Glynn Street and Grange Terrace. In these streets, there are narrow cluttered footways, encroached by pavement parking and despoiled by uneven surfaces. These streets are both dead ends and serve no traffic function, and are used primarily for convenience parking.

There are no signs to the park from Picton Road / High Street, and the gate in Grange Terrace is not visible from a distance. The main ornamental gates are in an unsightly condition and are usually closed, leaving the only access through a narrow gate to the side, which is barely wide enough to get a buggy through, and has an uneven surface. If you did not know the area, you would assume it was not an access point due to lack of signage.

Once at the park, there are no maps or interpretative facilities, nor important information such as the location of more distant entrances and exits, and opening and closing times. There is no indication of the nearest toilet facilities, an important consideration for many groups of park users. There is nothing to indicate through routes, and links to other facilities such as the city centre cycle route.

However, the timing could not be better to achieve an improved access route to the park. The existing outdoor athletics and sports facilities are being complemented by a new Leisure Centre and 50-metre swimming pool, due to open in 2006 and which will serve a much wider catchment than Wavertree alone.

The challenge, therefore, is to build on these internal enhancements, and to improve accessibility for those on foot or coming by public transport. It is equally important to make the right improvements beyond its boundaries in Picton Road and High Street, those that will have the greatest benefit to local people in accessing their local park.

It will also be important to reduce the impact that the new facilities may have on traffic volume and movement in the area. A large car park is being provided, that will be accessed from Wellington Road via the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road / Picton Road crossroads. This is already a tortuous junction for those on foot to cross, with no protected pedestrian crossing facilities. Any increase in traffic flow at this junction will only exacerbate conditions for those on foot unless the junction can be upgraded to include full pedestrian crossing facilities.



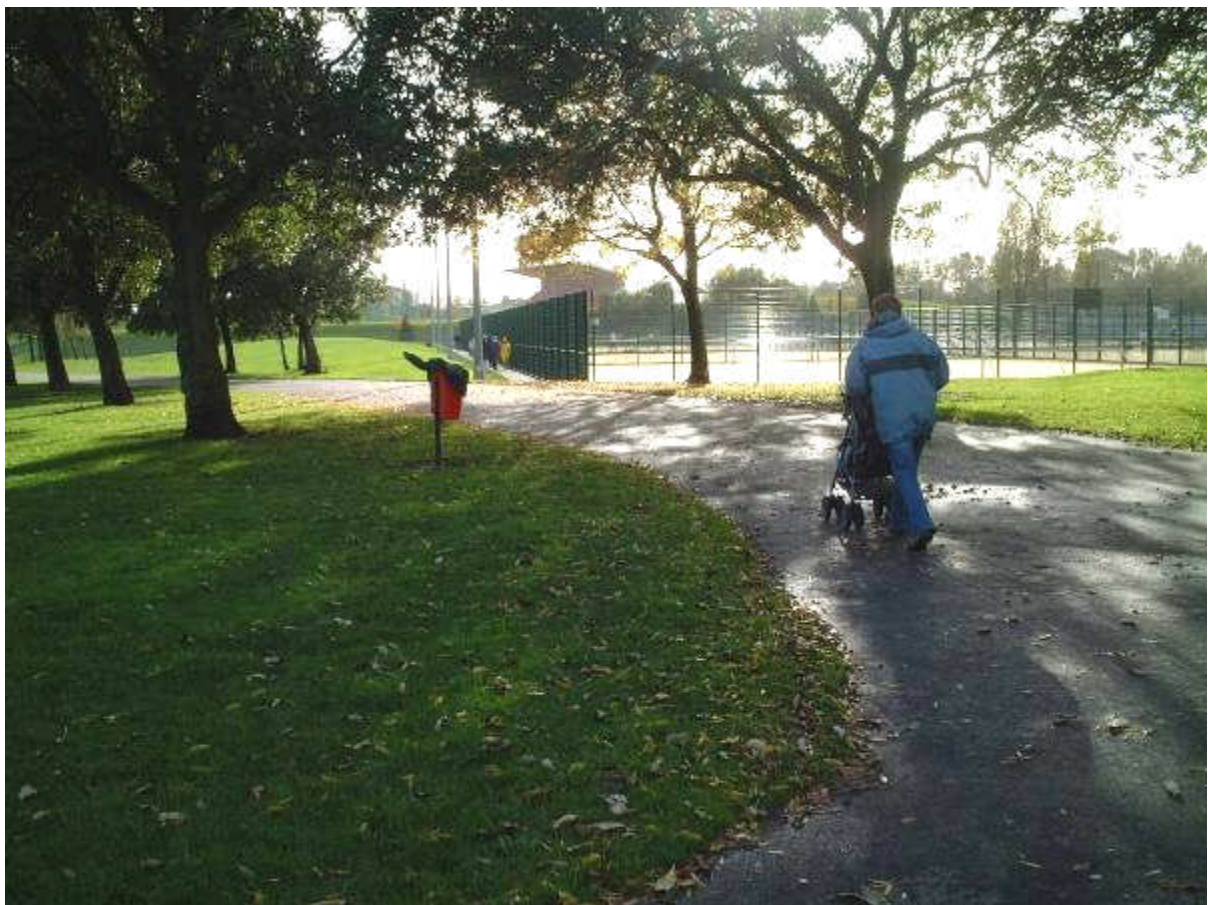
Solutions

The key elements of a project to reconnect The Mystery with its surroundings are as follows:

- Review the layout of space on the routes forming the entrances to the park, to give better options and facilities. Reduce or remove parking from the area between Paradise Gardens and the entrance in Grange Terrace, and improve surfacing to give an unobstructed and step free route to the park. Treat Glynn Street similarly, and upgrade all lighting on these routes with attractive heritage fixtures.
- Consider more radical means of controlling traffic volume and speed in Wellington Road in the vicinity of the main park entrance. Also improve pedestrian crossing facilities at the park entrance and at the Wellington Road / Rathbone Road crossroads to enhance direct and safe access for people on foot.

- Following on from the above suggestions, consider creating a more prominent main entrance to the park. This could create more of a central hub and meeting point, with grouped seating away from the traffic that encourages conversation. Seating is best located to avoid approach from behind, with back and arm rests. Warm materials, such as timber, are more comfortable for seating. Also include bins, signage and maps to relate the park to its local area.
- Review and upgrade lighting in the streets adjoining the Park entrances, to enhance their use as a pedestrian link between Picton Road / High Street and the residential area to the north at all times of the year. Also consider lighting improvements on the paths within the park to promote greater use as a pedestrian link in winter months. Consider painting and floodlighting the elegant park entrance gates.
- Install public information boards with local maps and signage for local destinations in the park entrances. Consider adding 'The Mystery' to the park gates in sympathetic lettering.
- Install route and area maps in bus shelters at the bus stops in Picton Road / High Street, to encourage greater use of public transport to visit the park.
- Resurface all pavements on the approaches to the park in a high quality, smooth and durable surface material, removing any drainage defects and trip hazards.
- Ensure that the internal paths and circulation routes within the park have the same level of facilities as are sought on the streets i.e. smooth step free surfaces, good drainage, adequate litter bins, seating, lighting and visual attractions such as colourful planting. Add times and distances to any signs used within the park, and particularly to indicate the nearest toilet facilities.
- Consider an enhanced Police and Warden presence in the park and the streets nearby to redress fears of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Consider opening the park beyond dusk, to give young people in the area somewhere to go (as suggested by the Youth Service representative, but not all auditors agreed with this, so requires further consultation).
- Develop a local organisation such as the 'Friends of The Mystery' if one does not already exist, or a Park User Group, to ensure that all management and enhancement proposals include and respect all users' requirements. Seek input and ideas from local residents of all ages (including the dog-owning community) as well as regular park users.
- Develop a community group such as 'Wavertree Volunteers' to undertake tasks such as painting park gates and checking the condition of any new signs and maps

- Consider positive actions to encourage more older people to use the Park, such as setting up a regular Healthy Walks programme in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust if such activities do not already take place.
- Encourage local Schools to use the Park as an extra resource.
- Develop a programme of community events based on the Park, to attract new users, to encourage more people to walk rather than drive to the park, and to allay any fears of those who would not currently use the park.
- Consider installing an automatic public convenience near the Grange Terrace entrance to the Park, to also serve people on foot using Picton Road / High Street.



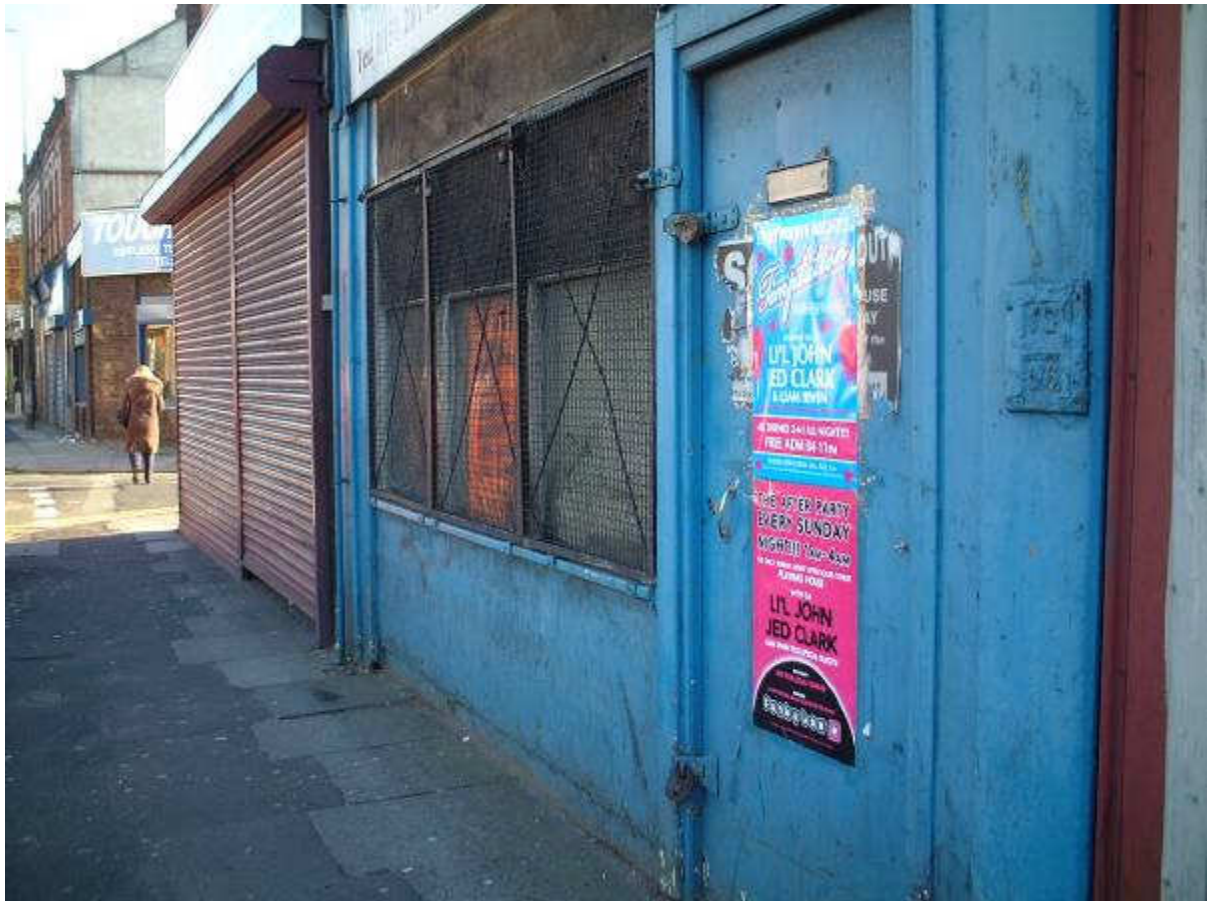
If the opportunity can be grasped to really improve pedestrian access to The Mystery through the creation of high quality access routes from and along Picton Road / High Street, the benefits will be reaped by all those who use the streets and the park, thus adding immense value to this cherished local asset for all sections of the community.

Project Two: Enhancing Wavertree Village and Green

Whilst Wavertree Village may not be a major pedestrian destination in its own right, its status as a District Shopping Centre means it is well placed to act as an important local facility for the residential hinterland it potentially serves to the north, south, east and west. To the north, there are the attractive residential areas of Wavertree Village Conservation Area, to the east the more suburban areas of Mount Olive and Childwall Road, and to the west and south are areas of high-density older terraced housing with a lively and vibrant multicultural community. Wavertree has the potential to be the essential local shopping and commercial centre, and with a historic identity in its own right. However, footfall is lighter than in the past, businesses are less stable, and there are few essential facilities such as banks.

“It used to be a thriving area, never an empty shop until the supermarkets came, but now it’s shabby, and all the traffic puts people off coming here. But there’s some hope – those two empty shops next to me are being worked on now – one’s going to be another restaurant I think.”

Local Shopkeeper in Picton Road



Picton Road / High Street is home to a number of commercial premises, local businesses and valuable community attractions, such as the Library, One Stop Shop, Citizens Advice Bureau, and access to nearby schools, community centres, places of worship, and The Mystery park. Collectively, the pedestrian use generated by these many roles should warrant a high quality streetscape. Sadly, this is not the case. It contrasts sharply with areas of Liverpool nearer the centre, or in the more affluent suburbs, which have received more significant interest or investment in the public realm in recent years.

Most of the area falls within the Wavertree Village Conservation Area, yet this too has not experienced the attention that other Conservation Areas have enjoyed. There has been no Conservation Area Character Appraisal or Enhancement Strategy, and decisions and enforcement opportunities have not led to an upgrading of the public realm. Under heritage legislation, the Council has a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement for their Conservation Areas. Following this approach could be a way of raising the profile of Wavertree and of creating a master plan for the future enhancement and improvement of its degraded public realm.



Problems

The locational advantages of Wavertree are to some extent negated by its poor overall environmental quality, particularly for those on foot. This project looks to redress these disadvantages by the consideration of an integrated project to make walking in Picton Road and High Street a much better experience for all.

The general lack of facilities for pedestrians and fragmented crossing opportunities in the Wavertree area do little to encourage more people to walk rather than use cars for short journeys. This in turn further disadvantages those people who do not have access to a car, for whatever reason.

These disadvantages could be redressed by implementing a package of high quality measures, which together would create a much better walking environment. This could be achieved through the creation of an accessible and seamless route with good crossing points, interest and information, to positively encourage walking, social interaction, and greater public transport use.

Solutions

Many of the key elements of this project have been discussed in detail in the respective sections of this report, but can be considered holistically as follows:

- Allocating adequate space for people on foot, rather than just considering the more visible needs of vehicles. This can be achieved primarily through the removal of obstructions and selective reallocation of road space at key locations where footway widths are particularly inadequate and at junctions,
- Reducing traffic volume and speed to a more equitable level,
- Undertaking a targeted maintenance programme not just to redress the legacy of municipal neglect, but to positively enhance and promote the area, given its heritage status,
- Upgrading all footway surfaces over time, to create a continuous, step free and attractive walking route, that is free from obstructions, defects and puddles,
- Improving all formal and informal crossing points, and particularly those linking to The Mystery and community and commercial facilities in the Village. This will enable the person on foot to cross safely, where they wish, when they wish, and on a level and comfortable crossing point,
- Improving the appearance of the street, especially in the central section, through more control of parking, the removal of rubbish and eyesores, upgrading street furniture, the improvement of commercial frontages and selective enhancement projects,
- The creation of attractive gateways – to the west by cleaning and painting the railway bridge, and landscaping the adjacent areas, and to the east by creating a plaza based on a narrowed Lake Road, linking the Village Green and Picton Clock Tower Island with improved crossings, and through a general upgrading of the area.
- Providing comfortable seating where possible and particularly at bus stops,
- Enhancing lighting provision throughout the area including more appropriate heritage lighting in the residential streets, and ensuring that lighting illuminates the footways as well as the roads,
- Assisting businesses in upgrading ugly frontages and working with building owners to achieve positive uses for vacant units,
- Creating a street environment that feels safe to use at all times, and appears clean, attractive, cared for and well maintained,
- Building a positive identity for Wavertree Village as a local shopping centre, and one which respects and celebrates the cultural diversity of the area,
- Introducing 'Wavertree Village' signage and local area maps to build the identity of the local centre,
- Creating a pleasant pedestrian space in the Rose Garden by Grove Street,
- Commissioning a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Enhancement Strategy to act as a design master plan for the area and to underpin greater promotion of the area's heritage assets.

- Promoting local character, distinctiveness, economic viability and local pride,
- Encouraging the formation of a 'Wavertree Village Business Association' to work collectively for the improvement of the local shopping centre,
- Providing information and maps to encourage more people to explore their areas on foot, and to highlight local facilities, including The Mystery,
- Improve off-street parking provision on vacant sites or during the off-peak in the bus lanes, to encourage greater use of local shops and less on-street parking,
- Introducing trees and soft landscaping to areas that are less attractive, particularly in the eastern section,
- Providing facilities to give confidence to people to regard streets as places as well as transportation corridors, and creating conditions to encourage people to linger and socialise in the public realm.



If many of the recommendations contained in the sections of this report can be implemented in the same timeframe, their cumulative benefits will go a long way to towards creating living streets that we can all visit, live in, use and enjoy.

Project Three

Boosting Business and Promoting Local Pride

Whilst the previous key projects have focussed on physical improvements that could be made to enhance the walking environment, consideration should also be given to the less tangible but equally important aspects of the public realm – what is there in the area to promote walking, and how is it regarded? This project is also an opportunity to consider what could be done to improve the Wavertree area in the short term, if resources are not readily available to implement some of the more challenging construction-based projects identified earlier in this report.

Boosting Business

The business economy in the Wavertree area is fragile. There are some long-term businesses that struggle to survive against competition from more modern car-based outlets, yet which serve essential local needs for those who do not or cannot drive. There are also a number of new businesses that open up, yet often do not remain beyond the critical first year of trading. Footfall is lower than expected in the shopping centre, again adding to the challenge of economic viability and investor confidence. It is a vicious circle - people will only walk to and use an area if it has what they need, but the facilities and attractions must be there in the first place.

The Council is undertaking a Business Survey in tandem with this audit, to more closely understand the needs, fears, and aspirations of the business community. This project looks at how business can be boosted in conjunction with the public realm improvements advocated elsewhere in this report. From this, a Business Support package could be developed to maximise the benefits to the area, and to ensure that walking can support business and vice versa.

The key elements of this package could be:

- The establishment of a Wavertree Business Association to give a collective voice to the many small independent businesses in the area,
- The holding of free evening workshops on basic business skills including visual merchandising, to encourage small businesses to improve their window displays and facades, to create a more attractive walking environment whilst also promoting their products,
- The provision of match-funded grants for shop front improvements that are conditional on improving the visual quality of the street, particularly in the Conservation Area i.e. no solid shutters, appropriate materials, sensitive signage,
- The development of Shop Front Design Guidance to assist small businesses in making suitable choices,
- Local schemes such as a variation of the 'Living Over The Shop' initiative to bring vacant upper floors back into beneficial use, whether as homes or other small businesses such as offices, which again would increase footfall and customer demand in the area,
- A programme of funding for small scale temporary works to vacant units, including the installation of high quality hoardings, to avoid continuing blight on nearby thriving businesses,

- A dedicated hotline and response service for enviro-crimes, such as the prompt removal of dumping and free graffiti removal,
- The introduction of a Retail Radio Scheme and a Pubwatch initiative, to help reduce crime and fear of crime, particularly in licensed premises,
- The development of partnership projects (such as through a Greening Strategy) that result in private sector improvements, such as the installation and maintenance of hanging baskets, festive lights or a Village Christmas Tree. This could include full participation in any 'Wavertree in Bloom' initiative, whereby the greatest scope may be in encouraging private sector enhancements, given the limited space in the public realm for landscape improvements.
- The development of a Community Bank, to redress the shortage of facilities in the area since the major banks closed,
- The review of off-street parking provision and opportunities for the creation of new free short-stay parking spaces. Whilst a Walking Audit may not usually recommend increasing parking provision, in this instance it could have two benefits – to promote the economic viability of the area, thus improving the range of facilities that people would walk to, and by freeing up space currently used for on street and on-pavement parking. The vacant site by Prince Alfred Road may provide one such opportunity, but there may be others in the areas to the south beyond Picton Road and High Street. Another option could be to look at the feasibility of creating free short-stay off-peak parking bays in the bus lanes, which are peak hour only. This approach has been introduced successfully in Islington, North London, following pressure from small businesses,
- Seasonal or themed competitions or initiative such as best-dressed shop window at Christmas.

There are many things the Council could do to increase its support for small businesses; these are purely initial ideas, and more suggestions may arise from the Business Survey. If followed through, any improvement in economic viability and vitality in Wavertree Village can only be to the benefit of all people on foot.

Promoting Local Pride

There is a very strong community base in the Wavertree area, and one which is very concerned about the quality of their area. Many of the comments made during the audits revealed a deep-rooted frustration with the Council, and an anger that community efforts were not matched by those of the Council. The establishment of the One Stop Shop in Picton Road has gone a long way towards dissipating this anger – 'at last we can see the face of the Council in Wavertree' - but there are many options for harnessing this commitment to boost civic pride.

A number of local community organisations were represented during the audits, with many individuals displaying a very clear knowledge of local issues, concerns and aspirations. The Council is well placed to harness this valuable local interest and work in partnership with the many community groups for the benefit of the Wavertree area. One such way of linking interests and promoting the walking environment could be through the idea of a 'Wavertree in Bloom' initiative; another could be through the co-ordination of a Wavertree Walking Festival.

Wavertree Walking Festival

This could be a week long event, co-ordinated and promoted by the South Suburbs Neighbourhood Management Office, and based on local groups and organisations, including schools, hosting a programme of walking events including such activities as:

- A series of short Heritage Trails, to promote the many historic assets of the area (over 300 people attended a recent Wavertree Society slide show on the history of the area, showing a keen community interest in this aspect),
- Businesses participating in Pub, Café and Restaurant Trails, perhaps with discount offers to encourage visits during the festival,
- A Taster programme of led Healthy Walks, in conjunction with the PCT, aimed at older people and to encourage greater use of The Mystery,
- An initiative based on 'Walk to School' in conjunction with the Council's Travel Plan team,
- Young people's treasure trail, in the park, or by looking for clues in shop windows, again to tie in with supporting local businesses,
- A walk celebrating the alley-gating scheme,
- A photographic competition to find the best and worst of Wavertree.

There are other initiatives the Council could pursue to harness community strength and promote greater interest in the public realm, such as improving systems for defect reporting, supporting the publication of local information leaflets, and consultation on any planned improvement works. The key is to develop a strong partnership through which this can happen.



“What’s needed here is a damn great sign saying ‘PRIDE!’”

Brian

General Recommendations

These recommendations suggest a number of tasks that could deliver detailed improvements to the street environment in the Wavertree area.

It may be that, for local people, certain key priorities have not been addressed by these recommendations. Many more improvements, both major and minor, are included within the Main Findings section, under separate categories. Those improvements should not be considered as less important than the following recommendations – priorities for action should be determined by those who manage, invest, and live in the Wavertree area themselves.

Build the Evidence Base

1. Commission **detailed pedestrian flow counts** at a number of locations in and around the audit area, collate existing data on vehicle flows and numbers arriving in the area by public transport, and assess the commercial and social impact on the local economy by users of different modes, to support initiatives favouring more sustainable transport modes, including walking. Regular pedestrian flow counts will also provide a measure of the effectiveness of any changes implemented.
2. **Interview drivers** to ascertain why they are there in Picton Road/High Street, to inform traffic planning and potential traffic reduction schemes. Interviews should include taxi drivers and heavy goods vehicle drivers, who make up a significant number of vehicles using the main roads in the audit area.

Street Clutter

3. **Remove bollards and redundant posts** where feasible. Replace those bollards that must remain with quality 'conservation-style' bollards, in sensitive locations and introduce high visibility contrast banding to aid recognition.
4. **Review traffic signage and lighting installation**, and investigate scope to reduce the obstruction and visual intrusion it causes, through removal of unnecessary signage; reduced size and number of signs; repositioning of signs to widest sections of footway, or wall mounting.
5. **Review street furniture locations including guard railing** removing surplus items and relocating essential features to the kerbside of the footway. Remove or reduce guard railing to the minimum needed at crossings.

Road Layout

6. **Negotiate to reallocate under-used road space** to pedestrian uses, particularly at junctions, plant trees if possible.

Crossings

7. **Improve crossing facilities** in key locations.

Street Management and Service Delivery

8. Initiate a regular (fortnightly or monthly) **Street Check** to ensure that maintenance issues are picked up promptly to avoid continuing the perceived

legacy of neglect. Devise a checklist based on the key headings of this report to ensure consistency of monitoring over time, and to reflect improvements after works have taken place.

9. Develop and adopt local **Key Performance Indicators** to measure the 'walkability' of local streets and pedestrian links to set clear local standards for management and maintenance.
10. Monitor and review plans for **parking control and enforcement** in the audit area, to ensure responsiveness to localised problems.

Footways

11. Consider a **total reconstruction** of the footways where necessary, in conjunction with raised side road entry tables on the direct pedestrian desire lines, to create a smooth, unobstructed and step-free walking environment that is free from defects and obstructions. Include carriageway repairs where they impact on pedestrian crossing points.
12. Initiate a phased programme of footway resurfacing and access improvements, dropped kerbs and tactile paving, to support moves towards **step-free primary pedestrian routes** through the audit area, if the installation of comprehensive side road entry tables and comprehensive resurfacing throughout the entire audit area cannot be pursued.

Pedestrian facilities

13. Assess possible locations for a network of **public seating** at 100-metre intervals along Picton Road / High Street.

Aesthetics

14. Provide **design guidance** including advice on shutters and security measures, frontage displays, curtilage enclosure, frontage parking, signage and detailing, to maintain quality and attractiveness in the street, particularly at shopping parades. Consider making frontage improvement grants to enhance the overall street scene within the Wavertree Conservation Area, and where eyesore frontages impact most on Picton Road.
15. Consider using **legal powers** including conservation legislation, to secure improvements to the most detrimental building facades and vacant sites in Picton Road / High Street.



Pictures by Sue Webber

LIVING STREETS



31 – 33 Bondway

London

SW8 1SJ

020 7820 1010

info@livingstreets.org.uk

www.livingstreets.org.uk