Whose town centre is it anyway ? Perspectives on the purpose of town centres in the North East
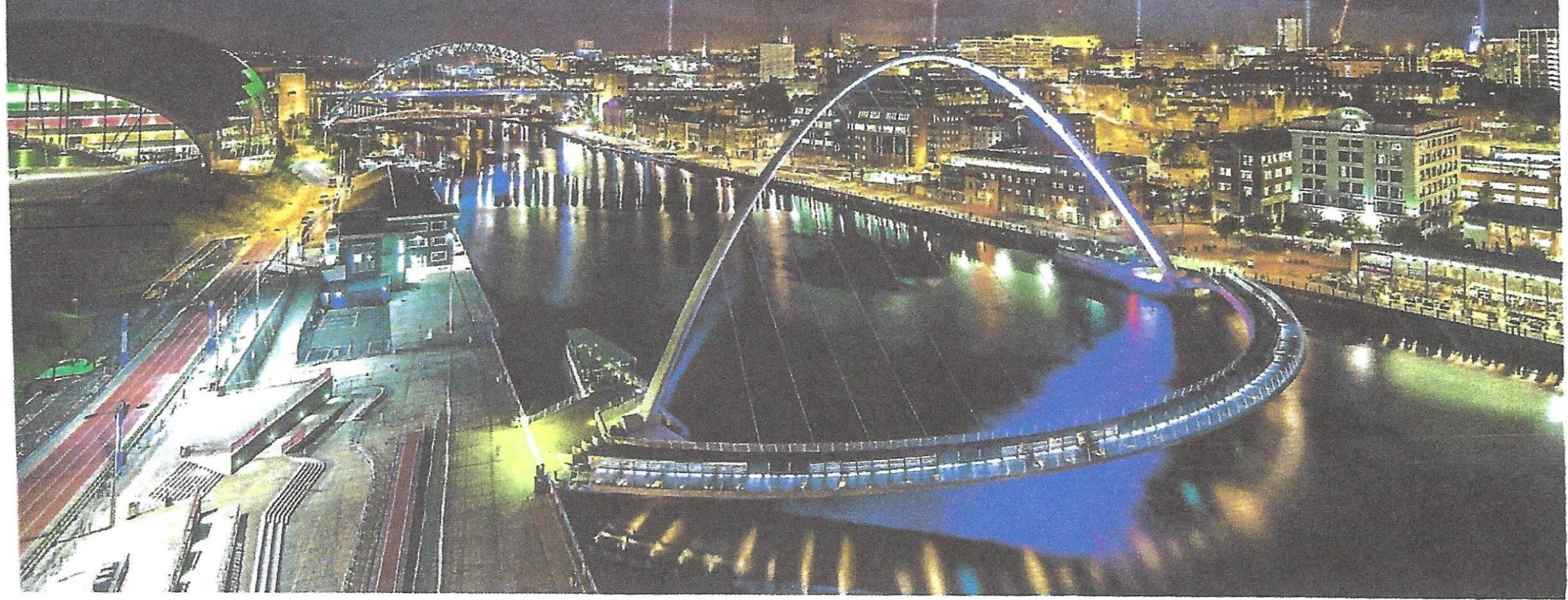
Colin Haylock
--- architect/planner and town and city centre lover !

Whose town centre is it anyway ? Perspectives on the purpose of town centres

Footfall down 2% in October
Footfall down for the previous 10 consecutive months

Despite herculean efforts of players including BIDs

LAST MONTH, WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OUR RENEWAL BALLOT, AS THE MOST SUPPORTED BID IN THE UK WITH 88% OF NEWCASTLE BUSINESSES VOTING IN OUR FAVOUR!

A very telling observation from a former CX of the British Property Federation

Some reflections on challenges and some radical responses based on working on Newcastle City Centre
--- and East Pilgrim Street in particular

A City / Town Centre for the
On-line World

A City / Town Centre for the On-line World

- East Pilgrim Street as a test bed

Where it is
- Context

East Pilgrim Street Mixed Use Area (UC1, NC2)
East Pilgrim Street Northern Area (UC2, NC2)
Primary Shopping Area (UC2)
Primary Pedestrian Routes (UC5)
Secondary Pedestrian Routes (UC5)
Bus Loop (UC7)
Freight Managment Area (UC8)
Urban Core Distributor Route (UC9)
Primary Retail Frontage (NC1)
Secondary Retail Frontage (NC1)
Key Sites (NC2, C2, D2)
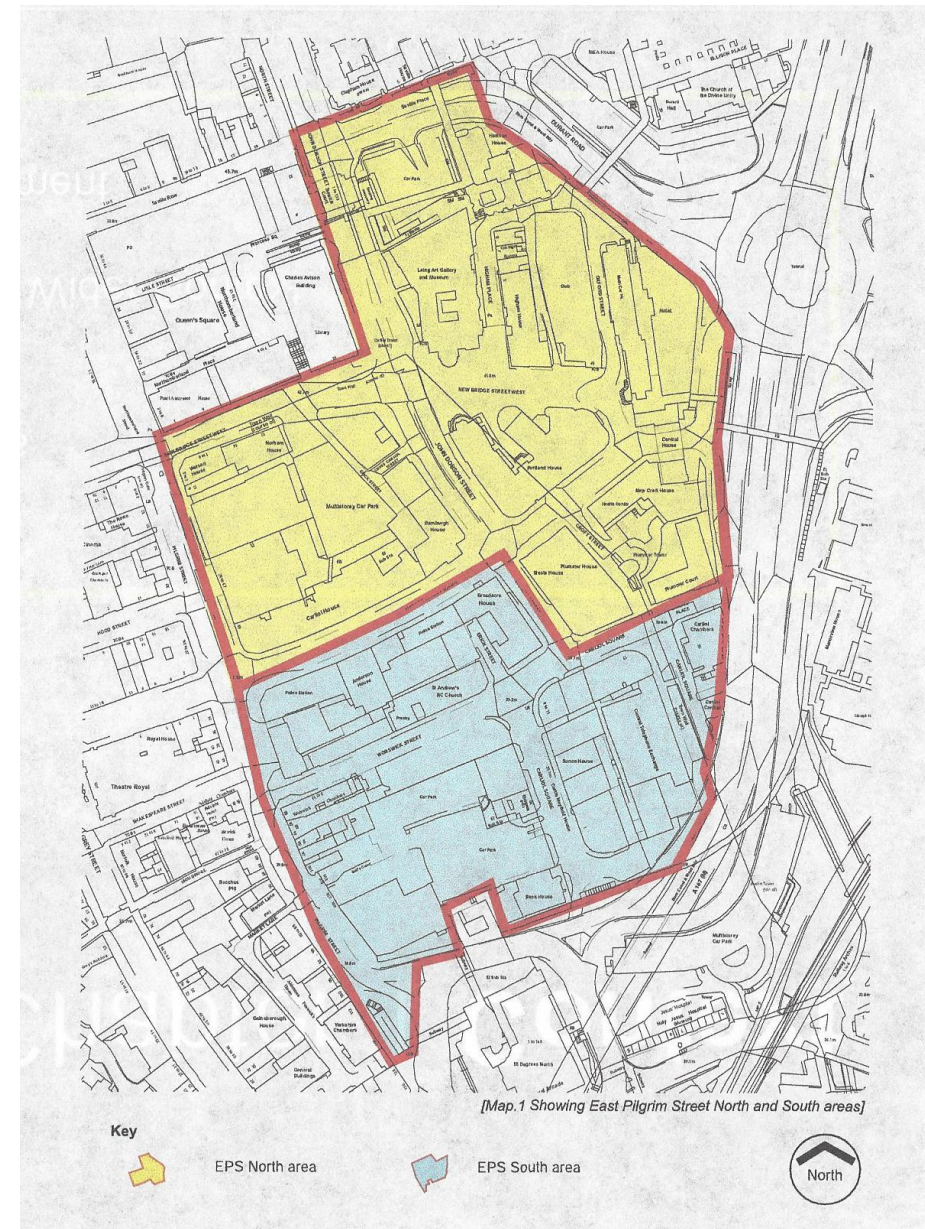Forth Yards Development Opportunity Site (D3)
Urban Core Area Boundary

[Map.3 Urban Core Inset Map - Not to scale]

A City / Town Centre for the On-line World

- East Pilgrim Street as a test bed

Where it is
- Detail

[Map.1 Showing East Pilgrim Street North and South areas]

Key

EPS North area   EPS South area

North

The City Council's
approach
East Pilgrim Street
Development
Framework

More of the same
--- and why
Council
Owners
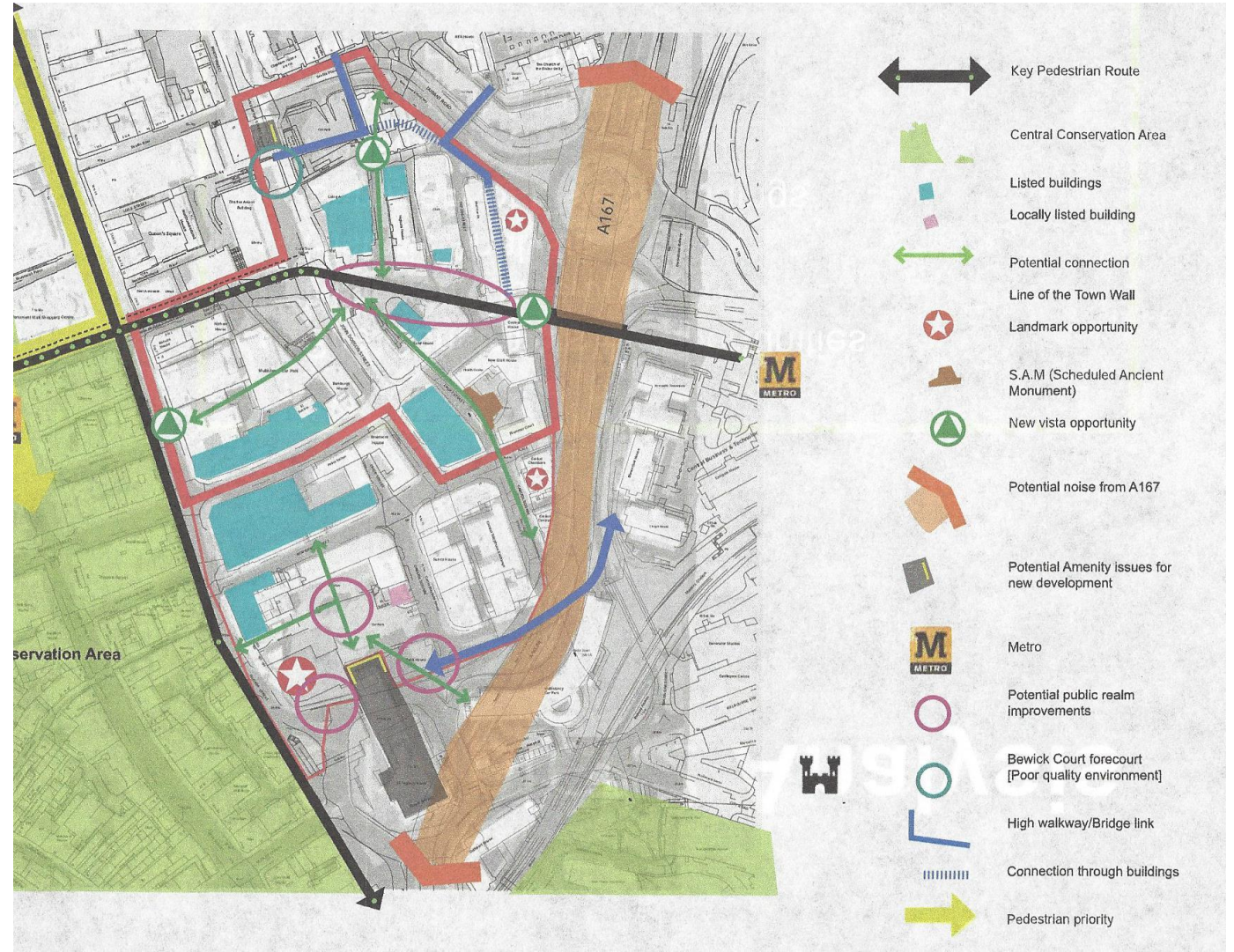
The Reality
--Short
– Medium ?
– Long Term ??

The Reality
--Short
– Medium ?
– Long Term ??

A City / Town Centre for the On-line World
- Understanding the area and its unique qualities
- Understanding the significance of its Listed Buildings as key assets

Key Pedestrian Route

Central Conservation Area

Listed buildings

Locally listed building

Potential connection

Line of the Town Wall

Landmark opportunity

S.A.M (Scheduled Ancient Monument)

New vista opportunity

Potential noise from A167

Potential Amenity issues for new development

Metro

Potential public realm improvements

Bewick Court forecourt [Poor quality environment]

High walkway/Bridge link

Connection through buildings

Pedestrian priority

A City / Town Centre for the On-line World

Exploring in depth a wider range of uses

Their
--- specific needs and requirements
--- potential contribution
--- sensitivities

The potential conflicts between them

How these conflicts can be avoided / managed / mitigated through design of buildings and places

A City /Town Centre for the On-line World
Some critical questions

Why people are still using City and Town Centres ?

What prompts them to gather ?

What other things are people willing to travel for ?

Where can they most readily reach ?

What new uses and activities might help sustain the remainder of the City / Town Centre

A City /Town Centre for the On-line World
Some opening thoughts on uses

A much wider range of housing
Low cost space for
--- Tech, and "Beyond Tech" business and business incubation
--- Creative industries – including craft and making
--- Real contact social networking and support
--- A wide range of "Leisure"
Niche – "not on the high street" retailing spinning off and supporting these uses
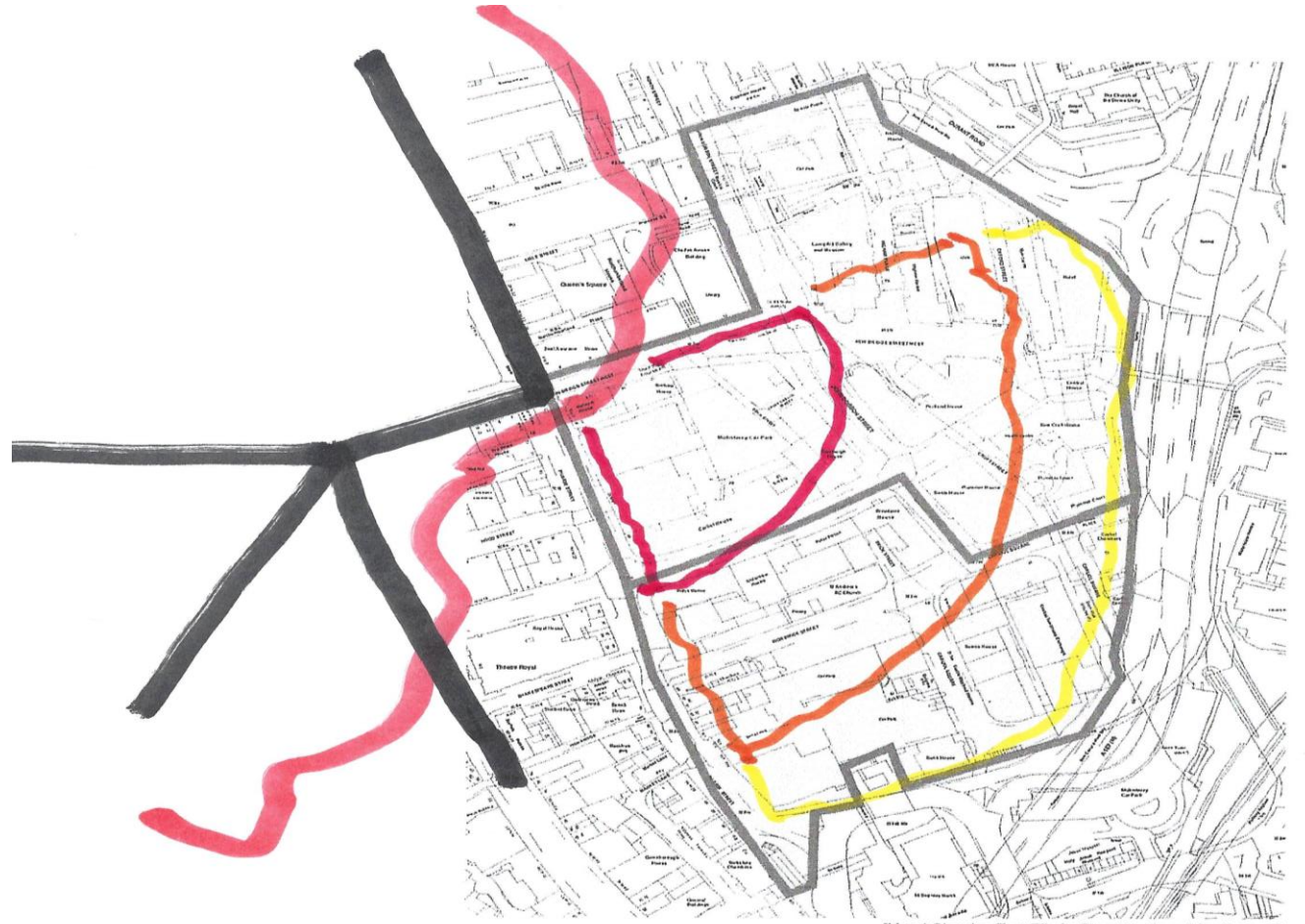Health and other social services
Education

Some factors to work with

Listed Buildings

[Map 1 Showing East Pilgrim Street North and South areas]

Some factors to work with

Gradients of notional value / intensity

[Map 1 Showing East Pilgrim Street North and South areas]

Potential Uses

A much wider range of housing

Low cost space for
--- Tech, and "Beyond Tech" business and business incubation
--- Creative industries – including craft and making
--- Real contact social networking and support
--- A wide range of "Leisure"
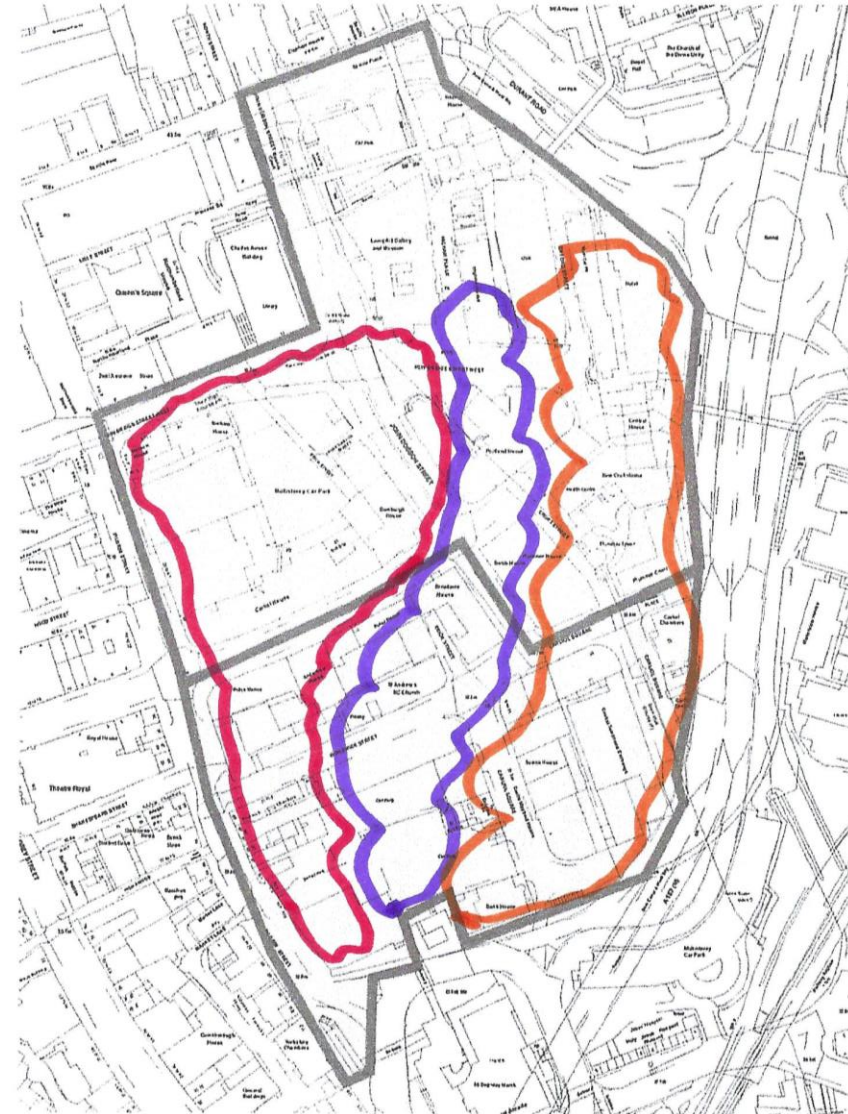Niche – "not on the high street" retailing spinning off and supporting these uses

Health and other social services

Education

Structuring the area

Maximising synergy / minimising
— mitigating conflict.

[Map 1 Showing East Pilgrim Street North and South areas]

The really tough stuff
How on earth do you deliver anything like this nature of change ?

---- multiple owners and their aspirations
---- "winners" and "losers"
---- the potential of BIDs and Chambers of Commerce
---- joined up "public services"
---- the critical importance of Local Authority leadership