THE CITY CENTRE FRAMEWORK

City Gateway - character statement and place plan
City Gateway

1. Dove Lane Site
2. Boys Club
3. M32 Services
4. BCC Depot
5. Office Outlet
6. Newfoundland Place
7. Cabot Circus car park
8. River Street Housing
9. Cabot Circus Hotel
Newfoundland Way is the principal traffic route into the city centre from the north-east, linking the M32 with the Inner Circuit Road. The pocket of land lying between Newfoundland Way, and the River Frome is identified within the current planning policy as an extension to the city centre and lies at the heart of a wider character area identified here as City Gateway.

In terms of land use, the majority of the area currently contains a mix of light industrial, retail warehousing and community based leisure, alongside significant areas of vacant and underutilised land. To the north-east the contiguous green corridor, following the gently meandering course of the River Frome, provides a potential to enhance both the environment and walking and cycling connections between the city centre and communities in East Bristol.

Prior to the post-war construction of the M32 and Newfoundland Way, the area formed part of the St Paul’s neighbourhood. Streets including Elton Street, Wellington Road, Clement Street and Houlton Street are the remnants of the historic street pattern that once existed. Today there are relatively few historic buildings and structures still surviving in the area, however imposing pennant stone boundary walls help to characterise the area.

Although planned in the 1960’s, the M32 was finally opened in 1975, and coincided with the opening of Tollgate House, which at the time was the second tallest building in Bristol. The controversial 19 storey office block marked the end of the motorway and the beginning of the city centre, however, was seen by many as an eyesore. The latter part of the 20th century saw relatively little change to the area with only a few piecemeal, and arguably under scaled developments, including the existing petrol service station and the low rise retail sheds on the opposite side of Newfoundland Way.

The development of Cabot Circus, opened in 2008, brought significant changes to the area including the realignment of Bond Street, and the demolition of the Tollgate House making way for a new shoppers car park. The redevelopment also saw the construction of new housing along the culverted River Street, and a new hotel and public space at Champion Square.

Newfoundland Way itself was improved with enhanced crossing facilities and a central landscape strip to create Newfoundland Circus, which contains the notable public art feature ‘Twist’. Aspirations to develop significant buildings in front of the car park and create street frontages have not been achieved. These vacant sites along with underused plots along Newfoundland Road and the demolished buildings around Dove Street, create an area where the regeneration potential has not yet been realised, and which subsequently provides a rather underwhelming entrance to the city.
City Gateway - character statement and place plan

4 City Gateway - Analysis

Challenges:
1. Conflicts between pedestrian, cyclists and vehicle through traffic.
2. Poor quality public realm and street clutter.
3. Highway dominated junction constraining pedestrian movement.
4. Negative visual impact of parking.
5. Poor connectivity across heavily trafficked roads.
6. Negative townscapes impact of vacant sites or poor quality buildings.
7. Poor quality ground floor relationship with the street.
8. Poor legibility for pedestrians and cyclists.
9. Imposing or out-of-scale buildings.
10. Poor condition and underused heritage assets
11. Compromised setting and lack of public interpretation of heritage assets
Newfoundland Way is the main traffic artery into the city and will continue to be so. As such the challenge of creating a high quality place based gateway to the city needs to be balanced with the infrastructure requirements and levels of noise and air pollution along its edges. The area has great potential for change, as evidenced by the Cabot Circus development and major plans for remaining vacant and cleared sites. The main challenge relates to the reinvention of the urban form and land use in the context of the historic St Paul's neighbourhood and constraints of major highways and the River Frome.

**Issues:**
- Managing significant changes in scale across a long term regeneration programme.
- Reconciling tensions between the strategic arterial route into the city, and promoting place-based development to provide an appropriate gateway into the city.
- Lack of strong landscape or urban structure to provide character.
- Inefficient use of land, particularly given the proximity to the core of the city centre.
- Noise pollution and air quality issues in relation to increasing the residential population.
- Inadequate connections across Newfoundland Way resulting in severed communities.
- Significant loss of historic urban fabric and grain of development.
- Varying quality of cycle and pedestrian connections along and across the Frome Greenway and Concorde Way connections.

**Opportunities:**
1. Enhance pedestrian and cycling connection from the city centre to provide a pleasant, legible and convenient alternative route to Newfoundland Way.
2. Improve public realm and promote a consistent palette of materials to improve legibility.
3. Improve pedestrian crossing points to allow easy and convenient access.
4. Encourage regeneration of vacant and underused sites to create an appropriate city scale.
5. Encourage contemporary architectural approach in response to unique placemaking opportunity.
6. Address the edges of Riverside Park to make the space more open and visually accessible where appropriate.
7. Consider alternative boundary treatments to the water’s edge to allow a better visual connection.
8. Introduce robust landscape structure through comprehensive tree planting and enhance links to green spaces.
9. Create a boulevard along Newfoundland Way to reinforce the transition from the M32 to the city centre.
10. Introduce opportunities for informal play spaces in residential streets.
City Gateway Place Plan

Vision
Create a memorable and high quality approach to the city centre incorporating higher density developments. Establish a mixed and diverse city quarter and help reinforce the existing historic street pattern and character. Deliver improved, safe, accessible, and legible walking and cycling routes including an additional link to the St Paul’s neighbourhood across Newfoundland Way.

Objectives
1. Establish a more appropriate gateway into the city centre by encouraging exemplar developments along Newfoundland Way.
2. Encourage the intensification of the area through the development of vacant and underused sites.
3. Establish a diverse and high quality residential environment on the edge of the city centre.
4. Plan for the development of social infrastructure and facilities to support the new community.
5. Promote further landscape improvements along Newfoundland Way to reduce the impact of traffic.
6. Integrate the remaining historic assets into regeneration schemes.
7. Continue to enhance the Frome Greenway as a primary walking and cycling corridor.
8. Develop opportunities for providing heat and power networks and ultrafast broadband connectivity.

Supporting transport measures
During the construction of Cabot Circus significant efforts were made to increase pedestrian and cycling movements across Bond Street and Newfoundland Circus. There is still a need however, to make better connections further to the east in order to establish improved connectivity between underutilised sites at Dove Land and Wellington Road, and potentially create new routes between St Paul’s and St Jude’s. The Frome corridor has significant potential to further establish a pleasant route for commuting cyclists travelling from between the City Centre and towards East Bristol.

Key development projects
CG01 Dove Lane
The outline planning application approved in 2010 focuses on a mixed use new neighbourhood on land between Wilson Place and the historic line of Bishop Street. The approved masterplan is based on an appropriate scale of buildings, enhancing views and the setting of St Paul’s Church with improved connectivity between Newfoundland Road, Cabot Primary School and St Paul’s Park.

CGO2 Newfoundland Way
Sites to the south centred on Elton Street are currently underutilised and offer great potential to provide a new residential community with good access to the city centre as well as recreational space along the River Frome. The site can accommodate building of a city scale, with greater height helping to contain Newfoundland Way and deliver public realm and landscape improvement both to the highway corridor and along the river frontage. The site together with the Dove Lane scheme should seek to improve pedestrian and cycling links across the highway in order to help better connect future residents with existing community and educational facilities to the north. Longer term connections to the south need to be considered in order to connect with an increasing mix of uses in the vicinity of Pennywell Road.

CGO3 North of Newfoundland Circus
The recently cleared buildings to the north of Newfoundland Circus were of a poor quality and scale that failed to contain the scale of the main corridor into the city centre. The site offers an opportunity to realise a street frontage of an appropriate scale that addresses the Newfoundland Circus space and contributes positively to the entrance into the city. The massing of the building should be articulated in a way that helps to reintebrate the locally listed former cinema building into the street. There may also be opportunities to incorporate and/or retain glimpsed views to the tower of St Paul’s Church from the south as a way of increasing the legibility and connections to the St Paul’s area.

CGO4 South of Newfoundland Circus
The Cabot Circus car park was not intended to provide the frontage onto Newfoundland Circus and was set back to allow two sites to be created onto the highway corridor. A commercial scheme for two linked 9 storey buildings providing just over 17,000 square metres of commercial space received planning permission in 2012. Whilst development of both sites either side of the car park entrance is desirable, the site at the corner with Bond Street in particular would provide much needed containment of the highway junction, delivering improved public realm and activity at street level. The development of these sites should seek to provide city scale enclosure to Newfoundland Circus and add to a rich mix of high quality building providing an appropriate introduction to the city centre.
Proposed Development: Restore
Proposed Development: Reinvent
New public spaces and improvements to existing public spaces
Active ground floor uses (cafes, restaurants, shops)
Active building frontage (regular doors and windows, balconies etc.)
Existing and potential new focal building
Significant building in the townscape
Key Public Space enhancement
Public realm improvement corridor
Pedestrian routes (primary and local)
Cycle routes
Future MetroBus Location