

BRISTOL HARBOUR PLACE SHAPING STRATEGY

VISION 2024-2044

February 2025



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
A VISION FOR THE HARBOUR	8
The Vision at a Glance: Context	13
The Vision at a Glance: Places	15
PRINCIPLES	19
Acknowledgements	38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The preparation of the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (HPSS) represents a generational opportunity to shape the sort of place we want Bristol's harbour to become. Created by multiple authors and stakeholders, and building on an expansive and far-reaching programme of engagement, this Vision sets out a broad and ambitious vision for the future of the harbour and its next 20 years of growth and transformation.

The Vision describes a harbour which is at the heart of Bristol – a waterborne park that is central to the city's culture and identity, and a focus of its working, leisure and civic life. Three overarching THEMES are then identified : that the harbour is Active & Accessible; Resilient & Sustainable; and Industrious & Creative. Each theme is underpinned by a series of guiding PRINCIPLES.

▶ page 8

▶ page 20

The harbour is not one place, but many, and it is used by many communities. Reflecting this, the Vision will ultimately be delivered in different ways with varied stakeholders across the harbour. Alongside the Vision a set of PLACE PLANS have been created which zoom in to the many distinct places of the harbour and develop tangible proposals for their growth and transformation, always underpinned by this vision.

Ultimately, to realise the potential and to achieve this vision, Bristol City Council seeks to actively engage with developers, businesses, users and the community to promote the unique qualities of Bristol's harbour and ensure the harbour's continued ecological, social and cultural value to the city. The delivery of this vision will depend on the availability of funding for key projects, partnerships with key stakeholders, and a collective spirit of working.



INTRODUCTION

Bristol's harbour is a tremendous asset to the city and is well loved by residents and visitors alike.

The Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (HPSS) is a 20 year strategy to make Bristol's harbour:

- Welcoming to all Bristol's communities
- Able to adapt to climate change and better support nature;
- Thrive economically so that the docks become financially self-sufficient.

The harbour embraces a unique combination of both physical assets and operational responsibilities. A significant part of the study area falls within the Dock's Estate, and as such is managed and operated by the Harbour Authority. The Harbour Authority must always consider and often balance a set of important outcomes for the city:

- The long term financial sustainability of the Harbour as an operational dock
- The creation of an active, inviting and accessible public waterfront
- Optimal use of land and water to meet the City's economic, social, health and housing agendas
- The needs of local residents, businesses and visitors

The HPSS's geographic focus extends from Junction Lock Bridge (near Underfall Yard) to Totterdown Basin (behind Temple Meads Station) and links the City's three main regeneration areas: Western Harbour, City Centre and Temple Quarter. The area does not include the New Cut (River Avon), Feeder Canal or Cumberland Basin. The HPSS considers both the water space, and the land immediately adjacent to it.

The strategy builds on regeneration successes over the past 40 years and establishes an ambitious and compelling vision which encourages landowners and other stakeholders to work together to make the harbour an even better place than it is today over the next 20 years. Core to this will be the creation of a high quality quayside and water space that can better support Bristol's growing population and comfortably cope with an increasing number of visitors. Change is always happening in the harbour, this is part of its vitality and richness - the role of the HPSS is to provide a strategy which will ensure that these changes are harnessed in ways that deliver on the priorities for residents, businesses and visitors.

The Harbour Place Shaping Strategy is in three parts:

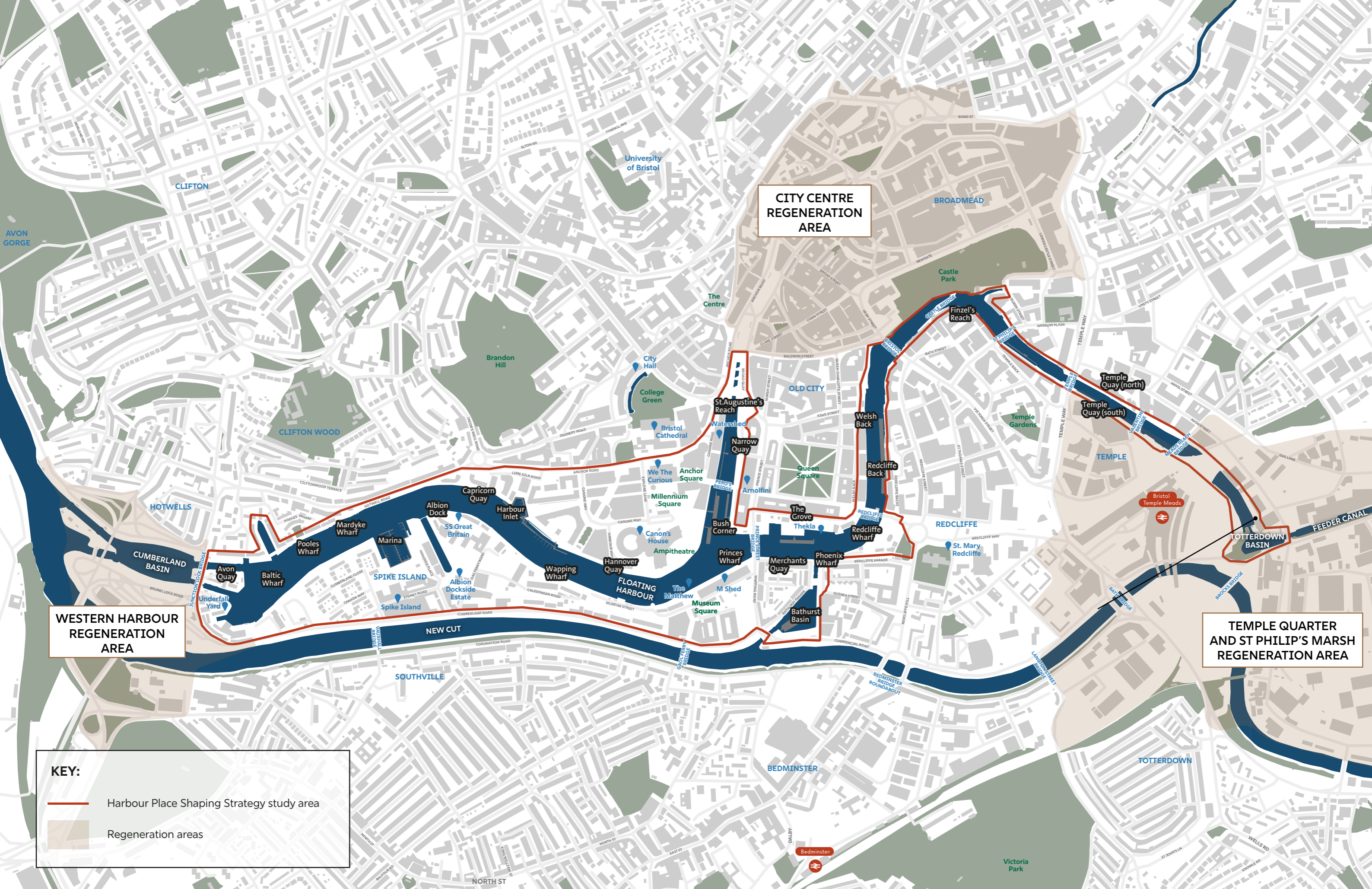
- **The Atlas** sets out a nuanced, detailed and evidenced picture of the harbour today
- **The Vision** sets out an overarching direction of travel and ambition for the whole harbour
- **Place Plans**, including a Waterspace Plan, set out what can be done in tangible terms to deliver upon the Vision, recognising that Bristol's harbour is not one place but many, with a wide array of qualities, opportunities and challenges.

The Plan Plans identify and describe more than 100 recommended interventions. These range from large capital projects, through to smaller placemaking and public realm projects. They encompass the waterspace, public realm, built environment, transport policy, planning, and programming.

If such a comprehensive strategy seems ambitious, it bears remembering that the vision is intended to be transformative and is meant to consider a very large area over a 20-year horizon. Over that period, circumstances will change – new opportunities will emerge, new challenges will present themselves. The vision should be a guide and a touchstone, but never a straight-jacket. Details may change, but – to be effective – the direction of travel should always be toward a Harbour that is more ‘active and accessible’, ‘resilient and sustainable’ and ‘industrious and creative’.

The HPSS is consistent with the policies of the emerging Bristol Local Plan (November 2023) and has a hook to Policy DS1: Bristol City Centre which states:

'The Floating Harbour will be maintained as a location for maritime industries and water related recreation activities alongside its role as a visitor destination and heritage asset (consistent with the vision set out in the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy). Waterfront areas adjacent to the Floating Harbour, Feeder Canal and River Avon will continue to be revitalised, delivering a high quality, publicly accessible quayside and water space that can support Bristol's growing population, comfortably accommodate an increasing number of visitors and better support nature recovery.'



A VISION FOR THE HARBOUR

The Harbour is the heart of Bristol – a waterborne park that is central to the city's culture and identity, and a focus of its working, leisure and civic life.

Bristol Harbour will continue to combine the needs of an operational dock with this vital role as the public heart of the city – a model for environmental sustainability, social responsibility, financial rigour and economic ambition.

The Harbour will be a thriving place to work – a place to imagine, make and create – especially in the cultural and maritime industries. It will be an exciting place to play near, on, and in the water – from everyday leisure for residents, to lively public spaces for visitors, and watersport destinations for participants of all ages, interests and abilities. The Harbour will be a restorative place, with opportunities for rest, wellbeing and contact with nature.

All these qualities will be made more accessible than ever to Bristol's diverse communities.

BRISTOL'S HARBOUR WILL BE:



principles

The harbour will be welcoming to the wider city, inclusive and accessible to all

The development of the harbour will underpin the sustainability of the Harbour and Dock's Estate

The harbour will be a vital part of Bristol's cultural identity, where everyday public life coexists with water uses, and maritime industries

The harbour will be a comfortable, open and safe place for people to spend time, that promotes wellbeing

The harbour will play a vital role in delivering upon Bristol's zero carbon, biodiversity and climate resilience ambitions

The harbour will be a place where creativity, making and culture, including local production and provenance, are celebrated and supported

The harbour will be a great place to live, with high quality urban design, services and amenities

The harbour will be a place that supports community life

The harbour will offer a unique playable quayside for all

The harbour will balance its world-class tourist offer and events programming with the needs of its diverse local communities and neighbourhoods

ACTIVE & ACCESSIBLE

- The harbour will be welcoming to the wider city, inclusive and accessible to all.
- The harbour will be a comfortable, open and safe place for people to spend time, and that promotes wellbeing.
- The harbour will be a great place to live, with high quality urban design, services and amenities
- The harbour will offer a unique playable quayside for all.

Portway Park and Ride

Long Ashton Park and Ride

WATERSPORTS HUB

INTEGRATED INTO THE CITY

PROMOTING WELLBEING

Thinking on how to make the eastern reaches of the harbour more active and accessible will evolve further through the Bristol Temple Quarter masterplan being developed from 2024'

A Unique Watersports Network Across Six Hubs:

- ① Focus of Watersports Activity
- ① Baltic Wharf
- ② Mardyke Wharf
- ③ Bristol Marina
- ④ Phoenix Wharf
- ⑤ Castle Park
- ⑥ Totterdown Basin

A Fully Accessible, Welcoming Public Realm:

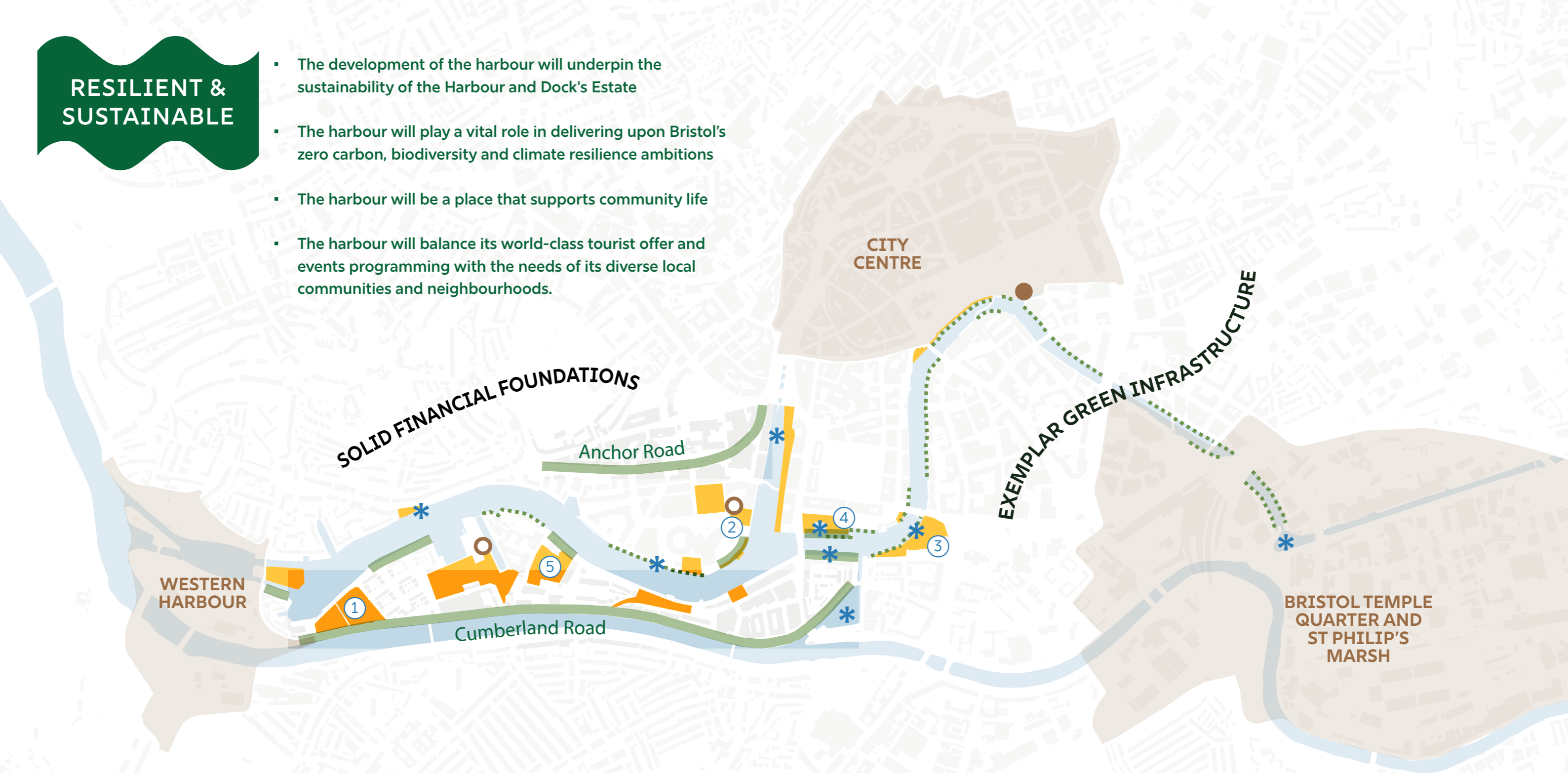
- Existing Quayside Walkway
- ⋯ New Quayside Walkway
- Priority for Public Realm Investment
- ☀ Focus for Enhanced Playable Landscape
- Existing Cycle Routes
- ⋯ Priority improvements to cycle routes
- Bristol Harbour Railway (both lines reinstated)
- ♿ Aspiration to upgrade publicly available toilet provision at M-Shed and We The Curious

Enhanced Bus, Ferry & Coach Services:

- Existing Bus Service
- ⋯ Enhanced Bus Service
- ▶ Existing Bus Stop
- ▷ New Bus Stop
- Existing Ferry Landing
- New Ferry Landing
- Enhanced Ferry Service
- ◆ Coach Parking
Coach parking (with provision being expanded along Cumberland Road)
- ◇ Coach Drop-off/ Pick up
Coach pick-up/ drop-off will require reproviding/ enhancing within wider development proposals.

RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE

- The development of the harbour will underpin the sustainability of the Harbour and Dock's Estate
- The harbour will play a vital role in delivering upon Bristol's zero carbon, biodiversity and climate resilience ambitions
- The harbour will be a place that supports community life
- The harbour will balance its world-class tourist offer and events programming with the needs of its diverse local communities and neighbourhoods.



KEY:

Delivering upon Bristol's Zero Carbon, Biodiversity and Resilience Ambitions:

- Opportunities for Green Infrastructure - Land
- ⋯ Opportunities for Green Infrastructure - Water
- Energy Centre - Constructed
- Energy Centre - Potential
- Regeneration Area
- Area for Potential Change

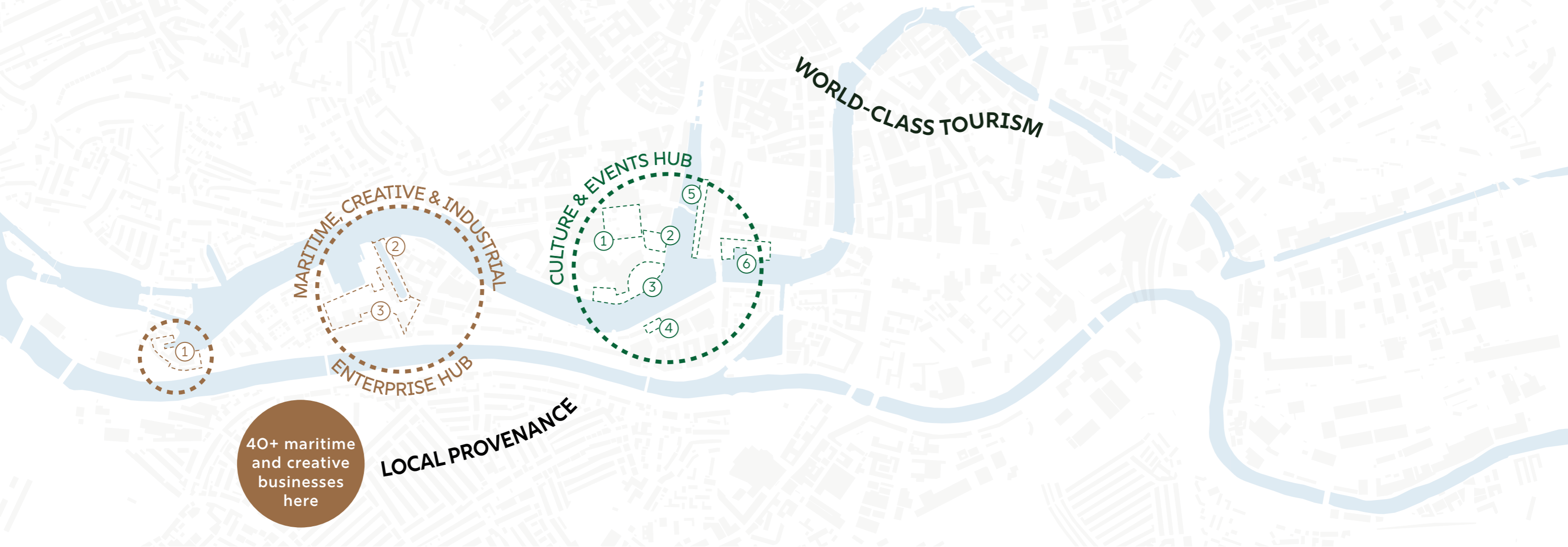
Opportunities to Underpin the Financial Sustainability of the Harbour Estate:

Development opportunities within the Harbour Estate

- ① Baltic Wharf Caravan Site
- ② Waterfront Place
- ③ Redcliffe Wharf
- ④ The Grove
- ⑤ Maritime Car Park
- * Potential for Increased Moorings

INDUSTRIOUS & CREATIVE

- The harbour will be a vital part of Bristol's cultural identity, where everyday public life coexists with water uses, and maritime industries.
- The harbour will be a place where creativity, making and culture, including local production and provenance, are celebrated and supported.



Supporting Maritime, Creative and Industrial Activity:

- Maritime, Creative and Industrial Enterprise Hub
- Strategically Important Project
- ① Underfall Yard Renovations
- ② Project Albion
- ③ Albion Yard

Enhancing the Focus for the Harbour's Cultural and Events Offer:

- Culture and Events Hub
- Strategically Important Project
- ① Millennium Square
- ② Waterfront Place
- ③ Amphitheatre / Hannover Quay
- ④ Museum Square
- ⑤ Narrow Quay
- ⑥ The Grove

The Vision at a Glance: Context

- A 20-year Vision
- 10 Principles for positive change
- Multiple stakeholders ready to work together to make that change happen

The Opportunity



Key Documents



THE ATLAS

sets out a nuanced, detailed and evidenced picture of the harbour today



THE VISION

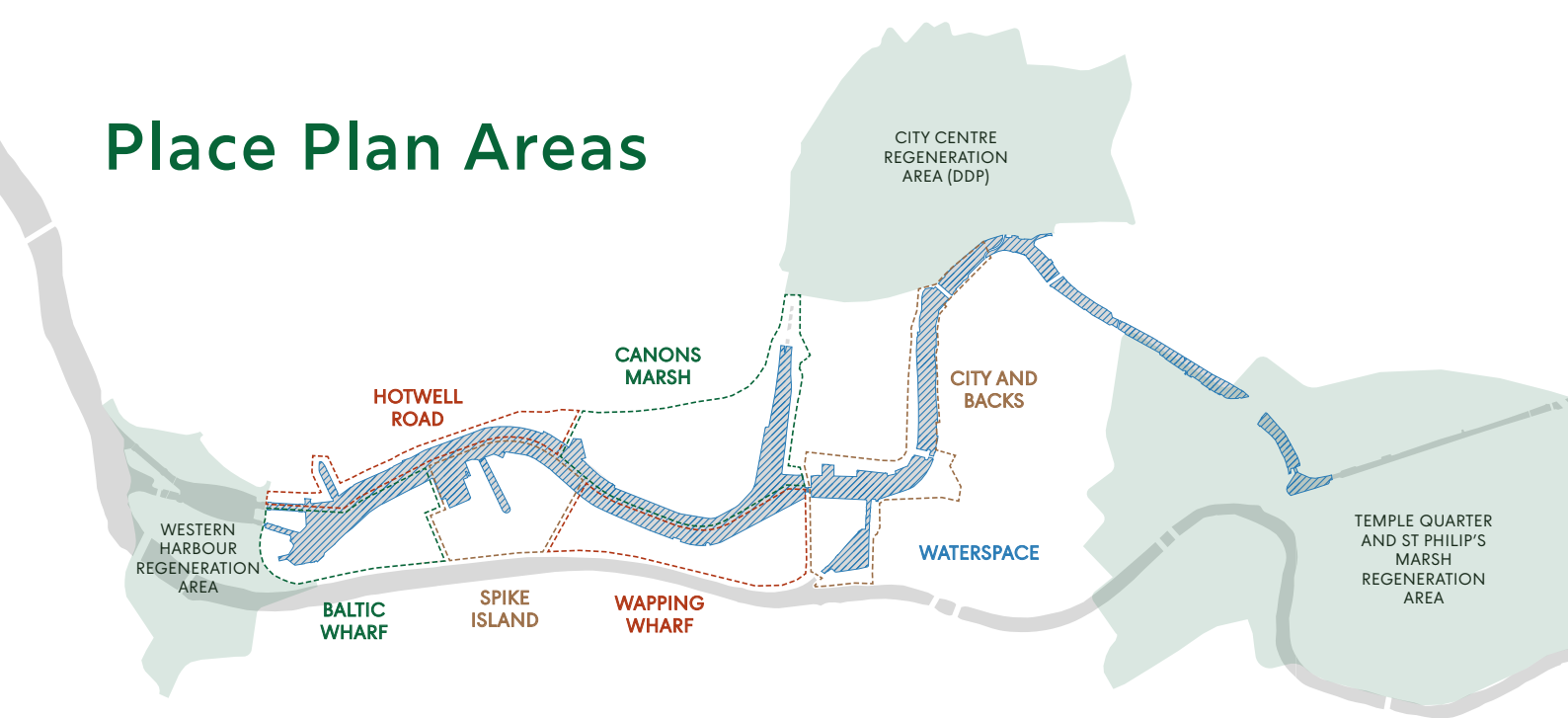
sets out an overarching direction of travel and ambition for the whole harbour



PLACE PLANS

set out what can be done in tangible terms to deliver upon the Vision, recognising that Bristol's harbour is not one place but many, with a wide array of qualities, opportunities and challenges..

Place Plan Areas



6 KEY PLACES

identified each with their own unique identity that together cover the whole of the Floating Harbour and have the potential to weave together the city centre, Western Harbour, Temple Quarter/St. Philips Marsh and the wider city.

28 HECTARES OF WATERSPACE

threading through the city and with the potential for hugely diversified uses and activities.

40+ UNIQUE MARITIME & CREATIVE BUSINESSES

in the Albion Dock and Underfall Yard areas alone.

Engagement Key Words and Concerns

OPENNESS	WATER QUALITY
DIVERSE HERITAGE	PLAY SAFETY
BIODIVERSITY	MARITIME INDUSTRY
CREATIVE INDUSTRIES	LOCAL BENEFIT
WORKSPACE	ENHANCED TOURISM
GREEN SPACE	ACCESSIBILITY

- Reduced diversity of land uses & loss of affordability
- Issues of parking and public transport
- Loss of 'undeveloped' or 'free' space to development
- Investment not benefiting local communities

The Vision at a Glance: Places

BALTIC WHARF

Baltic Wharf will be consolidated as Bristol's watersports and waterside leisure hub. Underfall Yard and Avon Quay will together form a rejuvenated hub of operations and the harbour's public life, with a stronger role as a vital place to access harbour-related industries and crafts, explore the story of the harbour and enjoy leisure time. Youth and leisure services will be opened up to wider audiences through enhanced and shared amenities and access points, and supported by a public realm that promotes appropriate access to the water. With an increased residential population and more commercial space to complement what's already there, the area will be a lively mixed-use neighbourhood with the harbour at its heart, and a stepping stone to Western Harbour beyond.

HOTWELL ROAD

The quayside walk will be a more comfortable place to dwell alongside the water and a much better place to 'move through' for pedestrians. To the west, the water edge will be safer and more accessible. Mardyke Wharf will have improved public realm and expanded leisure uses, making an accessible leisure space for all Bristolians. To the east, opportunities will be taken to enrich the existing provision of moorings and ecospace, such as Capricorn Quay.

SPIKE ISLAND

Spike Island will continue to be a vital hub for cultural and making institutions, and wherever possible these institutions will be more accessible, visible and celebrated. These institutions will thrive whilst the harbour develops for the future. The Albion Dockyard will be transformed into a world-class maritime attraction inside a thriving working shipyard. For all Bristolians, walking through the area will be an easy and rewarding experience that connects you with the best of what Bristol makes and creates, as well as with its rich maritime history.

WAPPING WHARF

Wapping Wharf will become a family-friendly, uniquely Bristol destination, a go-to place for culture, play and hanging-out. Museum Square will be rejuvenated as the area's principle meeting space, where working exhibits and heritage vessels sit comfortably alongside outdoor film screenings and picnicking school parties. The area's reputation for good quality food will grow with a more permanent offer increasingly capable of drawing customers from across the city and beyond. Thanks to its central location, its offer, and venues like M Shed, the Wapping Wharf area will be reinforced as the gateway to the wider harbour, whilst remaining a great place to live and work.

CANON'S MARSH

Canon's Marsh will be refreshed as a contemporary, inclusive and family-friendly focal point for Bristol's civic and public life. Its significant public spaces - among them the Amphitheatre and Millennium Square - will be rejuvenated, making them great spaces to visit both during and outside of formal events. There will be better amenities, more abundant seating, increased greening and enhanced shelter and shade for increasingly unpredictable weather. A new cross harbour ferry will connect the Amphitheatre directly to the M-Shed. Floating commercial activity will be boosted along St. Augustine's Reach whilst the harbour edge beside the Amphitheatre will be a natural home for tall ships and other 'special' visiting craft.

CITY AND BACKS

As an increasingly vibrant part of the harbour, with an enhanced public realm, this area will become a place that visitors more regularly explore. New mixed use developments will provide new destinations and points of interest around the harbour. A coherent and welcoming public realm will invite people to the water's edge and host an array of activities and programmes appropriate to the city centre. Existing hubs of public life and activity will be consolidated and expanded. At key locations, for example at Bristol Bridge, significant public realm interventions will have brought the water and the city much closer together and created a new public waterside.

WATERSPACE

The Waterspace will accommodate a diversified array of uses tuned to the needs of Bristolians and visitors, including a population of water users, with amenities and services provided to a good standard throughout. Uses will vary a great deal, from areas dedicated to sport and leisure through to peaceful wildlife habitats. These will have been added to the waterspace in a way that achieves a harmonious and productive balance between uses whilst respecting the industrial heritage of the floating harbour.

PRINCIPLES

◆ The harbour will be welcoming to the wider city, inclusive and accessible to all

Aspiration:

Getting there

The harbour will be easier to get to by public transport, cycle, ferry and on foot and become more accessible for disabled people. Metrobus services along Cumberland Road, will be expanded into the evening and Sundays. As Temple Quarter is developed, bus and ferry services to the east will be expanded. The walking routes across the New Cut will continue to play a vital role with onward journeys enhanced. There will be better cycle parking provision.

Exploring the harbour

The harbour has a huge range of events, activities, and attractions which cater to different audiences, seasons and times of day. A central harbour hub, located at a place where visitors to the harbour already gather such as Museum Square at Wapping Wharf, will collate and showcase places and activities in the harbour, providing visitors and Bristolians with an opportunity to follow the heritage trail, art trail, or play trail around the Harbour. People will be able to navigate their way easily by following attractive and informative signage that celebrates local gems and shares alternative histories of the city and its harbour. Patronage of the steam train and ferries will grow as awareness builds.

Harbourside walkway

The vast majority of visitors and residents explore the Harbourside on foot. Continuous, well sign-posted and accessible pedestrian routes - most often directly alongside the water - will weave through the harbour. There will be a consistent use of high quality materials. New routes will open up access to Temple Quarter and provide opportunities to access the water's edge at Castle

Park. Existing sections of route will be improved to reduce the impact of car parking, providing spaces to sit and enjoy the waterspace.

Bus and water transport

The harbour will be well-connected to the surrounding city and neighbourhoods with low-emission bus and ferry services, providing frequent services that extend into the evening and weekends. Ferry transport throughout the harbour will be a well-used and affordable mode of transport for visitors, commuters and locals. Accessible ferry stops will be evenly and strategically distributed, and with a timetable that supports commuting. A new cross-harbour ferry service will connect M-Shed and the Amphitheatre.

Water access

Locals and visitors will be able to participate in a range of water activities. Access points for these activities will continue to be focussed towards the western end of the harbour at Baltic Wharf with new or enhanced access points at Mardyke Wharf, Bristol Marina, Phoenix Wharf, Castle Park and Totterdown Basin.

Welcoming, affordable and inclusive

Bristol's Harbour will be an accessible and positive place for people, including those with mobility, visual, hearing, sensory and neurodiverse needs. People will be able to move around the water's edge, stopping as they go to enjoy the views, eat their lunch or read a book. Historical elements in the public realm will be celebrated in an inclusive and accessible way.

What if places like Totterdown Basin provided important pedestrian connections whilst also giving people the chance to engage with nature and the water?

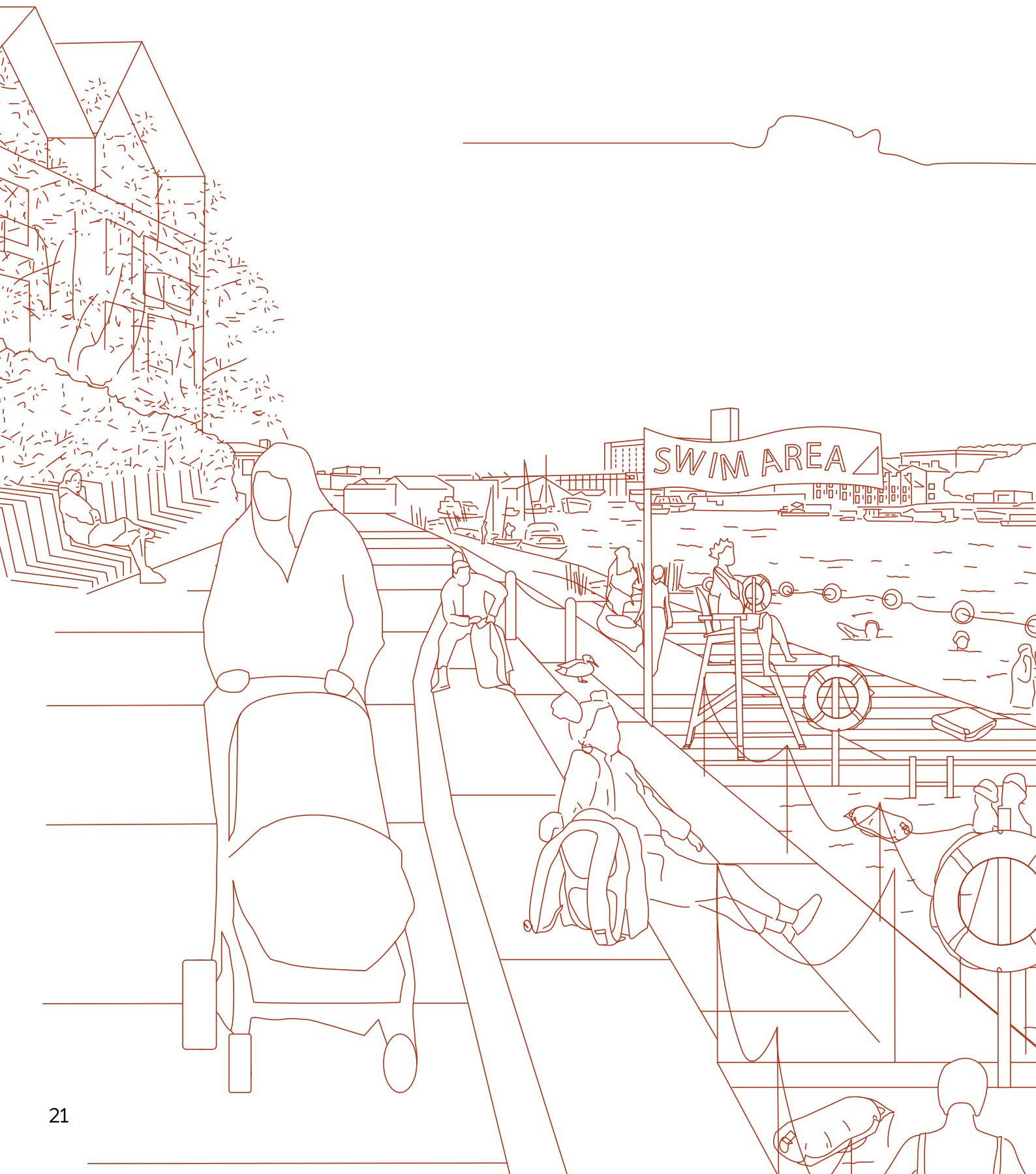


5 MIN

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL
BUSINESS SCHOOL



Could the water's edge at Baltic Wharf be redesigned, replacing the slope of jagged rocks with generous steps for people to safely view the watersports, including the newly introduced swimming? Could there be more planting incorporated into the water's edge?



◆ The harbour will be a comfortable, open and safe place for people to spend time, that promotes wellbeing

Aspiration:

Representation

Bristolians will be able to see their culture represented and celebrated in the harbour, be it through food, music or stories. Buildings and external spaces will host a range of permanent and temporary uses or events such as markets, festivals and exhibitions. Building frontages will be opened up to showcase activities and events; whilst public realm space will provide interventions such as seating, stages and signage.

Safety

Navigating the harbour can be troublesome due to busy roads, cycle lanes, open water and bridges. Far more people are reaching and exploring the harbour by foot than driving, and in future space will be redistributed to support greater walking, reducing collision and pinch points. Clear, well lit, and easy-to-follow routes will provide safe connections around the harbour regardless of people's mode of travel. Where possible, cycles and scooters will be segregated from areas of significant pedestrian activity. Signage, safety equipment and clearly marked designations around the harbour will educate people about how to keep themselves and others safe around the water.

Comfort

The harbour will provide comfortable places for visitors and residents to relax and spend time. Interventions to support this will include sociable and sheltered seating; more green space and better visitor facilities. There will be

more toilets made publicly-available through the Community Toilet Scheme, with the aspiration to also deliver 'Changing Places' toilets, catering for people who need toilets with more space and the right equipment to enable them to get out and about and enjoy the day-to-day activities which many of us take for granted.

Openness

Space around the harbour, particularly close to the water, will be protected and enhanced to provide a sense of openness and calm within the city, supporting the harbour's important role in providing Bristolians with places that feel free and expansive within the city centre. These will be 'places of no obligation' where people of all ages can feel comfortable resting, exercising, socialising or playing. Other drivers will increase activity and commercial space, but they must not crowd out the 'places to be'.

Wellbeing

The harbour will continue to support people's physical fitness, active lifestyles and mental wellbeing, with improvements to access and infrastructure widening and diversifying participation. People will be able to have picnics by the waterside, attend a weekly harbour loop running club, try out water activities in the harbour, and skate in the amphitheatre. The public realm will provide opportunities for incidental play and exploration, allowing space for people's individual interpretation and use.

◆ The harbour will be a great place to live, with high quality urban design, services and amenities

Aspiration:

Living in the harbour

A home in the harbour will be special, not only because of the architecture but because of the unique urban life that the harbour provides. Residents will be able to access some of the city's most expansive views, best and most authentic food, vital culture and public life all from their doorstep. New residential development should provide their residents with spaces to relax and recharge; play and garden; perhaps even providing designated areas for barbecues and community parties. New housing should be well designed and should fit well into the context

Identity and public space

The public spaces of tomorrow's harbour will combine the distinctive, post-industrial qualities of the old docks with fresh, contemporary design that celebrates the harbour's unique character whilst also making a public realm which is legible, enjoyable and safe. Moving through the harbour, people will experience a series of distinct places: they will know where they are and be helped to navigate the harbour's many complex spaces.

A diverse and inclusive harbour community

The opportunity to live in the harbour should be open to all regardless of income and at all stages of life. New developments should provide affordable housing across a range of tenures.

Mooring

The harbour will provide well-designed moorings and facilities, with new moorings being introduced to further animate the harbour. Visitors will benefit from welcoming visitor moorings that are located to help them access the best that Bristol's harbour and the wider city can offer. Live-aboard and leisure moorings will provide secure, well-serviced and peaceful places to dwell. Commercial moorings will be sited where they complement and enhance quayside activities, providing space for independent businesses, hotels and shops.

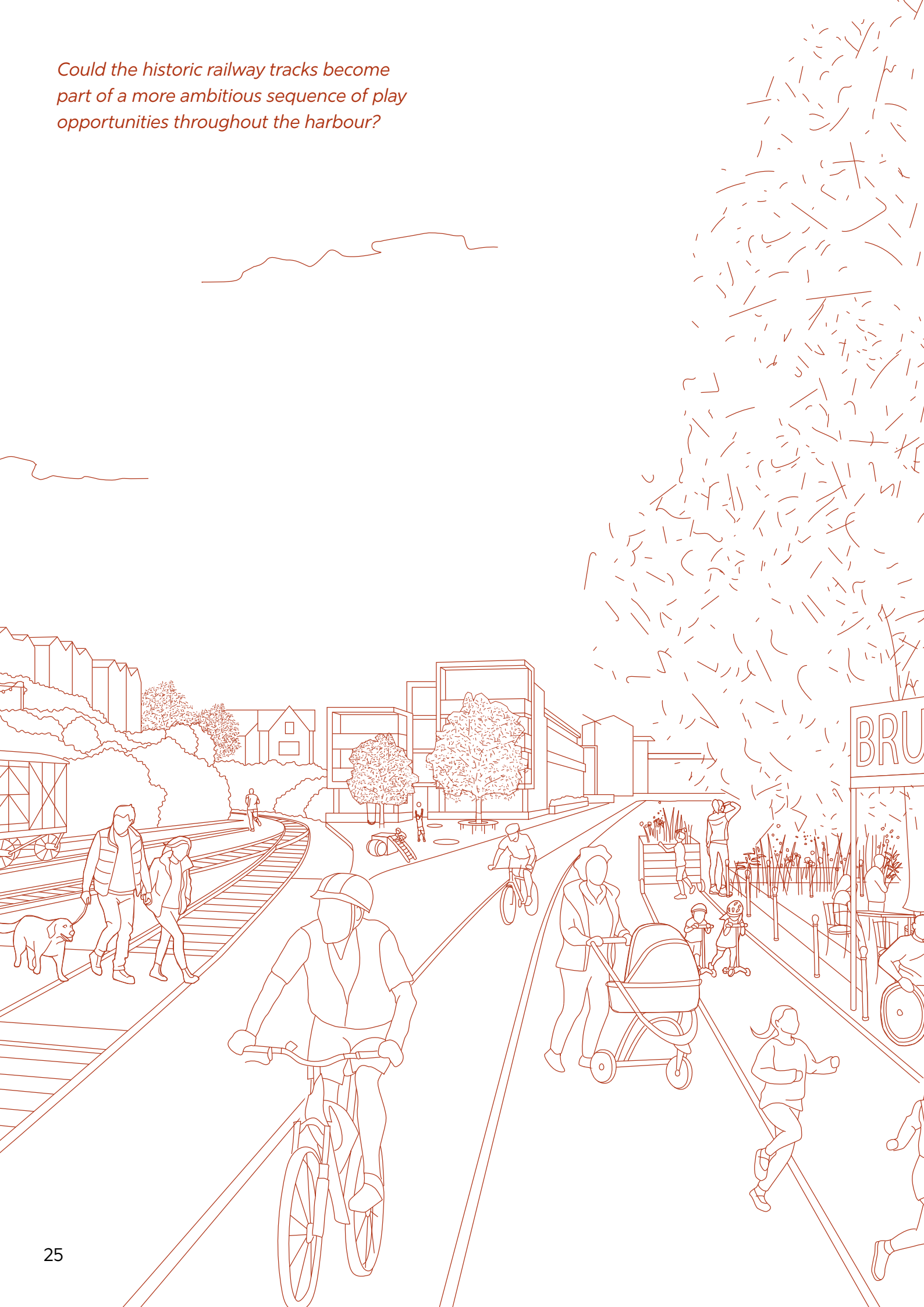
Servicing

To reduce the impact of freight in and around the harbour, the creation of freight consolidation hubs will be supported as well as access by e-cargo bikes and other forms of e-mobility for deliveries and servicing.

Could the harbour set a new standard for biodiverse urban moorings, for example at Capricorn Quay?



Could the historic railway tracks become part of a more ambitious sequence of play opportunities throughout the harbour?



◆ The harbour will offer a unique playable quayside for all

Aspiration:

Child's play

The harbour will offer safe opportunities for informal play. Future generations of children will continue to be able to balance on the historic train tracks, crawl over maritime anchors and cool off in paddling pools. Alongside this, new opportunities for play will be explored which could be as simple as new playable lines on the ground but could be as ambitious as a child-friendly lido, a seasonal urban beach, or an outdoor nature classroom. On top of all this, play provision will be gender-inclusive and designed so that everyone is welcomed and given space to play and express themselves.

Working out

The harbour's popularity as a place to work out is growing. The harbour of the future will further promote physical activity and sport to aid wellbeing protecting existing sport infrastructure, enhancing it and providing things like jogging routes, trim trails, water fountains, changing rooms and lockers, as well as spaces that promote activities like yoga or meditation. Sports events such as the marathon and triathlon will continue to be encouraged, with new events added that provide opportunities for more diverse groups and more mixed abilities.

Hanging out

The harbour is already a popular place to simply hang out, particularly for those that can afford to visit the many hospitality businesses. The harbour of the future will provide many different types of hanging out space, designed to attract a greater diversity of people. This might involve tiered seating round a small performance space, reclining seating in a sunny spot of the harbour or picnicking and barbecue areas.

Education and exploration

Tomorrow's harbour will be a place for everyone, young and old, to engage with the built and natural environment. Integrated into a child-friendly public realm will be opportunities for education and exploration, whether that is through hands-on nature and citizen science projects, or immersive projects that seek to tell the stories of the harbour.

Animation and cultural happenings

Spaces in the harbour will be interesting and inspiring – lively places in which people can engage with each other, where creativity can flourish and where new forms of cultural expression are supported. The public realm will be animated through performance, street art, creative interventions and cultural 'happenings'. Skateboarders, skaters, and street artists will be welcomed as an important part of the harbour's spectacle, enabling these existing activities to flourish alongside new activities.

Could areas like the Harbour Inlet see shops and cafés happening on the water as well as on land?





The development of the harbour will underpin the sustainability of the Harbour and Dock's Estate

Aspiration:

Excellent infrastructure

The harbour will reinvest income to provide fit-for-purpose infrastructure that is well maintained and efficiently repaired to provide continuous and consistent access, use and navigation of the harbour. Essential to maintaining quality of craft is the continuing presence of infrastructure, facilities and skills to supply maintenance services.

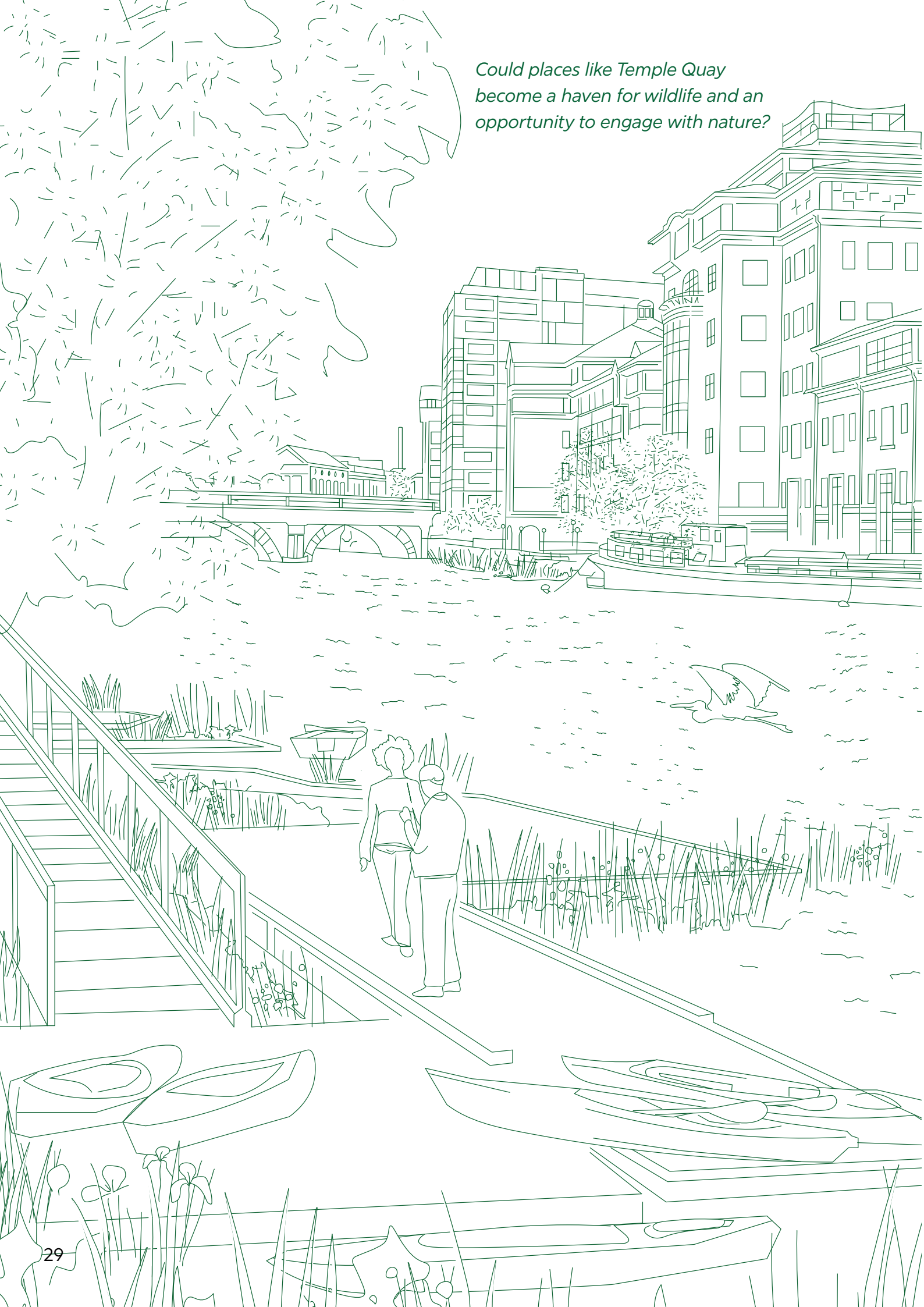
Improved and expanded mooring infrastructure

An increase in the number of moorings in the harbour will amplify what is already an important income stream for the Harbour Authority. Mooring types will be varied across the harbour with groupings and increased capacity complimenting the uses and activities on the surrounding harbourside. New commercial moorings such as floating markets, saunas and bookshops will be located across the harbour to diversify and increase the water-activity offer. The provision of additional mooring pontoons will be secured through development of waterfront sites.

Car Parking

While the longer term plan anticipates that some of the quayside car parks will be redeveloped, in the short term they are vital – as car parks – to provide income to enable the Harbour Authority manage and maintain the Harbour Estate. Car parks will be retained until market value, development costs, and travel habits have shifted sufficiently to justify their redevelopment. Continued parking provision for disabled visitors will be essential.

*Could places like Temple Quay
become a haven for wildlife and an
opportunity to engage with nature?*





The harbour will play a vital role in delivering upon Bristol's zero carbon, biodiversity and climate resilience ambitions

Aspiration:

Green space and biodiversity

Existing and new habitats on land and in water will enhance the biodiversity of the harbour. The harbour's public spaces will be more porous, varied and verdant, providing climate resilience particularly during heatwaves. People will be able to stay cool in the shade of the trees, explore a network of green spaces and engage with wildlife.

Energy generation

The harbour will fuel water source heat pumps, a low-carbon energy solution, for local businesses and residents, bringing Bristol closer to its net zero goal. People will be able to see the energy centres in action and learn about the trailblazing technologies that are keeping Bristol's Harbour at the forefront of innovation. The energy centres will be well integrated into the harbour's public realm and new developments.

Water quality

The quality of the water in the harbour will improve, thus encouraging more water based activities and allowing habitats to thrive. Attractive landscaping, drainage and filtration will help to reduce pollution flowing into the harbour. The introduction of floating ecospaces on the water will provide a natural and sustainable solution to clean the water. Measures to stop raw sewage outflows into the harbour will be explored.

Refurbished building stock

Many of the existing buildings in the Harbour Estate will be upgraded to provide better, more-insulated, and cheap-to-run spaces for businesses and organisations. Electrical equipment and fittings will be energy efficient, renewable energy will be produced on site, and buildings will be exceptional in energy performance terms.

Low-carbon transport

Affordable, well connected and low-carbon public transport will be available for locals and visitors to the harbour. Coach parking provision and drop-off will be expanded and improved to attract visitors from outside the city and provide a sustainable alternative to long distance car trips. Fewer cars will need to access the harbour as there will be affordable electric bikes, cargo bikes, ferries, and buses. There will be an increase in the amount of electric vehicle charging points.

Resilience to flood risk

Having a river at the heart of the city comes with challenges, especially as climate change and rising sea levels increase the risk of flooding. The harbour will continue to fulfill a fundamental part of the River Avon Flood defences. Implementation of the Bristol Avon Flood Strategy will better protect homes and businesses in the central area from flooding, giving businesses the confidence to invest in Bristol.



The harbour will be a place that supports community life

Aspiration:

A waterborne park

The harbour will evolve to become a unique waterborne park that meets the needs of a growing city centre community. New and underutilised spaces will provide much needed space for community activities. This new park winding its way through the heart of the city would meet many of Bristol's goals and priorities as a city, among them nature recovery, health and wellbeing, and inclusive play space.

Providing for communities

The harbour is home to many people and will continue to be a home for many more people in the future. Local amenities and facilities such as community centres, GP surgeries, grocery stores, and play space will make the harbour a local centre that provides for residents' needs.

Recognition for volunteers

Greater recognition will be given to the vast number of volunteers who maintain the harbour's maritime heritage, go litter picking on the water, run sporting activities, deliver rewilding initiatives and much more. Opportunities for volunteering will be more widely promoted.

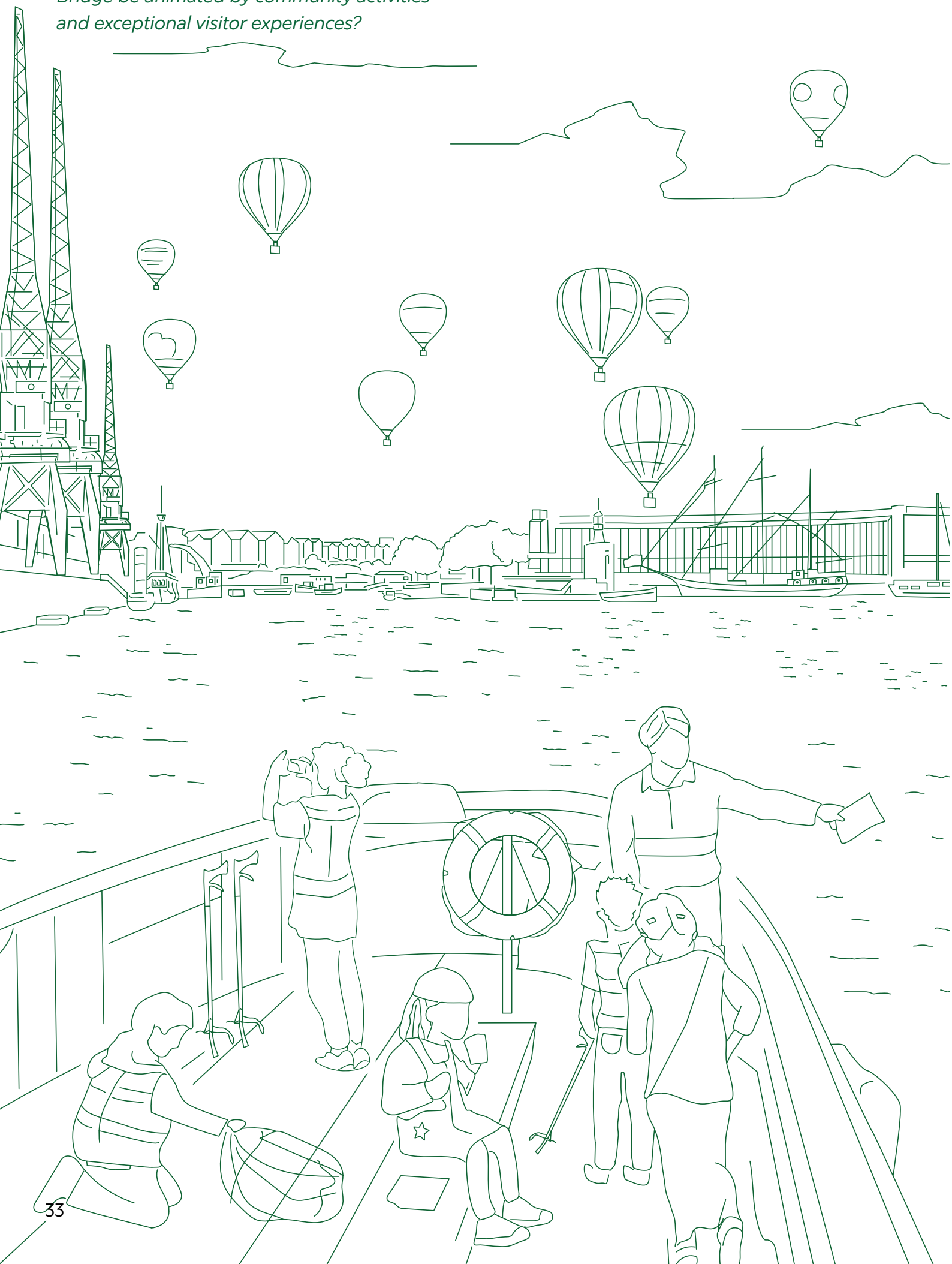
A harbour for everyone

The harbour will provide exemplary access to water sports and leisure activities with engagement programmes reaching underrepresented schools, families, young people, residents and communities.

Could underutilised harbourside spaces such as at Phoenix Wharf provide much-needed space for community activity?



Could the water at locations like Prince Street Bridge be animated by community activities and exceptional visitor experiences?





The harbour will balance its world-class tourist offer and events programming with the needs of its diverse local communities and neighbourhoods

Aspiration:

Many things to many people

Bristol's Harbour will be supported as a space that can be many different things to many different people. There will be a morning to evening economy with options for different budgets, interests and ages. Families will be able to have a free day out; tourists will be able to see the harbour's heritage; and locals will be able to commute on the ferry.

Community meanwhile uses

Following the success of projects like the temporary Roller Disco in Redcliffe Wharf, new uses and activities will be tested across underutilised land in the harbour. Local communities/visitors will be able to feed back on what they need and value as part of a rolling and responsive programme of temporary uses.

Public transport

Public transport, including coach drop off and pick-up, will be well-integrated with key tourist attractions such as the SS Great Britain to provide convenient, and affordable alternatives to car use.

Responsible tourism

The harbour will provide a varied tourism offer that attracts visitors at different times of the day, week and year to balance peak periods. Visitors will stay for longer periods of time, explore broader areas of the city, and utilise local supply chains and skills.

Promoting public events

Public spaces throughout the harbour will be designed not only to be delightful everyday spaces but also to make it easy and convenient to stage events, be it street markets, fairs, temporary events for kids or performances. Infrastructure such as power and water will be provided alongside public amenities to support events, including the Bristol Harbour Festival. Important events spaces like the 'amphitheatre' will be designed to be more welcoming when not being used for events.

Evening economy

The evening economy will be diversified, showcasing the best of Bristol's cultural offer. New venues and activities will be less about drinking and provide inclusive, safe spaces for all to feel welcome - places to come together, celebrate and relax. New venues will be particularly welcomed in areas that feel isolated and unsafe at night, as part of wider initiatives to improve lighting and accessibility.



The harbour be a vital part of Bristol's cultural identity, where everyday public life coexists with water uses, and maritime industries

Aspiration:

Local distinctiveness

The harbour is made up of many places and many local institutions that have huge value and cultural significance to Bristol's many communities. The importance of these places will be recognised and their distinctiveness celebrated and enhanced, for example through engaging, place-specific signage design, sculpture and so on.

A vibrant mix of uses

The harbour already provides a number of places where different kinds of public life, activity and culture co-exist in exciting and lively ways, for example the way that youth sailing happens alongside people socialising on the harbourside. These adjacencies are part of the excitement and joy of the harbour and, whilst there is potential to better manage how these uses co-exist, the harbour of the future will continue to be a place of contrasts and exciting, surprising experiences.

The Floating Harbour as Heritage

The harbour is not just a place that is home to remarkable heritage; it is heritage itself: an extraordinary work of industrial engineering with a story to tell that should involve and engage the whole of Bristol. This unique industrial story will be celebrated throughout the harbour.

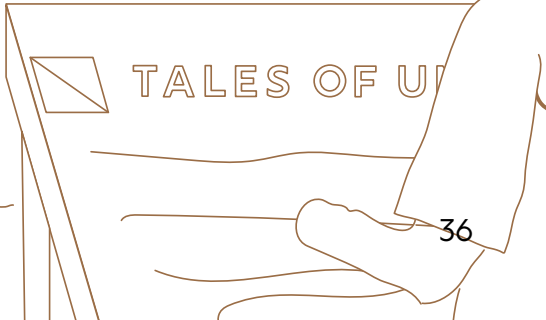
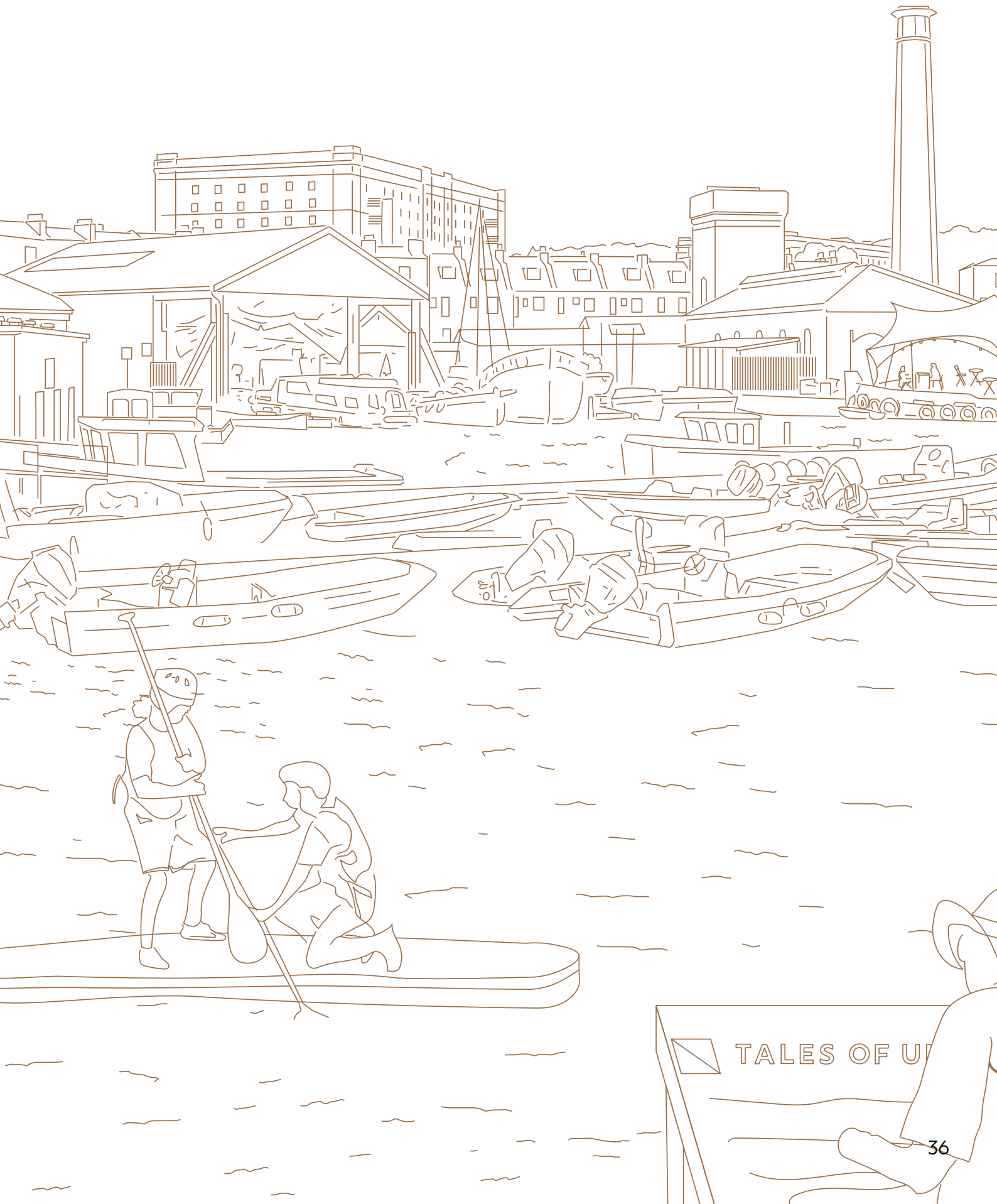
Maritime craft and industry

Since opening itself up to the wider city, the harbour has become a place where Bristolians and visitors can directly experience maritime crafts, industries, from the historic (but still active) workshops at Underfall Yard to contemporary chandlery and boat-building. Essential to maintaining quality of craft is the continuing presence of infrastructure, facilities and skills to supply maintenance services. Space and infrastructure for these activities will be protected.

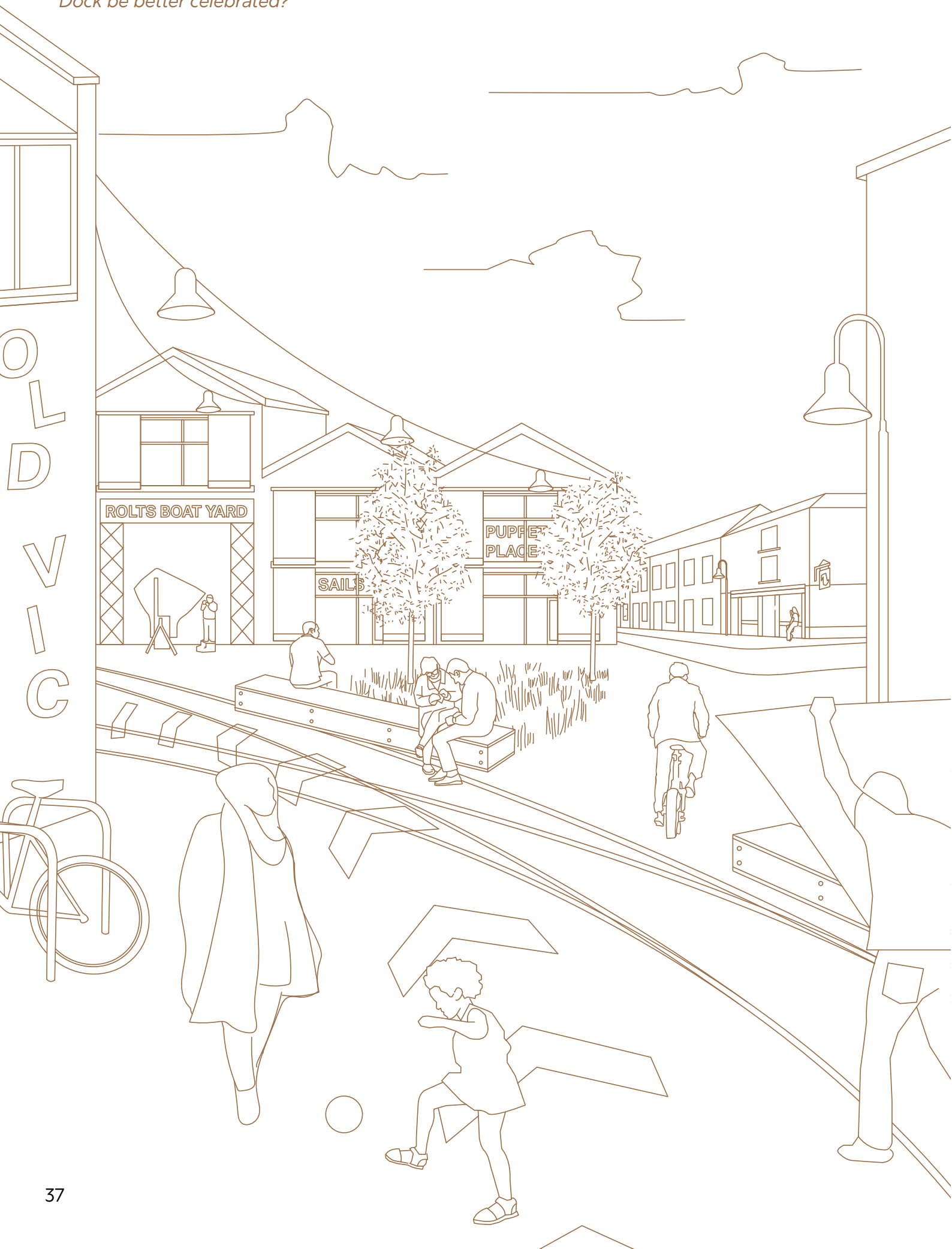
Storytelling

Every Bristolian should find stories, narratives and meaning in the harbour that is relevant and meaningful to them. Some of the narratives of the harbour, such as the visionary engineering that created it in the first place, are well told and documented. Others, such as the experiences of those who worked in the City Docks or for whom the harbour was their first taste of the city and the wider region, have not been so well told until now.

Could places like Underfall Yard become even more accessible, sharing their activities and history with wider audiences?



Could the things made and created at Albion Dock be better celebrated?





Bristol Harbour will be a place where creativity, making and culture, including local production and provenance, are celebrated and supported

Aspiration:

A good home for creativity

The harbour provides a rich mixture of creative and cultural businesses – from up and- coming artists and start-up businesses to a global entertainment brand like Aardman Productions – which sit alongside manufacturing and maker businesses who maintain Bristol’s involvement in contemporary maritime industry. Spike Island provides particularly significant clusters of such businesses. The Albion Industrial Estate provides an opportunity to add new space through refurbishment, redevelopment and intensification, growing this as a messy and authentic creative quarter.

Local provenance

From a much-loved bacon butty to a locally-sourced fried oyster or a fine sharing bottle of Somerset cider, the harbour is emerging as a place to access the best of Bristol and Somerset’s food cultures - and in a way that suits diverse audiences and markets. The value of businesses and organisations that bring these products and dishes to the harbour’s ‘table’ is huge and will be properly supported and cherished.

Boosting young voices

Cultural initiatives in the harbour, such as art commissions, will work to better celebrate and amplify the voices, activities and production of young creatives, both those already living and/ or working in the harbour and those who do not.

Made in the harbour

The harbour is already a powerhouse of local craft, skill and making. Investment and commissioning will make use of this incredible local expertise to create a harbour that is ‘made’ by harbour-based businesses - whether the drinks in local cafés or the benches that provide seating on the water’s edge.

Film making

Bristol boasts a rich history of film and TV production, with many well-known programmes and films made here over the years. The harbour will continue to facilitate and support this, both as an increasingly popular location for film-makers and home to the UK’s first media centre - the Watershed.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Vision is part of the **Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (HPSS)** prepared by DK-CM for Bristol City Council, 2023-24.

DK-CM have acted as lead consultants on this project supported by Fourth Street, Savills and Rising Arts Agency.

Funded by the West of England Combined Authority through the Investment Fund, administered by the West of England Combined Authority.

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting harbourplaceshaping@bristol.gov.uk

This document is part of the Harbour Place Shaping Strategy (HPSS) prepared by DK-CM for Bristol City Council, 2023-24.

Funded by the West of England Combined Authority through the Investment Fund, administered by the West of England Combined Authority.



For further information, please email harbourplaceshaping@bristol.gov.uk