

## **Kirkstall Neighbourhood Forum Infrastructure. September 2022**

Community Infrastructure is the framework which enables communities to thrive prosper and develop over time.

A neighbourhood is only as good as the infrastructure in the area and without proper consideration, consultation and planning, neighbourhoods can deteriorate or fail to thrive.

It is important that local people engage in the planning and decisions that will affect their local communities and to challenge where investment is insufficient.

Whilst we have the historical infrastructure, we all take for granted e.g., Water, Gas, Electric we have new needs in the community and upgrades to existing infrastructure that we must plan for to ensure the success of Kirkstall and its community.

From the engagement with our community, we can pick out some infrastructure needs both new and historical which the community have highlighted as requiring attention.

- Digital
  - Access to cable or other fibre WIFI must be available with a basic service available to all inhabitants of Kirkstall.
- Green spaces
  - For an inner-City district Kirkstall is blessed with many green spaces but these must be protected and maintained to protect leisure in the community. We have been engaging with the community around the registration of footpaths and this is currently ongoing.
- Flood Defences
  - Kirkstall is vulnerable to flooding and whilst we are grateful for the substantial flood protection investment in the valley this must not mean the area becomes an immense potential development site if the area is now flood protected. The community are concerned about the impact of the flood defences on local wildlife and that the protected flood plain may become attractive to developers. We should consider SuDs Sustainable Drainage and how these can be incorporated into local infrastructure.
- Medical Facilities
  - Kirkstall residents currently complain about lack of doctors' appointments and access to doctors and NHS dentists. Investment in a Minor injuries' unit would benefit Kirkstall and the wider community as well as a joined-up approach to health & wellbeing.
- Schools & Educational facilities
  - Investment in local schools is required to deal with the high intake of children from disadvantaged backgrounds who consistently perform at or below national levels.
  - Investment in Adult Education and training should be available to enhance residents' opportunities in obtaining skilled jobs.
- Safer Roads
  - The community first concern in engagement is always traffic issues and the impact on Kirkstall. Traffic calming and 20mph zones should be standard throughout the area in residential areas. Computer coordinated control of traffic should be improved to maintain traffic flow. Standing queuing traffic creates a toxic

environment along the valley corridor and surrounding areas. Active travel and cycling initiatives should be explored in reducing traffic in the area.

- Cleaner air
  - Kirkstall has five schools alongside the A65, and the car fumes are impacting the children's health, wellbeing, and safety. Children from several schools have actively campaigned in the area for a cleaner safer Kirkstall.
  - More investment in green energy should be encouraged across the community. Recent examples would be Ground Source heating at Queenswood Heights, Kirkstall Leisure centre and Solar Panels at Sacred Heart school all helping to clean up Kirkstall.
  - We should explore green roofs green walls and extensive tree planting to aid clean air.
- Housing
  - Kirkstall has a wide range of housing from the Victorian back to backs in Burley to the large detached and semi-detached properties in West Park. Substantial investment is required in much of its housing stock to bring in up to standard.
  - Affordable housing is required in large numbers across Kirkstall as many of the social houses have been sold. Recent developments have not included sufficient "affordable" housing
- Food
  - Access to healthy local food and nutrition is vital for all communities and we have a thriving farm project which should be supported. Additional support to local allotment holders would also benefit the community
- Transport
  - Kirkstall needs substantial investment in busses, trains, and other form of green transport. The community should press for all busses to be electric to pass through our community.
  - Further development of electric trains on our local lines should be a priority.
  - The community would benefit from a reopened station at Kirkstall Bridge and at Spen Approach giving the community more options to travel by public transport.
- Employment
  - Local jobs for local people are important to ensure we continue to thrive as a community. This will require investment in training and skills within the community.
- Community Hub
  - Kirkstall does not have a Community Hub, and this means the community is not as engaged as it should be. Local community groups do a tremendous job, but they are fragmented across the community due to a lack of an effective community building. KVDT have had to move buildings on several occasions which impacts the fantastic work they conduct. We need a dedicated Community Hub owned and run by the community. We need to explore the potential for NDOs Neighbourhood development order and CRTBOs Community right to build orders, which can grant permission for small scale community led developments.
- Retail & Leisure
  - Kirkstall has an abundant and thriving retail base somewhat fragmented along the valley bottom which brings along its own problems of incoming traffic polluting the area. We have lost some of the more traditional small shops e.g., butchers, bakers greengrocers, Post Office etc to be replaced by the big supermarkets which have

forced many out of business. This is in part consumer driven and replicated across the city as shopping habits change to a more convenient all in one place shopping.

- Leisure is available across Kirkstall with several clubs and community sports teams regularly meeting up. Some old traditional sports have been lost to the community as the population changes. e.g., Crown Green Bowling. We have a local sports centre and several gyms across the community. Large investment has been recently made at the Sports centre around green energy initiatives.
- The sprawling Cardigan Fields entertainment site on Kirkstall Road attracts a large number of people from Kirkstall and the wider community and brings issues of pollution noise and littering but also adds to the vibrancy of our community.

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TJB 1 September 2022