INTRODUCTION
The Minster is the oldest building in Cheltenham and is Grade I Listed. Despite its historic importance there have been a number of more recent developments that now surround it which have effectively turned their back on the church and its grounds. The resulting effect is that the church has become a forgotten jewel in the town and there have been a number of problems with antisocial behaviour in its ground which further reduces visitor numbers. With relatively few people crossing the grounds there is little connection between the lower High Street, which is often very busy and Clarence Street to the other side where the Wilson Art Gallery and Public Library are located.

The proposed Public Realm improvements follow planning approval for an Innovation Hub on land to the rear of Chester Walk in Cheltenham which is now as Workshop Cheltenham. The original scheme was based on the re-use of recycled shipping containers (planning reference 19/00204/FUL), however a revised application using bespoke modular construction is currently under consideration, with a decision expected on August 13th 2020.

The aspirations of the project remain as originally intended and include a Tier II Growth Hub which will be delivered in partnership with GFirst LEP, an event space which will be curated in partnership with Cheltenham Festivals, a café and bar, and flexible studio space. The studios will be orientated towards the creative industries within the town such as digital, media, culture, cyber and technology, and as such the Growth Hub will offer specialist support in these areas.

The event space will be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of uses, from break out meeting areas to a conference hall, or for performances in music and the arts. The Culture Board identified the gap of cultural spaces for the 18-30 age group as a key missing element in the offering of Cheltenham and has been consulted along the way with the project.

MEETING PLACE
New fixed and flexible accessible social seating is proposed within this area to encourage visitors to spend a little longer in the grounds, with more people using the space for positive activities it should help to displace anti-social uses. Additional seating will also provide an option to avoid sitting on the historical monuments and gave tablesrelieving the pressure on these features.

BIODIVERSITY GARDEN AND PUBLIC ART
The Minster Grounds are in a poor condition due to a number of factors, but with a poor grass sward, inappropriate shrub planting and a heavy tree canopy this does not help to make the space feel welcoming or safe.

As part of the borough’s Habitat Cheltenham project the existing landscape will be redesigned to increase the variety and number of plant species. This will involve increasing the species mix of the grass areas with a particular interest in increasing the spring and autumn colours to encourage visitors at the beginning of the year and extend the appeal of the space into autumn.

Management of the shrub and tree species will also be considered, both to increase the amenity of the space and increase the biodiversity. Opportunities to combine art and historical references into the landscape in a practical and appropriate manner will also be incorporated.

Visitor movement through the site will be partially controlled by the planting of wildflower/bulb planting biodiversity gardens. Within the gardens will be allocated zones for public art which will be curated by The Cheltenham Trust which will provide much needed outdoor space for sculptures and installations.

The intention of the proposals is therefore to create a cultural destination that includes the Minster, its grounds, the art gallery, museum and library and the Workshop Cheltenham project. Public art plays a vital role in place making. Public art is only limited by the imagination of the artist and the guardians of public space. It can be a temporary installation, lighting a building, film & video, sculpture, ceramics, metal, textiles, plastic, street furniture, landscaping, a poster, poetry, performance, a website, a social enterprise, a shared idea, a new social relationship and more.

PROPOSAL
ACTIVITY LAWN
Either side of the footpaths will be a new Activity lawn, with electrical connections provided for pop up events and gatherings. Seating in this area will be flexible to allow a variety of uses. This feature can be used for outdoor activities by the Minster, The Wilson, Workshop Cheltenham or link to the festivals and community events, increasing the frequency of positive public activities and animating the space.
PUBLIC REALM MASTERPLAN 1:500

Diagram Key:
- Shopmobility
- Proposed lightweight elevated footpath
- Proposed meeting place
- Proposed activity lawn
- Proposed low level shrubs
- Proposed high level lighting
- Proposed biodiversity garden and community art in partnership with The Wilson

NOTE: Lighting to be provided along Well Walk, Processional Way, Cheltenham Minster steps, spine and west elevation.
BIODIVERSITY, SEATING & FOOTPATHS PRECEDENTS

Diagram Key:

A  Footpath finishes
B  Biodiversity garden
C  Fixed seating
D  Flexible seating
E  Floating footpath

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ALLEYWAY & LIGHTING PRECEDENTS

DIAGRAM KEY

A  Church lighting
B  Footpath lighting
C  Alleyway lighting

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