

Rotherham Town Centre

Supplementary
Planning Document
Consultation Draft

March 2016

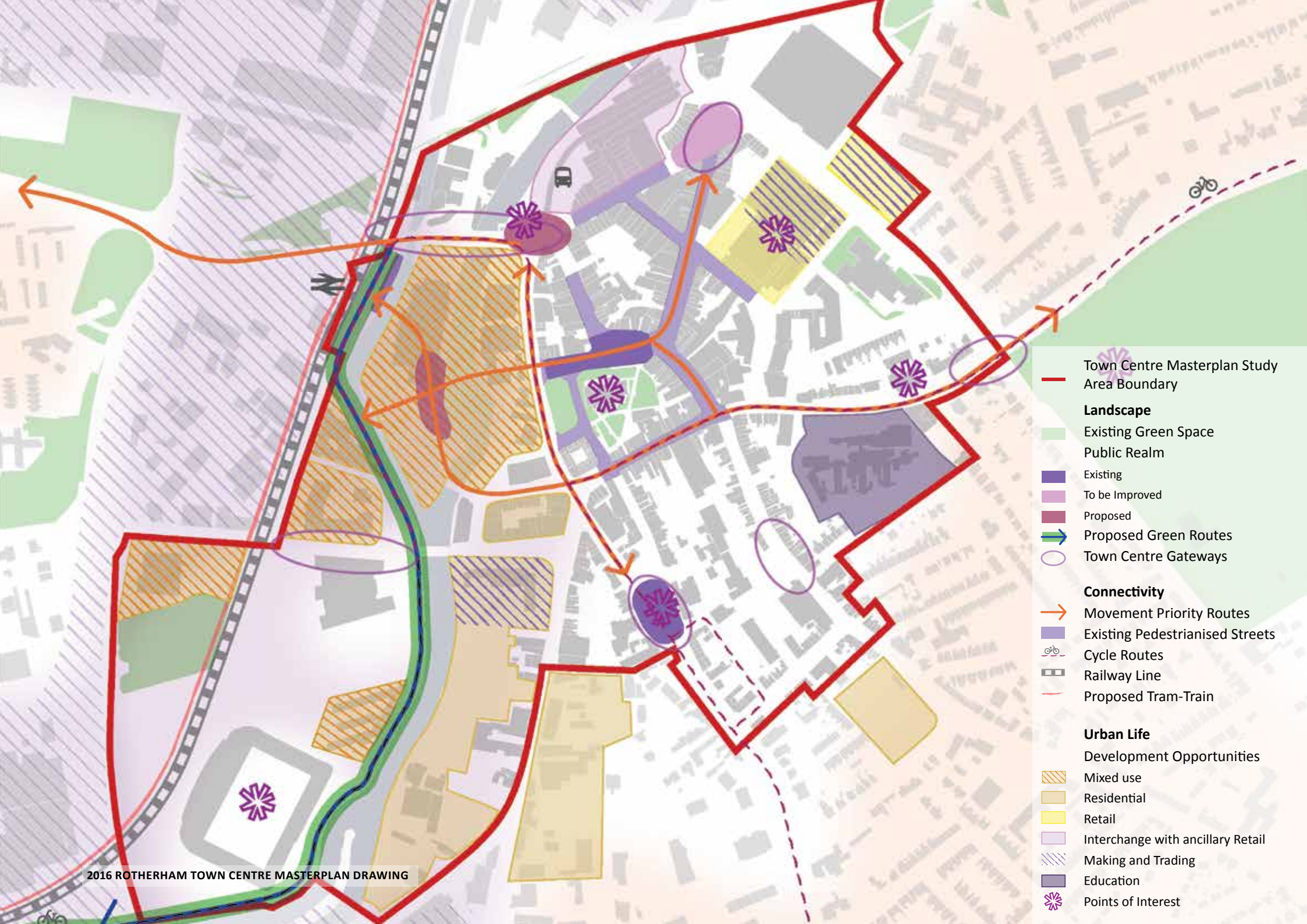
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Foreword

*** *RMBC to draft* ***

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- Town Centre Masterplan Study Area Boundary
- Landscape**
 - Existing Green Space
 - Public Realm
 - Existing
 - To be Improved
 - Proposed
 - Proposed Green Routes
 - Town Centre Gateways
- Connectivity**
 - Movement Priority Routes
 - Existing Pedestrianised Streets
 - Cycle Routes
 - Railway Line
 - Proposed Tram-Train
- Urban Life**
 - Development Opportunities
 - Mixed use
 - Residential
 - Retail
 - Interchange with ancillary Retail
 - Making and Trading
 - Education
 - Points of Interest

Vision

Self-confident yet outward looking, Rotherham will build on its heritage as a market town and industrial powerhouse, becoming a bustling hub for **living, learning, working, making and trading**.

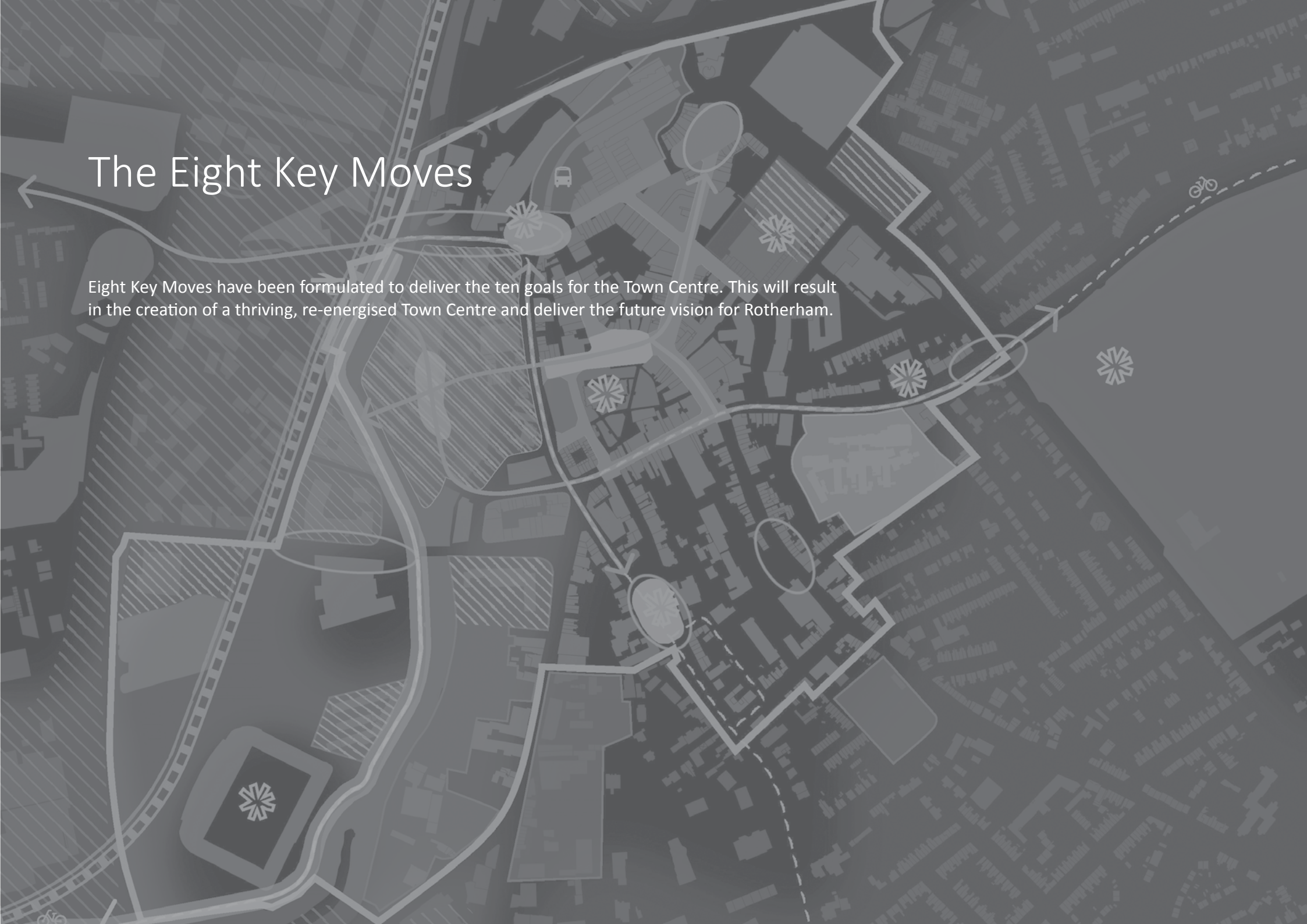
Attracted by quality design and a strong sense of place, new Town Centre residents and visitors will benefit from an **excellent cultural and leisure offer** and an **active night time economy**. The Town Centre will become a truly family friendly destination with a vibrant community that will sustain the success of the town's independent retailers and market traders.

Nurtured by a strong higher education campus, Rotherham's **entrepreneurial spirit** will engender business start-ups. Located in the Town Centre, they will create new jobs and opportunities for the town's residents as they succeed and grow.

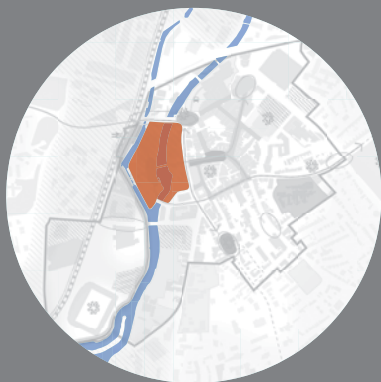
With continual momentum and focus, the Town Centre will reclaim its place as the **heart of the Borough**.

The Eight Key Moves

Eight Key Moves have been formulated to deliver the ten goals for the Town Centre. This will result in the creation of a thriving, re-energised Town Centre and deliver the future vision for Rotherham.



1 Development of a central Mixed Use Leisure Hub at Forge Island



2 Delivery of Residential Units on key sites within the Town Centre



3 Creation of pedestrian 'Gold Routes' through the Town Centre, improving wayfinding and reconfiguring Town Centre footfall



4 Improving the Town Centre's Gateways to create a strong sense of arrival and identity



5 Opening up Rotherham's Riverside



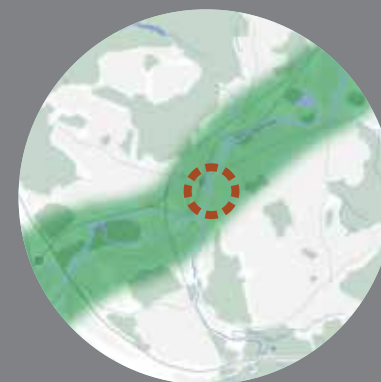
6 Support for 'Making and Trading' in the Town Centre



7 Redevelopment of the Interchange to create a high quality environment with improved Linkages to Rotherham Central Railway Station



8 A connected Green Network to deliver a Corridor of Healthy Living





AERIAL VIEW OF ROTHERHAM

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

New Opportunities

Rotherham Town Centre presents a fantastic opportunity to deliver economically driven regeneration at the heart of the borough. The Town Centre is well located, well connected and plays a strong role in the wider South Yorkshire economy. There are a number of exciting opportunities within the Town Centre's boundary, from leisure to residential, and this document charts the contributions that these schemes will bring to the future of Rotherham. The Town Centre boasts excellent connectivity to the wider Sheffield City Region and this is a strong asset that will be drawn upon and maximised through the lifetime of this Masterplan Update.

Despite difficult times following the recession of 2008, the Town Centre holds real potential to move forward and deliver a number of exciting schemes. These schemes will bring regeneration benefits not only to the Centre itself, but the wider Borough. In 2005 the Council commissioned the original Renaissance Masterplan. Now eleven years later, this 2016 update provides a review of the original Masterplan in respect of the changes that have occurred since 2005, perhaps most notably the recession of 2008.

Living, Working and Trading

Located within close proximity to the proposed Sheffield and Rotherham Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District ('AMID'), the Town Centre will have an increasingly important role in supporting this cluster of cutting edge research and manufacturing facilities, most notably by capitalising on its location in a working area that is liveable, walkable and bikeable, with good quality transport links. The growth of the AMID will in part be dependent upon the successful regeneration of Rotherham Town Centre, with complementary improvements, including the delivery of housing, helping to realise benefits for both areas.

This document has sought to analyse the Town Centre as it is currently ('the baseline scenario') and build on these findings to define a concept vision for the Centre. This concept has subsequently translated into a number of proposals which the Council will seek to prioritise in order to achieve successful revitalisation and regeneration.

Purpose of the Document

This document takes the form of a Supplementary Planning Document ('SPD'). As such it accords with the direction set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance. It specifically adds detail, guidance and clarification to the suite of documents comprising Rotherham Development Plan, where it applies to the Town Centre. This document should be used as a reference point when developing proposals for the Town Centre, and as an SPD, is a material consideration

for the determination of planning applications.

The Masterplan update has also been drafted to support and enable the aspirations of Rotherham's 2015 Economic Growth Plan. Stakeholder engagement has been key to the development of this update. This has included engagement sessions with Council Officers, Councillors and Commissioners along with the Town Centre Business Sub-Group, and a workshop which involved members of Rotherham's private sector community. Members of the public and interested parties will be afforded the opportunity to comment on and shape this masterplan as part of a formal public consultation in Spring 2016, prior to adoption of the SPD in Summer 2016.

The Study Area

The diagram opposite shows Rotherham Town Centre with the red line boundary of the Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan. This study area includes a number of the town's key assets, notably its retail core, Market Hall, bus and rail stations, several listed buildings (including the historic Grade I listed Minster), All Saints Square, Minster Gardens, Rotherham College and New York Stadium. The boundary also includes a number of key opportunity sites that offer exciting development potential.

The northern boundary is defined by Centenary Way (A630), beyond which exists a number of buildings in industrial ('B-class') use. The eastern boundary is broadly

defined by the A6021, leading toward Clifton Park, the Clifton Park Museum and a largely residential area. The southern boundary, much like the eastern boundary, is defined by a change in land use, land-patterns and density, and again a high proportion of residential dwellings.

The western boundary is broadly defined by the Holmes Chord which provides services to Rotherham Central Railway Station. Beyond the western boundary is a mixture of residential and industrial uses. South-west of the Town Centre boundary exists the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District ('AMID'), the M1 motorway and Meadowhall Shopping Centre. To the east of the Town Centre boundary is a junction to the M18.

The Town Centre Masterplan boundary differs from the more expansive Local Plan Town Centre boundary, being more concentrated and spatially focussed. The intention of this is to focus regeneration on a number of key sites and areas that will bring the greatest benefit to the Town Centre.

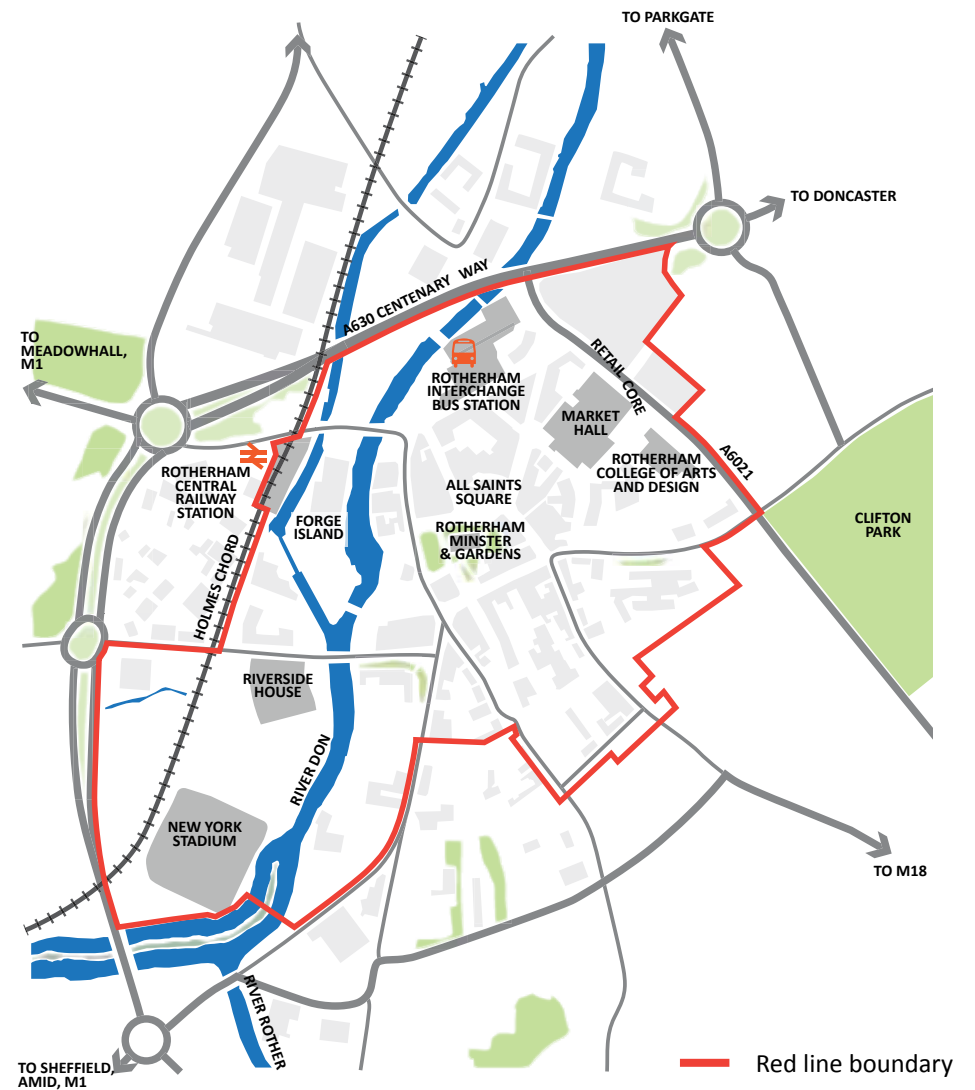


Fig. 1.1 Rotherham Town Centre Plan with Masterplan Boundary



ROTHERHAM MINSTER AND GARDENS

Town Centre Goals

2.1 Town Centre Goals

Review of the 2005 Renaissance Goals

The 2005 Renaissance Charter provided a broad set of goals that sought to shape the future of the Town Centre over the next 10 years. These original Charter Goals have provided the foundation for this update and have been reviewed to understand their continued relevance in shaping the future of the town centre across the remainder of the Masterplan Period. An important part of this process was a workshop with representatives from across the public and private sectors held in November 2015. Additional meetings were held with Council Officers and the Town Centre Working Group. Together these sessions provided a useful 'check and challenge' role, and the outcomes have guided and shaped the subsequent production of this masterplan update.

Updated 2016 Town Centre Goals

The workshop concluded that all of the 2005 goals were still considered fit for purpose with the exception of Goal 5 which related to significant, untested highway remodelling. Throughout early consultation sessions with key stakeholders, it was reiterated that the goals should be updated to reflect the Town Centre's proximity to the proposed Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District ('AMID') at the east with the scope to extend this concept to the Town Centre itself. Additionally another theme that emerged from the workshop was that the goals should also refer to culture, leisure, and sport. Several other participants commented that the 2005 goals were 'too vague' and should be more focussed. Based on this feedback, the Town Centre Goals have been updated for this 2016 masterplan refresh.

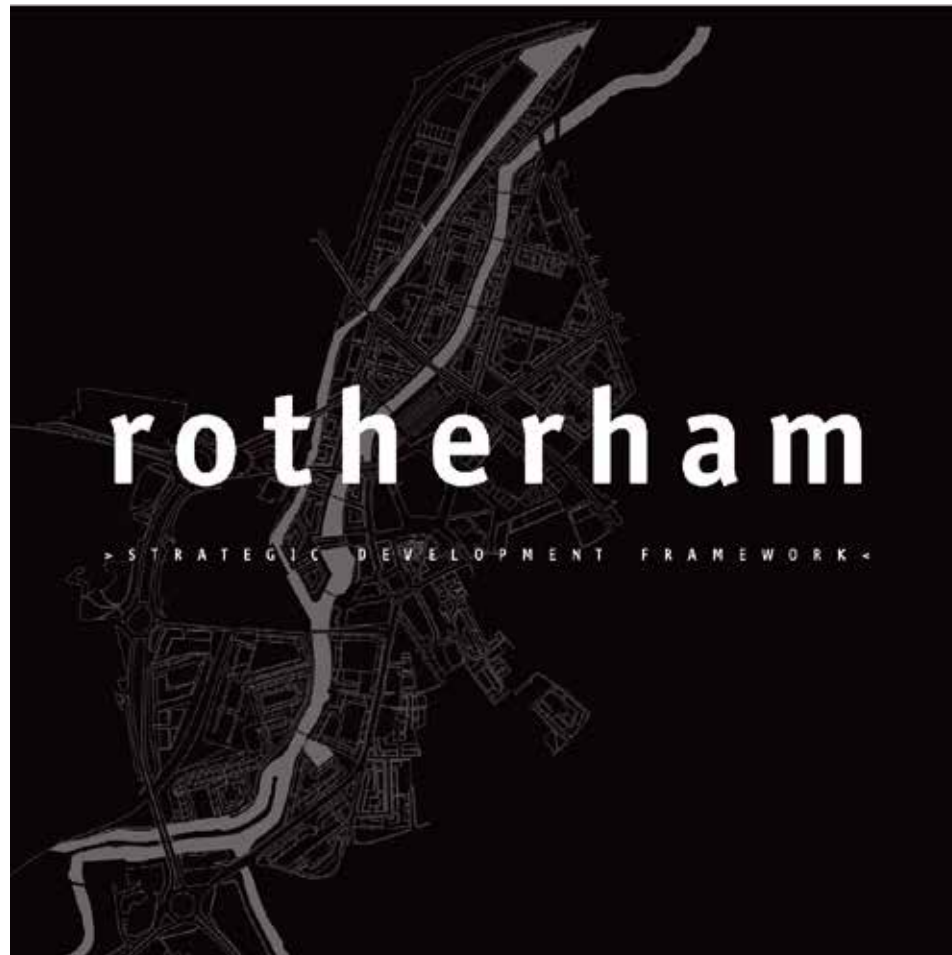


Fig. 2.1 2005 Rotherham Renaissance Strategic Development Framework

2016 Town Centre Goals

<p>1</p> <p>The river and the canal will be a key part of the town's future. Development along the canal must be of high quality, and follow an agreed masterplan. The river and canal will become much loved parts of the town with public spaces and walkways lining their banks.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>The Masterplan will seek opportunities to deliver residential units within the Town Centre. This will achieve around the clock vitality and vibrancy. Town Centre living is critical to sustaining the long term health of the Town Centre and the Masterplan will seek to improve the existing housing stock, provide greater choice and exploit the Town Centre's excellent connectivity. Rotherham Town Centre is well placed to provide a significant proportion of the new housing needed to support the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>The Town Centre will be the centre of a sustainable landscape setting of the highest quality, giving its residents access to beautiful countryside, outdoor recreation, leisure, and healthy living. At the same time we wish to enrich and extend the network of parks and green spaces in the town.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Rotherham Town Centre will be at the centre of a public transport network that connects Rotherham's satellite communities into the town and joins the town to the rest of the sub-region including Robin Hood Doncaster-Sheffield airport and the future HS2 station. In addition, we want improvements to the highway network to accommodate growth and provide high quality sustainable transport access, such as walking and cycling, into the Town Centre.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Rotherham Town Centre will seek to exploit every opportunity to better integrate its cultural, leisure and sporting assets such as Rotherham Theatre on Bridgegate, the Civic Theatre on Catherine Street, Clifton Park and the New York Stadium. This will help create a sense of community and support Town Centre living by making it a more attractive proposition.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>Forge Island will become a major new piece of the Town Centre, with a strong leisure and residential focus. It will feature new townscape and exploit the water frontages of the canal and river. The definition of the area will be broadened out from the physical island alone to include the areas on either side of the water which will bring better connections and help create a real sense of place. The Island will be the town's new leisure quarter that will complement the retail centre.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>We want to establish a new civic focus for the town which not only promotes a more open and accessible type of governance but also embraces culture and the arts.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Rotherham will actively seek the best in architecture, urban design and public spaces and will not accept the mediocre or the banal.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Opportunities to improve community access to health, education and promote social wellbeing will be actively pursued as a key component of any major transformation within the town. In particular, we want to improve opportunities for the young and disadvantaged.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Rotherham will be a broadly based, dynamic local economy with a vibrant Town Centre as its focus, capitalising upon new public spaces, and a new riverside. In particular we want the Town Centre to become a place of employment with shops, offices, workshops and cultural facilities.</p>

Fig. 2.2 Revised 2016 Town Centre Goals



ROTHERHAM CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

Progress

3.1 Progress

Since the 2005 Renaissance Masterplan, a number of developments have come forward in Rotherham Town Centre. Progress has since slowed however, and this can be attributable to a number of factors, such as the recession of 2008, the dissolution of supporting bodies such as Yorkshire Forward and the loss of key grant funding

schemes. The timeline below reviews completed projects and their contribution towards achieving the Renaissance Goals and incorporates projected projects that will further support the 2016 Goals for Rotherham Town Centre. Please refer to figure 2.2 for full description of revised 2016 Town Centre goals.

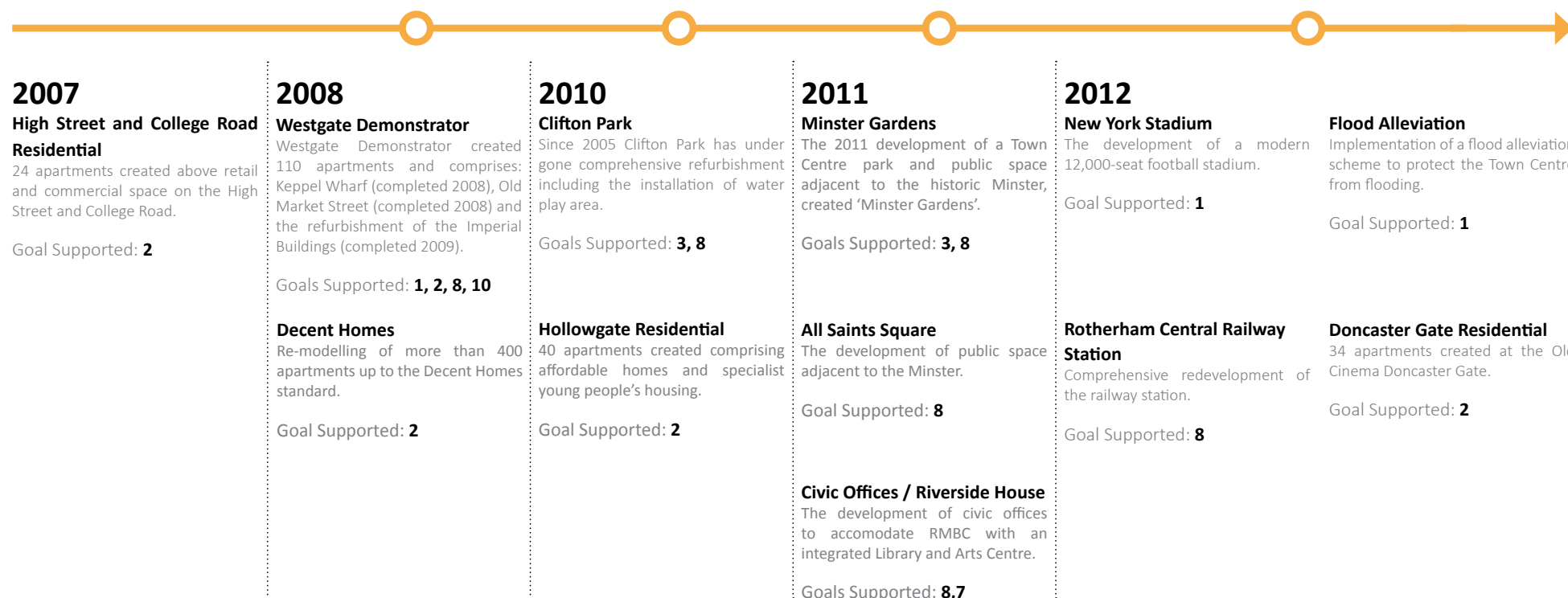
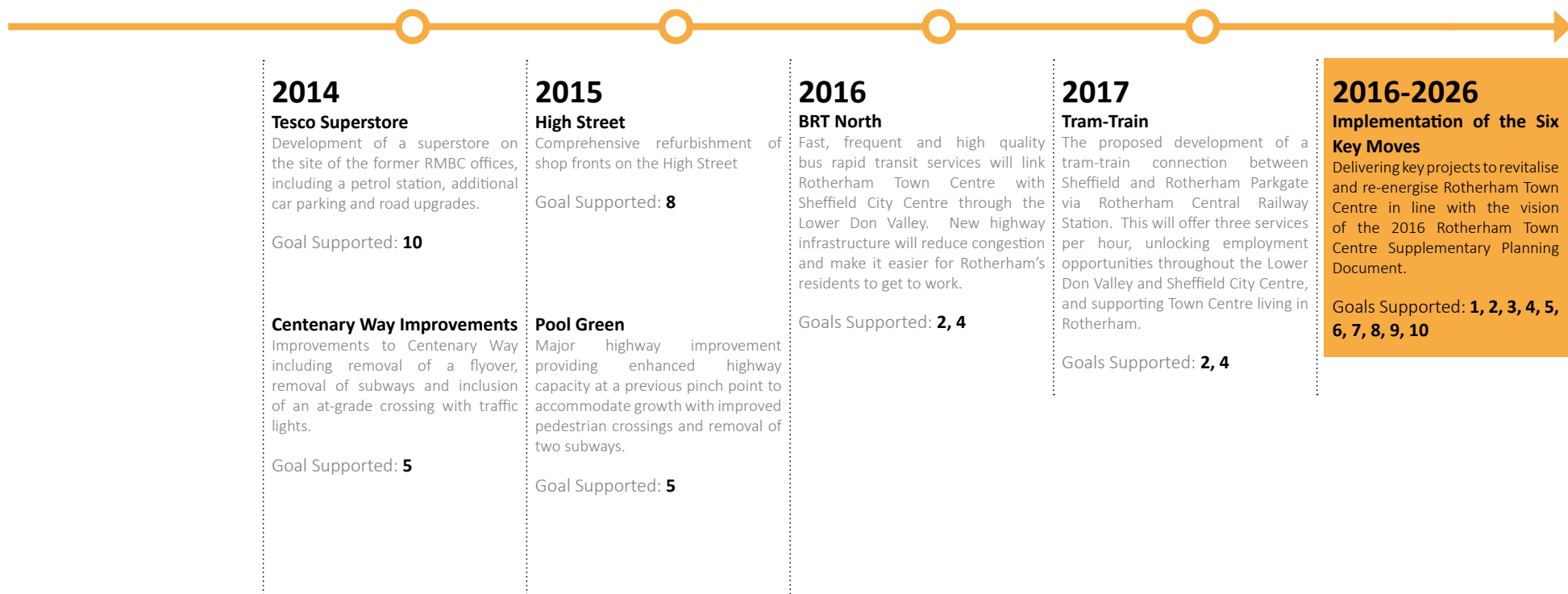


Fig. 3.1 Goals





CHAPEL OF OUR LADY

Planning Policy

4.1 Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy

The overarching planning policy document for England is the **National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF')**. At the heart of the NPPF is the principle of sustainability, defined as having three parts, social, economic and environmental. In order to achieve this, the Framework includes twelve core planning principles that require planning to: drive and support sustainable economic development; deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure, and thriving local places that the country needs; seek high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings; and encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.

Rotherham Town Centre presents a number of key opportunities to achieve these goals. The proposals within the masterplan should promote the efficient use of land by recycling brownfield sites, therefore contributing towards achieving the highest standard of sustainability. With the requirements of the NPPF firmly in mind, the masterplan has been designed to help ensure that the Town Centre makes a strong contribution towards the new homes and employment space that the Borough needs.

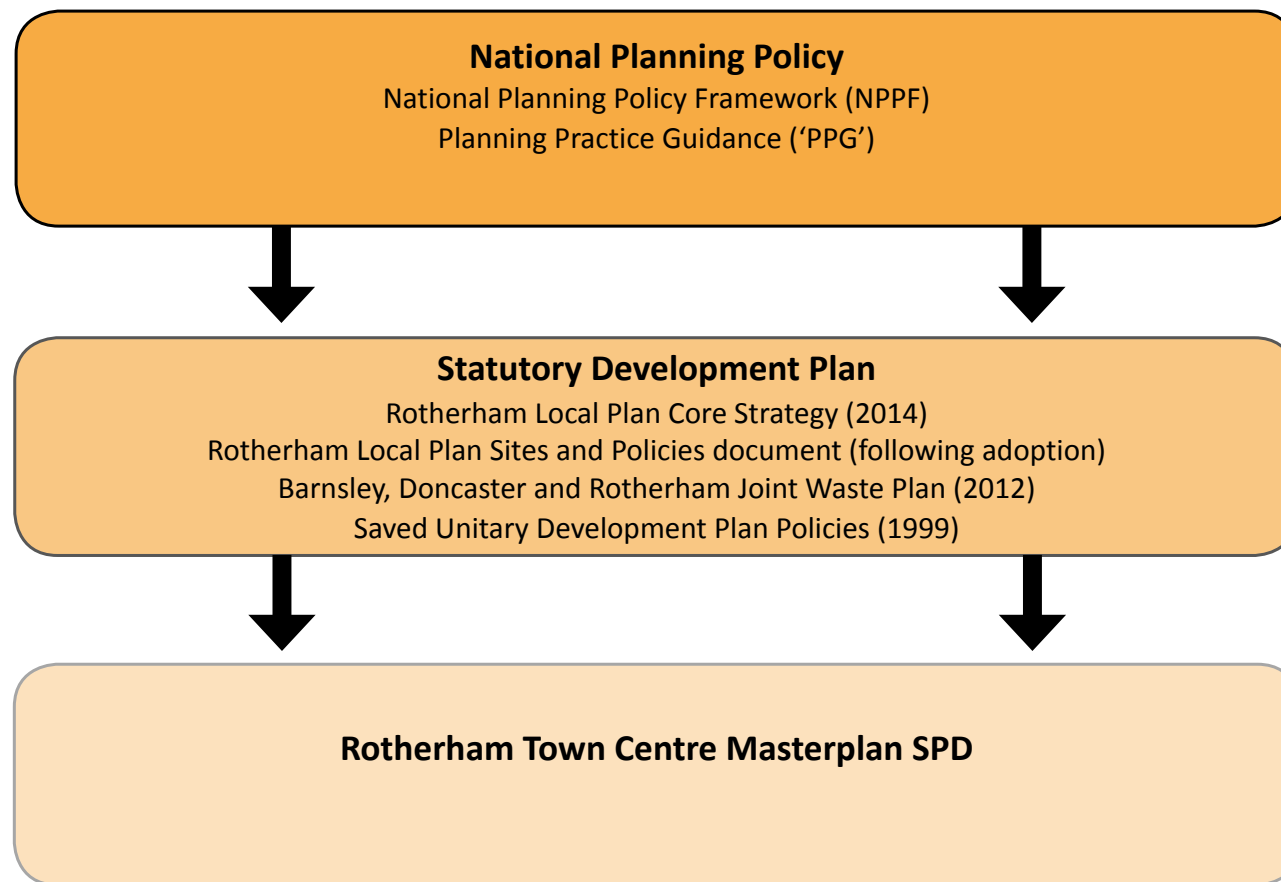
Local Adopted Emerging Policy

At the local level, the development plan for Rotherham currently comprises the **Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)**; Saved policies from the **Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1999)**; and the **Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Joint Waste Plan (2012)**. In addition the Council is working on an emerging **Sites and Policies Local Plan** document which will replace the saved UDP policies and form part of the Local Plan. The Core Strategy provides the Borough's overarching strategic development principles. **Policy CS1** provides the Borough-wide spatial strategy. Under the policy, the Borough's Main Urban Area (in which the Town Centre falls) is required to absorb 38% of the Borough's overall housing requirement and 30% of the Borough-wide requirement for employment. It is therefore clear that this presents a key opportunity for the Town Centre to play a strong role in contributing towards these objectives by providing opportunities for new employment and residential uses.

Core Strategy Policy CS12 stipulates that the Town Centre will be the focus for the majority of new comparison and convenience floor space proposed to be accommodated in the Borough, whilst **Policy CS13** commits the Town Centre to be the main focus for the majority of new retail, office and other Town Centre uses. Both policies underline the Town Centre's importance as a retail and employment location.

Policy SP27 of the emerging Sites and Policies Local Plan seeks to encourage the redevelopment of Forge Island for office or leisure uses, whilst also providing policy support for a new transport interchange, parking and leisure uses at the bus station. **Draft allocation R1** seeks to increase accessibility to the markets complex and provide more market-attractive retail floor space. **Draft allocations R2 and R3** seek to allocate retail floor space at ground floor level whilst also supporting residential uses above.

Together these policies have been the starting point for the updated masterplan. As a Supplementary Planning Document the Masterplan has been produced to be in conformity with the rest of the Development Plan. The masterplan should therefore be considered as providing an extra layer of 'interpretive clarification' over and above the policies contained within the wider Plan.



National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)



Left: Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

Right: Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Joint Waste Plan (2012)



Rotherham Town Centre SPD

Fig. 4.1 Planning Policy Hierarchy

4.2 Planning & Economic Policy

The key Planning and Economic Policy documents that have shaped the production of the masterplan are set out below.

1999

Unitary Development Plan

The Rotherham UDP has in part been replaced by the Core Strategy and Joint Waste Plan, however a number of policies remain extant. Saved policy RET1.1 encourages high quality, attractive and secure environment within shopping areas, whilst RET1.2 defines primary shopping frontages where A1 uses are supported.

2006

Conservation Area Appraisal

The majority of the Town Centre is covered within a Conservation Area, and the supporting appraisal sets out the elements of Rotherham Town Centre that hold special architectural and historic interest. Many of the Town Centre buildings date from the 19th century, however the Town Centre also has evidence of Anglo-Saxon and Roman settlements.

2009

Rivers and Waterways Strategy and Action Plan

The 2009 Strategy and Action Plan provides a framework for the improvement and conservation of Rotherham's rivers and canals, and the creation of clean, safe, attractive and popular waterside environments throughout the Borough.

2005

Rotherham Renaissance Masterplan

The 2005 Masterplan established 10 charter goals for the Town Centre to act as a framework to underpin its transformation. The goals sought to exploit the river and canal as key assets, support town centre living, improve the town's landscape setting, improve public transport, architecture and urban design, access to health and social infrastructure as well as suggesting highways downgrades, improvements to Forge Island and promoting a new civic focus.

2010

Rotherham Retail & Leisure Study

The Rotherham Retail & Leisure Study underpins the Council's retail policies. It notes the impacts of out of centre retail on the Town Centre and suggests that it attracts only £1 out of every £10 generated by the Borough's residents. The study anticipates a need for additional floorspace and indicates that leisure uses such as a cinema, pubs/bars, cafes and restaurants should be supported to cater for a broader, more family oriented customer base.

2014

Adopted Core Strategy

Core Strategy Policy CS13 seeks to ensure the Town Centre remains the borough's primary retail, leisure, cultural and service centre. Policy CS12 seeks to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the borough's retail and service centres whilst Policy CS14 seeks to promote sustainable transport and reduce car parking provision in the Town Centre.

2015

Rotherham Growth Plan 2015 – 2025

The Draft Growth Plan sets out the vision for Rotherham to be a place where businesses flourish and grow, the population is highly skilled and enterprising and there is quality housing provided for all sections of society. It seeks to deliver 10,000 net new jobs in the private sector over the next 10 years, create 750 additional new businesses over the next 5 years and increase GVA through growing, attracting and starting businesses.

2015

Draft Rotherham Transport Strategy

2016 – 2026

The Draft Rotherham Transport Strategy provides a policy framework which sets out the proposed approach to the provision and management of transport and transport infrastructure in Rotherham.

2015

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The 2015 SHMA highlights that around 75% of the population aged 16-64 is economically active, whilst there are important labour market links to the surrounding areas (especially the city of Sheffield). House prices are said to be among the lowest in the sub-region, which is a strength as it can be demonstrated that the borough is meeting housing requirements from further afield, especially for families looking for better value housing.

2015

Sheffield City Region Strategic Economic Plan

The SEP sets out how the Sheffield City Region will deliver structural economic change across the City Region. At the core of the plan is the need for a stronger, larger private sector. Of particular note to Rotherham Town Centre, the plan notes that the Sheffield Rotherham Don Valley Corridor represents largest cluster of modern manufacturing in the SCR. The plan seeks to create 70,000 more jobs in the City Region and boost highly skilled occupations to create a more prosperous economy.

2015

Rotherham Sites & Policies Local Plan Publication Draft

The Sites and Policies Local Plan will support the delivery of the Core Strategy and Joint Waste Plan by allocating development sites across the borough. The Publication Draft plan seeks to allocate 11,000 square meters of comparison goods floorspace in the Town Centre. Draft Policy SP7 provides specific regeneration priorities for the Town Centre, whilst Policy SP28 seeks to support the evening economy.



Context

5.1 Location

Rotherham is a main town in the heart of South Yorkshire, and lies 9km north east of Sheffield City Centre and 18km south west of Doncaster Town Centre. The Town Centre lies at the heart of the borough which in total occupies an area of 28,653ha. A major constituent town within the Sheffield City Region, Rotherham maintains a number of strategic links with the City of Sheffield, particularly employment, with 38.3% of residents in the Borough commuting to Sheffield for work. Accordingly there are strong transport connections between the two urban centres through the Lower Don Valley and the Advanced Manufacturing and Innovation District.

More than half of the Rotherham Borough is rural, and as such the borough's rural character and high levels of green infrastructure means the area is a haven for walkers. River and canal corridors, rights of way, footpaths, bridleways and cycleways provide links which thread through built-up areas and connect to surrounding countryside.

The town centre is the borough's principal retail centre, located at the heart of urban Rotherham, which together with the neighbouring areas provide a large amount of residential dwellings in addition to retail and employment areas.

The Town Centre is well placed in terms of accessibility to the motorway network, with the M1, and M18 only a short distance away, providing onward connectivity by road to other regional and national destinations.

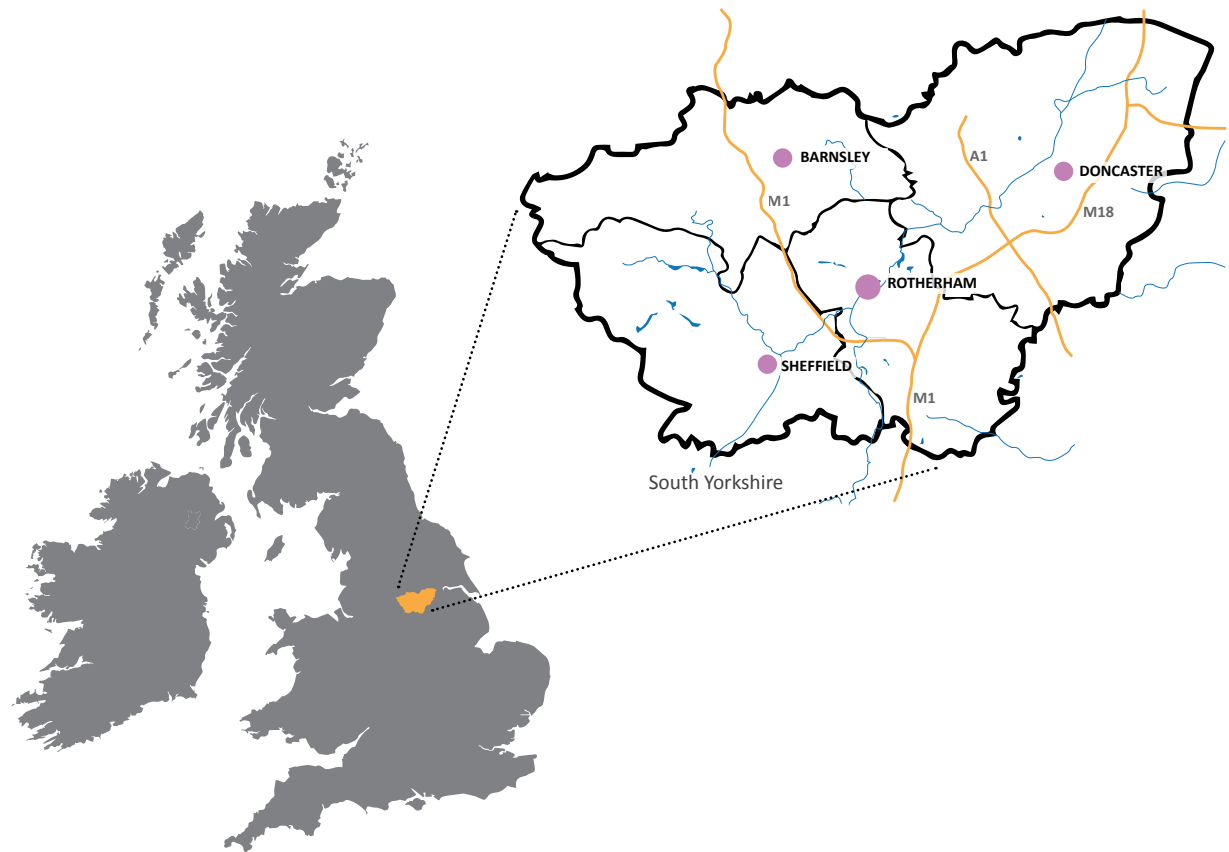


Fig. 5.1 Location Plan

5.2 History

Origins

The town's name, 'Rotherham' comes from Old English and means, literally 'Homestead on the Rother'. The Town Centre conservation appraisal suggests that the town began to evolve as a Neolithic or Bronze Age Settlement, with the town beginning to develop significantly as a crossing point during Roman occupation.

Trade

Historically, Rotherham's identity is rooted in its wider landscape setting, and its connectivity with other South Yorkshire towns and cities. As a result, the town has developed and evolved as a centre of trade.

The Domesday Book of 1086 acknowledges the presence of the town ('Rodreham'), and records the town as featuring a church with a priest and a mill. During the medieval period Rotherham was the market centre for a wide rural hinterland, a role that was reinforced by its location at a key crossing point of the River Don. It can therefore be observed that trade has been firmly linked and intertwined with Rotherham's evolution from its earliest recorded existence. It continues to fulfil this role as a centre for trade.

Industry

Manufacturing and trading continued to play an important role in the town's development during the Industrial Revolution of the 19th Century, and this has shaped the town as we see it today. Located at the heart of South Yorkshire, the local availability of coal and ironstone and ease of transportation on the newly built Don Navigation meant that Rotherham was ideally placed to capitalise on its strategic location, with the town playing a major role in the industrialised Victorian South Yorkshire. This industrial legacy is particularly evident through many place names in the Town such as 'Forge Island'.

Archaeology

Previous studies undertaken by RMBC have uncovered a prehistoric burial mound in the garden of Chatham House. Flint implements have also been discovered to the south of the conservation area at Canklow Wood, suggesting that the sandstone ridge may have been the site of a Neolithic or Bronze Age Settlement. The Conservation Area Appraisal dating from 2006 notes the potential for Saxon remains to be found in the vicinity of the church. Elsewhere in the town centre pottery shards from the 11th to 16th Centuries have been recovered.



Fig. 5.2.1 Above: Rotherham High Street, Early 20th Century

Fig. 5.2.2 Below: Guest and Chrimes Advertisement

5.3 Landscape

Wider Setting

More than half the Rotherham Borough is rural, and the areas further afield from the Town Centre are surrounded by rolling countryside, woodland and arable farmland. Suburban residential areas south-east and north-west of the Town Centre, allow 'green wedges' of countryside to permeate towards the urban core. Some of these green wedges exist as farmland which is inaccessible to the public, however, parks and green open spaces are scattered throughout the Town Centre and the suburbs.

The 'Corridor of Healthy Living'

The 2005 Renaissance Masterplan defined the Town Centre as being at the heart of a 'corridor of healthy living' with a number of opportunities for recreational activity only a short distance away. This remains true today, however to encourage this use of open space the gaps in the network will need to be filled.

Rotherham Town Centre exists in the centre of the South Yorkshire Forest, a nationally significant community forest, but despite the close proximity to woodlands, rolling countryside and green infrastructure, the 2010 Green Space Strategy identifies the need to improve the quality of open space throughout Rotherham. The Town Centre is identified by the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership (SYFP) as being of strategic importance to the Don Corridor and

the wider network of green infrastructure existing in the South Yorkshire Forest. The SYFP identifies Rotherham Town Centre as a key project for improving the network and there is the potential for the Town Centre to create linkages out to the wider countryside.

The 'Corridor of Healthy Living' was defined in the 2005 study as running broadly along River Don. Whilst this link is undoubtedly important, further analysis of the wider green infrastructure linkages beyond the Town Centre, running through the surrounding communities suggest that the real opportunities for a Corridor Healthy Living run in a south-easterly and north-westerly direction through the Borough. This is important to note because the Town Centre is situated at the heart of this. Opportunities should therefore be explored to provide onward connections from the Town Centre to these areas of Green Space beyond the Town Centre boundary, thereby creating a Corridor of Healthy Living.

Town Centre Landscape

Rotherham Town Centre has a number of high quality public spaces, most notably All Saints Square, Minster Gardens and Effingham Square. Minster Gardens is a particularly high quality space, and is an open, terraced landscape suitable for informal play and seating. It also provides a distinct setting for Rotherham Minster. Other squares in the Town Centre are predominantly hard landscaped, but provide useful space to meet and socialise. All Saints Square has a central water feature which gives the square a focal point and incorporates a large flexible open space for activities and events, surrounded by seating and raised planters.

The majority of the Town Centre (14.12ha) falls within a Conservation area. This includes the streets around the medieval Parish Church which the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies as still conforming to their medieval layout. A significant amount of development occurred in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, and therefore present day Rotherham has a good mix of quality buildings in a variety of architectural styles.

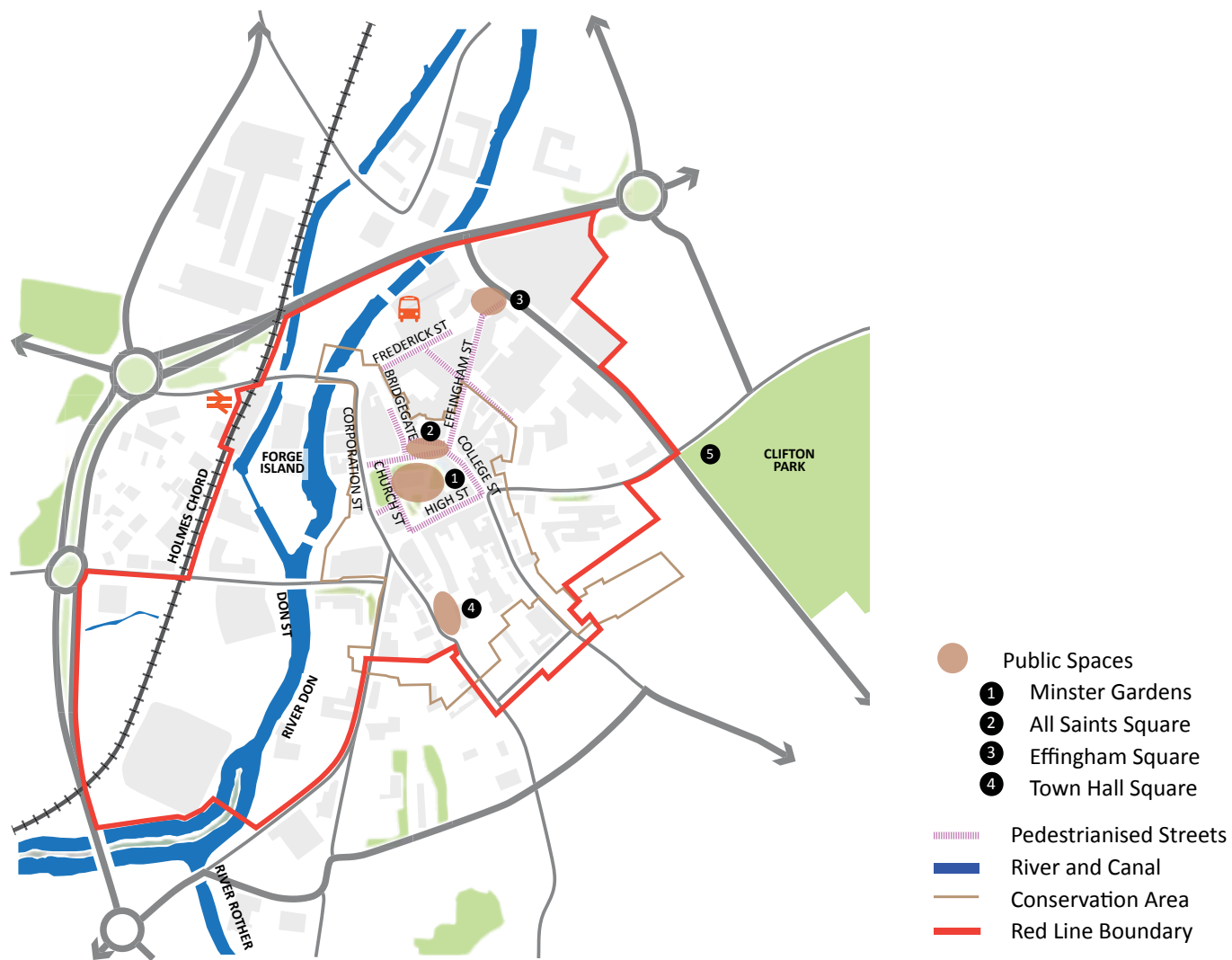


Fig. 5.3.1 Rotherham Open Spaces Plan

5.3 Landscape



River Don and Canal

Upstream from the River Don, to the south-west of the Town Centre, is the City of Sheffield. The land use following the River Don between Rotherham and Sheffield is dominated by industry, however other developments are embedded into the industrial landscape, including Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park, Meadowhall Shopping Centre, and Magna Science Adventure Centre. South-west of the Town Centre around the River Don is the Centenary Riverside Wetland Nature Reserve, which acts as part of the flood alleviation scheme for flood water storage and also as a wetland nature reserve. Further high value manufacturing led development is expected to be delivered along this corridor as part of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District.

In Rotherham Town Centre, the River Don and Canal split from one another creating Forge Island, a narrow strip of land that exists between the two watercourses. These watercourses have the potential to play a significant role in regeneration, transforming the way in which people use the Town Centre. However, the Rotherham Rivers and Waterways Strategy Action Plan 2009 states that crime, dereliction, negative perception, pollution, forgotten corridors and poor access are all problems that face the river. In part these perceptual problems arise from the distinct lack of active frontages along the river, which contribute towards a lack of activity and passive

Fig. 5.3.2 Above: Minster Gardens

Fig. 5.3.3 Below: All Saints Square

Fig. 5.3.4 Above: Effingham Square

Fig. 5.3.5 Clifton Park

surveillance in these areas. Whilst flood defences offer protection to the Town Centre, they also serve to enclose the river in many locations, limiting opportunities for interaction with the riverfront.

Aside from the example of Keppel Wharf, development has generally not embraced the riverfront. To the west of Corporation Street is a riverside walkway, however this is elevated and retains an element of separation from the river. The lack of pedestrian permeability is compounded by the lack of pedestrian crossings.

Flood Risk arising from the River Don is a notable issue, with Forge Island and the west and south-west of the Town Centre being the most vulnerable to flooding. As such, maintaining adequate flood defences whilst also opening up the river will require a creative design approach.

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Borough acknowledges that the Town Centre is particularly liable to fluvial flooding due to its location around the confluence of two rivers, the Don and the Rother. The Flood Risk Toolkit 2011 is a document that assists in the production and the assessment of planning applications within the Rotherham Regeneration Area, which includes the Town Centre. All new development would be expected to meet the requirements of national and local flood risk policy,

and refer to the Council's bespoke Flood Risk Toolkit.

Based upon National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance, development on land designated as Flood Zone 2 and 3 must demonstrate that it is sequentially preferable. To allow development to proceed in this zone the site would first need to be sequentially tested against other sites elsewhere and measures to tackle flood risk agreed with the Environment Agency and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Drainage Team and included within the design of new development.



Fig. 5.3.3 Above: River Don and Chapel of Our Lady

Fig. 5.3.4 Below: River Don and Forge Island

5.4 Connectivity

Introduction

Connectivity lies at the heart of any successful town or city. Rotherham is in a fortunate position to benefit from a number of transport links to other towns and cities across South Yorkshire and further afield.

Current Rail

Rotherham Central is the Town Centre's only train station, located on the west bank of the River Don and west of Forge Island. The station was separated from the Midland Line in 1987, and is now located on what is known as the Holmes Chord.

Current services operating from the station provide onward connections to a number of regionally significant centres, including Leeds and Doncaster to the north and north east, and Sheffield to the south west.



Fig. 5.4.1 Plan of Connections

Future Rail: Tram-Train

Rotherham is set to benefit from a new tram-train link between Sheffield and Rotherham and this is expected to commence service in 2017. The service will run from Cathedral tram stop in the centre of Sheffield to Parkgate shopping centre in Rotherham via Meadowhall and Rotherham Central, providing three tram-trains per hour. This will deliver significant connectivity improvements between Rotherham and Sheffield, unlocking employment opportunities on this key corridor and improving the attractiveness of Town Centre living in Rotherham.

Future Main Line Rail

The separation of Rotherham Central from the main line railway has made the Town Centre difficult to access by rail from other major towns and cities in the UK. Proposals to reconnect Rotherham to the mainline are being investigated, however the segregation of Rotherham Central caused by the Holmes Chord presents a number of issues that will need to be resolved. Should Rotherham be successful in securing reconnection to the Main Line, it is likely that this would be through the provision of a new station, beyond the Town Centre boundary. Links into the Town Centre will be considered and the proposed tram-train potentially provides this opportunity.

Bus Services

Rotherham Interchange is located on the east bank of the River Don. In addition to local routes that serve the Borough, frequent inter-urban services to Doncaster, Barnsley and Sheffield via Meadowhall operate from the Interchange.

Compared to the rail network, the bus network is extensive and well utilised. Over 4 million people passed through Rotherham Interchange in 2015, with over 20% of fare paying passengers interchanging between buses. This highlights not only the value of the bus as a mode of transport to Rotherham, but also the importance of retaining an interchange function within the town. However, the quality of environment at Rotherham Interchange has scope for improvement.

Car Parking

The Town Centre has a number of car parks that strategically serve four 'quarters': Market Quarter, Minster Quarter, Wellgate Quarter and Westgate Quarter.

Road

By road, Rotherham Town Centre is primarily accessed from the A630 Centenary Way to the west and north, Fitzwilliam Road from the East, and Sheffield Road/Westgate, Wellgate and Clifton Lane to the south.

Since the 2005 masterplan, a number of highways improvements to the A630 have been realised. In 2013, £3.4m was secured from central Government to improve the Centenary Way junction at Main Street, removing the roundabout and replacing it with a signalised junction. This has improved connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists by placing them at grade with new crossing facilities. In addition the road was widened, helping to relieve congestion.

To the north of the Town Centre the overpass onto Centenary Way from Drummond Street has been removed and replaced with a more conventional junction configuration. The removal of the overpass was set out in the 2005 masterplan, however the recent upgrade did not include the re-routing of the stretch of Centenary Way from Drummond Street to College Road Roundabout. Notwithstanding this, the new junction has improved connectivity and safety for pedestrians, thereby improving permeability into the Town Centre.

5.4 Connectivity

Pedestrian Connectivity

There are a number of key pedestrian routes through the Town Centre linking the town's key anchor stores and public spaces. A number of these routes have been pedestrianised and comprise: Effingham Street; Frederick Street; College Street; Bridgegate; Church Street; and High Street. With the exception of High Street, all these pedestrian routes intersect at either Effingham Square or All Saints Square.

The 2005 Renaissance Masterplan highlights the issue that the pedestrianised streets feel empty after the shops are closed. This has been compounded by an increase¹ in the number of vacant units along these routes which further breaks up the continuity of quality street frontage and potentially discourages pedestrian movement through the Town Centre on an evening.

To the north of the Town Centre, the A630 (Centenary Way) cuts east-west across the canal, River Don and Forge Island, creating challenges for the Town Centre.

Although Centenary Way has benefitted from a substantial upgrade since 2005, it still partly severs land to the north from the rest of the Town Centre, and as a result a number of office blocks and a medical practice are physically separate from the Town Centre. Pedestrian access is achieved either through underpasses at College Road roundabout or by traffic light controlled staggered crossing points at the recently rationalised junction near the Tesco Superstore. There is an opportunity to further improve these crossing points. Better connections could encourage staff working in premises to the north of Centenary Way to enter the Town Centre, bringing additional spend into the town.

Cycling Routes

The majority of the cycling routes through Rotherham Town Centre are on road, however Rotherham Council has installed a number of cycle lanes. In the Town Centre, Westgate, Moor Street and Don Street (alongside the river) are popular cycling routes. However, only the riverside route is segregated from traffic. Some designated cycle paths in the urban area have onward links to the Trans Pennine Trail.

The 2005 Renaissance Masterplan suggests that although the current cycle infrastructure is sufficient for leisure cyclists, there is a need for more dedicated routes required for commuters as the population in and around the Town Centre increases.

An improvement to leisure cycling infrastructure has recently been achieved with the introduction of the Bike & Go scheme at Rotherham Central Station.

1. 13% vacancy rate in 2005, rising to 22.6% in 2014

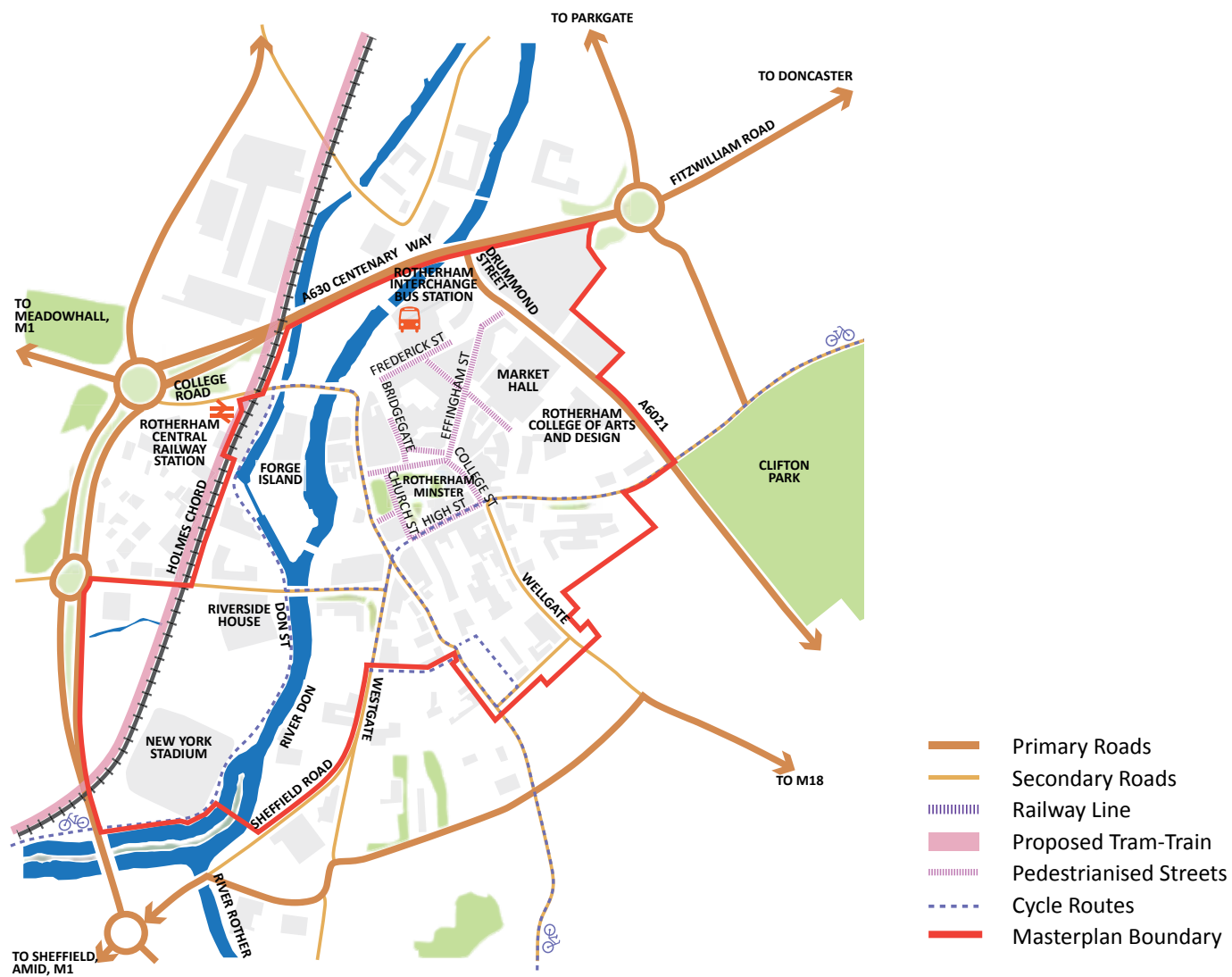


Fig. 5.4.1 Rotherham Town Centre Connectivity Plan

5.5 Urban Life

This section provides analysis of Rotherham's distinct character areas and quarters. It sets out the Town Centre's functionality as a whole by analysing each distinct area and its contribution toward urban life. This understanding is crucial as it underpins the vision and the interventions proposed subsequently in this document.

Rotherham Character Areas & Quarters

Analysis of the Town Centre's current uses and functionality highlights that it currently consists of various 'Quarters', which each have the potential to strengthen the Town Centre's overall appeal as a destination. These Quarters are defined by clusters of a similar land uses which create a distinct character for the area they are located in.

The following section explores the location, character and urban grain of the Town Centre 'Quarters' identified below:

- Retail;
- Office and Residential;
- Forge Island;
- Professional;
- Industrial/Commercial;
- Civic;
- Medical;
- Education;
- Industrial and
- Residential

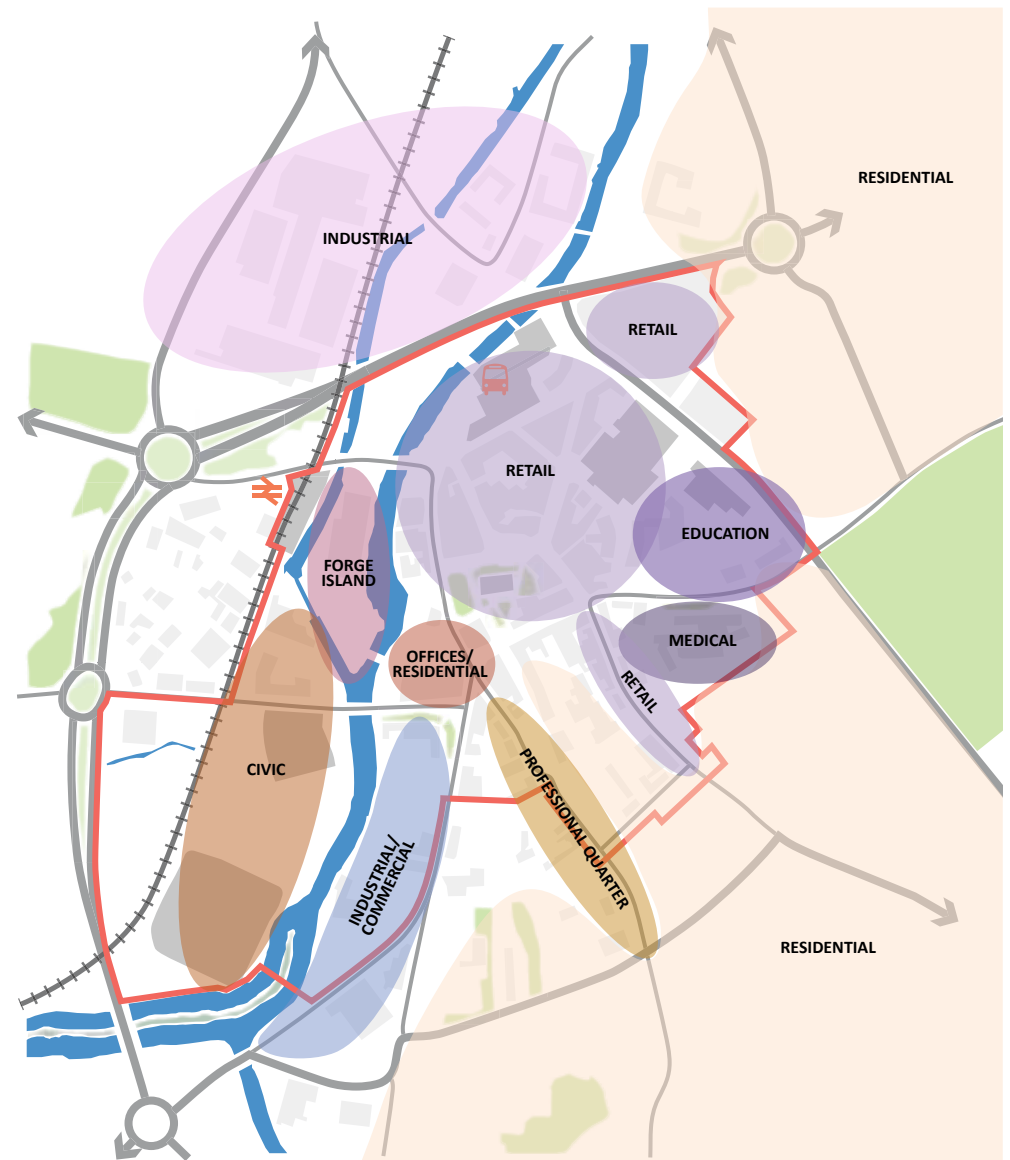


Fig. 5.5.1 Plan of Rotherham Town Centre Character Areas and Quarters

Retail

At the heart of the Town Centre is a significantly dense core that is defined by a high number of retail uses. Accordingly this is defined as the town's 'Retail Quarter'. This surrounds the Market Hall and encompasses the Minster and the traditional High Street. The retail quarter has a fine, historic urban grain which is conducive to walking owing to the high number of pedestrianised streets. Key routes partly or fully pedestrianised consist of:

- Effingham Street;
- Frederick Street;
- College Street;
- Bridgegate;
- Church Street;
- High Street; and
- Wellgate.

These routes provide good walking links to the public spaces of All Saints Square, Minster Gardens and Effingham Square. The fine urban grain is generally historic and lined with two to three storey buildings dating from the 19th or 20th Centuries. Typically these buildings contain retail or commercial units at the ground floor.

The area's character differs throughout the day. Although there are issues relating to retail vacancies, generally there is an active presence on most streets during the day, as evidenced by the town's footfall figures. However, following the closure of retailers on an evening, the quarter becomes quiet due to the absence of a night time economy.

Offices & Residential

To the south-west of the Retail Quarter (around Market Place and Domine Lane) is an area strongly defined by the presence of a combination of office and residential land uses. The Royal Mail Delivery Office defines the southernmost edge of the Quarter.

The quarter is physically smaller than the Retail Quarter and Forge Island and consists of only a few distinctive 'blocks'. The quarter has a visual uniqueness due to the existence of two contemporary residential buildings (Keppel Wharf and Old Market Street) which both contrast and complement the surrounding historical built form. The Quarter retains a compact, traditional urban grain, similar to the Retail Quarter, though this becomes slightly more fragmented around the vehicular access point to Forge Island on Market Street. This presents a number of opportunities for reconfiguration, waterfront access and/or 'infill' blocks of development.

The older buildings are generally consistent with the scale and form of the Retail Centre and have a number of A1-A5 uses at ground floor level. In addition there are a number of units offering purpose built office floorspace. Unlike the Retail Quarter, this Quarter has a higher incidence of fast-food/takeaway businesses. Generally office space occupies upper floors and on some occasions, ground floors. Like the Retail Quarter, the Office and Residential Quarter experiences a number of vacancy issues which impact upon the character of the area.



Fig. 5.5.2 Above: Rotherham High Street

Fig. 5.5.3 Below: Keppel Wharf

5.5 Urban Life

Forge Island

To the west of the retail core exists Forge Island, a narrow strip of land between the two water courses, the River Don and Canal. To the west of Forge Island is Rotherham Central Railway Station that connects to Forge Island via Bridge Street. The area referred to as Forge Island comprises a 'peninsula' in the River Don between the historic retail quarter and the railway station.

Presently the northern part of Forge Island is disused, and dominated by a vacant building last used as a supermarket. To the south, Forge Island is currently in use as a surface car park. The Island takes its vehicular access from its southern tip, via a road bridge that crosses the River Don and connects the island into Market Street. There is also scope for a future access route from Bridge Street to the north.

In terms of character Forge Island currently lacks a distinctive identity due to existing land uses, under-utilisation and poor urban grain. These elements are not conducive to fostering vibrant Town Centre life. This currently represents a lost opportunity as despite the Island's unique geographical position, surrounded by two water courses, this combination of factors discourages Town Centre visitors from accessing the river.

The 2005 Renaissance Charter identified the under-utilisation of Forge Island and envisioned it as a major new piece of the Town Centre dedicated to art, culture and living. Although the original vision did not come to fruition, the opportunities at Forge Island remain.



Fig. 5.5.4 Above: Carpark on Forge Island

Fig. 5.5.5 Below: Bridge Linking Forge Island to Corporation Street

Professional

To the south of the Retail Quarter is an area defined by the presence of Professional Services Firms. The Professional Quarter is linear in nature, following a north-south axis, and generally centres on Moorgate Street. Visually the character has a looser, less dense urban grain than the Retail Quarter. The Quarter consists of mainly nineteenth and twentieth century buildings, with the historic street pattern interspersed with purpose built offices.

Unlike the Retail Core, the Professional Quarter has not been extensively pedestrianised and it therefore maintains good vehicular access and on-street parking, although this makes it somewhat less conducive to walking. The main public space in the Quarter is Town Hall Square, an attractive hard landscaped space fronting the Town Hall. Professional Services firms generally occupy ground floors and occasionally full buildings.

Industrial / Commercial

To the south of the Office and Residential Quarter, following Sheffield Road and the boundary of the Town Centre Masterplan, is an area of industrial and commercial uses. The Royal Mail Delivery Office defines the northern edge of the Quarter.

The quarter is linear in nature and exists in parallel with the River Don. The quarter has a fragmented urban grain with large vacant plots being used as surface car parks, notably Westgate Car Park. There are instances of historic buildings in the quarter, however the area has the perception of being at the edge of the urban area due to the significant gaps in the street which lessen density and prevent street definition. However, the quarter can be strengthened through 'infill' developments. This stretch along the river has the potential to be developed along both sides of the Sheffield Road for an attractive and dramatic riverside transformation, expanding beyond the town centre boundary.



Fig. 5.5.6 Town Hall Square

5.5 Urban Life

Civic

Civic uses largely define the area south-west of Forge Island. This quarter is bounded by the River Don, Don Street, Main Street and New York Way, with the northern end of the Quarter dominated by the Council's office at Riverside House, and by the New York Stadium to the south. In between these two large developments is an expanse of surface car parking. The largely vacant, open nature of the quarter largely contrasts with the dense, defined grain of the historic Retail Centre. The Grade II Listed façade of the former Guest and Chrimes site is situated to the south of Riverside House and to the north of New York Stadium. From Don Street there are strong views across the River Don towards the buildings on the other bank, including to the Talbot Lane Methodist Church.

Medical

To the south-east of the Retail Centre and north-east of the Professional Quarter (around Doncaster Gate and Chatham Street) is an area broadly characterised by medical uses. A number of medical centres/clinics and pharmacies are located in a cluster around the former Doncaster Gate Hospital. Several other supporting medical services exist nearby.

The Quarter is compact and is demarcated by the existing surface car park to the south and east, and wooded areas to the north and west. Access to the surface car park is provided on Doncaster Gate and Chatham Street.

To the south and east the Quarter largely comprises residential properties, whilst to the north and west is the Retail Quarter. The area is characterised by a strongly defined urban grain of differing densities. Illustrating the variety in densities, the cluster of medical uses is set back, partially removed from the existing street pattern, which creates a lower density, more fragmented urban grain. As such, the character of the area is markedly different from the 'Town Centre character', which lends a more 'suburban character' to the Quarter.

Education

Lying immediately north of the Medical Quarter and east of the Retail Quarter, is an area defined by the concentration of education uses. The area is bounded by Eastwood Lane and Percy Street and is dominated by Rotherham College which is spread across a compact cluster of buildings of various ages and styles.

The Quarter occupies the eastern edge of the Town Centre Boundary, beyond which lies Clifton Park and a high number of residential properties.

The Education Quarter has differing qualities of urban grain. On Eastwood Lane, the urban grain defines the street well, providing a strong high density 'Town Centre' character. However, these dense buildings back onto Percy Street and do not actively engage with the streetscene, being orientated instead towards Eastwood Lane. Percy Street suffers from a poorly defined frontage, experiencing gaps across built form and surface car parks that create an inconsistent, fragmented urban grain that doesn't serve the street.

Industrial

Rotherham's industrial area lies chiefly to the north and south of the Town Centre, and broadly traces its way southwards along the River Don corridor. This land use can trace its way back to the emergence of Rotherham as a settlement, as the town developed on the back of industrial and trading endeavours. The majority of the industrial uses that are closest in proximity to the Town Centre are to the north of Centenary Way, whilst the emerging AMID is immediately to the south. As such these industrial areas serve as a continual reminder of the Town's industrial heritage.

Residential

The Town Centre is surrounded by residential areas to the south, east and north east. These areas abut the commercial uses and are located within a short walking distance. At the south, the Professional Quarter transitions into a residential area, largely comprising substantial Victorian/Edwardian properties interspersed with more recent flatted development. The streets in this area are lined with established trees which provide an attractive setting for the residential properties. This is echoed at the east, where the properties located along Clifton Lane front directly onto Clifton Park, giving the area an attractive 'green and leafy' character. As the streets approach the Town Centre, several larger dwellings have been converted into other uses, e.g. doctors surgeries. The residential areas to the south and east are only a short distance from the Town Centre and therefore set a strong precedent for extending residential character areas northwards into the Town Centre boundary.



Fig. 5.5.7 Residential Streets in Rotherham

5.6 Economy

Like many Northern towns and cities, post-industrial decline in the latter part of the twentieth Century has particularly affected Rotherham, with traditional industries such as coal mining, steel making and heavy industry now largely absent in 2016. Nevertheless, manufacturing still plays a key role in the economy of the town. Despite historical general decline, the town did experience a strong increase in employment up to 2005 as the Borough's economy began to diversify and grow, with Rotherham's employment rate remaining close to the national average at over 74% throughout that year.

More recently, whilst the town was affected by the recession of 2008, in general the town's more diverse and adaptable economy has meant that unemployment fell in the 12 months to October 2015 .

However, despite this overall improved resilience in the economy over previous years, anecdotal evidence from national retailers operating in the Town Centre suggests that it has perhaps suffered more than most over the last 5-10 years. This is best illustrated by the loss of a number of major multiple retailers including Woolworths, Burtons, JJB Sports, Burger King, Marks & Spencer and Next. Most of these vacancies have subsequently been replaced by discounters.

Analysis of vacancy data held by RMBC suggests that whilst the supply of A1-A5 floorspace in Rotherham has increased slightly across the masterplan period, the number of available units has reduced substantially. This may, in part, be as a result of the consolidation of smaller units, reflecting broader trends in the retail sector towards larger units. At the local level, a number of demolitions within the Town Centre, as well as the refurbishment of the Imperial Buildings (which saw the conversion of some former retail space into residential and other units) have resulted in the loss of some units.

In 2005, the year of the original Masterplan's publication, 12% of floorspace within Rotherham Town Centre was vacant. Over the following 5 years, this rate increased significantly, peaking at 24% in 2009. Following this, the Town Centre experienced a modest halt in this decline, with the rate falling to 20% by 2010 and remaining broadly static over the following 3 years, driven by the arrival of several new retailers in the town's 'prime' shopping streets.

The number of retail voids in the Town Centre is currently at the highest level since the start of the recession in 2008. This is to some extent skewed however, due to the voids created following the relocation of Tesco, though the data suggests that the rate of vacancy in terms of actual number of units also increased during 2015.

On a more positive note the Council's Town Centre survey shows that there have been no new vacancies within the 'prime' shopping streets over the course of 2015. This would indicate that footfall patterns across the Town Centre have reconfigured, and this to some extent is illustrated by a decline in some of the more peripheral parts of the Town Centre. In part this structural change has been as a direct result of the relocation of Tesco from Forge Island to their current site off Effingham Square which has seen increased footfall on College Walk/Frederick Street/Effingham Square (as confirmed by Norseman who own College Walk) and reduction in footfall on Corporation Street of circa 75%.

Use Class		2005	2010	2014
Retail (A1-A5)	No. Units	320	283	279
	Floorspace (m ²)	45,202	42,000	47,535
Office (B1a/b)	Floorspace (m ²)	-	-	133,380

Fig. 5.6.1 Use classes as follows: A1 shops and retail outlets, A2 professional services, A3 food and drink, A4 drinking establishments, A5 hot food takeaway.

This structural change is supported by historic footfall data, which demonstrates that, in general, streets within the core of the Town Centre have tended to maintain consistent footfall between 2005 and 2015. The Town Centre's resilience is also demonstrated by the fact that footfall has generally been constant between 24-26m per annum and has remained stable at the upper end of this range during 2014 and 2015. This illustrates the continued importance of the Town Centre as a retail destination and demonstrates that a core visitor base remains. In addition, as the Town Centre footfall patterns begin to reconfigure, this presents a number of opportunities for alternative uses to retail, most notably in the peripheral areas of the Town Centre.

In terms of Rotherham's housing market, the 2015 SHMA indicates that enhanced levels of economic growth, better affordability of prices and rents, and increased net international in-migration coupled with decreased net domestic out-migration have increased the borough's annual housing requirement. The study concludes that Rotherham's low average housing price is partly a strength, as the borough is meeting housing requirements from further afield, especially for families looking for better value housing, in more attractive neighbourhoods, than might be available to them in Sheffield.

In addition to retail, Rotherham's leisure market has also suffered over the 5 years to 2016, with the number of

restaurants and bars in the Town Centre having reduced significantly.

In summary, Rotherham has sufficient retail provision in quantitative terms to meet market demand. There are however a number of quality issues, with the Borough's retail study highlighting a high proportion of discount retailers. Future regeneration should focus on other uses that will draw more people in to the centre and support the existing retail, including attracting 'middle-market' retailers which would diversify the Town Centre's offer. This should include establishing a critical mass of leisure uses, and encouraging more people to live and work in the Town Centre.

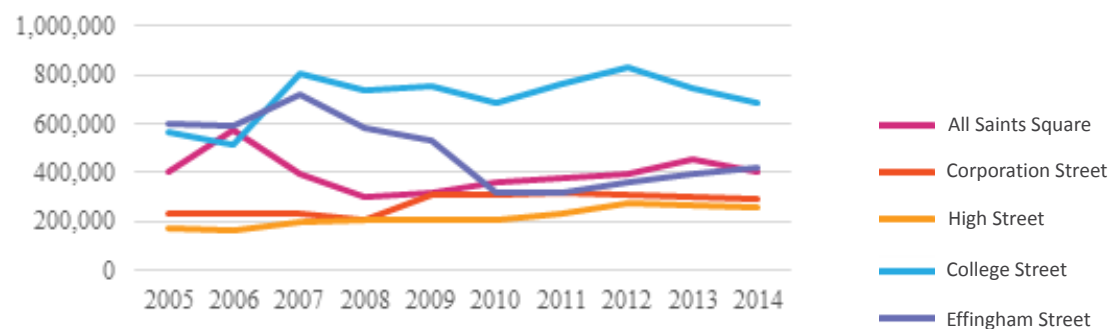


Fig. 5.6.2 Rotherham Town Centre: monthly average football by year and location *Source: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council*



CONCEPT SKETCH

2016 Masterplan Concept

6.1 Masterplan Concept

Introduction

The concept for the 2016 Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan is based firmly on the origins of the town. It aims to give Rotherham a strong and unique identity that is rooted in its history and achievements.

Rotherham comes from the Old English and means literally 'Homestead on the Rother'. Historically the town grew up within the river valley around a ford, or strategic point of connectivity across the river Don. This created a focal point and enabled trade and community to flourish, resulting in the Town Centre that we know today. The town's location on the river, in combination with its status as a trade centre subsequently saw it play an important role as a manufacturing centre during and following the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. The uses of manufacturing, industry and innovation still persist and thrive along this corridor.

When analysing Rotherham within its context two key character areas emerged, the Industrial River Corridor, following the course of the River Don, and the places of urban life, predominantly taking the form of residential suburbs. Rotherham Town Centre forms the focal point that connects the surrounding town to the wider industrial corridor that supports it. Overlapping these two character areas within the town centre has potential to create a dynamic local economy and a diverse and vibrant town centre, with a regenerated Forge Island at its heart.

Industrial River Corridor

The industrial river corridor south west to north east along the River Don. This has historically been the location for industry, principally iron and coal, strategically located to capitalise on the navigation of the River Don. Although much of the historic industry has declined, the river corridor still remains a heavily industrialised landscape with new industry and manufacturing uses developing and thriving.

The industrial character of the Lower Don Valley is significant regionally and is the location of the proposed Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMID) that will provide a range of opportunities to build unique strengths and specialisms within the Borough. In addition to industrial use the corridor contains a mosaic of green open space, such as The Centenary Riverside nature area in Templebrough.

Rotherham's rich industrial heritage and future opportunities are celebrated in this 2016 masterplan. The masterplan concept explores and encourages extension of the strong Borough-wide tradition of manufacturing and 'making' to the Town Centre to support further regeneration.

Town

To the east and west of the River Don and the Industrial Corridor are predominantly residential areas which both have a strong domestic character. The masterplan proposes to bring new residential developments into the Town Centre boundary itself, creating vitality, vibrancy and activity around the clock. The introduction of a significant number of leisure uses will help sustain this move towards residential occupation within the Town Centre boundary.

This will knit into a mosaic of green space and high quality public realm that will help to deliver the Corridor of Healthy Living, by connecting in with wider Green Infrastructure beyond the Town Centre boundary. The masterplan concept therefore strives to increase opportunities for urban living to bring life and energy into the town centre.

Town Centre Convergence

Rotherham Town Centre, located on the River Don, with Forge Island at its heart, provides a focal point where the two characters of the industrial river corridor and town converge. This offers exciting opportunities for the regeneration of the Town Centre and the character areas strongly influence the proposals brought forward in the 2016 masterplan.

The masterplan encourages the introduction of small scale high end manufacturing and creative businesses within the town centre to build upon the rich industry and manufacturing skills in the area. This could be brought forward by the re-use and re-configuration of existing empty buildings or through the construction of new purpose built facilities, including Live Work units. In particular, the market, which is currently underutilised, offers potential to become a newly re imagined centre of trade and enterprise, where goods manufactured on site and nearby could be traded.

There are opportunities to tie in with the skills in the education quarter, as well as the larger scale manufacturing and industries, such as AMID, beyond the town centre boundaries. Opportunities could be provided for startup businesses to occupy space within the reconfigured Markets, which in turn could grow into larger enterprises and inhabit space within the AMID industrial corridor.

An existing successful example of this type of use within a town centre is Sheffield's 'Chop-Shop'. This is a CNC fabrication & design facility for creatives, start-ups and social enterprises. The facility operates as a collective of architects, designers and craftsmen with a wide range of formal qualifications and practical experience. It offers a high quality design and fabrication service (including CNC and laser cutting) to creative companies.

Summary

In summary the concept that underpins the Town Centre Masterplan for Rotherham is:

- Rooted in Rotherham's Industrial Heritage, the Town Centre will draw the aspirations of the AMID northwards into the Town Centre, to provide complementary 'making and trading' spaces.
- The convergence at the Town Centre of Rotherham's industrial and residential areas will be embraced. This will create a sustainable community where opportunities for employment, leisure activities and residential occupation are co-located.
- Enhanced connectivity with Rotherham's wider green infrastructure will support the Town Centre's growth, knitting together the existing mosaic of green space and high quality public realm to deliver a Corridor of Healthy Living.

6.1 Masterplan Concept

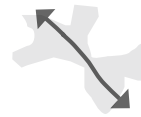


Industrial River Corridor

'Landscape and Making'



Fig. 6.2.1 Masterplan Concept - River Corridor



Town

'Landscape and Living'



Fig. 6.2.2 Masterplan Concept - Town



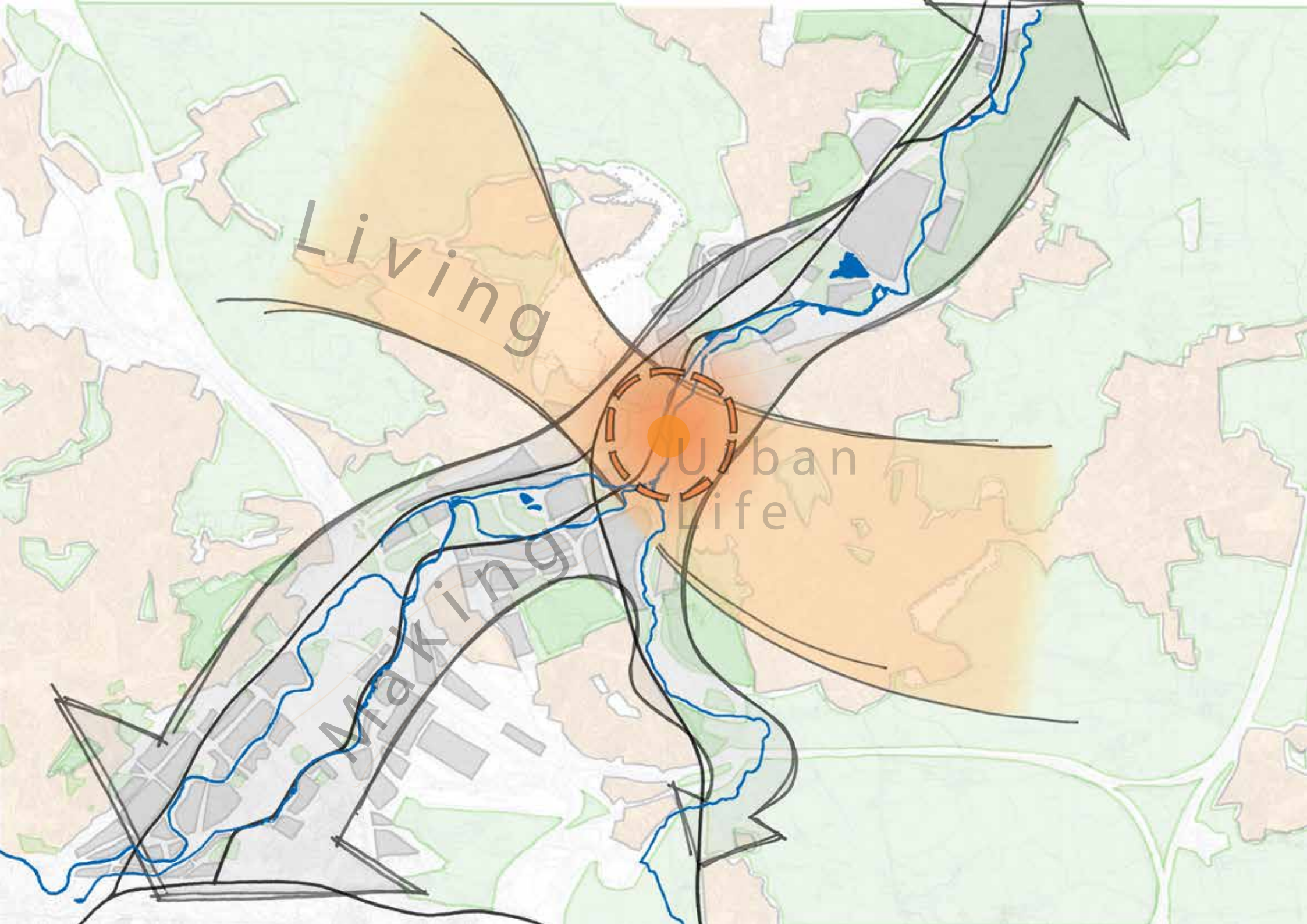
Town Centre Convergence

'Landscape and Making and Living'



Fig. 6.2.3 Masterplan Concept - Town Centre

Fig. 6.2.4 Opposite: Overall Masterplan Concept Diagram



Living

Making

Urban
Life



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS IN ALL SAINTS SQUARE

Masterplan Proposals

7.1 Overview

There are a number of opportunities within Rotherham Town Centre that should be embraced in order to deliver a step change in both the quality and usability of the Town Centre. Some of these opportunities require only low level interventions to realise, whereas others will require significant commitment.

Strengthening the fabric of the town through improvements to landscape and connectivity will provide a framework within which sites can be brought forward for regeneration, encouraging investment that leads to increased activity and movement within the town, and in turn leads to economic renewal.

Future development proposals that are brought forward for sites within the Town Centre boundary should respect the framework and key principles set out in this document, allowing the whole to become greater than the sum of its parts.

It should be noted that the Town Centre Masterplan Boundary as shown opposite is a more refined study area and differs from the Rotherham Sites and Policies Local Plan. The Plan should be read in conjunction with all other adopted documents within the Rotherham Statutory Development Plan.

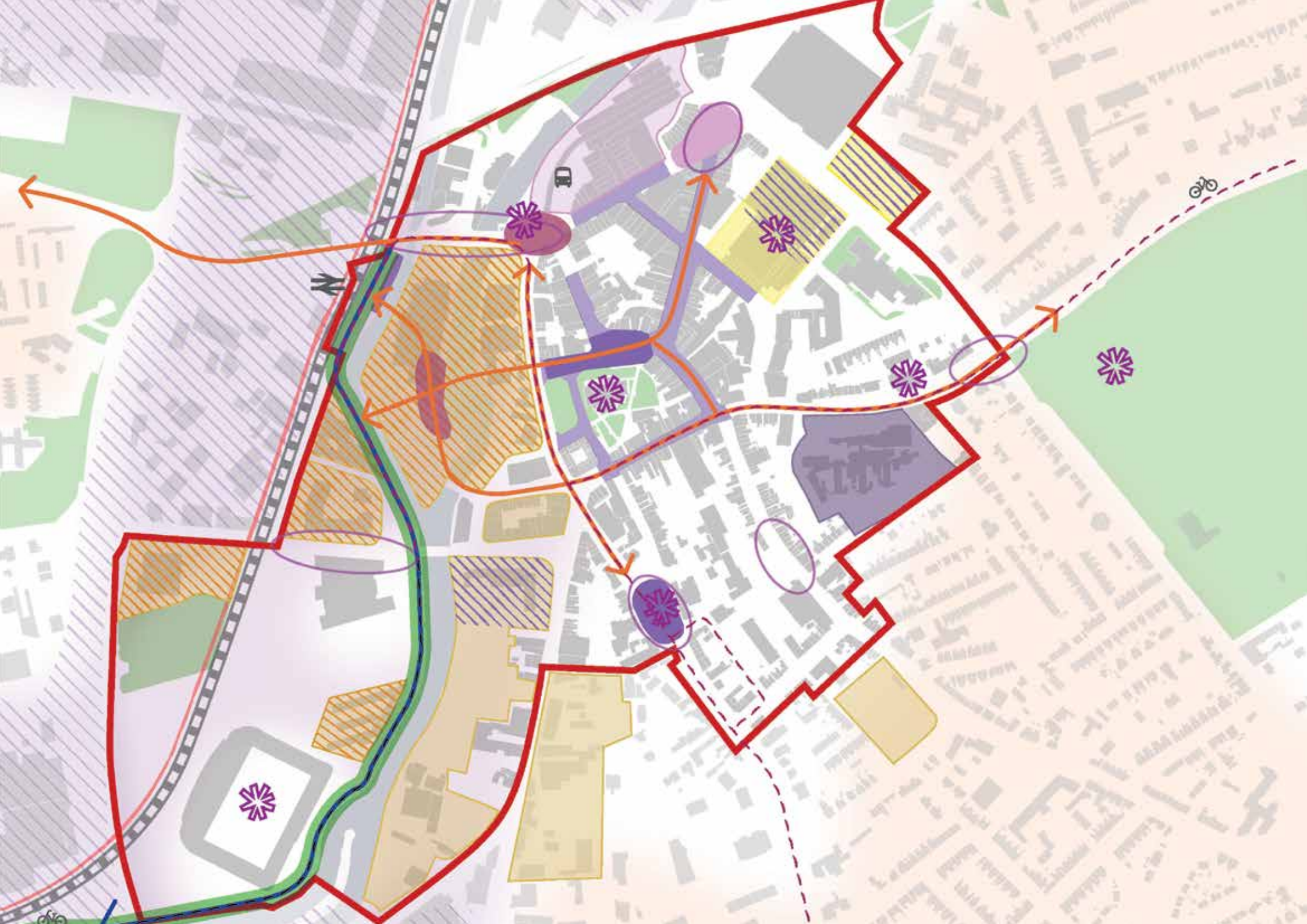
The Masterplan makes reference to a number of opportunities for ‘commercial space’. Whilst the Masterplan would not wish to be prescriptive to the point where it may stifle innovation, it is expected that this would primarily be B1 space. The acceptability of other use classes (e.g. B2/A2) will be determined on a case-by case basis and judged on the conformity of the proposal’s contribution to achieving the overall vision of the Masterplan.

In order to conform with Policy MU9 of the emerging Sites and Policies Local Plan the Guest and Chrimes site will be brought forward with a mixed-used scheme to support the ‘making and trading’ vision in the Town Centre. Flexible workspaces will be encouraged to support employment and new business start-ups – this could potentially include a live/work element to support growth of the Town Centre population and local entrepreneurship. Proposals that are in C3 in use will be strongly resisted.

Similarly proposals for the Law Courts and Police Station site must first demonstrate that there is no demand for the sites as a community facility, in line with the requirements of Policy SP64.



Fig. 7.1.1 Masterplan Drawing Showing the Town Centre Vision



7.1 Overview

1 Forge Island (3.4ha)

Forge Island will be a new mixed-use leisure hub. Proposals should seek to incorporate a mix of residential units and leisure developments (including A3/A4/D2 uses), to help create a new and vibrant Leisure Quarter in the centre of Rotherham that complements the existing Retail Quarter. New linkages should be created across the river, to provide movement routes on an east-west and north-south axis, intersecting at a new public square.

2 Transport Interchange (1.37ha)

The primary role of the site as a Transport Interchange will be retained, however other ancillary uses, such as retail, will be encouraged so long as they remain ancillary to the overall purpose of the facility as a Transport Hub, and do not prejudice this primary role.

3 The Markets (1ha)

It is envisaged that half the site will be retained as a traditional indoor market, however support for alternative proposals for the additional surplus area will be supported where they: provide opportunities for small scale manufacturing, particularly where they support start-up enterprises; exploit the opportunities provided by the proximity to the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District ('AMID'); closely link to the Education Quarter.

4 Drummond Street Car Park (0.6ha)

It is anticipated that Drummond Street Car Park will be brought forward to complement the reconfigured Markets by providing space for retail and 'making and trading'. Proposals should consider how best to integrate with the Market and Education Quarter, in addition to the rest of the Town Centre. Proposals should seek to overcome perceived severance issues caused by the A6021.

5 Education Quarter (5ha)

The Education Quarter is vital to the future success of the Town Centre and proposals should be complementary to the Quarter's education focus. Proposals should seek to incorporate improvements to Doncaster Gate in order to improve this key movement axis by better integrating Clifton Park to the east and Forge Island to the west.

6 Westgate Chambers (0.4ha)

The central block to the east of Keppel Wharf, defined by Main Street, Market Street and Domine Lane should be brought forward for residential occupation. It would be expected that proposals make links and integrate with the proposed residential areas to the south along Westgate, and also seek to improve the connectivity to Rotherham Central across Forge Island.

7 Law Courts and Police Station (1.55ha)

Should the Law Courts and Police Station opt to relocate away from their present sites then it would be expected that there would be a strong residential component as part of any mixed-use scheme that would be developed here. Proposals should bear in mind the requirements of Sites and Policies Local Plan policy SP64 to safeguard community facilities, and also embrace the site's riverside location, opening up this movement route for pedestrians and cyclists.

8 Land South of Main St. (0.83ha)

This site offers opportunity for mixed use development at a key gateway location to the Town Centre. The site is currently segregated from the Town Centre by the Holmes Chord Railway Line, and therefore proposals will be expected to contribute towards the improvement of the Main Street gateway, thereby reducing this perceptual separation with the rest of the Town Centre.

9 Former Guest & Chrimes Site (0.37ha)

The Guest and Chrimes site will be brought forward with a mixed-used scheme to support the 'making and trading' vision in the Town Centre. Flexible workspaces will be encouraged to support employment and new business start-ups – this could potentially include a live/work element to support growth of the Town Centre population and local entrepreneurship. Proposals that are in C3 in use will be strongly resisted. All proposals must have regard to Policy MU9.

10 Land to the west of Westgate (3.5ha)

The land to the west of Westgate will become a distinct new residential character area that embraces its riverside setting and extends northwards into the Town Centre. Proposals should also consider how they integrate with other residential proposals beyond the Town Centre Masterplan boundary, notably those to the east of Westgate. Development should seek to avoid the areas of the site that are at risk from flooding, and regard must be had to the Council's Flood Risk tool kit.

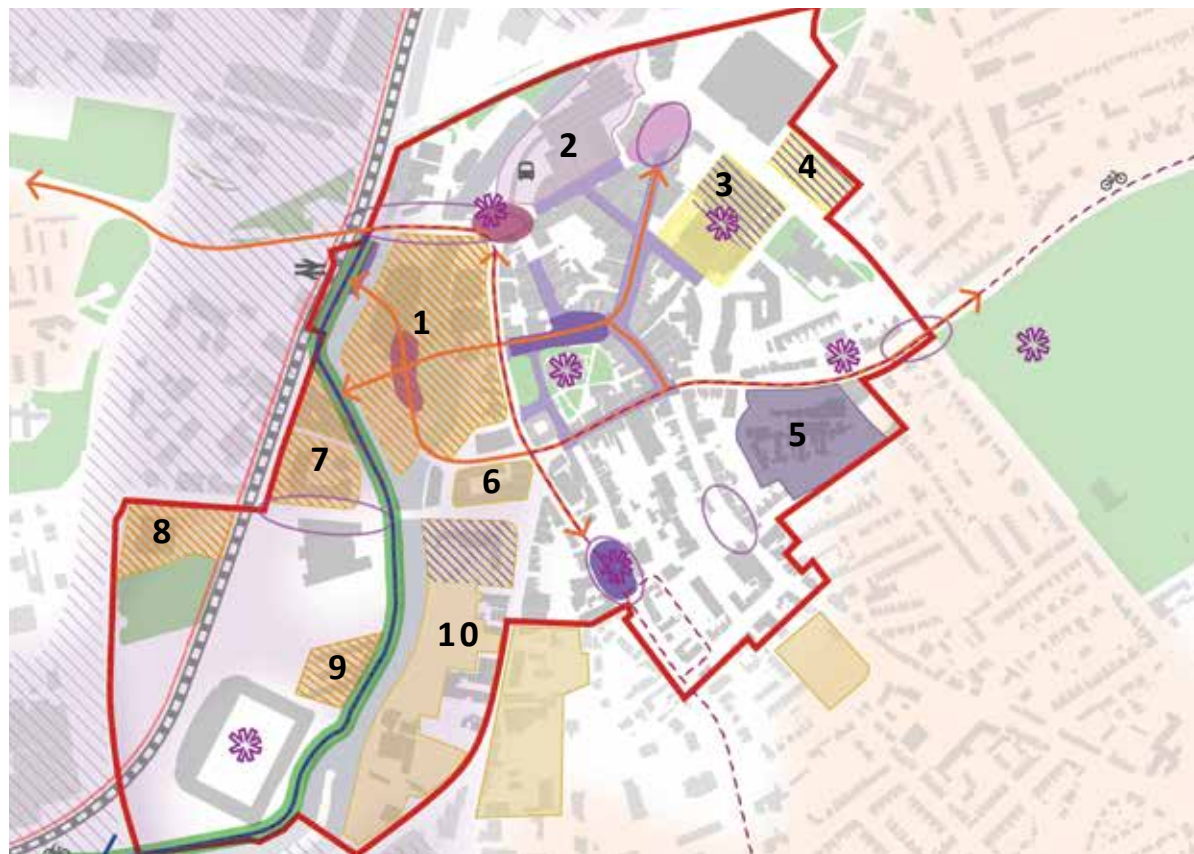


Fig. 7.1.2 Masterplan Drawing Showing Proposed Development Plots

7.2 Landscape & Public Realm

Landscape, public realm and wayfinding are each critical factors in achieving a successfully functioning Town Centre. Well-designed landscape and public realm, with complementary wayfinding improvements provide a significantly improved pedestrian experience, helping to encourage connectivity and provide new opportunities for Town Centre users to engage with different parts of the centre.

A significant opportunity for the Town Centre will be to improve connectivity and sight lines along key routes. This will encourage visitors and residents to explore new areas, breathing life back into currently under-utilised parts of the town. This in turn will bring additional benefits, for example encouraging the uptake of vacant units on streets that might have seen a decline in footfall.

This can be achieved through identifying the Town Centre's important assets (such as listed buildings and attractive squares) and working to understand how these strengths can be best stitched together. This might be through simple interventions such as improvements to the existing public realm or wayfinding provision, or through larger interventions such as selective demolition to create new sight lines along existing streets.

Together these smaller scale and larger scale interventions will help create clear and legible routes between each of these identified assets.

Public Realm will be an important factor in achieving an attractive and usable Town Centre. Development proposals should seek to incorporate public realm improvements where practical. Public realm improvements should be delivered in line with the guidance contained within Rotherham's 2008 Public Realm Strategy.

Project	Conformity with Development Plan	Conformity with Sites and Policies DPD	Conformity with Saved UDP Policy
Gateway Enhancements	CS Policies: Objective 8; Objective 14; CS12; CS13; CS14; CS27; CS28.	SP 27 and SP 28	T6; T7; T8
Riverside Links	CS Policies: Objective 8; Objective 14; CS12; CS13; CS14; CS27; CS28.	SP 35	T7; T8
Public Realm Improvements	CS Policies: Objective 8; Objective 14; CS12; CS13; CS14; CS23; CS27; CS28	SP 34 and SP 58;	T6; T8
Gold Routes	CS Policies: Objective 8; Objective 14; CS12; CS13; CS23; CS27; CS28.	SP 31; SP35	T6; T8
Corridor of Healthy Living	CS Policies: Objective 9; CS3; CS4; CS19; CS20; CS28.	SP35	T8

Fig. 7.2.1 Conformity with Wider Development Plan Policies

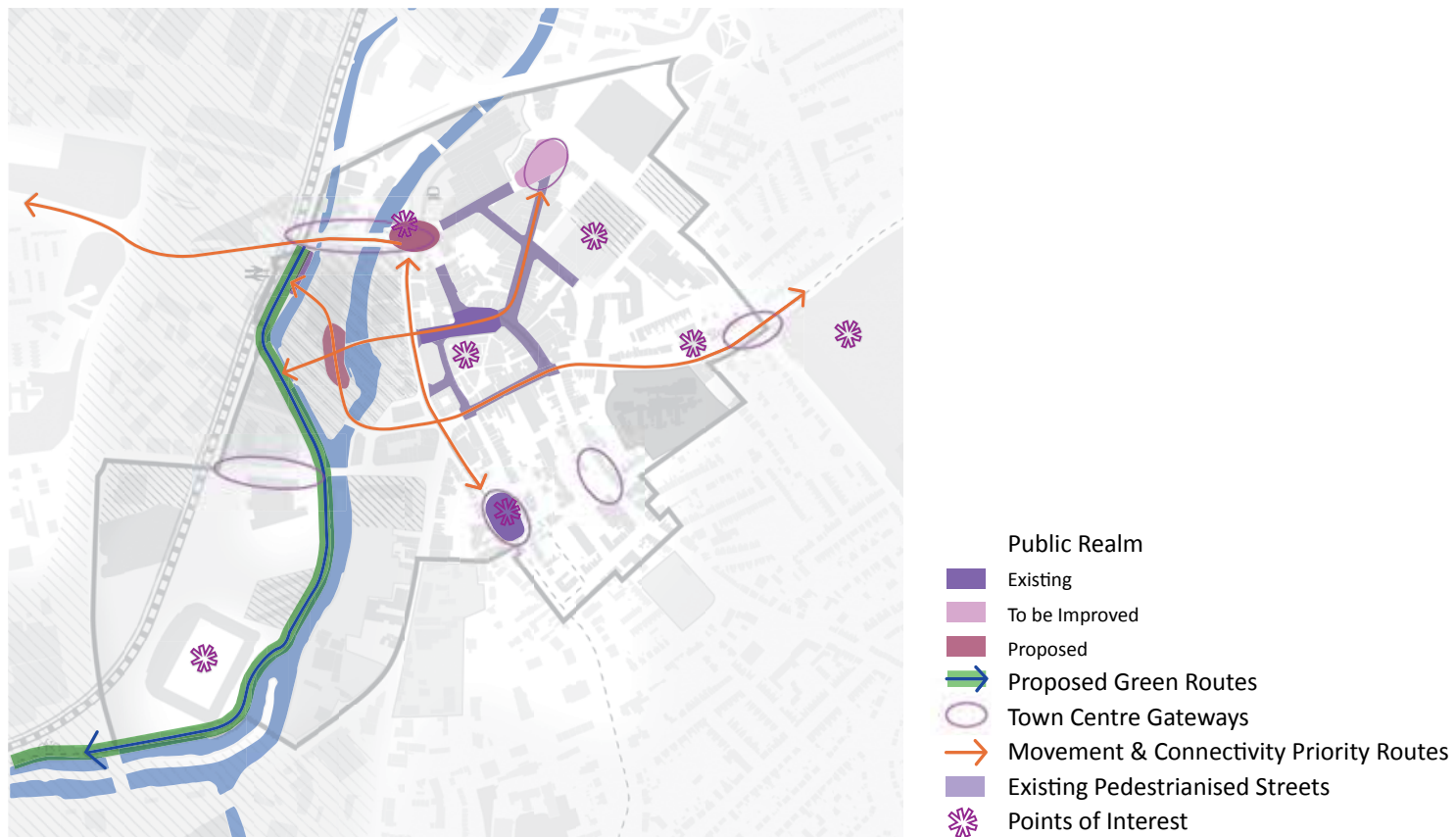


Fig. 7.2.2 Landscape and Public Realm

7.3 Development Sites

The Town Centre provides a rich and diverse place in which to live, work and pursue leisure activities. Identified assets within the Town Centre have the potential to be reimagined, reconfigured and redeveloped to further support Town Centre Life in Rotherham.

In particular, there are opportunities to increase activity and movement in the Town Centre by introducing a critical mass of leisure uses that will encourage people to visit the town and help grow the night time economy. For instance, these may include a cinema, bars, restaurants, hotels and health and fitness centres.

The baseline analysis identified that a number of retail areas in the peripheral parts of the Town Centre are suffering as a result of reconfigured footfall. This presents the perfect opportunity to accommodate leisure uses, enticing more people to spend time in the Town Centre, and securing a sustainable future for the town.

In addition to the introduction of more leisure uses to the Town Centre, vibrancy and energy after hours will also be achieved by introducing more residential units. This will be complementary to leisure facilities and will provide a strong critical mass of customers ready to exploit these new leisure opportunities, in addition to supporting the existing retail core. Residential development will be supported on a

range of sites in the Town Centre and these include Forge Island, Sheffield Road and Westgate. Their delivery will support the goals of the Masterplan, fulfilling the vision of re-populating the Town Centre to create a more vibrant, sustainable and family-friendly core for Rotherham. It will also help support the AMID by providing key housing opportunities within close proximity, benefitting from high quality connections.

Project	Conformity with Development Plan
Forge Island	CS Policies: Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5; CS1; CS2; CS3; CS7; CS11; CS12; CS13; CS14; CS22; CS25; CS33
The Markets	CS Policies: Objective 3, 4, 5; CS1; CS2; CS3; CS7; CS9; CS10; CS12; CS13; CS33
Transport Interchange	CS Policies: Objective 3, 4, 5; CS2; CS3; CS7; CS9; CS10; CS12; CS13; CS17; CS33

Fig. 7.3.1 Conformity with Wider Development Plan Policies

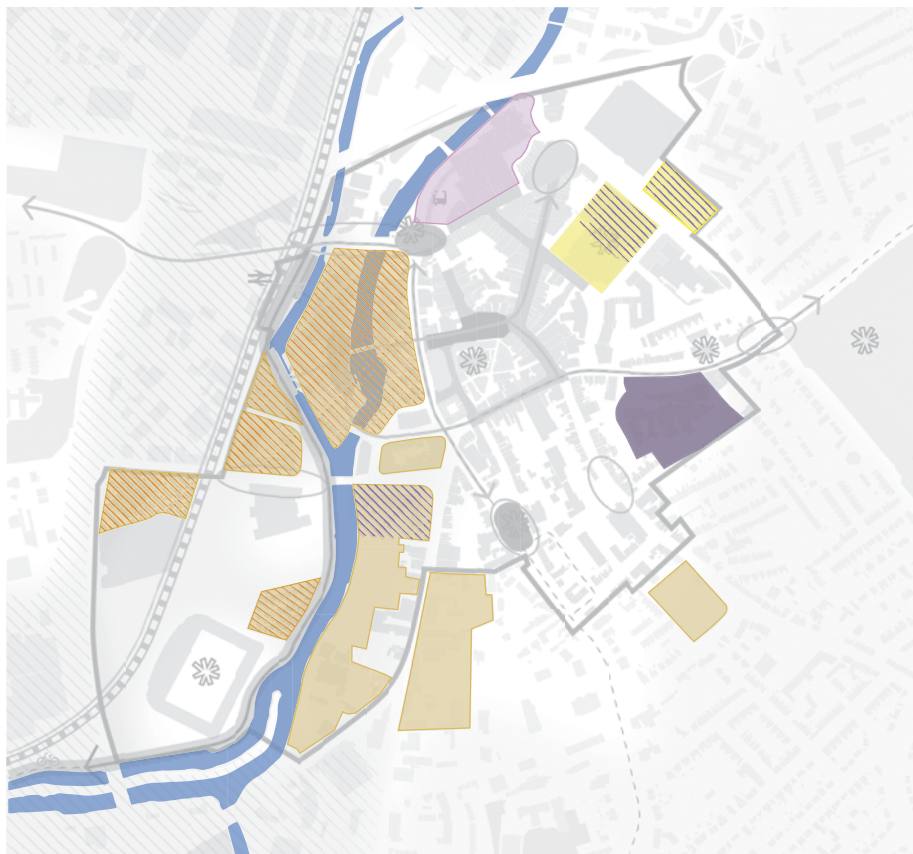


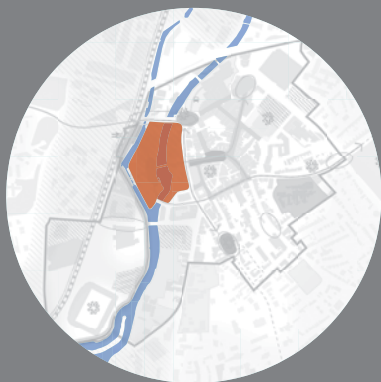
Fig. 7.3.2 Development Sites

7.4 The Eight Key Moves

Eight Key Moves have been formulated to deliver the ten goals for the Town Centre. This will result in the creation of a thriving, re-energised Town Centre and deliver the future vision for Rotherham.



1 Development of a central Mixed Use Leisure Hub at Forge Island



2 Delivery of Residential Units on key sites within the Town Centre



3 Creation of pedestrian 'Gold Routes' through the Town Centre, improving wayfinding and reconfiguring Town Centre footfall



4 Improving the Town Centre's Gateways to create a strong sense of arrival and identity



5 Opening up Rotherham's Riverside



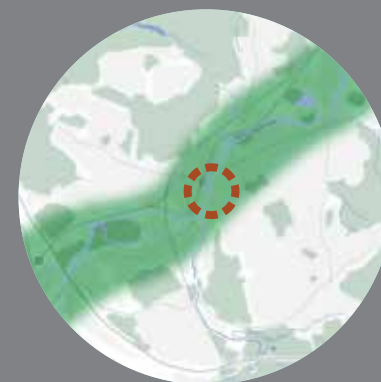
6 Support for 'Making and Trading' in the Town Centre



7 Redevelopment of the Interchange to create a high quality environment with improved Linkages to Rotherham Central Railway Station

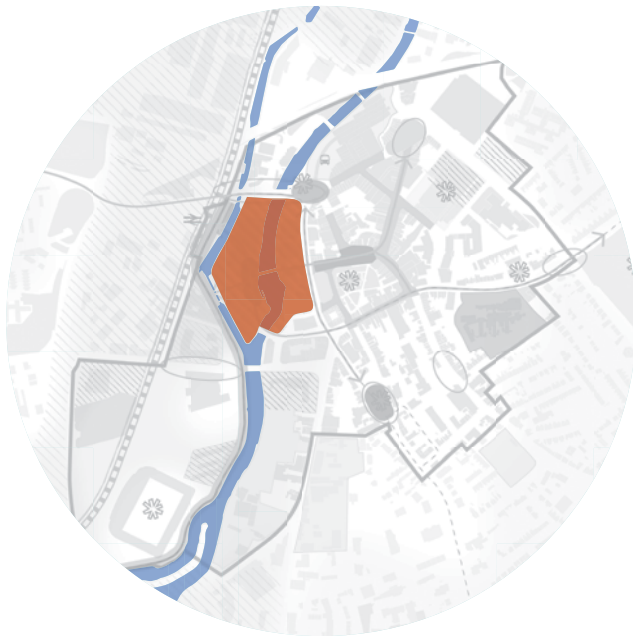


8 A connected Green Network to deliver a Corridor of Healthy Living



7.5 Key Move 1: Forge Island

Development of a central Mixed Use Leisure Hub at Forge Island



Forge Island will become Rotherham Town Centre's leisure hub. Proposals should seek to incorporate a mix of residential units and leisure developments (including A3/A4/D2 uses), to help create a new and vibrant Leisure Quarter in the centre of Rotherham that complements the existing Retail Quarter. Market analysis suggests that there may be an appetite amongst cinema operators to locate within Rotherham as part of a wider leisure scheme. Support will therefore be given to locating a cinema on Forge Island as the anchor in a wider leisure scheme, most likely comprising A3/A4 units.

Proposals for non-residential or leisure uses, particularly proposals where retail would be the dominant use class, will be resisted in order to support other quarters within the Town Centre.

All proposals should seek to incorporate the highest quality design and actively seek every opportunity to embrace the river and canal frontage. In doing so, proposals should also seek to address the issues presented in the 2009 Canals and Waterways Strategy, creating active frontages that encourage pedestrian movement from Rotherham Central, through Forge Island and toward Corporation Street. New and improved bridge linkages will be necessary.

Public realm improvements will play an important role in ensuring that the route from the station across into the Town Centre is user friendly and fully accessible. Forge Island lies immediately to the west of Minster Gardens, and to the east of Rotherham Central. Additionally, the northern-most point of the Island is located on a main route between the rail and bus stations. There is a firm opportunity to create attractive pedestrian routes across the Island and other significant parts of the Town Centre.

All proposals at Forge Island should fully consider how they might contribute towards delivering and improving this important connectivity.

In line with Core Strategy Policy CS2 detailed masterplanning and preparation of appropriate Design Codes will be required for the development of a scheme on Forge Island.

Fig. 7.5.1 Forge Island Key Plan



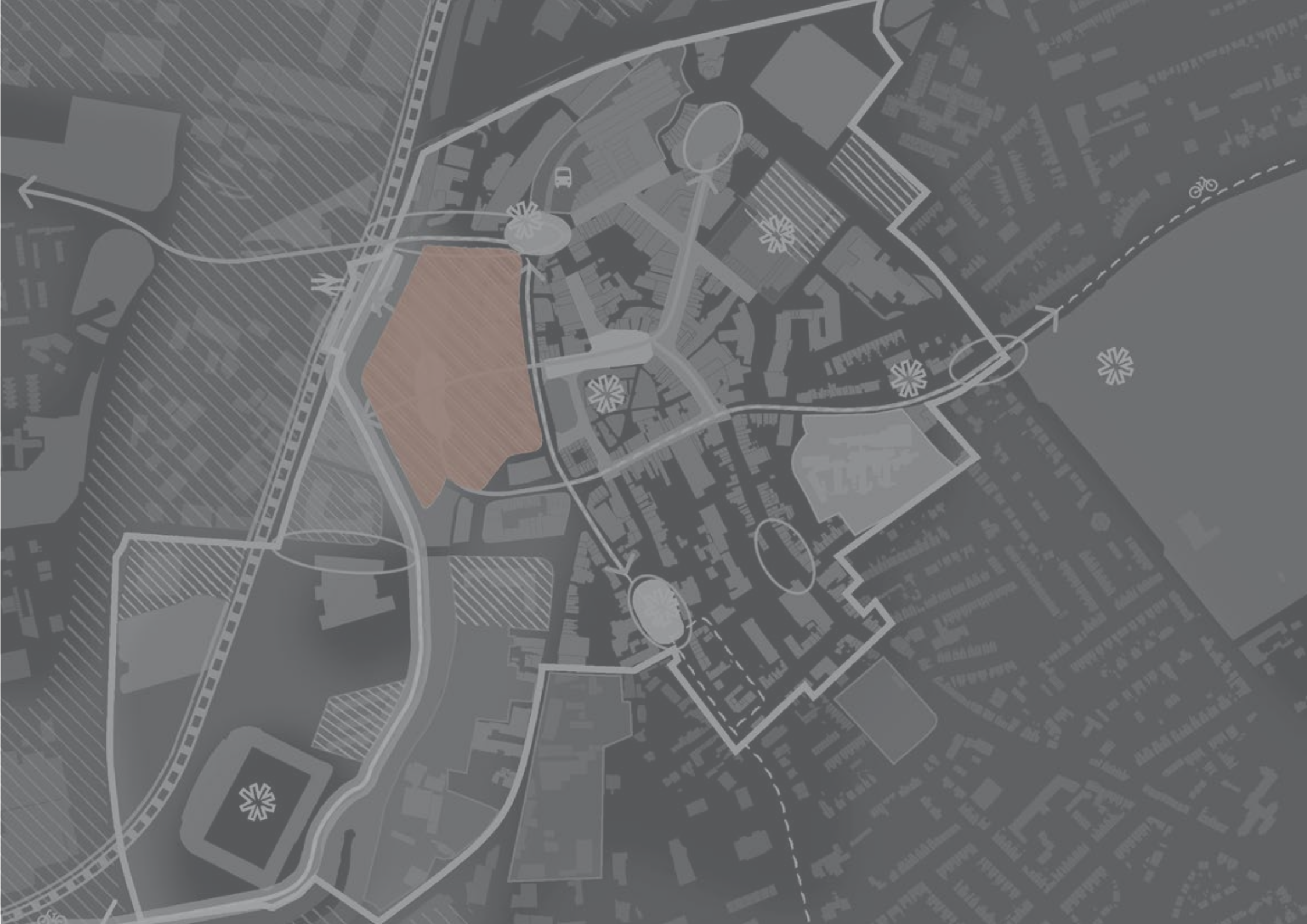
Fig. 7.5.2 BO01 Housing, Malmö



Fig. 7.5.3 Accordia Cambridge by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.
Copyright Tim Crocker for Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios



Fig. 7.5.4 Cafe Seating



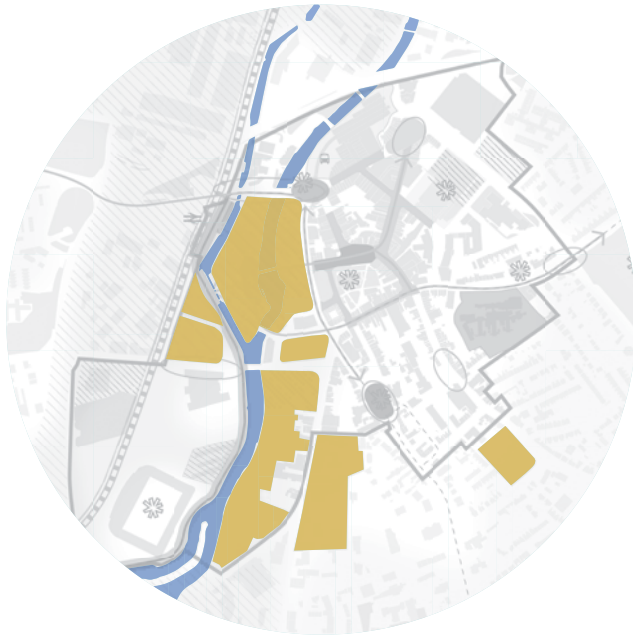


VISUALISATION OF FORGE ISLAND

VIEW FROM FORGE ISLAND WESTWARDS TOWARDS THE MINSTER. FORGE ISLAND IS A FOCAL POINT FOR LEISURE AND URBAN LIVING, RECONNECTING THE TOWN WITH THE RIVER CORRIDOR.

7.6 Key Move 2: Residential Units

Delivery of Residential Units on key sites within the Town Centre



The Plan opposite illustrates a number of residential opportunities across the Town Centre. As set out in the Masterplan Concept, residential occupation of the Town Centre is fundamentally important to achieving the goals and ambition of this Masterplan. It will bring after hours vitality and place residents at the heart of a highly sustainable and walkable environment, clustered around a high concentration of facilities and services.

The following sites have been identified as suitable for residential occupation:

Forge Island - An integral component to the Masterplan vision, Forge Island will be a mixed use scheme with a number of residential units delivered on site. This will likely be high density and also complementary to its principal role as a new leisure quarter for the Town Centre

Law Courts and Police Station - Should the Law Courts and Police Station opt to relocate away from their present site then it would be expected that there would be a strong residential component as part of any mixed-use scheme that would be developed here. Proposals should bear in mind the requirements of Sites and Policies Local Plan policy SP64 to safeguard community facilities.

Land to the East and West of Westgate - The land either side of Westgate is considered to be well suited to residential development. The land on the western side of Westgate extends towards the River Don which creates a key opportunity to provide access to the waterfront. Development should seek to avoid areas of flood risk. Development on the eastern side of Westgate should complement the development opposite, and exploit linkages between the two wherever possible.

Main Street/Market Street/Domine Lane - The cluster of buildings situated in the centre of Main Street, Market Street and Domine Lane present a good opportunity to deliver residential units in the heart of Rotherham Town Centre. This provides an excellent opportunity to complement the residential units delivered at Keppel Wharf, only a short distance away from Rotherham Central via Forge Island.

Former Henleys Garage Site - Located only a short distance beyond the Town Centre Masterplan boundary, the Former Henley's Garage site on Wellgate could deliver high quality residential opportunities in an area of that is already characterised by a number of residential streets, interspersed with other land uses.

Fig. 7.6.1 Residential Units Key Plan



Fig. 7.6.2 Ann Mews by Maccreanor Lavington Architects.
© Tim Crocker.



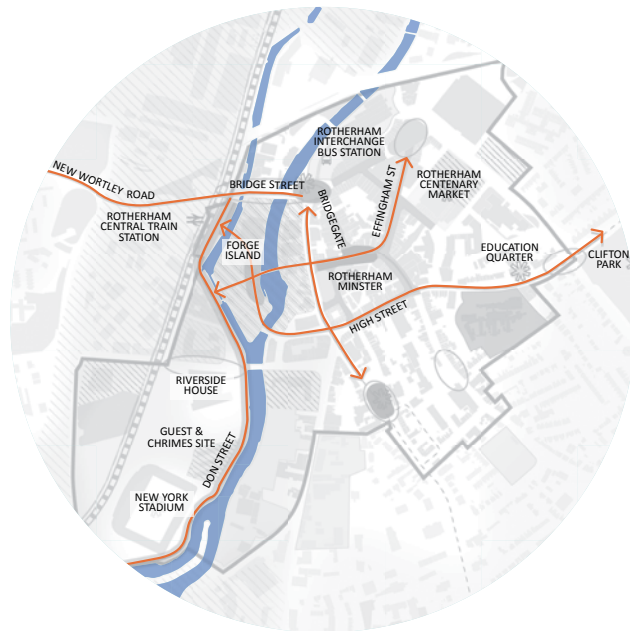
Fig. 7.6.3 Accordia Cambridge by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.
© Tim Crocker for Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.



Fig. 7.6.4 Kelham Island by Citu.

7.7 Key Move 3: Gold Routes

Creation of pedestrian 'Gold Routes' through the Town Centre, improving wayfinding and reconfiguring Town Centre footfall



There are a number of important routes through the Town Centre which should be embraced in order to stitch together the Town's assets.

Improved connections through the Town Centre will be vitally important in order to implement the 'Corridor of Healthy Living' concept. Key routes such as the link along Bridge Street/College Road towards the communities immediately beyond the Town Centre boundary will be important to enable access to wider green infrastructure opportunities.

Development proposals located along the proposed 'Gold Routes' should seek to contribute towards their successful delivery. This might take the form of a contribution towards improving wayfinding across a proposed route, or might include careful design or orientation of buildings to maximise opportunities to access routes. Consultation with RMBC will help define how development proposals might best contribute towards these routes.

Conversely this will also enable reciprocal accessibility from those communities towards community assets such as Clifton Park, a significant Borough-wide asset.

This will also be an important factor in facilitating Town Centre living as future residents will be able to access wider green infrastructure, and with it the multitude of health related benefits and opportunities that this brings.

Fig. 7.7.1 Gold Routes Key Plan



Fig. 7.7.2 New Road Brighton



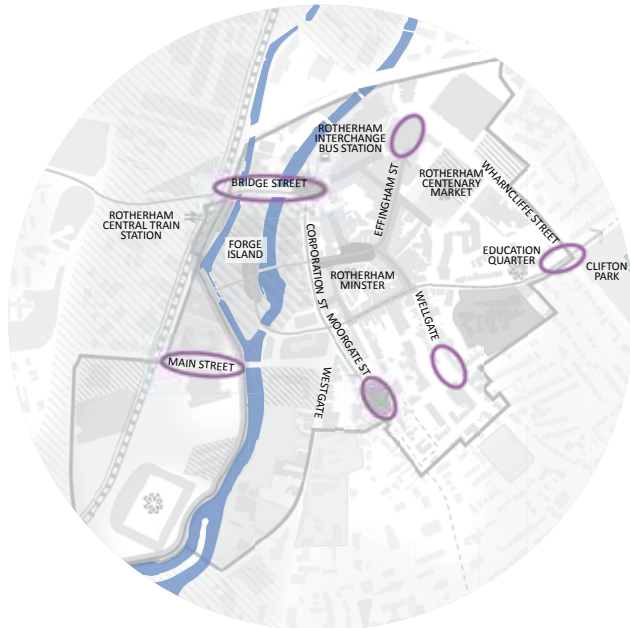
Fig. 7.7.3 New Road Brighton



Fig. 7.7.4 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

7.8 Key Move 4: Gateway Enhancements

Improving the Town Centre's Gateways to create a strong sense of arrival and identity



Gateways are important to the success of any Town Centre. They are critical to ensuring a sense of arrival, and firmly demarcate the extent of the Town Centre.

Rotherham currently suffers from poor quality gateways into the Town Centre. As a result opportunities to improve their quality will be firmly supported. Development proposals should seek to deliver enhancements to the identified routes below:

- Westgate and Corporation Street;
- Main Street;
- Wharnccliffe Street;
- Effingham Street;
- Wellgate; and
- Bridge Street.

Proposals should employ high quality design, and contribute strongly towards achieving a 'sense of place'. There may be a role for higher density, larger scale buildings in selective locations provided that they do not represent a loss of amenity to the surrounding uses and contribute towards delivering a strong gateway.

Fig. 7.8.1 Gateways Key Plan



Fig. 7.8.2 Using new development opportunities to define key gateways. Image: Sinclair Building, Sheffield © Project Orange



Fig. 7.8.3 Carefully defined focal points in public realm. Image: Windrush Park, Brixton



Fig. 7.8.4 Clearly defining characters at entry points to town centre quarters. Image: New Road Brighton

7.9 Key Move 5: Riverside Links

Opening up Rotherham's Riverside

The Riverside is an under-utilised asset in the Town Centre. This is in part due to legibility issues which may deter potential users from exploring the wider area.

Rotherham Central Railway station is located directly north of New York Stadium, the Guest and Chrimes site, Riverside House, the Police Station and the Magistrates Court. All development proposals along this link should:

- Maintain a strong link with the River Don and should not prejudice the delivery of a linear river frontage;
- Where access is currently constrained, consider opportunities to reopen sections of the riverside to pedestrians and cyclists;
- Contribute towards public realm improvements, legibility and wayfinding;
- Consider how the proposal may encourage onward movement between the Town Centre and the proposed Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District.



- Riverside Sites for Development
- Proposed Riverside Green Route
- Town Centre Gateways Across River Don
- Movement & Connectivity Priority Routes
- Proposed Public Realm Adjacent to River

Fig. 7.9.1 Riverside Links Key Plan



Fig. 7.9.2 High quality buildings and public realm alongside water front. Image: Copyright Brentford Lock West © Duggan Morris Architects.



Fig. 7.9.3 Creation of green network connecting River Corridor
Image: Central Scotland Green Network © Sue Evans.



Fig. 7.9.4 Sensitive riverfront development
Image: Kelham Island, Sheffield

7.10 Key Move 6: Markets Regeneration

Support for 'Making and Trading' in the Town Centre



Rotherham's history is firmly wedded to its role as a centre for 'making and trading'. The markets are a well utilised asset within the Town Centre and are vital to Rotherham's identity and culture. It is therefore vitally important for the future of the town that the retention of the Indoor Market as a place for trade continues as the primary use of the site.

However, the current size of the market provides some scope for remodelling in order to rationalise the existing occupiers into a smaller and better quality space. In turn this will likely free up some space for alternative uses.

Rotherham's tradition of manufacturing continues through the exciting opportunities presented by the AMID. This manufacturing spirit should be supported by and echoed in the Town Centre. The Markets could provide an excellent location to build on this, whilst also fostering entrepreneurial spirit, by accommodating small scale manufacturing space for start-up enterprises. The suitability of the Markets for this purpose is also reinforced by the fact that it would also be capable of providing a space in which products manufactured on site could be sold. This vision could be realised by drawing upon the site's close proximity to the College and the creative endeavours of the student population.

It is envisaged that half the site will be retained as a traditional indoor market, however support for alternative proposals for the the additional surplus area will be supported where they:

- Provide opportunities for small scale manufacturing, particularly where they support start-up enterprises;
- Exploit the opportunities provided by the proximity to the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District ('AMID'), and actively seek to support these wider aspirations.
- Exploit the opportunities provided by the Market's proximity to the Education Quarter.

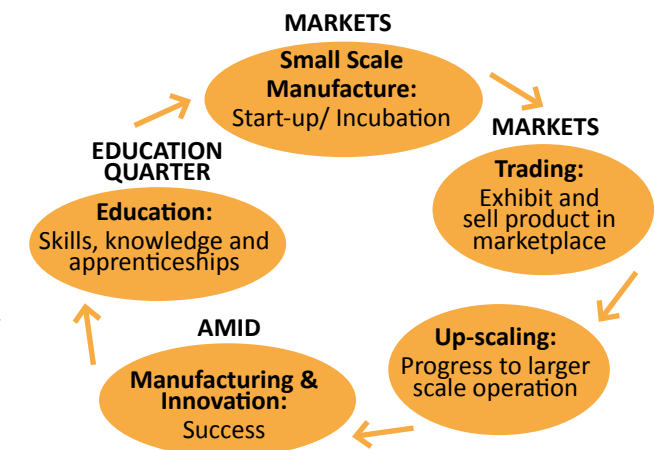


Fig. 7.10.1 Making and Trading Key Plan

Fig. 7.10.2 Making and Trading Ecosystem



Fig. 7.10.3 Rotherham Market Traders



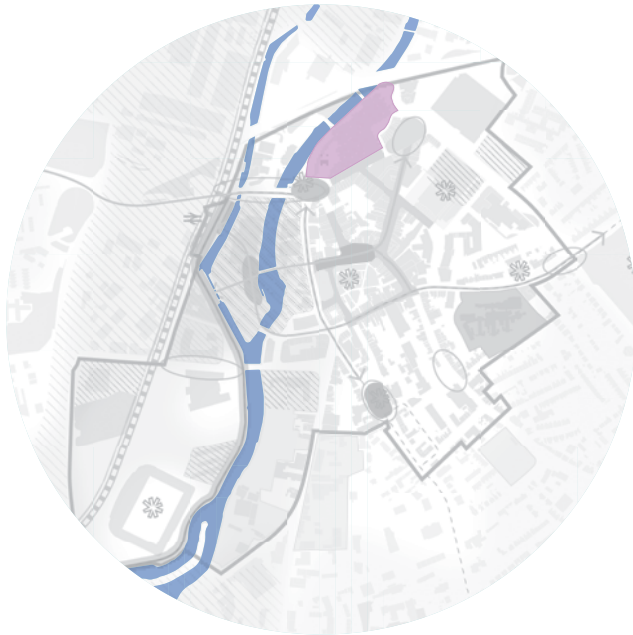
Fig. 7.10.4 Encouragement of creative business start ups
Image: Duke Studios, Leeds



Fig. 7.10.5 Opportunities for manufacturing within town centre
Image: Chop Shop, Sheffield

7.11 Key Move 7: Transport Interchange

Redevelopment of the Interchange to create a high quality environment with improved Linkages to Rotherham Central



Rotherham Interchange is an important, and heavily-used bus station. Analysis shows that bus-to-bus interchange is by far the most common type of interchange, however bus-to-train interchange also represents a significant market share of journeys. This highlights the important role played by the interchange in facilitating onward travel to destinations further afield.

It is therefore proposed that the primary use of the site as a Transport Interchange is retained. This will ensure that the Town Centre's high levels of connectivity continue, and the benefits that this brings are retained.

It is understood that the car park that is co-located on the Interchange site suffers from a number of structural issues which could result in the redevelopment of the site. As part of any such redevelopment, proposals must consider:

- Opportunities will be explored to create improved public realm around the Interchange that comprises a functional, visually interesting environment that also creates a safe and secure space with high levels of active surveillance across the area. Development proposals should consider their role in contributing towards this aim;

- Pedestrian and wayfinding improvements between the bus and rail stations in order to facilitate and improve interchange. This will become more important following the introduction of Tram Train in 2017;

- Linkages and integration with the Town Centre; and

- The contribution that the Interchange can make towards improving the gateway into the Town Centre at Bridge Street.

Whilst the primary role of the site as a Transport Interchange will be retained, there may be a role for the site to incorporate other uses on the site, for example retail. These uses will be supported so long as they remain ancillary to the overall purpose of the facility as a Transport Hub, and do not prejudice this primary role.

Fig. 7.11.1 Transport Interchange Key Plan



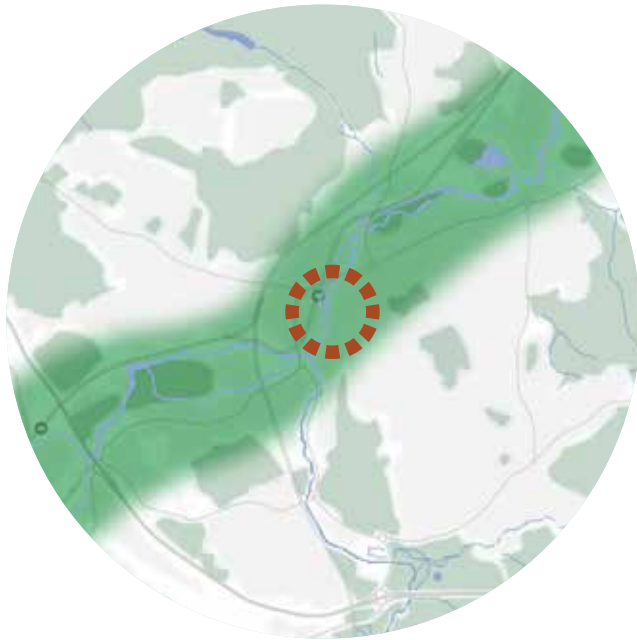
Fig. 7.11.2 Barnsley Interchange



Fig. 7.11.3 Stoke Bus Station

7.12 Key Move 8: Green Network

A connected Green Network to deliver a Corridor of Healthy Living



The delivery of the Corridor of Healthy living is essential to support Town Centre life and vitality. This is a particularly crucial Key Move if the Town Centre is to accommodate an increased residential community. The Rotherham Borough is fortunate enough to exist at the heart of a vast network of green infrastructure and therefore opportunities and proposals that aim to better stitch the Town Centre into this network should be strongly supported.

All Town Centre development will have a role to play in helping to achieve this vision, for example by contributing towards the provision of green infrastructure within the streetscape, or by delivering improvements to the Transpennine Trail, thereby encouraging walking and cycling into and out of the Town Centre via the surrounding green infrastructure network.

Clifton Park is located immediately to the east of the Town Centre boundary and this is a valuable piece of green infrastructure that is well used. Proposals on the eastern periphery of the Town Centre ought to consider their role in supporting its integration with the wider Town Centre.

Fig. 7.12.1 Green Network Key Plan



Fig. 7.12.2 The existing Centenary Riverside on the River Don



Fig. 7.12.3 Natural play trails. Image: Westonbirt play trail
© Rob Cousins Forestry Commission



Fig. 7.12.4 Green routes



Benefits

8.1 Benefits

Footfall

The proposed key interventions will bring positive benefits across the Town Centre, most notably through the reconfiguration of the Town Centre's footfall and movement patterns. As highlighted previously, footfall has remained broadly consistent throughout the previous masterplan period, though the volume varies substantially by street. This suggests that, although the centre maintains a loyal customer base, there are weaknesses in its configuration which have marginalised certain parts of the centre.

The proposed interventions will provide new key anchor points (e.g. Forge Island) and also, through improved wayfinding, help steer Town Centre users to different areas that they might not normally visit. This reconfiguration will help revitalise some of the Centre's more peripheral areas, and by generating new activity, could influence an increased uptake in empty units. Subject to completion of the proposed Key Projects, which have the potential to expand A1 floorspace in the centre by 22%, and the trend-based estimate of monthly footfall per 1,000 sq m floorspace, it is anticipated that the centre could generate an average of 3.0m-3.7m monthly visits by 2025. Combined with a reconfigured movement pattern, this will undoubtedly influence the uptake of vacant units in peripheral parts of the Town Centre.

New movement axes from the rail station across Forge Island will help drive activity on the Town's western periphery, whilst improved wayfinding and the introduction of a Gold Route from the College along Doncaster Gate will help better integrate Clifton Park with the rest of the Town Centre. This latter intervention is especially important as it will help draw visitors from the park along with the college's student population into the Centre. In turn this connectivity will support the leisure uses supported on Forge Island and also support increased residential occupation by better linking future residents with the park and the recreational opportunities that it holds.



Fig. 8.1.1 Town Centre Footfall © Chris RubberDragon

Alive after Five

The proposed leisure cluster at Forge Island, anchored by a multiplex cinema and complemented by cafes, restaurants and bars, would increase the gravity of the western part of the centre, driving footfall from the retail core north of All Saints Square westwards through Bridgegate, Corporation Street and Market Street. A new focus on diversifying the centre's offering 'beyond retail' will increase its resilience, enhancing its appeal to wider user groups (for example, families) and encouraging longer dwell times.

Local market analysis has indicated that, as the retail core has consolidated, its primary role has transitioned towards a convenience and essential comparison centre. An expansion in Town Centre living, delivered through a series of residential schemes around the River Don, will further support this role, generating increased levels of residential footfall. Evidence has also suggested that such footfall is often positively linked to 'eyes on the street' and a greater sense of safety and security, particularly by night, which would complement efforts to broaden the range of functions within the centre and create a 'round the clock' economy.

The delivery of residential developments in the Town Centre will be able to regenerate derelict and under-utilised sites, especially on Sheffield Road and Westgate, as identified

by the Masterplan. The increase in residential population throughout the Town Centre will yield a number of benefits and create activity and vitality after regular trading hours. This will create an active presence and in part address the perceptual safety and security issues, alongside helping to deliver a more diverse spending profile that will support the proposed leisure uses on Forge Island.

Economic

The Masterplan Update is centred on diversifying uses within the Town Centre and building on recent trends to create a broader offer, with additional residential, leisure and food and drink uses proposed. It was noted through the baseline economic assessment and local market analysis that despite the lack of quality comparison retail floorspace, the Town Centre continues to maintain a consistent level of footfall, meeting the everyday convenience needs of local residents. The Masterplan Update seeks to create a Town Centre offer that complements, rather than directly competes with, nearby out-of-Town Centres such as Meadowhall and Parkgate.

Given the scale of the proposed Key Projects, economic analysis undertaken to support this Masterplan broadly estimates that the reconfiguration of the centre and the

diversification of its core functions could generate an estimated 5-10% additional footfall above the trend-based estimate. It is generally the case that more retail floorspace equates to more footfall. Subject to completion of the proposed development sites, which have the potential to expand A1 floorspace in the centre by 22%, and the trend-based estimate of monthly footfall per 1,000 sq m floorspace, it is anticipated that the centre could generate an average of 3.0m-3.7m monthly visits by 2025.

In addition to an overall increase in footfall, the table below sets out the potential number of additional Full Time Equivalent jobs that could be created should the Masterplan vision be achieved.

A high level analysis of the Town Centre’s residential

potential indicates that it could accommodate upwards of 437 units. The increase in residential population throughout the Town Centre will yield a number of benefits and create activity and vitality after regular trading hours. This will create an active presence and in part address some of the perceptual safety and security issues, alongside helping to deliver a more diverse spending profile that will support the proposed leisure uses on Forge Island. Further benefits will be realised through the regeneration of a number of under-utilised sites, which will in turn revitalise the town.

³ HCA / GVA Grimley (2015) *Employment Density Guide (3rd ed.)*
⁴ N/A in m² (unless otherwise specified)
⁵ Assumed high street retail
⁶ It is assumed that, through the redevelopment of Rotherham Market, there will be a consolidation of A1 retail floorspace and no additional employment generation from this use
⁷ Number of units
⁸ Assumed 1.5 FTE / unit
⁹ Assumed corporate offices
¹⁰ Assumed light industrial studio spaces
¹¹ GIA in m²

	Floorspace ⁴	Area per FTE (m ²)	Potential FTEs
Retail (A1)^{5 6}	4,860	17.5	249.9
Live/work	248 ⁷	n/a ⁸	372.3
Commercial office (B1)⁹	23,232	13	1,787.1
Manufacturing (B1c)¹⁰	6,103	30	203.4
Cinema	1,600 ¹¹	200	8.0
Food/beverage (A3-A4)	5,760	17.5	329.1
		Total FTE	2949.9

Fig. 8.1.2 Employment density calculations for development sites



VIEW OF HIGH STREET

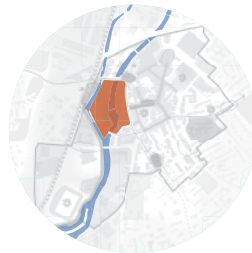
Delivery

9.1 The Eight Key Moves

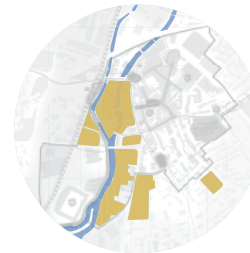
It is proposed that the vision for the Town Centre can be achieved through the eight Key Moves shown opposite.

This will result in the creation of a thriving, re-energised Town Centre and deliver the Vision. These key moves will be delivered incrementally over the short, medium and long term.

1 Development of a central Mixed Use Leisure Hub at Forge Island



2 Delivery of Residential Units on key sites within the Town Centre



3 Creation of pedestrian 'Gold Routes' through the Town Centre, improving wayfinding and reconfiguring Town Centre footfall



4 Improving the Town Centre's Gateways to create a strong sense of arrival and identity



5 Opening up Rotherham's Riverside



6 Support for 'Making and Trading' in the Town Centre



7 Redevelopment of the Interchange to create a high quality environment with improved Linkages to Rotherham Central Railway Station



8 A connected Green Network to deliver a Corridor of Healthy Living



Fig. 9.1 The Eight Key Moves

9.2 Indicative Phasing

Short Term Interventions

- **Forge Island** is a strategically important scheme and should be advanced at the earliest possible stage. It is expected that this scheme will come forward incrementally over a number of years. Temporary uses might be one way in which activity can be encouraged, thereby making Forge Island a destination ahead of future development.

By pushing to start delivery on Forge Island early this will help to create a sense of place and help to reconfigure Town Centre footfall patterns. The eventual delivery of leisure facilities, including cinema, food and drink will provide vitality across the Town Centre on an evening, and, in addition to increasing Town Centre spending, will create a complementary environment that supports Town Centre living.

- **The delivery of residential units** within the Town Centre should also be a short term priority. The Town Centre is a highly sustainable location with excellent connectivity. New communities will create presence and activity on an evening after the shops have closed. Residential occupation might also extend to older persons accommodation, taking advantage of the concentration of existing facilities that are present within the Town Centre.

In particular, there are key opportunities to deliver residential development along Sheffield Road and Westgate Hillside which should be prioritised as short term interventions. In particular the delivery of Starter Homes

should be advanced as a priority, in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency.

- Early interventions will also focus on **public realm, the creation of 'Gold Routes', wayfinding and other measures to improve the movement routes** across the Town Centre in order to encourage activity in some of the more peripheral areas. This will incentivise future development and bring momentum to the wider regeneration efforts, as well as contributing strongly to filling the Green Infrastructure Gaps in the Corridor of Healthy living.

- **Equally improvements to Rotherham Interchange** should be advanced in the short term and in parallel with Forge Island. In addition to the existing structural issues that will necessitate a short term intervention alone, improvements will help support the movement route towards Forge Island. This should be tied into the identified Gateway Improvements that will begin to create a sense of arrival.

Medium Term Interventions

- In the Medium Term, the **reconfiguration of the Markets** to include a 'Making Space' should be pursued. Although RMBC control the site, in order to realise the 'Making' aspect, to fully take advantage of the opportunities this concept presents, the necessary capacity and linkages will need to be established with the Education Quarter. This means that the reconfiguration of the Markets is best employed in the Medium Term.

- The same rationale underpins the rationale behind placing the **making/trading units at Guest and Chrimes site and along Westgate** into the Medium Term time period. This will allow sufficient time for the AMID to become established, thereby helping to reinforce Rotherham's identity as a manufacturing centre of excellence. It is this identity that will be critical to the success of Live Work Units, which will be reliant upon the entrepreneurial endeavours of those wishing to build upon Rotherham's manufacturing prowess, but on a smaller scale.

- **Riverside links** towards the AMID are also a Medium Term goal as the aim is to provide better onward connectivity to the District. Again, the District will need to develop further before the upgrade of the existing route becomes a pressing priority issue.

Long Term Interventions

- In the long term **improvements to the quality of the route along Doncaster Gate** towards the Town Centre from Clifton Park should be made. This would help better integrate the popular and well visited park into the Town Centre. This could comprise public realm improvements, signage and wayfinding, and will contribute towards the Corridor of Healthy Living. This has been prioritised as a long term intervention because it is reliant in part upon the delivery of a critical mass of development on Forge Island in addition to the realisation of proposals in the Education Quarter.

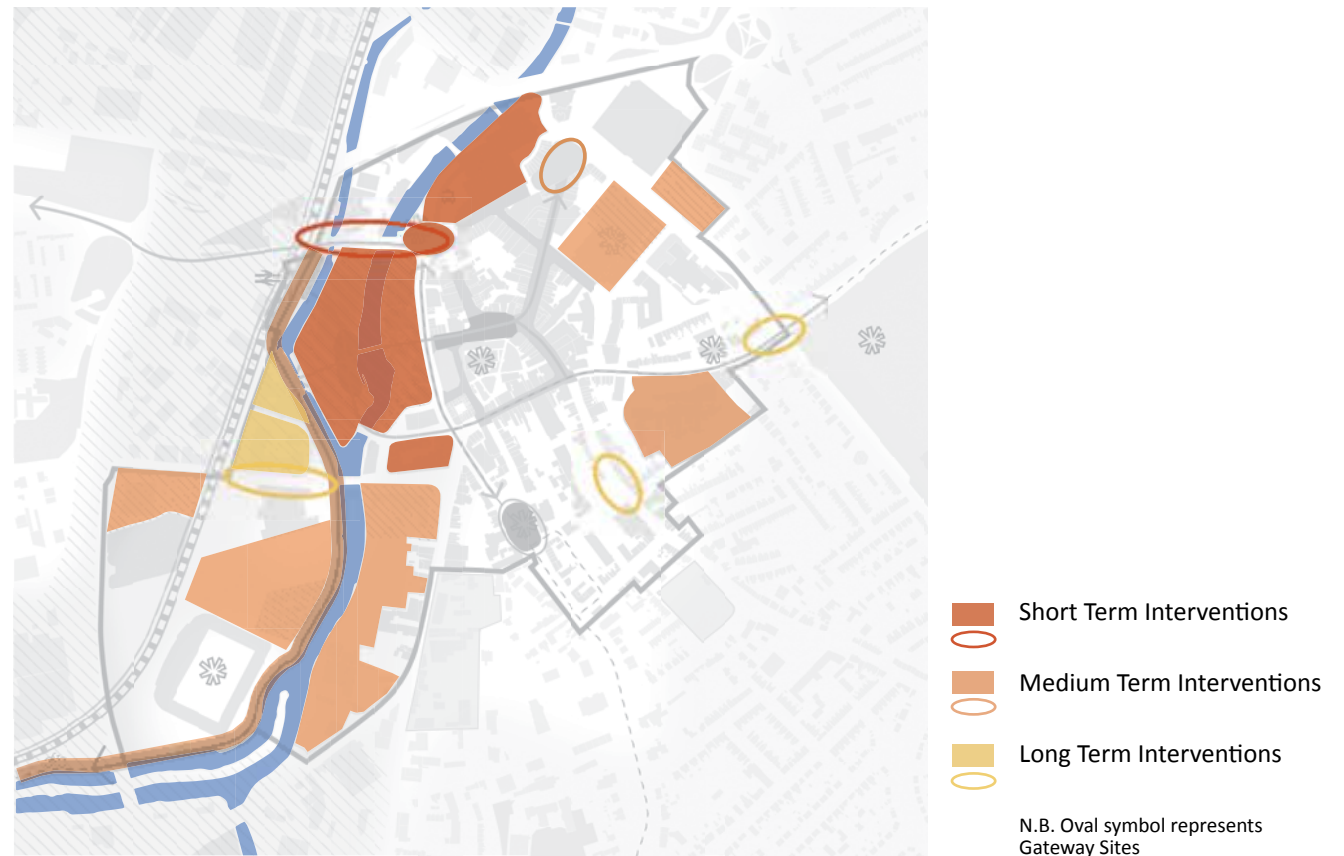


Fig. 9.2 Phasing Plan

9.3 Design Quality

High quality design will be of the utmost importance to achieving the goals and objectives set out in this masterplan. Goal 8 specifically covers high quality design therefore underlining its importance. A variety of architectural styles, mixture of development and character areas that reflect the quarters of the town and build a strong urban grain in the identified key areas, will be crucial to the Town Centre's success.

It is recommended that applicants developing proposals pursue a Design Team approach with Council Officers to ensure that proposals fully achieve the objectives of this Masterplan. The identified key sites within the Town Centre, and Forge Island in particular, should be brought forward in line with an agreed Development Brief. This should be prepared with RMBC and fully conform and build on the vision contained within this document.

This SPD is deliberately not prescriptive regarding design quality, and it is the intention that this flexibility will foster creativity. Applicants for major schemes will be encouraged to voluntarily engage with Integreat, the Design Review Service for Yorkshire and the Humber. Strategic schemes, such as Forge Island would undoubtedly benefit from referral to the Service for critique, helping to ensure the best quality design, thereby maximising the regeneration benefits for the Town Centre.

The Draft Rotherham Public Realm Strategy from 2008 provides specific guidance on how public realm might provide uplift across the Borough's public spaces, and provides a set of design guidelines. It is expected that all proposals incorporating public realm improvements follow the guidance contained within this document, and use the principles in a 'check and challenge' manner to ensure that designs are of the highest possible standards.

9.4 Funding Options

Indicative Phasing

This document sets out eight key moves that should be pursued to realise a stepped change in the Town Centre:

1. Development of a central Mixed-Use Leisure Hub at Forge Island.
2. Delivery of Residential Units on key sites within the Town Centre
3. Creation of pedestrian 'Gold Routes' through the Town Centre, improving wayfinding and reconfiguring Town Centre footfall
4. Improving the Town Centre's Gateways to create a strong sense of arrival and identity.
5. Opening up Rotherham's Riverside
6. Support for 'Making and Trading' in the Town Centre
7. Redevelopment of the Interchange to create a high quality environment with improved Linkages to Rotherham Central Railway Station.
8. A connected Green Network to deliver a Corridor of Healthy Living

The delivery of these key moves to deliver a stepped change and support growth is framed in the context of a further 40 per cent of public sector savings by 2020. Whilst this

is required nationally, a disproportionate share is falling on Metropolitan Boroughs such as those found across the Sheffield City Region ('SCR') including Rotherham. The council will therefore seek innovative ways to fund these key moves, in addition to looking toward private developers to deliver many of the necessary interventions outlined in this document. This will either be through on-site delivery, or through financial contributions.

The primary mechanism currently used by the Council to capture developer contributions is Section 106. Rotherham Council is currently preparing a Community Infrastructure Levy that upon adoption will replace Section 106 contributions in most instances.

The Necessary Infrastructure

Consideration needs to be given to the provision of the following infrastructure by planning obligation:

- Connectivity Improvements through the Town Centre, including the creation of 'Gold Routes', better wayfinding and signage;
- Delivery and maintenance of Gold Routes and public realm enhancements at identified locations;
- Feasibility studies for public realm infrastructure;
- Education (where family housing is proposed);

- Affordable housing;
- Flood infrastructure where required;
- Alterations and Improvements enabling greater accessibility to the Riverside;
- Highways alterations/downgrades/landscaping and pedestrian crossing improvements at key locations to improve pedestrian movement and circulation; and
- Sustainable transport measures to support public transport infrastructure, cycle parking and storage and smart transport infrastructure.

There are a number of sources of innovative funding available that the Council may wish to develop in order to help deliver these key moves. Some sources are summarised below, however this list is not exhaustive, and scheme promoters will be encouraged to work with the Council creatively to find innovative sources of funding.

Potential Funding Sources

The following examples could be utilised:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

CIL is a compulsory charge local planning authorities can levy upon new development as a condition of granting planning consent. It allows Local Authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects, with this then being used to fund a wide range of strategic infrastructure.

Business Rate Supplement (BRS)

A BRS is a compulsory charge added to all National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) that are levied on qualifying properties within a given local authority area. Under the terms of the Business Rates Supplement Act 2009, a BRS can be levied up to a maximum of 2p in the pound of rateable value, increasing the total NNDR multiplier to a maximum of 50.2p in the pound with a rateable value threshold of £50,000 (2014).

Council Tax Precept

An addition to council tax which could be levied for either a specific project or an infrastructure investment programme as a whole, e.g. the GLA Olympic Games precept levied on residential properties equivalent to £20 p.a. for a 'Band D' property. As an example of recent use of Council Tax Precept, the GLA Olympic Games precept was structured

to raise £625m over 11 years. A council tax precept would provide an incremental uplift in the revenue base, is subject to local control and available to spend at Local Authorities' discretion, whilst households can directly see what the benefits would be.

Workplace Parking Levy (WPL)

A WPL is a levy on employers for providing workplace parking with the aim of reducing private car commuting to work and encouraging a shift towards public transport. This has recently been utilised in Nottingham and builds on the provisions of section 178-190 of the Transport Act 2000. Revenue from parking levy can be used to help fund public transport systems, whilst also delivering the benefit of reducing carbon emission from private vehicles and promoting greater use of public transport. This option would represent an incremental revenue stream.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is a mechanism used by a Local Authority to promote economic development. It is designed to use the incremental business rates generated by a development project to leverage upfront borrowing to deliver the project. This might prove a useful way of generating funding toward the delivery of Forge Island, and can be regarded as economically efficient as the cost of the project is borne by its beneficiaries. TIF uses sources of taxation that already exist, i.e. business rates. For new projects TIF provides

an additional incremental revenue stream to contribute towards self-funding.

Viability

Trigger points, phasing of contributions, and indexation of commuted sums from grant of planning permission will all need to be negotiated and set out in draft Section 106 agreements at pre-application stage. The exact package of planning obligations for each site will need further discussion, as each proposal comes forward in the planning process.

It is acknowledged that market conditions are subject to change, and that these impact on the viability of development. If it can be demonstrated by an independently assessed open book appraisal at the submission of a planning application that a scheme is unviable with the full package of Section 106 (or subsequently CIL) obligations, including on-site provision, the Local Planning Authority may enter into negotiations with applicants to determine the priorities to enable the scheme to succeed. CIL can be renegotiated through an 'exceptional circumstances relief' where a specific scheme is not able to pay the levy.

If contributions towards public open space or education are made on site then a deduction would be negotiated from the total CIL payment. This would be negotiated during at pre-application stage.

For more information on planning services, please contact:

The Planning Policy Team

The Planning Policy Team produces the planning documents that make up the Local Plan and can be contacted for advice on planning policy. They organise and lead the consultations on draft planning documents and consider relevant consultation responses, making changes to draft documents where appropriate.

Web www.rotherham.gov.uk/localplan
Tel 01709 823869
Email planning.policy@rotherham.gov.uk

The Development Management Team

The Development Management Team assesses planning applications in accordance with the policies of the adopted Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and any other material considerations including consultation responses and other comments. They can be contacted for pre-application advice for all major developments and other advice on planning applications.

Web www.rotherham.gov.uk/planning
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