



# Radcliffe Town Centre 2010

A masterplan promoting mixed-use development  
opportunities in the heart of Radcliffe Town Centre  
**Adopted March 2011**



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## Status of this Document

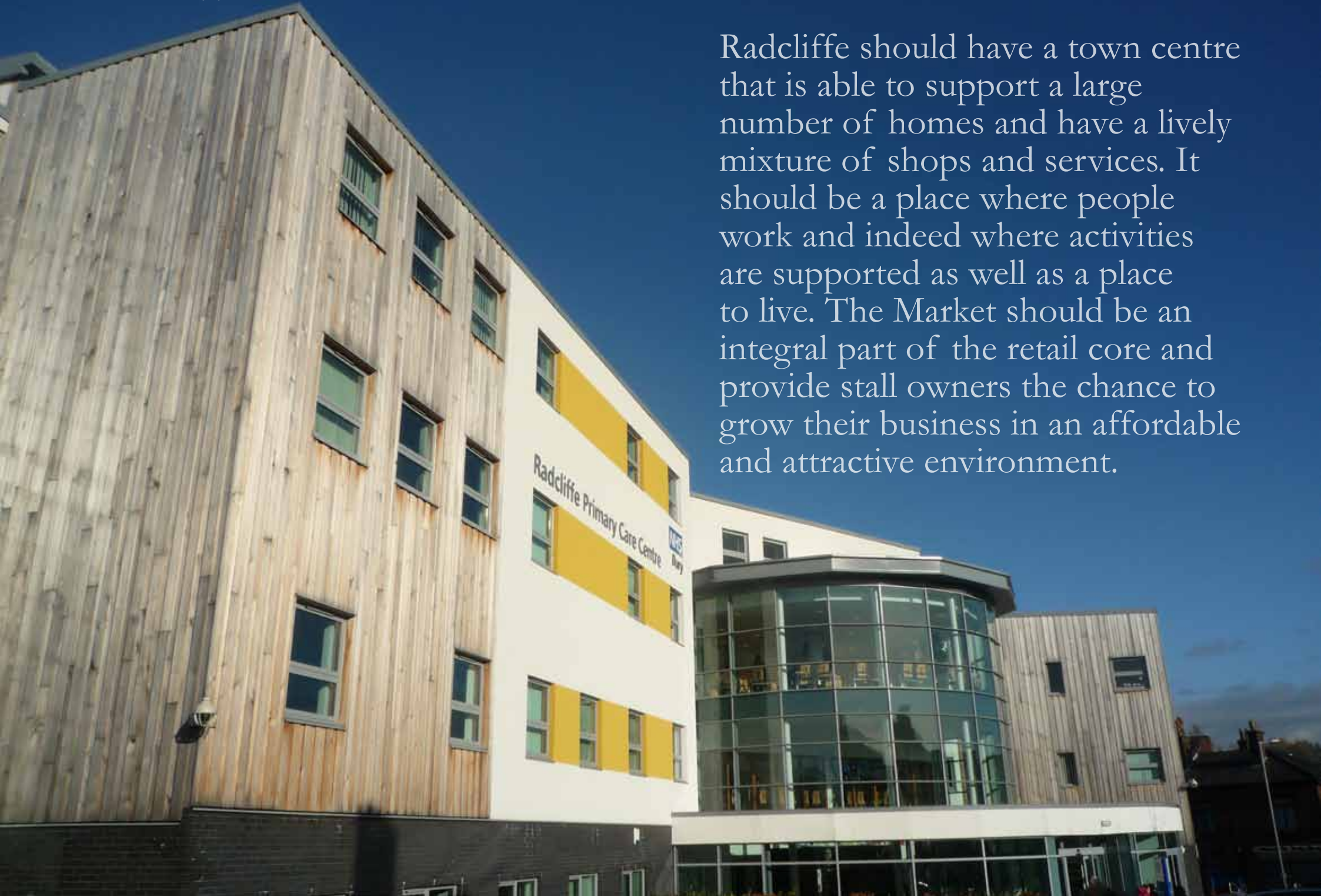
This document has been prepared by URBED (Urbanism Environment Design) and describes the councils objectives for key development sites in Radcliffe Town Centre and has been subject to extensive stakeholder and public consultation. Formal consultation took place between 24 January 2011 and 21 February 2011. The masterplan was adopted as non-statutory planning policy for Radcliffe Town Centre and as part of the evidence base backing up the Local Development Framework by Bury Council's Cabinet Member for Communities and Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport on 24 March 2011.

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Radcliffe should have a town centre that is able to support a large number of homes and have a lively mixture of shops and services. It should be a place where people work and indeed where activities are supported as well as a place to live. The Market should be an integral part of the retail core and provide stall owners the chance to grow their business in an affordable and attractive environment.



# Introduction

Bury Council is seeking to promote the comprehensive regeneration of Radcliffe Town Centre and will seek development partners to work with the authority as the retail property market and the residential property market improve over time. The development opportunities identified in this masterplan include an opportunity for a new supermarket and retail units in the heart of the town plus potential improvements to the market, a new bus station and potential opportunities to create a new residential neighbourhood.

Radcliffe is a key town centre within Bury and the council has been working to regenerate the centre for a number of years. The *Reinventing Radcliffe* strategy agreed in 2004 has led to the successful reopening of Blackburn Street and work with the market traders and retailers to improve the vitality and quality of the town centre. This has been successful in stemming the decline of the centre, which has held up well in recent years despite the recession. However, the flagship scheme – the SUN Quarter – was a victim of the recession and will not go ahead. Bury Council has therefore been working with URBED, who developed the original strategy, to draw up alternative plans for town centre development.

These proposals are set out in this masterplan and have been designed with a view, both to the current difficult market conditions and the need to continue the regeneration of the town centre. They have been subject to extensive consultation and have received widespread support. It is anticipated that recovery in the property market will be able to support retail development of the type envisaged by the masterplan earlier than the proposed town centre residential development. It is therefore likely that the council will seek a development partner, as market conditions improve, for a first phase consisting of a new budget supermarket, market improvements, bus station (to be delivered in partnership with the GMPTE) and environmental works. Proposals for residential development to consolidate the town centre are likely to be brought forward as a later phase possibly with a different development partner.



a recently refurbished hotel building in the town centre

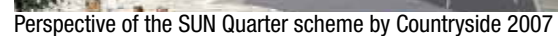


the view down to Radcliffe Bridge



Radcliffe Piazza







# Background

The initial work on the Reinventing Radcliffe Strategy was undertaken in 2003 and approved in 2004. Since that time a great deal of progress has been made in the town but unfortunately the key project to develop the SUN Quarter has not been possible.



Aerial perspective of the SUN Quarter submission 2007

## **Reinventing Radcliffe (adopted May 2004)**

The 2003 study by URBED assessed the challenges facing Radcliffe including an exercise that benchmarked the town against similar places. The study concluded that the decline suffered by Radcliffe Town Centre was a result of wider economic trends, rather than problems within the town. Indeed it has fared better in the face of these trends than many other small industrial towns. This resilience was the result of the range of independent retailers in the town including the market, the proximity of the ASDA store and the efforts of the council over a number of years. While there was no prospect of the town recreating its past role as a major retail centre it could 're-invent itself' as a Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood - the centre for a strong and sustainable community within Greater

Manchester with a particular reputation as a creative town and a good place to live.

The study developed this into a series of themes including the promotion of new housing, the development of the town centre as a service, leisure and cultural hub for local people and the development of a unique identity for Radcliffe based on the visual arts. Projects included housing development around the town centre, the reopening of Blackburn Street (recently completed) and the creation of a gallery to house the sculptures donated to the town by Ulrich Rückriem.

## **The SUN Quarter Development Brief (adopted 2005)**

The main opportunity in the town centre was the site of the Kwik Save store behind the market. This combined with the council owned car parks and the bus station created a significant development opportunity. This was put to the market through a development brief approved in 2005. The brief envisaged new retail space and cafes, a gallery and riverside garden for the Rückriem sculptures, a new bus station and market, with apartments on the upper floors. The SUN Quarter development opportunity was put to the market in October 2006 and the council selected Countryside Properties as preferred developer in April 2007. Unfortunately their proposals, particularly the apartment development fell victim to the banking crisis and Countryside Properties were forced to pull out in 2008. This masterplan seeks an alternative solution for this site.



Blackburn Street, recently re-opened to traffic



# Radcliffe Today

Radcliffe has been under significant pressure from other stronger neighbouring centres like many small former industrial towns. However, it has not done as badly as many similar places and there are reasons for optimism.



The analysis in the original Reinventing Radcliffe report remains relevant today. There was a time when thousands of people lived and worked around Radcliffe town centre. Car ownership was low, and travel into Bury, Manchester and Bolton was difficult so that Radcliffe had a captive market. The town prospered with its own town council, newspaper and a full range of local shops and services. There are scores of towns like this in Greater Manchester all of which have suffered in the face of competition from larger centres and supermarkets. They all face the same question – what is the future for a small town in a large conurbation and can it sustain a lively town centre?

Radcliffe is facing these challenges better than many similar towns. Even after the recent recession there are relatively few vacant shops, the market is doing better than it was seven years ago and the piazza seems if anything more lively. So Radcliffe Town Centre is not in crisis - the trend of long term decline slowed

during the boom years of the early 2000s and it has not been as badly hit by the recession as some other towns. There are a few reasons for this. One is the popularity of Radcliffe as a place to live – probably the most affordable place to buy a house with a Metrolink service. Indeed there are probably more people shopping in Radcliffe than there ever were, its just that most of them use the ASDA store. The proximity of this store means that some of these people come into the centre and we consider that there is scope to increase the amount of linked trips.

Having said all of this the people and traders of Radcliffe are not happy with its current position. It is no consolation that it has declined less than other places, people compare it to how it used to be. Our consultation has shown that while people and traders realise that it will never get back to what it was in its heyday they want much more and they are frustrated by the failure of recent schemes particularly as they see

investment going into other towns.

In the current economic climate it is unlikely that we will be able to attract another dense urban mixed-use development of the type Countryside Properties proposed in 2007. However the strengths that have sustained Radcliffe, particularly its attractions as a place to live and the success of the ASDA store, do provide opportunities. If the attractions of the town centre can be increased then there are more customers who could be drawn into the centre. It is therefore important to anchor the retail core of the town with something that can draw in people living nearby and attract people visiting the ASDA store to cross Pilkington Way. If we can secure such a magnet then trade in the centre can be increased and all retailers will benefit creating a better town centre and a virtuous cycle of recovery. The proposals in this masterplan have been developed with this in mind.



BT Exchange

Police Station

Post Office

Radcliffe Town Centre

Market (refurbishment opportunity)

Site of New Bus Station

Bus Station to be relocated

River Irwell

DALE STREET

PILKINGTON STREET



# Site

The site is in two parts and totals 2.6ha of land in the heart of Radcliffe. The southern section is flat and largely occupied by surface parking. This has the most immediate development potential for retailing. The northern part of the site consists of south facing sloping land with an number of existing uses.



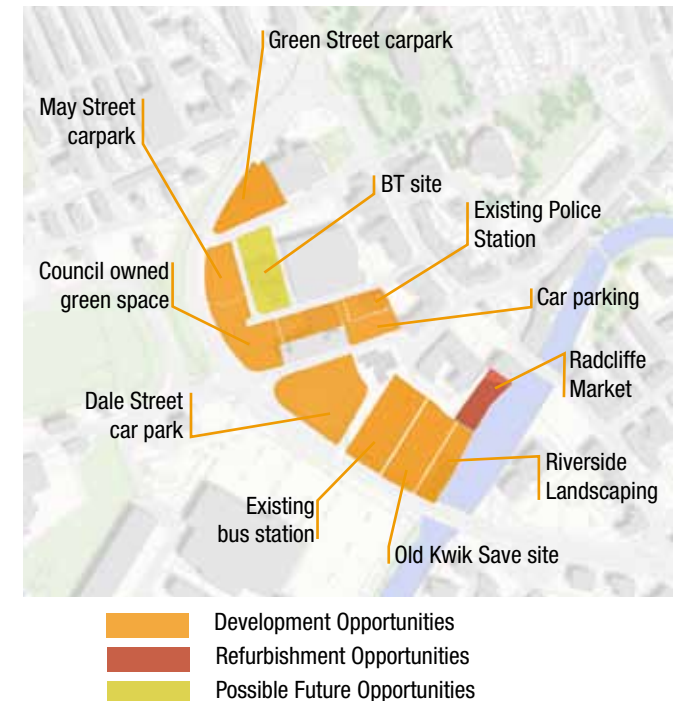
the River Irwell running behind Radcliffe Market

The site lies in the heart of Radcliffe Town Centre and is in two parts. The lower part bounded by Pilkington Way, the River Irwell and Dale Street backs on to the market and the rear of the existing shops. This site comprises 1.2 hectares of flat land mostly occupied by surface parking with the central section used by GMPTE as a bus station. The eastern part of the site was formerly occupied by a cinema which was subsequently occupied by a Kwik Save. When this closed the council acquired the site and demolished the building.

This site has vehicle access from Dale Street and there is currently no vehicle access from Pilkington Way which rises on an embankment to the east as part of the Bridge over the River Irwell. South of Pilkington Way is a busy ASDA linked to the site by a Pelican crossing created following the Reinventing Radcliffe strategy to replace the unpleasant pedestrian underpass.

There is a green embankment to the river and the site is partly within the flood zone which will require ground floors to be lifted 600mm above current ground levels. The market building directly abuts the river and is accessed by an alley running between the site and the Radcliffe Piazza which is the heart of the town centre. To the west of this, two retail blocks dating from the early 1970s are well occupied, including a Boots. There is a Post Office sorting depot on Dale Street that is not part of the site.

The second part of the site to the north of Dale Street comprises 1.4 hectares of south-facing land between Pilkington Way and the Dunelm Mill Shop. This includes a number of sites in a variety of ownerships. The industrial and commercial buildings on Dale Street are of some architectural quality but there are opportunities to develop the surface car parks and landscaped areas as well as potentially relocating the police station.







# Options

A series of options have been explored for development in the town centre. These options have been the subject of consultation and an options appraisal process.

The options process was based on commercial advice about what was likely to be viable in the town centre. The three options have been the subject of public consultation as well as viability and deliverability assessment. At the beginning of this process the discussion was about whether the Council and local stakeholders were prepared to compromise to accept early development or wait for something more comprehensive in the future. However, as Option 1 developed it became both the most viable and the one favoured by the majority of consultees. This was because it demonstrated that a small supermarket could be accommodated in the centre in a way that reinforced the market and the remainder of the town centre. There was also a view that the housing on the land rising above Dale Street on Option 3 should be included as a future option. The preferred option is therefore a combination of Options 1 and 3.



## Option 1

This option is based on uses that are most likely to be viable as the property market recovers over the next 2 – 5 years. The scheme is based around a budget supermarket linked to 2 additional retail units – for shops that would be attracted by the supermarket. These units are angled to be visible from Pilkington Way while channelling pedestrians towards the market. The bus station is shown on Dale Street and illustrates an indicative layout that will be further developed with GMPTE to ensure that operational and spatial requirements are met. A possible improvement for the market could be to create a glazed arcade over the route through to the Piazza.



## Option 2

This is predominantly a residential option with town houses and some apartments on the site by the river. The indoor market improvements would be the same as in Option 1 with a small public space to the south. The new bus station is shown wrapped around a purpose-built kiosk and a number of small retail units but this configuration, and that shown in Option 3, do not meet the GMPTE's operational and spatial requirements. Our market analysis has concluded that this scheme isn't likely to be viable within the 2 -5 year timeframe envisaged in Option 1 however a scheme based predominantly on townhouses is likely to become so more quickly than an entirely apartment-based option.



## Option 3

The third option is a long term scheme that is only likely to be possible after the residential market fully recovers. This option comprises a mixed-use retail/apartment scheme similar to the previous SUN Quarter scheme. The option also includes a new neighbourhood of townhouses on the land north of Dale Street.



Proposed  
Town Centre  
Neighbourhood

Dale  
Street

Radcliffe  
Piazza

Proposed new  
Bus Station

Radcliffe  
Market

The Retail  
Quarter

ASDA





# Masterplan

The preferred option is based on Option 1 combined with the residential neighbourhood north of Dale Street on Option 3. The key design principles that underpin the preferred option are that new development in the masterplan area should improve links between the town centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods, use development to define key through routes and gateways into the centre and front development along clearly defined building lines. The illustrative masterplan demonstrates how these objectives can be achieved.

## **The Retail Quarter**

The masterplan looks to create a legible walking route between the ASDA store and Radcliffe Market by angling the new supermarket along the walkway edge. This creates a pedestrian link that passes right to the heart of Radcliffe Town Centre. The smaller retail units are positioned to form a continuous building line along the edge of the pedestrian link and provide a seamless building line with the existing retail. This leads to the indoor market and the pedestrian passageway through to Radcliffe Piazza. Opportunities for improving the access and image of the indoor market with the adjacent passageway should be explored. This might include creating a glazed arcade but 24hr access would need to be retained.

## **Dale Street**

Dale Street is a key gateway into the town centre and would benefit from a clearly defined frontage of development, repeating the scale and massing of the existing buildings. The new predominantly two/three storey apartment buildings along the northern edge of

Dale Street have the appropriate form to achieve this and provide a uniform building line along the northern edge of the street. The ground floor of each of these blocks contain retail units to complement the existing retail stores on Dale Street and provide active frontage onto this important pedestrian route.

## **Town Centre Neighbourhood**

If the residential scheme is going to be successful then it is important that the development is fully integrated with the surrounding area and new routes are integrated with the existing street network. The new townhouse development north of Dale Street should clearly define a legible walkable route from the footbridge over Pilkington Way down to Dale Street and the new bus station. This would help provide an important link between the residential areas in the north west of Radcliffe and the town centre. A number of small pocket green spaces and trees are positioned along its length to reinforce its pedestrian friendly character. The residential properties proposed should front on either side of the pedestrian link, creating a

safer environment in an area of the town that currently lacks natural surveillance. The residential development to the north of Dale Street utilises the existing street network pattern to form a clear set of block sizes with clearly defined building lines within a network of narrow residential streets. The site slopes down to Dale Street so the residential blocks should be designed to fully optimise views to the south.

The council will expect the residential elements of the development to be designed using the Code for Sustainable Homes and to Lifetime Homes standard

## **The Riverside**

The southern edge of the masterplan area lies adjacent to the river Irwell and provides the opportunity to open up views and provide good access to it.





# Retail Quarter

The proposed retail quarter is anchored by a new budget supermarket and other retail units linked to potential improvements to the market, a new bus station and riverside landscaping.

## 1. RETAILING

There has been interest in the recent past for the development of a budget supermarket in Radcliffe Town Centre. The scheme therefore seeks to accommodate a store of around 1,000 sq m with 75 associated parking spaces. This is part of a new retail frontage which is angled to maintain good visibility from Pilkington Way while directing pedestrian footfall from the pedestrian crossing from the ASDA store to the market. The supermarket uses the standard floor plate of one of the leading budget chains with servicing to the rear. On either side of the supermarket are smaller retail units that would be attractive to retailers who like to be near budget supermarkets (and indeed ASDA stores). This could possibly include retailers like Wilkinsons, Argos, Poundstretcher or Home Bargains.

## 2. THE MARKET

The plans in the original SUN Quarter Development Brief to create a new outdoor market and hall are not viable so we have concentrated on the potential for

reformatting the existing market. Currently the market feels like it is accessed off a narrow alleyway and is not visible from the Piazza. Subject to the level of value generated by the proposed development investment should be made to improve the market. Potential options might include creating a new glazed arcade alongside the market and opening up access into the market from this arcade. This approach could create a much lighter more attractive market and help integrate the market with the main footfall in the town centre.

## 3. RIVERSIDE LANDSCAPING

It will be necessary to leave a strip of land along the river to meet the Environment Agency's requirements to access the river. It is proposed that this be used as an opportunity to improve the presence of the River Irwell within the town centre by creating a formal landscaped area that will open up views and access to the riverbank.

## 4. LANDSCAPED CAR PARK

The car park is accessed off Pilkington Way by converting the Pelican Crossing into a signalised traffic junction. It will be necessary to extinguish the existing subway to achieve this. This provides access to a parking area with 75 spaces. It is important that this is a high quality landscaped car park to create an attractive riverside environment.

## 5. BUS STATION

The masterplan has been developed in partnership with GMPTE and incorporates an indicative layout for a new bus station, the detail of which needs to be agreed with them. The station includes two double bays and two single bays and is based on an island layout surrounded by a bus apron. There would be a direct route from the new shops to the bus station.



Trafalgar Street, Rochdale



Donnybrook Quarter, London



modern townhouses, Bristol





# Town centre housing

The area along Railway Street is proposed as a new residential quarter based on town houses designed to exploit the sloping site. These could come forward as part of a long term comprehensive approach or could be procured separately to the retail scheme.

The sloping land above Dale Street was once a lively quarter next to Radcliffe's second station (hence the name Railway Street). Pilkington Way was built on the line of the railway and is in a cutting as it curves around this area, making it feel isolated despite its central location.

The residential market has changed and there is unlikely to be interest in developing large apartment schemes in the core of Radcliffe Town Centre for many years. However it is intrinsically a good place to live and the masterplan therefore explores the potential for new town centre housing. This is based on townhouses similar in form to the units developed by OMI Architects with URBED at Trafalgar Street in Rochdale (top left photo and the diagram to the right). This is considered a longer term prospect and could be procured separately from the retail scheme or could potentially form part of a wider development partnership arrangement.

The proposals retain the existing buildings on Dale Street and propose some infill blocks to repair the frontage. These are likely to be apartment blocks and the ground floor could include the reprovision of the police station. To the rear of this town houses are proposed along Railway Street, May Street and Green Street. These are courtyard houses designed to exploit the south facing aspect of the site and the views across the valley.

It is likely that the BT block and adjacent Dunelm Mill store overspill car park will remain in the medium term, whilst the site remains in use as an operational exchange and car park, though most of the building is unused. However the scheme allows for this site to be included in the future should it become available for development.

The scheme would create a new neighbourhood with a distinctive character increasing the population of the immediate town centre catchment.



Naturally lit supermarket



Supermarket solar roof



# Energy strategy

Manchester City Region has been designated a 'Low Carbon Economic Area' and this scheme is an opportunity to translate this into practical action and local benefits. The council is committed to doing this in a way that does not impact on the viability of the development.

Following a study for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA), Bury Council has taken the lead in planning for investment in low carbon forms of energy supply. The LDF Core Strategy contains new energy policies which seek to 'ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken towards carbon reductions by looking at new and existing buildings and strategic energy infrastructure.' It is expected that this will be implemented in Radcliffe.

A separate energy study has therefore been undertaken by URBED and AECOM that identifies the energy resources and infrastructure opportunities in Radcliffe. These include sources of renewable energy such as wind and hydroelectric as well as specific forms of demand for energy from existing buildings that might be served by new energy networks. The renewable energy opportunities include:

- **Sewage gas** from the Bury waste water treatment works
- **Waste water heat** also from the Bury waste water

treatment works which is released into the Irwell.

- **River and canal water** may be possible to be used for cooling and refrigeration.
- **Mine water geothermal energy** may be available from the Outwood mine workings
- **Hydroelectricity** from the three weirs downstream of the town centre could be used to generate electricity using turbines.
- **Solar energy** from thermal and solar photovoltaic panels on buildings.

The town centre contains a number of public buildings which could benefit from investment to reduce their carbon emissions. These include big energy users such as the swimming pool & fitness centre as well as the library, civic suite and post office. It also includes new more efficient buildings such as the NHS Primary Care Centre. Six Town Housing, the Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for Bury's housing stock, has 96 units of housing at the Thomas's Estate on the edge of the town centre. These properties have had recent investment in the form of new double glazed

windows and loft and cavity wall insulation. However, the properties still have electric heating and there is the possibility of improving these systems, which are expensive to run and have high carbon emissions.

As part of the development of the retailing and the later residential development the council is committed to exploring these opportunities. This may include an energy network to link the new development to renewable energy sources and existing energy users. For example, the new residential quarter could be connected to a district heating network for the town. It is anticipated that the new retail space will make use of energy from these sources for heating and refrigeration and there will also be an opportunity to provide new solar panelling in the town centre. This could take the form of a solar energy hub centred around the new supermarket and refurbished market.





# Delivery

It is recommended that a flexible phased approach be adopted to the implementation of the masterplan. This recommendation is based on an assessment of market conditions, outline development appraisals to test the viability of the proposed development opportunities, and site availability.

## **Phase 1 - Retail Quarter**

The retail proposals put forward within the masterplan are for a sector of the retail market for which there is currently a demand i.e. discount food retailing of which Aldi and Lidl are examples. However, public spending restraint over the next few years means it is likely that the costs of relocating the bus station and any improvements to the market will need to be fully met from the potential value/capital receipt generated by the development. Our outline development appraisal indicates that though the proposed retail scheme should be commercially viable in principle some recovery in development values is likely to be necessary in order for the scheme to be able to fund these elements. The land is largely in the ownership of Bury Council so is already assembled and available for development. Our advice, therefore, is that the proposed retail quarter forms phase 1 of the masterplan and that the development opportunity be brought to the market as soon as the retail property market recovers sufficiently to fund all elements of the scheme.

## **Phase 2 - Town Centre Housing**

Our assessment is that in this economic climate and residential market it is unlikely that developers would have the confidence to assemble the land required for the development until more demand exists for homes in Radcliffe Town Centre and values improve. Developers will also take into account the amount of residential activity that is taking place in the wider Radcliffe area before committing themselves to this more complex scheme in the town centre. Our advice, therefore, is that the proposed town centre housing could form a distinct phase 2 of the masterplan that could be progressed when the market has recovered sufficiently for a residential developer to commence site assembly, and if necessary, the Council should make its CPO powers available to assist site assembly.

## Comments & Feedback

This brief sets out a draft strategy for key regeneration sites in Radcliffe Town Centre. It has been prepared by URBED working with Gordon Hood Regeneration in collaboration the community, stakeholders, the Local Area Partnership and Bury Council. We welcome feedback so please send comments to Bury Council:

Website: [www.bury.gov.uk/RadcliffeRegeneration](http://www.bury.gov.uk/RadcliffeRegeneration)

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Telephone: 0161 253 5270

Available on [www.bury.gov.uk/RadcliffeRegeneration](http://www.bury.gov.uk/RadcliffeRegeneration)

Supporting documents available:

Baseline and Options Report  
Inner Radcliffe and Town Centre Energy Framework

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