

Bury but better

In the autumn of 2002 Bury Council commissioned a team of consultants led by the urban designers URBED to develop a vision and strategy for Bury Town Centre. This leaflet describes the outcome of this study. It is published as the basis for public consultation to find out what the people of Bury think about the proposals.

Town Centre Vision and Development Strategy

The need for a vision has arisen as part of the review of Bury's development plan. However, it is also given added urgency by a number of development proposals in and around the town centre. These provide an opportunity to transform the town centre but only if we get them right. The study has therefore looked in particular at the areas affected by these developments.

The study is not a regeneration strategy for the town centre. Unlike many former industrial towns, Bury is doing reasonably well. When we asked at the public consultation workshop held as part of the study,

what the vision for the town should be, the answer came back 'Bury but better'. This seemed to sum up what the study was trying to achieve and has been adopted as the title for URBED's report.

However, Bury cannot rest on its laurels. It is surrounded by towns that are all improving their town centres. It also faces competition from Manchester city centre and the Trafford Centre. If it does not improve it could be left behind. However, in improving the town it is also important not to lose sight of the things that make Bury special – particularly the market.



Bury today

The first part of the study looked at Bury today. The town is home to 65,700 people and the population is growing slowly. It has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Greater Manchester and while Bury is relatively deprived compared to national figures, it is the most affluent of the North Manchester towns.

Urban design: The study looked at the urban form of Bury. It concluded that Bury has a small area of attractive townscape around

Market Place but this is surrounded by a zone of poor urban quality (or 'shatter zone'). The ring road in particular cuts the town off from its surroundings preventing people from walking into the centre.

Market demand: As part of the URBED team the surveyors King Sturge looked at demand for development in and around the town centre. This concluded that there is potential demand for; town centre housing; a limited amount office space; a health and fitness centre; a bingo hall; pubs and small scale

industrial premises. There is very limited demand from developers to build for a town centre cinema, restaurants and a hotel although this might change in the future.

Town centre health check: Bury has 1.2 million ft² of shops. It is the 83rd most important shopping centre in the UK (Bolton is 58th and Oldham 161st). The shopping centre is doing reasonably well largely due to the market, which is the largest in the northwest. A recent study by consultants Drivers Jonas has shown that there is potential to expand the shopping centre.

Transport study: As part of the study TPP Highway Engineers looked at access to the town. They concluded that, while the road network is congested at times, this is mostly to the north and west of the town. The centre is well served by bus routes and also benefits from the Metrolink service into Manchester.



This plan shows just the buildings of Bury and is a good way of understanding the structure of the town. It shows that the town centre is surrounded by large areas of poorly defined space (what urban designers sometimes call a shatter zone)

Illustrative Masterplan



Western Waterside

It is proposed that the reopening of the Manchester-Bolton-Bury canal be used as an impetus to regenerate the area around the original canal basins. This would mainly be for housing but would include some leisure and office uses. Links to the town centre would be improved with a new pedestrian bridge and route linking to Bolton Street.



The Phoenix Quarter

This area is currently cut off by the railway, ring road and river. It is proposed that it should be developed as a residential area taking advantage of the police station site should this be vacated and a new gateway at the western end of Bolton Street

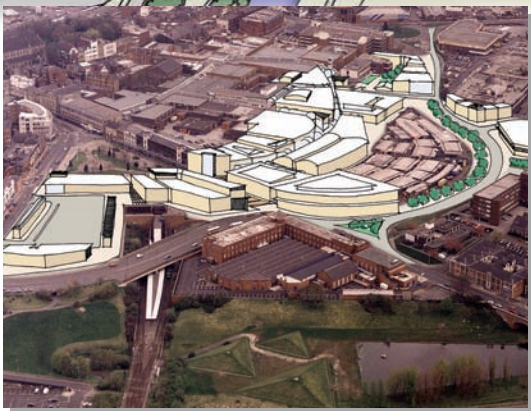


The Historic Core

The historic core should continue to develop as a cultural and entertainment quarter with improvements to the environment and new signage and interpretation. The main project should be the refurbishment of the Arts and Crafts Centre

The Southern Gateway

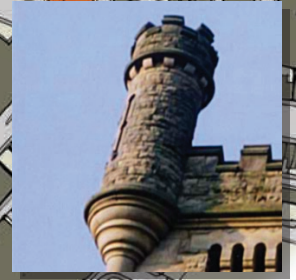
The area to the south of the town centre includes the College, the Metrolink station and the large area of Townside Fields / Pyramid Park. The college does not have current plans for expansion outside its site. Townside Fields currently does not operate very well as a park. It is suggested that it be used for parking in the short term with the potential in the medium term for mixed use development incorporating offices, residential and / or a hotel.



Proposals

Bury Ground

A new business quarter is proposed on the northern fringe of the town centre at Bury Ground. The strategy suggests that this proposal should be supported provided there are good links to the town centre and riverside parkland is maintained.



The Eastern Gateway

There are development proposals for this area including a new supermarket, retail units and mixed use development. The strategy suggests that these proposals should be supported provided that there are strong links to the town centre. As part of the downgrading of the ring road a new north/south link is suggested through the site. This would be designed as a traditional street. The area to the west of this street is to be a mixed use quarter and the area to the east a retail area. In the longer term residential development could be encouraged on the site of the bus depot.

The Shopping Quarter

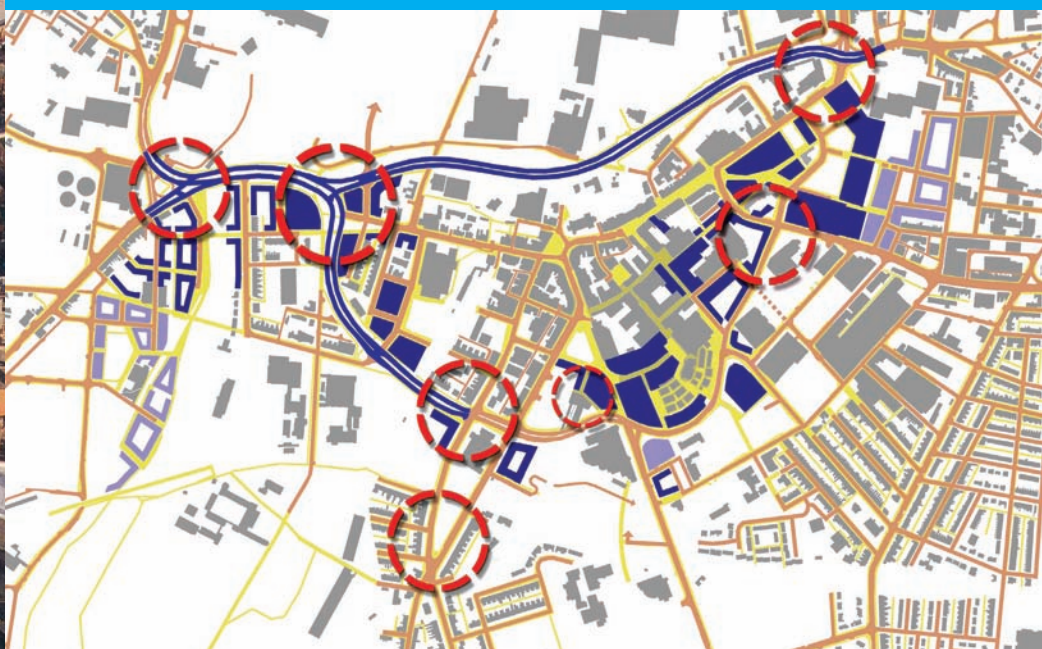
The market and the Millgate shopping centre are at the heart of Bury's success. There is the potential to expand the amount of shopping in Bury and the first priority for this should be expansion within the Ring Road. This however must be done in a way that enhances the operation of the market. The study suggests that there is potential for significant new development around the outdoor market including a new department store. This might involve the relocation of the indoor market hall and the development of the Bus Interchange. Angouleme Way should be downgraded to improve linkage between the shopping quarter and areas to the east.





Vision

'Bury but Better' - Bury will continue to expand its role as a bustling market town where shoppers travel from a wide area on market days. It will become a more rounded town centre with a mix of housing, business and employment uses alongside the shops. It will feel and look more like a traditional town centre and will be more closely integrated with the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.



Strategy

The strategy proposed by URBED to realise this vision is based on the following 6 themes:

1. Reinforcing Bury as a market town:

- The expansion of the Millgate centre should be encouraged
- This should be linked to improvements to the market
- Any independent retailers displaced should be relocated.
- A supermarket could be built to the east of the town centre
- Bulky goods retailing should be supported provided there are links to the town centre.
- The Rock should be improved.
- A signage and interpretation scheme should be implemented.



2. Making the most of Bury's heritage

- The East Lancashire Railway should be expanded.
- The transport museum should be developed with the railway as a linked attraction
- A new home for the Lancashire Fusiliers Museum should be sought in the town centre.
- The Culture Quarter should continue to be developed.
- The reopening of the Manchester-Bolton-Bury canal should be a spur to the regeneration of the canal area.
- The signage scheme should include panels on the history of the town.

3. Creating an accessible town centre

- The eastern section of the ring road should be downgraded into a traditional street.
- Surface crossings should be created elsewhere on the ring road.
- Local disability groups should be consulted on all works.
- Ring road junctions should be re-prioritised to reduce land-take and make it easier to cross.
- A pedestrian link should be created to the canal basin
- A new bus station should be developed to remove the barrier to pe-

destrians arriving at the Interchange.
■ Decked car parks should replace surface parking.

4. Creating an attractive, compact town centre

- An 'Urban Quality Area' should be defined in the core of the town.
- Urban design guidelines should be drawn up for this area
- Planning briefs should be prepared for the major developments.
- Environmental improvements should be targeted at the gateways to the town centre.
- A series of quarters should be created in the town centre.

5. Managing the quality of the town centre

- A town centre manager should be appointed.
- The manager should be responsible for promotional events and animation.
- Improved lighting and CCTV should extend to cover the town centre fringes.
- The role of the town centre wardens should be expanded to include town centre promotion.
- A programme of public art should be initiated linked to the Irwell Valley sculpture trail.

6. Broadening the role of the centre

- New housing should be promoted in the town centre.
- Bury Ground should be promoted as a business park.
- Small scale offices should be developed for local companies
- Sites adjacent to the Town Hall should be promoted as opportunities for office development and improved civic space.
- Studio space and business start-up units should be developed.
- The Arts and Crafts Centre should be promoted and further developed as a visitor attraction.



What do you think?

Before finalising proposals for the local plan we want to know what you think of the proposals outlined in this leaflet. Please use the enclosed reply slip to let us have your comments.



Environment and Development Services
Craig House, 5 Bank Street,
Bury, BL9 0DN
tel: 0161 253 5283

Report produced for Bury Council by a team led by URBED and including King Sturge, TPP and JRUD.
URBED - 10 Little Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1HR. www.urbed.com

