Bury but better

Town Centre Vision and Development Strategy
- Consultation Draft -

A report for...
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

by...
URBED with King Sturge, TPP and JRUD

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1. Introduction

Bury but better

This report was commissioned by Bury Council to develop a vision and strategy for the town centre of Bury in the context of the town as a whole. This was prompted partly by the need to review the Council's Unitary Development Plan, adopted in 1997, and also to update the previous Bury Town Centre Strategy, published in 1994. There was, therefore, a need to review and update the vision for the centre and the planning policies needed to bring this about.

This process is, however, given added urgency by the development interest currently being shown in the town centre by a number of major developers. These have the potential to transform both the built environment of the town centre as well as its economic performance. They are a major opportunity to make significant progress on the town centre vision in the near future. Alternatively, if not handled correctly, they could undermine the success of the centre or put back its development for many years. The Council is, therefore, concerned to harness these development interests to the benefit of the town. This study will, therefore, be useful in negotiations with these developers - indeed discussions with the developers have been ongoing throughout the study period.

Building on success

What this study is not about is the need to regenerate Bury town centre. Unlike many similar towns, Bury town centre is not declining. This is not to say that it is free of problems, or that all parts of the centre are thriving, for example, there are indications that the wealthy and better-off Bury resident is not shopping in the town. However, in general, Bury town centre is doing pretty well. At the heart of its success is its 'famous' market. Unlike virtually every other market in the UK this is thriving. There may no longer be fights between market traders to secure a stall, but there is a waiting list as well as a healthy demand for shop units in the centre.

This study is, therefore, not about reinventing or regenerating Bury but about building on its success and securing its long-term future – what one participant at the town centre workshop summed up as 'Bury but better'. It is important that this is done because, successful as it might be, it is facing increasing competition from Bolton 6 miles to the west, from Manchester city centre a 20 minute tram ride to the south as well as the Trafford Centre that is within easy reach of Bury's catchment population. This study has, therefore, sought to identify and build upon the roots of Bury's success and to generate a vision that can take it forward into the 21st century.

A renaissance vision

2.

The context for this study is a radical change that is taking place in Britain's towns and cities. This is partly policy-driven through following the government's Urban White Paper. It is, however, also driven by economic and social change that is seeing the restructuring of urban economies and a growing market for urban housing. Collectively this is known as the *Urban Renaissance* and presents huge challenges and opportunities to a town like Bury. URBED has recently completed the Towns and Cities research project for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) as part of the Urban Summit. This identified a series of drivers for urban renaissance that provide a backdrop to this study:

Economic restructuring: Urban economies are moving away from their traditional manufacturing base. To survive towns need to develop new forms of economic activities in white collar sectors, services, creative industries, leisure and retailing. This is a painful process and the northern towns that have been least successful in making this change are the ones that are suffering at present. By contrast larger cities have been more successful in this restructuring – especially Manchester.

Urban repopulation: At the heart of the urban renaissance is the need to reverse the decline of urban populations. This is based on the reintroduction of housing, that can attract people with a choice over where they live, into the centre of towns and cities. This is encouraged by Government policy but is also being fueled by demographic trends and the growth of single-person households.

Sustainable development: At the heart of the urban renaissance is a concern about sustainability. A vital issue is car-use, because of environmental issues and congestion. Planning policy expressed particularly in PPG 1, 3, 6 and 13, seeks to concentrate development in areas that can be reached on foot and by public transport.

This urban renaissance agenda has important implications for towns like Bury. It needs to make itself attractive, to integrate public transport, to invest in local services such as education and to increase the quality of life for local people - all essential steps in making urban areas attractive to people and business. As this report shows Bury has a head start in <u>all</u> of these areas. It has the potential to grasp this renaissance agenda to secure its future. This will mean concentrating development towards the centre, promoting higher densities and supporting efficient public transport, a mix of uses and quality urban design. It means thinking about Bury, not just as a retail centre but as a rounded town centre that is a focus for the community and a centre for services, entertainment, employment and housing alongside shopping – the renaissance of the town it was 30 years ago.

The study approach 3.

This study has been undertaken by URBED working with the surveyors King Sturge, the Transport Planning Partnership (TPP) and Jon Rowland Urban Design (JRUD). The study has taken place over the latter part of 2002 and has involved the following elements:

- A review of background material and policy documentation;
- Meetings with the main property interests and developers in the town centre;
- A close working relationship with a group of council officers representing departments – what elsewhere has been called a 'Town Team';
- A walking workshop of the town centre by the town team;
- Two presentations and discussions with the Bury Town Centre Management Forum a group that brings together businesses, the Council, Chamber of Commerce and organisations such as the church and the police;
- Three 'nested' studies: An urban design study by URBED and JRUD, a town centre health check by King Sturge and an access study by TPP.
- A town centre roundtable workshop on 1st October that brought together 90 people to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the town centre and the vision and strategy for the centre.
- A presentation to senior Members and officers of the draft findings.

This report is, therefore, published with reasonable confidence that its proposals will not come as a surprise to the key stakeholders in the town centre and will generate broad support. The report is, however, published as a consultation draft and will be subject to further comments and consultation over the coming months. Following this the findings will be reviewed to take on board comments and will be the basis for the town centre elements of the UDP review.

The study has been undertaken by a 'town team' including the following people: Paul Allen, Howard Aitkin, Stephen Lever, Heather Clark, Peter Schofield, David Isherwood, and Amanda Hope of Bury MBC, David Rudlin, Charlie Baker, Neil Corteen, Nick Dodd, Debbie Fuller, Stephanie Hevecker and featuring Dr. Nicholas Falk all of URBED, Jon Rowland and Malcolm Moore of JRUD, Gordon Hood and Emma Pinches of King Sturge, and Don Wignall of TPP.

DOWNHAM
VAN ALLAN
DOWNHAM
WILLIAMS

Bury in the past

4.

The name Bury is derived from the Saxon word Bryi meaning stronghold, demonstrating the town's ancient roots. The area around Market Place was the heart of a medieval settlement with the parish church dating back to the 11th century and the castle to 1315. These buildings stood on an elevated defensible position over a fording point on the River Irwell. This was also an intersecton of the road from Bolton to Rochdale and the road northwards from Manchester to Blackburn. The remains of the castle can be seen to the west of Market Place and was already a ruin by 1636. Market Place was a market square dating back to a 15th century market charter but was moved in the 1850s to the fairground on what is now Bury Interchange . The area surrounding Market Place was known as the Wilde and included the courthouse, a dungeon, pillory, stocks and a number of beer houses.

By the 18th century Bury had developed into a textile town. Initially, this was based on wool from the sheep that grazed on the surrounding moorland. The town started to develop with characteristic 'loomshead' housing with a weaving room on the top floor where families would spin and weave wool. In 1733 John Kay, from Ramsbottom just to the north of Bury, invented the 'Flying Shuttle' one of the first moves to mechanise production that could be seen as the beginning of the industrial revolution. His son Robert Kay subsequently invented the 'drop box' that allowed for patterns and colour to be added to the cloth. John Kay was eventually forced to flee by angry weavers whose livelihoods were threatened.

The mechanisation of weaving led to the industrial revolution in which the towns of Greater Manchester and Lancashire were, for a short period, to become the economic powerhouse of the world. This was based not on wool but cotton, imported through Liverpool and traded in Manchester. Manchester grew dramatically, doubling in population every ten years for the first half of the 19th century. Manchester was initially a production centre but over time it changed into a trading centre with production and processing (such as dying) being undertaken in the surrounding towns such as Bury, Oldham and Rochdale.

In Bury large cotton mills began to appear employing hundreds of people and relying on the abundance of water to bleach and dye the cloth, and power the water wheels, turbines and laterly, the steam engines in the mills. In 1788 Sir Robert Peel, who was to become Prime Minister in 1834, was born to a mill owner at Chamber Hall in Bury. At the beginning of the 19th century the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal linked Bury to Manchester and also brought in coal allowing the adaptation of the mills to steam power. In 1844 the East Lancashire Railway was completed linking Bury to Manchester and Rossendale, later extended to Liverpool.

This heralded a period of sustained growth in both population and prosperity. By 1883 a steam tram service was running from Market Place to Blackford Bridge and grand buildings such as The Derby Chambers, Barclays Bank and the Royal Hotel were built. The Castle Armoury was built on the site of the Bury Castle and became the base for the Lancashire Fusiliers. Industry

Top Left: The day after the market hall burned down in 1968. This stood on what is now the site of the Transport Interchange. The open market can be seen to the rear of the market hall and beyond this the College.

Bottom left: The western part of the Rock in 1958. This is the southern side of the street at the junction with Union Street.

Historic plans of Bury Town Centre.
Top: 1850,
Middle 1894,
Bottom 1931

diversified to include paper manufacture, engineering and ironworks.. Like other industrial areas that experienced dramatic industrial growth – such as the Potteries – this has left Greater Manchester and Lancashire with a legacy of closely-spaced urban centres. Now that the economic driver that created this dense settlement pattern has gone these towns are competing with each other for a more limited pool of investment and economic activity.

Historic structure

The maps show the growth of Bury from 1850 to 1931. Even though the earliest of these plans shows a town that had already experienced considerable growth, the historic structure of the town is still visible. This is based on a 'T' junction between the road from Manchester (that was originally Silver Street) and an east/west route that is Bolton Road, Fleet Street, Rock Street and Stanley Street (now The Rock). This road then splits with the Rochdale Road heading south east and other routes heading north. Market Place at the junction of the roads to Manchester and Bolton is the heart of the town but, because it was built on the edge of an escarpment, the town did not develop evenly around this centre. There is a ribbon of development along Bolton Street down to the bridge and a cluster of industrial buildings around the river and canal. However, much of the valley is not developed. It was occupied by large houses such as Chamber Hall where Robert Peel was born and Irwell House which later became the site of Bury Grammar School. The main development of the town took place on the gently sloping land to the south and east. Here a grid of streets was created along the axis of Union Street through what is now the Millgate shopping centre.

One of the most striking aspects of the historic plans is the triangular space that now has Kay Gardens as its apex. This lay to the back of Silver Street and appears to have been the site of fairs throughout the town's history. In the late 19th century it became the market place and was opened up through the construction of Market Street and Knowsley Street. The latter replaced Silver Street as the main route for traffic from Manchester. This was later the site for a grand market hall and open fairground/market before the market was moved to its current location.

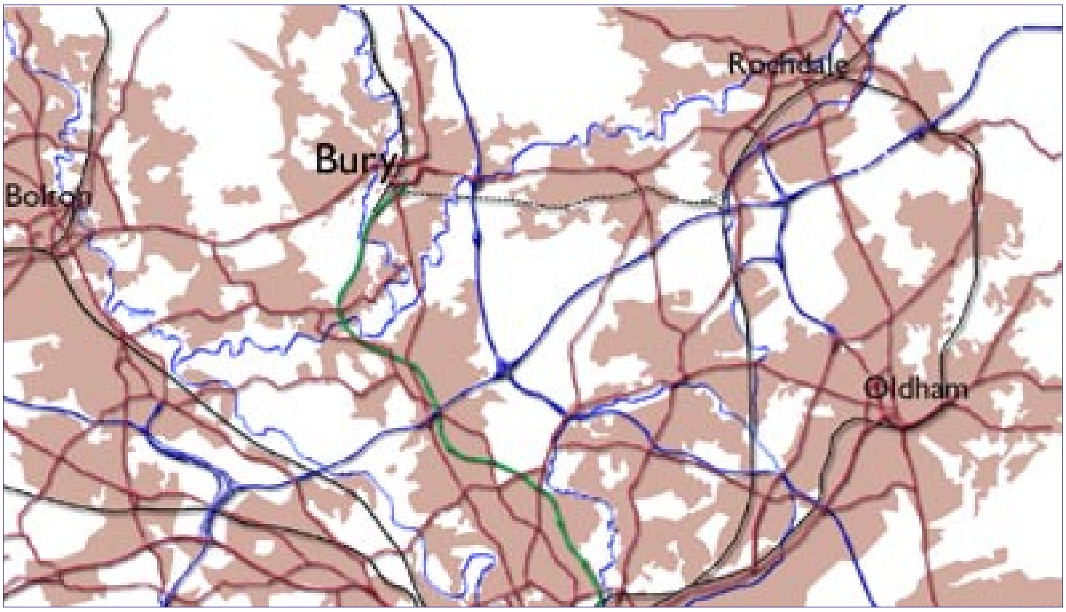
5. Bury today

Bury is one of the string of industrial towns to the north of Manchester city centre. Greater Manchester has a population of 2.4 million people at the heart of which lies the city of Manchester/Salford that has a population of around 1 million . There are then a series of industrial towns ranging from 60-80,000 including Stockport, Ashton, Rochdale, Bolton, Oldham, Wigan and Bury. Between these are a series of smaller towns of 30-40,000 ranging from Altrincham in the south to towns like Middleton, Westhoughton, Eccles and Chadderton.

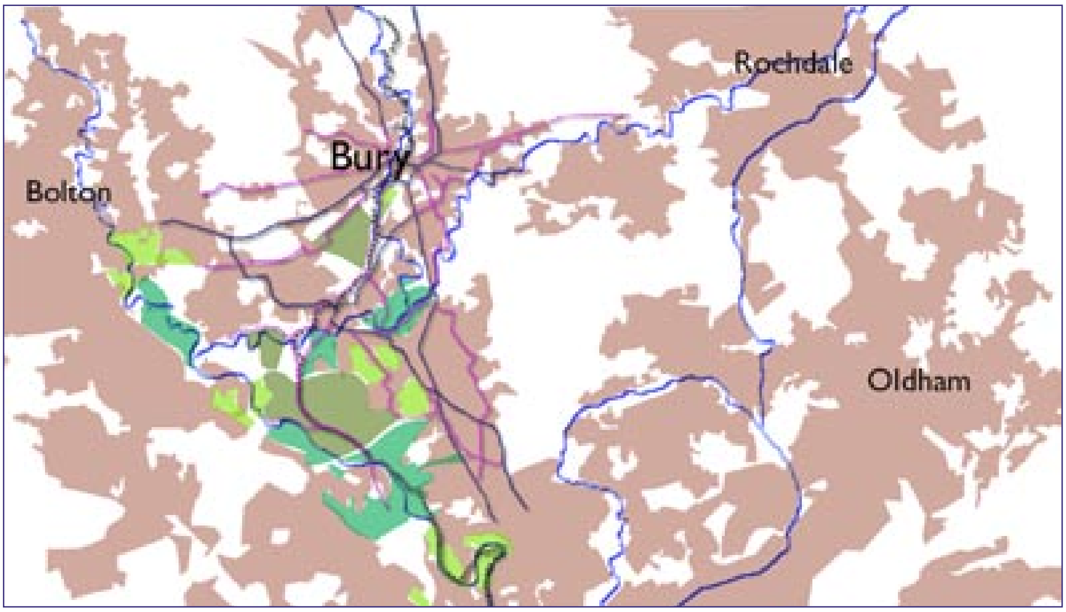
The present day Borough of Bury has a population of 182,700 (ONS - 1998 estimate) and includes six settlements each with its own town centre. The largest is Bury (65,700) along with Radcliffe (36,800), Whitefield and Prestwich (52,900 between them) and Ramsbottom and Tottington (27,300). Bury itself is comprised of five wards – Elton, Moorside, Bury East, Redvales and Church.

Bury's population growth of 3.64% during 1991-99 is comparable with Rochdale and Oldham but is behind the national average of 5.32% and the growth rate of 6.47% achieved by Manchester as a result of city centre repopulation. Household size and the number of single person households are comparable with the rest of Greater Manchester at 2.4 and 29% respectively, with only Manchester (36%) and Salford (34%) demonstrating significantly higher proportions of single person households. The percentage of the population of working age is comparable with the national average at 62.4%

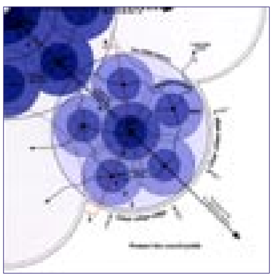
Compared to areas of Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale, which have significant pockets of deprivation, Bury is relatively affluent with most wards ranked over 2,000 on the Index of Multiple Deprivation out of 8,414 nationally.

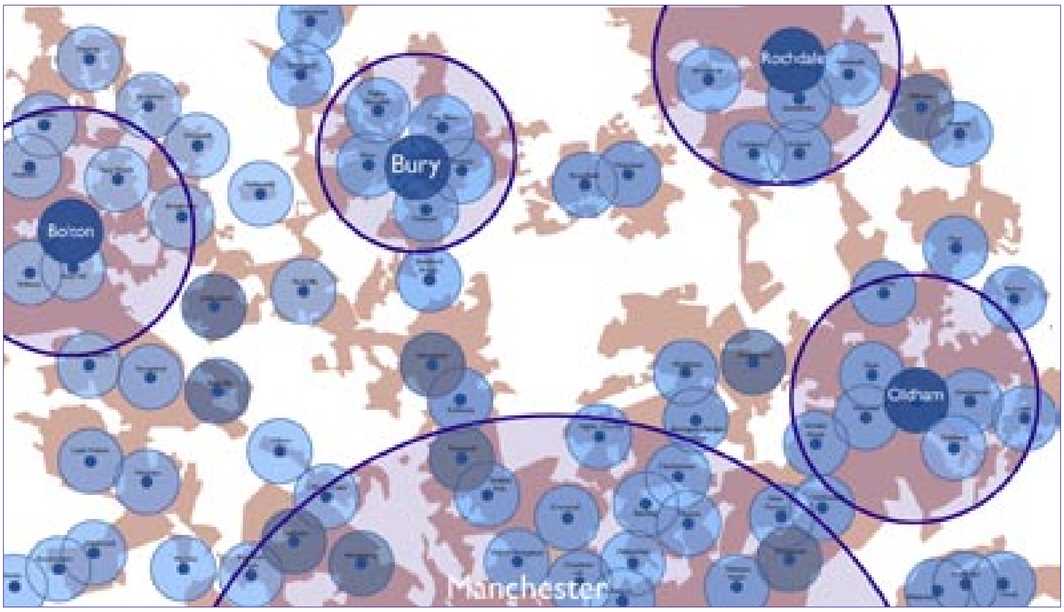


Regional Transport links



Regional Open space network





Regional settlement structure: Based on the ideal structure (above) suggested by the Urban Task Force

The Borough is ranked mid-way between more affluent areas of Trafford and Stockport, and the most deprived areas of Greater Manchester. The average gross weekly earnings of £311.44 are below the national average of £346.64, but compare favourably with neighbouring districts of Rochdale £313.79, Bolton £302.23 and Oldham £296.84.

Bury has one of the lowest levels of unemployment in Greater Manchester. At 2.0% unemployment (Nomis / GM Research, Oct 2002) in Bury is below the national average of 3.0% and is lower than neighbouring Rochdale 3.8%, Manchester 7.4%, Oldham 3.5% and Bolton 3.2%. and the proportion of the workforce with no formal qualifications compares favourably with the rest of Greater Manchester at 16.3%. Levels of poor literacy and numeracy are comparable with the national average at 24.1% and 24.6% respectively, and compare favourably with the rest of Greater Manchester.

Bury's workforce has one of the highest proportions with qualifications at NVQ level 4+ at 25%. Employment is predominantly in the public services (30%), consumer services (27%) and manufacturing (20%) – reflecting a relatively high retention of the manufacturing base and public service employment. The proportion of employment in finance and business services is half the national average at 3.2% and well behind Manchester (9.8%) and Stockport (7.38%).

At 76.64% the proportion of housing in owner occupation is high compared to the national average (66.31%). The Borough also has a relatively high proportion of properties in the Council Tax Bands E-H (values of more than £88,000) at 10% compared with 7% in Bolton and 6% in Rochdale. The area has the lowest rate of new housing provision in Greater Manchester at 0.21% with the national average 0.28% being oustripped by Manchester 1.05% and Bolton 0.49%.

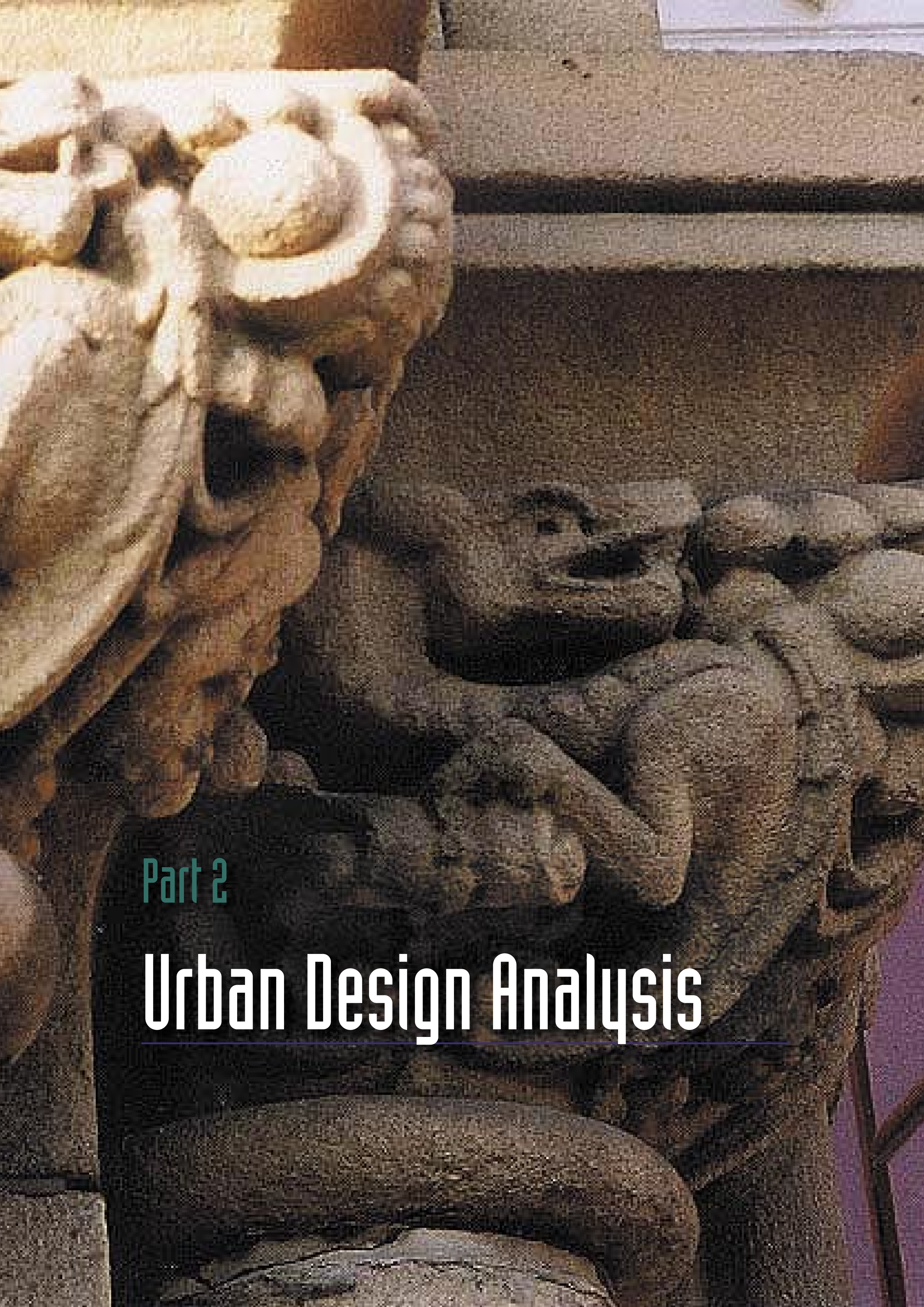
The business formation rate is higher than the national average at 12.48% of the total business stock, and is higher than all the other boroughs in Greater Manchester apart from Manchester and Trafford. The share of employment in SME's is around the national average of 48%, although at 25% the proportion of employment in micro-businesses is higher than for the rest of Greater Manchester and the national average of 22%. Employment in SME's dropped 7.6% between 1991 and 2000 compared to a national increase of 8.6% and a growth rate of 15.52% in Bolton.

In terms of crime, burglaries per 1000 households are lower than comparable districts of Greater Manchester at around 33 compared to Bolton 44, Oldham 37 and Rochdale 46 - though this compares poorly with the national average of 19. The overall number of offences per 1,000 population is also low compared to the rest of Greater Manchester at 59 compared to Bolton 62, Oldham 66 and Rochdale 71. Again this compares less favourably with the national average of 41.

The overall picture is of a district that is more affluent and enterprising than the rest of north Manchester with lower crime levels and higher houseprices than its neighbouring boroughs. However, almost all of these indicators fall below the national average as well as below those districts in the southern part of the conurbation. In terms of comparison Bury is, however, probably more like the towns of Stockport and Macclesfield than Oldham and Rochdale.

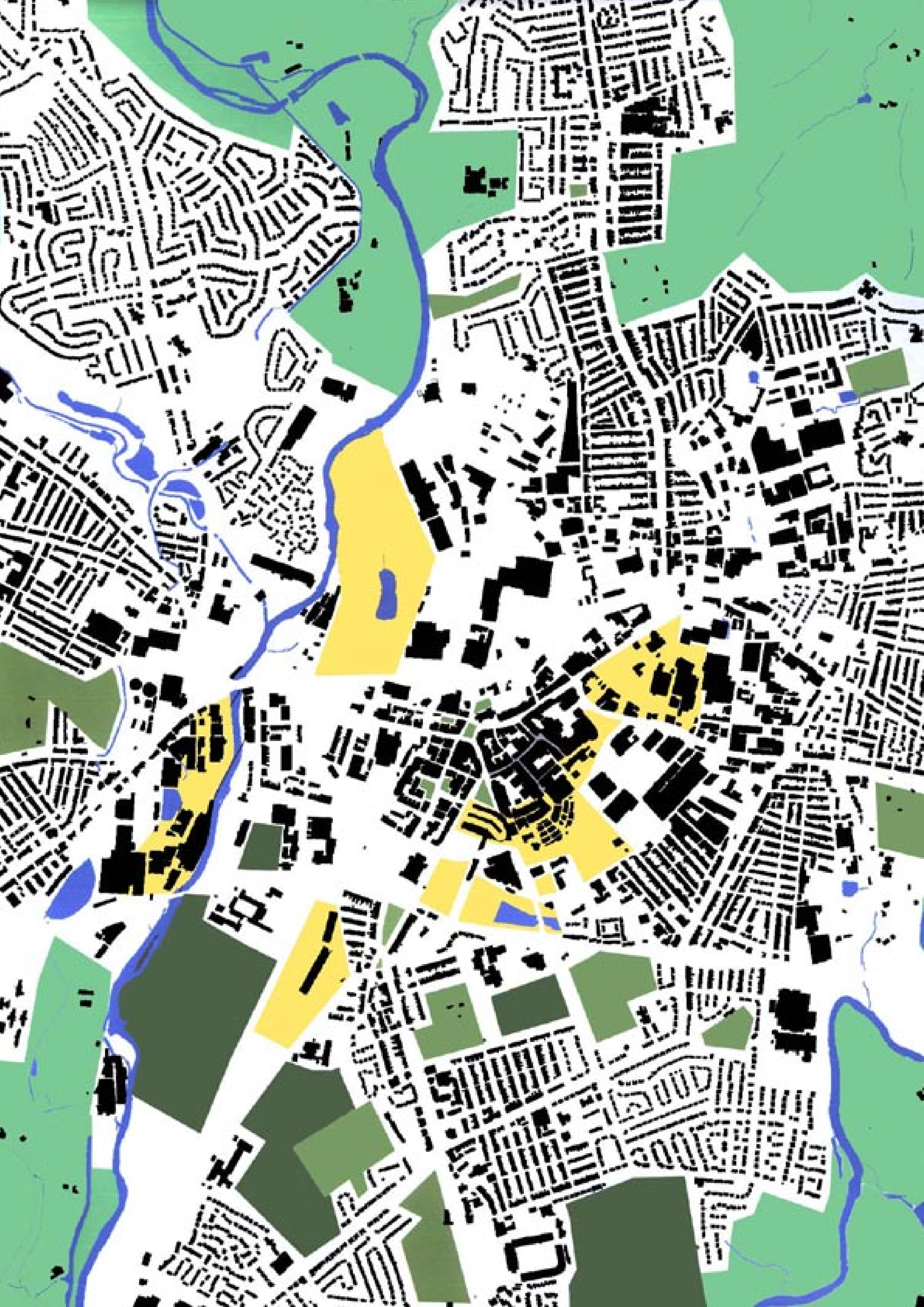
A Mosaic Plan of Greater Manchester: This is produced by Experian Ltd. based on Census data. (copyright Experian)

- A High Income Families
- B Suburban Semis
- C Blue Collar Owners
- D Low Rise Council
- E Council Flats
- F Victorian Low Status
- G Town Houses & Flats
- H Stylish Singles
- I Independent Elders
- J Mortgaged Families
- K Country Dwellers
- L Institutional Areas



Part 2

Urban Design Analysis



The structure of the town

6.

The map to the left is a figure ground plan showing most of Bury. A figure ground plan is a map showing just the buildings and nothing else. We will come back to the figure ground plan of the town centre later in this report. However, our concern here is the form and structure of the town. This illustrates the following:

- The town centre retains a compact traditional urban form based on the confluence of the roads between Bolton and Rochdale and Manchester and Blackburn. These roads converge on Market Place which shows up clearly on the plan as the heart of the town.

- The radial routes coming into the town can all be seen clearly on the plan including the east/west A58 and the north/south A56. This is because these these routes largely retain their traditional form and are enclosed by buildings.

- The neighbourhoods around the centre retain a fairly coherent urban form and are largely based upon medium density terraced housing. These neighbourhoods are relatively distinct from each other being separated by fingers of countryside.

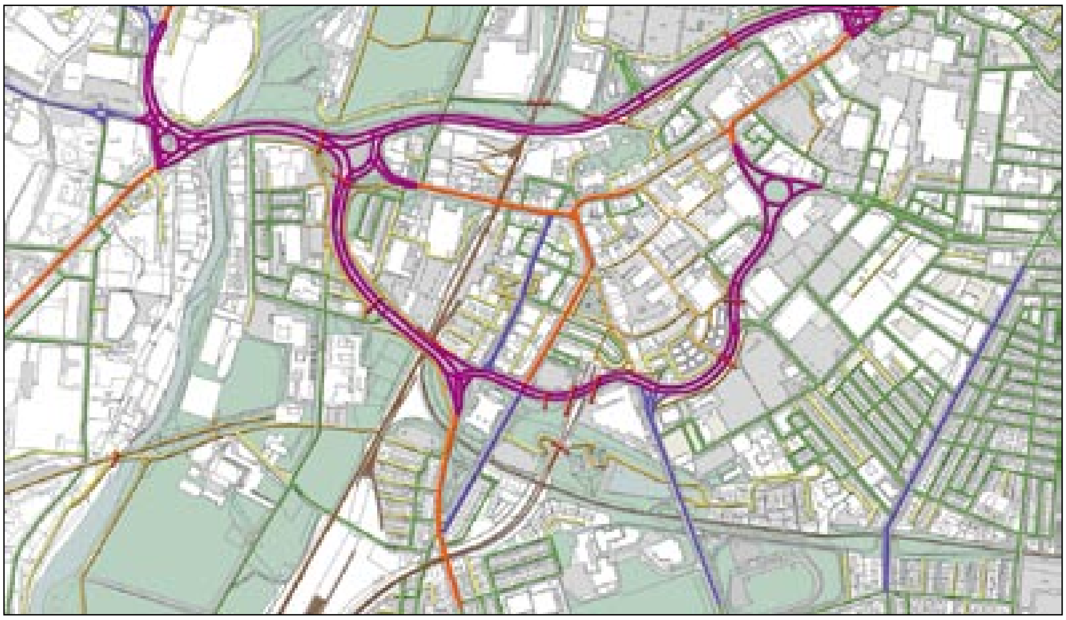
- The valley of the River Irwell is an important factor in shaping the town. The flood plain has been only sparsely developed with the exception of the former canal basin.

- There is however a significant 'shatter zone' surrounding the town centre. This is an area where the urban form of the town breaks down and the spaces become poorly defined. This is the area where the ring road runs and was once where much of the town's industry was based. It is now an area dominated by retail warehouses and surface parking. It has the effect of cutting off the town centre from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

- The sites where there is development interest or where change is likely or possible around the town centre (marked in yellow on the plan to the left) have huge potential to repair and reconnect the town centre to its hinterland.

Shatter Zone: Bury town centre is surrounded by a 'shatter zone' that separated the town centre (topright of the picture) from its surrounding neighbourhoods (left of the picture).

Public realm plan: This shows just public spaces in the town. It shows that the public space in the town centre is well defined by buildings but that there is very poor definition of space in the surrounding area.



The street hierarchy:

Middle: The street network today showing the importance of different streets, how easy it is to get around the town and how easy it is to get lost.

Below: The network in 1931 (over today's map) when there was a strong network of streets connecting the centre with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

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The public realm of the town centre 7.

A vital part of the success of any town centre is the quality of its public realm. By this we mean the streets, squares and public spaces of the town. There are a number of aspects that make up a good quality public realm. The first is the definition of space and the clarity of public and private areas, the second is the ease with which people can get around and the third is the quality of public space design, materials and management. We deal with each of these in turn.

Definition of space

Good public space is normally defined by buildings and the character of the space depends on the height of these buildings compared to the width of the space. The map above left is a public realm plan that shows all the public space. In the town centre this space is confined to streets and squares such as Market Place and Kay Gardens. This area of the town retains its traditional urban form and has a well defined public realm. The same is true of the residential streets around Heywood Street and would also be the case for the other residential neighbourhoods around the centre. However, in the shatter zone around the centre the public realm is very poorly defined. Here it includes virtually everything except for the buildings which sit in a sea of surface parking. These are the areas where new development should seek to redefine the public realm of the area.

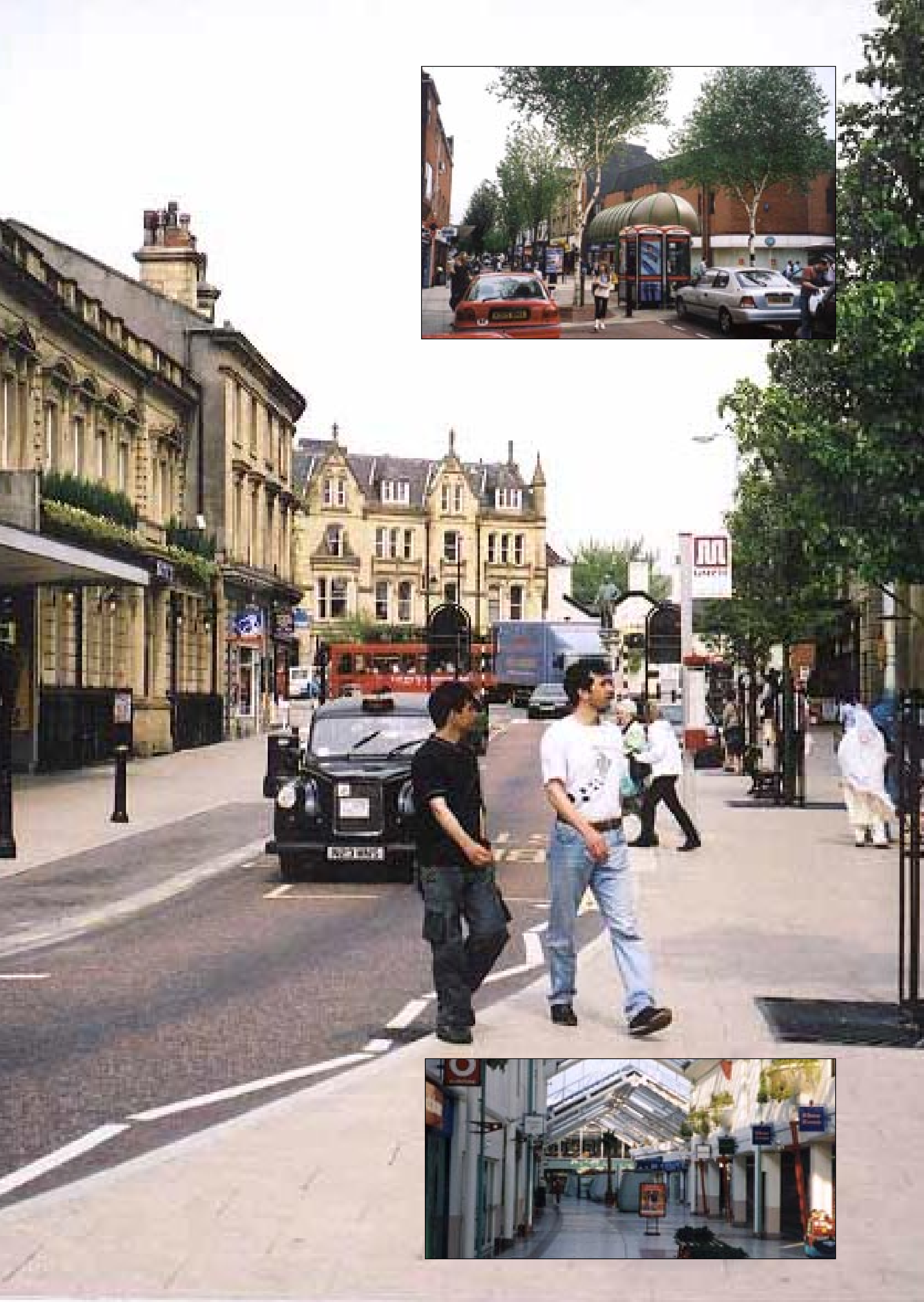
Ease of movement

The second aspect of good public space is movement. This is partly covered in the Access Section. However, in terms of urban design we are concerned with 'permeability'. This relates to the number of routes that there are for movement around the town centre. Techniques such as 'urban space syntax' have demonstrated that the more routes there are, the more lively are the streets and public spaces. Clearly, this is important for a shopping area because lively streets mean customers. It is, however, also important in other areas because activity on streets makes them feel safer and more attractive.

The map middle left shows the movement network around the town centre. A comparison between this plan and the plan bottom left, which shows the historic road network, highlights a number of permeability issues.

It first shows that the town centre today is very impermeable and disconnected. One important reason for this is the barriers around the town centre. Prime amongst these is the ring road but they also include the railway lines and the river. The western part of the town centre suffers in particular from all three of these barriers cutting it up into isolated enclaves that lack activity and supervision. Even when these barriers are crossed by subways and bridges they can still be significant impediments if the routes are intimidating to users.

The second aspect to permeability is the size of the urban blocks which dictates the spacing between streets. The plan bottom left shows that



the traditional block size of Bury was quite small in the area to the east of the centre. The blocks on this plan are 60-100m by 40-60m. This is the sort of block size that is found in many traditional urban areas and creates a good level of permeability and pedestrian activity. The current road network is based on a much more variable block size. The old block structure survives in the old residential neighbourhoods and in the area around Silver Street. However, elsewhere it has broken down, particularly to the east of Angouleme Way. This is also the case in the shopping centre as described below.

Hierarchy

An important element of the street network is the street hierarchy based on the importance of different streets. Traditional urban areas have at least a three level hierarchy: high streets, secondary streets and residential or tertiary streets. High streets take through traffic and tend to be where the main shops are concentrated, they also have larger buildings with active frontages. Secondary streets carry traffic into different neighbourhoods and also have a good range of shops but are smaller and also include buildings without active frontages. Tertiary or residential streets make up the rest of the area and are less mixed use in character.

This hierarchy can be seen clearly on the historic street pattern. The high streets are the main roads coming into town while the secondary streets include Silver Street (that had been a high street before Knowsley Street was built as a diversion), Market Street, Heywood Street and Union Street (that no longer exists).

The street hierarchy on the current plan of the town is more difficult to make out. The high streets are now fragmented by the ring road and the pedestrianised areas. The high streets and secondary streets do not make a coherent street network and some areas, like the southern parts of Knowsley Street, feel like backwaters. It will, therefore, be important to establish a clear street hierarchy and relate this to new development to reinforce this structure.

Legibility

The clarity of the street network and hierarchy relates to the legibility of the centre. This is the ease with which people can find their way around the centre. This is not something that we have found to be a problem in Bury, nor has it been a concern of our consultees. However, it was highlighted by the Drivers Jonas study as a potential problem. Certainly a clearer structure to the street network would improve the legibility of the centre.

The shopping centre

There is a great deal of discussion at present about the impact of covered shopping centres on public realm issues. Clearly, during the day when the malls are open, shopping centres contribute to permeability. However, if they are closed outside shopping hours they can create permeability 'black' holes within town centres where no movement is possible. This in turn can lead to 'activity shadows' around the centre where this lack of permeability causes areas to be deserted, intimidating and dangerous. To counter this many shopping centre developers are undertaking to keep the malls open throughout the day and evening.

This, however, raises more difficult issues about the nature of public realm that CABE (The Commission for Architecture and the Built

Examples of Bury's public realm:

Left main picture: Market Street looking towards Market Place. This still operates well as a high street.

Inset top: The Rock was once Bury's main high street. However it has declined in recent years and in terms of its trade and its appearance no longer feels like a successful high street.

Inset below: Can the Millgate Centre ever really replace traditional high streets?

Silver Street: was once the main road into Bury from Manchester (before Knowsley Street/Haymarket Street were built). Silver Street remains one of the most attractive streets in the town because of the way that it is enclosed by attractive buildings.

Above: The Victoria Quarter in Leeds - a new approach to covered shopping?

Top left and right: Views of Townside Fields. This is an attractive area of public space but the lack of a clear and convenient access means that it is very underused.

Middle: Open space plan

Bottom: Kay Gardens is a green oasis in the heart of the town.

Environment) has been considering as part of its review of various shopping centre developments. On the one hand there is good urban precedent for covered urban streets dating back to the Galleria of Milan. There are modern equivalents of this such as the Victoria Quarter in Leeds. However, the modern covered shopping centre with air conditioning, 'muzac', security guards and interior decoration seem to be the antithesis of this.

In urban design terms the response to these issues is twofold. The first is to say that the mall, arcade or galleria is an appropriate way to open up the centre of an urban block. However, a mall is less appropriate if it is used to privatise public realm between urban blocks. This relates to the appropriate size of urban block as described above. In Bury's case the shopping centre is already too large to be just one urban block which suggests the need to retain and increase the public routes through the centre. The second response has been to design malls to be more like streets with natural ventilation and lighting, external materials etc…

Open spaces

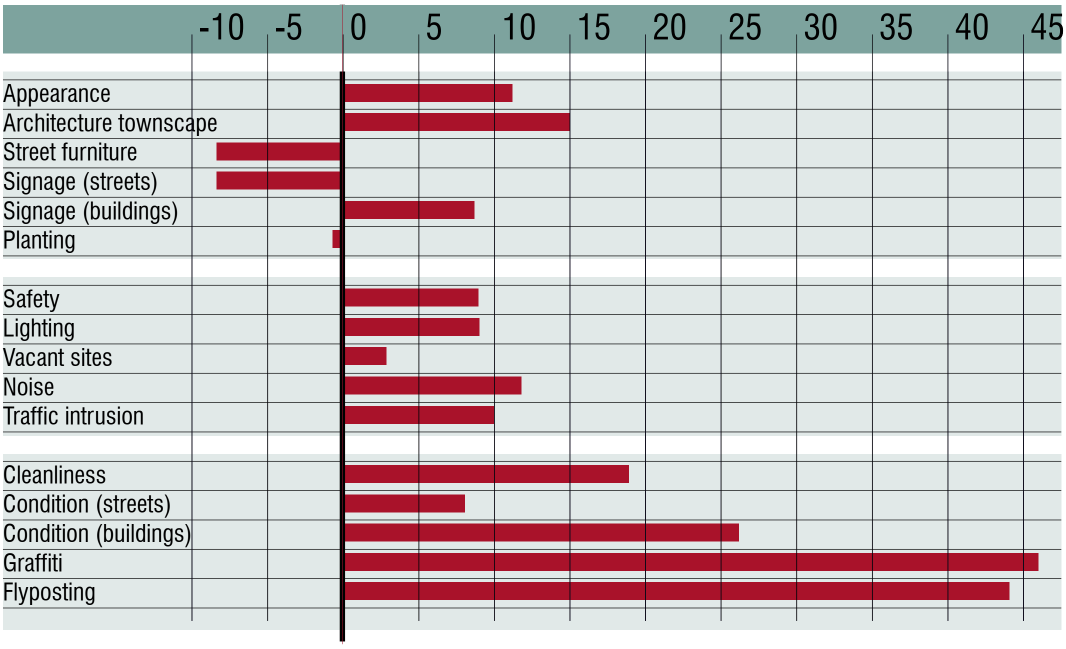
The plan above left shows the open spaces in the town centre. The town as a whole is easily accessible to the countryside that penetrates into the heart of the town along the river valley. The Bury Ground site to the north of the town has been subject to derelict land reclamation and now provides a mature and attractive landscape but does not appear to be well used. In contrast, the Manchester Road Park to the south is a much smaller area of open space which is well used and attractive. Within the town centre there is a limited amount of open space. The main area is Kay Gardens which is formal public gardens and covers a very small area. The other town centres spaces include Market Place and a poorly used space at the Crompton Street entrance to the shopping centre.

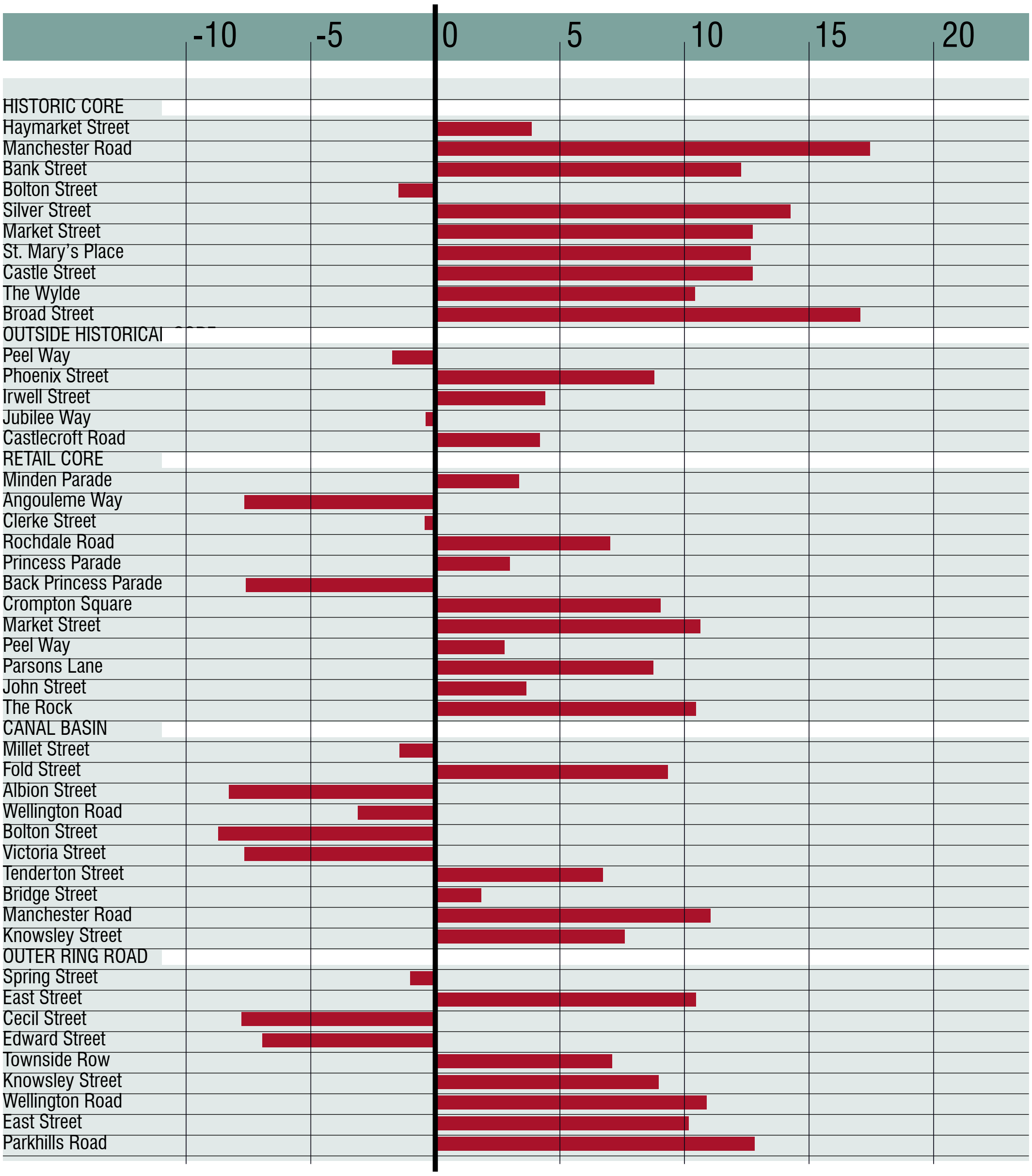
The main initiative to create open space in the centre has been the landscaping of the former railway land at Townside Fields (otherwise known as Pyramid Park). This is a striking scheme because of the pyramidal mounds that dominate the centre of the site and the shallow lake. However, there is no attractive public access from Market Street to the park meaning that all access must either be taken from the housing on Town Field Close or under an intimidating underpass beneath the Metrolink lines. As a result the area is underused and negleted. It is understood that the Council have the site earmarked for future development.

The quality of public space

As part of the urban design study we have undertaken an assessment of the quality of the public realm in Bury. This is based on an environmental audit technique developed by URBED that assesses three sets of factors; identity, security and condition. Within these there are 16 factors that are assessed for each of the streets in the town.

Environmental audit





For each street, each issue is scored from –1 to +1. If the issue is considered to be a problem in a particular street it scores –1, if the street does well on that issue it scores +1 and if it is average it is scored 0. This allows scores to be generated both for streets and for each issue. It is important to stress that this technique is not a science but a means of assessing the environment in a structured way and comparing different parts of the centre.

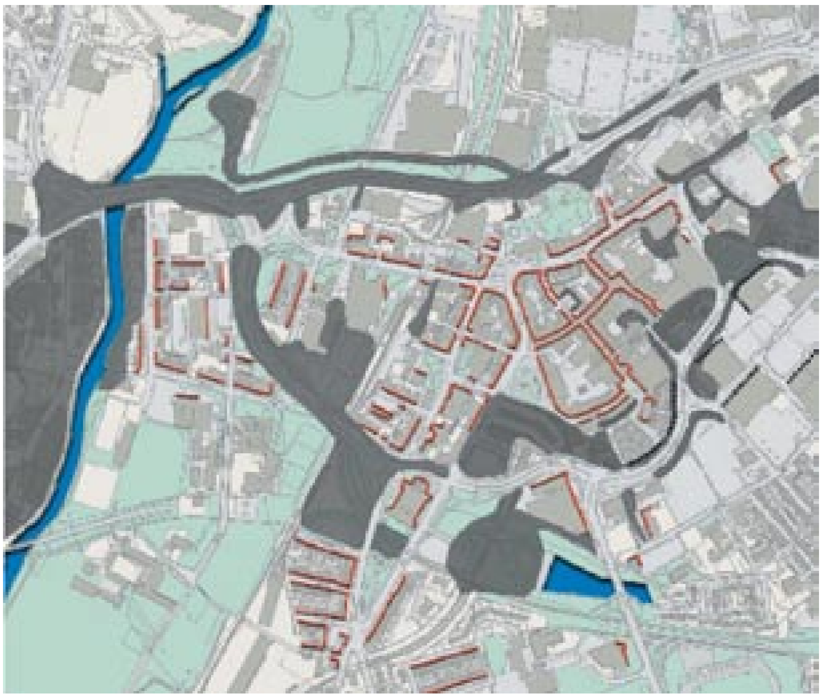
Identity: This takes into account issues such as the appearance and architectural quality of the town as well as the street furniture, signage and planting. The scores show a dramatic difference between good scores for overall appearance and architecture and poor scores for street furniture and street signage. While there are streets around Kay Gardens and Market Place that scored well for street furniture, these were dragged down by a poor performance elsewhere. The centre also scored negatively for planting although here again good scores in the heart of the town were cancelled out by poorer scores around the edge.

Security: The second part of the audit looked at security issues such as safety, lighting, vacancies, noise and traffic intrusion. These issues all scored consistently well with the pedestrianised sections of the centre scoring particularly well. The pedestrianised area is largely friendly and welcoming and free of traffic. This is supplemented by the wardens that patrol the town centre which provide a reassuring presence. The retailing area scores differently for security on market and non-market days. The Market can be intimidating when it is not operating especially at night because the areas around the stalls are poorly overlooked. The area of edge -of-town retailing beyond the Market once again feels safer but this is because of artificial security – such as CCTV and security guards.

Condition: The final part of the environmental audit relates to the condition of the centre including street cleaning, the condition of the public realm and buildings, graffiti and flyposting. Here Bury scores very well indeed. The centre is well maintained and clean and with a few exceptions is largely free of graffiti and flyposting compared to comparable centres. The only issue to score less well is the condition of the public realm that perhaps suffers from the tired state of parts of The Rock and the unimproved parts of the Millgate shopping centre. However, generally even this is not a problem throughout the town.

In this section we have looked at the form of public space in the town, the street network and how easy it is to get around, and the quality of the spaces. This shows a variable picture with some elements of very good quality public realm next to poor areas. This is summed up on the plan below that shows that much of the central part of the town presents a 'friendly face' to visitors because of the quality of the buildings, the active ground floor uses, and the scale and proportion of the public realm. However, these areas are surrounded by much more hostile spaces where the public realm is poorly enclosed and unwelcoming. These areas relate largely to the ring road but also to the retail areas that surround the town and to the Interchange and railway. There is, therefore, much that can be built upon in developing Bury's public realm but also large areas that need to be improved.

Below: Friendly faces and hostile places



Townscape assessment 8.

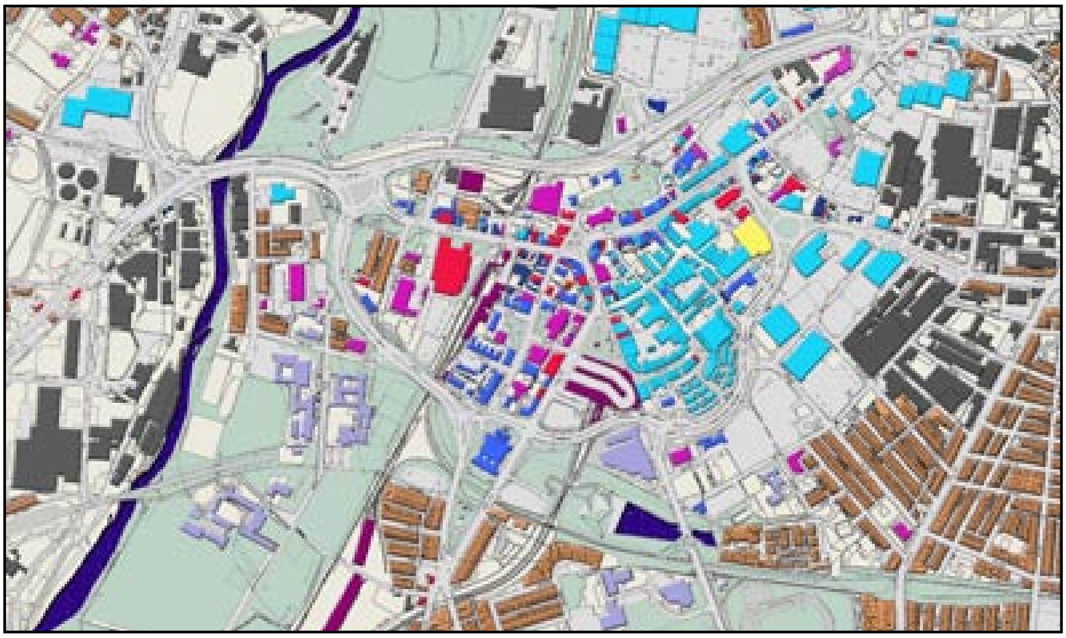
The other element of the urban design analysis is the townscape of the centre. This relates to the massing, density and grain of the buildings, the mix of uses in the centre and the quality and heritage of the built stock. Again we deal with each of these in turn.

Built form

The plan to the left shows a detailed 'figure ground' plan of the town centre. This is a useful urban design tool that illustrates the urban form and structure of the centre as well as the development density and urban grain. Spaces that are well defined by buildings are clearly visible on a figure ground plan. In Bury these include The Rock and Market Place. Kay Gardens also stands out as does the eastern part of Bolton Street. However, the rest of the town centre is poorly defined. Even Silver Street does not read particularly well. The fringes of the centre are particularly poor in terms of urban space. They read as a 'shatter zone' of buildings in a sea of space much of which is car parking.

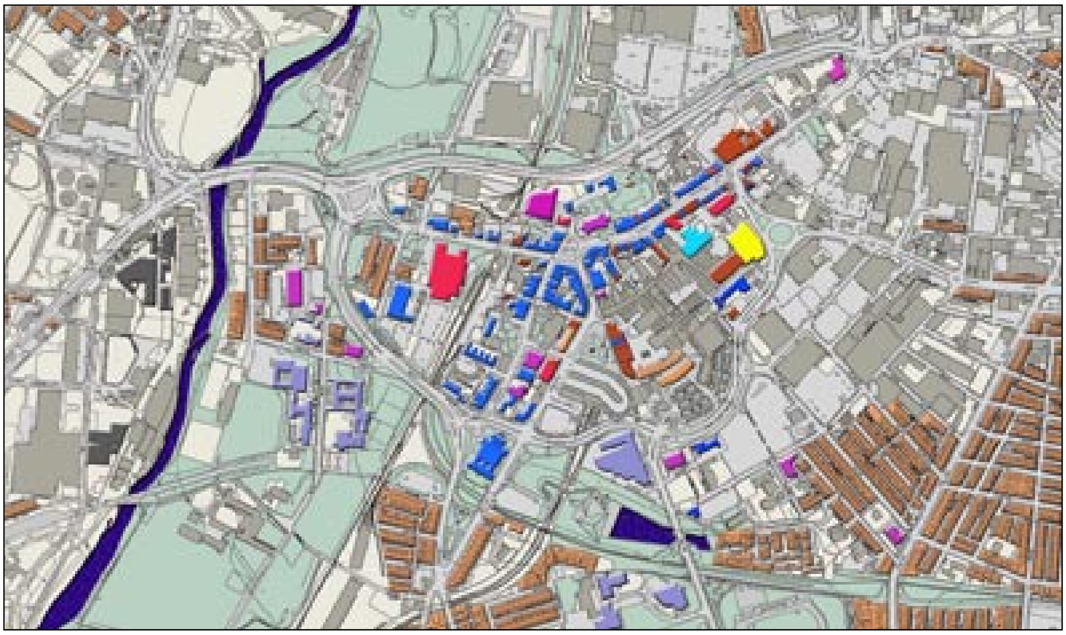
The figure ground plan also illustrates the density of the town centre. This again shows that the area of the centre that is developed to urban densities is very small. This area of urban density is confined by the railway and ring road and is surrounded by a very low-density ring.

Finally the figure ground plan shows the grain of the area. Traditional urban areas are made up

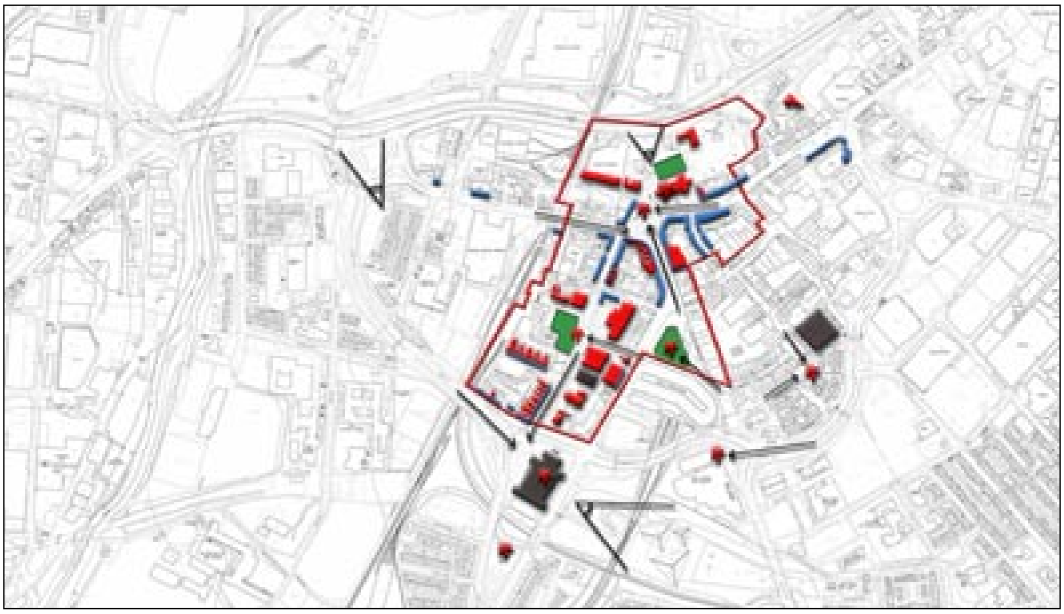


Land Use - ground floors

Key
- Office/commercial
- Retail
- Education
- Civic/community
- Multi storey car park
- Leisure/hotel
- Storage
- Housing
- Industry
- Services
- Transport



Land Use - upper floors



Key
- Significant buildings
- Important frontages
- Significant areas of open space
- Landmarks
- Attractive views
- Vistas
- Listed Buildings
- Conservation area

Townscape and Heritage

of a variety of individual buildings that can be read in the detail and variety of a plan as in the area around Market Place. This contrasts to the shopping centre which reads as large monotonous blocks. This highlights that the weakness of the shopping centre is not that it fails to define space or that it is developed at too low a density but that it is very coarsely grained with little variety or interest of built form.

Mix of Uses

The plans top and middle left show the land use of the town centre. The ground floor land use is dominated by retailing as one would expect of a town centre. Indeed the area stretching from The Rock to the Market and from Kay Gardens to Foundry Street is pretty much a monoculture of retailing. The area to the west of Kay Gardens is more mixed with leisure and community uses, along with some offices.

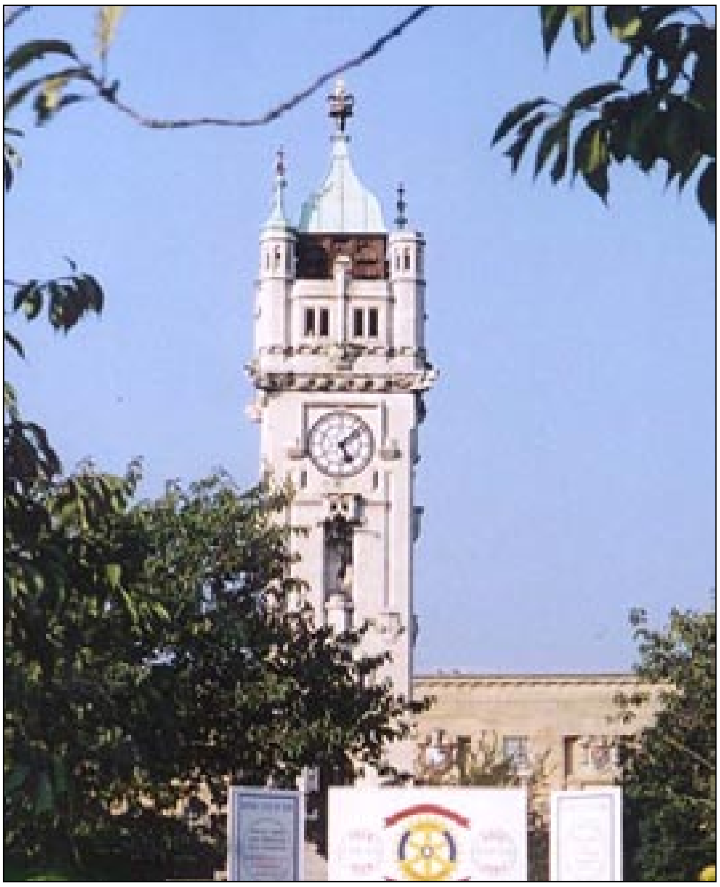
The upper floors are relatively under used. There is a good deal of storage, some office space and a very small amount of housing such as above Princess Parade. While overall the centre has a good mix of town centre uses there is a separation between shopping and leisure uses. The latter are almost entirely to the west of Kay Gardens and the former to the east. The disruption caused by the leisure uses in the west and the domination of shopping in the east leaves little opportunity at present for residential development.

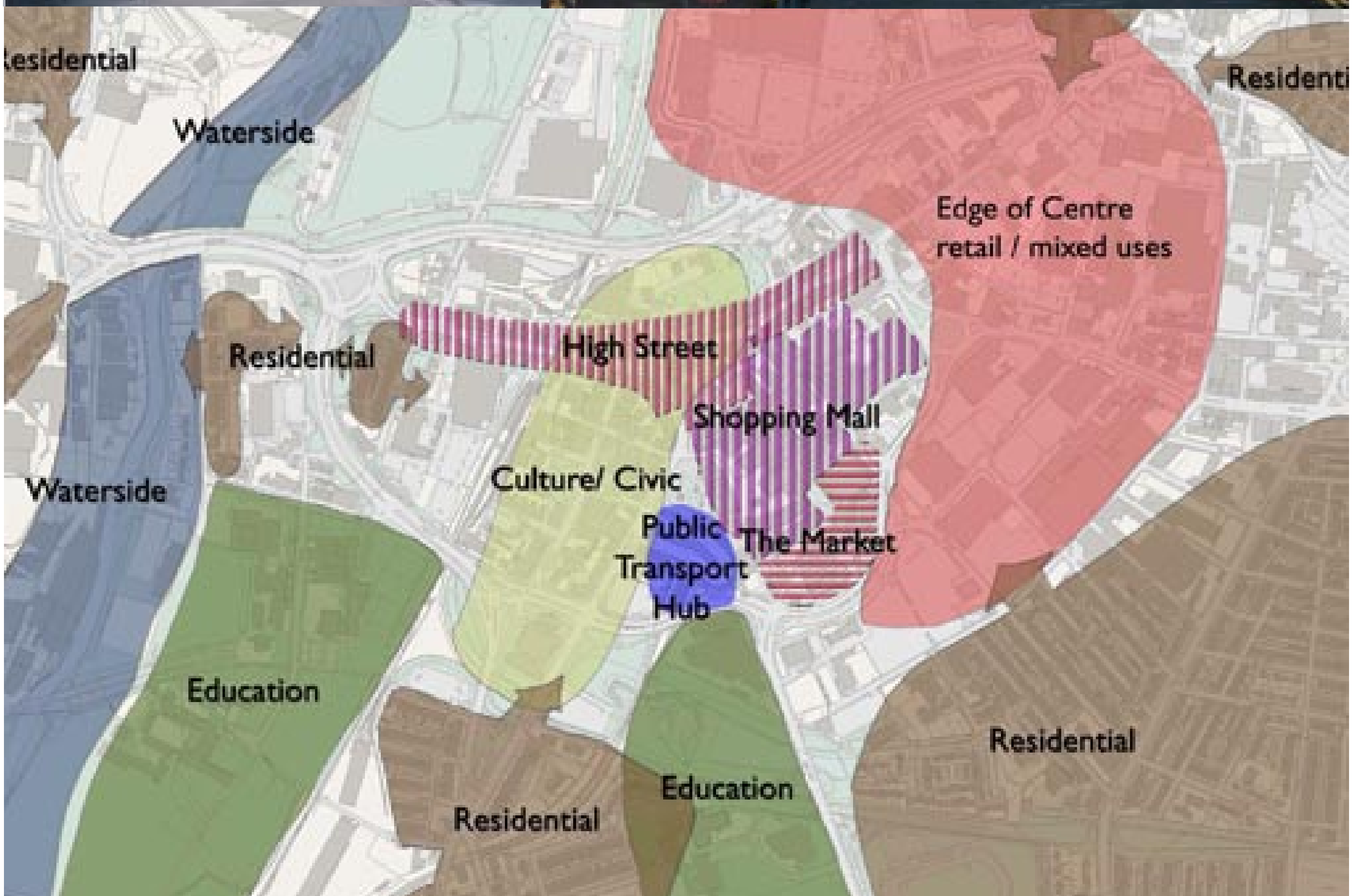
Built heritage

The plan bottom left shows the townscape and heritage of the town centre. This shows that virtually all of the listed buildings are concentrated in the central part of the town. These include the Art and Crafts Centre, the Library and Art Gallery, The Met Arts Centre, the parish church (recently given Grade 1 listing) and three of the terraces of Georgian properties to the west of Silver Street as well as the buildings fronting Market Place to the north. The two most significant buildings not to be listed are the Town Hall and Textile Hall as well as the Market Hall that is a contemporary structure of some character.

The plan also shows groups of buildings that have value as frontages. These are mainly focussed around Market Place and the remnants of quality on The Rock and Bolton Street. The listed buildings also create important landmarks along with the statues in Kay Gardens and Market Place. These are the focus for a number of important views in the town centre. The topography also creates a series of vistas where the land falls away.

The historical and heritage value of the town is concentrated in a very small area. This is designated as a conservation area and includes most of Bury's civic facilities and buildings of character. The rest of the centre has remarkably little remaining built heritage, which accounts for its lack of character and interest.




Waterside
Residential
High Street
Shopping Mall
Edge of Centre
retail / mixed uses
Waterside
Culture/ Civic
Public
Transport
Hub
The Market
Education
Residential
Education
Residential

Character areas

The Plan to the left shows the character areas that have been created by this mix of uses and urban form.

a) **The 'high street':** Bury developed as a centre on a 'T' junction and still retains a traditional high street running from the Castle Leisure Centre to the eastern end of The Rock. This includes a good range of shops as well as the parish church, Bolton Street rail station and a number of pubs. In its central part it also retains much of its original character although its economic role has declined.

b) **The shopping centre and market:** The main shopping area is the reverse of the 'high street'. It is less attractive in terms of urban form but much more successful economically. On a market day this area bustles with people and is the heart of the town. The character of the built form is, however, generally low rise and lacking in character. The main part of the shopping centre has been refurbished with glass roofs over the malls. This has greatly improved the appearance of the centre but it still lacks distinctive character. The Market similarly has been improved recently. However with the exception of the excellent Meat and Fish Hall, the market design is utilitarian with its character, vitality and distinctiveness generated by the traders (which is as it should be). The indoor Market Hall is a concrete 1960s building of some distinction. Princess Parade while of the same era, is less attractive. The lack of character in the shopping centre is of no consequence when the centre is bustling with life on market days but it can look drab and uninviting at other times.

c) **The transport hub:** To the west of the shopping area is the bus and tram interchange. This stands on the southern part of the large triangular fairground and open market area that used to dominate the town. The northern part of this space remains open and is attractively landscaped as Kay Gardens. The Interchange while very successful and despite considerable recent investment does not form an attractive gateway to the town. The main problem is that the circulation system for buses cuts across the pedestrian routes. The Interchange is also built across Market Street, which was once an important route into town. This means that people arriving at the Interchange must pass through the bus shelters and cross wide bus routes making for a poor arrival experience.

d) **The educational campus:** The southern part of the centre is dominated by Bury College which has expanded its numbers greatly in recent years. This is on two sites, the original building (Woodbury Centre) next to the town centre has been considered in the past for closure but is now being refurbished. The main part of the College is, however, now being developed on land to the south of the low lying parkland known as Townside Fields. This is crossed by Market Street on a viaduct and access from the street and the college to Townside Fields is very limited. The College area lacks character and coherence and is separated from the town centre by the ring road.

e) **Culture/Civic area:** The most characterful part of the centre is along Silver Street. This was the original street into town from Manchester and became the location for the civic functions. This starts with the war memorial on Manchester Road and is followed by the 1930s Town Hall, St. Marie's Church, the Textile Hall (now Council offices), the Library and Art Gallery, and the Arts and Crafts Centre. These institutions were originally surrounded by Georgian housing, only remnants of which remain. The quality of the urban form is undermined by the ring road and to a lesser extent by the 1970s Craig House development. To the north the area adjoins Market Place with The Met Arts Centre in the former Derby Hall and the parish church and beyond

The Topography of Bury: The yellow shows the highest areas and the blue the valley bottom. The hatched areas show where the land falls steeply.

Town Centre southern fringes: showing Town Hall, Bury College and Townside Fields this Bury Castle, the Castle Armoury and at a lower level the Transport Museum. It is also bounded to the west by Bolton Street station - an attractive 1950's station complex which is now a terminus for the East Lancs. Railway. The area therefore contains the majority of Bury's non-retail attractions as well as much of its character.

f) **The Castle Leisure Centre area / Western fringe:** The area to the west of the East Lancs. Railway contains the Leisure Centre and the Police Station but lacks the character of the centre. It is cut off by the Railway and river and bisected by the ring road so that it lacks form and coherence. This was never a historic part of the town. Bolton Street to the north was lined by development but to the south the area remained open until the early 20th century when it had already been cut off from the town by the railway. This area has no distinct function or identity.

g) **The Canal / Waterside area:** The area to the south of Bury Bridge once had a strong industrial heritage character. The canal originally terminated in two canal arms adjacent to the river just south of Bury Bridge. These were surrounded by warehouses, a number of which remain today. The area runs southwards to the dramatic railway viaduct that crosses the valley. Today the area is dominated by industrial activities, vacant sites and an industrial estate on the now filled-in canal basins. There is, however, sufficient intrinsic character in this area to act as a basis for regeneration if the canal were to be reopened.

h) The Eastern Fringe: The least attractive part of the town is the eastern fringe. The northern part of this area was originally industrial with small scale premises and reservoirs. The southern part was residential as part of a network of streets that led into the town centre. The area is now dominated by the ring road and retail warehouses. Each of these stores is surrounded by parking creating an area that is car-dominated and unattractive.

i) Residential neighbourhoods: In urban design terms, the town centre is surrounded by older residential areas that are urban in character, dense and with a mix of land uses. The densest area is along Heywood Street to the east. To the south the housing is larger and the neighbourhood surrounds the Manchester Road Park. The same is true of the residential areas to the west and north. However, in all cases these residential communities are cut off from the town centre.

Topography: The character of Bury is formed as much by its topography as by its buildings. As described above, the town grew up on a defensible ridge overlooking the river valley where a castle could be built. The valley narrows at this point making it possible to bridge the river. To the north and south the valley widens out and was traditionally sparsely developed. To the north stood Peel Mills and a dye works while to the south stood a number of large houses that became schools. From a high point at Market Place the land slopes westwards to the river and more gently to the south and east. The railway sliced through this topography through the heart of the town and at Townside Fields. This creates steep falls south of the College's Woodbury Centre, to the west of Market Street and west and north of the castle and church. There is, therefore, still the sense of Bury as a hill fort surrounded by slopes on three sides.

Overall the conclusions from the urban design assessment are that Bury is a compact town with a small area of attractive, lively townscape. This relatively small core is surrounded by poorly defined public realm both in the river valley and on the eastern fringe. The circulation pattern in the town is disrupted by the ring road, railway and river. This means that the tremendous vitality and activity of the shopping area on market days does not enliven the surrounding areas, discouraging walk-in trade. The masterplan should, therefore, aim to expand the area of urban quality to re-link the town centre with its catchments.

Part 3

Economic Analysis

Market assessment 9.

This section considers the following property market sectors within Bury; Residential, Office, Leisure, and Industrial. Retail activity is covered in a separate town centre health check chapter. In addition to considering the local property market within Bury, each sector is considered in its wider national, regional and sub- regional context. This will provide an up- to- date foundation for the development of the town centre vision.

Residential

The National Context: In recent years there has been a significant rise in the average UK house price, with the South East of England experiencing some of the greatest margins of growth. According to the Nationwide Quarterly House Price Review, 2002 has seen some of the highest monthly increases in house prices nationally since 1993 and this at a time of growing fears of an economic slow down. However, despite the events of September 11 and a typical seasonal decline in demand in winter, this buoyant market continues, fuelled in large parts by low interest rates and a market imbalance between supply and demand with the wide spread shortage of new and second hand houses being put up for sale.

The Bury Market: Valuation Office figures for 2001 and 2002 show that Bury is experiencing greater growth than the England and Wales average. Over the last year the average house price has increased by 23% in Bury compared with just 14% nationally. In all types of property the Bury market out performs that of England and Wales with the exception of flats/maisonettes. Bury also out performs Greater Manchester again with the exceptions of flats/maisonettes.

Despite this large rise in prices the average price of a dwelling in Bury still only represents 64% of the national average. This figure is very similar to the average for Greater Manchester.

These figures suggest that the Bury market is particularly buoyant in all sectors with the excep-

Average Price of Property (July 2002)

	Bury	Greater Manchester	England & Wales
Detached	£154k(77%)	£162k(81%)	£201k(100%)
Semi Detached	£ 80k(70%)	£ 84k(74%)	£114k(100%)
Terraced	£ 52k(52%)	£ 49k(50%)	£ 99k(100%)
Flat/Maisonette	£ 47k(35%)	£100k(77%)	£133k(100%)
Overall	£ 83k(64%)	£ 82k(63%)	£130k(100%)

Note: Percentages show relationship to national figure (100%)
Source: Valuation Office 2002

Change in property prices 2001 - 2002

	Bury	Greater Manchester	England & Wales
Detached	+ 23%	+ 19%	+ 13%
Semi Detached	+ 23%	+ 14%	+ 14%
Terraces	+ 17%	+ 15%	+ 13%
Flat/Maisonette	+ 1%	+ 19%	+ 16%
Overall	+ 23%	+ 14%	+ 14%

Source: Valuation Office 2001/2002

tion of flat/maisonettes. This perhaps highlights the fact that the more expensive town centre residential market has not yet reached Bury. Bury has many attractions as a residential location; proximity to attractive countryside, good communications, links by tram to Manchester City Centre, a strong retail centre, very good schools and cheaper house prices than those of the southern part of the Greater Manchester conurbation.

Local agents confirmed the buoyancy of the local housing market. However, their view is that demand for residential accommodation within Bury town centre is low. They suggest that those wanting to live in Bury prefer to live in the more peripheral areas such as Walmersley Road/Woodfields and Redvales. Demand in these areas is generally for semi-detached modern properties or larger modernised terraced property. Areas such as Brandlesholme, Ainsworth, Walshaw and Tottington provide a higher quality of accommodation including larger semi-detached and detached modernised properties and new properties.

Houses located in and around the town centre generally are those of the lowest value in the Bury area. Most properties are brick terraced and many are unimproved in terms of décor, kitchens and bathrooms. Although these properties have increased in value in the last 12 months, values are low in comparison to properties outside the town centre. The average selling price of the houses within and close to the town centre is approximately £40,000. Whilst the terraced property has not suffered from the catastrophic decline in values affecting many northern towns, demand for terraced property is comparatively low. Not far from the town centre are a number of residential areas which are proving popular with purchasers. These include Elton and the Victorian properties on Manchester Road and Walmersley Road about a mile from the centre.

Local estate agents perceive that people are not generally interested in town centre living in Bury as the town centre is not particularly attractive and lacks facilities such as quality restaurants to attract both young professionals and the 30 plus age band to live in the town. There are also concerns that the evening drinking economy is not conducive to town centre living.

However, an important reason for a lack of interest in town centre living is the lack of quality accommodation as most of the residential property close to the town centre is low grade terraces. It is suggested that there could be more interest if higher quality accommodation were on offer such as that being built by the developer Suburban Lofts in the south of the Borough.

Despite these concerns there are currently two apartment developments taking place close to the town centre. Ainsworth Homes (Northern) are developing a scheme of 9 town houses and 18 flats in Baron Street off Manchester Road. The town houses are selling for between £77,000 and £85,000 and 7 of the 9 units have been sold prior to completion. The flats, a mixture of 1 and 2 bedrooms selling for between £63,000 and £72,000, have not been completed and have not yet been marketed, although one has been sold. The other development close to the town centre at Frechville Court, Knowsley Street is being developed by Melrose Construction. The details of this scheme are unknown, but a similar scheme by the same developer at nearby Glenmore Street sold out very quickly within the last year.

Bury Council's recent (April 2002) report on land availability came to a number of relevant conclusions:

- 58% of housing completions took place within the urban areas.
- Bury has exceeded the Government's target of ensuring 60% of new house building takes place on brownfield sites for the last 2 years.
- The majority of house building in the last 5 years has been by the private sector and this is likely to continue.
- Most new homes have been three bed-roomed.
- 93% of new dwellings are located within schemes where the 30 dwellings per hectare, Government guidance density is being met.
- Conversions of properties from other uses to residential is increasingly making an important contribution to Bury's housing requirements. This is likely to continue.

Conclusions: Bury is undoubtedly an attractive residential location. Most of the property being provided is traditional 3 bed-roomed stock. However, this demand and buoyancy is not being experienced by the town centre according to local agents. Despite this two apartment developments are taking shape close to the town centre and demand for these properties appears to be good. The rise in town and city centre living has been fuelled by demographic change resulting in more households being formed and a desire for a different housing product close to shops, entertainment facilities and public transport. We do not agree with local agents that the lack of quality restaurants and the evening drinking economy is holding back residential demand within the town centre. The two current schemes are evidence of that. It is our view that demand is being constrained by a lack of supply.
It is, therefore, important that the conditions should be right to encourage developers to invest in new house building within Bury Town Centre:

- That there is an achievable vision for the town and that developers can see how their schemes fit within this;
- That sites are available which are attractive to potential residents (i.e. not affected by the evening drinking economy and unattractive surrounding environment);
- To encourage development of town centre housing, the Council consider <u>not</u> requiring an affordable housing contribution in private sector schemes;
- That the design of, and materials used in any new town centre housing, is to appropriate high standards.
- That where the costs of an appropriate housing development exceed the end values, that the Council support any application/or 'housing gap' funding to the North West Development Agency. A gap could arise from high abnormal costs caused, for example, by ground conditions.

Office

National overview: Following an exceptional year in 2000, when many office centres saw take up levels at a 10-year high and vacancy rates at a 10 year low, 2001 saw a readjustment of the office market as growth in the global economy slowed. Many office centres returned to 1999 levels of activity, which was also a good year but saw growth at a more sustainable level.

The impact of the post September 11th global slow down on the rate of growth in individual office centres has varied across the UK and Ireland. In general, centres with greater exposure to international occupiers and the information, communication and telecommunication (ICT) sectors have been more affected.

Those centres where demand is driven by domestic firms and more traditional financial and business services occupiers have prospered relatively well. A number of centres such as Newcastle, Exeter, Southampton, Bracknell and Glasgow bucked the general trend and continued to experience good levels of growth. Currently there is a shortage of new space in almost all centres and 2001 saw a demand for very large buildings. In 2001 the gap closed significantly between average rental growth in Central London and the rest of the UK, according to the IPD Monthly Index. Central London's rate of average rental growth experienced a slowdown while the rest of the UK maintained steady growth.

National outlook: The outlook for the office market in 2002 is generally positive. Although the UK economy is expected to grow at a less rapid rate than 2000 - 2001, it will continue to see relatively strong growth compared to the rest of Europe. Average rental growth is set to stabilise, although the gap between London and the rest of the UK is expected to contract further. Developers' cautious approach during 2001 will ensure that most office centres will not face an oversupply of space, in fact some will face undersupply.

While there has been a lower demand from the ICT sector, we are likely to see continued strong demand from the more traditional financial and business service occupiers in 2002. Well located office properties will remain an attractive choice for investors, particularly in the city centre markets where supply is constrained.

The Greater Manchester office market: The out of town office market in Manchester is broadly made up of four markets;- South Manchester, Salford Quays, Warrington and North Manchester. Each particular market offers a different environment and location.

South Manchester : This market has traditionally provided the strongest out of town market due to its locational advantages, being close to Manchester Airport, benefiting from its motorway links and traditionally having the most prosperous suburbs close to Manchester.

Salford Quays: As an office location this was created in the mid to late 1980s following its designation as an Enterprise Zone. Numerous developers built large speculative office schemes with the expectation of boom levels of take-up and large relocations from the South East of England. This was never realised. Salford Quays over the last few years has shown take up levels between 100,000 sq ft and 175,000 sq ft per annum. However, 1999 was a record year totalling 230,000 sq ft. This increase in take up levels can be explained by the arrival of the Metrolink which links Altrincham to Bury and the City Centre to Eccles.

Warrington: This is now an established office location close to Manchester. Originally a handful of science and technology based companies dominated the area. Its status as a New Town, coupled with its locational advantages of being adjacent to three motorways and strategically positioned between Liverpool and Manchester, has caused the area to develop rapidly. As a consequence the take up levels have increased year on year.

North Manchester: Demand in the North Manchester market including Bury, has historically been difficult to quantify as very little new stock has come to the market. Many footloose enquiries that would prefer to be located in North Manchester have either located in inferior second-hand accommodation or have been forced to consider other locations around Manchester or along the M62 closer to the Leeds conurbation. There is little doubt that the lack of supply has also frustrated occupiers in North Manchester causing occupiers to stay within existing accommodation.

From King Sturge's own demand / enquiry database, there have been a total of 54 enquiries for offices in North Manchester over 5,000 sq ft since 1999. This represents a potential demand of between 950,000 and 1,300,000 sq ft although a number of these enquiries would have started off as Greater Manchester enquiries rather than being specific to North Manchester only.

North Manchester has largely been ignored as an area to develop offices. However, with continuing strong demand in other out-of-town locations, demographic advantages, untapped labour supply and the completion of the M60, together with the lack of new out-of-town provision of office space, North Manchester is now recognised as an area where pent up demand is likely to exist. During 1999 / 2000 whenever new office accommodation came to the market it was either let prior to or within 3 months of completion. The best example is probably the first phase of the Castlebrook scheme which let to Flights Direct (a subsidiary of Thomson Holidays) who took 19,300 sq ft at £13.50 on a 15 year lease and to First National Bank who took the second building also comprising 19,000 sq ft on a fifteen year lease at £12.75 per sq ft. Keogh Ritson Solicitors also took 44,000 sq ft at Parklands Business Park, Middlebrook.

The Bury Market: Bury does not have what would be recognised as a real 'in town' office market. Demand for office accommodation in North Manchester has historically come from local occupiers seeking expansion space. There are a limited number of enquiries from corporate occupiers who tend to be less location driven. Bury's office stock is generally comprised of accommodation above retail premises and converted town houses. There are a few small modern office schemes constructed in the last 10 years. These are mainly located at edge of centre locations. Office buildings offering refurbished suites between 2,000 - 2,500 sq ft are achieving rents in the region of £6 per sq ft, on the basis of three or five year leases.

Rental levels are clearly higher on more recently constructed office floorspace. Hilton House on Irwell Street, a three storey purpose built office building, of approximately 1,681 sq ft, was let at a rent of £10 per sq ft on a 10 year lease. On a suite of 2,076 sq ft a passing rent of £11.94 sq ft was achieved. These relatively low rental levels could work in favour of the North Manchester and Bury office market, in attracting companies to relocate in the area.

Future Proposals: Plans for future development include both schemes for smaller scale office accommodation and larger office park schemes. Planning consent is currently being sought for the construction of 30,000 sq ft of office accommodation at The Waterfold at Junction 2 of the M66. The development will be providing units of 2,000 sq ft which could be joined as larger units or further split to create smaller units. It has been identified that smaller units in this size range are particularly in demand in Bury at present, which reflects the local occupier nature of demand. Many occupiers are particularly interested in acquiring their own premises as an investment for their pension funds.

Within the town centre there were proposals for the development of Townside Fields. The council undertook an exercise to choose a development partner and selected Ron Wood Developments. They planned to build a business park with a range of B1 office buildings. However, the scheme has not been progressed.

A more realistic prospect is Bury Ground. This is owned by Bury MBC and is located just to the north west of the town centre on the north side of Peel Way. The Council has aspirations to see this site largely developed as a Business Park and to this end sought to select a preferred development partner. A competition was won by developers HBG Property with a scheme that contained approximately 300,000 ft^2 of office floor space. The site, adjacent to the River Irwell already has mature landscaping. HBG's proposals were to build upon this to create an attractive Business Park close to town centre facilities.

The key to the opening up of this site is a new access from Peel Way. This would necessitate the new road dropping down from the elevated Peel Way across Carlyle Street and onto the site. We understand that the scheme has been delayed by title issues but that the Council has now resolved these.

In discussions with local agents there is a view that there is not at present a demand for the type of office floor space that the Bury Ground development could provide and that better located sites at Middlebrook and Castlebrook will take up what requirements are available. However, we are of the view that as capacity is reached on those sites, Bury Ground's proximity to the town centre and its shops, services, public transport and its mature environment will prove attractive to potential tenants in the medium to long term.

Conclusions: At present the main source of demand in Bury for office floorspace is for small (less than 5,000 ft^2) self contained and freehold premises for local businesses. The current proposal for such premises at the Waterfold Business Park could satisfy this demand and it would be unlikely for a developer to pursue a similar scheme within the town centre whilst the Waterfold scheme is being marketed. However, this does not mean that land should not be identified for this use within the town centre. A clear vision for the town centre together with environmental improvements will make the area more attractive for such investments.

The development of Bury Ground has considerable 'up front' development costs, most notably the installation of a junction onto Peel Way and a new access down onto the site. It will be difficult for a developer to crystallise interest in the site until access has been built onto the site and occupiers can see that the development of the site is credible. There may be a need for the North West Development Agency to 'pump prime' this site by working with the Council to provide the access. Clearly, the marketing of the site could also be assisted by the provision of speculative floor space and possibly the inclusion of related uses such as hotel and health and fitness facilities. In addition the provision of an attractive and safe pedestrian link through to the town will be important in encouraging occupiers to the site.

Leisure uses

The UK leisure market has seen substantial growth over recent years, mainly through multiplex cinemas, health clubs, bowling alleys and new restaurants/bar developments. While cinema development has slowed significantly, there continues to be growth in the health and fitness, and restaurants and bars remain the most popular activity with operators continually seeking the next big idea, such as theme bars or target branding. Companies specialising in fitness centres have embarked upon substantial expansion programmes and are still seeking further development opportunities. Recent research shows members of such facilities account for 3.2% of the UK population and this is predicted to rise significantly. The hotel and tourist market has been impacted over the last year by two significant factors; events in the United States and the effects of the foot and mouth epidemic. However, the budget hotel market continues to expand, largely driven by the business market.

Cinema: Drivers Jonas in their retail study of Bury (July 2002) assessed the likely demand for additional cinema screens in Bury. There is only one cinema complex within the catchment area of the town and that is at Park 66 at Pilsworth. This is a 12 screen facility operated by Warner Village.

There is no question that the location of a cinema complex within Bury town centre would bring many benefits to the viability and vitality of the town centre. It would support and create the demand for other leisure pursuits i.e. eating and drinking, it would extend the night-time economy of the town, it would attract further shoppers into the area and could jointly use car parking facilities within the town centre.

Nationally the rapid expansion of multiplex cinemas appears to be based on an over optimistic forecast of cinema admissions and this has led to an over-supply in certain towns and cities. Drivers Jonas's pessimistic demand assessment reflected this since developers and operators are not generally looking for expansion opportunities at present. We are aware that Westfield, the owner of the Millgate Shopping Centre has aspirations to incorporate a 10 screen cinema within their expansion proposals for the centre. Their view is that this may be facilitated economically within the scheme on the back of the retail development. Given the current oversupply of cinema screens, Drivers Jonas predicted that the opening of such a facility within the town centre would severely affect the trade of the existing facility at Park 66. However, the priority should be the town centre and we agree with Drivers Jonas that there is merit in considering new 'in town' facilities such as those being considered by Westfield as part of their proposal for the Millgate centre.

Health and fitness: Drivers Jonas have identified 12 health and fitness clubs in the Bury catchment area, and estimated that the potential demand for membership could increase by a further 50% (approximately 5,000 members) by 2006. They are of the view that this additional scope could be taken up by the Whitefield Total Fitness scheme currently under construction. They, therefore, conclude that there is no demand for further private health and fitness club facilities unless a facility was provided by a 'higher order operator' within the town centre. However, developers 'High Point' are proposing a JJB Sports health and fitness facility on part of the current Market car park at Spring Street. This is part of the overall diversification of JJB and suggests that they are more confident than Drivers Jonas about current demand.

Restaurants, pubs and bars: Bury already has a buoyant evening economy that is centred around a number of drinking establishments within the town centre. These include JD Weatherspoons, Chicago Rock Café, O'Neils, Yates Wine Lodge and a number of more traditional public houses. These facilities are primarily aimed at the 18-34 year old age group. Whilst there is a significant proportion of Bury's residents within this age group, the proximity of the town, especially by Metrolink, to Manchester City Centre dilutes the demand for such facilities. Drivers Jonas in their report concluded that it was unnecessary to make further provision for Public Houses, Wine Bars etc. However, we are aware that the industry considers that Manchester City Centre is approaching capacity and that more attention is being focussed on the affluent commuter towns like Bury so that it is likely that there will be further demand from operators. As currently most of these establishments are public houses it is likely that operators will look to diversify the offer to some extent. The current pub circuit extends from Market Place down Market Street along Broad Street and up Silver Street. The problem with this type of activity is that it may impact on the privacy of local residents and discourage other town centre users from using the centre.

There are a few independent restaurants within the town, mainly Italian and Indian. The independent restaurant trade is more difficult to analyse and will in large part be driven by trade generated by other leisure uses, the quality of the surrounding environment and the proximity of other similar facilities. Therefore, improvements to the retail and leisure offer in the town centre and improvements to the environment and safety of the centre will do much to encourage investment in new eating facilities.

Family leisure facilities: The only leisure facility of this type within the Bury catchment area is the Megabowl at Park 66. This facility absorbs all the capacity for this type of activity within the Bury catchment area. Bury lacks a Bingo facility. It is understood that those residents that do participate in this activity, travel outside the catchment area to Bolton and Middleton. We are aware that operators Mecca are seeking to find a site in or close to the town centre.

Hotels: There are approximately 25 large bed and breakfast inns and small private hotels in Bury. The only large independent hotels in the area are the Bolholt Hotel off Walshaw Road to the north west of Bury town centre and The Village Hotel at Waterfold Business Park adjacent to Junction 2 on the M66. The Village Hotel is operated by the De Vere Hotel group. Both operations include a leisure club. There are no branded 'budget hotel operators' within the town centre although there are a number south of Bury on the M62 with a Travel Lodge on the motorway service area between Junction 18 and 19. In addition just off Junction 17 there is a Travel Inn. It would appear that the budget hotel operators are reasonably well provided for either on or adjoining the motorway network and that Bury itself probably has sufficient traditional accommodation for its current business needs.

For a new budget hotel operator to be attracted to the town there needs to be a number of specific reasons for them to consider this. The first issue would be whether or not there is sufficient commercial business in the area to satisfy weekday trade. Secondly, whether there can be additional business developed over the weekend from other sources. This could be demand generated by a major football club, visitor attractions, teaching hospital or university etc. On this basis one could foresee a budget hotel operator being interested in the Bury Ground proposals for a major office park if links were made with the East Lancashire Railway and weekend countryside breaks.

Conclusions: There is no question that a cinema complex located within the town centre would greatly improve vitality and viability of the centre. However, it is clear that cinema operators have no interest in developing new facilities in the Bury area. At the present time the only way we could see such facilities being provided within the centre would be if they were provided, and cross subsidised by an expansion of the retail facilities at the Millgate Centre. The developers should be given encouragement to bring forward such proposals.

There may be a qualitative opportunity for a 'high order' health and fitness facility in the centre. We are aware of two proposals, HBG were in discussion with Bannatynes to locate a facility on the Bury Ground site but given the difficulties in bringing forward development on the site, this interest has disappeared. JJB Sports are pursuing, through Highpoint, the development of one of their facilities on the Spring Street site. Given that the development of the Bury Ground site is a medium/long term proposition, there would seem to be no reason on market grounds to resist JJB's proposals.

Industrial market

The National Context: Examination of the current UK industrial market reveals a mixed picture. Although the overall level of available space in completed buildings increased again in the last quarter, the rate of increase slowed down and was comparatively modest compared to earlier in the year. Further, the total level of available floorspace in completed buildings fell in all four UK regions where as earlier in the year there were increases in every region. The overall amount of floorspace being developed on a speculative basis was lower this quarter at 537,179 m² compared with the second quarter of the year at 644,311m².

On the demand side, the continuous 'two speed' economy, with manufacturing in the doldrums, partly explains the divergence between demand related to manufacturing and the demand related to distribution. The former has been fairly subdued, although interest rates have encouraged good demand for freeholds. The demand for large new distribution units, which is dominated by design and build transactions, reached a record high last year with some 1.857 million m² of take up. However, levels of take up have slowed this year. This slowdown can be partly attributed to an increased supply of large second hand buildings but it also reflects the fact that companies remain relatively cautious against a background of flat economic activity and continuing uncertainties.

The North West: The total amount of available floor space in the North West stood at 2.042 million m² at April 2002. This represented a fall of 6% (136,000m²) since December 2001. Floorspace available in large units over 10,000 m² decreased whilst available new floorspace was static overall contrasting with a 35% increase

in the second quarter of the year. The level of speculative development in the North West has fallen since earlier in the year with approximately 30,123m² currently under construction in six schemes. There are currently two major schemes under construction or about to be completed in north Manchester. These include; three units of 1,022m2, 1,208m² and 1,486m² at Blueberry Business Park, Rochdale and five units ranging from 743m² to 1,486m² at Mango Park on Wingates Industrial Park, Bolton.

The Bury Industrial Market: There has been a general reduction in demand over the last 12 months. The lettings market has been quieter and the freehold market stronger due to low mortgage rates. The Bury manufacturing base has shrunk considerably in the last 10 - 20 years. Demand for industrial property is, therefore, relatively low. There is, however, a reasonable demand from smaller specialist companies. Lack of demand and product is put down to the fact that there has never been a good availability of industrial sites in the Bury area. Competing locations such as Oldham and Rochdale have a greater availability of sites and Rochdale benefits as an industrial / distribution location from its proximity to the M62. A further reason for there being more speculative industrial development in Rochdale and Oldham is that there has been a greater availability of grant funding available in these areas. There has been little public sector funding available to support industrial development in Bury.

Whilst there has generally been little public assistance for industrial development in Bury, the only recent speculative build by Saville -Gordon at Peel Mills was ERDF funded. This was completed in August 1999 and all the space was let within 12 months. This is the most centrally located recent industrial development in Bury.

According to local agents there is a reasonable level of pent up local demand for small units in Bury, from both owner occupiers and tenants. If suitable industrial accommodation were developed providing units between 700 – 1,500 ft^2, it is believed there would be significant local demand. The likely demand would be from owner occupiers looking for an investment purchase and those looking for higher quality rented accommodation.

There is a lack of industrial accommodation at accessible motorway sites in the Bury area. This seems to be due to competition from other sectors, with many well located sites being developed for office, leisure and retail uses. The table below shows the enquiries received by King Sturge for industrial accommodation in Bury for the year up to 15th October 2002.

As can be seen there were a total of 56 enquiries received over the one year period, 13 of which were specific to Bury. The other enquiries were for industrial accommodation located in one of up to 7 locations. The other locations were generally in towns in the north of Manchester, the most frequently recorded were Whitefield, Prestwich, Rochdale and Bolton. Of the Bury specific enquiries 10 came from companies located in Greater Manchester and Lancashire and only three from outside of the region. The majority of the Greater Manchester enquiries were from the north of Manchester. According to these enquiries demand for industrial premises in Bury is generally from within the region and a large percentage from neighbouring districts or Bury. Whilst 46% of enquiries were for either leasehold or freehold accommodation, 36 % of enquiries were for freehold premises and only 12 % for leasehold. According to these figures then it seems there is greater demand for freehold accommodation in North Manchester and Bury. The size of accommodation being sought through the enquiries ranged from 1,000 to 150,000 sq ft. There were few enquiries at the extremes of the scale, the majority of enquiries fitted into the size range of 10,000 to 50,000 sq ft.

King Sturge Enquiries

Type of enquiry	**Number**
Total no of enquiries	56
Total Bury only enquiries	13
Total 'either' freehold or leasehold	26
Total freehold	21
Total leasehold	9
TOTAL	56
Eng. from Bury	20
Enq from Grt Manc / Lancs	29
Enq from out of region	7
TOTAL	56

Conclusions: Discussions with local agents suggest that Bury has not benefited from industrial development largely due to a lack of available industrial sites. Most new industrial development within this part of North Manchester has favoured Rochdale and Oldham. However, there does appear to be demand in the town for small new industrial development to be occupied by local businesses.


The Market
£5

Town centre health check

10.

In the last chapter we considered demand for different uses in Bury town centre. In this chapter we will look at the most important of these uses, retailing. The retail sector is without doubt the driving force of Bury Town Centre and decisions on future retail provision will have a major influence on the health and vitality of the town centre. To provide context this section will look at the national and regional related trends, it will examine the structure of the retail provision within the town, it will address the health of the centre using the criteria set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6, it will examine the capacity for further expansion in the centre and explore any weaknesses that may be preventing the centre from developing and improving. Bury is currently considering three proposals from major retail development companies for expansion of the town centre. This section will review these proposals. Finally, conclusions will be reached which will help guide the preparation of the vision and masterplan.

In July 2002 Bury Council received a Retail Report prepared by Drivers Jonas. This study will be used as a principal source of information for this section but we will also draw upon King Sturge's own research and market knowledge, and information from discussions with key developers.

National and Regional Trends

Despite having faced two recessions over the last 20 years the retailing industry has experienced considerable growth. This growth has taken place in a context of uncertainties caused by changes in demographics, increasingly restrictive planning policies and a technological revolution. Perhaps because of these trends recent statistics indicate a slow down in the retail sector. Figures released by the British Retail Consortium (July 2002) show that overall sales were up 3.4% on last year's figure, this compares with the figure of 6.5% in July of last year. For the first time this year, however, the rate of growth in retail sales has not exceeded general growth in consumer expenditure. It is felt that growth rates peaked at the end of 2001 and that retailers should expect positive but slow growth rates into the middle of 2003 when the declining growth trend is expected to reverse.

Within this macro-economic environment a number of trends are apparent which have implications for town centres. These can be summarised as follows:-

- Shoppers are no longer content with just purchasing good quality goods but now are increasingly requiring a high quality pleasant environment in which to shop.

- Secondary retail frontages are being affected by Sunday openings as these premises are normally occupied by independents and non-retail uses such as professional services, banks and building societies which generally do not trade on a Sunday and the resulting lack of footfall affects those that do open.

- Opening hours are generally extending for both shops and for pubs.

- High Street comparison goods retailers are finding that they need to improve financial performance by cutting costs and improving the range of goods made available to customers through their existing stores. The response to this has been to move to larger units either by relocating or by expanding into storage space such as basements and first floors.

The major convenience retailers are introducing smaller format stores to respond to the trend towards urban living particularly in the larger towns and cities and to provide a service to office workers. These new formats like Sainsbury Local and Tesco Metro are usually no larger than 25,000 ft² in size.

Bury Shopping Centre

Bury's excellent location on the motorway network and good public transport linkages, especially the tram is a mixed blessing, the centre is accessible to shoppers but by the same token other centres are easily accessible to the residents of Bury. Bolton is only a 14 minute drive away and Rochdale is just 12 minutes. The Trafford Centre and City Centre Manchester are also within easy reach. Metrolink will carry a shopper from Bury to the city centre in under 20 minutes. Bury is one of several sub regional centres servicing the north Manchester sub region, alongside Bolton, Rochdale, Oldham and Wigan. Using Experian Goad information on the ranking of centres based on the number of retail outlets, floorspace and the number of key attractors Bury is second only to Bolton. However, like Bolton it is slipping down the rankings while Oldham and Wigan, in particular, improve their position. However, Bury's fall in the rankings is small and perhaps is more indicative of other centres improving their performance.

Experian Goad information shows that Bury has a total shopping area of 1.2 million ft² with 185 multiple outlets. This floorspace is largely contained within the ring road and three retail parks, namely the Angouleme, Moorgate and Woodfields Retail Parks. These retail parks house a number of retail warehouse outlets and three supermarkets.

The largest space users in Bury town centre are Marks & Spencers, BHS, Littlewoods, Boots

Town	2001 Ranking	2002 Ranking	Change 2002
Bury	72	83	-11
Bolton	45	58	-13
Oldham	171	161	+10
Rochdale	149	150	-1
Wigan	125	104	+21

Source: Experian Goad (2002)

Retail Type	Total floor space m²	Percentage of total floor space
Convenience	16,260	15%
Comparison	73,568	66%
Service/Miscellaneous	17,000	15%
Vacant	4,868	4%
Total	111,696	100%

Source: Experian Goad (2002)

Town	Shopping centre	No. Units	Selling area sq ft	Total shopping centre selling area sq ft
Bury	Millgate	136	339,000	339,000
Rochdale	Exchange	45	320,000	
	Wheatsheaf	41	155,550	475,550
Oldham	Spindles	55	280,000	
	Town Square	31	190,000	470,000
Bolton	Market Place	30	308,000	
	Crompton Place	55	180,000	488,000
Wigan	Galleries	78	235,000	
	Market Gate	34	80,000	315,000

Source: Retail Directory of the UK (2003 Edition)

and Wilkinson. Convenience outlets in Bury include Asda, Tesco, Marks & Spencer Food Hall and Kwik Save, together with a number of independent retailers and a large number of market stalls. Of these convenience outlets, only a number of the independents, the market stalls and Marks & Spencer are located within the inner ring road.

Shopping in Bury is dominated by the Millgate Shopping Centre, which is in the ownership of Westfield Shopping Towns. The centre consists mainly of single level shopping in conservatory style malls. The centre was opened in 1969 and has approximately 315,000 ft² of floor space in approximately 140 units. The centre provides a popular and pleasant indoor shopping environment which houses most of the higher order retailers in the town centre such as Marks & Spencer, BHS, Littlewoods, Body Shop etc.

The Millgate provides a greater total retailing floor space that any other single shopping centre in the neighbouring towns, as the table above shows. The average unit size though is significantly smaller in the Millgate Centre than the other centers, and hence there are a greater number of units in the center than the other centers. . However, Bury has a significantly smaller total shopping centre retailing floor space than Bolton, Rochdale and Oldham, all which have two shopping centres.

The smaller unit size in the Millgate has both positive and negative implications for the retail offer in Bury. Small units have encouraged independent outlets to locate in the town and add to the diversity of the retail offer. Concurrently, larger retail and multiple outlets have been limited in the range of goods they are able to offer due to the limited floor space of the small units.

Aside from the Millgate Bury's famous Market and the three retail parks, the remainder of Bury's shopping provision is concentrated on The Rock and Bolton Street. The Rock is dominated by A2 uses including banks, building societies and travel agents as well as lower order retailers and discounters. Bolton Street contains a number of independent retailers and restaurants.

Bury boasts the largest market in the North West. It comprises three distinct elements;

- A market hall with over 60 stalls which is open every day except Sundays.
- A fish and meat hall which is also open everyday except Sundays.
- An outdoor market with almost 300 stalls which is open on Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

It is estimated by the Council that the Market attracts over 250,000 shoppers every week. The Market is clearly a major attraction for the town and draws visitors from both within and beyond the North West. The Market is located between The Millgate Centre and Angouleme Way and has excellent linkages with The Millgate Centre.

Health of The Centre

Planning Policy Guidance Note 6, 'Town Centres and Retail Developments' sets out a number of indicators by which local planning authorities should assess the health of their town centres. These include diversity of uses, retail representation, shopping rents, proportion of vacant street level property, commercial yields, pedestrian footfall, accessibility, customer views and behaviour, perceptions of safety and crime and the environmental quality of the town centre.

Drivers Jonas in their retail study carried out such an analysis and concluded that Bury was a relatively strong centre, but there were a number of features that were inhibiting the centre's potential for qualitative growth. These factors included:

- A lack of a department store as well as medium to higher order fashion multiples and lifestyle stores.
- Limited floor space available to some retailers was inhibiting the range of goods that could be displayed within their shop.
- A lack of large floorspace units to attract retailers not currently represented in Bury.
- Both Woodfields and Angouleme Retail Parks sell goods which directly compete with the town centre.
- The lack of a focus in retail warehousing makes the town unable to attract higher order occupiers such as PC World.
- The good linkages that Bury has with the rest of the conurbation means that trade leaks to other stronger centres like Manchester City Centre and Bolton.
- Pedestrian linkages within and around the centre are poor.
- There is a lack of convenience stores within the core of the town centre with the exception of the Marks and Spencer's Food Hall and the Market.
- The night time economy is largely based on pubs and clubs and lacks non-alcohol based entertainment, e.g. restaurants, café bars and a cinema.
- Whilst the Market introduces life and vitality to the centre the interface of the Outdoor Market with Princess Parade acts as a blight on this part of the Millgate Centre from this part of the town.
- The Rock with its run down appereance and concentrations of discount retailers, charity shops and low order independent retailers projects a poor quality image of the town centre in this area.
- Access to the town centre core can be difficult at peak times.

Capacity for Expansion

Drivers Jonas in their Retail Study identified the potential capacity of Bury town centre for comparison and convenience retailing based upon detailed analysis of available expenditure at 2002/2006/2011/2016 and taking into account the turnover of existing and approved stores

Assessment of Need: Convenience Retailing

	Current Capacity	2006	2011	2016
Main stream Retailers	8,507m2	7,618m2	6,524m2	5,584m2
Discount Retailers	15,069m2	13,493m2	11,556m2	9,891m2

Source: Drivers Jonas (2002)

Assessment of Need: Comparison Retailing

	Current Capacity	2006	2011	2016
Scenario A		14,132m² (gross)	35,196m² (gross)	59,616m² (gross)
Scenario B	12,761m² (gross)	29,560m² (gross)	52,672m² (gross)	79,465m² (gross)
Scenario C	23,254m² (gross)	41,173m² (gross)	65,826m² (gross)	94,406m² (gross)
Scenario D	25,207m² (gross)	45,522m² (gross)	73,888m² (gross)	107,19717m² (gross)

Source: Drivers Jonas (2002)

within the centre. Their assessment concluded that there was the capacity to support a further 8,500m² gross of convenience food store floor space occupied by one of the big five supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury, Asda, Safeway and Morrisons). Alternatively, this capacity they felt could support up to 15,000m² gross of food store floor space occupied by discounters (Aldi, Lidl, Netto, Kwik Save, etc). Given the expected increase in turnover efficiency in food stores and a very low annual increase of expenditure on food stuffs, they considered that there would be little, if any, additional capacity for new convenience floor space in the future.

Drivers Jonas identified four different assumptions (scenarios) with which to analyse potential growth in comparison retailing until the year 2016. The most cautious Scenario A allowed for an inflow of expenditure to the centre. Scenario B allowed for an increased market share of the centre, Scenario C assumed an increased in flow of expenditure and an increased market share and, finally, Scenario D assumed an increased inflow of expenditure, increased market share and a growth in turnover. The resulting calculations show no capacity currently (2002) for further floor space in the most cautious scenario (A) up to a capacity of 25,000 m² gross in the most optimistic scenario (D). The range for the calculations for the year 2006 go from 14,000 m² up to 45,500 m² gross. Given the trend based nature of these projections Drivers Jonas advise extreme caution when considering the projections for 20011 and 2016.

This assessment shows that Bury has the capacity to accommodate a large food store at present and up to 45,500 m² gross of comparison retailing by the year 2006 depending on which scenario is adopted. If Bury town centre is to benefit from this increased capacity, it is imperative that floor space is located where it will complement and enhance the other retailing activities within the town centre.

Current Proposals:

Bury is in the enviable position of having three retail developers pursuing new schemes within and around the town centre. Following meetings held with each of the developers during autumn 2002, we are able to outline briefly below proposals that they are currently considering:

Millgate Shopping Centre Expansion –Westfield Shopping Towns recently took over a number of shopping centres from MEPC in the UK. They are in the process of refurbishing and extending these centres. Their most recent development at the Millgate Centre has been the extension of the centre at Minden Parade to create new shops for JJB Sports and Clinton Cards, in addition to other smaller retail units and the glazing over of the mall. The company is currently considering options for the further development of the centre. These include the extension of Marks & Spencer's onto The Rock and the relocation of the bus station onto the park and ride car park adjacent to the Metrolink Station to enable expansion to the south of Kay Gardens. They are also currently considering the possibility of relocating the market with expansion southwards onto the existing market to create up to 30,000m² of additional retail space together with leisure facilities, perhaps even a multi-screen cinema. The company are concerned that the possibility of retail development being allowed outside the town centre boundaries would have an adverse impact upon their centre and on the town centre as a whole. Westfield acknowledge that there is a need to extend the retail offer of the centre and feel that this could be best achieved by the introduction of larger floorspace units and a department store into the centre. They indicate that there is interest from a number of stores.

The Rock Triangle: Thornfield Properties are working with Bury Council who are a land owner in the area bounded by The Rock, the Moorgate Retail Park, the ring road and Derby Street. At present this is a poorly performing area containing a mixture of disjointed uses including car parks, run down buildings and an outdated supermarket. The company have recently undertaken consultation with the Council and a number of other town centre groups with a view to bringing forward a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment scheme for the area. Proposals currently being considered comprise a high density three storey development next to the town centre with retailing and leisure uses on the ground floor and residential, office or hotel uses on the upper floors. To the east would be an 7,803 m^2 (84,000 ft^2) food store and large format non-food stores with perhaps Bingo or Health and Fitness facilities on the floor above the retail uses.

Spring Street Scheme: High Point Estates are proposing a scheme located immediately to the south of Angouleme Way and bounded by Spring Street, Market Street and Cecil Street. The majority of this development would be on land currently used as a surface level car park for Bury Market and would comprise a leisure/ retail scheme of approximately 3,808m^2 (41,000sq.ft) for a JJB Sports Shop and fitness club. This would be located at the junction of Angouleme Way and Spring Street in a two storey building. A dedicated car park for the health club members would be required to the rear of the facility. The majority of the land involved in this scheme is in the ownership of Bury Council who have insisted that the car parking spaces for the Market should be retained on the site. Highpoint have also suggested a much larger second phase of devel-

opment of retail units and leisure uses along with a multi-storey car park. This, however, is unlikely to be supported by the Council.

Conclusions

Bury is in the fortunate position of having three major proposals for retail development in and around the town centre. Many towns of a similar size would like to be in a similar position. However, Bury must exercise care in deciding which developments it wishes to support, as the wrong decision could harm Bury's long term retail offer. Drivers Jonas identified current scope for convenience retailing in the town. The form which would provide maximum benefit for the town centre would be either a medium size higher order supermarket or one of the smaller town centre style stores (Tesco Metro/Sainsbury's Local) which could provide a useful service to local workers and town centre dwellers.

Drivers Jonas also identified potential for between 14,000 m^2 (gross) and 45,500 m^2 (gross) of new comparison floor space in the Bury area by 2006. The range is dependant upon the optimism of assumptions regarding the inflow of expenditure, market share and growth in turnover. It is clear that even under the most optimistic scenario, Bury's potential would not accommodate all the current development proposals if they were to come forward by 2006. By 2011, even taking the second most pessimistic assessment of potential, sufficient capacity would still not be available to accommodate all three schemes. However, we are of the view that, subject to the phasing of each scheme, the Westfield and Thornfield schemes could both proceed because they are aimed at different markets. We believe, however, that the Council is right not to support further development of the Spring Street site.

Thornfield's proposals provide the opportunity to improve a gateway into the centre, assist the regeneration of the town's main shopping street, The Rock, and to bring potentially new uses to the centre, i.e. residential or office development. It will, however, be vital to ensure that the development is physically tied into the centre and linked to improvements to The Rock. The scheme proposes a number of large retail warehouse units on the part of the site furthest from the town centre. It is important that these are not used for the retailing of goods normally found within a town centre. The Drivers Jonas report suggested that the town lacked focus for bulky goods type retailers. We would suggest that the use of these retail warehouse units in Thornfield's scheme be restricted to this type of use.

Bury needs to ensure that the location and make up of this amount of floor space provides clear benefit to the town's retail offer. Clearly, the first priority is to locate further comparison retail development within the core of the centre. This would accommodate the proposed expansion of the Millgate Shopping Centre. It will be for the Council to ensure this new development compliments and enhances current provision within the centre e.g. by attracting higher order department store(s) to the centre to enable it to attract back shoppers lost to centres like Bolton and Manchester, by enabling currently constrained retailers to expand (for example Marks and Spencer's), by introducing large floorspace units to attract retailers not currently represented in Bury, by improving circulation within the centre and by building complimentary leisure facilities in the centre. However, the town centre is very constrained in term of space and its great strength is the Market and the variety of independent / small retailers. It is, therefore, vital that the expansion of the Millgate Centre does not undermine these strengths.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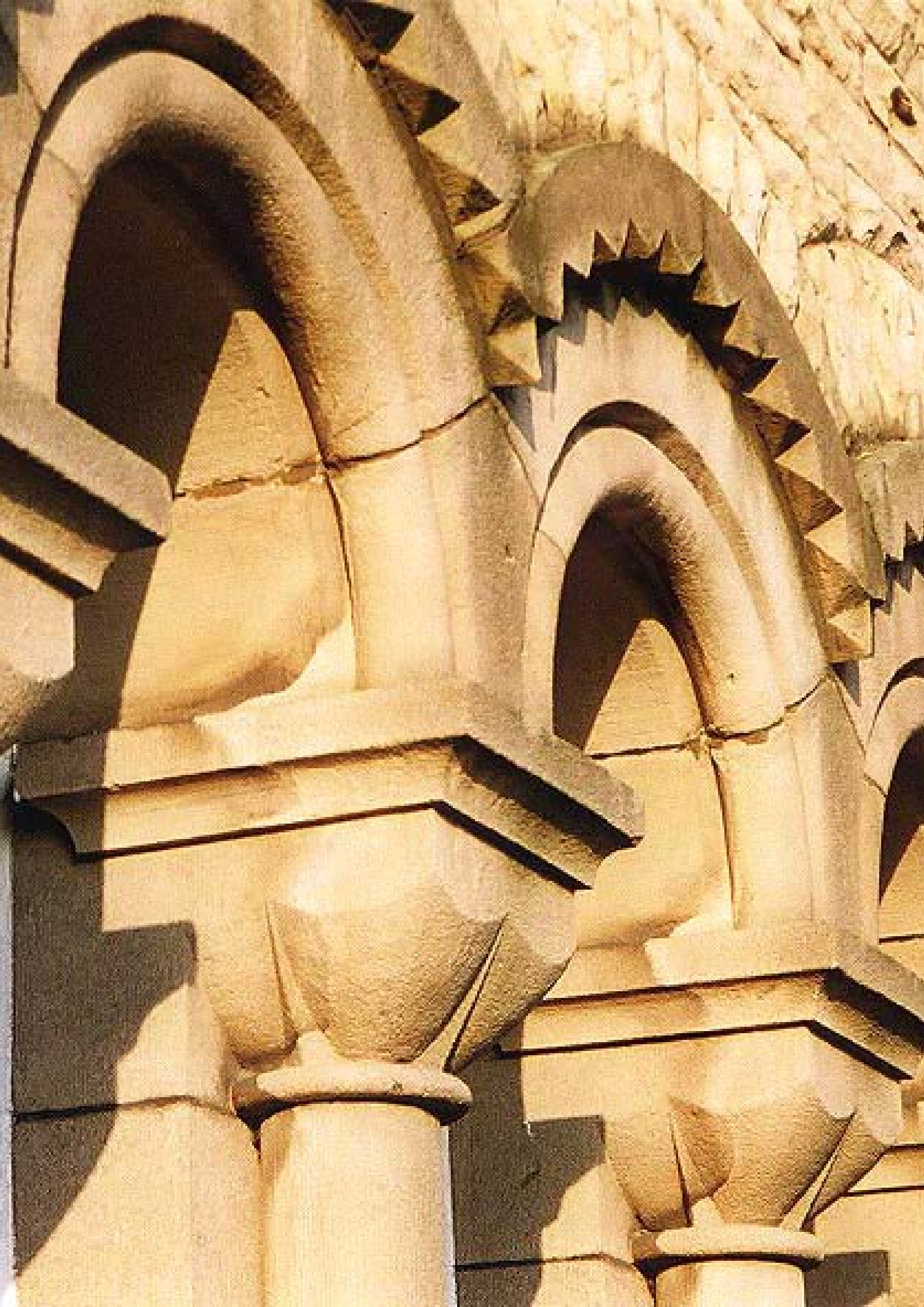
Part 4

Transport Analysis



Access to the town centre

11.

Background

This overview has been prepared by TPP and others. Its purpose is to review the conditions, trends and the potential implications of future changes within the town centre, in terms of accessibility, traffic and transportation. Clearly, any proposed development of the existing town centre needs to be accessible by public transport, the car and non-motorised modes.

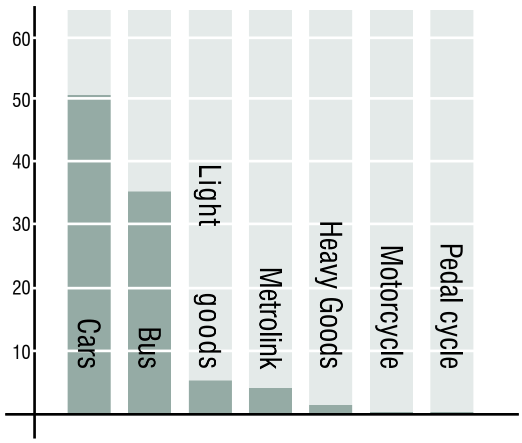
The town centre is 13 miles from Manchester City Centre and is a major shopping destination within the northern Greater Manchester conurbation and southern Lancashire, in addition to Bury district itself. Historically, Bury Market has served the region as a place to buy local farming produce. Millgate (the recently refurbished undercover shopping area) has strengthened the retailing role of Bury town centre and the centre now performs a range of other important roles, in terms of employment, education, culture, arts and civic functions.

Bury town centre is relatively compact and has the advantage of safe and convenient pedestrian circulation combined with an integrated public transport interchange located within the ring road and in close proximity to the main retail centre. Within the existing town centre, areas such as the Millgate shopping centre and The Rock have been improved in the past through pedestrianisation. A description of access to the town centre by a range of modes is described in the tables below.

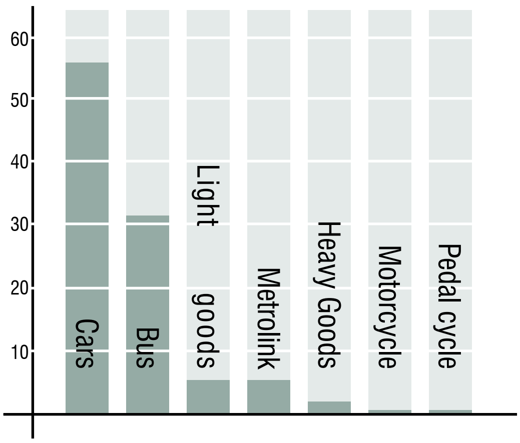
Road Network

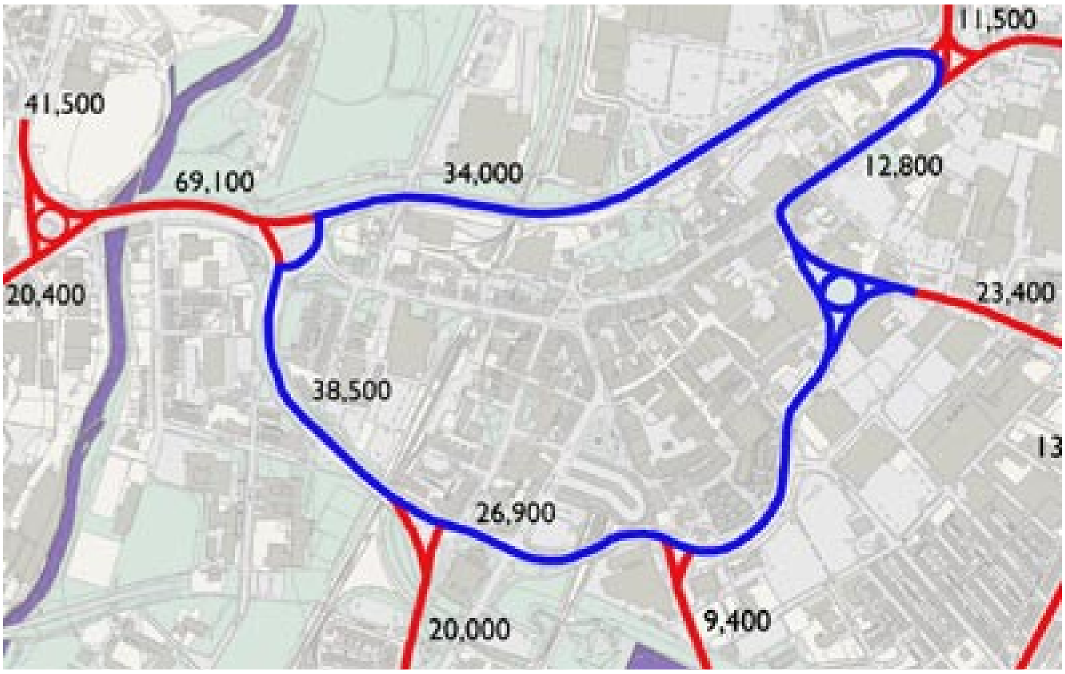
The existing main road network, approaching and around the town centre and current traffic levels is shown on the map on the following page. Traffic volumes are particularly high at Bury Bridge at almost 69,000 vehicles per weekday (vpd) and the northern section of the ring road - Peel Way (34,000 vpd). Flows are relatively lower on the southern section of the ring road, where

Morning Peak (0730-0920)



Inter Peak (1000-1200)



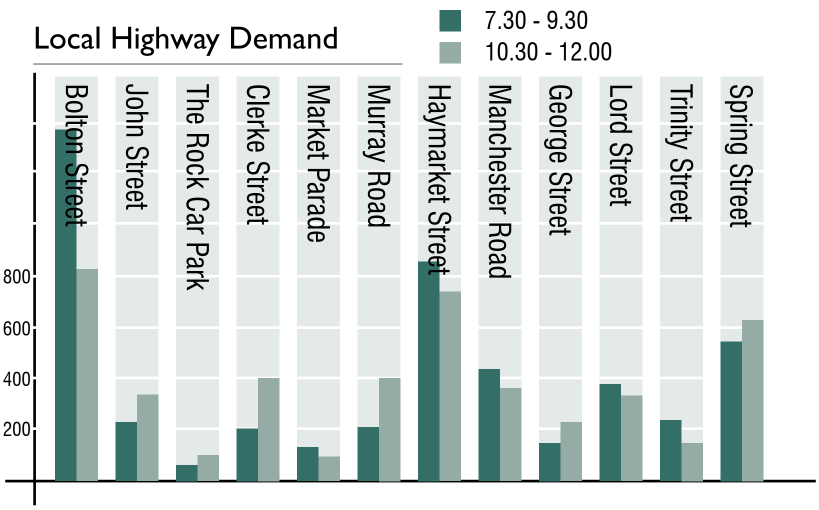


Strategic Highway Network with the number of vehicles per day (weekdays) using each route

Angouleme Way carries 27,000 vpd per day and are very much less on the eastern section formed by The Rock at 13,000 vpd. Main radial routes leading to the town centre, such as Walmersley Road, Bell Lane/Rochdale Old Road, Wash Lane leading to M66 Junction 2, Rochdale Road also leading to M66 Junction 2, Bolton Road and Manchester Road typically carry daily traffic volumes of around 20,000 vpd. The exception to this is Crostons Road which carries in excess of 40,000 vpd (south of the connection with Tottington Road and Brandlesholme Road).

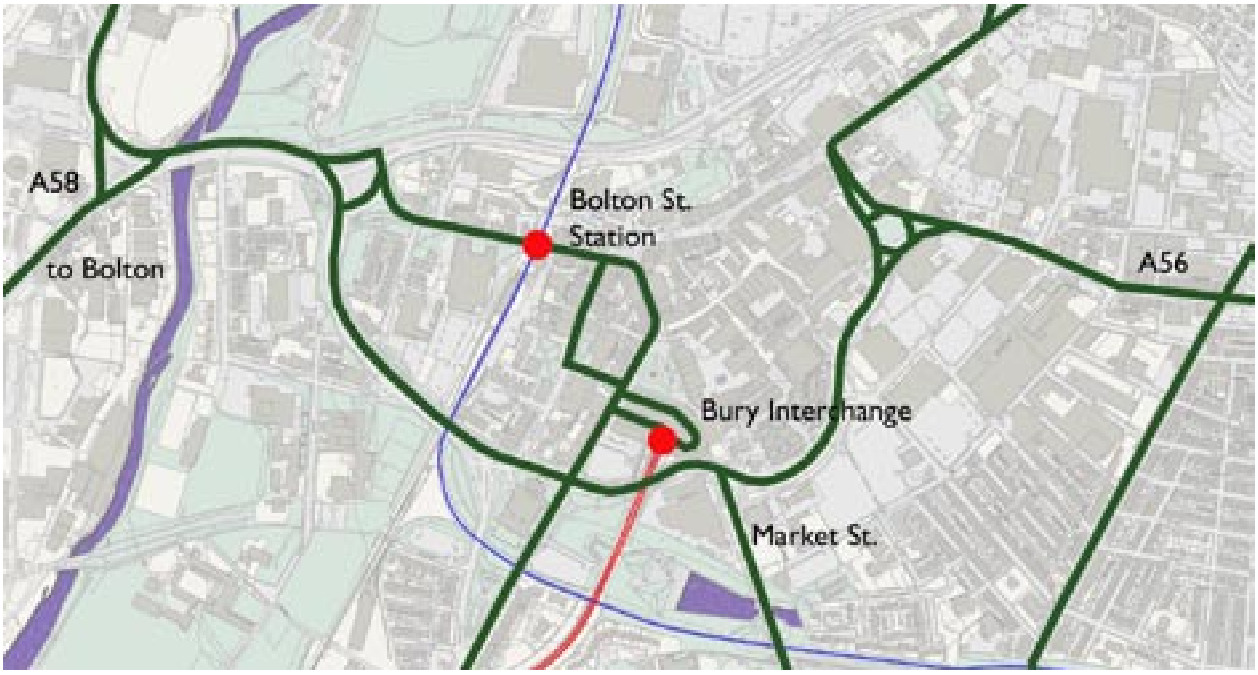
The number of vehicles entering the centre (crossing a cordon used for monitoring survey purposes) is shown in the graph below. This shows that within the centre, Bolton Street, Haymarket Street, Spring Street and Manchester Road are the busiest links. From the information available, it can also be seen that traffic patterns exhibit strong tidality, particularly for home to work journeys from Bury towards the M62 / Manchester via the A56 or M66 in the morning, with the reverse tidality in the evening. The high flows passing through the Bury central area network in the peak periods as a result of this demand cause heavy congestion at central junctions and queues stretching along sections of the inner ring road.

Local Highway Demand



Public Transport

Within the centre, buses use Bolton Street, Silver Street and Market / Haymarket Street (see Plan above right). Buses also make use of Jubilee Way/Angouleme Way and the eastern section of The Rock, although Peel Way is not used by buses. A total of 40 bus services either terminate or call at the main terminus, Bury Interchange. Tram services to the Metrolink station at Bury Interchange operate at 6 minute intervals throughout the working day and on Saturdays with less frequent services – typically at 12 minute intervals - at other periods (e.g. early morning, evening and Sundays). The GMPTE and Bury Council are introducing quality bus corridors on the A56 and A58 approaches to Bury



Public Transport Network in Bury. The green routes are the main bus routes, red is the Metrolink and the blue shows the East Lancs Railway

and which also may include future proposals for further traffic management measures within the centre itself to assist buses.

Other Modes

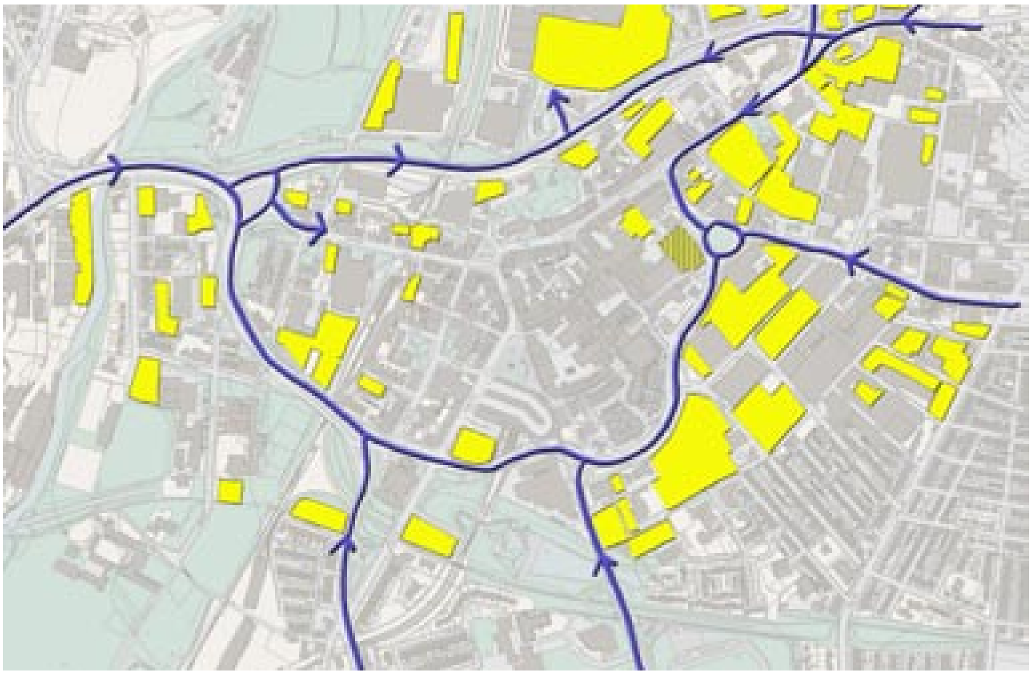
Pedestrian volumes within the centre are highest at The Mall, Haymarket, within the Millgate Centre, Princess Parade, Union Street and The Rock. Pedestrian at-grade ring road crossings and subways are also heavily used. Within the centre – designated main cycle routes exist or are planned for Bolton Street, Castlecroft Road, the entire length of The Rock, Silver Street, Market Street / Haymarket. Secondary cycle routes are proposed for Irwell Street, Back Parsons Lane and Market Street (south). Servicing, loading, waiting and parking restrictions apply throughout much of the central area.

Other facilities are also provided for taxis, disabled drivers, motorcycles, etc. Leisure transport, is also important in Bury in the form of heavy rail services on the East Lancashire Railway - Bury (Bolton Street) to Rawtenstall line which operates at weekends and holiday periods with typically 4 services per day. The rail services also call at Summerseat, Ramsbottom and Irwell Vale and due to the reinstatement of the line to the south of the town centre the potential to operate services to Heywood and beyond, with a link to the main rail network at Castleton, now exists. British Waterways are currently promoting a plan to reinstate the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, bringing the canal back into the town centre with a terminal basin near Bury Bridge.

Car Parking

Off-street car parking available to the public is dispersed throughout the centre with the larger surface car parks located along the eastern rim of the centre. The parking stock varies considerably in terms of size, quality, accessibility and conditions of use. On street parking is controlled within much of the town centre, including some time limited pay and display parking.

Footfall - Pedestrian Areas



Town centre car parks: All of these are surface car parks except for the one multi storey car park shown hatched

Future Trends

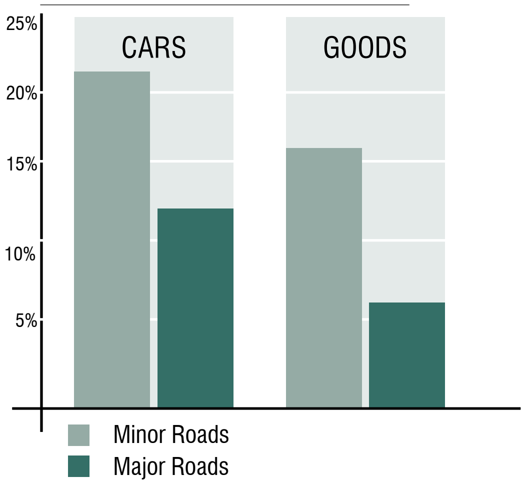
Over the next decade, if no intervening actions are taken, the present overall balance between access modes and movement patterns is expected to remain dominated by the car:

- Background road traffic growth has been predicted over the period 2002-2012 and is shown on the graph below. However, most of this growth is likley to be in off-peak 'through traffic' volumes – and little growth is expected in terms of peak period traffic growth or major overall travel to park in the town centre itself.

- Public transport usage is predicted to remain fairly constant with a continuing increase in demand on Metrolink being counter-balanced by the long term trend of decline in bus patronage.

- Cyclist and pedestrian demand is currently being promoted through measures contained in the Local Transport Plan and it is hoped that this will succeed in maintaining or slightly improving their current modal shares.

Traffic Growth 2002 - 2012



Role of The Masterplan

New development within the centre creates the potential to influence travel patterns and modal shares through a variety of measures. For example, the Masterplan Study has considered the possible expansion of the town centre linked to the breaking down of the barrier created by the ring road, particularly for the Angouleme Way section. Here development sites could be created by redesigning existing junctions, in order to further strengthen the role of the centre. This may have the effect of reducing through traffic volumes in this area of the town and of promoting better pedestrian circulation whilst maintaining public transport access.

It is important, however, that the existing town centre accessibility, the convenience of public transport access and the compact pedestrian network within the centre are both maintained and improved as additional development is introduced. The future development, improvement and expansion of the centre, therefore, raises a number of significant traffic and transportation issues, which are discussed below:

Highway Network: The potential to reduce severance by the busy ring road especially to the east of the town centre has been considered in the preparation of the Masterplan. In particular, Angouleme Way (between Market Street and Rochdale Road) and The Rock have been considered for treatment to reduce the barrier effect of the ring road in these locations. This could include, for example, the reduction of Angouleme Way to single carriageway standard and limiting vehicular use of The Rock to public transport and local access only, together with the possibility of accomodating displaced traffic on new and improved routes linked to development opportunities.

In parallel with this, appropriate traffic calming measures and the conversion of all pedestrian subways to surface crossings could be considered. In order to accommodate these changes, some junction redesign measures would be required, for example, at the junctions of Angouleme Way/Market Street, Spring Street/George Street, George Street/Rochdale Road, The Rock/ Rochdale Road / Angouleme Way, The Rock/Peel Way, Bell Lane /Wash Lane and possibly elsewhere following more detailed analysis.

Additional traffic management measures are also likely to be required. This might include measures along George Street to prevent on-street parking. Changes may also be required to destination traffic signing on the A56 and A58 approaches to direct drivers to the most appropriate route in view of the changes within the town centre. Other opportunities exist to introduce improvements within the centre as the Masterplan is implemented including, for example;

- Re-design and pedestrianisation of Market Place.
- Comprehensive treatment to improve pedestrian priority and cycling provision along The Rock, including part of the section currently designated as 'ring road'.

However, in order to determine the exact type, location and feasibility of measures required, and the potential effect of re-development proposals on the ring road (and vice versa) in traffic terms, more detailed survey information, extensive analysis and traffic modelling will be necessary.

Public Transport

The town gateway represented by the Bury Interchange and the relationship between the Interchange and the town centre could be greatly improved. The masterplanning study has explored the possible re-design and re-alignment of the bus station to locate it on the existing Park and Ride car park, bus parking area and what is currently the staff building at the Interchange.

It is essential for the bus stations to remain immediately adjacent to the Metrolink station and within the ring road. This is because there is a high degree of interchange between public transport modes and due to the importance of bus travel to the town centre and the Market.

It is also very important that the bus station retains its existing capacity and a degree of additional capacity to provide the potential for future growth. At present there are 19 bus stands and the services scheduled at each stand are typically scheduled at 10 to 15 minute headways throughout the day. There is also a degree of operational layover use at the bus station and a range of size of buses use the facility, ranging from double, articulated single deckers to mini-buses. The table overleaf describes a typical hourly period at the bus station.

The current bus station layout provides for two way bus circulation around the outer stands and inner-island and, although buses do not have to reverse, there is significant conflict with pedestrians who are not awarded any crossing priority. Subject to a more detailed feasibility assessment, design appraisal and consultation with operators it should be feasible to produce a redesigned

Bury Interchange Bus Survey (13th August 2002)

Time Period	Inbound Buses	Outbound Buses
3:00 - 3:15 pm	27	33
3:15 - 3:30 pm	29	24
3:30 - 3.45 pm	32	31
3:45 - 4:00 pm	13	19

facility which retains adequate capacity and removes bus/ pedestrian conflict.

Car Parking: The rationalisation of car parking to reduce the number of surface car parks by introducing decked or multi-storey car parks in appropriate locations would have the effect of freeing up development sites within the centre and reducing the negative image of large surface car parks. The future development and expansion of the centre will increase demand for car parking. It is important that assistance is given to other modes, particularly public transport, to encourage modal shift and reduce the demand for car parking.

Similarly the increase in retail demand suggests that the pricing of car parking could be used to increase the proportion of short stay parking and to limit commuter parking. This would need to be linked to alternative long stay parking provision together with initiatives to encourage alternative commuter travel by public transport, park and ride, car sharing or cycling.

Implementation: The discussions on the feasibility of these measures has been informed by available data. A fuller evaluation of changes in travel and traffic demand will be required in order to confirm and implement the findings. This assessment, taking account of the relative cost of alternative modes, future developments, etc. could be undertaken through a purpose built land-use/transportation model. This, however, would require considerable resources.

Alternatively, the strategic testing of highway options could be undertaken cost effectively using the Greater Manchester Strategic Highway Model particularly the proposed changes on the eastern section of the ring road. Following strategic testing more detailed analysis of junctions and local traffic management options will be needed. This could be approached in one of several ways;

- Update and improve the Bury town centre (SATURN) traffic model. This is likely to require considerable resources even if matrix estimation and other techniques were applied.

- Update and improve the Bury town centre TRANSYT model (see below) this would require some turning count surveys but could be done quickly and cost effectively.

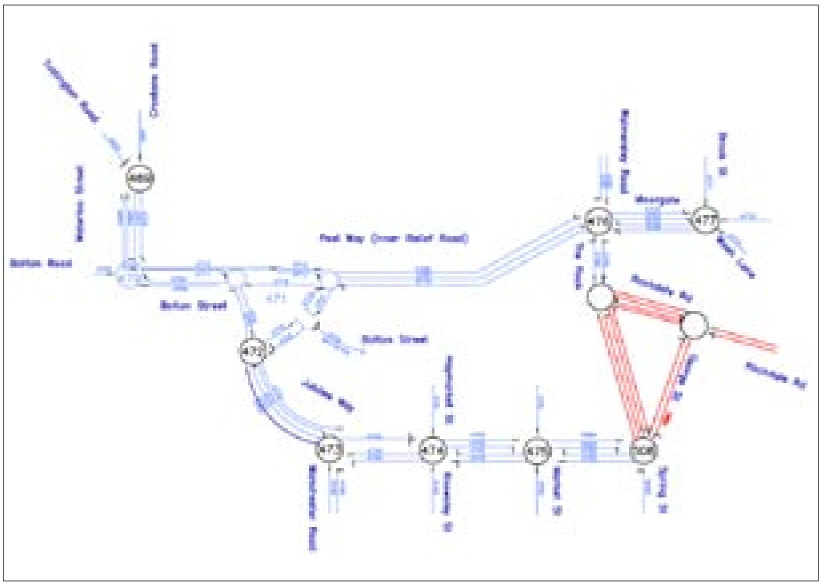
- Analyse junction changes on the basis of individual models (i.e. PICADY, ARCADY, LINSIG, TRANSYT, etc). This would require turning surveys and would cost more and take longer than option two without significant benefit.

Potential Developments

A review of access issues for potential development areas has been undertaken and a summarised commentary is provided below;

The Millgate Centre: There are sketch proposals for the major expansion of the Millgate

Bottom: Bury town centre traffic model



Shopping Centre. This would be well suited to public transport and pedestrian accessibility as it would be located within the ring road. However, it would create additional demand for parking. Care is needed in accommodating this perhaps through a multi-storey car park that can be used for other town centre activities.

Spring Street: There are proposals for a health/ fitness and retail scheme on part of this site. This includes the relocation of part of the market car park to the Bury Times site. This raises issues relating to the loss of market parking and increased demand for spaces from the development. There is also the question of linked trips and the improvement in pedestrian access over the ring road. The scheme may also affect the potential future proposals for the eastern part of the ring road.

Rock Triangle: There are proposals here for a major mixed-use development with a significant retail element. This will develop a significant amount of existing surface parking although parking numbers will eventually increase as the scheme includes large car parks for customers. The main access issues are its relationship with the town centre and the potential for linked trips.

Bury Ground: This is proposed as a major business park north of Peel Way. The main access issue is the difficulty of achieving a workable, high visibility access off Peel Way. There is also a need to improve pedestrian links to the town centre.

Crostons Road: This development contains a number of commercial and quasi-retail uses, including car dealerships and low intensity employment uses. This is expected to generate little traffic and much of the access will be off-peak.

Townside Fields: Suggestions for this site include car parking, employment, hotel, educational and housing uses. Access issues are likely to relate to the links over/under the ring road. There is also a need to overcome the barrier of the Metrolink line and to provide a link between the two Bury College sites .

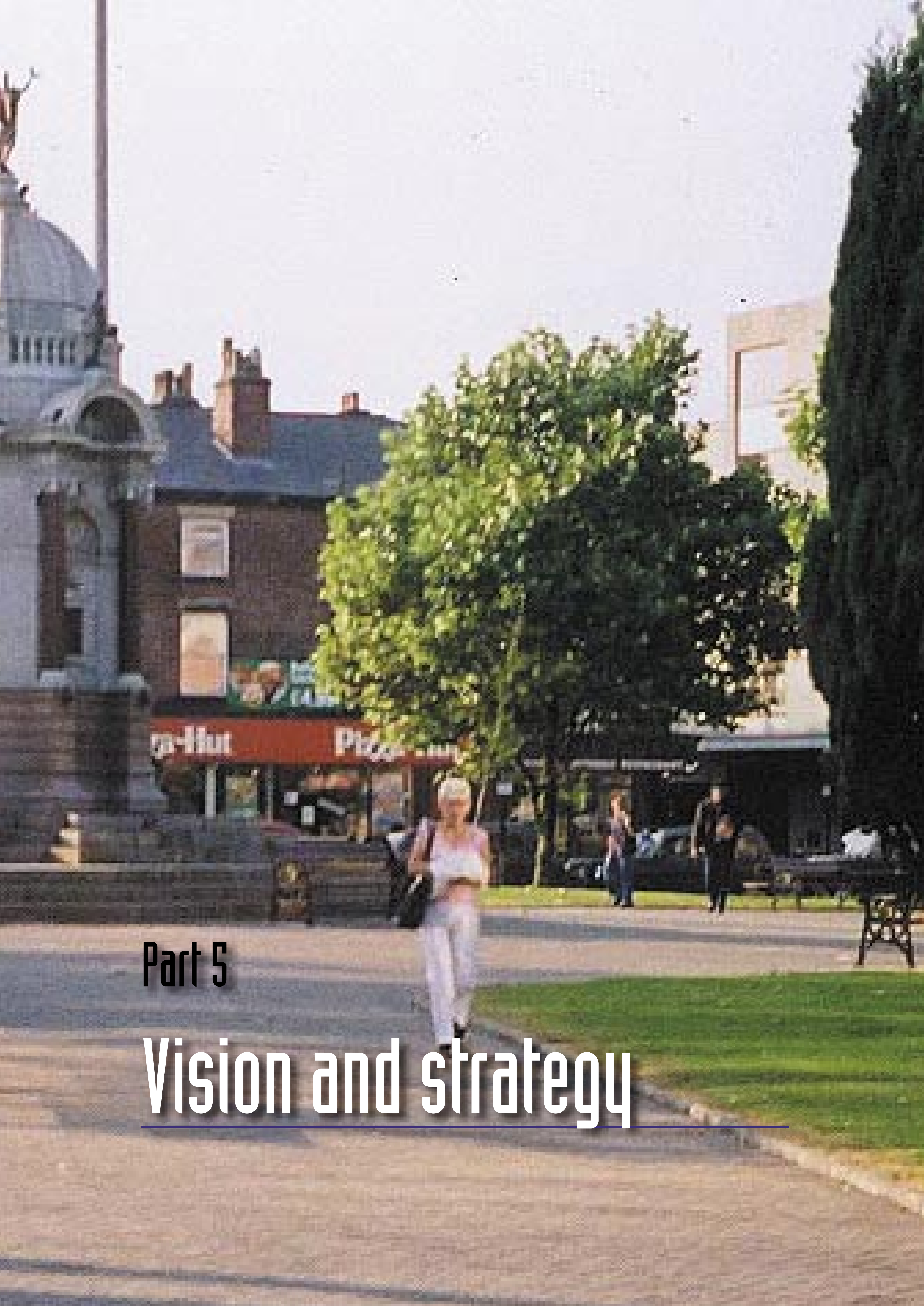
Buckley Wells: There are proposals for the further development of the rail works at Buckley Wells including a Metrolink Park and Ride and the extension of rail services.
Access facilities (for vehicles and pedestrians) to and around the site would require significant improvement if greater public access to the area is to be achieved.

Recommendations

The access assessment has shown Bury to be well served by a range of transport modes. This is an important part of its success and it is important that proposals for the town centre do not undermine this. However, the transport infrastructure of the town, particularly the ring road and the railways are also a major barrier to movement in and around the centre. Improving links between the centre and its surroundings may, therefore, involve the downgrading of parts of the ring road. This will improve the attractions of the centre and should not in our view undermine car access.

The same is true of parking. The availability of cheap parking is an important attraction of Bury. The loss of surface parking to development should, therefore, be replaced in order to maintain a balance between short and long stay parking. Pricing mechanisms should then be used to reinforce this balance and allocate parking between shoppers and visitors and commuters.

It is important to maintain and improve public transport links to the town centre. Vital to this is the Interchange which needs to be conveniantly located within the Ring Road. However, it presently does not provide an attractive gateway to the town centre and the possible re-orientation of the bus station to incorporate the Metrolink car park site could improve pedestrian links into the shopping centre and Kay Gardens while improving the capacity and efficiency of the bus facilities.



Part 5

Vision and strategy

Towards a vision

12.

SWOT analysis

In the previous parts of this report we have set out urban design, economic and access assessments of the town centre. In this part we draw conclusions from this work in order to develop a vision and strategy for the centre. In addition to our analysis three further elements have fed into this analysis:-

- The town centre workshop
- A SWOT analysis of the centre
- A 4 As analysis (Attractions/Amenity/Access and Action)

The strengths of the town centre

It is clear from our analysis that the town centre has many strengths and that these were recognised in the town centre workshop. They include the following:

Authenticity: As our urban design assessment illustrated, Bury has a long history and many fine buildings although overall the town centre is not of the character and heritage value that one might find in comparable towns like Wigan. However, the workshop participants felt that Bury's history was a strong part of its appeal mentioning the Lancashire Fusiliers and the East Lancs Railway but also the loyalty, soul and community of the people.

Compact character: People also valued the compact character of the town centre. They liked the fact that it could be appreciated easily and that everything was within easy reach. People also enjoyed the human scale of the buildings which set Bury apart from Manchester or even Bolton.

Accessibility: Many of the points at the workshop related to the accessibility of the centre, particularly the centrally located Bury Interchange, but also the ease of car access and parking, especially for disabled people. People also valued the accessibility from Bury of the countryside, the motorway system, the airport and Manchester making Bury a good place to be based.

A good place to shop: Top on the list of Bury's strengths is the Market. This is seen as the heart of the town and central to its shopping offer. People also liked the Millgate Shopping Centre with its attractive covered environment and wide range of comparison retailers. However, it is clear that the town's attraction in terms of comparison retailers is not purely the shops that are part of multiple chains because, on the whole, the Bury branch will carry a smaller range than its equivalent store in Bolton or Manchester. The main attraction is a combination of the Market, the independent traders, and the compact nature and the variety of local and multiple stores that are found in the Millgate Centre, which together provide a distinctive offer.

A good place for leisure: While Bury's leisure offer is not seen as very broad – excluding as it does family entertainment – the evening economy was seen as one of its strengths. Bury is a very good place to go out for a drink, especially

if you are young. It is also within easy reach of the huge leisure market of Manchester.

Well managed: As our environmental audit picked up, Bury is well managed. There is very little litter or graffiti, there are lots of town centre floral displays and the public spaces are well kept. While this relates to only a small part of the centre it was picked up by the workshop as an important part of Bury's appeal. It was also felt to be a safe place and the town centre wardens were particularly appreciated.

Quality services: The workshop participants also highlighted the quality of the local schools as well as the college. There is no doubt that educational excellence is an important part of Bury's appeal.

The themes that emerged from the workshop are similar to those that we suggested in our SWOT analysis. The only issue not mentioned by the workshop, that was picked up by our analysis, was the relative affluence of the population. This is clearly an important cause but also a symptom of Bury's success.

Bury's weaknesses

There were, however, no shortage of weaknesses cited at the workshop. These tended to fall into the following categories:

Weak identity: There was great concern that Bury's image was weak. People did not necessarily have a bad image of Bury – rather they had no image at all. The town fails to stand out from the crowd of Greater Manchester towns and, therefore, its strengths are not recognised.

Rough edges: While overall the environment of the town is viewed positively, it is seen as having rough edges, particularly around the ring road. There was concern that important buildings such as the College and the Town Hall were cut off by the ring road and about the unattractive appearance and dominance of surface parking in other areas. Of particular concern were areas with dead frontages and the lack of green open spaces in the centre.

Difficult to access: there were a range of complaints about accessibility to the town including congestion at rush hour and difficulty in parking. Disabled access, while good to the shopping centre, was seen as poor to civic buildings – especially the Arts and Crafts Centre. There was also concern that it was difficult to find your way around the centre and that in places it is confusing. The ring road was also seen as a major barrier for pedestrians and cyclists.

Poor facilities: People at the workshop came up with a long list of things missing from the centre, which was seen as little more than a shopping centre. This list included town centre housing, leisure uses, local employment, exhibition space, high quality shops, decent restaurants / bars, a department store, cinema and hotel. There was concern that because of this, parts of the centre were dead after dark.

Insecurity: As is often the case, issues that came up as strengths were also cited as weaknesses. This is particularly true of security, partly because the positive and negative comments relate to different parts of the town centre. There was concern that security after dark was poor in parts of the centre, particularly at night. Specific mention was made of the area around Kwik Save and the underpasses under the ring road. There was concern about broken glass and 'undesirables' who congregate in Kay Gardens and on The Rock.

Failing Places: A number of specific places were signalled out for criticism. Most of these comments related to The Rock, especially the 'mushrooms' (canopies over seating) and the area outside Cash Generator. Also mentioned as problem areas were the vacant Halifax Building Society at the corner of The Rock and Crompton Street and the area around Kwik Save.

While these strengths and weaknesses seem finely balanced, it is in fact the case that most town centre workshops of this kind tend to over-emphasise the negative. The participants at the workshops were much less negative than is normal and it is clear that the centre is doing

relatively well. However, no centre can stand still and, in terms of the strategy, it is important to also understand the threats and opportunities facing the centre.

Threats and opportunities

The main threat facing all town centres is that they are left behind. This is not always the result of decline. It can even be the case that a centre is improving, but just not as quickly as other centres. This is a particular problem in Greater Manchester because of the large number of closely-spaced centres. Bolton is the closest threat with a full range of retailers and plans for improvement and expansion. Manchester has expanded its shopping area and added retailers like Selfridges while the Trafford Centre is within easy reach of Bury. Compared to this competition the recent improvements to the Millgate Centre are small beer.

This begs the question of why Bury is not doing a lot worse than it presently is. The reason is that it does what all small players need to do in a competitive market – it provides a distinctive offer at the heart of which is the Market. As we have said, Bury Market has been ranked as one of the top ten in the UK and is part of a wider Bury offer, which also comprises a wide range of independent traders and the convenience of the Millgate Centre. For variety, character and independence retailing in Bury is unrivalled.

One approach to the competition of other centres is to expand the shopping offer of Bury to help it to retain its position in the retail hierarchy. The fact that there are a number of retail developers seeking to do just this is a great opportunity for the town. However, it is important that this is done without endangering Bury's unique selling point which is its market and independent retailers. This is perhaps the greatest threat to the town.

The other threats facing the town are the further erosion of the town's manufacturing base. There is also concern that the uncontrolled growth of bars and clubs could threaten other opportunities such as housing development. More importantly, the decline of the northern part of the town around The Rock is seen as potentially putting customers off and damaging the town's image.

There are, however, many more opportunities that the town must grasp. These include the reopening of the canal, the development of Bury Ground, the development of the Rock Triangle and Spring Street, the desire by Westfield to expand the shopping centre and the visitor potential of the railway. The ingredients are available for a successful and thriving town centre.

The four 'A's

In order to understand how to make the most of these opportunities we have undertaken a 4 'A's analysis of the town centre. This is based on the idea that the success of any centre is based on a) the *attractions* that bring people into the town, b) the ease with which they are able to *access* the centre, c) the *amenity* of the centre when they arrive and d) the effectiveness of local people and agencies at taking *action* to address these issues.

Attractions: At the heart of the success of any town centre are people as customers, visitors, residents or citizens. They will not come to the town to live or visit unless there is something to attract them. These attractions can operate at a variety of scales. Only relatively minor attractions are needed to pull in the immediate catchment population, whereas other attractions may exert a regional or even national and international draw, even in quite small places (such as the Hay on Wye book festival). At present Bury has two attractions that operate at the regional level – the Market and the East Lancs Railway. The Market, in particular, pulls people in from a very wide area and makes the town 'bustle' much more than you would expect for its population. It is part of the wider retail attraction of Bury which is based on both convenience and comparison shopping. It, therefore, includes the supermarkets around the centre such as Tescos and Asda, as much as the stores within the shopping centre. Other more local attractions include the evening economy, the cultural facilities such as the Art Gallery and Museum, the Met Arts Centre and the transport museum, although the latter is an under-exploited asset. The attractions that are missing include a bingo hall, town centre cinema, certain national retailers and a department store. Attractions also relate to town centre housing since this also brings people into the town by increasing the local catchment population.

Access: The second 'A' is the ease with which people can get to the centre because even with good attractions they will be put off by a difficult journey. This relates to all aspects of the journey from travelling by car, bus, tram, bicycle or on foot to the arrival experience at the bus station or car park and the 'walk in' experience from there to the final destination. As we described in Section 11 overall access to Bury is good. It has excellent public transport connections, road access is very good (despite some complaints at the workshop) and there is plentiful cheap parking. This is important because if Bury is not able to compete head on with larger centres it must be easier to get to. It is, therefore, important to preserve this accessibility by public transport and car as part of the strategy. There is, however, room for improvement in the arrival and walk-in experience by looking at the quality of the bus/rail interchange and the quality of surface car parks, walking/cycling routes and underpasses around the town.

Amenity: The third 'A' is the amenity of the centre or how attractive it is when people arrive. As we have described above the townscape and urban quality of Bury is confined to a very small area, and the shopping centre and fringe are not particularly attractive. Certainly, few people come to Bury for its architecture and townscape. However, it makes up for this with very good levels of maintenance and cleansing of public areas and, together with the town centre wardens, the centre feels safe and 'looked-after'.

Action: The final 'A' relates to the ability of stakeholders in the town to mobilise efforts to address the issues faced by the town. In many respects the town is doing very well in this regard, as indicated by the very good turn out at the workshop held as part of this study. There is also an active town centre forum, chaired by the manager of the shopping centre, which includes a range of local traders, the police, the churches and other agencies. The Council has a focused team of officers drawn from various departments working on the centre and senior officers and Members are committed to the success of the centre. The missing ingredient is a dedicated town centre manager to take the pressure off the Town Centres Co-ordinator who currently deals with town centre issues across all six town centres in the Borough.

13. Towards a vision

Bury but better

How then can we draw these strands together into a vision for the future of the town? Many visions developed as part of town centre strategies are meaningless, suggesting that the town is going to be good at everything and recognised as a 'centre of excellence' for this or that. It is, of course, impossible for every town to shine at everything and it is important to use the visioning process to provide a practical tool to shape the future of the town.

There was a very interesting session at the town centre workshop that discussed a vision for the town centre. Participants were first asked what places most resembled Bury today. The answers varied wildly from Altrincham and Solihull to Stockton-on-Tees and Barnsley depending on how positive people were feeling. However, many people felt that Bury was unlike anywhere else!

Participants were then asked to name places that Bury should be like. There were again a wide range of responses, some quite unrealistic. However, many of the suggestions were affluent smaller towns especially those within wider conurbations such as Altrincham (again), Chester, Didsbury, Harrogate, Lincoln, Lytham St. Annes, Southport, Aix en Provence and Calgary.

When participants were asked to suggest a vision for the town they listed issues such as, a car-free town centre, cleanliness and safety, attractive character, town centre living, cafés, restaurants, cinema and bingo and tree-lined streets. However, overall people did not want the town to change but rather to do better what it did now. This was summed up in comments like 'Keep its character' – 'Don't imitate – innovate' and 'Bury but Better'. There was also concern that it should project a better image to the outside world.

Much of what follows from these discussions is fairly straight-forward and we set out below the residential, leisure and business elements of the vision. However, at the heart of the vision lies the retail role of the centre and this involves some difficult choices. There are two broad scenarios that the town could follow:

Retail expansion: The first scenario is to support a substantial expansion of the shopping offer by vigorously encouraging all of the current retail developer interest. This could see the addition of 30-40,000m^2 of additional retail floorspace. This is the route being taken by most other towns (at least those able to attract developer interest) for fear of being left behind. It would not only increase the floor area of the centre but could also attract a department store and provide larger modern units able to attract retailers not currently represented in Bury. This scenario does, however, have risks. It could damage the independent retailing base of the town either through the loss of smaller units or through rising rents. It may even threaten the Market if the expansion of the shopping centre were to disrupt its operation or lead to inferior relocation. The concern is that if the importance of the existing retail base is not protected, then this scenario could damage the centre's distinctive retail offer, while only making Bury into a 'second-rate Bolton'.

Protecting the distinctive offer: The second

scenario is to emphasise and protect the distinctive independent and diverse retailing base of the town by resisting any shopping expansion that may harm this. This too has risks. Indeed it would be seen as swimming against the tide of national retailing trends and the strategies being pursued by most of Bury's competitors. If it were to curtail the aspirations of the retail developers interested in the town they may threaten to take their investment elsewhere and warn that Bury will be left behind. It relies on the continued success of the Market at a time when virtually every other market in the country is in decline. However, in a competitive market where Bury will always find it difficult to compete head on, it is vital to find a market niche. In Bury it is clear that the Market and independent traders give Bury a distinctive retail offer that must be protected and enhanced.

These two scenarios need not be incompatible. It is clear that the vision must be to expand the centre <u>and</u> to protect the independents.

We therefore do not believe that there is a need to choose between these two scenarios. However, the market and town centre independent retailers are potentially vulnerable to change. Particular efforts are therefore required to ensure that they continue to prosper in the future.

Other elements to the vision

The vision for Bury must be about far more than retailing. As we described in Section 2, the Urban White Paper and the drive for urban renaissance suggests that towns like Bury need to restructure their economy, repopulate their central area and respond to the sustainable development agenda.

This can also involve some difficult choices. In the past Bury was an independent centre able to provide jobs for its people. In truth this has not been the case for some time as a proportion of the population have commuted to jobs elsewhere, such as Manchester and Warrington. However, it is possible that economic change, such as the growth in the knowledge economy, services, media and creative industries, will focus ever more activity on larger cities. It may, therefore, be that Bury's future is to be ever more linked to the Manchester economy.

The town centre has a central role to play in this renaissance agenda as the focus for economic, leisure and residential development, and as Bury's shop front. This suggests the need for the expansion of the leisure offer and its widening to include family entertainment and visitor attractions based around the East Lancs Railway and the restoration of the canal. It also suggests

the development of business space to encourage local jobs and economic development. In addition to this, a renaissance vision would suggest the expansion of town centre housing. All of this means changing the emphasis of the town centre from a shopping centre to a more rounded town centre. It also has implications for the urban form of the town. Most important is the 'restitching' of the town into its context so that the centre can act as a natural focus for the town rather than an isolated island of facilities within a shatter zone of hostile space.

A proposed 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, leisure 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.*

Development Strategy 14.

In the last section we set out a vision for Bury recommending that retail expansion must be complemented by the protection and enhancement of the town's distinctive independent retail offer, together with the expansion of other town centre uses and the integration of the centre with its surroundings. In this section we develop this vision into a strategy for the town. This has been developed into six themes that are described below. These are then applied to each part of the town centre in the following section.

1. Reinforcing Bury as a market town:

The first theme is the consolidation and expansion of Bury's retail offer. This includes the following proposals:

1.1 Expanding the shopping centre: There is scope to expand the Millgate Shopping Centre. This includes the area to the rear of Marks and Spencer, the Interchange area and Princess Parade. This is to be encouraged subject to the comments below about the Market and the need to maintain the distinctiveness and design of the centre with its light and airy 'conservatory' style malls. These are explored in more detail below.

1.2 Protecting / enhancing the market: As described above this is heavily based on the success and uniqueness of the Market. This was refurbished a number of years ago and has been a success. Further improvements should be supported but great care should be taken if dealing with development proposals which affect the current operation of the Market.

1.3 Accommodating and retaining independent traders: Maintaining Bury as good place for independent retailers through support for the market and work to ensure that small affordable units are available in the town centre.

1.4 Expanding the convenience offer: Given that Bury is an important convenience shopping destination , the development of a further supermarket on the edge of the town centre is to be encouraged. Provided that this is part of a coherent scheme, supports and enhances town centre vitality, and has good pedestrian links into the town centre it will reinforce its role.

1.5 Bulky goods retailing: The Drivers Jonas report identified scope to develop bulky goods retailing on the edge of the town centre. Provided that this is restricted to non-town centre uses it will attract custom into the town that would not otherwise come to Bury rather than diverting trade from the centre. It is, therefore, to be encouraged again provided that there are links to the centre.

1.6 Regenerating The Rock: The Rock was the traditional shopping street of Bury and has suffered in recent years of die-back from its eastern end. The pedestrianisation scheme is looking tired and needs to be renewed. However, this alone will not solve the problems of the street. What is needed is an anchor at the eastern end of the street to draw it back into the retail centre. This could be provided

by the Rock Triangle scheme or through the expansion of Marks and Spencers to provide them with a shopfront onto The Rock, or ideally both.

1.7 Signage and interpretation: To overcome the problems of legibility and to tie the centre together it is suggested that a comprehensive signage and interpretation scheme be implemented for the town centre. There have been a number of recent finger posts installed. However, as part of the proposals set out below, we are suggesting that the town centre is developed as a series of 'quarters' and these should be reflected on the signage and maps of the centre. An early phase in the implementation of such an approach could be sought in conjunction with Thornfield Properties and the Rock Triangle scheme.

2. Making the most of Bury's heritage

It is clear that the history of Bury is one of the aspects of the town that people value. While many of the centre's present day buildings do not necessarily reflect this heritage there is the opportunity to use Bury's history and heritage to project a positive image, to diversify its economic base and to attract visitors. This includes the following proposals:

2.1 Expanding the East Lancashire Railway: There are long term plans to develop the East Lancs Railway by linking it to the main line (via the line that runs through Townside Fields) and to provide more public access to the railway restoration sheds at Buckley Wells. Aside from the Market this is Bury's only regional attraction and we would endorse its continued expansion.

2.2 The transport museum: This is currently an underused asset and needs to be developed in conjunction with the railway. It has the potential to provide a linked attraction when trains are not running up the valley. There is scope to widen opening hours and to provide joint ticketing with the railway and shared publicity. The vehicles could also be used as part of the animation of the centre.

2.3 A new role for the Armoury: If, as seems likely, the Bury Armoury is largely vacated by the Territorial Army this should be the focus for a scheme to permanently house the Lancashire Fusiliers Regimental Museum. Falling visitor numbers means that the museum collection could be put into storage unless it can find a more accessible home. While the Armoury building is of limited heritage value, it is a striking structure and is well placed to create a critical mass of attractions with the railway, the restored canal, the transport museum, Castle Square, and the culture quarter including the shops, pubs and restaurants of Silver Street, Bolton Street and Market Place.

2.4 Culture Quarter: Bury has already been promoting a Cultural Quarter focussed on the Market Place / Silver Street area. This is the most characterful part of the town with the largest concentration of listed buildings. We would, therefore, endorse the further development of this area as a focus for cultural and leisure activities.

2.5 Canal: The Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal was an important part of the town's industrial heritage. Much of this was lost with the filling in of the canal and the development of industrial sheds on the former canal basins. This area does, however, contain many remnants of industrial heritage and we believe that the proposals for the reopening of the canal should be used as a spur for the regeneration and development of this area as described in section 16.

2.6 Interpretation: The signage scheme suggested above should include interpretive panels uncovering the history of different parts of the centre.

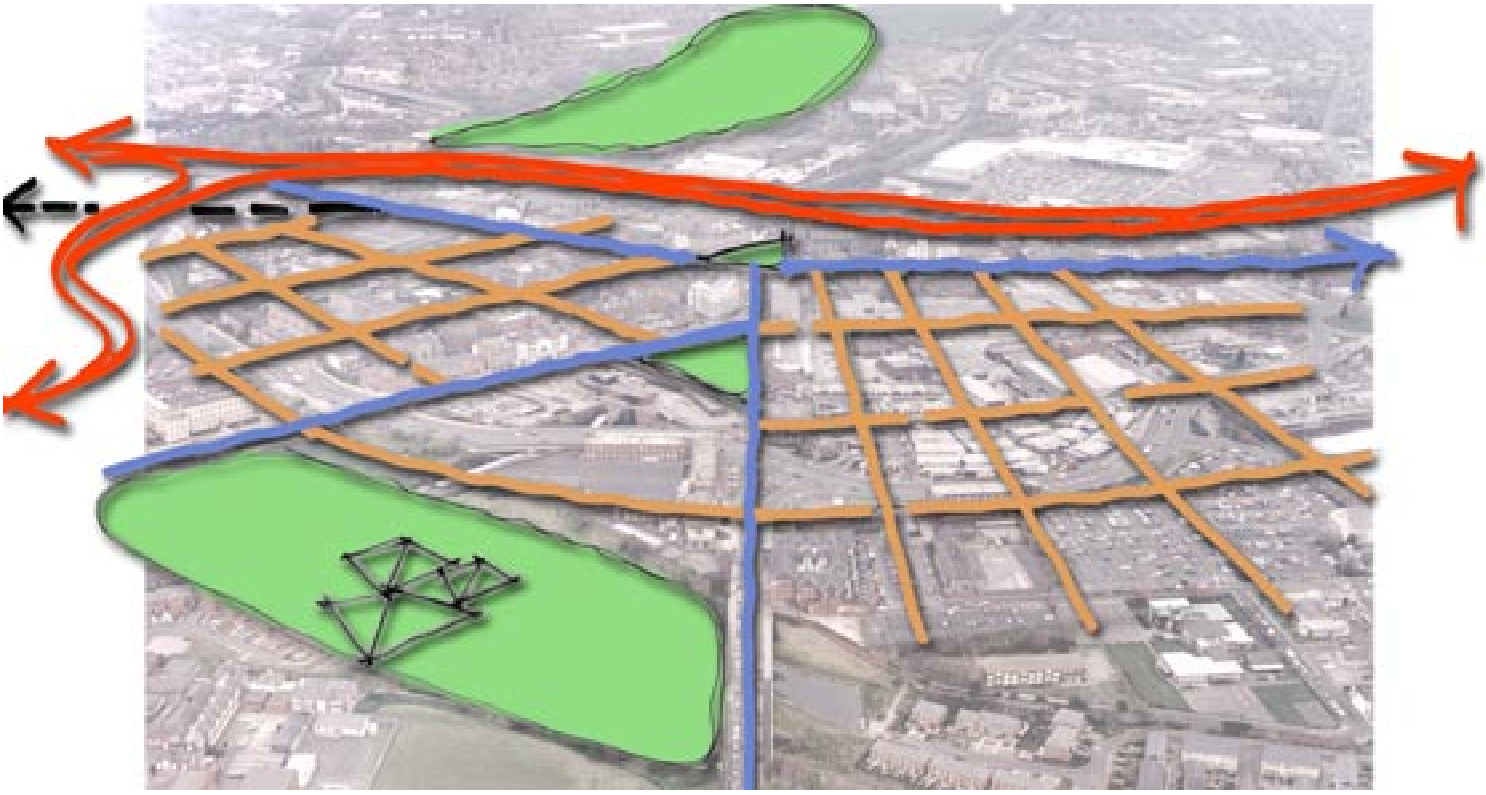
3. Creating an accessible town centre

Bury is currently a very accessible centre for cars and public transport but is less accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. It is important to enhance existing accessibility while also making the centre more friendly for pedestrians and the disabled. This includes the following proposals:

3.1 Overcoming the barrier of the Ring Road: Perhaps our most radical proposal is to change the character of the ring road to the east of the town centre. As we described in Section 4, Bury was originally built on a 'T'

junction. We are suggesting that the eastern section of the Ring Road be turned back into a traditional street to allow the reintegration of the town centre with the residential areas to the east, recreating the original T junction and 'fan-shaped' form of the town. This needs to be subject to specific traffic modelling and should take place as part of a signage scheme that directs traffic through a network of streets rather than down one channel. We are not proposing that Angouleme Way be closed but that it be turned into a traditional street with frontage development and surface crossings.

3.2 Creating surface crossings: We are also proposing that traffic light controlled surface crossings be created for pedestrians elsewhere on the ring road. This includes the junction with Manchester Road, the subway linking Tenterden Street and Irwell Street, and the western end of Bolton Street.



Above: The masterplan concept based on the principles set out in this section. The ring road becomes more of a bypass allowing the street patterns of the town to be reinstated

Right: Proposed Zone of Urban Quality

3.3 Improvements to disabled access: Bury town centre is already very accessible for disabled groups. As part of all access works, local disability groups should be consulted to ensure that this situation continues.

3.4 Reprioritising junctions: The proposed changes to Angouleme Way should involve the realignment of the Market Street junction allowing college students to cross more easily into the town centre. It is also suggested that the following junctions also be reprioritised to reduce land-take and make it easier for pedestrians to cross: Manchester Road/ Angouleme Way, Jubilee Way/Peel Way and Peel Way/The Rock. In the first two instances there is the opportunity to release development land to fund the improvements.

3.5 Creating a pedestrian link to the canal basin: As we have described, the railway and the river also provide barriers to pedestrians. This has held back the development of the areas around Irwell Street and Millet Street. We have looked at various options for creating links into this area and believe that the best opportunity is a link to the end of Bolton Street with a new surface crossing on Jubilee Way and a new footbridge over the river . This would only be justified if British Waterways were to pursue the development of the canal basin as described below.

3.6 Reorienting the bus station: Presently the bus station / rail interchange functions very effectively but is unattractive and does not provide a good arrival experience to the town. The adjacent park and ride car park could become surplus to requirements when the new park and ride facility (into Manchester) is completed at Buckley Wells. This provides the opportunity to reorientate the bus/rail interchange to the west of the tram station creating a development site and removing the barrier to pedestrians arriving at the Interchange.

3.7 Town centre parking: Retain the overall number of town centre car parking spaces while releasing surface parking for development. This is to be achieved by creating decked or multi storey car parks as part of development schemes and creating a new car park on Townside Fields.

4. Creating an attractive, compact town centre

As we have described, Bury is a very well kept town centre but the current area of urban quality is confined to Silver Street, Market Place and the western part of The Rock. An important part of the strategy should be to extend this area of urban quality so that Bury creates an urban environment fitting to its history and role.

4.1 Defining an Urban Quality Area: By urban quality we mean a street-based, relatively densely built, mixed-use environment. This, however, is not always compatible with modern retailing, office and leisure developments. Therefore, rather than apply urban design guidelines to all development, it is suggested that a zone of urban quality be defined as shown on the plan on the previous page. Within this area development would be expected to follow the guidelines set out in 4.2. Outside the area different development forms would be acceptable such as retail and business parks.

4.2 Drawing up urban design guidelines: The guidelines set out in the Government guidance 'By Design' or the 'Manchester Guide to Development' should be amended for use in Bury and adopted as SPG as part of the UDP review. All development within the zone of urban quality should be required to correspond to this guidance.

4.3 Preparing planning briefs: It is often the case that developments move too quickly for planning authorities to prepare considered planning briefs. However, the major developments around Bury town centre require planning briefs to provide clarity of the Council's intentions and coordination between schemes. In line with the Planning Green Paper these could be developed in partnership with developers.

4.4 Concentrating on gateways: It is suggested that development and environmental improvements should be targeted at the gateways to the town centre. This will maximise the impact of development and bridge the shatter zone that currently surrounds the centre.

4.5 Defining a series of quarters: In order to promote the development of different parts of the town and to create a sense of identity and legibility it is proposed that a series of quarters be created as set out in section 16.

5. Managing the quality of the town centre

While Bury is very good at activities like street cleaning and town centre wardens there is a need to develop more proactive town centre management. This would involve the following:

5.1 The appointment of a town centre manager: There is a need for a manager that can work with the current Town Centres Coordinator to bring a focus to promotional work in Bury. The existing Town Centre Management Group would provide oversight for this manager.

5.2 Events and animation: The appointment of a manager would allow an increase in promotional events and animation of the town centre throughout the year. This is starting to happen with this year's very effective Christmas campaign. A manager would allow this to cover other aspects of the centre such as the heritage facilities. Animation could also include street performance and cultural activities (such as the Greater Manchester Streets Ahead Festival) in partnership with organisations like the Met.

5.3 Improving safety and lighting: While the centre of town is perceived as being safe, the fringes are less inviting. The gateways improvements and car park development suggested above should be linked into the CCTV scheme and lighting improvements to extend the safe zone to the surrounding areas.

5.4 Coordinating the town centre wardens: In future the town centre wardens could come under the control of a town centre manager to enhance their promotinal roles together with maintaining their roles as, for example, town centre guides, maintenance coordinators etc…

5.5 Commissioning public art: A programme of public art should be initiated linked to the Irwell Valley sculpture trail. This has the potential to extend the innovative commissioning strategy in the valley – such as the Ulrich Ruckriem sculptures in Radcliffe to project a positive image and draw people into the town.

6. Broadening the role of the centre

The final set of recommendations relates to the broadening of the economic base of the town centre by encouraging uses other than retailing. This will create a rounded town centre active throughout the day, in the evenings, and at weekends so smoothing out the market day peaks of activity.

6.1 Promoting town centre housing: New housing should be promoted in the town centre. This will be predominantly flats but may include town houses around Irwell Street. This should be a mix of social and private housing but the latter is important, initially to establish a market for town centre housing as has happened in Bolton. Two recently completed schemes off Knowsley Street and Bolton Street give comfort that this is possible and the development of the Rock Triangle is likely to give an early opportunity to develop a significant amount of housing in a scheme which will largely make its profit from retail development.

6.2 Promoting Bury Ground as a business park: The development of Bury Ground represents an important opportunity to establish Bury as a key business location in North Manchester. There is currently only a limited office market in the town and this will not change unless a critical mass can be generated to change the market. This is what the Bury Ground development will do and as such we believe it is worthy of support by the NWDA.

6.3 Developing small scale offices and provision for SME's: There is demand for small scale units for locally based companies. This could build on the existing scheme on Bolton Street (Inwood House) to reinforce this as a gateway and to link to the critical mass of Bury Ground or build on regeneration proposals for areas such as York Street and East Bury.

6.4 Creating new council offices: There are proposals to rationalise council accommodation currently spread throughout the town centre. A new building could be developed adjacent to the Town Hall, either on the western part of Townside Fields or on land created by the remodelling of the Manchester

Road/Angouleme Way junction. This could be financed on a lease, lease back arrangement and would free up office space within the centre for small businesses.

6.5 Developing studio space and incubator units: Other than Bury Ground, Bury is unlikely to attract major inward investment in the face of competition from towns with greater access to grants. It is, therefore, important to grow indigenous economic activity perhaps generated by students at the College. To do this we suggest that incubator/workspace schemes should be promoted perhaps as part of a scheme for the Arts and Crafts Centre (see below), an expansion of Business Lodge or possibly part of redevelopment proposals at Crostons Road.

6.6 Arts and Crafts Centre: This is an important and historic facility in the town centre that is currently badly configured and inaccessible for disabled people. As a result it may be forced to close which would be a great loss to the town. It is important to promote a scheme possibly with lottery funding to refurbish and extend the building for its current use and to provide gallery and studio space. Consideration should be given to opportunities which may arise in the wider area including Sparrow Park and the Health Authority offices which could be vacated in the future. This could be undertaken in partnership with the College or the Art Gallery and Museum.

15.

Towards a masterplan

Process and principles

We have pulled the six themes from the previous section together into a masterplan for the town centre as described on the maps that run through this section. We describe first the overall development of the plan before setting out our proposals for each of the quarters.

The generation of the town centre masterplan

The masterplan has been developed through the stages set out below. This technique has been developed by URBED over a number of years and is based on what we call the three 'R's:

1. **Rediscovery:** The rediscovery and uncovering of the historic structure of the town based on an analysis of historic maps.

2. **Repair:** The restitching of the urban fabric to repair the damage done by decline, highways works or poor planning in the past.

3. **Renewal:** The addition of a contemporary layer that adds to what was there before and creates a sense of place and identity.

This process is set out in the following plans:

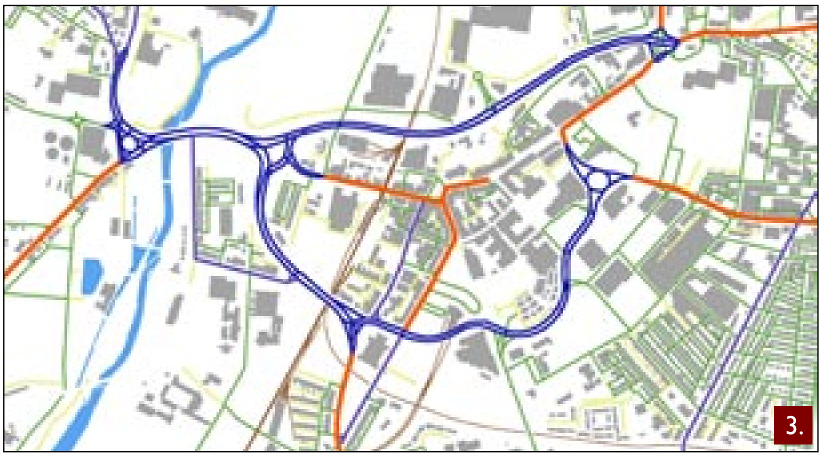
The hard and soft plan: The first step is to identify the areas of the town centre where change is either possible or desirable. This is shown on **Plan 1** - the hard and soft plan with the blue areas showing where change is possible. The striking thing about this plan is the extent of the soft areas. This creates huge opportunities to transform the town but also enormous risks that the change may not be for the best.

Clearing the decks: Plan 2 takes away the buildings that are likely to go within the soft areas. This allows the scope for change in the town centre to be clearly seen.

Reconnecting the street network: The first step in reconstructing the form of the town is to establish the street network. **Plan 3** shows the existing street network and **Plan 4** shows the historic network.


1.


2.



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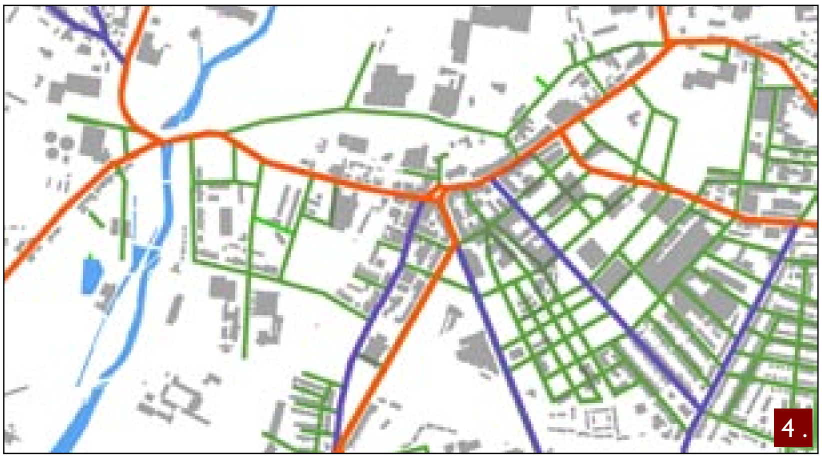

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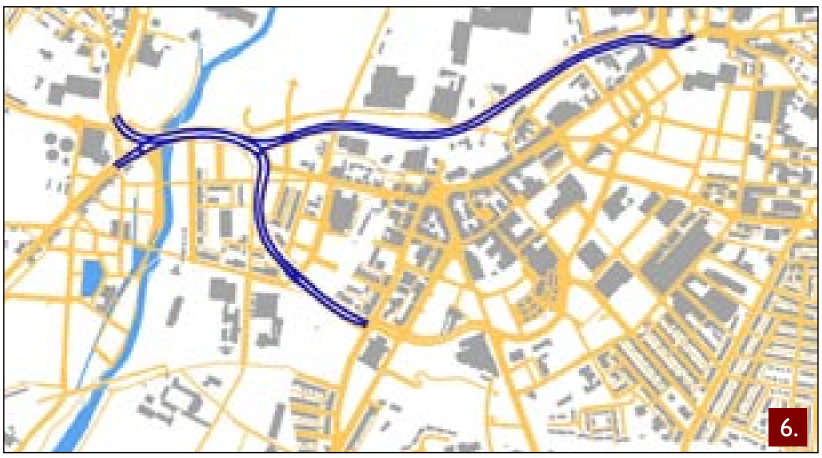


6.

Plan 5 then shows a suggested new street network that starts to stitch back together the town centre and reconnect the centre to the edge. The main element of this network is the downgrading of the eastern section of the ring road and the creation of a new route though the centre of the Rock Triangle. This rediscovers elements of the historic street pattern and restitches the fabric of the town.

Street hierarchy: The next step is to overlay a street hierarchy over this network. In this case we have used a simple five level hierarchy:

1. **The 'Ring' Road:** This is to be a high volume route designed for the freeflow of traffic - see **Plan 6**. However, this does not mean that the street should be intimidating to pedestrians. We would envisage the Jubilee Way section being tree lined with surface pedestrian crossings and new buildings facing onto the street.

2. **High Streets:** These are the main streets of the town and carry much of the internal traffic. They were often the main roads into town. They should also be the most urban in character and lined by buildings with active frontages to create an attractive shopfront to the town. They are shown in red on **Plan 7** and include the Rock, Market Street, Knowsley Street, Manchester Road, Bolton Road and Rochdale Road. The dotted lines indicate the areas of the Rock that is a high street but which is pedestrianised.

3. **Secondary Streets:** These are not quite as important as high streets but play an important role as a location for secondary shops and other public facilities. The status of streets can change over time so that Silver Street, for example, started as a high street being the main road from Manchester. However, with the development of Knowsley Street it became a less important secondary street. Other secondary streets (in brown on **Plan 7**) include Market Street. It is also pro-

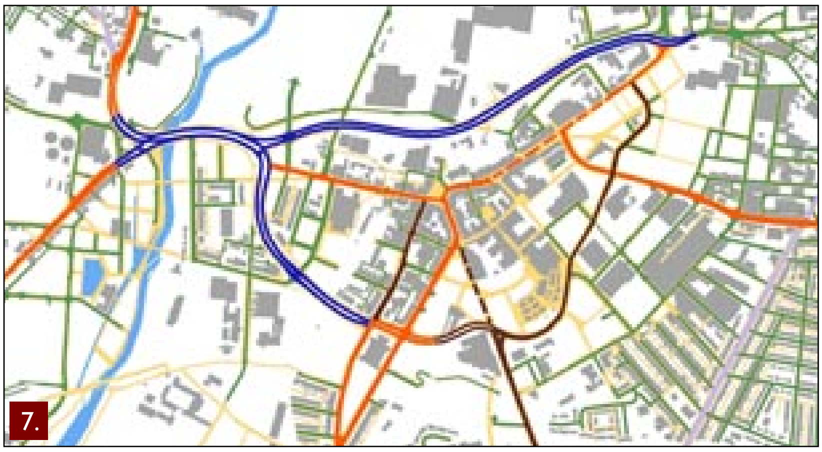
posed that the eastern part of the Ring Road should become a secondary street. This is because it will remain an important route but will not be a focus for the main shops and public facilities.

4. **Tertiary Streets:** These make up the rest of the street network (in green on **Plan 7**) and provide permeability and frontage access for vehicles within the town. They should also be fronted by buildings but with less active frontage.

5. **Pedestrian network:** The picture is completed by the pedestrian routes on **Plan 8**. Given that much of central Bury is car free these form an important part of the 'street' network. In design terms it is important that pedestrian routes are designed with the same care as other streets. They should also be overlooked where possible by buildings. An important issue is the role of malls in this network as described in Section 7 above. These operate as routes in the daytime but are closed outside shopping hours creating large areas of impermeability. This leads to a lack of pedestrian activity outside shopping hours which can make the centre feel more threatening.

Gateways: Plan 9 then identifies the gateways to the town centre (red circles) in order to focus development and improvements where they will have the greatest impact (see **Plan 10** - blue areas). These include the existing Manchester Road gateway, the Angouleme Way/Manchester Road Junction, Bury Bridge, The Jubilee Way/ Peel Way/Bolton Street junction, The Moorgate Junction, the Rochdale Road Roundabout and, of course the Interchange.

Zone of urban quality: Plan 11 then overlays the proposed zone of urban quality as described in the previous section. This covers the central part of the town and extends to cover the gateways and to make bridges along the main streets to connect the centre to the surrounding neighbourhoods.



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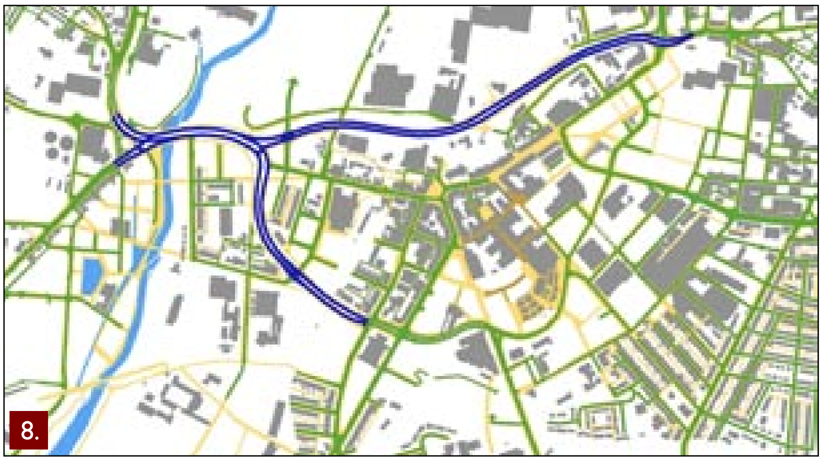

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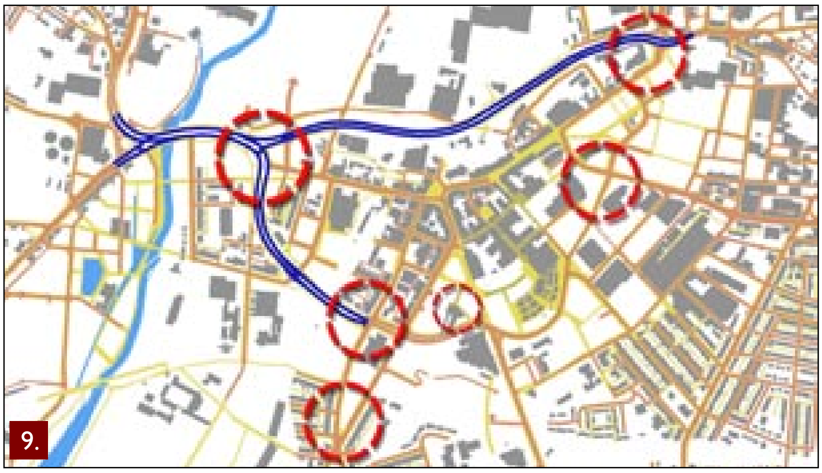

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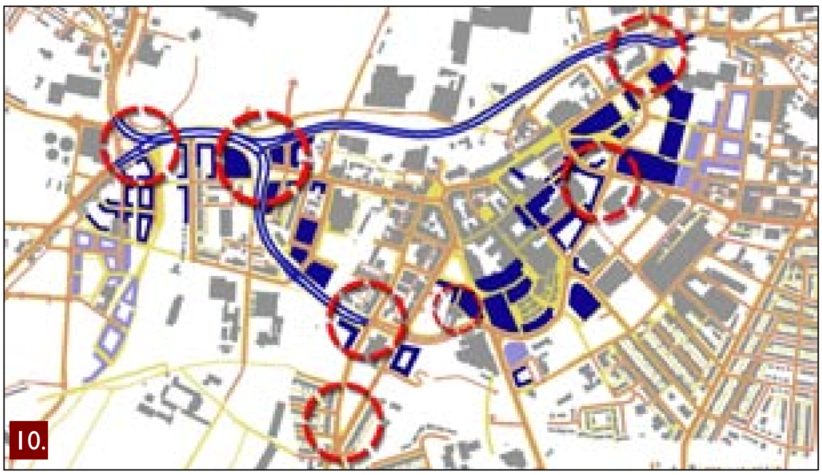


10.

Proposed quarters: We go on to suggest a series of quarters (if indeed you can have seven quarters) in the town centre (**Plan 12**). This is considered to provide a practical framework for implementing the 'vision' and includes the following:

1. **The Western Waterside:** This includes the Irwell valley and the proposed reopened canal basins and extends eastwards to the Millet Street area. It is seen as a residential/heritage area similar to Castlefield in Manchester.

2. **The Phoenix Quarter:** We have struggled to find a name for this area – which sums up its problem. Taking its name from Phoenix Street seems as good as any other suggestion. It is likely to be a predominantly residential area around the Castle Leisure Centre.

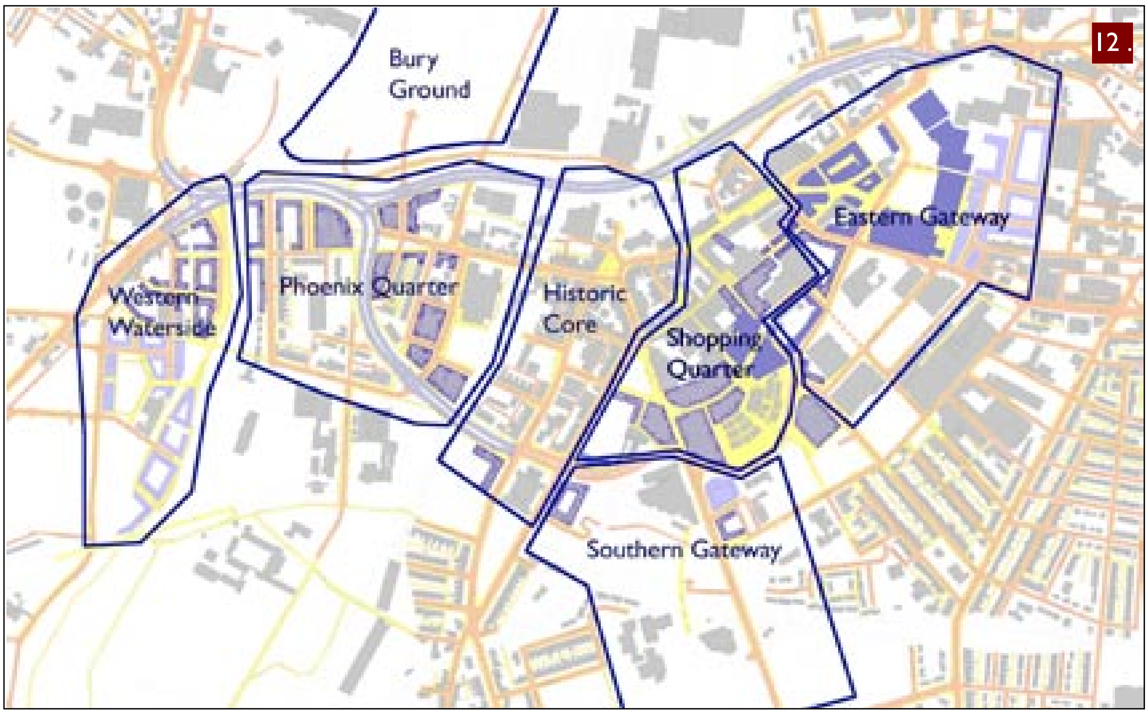
3. **The Historic Core:** This includes a slice through the centre of the town from the Parish Church to the Town Hall. It includes most of Bury's cultural and civic facilities as well as much of the evening economy.

4. **The Shopping Quarter:** This is the main shopping area stretching from The Rock to the Market. This contains most of the town centre shopping and will be the focus for retail expansion.

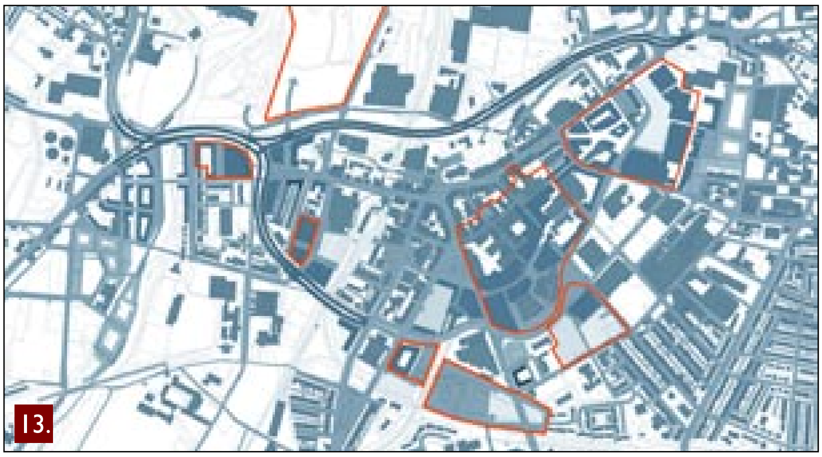
5. **The Eastern Gateway:** This includes the areas on either side of Rochdale Road including the Rock Triangle and the bus garage site. It will continue to provide larger retail units with the introduction of housing and other uses to restitch together the urban form of the area.

6. **The Southern Gateway:** The College sites and Townside Fields.

7. **Bury Ground:** This area is proposed as a business park, which will need to be linked to the town centre.

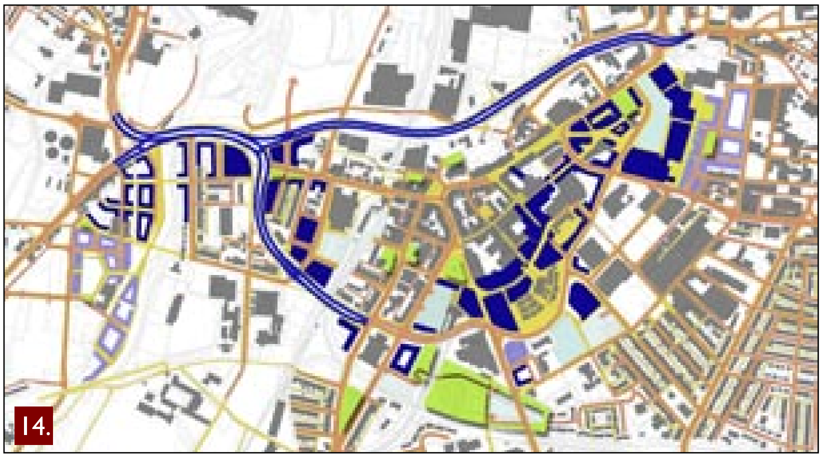


Built form: The buildings on the plan (dark grey on **Plan 13**) start to map out urban form to repair the damaged parts of the town. These are concentrated around the gateways and on the shatter zone to the east of the town. At this stage these are just blocks and the intention is to create a legible urban form and to enclose streets and public spaces. **Plan 13** also shows that many of these blocks correspond to sites (red edged sites) where there are current development proposals or where land is on the market.



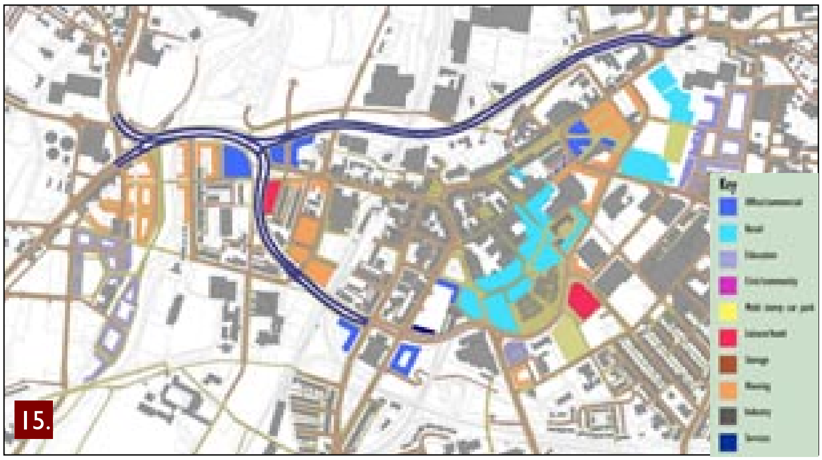
13.

Open spaces: Plan 14 adds a network of open spaces to this structure. This includes a new public square in the Rock Triangle along with a park on part of Townside Fields and a gateway space at the western end of Bolton Street.



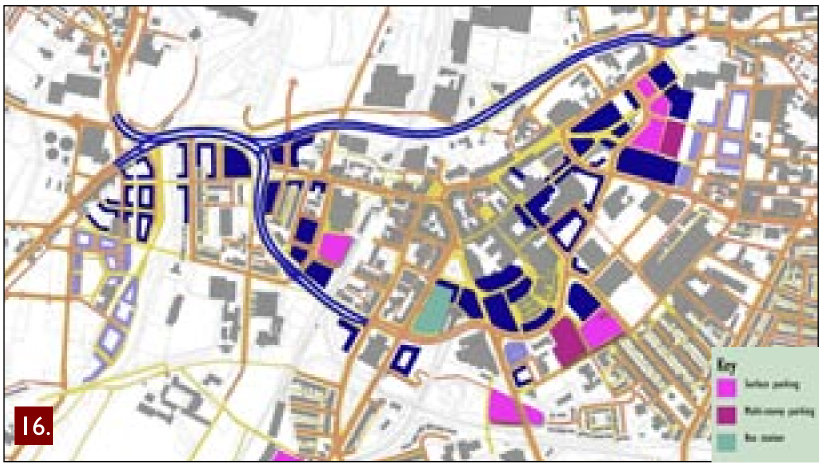
14.

Land uses: Plan 15 suggests a series of land uses for these development plots. This is based on the demand assessment undertaken by King Sturge as set out in Sections 9 and 10. These uses are described in more detail in the following section.



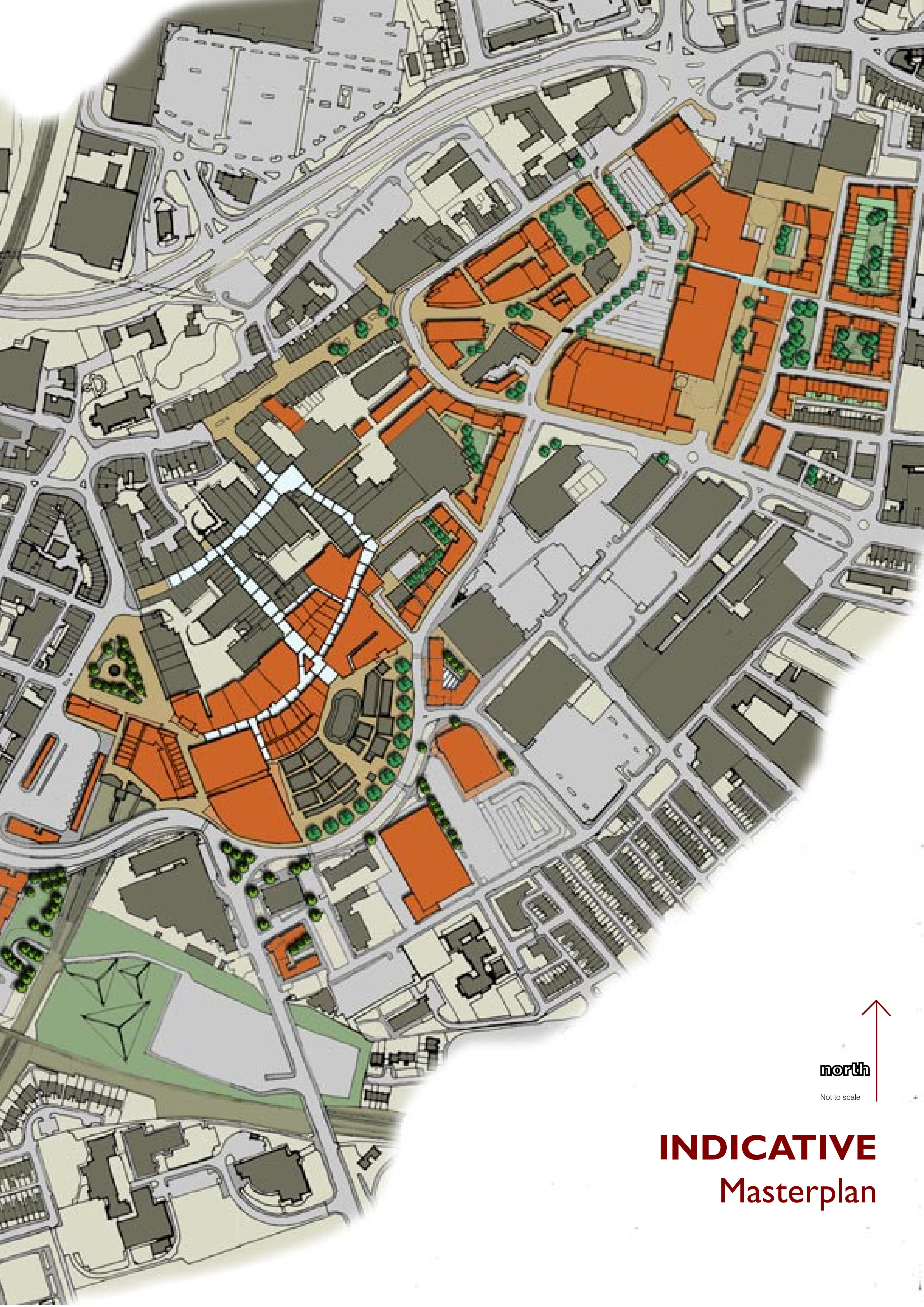
15.

Parking: Plan 16 completes the picture by showing the location of new and improved parking areas, both surface (light purple) and multi-storey (dark purple).



16.

This step-by-step process shows how the structure of the town can be repaired and recreated. This will, of course, take many years to implement. However, the current development schemes provide an excellent opportunity to make an early start and the overall structure can then be used to guide future development through design guidance and planning briefs. Thus, over a period of 10 to 20 years, Bury can transform its character and urban structure to create a town fit for the 21st century. As a starting point for these planning briefs we set out in the following section our thoughts on the way these proposals can be translated for each of the sites and quarters in the town centre.



INDICATIVE
Masterplan

16. Towards a masterplan

Quarters

Having set out a strategy for the town centre in the previous sections, we go on in this chapter to illustrate how this could transform the town centre. In doing this it is important to stress that we are not in a position to design every site. Developments will come forward over time promoted by different developers with their own architects. It would be wrong of us to be over prescriptive about what these developers should do.

On the other hand, if the strategy that we have set out set is to be implemented, there are a number of key principles that need to be followed by the developments in the town centre. It is these principles that we set out in this chapter. These principles should be reflected in the UDP and in the briefs for individual sites that we recommend in section 14. These principles are demonstrated with plans that are purely illustrative that give an impression of what the principles might mean.

On the following pages we set out these principles for the four areas of the town centre where the most change is likely to take place. However before we do that we describe proposals for the others parts of the centre:

Bury Ground: We endorse the proposals to develop this area as a business park based on a new access from Peel Way along with a possible hotel and heath and fitness centre. The main development principles should be to:

1. Promote Bury Ground as a major opportunity for development as a business park.
2. Supporta new vehicular access from Peel Way.
3. Maintain areas of public open space to compliment the river valley / Sculpture trail initiatives and park land setting.
4. Seek to increase density in aeas to be developed.
5. Seek to reduce car parking to PPG 13 standards and encourage public transport, walking and cycling links.

The historic core: This area forms the focus for the development of Bury's 'culture quarter' and should continue to be developed, particularly making better use of its landmark buildings and attractions such as The Met, the library, Museum & Art Gallery building, the Arts & Crafts Centre and the Castle Armoury. Improvements to the existing built fabric are recommended rather than radical change.

The main opportunities are the scope to further develop The Met Arts Centre; to improve

the vitality and accessibility of the Museum & Archive service; to find a new home for the Lancashire Fusiliers Museum within the town centre; and to promote and futher develop The Arts & Crafts Centre as a visitor attraction.
Opportunity also exists to develop new offices to the east and west of the Town Hall. The principles guiding development of this area should be:

1. The conservation of the historic built fabric
2. The refurbishment of the Arts and Crafts Centre
3. The introduction of signage and interpretation.

The southern gateway: The southern gateway includes Townside Fields that has been promoted as a development opportunity over a number of years. We believe that this site will be difficult to develop because of its poor access and difficult levels. It is bisected by the Metrolink line and cut off by the East Lancashire Railway line and the Market Street viaduct. It does however have the advantage of being in local authority control and is adjacent to the Transport Interchange.

Whilst the immediate prospects for development are uncertain, the development of offices, housing or a hotel would be entirely consistent with this strategy. The long-term strategy should be to promote the site for mixed-use development, however, in the interim it would be suitable for parking. The principles that should guide development are:

1. A pedestrian link should be created between the two college sites.
2. An access should be created from Market Street
3. There is long term potential for mixed-use development.
4. In the short term the site can be used for parking.

INDICATIVE Plan

Western Waterside

The western waterside:

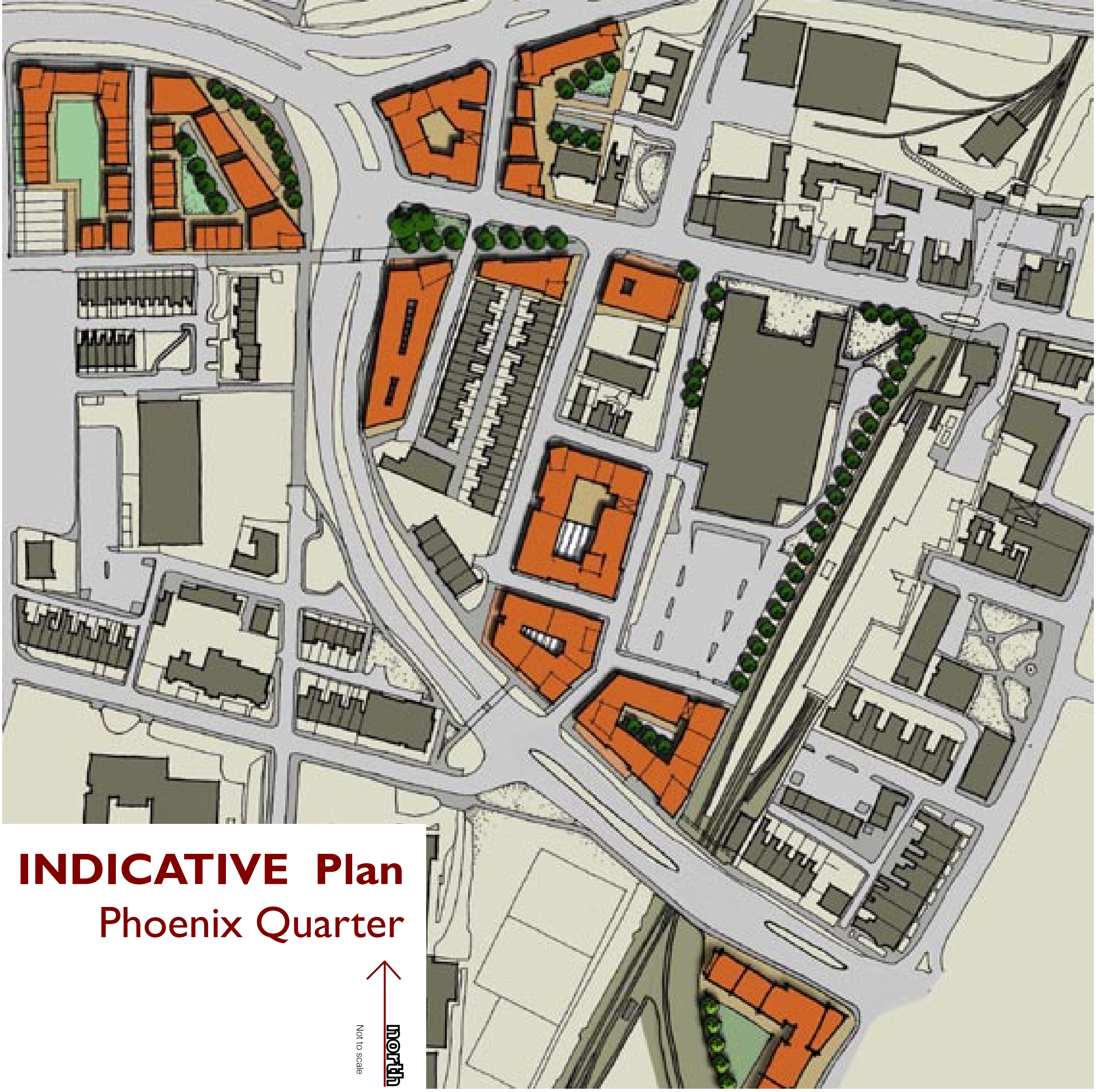
The plans to reopen the Manchester - Bolton - Bury Canal create an opportunity to completely regenerate this part of Bury. This was once an industrial area based around the canal and while it has fallen into decline a number of canalside buildings have survived.

British Waterways propose to relocate the industrial estate that stands on the former canal basins. This will create a significant development site that we believe has the potential for waterside residential development linked to leisure uses similar to Castlefield in Manchester or Wigan Pier.

The area's main problem at present is its isolation. If significant resources are to be invested in the opening of the canal it will be important to link this to the town centre to tie it into the town's attractions. Presently the only link is across the traffic-dominated Bury Bridge and barriers are created by the railway, ring road and river. We have explored a number of possible new links. The best we believe is along Bolton Street to its link with the Ring Road and then down a new route along Sankey Street to a new bridge over the river. This will create a direct pedestrian and visual link between the centre and the canal unlocking the development of the canal basin. If the area were to be successful there is a possibility of a second bridge in the future at the end of Tenterden Street.

This would allow residential development around the reopened canal basins with small scale leisure uses such as a waterside pub and office units for local companies. The development would start at the northern end of the site and extend southwards in phases to the railway viaduct. The development as a whole would not be triggered until the canal is reopened and the next stage is to work with British Waterways to commission a detailed masterplan for the development of the area to feed into the canal feasibility work.

1. Relocation of industrial estate to create a major development opportunity triggered by the opening of the canal.
2. The mixed-use development of waterside apartments with small scale leisure uses and offices.
3. Improved pedestrian links with the town centre including a new footbridge.



INDICATIVE Plan
Phoenix Quarter

north

Not to scale

The Phoenix Quarter

This area is currently a no-mans land bisected by the railway, ring road and river. The old plans of Bury show that this area has always been something of a backwater particularly since the completion of the railway. The main uses are currently the Leisure Centre and police station with a range of housing, small industry and other uses.

The likely relocation of the Police Station provides an opportunity to realise the potential of this area as a residential quarter on the edge of the town centre.

The proposals show residential development on the Police Station site. This could either be flats or town houses around courtyards allowing a street network to be reinstated in this part of the town. This would be used to consolidate and give an edge to the Leisure Centre car park.

Jubilee Way is to remain an important part of the Ring Road. However it should still be treated as a street rather than a hostile motorway. We have therefore sought to create an urban edge to the street which would in turn be planted with trees and the underpasses replaced by surface crossings. This will reduce the barrier effect of the road and allow development to be integrated.

Development is also proposed around the junction of Peel Way/Jubilee Way and Bolton Street. This is an important gateway to the town centre and also an important node in the route to the canal side. It is proposed to create a new triangular public space enclosed by new development on land released by the reorientation of the road junction.

To the west of the junction the sites currently being marketed are also proposed for mixed use development to create an active, urbanised route from the town centre to the canal area.

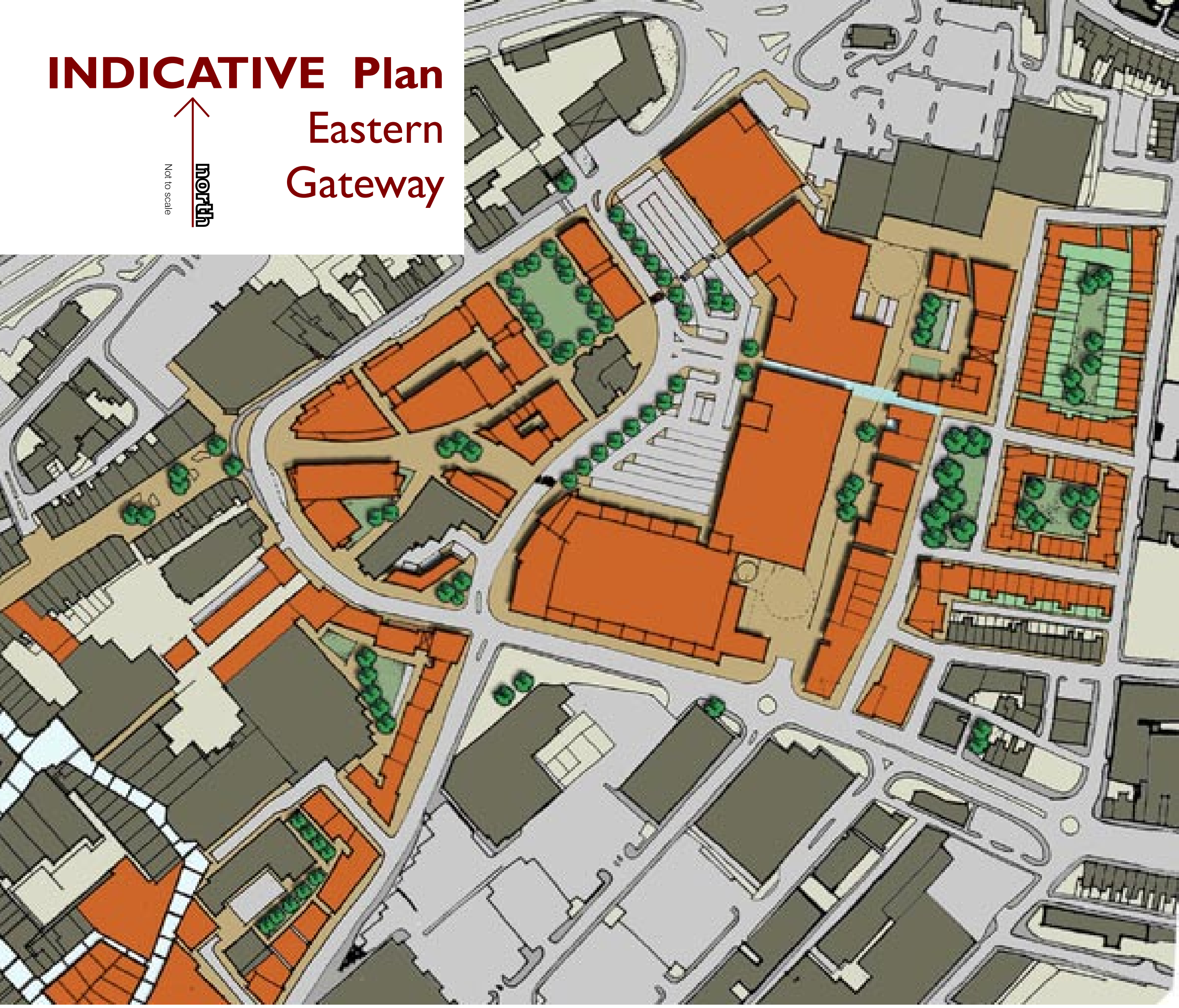
1. Reinstatement of the original street pattern when the opportunity arises.
2. Consolidation of the area as a residential quarter.
3. The treatment of Jubilee Way as a boulevard with surface crossings and frontage development.
4. The creation of a new gateway to the town centre at the junction of Bolton Street and Jubilee Way based on the reorientation of the road junction.

INDICATIVE Plan

Eastern Gateway

north

Not to scale



The Eastern Gateway:

This scheme includes the Rock Triangle where development proposals are being put forward by Thornfield Properties. This was originally an industrial area with a range of mills and reservoirs. Little of its former character remains other than the retail properties at the junction of the Rock and Rochdale Road and the adjacent church. To the rear the site includes the First Manchester bus depot. The bus company has been exploring the redevelopment of this site if an alternative site can be found.

Thornfield's proposals include a large supermarket and a number of retail units on the eastern part of the site with a number of mixed use blocks to the west including housing, retailing, offices and leisure. These uses are broadly acceptable in terms of the town centre. The supermarket is in line with our analysis that Bury needs to strengthen its role as a convenience shopping centre and the other retail units are supported by the Drivers Jonas study (see Section 10). First Manchester are also interested in retail development on their site. However, it would be difficult for the retail development on this site to be closely linked to the retail core of the town centre. We therefore believe that the First Manchester site is not well suited to retail development.

An initial scheme for the Rock Triangle was published by Thornfield for consultation during the course of the study. There were many aspects of this scheme that we welcomed. However, its weakness was that it was designed around a large car park. Through discussions with Thornfield this scheme has evolved and the indicative plan to the left is very similar to their current proposals.

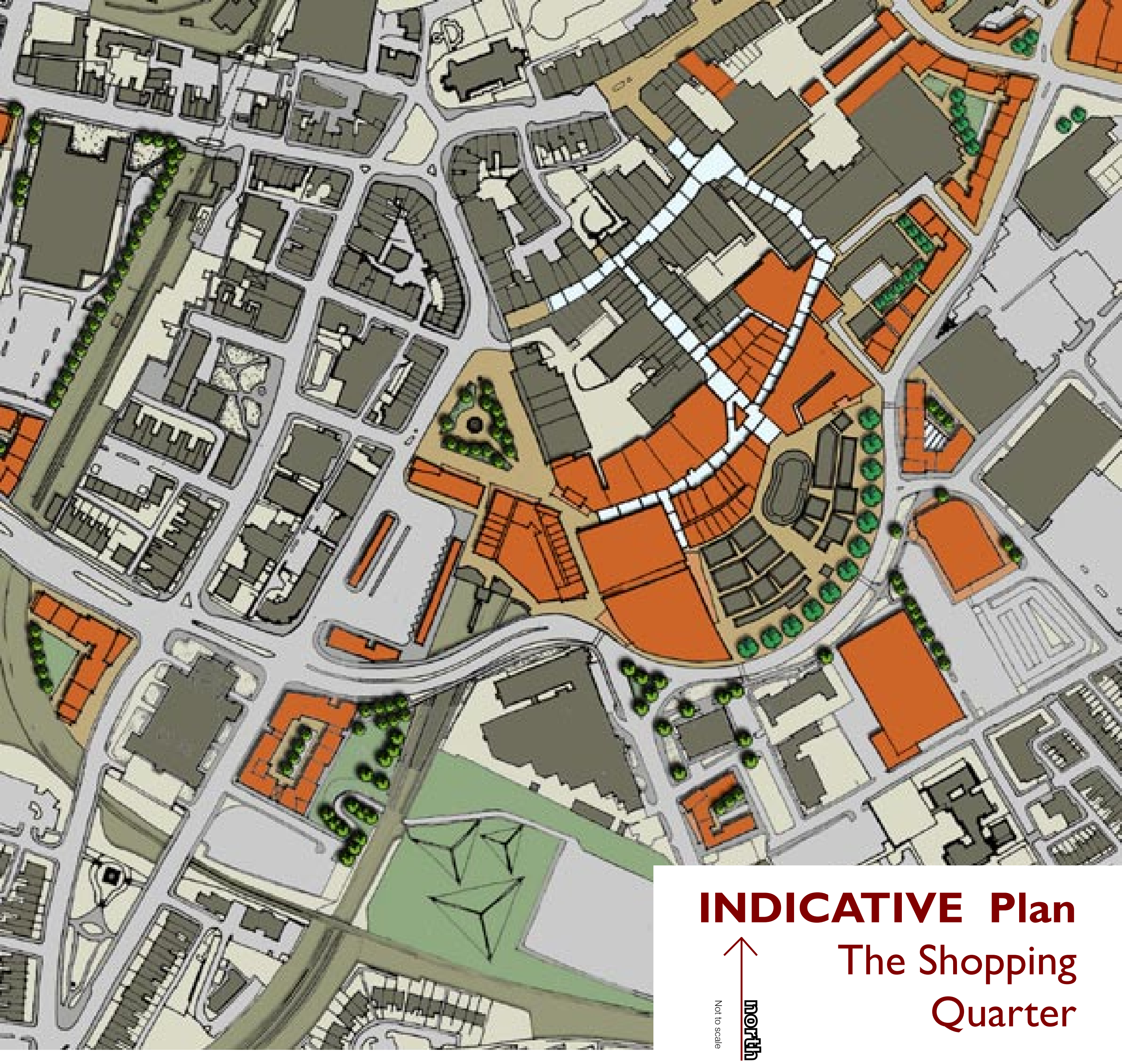
The first step was to take a street through the centre of the site. This is part of the downgrading of the Eastern Ring Road and will allow traffic to be reduced on the eastern end of the Rock and the western end of Rochdale Road. This new street becomes a central spine through the site and the boundary between the zone of urban quality to the west and the area where more edge-of-centre retailing forms are acceptable to the east.

To the west we suggested a series of urban blocks with a mix of housing, shopping and offices. This includes the retained health centre and a new square that would become a focus for cafe and leisure uses. To the east of the new street there is large box retailing with the supermarket on Rochdale Road and 3 or 4 other units around a car park. In order to maintain the parking numbers required for the scheme and the town centre generally the block to the rear of the supermarket is envisaged as a multi-storey car park.

We have then laid out the First Manchester site as a residential area. In reality we are aware that this is unlikely to generate sufficient value to make the relocation of the bus depot worthwhile. However, the important principle is that the area as a whole is masterplanned so that the Thornfield scheme does not create an impermeable barrier to the First Manchester site.

The plan also shows proposals for the narrowing and reurbanisation of the ring road. This includes the removal of the roundabout on the Rochdale Road and the development of housing to give an urban edge to the town centre. This is a long term aspiration and would take place once a residential market has been established.

1. The Rock Triangle site is acceptable for retailing provided that it is well linked to the town centre.
2. The opportunity to create a new street through the Rock Triangle site to improve permeability and linkage should be strongly pursued.
3. The western part of the Rock Trinagle site should be developed as a mixed-use area including housing, retail and office development.
4. The western part of the site should be based on mixed-use street-based urban form.
5. The Rochdale Roundabout should be realigned to create development sites for town centre fringe housing.
6. Permeability should be maintained by creating links to the First Manchester site.



INDICATIVE Plan
The Shopping Quarter

The Shopping Quarter:

This is the most complex area. There are currently a number of proposals being explored by Westfield, the owners of the centre, who are seeking to expand the centre by 30 to 40,000m². We endorse this objective and believe that the priority for retail expansion should be the area within the ring road.

A number of options have been explored by Westfield, including the extension to the east of Marks and Spencers creating a new frontage onto The Rock. This is something that we would support. They have also explored the reorientation of the Bus Station onto the Park and Ride site to create a development opportunity to the south-east of Kay Gardens. This again is something that we would support.

Other proposals have explored the redevelopment of Princess Parade and the relocation or reconfiguration of the Market. Based upon the discussion earlier in this report about the importance of the Market to the town we would have concerns about any plans for the Market to be relocated. We consider it to be vital that any proposals being considered must offer a demonstrably better facility than that which currently exists.

We have explored a number of options for the expansion of the shopping centre. In doing this we have tried to anticipate the aspirations of the developers. Having explored a number of design options we set out below one possible option although there are other acceptable ways of developing the site:

- We have relocated the bus station to the site of the Park-and-Ride car park.

- The eastern part of the Interchange has been developed as a town centre use such as a department store, part of the shopping centre or a cinema. It would incorporate small units serving passengers arriving by Metrolink and would create a pleasant arrival experience.

- Princess Parade has been redeveloped to be incorporated into the covered shopping centre. This includes the redevelopment of the units on either side of the parade to create the larger units that multiple stores require. As part of this the Square would be covered and incorporated into the shopping centre. This area could potentially incorporate two levels of shopping.

- We believe that the indoor market could be redeveloped to enable the expansion of the shopping centre with a new market hall being built on the petrol station site to the east of the open market. This could be done without disruption because the new building could be completed first. It would help to balance the market with an attraction at either end rather than the current situation where it tends to peter out towards its eastern end.

- The indicative scheme incorporates the proposed leisure centre, sports store on Spring Street but no other retailing on this site. However it is possible that the market car park could become a multi storey to serve the expanded shopping centre.

1. If possible the Marks and Spencers unit should be extended to create a frontage onto the Rock.
2. The bus station should be relocated to the park and ride site to create a development site on Market Street.
3. There is potential to redevelop Princess Parade to expand the shopping centre.
4. The Market car park should not be developed for further retailing because of the loss of parking and the diversion of trade from the town centre.
5. There is the possibility of relocating the indoor market as part of a scheme to redevelop the shopping centre.
6. Great care should be taken to avoid disruption to the outdoor market.

Next Steps

17.

Phasing

s - short term
m - medium term
l - long term

c - part of negotiations with developer
p - policy

The purpose of this report as we said at the outset is not to develop a regeneration strategy for Bury town centre because it is not in decline. The aim of the report has instead been to create a vision for the town centre that can be taken forward through the update of the UDP and the way in which the Council responds to current development proposals. However, in the vision and strategy part of this report we have made a number of recommendations. In this section we recap these recommendations and suggest the next steps that need to be taken.

1. Reinforcing Bury as a market town

1.1 Expanding the shopping centre: (p): The Council should continue to work constructively with Westfield to explore the development of the shopping centre. This, however, should be to the overall benefit of the town centre not just the best interests of the shopping centre owners.

1.2 Protecting / enhancing the market attraction (p): Proposals from Westfield that involve substantial change or relocation of the outdoor market should only be supported where disruption is minimised and the market can be enhanced.

1.3 Accommodating and retaining independent traders (c): The expansion of the shopping centre will undoubtedly involve disruption to independent retailers. As part of any proposals there should be a scheme for the relocation of all affected traders perhaps into areas like The Rock / Rock Triangle or Bolton Street.

1.4 Expanding the convenience offer (p): The proposals for the development of a supermarket as part of the Rock Triangle scheme should be supported.

1.5 Bulky goods retailing (p): The proposals for bulky goods retailing as part of the Rock Triangle should be supported. Proposals for retailing on the Spring Street and the FirstManchester sites should be resisted because they would have an adverse effect on the town centre.

1.6 Regenerating The Rock (c): The proposals to expand the shopping centre to give Marks and Spencers a frontage onto the Rock are to be strongly supported. As part of the schemes for the Rock Triangle and the shopping centre, Section 106 contributions should be sought to refurbish the public realm on the Rock. This needs to be a high quality scheme that respects its role as a high street.

1.7 Signage and interpretation (s): The Council should commission a study to develop a signage and interpretation scheme for the town centre. This should include a mapping of quarters and attractions to be signposted along with a common colour scheme and style for all signage. The Legible City scheme in Bristol is an excellent example of this.

2. Making the most of Bury's heritage

2.1 Expanding the East Lancashire Railway: The Council should continue to support the development of the railway.

2.2 The transport museum (l): The Council should initiate discussions between all leisure attractions in the town to coordinate marketing and ticketing. The possibility of a lottery grant for the Transport Museum to extend and upgrade its facilities should be explored.

2.3 A new role for the Armoury (l): If the Bury Armoury is vacated the Council should initiate discussions with the Lancashire Fusiliers about relocating the Regimental Museum.

2.4 Culture Quarter (l): There are a variety of proposals relating to the cultural quarter including interpretation, animation and the development of the Arts and Crafts Centre (see below).

2.5 Canal (l): To work with British Waterways on the feasibility of proposals for the reopening of the canal. Once this is established the Council and BW should jointly commission a masterplan and strategy for the canal area.

2.6 Interpretation (s): See signage strategy above.

3. Creating an accessible town centre

3.1 Overcoming the barrier of the Ring Road (s - highway study): This proposal is central to the strategy that we are proposing. Yet clearly as a stand-alone project it would be prohibitively expensive. It will only, therefore, happen if coordinated with adjacent development schemes. The first step, as described in Section 11, is to undertake a more detailed highway modelling study (Access study). Once this has been done it will be possible to implement projects incrementally through the highways contribution as part of development projects.

3.2 Creating surface crossings (s/m): The Access Study should include a review of pedestrian crossings. The highway authority should prepare a scheme to close subways and to introduce surface level crossings.

3.3 Improvements to disabled access (s): Local disability groups should be consulted as part of all access works.

3.4 Reprioritising junctions (l): Junction improvements should be funded by releasing development sites through joint ventures with developers.

3.5 Creating a pedestrian link to the canal basin (c): This will only become a priority once the opening of the canal has been secured. Once this is the case funding should be sought for the new route and bridge. This could include the NWRDA, European Grants and Lottery.

3.6 Reorienting the bus station (c): This needs to be subject to a separate study and detailed consultations with the bus companies and the Passenger Transport Executive. The funding for the project should be linked to the extension of the shopping centre and would be triggered by this scheme.

3.7 Town centre parking (c): As part of discussions on the Rock Triangle and other shopping centre schemes the Council should seek to secure multi-storey car parks. These should serve the parking needs of the schemes as well as replacing the surface parking lost as part of the development.

4. An attractive, compact town centre

4.1 Defining an Urban Quality Zone (p): The UDP should define an Urban Quality Zone.

4.2 Drawing up urban design guidelines (s/p): The Urban Quality Zone should be linked to Supplementary Planning Guidance setting out guidelines for new buildings within this area.

4.3 Preparing planning briefs (s): In line with the Planning Bill, the Council should initiate discussions with developers to draw up Action Plans, Planning Briefs or Statements of Development Principles for each of the large development sites around the centre.

4.4 Concentrating on gateways (l): Opportunities should be taken to concentrate environmental improvements and new development on the gateways identified in the masterplan.

4.5 Defining a series of quarters (s): The quarters proposed as part of the masterplan should be included in the signing and interpretation strategy.

5. Managing the quality of the town centre

5.1 The appointment of a town centre manager (s): The Council should allocate funds for the appointment of a town centre manager and explore the possibility of a Business Improvement District (BID) through which businesses can contribute to the costs of town centre management.

5.2 Events and animation (s): The town centre manager should be established with a budget to organise events and animation.

5.3 Improving safety and lighting (s): Developments around the town centre should be incorporated into the town centre CCTV scheme. Planning gain contributions should be used to improve lighting and CCTV coverage.

5.4 Coordinating the town centre wardens (s): The town centre wardens should come under the control of a town centre manager and their promotional role should be enhanced.

5.5 Commissioning public art (m): An annual budget, possibly making use of commuted sums from development proposals, should be set aside to commission public art and to provide match funding for applications to the Arts Council, NWAB and the Lottery .

6. Broadening the role of the centre

6.1 Promoting town centre housing (s/m): New housing should be promoted as part of the schemes for the Rock Triangle, the Phoenix Quarter (particularly the Police Station site), the canal basin and the urbanisation of Angouleme Way. The UDP should include specific policies promoting town centre housing.

6.2 Promoting Bury Ground as a business park (s/m): The Council should pursue negotiations with HBG Property now that the access issues are close to resolution. This should include a review of the design of the scheme in the light of recent government planning policy guidance on sustainable development issues.

6.3 Developing small scale offices and provision for SME's (m): A brief should be produced for the Bolton Street gateway. Following resolution of the Access Study and analysis of land ownership issues a brief should be prepared and a joint venture partner to be sought in the same way that the Council is currently doing for Townside Fields. This may involve the use of CPO powers to assemble the land.

6.4 Creating new council offices (m): A review should be undertaken of Council accommodation including lease periods and space requirements. This should be developed into a brief for a new building. Opportunities for a joint venture company should then be explored.

6.5 Developing studio space and incubator units (m): The Council should explore incubator units as part of a scheme for the Arts and Crafts Centre (see below), an expansion of Business Lodge or possibly part of redevelopment proposals at Crostons Road.

6.6 Arts and Crafts Centre (m): A project officer should be identified within the Council who can coordinate a steering group to prepare a scheme for the upgrading and continued use of this building. The aim would be to prepare a lottery funding bid.

6.7 Developing mixed uses and promoting the evening economy (p): The evening economy is a positive part of the town centre economy and should be promoted.