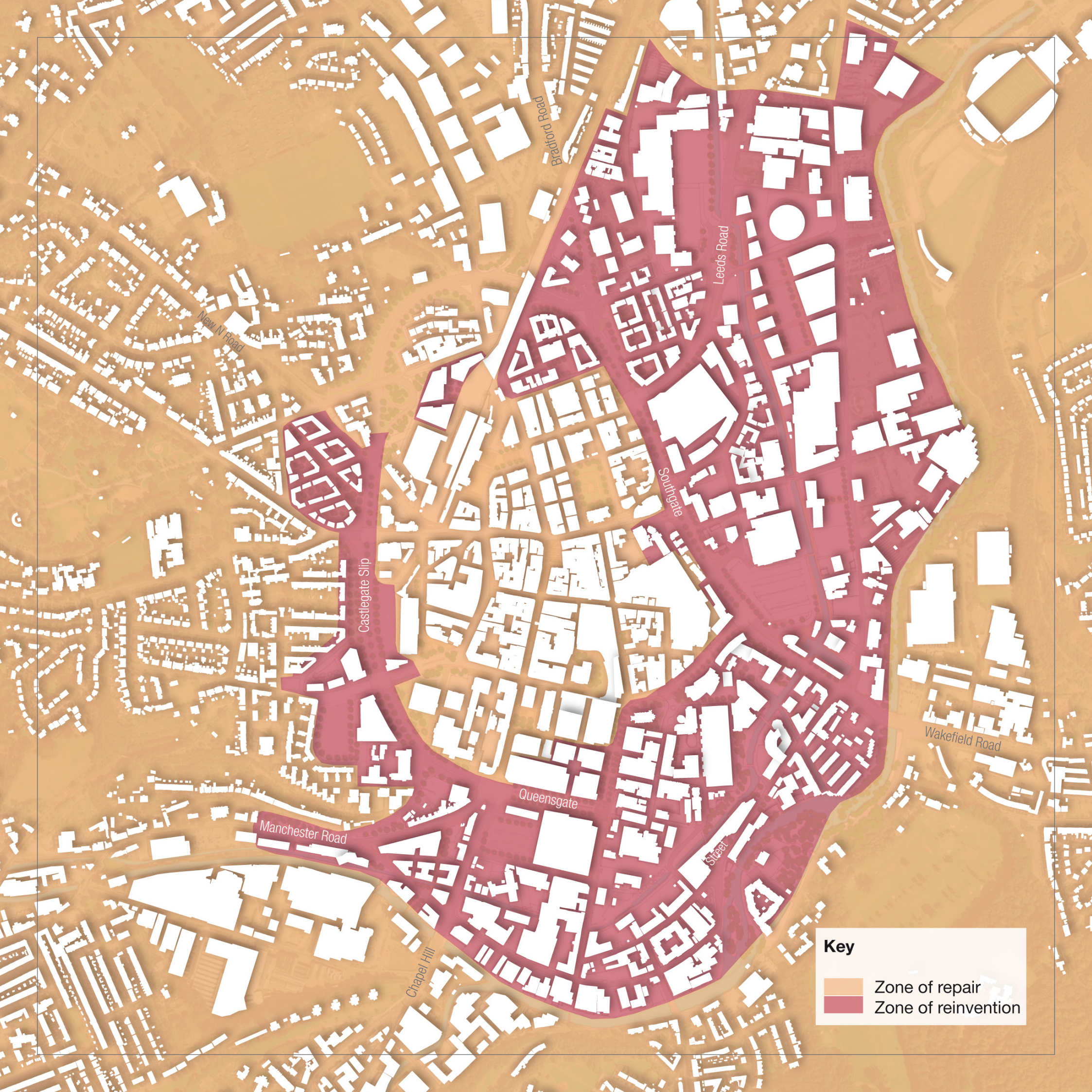


# 3. Framework

The illustrative plan has been used as the basis for developing an urban design framework and strategy in Part 3 of this report. This is based on a series of regulatory plans that code the illustrative masterplan in a way that can be used as the basis for planning policy.





New N Road

Bradford Road

Leeds Road

Southgate

Wakefield Road



Queensgate

Manchester Road

Chapel Hill

Street

**Key**

	Zone of repair
	Zone of reinvention



# Repair & Reinvention

The first part of the strategy defines zones of repair where the priority is to maintain and improve the existing urban structure of the town and zones of reinvention where a new structure needs to be created.

URBED have produced a number of design guides for local authorities where we have developed the concept of areas of repair and areas of reinvention. Areas of repair are those where the urban form of the town is largely intact and where the priority is to preserve its urban quality and to repair the small areas that have been

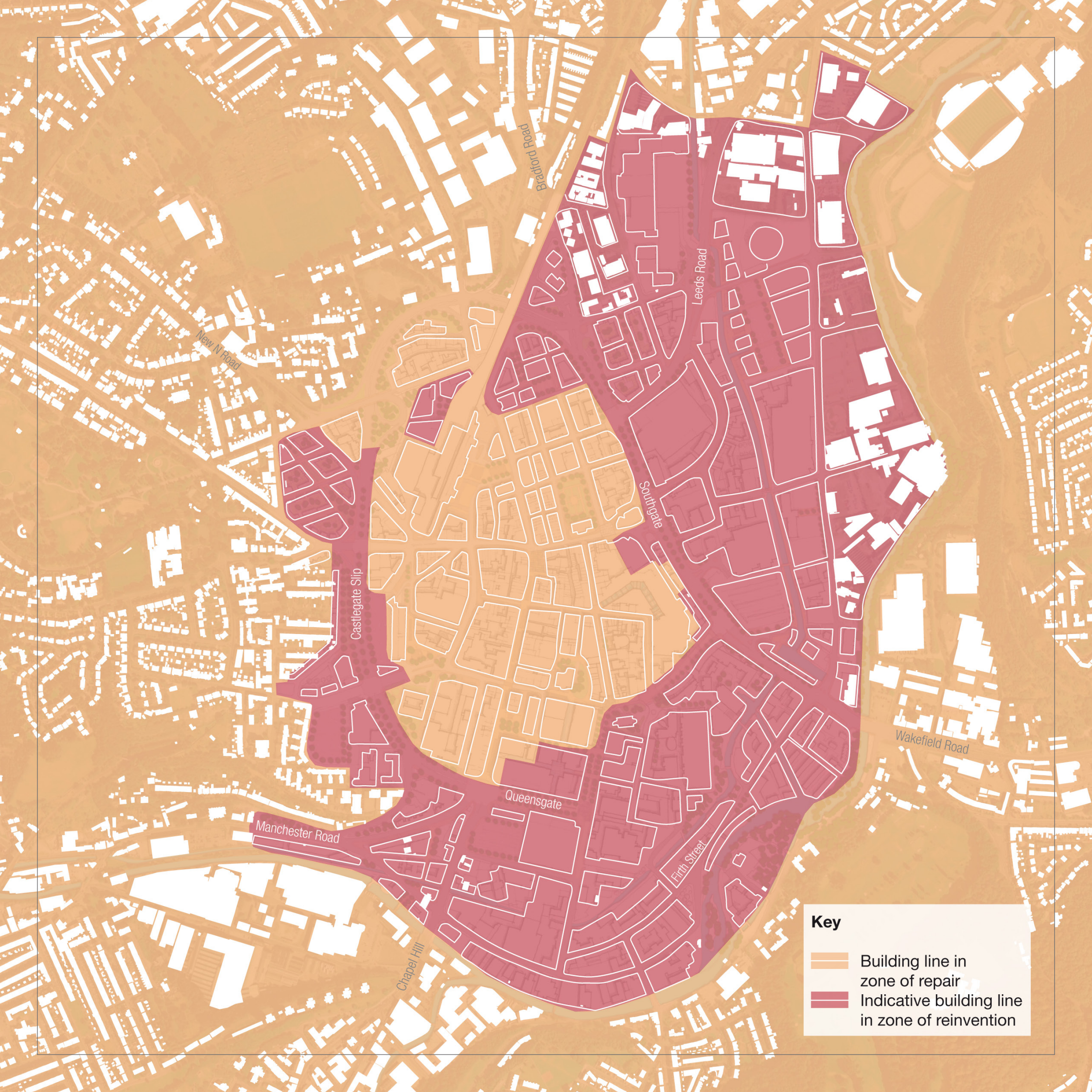


damaged over time. This includes virtually all of the town centre within the Ring Road as well as the conservation areas to the northwest of the town.

The areas of reinvention, by contrast are those where the urban structure of the town has broken down to the point where it is beyond repair or perhaps never really existed. Here there is little to repair so that the role of the urban design strategy to create a new urban structure through masterplanning opportunity sites. It is impossible for site owners in these areas of reinvention to coordinate their schemes with neighbouring site owners so it is vital that the strategy creates a strong framework into which new development can fit.

In the area of repair the framework for development in terms of the building line, height and access is determined by the existing built stock. New buildings will need to respect the character of the existing context and the policies of the conservation area. In the zones of reinvention the existing build context is not sufficiently strong to shape development - so this strategy must play this role. This first element of this is the building line as described in the following section.





**Key**



Building line in  
zone of repair



Indicative building line  
in zone of reinvention



# Urban Form

The second part of the strategy relates to the position of buildings. The main significance of this is the way that it relates to streets and public spaces, something that is defined by a ‘building line’.

The building line refers to the primary front face of a building not including set backs or projections. The image below of Bankfield Road in Huddersfield shows a row of houses, all slightly different but built to a graceful curving building line. In this case the building line allows for front gardens. In the city centre, where



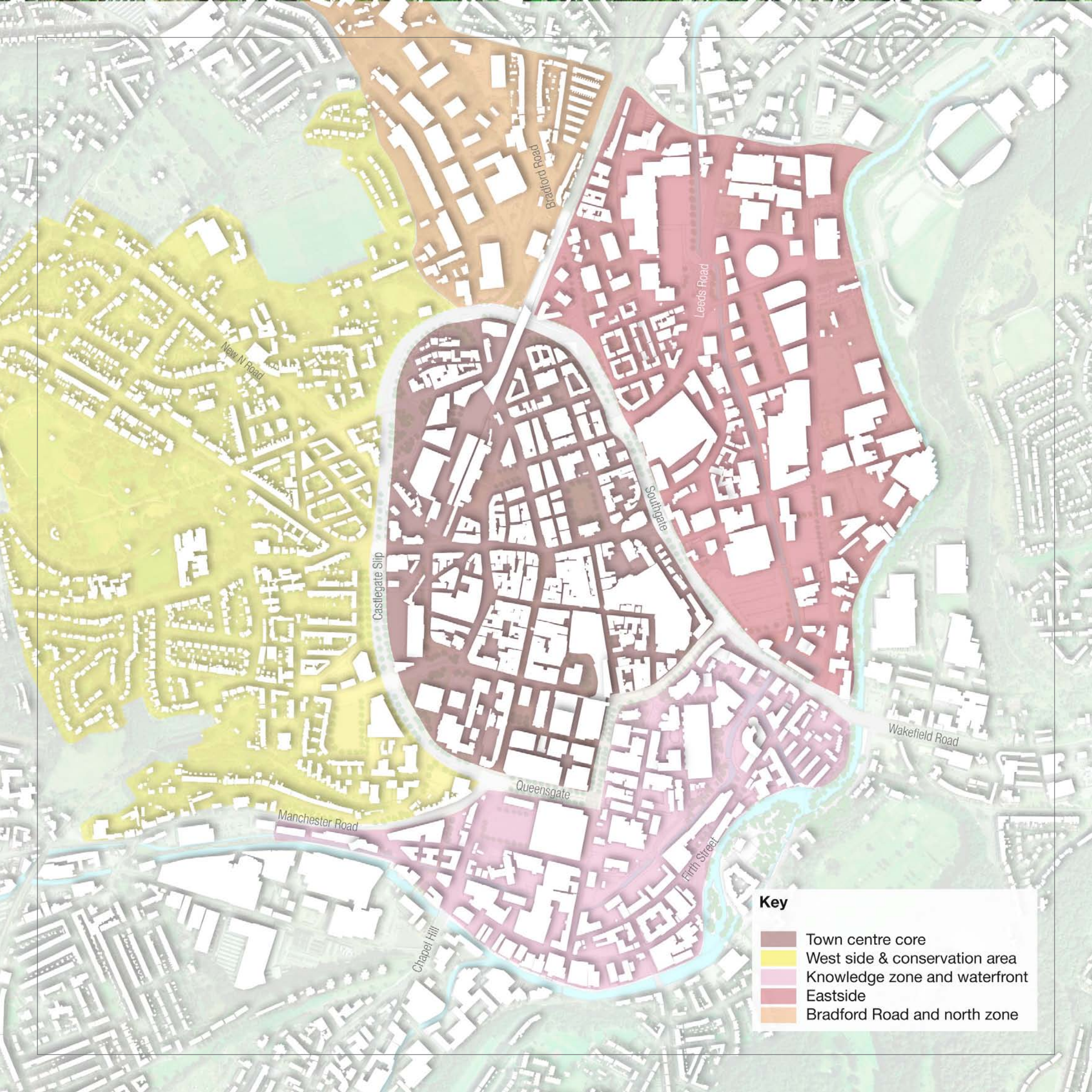
it is equally well respected, the building line tends to be right at the back of the pavement. The position and integrity of the building line (the proportion of buildings that respect it) is one of the most important factors in creating good quality urban space. It determines the width of the street and therefore its scale and proportion as well as the level of enclosure, vistas and views. All masterplans from Hausseman's Paris to Nash's London are therefore based on fixing a strong building line.

The plan to the left therefore suggests a building line for the whole of Huddersfield town centre. In the zone of repair this follows the existing building line. Elsewhere in the zone of reinvention, a new building line is suggested. This is

sometimes based on the historic building line and sometimes on an entirely new line. The intention is to establish an urban structure for these areas that all development can fit into.

In implementing this building line in planning policy it will be important that the front face of all new buildings be built to within 1m of the line shown on the plan. Set backs and projects are possible provided that a strong building line is established. In the zone of reinvention developers are able to change the suggested building line. However to do this they will be expected to undertake a masterplanning process to show how their new building line fits into the surrounding sites.





**Key**

- Town centre core
- West side & conservation area
- Knowledge zone and waterfront
- Eastside
- Bradford Road and north zone



# Massing

Having established the position of buildings through the building line the next issue is their height. The plan to the left shows a series of proposed massing zones to regulate the height of new buildings.



The height of buildings needs to respond to the predominant character of each part of the town centre and the opportunity to increase density along the river. The map to the left suggests a series of height zones to regulate predominant heights within the centre. Higher structures may be acceptable in exceptional circumstances or where an existing structure is being refurbished.

**The Town Centre Core:** This is the most critical area in terms of character. New buildings in this area should respond to their context. It is not expected that

this will exceed 6 residential stories or equivalent over an active ground floor. There are several 1960's buildings, within the town core, along Southgate and Albion Street which exceed this height. These should not be seen as a precedent if they are to be redeveloped.

**Bradford Road and the North:** This area is predominately by low-rise large footprint retailing units and residential properties. This area should not exceed building height of 3 residential stories over an active ground floor. Slightly more prominent buildings (5 residential

stories over active ground floor) may be appropriate as landmark or corner buildings. These exceptions should be occasional and should not impact detrimentally on key views and the listed railway viaduct structure.

**Eastside:** The area runs down the eastern side of the town centre. This area is dominated by low-rise industrial premises and warehousing with a series of taller blocks on Northgate. The traditional mills in this area were however of a significant scale and there is scope to increase density by developing up to 7 residential stories equivalent.

**Knowledge and Waterfront Zone:** This area is an opportunity for increased density. It is currently characterised by a range of building heights – from 2 storey sheds to the 16 storey university tower. On average, building heights should not exceed a ground floor plus 6 residential stories – the equivalent to most industrial mills in the area. There may be opportunities to build above this height around the university tower or in the low-lying areas along Manchester Road and Folly Hall however, these taller elements must fit into appropriate street sections and not undermine key buildings or views such as that towards Castle Hill.

## **Westside and Conservation Zone:**

This is a sensitive zone that includes the residential conservation area protecting Highfield and Springwood - around Greenhead Park. This zone is typified by a strong historic identity; the only exclusion being that of the Technical College on Trinity Street. It is envisaged that the predominant height will be ground plus 2 residential stories. This may rise to ground plus 4 stories - in place of the Technical College and immediately adjacent to Castlegate.







**Key**

- Primary active frontages
- Secondary active frontages (at least 20% active)
- Opportunity areas to increase density



# Activity

The quality of an urban area has as much to do with its level of activity and animation as it does with its scale and proportion. This relates to the mix of uses in the centre, the density of development and the extent to which buildings animate the streets and public spaces.

The heart of Huddersfield bustles with life, but this activity drops off rapidly away from the main shopping streets. The Action Plan, LDF and Core Strategy seek to promote a wider range of activity in the centre. This needs to involve the following elements:

**Mix of Use:** The mix of uses in the town centre has expanded in recent years with the growth of residential development and the University and creative uses complementing the strong retail base. The strategy needs to continue to encourage this. There is not a need to zone uses within the town centre but the focus in

different parts of the centre will change. Current development activity indicates that the retail core will consolidate in the southern part of the town centre allowing the northern areas around St. Peter's Street to be developed as a mix of housing and workspace. The main policy issues relate to the potential for new retail space around the town centre which is beyond the scope of this commission.

**Density:** There is an opportunity to increase the density of development in the 'shatter zone' around the town centre. The map shows two zones on either side of the centre where the AAP should promote



an intensification of uses to increase density and activity. As a guideline 70 dwellings per hectare should be achieved for areas closest to the ring-road or a plot ratio range of 2.0 - 4.0.

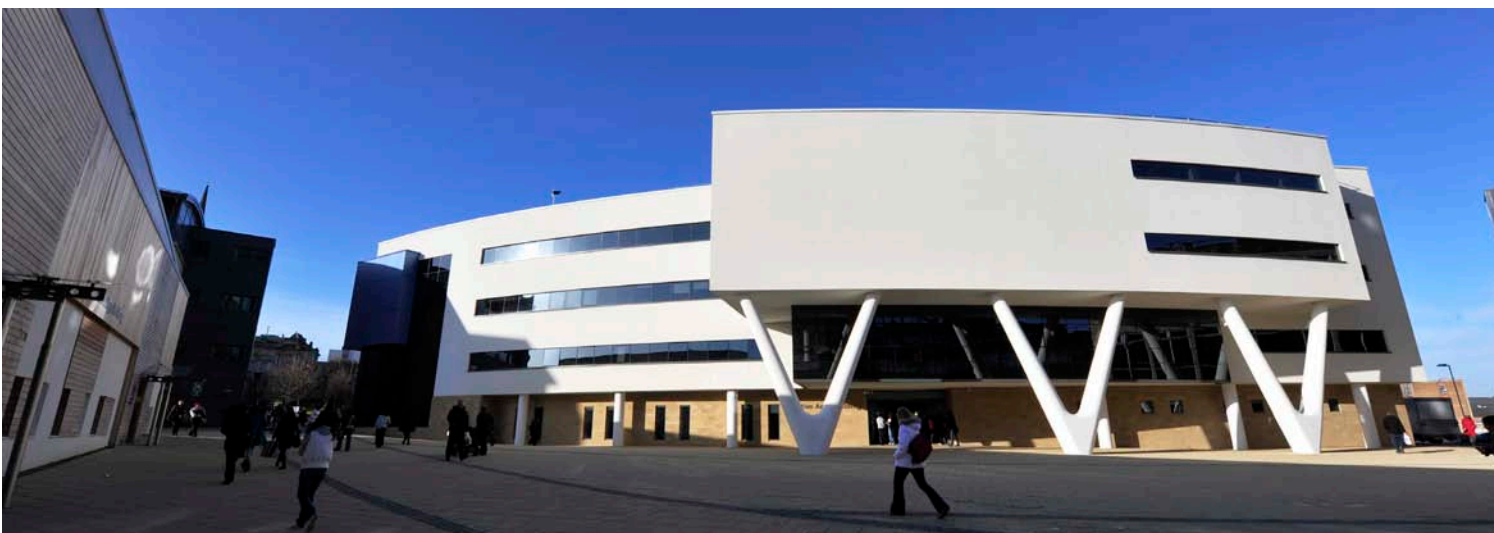
In the town centre there is scope to increase the level of occupation of buildings, particularly where there is empty space on the upper floors. However the built form of the centre will limit the scope to increase building density.

**Active Frontage:** It is vitally important that buildings animate public spaces with active frontages as far as possible. Active frontages may be ground floor

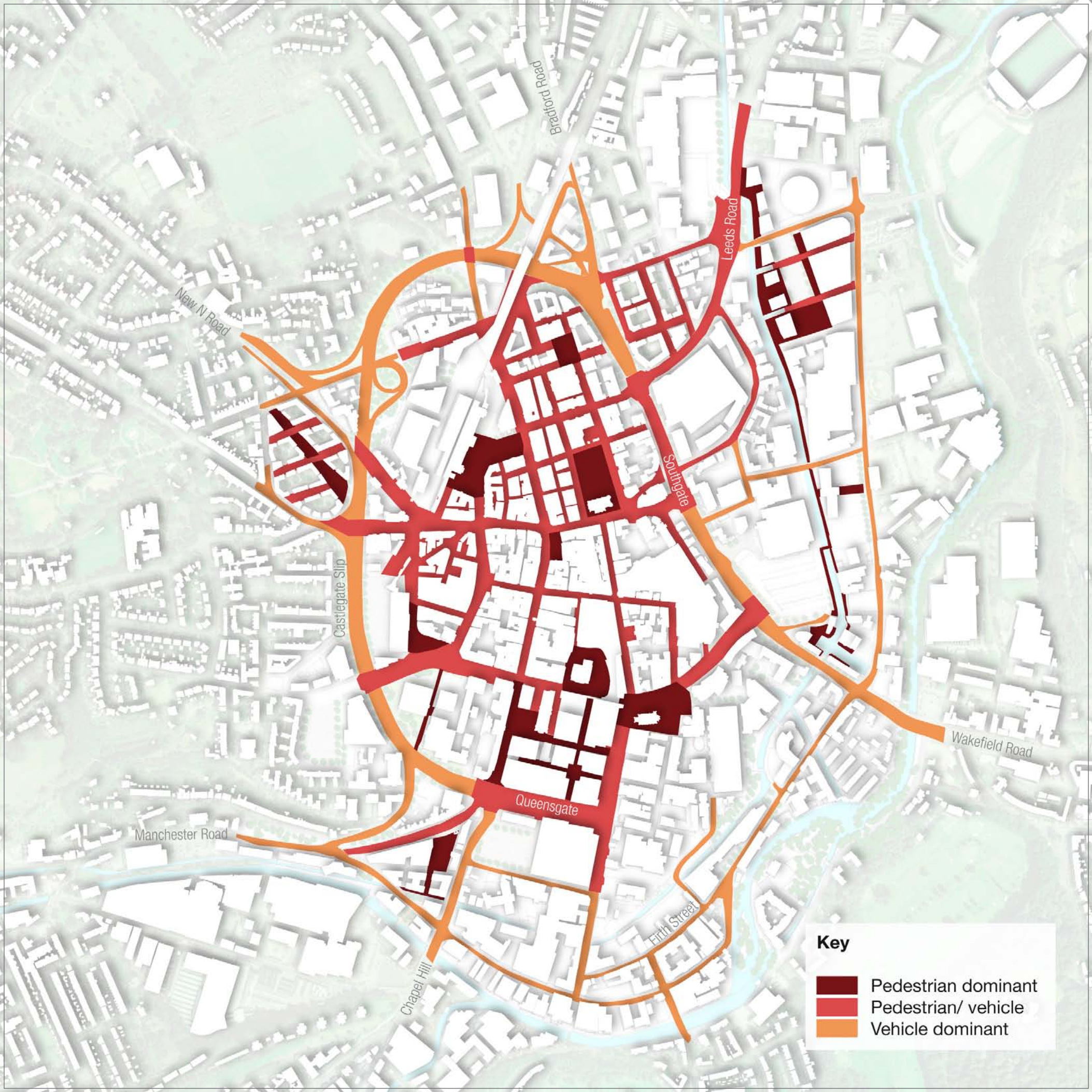
shop windows or transparent frontages so that the activity within the building is visible from the street. Ideally this should also include opportunities for activity to spill out onto pavements through street cafes and shop displays. Typically, active frontages are ground floor retail spaces, cafes, restaurants and bars. However they can also include hotel foyers, office receptions, galleries and public facilities.

The level of animation should relate to the prominence of the street. The main high streets should be active along their frontage while secondary will have less active frontage and minor streets will be active only rarely. There is also scope to increase the amount of active frontage on the Ring Road and the arterial routes into town.

The plan to the left suggests primary active frontages where at least 70% of the frontage is to be active and secondary active frontage where at least 20% of the frontage is to be active.









# Public Realm

The final part of the strategy relates to the spaces between the buildings – the public realm. The plan to the left suggests three categories of space depending on the level of vehicle access and there is a need to draw up a specification for each of these to ensure a consistency of approach.

The plan to the left shows space where vehicles have priority, shared pedestrian vehicle spaces and pedestrianised spaces. This broadly corresponds to the approach in the Renaissance Plan. There is a need to develop a specification for each of these spaces, drawing on the work that has already been done in the town centre such as St. Georges Square. Over time as development comes forward and streets are renewed this pallet of materials should be applied to ensure a consistency of approach throughout the town centre.

## Vehicle Routes

The main vehicle routes are confined to the ‘horseshoe’ of the ring road the arterial routes and key links such as St. Andrew’s Road. While remaining main vehicle routes accommodating up to 45,000 vehicles a day, these routes should be welcoming for pedestrians and cyclists including wide pavements, cycle lanes and street trees.



## Pedestrian routes

There are already significant pedestrian areas in the town centre, primarily on the lower part of New Street, King Street and the space around the shopping centres. It is not suggested that these pedestrianised areas be extended.

## Public spaces

The strategy also seeks to reinforce a network of public spaces within the town centre, reminiscent of that which existed in Victorian times see Page 22. These include the recently improved St. Georges Square, St. Peter’s Churchyard, Beast Market, The reinstated space around St. Pauls and a new square on New Street. These spaces also need treating with a consistent pallet of materials and should include opportunities for public art and performance.

## Pedestrian/vehicle routes

The remainder of the streets within and around the town centre should be usable by vehicles but dominated by pedestrians. Shared Space provides one model to do this and should be explored in parts of the town centre. There is also a place for traditional streets (like upper Queens Street) with carriageway, kerbs and on street parking. This car accessibility is important for the vitality of the centre and the viability of independent shops. The onstreet parking should however be restricted to short stay.









# Conclusion

**This strategy shows the extent of change possible in Huddersfield in the coming decade. This strategy should form the basis for a policy document that can be used by the council to shape the change that will inevitably take place in the town so that every project contributes to realising the wider vision.**

This report has set out a strategy for Huddersfield Town Centre. It is clear from our analysis that the heart of the town is a very high quality urban environment that is one of the finest example of Victorian planning in the north. The priority in this area is to preserve and improve what exists and to ensure that new development complements (rather than copies) the historic buildings that give the area so much character.

Outside the heart of the town centre the quality of the environment is much poorer. While the Ring Road has many benefits in terms of traffic circulation it has damaged the structure, permeability and legibility of the town. This together with some unsympathetic modern buildings on the ring road create a very poor impression of the town to people passing through by car.

This strategy suggests a way in which the town centre could be reconnected to its hinterland by repairing the damaged shatter zone that surrounds the centre. This involves reconfiguring the street network of the town to create a 'horseshoe' ring road, redesigning the

roads so that they are friendlier places for cyclists and pedestrians and shaping new development over the coming years so that it addresses and animates the streets and public spaces of the town.

This is a daunting task and it is not within the remit of this study to develop a detailed implementation plan for these works. However it is not necessary at this stage to illustrate how these proposals can be funded. One need only look at the extent of change in Huddersfield in each of the last four decades to see what is possible in the life of the AAP currently being prepared. While current market conditions mean that there will be limited scope for development in the next few years, the market will come back and there is not reason to believe that the scope for change in the next decade is any less than in the last.

What is required is a plan to shape this change so that every scheme, and public works project contributes incrementally to realising the vision over

time. The strategy set out in this report shows how this could be achieved. For this strategy to have the teeth necessary to do this it will need to be given weight. URBED have recently completed a similar guide for Nottingham as part of a much larger contract that is being adopted as non-statutory planning policy.

Huddersfield must make the most of these opportunities in the coming decades. To do this it needs a plan, which is what we have tried to develop in this document although the scope of this commission means that this is very much a first draft. This plan needs to be subject to consultation and once updated and tested, needs to be tied into the Local Development Framework and the Town Centre

Area Action Plan. Once the plan has been agreed it needs to be given some weight if it is to be taken seriously by developers in the town centre. There are three options for this: Adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance, incorporation into the Area Action Plan or adoption as non-statutory planning policy.









