

Oldham
beyond

The Oldham

Ideas for
transformation

Net



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Third Masterplanning
report
for...

Oldham Local Strategic
Partnership and North
West Development Agency
by...
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1 Introduction



This is the Third Masterplan in the family of reports that comprise Oldham Beyond, a new vision for the Borough of Oldham commissioned by the Oldham Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the North West Development Agency (NWDA), and produced by a team of consultants led by URBED.

The three 'demonstrator plans' have been undertaken by the team to show the practical impact of the themes and principles that have emerged from the overall *Vision for Oldham Beyond*, but unlike the masterplans for the Werneth/Freehold Housing Market Renewal area and Oldham Town Centre, this third masterplan encompasses all of the borough. It aims to be imaginative and visual but rooted in practicality – as well as setting out a route towards achieving the transformation of seven exemplar 'demonstrator' sites, it also offers principles for a regeneration framework that could bring life to many other places across the borough.

A route to the future

The main aim of the masterplan is to provide a practical route forward towards the possible implementation of the different scenarios and plans, but it also offers an imaginative and visual way of thinking about the future of the borough. This creative thinking can be applied to other sites and situations, based on the principles for the nodes that are explored here. Throughout the masterplan we look to the future to explore the potential changes that could be achieved in the borough.



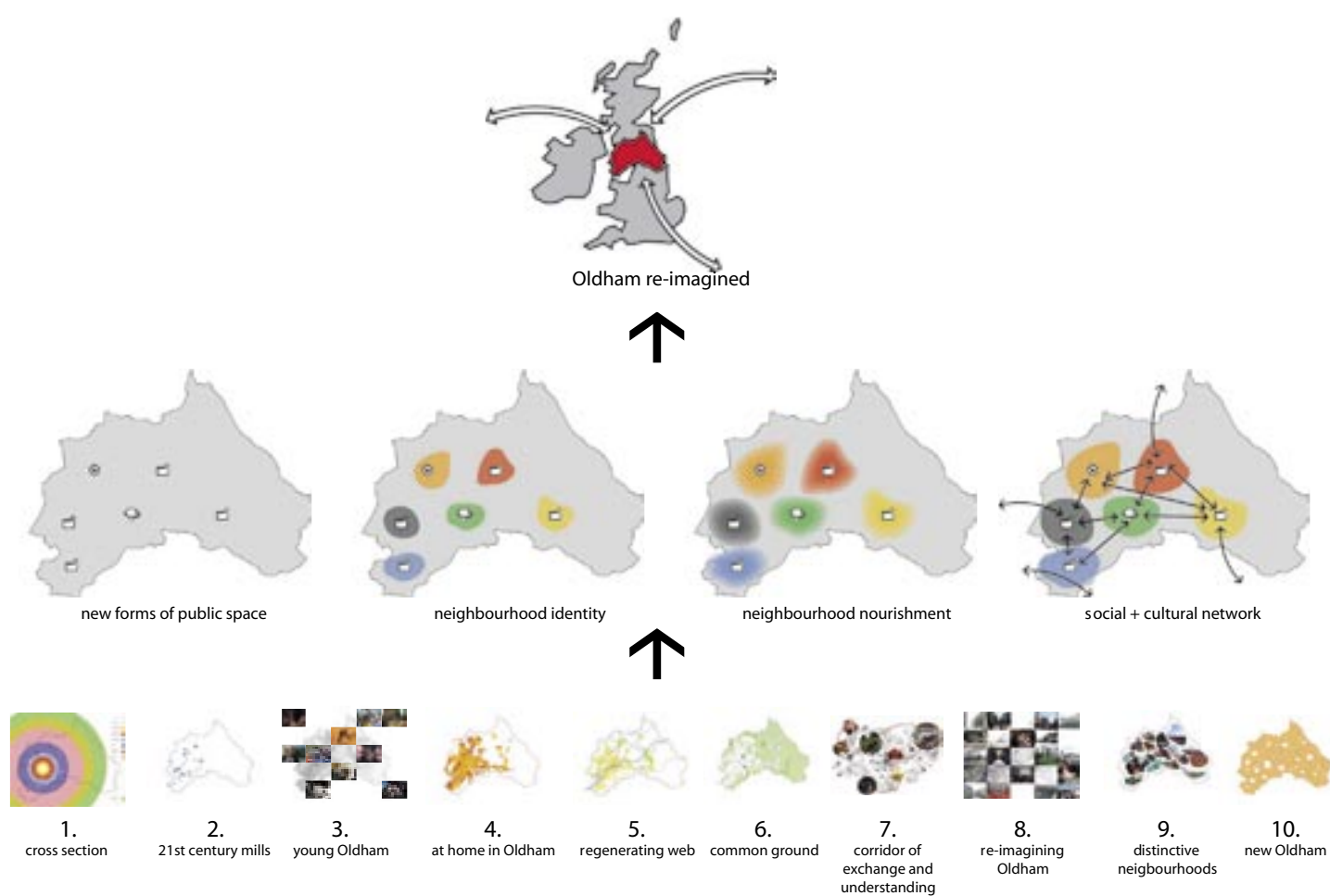


Figure 1: Schematic illustration of the development of ideas towards re-imagining Oldham through a social and cultural network

2 Nodes



This masterplan develops a series of seven smaller plans and scenarios for different types of place across the borough. These seven 'nodes' have been chosen for two reasons: first, because individually they offer significant and often unique opportunities for the borough as a whole as well as for their local neighbourhoods, and second, because they encompass the six themes that have emerged from Oldham Beyond and therefore demonstrate practical ways in which the ideas developed in the Vision can be taken forward in the future.

These six themes are:

- ▶ Wealth Creation
- ▶ Common Ground
- ▶ A Learning Community
- ▶ Liveability
- ▶ New Oldham (governance and cultural identity)
- ▶ Sustainability

Of these, the themes of Wealth Creation and Common Ground have been identified as central to the future development of Oldham, and they underpin all of the ideas developed here.

Wealth Creation

A fundamental question for towns like Oldham is where wealth is created. Unemployment in Oldham currently is less than the national average. However, this positive statistic hides a low skill/low wage economy and a reliance on business sectors that are forecast to decline nationally in employment terms, if not in absolute terms. Many Oldhamers in future will also travel outside the borough to work. For Oldham to prosper it is therefore imperative that action is taken to address these issues so that the borough can compete again in a global as well as a regional market. To create wealth in the borough this masterplan recognises that it is important

to protect and expand existing employers, and in particular to encourage new firm foundation, as well as to attract new investment.

The *Vision for Oldham Beyond* describes our underlying principles for Wealth Creation in more detail, in particular for providing more help and assistance for existing firms, creating 'strategic' employment sites to attract inward investment at both Hollinwood and Mumps in the town centre, encouraging and assisting further growth in the creative industries and amongst the Asian business community, fostering social enterprise, exploiting the borough's tourism assets and creating zones of economic interaction between the communities.

Common Ground

Interaction between communities will not happen unless there is 'Common Ground', not owned by any community – public realm, where people can meet, interact and get on with each other. Within Oldham Beyond we hope to create a range of places in the borough where this interaction can take place – we are also calling them 'Zones of Exchange and Understanding'. As well as the proposals made in the Werneth/Freehold and Town Centre masterplans, each of the seven nodes in the 'Oldham Net' incorporates the principle of Common Ground. Each node is intended as a new form of public space, to benefit the citizens of Oldham.

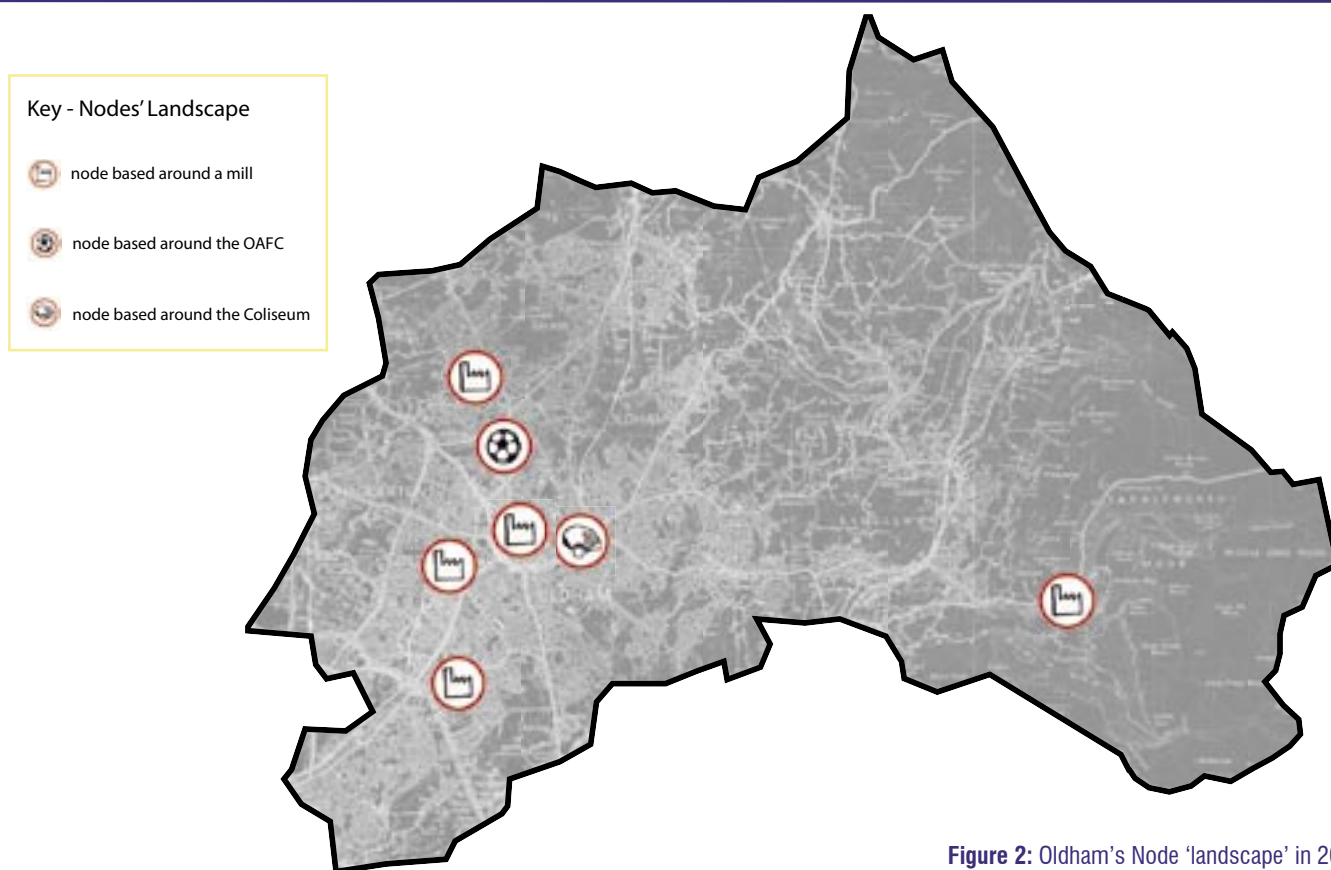


Figure 2: Oldham's Node 'landscape' in 2004

A Network of nodes

The seven nodes have been chosen as exemplars because they offer a vital opportunity to the borough, not just economically, but also socially and culturally. However, we see these individual places as the first points in a growing network that could bind and strengthen the borough through further developments in future.

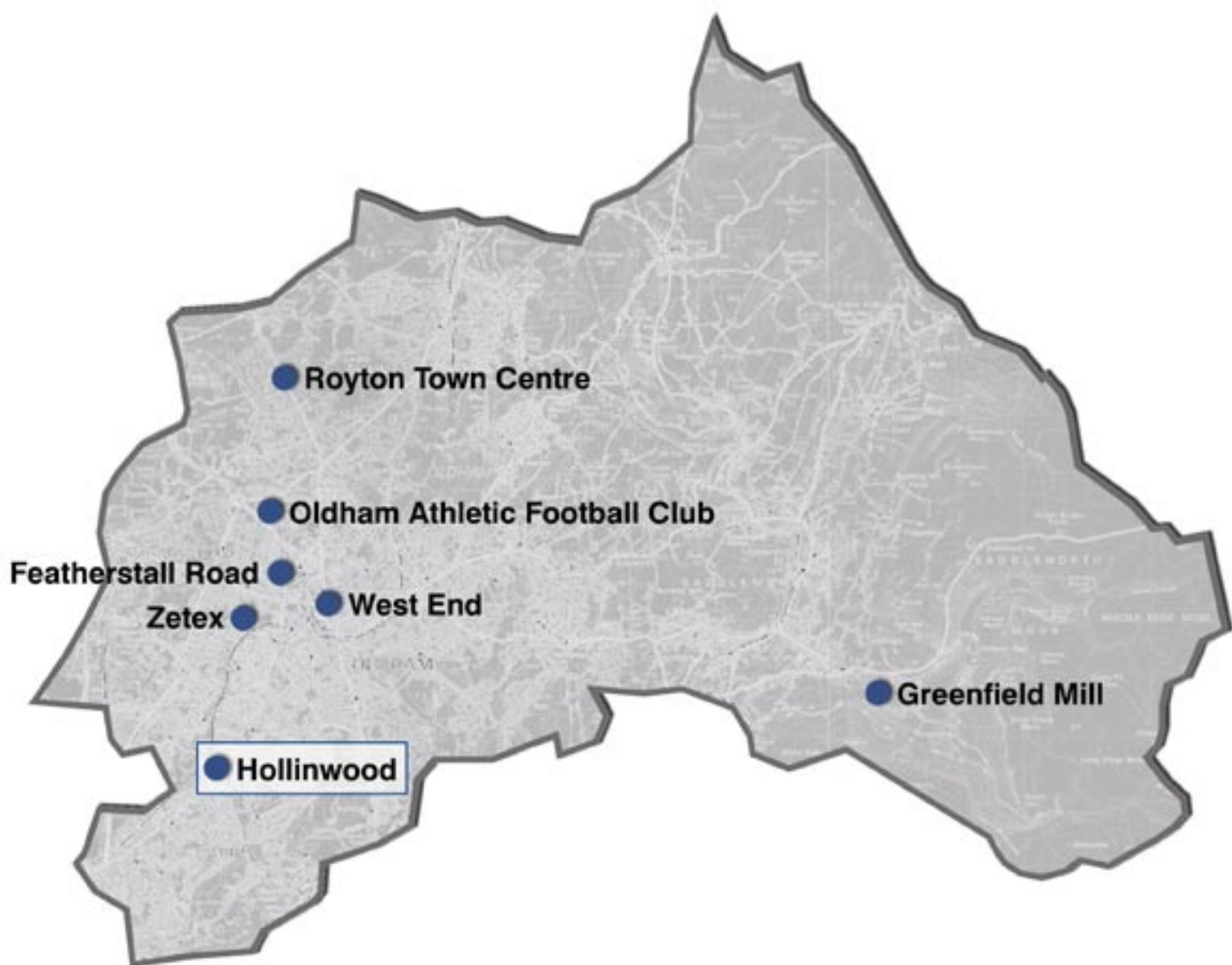
The idea of a regeneration 'net' to coordinate a series of improvements across the borough reinforces the principle throughout Oldham Beyond of developing the 'point and line' technique first used in the revitalisation of Barcelona. The principle involves identifying a series of spaces (points) at the heart of local communities that can be improved and then focusing on the connections (lines) between them. The

improvements to the points may include public art (as happened in Barcelona) or even the commissioning of a small building by a famous architect (as happened in Groningen that has a public toilet designed by Rem Koolhaas). These points and lines eventually combine to unite the borough and to build links between neighbourhoods. This regeneration framework could then spread across the whole of Oldham and indeed beyond the boundaries of the borough.

Therefore the principles that we will develop in this masterplan are also intended as guidance to other, future developments, to have a spatial, 'interweaving' benefit for Oldham, as the net grows ever tighter and stronger.

INGREDIENTS	LOCATION						
	WEST END	FEATHERSTALL ROAD	GREENFIELD	HOLLINWOOD	O AFC	ZETEX	ROYTON TOWN CENTRE
common ground	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
offices		X		X	X	X	X
retail		X	X	X	X	X	X
start-up incubators				X		X	
conference facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	
market		X					X
theatre	X		X	X			
Roxy cinema	X						
creative workshops	X	X		X		X	X
museum		X	X		X		
community institution		X	X	X			X
public services			X	X		X	X
"Social Computer"		X	X			X	
research facilities			X			X	
nursery / school / college / training	X	X	X	X	X		
restaurant / café / bar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
indoor / outdoor sports			X	X	X		X
visitors accommodation		X	X		X	X	
housing		X	X	X	X		X

Figure 3: Identifying the Nodes – the common ingredients in each node



3 Demonstration Nodes



Node 01: HOLLINWOOD

Themes: Wealth Creation, Common Ground



Context

Hollinwood is a key gateway to Oldham. It stands at the junction of the M60, the A62 and the proposed Metrolink. This highly accessible location is combined with a significant amount of land that is either vacant or underdeveloped. This masterplan therefore sees this as the most prominent inward investment location in Oldham. It is seen as a location that can attract commercial uses into a high quality business environment that promotes economic development and projects a strong image for Oldham.

To make the area work as a destination it needs a mix of other uses. As well as offices these could include housing, leisure uses appropriate retailing and associated eating and drinking uses.



Location

The Hollinwood area's location at the intersection of the A62 and Manchester's orbital motorway, the M60, places it in a highly accessible location on Manchester's 'economic ring'. The proposed development of a Metrolink line between Manchester City Centre to Oldham and Rochdale Town Centres through the site will not only improve the public transport accessibility of the area, but place Hollinwood on Manchester's public transport 'map'. Hollinwood is currently less than 15 minutes by car from Manchester Airport: with Metrolink it will be a similar journey time to Manchester City Centre.



Opportunities for development

Hollinwood has the potential to become a significant economic hub on the 'economic ring' of the M60 – an office/business area of sub-regional importance. We do not see Hollinwood being developed for a local market – it is too valuable a site for this – but rather to compete in a sub-regional market comprising most of the M60 corridor.

The area's prime location, lower land values, large catchment population and excellent accessibility will enable it to compete with the South Manchester Business Parks and with sites closer into the City Centre. However, to do so the area has to match the 'offer' of its competitors, i.e. a quality environment with landmark building design and good car parking. There is also the potential to build on this economic

function with complementary functions, explored below. As well as its sub-regional role, however, Hollinwood also serves as an important gateway not only into Oldham but also to Manchester from the east. This highlights the need to ensure that the design and development of the area is to a high standard.

A major business location at Hollinwood would provide a source of employment close to residential areas and on a high-density public transport corridor. At present the market for office development in this area is limited. However, with a clear vision/masterplan for the area and a commitment from the Council and the

NWDA and English Partnerships to develop a high quality business location we believe that a strong demand can be created. Before this position is reached it is imperative that the Council protects the area from inappropriate uses. The Hollinwood area is an asset that cannot be replicated anywhere else within the borough.

Constraints on development

At present land within the Hollinwood area is in a multiplicity of ownerships. Fortunately the Council has significant land holdings in the area. The environment of the area is far from conducive to inward investment with vacant and derelict sites

and a poor environment. In addition the area is under pressure from a number of uses that would be inappropriate if the area's full potential is to be realised, i.e. fast food outlets, car showrooms, etc. To be able to address these constraints will require strong public sector intervention to plan the area, assemble sites, improve the environment, service sites and resist inappropriate uses.

Potential development plots and their possible uses

Key sites, other than those owned by the Council, in the Hollinwood area, include those owned by British Gas and the Roxy

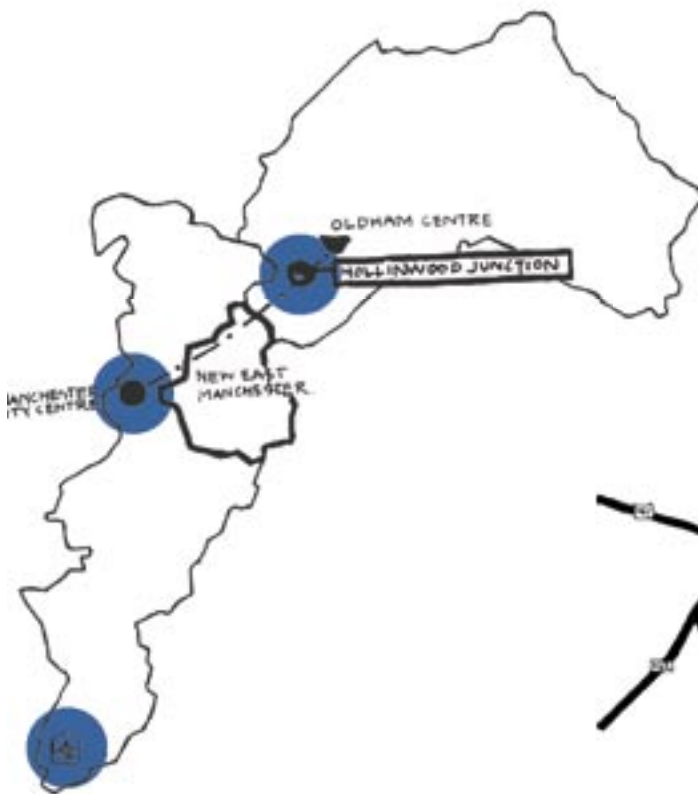


Figure 4: Relationship to airport, New East Manchester and City Centre

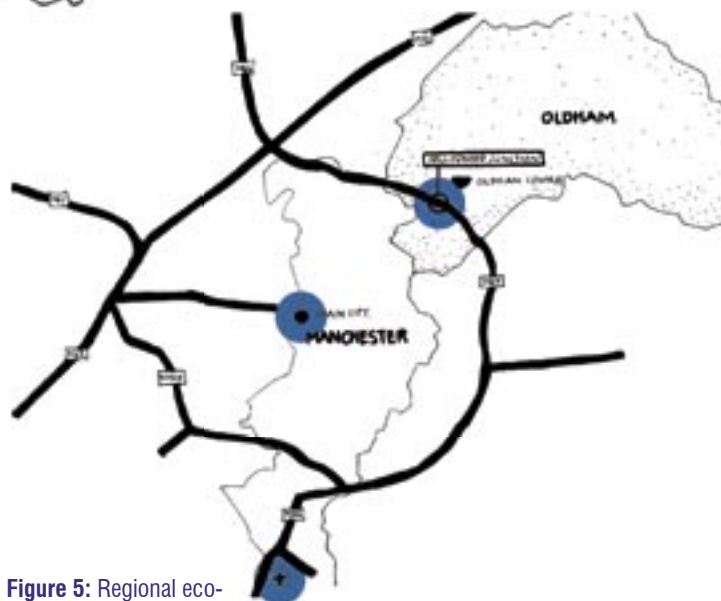


Figure 5: Regional economic axis between cities



Figure 6: Strip between rail and A62 is fed by the 3 sources M60, A62 and the proposed Metrolink

Cinema. These and other sites in the area need to be brought under single ownership to enable an attractive and successful development to be achieved. The Roxy Cinema is one of the borough's important assets, and currently occupies an important gateway site at Hollinwood. It is important that this leisure facility is not lost. We are aware that the Cinema's owners would con-

sider moving to the town centre if a suitable "deal" could be arrived at. This would bring major benefits to the town centre as well as free up a valuable development site.

The possible future ingredients in the development of Hollinwood could include:

- ▶ primarily offices and businesses
- ▶ ancillary retailing
- ▶ ancillary housing
- ▶ cafes, restaurants, bars
- ▶ landscape elements
- ▶ ancillary leisure
- ▶ conference centre
- ▶ Renewable Energy Park

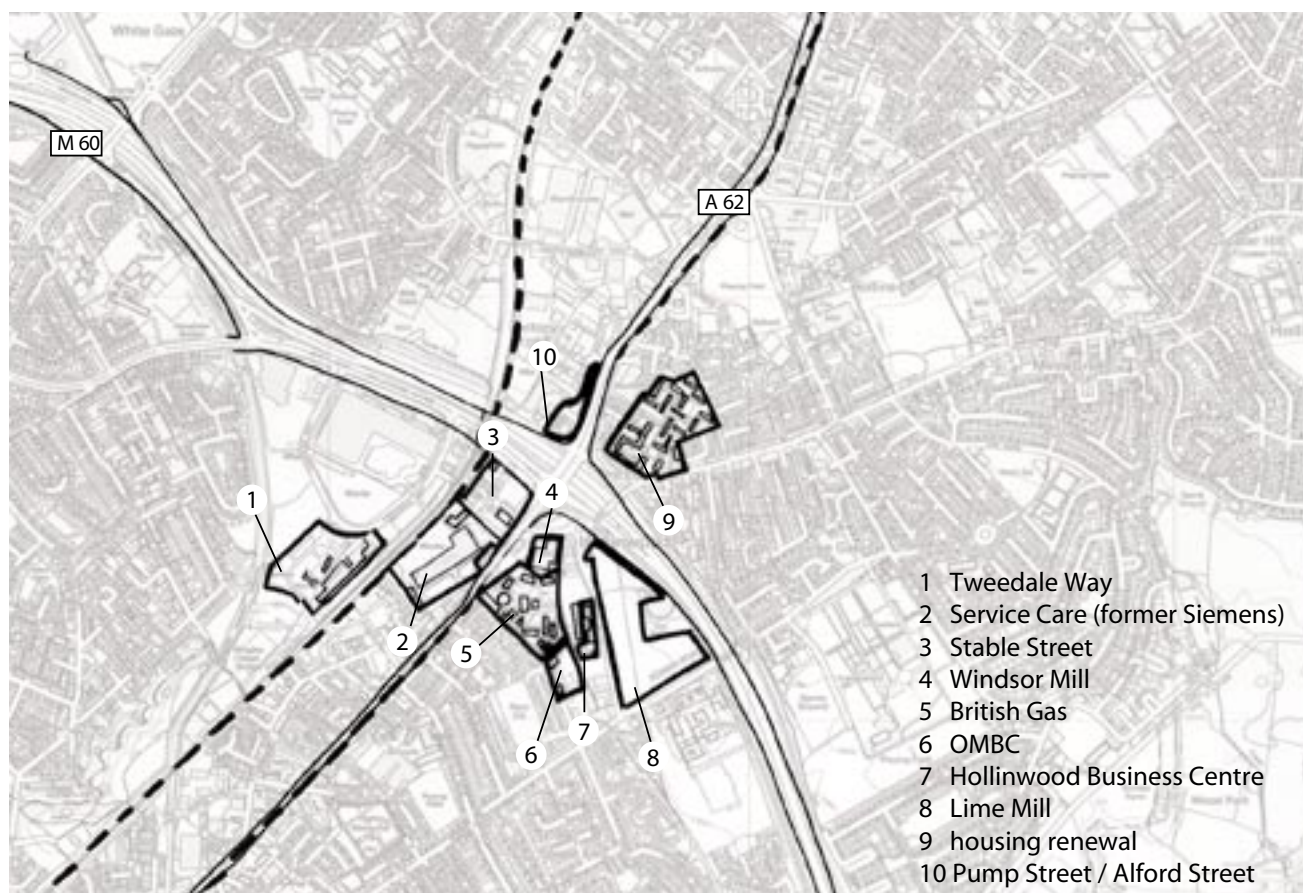


Figure 7: Hollinwood – site plan

Implementation strategy

In order to create a business location of sub-regional importance the site needs to be brought together and serviced and marketed as a coherent package. This will not happen in the short term indeed the demand for business space in the short term will probably be taken up by competing business locations. Oldham, however, needs to play the long game in order to respond to opportunities as they arise and to have a scheme capable of being brought forward in the medium term. The first step is to avoid sites being taken by conflicting uses. This will require either site acquisition or the adoption of Supplementary Planning Guidance that gives the planning system teeth in resisting such uses. In order to justify acquisitions and SPG the Council needs to commission more detailed masterplanning work for the area and provide the context (and leverage) for more detailed negotiations with landowners. It will enable plans to be brought forward for infrastructural investment, for plots to be defined, for marketing material to be produced and for promotion of the area to be undertaken. The North West Development Agency's and English Partnership's assistance will be essential in helping to assemble sites.

Summary points

- ▶ To develop Hollinwood as a high quality sub-regional office/business location
- ▶ To commission as a matter of urgency a masterplan for the Hollinwood area
- ▶ To resist inappropriate development of the area



Figure 8: Illustration showing a possible future development of Hollinwood

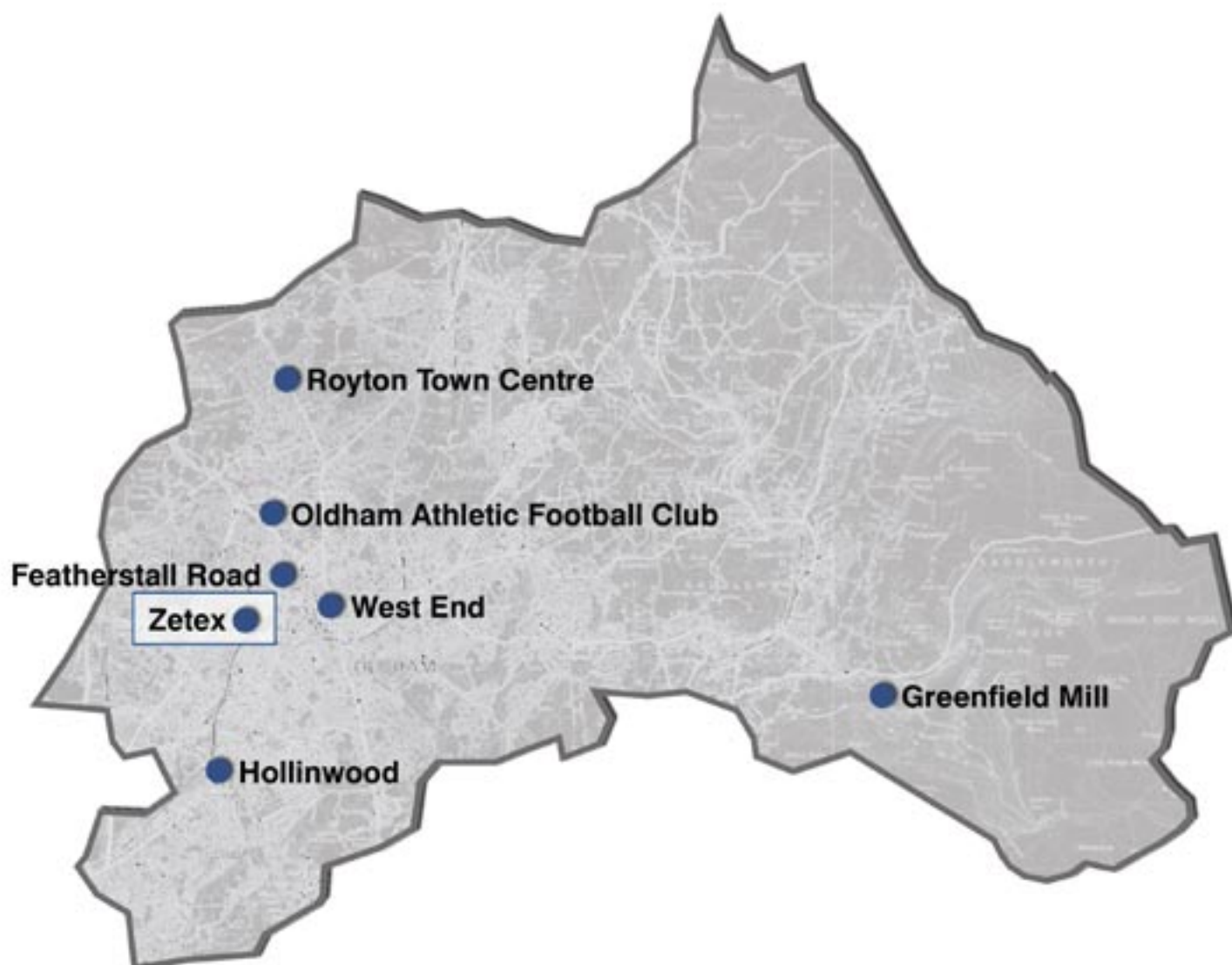
Hollinwood 2014



Figure 9: The ingredients and functions that could characterise Hollinwood in 2014







Node 02: ZETEX

Themes: Common Ground, Wealth Creation



Context

As the largest manufacturer of micro-processors in Britain, Zetex operates on a global scale, with affiliated companies in Europe, America and Asia. It is the type of company to whom most local authorities throughout the country would offer their most prestigious sites, as well as provide grants to entice them to locate within their boundaries. Oldham must ensure that it retains this prestigious company and maximises the benefit of it being within the borough.

However, for historical reasons the plant finds itself located within an area which is the antithesis of a normal location for a high tech company that requires a

dust and vibration free environment. Its neighbours include a brick crushing plant and a waste-recycling depot. Whilst these uses are important to the local economy themselves, their proximity to Zetex, raises questions of the long term attractiveness of this site to the company. In addition, Zetex attracts visitors and potentially highly qualified recruits to its Chadderton plant. The immediate area is a poor advert for the company. If the company had to move, they may not remain within Oldham. It is therefore imperative that the Council works with Zetex to not only look at how their operational difficulties can be addressed but how the location of the only British owned microprocessor business in the country can be capitalised upon to attract further business into the borough and provide

more jobs to local residents.

This can be achieved by relocating the inappropriate neighbours, improving the environment and creating development sites for other high tech companies, by improving the linkages and the environment of these linkages between nearby Chadderton town centre and the A62.

Location

The company has recently consolidated all of its operations on the one site in the Chadderton area. Internally the plant is “state of the art” with the technology required to ensure a “clean” environment for the product of microprocessors.

Opportunities for development

The relocation of the surrounding businesses will help to ensure Zetex remain within Oldham and provide them with the opportunity to expand further in one location. The freeing up of adjacent sites will also provide the opportunity to create

new development plots which can be used to attract either existing high tech firms in Oldham to expand into or to bring in companies from outside the borough. We have also suggested the area should be explored as the possible location for a 'social computer' (see below).

Constraints on development

The main constraints on the development of this location are the ownership of land, the current lack of demand and the availability of funds to be able to pursue the plan's objectives.



Figure 10: Zetex is competing with other production sites: Zetex's position, like that of the IT world, is constantly changing and thus competition from cheaper markets particularly Asia is very high.

Potential development plots and their possible uses

The first priority is clearly to relocate the inappropriate uses that lie to the north and east of the Zetex plant. However, the opportunity to improve the surrounding area from the proposed metro station at Werneth to Middleton Road should also be explored.

The possible future ingredients in the development of the Zetex area could include:

- ▶ relocation of surrounding inappropriate businesses
- ▶ science park/location for high tech companies
- ▶ a quality environment
- ▶ reusing a redundant mill as a 'social computer'

We have suggested the possibility of reusing a mill in the general proximity of the Zetex plant as a 'social computer'. This is a concept being supported by the

European Union and IBM, where high tech companies collaborate with the public on product development and testing. Oldham already has several high tech companies that might be persuaded to participate in this innovative European network of facilities. These include not only Zetex but also Ferranti and Digital Projections, as well as a number of companies in nearby Manchester. The 'social computer' would also help develop workforce skills as well as focus on design and innovation.



Figure 11: Zetex – site plan

Implementation Strategy

As a first step it will be important for the Council to commission a Development Framework for the area surrounding the Zetex site and its links with the A62 and Chadderton Town Centre. This development framework would identify the options for improving the environment of the Zetex plant, uses that will need to be relocated, potential development sites that could be created, potential sites for the relocated businesses, the potential for attracting high tech uses (if any), necessary environmental improvement works, the feasibility of the 'social computer' concept in this loca-

tion and lead to a phased action plan. The next stage would be to enter negotiations with uses to be relocated. It would be clearly preferable to do this by negotiation but there may be a need for a CPO to unlock these discussions. The North West Development Agency's/English Partnerships assistance may be required to fund the study, assemble the sites and carry out any necessary works. The proximity of this area to the Housing Market Renewal area of Werneth gives this job safeguarding/creation project particular relevance to English Partnerships.

Summary points

- ▶ By improving the environment of one of the borough's key employers, not only ensure the future of the company in Oldham but development sites for other high tech companies
- ▶ The Council should commission a Development Framework of the area surrounding the Zetex plant
- ▶ The Council should enter discussions with non-complementary uses



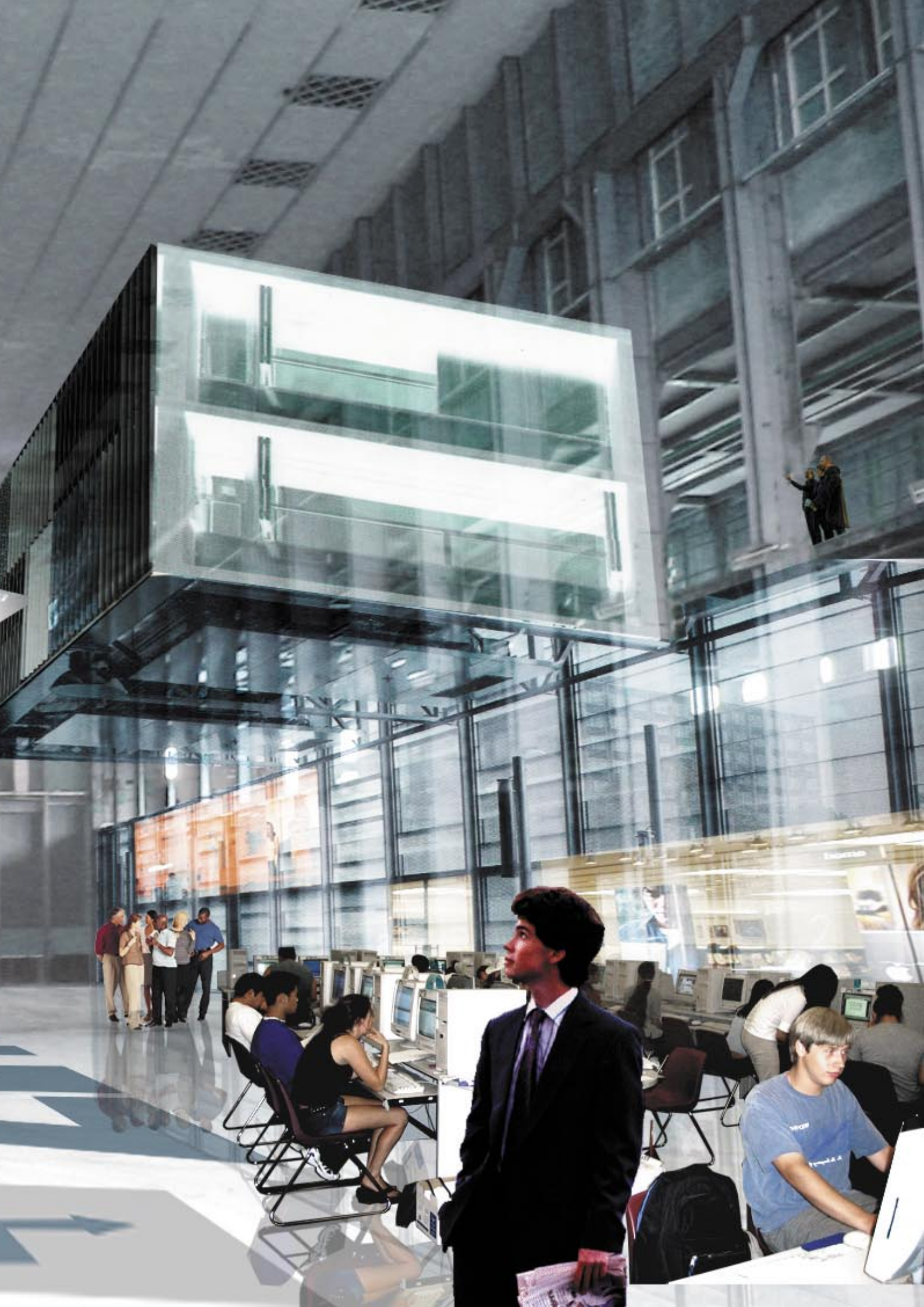
Figure 12: Common Ground on development plot

Zetex 2014



Figure 13: The ingredients and functions that could characterise the Zetex 'node' in 2014







Node 03: FEATHERSTALL ROAD

Themes: Common Ground, Wealth Creation, Liveability



Context

Featherstall Road's character is shaped by its ethnic communities, and especially its strong Bangladeshi culture and businesses. This richness gives the area the potential to develop as a node with a broad range of attractions to all cultures so that Featherstall Road could become a bridge between different cultures.

The idea that inspires this project is the spirit of a market square, a place where different people come together to interact and trade in goods, life-styles and ideas. Trade is not only the lifeblood of a town but in the case of Oldham is a the route through which greater intercultural understanding and integration can be achieved. Because of the international network of connection of which Oldham is part, markets are now not only local but also

regional and global. Featherstall Road is well connected to other Bangladeshi communities in Britain and around the world yet, feels physically and culturally separate from the rest of Oldham, particularly the town centre. This needs to be addressed.

Location

Featherstall Road links Rochdale Road and the Royal Oldham Hospital in the north to Manchester Road and Werneth Park in the south and lies approximately 750 metres to the west of Oldham Town Centre. The Featherstall Road area is separated from the town centre by the barrier of the Oldham Way. Whilst this demonstrator plan focuses on that part of Featherstall Road between the roundabout on Oldham Way and Middleton Road, we would see the activity proposed through time extending along the whole length of the road.

Opportunities for development

The masterplan aims to enhance Featherstall Road's rich economic and cultural potential and international links whilst reintegrating it with Oldham itself. The Vision is of a commercial neighbourhood where the richness of Bangla culture is expressed, but which is attractive and open to all cultures and which will have improved linkages with the town centre.

The demonstrator plan suggests the development of Featherstall Road as a centre for Asian restaurants and retailing. This has the potential to be a 'Zone of Exchange and Understanding' as part of the overall vision – a place where the Asian community can trade and interact with other communities as happens in places like Rusholme in Manchester and Brick Lane in London.



This does not presently happen in Oldham other than in the Open Market because most of the Asian commercial areas serve a largely Asian market. The proposals build on some progress that has been made and the aspirations of the Featherstall Road Traders Association. They also tie in with the regeneration of Anchor Mill and the proposed construction of a new Mosque on Featherstall Road.

Figure 14: Featherstall Road is part of a network of Asian communities in England

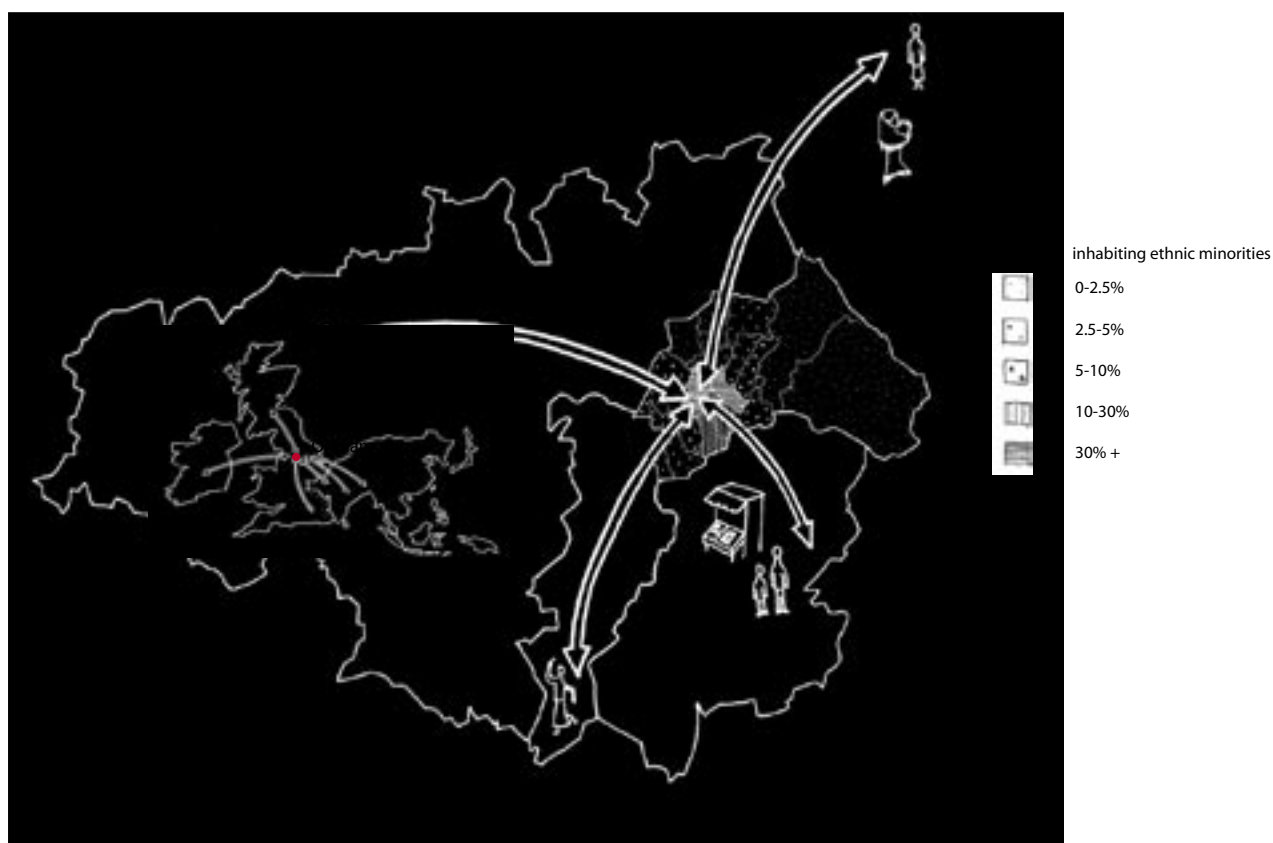


Figure 15: Featherstall Road attracts people from a larger region

The masterplan suggests a series of temporary uses similar to Gabriel's Wharf in London as a spur to developing this activity, with the development of housing and permanent facilities linking to Asian culture (for instance music production studios) following. Key to the proposals is a new 'Urban Bridge', to link across Oldham Way to the College and beyond to Oldham Town Centre.

There is a loosely constituted Traders Association. Its stated aspirations for Featherstall Road over the next 10 years are:

- ▶ for it to become predominantly a retail zone
- ▶ with high profile annual events including Bangla New Year, a summer shopping festival and a curry festival
- ▶ Anchor Mill re-opened
- ▶ the expansion of the Tesco store
- ▶ a new Mosque
- ▶ a growing residential Bangla community around
- ▶ an increase in cafe and kebab shops, employment agencies, more clothing shops

Constraints on development

There are three main constraints on the vision for this node being realised: land ownership is in a multiplicity of hands, Anchor Mill, an important component of the vision, is in the hands of the receiver and the Oldham Way represents a significant barrier between this area and the town centre.

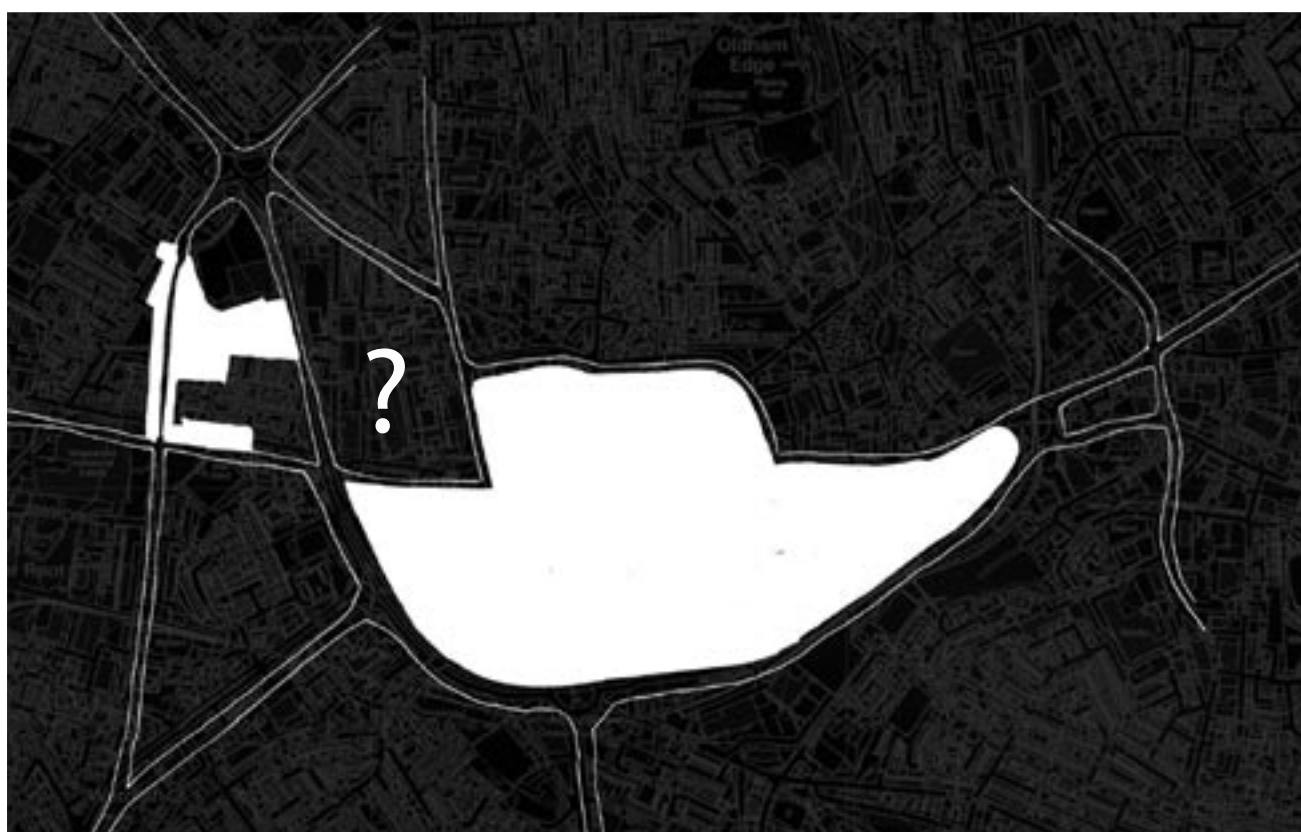


Figure 16: Featherstall Road is currently disconnected from the town centre

Potential development plots and their possible uses

Key development sites are ones located on Dew Way, land earmarked for the proposed Mosque, and a number of sites off Hilda and Widdop Streets.

The possible future ingredients in the development of the Featherstall Road area could include:

- ▶ special street furniture to give the area a distinctive identity, e.g. benches, lights, sculptures, street names
- ▶ public square with several functions (market square, performance space, parking space at special events)
- ▶ internet centre connecting Oldham to the world beyond
- ▶ Mosque
- ▶ possible Asian bazaar in the Anchor Mill, (indoor and outdoor market for Asian goods, cultural training in Asian dance, singing, music production company)
- ▶ the existing Millennium Community Centre
- ▶ offices
- ▶ conference centre, hotel (50-100 people)

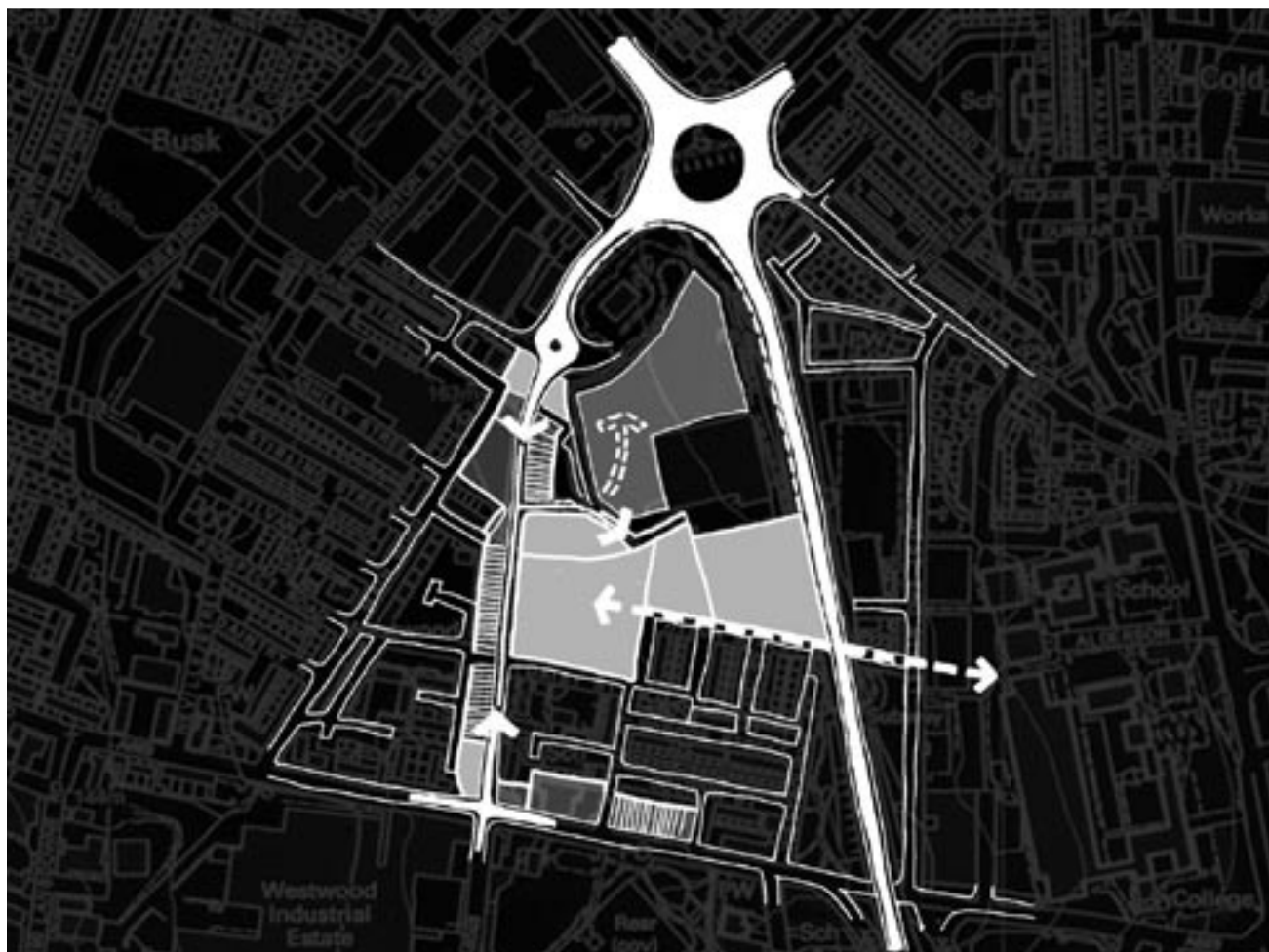


Figure 17: Development plots and possible access points into the site

Implementation strategy

Progress is already being made towards our vision for the Featherstall Road area. There are already restaurants on Featherstall Road, the Millennium Centre is operating successfully, a Mosque is planned and the informal Traders Association has similar ideas for the development of the area.

This is a significant start but to achieve the above vision there is a need for something to take the regeneration of the area onto

a new level. The refurbishment of Anchor Mills could achieve this, however, the building is in the hands of the receivers and so this cannot be relied upon in the near future. The proposal for a temporary market/restaurant area is, therefore, intended to animate the area and create a focus in the short term. In Gabriel's Wharf this was done using shipping containers with colourful shop fronts. It is suggested that this could happen on a temporary basis around the mill.

The main economic value in the area is currently the Tesco store. This

does not contribute to the street in terms of urban design or vitality but it is regarded as a successful store and employs a lot of local people. The store is seeking to expand. It is, therefore, important to work with Tesco to:

- ▶ Create a strong pedestrian route and crossing over Oldham Way to the town centre
- ▶ Support the creation of the market/restaurant area
- ▶ Create links to the supermarket car park so that it can serve the Featherstall

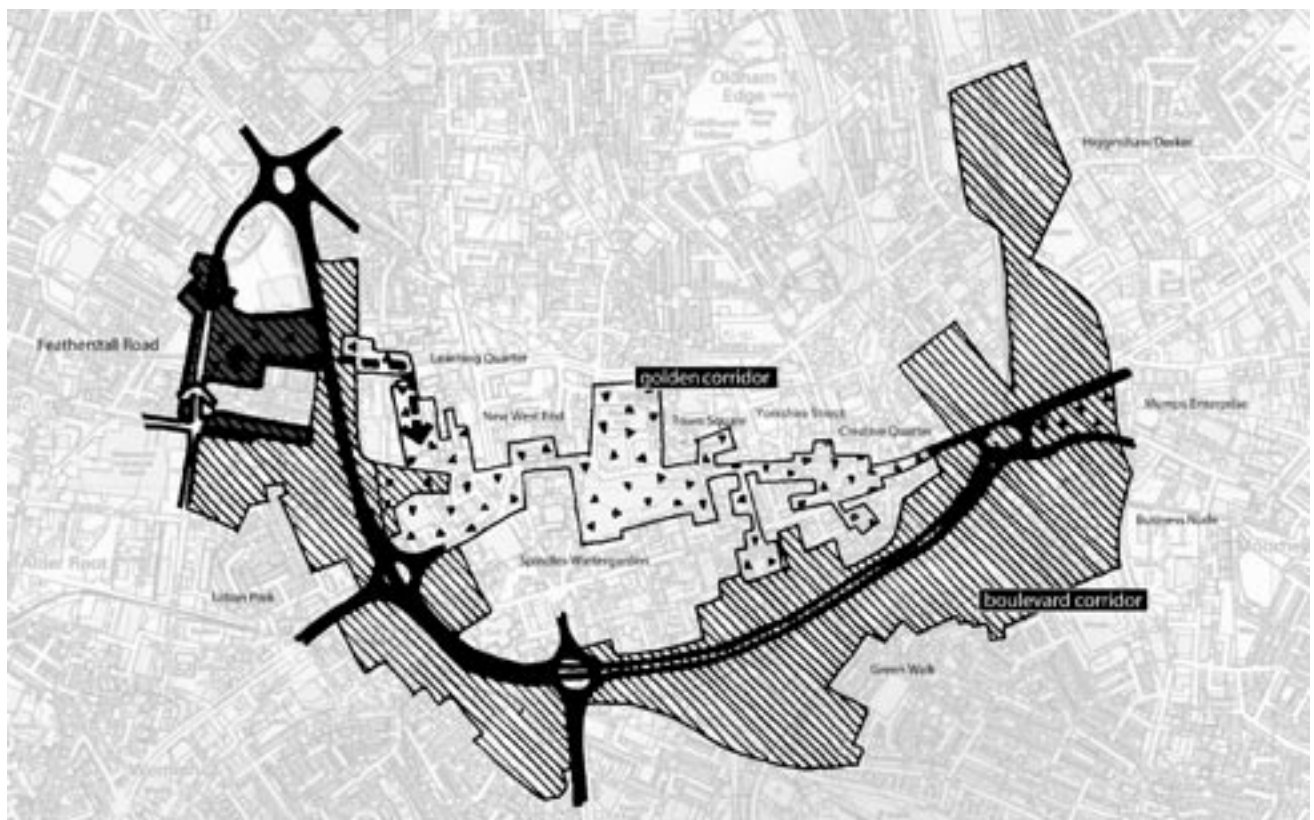


Figure 18: Boulevard and 'Golden Corridor'

Road facilities as well as encouraging supermarket shoppers to explore the stalls and restaurants.

In this way the commercial value of the supermarket can act as a spur to the scheme for Featherstall Road. As this gathers momentum it is our view that the mill will become more viable and we would anticipate it being brought forward for development as values in the area rise. Other recommendations are:

- ▶ Traders Association to be set up as a formal organisation, which can take responsibility, together with the Asian Business Association, for supporting business expansion, for both start up businesses and expanding companies. The organisation would also manage development schemes such as shop presentation / shop signage / street lighting / state of roads and pavements / structural control / parking / security / litter as well as coordinate cultural activities. Local businesses should be encouraged to improve their premises and funding opportunities should be investigated
- ▶ Enterprising activities and training needs to be put in place for the large number of young people who would benefit from the experience these facilities could offer
- ▶ The area should reflect the community who live and work in the area through imaginative designs and landmarks
- ▶ The added advantage is access: Westwood is very accessible from the

motorway network and Manchester Street. Having two gateways at each end of the road would create an inviting entrance into Featherstall Road and give the area stronger identity.

- ▶ There needs to be a promotional strategy which clearly outlines how to effectively market the area and make it more inviting for local residents, people from the rest of the borough, neighbouring areas and people from further afield.
- ▶ The strategy would give Featherstall Road a strong identity as a cultural hub and popular destination for shopping for a variety of multicultural crafts, food and clothes. The promotion could be linked to an annual shopping festival.

Funding for these proposals could come from a variety of sources: European Regional Development Funding, North West Development Agency, Section 106 funding linked to Tesco's possible expansion, and possibly recycled receipts from land disposals by the Council.

To be able to justify funding from these sources it will be important that a Development Framework is prepared for the area which sets out in more detail these projects, their phasing and cost and provides an action plan for their implementation.

Summary Points

- ▶ To develop the Featherstall Road area as a centre for Asian culture, business, retailing and restaurants
- ▶ To create a place where the Asian community can trade and interact with other communities, thereby creating a 'Zone of Understanding and Interaction'
- ▶ To improve pedestrian links between the Featherstall Road area and the town centre
- ▶ To commission the preparation of a Framework to guide development

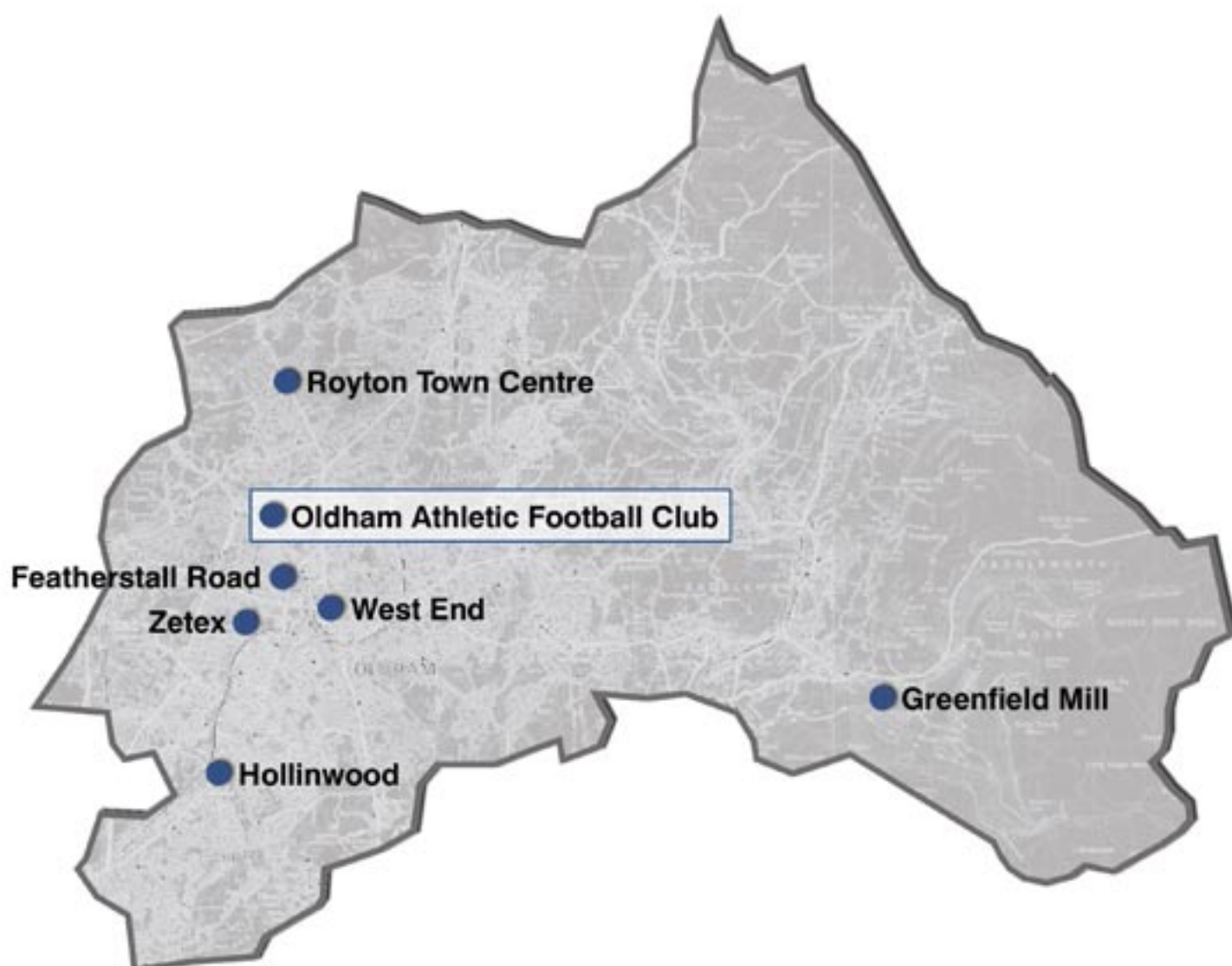
Featherstall Road 2014



Figure 19: The ingredients and functions that could characterise Featherstall Road in 2014







Node 04: OLDHAM ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

Themes: Common Ground, New Oldham, Wealth Creation



Context

Oldham Athletic Football Club (OAFC) has recently been bought by new owners who want to invest in the club by improving facilities and expanding the range of uses around the ground. The success of Premiership football clubs such as Blackburn and Bolton has been hugely important in the confidence and image of these towns. This is partly about the success of the team but also relates to the quality of the ground and the revenue that the facilities are able to generate. The proposals to develop the 'Latics' are therefore potentially an important part of Oldham's regeneration.

Location

OAFC's ground, Boundary Park, is located at the end of the A627 (M), the motorway linking Oldham to the transpennine M60. As such, the ground and its surrounding area is not only a potential regeneration node, but also a potential commercial site. The site is surrounded to the north and east by suburban family housing, to the west by open space and motorway infrastructure, and to the south by Oldham Hospital and terraced housing.

Opportunities for development

Boundary Park and its surrounding sites are without doubt positioned in a highly accessible and visible location. As such the area is attractive for retailing (which already exists at Elk Mill Central Retail Park), hotels (one is currently being constructed) and office development. Other professional football clubs have capitalised on the development potential of their stadia by incorporating office, leisure, retail and restaurant and conference facilities into their complexes and surrounding land. There is often a synergy in these uses, i.e. conference facilities can be hired out to businesses during the week and used for hospitality on match days. Leisure facilities linked with the club can attract people who



Figure 20: The node within the regional network

would not normally visit such facilities, and conversely people using the facilities may be attracted to attend matches. The same is also true of community and education facilities. Football stadia can have an uneasy relationship with the communities that surround them. It is therefore important that the community is involved in plans for expansion and that they can see benefits from the proposals.

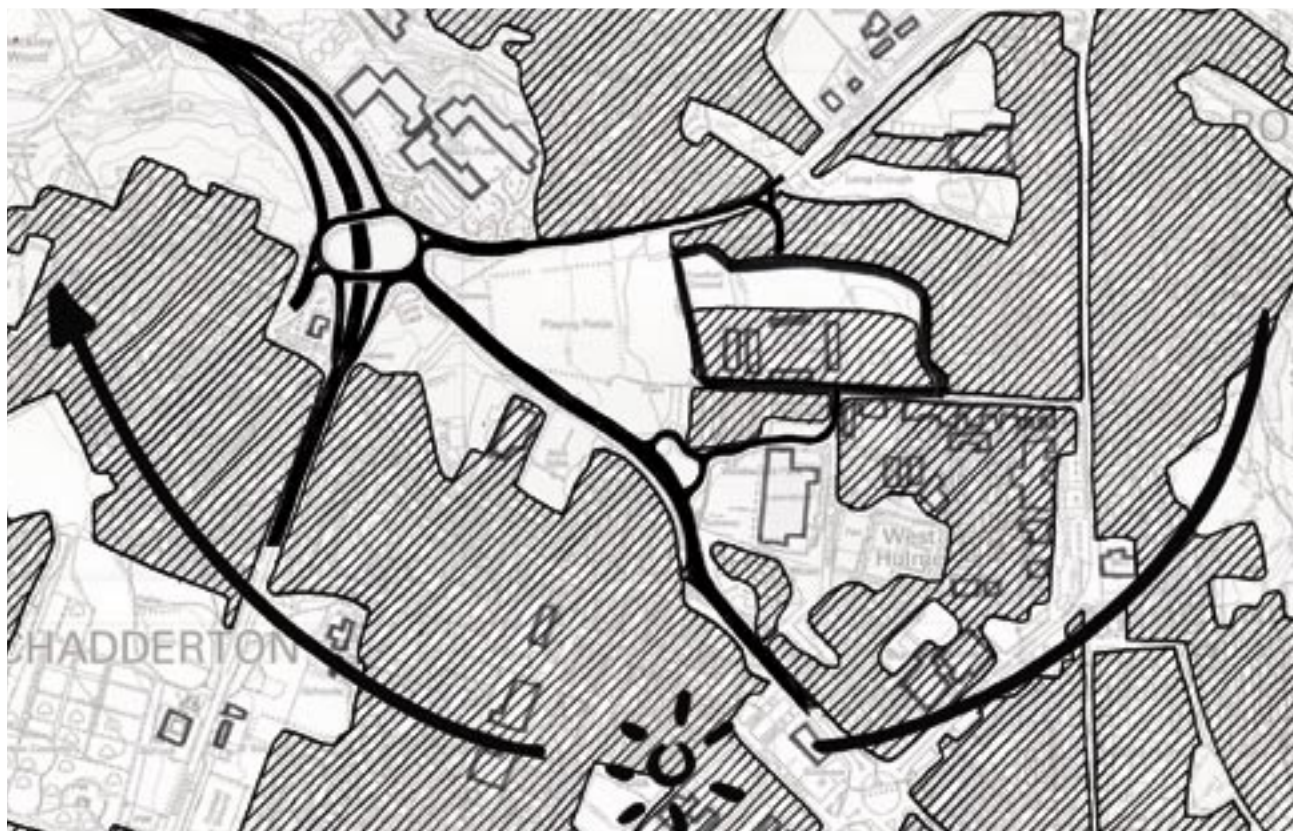


Figure 21: The nature of the site

Constraints on development

There are two constraints on the development of this node. Firstly there is the need to provide a more direct access to the area from the main road network. This will make the ground and its sites more attractive commercially. Secondly, the most successful examples of ancillary development of football grounds have generally been of clubs in the Premiership. Oldham is in the Second Division and does not have the same kudos or attract the same 'gates' as these clubs. We do understand that the

'Latics' have recently announced that they intend to build a new 8,000 capacity stand: however, care must therefore be taken in the type and quantum of uses developed.

Potential development plots and their possible uses

Three independently accessible plots offer excellent potential for a range of development options for redeveloping the stadium complex, but also additional complementary commercial and community functions. Additionally a fourth plot could be created

to facilitate redevelopment of the park for a wider range of recreation activities:

- ▶ bars, restaurants
- ▶ conference centre (400-500 seats)
- ▶ accommodation (hotel/hostel)
- ▶ public services
- ▶ outdoor sports facilities
- ▶ indoor sports facilities
- ▶ educational facilities
- ▶ offices / enterprise centre
- ▶ local retail
- ▶ sports pavilions
- ▶ special events, e.g. music venues

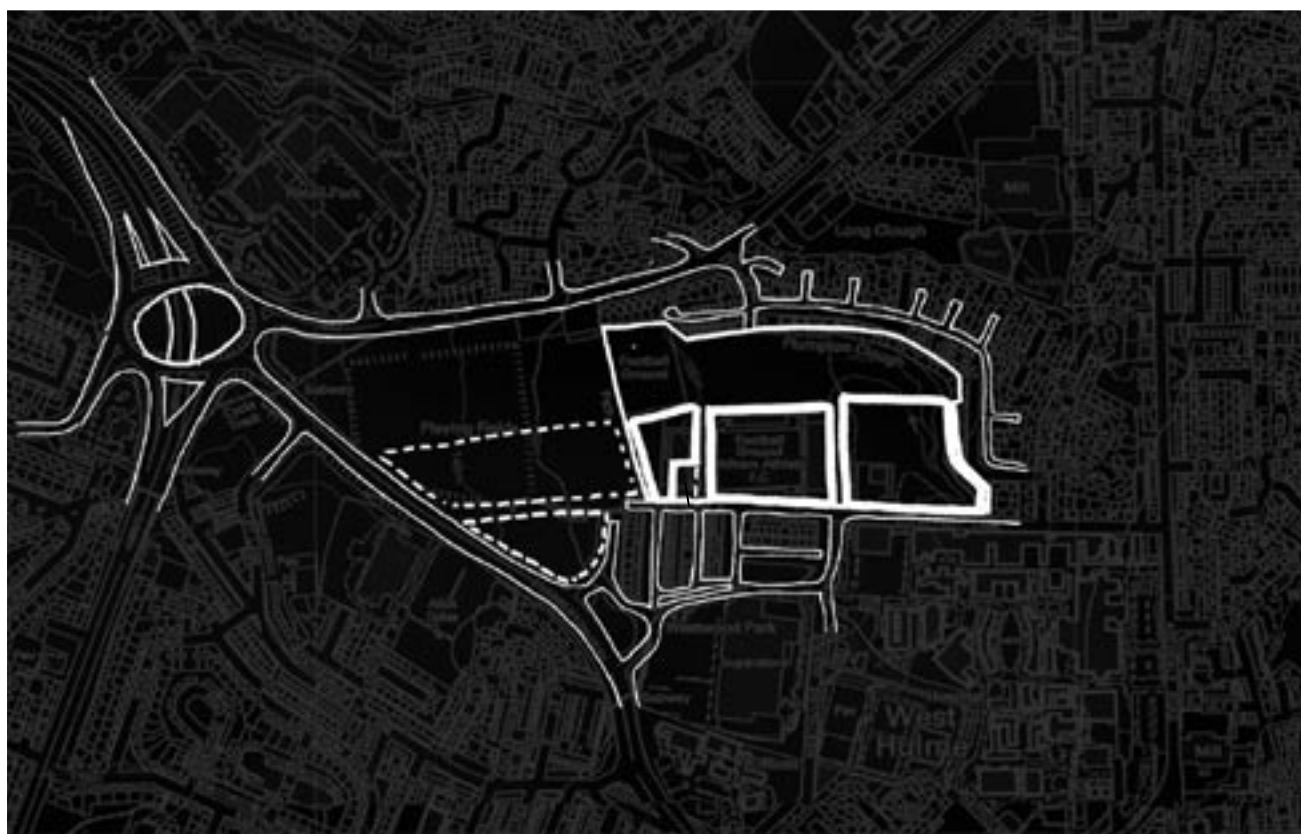


Figure 22: Oldham Athletic Football Club – site plan

Implementation strategy

The key to the viability of these sites is a direct road connection and visibility from the junction of the A627M Motorway. The extension of Furtherwood Road or of Westhulme Avenue is therefore crucial.

We believe that the next stage in taking this proposal forward is a feasibility study, which would explore the type and quantum of use that could be accommodated on the site, the likely future market for those uses, together with an exploration of costs, values and potential public assistance required. There is likely to be a need for subsidy and we believe that there is a case to be made for North West Development Agency investment in an imaginative scheme, which not only helps the long-term viability of the 'Latics' but also creates business space and facilities and jobs at a key gateway into Oldham.

Summary Points

- ▶ To capitalise on the accessibility, visibility and image of the Football Club to create jobs and new facilities and services and support the viability of the Club
- ▶ To improve access to the football ground and its development sites
- ▶ To commission a feasibility study of the development potential of the ground

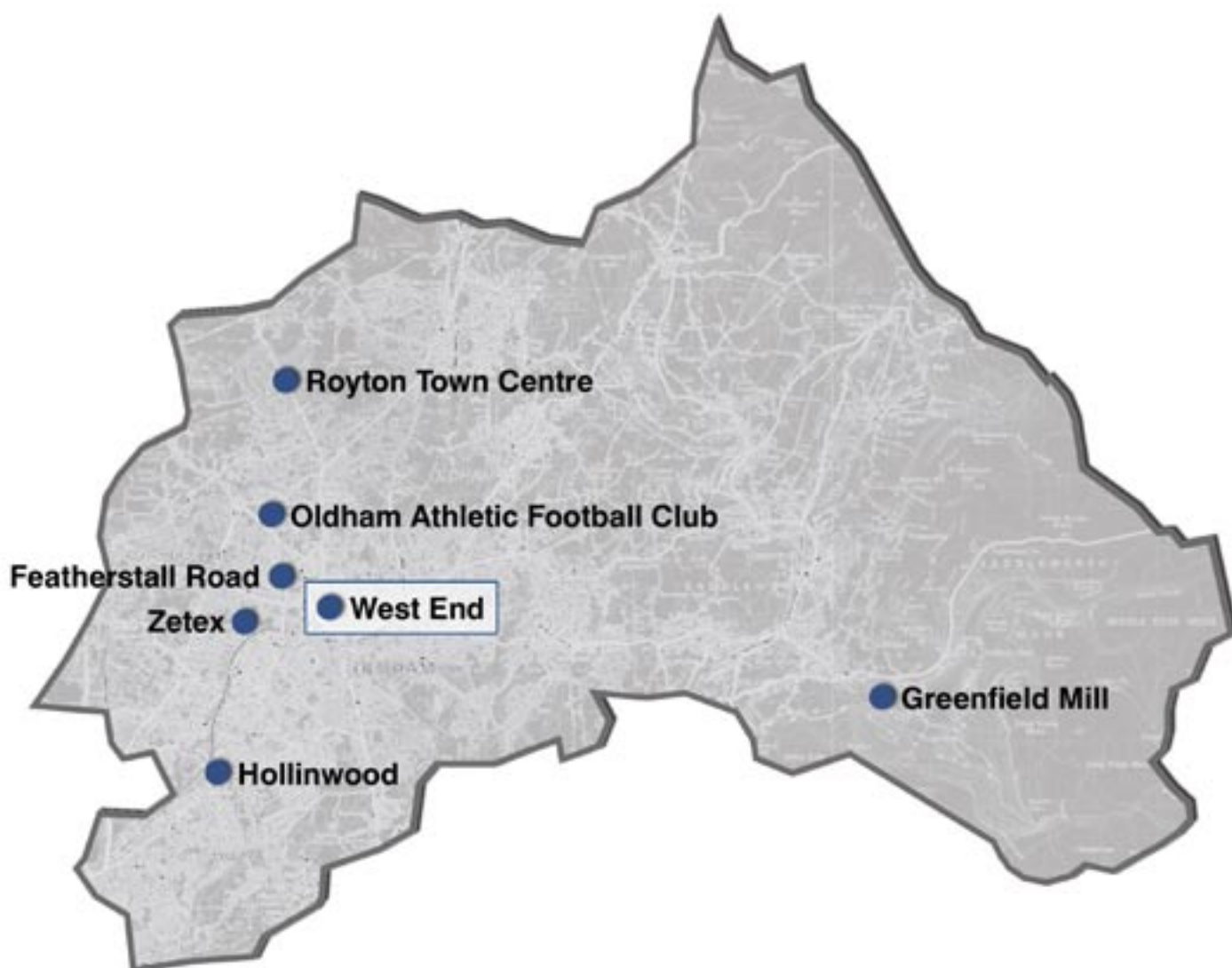
OAFC 2014



Figure 23: The ingredients and functions that could characterise Oldham Athletic Football Club in 2014







Node 05: WEST END

Themes: Common Ground, Wealth Creation



Context

The award-winning Coliseum Theatre has built up a formidable regional reputation for lively repertory theatre and support for local talent and a range of community and outreach activities. However, the venue off Yorkshire Street is approaching the end of its life. It is proving an impediment to progress both technically and in audience development, and a feasibility study has been exploring options for creating a new home for the theatre. The Coliseum is a key element in the landscape of Greater Manchester theatres, as the illustration on pages 46/47 shows. It also plays a major role in Oldham's cultural landscape. The new development might give the theatre the opportunity to gain influence at a larger scale. In the Town Centre Masterplan we suggest redeveloping the Coliseum as the heart of a new 'West End', as a cultural counterpoint

to Yorkshire Street. While this new site is only one potential location, developing the ideas further in this masterplan allows us to explore the different ingredients that such a cultural node could include.

Location

The proposed 'West End' can be defined as the area located to the west of the shopping core, to the south of the Civic Centre and Oldham College and bounded on the west by the curve of the Oldham Way. This location has a number of key attributes:

- ▶ it is highly accessible by road and bus and the proposed Metrolink will have a station within the area at Union Street
- ▶ it is in close proximity to the shopping centre
- ▶ it is adjacent to Oldham College, which may have synergies with proposals

being developed

- ▶ there are a number of potential available development sites

Opportunities for development

In seeking to find a new home for the Coliseum Theatre, studies have focused on the Old Town Hall as a possible location. The Oldham Town Centre Masterplan explains why this conflicts with the possible expansion of the Town Square Shopping Centre. We also believe that a theatre developed as part of a shopping centre would not be appropriate or fulfil the potential of the Coliseum as a focus for the cultural life of the town. This masterplan suggests that there should be a new-build solution for the Coliseum, which would allow it to expand its role in education, improve its customer facilities and provide a base for Peshkar Productions and potentially other creative



Figure 24: Theatres in Greater Manchester

businesses in Oldham.

We believe that a location close to the College could facilitate this and would provide an important bridge between the theatre and the rest of the town centre.

We have also explored with the Roxy Cinema's owners the possibility of relocating the cinema from its current location at Hollinwood to the town centre. This would help free up a key site for the development of Hollinwood, provide a valuable leisure facility for the town centre and enable the Roxy to redevelop and expand its audience. A relocated Coliseum Theatre together with a relocated Roxy Cinema and associated cafes and restaurants could create the basis for a new 'West End',

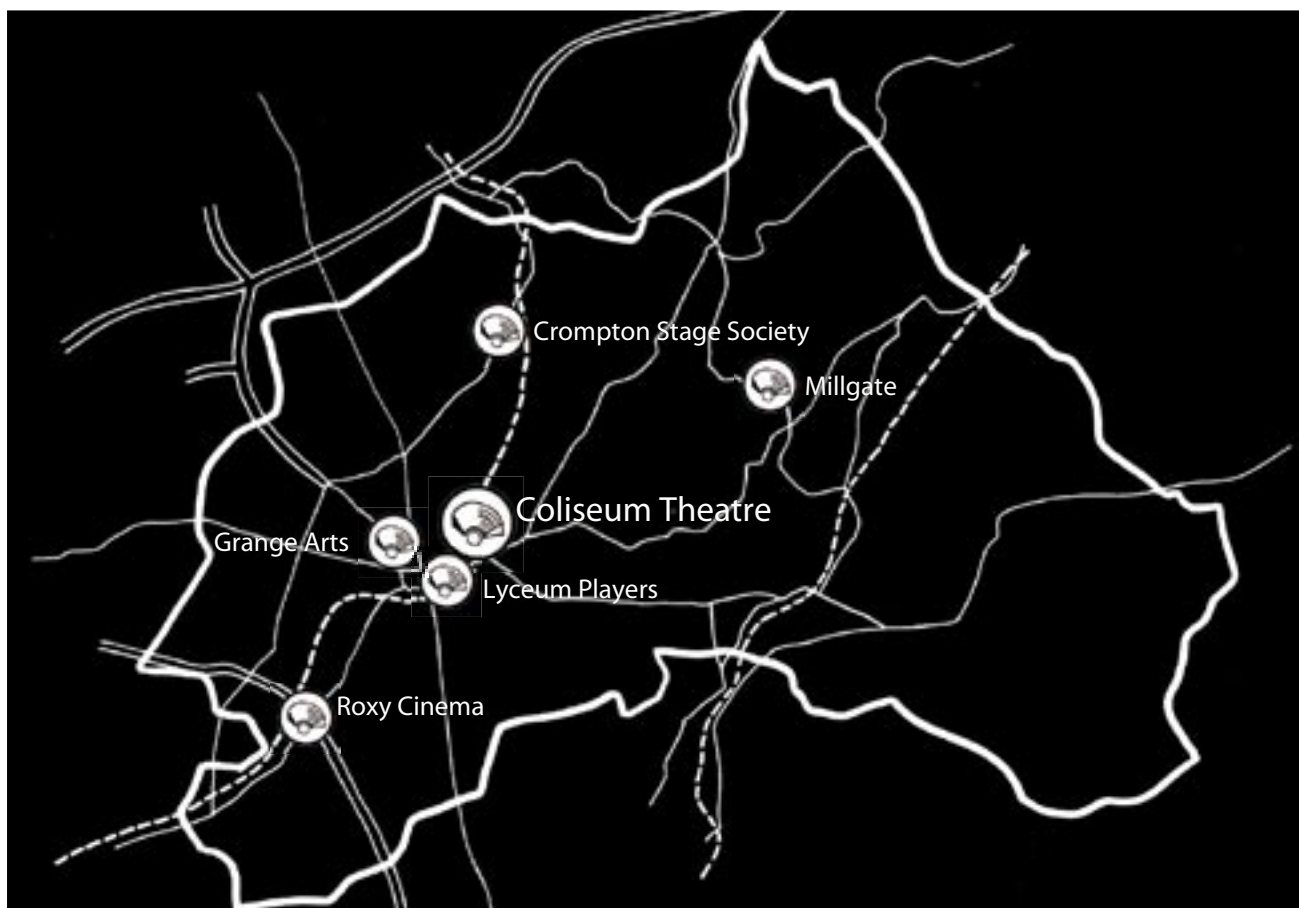


Figure 25: Theatres in the Borough of Oldham

which would provide a vibrant balance to the evening economy on Yorkshire Street. These proposals also have significant importance in creating an intercultural area of 'Exchange and Understanding'.

The Coliseum has developing links through its participatory work and theatre programme with the South Asian communities but the new Coliseum with Peshkar Productions could become a genuine community resource for all the communities in Oldham. The Roxy Cinema is already exploring screening 'Bollywood' movies. The area could become a bridge between the two cultures. We are also suggesting that the roof of the Civic Centre tower be developed as a 'Tower of Views' with

a public restaurant and viewing gallery, and interactive terminals where people could participate in the governance of the borough and see the 'big picture' of the borough from this birds eye view.

The location of the Coliseum/Cinema complex in the necklace of the 'Golden Corridor' (see Oldham Town Centre masterplan) and the close proximity to other cultural elements such as Featherstall Road, the Learning Quarter and the Tower of Views, enables a strong potential interrelation with those elements. A drink in the Tower Bar looking out over the borough would be a dramatic location for the end of a cultural evening out in Oldham Town Centre.

Constraints on development

To create a vital and viable 'West End' it is important that at least one of the above-mentioned key facilities is attracted into the area. A feasibility study is ongoing on the relocation of the Coliseum and the Roxy have expressed their willingness to be involved in a feasibility study of the relocation of the cinema to Oldham Town Centre.

Land ownership may be an issue in this area as the key sites are either not in public ownership or have other constraints upon them. The funding of the key facilities: the theatres and the cinema, will clearly be an issue and one that needs to be explored further.

Potential development plots and their possible uses

The key development plots for this proposal are:

- ▶ the former Mecca Bingo site – this could accommodate the cinema and the theatre
- ▶ the former Sainsbury's store off Manchester Street – this has an existing retail consent and would be expensive to acquire
- ▶ land at the rear of the Magistrates Court off Middleton Road extended by rationalising the traffic circulation at the Middleton Road/King Street junction – in the short term this may be an expensive option.

The possible future ingredients in the development of a new 'West End' could include:

- ▶ relocated Coliseum theatre
- ▶ studio theatre space
- ▶ educational facilities (theatre school)
- ▶ bistro, cafe



Figure 26: West End – site plan

- ▶ restaurants
- ▶ artists' workshops
- ▶ relocated Roxy multiplex cinema
- ▶ Civic Centre 'Tower of Views'

Implementation strategy

The illustration on pages 46/47 shows how a new Coliseum could be accommodated on a site to be created at Kings Street/Middleton Road. This will require Oldham Council to rationalise the road layout, redesigning the present generous roundabout to become a simple crossroads junction, while still allowing for a full turning circle for buses. Negotiations will also be necessary with the Magistrates Court, whose car park adjoin the site and would probably need to be built over in the development of the theatre. Associated improvements to the public realm surrounding the Mag-

istrates Court would be another associated benefit from the proposed Coliseum scheme. It may be that whilst this would create a landmark site for the theatre, the costs and constraints on its development would prohibit its use. This needs to be explored further.

The best site for both the theatre and the cinema would appear to be the former Mecca Bingo complex, which will have the benefit of a nearby Metrolink station. The public sector should seek to bring this into public ownership.

The feasibility study on the relocation of the Coliseum to the Old Town Hall is being carried out. We recommend that this study be widened to take into account other locations at the west end of town and incorporating our proposals that in addition the theatre become a 'teaching' facility. Our

discussions have shown an interest from the owners of the Roxy Cinema at Hollinwood to consider relocation to Oldham Town Centre. However, they would have to be convinced that such a relocation was both feasible and viable. There is, therefore, a need for this work to commence as soon as possible.

Summary Points

- ▶ To develop the area to the west of the shopping core as Oldham's 'West End'
- ▶ That the public sector should seek to acquire the former Mecca Bingo site
- ▶ To extend the Coliseum Theatre feasibility study and to commission a feasibility study into the relocation of the Roxy Cinema

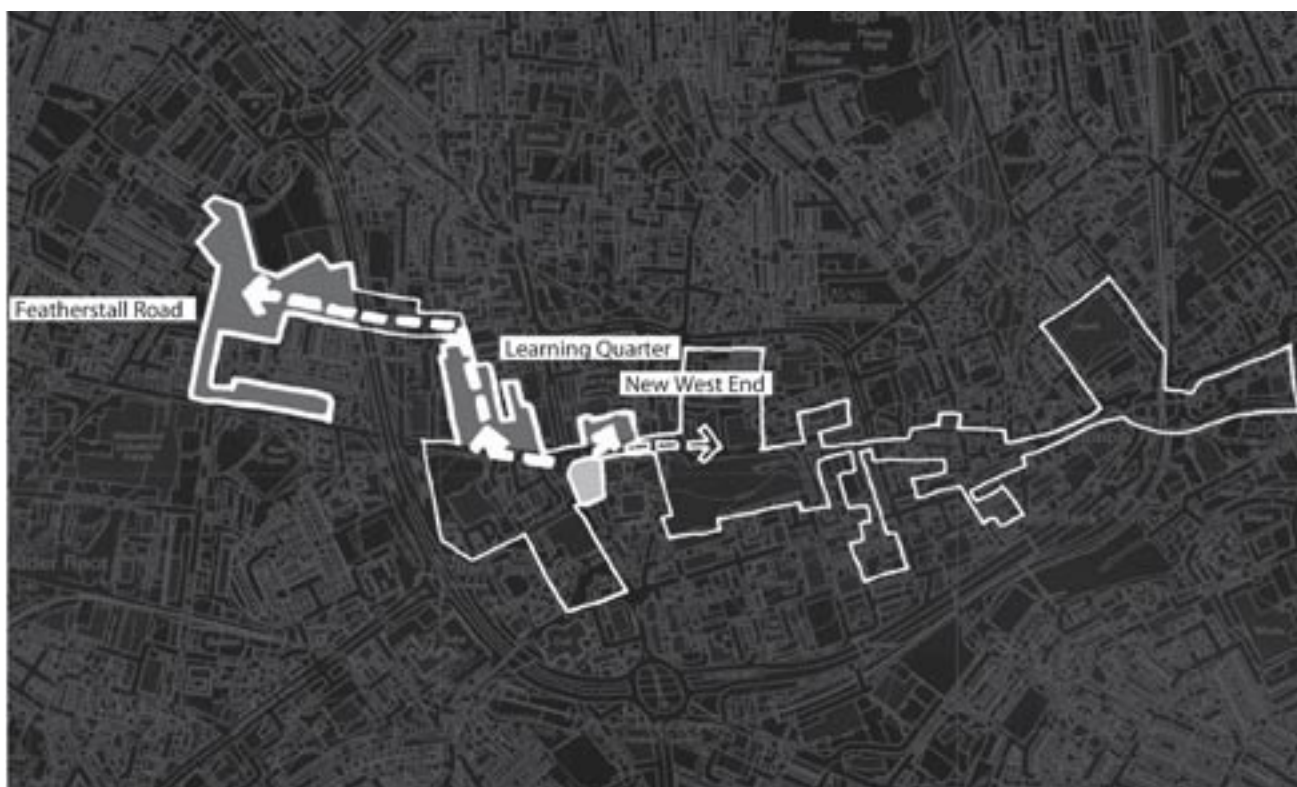


Figure 27: Coliseum and the elements of the 'Golden Corridor'

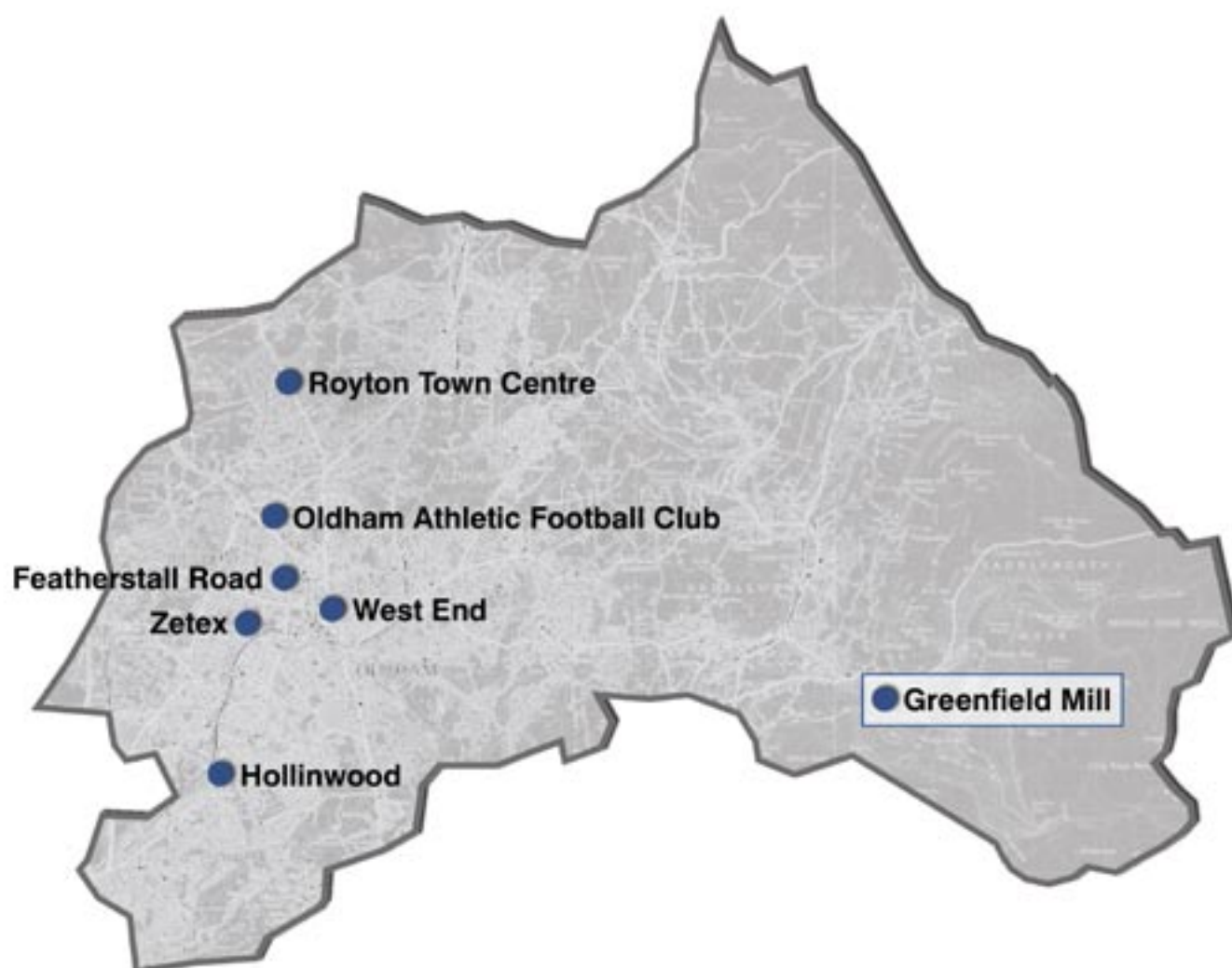
West End 2014



Figure 28: The ingredients and functions that could characterise the Coliseum in 2014

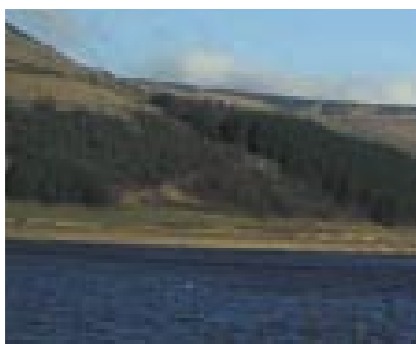






Node 06: GREENFIELD MILL

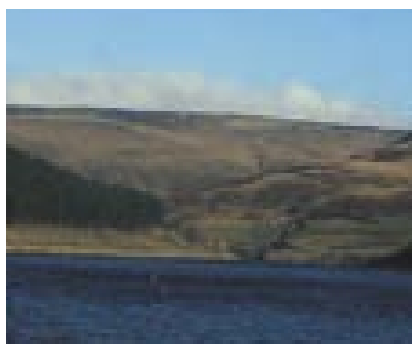
Themes: Wealth Creation, Common Ground, Education



Context

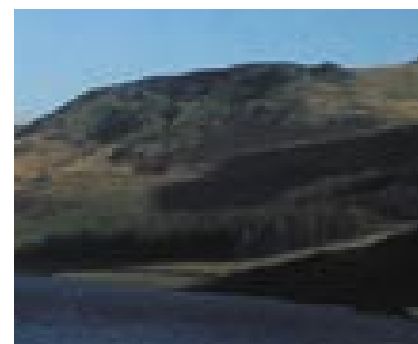
The Robert Fletcher Mill, a former cigarette paper manufacturing complex, occupies a 76 hectare site on the eastern edge of Oldham adjacent to the Peak District National Park and the attractive Dovestone Reservoir. The mill ceased working in 2001 and comprises some 22,000 sq m of floor space, associated millponds, tanks etc as well as large areas of agricultural land and woodland. The site lies within the Green Belt.

The owners of the complex are considering what action to take. We understand they seek a high value use, residential, because of the high cost of clearing and cleaning up; they need to generate sufficient value in the site.



Location

The site lies 11 miles north east of Manchester City Centre and 4 miles from Oldham Town Centre. The site links onto both the A669 and the A635, which in turn provides linkage to the A670 and thereby onto the M60 at Ashton-under-Lyne. It occupies a unique location, a gateway into the Peak District National Park on the edge of a major conurbation.



Opportunities for development

The Robert Fletcher site represents a significant opportunity site for recreation/leisure/tourism development in a prime location adjacent to a National Park. The demonstrator plan envisages the development of the site as a recreational resource for the entire borough (and beyond) and a gateway to the Peak District National Park. We have explored the market for appropriate commercial leisure facilities and found that demand is at present limited.

Our proposal is for the development of an outdoor centre for both the general population and for all schools within the borough (and indeed further afield). This centre could cater for extreme indoor and outdoor sports, a national park centre, hostel, hotel and timeshare accommodation, conference

facilities and associated eating and drinking facilities. This would bring a prominent vacant site in the most scenically attractive part of the borough back into use, promote the leisure economy to the benefit of the borough as a whole and create a 'common ground' resource for all the people of the borough to experience the Saddleworth area.

Constraints on development

This is not an easy site to develop and there are a number of constraints to its development:

- ▶ it is within the Green Belt
- ▶ there are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings
- ▶ it is in private ownership
- ▶ development of the site would involve very high abnormal costs for decommissioning the plant, clearing buildings and decontaminating the site
- ▶ highway access is difficult
- ▶ there is congestion at Dovestone Reservoir at peak times

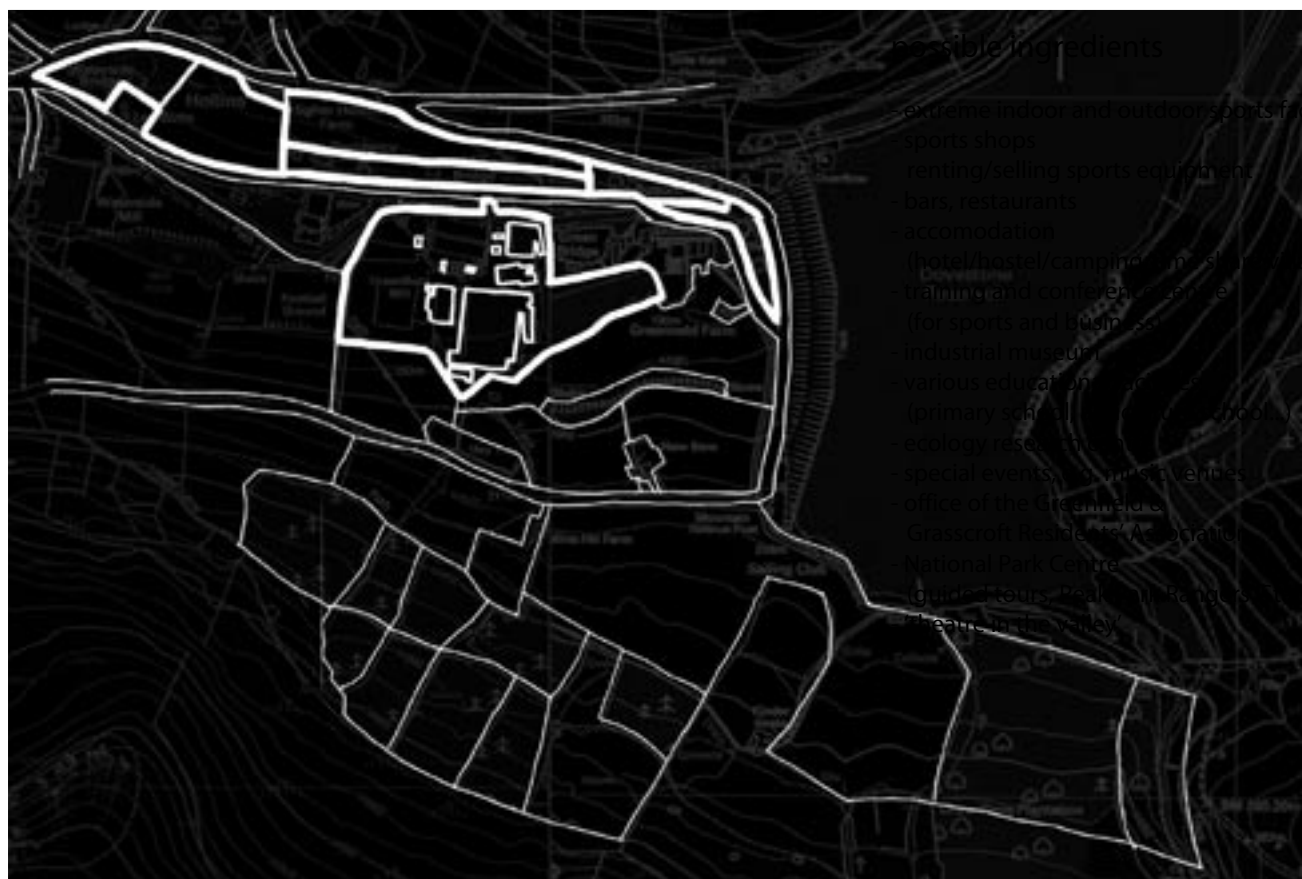


Figure 29: Greenfield Mill – site plan

Potential development plots and their possible uses

The site is identified in the draft Oldham UDP as a major development site within the Green Belt. Although the site extends to some 76 hectares, we understand that given its Green Belt status, development would only be allowed on the existing paper mill footprint of 5.4 hectares. In addition, the sensitive re-use of existing buildings elsewhere on the site would be allowed. The Council's primary concern

would be to preserve the existing 'openness' of this site within the Green Belt.

The possible future ingredients in the development of the Robert Fletcher Mill complex area could include:

- ▶ extreme indoor and outdoor sports facilities
- ▶ sports shops renting/selling sports equipment
- ▶ bars, restaurants
- ▶ accommodation (hotel/hostel/ camping/time share villas)
- ▶ training and conference centre (for sports and business)
- ▶ industrial museum
- ▶ educational facilities
- ▶ ecology research centre
- ▶ special events, e.g. music venues
- ▶ National Park Centre (guided tours, Peak Park Rangers' Station)
- ▶ 'theatre in the valley'
- ▶ park and ride system to reduce car parking on the site and at Dovestone Reservoir

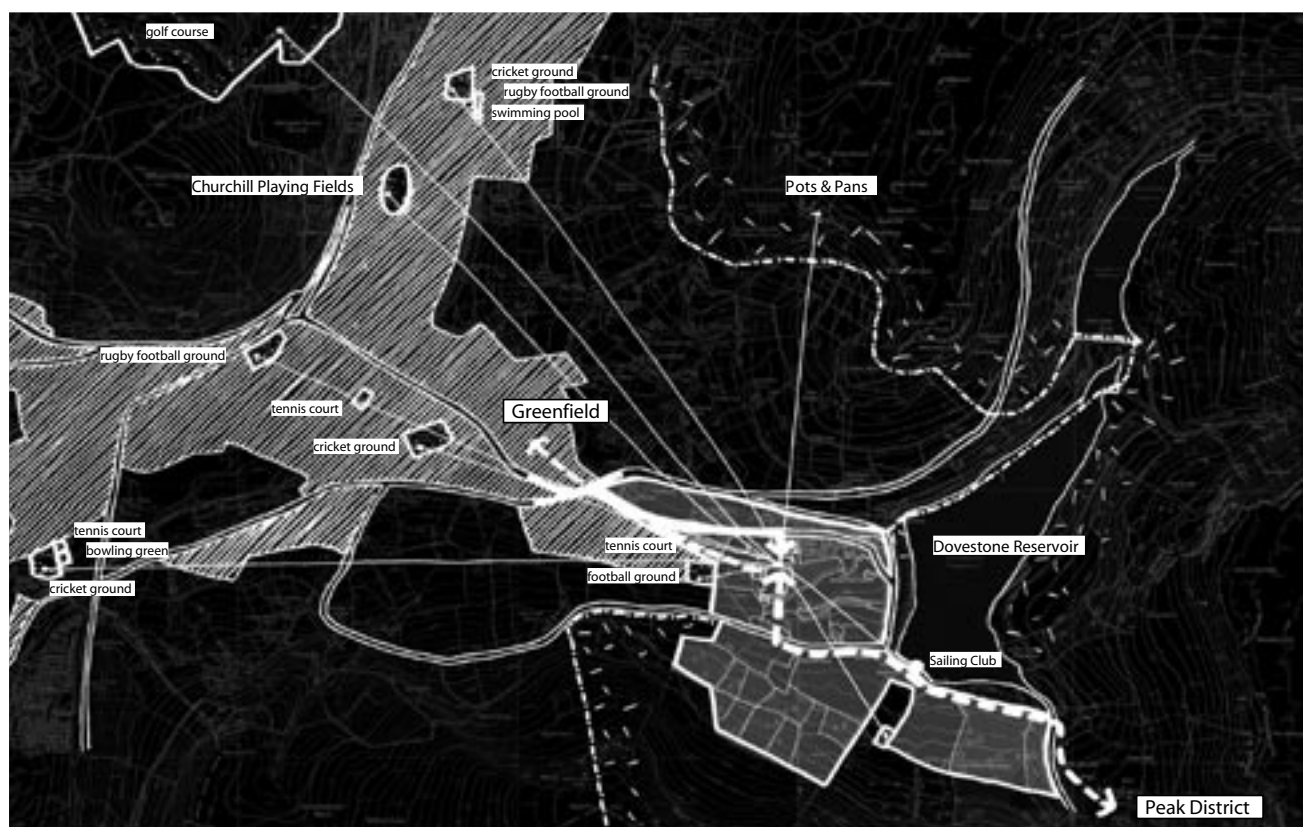


Figure 30: The site and in its potential relation to the wider area

Implementation Strategy

Recreation, leisure and tourism uses will not generate sufficient value to persuade the owners of the site to sell. However, we believe the current mainly residential proposals by the owner are also unviable because it will not be possible to secure a planning consent for sufficient homes on the site, to cover the costs of decontamination and access within the constraints of Green Belt policy.

The only use with the potential to both generate sufficient value and potentially meet Green Belt criteria might be a major commercial leisure use such as Center Parcs. However, King Sturge have explored this with potential operators and confirm that there is no current demand for this. The site will, therefore, remain vacant (and a financial drain on its owners) unless something is done.

The proposed implementation route is therefore to bring the site into the public ownership of either the Council or the RDA. This could be achieved in a number of ways; either by the Council/NWDA negotiating the site's purchase or by taking Compulsory Purchase action. The former depends on resources being available and the latter on a strong case being advanced. Both approaches have their difficulties. A further way worthy of consideration is to give the owners permission for a smaller number of homes on part of the site that does not need decontamination in return for which they transfer the rest of the site to the Council or the RDA. Alternatively there could be a land swap with the secondary school site in Uppermill, which has potential for housing with the same results. Both these options cut down on the

amount of land that would be available for recreation, leisure or tourist development.

In order to justify bringing the site into public ownership it will be necessary to carry out a study which explores the demand for leisure, recreation and tourism facilities, how these could be accommodated on the site sensitively, the benefits of this use of the site to Oldham and the region, the costs of the proposed development and how this could be funded, together with an Action Plan for its implementation.

Having got the site into public ownership there would be the possibility of grant being used to support the development of the site in the public interest. This could include assistance from both English Partnerships and the North West Development Agency for dealing with derelict and contaminated land, for improving services, for servicing the site and for environmental works. In addition grant may be available for Schools for the Future (if this route

is chosen) and from Lottery sources for appropriate sport, community and arts facilities.

This project will be long term. It is important that this key regional resource is protected from inappropriate uses until such time as a feasible and viable recreation, leisure and tourism scheme can be developed.

Summary Points

- ▶ Given the site's uniqueness in Oldham and indeed Greater Manchester, it should be reserved for predominantly recreation, leisure and tourism uses.
- ▶ A more detailed study of the site's potential should be commissioned
- ▶ The Council should explore with the North West Development Agency how this site can be brought into public ownership

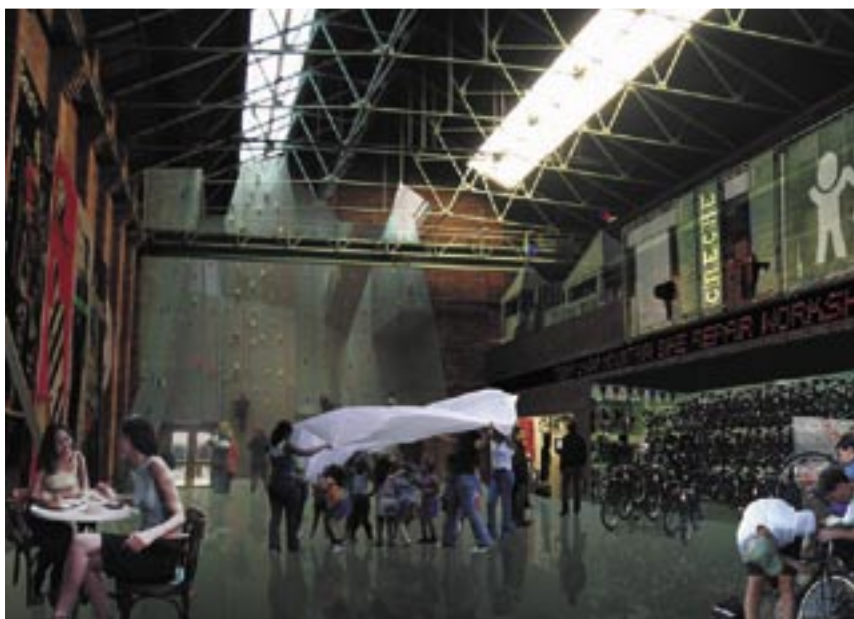


Figure 31: Possible scenario for the Robert Fletcher site

Greenfield 2014

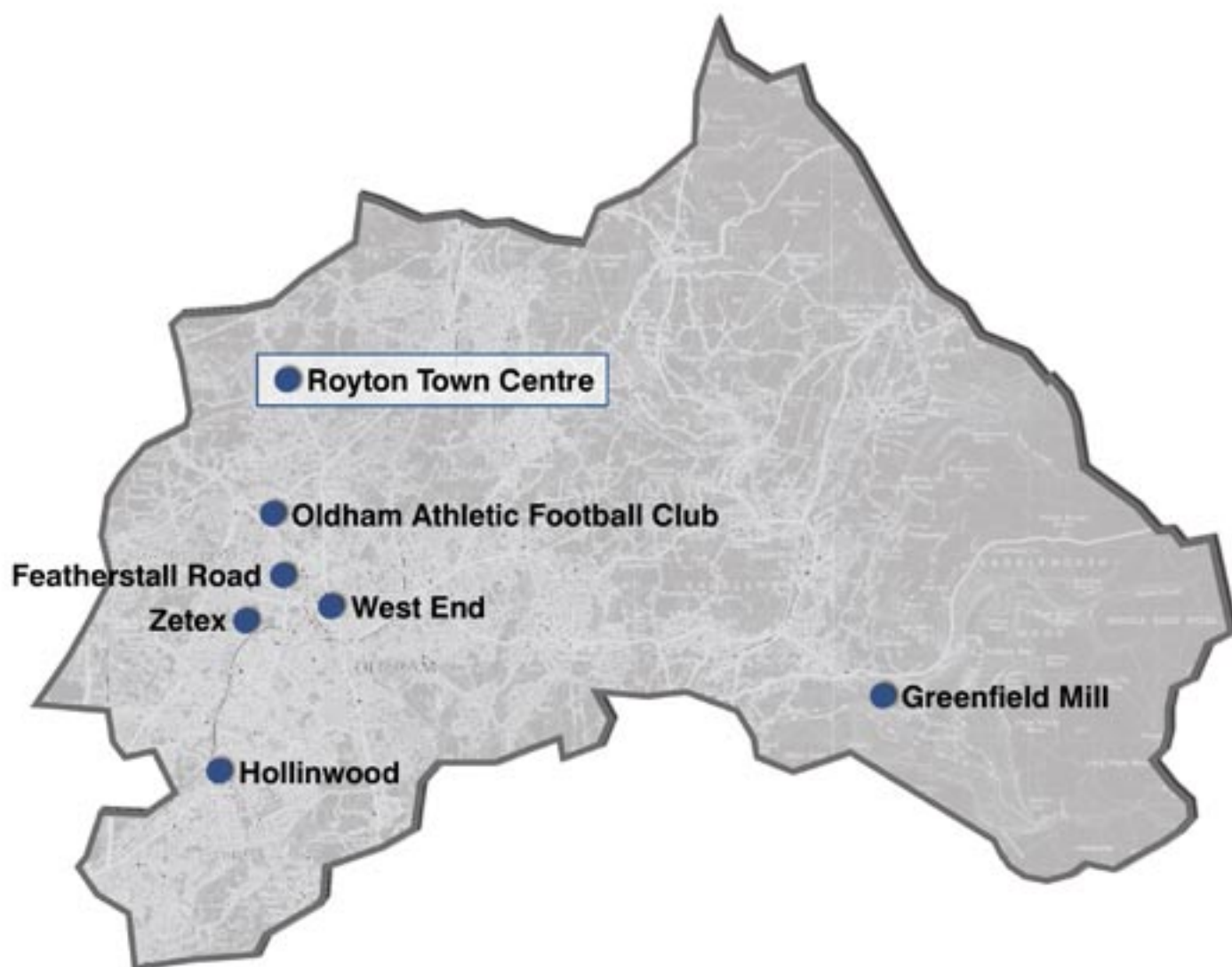


Figure 32: The ingredients and functions that could characterise Greenfield in 2014





NATIONAL PARK CENTER



Node 07: ROYTON TOWN CENTRE

Themes: Wealth Creation, Liveability, New Oldham



Context

One of the great strengths of the borough is its many and varied towns, each with their own town centre. These include Shaw, Royton, Failsworth, Chadderton, Lees and Uppermill. We have looked at Royton to explore how the potential of the borough's distinct centres can be fully realised. It is a centre built on a crossroads with a good range of convenience shopping, anchored by a Summerfield supermarket, a successful outdoor market that operates on Thursdays, plus a range of civic institutions such as the Parish Church, a Carnegie Mellon library, a community centre and the old town hall. The centre also includes a number of banks and pubs.

The strength of Royton is striking in comparison to other towns of a similar size in North Manchester. Royton appears to be thriving, with a broad range of shopping, few vacancies, good footfall and a successful market. The difference lies in people's attitudes. In Royton they shop locally as well as going into Oldham. The Masterplan therefore does not suggest major changes to Royton.

Location

Royton Town Centre lies 2.5 kilometres to the north of Oldham Town Centre on the A671, the Rochdale Road. Rochdale Town Centre is approximately 5 kilometres to the north.

Opportunities for development

The opportunities to improve the centre are:

- ▶ public realm improvements to the rather outdated precinct to improve the quality of the environment and to emphasise the attractive axis between the town centre and the church;
- ▶ new housing development on some of the underdeveloped landscape areas around the centre to improve its

catchment population and make the centre feel safer;

- ▶ the creation of a 'Common Ground' landmark in the heart of the town as suggested in the Oldham Beyond Vision;
- ▶ the lighting of the mills that surround and dominate the centre, and the promotion of a series of economic uses to reuse the space.

Constraints on development

Royton is a vital town centre successfully serving its local market. However, for town centres to continue to thrive it is important that they continue to make improvements to the facilities they offer shoppers and the general public. The only issues that should be addressed relate to the quality of the environment of the centre. We believe that improvements



Figure 33: Possible scenario for Royton town centre after improving the public realm

should be made to the public realm to improve a rather tired shopping precinct, and that new housing should be introduced on vacant sites to provide more life and security to the area outside of shopping hours.

Potential development plots and their possible uses

Many of the improvements proposed for Royton can be made on publicly owned land, for instance roads and pavements. Most of the vacant land/infill sites are in private ownership and with public realm improvements and clear development briefs owners will come forward to develop their sites or to sell them on for development.

The possible future ingredients in the development of the Royton town centre could include:

- ▶ public art
- ▶ water features
- ▶ landscape design
- ▶ pocket parks
- ▶ infill development
- ▶ residential development
- ▶ a development trust approach to reusing mills
- ▶ playgrounds

Implementation Strategy

Public realm improvements will need to be funded by the Council with assistance from the North West Development Agency. The development of the sites around the centre should be the subject of planning briefs and development partnerships initiated by the Council. Section 106 Planning Agreements for these developments may also play a role in funding public realm improvements. The mills, in close proximity to the town centre, have the potential for conversion to business centre use, thereby providing not only an economic driver for the area but an additional source of shoppers for the centre.

We suggest that a development trust could be set up to acquire and reuse vacant mills. A strategy would be drawn up for each of the mills based on the work that has been done in Dean Clough in Halifax. Here space was initially mothballed to prevent physical deterioration. It was then made available at very low rents to artists and small companies wishing to develop new ideas. The mills were also used as venues for public art installations by local as well as international artists. Over time the image of the mills and therefore their value changed. This allowed investment and refurbishment to take place.

A development trust would be charged with changing perceptions of the mills and bringing them back into productive use and as resources for the local communities that once relied on them. The availability of cheap space would also stimulate creative activity and industries as a major tool to change Oldham's image and to promote economic activity. As a powerful symbol of this initiative we suggest that the mills be illuminated with projections so that they completely transform the image of Oldham for the thousands of people who pass through the borough every day. This initiative could be started in Royton.

Summary Points

- ▶ To carry out environmental works to ensure that the centre remains attractive to local shoppers and residents
- ▶ To explore the possibility of a 'development trust' approach to regenerating local mills to the benefit of the local community
- ▶ To introduce more housing into the town centre on vacant and infill sites





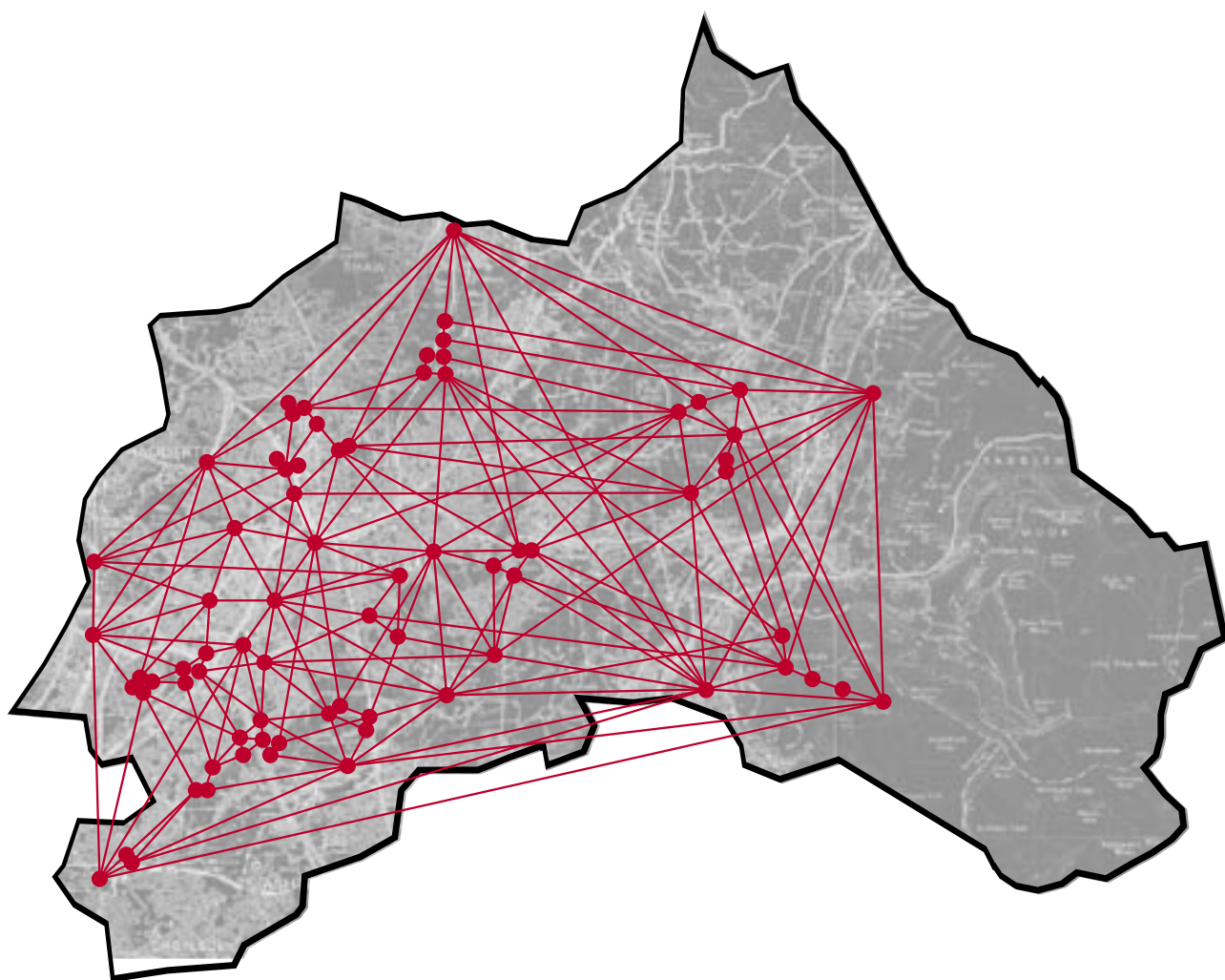


















Figure 34: The nodes' network

4 Conclusions



This masterplan has explored how the principles set out in the 'Oldham Beyond Vision' can be realised through the implementation of specific initiatives in various parts of the borough. It has concentrated on seven 'nodes', but these are only intended as demonstrators or exemplars.

The intention is that the strategy for the future of the borough will be brought to life in many places over the coming years. For instance, the ideas for Royton Town Centre are an illustration of the approach that could be taken in many town centres across the borough.

							
Town Centre	Town Centre fringe	Inner city terraces	Mill neighbourhoods	Suburbs	Smaller towns	Villages	Countryside
							



Oldham Beyond has been commissioned by the Oldham Local Strategic Partnership in collaboration with the Northwest Development Agency.

