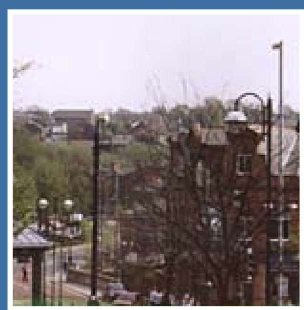
# Re-inventing Radcliffe

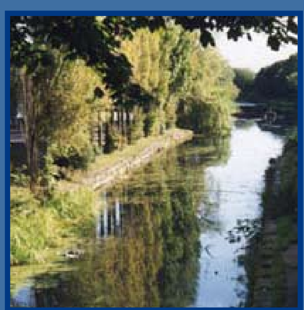
## FINAL REPORT

A report for Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

by URBED...
with King Sturge and TPP

January 2004



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A report for
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
- Final Report -

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January 2004

Contents



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# 1. Introduction


In which we summarise the main themes to emerge from our work and describe the structure and content of the report.

Radcliffe is a town with a long and proud history. One of a constellation of industrial towns in North Manchester, it once employed thousands of people in mining and the paper industry. These people lived locally in strong neighbourhoods and used the bustling town centre with its thriving market to do their shopping and socialising.

This has all changed, not through any fault of Radcliffe or its people. The industrial revolution that created the North Manchester towns has long gone and most of the manufacturing that it left in its wake has also closed or been rationalised so that it is no longer a major employer. Radcliffe lost its mine many years ago but the wounds left by the closure of the Radcliffe and East Lancashire Paper Mills and Allen's Green Works are much more recent. Local people have had to find work elsewhere and others have moved away. As a result neighbourhoods, particularly to the east of the town centre have also declined. This in turn has impacted on the town centre that grew up to serve a bustling local community but is no longer able to rely on a loyal and local customer base with money to spend.

The town centre has also been faced with other challenges. Many types of shopping have moved out of traditional town centres to supermarkets, retail parks and out-of-town shopping centres. The larger town centres have responded to this by improving their offer. This is particularly true of Manchester City Centre but also of Bolton and increasingly Bury. These are places that Radcliffe people would have once visited only on special occasions. However, with the mobility afforded by the car as well as the Metrolink and buses they can now shop in Bury, Bolton or Manchester with relative ease while going to a supermarket for their weekly shop. In this situation what is the role of Radcliffe town centre?

It is for these reasons that today, while Radcliffe as a whole is not doing too badly, the town centre is really struggling. Because the world has changed, this decline may not be as easily reversed as it has been in larger centres like Bury. If Radcliffe town centre is to have a future it must rethink its role. In short it must 'reinvent' itself.

This is the main conclusion of this report. It has been produced by URBED, King Sturge and TPP following a study commissioned by Bury Metropolitan Borough Council. The study follows on from the report on Bury Town Centre produced by the same team and like that report will feed into the review of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). However, the issues in Radcliffe go deeper than planning policy and involve much more fundamental regeneration issues. Yet because of the overall prosperity of Bury Borough, Radcliffe - unlike many similar towns in North Manchester - is not a Neighbourhood Renewal Area and has very limited access to regeneration funds. It is therefore unrealistic to make recommendations requiring large amounts of public funding. The report therefore sets out a new vision for Radcliffe and suggests a route for realising this vision based on evolution rather than revolution using the tools available to us to do this report.

## The report is structured into 11 sections.

- We start by setting the renaissance of Radcliffe into the national context of the urban renaissance in the UK.
- We then undertake a renaissance audit that compares Radcliffe to a range of similar towns to assess how it is really doing. This in fact tells a more positive story than many people in Radcliffe expected. While Radcliffe has many problems these are the same as those suffered by towns with similar history and Radcliffe is not doing as badly as some places.
- An urban design assessment that examines the built form of Radcliffe, the way it has grown over time and its currents strengths and weaknesses.
- A commercial assessment of Radcliffe by King Sturge. They look at the market for different types of development in the area before concentrating in more detail on the health of the town centre.
- A transport assessment by TPP. This looks at access to Radcliffe by road, public transport, foot and cycle as well as looking at issues like parking and the bus station.
- Chapter 9 draws these strands together into a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the centre along with the results of the very successful workshops with stakeholders held as part of the study
- This is developed in Chapter 10 into a vision for Radcliffe, not as an independent market town but as a sustainable urban neighbourhood integrated with the wider city region. This is developed into a series of themes including the promotion of new housing, the development of the town centre as a service, leisure and cultural hub for local people and the development of a unique identity of Radcliffe based on the visual arts - St Ives without the sea (or sunshine!).
- Chapter 11 develops this vision into a set of practical proposals for the town. This area sets out as a flexible masterplan for the town, which creates a framework for a series of proposals concerning new housing, the schools, the market, the museum and new employment uses. These are then prioritised and phased to create both a planning framework and a deliverable masterplan.

# 2. The renaissance of industrial towns

In which we describe progress towards the renaissance of urban areas in the UK. We suggest that while real progress is being made in many places, especially the provincial cities, there are still major questions about the future role of industrial towns that have lost their industrial base. We suggest that this is starting to be addressed in the larger towns but that quite different issues exist in smaller towns like Radcliffe.

The regeneration of Radcliffe needs to take place in the national context of the renaissance of urban areas. This was explored by the Urban Task Force, set out in the Urban White Paper and most recently in the Communities Plan. URBED undertook a major research project for the Urban Summit in 2002 looking at the progress towards urban renaissance in 24 towns and cities across England. The conclusions from this work are a good starting point for this work in Radcliffe:

- London is booming and growing rapidly so that its population will soon pass 8 million for the first time since the 1930s. This population growth is driving economic growth and London's place as one of the three great world cities - with New York and Tokyo - is secure.

- The story in the provincial cities is not quite so dramatic. However, their renaissance is well underway. Cities like Manchester and even Liverpool are starting to reinvent themselves based upon the repopulation of the city centres and the growth of knowledge, creative and service economies. These cities (particularly Manchester and Liverpool) still have huge problems and the signs of recovery are confined to relatively small parts of the urban area. There is, however, the sense that a corner has been turned and it is possible to imagine the improvement in the city centres spreading to (the inner cities) as the urban renaissance of these cities takes hold.

- There are increasing imbalances between the North and the South. The South is overheating and suffering severe housing shortages leading to price inflation. The North is patchier with areas of high demand, but also significant areas where the housing market has collapsed. This is not so much due to population drift from the North to the South but rather from inner urban areas to the periphery. Since the Urban Summit these conclusions have led to the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Areas.

- The lack of demand in the North has largely been manifest in private rather than social housing areas. This is a major change from the situation five years ago when most housing problems were concentrated on council estates. While some problems remain, many social housing providers have put their house(s) in order. This has, however, pushed problems into the private rented sector where they have proved more difficult to control. This has been an important contributor to housing market collapse and abandonment in some terraced housing areas,

Huddersfield Aspley basin

which in Greater Manchester can be seen in Salford, East Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale.

- As URBED's recent research for the Greater London Authority (City of Villages 2002) has shown, the renaissance of urban areas is starting to cause the decline of some inaccessible suburbs. It is possible that in the future these could be the problem areas, as is the case in France.

- The situation with towns is however much less clear. There were a number of towns included in the Towns and Cities research that URBED undertook for the Urban Summit and from this and URBED's other research a number of conclusions can be drawn:

- **University towns:** The existence of a University has a huge effect on a town's fortunes. Universities help attract and retain creative people and the students add to the vitality and economy of the town. Higher education is a growth industry and graduates often remain in the area where they studied, encouraging employers to invest there. (*Examples: Preston, Huddersfield, Wolverhampton and Sunderland*)

- **Historic towns:** Towns with strong tourist attractions and good facilities have also done well recently. Tourism, particularly international tourism, has been a major growth industry and the image of these towns also means that they are sought-after as places to live and invest. (*Examples: Hebden Bridge, Keighley, Knutsford*)

- **Market Towns:** Smaller towns with charm, historic environments and nearby countryside have also proved attractive, especially to older people - in much the same way as people have been attracted to villages in rural or semi-rural settings. (*Examples: Ormskirk, Northallerton and Richmond*)

- **Resorts:** Resorts have particular problems and, like industrial towns, have been suffering because of the decline of domestic holidays. (*Examples: Morecambe, New Brighton, South Shields*)

The main problems lie in industrial towns and the largest concentration of these is to be found in the North-west and Yorkshire. These northern industrial towns are the next great challenge for the urban renaissance.

## The Renaissance of Industrial Towns

The industrial revolution created a dense network of towns in Northern England unlike anywhere else in the world. These towns grew rapidly and some, often the least organised, carried on growing to become cities. However, most remained as towns and their economic dynamic is very different from a city. Cities suck in people and investment from a huge area, whereas towns have more stable economic 'eco systems'. They grew up, or expanded, in locations that were suitable for manufacturing industry - often close to raw materials, power sources and/or water transport (and later rail). The town clustered around the factories because people had to live close to where they worked. Travel was limited so that towns - even large places - could grow up close to each other without being in competition. Many places became dominated by one industry like the paper industry in Radcliffe and some places even became dominated by just one employer such as ICI in Middlesbrough or Pilkington in St. Helens.

**top:** Bolton market hall,
**centre:** Bolton's Churchgate and Bradshawgate,
**bottom:** Sunderland

The success of such industrial towns depended on the health of these industries. In good times the major firms employed thousands of people and would invest in civic amenities. However, on the whole these towns thrived not because they were attractive or pleasant places to be but because people were stuck with them. Most people had little choice over where they lived, and low housing standards and a poor environment were accepted facts of life.

In the last few decades this stable economic 'eco system' has broken down in many places. Faced by worldwide competition, British manufacturing, mining and other industries have suffered a deep decline. Almost without exception, the industry that sustained these towns is no longer a major employer and generator of local wealth. This is true of mining in Barnsley, textiles in Halifax and fishing in Grimsby and of course paper in Radcliffe. In some cases this is because of decline but in others such as glass in St. Helens it is due to vastly improved productivity or, in the case of the ceramics industry in Stoke, the transfer of manufacturing overseas. This has also happened in cities - the docks in Liverpool being a classic example. While cities have suffered from these trends, they are more able to diversify and to develop alternative economic activity as is now starting to happen. For towns this is more difficult. These economic forces could raise fundamental questions - once the reason for the town's growth has gone, what purpose does it have and how can it compete with the big cities on the one hand and the historic and market towns on the other?

Not all industrial towns are the same. URBED have undertaken work recently on towns like Bury, St. Helens, Stoke and Oldham where these fundamental questions are starting to be addressed. These are all towns of 60-100,000 people. Radcliffe falls into a different category of town with a population of 20-40,000. These towns it seems to us are quite different to their larger neighbours. While the reasons for decline are similar - namely the loss of traditional employment and a 'captive' local population - the solutions are likely to be different. Whereas larger towns like Bury remain major centres for shopping, administration and employment, this is not the case with the smaller towns. They can no longer survive as smaller copies of the larger towns - but need to find new roles. We return to this task later in this report, however, we first seek to assess how Radcliffe is doing compared to other similar towns as set out in the next section.

# 3. The Renaissance of Radcliffe

In which we look at the changing role of Radcliffe throughout its history and the challenges that it faces today. We then assess how well it is facing up to these challenges when compared to similar industrial towns elsewhere. This allows us to draw conclusions about its possible future.

◀ **Far left:** Radcliffe, aerial view
This page:
**top:** Blackburn Street,
**middle:** the Viaduct in 1879,
**bottom:** Blackburn Street in the 1920's

## Radcliffe's history

Radcliffe, meaning red cliff after the exposed sandstone on the southern side of the Irwell Valley, has always been an auspicious location for a settlement. Mesolithic and Stone Age remains have been found on what was a fertile flood plain near the confluence of the River Irwell and the River Roch. The existence of a fording point meant that the Roman Road from the fortress of Mancunium to Ribchester passed through Radcliffe and led to the earliest settlement around what is now the Radcliffe tower.

Radcliffe (or Rad-clive) developed as a Saxon settlement around the Royal Manor. This was focused on the Manor House that stood at the eastern end of Spring Lane (demolished in the 1840s) and tower (now scheduled as an ancient monument). On historic plans this area is referred to as Radcliffe, whereas the current town centre is 'Radcliffe Bridge' suggesting a later origin. Radcliffe, therefore, has an important pre-industrial history. It was one (albeit the smallest) of the 10 parishes that made up the Salford 100 giving it a similar status to Bury, Bolton and even Manchester. In the English Civil War Radcliffe and Bolton fought for Parliament against the Royalist Bury. It therefore has a proud and independent history.

The entity of North Manchester was transformed by the Industrial Revolution. Mining had taken place in Radcliffe since 1221 and the textile industry since arable fields were turned over to sheep during the Black Death. However mechanisation, such as the 'flying shuttle' invented nearby by John Kay, and the development of transport infrastructure of canals and later railways created a series of boomtowns in Lancashire. Cotton manufacture

Radcliffe Library

initially concentrated in Manchester moved out to the surrounding mill towns, particularly Bolton, Oldham and Rochdale, which grew from small market towns into huge industrial centres.

Radcliffe, connected to the canal system in the 1790s and to the railway system in the 1840s (once having 7 railway stations!), shared in this boom. As Whellen & Co's directory of 1853 stated:-

'[Radcliffe has] its full share of all those advantages that characterise the neighbouring towns, resulting from the establishment of the cotton and other manufacturers which consist chiefly of ginghams, checks, ticks, nankeens and fustians besides cotton spinning, small ware manufacture and calico printing: and in the parish and its neighbourhood there are several coal mines, the whole affording employment to large numbers of the working population both male and female. The East Lancashire Railway and the Bolton Bury canal, which pass close to the village, furnish the greatest facilities for the transit of its manufactures and merchandise …'

This entry is illuminating because while it lists an extraordinary amount of commerce it is still able to describe Radcliffe as a 'village'. This could not have been said of Bury or Bolton at the same time. In fact Radcliffe had a population of about 6,500 in the 1850s. This had risen from 2,497 at the start of the century and would mushroom to 16,267 by 1881. Nevertheless, it remained small compared to the main Lancashire mill towns.

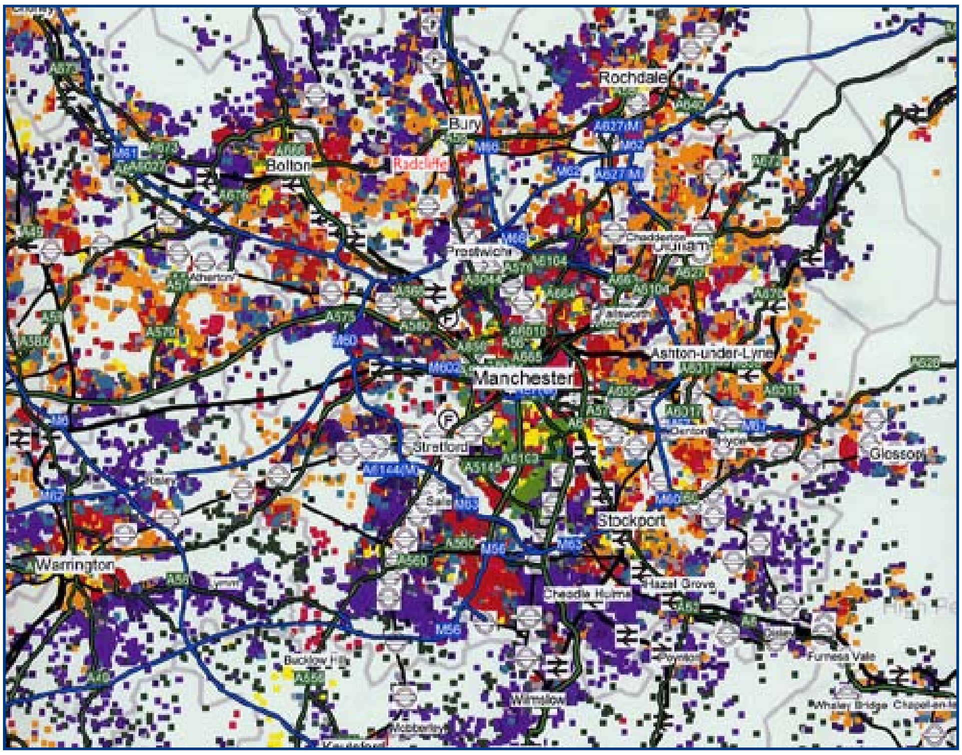
The textile industry on which Radcliffe was based went through a series of booms and busts from the 1850s right through to the 1950s. However, after that it went into terminal decline in the face of cheaper imports and now hardly exists other than a few specialist manufacturers. However, long before the death of textiles Radcliffe had moved into paper. Developing from the start of the 20th century Radcliffe and Ramsbottom became major paper making centres. In Radcliffe this continued into the 1980s and early 1990s with the Radcliffe and East Lancashire Paper mills employing thousands of people. Even as late as the early 90s major investment was taking place in these mills and the town's economy seemed secure. However, the paper mills have now gone, victim to group restructuring and rationalisation. These are fundamental and very recent changes in the town and its economy. Radcliffe has not yet come to terms with these changes which is one of the purposes of this report. The closures have left a large gap in Radcliffe's economy as well as large vacant sites around the town centre. Part of the Radcliffe Paper Mill site has already become a suburban housing estate. The question now is what should become of the other sites and how can we contribute to a new vision for the town?

## What type of place is Radcliffe?

As we have said Radcliffe is one of a constellation of industrial towns north of Manchester. As we describe in Chapter 7 it has good connections to the M60 and is linked to Manchester by the Metrolink. It is located between Bolton and Bury in the valley of the River Irwell. As a result of this it is much more physically distinct as a town than other small towns that have been engulfed by their larger neighbours. Radcliffe is surrounded by open space and rural/semi rural land. Because of the steep sides of the valley this open space is visible from the town centre and is an important part of Radcliffe's character.

While it may be physically separated from the surrounding towns, it is no longer the case that Radcliffe is socially distinct. It is home today to 36,800 people. However, the residential areas to the north and south of the town operate as suburbs of Bury and Manchester and their residents do not necessarily relate to Radcliffe. The resulting socio-demographic pattern of population is illustrated on the mosaic plan (figure 1). This is produced by Experian and is used by retailers to map where their potential customers are. Generally the purple and blue colours are suburban middle classes, the yellows, oranges and reds are the working classes and the greens are what Experian calls 'stylish singles' (yuppies) of which there are very few in North Manchester. The plan shows Radcliffe to be part of a band of working class population extending into Bolton. However, to the north and south are concentrations of suburban middle classes linked to Prestwich and west Bury through to Ramsbottom.

The neighbourhood plan (figure 2) tries to make sense of this complex picture. It suggests to us that there is a hierarchy of places within the region. At the top of this are the cities of Manchester and Liverpool. These cities contain within them a large number of neighbourhoods some of which were once independent towns. In this respect

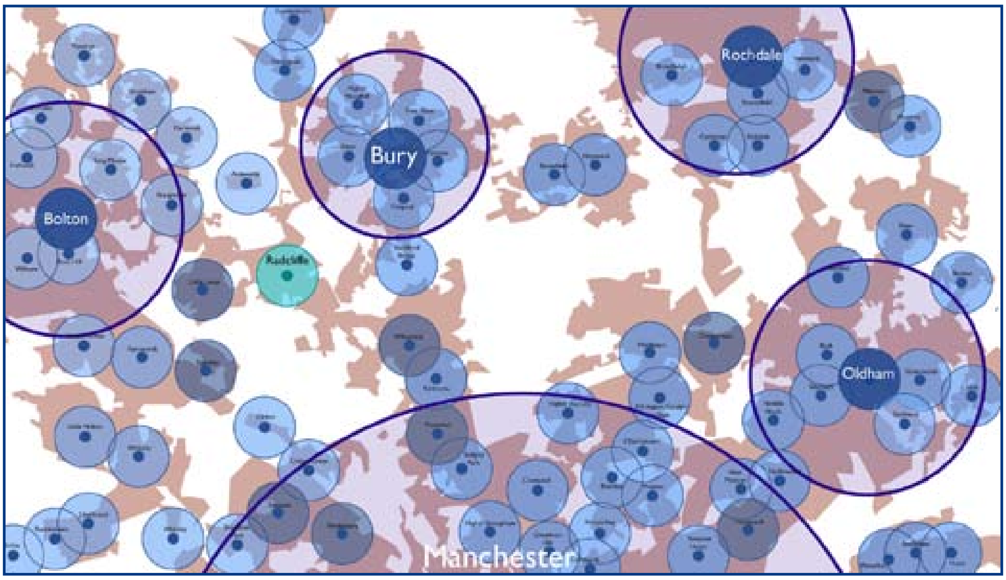



- A High Income Families
- B Suburban Semis
- C Blue Collar Owners
- D Low Rise Council
- E Council Flats
- F Victorian Low Status
- G Town Houses & Flats
- H Stylish Singles
- I Independent Elders
- J Mortgaged Families
- K Country Dwellers
- L Institutional Areas

**Figure 1 - Neighbourhood Plan:** A Mosaic Plan of Greater Manchester: This is produced by Experian Ltd. based on Census data. (copyright Experian)

Manchester as a social and economic entity extends beyond its administrative area to include places like Salford, Ashton and even Prestwich - roughly up to the line of the M60 making it a city of about a million people. The next tier of place are the industrial towns including Bury, Wigan, Bolton, Oldham, Stockport, St Helens, Macclesfield etc. These are generally 60-100,000 in population and are administrative centres.

The tier below this includes Radcliffe and is made up of towns of 20-40,000 populations. These were once independent town councils but were absorbed into larger council areas in the government reorganisation of 1974. These towns have lost their administrative functions and have often been amalgamated into boroughs bearing the name of their larger neighbouring and sometimes rival towns. In Greater Manchester, with the exception of Tameside, the authority is named after the largest towns. Bury is made up of 6 main areas including Prestwich, Ramsbottom, Whitefield, Tottington and Radcliffe. These settlements have lost their independence and, to a degree, their identity. They also share a sense of having slipped down the priority list compared to the attention and spending given to the administrative centre. In assessing how Radcliffe is doing and what its future might be we need to consider it in relation to this 'third tier' of towns.



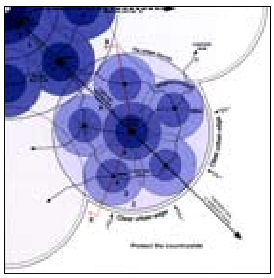
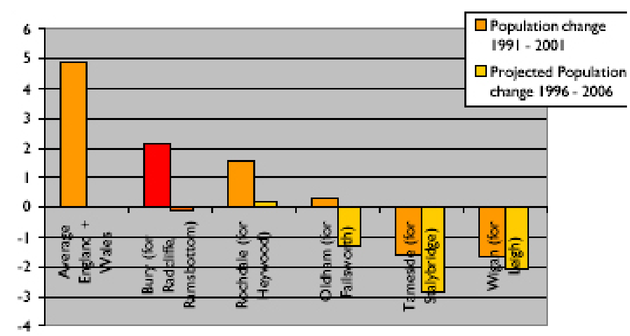
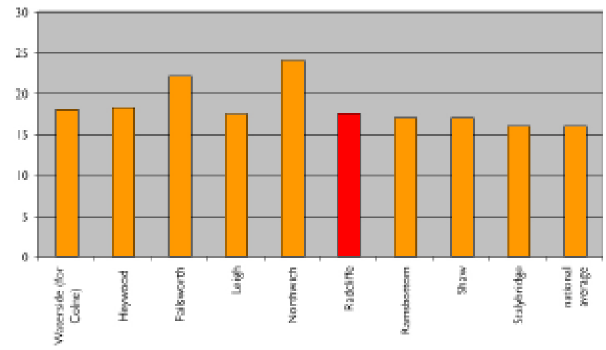



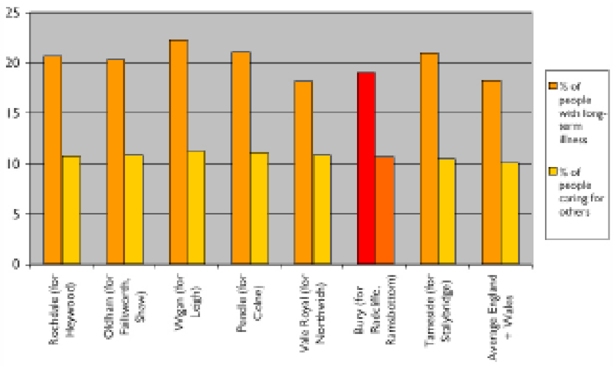
**Figure 2 - Regional settlement structure:** Based on the ideal structure (above) suggested by the Urban Task Force



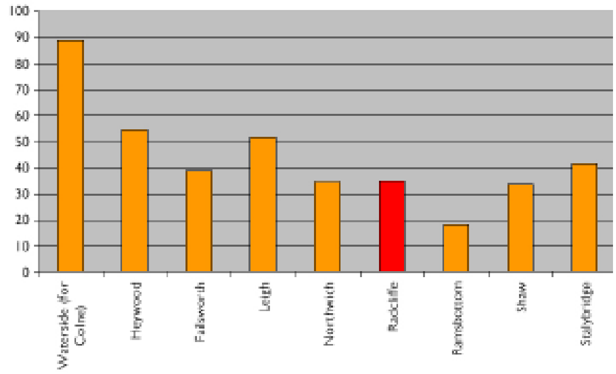

▶ Population change and projected population change, source: Local Knowledge, 2001



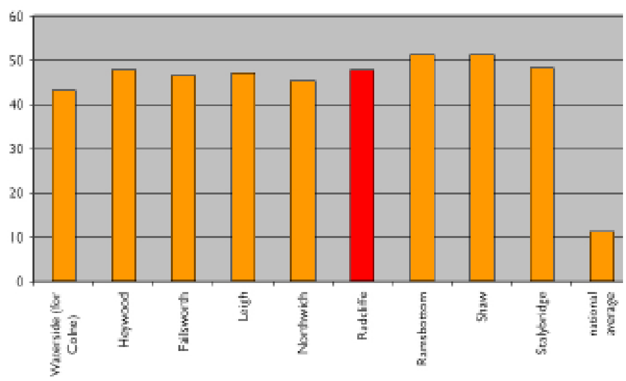

▶ Percentage of population over pension age, source: Local Knowledge, 2001



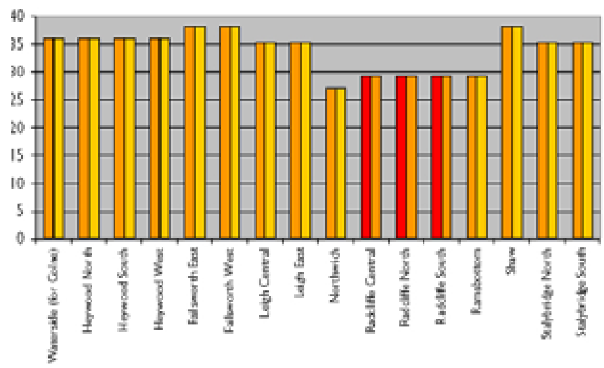

▶ Percentage of people with long-term illness, source: Local knowledge, 2001




▶ Unemployment rate, source: Local Knowledge, 2001




▶ Percentage of population who are economically active, source: Local Knowledge, 2001




▶ Percentage of population aged 16 to 74 with and without qualifications, source: Local Knowledge, 2001

## How is Radcliffe doing?

A list of facts and figures about a place means very little without something to compare them to. This is normally done over time showing a trend. In Radcliffe's case historic trends are clearly influenced by the recent closures and show a picture of decline. We have, therefore, chosen to compare Radcliffe to similar 'third tier' towns. This has allowed us to compare Radcliffe to its peers, many of which have a similar history. During discussion with the steering group for the study, five comparator towns were identified: Ramsbottom, also in Bury, Heywood in Rochdale, Failsworth in Oldham, Leigh in Wigan and Stalybridge in Tameside.

We have compared these places to Radcliffe to get a sense of how Radcliffe is really doing. There are, however, problems with the data for these third tier towns because some data is only available at district or ward level. The district clearly subsumes the smaller towns while the wards do not always correspond to the town's boundaries. We have, therefore, used Radcliffe North, Central and South.

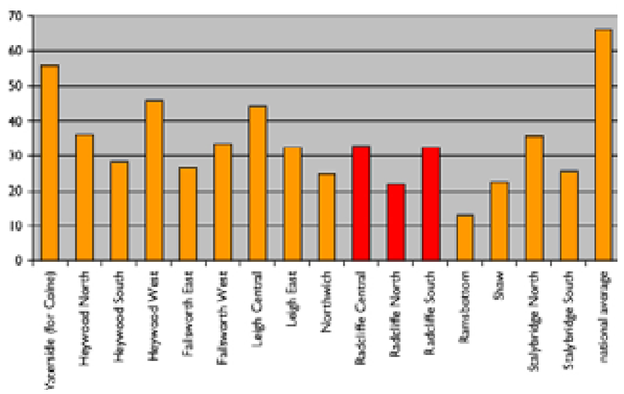
- **Population change:**The population of Bury rose modestly in the 1990s but is predicted to fall slightly between 1996 and 2006. This is due to an ageing population and falling household size rather than depopulation. This Borough-wide figure is well below the national average but marginally better than the comparison towns. It is likely to mask variations with Whitefield growing strongly while Radcliffe has declined. An important goal for Radcliffe must be to reverse this population decline.

- **Pensioners:** Radcliffe is not exceptional with regards to the number of people over pensionable age. Radcliffe South has a slightly higher number than most of the comparison towns except Failsworth.

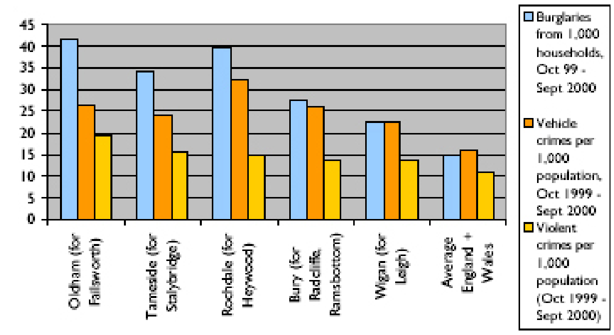
- **Long-term illness:** Radcliffe is also roughly average with regard to long-term illness, Ramsbottom is the best in this respect but Radcliffe is not far behind.

- **Economic activity rates:** The proportions of economically active people vary widely across Radcliffe. Radcliffe North does very well while Radcliffe South is worse than all the comparison towns.

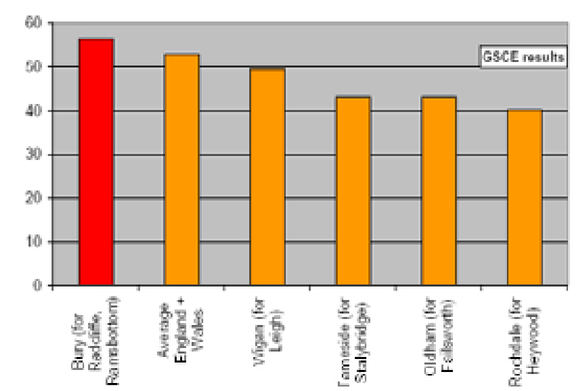
- **Unemployment:** The unemployment rates in Central and North Radcliffe are low compared to the comparison towns. Radcliffe South is by contrast very similar.



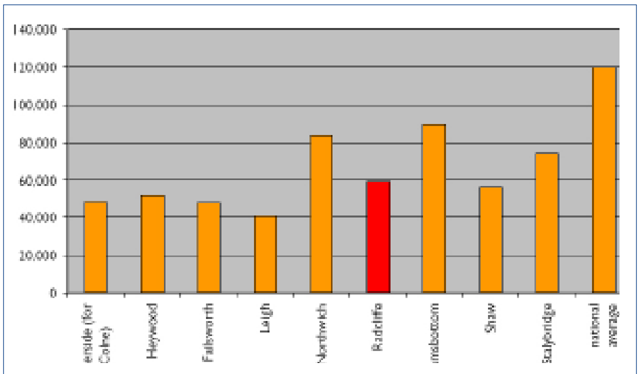

Index of Multiple Deprivation, IMD, source: local knowledge; DETR



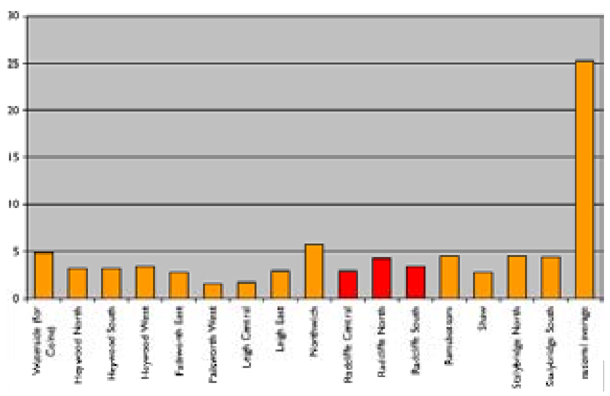

Crime figures, source: Local knowledge, 2001



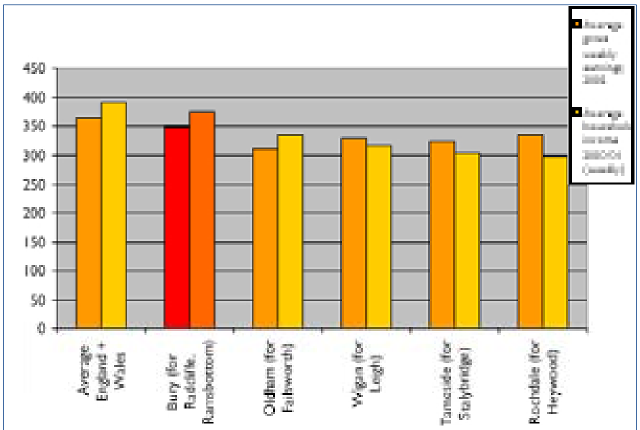

School performance at borough level, source: Local Knowledge, 2001




House prices, source: Local knowledge, 2001




Successful university admissions, source: Local Knowledge, 2001




Average earnings, source: Local knowledge, 2001

- **Qualifications:** Data on qualifications is only available at a Borough level. This shows that Bury has significantly more people with qualifications than all of the other boroughs. However, Radcliffe is identified as having notably lower educational attainment than the Borough average.

- **Deprivation:** The ODPM indices of deprivation show Radcliffe South and Central to be comparable with most of the comparison towns except Ramsbottom.

- **Employment change:** Bury has seen a lower growth in jobs than any borough except Tameside. This reflects the job losses in the Borough, including those in Radcliffe, and also Bury's difficulty in competing for jobs against assisted areas.

- **Earnings:** Average earnings in Bury are the highest of all the comparison towns although still below the national average. It is, however, clear that Radcliffe is below the Borough average.

- **House prices:** The house price figures are slightly at odds with the other data because Radcliffe South has the higher house prices than Radcliffe North despite being more deprived in most other respects. This is probably because the influence of Whitefield is cancelling out the poorer economic figures. Prices in Radcliffe Central are as low as any of the comparison towns.

- **School performance:** Bury secondary schools perform better than the other campara-tor town's boroughs and indeed exceed the national average. We know, however, that the Radcliffe secondary schools do not perform to the Borough-wide standards.

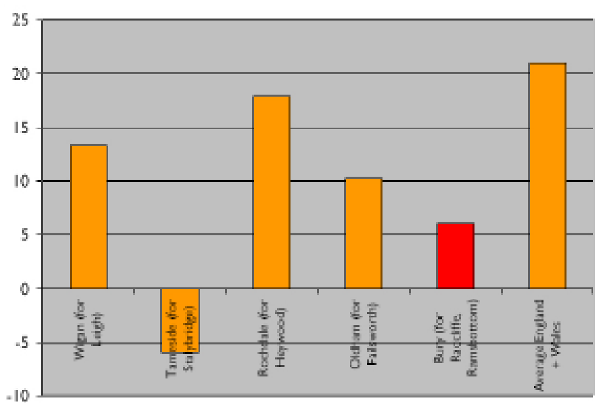
- **University admissions:** Despite the relatively poor performance of the Radcliffe schools, the proportion of the population that go to university is high in Radcliffe North and average in Central and South.

- **Crime:** Radcliffe has a reputation for crime but the statistics show this not to be a major problem. The main issue seems to be with vehicle crime. The police have confirmed that crime levels are not a major problem in Radcliffe.

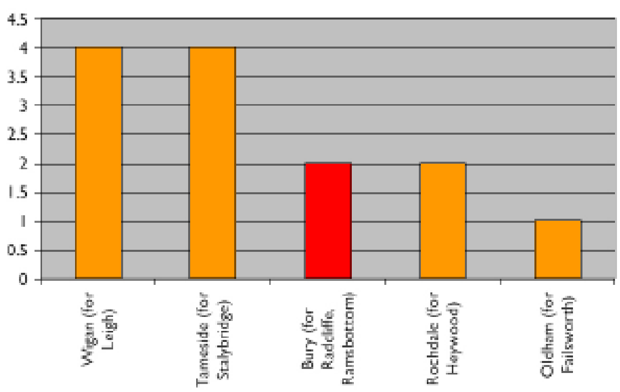
- **Access to services:** Figures compiled by the Audit Commission show the ease with which people can reach basic services. These show Radcliffe North to be very isolated while Radcliffe South and Central are average.

A significant conclusion to emerge from this analysis is the notable disparity between Radcliffe North and South. Generally Radcliffe North is more affluent, in some cases almost comparable with Ramsbottom. It is likely that this area relates to Bolton rather than Radcliffe.

By contrast the south and to a lesser extent the central parts of Radcliffe are comparable to, and in some cases worse than, the other towns in terms of unemployment and low income levels. This is significant because, with the exception of Ramsbottom, all of the other towns are assisted areas eligible for neighbourhood and regeneration funding. The figures for Radcliffe South and Central are not perhaps as bad as one might expect of a town that has recently experienced major industrial closures. Nevertheless, it is a deprived area that has the 'misfortune' to be in a relatively affluent Borough.




Employment change, source: Local Knowledge, 2001




Geographical access to public services, source: Local Knowledge, 2001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# Part 2 - Analysis

# 4. Urban Design Assessment


In which we narrow our focus to Radcliffe town centre in order to explore its physical structure. We start by looking at the historic structure of the town and at the current urban form. We then look at the mix of uses, the hierarchy of streets and the quality of the public realm.

## The historic development of Radcliffe

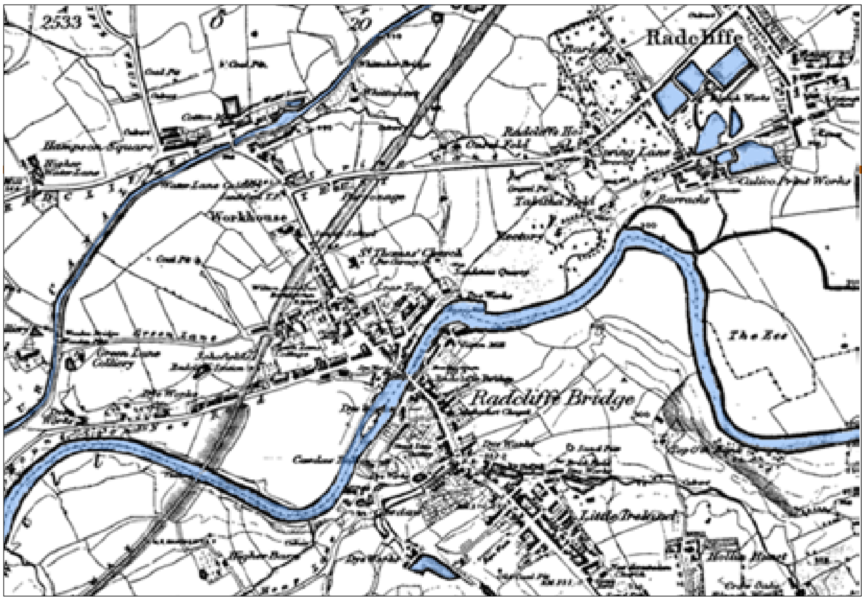
The history of Radcliffe as described in the last chapter is etched into the streets and buildings of Radcliffe. This is illustrated on the three plans from 1843, 1893 and 1930.

- The earliest map shows what is little more than 2 villages surrounded by collieries. On this plan there are still open fields between Radcliffe and Radcliffe Bridge. Radcliffe Hall can still be seen just before its demolition. The plan shows the Clifton Junction and Accrington Railway as well as the canal to the north. However, industrial growth has yet to take hold and the town is still largely rural in character.

- By the end of the 19th century Radcliffe has grown into a much more recognisable shape. The Prestwich Branch of the East Lancashire Railway has been built with a new station in Radcliffe. Spring Lane and Cross Lane have been built up joining the two parts of Radcliffe and the East Lancashire Paper Mill has expanded into a major industrial complex.

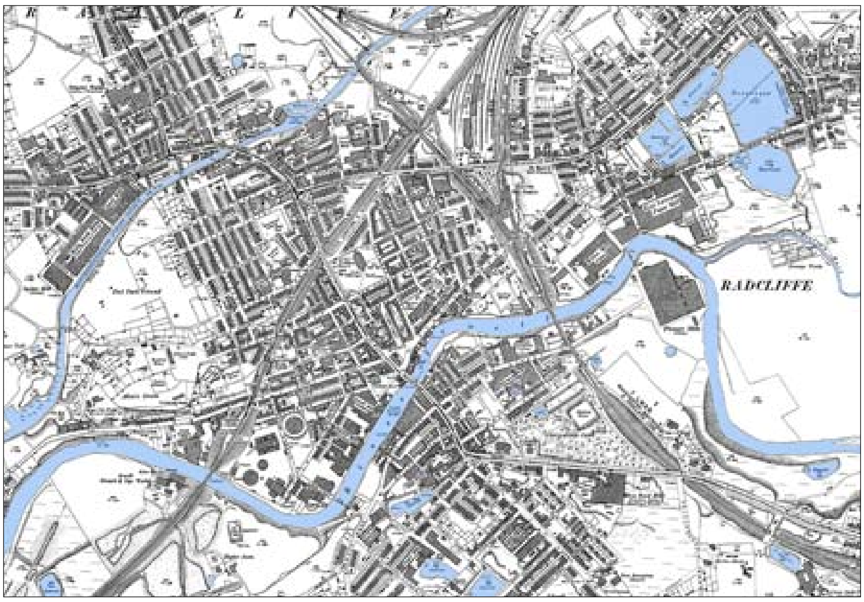
- The 1930s plan shows the further industrialisation of Radcliffe with a series of cotton mills along the Irwell and a town centre densely hemmed in by terraced housing.

Historic plans of Radcliffe




**Plan 1:** Radcliffe in 1843


**Plan 2:** Radcliffe in 1893




**Plan 3:** Radcliffe in 1930

A series of Figure ground plans for Inner Radcliffe.

The sequence of figure ground plans shows the growth of Radcliffe from the scattered village like settlements of 1843 through the growth into a thriving industrial town right through to the 1950s. However, the change after 1950 is equally stark. The final figure ground plan (plan 7 on page 25) shows the disintegration of the urban structure of the town as described below.

## Urban Form

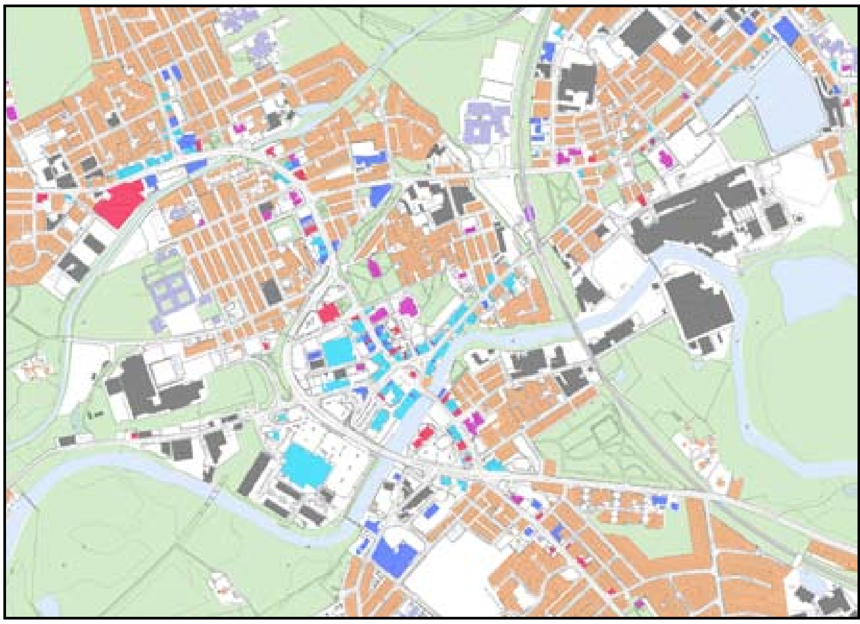
The figure ground plan shows just the buildings of Radcliffe and nothing else. This type of plan is useful in illustrating three important issues:

- **Density of development**
  While it does not show the height of buildings the plan does show the footprint of buildings and the density of ground coverage. What this illustrates is that the neighbourhoods of Radcliffe are relatively densely built, notably the Lord Street and Cross Lane neighbourhoods. However, whereas once the density of development rose further around the town centre, now it decreases dramatically. The centre is therefore isolated from its hinterland.

**Plan 4:** Radcliffe's figure ground plan of 1843

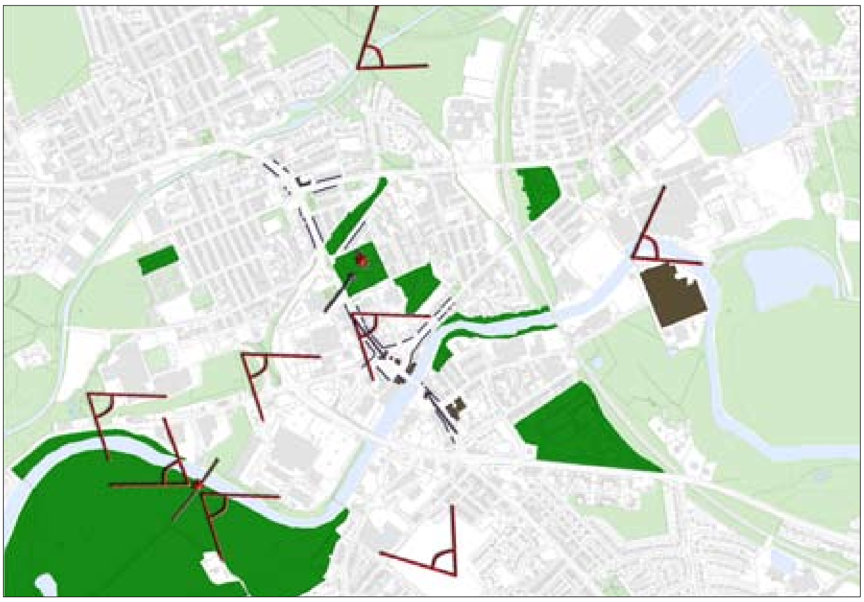
**Plan 5:** Radcliffe's figure ground plan of 1893

**Plan 6:** Radcliffe's figure ground plan of 1930




**Plan 8:** Land use


**Plan 9:** Character areas




**Plan 10:** Townscape

Plan 7: Inner Radcliffe, Figure ground plan, 2003

## Enclosure of space

Most successful public spaces be they streets or public squares are defined by buildings. They should therefore show up on the figure ground plan 7. To a large extent they still do in Radcliffe. The town square stands out clearly as does the lower part of Blackburn Street, Stand Lane and Church Street West. There are, however, problems in the zone cut through by the by-pass where the enclosure of space breaks down. This is also true of the public space around the Civic Centre.

## Grain and variety

Plan 7 also gives some indication of the variety of building types in the town. This shows an overall lack of variety with the domination of terraced housing. The historic figure grounds show that this was always the case. The figure plan indicates that the neighbourhoods surrounding Radcliffe town centre retain much of their form and character. However, whereas these neighbourhoods once focused on the town centre today the centre is isolated and surrounded by open space. The Asda, the by-pass and the vacant sites around the Civic Centre mean that the town centre has been reduced to the lower part of Blackburn Street, Stand Lane, Dale Street and Church Street West.

## Land use

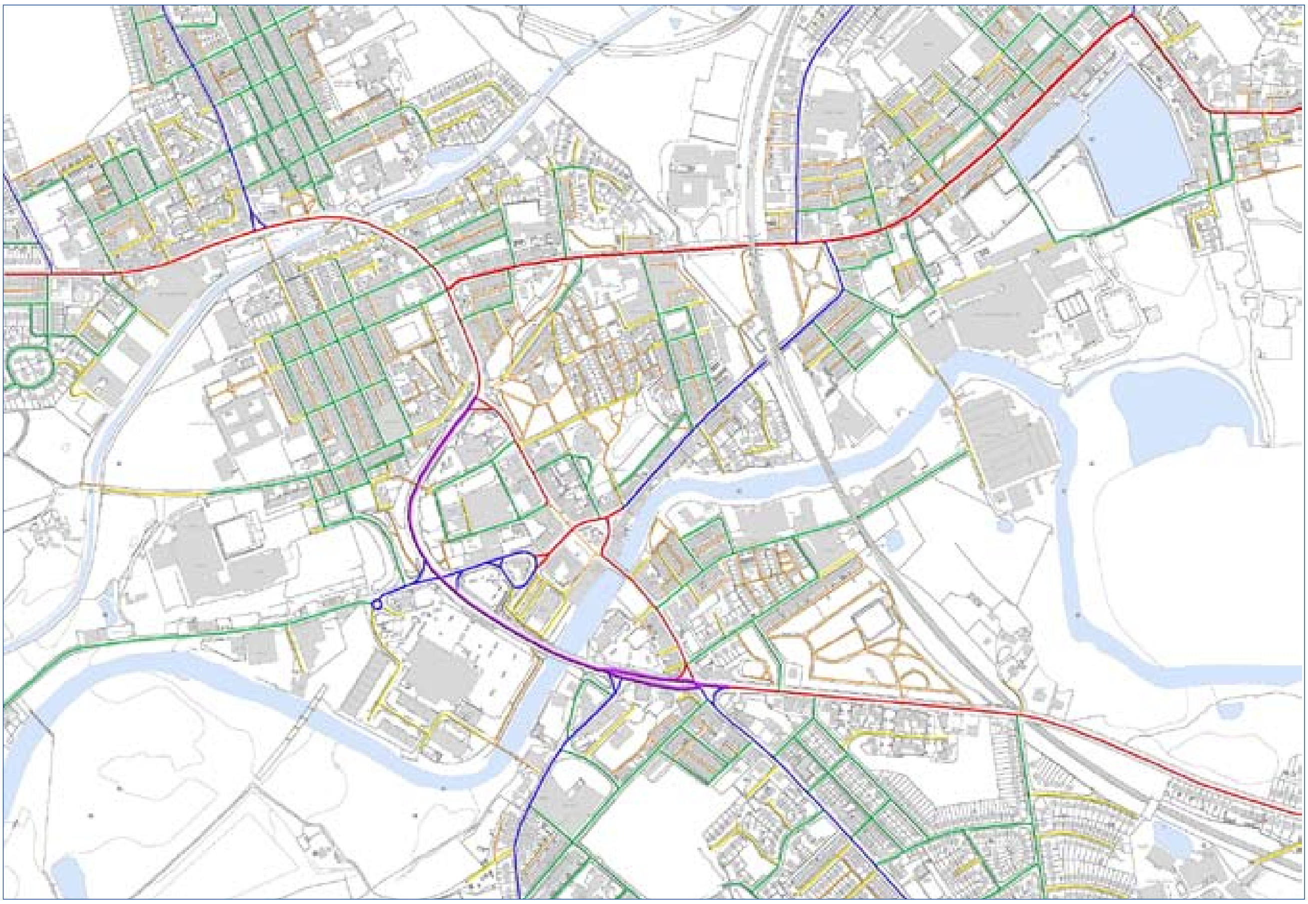
The next step is to look at the use of buildings as shown on Plan 8. This shows that the predominant use in the town is residential. The main mix of uses extends north and south along the old line of the A665 through the town. This extends for a surprisingly long way up Water Street. While the industrial parts of the town are much reduced they remain concentrated in the valley bottom particularly along Milltown Street and Sion Street.

## Character areas

These land uses combine to create a series of character areas in the town as shown on Plan 9. This again shows the predomi-


▶ **Plan 11** shows the street network of 1930 (over todays figure ground)

▼ **Plan 12:** todays road hierarchy



nance of terraced residential areas to the north and east and more suburban housing to the south. The industry winds its way along the valley floor. The town centre is a small linear area bordered to the west by the out-of-town character of the Asda and the by-pass. There are the remnants of a smaller village centre around Radcliffe Tower.

- **Townscape (Plan 10)**
  Radcliffe is not blessed with a fine stock of buildings of architectural or historic value. The most historic structure is the Radcliffe Tower although this is not a dominant townscape feature. The two most notable structures are St Thomas' Church, which dominates the town due to its prominent location and the Outwood Viaduct, which dominates the valley. There are few other buildings of note such as the former Radcliffe Times building, the Library and a number of former banks, which are attractive but unremarkable. There are many buildings that detract from the appearance of the town. These include the market hall and Kwik Save and the Dunelm Mill shop that looms over the town.

Radcliffe, therefore, has very few architectural assets. Nevertheless, it is not an unattractive town. It retains the character of a historic river crossing climbing up the sides of the Irwell valley. There are a number of important views across the valley from Radcliffe New Road and Water Street as you arrive in the town.

## Public realm

We have, so far, focused on the buildings and their uses. We turn now to the public spaces of the town. These are set out on the Public Realm plan (Plan 13). This shows all of the areas of the town to which the public has access. For most of the town the public realm is reasonably well defined. However, there are areas where it breaks down. These relate partly to the poorly defined zone around the town centre described above. However, it also relates to more recent development such as the St Thomas' housing estate and the area to the rear of the swimming baths. In order to further explore the quality of this public realm we have undertaken the following analysis:

**Street hierarchy** - The first issue relates to the hierarchy of streets in the town. Successful places tend to have a clear hierarchy as follows:-

- High streets carry through traffic and also tend to be where most of the shops and public facilities are located.
- Secondary streets give access into the different parts of the town and contain fewer shops.
- Tertiary streets are then the local routes that give access to the buildings of the town.

Plan 11 shows the historic street hierarchy of Radcliffe. This shows a clear set of high streets along the line of the A665 and the A6053 (most

high streets are A roads). The valley topography of Radcliffe tends to limit the number of through routes so there are not many secondary routes. However, Stand Lane, Ainsworth Road and Bury Road would probably fall into this category. The remainder of the streets are tertiary routes and link together to form a coherent street network.

Plan 12 shows the street hierarchy today. This is very similar to the historic plan with the important exception of the by-pass. This creates a new tier to the hierarchy, the by-pass that takes through traffic without supporting any shops other than the Asda. While this has benefited the town by reducing traffic intrusion it has undermined the hierarchy by leaving the high street with no through traffic or passing trade. This is why the Water Street area around the junction of Spring

**Plan 13:** public realm plan

Street remains a healthy retailing area despite the traffic congestion and its peripheral location. This disruption of the street hierarchy tends to intensify the isolation of the town centre.

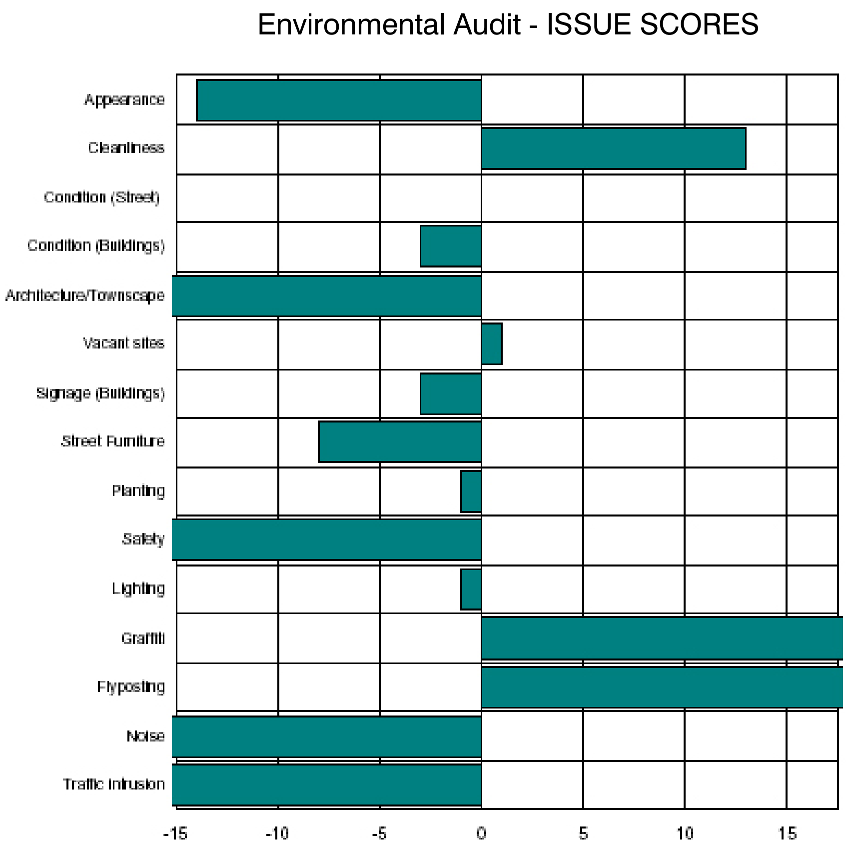
**Permeability** - An important aspect of any street network is the ease with which people can move through the area by a variety of routes. Permeable areas with lots of connections tend to be livelier, safer and support more shops. The historic street plan shows that Radcliffe was never very permeable due to the natural features of the area. The river is historically a major barrier to permeability with formerly just one bridge and even today only two. Surprisingly there are even fewer road crossings over the canal with Water Street being the only vehicular crossing in the 4-mile stretch between Bolton Street in Bury and Kersley. This lack of connectivity may well be the reason why Radcliffe didn't grow as large as Bury or Bolton.

The real change between the historic and present day street patterns is local permeability. Tertiary streets shown on plans 11 and 12 in green are through routes and those in yellow are cul-de-sacs. The plans show that there has been a significant growth of yellow routes. This is partly severance caused by the by-pass and partly the design of development from the St Thomas' estate to the new housing on the Radcliffe Paper Mill site. The results of the severance can be seen in the Lord Street area, which has become cut off from the centre and is served by just one very congested access point.

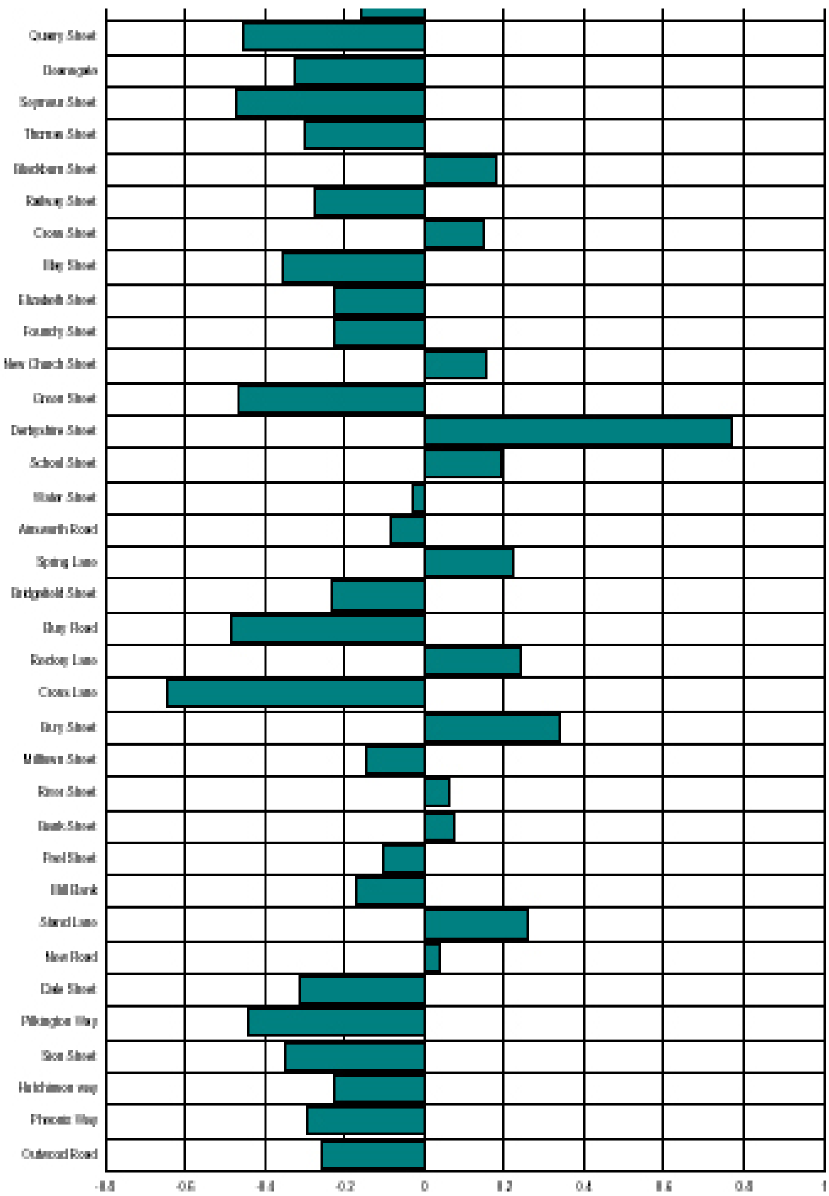
**Environmental Audit** - We have also looked at the quality of these streets. This is based on a 15-point environmental audit. We have walked each of the streets of the town and marked each of these 15 issues, +1 for good, 0 for average and -1 for poor. These scores are then weighted and totalled to give an overall score for each issue and a rating for each street.

The issue scores show that Radcliffe does not score particularly well in overall terms. However, there are some very positive scores for cleanliness, graffiti and fly posting. Many of the other scores are negative with particularly poor scores for overall appearance and townscape. There are also poor scores for the perception of safety, traffic intrusion and noise.

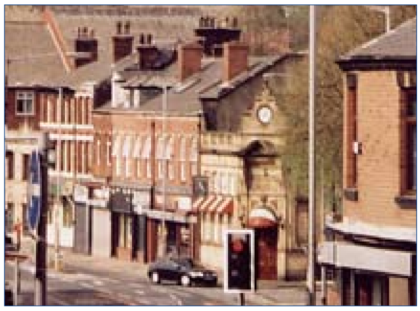
Overall the conclusion is that the



Environmental Audit - STREET SCORES

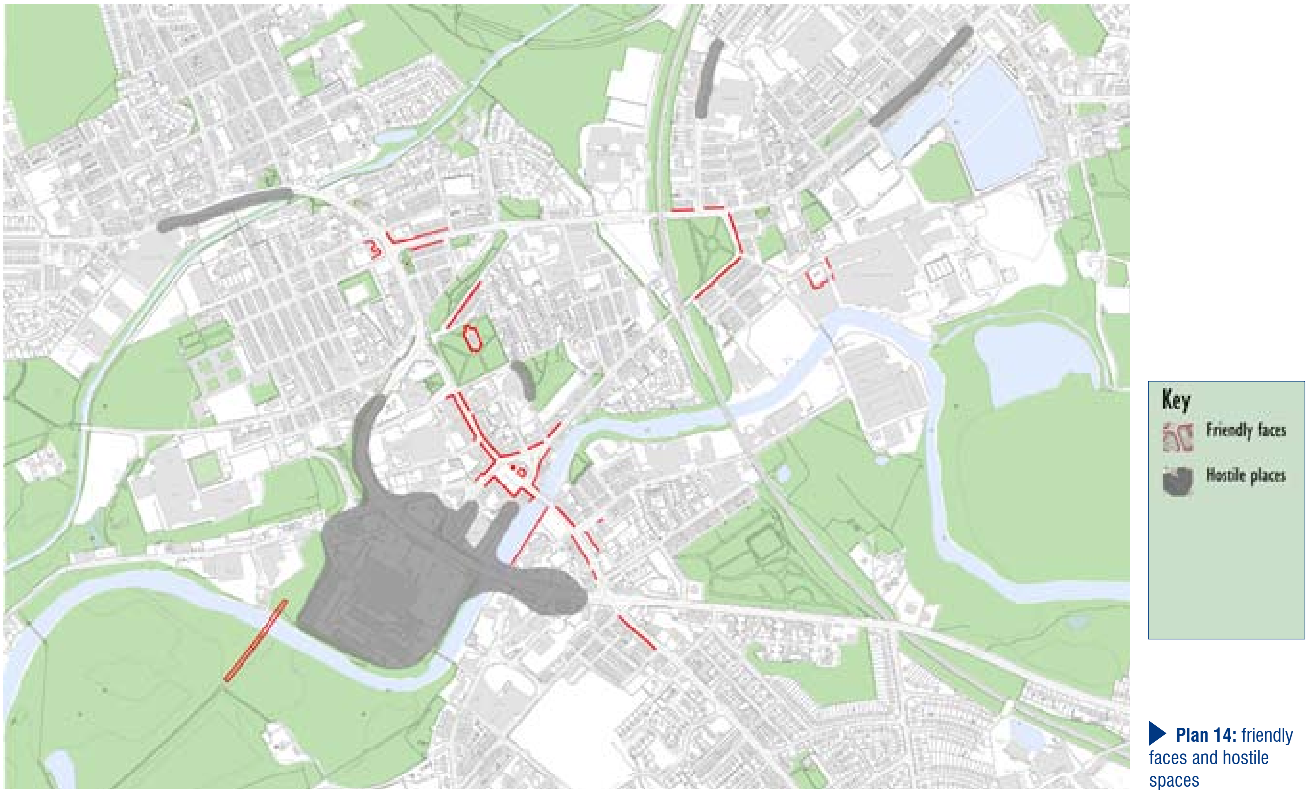


town is well managed but suffers from a poor built fabric and from traffic intrusion from the by-pass in particular. In terms of street scores the best street by some considerable distance is Darbyshire Street. This is a combination of attractive housing, a park along the line of the former railway line and proximity of the church. Good positive scores are also shown for Blackburn Street, Cross Street, New Church Street, School Street, Spring Lane, Rectory Lane, Bury Street and Stand Lane. The poorest score is shown for Cross Lane because of a combination of vacant housing and traffic intrusion. Bury Road, Pilkington Way, Green Street and Seymore Street also score poorly. Overall 24 streets have negative scores and just 12 are positive. There is clearly a great deal of work that needs to be done to improve the public realm.



**Friendly places/hostile spaces** - One of the issues that determine the quality of the public realm is the way that buildings address the street. Plan 14 shows the buildings that present attractive 'friendly' faces to the street. These are really very limited. By contrast there is a large area around the by-pass and smaller areas on Cross Lane, Bury Road and Water Street that feel much more hostile.

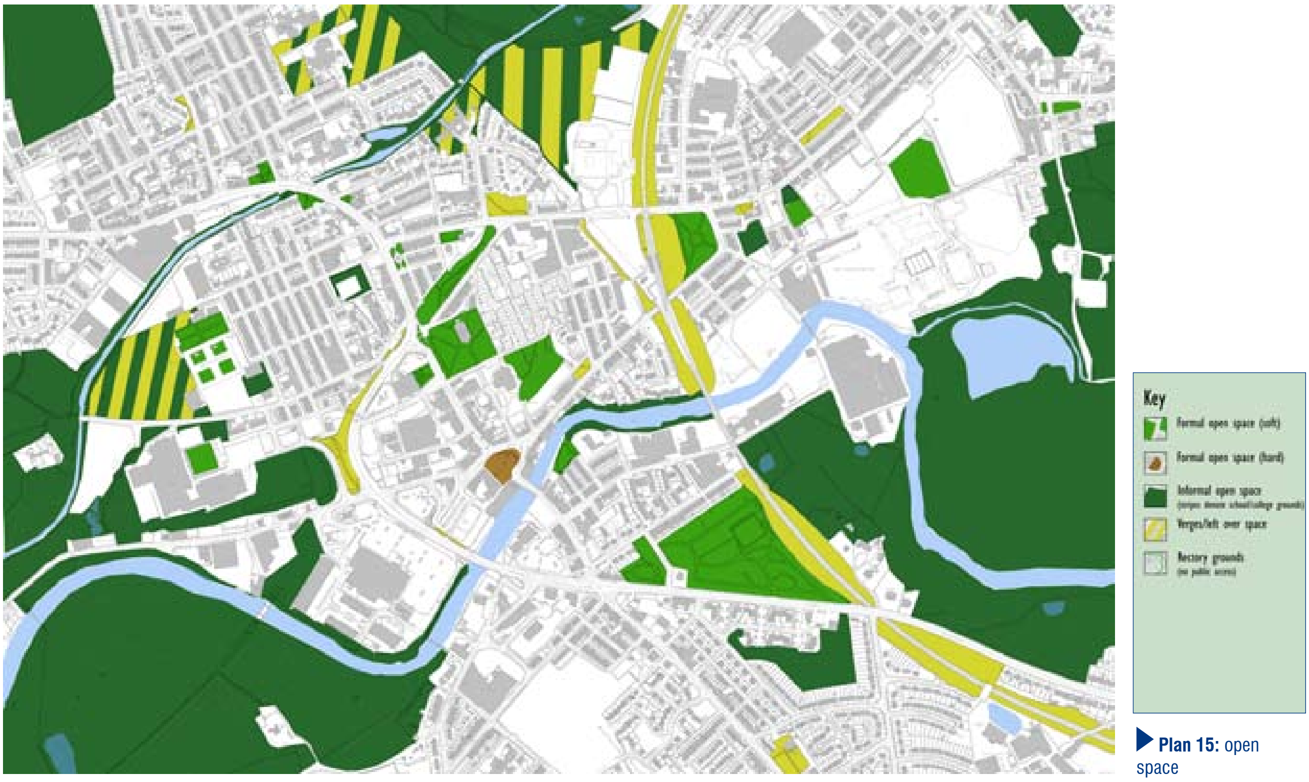
**Open space** - The final aspect of the public realm is open space. Plan 15 shows the open space in and around Radcliffe. The best public open spaces are Coronation Park, St Thomas' Church yard and the space to the east of the Metrolink Station. The open space next to the Civic Centre has great potential but is little used. The plan also shows the proximity of the surrounding countryside. Indeed, the embankments along the Metrolink line and Coney Green school grounds means that




**Plan 14:** friendly faces and hostile spaces

the open space that once separated the original Radcliffe village from Radcliffe Bridge still exists and could be emphasised.

Overall the urban design assessment has painted a picture of a town that has some intrinsic qualities but is generally undistinguished with regard to its built forms. The town centre is isolated from its surroundings and is very limited in its extent. Overall there are few notable buildings with the exception of St Thomas' Church, which is a fine local landmark. The town suffers from poor connections and the by-pass has undermined the street hierarchy, further isolating the town centre. Radcliffe therefore lacks architectural features but has tremendous natural assets. It is therefore not particularly sensitive in terms of townscape giving the potential to introduce contemporary design to create a distinctive identity.




**Plan 15:** open space

# 5. Commercial Audit

As part of the study King Sturge have undertaken an assessment of developer interest in the town as well as a more detailed health check of the town centre. The results of this work are outlined in this chapter and chapter 6.

## Market assessment

This section considers the following property market sectors within Radcliffe; Residential, Office, Leisure, and Industrial. Retail activity is covered in a separate town centre health check chapter. The property market in Bury is considered in detail in order to provide a context for the Radcliffe market, which is part of the Bury market. Each property market sector is also 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.

**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 and this trend spreading outwards through the regions. This trend reflects a number of factors including:

- Overall economic strength and stability
- Historically low interest rates
- Stability of interest rates
- Increased security from steadily reducing unemployment through the 1990's
- Underlying under supply of housing nationally

According to the Nationwide Quarterly House Price Review, 2002 saw some of the highest monthly increases in house prices nationally since 1993 and this at a time of increasing fears of an economic slow down. The same review of Summer 2003 forecasted a house price rise of 10% (unchanged on the previous forecast), although forecasts for northern region of Britain were higher at 10 - 15%. The average property prices in the North West were reported to have, for the first time broken through the £100,000 mark.

The two most obvious trends in the market in terms of product are partly related to each other. Planning restrictions have begun to curtail urban sprawl and house-builders nationally are becoming more prepared to work with 'difficult' i.e. previously - developed sites. Secondly, the trend towards city and town centre living continues to expand rapidly, partly linked to an increase in consumer interest in good design and modern lifestyles. Again this has forced builders to address demand for better-designed products.

| | Bury | Greater Manchester | England & Wales |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Detached** | £187k | £207k | £251k |
| **Semi Detached** | £109k | £110k | £146k |
| **Terraced** | £71k | £64k | £120k |
| **Flat/Maisonette** | £129k | £108k | £152k |
| **Overall** | £105k | £101k | £162k |

**Average Price of Property (July - September 2003)**
**Source**: Land Registry, 2003

| | Bury | Greater Manchester | England & Wales |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Detached** | + 15% | + 19% | + 14% |
| **Semi Detached** | + 27% | + 19% | + 15% |
| **Terraces** | + 24% | + 21% | + 11% |
| **Flat/Maisonette** | + 45% | + 5% | + 6% |
| **Overall** | + 21% | + 14% | + 11% |

**Change in Property Prices - 2002 -2003**
**Source:** Land Registry, 2003

Bury (including Radcliffe) finds itself at the edge of one of the leading centres of housing renaissance - Manchester.

**The Bury Housing Market** - Land Registry figures for 2002 and 2003 show that Bury (figures which include Radcliffe) is experiencing greater growth in property prices than the England and Wales average. Over the last year the average house price has increased by 15% in Bury compared with just 13% nationally. In all types of property the Bury housing market out-performs that of Greater Manchester and England and Wales.

Despite this large rise in prices the average price of a dwelling in Bury still only represents 60% of the national average. This figure is very similar to the average for Greater Manchester.

These figures suggest that the Bury Housing Market is particularly buoyant in all sectors. Bury as a Borough has many attractions as a residential location including; proximity to attractive countryside, good communications, links by tram to Manchester City Centre, a strong sub-regional retail centre, very good schools and cheaper house prices than those of the southern part of the Greater Manchester conurbation despite increases.

**The Radcliffe Housing Market**- Values for the Radcliffe housing market are included within the Valuation Office figures for the Borough of Bury. With closer examination of the local market in Radcliffe it is clear that average property values are lower than most other parts of the Borough. In particular, the values of terraced properties are lower in Radcliffe with many selling at prices of between £40 - 45K. Whilst there are some lower value terraced properties in other areas of the Borough (including parts of central Bury) overall values are higher elsewhere.

Local agents confirmed the buoyancy of the housing market in Radcliffe and throughout the Borough. Agents have experienced a high demand for terraced properties in Radcliffe particularly from first time buyers who cannot afford to purchase a property elsewhere in the Borough and indeed in North Manchester. This demand has already lead to increased values and will continue to do so.

Houses located in and around Radcliffe town centre are generally those of the lowest value. Most properties are brick terraced and many are unimproved in terms of décor, kitchens and bathrooms. As noted, although these properties have increased in value in the last 12 months, values are low in comparison to properties elsewhere in the Borough. The average selling price of the houses within and close to the town centre is approximately £40,000. Terraced property has not suffered from the catastrophic decline in values affecting many northern towns. In Radcliffe the demand for terrace property is comparatively good.

There has been some new build activity in Radcliffe - the majority of which is at the former Radcliffe Paper Mill site. This development includes three and four bedroom properties of mews, towns house, semi-detached and detached design and 1 and 2 bedroom flats. The first phase of this development sold well including properties from £112,000 to £221,000 thus indicating a healthy market for new build properties in Radcliffe. Subsequently, a second phase is underway which Barratts believe will also sell well.

There is currently little 'town centre' living in Radcliffe except for some accommodation above shops. However, there are substantial areas of terraced housing close to the town centre for which there is a significant demand as discussed. As the market for new, good quality accommodation within the central area is yet to be tested it is difficult to predict demand. Estate agents had perceived that people were 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. However two apartment / town house developments have recently taken place close to the town centre and the properties were all easily sold for values of between £63,000 and £90,000. Hence, this confirms that there is a demand for accommodation in town centre environments outside of Manchester City Centre.

Whilst Radcliffe also lacks the town centre facilities which would be deemed necessary to attract people to live in the town centre, it is likely that if a range of town centre accommodation were available including that suited to first time buyers, then it would provide an alternative to those buyers who may otherwise purchase a terrace property close to the town centre. Further, with the good transport links to Manchester City Centre provided by the Metrolink and the potential for developing accommodation along the riverside, Radcliffe could be a desirable location for town centre living in the future.

Bury Council's recent (April 2003) annual report on housing land availability came to a number of relevant conclusions:

- 85% of housing completions took place on previously - developed land.
- For the last 2 years Bury has exceeded the Government's target of ensuring 60% of new house building takes place on brownfield sites.
- 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 bedroom properties.
- 95% 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 as a Borough is undoubtedly an attractive residential location. Radcliffe, whilst lagging behind Bury in terms of house prices is experiencing a good demand for both older terraced properties and new build semi-detached and

detached houses and flats and has experienced significant price growth in the last 18 months. Much of the accommodation presently available is lower quality terrace properties although with increases in demand improvements are being made to properties.

The rise in town and city centre living has been fuelled by demographic change resulting in a greater number of smaller households being formed and a desire for a different housing product close to shops, entertainment facilities and public transport. Whilst improvements are required to the quality of the town centre and facilities, there is potential to develop town centre living in Radcliffe and to attract a greater number of residents to live in Radcliffe overall.

It is, therefore, important that the conditions should be right to encourage developers to invest in new house building within Radcliffe Town Centre. In order to achieve this, it needs to be ensured that:

- There is an achievable vision for the town and that developers can see how their schemes fit within this.
- Sites, which are attractive to potential residents, are available for development.
- The design of, and materials used in, any new town centre housing is to appropriately high standards.
- Where the costs of an appropriate housing development exceed the end values that the Council support any application for "housing gap" funding to the North West Development Agency. A gap could arise from high abnormal costs caused for example by ground conditions. Such grant will be difficult to access unless a very good case can be made of the project's contribution to kick-starting the housing market in the town, making a major contribution to its regeneration and setting a quality of design and materials that will influence future developments.

## Office

**National Context** - The UK office market experienced mixed fortunes from 2002 as the period of economic uncertainty continued to impact on demand for office space. In the majority of office centres the trend was for rising availability and falling levels of demand with only a few exceptions in the regions.

The continued slowing of the global economy in 2002-03 and the downgrading of UK economic growth forecasts by the Chancellor impacted on demand for office space in the UK as business confidence waned. The volume of take-up in 18 of the 24 centres monitored by King Sturge had on average, declined by 45%. This period of uncertainty continued through 2003, although, in line with the gradual improvement in the economy, the market stabilised in 2003, and started off well in January 2004.

A two-tier market is developing in terms of the quality of office space available. There are clear disparities between the levels of grade A space available in the city centre and out-of-town markets. For example, 24% of space in Manchester's city centre is grade A, compared to 51%

in South Manchester. Potentially this is an advantage for 'new markets' that do not carry a mass of secondary stock.

Prime rents stabilised or fell slightly in the majority of office centres but 11 of 24 key office markets recorded growth in prime rents. The regional office markets dominated this growth. Average rental value growth slowed dramatically in 2002 although the regional office centres have maintained growth.

The commercial property market continued to outperform other asset classes (equities and gilts) in 2002 and we expect this trend to continue in the short term. Property therefore remains an attractive investment but, with high levels of availability in many office centres, office properties with secure income streams will remain attractive to investors.

The different occupier bases in the core city centre and out-of-town office markets influenced the levels of demand during 2002 and 2003. The city centres have largely seen traditional office occupiers, such as financial and business services and the government/public sector, maintain underlying steady demand, while the out-of-town markets have suffered from a lack of demand from the Telecommunications Media Technology Sectors (TMT). As already identified, over-acquisition of space by TMT occupiers over the past couple of years has led to new space remaining empty and being released back to the market.

The stabilisation of prime rents in the majority of office centres masks the increasing incentives offered to tenants. The rising levels of supply, combined with space marketed by tenants, are leading to increasingly competitive landlords who offer greater rent-free periods, lowering by some margin the actual net effective rent achieved.

The government and the public sector will continue to be a key source of demand for office space throughout the UK. Traditional and local occupiers will underpin demand for office space in the majority of office centres in 2003.

The office sector under performed the retail and industrial sectors in 2003 in terms of rental growth and total return, but a cautious recovery started in late 2003 and is expected to continue into 2004

Congestion continues to be a key feature in a number of office centres, and the majority of major cities in the UK suffer from congestion on the roads. In a move to begin to address this, solutions such as congestion charging and alternative transport provision will become more important to market trends. Developers will remain cautious for the foreseeable future in the majority of markets, since speculative starts have all but stopped in the majority of office centres. This will further exacerbate the acute shortage of available new space in many office centres, with limited completions in 2003 and little expected to come out of the ground in the short term. Occupiers seeking new space will be increasingly restricted to pre-sold or pre-let development opportunities.

**The Greater Manchester Office Market** – Manchester's out of town office market is broadly made up of four markets: South Manchester, Salford Quays, Warrington and North Manchester. Each particular market has a different offer depending on various characteristics such as 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 and massive voids only diminished in the late 1990's. Metrolink has helped this and the market is now stable comprising mostly fairly modern space with good occupancy levels. Salford Quays over the last few years has shown take-up levels of between 100,000 sq ft and 175,000 sq ft per annum.

- 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 the advantages of fast access to three motorways and strategic location between Liverpool and Manchester, has caused the area to develop rapidly. As a consequence office 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. The development of the mixed use Kingsway site on the M62 will be a major source of new supply immediately to the east of the Borough over the next decade.

- 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.

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.

**The Bury and Radcliffe Office Market** - Bury as a Borough does not have what would be recognised as a real "in town" office market. Demand for office accommodation in North Manchester has traditionally come from local occupiers seeking expansion space. There are limited numbers 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 in converted town houses. There have been a few small modern office schemes constructed in the last 10 years. These are mainly located at the edge of centre locations. Office buildings offering refurbished suites of 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. The majority of office accommodation in Radcliffe is situated as with Bury above town centre retail premises or as a small element of industrial developments where an office facility is required. There is little modern purpose built office accommodation in the town.

Within the Borough rental levels are clearly higher on more recently constructed office floor space. Hilton House on Irwell Street, Bury a three-storey purpose built office building, of approximately 1,700 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 to the area. However, it is doubtful whether these values would justify speculative office development.

Within the Borough, plans for future development include both schemes for smaller scale office accommodation and larger office park schemes. These schemes are likely to located at sites in central Bury and around Pilsworth. A scheme of 30,000 sq ft at The Waterfold site on Junction 2 of the M66 is currently under construction and will provide units of 2,000 sq ft, which could be joined as larger units. Although relatively close to Bury Town Centre, The Waterfold site falls with the administrative boundaries of Rochdale. In addition the third phase of the Castlebrook Business Park at Pilsworth is expected to commence in 2004. It has been identified that smaller units in this size range are particularly in demand in Bury at present.

In the current market Radcliffe is unlikely to experience any significant demand for new build office accommodation considering the limited number of enquiries from corporate occupiers and the more suitable sites that are available in Bury. The local demand for accommodation is likely to be met by the current stock although there could be some demand for small modern units for owner occupation.

**Conclusions** - At present the main source of demand in the Borough for office floor space is for small (less than 5,000 sq ft) self contained and freehold premises for local businesses. It is unlikely, however, that a developer would speculatively pursue a scheme in Radcliffe. Any such development is likely to occur only where schemes are commissioned on an individual basis.

## 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 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, this is a 12 screen facility operated by Warner Village at Park 66 in Pilsworth.

Nationally the rapid expansion of multiplex cinemas appears to be based on an over optimistic forecast of cinema admission and this has led to an over-supply in certain towns and cities. Drivers Jonas' pessimistic demand assessment reflected this since developers and operators are not generally looking for expansion opportunities at present.

**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 'higher value' facility was provided within the Borough.

**Restaurants, pubs and bars** - Radcliffe's evening economy is centred around several drinking establishments in and around the town centre and three restaurants. The majority of the drinking establishments are privately owned public houses with the exception of 'The Lock Keeper' situated on Stand Lane adjacent to the river. As the Drivers Jonas report identifies for Bury Town Centre, there is also a lack of non-alcohol focused leisure facilities within Radcliffe. Within

Radcliffe town centre there are only three restaurants.  The existing drinking establishments primarily attract the 18-34 year old age group.

Whilst there are a significant number of public houses in Radcliffe, we are aware that the industry considers that Manchester City Centre is approaching saturation and that more attention is being focussed on the affluent commuter towns. Whilst Bury is more likely to be targeted by the major public house and bar chains it is possible that Radcliffe may receive some attention especially as most of the current establishment are not part of the larger groups and brands.

As identified there are only three independent restaurants within the town centre, although there are several take away food outlets. The independent restaurant trade is more difficult to analyse and will, in large, 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 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/ Radcliffe catchment area.  The Borough 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 Bury town centre.

**Hotels** - There are approximately 25 large bed and breakfast inns and small private hotels in the Borough. The only large hotels in the area are The Village Hotel at Waterfold Business Park adjacent to Junction 2 on the M66 and  Prestwich. It would appear that the budget hotel operators are reasonably well provided for either on or adjoining the motorway network and that the Borough itself probably has sufficient traditional accommodation for its current business needs.

**Conclusions** - Considering the size and role of Radcliffe in the Borough, the additional leisure facilities which it could support and which are at the current time limited, are primarily a greater selection of restaurants including café bars etc. This would add some less alcohol orientated facilities to the evening economy and attract a greater diversity of the population in terms of age group, to use the town centre in the evening, which would help to increase the vitality and viability of the town.

The demand for other leisure uses including health and fitness, cinema and hotels are met by facilities elsewhere within the Borough. Whilst the provision of such facilities in Radcliffe would undoubtedly be welcomed by residents, there is insufficient demand to support additional facilities alongside those which already exist.

## 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 third quarter of 2003, the rate of increase slowed down and was comparatively modest compared to earlier in the year. Further, the total level of available floor space in completed buildings fell in three UK regions. The overall amount of floor space being developed on a speculative basis in September 2003 totalled 6,204,466 sq ft representing on increase of 13.1% since April 2003

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 in 2002 with some 19,989 million sq ft of take-up. However, levels of take up have slowed in 2003. 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 Industrial Market** - The total amount of available floor space in the North West stood at 26.60 million sq ft at August 2003. This represented a fall of –1.5% since April 2003. Floor space available in large units over 107,640 sq ft decreased by 0.8 % and available new floor space decreased by 9.9% in line with the second quarter of the year. The level of speculative development in the North West has remained steady since the previous quarter with around 851,465 sq ft currently under construction in eight schemes.

**The Bury and Radcliffe 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 interest 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. Radcliffe has a greater availability of employment sites compared to those in the central Bury areas and has some of the larger available industrial sites within the Borough.

Rochdale and Oldham have experienced more speculative development than that experienced in Bury as a whole. This is in part due to the proximity of many sites, particularly in Rochdale, to the M62 motorway. Further, a key 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 the Borough of Bury.

Despite the low levels of speculative development in Bury, a speculative scheme was recently completed at Dumers Lane providing six industrial units ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 sq ft. Whilst this scheme is in located within the Bury ward of Unsworth, its proximity to Radcliffe provides an indication of developer confidence in this area. This confidence in demand is supported by local agents who believe that there is a reasonable level of pent up local demand for small units in the Borough, from both owner-occupiers and tenants. If suitable industrial accommodation were developed providing units between 700 - 1,500 sq ft, it is believed there would be a good level of 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 in 2003

**King Sturge Enquiries** - As can be seen there were a total of 56 enquiries received in 2003 for premises in the Borough of Bury of which 7 were specific to Bury. The majority of the 56 enquiries were general enquiries for accommodation in the Borough, although 9 specifically were for Radcliffe among other locations and 3 of the 9 were uniquely for Radcliffe. The other locations were generally towns in the north of Manchester, the most frequently recorded were Whitefield, Prestwich, Rochdale and Bolton. Of the Radcliffe specific enquiries, 8 came from companies located in Greater Manchester and Lancashire with one 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 Radcliffe is generally from within the region and indeed from neighbouring districts or from within Bury itself. This is also the case with regard to enquiries for industrial premises in the Borough of Bury generally.

Considering tenure, 3 of the Radcliffe specific enquiries were for freehold accommodation and 6 with for either freehold or leasehold. These figures suggest to some extent there is currently greater demand for freehold accommodation. The size of accommodation being sought through the enquiries ranged from 2,000 to 40,000 sq ft, although the majority of the Radcliffe enquiries were in the 7,000 – 20,000 sq ft range. It should be pointed out that King Sturge's data probably excludes many enquiries at the lower end of the scale. Speaking with local agents they confirm a healthy demand for premises in the 3,000 - 15,000 sq ft range.

**Conclusions** - Discussions with local agents suggest that Bury has not benefited from industrial development largely due to a lack of available industrial sites. Radcliffe does not benefit from immediate access to the motorway network and therefore is unlikely to benefit from large inward investments or from the current demand for

| Type of enquiry | Number |
|---|---|
| Total no. of enquiries for Bury | 56 |
| Total Bury only enquiries | 7 |
| Total Radcliffe enquiries | 9 |
| Total 'Radcliffe only' enquiries | 3 |
| Total leasehold | 9 |
| **TOTAL** | **56** |
| **Radcliffe enquiries** | |
| Radcliffe enquiries freehold | 3 |
| Radcliffe enquiries either freehold or leasehold | 6 |
| **TOTAL** | **9** |

**King Sturge industrial enquiries for Bury (2003), Source**: King Sturge, 2004 large logistic/distribution facilities. We have identified a demand for premises in the range of 3,000 sq ft to 15,000 sq ft mainly from local companies (e.g. Bury, North Manchester, Bolton and Rochdale) who are either seeking to expand or consolidate and/or wish to purchase their own property whilst interest rates are low to provide a "pension fund". This demand comes from companies who both want to purchase their own property and those who want to build their own premises. It is, therefore, important that suitable land is made available to provide for this requirement and to have land available for the development of larger units if these can be pre-let. Work carried out on the Bury Employment Opportunities Study has identified that the speculative development of smaller industrial units may be marginal i.e. there could be a need for grant assistance. Given the lack of available grant in Bury, the Council could increase their stock of industrial land and premises by creative use of the Section 106 agreement process when affecting change of land use from industrial to residential.

# 6. Town centre health check

In which we look at the performance of retailing in Radcliffe town centre based on King Sturge's Health check.

## Introduction

In the last chapter we considered demand for different uses in Radcliffe. In this chapter we will look specifically at retailing and how decisions on the future of retail provision will have a major influence on the health and vitality of Radcliffe town centre. As context this section will look at:

- the national and regional retailing trends,
- Radcliffe's position in the retail hierarchy of the Borough and will examine the structure of the retail provision within the town,
- the health of the centre using the criteria set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6,
- the capacity for further expansion in the centre and any weaknesses that may be preventing the centre from developing and improving.

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 despite 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 (January 04) show that overall sales were up 2.33% on a total basis on the previous year's figure, however, the three month trend rates of growth decreased from 4.3% to 3.2% for total sales. It is felt that growth rates peaked at the end of 2001 and there were positive but slow growth rates into the middle of 2003 when the declining growth trend started 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 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 that generally do not trade on a Sunday and the resulting lack of footfall affects those that do open.

| Town | 2003 Vitality Score |
|---|---|
| **Radcliffe** | 49 |
| **Bury** | 180 |
| **Whitefield** | 36 |
| **Prestwich** | 52 |
| **Heywood** | 54 |

**Source:** Experian Goad (2003)

- 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's Local and Tesco Metro are usually no larger than 25,000 sq ft in size.

## Radcliffe Shopping Centre

Other than Bury, Radcliffe is the largest of the three other centres in the Borough i.e. Radcliffe, Prestwich, Ramsbottom. Radcliffe has good connections to Bury town centre and Manchester City Centre by tram but is more isolated than the other smaller centres in the Borough from the motorway network. Like Bury, the tram provides a mixed blessing for the town as it provides access to the centre for shoppers from the neighbouring towns but also provides easy access to other centres. Bury town centre is less than 10 minutes drive away and Bolton less than 15 minutes. The Trafford Centre and City Centre Manchester are also within easy reach. Metrolink will carry a shopper from Radcliffe to the city centre in less than 20 minutes.

Using Experian Goad Retail Centre Vitality Ranking Score, information on the ranking of centres based on the number of retail outlets, floor space and the number of key attractors, Radcliffe is seen to have a comparatively low score indicating low vitality. Bury has a significantly higher score which reflects the greater range of retail outlets and higher quality shopping environment. The neighbouring centre of Whitefield has a lower vitality score than Radcliffe, whilst Prestwich has a slightly higher score, which is reflective of recent improvements to the centre including the improved convenience offer. Heywood located approximately 4 miles from Radcliffe in Rochdale is a useful comparable to Radcliffe as it is of a similar size and provides similar functions to Radcliffe. Heywood has a vitality score of 54, which is slightly higher than Radcliffe.

Radcliffe has a total shopping area of 350,000 sq ft with 42 multiple outlets and 35 independent comparison outlets. The majority of floor space is contained to the east of the by-pass with the exception of the Asda superstore and a few independent outlets located to the edge of the centre.

Radcliffe town centre has mainly attracted middle / low-end retailers. The only exception being Boots and Ethel Austin as national multiple retailers. The largest space users in Radcliffe's main shopping area of the town centre are Dunelm and Kwik Save and a number of independent retailers and the market, which account for the majority of the centre's floor space.

Radcliffe town centre is concentrated around Dale Street, Blackburn Street, Stand Lane, Church Street West and Deansgate. The central shopping area of the town is focused on

Blackburn Street where there is a mix of retail and service uses such as travel agents, hairdressers, banks, and estate agents. These outlets are located within a 2 and 3 storey 1960's development which houses retail accommodation to the ground floor and storage space to the upper floors. This development has seen little investment over recent years and gives the town centre a dated and tired image.

Dale Street, which leads into the main shopping area from Pilkington Way to the west, has a number of small independent retail units and a number of vacant units, which provide a poor image to this section of the retail centre.

Stand Lane provides access to the town centre from the south and is characterised by non-retail units and again a high proportion of vacant units. The majority of the town centre's pubs and restaurants are located on Stand Lane creating a focus for the evening economy.

Church Street West runs from the Market Hall to the north east of the main shopping area of the town centre. In the main core of the town centre the outlets on this street are mainly independent retailers as well as some vacant units. To the edge of the main shopping area and beyond there are also a number of fast food outlets on Church Street West.

| Retail Type | Total Floor Space sq ft | Percentage of Total Floor Space |
|---|---|---|
| Convenience | 17,588 | 5% |
| Comparison | 127,887 | 39% |
| Service/Miscellaneous | 122,311 | 38% |
| Vacant | 53,626 | 18 % |
| Total | 324,351 | 100% |

**Source:** Bury MBC

Radcliffe market is housed within the Market Hall, accessed from Blackburn Street. Although there is some variety of comparison and convenience goods offered, the Market Hall lacks the atmosphere and vibrancy required to attract large numbers of customers. Radcliffe market has to compete with Bury market in attracting customers from further afield. Bury market is a significantly larger and particularly successful market with a large diversity of stalls and a waiting list of traders who want to have a stall. With this competition it is unlikely that there is the capacity in the area to enable Radcliffe market to grow significantly in size. However, there is potential to increase local interest and visitor spend at the market through improving its surrounding environment and the overall 'market shopping experience' which is likely to create increased demand by traders to have a stall at the market.

## 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. This includes 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.

In their retail study Drivers Jonas carried out such an analysis and concluded that Radcliffe does not display strong indicators of vitality or viability. The key factors they pinpointed were:

- There are extremely high numbers of vacant units and a limited choice and range of retail provision.
- Representation by both convenience and comparison retailers

is limited to discount and lower order retailers and the centre does not project a particularly high quality image to shoppers.

- The edge-of-centre Asda performs an important role as a main-food shopping destination in the area but there does not appear to be a high level of combined trips to the town centre from Asda shoppers.

A further factor that is considered to have limited the success of Radcliffe as a shopping centre is the relatively small floor area of the majority of existing units in the town. Multiple retailers require units generally of at least 1,200 sq ft for smaller sized outlets but more ideally units of approximately 2,000 sq ft or units of 5,000 - 6,000 sq ft for more expansive floor space users. The majority of town centre units in Radcliffe are less than 1,200 sq ft with many between 500 – 1,000 sq ft.

London and Associated Properties PLC are owners of much of the town centre's retail units in what is known as the 'shopping centre' area on Blackburn Street/Dale Street. Their experience of managing and letting these units has been that multiple retailers and their agents are not willing to consider locating an outlet in Radcliffe town centre due to two main factors. Firstly, because of the poor image that the town centre presents and the low footfall count. Secondly, as explained, the majority of multiple retailers have requirements for units in excess of 1,200 sq ft, which the centre is unable to offer. London and Associated Properties have indicated that they would be interested in becoming involved in activities that lead to the development of larger scale units in Radcliffe given that pre-lets to the right sort of retailers could be achieved. With the current layout of the town centre there is little scope for either developing new, larger units or re-organising the existing ones to create larger units.

## Capacity for Expansion

Drivers Jonas in their Retail Study for Bury identified the potential capacity of the town centre for comparison and convenience retailing based upon detailed analysis of available expenditure at 2002/2006/2008/2011 taking into account the turnover of existing and approved stores within the centre. The study reported that the town centres of Bury, Prestwich, Radcliffe and Ramsbottom all have strong quantitative convenience provision with both town centre and edge of centre facilities being sufficient in all four centres. Their assessment did not make any quantitative comment on comparison capacity in Radcliffe but rather concluded that Radcliffe is a centre in need of investment and needs to take advantage of any development opportunities.

Convenience provision in Radcliffe is met primarily by the Asda Superstore located on the by-pass and Kwik Save located within the main shopping area of the town centre. Kwik Save is currently located within a former cinema building, which in its current state of repair, contributes to the poor image of the town centre. The importance of having a convenience store located in the town centre is evident in terms of attracting people into the centre for multi-purpose trips including visits to comparison and service outlets such so as to make an overall contribution to the vibrancy of the town centre. The provision of new modern premises for the Kwik Save store in the town centre would add to the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.

## Conclusions

- Radcliffe functions as a shopping centre that draws most of its trade from the town and its immediate hinterland. The proximity of Bury town centre and the easy access to Manchester City Centre inhibits any significant growth of the centre.

- To support existing businesses and to attract new retailers to establish in the town, it will be necessary to grow the catchment population of the centre, i.e. by bringing more people to live and to work close to the centre. This will increase the viability of existing premises enabling them to reinvest in, and perhaps expand their shops.

- In order to attract a greater range of retailers to locate in the town a larger number of retail units over 1,200 sq ft should be made available in the town centre.

- Key “anchors” in the functioning of the town centre are the Asda superstore and to a lesser extent the Market Hall, the Dunelm store and the Kwik Save. The ease and attractiveness of linkages between each of these facilities as well as car parking is important for the health of the centre.

- In this respect, the location and environment of the Market Hall could improve the attractiveness of the market, as could the relocation of the Kwik Save store out of the former cinema. The relocation of these two facilities would free up a potentially attractive riverside development site.

- Further environmental improvements are required to improve the image and appearance of the town centre.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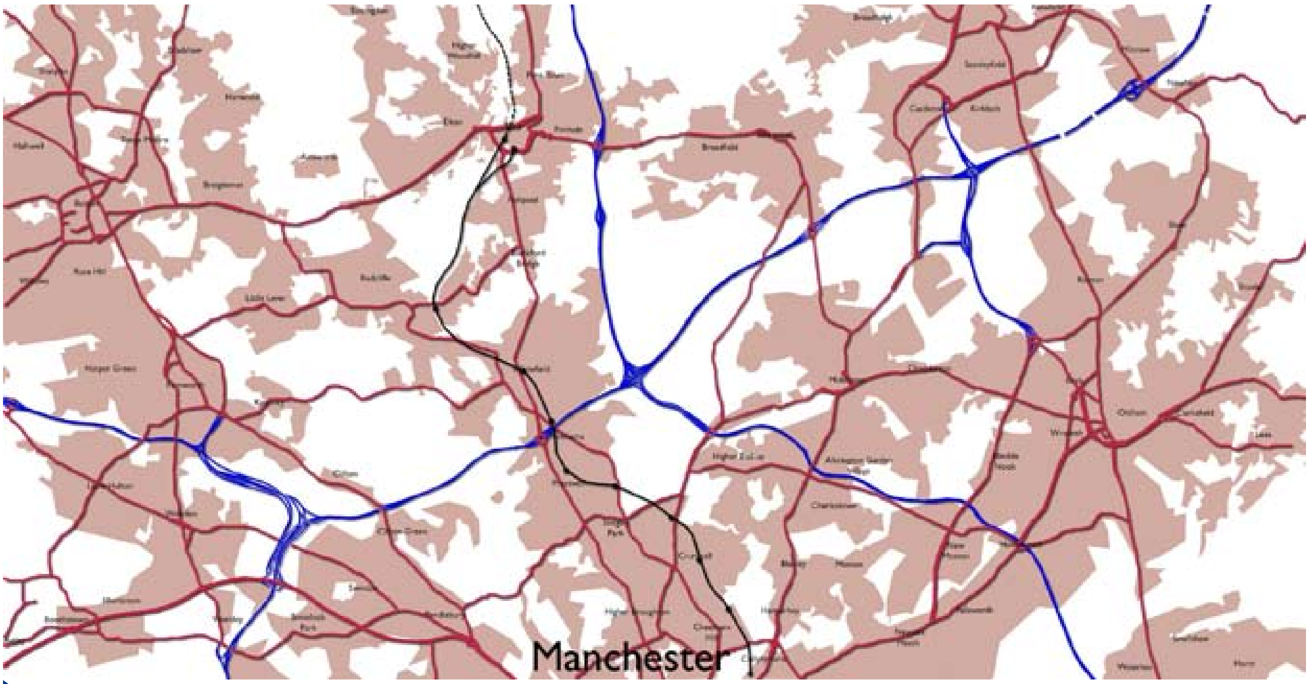
# 7. Access to the town centre

In which we describe the transport assessment undertaken by Transport Planning Partnership (TPP). It reviews existing transport conditions and facilities within the vicinity of Radcliffe town centre and determines overall future conditions, trends and the transport implications of future changes within the town centre.  The report goes on to recommend how transport improvements could be implemented in order to support the emerging regeneration strategy.

## Introduction

Radcliffe town centre is located within the Borough of Bury, approximately 3 miles southwest of Bury Town Centre, 5 miles southeast of Bolton centre and 7 miles northwest of Manchester City Centre. The strategic importance of the Radcliffe Bridge crossing of the Irwell, which gave rise to the early growth of the town centre, is still significant in transport terms today.  Development in the latter part of the last century of large residential areas to the north and west of the town centre resulted in increasing volumes of commuter traffic through the town and across the only available river crossing to the city centre and the motorway network, resulting in regular severe congestion at peak periods.
Proposals to provide for these traffic demands by means of major highway construction through the Irwell valley were abandoned in the 1970s, and congestion problems were addressed instead by the development of a smaller scale local by-pass of the town centre.
Of equal if not greater significance historically has been the development of the railway link between Bury and Manchester. The former electrified commuter service into Manchester Victoria Station was converted in the early 1990s to the Metrolink light rail system, which now provides a frequent service between Bury and, via on street running, into and through the centre of Manchester to Altrincham. The map in plan 16 (next page) shows the existing overall transport network.
The town centre itself is compact and pedestrianisation of the central shopping street has allowed the development of a reasonably safe and convenient pedestrian circulation system in the central area. The bus station is located immediately adjacent to the town centre and the Metrolink Station located approximately 500 m to the east of the main shopping area. The town centre provides adequate free parking




**Plan 16:** Transport within Greater Manchester

for both short and long stay users. The analysis of the operation and future development of the transport system in the town centre has focussed on the following five key issues:

- The by-pass and the associated pedestrianisation of the town centre
- Walking and accessibility
- The bus station and the bus routes through the town centre
- Metrolink – particularly the links between the Metrolink station and the town centre
- Car parking quantity and quality

Each of these issues has been investigated and is reviewed in the following sections of this report.

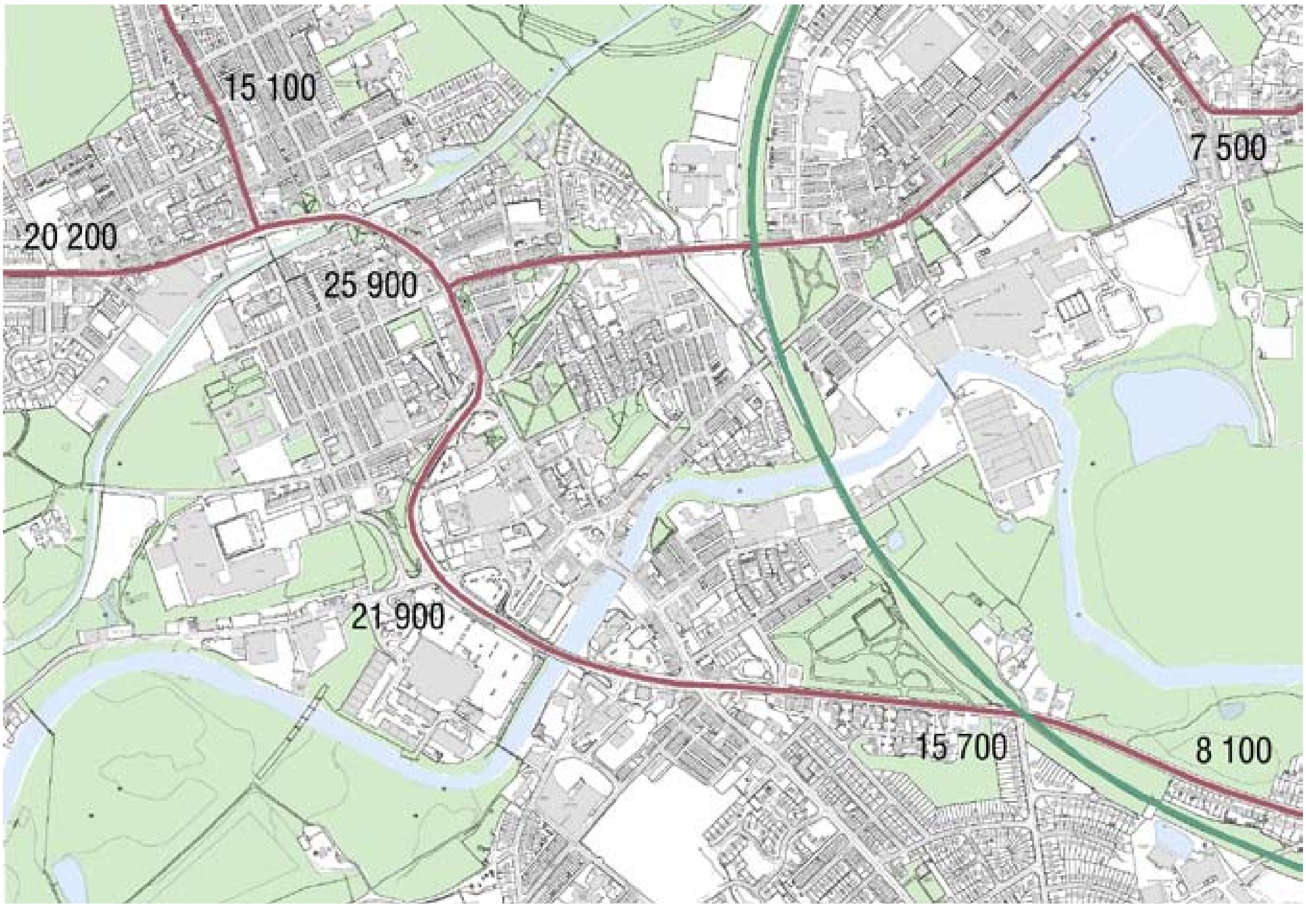
## The by-pass

Construction of the A665 Pilkington Way by-pass has relieved congestion on Blackburn Street through the main shopping area of the town, resulting in a reduction in pollution and an improvement in the safety and environmental quality of the area for pedestrians. Pilkington Way passes to the west of the town centre from the Water Street / Spring Lane / Abden Street junction to the Stand Lane / Radcliffe New Road junction. Pedestrianisation of part of Blackburn Street, from the junction with Railway Street and Dale Street, has also been introduced in order to prevent traffic travelling through the main shopping area and improve conditions for pedestrians. The by-pass has allowed (and to an extent encouraged) traffic to travel through Inner Radcliffe, from Manchester, Bolton and Bury, while avoiding the main shopping area. Plan 17 illustrates existing traffic flows on the main routes within the town.

Recent observations and reports show that congestion continues to occur at the Water Street / Spring Lane / Abden Street junction and on Blackburn Street but, on the whole, the by-pass has reduced delays and improved journey times for vehicles travelling through the area and has helped to attract development such as the Asda store and McDonalds restaurant to the west side of the town.

There are, however, some problems associated with the by-pass, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. Despite good quality pedestrian crossings at major junctions across Pilkington Way, in the form of at-grade and subway facilities, there are severance problems that exist for pedestrians and cyclists. There is an apparent reluctance for visitors to the Asda store to cross Pilkington Way to visit the town centre shops – although the crossings seem to be well used by bus passengers wishing to visit Asda. Plan 18 illustrates the results of a pedestrian survey, conducted on 8th May 2003, which shows how pedestrian movements are currently distributed between the various crossing points.

There is also a perception that the centre of the town has become less accessible and less apparent to car drivers. The combination of the by-pass alignment, junction design, signage and the pedestrianisation of a section of Blackburn Street directs traffic around and away from the town centre, causing difficulties for car users whose journey purpose is to use facilities within Radcliffe itself and discouraging casual visitors. In order to address these problems, the possibility of allowing some traffic to travel through the town centre retail area has been considered. One way in which this could be achieved would be by reopening the whole of Blackburn Street to traffic by removing the pedestrianised area or allowing its use for some classes of traffic. The crucial issue is whether this can be achieved in an acceptable manner, which does not lose the benefits to the




**Plan 17:** traffic flow in inner Radcliffe

town centre environment, which the present arrangements have brought about.

Like many town centre by-pass schemes, Pilkington Way provides a longer route for through vehicles than the old route, Blackburn Street / Stand Lane, which it now replaces. Its success in attracting traffic away from the town centre is at the moment guaranteed, because the pedestrianisation scheme on Blackburn Street has removed the option of using the old route. A possible re-opening of Blackburn Street should aim to preserve as far as possible the benefits to the town centre the by-pass has brought. A number of alternative strategies would therefore need to be considered, including the following:

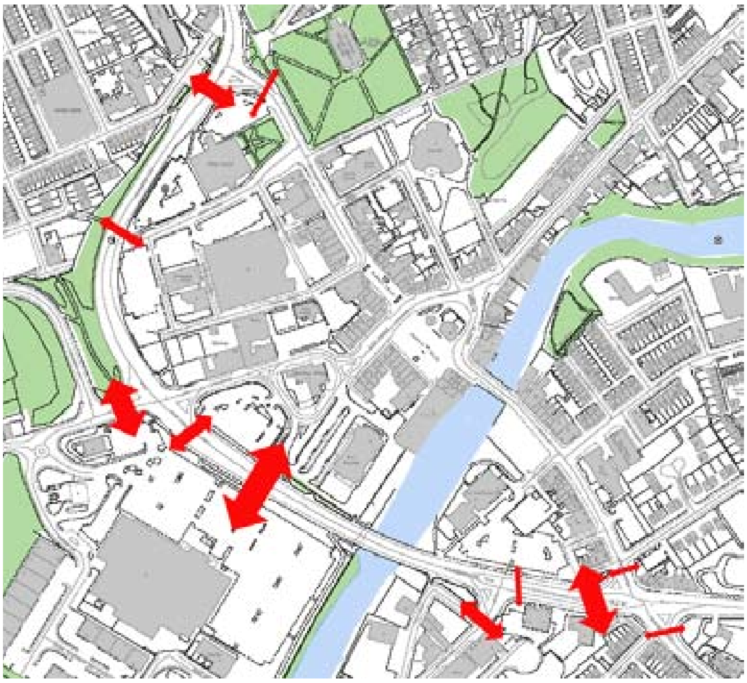
- Re-opening to certain classes of vehicle only, e.g. buses, taxis, cyclists
- Re-opening at certain times of day only (e.g. off-peak periods)
- Re-opening to certain user types (e.g. access only)
- Controlling journey times along the re-opened route to ensure the attractiveness of the by-pass
- A combination of the above

Following adoption of a chosen strategy, a detailed design programme of implementation measures will need to be undertaken. The elements of this programme will vary, depending on which strategy or combination of strategies is adopted, but the following measures will need to be considered:

- In order to allow car users to make an appropriate choice of route, depending on their journey purpose, some junction redesign measures may be required, especially for the Water Street / Spring Lane / Abden Street junction, the Strand Lane / Radcliffe New Road junction and at the Blackburn Street / Pilkington Way junction.
- A review of signage on routes approaching Radcliffe town centre would need to be undertaken in order direct traffic destined for the town centre clearly along Blackburn Street / Spring Lane whilst traffic passing through would continue to be directed along Pilkington Way.
- Re-opening of Blackburn Street to traffic would have a significant impact on pedestrian and cycling accessibility in the town centre. It would be important to determine how Blackburn Street can be reopened to traffic without causing safety, accessibility and environmental problems for walkers and cyclists. Further pedestrian facilities may be necessary across Blackburn Street to promote walking within the

town centre. Consideration of specific walking routes, such as those for school children walking to and from school would help to accommodate special pedestrian cases.

- In order to determine the exact type, location and feasibility of measures required and the potential effect of re-development proposals on the design, more detailed survey information and analysis will be necessary, especially in terms of congestion and safety.



**Plan 18:** pedestrian movements along Pilkington Way

## Metrolink

The Metrolink Station is an important facility for the town, allowing easy access to and from Bury, Manchester and the rest of the Metrolink network. Tram services to the Metrolink station at Radcliffe Station 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). A comparison of rail (pre-1992) and Metrolink patronage at Radcliffe is shown in Plan 19. There is a perception that the development of Metrolink has helped the residents of Radcliffe to access employment and facilities in other parts of the conurbation, but has not necessarily helped to attract visitors to Radcliffe to make use of the town. Plan 19 illustrates that, although there has been growth in passenger use of Radcliffe station, this has been built on an already substantial pre-existing passenger demand. The increases in Radcliffe boarding figures from 1990 (the last full recorded year of heavy rail operation) and 2001 were from just under 500 to just under 600 in the morning peak period and from about 150 to just over 200 in the off peak period. Over the next decade, the existing Metrolink network, consisting of the Bury to Altrincham and Manchester to Eccles lines to date, is to be expanded across Greater Manchester with the creation of the Oldham to Rochdale, East Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne and South Manchester and Manchester Airport lines. This expansion will increase the opportunity for new arrivals at Radcliffe station but it will also increase the accessibility of other towns in the Greater Manchester area for commuting residents.

Analysis of survey data from the year 2000 demonstrated that the park-and-ride facility at the Metrolink station is very well used, especially by Metrolink users wishing to commute into Manchester City Centre and Bury. A high proportion of parking spaces are taken by commuters from other parts of the Bury Borough and the car park generally fills up quickly in the

| Mode of Transport | Percentage using Radcliffe Metrolink Station (%) |
|---|---|
| Car | 53 |
| Pedestrians | 37 |
| Bus | 7 |
| Taxi | 2 |
| Other | 1 |

morning and is usually close to full by 8.30 am on most weekdays. Data from the GMPTE shows the current modal split of Metrolink users at Radcliffe Station above.

Improvements in links between the existing bus network and the Metrolink station have been considered in order to improve integration between the two modes of transport. Options include the addition of a bus stop close to the Metrolink station and changes to some existing bus routes to allow transfer between both modes, especially for passengers from areas such as Bolton, to allow them greater access to the Metrolink network. Further details of proposed bus route options are discussed in the following sections.
Pedestrian access to the station is generally good but access problems exist to the east of the station, which is particularly relevant in the context of the proposed redevelopment of the East Lancashire Paper Mill site. Options to improve Metrolink Station accessibility for pedestrians involve the addition of a walkway directly from the station down to the park area below. To improve conditions for cyclists at the station, cycling storage facilities could be introduced at the station. Further details of pedestrian and cycle accessibility are discussed in the section walking and cycling in this chapter.
Further improvements are possible to improve the general appearance of the Metrolink facility and areas of the town visible from trams entering and exiting the station. Any regeneration of Inner Radcliffe can be supported and reinforced using advertising and marketing initiatives on the trams themselves.

## Buses

The bus station is very accessible from the main shopping area and is linked to retail development, such as Asda, on the other side of the Pilkington Way by-pass with pedestrian facilities available. It is essential for bus stops to remain easily accessible to the town centre (focussed on the Blackburn Street / Church Street West / Stand Lane junction), to the Metrolink station and to the east side of the by-pass.

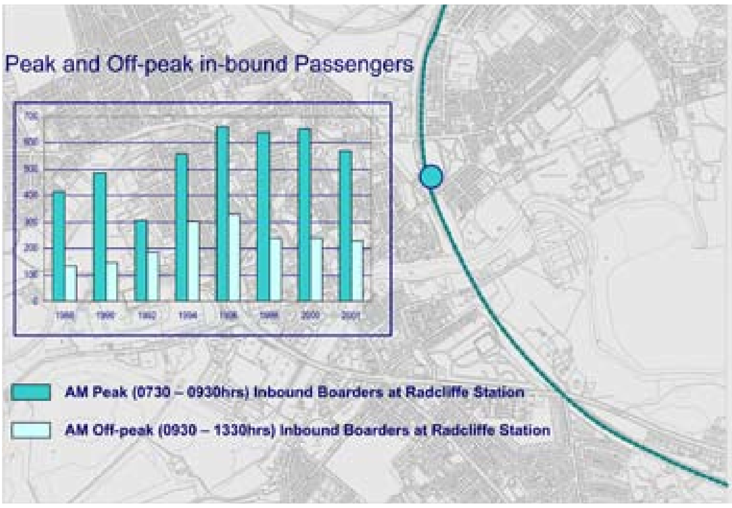
However, the suitability of the existing bus station location and layout is questionable, not least because none of the bus services currently using it actually terminates at Radcliffe. Amendments to the bus station and to bus routing through the town centre have therefore been considered, especially in view of a possible revision to the pedestrianisation of Blackburn Street referred to earlier. It is very important that any changes in bus facilities retain the existing capacity and a degree of additional capacity to provide the potential for future growth. Plans 20 and 21 show existing and proposed bus route networks through the town. The proposed option involves replacing the existing bus terminal with modern, high quality bus stop sites, in the town centre and at the Metrolink station, with a route developed for buses through the existing Metrolink car park, improving visibility and accessibility of buses and improving transport connections between the Metrolink station and the town centre. Although a small number of car park spaces would be lost at the station, these would be partially offset by the development of alternative additional parking facilities by the PTE at Whitefield and Bury.

Any future bus facilities and routes need to serve future development proposals, with bus stops and routes located close to future development initiatives. In some cases, further work is required to improve bus accessibility. In other cases, such as at the Coney Green site and Town centre sites, bus and/or tram facilities are already located close by. Subject to a more detailed feasibility assessment, design and consultation with operators it should be feasible to produce a redesigned facility, which retains adequate capacity. Any alterations to bus facilities will need to be implemented in partnership with key users from schools and large workplaces within the town.

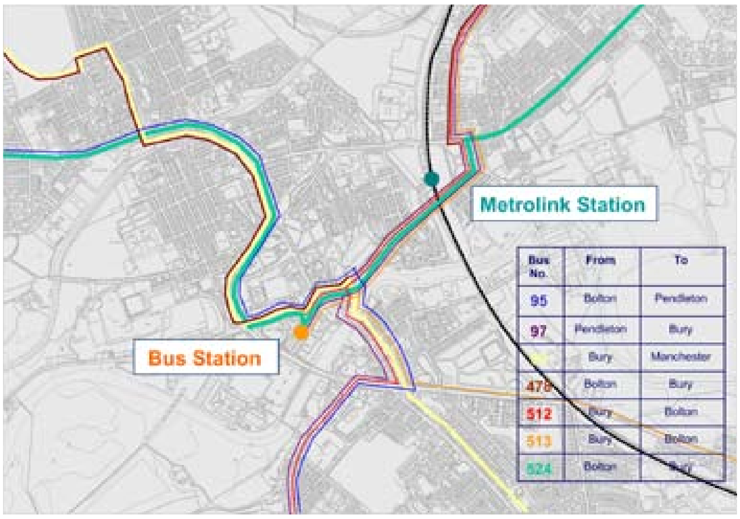
## Walking and Cycling

**Walking facilities** - Walking facilities within the town centre and surrounding areas are generally of a good standard but further improvements will be necessary to make any proposed development as accessible as possible by pedestrians and cyclists. There are a number of elements within the Inner Radcliffe area that form barriers or cause delay to pedestrians and cyclists. The main problems of severance within the town are:

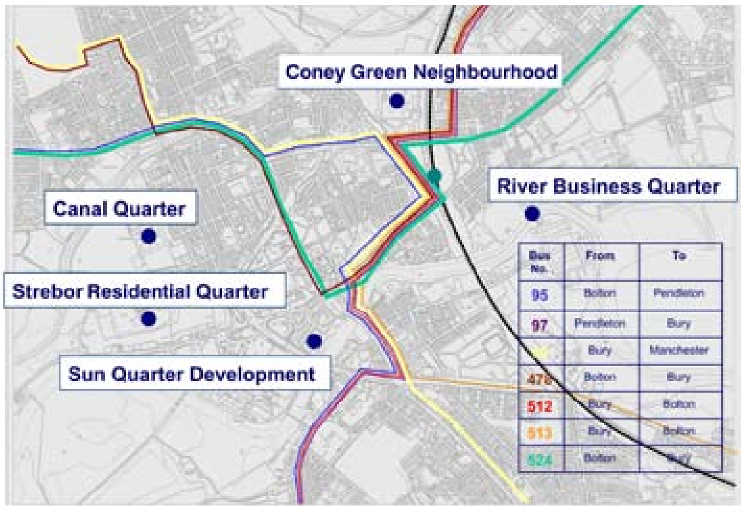
- The Pilkington Way by-pass
- The River Irwell and Canal
- The Metrolink line



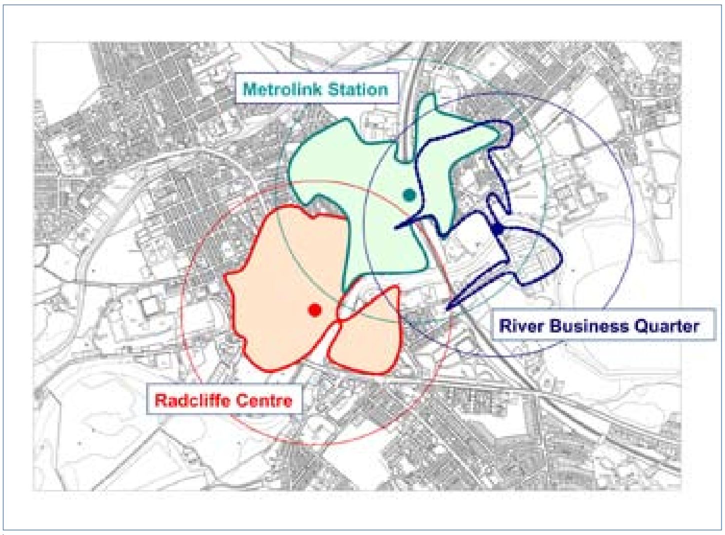

Plan 19: Traffic flow in inner Radcliffe



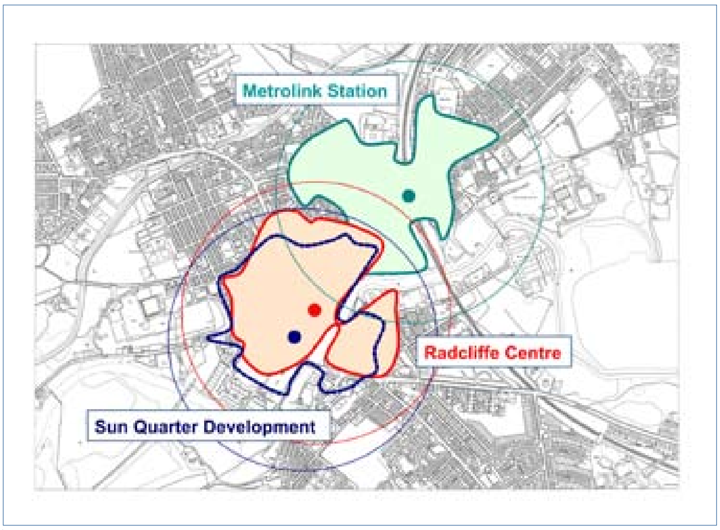

Plan 20: Existing local bus frequencies



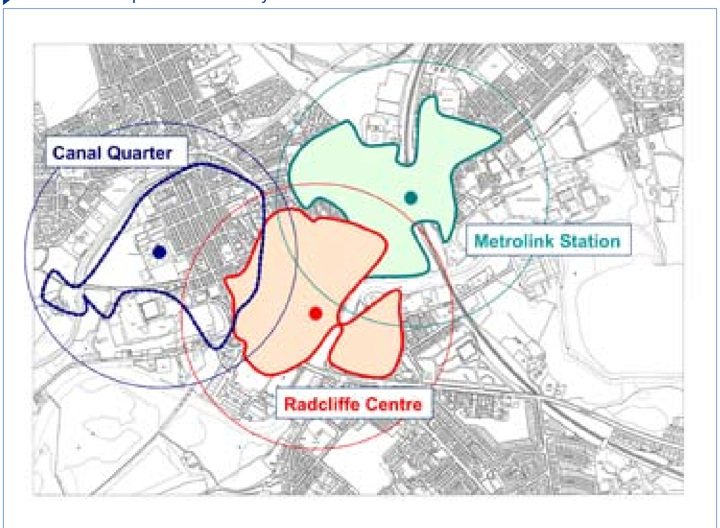

Plan 21: Future bus route option




▶ **Plan 22:** River Business quarter accessibility




▶ **Plan 23:** SUN quarter accessibility




▶ **Plan 24:** Canal quarter accessibility

Further severance issues exist where areas of housing development or industry have no through access and so have to be circumnavigated.

In Plans 22 to 27 walking isochrones have been used to analyse and represent the area of catchment for key sites within the Radcliffe area (such as the Metrolink Station and main shopping area) and the proposed developments within this document. The process used to form the isochrones for each case has been described in the Isochrone methodology at the end of this chapter.
The proposed alterations below have been chosen to demonstrate how improvements can be made to accessibility of the facilities within the town centre, especially in relation to the proposed future sites designated for development.

Walking Accessibility Improvements include (all subject to design scrutiny):

- Metrolink East Access Walkway to support East Lancs Paper/ Pioneer Mill sites

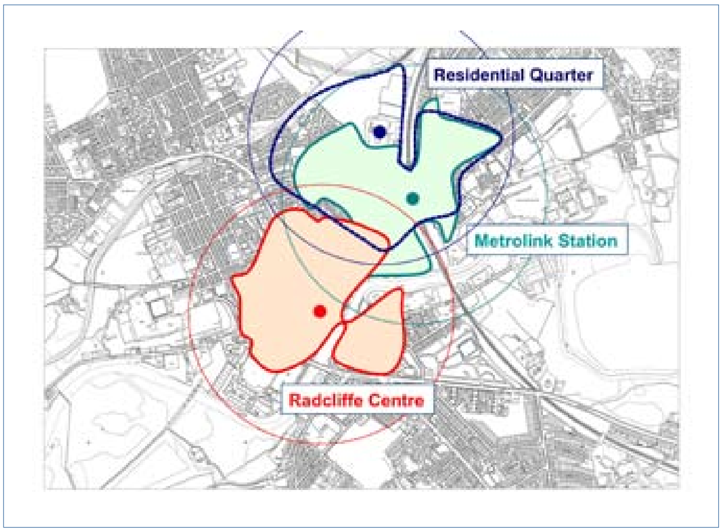
- Bridge across river connecting Milltown Street to Church Street West at Radcliffe Times Building to support Pioneer Mill, supplemented by access along river, connecting mill areas with Radcliffe Bridge

- Connection of New Church Street / Crook Street etc to connect Radcliffe town centre to Metrolink Station and Radcliffe school pedestrian movements from Hindle Street across the bridge to Green Street / to New Church Street / to Crook Street / to the Metrolink station

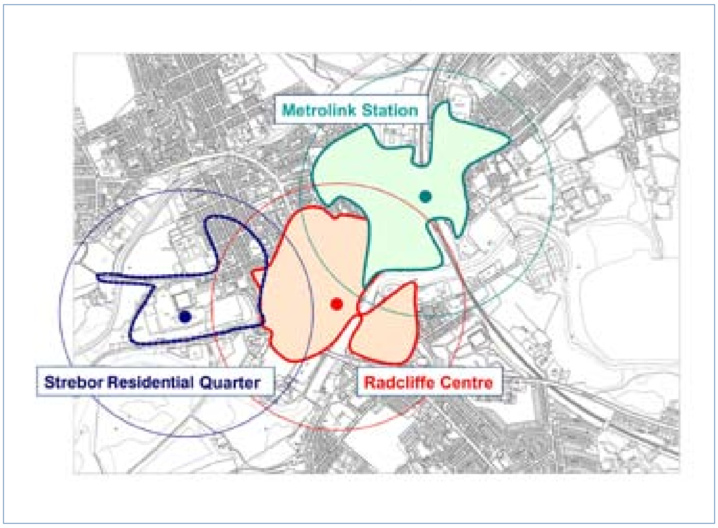
- Improve pedestrian facilities at Water Street/Spring Lane incorporating the traffic improvements at the junction to restrict traffic from Abden Street

- Accessibility improvements across Pilkington Way, between Dale Street and Blackburn Street

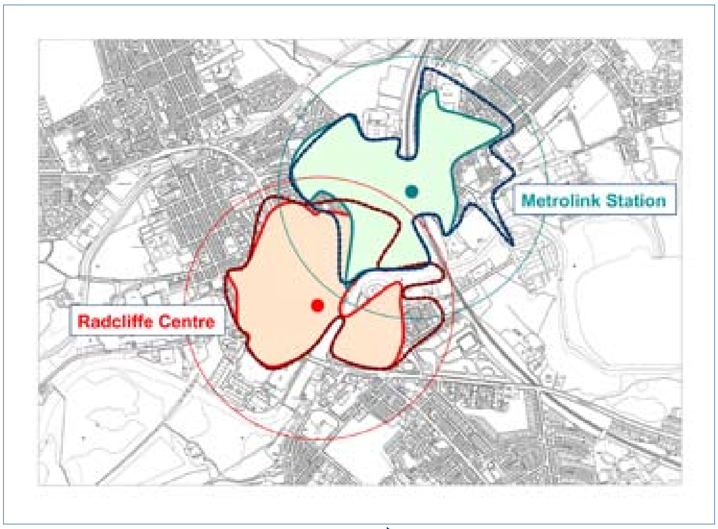
The effects of re-routing traffic down Blackburn Street, through the main shopping area will need to be designed and monitored carefully in order to make sure safety, accessibility and environmental conditions do not become hazardous for the pedestrian and cyclist user. In some cases, it is important to cater for specific walking journeys through the town due to the frequency of use. This is the case for both Coney Green High School and Radcliffe High School where pupils during certain periods of the day may need




**Plan 25:** Education quarter accessibility




**Plan 26:** Strebor employment quarter accessibility




**Plan 27:** Future walking accessibility option

further facilities to assist in walking to other areas of the town.

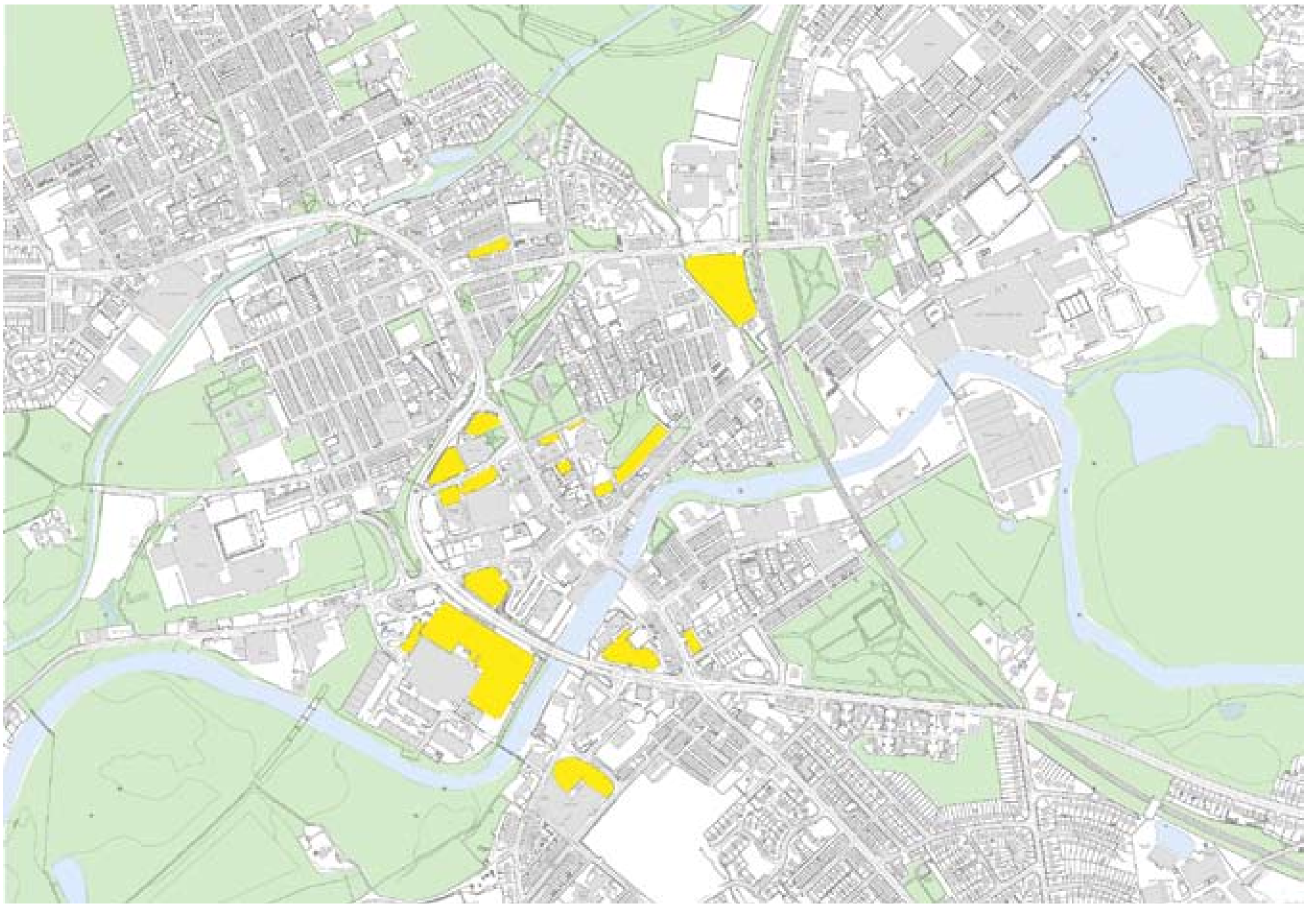
**Cycle facilities** - Cycle lanes are required to connect up cycle routes that already exist within the Inner Radcliffe area. Cycle lanes already exist in certain parts of the town centre itself but further work is necessary to form a cycle network through the town. This cycle network could be integrated with existing transport facilities, with, for example, the introduction of cycle storage facilities at the Metrolink station.

## River and Canal Facilities

The existing relationship between the town's urban fabric and the many bodies of water surrounding it is poor. The Canal and River Irwell run close to the Inner Radcliffe area, and reservoirs exist at Cross Lane but in most cases, buildings back onto either side of the canal and river. There is great potential to develop a number of sites adjacent to these areas for leisure and mixed use purposes. British Waterways Board is currently promoting a plan to reinstate the canal from Manchester, to Bury including a stretch passing through the town centre.

## Parking

Car parking facilities throughout the town are plentiful and no charging exists at present in the Radcliffe area. Over 650 off street public car park spaces exist in the town centre with adequate short-term on street parking also available. The parking stock varies considerably in terms of size, quality, accessibility and conditions of use but it is evident that a degree of spare capacity exists. There are opportunities for development on some of the existing car-parking sites and it is likely that the total off-street parking stock could be reduced without affecting



**Plan 28:** Town centre car parks

the economic viability of the town centre. The future development and expansion of the centre may increase demand for car parking but it would be possible to introduce some controls over the use of a more limited car park provision in order to give priority to short stay users. In order to properly assess car parking availability throughout the town centre, a detailed analysis of the usage all existing car parks would be needed in order to determine how their location, size and design can best support development. As part of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, Bury Council wish to support sustainable development in town centres by promoting short stay parking in town centres and long stay parking on the periphery.

The park-and-ride facility adjacent to the Metrolink station holds approximately 260 spaces, including 14 disabled spaces and an area designated for motorbikes. Many commuters travel from other parts of Bury and Bolton but few enter Radcliffe Town Centre. There are plans to introduce new or improve existing park and ride facilities at the Bury, Whitefield and Prestwich Metrolink stops and this may reduce use at the Radcliffe facility. If car park demand increases it may be possible to increase the capacity of park-and-ride facilities at the Metrolink station on the Coney Green High school site.

## Transport Assessment of Development Options

The location, density and nature of proposed development within Inner Radcliffe can cause traffic and passenger levels to increase on the existing road network and public transport links. In some development cases it may be necessary to make improvements in order to cater for development transport demand. Whatever development proposals are implemented it is important to try and promote use of public transport facilities to and from them, and in Radcliffe the Metrolink line and bus facilities provide a good base for new workers and residents to use. It is necessary that the road network is able to support additional traffic levels generated from future development both in terms of capacity and design, but care should be taken to ensure that additional road capacity does not cause severance to any part of the community. Severance issues already exist in the town due to the size and configuration of Pilkington Way. As a consequence, any development on the west side of Pilkington Way will need to be supported by improved connections to the town centre across Pilkington Way, especially for walking and cycling. Developments of all types need access to other areas around Radcliffe such as Bury, Prestwich, Manchester and beyond (by both public transport and road/motorway) but in order to support Radcliffe itself, it is important to create specific links from any proposed developments to the town centre and to facilities within it such as the main retail area, market and Metrolink Station. The closer development is positioned to the town centre the greater chance there is of people using these facilities. Other existing and proposed developments in order to retain the character of existing neighbourhoods and emphasise the character of any proposed. The design of transport networks and facilities within any proposed development can determine how accessible a development is. It is necessary to design all developments to allow easy movement through in order to promote accessibility and make the area in question safer and more likely to support future retail based development. Careful design of roads and car parking facilities can also help to reduce traffic intrusion in sensitive areas and promote walking and cycling. General improvements to the traffic and public transport facilities in order to serve the area as a whole are discussed in chapter 10 but more specific improvements may be necessary as a consequence of each individual proposed development as discussed below:

**Coney Green Neighbourhood** - Road access to this site exists from Spring Lane, which has good connections to the main road network in Bury but suffers from localised congestion problems during peak times. Further capacity improvements may be necessary to cope with further development traffic. This site has the advantage of being close to the Metrolink station but accessibility could be further improved with the addition of better pedestrian facilities across Spring Lane. Good connections can be achieved to the adjacent neighbourhood around Whittaker Street and the town centre by car and foot. It may also be possible to incorporate proposals for the Bury Metro composite cycle route network into the design of facilities on the Coney Green site.

**East Lancashire Paper Mill** - This would respresent a large development with sizeable increases in traffic expected from residential and school run sources. It is especially important in this case to promote the use of public transport with the possible inclusion of nearby bus stop facilities supporting the development.
Walking access between the proposed school site and Metrolink will need to be improved with special consideration made for the large groups of school pupils expected in the mornings and early afternoon. Proposed walkway improvements to Metrolink from the east of the station will help with access to the station and the town centre.

**Pioneer Mill Improvements** - Road connections between the Pioneer Mill site and areas of Radcliffe to the south of the river are good but severance issue exist with the town centre to the north of the river. A potential new road bridge connecting the site to the town centre will improve accessibility between both sides of the river. Accessibility to the Metrolink station is good but further improvements are necessary to improve links between the site and the local bus network and facilities.

**Radcliffe Neighbourhood** - Good road connections exist with Pilkington Way leading to areas outside of Radcliffe but the canal disconnects the existing road network serving the development from the north-west areas of the town. Proposals to build a link over the canal should help to integrate this area into the community as a whole. The proposed Radcliffe Neighbourhood is further away from the commercial town centre than the other proposed developments and Pilkington Way acts as a barrier between the development and the town centre, Metrolink station and other facilities. Public Transport facilities will need to be improved in order to serve this particular site and improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities will help to improve links across Pilkington Way to the town centre.

**Town Centre Development** - Due to the proximity of these developments to the town centre the neighbourhood benefits from all the facilities such as the Metrolink, bus facilities and retail areas.
Walking and cycling facilities can be improved, especially for the St. Thomas Neighbourhood scheme, by allowing access through development sites close to the town centre to other facilities such as the Metrolink station and proposed bus facilities.

## Isochrone Methodology

- Accessibility by walking and cycling has been tested using techniques taken from the research paper produced by the Scottish Executive Central Research Unit entitled Accessibility: review of measuring techniques and their application.

- Origin and destination accessibility has been measured for existing key sites and proposed developments within the inner Radcliffe area based on 'an average persons ability to walk a 'normal walking distance' along a particular route'.

- Radcliffe is a compact town and designated development sites have been located close to the town centre itself. In order to analyse the accessibility of existing facilities in relation to any future possible development sites, catchment areas representing an area within 5 minutes normal walking distance of a particular site have been established. Local knowledge of the walking conditions including gradient and general ease of use have been used to produce a realistic model of pedestrian movement in the town.

- Once existing walking accessibility conditions have been tested it has been possible to test how and where improvements to walking facilities within the Inner Radcliffe area can be made to improve accessibility to proposed developments as well as the area as a whole.

# 8. SWOT Analysis

In which we bring together the analysis in the first four sections of this report and the consultations that we have undertaken to suggest a vision for the future of Radcliffe. This is set out initially in an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing Radcliffe before reviewing the results of the round table workshop.

From the analysis that we have undertaken we have developed an assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing Radcliffe as set out below:

## Strengths

It is clear from our analysis that Radcliffe, despite all of the hard times, has a number of very real strengths that can be uses as the basis for regeneration:

- **Mix of uses in the town centre:** Despite the decline of the town centre, it retains a full mix of uses including shops, the market, the church and Civic Centre as well as a range of other facilities. It therefore retains the bones of a 'proper' town centre, which is something that we can build upon as part of the strategy.

- **Proximity to Manchester and the countryside:** In many respects the location of Radcliffe is ideal. Manchester City Centre is just 20 minutes away and the airport, Trafford Centre and other regional facilities are within easy reach by motorway and soon by Metrolink. Yet at the same time Radcliffe is set within countryside - which extends into the heart of the town. It is also within easy reach of the hills and moors to the north and east of Manchester and therefore has the best of both worlds.

- **Metrolink service and motorway access:** The Metrolink service and the proximity of the M60 give Radcliffe excellent accessibility. The extension of the Metrolink system will increase this accessibility although it will mean that other towns also benefit from a Metrolink connection.

- **Good local employers, interested in expansion:** While the closure of the paper mills has undermined the employment base of the town, there remains a number of very good employers in the town such as Trumeter who serve an international market in precision measuring equipment. $O^2$ are also based near the town and there are a number of strong manufacturing firms in the area to the west of Asda. There is also a good level of demand for small scale manufacturing uses and the potential to attract new employment into the town.

- **Distinctive neighbourhoods:** As described in Part 3, there are a number of strong and distinctive neighbourhoods around the town centre. This is particularly true of the housing areas around Radcliffe High School in the west of the town and to the north of Cross Lane (despite its current difficulties).

- **Craft fair and carnival:** The craft fair and carnival that take place in the town every summer are evidence of a strong community spirit and the willingness of traders to get involved in the town. The craft fair in Septem-

ber 2003 attracted more than a thousand people into the town and helped to demonstrate its potential.

- **History and heritage:** Radcliffe is a historic town dating back to Roman times. While the evidence of this history is limited, there is the potential to emphasise this past as part of the reinvention of the town.

- **Topography:** The view of Radcliffe from its approaches is of a town nestling in a valley around a bridge over the river and overlooked by a church. This historic form is potentially very attractive as a model for the renaissance of the town.

## Weaknesses

It is, however, important to recognise the weaknesses of the town and the challenges that it must face:

- **Collapse of manufacturing:** Stemming from the collapse of the manufacturing base as a result of the closure of the paper mills and Allen's Green Works. These closures are recent and the scars are still fresh.

- **Decline of the retail centre:** The town centre has also collapsed when compared to its former role as a market town. While there are a number of strong independent retailers, the town centre as a whole is barely viable as a retail location. This is partly due to the loss of thousands of jobs near to the town centre (these workers would have potentially used the centre). It is also due to national changes in retailing and increasing mobility so that people can more easily get to better shopping centres in the wider area.

- **Areas of derelict and vacant land:** These changes have left scars in the form of vacant and derelict land around the centre. The worst dereliction of the past was the Outwood Colliery and this has been successfully reclaimed to form Outwood Forest Park. However, the Allen's Green site and the East Lancashire Paper Mill are currently prominent vacant sites giving the centre a neglected feel.

- **Moribund market:** While there have been some recent improvements the market in Radcliffe is generally in a poor state. The comparison with Bury market is particularly striking. The market suffers from the overall decline of the town centre and the declining number of customers. However, it is not helped by the unattractive market building and the poor position of the market entrance. This has created a spiral of decline as traders leave and the attraction of the market is further eroded.

- **The by-pass:** While the by-pass has undoubtedly alleviated traffic problems in the main shopping area of the town centre it has consequently damaged the economic performance of the centre. Strong town centres tend to benefit from the removal of through traffic but for weak centres it leads to a further loss of trade as shops lose passing trade and visibility. The by-pass also creates a physical barrier between Asda (which is attracting customers) and the town centre.

- **Weak but improving schools:** The Council has undertaken a survey of pupils at Radcliffe High and Coney Green High Schools during this study. It is clear that the schools are very committed and are improving. It is, however, undeniable that they are the two weakest schools in Bury (which generally performs very well in terms of education). The outside perception of the Radcliffe schools is poor and this is a major weakness in the regeneration of the town.

- **Very weak commercial demand and values:** As described in Part 5, King Sturge have shown that demand from developers of commercial leisure, offices and retailing is very weak in Radcliffe. There is, therefore, little demand to develop new buildings other than industrial use or to improve the exiting premises.

## Opportunities

Despite these problems there are- some very important opportunities to transform Radcliffe:

- **The Irwell Sculpture Trail:** The sculpture trial along the Irwell valley is a maturing opportunity. It now includes some 40 pieces of work and therefore is an important collection albeit not with the profile of the Grisedale or Forest of Dean sculpture trails. Previously the four authorities that collaborated on the trail could not agree on which of them should host the centre for the trail. Now that this collaboration has come to an end there is an opportunity for the visitor and interpretation centre for the trail to be located in Radcliffe.

- **The Ruckreim Collection:** A component of the Irwell Sculpture Trail is a significant body of work by the world-renown German sculpture Ulrich Ruckreim and this offers an opportunity to add to this attraction. These minimalist sculptures may not have huge popular appeal but they are of world significance and a Ruckreim galley would really put Radcliffe on the map. There is the opportunity of a further donation of Ruckreim work if this becomes a reality. This has been pursued by Bury Council through the Market Museum project. This proposal is for a new building by John Pawson to house the Ruckreim collection as well as the market and the museum.

- **John Pawson's interest in the town:** The combination of Ruckreim's interest and the enthusiasm of Bury Council have persuaded the world-renown minimalist architect John Pawson to devote a considerable amount of time to Radcliffe. As

well as proposals for the Market Museum project, and has also drawn up masterplanning proposals for the heart of the town centre.

- **CITE's proposal to locate in the town:** CITE (Commissions in the Environment) grew out of the partnership responsible for the Irwell Sculpture Trail and are now an independent organisation. As described above, they are exploring the possibility of locating their offices in the former Radcliffe Times building along with studio space for artists.

- **The potential for waterside uses:** Now that the polluting industry has gone, the water quality of the River Irwell has improved significantly and has the potential to establish itself as an attractive river - at least as it runs through Radcliffe. A number of potential development sites can therefore exploit attractive riverside locations. Unfortunately Radcliffe tends to turn its back onto the river with riverside buildings, for example on Church Street West and Milltown Street backing onto and blocking views of the water.

- **The reopening of the canal:** The same is true of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal, that runs to the north of Radcliffe town centre, which, even now, is an attractive water feature. However, the proposals by British Waterways to reopen the canal create real opportunities to develop canal side uses and to encourage visitors to Radcliffe.

- **The school project:** The Council is currently working on a project to transform the two Secondary schools in Radcliffe. The proposal is to consolidate the two existing schools into an entirely new building and to relaunch the school, on a different site. This type of re-launch has not always worked in the past when the conditions that created the problems in the schools have not been addressed. However, as part of the overall reinvention of Radcliffe it has the potential to overcome the currently weak image of the schools.

- **Major development opportunities:** While the industrial closures have been harmful to the town, they have also created some important development opportunities. The biggest of these is the East Lancashire Paper Mill site but there is also the Allen's Green Works site, the remainder of the Radcliffe Paper Mill site and potentially vacant school sites. It is unfortunate that the appeal on the Allen's Green Works site has now been lost and this will be developed for standard housing as we saw this as an opportunity to ensure a developement scheme of good quality and distinctive design. This makes it all the more important that the other sites and in particular the East Lancashire Paper mill site are used carefully as part of the reinvention of the town (rather than being lost to characterless housing development).

- **Strong interest from housing developers:** The key to unlocking these development sites is the interest in developing new housing in Radcliffe. This is a consequence of concentrating development within the urban area and resisting the release of peripheral open land for housing. In addition the strong housing market in North Manchester and particularly in the Borough has led to significant levels of residential development in recent years. This housing demand including apartment living is now working its way up north along the Metrolink line and spilling over into Radcliffe. While the quality of some of the early schemes was not particularly good there is a growing interest in more urban housing that could help to repopulate Radcliffe.

## Threats

There are a number of opportunities that we can exploit in developing a new vision for Radcliffe. However, there are also threats that we must face up to:

- **Improvements to neighbouring centres:** Most of the centres surrounding Radcliffe are improving. Major development is planned within Bury town centre and this will inevitably become a stronger draw further undermining Radcliffe's position. It is, therefore, increasingly unlikely that Radcliffe will ever compete again as a significant retail centre.

- **Loss of employment:** There is a real danger that the remaining employment base of the town will be lost. This is mainly due to current Government policy that seeks to concentrate development within the existing urban area and the growth in residential land values, both of which are causing residential developers to seek consent to build on employment sites. A residential application on the Allen's Green Works site has been approved following an appeal during the course of this study. There is also residential developer interest on many of the other employment sites in the town, including, of course the East Lancashire Paper Mill.

- **Physical deterioration of the town centre:** One of the problems with weak retail and service sector interest is that the values do not justify investment in the buildings of the town. This is the view of London and Associates who own a large part of the shopping centre and this also appears to be the case with Kwik Save. The result is the gradual physical deterioration of the centre.

- **Expansion of Asda:** The Asda supermarket could have consolidated the town by bringing more shoppers into the centre. However, the town centre does not provide sufficient attractions to draw people across the by-pass. The threat is that the Asda expands further by, for example, providing a pharmacy, post office or expanding its non-food ranges. This would further threaten shops in the town centre.

- **Doing nothing:** It is clear from our analysis that doing nothing is not an option. If current trends continue there is a danger that Radcliffe will decline to the point that the town centre dies.

## Stakeholder consultations

As part of the study we have talked to a range of people and attended meetings of the Traders Association. We also organised a round table workshop in the Civic Suite on 20th May 2003, which was attended by more than 70 people with an interest in the town. As part of the consultations and particularly at the workshop we discussed the current strengths and weaknesses of Radcliffe and talked about a possible vision for the town. The full write up of the workshop is included as Appendix 1 and below we summarise the main points.

## What people value about Radcliffe

People at the workshop came up with a long list of things that they valued about Radcliffe:

- The fact that it is a distinctive town with a strong sense of community and belonging. While it is part of Greater Manchester it has retained its independence, identity and a strong sense of community.
- The range of facilities offered by the town centre including the skate park, the leisure centre and the library.
- The good connections by road and tram and the ease of parking in the town centre.
- The proximity to the Irwell Sculpture Trail.
- The distinctive buildings of the town. While the urban design analysis in chapter 4 suggested that there were few buildings of distinction those that exist are valued.
- The ease of getting to the surrounding countryside and the Outwood Forest Park.
- The quality of local neighbourhoods.
- The availability of affordable housing.
- The opportunities for employers.

## What people dislike about Radcliffe

The list of gripes that people had about Radcliffe was equally long and included the following:

- The town has a very poor image, particularly within Bury. People in Radcliffe feel that the Borough looks down on them.
- More important in some respects is the fact that Radcliffe people have a poor self-image and lack confidence in themselves and the town. This is not surprising given the recent knocks that the town has taken.
- The vacant sites around the centre and the poor quality of buildings, particularly on Church Street West.
- The failing town centre and the impact of Asda that is seen to have diverted trade from the

centre rather than brought new customers in.

- The current state of the market that is seen to be a shadow of its former self and is not being managed effectively by the Markets Department.

- Failing neighbourhoods, particularly on Cross Lane.

- The separation of the Metrolink Station from the town centre.

- The barrier created by the by-pass and the fact that it has isolated the town centre.

- The perception that Radcliffe is a dumping ground for the housing department with more than its fair share of social housing.

- The concentration of deprivation in the area and the associated problems of anti-social behaviour, drugs etc.

- The poor performance of local high schools and the generally low level of skills in the local population.

## Radcliffe's potential

Generally the consultees felt great loyalty towards Radcliffe but were positive about its failings. When asked what sort of place Radcliffe was like at the moment the suggestions included other small industrial towns like Ashington, Eccles, Farnworth, Heywood and Westhoughton. However, larger places were also mentioned like Burnley and Ashford as well as more affluent neighbouring towns like Ramsbottom, Whitefield and Prestwich. There was also a suggestion that Radcliffe was like Castlefield in Manchester 15 years ago before its regeneration - which may be a bit harsh but nevertheless highlights its potential.

People were then asked about the type of place that Radcliffe could become. Ramsbottom was mentioned again along with Hebden Bridge, Honiton (Devon), Middleton, Stalybridge, and Skipton. These are all small market towns with an industrial past that have found new roles. People were particularly interested in the model of Hebden Bridge, which was seen to have re-invented itself by attracting people to live there and encouraging visitors by transforming its image. This was seen as the future for Radcliffe.

The workshop, therefore, went on to discuss how these ideas might translate into a vision for Radcliffe. This was set out through answers to the following questions:

Q. **What image will Radcliffe have in the future?**

A. A distinctive riverside neighbourhood known for its arts and festivals. A good place to live with a local centre (rather than a town centre?) containing a fantastic range of facilities. It would thus be seen as a place in its own right rather than a smaller version of Bury.

Q. **Where will people earn their money?**

A. There was an acceptance that people in Radcliffe would commute into Manchester, Bury and other places to work but there was concern that it should not become a dormitory town. Radcliffe should be a place where there are people living and working. Existing jobs should therefore be protected and new jobs created. These new jobs should include small-scale workshops but also jobs in creative industries, leisure and tourism.

Q. **What role will the town centre play?**

A. It was accepted that Radcliffe town centre could never compete with Bolton and Bury - so there is little point trying. New roles need to be created for the town centre, which would include convenience shopping, specialist shops, creative outlets, specialist markets (flea, books etc…) as well as being a focus for pubs and bars and the evening economy. For this to work there is a need for more attractions to bring people into town, more animation (like the craft fair) and more people living locally.

Q. **What should Radcliffe look like?**

A. While people liked the historic roots of Radcliffe they were not overly protective of them. There was a feeling that new development should be designed to the highest quality and should be contemporary and distinctive. The idea of attracting world-class architects like John Pawson to the town was fully endorsed.

Q. **How do we improve liveability?**

A. One of the keys to Radcliffe's recovery is to encourage its existing residents to stay and to attract new residents (and housing developers) into the town. To do this it must focus on how attractive it is to live in Radcliffe. This is partly about housing, the quality of the environment and the facilities in the town centre. However, it is also about issues like crime and crucially education. The workshop therefore fully endorsed what, at the time, were PFI proposals to create a new secondary school on a new site.

Q. **How do we make the centre more accessible?**

A. There was almost unanimous backing at the workshop to reopen Blackburn Street and to bring some traffic back though the town centre. There was real concern about the by-pass and a desire to tame it so that it became more of a friendly street.

The workshop went on to look at a range of specific proposals for parts of the town that we return to in Part 10. However, before that we need to pull these strands together to set out a vision and strategy for Radcliffe, which is what we do in the next section.

# Part 3 - Towards a Vision

# 9. Reinventing Radcliffe

In which we discuss the key issues of liveability and wealth creation that must lie at the heart of a vision for Radcliffe. We suggest a vision based on a distinctive urban neighbourhood and develop this into seven themes including; encouraging new housing, protecting and encouraging jobs, consolidating the town centre, making Radcliffe a centre for the arts, improving links in and around the town, creating a model school and transforming Radcliffe's image.

We have described in this report how Radcliffe grew from a village into a thriving industrial town in the mid 19th century. This was based on collieries, mills and later the paper industry. This employment has now completely disappeared and the new employment that has been attracted into the town is on a much smaller scale. It is, therefore, important to ask - what is the future role for Radcliffe now that the reasons for its growth into a town have disappeared?

It is not going to turn back into the village that it was 200 years ago. There is also little support for it becoming a dormitory suburb for Manchester, although it already plays this role to an extent. We have also concluded that it cannot recapture its heyday as a thriving independent town because times have moved on and it is no longer possible for small towns like Radcliffe to compete against their larger neighbours not to mention regional attractions like Manchester and the Trafford Centre. What then is the future for Radcliffe?

URBED's work on the renaissance of industrial towns suggests that their future depends on two key issues.

- **Liveability:** The most important issue is the quality of life in the town, what is increasingly being called liveability. This is based on a range of issues including the quality of education, levels of crime, local services, cultural facilities, the housing stock and the quality of the environment. Liveable towns retain their existing population and attract people in from outside. Liveable towns are popular, attractive places that also tend to have high business start-up rates. They are also attractive to inward investors, partly because they are good places to be but also because they have a stock of skilled articulate employees.
- **Wealth creation:** The second issue is where people earn their money. Here there are broadly two options. Traditionally in industrial towns people earned their money locally and, as they became more affluent, they tended to live outside the town. In this way industrial towns were great wealth creators but tended to 'export' this wealth. Alternatively suburbs generate very little wealth but attract people who work elsewhere. They are therefore 'importers' of wealth and many grow very rich in this way. Whichever way the wealth is earned, the key to a prosperous town is encouraging people to spend their money locally. In this way the wealth supports local jobs and businesses and is recycled through a number of pockets before leaving the town.

## A vision for Radcliffe

The future for Radcliffe lies in a combination of these approaches - to make itself a more liveable place, to expand its population, to encourage local wealth creation while also appealing to people who work elsewhere in Greater Manchester and to ensure that its town centre attracts local spending so that the money is recycled through the local economy. The model for this approach is the small town of Providence, which is just outside Boston in the US. This, like Radcliffe was once a mill town but saw the closure of its traditional industry. Its approach was to improve the quality of life for its citizens and to attract people who worked in Boston. Initially this strategy led to a huge commuting flow into Boston. However, over time these people started to set up their own businesses in Providence and companies in Boston also started to relocate to the town to be nearer their employees and to reduce costs. After a decade of this the number of people flowing out of Boston are almost as great as those in the other direction.

This suggests a vision for the future of Radcliffe not as an independent town but as a distinctive neighbourhood within the Greater Manchester conurbation. If we look at Radcliffe as a sustainable urban neighbourhood or an urban village, its prospects are much more positive. It could be compared, for example, to Hulme in South Manchester that is regarded as a national example of best practice in the creation of a sustainable urban neighbourhood. Yet Hulme does not have a shopping centre to match Radcliffe, nor does it have a Metrolink service or a distinctive identity based on more than a thousand years of history. Radcliffe is just 20 minutes away from Central Manchester and so is only marginally less convenient than Hulme yet it is also surrounded by greenbelt and within easy reach of exceptional countryside.

Our vision for Radcliffe is a sustainable urban neighbourhood within the Greater Manchester conurbation with a strong local economy but which is also seen as one of the best and most interesting places to live in North Manchester. This vision can potentially link into a range of models both in the UK and the US. In the UK the most well known model is the Urban Village, promoted initially by Prince Charles. This initially referred to self-contained new settlements. However, it soon came to refer to neighbourhoods within existing cities like Hulme. Radcliffe is in fact more like the original model of the urban village (see image of Greenville), which could provide a powerful model for its renaissance. In the US the same ideas have been developed through what have been called 'Pedestrian Pockets'. These are high density, walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods clustered around a tram stop and surrounded by countryside. This again bears an uncanny resemblance to Radcliffe.

## Themes

This vision suggest a series of themes that should guide the Reinventing Radcliffe strategy as set out below:

1. **Encouraging new housing:** The first step is to encourage new housing development in appropriate locations in and around central Radcliffe. There is a healthy demand to develop in southern and northern Radcliffe and the market is starting to improve in and around the town centre. New housing would increase the number of people living in and around the town centre increasing the potential customers for the shops and facilities. This new housing should be mostly for sale to rebalance the current predominance of social housing in the town centre.

Illustrative 3D drawing of the proposed development in Hulme, Manchester by URBED

2. **Protecting and encouraging jobs:** We are recommending that the existing employment areas to the west of the town centre (behind Asda) and along Milltown Street should be retained and improved. King Sturge suggest that there is demand for small scale industrial and workshop units and these should be encouraged in these areas, the starting point being the lower part of the Radcliffe Paper Mill site that has been retained for employment uses. This theme should also include the improvement of the Pioneer Mill site and the encouragement of existing successful firms such as Trumeter to expand.

3. **Consolidating the town centre:** There is little point attracting more people to live in Radcliffe if they do not use the town centre. This is the main opportunity to recycle wealth and to create a distinctive identity for the town. We are, therefore, proposing a range of improvements to the town centre including the redevelopment of the market and the development of the Kwik Save and bus station. The aim is to improve the environment of the centre and to reconnect it to the surrounding, and expanding, residential areas. It will also be important to increase the range of activities in the centre to include speciality and convenience shopping, leisure and evening economy uses as well as cultural activities as described below.

4. **Making Radcliffe a centre for the arts:** As we described in Chapter 8 there are some extraordinary opportunities to create a unique cultural identity for Radcliffe. These include the world's third gallery devoted to the work of Ulrich Ruckreim, one of the first UK buildings by the architect John Pawson, a centre for the Irwell Sculpture Trail and a base for the organisation CITE along with studio space for artists. Together these opportunities could transform the identity of Radcliffe as a leading centre for the arts in Greater Manchester. This in turn will transform its image and increase its appeal as a place to live and work.

5. **Improving links in and around the town:** As we describe in Chapters 4 and 7 Radcliffe has suffered from poor connections as a result of the river, canal and railway. The by-pass has also made pedestrian links withinin the shopping

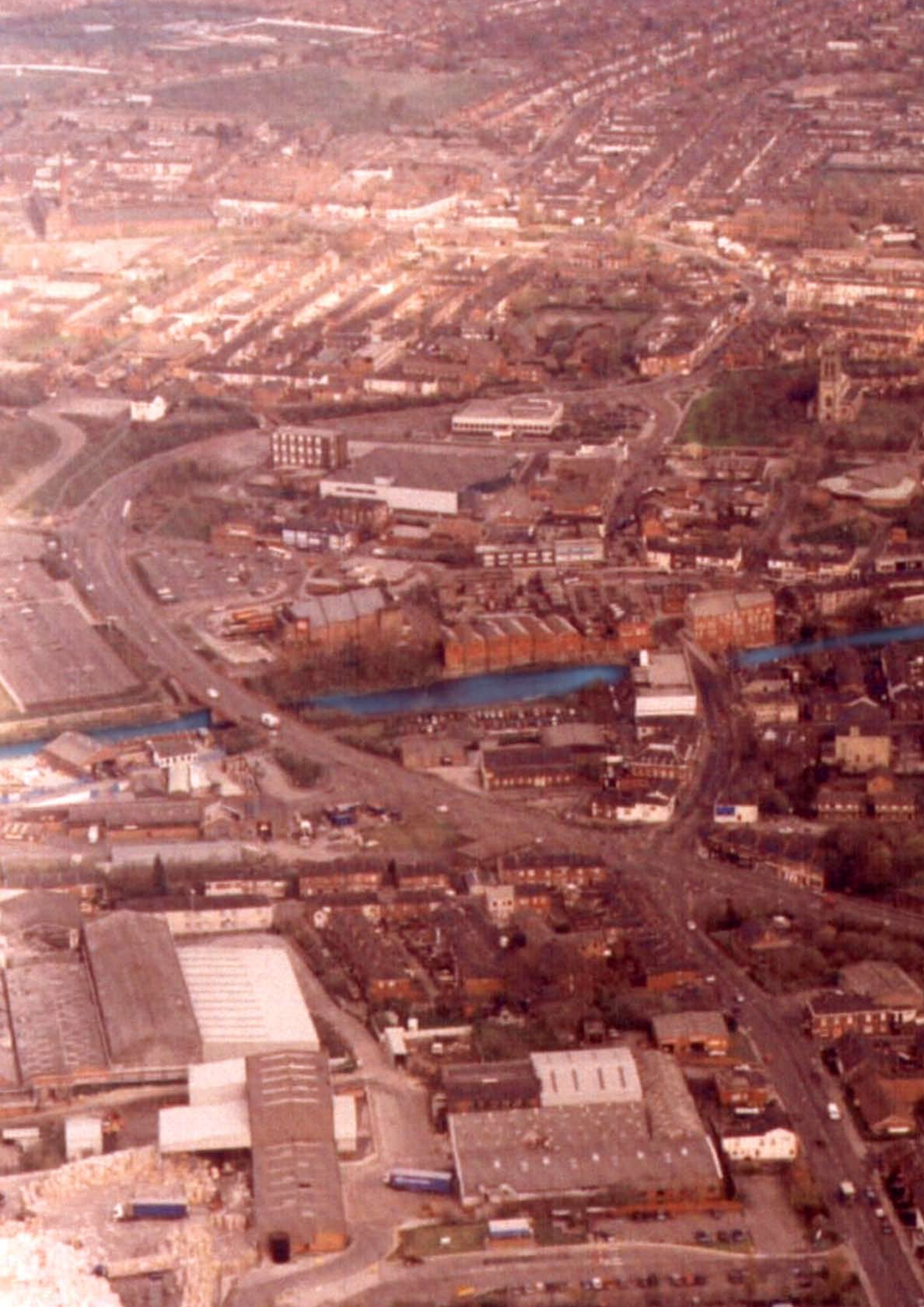
area of the town centre more difficult even if it has improved vehicle movement. An important theme is therefore to create new links across these barriers and to open up the town centre by reopening Blackburn Street to traffic.

6. **Creating a model school:** The improvement of secondary school education in Radcliffe is essential to the town's future. Secondary schools are vital in equipping local people with the learning and skills needed in a modern economy. They are also a vital part of the attraction of a town as a place to live. The proposed redevelopment of the schools is therefore an important part of this strategy. It is also very appropriate that the new school specialises in technology and the arts since this would dovetail with the arts theme above.

7. **Transforming Radcliffe's image:** The final theme relates to the image of Radcliffe. This was picked up as an important issue at the workshop. However, while Radcliffe is not regarded positively within Bury, its image in the wider Manchester area is not particularly poor. It is, therefore, quite possible to project a positive image. Based on the proposals in this report we believe that this is achievable and should be an important part of the strategy.

Based on these themes we suggest that the vision for Radcliffe should be as follows:

*Radcliffe will become a distinctive urban neighbourhood linked into the Manchester conurbation by tram and road. It will be seen as a good place to live by its local community and by those looking for a base in North Manchester. It will be focused on a dense, lively local centre that provides for the community's shopping, leisure and cultural needs. It will be known as a centre for the visual arts and for exploring the Irwell Sculpture Trail attracting both visitors and practicing artists.*



# Part 4 - The Masterplan

# 10. Area Proposals

In which we describe our detailed proposals for each part of the town. This includes a description of our proposals, an implementation route, funding implications and priority/timing.
The principles outlined in the previous chapter have been developed into a series of proposals for Radcliffe. These are described on the attached masterplan for the town. We describe below each area in turn.

## The School Sites

As we described in the previous chapter we agree with the Council's proposals to merge and redevelop the two Secondary schools. Building a new school on the East Lancashire Paper Mill site will liberate the two existing school sites for development. Both are potentially very attractive residential opportunities since they abut the canal, have links to open countryside and relate to existing residential neighbourhoods. There is potential on both sides to develop new housing on the site of the school buildings. More difficult from a planning perspective is the development of the school playing fields. this may be classified as a greenfield site so that application would be referred to the Secretary of State. This is something that should be tested. We are suggesting that these two sites have slightly different characters.

**The Radcliffe High School Site:** This 5.2 ha site is part of the Abden Street neighbourhood. This is a healthy predominantly terraced area with some local facilities and a mix of uses. The entrance to the school is off a formal garden area on the axis of Abden Street. We have retained this feature and suggested a reasonably formal housing layout which ties into the existing street network to the east. We are proposing that this be developed with medium density housing at 40-50 homes/ha giving a yield of 120 units. There is, we believe, an important opportunity to create a road link to Bolton Street to the northwest. As we described in the access chapter there are very few crossings over the canal. This new route could potentially create the opportunity to relieve the pressure on the Water Street/Spring Lane junction. The industrial sites to the north of the canal, which is not part of the school site, could also come into play for residential development allowing housing on both sides of the canal. The character of the canal at this point is semi-rural. We are suggesting that the housing makes a soft edge to the water with planting and public access.

**Coney Green High School:** This 6.2 ha site is possibly the best residential opportunity in Radcliffe. It overlooks the canal and open countryside to the north while being adjacent to the Metrolink station. It is affected by noise from the elevated Metrolink track and



urbed

abuts suburban housing to the west. We are therefore suggesting a layout, which is medium density on Spring Lane (50/ha) and becomes lower density (35/ha) to the north. This would give a yield of approximately 100 units.

**Implementation Route:** Both sites are Council owned and do not require subsidy for residential development. The implementation route should therefore involve a detailed development brief produced by the Council that is then put to the market in order to secure a development partner. In our view the Council should be seeking a development partner rather than seeing the school sites as straightforward disposals.

**Funding and Viability:** Both sites involve significant values and will not require any subsidy to develop. This includes the costs of infrastructure - the main element of which is the proposal for a new bridge over the canal on the Radcliffe High School site. One of the objectives of these schemes is to release a land receipt for investment in the new school. This, however, should not encourage the Council to look for quick sale or a standard scheme. If the Council retains an ongoing role as a development partner it can ensure both a good quality of development and potentially share in increasing residential values. The schemes should also generate S106 contributions for investment in the town centre in addition to the new bridge crossing.

**Phasing and Priority:** The phasing of these schemes is clearly dependent on housing supply and the availability of the East Lancashire Paper Mill site for the new school. Clearly nothing can happen until the new school is built and ready for occupation. This does, however, cause problems in using the capital receipts for the school. The other important phasing issue is the house building take-up rate in Radcliffe. This is currently likely to be not more than 100 units/year. While this is likely to rise as values in the area increase, it is clear that these sites, plus the housing proposed elsewhere in these proposals, will need to be phased in over a number of years.

This should influence the parcelation of these proposals. One approach would be to tender each school site separately. This would have the advantage of spreading risk and encouraging a variety of approaches. The danger, however, is that developers will be put off for fear of development on other sites flooding the market. We, therefore, believe that a better approach would be to treat the two sites together as part of the overall scheme. In this way a consortium would be able to work with the Council on the whole package making it easier to control supply and phasing.

## The St. Thomas' Quarter

The St. Thomas' estate is a product of the 1970s. It won design awards when it was completed but has not proved popular as a housing area despite recent investment. Our concern is that the maze of passageways and routes through the estate make it a virtual no-go area to everyone except residents. This tends to cut the town and church off from the Metrolink station and renders useless the area of open space next to the Civic Centre.

Our proposal is that this estate be redeveloped. We would stress that this is not currently a Council proposal and would need to be considered as part of the current ALMO discussions. Nevertheless, there has been clear support for this proposal during the consultations carried out as part of this study. The redevelopment would be for a residential scheme that mixes new social housing for residents wishing to stay in the area with private stock. This would be based on the old street pattern and would therefore knit into the surrounding streets.

The scheme would wrap itself around the open space to the east of the Civic Centre to create a town centre park overlooked by surrounding property. This could include the proposed health centre or church on the site fronting Church Street West. The scheme would cover approximately 4 ha and would yield about 80 homes and 50 flats.

**Implementation Route:** The implementation routes available for this type of development are becoming well established and flow from the ALMO process. This could include a partnership between a private and social housing provider or a PFI scheme. This is likely to form part of a wider discussion relating to the ALMO stock and needs to be pursued once the ALMO is in place.

**Viability and Funding:** Most schemes of this type are funded by increasing density and using receipts from private housing to subsidise new social housing. Alternatively a PFI route would fund new social housing on the basis of future rental receipts.

**Phasing:** This is a longer-term project partly because of the need to complete the ALMO but also because of the danger of oversupply in the housing market.


# SUN Quarter -
# INDICATIVE Masterplan


## The SUN Quarter

At the heart of our proposals for Radcliffe is the transformation of the town centre. This is based on an acceptance (as described in the last chapter) of the fact that its retail role has changed forever. The new town centre is therefore made up of a combination of elements including local retailing, a market, leisure uses, visitor/cultural facilities and housing.

We have developed these proposals into an indicative masterplan for the town centre that includes the following proposals:

- **The market:** The market should be taken out of the market museum concept. It should instead be redeveloped as an open-air market on the lines of the Bury Market. We are suggesting that this be developed on the site of the current Post Office depot, which would be relocated to an industrial unit. The new market would be a permanent structure with lock-up units.

- **The Bus Depot:** We are proposing that the bus station be removed and that it be replaced with individual bus stops distributed around the town centre.

- **Blackburn Street:** The pedestrianised section of Blackburn Street should be reopened to traffic as part of the wider transport proposals that we have described. This will take local traffic and buses. The piazza will however remain as a pedestrianised space with through traffic using the existing line of Stand Lane to the rear of the Bridge Tavern pub.

- **The Gallery/Museum:** We strongly support proposals to create a major cultural facility in Radcliffe. The elements of this are likely to include the Ruckreim Gallery, a gallery for changing exhibitions, the museum and the visitor centre/archive and administrative base for the Irwell Sculpture Trail. There are three options for procuring this facility:

**a)** The current proposals for a new landmark building by John Pawson are the ideal solution and should be pursued as a priority. We are however concerned at the difficulty of raising the capital and more importantly the revenue for this facility. We would therefore suggest that it be pursued rigorously for a year but that if no progress is made in this time, alternatives are pursued.

**b)** The second option is a much simpler refurbishment of the existing market building. This would involve basic repairs and maintenance, large new windows overlooking the river, the removal of the false ceiling and the painting of the interior white and the refurbishment of the basement. This would cost a fraction of the cost for the new building (say £500,000 -£750,000) and

would create a space not unlike the original Saachi Gallery in London.

**c)** The third option is a space created as the basement and ground floor of a residential block on the market site. This is a model established by the Castlefield Gallery in Manchester and could be achieved within the overall development package for the scheme and the surrounding area with capital being required just for fit out.

- **Kwik Save Site:** We are proposing that the Kwik Save be redeveloped as part of a comprehensive scheme taking in the gallery/museum, bus station site and post office site. This would be book ended by the new market and museum described above. Between these would be two blocks with retailing on the ground floor and housing above. A public space would be created to the east of the museum on the riverbank.

- **Radcliffe Times:** We endorse CITE's proposed conversion and extension of the Radcliffe Times building as a base for their activities and for cultural businesses, which are now the subject of a planning application. We have suggested that this be linked to a new footbridge over the River at this point.

- **Central Square:** We were intrigued by John Pawson's proposal to create a residential tower on the site of Bridge Tavern pub. This has been included in our proposal as a landmark structure with the pub licence transferred to a new ground floor bar.

**Implementation Route:** These proposals need to be carefully coordinated and sequenced. The first step is to reopen Blackburn Street. This will allow new bus stops to be created and the bus station to be closed. In parallel to this, discussions need to take place with the Post Office and Kwik Save about their premises. In the case of the latter this could be tied to a new store in the proposed scheme. During this period the funding for option A of Gallery/museum proposals should be sought.

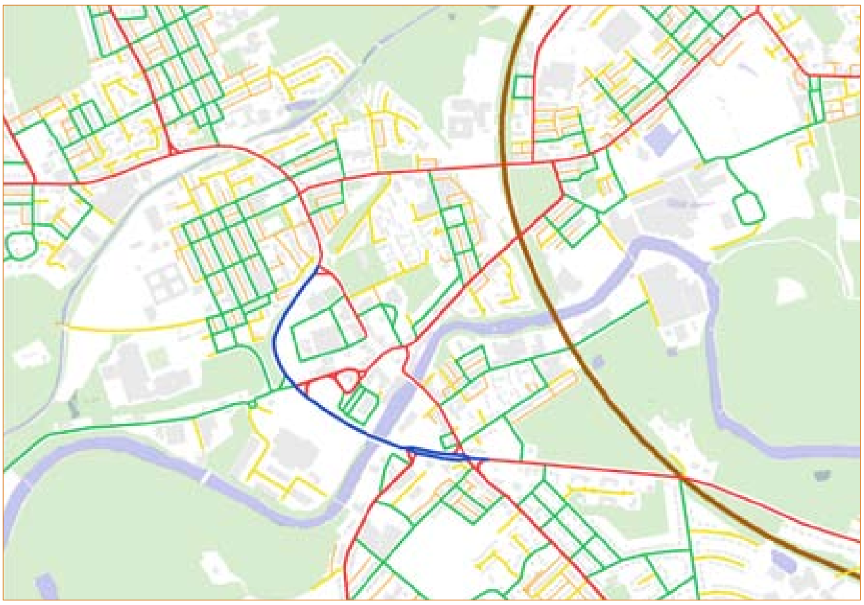
The next step would be to package the entire scheme and put it to the market. The aim will be to secure a development partner to bring forward the entire scheme. This partner would then work with the Council using a cocktail of funds as outlined below to realise the museum/gallery, housing, retailing and market.

**Funding and viability:** The sources of funding available to this scheme are: the value of the land, the development value for residential accommodation, mainstream resources from Bury, (for example for the market), S106 contributions from other sites and grants of various kinds. Bury does not lie within a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund area so that grants are limited to small amounts of European and Lottery funding. This is going to make it difficult to find capital funds for Option A of the museum/gallery. On the other hand, residential values are not yet sufficiently strong to fund the scheme through development and land values. We, therefore, believe that the preparatory work described above should proceed on the assumptions that rising values and the demonstrable commitment of the Council will mean that the scheme becomes viable within 18 months to 2 years.

**Timetable and phasing:**
Described above


▶ **Plan 29:** Aerial view of Inner Radcliffe


▶ **Plan 30:** Open space


▶ **Plan 31:** Current road hierarchy

## The Riverside Employment Zone

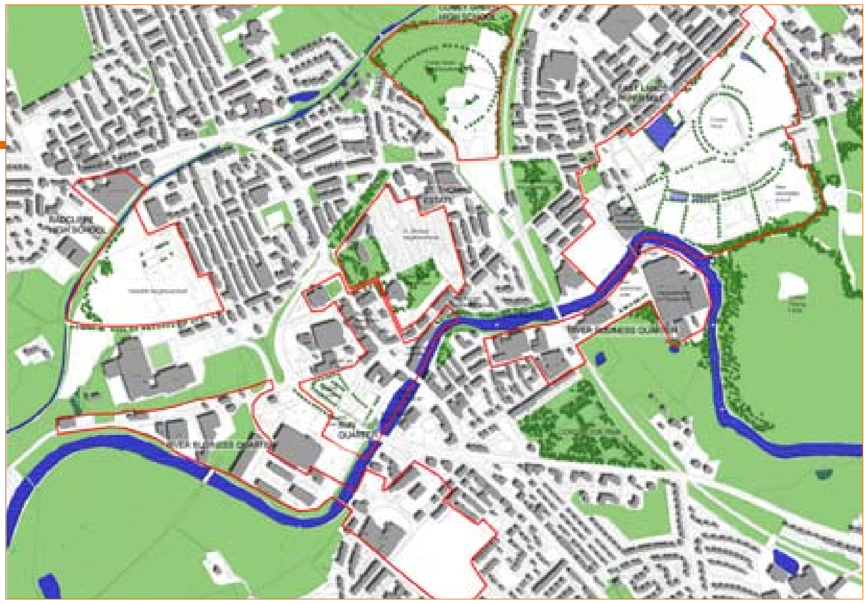
There is real concern in Radcliffe, and indeed the wider Bury area, that employment sites will be lost to housing development. This is illustrated by the recent planning appeal on the former Allen's Green Works site. We believe that it is important to retain an employment base in Radcliffe and that it makes sense to concentrate this employment in its traditional location in a band along the river from Sion Street through the lower part of the Radcliffe Paper Mill site and along Milltown Street to Pioneer Mill.

## The East Lancashire Paper Mill

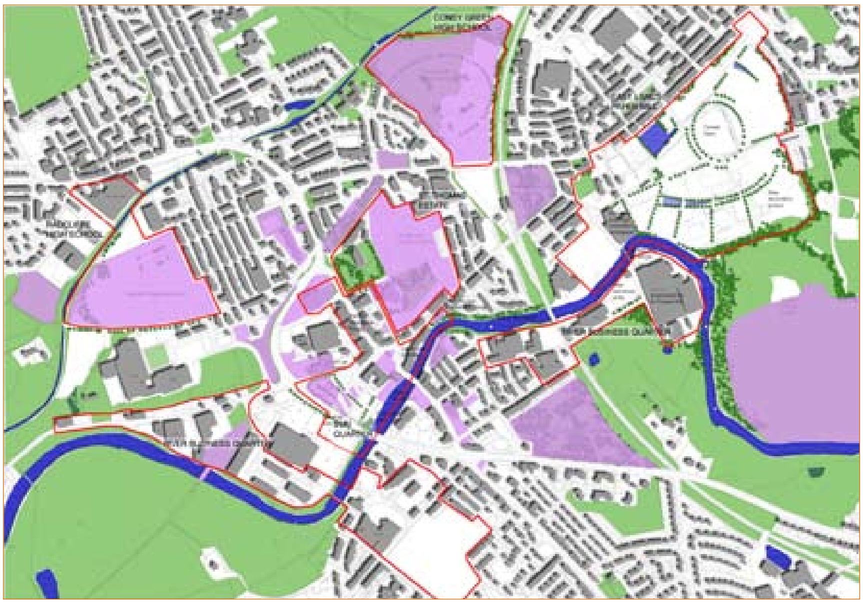
The East Lancashire Paper Mill is the largest development opportunity in Radcliffe. The mill closed down a few years ago and the owners are seeking to dispose of the site. The main development interest is from housing developers, although the Council are keen to ensure that part of the site is retained for employment use.

The site includes a number of buildings, some of which have some architectural interest. There are also a series of reservoirs, one of which is used by a fishing club. The work's club remains active on the site, as does the cricket field. The site is bounded to the north by the rear gardens of property on Cross Lane and there are a few remaining terraces together with a pub on the western part of the site. A significant constraint on the site is the Scottish Power Combined Heat and Power plant, which was completed only a few years ago.

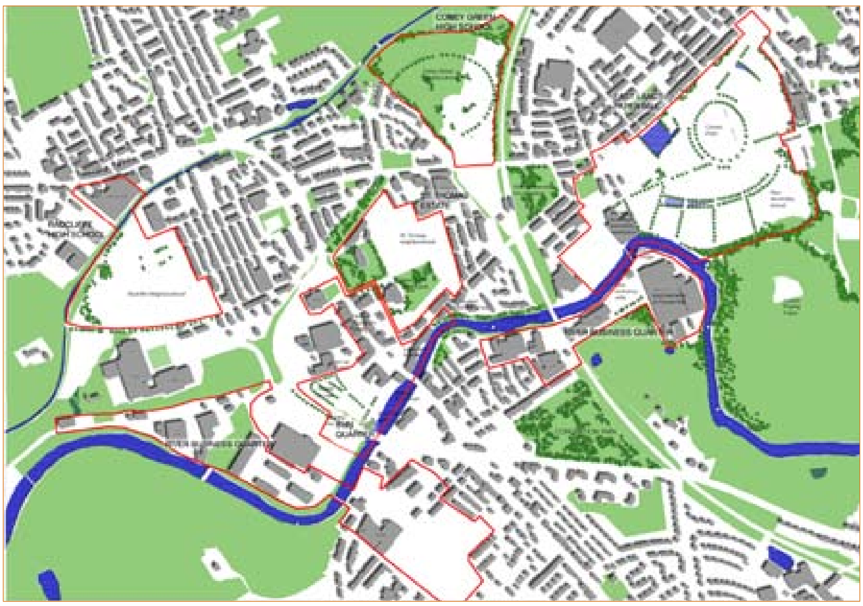
The King Sturge study into employment land in Bury has concluded that this site is unlikely to attract new industrial uses over the entire site. It is, therefore, our view that it is likely to remain vacant unless a degree of housing development is permitted.



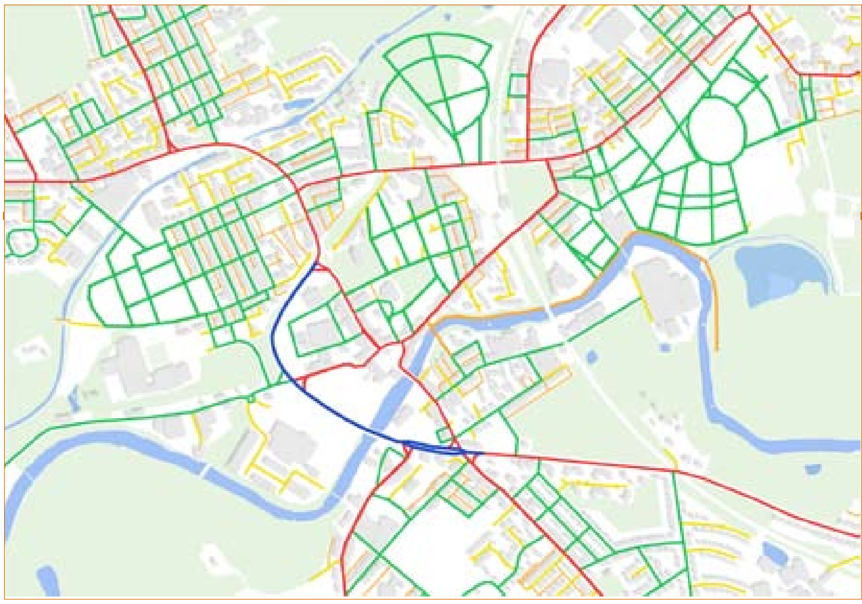
**Plan 32:** Main areas of change



**Plan 33:** Areas of change with council ownership



**Plan 34:** Hard and soft plan



▶ **Plan 35:** New road layout

▶ **Plan 36:** Masterplan

▶ **Plan 37:** Masterplan with quarters

We are therefore proposing the following elements for the site:

- A new secondary school in the southeastern part of the site linked to playing fields on the Radcliffe E'es site.
- A retained and improved cricket pitch to create a 'village green' at the heart of the site.
- The retained reservoir used by the fishing club.
- The retention of the oldest part of the paper mill converted to workspace for small enterprises.
- The remainder of the site developed for housing making up 80% of the site area. This would be developed at 40-60/ha giving a yield of approximately 400 homes.

**Implementation route:** There is currently developer interest in the site so that it could be brought forward for residential development together with some workspace. This needs to be done on the basis of a planning brief drawn up by the Council on the basis of this study. This would include the cricket ground and retained reservoir as well as the proportion of workspace.

The only difficult part of the implementation is the school. If the costs of the school are met by the Council it is possible that developers would be prepared to provide the site as part of their section 106 contributions. This could, however, be onerous but there may be an option in which there is a partial land swap with one of the other school sites. An alternative would be for the Council to negotiate the acquisition of the school site separately from the current owners. This should be possible but may create difficulty because the site will need to be acquired from the sale of the existing school sites becoming available.

**Viability and funding:** This scheme should largely be possible without subsidy. The two areas that may require funds are the acquisition of the school site as described above and the workspace. The latter should be pursued as part of a S106 agreement/planning condition. However, subject to detailed appraisal work it may be that some subsidy is needed. This could be pursued through NWDA.

**Timing and phasing:** The priority on this site is to prepare a planning brief with committee approval that can set the context for development. This needs to be produced as a matter of urgency if it is to influence the development proposals that are probably already being developed.


# INDICATIVE Masterplan


Cricket Pitch
New pedestrian link to station
New secondary school
Retained buildings converted to workspace
Potential new road bridge
New workshop units
Improvements to Pioneer Mill
School Playing Fields
CITE located in Radcliffe Times Building
RIVERSIDE WALKWAY
NEW BRIDGE
CORONATION PARK

# Appendix 1

**Visioning Workshop**
**20th May 2003**

## The Good things about Radcliffe

### Identity
- Distinctive town
- History
- Community, strong social network
- Its people
- Sense of community spirit – 'This is Radcliffe.'
- People who are proud of Radcliffe
- Canal
- River
- Football team

### Urban Design & Architecture
- Sculpture Trail
- Some attractive buildings

Mixed Use
- Asda
- Library
- IT Centre
- New Bank Garden Centre

### Transport
- Metrolink
- Car park at Heber Street
- Plentiful free parking
- Good connection to the motorway
- Cycle track along the old railway – nature trail

### Places to go
- Easy access to countryside
- Proximity to Manchester

### General outer appearance
- Canal has great potential
- Improved quality of the environment (environmental schemes)
- Nice areas
- Canal side areas
- Green areas

### Security
- Lowest crime rate in the borough

### Social aspects
- affordable property prices

### Facilities
- Skater Park
- Swimming pool
- Leisure centre
- Outwood Trail
- Scooter trail

### Employment
- Available sites for development
- Opportunity to be special
- Good area for employers to develop new businesses
- Some industry remaining
- Local employers
- Specialist shops - lot of independents
- There are no good things about Radcliffe.

## The Bad things about Radcliffe

### Identity
- bad perception from insiders
- low self-esteem, disillusioned people
- pessimistic people
- perception - proud bad negative
- no vision for Radcliffe's future
- lack of knowledge/awareness
- general bad image
- apathy of people (Radcliffe – a dumping ground)
- press creates a bad image

### Urban Design & Architecture
- Civic centre is inaccessible from Public Transport
- Derelict sites/buildings
- Asda situated outside the centre on the other side of the bypass
- Bad state of terraced properties – threat from low income households
- No balance between social and private housing ('pepperpotted')
- Lacks a heart
- Market requires regenerating
- Kwik Save
- Bus station
- Fragmented town centre
- Poor quality of some buildings
- Isolation of the town centre with Asda
- No link from Metro Station to the town centre
- Divided town

- Residential areas are not linked to the town centre

## Mixed use

- market – half the stalls are empty and half are car boot
- not enough shops
- Asda drained people from the town centre
- lack of facilities (community facilities)
- no facilities for young people
- no shops that sell something special or are different from big chain stores
- lack of quality shops
- lack of night time economy
- lack of open spaces for young people to meet at every time

## Transport

- Bypass takes everyone past Radcliffe
- Spring Lane and Blackburn Street are traffic bottleneck
- Pilkington Way division
- Metrolink is not very well connected with the town centre
- Accessibility to the town centre

## Places

- Radcliffe toilets

## General outer appearance

- Poor shop frontages
- Lack of street furniture (benches etc.)
- Lack of green areas/planting

## Social aspects

- Drugs
- Antisocial behaviour
- Vandalism
- Legacy of 'homeless' dumping ground
- Skill base is a major problem
- Pockets of degradation
- Poverty
- Low income homes
- Bad education at High Schools à pupils are educated to work in the mills

## Employment

- Employers leave Radcliffe
- Lack of investment à undermines confidence!
- Demise of paper industry
- Loss of traditional jobs (mills)
- Commuter town, people go to Manchester for work

## The places that are most like Radcliffe today

- Ashington
- Whitefield
- Ashford
- Ramsbottom
- Prestwich
- Manchester Castlefield (15 years ago)
- Burnley
- Eccles
- Farnworth
- Small towns around Bury
- Heywood (similar stigma)
- Middleton
- Oldham
- Walkden
- Westhoughton

'Radcliffe is like any other town without a heart.'

## The places Radcliffe could be like

- Bury
- Hebden Bridge (canal town river)
- Honiton, Devon
- Middleton
- Ramsbottom
- Huddersfield
- Kirklees
- Manchester Castlefield
- Prestwich
- Skipton
- Staley Bridge
- 'Mini Salford Quays'
- Amsterdam
- The Hague
- Eindhoven

Radcliffe should use its own resources.

## Our vision – Radcliffe in 10 years time

- More Employment
- Wide variety of different sorts of work
- Facilities for the young, leisure
- Mega bowl
- Massive Youth Club
- Rail link between Radcliffe and Bolton
- Improved public realm
- Higher quality of facilities, better maintained
- Less house building activities
- No dormitory town
- Improved schools and sporting provision – facilities for every-one
- Waterfront Bar Scene
- Street markets
- Improved market
- Evening economy – decent bars, restaurants (no yobo culture as in Bury)
- Let investors in only if their project supports Radcliffe's future development
- Distinctive places to work & stay
- Develop creative industries, public arts
- Vastly improved environment
- Opened river and canal
- Tourism
- Increase in specialist shops
- Radcliffe – an event orientated town
- Better quality housing in the town centre
- Improve the Sculpture + Arts trail
- Using the river as a asset
- Fountain at the river
- Integrate children in social/community projects as planting flowers
- Events as live bands in the cen-tre, carnival
- Improved shop fronts
- Internet café
- Flee market
- Be different from Bury (no shopping centre but maybe sports centre instead)
- Being unique
- Walking routes
- Set up forums with people who have influence/money
- Spread the money for different projects/neighbourhoods
- More shops for older people
- Turn Radcliffe into an area where people want to live and work by tackling perception and redesigning the town for the 21st century

## What should happen to…?

### East Lancs. Paper Mill site:

- Keep reservoirs for recreation (commercially improve)
- Possibly residential development around a commercially viable fishery
- Retain leisure facilities
- Move heavy ('dirty') industry to the other side of the river
- Lock prices at a low level to encourage people to set their businesses up there
- Mixed use development
- Radcliffe university
- Small creative industries units
- Incubator units – science park
- Greenery
- Cricket, bowling ground
- Create a street network to access the site
- Preserve the mill as part of Rad-cliffe's history/heritage

### Kwik Save site:

- 'shop window' to the town
- open up the river
- move the bus station
- develop a market concept
- market museum or covered multi-use market
- relocate library – near market museum
- evening economy type develop-ment
- cultural quarter
- internet café
- living over shop
- health care facilities
- Community centre
- Kelsell's Plumbing
- WT Fabrications
- Thematic markets (farmers mar-ket etc.)
- Leisure
- Indoor/outdoor market

### Strebor site:

- Housing
- Sports + Leisure Pursuits Centre
- Hotel
- Youth centre
- 'Another Pilsworth' – cinema, bowling, casino
- Employment uses
- Small retail units
- Small industrial estate to move the works out of the town centre
- Access the site via Bolton Street (bridge over the canal)

### What should be done with the schools?

- East Lancs. Paper Mill should be used for the new location of the High School due to Metrolink access
- Coney Green School should be developed for housing
- The new High school should go next to the Metro station à mix of schools, one stop shop, sports

### How can the linkages between the Metro station and the town centre be improved?

- Shuttle bus from the station to the town centre
- Free busses for older people around the centre
- Have a bus station next to the Metrolink
- There is no need for a bus station
- Landmark building
- Turn Church Street West into a boulevard
- Wider pavements
- Tree-lined attractive route
- Improved bus stops
- Link to the new cultural quarter
- Move the town centre towards the Metrolink

### How can the canal and the surrounding residential areas be linked?

- Revive Blackburn Street (North) with bars, restaurants, community centres
- Set up more activities along the canal
- Open up the canal and set up activities as boat trips etc.

### How can we overcome the barrier created by the bypass (Asda)?

- Develop the site opposite Asda to connect the centre and Asda
- Signage for shops across the road
- Create a new route through the town centre (Dale Street)
- The Asda should play a minor role; people go there anyway; it does not need to be integrated into the town centre
- Footbridge over the bypass

### How do we make the best of the river?

- Open it up
- Sculpture trail link to the canal
- Use the most attractive sites for housing
- Leisure centre

### How can the market be revived?

- Good marketing strategy
- Market museum
- Covered multi-use market
- Open up the town centre (Blackburn Street)
- Demolish the whole centre and build something new
- Restaurants along the river
- Reopen the old cinema
- Combine new development with the market museum
- New development sites at the car park and the bus station
- The market museum goes on the market hall site
- Living over the shop to get more residents into the town centre
- Bus route through the town centre (Blackburn Street)
- Active frontages for new developments

### How can the townscape be improved?

- Good quality for whatever is built
- More street furniture