Rochdale SUN

Final Report for
Rochdale Development Agency

By URBED
King Sturge and TPP

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Rochdale SUN

In which we summarise the strategy set out in this report.

This report sets out a strategic framework for the renewal of the housing markets of the inner Rochdale neighbourhoods of Spotland and Falinge; Deeplish and Milkstone; Sparth; Newbold; and Kirkholt.

However our concern is about more than just the value of housing – we have called this study the Rochdale SUN because our aim is to create a set of sustainable urban neighbourhoods around the centre of Rochdale.

This draws upon URBED's work through the Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood (SUN) Initiative that has been exploring how to create neighbourhoods that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable. This means neighbourhoods that people live in out of choice rather than necessity; neighbourhoods where people have access to a range of facilities, services and employment opportunities, where they enjoy good quality housing and a civilised and safe public realm. Neighbourhoods where they are not stigmatised by a poor image and where they have access to the mutual support of a strong community. When these qualities can be created people choose to stay in a neighbourhood and put down roots while others wish to move in creating, both a healthy housing market and a popular community.

These aims lie at the heart of the HMR process. They also form a central part of the Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan. This sets a new course for Rochdale in the light of the changing economy and the need

to improve the conditions for local people. As the vision says; *'critical opportunity lies in linking the Housing Market Renewal Fund with ongoing key initiatives.... to transform the quality of the physical environment and and attract private sector investment'.* It goes on to set out seven key topics, the first of which is the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods, which is our prime concern with this report.

Understanding the neighbourhoods

It has been vital for us to understand the nature of the five neighbourhoods and their role within the borough. In Section 2 we therefore look at the people, the economy, the market, transport links and the urban form of Inner Rochdale. In Section 3 we looked in detail at the nature of each of the neighbourhoods guided both by our research and by consultations with local residents. This draws particularly on our tour of the area in the Rochdale SUN Bus.

This work has given us a good understanding of the five neighbourhoods. The picture that emerges distinguishes two broad types of area:

Victorian terraces: The Victorian terraces that make up much of Spotland and Falinge, Sparth, Milkstone and Deeplish and parts of Newbold. They are characterised by growing Asian communities that have been reluctant to move away from these neighbourhoods. Population growth and a limited housing supply has pushed up prices while leaving very few voids and severe problems with overcrowding. Low levels of income mean that households are unable to borrow against the equity in their home so that the condition of the stock is deteriorating.

Social housing areas: The social housing areas of Kirkholt, central Newbold and the Falinge and Freehold Flats face different issues. The communities of Kirkholt and Central Newbold are largely with low incomes. Progress made on the Decent Homes Standard means that the quality of the housing is good and affordability issues elsewhere means that demand is high and voids are very low. These areas do however suffer from a stigmatised reputation and a high turnover of properties. In the consultation people suggested that the communities were more vulnerable and there is a fear that problems could materialise in the future particularly as surrounding areas improve.

A strategy for transformation

These types of area require different strategies. However we conclude from this analysis that in neither case can we pursue the type of demolition and clearance strategy being undertaken in other HMR areas. The strength of the communities and the value of the housing stock makes this impossible. We must therefore find other ways of bringing about radical change. In Section 4 of the report we therefore set out a series of regeneration principles for, what might be called, 'careful urban renewal' based on:

- Creating a series of sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Linking these neighbourhoods to overcome isolation and to ensure passing trade for shops.
- Accommodating a changing

employment base by converting run-down employment areas to mixed-use neighbourhoods

- Building and strengthening local communities by undertaking no demolition until new housing has been completed.
- Encouraging a broader range of people and social groups to live in the area by increasing the range of housing.
- Reinventing a role for the terraces as the first rung on the housing ladder.
- Creating a structure in which this can be guided and controlled by local people.

These aims compliment those of the Borough Renaissance Masterplan. The aforementioned principles are developed into a strategy with three legs:

Comprehensive Development Areas: We identified 19 ha of land for new housing. This is in three areas, Lower Falinge, Sparth Riverside and the Maclure Road/Canal basin area. We propose that land is acquired in these areas alongside a strategy to relocate industrial uses to create sites for just over 1,000 homes.

This new housing would be developed by the council's development partners in consultation with local communities. There would be a series of incentives to encourage households to move out of terraces into this new property (such as part exchange and equity sharing). These incentives would be available to anyone in the HMR areas and the housing would also be marketed at incoming and more affluent households. This would allow the Asian communities to spread, taking pressure off their core communities, while creating truly multi-cultural new neighbourhoods.

Restructuring the terraces: As people move into the new housing the remaining terraced areas would be assessed as part of a strategy to 'reinvent the terraces'. This could include demolition and redevelopment, radical restructuring or refurbishment, the exact nature of the strategy depending on the housing market. We have however looked at two scenarios.

- The first scenario, assumes a relatively strong housing market and proposes the demolition of just under 900 of the 5,800 terraces in the area. It then suggests the refurbishment of a third of the remainder (1,600 properties) through an equity investment scheme.
- The second scenario assumes that the new build weakens the terraced market so that just under 1,900 properties are demolished with a third of the remainder (1,300) being refurbished.

Renewing social housing areas: The third leg of the strategy is the renew of the social housing estates through the redevelopment of the heart Newbold and Kirkholt. We propose the demolition of properties based around the Guinness Estate in Newbold and suggest that area running from the Strand to Hilltop School in Kirkholt should be taken forward and planned.The levels of demolition will depend on more detailed work however the majority demolitions

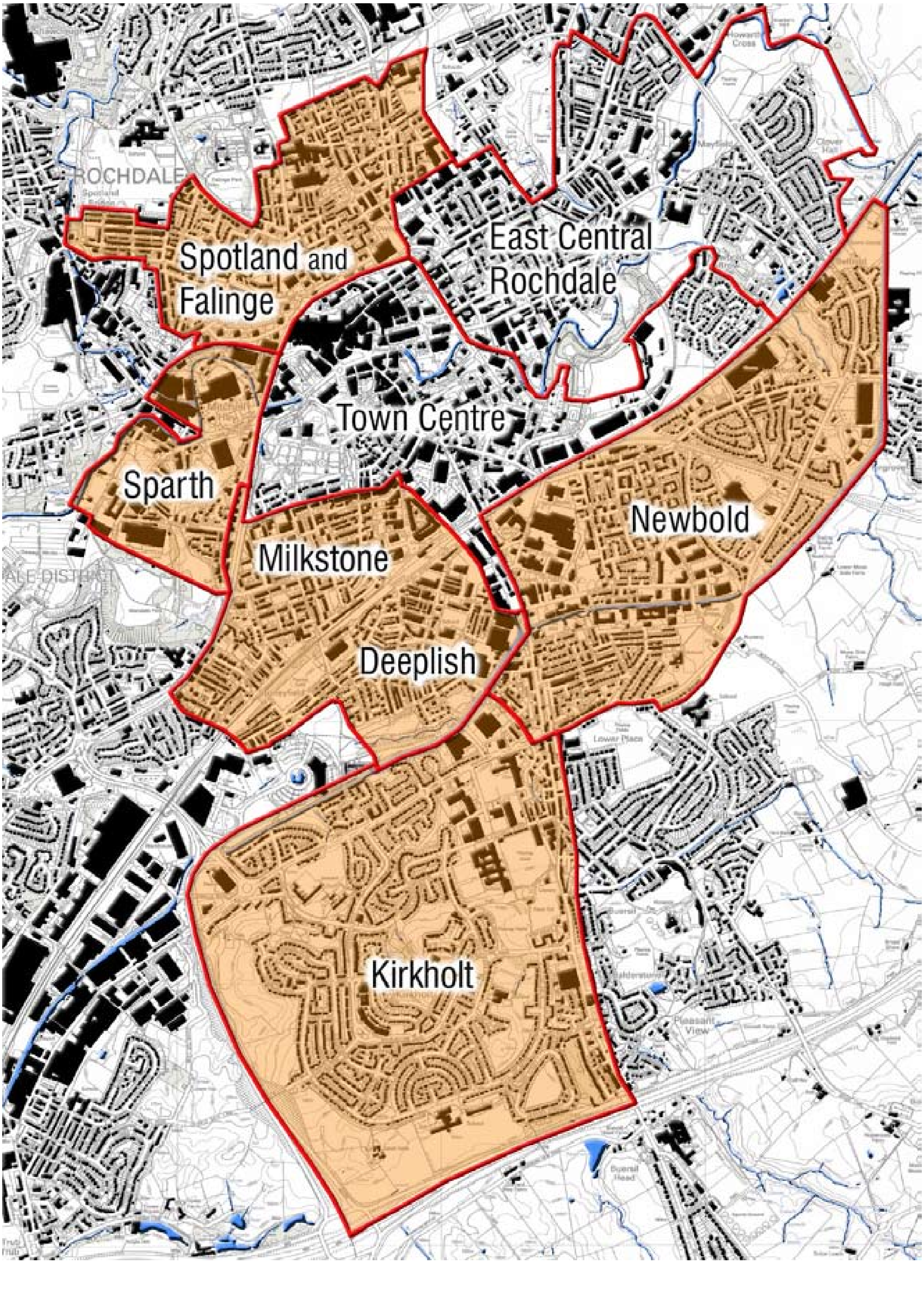
will be low-demand single-bed flats. This creates an opportunity for the development of a new mixed-tenure heart for these estates as a way of overcoming their sense of isolation with new links to increase permeability.

Community control: We suggest that this regeneration strategy should be underpinned by a community empowerment strategy based on a Community Land Trust. This would be a body that used Housing Market Renewal funds to invest in land acquisition, assistance to households to buying a new home or refurbish their existing house. Each of these would leave the CLT owning equity that it would receive back when property was sold allowing it to benefit from increasing values. It would thus allow funds to be recycled and create a vehicle for community ownership and control of the process.

Spatial Framework

In Section 5 this strategy is developed into a spatial framework for the four neighbourhoods that are developed more fully as part of the masterplanning phase of the study. However we concentrate here on identifying the areas of change through a 'hard and soft' exercise undertaken as part of our research and consultations. Through this we identify the areas for new-build, the reinvention of terraces and the redevelopment of social housing areas. This is combined with an assessment of neighbourhood territories to identify the network of communities that exist across the five areas. The spatial strategy starts to bring these elements together so that the resources secured through Housing Market Renewal can be used to strengthen the neighbourhood structure and improve the quality of the public realm of the area.

As a final document it creates an outline programme based on a set of principles and a pragmatic strategy that is nevertheless able to bring about the radical transformation demanded by HMR. The proposals have been masterplanned, tested, assessed and revised and are now in a robust form to take forward.



ROCHDALE
Spotland and Falinge
East Central Rochdale
Town Centre
Sparth
Milkstone
Newbold
Deeplish
Kirkholt

1. Introduction

In which we describe the context and aims of the study and the structure of the report.

This report has been prepared for the Rochdale Development Agency and Rochdale Council to assist in the preparation of the Scheme Update to bid for second round Housing Market Renewal (HMR) funds.

Oldham/Rochdale is one of nine Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder Areas designated by the Government in 2003. These are areas with weak and failing housing markets across Northern England stretching as far south as Birmingham. The areas were allocated £600million in the first round of funding and each submitted prospectuses for that money. Oldham Rochdale's prospectus covered four neighbourhoods; Werneth/Freehold and Derker in Oldham and East Central Rochdale and Langley in Rochdale. They were awarded £53.5 million and are in the process of appointing development partners to work in these neighbourhoods. The government has now allocated a further £400 million to the programme and the Pathfinders have been asked to draw up bids for the Second Round of neighbourhoods. This study was commissioned to prepare an input to the bid for Rochdale's inner neighbourhoods and a similar study is being undertaken by EDAW in Oldham.

This study looks at five Inner Rochdale neighbourhoods namely; Spotland and Falinge; Deeplish and Milkstone; Sparth; Newbold; and Kirkholt. These make up the balance of the HMR areas in Rochdale. The

study has been undertaken in two parts; the first developed a Strategic Framework and Spatial Strategy for the five neighbourhoods while the second has developed masterplans for four of these neighbourhoods. This report was produced in draft form for at the end of the first stage and has been updated following the masterplan exercise. The masterplans are contained in separate appendices.

At its root this means neighbourhoods where people live out of choice rather than necessity

This work has drawn on a wide range of research. Particularly important has been the work on the housing market undertaken by GVA Grimleys in parallel to this study. This study has also involved intensive consultations including 2 workshops, 3 Design for Change charrettes and 3 tours of the neighbourhoods by the SUN Bus. Through these events some 1000 local people and stakeholders have been involved in the study.

These strands have been woven into a strategy to strengthen and consolidate the five neighbourhoods and to transform the housing market and the variety and quality of housing in inner Rochdale. The strategy is then illustrated in four individual masterplans although these do not form part of the scheme update.

This report has been produced by a team led by URBED, with King Sturge and Transport Planning Partnership (TPP). It has been guided by a steering group drawn from the public sector partners and representatives of the five neighbourhoods. We are grateful for everyone who has made an input to this work.

Rochdale SUN: Steering Group membership

- Ruth Pugsley (North West Development Agency)
- Peter Cunningham (Rochdale MBC Environment)
- Martin Hathaway (Rochdale MBC Environment)
- Chris Hall (Rochdale MBC Strategic Planning)
- John Lloyd (PCT)
- Jill Dixon (Rochdale Boroughwide Housing)
- John Percival (Rochdale MBC PPR)
- Dean Aggett (HMR Core Team)
- Donna Bowler (Urban Renewal Manager)
- Richard Duddell (Rochdale Development Agency)
- Mohammed Ahmed (HMR Strategic Programmes)
- Darryl Lawrence (Rochdale Housing Initiative)
- Pauline Brown (St Vincent's Housing Assocation)
- Andy Smart (Education RMBC)

Community representatives

- Phil Renshaw (Kirkholt)
- Kenny Farrar (Sparth)
- Sarfaz Arfan (Sparth)
- Barabara Todd (Spotland & Falinge)
- Vanessa Kilburn (Spotland & Falinge)
- Andy Mcculloch (Newbold)
- Ghulam Shahzad (Milkstone & Deeplish)

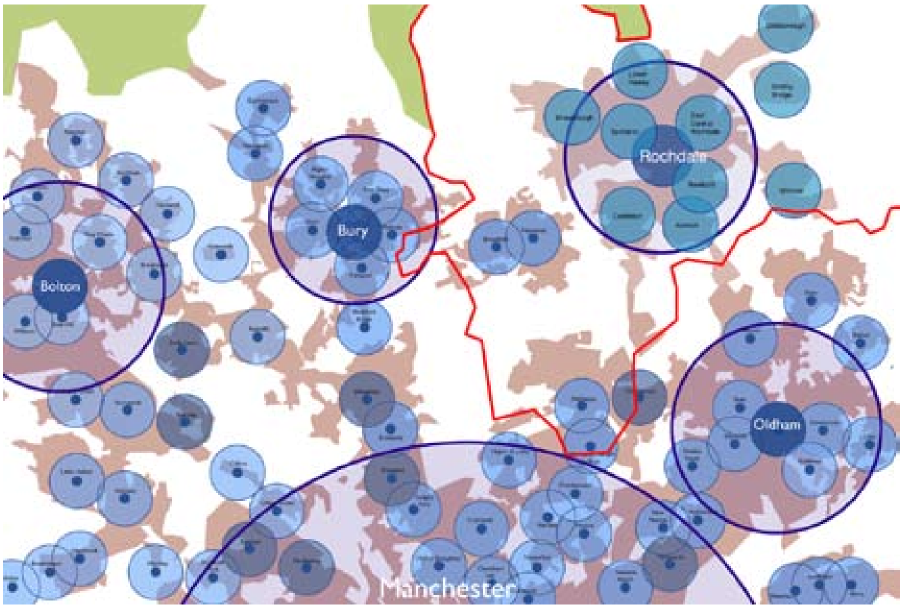
Project Management Team

- Janet Brooks (Project Manager) RDA
- Vivienne Hall RBH
- Kaye Mahoney RMBC
- Zoe Powell RMBC
- Katie Wall RMBC
- Dawn Hoskins HMR

2. Inner Rochdale

Where we describe the social and demographic profile of the HMR neighbourhoods

The North Manchester Conurbation is made up of a series of major industrial towns and scores of smaller towns and neighbourhoods



Rochdale is one of 10 boroughs in Greater Manchester with a population of 206,000. This is around 8% of the 2.5 million people who live in the conurbation. Of these around 1 million live within the core city - broadly the area within the M60 that includes Manchester, much of Salford and the inner parts of Oldham, Bury, Trafford and Stockport. The remaining 1.5 million people live in seven major industrial towns with populations of 60-100,000;- Stockport, Ashton, Oldham, Bolton, Wigan and Rochdale. The conurbation also includes 40 or so smaller towns Such as Heywood, Middleton, Milnrow and Littleborough in Rochdale.

The challenge being faced by all of these towns at this present time is how to re-invent themselves for a post industrial age. In Rochdale this was addressed in the Borough Renaissance Masterplan which is based on 7 key topics.

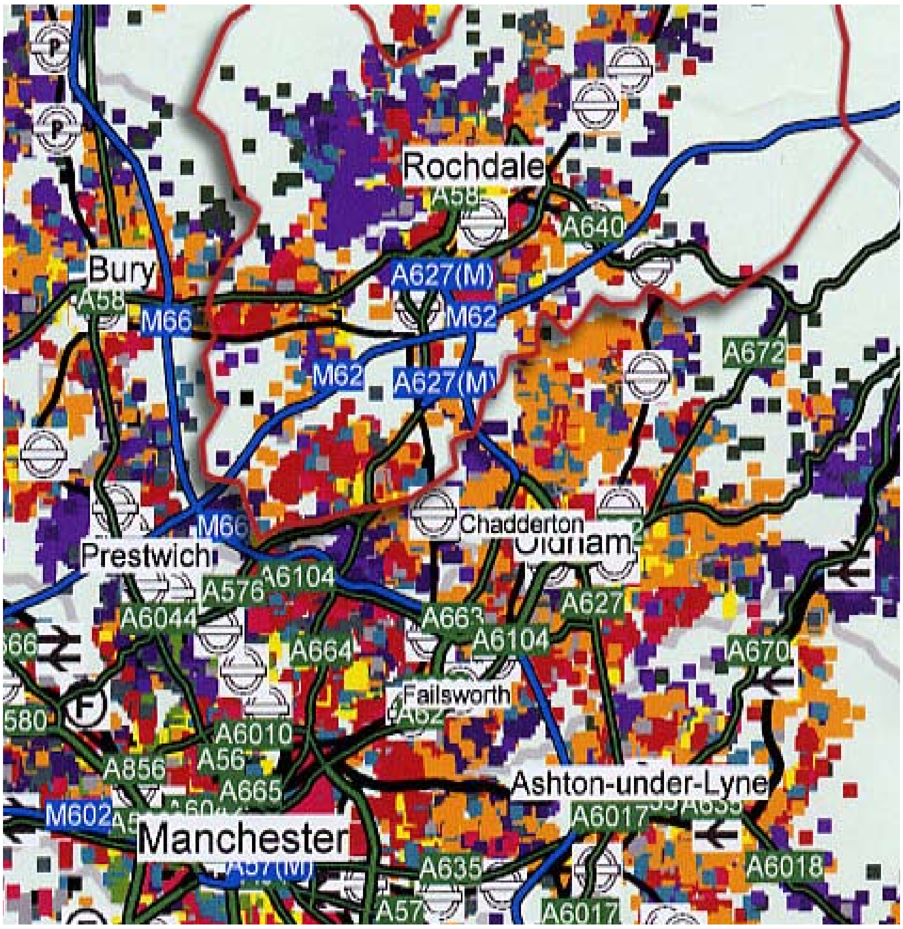
- **Sustainable neighbourhoods:** Concentrating housing within urban areas at higher densities to

consolidate existing communities.

- **21st century employment sites:** Diversifying the economy by capitalising on knowledge economies and promoting new business investment including Kingsway
- **Thriving town centres:** Promoting town centres as drivers for urban renaissance.
- **Environmental assets:** Using environmental assets such as the moors to promote quality of life.
- **Gateways and corridors:** Improving the gateways and corridors to the borough.
- **Sustainable transport:** Improving connections and access by motorway, rail, tram and bus.
- **Design and image:** The importance of quality design at a time when a huge amount of development is planned.

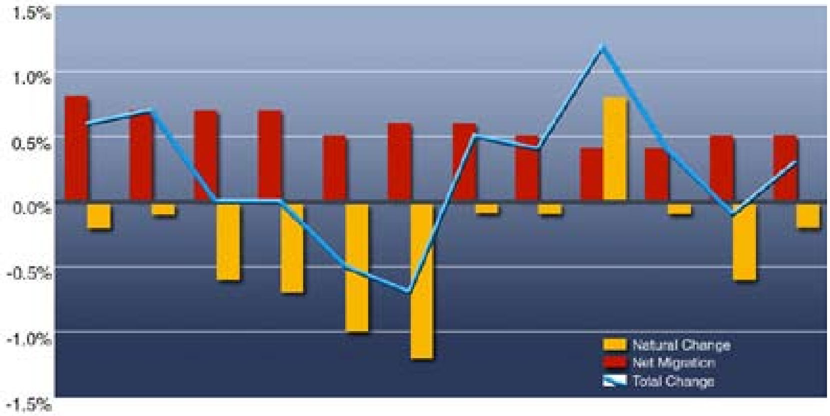
The inner neighbourhoods of the town have a vital role to play in realising this vision. In the following pages we look at the socio- economic challenges being faced by these neighbourhoods.

A Mosaic map of North Manchester prepared by Experian to show the social make-up of the population. The blues show suburban middle classes, the red squares are council estates, orange shows Victorian terraces areas while green shows young single person households.



2.1 Population

In which we briefly describe the population of the five neighbourhoods compared to the population of the borough.



While Rochdale borough's population is one of the smallest in Greater Manchester, the the town of Rochdale is one of the largest with just under 100,000 people. The population of the borough has been relatively stable growing by 2% since 1991 compared to a decline of 3.3% for Greater Manchester. The population is projected to grow by 0.6% by 2021 while households are projected to grow by 7.6%. According to ONS figures the borough as a whole is projected to grow by 6.7% over the next 25 years reflecting the young age structure of the population.

This stable population masks strong internal growth, particularly in the Asian community set against fluctuating migration figures. Until the late 1996 there was a net outflow of population from the borough. Since that time population loss through migration has slowed while internal growth has stayed constant causing the population to grow by 1%.

The population of the five neighbourhoods is stable masking relatively high levels of internal growth and outward migration

The five neighbourhoods covered by this study are home to 27,821 people (13.5% of the borough population and a quarter of Rochdale township). This population has been stable since 1996. However this masks an uneasy balance between relatively high rates of internal growth and outward migration from inner Rochdale to outer wards. However the wards of Brimrod and Deeplish and Central and Falinge have also experienced net inward international migration of around 100 persons/yr based on the Asian community.

Area and population 2002

Area	Population			Percentage of population aged			
	Persons per sq km	Total, 000s	Change % 1982 - 2002	Under 5	5 - 15	16 to pension age	Pension age or over
Rochdale	1,305	206	-0.1	6.4	16.0	61.0	16.6
Manchester	3,652	422	-7.0	6.0	14.0	65.1	14.9
Greater Manchester	1,970	2,513	-3.3	6.0	14.8	61.9	17.3
North West	480	6,771	-2.0	5.7	14.6	61.0	18.6
UK	244	59,229	5.2	5.8	14.1	61.7	18.4

Source: Regional Trends 38, 2004

Overall the picture is of a deprived community that, despite recent improvements, is still lagging behind the borough and Greater Manchester.

Age: 22% of Rochdale's population are under 15 compared with 21% for Greater Manchester. In the HMR neighbourhoods 45% of the population are below the age of 30 compared to 37.7% nationally. Newbold has the youngest population while the highest average age is to be found in Kirkholt.

Ethnic Origin: 11% of Rochdale's population is of Asian origin and this is projected to rise to 16% by 2021. Within the five neighbourhoods 22% of the population is of Asian origin. The majority (80%) are Pakistani. Over three quarters of the population are white with the lowest proportion of BME groups in Kirkholt and Newbold. The Asian community is concentrated in East Central Rochdale, Milkstone and Deeplish, Sparth and Spotland. During the course of the study we have encountered no racial tension in Rochdale. In this respect it is very different to Oldham where a similar ethnic mix has let to a range of inter-community tensions.

Health: Rochdale has severe health problems. It ranks 8th nationally for poor life expectancy and Central and Falinge is the 3rd worst ward in the borough.

Prosperity: The HMR areas are within the 20% most deprived wards nationally. In 2003 average weekly earnings in Rochdale were £388/week compared to £438 in Greater Manchester. The borough is characterised by low wage/low skill jobs and many of the people with qualifications travel to work outside the borough. In the HMR areas 16% of households have incomes of less than £5k/year and a further 36% earn less than 15k/year. 22% of households receive Income Support, 30% Housing Benefit and a third of pupils receive free school meals.

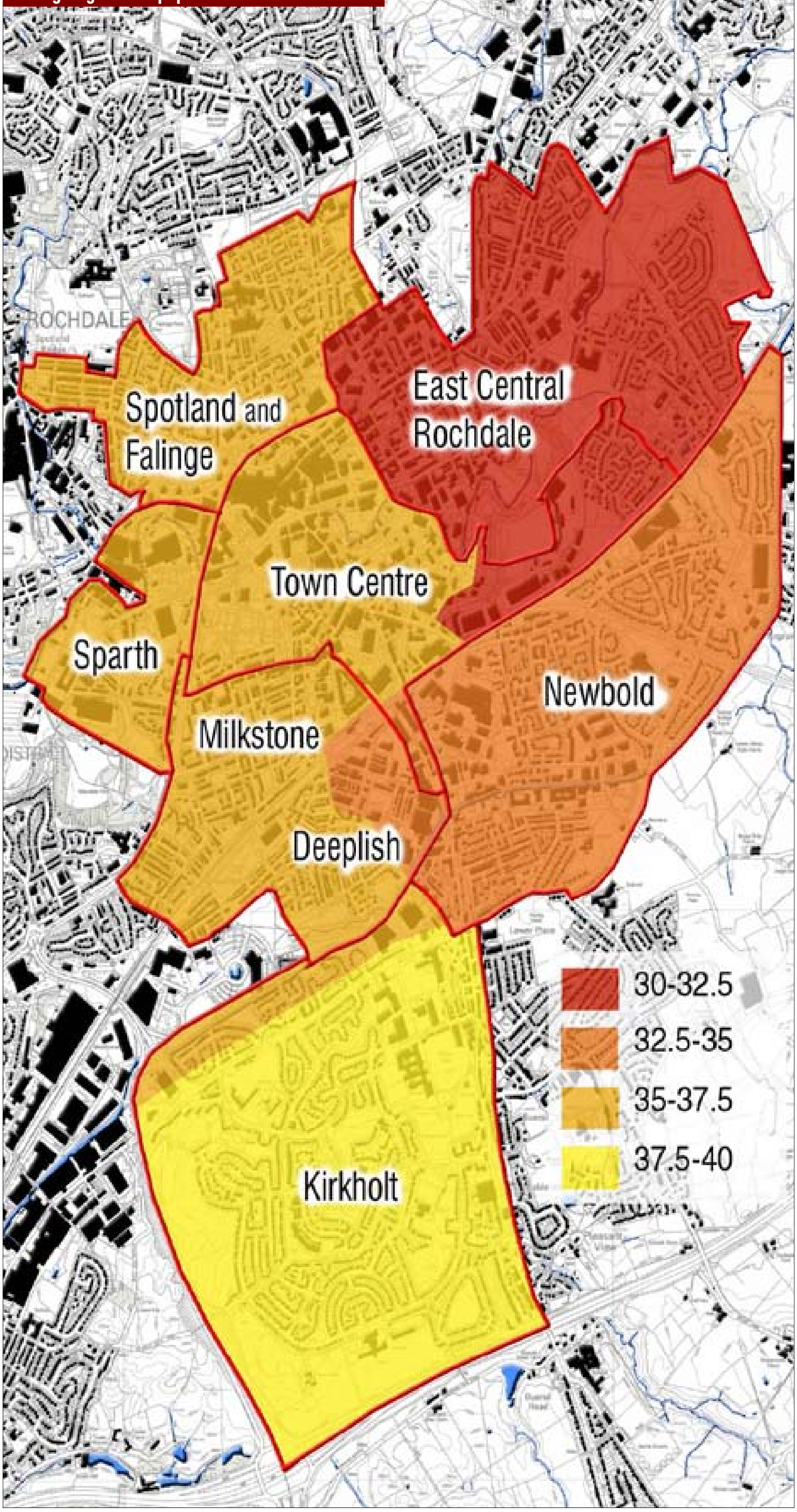
Employment: Unemployment in Rochdale has been falling and now stands at 4.2% which is still above the

regional average of 3.2%. In the HMR area only 48% of households have incoming wages and unemployment is twice the borough average. Central ward has an unemployment rate just under 12%.

Qualifications and Skills: The educational achievement of pupils in Rochdale has improved in recent years. This is against a backdrop of improving standards nationally so that the relative position of Rochdale schools has not changed. Achievement levels in the HMR area are poor with only 30% of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A-C last year compared to 58% nationally. The population of the borough is characterised by low levels of skills. 40% of 16-19 year olds have no NVQ qualification or higher compared to 35% nationally. 20% of the population have low levels of literacy.

Overall the picture is of a deprived community that, despite recent improvements, is still lagging behind both the borough and Greater Manchester.

Average Age of the population



2.2 Economy

In which we describe the economy of the borough and the need to diversify Rochdale's employment base to ensure a wide range of jobs in the future.

Business Activity: There were 4,250 VAT-registered businesses in Rochdale at the end of 2002, an increase of 1.3% on 2001. However the rate of business registrations at 22 per 10,000 population is below the regional average of 26.

The Rochdale economy is dominated by manufacturing (21% of jobs), distribution, hotels and restaurants (25%), public administration, education and health (23%). The manufacturing figure is significantly higher than the regional average.

In the next 10 to 15 years output is expected to increase regionally by 2% although employment growth will be much less at 0.3% as businesses become more efficient. However growth will be concentrated in certain sectors - retailing, business services, education and health. Manufacturing output is predicted to increase by 1.3% regionally but manufacturing employment is to shrink by almost 2%. Rochdale is therefore likely to see a loss of employment unless it diversifies its economy.

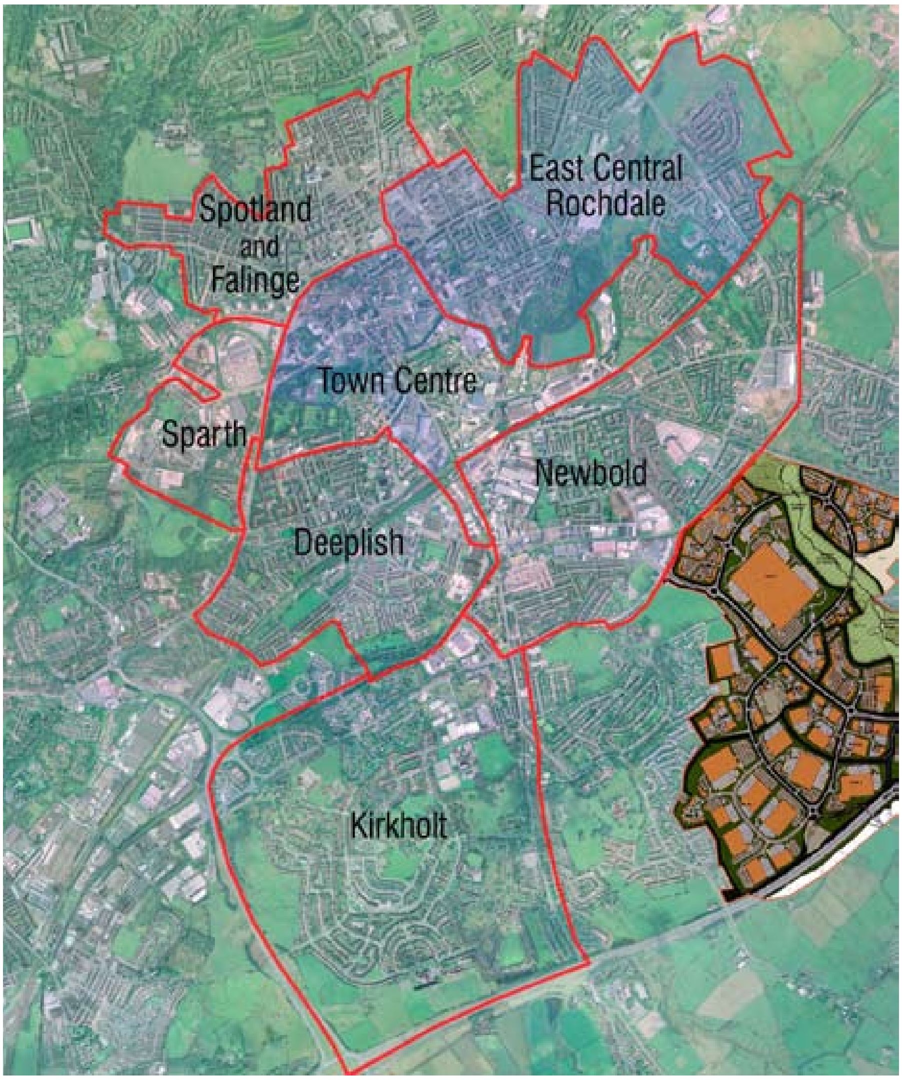
> Rochdale's economy is concentrated in sectors predicted to decline so that, unless action is taken, the number of local jobs will decline

One of the ways to assess the potential for this is by looking at business clusters. There are economic benefits of businesses clustering, especially if they are in growth sectors. Rochdale has clusters in textile manufacturing (almost 10 times the national average), chemicals and transport. It does however have low concentrations of research and development, insurance, pensions and computing. The clusters in Rochdale are in sectors predicted to decline adding to the conclusion that the borough will see declining levels of jobs in the future.

Inward Investment: Research for MIDAS on inward investment in Greater Manchester shows that in 2002/3 Rochdale only attracted 8% of all investment in Greater Manchester (2 projects). The lion's share (17 projects) went to Manchester. The work suggested that inward investment was becoming more difficult but identified that the key sectors were; life sciences, multi-media, business services/ICT, transport, food & drink, multi-lingual service centres and financial services.

Future opportunities: Rochdale has responded to these changing economic circumstances with the potential new office development at Sandbrook Park. The area in and around the town centre and the strategic corridors are also seen as important growth points with the creation of more than 1,000 office jobs in the Globe House and other planned schemes. However the largest employment initiative is the Kingsway Business Park which has the potential to attract many of the inward investment sectors described above. This is one of the most important employment initiatives in Greater Manchester. It has a net developable area of 114 hectares and the potential to provide 313,000m^2 of employment space including a mix of B1, B2 and B8 space. Sectors that have been targeted include ICT, financial services, leisure and tourism, materials based businesses, environmental services, engineering, manufacturing and logistics. It is expected that the first sites/premises will be available in 2006 and that eventually 7,250 direct and 1,570 indirect jobs will be created.

It is therefore clear that the economy and employment base of Rochdale will evolve in the next decade or so. Traditional jobs in manufacturing are likely to decline but this should be more than compensated for with new employment in the town centre and Kingsway. This has implications for the skills levels in the local population as well as the quality of the local housing stock. If these issues are not addressed there is a danger that the new jobs will be taken by people from outside the borough.



2.3 Housing Market

In which we review the assessment of the housing market by King Sturge alongside the work being undertaken by GVA Grimleys into the housing market and the impact of measures on houseprices.

Over the last year the average house price has increased by 23% in Rochdale compared with just 18% nationally.

In recent years there has been a significant rise UK house prices due to overall economic stability, low interest rates, falling unemployment and a national under-supply of housing. This caused houseprices to rise in the Southeast and spread to the rest of the country. The recent slow down has followed a similar course.

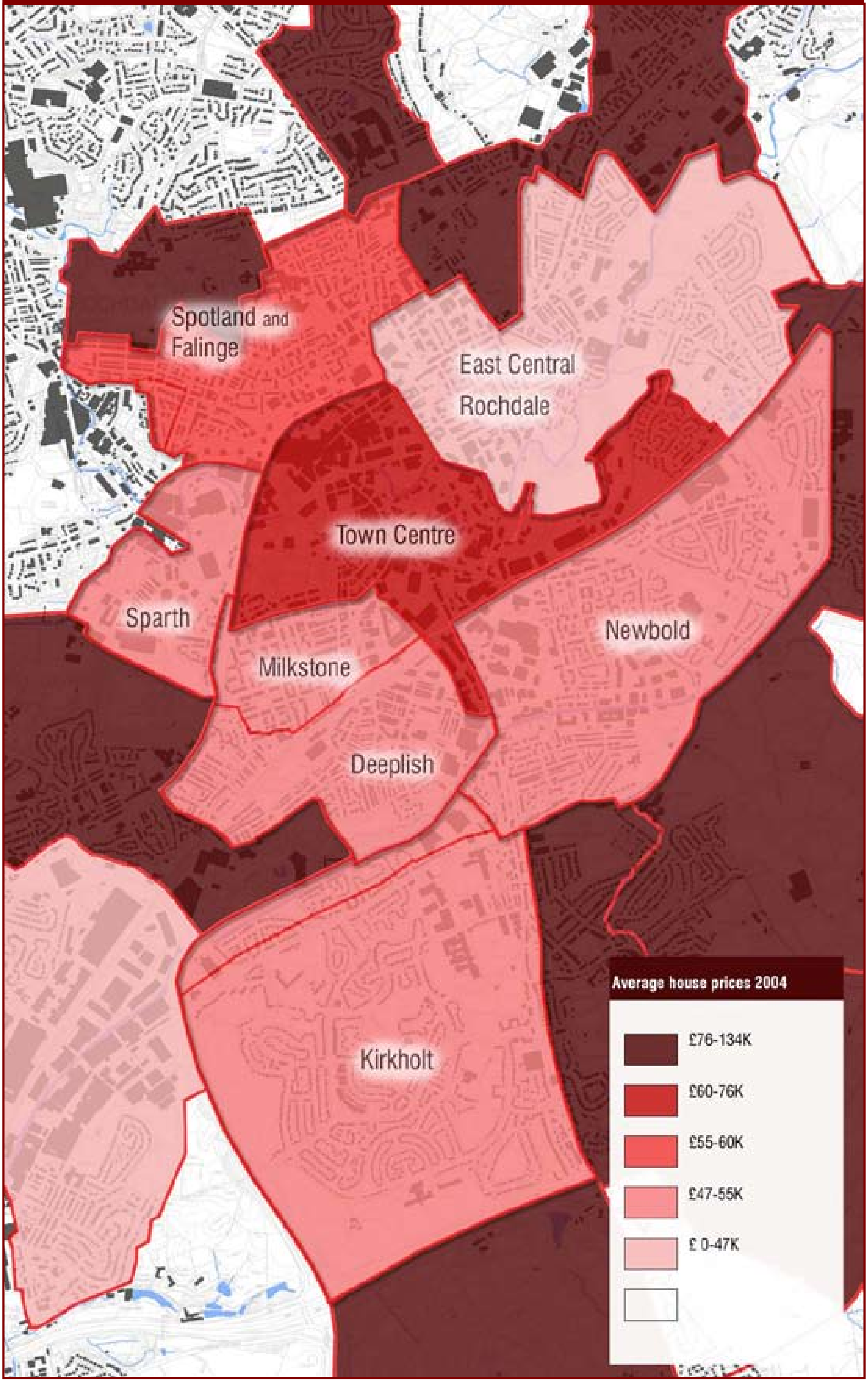
2002 saw some of the highest monthly increases in house prices since 1993. By 2003 the rate of increase had slowed in the south but continued at 10 – 15% in northern England. This continued into 2004 however towards the end of the year monthly increases dropped below 1% with some commentators showing a fall in November

However figures from July 2004 confirm that the value of residential building land continues to remain buoyant due to competition between developers for scarce land. This means that housebuilders are more prepared to work with 'difficult' inner city sites. Combined with a demand of urban lifestyles, this is creating a market for town centre housing.

The Rochdale Market: Rochdale is on the edge of one of the leading centres of housing renaissance – Manchester and there has been a strong growth in housing values which have risen by 23% in the last 12 months compared to an England and Wales average of 18%. This has been true of all types of property with the exception of flats/maisonettes. Terraced house prices have experienced a particularly large increase (36%). However despite this the average price of a dwelling in Rochdale is still only 57% of the national average.

The poor performance of flats and maisonettes suggests that the more expensive town centre residential market has is yet to develop in Rochdale. There are however substantial areas of terraced housing close to the town centre for which there is a significant demand. As the market for new, good

Average houseprices 2004



quality accommodation in the central area is yet to be tested it is difficult to predict demand. With good transport links to Manchester there is potential for developing desirable accommodation near to the town centre in the future.

Rochdale has many attractions as a residential location; proximity to attractive countryside, good communications links and affordable housing. However, there has been relatively little housebuilding in the borough with only 290 completions in 2003/4 the majority in the Pennines township and north Rochdale. There has been relatively little new housing in central Rochdale - mostly small infill schemes, the largest being just 68 units.

There has been substantial price inflation at the lower end of the market. However this is from a low base and prices are still more than 35% below the brough average

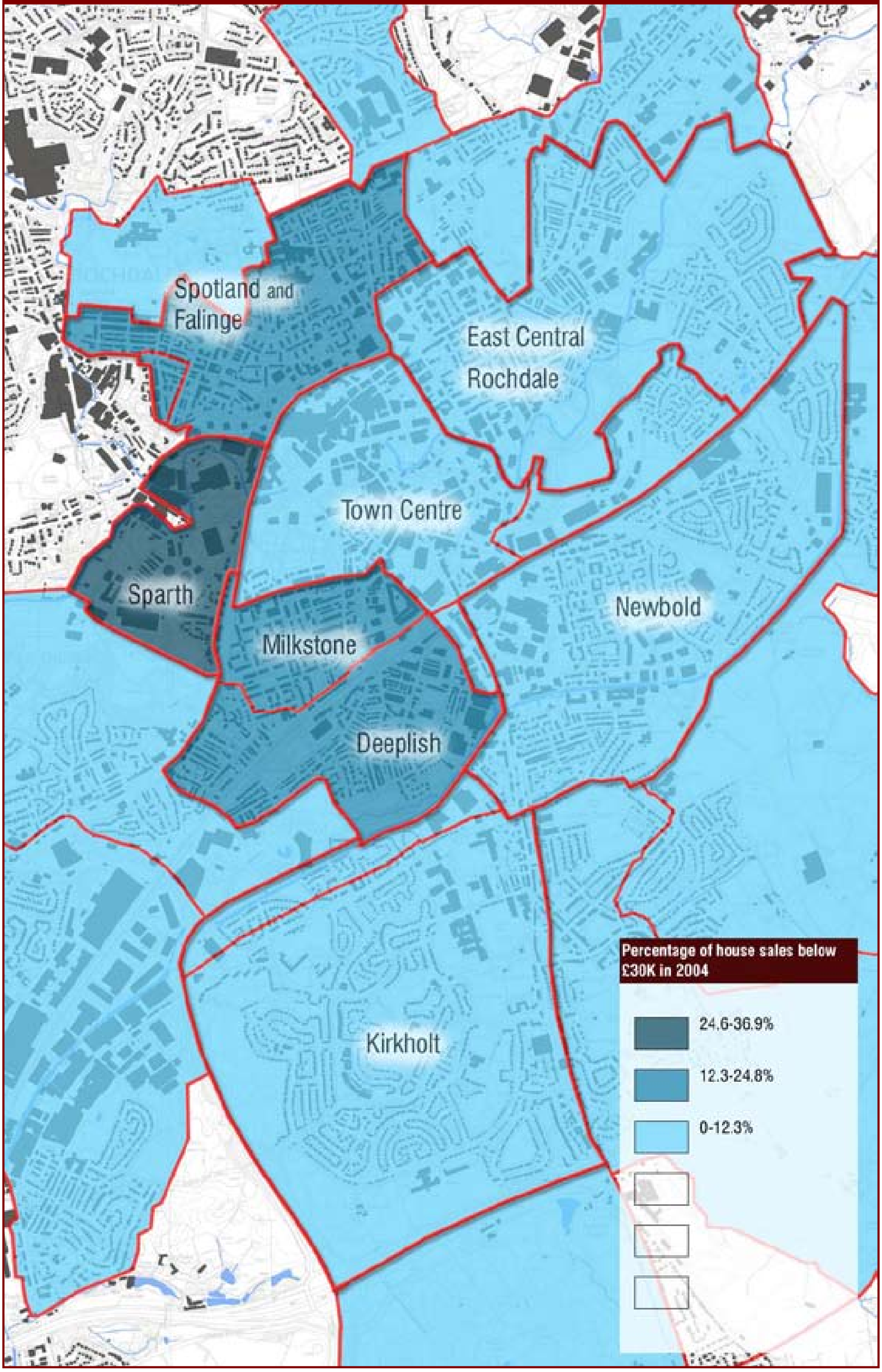
Inner Rochdale

The housing market of the five neighbourhoods covered by this study has been assessed by both King Sturge and Grimleys. This reveals a mixed picture. There has been substantial price inflation at the lower end of the market with terraces increasing by 20.3% in 2003 and 43.2% in 2004. However this is from a very low base and prices in the area are still more than 35% below the borough average.

The plan to the right shows that there is considerable local variation. The lowest average values are in East Central Rochdale where they are less than £47,000. In the remainder of Newbold, Kirkholt, Milkstone, Deeplish and Sparth values are between £47 and £55,000 while in Spotland and Falinge they are £55-60,000. The plan far right shows the proportion of sales at less than £30,000 and shows a slightly different picture. Sparth has the highest number of properties below £30K although the housing on Manchester Road lifts its average price significantly. Spotland and Falinge, have higher average prices due to the range of property in the area. The area holds significant numbers of much lower value properties as well as some of the highest value properties with detached property averaging £205,000 which is above the Rochdale average (albeit with a small number of transactions).

Demand for property is locally generated with the greatest demand for terraced accommodation, fuelled by first-time buyers.

Percentage of sales less than £30K in 2004



2.4 Commercial Market

In which we review the work undertaken by King Sturge into the commercial and industrial market of Rochdale. This highlights the opportunity to use the strategy to strengthen the economy of the town.

Office space

Nationally the market for offices has been through a difficult period but has picked up recently, particularly in regional markets. The upturn has been led by the finance and public sectors which account for over 80% of new floorspace. There has also been a trend away from out-of-town development in favour of sites where staff have access to public transport and facilities. An important factor are the plans in the Lyons Review to relocate 20,000 government jobs out of London. This identified Rochdale as a possible location for 'Information Support Contact Centres' and 'Back Office Functions'.

Rents have remained stable in the Manchester market in recent years however take-up in the City Centre and South Manchester has dropped while Salford Quays has grown. The North Manchester market is much smaller and harder to quantify. This has created a pent-up demand which is now being exploited following the completion of the M60. This can be seen by the success of the Waterfold Business Park in Rochdale, and the ASK development in Ashton-under-Lyne.

> There is likely to be continuing healthy demand for office and mixed-use development in and around the town centre.

The office market in Rochdale has traditionally been small. However schemes such as Sandbrook Park, Mitchell Hey Place and Globe House have let well and new-build accommodation is now achieving rents of £12/sqft. The Kingsway Business Park is the largest site, not only in the borough, but in the North West and will transform the North Manchester market. It covers 170 hectares and includes 3.13m^2 million of B1 and B2 space alongside 300 housing units in the KBP. Notwithstanding this there is likely to be a healthy demand for new office and mixed-use accommodation around the town centre and along strategic corridors including the Maclure Road/Canal basin area.

Retailing

The growth in retail spending has slowed recently although various trends continue to drive retail development. These include demand for high-quality shopping environments, extended opening hours and restrictions on out-of-town schemes. High-street retailers are looking for larger units while food retailers are introducing smaller format stores for town centres. The Borough Masterplan confirms that Rochdale is under-performing as a shopping centre. It is ranked at 143 compared to

Bolton at 76 and Oldham at 139. The proposed expansion of the Wheatsheaf Centre will start to address this. The main edge of centre provision is the retail park off Maclure Road that is being redeveloped by Town Centre Securities. The Borough Masterplan suggests that new retailing should be confined to the town centre.

There are also a range of smaller shopping parades in the five neighbourhoods with newsagents, convenience stores, a post offices, chemists and fast food outlets. Many also have a laundrette, hairdressers, tanning studio and betting shop. With the exception of Sparth the neighbourhoods have a good range of provision and the challenge is likely to be to maintain this rather than to expand it greatly. This is particularly true in Kirkholt where the Strand has some vacant units that could provide essential services for the community.

Leisure

The leisure market has expanded rapidly in recent years yet the Borough Masterplan suggests that cultural and leisure facilities in Rochdale are poorer than similar towns. There is one cinema (Sandbrook Park) and 7 private health clubs with a further facility planned as part of the Kingsway Business Park. The town centre has a buoyant evening economy based around the youth market. There are 18 hotels including 2 budget hotels and one 4 star hotel (Norton Grange at Castleton). The few independent restaurants are mainly Italian and Indian but the area lacks family leisure facilities. The Borough Masterplan suggests enhanced facilities to improve the attraction of the area to visitors. There is the potential for leisure development such as restaurants and family leisure in the area stretching from Drake Street to the canal. This is being addressed by the Taylor Young report and recommendations on the Rochdale Canal Corridor.

Industrial market

Demand for industrial space has remained strong in recent years. In the Rochdale market there has been a good level of demand for industrial accommodation in the second half of 2004. There is no shortage of industrial sites and premises in inner Rochdale. However a great deal of the stock is poor quality and badly located with respect to access and residential areas. Many industrial areas are a mix of infill accommodation, industrial estates and older mills and warehouses. Modern accommodation is generally well occupied. There is some vacancy in the poorer stock but no widespread vacancy. As new space comes on stream, particularly on Kingsway it is likely that demand for the older poorer space will decline further.

Overall the review suggests that there is a need within Rochdale to attract a range of commercial uses as set out in the Borough Masterplan. These will be concentrated in the town centre and on Kingsway creating a potentially important role for the Milkstone, Deeplish and Newbold areas which link the two. There is also a need to rationalise industrial provision and to redevelop some of the older premises.

2.5 Access and transport

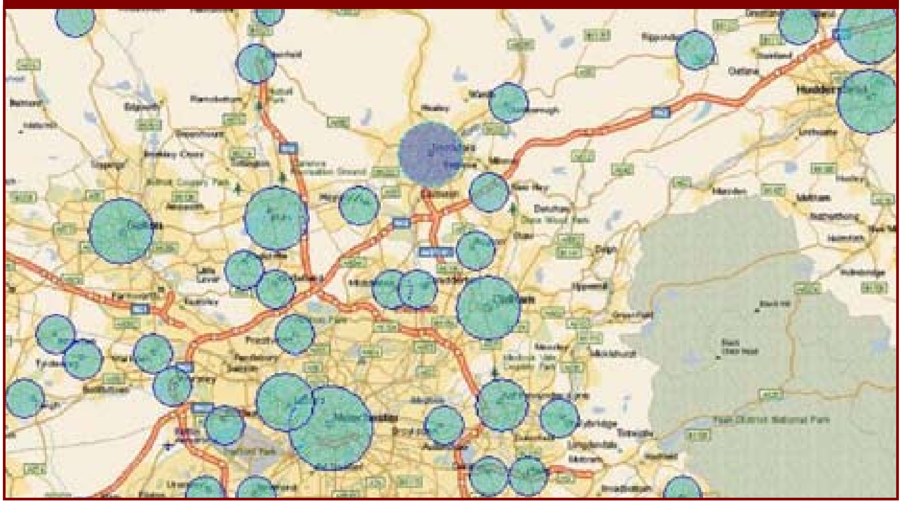
In which we describe the findings of the access audit undertaken by TPP as part of the study. This has reviewed existing transport conditions and provision within inner Rochdale.

> The majority of trips within the five neighbourhoods are by car despite relatively low levels of car ownership

Rochdale town centre is 10 miles from Manchester city centre, 6 miles from Bury and 5 miles from Oldham. It lies on the M62 corridor that links the urban areas from Liverpool to Hull.

The demand to travel in Inner Rochdale is determined by people's needs to get to work, shops and facilities. Some of this demand is to travel outside the Borough as shown on the plan below left – the size of the circle indicating the numbers travelling. Travel also takes place within the borough and the map above shows the main types of facility within the town that are likely to generate travel demand. This shows a concentration of services in the town centre and Drake Street that serve the whole borough but are very accessible to the five neighbourhoods. Other services in residential areas are less easily reached by public transport and there is also a need to relate public transport to employment centres such as the hospital and, in the future, Kingsway Business Park.

Travel destinations for Rochdale residents



Mode of travel

TPP show that the majority of people in the five neighbourhoods access these facilities by car. This despite the low levels of car ownership in the area (50% in Sparth and Spotland and Falinge and 60% elsewhere). The combination of these factors limits mobility so that the of people tend to work either in their neighbourhood or the town centre. Only in Kirkholt do a significant number (30%) work outside the borough.

Most journeys are by car even within the neighbourhoods. People travel more by bus within Greater Manchester but the highest proportion is still only 13% of trips in Newbold and Sparth. Train accounts for 6-7% of trips from neighbourhoods around the station but only 2-4% elsewhere.

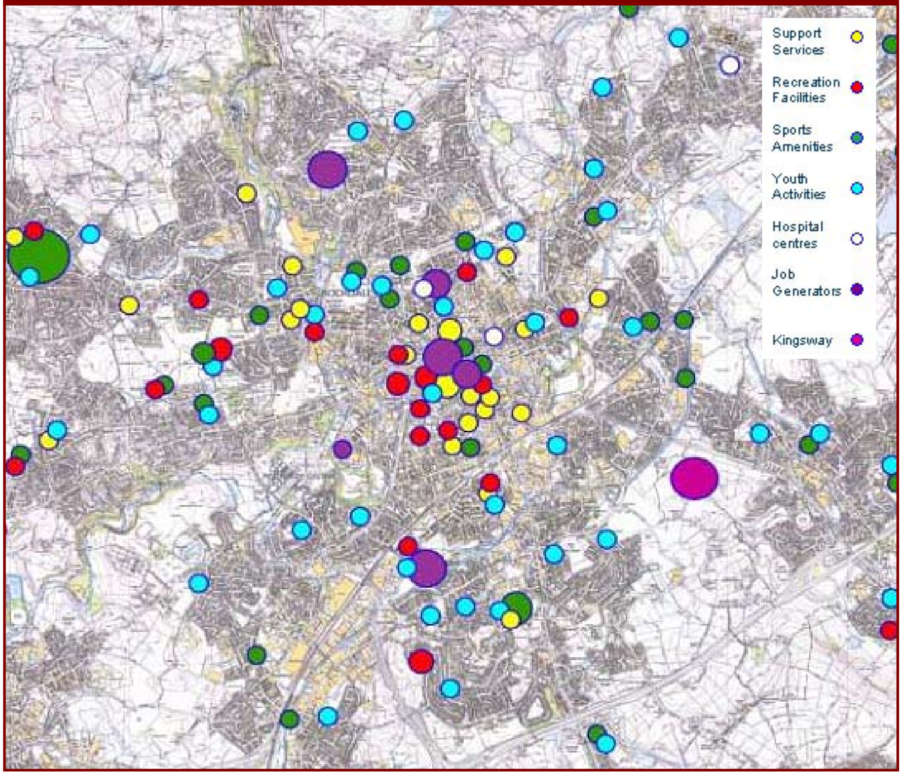
Traffic

This high level of car use causes congestion problems in inner Rochdale. However many of these car journeys originate and terminate outside Inner Rochdale - it is just that people need to pass through the area. This causes congestion, poor air quality, delays and severance for trips by pedestrians and cyclists. The plan below right shows the worst areas of congestion. Improvements are being made to the network including the Manchester Road / Edinburgh Way, Kingsway / Oldham Road and Whitworth Road / Yorkshire St junctions. Park and ride facilities are planned at the station and traffic calming is planned or recently completed in Deeplish, Kirkholt and Newbold.

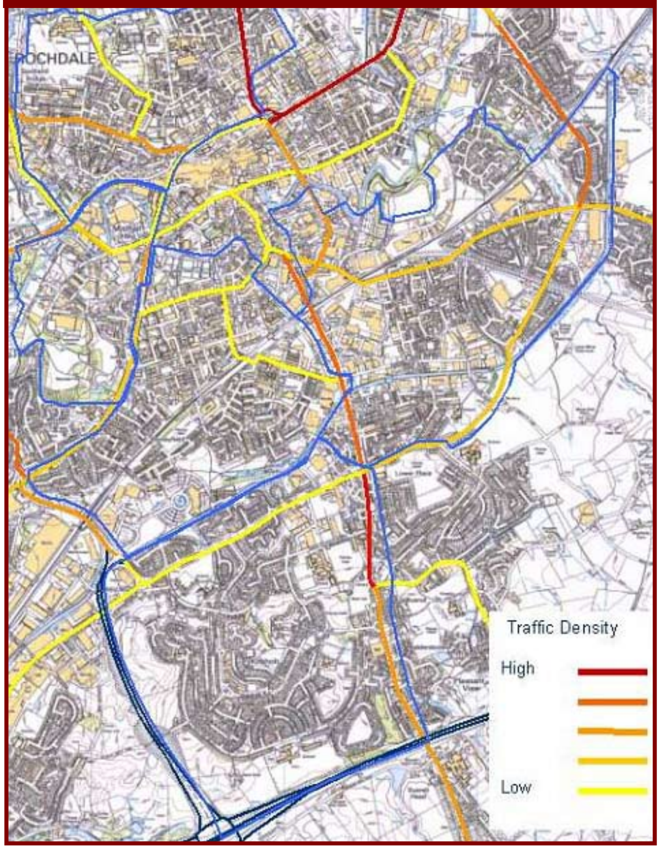
Public transport

Bus Routes: There are currently plans to move the bus station to create an interchange with Metrolink east of Drake Street. Most of the bus routes through Inner Rochdale access the bus station so that accessibility to the town centre is very good as shown by the plan overleaf. The bus routes are on main routes and most neighbour

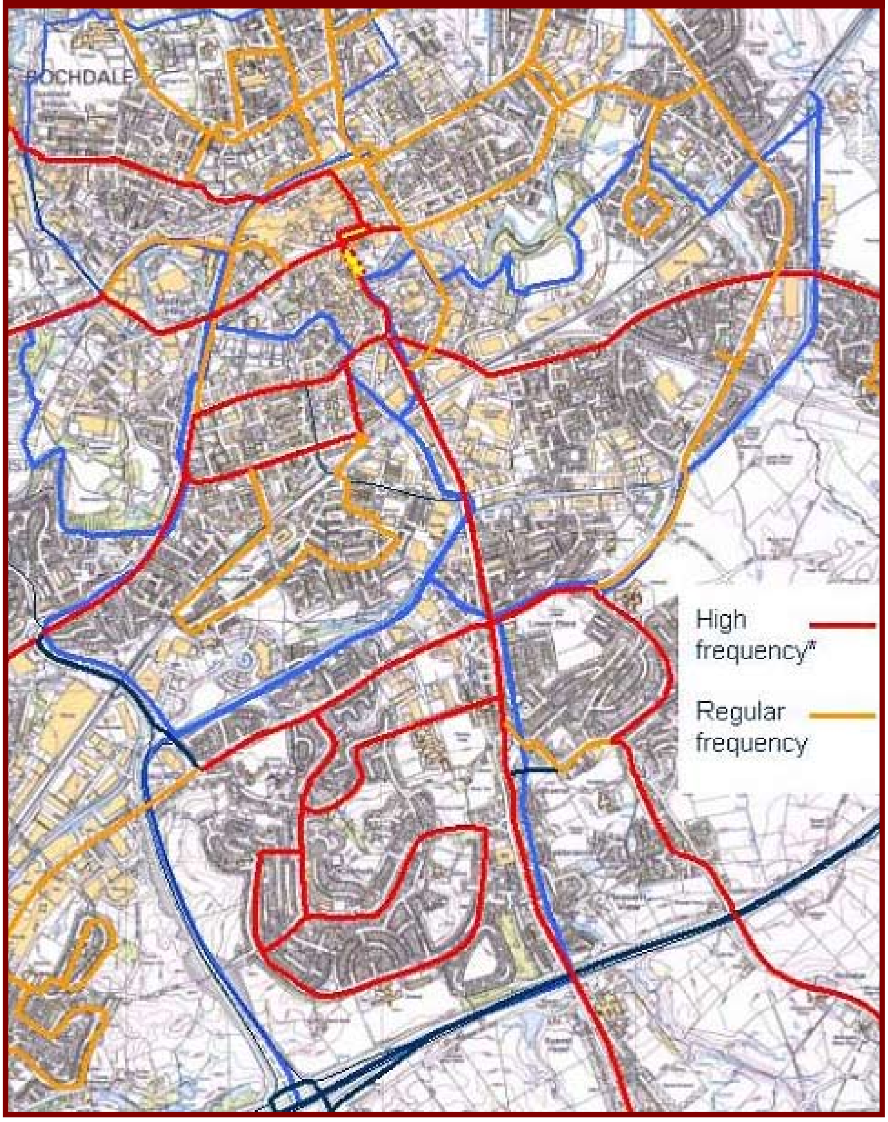
Facilities within Rochdale that generate travel demand



Traffic density within Rochdale



Bus routes



hoods are well served. The exception is Newbold where penetration into the area is very poor. Quality Bus Corridor are proposed on Manchester Road and in the future on Whitworth Road and Oldham Road.

Rail and tram: The railway station is just south of the town centre. The main line runs from Manchester to Yorkshire with a loop down through Oldham and back to Manchester. This line is proposed for the Metrolink which will run up through the Kingsway Business Park stopping in Newbold and at the station before running on Drake Street to terminate in the town centre. While not yet secure, prospects for the Metrolink currently look reasonably good.

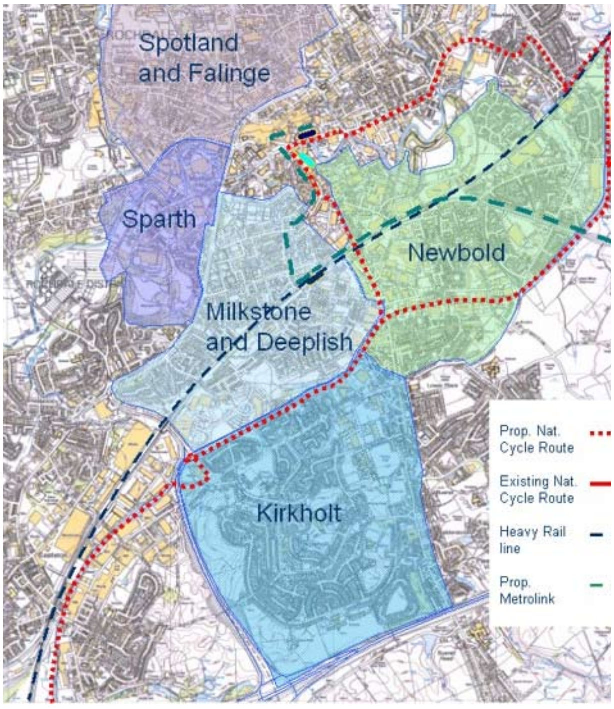
Rail, and potentially tram services, make Rochdale very accessible. However the station is poorly accessible and has no interchange facilities. There are however proposals for a 250 space park-and-ride facility south of the station.

Walking and Cycling

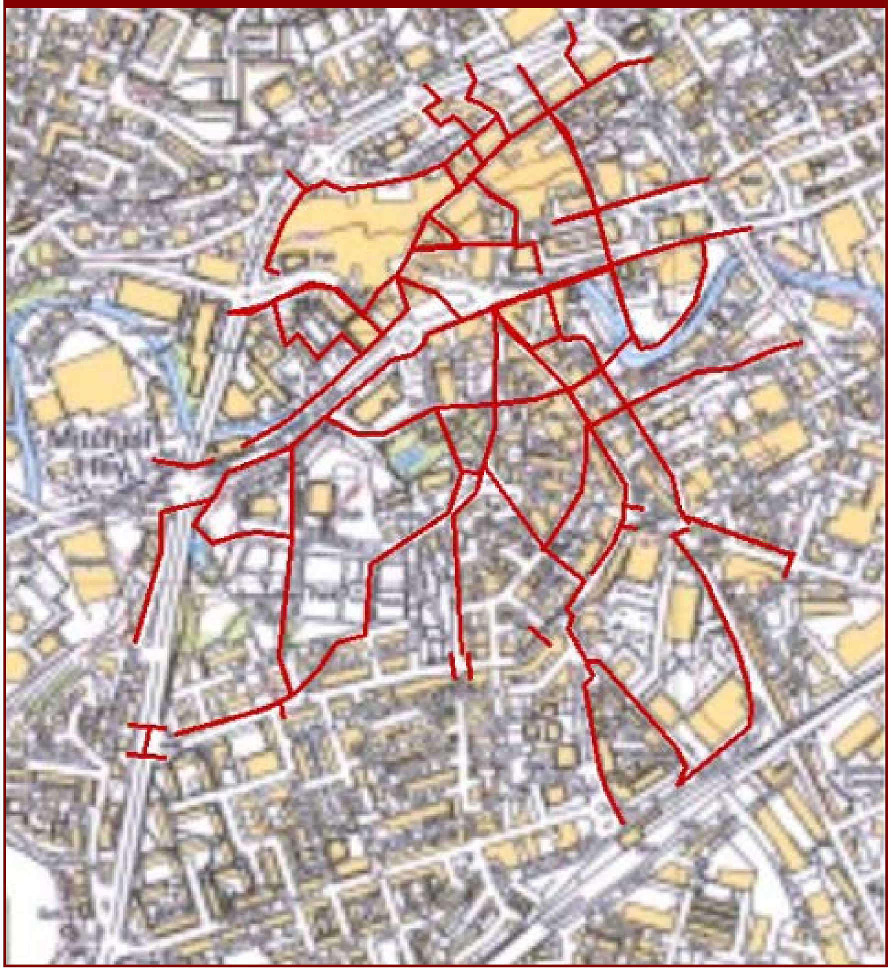
Many journeys to work in Inner Rochdale are short so that travel on foot and by cycle could be more important than it is. However there are problems of severance caused by topography and infrastructure such as roads, the canal, industry, the railway and the River Roch. Concerns for safety also dissuade people from walking. Work done by TPP acknowledges that improvements to the quality of the highway environment are needed in order to promote use by pedestrians, cyclists and other modes as well as private car. Proposals are already in place to connect up the many walking and cycling facilities already existing in the town centre, in addition to the existing and proposed national cycle network, to form an integrated walking and cycling network.

The image below right demonstrates how existing and proposed pedestrian and cycle routes can form the foundations of a network to connect the inner Rochdale areas with the town centre and the surrounding countryside. Further proposals to improve the canal network as part of the Rochdale Canal Corridor Regeneration Strategy can also tackle environment issues around the canal for local residents and improve accessibility. All of these strategies need to form a comprehensive network with the town centre area.

Below right shows a strategic walking/cycling network within the town centre. Any additional routes through the Inner Rochdale areas would need to form a consistent network with these existing and proposed facilities. By encouraging walking and cycling it is hoped that the vitality of each neighbourhood would be significantly improved creating a safer, less polluted environment. This idea is explored in more detail for each of the neighbourhoods.



Potential cycle network



2.6
Urban form

In which we describe the physical structure of Inner Rochdale including its urban form, linkages and open space network.

> Many of the housing areas retain their form and structure, especially the inner neighbourhoods

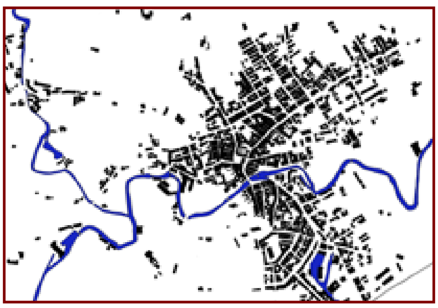
As part of the study we have undertaken an initial analysis of Inner Rochdale's urban form. This is a starting point for the more detailed work in the second part of the study. This includes a range of analysis plans that are combined onto the plan opposite.

Rochdale grew up as a small market town in the foothills of the Pennines. Described by Celia Fiennes in 1698 as 'a pretty neate town built of stone' it changes little until the mid 19th century. The town grew up around the Parish church dramatically sited on a hill overlooking a fording point over the River Roch. The Industrial Revolution saw the town grow rapidly with densely packed industry along the river and the canal surrounded by closely packed workers housing in the neighbourhoods covered by this study. Much of the poorest housing has been cleared leaving the later better quality terraced housing.

The figure ground plans of the town show this growth. Particularly striking are the routes that form such an important part of the town. Drake Street was originally the route from Manchester while Milkstone Road and Toad Lane was an important North/ South route.

The current figure ground plan shows major changes from the historic plans. Many of the housing areas retain their form and structure, especially the inner neighbourhoods. There is much urban form here to be built on, especially in Spotland and Milkstone. However the industrial areas have become very fractured with a much lower density of development and little urban form. As a result the town centre is surrounded by a zone of poorly-defined space that stretches all the way down to the canal and along the river valley.

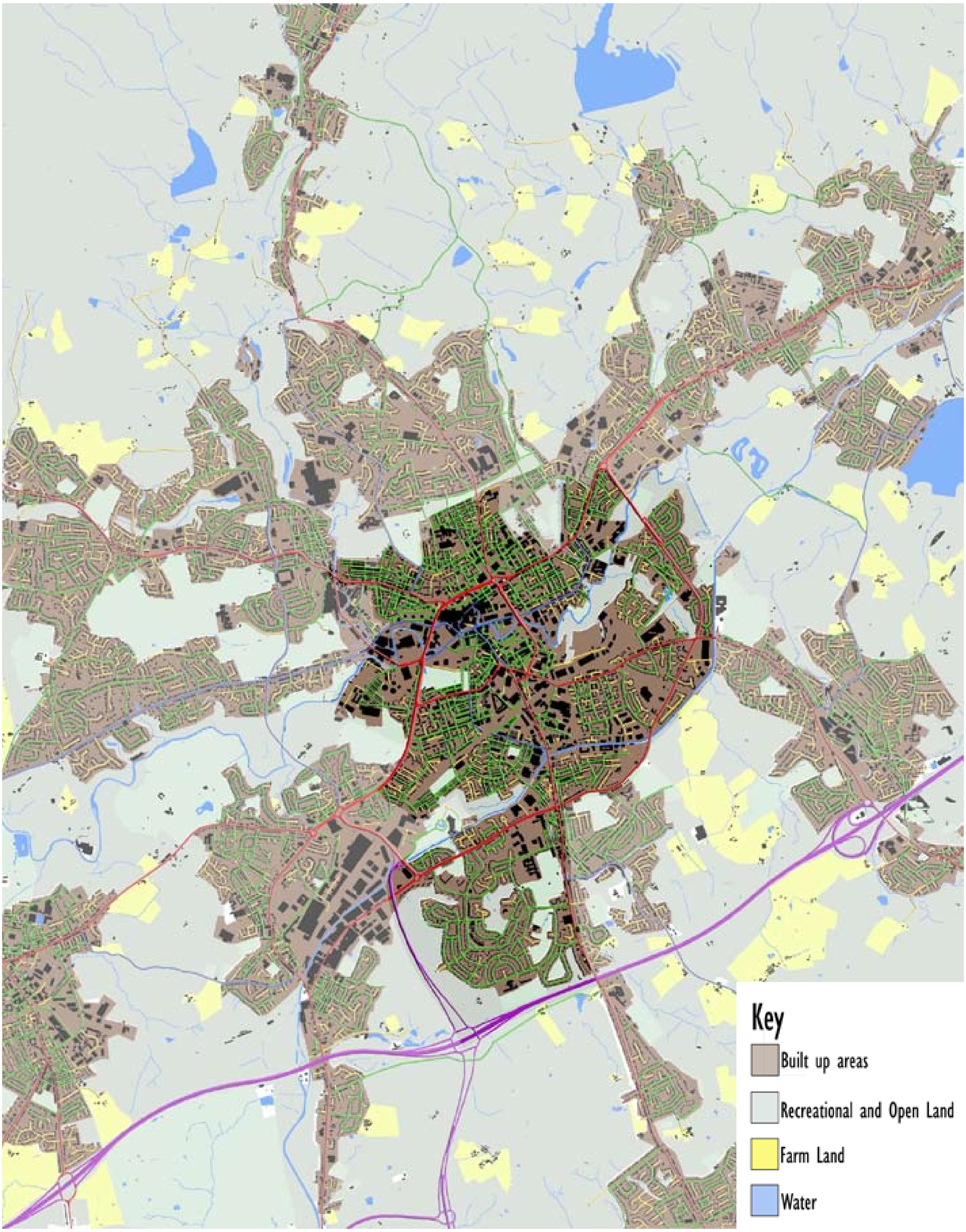
The main roads into the town can be picked out on the figure ground plan indicating that they remain reasonably well enclosed by buildings. This is true of Oldham Road and



1851

1894

1931


Key
Built up areas
Recreational and Open Land
Farm Land
Water

Whitworth Road and Drake Street. Manchester Road and Kingsway / Queensway are less visible reflecting the fact that they are not well defined and enclosed by buildings.

Permeability

We have also undertaken a permeability assessment of the inner areas. The street hierarchy is shown in the plan on the previous page and in more detail in the Appendix. It shows the twin routes of St. Mary's Way and Kingsway bypassing the town centre and the radial routes linking into the centre. The former generally act as barriers while the radial routes still act as high streets in many places and are lined with shops. The green lines shown are local routes and the yellow show streets that are cul-de-sacs. This illustrates that there a range of barriers around the town the make it difficult to move from one neighbourhood to another. The most important barriers are the river valley and the canal. There are other local barriers such as the Falinge and Freehold Flats. One of the roles of the masterplanning process will be to overcome these barriers.

Land use

We have undertaken an analysis of land use in the inner area. This shows a broad separation of uses. The industrial areas would once have included substantial amounts of housing but years of planning zoning and clearance have separated these uses out. The remaining terraces in Sparth are perhaps the last of their kind. However the older terraced areas do retain a mix of local uses including shops, pubs, community buildings and small scale employment. By contrast the planned Kirkholt area and much of Newbold have very few uses other than housing.

> By consolidating the industrial areas and improving the green space the HMR masterplans can reinforce the town's neighbourhood structure

Open space

The wider context plan shows that the five neighbourhoods make up a significant part of the township of Rochdale. This is a star-shaped settlement and fingers of greenery penetrate up to the edges of the inner neighbourhoods. There are also a number of potentially good quality open spaces within the area, particularly Falinge Park, Broadfield Park, Cronkeyshaw Common and the valley between Deeplish and Kirkholt. However many of these areas were identified in our consultations as dangerous and intimidating and in need of major capital investments and restoration.

Rochdale retains a structure of dense inner neighbourhoods separated by industry and green space. By consolidating the industrial areas and improving the green space the HMR masterplans can reinforce this neighbourhood structure and repair the damage to the urban fabric around the centre.

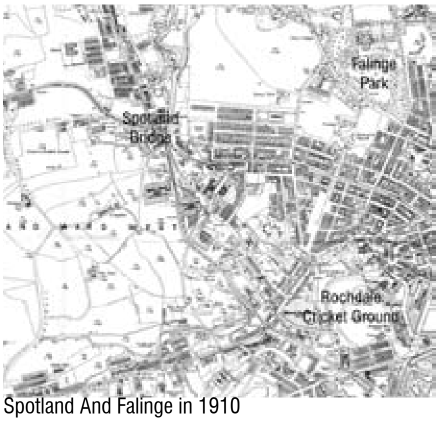
3. The neighbourhood

In which we describe the characteristics of each of the neighbourhoods.

The main part of the study has concentrated on the five neighbourhoods of Sparth, Spotland and Falinge, Milkstone and Deeplish, Newbold and Kirkholt. These areas have been studied in detail through desk-based research, analysis and consultation. This has fed into the a masterplanning exercise for four of the five neighbourhoods and each area has an appendices to this report detailing the work done by URBED in each area. In this section we briefly characterise each of the neighbourhoods including its history, its relationship to Rochdale and its population and housing stock.

This background work has been combined with the details of the consultation undertaken in each of the areas. This includes the feedback on neighbourhood and housing issues from the SUN Bus, the Design for Change workshop and subsequent SUN Bus exhibitions.

3.1 Spotland and Falinge



Spotland And Falinge in 1910

Spotland and Falinge stand on the slopes to the north of the town centre. To the south the area is bounded by College Road and St. Mary's Gate from which it rises to Falinge Park and Cronkeyshaw Common to the north. To the east it encompasses Whitworth Road and Town Head, the original gateway to the town from the north. In addition to Whitworth Road the oldest part of the area is Spotland Bridge, which was once a village separated by fields from Rochdale until as late as 1850. The area between Whitworth Road and Spotland Bridge grew up in the second half of the 19th century. By the end of the century a dense terraced housing area had developed around the busy Spotland Road. The Rochdale Infirmary was built in its current form in 1913, although it has been a facility on this site for longer. Originally on the edge of the town but now hemmed in by terraced housing.

The core of the area remains largely unchanged and is dominated by terraced housing. However the terraces on the slope nearest the town centre were redeveloped in the mid 1960s with the College Bank flats – four 20 storey and three 16 storey tower blocks that have dominated the town ever since. The College Bank flats have always been relatively popular. Less successful were the Falinge deck-access flats built a few years later in the heart of the area. A decision was nearly taken to demolish this estate a few years ago but it was instead refurbished and subjected to intensive management. It is now considered to be operating successfully.

In addition to Spotland Road and Whitworth Road the area was once linked to the centre by Toad Lane, one of Rochdale's historic routes. However the development of Collage Bank Flats and St. Mary's Gate has cut the area off from the town centre from which it now feels quite isolated. Spotland is however a strong neighbourhood as is Whitworth to the east, Falinge has a less strong identity and its image is negatively affected by the flats.

Population: The area is home to 6,765 people in 3,097 households. 30.3% are of Asian origin, mainly Pakistani. There is a significantly higher number of single person households

in the area, 46% compared to the HMR average of 32%. This is likely to be because of the College Bank flats. This may also account for the fact that the population is relatively young and transient. There are also a significant number of asylum seekers because the council's policy of using the Falinge Flats to accommodate this group.

The area suffers from high levels of deprivation, crime, unemployment and poor health. These problems tend to be concentrated in the Falinge Flats however unemployment stands at 13.1% across the area while almost 41% of households have incomes below £10,000. There are also high levels of long-term sickness and disability in the area compared to the HMR area as a whole.

Housing: The majority of the properties (51.3%) are terraced, most of the balance (37.8%) being flats in the Falinge and the College Bank estates. These flats make up most of the 37% of the stock in the area that is social rented and overall 55% of property is rented the balance being owner-occupied. Only 7.8% of the surveyed housing stock was categorised as 'unfit' or 'defective', mostly older terraced properties. This reflects the housing improvement work that has been undertaken in the area in the last 20 years. Spotland and Falinge also has the lowest voids levels (2.98%) of all the HMR areas whilst overcrowding is slightly lower than the HMR average at 14.5%.

Major projects: There are no plans to undertake major works to the Lower Falinge estate or the College Bank Flats. The Pennine Acute Hospital Trust which runs the hospital is exploring the potential to expand and to rationalise its site through a masterplan by Taylor Young. Their remit is to look at the rationalisation of the existing site, not its expansion by the demolition of surrounding housing which has been ruled out. The study is however looking to reorientate the hospital towards Whitworth Road and is looking at possible acquisitions to facilitate this, particularly the ambulance station which is relocating.

RMBC and RDA are looking at potential sites for long stay car parking around the ring road. There may be an opportunity for a shared facility at the infirmary at some point in the future.

Masterplan: The masterplan was developed in consultation with residents identified key areas for intervention and improvements. We worked alongside residents in the Design for Change workshop to develop these ideas and after further consultation with the wider community developed a masterplan that reflected both the communities aspirations and realities of build. Further information on this process and the eventual product can be found in Appendix 1.

3.2 Sparth

Sparth in 1910

The Sparth neighbourhood is located half a mile south-west of the town centre and is the smallest HMR neighbourhood with just 761 people. The area developed along the valley of the River Roch. The flood plain was developed for industry and the town cricket pitch (since developed as an Asda Supermarket). Terraced housing developed amongst the industry – it was never a large community but now has reduced to a core of 305 homes.

To the north is Rochdale College although this is cut off from the rest of the area by the river. The area has developed on either side of Norman Road which serves a variety of industrial premises next to the river. While this industry includes some older buildings much of the industry is unsightly and there are a number of bad neighbour uses including a skip yard, a concrete plant and a bus depot. There is also a long-established gas works with three large gas holders that tower over the housing. The area suffers from serious conflicts between the housing and these industrial uses, particularly as a result of traffic on Norman Road.

The community is focused around a community centre and a small mosque on Normal Road as well as a small park. These facilities have generated a very strong community support, something that has been reflected in the consultations that we have undertaken in the area.

To the east the ground rises rapidly up Sparth Bottoms Road to Manchester Road. The retaining wall along this road is in a poor condition and is threatening the housing above the wall. There is a small community of houses on the level land at the top of the hill fronting onto the old Manchester Road now bypassed by a dual carriageway to the east. To the south the area is bounded by Mandale Park. This is a former tip that has been landscaped. However the park is isolated, feels dangerous and is not well used. It has been used for trial biking that is a source of irritation to local people.

Population: The area is home to 761 people 45.3% of which is of Pakistani origin while 47.8% are white. It is a young community with 24.7% of people in the 16-30 years old age band, compared to 19.4% in Inner Rochdale. It is however a severely deprived community (the 17th most deprived out of 32,482 nationally). Unemployment stands at 18.1% and a large numbers of houses are in receipt of benefits. 60.1% of households have incomes of less than £15k per year

Housing: The housing is almost entirely made up of pre-1919, pavement-fronted terraces. This area has the highest proportion of houses which were sold below £30,000 and a 100% survey of the property found 28.69% to be 'unfit' or 'defective'. However while values are low there are only 5.24% voids which is lower than the HMR average. The consultation suggests that demand within the local community for housing in the area is strong particularly from families seeking to move out of their parents home. The lack of alternative accomodation leads to severe overcrowding affecting 20% of the property.

Major Projects: The Sparth area is currently subject to a Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment by Michael Howard Associates. This has looked at 5 future scenarios for the area and has consulted with local people. The scenarios were; 1) to do nothing, 2) to remove the industry from the area and develop it entirely for housing, 3) to deal with the social problems of the area, 4) to deal with the housing issues and 5) to remove the housing and develop it for industry only. The community opted for Option 2 but on balance the process has opted for a combination of options 3 and 4. This is being worked up into a neighbourhood action plan through the Neighbourhood Renewal process but the reality is that the resources to implement this plan are limited.

At this time there is a proposal for a small housing scheme by St. Vincent's Housing Association north of the river. This however is currently in abeyance due to ground condition problems.

Masterplan: URBED worked with residents in the area identifying the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the area with the aim to address them in the final masterplan that the practice produced. Through the Design for Change workshop URBED consulted with residents about the way in which to deal with housing. The option most favoured was to segregate industrial and housing but keep both in the area and expand. Residents wanted to stay and the industrial area could be expanded and used for other industry relocation. To see in further detail the proposed plans to bring this idea forward and the process involved in making those decisions please see Appendix 2.

3.3 Milkstone and Deeplish

Situated to the south of the town centre, Milkstone and Deeplish is the most populous of the five Inner Rochdale neighbourhoods with a population of 7,490 of whom 65% are of Asian origin.

Milkstone is one of the oldest parts of Rochdale. It grew up around the Parish Church on the top of the sloping valley side to the west of the town centre. It would appear from old maps that Drake Street was the original route from Manchester and Milkstone Road was the old road from Oldham. Drake Street made its way down the slope to what would once have been the only crossing point over the River Roch. While much of the old Milkstone has gone there remains a few substantial Georgian properties. Milkstone Road remains a lively street, lined with small shops and restaurants.

The remainder of Milkstone and Deeplish grew up around the canal and the railway. The Rochdale Canal was completed in the early part of the 19th Century with an arm to a canal basin next to the junction of Drake Street and Oldham Road. The railway arrived in the 1840s and together this led to a growth of industry along the canal and in the eastern part of the area. It would appear that the terraced housing on Deeplish and the remainder of Milkstone grew up to house the workers in this area. The area to the north of the station was redeveloped in the 1930s to create a gateway to the town. Key buildings include the domed St. John's RC Church and the fire station with its fine hose drying tower.

Two parts of the area were redeveloped in the 1960s and 70s. The valley to the south of Deeplish was developed as the Ashfield Valley flats, a notorious 7 storey deck access estate that was demolished in the 1990s. A small part of the estate remains on the canal, part of the remainder has been landscaped and the rest was redeveloped for offices and a retail store for the Cooperative. This is now a B&Q store and the offices of My Travel.

The other redevelopment was the Freehold estate on the Manchester Road. This was refurbished rather than demolished and, like the Falinge flats, has been subject to an intensive

management regime. A percentage of the estate is now used to house asylum seekers, is fully occupied and is regarded by the ALMO as a success.

Population: The 7,490 people of Milkstone and Deeplish live in 2,413 households. The average household size is therefore 3.1 persons, the largest in the HMR area. This reflects the fact that it is a predominantly a family-based community, with 45% of households living with children, and higher levels of younger people in the area generally. People of Asian origin make up 65% of the community the majority of whom are of Pakistani origin (61.3%).

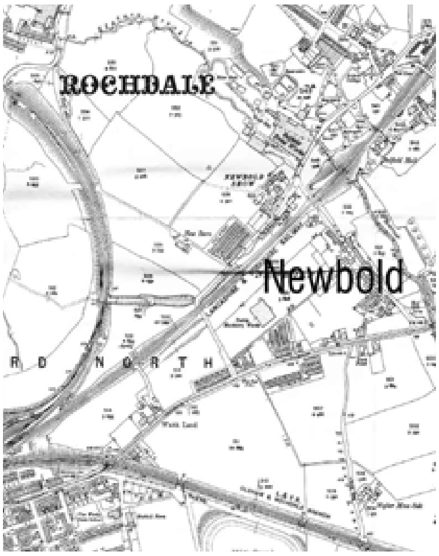
Deeplish and Milkstone have high levels of unemployment (16%) and over 50% of households receive Housing Benefit. The area has a range of problems including drugs, crime, anti-social behaviour and prostitution. However it also has a very strong community based particularly around the mosques as detailed below.

Housing: The housing in the area is predominantly pre-1919 terraced housing (45.7%). The Milkstone area is quite varied with some older and larger properties. The central part of Deeplish is made up almost entirely of Victorian terraces although there are some larger properties on the southern fringe of the area. 60% of the property is owner-occupied with the rest split between different forms of renting. There are problems with the housing stock. 18.1% of properties are classified as unfit or defective (437 properties) and 7.8% are overcrowded. However a significant amount of property has been improved and there remains a healthy demand for property in the area and house prices have risen faster here than in other areas.

Key Projects: The main plans being developed in the area are Central Retail Park, Maclure Road, Metrolink and the canal. These are all discussed in greater detail at the beginning of the third appendix.

Masterplan: Working with the residents and community of the area URBED sought to find out what the key needs were in the area as identified by the local people, the SUN Bus exhibitions in the area proved informative and often well attended. Working hand in hand with residents on the Design for Change workshops URBED took people through the masterplanning process to see what different options arose. Those were then taken out to the wider community for comment before URBED completed a final masterplan. The process and the product of it can be seen in Appendix 3.

3.4 Newbold



Newbold in 1910

The Newbold area is situated to the south east of the town centre. Its has a population of 6,891 and consists of a variety of housing developed at different times. The area developed in the gap between Oldham Road to the west and Milnrow Road to the North. It is bisected by the canal and the railway creating a neighbourhood that feels cut off from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

The western part of the neighbourhood consists of industry, originally developed along the canal arm into town. This includes older industrial buildings to the south and more modern premises next to the railway. To the east of this is a mixed area of predominantly social housing. Some of this is managed by the ALMO and some by the Guinness Trust. To the west of this lie a variety of more suburban housing areas, both private and council. These estates consist of semi-detached properties. The council stock has had problems in the past but is now stable. To the north of this area a mill on Kenworthy Terrace is being demolished to create a housing site to be developed by Westbury Homes.

One of the problems of the area is the disconnected nature of the street network. The nearest that the area has to a high street is the Milnrow Road on the northern edge of the area which is a focus for some shops and facilities. However the main shopping provision is the Morrisons store in the heart of the area. To the south the area is bounded by Kingsway. However the road network has been sliced up so that there no direct connections between the two roads in the heart of the area. This causes the area to feel isolated and confusing meaning that people who do not live there will tend not to venture into the estate.

Population: Newbold is home to 6,891 people in 2,983 giving an average household size of 2.3 persons, one of the smallest in the HMR areas. The population is predominantly white (73.3%) with a small Pakistani (19%)

and Bangladeshi (3%) community. This is an area where the Asian community have in the past not wished to live due to conflict with the white community. This is gradually being overcome and the ALMO reports success in moving Asian households into the western part of the area. Unemployment in the area is twice the borough average and the number of Housing Benefit claimants is also higher than the average borough levels.

Housing: The housing is more mixed that the other HMR areas. Terraces make up 47% of the stock while 33.1% are semi detached and 16.5% are flats. Half of the property is owner-occupied while 19% is council housing, 17.2% housing association and 12.1% private rented. Average houseprices are lower and the voids rate at 4.45% is relatively high compared to the other HMR areas and has risen from 3.55% in 2003. However voids levels are still well below a level that would cause concern. Overcrowding is relatively high at 11.2% of the stock but condition does not appear to be a problem in the area.

Key projects: There is a canal basin masterplan that affects Newbold. It proposes the development of the sites between Crawford Street and the canal as a mix of new housing and workspace. This also links with the wider Rochdale Canal Corridor masterplan put forward by Taylor Young.

The Guinness Tust is currently reviewing its estate in the heart of the area. Parts have not worked and it is likely that the core of one bedroom flats will be redeveloped. Currently, there are no plans for wider demolition.

If the Metrolink is approved there is a planned stop in the car park of Morrisons. This will potentially serve the area, although at present the disconnected road system could undermine this.

To the south of Newbold there are plans for the Kingsway Business Park. This is a major development that runs from Kingsway to the motorway and will take access from Junction 21 of the M62. This will create up to 7,250 jobs as well as being a new gateway to the town. There will be an increasing focus on Newbold as the connection between Kingsway and the town centre.

Masterplan: Although there was not as much interest from the community as URBED would have hoped we still managed to engage with groups of local people and stakeholders to identify areas that could be developed and improved. During the consultation process URBED sought to ensure that any plans taken forward would compliment other research done in the area and the long term view of the impacts of Kingsway Business Park. To see more on the consultation process, the community's views and the emergent masterplan see Appendix 4.

3.5 Kirkholt

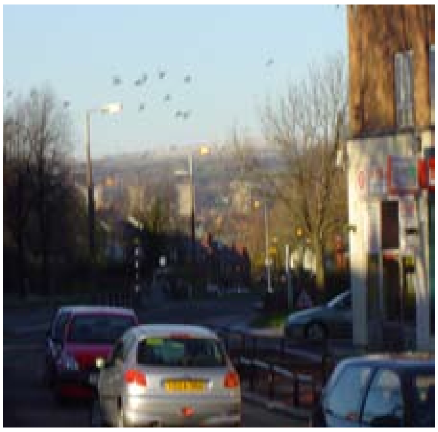
Balderstone Ward in 1910

Kirkholt is located to the south east of Rochdale with a population of 6,868 people. It was built in the ten years after the war to accommodate overspill population from inner Rochdale and stands on higher ground between the A637M to the west and the M62 to the south. To the east it slopes down to Oldham Road and the neighbourhood of Balderstone.

The neighbourhood is a typical garden city layout, similar to Wythenshaw in Manchester. The housing form is predominantly semi-detached with some short terraces and cottage flats with front and back gardens. There are a small number of low rise flats next to the Strand which is the main shopping centre for the estate. The streets are winding with mature trees and the topography of the area makes it potentially very attractive. It does however have a poor reputation although it was very popular when it was first built. This is typical of large council estates such as this, and is made worse by the isolation of the area. The layout of Kirkholt means that no one without business in the area has any reason to go into the estate. Even the bus routes are circulars which link Kirkholt to the town centre but nowhere else. The area of Kirkholt with the poorest reputation is the Hilltop area which is also the most isolated. There are less problems with the sections of Kirkholt near to Oldham Road and Queensway.

Population: Kirkholt is home to 6,868 people living in 2,800 households giving an average household size of 2.45. The population is overwhelmingly of white origin (94.6%) with a small number of people of Pakistani and Nigerian origin.

The average household income in Kirkholt at around £12,300 is lower than the average in the other HMR areas of £14,000. More people in Kirkholt have an annual income of between £5 - 15,000 and significantly fewer households have an income over £25,000 than the other areas.



The area is ranked as the 174th most deprived ward nationally and educational achievement is poor with levels at Key Stage 2 lower in all subjects than the national and Borough average. At GCSE the achievement level is less than a third of the national average. There are also problems with crime levels and anti-social behaviour. In the 1980s the estate was the subject of a Home Office study on burglary prevention because at the time it has a burglary rate of almost 25% of properties a year. It has since fallen sharply, partly in line with national trends but the perception of crime in the area persists - both inside and outside the community - the bus companies report that their drivers are reluctant to go through the area.

Housing: The housing mostly dates from the period 1945 to 1953 and is built in the Garden City style with wide fronted semi detached and short terraces. 52.9% of property is semi-detached and 22.9% are terraces. There are 644 flats in the area representing just over 20% of the stock. These fall into three types; The walk-up flats opposite the Strand, the flats over the shops and cottage flats throughout the estate. The walk-up flats opposite the Strand have had problems for many years. Many were converted in the 1980s to furnished accommodation and work was also undertaken to address security problems. This has improved the situation and the flats are nearly fully occupied. The flats over the shops are two and three bed units which have experienced problems along with the cottage flats. The main area of problems with the cottage flats is Kildare Crescent.

The ALMO estimates that there have been 500 Right-to-buys in Kirkholt, with the greatest concentration to the east of the area. There has also been a small amount of new build low cost home ownership in the heart of the estate. Indeed the tenure figures show that only 50.5% of properties are still rented from the Council and around 1,000 (36.7%) are owner occupied.

Key projects: There are relatively few projects planned in the area. The ALMO are continuing with their work to property to meet the Decent Home Standard. The property remaining includes the Hill Top area and the flats. Hill Top Primary school is closed and the pupils have transferred to Sandbrook Primary School. Groundwork have also undertaken some environmental works to open spaces in the area.

Masterplan: Even though Kirkholt was included in the Strategic Development Framework for the five neighbourhoods of Inner Rochdale, it was decided by HMR that the final masterplan should be dealt with independantly of this process. URBED did create a plan through an iterative and collaborative design process but the community feeling was that the final plans were too radical for the area. URBED's work can be seen in Appendix 5, it is very important to note that the plans contained within the Appendix are referential only and are not illustrative masterplans to be enacted by the HMR process.