

Burnley Town Centre and Weavers Triangle Master Plan Brief

Introduction

The Borough of Burnley has undergone a transformation over the last decade, with investment in new schools, new housing, business parks and a new direct train link to Manchester. The borough has witnessed significant job growth – 5.6% since 2009. The Council, in partnership with businesses –The Burnley Bondholders – has worked hard to improve perceptions of Burnley as a place to invest, work and live. The result was Burnley winning the prestigious title of Most Enterprise Place in 2013, awarded by BIS.

Despite our recent success, we are not complacent. The recently published Local Plan Preferred Option sets out a high growth strategy for the borough releasing a mix of brownfield and green field sites for new housing and further extensions to the borough’s successful business parks. A key part of the development strategy for the borough is enhancing the town centre ensuring that it is a vibrant retail, leisure and service centre for a larger part of Pennine Lancashire.

In November 2015, Burnley Borough Council adopted a Town Centre Strategy which clearly articulates the opportunities and challenges presented in the Town Centre and sets a clear vision for Burnley Town Centre.

The success of the Town Centre is central to the wider economic strategy for the borough. The town centre needs to carve out a high quality retail offer and combine this with a wider leisure, cultural and social experience during the day and into the evening. The Strategy identifies a number of practical actions that are being taken forward by the Burnley and Padiham Town Centre Management Team together with the recently re-invigorated Town Centre Partnership. With regards to potential development sites, there is a need for a comprehensive masterplanning approach that will allow the opportunities to be looked at holistically, identifying how each can contribute to the Vision for the Town Centre.

Burnley Town Centre

The Borough’s population at the time of the 2011 Census was 87,059, however, Burnley Town Centre serves a much wider catchment. Burnley Town Centre plays an important role in the economy serving an immediate population of 110,000 in Burnley and its immediate surrounds and 270,000 people within a 15 minute drive time. Alongside Blackburn, the town is a sub-regional centre for retail, business, civic and cultural activities in Pennine Lancashire

Burnley Town Centre has some strong assets in its fine Victorian architecture and a town centre retail offer which has fared relatively well in difficult circumstances. However, Burnley has not benefitted from the levels of investment that other similar sized towns and cities in the region have seen. The last significant extension to the retail floor space was in 2001. Recent investment includes a £3m refurbishment of the eastern side of Market Square including reconfiguration of 7 smaller units in Charter Walk Shopping Centre to create 3 larger premises. Work is currently underway to refurbish a strategically placed retail unit with significant investment to accommodate Primark to be open later in 2017.

Burnley Town Centre is identified as a strategic employment location in the Lancashire Strategic Economic Plan sitting strategically on the Arc of Prosperity. Burnley’s Community Strategy and Burnley’s Economic Strategy identify the town centre as a strategic economic priority.

Burnley Town Centre benefits from being relatively compact and largely contained within the inner ring road. It has retained much of its Victorian character of attractive buildings and logical streets, intersected by waterways. The centre is enclosed to the South by the imposing embankment of the Leeds's Liverpool Canal and to the West by the mills of the Weavers Triangle. However, there has been a significant amount of retail and leisure growth outside of the ring road including a cinema and bowling alley, large format supermarkets and retail parks.

The main shopping area is centred on St James's Street and the Charter Walk Shopping Centre, flanked by a number of secondary independent retail areas including Standish Street, Kierby Walk, and St James's Street West that are occupied by smaller independent retailers and services. A large market hall is situated on the first floor of the Charter Walk Shopping Centre and has approximately 60 traders. Hammerton Street and its surrounds have until recently been the centre of a lively night time economy.

Burnley Town Centre retains a healthy level of non-food (comparison) retail expenditure from its catchment of 55.8% (69.9% in the borough as a whole). A broad range of other destinations compete for borough's comparison retail expenditures including Manchester (6%), Blackburn (4.7%), Nelson (3.9%) and Colne (3.9%). Convenience (food shopping) is dominated by free standing stores around the town centre and elsewhere in the catchment area. The town centre accounts for only 5.7% of convenience food expenditure (NLP 2013).

Evidence suggests that foot fall has declined over the last decade since 2005. The highest levels of footfall remain the Mall, Charter Walk, St James's Street (East) and Curzon Street where footfall has increased by 27%.

The town centre also serves as an important service centre for public and professional services, with approx. 400,000 sq ft of office space in the town centre (the third highest in Lancashire). Burnley town centre is currently supporting approximately 5,000 jobs (ONS, Nov 2015).

Burnley Borough Council occupies a number of buildings, including the Town Hall which is the focus of the town's civic life. Lancashire County Council also has offices, as well as the central library on the edge of Place de Vitry, opposite is the police station and magistrates court. Office space is occupied by a range of professional services and customer service centres. Calico Group is another notable town centre occupier recently renovating offices adjacent to the bus station.

The strong presence of professional services in the town centre is under pinned by the presence of Crown and Magistrates Court functions, together with a high number of banks, all of which are vulnerable to rationalisation over the coming years and could leave prominent landmark buildings vacant. Burnley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council also own properties and deliver services in the town centre and are being affected by significant financial cuts meaning that both the public sector estate and delivery of services could suffer.

Despite a plentiful supply of office accommodation in the town centre Burnley is not perceived as an office destination and is reliant on a local market. Much of the existing office accommodation, particularly in around Parker Lane, is dated with 86% of stock predating 1940. The stock does not meet modern business needs, lacks dedicated car parking and requires considerable investment. This has led to a large amount of vacant office space with companies preferring out of town high quality serviced office accommodation with good car parking, compounded by an ineffective application of planning policy.

Burnley town centre faces challenges from issues which all town centres are encountering, and issues which are Burnley specific.

Burnley town centre faces significant competition as a result of changing shopping habits and a wealth of alternative options for consumers. Burnley's primary retail area including the Charter Walk Shopping Centre and St James Street has fared relatively well with vacancy rates in July 2016 standing at 5%. Vacancy rates in secondary shopping areas are significantly higher at 18% with high levels of urban decay and there is a need to consider new uses and the potential retraction of the town's secondary retail floor space

A key part of the town centre experience is the evening / night time offer. The traditional drinking/clubbing industry, which was previously very strong in Burnley Town Centre, has struggled in the wake of extended opening hours, cheap supermarket alcohol and increased health awareness. This has had a major impact on the Hammerton Street area both with closing businesses and businesses opening later, although a number of businesses have responded to changing demands a new format bars with a focus on food and quality have opened up over the last twelve months. A lack of a branded central town centre leisure offer including cinema and associated food and drink establishments means there is a clear gap in the evening economy.

Burnley Town Centre is bounded to the West and South by the Leeds Liverpool Canal. Along the canal is an area known as the Weavers Triangle, extending to some 17ha including a mixture of semi-derelict mill buildings and brownfield sites. Burnley Borough Council has established a JV with Barnfield Developments to re-develop a significant part of the Weavers Triangle now known as On the Banks. Significant progress has been made with the refurbishment of the iconic Victoria Mill and Slaters Terrace, a new public square and high quality public realm, and work is commencing on an apartment development of Sandygate. The area forms a key gateway to the Town Centre and a significant potential for the town. The Canal and Rivers Trust in partnership with the Heritage Lottery are about to make a significant investment in a visitor attraction at Finsley Gate.

Burnley Town Centre Master Plan 2005 and Public Realm SPD 2006.

In 2005, Burnley Borough Council, supported by the North West Development Agency commissioned BDP, Regeneris and King Sturge to develop a Town Centre Master Plan/Area Action Plan for Burnley Town Centre and its environs, including the Weavers Triangle that had been the subject of a previous master planning exercise. On the back of the exercise a number of developments and projects have progressed including the "On the Banks" development within the Weavers Triangle, a new £90m College/University campus on the edge of the town centre, a £4 investment in Charter Walk to create large floor plates (a key recommendation), a new rail station and Growth Deal funding has recently been secured to implement some of the transport improvements identified in the master plan.

The NWDA also funded a Public Realm Strategy which has subsequently been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document providing a strategic framework to secure investment. Burnley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council have committed £3m to a new public realm scheme along St James' Street the aim of which is to create an attractive and contemporary public space. As well as providing an attractive environment to enhance the visitor experience, it also provides an opportunity to 'animate' the town centre with events and attractions to increase visitor 'dwell' time and in turn lead to an increased spend in the town centre.

A similar master planning exercise and public realm strategy were developed for the Weavers Triangle.

The proposed masterplan should have regard to these documents.

Key Opportunities

Culture and Leisure

Burnley Borough Council would like the chosen consultants to explore options for extending the Cultural and Leisure offer in the Town Centre. The NLP Retail, Office and Leisure Study (2013) identified a lower than average A3 and A5 uses in the town centre with limited offer particularly of national branded chains. A key weakness is the current location of the borough's cinema provision on a peripheral site.

Retail

The Town Centre has a good retail offer and relatively low vacancy rates (5%) in the primary shopping area. The recent announcement of a 20,000sq foot Primark to open on Curzon Street in 2017 should result in an increase in footfall and an opportunity to attract other retailers. The town centre currently retains high levels of comparison shopping, however there is capacity for 35,000 sq. ft. of additional comparison goods floor space (NLP 2013) to enable the town to further improve its' retail offer. There is also opportunity for convenience retail in the core of the town centre, which is currently not provided despite there being adequate floor space in the borough.

In addition, the master plan should consider the future of Burnley Market. BBC is due to spend £1.8m in demolishing part of the market complex for structural reasons. This leaves behind the current Indoor Market which like many markets is struggling in the face of competition from discounters, and suffers from a lack of presence within the town centre. The demolition does create some opportunities for re-configuring the upper floors of the Charter Walk complex and its interface with any future development of the Curzon Street site.

Town Centre Living

Until recently, Burnley Town Centre had seen very little housing development. However, there has been a recent increase in interest, particularly in the conversion of older office premises (including former Council owned buildings) in the Civic and Business District. This is a key part of the Council's strategy to increase the vitality of the town centre and further options should be explored. The Council is procuring a Housing Joint Venture Partner to take forward housing opportunities on council owned land and town centre sites could be part of this portfolio.

University of Central Lancashire

The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), is co-located with Burnley College on a £90m campus, adjacent to the town centre in the Knowledge Quarter and has significant growth plans to attract 3000 students per year.

One Public Estate

The shadow Lancashire Combined Authority is part in the One Public Estate Initiative. Burnley BC has been awarded funding to work with other public sector agencies to review their respective estates and explore opportunities for co-location. This masterplan is part funded by OPE and the concept of OPE needs to be embedded into this master planning exercise to look at alternative uses for the publically owned buildings in Burnley Town Centre, the potential for co-location of services releasing land and property for other purposes. Many of the buildings owned by the public estate include some of the Town Centre's most notable listed buildings including the Town Hall, the former Burnley Building Society offices on Parker Lane, The Library and the Police Station and Law Courts. The masterplan needs to be developed in this context – key publically owned sites and buildings are identified in the Key sites section below.

Key Sites

This section outlines a number of sites within the Town Centre that are in public sector ownership and present opportunities for re-development and rationalisation of the public estate. The list is by no means exhaustive and other sites, in private ownership should also be considered.

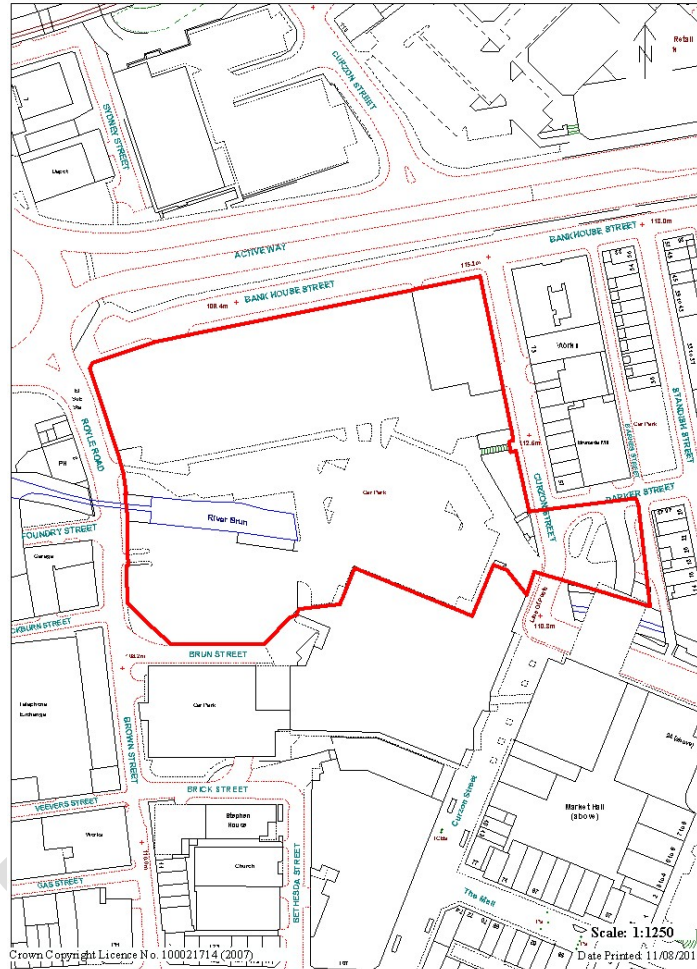
Curzon Street

The Curzon Street site is situated at the North West corner of the Town Centre, extending to 1.52 ha and in the ownership of Burnley Borough Council. The site is identified in the Local Plan Preferred Option as suitable for a mix of retail, office and leisure uses.

The site has been the subject of a two development schemes, firstly a 220,000sq ft retail scheme which fell through in 2009 after the developer was unable to secure a prominent retailer as anchor tenant. The Council has subsequently had a development agreement for a 54000 sq ft Cinema and Leisure complex. The agreement has now lapsed.

The council still has an aspiration for a Leisure led scheme on the site, and is currently procuring a development partner to progress the scheme. The masterplan will need to address how this development will integrate with the wider town centre and should include proposals to address neighbouring sites particularly the land immediately west of the site, currently occupied as a scrap yard and the adjoining BT telephone exchange may offer longer term opportunities.

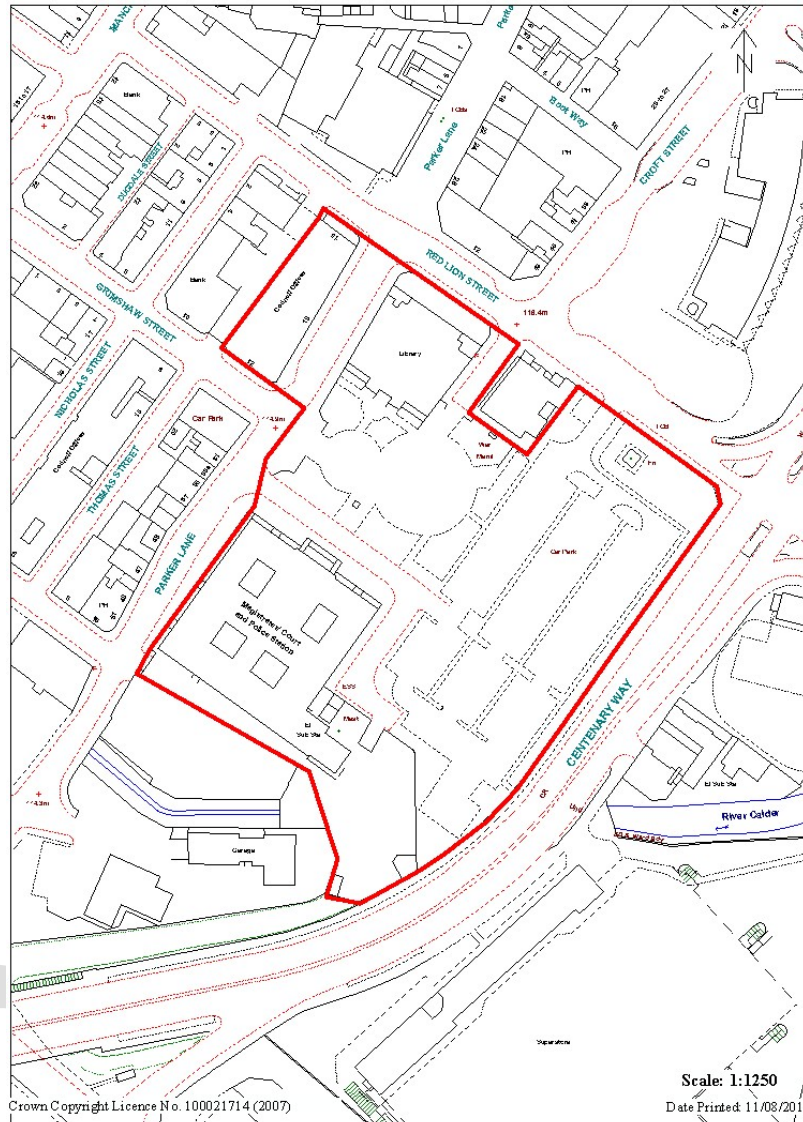
Curzon Street Site



Place De Vitry

Place De Vitry is a public square situated in the town's Civic and Business Quarter. The square is bounded to the south by the former Thompson Centre site (currently laid out as a car park) which extends to 0.68ha. Place De Vitry is flanked by two prominent listed buildings accommodating the Police Station, Magistrates Court and the Library. North of Place De Vitry on Parker Lane Burnley Council owns a significant heritage property on Parker Lane,

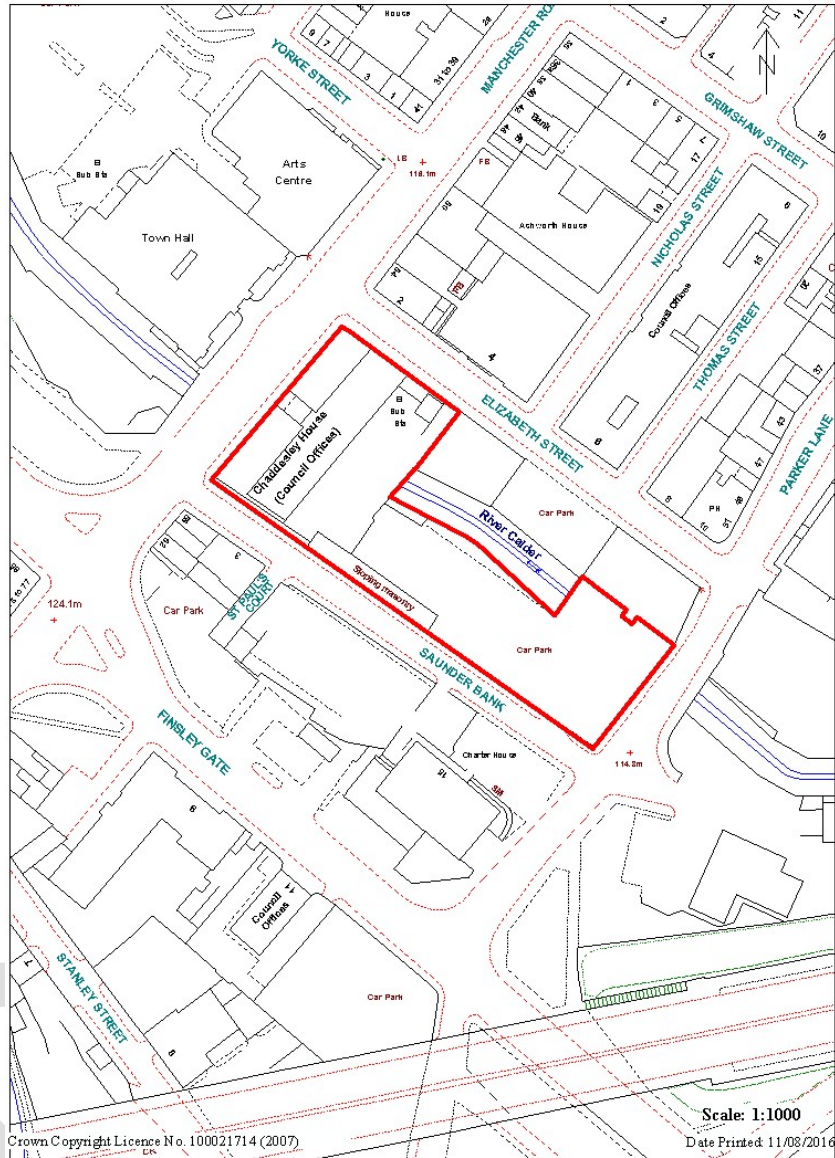
Thompson Centre, Place de Vitry & surrounding buildings



Manchester Road

Opposite the Town Hall is Chaddersley House, owned by LCC and an adjoining car park owned by BBC on a long lease to LCC. The building has been identified as surplus to requirements. The site is constrained by the river Calder which runs through the site and a steep embankment on the western side. The building and land extend to xx ha and is on a key gateway within a short walking distance to the town centre and Manchester Road Rail Station. North of the site stands the Town Hall and Burnley Mechanics and any future development should complement these grand civic buildings.

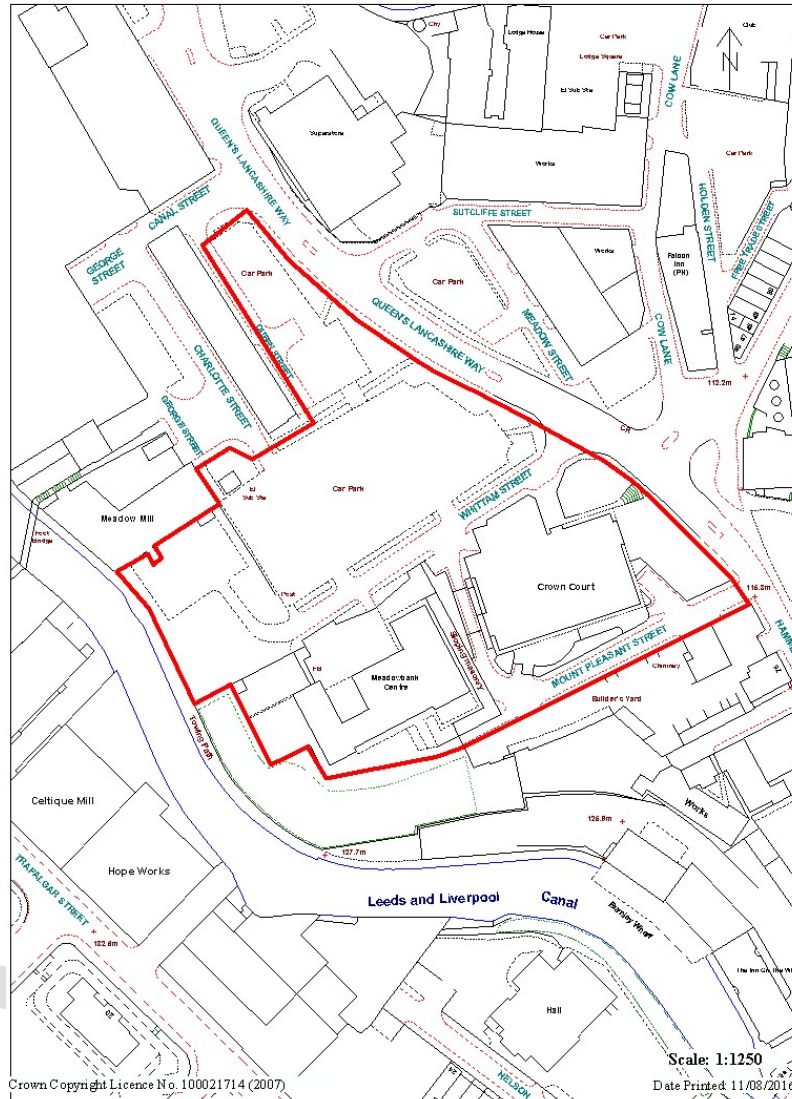
Chaddersley House and Car Park to rear



King Street Car Park/George Street Mill

This site sits adjacent to the Town Centre on the edge of the Weavers Triangle. Current uses include a car park owned by BBC, the Crown Court and LCC's Youth Zone and was identified in previous master planning exercises as an area of change. Parts of the site that abut the canal bank are in private ownership, but currently unoccupied. The site is within easy reach of Manchester Road Rail Station, has access to the Canal and is a short walk from the town centre. Adjoining the site is a large canal side site (George Street Mill) in private ownership.

King Street Car Park, Crown Court & LCC building



Cow Lane and Former Empire Theatre (Insert Map)

This sits just off St James Street, north of Hammerton Street. It is partially in use as a Council owned Pay and Display Car park. Other buildings including the Former Theatre are in private ownership. The Theatre, which is listed, is in a very dilapidated state. A feasibility study looking at future uses for the building is/has been completed and any proposals for this area should take this into consideration.

Finsley Gate

Finsley gate is a key gateway to the Town Centre and lies alongside the Leeds Liverpool Canal. The Canal and Rivers Trust has secured Heritage Lottery Funding for a scheme to bring the former Finsley Gate Wharf back into use. Two further sites have planning permission for housing but no progress has been made in bringing them forward. The area is blighted by a mix of low quality uses, semi derelict buildings and waste land. The masterplan should consider how this area is developed and better connected with the Town Centre.

Burnley Football Club

Burnley Football club is situated to the South of Burnley Town Centre. The club are developing a masterplan to re-develop the site. Todmorden Road links the football club with the town centre and is a key gateway for visitors to the town. The masterplan should include proposals to address this area ensuring that the town centre and football club develop mutual benefits.

Requirements of the Brief/Outcomes

The key requirement is for a comprehensive, ambitious and deliverable master plan for Burnley Town Centre. The Master Plan is intended to facilitate the redevelopment and growth of the Town Centre ensuring its future as a vibrant and thriving retail, leisure and business centre supporting the borough's overall growth ambitions. The Master plan should establish a coherent set of land use and design parameters to guide the future development of the area and under pinned with an implementation plan based on sound market testing and analysis.

The Town Centre Master Plan Study Area is defined in Appendix 1. It consists of a core Town Centre area (edged red) and a wider area including the Weavers Triangle, which also needs considering in the broader town centre context.

The master plan should address the following:

- Build on the previous Mater Plan exercises, the two Public Realm SPD's and Town Centre strategy to produce a clear vision for the future to attract private and public sector investment
- Set out proposals to increase the scope and quality of the town centre retail offer and including proposals for the town's secondary retail areas including potential alternative uses
- Set out proposals to introduce new leisure and cultural uses into the town centre
- Ensure that urban design, public space and architecture are of the highest quality
- Detailed analysis of key sites including the identification of new uses and market opportunities to exploit the full development potential of the sites.
- Test the commercial reality of proposals and key projects and provide clear proposals for delivery. A written statement will be required to address costs, viability and deliverability issues, particularly for key sites.
- Develop a set of key early win projects to a state where they are feasible and can be taken quickly to the market.
- Explore innovative ways in which the property portfolio owned by the Council and other public sector bodies can play in delivering the vision making the most of key buildings, the potential to co-locate services and release buildings and land for re-development.
- Building on existing reports explore ways to address issues associated with the Indoor Market and how it can be better integrated into the town centre
- Assess and make recommendations for improvements to highways and transport infrastructure in the town centre to improve access and to enable key developments.
- Propose a car parking strategy to support the delivery of the master plan that seeks to rationalise current provision making improvements for visitors and freeing land for development.

Deliverables

10 copies of the final report in full colour, high quality format that will include:

- A detailed master plan for the core and wider Town Centre area including Weavers Triangle
- An action plan of key projects and site development opportunities including costings and viability appraisals
- Realistic Delivery proposals for key projects
- Detailed market advice

The master plan should be prepared in such a way that it is capable of being produced as an SPD, in consultation with the Council's Planning Officers

The document should be high quality reflecting the Borough's Brand values and should be replicable and readable on-line. The report should include an executive summary, which will be provided as a separate full colour document.

Associated visuals and plans will also be made available

The report will, together with any supporting documents and evidence, be available in electronic version and the copyright belong to Burnley Borough Council.

Expected Timetable

We would expect the commission to be completed no later than 6 months from the award of contract. A detailed programme with key milestones should be provided in the tender submission for agreement with Burnley Borough Council following appointment

Appendix 1

