

Littleborough Station Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Draft October 2021



Document Control

Document Title: Littleborough Station Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Summary

Publication Date	September 2021
Related Legislation / Applicable Section of Legislation	The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
Related Policies, Strategies, Guideline Documents	Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Replaces	
Joint Policy (Yes/No)	No
Name of Partner(s) if joint	N/A
Policy Owner (Name/Position)	Mark Robinson (Assistant Director – Economy)
Policy Author (Name/Position)	Kirsty Nicholls (Principal Planning Officer)
Applies to	

Review of Policy

Last Review Date	
Review undertaken by	
Next Review Date	

Document Approvals

This document requires the following approvals.

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version Number
Mark Robinson	Assistant Director		
Paul Moore	Head of Planning		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Background.....	7
3. Context	10
4. Development Principles	12
5. Design Principles	15
6. Transport and Access	16
7. Focus Areas	17
7.1 Focus Area 1: Harehill Road and Village Centre	19
7.2 Focus Area 2: Station and Environs	20
7.3 Focus Area 2: Canalside	22
8. Delivery and Implementation.....	24

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Littleborough is a historic settlement nestled within the Calder Valley and grew up largely around the River Roch and latterly with the construction of the Rochdale Canal and then the rail line became a thriving rural village. Today, the centre of the village retains the historic character with stone-built buildings unusual in Greater Manchester.

The village is centred around the junction of Church Street and Hare Hill Road with several notable buildings. A Conservation Area covers most of the village centre, including the areas immediately in front of the railway station. To the south of the canal the land is protected through Green Belt status and the entirety of the Rochdale Canal corridor is also considered a site of biological interest.

Littleborough railway station is a stop on 2 main route groups, namely the Blackburn and Manchester Victoria line and the Leeds, Chester, Warrington Bank Quay and Wigan Wallgate, via Manchester Victoria line. The service provision between Monday and Saturday into Rochdale is 8 mins with 4 trains an hour; into Manchester Victoria of 23 minutes with 1 train an hour; and, into Leeds is 73 minutes with 1 train an hour (the service to Manchester Victoria). The station has experienced significant passenger growth of more than 30% in the last 20 years serving almost 500,000 passengers during 2018/19.

The station is a focus area of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that provides a gateway experience for those arriving in the village and the departure point for those commuting into Rochdale, Manchester and further afield. The station area also provides the link between the village centre with the canal and on to the wider Hollingworth Lake Country Park and Rochdale canal to the south via the pedestrian underpass.

This area directly outside the station buildings and the approach to the Village Centre is currently dominated by vehicular movements associated with the bus stops and turning area; the station car park; drop-off/pick-up and short stay parking for the two and the Co-op Car park accesses. There is no priority for pedestrians and a lack of footways. This results in the gateway experience into the area for visitors via the rail network being extremely poor with limited wayfinding and natural navigation.

The aim of the SPD in this area is to improve the gateway experience for visitors and commuters and link together the Village Centre and canal via an enhanced and/or new public realm that rebalance the area for pedestrians. The document also seeks to promote the area as a location for new residential development and working space and to increase footfall and vibrancy of the Village Centre, including the evening and visitor economy.

It is envisaged that all these objectives will create an enhanced public interface with an improved public realm. It is important that the Council aspire to utilise its current assets and create a welcome arrival to Littleborough, improving perceptions of personal safety and navigation.

As a gateway into the Borough, the regeneration and improvement of Littleborough Railway Station, and the surrounding land and buildings, represents a strategic priority for the Council to attract new residents and businesses to the area, contribute to an improved housing offer, create new public realm and open space, re-purpose vacant land and buildings, and to capitalise and support further development and improvements to the rail network. Rochdale Borough Council is seeking to promote transit led integrated development and place making around existing stations with the aim of unlocking the dormant potential of Rochdale's stations through dynamic urban

regeneration and the creation of a Transport-Orientated Community (TOC). The approach aims to add commercial benefit through access to transport but critically also aims to realise social value.

Littleborough Station's redevelopment and potential is an important vision which offers residents and businesses an opportunity to develop a sustainable community in an attractive market location with a vibrant mixture of living, working and recreational opportunities.

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to establish an appropriate framework to guide and deliver development by setting out the development, design and accessibility principles, and the identification of focus areas where more specific guidance is necessary.

1.2 The Vision

The redevelopment of the station area will recognise the rich cultural heritage in Littleborough; draw on distinctive characteristics and amplify to create a modern identity for the Station area. **With the station at its heart, an uplifted village centre attractive to new residents and businesses with an improved station gateway to support development sensitive to the existing historic fabric, building on Littleborough's unique identity.**

The vision for Littleborough includes:

- **Connecting sustainably to the attracted countryside location and wider area housing sites.**
- **Attract a young professional demographic with options for living and working.**
- **Improve arrival/departure experience and create opportunities for improved public realm.**

The SPD for the station area builds on the strengths of the existing village centre, businesses and community to enhance them through improvements to the residential and commercial availability, landscape, public realm, and associated infrastructure. This will be to the benefit of the current community, the wider surroundings, and future residents of the area and will support the further enhancement of Littleborough Village Centre.

The objectives include:

- **Station as Catalyst** – Release the potential of the railway connection to Rochdale, Manchester and abound to support growth in Littleborough.
- **Future Lifestyle** – Embracing changing urban lifestyle and connect the strategic residential sites
- **Future Place** – Celebrate the railway heritage, local assets and building opportunities for new businesses to open in the village.
- **Future Mobility** – Enhancing the existing transit infrastructure to access employment, services and Culture.

The priorities include:

- Improve the arrival/gateway experience at the railway station and increase parking
- Define a village 'heart'
- Promote the station as a gateway experience creating a new gateway public square outside the station that enhances the arrival experience to the village;
- Create a place that has a distinct, vibrant and authentic identity that places people at the centre to celebrate and build upon the strong local communities and heritage;

- Establish a clear hierarchy of movement and access, centred on a transit hub for the future, that is accessible for everyone to navigate to and from;
- Promote a high quality, high density residential led development around the station that is complimented by a mix of land uses that create a flexible and resilient community that further supports and drives the economic growth of Rochdale;
- Provide uses that create vibrancy and activity throughout the day, evenings and weekend
- A 'place led' approach built around Streets for All.
- To promote healthy living and to support the viability of existing and new businesses.

1.3 Purpose and status of the SPD

The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide a land use and development strategy for the Littleborough Station area. Whilst recognising the heritage assets of the area, it outlines potential development opportunities within the area including options for the scale and mix of future proposals on a number of different sites.

The SPD elaborates upon policies within the Rochdale Core Strategy (2016), notably policy SP3/P – The Strategy for the Pennines which provides a vision and strategy for the township. The introductory text states '*Littleborough will be a key gateway and service centre for the adjoining Pennine edge*'. The policy has as one of its priorities the delivery of a high quality station gateway providing for:

- Promoting its role as the borough's recreation and leisure destination and gateway to the South Pennines;
- Encouraging new and specialist retail within the village centre;
- Enhancing the public transport interchange at Littleborough station;
- Improving the public realm and enhancing the conservation area; and
- Improving links and signing to surrounding tourism and visitor destinations including Hollingworth Lake, the canal corridor and South Pennines.

The SPD will also be used by the Council as a material consideration when determining future planning applications and to establish a framework for investment building upon the policies contained within the Council's Core Strategy document and the Masterplan which:

- Sets out a development vision for the area;
- Provides greater certainty on the uses, form and quality of acceptable development, including the public realm and guidance for development partners on how this might be achieved;
- Assists the Council in the assessment of planning applications; and
- Provides a basis for future decision on assembling land to provide certainty, including the potential use of Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Technical evidence

In preparing this SPD:

1. WSP/ Broadway Malyan & GL Hearn – part of the GM2080 team provided technical support on design and townscape illustrations. More information on the design approach that informed the SPD is provided in the design principles section later in this document.

2. WSP/ Broadway Malyan & GL Hearn provided support on the accessibility and movement strategy. More information on the accessibility approach that informed the SPD is provided within the Transport section can be found in Chapter 6
3. WSP/ Broadway Malyan & GL Hearn provided technical support in terms of viability and delivery strategy underpinning the masterplan. More information on phasing and delivery can be found in Chapter X
4. The Council worked with the GM Stations Alliance, a newly established partnership between Rochdale Council, GM Combined Authority, Network Rail, LCR Property and Transport for Greater Manchester.

2. Background

2.1 Policy Context

The document is designed to supplement Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) however, it should be read in conjunction with all national and local planning policy and guidance documents including those outlined below; including any other relevant documents which may emerge during the lifetime of this document as material considerations.

2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The Framework sets out national planning policy, providing strategic direction on a wide range of planning matters. It is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance which gives further guidance on how policy should be interpreted.

At the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption should be reflected in the plan-making process and any associated guidance. The Framework states that development should be approved unless any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of that development.

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, which creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that development responds to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting; however, authorities should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change. The Framework seeks to ensure that developments establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimising the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix that function well, are safe, inclusive and accessible.

The SPD has been positively prepared. It seeks to regenerate and attract investment into the area and wider Rochdale Village Centre, taking forward identified opportunities to meet the housing needs and aspirations of the area's community both now and in the future.

2.3 Core Strategy (2016)

Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) is the key element of the development plan for Rochdale and will be used in determining planning applications for sites in and around the station area.

Key policy implications are set out in relation to each site identified in this SPD but it will be important to consider all the relevant policies of the Core Strategy when preparing site-specific proposals.

The Core Strategy SP3/P – The Strategy for the Pennines specifically sets out key development principles and proposes the following:

- Promoting its role as the borough's recreation and leisure destination and gateway to the South Pennines;
- Encouraging new and specialist retail within the town centre;
- Enhancing the public transport interchange at Littleborough station;
- Improving the public realm and enhancing the conservation area; and
- Improving links and signing to surrounding tourism and visitor destinations including Hollingworth Lake, the canal corridor and South Pennines.

Places For Everyone Joint Development Plan

Up until December 2020 a joint development plan document of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities was being prepared, Greater Manchester's Plan for Jobs, Homes & the Environment (known as the "GMSF").

Following the decision of Stockport to withdraw from the GMSF, the remaining nine districts agreed to progress a joint development plan for the remaining nine districts to be known as 'Places for Everyone' (PfE). A new joint committee has been formed to progress PfE with the intention to move to the next stage of plan preparation subject to approval by the nine individual districts.

The main benefits of producing a Joint Development Plan include:

- Underpinning Greater Manchester's plan for recovery from Covid
- Supporting delivery of the Greater Manchester Strategy
- Providing a framework to manage growth in a sustainable and inclusive way, avoid un-planned development and development by appeal
- Aligning the delivery of development with infrastructure proposals
- Meeting the requirement for local authorities to have a local plan in place by December 2023.
- Meeting the Duty to Co-operate in s33A Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

2.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

When considering any type of development, relevant SPDs at the time of publication of this document include:

- The Oldham and Rochdale Urban Design Guide Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs);
- Littleborough Town Design SPD;
- Affordable Housing SPD;
- Climate Change and Adaptation SPD;
- Provision of Recreational Open Space in New Housing SPD; and
- Biodiversity and Development SPD.

All SPDs are available to view on the Council's website.

2.5 How the SPD was prepared

Two companion documents have been prepared as supporting evidence to this SPD. These are:

- Littleborough Station Masterplan

The GM Stations Alliance commissioned WSP and Broadway Malyan in 2019 to prepare a masterplan for the Littleborough Station area and identify a vision and priorities in order for the aspirations of the Council to be realised.

The Masterplan was developed in collaboration with the Council to ensure there was agreement on all elements of the masterplan, from the vision through to use framework. The process was supported by in depth discussions and consultations with statutory consultees and other interested bodies. The document also outlined key delivery and implementation mechanisms in order for the vision aspirations to be realised.

- **Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy**

The document outlines an aspirational vision to create approximately 7,000 new homes and 250,000 square metres of employment space along the Calder Valley rail corridor over the next two decades. The document provides a high-level masterplan, proposing major development that is centred around the borough's five railway stations; Rochdale, Castleton, Smithy Bridge, Littleborough and Mills Hill, as well as to support plans for a new station at Slattocks and GMCA plans for a tram – train pathfinder scheme to connect Rochdale with Heywood via Castleton and onwards to Bury. The plans priorities the creation of new neighbourhoods on underused brownfield sites, which are close to local amenities and public transport links.

The strategy is being delivered in collaboration with the newly formed Greater Manchester Station Alliance, a partnership of Network Rail; Northern Rail; the Greater Manchester Combined Authority; Transport for Greater Manchester; and regeneration specialists, London and Continental Railways (LCR).

3. Context

The area covered by this SPD covers the area to the north of the railway station and takes in the commercial centre (Church Street / Hare Hill Road) and land alongside the Rochdale Canal. This is shown in Figure 1 below.

Location and study area



Figure 1 - Littleborough Station Supplementary Planning Document Area

The railway, Littleborough's rural location, the River Roch and the Rochdale Canal are key assets and attractions for both residents and visitors to the village and surrounding countryside.

There is a visual connection between the village and the countryside upon arrival into the station. The masterplan seeks to build upon this whilst strengthen the physical connectivity between both, via the railway station and area of land adjacent to the canal.

Littleborough is a historic settlement within the Calder Valley and grew up largely around the River Roch and latterly with the construction of the Rochdale Canal and then the rail line became a thriving rural village. Today, the centre of the village retains the historic character with Pennine stone-built buildings in contrast with many parts of Greater Manchester.

The village is centred around the junction of Church Street and Hare Hill Road with several notable buildings.

A Conservation Area covers most of the village centre, including the areas immediately in front of the railway station. To the south of the canal the land is protected through Green Belt status and the entirety of the Rochdale Canal corridor is also considered a site of biological interest.

The centre of Littleborough contains a good mix of uses in addition to the largely residential core. Uses include retail (including a mix of 'high street' brands and independent retail), convenience retail (small supermarkets), health provision and food and drink/ leisure.

The SPD area has been divided into three focus areas, although it is essential that these are comprehensively designed to complement each other and its surrounding neighbourhoods. The three focus areas are:

- Station Area – this incorporates the area immediately adjacent to the Railway Station;
- Village Area – this incorporates Church Street, Hare Hill Road and the surrounding commercial centre; and
- Canal Side – this includes the area adjacent to the canal and its surrounds.

In all three focus areas the driving land use is high quality residential with opportunities for suitable flexible work / office accommodation and supporting retail and leisure uses. The area has been recognised as needing investment in order to meet passenger demand, provide a high-quality gateway space into the Village Centre, provide a clear route for visitors, quality urban housing as well as improvement to the station facilities for passengers and station area. Further detail on each focus area can be found in Chapter 7.

4. Development Principles

The SPD establishes the principles and parameters to guide future development for the next 10 years and beyond. This will enable the realisation of the vision and objectives for the Littleborough Station area that were established in the masterplan. The overarching principle of this SPD is the creation of thriving, vibrant, sustainable communities in Littleborough Station. In order to achieve this, the SPD will seek to efficiently use land, provide a better quality and variety of housing by type and tenure, good and environmentally sensitive design, improvement to public open space and public realm and access to employment and job opportunities, community facilities and local services.

In order to make Littleborough Station a desirable and sustainable place to live and work, the SPD places strong emphasis on the following:

- Introduce new residential uses that provides for a mix of types and densities in close proximity to the station.
- Define a village 'heart' centred around the junction of Church Street/Hare Hill Road and station approach
- Improve the arrival/gateway experience at the railway station and connectivity to the village centre;
- Increase the station parking provision;
- Accommodate a bus interchange with rail services;
- Improve the pedestrian experience, with greater priority across the village centre;
- Refurbishment of the railway arches and disused buildings for commercial uses
- Improve the existing public realm accommodating local servicing and parking requirements in addition to maintaining through route;
- Create opportunities for street tree planting;
- Create opportunities for cycle parking;
- Provide for public open space and links to the canal towpath (and beyond)
- Complementary residential infill development, reinstating street frontages to Peel Street/Victoria Street.

These principles are discussed in further detail below.

4.1 Introduction of residential uses

The provision of housing within Littleborough is typically focused towards those for families with very little provision for the next generation of residents of Littleborough as they are starting out in life. This is highlighted by the types of new developments that are being promoted by private developers that looking to develop lower density family homes.

Littleborough has a thriving village centre and the Council keen to ensure there is a sufficient supply of suitable commercial premises to cater for the demand from existing businesses and attract new businesses to locate in the village.

New development within the masterplan area should be formulated to provide opportunities to meet the demand for new business premises in the village and the type of which enhances the attractiveness of the village centre for existing and future residents.

This principle ensures that opportunities for development and regeneration within the masterplan area are considered appropriately and promoted as required. Opportunities for residential development should consider a mix of typologies including apartments, seeking to diversify the demographic in Littleborough and appeal to new

residents. Other uses could include local retail and business/ commercial premises to support local entrepreneurs and business-owners.

4.2 Define a 'Village' heart

This principle seeks to reintroduce a space at the heart of Littleborough as a focal point for the community. Using the war memorial and the space around the road junction, improvements to public realm and review of road layout/ carriageway widths should provide more space for pedestrians and cyclists without compromising the function of the road network.

4.3 Improve the arrival/gateway experience at the railway

The station is a focus area of this masterplan study that provides a gateway experience for those arriving in the village, and the departure point for those commuting into Rochdale, Manchester and further afield. The station area also provides the link between the village centre with the canal and on to the wider countryside via the pedestrian underpass.

This area directly outside the station buildings and the approach along is currently dominated by vehicular movements associated with the bus stops and turnaround; the station car park; drop-off/pick-up and short stay parking for the two and the Co-op Car park accesses.

The aim of the SPD in this area is to improve the gateway experience for visitors and commuters and link together the village centre and canal via an enhanced and/or new public realm that rebalance the for pedestrians.

In developing and testing options for the masterplan that fit with the overarching aims and the vision that have been established at the start of the process, the following key principles we agreed with stakeholders.

4.4 Increase the capacity of car parking

Increasing the capacity of the car park at the railway station so this can assist in freeing up space kerbside within the village centre, residential streets and alongside the canal for the use by Littleborough residents, businesses and visitors

4.5 Accommodate a bus interchange with rail services

This principle supports the sustainable transport objectives of the document by ensuring there are wider sustainable connections for railway passengers that are easily accessible.

4.6 Improve the pedestrian experience

This principle supports improvements to the public realm along the key streets through the centre of Littleborough. Providing more space and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists will improve connectivity and linkages through the village centre, in particular between the station and the retail core.

4.7 Refurbishment of the railway arches and disused buildings for commercial use

The existing railway arches are a key asset within the area and the principles supports their refurbishments for appropriate commercial uses. There will be improved public realm to the front of the arches with high quality paving and street planting, glazed infills to the arches themselves with activity inside. Improved crossings to Canal Street linking access to the station to the rear where the existing footpath runs under the viaduct will be a key objective.

4.8 Provide a mix of densities and housing types

Increasing the density of housing in locations that have a high level of accessibility by sustainable modes of transport is a key part of the over strategy for Greater Manchester, set out in the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE)). The strategy sets out that 'new housing should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport, in accordance with the minimum densities shown in Figure 8.

This SPD promotes the emerging PfE guidance on density of residential development in proximity to rail stations and Metrolink stops. The utilisation of sustainable brownfield development and village centre living is key to the achievement of efficient use of space and sustainable development.

The majority of the station area is within 400m of the Littleborough railway station and, as shown in Figure X below.

5. Design Principles

It is one of the main aims of this SPD and its proposals to address the key issues and problems identified in the previous section and to help guide future development in the SPD area whilst ensuring it is of the highest possible quality. This section sets out key principles for urban design and public realm.

Public Realm

The public realm strategy defines the extent and type of improvements which should be considered in the streetscape within the SPD area. The potential for the pedestrianisation of key spaces and streets, improvements to public realm and the review of the highway layout to improve the pedestrian experience will facilitate improved development opportunities.

Any development should be of a high quality and adhere to the principles of the Littleborough Town Design SPD.

6. Transport and Access

This section contains a summary of the main transport issues affecting the SPD area, particular, issues that will need to be taken into account when considering the future development of the Rochdale Station area and revitalisation of the Village Centre for new development.

The overall objective of the movement strategy for the SPD area is to enable pedestrians, people with impaired mobility and cyclists to have better connectivity within and to adjoining areas including Littleborough Village Centre. Across the SPD area, there is a lack of facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and priority is given to motorised traffic. This reduces choice and channels pedestrians to crossing locations that may be less than conveniently located for their particular journey.

An inclusive and legible movement network should manifest itself in a well-defined hierarchy of streets, safe pedestrian and cycle routes, and correct distribution of land uses. The general aims of the access and movement strategy are to create an interconnected network of streets and public spaces, integrate communities, arrange and align routes first and foremost for ease of walking and cycling and create a strong connection with surrounded areas.

Transit Orientated Communities

A Transit-Orientated Community (TOC) is a project that mixes residential and commercial opportunities with the objective of optimising the use of land and maximising access to public transport. The goal is to achieve important sustainability aspirations that have the potential to be a great catalyst for adopting new development strategies that will make Littleborough more liveable. A TOC approach adds commercial benefit through access to transport but critically also aims to realise social value and provide a 'plan led' approach for local and transport authorities.

Central to the wider objectives and strategy for the station area, including the creation of the 'village heart', is the reorganisation of the vehicular movements. The key driver for the vehicle movement strategy is the removal of traffic from in front of the northern station entrance.

The Streets for All methodology is aimed at delivering a balance between modes within the street network. Walking and cycling are prioritised and encouraged, and the space available to them is increased to provide a more comfortable and safer environment. Conflict between modes will be minimised at key points throughout the SPD area.

7. Focus Areas

Proposals for areas identified in this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should take account of the development, design and transport principles detailed in earlier sections, the overall vision, and the area specific information set out below (see map below for all character areas). These character areas have been identified through their different characteristics in order to provide an analysis of the issues and opportunities within the overall SPD.

Within the Core Area of the SPD boundary, a number of distinct focus areas have been identified. A fourth area behind the station has been identified of which consist of an existing residential area.

The three Focus Areas are shown of Figure X below and are:

1. Harehill Road and Village Centre Area
2. Station and Area
3. Canal Side Area.

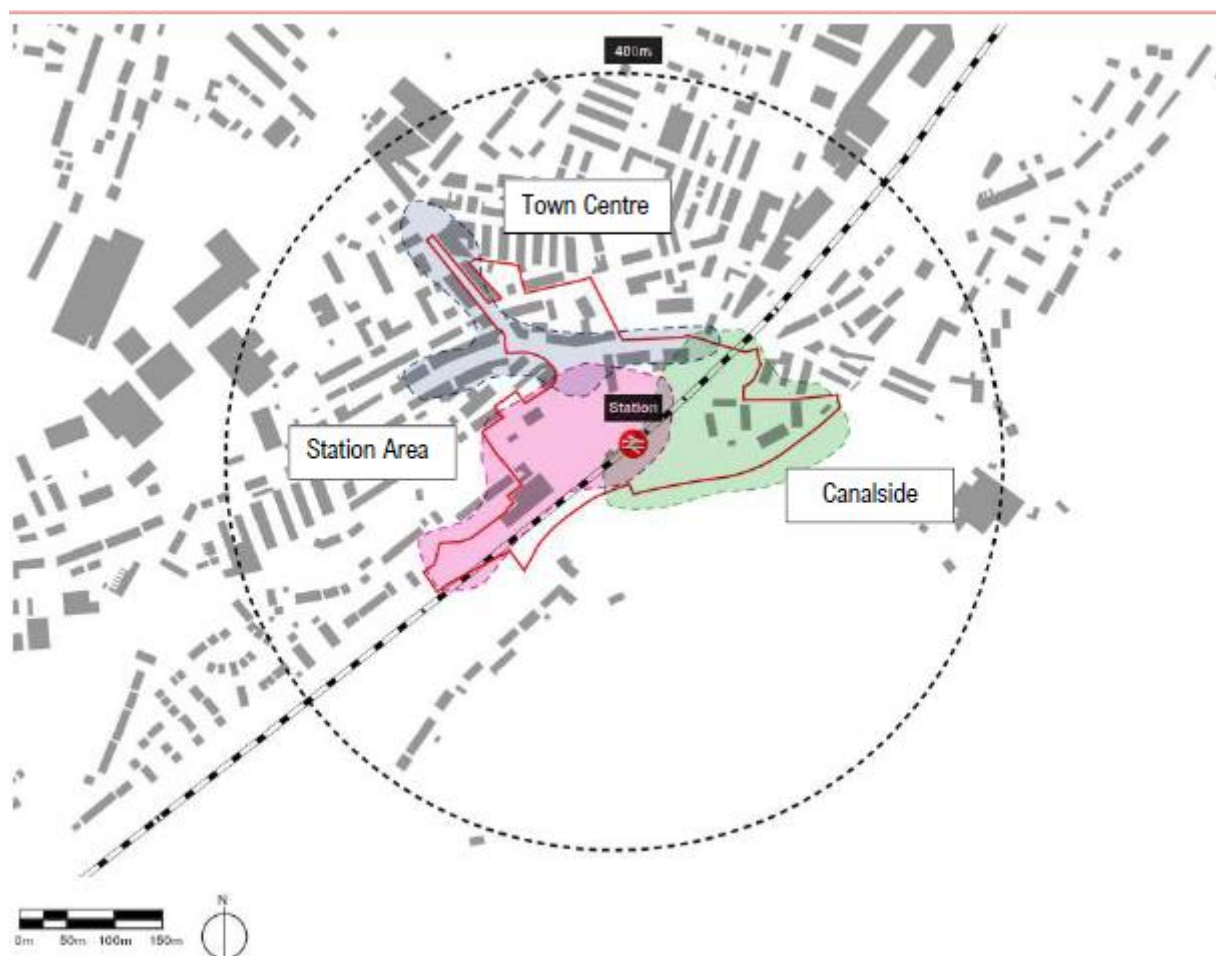


Figure 2 – Focus Areas in SPD

Throughout each focus area an emphasis will be to:

- Improve and increase the residential offering;
- Providing a mixture of local amenities;
- Providing complementary commercial uses;
- Providing multifunctional spaces; and
- Improve sustainable modes of access to and from the surrounding areas from the station centre are also critical in each focus area as is integration with the wider village centre.

The purpose of this section is to set out in more detail how we anticipate these areas to develop, and determine what role and function they have in delivering the overall vision for the Station area. This includes identifying appropriate future uses as well as the design and development considerations throughout this SPD.

Proposals for areas identified in this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) should take account of the development, design and transport principles detailed in earlier sections, the overall vision, and the area specific information set out below (see map below for all focus areas). These focus areas have been identified through their different characteristics in order to provide an analysis of the issues and opportunities within the overall SPD.

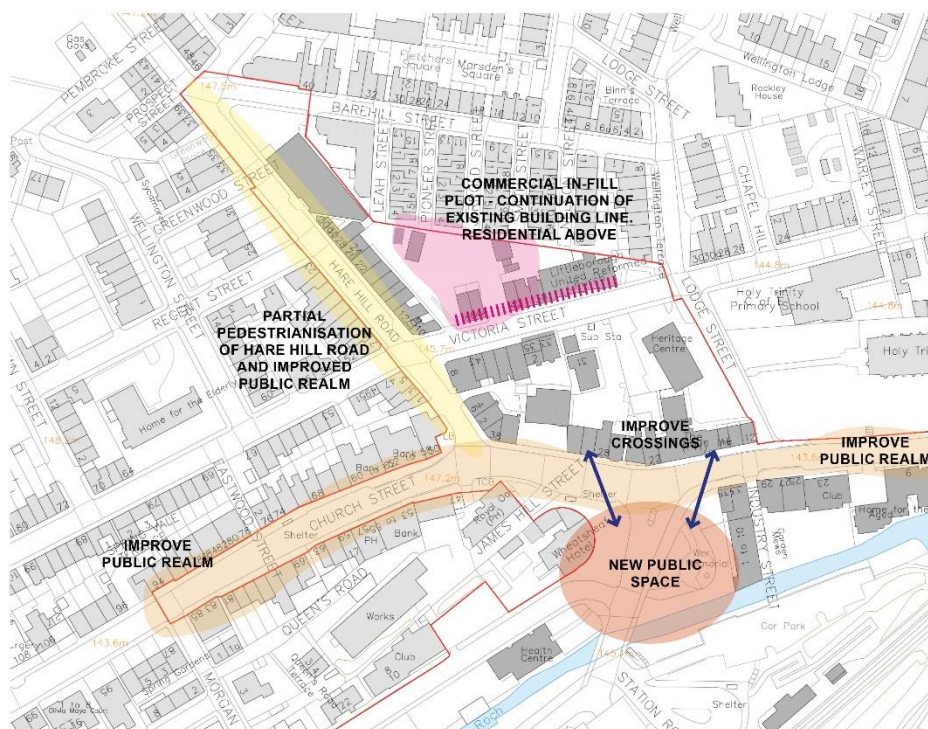
The focus areas are not rigidly defined for development and do not imply separate developments are sought or appropriate for these areas. Instead, development within the whole SPD area should be undertaken in a co-ordinated manner paying regard to all the guidance in this SPD, in order to deliver a well-planned and designed, coherent, interconnected and integrated development that delivers the regeneration of the wider Station Area.

The strategy is to create three distinct character areas (numbered 1-3) that are integrated with each other and within the existing communities.

7.1 Focus Area 1: Hare Hill Road and Village Centre

The area and approach around the station is key to this SPD and the overall regeneration of the Station Quarter and wider area. Figure X below shows the Focus Area in the context of the wider SPD area.

Hare Hill Road and village centre



PRINCIPLES

- Improve pedestrian environment and connectivity along Hare Hill Road, Church Street and through to the Station.
- New commercial units and local parking proposed on underutilised site (demolish low quality existing buildings), fronting directly onto Victoria Street and creating a strong building line.
- Narrow carriageway of Church Street.
- Improve pedestrian crossings to A58
- Improvements to public realm including street tree planting, cycle parking.

Figure 3 – Hare Hill and Village Centre

The key development principles of this area are:

- Provide alternative areas for car parking to improve pedestrian environment and connectivity along Hare Hill Road, Church Street and through to the Station;
- New commercial units and local parking proposed on underutilised site (demolish low quality existing buildings), fronting directly onto Victoria Street and creating a strong building line.
- Narrow carriageway of Church Street.
- Improve pedestrian crossings to A58
- Improvements to public realm including street trees

It is envisaged that a mix of land uses would be appropriate within this area including:

- Retail and café style developments;
- Small scale flexible office space,

- Residential developments which encompass ground floor commercial space fronting the station and station square;
- Community facilities, including potential for outdoor events space

The design of new development around the station should demonstrate how it has taken account of the guidance within the Urban Design Guide and the Littleborough Town Design Statement and its understanding of form, context, hierarchy, scale and proportion along with the new Station Square centre and the existing urban form.

The existing key landmarks and buildings should be enhanced through new development or area improvements. Strong active frontages and the use of quality materials should be appropriate to the conservation setting. There is opportunity to promote and enhance the conservation area through the SPD. The delivery aims of each area should provide space for community interaction and deliver high quality new and established neighbourhoods and flagship developments. Public spaces should be well designed and relate to the buildings around them.

7.2 Focus Area 2: Station and Environs

The station area is immediately adjacent to the train station. As a local transport interchange, within the settlement hierarchy, this station area provides links to local towns and neighbourhoods as well as wider links to Manchester and Leeds. When leaving the station, the connection to the village centre will be improved as part of the redevelopment of the area for new public realm. There is opportunity for high quality and well-designed high density housing developments within this character area. Using the existing high quality buildings as a backdrop, there is scope to create a sense of arrival and an excellent, safe public space in the form of a new civic square.

The station will be the heart of the redevelopment and should seek to balance the wider context of the station requirements as well as with a sympathetic relationship to the conservation area.

Station and environs

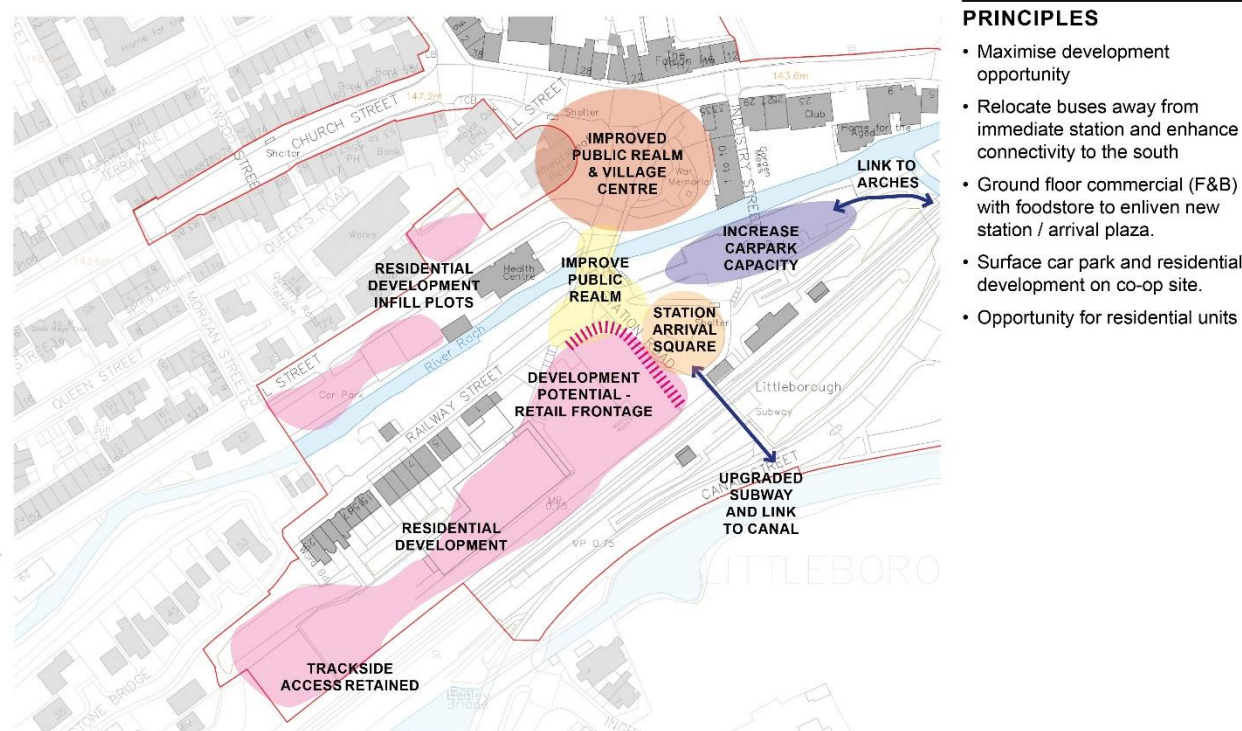


Figure 4 – Station and Environs

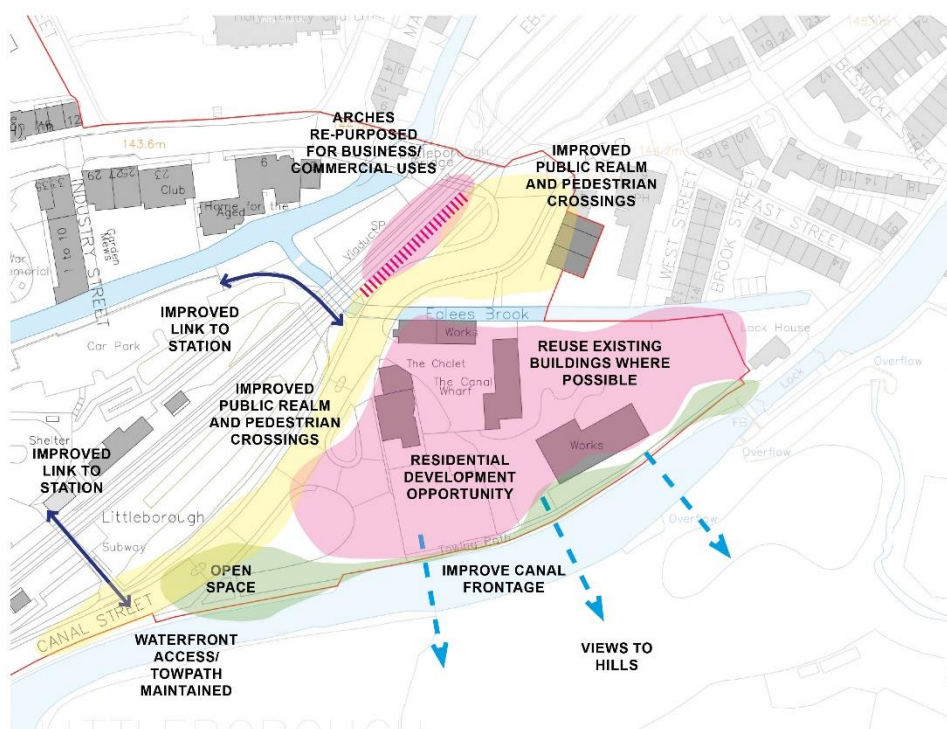
Key development proposals for the whole area include:

- Explore the opportunities to make more efficient use of the existing Co-op site to develop an enhanced food store offer with residential and other compatible commercial uses;
- Relocate buses away from immediate station to create an enhanced arrival plaza;
- Enhance the pedestrian and cycle links to promote sustainable transport connections to and from the station;
- Rationalise parking in the area, including decking of existing station car park, to meet the needs of the station and existing/future commercial uses in the area.

The site is in a sustainable and accessible location and is a key site in regards to its relationship to the village centre and train station. Integrated pathways must provide attractive and safe walking routes by improving accessibility and permeability via high quality to the public realm, which in turn reduces the carbon footprint through increased walking and cycling.

7.3 Focus Area 2: Canalside

Canalside



PRINCIPLES

- Retain / refurbishment of existing business premises and building into workshops / make space
- Improves public realm and re-purposing of underutilised space
- Enhance links through to canal towpath (leisure uses link to tourism/ footpath etc) and connectivity through to Station.

Figure 5 – Canalside

The Canalside area offers the opportunity to make best use of the existing asset of the railway arches. It is proposed that pedestrian links will be enhanced to ensure effective connectivity between the arches, planned housing and commercial space and the wider Village Centre.

Key development proposals for the area include:

- Retain / refurbishment of existing business premises and building into workshops / work space and/or residential;
- Improved public realm, new paving, street planting and re-purposing of under-utilised space;
- Enhance links through to canal towpath (leisure uses link to tourism/ footpath etc) and connectivity through to Station;
- Utilise the space under the railway arches for food and beverage uses, work space with potential dual frontage to Canal Street and River Roch;
- Traffic calming and improvements to the pedestrian crossing points between Canalside and station entrance and railway arches;
- Footbridges across Eales Brook to connect Canalside towards railway arches and into the station area.

Each site will accommodate a variety of well-designed dwellings, from low to high density. Appropriate size, proportion, scale and character is expected. There is a focus on providing local amenities to current and future residents and commuters to the station, creating a sustainable community setting. There is the potential to provide a vibrant community feel which enhances the area as a desirable place to live by making use of its Canalside location. The Rochdale Canal is steeped in history, and this historical context can be used as a focus for its regeneration.

The addition of high quality public realm encourages the use of streets and spaces and can significantly add to the quality of life and the image of the area. Well-designed public realm can create a 'sense of place', and enhance new and existing buildings as well as identifying key gateways and corridors which can encourage further investment. Key routes that connect to wider open spaces should be protected and improved such as the canal corridor. Local accessibility and permeability through the area needs to be strengthened with a particular focus on improving existing facilities for walking and cycling.

8. Delivery and Implementation

Introduction

The need for a robust and coherent delivery strategy has been a core principle running throughout the SPD process which underpins this SPD. This has included but is not limited to: a realistic and sound understanding of market aspirations and potential for change and investment, integrated feasibility and viability analysis which seeks to maximise public and private sector funding streams, and the need for land assembly to deliver the identified regeneration opportunity.

Comprehensive Development

This SPD supports and seeks a comprehensively planned and delivered mixed-use redevelopment in the Littleborough Station Area. The re-development should enhance the range and quality of the residential offer within the Littleborough area, provide opportunities for limited retail, new commercial and cultural space, and promote active travel for local journeys into the centre through improved public realm. The proposals will enhance the attractiveness of Littleborough centre for residents, visitors and business and support further investment.

In order to deliver the major step change necessary to achieve the Vision, Aim and Objectives set out in the beginning of this SPD it is considered that, at a minimum, a comprehensive co-ordinated development needs to be delivered for all the area covered by the character and focus areas

Market Demand Considerations

The Council's latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment (Draft, 2015) supports a need for the increased delivery of family houses sized 2-bedrooms and above to meet emerging need. In addition there is a recognised need to deliver a housing product within the SPD area to facilitate re-housing existing residents to release sites for development. There is also an identified need for a specialist older persons housing.

Soft market testing undertaken with a number of national and regional regeneration housebuilders and contractors has supported the view that there is a strong and continued interest in investing within the SPD area.

Partnership Working

It is prudent that the partnership working be embedded in the delivery of a comprehensive development.

Delivery Approach

The GM Stations Alliance working alongside G L Hearn and Broadway Malyan have produced a realistic delivery approach for the SPD area. Where it is identified to be necessary the Council is willing to use its statutory powers (including Compulsory Purchase Orders) to facilitate the holistic and comprehensive delivery of development and investment across the whole area.

The SPD seeks the comprehensive development and regeneration of the area captured within its boundary. Working alongside its partners, including but not limited to the Greater Manchester Stations Alliance, Network Rail and land owners, it is intended that investment may be delivered through the procurement of development partners.

Any development proposals promoted outside of this structure by individual landowners or interested parties will be required to demonstrate that they facilitate and contribute to the delivery of the wider regeneration objectives set out in this SPD and the Masterplan, and do not in any way prejudice its delivery.

Infrastructure and S106 Contributions

The Council will seek S106 contributions where these are necessary to make individual proposals acceptable in planning terms. The Council will also consider the ring fencing of contributions from development within the area to support future investment and on-going maintenance of infrastructure, such as public realm and open spaces, within the SPD area.

Applicants should be aware of the ambitions to deliver wider betterment through the inclusion of improved sustainable transport opportunities.

Delivery of affordable housing as part of residential developments is an established policy requirement across Rochdale. Policy C4 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (2016) requires an affordable housing contribution of 7.5% of the development sales value of the overall scheme, with a preference for on-site delivery of an affordable product to meet local need. The policy allows for exceptional circumstances where off-site contributions will be accepted.

Notwithstanding identified local need for affordable housing provision across Rochdale, this SPD recognises the need to diversify housing supply within the Littleborough Station area. It is recognised that the delivery of market housing within this area is required to deliver this diversification and to ensure the sustainability of retained affordable housing in the area – with only partial clearance of the existing estates proposed.

The SPD requires a clear and robust strategy around the strategic delivery of affordable housing, including an intermediate product, which can and should be delivered through future planning applications. This should include consideration of retained and improved affordable housing supply, the role for affordable supply as part of new developments to contribute to the wider implementation of the masterplan (including recognition of the need to re-house residents from redevelopment areas), and/or the contribution that off-site delivery could make to delivering the overall ambitions of the masterplan.


Planning Application Requirements

This SPD will be a material consideration in any future planning application relating to any site within its boundary; accordingly, any planning applications for development within the area will need to be supported by sufficient evidence and information to demonstrate they embed appropriate responses to the requirements set out within this SPD. This includes the need for justification for and evidence supporting any deviations from the requirements set out within the SPD.

The Council has a series of checklists summarising validation requirements associated with different types of applications, available at <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/planning-and-building/apply-for-planning-permission/planning-permission--home/application-forms-and-guidance>. These checklists should be adhered to by all applications to demonstrate that development is appropriate in planning terms.

Rochdale Borough Council
Strategic Planning Team
Number One Riverside
Smith Street
Rochdale OL16 1YH

 rochdale.gov.uk

 01706 924252

 strategic.planning@rochdale.gov.uk

