

Rotherham Civic Society

Rotherham Town Centre Strategic Development Framework: Draft Interim Planning Statement

1. INTRODUCTION:

The documents upon which we have been asked to comment comprise a 112 page Draft Interim Planning Statement, a Flood Risk Management Statement of 49 pages, and a Sustainability Appraisal of 96 pages. The following is, therefore, my best attempt to bring clarity to 257 pages of sometimes complex material.

There are 16 questions which we are asked to respond to, and these are placed at appropriate points in the text with my suggested response.

2. THE DRAFT INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT:

The document is intended to establish robust principles for the development of land and buildings and has the following objectives:

- i) To set out the vision and aspiration for the town centre.
- ii) To identify key activities, initiatives and infrastructure and enabling requirements.
- iii) To provide detailed guidance for developers.
- iv) To begin the process of considering the future of town centre sites as part of the 'issues and options' stage of the LDF Site Allocation DPD (in plain English - the Local Development Framework Site Allocations Development Plan Document) -which will govern development in the period to 2021.

**Question 1 - Do you agree with the objectives set out at paragraph 1.5/ If not can you suggest any amendments or additions/
RESPONSE - YES.**

3. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AREA:

The SDF area covers a wider area than the Town Centre as presently defined. The present town centre boundary was of course a key factor in Tesco's abortive planning application for the Guest and Chrimes site.

The SDF area stretches from Grafton Bridge in the north, to the Ickles roundabout in the south, and from Clifton Park in the east to Centenary Way in the west.

4. BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT:

This outlines in section 3 a series of national and regional policy guidance, the draft Regional Spatial Strategy, Rotherham UDP, Local Development Framework, Neighbourhood Renewal and Housing Market Renewal Strategies, and Local Transport Plan documents. It also refers to recent detailed local guidance such as the Design Code for the Rotherham River Corridor.

Question 2 - Are there any gaps in the policy context set out in Section 3/ If so can you suggest any additions or amendments?

RESPONSE-NO

5. TOWN CENTRE VISION:

This section is straightforward in the sense that it re-states the vision and the ten goals contained in the Town Team Charter. Four goals are of particular note:

- i) Make the river and the canal a key part of the town's future.
- ii) Populate the town centre by creating good quality living.
- iii) Make Forge Island a major new piece of the town centre.
- iv) Establish a new civic focus that not only promotes a more open and accessible type of governance but also embraces culture and the arts.

The Vision is added to with a plan illustrating 'Town Centre Aspirations' the key ones of which are:

- i) Redevelopment of Guest and Chrimes for a mix of uses including offices and housing. (NB. Doesn't specifically state Civic Centre).
- ii) Relocation of Tesco and redevelopment of Forge Island as a major new piece of the town centre.
- iii) Potential redevelopment of Nellie Denes / Enterprise House and Corporation Street.
- iv) Extension and improvement of Rotherham Interchange.
- iv) Possible area for housing in the longer term on the old Rotherham Power Station site and Effingham Street (north) shops.
- v) Relocation of the Civic Centre and redevelopment of this and Drummond Street car park as a major new piece of the town.
- vi) A new RCAT campus on Eastwood Lane.
- vii) Redevelopment of the vacated Doncaster Gate Hospital site.
- viii) Major redevelopment along Westgate and the riverside for a mix of uses including housing.

An indicative phasing is shown of the changes to the year 2026.

Question 3 - Do you agree with the Town Centre vision and aspiration set out in section 4? If not, how could this be amended?

RESPONSE – NO

SUGGEST ADD THE VISION CONTAINED IN THE DRAFT ROTHERHAM COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2005-2011 *'There will be an excellent town centre known for the high quality design of its public spaces and buildings, specialist and quality shops, markets, and cultural life for all age groups'*.

NELLIE DENES AND THE TRADES CLUB TO BE RETAINED IN ANY PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF THE UPPER FORGE ISLAND. DONCASTER GATE HOSPITAL TO BE ADAPTED FOR AN ALTERNATIVE USE USING BEST CONSERVATION PRACTICE.

6. PART TWO: TOWN CENTRE CHANGE:

This section analyses key issues on housing, retail, transport etc. A series of 'evidence base' and 'policy guidance points' are included. The main points are as follows:

Retail:

Evidence Base 1 shows that *there is little capacity for significant additional floor space* for convenience goods (i.e. everyday grocery shopping). At the same time it suggests there is a lack of choice in the smaller convenience store offer, and these should be encouraged to develop to serve the new residential developments in the town centre.

On the face of it there is no justification provided for an increase in convenience goods floorspace for the Tesco foodstore. The 2,400 sq m. Satnam development is allowed for by virtue of the existing planning permission.

In relation to comparison shopping (i.e. non-food retail) there is capacity for up to 40,000 sq metres across the Borough. Policy Guidance 3 indicates support for a department store, high quality fashion and footwear, and lifestyle retail in the Town Centre. This may well be compromised by the additional 14 units being proposed at Retail World in association with the development of a community stadium.

Housing:

Map 3 suggests possible housing units sited as follows:

By 2010:

150 in All Saints Quarter, 128 on Henley's, Wellgate, 37 at Moorgate House and 31 on the former Cinema House site.

By 2013:

350 on Guest and Chrimes, 150 on Doncaster Gate Hospital, and 50 on Civic Theatre / Highfields locality.

By 2021:

268 on Forge Island, 80 on Nellie Denes / Upper Forge Island, 500 on Westgate and Moorgate Hillside and 50 on Crofts / Wellgate.

After 2021:

300+ units on the old Power Station site / Effingham Street (north).

Concerns re: the Henley's site, Nellie Denes, Doncaster Gate Hospital and the Civic Theatre / Highfields need restating in the responses below.

Culture and Leisure Facilities:

Evidence Base 3 indicates that the Rotherham Cultural Strategy (Future Perfect 2003) identified:

The condition, accessibility and quality of a number of buildings (including the Civic Theatre and Arts Centre) as a weakness, highlighting the limited life expectancy of the current Civic Theatre.

For information, Future Perfect includes a very short statement indicating that the 200 seat performing Arts Centre limits opportunities *for the type and range of product*, the Art Gallery *is too small*, the York and Lancaster Museum *is easily missed by visitors and has no facilities for temporary display*. The building has many competing demands and *is showing signs of deterioration internally and externally (particularly the roof)*. In so far as the Civic Theatre is concerned *a recent condition survey identified remedial repairs in the region of £250,000 and suggested a limited life expectancy for the building*.

These are hardly damning indictments sufficient to justify the demolition of the buildings. The alternative argument could be put that a robust maintenance plan is needed for the buildings, and an internal rearrangement of the Arts Centre could be achieved by removing the

200 seat arts theatre. The Sheffield Theatres are not physically joined to their library or arts centre - why should they be in Rotherham?

Rotherham certainly needs better cultural facilities; it needs a modern civic theatre and facilities to replace the floorspace lost with the Assembly Rooms and Clifton Hall closures. This could be on Forge Island or by a re-vamp of the existing Civic Theatre and adjoining properties.

I think a much stronger case has to be made by the Council.

This section also indicates that the Council will encourage the provision of a cinema and 10 pin bowling alley, together with a 3 to 5 star quality assessed hotel with around 100 bedrooms to locate in the town centre. In line with PPS6 the town centre *will be the sequentially preferable location for new hotel proposals within Rotherham's urban area.*

Employment:

As one would expect this section sets a high priority on increasing employment in the town centre. It notes the Town Team's long term aspiration for housing along the riverside but counsels caution in relation to the displacement of existing viable businesses in the short term.

The Guest and Chrimes site is identified for *a comprehensive mixed use development* with significant employment generating uses in preference to wholly industrial and business uses. Whilst noting that relocation of the Civic Centre to this site is the Council's preferred option the report states that *an alternative option would be for the Council to consider development on alternative sites within the Council's ownership.*

An aspiration for any new civic centre is that it must contribute far more strongly to a positive identity for the town than the current collection of civic buildings do. A high quality public realm setting, and active ground floor uses including those that stay open after normal working hours, such as cafes, bars, and restaurants could help provide vitality to any new civic area.

All well and good, but how many cafes etc can a town centre take? The wider proposals suggest that All Saints Quarter and Forge Island are going to be stuffed full of them.

Conservation and Heritage:

It includes appalling inaccuracies to the Map of Listed Buildings - which are commented on later.

The key points are:

There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Rotherham Town Centre Conservation Area.

And that the Planning Authority will have regard to *Resisting pressure for change from retail uses for shops, especially on High Street where speciality shops will be encouraged.*

Encouragement of the use of traditional building materials, stone and brick with natural roof coverings of stone or blue slate, rather than artificial materials.

Community Facilities:

No analysis or evidence base is given for demolishing the existing civic buildings.

A pretty weak narrative which focuses primarily on the provision of 'Changing Places' toilet facilities.

Flood Risk:

Discusses in detail the flood risk issues, the removal of Grafton Bridge, and general details of the Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Transport:

Outlines the recommendations of the Rotherham Integrated Transport Study e.g. the downgrading of Centenary Way between the College Road and St Ann's roundabouts, the replacement of the Effingham Street flyover with a ground level junction, and that Westgate, Sheffield Road and Corporation Street be enhanced as a primary public transport route. Also Greasbrough Road widened to dual carriageway standard and St Ann's Road (south) closed to through traffic.

The general thrust of the proposals lead me to question the efficacy of introducing a major trip generator like Tesco into the St Ann's area.

Intriguingly Percy Street is mentioned as a road upon which public transport will have a high priority. This is completely at odds with the draft public realm strategy which indicates this to be a primarily pedestrian route.

Public Transport:

This section discusses a number of alternative routes through the town centre for Supertram / Bus Rapid Transit Westgate / Main Street / Corporation Street / Frederick Street / Walker Place / Effingham Street / St Ann's Road (north) could be affected to a greater or lesser degree.

It will be important for an early decision to be made on ONE route.

Car Parking:

That assuming that the full Renaissance programme is achieved some 1600 parking spaces lost to development -would need to be replaced. If the Council agrees that some growth in parking provision is sustainable, up to 900 additional parking spaces may be justifiable.

Options suggested:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Guest and Chrimes: | 140 spaces. |
| Civic Area / Drummond Street: | 1400 spaces. |
| College Road north (Fads / Phoenix PH locality): | 400 - 600 space multi storey. |
| Frederick Street Multi Storey: | extended to 1,000 spaces. |
| Westgate: | 680 - 800 spaces. |
| Wellgate Multi Storey: | potential for expansion. |

Question 4 - Are there any key activities missing? If yes what should be included.**RESPONSE -NO**

BUT AMENDMENT REQUIRED TO MAP 4 (LISTED BUILDINGS). NO.3 IS NOT THE OLD SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND ART BUT THE SITE OF ARCHBISHOP

THOMAS ROTHERHAMS' 15TH CENTURY COLLEGE OF JESUS AND NO'S 25-27 HIGH STREET (THREE CRANES) SHOULD BE ADDED.

Question 5 - Is the evidence base as shown in the blue boxes complete? If not are there other documents which should be referred to?

RESPONSE –NO

FURTHER EVIDENCE REQUIRED TO JUSTIFY THE EXPANSION OF CONVENIENCE SHOPPING IMPLIED BY THE TESCO DEVELOPMENT.

FUTURE PERFECT 2003 DOES NOT PROVIDE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE FOR THE NEED TO REPLACE THE ARTS CENTRE AND THE CIVIC THEATRE.

NO EVIDENCE BASE IS GIVEN TO JUSTIFY THE DEMOLITION OF THE CIVIC BUILDINGS.

Question 6 - Are the policy guidance points appropriate? If not can you suggest any amendments or changes.

By and large the policy guidance points are so general as to be inoffensive.

The rationalisation and improvement of civic accommodation within the SDF will be pursued leaves open the possibility of a rethink on this. Indeed there is an argument to be made that upgrading the existing Civic Area with a replacement for Bailey House / Grove Road offices added to it and improved public realm could be more welcoming to the public the Council serve than a possible 8 storey high glass office block on the Guest and Chrimes site.

Again in relation to the provision of cultural facilities the policy guidance does not entirely box the Council in to a fixed position referring to *the concentration of new and relocated cultural facilities in to a cluster* being encouraged *ideally on and around Forge Island*.

Ideally, but not definitely!

Policy Guidance 4 refers to this being acceptable within UDP areas MU19 Bridge Street and MU25 between Percy Street and Doncaster Gate.

Also Policy Guidance 10.H stating *that the Council will resist development proposals where they would jeopardise the ability to deliver Bus Rapid Transit or Supertram extension schemes along the routes identified in Figure 4*. This must be challenged.

RESPONSE – NO

IN RELATION TO POLICY GUIDANCE 4 THE SOCIETY HAS GRAVE RESERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ON NELLIE DENES AND THE CIVIC THEATRE AREA.

POLICY GUIDANCE POINT 10.H MUST BE BASED ON A PREFERRED ROUTE FOR BUS RAPID TRANSIT / SUPERTRAM WITH HIGH PRIORITY BEING GIVEN TO ITS SELECTION SO AS TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT ON DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS.

Question 7 - Do you have any further comments on the transport section and the recommendations of the Rotherham Integrated Transport Study.

RESPONSE - YES

IN PART 3 OF THE IPS REFERENCE IS MADE TO THE CLOSURE OF BRIDGE STREET TO GENERAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN MASBROUGH STREET AND CENTENARY WAY AND ITS USE FOR BUSES ONLY. WAS THIS RECOMMENDED BY THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STUDY, AND HOW CAN IT BE JUSTIFIED?

THE REFERENCE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT HAVING A HIGH PRIORITY ON PERCY STREET (PAGE 47) DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS THE DRAFT PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY.

7. PART THREE: DETAILED GUIDANCE

This identifies seven areas of change but before considering these in detail the Executive Committee may wish to be reminded of the details of a powerpoint presentation made by John Smales, the Council's development Manager, in October 2007. The presentation was made within days of the Council announcing that it had entered into a 5 year exclusivity agreement with a developer called TCN Express Park Developments.

In summary Mr Smales outlined:

1. *A new civic centre on Guest and Chrimes. The 'massing model' displayed showed the civic centre to be 8 storeys high on the Main Street frontage, and containing 244,000 sq ft of offices.*
2. *A superstore on Walker Place.*
3. *A 2 storey car park with temporary library and arts centre above on the Drummond Street car park.*
4. *A new car park, with bowling alley, cinema and food court above, on the site of the covered outside market.*
5. *A 96 bed hotel on Crinoline House.*
6. *An 80 bed hotel on the Mecca Bingo car park in Corporation Street.*
7. *A cultural centre on Forge Island together with residential blocks up to 8 storeys.*
8. *Residential blocks on the site of Nellie Denes and Enterprise House.*
9. *A 5 storey block of 64 key worker housing units on Bailey House.*
10. *A glass 2 storey restaurant and banqueting suite built as a front extension to the Town Hall, extending over the existing pedestrianised area.*
11. *New offices on the site of the Eric Manns building.*
12. *New residential development on the site of the Civic Theatre and 1 & 2 Hkighfields.*
13. *The Westgate Centre is outlined in red with a comment 'by others'.*
14. *The town centre is split into a series of zones:*
Commercial Quarter -for the shopping area.
Waterfront Quarter.
Cultural Quarter -for Westgate / Town Hall.
Lifestyle Quarter -for the present civic area.
Exchange Quarter -for the market / RCAT / Civic Theatre area.

The presentation clearly implied that the concepts were generated by TCN Express Parks.

Mr Smales also confirmed that the Council has purchased Westgate Chambers (former Coop) and the Lloyds Bank on Corporation Street. Last week's Advertiser contained a 'to let' notice which suggests the Council has also purchased the Millfold Works on Westgate.

The most recent Delegated Powers Minutes from the Council refer to existing leases on the Centenary Market and the Guardian Centre being renewed for no more than 5 years expiring no later than 2013, with a break clause to obtain possession at short notice.

The following narrative in the SDF document may well gloss over certain issues due to the delicacy of negotiations with current occupiers / landowners, but it is clear that the Society must have regard to the fact that there may be a broader agenda.

The seven areas of change are as follows:

1. Former Guest and Chrimes:

It is also recognised that to help meet Rotherham 's Renaissance aspirations a comprehensive employment led mixed use development may be the most appropriate and efficient use of the site, with new streets and spaces.

The design principles envisage a landmark building of a minimum 4 storeys and a maximum 8 storeys at the Main Street / Don Street corner. Building height to decrease towards the existing 3 storey listed building.

Potentially a multi storey car park on the railway boundary, and a new vehicular / pedestrian bridge link to Sheffield Road. The southern third of the site *would have scope for housing.*

The emphasis on the main part of the site of preferring BI business office uses raises no problems - but presumably leaves open the question of a civic centre use.

2 St Ann's and existing Civic Area

The Renaissance aspirations seek to relocate Tesco from their Forge Island site. The vacated civic area may be a potential alternative location.

Whilst a big caveat is included to the effect that the site could accommodate office or retail floorspace where they meet the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 6, the design and development principles provide detailed architectural analysis of three options for accommodating Tesco on the site.

Option 1: 11,600 sq m superstore and 800 parking spaces beneath and to the rear. Considered to compromise urban design aspirations - huge monolithic block.

Option 2: 10,150 sq m superstore (with mezzanine) on the civic offices and 671 parking spaces on the Arts Centre / Norfolk House. Retains the existing pedestrian link between town centre and St Ann's.

Option 3: 7,650 sq m superstore and 388 parking spaces below and on Norfolk House. Retains pedestrian links and could also accommodate the retention of the Arts Centre at least in the short term. Additional decked car parking could allow a larger store up to 9,760 sq m. n.b. Tesco's planning application for Guest and Chrimes in 2002 was for a 7,937 sq m gross foodstore. There were a number of ancillary uses on site - pub /restaurant etc requiring a total of 870 parking spaces.

No consideration is given to the commercial viability or disabled access issues of having the entire sales floor area at first floor level. There are dangers therefore in pursuing these options only for Tesco to respond that it requires a ground floor sales area with parking alongside.

The narrative in respect of the Drummond Street car park is vague, referring to the need to retain car parking and giving a range of acceptable uses for the site.

3. Forge Island and the Town Centre:

Forge Island is arguably the most important site for redevelopment in the town.

Tesco is one of the strongest stores in the town centre and acts as the primary anchor and attractor..... Whilst it's present location is the most appropriate in terms of the sequential test set out in Planning Policy Statement 6 there are concerns over whether larger premises can be achieved on site, (this says it all to me! What happens to Westgate / All Saints Quarter when the anchor goes?)

Redevelopment of Forge Island is mentioned as a key Renaissance goal and the concept of the Arts Bridge (referred to in the draft Public Realm Strategy) is once again mentioned.

Acceptable uses are stated as main town uses, arts and cultural development, and housing above ground floor level.

The Council and Yorkshire Forward are currently producing a more detailed development brief for the site. In the interim design principles stated as:

- i) Publicly accessible, lively and have high quality architecture.
- ii) Mixed use, as well as cultural facilities, ground floor retail, drink and food uses.
- iii) Reference to public realm / public art.
- iv) Add a further footbridge link to the railway station.
- v) Buildings up to 6 storeys in height with the southern tip being suitable for a *tall landmark building..... to contribute to the creation of a gateway to the town centre linked to the landmark buildings sought on the former Guest and Chrimes site.*
- v) Includes cross reference to the Rotherham Lighting Experience.

The Town Centre narrative is very much a statement of fact regarding the existing condition of the retail core. It highlights the fact that the Frederick Street multi storey car park may need replacing due to structural problems.

It defines the town centre 'retail loop' as being Effingham Street / Bridgegate / Frederick Street (a rather simplistic idea!). Suggests the Mecca Bingo car park on Corporation Street for residential with g/f retail uses.

It generally revisits the issues already considered regarding the Townscape Heritage Initiative and the draft Public Realm Strategy - riverside environment, market entrance canopy, Effingham square 'greening'.

4. Exchange Quarter:

This 'Quarter' comprises RCAT's Clifton and Eastwood buildings, Percy Street, Doncaster Gate, and the hospital.

It defines the new RCAT campus as including the former Brittain's store (Rileys).

It defines Clifton Court, the Civic Theatre, and 1 & 2 Highfields as a *site which may become available for development*, and flags up the availability of Doncaster Gate Hospital once the PCT has relocated its activities.

Reference is made to the contribution the RCAT Howard Building and Doncaster Gate Hospital make to the environmental character of the area. Residential or community use is proposed on the hospital site with an *innovative redevelopment layout* behind a retained building frontage.

Crucially, however, the report is entirely silent on the important contribution that Clifton Court / Civic Theatre / Highfields make to the street scene, and provides no justification of its allocation as a potential redevelopment site.

5. Westgate:

Westgate and the river corridor provide another strategically important gateway offering the potential to dramatically reorientate the town towards the waterfront, injecting new life into the town centre and reposition it in market terms.

Split into three areas:

i) The Riverside (Telephone Exchange / Royal Mail building etc.)

This would be a residential led mixed use development with a lively street frontage along Westgate and active riverside spaces. *A flourishing residential area with a strong contemporary urban feel.*

Possibly with an 'anchor' development on the Main Street / Westgate corner.

ii) The Hillside (triangle formed by Westgate, Alma Road, and a line drawn behind Maltkiln Street and Unity Place).

In the Hillside area the aim is to create a quiet residential area with family housing that takes advantage of the views over the Don Valley.

At the level of Maltkiln Street there is no view over the Don Valley! I am totally perplexed by the thought of family housing here - issues such as schools, play areas, open space.

Almost repeating the same mistakes of the past re: Victorian courtyard housing.

I would suggest as an alternative that Westgate is a good location for the development of the creative and digital industries sector with the Hillside becoming a location for live / work units.

iii) The old T.C. Harrison's triangle.

Suggested as a 'business cluster' of B1, B2, and B8 uses. Ove Arup Sustainability Appraisal assumes that it is a creative industries cluster.

6. Moorgate:

This section is weak, referring briefly to the backland area of Snail Hill and the old Veres Bakery site. The future vacation of RMBC's Grove Road offices is also mentioned.

For the most part it focuses on a continuation of UDP policies permitting offices, hotels, residential institutions, dwelling houses and non residential institutions in the area.

Map 12 should be amended to exclude Wellgate Old Hall from the housing development notation, and some explicit statement should be made regarding the design of new housing adjacent to it.

7. Western Periphery:

Includes Brinsworth Street, the Liquid Nightclub, Masbrough Commercial Area, Phoenix Hotel, Nellie Denes, Bailey House, Rawmarsh Road, Northfield Road, and Effingham Street (north).

Truly the odds and sods!

Much of the area *is unlikely to change significantly*. However, *the area must improve if it is to offer attractive gate-ways for visitors to the town centre*.

Reference is made to the proposed car parking provision in the Phoenix Hotel / FADS area - which is called the Rotunda! - and to a long term proposal to consider the re-allocation of the old Power Station site and Effingham Street (north) shops to residential use along the riverside.

In relation to the Bridge Street area, it pulls back on the proposal outlined by John Smales for residential flats in this location. Simply stating housing could also be acceptable as part of a mixed use development.

In Bridge Street, Masbrough Commercial Area and Main Street it includes as acceptable uses *A1 shops, where proposals meet the tests set out in Planning Policy Statement 6*.

This is unsatisfactory - almost inviting further problems when the target must be to strengthen the town centre itself.

In relation to Bailey House, rather than key worker housing as outlined in John Smales' talk the SDF refers to community or B1 office use being acceptable.

One statement which has left me totally dumbfounded is *as part of a package of bus priority measures Bridge Street would be closed to general traffic between Masbrough Street and Centenary Way and become bus priority*.

I just don't understand how, in this eventuality, access will be gained to the Masbrough Commercial Area, the railway station, the existing multi storey car park and the proposed new one by the Phoenix Hotel.

Question 8 - Do you have any comments on the potential development options on pages 71 to 74 for the site of the existing Council buildings at Walker Place? Which option(s) would you prefer to see?

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Option 1 | Yes | No |
| Option 2 | Yes | No |
| Option 3 | Yes | No |
| Option 3 with decked parking | Yes | No |

RESPONSE: - YES

THE SOCIETY SERIOUSLY QUESTIONS WHETHER TESCO OR ITS CUSTOMERS WOULD ACCEPT THE ENTIRE SALES AREA BEING AT FIRST FLOOR LEVEL. ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND ADDITIONAL ENERGY COSTS ARE IMPLIED.

THE SOCIETY CANNOT SEE HOW A 2 STOREY SLAB BLOCK WITH SERVICE YARD FACING ONTO CENTENARY WAY WILL PROVIDE A SUITABLY IMPRESSIVE OUTLOOK ON THIS IMPORTANT GATEWAY TO THE TOWN CENTRE.

Question 9 - Do you agree with the aspirations set out for each area? If not, how should these be changed (please identify the area(s) to which your comments relate).

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Former Guest and Chrimes site | Yes | No |
| 2. St Ann's | Yes | No |
| 3. The existing Civic Area | Yes | No |
| 4. Forge Island | Yes | No |
| 5. Town Centre | Yes | |
| No 6. Exchange Quarter | Yes | No |
| 7. Westgate | Yes | No |
| 8. Moorgate | Yes | |
| No 9. Western Periphery | Yes | No |

RESPONSE: - NO

THE EXISTING CIVIC AREA COULD ALTERNATIVELY BECOME A KEY REGENERATION SITE BY REFURBISHMENT OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS AND THE ADDITION OF A REPLACEMENT BUILDING FOR BAILEY HOUSE / GROVE ROAD BUILT TO THE HIGHEST ARCHITECTURAL PRINCIPLES.

THE EXCHANGE QUARTER NARRATIVE SHOULD SPECIFICALLY STATE THAT THE GRAIN AND CHARACTER OF THIS AREA WILL BE ENHANCED BY THE REFURBISHMENT AND RE-USE OF THE PRINCIPAL EXISTING BUILDINGS ON DONCASTER GATE AND CATHERINE STREET.

Question 10 - Is it clear what the acceptable uses for each area are? If not, how could this be made clearer? (please identify the area(s) to which your comments relate).

Then lists the individual areas as above with Yes No boxes.

RESPONSE: - NO

THERE IS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SDF DRAFT IPS, AND THE SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL APPENDIX C WHICH REFERS TO A CREATIVE AND BUSINESS CLUSTER ON THE SHEFFIELD ROAD TRIANGLE.

Question 11 - Do you agree with the design and development principles for each area? If not, can you suggest any changes/ (please identify the area(s) to which your comments relate).

Then lists the individual areas as above with Yes No boxes.

RESPONSE: - NO

A TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THAT NEW 'LANDMARK' BUILDINGS DO NOT OBSCURE THE VIEW OF THE ALL SAINTS MINSTER SPIRE FROM KEY GATEWAYS TO THE TOWN CENTRE.

THERE IS A HEAVY EMPHASIS ON LANDMARK ARCHITECTURE ON WESTERN GATEWAY TO THE TOWN CENTRE. CONSIDERATION NEEDS EQUALLY TO BE GIVEN TO THE IMPACT OF THE TESCO STORE DESIGN WHEN VIEWED FROM ST ANN'S ROUNDABOUT.

IN RELATION TO THE TOWN CENTRE PLEASE REFER TO THE SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY.

THE SOCIETY STRONGLY FAVOURS THE OPTION OF RE-USE RATHER THAN REDEVELOPMENT OF CLIFTON COURT / CIVIC THEATRE / HIGHFIELDS IN THE EVENT THAT THE PROPERTIES BECOME SURPLUS TO RMBC REQUIREMENTS.

THE SOCIETY SERIOUSLY QUESTIONS THE LOGIC OF INTRODUCING FAMILY HOUSING TO THE WESTGATE HILLSIDE AND SUGGESTS INSTEAD THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIVE / WORK UNITS IN CONNECTION WITH A FOCUS ON DEVELOPING THE CREATIVE AND DIGITAL INDUSTRIES IN THE WESTGATE AREA.

THE SOCIETY IS COMPLETELY AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HOW BRIDGE STREET CAN BE CLOSED TO GENERAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN MASBROUGH STREET AND CENTENARY WAY GIVEN THE IMPORTANT FUNCTION THAT THIS ROUTE SERVES IN ACCESSING THE RAILWAY STATION, MASBROUGH COMMERCIAL AREA ETC.

THE SOCIETY BELIEVES THAT ACCEPTABLE USES FOR THE BRIDGE STREET, MASBROUGH COMMERCIAL, AND MAIN STREET AREAS SHOULD EXCLUDE AI SHOPS IN ORDER TO RETAIN THE FOCUS ON THE TOWN CENTRE.

AN EXPLICIT REFERENCE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE MOORGATE SECTION REGARDING THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE VICINITY OF WELLGATE OLD HALL. MAP 12 SHOULD BE AMENDED TO REMOVE THE REDEVELOPMENT NOTATION FROM THE OLD HALL SITE.

Question 12 - Do you have any comments on the development principles set out in Appendix 1?

RESPONSE – YES

THE SOCIETY WELCOMES THE STRUCTURED AND CONCISE APPROACH ADOPTED FOR SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND BUILT DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES, AND THE TRANSITION TO HIGHER QUALITY STANDARDS IMPLIED BY THIS AND THE ADOPTION OF THE DESIGN CODE FOR THE RIVER CORRIDOR. THE SOCIETY ALSO NOTES WITH PLEASURE THE

EMPHASIS ON THE RE-USE OF STONE OR OTHER LOCALLY DERIVED OR LOCALLY IMPORTANT MATERIALS.

THE SOCIETY AGREES WITH THE WELL CONSIDERED REFERENCE TO LANDMARKS BUT FEELS THAT THEIR SITING SHOULD NOT SOLELY BE CONFINED TO OPPORTUNISTIC REDEVELOPMENT SITES BUT BASED UPON A FULL APPRAISAL OF THE SDF AREA IN ORDER TO GIVE A UNIQUE 'SENSE OF PLACE' THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BEEVERSLEIGH FLATS IN 1970 SET A BENCHMARK WHICH HAS SADLY NOT BEEN MATCHED SINCE.

Question 13 - Do you have any comments on the draft 'Design Brief for Flood Management Works' at Appendix 4?

RESPONSE: - YES

REQUIRES UPDATING TO EXPLICITLY REFER TO THE PROPOSED NEW WALL TREATMENTS RECOMMENDED BY GILLESPIES.

APPENDIX C REFERS BOTH TO DON BRIDGE AND AT DON 11.3054 TO GRAFTON BRIDGE, CAUSING CONFUSION. IS GRAFTON BRIDGE NOW THE NAME OF THE BRIDGE ERECTED IN 1977?

Question 14 - Overall is the document easy to understand? If not, how could it be improved?

RESPONSE: - YES

Question 15 - Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal?

RESPONSE: YES

TOO MANY TO MENTION HERE. PLEASE SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT.

Question 16 - Please use the space below to provide us with any other comments you may wish to make or feel free to provide these to us separately.

THE SOCIETY IS GENUINELY CONCERNED, BASED ON THE PRESENTATION GIVEN BY MR SMALES IN OCTOBER 2007, AND HAVING REGARD TO DELEGATED POWERS MINUTE NO. 207 OF FEBRUARY 2008, THAT THERE IS UNCERTAINTY WITH REGARD TO THE FUTURE OF ALL OR PART OF THE CENTENARY MARKET. THE SOCIETY BELIEVES THAT A SUCCESSFUL CONTINUATION OF THE MARKET IS VITAL TO THE TOWN'S FUTURE.

THE SOCIETY IS CONCERNED AT THE PROSPECT OF FURTHER DAMAGE BEING CAUSED TO THE VIABILITY OF THE TOWN CENTRE AS A RESULT OF 14 MORE RETAIL UNITS BEING PROPOSED AT RETAIL WORLD IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNITY STADIUM SCHEME.

THE SOCIETY IS CONCERNED THAT MOVING TESCO TO THE EAST SIDE OF THE TOWN CENTRE WILL SIGNIFICANTLY HARM THE ALL SAINTS / THI

AREA. THE LOCATION OF TESCO AND THE MARKET ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE CENTRE CURRENTLY PROVIDES A BALANCING EFFECT. THE SOCIETY WONDERS WHETHER RECENT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY TO JUSTIFY THE COUNCIL REVIEWING WITH TESCO THE POSSIBILITY OF A FOODSTORE ON THE GUEST AND CHRIMES SITE, WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE SITE DEVELOPED FOR RESIDENTIAL / B1 OFFICE USES RATHER THAN THE ORIGINALLY INTENDED PETROL FILLING STATION AND NON FOOD RETAIL USE.

THE SOCIETY HAS RECENTLY SUGGESTED TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL THAT THE COUNCIL LEAD A BID FOR ONE OF THE 20 NEW UNIVERSITIES RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BY H.M.GOVERNMENT. GUEST AND CHRIMES WOULD BE A POTENTIAL SITE FOR A UNIVERSITY OF ROTHERHAM, AND IF IT WERE TO PROCEED IT WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE SDF DRAFT IPS. THE SOCIETY WOULD POSSIBLY NEED TO REVISIT SOME ASPECTS OF ITS CONSULTATION RESPONSE IN THIS EVENTUALITY.

Attached Document

Rotherham Civic Society: Consultation Response to Question 15.

Comments regarding the Sustainability Appraisal carried out by Ove Arup into the Rotherham Town Centre SDF Draft Interim Planning Statement.

Page (iii) Sustained Economic Growth:

The reference to competition should include not only Meadowhall but Parkgate Retail World and the increased challenge resulting from the proposed construction of 14 more retail units in connection with the community stadium, (also para 5.4.1. - page 15 and table 3 - page 24.)

Page (iv) Buildings and Infrastructure:

There is reference to minimising waste during construction but no reference to the waste created by demolishing Civic Buildings of only 30 years old.

Page (iv) Climate Change Resilience:

The developments that could be constructed as a result of the IPS are likely to be in place for over 25years. It is to be hoped that the developments last a minimum of 60 years!!!

It is noted that the consultants provide the usual 'get out' by stating that the IPS is insufficiently detailed *to carry out a comprehensive and detailed appraisal of its cumulative effects* and that the assessment is based upon a qualitative assessment of the Policy Guidance.

Page 20. para 5.11.1 Archaeology:

Fails to mention the 15th C College of Jesus and the important remains retained behind the facade of the Woolworths etc building on Effingham Street.

Page 21. para 5.11.2 Listed Buildings:

Refers to the Three Cranes building being at risk but omits it from the accompanying Figure 11. Also No 3 on the map is not the Old School of Art and Science but the site of the 15th C. College of Jesus.

Page 26 Table 4 Contextual Sustainability Issues - Housing:

Mentions attracting young professionals into new dwellings in the Town Centre but not families (viz: Westgate Hillside proposal).

Page 28 para 7.1.1 Guest and Chrimes:

We welcome the statement made in relation to the listed building being a key strength but consider the word 'redevelopment' should be replaced by 'refurbishment'.

Page 28 para 7.1.2

Clarification is needed from the consultants to justify the statement that *developments could occur that could exacerbate these (climate change) effects*. As this statement is included as a throwaway comment throughout the document it is pretty important.

Page 29 para 7.1.3 Enhancement Opportunities: Guest and Chrimes

We seriously doubt that introducing a water bus link to the railway station *would further enhance* public transport. The presence of Rotherham Lock makes it quicker to walk or cycle.

Page 29 para 7.2 St Ann's and Existing Civic Site:

This section is an appalling 'cop out' by the consultants. It makes no reference whatsoever to the Tesco superstore proposal or its impact and instead simply focuses on the new leisure facilities and Drummond Street.

Crucially it makes no statement about the demolition of 30 year old civic buildings, and the relationship with one of the five key principles of sustainable development 'Living within environmental limits'.

Page 30 para 7.3 Town Centre and Forge Island:

The entire assessment and positive score for this area is based upon *a key strength of this site is the relocation of the town's cultural facilities providing an Arts Centre that is accessible to the whole community.*

In the Society's view this assessment is highly questionable. The current Arts Centre is flanked by a 240 space car park within yards of the Bus Station. The Civic Theatre is close to a surface car park and the intersection of a number of bus routes.

The Forge Island site by contrast will be some distance away from car parking and physically no closer to the Bus Station. Accessibility is therefore one factor that should not be argued as a key strength for this site.

Page 31 para 7.4 Exchange Quarter:

Have the consultants been issued with the same report?

There is no way that proposing the redevelopment of Clifton Court / Civic Theatre /1 & 2 Highfields and Doncaster Gate Hospital (albeit with the facade retained) should result in a positive score under Objective 19 Landscape Quality and historic assets.

Page 32 para 7.5 Westgate:

The economic growth positive score is questioned in terms of the displacement of existing businesses. As previously indicated the Society is concerned at the reference to family housing in relation to the Hillside.

Page 33 para 7.6 Moorgate:

The Society does not understand how the SDF proposals contribute a major positive score on 'creativity, innovation and sound science'. The flagship example of Moorgate Crofts Business Centre already exists and is not part of the SDF. If the SDF was adapted to include live / work units for creative and digital industries in Moorgate / Westgate Hillside this score would be appropriate.

Page 34 Para 7.7: Western Periphery:

How can there be a major positive score on economic growth and a neutral impact on employment opportunities? There is no indication that uses in this area are going to be highly productive and efficient!

Page 37 Para 7.9 Sustainability of the IPS as a whole:

The comment in 'Town and District Centre function and vibrancy' that *the function of the Town Centre remains relatively unchanged following the policy guidance* suggests that the

IPS may not be achieving the vision set out in the Draft Rotherham Community Strategy 2005-2011.

As previously mentioned there is an obvious danger that, if further AI uses are permitted in the Bridge Street / Main Street areas, and further retail expansion or unit subdivision allowed at Retail World, the Town Centre will underperform even more. It also suggests that Policy Guidance 3 related to the 'retail offer' needs to be more forceful.

Appendix C1: Sustainability Appraisal Matrices:

Guest and Chrimes:

Objective 17 makes erroneous reference to PCT facilities on this site.

St Ann's and Existing Civic Site:

Objective 1 mentions a new cultural centre here. Why?

Objective 3 should include consideration of increased congestion resulting from the new Tesco store.

Objective 9 There is no justification for the statement that *the redevelopment of the Drummond Street carpark is of strategic importance to the town etc....* based on the information contained on page 70 of the SDF.

Objective 12 *This option provides a significant opportunity to provide an exemplar for city Centre residential development and reference to ensuring the development is complementary of the existing listed building.* As noted in Objective 18 there is no residential development proposed in this area and certainly no listed building. Presumably this is a lazy piece of 'copy, cut and pasting' by the consultants!

Objective 15 This notes that *redevelopment of the site will include the production of construction waste.* The reference to there being no facilities for composting on site is bizarre when the real issue is the destruction of four major civic buildings which are nowhere near the end of their economic life.

Objective 21 What has the improvement of the railway station to do with the St Ann's / Civic area?

Town Centre and Forge Island:

Objective 9 There is no consideration of the possible impact on town centre vibrancy of having both key attractants (Tesco and the Market) on the east side of the town. Locating Tesco on the west side of the town gives it more balance and must surely underpin development of new retail units in the All Saints Quarter.

Objective 10 It is open to debate that the redevelopment of Forge Island *will increase the number of people around.* The customer numbers at the present Tesco must be substantial.

Exchange Quarter:

Once again there is no consideration given to the effect that redevelopment of the Civic Theatre etc will have on the area.

Westgate:

Objective 5 There is absolutely no justification on the basis of the narrative included in the SDF document for the comment that *the development of a business cluster on Sheffield Road will provide a key location for creative and new businesses to grow*. The consultants comment that this then supports additional clusters around the town suggests a major re-write of the relevant SDF section. The Society believes, however, that Westgate and Westgate Hillside are the more appropriate location as previously referred to.

Again no consideration given to the consequences of displacing existing businesses. Also again we reiterate our comments re: family housing on the Westgate Hillside.

Western Periphery:

Objective 8 refers to significant development of leisure facilities may be enabled on the Brinsworth Street site. This is not made clear in the SDF draft IPS document.