



ROTHERHAM TOWN CENTRE

IMPLEMENTATION MASTERPLAN

Prepared by WYG for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
June 2017

Vision

Rotherham Town Centre will become a place people will increasingly choose to use. It will become a bustling historic market town, with a good range of independent shops and services. It will provide a more distinctive and diverse experience to nearby retail parks and malls. It will offer much more than just shopping. There will be new places to eat-out and new bars and cafes. Some of these will be high-street-brands, with new and existing independent businesses adding to the mix. There will be a confident, welcoming and family friendly atmosphere. There will be more to do for all ages, especially for young people. A cinema and quality hotel will be at the heart of a new commercial leisure development. Streets, spaces and public transport hubs will have been upgraded and new green spaces created, to provide a brighter, more attractive and safer Town Centre. Parking will be convenient and will encourage people into the town. More people will live in and close by Rotherham Town Centre. There will be an expanded student population along with new opportunities for business and entrepreneurship. Rotherham will be a destination for all to enjoy. The Town Centre will not be finished when this plan is delivered – it will always face challenge and change – but it will be much improved – it will be a place with a new sense of purpose, with a stronger identity and economic base, which local people can take pride in once more.



Objectives

This masterplan will provide a clear structure to guide the implementation of a set of key development opportunities, public realm improvements and smaller scale 'easy win' projects which will work together to transform the Town Centre of Rotherham.

It will be guided by a set of priorities which build on the Eight Key Moves of the Rotherham Town Centre SPD (2016) and the Ten Renaissance Goals initially set out in the Rotherham Strategic Development Framework (2005) and as summarised in Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014).

The following aims to capture the ambition set by into five overarching objectives for Rotherham:

Reveal the waterside

New development proposals must integrate the waterside back into the heart of the town. The river and Navigation should become a focal point for activity and civic life. The key projects within the masterplan offer a once in a generational opportunity to rediscover the waterscapes and in doing so adding value and relevance to these new places.

Transform grey to green

New and improved spaces and streets will be designed to create a much greener Town Centre. This will help strengthen local identity, drawing on the success of places such as Minster Gardens. New development and landscape proposals should value planting and the green setting. A green Town Centre will be a more attractive and healthy Town Centre.

Diverse, distinctive and focused

The Town Centre must continue to diversify and develop its offer based on much more than just everyday retailing. Everyday retailing will continue in Rotherham, but it will not lead to Rotherham's resurgence.

The Town Centre must become known for a higher quality and distinctive 'offer'. This includes independent retailing and boutique businesses and services. Good quality food and drink, new leisure and recreation facilities and possibly new cultural attractions can all add to this more diverse and distinctive mix.

Development projects which focus on areas of the Town Centre economy where growth is possible (which are under-represented presently) and where there is latent demand, have been prioritised, particularly commercial leisure and branded food and beverage.

Proposals which draw people into town, to work, to learn, to live or to visit will be important. There is a powerful link between the quality of a place and its draw in terms of people, footfall and spending power.

High quality design

New development and landscape design will be of high quality and respond to the local distinctiveness of Rotherham. Design should be ingrained in the 'DNA' of Rotherham. Cues should be taken from the heritage of the town, its patterns, its materials, details and colour. The best of modern will live with the towns under-appreciated architectural heritage.

Safe, sociable streets with sustainable travel and parking

Streets and spaces within Rotherham will be attractive and safe places to enjoy. They will be clean and well maintained. Streets will encourage walking. Sustainable transport will be promoted, through a range of ongoing projects including tram-train, the interchange and links between the two. This objective has guided investment up until now and will deliver value into the future.

Whilst the sustainable modes of travel are promoted the role of car parking in supporting the success and sustainability of Town Centre and its businesses is confirmed as vitally important. Free parking giving access to a poor Town Centre is not the key to success. An improved Town Centre offer, with an intelligent and competitive parking regime is. Parking controls should be geared to encouraging people to use the Town Centre as conveniently and cost effectively as possible.

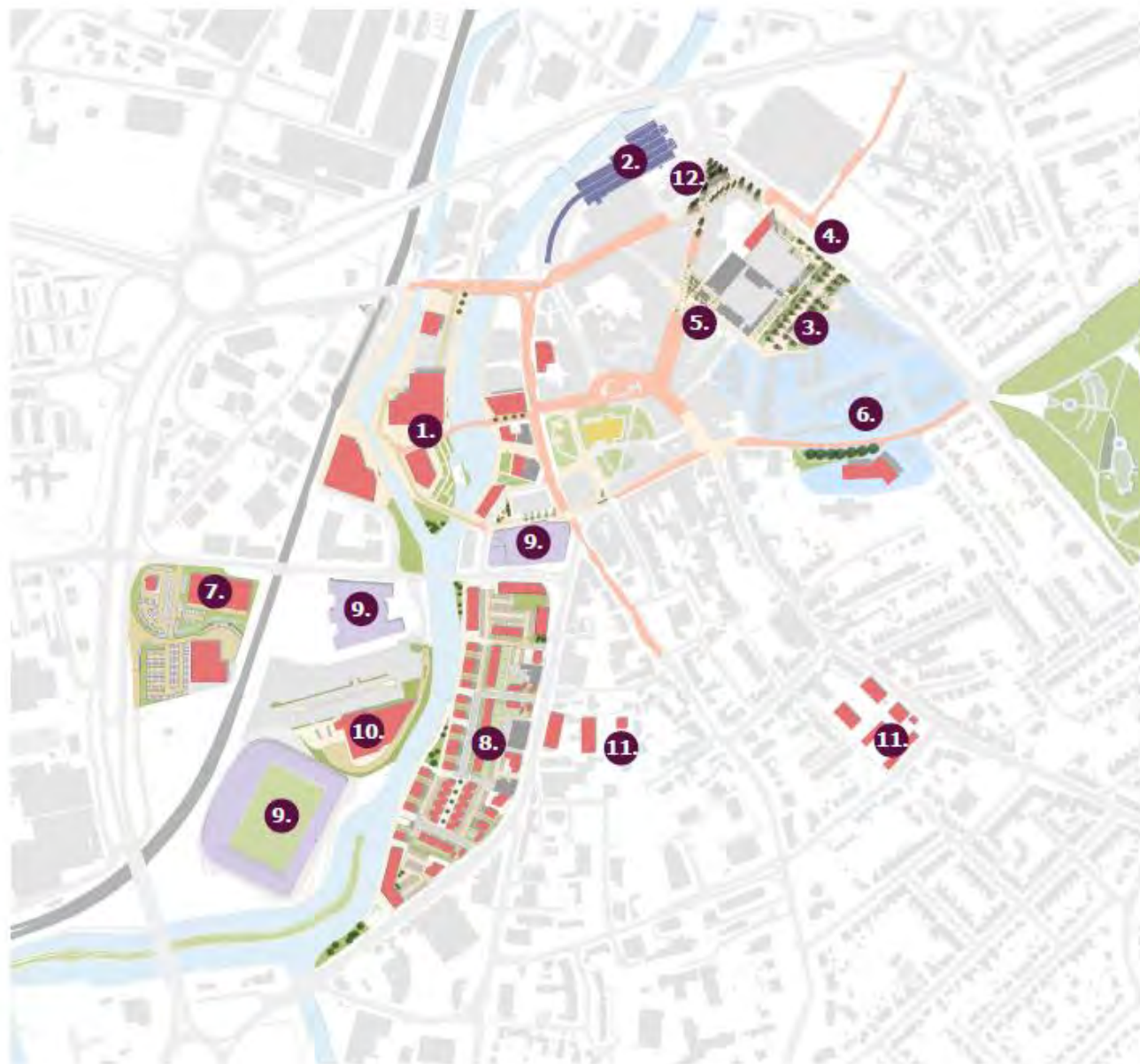
Strategy

The vision describes the place we want Rotherham to be. The objectives provide clarity on what the implementation plan and its projects needs to do. The following list summarises the ongoing strategy for the Town Centre, which can influence management of the Town Centre and delivery of projects and proposals. The intention is to develop a strategy for success based on a number of clear markers. Where possible all decision makers and investors should follow this strategy.

- Confidence in the Town Centre environment:** Address anything including social incivilities that damage confidence in people's experience. Focus on the family experience and young people
- The arrival-to-departure experience:** As far as is practically possible create the conditions for a safe and attractive end to end experience within the Town Centre. How you arrive and leave linked to the attractions used.
- Convenience of use - reducing barriers:** Make it as easy as possible for people to use and enjoy their Town Centre
- More to do and see in a quality setting:** This is at the heart of the implementation masterplan
- The 'WOW - that really makes a difference' moment:** Rotherham needs this at the present time. The town needs a big project to transform people's perceptions.
- More people and more life:** With more people comes more footfall and more spend.
- Capture latent spending power:** Many Rotherham Residents do have money to spend and would spend in the town if there was more of what they wanted.
- A better place attracts spend:** Invest in the place and its distinctive and focused offer and the economy will improve.

The Masterplan

1. Forge Island will become a major leisure destination and will include a new cinema, theatre, quality hotel and food and drink offer. Residential units will support these uses.
2. Refurbishment of interchange building and associated car park.
3. College Fields to form a key open space within the College Campus.
4. Rotherham Markets will be opened up through the removal of buildings adjacent to Doncaster Gate. A new building will form a strong feature at the junction with Henry Street.
5. The access to the indoor market will be enhanced through public realm improvements to Market Square.
6. Rotherham College Town Centre Campus to include a new Centre for Higher Education Skills building.
7. A new foodstore and drive-through unit will front onto Main Street.
8. Up to 279 high quality riverside residential units will be provided, to include a mix of apartments and houses.
9. Recent investment has been made in Rotherham Town Centre, including the New York Football Stadium, Riverside House and Westgate Chambers.
10. The former Guest and Chrimes building will be partially retained to create a leisure destination within the vicinity of the football stadium.
11. Two starter homes sites will be brought forward within the Town Centre.
12. Effingham Square will become an area of green space within the Town Centre, complementing the green space at Minster Gardens.



Town Centre Land Use

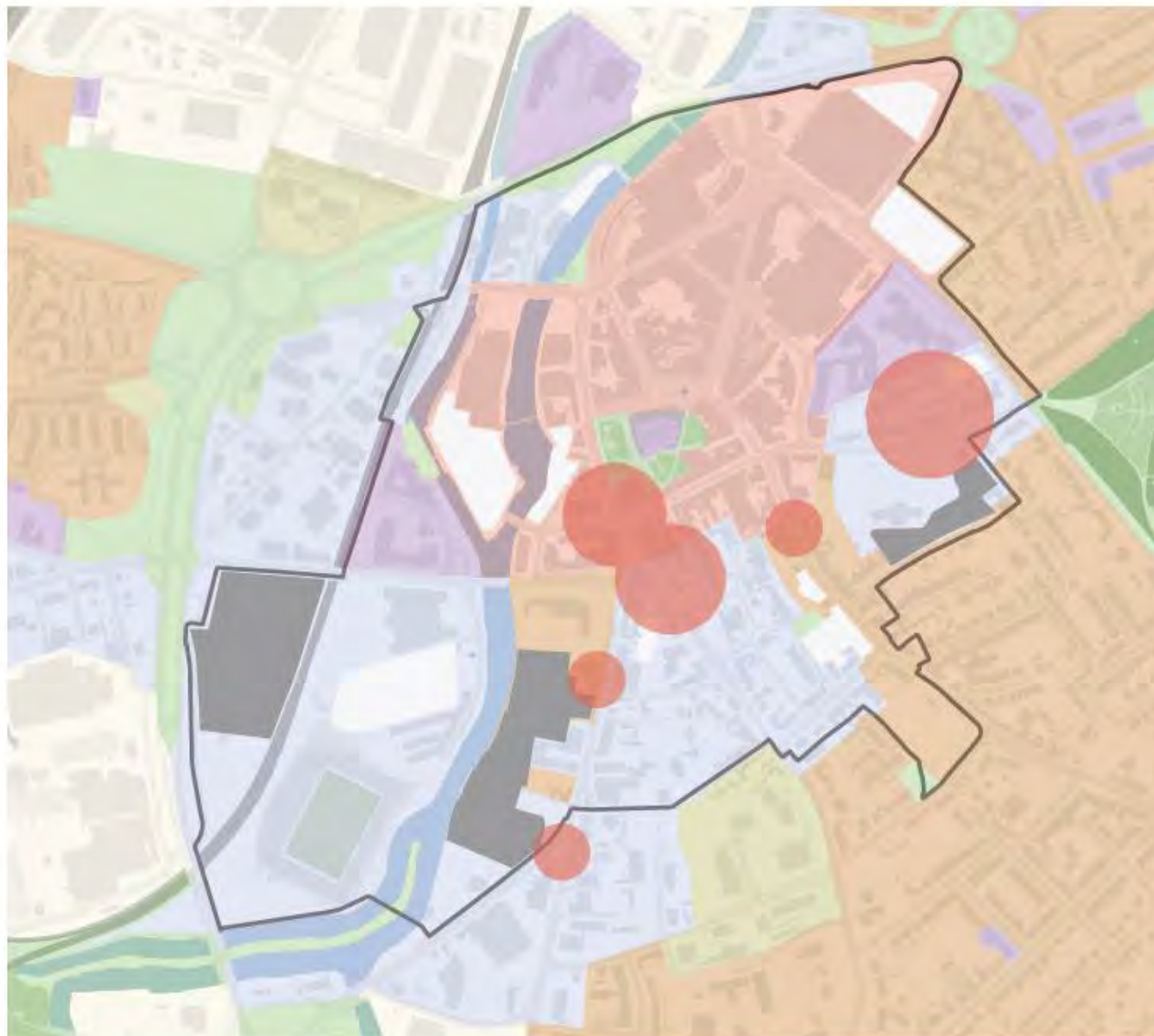
Rotherham Town Centre has a distinct retail zone which forms the Town Centre core. To the north is a large area of industrial land use and to the south and east a large residential area.

The south-west of the Town Centre consists of a mix of uses, with a number of vacant sites which are currently used for surface car parking.

Rotherham College is located to the east of the Town Centre. Planning approval has been granted for a new Centre for Higher Level Skills building on Doncaster Gate.

In late 2014 Tesco relocated from their Forge Island store to the new, larger store on Drummond Street, Forge Island has been operating as surface car park and the store has recently been demolished.

Evening uses are spread across the Town Centre and include Rotherham Civic Theatre on Doncaster Gate as well as a number of bars and pubs, and a limited restaurant offer.



Connectivity

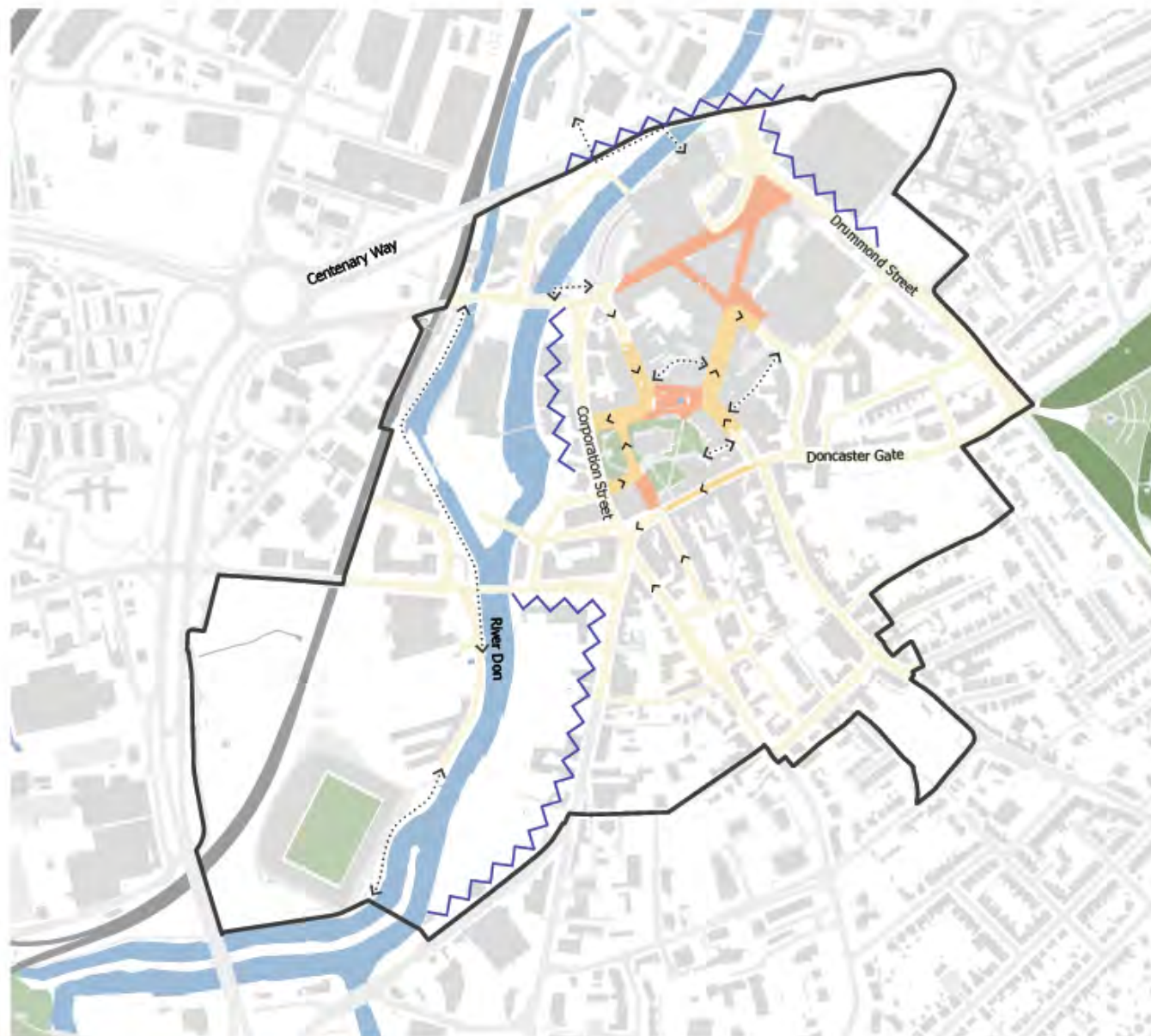
Vehicular routes into the Town Centre are currently restricted by one-way systems and pedestrian only / traffic restricted streets. Vehicles are routed around the edge of the Town Centre along Westgate, Wellgate Road, Corporation Street, Drummond Street and Centenary Way.

There is very limited opportunity to cross the Town Centre from east to west and the street regulations minimise the presence of vehicles in the Town Centre, particularly in the evening.

There are a number of pedestrian only routes providing connections within the Town Centre. A number of these routes are in need of improvement.

Although there is provision for pedestrian movement within the Town Centre core, pedestrian connectivity to edge of Town Centre locations is limited by key barriers including Centenary Way, land to the west of Sheffield Road and Drummond Street / Tesco.

As described previously, there appears to be only limited footfall flowing between Clifton park and the Town Centre. This needs to be addressed. Distances are relatively short, albeit affected by gradient. There is an existing 'tractor-train' providing rides around the park in high season. Perhaps that could extend into town through summer months.



-  Masterplan boundary
-  Pedestrianised streets / spaces
-  Pedestrian priority street with regulated, restricted traffic access
-  Conventional street (including one-way sections)
-  Pedestrian routes
-  Barriers

Transport

Rotherham Town Centre benefits from strong strategic links, with multi-modal connections to surrounding towns and countryside including:

Weekday rail connections to:

- Sheffield every 20 minutes
- Doncaster every 30 minutes
- Wakefield every 60 minutes
- Leeds every 60 minutes

160 bus routes serving the Town Centre

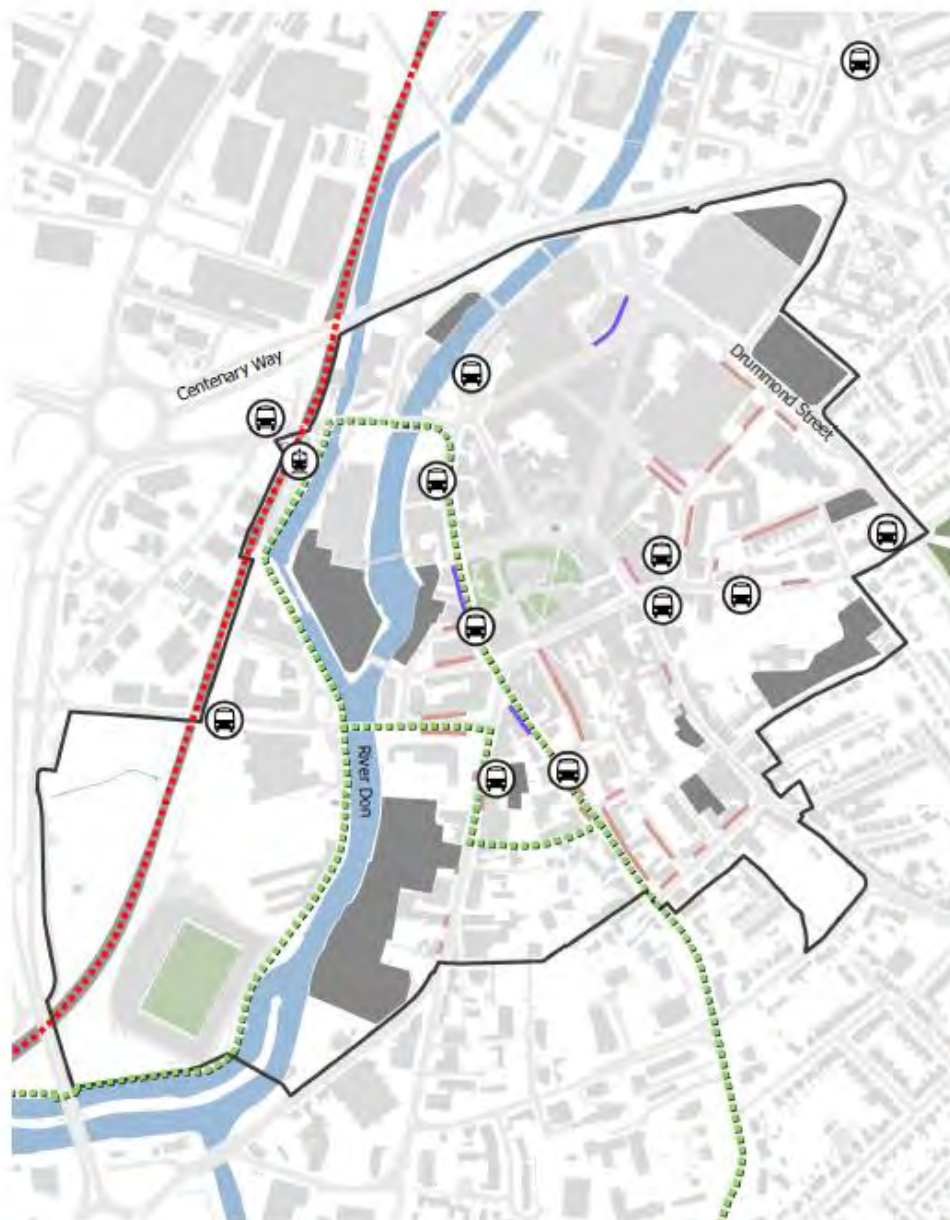
Weekday bus services to:

- Sheffield approximately every 5 minutes
- Doncaster approximately every 10 minutes
- Meadowhall every 10 minutes

Cycle routes

- National Cycle Route 6 - Trans Pennine Trail follows Moorgate Road, Corporation Street, passes the train station and follows the canal towards the countryside and Peak District.

-  Town Centre Boundary
-  National Cycle Route 6 Trans Pennine Trail
-  Tram - train route
-  Surface car park
-  Key bus stop
-  On street parking
-  On street blue badge holder parking
-  Taxi rank



Development Opportunities

Several key sites have been identified which can support regeneration of the Town Centre and new development projects. This includes the following:

- Forge Island;
- The Riverside site;
- Doncaster Gate;
- The Guest and Chrimes site;
- Main Street;
- The Interchange; and
- Rotherham Markets.

To inform the masterplan and development proposals for these sites, a constraints and opportunities assessment has been undertaken for each. This includes considerations including existing buildings, flood zones, utilities apparatus and access arrangements. This section draws together key data for each site as basis for the development proposals.

