Opportunity Sites
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.
Forge Island

Forge Island is located in the west of the Town Centre, separated from the retail core by the River Don. Despite its name this land is not an island as such and is in fact a peninsula extending southwards from Bridge Street / Chantry Bridge. The peninsula is formed by the River Don and its weir to the east and the Sheffield and south Yorkshire Navigation Canal to the west.

Forge Island is situated adjacent to Rotherham central train station but separated from it by the Navigation Canal. A footpath links along the Navigation in a north-south orientation linking with the River Don when they meet. A short pedestrian footbridge provides access onto the main site. Moving across the site eastwards a larger and more utilitarian footbridge spans the River Don near to the weir and links into the heart of the Town Centre via Riverside Precinct.

The site was developed as a foodstore; (Hillards then Tesco) for many years before the relocation of Tesco across town to its present location resulted in its closure. The building was vacant for a long period before its recent demolition in summer 2017. A large proportion of the site (the former foodstore car park) is now operated as a surface car park for 311 spaces. The site is now owned by the Council. This car park will be extended on a temporary basis once demolition works are completed.

The site is accessed by traffic from the south-east via an existing road bridge at Market Street, and from Bridge Street to the north, which was historically used as service access only (to the food store).

There are important ancillary buildings and land close to the peninsula (Island). The Council has substantial landholdings there also in terms of the redundant Magistrates Court, Riverside Precinct, which is being managed to deliver a vacant site for redevelopment, the riverside car park and the former Lloyds bank building.

Water is a distinctive and important feature in this area. The River Don with its weir creates noise, movement and energy. The Navigation canal is a calmer space.
1. Magistrates Court is now in Rotherham MBC ownership and potential long term acquisition of Police Station

2. Westgate Chambers redevelopment ongoing

3. Views of Minster from the riverside

4. Key pedestrian link to the Town Centre across existing poor quality bridge.

5. Pedestrian link to the Police Station, Magistrates Court and train station via existing bridge across the canal

6. Existing vehicular access bridge to surface car parking; structural integrity to be confirmed
Forge Island

Heritage

Forge Island has a strong industrial heritage. It was formerly home to Rotherham Foundry, Providence Iron Works and Rotherham Iron Works, as shown on the 1854 historical map.

The alignment of the River Don adjacent to Forge Island changed between 1904 and 1924. A mill formerly stood on the eastern bank of the river which utilised the weir and the energy created by the fall in water to drive milling machinery. The link between the river and the economic fortunes of the town were interwoven in that period.

This area has seen very significant change over time. For many years, the river was open to the town along Corporation Street. In other areas buildings defined a river wall and again turned their back onto the river. Today the river is cleaner and more attractive but still a visible connection between the heritage of the Town Centre.

The Town Centre Conservation Area extends close to the riverside and includes a number of buildings which edge the water space. There are glimpses of the stunning western wing of Rotherham Minster and its spire, though unattractive rear elevations of buildings reduce the quality of these views. Framing and creating views to the Minster from Forge Island should be a priority.

Forge Lane is currently closed along the western edge of Forge Island. This is an important historical route.

To the south-east of Forge Island, at the junction of Market Street, Corporation Street and Domine Lane, is the location of the former Rotherham Market building. This was relocated to Drummond Street in 1970.