1. Existing disabled parking spaces retained
2. 2 no. existing trees retained with new feature tree grilles introduced
3. New seating introduced along the High Street
4. Existing disjointed paving materials and layout rationalised, with new high quality paving reflecting the wider public realm strategy for Rotherham
5. Feature ‘magical’ lighting column designed to extend Grimm & Co theme into the public realm
6. Public realm extended across Doncaster Gate, with traffic controlled along a narrowed single lane carriageway
7. Traffic controls set back from existing location to accommodate public realm improvements
8. New tree introduced between the two existing trees to increase extent of tree cover and provide additional shade to the seating area below
3D Visualisation of public realm outside Grimm & Co.
Domine Lane

1. Tree planting extending down Domine Lane
2. Surface materials to link to recently improved High Street
Public Art, Landscape Design & Lighting

Public art and a strong design-led approach to public realm is an important opportunity for an improved and reimagined Town Centre. Done well, public art provides an opportunity to strengthen place-making and identity, amplifying the distinctiveness of the Town Centre by exploring and celebrating local history, traditions, language and people. It can connect the past to the future and improve the image and identity of the place. Using contemporary approaches to reinterpret history and make it relevant to 21st century visitors is also important. An imaginative approach to public art can also aid navigation and way-finding, making connections between key sites and attractions, and providing people with new routes to explore, appreciate and fall in love with their town.

Public art interventions do not need to confine themselves to murals, sculptures and standalone artistic features. They could be imaginatively and playfully incorporated into the public realm, through for example:

- Bespoke street furniture including benches, bollards, bins, railings and cycle-stands.
- Paving, murals and 2D interventions.
- Landscape design, green space and horticultural features.
- Fountains, water features and bridges.
- Feature / focal-point lighting, light installations / artworks and lit buildings.
- Imaginative use of materials, including light-works, ceramics, glass, iron/steel which reference Rotherham’s culture, heritage and industry.

Good examples of artworks suggested by RMBC include the following and Rotherham will need to find its own way to express and celebrate this creativity:

- Gordon Young’s ‘Comedy Carpet in Blackpool which provides a personal history of the best jokes, cracks and one-liners in comedy in the form of a ‘carpet’ unfurling from the infamous Tower. The work is both public artwork, events space, visitor attraction and a place for civic and social gatherings.
- Young’s ‘A – Z of Fish Trail’ in Hull, celebrates a local industry and encourages people to explore the town, following a trail of fish across 26 sites via the Anchovy to the Zander.
- Thomas Heatherwick’s Blue Carpet in Newcastle utilised a bespoke ‘carpet’ of blue glass to unite a challenging space at the intersection of several roads. ‘Tears’ in the carpet created seating and underlighting created an illusion that the carpet was floating.
- Alex Chinneck’s monumental works integrate art, theatre, engineering and civic space. http:// alexchinneck.com/

Whilst the Council does not have a current Public Art Strategy, a new Cultural Strategy for the borough is in development with a view to setting out the vision and priorities for culture, heritage, leisure, green spaces and tourism to 2025. Meanwhile, the Rotherham Story has set out 3 principles which could be adopted as part of any new approach to public art in the Town Centre:

- Engineering excellence: celebrating Rotherham’s engineering industry both past and present, utilising innovative engineering in the construction of features, and ensuring ‘excellent’ work through the commissioning of high quality artists.
- Pushing boundaries: identifying cutting-edge artists or delivering projects which blur the boundaries between different disciplines, such as art / architecture, art / manufacturing and art / engineering
- Living green: celebrating Rotherham’s lush green space and transforming perceptions from ‘grim northern town’ to vibrant, diverse and child-friendly borough at the heart of the South Yorkshire Forest.

As part of the development of the Town Centre, there is an opportunity to strengthen the sense of place and movement through the introduction of public art and landscape interventions to highlight and link key sites and gateways across the Town Centre, including:

- The new leisure development at Forge Island and associated public realm.
- The new Theatre and Arts Centre at the Magistrates Court.
- The Chapel on the Bridge.
- Rotherham Minster and Minster Gardens.
- All Saints Square.
- New York Stadium.
- Guest & Chrimes.
- The High Street.
- The Markets and Market Square.
- Transport Interchange.
- Grimm & Co.
- Clifton Park and Museum.

An integrated approach to public art commissioning would enable developers to work with the Council and other partners to agree a brief for a lead artist to develop proposals and identify other possible artists to deliver a programme of public art and landscape projects. This should also enable such interventions to be conceived and developed as an integral part of the spatial planning and design of a re-imagined Town Centre, rather than being an afterthought or stand-alone element. It also provides a useful way to engage local stakeholders in the wider development, creating opportunities to link creatively with local schools, colleges and community groups. Partnership funding for such an approach may be possible through Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and other cultural funders.

There are several specific proposals described in the masterplan, which can convey the special qualities of Rotherham and add to the distinctiveness and the sense of the place. These elements should be an integral part of town’s public realm and the redevelopment proposals for the town.

There will be different delivery routes for these elements, with some associated with developments and others to be delivered by the Council. There may be potential funding through Arts Council England, should the quality and value of the installation / feature / initiative prove to be of exceptional national importance. Some of the key features described include the following with considerations about delivery alongside:

- The Bridge at Forge Island which could be developed as a new landmark feature. This will in any event prove to be a costly piece of infrastructure. It must in any event be much more than functional. There is a potential cost of infrastructure. It must in any event be much more than functional. There is scope to develop interaction with water and the weir. This should be written-into the development brief for the Forge Island Site to be delivered by the scheme.
- The use of lighting throughout the Forge Island scheme and specifically across the weir, the bridge and the Riverside should be considered in full and a scheme developed to add to the sense of place after dark. Consideration needs to be given to the ability of the scheme to deliver (and fund in full) a truly breathtaking lighting installation for this part of the Town Centre which may be subject to additional support from the Council or Arts Council England. The lighting scheme would reach back into the traditional Town Centre and connect with other areas of the Town Centre where evening uses are present and with the bus and rail stations.
- The ‘Guest & Chrimes inspired’ feature, which tells the special story of that building (and business) is vital to the concept of conservation and interpretation for that development. This feature would be interactive and based on a theme relevant to Guest and Chrimes. The masterplan suggests high level taps, but a proper brief is required now to guide the commissioning of this work. It’s placement between the retained and redeveloped historic building and the football ground in a new public space is key. The creation of this water feature validates the major works to the listed building albeit costs need to be assessed to ascertain if the development alone would carry the full costs. It is suggested that this may be prohibitive and that the delivery may be progressed by Rotherham United FC, RMBC, Arts Council England and Historic England. The detail here needs to be confirmed.
- A further installation is suggested as part of an applied / bespoke landscape feature adjacent to Grimm & Co. Which would form part of the public realm and highways calming scheme in this location. This feature was about bringing the magical flavour of Grimm and Co. into the street scene in a smart and understated manner. Further consultation with Grimm and Co. is needed but preliminary ideas visualised in the masterplan related to a ‘Narnia-themed’ lighting column with tree-root base. Delivery of this work will be through RMBC and Grimm & Co. and this may form
The 2008 Public Realm Strategy raised the prospect of what it called a ‘Rotherham Lighting Experience’. This was a highly ambitious project which would involve feature lighting throughout the town which would change through the year and provide a reason to visit the Town Centre. Over the period since that strategy was drafted lighting technology has advanced and costs have reduced. This makes the use of architectural and applied landscape light installations in the Town Centre a much more feasible. The recent lighting of the Minster spire shows the impact of high quality architectural white lighting. The proposals for lighting in the Town Centre relate, as described previously to three distinct elements. First Forge Island and the River Don. The moving water here creates a potential focal point for creative lighting. Second the bus and rail interchanges and the key routes between these and through the town to the key areas for evening use. An audit of lighting infrastructure should be undertaken to ascertain quality, levels and colour to support a safe environment. Third, the focal points where evening uses and through the town to the key areas for evening use. An audit of lighting infrastructure should be undertaken to ascertain quality, levels and colour to support a safe environment. Third, the focal points where evening uses

Parking Proposals

A detailed parking strategy has been prepared to underpin and support this masterplan. The strategy includes assessments of the present situation and makes a series of recommendations. These are not repeated here in full but are edited and summarised as follows:

- Reduce the number of off-street Council operated parking spaces in a managed fashion to allow redevelopment of key sites. The strategy clearly demonstrated an overrun of parking now and with planned developments.
- Create a series of dedicated off-street ‘hub’ public car parks – These will include the refurbished interchange, a new multi-storey car park at Forge Island, Drummond Street and Wellgate
- Maintain a level / increase the level of short stay parking in central areas that enables easy access by visitors to retail, service and leisure destinations. This will be through additional on-street parking within the Town Centre.
- Consider free parking in car parks that are experiencing low occupancy. Also, consider additional time-limited (red bay) free parking at Forge Island car park as this car park is enlarged following the demolition of the former building and in advance of the redevelopment of that site.
- RMBC undertake a review / audit of advanced direction signing (signs on the approaches / periphery of the town explaining car park availability. This would be a comprehensive scheme linking the hub car parks.
- RMBC to consider the ticketing regime and the potential for barrier controlled entry and exit car parks for their own hub off street car parks so that people are not forced to leave the town when their paid for time / ticket expires. Pay on exit barrier controlled parking reduces the risk of enforcement and people only pay for what they use. This will have an impact on revenue and will require new investment by the council. Small off street car parks and on street parking will remain ticketed.
- The Council should identify quality parking standards. RMBC owned and operated car parks should be improved to meet the ‘Quality’ standard. The Interchange should also meet this standard. A ‘Quality Plus’ car park standard might apply to those car parks which are monitored / secure in the evening to support the night-time economy.

Proposals for car parking in the short-term should help to support increased use of the Town Centre. This will directly answer retailers’ requests for interim measures to support vitality and viability. This could involve the Council taking a flexible approach to their car parks and the charging / ticketing regimes. The answer to Rotherham’s future is not however free parking. The answer is building and enhancing the quality of the destination and the Town Centre as an attraction. In the longer term, the aim is to ensure safe, welcoming and user friendly Town Centre car parks and parking options, which are convenient, competitively priced and which encourage use of the Town Centre through the day and into the evening.

The core ‘hub’ retained car parks at Wellgate, Drummond Street and the new car park at Forge Island should operate the same regime / pricing, ideally with barrier controlled entrance and exit. The regime is subject to confirmation by RMBC. At Forge Island, there will need to be some form of concession for use of the key leisure facilities, but the Council it is envisaged, will retain the operation of that car park. This approach to Council hub car parks will influence the parking regime operated by SYPTE (and their managing Agent) at the Interchange. It is understood that this car park will remain outside RMBC’s management. Ideally the same / similar ticketing and charging would apply. A new approach to on-street parking is being promoted, to increase the numbers, use and turnover of the short stay on street provision. Proposals to open-up areas of the centre of the town to traffic circulation outside of retail hours will allow for the creation of new on street parking in the centre and this would support evening uses. The smaller dedicated off street parking areas will continue to play a key role in terms of warden patrolled pay and display.

In terms of the delivery programme, it has been confirmed that the development of key sites, several of which are presently surface car parks, can be sequenced such that the town continues to be well-served by available car parking through the construction period and beyond.
Important Wider Priorities and Project Initiatives:

There are various other priorities and initiatives which can make a significant difference to the success of Rotherham Town Centre. These have emerged through various consultations, assessments and design workshops. These priorities and initiatives include physical interventions and management / stewardship interventions. All of these initiatives - new or recurring as concerns - will need to be considered and actions and responsibilities confirmed to provide an effective response. These considerations are listed in this section in no particular order.

Continuing support from RMBC for Rotherham’s Independent retailers will be necessary for the foreseeable future and until the major Town Centre projects are delivered. The nature of that support, historical initiatives and measures and the extent to which RMBC can provide / resource pro-active Town Centre management will need to be carefully assessed. Ongoing initiatives such as Rotherham Voice will be instrumental. The promotion of a calendar of events also needs ongoing support from RMBC. If this positive work ceases the retailing environment will suffer.

Promote and strengthen the food and beverage offer within the Town Centre. One area to develop is the food and beverage sector. Proposals include substantial new commercial leisure and high street named food and beverage. There is an opportunity to develop a degree of passing trade and on-street parking as well as being drop off point for several bus services arriving in town all help animate this area. Retailers have described challenging conditions. Changes to the routing and drop-off from the X1 bus service have had a detrimental impact on trade. Wellgate multi-storey car park is an underserved facility, which should become more intensively used as changes to parking are implemented in the coming years. The mix of uses, activities and cultures in Wellgate is part of the areas character and needs to be supported. There are also proposals for new homes at the former Henleys Garage Site. The suggestion is that Wellgate will benefit indirectly from several wider masterplan proposals rather than having specific proposals itself. It will be important for the Council to monitor the health of this area and its businesses through initiatives such as Rotherham Voice.

Maintain the Professional Quarter around the Town hall and Moorgate. The area around the Town Hall and Moorgate Street has long since been an area for solicitors, estate agents and other professional services. Other ancillary businesses have also developed there. The masterplan has not focused on this part of the town and it will be important to monitor the health of this area and its business. One issue in this area continues to be vacant public houses which can blight the area. Pubs can be a popular and successful addition to this part of town and it is understood the Bluecoat for example trades well. The issue here is whether in the future the Council should support diversification of some of the vacant food and beverage premises into professional services use. This does not feature as a masterplan project, but the Council should monitor the area and if appropriate develop proposals to address longstanding vacancy of buildings.

Promote linked trips for leisure activities between Clifton Park and the Town Centre. One of the most successful and vibrant places in the Borough is Clifton Park. This is a wonderful destination and becomes very busy indeed through summer months and the school holidays. Presently, there are very few linked-trips into the Town Centre and families do not typically head into town after a morning at the lido, the rides or the museum. This is a major opportunity, not least because the food and beverage offer – for lunches and teas – is very limited at Clifton Park. There is scope to draw latent food and beverage spending into the Town Centre towards the new destination which is being created at Forge Island. This connection, physically, functionally and economically needs to be developed. One potential project to investigate could be the routing of a ‘bus-train’ route down from Clifton Park into the Town Centre and forge Island. A loop potentially along Doncaster Gate, up High Street, into Forge Island and then back through the Town Centre along Chantry Bridge, Frederick Street and Drummond Street could be a great seasonal attraction. An existing bus train runs through / around the park. Costs to hire / purchase a vehicle should be assessed. Costs to upgrade the existing bus-train should also be considered. The feasibility of the route and pricing need to be considered.

Bring Council owned vacant shops back into active use. Vacancy does without saying that the Council is working hard to bring vacant shop units back into active use. Highly prominent locations can be particularly sensitive to vacancy and the negative associations this brings. For example, the Council owned unit on All saints Square (the former Thortons) must be a priority for re-use. The aim should be to find good quality uses for these units. Could these provide space for local businesses as well as national-chains? Could rental levels / terms encourage this? A positive approach is needed because prominent vacant shopfronts are a drag anchor on the town. As wider improvements to the town draw more people into the Town Centre viability will increase but until the work is well-underway, a more creative and flexible approach is needed. Are there potential links with the College? Is there a role for charities? Workshops are required to assess options.

Other prominent vacant retail units which are not in the control of RMBC will also need to be promoted for re-use by their owners. The Council may be able to assist this process but cannot step-in and solve these problems in all cases. There are two particularly challenging shop units at present where the Council should become involved to assist. The first is the existing vacant unit on All Saints Square. This unit is narrow to the square but wide and deep into the plot with quite large and awkward floorplan. The shopfront itself is particularly unattractive. This may be an example of where the Council could help find a new use for these premises and upgrade the shopfront. The other shop unit is the large unit at Primark, which is understood to becoming vacant in the weeks / months ahead. This is a strong anchor and a larger unit in the town on High Street and it will be a challenge to bring in a similarly successful retailer on such a large floorplate. The Council should liaise with the building owners to monitor progress with this units re-use and how they might assist.

Social Incivilities will continue to threaten the ability to realise the full economic potential of Rotherham Town Centre. Positive measures are needed to reduce this very real problem. Nothing shatters confidence in the Town Centre experience than the threat or worry of social incivility. Crime of course is a serious concern but is in Rotherham more of as perception than a reality for...
most people. Criminal activity needs to be effectively policed especially against people and property in the Town Centre but the reality is that the visible incivilities associated with individual and groups of street drinkers, rough sleepers, beggars and the like have a very strong deterrent on people using the Town Centre. This is especially true of families. Confidence in a safe and pleasant family experience is critical. Even the worry of bad language, wandering dishevelled people and the associated of difficult questions children might ask are enough to put people off using the town and ensure they head over to competing attractions. Of course, Rotherham Town Centre is not a private mall / complex and as such can never be managed so closely. However it is clear that the present situation is putting many people off using the Town Centre. As these bold plans are delivered we need to ensure that people’s first experiences ‘coming back’ to use Rotherham are positive. Effective and pro-active policing will support this as well as detailed assessments of current repeat problem areas, people and groups. This may involve issues of social care or support for vulnerable people and communities. This link needs to be established.

The night time cultural identity of Rotherham is important as the plans are delivered. As we look to build the evening economy, a culture of eating and drinking should be supported. Excessive drinking and excess generally should be monitored to minimise social incivilities as we are at the same time looking tom foster a Town Centre resident population. The night time economy will embrace many customers a balanced view will need to be taken where people may over-do-it, but this should be the exception and not the rule. Bars and late night venues should support a pleasant and sociable ambience and should avoid positive promotions of excessive and rapid alcohol consumption. A mature and grown-up approach is needed which can create a more appealing cultural offer. Clearly like in any Town Centre, people can come to Rotherham, enjoy themselves and have a few too many drinks. But the idea of Rotherham being a place where people go and get drunk (and then go and get a take-away) must and is changing. New uses will help, for example the cinema, hotel and theatre. There will be more to do and a wider cross section of people using the town. Positive licensing and enforcement will also help. Managing the location of hot food take-aways will also be important to avoid problems occurring for residents. A positive code of conduct between bars may also be of assistance.

Engender a more positive and proud outlook for Rotherham in a tone and presentation which is of the place. Based on the major developments planned, develop at every opportunity a positive and optimistic ‘message’ of Rotherham and a pride in the place and its ongoing improvement. This would be marketing the Town Centre to the people of Rotherham to draw-in local visitors and also further afield. If this can be done with a sense of the place and its people, with a sharp sense of humour and a wit and a self-deprecating Yorkshireiness then all the better. This should not be a bland ubiquitous marketing campaign. The branding and identity proposed through the Rotherham Story is very positive start in this regard. This must go hand-in-hand with continuing improvements.