

Little Lever Town Centre Masterplan

What is this consultation about?



A draft masterplan for Little Lever town centre has been developed and we would like to get your views on the draft development proposals.

The Little Lever town centre masterplan is a key regeneration project to enhance the economic prospects of Little Lever by providing a clear strategy for growth, helping to future proof the town by building on its existing qualities and assets and promoting new activities, so that its full potential as a thriving town can be realised.

Bolton council is committed to developing a masterplan for Little Lever town centre that reflects the Bolton Vision 2030 of creating a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful business and healthy residents.

Ensuring that Bolton is a welcoming place where people choose to study, work and put down roots, the Little Lever town centre masterplan will also assist in the delivery of the council's Economic Strategy focussing on inclusive growth, which delivers opportunities and benefits for everyone.

To help guide future investment, a team of town centre development experts (BDP supported by BE Group and CBO Transport) was commissioned by the Council in October 2019, to prepare a masterplan for Little Lever town centre.

The study team has undertaken an analysis of the existing town centre, researched national town centre trends, looked at local demand and aspirations and consulted with key stakeholders. Based on their findings, the team has prepared a draft masterplan which will provide the spatial framework for the town centre, helping to guide future development. The draft masterplan will be supported by a delivery strategy to help start the regeneration of Little Lever town centre.

This consultation is part of the masterplan process and seeks to raise awareness of the Little Lever town centre masterplan, test opinion on the draft masterplan proposals, and gain feedback from the local community and businesses. Your feedback will help shape the final masterplan and delivery strategy for the town centre.



Little Lever Health Centre and Library



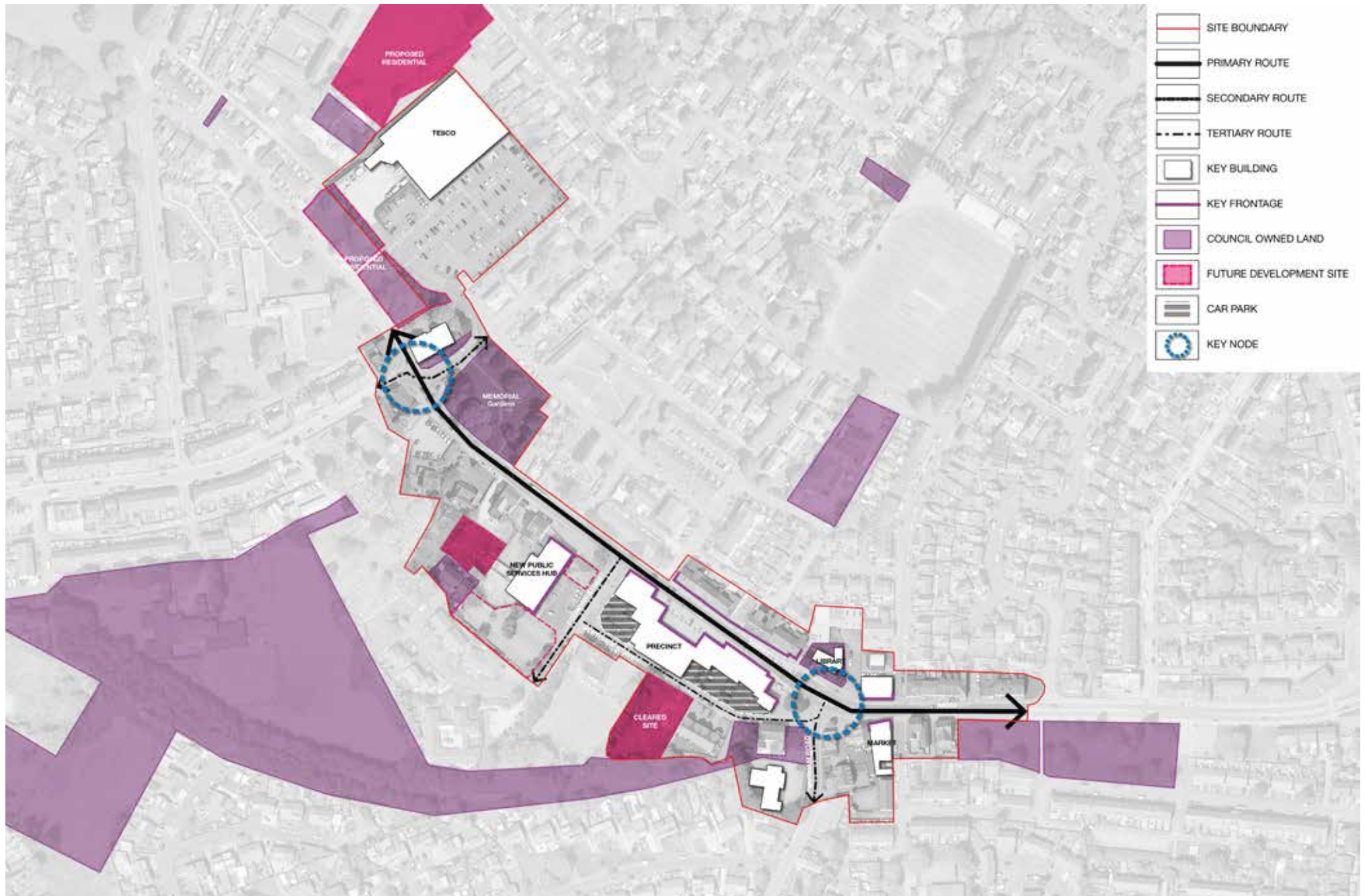
Little Lever Precinct on Market Street



The Tesco superstore is a key asset



Little Lever's Memorial Library



What are the challenges facing Little Lever town centre?

Town centres are changing...

Town centres are changing, so are the ways in which people use them. Over the course of the last decade, our high streets have faced some of the biggest challenges in their history, from global economic recession to the rise of the internet offering unprecedented choice in on-line shopping. With changes in people's spending and visiting patterns, town centres are now seen as places for more than just shopping, but also as places for leisure, food & drink, as social and community hubs, business space, places for culture, healthcare and education and increasingly as a place to live. A bit like they used to be!

It is now commonly agreed that whilst retail is an important element of a thriving town centre, it is not the only one. Other ingredients such as independent traders, town centre homes and the quality of the pedestrian experience are also vital to the creation of attractive and healthy places which people will choose to visit, to work or live in and to spend their time and money. We can see the success of this approach in other Greater Manchester town centres such as Urmston in Trafford or Prestwich in Bury. To remain relevant and as important to communities and businesses as they have been in the past, town centres and high streets have to adapt to these changes.



The precinct is dated and unattractive



Limited investment in the public realm on Market Street



The roundabout at the eastern end of Market street is difficult to cross for pedestrians

Little Lever town centre has a reasonable range of facilities including retail, community (library) and food & drink uses. There is a modern Tesco superstore as well as more traditional convenience retail along the main road and within the private indoor market. Not far from the town centre there are other community assets such as the sports and leisure centre on Hall Lane, and the health centre and park on Mytham Road. A start has now been made on the new library and health centre at the former Tesco site on Market Street which will help strengthen the town centre.

However, like many town centres across the UK, Little Lever still faces challenges.

The challenges facing Little Lever town centre include:

- The Tesco foodstore feels detached from the town centre;
- Unattractive precinct and nondescript high street not appealing to visitors;
- Few strong attractions in the town centre to attract footfall, though the new library and health centre will start to address this;
- Insufficient car parking available;
- Negative impact of vacant sites, poor quality shop and business frontages and low quality public realm;
- Traffic dominated gateways to the town centre from Coronation Square to the east and intersection of Market Street and Church Street to the west, difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross.

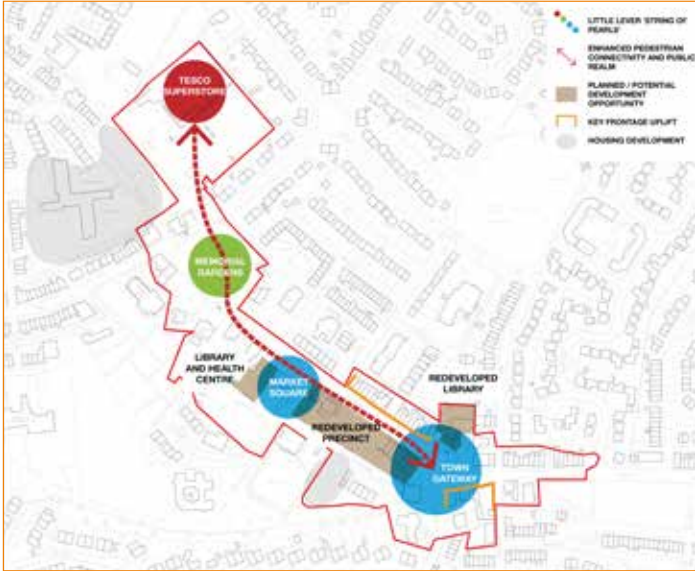


Unattractive public realm – pedestrian link to the car park at the rear of the precinct

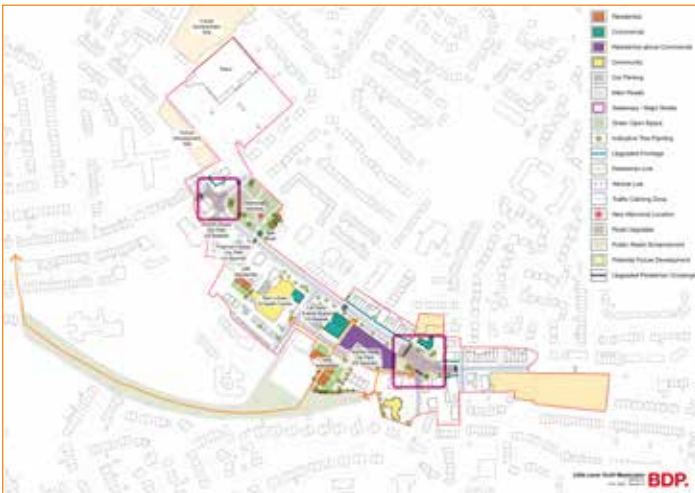


Availability of short stay car parking in the town centre is an issue

A draft masterplan has been developed to tackle the challenges and to guide the regeneration of Little Lever town centre



Little Lever town centre regeneration strategy



Draft Little Lever town centre masterplan

Little Lever town centre currently stretches from the Tesco foodstore all the way along Market Street to the indoor market on High Street. The draft masterplan helps to focus future town centre development on Market Street, to create a strong heart to the town centre, whilst providing better pedestrian linkages from Market Street to Tesco's to the west and the indoor market on High Street to the east.

The new library and health centre will be at the heart of the regenerated town centre. The building work on this project has now started and a new use will need to be found for the existing library building. The existing and important war memorial could be given a new and more spacious setting in the Memorial Gardens.

The draft masterplan proposes a new Town Square, fronted by the new library and health centre, the existing Conservative Club and a new development of shops with apartments above, on the site of the existing precinct, which would be demolished.

Improved public realm will connect the heart of the town centre to the Tesco foodstore in one direction and the indoor market in the other. This will include new or relocated pedestrian crossings and replacement of the roundabout at the Market Street / High Street junction (close to the existing library) with a new signal controlled junction including pedestrian crossings. A car parking strategy will promote short term parking in the centre and longer term parking around the edges.

We have suggested the following themes which could characterise the future of Little Lever town centre:

1. A town centre for families – Making Little Lever a great place to visit with children, friends and family

- Creating outdoor places for people to sit and meet, and opportunities for café activity to spill outside during nice weather, including the proposed new Town Square, a second smaller square opposite the existing library and making more of the Memorial Gardens;

- Using the new library and health centre to draw in more families and children and improving the public realm and crossings to encourage walking from local schools, from the Tesco car park and around the town centre.

2. Shop in Little Lever

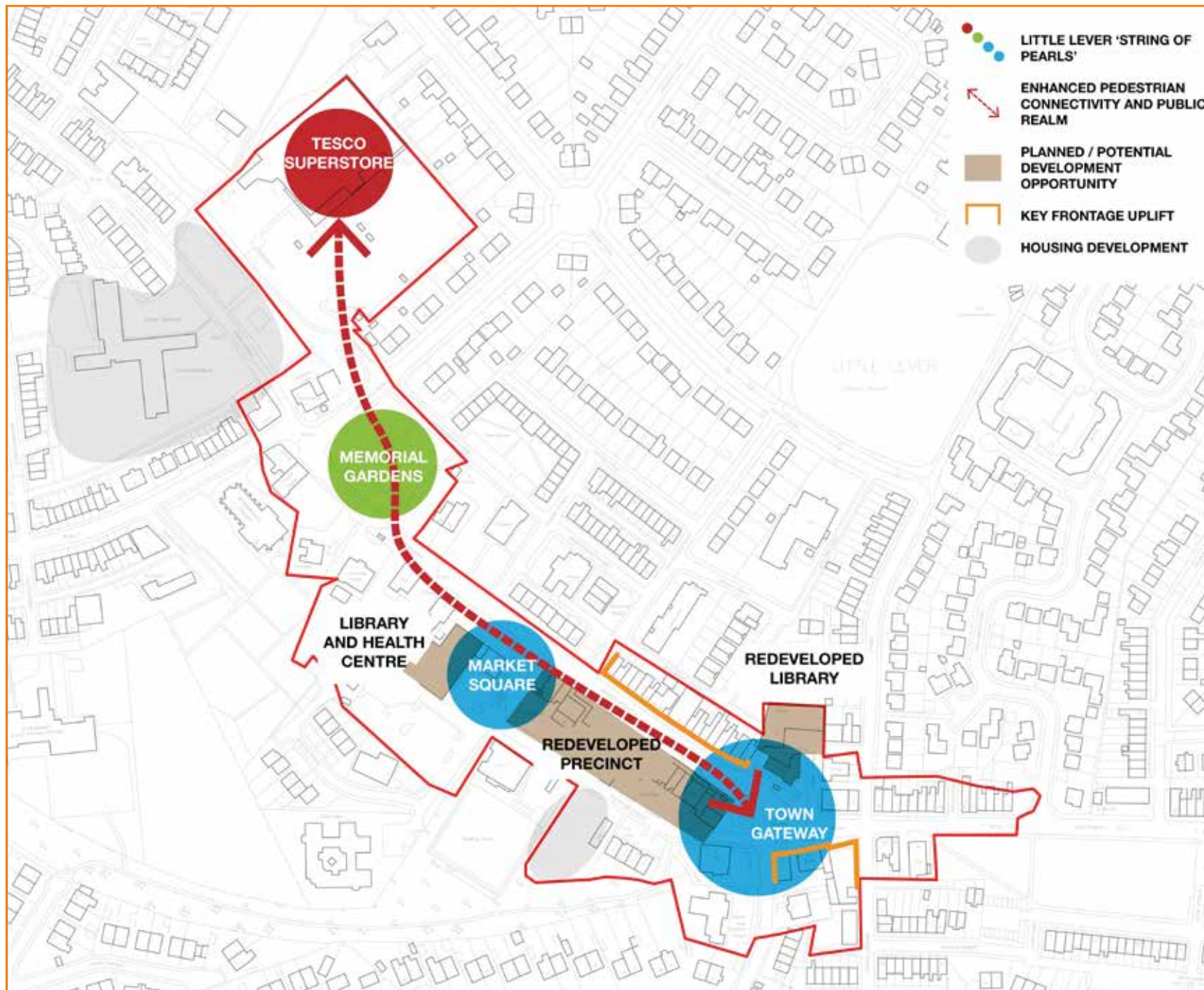
- New, modern shops that provide goods you need – making it possible to shop local;
- Encouraging 'linked visits' – making it more attractive to do some shopping whilst visiting the new library, or encouraging Tesco shoppers to also spend time in the rest of the town centre;
- Developing a car parking strategy to promote short-stay car parking close to the core of the town centre, to encourage passing trade, such as layby spaces on Market Street and to provide long-stay car parking at the edge of the town centre.

3. Little Lever evenings – A town centre to visit at all times

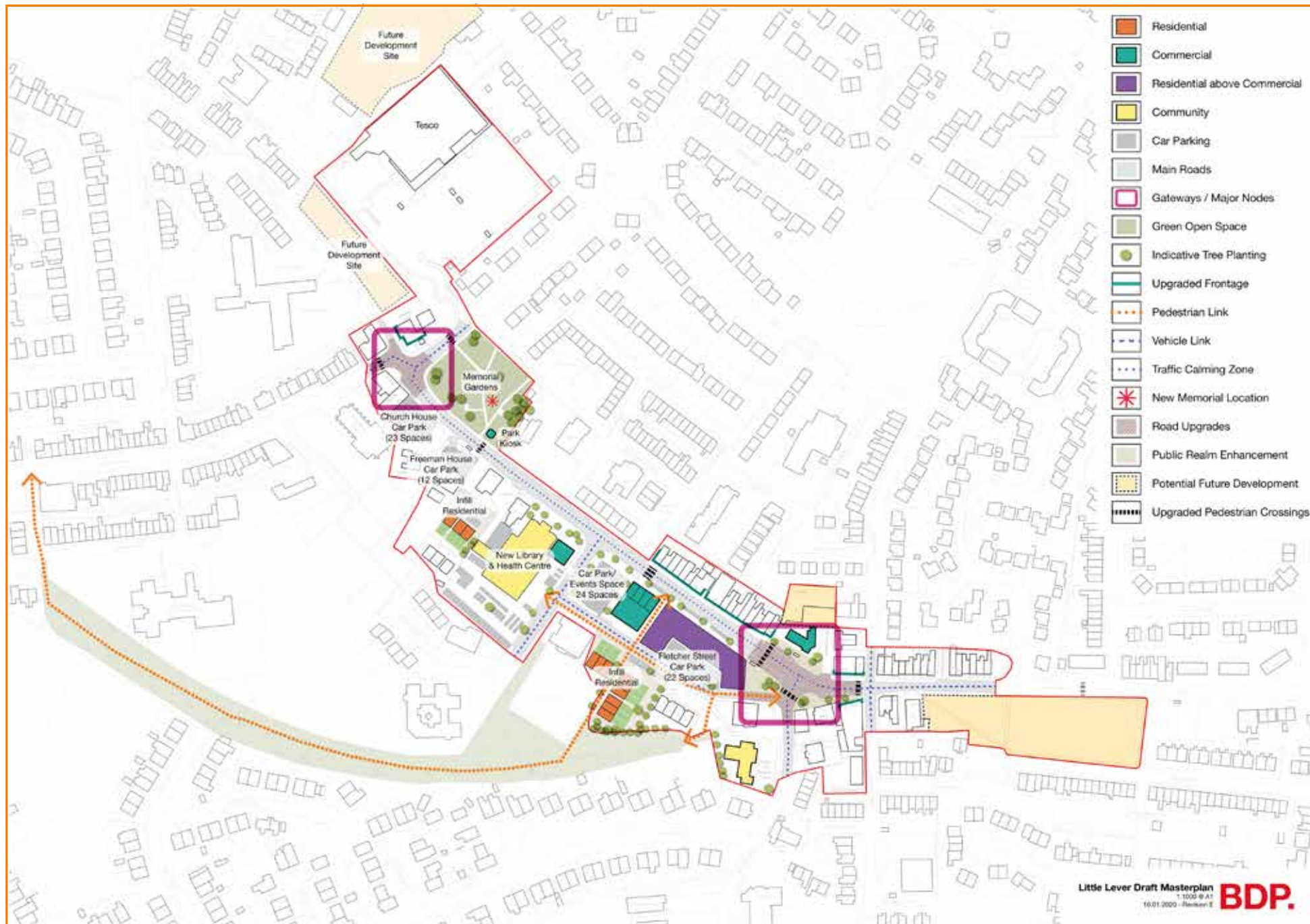
- Extending the library opening hours and including community uses to encourage evening activity;
- Shops that stay open into the evening;
- Daytime cafes opening later;
- Incorporating additional lighting into public realm designs.

4. Live in Little Lever

- Promoting Little Lever as an attractive place to live in new apartments and town houses, with town centre services and shops on the doorstep.



Little Lever town centre regeneration strategy



Draft Little Lever town centre masterplan

Draft Proposals

Seven Key Development Proposals (KDPs) have been identified that could transform the town centre

KDP1: Redevelopment of the precinct site to create new shops with apartment living above

The existing precinct is unattractive and underused. The masterplan proposes a wholesale redevelopment of the site, to create shops and cafes at street level with apartments above. This new development will transform impressions of Little Lever, with Market Street facing retail units and cafes fronting new public spaces. Some new short stay car parking will be provided on Market Street to help attract passing trade. Four floors of apartments above the shops will increase town centre living which will improve the vibrancy of the town centre, especially in the evenings.

When thinking about this proposal consider whether you welcome the redevelopment of the precinct for new shops and cafés and if you think building flats or apartments on the upper floors so that more people can live in the town centre would be a good idea.



KDP2: New Town Square

The masterplan proposes a new town square, which will become the heart of the town centre, between the new library / health centre and the redeveloped precinct (KDP1). The existing Conservative Club will also face the new square. The town square could be used for markets and other events but at other times will provide much needed car parking.

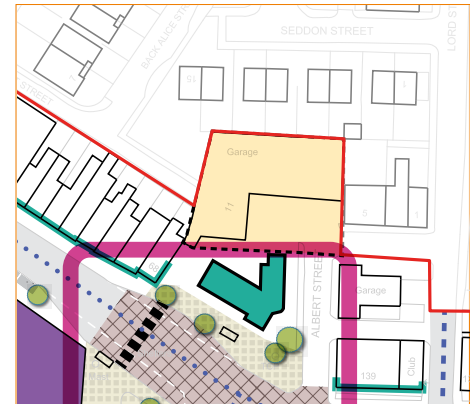
When thinking about this proposal consider if it is a good idea to replace the existing square in front of the precinct with a more attractive Town Square close to the new library and whether car parking should also be an element of the proposal. Also think about whether the new town square should be used for outdoor events.



KDP3: Redevelopment of former library

Once the new library and health centre is built, the former library will become vacant. The masterplan proposes to use the former library building for commercial / town centre uses and redevelop the surrounding area (including the garages to the rear) for mixed use development. This would involve sensitively relocating the war memorial to Memorial Gardens (see KDP 4).

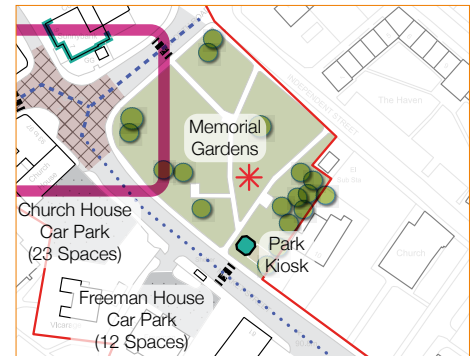
When thinking about this proposal consider whether the site around the existing library could be redeveloped for apartments over shops or other types of business? Have a think about what other uses would be suitable for the former library building and surrounding area.



KDP4: Relocation of War Memorial

A war memorial is set into the façade of the existing Little Lever library. This is a valued local memorial and the focus of annual community gatherings. The war memorial could be relocated to the Memorial Gardens at the western end of Market Street, where an appropriate and more spacious setting can be provided. A small café or kiosk could also be provided to cater for those who wish to spend some time in the gardens which is conveniently located between the Tesco store and the new library and health centre.

When thinking about this proposal consider whether it is a good idea to sensitively relocate the war memorial to a new site in the Memorial Gardens.



Draft Proposals

Seven Key Development Proposals (KDPs) have been identified that could transform the town centre

KDP5: Town Centre Gateways

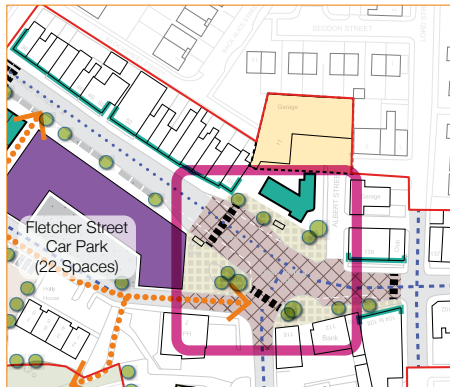
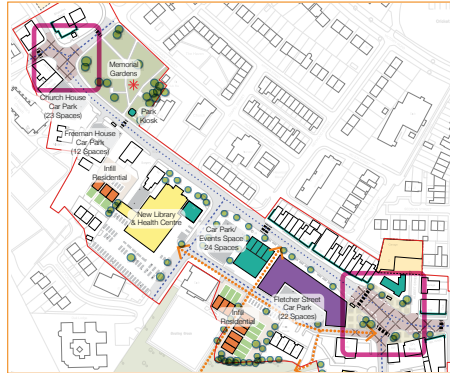
There is opportunity to improve the gateways to Little Lever by replacing the roundabout at the east end of Market Street with a traffic light controlled junction, incorporating pedestrian crossing phases, to create a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians. There is also opportunity to undertake similar improvements to the junction with Market Street and Church Street.

When thinking about this proposal consider whether improvements to the junctions at either end of Market Street would improve the pedestrian experience and encourage more walking.

KDP6: Shopfront / business frontage facelift scheme

The proposal is to give the business / shop units along the northern side (opposite the precinct) of Market Street a facelift. This proposal would make Little Lever a more attractive place for residents and visitors and may lead to an increase in trade for local shops and businesses. The proposal will ensure that the benefits of the masterplan investment is dispersed across Little Lever's business community and, in combination with other investments in the town centre, contribute to the increase in footfall and spend.

When thinking about this proposal consider whether the buildings and shop frontages along Market Street and around the junctions at either end of Market Street should be priority for frontage improvements and what other areas could benefit from improvements to the façade of the buildings.



KDP7: Promotion of housing development in and around the town centre on Council and privately owned land.

New homes will help increase the town centre population which helps to increase levels of activity and safety in the town centre, especially in the evenings. Sites for consideration include those already with planning permission to the west and north of Tesco superstore and a cleared site at the back of Hannon Holmes Limited. Vacant land adjacent to the Conservative Club lends itself to a residential development that could include town houses overlooking the pedestrian path that runs from Fletcher Street to Maldon Close, behind St Matthew's CE Primary School. There is also a large cleared site between High Street and James Street, beyond the Canary Tavern, which lends itself to a mix of housing, open space and long-stay car parking.

When thinking about this proposal consider whether it is a good idea to build more housing within and around the town centre and if so, what type of new homes do you think are needed to meet local demand as well as attracting new residents to the area?

Next Steps

Please complete and return the questionnaires provided so we can use your feedback and suggestions to further improve the proposals for the town centre.

- Bolton Council and its consultants will review the proposals in the light of your comments.
- The team will also look in more detail at the deliverability of the proposals – can funding be identified and how will other landowners be encouraged to invest?
- Once all of the comments have been considered, a final masterplan for the town centre will be produced for formal approval by the Council.
- After this we hope to work with our partners to get the masterplan moving.

For more information go to www.investinbolton.com/littlelever



