

TITLE	: THE ROCK TRIANGLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK		
TO / ON	: Executive Committee	12 February 2003	
	: Planning Control Committee	20 February 2003	
FROM	: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & HOUSING		
STATUS	: FOR PUBLICATION		

1.0 TYPE OF DECISION

1.1 What type of decision is to be taken:-

EXECUTIVE DECISION		COUNCIL DECISION	
Key		Non Key	

1.2 If a key decision, has it been included in the Forward Plan

Inclusion in Forward Plan	YES	Date of Plan	1.1.03 – 31.4.03
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2.0 SUMMARY

The report is made up of 3 parts:

A report by Bury MBC which outlines the background to 'The Rock Development Framework' which has been drawn up by Thornfield Properties Plc for consultation ahead of making a planning application for the site. This report also précis the main structure of the Development Framework and lists the development principles Committee are now asked to approve.

A statement prepared by Thornfield Properties on the results of the consultations to date, conclusions reached and the next steps (Appendix 1).

An amended (post consultation) Development Framework which contains the development principles on which a planning application for the site will be worked up and submitted in due course (to be made available in the Members' Room and at Committee).

3.0 **OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTIONS (with reasons)**

Recommended Option

After considering the progress made by Thornfield Properties to approve the broad development principles contained within the revised 'The Rock Development Framework' as a material planning consideration in assessing a future planning application until such time as a revised Bury Unitary Development Plan has been adopted.

Recommend that the report go to Planning Control Committee. The reason for this is for the Committee to be made aware of the development principles that have been discussed with East and West Bury Area Boards and other Bury Town Centre stakeholders ahead of the planning application stage.

Other Options

To make further suggested alterations to the Development Framework before its adoption as a material consideration to the Bury Unitary Development Plan.

Not to adopt the Development Framework outlining the reasons for this action.

4.0 **THIS REPORT HAS THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS**

Corporate Aims

The Rock Triangle Regeneration Initiative will play a role in the achievement of Corporate aims, particularly in relation to 'Improving Transport and the Environment', 'Developing a Competitive and Diverse Economy' and 'Making Our Communities Safer and Healthier'.

Policy Framework

Bury UDP Policies (adopted August 1997) BY8, HT2/5/3, 33/1/10, S3/1/8, BC1/2/5.
Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 – Town Centres and Retail Developments (June 1996)
Local Agenda 21 Strategy
Bury Regeneration Strategy
East Bury and SRB 5 Initiatives
Town Centres Strategy
Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002
URBED 'Bury But Better' Town Centre Vision

Statement by Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the recommendations of this report support the Council's policy framework and are within the powers of the Council.

Statement by Director of Finance & E-Government					
Human Resource IT/Land and Property Implications					
Wards/Area Boards affected	Redvales Ward Bury East and West Area Boards				
Scrutiny Panel's Interest	Environment and Transport				
Consultations	Consultation has taken place with: Bury East Area Board 15.10.02 and 7.11.02 Bury West Area Board 17.10.02 and 21.11.02 Bury Town Centre Traders/The Rock Working Group Government Office North West 25.11.02 URBED Bury Town Centre Visioning Consultants Executive Member update presentations Bury Times press articles				
Call-in					
Briefings	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Executive Members/ Chair</td> <td></td> <td>Chief Executive</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Executive Members/ Chair		Chief Executive	
Executive Members/ Chair		Chief Executive			

5.0 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 Thornfield Properties initial interest in The Rock Triangle resulted from large parts of the site being identified within the Bury Unitary Development Plan as 'Opportunity Sites'. These sites were identified in the UDP as a reflection of the area's current poor performance in contributing to Bury Town Centre's vitality/viability. For these sites to add to the improving town centre attraction ideally a comprehensive approach needs to be taken to the area's regeneration. Thornfield Properties in their Development Framework sum this up in terms of 3 overwhelming reasons why The Rock Triangle should be redeveloped (para 1.3).

it is generally of poor environmental quality, both in terms of building form and open spaces though it occupies an important gateway location.

it is positioned between the heart of the town centre and local residential areas but has poor connections and linkages to and from each.

the site occupies a logical area for expansion of Bury town centre, to provide a range of new attractions and facilities which can broaden the offer of the town centre and ensure it remains competitive.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 After Thornfield Properties had demonstrated they held a number of key land purchase options within the overall site the Council first entered into an exclusivity and then a development agreement with Thornfield Properties (Executive Committee 6.11.02).

6.2 Parallel with the progress being made on land assembly Bury Council as Planning Authority has worked with Thornfield Properties to prepare a Draft Development Framework to establish the broad principles that should guide the future redevelopment of The Rock Triangle site. In this Thornfield have been encouraged to carry out a wide-ranging consultation of their analysis and ideas ahead of making a planning application.

6.3 At the same time as Thornfield Properties have been preparing their Draft Development Framework the Council commissioned two major studies which provide an over-arching context to Thornfield's own study:

the Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002; to advise The Council on the capacity for future retail development within the Borough.

the URBED 'Bury But Better' Town Centre Vision; to update the successful 1993 Bury Town Centre Strategy and set a vision to aim for over the next 10-15 year period.

6.4 All 3 studies have been carried out in a manner where information has been shared and where results have guided the final production of each study:

the Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002 was adopted by Executive Committee as a material consideration to the existing UDP on 23.10.02.

the final draft URBED study is to be reported to Executive Committee shortly. A major part of URBED's commission was to assess the current developer interest in Bury town centre and to advise the Council as to the potential mix and geographical distribution of uses i.e. where they would do the most good in terms of driving the revised town centre vision forward. In this, URBED were asked to talk directly with the main developer interests.

Thornfield Properties' draft 'The Rock Triangle Development Framework' has formed the basis of an extensive round of consultations to open up discussion on how best to redevelop this part of Bury town centre. Consultations have been primarily through the East and West Area Boards, town centre trader groups, direct contact with other specialist town centre user groups and stakeholders. In addition there has been wide press coverage and availability of both the full draft development framework and 'The Rock Triangle – A Regeneration Opportunity' leaflet. Consultation has

largely taken place between October – December 2002 leading up to a revised Development Framework to take account of received comments.

7.0 ISSUES AND RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Thornfield Properties published their consultation draft 'The Rock Triangle Development Framework' early in October 2002. Set out at Appendix 1 is a statement of the issues and comments made by all those who responded through the consultation process. The main conclusions reached by Thornfield in their consultation statement (para 6) have been summarised as:

the regeneration of The Rock Triangle has been widely supported.

it will make a positive contribution to Bury Town Centre's continued revitalisation and vitality in particular trading patterns on The Rock.

The Rock Triangle forms a key project in delivering the vision for the town centre currently being finalised by URBED.

many of the comments received by Thornfield have related to detailed issues such as traffic and accessibility. These comments will need to be taken forward as part of the continuing design process.

7.2 In addition to the results of the October-December consultations three further major issues will need to be fully considered in taking The Rock Triangle scheme forward.

the amount, type and level of restrictions concerning the retail content of a final mixed use scheme. This to be consistent with the recommendations the Council has adopted within the Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002.

the further modelling of traffic data as a 'real scheme' is developed so as to select the best transportation option both for The Rock Triangle scheme itself and in the scheme's relationship with the wider town centre.

a fully thought through urban design statement that takes the development principles as set out in the Development Framework and applies them to a final scheme for The Rock Triangle that will deliver a comprehensive mixed development scheme of interest, variety and quality adding to the town centre's overall attraction.

7.3 Further consideration on all three of these major issues, as the scheme approaches planning application stage, will also go a long way to resolving comment that has been made at this stage from URBED on matters on urban design, traffic circulation and town centre connectivity and from Westfield on how The Rock Triangle can best complement and not compete with ambitions of their own to invest further in the Mill Gate Shopping Centre.

7.4 Taking all these factors into account it is now possible to set out a summary of Thornfield's revised Development Framework for The Rock Triangle.

8.0 THE ROCK TRIANGLE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

8.1 The Rock Triangle Development Framework as prepared and consulted on by Thornfield Properties is made up of 5 sections; an overview, site appraisal, analysis, development framework principles, an illustrative masterplan.

8.2 Copies of the revised Development Framework are available in the Members' Room, at the reception desks at Craig House and Town Hall and copies will be available at Executive Committee and Planning Control Committee. Set out below is a précis of the main structure of the Framework and in particular the development principles established as the main product of the Development Framework exercise carried out in partnership with Thornfield Properties.

Section 1

8.3 **Overview** – a description of the development area and an outline of the aims of the development. An outline of the development process – from production of the Development Framework report to the delivery of the scheme. Appendix 2 illustrates The Rock Triangle site contained within the background note forming part of Thornfield Properties presentation to the Special East Area Board meeting of 7 November 2002.

Section 2

8.4 **Site Appraisal** – of the *development opportunity* with particular reference to the Development Framework's 3 main themes of place, movement and economics.

Place (main conclusions) prominent location, no coherent character, poor impression to those arriving to town centre, poor penetration into the site on foot, evolved piecemeal, need for a comprehensive approach to its development.

Movement (main conclusions) within easy walking distance of heart of town centre, current barrier effect of highway layout The Rock/Rochdale Road, poor pedestrian access through site, on main bus routes though current connections with site poor, significant contribution to overall town centre car parking spaces at 420, servicing arrangements haphazard.

Economics (main conclusions) the site has been identified as having potential for a range of mixed use – retail (levels still to be established), leisure (to extend the town centre attraction), office (scope for quality affordable space as a component of mixed use scheme), residential (belief that Bury Town Centre could benefit from the trickle down effect from Manchester City Centre).

Section 3

8.5 **Analysis** – in developing the 3 themes (place, movement, economics) the Development Framework identifies The Rock Triangle's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities as the springboard to establishing the development principles on which a scheme specific proposal will be taken forward to planning application stage.

Sections 4 and 5

8.6 **Development Framework Principles and Illustrative Masterplan**

The final two sections of Thornfield's Development Framework concern themselves with the main product of the overall exercise. At Section 4 the main development

principles on which a scheme specific proposal will be based are outlined and at section 5 an illustrative masterplan has been included to give a feel for one way these principles might be applied.

The illustrative masterplan has been reproduced as Appendix 3 together with three dimensional imagery that formed part of Thornfield's consultation leaflet.

The development principles, relating to the 3 themes of Thornfield's Development Framework, which will guide future planning submissions, are set out below:

Place

the main building blocks to be sited where they front the main streets of Rochdale Road/The Rock.

the Rochdale Road block to promote a strong frontage onto the street.

important that the vista along Rochdale Road towards The Rock Triangle establishes a 'gateway' presence.

blocks facing onto The Rock need to play an active part in the streetscene.

a key meeting place should be created within the development which draws people into the site particularly from The Rock. This plaza should provide a setting for all the buildings around it which will need to have active frontages.

The Rock needs to be upgraded and the setting for Hornby Buildings enhanced using consistency of materials through into the main Rock Triangle scheme.

the tallest buildings with potential for 3/4 storey, should be on the western part of the site, but general massing of buildings throughout the scheme should strive for a much greater town centre contribution than at present. It will be important that this principle is developed further in the Urban Design Statement to accompany a planning application for the scheme.

safety and disabled access are important considerations of any detailed development scheme and attention should be paid to security in any design. The extension of the town centre CCTV system into this area will be encouraged.

in terms of building design, buildings should be sited so they front on to the streets and public spaces, both existing and those to be created. Frequent windows and doors will provide active frontages and animate the streetscene. Materials should be durable and high quality. Any large development blocks will need to be designed to minimise any perceived bulk and absorbed within a finer grain of built structure. Blank walls and servicing areas should be minimised in the interests of visual amenity.

the churchyard 'pocket park' is seen as a vital asset to be the subject of a landscape design scheme to enhance its role and importance. Links to and from the park by foot should be widened. Any new buildings adjacent to the

park need to have a face to the park and large expanses of blank walls should be avoided.

retention of the United Reform Church, the LA Fitness Centre and the Medical Centre also reflect current design element strengths and should be retained and integrated into the overall scheme.

Movement

the handling of through traffic, access to the site's main building blocks and public transport arrangements should be the subject of further modelling to develop a best solution. A Transport Statement will accompany any planning application for The Rock Triangle scheme.

generally new routes should lead pedestrians through the site with priority given to pedestrians rather than cars. The strong flows of pedestrians along The Rock eastwards, towards the Moorgate Retail Park, should be strengthened and buildings with active frontages created along this stretch.

the crossing of The Rock into the site needs to be given pedestrian priority through an extensive traffic management scheme, so as to provide a continuous link across from the pedestrianised part of The Rock into the main plaza within the development site.

there needs to be greater pedestrian priority and connectivity between The Rock Triangle and the Angouleme Way Retail Park through to the Market area and the Mill Gate Shopping Centre.

car parks should be located within the heart of the development site and an open presence onto the main streets should be avoided. Surface car parks should be broken by the use of strong landscaping. The potential for multi-level car parking within the site will be encouraged.

bus lay-bys and stops should be created and/or enhanced around the site to further improve accessibility by bus. In addition the opportunity to provide a bus shuttle service linking the various attractions in and on the edge of the town centre should be considered and the internal site layout will need to reflect this opportunity.

provision for cyclists in the form of cycle routes and parking will need to be made within the final scheme design.

Economics

a range of uses are seen as appropriate as part of a mixed use development scheme.

a retail statement will form an essential part of a planning application for The Rock Triangle. The statement will need to take into account the recommendations of the Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002 recently adopted by the Council as a material consideration to the Bury Unitary Development Plan. In particular, the type of retail outlets provided should meet a qualitative improvement in the offer available within the town centre:

- The western part of the site is suitable for a range of retail units with food and drink uses integrated and residential and office accommodation built above. This provides an opportunity to accommodate modern retail floor plates but in a manner akin to the traditional form of development in Bury town centre. Smaller retail units should be made available within this part of the scheme to accommodate local and regional traders. The potential to accommodate a hotel above retail development in the western area should also be considered.
- The central and eastern part of the site provides an opportunity to satisfy requirements for larger space retail and leisure users including food stores and bulky goods retail warehouses albeit designed and built to appropriate urban standards as set out in this Framework. Opportunities for two storey development or above will be actively encouraged where feasible to accommodate large space requirements such as leisure uses above retail.
- The north eastern part of the site presents an opportunity to create a better physical linkage with the Moorgate Retail Park which has a degree of 'bulky-goods representation at present but currently has little relationship with The Rock and the town centre. This area also presents an opportunity to create a multi-decked car park which could be linked into the first floor of new buildings.

9. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The Rock Triangle area currently represents a fragmented site of poorly performing retail and other mixed uses with poor pedestrian connections with the town centre and in particular its traditional high street The Rock. Little investment has been attracted to the area in recent years.
- 9.2 The Bury Unitary Development Plan when it was drawn up recognised in part the need and the opportunity for a comprehensive approach to the area's regeneration in identifying two 'Opportunity Sites' to the west and the north of the Kwik Save site.
- 9.3 Thornfield Properties' interest in the wider site has enabled a much needed comprehensive approach to be adopted to the area's redevelopment and significant progress has been made on land assembly over the last 18 months. Parallel with land assembly they have worked in partnership with Bury MBC planners to establish 'principles of development' outlined in para 8.6 of this report and contained within their Development Framework for The Rock Triangle.
- 9.4 Thornfield's Development Framework for the site is set alongside two reports Bury Council has commissioned to guide the overall development of the town centre over the next 10-15 year period. (The Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002 and the URBED 'Bury But Better' town centre 'visioning' strategy). All three studies will form the context for Thornfield's more detailed scheme specific planning application anticipated to be submitted in 2003.
- 9.5 Thornfield's Development Framework picks up on comments made in the Drivers Jonas report on providing a better linkage with the Moorgate Retail Park, in looking

to provide a wider qualitative retail offer within a mixed use concept that complements and does not compete with the town centre's retail core.

- 9.6 The draft URBED study sees the Thornfield Properties Rock Triangle scheme as potentially delivering investment in an area of the town centre where it will have a significant regeneration effect. In this the further development of a detailed scheme is to be encouraged.
- 9.7 At this stage some outstanding issues remain to be resolved concerning the amount of unrestricted retail space, the relocation of some of the existing uses, traffic circulation, access, parking levels and public transport provision. These will all be dealt with at planning application stage.
- 9.8 However, through the recent consultation exercise the partnership between Thornfield Properties and Bury MBC has demonstrated that there is widely held support for The Rock Triangle Development Framework and that this does provide for a firm basis on which the more detailed planning application can now be brought forward.

**COUNCILLOR S SMITH
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT**

**COUNCILLOR R A WATTS
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR REGENERATION & HOUSING**

Background documents:

Bury Unitary Development Plan (adopted August 1997)
Drivers Jonas Bury Retail Study 2002
Draft URBED 'Bury But Better' Bury Town Centre Strategy

For further information on the details of this report, please contact:

Howard Aitkin – Planning Development Manager
Environment & Development Services
Craig House
Bank Street
Bury

Tel: 0161 253 5274
e-mail: H.Aitkin@bury.gov.uk