The Western Waterside was identified as a major development opportunity in the original Bury But Better masterplan. This area in the valley bottom was formerly Bury Wharf, the terminus of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal and retains a significant amount of industrial heritage including a number of Victorian warehouses, a feeder reservoir for the canal, the Daisyfield Viaduct and a historic weir on the river. The canal itself has, however, been filled in to a point about half a mile to the south of the site.

The area lies between the busy Bolton Road and the River Irwell and is a forgotten corner of the town. The frontage properties are generally poor and the interior of the area is still largely industrial. The main industrial user is Milliken Industrials Ltd. This is a major, successful international fabrics manufacturer. Their plant manufactures materials for airbags for the car industry and has recently expanded into modern premises on Wellington Street. The other main use is an industrial estate off Bolton Road still owned by British Waterways.

**Bury But Better Vision:** At the time of the original vision, British Waterways were actively working on the reopening of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal. Fresh from the successful reopening of a number of canals with Heritage Lottery funds they were confident that the canal would be their next major project. This vision proposed the development of a new mixed-use waterside development based around the reopened canal and basin. This included the following elements:
The Preferred Option for the Core Strategy specifies that it may be appropriate to prepare an Area Action Plan for the Western Waterside Area. BW would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to explore this option further and together ensure that the opportunities associated with canal-related regeneration are maximised.

As part of this strategy we have also had discussions with Millikins who, now that they have expanded into their new factory, have a significant land holding in the area that they are interested in bringing forward for development in line with Bury But Better.

The River Irwell passes through the area and does present a flood risk. Much of the land to the east of the site falls within Flood Zone 3 (high risk) where PPS25 states that development should only be considered if no other sites are available in lower risk areas. Any development proposals will need to take account of the flood risk issues on the site.

Recent activity: Since the time of the Bury But Better Vision progress has been made on the restoration of the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal with the completion of a £5.9 million scheme to reopen the Middlewood section in Salford. British Waterways (BW) are still enthusiastic about the restoration of the canal but funding opportunities are no longer available, and increasingly difficult to secure on the scale required. In the short to medium term small scale work to protect, secure and enhance the line of the canal is more likely. British Waterways support the Council’s Core Strategy Preferred Options Report, which acknowledges the role that mixed use regeneration around the canal basin can play as part of the Council’s wider spatial vision.
Updated vision: Due to the location of the Western Waterside site adjacent to the River Irwell it has been important to take account of flood risk issues. Part of the area falls within the Environment Agency’s flood zone 3 and is therefore not considered suitable for residential development. In bringing forward individual proposals formal flood risk assessment will be required.

The updated vision retains the strategy suggested in the original 2003 masterplan, namely a new mixed-use waterside scheme, but takes account of flood risk issues. We have, however, suggested that this is considered in the long-term to allow time for the canal restoration to come forward. However, if land owners wanted to bring forward projects in line with the vision in advance of this we see no reason why they should be resisted. There would be value in putting the canal back in water even before it can be connected to the wider network and this in itself would be a spur to development.

The masterplan is based on reopening the canal on its original line, which had two arms at the northern end. A marina is proposed at the terminus of the canal which, along with any adjacent public space, would form an important focal point to attract people to the area from the town centre. It is likely that the Bridge Trading Estate (owned by British Waterways) will need to be relocated for the development of the area to be achievable. A new bridge is proposed over the River Irwell on a direct route from Sankey Street.

A series of development plots are envisaged as four storey blocks with commercial ground floors created in two areas, Canalside North and Canalside South. Due to the flood risk issues land between the canal alignment and the River Irwell is not considered suitable for residential development.

Development within Canalside North consists of predominantly residential property west of Albion Street and commercial property within the flood zone and either side of the canal. Blocks within Canalside South to the west of the canal are more likely to consist of residential development. In both areas there are a number of buildings, such as Victoria Mills and Albion Mill (and the feeder reservoir directly east of Albion Street) that have been retained in the proposals either because they are required by adjacent uses or are of industrial heritage value to the area.

Projects

1a: Reopening of the canal and a new marina.
1b: Development of a new footbridge.
1c: Redevelopment of the industrial estate on the northern part of the site for mixed-use development.
1d: Residential development on the vacant industrial land in the southern part of the site.