



# Drivers of Regeneration.

# 2

## 2.1

## Strategic Regeneration



## Strategic Regeneration

Investment in the Framework Area is essential to support a sustainable future for Bury Town Centre and provide local residents with opportunities for beneficial outcomes. The Levelling Up agenda is committed to reducing geographical inequality in the UK, while GMCA Devolution gives Greater Manchester new tools and responsibilities to drive growth and enhance the local economy, services, and infrastructure. These objectives are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which emphasizes a positive approach to managing and adapting town centres to unlock inclusive economic growth.

Improved rail infrastructure, the Northern Powerhouse initiative, and Greater Manchester's future economic growth will all contribute to the region's future prosperity. Greater Manchester's Places for Everyone Plan (Pfe) recognises the need to deliver high levels of economic growth to support the prosperity of the city region, and specifically identify substantial opportunities across the North-East and Wigan-Bolton growth corridors.

Bury Town Centre's Masterplan, within which the Mill Gate sits, represents a key opportunity to unlock inclusive growth and support the broader regeneration, economic, and social ambitions and opportunities for Bury Town Centre. The Mill Gate can therefore help Bury Town Centre reach its full potential.

The commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and driving investment across the North has been key priority for successive Governments, and serves as a golden thread that runs through all Levelling Up initiatives.

The Mill Gate represents a significant regeneration opportunity, to deliver a mixed-use town centre hub that supports the needs of the existing and future community. This section provides an overview of the primary drivers of regeneration. For additional detail please refer to Appendix 03.

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2//  
3//

Bury Interchange - Metrolink  
Manchester Piccadilly Station  
The Rock -Northern Powerhouse Study



Mill Gate.



## 2.2

## Role of the High street



The retail market has experienced a significant downturn due to the expansion of the online market share, resulting in a rapid decline in sales densities and the loss of major high street retailers. To support their long-term vitality, town centres should adapt by introducing a more diverse range of uses to generate footfall and activity. Evening and night-time activity can also play a crucial role in boosting activity and creating more diverse employment opportunities in town centres while enhancing their reputation as attractive visitor destinations.

As the sub-regional centre for the Borough and a key retail and commercial destination, Bury's retail offer has evolved over the last couple of decades. Historically, the Mill Gate shopping centre was the town's premier shopping destination up until the opening of The Rock in 2010. This resulted in changes to the Mill Gate offering, within the shopping centre becoming home to smaller, more local retailers as well as budget, value brands. Today, retail units within the Mill Gate struggle to attract national and regional brand occupiers which is exacerbated by the over provision of traditional retail and the high proportion of charity shops and smaller budget-focused brands. To address this, there is an opportunity to reduce existing duplication and vacancy by introducing more mid-range national brands and expanding dine-in food and beverage options to enhance the appeal of Mill Gate to a broader customer base.

Similarly, Bury Market, a nationally renowned cornerstone of Bury heritage and identity, would also benefit from reduced duplication and the introduction of more varied local businesses and entrepreneurs to enhance its attractiveness and the visitor experience. Despite this, the Market and Bury's new Flexi-Hall project have received Levelling Up funding which will seek to better integrate this area into the wider town centre.

The town centre needs to adapt and respond to changing circumstances by rationalising traditional retail floorspace and offering more 'experience-driven' retail, leisure, and food and beverage offerings to support the Mill Gate's long-term vitality. By doing so, the Mill Gate can be a key component of Bury Town Centre reaching its full potential by acting as a catalyst for future investment in the town centre.

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2//  
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High Street Amenity Spaces  
High Quality Homes  
Places to Work  
Town Centre Regeneration



## 2.3

## Education + Employment



The Northern Powerhouse initiative aims to tackle barriers to productivity and unlock the economic potential of the North. Despite Greater Manchester's strengths, the city region's productivity has remained 10% below the UK average for the past two decades. At a local level, Bury's economic growth lags behind Greater Manchester, highlighting the need for further investment and improved productivity. While Bury Town Centre is a key employment hub, it has shown lower employment growth than other Greater Manchester localities.

The Mill Gate represents an opportunity to increase job opportunities across a range of sectors and skill levels within the town. Investment in higher-level skills is crucial for residents to access job opportunities, and so the Borough should seek to invest in the skills base of its workforce to maintain and further develop a competitive skills supply offer.

Bury Town Centre currently accounts for over a quarter of all businesses in the Borough, with a higher-than-average proportion of small businesses, highlighting the Borough's entrepreneurial activity. However, this also indicates that the business base may be highly exposed to economic shocks.

To address this, there is a need to support the delivery of flexible and affordable workspaces, support and create more local employment

opportunities, attract higher-paying employment opportunities, which can help to encourage younger residents to stay or relocate, and stimulate wider economic growth through increased local expenditure.



**NORTHERN** |  **HM Government**  
**POWERHOUSE**



## 2.4

# Residential Demand



The UK is facing a housing crisis, with many individuals struggling to access suitable and affordable housing. The Government and NPPF recognises the need to increase the supply of new homes, including affordable homes, and ensure that they are built faster and in the right locations. Residential development in town centres plays an important role in increasing the supply of new homes, whilst supporting town centre vitality and providing easy access to essential services.

Bury is facing significant housing demand and affordability challenges due to sustained population growth, with house prices increasing by 57% in the last decade. The limited supply of new high-quality housing has resulted in affordability challenges, restricting the town's potential to attract and retain skilled young people, and contributing to elevated levels of outward migration for higher-skilled individuals.

Similarly, there is high demand for housing from people who work outside the Borough, and whose incomes are generally higher than those that work and live within Bury. Therefore, there is a need to deliver a range of high-quality housing, including Build to Rent, to meet local housing need and increase the draw of the town centre as an attractive destination to live and work.



Residential images

## 2.5

## Sustainability



The planning system strives to achieve sustainable development by delivering economic, social, and environmental benefits together.

To achieve a clean, carbon-neutral, climate-resilient place, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority's 5-year Environment Plan and Bury Council's Climate Action Strategy (2021) and Action Plan (2023) aim to progress to carbon neutrality by 2038. At both a national and regional level, the importance of this is recognised as playing a crucial role in improving health and well-being outcomes for communities, while also reducing reliance on public sector services.

The provision of sustainable transport options will contribute to achieving these targets, by reducing emissions from personal vehicle usage and a decreasing levels of air pollution. Future proposals at Mill Gate offer the opportunity to promote sustainable and active travel by expanding green routes and improving connections to other parts of the town centre; through this, residents and visitors will be encouraged to practice active travel and reduce car dependency. Low-carbon development at Mill Gate also presents an opportunity to support the Greater Manchester and Bury's net-zero carbon goals. The JV is developing a sustainability strategy to ensure all new and existing buildings exceed or meet local and

national targets, ensuring that the growth of Bury Town Centre is both sustainable and prosperous.



Sustainability Images



## 2.6

## Inclusive Growth



Inclusive growth is at the forefront of Greater Manchester's PFE Bury's 2030 "Let's Do It!" Strategy and the Bury Economic Strategy 2024-2034. Within Bury, there are significant disparities and inequalities between residents, with the Borough characterised by a range of socio-economic barriers which disproportionately impact residents' quality of life.

Communities around Bury Town Centre are still marked with pockets of deprivation, with Bury featuring higher levels of poverty than the national average. This is illustrated by neighbourhoods, particularly to the east and west of the town centre, which display lower-than-average household income levels, poor quality (often private rented) housing and limited access to public services and employment opportunities.

Bury is one of the worst-affected locations in the North West with regard to housing affordability, with almost 70% of homes priced beyond the household income of the average resident. This presents an opportunity to contribute to a more balanced housing market for the town centre by delivering mix of housing of diverse types and tenures, which are high-quality, futureproofed and affordable. This can seek to overcome reduced levels of social mobility, higher levels of preventative poor health, and a perceived lack of opportunities for residents,

both in education and employment. Residents who are in some of the most deprived parts of the Bury face some of the most significant health challenges, resulting in substantial disparities across Borough. This includes significant variation in life expectancy, whereby in a more prosperous location a resident is expected, on average, to live an additional 8 years when compared to a resident living in a more deprived area. The Borough is also characterised by a diverse population, most notably an ageing population which presents challenges in limiting the supply of labour in the morning age population and increasing demand for health and social care services.

Bury faces further challenges with health and well-being acting as a barrier into employment, with 31% of economically inactive residents being long term sick. In addition, the prevalence of childhood obesity and overweight around Bury Town Centre (within East Bury Ward) is higher than both the Borough wide and national average. This variation further reinforces the health inequalities and challenges facing the Borough.

The regeneration of Mill Gate and the town centre provides an opportunity to address the high levels of deprivation within the town centre and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes to address inequalities within the Borough. This can seek to promote social and

economic diversity by providing homes and opportunities for people of different income levels and backgrounds, which plays an important role in reducing social segregation and promoting social mobility, interaction and cohesion. This will in turn support the establishment of more sustainable, mixed communities.

