

# Huddersfield

**Urban Design Strategy**

Consultation Draft Summer 2009





# Huddersfield

## Urban Design Strategy

Report by  
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For  
**Kirklees Council**

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# Introduction

In March 2009, URBED were commissioned by Kirklees Council to develop an Urban Design Strategy (UDS) for Huddersfield town centre. This work ran in parallel to, and complemented the development of the options stage of the Area Action Plan for the town centre and the two pieces of work will form part of a joint consultation.

Huddersfield is strategically located mid way between Leeds and Manchester and on the doorstep of the Pennines. The most significant linkages are the M62, A62 and Transpennine Rail line between Leeds and Manchester as well as road and rail links to Bradford, Halifax, Wakefield and Sheffield. While these surrounding towns represent significant competition Huddersfield has risen to the challenge. Its

town centre has performed strongly and it has supplemented local employment by developing a role as a commuting base for Leeds and Manchester.

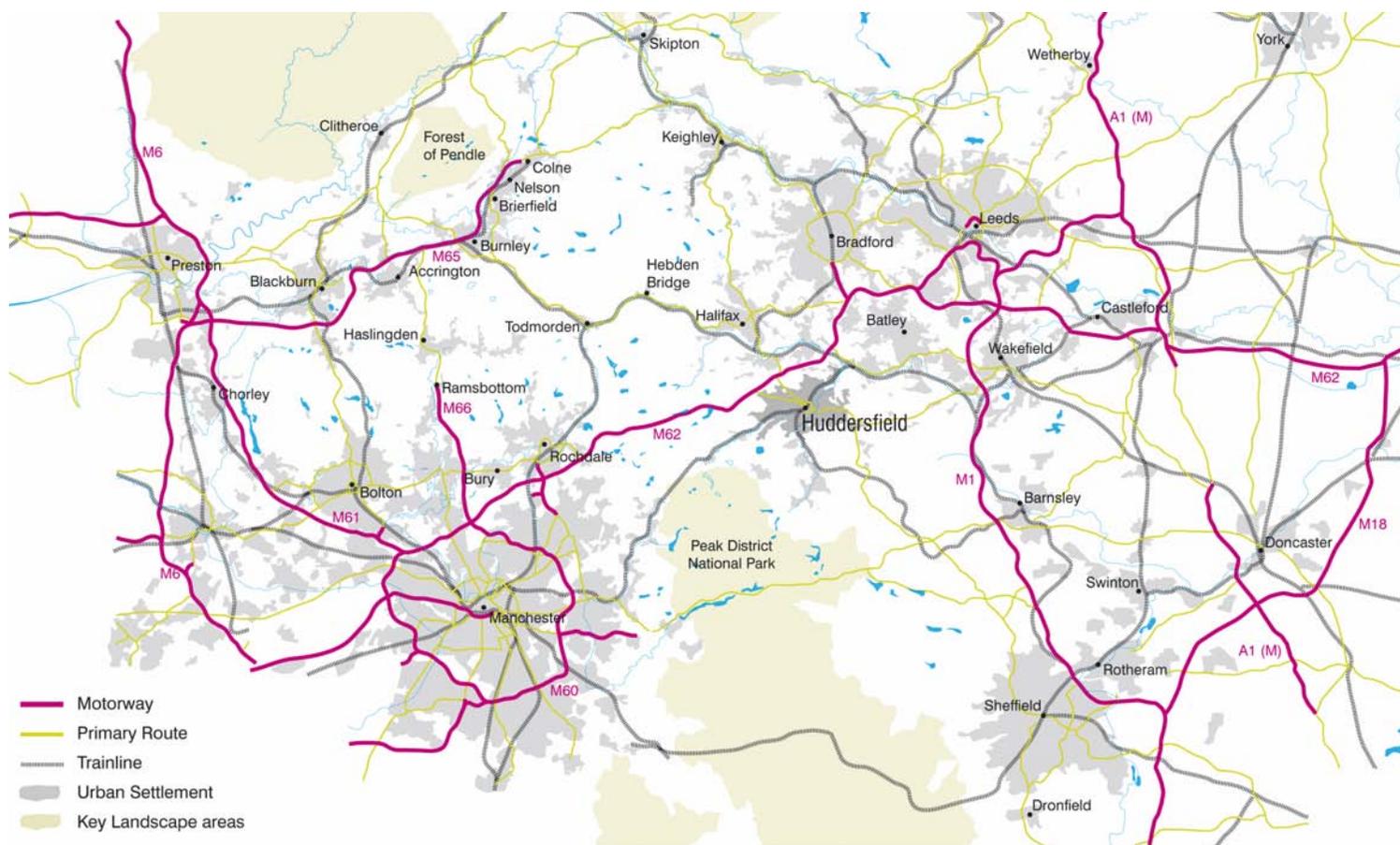
Huddersfield town centre continues to perform well in the face of competition and the recession. It has 1 Million square meters of space and just under 380 shops - making it a larger centre than Preston, Derby or

Wolverhampton and is ranked 67th on Experian's national retail rankings. It has a thriving, well established university established in 1841 with 40,000 students. Linked to this is a growing creative industries sector that has helped to diversify the local economy. However unemployment remains at 3.7%, above Kirklees and the national average (2.6% & 2.4%) and is significantly higher for some groups.

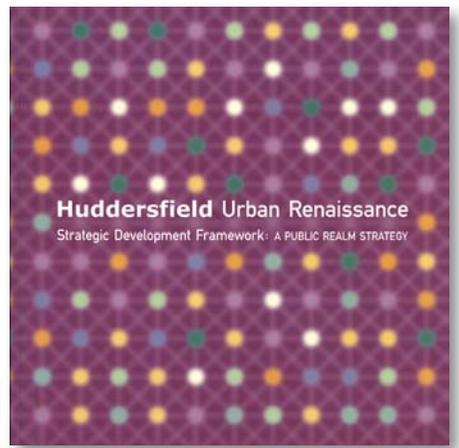
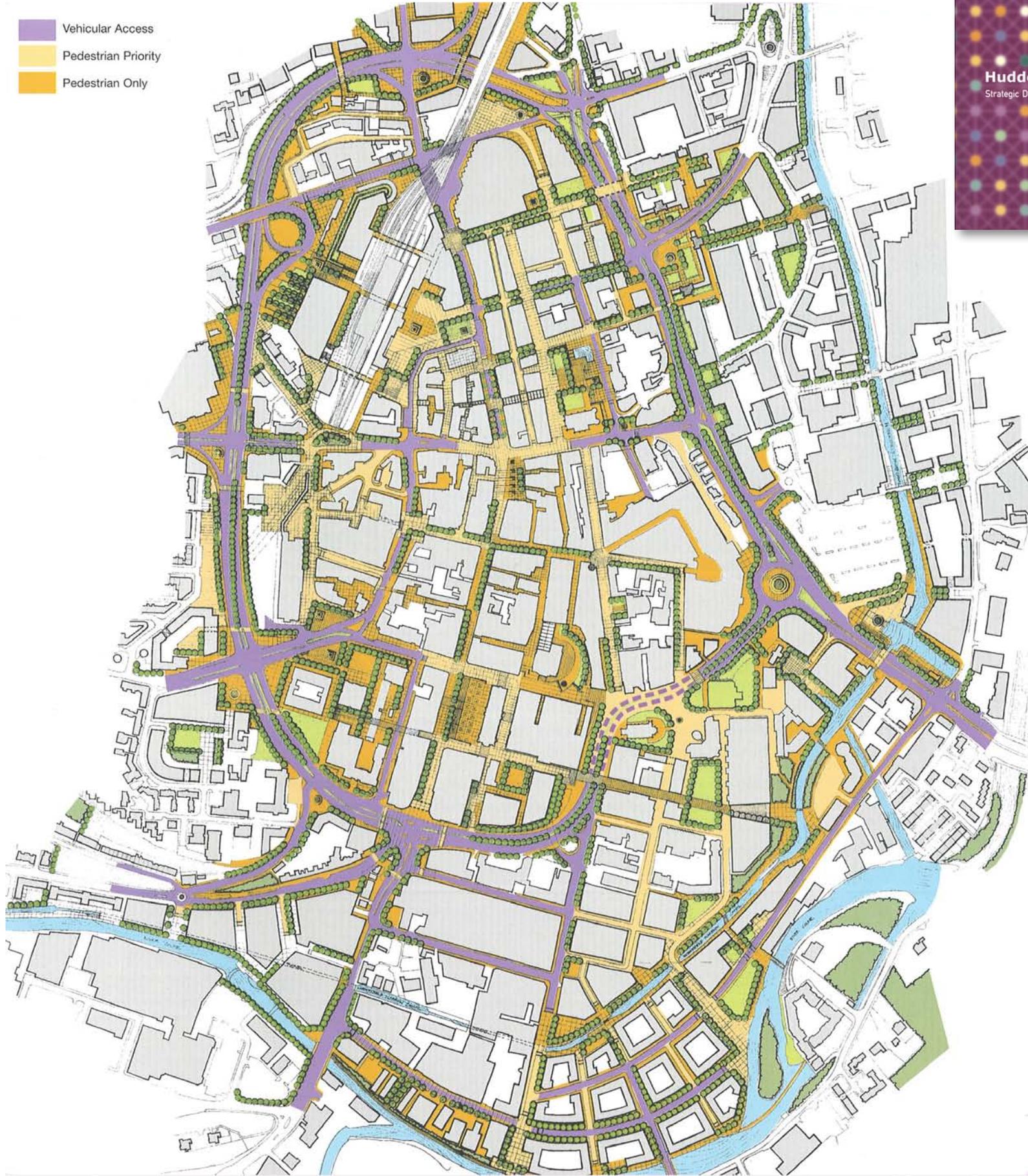
Huddersfield's Core Strategy and the AAP builds on the RSS strategy that the town centre will be the principle focus for change and employment within the borough. This is part of the wider Leeds City Region strategy that sees town and city centres as the key economic drivers.

This Urban Design Strategy draws on the Renaissance Towns report developed by David Lock Associates and the emerging themes and options from the Local Development Framework (LDF) and AAP. This strategy will form part of the AAP consultation to take place in late 2009.

It is not intended that this UDS will have statutory status. Its weight will come from having been approved by council as part of the LDF evidence base. On this basis it will be used to guide development in the town centre.



- Vehicular Access
- Pedestrian Priority
- Pedestrian Only



# Renaissance

In 2001 Huddersfield was amongst the first towns to be designated a Renaissance Town by Yorkshire Forward. Consequently, a Renaissance Charter and Strategic Development Framework was developed for the town centre by David Lock Associates working with a local town team. The vision developed was of a town that people can move through easily, that contains high-quality buildings and is a lively and busy place.

The UDS builds on this Renaissance work. The Renaissance Charter published in 2001 was developed with the town team and set out a vision for the town centre that a range of local stakeholders signed up to. This included the following objectives:

- Unified, integrated, mixed use centre;
- A strong city centre economy;
- A vibrant centre with movement and activity;
- Urban living;
- High quality buildings and public spaces;
- Inviting approaches and entrances;
- Convenient movement on foot;
- Lively and animated places;
- Fronting onto streets and squares;
- Centre as a resource for all communities;
- Collaboration with the public;

This was developed into a Strategic Development Framework which turned this vision into an implementable set of projects and policies. This focusses on the area within the Ring Road plus the University and Waterside as illustrated

on the plan to the left. The northern and westerly fringes of the town centre were not included.

The Renaissance SDF has three key elements: Movement, Activity and Appearance.

**Movement:** The public realm of the centre is re-configured and designated in terms of:

- Vehicular access only;
- Pedestrian priority and;
- Pedestrian only.

As can be seen in the plan opposite - the most significant contribution is shared space - for pedestrian priority.

**Activity:** The SDF recognises several existing types of activity in the centre, but stipulates that there should be three activity corridors:

- Creative business and leisure - Railway warehouse, via St George's Square, down to the canal.
- Retail and leisure - accross the centre from the bus station to

Kingsgate shopping centre and;

- Civic management and creative learning - from Civic 3 to the university/ canal.

**Appearance:** In terms of appearance the SDF suggests three broad and overlapping character areas:

- **The Northern Quarter:** characterised by the New Town grid/ rhythms and Victorian coding of building patterns.
- **Heart of the Town:** based around the medieval fine-grained core with which is paritally in-tact. Genrally a 'hotch-potch' of architectural styles;
- **The Waterside:** This area is focused on the University and the canal side. There is a large industrial heritage presence.



Mountain