

rethinking  
**BARNSLEY**



PROSPECTUS  
JANUARY 2002



**BARNLSLEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

# rethinking

## **Barnsley is adopting a new vision for the future.**

We want to achieve a step change in the regeneration of the Borough. This requires a fundamental rethink of existing approaches to regeneration in Barnsley.

We need a transformation in expectations and aspirations for Barnsley and its people, moving the Borough on from its proud coal mining heritage by building on one of its most important economic and social strengths, its history as a Market Town of considerable importance.

We want to develop a unique selling point for Barnsley centred on the urban heart of the town and the Borough.

We seek to create in the urban centre over the forthcoming years a completely new concept of Market Town, with a strong central attractiveness and a diverse and quality offer to all who visit, shop, work or live in Barnsley.



We seek to create an Urban Centre which can help drive regeneration and improve confidence right across the Borough.

And we seek to create an Urban Centre which can inspire our young people about their futures and the future of Barnsley as a whole.

Of course none of this will be easy and it is not without some risk - but we need to have high ambitions. The people of our Borough deserve nothing less.

*Stephen Houghton*

Councillor Stephen Houghton  
Leader of Barnsley Metropolitan Borough  
Council  
Chair, Barnsley Forum Executive

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**Junction 37 of the M1, with Barnsley Town Centre in the background (top right)**



A new vision for the future of Barnsley

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## What we are seeking to achieve

### **Barnsley needs a unique selling point for the future.**

The Borough has a great and proud history as a centre of coal mining and related industries, and a strong heritage as a market town of over 600 years standing. We are also part of the great Yorkshire tradition. Indeed the image of Barnsley is linked in many people's minds with the true image of Yorkshire.

In modern Barnsley, the market town is still thriving but coal mining and much of the related industries have gone. Following years of reclamation works, we have a Borough which is green and attractive as a place to live and to visit. Tourism is one of the fastest, possibly the fastest, growing local industries. The strength of Yorkshire culture remains alongside an improved environment and vibrant towns and villages.

We need now to build on these strengths and deliver a stronger and even more vital economy and community. We believe that this can be achieved by focussing ever more strongly on developing a modern, quality, diverse offer centred on, but not exclusive to, the town centre of Barnsley.

Barnsley Town Centre is 1.5 miles from the M1. It is on a rail route between Sheffield and Leeds. These are significant assets which need to be built upon.

Barnsley Town Centre and the surrounding urban core provide one third of the jobs within Barnsley. Through Objective One, an Integrated Development Plan for the urban centre has been adopted, aimed at bringing significant additional employment into the centre. Objective One will also help develop sites at Junction 37 on the M1 and the Dearne Valley, and improve or create links between the Town Centre and the M1 as well as rail links.

We have a great opportunity to transform the urban heart of Barnsley, but we believe that this plan on its own is not enough to achieve the fundamental step change needed. We believe that it is necessary to raise aspirations to a higher level and promote Barnsley Town Centre as the unique selling point that is at the heart of the future regeneration of Barnsley.

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To do this, we need the commitment of the private and public sector, whether within Barnsley or beyond. We need the commitment of all Barnsley's family of partners. We need the commitment of regional, national and European agencies to this renaissance of Barnsley.

We also need to raise the aspirations of local people and work on the image that Barnsley portrays to the world. We believe that Barnsley's place in the world needs to be redefined by this process of rethinking, into being the very epitome of a modern market town, and our image must reflect that to the rest of the world. As Yorkshire is redefining itself, so should Barnsley, the heart and crossroads of Yorkshire. As Yorkshire is 'alive with opportunity', then so is Barnsley.

The end result of this cannot be defined in precise terms right now. If it could, it would be easy to deliver and plan for. We are in fact setting a harder challenge for the Town and the Borough. We need to draw on the highest level of advice and support that we can to think through and develop this vision.



The vision for Barnsley Town Centre is not simply a vision for retail, although retail development is a clear part of this strategy. The vision is actually for a town at the heart of Barnsley which provides a diverse and quality offer which includes employment, high quality public realm, culture and the arts, places to live, a range of leisure options and a strong retail base. We want Barnsley to be seen as an example of how a strong modern market town can meet the diverse needs of the future, and not just as a shopping centre.

To achieve this, Barnsley must have improved access, must provide a better Town Centre environment, and must be designed and built to levels of quality never before seen, other than on a small scale, in the town. Recent developments have shown a marked improvement in the quality of design and pedestrian environment, we need to take this to a much bigger scale.

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We also need to attract new jobs and investment to the Town Centre, and look for companies to be born in, grow in, and stay in, the centre of Barnsley. We want more firms to locate in the centre of Barnsley. To this end, we must look to ways in which we can develop the technological infrastructure and prime office and commercial premises needed in and around the Town Centre to ensure that this happens. We need more people to be employed in and around the Town Centre, not just more people shopping here.

This vision will also be about garnering the economic and social benefits for the whole Borough. A greater economic focus and employment in the Town Centre will help create employment opportunities for the Borough as a whole and thereby will bring benefits to people living across Barnsley. Benefits in terms of housing renewal and development of satellite centres to Barnsley will need to be integrated with this programme.

At the same time, existing programmes in relation to development in the rest of the Borough and on education and workforce development in particular will continue.

The vision for the Town Centre of Barnsley is in addition to all the regeneration activity already in hand. It is not a replacement for well-founded existing programmes, but a recognition that we have to think bigger and work harder if real transformation of Barnsley is to be achieved.

Finally, we want to achieve a programme of regeneration which has its own momentum, which is inevitable in its positive consequences for the Town, and which will have the force to make things happen over many years, not just in the next few years of Objective One funding. This is a long term vision which requires long term sustained commitment.



A new vision for the future of Barnsley

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## Key strands of activity



In this initial stage of Rethinking Barnsley, we have identified 9 strands of activity that are key to delivering this vision. They are :

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**Developing the Vision**

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**Planning and Transportation Policies and Plans**

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**Investment and Development**

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**Technological Infrastructure**

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**Public Realm**

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**Arts Culture and Leisure**

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**Funding**

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**Image and Marketing**

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**Structures and Processes**

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Each is further described in the rest of this paper.

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## Key Strand 1 : Developing the Vision

Beginning now, the Council and its partners will start work on the vision with support and assistance from Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency as part of the 'Renaissance Towns' Initiative.

This work will include creative workshops run by Alsop Architects, appointed by Yorkshire Forward, and a Rethinking Barnsley Planning Weekend run by John Thompson Associates, also from the Renaissance Towns Panel.

To involve and consult the community, the Council will be organising a consultation exercise on the weekend of the 23rd/24th March as part of a new Spring Festival in the Town Centre.

This programme of work will, by the middle of May 2002, form the basis of moving on to develop a Master Plan for the Urban Centre of Barnsley. This Master Plan should be developed and finalised by January 2003.

Action on all the other Key Strands of Activity will be shaped by this vision.



During this period there will be other consultation with the public and partners on the range of issues involved in Rethinking Barnsley, incorporating all the Key Themes. There will be forums and conferences on the Town Centre, and there will be detailed discussion with key bodies.

Important links to national decision making and policy development will be made through the national 'Towns and Cities' partnership, set up by the Government's Urban Policy Unit, in which Barnsley is involved.

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## **Key Strand 2 : Planning and Transportation Policies and Plans**

The Council is engaging experts to look at the transport 'corridor' between the Koyo roundabout at the western end of Dodworth and the centre of Barnsley. This will include looking at improving links between the M1 at Junction 37, where there is a significant priority employment site under Objective One, and the Town Centre.

The Council has embarked on the first stage of reviewing the Unitary Development Plan for Barnsley. A paper outlining the Key Issues to be considered in the review has been published and consultation will take place between January and March 2002. This consultation will be linked closely to the work on developing the vision outlined above.

It is recognised that what is needed is root and branch reconsideration of planning and transportation policies and how they provide both opportunities and impediments to delivering the vision.

It is recognised that parking will be a key issue to address as part of any forward strategy for developing the Urban Centre of Barnsley. The Council have commissioned a study into the parking strategy for the Urban Centre, particularly the prospects for residential parking.

The proposed new Barnsley Interchange has received in principle funding approval from central government, and will be progressed later this year, with planning approval likely to be sought in the Autumn of 2002. This will significantly enhance public transport provision in Barnsley.





### **Key Strand 3 : Investment and Development**

We believe that this vision depends upon the creation of a core to the Town Centre which builds upon the existing market town values of Barnsley, by creating a quality market/retail/leisure centrepiece in the area around the Market Hall.

This will probably include significant property development on top of that already planned on the former Courthouse site and as a possible part of the Barnsley Interchange development.

Over the coming months, the Council will be working to bring together the various land and property interests in this part of Barnsley and applying concerted effort to developing a practical plan for such a development.

For its part, the Council is willing to use its role in relation to the Market and in relation to office employment in the Town Centre to support this development and to encourage development of more prime office space within the Town Centre or surrounding areas.

At the same time, the Barnsley Development Agency will continue to pursue inward investment opportunities into the Town Centre.

Finally, the developments proposed as part of the Integrated Development Plan under the European Objective One programme will also be pursued. The team to deliver this plan is being established and will hopefully be fully staffed in the Spring.

As part of Objective One, particular consideration is being given to developing opportunities for new businesses to locate in the urban centre as they grow, rather than moving on to other areas. This is particularly important for high technology businesses and businesses which develop out of Barnsley Business Innovation Centre. The possibility of further business incubation space within the urban centre is also part of the Integrated Development Plan.

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## **Key Strand 4 : Technological Infrastructure**

The development of Broadband technological Infrastructure in Barnsley is currently being examined and there are active discussions taking place between the Council, Barnsley Business Innovation Centre, and a range of partners both local and national about how this can be pursued.

As part of the Integrated Development Plan, a Digital Technovation Centre is planned for the Town Centre linked closely to the Barnsley Innovation Centre. This will be a leading edge technology development and along with BBIC will provide the core for future development of technology based innovative businesses in Barnsley.

Future prime office space will need to be wired for this infrastructure and this will be part of the investment and development required.



## **Key Strand 5 : Public Realm**

The need for a fundamental step change in approach to managing and developing the public realm in Barnsley is recognised. The Council is currently reviewing its approach to Town Centre management and expects to publish an improvement plan in the middle of 2002.

In this context, Public Realm needs to be concerned with the whole experience of visiting the Town Centre, both in terms of physical layout, but also in terms of cleanliness, safety and other day to day issues. It is important to delivering the vision that people can shop, go out, or otherwise visit, in the Town Centre safely and with pleasure. Public realm has a critical role to perform in this.



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## **Key Strand 6 : Arts, Culture and Leisure**

The Arts in Barnsley remain a strong and important part of the Town Centre's role. The success of the Cooper Gallery renovation, and the continued success of the Lamproom Theatre, are considerable indicators of the potential that the Arts and Culture have in the Town.

At the same time, the nightlife bars and clubs sector has continued to grow, and progress is still being made towards the development of a multi-screen cinema and leisure facilities on the former Courthouse site. There are other private sector proposals understood to be in the pipeline.

The vision is of a more diverse and quality arts, culture, and leisure offer in the future. The work on developing the vision needs to establish the role of this sector in the future.

The Arts Council have offered to part fund an officer to work alongside partners and the Council to develop cultural activity in the Town and to work on a future Lottery proposal for a Centre for Creativity, as was planned for the Civic Hall.



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## Key Strand 7 : Funding

Delivering the vision that will be developed is going to be a massive task. It requires public money, but primarily it is dependent on investment by the private sector.

Investment by the private sector depends fundamentally on the belief that Barnsley can achieve its goal to be the epitome of a modern market town, and on investors being convinced that there will be a proper return for them in quality development in Barnsley.

This means building long-term confidence in the Town and the vision becoming an action plan with its own momentum.



Further public sector funds depend fundamentally on showing that Barnsley can deliver and is delivering. The response of many national and regional bodies to our determination to rethink Barnsley has been to offer real resources to help that process. If Barnsley can show that it really will be able to make that change happen, then there is every reason to believe that a reasonable level of public funding can be obtained.

The vision cannot succeed on public or private funding alone. Both are required, and considerable effort will be needed to obtain these funds, supported by partners across the board.

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## **Key Strand 8 : The Image of Barnsley**

As was discussed earlier in this Prospectus, there needs to be a sea change in the image of Barnsley held by Barnsley people and by those who look in from outside.

Within Barnsley, we need to expect more and aspire to a bigger future for the Town. We need to do this by building on the pride we have in the heritage that Barnsley holds, and believing that a future can be built on that heritage which will make Barnsley one of the leading market towns in the country, or even in Europe, over the forthcoming decades.

If our expectations are low, and we aspire to little, then that is what will be achieved.

But we also need to change perceptions of those outside Barnsley, whether they are shoppers or whether they are investors. To this end, a collective communication effort with clear and consistent messages is needed. We need people who know Barnsley, whether they live here, have business here, have roots here, or have only general links with the Borough, to act as Ambassadors for Barnsley, battling for Barnsley in regional, national and international arenas.

Alongside developing the vision over the next few months, work will begin on developing a clear communication strategy.



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## **Key Strand 9 : Structures and Processes**

Initially, this process is to be led by the Barnsley Forum Executive, the Council, and the Urban Centre Board which has recently been established.

As the vision is developed, consideration will be needed of structures and processes which will ensure that the vision can move to action and delivery, and then to structures which will ensure a long term momentum.

Options include establishing some form of Town Centre trust or partnership, an Urban Regeneration Company, a separate Marketing Company, and so on.





If you have any comments on this prospectus, please write to:

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Further information and updates  
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