

Bolton **Council**

River Croal Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Adopted 14th January 2020

River Croal – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bolton's Core Strategy is the Local Plan for the Borough and Section 3 sets out in more detail policies affecting the River Croal as it runs through Bolton Town Centre. In line with MHCLG Planning Practice Guidance this draft SPD builds upon and provides more detailed advice or guidance on the policies in the Local Plan.
- 1.2 Within the context of The Bolton Economy: Our Strategy for Growth 2016-2030 ("Economic Strategy"), the Council has adopted a Town Centre Strategy ("Town Centre Strategy") including a masterplan framework and key intervention areas. These documents set out Bolton's ambition and vision to achieve a £1bn regeneration of the town centre and sustain its immediate future to the benefit of the wider Borough and its residents, supported by £100m direct investment from the Council.
- 1.3 The Council is seeking to open up and improve access to and along the River Croal thereby maximising this untapped asset as it runs through Bolton town centre. This draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to convey the council's aspirations for the river and assist with guiding development where development proposals impact on the river. The area covered by this draft SPD is shown in Appendix 1. The River Croal runs from Queens Park in the west, through the Croal Valley intervention area to the town centre, under the Market Place, through the Church Wharf intervention area to and ends where it is culverted under the A666 St. Peters Way.
- 1.4 At the heart of the Economic Strategy, Bolton town centre continues to be the Borough's main centre for shopping, business and civic affairs. It also remains as the most important centre for arts, entertainment, urban leisure and cultural activities and is thus a focus for the wider community. The Town Centre Strategy and the proposed investment acknowledges this importance, as well as the challenges faced, and the opportunities presented, including the need to diversify beyond a traditional retail offer. A key element of these strategies is to increase the quantity and quality of residential development in the town centre, attracting more people to generate demand through household spend and improve its vitality, viability and sustainability. As such it is an exemplar for the Borough's vision for 2030 where Bolton is:

"a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful businesses, and healthy residents. It will be a welcoming place where people choose to study, work and put down roots. In short Bolton will be 'Active, Connected and Prosperous'.
- 1.5 The River Croal is an almost hidden jewel of historic importance and is an untapped asset for the town. As previously mentioned, it flows through both the Croal Valley and Church Wharf interventions areas of the town centre masterplan framework and in the past has helped support large scale industrial infrastructure. Much of this has now been cleared, leaving sites with good access to the Civic Core, some remaining industrial buildings of historic interest and the River Croal itself, which remains in an engineered channel. A more organic design approach is needed which will ensure that new development in the area avoids standardised solutions and considers issues such as river frontage, level changes, historic street frontages, and examples of industrial

heritage such as St Helena Mill, the listed arch of Marsden Road bridge and the listed Victoria Hall.

- 1.6 The two intervention areas running along the River Croal present exciting development opportunities for mixed use development that will have a significant regeneration impact. It is anticipated that at least 900 new residential dwellings and up to 700 new jobs could be accommodated within the draft SPD area. The area is an even more attractive and affordable proposition given the recent development of the new town centre transport Interchange that increases the speed, ease and frequency of connectivity now offered to Manchester and the rest of the UK. Early phases of residential development coupled with upfront, high quality public realm improvements, including along the river, will provide the catalyst to kickstart the redevelopment of the river area and allow for potential leisure and mixed-use development in later phases. Given these development opportunities the council is seeking careful treatment of the river corridor and the impact of any development upon the river should form part of any initial project development.
- 1.7 This SPD is currently in draft form. In line with the Statement of Community Involvement, prior to adoption by the Council there will be a period of consultation during which the views of key stakeholders will be sought. These comments will be considered by the Council and, where appropriate, the draft SPD will be amended.

2. Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document

- 2.1 This draft SPD has been prepared to give advice as to how the Council envisages the River Croal and its riverbank be opened up and to guide the development along the River Croal as shown on Appendix 1. It considers updated local policies and contextual changes contained within the recently approved Bolton Town Strategy, together with flood risk principles.
- 2.2 This draft SPD sets out the objectives of the Council on the form and content of proposals along the river and describes how the Council expects the implementation and delivery of these proposals to come forward. It provides information on issues such as urban design principles, public realm and open space requirements, issues affecting the River Croal and local distinctiveness, perception and image.
- 2.3 The Town Centre Strategy recognises the potential of the Croal Valley and Church Wharf intervention areas to deliver new neighbourhoods within Bolton town centre. These areas offer major opportunities for private sector led investment to bring added economic, social and environmental benefits whilst taking account of the impact this investment will have on the river and the opportunities presented by the river. The most up to date economic analysis available highlights that residential development in the town centre is the most economically viable in the current climate and is within the range of uses identified in the Core Strategy.
- 2.4 It is likely that a large proportion of residential development will have little outdoor space for residents making improvements to the riverside environment more important.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 The Core Strategy, adopted in March 2011, is Bolton's key Local Plan document. It describes what we want Bolton to look like in the future up to 2026, and the planning policies that will be used to make it a reality. It reflects the spatial aspects of the work of Bolton Council and its partners.
- 3.2 Along with the Adopted Allocations Plan and other supplementary planning documents, the Core Strategy forms the basis for how planning application decisions are made in Bolton. The site-specific Allocations Development Plan Document was adopted in December 2014 and helps implement the Core Strategy approach on a site-by-site basis.
- 3.3 The Core Strategy Spatial Vision sets out the critical role of Bolton town centre as the principal location for retailing, leisure, cultural and civic activities over the next 20 years. In addition, the town centre will provide a significant contribution to new jobs, remain the main location for education and become one of the main locations for new housing development in the borough.
- 3.4 Policies **TC2**, **TC8** and **TC10** within the Core Strategy are site specific to the St. Helena, Church Wharf and Urban Village areas respectively and the Allocations Plan defines the boundaries of these areas on the policies map. All policies state that:

The Council and its partners will:

Ensure that the River Croal environment is preserved or enhanced and that full account is taken of flooding risk.

- 3.5 Any development within the river area must comply with the policies contained within the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This draft SPD expands on policies set out in the Core Strategy and takes account of national policy and guidance. The relevant policies are listed below:

Policy	Description
H1	Healthy
A1	Achieving
P1	Employment
P2	Retail and leisure
P5	Accessibility
S1	Safe
CG1	Cleaner and greener (including CG1 (5) relating to flooding) (Flood Risk Zones can be found on the Allocations Plan policy map)
CG2	Sustainable design and construction
CG3	The built environment
CG4	Compatible uses

SC1	Housing
TC2	St. Helena
TC8	Church Wharf
TC10	Urban Village
TC11	Design in the town centre
LO1	Links to other areas (reference to flooding within narrative)
IPC1	Infrastructure and planning obligations

Further details of these policies can be found on the Council's website.

- 3.6 Further guidance relevant to any proposals is provided by several SPDs. Those relevant to the area are listed below.

Accessibility, Transport and Road Safety	Adopted October 2013
Affordable Housing	Adopted February 2013
Building Bolton	Adopted November 2006
General Design Principles	Adopted July 2015
Infrastructure and Planning Contributions	Adopted July 2016
Location of Restaurants, Cafes, Public Houses, Bars and Hot Food Takeaways in Urban Area	Adopted September 2013
Sustainable Design and Construction	Adopted October 2016
Church Wharf	Adopted April 2018

- 3.7 In addition to the SPDs, the council approved the Public Realm Implementation Framework as a Statement of Council Policy in June 2007.

4. The River Croal

- 4.1 Prior to the creation of Bolton Corporation in 1838, the River Croal formed the boundary between Greater and Little Bolton. On the Greater Bolton side, between Deansgate and the river, narrow plots occupied the steeply sloping site, having both a street and river frontage. The pattern of land ownership is evidence of well established settlement on this side of the river, possibly associated from an early date with the origins of Bolton's textile industry that saw major growth and investment in the town. Both St Helena Mill (the oldest surviving industrial building in the Town Centre) and the Bolton – Bury – Manchester canal can be seen on the 1793 map below.



- 4.2 The prominence of the river has been obscured by subsequent development. The river was channelised in the 19th century, and new bridges isolated the valley areas from the surrounding townscape. Development density was particularly high with living conditions amongst the worst in the town centre.
- 4.3 The partial culverting of the river in the 1980s under the Market Hall extension split the visible sections of the Croal into two, identified in Building Bolton as the Church Wharf and St Helena character areas. Clearance of much of the industrial and all the residential buildings has removed most of the urban structure in these areas, though both sites retain historic street frontage, as well as surviving industrial buildings and possibly areas of archaeological value. Today, large parts of the River Croal are culverted and canalised, with buildings constructed both up to the river edge and over the river itself. In many places the natural form of the river does not exist, and it is recognised as a heavily modified waterbody by the Environment Agency.
- 4.4 The River Croal is currently failing its ecological objectives under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) to achieve good ecological status by 2027; but heavily modified waterbodies such as the River Croal are expected to achieve good ecological potential by this date. The North West River Basin Management Plan (NW RBMP) provides the statutory framework for implantation of the WFD for the Irwell Catchment that includes the River Croal (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/north-west-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan>)
- 4.5 The main failures relate to the watercourse being heavily modified through poor development practices in the past and many parts being left in culvert or cut off from the wider environment through heavily built encroachment. Major new regeneration proposals provide the opportunity to reverse this trend and create a valued amenity

and landscape resource for both people and wildlife. The image below shows the extent of these modifications; particularly around White Lion Brow and the area east of Knowsley Street, when compared to the one above.



4.6 The NW RBMP identifies that the restoration and enhancement of water bodies is needed to prevent further deterioration. Policy documents such as this SPD should seek to address WFD failures and enhance the River Croal as a result of its multifunctional benefits with measures potentially including:

- Surface water improvements
- Improving the water quality of discharges from development
- Deculverting, removal of weirs and redundant structures
- Softening of bankside locations
- Front facing development that is set back from the watercourse with large areas of soft/green public realm to provide an enhanced waterside setting and reduced pollution (littering)
- Improved safe public access and access for maintenance

5. The Vision

5.1 The council is seeking to open up access to the River Croal, creating a high quality green infrastructure asset that will benefit people and wildlife from Queens Park at Chorley Street/White Lion Brow to where it enters the culvert under St. Peters Way at Church Bank. The river will have an improved environment enabling it to become a main town centre feature providing essential ecosystem service benefits and helping to meet the objectives of the WFD.

5.2 This focus on Green Infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements within the SPD recognises the importance of the multiple benefits these will bring to the Town Centre and the River Croal corridor. These include reducing flood risk, improving psychological health and wellbeing, boosting local economic regeneration, increasing resilience to climate change and providing a habitat for wildlife. General guidance on the council's approach and requirements for Green Infrastructure is set out its Sustainable Design and Construction SPD at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/866/sustainable-design-and-construction>. Furthermore specific advice on how this will be applied within the Croal Valley is elaborated more in later sections of this SPD.

- 5.3 In order to achieve the Council's aim, it will be necessary to ensure that new development enhances the use, enjoyment and setting of the river by integrating land and water uses. Ultimately this means opening up access to, from and along the river, exploring the added value and use of water space, taking opportunities to manage and reduce flood risk and viewing the waterway, walking and cycle paths and environs as part of the public realm to unlock the economic, environmental and social benefits of the river.
- 5.4 The council wishes to encourage the promotion of the following principles as part of any developments:
- Re-naturalisation of watercourses where possible - through removal of retaining walls and de-culverting to open-up the watercourse as far as practicable.
 - Preservation of potential linear access routes along the River Croal
 - The use of SuDS approaches that include amenity and biodiversity benefits, such as those advocated in Chapters 5 and 6 of The SuDS Manual (2015).
- 5.5 If new development is implemented without these measures being addressed the opportunity to include them may be lost, and potentially compromise the long-term goals of the council.

6. Development Constraints

General

- 6.1 All development along the River Croal must be carefully designed to prevent any pollution issues. The design must ensure that adjoining land uses do not create problems from noise, odours and air pollution that detract from the recreation, education and general amenity value of the river.

Water Quality

- 6.2 Measures to improve the water quality of the river corridors should be carried out wherever possible. Achieving improved water quality is paramount if we are to see a return to 'natural' rivers that many desire to see. The ecosystem of the river depends on the quality of the water. A range of wildlife within river corridors will only occur if the water available for their survival is improved. This can only be achieved through a number of interlinked measures contained within this SPD.

Water Pollution

- 6.3 Measures should be taken to prevent pollution of controlled water within the river catchment.
- 6.4 Pollution prevention will need to be addressed from the very beginning of the development process. Developments that could create a potential threat of pollution will not be granted planning permission without appropriate conditions to avoid such

risks or without measures either in place or proposed which may be subject to S106 agreements.

- 6.5 Pollution can occur to both ground and surface water. Since groundwater flows through aquifers and provide the base flow for rivers it is vitally important that all possible pollution of ground water, as well as surface water, is prevented. Since contamination of sites may affect the groundwater as well as surface water run-off, developers will be required to treat contaminated sites.

Contamination

- 6.6 Some areas adjacent to the river such as Church Wharf and Croal Valley were formerly densely developed with a mixture of industry and residential uses and it is possible that parts of these areas may be contaminated. To ensure any proposal is safe for use the developer must carry out an adequate investigation of the land to ensure sufficient protection to the end users of the development is provided. This must be in line with Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Developers should ensure a completed desk top exercise is submitted with any applications.

Highways

- 6.7 Existing servicing arrangements should be retained with future arrangements agreed with the Environment Agency and the Local Highway Authority. All public footpaths along the route will be required to link into new and existing town centre streets to aid movement. The council will look at extending the Bee Network along the route where achievable and in support of wider town centre Bee Network proposals

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.8 The River Croal is designated as a “main river” and any development that would affect the channel or would be within 8m of it, may require a permit from the Environment Agency under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.
- 6.9 Proposals for the river should adopt a sequential approach to avoid the areas of highest risk as outlined in Policy **CG1 (5)** of the Core Strategy.
- 6.10 A Flood Risk Assessment may be required where it is considered that there would be an increased risk of flooding as a result of the development or the development itself would be at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency has a hydraulic model for the River Croal and information from this will be available in relation to any Flood Risk Assessment carried out. Where development is permitted, the Council may impose conditions or seek agreements to ensure that compensatory measures that may be required to alleviate flood risk both on and offsite are provided. Developers are also requested to refer to the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD for further guidance relating to Sustainable Drainage.
- 6.11 Developers should therefore fully investigate the surface water hierarchy-at initial development design stage and must demonstrate consideration for the potential use of

SuD has been considered and where appropriate used in the surface water drainage strategy for the site. The expectation will be for only foul flows to communicate with the public sewer. Applicants will have to submit clear evidence of why each option within the hierarchy has been discounted. In the initial stages of designing a development a range of SuDs should be explored including green walls, green roofs and tree planting. If appropriate, this should then be incorporated into the development prior to the submission of a planning application and planning conditions will be used to ensure SuDs have been implemented where planning consent is granted.

- 6.13 In the initial stages of designing a development a range of SuDs should be explored including green walls, green roofs and tree planting. If appropriate, this should then be incorporated into the development prior to the submission of a planning application and planning conditions will be used to ensure SuDs have been implemented where planning consent is granted.
- 6.14 The use of SuDs would also provide flood risk and water quality benefits which is more critical given that the town centre has suffered from surface water flooding previously and the Croal experiences water quality issues from urban diffuse run-off.
- 6.14 In general, if it is deemed essential that development takes place in the higher risk areas, proposals will need to show that development would be safe. It must also show that any mitigation measures (such as raising levels) would not increase risk elsewhere and this may mean compromises in designs considered and the area available for development.
- 6.15 It is essential that development creates an attractive riverside setting. At the very least this should include improvements to the embankments and cleaning of the riverbed. New hydraulic controls could be an impediment to storm water flow and the Environment Agency and United Utilities need to be consulted on any proposals relating to the river or possible water features. Ideally an open landscaped corridor could be created along the open sections of the river to integrate the river with any future town centre development. Sustainable options should be pursued that accommodate the environmental, recreational, landscape and economic needs of the town centre.
- 6.16 Where possible developers are encouraged to consider how best their development can make environmental improvements to the river that would create a green network through the town centre with improved connectivity to Queens Park. Queens Park has opportunities to provide increased flood storage to benefit the town centre and also provides potential to improve fisheries interest through the provision of improved habitat.


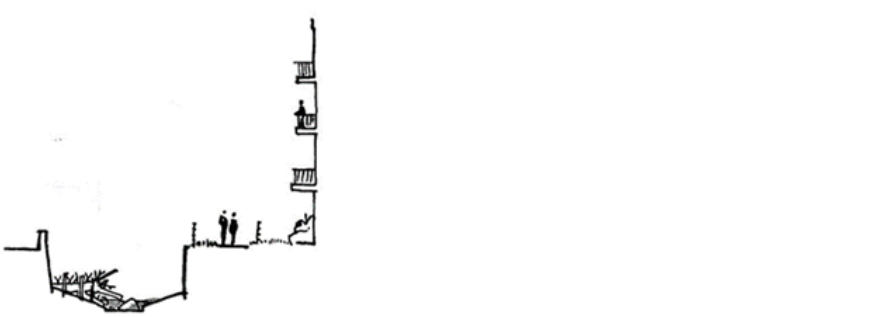
Existing Infrastructure Assets

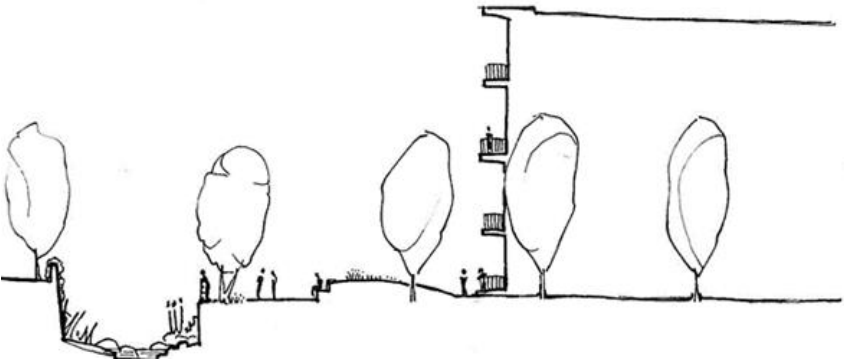
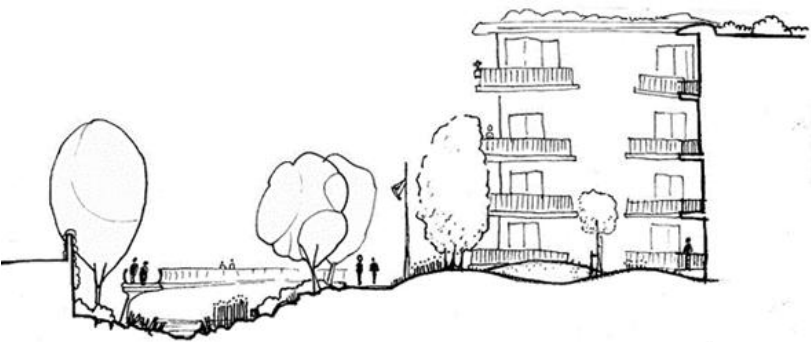
- 6.17 United Utilities has some significant water and wastewater infrastructure within Bolton Centre and within proximity to the River Croal. These assets will need to be afforded due regard in any masterplanning process and future development as the location of such assets can impact on the viability and deliverability of certain schemes

- 6.18 Early engagement with United Utilities is essential when developing within the SPD boundary to explore their options as early as possible
- 6.19 There is a debris screen in the channel of the river in the meander downstream of Chorley Street to prevent debris entering the long culverts in the town centre where it is inaccessible. The ability to access the screen, and the channel in general, is essential for future maintenance works. Development layout must make provision to access the channel along the length of the riverbank.
- 6.20 The existing retention tank at Water Street in the Church Wharf area has the potential to create issues of amenity arising from noise, odour and/or highway constraints. Any developer will be expected to demonstrate mitigation measures through the planning process in consultation with United Utilities and vehicular access to this facility will need to be retained for maintenance purposes.
- 6.21 There is a preference, wherever feasible, for watercourses to be opened up and incorporated into any new development rather than considering retaining them below ground. Developing over culverts should be avoided where possible as this is not good practice and inspection and maintenance access more difficult.
- 6.22 Policy **TC 10** of the Core Strategy relating to the Urban Village site states a preference to reduce the risk to the potential for flood storage upstream. The Environment Agency has an allocation in the Investment programme to investigate flood risk in the River Croal catchment. The River Croal could potentially benefit from any scheme proposals that this may generate. However, there is likely to be a need for development contributions to implement any works and consideration will be given to a council/developer partnership approach to reducing risk.
- 6.23 The following guidance also provides reference to other urban river restoration projects that could potentially be adopted (with the aim of restoring this environmentally poor urban river corridor, and create a valued environment for both people and wildlife):
- http://www.therrc.co.uk/sites/default/files/general/Training/esmee/river_restoration_in_urban_areas.pdf
- <http://www.ecrr.org/RiverRestoration/UrbanRiverRestoration/tabid/3177/Default.aspx>
- https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/297315/LIT8146_7024a9.pdf)
- 6.24 The latest Environment Agency model for the River Croal (2016) shows that during a 1 in 100yr flood event, the majority of the site south of Brown Street / Well Street would be affected by flooding. This is within the Church Wharf area; the subject of its own SPD that was adopted by the council on 9th April 2018 and available at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/859/church-wharf>. Development of this area is being carried forward by Muse Developments.

7. Design Objectives

7.1 As mentioned previously the council's overall vision is to open up access to the River Croal, creating a high quality green infrastructure asset that will benefit people and wildlife and make a feature of the Croal. A series of design option principles have been formulated to articulate council thinking that commence with the current baseline then moves through a series of bronze, silver and gold principles as outlined below. As a minimum the council will accept the bronze design options but it would be desirable for developers to aspire to silver or gold options.

Scenario	Description	Principles	Example illustration (indicative only)
Baseline	<p>The current situation of unattractive patchy brownfield sites and no clear route between the town centre and the park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside walkway is overgrown with shrubbery or is non-existent. • No clear riverside route defined between the park and the town centre. • Poor in-channel habitats. 	
Bronze	<p>In the bronze scenario, a clear route between Queens Park and Market place is proposed.</p> <p>Some enhancements to the river and with some environmental enhancements to the river and brown field sites are suggested between Queens Park and Church Wharf.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riverside route defined with basic signage. • Developments are focussed upon return on investment, maximising the size of development with less focus on green space and construction as close to river as possible. • Minor in-channel improvements at relatively low cost. 	

Scenario	Description	Principles	Example illustration (indicative only)
Silver	<p>The silver scenario builds on the bronze one by suggesting additional enhancements to the route and environment but assumes a degree of financial and environmental constraint.</p> <p>This scenario considers impacts, benefits, feasibility, and potential cost</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverside route enhanced and defined with signposts/education boards Green spaces incorporated into urban developments along the riverside. Buildings set further back from rivers edge. Moderate in-channel improvement at moderate cost to improve flow and habitats. 	
Gold	<p>The gold scenario depicts the best-case scenario and includes all possible options for enhancement of the River Croal</p> <p>It assumes less financial and environmental constraints.</p>	<p>As for silver plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green spaces and pocket parks prioritised over buildings. Use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. Buildings set as far back as possible to maximise riverside environment and improve social amenity. Moderate/major in-channel improvement at moderate/major cost to improve fish passage. 	

General Design Principles

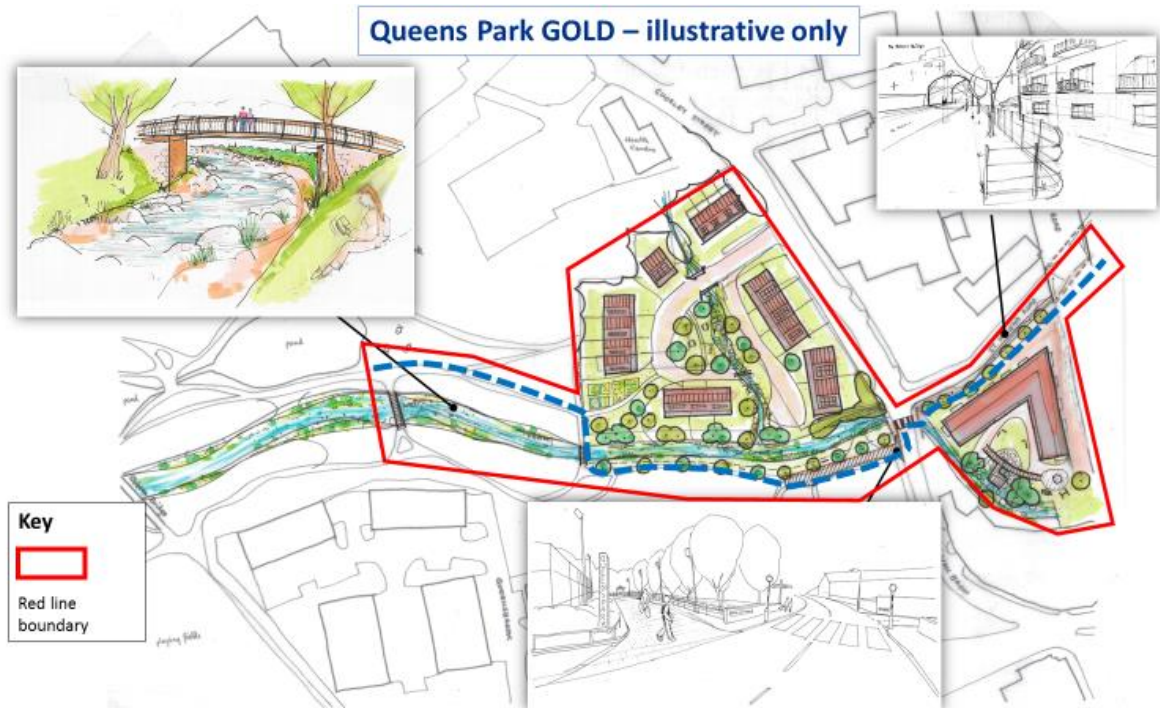
- 7.2 The sketches below highlight how these objectives could be taken forward and are purely for illustration purposes.
- 7.3 As mentioned previously the Church Wharf area is the subject of its own SPD that was adopted by the council on 9th April and is available at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/859/church-wharf>. Development of this area is being carried forward by Muse Developments. Design work at Church Wharf was done in accordance with that SPD and also in tandem with preparation of this document. A planning consent is in place for Church Wharf and is equivalent to the gold standard.



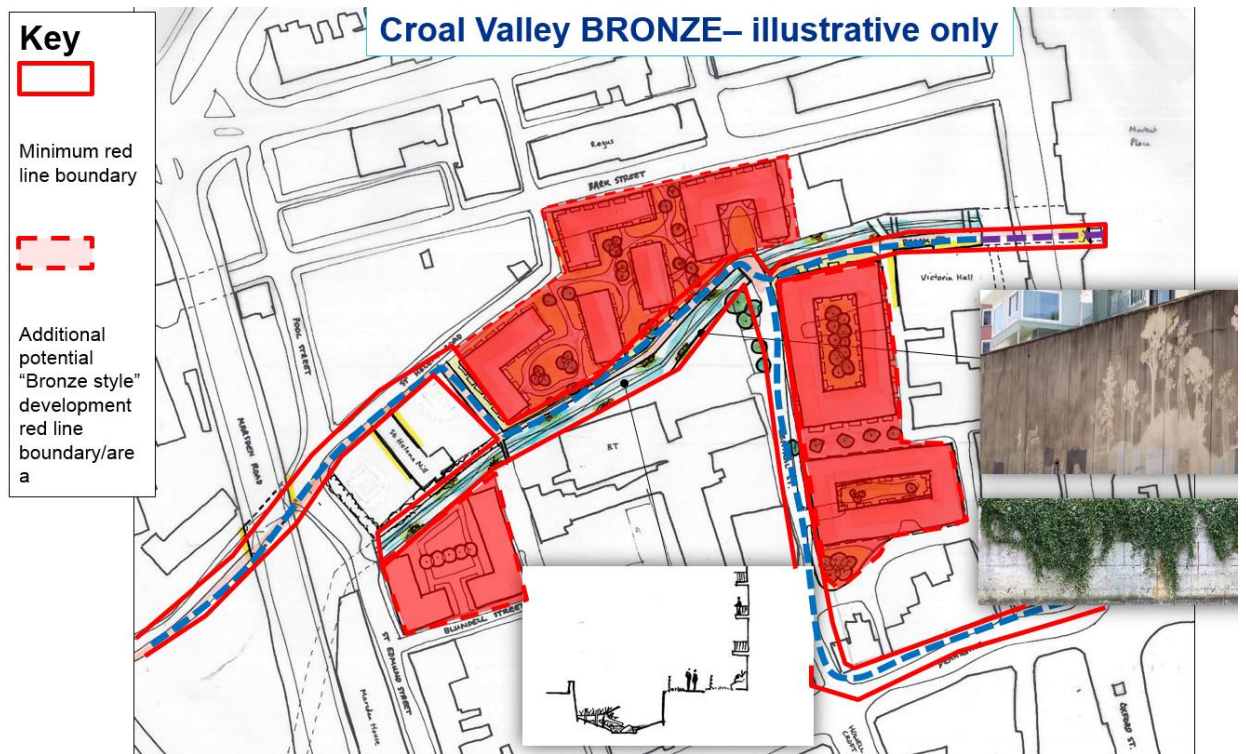
The riverside route along Queens Park area would have basic signage to encourage people to use the route towards the town centre. As part of the signage, a sign would also be erected indicating the entrance to Queens Park and a pedestrian crossing instated over White Lion Brow. Small, relatively low cost improvements to the riverbed are suggested to improve aesthetics and river environment through the installation of boulders/ woody material to vary the flow through Queens Park. Car parks (such as St Helena car park) could be redeveloped maximising use of site by development with minimal green space.



The riverside route along Queens Park could have enhanced signage and signposts to indicate the riverside route towards the town centre and some information boards relating to Bolton's heritage and environment as well as a sign indicating the entrance to Queens Park. The route would also require a pedestrian crossing installed at White Lion Brow. Car parks (such as St Helena car park) could be redeveloped with buildings set back from the water's edge with some green space incorporated into the urban development. A tree-lined avenue is also suggested along St Helena Road. In-channel improvements could include the installation of a fish pass on the large weir as this currently acts as a major barrier to fish passage as well as the installation of flow deflectors and/or the creation of berms which would lead to aesthetic and environmental improvements along the channel.



The riverside route along Queens Park could have enhanced signage, with signposts to indicate the riverside route towards the town centre and some information boards relating to Bolton's heritage and environment as well as a sign indicating the entrance to Queens Park. The route would also require a pedestrian crossing instated over White Lion Brow. Car parks (such as St Helena car park) could be redeveloped with buildings set back from the water's edge and green space maximised or have as a complete pocket park with riverbanks reprofiled to improve view of river. A tree-lined avenue is also suggested along St Helena road. In-channel improvements could include the full weir removal of both weirs in Queens Park as they currently act as major barriers to fish passage as well as the installation of flow deflectors and/or the creation of berms which would lead to aesthetic and environmental improvements along the channel.

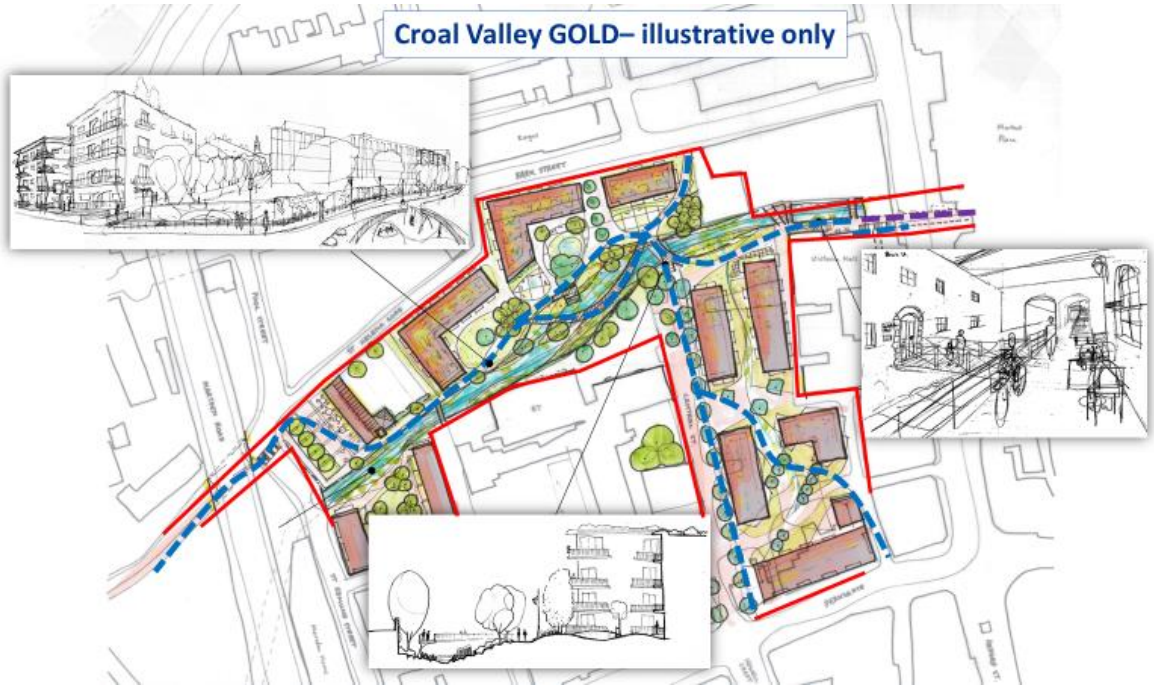


A route with basic signage throughout and going along the north side of St Helena Mill along the road, returning to river after St Helena Mill. Substantial vegetation clearance would open route up along north bank of river. Low cost in-channel improvements to vary river flow and the potential to create urban developments in the car parks of the Croal Valley area. The aesthetics of the old BT building could be improved through painting.



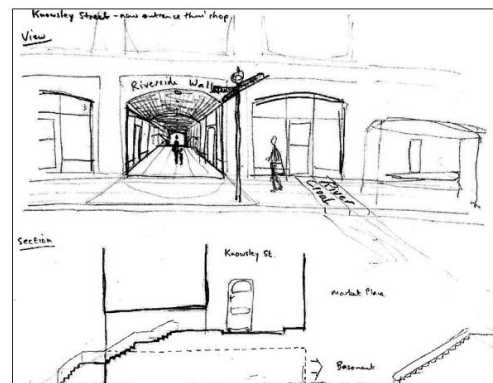
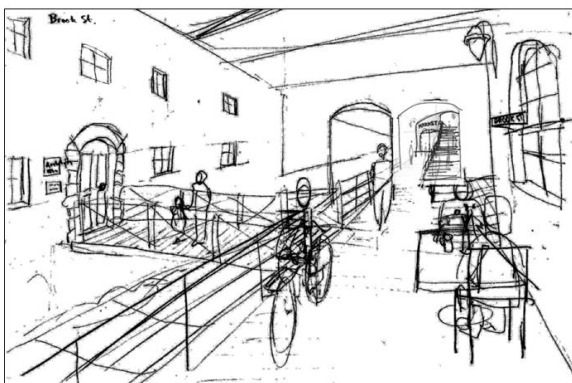
A route with enhanced signage including information boards, leaving the road to go along the south eastern edge of St Helena Mill. Substantial vegetation clearance would

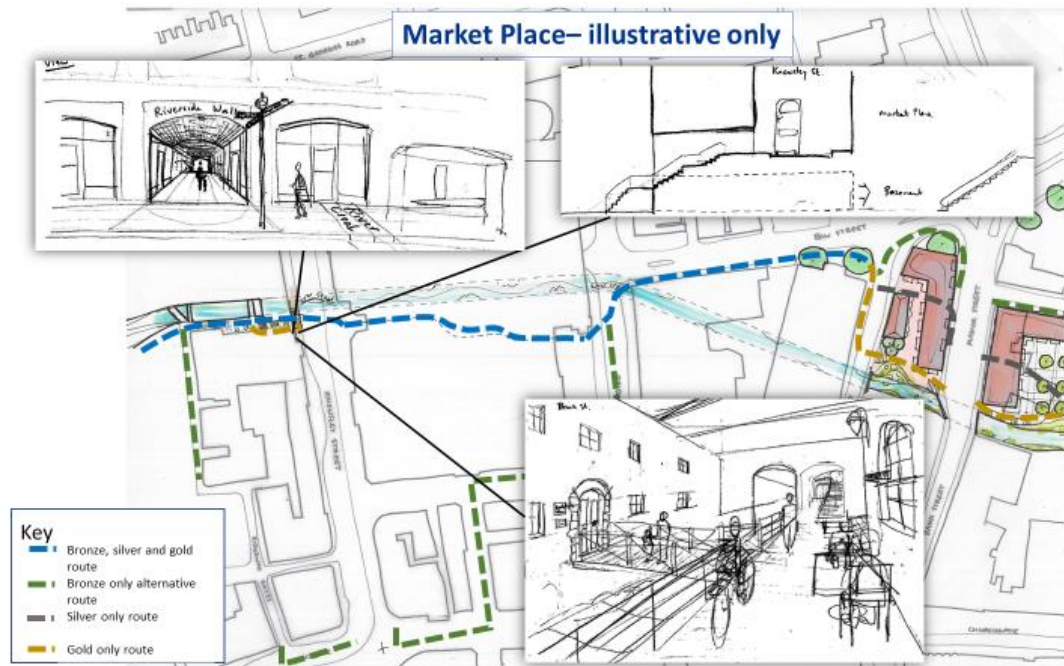
open route up along north bank of river. River improvements such as Installation of flow deflectors and/or berm creation, and the development of old car parks with a mix of mainly urban, with buildings set back but some green spaces. The aesthetics of the old BT building could again be improved through cladding.



A route with enhanced signage (including information boards, leaving road to go through a newly created park and then along the south eastern edge of St Helena Mill. Substantial vegetation clearance would open route up along north bank of river. River improvements (including berm and flow deflector installation, artificial bed removal and bank reprofiling), development of pocket parks or urban developments with a large green space element on the sites of the old car parks. As with the bronze and silver options the opportunity could be taken to improve the aesthetics of the old BT building through greening.

Croal Valley/ Market Place transition





Historic Environment

- 7.3 All development proposed along the river must ensure that any archaeological remains, historic buildings and historic landscapes are preserved and protected.
- 7.4 The historic environment is an asset of the River Croal and shows how the town has developed over the years and the river has been managed in the past. When proposals for new development within or adjoining river corridors and their tributaries are put forward the impact of the proposed development on the historic environment must be assessed by the applicant. This is particularly the case where development is in the vicinity of St. Helena Mill and Victoria Hall, both of which are listed buildings. This assessment may need to include archaeological evaluation and/or historic building recording and/or palaeoenvironmental sampling are put forward the impact of the proposed development on the historic environment must be assessed by the applicant. This is particularly the case where development is in the vicinity of St. Helena Mill and Victoria Hall, both of which are listed buildings. This assessment may need to include archaeological evaluation and/or historic building recording and/or palaeoenvironmental sampling.
- 7.5 Where in situ preservation of other historic environment features affected by the development is not feasible or necessary or where there is an opportunity to enhance understanding of those features through further investigation, 'preservation by record' may be acceptable. Such a record must be obtained by appropriate methods and must include all affected parts of the historic environment, including structural remains, earthworks, archaeological remains below ground and palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- 7.6 Where appropriate and where it does not adversely affect the protection and preservation of the historic environment, planning conditions will be imposed or planning agreements entered into, to enhance public appreciation and understanding, as part of the development proposals.

Design of Development

- 7.7 In the past, riverside development along the Croal has ignored the river corridor. Consequently, factory backs, storage yards and security fencing line many sections of the river corridors. All development proposed adjacent to the river corridor should therefore be designed to take account of its proximity to the river.
- 7.8 As water quality improves and public awareness of rivers increase, it will be necessary to focus development around the water environment. This can be done by relating the development to the river through siting and orientation. Choice of materials should also be in keeping with the natural environment. For example, developments could incorporate some form of planting within the development site itself to make spaces for nature within the river corridor.
- 7.9 New development should first consider the allocation of space along the Croal for the management and possible disposal of surface water through the use of sustainable drainage systems with multi-functional benefits that are part of a high quality green and blue water environment. Sustainable drainage features should provide multi-functional benefits as opposed to a reliance on underground conventional piped and tanked storage systems. Development with such SuDS features should consider the topography of the site to understand any naturally occurring flow paths and any low lying areas within the proposal where water will naturally accumulate.

Access

- 7.10 Access to the riverside at appropriate locations will be improved for all persons. Whilst it is accepted that constraints of ownership may prevent public access to some parts of river corridors, access should be improved wherever possible including the designation of a routes for pedestrians and cyclists. However, a balance needs to be struck between formalising access to the riverside, maintaining a more natural character to the river and safeguarding any sensitive sections of it.
- 7.11 The opportunity for safe access for all persons to the riverside should be of paramount importance to all developments and improvements. In general development should not restrict access to the riverside.
- 7.12 Access should be available to all people including those with disabilities and wheelchair users. However, it is accepted that wheelchair access may not be feasible in all cases. In some areas access should be restricted to prevent damage to the natural environment. In these cases the local community should be encouraged to be involved by perhaps providing viewing points and educational areas and diversion or diversity of routes.

Public Art

- 7.13 The Council encourages developers to think about the potential for public art within their site. Artworks should be used to reinforce the sense of place and a distinct

identity for the site. Amongst many possibilities, the flow of the River Croal through the site may offer opportunities to reflect its course in the treatment of areas of adjacent public realm. No art form will be favoured above another, but durability and long-term maintenance should be taken into consideration.

- 7.14 Any artworks should be considered an integral part of the development design rather than an add on. This can include either architectural or public realm design provided a recognised public artist is appointed as either the main or partner designer. It is essential that all commissioned works are unique, original, and of the highest quality.
- 7.15 Further detail in relation to the council's requirements for public art can be found within the Infrastructure and Planning Contributions SPD at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/planning-policy-strategy/supplementary-planning-documents/1>

8. Implementation and Delivery

- 8.1 As mentioned in paragraph 1.2 the council has, in consultation with key stakeholders, refreshed its Town Centre Strategy and created a £100 million investment fund to support delivery. This could be achieved by pump priming development of the public of public realm and river corridor with the aim of leveraging in further funding and investment to regenerate Bolton town centre and sustain its immediate future for the benefit of the wider Borough and its residents
- 8.2 Every attempt will be made to achieve any necessary land assembly and where it is not possible to secure control and ownership of land and property interests, the council will give due consideration to the use of its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers.
- 8.3 Council policies within this draft SPD will be taken into account for any development that has a potential impact on the River Croal as flows through Bolton Town Centre.

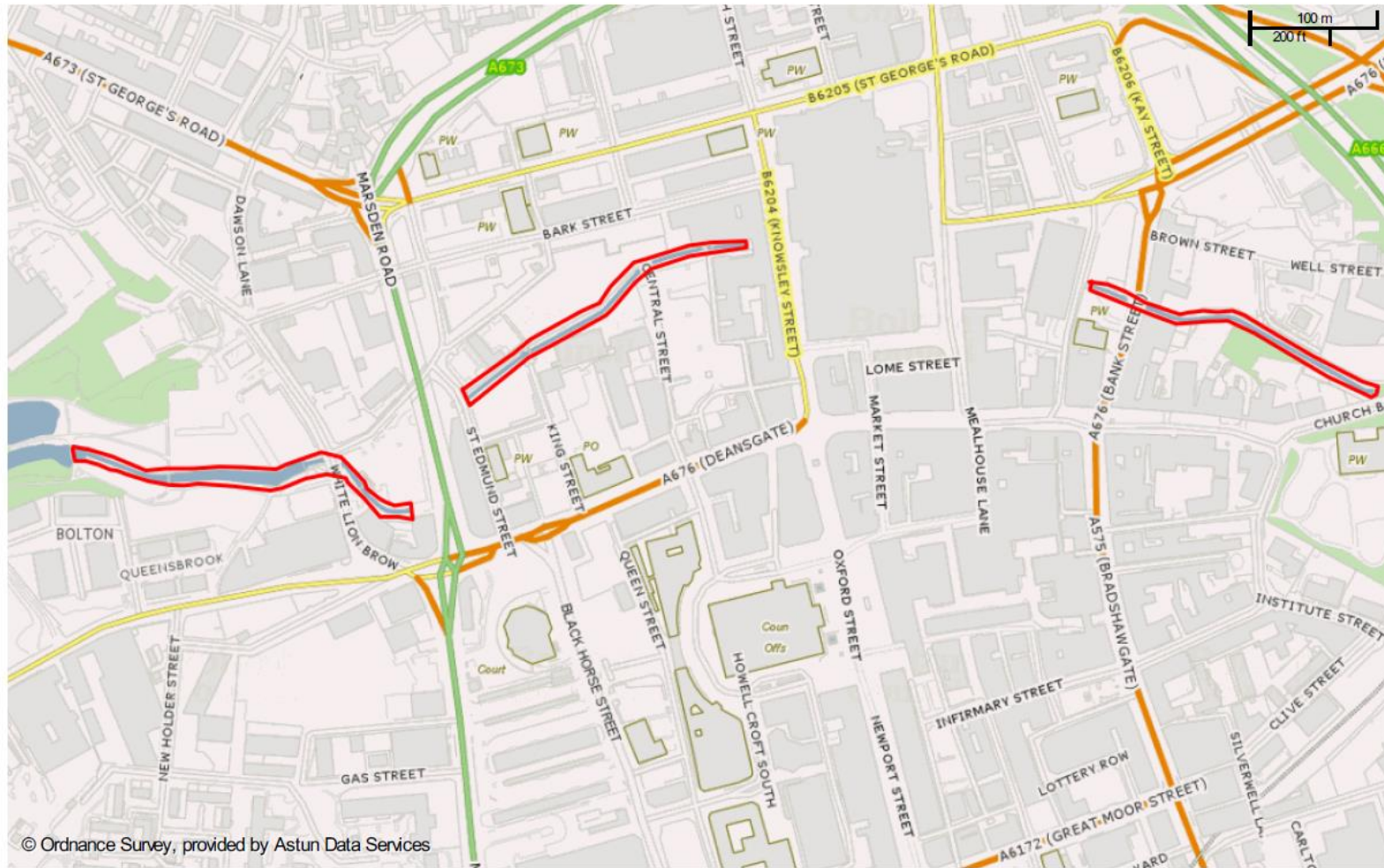
9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The key aim of the proposed opening up of the River Croal and associated environmental improvements is to bring about transformational change that maximises the impact of this untapped and under utilised town centre asset and the council's continuing investment in Bolton town centre.
- 9.2 Enhancing the River Croal is a key project to deliver the objectives of the Economic Strategy and the recently updated Town Centre Strategy to ensure Bolton remains 'Active, Connected and Prosperous' and the diversity of the town centre is significantly strengthened with the creation of spaces and places for people to meet, use and stay longer.

10. Monitoring and Review

- 10.1 The Council will monitor the significant effects of the SPD. The Council is required to produce an Authority Monitoring Report to assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies in local development documents are being achieved. The SPD will be included in this process.
- 10.2 The test of the effectiveness of the SPD will be whether the objective to see the River Croal opened up and renaturalised is achieved. The Council's Economic Development Team will monitor the number of bronze, silver and gold standard interventions along the river corridor. This information will be fed into the Authority Monitoring Report. If there is evidence that the SPD is failing to meet the overall objective, it will be reviewed.

Appendix 1 – Boundary of the River Croal SPD



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Draft River Croal SPD Boundary

Scale: 1:4000

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Bolton
Council

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