

The Altrincham Strategy (Consultation Draft)

Introduction

Altrincham has been a market town for more than 700 years and has a rich and varied history. Altrincham's historic market dates back to 1290 and there are a large number of buildings of architectural interest within the town centre. Altrincham is renowned for its outstanding schools, the quality of its residential offer and its proximity to both the Manchester City Region urban area and the Cheshire countryside. It benefits from an affluent catchment area and excellent connectivity by road and public transport.



In recent years town centres nationally have suffered from a combination of competition from out-of-centre retail destinations, the recent recession and economic downturn, the growth of internet shopping and a loss of unique identity and character. These pressures have had a negative impact on Altrincham which has seen a decline in the performance of its centre and retail offer. The Council and Altrincham Forward have recognised that Altrincham Town Centre can do more to maximise its potential and intervention is required to create a unique, attractive and vibrant centre.

The ambition is to create one of the best market towns in the country and make Altrincham the 'Modern Market Town'. Altrincham should be a town that residents and businesses can be proud of. It should be somewhere with a mix of retail, leisure, cultural, commercial and social provision meeting the day to day needs of local people and providing an attractive destination for visitors. The town centre



should be a vibrant place, with small independent businesses thriving alongside larger chains. It should be a destination where there is always something going on, with the historic Market at the heart of the town. Altrincham should be a place that successfully uses its heritage as the backdrop to a town for today.

Rationale for the Altrincham Strategy

The Altrincham Strategy will provide a coherent framework to assist in realising the opportunities which exist within Altrincham Town Centre over the next 10 years and support future formal planning guidance for the town.

The Strategy establishes a comprehensive vision for the town centre and provides a framework to support the delivery of development opportunities within Altrincham. It has been informed by a range of documents and activities including the Altrincham Forward Town Centre Action Plans, the Altrincham Town Centre Public Realm and

Movement Strategy, Conservation Area Appraisals and the adopted Trafford Core Strategy.

Structure of the Altrincham Strategy

- The Strategy Area
- Vision and Objectives
- Altrincham and its Assets
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Town Centre Quarters
- Development Opportunities
- Public Realm and Movement Strategy
- Delivering the Strategy

The Strategy Area

The Altrincham Strategy area, as shown in Figure 1 below, encompasses Altrincham Town Centre, as defined by the Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map as well as part of the Old Market Place Conservation Area, the area of commercial office floorspace to the north of the town centre, an area along Oakfield Road either side of Manor Road and a section of residential properties on New Street.

The Strategy area boundary reflects the current work of Altrincham Forward and the initial work undertaken in respect of the potential Business Neighbourhood Plan. The rationale for the boundary is to support increased economic activity within the town centre and improvements to its vitality and viability. It will help ensure that existing town centre uses are maintained, active uses are encouraged within the town's historic buildings and the implementation of proposed public realm improvements is supported.

The Strategy area is made up of a number of town centre 'quarters' and key development sites that will enable Altrincham Town Centre to capitalise on its assets and maximise its potential as a 'Modern Market Town'.

Figure 1: Altrincham Strategy Area



Vision and Objectives

The Vision

The vision for Altrincham Town Centre is as follows:

‘Altrincham will be a unique, attractive and vibrant Modern Market Town and an integral part of people’s everyday lives. It will have its own distinctive identity and be a place people can be proud of. The town centre will be an aspirational place with a wide variety of shops, cafes, bars restaurants, theatres, leisure, cultural and sports facilities alongside a quality residential offer.’

To achieve this Vision:

‘The town centre will be an attractive destination, accessible by foot, car, cycle and public transport, with routes that reflect its historic urban grain. High quality public realm and green infrastructure will link Altrincham’s key destinations effectively. The town centre will contain lively shopping streets where independent businesses thrive alongside national chains. The high street retailers will be consolidated in the existing retail heart with a new boutique quarter to the south of the primary shopping area. An enhanced market quarter will strengthen the role of one of Altrincham’s most important heritage assets and provide a focus for events. The town centre will be a high quality business location that encourages innovation with excellent connections, office space, business support and a strong local skills base. Altrincham’s employment areas will be well integrated with the rest of the town centre to provide effective linkages to retail and leisure facilities.

The town centre will celebrate its heritage assets and history whilst encouraging complementary new development. Altrincham will be a gateway to wider opportunities and a town centre to be proud of. It will be a place where local people regularly use its facilities; an historic place that successfully utilises its heritage assets as the backdrop to be a successful Modern Market Town’.

Objectives

The objectives of the Altrincham Strategy are to:

- bring forward development that realises the full potential of Altrincham Town Centre as a key economic driver and the Principal Town Centre in Trafford;
- support development opportunities for physical change;
- improve Altrincham’s retail offer and increase footfall in the town centre;
- promote and enhance Altrincham’s visitor and leisure offer;
- consolidate high street retailers within a defined retail core;
- place Altrincham Market and the surrounding areas at the heart of plans for the future of the town centre;
- provide opportunities for smaller independent town centre businesses and entrepreneurs;
- promote an increased town centre residential offer;
- deliver additional employment activity within the town centre and provide effective linkages between employment areas and other town centre uses;

- link key town centre destinations through high quality public realm, green infrastructure and improve pedestrian and cycle routes through the town centre;
- improve access by public transport, and maximise the benefits of Altrincham Interchange; and
- protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre, especially the Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

Altrincham and its Assets

Altrincham is Trafford's principal town centre and one of the Borough's key drivers of economic growth. It has a long tradition of serving local people with a good choice of shops and services. It contains a mix of high street and convenience retailers, independent shops, services and restaurants, residential properties and excellent access to local public transport and car parking. The town has an enviable built and cultural heritage and attractive period buildings, streets and squares.

It is a hub for small to medium sized businesses, particularly in the retail, finance and professional services sectors. Businesses are attracted by lower office rents than Manchester City Centre, Altrincham's good location and accessibility, an appealing lifestyle and the highly skilled local workforce. The town has a significantly higher proportion of senior, managerial and professional occupations than the national rate, as well as a higher rate of local entrepreneurs.

Altrincham has some of the highest educational standards in the UK, reflected in the strength of the town's primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form colleges. Trafford College, one of the top 8% of colleges in the UK and graded 'outstanding' for teaching and learning excellence, has a campus to the north of the town centre.

These key strengths provide a strong base for building on Altrincham's inherent identity and character, to create a town centre that will be the focal point for local people.

Altrincham's Assets

Altrincham Town Centre benefits from a number of key assets which provide the opportunity to deliver a new and revitalised Altrincham. These assets include:

- Unique historic character
- Accessibility by both road and public transport
- Compact and walkable town centre
- Well established destinations
- Strong independent retail sector
- Green assets and proximity to recreational attractions
- Local commitment and leadership

Historic Character

Altrincham is an historic market town and includes five Conservation Areas, with attractive and important historic buildings, streets and alleys/ginnels. The town centre includes a series of historic spaces, such as Old Market Place, Goose Green, and other areas of historic reference. Together these define Altrincham as a unique place, providing local interest and an inherent identity and character.



Accessibility

Altrincham Town Centre benefits from excellent road and public transport connections. The A56 and A560 provide connections from the wider motorway network. The Altrincham Interchange, located in the heart of the town centre, provides regular connections from destinations across Greater Manchester and beyond by bus, train and Manchester Metrolink.



A £19 million redevelopment of the Altrincham Interchange is now underway, and due to be completed by the end of 2014. These works will transform the interchange into a modern and fully accessible facility with improved linkages between different modes of transport and provide an attractive gateway to the town centre. The town centre provides over 4,700 car parking spaces with low car parking charges.

Compact and Walkable Town Centre

Altrincham is a compact and walkable town centre with strong linkages to surrounding residential areas. There is a wide range of retail, leisure, cultural and community destinations located within a 10 minute walk from the heart of the town, including Stamford Park and John Leigh Park.

Established Destinations

Altrincham Town Centre performs three primary roles acting as a retail centre, leisure destination and employment location. Within the town centre there are established zones for retail, commercial offices and leisure facilities. There are a number of established cultural destinations located within Altrincham and its immediate surrounds, providing a strong base from which to maximise its potential.

As the principal town centre in Trafford and one of the eight sub-regional town centres in Greater Manchester, Altrincham is an important shopping destination. There are a number of large anchor retail stores alongside a range of smaller independent retailers and the indoor and outdoor market. The majority of the national retail stores are located in the refurbished section of the Stamford Quarter. Two large supermarkets are situated towards the south eastern edge of the town centre.



The town centre contains a mix of leisure facilities with a cluster in the area to the east which include the ice rink, the cinema, Altrincham leisure centre and a health and fitness centre. In addition, there is a well-established and diverse evening economy with a mix of bars and restaurants, particularly at Goose Green, Greenwood Street and The Downs. The Garrick Theatre to the north of the town centre and Altrincham Little Theatre to the south also add to Altrincham's cultural offer.



Altrincham has an important role as an employment location with businesses attracted by the accessibility, facilities and quality of life. There are a number of local and regional businesses with offices in Altrincham, particularly to the north of the town centre.

Independent Retail Sector

The presence of a number of excellent independent retailers and other businesses within the town centre contributes significantly to the unique character and overall wellbeing of Altrincham. A thriving independent retail sector helps to attract visitors and supports other local businesses as the money spent in them is more likely to be re-circulated within the local economy. Altrincham has benefited from the opening of over 25 new independent businesses within the town centre over the last year.

Green Assets and Recreational Attractions

Altrincham is located adjacent to the Cheshire countryside. Stamford Park, John Leigh Park and Denzell Gardens provide attractive areas of public open space within close proximity to the heart of the town centre. The major recreational destinations of the Dunham Massey Estate and Bollin Valley Way are also located a short distance from the town centre.



Local Commitment and Leadership

There is strong commitment at the local level to deliver a revitalised town centre in Altrincham, address the key challenges that it faces and maximise the potential of its core assets. Altrincham Forward was established in 2011 to bring together the town's key stakeholders in a single partnership to drive forward change. Altrincham Forward is made up of: local traders; residents; major businesses; Altrincham & Sale Chamber of Commerce; Altrincham & Bowdon Civic Society and Trafford Council. This partnership approach, involving a wide range of individuals and organisations, will help to realise the opportunity to deliver a new Altrincham.

In September 2013 Altrincham Forward recommended that a Business Neighbourhood Plan for Altrincham Town Centre be produced. The Altrincham Strategy will act as part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Challenges and Opportunities

National Economy

As a consequence of the recent recession, levels of retail expenditure growth have declined. This has had a knock on effect on investor and developer confidence with a number of town centre development schemes across the country either cancelled or put on hold. There has been a squeeze on growth in consumer expenditure creating tough trading conditions for retailers and other town centre businesses.

Numerous high-profile retailers have gone out of business or into administration in the last few years including Woolworths, HMV, Adams, MFI, Zavvi, Borders and TJ Hughes. In response to declining sales other retailers have closed some stores to rationalise their portfolio or reduced previous expansion plans. Furthermore numerous town centres across the country have witnessed an increase in vacancies, the loss of anchor stores and a decline in town centre development.

The residential property market has witnessed significant change following a peak in 2007. The UK housing market underwent a period of significant downturn following the recession. The decline in residential property values was exacerbated by the decrease in the availability of mortgage finance and other economic uncertainties which destabilised the market. In 2013 the residential market has started to show signs of recovery with a 4.2% increase in average house price growth nationally, however this has largely been driven by London and the South East with a more modest increase of 0.5% for the North West.

Current Town Centre Performance

Altrincham Town Centre includes approximately 400 ground floor units and over 80,000 sq.m of retail floorspace. In September 2013 there were 87 vacant town centre units, excluding sites earmarked for redevelopment. This equates to a vacancy rate of 21%. There are a number of large vacant units in prominent locations including the former JJB and New Look stores. In Altrincham Town Centre 65% of the retail and leisure operators are independents. This compares to an average of 46% in the North West and at national level¹.

Nationally retail rental levels and yields have been adversely affected by a combination of the poor performance of retailers, a decline in consumer spending power and limited access to investment capital. Altrincham Town Centre has experienced similar pressures to other town centres as a consequence of the recent recession and national trends affecting the retail market. Consequently the town centre retail property market is in a period of transition.

Whilst the local catchment area is relatively affluent, the retail performance of the town centre has suffered due to strong competition from other destinations, particularly Manchester City Centre and the Trafford Centre, alongside changes to the national retail market including the growth of internet shopping. Without continued intervention to provide a more attractive and competitive retail offer it is

¹ Springboard, January 2013

likely that retail expenditure and investment will be increasingly attracted to other centres.

The detailed analysis in the Altrincham Town Centre Assessment (DTZ, 2011) report forecast spending capacity to support up to 3,100 sq.m gross new floorspace within the Altrincham catchment over the next 10 years. There is capacity to support new and refurbished comparison retail development in the town centre of up to 23,300 sq.m gross new floorspace to 2021.

Despite the negative impact of the recent recession there are potentially some longer term benefits to the retail market in town centres such as Altrincham. It is unlikely that growth in consumer expenditure will reach the levels which supported many of the large scale retail developments of the last decade for the foreseeable future. As a consequence there may be a shift from large scale city/town centre developments to smaller schemes containing a range of retailers and other uses that are more deliverable in this restrained market.

Altrincham Office Market

Altrincham is part of the South Manchester office market². Altrincham's key strengths in its office market relate to the quality of economic activity located in the centre and the relatively strong performance of the private sector knowledge based and creative industry employment sectors. Altrincham Town Centre is perceived to be a location of choice for higher skilled office based activity, particularly professional and financial services due to its excellent connectivity.



The town centre contains in the region of 110,000 sq.m office floorspace³. A total of some 844 sq.m office floorspace was let within Altrincham Town Centre in 2012⁴, the lowest office floorspace take up figure recorded in the last five years. A survey carried out in July 2012 by Trafford Council identified approximately 11,000 sq.m vacant office floorspace within Altrincham Town Centre.

Recent trends across the South Manchester office market have shown a move towards out of centre office locations, in line with national trends. Altrincham Town Centre is not immune to these pressures and market share has been lost to out of centre business parks. Furthermore localised congestion within the town centre has been identified as providing an additional constraint to expanding the office offer.

Whilst the current market for office floorspace is relatively flat an increase in the amount of office floorspace in the town centre would help to support and enhance the town centre offer. Any future demand for offices in Altrincham is likely to come from knowledge based and creative industries requiring Grade A office floorspace.

² The South Manchester office market comprises Alderley Edge, Altrincham, Cheadle, Didsbury, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Poynton, Sale, Stockport and Wilmslow

³ GM Town Centres Review (Drivas Jonas, April 2009)

⁴ Focus Costar, March 2013

Altrincham Residential Property Market

The Altrincham residential property market has historically been very strong and is made up of a large proportion of owner occupiers. House prices are above the borough, regional and national averages.

Average house prices within Altrincham are in the region of £300,000. However, house prices are more affordable when compared to areas immediately to the south such as Bowdon and Hale where average prices are in excess of £400,000.

Whilst Altrincham and the surrounding area comprises a highly sought after residential area, historically the town centre market has performed less well, although there have been some recent residential developments. This is in part due to a limited number of sites coming forward for higher quality homes within the town centre.



Public Realm and Movement



In order to be successful, town centres need good quality streets and spaces. Delivering enhancements to the public realm and improving accessibility within Altrincham Town Centre is identified as a key priority. To facilitate this change a Public Realm and Movement Strategy was commissioned by Altrincham Forward in 2012.

The existing public realm suffers from a fragmentation of key areas and a lack of any sense of arrival at gateways into the town centre. The provision of attractive town centre gateways and safe, efficient and attractive routes is essential to the future success of Altrincham Town Centre. The majority of the existing footways are along busy roads and in pedestrianised areas they are perceived as being unsafe and hostile when the retail units are closed. There is a perception that walking distances are long due to the lack of animation in the streetscape. Furthermore the public realm does not provide sufficient flexibility to allow activity to spill out onto key streets. There are a number of historic spaces within the town centre which have been undermined by vehicular movement and historic ginnels and features are not used to maximum effect.

Altrincham Town Centre has excellent connections to the rest of Trafford and the wider sub-region by road and public transport. The Altrincham Interchange, which is currently undergoing a major redevelopment, is the main arrival point for public

transport users and facilitates access to buses, trains and the Manchester Metrolink. The town centre is served by approximately 4,700 public car parking spaces, of which 2,650 are off street.

The Public Realm and Movement Strategy identifies the interventions required to make Altrincham an attractive town centre which is accessible by foot, car, cycle and public transport.

Altrincham's Heritage

The Altrincham Strategy is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content in relation to architectural and historic assets within the town centre. In relation to these matters, particularly within the five Conservation Areas of George Street; Goose Green; The Old Market Place; The Downs and; Stamford New Road, reference will need to be made to the emerging Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans together with the Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map and the Trafford Core Strategy.



Altrincham has a number of buildings and frontages which play an important part in the town's heritage, not all of which are formally listed. The Conservation Area Appraisals detail the buildings and frontages which make a positive contribution to the conservation areas. These properties and frontages include: properties in the Old Market Place; properties along Market Street;

Stamford New Road; The Downs; Oxford Road; the original buildings within Goose Green; The Bricklayers Arms; Altrincham Station and the Clock Tower. The Conservation Area Appraisals not only identify positive aspects within the conservation areas, but also they identify those areas which currently display negative aspects including land at Greenwood Street, Central Way, Lloyd Square and Back Grafton Street.

Currently a number of individual structures (including buildings and boundary walls) are demonstrating levels of decay and dereliction. In some areas of the town centre, intrusive modern additions and alterations to historic structures have had negative impacts on historic assets in the town. The desirability of retaining historic character, architectural detail such as the painting of stonework, roof lines and door and window details, should be balanced with the need to adapt properties to meet modern requirements.

Key views and vistas also play an important role in Altrincham's heritage. The conservation area appraisals detail these which include:

- along Market Street;
- into and out of the Old Market Place;
- into and within Goose Green;
- along George Street;
- along Stamford New Road and Railway Street; and
- along The Downs towards Railway Street.

The management plans will provide policy guidance to address the threats highlighted in the appraisals including policies relating to public realm, traffic management and green infrastructure. New development within Altrincham Town Centre should be of a high quality and reflect the design aesthetics and/or the historic character of the area.

Town Centre Quarters

Market Quarter



The Market Quarter contains the Grade II listed Market House and outdoor Market area. Whilst Altrincham Market Hall is recognised as a key asset within the town centre, the market currently underperforms. The area also contains a number of other heritage assets, such as the Hospital site on Central Way and Shaws Road along with Altrincham Town Hall.

The Market Quarter will form a new heart for the town centre with new public spaces acting as a focus for events.

Anchor Retail Quarter

The main shopping area in Altrincham is the Stamford Quarter and George Street. This area will act as the Anchor Retail Quarter, functioning as the retail heart of the town centre. Although shopping habits and the future form and content of these streets may change, it is proposed that comparison retail uses will continue to dominate Stamford Quarter and the northern end of George Street and their offer will strengthen as the town continues to revitalise.



Boutique Quarter



The Boutique Quarter is centred along the southern end of George Street, Greenwood Street and Stamford New Road. The consolidation of the high street retail offer into the Anchor Retail Quarter will provide opportunities to encourage small independent retailers alongside cafes and bars in this area.

It is proposed to bring in activity beyond the traditional 9 to 5 shopping hours, encourage new investment into residential, leisure and office development and secure an improved street environment. New uses will be encouraged in some of the vacant shop units in the town centre which will give people several reasons to visit Altrincham.

Leisure Quarter



The Leisure Quarter in the east of the town centre contains a number of existing leisure facilities including the ice rink, leisure centre, cinema and a health and fitness centre. These uses are currently poorly connected to the rest of the town centre due to a combination of the severance caused

by the railway line, major roads and poor public realm. New green infrastructure will improve linkages between these leisure destinations and the rest of the town centre.

Evening Economy Quarter

Altrincham's evening economy is largely focused around The Downs, Goose Green, Regent Road and Greenwood Street. These areas already contain a mix of restaurants, bars and jazz clubs. This will form Altrincham's Evening Economy Quarter. The focus for this area will be on providing an attractive and vibrant physical environment for these uses to flourish with a public realm that improves pedestrian movements and encourages activity to spill out into the street.



The Evening Economy Quarter should also link effectively with the Market Quarter and Boutique Quarter where there are complementary uses.

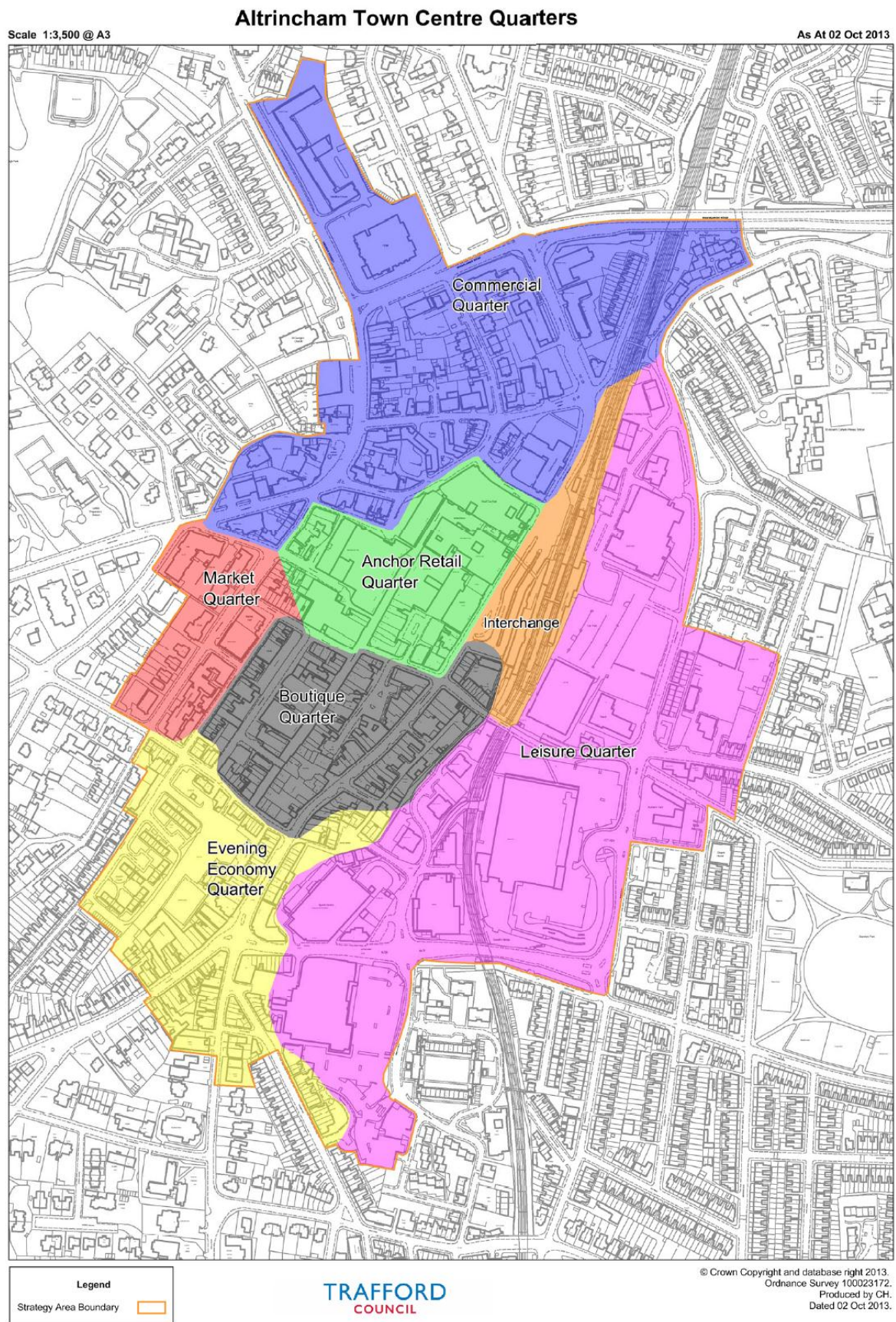
Commercial Quarter



The town centre plays an important role as an employment location with occupiers attracted by Altrincham's accessibility, facilities and quality of life. The Commercial Quarter to the north of the town centre comprises the land bounded by Church Street, Woodlands Road and Grosvenor Road and contains the main concentration of office floorspace within

Altrincham. This area needs to integrate more effectively with the wider town centre and provide customers to support the retail and leisure offer within Altrincham. It also has the potential to offer scope for additional residential development.

Figure 2: Altrincham Quarters



Development Opportunities

The following key development opportunity sites have been identified where there is potential for intervention or new development to help address identified challenges and meet the vision and objectives for Altrincham Town Centre.

Market Quarter

The historic Market House and outdoor market area offer the potential to create a new heart for Altrincham Town Centre. A new public space will be created to offer a focus for events.

The first phase in the creation of the Market Quarter will be the refurbishment of the Grade II Listed Market House and the covered market alongside improvements to the Lower Market Place area. The Council leased the market to a new commercial operator in Autumn 2013 to support its transformation as part of a vibrant new Market Quarter.



On completion of the new Altrincham Hospital facility at Railway Street, the current hospital site on Market Street will become vacant. This will enable the redevelopment of this site by Citybranch for a mixed use scheme, including the relocation of Altrincham Library from Stamford New Road, forming part of the new Market Quarter.



Altair

The Altair site is a development opportunity located on one of the key approaches to the town centre by car and adjacent to the Altrincham Interchange. It is situated in a part of the town centre currently dominated by large retail and leisure units.

The site is identified in the Core Strategy for a mixed use development. The Council is currently working with Nikal to bring forward development of the Altair site. An outline planning application was submitted to the Council in September 2013 for a £70m mixed use development. The proposed development will support the development of the Leisure Quarter in the town centre, anchored by an ice rink and leisure facility with supporting restaurant and café uses.

Stamford Quarter

The first phases of the Stamford Quarter redevelopment have now been completed and contain the majority of the town centre's national retailers and a 700 space car park. A proposed future phase could include the redevelopment of the frontage along Stamford New Road to provide active uses. The delivery of this redevelopment would vastly improve the first impression of the town centre that many visitors experience when arriving from the Altrincham Interchange, a key gateway into Altrincham. There is potential to deliver new residential development above ground floor retail uses at the Stamford Quarter. The later phases of the development will encompass improvements to the public realm along George Street, including new street furniture.



Grafton Centre

The Grafton Centre is Altrincham's other main shopping centre and provides an opportunity for a town centre offer that is complementary to Altrincham's retail heart and includes a wider mix of uses. The centre has recently been refurbished for a range of retail, food and leisure businesses. A 91 room Travelodge hotel was completed in the existing office tower in 2012 as part of the scheme.

Altrincham Hospital

Development of the new £17m Altrincham Hospital facility on Railway Street started on site in 2013. The site is being delivered by Pochin Property in partnership with Citybranch and Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The completed development will comprise a new hospital facility including a minor injuries unit, out-patient consultation and treatment rooms, physiotherapy, X-ray, ultrasound and blood testing services. The redevelopment of this site will facilitate the refurbishment and redevelopment of another key development opportunity in the town centre, the current hospital site on Market Street. The project is due to complete in early 2015.



Altrincham Interchange



The Altrincham Interchange has been recognised as requiring major improvement if it is to function effectively. As one of the main gateways to the town centre, the Altrincham Interchange should be a focal point in the town centre. Its transformation will make visiting or working in Altrincham an even more attractive proposition.

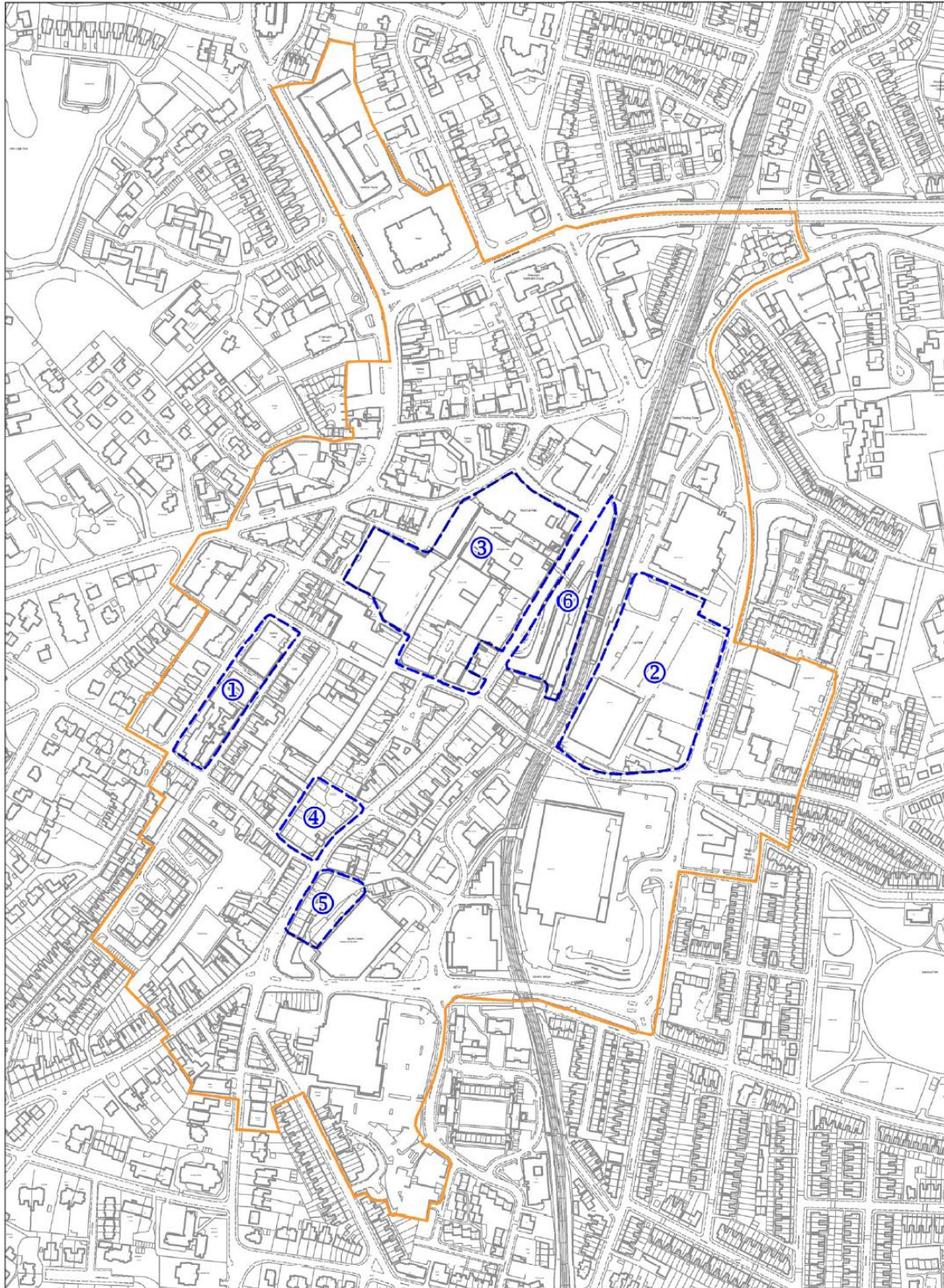
Transport for Greater Manchester commenced work on the new £19m Altrincham Interchange facility in 2013 with the demolition of the existing bus station commencing in July 2013. The key objective of the new Interchange will be to create a modern, integrated facility which is fully accessible, efficient, and sustainable. The new Interchange will open at the end of 2014.

Figure 3: Development Opportunities

Altrincham Development Opportunities

Scale 1:3,500 @ A3

As At 02 Oct 2013



Legend	
Strategy Area Boundary	
Development Opportunities:	
1 - Altrincham Market	3 - Stamford Quarter
2 - Altair	4 - Grafton Centre
	5 - Railway Street
	6 - Altrincham Interchange

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Dated 02 Oct 2013.

Public Realm and Movement Improvements

Altrincham Forward and Trafford Council commissioned a Public Realm and Movement Strategy for the town centre in 2012. The Strategy proposes a series of public realm improvements to create places for people to dwell and to bring activity to areas that are currently lifeless. Enhanced gateways will mark the arrival into the town centre with visual connections between Altrincham's professional areas and the town centre. The de-cluttering of the street scene, distinctive materials, planting or artwork, widening of footpaths, use of historic ginnels and creation of active frontages at key destinations will help enhance pedestrian connectivity across the town centre whilst building on Altrincham's unique character.

Vehicular Movement

The imbalance between pedestrians and vehicles at key junctions will be addressed. The re-balancing of streets will enable the existing network of streets and ginnels through the town centre to function more effectively. Movement will be re-introduced into areas of the town centre that have become sterile and lifeless during certain times of the day/night. Cycle hubs and cycle parking facilities will be provided at key locations within a cycle friendly town centre core.

Shared spaces will be introduced on key streets where both vehicles and pedestrians will have equal priority and a single surface will be encouraged. The key junctions where this will be promoted are:

- Railway Street/Lloyd Street/The Downs
- Regent Road/Stamford New Road Junction
- Stamford New Road/Moss Lane/Cross Street Junction
- Old Market Place

In order to stimulate the performance of shops, bars and restaurants (including the evening economy) and to reduce unnecessary car journeys controlled vehicular movements will be introduced in parts of the following locations:

- Market Street/Shaws Road/Greenwood Street/Central Way
- George Street/Cross Street

Pedestrian Movement

The creation of a series of outer gateways will direct people to key destinations. Within the town centre the focus should be on the activity of the streets and spaces, rather than vehicular movement. Safe, efficient and attractive routes from the new Altrincham Interchange to the rest of the town centre will help maximise the potential of this facility. The improvements will also deliver improved traffic flows throughout the town centre with vehicle speeds reduced on key roads.

Some streets in the town centre will become pedestrian priority streets. This will result in behavioural change, with drivers being encouraged to drive more slowly and be more aware of other street users, with most vulnerable users having priority across the spaces wherever possible.

Implementing the Public Realm and Movement Strategy

Following the completion of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy in early 2013, an implementation strategy for short and medium term projects has been prepared alongside further design work for the identified priority projects. The Implementation Strategy identifies the ten key street and space public realm projects for Altrincham and sets out strategic programming, outline costing, and project prioritisation.

The two priority projects within the Public Realm and Movement Strategy are the Stamford New Road-Railway Street and Moss Lane-Cross Street-Shaw's Road routes. The Lower Market Place is also identified for improvement, linked to the delivery of the wider Market Quarter scheme. The delivery of these projects will be fundamental to the future success of Altrincham Town Centre and they interface with the committed development projects of the Altrincham Interchange, Altrincham Hospital and the Market Quarter. Delivery of the priority projects will start on site in Spring 2014, whilst initial works to the Lower Market Place will complete in December 2013.

The design work that has been completed for the implementation of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy is summarised in Appendix One.

Delivering the Strategy

Governance

Altrincham Forward is responsible for spearheading the revitalisation of Altrincham. It brings together people who can influence positive change to ensure that Altrincham addresses its problems and fulfils its potential. The Board is supported by officers from Trafford Council, the Altrincham Town Team and a range of associates who bring expertise in the development of specific projects.

The Altrincham Town Team has been established to provide a coordinating role for the activities involved in the revitalisation of the town centre and is working with the community and partners across a wide range of organisations to deliver a joined-up and cohesive programme of support.

Altrincham Forward has agreed to pursue the preparation of a Business Neighbourhood Plan for Altrincham. In the first instance a Shadow Neighbourhood Forum will be established, building on the Altrincham Forward organisation. This Shadow Forum will be responsible for the finalising the Neighbourhood Plan Area and Neighbourhood Forum for submission to the Council for consultation prior to its formal designation.

Working with Partners

The successful delivery of the vision for Altrincham Town Centre will be dependent on effective partnership working. The partnership approach of Altrincham Forward working collaboratively with the community, businesses, landowners, developers, investors, retailers and residents is already delivering positive change at a number of key development sites. These sites include Altrincham Hospital, the Altrincham Interchange, Altair and Altrincham Market.

Key Actions for 2013/14

The following key actions have been identified for the period 2013/14:

- Consultation has been undertaken on plans to implement further public realm improvements in 2014.
- An initial phase of the public realm improvements commenced in September 2013 at the Lower Market Place area.
- The transfer of the Market to a new commercial operator will complete in the autumn 2013, with an investment programme to transform the Grade II Listed Market House being commenced by April 2014 as part of the new Market Quarter.
- An Investment Pack for Altrincham will be launched in spring 2014 to support landlords and agents in attracting new operators to the town.
- A funding package to deliver a Fab Lab facility in the town centre will be prepared with a target launch in 2014.
- Transport for Greater Manchester will deliver the new Altrincham Interchange for the end of 2014.

- Work will be undertaken with Citybranch to advance plans for the current hospital site as part of the Market Quarter redevelopment for implementation once the current hospital vacates in 2015.
- The Landlords Forum will continue to be supported to promote the exchange of ideas and sharing best practice in support of the regeneration of the town.

Phasing Plan

The next five years will see the delivery of significant regeneration with a number of physical projects delivered in Altrincham Town Centre.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Completion of new Altrincham Interchange	■	■			
Completion of new Altrincham Hospital	■	■	■		
Public Realm Works (Lower Market Place)		■			
Refurbishment of Market House and Covered Market		■			
Public Realm Works (Priority Projects)		■	■		
Development of the Altair Scheme		■	■	■	■
Completion of new Altrincham Library			■	■	
Redevelopment of the Old Hospital Site			■	■	

The successful delivery of these key projects will contribute to the achievement of the vision and primary objective to make Altrincham a thriving and successful destination and create the 'Modern Market Town'.

Appendix One: Public Realm Works Outline Design

Outline design work was completed in Autumn 2013 in relation to the delivery of the two priority projects within the Public Realm and Movement Strategy, the Stamford New Road-Railway Street and Moss Lane-Cross Street-Shaw's Road routes. Outline design work has also been completed in relation to the Lower Market Place which is identified for improvements linked to the delivery of the wider Market Quarter scheme.

Stamford New Road/Railway Street

The Downs junction should be a key gateway to Altrincham Town Centre. The junction is currently dominated by vehicular movement with traffic flows constrained by traffic lights. The pedestrian environment is poor and the junction provides no sense of arrival in the town centre.

Shared space will be introduced at this junction to re-balance pedestrian and vehicular movement. Traffic flows at the junction will be improved by the removal of traffic lights and through traffic will be discouraged from continuing onto Railway Street/Stamford New Road and will be directed onto Lloyd Street/Oakfield Road. The area available for pedestrians will be increased and the quantum of street clutter reduced.



Existing traffic flows along Railway Street/Stamford New Road create a physical and visual barrier to pedestrian movements and have a negative impact on the town centre environment. A large number of vehicle journeys along this route would be better served by the strategic network because they are through traffic rather than users of the town centre. Movement will be re-balanced through the creation of a shared surface street where both vehicles and pedestrians have equal priority. Along Railway Street and Stamford New Road a running strip will be designed to separate vehicle lanes. Semi-mature trees will be planted to give the streetscape definition while also adding character. Courtesy crossing points will be provided to encourage effective circulation of pedestrians. Local businesses will be supported through the provision of on-street parking and areas for loading. The works will enable the new Altrincham Hospital development and Altrincham Interchange to be integrated into the public realm improvements and linked effectively to the wider town centre.



Moss Lane/Cross Street/Shaw's Road

The existing Moss Lane Junction with Stamford New Road forms a visual and physical barrier to pedestrian access. A pedestrian friendly environment will be created at the junction which will become a shared surface junction with more user friendly crossing points, indicated by a change in surface material, increasing pedestrian flow and movement.



Cross Street and Shaw's Road will be pedestrian priority streets over vehicles with drivers encouraged to be more aware of other users. The quantum of street clutter will be reduced and spaces will be provided for activity to spill out onto the street creating an environment that supports a café culture in the heart of the town centre. The improvements to the Moss Lane/Cross Street/Shaw's Road route will provide an effective linkage between the Market Quarter, the Leisure Quarter / Altair development and Altrincham Interchange.

Lower Market Place

Initial work to transform the Lower Market Place on Central Way into a new contemporary shared space commenced in September 2013. New lock up market units and a canopy will be provided at the site. Central Way will be closed to traffic on market days. An enhanced link will be provided to Greenwood Street and the wider Market Quarter, supporting the wider aspirations for the transformation of this area.

