



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

Stretford Town Centre Masterplan

May 2013
(Final Draft)

Stretford Town Centre Masterplan (Final Draft)

Introduction

Many town centres nationally have suffered in recent years due to the pressures of out of town retail, internet shopping, the global economic recession and the lack of a distinctive offer. Stretford has not been immune from these pressures and it is recognised that we need to do more in order to make Stretford Town Centre a unique and attractive destination of choice.

Stretford benefits from a strong community spirit and at its heart is a town centre serving local people; however there remain significant challenges. In order to realise its potential we need to address these key challenges and maximise the contribution made by existing assets.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres is a priority of Trafford Council and we are committed to ensuring that local people are able to shop, eat, drink, relax and access key services within their town centre. Delivering the successful regeneration of Stretford Town Centre is therefore considered to be a key priority for the Council. The Stretford Town Centre Masterplan seeks to establish a comprehensive vision for the town centre, identify areas for future development and key actions required to deliver this change and growth. The Masterplan represents a significant step forward for the Council in securing the revitalisation of Stretford Town Centre.

Stretford Town Centre

Stretford is one of Trafford's town centres and a key driver in the economic growth of the Borough. Stretford Town Centre is located in a prominent position along the A56 corridor at the northern end of Trafford and benefits from links to the M60, good public transport links and access to the Bridgewater Canal. Victoria Park is located close to the town centre and provides access to an area of attractive green space.

Until the 1960s the town centre contained a wide range of retail, leisure and entertainment facilities within a conventional suburban neighbourhood. In the late 1960s and early 1970s significant development took place in the area with the widening of the A56 to six lanes and the completion of the Arndale Centre, a covered shopping centre now known as Stretford Mall. The core of the town centre area is

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now dominated by Stretford Mall. The mix of leisure and family entertainment uses has diminished over the years and there is no functioning evening economy in the town centre to provide for local people or visitors, furthermore there is no life or vitality in the centre after Stretford Mall closes. There are a number of office uses including Trafford Housing Trust, JobCentre Plus, Connexions and a mix of professional services. Trafford Council currently has office floorspace within Stretford Public Hall, although the future use of these premises is subject to review. A number of other important community facilities are located in the area, including the public library and health centre.

Purpose of the Masterplan

There is a clearly recognised need to improve the offer of Stretford Town Centre which is identified in the Trafford Core Strategy as a location for regeneration and change. The Trafford Retail and Leisure Study (2007) stated that Stretford Town Centre is “*in need of urgent improvements*”. The Retail and Leisure Study identified potential for future retail growth and an improvement in the evening economy focused on the food and drink offer and family orientated leisure facilities.

Delivering the successful regeneration of Stretford Town Centre is considered to be a key priority for the Council. In order to deliver the change and growth sought it will be necessary to consider how this location can maximise the opportunities of its key assets, link key spaces together and create a strong and attractive destination of choice meeting the needs of the community.

The intention is that the Stretford Town Centre Masterplan will provide a coherent framework for the Council, property owners, prospective developers, existing occupiers and community stakeholders which will assist in realising the opportunities which exist within the Masterplan area over the next 10-15 years. The ambition is to secure the revitalisation of Stretford Town Centre and create a unique town centre that is a destination of choice for local people to shop, eat, drink, relax and access key services.

Structure of the Masterplan

- Vision and Objectives
- Policy Drivers
- Masterplan Area
- Challenges and Opportunities
- Potential Projects
- Design and Sustainability

Vision and Objectives

Vision

The vision for the Stretford Town Centre is as follows:

'To create, within the Stretford Town Centre Masterplan area, a prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe destination that provides facilities throughout the day and evening to meet the needs of the community whilst maximising the opportunities provided by its key assets'.

To achieve this Vision:

'The Stretford Town Centre Masterplan area will deliver a strong sense of place with a thriving retail and leisure offer alongside new employment and residential development. There will be a clear and distinctive identity taking advantage of its listed buildings, covered shopping centre facilities and access to environmental assets including Victoria Park and the Bridgewater Canal. The town centre will also be highly accessible with excellent public transport links and attractive pedestrian and cycle routes.

There will be a balance of independent retailers alongside national chains in an attractive shopping environment. The Masterplan area will include a range of restaurant and café uses alongside family orientated entertainment activities contributing to a vibrant evening economy. The area will contain a wide range of high quality community facilities including a library and health centre that meet the needs of local residents and support activity within the town centre. It will provide opportunities for those attending major cultural and leisure attractions in the surrounding area to visit and stay within the Masterplan area'.

Objectives

The primary objective of the Masterplan is to secure the successful regeneration of Stretford Town Centre and provide a prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe destination. In summary the objectives of the Masterplan are to:

- bring forward development that realises the full potential of Stretford Town Centre and the surrounding area;
- create a strong sense of place within the town centre;
- improve key gateways;
- develop unused, under used or derelict land for a mix of uses;
- promote the refurbishment, enhancement and reuse of historic buildings such as the Essoldo Cinema and Stretford Public Hall;
- enhance the retail, leisure and services offer in the town centre, particularly the evening economy;
- deliver additional employment activity within the town centre;
- provide residential development and a better balance in housing types;
- attract visitors using major cultural and leisure attractions in the surrounding area to Stretford Town Centre;
- maximise the role of recreational assets and green space including the Bridgewater Canal, Trans Pennine Trail and Victoria Park;
- deliver environmentally sustainable development;
- provide clear signage throughout Stretford Town Centre;
- address poor air quality and congestion along the A56;
- improve pedestrian and cycle routes through the area and access by public transport;
- create a safe and secure town centre where crime and anti-social behaviour is actively discouraged and reduced;
- reduce economic deprivation within the surrounding area; and
- ensure the town centre fulfils its role as a vibrant social hub for the whole community.

Policy Drivers

The Stretford Town Centre Masterplan will support the delivery of key elements of national and local planning policy. This section provides a brief summary of the key planning policy documents and how they relate to the Masterplan.

National Planning Policy Framework

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Town centres are recognised by the NPPF as being at the heart of communities and planning policies should support their viability and vitality, promote competitive town centres, and provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer reflecting the individuality of town centres. The NPPF requires that local planning authorities 'positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area' and develop positive planning policies to promote competitive town centre environments. Where town centres are identified as being in decline, local planning authorities should plan positively for their future to encourage economic activity.

Trafford Core Strategy

The successful implementation of the Stretford Town Centre Masterplan will support the delivery of the adopted Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (2012). The Core Strategy sets eight Strategic Objectives for the Borough as a whole and 23 specific Place Objectives for Stretford. Stretford Town Centre is identified in the Core Strategy as a location for regeneration and change over the plan period.

Core Strategy Policy W2.4 states that Stretford Town Centre will be a focus for the consolidation and improvement of the convenience and comparison retail offer, as well as diversification to other uses such as offices, services, leisure, cultural and residential, as appropriate. Core Strategy Policy W2.6 identified the following actions for the successful delivery of regeneration in Stretford Town Centre:

- *New/improved retail floorspace to enhance the offer of the town centre, in particular within Stretford Mall and its immediate vicinity;*
- *New/updated commercial office accommodation and family oriented leisure facilities;*
- *New residential (apartment and family) accommodation (minimum of 250 units);*

- *Public realm enhancements and accessibility improvements around the A56 Chester Road – A5145 Edge Lane / Kingsway junction and between the town centre and the Metrolink station; and*
- *Securing the active reuse and preservation of the Essoldo building.*

Draft Trafford Land Allocations Plan

The Council is currently preparing the Trafford Local Plan: Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) which will provide detailed, site specific guidance for allocated sites and will be accompanied by a new Policies Map. It will supersede the majority of the remaining Policies and Proposals of the Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The boundaries of the town, district and local centres, including Stretford Town Centre, are identified in the Revised Trafford UDP and will be reviewed along with the identification of the primary shopping areas through the Land Allocations DPD. The Masterplan will feed into and support the designated policy areas and site allocations for Stretford Town Centre and adjacent area in the Land Allocations DPD.

The initial consultation document, the Trafford Local Plan: Land Allocations – "Shaping the Plan" (August 2012), identified the following key land issues for Stretford:

- To maintain a vibrant town centre;
- To maximise opportunities for the re-use of land; and
- To maximise opportunities for recreation, including the potential of the Bridgewater Canal.

SPD2: A56 Corridor Development Guidelines

The A56 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out how the Council will enable improvements and reduce congestion along this important sub-regional transportation corridor through the provision of guidance to landowners, developers, architects, engineers, planners and other stakeholders. The SPD also provides guidance on how improvements will be implemented through such measures as planning applications, planning enforcement, development briefs and developer contributions.

The SPD identifies opportunity areas including Chester Road, Stretford, which are in need of improvement either through cleaning, landscaping or redevelopment. The Essoldo Cinema is identified as one of the major opportunity sites for intervention. The SPD also includes general guidance for new development to ensure it enhances the townscape along the A56 and identifies measures to improve road safety and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and the disabled. The Chester Road and

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Edge Lane junction is specifically identified as one of the gateways along the A56. Further guidance is provided on making the use of the A56 more environmentally sustainable including improving air quality, tree planting, and the linkage of greenspaces.

Trafford Vision 2021

The Trafford Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy sets the vision for Trafford by 2021, including its town centres and their importance for local people and the Borough. The priority outcomes include:

- A balanced mix of residential, retail, commercial, leisure and food and drink uses in Trafford's town centres;
- More jobs and wealth created locally;
- Plenty of high quality businesses in well served locations for both new and expanding businesses and major relocations;
- More jobs and wealth created locally, particularly in the growth sectors;
- People feel a sense of belonging and involvement in their neighbourhood;
- More new homes and more affordable homes built on previously developed land;
- Public spaces, countryside and streetscape that are easily accessible to all, attractive and well managed for residents and wildlife and well used by residents; and
- More people using accessible public transport, walking and cycling.

Masterplan Area

The Boundary

The Masterplan area boundary, as shown in Figure 1 below, encompasses Stretford Town Centre, as defined by the Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map, in addition to a section of the Bridgewater Canal and key gateway sites at Chester Road, Edge Lane and Kingsway.

Three options for the Masterplan area boundary have been considered:

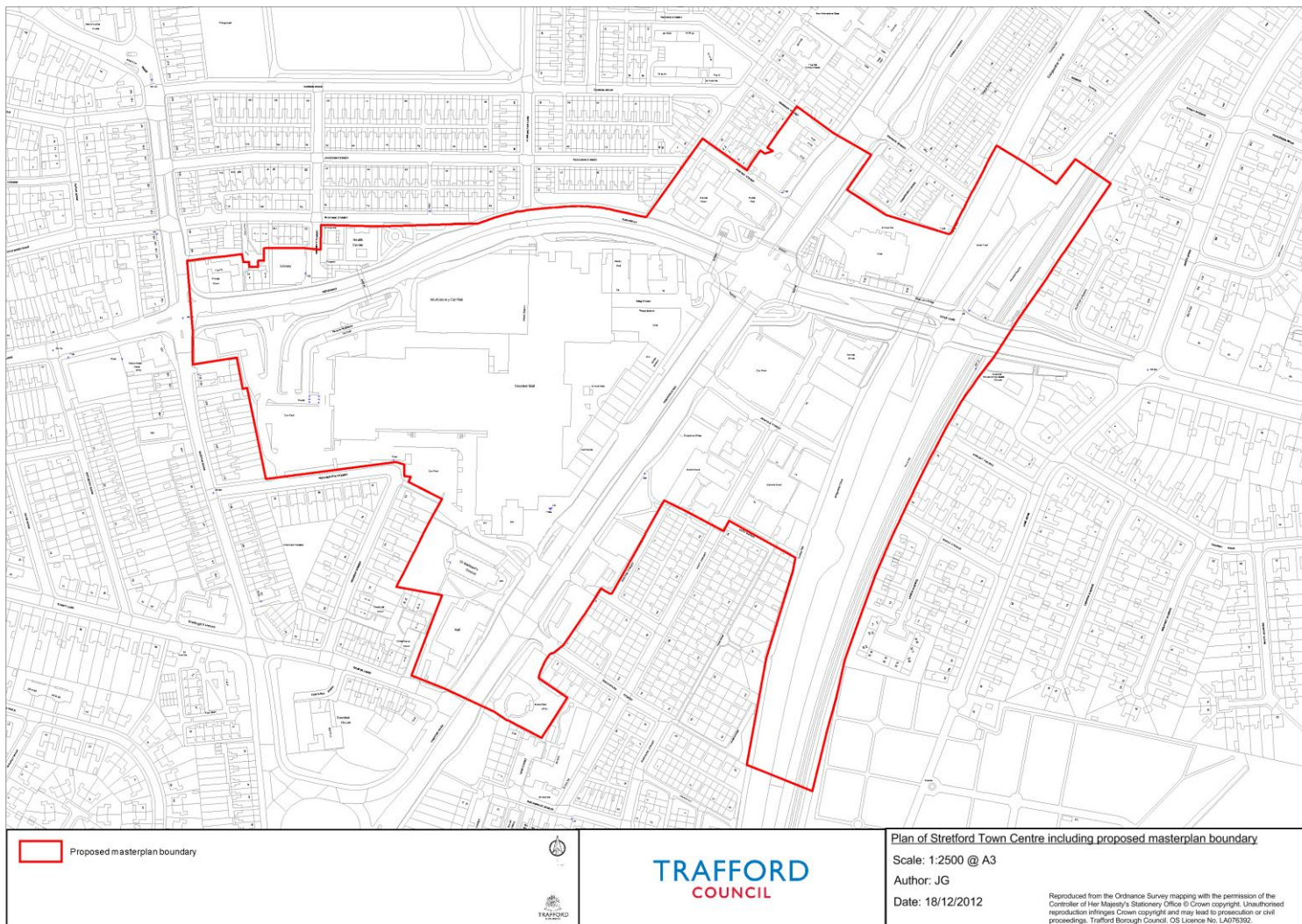
- Option One: the existing Stretford Town Centre boundary, as defined by the Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map.
- Option Two: the existing Stretford Town Centre boundary, in addition to a section of the Bridgewater Canal, Stretford Metrolink Station, the Essoldo Cinema, Stretford Public Hall, Lacy Street/Newton Street Car Park and adjoining employment uses, The Drum Public House, St Matthew's Church, Stretford Library and Mitford Street Clinic/Bennett Street Surgery.
- Option Three: as Option Two, in addition to a section of Barton Road between Stothard Road and Stretford House, also encompassing Wellington Street, Church Street and Chapel Lane.

Option Two has been assessed as the preferred option for the Masterplan area boundary. The rationale for this boundary is to include gateways into the area, key landmark buildings, community facilities such as the public library and health centre, the Metrolink Station and the Bridgewater Canal whilst ensuring development can be concentrated around a strong town centre core. The Masterplan area encompasses a number of sites where there are opportunities for intervention or new development.



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Figure 1: Masterplan Area Boundary



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Prominent Buildings

The Masterplan area contains a number of prominent buildings, the locations of which are identified in Figure 2 below, most of which currently fail to make a positive contribution to the urban character of the town centre. If Stretford is to maximise the potential of its key physical assets then intervention will be required in respect of the majority of these buildings.

Stretford Mall

Stretford Mall was opened in 1969 as the Arndale Centre and provides the retail core of the town centre containing over 100 businesses. At the time of opening the Mall was one of the largest covered shopping centres in the country, providing modern retail facilities in the heart of the community. However, over recent years Stretford Mall has suffered from a lack of investment, competition from other centres and the loss of several major occupiers. Furthermore the once popular indoor market area has now dwindled to a handful of occupiers. As a consequence the Mall and town centre as a whole has been losing out to other centres that can offer both a more attractive retail environment to shoppers and modern retailers with more suitable premises.



Trafford Council is the freeholder of the Mall site. The operator of the Mall, which has a long leasehold interest in the Mall site, is currently in administration.



Essoldo Cinema

The Grade II listed Essoldo Cinema building, designed in the art deco style, is an important heritage asset for Stretford Town Centre. Its distinctive frontage and location at a gateway into the town centre makes it a key landmark building. Originally known as the Longford Theatre, the building was opened in 1936 and renamed the Essoldo in 1950. From the mid-1960s the building was used as a bingo hall until its closure in 1995. The building is currently in private ownership and has remained vacant for over 15 years. Adjacent to the Essoldo Cinema are three retail units located in a three storey terrace block alongside the

Brick Top hairdresser unit and a row of five vacant retail/office units with two storeys of residential above.

Stretford Public Hall

The Grade II listed Stretford Public Hall was gifted by John Rylands and opened in 1878. It is located on the A56 opposite the Essoldo Cinema and recognised by the community as a significant part of the architectural and historic fabric of Stretford. The building has accommodated a variety of uses over its lifetime including a library and civic theatre. It was refurbished in the mid-1990s and is currently used as office premises by Trafford Council.



Stretford Library

The Stretford Library building is located on Kingsway, opposite Stretford Mall. The building opened in 1940 and currently contains the library, learning centre and the Stretford Citizens Advice Bureau. It is Trafford's oldest library building and requires improvements if it is to be made accessible for all.

Stretford Metrolink Station

Stretford is situated on the Altrincham to Bury Metrolink line and the station is a key public transport gateway into the town centre. The station originally served the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway. The former street level booking hall building on Edge Lane currently contains retail and service uses. The current frontage would benefit from external restoration works and improved signage to the town centre.



St Matthew's Church

St Matthew's Church is a Grade II listed building constructed in the Gothic Revival style and is located adjacent to the southern side of Stretford Mall. The building was completed in 1842 to replace the original Stretford Chapel built by the de Trafford family in the 15th Century.

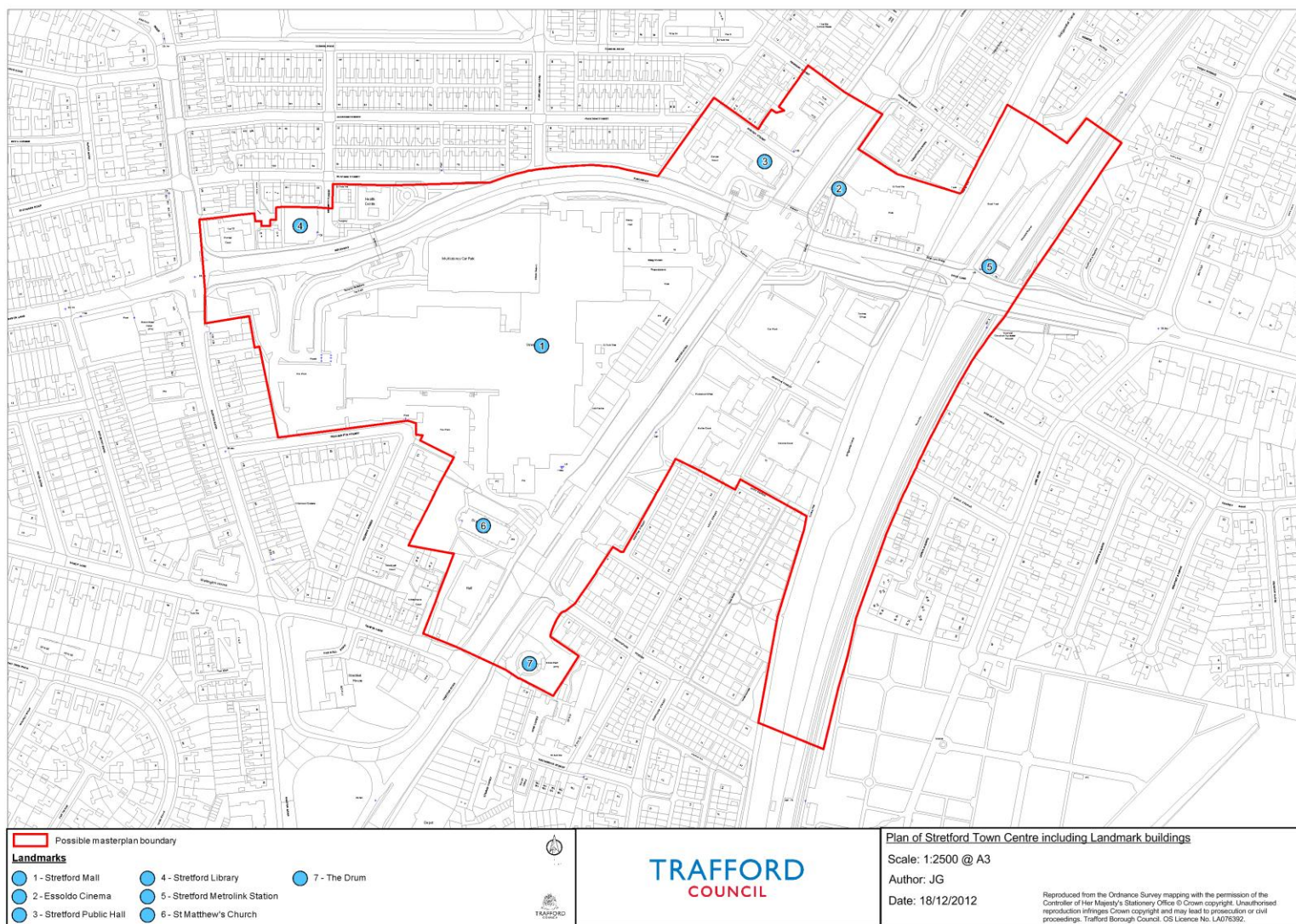
The Drum Public House

The Drum Public House is a distinctive two storey modern building that fronts onto Chester Road and is located at the southern edge of the town centre opposite St Matthew's Church.



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Figure 2: Prominent Buildings



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Challenges and Opportunities

The Town Centre Offer

The inward facing Stretford Mall dominates the town centre and does not provide active frontages to the main roads. As a consequence it is difficult to recognise it as a town centre and fails to provide a sense of place or any focal point. Whilst the Mall does include several national retailers and some strong independent business, overall the range and quality of operators is not sufficient to provide an attractive retail destination of choice. The vacancy rate in the Mall is currently in the region of 20%. There have been several high profile closures in the Mall as a consequence of the national economic climate, most notably the TJ Hughes and Argos stores. There is an opportunity for intervention in Stretford Mall to provide a more diverse town centre offer that enables the area to fulfil its role for the community more effectively and provide attractive retail frontages to both Chester Road and Kingsway.

A major omission within the Masterplan area at present is the lack of an adequate mix of leisure and family orientated entertainment uses and a functioning evening economy to ensure town centre activity after 5pm. Whilst Stretford is located in close proximity to major cultural and leisure destinations, including Manchester United FC and Lancashire County Cricket Club, there is little to attract visitors using these facilities to the town centre.

There is potential to introduce a regular town centre market that can provide a range of goods from everyday items to higher end produce. Further themed or event markets could also help to revitalise the town centre and attract more local people and visitors.

Whilst there are some office uses located within the Masterplan area, including the Arndale House office block and Stretford Public Hall, the office market is weak. There is potential to strengthen this market through the provision of modern office space linked to a revitalised town centre retail and leisure offer that also takes advantage of excellent road connections via both the A56 and M60 motorway and public transport infrastructure including the Metrolink.

The area also benefits from high quality sports and leisure facilities at Stretford Sports Village which is located 1 mile from Stretford Town Centre. These facilities include a swimming pool, gyms, a sports hall, squash courts, and a floodlit 4G artificial pitch.

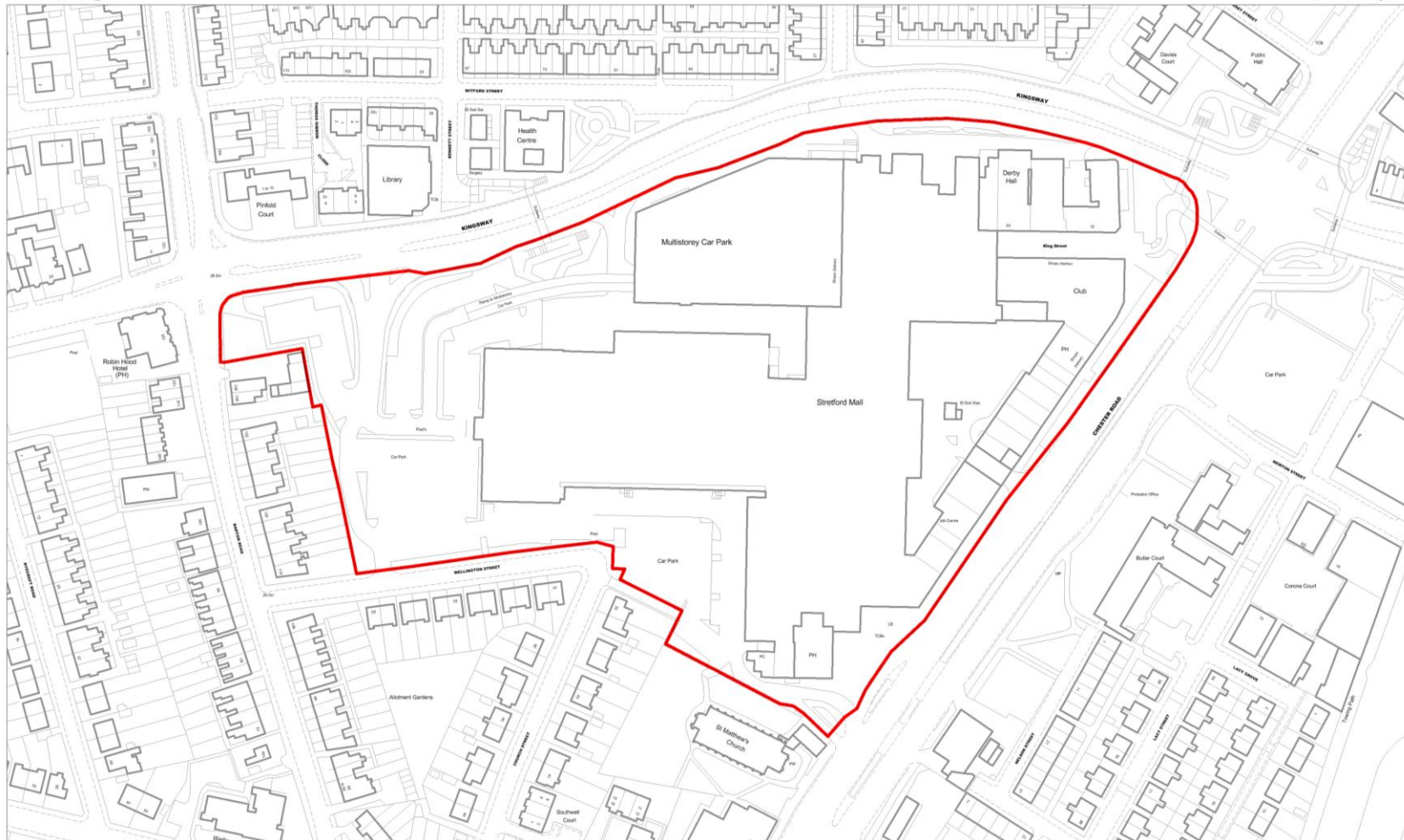
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Figure 3: Stretford Mall

Scale 1:2,500 @ A3

As At 23 May 2013



Legend
[Red outline] Stretford Mall Site



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Townscape and Public Realm



The townscape is generally considered poor and uninspiring in appearance which contributes to negative perceptions of the area as a destination. Furthermore the public realm is dated and there is a lack of good quality landscaping throughout the Masterplan area. There is a lack of high quality and functional public open spaces within the town centre and there are poor linkages to key environmental assets including the Bridgewater Canal and Victoria Park. Generally the built form within the town centre is of poor quality, particularly dominated by Stretford Mall. The Mall has a negative impact on the townscape with a number of blank and inactive frontages. In

some areas the rear of retail units or service yards at Stretford Mall front onto the street. There are some notable buildings of historic and architectural interest within the Masterplan area, however, a number of these are vacant and/or in poor condition.

Land Ownership

There are a number of Council land holdings within Stretford Town Centre. The Council owns Stretford Public Hall, Stretford Library and the Lacy Street/Newton Street Car Park. Whilst the Council owns the freehold interest for the Stretford Mall site the majority of this is on a long lease to Stretford Limited Partnership which went into Receivership in 2011. The Mall is therefore run by asset managers acting on behalf of Aviva Commercial Finance. Where the land interests required for delivery of key projects are not in the ownership of the delivery parties it may be necessary for the Council to consider acquiring land by using its compulsory purchase order (CPO) powers.

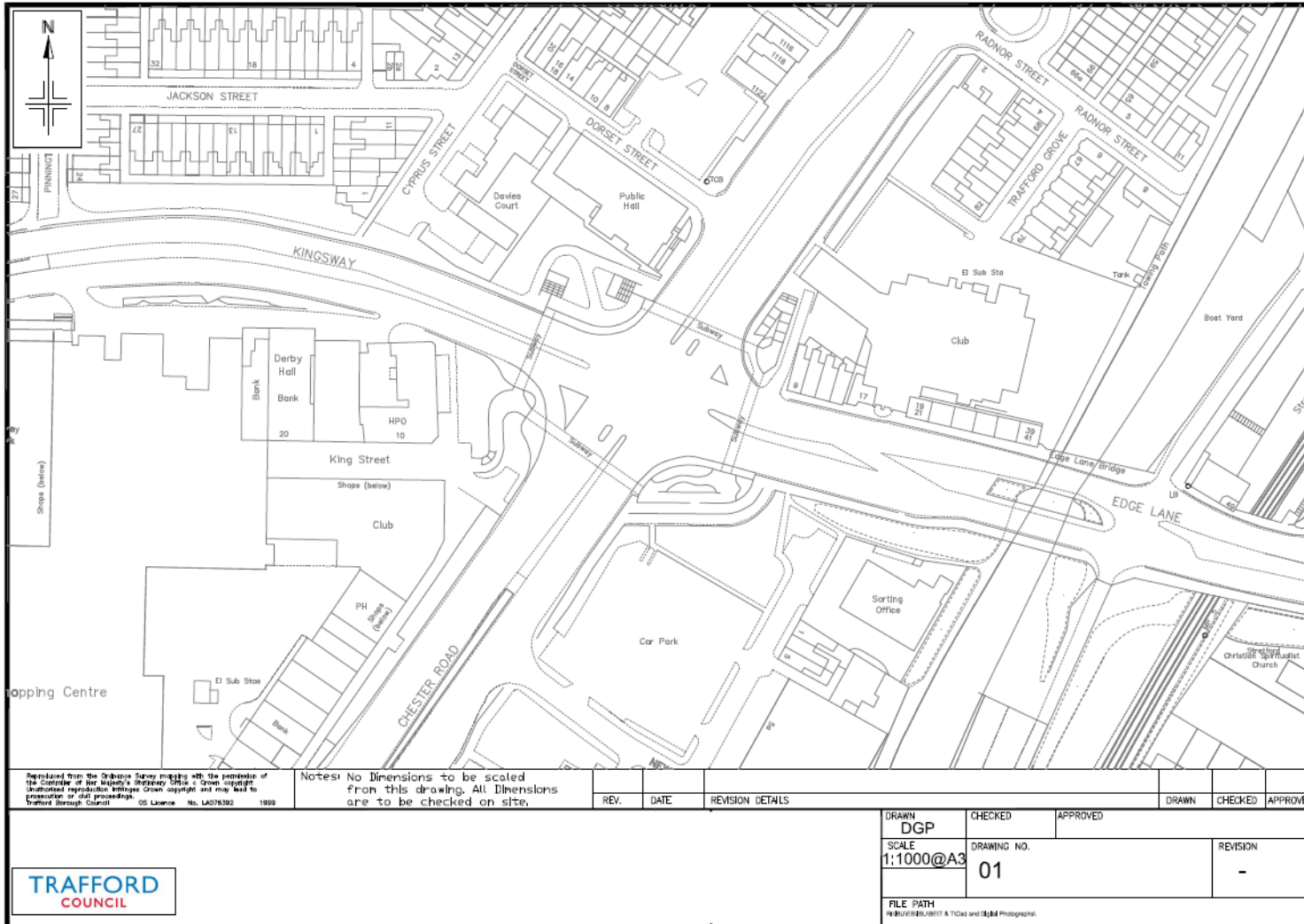
Movement and Access

The six lane A56 and Kingsway/Edge Lane dual carriageways cut through the heart of the area and sever Stretford Mall from the local population and key assets such as the Bridgewater Canal, Metrolink Station and key buildings including the Stretford Public Hall and Essoldo Cinema. As a consequence the A56 and associated traffic dominate the town centre environment. The existing subways which provide access across the A56 are unattractive, unsightly and associated with fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. As a consequence there are issues surrounding pedestrian access to Stretford Mall and linkages to other sites within the Masterplan area.



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Figure 4: Subways and Existing Highways Layout



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Potential Projects

Development Sites

Ten priority development sites, shown in Figure 5 below, have been identified within the Masterplan area where there are opportunities for intervention or new development to help address the challenges faced by Stretford Town Centre and meet the vision and objectives of the Masterplan. The sites selected are those within the Masterplan area that are either within the Council's ownership, vacant land or buildings, or sites of strategic importance. It is important to make clear that no one project in isolation will deliver the vision and objectives of the Masterplan. The successful delivery of the identified development sites will help to bring life and vitality to the area and secure the regeneration of Stretford Town Centre.

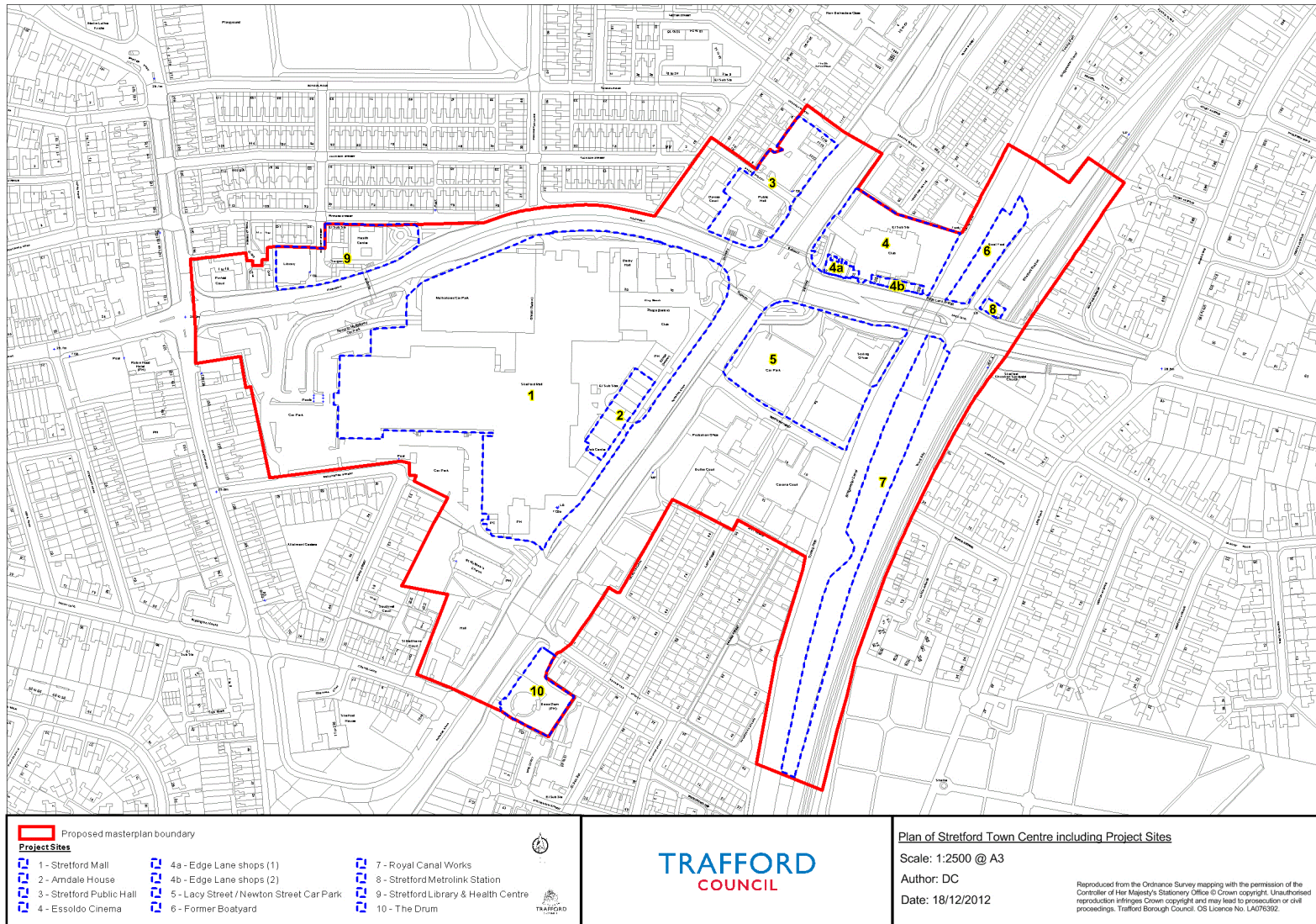
Development Options

Three broad options for the regeneration of Stretford Town Centre have been considered during the development of the Masterplan.

- Option 1: Comprehensive redevelopment
- Option 2: Remodelling and redevelopment
- Option 3: Continuation of existing programme

The development of the preferred option (Option Two) for the Stretford Masterplan has been influenced by previous work completed by the Stretford Partnership and the assessment of needs identified by the Trafford Core Strategy and Trafford Retail and Leisure Study. The identification of the preferred option is based on its contribution to the vision and objectives; compliance with national and local policy; and high level assessment of deliverability. The assessment of deliverability has considered: scheme viability; levels of developer interest; potential constraints to development; and the likely level of funding available.

Figure 5: Development Sites



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Preferred Option: Remodelling and Redevelopment

The preferred option is based on an approach that focuses primarily on the remodelling of the Mall, the reuse of historic buildings, the introduction of a wider mix of uses into the town centre; including an enhanced evening economy and improving the linkages between key environmental assets such as the Bridgewater Canal and Victoria Park. The key principles that underpin the preferred option are:

- the creation of more active frontages at key locations;
- delivering a wider mix of uses within the Masterplan area;
- improving pedestrian linkages; maximising the beneficial impact of historic buildings; and
- improving access to recreational assets and green space.

Site 1: Stretford Mall

Stretford Mall is recognised as being central to the economic health of Stretford Town Centre. Historically the Mall has suffered from a lack of investment although there are opportunities to attract new investment to the area. The previous owners of the Mall had plans for the partial redevelopment of the Mall but these have not been implemented.



The Mall offers potential for expansion, reconfiguration or redevelopment in the longer term with a consolidation of retail space, a larger convenience retail store, the creation of more attractive frontages at key entry points and the introduction of a wider mix of uses into the town centre core, including residential. Ensuring that this site maximises its potential will be critical in positioning Stretford as a modern and competitive town centre.

There is potential to change the use of shop units along Chester Road to provide restaurant and café uses strengthening the evening economy and creating a more active and attractive frontage. A lay-by in front of these units has already been created to facilitate this change, although this needs to be managed more effectively to ensure it does not operate as long stay car parking.



The options considered for this site were the demolition of a significant proportion of the Mall and the delivery of a new mixed use scheme in the heart of the town centre; the remodelling of the Mall along the lines of previous proposals to provide an enhanced town centre offer; and the identification of opportunities with the administrators of the Mall that can be delivered without the need for significant investment.

Whilst Stretford Mall is recognised as a dated and underperforming facility, there would be considerable cost implications in demolishing a significant proportion of the Mall. The preferred option is therefore one that retains the majority of the existing Mall but remodels it to create a more outward facing development. The remodelling would focus on the creation of more active frontages at key locations and the improvement of the physical attractiveness of the Mall. This includes scope for some demolition works and the delivery of a wider mix of town centre uses.

These uses would include:

- an anchor convenience retail store;
- balance of national retailers and independent stores;
- restaurant and café uses to provide for both the local community and visitors to the area;
- family orientated activities;
- professional services;
- community facilities; and
- residential accommodation.

A new combined community facility could be provided on the Stretford Mall site as part of a redevelopment. This would replace the existing Stretford Library and potentially include a replacement for the Mitford Street Clinic. Locating these facilities alongside other community uses like the Town Team Hub within the town centre core would help to increase footfall for other nearby uses.

Site 2: Arndale House

Arndale House is an office block located above Stretford Mall. The future of this site will need to be considered alongside the plans for Stretford Mall as a whole. This unit could be refurbished to offer higher quality office accommodation that would be more attractive to potential occupiers or be converted for residential use.

Whilst this location has previously been identified as having potential to provide accommodation for a new hotel in the heart of the town centre, initial discussions with a potential operator did not progress due to cost implications.

The Arndale House office block could receive both an internal and external refurbishment in order to make the existing office floorspace more attractive to potential occupiers and improve the physical appearance of this landmark building. Under the preferred option the ground floor entrance on Chester Road would be improved to provide a more attractive and active frontage. The attraction of new employers to Arndale House will both provide additional jobs for local people and contribute to increased footfall within the town centre.

Another development option for Arndale House would be conversion of the existing block for either residential or student accommodation, taking advantage of the town centre's good public transport linkages via the Metrolink. This would secure the active reuse of the building and provide an increased residential population to support town centre uses and the evening economy.



Site 3: Stretford Public Hall



Stretford Public Hall is a Grade II listed building and currently used for office premises by Trafford Council, although the Council plan to vacate these in 2013. The building is one of the key landmarks of within the Masterplan area and recognised by the community as a significant part of the architectural and historic fabric of Stretford. Therefore its retention and continued active use will be important in achieving the objectives of the Masterplan.

The option of utilising Stretford Public Hall and adjoining land to provide a site for a new hotel in the heart of the town centre has been considered. This facility could take advantage of the proximity to major cultural and leisure destinations, including Manchester United FC and Lancashire County Cricket Club and contribute to the vitality of a rejuvenated evening economy. However, whilst there is an opportunity for Stretford Town Centre to provide a new hotel to service the local tourism market and support the development of the evening economy, feedback from the development industry suggests this may not be a viable or deliverable option. An alternative use identified for this location is office space. The refurbishment of Stretford Public Hall to provide a distinctive office location within the town centre would provide a use for this building once Trafford Council vacates these premises in 2013.

There may be an opportunity to utilise the adjoining surface car park to provide additional floorspace as part of any new development. This would potentially require the stopping up and closure of Dorset Street.

Site 4: Essoldo Cinema

The Grade II listed Essoldo Cinema has been vacant since 1995. Repairs have recently been made to the external fabric of the building. There is potential to create a new entertainment / leisure facility at this location contributing to the development of the evening economy and providing family orientated activities within the town centre. Restoration of the Essoldo Cinema could potentially link with the parade of shops, offices and residential uses on Edge Lane immediately to the south of the cinema and with the Bridgewater Canal to the rear of the site.



The restoration of the Grade II listed Essoldo Cinema building would provide the opportunity for a large scale family friendly entertainment facility within Stretford Town Centre. This would support the development of the evening economy and also encourage families to use the town centre for leisure uses. Under the preferred option restaurant / café / bar facilities would be provided as part of the Essoldo site. Works to the rear of the site would improve access to the Bridgewater Canal and take advantage of proximity to this key asset.

Adjacent to the Essoldo Cinema there is a row of three retail units alongside the Brick Top hairdresser unit and a row of five vacant retail/office units with two storeys of residential above. These two areas are identified as sites 4a and 4b. The row of three retail units (site 4a) could provide improved retail and leisure uses. This building could potentially provide a location for affordable small space for local traders. Planning consent was recently granted to change the use of the five vacant retail/office units (site 4b) to residential. The conversion of these vacant units to residential will provide an active use in this area.

Site 5: Lacy Street/Newton Street Car Park



This site currently provides an area of surface car parking, the Post Office sorting depot and offices for Atlas Bathroom and Heating. There is potential for this site to provide accommodation for a mixed use development comprising of residential, leisure or community uses. In developing this area it will be important to take full advantage of its gateway location and ensure that it contributes to an attractive route between the core of the town centre and the Metrolink and Bridgewater Canal. The area available for development may increase depending on the works that are undertaken in relation to the subways which could release some additional land.

The Lacy Street/Newton Street car park site is recognised as offering significant development potential. Whilst the option of leaving the Atlas Heating and Bathroom building and Post Office sorting depot in situ has been considered, the preferred option for this site includes the development of the whole site to create a landmark building that also opens up access to the Bridgewater Canal. The site is identified for a mixed-use development that would include a new hotel with restaurant / café / bar uses taking advantage of the canalside setting. The new hotel facility would provide accommodation within Stretford Town Centre for visitors to major cultural

and leisure destinations in the surrounding area, including Manchester United FC and Lancashire County Cricket Club, and support the development of the evening economy. Subject to future viability studies, it may be possible to extend the area for development by including adjoining uses such as the Probation Service Offices, subject to suitable alternative office space in the area.

Site 6: Former Boatyard Site, Edge Lane

An outline planning application has been prepared for the construction of residential apartments along the Bridgewater Canal at the former boatyard site. The development of residential units along the canalside offers the potential to open up access from the town centre to this key environmental asset as part of a new 'Stretford Wharf'. Issues around access and parking remain under discussion between the applicant and the Council.

The preferred option for this site is to deliver new high quality residential accommodation taking advantage of its waterside location.



Site 7: Royal Canal Works Site, Edge Lane



Plans have been prepared by a private developer for the construction of residential apartments with associated landscaping works on the Royal Canal Works site. There has been no recent progress regarding the delivery of these plans and the applicant has not been in contact with the Council regarding this site for some time. Previous plans prepared for this site included apartments, with a restaurant/café/bar unit and boat moorings along the Bridgewater Canal. As with development at the former boatyard site, this site offers the potential to open up access from the town centre to this key environmental asset as part of a new 'Stretford Wharf'.

The preferred option for this site is to deliver new high quality residential accommodation taking advantage of its waterside location.

Site 8: Stretford Metrolink Station Building

The Stretford Metrolink station building is located at a major public transport gateway into the town centre and is also sited at a prominent location along Edge Lane. Whilst this is potentially an attractive landmark building, the external fabric would benefit from enhancement. Another key issue at this site is the lack of appropriate signage between the Metrolink station and Stretford Town Centre. At the present time the majority of signage in this location directs people to the shuttle bus service for the Trafford Centre. As part of the Masterplan proposals the Stretford Metrolink building is identified for intervention to improve its external appearance alongside enhancements to the public realm and signage to the town centre at this key public transport gateway.



Site 9: Stretford Library and Mitford Street Clinic/Bennett Street Surgery



The existing library is located within the oldest operational library building in Trafford. Significant intervention would be required to make it fit for purpose as a modern facility meeting community expectations. The Mitford Street Clinic building itself is understood to require structural work within the next four years. The 1960's building that housed the Bennett Street Surgery is now vacant. The preferred option is to deliver a new combined community facility as part of the Masterplan proposals offering high quality public services in an accessible location. A new community facility could possibly be located within the town centre core as part of the redevelopment of Stretford Mall where it could help support linked trips to other town centre uses. This site could then be made available in

whole or in part for the development of residential/supported housing accommodation.

Site 10: The Drum Public House

The Drum Public House is located on the A56 at the southern edge of Stretford Town Centre and is currently vacant. The preferred option for the site is to deliver residential development integrated with the surrounding area. Future development at this location should provide an attractive entry point into the Masterplan area and reduce severance from the existing residential community.



Pedestrian Movement and Highways

The subways provide opportunities for a number of interventions to deliver more attractive pedestrian access into the heart of the town centre. Three broad options for intervention have been considered as follows:

- 1) The filling in of all four existing subways and their replacement with surface level pedestrian crossings;
- 2) The retention of all four existing subways and the completion of additional surface level pedestrian crossings for all four crossing points; and
- 3) The filling in of the two subways between Lacy Street Car Park/Stretford Mall and Stretford Public Hall/Stretford Mall and their replacement with surface level crossing points. The other two subways would remain in place.



The replacement of the existing subways with surface level pedestrian crossing points has been identified as a key intervention that would deliver more attractive pedestrian access into the heart of a redeveloped town centre. However, it is recognised that the replacement of the subways with surface level crossings in isolation will not deliver the transformation necessary if Stretford Town Centre is to fulfil the vision in the Masterplan. The preferred option, option three, focuses this intervention on the replacement of the subways between Lacy Street Car Park/Stretford Mall and Stretford Public Hall/Stretford Mall where the highest levels of pedestrian footfall have been identified. Furthermore this could be delivered at a considerably lower cost than option one. However this would leave two of the existing subways in place, with the associated issues of poor physical environment and perceptions of crime. The replacement of these subways with surface level crossings may be completed as part of later development phases should additional funding and resources become available.

Kingsway is a dual carriageway road that runs directly to the north of Stretford Mall and connects Barton Road with Chester Road. There are existing surface level crossing points between the Mall and Pinnington Lane and at the Kingsway/Barton Road junction. The existing subway on Kingsway between the health centre and Stretford Mall, which is not currently well used, could be removed as there are existing alternative pedestrian crossing points at this location.



Landscaping, public realm and traffic calming works along Kingsway would help improve the physical environment of this area. Improvements to pedestrian access and new signage would provide a new green linkage between the town centre and the key environmental asset at Victoria Park which offers an attractive area of formal green space in close proximity to Stretford Town Centre.

Any removal of the subways or their replacement with surface level crossing points will need to take account of the impacts on pedestrian safety and traffic flows.

Design and Sustainability

Stretford Town Centre should offer a safe, attractive and distinctive environment if it is to be a successful destination of choice. The urban design approach that underpins development within the town centre should:

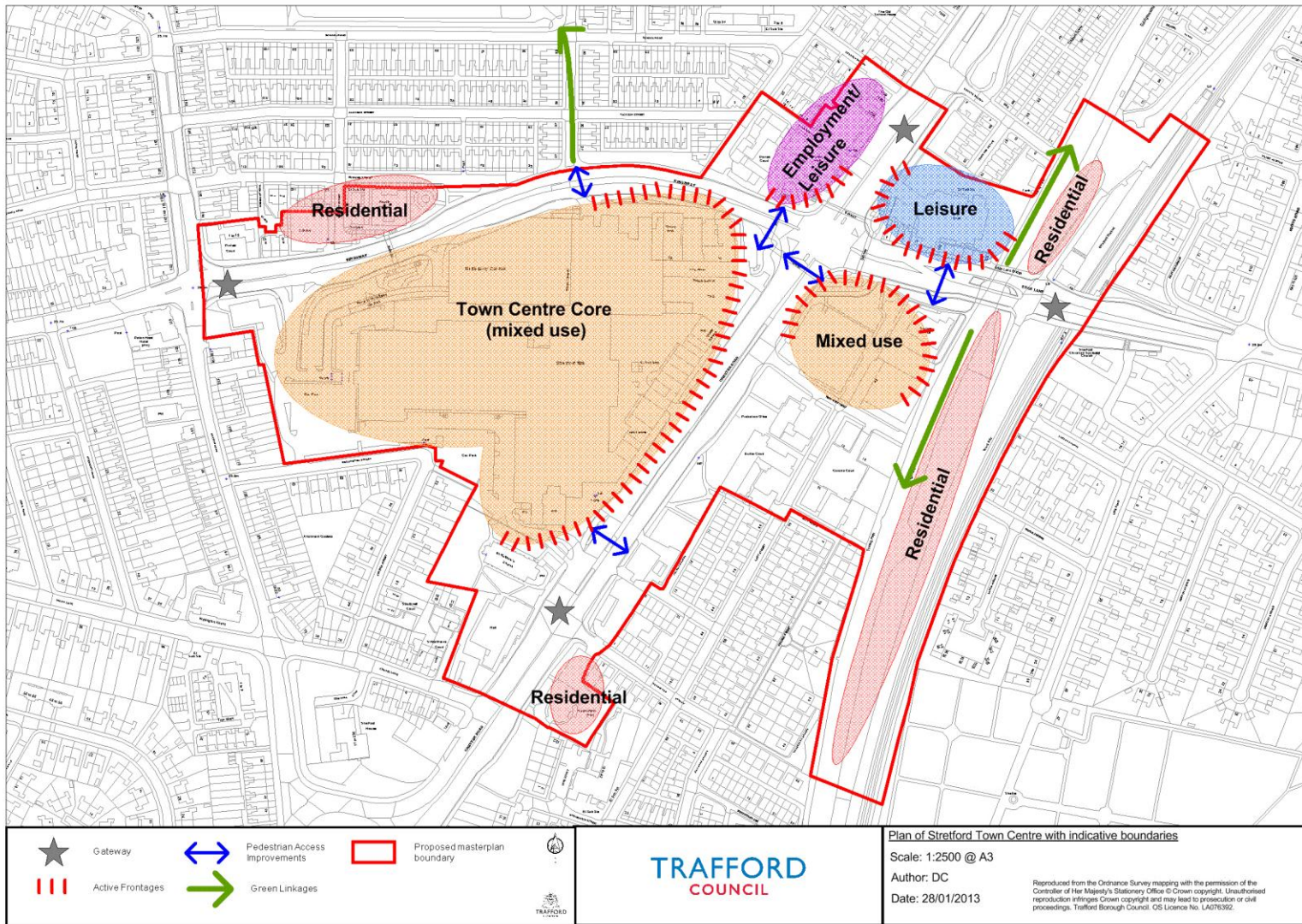
- enhance the existing character of Stretford;
- create a centre with a unique identity;
- provide variety in the urban environment;
- create attractive outdoor spaces;
- ensure a safe and secure environment;
- enable ease of pedestrian and cycle movement;
- create a space that is easily understood;
- provide adaptability for future change;
- minimise the environmental impact; and
- protect and enhance Stretford's heritage assets.

Land Uses

To be a successful town centre Stretford requires a diverse mix of land uses and a variety of experiences that provide an attractive offer to both the local community and visitors. Stretford currently lacks a diverse retail offer, appropriate mix of leisure and family entertainment uses, and development that maximises the impact of key assets such as its historical buildings and the Bridgewater Canal. The absence of these uses has an adverse impact on the performance of Stretford Town Centre and its ability to provide a prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe destination.

Whilst a vibrant and active town centre requires a mix of land uses, it is important to provide defined land use areas in order to provide strong recognisable areas and clear urban design. Furthermore within Stretford Town Centre it will be necessary to alleviate the severance caused by the A56 and Kingsway and deliver an enhanced public realm. The illustrative Masterplan shown in Figure 6 below seeks to define the role and function of different areas of the town centre.

Figure 6: Illustrative Masterplan



*Stretford Town Centre Masterplan
 Final Draft – May 2013*

Design Guidelines

The existing scale and massing of buildings varies throughout the Masterplan area. The development of new buildings within Stretford Town Centre should relate in scale and mass to surrounding buildings and the size of development site. Where larger scale of development is appropriate, such as within the town centre core, careful consideration should be given in the design process to avoid development of a monolithic nature that has a negative impact on townscape.

Variation in building heights and elevation detailing can create a more interesting townscape and distinctive skyline. Taller buildings should be located in areas that emphasise key landmarks. Where taller buildings are appropriate consideration should be given to ensuring the design allows sufficient sunlight and daylight for different uses and protects the historic environment.

New development should contribute to the development of a high quality mixed use environment with a strong sense of place within the town centre. There should be well designed and active frontages, particularly at key entry points. Good quality materials and appropriate detailing should be used and where appropriate reflect the status of listed buildings. The public realm should be enhanced through the use of good quality paving and landscaped edges, distinctive street furniture and clear and well positioned signage.

Sustainability Principles

Development within the Masterplan area will need to meet current planning policy in relation to energy and sustainable design. Future development proposals should be in accordance with the following sustainability principles:

- Sustainability should be a primary consideration within the development process and lead to energy efficient design that reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions.
- New development should make use of renewable energy sources.
- There should be a focus on reducing the need to travel by privately owned vehicles and improving linkages with public transport infrastructure, cycle networks and pedestrian routes. A range of facilities should be provided to allow people to work, live and play in the local area.
- New development should aim to exceed building control minimum requirements such as those relating to reductions in CO2 emissions and climate change mitigation at the time of development.
- Modern methods of construction and sustainable materials should be utilised in new development, where appropriate.
- The use of green roofs and living walls on new and existing buildings should, where appropriate, be encouraged to enhance the green environment and help create unique identity.
- Sustainable waste management and recycling strategies should be developed.
- New development should manage surface water run-off and make use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- The positive impact of biodiversity should be maximised and the greening of the urban environment required.