

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

### Report Title

**Town Centres Framework**

### Summary

Trafford Council recognises that its four main town centres, Altrincham, Sale, Streford and Urmston are crucial components to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the borough. The Town Centres Framework has been produced to act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and activity in each of the centres and set the individual strategies for each of the centres in context.

### Recommendation(s)

The Executive is recommended to approve the Town Centres Framework.

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

**Name:** Martin Ledson  
**Extension:** 4137

Background Papers: None

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Framework supports Council Priority 3: "Trafford has successful and thriving town centres and communities". It also supports the Economic and Housing Growth Framework and the Trafford Housing Strategy.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The Framework supports the GM Strategy "Our People, Our Place" which proposes bringing forward proposals for how the town centres can be modernised, including quality public spaces and providing a good environment for walking and cycling. It supports the GM Made to Move Strategy by encouraging increased walking and cycling. It also supports the GM Industrial Strategy which identifies a need to bring forward strategic regeneration proposals for the town centres.
Financial	The Framework has been produced using existing Council resources.
Legal Implications:	None arising directly from this report
Equality/Diversity Implications	The Framework proposes to make the town centres safer and more accessible for all. This includes proposals for an 'Accessible Town Centres' scheme which will assist disabled users, and other users with accessibility issues, to access the shops and services.
Sustainability Implications	Not applicable
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Not applicable
Risk Management Implications	Not applicable
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The Framework aims to make the town centres more vibrant places for people to enjoy shopping, working, visiting and living. The proposals will enhance the environment, improve accessibility, increase employment and create places which local communities are proud of. The Framework includes a proposal for a 'Safe Spaces' scheme to provide places to go for anyone lost, bullied or in need of help or support.
Health and Safety Implications	Not applicable

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Trafford Council recognises that its four main town centres, Altrincham, Sale, Streford and Urmston are crucial components to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the borough. Each town centre provides a unique but complementary offer, where Trafford's residents and visitors can easily access a range of facilities and services; and businesses can grow and reach their full potential.
- 1.2 A number of the town centres have undergone, or are undergoing, major public realm improvement works to make them more vibrant places for people to enjoy shopping, working, visiting and living. In recent years the focus has been on developing strategies for each of the individual town centres. However, there has not previously been an overarching Strategic Framework to set these individual strategies in context.

## 2.0 Town Centres Framework

- 2.1 The Town Centres Framework has been produced to cover each town centre within the borough and to act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and activity. The Framework is intended to complement Trafford Council's Corporate Priorities, the Economic Growth and Housing Framework and the activity of partner

organisations such as Altrincham Unlimited. It also aligns with existing and future studies of the town centres such as:

- Altrincham Strategy / Public Realm Strategy
- Sale Improvement Plan / Public Realm and Movement Strategy
- Urmston Improvement Plan
- Refreshed Stretford Masterplan

- 2.1 The Framework will help to deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, particularly around the creation of Successful and Thriving Places. It provides the direction of travel to create more prosperous and investable locations which meet local needs and ensure that each town centre has the right offer of retail, food and drink, community and leisure uses, as well as supporting infrastructure. It is important that the activity within each centre is tailored to meet local need and harness individual strengths and distinctiveness to help set them apart from their competitors.
- 2.2 The ambition is to create improved town centre environments where businesses feel that they can start up, grow or invest. Moreover, they should also be places where residents can access the facilities and services they need, and provide a strong sense of place which the community are proud of and engage with.
- 2.4 With excellent transport links into all the town centres, the Framework aims to capitalise on these strengths and to encourage people from the local area and further afield to visit.

### **3.0 Future Priorities**

- 3.1 The Framework identifies a number of priority themes for improvement within the town centres. These are summarised below:

#### **3.2 Buildings & Place:**

The five key elements of 'Buildings & Place' within the Framework are Heritage, Physical Condition of Buildings, Public Realm, Highway Clutter, and Safe Spaces. These specific elements help to emphasise the unique character of the individual towns and help to create desirable places for businesses to operate and people to visit. Priorities include using heritage assets to support sustainable growth, identifying properties in need of improvement and potential development sites, managing clutter on the highway so not to detract from the character of the town centre, and creating safe spaces for anyone in need of help or support.

#### **3.3 Transport & Access:**

This priority focuses on car parking, disabled access, public transport and improving walking/ cycling routes. The town centres are extremely well connected with excellent public transport and good road links. However, there are issues around congestion so the Framework proposes to encourage use of alternative forms of transport, such as cycling and walking. The Framework also considers the gateways in to the town centres (e.g. the transport interchange in Altrincham) and will look to ensure these leave a positive, lasting impression. Other elements include increasing capacity on the tram network, improved parking facilities and, importantly, the development of an 'Accessible Town Centres' scheme.

### 3.4 Leisure, Food & Drink:

A strong leisure offer can help make a town distinctive and contribute greatly to its success. This has been particularly evident in Altrincham, Sale and Urmston where the food and drink offer is well established. Stretford has also recently seen a number of new openings and further interest from businesses within this sector. To support this growth it is essential that town centres are attractive and safe so a focus on security and safety is imperative.

### 3.5 Offices & Commercial:

Increasing the levels of employment in town centres can bring great benefits to local communities as well as supporting the retail and leisure offer by increasing the potential customer base. With high concentrations of office space along the A56 corridor from Stretford through to Altrincham there are great opportunities to attract businesses that will have a positive impact on the town centres. The Framework highlights the opportunities of working in partnership with landlords and agents to identify and promote these opportunities and attract new businesses.

### 3.6 Housing:

Residential provision in the town centres is vital to the local economy, increasing the vitality of the town centres and the customer base of retailers, leisure operators etc. Increasing numbers of people who are active outside of traditional shopping hours also contributes to increased feelings of safety. In promoting town centre living the Council can contribute towards the aspirations within the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and also repurpose empty, commercial property.

### 3.7 Markets:

Markets can be a positive asset to town centres – attracting visitors, increasing spend and encouraging entrepreneurship. The positive impact of a market can be seen, most notably, in Altrincham where it was a major catalyst for change. Recent consultation has highlighted public support for markets and there have been applications to operate markets in town centres on a regular basis in Urmston, Sale and Stretford. Therefore a clear Market Policy and application process that encourages markets to operate within the confines of the Altrincham Market Charter is vital to ensure that the town centres can take advantage of opportunities that arise.

## 4.0 Other Activity

4.1 The Framework emphasises the importance of continued Business Support and proposes co-ordinated Marketing and Promotional Activity which would benefit all the town centres, including retailer targeting, branding and encouraging linked trips with other key destinations in the borough.

4.2 Monitoring performance is also fundamental to understanding the impact of the activity, including vacancy and footfall levels (where available).

## 5.0 Next Steps

5.1 Following Executive approval, the Town Centres Framework will be used to guide future strategic work and activity within the individual town centres.

## 7.0 Other Options

7.1 Without an overarching Framework, there would be a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to the improvement and regeneration of each of the town centres.

## 8.0 Consultation

8.1 As an overarching strategy, this Framework has considered consultation carried out within each the town centres, as well as the existing strategic documents. Consultation will be carried out on individual strategies and plans for each of the town centres as work progresses.

## 9.0 Reasons for Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Executive approves the Trafford Town Centres Framework to act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and activity in each of the centres and set the individual strategies for each of the centres in context.

**Key Decision** No

**If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?** N/A

**Finance Officer Clearance** *(type in initials)* PC

**Legal Officer Clearance** *(type in initials)* CF

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** *(electronic)*...



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

**Appendix 1 – Town Centres Framework**