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An aerial photograph of the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester, showing its distinctive white and red facade and the surrounding urban landscape. The stadium is the central focus, with its unique roof structure and red accents. The background shows a dense cityscape with various buildings and a river in the distance under a cloudy sky.

# THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF REGENERATING OLD TRAFFORD

AN INDEPENDENT REPORT  
BY OXFORD ECONOMICS

OCTOBER 2024



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**100,000**

new seater stadium potential investment by Manchester United Football Club in Trafford.

Manchester United Football Club is considering investing in a new 100,000-seater stadium in Trafford. The stadium is part of wider Old Trafford Masterplan for the area, which itself sits alongside a Regeneration Masterplan for Trafford Wharfside. Combined, they offer a unique opportunity to deliver a step change in economic performance and quality of life for the area. At present, a Tripartite Partnership containing Manchester United, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is working together to realise this future transformation of Trafford. To inform discussions with key stakeholders, Oxford Economics was commissioned to quantify the combined economic impacts of the proposals.

## AN INDUSTRIAL LOW-DENSITY AREA

Trafford Wharfside and the area containing Old Trafford stadium and the site for a potential new stadium are largely industrial, with a considerable amount of car parking and derelict land. Despite recent jobs growth, the area has a sectoral structure centred on less productive activities. The redevelopment of the area is a priority for Trafford Council and its Trafford Wharfside Masterplan aims to intensify and densify the area through the provision of office space, retail, and hospitality, as well as residential units.

Manchester United's potential investment in a new stadium and the wider Old Trafford Masterplan for the area could provide a catalyst for this regeneration. The London 2012 Olympics showed how a stadium-led redevelopment can have lasting economic and social impacts (even though this was initially driven by public investment).

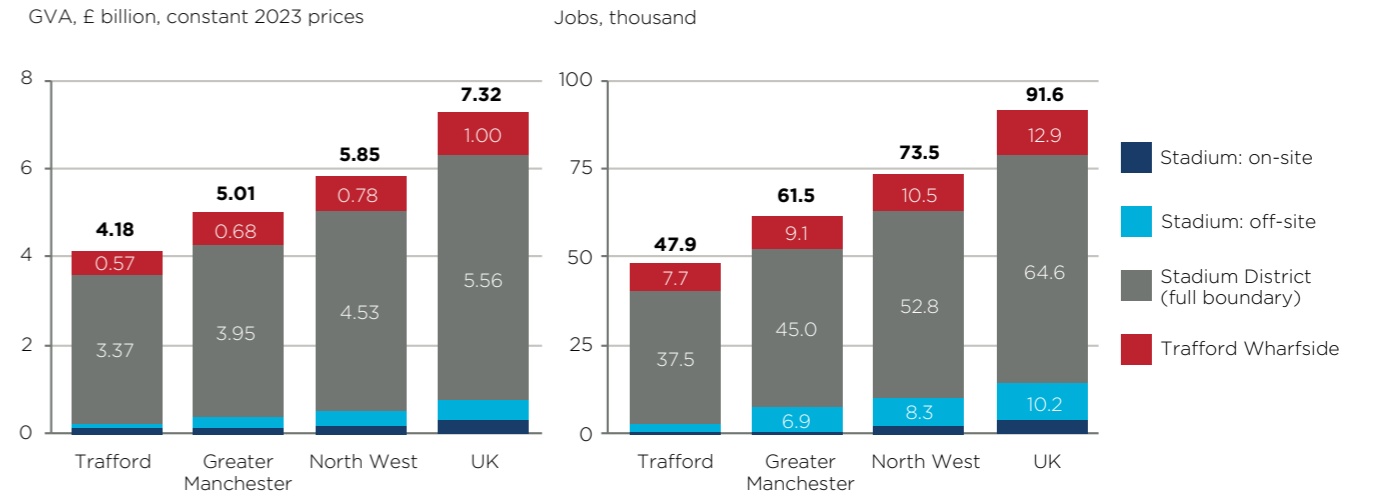
## THE SIZE OF THE PRIZE

We estimate that both masterplans would provide a net increase of £4.18 billion in GVA contributions to the Trafford economy and facilitate 47,900 additional jobs by 2039, compared to the existing stadium and without regeneration. Across the national economy, the net economic impact amounts to a **£7.32 billion GVA contribution to the UK economy and 91,600 jobs across the UK workforce, alongside £1.38 billion in tax revenues.**<sup>1</sup>

We estimate that the Manchester United Masterplan and Trafford Wharfside Masterplan could result in the rate of economic growth increasing from 1.3% per year in our baseline forecast to 2.9% per year, through 2023 to 2039. In addition, successfully delivering both masterplans would benefit all sectors of the economy and growth would no longer be reliant on a small number of sectors.

<sup>1</sup> Our estimates account for the potential to double-count the off-stadium spending of visitors to the area and of new residents living at Trafford Wharfside within the commercial space delivered by the Masterplan.

**Fig. 1: Net additional impacts of a new stadium, Old Trafford Masterplan and the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan, 2039**



Source: Foster + Partners, Manchester United, Trafford Borough Council, Oxford Economics. Note: may not sum due to rounding.

## SUPPORTING HOUSING PROVISION & IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

The potential new stadium would provide an additional 25,690 seats, as well as hosting more non-matchday events, such as concerts. We estimate this could result in a net additional 1.76 million visitors to GMCA and real terms growth in visitor spending of 7.1% from 2023 to 2032.

The Trafford Housing Needs Assessment 2023 found that over the period 2010/11 to 2022/23, there was an undersupply of new housing delivered each year in the council area and that there is a need for 1,122 new homes to be built each year up to 2039. There is also evidence of notably high house prices that have affected housing affordability.<sup>2</sup> Through plans to deliver over 17,000 additional homes over the regeneration period, the Stadium District and Trafford Wharfside Masterplans will help address these local issues and cater for the expected growth in population.

The regeneration of Trafford Wharfside and delivery of a new stadium would also have profound impacts on the built environment through the replacement of a largely industrial site littered with car parking and underused spaces with an urban environment that has been designed around the quality of life of residents and the needs of workers and visitors.

## TRANSPORT INVESTMENT

We understand there is also an opportunity to upgrade the railway line in Trafford. This would not only support delivery of the new stadium and Wharfside regeneration, but it would also provide additional opportunities for regeneration and growth in the area, GMCA, and the North of England.

**£7.32bn**

Total contribution to the UK economy.

**91,600**

Jobs across the UK economy.

**£1.38bn**

In tax revenues.

<sup>2</sup> Trafford Council, "Trafford Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) 2023", accessed 2024.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

Trafford Wharfside is a mostly industrial area, mixed with large out-of-town retail units, a hotel, and generally relatively low value-added activity. It was the world's first industrial estate, attracting a large manufacturing presence in the early 1900s with Old Trafford being built in 1910. Alongside the industrial uses, it has a generous supply of car parking facilities and some derelict land. Immediately adjacent to the south is Old Trafford stadium, additional car parking, and a freight terminal.

Manchester United is considering several options for the development of their stadium at Old Trafford. As such, there is a need to understand the net socio-economic benefits that could be generated by a potential new stadium at a local, regional, and national level. The stadium is however, just one part of a wide range of development work to be undertaken in the area.

Consequently, Manchester United, Trafford Metropolitan

Borough Council and GMCA wish to understand the scale of economic benefits that could be realised through successfully delivering a potential new stadium and associated masterplan, along with the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan. As such, Manchester United has commissioned Oxford Economics to quantify the combined socio-economic impacts.

**Fig. 2. Map of Draft Trafford Wharfside Masterplan**



**1.2 OUTLINE OF PLANS**

At the time of writing, Manchester United is considering the potential to deliver a 100,000-seater stadium. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that a new stadium would be fully operational in 2032.

The Trafford Wharfside Regeneration Masterplan contains details of future housing developments and commercial space. While it provides detailed information on the housing units to be delivered (and the associated population impacts), it is less specific on the commercial space. Although there are broad assumptions on which buildings will be retained, plot sizes, commercial building footprints, and building height, the Masterplan is less prescribed on how the buildings will be developed and used. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this study we have used Trafford Council's working assumptions on the commercial space.

At the time of writing the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan does not have construction cost estimates. We therefore provide an estimate of its net economic benefit once fully delivered. We do not have a timeline for the regeneration Masterplan, but to aid our understanding of the scale of the opportunity we assume it will be fully delivered within 15-years (i.e., by 2039).

**1.3 ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS**

The economic footprint of the proposed development is quantified through several headline metrics including:

- **Gross value added (GVA) contribution to GDP** quantifies the potential economic value associated with economic activity generated by the Masterplans.<sup>3</sup>
- **Employment** supported through the operational phase.
- **The fiscal impact** of the proposed development by considering how additional economic activity may generate additional tax revenues.

The potential economic impacts detailed in this report draw on a standard assessment framework that quantifies the potential economic footprint of the stadium and Masterplan developments across three channels (see Fig. 3):

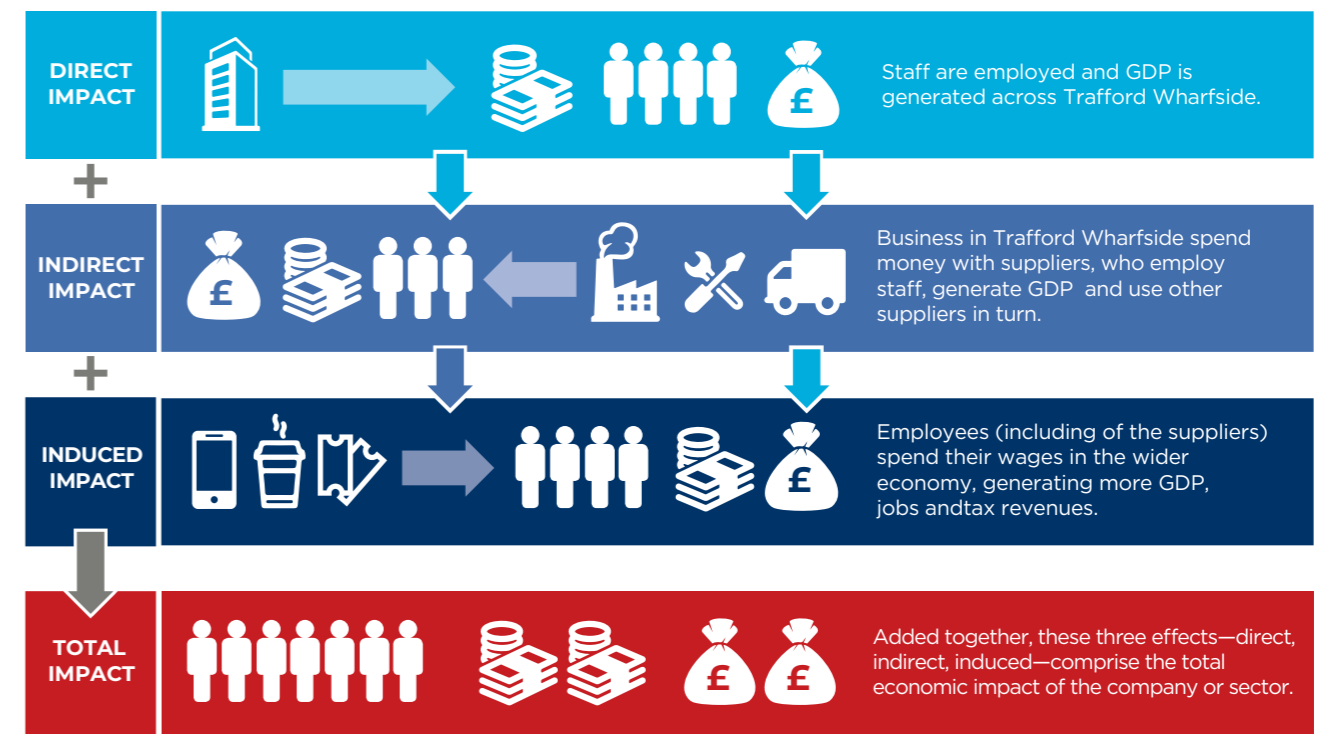
- **Direct impact:** relates to the activities directly generated to support the operations of the new stadium and masterplans;
- **Indirect impact:** captures the economic activity and employment within the supply chains that support these activities, through the procurement of goods and services from third party suppliers; and
- **Induced impact:** comprises the wider economic benefits that arise when workers employed at the stadium and Masterplan developments as well as the companies in their supply chain spend their earnings.

The economic impact model utilises an input-output framework to quantify the economic benefits across Trafford, Greater Manchester, the North West, and the UK. The input-output framework allows us to estimate the

indirect and induced impacts that are likely to flow from a given level of investment or economic activity.<sup>4</sup> An input-output table provides information on how sectors purchase from one another, and how households spend

their income. We use input-output tables published by the ONS and estimate the likely spending effects to occur across the various economies based on their relative size and sectoral composition.<sup>5</sup>

**Fig. 3: Illustration of the channels of economic impact**



Source: Oxford Economics

<sup>3</sup> Gross value added (GVA) measures the contribution to the economy of each individual producer, industry, or sector. Gross domestic product (GDP), the headline indicator of economic output at a national level, is equal to GVA plus taxes minus subsidies. At an individual firm level, GVA comprises the operations surplus (profit), composition of employees (gross wages, plus employer tax and social security contributions), and taxes minus subsidies on production.

<sup>4</sup> An input-output model uses a matrix representation of a nation's interconnected economy to calculate the effect of changes by consumers, by an industry, or by others, on other industries and therefore on the economy as a whole.

<sup>5</sup> All values presented in this report are in constant 2023 prices, unless otherwise stated. We consider a constant price base to compare economic variables over time, adjusting for changes in prices (inflation) over time. This ensures that we can compare variables on a like-for-like basis.



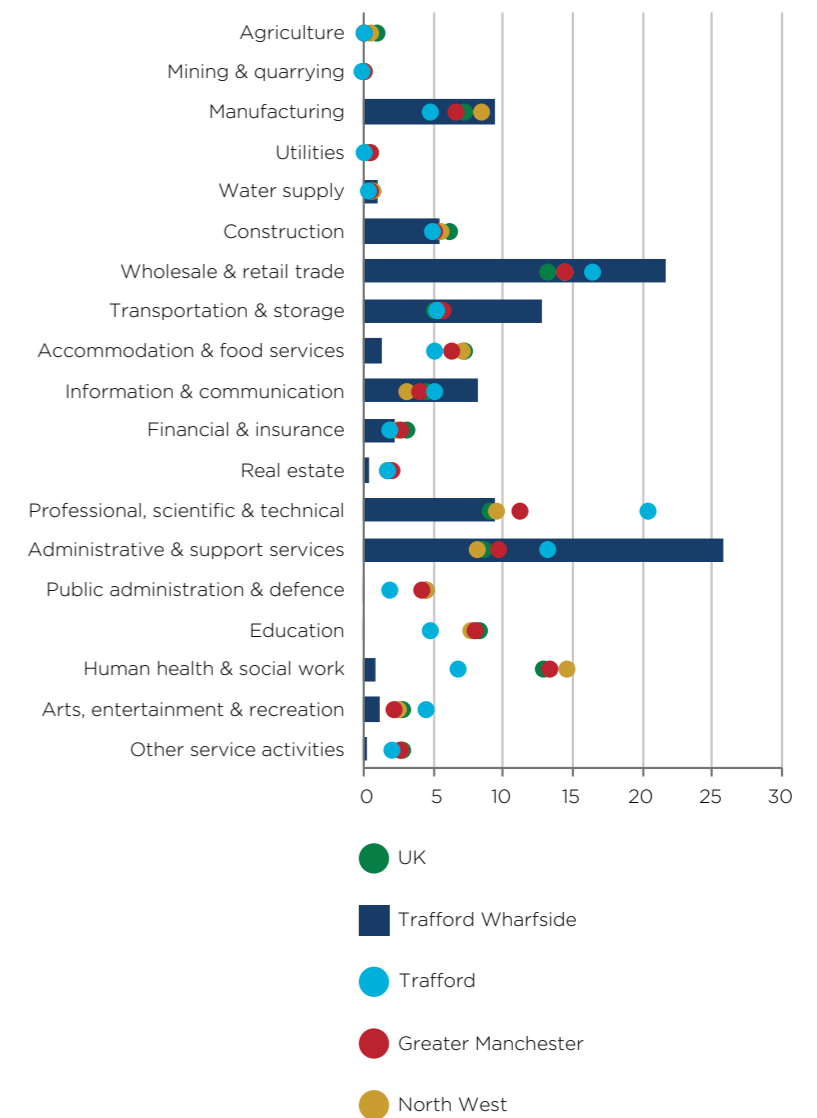
## 2. THE IMPACT OF INVESTMENT AND REGENERATION

### 2.1 AN INDUSTRIAL AND LOW-DENSITY AREA FACING A CHALLENGING OUTLOOK

An analysis of ONS employment data for the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan site,<sup>6</sup> which includes most of the Masterplan area (Old Trafford is excluded), shows that its sectoral composition generally includes lower value-added activity. Owing to its industrial character, both wholesale & retail trade and transportation & storage are both disproportionately prevalent across the Masterplan site.

Business service sectors have been a key driver of recent employment growth across the Trafford and Greater Manchester economies. But while over two-fifths of existing employment at the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan site is in this form of activity, it is dominated by comparatively less-productive administrative & support services—the second-least productive sector across Greater Manchester behind only accommodation & food services. The Trafford Wharfside Masterplan area lacks the high grade and well-connected office space required to attract activity in relatively higher value-added business service sectors.

**Fig. 4: Employment by sector: Trafford Wharfside vs Trafford average, 2022**



Source: ONS, Oxford Economics

<sup>6</sup> Defined as the Trafford 006B Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA), according to the 2011 Census.

**While the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan area has seen a recent expansion in employment, it has generally created lower-value jobs.**

The Masterplan area added over 5,400 jobs between 2015 and 2022,<sup>7</sup> equivalent to an average growth rate of 5.1% per year—far exceeding the overall performance of the Trafford economy (0.9% per year), and growing three times faster than across Greater Manchester (1.7% per year). However, almost half of the increase in employment came in administrative & support services, and the average productivity of jobs created at the Masterplan site was some £11,600 (or 22%) less than the Trafford average.

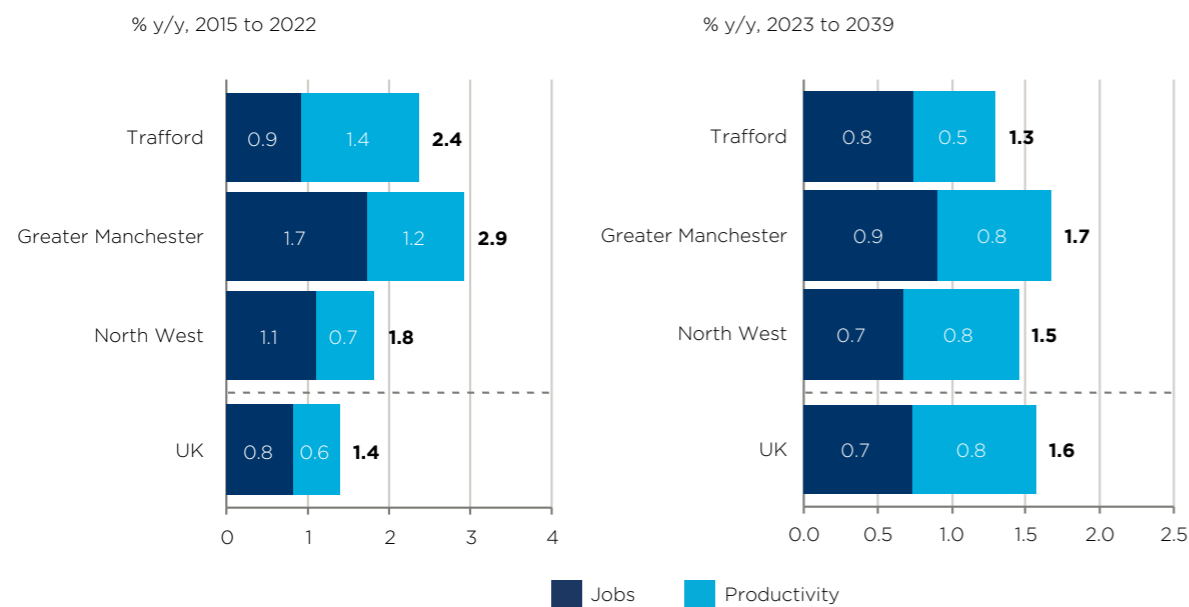
**Consequently, the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan site is around 7% less productive than the Trafford average, a productivity gap equivalent to £3,700 per job or worth a potential £69 million of GVA across the Trafford economy.<sup>8</sup>**

The Trafford Wharfside Masterplan site similarly lags both the North West and UK economies by this measure.

**Our baseline forecast presents a challenging outlook for the Trafford economy.** Our forecast for Trafford—which does not explicitly account for policy interventions such as the Trafford Wharfside or potential investment in a new stadium—suggests that the

Borough's economy will grow by an average of 1.3% per year to 2039, underperforming its comparator areas. The prospects for growth are less favourable for the Masterplan site: we expect Trafford to experience employment growth of 0.8% per year on average. This falls to 0.5% per year for firms currently operating locally.

**Fig. 5: Components of GVA growth: Trafford and comparator areas, 2015 to 2039**



Source: ONS, Oxford Economics. Note: may not sum due to rounding.

<sup>7</sup> This reflects the period for which geographically granular employment data are available.

<sup>8</sup> This assumes that the productivity of firms within the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan site is equivalent to their counterparts in the same sectors elsewhere in Trafford.

**2.2 A ONCE IN A GENERATION OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM THE PROSPECTS OF THE AREA**

Trafford Wharfside benefits from being a strategic location running along the Manchester Ship Canal, with good accessibility to Manchester City Centre, Salford Quays, Manchester Airport, and to residential suburbs across the Borough. The redevelopment of the area has been a priority for Trafford Council and their Trafford Wharfside Masterplan aims to intensify and densify the area through the provision of office space, retail, and hospitality, as well as residential units. Manchester United's potential investment in a new stadium and associated masterplan for the surrounding area could provide a catalyst for this regeneration. At the time of writing, a Tripartite Partnership containing Manchester United, Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, and the GMCA are working together on delivering this.

**2.2.1 The size of the prize**

The potential new stadium, in conjunction with the Old Trafford and Trafford Wharfside Regeneration Masterplans, would generate a substantial boost to the local economy. We estimate that a new stadium, Old Trafford Masterplan, and Trafford Wharfside Regeneration Masterplan would provide a net increase of £4.18 billion in GVA contributions to the Trafford Economy and facilitate 47,900 additional jobs by 2039. Across the national economy, the net increase in economic impact amounts to a £7.32 billion GVA contributions to the UK economy and 91,600 jobs across the UK workforce, alongside £1.38 billion in tax revenues—equivalent to the average (median) wages of 41,500 nurses or 36,700 primary school teachers.

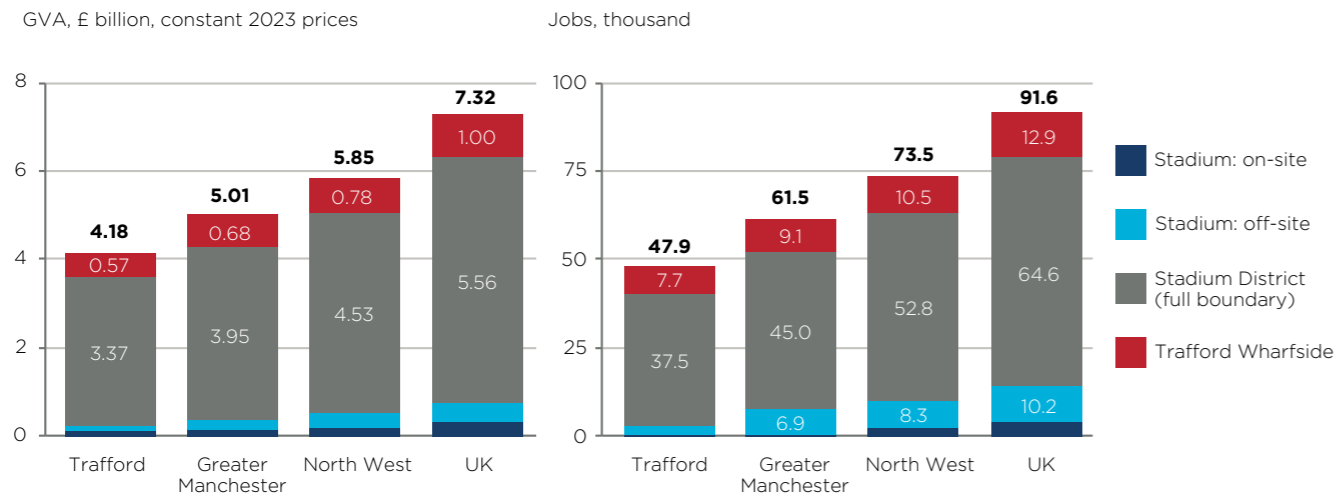
The potential new stadium would contribute £243 million more in GVA contributions to GDP and 2,700 more jobs to the Trafford economy than the existing stadium once developed, in addition to the £3.37 billion in GVA and 37,500 more jobs supported by the Stadium District Masterplan, while the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan could add a further £572 million in GVA and 7,700 jobs to Trafford. It is worth noting that if the Masterplan is delivered after the stadium development, then some of the commercial developments delivered by the private sector

may be designed to capture the spending of visitors to football matches, events, and stadium tours.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the economic impact of the Masterplan and stadium may be interlinked.

In addition to the above, there will also be substantial benefits arising from the construction activity in Trafford (unfortunately we are not able to quantify these at this stage). While most of the direct construction phase jobs would be based in Trafford, Great Manchester will benefit from supply chain and consumer spending. Furthermore, many of these construction phase jobs will be taken by residents of the city region.

<sup>9</sup> Our estimates account for the potential to double-count the off-stadium spending of visitors to the area and of new residents living at Trafford Wharfside within the commercial space delivered by the Masterplan.

**Fig. 6: Net additional impacts of a new stadium, Old Trafford Masterplan and the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan, 2039**



Source: Foster + Partners, Manchester United, Trafford Borough Council, Oxford Economics. Note: may not sum due to rounding.

**2.2.2 A step change in the fortunes of the Trafford economy**

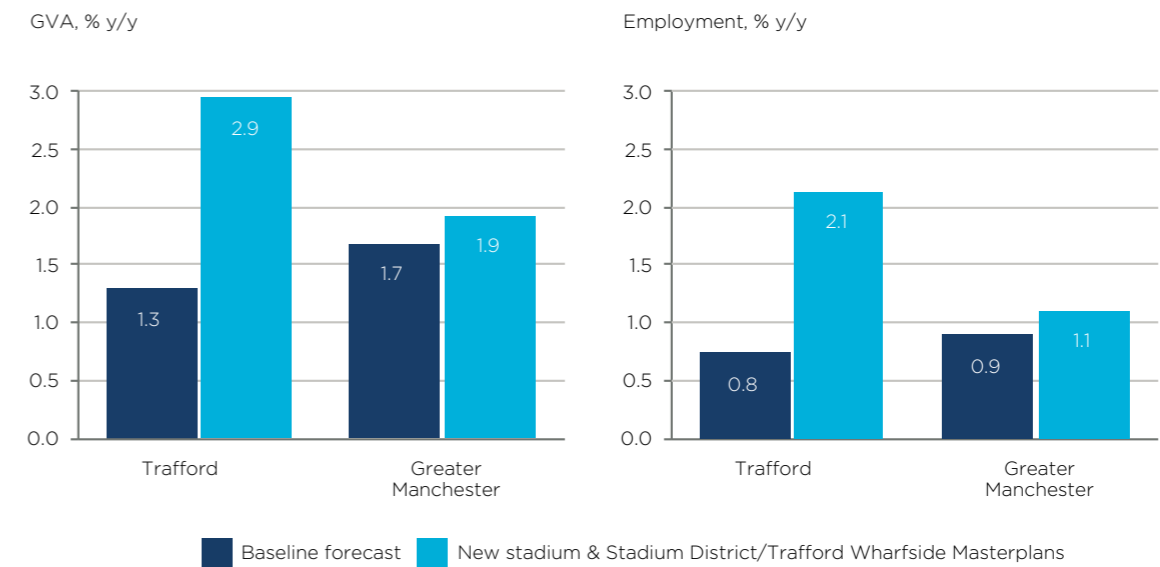
We estimate that the potential new stadium and Old Trafford Masterplan, along with the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan could result in the rate of economic growth increasing from 1.3% per year in our baseline forecast to 2.9% per year, through 2023 to 2039.

**This would, all else equal, catapult Trafford from among**

**the worst performing local authorities in the country to among its best performers.**

Meanwhile, employment growth would average 2.1% per year, more than two-and-a-half times our baseline forecast (0.8% per year), enabling Trafford to jump from the bottom half of the growth table to among the best performing areas.

**Fig. 7: Future net economic impact of a new stadium and Masterplans, 2039**



Source: Foster + Partners, Manchester United, Trafford Borough Council, Oxford Economics

**The potential investment would also help deliver policy objectives of Trafford Council and GMCA.** For example, the regeneration of the Trafford Wharfside is included in the "Trafford Local Plan" (Policy SL2).<sup>10</sup> Through the promotion of land for development in this location the Council aims to enable opportunities for new economic (particularly digital and media industries), leisure

(hotels and visitor attractions), and residential development. Successfully delivering the stadium and masterplans would benefit all sectors of the economy and growth would no longer be reliant on a small number of sectors. Our baseline outlook for Trafford suggests that three sectors will create more than two-thirds of jobs (professional, scientific, and technical; administrative

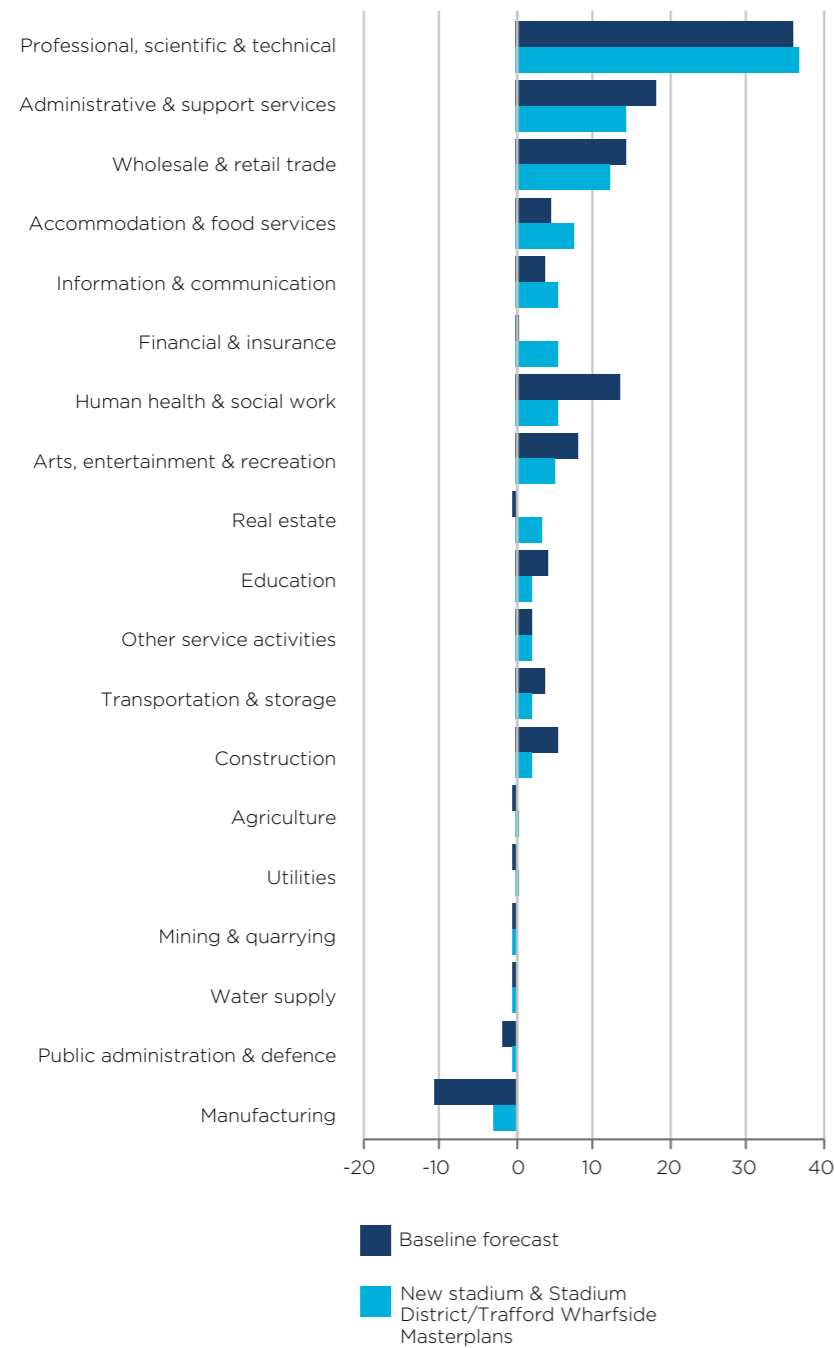
& support services; and wholesale & retail). The planned redevelopment of Trafford Wharfside and potential new stadium would provide a more diverse mix of employment growth with additional employment creation in sectors such as information & communication and accommodation & food services.



<sup>10</sup> Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, "Trafford Local Plan 2012-2026", accessed 2024.



**Fig. 8: Composition of employment creation: baseline forecast vs investment scenario, Trafford, 2023 to 2039**



The regeneration and development of a larger modern stadium would also support the *Greater Manchester Strategy* in its aims to make Greater Manchester a great place to visit and invest. The strategy notes the opportunities of “Greater Manchester’s internationally recognised leisure, sport and cultural offer”. The various proposed investments in Trafford would support increased footfall, and through media coverage influence “investor/business relocators/student perceptions of Greater Manchester”.<sup>11</sup>

Source: Foster + Partners, Manchester United, Trafford Borough Council, Oxford Economics

**2.3 A BOOST TO TOURISM**

**Manchester United is a significant draw for visitors, and this will be enhanced through stadium investment.**

The Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy (published in June 2019) highlighted the importance of hospitality, tourism, and sport sector. Although slightly out of date, it reported that the sector employed approximately 110,000 people in just under 10,000 businesses and provided £2.9 billion of GVA in 2016. It also noted that it was the third most visited UK city by international visitors, behind London and Edinburgh, and that sporting assets such as Manchester United are a key driver of visitor numbers to the city region.<sup>12</sup> Research carried out by Marketing Manchester found that the Manchester United Stadium Tour attracted around 310,800 visitors in 2019, which was the second-highest for a paid attraction in Greater Manchester.<sup>13</sup>

Old Trafford currently has a capacity of 74,310. Data from Manchester United suggest over 2.3 million people visited GMCA in the 2023/24 season, both to attend matches and visit other attractions at the club, such as the stadium tour

and the megastore. These visitors spent an estimated £358 million in the city. Of these visitors, it is estimated that 28.9% or over 682,000 were international. As a group, international visitors spend nearly three times as much per night as domestic visitors and their spending is 100% net additional to the UK economy. Manchester Airport is well placed to cater for an increase in international visitors.<sup>14</sup> It is already the third busiest UK passenger airport and the only other than Heathrow to have two dual use runways that allow for both take-offs and landings.

**A 100k capacity stadium would provide an additional 25,690 seats, as well as hosting more non-matchday events, such as concerts.**

In our modelling, we have assumed that the potential new stadium would cater for relatively larger numbers of international visitors (two in every five additional visitors). Therefore, the net impact would be an additional 1.76 million visitors to GMCA of which just over 710,000 would be international. We have also assumed that through a new stadium which is also supported by a regenerated Wharfside, visitor spending would rise

by 7.1% in real terms. Over two fifths of the additional spending would be enjoyed by the accommodation sector with another two fifths split between food & beverage and retail.

The potential investment in a new stadium would again support policy objectives. For example, the *Greater Manchester Places for Everyone* policy JP-P7: Sports and Recreation aims to enable “the continued development of major sports facilities and events, which can further enhance Greater Manchester’s international sporting reputation.”<sup>15</sup>

There could be even greater additional visitor spend than the value captured in our estimates. The Wharfside regeneration could provide more reasons for visitors to stay longer and spend more. As noted previously, the commercial developments contained in the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan are not fixed at this stage, and is likely that more activity in our impact estimates would be allocated to hospitality and visitor attractions as developers and investors capitalise on the larger flow of international visitors to the area.

<sup>12</sup> Greater Manchester Combined Authority, “Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy”, June 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Marketing Manchester, “Greater Manchester’s Tourism Sector”, accessed 2024.

<sup>14</sup> According to UK CAA Airport data for 2023, Manchester Airport had the third largest number of passengers compared to other UK airports, rising 20% from the previous year.

Source: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, “Greater Manchester Places for Everyone 2022-2039”, accessed 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Greater Manchester Combined Authority, “Places for Everyone”, accessed 2024.

**2.4 LESSONS FROM PREVIOUS STADIUM-LED INVESTMENTS**

**Manchester United’s potential investment in a new stadium could spark accompanying private sector investment in Trafford Wharfside.** The London 2012 Olympic Games helped to regenerate parts of east London. Through the cleaning up of land, investment in a new stadium and park, as well as investment in accompanying infrastructure (which we will discuss below), the Games transformed the area in and around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP). Indeed, these investments continue to have a social and economic legacy.

The Regeneration Committee published a report on **stadium-led regeneration** back in 2015.<sup>16</sup> It provides evidence of how a new stadium and regeneration in general can provide multiple benefits to a local area. They note for example that well-planned stadiums can act as “anchors”, helping to encourage other private sector actors to invest. They discuss the establishment of Here East—a hub for businesses and universities in the technology, digital and creative sectors—in the QEOP.<sup>17</sup>

The report also indicates that stadiums can be “place-shapers”. Most stadiums designed in recent times focus on being an attractive visitor destinations with the aim of attracting and retaining higher levels of footfall in the area to support local businesses. There is also evidence from the report that new stadiums make a place more desirable as a place to live.

<sup>16</sup> Regeneration Committee, “Stadium-led regeneration”, accessed 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Oxford Economics estimated that activity at Here East contributed £700 million in GVA contributions to the UK economy and supported more than 10,000 jobs. <https://hereeast.com/news/east-londons-collaborative-ecosystem/>

**2.5 SUPPORTING THE ANTICIPATED GROWTH IN POPULATION**

**The Trafford Housing Needs Assessment 2023 found that over the period 2010/11 to 2022/23, there was an undersupply of new housing delivered each year, in the council area.**<sup>18</sup> This led to a cumulative shortfall of 5,428 dwelling completions over the period. Indeed, much of the Trafford Wharfside area had no or low levels of new housing (partly reflecting the industrial characteristics of the area).

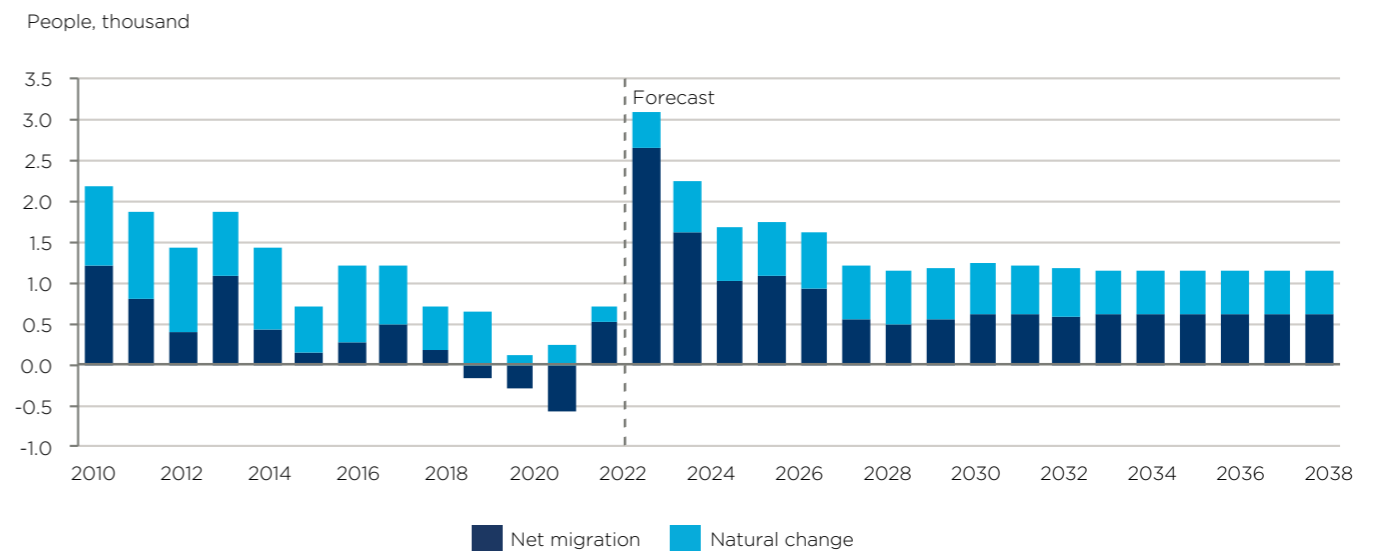
**In addition, median house prices in Trafford tended to be the highest across Greater Manchester (£350,000 compared to £205,000 respectively in 2022) and**

**were higher than the regional and UK average.** This has affected housing affordability. Median house prices in 2022 were 10.6 times higher than median incomes for people working in Trafford, again the highest in Greater Manchester, the North West, and the UK.

**Partly as a result, the Trafford Housing Needs Assessment 2023 identified the need for 1,122 new homes to be built each year up to 2039.** ONS population projections suggest Trafford will experience positive population growth, driven by both natural change and net migration. Between 2024 and 2032, forecasts suggest there will be around 19,000 new residents in Trafford.

**The Stadium District and Trafford Wharfside Masterplan have the potential to deliver over 17,000 additional homes which are expected to accommodate more than 42,000 additional residents.** The Trafford Wharfside Masterplan will deliver 5,545 additional homes, supporting an estimated 13,500 new residents, while the Stadium District could deliver a further almost 11,700 homes, supporting more than 28,500 new residents. This would cater for the expected population growth, boost the supply of labour / skills in the economy, and help to dampen future house price growth. It will also support wider growth in Greater Manchester.

**Fig. 9: Components of population change: Trafford, 2010 to 2039**



Source: ONS, Oxford Economics

<sup>18</sup> Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council, “Trafford Housing Needs Assessment”, 2023.



MANCHESTER  
UNITED

SIR ALEX FERGUSON STAND

## 2.6 THE ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

**The regeneration of Trafford Wharfside and delivery of a potential new stadium and Old Trafford Masterplan will also have profound impacts on the built environment.**

**The ONS's Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that the area is amongst the most deprived for the living environment.** The Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) that contains the location of a new stadium is in the 10% most deprived for living environment, while the LSOA containing Old Trafford stadium is ranked in the 10% to 20% most deprived in England. The equivalent for Trafford Wharfside is in the 20% to 30% most deprived.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the result of the ONS's clustering analysis also show that Trafford Council area performs "far below median on all well-being metrics".<sup>20</sup>

The Trafford Wharfside Masterplan includes a range of new public open space zones including:

- waterside open space through the inclusion of promenades, spaces and new boardwalks;
- a park located near the centre of the masterplan area; and
- a number of green spaces scatter throughout.<sup>21</sup>

The Masterplan Design Code also notes the inclusion of children's play and youth areas as well as a green corridor that will "span the site from east to west to ensure this is landscape-led, green development". In addition, the Design Code considers private spaces and notes the need for communal gardens, private gardens, communal courtyards, balconies, and roof terraces. It also includes mandatory requirements for tree protection and new public spaces.

**Consequently, future regeneration will replace a largely industrial site littered with car parking and underused spaces with an urban environment that has been designed around the quality of life of residents and the needs of workers and visitors.** The mix of economic activity brought forward by the redevelopment would also support the *Greater Manchester Places for Everyone* policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities. The plan notes that "varied and high-quality retail, leisure and cultural facilities are vital to providing the quality of life that will help to attract people to live in Greater Manchester and in contributing to inclusive places. Such facilities are also a key part of the overall tourism function of Greater Manchester, drawing visitors to the area."

## 2.7 TRANSPORT INVESTMENT

**The success of the London 2012 Olympic Games was based on a range of factors, but public sector investment in infrastructure, in particular transport contributed.** More than £7.2 billion was invested in transport for the games including upgrades to the Tube, Docklands Light Railway and railway networks.<sup>22</sup>

**We understand there is an opportunity to support the delivery of both the stadium and regeneration of Trafford Wharfside by upgrading the railway line in Trafford.**

Currently, there is a freight depot to the west of Old Trafford that is serviced by a railway line. We understand that freight movements on the railway line have reached maximum capacity and as such both the freight company and GMCA are keen to explore alternative arrangements that would cater for future growth. One of these is to relocate the freight company to Port Salford and Parkside. This would be accompanied by moving the freight traffic on to the West Coast Main Line. This would lead to several key benefits, not least the opportunity to support the substantial growth in employment and residents in Trafford Wharfside:

- First, the relocation of freight activity would free up the site for additional regeneration and investment to support the potential new stadium and Trafford Wharfside Masterplan.
- Second, the removal of freight from the rail line would release capacity for passenger travel on the Castlefield Corridor. A new passenger station at the site would enable commuting for those working in the new jobs at Trafford Wharfside, for new residents who work elsewhere, and for visitors to the stadium.
- Third, we understand there is currently a need for more freight movements in the North West. Moving freight onto the West Coast Main Line would provide the opportunity for growth.
- Fourth, moving the freight traffic onto the West Coast Main Line also improves the business case for future investment in rail.
- Finally, we understand there may also be opportunities for decarbonisation by investing in the relocation of freight.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), "The English Indices of Deprivation", 2019.

<sup>20</sup> ONS, "Clustering local authorities against subnational indicators, England", 2023.

<sup>21</sup> Trafford Council, "Trafford Wharfside Master Plan", accessed 2024.

<sup>22</sup> London Assembly, "London 2012 and the Transport Legacy", accessed 2024.

## ABOUT OXFORD ECONOMICS

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