

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 28 July 2014
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning

Report Title

ALTRINCHAM STRATEGY

Summary

Securing the successful regeneration of Altrincham Town Centre is a key priority for Trafford Council. The Altrincham Strategy ('the Strategy') provides a coherent framework to assist in realising the transformation of the town centre over the next ten years and support future formal planning guidance for the town.

The Strategy draws together a number of separate pieces of work completed in relation to Altrincham over recent years and establishes a comprehensive vision for the revitalisation of the town centre.

The ambition is to create a unique, attractive and vibrant 'Modern Market Town' that forms an integral part of people's everyday lives. The successful implementation of the Strategy will help support the delivery of significant regeneration in the town centre and secure its transformation.

Recommendation(s)

That the Executive approve the Altrincham Strategy (Appendix 1).

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Mike Reed (Growth and Masterplan Manager)
Extension: x4924

Background Papers:

Background Paper 1 - Consultation questionnaire
Background Paper 2 - Summary of consultation responses data
Background Paper 3 - Full record of consultation responses received

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Strategy supports the corporate priority for economic growth and development. The successful implementation of the Strategy will support the delivery of the adopted Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy which identifies Altrincham as the principal town centre in the Borough and a key driver of economic prosperity over the plan period. It will also inform the emerging Altrincham Neighbourhood Plan.
Financial	The estimated cost of the projects will be contained within the mix of available capital resources. These include secured funding in the form of capital grant from TfGM, contributions from the existing capital programme and developer contributions. Expenditure will not be committed until the envelope of resources is fully secured. A further report will be brought back to a future Executive once firm estimates of the cost of the public realm schemes and available resources are known
Legal Implications:	All actions relating to the Strategy, when undertaken, will be done in accordance with legal requirements.
Equality/Diversity Implications	The Strategy has been subject to an EIA assessment to ensure that equality issues have been considered as part of the preparation.
Sustainability Implications	Development within the Strategy area will need to meet current planning policy in relation to energy and sustainable design. The Strategy supports accessibility improvements to the town centre by public transport and improved provision for both pedestrians and cyclists.
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	The delivery of the Strategy will be undertaken by existing staff resources in Economic Growth and Prosperity, Environment, Transport and Operations and Transformation and Resources in conjunction with Altrincham Forward and other external partners and agencies where appropriate. Information on the Strategy and its delivery will be made available on line and all the documents will be available to access through the Council's web pages. The Strategy provides a framework for the Council to realise the potential of its assets within Altrincham.
Risk Management Implications	The Strategy is clear that this document provides a framework for the next ten years. Risk to delivery will be monitored and updated as required.
Public Health Implications	None.
Health and Safety Implications	None.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Altrincham is the principal town centre in Trafford and has been a market town for more than 700 years with a rich and varied history. A combination of competition from out-of-centre retail destinations, the recent economic downturn and the growth of internet shopping have had a negative impact on Altrincham which has seen a decline in the performance of its centre. The Council and Altrincham Forward have recognised that Altrincham Town Centre can do more to maximise its potential and intervention is required to create a unique, attractive and vibrant centre.
- 1.2 The Altrincham Strategy ('the Strategy') provides a coherent framework to assist in realising the transformation of Altrincham Town Centre over the next ten years and support future formal planning guidance for the town.

2.0 Vision and Objectives

- 2.1 The vision for Altrincham Town Centre is as follows:

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

- 2.2 The aim of the Strategy is to create one of the best market towns in the country and make Altrincham the 'Modern Market Town'. In summary the objectives of the Strategy are to:

- § bring forward development that realises the full potential of Altrincham Town Centre as a key economic driver and the Principal Town Centre in Trafford;
- § improve the quality and diversity of Altrincham's offer and increase footfall and dwell time in the town centre;
- § promote and enhance the development of Altrincham's visitor economy;
- § widen the scope of activities in the town to make it attractive to all age groups;
- § consolidate national operators within a defined town centre core;
- § place Altrincham Market and the surrounding areas at the heart of plans for the future of the town centre;
- § promote an increased town centre residential offer;
- § provide increased opportunities for smaller independent town centre businesses and entrepreneurs;
- § deliver additional employment activity within the town centre and provide effective linkages between employment areas and other town centre uses;
- § link key town centre destinations through high quality public realm, green infrastructure and improved pedestrian and cycle routes through the town centre;
- § improve access by public transport, and maximise the benefits of Altrincham Interchange; and
- § protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre, especially the Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

3.0 Development Opportunities

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

3.2 The development opportunity sites are:

- § The Market Quarter
- § Altair
- § Stamford Quarter
- § Grafton Centre
- § Altrincham Hospital
- § Altrincham Interchange

3.3 The Council will prepare a Town Centre Residential Strategy to support the delivery of sustainable housing growth within Altrincham Town Centre.

4.0 Public Realm and Movement

4.1 The Council commissioned a Public Realm and Movement Strategy for Altrincham town centre in 2012 to guide targeted investment in public space in the town centre, with a particular focus on providing a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists in order to support the local economy and provide an environment appropriate for a modern market town. The accompanying Implementation Strategy identified the ten key street and space public realm projects for Altrincham and sets out strategic programming, outline costing, and project prioritisation.

4.2 The Council will commission the technical design work required to enable delivery of the first phase of public realm works in 2014/15. The two identified priority public realm projects are:

- § Phase One: the route from Shaws Road to Cross Street, George Street, Goose Green (including Denmark Street) and Greenwood Street.
- § Phase Two: the section of Stamford New Road (between Altrincham Interchange and Regent Road), Railway Street (between Regent Road and The Downs junction), Moss Lane (between Stamford New Road and Oakfield Road).

4.3 The Lower Market Place has also been transformed, linked to the delivery of the wider Market Quarter scheme. The delivery of these projects will be fundamental to the future success of Altrincham Town Centre and they interface with the committed development projects of Altrincham Interchange, Altrincham Hospital, the Market Quarter and Altair.

4.4 The Council will also commission a Signage, Parking and Access Strategy alongside the technical design works. This will consider car parking and other parking facilities which may be required for different modes of transport, most particularly cycles, motorcycles and coaches. The strategy will also provide detailed proposals for improvements to car park directional signage and pedestrian way finder signage.

5.0 Other Options

- 5.1 The Strategy bridges the gap between the strategic policy framework provided by the adopted Trafford Core Strategy and more detailed site specific planning policy.
- 5.2 The preparation of the Strategy has been informed by a range of documents that have been produced in recent years. These include the Altrincham Forward Town Centre Action Plans, the Altrincham Town Centre Public Realm and Movement Strategy, Conservation Area Appraisals and the Core Strategy. Drawing the outputs from these workstreams together as part of the Strategy helps to provide a coherent framework to assist in realising the opportunities which exist within Altrincham Town Centre over the next ten years.
- 5.3 The Strategy brings together various pieces of work that have been undertaken in Altrincham over the past few years into a single coherent document, setting out the Council's vision for the town. The absence of an overarching plan for Altrincham Town Centre could result in a lack of clarity in the approach to be taken. The Strategy is not intended to be a formal planning document but it will provide the framework for future formal planning guidance for the town, whether that is the emerging Altrincham Neighbourhood Plan or the Land Allocations Plan.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 Trafford Council invited representations on the consultation draft Strategy for an eight week period from 17 February to 13 April 2014. The Strategy has also taken full account of the findings from the Altrincham Town Centre and Market Survey Report which was commissioned in Summer 2012. All consultation responses received have been fully considered and taken into account in making modifications to the Strategy. The Altrincham Strategy Consultation Report (as attached at Appendix 2) provides a summary of the consultation process and responses received.
- 6.2 The majority of responses received have been positive. A clear majority have stated that they agree with the proposed approach to the regeneration as set out in the Strategy. There is clear support for the regeneration of the town centre with a particular emphasis on the transformation of Altrincham Market, introduction of a wider mix of non-retail uses (including residential), and improvements to the physical environment and public realm. However there are some concerns expressed around the ability to tackle existing empty units, town centre car parking, protection and enhancement of Altrincham's historic character, and the attraction of more independent businesses. Furthermore there is a need to ensure the Strategy recognises the challenges town centres like Altrincham face from changing shopping patterns and trends, particularly the impact of the internet.
- 6.3 To take account of the Consultation feedback the following modifications have been made to the Strategy:
- § The vision and objectives include a stronger reference to businesses and the visitor economy.
 - § Additional detail has been added setting out more clearly the rationale for the Strategy Area boundary.
 - § The Strategy identifies how connectivity with areas located outside the boundary, which nevertheless form part of the town centre offer, will be enhanced through improvements to signage.

- § Further reference to the role of Dunham Massey and Altrincham's schools has been added to the section on assets.
- § The challenges and opportunities section includes additional reference to the specific challenge of changing shopping patterns and the impact of the internet.
- § The function of the identified Town Centre Quarters has been clarified.
- § Additional detail has been added to the Market Quarter development to identify how new uses will operate at this location and connectivity improved with the wider town centre.
- § The development mix now proposed at the Altair scheme has been clarified.
- § Updated information has been included on the development opportunity at the Stamford Quarter following the disposal of this asset by Aviva.
- § Further information has been added to the Grafton Centre development opportunity linked to the emerging public realm and movement proposals for George Street.
- § Additional detail has been added to references to the new hospital development in relation to the proposed drop off and servicing arrangements.
- § Greater prominence has been given to the role of Altrincham Interchange throughout the Strategy.
- § Reference has been made to the buildings in the immediate vicinity of Altrincham Interchange and their role in creating an attractive town centre gateway.
- § Additional detail has been added to the Strategy on the approach to tackling vacant retail and commercial units and bringing these back into active use.
- § A separate strategy will be developed to provide additional detail on how residential development will be brought forward in the town centre.
- § Further public consultation will be undertaken on the proposed public realm and movement improvements as the detailed design work is completed.
- § A specific Signage, Parking and Access Strategy will be prepared for the town centre.

7.0 Next Steps

- 7.1 The successful implementation of the Strategy will help secure the transformation of the town centre.
- 7.2 It is anticipated that the next five years will see the delivery of significant regeneration with a number of physical projects completed in Altrincham Town Centre including:
- § Completion of the new Altrincham Interchange
 - § Completion of the new Altrincham Hospital
 - § Refurbishment of Market House and the covered market
 - § Delivery of the two priority public realm projects and the Lower Market Place improvements
 - § Opening of the Altrincham Fab Lab facility
 - § Development of the Altair scheme
 - § Completion of the new Altrincham Library
 - § Redevelopment of the Old Hospital site as part of the Market Quarter
- 7.3 The successful delivery of these key projects will contribute to the achievement of the vision and primary objective to make Altrincham a thriving and successful destination and create the 'Modern Market Town'.

Reasons for Recommendations

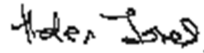
The Executive is asked to approve the Altrincham Strategy which will form the Council's strategy for securing the revitalisation of Altrincham Town Centre over the next ten years.

Key Decision: Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer ClearanceGB.....

Legal Officer ClearanceEO.....



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

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