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# Altrincham

## Strategy



July 2014

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# The Altrincham Strategy

## Introduction

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



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



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

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

## ***Rationale for the Altrincham Strategy***

The Altrincham Strategy will provide a coherent framework to assist in realising the opportunities which exist within Altrincham Town Centre over the next 10 years, support future formal planning guidance and provide a strategic co-ordinated approach to the management of the town centre.

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

### ***Public Consultation***

Trafford Council invited representations on the consultation draft Altrincham Strategy for an 8 week period from 17 February to 13 April 2014. The Altrincham 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.

### ***Structure of the Altrincham Strategy***

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

## **The Strategy Area**

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

The Altrincham Strategy area, as shown in Figure 1 below, reflects the current work of Altrincham Forward and the work undertaken in respect of the proposed Business Neighbourhood Plan.

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

The rationale for the boundary is to support increased economic activity within the town centre, provide opportunities to deliver improvements to its vitality and viability, and enable development sites to be brought forward. It will help ensure that existing town centre uses are maintained and enhanced, active uses are encouraged within the town's historic buildings and support the implementation of proposed public realm improvements. It also encompasses sites where there are opportunities for future change to improve town centre performance and broaden the scope of activities and uses.

It is recognised that there are a number of important uses, such as the Garrick Theatre, Stamford Park, John Leigh Park and Dunham Massey, which are located outside of the area boundary but still form a key part of Altrincham's offer. These need to link more effectively with the town centre through public realm and movement improvements alongside more effective signage if Altrincham is to maximise the potential of these assets.

# Figure 1: Altrincham Strategy Area

Scale 1:3,750 @ A3

As At 16 Jun 2014



**Legend**  
— Strategy Area  
— Boundary

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## **Vision and Objectives**

### ***The Vision***

The vision for Altrincham Town Centre is as follows:

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

To achieve this Vision:

*‘The town centre will be an attractive destination, accessible by foot, car, cycle and public transport, with routes that reflect its historic urban grain. High quality public realm and green infrastructure will link Altrincham’s key destinations effectively. The town centre will contain lively shopping streets where independent businesses thrive alongside national chains. The national retail and leisure operators will be consolidated in the existing retail heart with a new boutique quarter to the south of the primary shopping area. An enhanced Market Quarter will strengthen the role of one of Altrincham’s most important heritage assets and provide a focus for leisure, cultural and distinctive outlets alongside a relaxing space for events. The town centre will benefit from a varied and attractive cultural offer that provides distinct reasons to visit. Altrincham will be a high quality business location that encourages innovation with excellent connections, office space, business support and a strong local skills base. Altrincham’s employment areas will be well integrated with the rest of the town centre to provide effective linkages to retail and leisure facilities. The provision of new housing within the town centre will be encouraged, including the development of unused, under used or derelict land for residential uses, where appropriate.*

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

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the Altrincham Strategy are to:

- bring forward development that realises the full potential of Altrincham Town Centre as a key economic driver and the Principal Town Centre in Trafford;
- improve the quality and diversity of Altrincham’s offer supporting an increase in footfall and dwell time within 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;
- improve access by public transport and maximise the benefits of Altrincham Interchange; and
- protect and enhance the historic character of the town centre, especially the Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

## **Altrincham and its Assets**

Altrincham is Trafford's Principal Town Centre and one of the Borough's key drivers of economic growth. It has a long tradition of serving local people with a good choice of shops and services. It contains a mix of high street and convenience retailers, independent shops, services and restaurants, residential properties and excellent access to public transport with links to the Manchester City Region and wider area. There is good provision of both private and Council operated car parking. The town has an enviable built and cultural heritage with attractive period buildings, streets and spaces.

It is a hub for small to medium sized businesses, particularly in the retail, finance and professional services sectors. Businesses are attracted by competitive office rents compared to Manchester City Centre, Altrincham's excellent location and accessibility, an appealing lifestyle and the highly skilled local workforce. The town has a significantly higher proportion of senior, managerial and professional occupations than the national rate, as well as a higher percentage of local entrepreneurs<sup>1</sup>.

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

### ***Altrincham's Assets***

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

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

### ***Historic Character***

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



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<sup>1</sup> Office of National Statistics (2013)



an inherent identity and character.

### **Accessibility**

Altrincham Town Centre benefits from excellent road and public transport connections. The A56 and A560 provide connections from the wider motorway network. The Altrincham Interchange, located in the heart of the town centre, provides regular connections from destinations across Greater Manchester and beyond by bus, train and Manchester Metrolink. Altrincham is well connected to Manchester Airport, the third busiest airport in the UK, which provides fast routes across the UK and to the rest of the world. The town is therefore ideally placed to take advantage of opportunities arising out of Manchester Airport City, a landmark office, logistics and advanced manufacturing development.



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

### **Compact and Walkable Town Centre**

Altrincham is a compact and walkable town centre with strong linkages to surrounding residential areas. There is a wide range of retail, leisure, cultural and community destinations located within a 20 minute walk from the heart of the town. These include Stamford Park, John Leigh Park, the Garrick Theatre, Silver Blades Ice Rink, Vue cinema, Altrincham Football Club and Navigation Road Recreation Ground.

### **Established Destinations**

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



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

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



Altrincham has an important role as an employment location and there are approximately 11,000 jobs located in the town centre<sup>2</sup>. Businesses are particularly attracted by Altrincham's accessibility, facilities, highly skilled workforce and quality of life. A number of local and regional commercial and professional service businesses are located within Altrincham, particularly in the area to the north of the town centre.

### ***Independent Sector***

The presence of a number of excellent independent retailers and other businesses within the town centre contributes significantly to the unique character and overall wellbeing of Altrincham. A thriving independent sector helps to attract visitors and supports other local businesses as the money spent in them is more likely to be re-circulated within the local economy. Altrincham has benefited from the opening of over 25 new independent businesses within the town centre in 2013.

### ***Education and Skills***

Altrincham has some of the highest educational standards in the UK, reflected in the strength of the town's primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form colleges. There are 16 high performing primary schools serving the Altrincham area which are all rated as 'outstanding' or 'good'. All of Altrincham's secondary schools are rated as 'outstanding'. The town has been ranked as the best place in the country to live

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<sup>2</sup> Business Register and Employment Survey (2012)

for schools<sup>3</sup>. Trafford College, one of the top 10 per cent of colleges in the UK and graded 'outstanding' for teaching and learning excellence, has a campus to the north of the town centre.

Altrincham Town Centre is located in an area with a highly skilled and educated population. The proportion of residents in the town and surrounding area who hold degree level or higher qualifications is 50 per cent above the national average and 70 per cent above the average for the North West.

### ***Green Assets and Recreational Attractions***

Altrincham is located adjacent to the Cheshire countryside. Stamford Park, John Leigh Park and Denzell Gardens provide attractive areas of public open space within close proximity to the heart of the town. The Bridgewater Canal which links Manchester City Centre with the Cheshire Countryside runs less than a mile from the town centre. The major recreational



destinations of the Dunham Massey Estate and Bollin Valley Way are also located a short distance away. Dunham Massey attracts in excess of 500,000 visitors per annum and is a major tourist attraction that makes a significant contribution to the local economy and fulfils an important social role, for example through the provision of volunteering opportunities. Altrincham Golf Course is a public 18 hole facility and located within a mile of the town centre. Altrincham Football Club, a semi-professional team, is based approximately a mile to the south east of the town centre at a 6,000 capacity stadium.

### ***Local Commitment and Leadership***

There is strong commitment at the local level to deliver a revitalised town centre in Altrincham, address the key challenges that it faces and maximise the potential of its assets. Altrincham Forward was established in 2011 to bring together the town's key stakeholders in a single partnership to drive forward change. Following a review of its structure in 2014 Altrincham Forward Board has a membership of nine comprising the Leader of the Council as Chair; two further Council nominees; three business representatives; and three community representatives. The Board is supported by three sub-groups covering the areas of people, place and economy. This partnership approach, involving a wide range of individuals and organisations, will help to realise the opportunity to deliver a new Altrincham Town Centre.

Work commenced in September 2013 on the preparation of a Business Neighbourhood Plan for the town centre. The Altrincham Town Centre Business Neighbourhood Forum submitted its application to the Council for the formal designation of the Business Neighbourhood Area and Business Neighbourhood Forum in January 2014. The Altrincham Strategy will act as part of the evidence base for any future Neighbourhood Plan or other formal planning guidance.

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<sup>3</sup> The Sunday Times Best Places to Live survey (2013)

## Challenges and Opportunities

### ***National Economy***

As a consequence of the recent recession and knock on effect on investor and developer confidence a number of town centre development schemes across the country have either been cancelled or put on hold. Retailers and other town centre businesses have experienced tough trading conditions with numerous high-profile retailers having gone out of business or into administration in the last few years including Woolworths, HMV, Adams, MFI, Zavvi, Borders and TJ Hughes. In response to declining town centre sales other retailers have closed some stores to rationalise their portfolio or reduced previous expansion plans. Furthermore numerous town centres across the country have witnessed an increase in vacancies, the loss of anchor stores and a decline in town centre development.

Nationally retail rental levels and yields have been adversely affected by a combination of the poor performance of retailers, a decline in consumer spending power and limited access to investment capital.

Whilst there has been a recovery in the level of consumer spending over the last 12 months much of this growth has been focused on larger centres and out of centre destinations. Town centres nationally have also been affected by changes in shopping patterns, including the growth of online retail. *Retail Futures 2018*<sup>4</sup> forecasts that by 2018 the share of online retail sales will rise from 12.7 per cent (2012) to 21.5 per cent. Customers now 'shop' in multiple ways and the town centre will need to adapt to these changing patterns; new technology is likely to play an increasingly important role. Whilst an increasing quantum of retail sales will be online there will be opportunities for innovation in town centres. Retailers will need to identify how their physical stores integrate with online sites and other channels coherently, including social media. Town centre retailers will have an opportunity to market themselves as convenient hubs for the collection of goods purchased online, for example through high street lockers and click and collect schemes. To support independent businesses adapt to this changing environment Altrincham was the first town in the country to trial the National Skills Academy for Retail's Digital High Street training.

In the future the high street will need to balance the need for convenience and value with a desire for quality and service whilst making use of technology to enrich experiences. If it is to be a successful town centre there will be greater demands on Altrincham to offer unique retail, cultural and social experiences, with increased town centre living, service and leisure outlets and facilities for the local community. Any reduction in land or premises required for retail will provide new opportunities for the growth of other uses. The town centre will also need to provide an increase in a mix of activities outside traditional 9am-5pm shopping hours.

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<sup>4</sup> Retail in 2018 - Shop numbers, Online and the High Street. Centre for Retail Research (2013)

Altrincham is part of a national High Streets 2020 project which will identify how town centres can become sustainable in the future. It is also one of seven town centres that received funding as part of the national High Street Renewal Fund, which rewarded areas delivering the most effective and innovative plans to bring their town centres back to life.

### ***Current Town Centre Performance***

Altrincham Town Centre includes approximately 400 ground floor units and over 50,000 sq.m<sup>5</sup> of retail floorspace. In February 2014 there were 79 vacant town centre units, excluding sites earmarked for redevelopment. This equates to a vacancy rate of 19 per cent<sup>6</sup>. There are a number of large vacant units in prominent locations including the former JJB and New Look stores. In Altrincham Town Centre 65 per cent of the retail and leisure operators are independents compared to an average of 46 per cent in the North West and at national level<sup>7</sup>.

The town centre has a primary catchment area population of 109,000 residents (within a 10 minute drive time) and a secondary catchment population of 402,000 residents (within a 20 minute drive time)<sup>8</sup>. Whilst the local catchment area is relatively affluent, the retail performance of the town centre has suffered due to strong competition from other destinations, particularly Manchester City Centre and the Trafford Centre, alongside changes to the national retail market including the growth of online retail. Without continued intervention to provide a more attractive and competitive retail offer alongside a more diverse town centre experience it is likely that retail expenditure and investment will be increasingly attracted to other centres.

Altrincham Town Centre has experienced similar pressures to other town centres as a consequence of the recent recession and national trends affecting the retail market. Consequently the town centre retail property market is in a period of transition.

Analysis in Altrincham identifies capacity to support new and refurbished comparison retail development up to 2021 ensuring that the town centre is the primary focus for this type of development<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Altrincham Office Market***

Altrincham is part of the South Manchester office market<sup>10</sup>. Altrincham's key strengths in its office market relate to the quality of economic activity located in the centre and the relatively strong performance of the private sector knowledge based and creative industry employment sectors. Altrincham Town Centre is perceived to

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<sup>5</sup> DTZ Town Centre Assessment, 2011

<sup>6</sup> Trafford Council (2014)

<sup>7</sup> Springboard, January 2013

<sup>8</sup> Javelin Report 2011

<sup>9</sup> DTZ Town Centre Assessment, 2011

<sup>10</sup> The South Manchester office market comprises Alderley Edge, Altrincham, Cheadle, Didsbury, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Poynton, Sale, Stockport and Wilmslow

be a location of choice for higher skilled office based activity, particularly professional and financial services due to its excellent connectivity.

The town centre contains in the region of 112,000 sq.m office floorspace<sup>11</sup>.

Recent trends across the South Manchester office market have shown an increasing move towards out of centre office locations, in line with national trends. Altrincham Town Centre is not immune to these pressures and market share has been lost to out of centre

business parks. A total of some 1,114 sq.m office floorspace was let within Altrincham Town Centre in 2013, the lowest amount in the last five years<sup>12</sup>.



However, whilst the current market for office floorspace is relatively flat an increase in the amount of office floorspace in the town centre would help to support and enhance the town centre offer. There has been recent growth in the demand for high quality and flexible office space within Altrincham, particularly from the knowledge and creative industries sector.

### ***Altrincham Residential Property Market***



In 2013 the residential market started to show signs of recovery following the downturn during the recession, with a 4.2% increase in average house price growth nationally<sup>13</sup>. The Altrincham residential property market has historically been very strong and is made up of a large proportion of owner occupiers. House prices are above the borough, regional and national averages.

Average house prices within Altrincham are in the region of £300,000. However, house prices are lower than those in areas immediately to the south such as Bowdon and Hale where average prices are in excess of £400,000<sup>14</sup>.

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

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<sup>11</sup> GM Town Centres Review (Drivas Jonas, April 2009)

<sup>12</sup> Estates Gazette Interactive, March 2013

<sup>13</sup> Land Registry House Price Index (2013)

<sup>14</sup> Land Registry (2013)

## **Public Realm and Movement**

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

The existing public realm suffers from a fragmentation of key areas and a lack of any sense of arrival at gateways into the town centre. The provision of attractive town centre gateways and safe, efficient and attractive routes is essential to the future success of Altrincham Town Centre. The majority of the existing footways are along busy roads and in pedestrianised areas which are typically seen to lack activity when the retail units are closed. There is a perception that walking distances are long due to the lack of animation in the streetscape.



Altrincham Town Centre has excellent connections to the rest of Trafford and the wider sub-region by road and public transport. The Altrincham Interchange, which is currently undergoing a major redevelopment, is the main arrival point for public transport users and facilitates access to buses, trains and the Manchester Metrolink. The town centre is served by approximately 4,700 public car parking spaces which are a mix of public and private and located both on and off street.

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

## **Altrincham's Heritage**



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

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

## Town Centre Quarters

The Altrincham Strategy identifies six distinct 'quarters within the town centre. These defined areas have a number of distinct characteristics and roles

### ***Market Quarter***



The Market Quarter contains the Grade II listed Market House and outdoor Market area. Whilst Altrincham Market Hall is recognised as a key asset within the town centre, it has been recognised as an underperforming facility in recent years. The area also contains a number of other heritage assets, such as the Hospital site on Central Way and Shaws Road along

with Altrincham Town Hall.

The Market Quarter will form a new heart for the town centre with spaces to act as a focus for events and attractive pedestrian links to other areas of the town. The redevelopment of the existing hospital site will provide opportunities for a mixed use scheme, including residential, commercial and community uses. There will be a strong connection between the Market Quarter and both the Evening Economy Quarter and Boutique Quarter where there are existing and proposed complementary uses.

### ***Anchor Retail Quarter***

National operators will continue to dominate the main shopping area in Altrincham. This area will act as the Anchor Retail Quarter, functioning as the focus for national retail and leisure operators. Although shopping habits and the future form and content of these streets may change, it is proposed that comparison retail uses will continue to dominate the Stamford Quarter and the northern end of George Street; their offer will strengthen as the town continues to revitalise. This will not preclude the presence of other town centre uses in this area, including residential development above retail and commercial units.



### ***Boutique Quarter***

The Boutique Quarter is centred along the southern end of George Street, Greenwood Street and Stamford New Road. The consolidation of national operators into the Anchor Retail Quarter will provide opportunities for small independent retailers alongside cafes and bars in the Boutique Quarter.



It is proposed to bring in activity beyond the traditional 9am to 5pm shopping hours, encourage new investment into residential, leisure and office development and secure an improved street environment. New uses will be encouraged in vacant retail units which will give people a range of reasons to visit Altrincham. There will be a strong connection between the Boutique Quarter and both the Evening Economy Quarter and Market Quarter where there are existing and proposed complementary uses.



### ***Leisure Quarter***



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

by the railway line, major roads and poor public realm. Connectivity between the north and south of the Leisure Quarter is also poor, particularly for pedestrians.

The proposed Altair development will further support the development of the Leisure Quarter and complement the existing town centre offer through provision of a mixed use leisure, commercial and residential scheme. New green infrastructure will improve linkages between these leisure destinations and the rest of the town centre. The activity in the Leisure Quarter will have a strong connection to the complementary uses, particularly those within the adjoining Evening Economy Quarter and Boutique Quarter.

### ***Evening Economy Quarter***

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



Uses in this area should also be sensitive to both existing and proposed town centre residential development. The Evening Economy Quarter should also link effectively

with both the Market Quarter and Boutique Quarter where there are existing and proposed complementary uses.

### ***Commercial Quarter***



The town centre plays an important role as an employment location with occupiers attracted by Altrincham's accessibility, facilities and quality of life. The Commercial Quarter to the north of the town centre comprises the land bounded by Church Street, Woodlands Road and Grosvenor Road and contains the main concentration of office floorspace within Altrincham. This area needs to integrate more effectively with the wider town centre and provide customers to support the retail and leisure offer within Altrincham. It also has the potential to offer scope for additional residential development.

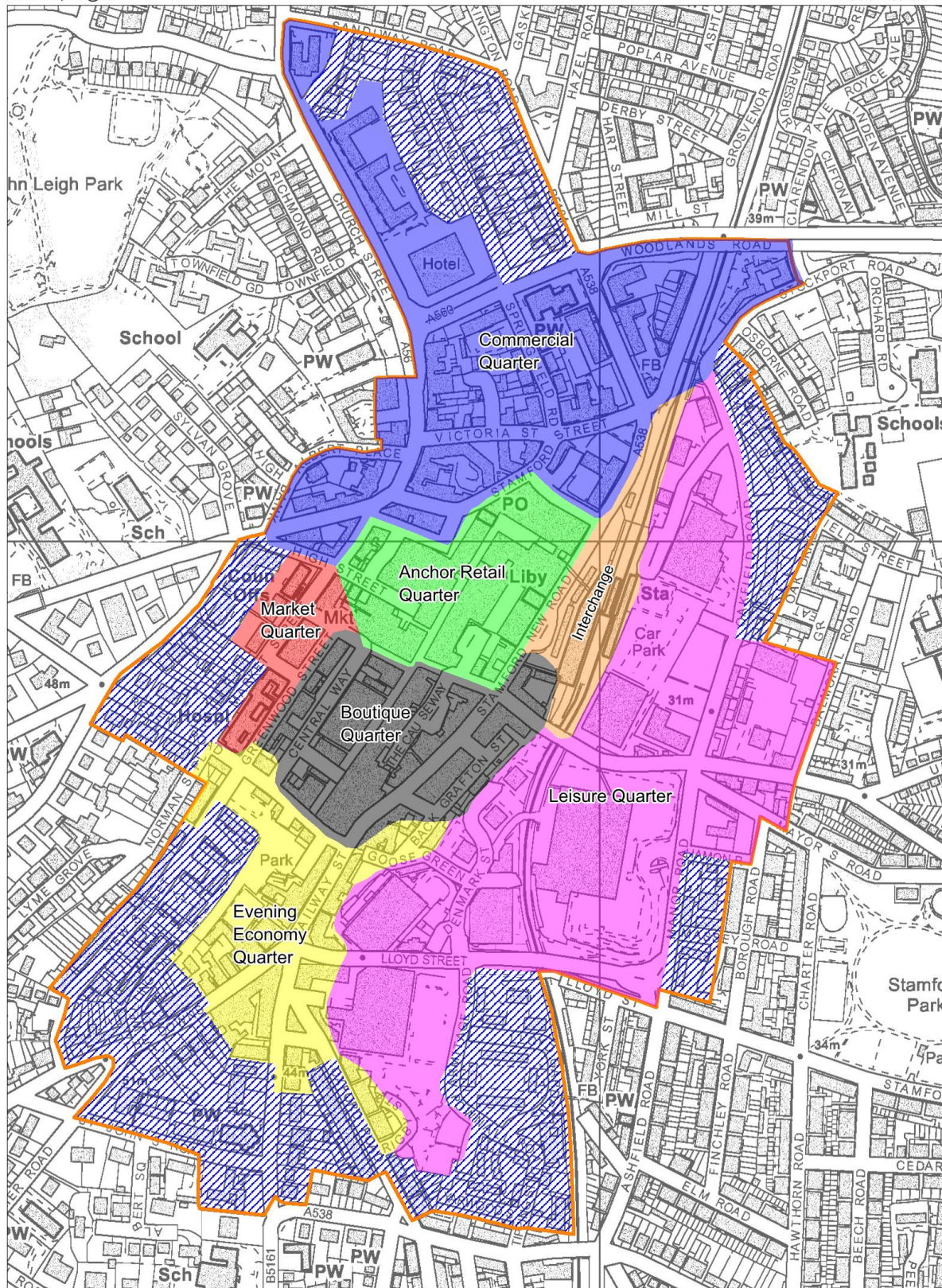
### ***Existing Residential Areas***

Within the Strategy boundary there are a number of established residential areas adjacent to the identified town centre quarters. The existing and proposed uses within Altrincham Town Centre should be sensitive to the role and character of these established residential areas. There are opportunities to improve the connectivity between these areas and the rest of the town centre, particularly for pedestrians.

**Figure 2: Altrincham Town Centre Quarters**

Scale 1:3,750 @ A3

As At 17 Jun 2014



**Legend**

- Strategy Area Boundary
- Existing Residential Area

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## Development Opportunities

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

### **Site 1: Market Quarter**

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

The first phase in the creation of the Market Quarter will be the refurbishment of the Grade II Listed Market House and the covered market alongside improvements to the Lower Market Place area with shared space public realm, providing an open and inviting space to support the operation of the market and complementary events. This space will be complemented with new lock-up market units, a canopy and market stalls.



In December 2013, the Council signed an agreement to transfer the running of Altrincham Market to Market Operations Limited. This will support its transformation as part of a vibrant new Market Quarter. A new modern fine food offer will be delivered, combined with extended operating hours and a wide programme of events to draw a diverse range of visitors into the heart of Altrincham.

On completion of the new Altrincham Hospital facility at Railway Street, the existing hospital site on Market Street will become vacant. This will enable this site to be redeveloped as part of a mixed use scheme, including residential uses, commercial space, the relocation of Altrincham Library from Stamford New Road, and a new pedestrianised space forming part of the Market Quarter.



### **Site 2: Altair**

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

The site is identified in the Trafford Core Strategy for a mixed use development. The Council is currently working with Nikal to bring forward development of the Altair site. Outline planning consent was granted in January 2014 for a £70m mixed use development anchored by an ice rink and leisure facility with supporting restaurant and café uses, office space and residential units.

The proposed development will support the development of the Leisure Quarter and complement the existing town centre offer. The scheme has been designed to provide convenient and attractive linkages to the surrounding area, avoiding the creation of an enclave separate from the established town centre.

### **Site 3: Stamford Quarter**

The first phase of the Stamford Quarter redevelopment was completed in 2009. This area contains the majority of the town centre's national retailers and a 700 space car park. A proposed future phase could include the redevelopment of the older frontages along George Street and Stamford New Road to provide a more attractive shopping environment. The delivery of more active uses along the Stamford New Road frontage would also vastly improve the first impression of the town centre that many visitors experience when arriving from the Altrincham Interchange, a key gateway into the town centre. There is potential to deliver new residential development above ground floor retail uses at the Stamford Quarter. There are also opportunities to deliver further improvements to the public realm along George Street, including new street furniture.



### **Site 4: Grafton Centre**

The Grafton Centre is Altrincham's other main shopping centre and provides an opportunity for a town centre offer that is complementary to Altrincham's retail heart and includes a wider mix of uses. The centre has recently been partially refurbished and contains a range of retail, food and leisure businesses. A 91 room

Travelodge hotel was completed in the existing office tower in 2012 as part of the scheme. The indoor retail arcade currently contains several small units which link George Street with Stamford New Road and provides a potential redevelopment opportunity.

There is potential to convert the space above existing retail units to other uses such as flexible commercial space or residential. Vacant retail units on George Street opposite the Grafton Centre also provide opportunities for conversion to new uses.

### **Site 5: Altrincham Hospital**

Development of the new £17m Altrincham Hospital facility on Railway Street will be completed in Spring 2015. The site is being delivered by Pochin Property in partnership with Citybranch and Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.



The completed development will comprise a new hospital facility including a minor injuries unit, out-patient consultation and treatment rooms, physiotherapy, X-ray, ultrasound and blood testing services. A drop off zone will be provided at the main entrance on Railway Street along with an ambulance and delivery bay to ensure traffic flows are not adversely affected.

The redevelopment of this site will facilitate the refurbishment and redevelopment of another key development opportunity in the town centre, the existing hospital site on Market Street.

### **Site 6: Altrincham Interchange**



The Altrincham Interchange is undergoing a major redevelopment to deliver a significantly enhanced facility. Its transformation will provide an impressive new town centre gateway and make visiting or working in Altrincham a more attractive proposition. Transport for Greater Manchester will complete work on the new £19m Altrincham Interchange facility in 2014.

The key objective of the new Interchange will be to create an integrated facility which is efficient, sustainable and fully accessible providing links between bus, train and Metrolink services. It will also provide upgraded passenger information systems, a new integrated ticket office and dedicated Cycle Hub providing secure, covered cycle parking for more than 50 bicycles.

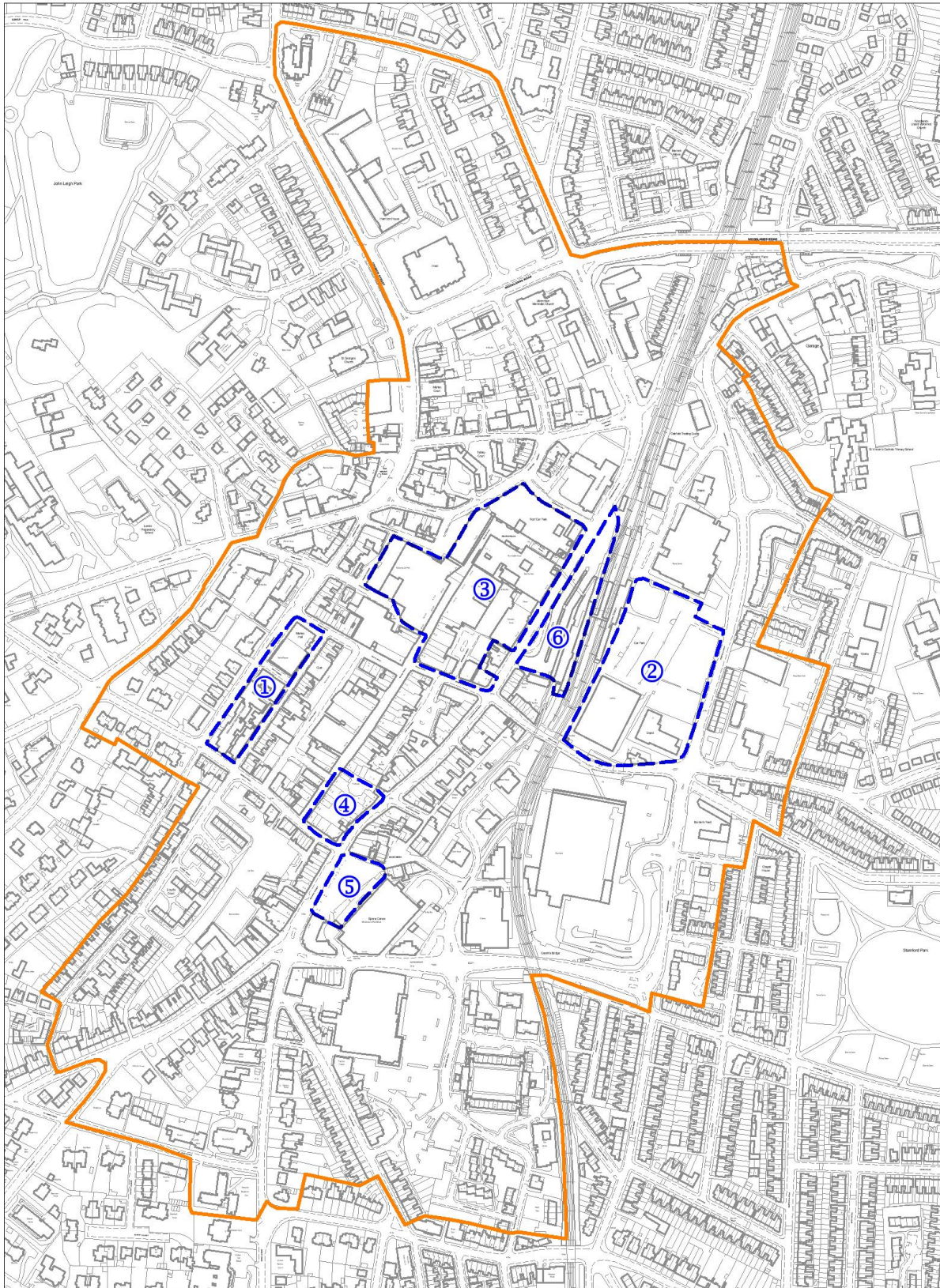
### **Town Centre Residential Strategy**

The Council is preparing a specific Town Centre Residential Strategy. This will provide additional detail to support the delivery of sustainable housing growth within Altrincham Town Centre. An increased town centre residential population can help support the wider regeneration of Altrincham. It can help to sustain a wide mix of day time uses, increase town centre footfall and expenditure, support the development of the evening economy and provide additional activity and vibrancy outside normal shopping hours. The development of new residential accommodation will also provide excellent opportunities for bringing vacant or under-used sites and buildings back into active and sustainable uses, where appropriate. New residential development can also support the delivery of mixed use schemes within the town centre.

**Figure 3: Development Opportunities**

Scale 1:3,750 @ A3

As At 17 Jun 2014



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

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## **Public Realm and Movement Improvements**

The Altrincham Public Realm and Movement Strategy proposed a series of public realm improvements to create places for people to dwell and enjoy a variety of activities. Enhanced gateways will mark the arrival into the town centre. The de-cluttering of the street scene, a distinctive pallet of materials, landscaping or artwork, widening of footpaths, use of historic ginnels and creation of active frontages at key destinations will help enhance pedestrian connectivity across the town centre whilst building on Altrincham's unique character.

Public Realm and Movement improvements should also seek to strengthen linkages with important destinations outside the town centre boundary including the Garrick Theatre, Stamford Park, John Leigh Park and Dunham Massey.

### ***Vehicular Movement***

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

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

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

### ***Pedestrian Movement***

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

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

### ***Implementing the Public Realm and Movement Strategy***

Following the completion of the Public Realm and Movement Strategy in early 2013, an implementation strategy for short and medium term projects was prepared



alongside further outline design work for the identified priority projects. The Implementation Strategy identifies the ten key street and space public realm projects for Altrincham and sets out strategic programming, outline costing, and project prioritisation.

The 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).

The Lower Market Place has also been transformed, linked to the delivery of the wider Market Quarter scheme.

The delivery of these priority projects, which interface with the committed development projects of the Altrincham Interchange, Altrincham Hospital, the Market Quarter and Altair, will be fundamental to the future success of Altrincham Town Centre.

Parking is recognised as an important feature in ensuring Altrincham's vitality. The town centre should have an appropriate balance of available short stay parking spaces close to the shops, businesses and leisure facilities. Therefore the Council will commission a specific 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.

## **Town Centre Management and Appearance**

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

The Council and Altrincham Forward are facilitating the attraction of new businesses in the town centre via the Town Centre Loan Scheme, provision of specific advice on available premises, business support and joint marketing opportunities with other businesses in the town centre. The Altrincham Landlords Forum has been established to share information and develop schemes to increase investment in the town centre and attract a diverse mix of new businesses.

The enhancement of the town centre streetscape and provision of high quality public realm is an important part in the creation of a pleasant shopping environment and improved business and investor confidence. Within the town centre there are a number of building frontages that are currently in poor condition. Work is being undertaken with landlord and agents to address poorly maintained buildings, whether occupied or vacant. A section 215 programme is underway to tackle properties in disrepair and a number of buildings have already been repaired, repainted and enhanced.

A range of town centre events are on offer throughout the years. Additional activities continue to be developed with businesses to attract more visitors, encourage them to stay longer, support the performance of the town centre, and make return visits.

### ***Conservation Area Appraisals***

The Altrincham Strategy is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content in relation to architectural and historic assets within the town centre. In relation to these matters, particularly within the five Conservation Areas of George Street; Goose Green; The Old Market Place; The Downs and; Stamford New Road, reference will need to be made to the emerging Conservation Area



Appraisals and Management Plans together with the Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Proposals Map and the Trafford Core Strategy.

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

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

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

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

## **Delivering the Strategy**

### **Governance**

The Council is working in partnership with Altrincham Forward to spearhead the revitalisation of Altrincham. It brings together people who can influence positive change to ensure that Altrincham addresses its problems and fulfils its potential. The Board is supported by officers from Trafford Council, the Altrincham Town Team and three sub-groups (Place, People and Economy) that bring together a range of stakeholders with specific expertise to support the development of specific projects.

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

### **Key Actions for 2014-2016**

The following key actions have been identified for the period 2014-2016

- Preparation of technical design works for public realm improvements will be completed in 2014 to support the delivery of the first phase of works. This will be accompanied by a Signage, Parking and Access Strategy.
- An initial phase of the public realm improvements will complete at the Lower Market Place area in 2014.
- An investment programme to transform the Grade II Listed Market House will commence in 2014 as part of the creation of the new Market Quarter.
- A Town Centre Residential Strategy will be prepared for the town centre in 2014.
- An Investment Pack for Altrincham will be launched in 2014 to support landlords and agents in attracting new operators to the town.
- A funding package to deliver a Fab Lab facility in the town centre will be prepared with a target launch in 2014.
- Transport for Greater Manchester will deliver the new Altrincham Interchange for the end of 2014.
- Work will be undertaken with Citybranch to advance plans for the current hospital site (including the relocation of Altrincham Library) as part of the Market Quarter redevelopment for implementation once the current hospital vacates in 2015.
- The Landlords Forum will continue to be supported to promote the exchange of ideas, development of projects and sharing best practice in support of the regeneration of the town.

## Phasing Plan

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

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

The successful delivery of these key physical 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'.