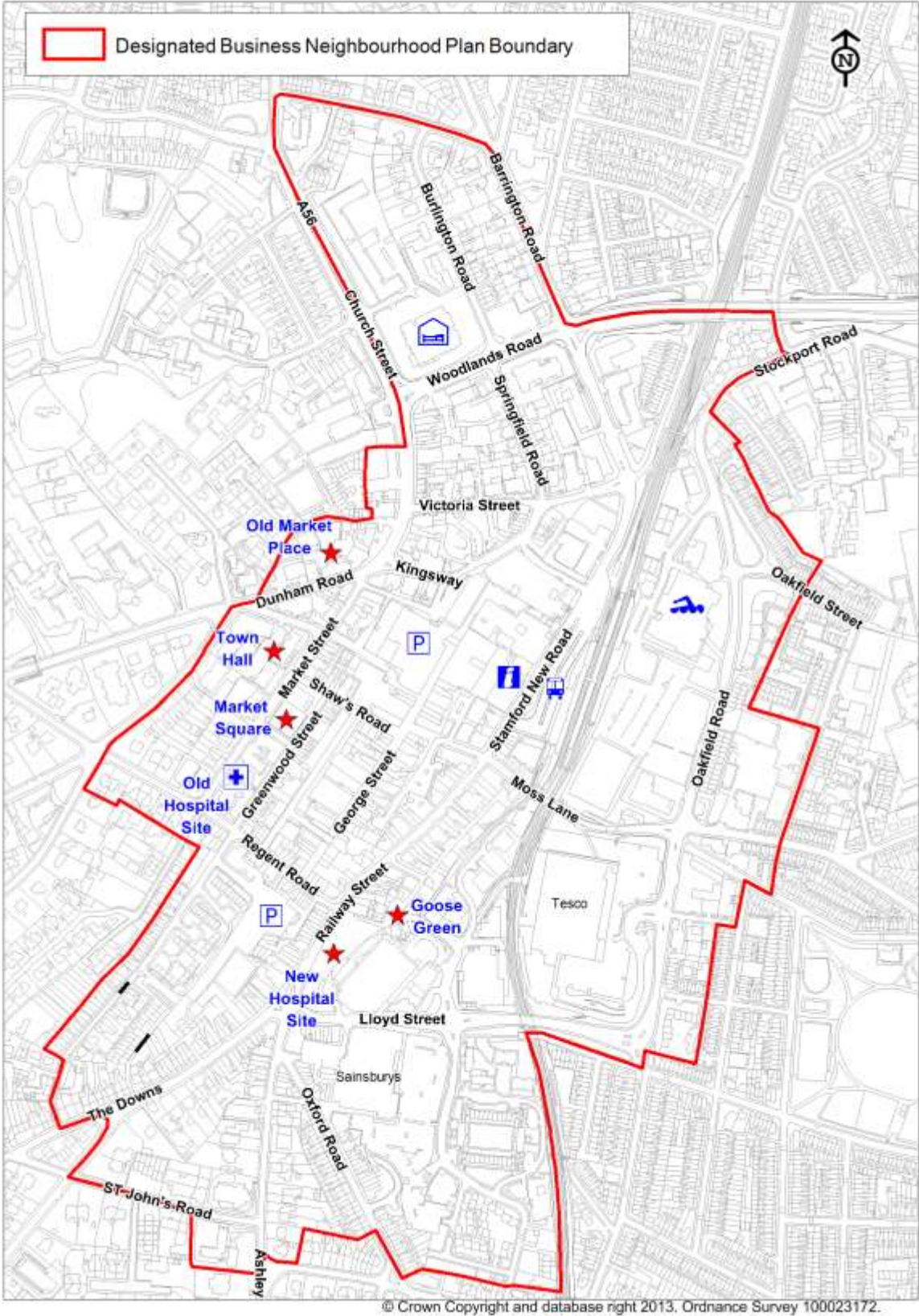


Appendix 1 – The Business Neighbourhood Plan Area



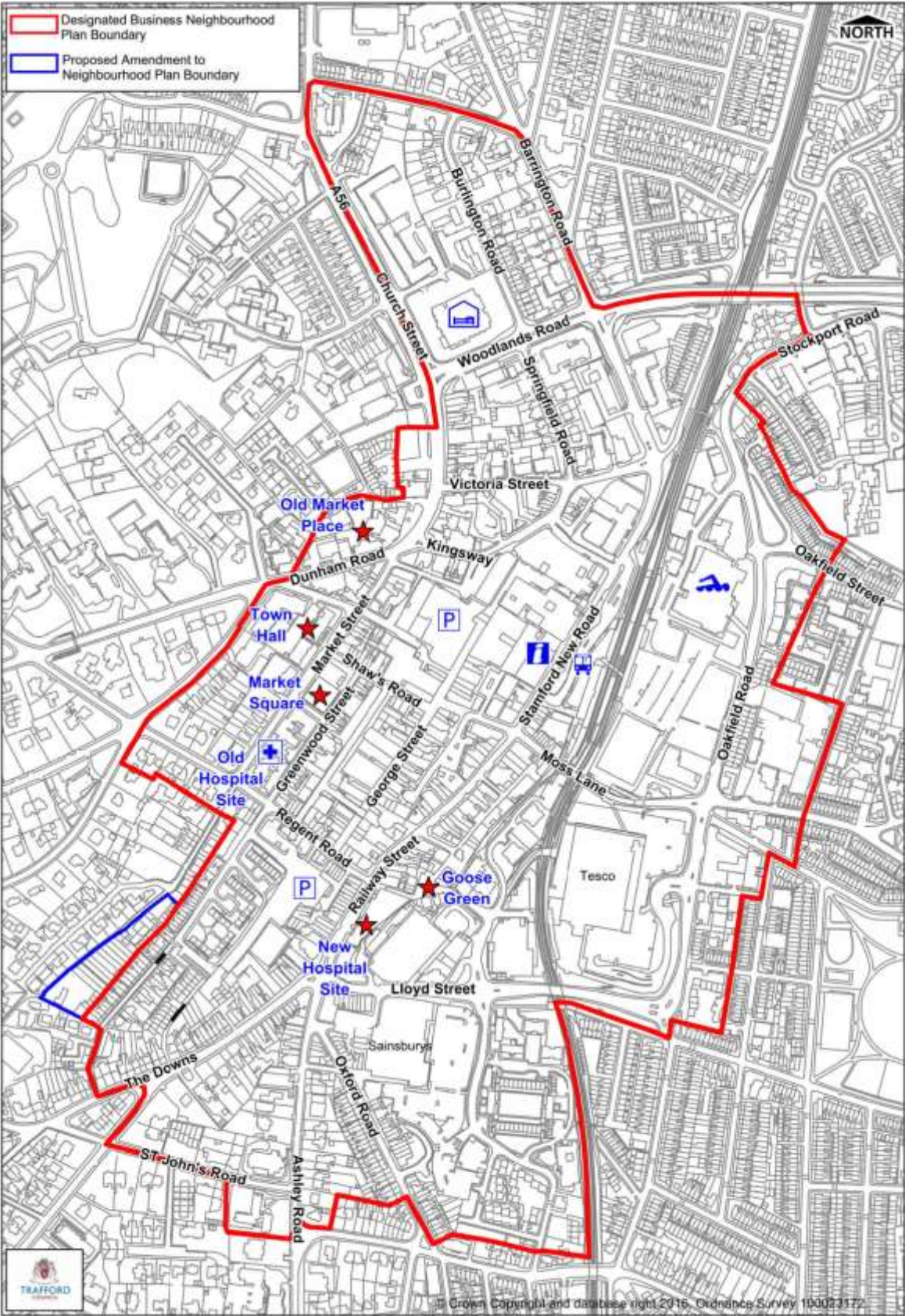
## Appendix 2 – Examiner’s Proposed Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Proposed Modification	Recommendation
PM1	Page 3, paragraph 1.4.4	Last sentence: An adopted Neighbourhood Plan has statutory status which gives it more weight than <u>some</u> other local planning documents such as Supplementary Planning <del>Guidance Documents</del> or Area Action Plans.	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan
PM2	Page 13, paragraph 4.1.5  Page 14, Policy ‘A’  Site F, last bullet point	Given the complexity of the site ...., an overall ‘master plan, <u>or development framework</u> should be prepared, <del>led by the Council,</del> to provide an integrated context .....  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure the development of an overall master plan <u>or development framework</u>, <del>led by the Council,</del> to ensure effective ...</li> </ul>	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan
PM3	Page 15, paragraph 4.2.7	The Plan also recognises the importance of the town centre attracting one or more <u>small or medium-sized</u> convenience stores in response to the <del>increasing development and importance of the ‘convenience culture’ which is rooted in the</del> growing desire to shift from the one-stop out-of-centre facilities to convenience at the local level, with positive effects .... Convenience retailing <u>at a more local level</u> has grown steadily ... A <u>small or medium-sized convenience store</u> is defined as being no more .....	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan
PM4	Page 24, Policy G1	G1 – Proposals for public realm should ....including green pedestrian and cycling routes; <u>and improvement to or provision of new public open space. New</u>	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan

		<u>development or redevelopment should contribute to enhancement of the public realm wherever possible having regard for viability and costs.</u>	
PM5	Page 38, paragraph 3.5	There are also a number of green walking routes which lead into the primary town centre (see Plan C: Movement in the <u>Non-Statutory Annex</u> ).	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan
PM6	Page 49, Appendix 4	References to national guidance on heritage assets, and to Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans should be added as follows:  <a href="https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/conservation-areas/">https://www.historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/conservation-areas/</a>  <a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/changing-face-high-street-decline-revival/">https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/changing-face-high-street-decline-revival/</a>  Trafford Council Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans  <a href="http://trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/local-development-framework/supplementary-planning-documents.aspx">http://trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/local-development-framework/supplementary-planning-documents.aspx</a>	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan
PM7	Plans 2-6 inclusive on pages 6,36,37,40,28	Amend the boundary so that the rear gardens of the houses along New Street and 4 additional properties are included within the town centre boundary (as per Reg 16 consultation response from Bowdon Downs Residents' Association)	Agree with proposed modification – Make change to the plan boundary

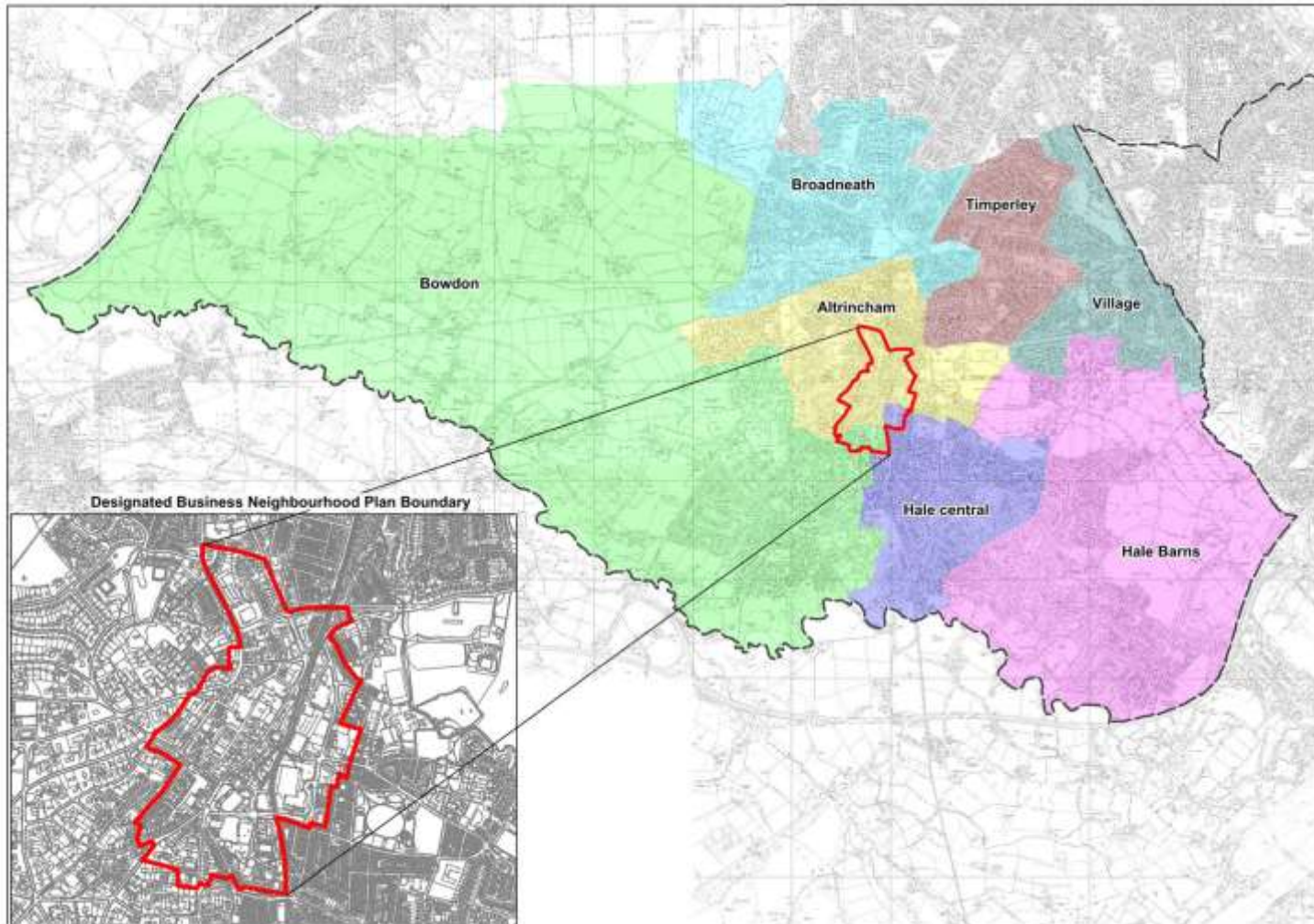


**Appendix 3 – The Business Neighbourhood Plan Area incorporating the Examiner’s proposed modification PM7**





**Appendix 4 - Alternative Referendum boundary based on the Wards of Altrincham, Bowdon, Broadheath, Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village – Presented to the Examiner in the Council’s response at Regulation 16**



## **Appendix 5 – Correspondence between the Forum and Director of Growth and Regulatory Services**



Mr R Roe and Mrs C Taylor-Russell  
Trafford MBC

16<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Dear Richard and Clare

**Altrincham NBP – Examiner’s Report.**

Working Group colleagues have carefully considered the Examiner’s Report and want to raise one issue with the Council as a matter of urgency.

We do not wish to comment on any of the Examiner’s decisions in respect of the content of the Plan, nor do we want to pursue with you the issue of the two referenda having separate boundaries. We do however request that you consider the boundary of the referenda (the same for both) as we believe very strongly indeed that to stick to the Plan boundary would be a major mistake, disenfranchising the vast majority of the general public who are impacted by the Plan and also comprise the vast majority of those who gave their time and views in order to help drive the development of the Plan through the three stages of public consultation. The facts, we believe, are as follows.

The resident population within the Plan boundary was estimated early in the Plan making process (by a Council officer, Damian Cutting) to be 2,332 – a figure which we accepted and utilised in our application for grant support. The catchment population for Altrincham Town Centre is considered to lie between 50,000 and 70,000 people, so whichever figure is taken, less than 5% of the town centre catchment population reside within the Plan boundary. It is also clear that the vast majority of the people who took part in the Plan making process through the public consultation stages also reside outside the Plan boundary. (As an example, 8 of the 10 active members of the Working Group, including the two authors of this letter, live outside the Plan boundary.) The Forum has said from the outset that it was its intention to involve as many people as possible in the consultation process in order that the Plan could be effectively driven by the weight of public opinion – an approach which the Forum regard as fundamental to the whole concept of Neighbourhood Planning. So far as we are aware, the Council has never opposed/disagreed with this view.

The Forum has also indicated from the outset that it would endeavour to collect post code data on all those members of the public who engaged in the public consultation process and where this has been provided, an analysis has been included in the Regeneris on-line questionnaire analysis reports

at each stage of consultation. So, at Stage 1, 86% of respondents were resident in WA14 and WA15 and 89% resident in those two wards at the crucial Stage 3 (the formal Regulation) consultation. The Forum collected and provided this information via the Regeneris reports, to assist the Council and the Examiner to set a reasonable boundary which would embrace the bulk of the people who engaged in the process. We suggest that those two post codes would achieve that but we would also accept that the definition by Wards included in your report to the Executive Member for Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure dated the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016, namely the Wards of Altrincham, Bowdon, Broadheath, Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village would also be acceptable.

We have considered how we should approach this issue including taking advice from Planning Aid and understand that we should make our case (above) and liaise with the Council with a view to the Council (supported by the Forum as necessary) approaching the Examiner with a view to her reviewing this single aspect of her report and agreeing to support the wider boundary embracing the Wards defined. We have also looked at the one good precedent of Milton Keynes where the Examiner agreed that the catchment population of the Milton Keynes Centre (in their case the whole Borough) should form the boundary for their referenda. As Trafford, unlike Milton Keynes, is a multi-centre Borough, the adoption of a Trafford wide referenda boundary would clearly be inappropriate whereas the definition of a boundary comprising the defined Wards would equate with the Milton Keynes decision, representing as it would, the catchment of Altrincham Town Centre.

We would urge the Council to agree to support this proposal and to approach the examiner urgently with a view to her reviewing the decision on the referenda boundary accordingly. The urgency here is to ensure that the matter is determined in time for it to be considered by the Council's Executive meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and the referenda held on the same day as the local government elections in May (thereby minimising the cost which will be marginal) and ensuring the timely completion of the referenda process.

If you require any further information or support from the Forum, we stand ready to provide that.

Yours sincerely,

*Tony*

Tony Collier

Chair, The Neighbourhood Forum

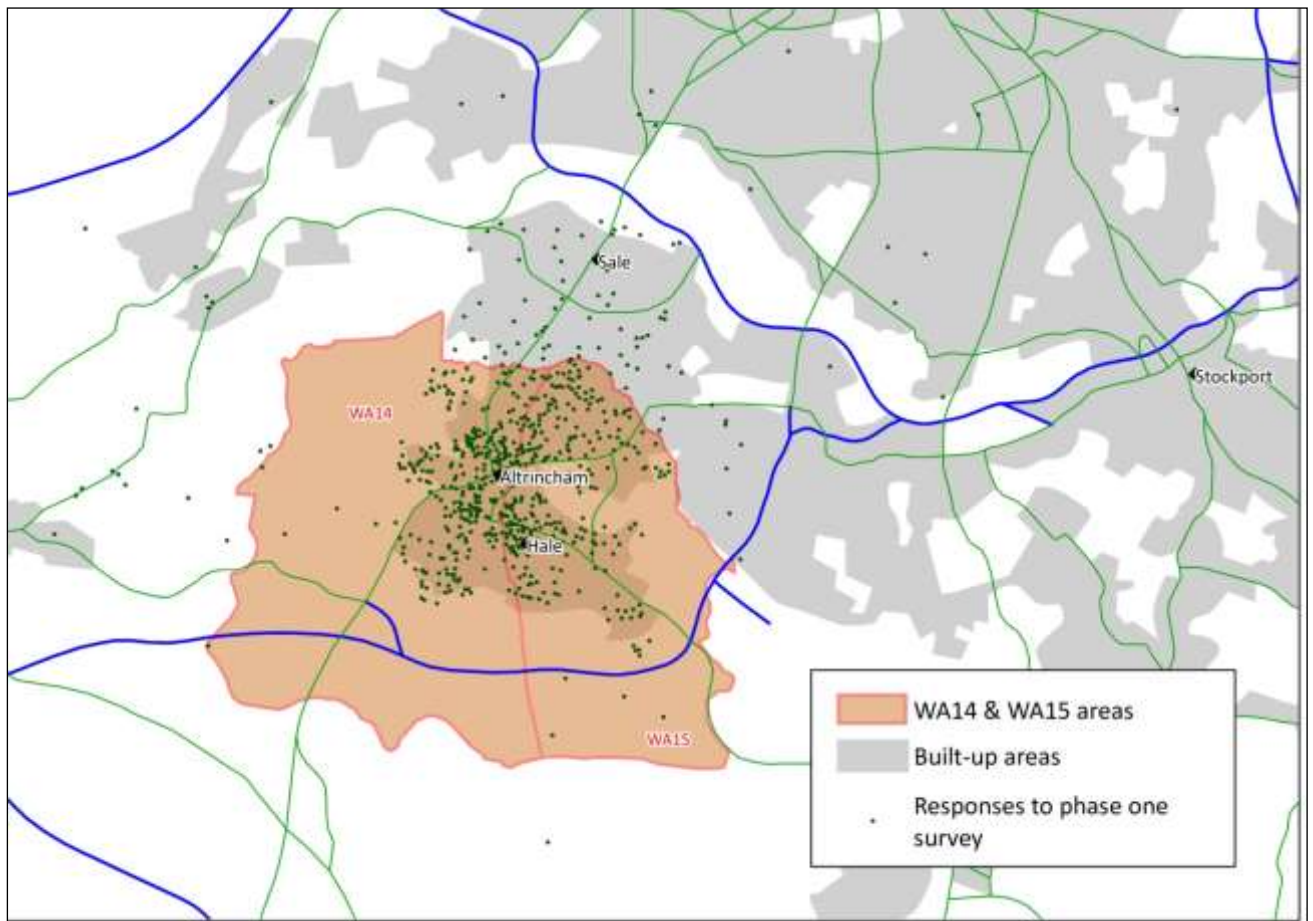
*Mike*

Mike Shields

Chair, Forum Working Group.

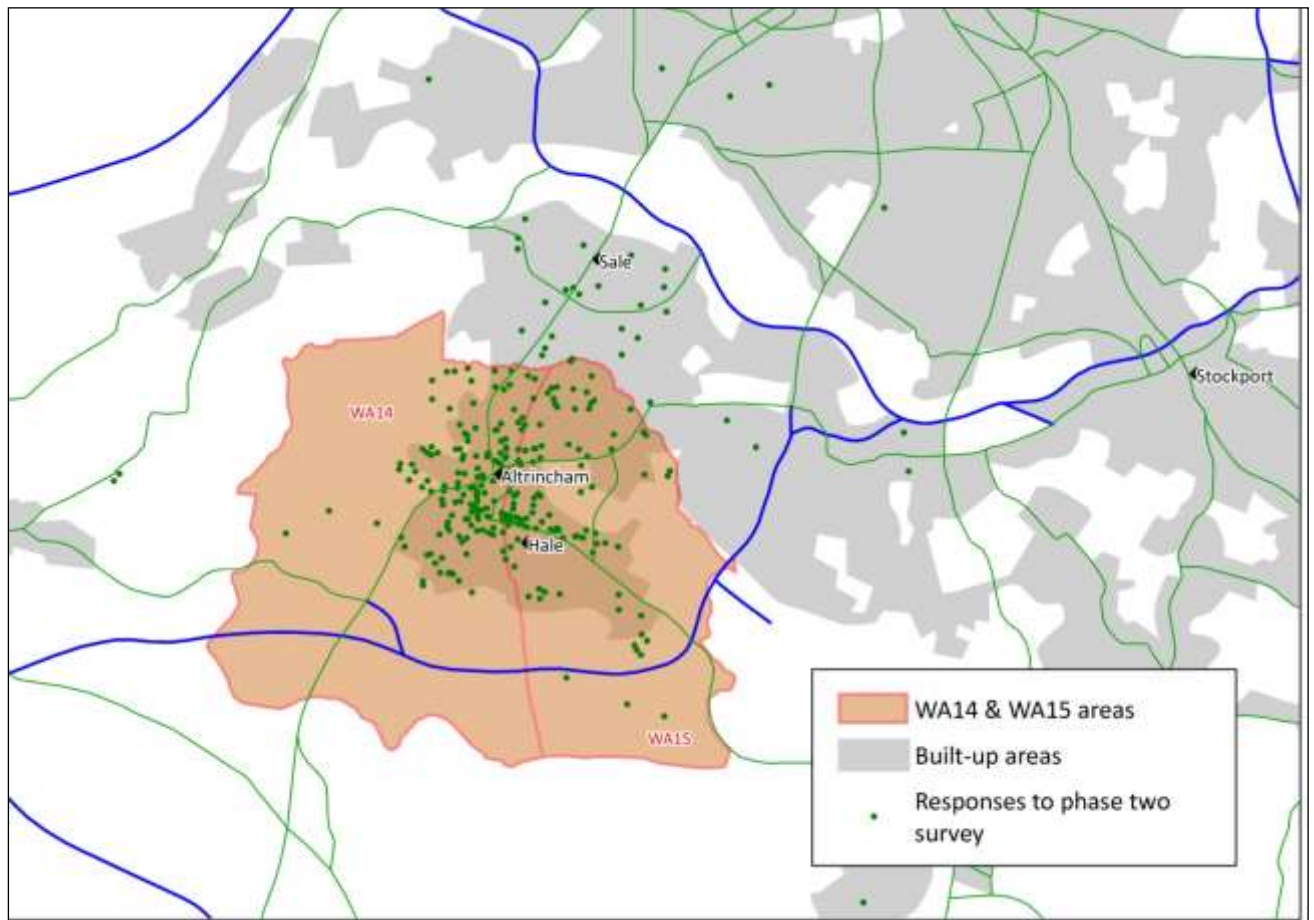


Phase 1 Public Consultation – Distribution of Respondees



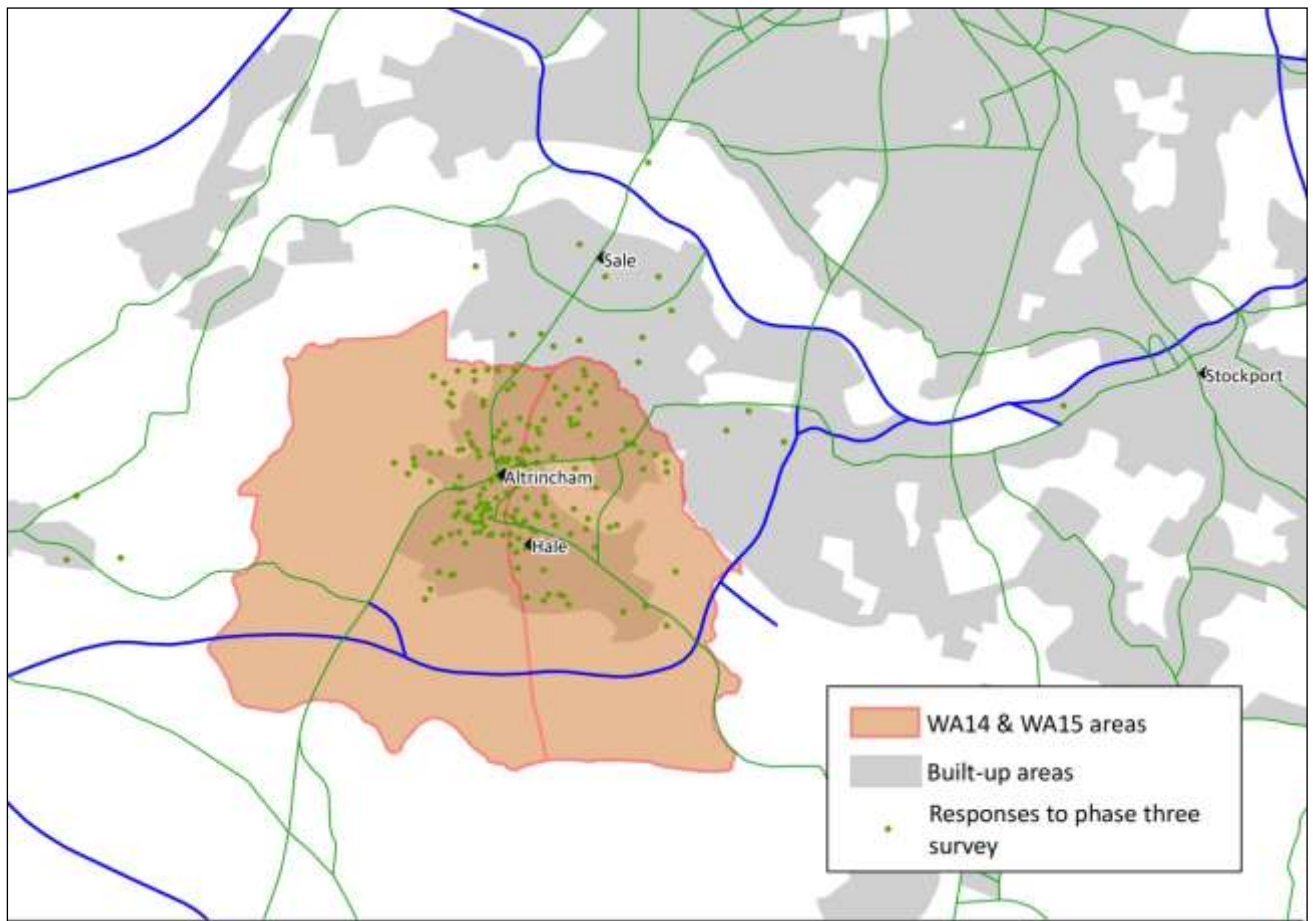
Phase 1 – Distribution of respondees of which 86% live in WA14 and WA15

## Phase 2 Public Consultation – Distribution of Respondees



Phase 2 – 348 respondees of which 83% live in WA14 and WA15

Phase 3 Public Consultation – Distribution of Respondees



Phase 3 – 222 respondees of which 90% live in WA14 and WA15



**Richard Roe**  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services

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**Date** 08 March 2017

Dear Tony and Mike,

### **Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan – Examiner’s Report**

Thank you for your letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The points raised within your letter have been carefully considered and I am now able to offer you the following comments:

I am sure that we would all agree that a very positive working relationship has been established between colleagues in Trafford Council and the Forum during the preparation of the Plan, over the past 3 years. However, as your letter makes clear, there is still one area where we have not been able to reach agreement and that is in respect of the referendums.

I note from your letter that the Forum does not now wish to pursue the issue of there being two separate boundaries for the business and residents referendums and this is welcomed. The only area of contention remaining, therefore, is that of the appropriate boundary for these two referendums.

As detailed in the Executive Report:

<https://democratic.trafford.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=561>, the Council has concluded that the most appropriate boundary for both referendums should be that of the Plan area.

It was considered that insufficient justification existed, in terms of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations, to widen the boundary of the referendums beyond that of the Plan Area.

Furthermore, to define a boundary which is significantly wider than the plan boundary would place a significant financial burden on the Council which would not be fully covered by the funding which the Council is eligible to claim from CLG.

Therefore, in the absence of any sufficient justification for widening the Plan boundary and given the additional financial burdens associated with such a proposal, it was decided that the Council’s preferred option in respect of the referendum

boundaries was for them to be the same as the Plan Area. This conclusion was submitted to the independent Examiner.

Notwithstanding this position the Council also put to the Examiner, in its response to the Regulation 16 draft Plan, that, should the Examiner see merit in extending the boundary for the referendums beyond the Plan boundary, then a reasonable extension for both the referendums would be to include the wards of Altrincham, Bowdon, Broadheath, Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village.

In considering whether a wider boundary should be set for the referendums the Examiner was of the opinion that a sensible judgement on proportionality needs to be made. Although many residents and businesses outside the Neighbourhood Business Plan (NBP) boundary may have an interest in the policies and proposals of the Plan, the Examiner considered that these interests are less significant than those of the people who live within the designated boundary and operate businesses there. The Examiner considered that it is in the interests of fairness and democracy that the referendums should be focussed on the people who live and operate businesses within the plan boundary area.

Taking the above points into account the Examiner reached the conclusion that both the referendums should be conducted for the designated NBP Area and that both referendums should be limited to the residents and businesses based within the NBP area.

This position is in line with that proposed by the Council when the Plan was submitted to the Examiner for independent review, therefore I do not consider that it would be appropriate to contact the Examiner to request her to review her decision on the boundary for the referendums. It is, however, ultimately a decision for the Council's Executive to consider each of the Examiner's proposed modifications and to determine the boundary for the referendums. Therefore, as part of the decision making process, the Council's Executive will be made aware of the contents of your letter, including the request for the Council to reconsider the boundary for the referendums.

You should be aware however that should the Executive decide to make a decision which differs from that of the Examiner's recommendations, there would be a requirement for a further public consultation in relation to this issue.

Finally I wish to advise you that because of the timing of the Mayoral Election in May, both the March and April Executive Meetings fall within the Pre-election period of Purdah. The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity advises that this period should be considered to be a period of heightened sensitivity and recommends that public authorities avoid taking key decisions on potentially controversial matters during this period. Therefore, given the nature of the issues which will be before the Executive in terms of the Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan, it has been decided that it would not be appropriate for the Executive

to take a decision in respect of the Examiner's recommendations, including the boundary for the referendums, within the purdah period. Instead it is proposed that these matters will be considered at the June 2017 Executive.

Whilst I appreciate that this means the matter will be determined outside the recommended timescale for these decisions, the council could be subject to criticism or even legal challenge if it were to proceed to consider the matter during this period. We have therefore no option but to defer the consideration of the matter to the later date

Please do not hesitate to get in touch should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Roe  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services





Mr R Roe  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services  
Trafford Council  
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Stretford  
Manchester  
M32 0TH

20 March 2017

Dear Richard

We refer to your letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> March and have the following comments/observations:-

**1. The Forum does not wish to pursue the issue of there being two separate boundaries for the business and residents forum**

We should make it clear that the Forum **does** wish to pursue this issue. However, it has chosen not to as, to do so would, we believe, result in considerable delays to the adoption of our plan which is more untenable than our desire to pursue the issue could justify following as a way forward.

**2. Insufficient justification exists to widen the boundary of the referendums beyond that of the plan area**

We're afraid that we differ completely with you on this matter to the extent that we must pursue this further. We have demonstrated extremely clearly that 95% + of the Altrincham Town Centre (ATC) catchment population would be denied the opportunity to vote including the bulk of the Forum Membership and Working Group (the two of us in particular, as the two key people involved in the development of the plan, would be denied a vote on it which is just totally ludicrous!). We have also demonstrated that, by widening the referendum boundary to cover WA14 & WA15 postcodes, over 85% of the people who took part in the process of preparing the plan (by taking part in the consultation on it) would have an opportunity to vote.

This is completely contrary to your comment that "insufficient justification exists" to extend the referendum area. We strongly believe that not extending the referendum boundary is **totally indefensible particularly in terms of democratic principles.**

We should also add that your refusal to discuss this issue with the Independent Examiner does not even acknowledge the facts that we have presented and that are re-iterated in this letter. Your refusal to consult with the Examiner simply does not address the points that we

have raised. You have simply repeated what was said in earlier Officers report to the Executive and the Examiners report.

Finally on this point you appear to have failed to consider the precedent set by Milton Keynes that their Town Centre plan needed to be put to the catchment population which is precisely what we are proposing in Altrincham.

In summary, we cannot in any way agree with you on this matter as your proposition disenfranchises precisely the people who should have a say in the future of the town namely, the people who live in Altrincham (including the two of us), those who took part in the consultation and came predominantly from the WA14 & WA15 post codes.

**3. Extending the referendum boundary would give the Council an additional financial burden**

The Council has been aware for the entire three years that the plan has been developed over that the Forum wanted the referendum to cover the entire catchment area of Altrincham and that we wanted the referendum to take place as early as possible. We were extremely disappointed that delays with the Council (eg, in the appointment of an Examiner) led to the referendum not taking place in 2016. Immediately we established that the referendum would not take place in 2016 we emphasised most strongly to your Officers that it was imperative that the referendum should co-incide with the May 2017 Mayoral election at the very latest. Given this, you have had many months to consider the necessary timetable to achieve this. Frankly, it is totally unacceptable that the Council has not put in place a clear time line to achieve the Forum's aim. If you had made us aware much earlier of the issues raised in the final paragraph of the 2<sup>nd</sup> page of your letter we would have been pushing much more strenuously at all stages to ensure that a referendum took place simultaneously with the May 2017 Mayoral election and this, in turn, would have saved the Council having an additional financial burden caused by needing to have a separate referendum. This burden is not of the Forum's making! It is also totally unacceptable that a financial issue should prevent democracy.

**Conclusion**

We feel most strongly that it is totally inappropriate to disenfranchise 95% of the population of Altrincham and that the inclusion of WA14 & WA15 postcodes would give 85% of those who assisted in the development of the plan an opportunity to vote.

We would therefore urge you to arrange a meeting at the earliest opportunity with yourself, the Independent Examiner, your Chief Executive and the two of us to discuss this matter fully.

**In the meantime we will be seeking the support of all interested parties for our position.**

Yours sincerely

Tony

Mike

Anthony F C Collier – Forum Chair

Mike Shields – Working Group Chair

**Richard Roe**  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services

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**Date** 24 March 2017

Dear Tony and Mike,

### **Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan – Referendums**

Thank you for your letter of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

I note your comments in relation to the Forum's views in terms of the two separate boundaries.

The decision as to whether or not there is "sufficient justification" to widen the boundary was taken in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations. As detailed in the Executive report dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016, the evidence presented in your letter was fully considered and, indeed formed the basis of an alternative option presented in the Council's Regulation 16 response, which was submitted to the Examiner. As such the Examiner was able to consider the matter of extending the referendum boundaries and balance the arguments in an independent manner. Following consideration of the facts, the Examiner reached the conclusion that the referendum boundary should be that of the NBP area and therefore I consider that the conclusion reached in the Executive Report, in relation to "sufficient justification", was the correct one.

I am sure that the Examiner who conducted the Examination into the Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan would have been fully aware of the Milton Keynes case. Nevertheless she still came to the view that the referendum boundary should be that of the NBP area. It is my view that Milton Keynes' retail hierarchy is very different to that of Trafford's in that the Milton Keynes Core Strategy states that the Milton Keynes Primary Shopping Area will function and develop as a regional shopping centre. Although Altrincham is Trafford's principal town centre, Manchester City Centre is the City Region's Regional Centre. Therefore, I do not consider that the Milton Keynes case sets a precedent in respect of the Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan.

With regards your comment about delays caused by the Council, for example in appointing the Examiner which in turn meant that the referendums could not be held at the same time as the Mayoral election; it should be noted that as a public body the Council is required to follow due procurement processes. Therefore the time involved



in the appointment of the Examiner was necessary and did not represent an undue delay to the process.

Whilst it is also acknowledged that the Forum submitted its plan on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016, I think you would agree that to organise a public consultation on the Plan over the summer months of July and August would not have been prudent due to the holiday season. Therefore the decision was taken to run the public consultation once the holiday period was over and the delays incurred as a result of that decision were acceptable.

As detailed in the Executive report of 10th August 2016, there are a number of formal processes (outside the control of the Council) which have to be undertaken between the Examination and the Referendum. Therefore, at the time that report was prepared it was estimated that the earliest a referendum could be held would have been April 2017. At that time it was decided to explore the possibility of combining the neighbourhood plan referendums with the GM Mayoral election in May 2017 in an attempt to minimise costs. However, since that time, it was concluded that it would not be practical to hold these two very different style "elections" on the same day.

I note that you feel disenfranchised by the outcome of the Examiner's report and the Council's position in respect of it, but I remain of the opinion that the referendum boundaries should be the same as the Plan Area, as detailed in the Examiner's report. I do not consider that your recent correspondence has provided evidence not previously considered by the Examiner in reaching her decision not to extend the referendum boundaries beyond the Plan area. Given this, and the fact that the Council's preferred option was for the referendum boundaries to be the same as the Plan area, I do not consider it would be appropriate to request a meeting with the Examiner. However as stated in my previous letter it will be a matter for the Council's Executive to consider the Examiner's recommendations, including the decision regarding the referendum boundary. It is anticipated that this decision will be made at the June 2017 Executive.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Roe  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services



Mr R Roe  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services  
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20 March 2017

Dear Richard

Thank you for your letter of 8 March.

We were very disappointed and saddened to receive your response to our letter, it seems that no one is actually listening to the facts. We deal with your letter issue by issue as follows.

You state that the evidence presented in our earlier letter was included in your report to the Executive Member dated 10<sup>th</sup> August. That is simply not correct. As our correspondence has taken place since your report was prepared it is clear that the detail we provided could not have been taken into account. You may have considered some of the information contained in the Regeneris reports on the public consultations (which did not include some of the analysis we subsequently provided) but if you did, no information at all relating to this matter was actually included in your report to the Executive Member who was therefore asked to take an important decision apparently in total ignorance of the facts and the implications. Just to crystallise those facts:

1. Less than 5% of the catchment population of Altrincham Town Centre live in the Plan area.
2. Sticking to the Plan boundary for the referendum means that 95% of the people served by the town centre would be deliberately excluded from voting in the referendum.
3. The vast majority of the members of the community who took part in the various public consultation exercises over the plan preparation period and whose responses and views have driven the development of the Plan in accordance with the principles of Neighbourhood Planning, will also be deliberately excluded from voting in the referendum.
4. By agreeing to define a referendum boundary equivalent to WA14 and 15, 86% of the members of the community involved in influencing the form and content of the Plan, will be able to vote.

Not one of these facts was included in your report nor were any of them referred to by the examiner. So the Executive Member was asked to take a decision in ignorance of these facts. We are unaware which information on this issue was supplied to the Examiner and we were not consulted on this (or anything else) by the Examiner during her consideration of the submitted documents.

It is in our view quite incredible that disenfranchising 95% of the catchment community including the vast majority of the people whose opinions and advice drove the development of the Plan (which is precisely what Neighbourhood Planning is all about) is regarded as 'satisfactory'. If the prospect of disenfranchising 95% of the catchment population of the town centre is not regarded as 'sufficient justification' for widening the boundary to WA14 and 15, then it is difficult to see what would constitute such justification. The decision is frankly unreasonable, not based on the facts and perverse.

Turning to your comments about Milton Keynes, it is in practice a perfect precedent. The fact that the Altrincham and Milton Keynes (MK) shopping hierarchies are different (which is the case) ignores the cardinal point involved here. In MK the chosen boundary covers the **catchment** population of that particular town centre. It is the **catchment** of Altrincham Town Centre (NOT its position in the Trafford or GM hierarchy) which is what matters. Your view seems to be that the catchment population of Altrincham Town Centre has no locus, no right to be involved in the referendum and that instead a population of c. 2,500 (instead of the 50 – 70,000 actually involved in the town's catchment) will suffice. Needless to say we totally disagree with this conclusion which we also regard as unreasonable and perverse.

We could argue all day about the timetable. There is no doubt it could have been tighter if it had been planned effectively in good time. The fact that you now indicate that it would not be practical to hold these two different elections on the same day (the logic of which eludes us completely) could and should (if it is a view based on facts) have been made clear long ago. It was Council officers who repeatedly indicated over the last 3 years that they thought tying the referendum to the Mayoral elections in May 2017 was the correct approach.

We are now left very annoyed and frustrated that the Forum's objectives (known to the Council from the outset) of seeking (a) to involve as many people as possible in the Plan preparation process, and (b) to provide post code information to assist the Council and the Examiner to draw a referendum boundary which embraced a significant majority of those people have been totally ignored. We maintain that Neighbourhood Planning is fundamentally about empowering the community, in this case the people who use the town centre as well as the many businesses in the town centre providing its services, to be actively involved in the preparation of the Plan and to determine the outcome at the end of the day. Your position, in our opinion, flies in the face of the spirit of community empowered Neighbourhood Planning.

Our Plan is very clearly driven by the weight of public opinion and we cannot stand idly by while the Council seeks to disenfranchise 95% of the catchment population from taking part in the referendum. We believe that the elected members when they meet in June to consider the position will want to safeguard the rights of the community involved, both the businesses in the town centre and the catchment population which uses the town centre and decide to press ahead with a WA14 and 15 boundary. We will continue to argue on behalf of the people who have driven the development of the Neighbourhood Business Plan in line with both the spirit and letter of the governing legislation.



We should add that the position outlined above is supported wholeheartedly by the rest of the Working Group and by members of the Forum who have responded to our regular updates on this matter.

As suggested previously we firmly believe that this matter should be addressed by meeting with yourself and the examiner.

We do intend to continue to press our case on this matter.

Yours sincerely

*Tony*

Tony Collier – Forum Chair

*Mike*

Mike Shields – Working Group Chair

**Richard Roe**  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services

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**Date** 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Dear Tony and Mike,

### **Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan – Referendums**

Thank you for your letter received on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Firstly I wish to address the fact that you consider that the issues raised by the Forum in terms of extending the boundary for the referendums beyond the Plan area were not presented to the Executive Member in my report dated 10th August 2016, because the details have been included in correspondence since that date. Although it is true that you have submitted correspondence on this matter since August 2016, it is my opinion that the facts remain the same as when the Executive Member took his decision in August 2016.

Whilst the report itself does not detail the location of the majority of the respondents, the consultation statement which was submitted alongside the Neighbourhood Plan and referred to in that report does. This consultation statement was one of the many documents sent to the Examiner and therefore this information was clearly available to both the Executive Member and the Examiner when they came to their conclusions on the matter. Notwithstanding this fact, the report to the Executive Member does clearly state that the Forum had requested that the boundary for the residents' referendum should be extended to be reflective of the geographical spread of the comments received to its Regulation 14 consultation which would include the following wards: Altrincham, Bowdon, Broadheath, Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village.

Therefore, I cannot agree with you when you suggest that the Executive Member, and latterly the Examiner, were asked to make a decision in ignorance of the facts. It follows that I do not therefore consider that there is any or any sufficient justification to reject the Examiner's recommendations in respect of the boundaries for the referendums.

Furthermore, as I have previously said, should the Executive decide to make a decision which differs from that of the Examiner's recommendations, there would be a requirement for a further public consultation in relation to this issue.

I remain of the opinion that the cases of Milton Keynes and Altrincham are different for the reasons I set out in my letter of 24th March 2017. However and notwithstanding this, I must stress that the Examiner appointed to consider the Altrincham Plan is a very experienced planning inspector and will have been well aware of the Milton Keynes decision and circumstances therein. If she considered that it constituted a precedent in this case, she would have acted accordingly, but she did not.

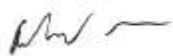
The decision as to whether or not the Council could combine the referendums with another election could only be finally taken once we had received the Examiner's report and we knew when the Executive decision would be taken in its respect. This is because there are a number of publicity requirements in relation to the referendums which cannot begin until after the formal decision has been made. Therefore although, as you say, officers of the Council had previously indicated that it was hoped that this could be a possibility the fact that no final decision had been possible before now means that this cannot be achieved.

With reference to your email dated 3rd April 2017, citing the recent Examiner's report into the Central Ealing Neighbourhood Plan and that you intend to contact the Examiner directly. Whilst I note the recommendation in relation to the referendum boundary for Central Ealing, I can only stress that each Neighbourhood Plan is considered on its own merits and that in the case of Altrincham, the Examiner has come to her own conclusions on the Plan and it is those that the Executive must consider.

Notwithstanding all views expressed above, the decision in respect of defining the referendum boundary is now a matter for the Council's Executive to decide when it formally considers the Examiner's report and recommendations. Therefore, I do not consider that there would be merit in arranging a meeting between members of the Forum, the Examiner and officers of the Council. I will of course, however, ensure that the Executive has access to all the necessary facts when it takes this decision.

Finally, I am sorry that you still feel disenfranchised by the process and the position that we now find ourselves in. As you stated in your submission letter, there has been a very strong working relationship between members of the Forum and officers of the Council. I do hope that we can return to a good working relationship ahead of the referendums. I am of the firm view that the most important thing, after all the hard work that has gone into producing the plan, is for the Council to be able to adopt it following a "yes" vote in the referendum. After all, as stated in the introduction to the Plan, the main purpose of producing the plan was to provide the planning context for the successful evolution and development of the town and I think the Plan will be a very effective document in that respect.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Roe  
Director of Growth & Regulatory Services