

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 18 February 2015  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning

### Report Title

**Stretford Town Centre Update**

### Summary

Securing the successful regeneration of Stretford Town Centre is a key priority for Trafford Council. The Stretford Town Centre Masterplan was approved by the Executive in January 2014. It provides a bold vision for delivering transformational change and sets out a route to securing a sustainable economic future for the Town Centre with lasting improvements to its vibrancy.

Work to implement the Masterplan is progressing with the establishment of a new governance structure, a number of new lettings within Stretford Mall, completion of the McDonalds development on Chester Road, preparation of initial concepts for public realm and movement improvements, the proposed disposal of Stretford Public Hall and preparation of a preferred option for the development of the Lacy Street site.

The continued implementation of the Masterplan will enable Stretford Town Centre to maximise the opportunities provided by its key assets and create a strong and attractive town centre that is a destination of choice for local people.

### Recommendation(s)

The Executive are recommended to:

- 1) Note the on-going work to transform Stretford Town Centre and implement the Stretford Masterplan.
- 2) Approve the disposal of Stretford Public Hall in accordance with the terms detailed in the Part II report and authorise the Corporate Director of Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to complete the necessary documentation.
- 3) Approve the Lacy Street preferred option for the purposes of public consultation.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Appendix One:  
Lacy Street Site Preferred Option

Background Papers:  
None

*Implications:*

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The successful implementation of the Stretford Masterplan will support the corporate priority for economic growth and development and the delivery of the adopted Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy which identifies Stretford Town Centre as a location for regeneration and change over the plan period.
Financial	Initial design costs for public realm will be met from within the existing capital programme. The cost of public realm works will be reported to a future Executive but met from a mix of external grants and developer contributions. There is potential for a capital receipt from the sale of the Council's land at Lacy Street, subject to the final development option.
Legal Implications:	A procurement process will need to be followed in respect of public realm improvements, which are likely to involve use of the Council's Framework.
Equality/Diversity Implications	The Masterplan has been subject to an EIA assessment to ensure that equality issues have been considered as part of its preparation and delivery. The preferred tender for disposal of the Public Hall also contains a separate EIA assessment.
Sustainability Implications	The Masterplan sets a number of sustainability principles that future development proposals should be in accordance with.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Existing staff resources have been identified to support the delivery of the Masterplan. Information will be made available online and documents will be available to access through the Council's web pages. The Masterplan provides a framework for the Council to realise the potential of its assets within the area. The disposal of the Public Hall will enable the continued use and maintenance of this important listed building.
Risk Management Implications	The delivery of the Masterplan is supported by a risk plan setting out the key risks to delivery and proposed mitigation measures.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None.
Health and Safety Implications	None

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Stretford is one of Trafford's four town centres and an important driver in the economic growth of the Borough. There is a clearly recognised need to improve the offer of Stretford Town Centre which is identified in the Trafford Core Strategy as a location for regeneration and change (Policy W2). Following public consultation from 24 July to 20 October 2013 the Executive approved the Stretford Town Centre Masterplan in January 2014 to provide the Council's strategy for securing the revitalisation of Stretford Town Centre over the next 10-15 years.
- 1.2 The overarching aim of the Masterplan is to secure the successful regeneration of Stretford Town Centre and provide a prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe destination. Over the last 12 months activity has taken place in a number of areas to deliver the objectives of the Masterplan.

## **2.0 Governance**

- 2.1 The establishment of the Stretford Working Group and Stretford Panel was approved by the Executive in October 2014. Chaired by the Executive Member for Economic Growth and Planning, the Working Group is a Council Member and Officer body established to oversee the Masterplan and make recommendations to the Executive for decisions on proposals for its delivery. The Stretford Panel, which includes both business and community representatives from Stretford, has been established to support the delivery of the Masterplan and act as a consultative body to the Working Group.
- 2.2 Both the Working Group and Panel have now met to help oversee the implementation of the Masterplan, co-ordinate activity and support the delivery of an annual Action Plan for the Town Centre.

## **3.0 Stretford Mall**

- 3.1 Stretford Mall was acquired by a subsidiary of Apollo Global in March 2014. Regular meetings are in place between the Council and the managing agents (and co-owners) M&M Asset Management and their retail consultants Barker Proudlove to discuss future plans for this site. This includes exploration as to how Stretford Mall can link effectively with other development activity in the Town Centre including the Public Realm and Movement Strategy, the proposed disposal of Stretford Public Hall and the potential development of the Lacy Street site.
- 3.2 Within Stretford Mall there were 12 new openings between October 2014 and January 2015 reducing the vacancy rate from 43% to 33%. This included the reopening of the former TJ Hughes store which has created 40 jobs and brought the largest single vacant unit back into active use. Following the granting of planning consent in June 2014 for a change of use and alterations to the former Argos unit, Pure Gym have now started on site and anticipate to be open in Spring 2015. The Council has recently supported the opening of Suya café at unit 106 Stretford Mall, King Street via its Town Centre Loan Scheme.

## **4.0 The Former Drum Site**

- 4.1 The Drum Public House on Chester Road closed in 2013. McDonalds received planning permission in April 2014 to demolish the former public house building to

build a two storey restaurant with a drive-through facility. The new development, which incorporates digital menu boards, tablets and free WiFi, opened in December 2014. It has brought a vacant site at a key gateway to the Town Centre back into active use and created over 90 jobs, 56 of which have gone to local people in the Stretford area via referrals from JobCentre Plus.

## **5.0 Stretford Public Realm and Movement**

5.1 An improvement in the quality of the public realm, mitigation of the negative impact of traffic flows along the A56 and provision of more attractive pedestrian routes have been identified as improvements that would encourage people to use Stretford Town Centre more regularly. Within the framework of the Stretford Masterplan, the Council has commissioned Gillespies/WSP to prepare a public realm and movement strategy to provide a clear approach for improving movement for pedestrians/cyclists and provide an enhanced public realm and physical environment within the Town Centre.

5.2 A number of initial concepts have been identified that will guide the development of the strategy including:

- Improve connections across Chester Road to reconnect prominent buildings and provide strong links to the Town Centre.
- De-clutter and simplify streets to encourage walking and cycling, whilst making links with green infrastructure and public transport assets.
- Encourage street activity and enhance the evening economy.
- Reduce the dominance of vehicles in the Town Centre and soften the visual impact of traffic through street greening.
- Create a sense of place in the Town Centre through street furnishings, materials and lighting.

5.3 Traffic and pedestrian modelling work is currently being undertaken to enable the development of initial options. The strategy will enable the identification and assessment of potential options for public realm improvements, in consultation with key stakeholders and the local community and provide a basis to take forward a future tender/s to provide outline and detailed design works necessary to deliver identified priority projects. Consultation on the initial options will start with key groups in early 2015 once modelling work is completed prior to the preparation of outline costings and proposed phasing of works.

5.4 Engagement will be undertaken with key stakeholders regarding the development of potential options for public realm improvements in February/March 2015 prior to wider public consultation later in the year.

## **6.0 Stretford Public Hall**

6.1 Trafford Council vacated the Grade II listed Stretford Public Hall in 2014. The Masterplan identified the Public Hall and its adjoining land as having potential to provide opportunities for new leisure, employment or community uses. Tenders for the disposal of the Public Hall were invited in late 2014.

6.2 A further report in Part II of this agenda sets out additional details in relation to the proposed disposal of the Public Hall.

## 7.0 Lacy Street Site

- 7.1 In order to progress the delivery of the Lacy Street site in Stretford, which has been identified as a catalyst for the wider delivery of the Masterplan, a feasibility and delivery study for the site has been completed. The study has developed a preferred option for the site based on analysis of market demand, identification of development opportunities and assessment of viability. It has also identified whether the third party landowners at the site could be relocated to open up access from the site to the Bridgewater Canal. Two separate workshops have been held with members of the Stretford Working Group to develop a preferred option for the site.
- 7.2 The preferred option for the development of the Lacy Street site is shown at Appendix One. It comprises three separate parcels; the Council owned car park site; the Royal Mail Sorting Office site and the Probation Office site.
- 7.3 The preferred option identifies the following proposed uses:
- Residential – the market analysis and consideration of viability has determined higher density residential development to be the most market facing and deliverable use for the Lacy Street site. Residential uses will also support the modernisation and diversification of the existing housing stock within Stretford, help to attract and retain economically active residents to further support footfall and spend within the Town Centre. Under the preferred option the site could accommodate c80 residential units. There is also potential for a café/bar unit fronting onto the Bridgewater Canal
  - Hotel – the Probation Office site has been identified as having potential for a 4 storey budget hotel with a ground floor food operator. New hotel and leisure uses would enhance the existing offer of Stretford Town Centre and help to reinstate a more vibrant evening economy. If a hotel development on this site is not forthcoming it has the potential to accommodate c20 residential units.
  - Car Parking - The preferred option identifies sufficient surface car parking to support the new residential and potential hotel uses. It will therefore be necessary to consider how the parking requirements of the existing Lacy Street users can be appropriately met elsewhere within the Town Centre to avoid any negative impact on surrounding residential streets.
- 7.4 The preferred option assumes that some or all of the existing pedestrian subways are removed and replaced with a surface level crossing/s. This would remove a key development constraint, enlarging the potential footprint of the development, enable a strong built frontage at this gateway location and encourage greater footfall through the site enabling improved access to the Bridgewater Canal. The potential removal of the subway adjoining the site will be examined in detail as part of the emerging public realm and movement strategy.
- 7.5 A further report in Part II of this agenda sets out additional details in relation to the potential future delivery options for the Lacy Street site.
- 7.6 It is proposed that a four week public consultation be undertaken in March 2015 relating to the Lacy Street preferred option prior to the preparation of a Development Framework to clearly set out the Council's expectations as to what should be brought forward on the site.

**8.0 Other Options**

- 8.1 The Masterplan provides a clear framework for delivering the successful regeneration of Stretford Town Centre over the next 10-15 years. Without this framework the delivery of development within the Town Centre would largely be dictated by market conditions and be brought forward in a piecemeal manner. This approach would be highly unlikely to deliver the step change the Town Centre requires with the consequence that Stretford would decline in comparison with other competing centres and fail to make full use of its existing assets.
- 8.2 The existing uses on the Lacy Street site could be retained. However this would not maximise the potential of the site to act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the Town Centre by providing a strong built frontage at a key gateway site, delivering a mix of uses to support the local economy and opening up access to the Bridgewater Canal.

**9.0 Consultation**

- 9.1 The Stretford Masterplan was subject to a public consultation from 24 July to 20 October 2013 following which a number of modifications were made to take account of comments received.
- 9.2 The Stretford Working Group and Stretford Panel have now been established and will provide a formal mechanism for future consultation and support the co-ordination of activity and the continued delivery of the Masterplan.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

The Executive is asked to:

- 1) Note the on-going work to transform Stretford Town Centre and implement the Stretford Masterplan.
- 2) Approve the disposal of Stretford Public Hall in accordance with the Part II report to ensure the continued use of the building for the benefit of the community and relieve the Council of its financial liability.
- 3) Approve consultation on the Lacy Street site to enable the Council to progress the delivery of this key development site in Stretford Town Centre.

**Key Decision No**

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

Finance Officer Clearance .....GB.....  
 Legal Officer Clearance .....JW.....

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** 

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