

# Stalybridge

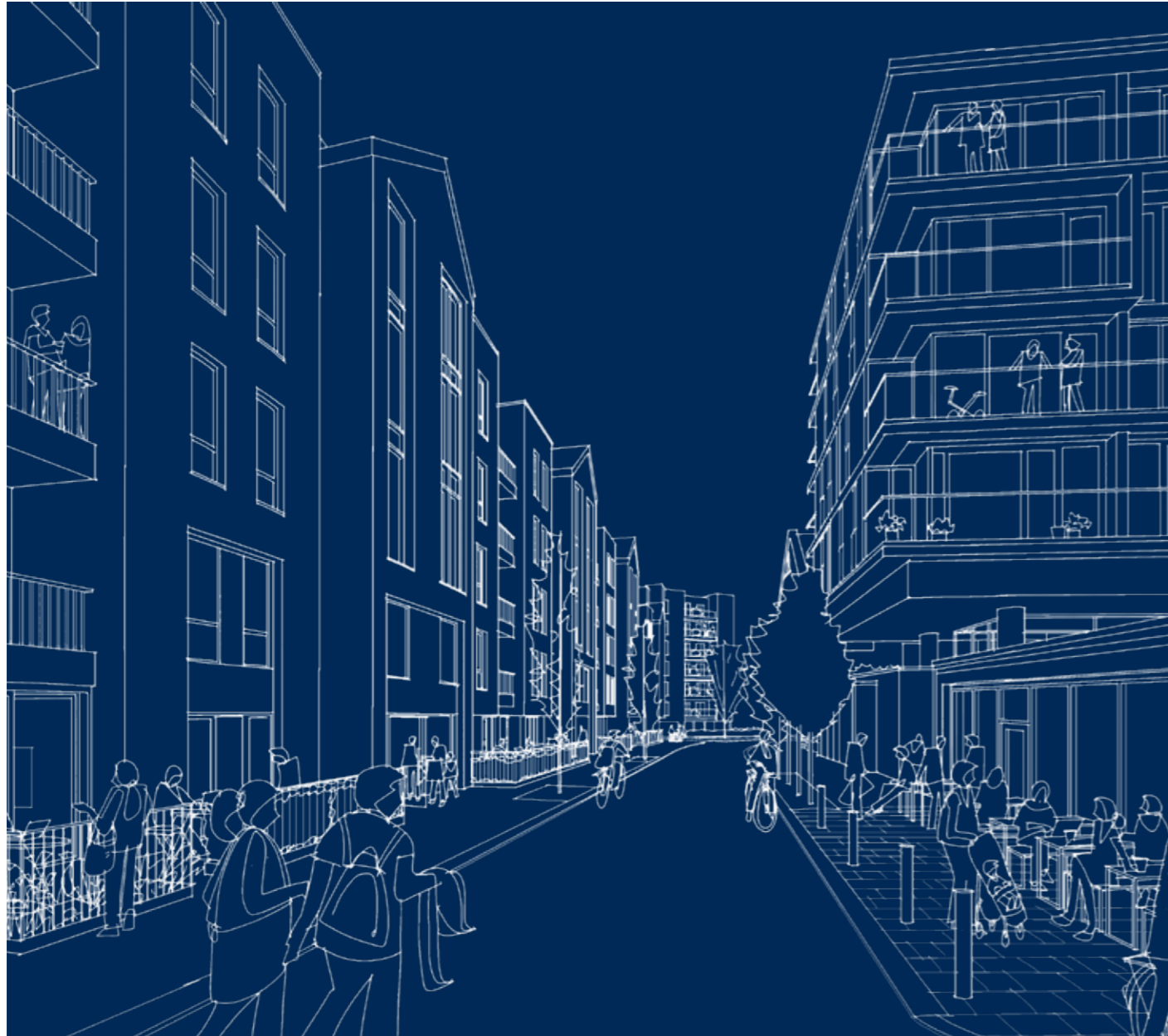
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# Regeneration

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Stalybridge Town Centre Delivery  
Framework 2024

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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

The Council has identified Stalybridge Town Centre, as one of its priority areas to deliver the objectives of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26 in making our town centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector.

Stalybridge Town Centre was selected as Tameside's focus for the GM Mayor's Town Centre Challenge in 2018. Initial work to plan and progress the delivery of Stalybridge's Town Centre Challenge was co-ordinated by the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge (STCC) Board.

The Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Action Plan – Our Place Our Plan which set out the aspirations for the town centre.

A consultation and engagement process was held during October 2018, to capture the views and aspirations of the local community. Engagement activity generated considerable public interest through survey responses and attendance at a drop in event. This engagement informed the preparation of the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Action Plan – Our Place Our Plan (2019) which set out the aspirations for the town centre.

The Stalybridge Town Centre Delivery Framework (the Framework) supports the themes of the Action Plan primarily focussing on increasing the town centre population, repairs to heritage buildings and improvements in access to public transport and associated public realm works, in turn enhancing the overall environment. The Framework is focused on the immediate opportunities unlocked by the award of £19.9m in external capital funding from the UK Capital Regeneration Projects scheme administered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and completion of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) programme through Historic England that runs from March 2020 to March 2024. This funding will have a significant impact on the town's regeneration.

The Delivery Framework provides an overarching strategy for the delivery of major regeneration, attracting new investment, maximising the impact of current opportunities, the future development of formal planning policy, and helping to avoid piecemeal development.



# 1.2 Strategic Context (Greater Manchester Wide)

This Delivery Framework will build on the strengths of Stalybridge and its contribution to Greater Manchester: Its character and built heritage; excellent transport links locally and regionally; centrally located sites held by the Council; and new opportunities such as sustainable town centre living.

## Stalybridge: Opportunity

Stalybridge is located in the eastern part of Tameside. It is unique in benefitting from a strategic location within Greater Manchester. It sits between the dynamism of Manchester city centre and the beauty of the Pennines. It has excellent rail transport links to east and west, linking to Manchester and Leeds. Digital connectivity is established and there are varied development opportunities. It is well connected to the regional centres and the network of significant local centres. Stalybridge is one of the main commuter towns in Greater Manchester for employees working within the regional centre.

Tameside as a whole is not growing as fast as other local areas. Between 2011 and 2021, the population of Tameside increased by 5.4%, a lower increase compared to England as a whole (6.6%) and notably lower than Oldham (7.6%) and Manchester (9.7%).

Stalybridge holds great potential. This Framework represents an opportunity to support delivery of the town centre regeneration programme and capitalise on the town's advantages, building resilience and sustainability. Stalybridge has a role to play in the success of the wider conurbation.

## Stalybridge: Baseline

The 2021 census provides a snapshot of Stalybridge and adjacent Hyde.

- Its population is 97,400. Its age profile shows a larger proportion of 0-14 year old's and 45-59 year olds than the national average.
- The work age population roughly matches the national average for England.
- There is a higher proportion of people with a disability than the national average (19.9% compared to 17.3%). The number of people in very good health is slightly below the national average (45.9% compared to 48.5%).

- There are more households deprived in 2, 3 or 4 dimensions than the England average (16% compared to 14.2%; 5% compared to 3.7% and 0.3% compared to 0.2% respectively).
- The area closely matches the England average for the number of people in employment (58.0% in Stalybridge compared to 57.4% across England) and the number unemployed (3.2% compared to 3.5%). There is a tendency for people to travel less far to work than the national average.
- In terms of the property profile, there is a higher proportion of social rented accommodation than the national average (21% compared to 17.1%).

## Town Centre Challenges: General

Small towns are facing challenges. Mintel's Retail Trends (Spring UK) report 2023 finds that retail sales declined by a record level in 2022 and the trend has continued into early 2023. Similarly Deloitte's Retail Trends 2023 confirms that we are in a period of significant change and economic uncertainty: businesses will need to address ongoing cost pressures and make difficult decisions around efficiency. The government's 2019 report, High Streets and Town Centres 2030, recognises the challenges facing the high street including too much retail space and fragmented ownership which gets in the way of comprehensive regeneration.

Greater Manchester's Places for Everyone (Pfe) document, currently at a very advanced stage and being examined by the Planning Inspectorate, seeks to facilitate inclusive growth with everyone sharing in the benefits of rising prosperity. Among its key principles are making the most of key locations and assets; and creating more favourable conditions for growth which at the same time, seek to address disparities. These are key themes for the region and for Stalybridge.

## Town Centre Challenges: Stalybridge

The Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021) sets out the Council's strategy to secure the right infrastructure, development space, skills, business support and investment to help Tameside's businesses and residents reach their full potential. The Strategy includes an overarching aim to make Tameside's town centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector. The Council's latest Retail and Leisure Study dates to 2018. Whilst in need of review,

potentially through the emerging Local Plan process, this is the best local benchmark for performance with little prospect that the statistics cited would have improved over the intervening years. It confirms that Stalybridge has a vacancy rate significantly above the UK average, at 20.1% compared to 12.2%. The town centre performs poorly in the comparison goods sector and as a result, is losing its fair share of comparison goods expenditure. While 11.5% of the spend remains in Stalybridge, it is the supermarkets that are the principal beneficiary which does little to benefit the wider town centre in terms of vibrancy.

Stalybridge is found to have a higher proportion of convenience retail floor space than other centres, and a lower proportion of service uses. In addition, units are small in size. The most under-represented sub-sectors were restaurants, cafes, takeaways and clothing. The lack of leisure and service uses and the over-provision of general retail indicates a potential weakness in the centre's vitality. This is confirmed by the fact that Stalybridge was ranked fourth of the five town centres in relation to family entertainment and food and drink offer.

There are other areas of dissatisfaction from visitors: it was the worst performing centre in terms of cleanliness of shopping streets; personal safety and policing; shelter from the weather; ease of movement on foot; and accessibility by bus.

The study concluded by recognising the huge potential of Stalybridge in terms of development opportunities, particularly for residential use. However, at the time of the survey, it was found to be 'a weak and vulnerable District Centre'.

Year	Housing requirement	Housing delivery (completions)
2018-19	632	646
2019-20	588	474
2020-21	433	368
2021-22	658	419

## A Further Challenge: Housing Delivery

Housing need is a second challenge facing the borough. Tameside delivered only 66% of its housing requirement in 2018, improving to 75% in 2019 and 89% in 2020. Over the three year period of the Housing Delivery Test, the borough delivered 1,510 net additional homes, representing 91% of the requirement. While delivery increased year on year, it remains below 95% of the requirement. As such, Tameside is required to prepare a Housing Delivery Action Plan.

The Council's Action Plan reflects on why the delivery of housing has fallen below the requirement. It identifies the root causes as follows:

- Delivery of new homes predominantly relies on sites identified on the most up-to-date Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment rather than the local plan, as the plan allocations have largely been completed.
- Reliance on a small number of large sites, many of which are in the control of national housebuilders and are being built out more slowly than expected.
- Potential barriers faced by smaller housebuilders.

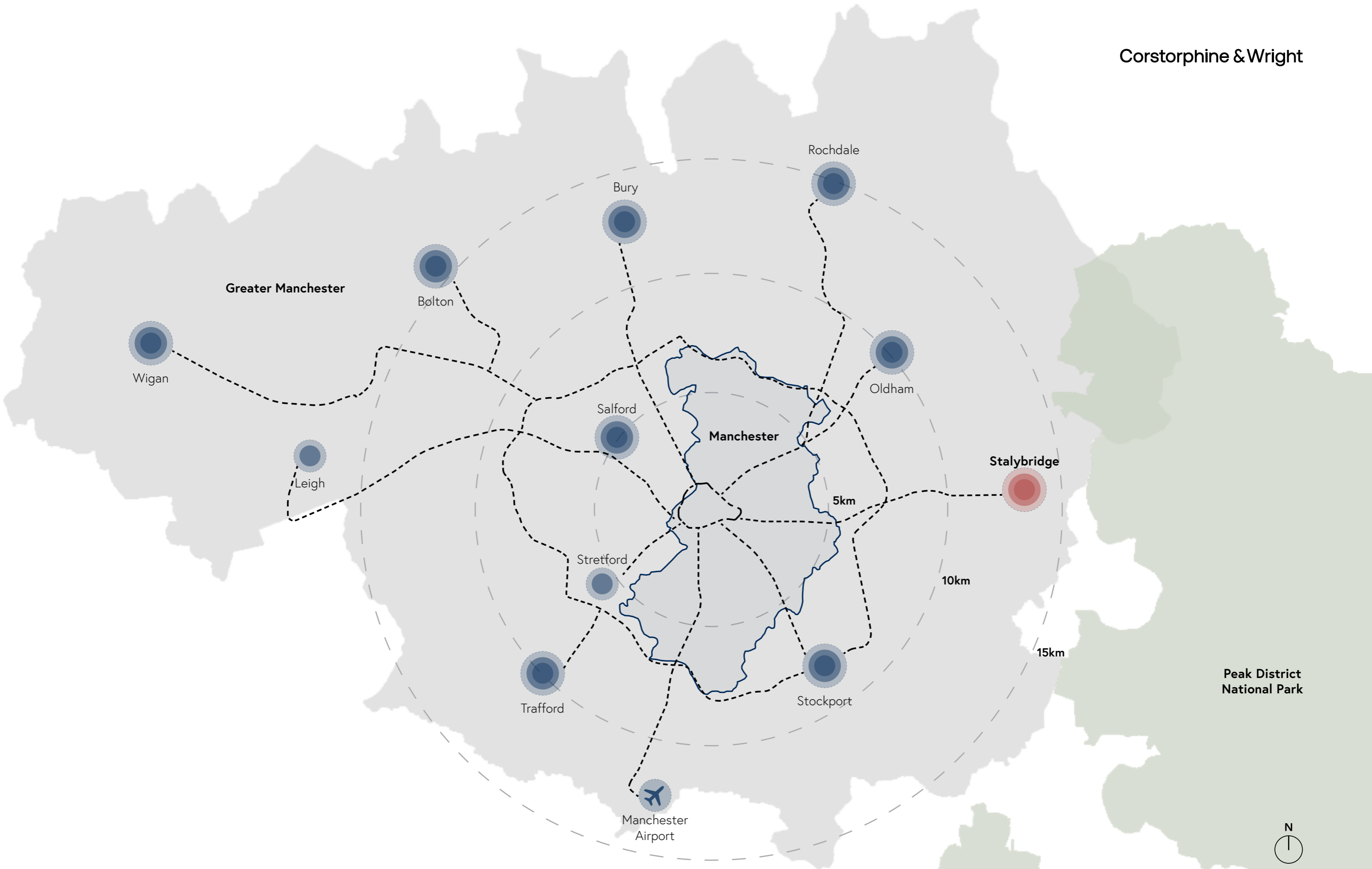
The Council's housing land supply is currently identified as 3.3 years by the SHELAA, a shortfall against the required 5 years.

## Solutions

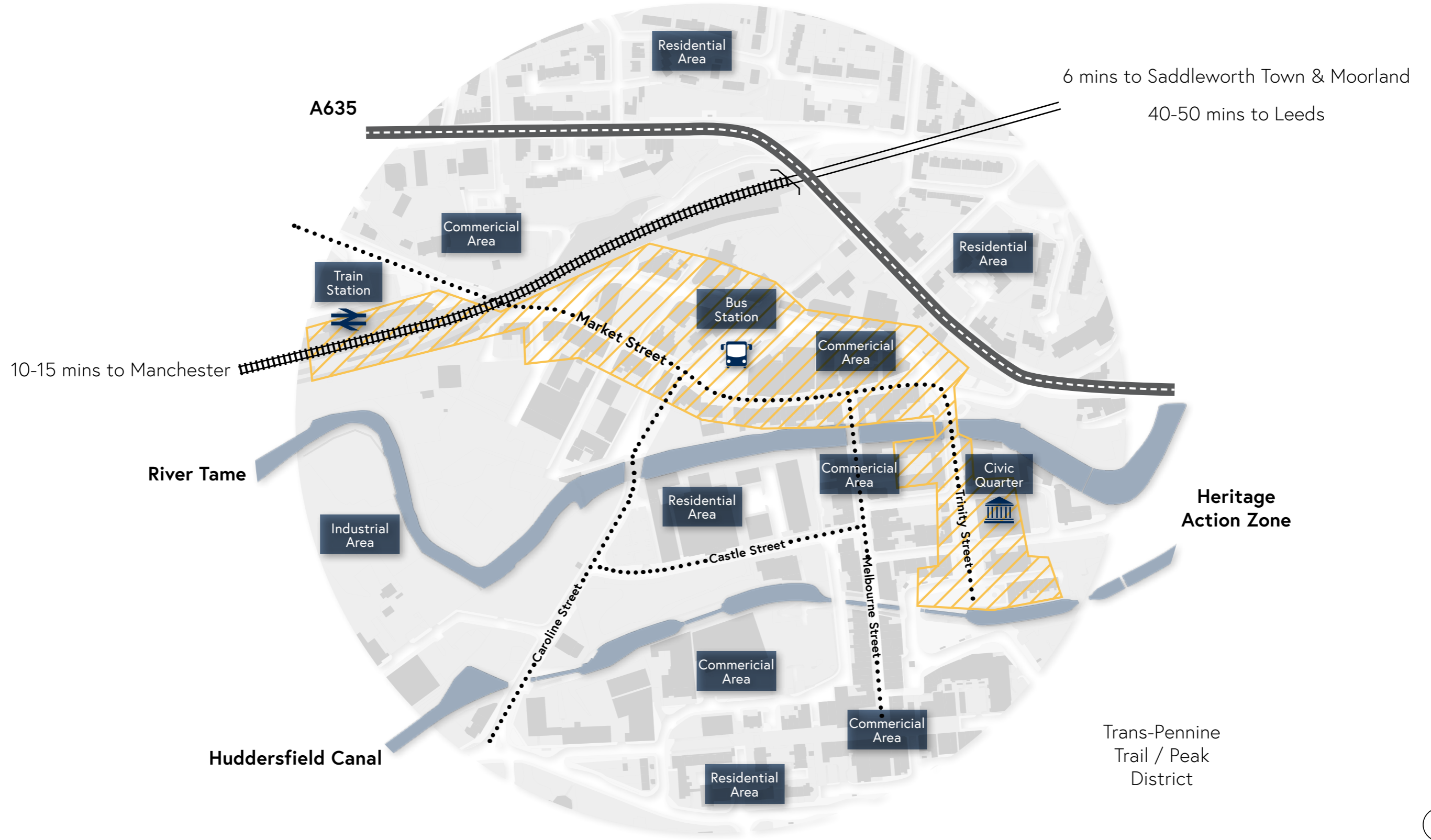
The fragility of the retail sector is widely recognised, and the solution is to reinvent centres as destinations for a range of activities. The government's Town Centre Regeneration research briefing recommends 'multifunctional' town centres with community, leisure and retail offerings.

The concurrent under-delivery of housing in the borough dovetails with the need to diversity town centres. The Council's Housing Action Plan finds that additional brownfield sites are required to be brought forward earlier than anticipated. A key action noted in the Action Plan is the need to take a more proactive role in the promotion and delivery of housing; and in it, the Council commits to sustainable housing and economic growth.

The opportunities within Stalybridge town centre respond directly to this aspiration. This Framework document seeks to co-ordinate delivery of the town centre regeneration programme and assist in the implementation of a longer-term strategy which will help address housing need whilst reinvigorating the town centre and enabling it to contribute more fully to the local economy and to broader regeneration aims.



# 1.3 Context



# 1.4 Historic Context



**1891**

During the industrial revolution Stalybridge became renowned for the manufacture of cotton and textiles. This resulted in the development of a number of factories and mills around the town which built a rich identity in industry. Rows of terrace houses for textile labourers were prevalent.

Mills were built on the banks of the River Tame as it was historically used to power the cotton mills. Market Street acted as a main axis to the market town, civic quarter and to the train/tram station.



**1938**

As the cotton industry declined, the need for factories and supporting housing was reduced. Post-WW2, many of the factories and mills were left derelict.

Historically, there were a number of footbridges acting as links across the River Tame, from the industrial zone leading to the residential areas. These links have since been lost.



**2023**

The mills and terrace housing largely disappeared within the town centre leaving a substantial amount of undeveloped land. However, the surviving mills play a significant part in the identity of today's Stalybridge Town Centre.

The previously joint station is now simply Stalybridge Train Station, with the tram line terminating at Ashton-under-Lyne since the 1960s.

Market Street has lost some of its standing as a main axis within the town; the high street has been through a period of decline, with some empty and neglected shopfronts. However, many vibrant, independent businesses have appeared on Trinity Street and Melbourne Street.

# 1.5 Heritage Context

## Stalybridge Town Centre Conservation Area

The heart of Stalybridge was designated as a conservation area in 1991 and is described by Historic England as an attractive Pennine town with strong historic character.

## Stalybridge High Street Heritage Action Zone

Stalybridge was selected as Tameside's focus for the GM Mayor's Town Centre Challenge in 2018. With £1,275,000 of government funding, delivered through Historic England, the HSHAZ is currently seeing improvements to the Civic Hall and High Street.

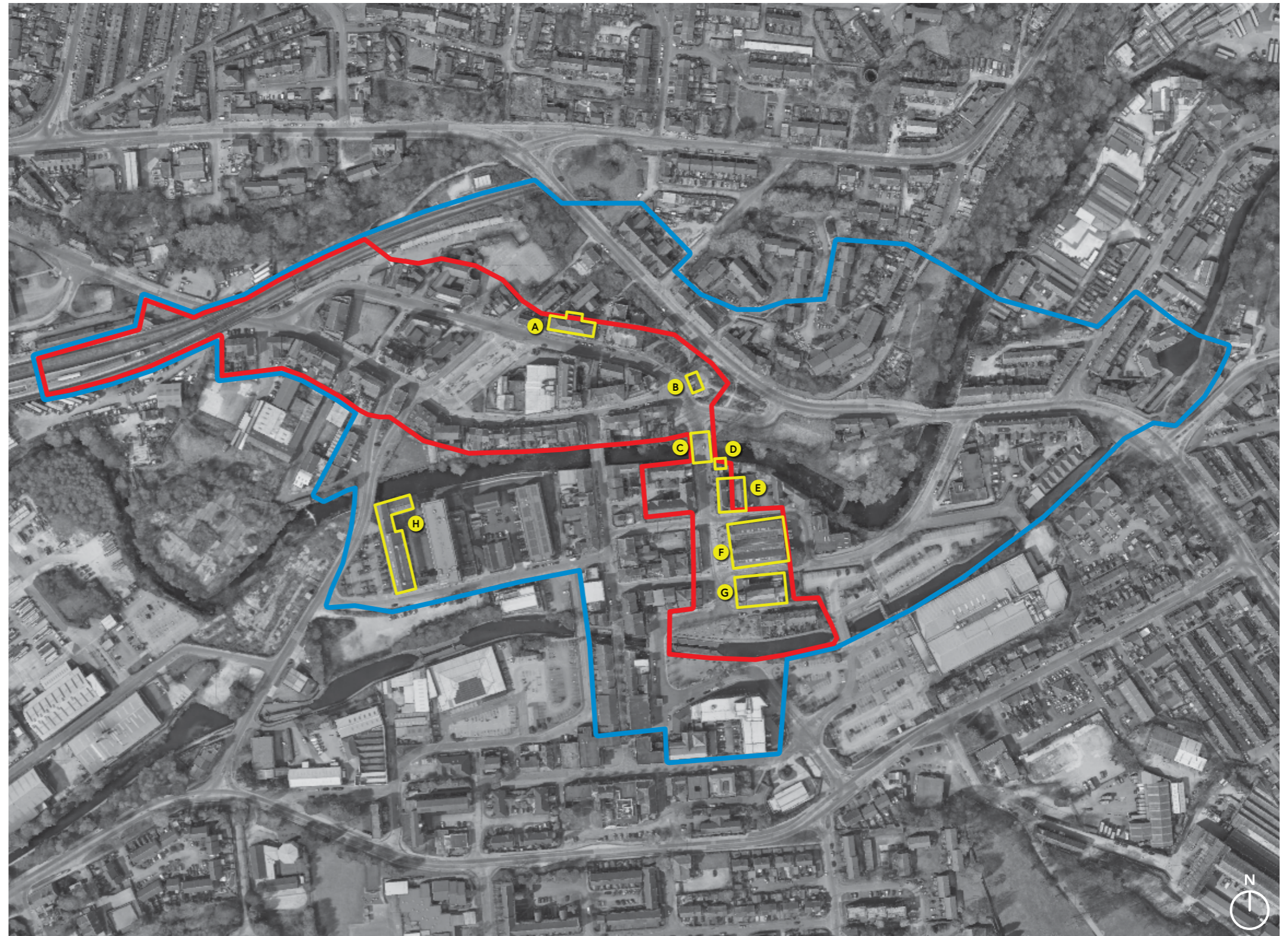
## Listed Buildings

Within the conservation area of Stalybridge Town Centre there are a number of listed buildings which speak of the town's history and character. The majority sit in the East of the town on Trinity Street.

- A Thorne House | Grade 2 | 1903
- B Former Town Hall Facade | Grade 2 | 1831
- C Memorial + Victoria Bridge | Grade 2\* | 1867 + 1920
- D Post Office | Grade 2 | 1899
- E Library | Grade 2 | 1901
- F Victoria Market | Grade 2 | 1866
- G Holy Trinity Church | Grade 2 | 1851
- H Castle Street Mills | Grade 2 | 1805

**Key:**

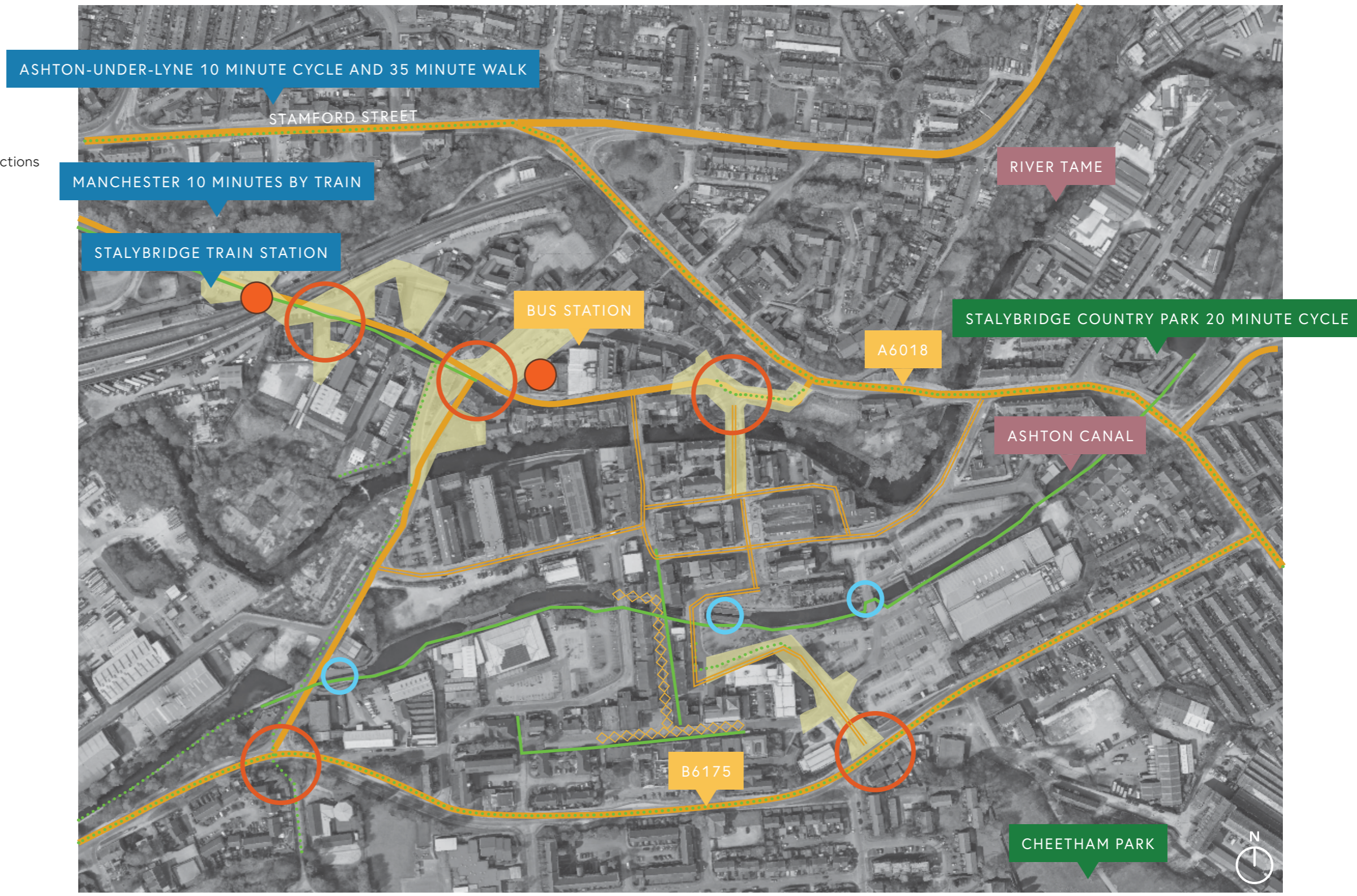
- Conservation Area
- High Street Heritage Action Zone
- Listed Buildings





# 1.6 Movement Context

- Key:**
- Existing Main Vehicular Routes
  - Secondary Vehicular routes
  - Town Centre Routes
  - Local interchange for Public transport Connections
  - Vehicle dominated spaces
  - Key Junctions
  - Existing Pedestrianised Streets
  - Existing connections to Canal
  - Cycle friendly routes
  - Designated Cycle & Pedestrian trails



## 1.7 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Nationally town centres are facing a number of significant challenges, requiring them to evolve and adapt as places where people want to live, work, shop and spend quality time. The structural change and pressures facing town centres were exacerbated by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with rising retail vacancies, declining footfall, and increased shopping online. There will be a need for Stalybridge to adapt to these challenges with a diversification of offer and increase of other uses, including residential.

The local challenges Stalybridge faces can be summarised by the below factors:

- **Land values:** Stalybridge suffers from low land values which makes private investment in the Town Centre difficult to secure. There are several key housing and mixed used sites with planning permission but very limited current activity. Brownfield sites are costly to remediate, and extensive feasibility work has demonstrated that these will only become viable for the private sector when sales values rise or there is public sector intervention.

- **Safety:** Stalybridge is ranked as the worst of all Tameside's towns for perception of safety. Some of this perception is attributed to the Town's past reputation as a late-night club and pub destination. Although many of these venues have now closed, Stalybridge retains a reputation for late night noise, substance abuse and violent incidents. Other reasons for poor perception of safety include low footfall across the centre, boarded-up shops, bars, clubs and large patches of derelict/vacant land that combine to generate a 'hostile' feeling for both residents and visitors.

- **Walkability and public realm:** Taken as a whole, the Town Centre looks in on itself, with narrow connecting pavements, excessive street furniture and wide junctions. The current location of car parks with inadequate signage and poor linkages between the train and bus stations and the retail core contribute to making the Town difficult to navigate with a poor walking experience. The existing public realm in the Town Centre provides a poor physical environment with limited landscaping and greenery.

- **Dilapidated buildings:** Many buildings in the Town Centre are in a poor physical condition. The Town Centre is on the Heritage at-risk register with asset condition rated 'very-bad'. Assets in poor condition negatively impact on the aesthetics of the Town and reduce its attractiveness. Specifically, the historic Cultural Quarter, comprising the Civic Hall and the Ashley Cheetham Library and Art Gallery, needs significant repair work. Without investment, these historic buildings may fall into further disrepair, disuse and eventually dereliction. In contrast, by activating the spaces and providing the opportunity to grow the cultural offering in the Town Centre, Stalybridge may generate a stronger sense of civic pride while attracting visitors and follow-on investment.

- **Out of town/online shopping:** Like many town centres nationally, out of town retail offerings have had a drastic effect on Town Centre footfall. Two large supermarkets, Aldi and Tesco, compete with the retail core and dominate smaller local businesses. Retail businesses continue to struggle with increasing vacant units in the Town Centre driven by both out of town shopping and online alternatives.

Within this document, we will make reference to the unique characteristics of Stalybridge, influenced by its surrounding typography, the strong presence of both river and canal, and a central role of retained and improved heritage buildings at the heart of a stronger and more vibrant town centre. As we explore and identify the opportunity to bring forward new development, it is important to focus upon the opportunity to create attractive places, to live, work, enjoy leisure time and improve residents' health and wellbeing.



# Key Challenges and Opportunities (Cont.)

In March 2023 it was announced that Stalybridge had been selected as one of 16 Capital Regeneration Projects nationally to receive grant funding and the Council was awarded £19.9m in accordance with the bid submitted to Levelling Up Fund Round 2 in July 2022. The bid for Stalybridge was focused on enabling infrastructure to bring forward vacant sites for redevelopment, public realm and active travel improvements, and the delivery of the Stalybridge 'Cultural Quarter' at the Civic Hall and Ashley Cheetham Art Gallery. This will help the Town Centre to reach its full potential and deliver further comprehensive regeneration, attracting additional investment.

The lack of enabling works that are the primary focus of the interventions to be supported by this external funding significantly inhibit the Council's ability to deliver the further comprehensive regeneration of the Town Centre to attract further investment, failing to meet the regeneration objectives for Stalybridge.

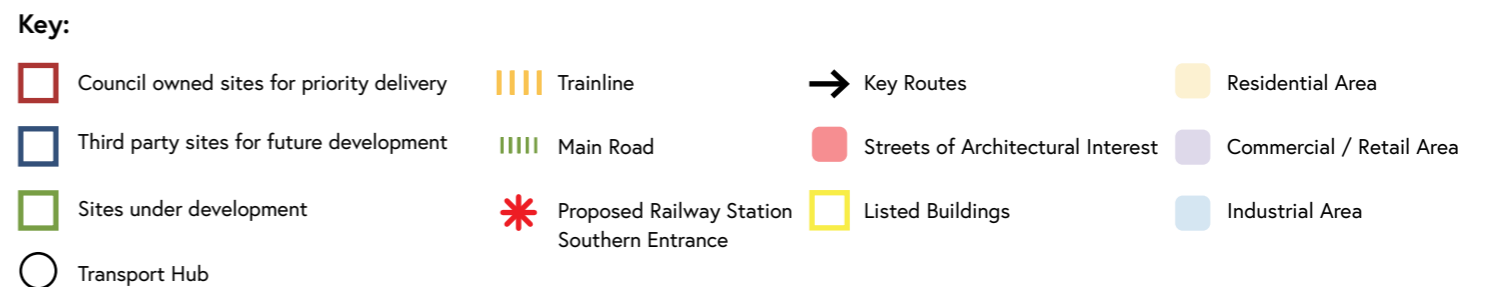
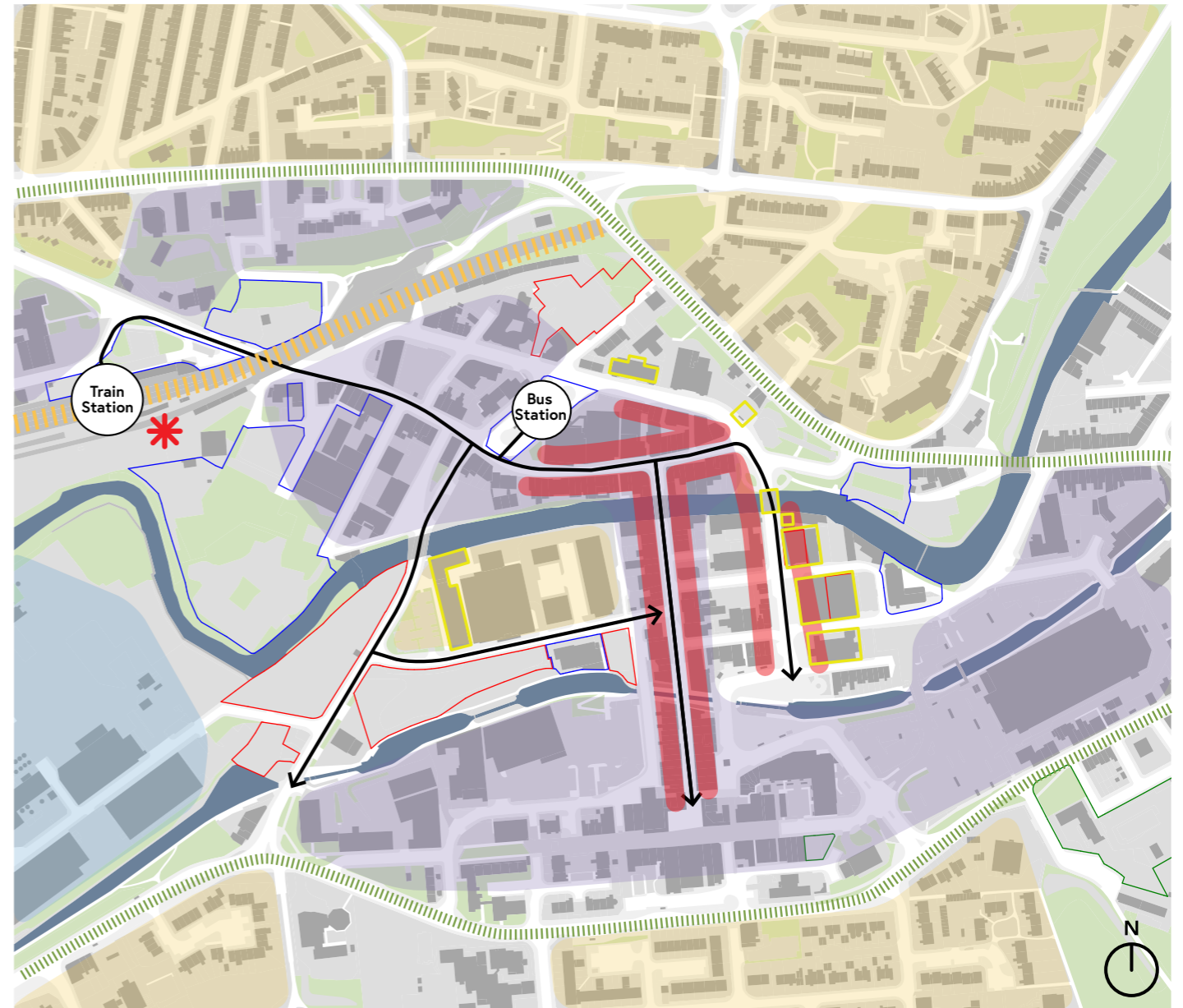
The funding will provide investment to deliver enabling infrastructure works across the sites identified within the Stalybridge West area to facilitate the viable delivery of new housing and commercial space in the Town Centre. Delivery of the Stalybridge West Opportunity Area will create a vibrant Town Centre residential community in a highly sustainable location that will support the local economy. The enabling infrastructure will include a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the River Tame and a new multi-level car parking facility within the Town Centre proposed to be located at Waterloo Road.

The choice of this proposed location for the multi-storey carpark is consistent with the exercise undertaken as part of the transport and parking assessment included within the preceding Stalybridge West Feasibility Study. Various sites were considered for the carpark which to date has concluded with the Waterloo Road site satisfying the criteria for both size and proximity to amenities along with being under the control and ownership of the Council to help eliminate risks to the eventual delivery and programme. As the site is already an existing parking facility, this also maximises the development potential of the remaining sites and avoids creating increased vehicular movement in close proximity to the proposed residential developments.

The Heritage Walk public realm improvements to pedestrian routes from the rail station along Market Street to the Cultural Quarter, and funded via the HSHAZ, commenced in October 2022 with practical completion by the end of 2023. These works comprise the first phase of public realm improvements in the Town Centre. The additional funding will now be utilised for the delivery of the public realm capital works along the remainder of Market Street, Trinity Street and other areas of the Town Centre, subject to further consultation and availability of budget. This will complement and be aligned with the ongoing work with Transport for Greater Manchester to identify alternative arrangements for the location of the Stalybridge Bus Station, improve integration of bus services with Stalybridge Rail Station and improve bus stop facilities at Armentieres Square.

The main roof repair works at the Civic Hall started on site in August 2023 supported by match funding from the HSHAZ, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Council Capital Programme. Further repair works and internal restoration at the adjacent Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and Library will now be updated to inform the programme to undertake the capital works to enhance the provision and accessibility, including the installation of a new internal lift. Collectively these two Grade II listed buildings will form the town centre Cultural Quarter.

As the repair works to the Civic Hall are completed, subject to further approval, the Council will seek to progress a programme of activity including the potential for markets, food and drink events, music, theatre, comedy, art and arts/cultural exhibition events. This will be progressed in the context of an emerging strategy for the long term sustainable use of the building.



## 1.8 Town Centre Regeneration Context

This Framework seeks to guide the future development of Stalybridge in a way which reflects its physical and local characteristics and the significance of the opportunity for the town centre. The area has been identified as a major regeneration opportunity that can deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits both locally and on the broader scale.

Stalybridge became renowned for the manufacture of cotton and textiles during the Industrial Revolution. However, the changed economic climate led to dereliction in the later half of the twentieth century. In the early 2000s the area enjoyed a nightlife boom but many venues closed down and still remain empty. There are significant historic buildings including mills which have the potential to be reused.

This Delivery Framework provides an overarching strategy for the delivery of major regeneration with immediate opportunities unlocked by the award of external capital funding.

### Environmental Regeneration

The guidance set out will result in an improved town centre environment. The reuse of existing buildings of character; encouraging on-site landscaping on suitable sites; and contributions towards street trees and other local improvements will result in an enhanced town centre. People will come to the town centre more often and spend longer periods of time there. Physical improvements which direct footfall through the main retail areas of the town centre will encourage a better commercial environment. Taken together, there is a positive impact on town centre vitality, encouraging further investment and attracting higher profile shops and services.

### Residential Regeneration: The Benefits

There is a clear need for additional dwellings in Stalybridge, to diversify the local housing market, add vitality and meet the needs of local people. This Framework indicates that the town could support the development of up to 1,000 new dwellings. It would be reasonable to envisage a further windfall delivery of unidentified sites of a similar number. This population would contribute significantly to the vibrancy of the town and its businesses. Residential development contributes strongly to the economy in the form of construction and management jobs, the attraction

of additional spending power from new residents, council tax receipts, planning obligation payments and infrastructure improvements.

Using the online Home Builders Federation calculator, and assuming the delivery in the town centre of up to 1,000 additional residential units, the following benefits could be generated:

- Generating £12,053,000 in tax revenue, including over £1m in council tax revenue.
- Creating 230 affordable homes
- Supporting the employment of 3,100 people.
- Providing 34 apprentices, graduates or trainees.
- Increasing open space, community sport and leisure spending by £806,200 – for context, this figure is the equivalent of 45 x 5-a-side football pitches.
- Generating the same figure for education spending, the equivalent of 380 classroom spaces.

### The Strategy for Stalybridge

The delivery of dwellings in the town centre would build on the Council's Housing Strategy which seeks the creation of vibrant, diversified towns which are places of 'live-work-play'. It commits to proactively encouraging the re-balancing of the housing market. Towns are recognised as capable of delivering the dwelling types that the borough currently lacks.

The nature of town centre residential development, with its smaller sites and higher density, re-balances a local housing market. Tameside as a whole has an overprovision of houses, a lack of apartments and a smaller private rental market than the England average (16.5% live in private rented properties in Stalybridge and Hyde compared to 20.6% across England, according to the census).

Tameside's Housing Need Assessment demonstrates that 78% of the borough's dwellings are houses and of these, 39.6% are terraced and 30.3% are semi-detached. Only 10% of properties have one bedroom. 42.6% of dwellings were built before 1945 and an estimated 21.8% of all dwellings do not meet the 'decent' standard. A need is identified for affordable home ownership options relating to two and three bedroom houses; and some need for two bedroom apartments. There is a need for market dwellings of all types including one and two bedroom apartments and houses of all sizes.

There is a clear need for new, high quality housing of a range of types and tenures which will rebalance the housing market. At the same time, it will address the gaps in the market for apartments and smaller homes. These are highly suitable for town centres. They also suit the borough's future demographic structure. There is a larger than average pipeline of young people and a population trajectory which indicates an increase across all age groups, especially the over 75s.

Apartments, particularly where they are close to local services and public transport options, appeal to a broad demographic from older downsizers to young professionals. Provision of town centre living will meet the local need for a range of dwelling types and will contribute to making Stalybridge a location of choice.

### The Future

Town centre residential markets evolve. From studying Manchester city centre, we can see that early adopters of urban living tend to be young singles and couples with higher disposable incomes who are drawn to the lifestyle, connectivity and dwelling type offered by the centre. As the market becomes established, a wider range of property types and facilities evolve. In Manchester, the city centre's young population was subsequently bolstered by young families and older retirees. This generated additional amenities in the form of healthcare and schools to cater to the new population. This Framework therefore considers the required strategy over time as the town centre residential market evolves.

# 1.9 Planning Position

The proposals for Stalybridge town centre align fully with the aims and objectives of the national and local policy framework.

Planning legislation requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is therefore important to start by summarising the policy position at both a local and national level, insofar as it relates to Stalybridge.

The development plan for Tameside is comprised of the Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 2004). Places for Everyone (PFE) will form part of a joint development plan for the 9 participating districts of Greater Manchester. It is yet to be adopted, but as it will become an important part of the local development plan within the short term, we should consider and comment upon its relevant policy advice within the body of this document

Although the UDP is of some age, important themes run through the document and align with the objectives of more recent policy. The UDP Proposals Map (below) identifies the town centre boundary of Stalybridge in blue, with a number of development of Development Opportunity Areas being identified in orange.

UDP Policy E2 provides more information on the Development Opportunity Areas, with Site 8 (Castle Street / Longlands Mill) being identified for workshops, leisure, office, retail and residential uses, Site 9 (Harrop Street / Shepley Street) being allocated for industrial, leisure and non-food retail, and Site 10 (Knowl Street / North Road) being allocated for residential, leisure and office use.

The identification of such sites for redevelopment was an initial indication of the council's appetite for encouraging the longer term regeneration of Stalybridge Town Centre. The allocations themselves generated some planning applications and resultant redevelopment, in particular, Castle Street, where a mixed-use development of up to 275 dwellings was approved in 2006, and to a lesser extent, Knowl St (site 10) where some residential development was brought forward at (again in 2006). The land south of Stalybridge Railway Station (Site 9), remains a long-term redevelopment opportunity at the heart of the town centre.

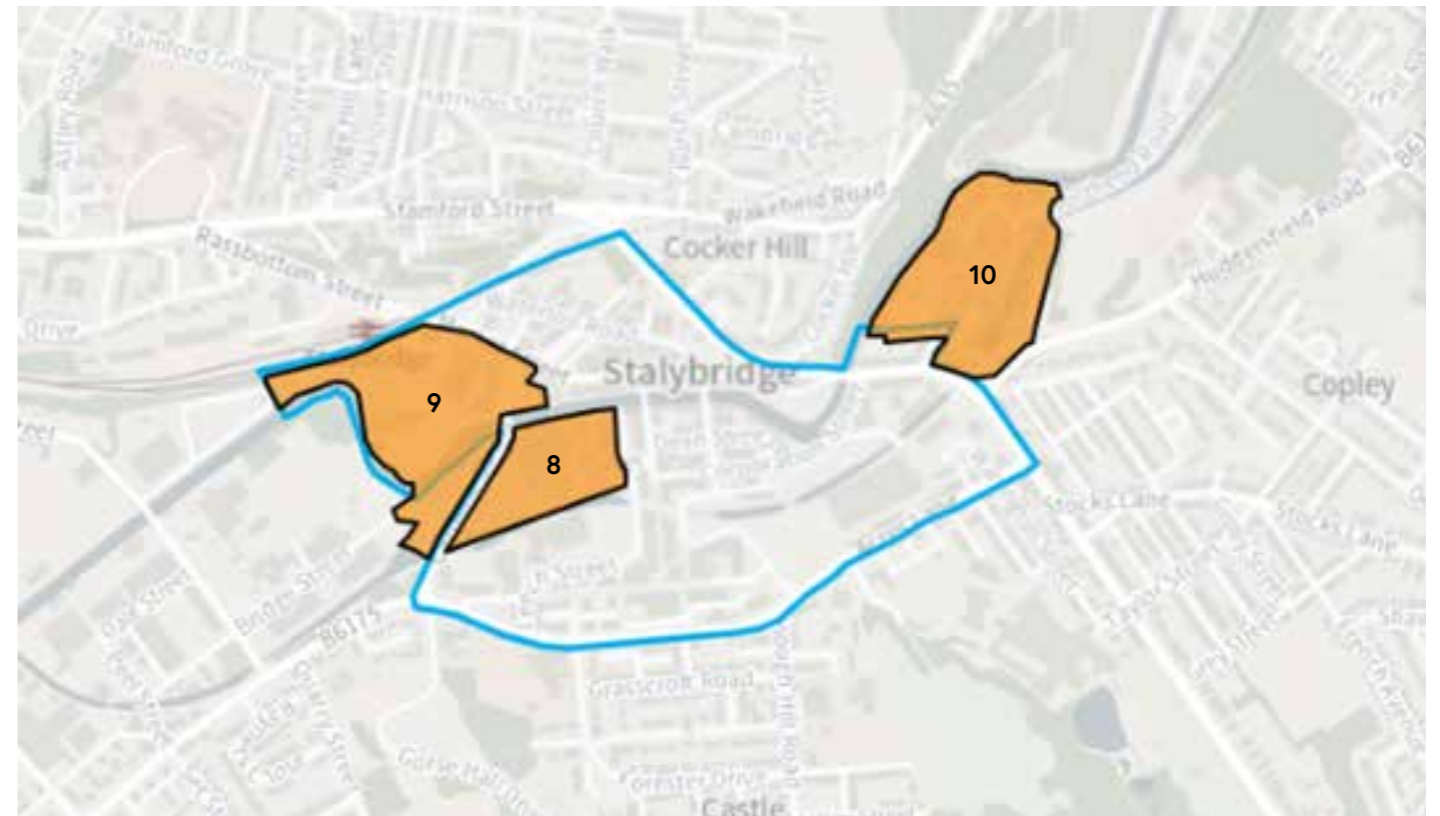
As stated earlier, Places for Everyone (PFE), will form an important part of the future emerging Tameside Development Local Plan (Homes, Spaces, Places),

updating the policy guidance of the UDP, in a way which will closer reflect the advice of the NPPF. Having initially begun to prepare a joint development plan in the form of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) in 2014, and progressed with various consultation stages, the withdrawal of Stockport Council from that process (including in 2010) resulted in the 9 remaining districts working together to produce a joint long-term plan in the form of the PFE.

Its headline description is that this would be a joint development plan, 'which would determine the kind of development that takes place in their boroughs, maximises the use of brownfield land and urban spaces, whilst protecting greenbelt land from the risk of unplanned development.'. PFE covers the period up until 2039, identifying the amount of new development land which will come forward, supporting the delivery of key infrastructure, protecting important environmental assets across the city region and allocating sites for employment and housing outside the urban area. After the preparation and submission of the Submission Documentation in February 2022, an examination in public took place between November 22 and July 23, and, most recently, public consultation was closed in respect of proposed modifications. It is currently anticipated that PFE will be in a position to be adopted in 2024.

Whilst a document of the scale and significance of the PFE Plan will be a matter for comprehensive consideration as part of any debate surrounding future development proposals, within this document, we should perhaps highlight its key themes and some specific policies that are particularly relevant to this Framework for Stalybridge Town Centre.

A central theme of the PFE Plan is to bring forward brownfield land as a means of meeting local housing need, promoting a new approach for town centre strategies, improving environmental and personal health, whilst also allowing long term protection for environmental assets. The specific target of providing new homes is firmly directed towards consistently delivering the right homes in the right place, both in terms of number and mix, in meeting future needs. Development is directed to the most sustainable areas which are primarily city and town centres where there would be the best outcome in terms of the reuse of brownfield land, and there will be significant opportunities to provide affordable homes that meet space standards and are both accessible and adaptable.



UDP Proposals Map

Consistent with the NPPF, the priority given to fully exploiting brownfield opportunities could not be stronger. This is seen to sit very comfortably with the plans and strategic approach with regards to town centres, which will see a significant increase in supply and demand for housing, as part of the strengthening and renewal of their role in each location.

In terms of specific policy guidance, we would highlight the following:

Policy JP/P1: Sustainable Places

Looks for all developments to have a range of important attributes including a distinctive identity, social inclusivity, visually interesting and imaginative, adaptability, durability, safety, legibility and connectivity, amongst a number of other important considerations.

Policy JP/P2: Heritage

Calls for a proactive approach in individual local plans, which will set out key elements which will contribute to the districts identity and character, will require a clear understanding of the historic environment and will set out a clear vision which can be given weight in the planning and design process with regards to future development opportunities.

Policy JP/P3: Cultural facilities

Recognises the historic roots of Greater Manchester, its potential value as part of the visitor economy, and future opportunities to enhance cultural characteristics, which in turn could help reinforce the nighttime economy. The policy itself lists a number of potential measures, which could proactively develop and support cultural 'business' and attractions in Greater Manchester cities and towns.

Policy JP/P6: Health

Reflects the importance of good health in its own right, but also the impact that it can have upon the Greater

## Planning Position (Cont.)

Manchester population, and the region's economic outputs. Health and wellbeing has increasingly become an important consideration in understanding the effects of development and therefore requires consideration and response as part of the planning process.

### Policy JP/C4: Streets for All

Calls for streets to be designed and managed to make a significant positive contribution to the quality of place and to support high levels of walking, cycling and public transport.

### Policy JP/C5: Walking and Cycling

Similarly, more focussed guidance is provided with regards to delivering a higher proportion of journeys by cycling and walking, supported by a range of potential measures, including the creation of active neighbourhoods and street networks which are more permeable, the separation of space which is suitable for walking and cycling and the utilisation of enhanced green infrastructure including canals, parks and recreation grounds etc.

### Policy JP/C7: Transport requirements for new development

Reinforces a number of the same themes including the importance of connectivity and permeability, hybrid design at a human scale, the relationship between development and public transport and the provision of parking infrastructure which meets long term demand and is convenient, so as to maximise use. It also highlights the importance of providing alternatives to car ownership and increased provision of ULEV charging infrastructure and car clubs.

The PFE Plan also provides more focussed advice with regard to housing development. Beyond the headlines of scale, distribution and phasing (Poly JP/H1) specific guidance concerns:

### Policy JP/H1: Affordability of new housing

### Policy JP/H3: Type, Size and Design of new housing

### Policy JP/H4: Density of housing

All of the above reflect the advice of the NPPF and other policy documents with particular regard to increasing the supply of low-cost market housing, to compliment the provision of affordable homes and to diversify options. New homes should be well designed

and adaptable with appropriate access to private space, and all new dwellings must comply with nationally described space standards and meet building regulation requirements in respect of accessibility and adaptability. Whilst recognising the importance of high-quality design, higher densities are permitted across districts, although it is recognised that site specific issues, such as design context, heritage assets and green infrastructure may influence final outputs

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) is a material consideration in planning decisions, and should be read alongside National Planning Practice Guidance. The NPPF has a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning that economic, social and environmental objectives are achieved. The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that local planning authorities should, without delay, approve developments that accord with an up-to-date development plan.

The NPPF seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes to meet the needs of various groups in the community. At least 10% of dwellings to be provided on major schemes should be affordable, with some exceptions. Local authorities are encouraged to identify specific, deliverable sites for housing in their plans.

The NPPF seeks to uphold the vitality of town centres. It recognises that a range of uses will achieve this, including residential. Good design is encouraged, and it should create inclusive places which promote social interaction. The location of housing, economic and community facilities should be integrated. Sustainable transport and active travel are encouraged through the location and format of development.

Parking standards, where required, should take into account accessibility, type of development, availability of public transport and local car ownership. As much use as possible should be made of previously developed land, with substantial weight given to the value of using suitable brownfield land in settlements for new homes.

The NPPF covers adaptation to climate change; response to flood risk and incorporation of sustainable drainage; minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity; preventing pollution; and reiterating legislative protection afforded to heritage assets.

We have referenced the Council's general appetite for encouraging further redevelopment of known opportunity sites within Stalybridge Town Centre, some

of which are covered by indicative proposals within this document. Since the adoption of the UDP, there has been a continued shift towards a recognition that the character and function of all town centres has changed. Whilst they remain important for retail, leisure and commercial activities, there has also been an increased focus upon the delivery of residential development.

This has partly been a response to the need to exploit brownfield development opportunities, where they exist, but also a recognition that an increase in the number of people who live close to and within our town centres, brings with it increased footfall, improved security, increased spend and use of existing town centre services, and potentially wide-reaching sustainability benefits. The delivery of development proposals can also secure improved public realm, investment in heritage assets, improved connectivity across the centre and, in a town such as Stalybridge, further exploitation of existing river and canal corridors.

These and other themes sit at the heart of National guidance (NPPF), and a number of the same considerations are also acknowledged within the current UDP, notwithstanding its age.

Our summary of some key policy considerations which the council have and would give particular weight to in the context of recent and future planning applications is as follows:

- Town centres provide opportunities for employment growth and a range of uses outside the primary shopping area. The focus should be on strengthening the centre itself. The Council is committed to the improvement of, and investment in Stalybridge.
- Previously developed land is a valuable resource for development and should be used efficiently with 30-50 dwellings per hectare.
- The provision of further housing is a priority, and it is important that individual proposals should focus upon a range of house types and tenures. Where there is a demonstrable lack of particular forms of housing including affordable, provision is sought on suitable sites of 25 or more dwellings or 1ha in size.
- Development should be of high design quality and sensitive to its location, particularly at higher densities. Design should enable accessibility and discourage crime. Suitable amenity space should be provided.

- Development should be located to avoid the need to travel and/or be located in town centres and in proximity to public transport. There are benefits to co-locating various residential, employment, leisure and community facilities.
- All development proposals should look to provide appropriate protection of heritage assets, biodiversity and trees.
- Schemes with limited provision of car parking (and at times nil-parking provision) are encouraged within or adjacent to town centres and in areas of good public transport. Maximum parking standards are to be applied, with draft standards outlined at a maximum of 1.25 spaces per town centre dwelling, along with minimum standards for disabled parking and bicycle storage. Safe access and design for those with mobility needs are required, and active travel is encouraged.
- All proposals should look to address any environmental impacts in terms of contamination, flood risk, pollution, noise and air quality.
- It is becoming increasingly important that proposals should look to encourage energy efficiency and reduce carbon consumption within new developments.

In preparing this document, we have engaged with the relevant planning officers at Tameside Council and, consistent with this summary of the relevant planning policy context, officers have recognised the age of the UDP, the advice of the NPPF and the weight that will be given to the relevant planning considerations that have been summarised above.

Officers have echoed our reference to the scale of opportunities that exist within Stalybridge town centre and the wide-reaching benefits that can potentially be secured in the context of future planning applications. It should be noted that the opportunities that have been highlighted will still need to be progressed through appropriate pre-application dialogue with Tameside's planning team and all relevant policy matter will need to be addressed at an appropriate level of detail in the context of individual applications. However, the general policy themes that we have highlighted will all be important material considerations.

## 1.10 Strategy for Future Community & Stakeholder Engagement

This Framework has been prepared in the context of the in extensive engagement and consultation with local stakeholders and the community undertaken in the preparation of the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Action Plan – Our Place Our Plan (2019). Further consultation and engagement will now be undertaken to finalise the Framework.

To support delivery of the Framework a Strategic Project Board has been established of all Stalybridge elected members and chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council that has oversight of the works, advised and supported by the Stalybridge Delivery Group which involves local stakeholders. Collectively these groups will inform the Council's Executive Cabinet as the decision making body with regular updates also provided to the East Neighbourhood Forum as appropriate. Where the delivery of projects forms part of the Council's approved capital programme, quarterly reports will be taken to the Council's Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel.

The delivery of the Framework and the individual component projects within it, will be subject to a process of ongoing engagement and consultation. Future engagement will be carried out in line with the council's Statement of Community Involvement 2023. This will include engagement as appropriate with key stakeholders and interested parties, targeted focus groups, and general consultation open to comments from all. This will be supported by an engagement strategy to be prepared for delivery of the Capital Regeneration Project funding.

The consultation exercise allowed the public to share their ideas and aspirations for Stalybridge and enable a shared vision of the future to be developed. The primary method of data collection was through a questionnaire with 540 surveys completed and over 350 comments posted on exhibition boards at a drop-in event. Input was also collected from three local schools. The successful outcome of the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) application was shaped in accordance with this consultation feedback.

The following key themes emerged from the engagement exercise:

- It is important that people are made to feel safe in the town;

- The car parking provision in the Town Centre could be improved in terms of quality, availability and pricing;
- The location (i.e. being both close to Manchester and the countryside) is a unique selling point of the Town which is not leveraged upon enough;
- The natural environment of Stalybridge (e.g. canals, rivers and parks) is an asset to the Town that should be better utilised;
- The heritage and history of the Town should be embraced, with any new developments adhering to this historic character;
- Support should be provided to new and existing shops and businesses;
- Streets should be 'cleaned up' to improve the attractiveness of the Town and encourage visitors;
- Existing buildings should be utilised, redeveloped and improved, specifically the Civic Hall; and
- Improvements should be made to public transport particularly existing train and bus services.
- When participants were asked for their top priorities, the highest responses included:
- Reinvention of the Civic Hall to bring it back into everyday use;
- Provide additional support for new and existing shops and businesses;
- Improve car parking facilities;
- Improve access to the river and canal;
- Provide new cultural and arts activities;
- Redevelop vacant brownfield land; and
- Build more affordable homes to support community in the Town Centre.

The Framework has been prepared to provide the delivery strategy that will address the key priorities identified in this engagement. As the individual projects and supporting strategies identified within the Framework are progressed, these will be subject to their own town engagement and consultation processes.

## 2.0 Emerging Town Centre Masterplan



Regeneration  
Catalyst



Availability/Viability



Heritage



Timing



Design



## 2.1 Delivery Framework Vision and Objectives

In 2018 Stalybridge was identified as one of the GM Mayor's Town Centre Challenge (2018) locations that seeks to unlock the potential of Greater Manchester's towns by fostering collaboration between industry and public bodies. The objective is to transform centres into world class places for residents, visitors and businesses.

In 2020 Stalybridge was identified as a High Streets Heritage Action Zone, being delivered with Historic England. The aim is to deliver schemes to transform and restore disused and dilapidated buildings into new homes, shops, workplaces and community spaces. It will restore local historic character and improve the public realm. There have been positive interventions from the private sector particularly in relation to housing delivery, which remains a key challenge for the borough. Grade II listed Castle Street Mills has been successfully transformed into residential use. Summers Quay and Pattern House are other examples.

This Vision Framework seeks to draw these strands together and set out key principles to shape development positively across the town centre.

The overarching vision is 'to deliver a thriving place throughout the day and evening optimising Stalybridge's excellent connectivity, waterfront, heritage, culture and passion to provide a hub for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector'.

The primary objective of the Framework is to co-ordinate delivery of the town centre regeneration programme and assist in the implementation of a longer-term strategy to secure the successful regeneration of the Town Centre and the surrounding area.

The specific objectives that will help achieve this are:

SO1: Bringing forward identified development sites to:

- Develop unused, under-used or derelict land for a mix of uses;
- Promote the refurbishment and enhancement of historic buildings, including Stalybridge Civic Hall and the Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and Library.

SO2: Attracting further investment in the Town Centre to:

- Diversify town centre uses; support town centre facilities, including a higher quality evening economy;
- Improve housing options.

- Create modern and vibrant, mixed-use town centre living environment in a highly sustainable location.

SO3: Delivering improved public realm and accessibility to:

- Provide a strong sense of place;
- Enhance pedestrian routes; strengthen access to existing public transport provision.
- Improve connections to Stalybridge's unique assets and green spaces and deliver clear signage throughout the Town Centre and surrounding area.

SO4: Encouraging greater footfall throughout the Town Centre in the day and the evening with the delivery of:

- A safer and more secure Town Centre
- New residential development and a range of housing types, including affordable housing and routes to home ownership.

SO5: Changing perceptions of Stalybridge by supporting:

- Enhanced and higher quality food and drink uses.
- Closer working with partners to address and deter anti-social behaviour;
- A Town Centre environment that maximise the potential of assets such as the River Tame and canal.
- An enhanced visitor offer that strengthens the role of Stalybridge as a destination.

This will deliver against the following principles of the Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge Action Plan

- A Vibrant and Visited Town - which harnesses its local environment (canals, rivers and parks), heritage, culture, shops, local services and facilities to attract a wide range of people
- A Sustainable Town - which can be accessed easily by foot, cycle, car, train and bus and from which our attractive surrounding countryside and other centres (including Manchester and Leeds) can be easily accessed by a range of transport modes
- A Prosperous Town - where people invest in homes and businesses
- A Liveable Town - where people can access quality homes that meet their needs

- A Safe and Clean Town - where people feel comfortable to walk around and sit in during day and night
- A Proud Town - where local people promote our strengths and local are active in enjoying, supporting and enhancing our offer



# Delivery Framework Vision and Objectives

## Regeneration Catalyst

A market-led approach could see some developments emerge but the combination of traditional economic challenges and the more recent economic and social impacts will further hinder the ability of towns such as Stalybridge to generate any pace of regeneration without external support

The identification of council assets and interests which could potentially deliver "early wins" should become a catalyst for wider change. Proactive intervention can be the best way for a council to highlight the 'art of the possible', create 'real-time' examples of what can be achievable and to effectively show potential interested developers how future opportunities can be realised.

The challenges faced by our town centres do not have the luxury of a 'quick fix' and traditional town centre occupiers were already struggling in the face of general economic challenges, before the additional impact of Covid. By creating a new town centre neighbourhood, with a broader range and type of new residential occupiers, there is a clear opportunity to create a demand for retail, leisure and employment uses which are more local and independent than would otherwise be the case. It's then hoped that such complimentary growth (supporting the new residential neighbourhood) could be more robust and more reliable in the medium to long-term. In itself, that is a realistic economic target as are the associated social and environmental benefits that would then begin to emerge.

## Heritage

Stalybridge has a rich heritage; from its textile manufacturing to its civic buildings, there are still some significant historic assets within the town. The industrial boom in the town also saw the creation of numerous historic infrastructure projects including the Canals and Railway lines, which are still used today.

In recent years however, there has been a general decline within the Town Centre, further amplified by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, it is clear that there remains significant opportunity to develop on the strengths of the Stalybridge's Heritage, services and excellent transport links. particularly through the works underway and the Civic Hall and planned works to the Astley Cheetham Library and Art Gallery to support the Cultural Quarter.

## Availability / Viability

The fact that the initial sites prioritised are within TMBC or other public sector ownership is a major advantage. This enhances the opportunity in terms of deliverability and cannot be understated.

## Timing

There is currently a generational change in attitudes towards town centre living and people wishing to live a more sustainable lifestyle with more reliance on public transport and easy access to amenities. Add this to changes in the way companies and people are, and will continue, to work in a post-Covid world there has never been a better time to propose developments which challenge traditional affordable family housing incorporating communal facilities and public realm. All designed to increase the vibrancy of the town centre and enhance the environment for both residents and visitors. The completion of the HAZ programme in March 2024 and delivery of the Capital Regeneration Projects funding by March 2026, supported by this Framework, provides the opportunity to truly transform Stalybridge.

## Design

New developments and proposals should be of high quality and respond to the distinctive character of Stalybridge. A number of buildings are protected by statutory listings. Many other buildings are of local importance and much of the townscape contributes positively to the conservation area. This should be recognised and proposals developed in response to the character, appearance and significance of the built environment and its individual elements. The heritage context should inform development and new development should take design cues from the existing quality built form in the town centre, respecting building materials and proportions.

The proposed illustrative schemes at stalybridge West have been designed to reflect the history of Stalybridge and in particular the textile and cotton mills that assisted in the growth of the town during the industrial revolution. They seek to maintain the natural grain of the town centre with the buildings forming natural boundaries whilst reinstating the residential scale street scenes. Along with taking advantage where possible of surrounding aspects, where this isn't possible, spaces have been created within the plots where aspects can be internalised and opportunities for secure, communal garden areas provided for social use and community

events. They present one possible approach in terms of style - various alternative approaches could be utilised.

There should be a requirement for new developments and proposals to support an enhanced quality public realm. The public realm will play an important role in setting the scene for development and be a significant contributor to the perception of quality of the place. Streets, green spaces, squares, signage, wayfinding, street furniture, lighting and the treatment of gateways should all be considered as part of a coordinated approach. Providing high quality well designed buildings will also help to enhance the pedestrian experience along key streets and spaces within the town centre. A more detailed public realm strategy will be developed to provide the detailed proposals.

Sustainability should be a primary consideration within the development process and lead to energy efficient design that reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions with new development seeking to make use of renewable energy sources where possible. The use of green roofs and living walls on new and existing buildings should, where appropriate, be encouraged to enhance the green environment and help create unique identity. There should be a focus on reducing the need to travel by privately owned vehicles and improving linkages with public transport infrastructure, cycle networks and pedestrian routes with a range of facilities should be provided to allow people to work, live and socialise in the local area. New development should manage surface water run-off and make use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with the positive impact of biodiversity maximised and the greening of the urban environment supported

## 2.2 Development Sites

### Council Owned Sites for Priority Delivery:

- 1 Land North of Caroline Street
- 2 Land South of Bridge Street
- 3 Land South of Castle Street
- 4 Castle Street Car Park
- 5 Waterloo Road Car Park

### Third Party sites for future development:

- 6 Rail Station Interchange
- 7 Land Opposite Rail Station
- 8 7 Market Street
- 9 Land South of Harrop Street
- 10 Bus Station
- 11 Former Clinic Site

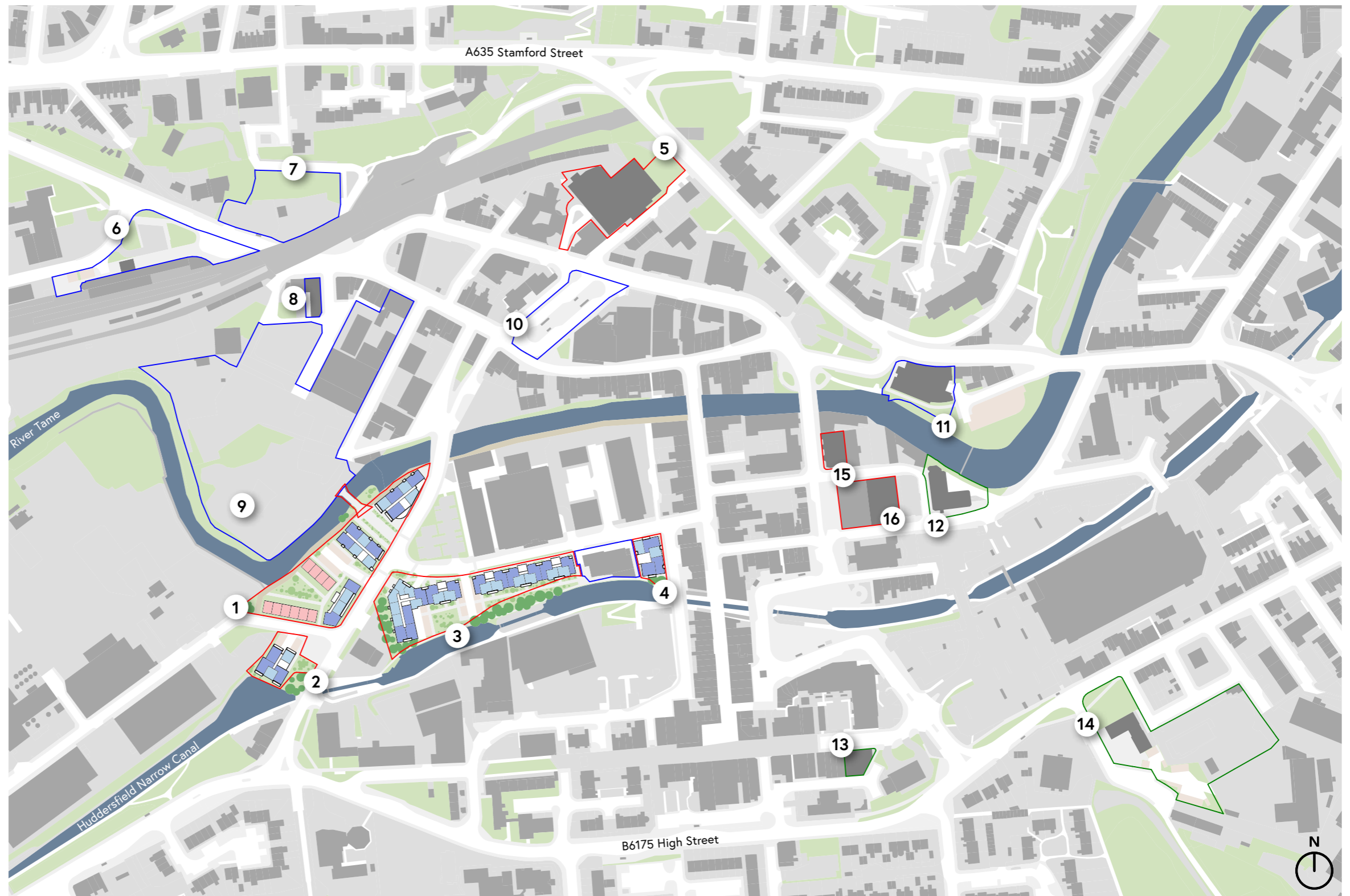
### Sites under development:

- 12 Former Police Station
- 13 Land South of Grosvenor Street
- 14 Land South of Acres Lane

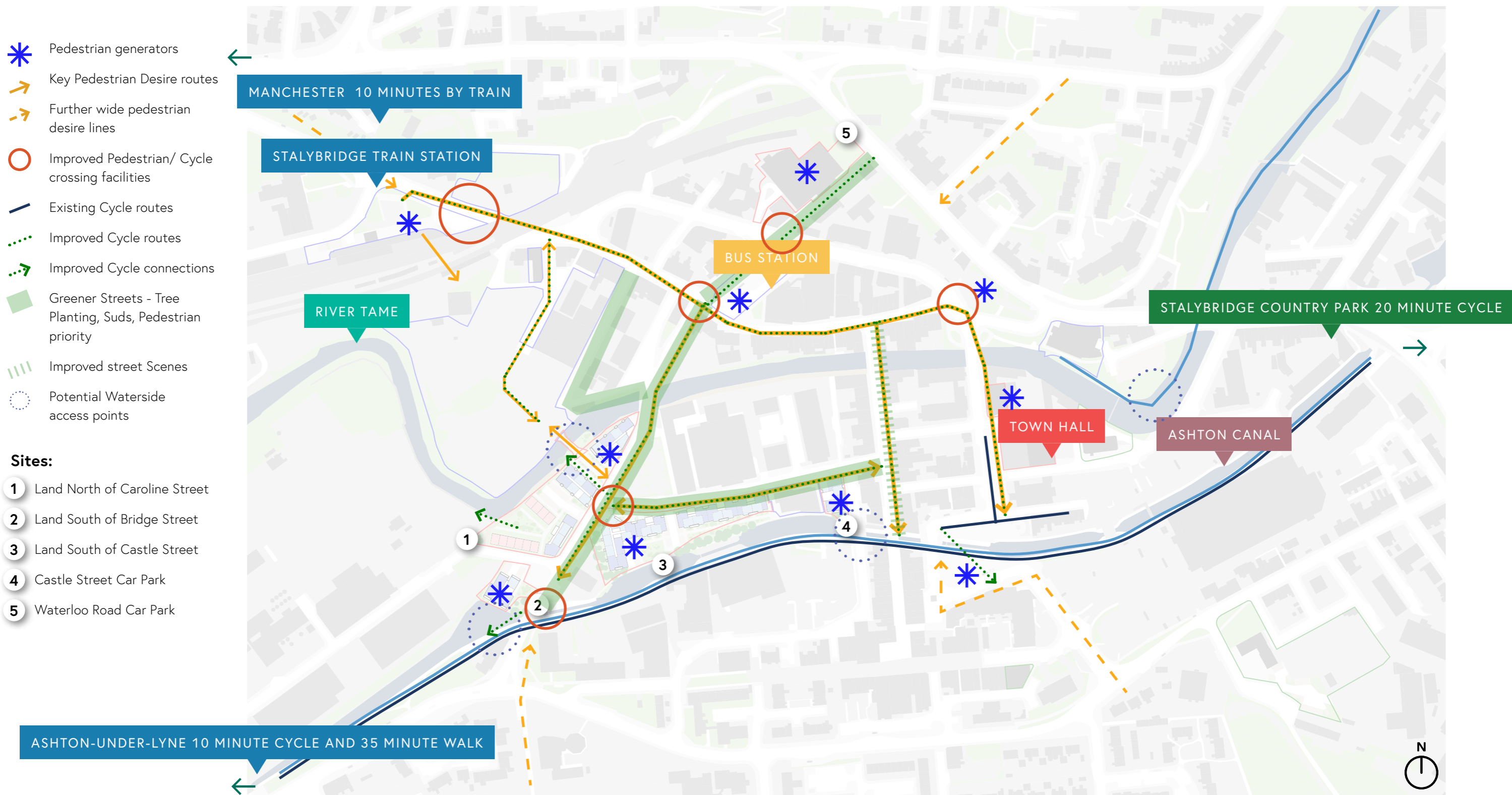
### Heritage Restoration Projects:

- 15 Museum & Art Gallery
- 16 Civic Hall

- Council owned sites for priority delivery
- Third party sites for future development
- Sites under development













## 2.3 Movement Framework - Pedestrian and Cycle



## 2.4 Movement Framework - Public transport and vehicle

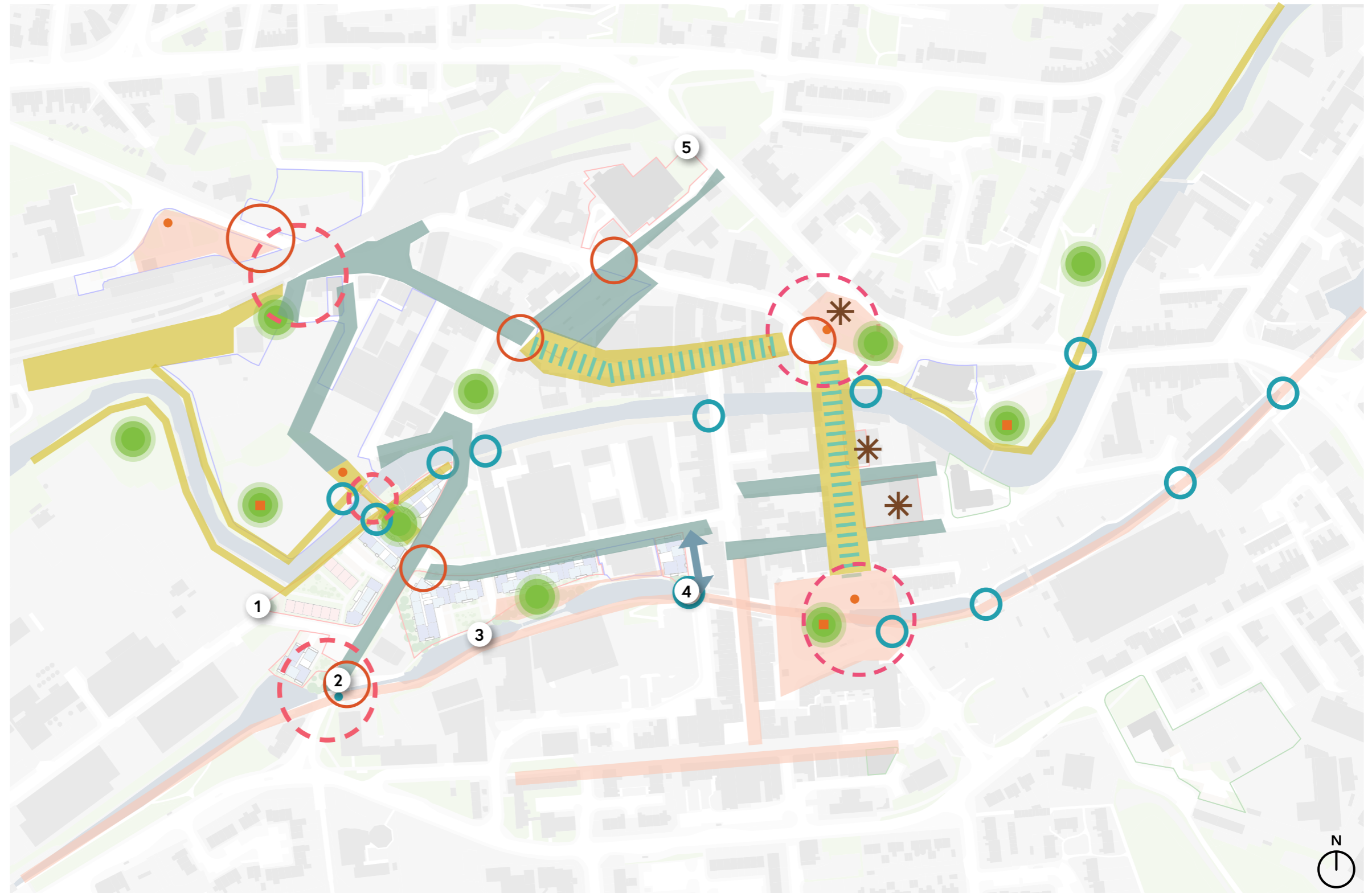


## 2.5 Public Realm Framework

-  Gateways and Entrance Points
-  Enhanced cycle & pedestrian facilities
-  Existing Public Open space (with opportunity for improvement)
-  Locations for new/ improved Public Spaces
-  Civic/ Historic Spaces
-  Opportunity to introduce Green Healthy Spaces
-  Green Street - Pedestrian priority space, SUDS & Tree planting
-  Gateways to Riverside/Canal Walking Connections
-  Potential for Public Art/ Branding
-  Social Interactive Spaces - Play/ Seating

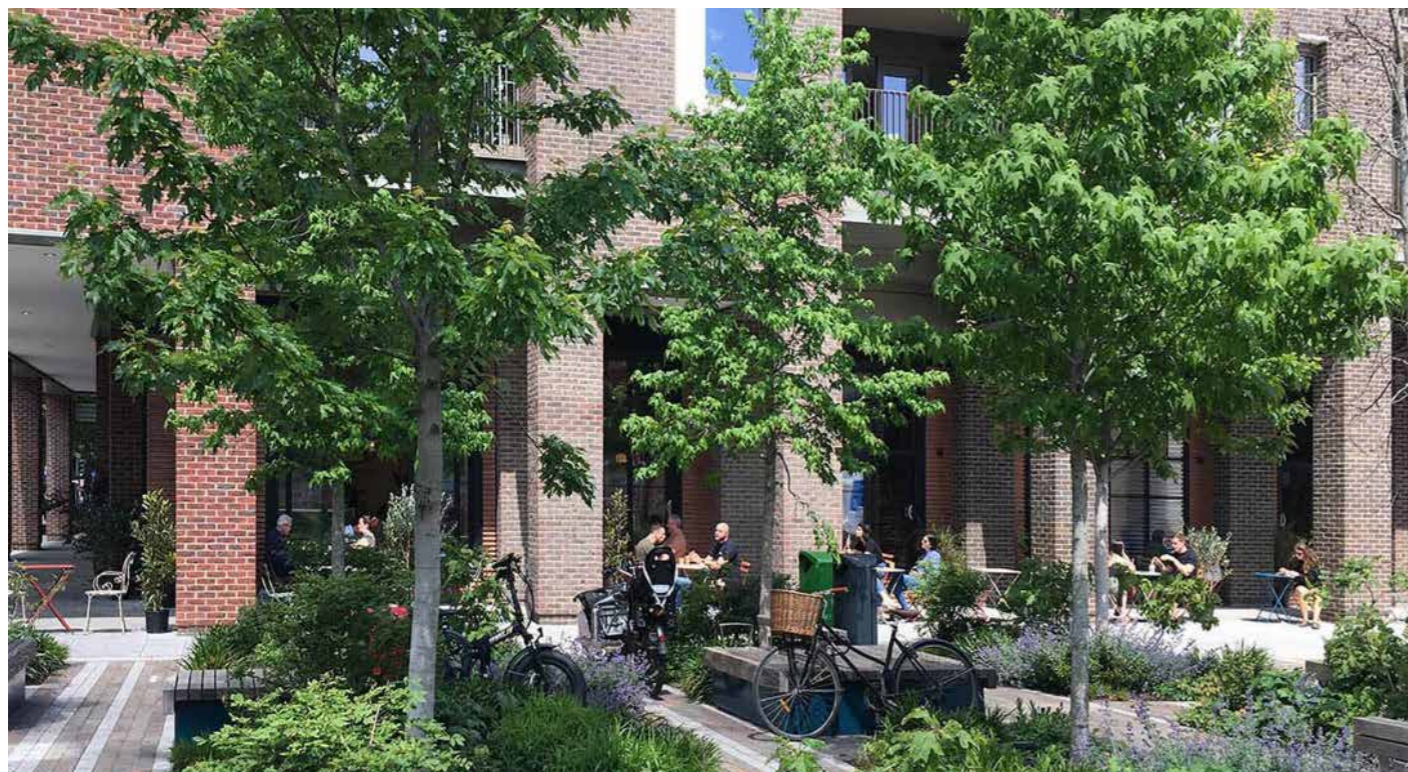
**Sites:**

- 1 Land North of Caroline Street
- 2 Land South of Bridge Street
- 3 Land South of Castle Street
- 4 Castle Street Car Park
- 5 Waterloo Road Car Park



## 2.6 Public Realm Precedents

A detailed public realm and movement strategy is being prepared to provide a coherent approach to the opportunities for public realm improvements which exist within the Town Centre. The public realm precedents below identify some high-level context for the preparation of this detailed strategy.









# 3.0 Architectural Form & Design Principles

A consistent urban design approach within Stalybridge should seek to enhance the existing character of the Town and support the unique identity of the place. This should include variety in the urban environment; attractive outdoor spaces within a safe and secure physical environment that enables ease of pedestrian and cycle movement. This approach should also seek to protect and enhance the heritage assets of Stalybridge.

In identifying potential uses and capacities for the identified development sites, initial feasibility and massing studies have been undertaken. Whilst some detail has been applied to these proposals to test their

potential market and regeneration value, these proposals are still indicative only. As such the development figures provide an indication of potential quantum but this is by no means a limit to development or an exact use for the site. Whilst the proposed uses for the sites are flexible, an allowance for active uses at ground floor level have been incorporated and will be encouraged as a regeneration mechanism for the public realm.

The sites referenced in this section, primarily focus on the specific boundary. However, moving forward, the potential to expand these boundaries and work with neighbouring land owners to maximise development

potential and provide an improved offering for the regeneration of Stalybridge should not be dismissed.

Where sites fall within the ownership of the council, more detailed studies have been investigated to identify development potential. Where they don't higher level assessments have been made or information from extant planning applications have been used.



# 4.0 Delivering the Framework

The Stalybridge Town Centre Framework provides a strategic approach to the transformation of the Town Centre, building on development activity undertaken to date and representing a significant acceleration in its scope and delivery.

The following key actions have been identified for the period to March 2026 to progress the delivery of the Framework utilising the secured Capital Regeneration Projects funding:

- Completion of the roof repairs at Stalybridge Civic Hall.
- Delivery of repair works and internal restoration to enhance the provision and accessibility of the Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and Library, with a new internal lift and the completion of repair works to the building fabric.
- Procurement of a developer partner for the Council owned land at Stalybridge West.

- The delivery of Stalybridge West enabling works, including a new multi-level car park facility in the Town Centre at Waterloo Road and a pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Tame.
- The preparation of a Public Realm and Movement Strategy for the Town Centre.
- The delivery of public realm works to improve pedestrian routes and access to public transport, including Market Street from the bus station site to the railway station and Trinity Street.

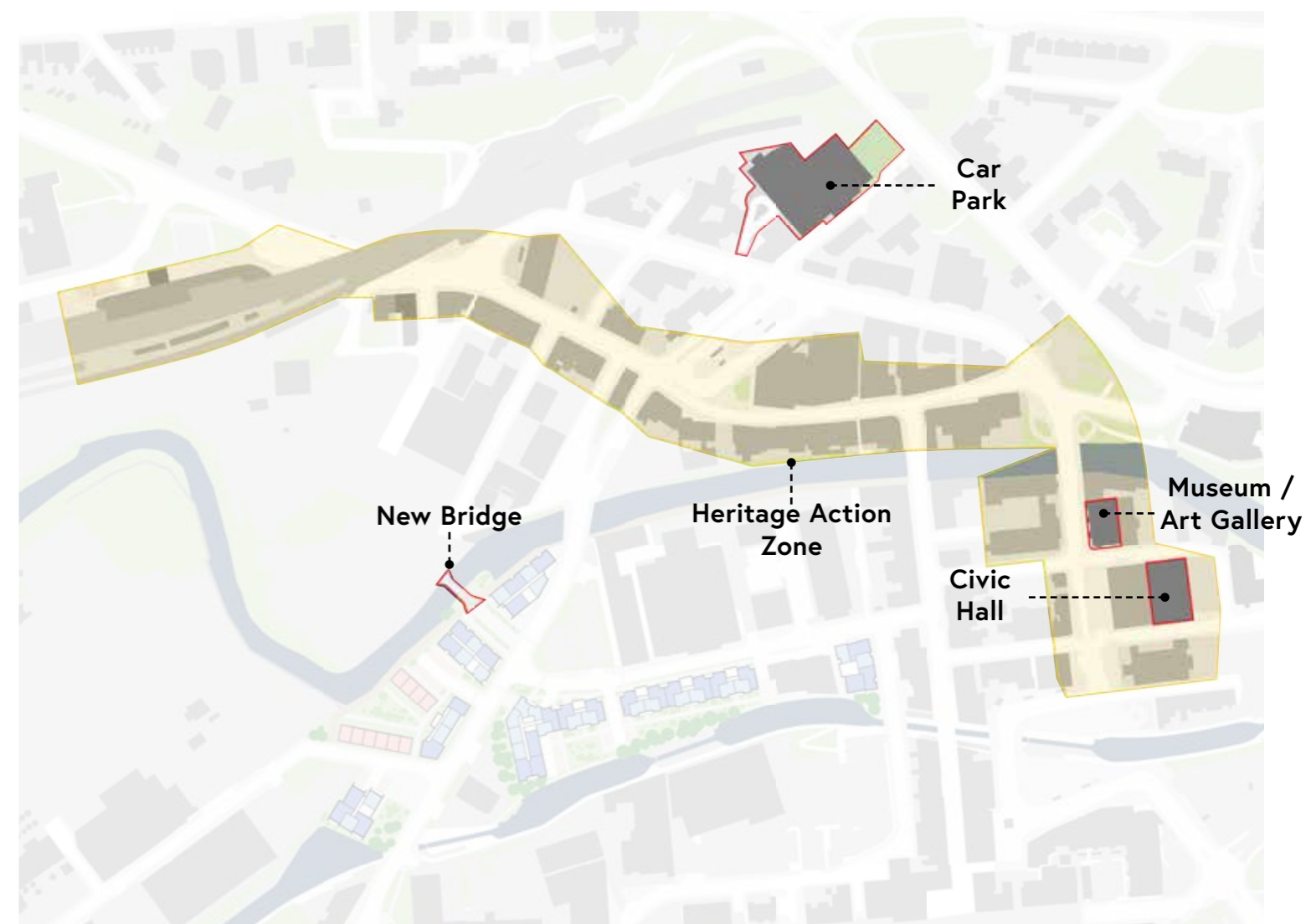
Progress on delivery and associated timescales will be reported regularly to the Council's Executive Cabinet, Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel, Stalybridge Strategic Project Board, and Stalybridge Delivery Group.

The period to March 2026 will see the delivery of significant regeneration with a number of physical projects delivered in Stalybridge Town Centre. The Council will continue to work with partners to attract further external funding and investment to complement this work.

The successful delivery of these key physical projects as part of the Stalybridge Town Centre Regeneration Programme will contribute to the achievement of the vision and primary objective to secure the successful regeneration of the Town Centre and the surrounding area.

Delivery of the key actions identified for Stalybridge in the period to March 2026 will be monitored via the Stalybridge Regeneration Programme Dashboard. The priority capital works are identified on the adjacent plan.

Once the Public Realm Strategy for Stalybridge has been completed this will identify the priority public realm projects for delivery in the period to March 2026 and the opportunities for further projects in future years, subject to additional funding.



# Corstorphine & Wright

Contact us to discuss your project

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