

TAMESIDE TOWN CENTRES FRAMEWORK: FEBRUARY 2022



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TAMESIDE'S POSITION, WITH ITS PROXIMITY TO KEY ECONOMIC GROWTH DRIVERS, LEISURE AND RECREATION OFFERS MAKES THE BOROUGH AN IDEAL LOCATION FOR BUSINESSES. IN PARTICULAR, BUSINESSES LOOKING FOR LINKS AND EASE OF ACCESS TO MARKETS AND SKILLS BASES ACROSS THE NORTH, AS WELL AS FOR SKILLED WORKERS WANTING TO LIVE WITHIN COMMUTABLE DISTANCE OF MANCHESTER AND LEEDS, WHILST ENJOYING AN EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE AFFORDED BY ITS CLOSE LINKS WITH THE PEAK DISTRICT.

Tameside Council recognises that its main town centres, Ashton-under-Lyne, Denton, Droylsden, Hattersley, Hyde, Mossley, and Stalybridge are crucial components to the economic, environmental and social wellbeing of the borough. Each town centre provides a unique but complementary offer, where Tameside's residents and visitors can easily access a range of facilities and services; and businesses can grow and reach their full potential.

Town centres across the country are facing a number of significant challenges due to changing consumer behaviours and a range of economic impacts. It will be necessary for our town centres to evolve and adapt, become more diverse, offer a broader range of uses and services, take advantage of their unique characteristics and become places where people want to live, work and do business, shop and spend quality time. The structural change and pressures facing town centres has only been exacerbated by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence, retail vacancies have increased, footfall has reduced and more people are shopping online; the diversity of offer is therefore more important than ever.

There is a significant opportunity for Tameside's town centres to rebuild and reinvent themselves as the heart of their communities with an increased focus on heritage and built form, culture, health, education, housing, leisure, arts and retail. To meet changing demands and ways of working it will be necessary for town centres to evolve, in a sustainable way, and ensure that they are accessible by different modes of travel. They will also have the optimum mix of uses and facilities, spaces for people to come together, to visit and experience the Tameside offer, shop, live, , work and meet throughout the day and evening. These spaces will promote wellbeing as well as environmental benefits; biodiversity and nature recovery, all of which are key components, necessary to be included in this strategy.



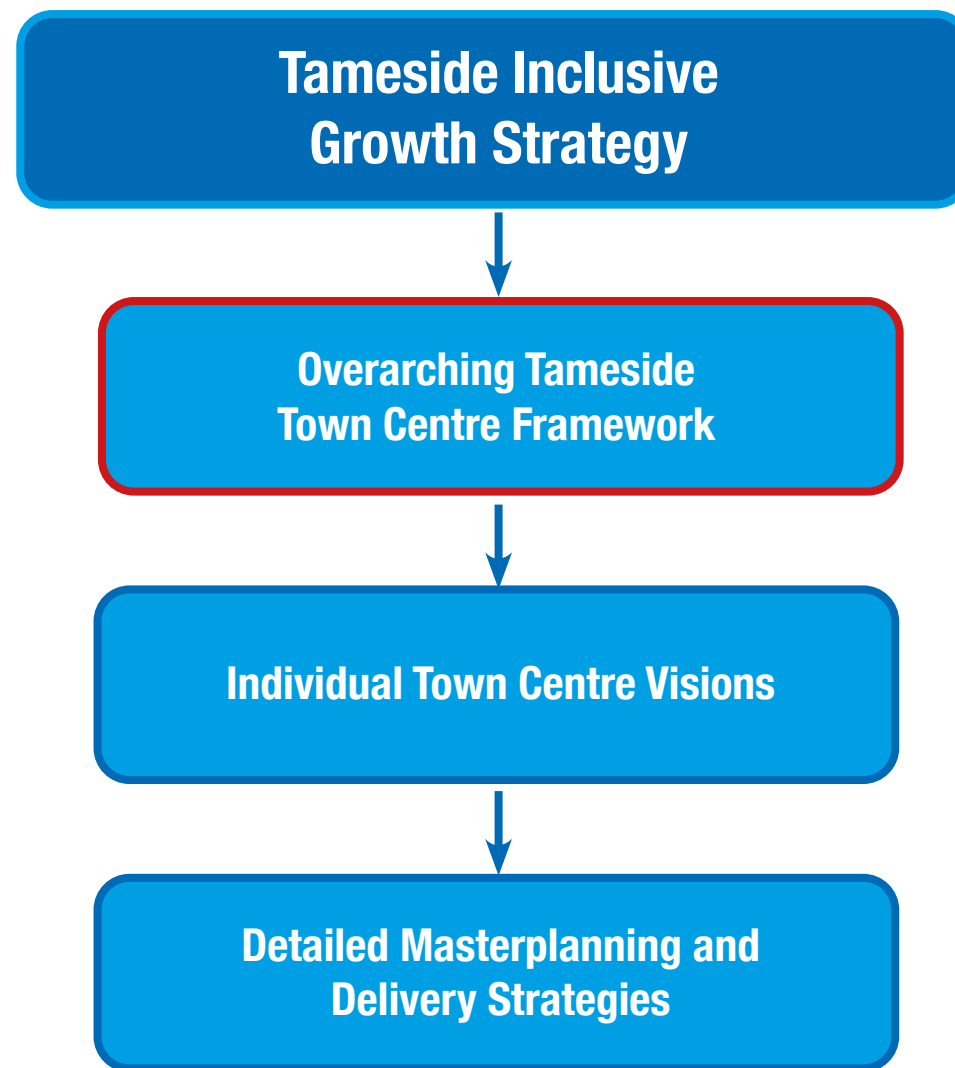
2. PURPOSE

The proposed Tameside Town Centres Framework will provide an overarching strategy for all of Tameside's town centres to support delivery of the priorities and guiding principles in the Council's Corporate Plan, the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021) and Places for Everyone to boost northern competitiveness alongside the activity of partner organisations. It will provide the context for the development of strategies for each of the individual town centres, which can feed into the Council's Local Plan and start to realise the opportunities that exist in the Town Centres over the next 15 years by providing a strategic co-ordinated approach to future development and activity.

Figure 1 sets out the role of the proposed Tameside Town Centre Framework in relation to the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy and individual town centre plans. Sitting above this hierarchy, are the regional and national policies defined in Section 4.

There is now an opportunity to establish an appropriate overarching strategy for all of Tameside's town centres, with a focus on the strengths, distinctiveness and unique character that each brings, to raise the borough's profile, ensuring the centres are able to adapt to a changing environment and be positioned to secure new funding, support and investment when announced by central government such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Figure 1: Strategic Hierarchy



The proposed Framework will take a holistic approach to the future of Tameside's town centres considering people, place, environment, transport and movement, economy, housing, health and well-being. Our town centres should be vibrant and attractive, safe to access at all times of day, places where people want to spend time, have a strong sense of community, attract businesses and independents to set up and grow, value their heritage assets and build on their uniqueness. Our town centres must also be flexible and resilient to changes in the climate and economy in order to thrive and be successful through any disruptions that occur. The proposed Framework is the start of the revitalisation of Tameside's town centres.

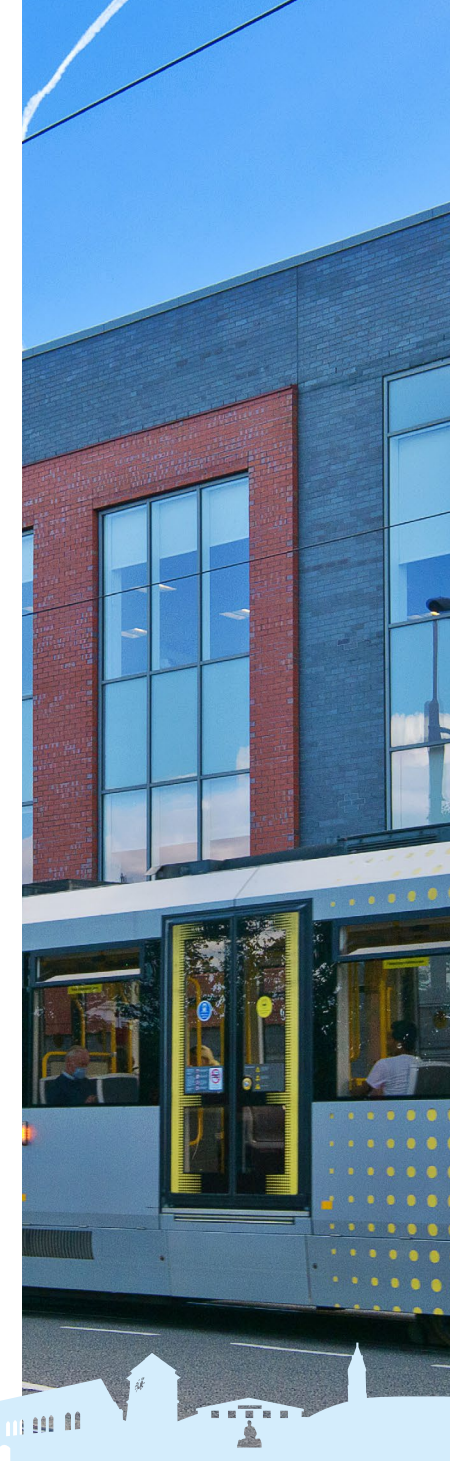
A SWOT analysis set out in Figure 2 has been carried out to identify the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relating to Tameside's Town Centres.

From this analysis a number of cross cutting areas that have been identified as important themes for the proposed Town Centre Framework and these are set out in Figure 3.

Figure 2: Strengths, Weakness Opportunities and Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent transport links – rail, road, Metrolink, close proximity to Manchester Airport • Heritage and cultural assets including Ashton Old Baths and the boroughs fantastic town halls. • Active Town Teams. Mossley Town Team recently delivered successful arts projects which attracted visitors to the centre. • Close proximity to a network of green spaces and blue corridors such as town parks, rivers, canal network and other areas such as the Portland Basin. • Sense of community • Walking and Cycling infrastructure such as Tame Valley Loop • Diverse and distinctive town centres – demographics, culture, built form • Quality of life potential given close proximity to the Peak District and parks • Vision Tameside programme including 7,000sqm Advanced Skills Centre for Tameside College, and Tameside One. Vision Tameside has increased footfall and vitality into Ashton Town Centre and will secure the future of Tameside College as well as improving the provision of skills and supporting growth and regeneration across Tameside. • Digital connectivity and infrastructure including the dark fibre co-operative and Ashton Old Baths Data Centre • Markets • Leisure facilities including the new Tameside Wellness Centre, Denton • Affordable homes compared to the rest of Greater Manchester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly performing shopping centres (see Tameside Retail and Leisure Study, 2018)) • Retail space unattractive or costly to convert to other uses • Poor quality public realm and wayfinding Lack of diversity in offer • Town centre sprawl with low quality users and vacant accommodation on fringe of inner centre / core • Anti-social behaviour and crime • Limited diverse housing accommodation across all types and tenure. • Poor connectivity between centres • Lack of open space and greening • Collaboration of key stakeholders Ability to attract larger 'names' in businesses and retail
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of opportunities for employment, residential, retail, education, health and leisure development • To further promote the dark fibre network and 5G - excellent access to high speed digital connectivity • One Public Estate - consolidation of premises and relocation of services • Strengthen existing market offer and improve the quality of the offer, particularly the outdoor market at Ashton. • Improve the health and well-being of those more deprived town centres working with partners on delivering the Active Tameside that aims to that empower people of any age or ability to be physically active, live well and feel great. • Secured capital and revenue funding in managing and rationalising Council assets. • Provide a quality offer – retail, leisure, public realm, food and drink • Attracting inward investment and further funding • Masterplanning and developing strategies • Promote as a destination for leisure, particularly walking, cycling outdoor activities capitalising on proximity of the likes of Mossley and Stalybridge to the Peak District • Strengthen connections in and between town centres • Strengthen accommodation offer to support increase in visitors • Revitalise our town centres and build a strong offer • Promote independent businesses • Promote exemplary design and sustainable buildings • Boost the evening and night-time economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural changes in the economy and changes in consumer behaviour impacting town centres nationally • Lack of private sector investment over the years has led to buildings falling into a state of disrepair • Lack of private sector interest • Proximity of competing centres and out of town retail • Profile and public opinion

Figure 3: Cross Cutting Themes





NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. It is driven by economic, social and environmental sustainable development objectives. Maintaining the vitality of town centres is a key element of the NPPF stating that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation.

GREATER MANCHESTER STRATEGY

The Greater Manchester Strategy (GMS) entitled "Our People, Our Place" sets out the priorities announced to make GM one of the best places in the world to grow up, get on and grow old. The Plan covers health, wellbeing, work and jobs, housing, transport, skills, training and economic growth. It has been prepared by the ten GM councils, the GM Mayor, the NHS, transport, the police and the fire service, with help from businesses, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations, and members of the public. The GMS recognises that town centres are critical to ensuring a thriving and productive economy with work required to improve them so that they become quality places to live and work. This will include a balance of new higher density residential development with quality cultural facilities, public spaces, an exemplar environment for walking and cycling, public services, retail, entertainment, and employment offers, as well as key access points to an integrated transport network.

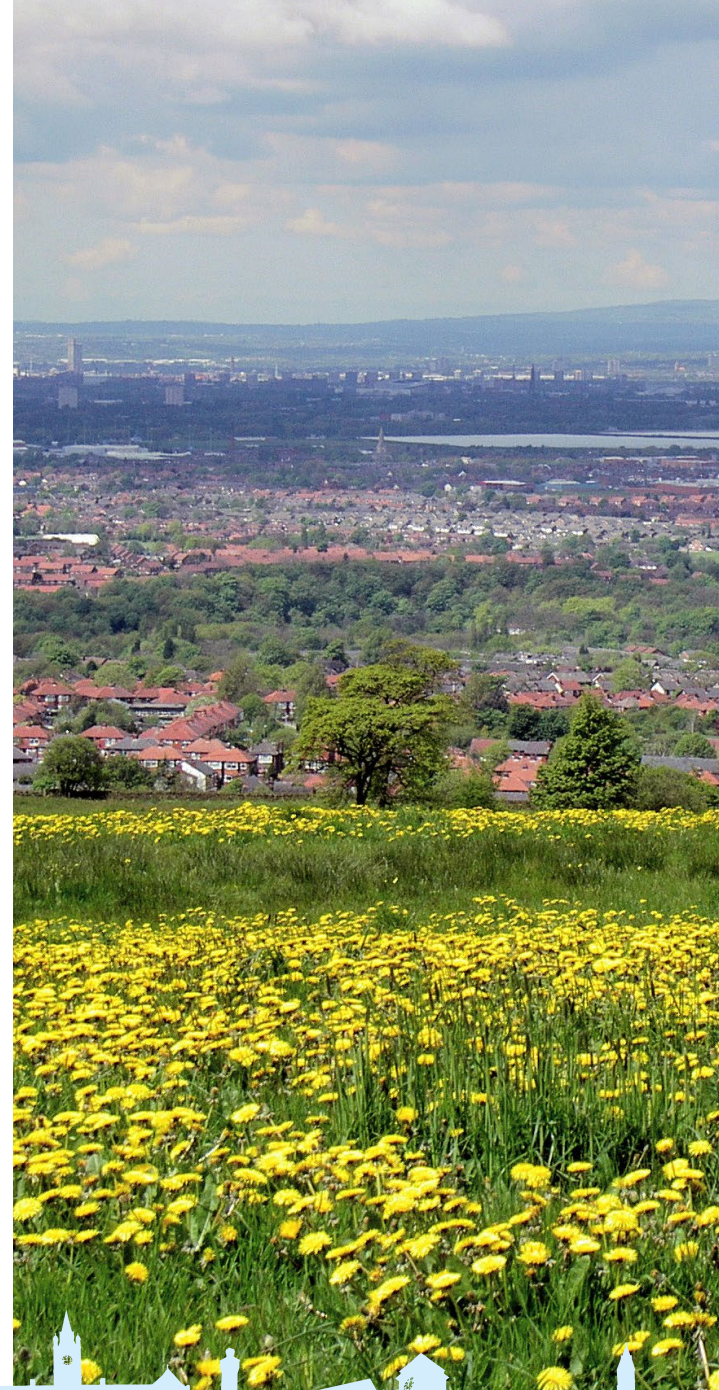
GREATER MANCHESTER TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2040

The strategy provides a transport system which: supports sustainable economic growth and the efficient and effective movement of people and goods; improves the quality of life for all by being integrated, affordable and reliable; protects our environment and supports our target to be net zero carbon by 2038 as well as improving air quality; and capitalises on new technology and innovation. The Greater Manchester Walking and Cycling Strategy sets out how it will be made easier for people to cycle and walk in GM.

PLACES FOR EVERYONE

Whilst not yet adopted, Places for Everyone (PfE) is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. This joint development plan of the nine districts for the period up to 2037 will determine the kind of development that takes place, maximises the use of brownfield land while protecting the Green Belt from the risk of unplanned development. It will also ensure all new developments are sustainably integrated into GM's transport network or supported by new infrastructure. It supports town centre improvements so that they become quality places to live and work; identifies Ashton-Under-Lyne as a Main Town Centre and major public transport hub. It places a priority on town centres as a location for more residential development and sets a minimum targets for affordable homes. This Plan also sets proposals to support GM Greater Manchester Resilience Strategy 2020 - 2030 (April 2021), Greater Manchester Resilience Forum

This Strategy sets out the vision for a resilient Greater Manchester. In a changing and complex world, the ambition is to create one of the most resilient places where everyone can grow up, get on and age well together. It describes five priority areas to guide work through to 2030 and sets out key themes within these priorities.





TAMESIDE INCLUSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY

The Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021-26) 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 build back better from COVID-19 and provides a robust response to Tameside's Inclusive Growth strengths, challenges and opportunities. It includes the aim to make our town centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector.

TAMESIDE LOCAL PLAN

A new Local Plan is currently being prepared, which alongside Places for Everyone will be the main land use planning documents for the Borough. The new Local Plan will replace remaining elements of Council's current Local Plan, the Unitary Development Plan that have not already been superseded by other Development Plan Documents. The intention is at a local level to set out a complementary vision, strategy and range of policies to Places for Everyone to guide development in the borough. A range of policy mechanisms such as establishing broad locations and specific allocations of land for different purposes, designations, such as town centre boundaries and overarching criteria based policies will provide a framework for future planning decisions.

4. POLICY CONTEXT



TAMESIDE HOUSING STRATEGY

The Tameside Housing Strategy (2021-26) sets out the ambitions and aspirations of the borough to deliver good quality and affordable housing that supports and impacts positively on people's quality of life. Central to this is the recognition that access to good quality and affordable housing is critical to many of the broader issues that Tameside needs to address, including health, carbon reduction, tackling homelessness, providing skills and training to local people, growing our economy and Public Service Reform. It sets the strategy by which the Council will support the development and improvement of its housing offer and how it will improve quality and support local households. The Strategy sets out a framework for where new homes will be built focusing on a brownfield approach and retaining a 'town centre first' approach, to strengthen the sub-regional status of Ashton-under-Lyne and establish a sustainable future for the borough's 'other' towns.

TAMESIDE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

The Tameside Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026 provides a framework to determine actions in response to the climate emergency. The scope of the strategy aims to achieve a Tameside Borough net zero carbon contribution by 2038. The five focal points of the Strategy are, Greenspace & Biodiversity, Homes Workspaces & Council Buildings, Influencing Others, Reducing Consumption & Producing Sustainably and Travel & Transport. It sets out how new development in Tameside must embrace the principles of sustainability and grasp the ambitious vision for the possibilities for low-carbon, environmentally sensitive development.

THE FOLLOWING PRIORITY THEMES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR TAMESIDE'S TOWN CENTRES TO ENSURE THAT WE CAN PROACTIVELY ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE AND HELP THEM REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. THE DELIVERY OF FUTURE ACTIVITY ALIGNED TO THESE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES WILL PROVIDE A STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITY.

PLACE

Tameside's town centres require a holistic approach to place making building resilient and flexible places that are sustainable and contribute to the health and well-being of those that access them. They will be responsive to change, attractive to the local population they serve and welcoming to those from further afield. Distinctiveness will be encouraged to celebrate local character, with a consistent and high quality standard of design (possibly through the use of Design Codes) to ensure our centres build on what makes them great places, all of which are fundamental component of that being the natural capital available in urban environments. Local communities will be at the heart of place shaping and decision making.

HERITAGE AND CULTURE

As our town centres evolve and change to meet the needs of current and future communities, our aim is to protect and promote the heritage value and distinctive culture that contribute to local distinctiveness and enable local people and visitors to enjoy these assets that contribute to sense of place. Tameside has many buildings and structures of architectural and cultural importance that offer value and attract both visitors and investment. These attributes are protected through the Ashton Town Centre Conservation Area, Portland Basin Conservation Area and Stalybridge Conservation Area. Some of the assets of heritage and cultural value include a long list of listed buildings including Grade II* listed Ashton Old Baths, Portland Basin our beautiful town halls, Tameside Hippodrome to name a few. Tameside has a rich cultural and ethnic diversity which should be celebrated so that the town centres meet the needs of people from all backgrounds and are enhanced to attract visitors to the area.



ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTHY PLACES

New development in Tameside's town centres should embrace the principles of sustainability and opportunities for low-carbon, environmentally sensitive development. Tameside's ambition is to have some of the healthiest and greenest town centres in Greater Manchester that recognise the value of nature in town centre recovery, greenery, blue corridors or rivers, lakes and canals and accessible spaces for people. Our town centres will ensure that all of these play an important role in place making which will benefit the health and well-being of local populations by providing opportunities for active travel and green spaces in town centres that are well connected to where they live.

The Framework will support the provision of new and improved health facilities to meet demands of new and existing residents; giving communities easier access to services (including temporary uses such as pop-up health clinics). The Council will work closely with colleagues in Population Health, Active Travel and CCG to ensure that new developments incorporate ideas and respond positively to addressing issues around health and inequalities.

TRANSPORT, ACCESSIBILITY AND MOVEMENT

Tameside's town centres will be highly accessible by sustainable modes of transport. They will attract people on foot and by bicycle and ensure that when people access the centres, they are able to move about freely in a safe manner. Our town centres will be highly accessible by a mix of modes of transport include car, bicycle walking. Sufficient parking provision will be incorporated in proposals along with EV charging points will ensure Tameside's electric motor drivers have somewhere to charge their vehicles. Proposals in or near to town centres should also focus on progressive models of car usage including car club hubs.

Driving the profile of cycling is of high importance to the borough. Streets for All and the Bee Network is Greater Manchester's vision for a public transport system which is accessible, affordable, equitable and easy to use with a daily fare cap and multi-modal ticketing to facilitate seamless journeys. Tameside will work with colleagues at the GM level to incorporate the Bee Network, building on our own physical activity and active neighbourhood strategies, into town centre proposals that will help improve access to economic opportunity, unlock new sites for development, promote healthy and active lifestyles through cleaner air and more walking and cycling, and significantly decarbonise the borough's economy. The Council will work with colleagues in the Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to support businesses to adopt improved cycling facilities and education for their staff.

RETAIL AND LEISURE

The market change and pressures facing retailers within Tameside's town centres has only been exacerbated by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence, retail vacancies have increased, footfall has reduced and more people are shopping online. As demand for traditional retail within town centres has reduced, there are opportunities for more specialist and independent retailers offering something different – some of which already exist in our town centres. Working with organisations such as Marketing Manchester will enable the Council to promote a strong leisure offer, building on the borough's proximity to the Peak District National Park, can also help make a town distinctive and contribute greatly to its success through a strong food and drink offer and other attractions.

Evening and night time activities have the potential to increase economic activity and should be aimed at a range of users; young people, older generations and families.



MARKETS

Markets can be a positive asset to town centres both attracting visitors, increasing spend and encouraging entrepreneurship. A combination of both permanent and temporary markets across Tameside play an important role in town centre distinctiveness and provision of a diverse and vibrant offer. Ashton and Hyde town centres have a thriving market offer, attracting visitors from outside of the borough, in order to ensure this vibrancy continues to thrive, these markets will need to evolve in order to incorporate a quality food and drink offer that will attract new visitors to the area. There are a number of examples of markets that have been redefined and help to kick-start regeneration including Altrincham, Southport and Warrington. The Council will use its built assets to provide facilities for indoor markets and pop ups that contribute to flexible spaces.

The existing Tameside Council Markets Policy will be kept under review to ensure that the council maintains its responsibility to protect and maintain consumer confidence and public safety, and to ensure that the relevant quality and standards are maintained. In addition and to encourage a vibrant borough wide markets programme, the review will also see an ongoing scrutiny of the Market Policy terms and conditions relevant to how market events are licenced and how the council supports organisers and manages partnership agreements.

COMMERCIAL

Tameside will be promoted as ‘open for business’ and will actively engage businesses and interested investors to the area. Increasing the levels of employment in town centres can bring great benefits to local communities as well as supporting the retail and leisure offer by increasing the potential customer base. There are a number of opportunities to attract businesses, through development of Council land and buildings and working in partnership with landlords, which will have a positive impact on the town centres. St Petersfield offers a unique opportunity to deliver a town centre business park that will meet the needs of a new ‘hybrid worker’ supported by residential, food and drink, leisure and culture in a healthy and sustainable way.





MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Working with the Council's Communications team, Tameside's town centres will be promoted and branded using the strengths, opportunities and distinctive qualities that each town centre offers. Marketing Manchester will assist in promoting the town centres to others outside of the borough with the aim of attracting visitors and raising the profile of the town centres.

COLLABORATION

The Framework will act as a strategic 'umbrella' to coordinate future development and regeneration activity in each of Tameside's town centres. This will require the full range of Council services to work collaboratively guiding future work and regeneration activity to minimise the risk of a fragmented approach. Collaboration with public, private and community/voluntary organisations and local communities, as part of bespoke governance arrangements for individual places, will ensure activity within each town centre is tailored to meet local need, respond to demand for community space, and takes full advantage of the opportunities that exist.

In formulating detailed town centre strategies, the Council will ensure they are prepared in collaboration with the local community. Consultation will be undertaken with a range of users including young people and older generations, families and diverse groups to ensure proposals are inclusive. Engagement strategies will be included at the start of the formulation of the detailed visioning work on key town centre proposals.

GODLEY GREEN CONCEPT



HOUSING

Residential provision in the town centres is vital to the local economy, increasing the vitality of the town centres and the customer base of retailers, leisure operators etc. Increasing numbers of people who are active outside of traditional shopping hours also contributes to increased feelings of safety. New residential neighbourhoods will be created in and around our town centres including affordable homes, thoughtfully designed to be safe, welcoming and encourage local living. Godley Green Garden village will to be recognised as a national and international example of modern place making that will deliver over 2,100 homes with the ambition that these will be net zero in operation use, supported by local centres and commercial uses with supporting green infrastructure, These new residents will provide additional footfall and spend for Hyde contributing to the regeneration of the town centre and new jobs in construction phase and operation use will also be created.

EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS

Working with the Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub, our ambition in Tameside is to create an employment and skills system where our town centres provide opportunities that respond to the needs of residents and businesses and contribute to the growth and productivity of the Tameside economy. The new Tameside College campus at Tameside One integrates services for learners, learning hubs, a restaurant, salon and provision for learners with complex and moderate learning difficulties and /or disabilities.

Opportunities through social value and partnership working to introduce learners at all levels to these development plans – introducing topics and encouraging hopeful interaction with arts and STEM focus will also be included.

The successful delivery of the vision for Tameside's town centres will be dependent on effective partnership working with residents, businesses, service providers, community groups, landowners, developers, investors and public sector organisations. This collaboration will support the delivery of positive change across our towns. Individual town strategies will include a visioning exercise that builds on the distinctiveness of each town, objectives and key actions that will ensure proposals in each centre are deliverable. Extensive collaboration with each town centre and Town Team (where applicable) will ensure individual strategies are community-led.

KEY ACTIONS FOR 2022/23

A number of key actions have been identified for the period 2022/23 in relation to Tameside's town centres:

- Commence delivery of the £19.87m Ashton Levelling Up Fund Programme including enabling works on the former interchange site, public realm improvements and external works to Ashton Town Hall
- Delivery strategy for next phase of St Petersfield development
- Submit full business case for Mayors Challenge Fund public realm works
- Delivery of the Stalybridge High Street Heritage Action Zone including the Heritage Walk public realm works on Market Street and works to Stalybridge Civic Hall roof
- Continue to engage private sector owners of vacant units that could be turned into meanwhile uses
- Start on site for residential development at former police station site, Stalybridge for vacant brownfield sites in Stalybridge Town Centre and submission of round 2 Levelling Up Fund bid
- Establishment of Hyde Town Centre Task Force Partnership
- Preparation of Hyde Town Centre Masterplan
- Secure developer partner to progress delivery of scheme for the former library site on Union Street
- Delivery plan for residential development on the Lock Keeper's and former Droylsden Library sites
- Preparation of Droylsden Masterplan
- Start on site of residential development on former Denton Baths site
- Progression of individual town strategies
- Preparation of Stalybridge Masterplan
- Implementation of GM Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (Ashton Town Centre, St Petersfield, Ashton Moss)

The successful delivery of these actions will contribute to the successful delivery of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy.







