



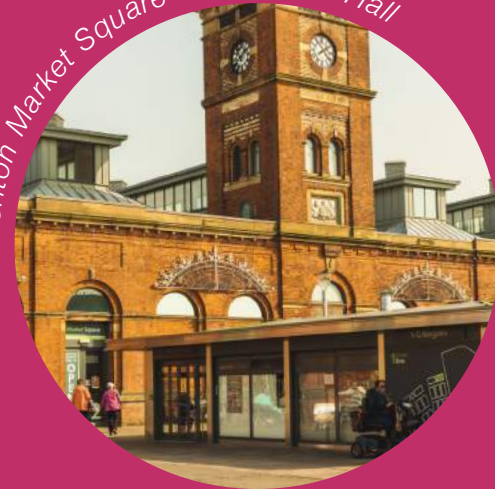
# A Public Realm Strategy for Ashton-under-Lyne

## Phase 1 - Market Square

A catalyst for further regeneration



Ashton Market Square and Market Hall



# Introduction



This Public Realm Strategy has been produced by Planit-IE on behalf of Tameside Council to devise a strategy to deliver improvements to the Public Realm within the Market Square at Ashton-Under-Lyne Town Centre.

Tameside Council has commissioned the production of a Public Realm Strategy for the Market Square in consultation with Stakeholders. This is a unique opportunity to consider the vision, heritage values and character of the Market Square within the context of the wider town centre. Environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, health and well-being, and accessibility are highly significant contributing factors in creating a sense of place and a unique destination for Ashton Town Centre.

## Phase 1 Market Square

The Public Realm Strategy will focus immediately on the Market Square, Market Hall and connecting spaces. This is Phase 1 of an overall Public Realm Strategy for the Town Centre.

The Phase 1 Market Square Strategy will include strategic plans, along with guidance and design principles to support the delivery of the Market Square vision. Future phases include the Market Fringes, Market Hall and Market Hall canopy, and will form part of the detailed design stage, up to RIBA stage 2. These areas will be excluded from the Levelling Up Fund and delivered at a later stage.

In the future a comprehensive public realm strategy will also include Stamford Street Central, Old Street and St. Michael's Square. It will incorporate proposals for Wellington Road and extend to Katherine Street, Penny Meadows, Oldham Road.

## Public Realm Strategy themes

- Inclusive and accessible
- Townscape context
- Responding to heritage
- Connectivity and accessibility
- Sustainability
- Safer streets and spaces
- Culture and events
- Health and well-being
- Way-finding, lighting and signage
- Brand identity and public art

## People and place focussed

Our approach is place and people focused, we started by getting to know the place in which we are working, and the people who know it best

It is about building strong relationships, identifying the priorities, gaining insight from the people and understanding of the essence of the place. This has enabled us to define the objectives, aims and ambitions of an effective Public Realm Strategy.



## Catalysts for Change

There are actions happening to accelerate positive change in Ashton Town Centre that will support the economy and future growth of the town, here are the actions below:

### Ashton Mayoral Development Zone

The establishment of an Ashton Mayoral Development Zone will significantly raise the profile of Ashton and Tameside, helping to position the opportunities that exist for future funding, investment and Greater Manchester support.

### Mayor's Challenge Fund (MTF)

Proposals will be coordinated with concept designs for improved cycling infrastructure which have been developed under the Mayor's Challenge Fund. One of these projects is **Ashton Streetscape** (Albion Way and Wellington Road) which aims to achieve the following:

1. Segregated cycle tracks on both sides of the road.
2. A modified junction at the exit from the bus station and the Ashton retail park, to incorporate a new Cyclops arrangement, which provides segregated, signalised facilities for cyclists, to improve road safety for all road users.
3. Measures to slow and control vehicle speeds and provide enhanced priority for pedestrian users, potentially including a reduction in carriageway width, increased landscaping, different surfacing materials and the introduction of pedestrian crossing points.



### Leveilling-up Fund 2021

The Council has gained further grant funding to continue this comprehensive transformation of the town centre and was successful in its £19.87m Leveilling Up Fund bid to support the next stage of regeneration.

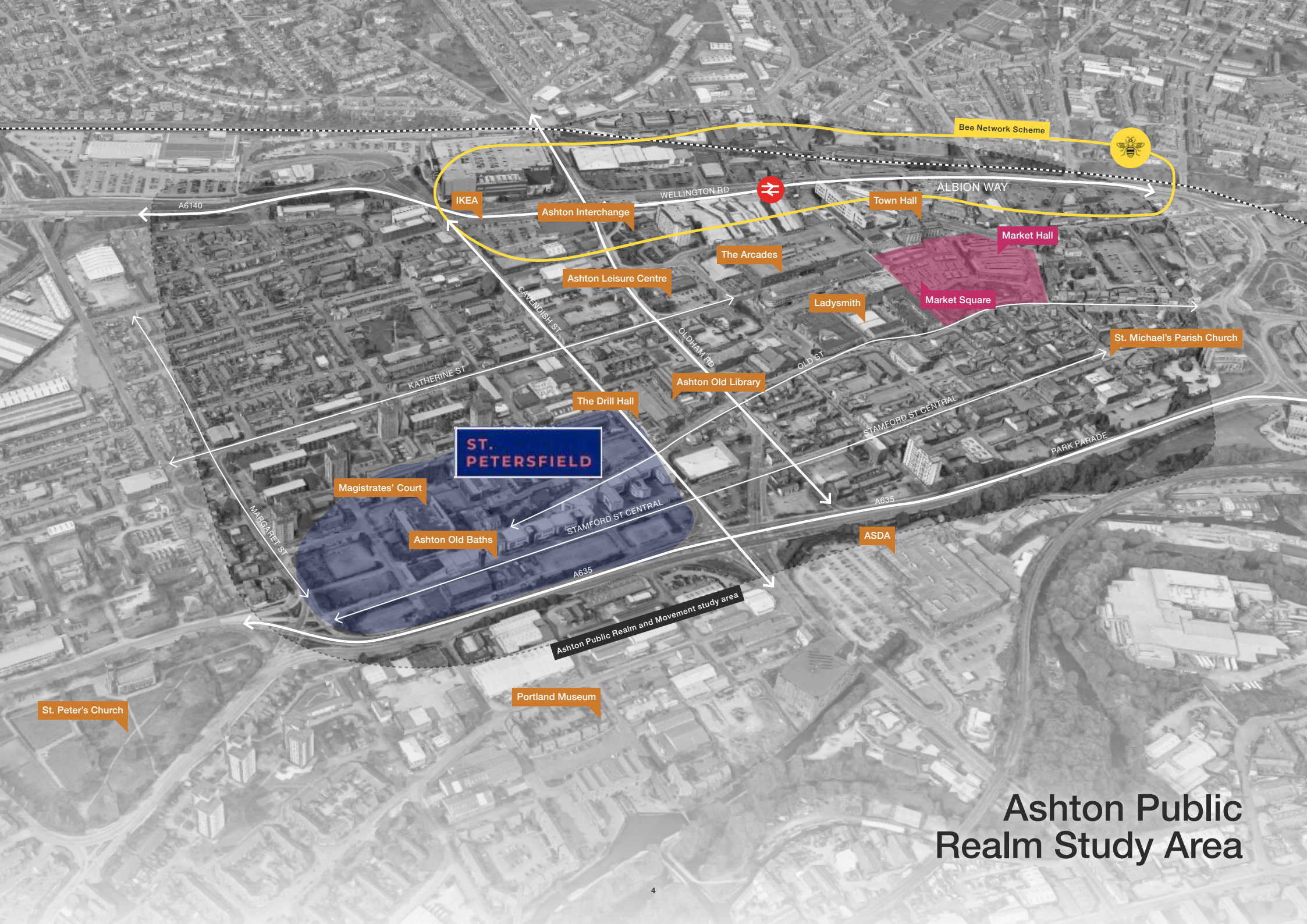
- A. Land remediation of the former interchange site
- B. Cycling and public realm improvements
- C. Restoration of Ashton Town Hall
- D. Further development of St Petersfield into a cutting edge business park for innovation and tech firms
- E. Residential, leisure and the delivery of a wider diversity of town centre uses with increased town centre living.

### Wellington Road Proposals

The Wellington Road and Albion Way proposals are currently progressing and construction has started on-site. The strategy and design principles for Phase 1 Market Squares will integrate into wider proposals underway.



Visualisation of Albion Way proposals



# Ashton Public Realm Study Area

# Stage 1

## Love Ashton engagement

The Love Ashton engagement event took place on Saturday 13th March 2022, at Ashton Market Hall, the feedback has shaped our plans.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council appointed Planit and Civic Engineers to undertake a Public Realm and Movement strategy for Ashton-under-Lyne Town Centre. We gathered the public's initial ideas and thoughts about how they wanted to see improvements in the town centre, the feedback has helped to shape our proposal.

### Key Messages

- Market square is characterless-missing the vibrant atmosphere from the past. It should be an attraction and destination rather than a cluttered space.
- Generally unkempt, with deteriorating materials, and lack of greenery.
- Market stalls are unattractive, impractical and in bad condition.
- Safety issues in the square, related to anti-social behaviour, poor lighting and visibility.
- Accessibility from public transport should be improved, as well as connections to St. Petersfield and the rest of Ashton Town Centre.

**Market stalls are unattractive and not practical**

**Make the area more of a community hub where meetings can take place forums and maybe even as a wedding venue.**

**Lack of greenery**

**Missing the once vibrant market stalls and atmosphere**

**Improve signage to the town**

**Residents need safe and attractive walks**

Love Ashton Event



Love Ashton Event



# Stage 2 Public Consultation

Consultation in Stage 2 focussed on the Market Square and took the form of workshops, briefings and meetings. The objectives of the consultation were to engage with key stakeholders and a wide variety of people and community groups to develop a clear local picture and to gain an insight into issues, opportunities, and future aspirations for Ashton Market Square and Market Hall.

The consultation went public with a Public Realm Strategy booklet, associated consultation boards for the public events and a questionnaire.

Following the public consultation of the Public Realm Strategy (Phase One - Market Square) in November 2022, a number of consistent themes and important considerations emerged which have been incorporated within the design principles.

**“We’d like to see a better variety of trees. Could we have some the same as those in Library Square in Manchester? They have startling spring blooms.”**

**“It looks great, Ashton needs the investment... Ashton is ready to improve, Stamford street could be something really special again”.**

**“It is to be hoped that the mistakes made in developing the current Market Square can be avoided and an amenity of which Ashton can be proud can finally be realised.”**

**“The plans would be enhanced by a lovely sunken garden, with plenty of benches and colour.”**

Feedback at Market Hall Event, Nov 2022



Market Hall Consultation Event, Nov 2022



A number of consistent themes and important considerations emerged across the various consultation sessions, which must be incorporated into the next stage of proposals and are summarised.



# Key Messages

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The following key messages have been incorporated into the design principles and proposals, as shown on pages 29 to 45.

## Public Realm

- Play for all ages needed to attract all ages.
- Range of spaces to suit different needs, including safe spaces, quiet spaces, active spaces for play and recreation and a community hub, which should be free or cheap with passes (for students).
- Plenty of ideas for play related including Skateboarding provision for teenagers
- Provision needed for trade waste and site cleaning operation.
- Servicing access along Bow St for market traders at key times of the day
- Lighting in the evening is critical.
- Food and drink offer - night-time economy
- Mitigate westerly wind,
- Wayfinding and signage need improving
- Provision for Bike parking
- Accessibility for less able bodied and important pensioner trade
- Access for deliveries and own car to stalls
- Bus stop provision has been removed
- Outdoor seating for food stalls
- Access for people from public transport required from Wellington Road (bus routes along this road)
- Pop-up/temporary/seasonal events/offer in the market square.
- Mitigate westerly wind
- Need to establish intimate spaces and curate atmospheres of 'hustle and bustle', buzz.
- Improve drainage capacity
- Maintenance needs considering with provision and resources built in.

## Kiosks

- The needs of kiosk traders must be considered.
- Fixed kiosks are required which can operate as a 'shop
- Protection from the weather, consider own canopy
- Designed for food is required
- Different sized kiosks to suit different traders– carrier for storage. 10ft by 10ft doesn't work for some uses.
- Industrial quality of finishes is required
- Intimate space – overlooked if the kiosks all face inwards, under the canopy.

## Canopy

- Canopy no sides preferred for ease of cleansing and to minimise ASB Food and drink as a cluster along gallery side of canopy
- Storage to stop lots of unloading for market traders
- Outdoor seating for food stalls
- Shelter and protection from the elements - especially westerly wind and rain, summer shade - free standing roof rather than canopy



## Future Vision

The aim for Ashton Town Centre is to breathe new life into the town centre and attract investment, and prosperity for years to come.

Ashton Town Centre will be known for celebrating its unique heritage and distinctive identity. A compact, well-connected, and sustainable place.

The Market Square will be the beating heart of the town; a modern market and public space enlivened by events, cafe culture and a vibrant evening economy. A friendly and welcoming place for future generations to enjoy. A destination where people can socialise and relax.



Diagram illustrating vision objectives

# Ashton Town Centre

Our plans capture the essence of Ashton-Under-Lyne Town Centre by celebrating its history and unique assets. We have defined the opportunities and character zones to help shape a comprehensive vision for the future.

## Key

-  Linking Ashton with the River Tame and Canal green infrastructure
-  Enhancing Ashton's cultural quarter and supporting the workforce
-  An emerging commercial district (St Petersfield)
-  Old Town Heart - creating a boutique retail offer, supporting the community and providing a high quality residential offer
-  Town Centre living
-  Extending the evening economy, enhancing the food and beverage offer
-  Consolidating the retail and arrival area
-  Identifying Ashton's heart
-  Supporting Ashton's workforce
-  Levelling Up Funding Zone Market Square to provide flexible spaces and events
-  Key Spaces
-  Key crossings
-  Key streets
-  Key linkages
-  Key junctions

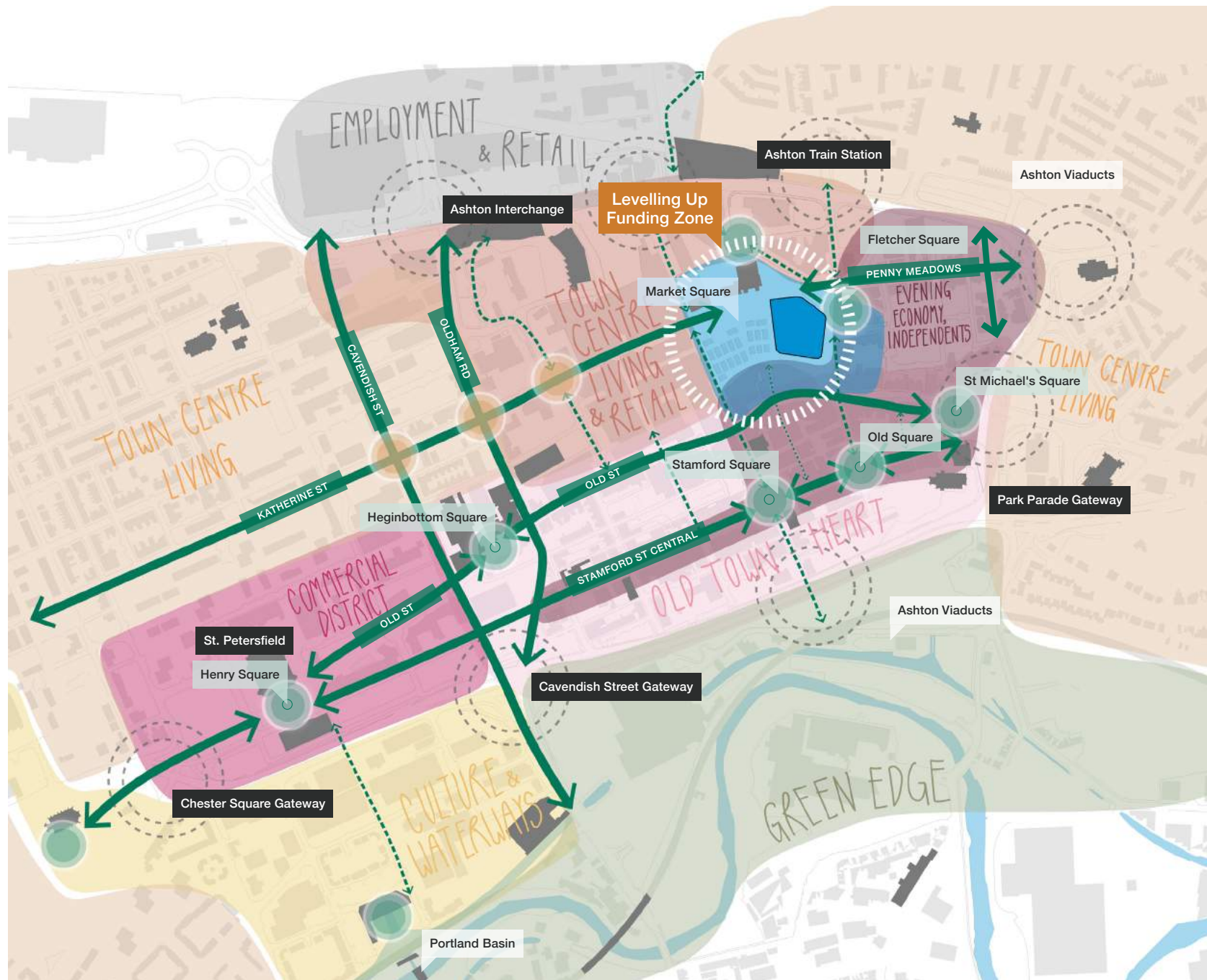


Diagram illustrating character areas and the overall vision

*Ashton Market is the beating heart of the town.*

**A modern market for everyone, a destination attracting locals and visitors, hosting a range of entertaining events.**



# A Modern Market Vision



Active edges around the Market Square will encourage footfall and activity

The vision includes the following key design elements:

- A flexible space to support a programme of entertainment and cultural events to attract visitors into the town centre.
- Accessible. A robust and durable single unified surface to meet modern accessibility standards. Incorporate access and servicing requirements.
- A layout to encourage permeability of visitors through the space, considering connections to the surrounding streets.
- Increased outdoor informal seating, and dedicated seating areas for eating and drinking to support and enhance spill out from the market hall.
- Inclusive and welcomes everyone. Uses to meet the needs of all ages and incorporating interactive play elements.
- A new canopy to provide a designated under-cover area for markets to include flexible, durable market stalls and kiosks
- New trees and planting to create an attractive environment and improve air quality and carbon sequestration.
- Improved way-finding, street furniture and lighting for encourage safety and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Public art to be incorporated to celebrate the heritage and story of Ashton.
- An improved waste management system, improved public toilet facilities, and designated storage for stallholders.

A welcoming high quality modern Market Square



Supporting the day and night time offer with outdoor, weather proof seating



Celebrate the Market Hall



Add attractive planting and trees, creating amenity to increase dwelling time in the square



Improve visibility, future proof connections and enhance legibility in the square



Facilitate walking and increase footfall



Umbrellas with integrated lighting provide flexibility to assigned stalls for vendors.



Umbrellas with integrated lighting provide flexibility to assigned stalls for vendors.



Flexible, specialist stalls could be hosted in the Market Square

# Illustrative Design Proposals

The illustrative Market Square plan illustrates one way that the design principles could be brought forward. The plan illustrates the key design principles and guidance for the detailed design stages of the Market Square.

The illustrative plan is indicative and subject to further technical considerations, surveys and the detailed design process. The findings from the contextual analysis and feedback from the consultation have shaped the illustrative Market Square Plans.

The emerging ideas include;

## Public Realm

1. Informal play area within the Market Square
2. An arrival space beside the Town Hall which will announce the Market Square
3. Emphasise and retain views to and from the Town Hall and Market Hall from key streets and spaces
4. Signage with strong branding from key streets and spaces will guide visitors from and to the Town Hall and Market Hall
5. The public realm will be designed for less able persons – level changes and lighting will create accessible routes
6. Heritage interpretation will be incorporated into the public realm design
7. A sustainable urban drainage approach will assist in responding to local climatic conditions
8. Servicing access along Bow Street for traders will be retained
9. Cycle parking areas on the periphery of the Market Square
10. Intimate spaces will be designed into the public realm
11. Planting will be proposed within the Market Square, avoiding grassed areas, instead providing planted areas that are easy to maintain (consider current issue with trees and bird droppings by seated areas).
12. Spill out from the Market Hall to allow for seating and F&B.


















## Kiosks

13. Kiosks will be designed to be located underneath the canopy (exact location and number of kiosks will be determined at the detailed design stage).
14. Design recommendations/requirements from kiosk traders relating to; kiosk design, lighting, storage, waste and servicing (consider VAT requirement) will be incorporated into the detail design of the kiosks
15. Consideration to the height of the kiosk structure, key views towards heritage buildings, and access to the first floor level within the canopy will be designed holistically

## Canopy

16. Factor in environmental conditions (south-westerly wind and rain) within the canopy design
17. Space within the canopy for ticketed events and security measures during night-time hours will be designed into the canopy features.
18. Allow for movement and circulation through the canopy to enhance permeability.
19. The design will consider security at night-time and avoid anti-social behaviour.

## Key

-  Main Market canopy structure
-  Canopy overhang
-  ① Market Kiosks (under canopy)
-  ② Market stalls (under canopy)
-  ③ Temporary seating and market stalls for events with cover (large)
-  ④ Waste and storage facilities for kiosk traders will be incorporated into the detail design of the kiosks
-  Flexible event space area
-  Proposed trees
-  Proposed informal seating area
-  Proposed cycle storage
-  Proposed lighting
-  Entrance to Market Hall
-  Active frontage to kiosk units
-  Active frontages
-  Passive Movement Zone
-  Key Views
-  South Westerly wind



Illustrative Market Square proposals plan (proposals are indicative and subject to further detailed design)





# The Kiosks

The kiosks will be located underneath the canopy structure for year-round protection. There is potential for the kiosks to work within the canopy, with first floor access.

Further consideration to the kiosks and their design will be required. These include elements that were highlighted during the consultation process and can be found in the consultation summary.

The considerations are as follows:

- Lighting strategy for the kiosks and stalls,
- Storage for market traders, included within the design of the kiosks and stalls, as well as provision for maintenance equipment storage,
- Design consideration of the kiosks and the waste management, including storing, disposing and collection of refuse,
- Power and utility facilities for kiosks, storage units and flexible space under canopy (for market traders/stalls and/or for flexible events under canopy),
- Servicing, including goods loading and unloading,
- Security, including potential to fully close canopy and kiosks outside of opening hours.



Kärda Central Square, Estonian island Hiiumaa



Lower market, Altrincham



Borough Market, London



Old Spitalfields Market, London



Shambles Market, York



# Public Realm

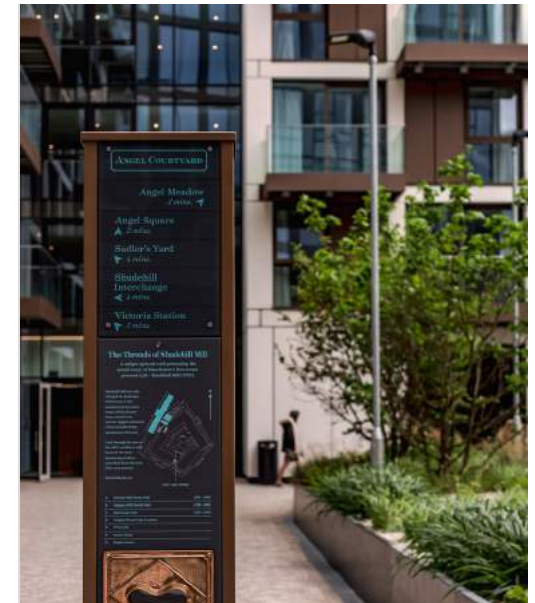
The redevelopment of the Market Square presents an opportunity to create better-connected, better-looking public spaces that build on Ashton's proud history and heritage, and provide a sense of consistency across the town centre.

The Market Square will be a space to host flexible events through the year. Proposals should include heritage interpretation, wayfinding and signage which is unique to Ashton.

Following the consultation process and comments from different stakeholders, there is potential to introduce attractive tree planting to create permeable wind breaks, and to create amenity through planted areas for seasonal interest which can further incorporate informal areas for seating and play.



A flexible open hard square where some permanent stalls are removed to host a variety of events



Potential for more stylised totems incorporating branding



Jaktgatan and Lövängsgatan, Stockholm



Hapa Collaborative Square, Canada



Curved seating with planted areas



Historical dates, text and imagery can be cut into paving and steps

The Market fringes are part of part of the overall vision for the future regeneration of Ashton Town Centre. A comprehensive approach to the design of the Market Square and the surrounding streets and spaces creates a future proof plan.

## Future phasing and delivery

The following pages describe the design principles and guidance for the future phases of regeneration and the market fringes. The following streets and spaces will form part of the detailed design stage, up to RIBA stage 2. These areas will be excluded from the Levelling Up Fund and delivered at a later stage.

- Wellington Square
- Clarendon Sixth Form College and Tameside One Walk
- Market Street and Fletcher Square
- Warrington Street
- Market Hall and Market Hall canopy.
- Market Avenue

The delivery of these streets and spaces will be subject to future funding opportunities.

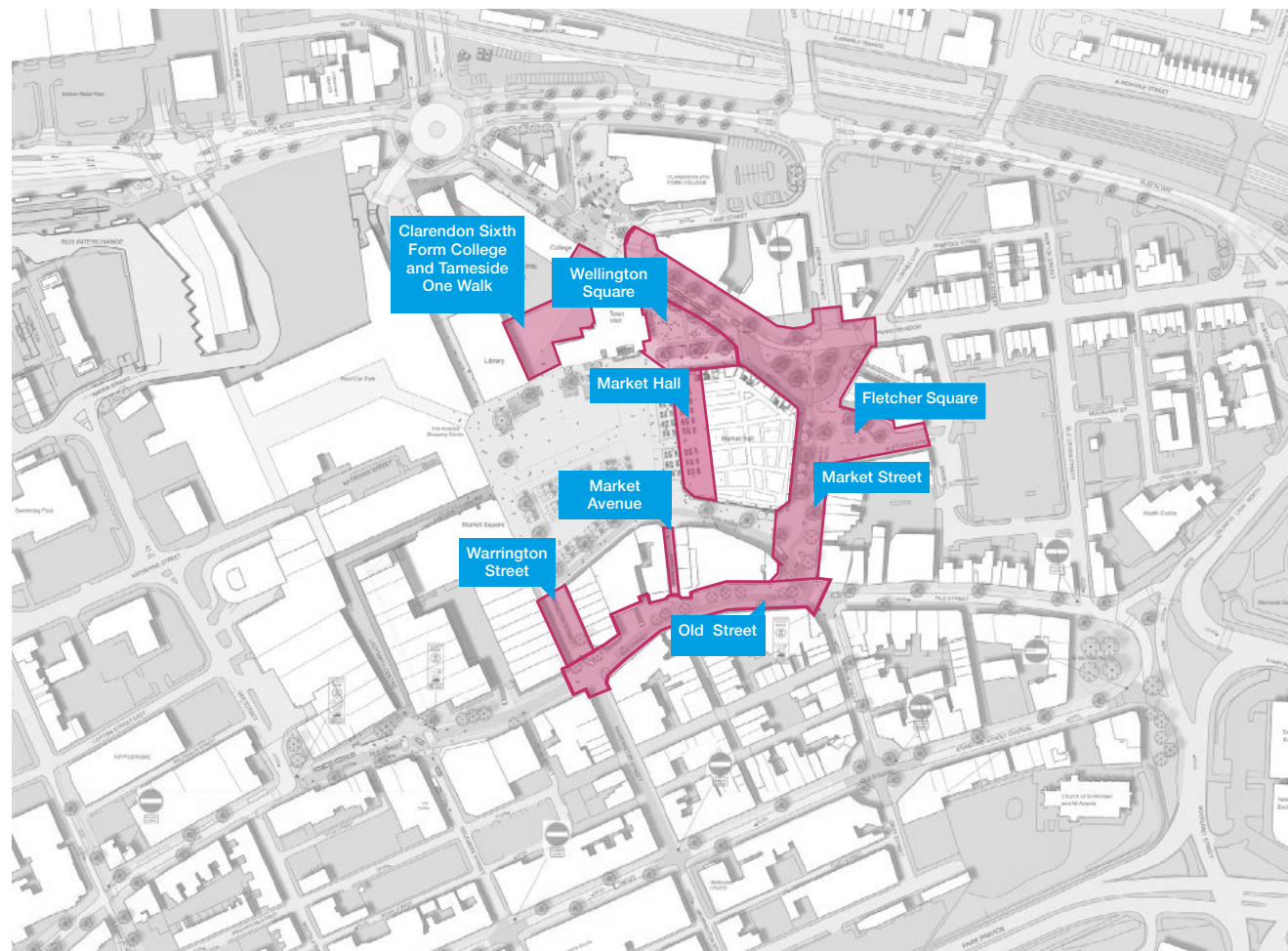


Diagram illustrating the Future Phases

 Future Phases, detailed design to RIBA Stage 2

## The Public Realm Strategy

### Phase 1 - Market Square

The Public Realm Strategy will focus immediately on the Market Square, Market Hall and connecting streets and spaces. This is Phase 1 of an overall Public Realm Strategy for the Town Centre. The aim of the Phase 1 Market Square Strategy will include strategic plans, along with guidance and design

### Phase 2 Ashton Town Centre

In the future a comprehensive Public Realm Strategy will also include Stamford Street Central, Old Street and St. Michael's Square. It will incorporate proposals for Wellington Road and extend to Katherine Street, Penny Meadows, Oldham Road.

**The ambition is that the improvements to Phase 1 Market Square will be a catalyst for the future regeneration of Ashton Town Centre, attracting investment to deliver the Ashton Town Centre Vision**

## Engagement and Continual Feedback

The consultation process has been important to gather views and opinions that have shaped the design principles described in this public realm strategy for Phase 1 Market Square and to ensure that the most appropriate scheme comes forward for the community and the surroundings.

Two stages of consultation, with both the public and stakeholder groups have been undertaken. The findings have been gathered and analysed to draw out the key messages to inform the design principles described in this document and the emerging detailed design proposals.

The process will not end here and engagement will be an ongoing process throughout the detailed design stage to ensure that all ideas are incorporated at every stage.

As part of next stage detailed design we will be liaising with traders and markets team around establishing a new operational model for the new scheme. This will be picked up as part of the next stages of work and ongoing dialogue.

## Next Steps

The following describes the process and timescales for the detailed design and delivery of Phase 1 Market Square:

- Public consultation: November/December 2022
- Consultation analysis: December 2022
- Preliminary works January 2023
- Approved Public Realm Strategy: March 2023
- Detailed Design Stage begins: April 2023
- Detailed Design Approval: November 2023
- Early Market Square works commence: November 2023
- Delivery of main Market Square works: Winter 2023 – ending March 2025

