

## **CIVIC QUARTER AREA ACTION PLAN**

### **TRAFFORD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE INSPECTOR'S MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS**

***Matter 3 - The Vision and the Strategic Objectives and  
Opportunities for the regeneration of Trafford's Civic Quarter***

**Introduction:**

This hearing statement has been prepared by Trafford Council in response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination hearing sessions. It addresses Matter 3: The Vision and the Strategic Objectives and Opportunities for the regeneration of Trafford's Civic Quarter

The following key documents are relevant to this response:

- The Civic Quarter Area Action Plan Regulation 19 Version (January 2021) **A01**
- Proposed Main Modifications **G01**
- Copies of representations received **E01**
- The adopted Trafford Core Strategy **J01**
- The new Trafford Local Plan (Regulation 18 stage) **J03**
- Proposed list of minor modifications (November 2021) – see Matter 1 hearing statement
- Updated Improved Permeability and Greenspace Parameter Plan – see matter 1 hearing statement

**3.1** *Overall, are the vision and the strategic objectives and opportunities for the regeneration of Trafford's Civic Quarter appropriate and does **policy CQ1- Civic Quarter Regeneration** - establish a sustainable and realistic framework to achieve them? Is the Plan in general conformity with the Local Plan Core Strategy and any emerging planning policy for relevant areas? Does the Plan effectively address the area's lack of identity?*

3.1.01 Securing the successful regeneration of this location, within the north-east of the Borough, has been a longstanding Council priority. More recently, there has been significant developer interest in this area, with planning applications coming forward for very high density developments. Together with the reduction in attractiveness of some of the historic office stock, and a relatively limited existing population, the area is clearly capable of undergoing transformational change. There does, however, need to be a policy framework to manage this, and one that is capable of coming forward ahead of the emerging Trafford Local Plan because the pressure and need for development here now is very considerable. The Area Action Plan has been identified as the means of achieving this. The vision and the strategic objectives and opportunities for the regeneration of the Civic Quarter are thus considered appropriate. The Area Action Plan's vision features twice within the document, with this setting out how the Council intends the Civic Quarter to be transformed by the end of the plan period to 2037. Reference is given to the creation of a new, diverse, resilient and vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood, and with key themes regarding the establishment of a new identity for the area, the enhancement of heritage assets, high quality design, sustainable transport, and improved health and well-being all featuring. The identified Strategic Objectives, featuring in Section 3.2 of the Area Action Plan, build on the preceding summaries of challenges and opportunities contained at sections 2.7 and 2.8 of the document. Eight high-level Strategic Objectives are defined which, it is explained, are intended to deliver and support the Area Action Plan's vision (and thus which focus on many of its themes). Following the Strategic Objectives, a further Strategic Vision is contained. This seeks to explain how a revitalised Civic Quarter could function to support wider strategic objectives, including outside of the Trafford borough.

3.1.02 Some changes have been suggested by the Council to the strategic objectives and opportunities. These are contained on the list of proposed minor modifications (dated November 2021). In order to provide clarity and avoid confusion with the 'Summary of Opportunities' section, the 'Strategic Objectives and Opportunities' are proposed to be re-titled to refer solely to the 'Strategic Objectives'. Some of the supporting text under each Strategic Objective is proposed to be tightened up. In addition, in responding to representations made at Regulation 19 stage, a new (ninth) Strategic Objective is proposed.

With reference to Lancashire County Cricket Club, this refers to the desire to strengthen its role and to encourage its growth and enhancement as a major sporting venue. Finally, a suggestion is made to delete the Strategic Vision, due to the potential to confuse with the main Area Action Plan Vision and it generally being superfluous.

- 3.1.03 Following on from this, it is considered that Policy CQ1 establishes a sustainable and realistic framework to achieve the Area Action Plan's vision and strategic objectives. Policy CQ1 is the principal policy of the Area Action Plan and it establishes key expectations regarding appropriate forms of development. It is accompanied by three parameter plans which cover: land uses, building height parameters; and improved permeability and greenspace. However, when having regard to the responses received at Regulation 19 stage, it is suggested that a main modification to the Area Action Plan may be required. This proposed main modification formed part of the package of material Submitted to the Secretary of State in November 2021. This main modification, for which there would then follow a number of consequential changes, relates to Policy CQ1 and its supporting content (including its three parameter plans). The extent of the changes, in totality, materially affect Policy CQ1 - it is considered - and thus they are suggested as a main modification. They do not, however, exceed the scope of a main modification since they do not change the spirit of the policy (or the essence and vision of the Area Action Plan as a whole).
- 3.1.04 In summary, the changes proposed to Policy CQ1, in their entirety, are chiefly intended to ensure that this leading policy is as effective as possible in delivering the vision and aspirations of the Area Action Plan. The overriding purpose of the Area Action Plan – to achieve large scale redevelopment and to deliver a regenerated neighbourhood – is now proposed to be identified at the outset in the policy's supporting text. Furthermore, the adjustments are aimed at reinforcing the Civic Quarter's unique attributes and maximising their ability to drive wholesale change. In this respect, a key focus of the renewed Policy CQ1 is the opportunity afforded by the presence of Lancashire County Cricket Club, as well as the adjacency of Manchester United Football Club, to secure a renewed tourism and visitor identity for the Civic Quarter (consistent with the proposed adjustment to the 'Strategic Opportunities') section referred to above, suggested as a minor modification).
- 3.1.05 The proposed Main Modification adjustments to Policy CQ1 would – it is considered – provide a clearer and more successful foundation to support the remaining policies of the Area Action Plan and to guide effective investment decisions as well as Council decision-making.
- 3.1.06 It is considered that the Area Action Plan is in general conformity with the adopted Trafford Core Strategy and also emerging local planning policy.

Securing the successful regeneration of this location, within the north-east of the Borough, has been a longstanding Council priority. The Civic Quarter, then referred to as the Lancashire County Cricket Club (LCCC) Quarter in acknowledging the siting of the international sporting venue, forms one of five Strategic Locations defined by the adopted Trafford Core Strategy (2012). These Strategic Locations have been identified on the basis that they have the potential for significant, strategic change and can make a considerable contribution to the delivery of new housing as well as employment floorspace and other development needs. Policy SL3 of the Core Strategy, which provides the policy detail for the LCCC Quarter, defines this strategic proposal as a major mixed use development to provide a high quality experience for visitors balanced with a new, high quality residential neighbourhood centred around an improved cricket stadium. Reference is given to the location accommodating 400 residential units.

3.1.07 Many of the aspirations of SL3 have been achieved, including a new stand, hotel and conference facilities at LCCC, a new food superstore, and the establishment of the UA92 Academy. In addition, with one site under construction, the area will shortly deliver beyond the SL3 target of 400 homes.

3.1.08 The initial identification of the Civic Quarter, which covers a broader area than the LCCC Quarter in extending further eastwards, seeks to build upon the success of Policy SL3 and further maximise the potential of the location to deliver significant change. It has been recognised, however, that Policy SL3 placed more emphasis on the opportunities afforded by the presence of LCCC than does the Area Action Plan at present. Policy SL3's reference to LCCC built upon one of the Place Objectives for Old Trafford which refers to the aim to maximise the potential of LCCC as a visitor attraction (see OTO11). The suggested changes to the Area Action Plan, as already identified under this item, seek to address this and in doing so also address some of the representations made by LCCC.

3.1.09 Accordingly, it is considered that the suggested adjustments to the Area Action Plan in totality on the topic of LCCC would enable the document to more fully align with Policy SL3 which accepted at the outset that this location is one of the most visited parts of Trafford and with it distinguished by virtue of its international sporting assets. Whilst Policy SL3 itself would be superseded upon adoption of the Area Action Plan, this message is reflected in other parts of the Core Strategy which would be retained (the Place Objectives for Old Trafford, as referred to above, for example). In addition, this adjustment is consistent with how the Civic Quarter is presented in the emerging new Trafford Local Plan (with the Civic Quarter now identified as an Area of Focus, Policy AF6: The Civic Quarter). Policy AF6 is consistent with the Area Action Plan in recognising the desire to create a vibrant new mixed use community, improved pedestrian and cycling routes, and the establishment of a strong identity.

However, in terms of policy detail, Policy AF6 defers to the Area Action Plan which is at a more advanced stage. Policy AF6 will be adjusted to reflect the Area Action Plan upon its adoption.

- 3.1.10 Whilst it is considered that the Area Action Plan is already well-placed to address the area's lack of identity, it is considered that this adjustment to Policy CQ1 could further the potential for it to achieve this by reinforcing its unique attributes, particularly its sporting heritage. The need to address the lack of identity is further secured by the Area Action Plan in other areas, with its intention to include new landmark buildings, restored and better respected heritage assets, recognisable streets and spaces, and new residential neighbourhoods. These objectives are evident across the Area Action Plan's policies, the neighbourhood guidance, and the design and public realm codes. The precise detail would be confirmed at development management stage but the Area Action Plan provides a good starting point to achieve this and to inform planning applications discussions.

**3.2** *Do the Parameter Plans, building height parameters and framework for improved permeability and greenspace support the vision and strategic objectives of the Plan and provide a sustainable basis for the implementation of policy CQ1?*

3.2.1 Yes. The three parameter plans have been devised to cover and guide the three main topics which are regarded as central to the successful regeneration of the Civic Quarter. Land use parameters have been set in order to inform and influence the types of uses coming forward, although with this set against a desire to allow for flexibility in this intended mixed use location. The expectation is, however (consistent with developer interest to date) that new residential development would be the catalyst for change, and with this delivered at high densities. With this in mind, and when acknowledging the Civic Quarter's sensitivity in terms of heritage assets, existing residential communities and lower-rise development (particularly in the western and southern parts of the Civic Quarter), the building heights parameters plan serves to establish a framework to control the height of new development coming forward. Only two locations have been identified as having scope for development of up to 20 storeys in height. However, the suitability of a development at this scale – with the 20 storey reference intended as a maximum figure – would be confirmed at planning application stage (with some sites in such locations potentially accommodating a reduced height subject to the success of the case made at planning application stage). The third parameter plan, the improved permeability and greenspace plan, demonstrates the commitment of the Area Action Plan in seeking to secure improved connections throughout the Civic Quarter, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, and also to ensure that new development at higher densities is brought forward in parallel with new interlinked open space, generally in pocket locations and throughout main corridors.

3.2.2 Overall, it is considered that the three parameter plans are wholly supportive of the vision and strategic objectives of the Area Action Plan, and with this evident by them being granted policy status as part of Policy CQ1.

3.2.3 Please note that the Council's response to this item (3.2) has had regard to the suggested changes to the three parameter plans to be pursued as part of the main modification, and then with a further adjustment to the improved permeability and greenspace parameter plan (only) now proposed as referred to in the Council's response to item 1.3.