

Trafford Core Strategy: Further Consultation on Defining the Regional Centre and Inner Areas Boundaries

April 2011

The Regional Strategy (RS)¹ identifies the Regional Centres of Manchester and Liverpool as the first priority for growth and development, the Inner Areas surrounding these Regional Centres are identified as the second priority and that “[e]mphasis should be placed on areas in need of regeneration and Housing Market Renewal Areas in particular”² (Policy RDF1). Specifically in respect of the Manchester City Region it describes that residential development should be focused in the Inner Area “in order to secure a significant increase in their population, to support major regeneration activity, including the Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, and to secure the improvement of community facilities and the creation of sustainable communities”³.

The RS describes that, unlike RPG13, it does not specifically define Regeneration Priority Areas because “it is clear where the emphasis should be in terms of the overall priorities for investment and regeneration activity, it is in the Regional Centres and Inner Areas (frequently the location of Urban Regeneration Companies)”⁴. It goes on to describe that the Inner Areas, “are identified as high priority by initiatives like the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder project and the creation of two Urban Regeneration Companies, Central Salford and New East Manchester” and that “they are considered to be a suitable location for significant new housing and local economic development”⁵.

The RS therefore sets out a clear regenerative focus behind the identification of the Inner Area, addressing the concentrated levels of multiple deprivation around the Regional Centre (see figure 1 below) through housing development and investment which creates successful residential areas able to benefit from their proximity to the economic opportunities within the Regional Centre.

¹ Government Office North West (September 2008) North West of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2021.

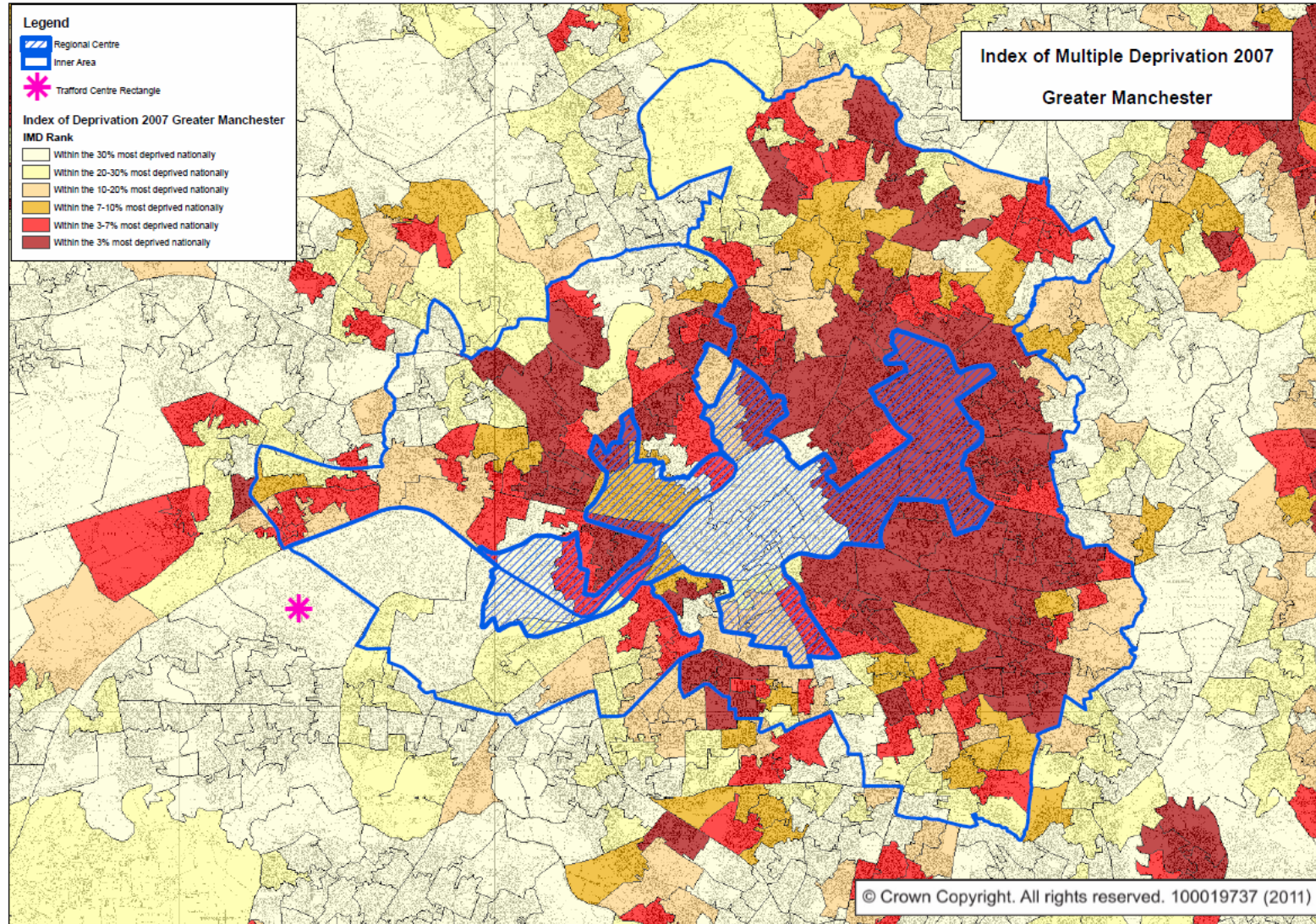
² Ibid. Policy RDF1

³ Ibid. Policy MCR2.

⁴ Ibid. paragraph 5.5.

⁵ Ibid. paragraph 10.8.

Figure 1: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007⁶



Note: Boundaries taken from Manchester’s Publication Core Strategy (February 2011), Trafford’s Publication Core Strategy (September 2010) and Salford’s Draft Core Strategy (November 2009).

⁶ The 2007 IMD has been used instead of the 2010 version due to possible errors in some of the latest data sets which have been notified to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

In order to ensure that the policy framework is clear about the regeneration needs of communities surrounding the Regional Centre, and resources are prioritised accordingly, it is important that the boundary of the Inner Areas is carefully drawn to target the levels of deprivation identified. An appropriate boundary should therefore be based on the potential of development and investment to address the concentration of deprivation around the Regional Centre identified above.

This is the basis for the Inner Area boundaries currently proposed in both Salford's and Manchester's emerging Core Strategies, encompassing each city's most deprived wards which are the subject of significant regeneration efforts. In the case of Salford the Inner area is drawn to match the boundary of the Central Salford area, along with the similarly deprived community of Eccles. The area is a key target for future intervention, building on the work of the Central Salford Urban Regeneration Company, the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder, the New Deal for Communities at Charlestown and Lower Kersal, and further interventions resulting from key development partnerships in Pendleton, Lower and Higher Broughton, and Ordsall. Similarly in Manchester the Inner Area boundary is defined by the North, East and Central regeneration areas, identified as the key focus for regeneration in the city, taking forward the work of the New East Manchester Urban Regeneration Company and other regeneration initiatives within North and Central Manchester.

The potential to promote neighbourhood regeneration should therefore be paramount in the definition of the Inner Area. This should not be confused with arguments in respect of achieving certain levels of development to support future growth as is suggested in Trafford's latest consultation which describes that "retaining such a tight boundary could have implications in terms of the Inner Areas ability to contribute the level of growth required to grow the economy of the City Region, resulting in pressures for development in less sustainable locations and less co-located to sources of economic growth"⁷. Indeed, whether or not a site is within the Inner Area is just one consideration in the determination of the suitability of sites for development and should not in itself justify, or negate, development potential. However, an Inner Area boundary which does not reflect the regeneration priorities of the City Region could weaken the focus of investment and intervention.

Incorporating the older part of Trafford Park, as was proposed in Trafford's publication Core Strategy⁸ might itself be regarded as questionable in these terms, not least because it falls outside of the clear concentration of multiple deprivation identified above and has no existing community to benefit from regeneration. However, reflecting Trafford's concern to attract funding to continuing efforts to regenerate the old Trafford Park we have regarded the

⁷ Trafford Council (April 2011) DPD1: Trafford Core Strategy: Further Consultation on Defining the Regional Centre and Inner Area Boundaries, paragraph 3.13.

⁸ Trafford Council (September 2010) DPD1: Trafford Core Strategy: Publication Document, page 6.

incorporation of the area west to the Bridgewater Canal as something we can agree with our neighbouring authority.

However this rationale would not support the further extension of the Inner Area to the highly successful commercial area which is the Trafford Centre and its environs. The M60 does not present a 'natural' boundary and following a similar approach across the three authorities would significantly extend the Inner Area and would include some of the more prosperous areas of both Salford and Manchester. This would diminish, if not completely destroy, the concept of focussing regeneration efforts on the older areas of high deprivation at the heart of the conurbation, which have always required support.

The relevance of the Inner Areas as a policy tool is likely to remain throughout the plan period. Although the Localism Bill proposes to remove the RS, AGMA is currently preparing a Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) to address citywide and cross-boundary planning issues, which could gain further significance as a context within which the requirements of the proposed Duty to Cooperate are to be assessed. Although the GMSF is at an early stage, the issues papers which have been produced indicate that the spatial strategy agreed through the RS retains support:

"The planned distribution of new housing is not evenly spread and reflects the policy priority to repopulate the core of the conurbation and reconnect these neighbourhoods to the economic opportunities nearby...."

*For Greater Manchester **priorities for growth cannot be readily separated from priorities for renewal** as it is our large scale regeneration areas which have both the capacity to deliver new development on a large scale alongside complementary funding to provide essential improvements in those elements which influence where people want to live.*

We are committed to continuing the pioneering long term approach to transforming neighbourhoods in our Housing Market Renewal Areas...⁹

The importance of the regeneration of the central areas identified in RS is clear, and therefore the role of the Inner Areas remains valuable as a means of giving policy recognition and focus to this priority.

Neither Salford nor Manchester City Council is opposed to the residential development proposed around the Trafford Centre through Trafford's draft Core Strategy. However, as noted above, not including the Trafford Centre Rectangle in the Inner Areas is not a constraint on the potential for this growth. This is something which should be properly governed by other policies in the Core Strategy, and Salford and Manchester will seek to work

⁹ GMSF Draft Topic Paper 3 – Creating Quality Places to Meet the Needs of a Competitive City Region (August 2010)

with Trafford to ensure that the potential of the area can be realised in a way that is complementary to other parts of the conurbation.

The key issues is that the Inner Area designation established in the RS has a particular policy purpose, rooted in Greater Manchester's regeneration priorities and the sustainable growth of its economic core. The assessment of which land should be included is a qualitative rather than quantitative exercise – there is not a minimum proportion of housing to be included in order that the aim of the policy is realised. Whilst current challenges to the delivery of new housing may warrant a reappraisal of the overall approach to Greater Manchester's housing strategy, the importance of supporting regeneration in the Inner Areas remains, and is a key determinant of which locations should be included.