

Strategic environmental assessment of the Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan

**Environmental Report (update)
Submission (Regulation 16)**

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Introduction

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned through Locality on behalf of the Altrincham Town Centre Business Neighbourhood Forum (the 'Forum') to undertake a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) in support of the emerging Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan (ATCNBP or the 'Plan').
- 1.1.2 The Plan is currently being prepared by the Forum under the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The plan will be in conformity with the Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (approved in 2012) as well as the Revised Trafford Unitary Development Plan (approved in 2006).
- 1.1.3 SEA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely significant effects of a draft plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse environmental effects and maximising the positives. SEA is a legal requirement for the Plan.¹

1.1 SEA explained

- 1.1.4 It is a requirement that SEA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations'), which transpose the European SEA Directive² into national law.
- 1.1.5 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, and the National Planning Practice Guidance³, a report (the 'Environmental Report') must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan (Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations) that presents information on the likely significant effects of implementing the plan, and reasonable alternatives.⁴ The Environmental Report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan prior to submission to Trafford Council (Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations).
- 1.1.6 The National Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 41) sets out that "The Environmental Report will not necessarily have to be amended if the neighbourhood plan is modified following responses to consultation." Only where the plan is substantially altered might an update be required. In the case of Altrincham, the Plan has not been substantially altered but nonetheless the Environmental Report has been updated to reflect comments received through the Regulation 14 consultation and changes made to the Plan prior to submission to the Town Council. These changes can be summarised as:
- Policy H 3 has been amended from 'car-free' to 'no off-street car parking'
 - Policy H 4 has been removed and included as background text under 4.4.7 of the Plan
 - CP 1 has been amended to support short term car parking rather than the development of an integrated car parking strategy
 - CP 2 on short-stay town centre car parking has been removed

¹ SEA is not an automatic requirement for neighbourhood plans. Rather, SEA is a requirement where an initial 'screening' assessment identifies the potential for the neighbourhood plan to result in significant environmental effects. On in June 2015, a screening exercise was undertaken for the Plan. A 'screening report' was produced and sent to the consultation bodies for a response. The conclusion was that an SEA would be required.

² Directive 2001/42/EC

³ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal/sustainability-appraisal-requirements-for-neighbourhood-plans/>

⁴ Schedule 2 of the Regulations lists the information that must be presented in the Environmental Report.

- DIGI 1 has been edited to support of proposals rather than specifying projects
- D 4 is a new policy on ginnels
- OF 1 and 2 on employment floorspace have been merged
- CF 1 new policy on community infrastructure

New text has been highlighted by being underlined.

1.2 This Environmental Report

1.1.7 This document is the Environmental Report for the Plan and hence must provide certain information specified in the SEA Regulations. Essentially, there is a need to answer four questions:

1. What’s the scope of the SEA?
 - i.e. what are the issues/objectives that should and should not be a focus of for the assessment?
2. What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?
 - Preparation of the plan must have been informed by at least one earlier round of plan-making / SEA; ‘reasonable alternatives’ must have been assessed.
3. What are the SEA findings at this stage?
 - i.e. in relation to the plan as it currently stands.
4. What happens next (including potential measures for monitoring the plan’s significant effects)?

1.1.8 **Table 1.1** explains more about the regulatory basis for answering these questions within the Environmental Report.

Table 1.1: Questions answered by the Environmental Report, in accordance with regulatory⁵ requirements

| <i>Environmental Report question</i> | <i>In line with Regulations, the report must include...</i> |
|--|---|
| What is the scope of the SEA? What is the plan seeking to achieve? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes |
| What is the sustainability ‘context’? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance |

⁵ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>What is the sustainability 'baseline'?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance |
| <p>What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment |
| <p>What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the plan approach) • The likely significant effects associated with alternatives • Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the plan |
| <p>What are the SEA findings at this current stage?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The likely significant effects associated with the plan • The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the plan |
| <p>What happens next?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A description of the measures envisaged for monitoring the plan's implementation |

1.1.9 N.B. The right-hand column of **Table 1.1** does not quote directly from Schedule II of the SEA Regulations. Rather, it reflects a degree of interpretation which is explained in **Appendix A** of this report.

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What's the scope of the assessment

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2 What is the scope of the SEA?

2.1.1 **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the scope of the SEA. In particular, and as required by the SEA Regulations, the following chapters answer the series of questions below.

- What is the plan seeking to achieve?
- What is the context?
- What is the baseline?
- What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus of SEA?

2.1.2 **Section 2.3** answers the first question by listing the objectives of the Plan. The other three questions are answered in **Sections 2.5 – 2.7** with each question answered for the following eight sustainability topics:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Historic environment and landscape
- Land, soil and water resources
- Population and community
- Health and well-being
- Transport
- Economy and enterprise

2.1.3 Rather than focusing strictly on the environment, the topics cover all three dimensions of sustainable development, i.e. the environmental, social and economic pillars. This is appropriate given that sustainable development is a stated objective for neighbourhood plans.⁶ Extending the scope of an SEA in this way does not mean that environmental issues are less important.

2.1 Consultation on the SEA

Scope

2.1.4 The Regulations require that *“When deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies”*. In England, the consultation bodies are Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England^{7,8}.

2.1.5 These authorities were consulted on the SEA scope between 30 July and 6 September 2015. Specifically, the authorities were presented with an SEA Scoping Report, which presented scoping information relevant to the emerging Plan.

⁶ At Examination the plan will need to demonstrate that it meets the ‘basic condition’ of contributing to sustainable development, the Environmental Report will help demonstrate that this condition has been met

⁷ Prior to 1 April 2015 Historic England’s role as a statutory consultee was undertaken by English Heritage.

⁸ In accordance with Article 6(3) of the SEA Directive, these consultation bodies were selected because *‘by reason of their specific environmental responsibilities, [they] are likely to be concerned by the environmental effects of implementing plans and programmes.’*

2.1.6 Comments were received from all three statutory consultees. Natural England were satisfied with the topic areas covers and were "*pleased to see Green Infrastructure as a cross cutting theme throughout the topic areas*". Nonetheless, there were other comments put forward, these are set out below (with AECOM responses following each comment):

"It is not clear if relevant plans, programmes and strategies have been reviewed as part of the evidence gathering for the baseline. Natural England recommends that this is incorporated into the evidence gathering process."

2.1.7 We (AECOM) believe that this has been covered. The National Planning Practice Guidance sets out that when consulting on the scope of the SEA (Stage B) the consultation should: "*Identify other relevant policies, plans and programmes, and sustainability objectives*". In the Scoping Report these areas were clearly set out under the 'Context' heading for each of the topics considered. This being the case, no amendments are considered necessary.

"We are of the opinion that more work is needed on the suggested criteria and thresholds because they are not currently fit for purpose in terms of assessing the effect of the plan on the environment."

2.1.8 The Scoping Report should have made clear that the red / amber / green scoring is not indicative of 'significant effect' but rather a 'flag' that indicates that there is a potential constraint or that a significant effect might be likely. The assessment in this Environmental Report provides additional qualitative description of the effects, where identified, which assesses likely effects in their context as part of the plan. The assessment has also included guidance as advised by Historic England, included in Appendix B.

2.1.9 Historic England made a number of detailed comments; these are set out in **Table 2.1** along with AECOM's response. It should be noted that the obligations of the Local Planning Authority as set out in the NPPF are separate to those of this assessment and this assessment does not obviate for the LPA's obligations.

Table 2.1: Scoping response to Historic England

| Location | Historic England comment | AECOM response |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Page 18 | The 'Themes considered' section bullet 1 should refer to designated and non-designated heritage assets (rather than sites) and areas. This then would include archaeological assets and negate the need for this to be separately listed. | Amended |
| Page 18 – Context 5.1.1 | The NPPF also notes (para 129) that 'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this | Considered addressed in later comments on the SEA Framework. |

assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'.

In other words the setting of the heritage assets is also part of the consideration of the impact of any development proposal affecting them.

| | | | |
|------------------|------|--|------------------------|
| Page 18 5.2.1 | para | Any references to English Heritage should be changed to Historic England. | Amended |
| Page 19 5.2.3 | para | Since the scoping report was drafted for consultation 2 of the 3 conservation areas deemed at risk and on our register have been re-assessed as now not being at risk. These will be removed from our 2015 register when it is published later this year. | Amended in this report |
| Page 19 5.2.3 | para | It would be important to note here also that new development <i>could</i> be harmful to the character and appearance of any of the 7 conservation areas affected by the proposed Neighbourhood Plan. | Noted |
| Para 5.2.5 | | We would expect to have all of the heritage assets identified here, rather than just mentioning 'including the grade II listed market house and the church of St Vincent'. We would also point out that development could affect the setting of heritage assets outside the NP boundary as well as those inside it; these (if there are any) ought to be identified too. | Noted |
| Para 5.2.7 | | We suggest changing the phrase '... to impact on the fabric and setting of cultural heritage assets' to 'impact on the significance and setting of heritage assets'. We also suggest amending the second sentence to be 'This includes through inappropriate design, layout, site allocation, and the demolition of | Amended |

| | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| | buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area.' | |
| Para 5.2.8 | The second sentence ought to include loss of buildings too – so it should read 'This includes from the loss of landscape features, loss of buildings as well as visual impact'. | Amended |
| Para 5.2.10 | Just to note – the preserving and enhancing the heritage assets, including conservation areas does also include the setting of these assets. | Amended – acknowledged in the SEA Framework sub-criteria. |
| Para 5.3.1 | Second sentence should also mention the listed buildings (at least the number of them) that fall within the NP boundary. If there are any other identified key buildings (unlisted) in the conservation areas (identified in the CA appraisal) or locally listed buildings then these also should be mentioned. | Amended |
| Para 5.3.2 | First sentence should also mention that inappropriate site allocations and demolition could also affect the integrity of the historic environment and impact listed buildings and conservation areas etc. and their setting. | Amended |
| Para 5.3.3 | Our [Historic England] best practice guidance advice (<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and the Historic Environment, July 2013</i>) states our opinion that English Heritage (Historic England) considers that for an SEA/SA to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive to assess impacts on cultural heritage, it needs to include a specific objective: ' conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings '. We recommend replacing the objective stated for the one in our national guidance. | Amended – however it is our view that an objective in its own right does not serve to meet the requirements of the SEA Regulations. There is not substantive justification to this approach in legislation and in fact there is no requirement to include heritage assets in the SEA (the SEA Regulations and Directive use a permissive working "on issues such as-" We believe the objectives, if used at all, should reflect the local circumstances and the likely significant effects of the plan and not be a homogenous statement |

| | | |
|------------|---|--|
| | | of aspiration. |
| Para 5.3.4 | The objectives and sub-objectives need to be amended to reflect more closely the approach and terminology of the NPPF. | We consider that the objectives and sub-objectives as amended reflect the requirements of the SEA Regulations and National Planning Practice Guidance. |
| Page 45 | SEA objective – replace with the earlier identified one of, ‘conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings’. Plus have a separate objective around the landscape and cultural facilities. | Amended |
| Page 45 | <p>As previously mentioned, the assessment criteria (like the objectives) need to be amended to more closely reflect the approach and terminology of the NPPF.</p> <p>It is important to understand the significance of any heritage assets that would be affected by a potential site allocation. This involves more than identifying known heritage assets within a given distance but rather a more holistic process which seeks to understand their significance and value. Whilst a useful starting point, a focus on distance or visibility <i>alone</i> as a gauge of impact is not appropriate. Site allocations may offer an opportunity for enhancement of a conservation area for example, or a way of tackling heritage at risk. Whilst conversely an allocation at a considerable distance away from a heritage asset may cause harm to its significance.</p> <p>Historic England has a new guide to site allocation in the historic environment coming out in September 2015, which will be available to download from our website.</p> | The red / amber / green scoring is not indicative of ‘significant effect’ but rather a ‘flag’ that indicates that there is a potential constraint or that a significant effect might be likely. The assessment covers the potential effects in a more qualitative way. |

2.1.10 The Environment Agency was generally supportive but had the following comments to make on the proposal to remove Flood Risk from the scope of the assessment:

"As the SEA Scoping report proposes to scope out flood risk as an issue, the SEA objectives (Proposed SEA Framework, Appendix 1) fail to pick up any issues regarding surface water and compliance with the SFRA. The only suggested criteria for surface water under SEA Objective 5 criteria relates to 'areas at risk of surface water flooding'."

2.1.11 Given the comments above, we have decided to include Flood Risk in the scope of the assessment but it will be focused on the likely significant affects development might have on surface water flooding.

Pre-submission

2.1.12 Following consultation on the pre-submission (Regulation 14) draft plan, AECOM reviewed the Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan Stage 3 Consultation: Summary of Responses. With regard to the SEA, no responses were received from the consultation bodies or other stakeholders. The scope of the assessment therefore remained unchanged.

2.2 What is the plan seeking to achieve?

The Environmental Report must include...

- **An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.**

2.1.13 The purpose of the Plan is to provide a strategic and long-term plan for the area that reflects the values of those living and working in the area. While the objectives of the Plan recognise the need for housing, they also reflect the character of the Town Centre. The Plan also seeks to resolve other issues, including around parking and traffic congestion in the Town Centre.

2.1.14 The Plan covers the area in the red line in **Figure 2.1**.

Plan 6: Town Centre Boundary & Allocations

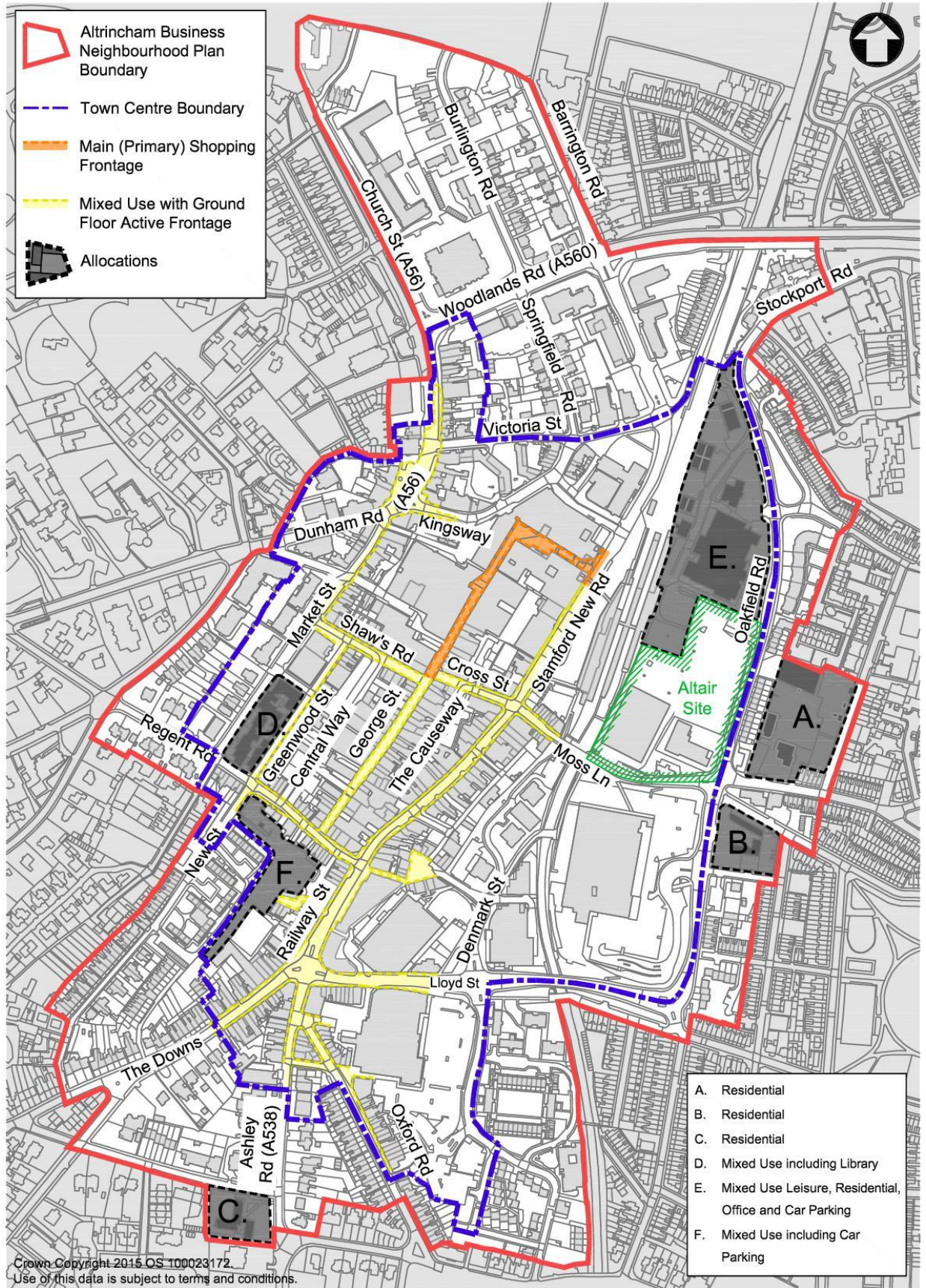


Figure 2.1: Town centre boundary and allocations

2.1.15 The 'Vision' of the Plan is (as of 14/10/2015) is:

"That Altrincham Town Centre evolves into an economically, environmentally and socially attractive and dynamic centre providing the widest possible range of high quality services and facilities to meet the needs of its catchment area population to 2030 and that in doing so it builds on its:

- *Strategic position in relation to the Airport, Manchester City Centre, the motorway and rail networks and tourist destinations*
- *History and architectural heritage*
- *Unique 1290 Charter Market*
- *Wide range of assets, particularly leisure based facilities, already established*

and develops its role as a modern market town, served by the effective application of the latest digital technologies, providing a safe and high quality environment in which all age groups can enjoy the widest possible range of quality cultural events and activities, leisure, retail, professional and business services, in which the community can engage and/or access."

2.1.16 The Plan has 11 objectives:

- *"OB 1. Secure the highest possible standards of design for the public realm and all new build and refurbishment in ATC including the use of high quality materials and ensuring that the scale and design of (re)development is appropriate to its location and setting, reflecting the character of the area in which it is located, including heritage characteristics and that environmental sustainability issues are addressed.*
- *OB 2. Define a more focussed retail core and provide wider areas of mixed uses including retail, residential and a wide range of other service outlets within a revised town centre boundary.*
- *OB 3. Review the extent of land allocated for office purposes and the potential impact of changes of use from offices to residential development.*
- *OB 4. Fully reflect and support (a) the recently approved Conservation Area boundaries and associated policies, seeking to protect and enhance the town's heritage assets and (b) the Public Realm and Infrastructure Concept Proposals agreed by Altrincham Forward and the Council but seek to influence the phasing and the detailed design of each phase of these works to reflect the views expressed during the public consultations.*
- *OB 5. Build on the success achieved by the new market operator, supporting the development and expansion of the Charter Market and adjoining public space as a major destination to attract a wider clientele including families and young people and so increase footfall and spend levels across the Town Centre.*
- *OB 6. Seek to attract more independent retailers providing goods not easily available on-line, including those serving niche markets and those providing food and fashionable clothes.*
- *OB 7. Promote (a) the adoption of an integrated car parking strategy, to include improved access, signage and information, co-ordinated charging policies and payment systems, to maximise the use of all existing spaces and encourage longer dwell times and provision for town centre residents and workers and those using the interchange; (b) encourage the greater use of public transport,*

cycles, walking and taxis in accessing services and jobs in the Town Centre, and (c) the provision of additional, safe, mainly short stay parking.

- *OB 8. Promote the town centre as a social centre, a family friendly place with attractive green spaces and town squares and a wide variety of service outlets including leisure related outlets attracting events, festivals and cultural activities providing entertainment for all ages (including the younger generation and children) both during the day and in the evening, all in a safe, high quality environment.*
- *OB 9. Promote the application of digital technologies in support of the promotion/advertising of the use of town centre services, including the development of a town centre web site; appropriate apps aimed at providing the widest possible up to date information about every aspect of town centre services; the provision of fast free Wi-Fi and charging facilities and the development of comprehensive 'Click and Collect' facilities supported by all retailers including collective joint services offered by groups of independent outlets.*
- *OB 10. Seek to increase the town centre resident population both by appropriately located new build and the refurbishment of appropriate existing unused/underused space, particularly above ground floor level in the town centre, with associated development control policies aimed at encouraging such developments.*
- *OB 11. As the principle town centre of the Borough, Altrincham will continue to be a key focus for economic growth including offices, high quality comparison retail (supported by a range of other retail, service, and leisure and tourism activities) and other town centre uses including residential."*

What the plan is not seeking to achieve?

2.1.17 It is important to emphasise that the plan looks to set policy that will be implemented through the planning system (i.e. when determining planning applications), and will be strategic in nature (i.e. recognising that some issues can be addressed through the planning application process without dedicated policy). The strategic nature of the plan is reflected in the scope of the SEA.

2.3 What is the context?

The Environmental Report must include...

- The relevant sustainability objectives, established at international / national level; and
- Any existing sustainability problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas / populations etc. of particular importance.

Introduction

2.1.18 An important step when seeking to establish the appropriate scope of an SEA involves reviewing context messages in relation to: broad problems / issues; and objectives, i.e. 'things that are aimed at or sought'. Messages from the review are presented below under the topic headings introduced above. Specific consideration is given to international and national context messages, in-line with requirements.⁹ National context messages are established first and foremost by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).¹⁰

Air quality

2.1.19 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- 'Planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan.'
- New and existing developments should be prevented from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air pollution.

2.1.20 In terms of the local context, Trafford Council is required to monitor air quality across the borough, report regularly to Defra and take action where nationally set levels are likely to be exceeded. Monitoring is undertaken to assess levels of nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, benzene and particulates. Where exceedances exist, areas are declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) and local authorities are required to produce an Action Plan to improve air quality in the area. The Trafford AQMA has been designated for annual mean levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and was primarily located in the north of the borough, and around major road networks, such as the A56 (Dunham Road), which passes through the north eastern section of the NP area. However, the AQMA was extended in 2005 to cover areas of central Altrincham, such as A538 (Railway Street/Stamford New Road).

⁹ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

¹⁰ Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) (2012) National Planning Policy Framework [online] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

2.1.21 At the European level, the EU Biodiversity Strategy¹¹ was adopted in May 2011 in order to deliver an established new Europe-wide target to 'halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020'.

2.1.22 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Contribute to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity by minimising impacts and achieving net gains in biodiversity wherever possible;
- Promote the 'preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks' and the 'protection and recovery of priority species'. Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;
- Set criteria based policies for the protection of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, giving weight to their importance not just individually but as a part of a wider ecological network;
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including green infrastructure (i.e. 'a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities');
- Plan positively, planning for 'green infrastructure' as part of planning for 'ecological networks'; and
- High quality open spaces should be protected or their loss mitigated, unless a lack of need is established.

2.1.23 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)¹² sets out the importance of a healthy, functioning natural environment to sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal well-being. It was in part a response to the UK's failure to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2010 and it signaled a move away from the traditional approach of protecting biodiversity in nature reserves to adopting a landscape approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity. The NEWP also aims to create a green economy in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other and markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature. It includes commitments to:

- Halt biodiversity loss, support functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks by 2020;
- Establish a new voluntary approach to biodiversity offsetting to be tested in pilot areas;
- Enable partnerships of local authorities, local communities and landowners, the private sector and conservation organisations to establish new Nature Improvement Areas; and
- Address barriers to using green infrastructure to promote sustainable growth.

2.1.24 At the local level there are seven Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) within Trafford, covering:

¹¹ European Commission (2011) Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/pdf/2020/1_EN_ACT_part1_v7%5b1%5d.pdf

¹² Defra (2012) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (Natural Environment White Paper) [online] available at: <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf>

- Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*);
- Bullfinch – (*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*);
- Gardens and allotments;
- Grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*);
- Reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*);
- Semi-natural broadleaved woodland; and
- Water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*).

2.1.25 These BAPs target the protection of a particular species or habitat and give details of what is currently being done to protect that species. Each species or Habitat was chosen to give the widest protection possible to the characteristic habitats of the borough¹³.

2.1.26 On a regional level, the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project (GMBP) outlines several BAPS, which aim to provide an overarching document for diversity across all ten of its constituent districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Trafford, Tameside and Wigan). The overall aim of the GMBP is to "*promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of biological diversity in Greater Manchester for current and future generations*" and to be used alongside district level BAPs¹⁴.

Climate change

2.1.27 In its 2007 strategy on climate change, the European Commission assesses the costs and benefits of combating climate change and recommends a package of measures to limit global warming to 2°C.¹⁵ In relation to energy, the Commission recommends that the EU's energy efficiency improves by 20% and the share of renewable energy grows to 20% by 2020.

2.1.28 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate as a 'core planning principle';
- There is a key role for planning in securing radical reductions in greenhouse gases (GHG), including in terms of meeting the targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008¹⁶. Specifically, planning policy should support the move to a low carbon future through:
 - planning for new development in locations and ways which reduce GHG emissions;
 - actively supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings;
 - setting local requirements for building's sustainability in a way that is consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy;
 - positively promoting renewable energy technologies and considering identifying suitable areas for their construction; and

¹³ Action for Nature in Trafford (n.d.) Biodiversity [online] available at: <http://www.actionfornature.co.uk/Biodiversity.asp> (accessed on 22 May 2015).

¹⁴ Greater Manchester Biodiversity Project (GMBP) (n.d.) Introduction to the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan [online] available at <http://www.gmbp.org.uk/site/images/stories/introduction%20gm%20bap%2009.pdf> (accessed on 22 May 2015).

¹⁵ Commission of the European Communities (2007) Limiting Global Climate Change to two degrees Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond [online] available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0002:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁶ The Climate Change Act 2008 sets targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions through action in the UK of at least 80% by 2050, and reductions in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.

- encouraging those transport solutions that support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion.
- Direct development away from areas highest at risk of flooding, with development 'not to be allocated if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower probability of flooding'. Where development is necessary, it should be made safe without increasing levels of flood risk elsewhere; and
- Take account of the effects of climate change in the long term, taking into account a range of factors including flooding. Adopt proactive strategies to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

2.1.29 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010¹⁷ highlights that alternatives to traditional engineering approaches to flood risk management include:

- Incorporating greater resilience measures into the design of new buildings, and retro-fitting properties at risk (including historic buildings);
- Utilising the environment in order to reduce flooding, for example through the management of land to reduce runoff and through harnessing the ability of wetlands to store water;
- Identifying areas suitable for inundation and water storage to reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- Planning to roll back development in coastal areas to avoid damage from flooding or coastal erosion; and
- Creating sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)¹⁸.

2.1.30 Further guidance is provided in the document Planning for SuDs¹⁹. This report calls for greater recognition of the multiple benefits that water management can present. It suggests that successful SuDS are capable of 'contributing to local quality of life and green infrastructure'.

Historic environment and landscape

2.1.31 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance valued landscapes, giving particular weight to those identified as being of national importance;
- Heritage assets should be recognised as an 'irreplaceable resource' that should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance', taking account of 'the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits' of conservation, whilst also recognising the positive contribution new development can make to local character and distinctiveness;
- Set out a 'positive strategy' for the 'conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', including those heritage assets that are most at risk; and

¹⁷ Flood and Water Management Act (2010) [online] available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

¹⁸ N.B. The provisions of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 will come into force on the 1st of October 2012 and makes it mandatory for any development in England or Wales to incorporate SuDs.

¹⁹ CIRIA (2010) Planning for SuDs – making it happen [online] available at: <http://www.ciria.org/service/knowledgebase/AM/ContentManagerNet/ContentDisplay.aspx?Section=knowledgebase&NoTemplate=1&ContentID=18465>

- Consider the effects of climate change in the long term, including in terms of landscape. Adopt 'proactive strategies' to adaptation and manage risks through adaptation measures including well planned green infrastructure.

2.1.32 The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England²⁰ sets out its vision for the historic environment. It calls for those who have the power to shape the historic environment to recognise its value and to manage it in an intelligent manner in light of the contribution that it can make to social, economic and cultural life.

Land, soil and water resources

2.1.33 The EU's Soil Thematic Strategy²¹ presents a strategy for protecting soils resources in Europe. The main aim of the strategy is to minimise soil degradation and limit associated detrimental effects linked to water quality and quantity, human health, climate change, biodiversity, and food safety.

2.1.34 The Water Framework Directive drives a catchment-based approach to water management. In England and Wales there are 100 water catchments and it is Defra's intention is to establish a 'framework for integrated catchment management' across England. The Environment Agency is currently seeking to establish 'Significant Water Management Issues' within catchments with a view to presenting second River Basin Management Plans to ministers in 2015. The plans will seek to deliver the objectives of the WFD namely to:

- Enhance the status and prevent the further deterioration of aquatic ecosystems and associated wetlands which depend on aquatic ecosystems;
- Promote the sustainable use of water;
- Reduce the pollution of water, especially by 'priority' and 'priority hazardous' substances; and
- Ensure the progressive reduction of groundwater pollution.

2.1.35 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- Protect and enhance soils. The value of best and most versatile agricultural land should also be taken into account;
- Prevent new or existing development from being 'adversely affected' by the presence of 'unacceptable levels' of soil pollution or land instability and be willing to remediate and mitigate 'despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate';
- Encourage the effective use of land' through the reuse of land which has been previously developed, 'provided that this is not of high environmental value'. Whilst there is no longer a national requirement to build at a minimum density, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to 'set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances';
- Produce strategic policies to deliver the provision of a variety of infrastructure, including that necessary for water supply; and

²⁰ HM Government (2010) The Government's Statement on the Historic Environment for England [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/6763.aspx

²¹ European Commission (2006) Soil Thematic Policy [online] available at: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/soil/index_en.htm (accessed 22 May 2015)

- With regards to waste, the NPPF does not contain any specific waste policies as waste planning policy is published in the National Planning Policy for Waste (2014)²².

2.1.36 Other key documents at the national level include Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England²³, which sets out a vision for soil use in England, and the Water White Paper²⁴, which sets out the Government's vision for a more resilient water sector. It states the measures that will be taken to tackle issues such as poorly performing ecosystems, and the combined impacts of climate change and population growth on stressed water resources. In terms of waste management, the Government Review of Waste Policy in England²⁵ recognises that environmental benefits and economic growth can be the result of a more sustainable approach to the use of materials.

Population and community

2.1.37 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- To 'boost significantly the supply of housing', local planning authorities should meet the 'full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing' in their area. They should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment to assess their full housing needs, working with neighbouring authorities where housing market areas cross administrative boundaries. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period;
- With a view to creating 'sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities' authorities should ensure provision of affordable housing onsite or externally where robustly justified;
- In rural areas, when exercising the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs;
- The NPPF attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. It explains how good design is a key aspect in sustainable development, and how development should improve the quality of the area over its lifetime, not just in the short term. Good architecture and landscaping are important, with the use of design codes contributing to the delivery of high quality outcomes. Design should reinforce local distinctiveness, raise the standard more generally in the area and address the connections between people and places;
- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities';
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities;

²² Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (2014) National Planning Policy for Waste

²³ Defra (2009) Safeguarding our Soils: A strategy for England [online] available at:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/land/soil/documents/soil-strategy.pdf> (accessed 28/02/2014)

²⁴ Defra (2011) Water for life (The Water White Paper) [online] available at [http://www.official-](http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf)

[documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf](http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8230/8230.pdf)

²⁵ Defra (2011) Government Review of Waste Policy in England [online] available at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13540-waste-policy-review110614.pdf>

- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship;
- Ensure that developments create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Places should contain clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public spaces, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and
- Ensuring that there is a 'sufficient choice of school places' is of 'great importance' and there is a need to take a 'proactive, positive and collaborative approach' to bringing forward 'development that will widen choice in education'.

2.1.38 The Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change report *Ready for Ageing?*²⁶ warns that society is underprepared for the ageing population. The report says that "*longer lives can be a great benefit, but there has been a collective failure to address the implications and without urgent action this great boon could turn into a series of miserable crises*". The report says that the housing market is delivering much less specialist housing for older people than is needed. Central and local government, housing associations and house builders need urgently to plan how to ensure that the housing needs of the older population are better addressed and to give as much priority to promoting an adequate market and social housing for older people as is given to housing for younger people.

Health and well-being

2.1.39 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- The social role of the planning system involves 'supporting vibrant and healthy communities';
- A core planning principle is to 'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all'.
- The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities';
- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship;
- Set out the strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities;
- Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities; and
- Planning policies should aim to avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.

2.1.40 In relation to other key national messages in relation to health, *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*²⁷ ('The Marmot Review') investigated health inequalities in England and the actions needed in order to tackle them. Subsequently, a supplementary report was prepared

²⁶ Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change (2013) *Ready for Ageing?* [online] available at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/public-services-committee/report-ready-for-ageing/>

²⁷ The Marmot Review (2011) *The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning* [online] available at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/12111/53895/53895.pdf>

providing additional evidence relating to spatial planning and health on the basis that that there is: *'overwhelming evidence that health and environmental inequalities are inexorably linked and that poor environments contribute significantly to poor health and health inequalities'*.

2.1.41 The increasing role that local level authorities are expected to play in producing health outcomes is demonstrated by recent Government legislation. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 transfers responsibility for public health from the NHS to local government²⁸, giving local authorities a duty to improve the health of the people who live in their areas. This will require a more holistic approach to health across all local government functions.

Transport

2.1.42 European and UK transport policies and plans place emphasis on the modernisation and sustainability of the transport network. Specific objectives include reducing pollution and road congestion through improvements to public transport, walking and cycling networks and reducing the need to travel. National policy also focuses on the need for the transport network to support sustainable economic growth. Greater Manchester's third Local Transport Plan 2011/12 to 2015/16²⁹ presents a long term strategy for transport within Greater Manchester, and sets out a variety of priority schemes, including the Altrincham Transport Interchange.

Economy and enterprise

2.1.43 Key messages from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) include:

- The planning system can make a contribution to building a strong, responsive economy by 'ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure'.
- Capitalise on 'inherent strengths', and to meet the 'twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future'.
- Support new and emerging business sectors, including positively planning for 'clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries'.
- Support competitive town centre environments.
- Edge of town developments should only be considered where they have good access. This should be followed with an impact assessment to ensure the town centre remains viable in the long term.
- Enhance and retain markets is also outlined.
- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

²⁸ Upper tier and unitary local authorities

²⁹ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM) (2011) Greater Manchester's third Local Transport Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16 [online] available at: http://www.tfgm.com/journey_planning/LTP3/Pages/default.aspx (accessed on 6 June 2015).

2.4 What is the environmental baseline?

The Environmental Report must include...

- The relevant aspects of the current state of the sustainability baseline and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan;
- The characteristics of areas / populations etc. likely to be significantly affected; and
- Any existing sustainability problems / issues which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas / populations etc. of particular importance.

Introduction

2.1.44 The baseline review identifies locally specific trends and issues with environmental assets. Once the baseline has been established, it becomes possible to assess the likelihood of a proposal resulting in significant effects. It should be noted that the information used to determine the baseline does not necessarily correlate with the boundaries of the plan, indeed in some cases the boundaries for neighbourhood areas do not tessellate with other administrative boundaries for which information is collected. Nonetheless, the report has endeavoured to document the finest grain of data that is publically available.

Air quality

Current baseline

2.1.45 The main input to air pollutants in Altrincham is road traffic, with the Trafford AQMA designated along the main roads within the NP area, including the A56 and A538. However, there are no permanent air quality monitoring stations within the NP area.

Future baseline

2.1.46 Whilst no significant air quality issues currently exist in the NP area, new housing and employment provision both within the town centre and outside of the NP area have the potential to have adverse effects on air quality through increasing traffic flows and associated levels of pollutants such as NO₂. Areas of particular sensitivity to increased traffic flows are likely to be within the more congested parts of the town centre and the routes with highest traffic flows, such as the A56 and A538. The car is likely to remain the most dominant form of transport for persons who travel into Altrincham Town Centre from other locations. This may be offset in part by factors designed to broaden or improve the current public transport provision, in particular buses, so as to encourage modal shift from the private car and the improved fuel economy and efficiency of vehicles.

Biodiversity, flora and fauna

Current baseline

2.1.47 No sites internationally designated for their nature conservation interest are present in the NP area. The closest European designated site is the Rostherne Mere Ramsar site, which is approximately 3 km to the south west of NP area.

- 2.1.48 In terms of nationally designated nature conservation sites, there are no SSSIs present in the NP area. The closest designated site is the Dunham Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (in a favourable condition), which lies approximately 2 km west of the NP area, and consequently the western edge of the NP area falls into the potential impact zone for the Dunham Park SSSI. Furthermore, the NP area does not include any Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) (local, non-statutory designation); however, features of local biodiversity interest, such as individual trees and/or hedgerows, may be present within the NP area.
- 2.1.49 Both the Action for Nature in Trafford and the GMBP BAPs identify a number of 'priority habitats and species' that are characteristic of Greater Manchester. In particular, the GMBP notes that Greater Manchester has one of the largest populations of native Black Poplar in Britain (*Populus nigra*), which is under threat internationally due to Poplar Scab which is decimating international populations³⁰. Additionally, the GMBP estimate that there are less than 100 breeding pairs of the Willow Tit (*Poecile montanus*) within Greater Manchester, with the Willow Tit predominately located within the western districts, including Trafford.³¹
- 2.1.50 The local countryside supports a wide range of habitats and species, owing to the differing land uses, including agricultural land and recreational uses (i.e. Altrincham Golf Course and Dunham Forest Golf and Country Club), and the Bridgewater Canal, Timperley Brook and River Bollin. However, neither of these watercourses run through the NP area, and the NP area itself is predominately urban.
- 2.1.51 In relation to geodiversity, the majority of Manchester and the urban fringe to the south (including Altrincham) is located on Permian sandstones and red Triassic sandstones and mudstone.³²

Future baseline

- 2.1.52 Although all sites of biodiversity importance have the potential to come under increasing pressure from an increase in an area's population and associated development, there are no sites of biodiversity or geodiversity importance within the NP area and it is unlikely that development within the NP area will impact nearby sites.

Climate change

Current baseline

- 2.1.53 The outcome of research on the probable effects of climate change in the UK was released in 2009 by the UK Climate Projections (UKCP09) team.³³ UKCP09 gives climate information for the UK up to the end of this century and projections of future changes to the climate are provided, based on simulations from climate models. Projections are broken down to a regional level across the UK and are shown in probabilistic form, which illustrate the potential range of changes and the level of confidence in each prediction.

³⁰ GMBP (2009) Species Action Plan 2009: Native Black Poplar [online] available at http://www.gmbp.org.uk/site/images/stories/native%20black%20poplar%20bap_09.pdf (accessed on 22 May 2015).

³¹ GMBP (2009) Species Action Plan 2009: Willow Tit [online] available at http://www.gmbp.org.uk/site/images/stories/willow%20tit%20bap_09.pdf (accessed on 22 May 2015),

³² Natural England, Greater Manchester's Geodiversity [online] available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/geodiversity/englands/counties/area_ID15.aspx (accessed on 28 May 2015).

³³ The data was released on 18th June 2009: See: <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

2.1.54 As highlighted by the research, the effects of climate change for the North West by 2050 for a medium emissions scenario³⁴ are likely to be as follows:

- the central estimate of increase in winter mean temperature is 1.9°C and an increase in summer mean temperature of 2.6°C; and
- the central estimate of change in winter mean precipitation is 13% and summer mean precipitation is –18%.

2.1.55 Resulting from these changes, a range of risks may exist for the NP area. These include:

- increased incidence of heat related illnesses and deaths during the summer;
- increased incidence of illnesses and deaths related to exposure to sunlight (e.g. skin cancer, cataracts);
- increased incidence of pathogen related diseases (e.g. legionella and salmonella);
- increase in health problems related to rise in local ozone levels during summer;
- increased risk of injuries and deaths due to increased number of storm events;
- effects on water resources from climate change;
- reduction in availability of groundwater for abstraction;
- adverse effect on water quality from low stream levels and turbulent stream flow after heavy rain;
- increased risk of flooding, including increased vulnerability to 1:100 year floods;
- changes in insurance provisions for flood damage;
- a need to increase the capacity of wastewater treatment plants and sewers;
- a need to upgrade flood defences;
- soil erosion due to flash flooding;
- loss of species that are at the edge of their southerly distribution;
- spread of species at the northern edge of their distribution;
- deterioration in working conditions due to increased temperatures;
- changes to global supply chain;
- increased difficulty of food preparation, handling and storage due to higher temperatures;
- an increased move by the insurance industry towards a more risk-based approach to insurance underwriting, leading to higher cost premiums for business;
- increased demand for air-conditioning;
- increased drought and flood related problems such as soil shrinkages and subsidence;
- risk of road surfaces melting more frequently due to increased temperature; and
- flooding of roads.

³⁴ UK Climate Projections (2014) North West England 2050s Medium Emissions Scenario [online] available at: <http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/23847?emission=medium> (accessed on 28 May 2015)

2.1.56 Whilst parts of Altrincham are at risk of fluvial flooding from Timperley Brook³⁵, these areas are not within the NP area. However, as shown in **Figure 2.2**, some areas are at risk of surface water flooding (including sewers).

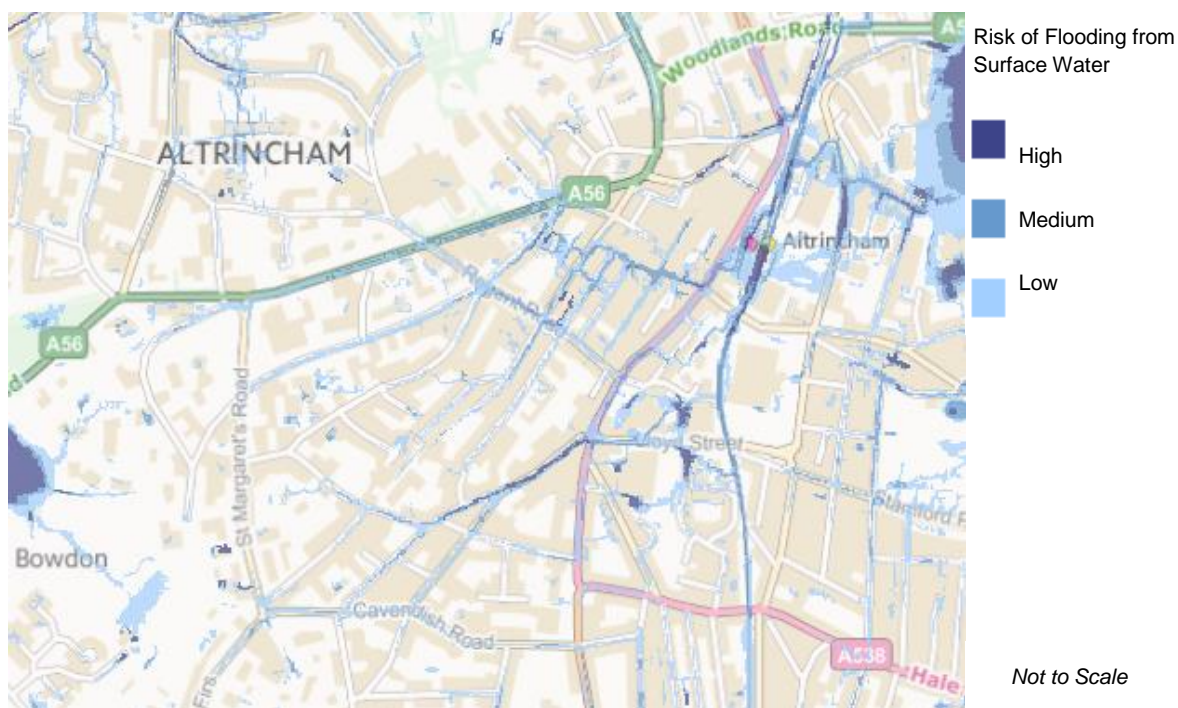


Figure 2.2: Areas at risk of surface water flooding

2.1.57 The Manchester City, Salford City and Trafford Councils Level 2 Hybrid Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): Level 2³⁶ summarises flood risk in Altrincham Town Centre (part of the Trafford South and Central area) as a result of canal breach (primary risk) and groundwater and surface water (secondary risk) as follows:

“Development should be acceptable on flood risk grounds. Residual risk from these sources needs to be taken into account when planning developments”.

2.1.58 Potential development areas have the potential to have a further effect on neighbouring watercourses in Altrincham, as the additional properties will cause an increase in foul water, after treatment, being discharged from the water treatment plants into the rivers.

2.1.59 Several instances of localised flooding have been recorded in Altrincham, including sewer flooding in 2004 following intense rainfall, which led to flooded gardens, highways and properties and in 1981 over 280 properties were flooded in Fallowfield, Withington, Gorton, Sale and Altrincham.³⁵

2.1.60 In relation to GHG emissions, source data from the Department of Energy and Climate Change³⁷ (outlined in **Table 2.2**) suggests that Trafford Borough has had consistently higher per capita emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) than the North West or England averages for industrial and commercial and domestic emissions since 2005. Although the total amount of road and transport CO₂ emissions are lower for Trafford than the North West, or England per capita averages, the total amount of CO₂ emissions in Trafford remains higher than both averages. The borough has also seen smaller reductions in

³⁵ JBA Consulting (2010) Manchester City, Salford City, and Trafford Councils Level 2 Hybrid Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA): Level 1 SFRA.

³⁶ JBA Consulting (2011) Manchester City, Salford City, and Trafford Councils Level 2 Hybrid SFRA: Level 2 SFRA.

³⁷ Department of Energy and Climate Change (2014) 2005 to 2012 UK Local and Regional CO₂ Emissions: Full Dataset [online] available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/local-authority-emissions-estimates> (accessed on 28 May 2015)

emissions per capita between 2005 and 2012 (14.8%) the North West (18.3%) and within England (20%).

2.1.61 In relation to CO₂ emissions by end user, between 2005 and 2012 the proportion of emissions originating from industrial and commercial sources in Trafford, the North West and in England have remained relatively consistent.

Table 2.2: Carbon dioxide emissions and sources, plus emissions per capita 2005-2012

| | <i>Industrial and Commercial (tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (t CO₂))</i> | <i>Domestic (t CO₂)</i> | <i>Road and Transport (t CO₂)</i> | <i>Total (t CO₂)</i> |
|-------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Trafford | | | | |
| 2005 | 5.3 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 9.3 |
| 2006 | 5.3 | 2.7 | 1.3 | 9.3 |
| 2007 | 5.0 | 2.6 | 1.3 | 8.9 |
| 2008 | 5.0 | 2.6 | 1.2 | 8.8 |
| 2009 | 4.7 | 2.3 | 1.2 | 8.1 |
| 2010 | 5.0 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 8.6 |
| 2011 | 4.0 | 2.1 | 1.1 | 7.2 |
| 2012 | 4.7 | 2.3 | 1.1 | 8.1 |
| North West | | | | |
| 2005 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 1.4 | 7.1 |
| 2006 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 1.4 | 7.1 |
| 2007 | 2.9 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 6.8 |
| 2008 | 2.8 | 2.5 | 1.3 | 6.6 |
| 2009 | 2.5 | 2.2 | 1.3 | 6.0 |
| 2010 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 1.3 | 6.3 |
| 2011 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 1.2 | 5.6 |
| 2012 | 2.6 | 2.2 | 1.2 | 6.0 |
| England | | | | |
| 2005 | 3.0 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 7.2 |
| 2006 | 3.0 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 7.2 |

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 2007 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 1.7 | 6.9 |
| 2008 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 6.7 |
| 2009 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 6.1 |
| 2010 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 1.5 | 6.3 |
| 2011 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 1.5 | 5.7 |
| 2012 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 1.4 | 6.0 |

Future baseline

2.1.62 Climate change has the potential to increase the occurrence of extreme weather events across the United Kingdom, including within the NP area, with increases in mean summer and winter temperatures, increases in mean precipitation in winter and decreases in mean precipitation in summer. This is likely to increase the risks associated with climate change (including surface water flooding) with an increased need for resilience and adaptation.

2.1.63 In terms of climate change mitigation, per capita emissions are likely to continue to decrease as energy efficiency measures, renewable energy production and new technologies become more widely adopted. However road transport and domestic sources are likely to be increasing contributors proportionally.

Historic environment and landscape

Current baseline

2.1.64 The NP area has a rich historic environment. A number of features and areas for the historic environment in the NP area are recognised through historic environment designations. These include listed buildings, which are nationally designated, and conservation areas, which are designated at the local level. English Heritage is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent. The historic environment is protected through the planning system, via conditions imposed on developers and other mechanisms.

2.1.65 There are seven Conservation Areas located within the NP area, with designations awarded and extended between 1973 and 2014, the most recent period of Conservation Area appraisals³⁸. These Conservation Areas are:

- The Devisdale Conservation Area;
- The Downs Conservation Area;
- George Street Conservation Area;
- Goose Green Conservation Area;
- Old Market Place Conservation Area;
- Sandiway Conservation Area; and
- Stamford New Road Conservation Area.

³⁸ Trafford Council (2015) Conservation Areas in Trafford [online] available at: <http://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/planning-for-householders/conservation-areas-in-trafford.aspx> (accessed 22 May 2015).

- 2.1.66 Of these seven conservation areas, three (George Street, Old Market Place and Stamford New Road) are listed on the English Heritage "Heritage at Risk Register"³⁹ and are classified as conservation areas at risk, with their condition categorised as poor (second to lowest on scale of 1-5) with the conservation areas judged to be vulnerable due to a deteriorating trend. All three of these conservation areas are located relatively centrally within the NP area, and therefore provide an opportunity to address their at risk status through future development.
- 2.1.67 Further to these conservation areas, there are two registered historic parks and gardens (Dunham Massey and Stamford Park⁴⁰) close to the NP area boundary. Dunham Massey (which contains the Dunham Park SSSI, with the eastern edge contained within The Devisdale Conservation Area) is located approximately half a kilometre to the west of the NP area and is a registered walled deer park, landscaped with avenues, water features and structures of the late 17th to mid-18th century, and gardens which retain 18th and 19th century features⁴¹. Stamford Park is located approximately 100 m to the east of the NP area, and is registered as it was 'at the forefront of a trend to make a major provision for sports and games within a public park in 1880'⁴².
- 2.1.68 The plan contains numerous listed buildings, including the Grade II listed Market House and The Church of St. Vincent De Paul and Presbytery.⁴⁰ However, it is worth noting that no Grade I or Grade II* buildings are listed within the NP area.
- 2.1.69 It should be noted that not all of the area's historic environment resource is subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. For example, although not listed, many buildings and areas are of historic interest, and which are seen as important by local communities. Examples of these in the NP area are likely to include parks and the wider historic landscape. Undesignated actual or potential archaeological finds in the area are also of significance.

Future baseline

- 2.1.70 New development areas in the NP area have the potential to impact on the significance and setting of heritage assets'. This includes through inappropriate design, layout, site allocation, and the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area. It should be noted however, that existing historic environment designations and Local Plan policies will offer a degree of protection to cultural heritage assets and their settings.
- 2.1.71 New development has the potential to lead to incremental but small changes in landscape and townscape character and quality in and around the NP area. This includes from the loss of landscape features, loss of buildings as well as visual impact. There are also likely to be potential effects on landscape/townscape character and quality in the vicinity of the road network due to an incremental growth in traffic flows.
- 2.1.72 There are likely to be small scale and incremental changes in tranquility in and around the NP area, affected by changes in the levels of light and noise pollution.

³⁹ Heritage at Risk Register (2015), <http://risk.english-heritage.org.uk/register.aspx> [accessed 22 May 2015]

⁴⁰ Historic England (2015) National Heritage List for England (NHLE) [online] available at <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list> (accessed on 22 May 2015)

⁴¹ Historic England (2015) NHLE Dunham Massey, Altrincham [online] available at <http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1000853> (accessed on 22 May 2015)

⁴² Historic England (2015) NHLE Stamford Park, Altrincham [online] available at <http://list.historicengland.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1001508> (accessed on 22 May 2015)

2.1.73 However, it should be noted that within the Draft Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan⁴³, the importance to “preserve and enhance the heritage assets across the town centre reflecting the work of the Conservation Area Appraisals and emerging Management Plans” is set out as a vision and objective.

Land, soil and water resources

Current baseline

2.1.74 The Agricultural Land Classification classifies land into five grades (plus ‘non-agricultural’ and ‘urban’), where Grades 1 to 3a are the ‘best and most versatile’ land and Grades 3b to 5 are of poorer quality. Defra’s Classification of Agricultural Land⁴⁴ classifies the NP area as “land predominately in urban use, which is not surprising given the urban context of the NP area. However, it is worth noting that the land around the NP area ranges from Grade 2 (very good) to Grade 4 (poor). Agricultural land to the south of the NP area is predominately rated as Grade 3 (good to moderate) with a thin strip of land rated as Grade 4, following the River Bollin. To the west/north-west of the NP area the land is classified as Grade 2 around Broadheath and Dunham Town.

2.1.75 There is no Household Waste and Recycling Centre in the NP area. The nearest is the Sinderland Road Household Waste Recycling Centre on Woodhouse Lane.

2.1.76 There are no watercourses within the NP area, but there are three separate water courses within the vicinity of Altrincham. The River Bollin flows to the south of Altrincham and is a major tributary to the River Mersey, whilst Timperley Brook can be found to the east and north of the NP area. The Bridgewater Canal, which connects Runcorn and Leigh, was opened in 1761 and flows to the north and west of Altrincham.

Future baseline

2.1.77 As the NP area is predominately urban, it is unlikely that any future development associated with Altrincham Town Centre will impact upon agricultural, or greenfield land.

2.1.78 Due to increasing legislative and regulatory requirements, there are increasing pressures to improve recycling and composting rates and move towards zero waste to landfill. As there are currently no waste management facilities within the NP area, it is unlikely that development within the NP area would impact adversely on Trafford’s current waste management facilities. Furthermore, Defra’s estimation for waste growth shows that national waste growth and estimates of future waste arisings are expected to remain consistent with current levels⁴⁵. This is because widespread initiatives to reduce waste and improve materials reuse and recycling are likely to reduce long-term production of waste.

2.1.79 In terms of water quality, the requirements of the Water Framework Directive are likely to lead to continued improvements to water quality in watercourses in the wider area. However, there are no watercourses within the NP area, so this is likely to have little impact on future development within Altrincham Town Centre.

2.1.80 Water availability in the wider area may be affected by regional increases in population and an increased occurrence of drought exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

⁴³ Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan (2015) Draft Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan 2015 - 2030

⁴⁴ Department for Farming and Rural Affairs Agricultural Land Classification Map - London and the South East 2010

⁴⁵ Defra (2015) Provisional Statistics on Waste Managed by Local Authorities in England including April to June 2014.

Population and community

Current baseline

2.1.81 According to the most recent census data available, in 2011 the working age population of the Altrincham was 7,672⁴⁶ and the total population for the ward was 11,477⁴⁷. There was an increase of 692 residents from the 2001 census, or approximately 6.4% population growth as illustrated in **Table 2.3**. The rate of growth in Altrincham is slightly lower than the Trafford district (7.8%) and the national level (7.9%), however it is significantly higher than the regional growth trend in the North West (4.8%).

Table 2.3: Population growth, 2001-2011⁴⁸

| Date | Altrincham | Trafford | North West | England |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 2001 | 10,785 | 210,143 | 6,729,831 | 49,138,831 |
| 2011 | 11,477 | 226,578 | 7,052,177 | 53,012,456 |
| Population Change 2001-2011 | 6.4% | 7.8% | 4.8% | 7.9% |

2.1.82 **Table 2.4** highlights the age structure of Altrincham compared with Trafford, North West and England averages. Adapted from statistics compiled by the ONS, the data indicates the total population of each age group, and the percentage of that group within the total population of each area.

Table 2.4: Age structure (2011)⁴⁹

| Age group | Altrincham | Trafford | North West | England |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0-15 | 2,139 18.6% | 45,824 20.2% | 1,324,548 18.8% | 10,022,836 18.9% |
| 16-24 | 1,026 8.9% | 22,456 9.9% | 858,953 12.2% | 6,284,760 11.9% |
| 25-44 | 3,909 34.1% | 62,985 27.8% | 1,861,118 26.4% | 14,645,152 27.5% |
| 45-59 | 2,087 18.2% | 46,226 20.4% | 1,397,119 19.8% | 10,276,902 19.4% |
| 60+ | 2,316 20.2% | 49,087 21.7% | 1,610,799 22.8% | 11,832,806 22.3% |
| Totals | 11,477 | 226,578 | 7,052,177 | 53,012,456 |

⁴⁶ ONS Census Data (2011), Population for Altrincham (2013)

⁴⁷ ONS Census Data (2011), Population for Altrincham (2011)

⁴⁸ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Population Density, 2001 (UV02)

⁴⁹ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Age structure (KS108EW)

2.1.83 The NP area has a similar proportion of residents (18.6%) between 0-15 as the North West (18.8%) and England (18.9%). The NP area has a lower proportion of residents in the 16-24 age range than regionally and nationally, this could in part be down to attendance at third level institutions. There is a significantly higher proportion of residents aged between 25-44 in Altrincham (34.1%) as opposed to Trafford (27.8%), the North West (26.4%) and England (27.5%). This can be attributed to urban living and ease of access to the town centre for residents. Altrincham is home to a youthful population with only 20.2% of the local population are aged over 60, which is slightly below the district, regional and national average.

2.1.84 Census statistics which measure deprivation across the four 'dimensions' of deprivation⁵⁰ including: any member of a household not a full-time student is either unemployed or long-term sick; education (no person in the household has at least level 2 education, and no person aged 16-18 is a full-time student); health and disability (any person in the household has general health 'bad or 'very bad' or has a long term health problem); and housing (household's accommodation is either overcrowded, with an occupancy rating -1 or less, or is in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating), show that Altrincham has deprivation levels that are significantly lower than borough, regional and national averages (see **Figure 2.3**).

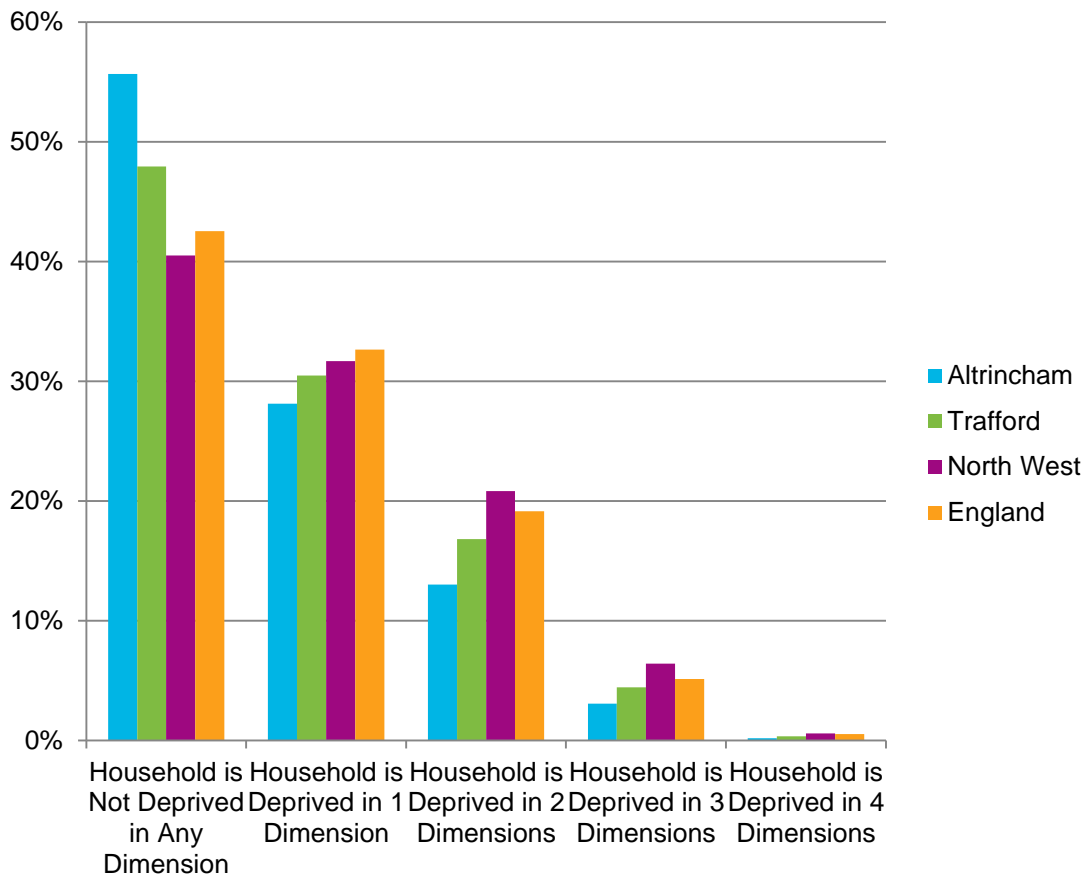


Figure 2.3: Relative deprivation dimensions

2.1.85 Data from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) indicates that the median selling price of property⁵¹ in the borough of Trafford in the fourth quarter of

⁵⁰ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Households by Deprivation Dimesions, 2011 (QS119EW)

⁵¹ Government Statistics, Live tables on housing market and house prices, Table 581 Housing market: mean house prices based on Land Registry data, by district, from 1996 (quarterly), [online] available at:

2012 was £239,100, lower than the 2012 England-wide median of £242,127, but higher than the North West median of £160,091. The median house selling price in Trafford decreased from £240,640 to £234,224 from 2008 to 2011.

2.1.86 In terms of the house price to income ratio, which illustrates the multiple of the average income in the area to average house price, the affordability ratio for Trafford in 2013 was 7.65, an increase from 6.84 in 2010. This is higher than the ratio of 6.72 for England.⁵²

2.1.87 Figure shows the tenure of households⁵³ in Altrincham in comparison with those in Trafford, the North West, and England. Home ownership is similar in Altrincham (65.3%) when compared to figures in Trafford (69.3%), the North West (64.5%) and England (63.3%). Altrincham has a low level of social rented housing and above average private rental.

2.1.88 In 2013 there were 3,699 households on local authority housing waiting lists in Trafford in comparison to the peak of 12,853 in 2010.⁵⁴ There has been a major decrease of 21,645 households on local authority housing waiting lists in the Greater Manchester Area as a whole from 2010 to 2013.

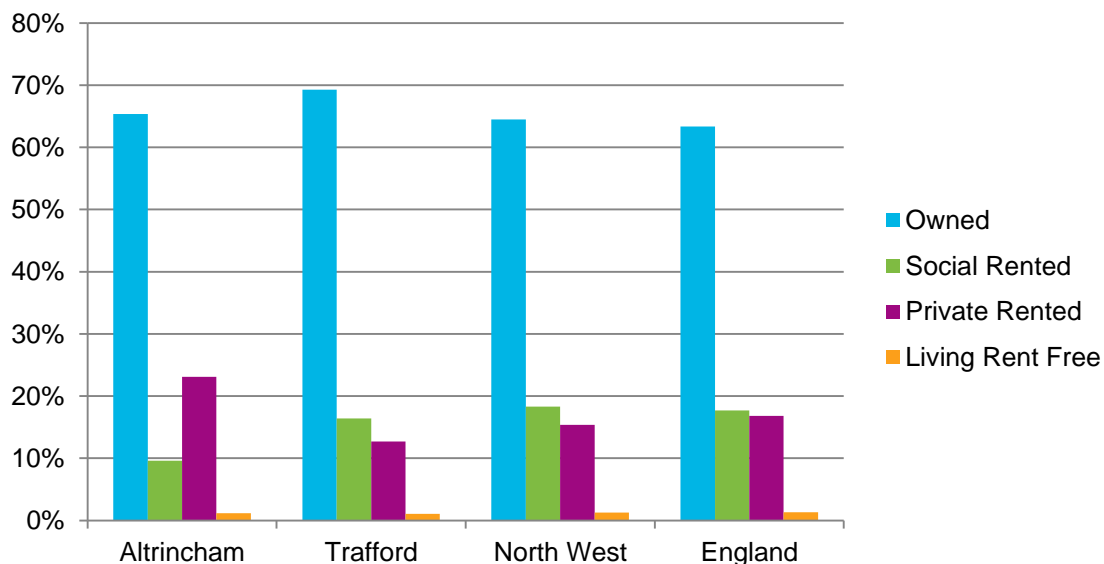


Figure 2.4: Tenure by household (QS405EW)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> (accessed 3 June 2015)

⁵² Government Statistics, Live tables on housing market and house prices, Table 577: ratio of median house price to median earnings by district, from 1997, [online] available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-housing-market-and-house-prices> (accessed 3 June 2015)

This data is not available at ward or parish level.

⁵³ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Tenure - Households, 2011 (QS405EW)

⁵⁴ DCLG (2012) Statistical data set Live tables on rents, lettings and tenancies. Table 600: numbers of households on local authorities' housing waiting lists, by district: England 1997 to 2013.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies> (accessed 3 June 2015)

Future baseline

- 2.1.89 The population of the NP area is likely to continue to grow and age. The suitability (e.g. size and design) and affordability of housing for local requirements depends on the implementation of appropriate housing policies through the Local Plan and NP. Unplanned development may have wider implications in terms of transport and access to infrastructure, or the natural environment.
- 2.1.90 The adult population across the NP area is largely well educated, with a significant number of people with degree level qualifications resident above the borough, regional and national average. Increasing economic activity rates are likely to increase demand for new housing and employment opportunities in the area.

Health and wellbeing

Current baseline

- 2.1.91 As highlighted in **Table 2.5**, general health across Altrincham (the finest level data available) is favourable compared to regional and national averages, with 54.9% of residents reporting they are in very good health⁵⁵, which is significantly higher than borough, regional and national averages. Likewise the proportion of people in 'very bad health' is slightly lower than borough, regional and national averages.

Table 2.5: General Health

| | <i>Altrincham</i> | <i>Trafford</i> | <i>North West</i> | <i>England</i> |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Very good health | 54.9% | 51% | 46.5% | 47.2% |
| Good health | 31.1% | 31.6% | 32.8% | 34.2% |
| Fair health | 10.3% | 12.2% | 13.9% | 13.1% |
| Bad health | 2.9% | 4.1% | 5.3% | 4.2% |
| Very bad health | 0.8% | 1.1% | 1.5% | 1.2% |

- 2.1.92 6.1% of residents of Altrincham reported that they were limited 'a lot' with day to day activities due to long-term health problems or disabilities, with 7.9% of people limited 'a little'⁵⁶. The levels of long term health and disability in Altrincham are significantly lower than borough, regional and national averages.
- 2.1.93 No data exists for the NP area for life expectancy and health indicators; however at the borough level the 2015 Health Profile⁵⁷ shows that life expectancy varies widely across the borough by up to 8.5 years for men and 6.8 years for women between the most and least deprived areas, with Altrincham one of the areas with the lowest deprivation within Trafford Borough. Across Trafford, average life expectancy is 79.9 for males and 83.5 for females, which are both above the national average of 79.4 and 83.1 respectively. Local priorities in Trafford include alcohol, tobacco control and smoking, healthy weight and active lifestyles.

⁵⁵ ONS (2011) Census 2011, General Health (QS302EW)

⁵⁶ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Long-Term Health Problem or Disability, 2011 (QS303EW)

⁵⁷ Public Health England (2015) Health Profile 2013 [online] available at:

<http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=trafford&SPEAR=> (accessed on 6 June 2015)

Future baseline

- 2.1.94 It is likely that the population of the NP area will grow and age in the future. This will place pressure on existing health and community facilities that are likely to face greater demand from residents.
- 2.1.95 Obesity is identified as a local priority, and seen as an increasing issue by health professionals, and one that will contribute to significant health impacts on individuals, including increasing the risk of a range of diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer.

Transport

Current baseline

- 2.1.96 The NP area is well connected by rail, with Altrincham Station providing a direct connection to both Chester (one hour) and Manchester Piccadilly (28 minutes).
- 2.1.97 Altrincham is one of the Manchester Metrolink termini, with the interchange having recently been refurbished. The Metrolink provides a service to destinations in Manchester, leaving approximately every 12-15 minutes running between 05:49 and 00:01-01:13 Monday – Saturday and 06:53 – 22:53 Sundays and bank holidays.
- 2.1.98 Altrincham is well connected by bus, with 28 buses serving the Altrincham Interchange, with 25 of these services run 7 days a week. Bus services run into Manchester, to Manchester Airport and a variety of other local and regional destinations.
- 2.1.99 The main route through the NP area is the A538 (Railway Street/Stamford New Road), which connects the NP area with the M56 to the south east and the A560 to the north. However, the NP area is well served by the road network, with roads (such as High Street and Stamford Street) adjoining onto the A56 which runs through the north east of the NP area.
- 2.1.100 **Figure 2.5** highlights the availability of cars and vans in the NP area. The proportion of households with no access to a car/van is lower than borough, regional and national averages, whilst the proportion of the population with two or more cars/vans is relatively consistent with the rest of Trafford, and above that of the North West and England averages.

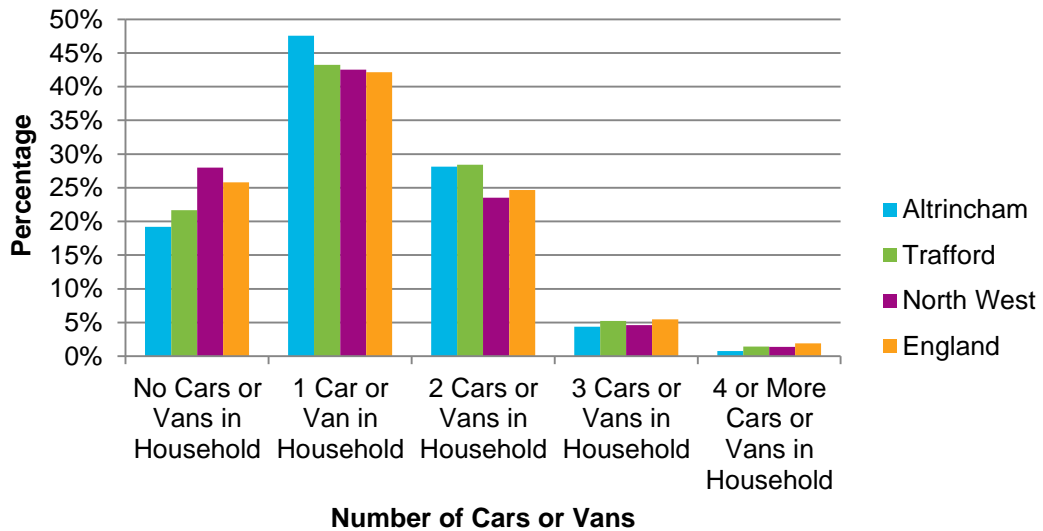


Figure 2.5: Car and van ownership⁵⁸

2.1.101 **Figure 2.6** shows the method of travel to work for residents in the NP area, compared with borough, regional and national averages. It is important to note that the data represented in Figure does not include residents who identified themselves as not in employment, as this includes students and those of retirement age, so is a disproportionate reflection of levels of unemployment. As highlighted by the figure, the proportion of people who travel to work by driving a car or van is 59.5%, which is lower than the borough (63.7%) and regional (62.6%) averages, but higher than the national (57%) average. The second highest mode of transport to work within Altrincham is by walking (12.6%) which is higher than the borough (8%), regional (10.9%) and national (10.7%) averages. It is interesting to note that the proportion of those who get the underground, metro, or light rail (9.1%) is significantly higher than the borough (5.1%), regional (0.6%) and national (4.1%) averages, which is likely due to Altrincham’s connection to the Metrolink. However, the number of those using the bus, minibus, or coach, is significantly lower in Altrincham (3.7%) than the borough (6.9%) regional (8.3%) and national (7.5%) averages, despite the numerous bus connections available. It is worth noting that this may have changed since the 2011 Census however, after completion of the Altrincham Interchange in 2014.

⁵⁸ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Car or Van Availability (QS416EW)

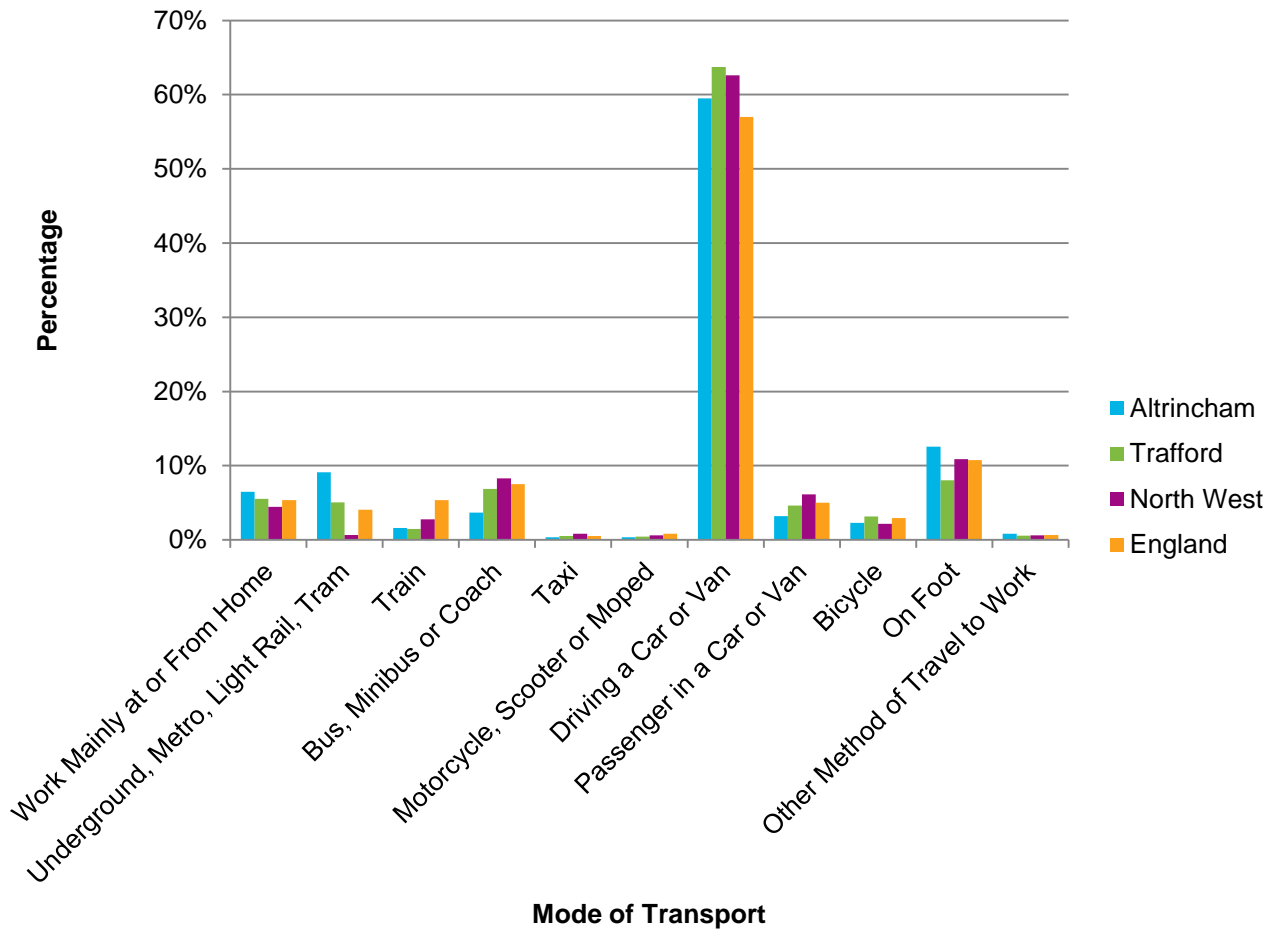


Figure 2.6: Method of Travel to Work⁵⁹

2.1.102 In response to the Stage 1 consultation questionnaire, 25% of respondents felt there should be more long stay parking, whilst 36% felt there should be more short stay parking. This has been translated into Objective 7 of the Draft NP and should be considered going forwards.

Future baseline

2.1.103 An increase in the NP area’s population has the potential to lead to increased traffic and congestion. This has the potential to be at least in part mitigated by measures outlined in the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan.

2.1.104 Improved public transport and an increased usage of the Altrincham Interchange could be used as a driver towards a modal shift in transportation within the NP area, both for current residents and those visiting the town centre

Economy and enterprise

Current baseline

2.1.105 As **Figure 2.7** illustrates, economic activity rates in the NP area are slightly higher than borough, regional and national averages. Approximately 71% of Altrincham residents are

⁵⁹ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Method of Travel to Work (QS701EW)

economically active in comparison with Trafford 65%, the North West 61% and nationally 64%.

2.1.106 Rates of full-time employment in Altrincham (57.5%) are higher than across Trafford (52.7%), both being significantly higher than regional (49.1%) and national (49.8%) rates. Rates of part-time employment in Altrincham are also higher than comparators.⁶⁰

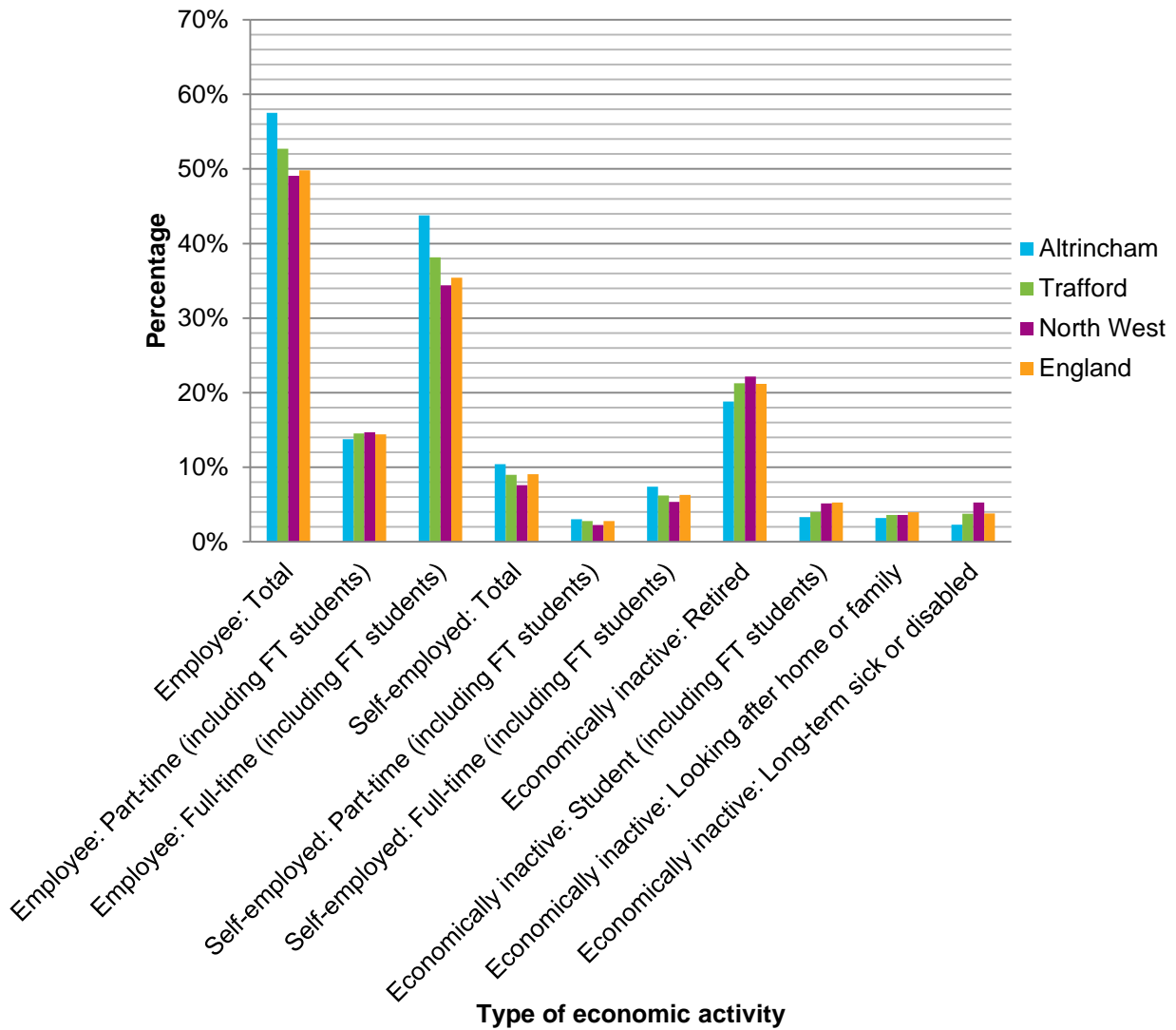


Figure 2.7: Economic activity by group of residents 16+

2.1.107 Rates of self-employment (with employees) are slightly higher than borough, regional and national level indicating an entrepreneurial culture. This could also be due to the large levels of business activity occurring within the ward. There is a higher percentage of full time self-employed sole traders (7.4%) in the NP area than other comparable areas which are Trafford (6.2%), North West (5.3%) and England (6.3%). The proportion of people retired (18.8%) in the NP area is significantly lower than borough (21.2%), regional (22.2%) and national (21.2%) averages.

2.1.108 **Figure 2.8** illustrates the levels of economic activity in the NP area. 71% of the working age population in Altrincham are economically active, this is marginally higher than 65.6% average in the borough and the North West region (61.7%).

⁶⁰ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Economic Activity Age 16 and over (DC6107EW)

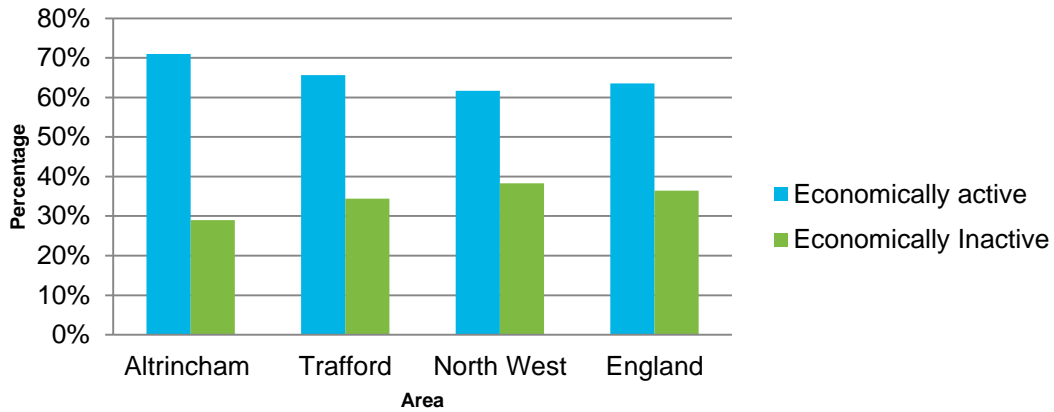


Figure 2.8: Percentage of economically active residents aged 16-74

2.1.109 **Figure 2.9** shows the highest level of qualification attained by residents in Altrincham, compared with Trafford, the North West and England. In this context the NP area has a highly qualified population compared to borough, regional and national averages, with 49.5% of working-age residents of the NP area qualified to NVQ level four or above.⁶¹ Likewise, there are a significantly lower proportion of residents in Altrincham ward (7.5%) that have no qualifications, when compared with borough (11.2%), regional (16.8%) and national averages (14.8%).

⁶¹ Level 4 qualifications include bachelor’s degrees, NVQs at Level 4, HNDs and HNCs.

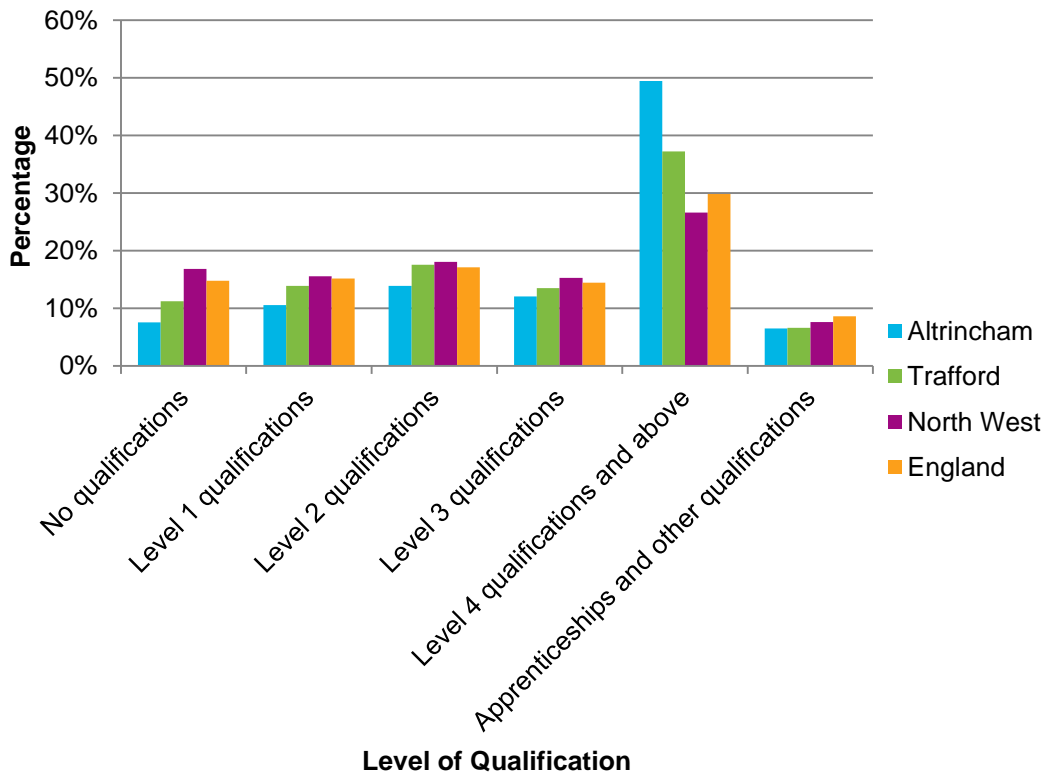


Figure 2.9: Highest level of qualification⁶²

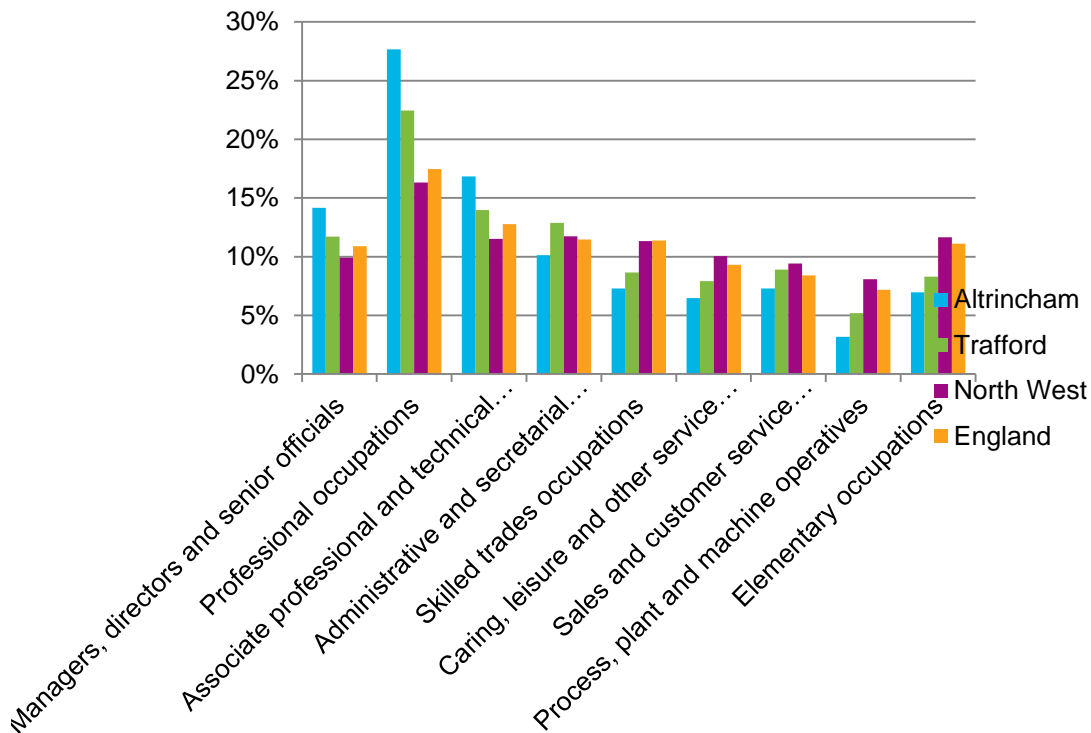


Figure 2.10: Occupation of residents (2011)⁶³

⁶² ONS (2011) Census 2011, Highest Level of Qualification (QS501EW)

⁶³ ONS (2011) Census 2011, Occupation by sex by age (DC6112EW)

2.1.110 **Figure 2.10** demonstrates the occupation of working-age residents. Overall, the occupation profile for residents of Altrincham is largely similar to borough, regional and national averages, with some notable exceptions. The NP area has larger proportions of people working in '*Management, directors and senior officials*', '*professional occupations*' and '*Professional and Technical Occupations*' with 14.2%, 27.7% and 16.8% respectively. This is significantly greater than the borough of Trafford (11.7%, 22.4% and 14%), the North West (9.9%, 16.3% and 11.5%) and nationally (10.9%, 17.5% and 12.8%). This indicates a highly skilled resident workforce.

2.1.111 There is a considerably lower level of residents employed in 'Process, plant, and machine operatives', 'caring, leisure and services', and 'elementary occupations' with approximately 3.2%, 6.5% and 7.0% than Trafford (5.2%, 7.9% and 8.3%), the North West (8.1%, 10.1% and 11.7%) and England (7.2%, 9.3% and 11.1%). This can relate to the urban setting, higher education levels and the lower levels of unemployment.

Future baseline

2.1.112 There will be an increased demand for services and facilities in the NP area with population growth. Increased economic activity in the Borough of Trafford may provide economic opportunities for those living in the NP area.

2.5 What are the key issues / objectives that should be a focus of SEA?

2.1.113 Drawing on the review of the sustainability context and baseline, the SEA Scoping Report (2015) was able to identify a concise list of sustainability 'objectives' for each of the nine sustainability topics used as the basis for scoping.

2.1.114 The sustainability objectives are listed in **Table 2.6**, which also presents a range of prompts alongside each objective to facilitate the assessment. These objectives and decision-making prompts provide a methodological framework to guide the appraisal of alternatives / the draft plan. The full framework, with assessment criteria (and amendments from consultation marked in ~~strike through~~ for deletions and *italics* for additions) for sites is included in **Appendix B**.

Table 2.6: The SEA framework

| SEA topic | SEA Objective, will the NDP... | Sub-criteria |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Air quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and improve air quality • Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise air pollution resulting from traffic congestion • Minimise air pollution from other sources |
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect, enhance and restore open space, biodiversity, flora and fauna, geological and geomorphological features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and enhance the integrity of the LWS present in the parish; • Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats; • Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | <p>priority species; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve a net gain in biodiversity. |
| <p>Climate change</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce contributions to climate change • Reduce impact of climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the NP area as a result of population growth; • Support reduced car dependency and increased walking, cycling and public transport use; • Increase the number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria; • Improve green infrastructure networks in the NP area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change; • Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking the likely effects of climate change into account; and • Sustainably manage water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the NP area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk. |
| <p>Historic environment and landscape</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve and enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets • Support the integrity of the various conservation areas within the NP area • Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest • Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness • Protect and enhance landscape and townscape features |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Land, soil and water resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve land resources and reduce land contamination • Protect and improve water quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the use of previously developed land and minimise the loss of agricultural land • Minimise water consumption and effects on water quality |
| Population and community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving a better balance and mix in the housing market • Improve accessibility for all to services and facilities • Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime • Reduce poverty and social exclusion • Encourage a sense of community identity and welfare and value diversity, improve equity and equality of opportunity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities; • Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents; • Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities; • Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing and support the provision of a range of house types and sizes; • Achieve minimum housing requirements. |
| Health and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the health and, inequalities in health of the population | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups; • Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities; • Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with national standards; and • Improve access to the surrounding countryside for recreation. |
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance transport infrastructure; improve accessibility and quality of life to all communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development; • Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel; and |

- Enable transport infrastructure improvements.

Economy and enterprise

- Enhance Trafford's high performance and sustainable economy to provide a powerful contribution to regional growth
 - Reducing disparities by releasing the potential of all residents particularly in areas of disadvantage
 - Enhance Trafford's image as a business and tourism destination
 - Encourage the long term sustainability of Trafford's Town Centres
 - Improve the social and environmental performance of the economy
- Support the economy of the NP area and provide access to employment opportunities

Three thin black lines intersect in the top-left corner of the page, creating a series of triangles and quadrilaterals that extend towards the center.

**What has plan-making / SEA involved up
to this point?**

03

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3 What has plan-making / SEA involved up to this point?

3.1 Introduction

The Environmental Report must include...

- An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with; and
- The likely significant effects on the environment associated with alternatives / an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of alternatives assessment (and hence, by proxy, a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan).

3.1.1 The 'story' of plan-making / SEA up to this point is told within this part of the Environmental Report. In particular, the aim is to explain how preparation of the draft plan has been informed by assessment of **alternatives** in relation to the following two policy areas / issues:

1. **Housing number**
2. **Site selection**

3.1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan Forum was set up in 2013 to lead the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Business Plan for Altrincham Town Centre (ATC). Forum members came together because of their mutual concern about how the town centre had deteriorated and believed it was important to produce a new Plan for the Town Centre which took full account of the major issues which had caused that decline and provided an up to date context within which the town centre could evolve over the Plan period to 2030.

3.1.3 The process for preparing the plan has been driven by a Working Group (WG) of the Forum. The Forum spent some time prior to Designation understanding the latest research into the radical impacts that the combination of the banking crisis in 2008 and subsequent methods for addressing this (e.g. quantitative easing, austerity programmes) and, particularly, the huge impact of the digital revolution in the form of internet based shopping has had, and continues to have, on the town centre. The Forum has sought to widen understanding of this essential background information as part of the public consultation process.

3.1.4 The result of 2 years work, driven by the outcome of major public consultations is set out in this Neighbourhood Business Plan (the Plan) which seeks to address all the issues which members of the public have raised concerning the future development of the town centre and which makes proposals as to how those issue might best be addressed. This document has been formally approved by the Forum. The Forum will submit this Plan to all those bodies who can contribute to delivering its objectives and will seek to promote the proposals in the document and keep the community appraised of progress.

3.1.5 The Forum decided to adopt a three stage approach to the public consultation:

- **Stage 1** was all about encouraging people to complete a questionnaire which enabled respondents to raise all the issues which they considered the plan may need to address. A detailed report (The Public Consultation Statement) on all

three stages of the public consultation process will be produced and submitted to the Council and the Independent Inspector at the same time as the final plan is submitted to the Council.

- **Stage 2** involved the production of a draft Neighbourhood Business Plan (NBP) including proposals and options where appropriate and which was the subject of public consultation in February/March 2015. That consultation also involved encouraging the general public and defined stakeholders to complete a questionnaire, as well as involving organised discussions with different stakeholder groups: Retail and Leisure; Landlords/Developers /Investors; the Market Operator; Community Groups; Office providers and users and students from secondary schools and the FE college as well as a series of general events aimed at generating interest from the wider public.
- **Stage 3** involves the Draft Final Neighbourhood Business Plan, to which this report accompanies, being the subject of a formal 6 week public consultation from mid-January to the end of February 2016. At the end of this consultation, the Forum will make any last amendments to the plan which it considers necessary and appropriate and then formally submit the Final Plan to Trafford Council (along with both the Public Consultation Statement and the Compliance with the Basic Conditions Statement).

3.1.6 It is noted that, as of June 2016, there have been no changes in the proposed housing number or the locations, size or capacity of the sites identified in the plan. Furthermore, the consultation yielded no further 'reasonable alternatives' that would necessitate being tested through the SEA. This being the case, there has been no update to this section.

3.2 What has been the focus of alternatives assessment?

3.1.7 It has been recognised during the development of the plan that delivering a regenerated high street and town centre through increasing the number of residents was a key issue. Linked to this is the provision of sites and the plan's site allocations (i.e. which sites should be allocated to meet the housing target, why and for what use). The results of the questionnaire with the community (Stage 1) concluded the following:

"Most people want to see the quality of outlets raised – indeed quality is an important theme running through many responses. There is a strong desire to see more independent traders bringing variety and choice and filling the 'niche' gaps in the town centre offer. The need for a high quality environment is an important issue with more green open space and facilities in which people can relax. Many people see the future of the town as a social focus for the community with a programme of events and activities aimed at all sections of the community (including families and the younger generation), provided in a safe environment and increasing footfall in the town. There is a desire to see a more focused retail core surrounded by a vibrant mix of uses including residential, financial and professional services and other services and leisure outlets as well as some retail. The message is also loud and clear that the town needs to embrace the digital revolution and develop a town wide Wi-Fi system; a town centre web site and a range of apps aimed at better promoting the town, helping to change negative perceptions and providing up to date information on what is available/what is going on."

3.1.8 The Stage 2 consultation yielded further information on the concerns of the community, partly in response to a 'draft' plan. In light of these findings, and those of Stage 1, the alternatives assessment has been tailored to the Plan.

3.1.9 This part of the report is structured as follows:

- Section 3.3 - Introduces the alternatives that have been a focus of assessment.
- Section 3.5 and 3.6 - Presents alternatives assessment findings.
- Section 3.7 - Explains the reasons for developing the preferred approach (i.e. the draft NP) in-light of alternatives assessment findings.

3.1.10 This structure reflects the regulatory requirement to present an assessment of 'reasonable alternatives' as well as 'outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with'.

3.3 Reasons for selecting the alternatives

Introduction

3.1.11 The aim of this chapter is to explain the reasons for focusing alternatives assessment on selected areas – the housing number and the site allocations; and to introduce / explain the alternatives that were a focus of assessment.

Reasons for focusing on a particular policy area

3.1.12 The SEA Regulations require that reasonable alternatives reflect the plan objectives. The objectives of the Plan are listed in paragraph 2.3.4 above. The objectives include one to *"...increase the town centre resident population both by appropriately located new build and the refurbishment of appropriate existing unused/underused space, particularly above ground floor level in the town centre, with associated development control policies aimed at encouraging such developments."* A further objective is to *"Define a more focused retail core and provide wider areas of mixed uses including retail, residential and a wide range of other service outlets within a revised town centre boundary."*

3.1.13 Given the above, AECOM have investigated the decision making behind the setting of the housing number, allocation of the 'preferred sites' and the definition of the retail core. This exercise was undertaken to determine if there are any reasonable alternatives. If there were alternatives then they would be subject to appraisal. If there were not then outline reasons are provided as to why this is the case.

Housing number

3.1.14 The Plan has been 'allocated' 250 dwellings (minimum) through the Trafford Core Strategy (to 2025/26). Trafford Council may not meet its overall target for the Borough and is supportive of the Plan policy to increase the town centre residential population.

3.1.15 The Forum has proposed a minima figure of 550 in the plan period (for the Neighbourhood Plan) which, it should be noted, is longer than that of the Trafford Core Strategy (the Plan runs to 2030 so an extra five years or so of delivery). The Forum sees 550 as a realistic target given the position today but also makes it clear that a higher figure is possible and would be supported.

- 3.1.16 The higher figure has also been based on what the Forum believe is realistically achievable based on performance to date (completions and units with consent); the likely yield from 4 of the land allocations (A, B, C and E) using the density assumptions used by the Council in the SHLAA and the Core Strategy; the outcome of an appeal and 2 significant current applications along with a (conservative) assumption regarding additional conversions of underused/unused space above commercial/retail ground floor uses of between 4 and 7 units a year.
- 3.1.17 It has been concluded that there are effectively two alternatives available for the Plan and subsequent assessment:
1. 250 dwellings (the amount stipulated in the Trafford Core Strategy; and
 2. 550 dwellings (the amount proposed in the Plan

Site allocations

- 3.1.18 The selection of sites was driven by the Working Group's consideration of two things. First, sites which presented a realistic (re)development opportunity and second, sites which represented specific opportunities to increase edge of town centre residential development that were within distance, and that would support the policy to increase the total town centre residential population. Underlying this was the consideration that the plan should address not just the pressing needs of the Town Centre but also those that would emerge over the 15 years of the Plan's timescale.
- 3.1.19 Taking redevelopment first, there were three sites that the Forum viewed as being suitable for allocation given the potential of the areas:
- **Site D – the Old Hospital:** at the time of the Stage 1 public consultation the site was still in use as a hospital while the new one was under construction. Its potential as a site was therefore tangible (the site would become vacant).
 - **Site E Leisure Centre:** the site lies adjacent to the bus/rail interchange and presents the opportunity for three uses all of which are regarded as important to the future development of the town centre. First, housing along the Oakfield Road frontage, second, offices, and thirdly car parking (mainly short stay).
 - **Site F –:** The site presents an opportunity to complete the commercial frontage to Regent Road/New Street corner; to make much more efficient use of the current surface car park for additional short stay car parking; to improve pedestrian access through Kings Court and to George Street and the opportunity to discuss with adjoining owners how their ownership might be embraced in a wider scheme.
- 3.1.20 Now, addressing the edge of town sites, three more were considered:
- **Site A and B – Builder's merchants:** In both cases it is considered that the existing uses and the traffic they generate for both deliveries and collections would be more appropriately located in primarily industrial areas rather than sitting adjacent to existing residential properties. Other uses compatible with housing such as open space could be considered although the deliverability of such a use is not considered to be practical. The proposed allocation reflects the priority in the plan to increase the residential population in and adjacent to the town centre.
 - **Site C – YWCA building:** the property has been vacant for some years so can be returned to productive residential use in the early years of the plan i.e. 2015 to

2020. The plan indicates that the town centre residential population be increased and as the demand for residential property within walking distance of the town centre remains high, this site offers an ideal opportunity to support that policy and is allocated accordingly for residential purposes.

3.1.21 The sites identified are illustrated in **Figure 3.1**.

Plan 6: Town Centre Boundary & Allocations

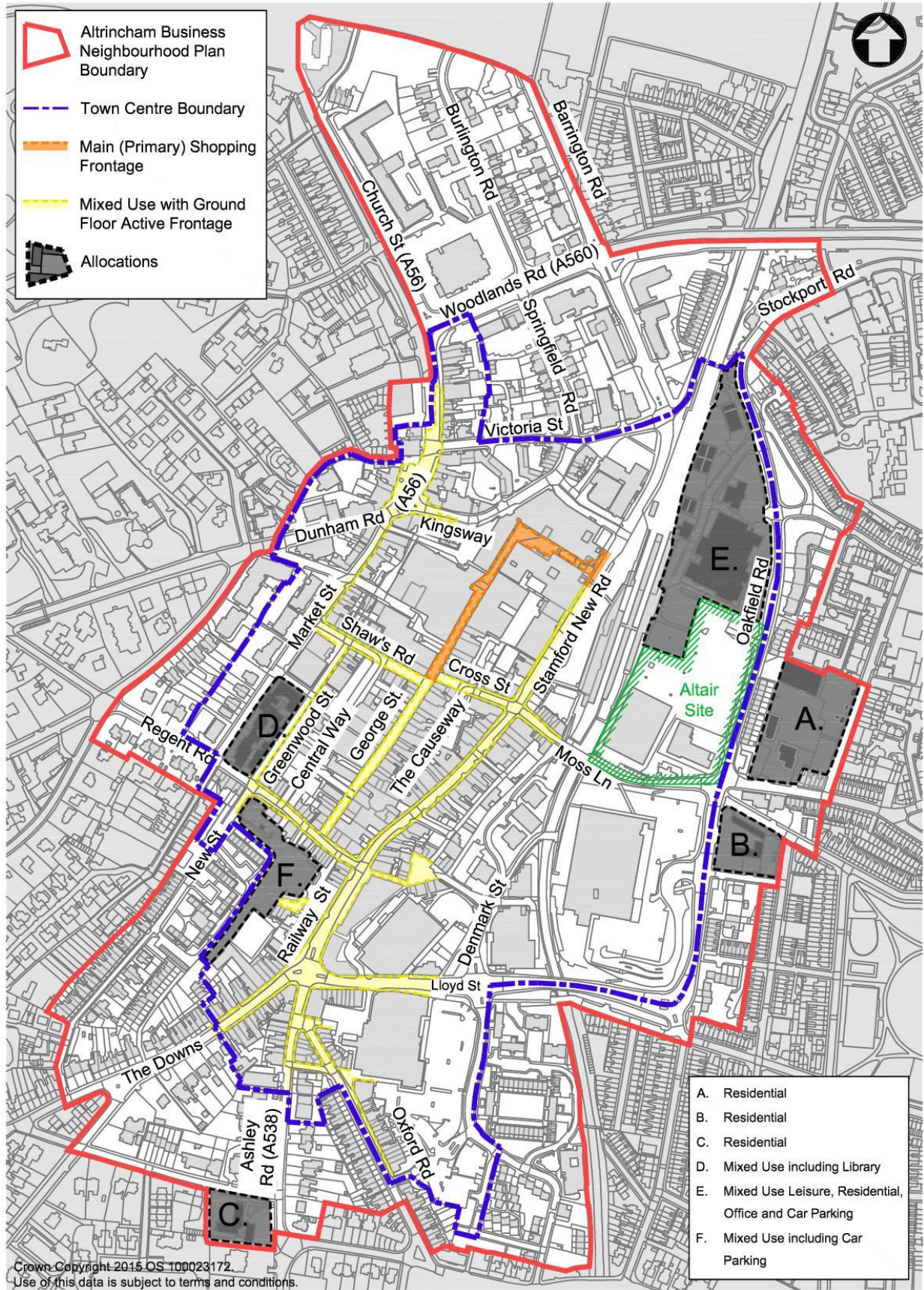


Figure 3.1: Proposed Town Center Boundary and Allocations

3.4 Alternatives assessment findings

Introduction

3.1.22 The aim of this chapter is to present summary assessment findings in relation to the alternatives introduced above, i.e. housing numbers and site allocations.

Methodology

Housing number

3.1.23 For each option the assessment identifies and evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability topics and issues/objectives identified through scoping as a methodological framework. **Red** text / shading is used to indicate significant negative effects, whilst **green** text / shading is used to indicate significant positive effects.

3.1.24 Effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within the SEA Regulations.⁶⁴ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Effects are described in terms of these criteria within the assessment as appropriate. The potential for 'cumulative' effects is also a consideration.

3.1.25 Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the options. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario) and precisely what future planning applications might 'look like'. In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how the options will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors will be. Where there is a need to rely on assumptions, this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

3.1.26 In many instances where one option is ranked above another, given reasonable assumptions, it is not possible to predict likely significant effects, but it is possible to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a **rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

Sites

3.1.27 The sites have been assessed against a set of proximity criteria augmented by qualitative assessments of significant effects. The full set of criteria is set out in **Appendix B** but in summary:

- **Red** signifies a constraint potentially preventing development of the site (or likely to require some form of mitigation to enable development of the site).
- **Amber** signifies a potential constraint likely to restrict development of the site or potentially require mitigation.
- **Green** signifies a potential opportunity.

⁶⁴ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

- 3.1.28 Where no colour is shown, neither a constraint nor an opportunity has been identified for that site in relation to that particular criterion.
- 3.1.29 At this stage of the appraisal, potential alternative uses of the sites have not been considered through the appraisal.

Appraisal findings

- 3.1.30 The assessment of the housing alternatives against the SEA Framework is set out in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Assessment of alternatives for housing numbers

| SEA topic | Commentary | Rank of preference | |
|---------------------|--|--------------------|----------|
| | | Option 1 | Option 2 |
| Air quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally speaking, the more growth allocated to the neighbourhood area the greater the traffic generated, regardless of mitigative policies on car parking and the development of routes for walking and cycling in the area. Given the designations of AQMAs in the neighbourhood and the cause of their designation increases in traffic are likely to be of particular significance. Saying that, the sites allocated are not 'greenfield' and may have current / previous uses including 'light industrial'. Given this, both options are likely to result in change to traffic flows and type. It is unknown what the direction of these changes would be (i.e. positive or negative) but there is the potential for <u>significant negative effects</u>. It is suggested that an air quality assessment is undertaken to determine what the cumulative effect of these developments will be on air quality in the neighbourhood area. | 1 | 2 |
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the sites proposed for both options are on brown field or previously developed land therefore the impact on biodiversity is likely to be negligible (notwithstanding any future findings of biodiversity on these sites through surveys). Given this assumption, it is likely that there would be <u>negligible impacts</u> on biodiversity and there is no option that would perform better than the other | - | - |
| Climate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On one hand, the high levels of development in | 2 | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|--|----------|----------|
| change | <p>Option 2 may cause in increase in greenhouse gas emissions in the Altrincham area. This would be through both potential increases in traffic and associated emissions from vehicles and also the increased energy use of the high level of residents. The effects are unlikely to be significant (as climate change mitigation needs action at a global scale) but there are still likely to be <u>negative effects</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lower growth option is also likely to have <u>negative effects</u> on climate change mitigation as with Option 2, just to a lesser extent compared to the Option 1. | | |
| Historic environment and landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a considerable set of heritage assets in and around the neighbourhood area. The development of the sites impact on heritage assets is covered in the site assessment in more detail. In terms of the two growth options however, it can be argued that the scale of development in Option 2 would result in greater cumulative pressure on heritage assets, particularly in and around St John's Church, the Old market conservation area and the Sandiway conservation area. In a worst case scenario it is possible that these effects would be significant negative on heritage assets (cumulatively). | 2 | 1 |
| Land, soil and water resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 2, by virtue of it increased development on PDL / brownfield would perform 'better' than Option 1 through more PDL land being used. Although in the long term the use of high levels of PDL in this plan period means it will be unavailable in the future (and green field land might need to be developed). | 1 | 2 |
| Population and community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 2 would perform clearly better than Option 1 against this objective. The significant increase in housing provision would provide a better mix of housing, a more competitive housing market. It is also assume that greater development would also deliver the associated benefits in terms of community facilities and community cohesion. | 2 | 1 |
| Health and well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It could be argued that an improved housing stock, allied to the economic benefits that it brings, would have a <u>positive effect</u> on residents health and well-being through a decent quality house and a better / higher income. Both of these elements are determinants of good health. It therefore follows that the more development, the more benefit residents would receive from development. This being the case, Option 2 would | 2 | 1 |

| perform better than Option 1 | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|----------|----------|
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of transport, it follows that should an area experience dramatic increases in development, including shifting from employment to residential use, not only will the number of cars increase but also the travel patterns. It is clear that Option 2 posits such an increase in development that it must have more of an effect on the traffic and transport issues in the Neighbourhood Area than Option 1. | <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> | 1 | 2 |
| 1 | 2 | | | |
| Economy and enterprise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 2 would perform clearly better than Option 1 against this objective. The significant increase in housing provision would provide a better mix of housing and a more competitive housing market. A greater resident population should serve to increase footfall in the town centre making it more of a viable high street option for new businesses. | <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">2</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table> | 2 | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | | | |

3.1.31 **Table 3.2** overleaf sets out the assessment findings of the sites according to the Red / Amber / Green code discussed previously augmented with qualitative commentary as appropriate.

Table 3.2: Site assessment

| SEA topic | Housing sites | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
| Air quality | <p>About 205 m from A538 AQMA. Development on this site is likely to lead to negative effects on air quality.</p> <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> | <p>About 235 m from A538 AQMA. Development on this site is likely to lead to negative effects on air quality.</p> <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> | <p>About 275 m from A538 AQMA. Development on this site is likely to lead to negative effects on air quality.</p> <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> | <p>About 146 m from A538 AQMA. Development on this site is likely to lead to negative effects on air quality.</p> <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd</p> | <p>About 76m from A538 AQMA. Development on this site is likely to lead to negative effects on air quality.</p> <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two</p> | <p>About 30 m from A538 AQMA. Development on this site is likely to lead to negative effects on air quality.</p> <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd</p> |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 290 m to the south. | There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 150 m to the south. | There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 440 m to the south. | Street). The closest to this site is c. 475 m to the south. Located inside the Town Centre Boundary. | 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd Street). The site is about equal distance from both routes (c. 380 m) | Street). The closest to this site is c. 290 m to the south. Located inside the Town Centre Boundary. |
| Located outside the Town Centre Boundary. | Located outside the Town Centre Boundary. | Located outside the Town Centre Boundary. | | Located inside the Town Centre Boundary. | |

Biodiversity

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| Climate change | Not at risk of surface water flooding. | Risk of surface water at the north west boundaries of the site (Mayor's Road and Manor Road). | Risk of surface water at the northern boundary of the site (St John's Road). | Risk of surface water at all boundaries of the site. | Risk of surface water at the northern and southern extents of the site. | Not at risk of surface water flooding. |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|

| | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| Historic environment and landscape | The site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market | The site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market | The site is c. 21 m from Church of St John the Evangelist. It is also within 500 m of listed buildings on The Downs, | This site is c. 40 m from the nearest listed building (Market House). Pretty much all the listed buildings in the Neighbourhood | The site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market | This site is c. 23 m from the nearest listed building (32-34 Railway Street). Pretty much all the listed buildings in the Neighbourhood Area |
|---|--|--|--|---|--|--|

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| | Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind the industrial buildings between it and the A538 (e.g. Tesco Extra, Altrincham Interchange and Silverblades Ice Rink. | Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind the industrial buildings between it and the A538 (e.g. Tesco Extra, Altrincham Interchange and Silverblades Ice Rink. | the A538 and Lyme Grove. Of concern is the effect on the church opposite the site. The site lies within The Downs Conservation Area. | Area are within 500 m of the site. This site sites within the Old Market Place conservation area. | Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind Altrincham Interchange. The sites lies adjacent to the Stamford New Road conservation area. | are within 500 m of the site. The site lies within The Downs Conservation Area and adjacent to the Old Market, and Stamford New Road conservation area. |
| Land, soil and water resources | The site is on previously developed land and not close to any water courses. There are no SPZ or NPZ near the site. | The site is on previously developed land and not close to any water courses. There are no SPZ or NPZ near the site. | The site is on previously developed land and not close to any water courses. There are no SPZ or NPZ near the site. | The site is on previously developed land and not close to any water courses. There are no SPZ or NPZ near the site. | The site is on previously developed land and not close to any water courses. There are no SPZ or NPZ near the site. | The site is on previously developed land and not close to any water courses. There are no SPZ or NPZ near the site. |
| Population and community | There are two healthcare facilities within 400 m of this site. There is a recreation facility within 400 m of | There are three healthcare facilities within 400 m of this site. There is a recreation facility within 400 m of | There are three healthcare facilities within 400 m of this site. There is a recreation facility within 400 m of | There are three healthcare facilities within 400 m of this site. There is a recreation facility within 400 m of this site. | There is one healthcare facility within 400 m of this site. There is a recreation facility within 400 m of | There are three healthcare facilities within 400 m of this site. There is a recreation facility within 400 m of this site. |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| <p>this site. The site is located in the town centre. All sites are located within 800 m of a primary and secondary school</p> | <p>this site. The site is located in the town centre. All sites are located within 800 m of a primary and secondary school</p> | <p>this site. The site is located in the town centre. All sites are located within 800 m of a primary and secondary school</p> | <p>The site is located in the town centre. All sites are located within 800 m of a primary and secondary school</p> | <p>this site. The site is located in the town centre. All sites are located within 800 m of a primary and secondary school</p> | <p>The site is located in the town centre. All sites are located within 800 m of a primary and secondary school</p> |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|

Health and well-being

Transport

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south</p> | <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south</p> | <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south</p> | <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 475 m to the south.</p> | <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south</p> | <p>All sites are within 800 m of a bus stop with Altrincham Station and Interchange serving as a transport hub to the area. The furthest site is 'C' at c 710 m.</p> <p>There are two 'local' cycle routes, one to the north (A560) and to the south (Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 290 m to the south.</p> |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>(Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 290 m to the south.</p> | <p>(Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 150 m to the south.</p> | <p>(Lloyd Street). The closest to this site is c. 440 m to the south.</p> | <p>Located inside the Town Centre Boundary.</p> | <p>(Lloyd Street). The site is about equal distance from both routes (c. 380 m)</p> | <p>Located inside the Town Centre Boundary.</p> |
| <p>Located outside the Town Centre Boundary.</p> | <p>Located outside the Town Centre Boundary.</p> | <p>Located outside the Town Centre Boundary.</p> | | <p>Located inside the Town Centre Boundary.</p> | |

Economy and enterprise

It is not considered possible to spatially assess against this objective i.e. it cannot be shown how the physical attributes of a site area can meaningful illustrate the effects on this objective.

3.5 Conclusions

3.1.32 This section sets out the justification for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives assessment.

Housing

- 3.1.33 The outcome of the assessment is mixed. For the more socio-economic objectives it seems clear that Option 2 would be advantageous (i.e. have a more positive effect on the relevant areas of the baseline than Option 1). The 'negatives' centre on the potential effects on air quality and heritage assets in the area. Both of these effect predictions have a high level of uncertainty as so much is dependent on the details of the design of the developments.
- 3.1.34 The Forum has decided to include Option 2 in the draft plan and exclude Option 1. The Forum and Council have stated that the 250 units in the Core Strategy is a minimum. Trafford Council is likely to struggle to meet its overall target for the Borough and is therefore supportive of the Plan policy to increase the town centre residential population.
- 3.1.35 The figure of 550 (note that this includes the 250 from the Trafford Core Strategy) is a reflection of what the Forum believes is realistically achievable based on performance to date (completions and units with consent); the likely yield from four of the site allocations (A, B, C and E) using the density assumptions used by the Council in the SHLAA and the Core Strategy; the outcome of an appeal and two significant current applications along with a (conservative) assumption regarding additional conversions of underused/unused space above commercial/retail ground floor uses of between four and seven units a year.
- 3.1.36 The Forum sees 550 as a realistic target given the position today but also makes it clear that a higher figure is possible and would be supported. The car parking policy (only requiring car park spaces where it is practical to do so – see H3) is a clear indication of the priority the Plan gives to attracting further residential development.
- 3.1.37 It should also be borne in mind that the housing market in the Altrincham area (which includes Bowdon, Hale and Hale Barns) is, and has been consistently, one of the strongest in the country outside the SE of England.
- 3.1.38 It was considered by the Forum that to achieve a figure of 250, or a significantly lower number than 550, would not enable the Plan to achieve its economic objectives and the community's stated aim of increasing footfall and revitalising the town centre.

Sites

- 3.1.39 The sites evolved from the Forum Working Group's consideration of two things. First; those sites which presented a realistic (re)development opportunity and second: those sites which represent specific opportunities to increase edge of town centre residential, within walking distance, in support of the policy to increase the total town centre residential population.
- 3.1.40 The Plan also seeks to address a long-term (15 year) development plan and as such the site selection was informed by possible and promote proposals which may help to achieve the Vision and Objectives which emerged from the public consultation.
- 3.1.41 The above being the case, the preferred strategy for the draft plan (and bearing in mind the housing discussion in the previous section) is to take forward all six sites. Given this there are no 'site alternatives' as such as all are proposed to be delivered.



What are the SEA findings at this stage?

04

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4 What are the SEA findings at this stage?

4.1 Introduction

The Environmental Report must include...

- The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan approach
- The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan approach

4.1.1 The aim of this part of the Report is to present the assessment of the Draft ('pre-submission') Plan, and also to present 'conclusions at this current stage'.

4.2 Assessment of the draft plan

Methodology

4.1.2 The assessment is structured under the following seven topics in the plan. For each topic an assessment against the eight sustainability 'topic' headings has been undertaken:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Climate change
- Historic environment and landscape
- Land, soil and water resources
- Population and community
- Health and well-being
- Transport
- Economy and enterprise

4.1.3 For each topic a range of sustainability objectives (as identified through scoping) are listed. Taken together, the sustainability topics and objectives provide a methodological 'framework' for the assessment of likely significant effects on the baseline.

4.1.4 Within each plan topic chapter 'significant effects' of the draft plan on the baseline are predicted and evaluated. Account is taken of the criteria presented within Schedule 2 of the Regulations.⁶⁵ So, for example, account is taken of the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects as far as possible. Cumulative effects are also considered. These effect 'characteristics' are described within the assessment as appropriate.

4.1.5 Every effort is made to identify / evaluate effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the plan. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline and the nature of future planning applications. Because of the uncertainties involved, there is a need to exercise caution when identifying and evaluating significant effects and ensure all assumptions are explained. In many instances it is not possible to predict significant effects, but it is

⁶⁵ Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

possible to comment on merits (or otherwise) in more general terms. As such, symbols are used to denote the broad performance of the policies

4.1.6 The appraisal of the policies are therefore set out within a table that sets out the 'broad implications' for the SA topics - it is important to note that these symbols are not used to indicate significant effects. The tables are for illustrative purposes.

4.1.7 The symbol definitions are below:

- ↗ Positive implications.
- ↔ No implications.
- ↘ Negative implications.
- ? Uncertain implication

4.3 Air quality

- Protect and improve air quality
- Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment
- Minimise air pollution resulting from traffic congestion
- Minimise air pollution from other sources

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ? | ↔ | ↗ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ |

4.1.8 The situation regarding air quality is mixed. On one hand there is a considerable increase in the residential population through the 'extra' 300 dwellings above the development plan allocation. On the other hand, the policies include support for no off-street parking (H3) and a requirement to reduce travel journeys (4.4.7) in addition to those on car parking (CP1) should have some mitigative effects on any increases in traffic and associated effects. Furthermore, the nature of the development of these sites means that there is effectively a change of use rather than the development of a green field or vacant site. Sites A and B are currently fully operational builders merchants sites which will generate traffic movements (assuming heavy goods vehicle movements). Site C was until recently an operational YWCA building which would have generated emissions. Site D does not have a residential component; Site E is currently in use as a Leisure Centre and the adjoining lands for industrial uses. Site F has a very small number of residential units associated with its redevelopment (c. 10 units).

4.1.9 It is not clear at this stage what the effect of these changes would be. There are two areas of concern. First, there are two AQMAs in the plan area, both designated for emissions related to transport sources. This being the case, any change in emissions caused by the plan is likely to be important. Second, whilst the sites are or were in use for other uses, by changing uses the traffic context will change (for residential properties there might be more intense car traffic at peak hours for school runs, and commuting whereas for retail there might be more steady traffic throughout the day).

4.1.10 In this context it is considered that there is potential for **significant effects** to occur. Given the uncertainty, it is recommended that air quality assessments are undertaken where traffic exceeds the guidelines set out in 'Land-Use Planning & Development Control: Planning for Air Quality'.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Environmental Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management (2015) Land-Use Planning & Development Control:

4.1.11 The addition of policy G1 may provide for **positive effects** on air quality through the provision of green pedestrian and cycle routes.

4.4 Biodiversity

- Protect, enhance and restore open space, biodiversity, flora and fauna, geological and geomorphological features.
- Protect and enhance the integrity of the LWS present in the parish;
- Protect and enhance semi-natural habitats;
- Protect and enhance priority habitats, and the habitat of priority species; and
- Achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ |

4.1.12 It is not considered that there will be any significant effects on biodiversity through the policies in this plan i.e. on nationally or internationally designated sites. None the less there are some policies in the plan that may have **positive effects** on biodiversity such as the addition of policy G1 which may provide for **positive effects** on biodiversity through the provision of green pedestrian and cycle routes.

4.1.13 It is recommended however that opportunities to provide 'urban greening' through biodiversity criteria in design policies should be taken. See: <http://www.victoriabid.co.uk/work/green-infrastructure-gi-research/>. Furthermore, urban greening and green infrastructure should be included and prominent in the plan.

4.5 Climate change

- Reduce contributions to climate change
- Reduce impact of climate change
- Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the NP area as a result of population growth;
- Support reduced car dependency and increased walking, cycling and public transport use;
- Increase the number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria;
- Improve green infrastructure networks in the NP area to support adaptation to the potential effects of climate change;
- Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking the likely effects of climate change into account; and
- Sustainably manage water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the NP area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk.

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIGI1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ? | ↔ | ↗ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↕ |

4.1.14 In terms of energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions, it is likely that the same effects as identified for air quality will be felt for climate change mitigation. The significance of these is likely to be lesser given the global nature of climate change mitigation.

4.1.15 Nonetheless, there should be potential for new development to provide energy saving measure and some useful policies with regard to design standards (e.g. Policy G1). It is recommended therefore that the design polices be amended to include energy efficiency standards that help to mitigate the effects of energy use in construction and occupation of these developments.

4.1.16 Note that flood risk is covered in more detail in the site assessment section.

4.6 Historic environment and landscape

- Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings
- Preserve and enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets
- Support the integrity of the various conservation areas within the NP area
- Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest
- Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness
- Protect and enhance landscape and townscape features

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIGI1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↗ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↗ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↕ |

4.1.17 Policies S1 and S2 serve to retain the ground floor active retail frontages that define the Town Centre to some extent. This preservation of the retail character would go some way to ensuring that the town character is maintained. This is likely to be a **positive effect** given the sensitivity of the areas being affected and the magnitude to the impact.

4.1.18 Design polices D1, D2 and D4 should ensure that new developments (or refurbishments) should accord with their heritage characteristics and key characteristics of the historic environment (e.g. an historic town centre ginnel) and Conservation Areas. This is likely to have a **positive effect** but it is not considered to be significant. Please see the Site Assessment section for more information on the potential effects of the allocations of sites.

4.7 Land, soil and water resources

- Conserve land resources and reduce land contamination
- Protect and improve water quality
- Promote the use of previously developed land and minimise the loss of agricultural land
- Minimise water consumption and effects on water quality

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ |

4.1.19 The main thrust of the plan is the regeneration and vitality of the Town Centre through the provision of new development but also the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing buildings. The sites are in the urban area and already build on as such all development is likely to see a good use of previously developed land. The emphasis on refurbishment should also provide a positive effect in terms of making best use of existing forms and buildings. This would see a **significant positive effect** against this objective.

4.8 Population and community

- Achieving a better balance and mix in the housing market
- Improve accessibility for all to services and facilities
- Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime
- Reduce poverty and social exclusion
- Encourage a sense of community identity and welfare and value diversity, improve equity and equality of opportunity
- Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities;
- Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents;
- Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities;
- Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing and support the provision of a range of house types and sizes;
- Achieve minimum housing requirements.

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ |

4.1.20 The strength of this plan, in relation to this objective lies in policy H1. It is the intent of the plan to over-provide housing in the area by over 100%. This should result in a number of positive effects, not least through a better mix of housing stock, a more competitive housing market with a greater choice and a greater accessibility to facilities and services

through directing the population growth in a central location. This is likely to lead to **significant positive effects** in regard to housing led objectives.

4.1.21 It will be important to ensure that any increase in population is catered for in terms of the provision of services and facilities through s106 agreements or community infrastructure levy (CIL). Policy CF1 addresses this through the support of proposals that "...would result in the safeguarding of any existing valued local community facility(s) or the provision of new such facilities..." This provision is likely to result in positive implications for this objective.

4.9 Health and well-being

- Improve the health and, inequalities in health of the population
- Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups;
- Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities;
- Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with national standards; and
- Improve access to the surrounding countryside for recreation.

| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↗ |

4.1.22 The key driver of effects for this objective is the considerable increase in housing stock for the Town Centre. This will have a range of effects but it is uncertain whether the plan has the policies within it to take full advantage of the direct and indirect effects.

4.1.23 The provision of a wide range of housing stock of good quality will provide a positive effect in terms of the determinates of health (a safe, well designed house that is affordable). Furthermore, the provision of mixed use development and the emphasis on the economic regenerating of the area would affect income deprivation and in all likelihood residents income, providing for better health outcomes. Added to this the emphasis on shortening travel times and increasing connectivity and the plan should have **significant positive effects** against this objective.

4.1.24 However, there are doubts as to whether the plan fully maximises the potential of the development proposed in terms of extracting s106 / CIL to ensure that community facilities are upgraded / developed. This is of particular concern as it is important that existing facilities do not exceed their capacity. This has been addressed in part through CF1. And the support of proposals that "...would result in the safeguarding of any existing valued local community facility(s) or the provision of new such facilities..." This provision is likely to result in positive implications for this objective.

4.1.25 The addition of policy G1 may provide for **positive effects** on human health through the provision of green pedestrian and cycle routes.

4.10 Transport

- Enhance transport infrastructure; improve accessibility and quality of life to all communities
- Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development;
- Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel; and
- Enable transport infrastructure improvements.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
| ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ |

4.1.26 The notion of focusing development in the Town Centre within reasonable proximity of the Altrincham Interchange should mean that the plan should be inherently positive in terms of this objective, and indeed it is generally the case that it is.

4.1.27 Policy H3 encourages certain development proposals with no off-street car parking where practicable and paragraph 4.4.7 places an emphasis on the development of locally based employment and reduction in travel journeys, both of which support the objectives under this topic.

4.1.28 It was identified that the plan might benefit from a stronger policy on green spaces and green infrastructure which would follow through the plan objectives more strongly (e.g. OB 8). This has been reflected in changes to the overall policy G1.

4.11 Economy and enterprise

- Enhance Trafford’s high performance and sustainable economy to provide a powerful contribution to regional growth
- Reducing disparities by releasing the potential of all residents particularly in areas of disadvantage
- Enhance Trafford’s image as a business and tourism destination
- Encourage the long term sustainability of Trafford’s Town Centres
- Improve the social and environmental performance of the economy
- Support the economy of the NP area and provide access to employment opportunities

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|------|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|
| S1 | S2 | S3 | R1 | H1 | H2 | H3 | CP1 | DIG1 | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | OF1 | M1 | G1 | CF1 |
| ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ | ↗ | ↔ | ↔ | ↔ |

4.1.29 S1, through the resistance to non-retail uses and the supporting of the continuous frontage should serve to protect the retail and economic characteristics of the town centre generating diversity and vitality in the town centre.

- 4.1.30 H1 through provision of a high housing target should ensure that development contributes to the economic revitalisation of the Town Centre (through development demonstrating a boost to the local economy and provision of locally based jobs). This is likely to see a **significant positive effect** on the local economy.

4.12 Site assessment

Site A

- 4.1.31 This site is closely located to the A538 AQMA and any traffic generated by this site could affect air quality in this sensitive area.
- 4.1.32 The site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind the industrial buildings between it and the A538 (e.g. Tesco Extra, Altrincham Interchange and Silverblades Ice Rink). In consideration of the effects of the allocation of this site it is important to consider the current use of the site and the setting and buildings around it. In this regard it is screened to the west by the train station and railways and is in a relatively built up area with constrained views on to the site. It is considered that the effects on heritage assets and their setting of this site would be negligible / minor positive given the regeneration aspect to the proposals.
- 4.1.33 The site has a few access issues including the location to local cycle routes. It is recommended that the plan is strengthened through to provision of polices on cycle routes and encouraging cycling.

Site B

- 4.1.34 This site is closely located to the A538 AQMA and any traffic generated by this site could affect air quality in this sensitive area.
- 4.1.35 The site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind the industrial buildings between it and the A538 (e.g. Tesco Extra, Altrincham Interchange and Silverblades Ice Rink). In consideration of the effects of the allocation of this site it is important to consider the current use of the site and the setting and buildings around it. In this regard it is screened to the west by the train station and railways and is in a relatively built up area with constrained views on to the site. It is considered that the effects on heritage assets and their setting of this site would be negligible / minor positive given the regeneration aspect to the proposals.

Site C

- 4.1.36 This site is closely located to the A538 AQMA (about 275 m) and any traffic generated by this site (albeit this is a small residential site) could affect air quality in this sensitive area.
- 4.1.37 The site is within c. 21 m from Church of St John the Evangelist. It is also within 500 m of listed buildings on The Downs, the A538 and Lyme Grove. The site lies within The Downs Conservation Area.
- 4.1.38 In consideration of the effects of the allocation of this site it is important to consider the current use of the site and the setting and buildings around it. In this regard it is screened to the west, south and east by other development and Ashley Road. However, it is very exposed to the north and the setting of St. John's Church. There is the potential for **significant effects** on this heritage asset (as reflected in paragraph 4.1.2 of the Plan). Without detailed plans it is not possible to determine whether the effects would be

positive or negative at this stage. It was recommended that a site specific policy was included that ensures that any development proposals *“Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings”*. This has been reflected in updated wording to the policy on Site C

- 4.1.39 The site has a few access issues including the location to local cycle routes. It is recommended that the plan is strengthened through to provision of polices on cycle routes and encouraging cycling.

Site D

- 4.1.40 This site is closely located to the A538 AQMA (about 146 m) and any traffic generated by this site could affect air quality in this sensitive area.
- 4.1.41 This site is c. 40 m from the nearest listed building (Market House). Pretty much all the listed buildings in the Neighbourhood Area are within 500 m of the site. This site sits within the Old Market Place Conservation Area and is adjacent to the George Street Conservation Area which is 'at risk'. It has been allocated for mixed use development and community space.
- 4.1.42 In consideration of the effects of the allocation of this site it is important to consider the current use of the site and the setting and buildings around it. In this regard it is sensitively located with an 'at risk' Conservation Area to the east and a number of listed buildings in close proximity. There is the potential for **significant effects** on this heritage asset but this is not reflected in the plan policies. Without detailed plans it is not possible to determine whether the effects would be positive or negative at this stage. It was recommended that a site specific policy was included that ensures that any development proposals *“Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings”*. This has been reflected in updated wording to the policy on Site C.
- 4.1.43 The site has a few access issues including the location to local cycle routes. It is recommended that the plan is strengthened through to provision of polices on cycle routes and encouraging cycling.

Site E

- 4.1.44 This site is closely located to the A538 AQMA (about 76 m) and any traffic generated by this site could affect air quality in this sensitive area.
- 4.1.45 This site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind Altrincham Interchange. The site lies adjacent to the Stamford New Road conservation area.).
- 4.1.46 In consideration of the effects of the allocation of this site it is important to consider the current use of the site and the setting and buildings around it. In this regard it is not considered that it is not sensitively located and it is effectively screened for the setting of the listed buildings by the A538 and Altrincham Interchange.
- 4.1.47 The site has a few access issues including the location to local cycle routes. It is recommended that the plan is strengthened through to provision of polices on cycle routes and encouraging cycling.

Site F

- 4.1.48 This site is closely located to the A538 AQMA (about 30 m) and any traffic generated by this site could affect air quality in this sensitive area.
- 4.1.49 This site is c. 23 m from the nearest listed building (32-34 Railway Street). Pretty much all the listed buildings in the Neighbourhood Area are within 500 m of the site. The site lies

within The Downs Conservation Area and adjacent to the Old Market, and Stamford New Road Conservation Area. It is also located close (to the north) to the George Street Conservation Area.

- 4.1.50 This site is within 500 m of a number of listed buildings, notably those on the A538 and the A56 (and on Market Street). The site is to the east of these sites and lies behind Altrincham Interchange. The site lies adjacent to the Stamford New Road conservation area.).
- 4.1.51 In consideration of the effects of the allocation of this site it is important to consider the current use of the site and the setting and buildings around it. In this regard it is sensitively located with an 'at risk' Conservation Area to the north and a number of listed buildings in close proximity. There is the potential for **significant effects** on this heritage asset but this is not reflected in the plan policies. Without detailed plans it is not possible to determine whether the effects would be positive or negative at this stage. It was recommended that a site specific policy was included that ensures that any development proposals "*Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings*". This has been reflected in updated wording to the policy on Site C.
- 4.1.52 The site has a few access issues including the location to local cycle routes. It is recommended that the plan is strengthened through to provision of polices on cycle routes and encouraging cycling.

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Next steps

05

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5 Conclusion and next steps

5.1 Introduction

The Environmental Report must include...

- Measures envisaged concerning monitoring

5.1.1 This section sets out conclusions of the updated assessment and explains the next steps (i.e. steps subsequent to consultation on the Submission Plan in-line with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations) that will be taken as part of plan-making / SEA.

5.2 Environmental Report Conclusions

5.1.2 The outcome of the assessment is mixed. For the more socio-economic objectives it seems clear that the plan would result in a number of positive effects of which those on 'Land', 'Population and Community', 'Health', and the 'Economy' are likely to be significant. The 'negatives' centre on the potential effects on air quality and heritage assets in the area. Both of these effect predictions have a high level of uncertainty as so much is dependent on the details of the design of the developments.

5.3 Plan finalisation and adoption

5.1.3 **Regulation 15**, of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, requires that the Forum submit (to the Local Authority) the 'Proposed' Plan and a 'Consultation Statement'. The Consultation Statement must describe issues or concerns raised through the Pre-submission Plan / Environmental Report consultation and how these were addressed when preparing the Proposed Plan for submission. An updated Environmental Report has been prepared for this stage.

5.1.4 **Regulation 16** then requires that the Local Authority 'publicises' the Proposed Plan so that stakeholders can make representations that may then be considered at Examination. It will be appropriate for the Local Authority to also publicise the updated Environmental Report, with a view to informing representations.

5.1.5 **Regulation 17** requires that the Local Authority submits (to the person appointed to carry out the Examination) the Proposed Plan and a copy of any representations which have been made in accordance with Regulation 16. It may be appropriate for the Local Authority to also submit the updated Environmental Report, with a view to informing the Examination.

5.1.6 **Regulations 18 and 19** require that, subsequent to the Examination, the Local Authority publishes the Examiner's Report and a Decision Statement. The Decision Statement sets out whether or not the Local Authority is prepared to 'make' (i.e. adopt) the plan. If the Local Authority is prepared to make the plan, then a referendum can be held. It may be appropriate for the Local Authority to also publish an updated Environmental Report, with a view to informing the Referendum.

5.1.7 **Regulation 20** states what the Local Authority must do when the plan is 'made' (i.e. adopted). An SEA Statement is required under the SEA Regulations and must be published alongside the made Plan. The SEA Statement must present:

- information on the decision, i.e. must explain why the final plan approach was decided-upon in light of SEA and consultation; and
- measures decided concerning monitoring.

5.4 Monitoring

5.1.8 At the current stage – i.e. in the Environmental Report - there is a need to present ‘a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring’. In light of the assessment findings presented in Chapter 4 of this report, the following effects have been identified and monitoring proposed.

Table 5.1: Significant effects and monitoring

| <i>SEA topic</i> | <i>Effect</i> | <i>Monitoring</i> |
|---|---|--|
| Air quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased traffic on two AQMAs in the plan area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in levels of PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, nitrogen dioxide. • Changes in traffic flows |
| Historic environment and landscape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on heritage assets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Area condition |

Appendices

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Appendix A: SEA Regulations compliance

Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 explains the information that must be contained in the Environmental Report; however, interpretation of Schedule 2 is not straightforward. The table below interprets Schedule 2 requirements.

| <u>Schedule 2</u> | <u>Interpretation</u> | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <i>The report must include...</i> | <i>The report must include...</i> | | | |
| (a) an outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes; | An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes | i.e. answer - <i>What's the Plan seeking to achieve?</i> | i.e. answer - <i>What's the scope of the SA?</i> | |
| (b) the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan | Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance | i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'context'?</i> | | |
| (c) the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected; | The relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level | i.e. answer - <i>What's the 'baseline'?</i> | | |
| (d) any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC; | The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan' | | | |
| (e) the environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation; | The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected | i.e. answer - <i>What are the key issues & objectives?</i> | | |
| (f) the likely significant effects on the environment including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors; | Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance | | | |
| (g) the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan; | Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of appraisal | i.e. answer - <i>What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?</i> | | |
| (h) an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information | An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (i.e. an explanation of the 'reasonableness of the approach') | | | |
| (i) a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring. | The likely significant effects associated with alternatives, including on issues such as... | | | i.e. answer - <i>What are the appraisal findings at this current stage?</i> |
| | ... and an outline of the reasons for selecting the preferred approach in light of the alternatives considered / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan. | | | |
| | The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan | i.e. answer - <i>What happens next?</i> | | |
| | The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan | | | |
| | A description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring | | | |

Appendix B: Full SEA Framework

| SEA topic | SEA objective | Sub-criteria | Suggested site assessment criteria | Suggested threshold |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Air quality | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Protect and improve air quality 2. Reduce the effect of traffic on the environment | <p>Minimise air pollution resulting from traffic congestion</p> <p>Minimise air pollution from other sources</p> | Proximity to an air quality management area. | <p>Within or adjacent to an AQMA</p> <p><1 km from an AQMA</p> <p>>1 km from an AQMA</p> |
| | | | Accessibility to a bus stop, train station, or metro stop (with at least a half-hourly service during the day) | <p>>800 m</p> <p>400 m – 800 m</p> <p><400 m</p> |
| | | | Proximity to a cycle route | <p>>200 m</p> <p>100 m – 200 m</p> <p><100 m</p> |
| | | | Distance to town centre or local shop. | <p>>800 m</p> <p>250 m – 800 m</p> <p><250 m</p> |
| | | | Biodiversity | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Protect, enhance and restore open space, biodiversity, flora and fauna, geological and geomorphological features |
| Proximity to the Dunham Park SSSI. | <p><400 m</p> <p>400 m – 800 m</p> <p>>800 m</p> | | | |
| Proximity to a Local Nature Reserve, a Site of Biological Importance, or area of | <p>Adjacent to a designated area</p> | | | |

biodiversity.

Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat.

<400 m of a designated area
>400 m of a designated area

Effects on protected trees.

Site includes more than one tree protected by a Preservation Order
Site includes one tree protected by a Preservation Order
Site does not include trees protected by a Preservation Order

Climate change

4. Reduce contributions to climate change

Limit the increase in the carbon footprint of the NP area as a result of population growth;
Support reduced car dependency and increased walking, cycling and public transport use;
Increase the number of new developments meeting sustainable design criteria;
Improve green infrastructure networks in the NP area to support adaptation to the

Uptake of sustainability initiatives by businesses.

Yes / in part / no

Accessibility to a bus stop, train station, or metro stop (with at least a half-hourly service during the day)

>800 m
400 m – 800 m
<400 m

Proximity to a cycle route

>200 m
100 m – 200 m
<100 m

Distance to town centre or local shop.

>800 m
250 m – 800 m
<250 m

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| | <p>5. Reduce impact of climate change</p> | <p>potential effects of climate change; Ensure that no development takes place in areas at higher risk of flooding, taking the likely effects of climate change into account; and Sustainably manage water run-off, ensuring that the risk of flooding is not increased (either within the NP area or downstream) and where possible reduce flood risk.</p> | <p>Uptake of sustainability initiatives by businesses. <hr/> Within a flood risk zone (fluvial). <hr/> Areas at risk of surface water (based on EA surface flood risk classification).</p> | <p>Yes / in part / no <hr/> Zone 3 Zone 2 Zone 1 <hr/> High Medium Low</p> |
| <p>Historic environment and landscape</p> | <p>6. Conserve and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings Protect and enhance the diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape character and cultural facilities</p> | <p>Preserve and enhance the setting of cultural heritage assets Support the integrity of the various conservation areas within the NP area Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of architectural or historic interest Conserve and enhance local diversity and distinctiveness Protect and enhance landscape and townscape</p> | <p>Heritage asset listed on applicable "At Risk" register <hr/> Located within a conservation area <hr/> Contains, or is located adjacent to scheduled monuments <hr/> Contains, or is located adjacent to listed buildings <hr/> Located within a conservation area <hr/> Located within a conservation area</p> | <p>Assets within 500m of a proposed site allocation will be identified in the first instance. Professional judgement will be used to assess the impact of site allocations upon identified heritage assets, in a proportionate manner, using available evidence such as conservation area appraisals and information on the HER. the site seeks to protect</p> |

features

and enhance heritage assets and/or has a positive effect on the historic environment including tacking heritage at risk or provides an opportunity to better reveal the significance of heritage assets.

neutral : no heritage assets or their settings are likely to be affected by the site allocation.

the site would result in harm to the significance of heritage assets and/or their setting. It is likely that impacts can be avoided/mitigated.

the site will result in harm to the significance of heritage assets and/or their setting. It is unlikely that impacts can be avoided/mitigated

Conservation area listed on the "At Risk" register

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|---------------------------|
| Land soil and water resources | 7. Conserve land resources and reduce land contamination | Promote the use of previously developed land and minimise the loss of | Located on previously developed land (brownfield)? | Yes / in part / no |
| | 8. Protect and improve water | | Located on a source protection | SPZ 1 |

| quality | agricultural land | zone? | SPZ 2 |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|
| | Minimise water consumption and effects on water quality | Located on a nitrate vulnerable zone | Neither of the above Yes / in part / no |
| Population and community | 9. Achieving a better balance and mix in the housing market | Encourage and promote social cohesion and encourage active involvement of local people in community activities; | >1 km 400 m-1 km <400 m |
| | 10. Improve accessibility for all to services and facilities | Maintain or enhance the quality of life of existing local residents; | >1 km 400 m-1 km <400 m |
| | 11. Reduce crime, disorder and the fear of crime | Promote the development of a range of high quality, accessible community, cultural and leisure facilities; | >1 km 400 m-1 km <400 m |
| | 12. Reduce poverty and social exclusion | Provide an adequate supply of affordable housing and support the provision of a range of house types and sizes; | >1.6 km 800 m-1.6 km <800 m |
| | 13. Encourage a sense of community identity and welfare and value diversity, improve equity and equality of opportunity | Achieve minimum housing requirements. | >1.6 km 800 m-1.6 km <800 m |
| Health and well-being | 14. Improve the health and, inequalities in health of the population | Promote accessibility to a range of leisure, health and community facilities, for all age groups; | It is not considered possible to spatially assess against this objective i.e. it cannot be shown how the physical attributes of a site area can meaningful illustrate the effects on this objective. |

Encourage healthy lifestyles and reduce health inequalities;
 Provide and enhance the provision of community access to green infrastructure, in accordance with national standards; and
 Improve access to the surrounding countryside for recreation.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Transport | 15. Enhance transport infrastructure; improve accessibility and quality of life to all communities | Reduce the need to travel through sustainable patterns of land use and development; | Accessibility to a bus stop, train station, or metro stop (with at least a half-hourly service during the day) | >800 m 400 m – 800 m <400 m |
| | | Encourage modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel; and | Proximity to a cycle route | >200 m 100 m – 200 m <100 m |
| | | Enable transport infrastructure improvements. | Distance to town centre or local shop. | >800 m 250 m – 800 m <250 m |
| Economy and enterprise | 16. Enhance Trafford's high performance and sustainable economy to provide a powerful contribution to regional growth | Support the economy of the NP area and provide access to employment opportunities | It is not considered possible to spatially assess against this objective i.e. it cannot be shown how the physical attributes of a site area can meaningful illustrate the effects on this objective. | |

- 17.** Reducing disparities by releasing the potential of all residents particularly in areas of disadvantage
 - 18.** Enhance Trafford's image as a business and tourism destination
 - 19.** Encourage the long term sustainability of Trafford's Town Centres
 - 20.** Improve the social and environmental performance of the economy
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About AECOM

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