



Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan

Stage 2: Final Report

A report to Bolton Council

September 2020

BDP.



Westhoughton Town Hall

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Setting the Context
- 3 Setting out the Challenge
- 4 Strategic Ambition and Vision for Westhoughton
- 5 Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan
- 6 Key Development Proposals

Appendix 1: Deliverability and implementation strategy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Westhoughton town centre masterplan project

1.1.1 BDP (supported by BE Group and CBO Transport) was commissioned by Bolton Council to produce a Masterplan for Westhoughton town centre (WTC) that reflects the Bolton Vision 2030 of “creating a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful business and healthy residents, ensuring it is a welcoming place where people choose to study, work and put down roots”.

1.1.2 The masterplan has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders and in consultation with the public and considers the current issues and challenges facing the town centre. It provides a framework for the future of the area, based on a clear regeneration strategy and a set of key development proposals which will underpin efforts and plans to secure continued investment and the long term viability of the town centre.

1.1.3 Through a robust and commercially viable delivery strategy, the masterplan will be deliverable and will help to secure a prosperous future for WTC and its residents.

1.1.4 This masterplan report builds on the Stage 1: Baseline Report and the property and market review that has been undertaken as part of the baseline studies, and presents a strategic ambition and a range of key development proposals for regeneration of WTC.

1.2 The need for Westhoughton town centre masterplan

1.2.1 Westhoughton town centre already offers a wide variety of assets. From a town hall, a library, Carnegie Hall, an

indoor market, independent businesses, shops and cafés, to leisure centre, a town park, schools, therapy centre, national convenience retail and food & drink, office space, banks and building societies, Westhoughton town centre has got almost everything that could be expected in a town centre of its size.

1.2.2 However, like many town centres across the UK, Westhoughton still faces challenges, and is not making the most of its assets. The challenges facing Westhoughton town centre include:

- Making more of Market Street, including bringing vacant sites back into use and maximising the use of Council-owned buildings like the town hall, library and Carnegie Hall;
- Diversifying the town centre to generate more activity, for example with managed workspace for small businesses and start-ups and new town centre living;
- Developing a stronger ‘evening economy’, encouraging shops to open later and attracting more cafés and bars;
- Creating stronger links between shops along Cricketer’s Way (like Sainsbury’s and McDonalds) and Market Street, including encouraging more active frontages (e.g. cafés, shops) along Marsden Street to encourage more people to visit all parts of the town centre;
- Lack of availability of short-stay car parking and some poor quality pedestrian routes to the car parks;
- In some areas, shop vacancy and underutilised or empty upper floors;
- Unattractive pedestrian links connecting Market Street to Pavilion Square shopping centre and the town centre public car park to its west;
- Central Park does not feel connected to the town

centre;

- Some areas of poor quality shop and business frontages and low quality public realm.

1.2.3 Bolton Council has taken the ownership of WTC challenges by playing a key role in using its knowledge, commitment and services, to ensure that WTC will be a future-proofed and adaptable town centre, in which everyone (including people and businesses) can invest and prosper.

1.2.4 The focus of this commission therefore is to develop a vision for regeneration of the town centre that helps maximise its potential through a deliverable strategy, focused on a small number of key transformational projects that create suitable means for achieving sustainable regeneration of the town centre.

1.3 Purpose of the report

1.3.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the challenges faced by the town centre (as set out in detail in the Stage 1 Baseline Report), set out a vision for the future of the town centre and to identify a number of Key Development Proposals (KDPs) which will guide the long-term regeneration of WTC.

1.3.2 The masterplan outcomes will include significant economic, social and environmental benefits, making it a sustainable approach in future proofing Westhoughton. The KDPs set out by the masterplan will retain and improve access for all through remodelling Market Street and discouraging the through traffic to minimise the impact of vehicles on pedestrians and cyclists. It will also support and promote local businesses and

provide attractive and fair opportunities for people to start business and live in the town centre.

- 1.3.3 The masterplan KDPs have been developed through a process of desktop studies and evidence gathering, market viability and option testing and have been informed by a series of stakeholder workshops and community consultation events. The KDPs have then been finalised through a process of testing of deliverability of each proposal.

1.4 Structure of the report

- 1.4.1 The masterplan final report adopts the following structure:

- **Section 2:** Setting the Context
- **Section 3:** Setting Out the Challenge
- **Section 4:** Strategic Ambition and vision for Westhoughton
- **Section 5:** Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan
- **Section 6:** Key Development Proposals
- **Appendix 1:** Deliverability and Implementation Strategy



Westhoughton Market Hall



Ditchfield Gardens



Westhoughton
Library

No dogs or animals

Westhoughton Library

2. Setting the Context

2.1 Introduction

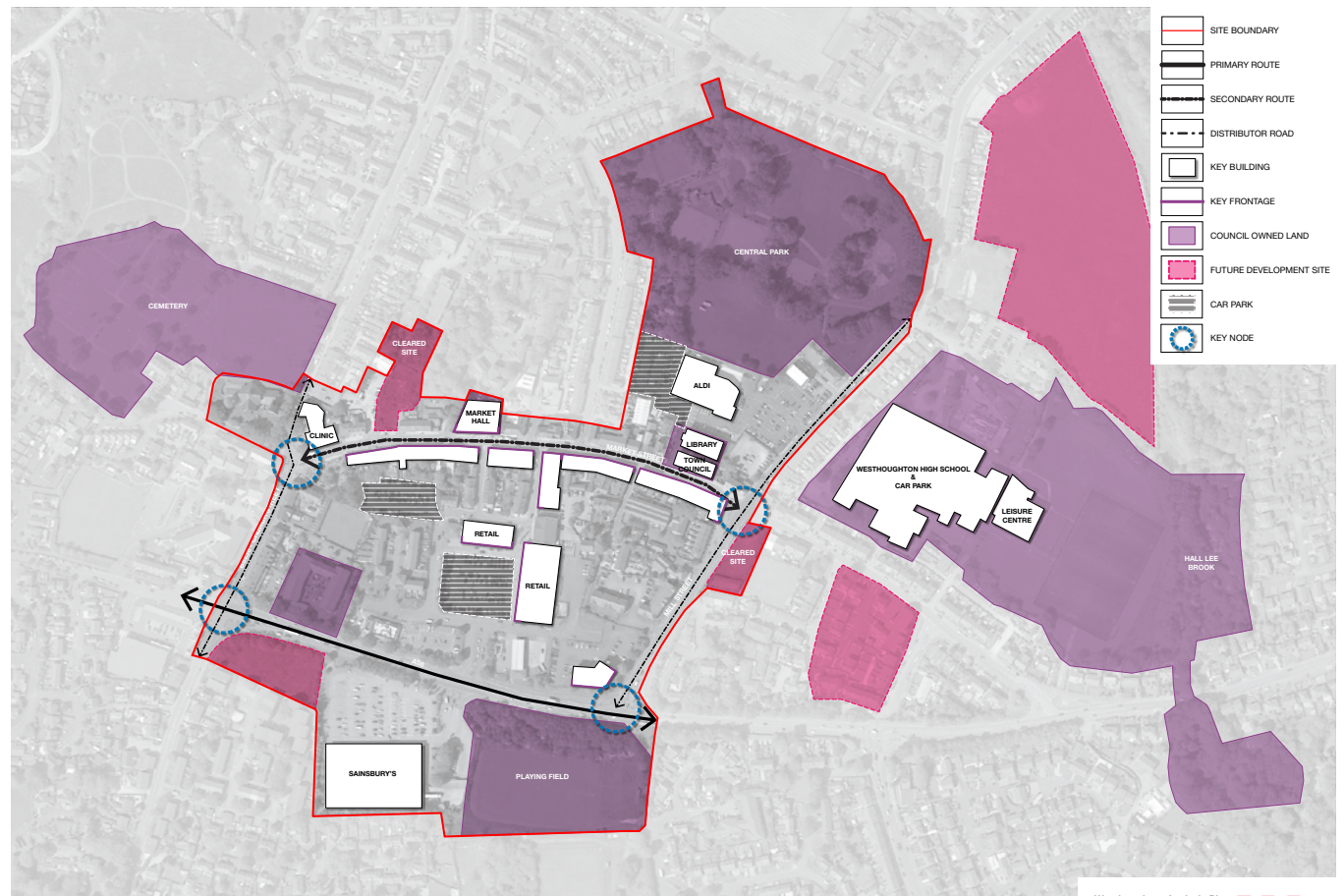
2.1.1 This section of the report provides a description of the town centre in terms of the geography and location, catchment demographics and the historic development of the area and its current context. It also provides an overview of the position of the town centre in the hierarchy of other town centres within the Borough, and its role in the regeneration of the wider area. Findings of this section help identify redevelopment needs of WTC, which would act as catalyst for regeneration of Westhoughton as a whole.

2.2 Location

2.2.1 Westhoughton is one of the main urban areas of the Borough and sits in a strategic location. The town centre encompasses a designated area of about 34ha in Bolton local plan. It has a dispersed boundary spanning from Westhoughton Community Leisure Centre in the east, to Westhoughton Cemetery to the west. It is considered an outer area of Bolton, and plays an important role in serving southwestern part of the borough.

2.2.2 Figure 2.1 opposite shows the district centre's boundary and the concentration of the main assets that sit along the spine of the town centre.

Figure 2.1- Westhoughton town centre boundary and main assets



Source: BDP

2.2.3 The town centre is strategically located off Cricketers Way (part of the primary road of A58), which borders the town centre core to the south. A58 provides large scale transport connectivity between Bolton and Wigan. There are also a number of development opportunity sites in and around the town centre which could bring meaningful changes to the area as part of a comprehensive regeneration plan. These opportunities will be discussed later in this report.

2.2.4 Given WTC's sustainable location, its status as a town centre and the presence of a number of development opportunity sites, the study area is considered a key node in which to accommodate future development.

2.3 Demographic trends

2.3.1 Population projections for borough of Bolton over the last 27 years show that from a starting point of 261,349 in 1991, Bolton's population began to decline reaching a low of 259,709 in 1997. Since 1998 however, Bolton's population has grown steadily, gaining some 25,000 residents, and is expected to gain around 1,000 residents/year to 2029 and around 500/year after that. Westhoughton in contrary has seen some population decline in recent years. The town has seen good population growth to 2013, but then lost around 250 people to 27,136 in 2017, with the reasons for the recent reductions being unclear.

2.3.2 Projections of future population in Bolton suggest regular population growth over the next 23 years with the overall gain to 2041 representing a 5.2% growth, which equates to up to 15,700 people. A high proportion of the future growth will be in the 65+ age group which means there is a need to attract more working age people to

Westhoughton and the Borough as a whole. For the town centre this would mean promotion of new housing for all ages in and around the town centre.

2.4 Historic development of the town centre's physical infrastructure

2.4.1 Historically part of Lancashire, Westhoughton is an ancient settlement that originated as an agricultural community, and later developed as a coal mining and domestic textile producing settlement in the Victorian period. The built legacy of the historic period is still evident today, in the intersection of Market Street, Church Street and Wigan Road to the far west end of the town centre boundaries, which includes most of the town centre's historic buildings. This core has been the focus of Westhoughton for hundreds of years and today is a designated conservation area incorporating five Grade II listed buildings.

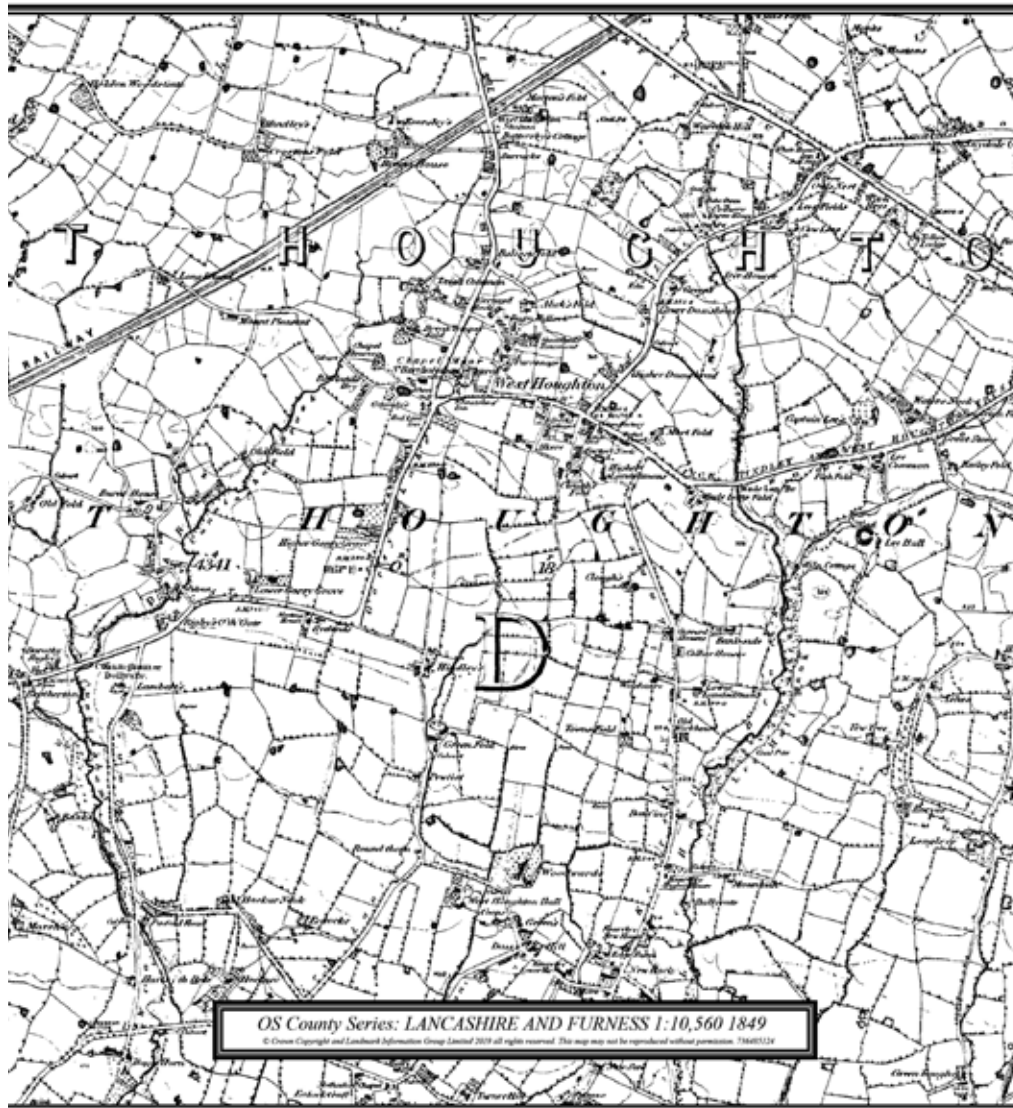
2.4.2 The highlights of the historic development of the area through past centuries is outlined below:

- The development of Market Street started before 1840s and by 1893-1894 was almost complete.
- By 1929-1930, ribbon development had started to take place around the central core of the town centre.
- Around the same time, low density housing development started to the south and southwest of the town centre, on land west of water works known as Service Reservoir (Leigh Corporation Water Works).
- The housing development, typical of the interwar period and characterised by neighbourhoods of semi-detached and terraces continued through post-war period up until 1960.

- Cricketers Way (A58) south of the town centre was constructed in 1993.

2.4.2 Figure 2.2 presents a series of images that evidence the historic development of the area during the time period highlighted above.

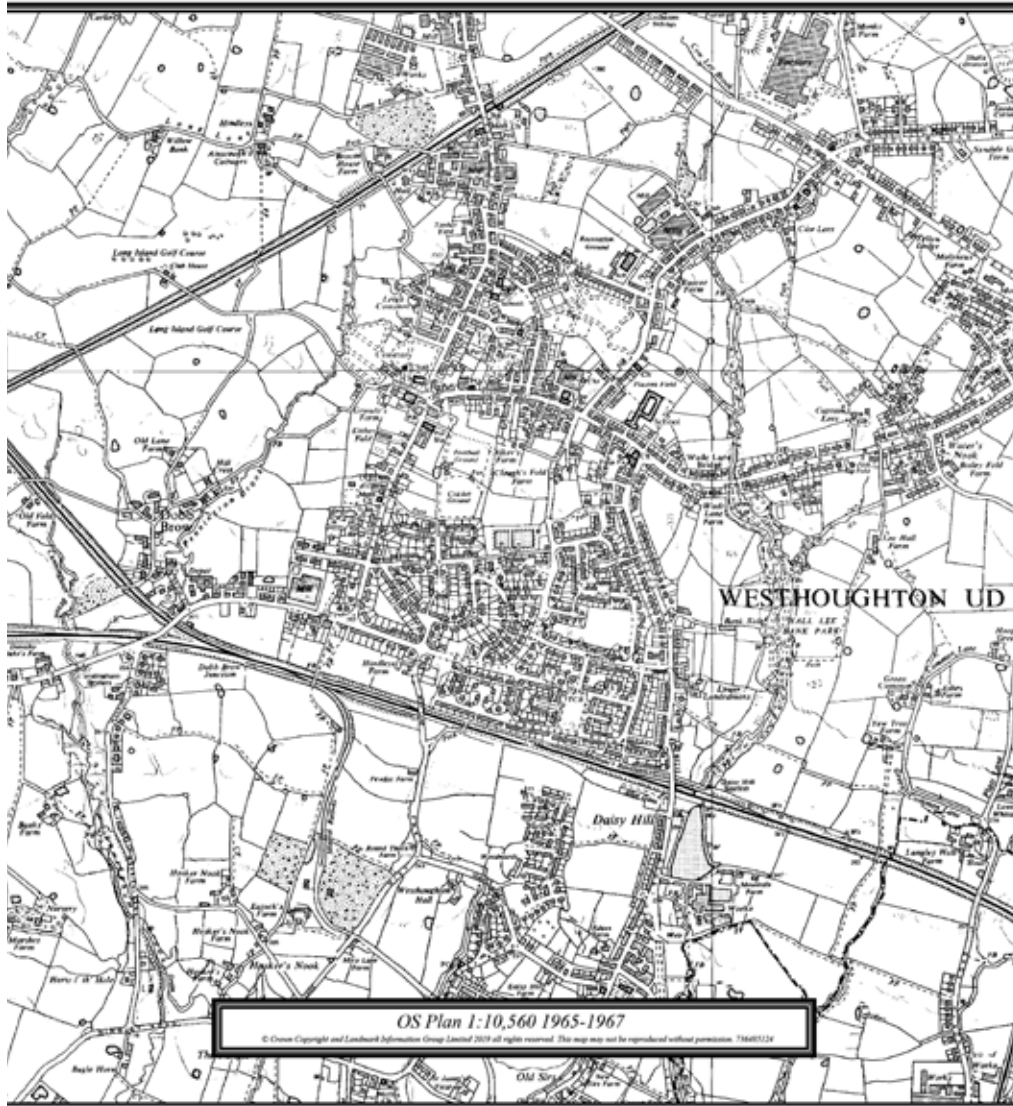
Figure 2.2: WTC's historic development



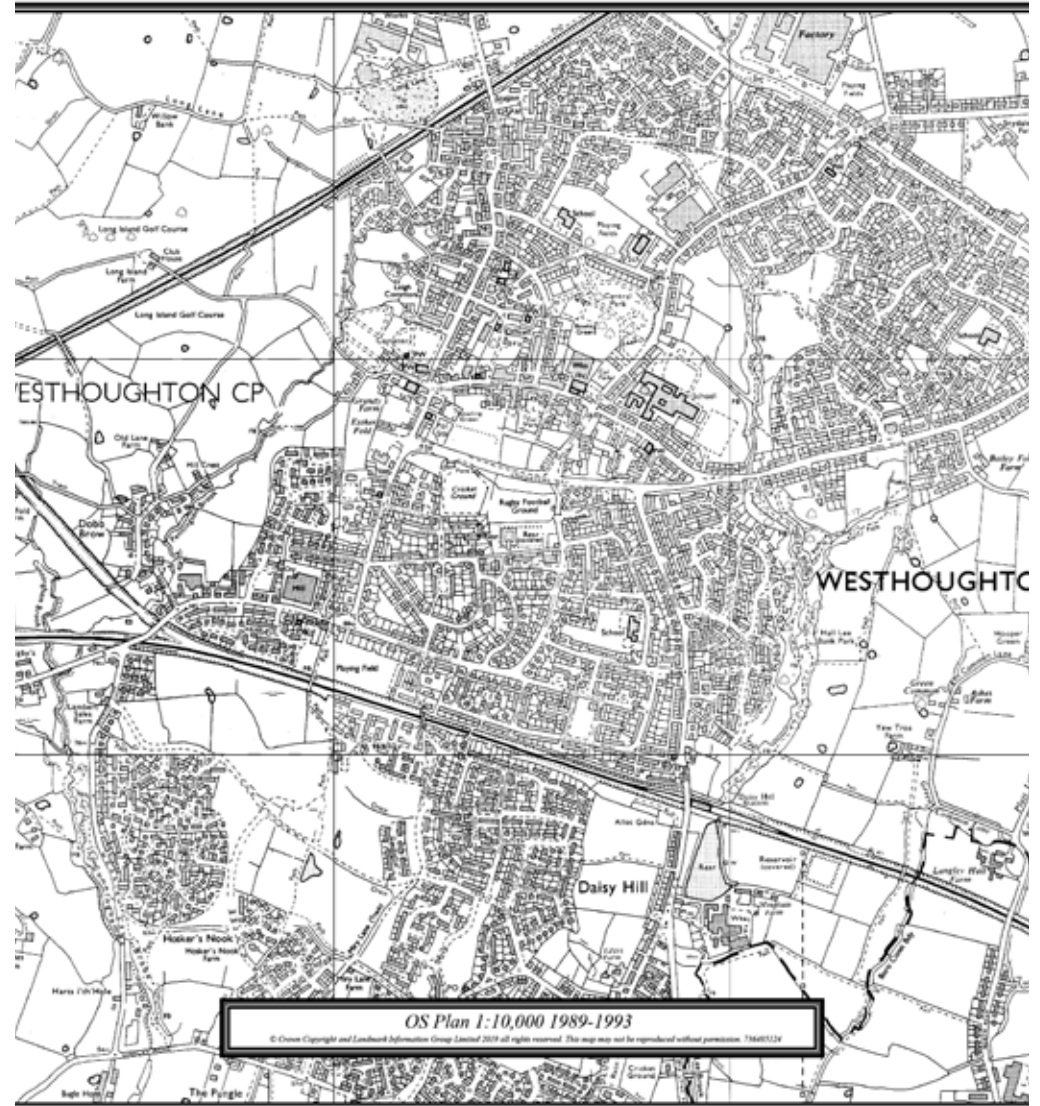
1849



1929-30



1965-67



1989-93

2.5 A focus for regeneration

- 2.5.1 Identified as one of the borough's four main town centres alongside Farnworth, Horwich and Little Lever, WTC is included in the 'outer areas' of Bolton as recognised by the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy states that there will continue to be smaller scale developments within the urban area of the borough's outer areas, for a range of uses where the character of the area and the existing infrastructure allows it. It is therefore expected that Westhoughton will undergo growth and change as part of the continued regeneration of the borough.
- 2.5.2 WTC's recent regeneration is evident in a number of developments that have been consented or developed in recent years. These include a range of retail, residential and office schemes in and around the town centre.
- 2.5.3 A more detailed review of the current regeneration opportunities in the town centre, the recent developments in and around the town centre, as well as Bolton planning policy considerations for future regeneration of the area is provided below:

Strategic location

- 2.5.4 Westhoughton sits in a strategic location. With the M61 corridor running along the motorway in its whole length through Bolton, Westhoughton has excellent access to employment opportunities that are located at its doorstep, including industrial estates at Westhoughton and Wingates. The strategic economic employment opportunity at Westhoughton Loco Works also part of the M61 corridor further contributes to regeneration of the area.

- 2.5.6 A58 which is a primary road passes to the south of the town centre and provides large scale transport and connectivity to the wider region.

Retail profile including edge of centre retail

- 2.5.7 In retail terms, according to Bolton's Retail and Leisure Study, Westhoughton is a pleasant, attractive and healthy town centre, serving primarily a localised role, in meeting residents' day-to-day retail and service needs. The town centre was ranked 2,243rd town centre in the country for importance in the wider area, though it is evident in the range of retail offer in the town centre that the area has undergone a huge investment by retail and leisure operators in the past decade.
- 2.5.8 Bolton Core Strategy Policy OA3 seeks to promote Westhoughton town centre as a suitable place for a mix of retailing, leisure, employment and housing uses and provides effective policy resource for future retail development in the area.

Housing schemes

- 2.5.9 Westhoughton includes a traditional town centre and a wide variety of housing. A large proportion of the housing has been built in the last forty years and there is continued pressure from developers and landowners for more housing on the open areas immediately around the built-up areas of the town¹.
- 2.5.10 There are a number of approved housing schemes around the town centre, namely the development of 41 dwellings at Collingwood Way to the northwest of the town centre, as well as the 2019 approved scheme for

131 dwellings at Roscoe Farm to the northeast of town centre, which acts as regeneration booster.

- 2.5.11 Housing growth is a borough-wide objective and in line with the requirements of Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) and Bolton Core Strategy for Bolton.
- 2.5.12 GMSF sets out principles and priorities for the development of Greater Manchester (GM) up until 2037 and identifies the amount of new development that will come forward across the city region, in terms of housing, offices, and industry and warehousing, and the main areas in which this will be focused.
- 2.5.13 According to the plan, Greater Manchester as a region should bring forward an annual increase in the number of houses of 10,578, totalling 200,980 new homes by the end of plan. When distributed across GM boroughs to meet the needs of individual boroughs, this would be translated into an annual increase of 726 homes and a total of 13,800 homes in the borough of Bolton. GMSF also sets out new priority on town centres for more residential development, to create neighbourhoods of choice.
- 2.5.14 On a local level, Bolton Core Strategy has plans for 12,492 additional dwellings within the borough by 2026, out of which 20-30% (2,500-3750 new homes) is planned within the 'outer areas' – Westhoughton being one of them. Policy OA3 in particular supports housing development in Westhoughton.

¹ Bolton Core Strategy (adopted 2011)

- 2.5.15 Given the status of WTC as a town centre in local plan and the support given by the Core Strategy for development of housing in the area, it is considered that WTC is well placed for some scale of future residential development to contribute to regeneration of the town and the wider borough as a whole.

Development opportunities

- 2.5.16 There are a number of development opportunity sites in the town centre which can be utilised to diversify the mix of district centre uses, and bring about developments that can act as regeneration catalysts. The Gaiety site (land off Market Street and next to Wheatsheaf public house) has been in planning a number of times for retail and residential developments. Given its location and size, the land is considered a prominent development opportunity. Similarly land off Mill Street (known as Sillocks site) and land off A58 next to Sainsbury's car park are suitable sites for development.
- 2.5.17 The Council's usage of the Town Hall is reducing as part of a wider reorganisation of premises, making it a suitable site for re-development which can introduce a new use into the mix of the town centre.
- 2.5.18 These development opportunities have the potential to diversify town centre uses, enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre through re-purposing it, and turn around the undermining effects that some of the town centre's issues such as public realm, and lack of car parking currently have on the area.



Independent food and drink offer is a strength of Westhoughton



An Aldi superstore has recently opened its doors to shoppers



National food and drink brands are present at the edge of the retail core



The Market Hall has been refurbished in recent years



The edge of centre retail at Pavilion Square complements Market Street retail offer



Westhoughton Town Hall is a heritage asset and a development opportunity



WESTHOUGHTON UD & CP

Westhoughton Town Centre Circa - 1965-1967

3. Setting out the Challenge

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Town centres are changing, so are the ways in which people use them. Over the course of the last decade, high streets have faced some of the biggest challenges in their history, from global economic recession to the rise of the internet offering unprecedented choice in online shopping to changes in people's spending and visiting patterns. Town centres are now seen as places for more than just shopping, including for leisure, food & drink, social and community hubs, business space, places for culture, healthcare and education and increasingly as a place to live.

3.1.2 It is now commonly agreed that whilst retail is an important element of a thriving town centre, it is not the only one. Other ingredients such as independent traders, town centre homes and the quality of the pedestrian experience are also vital to the creation of attractive and healthy places which people will choose to visit, work or live in and to spend their time and money. We can see the success of this approach in other Greater Manchester town centres such as Urmston in Trafford or Prestwich in Bury. To remain relevant and as important to communities and businesses as they have been in the past, town centres and high streets need to be adaptable, and be able to adjust to changing retail and social trends and offer shoppers and visitors the experience they want.

3.1.3 The critical first step to identify the needs for investment in the area is to assess the challenges facing the town centre. It is also important to understand the wider economic and property market contributors which impact on the performance of the town centre.

Such an understanding of the challenges and issues facing the area can inform a more positive response to changes.

Issues facing Westhoughton town centre

3.1.4 Westhoughton town centre is a distinctive and much loved town centre, with the gently curving Market Street which runs from St. Bartholomew's Church to the Town Hall at its heart being generally a pleasant high street.

3.1.5 The town centre has many great assets and is generally working well, however it is believed that a number of factors are impacting the performance of the town centre. Market Street is the main spine of the town centre today, and owing to the completion of a town centre bypass (A58 Cricketers Way), is lightly trafficked. Whilst being less trafficked is usually a positive aspect of a high street, it brings with itself the challenge of insufficient footfall in the area. There are also issues regarding car parking, visual impacts of poor quality public realm in some areas, poor pedestrian and cyclist experience and shop vacancy in some parts.

3.1.6 This section of the report elaborates on the findings of the baseline report and provides a more detailed study of the challenges impacting the performance of Westhoughton town centre. It also identifies needs for investment within the area in order to maximise the contributions that are made by the town centre's sustainable location and existing assets. This will provide a solid basis for justification of the strategic ambitions and the KDPs proposed in this masterplan.

3.2 District centre performance themes and indicators

3.2.1 Before reviewing issues facing WTC and impacting its performance, it is important to first set a number of performance indicators for local centres, against which the performance of WTC can be assessed.

3.2.2 It is commonly agreed that footfall, diversity and range of offer and economic activity are key to understanding a high street and are indicators of good performance of a town centre. Consumer and business satisfaction is also an indicator to measure whether the town centre is serving the social and community purposes envisaged for it as well as its traditional retail function². Other measures such as retailer demand, leisure and tourism spend, house price and catchment demographics are also used to understand the retail resilience in the high streets and town centres³.

² Department for Business Innovation & Skills' report: Understanding High Street Performance (2011)

³ Cushman and Wakefield report 'UK High Streets Dead or Alive' (2018)

3.2.3 A study undertaken by Gfirst and ATCM: 'Successful town centres – developing effective strategies' has identified a number of key themes and indicators that help monitor the performance of town centres. The key themes and indicators identified by the study are summarised in the table below:

Themes	Key indicators
People and footfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall • Geographical catchment • Access • Car parking • Community spirit
Diversity and vitality of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail offer • Culture and leisure offer • Events • Reported crime • Markets
Consumer and business perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business confidence • Town centre visitor satisfaction with retail offer • Visitor experience satisfaction • Attractiveness • Crime and safety perception
Economic characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail sales • Partnership working • Charity shops • Vacant retail units • Evening/night time economy

3.2.4 The common themes and indicators cover a wide range of issues facing town centres nationally, and can be used in assessing the performance of town centres of all sizes, including WTC. It is however considered that there is a gap in the identified themes and indicators, as there is no mention of 'digitisation' or 'technology'. The high street ability to adapt to new technology now more than ever needs to be included in considerations when assessing the performance of town centres. Ofcoms 'Connected Nations 2019'⁴ highlights the change in digital availability and performance across the UK. Looking at the percentage of Ultrafast Broadband (UFBB) as an example shows that the coverage of commercial properties with full fibre broadband access services stands only at around 13% of premises in the UK. Poor digitisation and utilisation of the latest digital technology is apparent in Westhoughton too, and future regeneration of the area needs to take account of potential room for improvements and bringing the district centre up to speed with technology changes.

3.3 Westhoughton town centre performance

3.3.1 In order to provide a realistic picture of the performance along with desktop studies, research was undertaken as part of this masterplan such as property and markets and traffic and movement surveys. These studies have used the available statistics on ward/borough level, and have paired the findings with a series of site visits to outline the challenges and issues facing the performance of the town centre. These studies also provide a base for identifying the indicators impacting on the performance of WTC, which are required to be addressed in the masterplan.

3.3.2 A review of the identified issues which impact the performance of WTC is provided below. These are directly linked to the broad themes for performance of town centres and use some of the key indicators to explain issues that are specific to WTC. This analysis helps develop a better appreciation of the area's needs for future investment.

People and footfall

Footfall

3.3.3 There are benefits to having a high street store. The town centre shops, businesses and commercial operators on a high street usually have access to a type of trade that is rarely taken full advantage of: passing trade. One of the major benefits of a high street location is the passing trade that has the potential to attract footfall to the area. It is noted that in order to draw consumers into the shops and premises on a high street, there is need to make an effort to create an attractive, pleasant and welcoming place for shoppers and visitors. Each business on a high street can operate as both a destination store and a magnet to the passing trade. The latter can be managed and achieved by a number of factors such as efficient car parking facilities, attractive shopfronts, outdoor seating areas, advertising, and using digital technology.

3.3.4 In Westhoughton, according to the property and market review, there is a strong retail market, relative to the size of the town. The town centre is busy with good footfall and a sizeable catchment extending out to Atherton, Hindley and Leigh. The creation of the town centre bypass (A58) has created a strong retail hub, attracting shoppers to the centre of Westhoughton and making

Market Street a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists who could be impacted by passing traffic. It is however considered that the movement between the edge of centre retail and Market Street should be strengthened to future proof the high street and ensure that sufficient footfall continues to be drawn into the high street's more traditional core.

- 3.3.5 There are currently a number of challenges affecting the ways that passing trade could be drawn to Market Street. These challenges include limited town centre car parking available, unattractive public realm on the routes linking the edge of centre retail core to the main high street, lack of attractive seating area outside of the stores where food and drink is offered and the overall appearance of the area which could be refreshed through shopfront improvement schemes where needed. A comprehensive street remodelling scheme is considered to tackle a number of issues such as accessibility and traffic flow, car parking management and pedestrian and cyclist experience in the area.

Car parking

- 3.3.6 For many people, the possibility of driving into town and parking their car in a safe car park remains a considerable element of convenience-based attractiveness as it grants them a higher sense of perceived comfort and independence⁵. An efficient car parking strategy which provides for a mix of off street long stay parking spaces, and on/off street short stay parking spaces supports the idea of visitors and locals visiting the town centre, and staying longer or spending more money on local offer.

- 3.3.7 Westhoughton currently struggles with managing car parking space for town centre users. Car parking is limited in number and represents a number of environmental issues. The town centre's public car parks are free with no time restriction and represent an issue relating to management of short stay and long stay car parking. There is also very little pop in on street parking in the town centre and therefore walking distance from off street car parks to some local shops probably means that the most convenient parking is often full.

- 3.3.8 The lack of efficient car parking system in the town often results in the existing car parking spaces being generally full, with the overspill of cars being accommodated on the streets. Whilst this is generally not a negative aspect, it could reduce the capacity of the street by narrowing the lanes which consequently results in road congestion, and unattractive or confusing pedestrian environment.

Diversity and vitality of place

Town centre offer

- 3.3.9 Interaction with other people, cultural activities and a bit of enjoyment not related to a 'to do/buy' list are some of the many reasons why people come to town centres. Events and festivals are another major reason for people to come to town centres and high streets. A diverse event offer can be a major source of attraction for visitors as well as local residents, particularly if these take place throughout the year and are aimed at a diverse audience. A successful town centre recognises the need for inclusivity, and flexibility to meet changing needs of all, through diversifying its offer, and also optimises connectivity to and between its main uses.

- 3.3.10 Westhoughton town centre is a pleasant area which plays an important role in bringing the residents together, but needs to provide a more appealing social and community focal point for people of all ages. Whilst retail is an important part of the town centre mix and WTC's strength, the place needs to be much more than shopping. People who visit the town centre would need a wider range of reasons to be there, such as to visit cafés, restaurants, pubs, community hub, library, events and market and of course walking and cycling. There are social factors too that bring people to the town centre to come together, meet friends, join community activities or just simply enjoy sitting and watching other activities going on.

- 3.3.11 Shopping has become just one of a range of activities rather than the sole purpose of visits to town and district centres. Given the review of the current offer at WTC and in order to stay relevant to all, the town centre needs to widen its offer, to include more leisure, food & drink, office, business, and supportive developments such as housing. It also needs to ensure that these would provide for everyone. The future mix of uses at WTC needs to be much more diverse and inclusive than it is today, and should be set within attractive and walkable spaces and places that take account of everyone's needs.

Consumer and business perception

Visitor experience

- 3.3.12 Westhoughton has many positive aspects that support implementation of a high quality, coherent and people-oriented public realm which would support walking and cycling. The town has a good quality, historic building

5 Gfirst & ATCM: successful town centres – developing effective strategies, <https://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/Successful-Town-Centres.pdf>

fabric. It has a legible network of different streets with good spatial containment and a mix of uses within a compact walkable core. There are however a number of key issues relating to the existing public realm. The car-dominated transport network on the edge of the high street discourages walking and cycling in and around the town centre and the poor quality of public realm on the high street side-roads connecting Market Street to Pavilion Square is not necessarily encouraging trips to the town centre by foot or bike.

3.3.13 The quality of building frontage, street furniture and lighting is poor in relation to the town's historic background and performance as a local centre in the borough. The town lacks the variety of places for people to socialise and relax and has few street trees and planting.

3.3.14 On the high street itself, lack of south-facing outdoor seating area impacts footfall and spend (both time and money) in the town centre. This coupled with the poor pedestrian and cyclists experience on the main road and the link roads connecting Market Street to retail centre at Pavilion Square, poor linkages with council carparks and limited short-stay parking gives rise to decline in some parts of the town centre which otherwise would attract customers and visitors.

Crime and safety perception

3.3.15 The healthy district concept is not just about putting more uses on the high street. It is also about management and control. The collective and active management of the district centre in the evening and night time can also impact visitor confidence, improve perception of the

area, prevent crime and disorders, and provide a healthy trading environment for a range of businesses and providers who operate at night.

Economic and characteristics

Vacant retail

3.3.16 Empty shops are a challenge for high street. High levels of vacancy in town centres result in declining footfall and overall town centre decline. The rising vacancy rate underlines the importance of diversifying the range of offers on high street, introducing new uses that could support the local economy and vibrancy of the town centre and making the most of the digital technology to bring more footfall into the high street.

3.3.17 In Westhoughton, one of the most relevant issues in creating a high street that remain a vibrant place to visit is how unoccupied vacant land and (retail) space can be brought back into use, or put to alternative uses compatible with the aspirations and environment of the area as a whole. This of course then raises the question over the potential demand for additional floor space and that what this means for the future development pipeline.

3.3.18 Currently a number of vacant sites within the boundaries of the town centre have created a fragmented fabric in the area, resulting in disjointed feeling to some parts of the town centre. These sites include the Gaiety site on Market Street, the Sillcocks site on Mill Street and land adjacent to Sainsbury's. There is also vacancy across the above shop units, though this is not a pressing issue in this town centre. The Town Hall will also be vacant once the

public services leave the building.

3.3.19 In a challenging retail environment there is a need to stitch the fragmented fabric of the town centre together, and diversify the mix of uses on the high street and the surrounding context through introducing additional floorspace which can support the vibrancy of the town centre and the local economy.

Evening/night time economy

3.3.20 The majority of town centres (or at least parts of them) do not go to sleep after the last shop closes for the day. They often have evening and night time economies, which may vary in size and character from one location to another. In some areas, this section of the economy forms a crucial part of the service offer. In many cases, the town centre attracts a completely different demographic of customer with different needs and expectations in the evenings, to those who visit the high street during day time. It is also worth distinguishing between the evening consumer (5-8 pm) and late night, which again can have quite different demographics⁶.

3.3.21 In Westhoughton, the focus of the town centre mix of uses to date has been mainly on small scale daytime economy, with little attention paid to the leisure and evening economy. The evening economy in Westhoughton is currently limited to the conventional hot food & drink offer on Market Street and national brands at the edge of Pavilion Square.



Market Street is somewhat a quiet high street with not much passing trade



Pedestrian routes linking Market Street to Pavilion Square could be made more attractive



Remodelling of Market Street can benefit visitors, shoppers, traders and businesses



Car parking quantity, quality and control is an issue in Westhoughton



Public realm in some parts has potential to be improved



The vacant sites in and around the town centre provide development opportunities to diversify town centre offer

3.4 Identified needs

3.4.1 Ensuring the vitality of Westhoughton town centre is a priority for Bolton Council. The Council has played a leading role in promoting a positive vision for the town centre, bringing together stakeholders and supporting sustainable economic and employment growth in the area. This is in line with the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advice which requires local planning authorities to consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on individual town centres, and how the planning tools available to the local authorities can support necessary adaptation and change.

3.4.2 The PPG also identifies a wide range of complementary uses such as residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development necessary to support the vitality of town centres. The same is true of temporary activities such as 'pop ups', which will often benefit from permitted development rights. Residential development in particular can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of town centres, giving communities easier access to a range of services. Given their close proximity to transport networks and local shops and services, local authorities may wish to consider locating specialist housing for different groups including older people within town centres or edge of centre locations.

3.4.3 Based on the assessment of the Westhoughton town centre performance provided in Section 3.2, the following investment needs have been identified in the area:

- Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area;

- Supporting change of use including delivery of housing;
- Investment in physical infrastructure;
- Acquisition and assembly of land including to support new housing and public realm; and
- Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology.

3.4.4 A detailed overview of each development theme is provided below. These themes have underpinned the masterplan's KDPs which are detailed later in Section 6 of this report.

Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area

3.4.5 The promotion of sustainable and active travel makes an important part of Bolton local plan. The Borough's Core Strategy's strategic objective 1 seeks to increase opportunities for walking and cycling in the borough whilst strategic objective 9 seeks to improve road safety through good design. The local plan also includes policies and supplementary planning guidance that focus on accessibility, transport and design. Policy P5 of the Core Strategy in particular requires developments to promote accessibility by different types of transport, prioritising pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, whilst Policy TC11 requires public realm to achieve a high standard of design which exhibits safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. On a regional level, the Greater Manchester Made-to-Move strategy and its proposed Bee Network also attempt to open up urban spaces, so they are more permeable to people who wish to adopt active travel choices.

3.4.6 As presented within the masterplan baseline studies, Market Street, the main spine of Westhoughton town centre as well as Bolton Road, Mill Street and Cricketer's Way face congestion at times which severs at peak times and do not particularly provide for users of sustainable modes of transport such as pedestrian and cyclists. There is a need to improve accessibility, traffic flow and circulation in the area.

3.4.7 The masterplan also recognises the need to make provision for enough car parking space for the future users in the area. Whilst transport is rapidly shifting towards more sustainable modes, it is believed that in whatever form transport takes in the future, the use of personal vehicles such as electric or hydrogen fuelled cars will be inevitable and may increase due to the newer generation of sustainable fuelled vehicles having no impact on the air quality. There will also be a blurring of boundaries with bicycles and scooters becoming electric powered which will make faster, but heavier and larger in size vehicles that will be in conflict with pedestrians. This highlights the need for forward thinking and making provision for sufficient space for parking and storing vehicles.

Supporting change of use including delivery of housing

3.4.8 The change of use including housing delivery supports the proposed new uses in the town centre. This could include change of use of buildings, as well as introducing new uses within new buildings where land is available.

3.4.9 When introducing new uses, there is need to recognise the different customer demographic for both day time and evening economy, and make provisions for attracting sufficient footfall to both. For example, new housing if

sensitively and appropriately located in the town centre could support commercial, retail, community and public services during the day and food & drink and restaurants during the evening.

3.4.10 More recently, the value of town centre living as part of mixed-use town centre development has been recognised, in particular as more retail investors and shop owners are taking a diverse approach to their assets. It is considered that revitalising high street through well planned and designed residential developments is a substantial factor to rejuvenate the area, which is also in line with diversification of the town centre, through non-retail uses which would subsequently improve footfall for retail and businesses. The mixed use element of such schemes can include any mix of town centre uses including community, commercial, health and education, business and food & drink.

3.4.11 It is also important to consider the local character and distinctiveness of the place in any physical intervention in the area. This could include the height and scale of the building, design and appearance as well as materials.

Investment in physical infrastructure

3.4.12 Relevant to the need for diversification of WTC uses and improving the transport network, there is need for physical regeneration of the town centre in order to support the increase in the number of town centre homes, business investment and community facilities.

3.4.13 There is also a need to revitalise public realm within the areas surrounding the core of WTC mainly along Market Street and the pedestrian links that connect the main town centre uses to the edge of centre retail at Pavilion Square.

Acquisition and assembly of land including to support new housing and public realm

3.4.14 Relevant to above points, any comprehensive scheme for bringing forward meaningful improvements to the town centre would require acquisition of land, or a collaborative approach public / private sector approach.

3.4.15 There are currently a number of opportunity sites within the town centre that can be used to invest in more up-to-date infrastructure, housing and improvements in the public realm. These include the Gaiety site, land off Mill Street and Land adjacent Sainsbury's car park.

Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology

3.4.16 Healthy high streets have economic and social value and are worth saving. These usually include small and medium enterprises and businesses that reside on high streets and play an important role in the prosperity of the local economy. Recent changes to shopping habits and the ever growing dominant role of digital technology has made it essential for the high streets to make every effort to adapt to the recent digital innovations, in order to continue to survive and create value. To support the adaptation of the high street in Westhoughton to the digital technology, the following recommendations by Digital High Street Advisory Board ⁷ can be considered as principles to follow:

- Sufficient access through infrastructure including raising infrastructure and connectivity standards;
- Eliminate the current gap in digital skills in communities to ensure that all digitally capable residents and businesses have the basic digital skills;
- Centralise the aggregation of generally available technologies, digital applications, tools, methods and training programmes, in order to provide a platform for digital consumer services on behalf of the local authority, high street businesses and charities;
- Adopt the High Street Digital Health Index ⁸ concept as a resource to assess the competitiveness of the high street community and understand the key measures of economic value creation from digital developments. It also requires inspiring the local authority and private sector to make positive changes.

⁷ Digital High Street Advisory Board: Digital High Street 2020 Report: https://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/pdf/Digital_High_Street_Report/The-Digital-High-Street-Report-2020.pdf?1582546035
⁸ Great British High Street: <https://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/research-reports/digital-high-street-report-2020>



4. Strategic Ambition

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Through a series of stakeholders and public engagements, the council, local stakeholders and residents have worked together to develop a strategic and ambitious masterplan for Westhoughton town centre and a shared vision for the area which underpins the development strategy for the district centre.

4.1.2 This section summarises findings of the engagements to date and outlines the vision for WTC

4.2 Aspirations for Westhoughton

Bolton Council aspirations

4.2.1 During the baseline stage, the Council's Stakeholders engaged in the process included representatives from highways, libraries, parks, public services and land & property. A series of objectives and aspirations emerged from the meetings with the Council's Stakeholders team. These have been considered in formulation of the vision and development strategy for WTC, which is presented later in this section. The Council aspirations for WTC is summarised below:

- Development of a car parking strategy to include improvements to the quality of car parks as well as a better control over long-stay car parking in and around the town centre;
- Provision of high quality, attractive and safe environments for everyone e.g. Market Street facelift scheme; environmental improvements to Central Park and upgrading key pedestrian links;
- Particular focus on provision of pedestrian and cycle-friendly routes within the town centre;
- Improved residential offer of all types for all ages,

where appropriate; taking account of the area's housing needs and the requirement of GMSF for promoting Greater Manchester's local centres as great places to live;

- Improved connectivity to and across the town centre to include safer walking & cycling, a more widely used public transport, and better digital connectivity;
- Meeting needs and aspirations of all ages through introducing intergenerational spaces; and
- Creating a sense of place and pride for all residents of the town, so everyone is proud of Westhoughton and would love for it to thrive.

Westhoughton Town Centre Steering Group aspirations

4.2.2 Westhoughton Town centre Steering Group including stakeholders and businesses were also engaged with throughout the masterplanning process. The following points emerged from the discussions which have also been considered in developing and finalising the masterplan:

- Calming traffic congestion along the town centre's main roads and improving both short and long stay car parking;
- Improving pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure within the town centre and in connection with the surrounding catchment areas for a stronger regional connectivity, in line with the Bee Network proposals in Westhoughton;
- Diversifying the retail offer at the town centre to include a wider range of small shops and independent businesses for a wider range of town centre offers;
- Retaining and re-utilising Town Hall building once the current services are re-located;
- Maximising the potential of Central Park by enhancing

connectivity to and safety within the park;

- Enhancing character and appearance of the area by improving public realm, street furniture and shop frontages for a more attractive town centre environment;
- Improving town centre gateways, signage and interpretations, in particular from the junctions at Cricketers Way as well as Church Street/Wigan Road to make visitors aware of the town centre offer and facilities; and
- Making provision for people of all ages, in particular young people.

Westhoughton community aspirations

4.2.3 An important part of the masterplanning has been to engage with local residents and businesses to discuss the purpose of the masterplan and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to influence and play part in the development of the masterplan vision.

4.2.4 To ensure that local people and other relevant stakeholders had the opportunity to influence change in the town centre, Bolton Council ran a public consultation period from 20 January 2020 to 23 February 2020, with two drop-in sessions being held on 12 and 15 February. A total of 159 completed questionnaires were collected with around 160 attendees at drop-in sessions.

- 4.2.5 Through engagement with the public, the following recurring themes of aspiration for Westhoughton town centre has emerged:
- Majority of participants agreed that safer pedestrian routes and enhanced lighting in the town centre would increase safety and attractiveness;
 - Participants agreed that a new use for the Town Hall can maximise the potential of this heritage asset;
 - Many people said they may support new housing such as homes for elderly people or development on brownfield sites, provided provision of infrastructure will be taken into account;
 - Majority of people said they would like to see increased use of Carnegie Hall for events;
 - Majority of participants agreed that a car parking strategy and stronger enforcement is needed in the area.

4.3 Market opportunity

- 4.3.1 The baseline review of potential market opportunities and town centre uses identified areas for growth in Westhoughton as highlighted below. These opportunities are in line with the deficiencies identified in Section 3: Setting out the Challenges, and reflect the aspirations of residents, local businesses and stakeholders. The range of market opportunities and uses identified for Westhoughton are listed below:
- **Residential** – Westhoughton is an active area for house building, with multiple schemes underway and larger schemes in the development pipeline. These include 41 homes at land off Collingwood Way and 131 dwellings at Roscoe’s Farm, north of the Town Centre, with the first 19 houses being scheduled for completion by end of 2020. It is noted that the majority of dwellings in the pipeline are larger

semi/detached houses, with the smaller, affordable dwellings offer being limited. Bolton as a borough requires to bring about housing development of some 2,500-3,750 homes in the boroughs ‘outer areas’ by the end of local plan. Given the focus of GMSF on local centres for development of new houses, the market opportunity identified for housing is considered to comply with local and regional policies.

- **Retail** – The strong established food, hot food and evening economy offer and a large and diverse comparison offer as well as the recent growth in the number of bars and pubs/restaurants indicates support from local investors. Westhoughton now has a stronger evening economy than many of its neighbours. This is a positive aspect that can be built upon.
- **Leisure, Gym and Hot food** – Westhoughton’s good historic retention of leisure spending makes Westhoughton attractive to leisure operators. This is an area of growth that could help further diversify the range of town centre offer.
- **Office** – There is evidence of ongoing demand for smaller serviced offices, from the self employed and micro businesses, particularly from home-based businesses, looking for their first offices.

4.4 A Shared vision for the town centre

- 4.4.1 The key elements drawn from the evidence base studies together with the outcomes of the public and stakeholder engagements have driven the formulation of a shared vision for Westhoughton town centre. The shared vision for the town centre is:

‘Westhoughton’s historic Market Street, from St Bartholomew’s Church to the Town Hall, is

the heart of the town centre. The vision for Westhoughton promotes better use of Market Street, improving the pedestrian and visitor experience through public realm investment and encouraging new town centre uses for underutilised sites and premises, from shops and cafes to managed workspace and offices. Better pedestrian connections to surrounding assets such as Central Park, the Leisure Centre and the shops and car parks of Pavilion Square and along Cricketers Way will encourage visitors to walk and cycle whilst a parking strategy will respond to the needs of car-based users.’

4.5 Westhoughton Regeneration Strategy

- 4.5.1 In order to respond to the aspirations of the public and stakeholders, a strategy has been developed to underpin the long-term regeneration of Westhoughton town centre which will benefit the current and future residents and businesses in the area:

Market Street – the healthy heart of Westhoughton town centre

- Creating outdoor places for people to sit, meet, have a drink or a meal, particularly focusing on the south facing properties on Market Street;
- Minimising the impact of vehicles on Market Street whilst retaining access for all vehicles, though remodelling and discouragement of through traffic;
- Healthy streets for active lifestyles including a green pedestrian and cycle routes through the town centre and connecting with the park, schools and leisure centre, perhaps as part of the Greater Manchester Bee Network of cycle routes;

- Bringing forward new development on the Gaiety site to address this eyesore in the heart of the town centre;
- Finding new uses for the underutilised Town Hall building.

Shop local – Supporting and promoting local businesses

- Support for local and artisan shops that provide goods you need and complement the larger shops – making it possible to do more of shopping locally;
- Developing a car parking strategy to ensure better short-stay car parking availability through short stay parking designations and limiting long stay car parking in the town centre.

Going out in Westhoughton - The evening economy

- Improving access to and use of the Carnegie Hall;
- Shops that stay open into the evening;
- Daytime cafes transforming into evening restaurants;
- Seasonal events programme;
- Incorporating lighting into public realm designs;
- Car parking strategy to encourage evening visitors.

Westhoughton Business

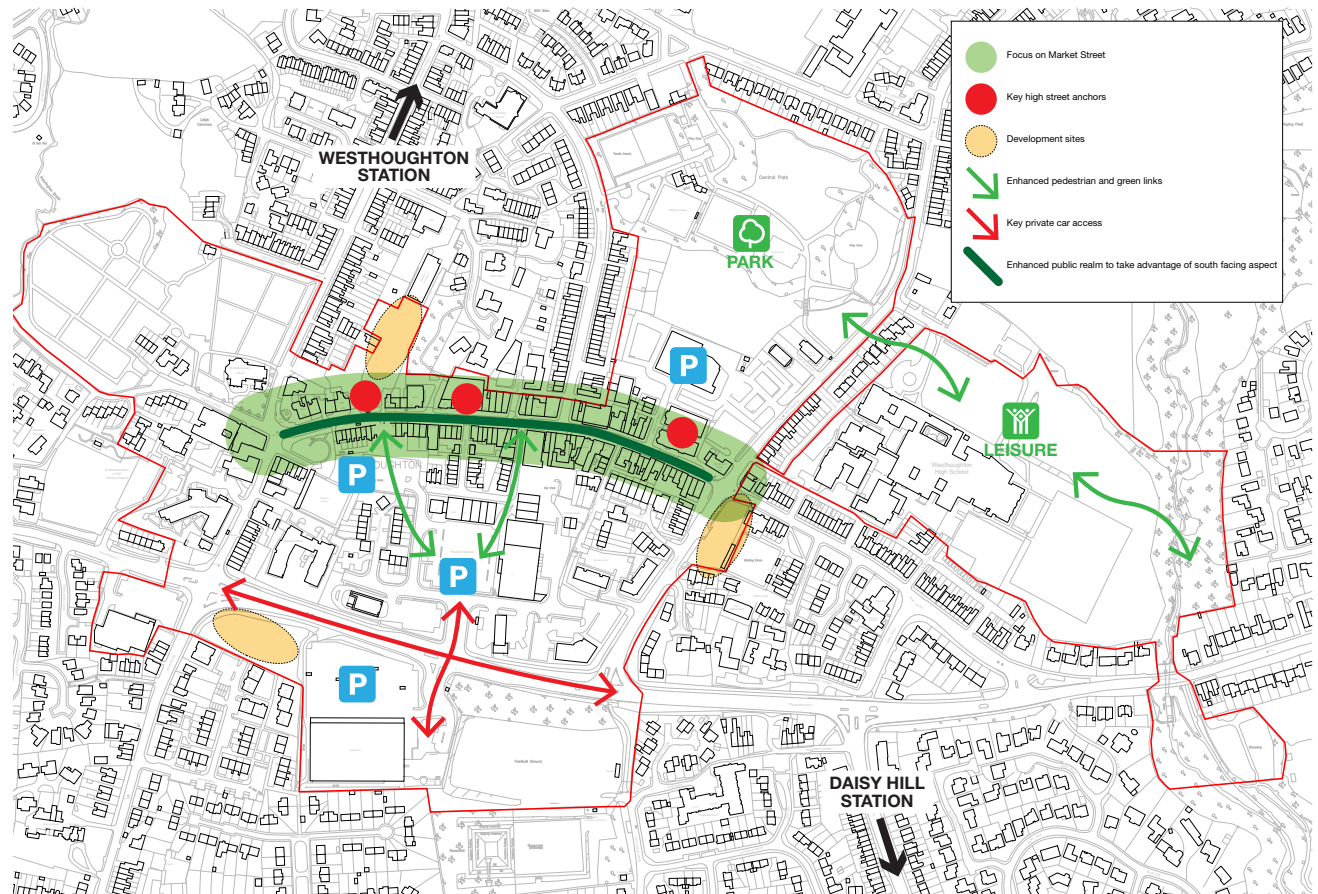
- Promoting Westhoughton as an attractive place for start-up and small businesses with town centre facilities on the doorstep and convenient access across the city region by road and rail.
- Creating the Westhoughton ‘app’ containing everything you need to know, with updates on events, special offers, and the facility to place orders and make reservations.

A living town centre

- Promoting Westhoughton as an attractive place to live, with a wider range of town centre facilities and excellent access to employment opportunities locally and across Greater Manchester.

4.5.2 Figure 4.1 below illustrates the strategy for regeneration of Westhoughton town centre.

Figure 4.1 Westhoughton town centre regeneration strategy diagram



Source: BDP



ospice

Empire 2
www.2.com

STANLEY

Black car with yellow license plate

Clock tower

5. Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan

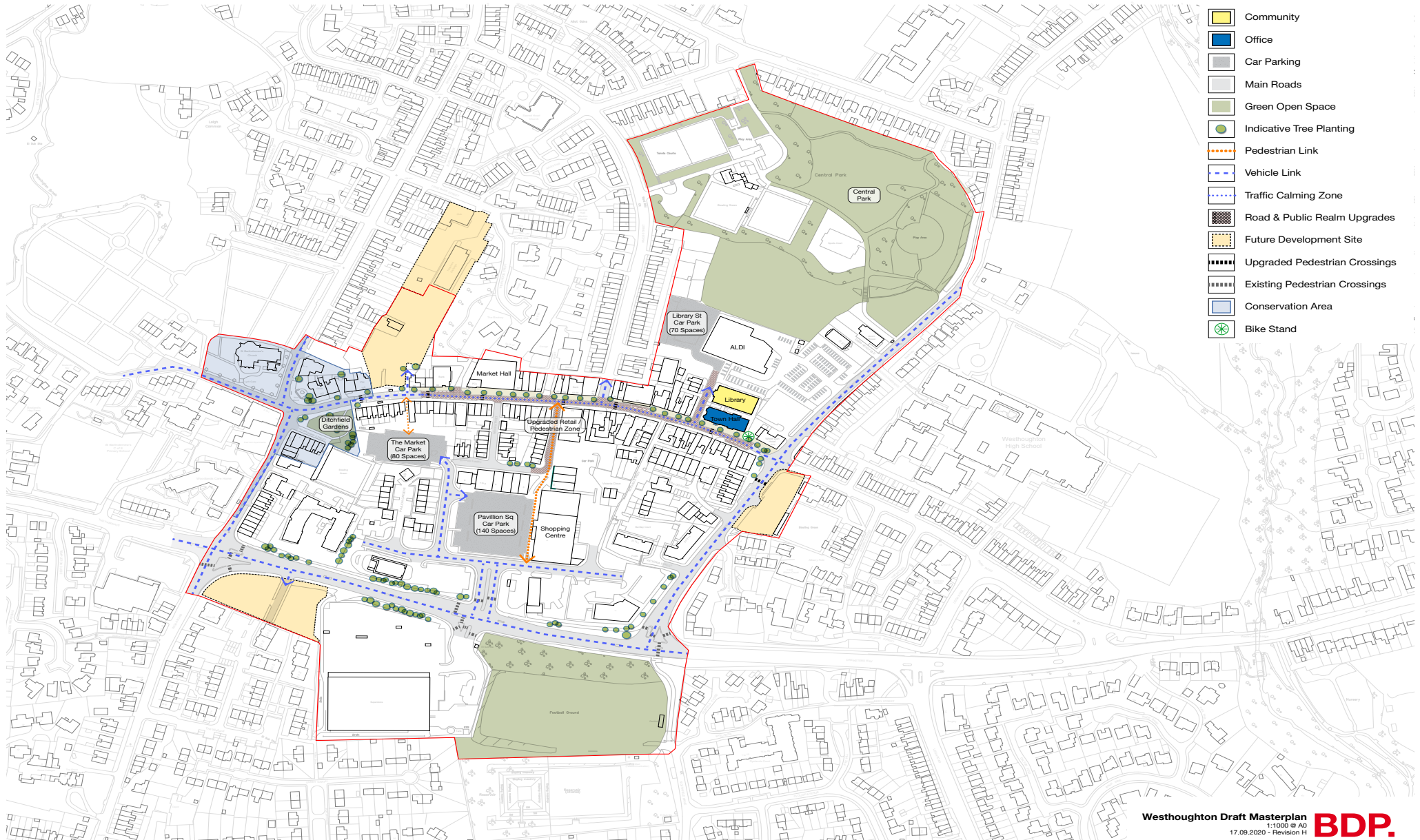
5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section of the report sets out the masterplan for the town centre. This is accompanied with images of exemplar developments that illustrate the masterplan aspirations for Westhoughton.

5.2 Final Masterplan

- 5.2.1 The final masterplan responds to the issues set out in the Stage 1: Baseline report and reflects the objectives of the Council and the aspirations of stakeholders including the Westhoughton community. The masterplan incorporates a number of key development projects with supporting public realm and townscape improvement strategies, which when implemented, will underpin the transformation of the town centre. These are set out in more detail in Section 6.

Figure 5.1: Westhoughton town centre final masterplan



Exemplar 1: Managed Workspace



Exemplar 2: Pedestrian links and public realm



Exemplar 3: Street remodelling



Westhoughton Market

Open Tues, Thurs, Fri and Sat 9am - 5pm

Bolton Markets



Westhoughton Market

Westhoughton Market

BETTY BIRD

FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Makin Memories
with artificial flowers &
Personalised gifts

FRESH
FLOWERS



LOW
PEI

WE'RE
OPEN

GREEN

6. Key Development Proposals

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Seven KDPs have emerged which hold the key to bringing forward the masterplan’s ambitions. These include the following:
- KDP1: Remodelling along Market Street
 - KDP2: Upgrading key pedestrian links
 - KDP3: Redevelopment of Town Hall
 - KDP4: Refurbishment of Carnegie Hall and improvements to the access with Library
 - KDP5: Improvement to Central Park
 - KDP6: Car parking strategy

6.1.2 The identified KDPs are expected to contribute to the long-term transformation of the town centre. These key interventions are linked to the investment needs that were identified in Section 3.3. The key development proposals were shared with Westhoughton Stakeholders and the public and the feedback received has been considered in finalising the masterplan proposals.

6.2 Key Development Proposals

6.2.1 A description of the KDPs, the case for each project and requirements for the delivery of these interventions is provided below:

KDP1: Remodelling along Market Street

6.2.2 The key development proposal links to the following identified needs:

- Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area;
- Investment in physical infrastructure; and
- Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology.

6.2.3 Market Street is the heart of Westhoughton and is a focus for the community and visitors to the town centre. In general terms, WTC functions well as a local centre, however there are opportunities to improve pedestrian accessibility and the shopping/leisure experience in the area. This can be achieved through wider public realm areas to allow outdoor seating, and enhance the areas of trade for cafes, bars and other leisure/evening economy businesses, which would encourage people to linger in the town centre and spend more time in the area. KDP1 therefore seeks a comprehensive improvement along Market Street, to enhance visitor experience and the local economy. The indicative extent of the suggested improvements is shown on Figure 6.1.

6.2.4 The Masterplan suggested approach - whilst purely indicative - will retain two-way traffic on Market Street, but include selective road narrowing to create larger areas of public realm (pedestrian areas), particularly on Town Hall / Market side which would enable businesses to take advantage of the sunny aspect and spill out onto the street. This would provide an opportunity to slow down the passing traffic and increase road users safety, provide pedestrian and cyclist permeability whilst also creating a new setting for public amenity spaces that help bring people together.

6.2.5 New key spaces can be provided in front of the indoor

market, between Queen Street and King Street and in front of the shops to the east of the Co-op foodstore, with the pedestrian links stretching to the public car park on Library Street. A bike stand can also be provided on the highway in front of Town Hall or land between the Town Hall and Library.

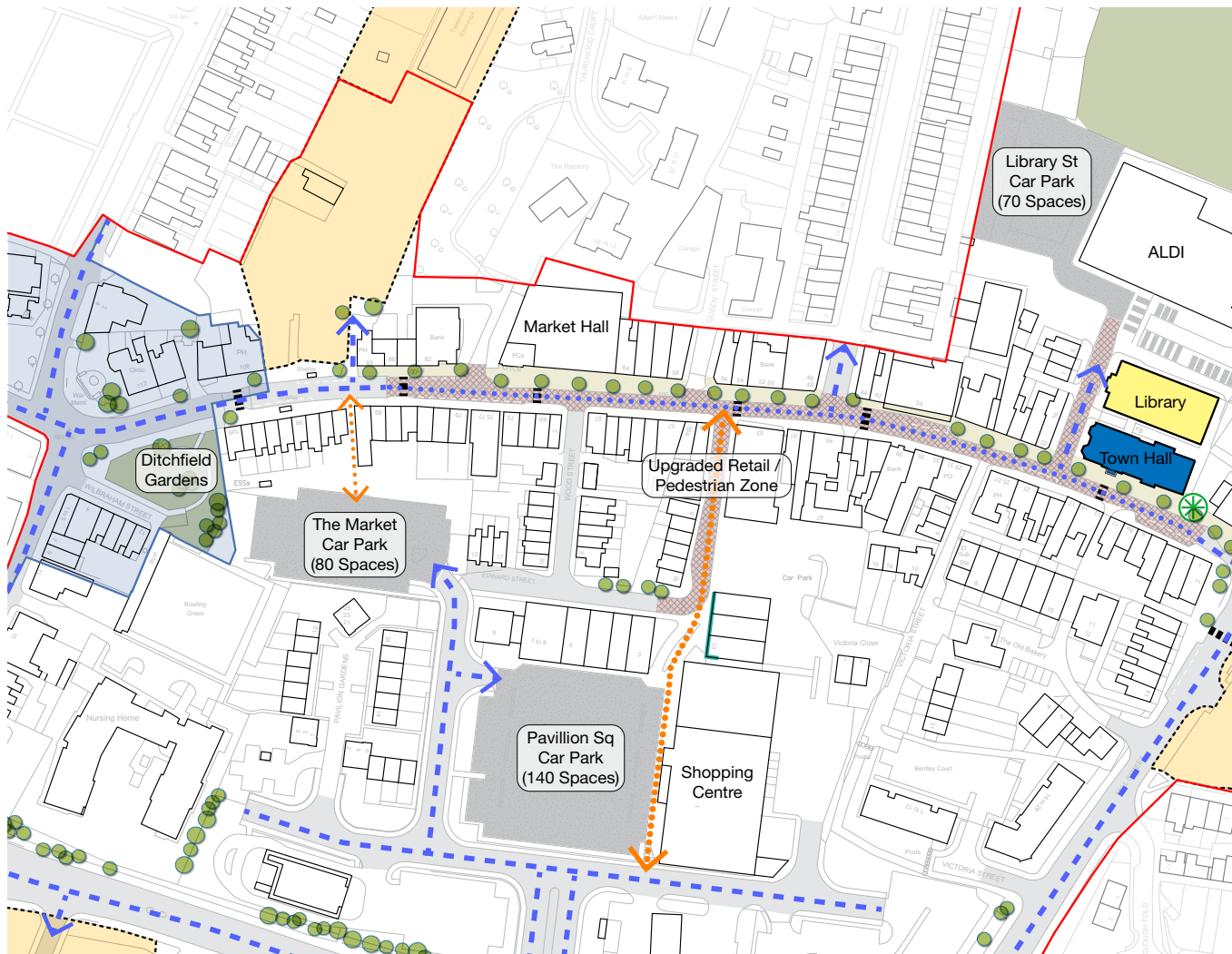
6.2.6 The Greater Manchester’s cycling and walking infrastructure proposals (Beelines) which sets out the Greater Manchester strategy to deliver more people-friendly streets is a catalyst for positive changes to how the streets throughout the borough are used to promote healthy lifestyles. As part of the strategy, it is proposed to re-allocate existing wide carriageway along A676 Wigan Road linking Bolton and Westhoughton, to create segregated cycleway, reducing rat-running and prioritising every day walking & cycling for local trips. There is potential to link this KDP’s proposals to the wider Beelines that are proposed in Bolton.

6.2.7 In addition, one of the COVID-19 long term implications for the structure of cities has been the introduction of measures which promote re-allocation of more space to people traveling by foot and bicycles. This new approach not only allows for social distancing, but also promotes healthier lifestyles. Bolton Council’s strategy for temporary road closures is assumed to provide an opportunity to see how Market Street’s space can be used when traffic is taken out.

6.2.8 It should be noted that the masterplan proposals are illustrative and if remodelling along market Street is taken forward, a number of options will be developed and tested to identify a preferred scheme for improvement works along Market Street.

6.2.9 The proposed extent of KDP1 is shown in figure 6.1 overleaf.

Figure 6.1: KDP1: remodelling along Market Street



Source: BDP

6.2.10 Figure 6.2 shows the details of the suggested remodelling works. Working from west of Market Street to the east, sections of on-street parking/loading are shown between Wigan Road and the market. There is currently no on-street car parking or loading on this section of the road and the proposal is intended to offer the same opportunity to capture passing trade as exists for those at the east end.

6.2.11 The suggested approach also includes removing the existing road humps – through which the carriageway has been slightly narrowed - to maximise the opportunity to provide on street parking and loading. The disruption to two-way traffic flow created by the parking/servicing bays and exiting bus stops would replace the traffic calming benefits of the humps.

6.2.12 To the east, two lengths of wider foot-way are proposed, to the west of Kings Street and the west of Library Street. The section to the west of Kings Street is outside the Provenance Food Hall. There are existing loading bays on both these sections of road so the proposals for this end of the street include the provision of a new loading bay outside the Co-op store and which in turn requires the eastbound bus stop to be relocated outside the Town Hall.

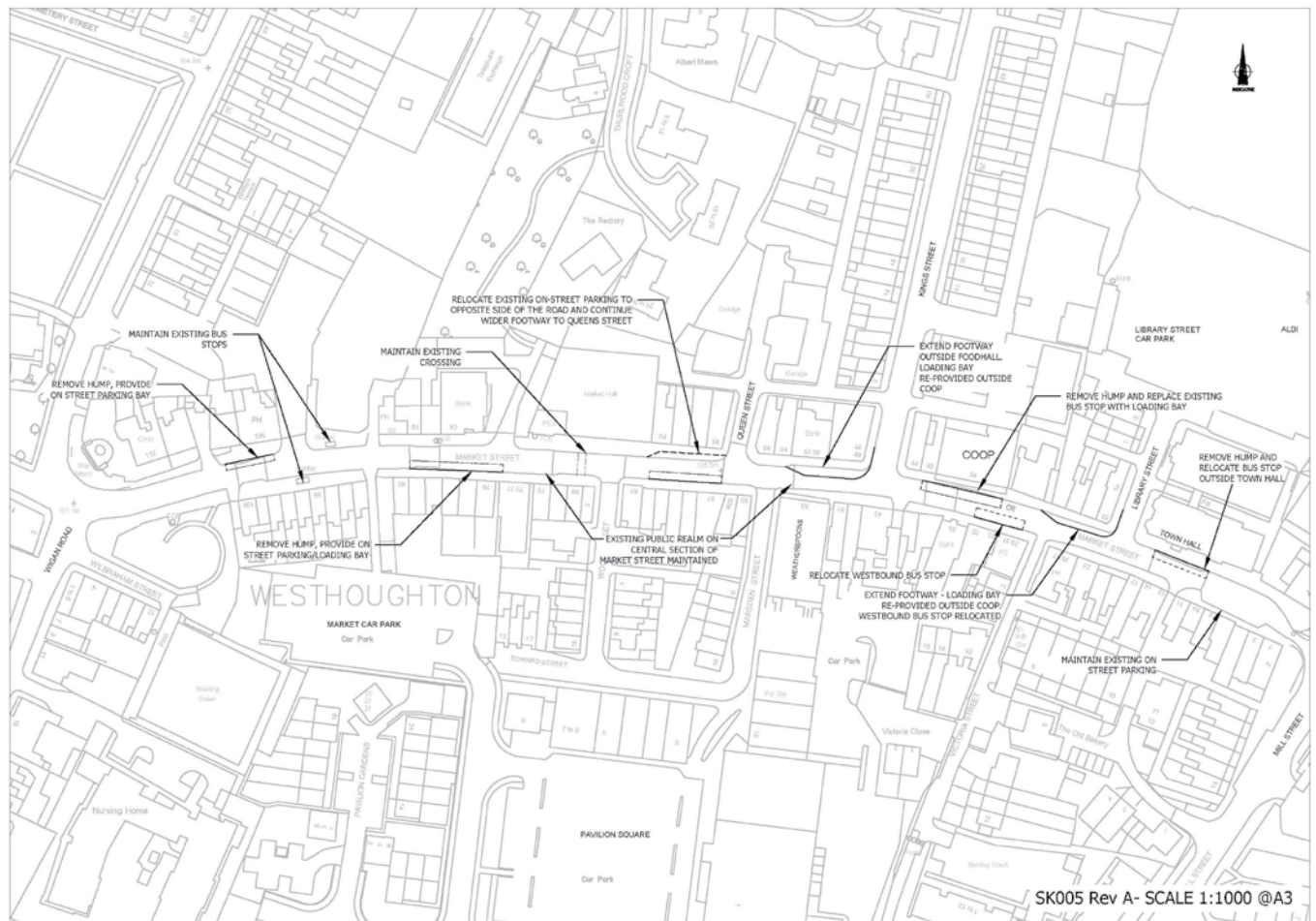
6.2.13 The wider foot-way to the west of Library Street requires the westbound bus stop to be relocated and it is proposed to relocate this to the other side of Victoria Street.

- 6.2.14 In terms of the extent of public realm works it is considered that the following would be required:-
- Maintenance of the existing central section and repaving of existing parking bays
 - The level of work suggested on the northside of the eastern end of the street including the two sections of wider foot-way would mean the whole northern foot-way from Queen Street to Mill Street should be repaved and the carriageway resurfaced. The southern foot-way could remain as is with kerbing locally modified where the speed humps are removed.
 - At the western end, the kerbing, foot-way and carriageway could be locally “patched” where the speed humps are removed.

Town centre’s digital strategy

- 6.2.15 If there is an opportunity in the future to develop a digital strategy for the town centre, then consideration could be given to the development of a town centre ‘app’ that provides a portal for town centre businesses and visitors, including opportunities for online retailing, notifications of events and services, leisure centre timetables and café menus and even live data on relevant bus services and car parking availability’. This could be led by the Council, setting up a template for Horwich (and other town centres in the borough) to use and support this with IT infrastructure and technical advice. Equally the town centre stakeholders could set this up, funding it through advertising revenues.

Figure 6.2: detailed highways works



Source: CBO Transport

KDP2: Upgrading key pedestrian links

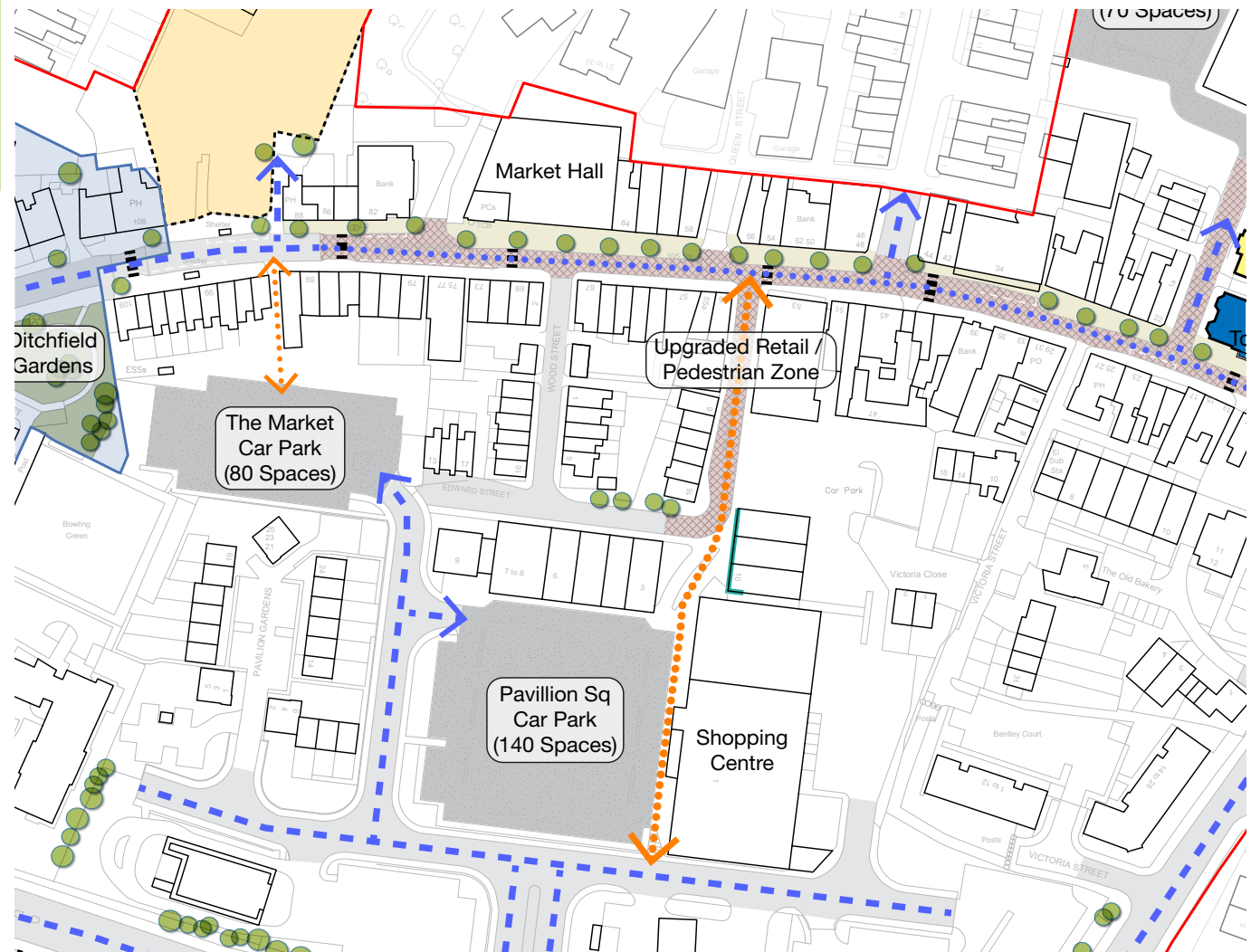
6.2.16 The key development proposal links to the following identified needs:

- Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area; and
- Investment in physical infrastructure.

6.2.17 The proposed project would involve improving the public realm (pedestrian areas) of Library Street, Marsden Street and the pedestrian link to the town centre market car park from Market Street. The aim is to make these routes more pedestrian friendly, through pavement improvements and lighting where possible. It is also proposed to enhance the public realm and the experience of the space along Marsden Street and town centre market car park through including business premises / shopfront improvements which will improve surveillance and animation of the routes. In the case of the car park this could also include the rear of premises and underutilised rear gardens/storage areas adjoining the pedestrian link. It is noted that upgrading pedestrian and cyclist links to these destinations increases footfall and would be beneficial for the local economy, as well as health and wellbeing of the residents and visitors.

6.2.18 It is also proposed to reduce or eliminate barriers to permeability of pedestrians and cyclists and install clear and directional signs to the retail and leisure destinations such as Pavilion Square, Aldi and Central Park.

Figure 6.3: KDP2: upgrading key pedestrian links



Source: BDP

KDP3: Redevelopment of Town Hall

6.2.19 The key development proposal links to the following identified needs:

- Supporting change of use; and
- Investment in physical infrastructure.

6.2.20 The Town Hall is a key heritage asset and a landmark in the town centre and there is a strong local community association with the combined Town Hall, Library and Carnegie Hall complex. At the same time the Council's usage of the Town Hall is reducing as part of a wider reorganisation of premises. Market research on the other hand has identified demand for smaller serviced offices in the town, from the self-employed and micro businesses, and in particular from home-based businesses, which look for their first offices in the central location.

6.2.21 This project proposes refurbishment and conversion of surplus space (some 840sqm) into a managed workspace development, providing space for small business and 'start-up' space for new businesses. A ground floor café would serve the businesses and also be open to the public.

6.2.22 The project seeks to ensure the long-term viability and protection of the building. As the Town Hall is already partly in office use, the proposed managed workspace use is considered as a desirable re-use option, which could be brought forwards with limited internal alterations, though a comprehensive refurbishment is also an option. The proposed café will ensure that the premises serves the wider community and contributes to the commercial offer of the WTC.

6.2.23 There is also opportunity for exploring options to retain an element of civic/community use within the building.

6.2.24 The Town Hall building and uses have a close relationship with the adjacent Library / Carnegie Hall services. KDP4 proposals (see following pages) relate to refurbishment of Carnegie Hall and improvements to the access with Library. It is considered if KDP3 is taken forward, the future option should be developed jointly with KDP4.

Figure 6.4: KDP3: Redevelopment of Town Hall



Source: BDP

KDP4: Refurbishment of Carnegie Hall and improvements to the access with Library

6.2.25 The key development proposal links to the following identified needs:

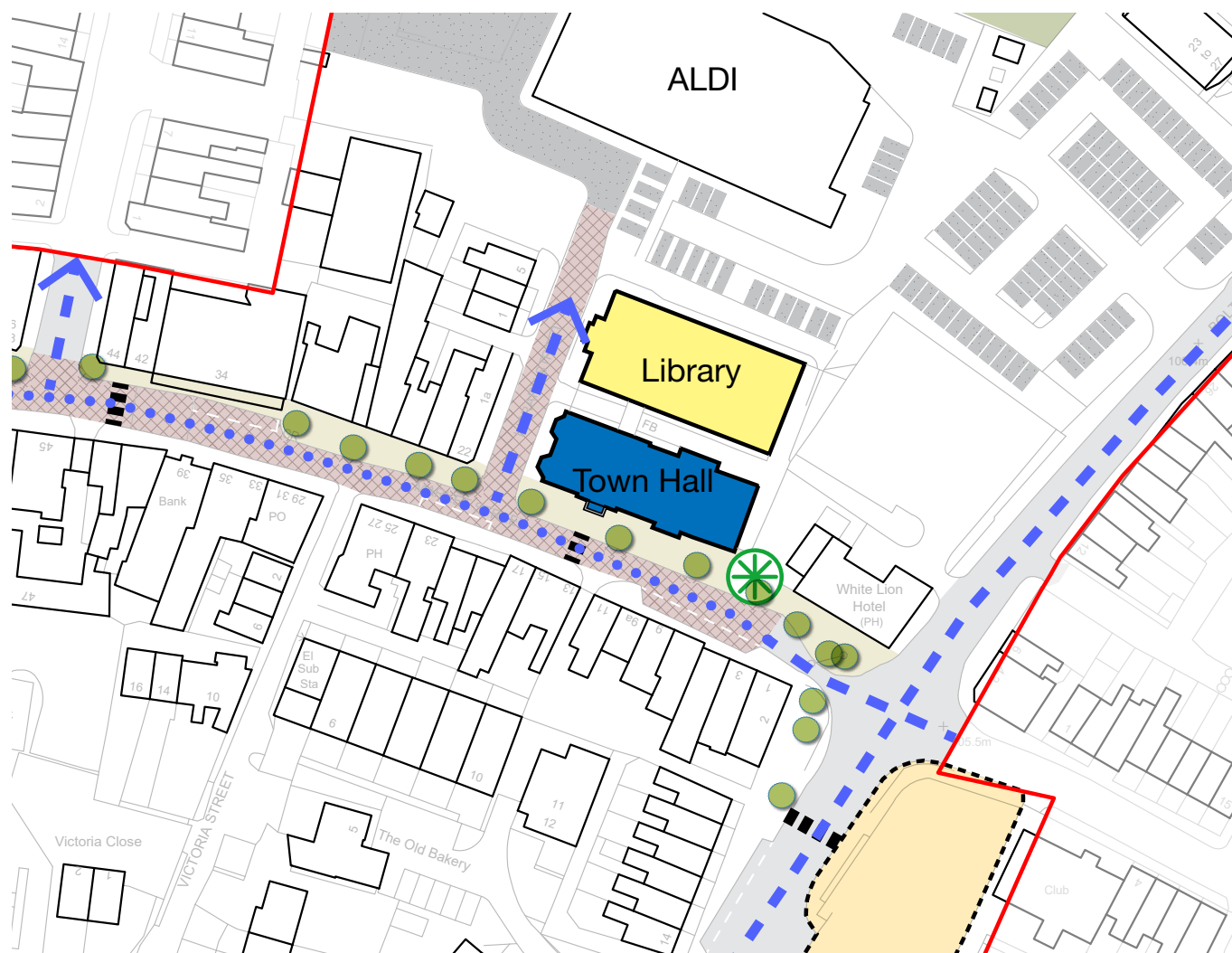
- Investment in physical infrastructure; and
- Supporting change of use.

6.2.26 There is a strong local community association with the combined Town Hall, Library and Carnegie Hall complex. Through the public consultation the community has made it clear that a community use for the hall is desirable. The current building condition and access arrangements are however limiting the potential of the hall to be used for community activities and events.

6.2.27 This KDP proposes refurbishment of the Carnegie Hall to make it suitable for community uses and events. The current access to Carnegie Hall is shared with the library. Under this proposal separate access to the upstairs of the library would also be created to improve safety, security and visitor experience. Improvements to access arrangements at both the library and Carnegie Hall will increase the use of the hall, together with simpler booking arrangements.

6.2.28 As noted in KDP3, the future options for both the Town Hall and Library / Carnegie Hall should be considered jointly, as the buildings and uses are closely related.

Figure 6.5: KDP4: refurbishment of Carnegie Hall and improvements to the access with Library



Source: BDP

KDP5: Improvement to Central Park

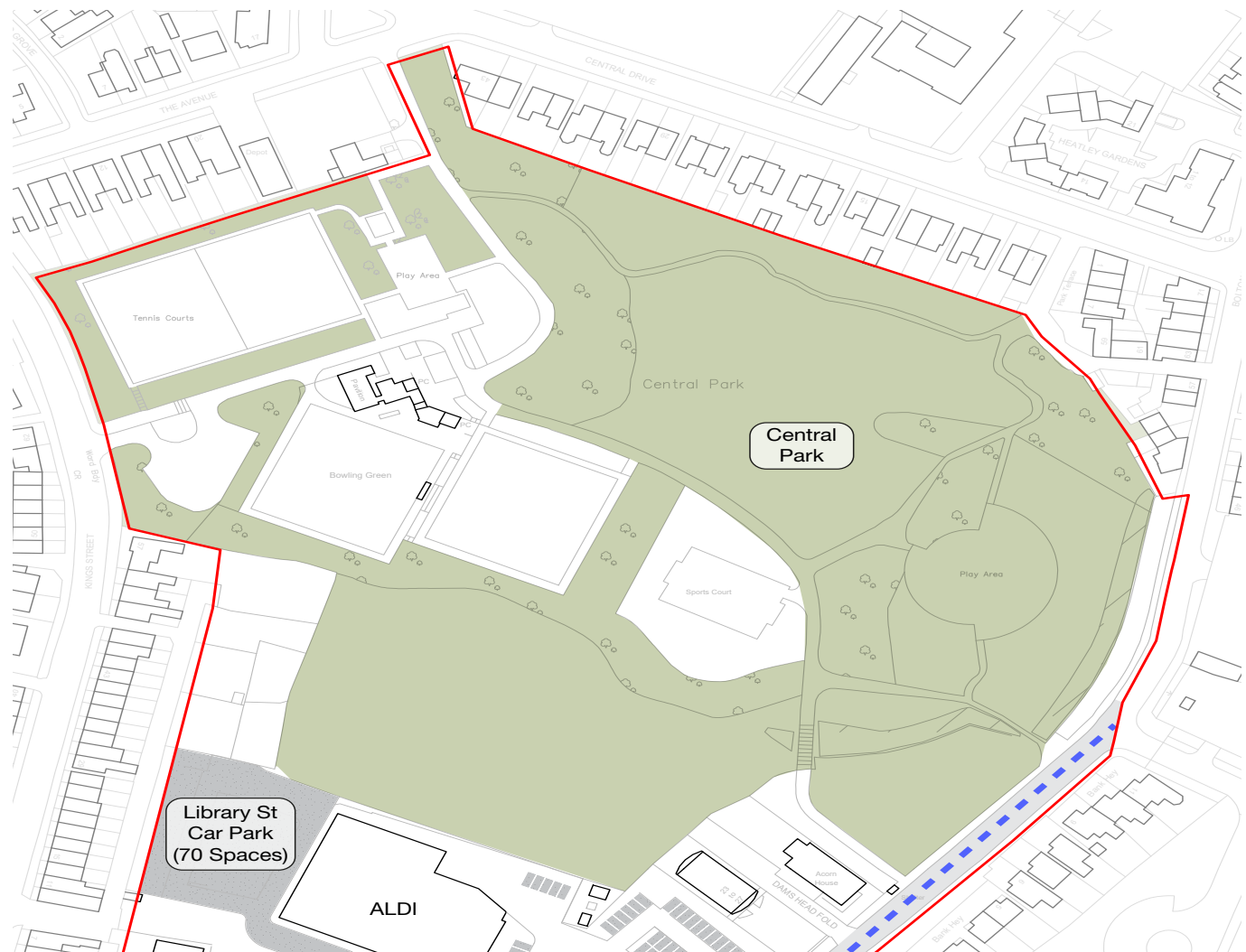
6.2.29 The key development proposal links to the following identified needs:

- Investment in physical infrastructure

6.2.30 Community green spaces provide a wide range of environmental benefits through their effect on biodiversity conservation, negating urban heat and offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, but there's more to the benefits of well-managed community green spaces. Parks and green spaces encourage healthy life styles, by providing residents the space for physical activity and fitness, walking and cycling. They also provide space for contemplation and relaxation which helps enhance mental health and spiritual wellness and allows psychological restoration to take place. Community parks also allow for social interaction which enhances social inclusion and cohesion.

6.2.31 Westhoughton Central Park provides all the above benefits for residents of the town, and has the potential to widen its offer. The park is a sizeable community green space, and its position close to Market Street makes it an accessible town centre asset. It provides the community with a sense of place and belonging, as well as opportunities for recreation, health and fitness. There is opportunity to improve the park, and promote the space for community and social events in order to enhance social inclusion and cohesion within the community. Owing to its position behind Market Street, its size and good accessibility, the park has become an integral part of the town centre which can encourage linked visits to the nearby town centre assets, shops and other services on Market Street, and contribute to increasing footfall to the high street.

Figure 6.6: KDP5 Westhoughton Central Park



Source: BDP

KDP6: Car parking strategy

6.2.32 The key development proposal links to the following identified needs:

- Investment in physical infrastructure

6.2.33 Stakeholders highlight parking as a barrier to further growth in Westhoughton. In public car parking terms, Westhoughton is strongly dependant on the Market Car Park, with limitations on other options. Constrained parking encourages shoppers either to park on private car parks or to go to Sainsbury's and the other food stores only, without making any linked trips to the rest of the town centre.

6.2.34 A Car Parking Strategy will identify and address parking issues, challenges and opportunities in the town centre and identify objectives and approach to parking provision that the Council will take in the long term to provide and manage car parking in Westhoughton.

6.2.35 The car parking strategy should identify guiding principles and policies that will ensure the additional/replacement parking spaces and allocations will continue to support and improve the economic vitality of the town centre, encourage sustainable modes of transport and promote active travel. It should also have regards to minimising potential negative impacts of parking on residential roads and seek to meet changing needs arising from future development of the area as well as the evolving technology.

6.2.36 Physical improvements include enhancing Market car park (including the rear of premises and underutilised rear gardens/storage areas adjoining the pedestrian link), considering parking/charging points for electric vehicles and decking to increase the number of spaces. Business

parking permits could also be considered to ensure local business have the space to accommodate their staff.

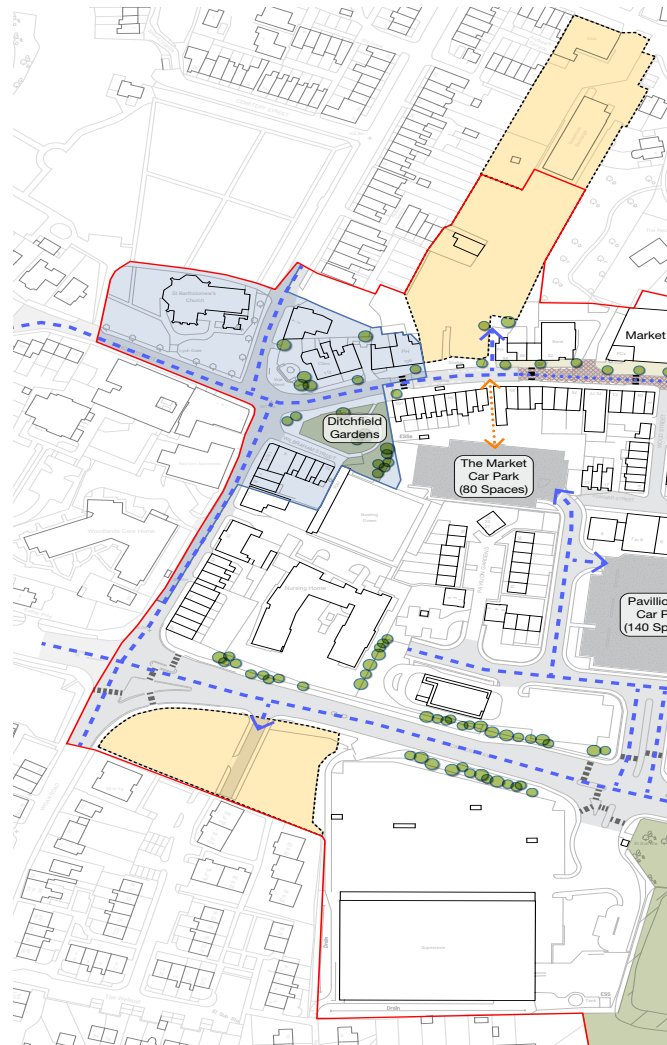
Future Development Sites

6.2.37 There are a number of private and public owned sites that are suitable for future development of a range of town centre uses. These opportunity sites include:

- Gaiety Site (in private ownership);
- Mill Street car park(in private ownership); and
- Land west of Sainsbury’s Car Park (in Council’s ownership).

6.2.38 These sites can primarily be considered for housing development to meet demand for housing types and tenures not readily available in the local market (e.g. for older people and apartments for young professionals) and would help improve the vibrancy of the town centre, especially in the evenings. Future development at these sites can also provide new commercial uses which could enhance and diversify the town centre offer.

Figure 6.7: Future Development Sites



Source: BDP



Appendix 1

Deliverability & Implementation Strategy

Appendix 1: Deliverability & Implementation Strategy

Introduction

This report provides a Delivery Strategy and Viability Appraisal for the Westhoughton Town Centre Masterplan. It informs the masterplan commission led by BDP and should be read alongside the Masterplan Report. The Study is completed on behalf of Bolton Council (the Council).

BE Group, economic development and property consultants, compiled this report during March-September 2020. It reflects previous Masterplan research and stakeholder engagement completed over 2019-2020 and discussed in more detail in the main Masterplan Report.

The Delivery Strategy and Viability Appraisal considers how the masterplan Key Development Projects (KDPs) can be brought forward in the real world, and what the physical and financial barriers to delivery might be. For each KDP the Strategy provides:

- A short description of the project
- A market case for the project, summarising baseline research and the comments of stakeholders
- An assessment of project costs
- Advice on project delivery and the partnership team required to bring it forward. Where relevant, action plans of the steps required to secure delivery are provided.
- Comments on funding options.

Financial Appraisals are completed for projects where new or refurbished residential or commercial space is proposed, i.e. where revenue and capital value generating uses are being delivered, the values of which can be compared against the financial costs of change. In Westhoughton, the revenue/value generating projects appraised are:

- KDP3: Redevelopment of the Town Hall

Finally, again where relevant, estimates of the other economic benefits the KDP may provide are set out, including:

For Commercial Space

- The number of jobs created
- The Gross Value Added (GVA) of those jobs, per year
- The Business Rates which could be generated

The methodology and assumptions of these different elements of assessment are considered below.

Project Costs – Methodology and Assumptions

Construction costs have been provided by cost consultants Warrington Martin. These are based on estimates on the amount new floorspace or public realm or roadway/pathway to be created, which have been provided by BDP. Where relevant, Warrington Martin have also estimated demolition costs of existing buildings.

For KDPs where financial appraisals can be completed, BE Group has estimated the costs of the professional fees and finance associated with the project.

Financial Appraisals – Methodology and Assumptions

BE Group has prepared a valuation of each of the above noted KDPs from a market perspective. The valuation uses the residual land value method which estimates a land value that a potential buyer would be willing to pay in order to develop the scheme as proposed. The financial appraisals compare scheme costs with likely values. The costs are as noted above, while the values, and the yields and revenues which inform those values, have been identified through a review of comparable schemes in the immediate area, across Bolton Borough and, as required, across a wider area of Central Lancashire and Greater Manchester. The value assumptions are noted in Table 1, below. More detail on the transaction evidence used to inform these average values is provided in Appendix 1.

Table 1 – Value and Revenue Assumptions

Use	Rental Level, £/ sqft (£/sqm) Where Applicable	Yields, percent Where applicable	Capital Value, £/ sqft (£/sqm)	Comments
Offices	15 (161)	8	-	Office values were also derived from Radius. There was a total of eight deals recorded in the Town Centre giving a value of £15/sqft (£161/sqm). These included the letting of serviced offices at 112 Market Street, which again achieved a base rent of £15/sqft (£161/sqm), exclusive of service charges.

Source: BE Group, 2020

The Appraisals are high level assessments of likely residual land value, based on the KDPs as they are set out in the Masterplan. Several key assumptions have been made to complete these Appraisals:

- The rents/values noted above are based on research into past transactions, thus they do not account for any impacts the Covid-19 Pandemic may have on the economy and local property markets
- Similarly, Section 106 or similar contributions are not allowed for
- Car Parking – As this stage it is assumed that new surface car parks will not charge for parking. The only exception to this is where large Multi-Storey Car Parks (MSCPs) are proposed which will need a revenue stream to support them
- It is assumed that all schemes will be delivered by a private developer who will seek a profit within the scheme. Developers profits are assumed to be 15 percent of costs, for all schemes. In reality, commercial developers would seek higher profit levels.

Other Economic Benefits – Methodology and Assumptions

Job Creation

Estimates of job potential utilise standard jobs density figures obtained from the Homes England 'Employment Density Guide, 2015' and are based on the following:

- Offices – Town Centre based office employment is focused around financial and professional/administrative services. Space therefore split – half financial (one job per 10 sqm) and half professional/administrative (one job per 12 sqm). Some of the space will be serviced, which impacts on final jobs densities, but the above density levels remain possible for both serviced and un-serviced space
- Retail/Food and Beverage – This is expected to comprise hot food/evening economy uses and A1 retail – each achieving one job per 15 sqm on HCA standards.
- Other – This comprises car parking and infrastructure, which will not generate direct employment.

Gross Value Added (GVA) on an Annual Basis

The jobs estimates are then converted into estimates of GVA using output per job, per year, estimates provided in the ONS Statistical Bulletin 'Labour Productivity: July to Sept 2018'. The assumptions for this are:

- Offices – Again assumes financial services/professional services will be split as above – half financial (£119,013/worker); and half professional (£52,233/worker)
- Retail – GVA is based on standard GVA/worker rate of £38,581
- Food and Beverage – Based on GVA/worker rate of

£24,023 for accommodation and food services.

Business Rates Generated

Research has identified the following rateable values for prime pitch locations in Westhoughton Town Centre:

- Office: £85/sqm – Current average across the Town Centre
- Retail: £225/sqm – Average for prime pitch areas on Market Street
- Food and Beverage: £250/sqm – strong average for key locations including Market Street.

The above per sqm rates are applied to the commercial floorspace figures and the resulting amounts, then use current, 2019-2020, business rates multiplier of 50.4 percent for standard businesses. Does not allow for any businesses that may be eligible for business rates relief.

The KDPs are considered individually in the following Sections.

KDP1: REMODELLING ALONG MARKET STREET

Introduction

The current proposal would retain two-way traffic along Market Street but include selective road narrowing to create larger areas of public realm (pedestrian areas) particularly on the Town Hall / market side which would enable businesses to take advantage of the sunny aspect and spill onto the street. It should be noted that the masterplan proposals are illustrative and if KDP1 is taken forward, several options for remodelling will be developed and tested to identify a preferred scheme.

Market Case

Overall, Westhoughton Town Centre functions well but there are opportunities to improve pedestrian accessibility and the shopping/leisure experience. Wider public realm areas would allow outdoor seating, enhancing the areas of trade for cafes, bars and other leisure/evening economy businesses, encouraging people to linger in the Centre and further enhancing the already successful local evening economy.

Project Costs

Table 2 provides an estimate of construction and other costs for this project.

Item	Cost, £	Assumptions
Market St; Medium quality public realm	213,250	Mid-level investment along the street. 853 sqm affected at £250/sqm
Market Hall and Town Hall; High quality public realm	279,600	High level investment at key locations 932 sqm affected at £300/sqm
10 percent allowance for traffic Management	49,285	An allowance for changes to main road access, etc. to and from the KDP area.
Total	542,135	-

Source: *Warrington Martin and BE Group, 2020*

The estimated project cost is **£542,135**. This is exclusive of the following, however:

- Costs are exclusive of VAT where applicable
- Planning and Development Costs are excluded
- Contingencies are not included
- Fees such as legals, professionals, consultants' fees, etc. are excluded
- Site abnormalities / unknowns are provisional allowances subject to surveys
- Site surveys / investigation costs are excluded
- Finance costs, if required are excluded
- It is assumed that works will be competitively tendered as one contract
- No allowance is made for construction industry inflation beyond 3Q 2020
- No allowance is made for renewal or improvement of existing drainage.

Viability Assessment/Other Economic Benefits

Indirect economic benefits only.

Delivery Approach

To guide the development and enhancement of public realm in Westhoughton (individually, or with the other towns, as judged appropriate), the Council should consider the creation of a Public Realm Implementation Framework, comparable to that completed for Bolton. This would:

- Provide detailed design guidance on the type and nature of the streetscape, future, lighting and landscaping sought through Masterplan and other projects
- Provide more up to date costings of the public realm, based on a full understanding of the materials and

designs to be used, and apportion those costs between projects, where relevant.

This would give developers certainty about what they are expected to fund within any given project and to what design standards. It would give the Council certainty about the quality of public realm to be delivered, plan how it could be phased with projects and funded. It could also identify any elements of public realm which could fall outside of project areas, where separate funding would be needed.

In this case, the proposed interventions take place on public streets and it is assumed the Council will lead on delivery, commissioning design plans and appointing contractors as has occurred on other streetscape projects elsewhere in the Borough.

Funding

To support public realm investment the Council should seek developer contributions, through Section 106 agreements and reflecting relevant elements of the Council's Infrastructure and Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document. However, given the viability constraints on several Town Centre development projects, it cannot be assumed that contributions will come from the KDPs specifically. However, there are a range of large out of centre housing proposals in Westhoughton, with more likely in the future. Capital sums, for town centre improvement, could be sought from these projects, through the planning process.

Public funding options are more limited, the Townscape Heritage Initiative, which has historically funded public realm improvements, is no longer part of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Public funds derived from the European Union can also no longer be relied upon, post 2020, and it is not yet clear what they might

be replaced with. Also, what new initiatives might be put in place to assist the UK's recovery from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Future High Streets Fund remains an option, subject to the ongoing bidding process, but it is likely that public realm in all three towns will be a focus for direct investment by the Council.

KDP2: UPGRADING KEY PEDESTRIAN LINKS

Introduction

The proposal would involve improving the public realm (pedestrian areas) of Library Street, Marsden Street and the Market Car Park. These routes would be made pedestrian friendly, through pavement improvements and lighting options. The enhanced links for Marsden Street and Market Car Park will include business premises/shopfront improvements to enhance surveillance and animation of the routes.

Market Case

Main shopping streets in Westhoughton function well, but there are opportunities to improve pedestrian accessibility and the shopping/leisure experience on side streets. As with other interventions these will help improve pedestrian flow and encourage footfall in and around the Town Centre.

Project Costs

Table 3 provides an estimate of construction and other costs for this project.

Table 3 – Construction and Other Costs

Item	Cost, £	Assumptions
Medium quality public realm	206,250	Mid-level investment along the pedestrian links Area based on average width of pedestrian/cycle path of 3 metres approximately 825 sqm affected at £250/sqm
10 percent allowance for traffic Management	20,625	An allowance for changes to main road access, etc. to and from the KDP area.
Total	226,875	-

Source: Warrington Martin and BE Group, 2020

The estimated project cost is £226,875. This is exclusive of the following, however:

- Costs are exclusive of VAT where applicable
- Planning and Development Costs are excluded
- Contingencies are not included
- Fees such as legals, professionals, consultants' fees, etc. are excluded
- Site abnormalities / unknowns are provisional allowances subject to surveys
- Site surveys / investigation costs are excluded
- Finance costs, if required are excluded
- It is assumed that works will be competitively tendered as one contract
- No allowance is made for construction industry inflation beyond 3Q 2020

- No allowance is made for renewal or improvement of existing drainage

Viability Assessment/Other Economic Benefits

Indirect economic benefits only.

Delivery Approach

Delivery Approach would be as for KDP1.

Funding

As for KDP1.

KDP3: REDEVELOPMENT (REFURBISHMENT) OF THE TOWN HALL

Introduction

This proposal would involve the conversion of surplus space within the town hall into a managed workspace development - providing space for micro business and ‘start-up’ space for new businesses. A ground floor commercial cafe would serve the businesses and would also be open to the public. Options to retain an element of civic/community use in the building will also be explored.

Change here will be considered jointly with opportunities in the adjoining Library /Carnegie Hall building, KDP4, see below.

Market Case

The Town Hall, alongside the linked Library, etc., is an iconic heritage building in central Westhoughton. It is expected that various Council services will soon vacate the property and a new use must be found which will ensure the long term viability and protection of the building.

Market research has identified demand for smaller serviced offices in the Town, from the self employed and micro businesses, particularly from home-based businesses, looking for their first offices. This demand is evidenced by the success of the recent conversion of 112 Market Street for 11 small, serviced offices of 15-50 sqm, which all let within a year, achieving rents of £25-30/sqft (£269-323/sqm), inclusive of services.

As the Town Hall is already partly in office use this is identified as a desirable re-use option which requires only limited internal modification to the building. A café is also proposed, open to all, which will ensure the property also serves the wider community and contributes to the commercial offer of the Town Centre. Proposals to retain some civic/community use in the building, reflecting its historic role as a centre for the local community are also being considered. The scale and nature of any such facilities has yet to be determined.

Project Costs

Table 4 provides an estimate of construction and other costs for this project.

Table 4 – Construction and Other Costs

Item	Cost, £	Assumptions
Office refurbishment; Town Hall	631,500	Refurbishment for modern offices 842 sqm affected at £750/sqm
Café refurbishment; Town Hall	66,000	Refurbishment for cafe 110 sqm affected at £600/sqm
Other Costs	185,514	Professional Fees, Finance, etc
Developer Profit (15 percent of GDC)	246,443	Indicative cost. As this is a refurbishment scheme this can potentially be amended
Total	1,129,457	-

Source: Warrington Martin and BE Group, 2020

The estimated project cost is £1,129,457. In practice, some cost savings may be possible as this is a refurbishment project. Additionally, this assumes KDP3 is completed as a stand-alone project. If works were combined with changes to the Library/ Carnegie Hall, there could be opportunities for cost savings through economies of scale.

The cost estimate is also exclusive of the following:

- Costs are exclusive of VAT where applicable
- Contingencies are not included
- Site abnormalities / unknowns are provisional allowances subject to surveys
- Site surveys / investigation costs are excluded
- It is assumed that works will be competitively tendered as one contract

- Upgrades to existing incoming services – provisional costs applied only
- No allowance is made for construction industry inflation beyond 3Q 2020
- No allowance is made for renewal or improvement of existing drainage.

The estimate also assumes the bulk of the available space is used for offices and the café. Clearly if an element of civic/community use is also included, the commercial floorspace is reduced and the estimates of refurbishment cost and value generated will change.

Viability Assessment/Other Economic Benefits.

Viability Assessment

This appraisal assumes the refurbishment of 842 sqm of Town Hall Space for modern, open plan offices. Such offices achieve a base rent of £15/sqft (£161/sqm) exclusive of any service charges, etc. which is comparable to that being achieved at 112 Market Street (see Table 5). Also, a café of 110 sqm, which achieves a full market rent of £15/sqft (£161/sqm). It is assumed the building stays in Council ownership, with no purchase costs allowed for.

Table 5 – Residual Valuation Appraisal of Westhoughton KDP3

KDP3 – Town Hall	£, Million
Revenue – Gross Development Value	1.90
Construction Costs	-0.68
Other Costs	-0.19
Developer Profit (15 percent of GDC)	-0.25
Residual Land Value	0.74

Source: BE Group, 2020

Figures rounded

The residual land value of this site for the proposed scheme is estimated at £740,000. Thus, the proposed scheme appears viable, based on the assumptions made here.

Other Economic Benefits

- The scheme could support 84 jobs, 77 specifically in the office space.
- These jobs could generate £6,727,742 million in GVA
- The space could generate £49,931 in Business Rates

Delivery Approach

The proposal here is for the refurbishment and re-use of the building for serviced offices, plus a café. It is assumed the property would remain in Council ownerships. Once a time-frame has been established for the current staff to vacate the building, the Council would market the property for operator partners using one of several models, noted below.

Serviced Offices/Business Centre

There are a range of companies which specialise in operating serviced office schemes, including Regus, Bruntwood, WeWork at the national/regional level as well as more local operators. These organisations would operate the scheme and advise on, and likely organise the fit-out of the space, with those costs passed back to the Council as owner.

In terms of facilities, such a scheme would generally be expected to offer:

- Private offices, shared offices, coworking space, virtual offices, recovery space (for companies who lost their premises in fires, etc.) and meeting rooms
- High-speed, dark fibre broadband included
- Centre management
- Manned reception
- ICT support.

It is caveated that many of the national operators would likely not be interested in a small scheme outside of a city or large town, but others are investing in more peripheral locations, recognising the scale of micro business and homeworker demand in rural catchments.

To illustrate under what sort of terms a scheme might operate, the standard Regus management terms are:

- Regus takes a 10-year lease
- Investment into the centre for the cat A/cat B works is passed to the Landlord
- That initial investment is paid back to the Landlord over a 10-year period with PLC guarantee (0 percent interest).

- The income generated from the centre is then divided, the lion share being the Landlord's which is typically 75-85 percent
- Service charge and business rates are covered by Regus from the date of completion/centre opening.

The advantage here is that capital fit-out costs are paid back over time, the managers presence as a tenant is guaranteed for an extended period and the income the manager takes out of the scheme is linked to overall scheme revenue.

Managed Workspace

As noted, serviced office operators may not be interested in this location or the additional service charges they put on to rents may make the scheme unattractive to local firms. Instead a more general managed workspace approach could be used. The general terms of such a scheme would be:

- Flexible licence terms, offered on a 12 months basis outside of the Landlord and Tenant Act, with 1 month required to quit, and inclusive of services, furniture, etc.
- Flexibility to offer furnished or unfurnished rooms depending on what furniture the company already has
- Meeting rooms provided for common use, but also the option for companies to bring meeting rooms into their tenancy if they wish
- Generally, unmanned reception and no formal business support but scheme may have a building manager to meet practical needs.

This is largely what has been delivered at 112 Market Street, and the owner/operator of that scheme would be one party to approach to determine if it would be interested in operating a

second scheme in Westhoughton.

The such a scheme could again be marketed to operators although if the Council felt it had capacity it could also manage the space itself, taking a greater share of the revenue and also reducing the costs which need to be passed on to occupiers.

Café and Civic/Community Space

The café would be developed by the Council, either as part of, or independent of the office refurbishment. The space could then be let out or tendered as a concession. That concessioner would make some investment and add its own branding, but we are assuming would not undertake the refurbishment itself.

It is assumed any space in the building to be retained for civic or community uses would continue to be managed by the Local Council and/or Town Council, likely independent of the office facility. What revenue these uses might generate would clearly be dependant on what is proposed, i.e. rooms for rent, gallery space, etc. Any monies generated will hopefully support the running costs of the space but are unlikely to be sufficient to support capital investments by themselves.

Table 6 – Project Action Plan, KDP3

Partners	Main Actions
BC, potential operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify timetable for staff to vacate the building • Clarify the uses proposed, what space will remain in civic/community use? What will those community uses be and who will be responsible for their management? • Undertake detailed appraisal of the different management models for the offices. Which most suits this option and is likely to deliver the most viable scheme? • If appropriate, market to management parties • With or without assistance of an operator, plan for and implement refurbishment works for offices and café • Market/contract café space to operator • Market office space to businesses, with operator assistance, if relevant • Proceed as per agreed scheme operational terms

Source: BE Group, 2020

Funding

As the scheme is identified as viable, it is assumed it can proceed through private funds. An initial capital outlay will be required for refurbishment including the refurbishment of civic/community space, but this can be recouped through the revenue generated over time.

KDP4: REFURBISHMENT OF CARNEGIE HALL AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE ACCESS WITH LIBRARY

Introduction

Current access to Carnegie Hall is shared with the Library. Under this proposal separate access to the upstairs of the Library would be created to improve safety, security and visitor experience. Improvements to access arrangements at both the Library and Carnegie Hall will increase the use of the hall, together with simpler booking arrangements.

Change here will be considered jointly with opportunities in the adjoining Town Hall building, KDP3, see above.

Market Case

The Town Hall, alongside the linked Library, etc., is an iconic heritage building in central Westhoughton. Alongside the reuse of vacant Town Hall space, KDP3, proposals are provided to invest in the physical infrastructure of the Library and Carnegie Hall to provide a better experience for all users and encourage more active use of facilities which contribute to the offer of Westhoughton to visitors and community members alike.

Project Costs

Table 7 provides an estimate of construction and other costs for this project.

Table 7 – Construction and Other Costs - Carnegie Hall

Item	Cost, £	Assumptions
Refurbishment of Carnegie Hall and improvements to the access	500,000	Indicative allowance only. Final costing would require a survey of the building and a more detailed design for the physical changes.
Total	500,000	-

Source: Warrington Martin and BE Group, 2020

The estimated project cost is £500,000 as an indicative only allowance, without detailed survey work on the building or a design for the structural changes. This also assumes KDP4 is completed as a stand-alone project. If works were combined with changes to the Town Hall, there could be opportunities for cost savings through economies of scale.

This is also exclusive of the following:

- Costs are exclusive of VAT where applicable
- Planning and Development Costs are excluded
- Contingencies are not included
- Fees such as legals, professionals, consultants' fees, etc. are excluded
- Site abnormalities / unknowns are provisional allowances subject to surveys
- Site surveys / investigation costs are excluded

- Finance costs, if required are excluded
- It is assumed that works will be competitively tendered as one contract
- No allowance is made for construction industry inflation beyond 3Q 2020
- Upgrades to existing incoming services – considered on a provisional basis only
- No allowance is made for renewal or improvement of existing drainage.

Viability Assessment/Other Economic Benefits

Indirect economic benefits only.

Delivery Approach

Assuming ongoing Council ownership and management of this facility, delivery would be by the Council. The Council would need to complete a more detailed survey of the building and appoint architects with a specialism in heritage to fully plan the changes, before seeking listed building consents. The changes would be implemented by contractors, again with a heritage specialism.

Funding

In addition to direct Council investment and cross funding from the Town Hall re-use proposals (KDP3), this heritage property, which is in community use, could be eligible for Heritage Lottery Funding. Such funding can provide grants of £3,000 to £5 million to support the maintenance or improvement of the building. Given the arts use of the Carnegie Hall, Arts Council monies could also be sought. As noted, all non-emergency Lottery grants are on hold due to the Covid-19 Crisis, till October 2020.

KDP5: CENTRAL PARK

Introduction

Develop Central Park as a centre for events and activities, for visitors and residents, linked to the Town Centre.

Market Case

Central Park is an underused asset for the Town Centre. Proposals would see it better used and better linked with the other attractions and residential communities of the area, encouraging those enjoying outdoor recreation to visit the Town and use local shops and services.

Project Costs

The detailed costs associated with this KDP have yet to be determined. It is assumed the capital investment required here will be modest, limited to some new paths, recreational equipment, and landscaping.

Viability Assessment/Other Economic Benefits

Indirect economic benefits only.

Delivery Approach

Delivery would be led by the Council, as owner of the park, with contractors appointed, as appropriate, and in consultation with key Park/Town Centre user groups.

Central Park could be included in the Public Realm Implementation Framework, as noted above.

Funding

To support any public realm investment required the Council should seek developer contributions, through Section 106 agreements and reflecting relevant elements of the Council's Infrastructure and Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document. There are several private development opportunity sites in the Town Centre (see Section 8.0) and a range of major housing developments proposed in the wider area which have at least the prospect of generating monies. Council officers should work with planning colleagues to ensure appropriate planning gain from out of centre developments can be secured for Town Centre schemes.

In terms of public funding, the Heritage Lottery Fund no longer have a dedicated programme for the regeneration of parks. However, all historic public parks can apply for funding through Heritage Lottery Fund open programmes which offer grants from £3,000-£5 million. It should be noted that all grants are halted till October 2020, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

It is likely that public realm in all three towns will be a focus for direct investment by the Council.

KDP6: CAR PARKING STRATEGY

Introduction

This proposal could include improvements to the quality of the car parks as well as considering both short term and long term parking needs, possibly with charging introduced, encouraging

visitors to the Town Centre. Business parking permits could also be considered to ensure local business have the space to accommodate their staff. The Library Street, Ditchfield Road and Market Car Parks are possible sites for improvement. Physical changes could include parking/charging points for electric vehicles and decking to increase the number of spaces.

Market Case

Stakeholders highlight parking as a barrier to further growth in the Town. In terms of public parking, Westhoughton is strongly dependant on the Market Car Park, with limitations on other options. Constrained parking encourages shoppers either to park on private car parks or to go to Sainsbury's and the other food stores only, without making any linked trips to the rest of the Town Centre.

Project Costs

Cost to be determined through competitive tendering but estimated at **£7,000**.

Viability Assessment/Other Economic Benefits

N/A

Delivery Strategy/Action Plan

Report to be procured through standard procurement methods by the Council as a next step following finalisation of the Masterplan. Payment through normal Council budgets.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITES

There are several privately owned development sites suitable for town centre uses:

- Vacant land in-between the Wheatsheaf Car Park and the Beer School (known as the Gaiety site) (privately owned)
- The Mill Street Car Park Site (privately owned)
- Land west of Sainsbury's Car Park (Council owned).

The future development of these sites for a mix of uses including commercial use will help diversify the town centre offer, and improve the vibrancy of the area, especially in the evenings.

The land is under mixed public and private ownership and it is assumed will proceed through private sector led development and through private finance.

PHASING

Introduction

Table 8 provides a phasing strategy, with justifications, for the Masterplan Projects. It makes the following assumptions:

- That most public realm investment will be implemented separately of the property development projects, under Council leadership
- That Shop/Business Frontage Improvement would be an ongoing programme of investment through the masterplan period
- That Council bodies can provide leadership on multiple projects at the same time
- Phasing seeks to spread housing across phases as much as possible, to avoid an oversupply of accommodation at any one time. It also allows for early delivery of Council owned sites to generate capital receipts which could be invested elsewhere
- Large and complex projects are given a long lead in time for site assembly, agreement of delivery route and funding.

Table 8 – Phasing Strategy

Project	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029	2029-2030	2030-2031	2031-2032	2032-2033	2033-2034	2034-2035	Comments		
KDP1: Remodelling Along Market Street	Masterplan Finalisation, Further engagement, introduction of the projects to key stakeholders, Internal organisation and funding bids by the Council	Project planning, design, funding identified			Public Realm Investment Strategy developed if appropriate.	Delivery											Council delivery assumed, with funds from other projects, were possible.	
KDP2: Upgrading Key Pedestrian Links		As for KDP1														As for KDP1		
KDP3: Re-development (Refurbishment) of the Town Hall		Space vacated, consideration of options and agree way forward	Marketing to potential partners, secure partner and agree nature of new scheme			Refurbishment	Scheme marketing and commencement. Secure café concession											Fairly rapid scheme development proposed, to minimise the amount of time space is left vacant
KDP4: Refurbishment of Carnegie Hall And Improvements to the Access with Library		Preparation, design planning, seek planning consent					Implementation										Delayed start gives time for KDP3 Town Hall scheme to generate revenues which could be re-invested in the adjoining buildings	
KDP5: Central Park		Project planning, design, funding identified		Varying implementation period depending on what physical projects are proposed													Assume KDP5 will primarily comprise activity programmes, etc. with only modest amounts of physical investment likely focused on pedestrian access/ footpaths, landscaping and recreation facilities.	
KDP6: Car Parking Strategy		Report procurement and completion															Further report, procured and then completed by consultants.	

Source: BE Group, 2020

SUMMARY

Introduction

The following Tables summarise the cost analysis, financial appraisals, economic benefits analysis and delivery advice of the previous Sections.

Table 9 - Project Summaries

Project	Project Cost £/Million*	Project Value £/Million	Residual Value £/Million	Viability Comments	Delivery Approach
KDP1: Remodelling Along Market Street	0.54	N/A	N/A	N/A	Assumed Council leadership, with financial input from KDPs, where possible. Consider creation of a Public Realm Implementation Framework to support investment across the Town Centre
KDP2: Upgrading Key Pedestrian Links	0.23	N/A	N/A	N/A	Assumed Council leadership, with financial input from KDPs, where possible. Consider creation of a Public Realm Implementation Framework to support investment across the Town Centre
KDP3: Redevelopment (Refurbishment) of the Town Hall	1.12	1.90	0.74	Refurbishment option for offices/café is viable.	Refurbishment of Council-owned property. Council could look for a serviced office/managed workspace operator to partner with who would advise on the fit out and manage the scheme, sharing revenue accordingly. Café would be operated as a concession.
KDP4: Refurbishment of Carnegie Hall And Improvements to the Access with Library	0.50	N/A	N/A	N/A	Council led refurbishment.
KDP5: Central Park	Not known	N/A	N/A	N/A	Assumed Council leadership, with financial input from KDPs, where possible. Consider creation of a Public Realm Implementation Framework to support investment across the Town Centre
KDP6: Car Parking Strategy	(£7,000)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Council to Commission Study
Total	2.39	1.90	0.74		

Source: BE Group, 2020

*Exact Project Costs can be found in each KDP Section

Table 10 – Other Economic Benefits, Where Relevant

Project	Employment Benefits			Housing/Population Benefits		
	Jobs Created	GVA of Jobs, £/year	Business Rates, £	Population Gain	Expenditure of Additional Pop., £/year	Council Tax Receipt, £
KDP3: Redevelopment (Refurbishment) of the Town Hall	84	6,727,742	49,931	-	-	-

Source: BE Group, 2020

Values Research, Past Transactions

Table A1.1 – Retail/Leisure, Recent Transactions

Address	Size/sqft	Size/sqm	Tenure	Deal Date	£/sqft	£/sqm	Achieved rent
4, Chorley Road, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3PR	513	48	Leasehold	01/07/2019	18	194	9,350
29-31, Market Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3BD	N/A	N/A	Leasehold	01/07/2018			6,600
Ground, 93, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AA	721	67	Leasehold	05/05/2017	8	86	6,000
Ground and 1st, 105, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AA	680	63	Leasehold	05/05/2017	9	97	6,000
Entire Building, 54, Market Street, Westhoughton, BL5 3AZ	1,235	115	Leasehold	15/11/2016	7	75	8,500
7 School Street, 1-7, School Street, Bolton, BL5 3RJ	529	48	Leasehold	01/08/2016	11	118	6,000
5 School Street, 1-7, School Street, Bolton, BL5 3RJ	621	58	Leasehold	18/07/2016	10	108	6,000
Ground and 1st, 9, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AH	860	80	Leasehold	15/06/2016	13	140	10,920
Ground, 33, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AG	295	27		14/06/2016	24	258	7,020
Ground and 1st, 61-63, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AG	2,077	123		15/04/2016	8	86	17,000
3 School Street, 1-7, School Street, Bolton, BL5 3RJ	805	75		01/04/2016	7	75	5,500
Ground, 93, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AA	718	67		21/12/2015	10	108	7,000
Ground, 72, Wigan Road, Bolton, BL5 3RJ	542	50		15/11/2015	12	129	6,500
29-31, Market Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3BD	1,035	96		01/09/2015	15	161	15,860
Average					12 (Improved to 15 in the Appraisals, as an allowance for improved values for new build premises)	126	

Source: Radius, 2020

Table A1.4 – Office, Recent Transactions

Address	Size/sqft	Size/sqm	Tenure	Deal Date	£/sqft	£/sqm	Achieved rent
112, Market Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3AZ	211	20		23/08/2019	37	398	7,800
112, Market Street, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 3AZ	130	12		23/08/2019	40	431	5,200
2nd, 1, Pavilion Square, Westhoughton, BL5 3AJ	4,200	390		04/05/2019	6	65	23,500
Long Lane, Bolton, BL5 2BP	1,571	146		04/09/2018	8	86	13,000
Suite D, 112, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AZ	130	12		13/03/2018	40	431	5,200
Suite I, 112, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AZ	116	11		22/09/2017	45	485	5,200
Suite J, 112, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AZ	127	12		04/08/2017	41	441	5,200
Suite A, 112, Market Street, Bolton, BL5 3AZ	165	15		01/08/2017	32	344	5,200
Average					31 (However, this includes service ad management charges at 1112 Market Street, a serviced scheme. Base rent here understood to be £15/sqft)	335	

Source: Radius, 2020

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