

STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# FUTURE STOCKPORT

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR THE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



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# INTRODUCTION

Prepared as a supplementary planning document (SPD) to the Stockport Unitary Development Plan First Review, this document aims to provide guidance regarding the implementation of the Stockport Town Centre Masterplan (Future Stockport) approved by Stockport Council February 2005.

It is intended that the guidance will supplement the Council's approach to development proposals within the town centre, providing a development framework and vision for investment and regeneration in line with planning policy.

The implementation of the Masterplan will be a dynamic process and there will need to be some flexibility, consistent with achieving its core objectives.

## Stockport Town Centre

Stockport today is a busy town centre ranked fifth in the the North West in Experian's 2004 Retail Centre Report. Situated at a key intersection of north – south road and rail links and east – west river and motorway corridors, in the Mersey Valley on the southern part of the Greater Manchester conurbation.

The town centre is an area of significant importance to the sustainability of the Borough. The focal point for commercial, cultural and civic activities, the area also is an important sub-regional retail and commercial centre, which provides a large proportion of the Borough's economic activity and employment. In addition, the town centre forms an important transportation interchange and a focus for leisure, educational and increasingly residential uses.

## Future Stockport: The Opportunity

There are a number of areas of opportunity that the town can capitalise on in particular:

- The desire to invest and take an active part in the regeneration process, by the Council and major landowners / commercial operators who have an interest in Stockport.
- A capacity for growth in the town centre, for additional retail and new leisure, cultural and residential developments.
- An opportunity to use the uniqueness of the Stockport location, topography and heritage to create a unique and memorable destination that will attract an increasingly discerning consumer.

- An opportunity to build upon recent developments including:
  - ◆ the refurbishment of Stockport Station;
  - ◆ the launch of the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme for the Hillgate area;
  - ◆ completion of the Magistrate's Court retail development;
  - ◆ the opening of Staircase House;
  - ◆ completion of the variable message signing programme for parking in the Town Centre; and
  - ◆ the release of the first block of apartments at SK South residential developments (former Christy's Hat Factory site) by Fairclough Homes for private sale.

## **Future Stockport: The Vision**

The potential of the town in terms of location, accessibility, heritage and catchment provides the opportunity to transform Stockport in a sustainable manner which creates:

*'...a town centre that combines the best of Greater Manchester, the best of Cheshire and that becomes a jewel in the Northwest...'*

Central to this vision is a complete overhaul of the shopping experience, with a full range of leisure, cultural and visitor attractions and thriving residential community.

Access for all, based on a new transport interchange, cross town links and a new public realm framework. An attractive, safe and welcoming environment including a unique and exciting public square acting as a centrepiece for the town centre and celebration of the River Mersey.

The aim being to transform the town through a series of deliverable projects, each delivering a marked step change in the quality of the town centre.

## **Community Strategy**

Proposals set out in Future Stockport lead directly from The Community Strategy, which is designed to shape the borough of Stockport over the next ten years. Produced by Stockport Partnership the strategy identifies the regeneration of the town centre as a key priority.

## **Consultation & Engagement**

Initial proposals for Future Stockport were developed during summer 2004 with key stakeholders including the Stockport Partnership, Stockport Economic Alliance, GMPTE, Stagecoach and key businesses and landowners.

This was followed by an extensive public consultation campaign in November, undertaken by Spin Media a local public relations firm. Involving a launch event, press briefing and extensive media coverage, together with a touring exhibition of proposals ('Stockpod'). In the four weeks of consultation, thousands of people visited the 'Stockpod' and the Future Stockport webpages received almost 4,000 hits reflecting the high level of local and national interest in the plans.

The final masterplan report in December 2004 accommodated feedback for the consultation and was approved by full Council and the Executive in February 2005. Since its approval the Council has continued to engage stakeholders with a series of meetings, press releases and presentations.

Appendix 2 provides further information in the 'Statement of Consultation'.

Clearly, there will be further consultation on individual development and infrastructure proposals as they are brought forward. In conducting further consultation it will be important to engage all groups, ensuring that diversity and access issues are considered.

## **Delivery**

Delivering this large and complex vision will involve a number of key players and partnerships. Its success will depend on response by the private sector, the commitment of the Council, potential funding agencies and the support of the local community and businesses.

An all-party Member Task Force at the Council will oversee delivery as individual development proposals come forward within the Town Centre. Whilst, key decisions will continue to be taken by the Council Executive and Planning & Highways Regulation Committee as appropriate.

# NEED FOR REGENERATION

Categorised as a Sub Regional Centre, Stockport is at the heart of a significant catchment area and although the town centre is undoubtedly a vibrant focus for Stockport and popular with much of the local community, there is a sense that the centre has lost ground in the wider regional retail hierarchy since the mid 1990's. Manchester City Centre has expanded significantly which has impacted upon Stockport's market share. Similarly, there has been a marked growth in the popularity of out-of-town shopping centres such as the Trafford Centre.

The cumulative impact of improvements to Stockport's competitors and the lack of obvious development opportunities in the town centre area is that Stockport Town Centre has increasingly failed to attract the type of retailer that would naturally be accommodated in an important sub-regional centre. Consequently, Stockport Town Centre has been under-performing in terms of the potential spend it could secure from the more affluent parts of its retail catchment.

This under-performance has also been compounded by the limited leisure provision, particularly in the evening in terms of a quality food and drink offer for families and professionals etc. Along with areas of public realm which often vary in quality and lack coherence, together with a limited residential community lacking the critical mass to transform the feel of the town centre

Good work has taken place in recent years, restoring and conserving the historic marketplace, Hillgate and Staircase House, securing new commercial development such as the Courts, bringing forward residential development (e.g. SK South) and refurbishment of Stockport Station etc. However, a town centre can never afford to stand still and for Stockport to achieve its full potential a fundamental expansion and restructuring of the town centre offer is needed, as put forward in the Future Stockport Masterplan.

## Comprehensive Development

Stockport will only be able to compete and grow successfully as a place to live, work, visit and enjoy, through the creation of a well designed centre with high quality public spaces, good transport links, housing, good quality office provision and above all a range of high quality retail / leisure facilities which people choose to use. If these ambitions for the town centre are to be realised comprehensive development is both necessary and desirable and the SPD seeks to ensure that regeneration proposals are brought forward in a holistic and comprehensive manner that integrates fully with the existing town centre uses and surrounding communities.

## **Proactive Approach**

The Council is committed to the comprehensive regeneration of the town centre, taking a proactive approach as appropriate and ultimately, if required, giving consideration to the support of land assembly through compulsory purchase powers. In addition, it should be noted that the Council would resist proposals that may, individually or cumulatively, prejudice or delay unnecessarily the delivery of this comprehensive approach.

# CONTEXT

National, Regional and Local Planning Policy provides the context, in planning terms, to support the delivery of the Future Stockport Masterplan.

## National Planning Policy

- Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Communities), promotes the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. In particular, the statement advocates a positive planning process, which is underpinned by the idea of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.
- Planning Policy Statement 6 (Planning for Town Centre), continues the ‘town centre first’ policy of previous guidance. It confirms the Government’s key objectives of promoting the vitality and viability of town centres through planning for growth and promoting and enhancing existing centres by focussing development in such centres. Wider Government objectives also include delivering sustainable patterns of development by ensuring locations are fully exploited through high density mixed-use development and the promotion of high quality design. In addition, PPS6 confirms that, in planning for the future of their centres, local planning authorities should adopt a position and proactive approach to planning for town centres.
- Planning Policy Statement 9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation) highlights the need for development to take account of the role and value of biodiversity, as well as the benefits for urban renaissance by enhancing biodiversity in green space and any developments so that they are used by wildlife and valued by people, promoting a better quality of life and people’s sense of well-being.
- Planning Policy Guidance 13 (Transport), seeks to reduce travel, especially by car, through the active management of urban growth, making full use of city, town and district centre locations which are highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

## Regional Planning Policy

- Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), now the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) under Policy SD1 (The North West Metropolitan Area) identifies Stockport as an urban centre that is seen as complimentary to the renaissance of the Manchester regional pole. Highlighting that the development, regeneration and environmental enhancement of the urban area must respond to and sustain people’s rising aspirations for a better quality of urban life.

## Local Planning Policy

Planning policy at a local level is provided in the First Review Stockport Unitary Development Plan, which provides development guidance up to 2011.

This supplementary planning document (SPD) is intended to elaborate upon this document and will be taken account of by the Council as a material consideration. In bringing forward appropriate Future Stockport proposals, the SPD will remain consistent with the main thrust of town centre policies, seeking to safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of Stockport town centre.

Relevant land-use allocations as illustrated on the proposals map in the UDP First Review include:

- Policy TCG2.1 (Central Shopping Area) – to give priority for new retail development to this central core area and strengthen the shopping experience;
- Policy TCG2.2 (Great Portwood Street Area) – to enhance retail provision and at the same time regenerate areas of derelict and underused land in this important gateway approach to the town centre;
- Policy TCG3.1 (Riverside) – to permit a mix of uses and support opportunities to enhance public realm, increase enjoyment of the river and improve linkages to the town centre; and,
- Policy TCG3.2 (Cultural, Leisure & Heritage Quarter) – to provide a focus for a range of cultural, leisure and heritage facilities, as well as a high quality environment with enhanced open space provision.

Appendix 1 contains a copy of all the UDP policies referred to.

## **Stockport Town Centre Masterplan (Future Stockport)**

The Council's ambitious masterplan, developed for the Council by Building Design Partnership, Cushman & Wakefield Healey & Baker and Faber Maunsell, focused upon the town centre core area, providing a long term vision for regeneration. In addition, the masterplan also gave consideration as to how best to utilise the substantial amount of Council owned land and its land assembly powers in partnership with developers.

Underpinned by a series of interlinked projects, which combine to bring forward a mixed use and vibrant town centre, the masterplan seeks to unlock Stockport's huge potential. Key elements include:

- A new public square opening onto the River Mersey to provide the setting for celebrating the source of the Mersey at the western end of Merseyway;
- A revitalised and expanded shopping centre towards Bridgefield Street to provide larger shop units to meet developer and operator requirements;
- A new public transport interchange to provide a focus for arrival in the town centre;
- A revitalised St Peter's Square providing new public realm and a focus for the evening economy;
- A new development at the eastern end of Merseyway, creating a key hub connecting Merseyway with Great Portwood and the historic marketplace; and,
- A new high quality eastern gateway approach to the town centre, improving the Knightsbridge area and providing retailing and complementary uses to the town centre.

The SPD seeks to help deliver the Future Stockport masterplan in an appropriate manner, consistent with planning policy, specifically highlighting six individual development projects (briefs), together with some overarching development principles for Stockport town centre, all cross-referenced to UDP policies.

## **Other Relevant Documents**

### **“Gateway to the Future”**

Adopted in September 2000, the regeneration plan for Stockport and the M60 Gateway provides a long-term strategic plan to guide the development and regeneration of the town centre and its environs. Its key aim is “to develop an attractive, vibrant and dynamic town centre for the benefit of all users now and in the future”.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance for Town Centre Housing**

Amended in 2005, the supplementary planning guidance contributes to a move to repopulate the town centre, injecting new social and economic life into Stockport. Prepared to help facilitate residential development in the town centre, the guidance introduces a relaxation in current planning requirements for affordable housing, open space and transportation.

### **Sustainable Design and Construction SPD**

Approved for adoption in November 2005, the Supplementary Planning Document highlights the UDP policies that require / encourage sustainable design and construction and gives guidance on how these policies can be met.

### **Stockport Shopping Study**

Prepared by Roger Tym & Partners, the study was approved March 2004 to assist the review of the Unitary Development Plan and assess the role and contribution that Stockport town centre can make towards meeting future retail needs.

### **Economic Development Strategy**

Produced 2002, the strategy underwent a review in April 2004. The purpose of this review was to monitor the progress of the ten year strategy and update actions recommended in the original document. The vision for a town centre for the New Millennium remains a key element in the strategy.

### **Conservation Strategy**

Approved in July 2004, the document provides a comprehensive conservation strategy for the borough of Stockport. The document further reinforces the promotion of high quality design of new development in the historic environment and ensures that conservation activities are integrated within regeneration initiatives for the town centre.

### **Evening Economy Study**

Completed in August 2004, the Evening Economy Study provides a basis / framework for the Council to develop a more proactive approach to strengthening the evening economy within the town centre.

### **Second Greater Manchester Transport Plan**

Produced by the ten Greater Manchester local authorities and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority. This second local Transport Plan (LTP2) outlines the approach being taken by the Greater Manchester authorities towards transport planning and investment for the period 2006 / 07 to 2010 / 11.

### **Planning for Town Centre: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools**

Approved in 2005, this government guidance supports PPS6 and deals specifically with design issues relating to planning for town centres and some of the main tools available to secure implementation.

# OBJECTIVES

Stockport town centre performs a range of functions serving the needs of residents, its employees and visitors to the town. Accordingly, Future Stockport seeks to achieve a number of core objectives to enhance the role of the town centre.

## **Retail**

To reinforce Stockport's position as a sub-regional shopping centre, expanding the retail offer and providing a diverse and distinctive shopping experience.

## **Leisure / Tourism**

To raise the quality and range of attractions within the town centre. Bringing a new vibrancy to Stockport through the introduction of new uses (including restaurant / cafes, leisure, tourism facilities, sport / recreational activities) and extending the evening economy.

## **Residential**

To promote housing within the town centre to bring life to the area, diversify tenure, promote security and act as a vehicle for change.

## **Employment**

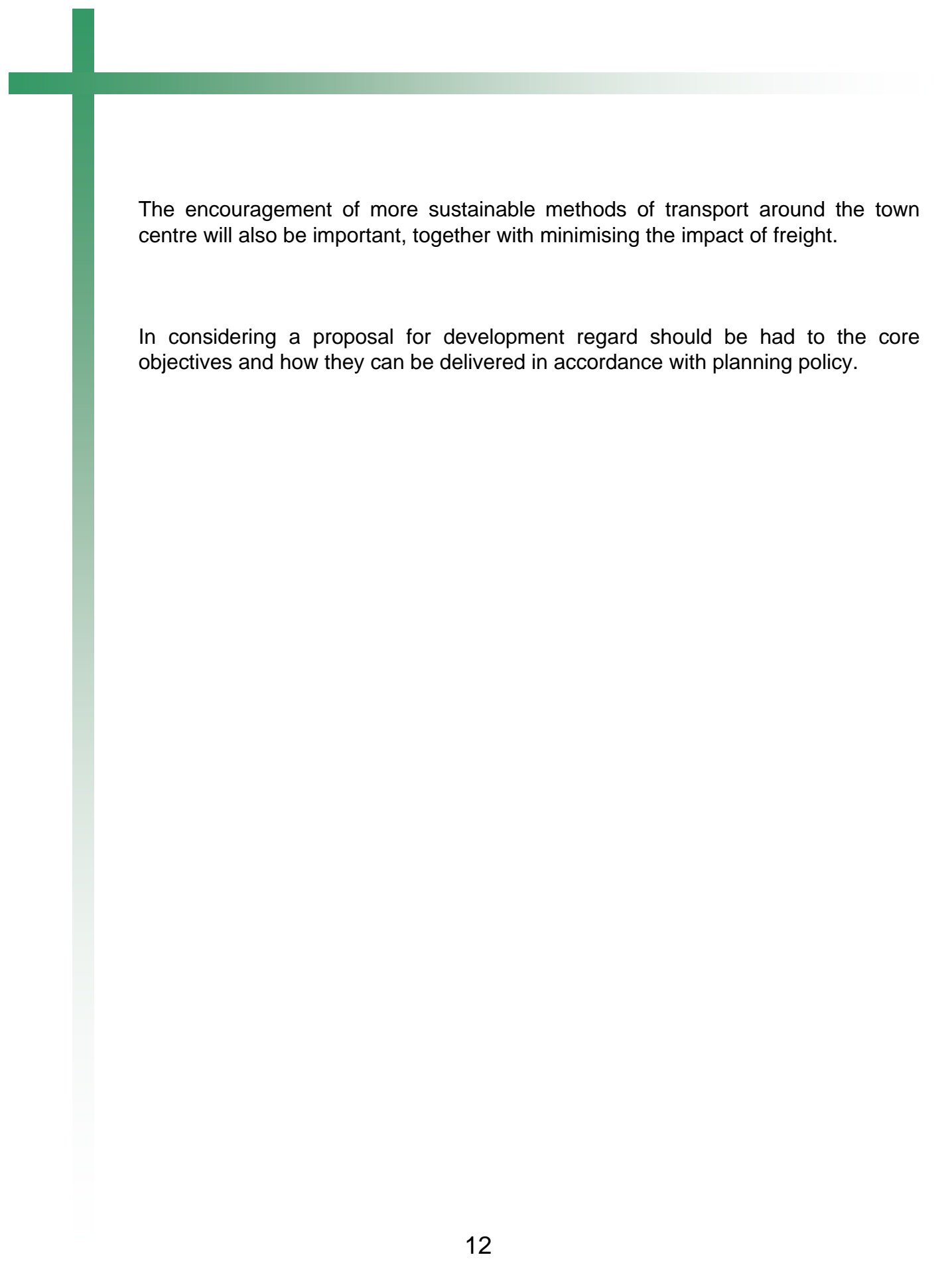
To encourage employment activities within the town centre and new opportunities in a sustainable location with access to town centre services and amenities. To ensure that local unemployed people and residents of deprived communities benefit greatly from the opportunities created.

## **Environment / Public Realm**

To upgrade the town's environment, promoting sustainable construction and good design that can open up the river frontage, maximise Stockport's rich local heritage, create a safe environment, deliver high quality public realm, improve air quality within the area and encourage confidence in economic regeneration.

## **Transport / Access**

To improve access to and from the town centre, as well as movement in and around the town centre, minimising conflict between pedestrians / cyclists and motorised vehicles. Ensuring the centre is accessible to all, including provision of a new transport interchange with direct and convenient access to the town centre as well as facilitating outward journeys.



The encouragement of more sustainable methods of transport around the town centre will also be important, together with minimising the impact of freight.

In considering a proposal for development regard should be had to the core objectives and how they can be delivered in accordance with planning policy.

# DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

In developing a comprehensive framework for regeneration, the Council has also identified the following principles for new development within Stockport Town Centre.

## Vitality and Viability

### Mixed-Use Development

The encouragement of appropriate mixed-use schemes is a fundamental component of the Government's approach to sustainable development. A point reflected in Policy DCD1.1 (Design Principles) of the UDP First Review which states that development should:

*'...take account of any potential for a mixture of compatible uses to attract people to live, work and play in the same area...'*

Mixed-uses will be particularly encouraged in the town centre to help deliver sustainable patterns of development and a diverse mix of uses. Mixed-use development often includes residential uses, which can make an important contribution to a centres vitality and viability, as well as reducing travel patterns. In addition, it can also be a means of sustaining activity throughout the town centre during the day and into the evening, which in turn will increase surveillance and improve community safety.

### Active Ground Floor Uses

Wherever possible, active ground floor uses should also be incorporated into new development. Active uses generate pedestrian movement and bring greater variety and interest to the street scene.

Furthermore, in accordance with Stockport's 'Outdoor Café Design Guide', the Council will seek to encourage activity to spill out of buildings and into the surrounding public realm where appropriate.

### Gateways

Gateways provide entry points to the town centre, presenting a first impression for visitors and it is important to convey a positive image. Arrival points such as the railway station, transport interchange and car parks need to reinforce this message.

Providing high quality focal points help people to find their way around the town, but they also introduce the town as a place worth exploring. Attention is therefore needed to create landmark buildings and features on key prominent sites, to provide high quality arrival points.

### **Potential Impact on the M60**

It is recognised that major development proposals highlighted in the Masterplan have the potential to have an impact on the junctions of the M60 running through the town centre.

The Council intends to promote sustainable access to the town centre. However, it will be necessary for proposals for major development to assess the likely extent of any impact, so that appropriate measures can be taken as part of the development and in partnership with the Highways Agency and the Local Planning Authority to alleviate potential problems.

## **Environment**

### **Riverside Uses / Flood Risk**

A priority will be the opening up and enhancement of the town's riverside. In line with Policy LCR1.1a (The Urban Fringe Including The River Valleys) in the UDP First Review.

Development along the banks of the Mersey, Tame and Goyt will be expected to contribute to the vitality of the river and its environment, enhancing the riverside setting and public enjoyment of the area. In particular, proposals should consider views over the river, as well as opportunities to increase public access to the water's edge and riverside walkways.

In line with Policy EP1.7 (Development and Flood Risk) in the UDP First Review, developers will be required to carry out a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) for any development within the flood risk areas shown on the UDP Proposals Map.

## **Biodiversity**

There is an ideal opportunity as part of the Masterplan, to enhance the Mersey, Goyt and Tame river corridors to the benefit of both people and wildlife. It should be noted that river valleys represent a valuable recreation, habitat and countryside resource and play a special role in biodiversity. In bringing forward proposals it will therefore be important to safeguard and enhance this natural environment.

## **Public Realm**

In seeking to upgrade the town centre environment, the overall aim will be to create a 'sense of place' through streetscape improvements on key routes and linkages, together with a series of public spaces and gateways that help define Stockport's unique identity.

In order to achieve this, an effective consistently high quality approach will be sought when looking at public realm, making use of elements such as planting, boundary treatment, furniture, surface materials, lighting and signing etc. Guidance has been prepared to direct and facilitate the enhancement of the town centre's streetscape. The Town Centre Public Realm and Lighting Guide recommends a palette of material for the area to complement key development and public realm improvements. In addition, under Policy DCD1.1 (Design Principles) in the UDP First Review, works of public art will be promoted where appropriate.

Policy TCG1.1 (Community and Civic Space) in the UDP First Review provides further support for the enhancement of public realm, specifically identifying a number of key community and civic spaces in the town centre.

## **Greening**

The 'greening' of the town centre environment should also be given careful consideration during the preparation of proposals, with landscaping being designed as part of a development scheme, rather than as an afterthought.

Policy DCD1.4 (Landscaping Of New Development) in the UDP First Review highlights the importance of plant cover and recognises that trees in particular can enhance the attractiveness of an area and create a feeling of maturity. Alternatively, hanging baskets, troughs and free standing planters can introduce an element of interest, contributing to the colour and animation of the town. These elements are particularly useful in narrow well enclosed environments or in areas where the ground does not allow for planting, for example in areas directly above the River Mersey.

## **Lighting**

The use of lighting is another means to significantly enhance the profile and image of the town centre, which the Council is keen to promote. As a result the imaginative use of lighting will be encouraged, particularly where it can increase safety and help to animate landmarks and gateways at night. Town Centre public realm and lighting guidance exists to facilitate the use of lighting in a co-ordinated manner.

Sustainability is an essential principle within the strategy, with the guidance promoting both the use of energy efficient lamps and efficient light controls.

## **Sustainable Travel**

### **Public Transport**

With a focus upon sustainable travel in national, regional and local planning policy (Policies TCG1.2 & 1.4 in the UDP First Review), it will be important to consider all modes of transport and how to improve the modal split, whilst still balancing the need for access by car.

Improving the quality of public transport is at the forefront of the masterplan, particularly with the proposed new transport interchange and east-west transport corridor for Metrolink and buses along the alignment of Great Egerton Street towards Portwood. This focus upon sustainable travel should be reflected in development.

### **Walking and Cycling**

Improving access and movement will be another key element to the success of the Masterplan for Stockport town centre, with the objective being the creation of a pedestrian friendly core area. Development proposals will need to incorporate a high level of pedestrian and cycle permeability through the town centre, strengthening existing linkages and providing new opportunities for moving within this core area.

Furthermore, where vehicles are permitted, it will be important that consideration is given to pedestrians crossing streets through the provision of pedestrian facilities at signalled junctions etc.

Wherever possible, the improvement of the Trans Pennine Trail for pedestrians and cyclists through the town centre should also be considered. Similarly, there should also be a focus on strengthening cycle links, together with cycle parking provision at key locations.

## **Travel Plans**

The Council will encourage and where appropriate require sustainable travel initiatives as part of the consideration of development proposals in line with Policy TD1.3 (Travel Plans In Developments) in the UDP First Review. Proposals which are likely to have significant transport implications will need to be supported by a Travel Plan, detailing measures to encourage staff and visitors to travel to and from the development by means other than the private car.

Continuing commitment will be required to the promotion and monitoring of travel plans

## **Design**

### **Design Appraisals**

Good design will be of particular importance within the town centre. Consequently, in line with Policy DCD1.2 (Design Appraisals) in the UDP First Review proposed development should be accompanied by an explanation as to how design principles illustrated in Policy DCD1.1 have been addressed:

*'...supporting information on the account taken of design considerations will be required with all relevant planning applications in accordance with Policy DCD1.1...'*

The Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation Tools, ODPM, 2005 provides further guidance on design principles and should be viewed in conjunction with the SPD. This states that Development should:

- Normally be orientated so that it fronts the street;
- Respect building lines of the existing urban environment and, where appropriate, build up to the edge of the curtilage;

- Maximise the amount of active street frontage
- Avoid decisions which are inward looking and which present blank frontages;
- Provide level access from the public realm; and
- In the case of development in edge-of centre locations, provide good pedestrian access to the centre.

#### For Parking:

- Large amounts of surface level car parking are likely to detract from the overall appearance of a development and its surrounding area and are unlikely to maximise the development potential of available land.
- Car parking and service areas should be carefully located within a development so as to minimise visual impact. Car parking should normally be located to the rear, underneath or, where appropriate, above new development.
- Where surface level parking is proposed, this should be conceived within the overall landscape proposals for the development and link to the wider area. Multi-storey car parking should also be carefully designed and be well integrated with its surroundings. Pedestrian access, security, lighting, signing and publicity, management and maintenance are all important design considerations. Where rooftop car parking is proposed, lighting should be designed sensitively to minimise the level of light pollution to the surroundings.

#### For Public realm and access:

- Local planning authorities should work in partnership with other stakeholders on the provision, rationalisation and maintenance of street furniture, signage and paving to improve the streetscape and produce high-quality, accessible and coherent pedestrian environments.
- Pedestrian links between the primary shopping area and the wider town centre should where possible be strengthened, in particular with adjoining areas of secondary shopping importance.
- Local authorities should seek to improve access to and from town centres by all modes of transport but in particular pedestrian access from the main points of arrival (such as bus or railway stations or car parks) to the main attractions, such as the primary shopping area.

## **Roofscape**

Stockport lies within the Mersey River Valley and this distinct topography defines the general character of the area. The high ground provides elevated and distant views over the town and there is an opportunity to use the uniqueness of Stockport's topography to create a much improved setting.

Roofscape design should therefore be carefully considered within the wider context, with any adverse visual impact of rooftop servicing minimised.

## **Secure by Design**

A key element of the Future Stockport Masterplan is the creation of a town centre residential community and the expansion of the town's evening economy. In order to deliver these objectives, it will be critical that the town centre is safe, secure and hospitable. With this in mind, proposals should take into account the principles of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design', which essentially seek to maximise natural surveillance, define public and private open spaces and create a public realm that removes opportunities for crime to take place. The Council strongly advise that developers attempt to achieve 'Secured by Design' accreditation for all projects within the Town Centre Masterplan.

On this basis, as outlined in Policy DCD1.6 (Public Health, Safety And Security In Development) of the UDP First Review, developers are advised to consult the Architectural Liaison Unit of the Greater Manchester Police for crime prevention advice prior to submitting a planning application.

## **Accessible Environments**

The Council will ensure new development and public realm schemes are designed to be fully accessible, in accordance with Policy DCD1.3 (Access For People With Access Difficulties) in the UDP First Review.

## **Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction**

New development will also be encouraged to achieve high standards in relation to energy efficiency and sustainable construction as promoted by Policies DCD1.8 (Energy Efficient Design) and MW3 (Energy Efficiency) in the UDP First Review.

Further guidance on this issue is available in the 'Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document'.

# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

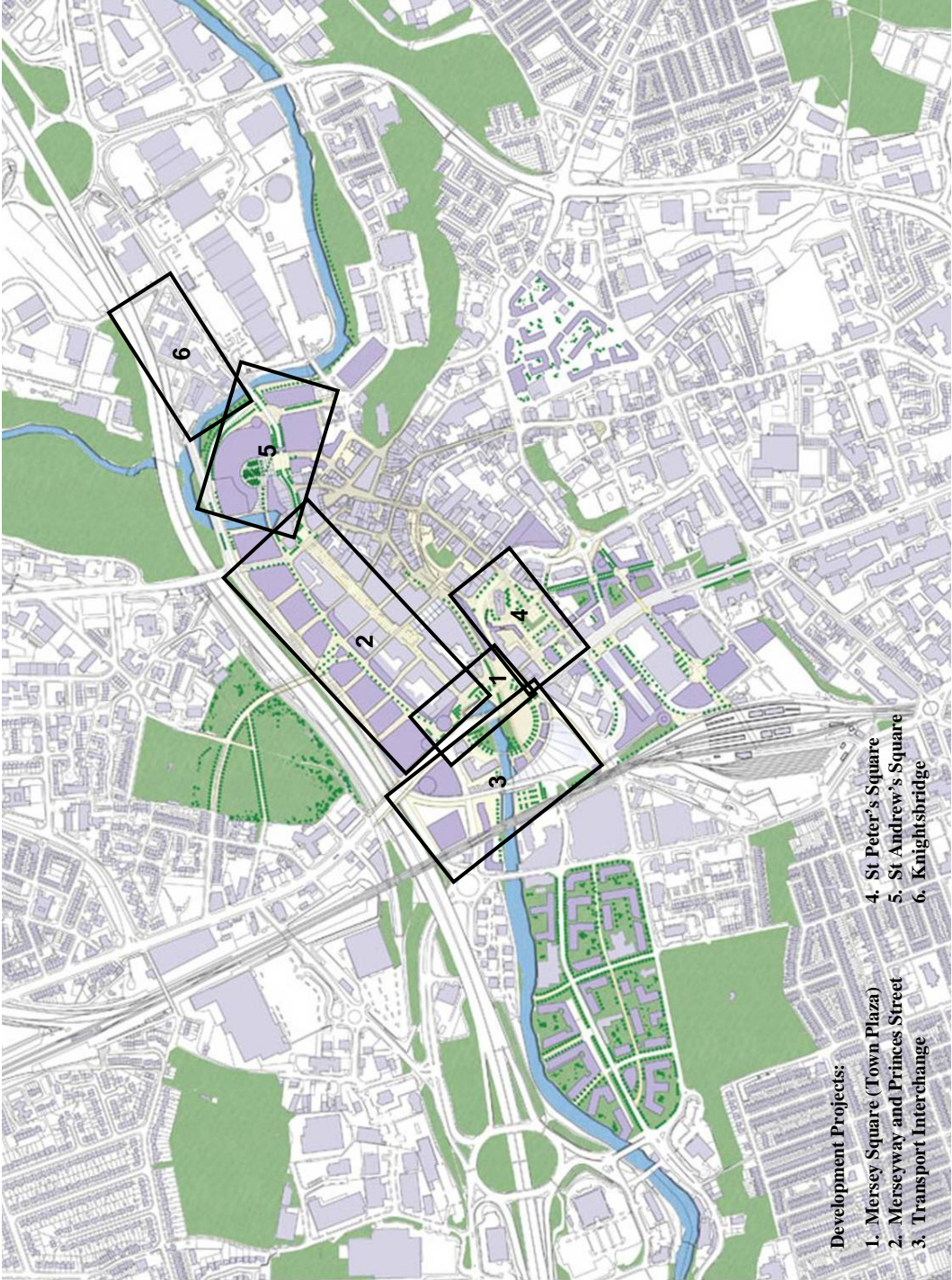
The SPD draws out six individual development projects, broadly illustrated within the diagram overleaf.

1. Mersey Square (Town Plaza)
2. Merseyway and Princes Street
3. Transport Interchange
4. St. Peter's Square
5. St. Andrew's Square
6. Knightsbridge

These key development projects have been identified as playing an important role in delivering the Future Stockport masterplan and site specific guidance is provided to facilitate the development opportunities. It should be noted that a number of these key development projects are interlinked and it can be difficult to define precisely each area. Furthermore, in recognising the need for the comprehensive regeneration of the town centre it is conceivable that adjoining projects could merge (eg Merseyway / Princes Street and St Andrew's Square) to form a singular comprehensive retail and mixed use scheme.

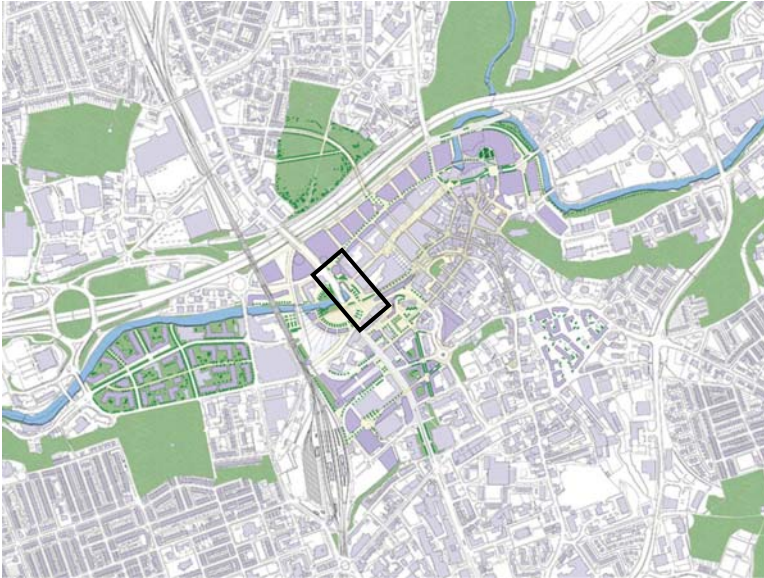
Applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their town centre proposals address the issues highlighted in the SPD and developers are encouraged to have early discussions with the Council.

# Stockport Masterplan - Development Projects

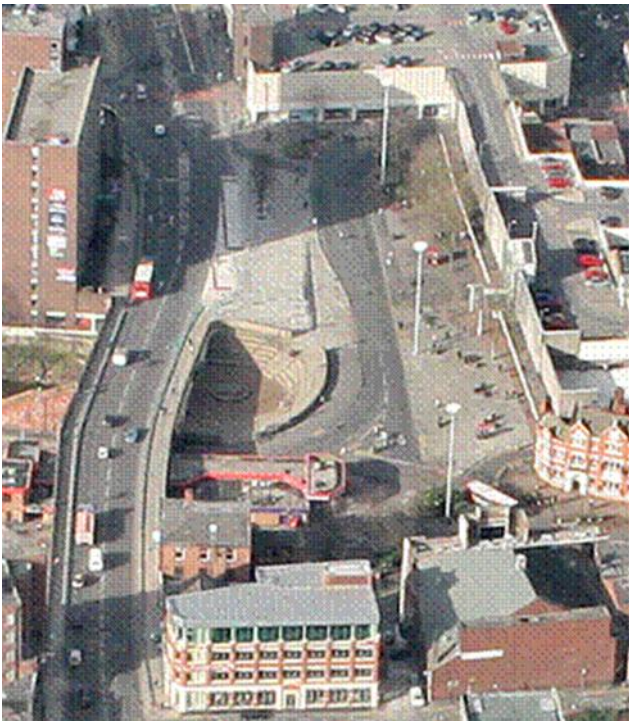


- Development Projects:**
- 1. Mersey Square (Town Plaza)
  - 2. Merseyway and Princes Street
  - 3. Transport Interchange
  - 4. St Peter's Square
  - 5. St Andrew's Square
  - 6. Knightsbridge

## 1. Mersey Square (Town Plaza)



Located on the western edge of Merseyway adjacent to Wellington Road South.



## Objective

To create a new 'Civic Central Space' for Stockport, providing a strong focus for the town centre. Mersey Square would become a key orientation space with direct linkages to the Interchange, Merseyway / Princes Street and St. Peter's Square, as well as a central meeting point for all users, ranging from shoppers, employees, young people, children and residents.

Proposals should aim to provide a point of reference and a strong new identity for Stockport that references the source of the River Mersey, as well as an arrival point into the town centre.

## Context / Policy

Located at the western end of Merseyway, this space provides the front door to the shopping area. The existing area suffers from vehicular through movement and the presence of the River Mersey is hidden away. Important buildings such as the Plaza will need to be recognised in designing the public realm.

In the UDP First Review the relevant allocation is Policy TCG2.1 (Central Shopping Area).

Planning policy is particularly strong in its support for enhancing Mersey Square with Policy TCG2.1 highlighting:

*'...the Council will support opportunities to reclaim Mersey Square as the main town square via the removal of unnecessary traffic and the creation of a high quality pedestrian environment, incorporating water features, public art and sitting areas...'*

In addition, Policy TCG1.1 (Community and Civic Space) flags up the important role of Mersey Square and the positive contribution public realm can have on the quality of life in the town centre. The policy states that:

*'...all significant proposed development will be required to make appropriate provision for the enhancement of these areas, including hard and soft landscaping, walkways, viewing and sitting areas...'*

## Existing Issues

- Vehicular dominance of space.
- Clutter and barriers disunite area.
- Outdated entrance to Merseyway.
- Key landmarks are not celebrated or marked out.
- Poor visual links to the river.
- Many links through the A6 arches are closed off.

## Existing Opportunities

- Prime location for gateway focus.
- Outlook from the A6 over this space.
- Art Deco Plaza Cinema and steps.
- Historic links to Chestergate, Underbanks and St. Peter's Square.
- Existing access under the A6 arches forms an attractive feature.
- Potential for a new anchor store.

## Development and Design Guidance

The Future Stockport masterplan views the new Mersey Square as the lynchpin of the regeneration of Stockport town centre and fundamental to changing perception of the town. Accordingly the quality and design of the square will be critical.

Acting as a central place for the town, it is proposed that this space becomes a dramatic and dynamic plaza providing important visual linkages to the River Mersey, the elevated areas such as St. Peter's Square and anchoring the western end of Merseyway.

In creating this new public space along the shopping 'front door', it will be important to complement the active frontages to Merseyway and, whilst maintaining bus routes through the town centre, rationalise the existing bus flow through the square enabling the space to become pedestrian friendly with information points to help improve orientation and transition through the town. In particular, the area in front of the dramatic Art Deco Plaza building and Plaza Steps should be a strong visual reference point leading the way to St. Peter's Square. The square is also a key linkage point for strategic cycle routes including the Trans Pennine Trail and cycle routes to and around this area need to be improved.

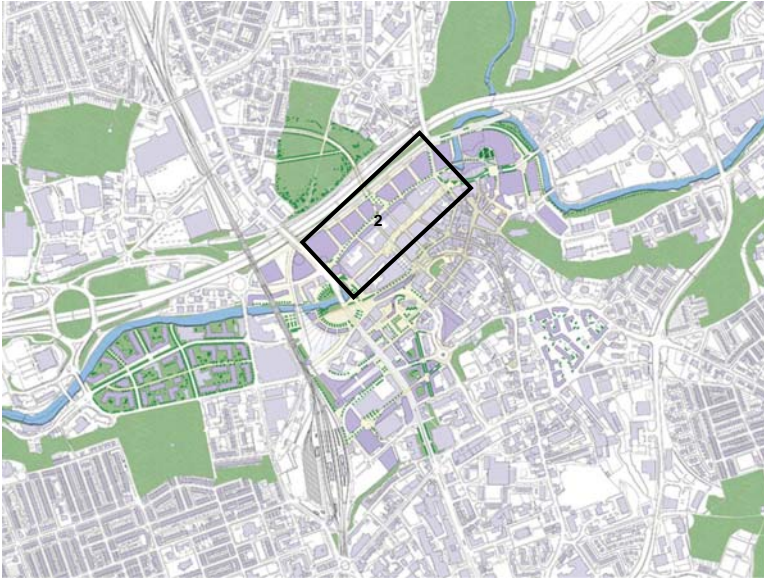
Appropriate access and provision for taxis and freight delivery vehicles requiring access to Merseyway, will also need consideration.

An exciting and dramatic water feature is also proposed to celebrate the symbolic 'birth of the River Mersey' and mark the entrance to Merseyway shopping as well a distinctive landmark from the A6.

In summary key features should include:

- A new landmark water feature;
- New public realm to meet and relax (incorporating street trees, furniture and lighting);
- A forum for festivals and celebration;
- Café, bar and restaurants where appropriate framing the square and complementing existing retail uses;
- An entrance to the new Transport Interchange;
- Access to riverside walks through the A6 Arches and exposure of the River Mersey;
- A new entrance to the Merseyway shopping circuit;
- An anchor store to the north overlooking the square and strengthening links into Princes Street (potential re-provision of the existing department store);
- Strong connections to St. Peter's Square to the south.
- Improved cycle routes through the area;
- Appropriate provision for taxis; and,
- Consideration of appropriate / safe provision for freight accessing Merseyway (Chestergate)

## 2. Merseyway and Princes Street



Located in the heart of Stockport town centre, this area remains the core of the retail offer in Stockport.



## Objective

To deliver a revitalised and extended shopping provision within the town centre. Reinforcing the retail core (Merseyway) through the establishment of a new retail circuit with the realignment of Princes Street and anchor stores at either end (refer to plan).

In seeking to bring a new vibrancy to the town centre it is also proposed that the introduction of new uses be considered on the upper floors, to ensure day and night activity and therefore vitality and safety.

## Context / Policy

Located in the heart of the town centre, Merseyway remains the core of the retail offer in Stockport. At present, the centre has a predominantly linear shopping pattern and major retailers have a requirement for modern floorspace providing larger units in the central retail area to suit operational needs.

In the UDP First Review the relevant allocation is Policy TCG2.1 (Central Shopping Area), which promotes this central location as the primary shopping area where priority be given for new retail development. Significantly, the policy also touches upon potential for expansion of the shopping centre parallel to Merseyway around the Princes Street / Bridgefield Street area, stating:

*'... it is desirable that the main retail area remains compact with new comprehensive development being encouraged in the Bridgefield Street area. This has the potential to attract high quality retailers, together with complementary leisure and restaurant uses that can enhance the shopping experience and provide activity in the evening...'*

The value of complementary uses to provide a diverse and distinct shopping experience is further supported by Policy TCG2 (Stockport's Sub-Regional Shopping Role), which states that:

*'...in strengthening the sub-regional shopping role new development should also seek to include a range of complementary uses such as restaurants, cafes, leisure, health and fitness and possibly hotel uses...'*

## PLAN OF PROPOSED RETAIL CIRCUIT



*The Masterplan proposes to reinforce the retail offer by transforming the existing Merseyway Shopping Centre, whilst retaining its structure, and creating a retail circuit through the redevelopment of the Princes Street area to the north.*

In addition, in considering proposals for this location, attention should be given to Policy TCG1.2 (Town Centre / M60 Gateway Transport Hub) supporting proposals to enhance sustainable transport links through the town centre. Together with Policy TCG1.3 (Parking In The Town Centre), which acknowledges that there are existing and future land uses which also require access by using conveniently located car parks:

*‘...the Council will ensure the supply of high-quality car, motorcycle, cycle and disabled parking in the Town Centre commensurate with its status as a key sub-regional centre...’*

## **Existing Issues**

- Retailer need for large footplates and identified capacity for comparison goods retailing over and above existing commitments.
- Upper levels of existing Merseyway under-utilised.
- Predominantly a 9am – 5pm culture.
- Dated streetscape.
- Hiding the line of the River Mersey.

## **Existing Opportunities**

- Sub-regional shopping centre.
- Merseyway serves as the primary shopping axis.
- Significant role in linking various parts of the town.
- A key strategic landholding in Council ownership.

## **Development and Design Guidance**

The Future Stockport masterplan essentially seeks to reinforce the retail offer by transforming the existing Merseyway and creating a retail circuit through the redevelopment of the Princes Street area to the north.

*‘...at the heart of the delivery strategy is the need to deliver a new retail core for the town centre with the quality and critical mass that will allow Stockport to recapture its natural catchment and re-establish it as the logical place to live, work and to spend leisure time...’*

Proposals identify the need for new retail units on Princes Street to provide large modern footplates, whilst maintaining pedestrian permeability through to Great

Egerton Street. Here an enhanced east-west transport corridor is proposed, where Metrolink and east-west bus services will encourage modal shift and ensure strong flows of pedestrians into and across the town centre. In seeking to achieve this modal shift appropriate stop location(s) for Metrolink will need to be identified, as well as the waiting environment and links for pedestrians being safe and secure. Appropriate provision for cyclists will also require consideration.

In developing a retail circuit, the transformation of Merseyway is also proposed with an improved streetscape using the concept of the River Mersey below. Ideas include the use of water channels, lighting and public art to remind shoppers of what lies beneath and incorporate colour and 3-dimensional interest to the area.

The need to integrate service access and car parking as part of any new development is also flagged up within the masterplan, which highlights the importance of replacing any parking spaces removed from Bridgefield Street and Merseyway, as well as providing additional spaces to cater for the new development. At the same time, the masterplan makes it clear that the location and quality of design of the car park should be done in a manner to help reinforce the attractiveness and competitiveness of the town. Designed with security in mind, both for the user and the vehicle, especially at night when footfall is usually lower.

Appropriate facilities for disabled, cycle and motorcycle parking will also need to be integrated into proposals for the area.

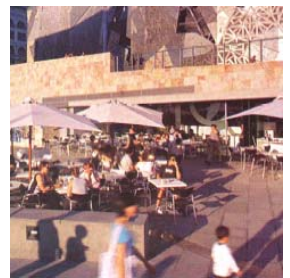
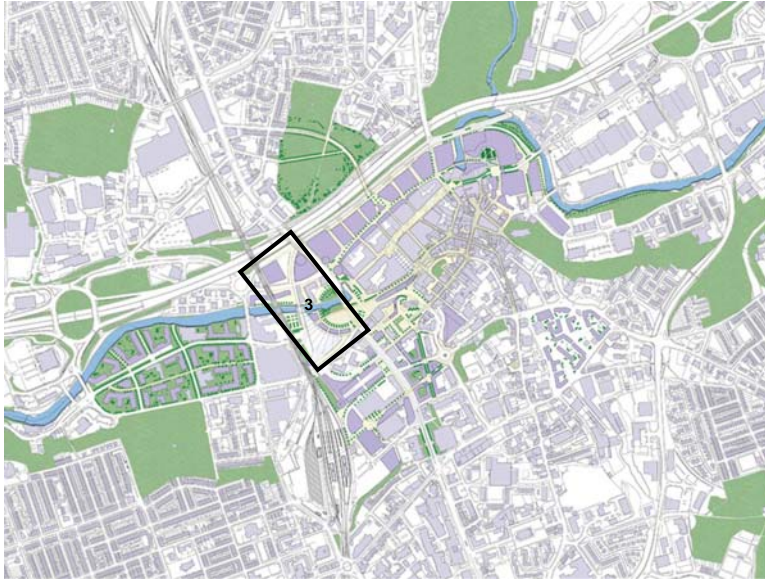
Finally, to enhance vitality and safety within the core area, the potential introduction of new residential apartment units on the upper levels of the area is identified, together with the opportunity to convert the roofspace of Merseyway for leisure use. Improving views across the skyline and creating a vibrant new public focus.

In summary key features should include:

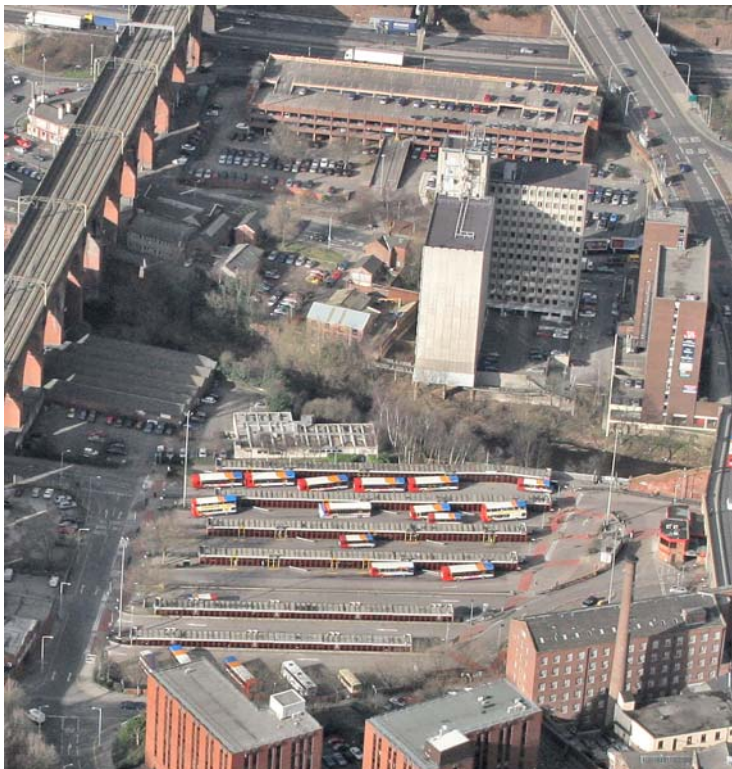
- A new retail circuit, based on a new Princes Street development and the transformation of the existing Merseyway;
- A substantial increase of retail floorspace in the central shopping area and provision of new larger units;
- Integrated service access and car parking to be built as part of the proposed development, with care being taken to present an attractive aspect to the M60;
- An improved streetscape and roofscape;

- A revitalised upper level introducing potential for both leisure and residential uses;
- A transport corridor based on Great Egerton Street, designed to incorporate both bus and Metrolink in the future, thus maximising opportunities for travel through the town centre by sustainable modes;
- Appropriate bus and Metrolink stops along the corridor, to allow easy and safe links to the retail area; and
- Appropriate provision for disabled, motorcycle and cycle parking and taxi provision integrated into the area.

### 3. Transport Interchange



Located on the western gateway of Stockport, linking public transport to the town centre core.



## Objective

To develop a new transport interchange to serve the town, improving the quality of facilities for passengers and promoting integration between public transport modes (incl. bus, rail and in the future Metrolink).

Modern interchanges can make more effective use of space whilst still providing a better environment for passengers, proposals for a new interchange should therefore include the opportunity to create space for public realm and commercial purposes. Creating a hub that can act as a catalyst for development and an interchange that is adaptable to meet potential future needs.

## Context / Policy

Located on the western side of the town centre, the existing bus station dominates this area, defined to the south by the imposing backdrop of Wellington Mill and to the west and east by the impressive Railway viaduct and A6 arches.

In the UDP First Review the relevant allocation is Policy TCG3.1 (Riverside), which permits a mix of uses to enable the area to function in the evenings as well as the daytime. The policy also promotes the importance of enhancing the public enjoyment of the river environment and the need to ensure that new buildings are designed to respect historic features and the dramatic setting of the viaduct and river gorge. In particular the policy states:

*'...the Riverside area represents one of the best opportunities for urban led improvements, with the proposed arrival of Metrolink and potential review of the bus station to provide a more efficient and safe passenger facility. Indeed, as sites come forward, both on Heaton Lane and around Stockport Bus Station, proposals should seek to use the dramatic setting of the river gorge, Weir Mill, the viaduct and adjacent Wellington Mill, to create a special riverside development...'*

In addition, Policy TCG1.2 (Town Centre / M60 Gateway Transport Hub) specifically identifies the Council bringing forward and supporting proposals to sustain and enhance sustainable transport links into and through the Town Centre / M60 gateway area, including the improvement of interchange facilities.

## Existing Issues

- The scale, design and layout of the existing bus station dominates the area, rendering the space inhospitable to pedestrians and impeding movement into the town from the west.
- The topography severs the railway station from the town centre.
- Unattractive views from both the A6 and railway viaduct.
- Poor visual links to the river and the town.
- The area fails to exploit the grandeur of several of the surrounding structures.

## Existing Opportunities

- Opportunity to provide a consolidated point of arrival and unique gateway into Stockport.
- A large level space framed by excellent examples of engineering and architectural heritage to exploit (e.g. the Railway Viaduct & Wellington Mill).
- Access under the A6 arches forms an attractive feature.
- Proximity to the central shopping area.

## Development and Design Guidance

The Future Stockport masterplan describes the potential development of a new interchange as:

*‘...fundamental to the planned modal shift of visitors and other town centre users, away from the private car to forms of public transport...’*

Encompassing a physically smaller bus station, using a more efficient approach to stands, it is envisaged that the area could accommodate both a new interchange, as well as a new area of public realm linked to Mersey Square.

Offering enhanced modern passenger facilities, the new interchange would include a new stop for Metrolink, together with a new route across the river for public transport. The proposed bridge would be critical to the re-routing of the buses away from the front of Merseyway, improving the environment and reducing pedestrian severance between the interchange and the shops. In the long term, the masterplan recommends that land on the northern side of Heaton Lane also be brought forward for development to enable the new Metrolink / bus lane to cross Heaton Lane and turn east onto the proposed east - west transport corridor. Running parallel to the motorway along the alignment of Great Egerton Street, this would serve development at Princes Street and on towards Portwood

to the east. Planning Policy allows for a mix of uses on Heaton Lane and the idea of a new library and cultural centre, straddling the A6 is identified in the masterplan creating a gateway into the town.

Changing the footprint of the existing bus station to take advantage of improved more efficient design for bus movements and allowing more space for public realm, should enable better orientation towards the town centre and the opportunity to create an attractive environment exploiting the banks of the river with river views, walks and seating. In addition, it is likely that there would be some opportunity for commercial premises (e.g. cafes, restaurants) to provide activity and interest.

Proposing the creation of a transport hub for bus and tram adjacent to Mersey Square, the masterplan also seeks to reinforce connections to the rail station, thereby creating a principal arrival point into Stockport and better integration of rail passengers into the town centre.

Various options for linking the interchange to the rail station may be considered including a lift from the interchange to the A6, from which access to the rail station would be easier, or possibly provision of a regular shuttle bus. However, a future aspiration identified in the masterplan is the development of a moving walkway (travelator) link between the interchange and the rail station.

In looking at this area, proposals should seek to exploit the grand scale of the enclosing buildings, utilising Wellington Mill and the arches, as well as considering how the space is viewed from above. Design will be an important consideration because of the sensitive nature of the location.

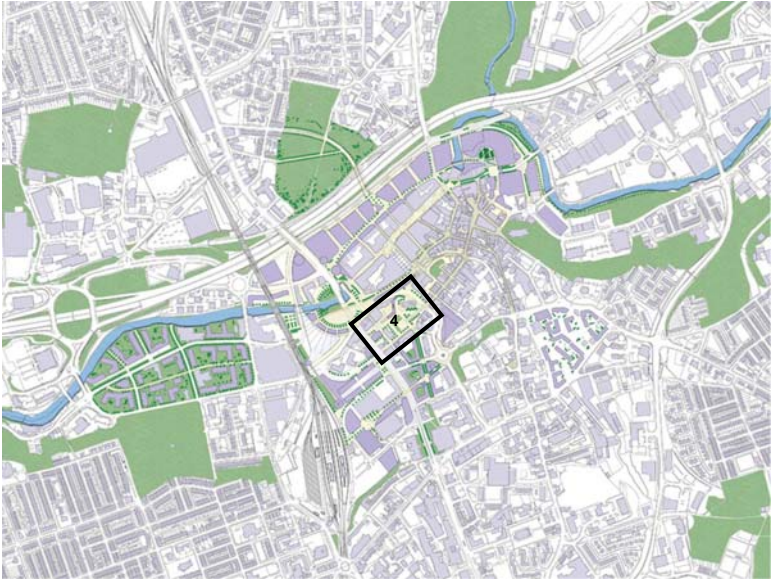
The Trans Pennine Trail goes through this area and provision will need to be incorporated for cyclists and pedestrians moving through the area.

In summary key features should include:

- A new transport interchange to serve the town, accommodating the requirements of GMPTE and integrating Metrolink;
- Strengthened links to the main railway station;
- Take into account access for freight to Merseyway / Chestergate;

- New public realm;
- An active frontage facing Mersey Square, to provide activity and interest at all times, ensuring that the Interchange is a safe and pleasant facility and an integral part of the town centre offer;
- A new bridge across the River Mersey to allow the removal of current bus traffic from Mersey Square;
- Appropriate provision for coaches and taxis; and,
- Appropriate provision for pedestrian and cycle routes (including the Trans Pennine Trail).

# 4. St Peter's Square



Located at the western end of St Petersgate, adjacent to Wellington Road South A6 on the site of St Peter's Church.



## Objective

To provide an area of high quality public realm on this key leisure route from the marketplace to Mersey Square, creating a new leisure and evening destination to complement the marketplace, Grand Central and Mersey Square attractions.

The area should be a setting for cafes, bars and restaurants and new residential developments to create character and enliven the Square.

## Context / Policy

Located at the western end of St. Petersgate, adjacent to Wellington Road South and incorporating St. Peter's Church, the existing square is under-utilised and dominated by traffic which loops round the space in a "U" shape.

In the UDP First Review the relevant allocation is Policy TCG3.2 (Cultural, Leisure & Heritage Quarter), which permits a mix of uses including office, residential, restaurants and cafes and tourism related development. The policy emphasises the need for good design taking account of the architectural character and historic nature of the area, identifying it as a focus for a range of cultural, leisure and heritage facilities, with the policy stating that:

*'...an enhanced St. Peter's Square, surrounded by cafes and restaurants, provides an ideal setting for developing a cultural quarter, with facilities to serve the surrounding offices during the day, as well as providing a more dynamic evening economy...'*

*'...a key priority will be to improve the quality of the pedestrian environment, with enhanced open space provision and links to the town centre and adjacent areas and reduced impacts from traffic...'*

In addition, Policy TCG1.1 (Community and Civic Space) lists St. Peter's Square as a key civic space, stating that:

*'...where appropriate further environmental enhancements will be carried out and measures introduced to reduce the impact of traffic...'*

A point supported by Policy TCG1.4 (Sustainable Access In The Town Centre / M60 Gateway), which puts forward proposals to enhanced access including extended pedestrianised areas within the town centre.

Finally, it should be noted that St Peter's Square has recently been declared a Conservation Area (under Policy HC1) in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area.

## **Existing Issues**

- Vehicular dominance of surrounding space.
- Clutter and surface car park disunite area.
- Vacant complex of former shops and offices known as 'Stockport Village'.
- Key landmarks are not celebrated or marked out.

## **Existing Opportunities**

- Conservation Area status.
- St. Peter's Church and Cobden's Statue.
- Historic links to marketplace (St. Petersgate).
- Direct link via Plaza steps to Mersey Square.
- Opportunity for early success.

## **Development and Design Guidance**

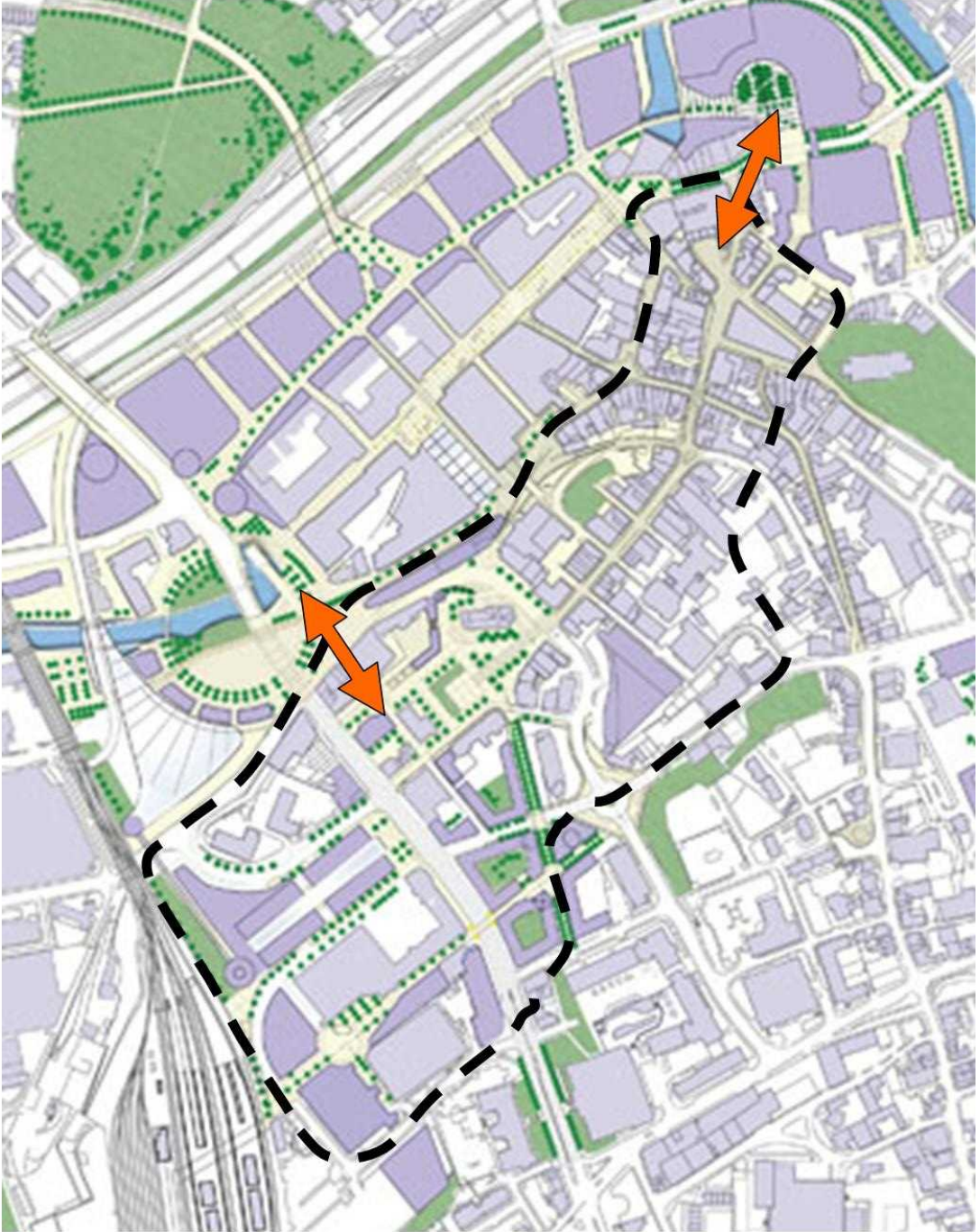
The Future Stockport masterplan vision for St. Peter's Square is for the creation of a high quality landscaped public / civic space surrounded by a variety of cafes, bars and restaurants and other commercial and residential uses.

Situated between the marketplace and Grand Central, on the upper level of the town centre, St. Peter's Square forms part of a wider area where leisure and visitor attractions predominate (refer to plan). It is envisaged that through the revitalisation of this space and introduction of new complementary uses, east west connections can be strengthened. In addition, in transforming the square to create an active space both day and night, St. Peter's Square is seen as key to unlocking the vertical linkages between this loop and Mersey Square on the lower level.

In enhancing St. Peter's Square, the opportunity exists to create a new contemporary space incorporating traditional and historical elements. It will be important to provide an attractive environment for all sections of the population, with proposals making the most of existing historic features and landmarks.

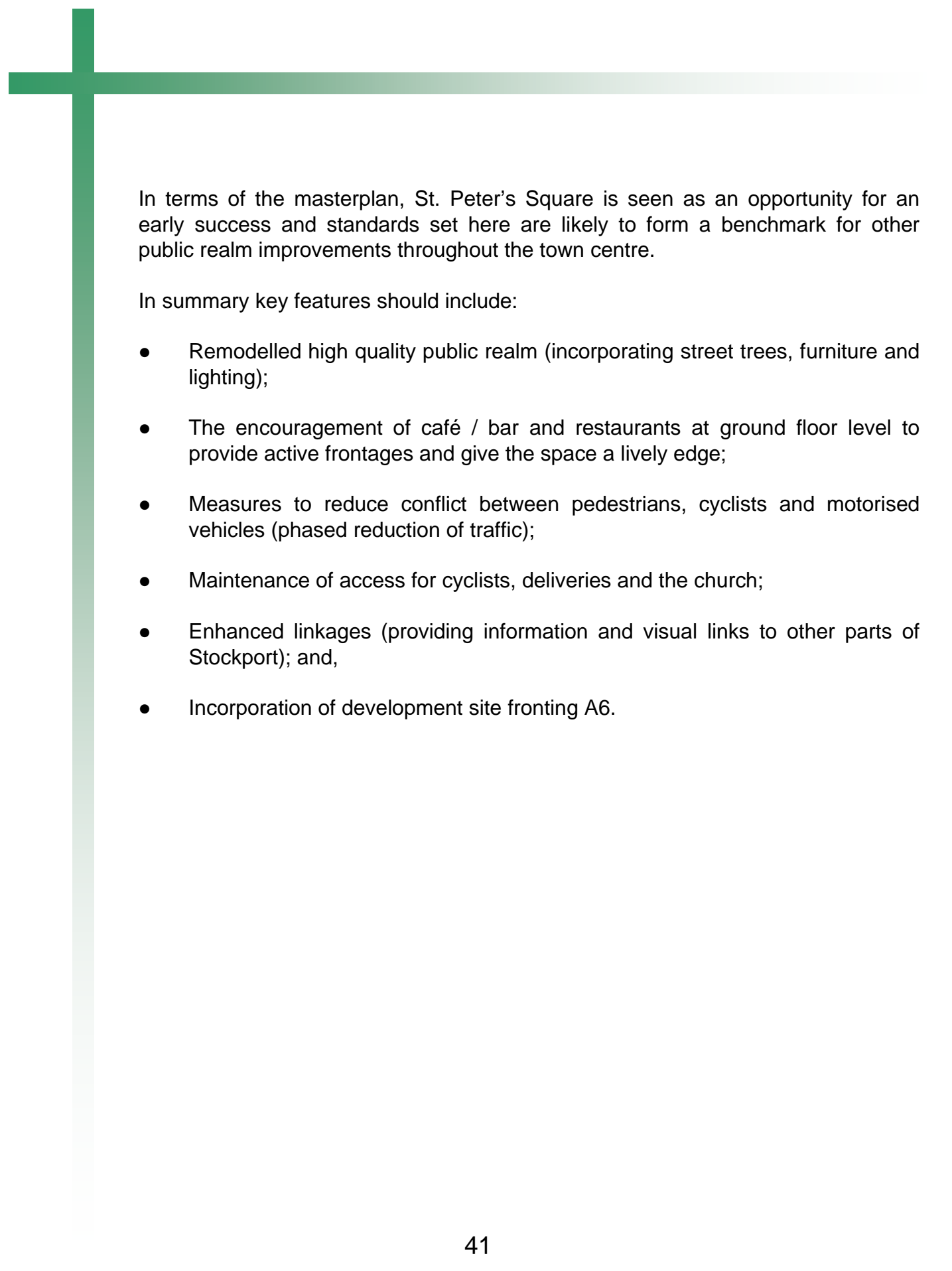
In addition, in seeking to create a safe and secure environment, consideration should be given to the potential use of lighting, appropriate landscaping and traffic calming measures to reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians.

**PLAN OF AREA WHERE LEISURE AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS PREDOMINATE**



*The plan highlights the upper level of the town centre, where leisure and visitor attractions stretch from the marketplace through St. Peter's Square and up to Grand Central.*

*It will be important to link this with the central shopping area at the lower level and proposals for both St. Peter's Square and St. Andrew's Square will be key to making the main vertical linkages.*

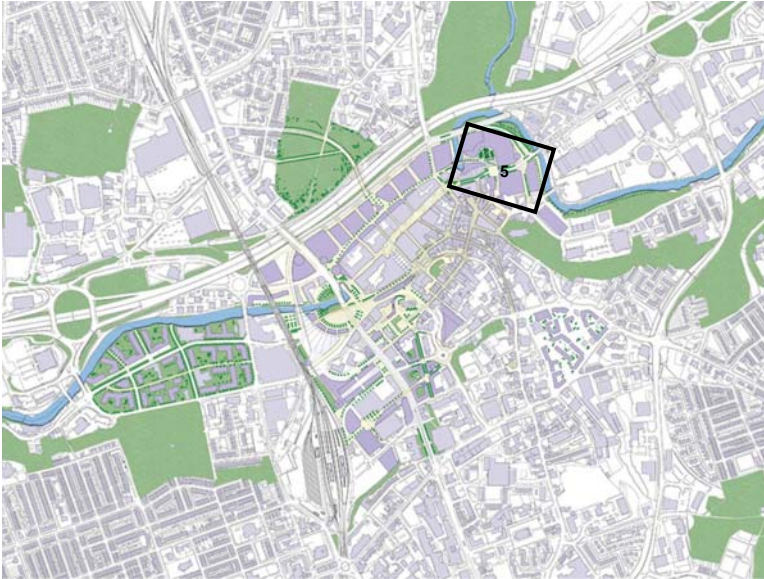


In terms of the masterplan, St. Peter's Square is seen as an opportunity for an early success and standards set here are likely to form a benchmark for other public realm improvements throughout the town centre.

In summary key features should include:

- Remodelled high quality public realm (incorporating street trees, furniture and lighting);
- The encouragement of café / bar and restaurants at ground floor level to provide active frontages and give the space a lively edge;
- Measures to reduce conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and motorised vehicles (phased reduction of traffic);
- Maintenance of access for cyclists, deliveries and the church;
- Enhanced linkages (providing information and visual links to other parts of Stockport); and,
- Incorporation of development site fronting A6.

## 5. St Andrew's Square



Located at the eastern end of Merseyway, the space is a key hub connecting Merseyway, the start of the Mersey, Great Portwood Street and the historic marketplace.



## Objective

To create a new public space and new retail opportunities at the eastern end of Merseyway. The development of St. Andrew's Square will provide the chance to remodel the public realm and create a new shopping area addressing current problems / design limitations.

Proposals should aim to create an eastern entrance and key hub connecting Merseyway, the confluence of the Mersey, Knightsbridge and the historic marketplace.

## Context / Policy

Located at the eastern end of the town centre, St. Andrew's Square was an historic space in the town that was lost to development. The site is currently dominated by the Asda and Sainsbury stores and acts as a bottleneck to the main east west spine, reducing the linkage beyond and leading to vehicle and pedestrian conflict.

The current supermarket sites turn their back on the river with backs of the buildings and service areas defining the river edge, as well as covering up part of the River Goyt. The blank building edges, car parking and vehicle ramps also have a negative impact on street character, with the scale and massing severing ties with the historic Market Place and the rivers.

In the UDP First Review the relevant allocation is Policy TCG2.1 (Central Shopping Area), which states that:

*'...within the central shopping area, new retail development and redevelopment or refurbishment of existing shopping provision will be permitted, provided schemes display a high standard of design, materials and construction, with particular care being given to accessibility and pedestrian links...'*

*'...this area has the potential to attract high quality retailers, together with complementary leisure and restaurant uses that can enhance the shopping experience and provide activity in the evening...'*

In addition, both Policies TCG1.1 (Community and Civic Space) and TCG1.2 (Town Centre / M60 Gateway Transport Hub) are of particular relevance, with TCG1.2 supporting proposals to reduce conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and TCG1.1 stating that:

*'...development within any of the policy areas and allocations that include river frontages should be designed to enhance riverside locations...'*

## **Existing Issues**

- Backs of buildings and servicing overlook the river.
- 'Big Box' supermarkets define the space.
- Deck parking and existing buildings detract from the quality of this area.
- Acts as a bottleneck.

## **Existing Opportunities**

- Located on the Merseyway axis.
- Potential for significant links between this area and the marketplace.
- Eastern gateway location.
- Proximity to the Peel Centre and Knightsbridge area.

## **Development and Design Guidance**

The Future Stockport Masterplan essentially promotes the creation of a new public space and gateway at the eastern end of Merseyway, as well as the opportunity to offer modern quality facilities for high order retailers.

It is proposed that with the potential relocation of the supermarkets, a new space can be created partly covered and closely integrated with the existing riverside. This could take the form of a covered atrium, offering a unique selling point for Stockport town centre. The proposed new retail and food and drink outlets enclosing this space would also generate the activity and the liveliness necessary to create a new focus at the eastern end of the town centre.

The masterplan shows new buildings being laid out in a way to define the new public space and allow a street pattern that ties in closely with the marketplace. These links could be further strengthened through the use of traditional materials that carry through to the market place, using lighting and public art to provide markers or points of interest along the way.

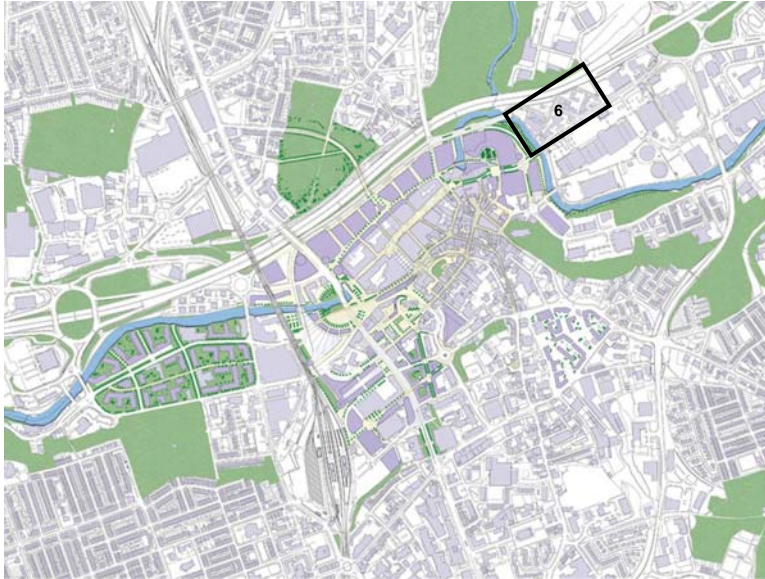
The introduction of a new footbridge over the River Mersey would also allow direct access into this space from Princes Street reducing the current bottleneck and reinforcing the retail circuit around the town centre.

Finally, facing the river new walks and cycle routes should be accommodated, with landscaped corridors opening the river up. In addition, in seeking to generate hubs of activity linked to key development entrances, bus stops and provision for taxis should be strategically positioned, together with the use of public art and lighting to celebrate this eastern point of arrival into Stockport.

In summary key features should include:

- The re-provision of retail space, to create anchor stores and a high quality retail goods offer;
- A new galleria development with a covered square, making use of improved public realm, planting, public art and lighting;
- Creation of a new pedestrian / cycle bridge, extending from Princes Street across the Mersey to reduce the bottleneck;
- Measures to reduce conflict between pedestrians and vehicles (particularly around Corporation Street);
- Strengthened links to the marketplace;
- A new landscaped corridor opening up the river;
- Provision for cycle links as part of the Trans Pennine Trail and Marple Multi User Trail; and
- Appropriate bus and taxi stops for easy access to and from the area.

## 6. Knightsbridge



Located at the eastern gateway of Stockport town centre, the area occupies a key position alongside the M60.



## Objective

To create a high quality eastern gateway to the town centre, consolidating the various parcels of land to allow a comprehensive mixed-use development scheme with an improved setting on the River Goyt.

Development of this eastern approach should seek to complement proposals for the town centre and accommodate the infrastructure requirements of Metrolink and through traffic.

## Context / Policy

Located at the eastern gateway of Stockport town centre, the Knightsbridge area occupies a key position alongside the M60. Comprising a mix of business and industrial uses, along with a small element of retail fronting Great Portwood Street, the area also contains a number of derelict and under-utilised sites.

In the UDP First Review the relevant allocations include Policies TCG2.1 (Central Shopping Area) and TCG2.2 (Great Portwood Street Area).

The revised deposit UDP is particularly strong in its support for the regeneration of the area in a planned way, with a high quality scheme making a positive contribution to this important gateway approach, with Policy TCG2.2 stating:

*'...the Great Portwood Street area is clearly visible from the motorway and forms an important gateway approach from the M60 Portwood junction to the Town Centre. The prominence of this area and proximity to the central shopping area, means that there exists a good opportunity to enhance retail provision and at the same time regenerate areas of derelict and underused land...'*

*'...both retail and mixed-use schemes (e.g. restaurants, leisure, fitness and hotels) will be encouraged, particularly where proposals to develop riverside locations demonstrate the opening up of the River Mersey and its tributaries, enhancing the river environment and creating opportunities for public enjoyment...'*

Policy TCG2.2 also emphasises the need to link the Knightsbridge area into the central shopping area, flagging up the fact that:

*'...in considering applications particular attention will be paid to the improvement of pedestrian and public transport links with the Town Centre, in line with Policy TCG1.4...'*

Of particular relevance in Policy TCG1.4 (Sustainable Access In The Town Centre / M60 Gateway) is the promotion of the extension of Metrolink eastwards from the bus station, penetrating the central shopping area and linking the Portwood area and beyond. A proposal further supported by Policy TCG1.2 (Town Centre / M60 Gateway Transport Hub).

## **Existing Issues**

- Fragmented landownership.
- Constrained site with the M60 forming a visually unattractive edge to the north.
- Low grade environment with a number of vacant plots.
- Presence of a high pressure gas main through the site.
- Poor pedestrian linkages from the west (central shopping area), with the existing Knightsbridge / Great Portwood Street junction presenting a barrier to movement.

## **Existing Opportunities**

- Located on a strategic route into the town centre.
- The nearby Peel Centre already provides a critical mass of retail floorspace, for new development on the north side of Great Portwood Street to build upon.
- Opportunity to open up the River Goyt and exploit riverside setting.
- Grade II listed bridge (Howard Street).
- Opportunities to relocate uses from the central core to facilitate the delivery of the Masterplan.

## **Development and Design Guidance**

The Future Stockport Masterplan recognises that the location of the Knightsbridge area alongside the M60 has a significant impact on the image of the town and the satisfactory development of the area will be key to the overall success of efforts to regenerate the town centre.

*‘...the objectives for the area are to create a high quality eastern gateway to the town centre, consolidate the various parcels of land to create development opportunities that will complement the town centre Masterplan and to accommodate the infrastructure requirements of Metrolink and through traffic...’*

In looking at the area, the consolidation of landownership is seen as critical in bringing about the delivery of a comprehensive scheme, which is both necessary and desirable. A point supported by Policy TCG2.2 in the revised UDP that states:

*‘...it will be important that development takes place in a way so that one off schemes do not prevent comprehensive regeneration...’*

It is envisaged that proposals would need to be predominantly retail led, meeting commercial objectives for the area. Whilst, the introduction of alternative uses (e.g. restaurants / bars and residential) would also help add to the vitality and viability. Certainly, a comprehensive mixed-use scheme with an element of residential use on the upper levels would have a strategic fit with the wider masterplan.

Acting as a gateway, proposals would require a high quality urban design solution, taking account of views from the M60, providing uses that create activity and visual interest at street level, as well as a built form designed to provide a focal point or marker at the Knightsbridge end of the site. An improved setting for the River Goyt would also be essential, with landscaping and riverside walkways being introduced to enhance the environment and create new public realm.

In addition, situated on a strategic route into the town centre, transportation and movement issues are further critical factors that must be taken into account. Firstly, the masterplan highlights the need to safeguard a route for Metrolink across the River Goyt and running alongside the M60 motorway, with an appropriate stop location to be identified. Although, prior to the construction of Metrolink the safeguarded zone could be used for landscaping, service access and parking.

Secondly, the masterplan retains Knightsbridge and Great Portwood Street as the main through route for cars and buses, recognising the need for an improved junction at Knightsbridge / Great Portwood Street to accommodate motor vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, with priority for buses where practical.

Finally, in line with the masterplan, it should be noted that a separate development framework document has been prepared for Knightsbridge, which develops the vision for regeneration and includes two indicative layouts (one incorporating a foodstore and the other non-food retail). Both options illustrate slightly different ways of responding to the inherent opportunities and constraints of the area, whilst incorporating the design approach mentioned above.

In summary key features should include:

- The delivery of a high quality comprehensive regeneration scheme through the consolidation of landownership;
- Mixed-use development, which is predominantly retail led and presents activity & visual interest at street level, as well as a positive image viewed from the M60;
- An enhanced riverside setting with walkways / cycle routes along the River Goyt and active frontages on the eastern bank;
- Retention of the existing bridge (Grade II listed);
- A reserved strip of land for the extension of Metrolink, crossing the River Goyt and continuing eastwards alongside the M60;
- Provision for a Metrolink station, with any scheme being designed to ensure good visibility and safe / attractive access;
- Retention of Great Portwood Street as the main through route for cars and buses, with an improved junction at Knightsbridge and appropriate bus stops and cycle provision; and,
- Enhanced pedestrian linkages to the town centre (central shopping centre).

# APPENDIX 1: UDP POLICIES

## Stockport UDP First Review

### TCG2.1 CENTRAL SHOPPING AREA

**Within the central shopping area, new retail development and redevelopment or refurbishment of existing shopping provision will be permitted, provided schemes display a high standard of design, materials and construction, with particular care being given to accessibility and pedestrian links. Proposals must also accord with relevant shopping policies.**

**Other service uses such as restaurants, leisure, health and fitness and hotel facilities will be permitted subject to the above criteria and provided that they do not conflict with Policy PSD2.2.**

**Explanation:** This central core area will remain the primary shopping area and be given priority for new retail development. The key anchor for this area should continue to be its department stores and key multiples, with efforts being made to maintain and if possible strengthen the department and variety store provision. Evidence of retail need in this area is demonstrated in Policy PSD1.1 (New Shopping Provision). The Stockport Retail Study has identified capacity over and above existing commitments for a substantial amount of comparison goods retailing - in excess of 51,000 sq. m net retail sales space for the period to 2011.

Extending along an axis from Mersey Square, through the Mersey Way Precinct and along Warren Street, it is desirable that the main retail area remains compact with new comprehensive development being encouraged in the Bridgefield Street area. This area has the potential to attract high quality retailers, together with complementary leisure and restaurant uses that can enhance the shopping experience and provide activity in the evening. In addition, in seeking to enhance the central shopping area, the Council will support opportunities to reclaim Mersey Square as the main town square via the removal of unnecessary traffic and the creation of a high quality pedestrian environment, incorporating water features, public art and seating areas.

A nucleus of activity should also be created around the historic Market and Underbanks, with proposals enhancing the historic quality of the area and securing the reuse of buildings for housing, shops, restaurants and bars, together with tourist attractions / museums and a revitalised market. This area has a wealth and diversity of historic buildings and schemes which will need to take account of the conservation policies for the area.

In addition to strengthening the retail “offer”, the improvement of links both within the central shopping area and to adjacent fringe areas (e.g. Portwood, Riverside and the Cultural, Leisure & Heritage Quarter), as set out in UDP policies TCG1.2 and TCG1.4, will be critical to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

Policy PSD2.2 in the Pattern of Shopping Development chapter deals with new uses in shopping and business frontages.

**Note:** the central shopping area defined under this policy and on the Proposals Map will be regarded as the “town centre” in terms of the sequential test under PPS6 “Planning for Town Centres”, 2005.

## **TCG2.2 GREAT PORTWOOD STREET AREA**

**Within this area the Council will permit new retail development including extensions to existing retail uses, service uses such as restaurants, leisure, health/fitness and hotel facilities. In particular, non-food retail proposals that create opportunities for high quality new larger units that cannot be accommodated in the Central Shopping Area, to meet market demand will be permitted.**

**Planning permission for new retail development will generally be subject to restrictions on the sub-division of units.**

**Linkages to the Central Shopping Area will be critical to any development within the Great Portwood Street Area. In addition, a high standard of design will be required, with buildings and landscaping making a positive contribution to the public realm in this important gateway approach to the Town Centre.**

**Explanation:** Policy PSD1.1 deals with the issues of justification, need and sequential test for retail and leisure development. This policy makes provision for new retail developments necessary to meet remaining deficiencies in Stockport Town Centre where there is insufficient availability of suitable sites within the Central Shopping Area and recourse will have to be made to sites within the Great Portwood Street Area. The Great Portwood Street Area is on the edge of the Central Shopping Area. It is sequentially the most preferred area after the Central Shopping Area and contains a number of existing non-food retail warehouses. Scope for further non-food retailing exists and the area complements the Central

Shopping Area by providing large floorplates which are not available in the latter. Restrictions to prevent the subdivision of units below 929 square metres will generally be applied.

The Stockport Shopping Study for the Council (2004) (see policy PSD1.1) identified quantitative need for a gross comparison retail floorspace figure of around 65,000 sq m which could be expected to locate in or at the edge of Stockport Town Centre up to 2011.

However accommodating floorspace of this order within Stockport Town Centre where market demand exists will not be a simple task as the Central Shopping Area is both closely developed and tightly constrained on most sides by physical features.

Work on the Town Centre Masterplan (2005) has identified scope for a net addition of around 54,500 sq m gross retail floorspace within the Central Shopping Area. Achieving this scale of increase within the Central Shopping Area is likely to require relocation of existing retail businesses to facilitate redevelopment. Some of these relocations will have to be accommodated outside the Central Shopping Area but in the sequentially preferred and in the most accessible location to the north east in the Great Portwood Street Area.

The Town Centre Masterplan has identified scope for 10,000 sq m gross of additional floorspace within the Great Portwood Street Area.

There is already a vital and close inter-dependent relationship between the Central Shopping Area and the Great Portwood Street Area (which includes the Knightsbridge development site). There is considerable linkage between these two areas in terms of pedestrian movement on shopping trips. The Great Portwood Street Area is also extremely well served by public transport in the form of bus services currently and the scope for a possible future Metrolink extension.

The Great Portwood Street Area links to the Central Shopping Area will be enhanced as a result of additional retail development in the Great Portwood Street Area and it is the logical extension of the Town Centre for shopping purposes.

The Great Portwood Street Area is clearly visible from the motorway and forms an important gateway approach from the M60 Portwood junction to the Town Centre. The prominence of this area and proximity to the Central Shopping Area, means that there exists a good opportunity to enhance retail provision and at the same

time regenerate areas of derelict and underused land.

The physical capacity of the Town Centre is limited and further retail development in the Great Portwood Street Area would strengthen the available shopping on offer in an appropriate location. The area already includes the Peel Centre, which was built on the site of the former gas works and the available land on the north side of the Great Portwood Street forms a logical extension.

A site (Knightsbridge) at the western end of TCG2.2, between Great Portwood Street and the motorway has previously been granted consent for 7075 sq m of retail floorspace. The area to the east of this, running along the northern side of Great Portwood Street, bordered by the motorway, up to Marsland Street at its eastern end, is also felt to have potential for development. Both areas combined would offer an area of approximately 3.3 ha for a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment scheme. In the longer term other sites within TCG2.2 may become available for redevelopment.

It will be important that development takes place in a way so that one off schemes do not prevent comprehensive regeneration. Futhermore, in considering applications particular attention will be paid to the improvement of pedestrian and public transport links with the Town Centre, in line with policy TCG1.4, as well as the potential for multi-purpose trips and dual use of car parking provision. A key gateway to the Town Centre, developers will also be required to develop high quality schemes following good urban design principles.

Both retail and mixed-use schemes (eg restaurants, leisure, fitness and hotels) will be encouraged, particularly where proposals to develop riverside locations demonstrate the opening up of the River Mersey and its tributaries, enhancing the river environment and creating opportunities for public enjoyment.

Note: for the purposes of this policy “larger units” will be regarded as those over 929 square metres (10,000 square feet).

### **TCG3.1 RIVERSIDE**

**In this area the extension of leisure and office uses into the area will be appropriate, with new buildings being designed to respect historic features and the dramatic setting of the viaduct and river gorge. In addition, the Council will permit a mixture of bars, restaurants, hotel and residential uses, which enable the area to function in the evening as well as the daytime.**

**Such uses should ensure the long-term viability of Weir Mill, as well as enhance the public enjoyment of the river environment by providing elevations, which overlook the river, generate active uses along the front and create viewing and sitting areas accessible to the public.**

**Linkages to the Town Centre will also be fundamental to any redevelopment proposals.**

**In this area retail development will not be permitted unless it is ancillary to other appropriate uses or is small scale development which accord with Policy PSD2.6, “Local Shops”.**

**Explanation:** Enhancement of the “public realm”, in accordance with UDP Policy DCD1.1, will be a particularly important aim within this area. The Riverside area represents one of the best opportunities for urban design led improvements, with the proposed arrival of Metrolink and potential review of the bus station to provide a more efficient and safe passenger facility. Indeed as sites come forward, both on Heaton Lane and around Stockport Bus Station, proposals should seek to use the dramatic setting of the river gorge, Weir Mill, the viaduct and adjacent Wellington Mill, to create a special riverside development. Green roofs can contribute to the enhancement of this setting, given the topography of the area and in particular views from the viaduct.

Schemes must also be linked through to Mersey Square, where improved public space can provide a focus for the Town Centre and an interface between the town’s retail core, the Riverside and Stockport’s emerging Cultural, Leisure and Heritage Quarter.

On the western side of the area the long-term viability of Weir Mill should be secured with mixed-use development, including the retention of employment uses. In addition, developments upon key gateway sites at Heaton Lane roundabout and the Chestergate area will be expected to make a positive contribution to the environment and present an attractive image of the Town Centre. This will be particularly important as the area acts not only as the entrance to the Town Centre via the M60, but will also as a gateway for both the proposed Metrolink extension and Transpennine Trail.

### **TCG3.2 CULTURAL, LEISURE AND HERITAGE QUARTER**

**The area extending from Grand Central and Daw Bank, through St. Peters Square and the Lower Hillgate area, will be the focus for a range of cultural,**

**leisure and heritage facilities. Permitted uses will include office and business uses (B1 use class), leisure including a hotel, residential, restaurants and cafes and tourism related development.**

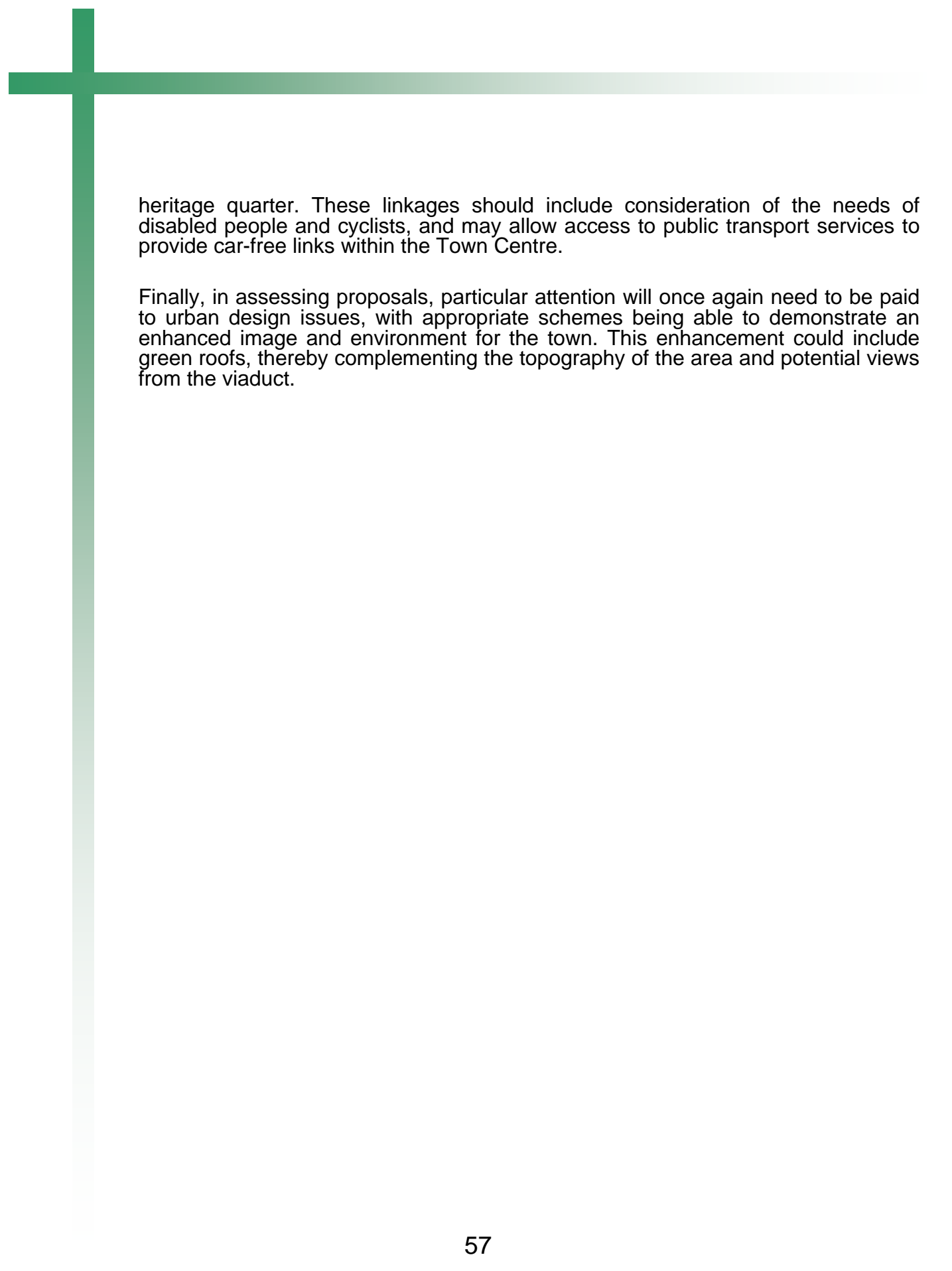
**The cultural, leisure and heritage quarter comprises part of the Hillgate Conservation Area and retention of the historic buildings with appropriate uses will be a paramount consideration. Where new build is considered appropriate, it should be of a high quality of design including landscape treatment taking account of the architectural character and historic nature of the area. Proposals should be appropriate both in scale and use, as well as contribute to the protection or enhancement of the area and its vitality. A key priority will be to improve the quality of the pedestrian environment, with enhanced open space provision and links to the Town Centre and adjacent areas and reduced impacts from traffic.**

**Explanation:** Stockport has the capacity to develop a range of tourist attractions. The Hatworks, the Air Raid Shelters, the re-opening of the Plaza Theatre, together with work on the nearby historic market place and Staircase House, all link together to provide a critical mass that attracts visitors. The Council wishes to further broaden this appeal of attractions and entertainment facilities, with the encouragement of new restaurants, cafes, hotels and leisure facilities, including a new library, which reinforces the Town Centre facilities and has potential to generate joint trips.

An enhanced St. Peters Square, surrounded by cafes and restaurants, provides an ideal setting for developing a cultural quarter, with facilities to serve the surrounding offices during the day, as well as providing a more dynamic evening economy. In addition, the potential redevelopment of the nearby Regal House Car Park site provides an opportunity to further enhance the vitality of the area (e.g. leisure facilities including a hotel) and the support of existing community facilities such as St. Joseph's RC Primary will play an important role in the re-population of the centre and injection of life into the area.

Proposals enhancing the historic quality of the Lower Hillgate area and securing the reuse of buildings for housing, shops, restaurants and bars are also supported.

Development which creates an interesting and pleasant pedestrian environment between the areas of Daw Bank/St. Peters Square and Lower Hillgate will be encouraged. Similarly, pedestrian linkages to the Town Centre and surrounding area will also be viewed as critical to the success of the cultural, leisure and

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heritage quarter. These linkages should include consideration of the needs of disabled people and cyclists, and may allow access to public transport services to provide car-free links within the Town Centre.

Finally, in assessing proposals, particular attention will once again need to be paid to urban design issues, with appropriate schemes being able to demonstrate an enhanced image and environment for the town. This enhancement could include green roofs, thereby complementing the topography of the area and potential views from the viaduct.

# APPENDIX 2: STATEMENT OF CONSULTATION

## Preparation Of Initial Proposals

During the summer 2004, in preparing initial proposals consultation targeted key town centre stakeholders including the Stockport Partnership, Stockport Economic Alliance, GMPTE, Stagecoach and key businesses and landowners.

In addition, to some individual meetings this initial consultation process primarily involved two stakeholder events held at **County Hotel, Bramhall on 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2004**. Held as a **two day series of workshops**, invites were sent to:

### Council Members

#### Established Stakeholder Groups including:

Stockport Partnership Board	Stockport Economic Alliance
Stockport Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Citizen's Panel
National Market Traders Association	Hillgate THI Advisory Panel
Market & Underbanks Action Group	Stockport Tourism Partnership
Town Centre Management Network	

#### Key Landowners including:

Buckingham Securities	Targetfollow Group
Peel Holdings	Maryland Securities
Plaza Trust	Stockport Primary Care Trust
Stockport College	GMPTE
Stagecoach	Virgin Rail & Network Rail
Robinsons Brewery	Seddons
Taylor Woodrow	IKEA
Royal Mail (Stockport)	Spaces
JS Sainsbury	ASDA
Woolworths	Debenhams
Marks & Spencer	British Home Stores
Sunwins (Co-op)	Boots
Next	Threadneedle Properties

**Developers and Property Agents** including:

Satnam	Morbaine
Emersons	Bruntwood Estates
Pentith Ltd	Donaldsons
King Sturge & Co.	Roger Hannah & Co.
Impey & Co.	Garners & Sons.
AMEC	Roberts and Roberts
Fairclough Homes	Roland Bardsleys

**Other Outside Agencies** including:

Govt. Office North West	North West Development Agency
Highways Agency	CABE
Manchester Enterprise	Environment Agency
Stockport Housing Partnership	Greater Manchester Police
English Heritage	Heritage Lottery Fund
Youth Forum	Disability Stockport
Local Faith Groups	

This was followed up by **further stakeholder event on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004** in the evening hosted by Stockport Partnership and Stockport Economic Alliance, when Building Design Partnership presented their initial findings to 72 group representatives and invited further input. Again held at Stockport County, this event offered a view of the proposals to a wide audience of stakeholders and potentially interested parties.

## **Public Consultation Exercise of Draft Masterplan (Future Stockport)**

Having produced a draft masterplan (October 2004), an extensive public consultation campaign was put in place during November 2004. This included **web pages** established on the Council web-site, which received almost 4,000 hits reflecting the high level of interest, together with a two phased public consultation process undertaken by Spin Media a local public relations firm.

### **Phase I (2<sup>nd</sup> Nov – 13<sup>th</sup> Nov):**

This phase began with a launch event, which took the form of a **press briefing** and resulted in extensive media coverage raising awareness. The briefing held at the Co-operative Bank, Pyramid Building, Jct. 1 M60, Stockport resulted in:

**Press articles** in the following publications:

City Life	Property Week
Housing Today	Estates Gazette
New Start	Planning
Regeneration & Renewal	Manchester Metro
The Guardian	Stockport Times
Manchester Evening News	Stockport Express
Community News (Bramhall, Cheadle & Poynton District)	Cheshire Life

**Features on radio** stations:

Imagine FM	Key 103
GMR	

**Features on television:**

BBC TV (North)	Granada Television
Channel M	

The 2<sup>nd</sup> November also marked the beginning of a **two week tour around the borough of the ‘Stockpod’** – an inflatable event station that covered an area of some 50m sq. The ‘Stockpod’ contained an exhibition of the proposals and gave the public an opportunity to see and feedback on these plans by means of questionnaires and Freepost postcards.

The ‘Stockpod’ visited Warren Street in the town centre, as well as Reddish, Bramhall, Cheadle and Marple district centres in a bid to extend consultation throughout the borough. In addition, across the borough, information leaflets and Freepost feedback facilities were made available in public buildings (including the Town Hall and Stockport Railway Station), libraries and doctor’s surgeries.

**Phase II (15<sup>th</sup> Nov – 30<sup>th</sup> Nov)**

Proposals were displayed in Hazel Grove (Civic Hall) and the Heatons libraries and presentations made to all **Area Committees**. At each location, Freepost feedback facilities again accompanied the presentations / exhibitions.

In addition, approximately 90 stakeholders attended a **breakfast briefing on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2004** at King’s Reach Business Park, Yew Street, Stockport.

## **Overall Response**

The four week consultation period returned over 930 responses in total, 671 of which were as a result of visits to the 'Stockpod' with the remaining comments collected by way of postcards, emails and presentations.

Feedback demonstrated overwhelming support for the Masterplan's concepts. For example, when asked for first impressions of the plans to reform Stockport Town Centre 45% of respondents indicated 'excellent', 41% 'good', 10% 'fair' and just 4% 'poor'. In addition, when asked which elements of the town centre needed most improvement the Bus Station was identified as the priority by 38% of respondents (22% indicated 'shopping' as second choice and 20% highlighted 'Public Spaces' as third).


## **Final Masterplan (Future Stockport) and Continuing Consultation as Proposals are Brought Forward and Draft SPD Prepared**

The final masterplan report in December 2004 accommodated feedback from the consultation and was approved by full Council and the Executive in February 2005. Following its approval the Council continued to engage stakeholders with a series of meetings, press releases and presentations (including Disability Stockport and the Chamber of Commerce). Furthermore, between May 2005 – June 2005 the 'Stockpod' was taken around secondary schools and further education colleges to specifically engage young people. Here again, feedback demonstrated overwhelming support for the Masterplan's concepts with 47% of respondents indicating 'excellent', 44% 'good', 7% 'fair' and just 2% 'poor'. In addition, when asked which elements of the town centre needed most improvement the Grand Central complex was identified as the priority by 18% of respondents (17% indicated the 'Bus Station' as second choice and 14% highlighted 'Nightlife' as third).

## **Public Consultation Exercise of Draft SPD**

Following approval by the Executive 12 December 2005, the draft SPD underwent an extensive public consultation exercise.

This formally started on 25 January 2006, with a notice being placed in the Stockport Express highlighting a six week consultation period and availability of the



draft document on the Council website. At the same time, copies were placed in Hygarth House Reception , local libraries and information and advice centres, as well as articles published in both the Town Info Newsletter and Stockport Partnerships Newsletter. In addition, individual letters were forwarded to well over 250 external consultees inviting comment. Those targeted included town centre stakeholders, key landowners, developers / property agents, Developer Forum members, Stockport Economic Alliance members and statutory consultees as identified in the Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement.

As part of role consultation exercise the draft SPD was also taken to Tame Valley, Four Heaton and Victoria Area Committees as well as Planning and Highways Regulation Committee and Regeneration, Housing and Development Scrutiny Committee.

Furthermore, formal presentations were given to the Developers Forum (7 March 2006) and the Walkers Forum (30 March 2006).

The results of the six week consultation exercise were broadly positive, with both Committee Members and many external consultees supporting the long term vision for regeneration. However, where appropriate a number of revisions were made to the draft SPD to take on board concerns as far as possible, whilst maintaining the vision for investment and regeneration within the masterplan area.

There will be further consultation on individual development and infrastructure proposals as schemes are brought forward through the planning process.

# APPENDIX 3: SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL

## Introduction

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Sustainability Appraisal is mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Sustainability Appraisal helps planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans.

The Brundtland definition of sustainable development is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable development is a major challenge to society and the planning system has a vital part to play in promoting more sustainability in land-use.

The Stockport Unitary Development Plan, which was adopted in 1998, was subject to Sustainability Appraisal. This appraisal can be viewed on the Stockport Council website on the Unitary Development Plan page or by following the link below.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/planningbuildingpolicy/developmentplanning/udp/?a=5441>

The Council will be preparing a methodology for the sustainability appraisal of its future plans in accordance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. In the interim, the same methodology that was applied to the adopted UDP has been used to assess the SPD for the Town Centre Masterplan.

## Methodology

Sustainability Appraisal involves testing a plan, programme or project against a set of objectives. The objectives articulate what is meant by sustainable development, especially with respect to land use planning.

The 25 sustainability objectives used for the purpose of this assessment were developed following consultation with other Greater Manchester Authorities and are based on the four aspects of sustainability highlighted in “A Better Quality Of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK” (DETR 1999).

## **Sustainability Objectives**

### **Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone**

1. To improve access to services and amenities
2. To reduce poverty and increase incomes especially in areas of social exclusion
3. To develop thriving and stable communities and neighbourhoods to reduce crime levels
4. To improve access to integrated public transport services
5. To improve the supply of good quality resource efficient housing and affordable housing

### **Effective protection and enhancement of the natural environment and prudent use of natural resources**

6. To reduce overall energy consumption and increase proportion of energy generated from renewable sources
7. To minimise development of greenfields, urban greenspace and wildlife sites
8. To maintain the long term productivity of agricultural land and use it more prudently
9. To minimise the amount of waste produced and increase the recovery of value
10. To minimise the use of primary minerals and aggregates
11. To reduce the need to travel by car
12. To maximise net environmental gain from all development
13. To reduce all forms of air pollution which contribute to poor air quality and change in global climate
14. To protect water resources and enhance water quality
15. To protect and enhance valued key habitats and landscapes
16. To practise creative conservation and enhance biodiversity
17. To reclaim dereliction and increase physical regeneration
18. To ensure conservation and sensitive re-use of the built heritage
19. To sustain and extend tree cover and woodlands

### **High and stable levels of economic growth**

20. To increase growth of employment
21. To reduce local unemployment rates
22. To promote increased choice of transport mode by developing public transport, increasing rail freight and water transport
23. To improve the image of Stockport and make it more attractive for visitors and investors

24. Develop sustainable leisure and tourism opportunities
25. Support the use and sustainable development of ICT

**NB** The “Symbolic Summary” column will be used to give an indication of the severity of the impact (positive or negative) the policy is expected to have in terms of sustainability.

- |    |                       |    |                       |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|
| √√ | positive impact       | √  | some positive impacts |
| -  | no apparent impact    | ?  | uncertain impact      |
| x  | some negative aspects | xx | negative impact       |

## Stockport Council - Sustainability Appraisal Proforma Supplementary Planning Document - Town Centre Masterplan

### Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone

Appraisal objective	Brief commentary on performance	Symbolic Summary
To improve access to services and amenities	The improvement of access to and from the town centre and its amenities, as well as movement in and around the centre is highlighted as a core objective	√√
To reduce poverty and increase incomes especially in areas of social exclusion	Through encouraging employment activities within the town centre the SPD seeks to create new opportunities in a sustainable location accessible to all.	√√
To develop thriving and stable communities and neighbourhoods to reduce crime levels	The promotion of town centre living is identified as a core objective to bring life to the area, diversify tenure and promote security.	√√
To improve access to integrated public transport services	Improving public transport provision is at the forefront of proposals, particularly with the identification of a new transport interchange as a key development project.	√√
To improve the supply of good quality resource efficient housing and affordable housing	In addition to promoting residential development, development principles emphasis the need for good design and the encouragement of sustainable construction. (Affordable housing is addressed in a separate SPG).	√

## Effective protection and enhancement of the natural environment and prudent use of natural resources

Appraisal objective	Brief commentary on performance	Symbolic Summary
To reduce overall energy consumption and increase proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	Energy efficiency and sustainable construction is highlighted under the development principles. However, it may be argued that the impact is uncertain given the significant scale of development outlined.	?
To minimise development of greenfield sites, urban greenspace and wildlife sites	Through the active encouragement of urban growth within the town centre, there is the potential to ease development pressure upon greenfield sites.	√
To maintain the long term productivity of agricultural land and use it more prudently	N/A	-
To minimise the amount of waste produced and increase the recovery of value	N/A	-
To minimise the use of primary aggregates	Sustainable construction is highlighted under the development principles. However, it may be argued that the impact is uncertain given the significant scale of development outlined.	?
To reduce the need to travel by car	In line with PPG13 (Transport), the SPD seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport and accessibility to the town centre with a new transport interchange being flagged up as a key development project. In addition, mixed-use development is promoted under the development principles, which could also contribute to reducing travel patterns.	√√
To maximise net environmental gain from all development	Upgrading the town centre environment and delivery of high quality public realm is a core objective of the SPD.	√

Appraisal objective	Brief commentary on performance	Symbolic Summary
To reduce all forms of air pollution which contribute to poor air quality and change in global climate	In promoting sustainable modes of transport as an alternative to the car, as well as the development principle of energy efficiency and sustainable construction, the SPD should help contribute to reducing air pollution. However, it may be argued that the impact is uncertain given the significant scale of development outlined and potential traffic generation.	?
To protect water resources and enhance water quality	N/A	-
To protect and enhance valued key habitats and landscapes	The opening up and enhancement of the town's riverside is identified as a development principle and proposals along the banks of the Mersey, Tame and Goyt will be expected to contribute to the vitality of the riverside habitat and environment.	√√
To practise creative conservation and enhance biodiversity	Opportunities for creative conservation and enhance biodiversity should certainly be increased with development principles promoting the 'biodiversity' and 'greening' of the town centre.	√
To reclaim dereliction and increase physical regeneration	The SPD as a whole is all about the physical regeneration and enhancement of the town centre. However, it is the Knightsbridge key development project that would primarily bring about the comprehensive regeneration of a number of derelict and under-utilised sites.	√√
To ensure conservation and sensitive re-use of the built heritage	The import role of key historic landmarks (e.g. the Plaza, Railway Viaduct, Wellington Mill, St.Peter's Church and Cobden's Statue etc) and Conservation Area status at St. Peter's Square is specifically highlighted in the SPD. Furthermore, the requirement for design appraisals should ensure regeneration proposals come forward in an appropriate manner.	√√

Appraisal objective	Brief commentary on performance	Symbolic Summary
To sustain and extend tree cover and woodlands	The 'greening' of the town centre is identified as a development principle, which specifically talks about the importance of landscaping and potential enhancement of an area by tree planting.	√

### High and stable levels of economic growth

Appraisal objective	Brief commentary on performance	Symbolic Summary
To increase growth of employment	Encouraging employment activities within the town centre is a core objective of the SPD. Certainly substantial job opportunities should be created given the potential scale of regeneration proposed, particularly in the retail sector.	√√
To reduce local unemployment rates	Through encouraging employment activities within the town centre the SPD seeks to create new opportunities in a sustainable location accessible to all.	√
To promote increased choice of transport mode by developing public transport, increasing use of rail freight and water transport	Improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, together with public transport, is identified as a development principle in the SPD. In addition, key development projects include proposals for a new transport interchange, as well as a new east – west transport corridor for Metrolink and buses along the alignment of Great Egerton Street towards Portwood.	√√
To improve the image of Stockport and make it more attractive for visitors and investors	The need to upgrade the town's environment and image is fundamental in the SPD, with development principles emphasising public realm improvements, greening of the environment, use of lighting and good design etc. This drive for a marked step change in the quality of the town centre is particularly evident with the key development project around Mersey Square and proposed overhaul of the shopping experience around Merseyway and Princes Street.	√√

Appraisal objective	Brief commentary on performance	Symbolic Summary
Develop sustainable leisure and tourism opportunities	Raising the quality and range of tourism / leisure attractions in the town centre is a core objective of the SPD. In particular, the key development project around St. Peter's Square is an example of where the SPD seeks to bring a new vibrancy to Stockport through the introduction of new uses and extended activity into the evening.	√√
Support the use and sustainable development of ICT	N/A	-

## Conclusions

Some of the sustainability objectives used in this methodology are not addressed by the SPD, however, the overriding majority of sustainability objectives that the SPD Town Centre Masterplan can be tested against result in some degree of positive impact. Of the 25 objectives used in the methodology, the SPD was thought to have no effect on four (-), uncertain impact on three (?), some positive impact on six (✓) and a positive impact on twelve (✓✓).

This is encouraging and in particular suggests that the SPD will greatly benefit the specific aims of **social progress which recognises the needs of everyone** and **high and stable levels of economic growth**.

For the purposes of this Sustainability Appraisal there is some uncertainty how the SPD would contribute to a number of appraisal objectives for the **effective protection and enhancement of the natural environment and prudent use of natural resources**. Primarily due to the potential scale of development outlined. However, these were not thought to have a negative impact with the range of core objectives and development principles put in place in the SPD.