



THE PLAN

VOLUME 3 ASHTON-IN-MAKERFIELD >>>

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A foreword by Cllr David Molyneux

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FOREWORD

Ashton-in-Makerfield is a great place to live, work and visit.

With a thriving centre, outstanding schools, beautiful green spaces and an excellent location for commuting there is a huge amount to be proud of and celebrate. That does not mean as a council we should rest on our laurels but instead must work hard to fully realise Ashton's economic potential.

We are committed to working with the private sector and our communities to improve even further what Ashton has to offer and to enable it to grow and prosper in the decades to come. This document is the first part in helping to shape that future. It highlights what we already have in Ashton and what we can build on for the future.

The centre is a bustling market town with variety of independent shops, a popular market and busy restaurants and cafes.

We know we can enhance that retail offer even further by attracting investment and by getting the right developers involved. Ashton has an excellent and varied housing offer.

But we know we must be bold and ambitious with our regeneration schemes to enable new desirable and affordable homes for existing residents and to attract new people to live in the borough.

We have major interest in the growing employment areas of South Lancs Industrial Estate and Landgate. The close proximity to the M6 has been a catalyst in recent years for major employers to locate to these sites. These major employers, with more to come, will bring an increasing number of jobs and greater prosperity to residents in the town and its outlying areas.

This is great news but we know this also poses its own challenges to our infrastructure. Improving transport links is

a major priority for Ashton and we are very much aware of local concern regarding traffic congestion in the centre.

As part of our wider strategic growth plan we will address these concerns and work with our Greater Manchester partners to enable a more diverse and improved travel offer to reduce congestion.

As this eye-catching plan illustrates this is an exciting time for Ashton with so many opportunities to help us build a bright and prosperous future for all.

CLLR DAVID MOLYNEUX

DEPUTY LEADER OF WIGAN BOROUGH COUNCIL/ PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR REGENERATION



01 INTRO

Exciting things are happening in both Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region. As two of the most populous and biggest economies in the North, they are driving growth across the resurgent Northern Powerhouse.

Ashton-in-Makerfield (referred to locally as Ashton) is equidistant between these two great cities, and just south of Wigan.

Its location on the overlap between these three major economies, and being directly served by the M6, has helped it become both an established commuter town and a thriving business location – and means it is well-positioned to take advantage of future growth too.

Located in the borough of Wigan - which is a key player in the success of Greater

Manchester, contributing £4.2 billion to the economy each year – Ashton will play a central role in an economy that is anticipated to grow to £5.2 billion over the next 10-years.

Ashton also neighbours St Helens and is close to the boundary of Warrington. This means close cross-border collaboration on several topics (e.g. transport) is essential to



the vitality of these areas, but also provides real opportunities for both residents and businesses of Ashton.

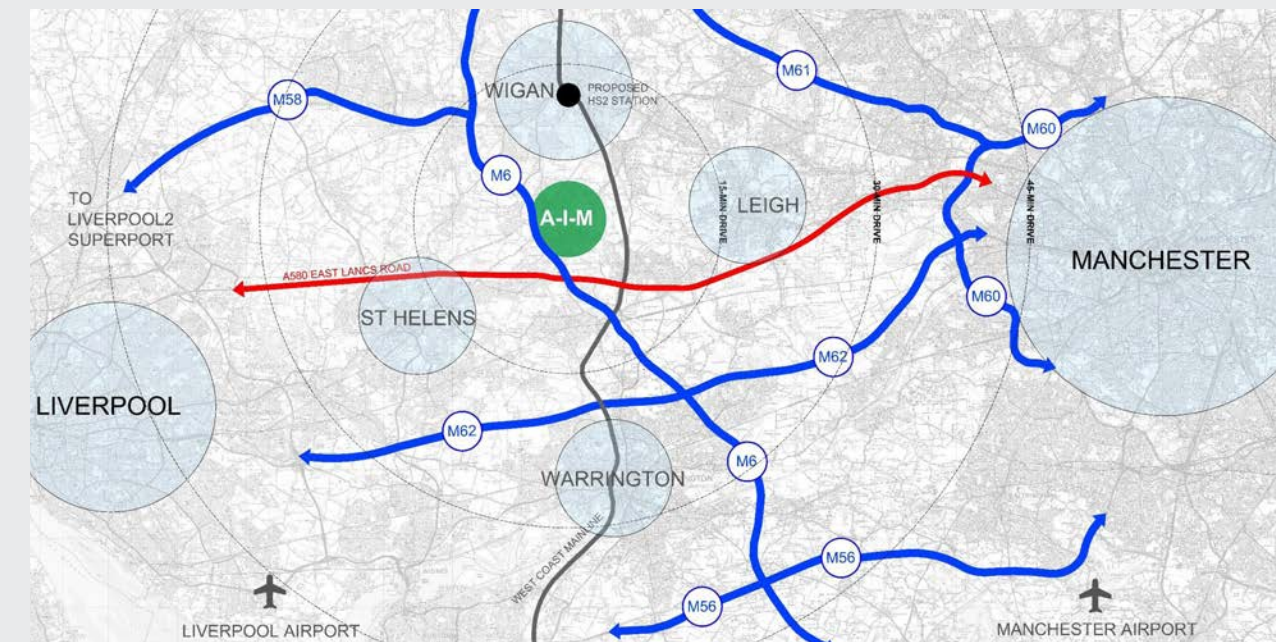
Ashton is home to around 30,000 people, and is an important hub for local goods and services. Ashton has many of the hallmarks of a traditional market town. Going forward, we want Ashton to play a bigger role as a district centre of the borough, and it is a town with fantastic potential to do so.

This Investment Framework sets out our objectives and aspirations for Ashton, outlining several ambitious schemes, regeneration priorities and development areas. Whilst this document does not limit itself to the town centre, it is a core

priority within this document, and where we believe some of the biggest gains can be made over coming years.

We know that Ashton is already a great place to live, but it has the ingredients to become one of the most desirable places to live in the North-West. This document is our plan to achieve that.

Ashton is already one of the North West's best connected small towns, by both road and rail. Adjacent to the M6 and A580; 750,000 people within just a 30-minute drive. It has excellent connectivity to two international airports and Liverpool2 Superport, and from 2027, Ashton will also be just a 10-minute train journey from regular HS2 services at Wigan rail hub too.



02 ASHTON TODAY



Deal in Action, Ashton.

CONNECTIVITY

Ashton is served by Bryn train station, just north of Ashton. The station is on the Liverpool – Wigan line, providing a service every 30-minutes in each direction. The line is electrified, meaning it provides fast, clean, and quiet services to these major transport and employment hubs. Ashton is also a hub for bus services, with several routes linking to the wider Wigan, Warrington and St Helens areas.



Bryn Station.



Ashton, Wigan Road.

SCHOOLS

Ashton enjoys a fantastic choice of schools, with seven primary and three high schools in the town. Several schools have been labelled 'Good' and 'Outstanding' in recent Ofsted reports - making Ashton a particularly attractive place to raise a family.



Byrchall High School, Ashton.

GREEN SPACE

There is an abundance of high-quality green space throughout Ashton. From the formal urban green spaces of Jubilee Park, to the pocket parks of Town Green, to the natural beauty of Three Sisters Recreation Area.



Three Sisters, Ashton.



Jubilee Park, Ashton.

LEISURE

The new Ashton Leisure Centre is 'changing the face of fitness'. A £2.8m investment from Wigan Council, as part of the Deal for Health and Wellness, will help with redevelopment. A new spin studio, fitness studio, 3G synthetic pitch, multi-use games area, steam room and sauna and improved parking facilities will make this a fantastic asset for the people of Ashton.

Add to this the exceptional Three Sisters Racing Circuit, and the nearby 20-hole course at Ashton Golf Club and neighbouring Haydock Park Racecourse – Ashton has a leisure offer to rival any town in the North West.



Karting at Three Sisters Race.



© Haydock Race Course.

HOMES

Ashton has a wide range of quality housing, ranging from Edwardian and Victorian townhouses through to modern homes. This extensive offer means there's something for everyone.

Add to this that the average house price is below both the Wigan and regional average, Ashton is in many ways a hidden treasure.

Excellent connectivity, schools, leisure, green space, and homes make Ashton a highly desirable place to live – but one that is a hidden gem amongst the North West's best.



Wigan Rd, Ashton.



Wigan Rd, Ashton.

INDEPENDENT ASHTON

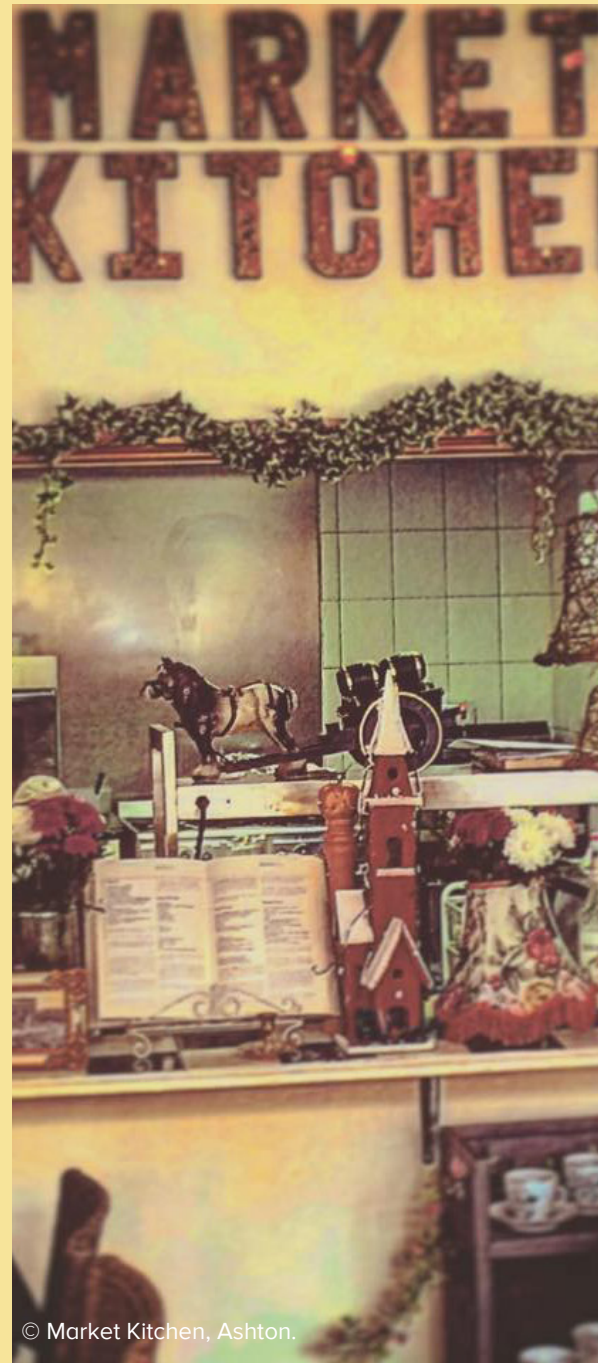
As a long-established market town, Ashton has a vibrant and distinctive mix of independent businesses.

The loop made-up of Wigan Road, Gerard Street, Bryn Street, and Garswood Street form Ashton's core independent offer. Here you can find grocery shops, food and drink outlets, hair and beauty specialists, fashion retailers, and a plethora of other high street services. Additionally, an indoor and outdoor market run on a Tuesday and Saturday.

Local favourites, such as The Hingemaker Arms, set Ashton apart as a quality destination for local needs. As testament to that, Mark Williams & Son butchers have been on Gerard Street for over 50-years!

Ashton is also home to a small but well-regarded mix of restaurants, offering a diverse range of cuisines. Some of which have obtained TripAdvisor's 'Certificate of Excellence' – including Primo, The Fat Bull, Pasquale's Italian and Plantation Bar and Grill.

Ashton is also locally renowned for its lively night-time economy, which especially comes alive when it is race day at the nearby Haydock Racecourse.



© Market Kitchen, Ashton.



© Hilton Smythe, Ashton.

BIG BUSINESS

Ashton is home to South Lancashire Industrial Estate, one of the North West's largest and most successful industrial estates.

With excellent access to the M6, the industrial estate is hive of activity for several high-profile businesses. The big sectors here are 'Transport, Logistics & Distribution', 'Engineering & Manufacturing', and 'Construction & Supplies'.

As a specialist cluster for these three core sectors, the industrial estate provides agglomeration benefits to businesses, and important jobs to the borough.

The market remains buoyant here, and that is reflected in recent investments such as Poundland's £30m national distribution centre, and db symmetry's 110,000sq ft warehouse; M6 Epic.

We think there is a real opportunity to build upon this growth and continue to attract high-quality employers to Ashton.



© db Symmetry



© Poundland

03 OUR VISION

Our vision is based upon four core principles:

1. Enhancing Our Place

Quality of place is paramount to thriving towns. A series of interventions are set out throughout this vision which seek to increase the quality of the existing built environment, and ensure future development is of a high standard.

2. Strengthening Our Enterprise

We know that both new and existing businesses require support. We will continue to nurture our strong independent offer, whilst simultaneously complementing and enhancing our distinctiveness with new development.

3. Empowering Our People

At the core of the Investment Framework is a desire to help our people realise their

ambitions. Promoting investments in the people of the town through education, job growth and access to employment will ensure that their success is evident throughout the town.

4. Providing Connected Infrastructure

We recognise that infrastructure is the network that connects people, places, and enterprise together. We want the people of Ashton to have better connections to education, employment, services, and leisure facilities.

STRUCTURING OUR VISION

Our vision for Ashton has been developed by focusing primarily upon the town centre, but also considering some of the major 'strategic growth areas' around Ashton.

By structuring our approach around these two key themes, this Investment Framework provides a toolkit to take

Ashton 'up a notch' in the hierarchy of North West towns.

03:01 Ashton Town Centre

The town centre is an established hub for local goods and services, but has significant potential for growth, diversification, and improvement. As such, we have developed a '7-point plan' of objectives to transform the beating heart of Ashton.

03:02 Strategic Growth Around Ashton

Strategic growth areas have been identified at Landgate and South Lancs Industrial Estate, due to their significant potential to provide the homes, jobs or leisure space that Ashton requires as the town and borough continue to grow.



Jubilee Park, Wigan in Bloom Judging.

03:01 ASHTON TOWN CENTRE

THE AREA

Traditionally a market centre, Ashton is increasingly attracting well known high street multiples which complement the existing range of quality independent vendors and discount retailers. Whilst the catchment is principally local, Ashton has a strong, loyal, and relatively affluent customer base.

We have identified two major opportunity areas, and two 'gateway' sites in the town centre – all of which have significant potential for regeneration or redevelopment.

Additionally, Gerard Street and the streets that feather from it, will receive public realm and streetscape improvements in order to refresh the principle retail and business area.



OUR OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen our Independent Offer

Independents are the life blood of towns like Ashton, and have the potential to create a diverse and unique offer that attract a wide catchment of visitors. We will seek to support both new and existing independents; both directly through business support and indirectly by ensuring any new development is of an appropriate type and scale. This will ensure that the existing offer is complemented and strengthened, rather than undermined.

2. Develop our Major Opportunity Areas

Well located and of a good scale, these major sites would suit a variety of retail uses. These sites also present an opportunity for restaurant use, supporting what is an underdeveloped evening economy with real opportunities for growth.

3. Regenerate Gateway Sites and Underused Buildings

First impressions count and, although few in number here, unused buildings or brownfield sites can detract from the positives of a place. Ashton's gateway sites, particularly along Bolton Road, present a real value for money investment – and would particularly suit residential uses. Carefully considered design here will also significantly enhance the image of this part of Ashton.

4. A Hub for New Business

Ashton is incredibly well located amongst the North West's biggest economies, by both road and rail. Whilst big businesses have clearly already taken advantage of



this, this type of investment is principally at South Lancs Industrial Estate. We firmly believe that there are other opportunities to take advantage of Ashton's offer as a base for business, in the town centre.

5. Improve the Streetscape

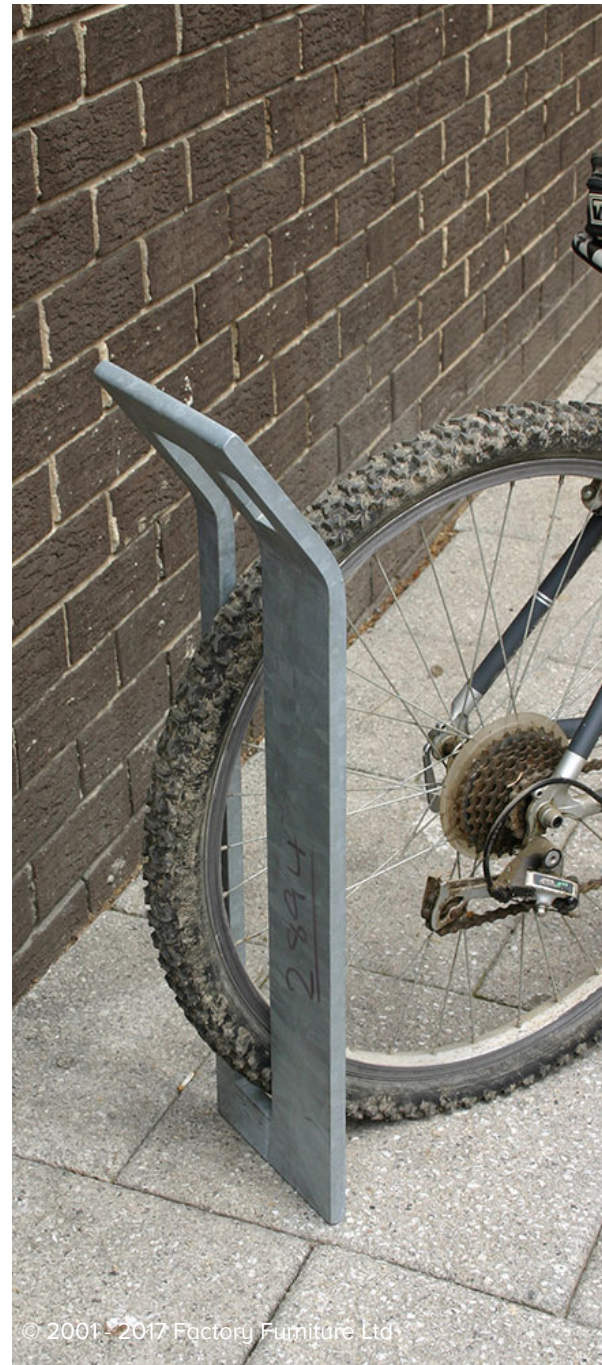
Streetscape is an all-encompassing term for the visual elements that make-up a street; building frontages, roads, footways, street furniture, lighting, and trees. These elements form the street's character. Improving the streetscape on Gerard Street will help create an environment that is aesthetically pleasing and strengthens Ashton's standing as a place to live, work and visit.

6. Enhance the Side Streets

Several side streets currently radiate from Gerard Street, but the current quality and offer of these areas is mixed. There is a real opportunity to create something distinctive and interesting using these spaces, many of which are more sheltered than the busy Gerard Street and carry the potential to create a 'café culture' -spaces to dwell or enjoy food and drink.

7. Balance Accessibility

The town centre is located close to the M6 and on a key highway route between some of our biggest employment areas. As such, there is a need to better balance vehicular movements through and to the town centre, with pedestrians and cyclists –particularly on Gerard Street and linking with our streetscape improvements.



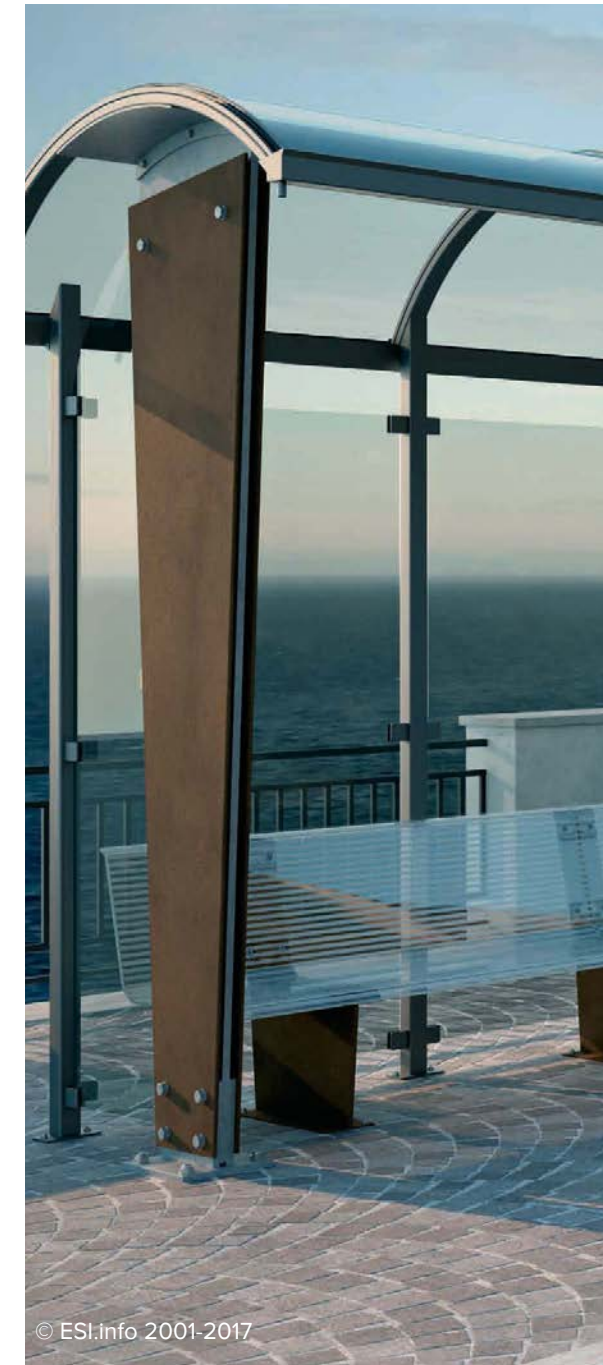
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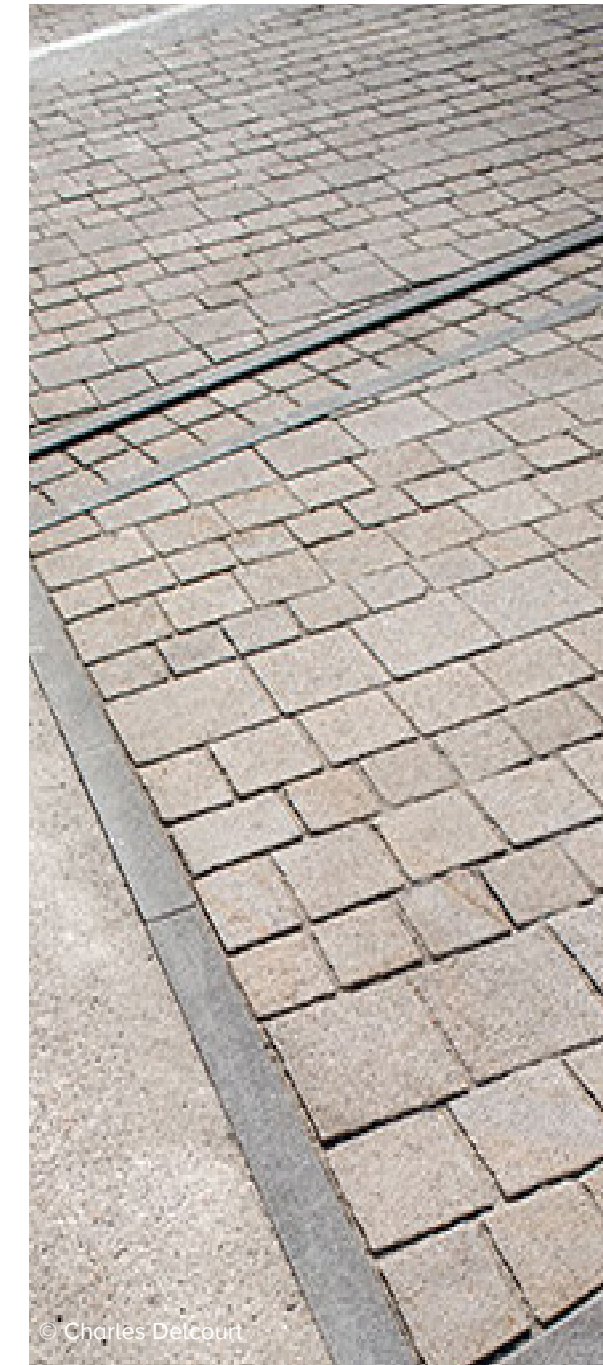
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AMBITIONS

Quality Design and Desirable Brands

We want to both improve and expand Ashton's offer. To do this we need to provide both a quality and unique mix – particularly brands that are not located nearby and will have a strong draw.

Development of an Appropriate Type and Scale

New development should be proportionate to the size of Ashton Town Centre, but also be aesthetically pleasing. New retail, restaurants and cafes will improve the local offer and encourage dwell time.

Nurturing Quality Independents

Quality independent retailers provide an offer that is distinctive and appealing – they set places apart and contribute significantly to the desirability of a place to live. We will support new and existing quality independents as a priority.

Enhancing the Urban Environment

A number of schemes have been outlined that will boost the quality of streets in the town centre; from revamped shop frontages, to new spaces to enjoy or meet friends.

Living, Visiting and Working in Ashton

Ashton is already a great example of a town where people choose to live, visit and work. We want to boost this even further; providing more options for people to live close to the town centre, more reasons to visit Ashton, and more spaces where people choose to work (or even grow their own business!).



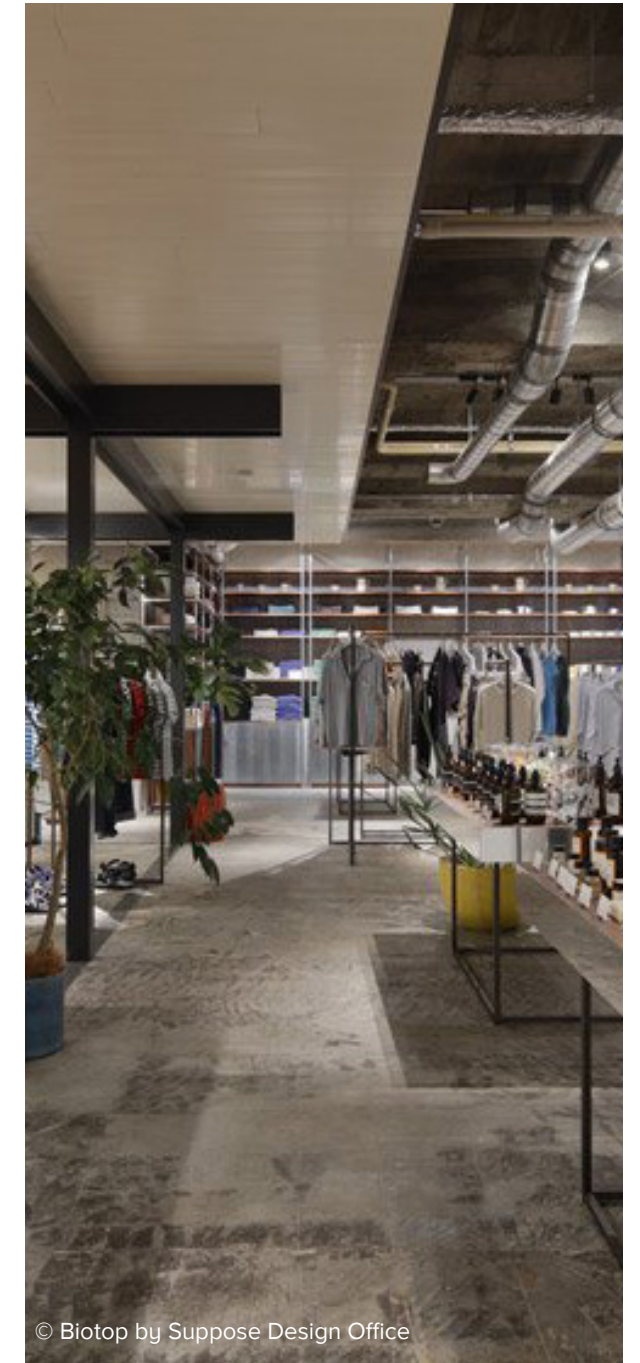
© Pret a Manger



© Marcin Wichary Courtesy of Friends of the High Line



© Present.se



© Biotop by Suppose Design Office

RELIEVING TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Ashton experiences significant levels of traffic congestion in the town centre as the main shopping centre (Gerard Street) is the primary through route for access to and from the M6 Junction 24 and also serves a number of major business sites.

Our vision for the future of Ashton town centre is to strike the right balance between vehicles and pedestrians, providing a safe environment for shoppers whilst still supporting the excellent road links that currently serve the area.

As part of this, we will explore options to improve the quality of the public realm alongside encouraging a greater use of the strong public transport network within and around Ashton.

Linked with wider growth and development strategies for the borough, further work is needed to look at the medium to long-term strategic opportunities for new transport connections which might assist with reducing the volume of through-traffic in the heart of the town centre.

This presents a major opportunity to transform the town centre – providing not only an uplift to the urban environment, but also in supporting existing businesses and creating the right conditions for new investment.



© Kobe.

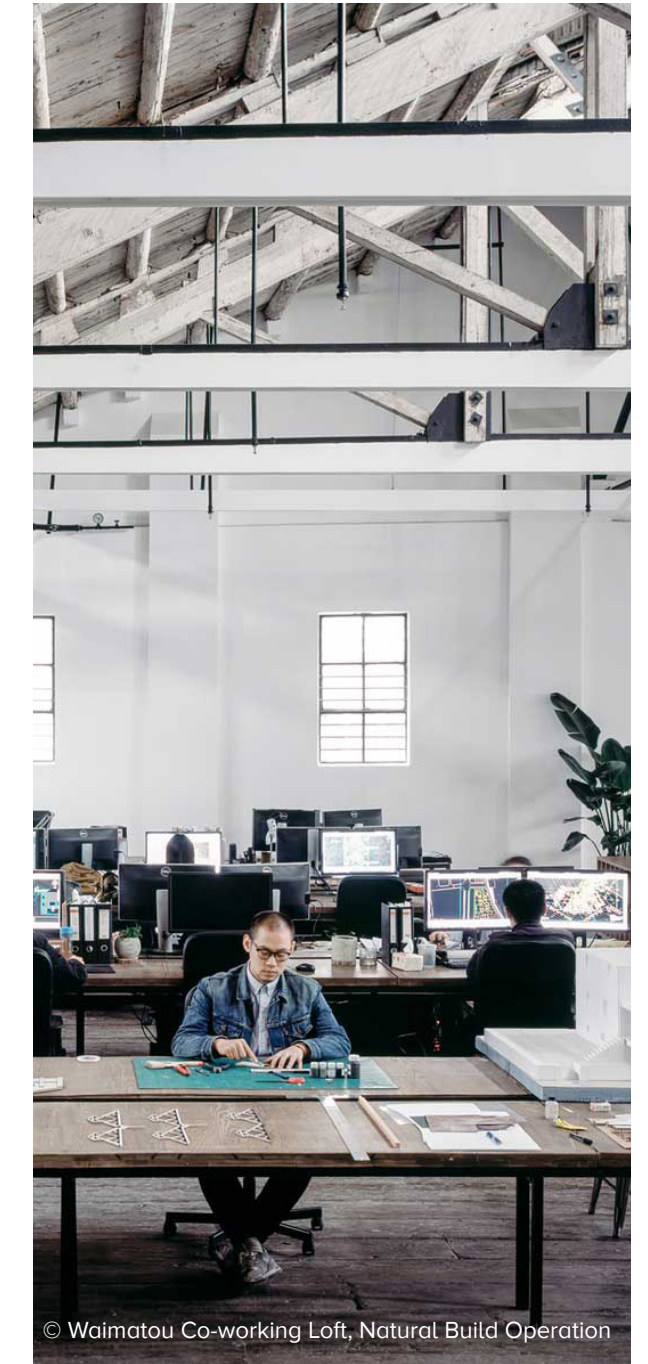
03:01 STRATEGIC GROWTH AROUND ASHTON

THE AREA

Our vision for Ashton is supported by two 'Strategic Growth Areas' around the town.

Between them, these two sites will be significant contributors to the housing stock and employment land within the borough, and clearly will drive growth across Ashton.

As such, it is imperative that the high-level objectives for these sites are outlined within the Investment Framework for Ashton.



LANDGATE

THE AREA

Landgate is a 45ha site, predominantly comprising of agricultural land, bound by Land Gate Lane to the north, Bryn Road to the south and Wigan Road to the west.

Outline planning permission for a mixed use, residential-led development was granted for the site in November 2015. The permission includes provision of nearly 500 homes, employment, retail, and recreational land.

The site boasts excellent connectivity to Junction 25 of the M6 and Bryn Rail Station.

OUR OBJECTIVES

A Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood

New development here should seek to provide not only high-quality homes, but also the opportunity to live, work and play in a desirable setting.

Clearly, the close proximity of Bryn railway station adds real value to this site – but we also think value can be created here through environmentally sensitive design, and the provision of recreational facilities, such as sports pitches.



SOUTH LANCS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

THE AREA

The South Lancs Industrial Estate (SLIE) is one of the borough's largest concentrations of employment, with over 25 businesses located between Bryn Road and the Three Sisters Race Circuit.

Over 11ha of industrial land has recently been developed on the new M6 Epic site. State-of-the-art facilities have been delivered here and are now occupied by major national corporations including Compagnie Fruitiere UK and Poundland which have together delivered close to 1,000 new jobs.

OUR OBJECTIVES

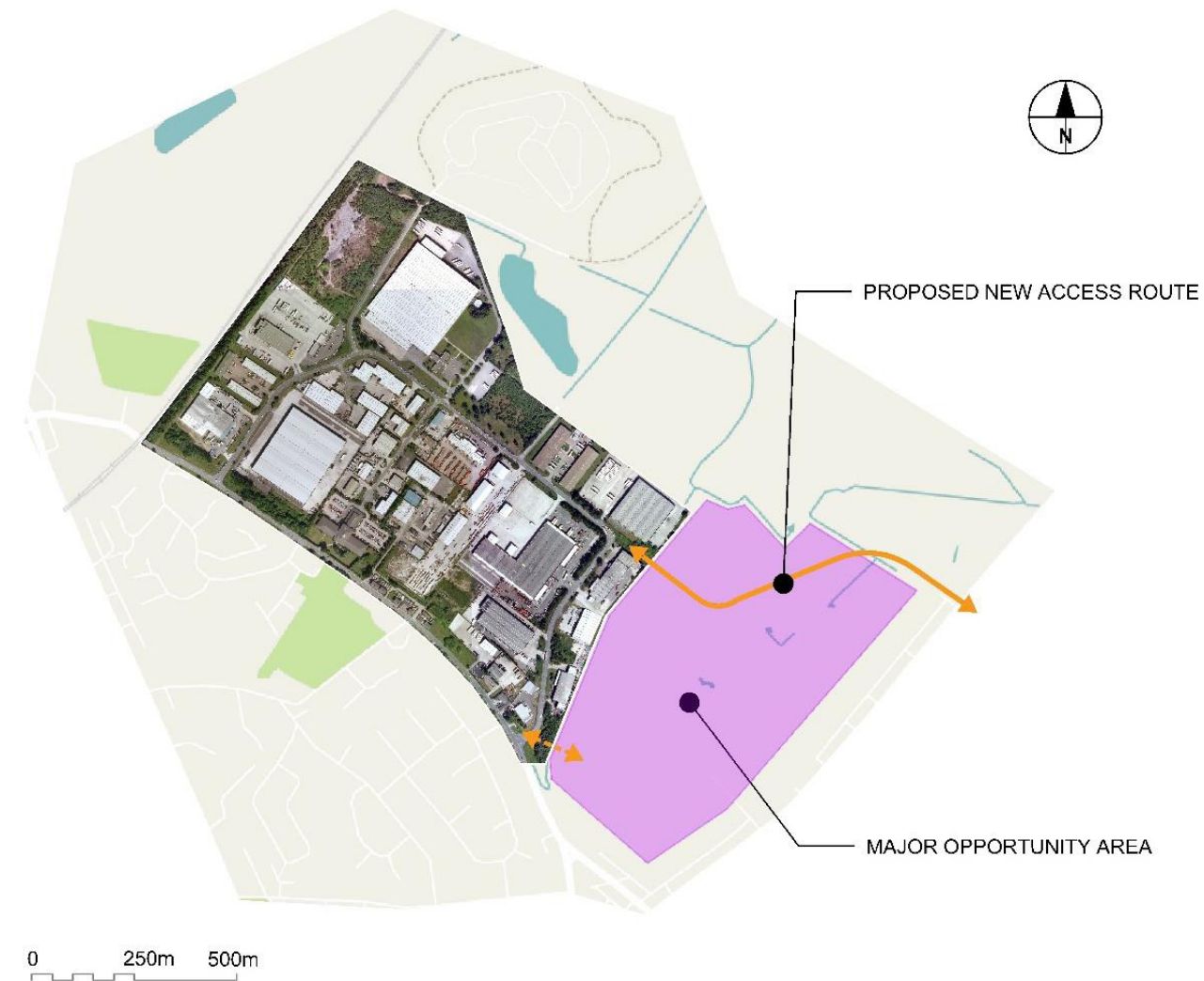
Create High-Quality Local Jobs

We're aiming to build upon our core employment sectors as well as attracting high-end businesses from new sectors including advanced manufacturing, increasing the number of quality local employment opportunities.

Improve Strategic Connections

The current routing of motorway traffic through Ashton Town Centre adds delays and cost to important business operations.

A new route between the industrial estate and the A58 to the south east of the site, will improve connectivity for existing businesses and help attract new investment.



04 DELIVERY

We've identified three key mechanisms that will help us deliver our ambitious vision for Ashton;

PARTNERSHIPS

Working Together

The wide and varied nature of the opportunities identified in this Investment Framework will require strong liaison with a number of external organisations.

We will continue to work in close communication with partner bodies including;

- GM Combined Authority
- Transport for Greater Manchester
- GM Local Enterprise Partnership
- GM Police
- Network Rail
- Merseytravel
- Canal & River Trust

- Homes & Communities Agency
- Central Government Bodies

Creating the right conditions to encourage enterprise across all of the Character Areas will also require us to work proactively with existing businesses, prospective businesses, land owners and developers.

We want to help foster new ideas, support business planning and help identify funding streams.

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF)

The framework is a joint plan to manage the supply of land for jobs and new homes across Greater Manchester.

GMSF identifies the borough as a major contributor to the future growth of Greater Manchester.

The framework will ensure that we have the

right land in the right places to deliver the homes and jobs we need up to 2035, along with identifying the new infrastructure (such as roads, rail, Metrolink and utility networks) required to achieve this.

As such, it will provide a critical overarching strategy for how Ashton fits into the wider picture of a fast growing Manchester City Region.

FUNDING

The funding landscape is continuously changing and our Business Investment Team are well briefed on new and emerging opportunities.

Collaborating with a number of independent organisations we aim to boost Ashton's economy through business support.

Businesses of all sizes have benefited from our guidance, from sole traders to national companies with 1,000+ employees.

Whatever your interest, whatever your size and whatever your opportunity, contact us so we can work with you to help unlock access to funding.

Devolution

Devolution is the transfer of certain powers and responsibilities from national government to a particular region.

Decisions made locally can better meet the needs and aspirations of the people who live and work in the area.

Wigan Council is a key player in Greater Manchester devolution. Wigan Council will receive significant new powers over its economic development and control over billions of pounds of public funding with the pioneering Greater Manchester devolution deal.

We want to put people at the centre of devolution. Allowing us more control over how we govern and spend locally will allow us to take great strides in developing our people and the place they live.

The Deal In Action Ashton

With such ambitions for new development and regeneration, we are looking for support from the private sector to help accelerate transformational change in Ashton.

We can boost our impact by working in partnership; recognising that both public and private funding can only go so far on their own. If we want to deliver the

aspirations set out in this document and we want to invest in local facilities and spaces that communities deserve, we need to work together to make it happen.

OUR TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMME

Ashton already has a strong portfolio of community activities and events that support the economy, foster local pride and strengthen the positive image of the town.

We will work with partners to support existing and highly successful community activities.

Local events are an essential part of this too and we will continue to support those such as the Christmas Lights Switch-On and those at Three Sisters and nearby Haydock Racecourse.

These events and activities are not only important to local residents, but also help bring new people to the town and show-off what Ashton has to offer.

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[The People] Where is the plan?

