



TRAFFORD - FIRST FOR TOWN CENTRES

SALE TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN:
Working Draft - January 2017



**TRAFFORD
COUNCIL**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sale town centre primarily serves local residents from neighbouring areas including Ashton Upon Mersey, Brooklands, Sale Moor and Sale West. These areas have differing demographics, particularly which make for a distinctive place. The town centre offer must therefore reflect this unique character in order to cater and serve the catchment population and visitors to the area. The Waterside Arts Centre, Sale Waterpark, and the Bridgewater Canal provide a cultural and tourism offer which attracts visitors from further afield. There is also a strong office/employment offer in and around the town centre, including large modern office blocks on the A56 Corridor along Washway Road and Cross Street.
- 1.2 Although Sale has managed to maintain a town centre vacancy rate below the national average, the town centre may be vulnerable to the pressures which have caused many town centres across the country to decline through out-of-town retail parks, internet shopping, competition from rival centres, and changing retailer strategies and requirements. In Sale, it is recognised that more needs to be done in order to improve the quality of the town centre to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of local residents and visitors as a high quality retail, leisure and employment destination.
- 1.3 Significant redevelopment of the shopping centre and improvements to the physical quality and the town centre offer are fundamental to the delivery of the regeneration that will raise the profile of Sale, and critically bring a change in market perceptions of the town centre offer for both visitors and for private sector investment.

- 1.4 Ensuring the vitality of town centres is a priority of Trafford Council and there is a commitment to ensuring that local people are able to shop, eat, drink, relax and access key services within their town centre.
- 1.5 The Sale Town Centre Improvement Plan aims to achieve this by establishing a vision for the town centre; identifying priority areas for future development and setting out the key actions that are necessary to deliver change and growth.



2. SALE IN CONTEXT

- 2.1 This section of the Plan provides an overview of Sale and sets out some of the key characteristics of the town. It is evident that Sale plays an important role in providing key services to local residents, employees and visitors to the area.
- 2.2 The town centre itself performs fairly well in terms of vitality and viability. However there are a number of opportunities identified in this Plan to further improve the health of the town centre. This includes the need for a rejuvenated shopping centre that could attract quality retailers and other town centre uses to further raise the profile of the town centre ensuring Sale continues to be a competitive town centre in a changing retail and economic climate.
- 2.3 Sale is a place of diversity and is a very sought after location where people want to live and work. Therefore, there is a high demand for housing and jobs and subsequently on health, education and other types of associated infrastructure.
- 2.4 However, there are some challenges that the town centre faces. Some of the retail units in the town centre are no longer fit for purpose to suit multinational retailer requirements. Many are far too small and dated leaving them no longer attractive to quality town centre occupants. In addition, the public realm throughout the town centre has become run down and deteriorated making the town centre environment less attractive to visitors and residents.
- 2.5 The night-time economy in Sale is also growing and improving in quality. However, it would appear that there are a number of instances of anti-social behaviour in the town centre linked

to the night-time economy. In 2016¹, there was an average of 40 reported instances of anti-social behaviour in the town centre. This is compared to an average of 31 reported cases in Stretford and 28 cases in Urmston town centre.

Local Demographic

- 2.6 The town centre serves Sale's total population of c.134,022 (2011 census)².
- 2.7 There is considerable variation in deprivation levels across the Central locality, with 8% of children living in poverty in Ashton on Mersey, compared to 26% in St Mary's ward.
- 2.8 Whilst overall employment in the Sale locality is high, with only around 300 Job Seekers Allowance claimants, Sale West (St. Marys) and Sale Moor have above average numbers of JSA claimants compared to Trafford as a whole (1%) or GM (1.5%)³. However, all areas saw a drop in 2015.

Location, Accessibility and Connectivity

- 2.9 Sale town centre lies five miles south west of the city of Manchester. Historically, it was part of the English county of Cheshire and its postal address is still 'Sale, Cheshire'.
- 2.10 Sale is considered to be a strategic location in the context of the wider city region given its close proximity to the M60 and M56 motorways as well as lying on a main arterial route (A56)

¹ Trafford Innovation and Intelligence Lab - Crimes reported to Police December 2015 – November 2016

² ONS Annual Population Survey March 2015-16 (Residents in employment within the 16-64 working age group)

³ DWP Benefit Claimants February 2016 (Job Seekers Allowance Claimants aged 16-64)

in the city centre of Manchester. Manchester Airport is approximately 15 minutes away from Sale.

- 2.11 Sale has a number of important geographical features. The town is linked to the main waterway networks in the North West by the Bridgewater Canal which runs through the heart of Sale and offers a pleasant, relaxed environment. Sale is bisected in a roughly north to south direction by Cross Street and Washway Road, which form part of the A56 main route between Manchester and Chester and links to the M60 motorway just under a mile away. This can be a major point of congestion in the traffic network, occasionally causing lengthy delays to journey times. Vehicular movement dominates the retail environment on Washway Road and Cross Street although controlled surface level crossings at key points provide safe pedestrian access.
- 2.12 The town centre is well served by public transport. The A56 is a quality bus corridor with a number of bus services operating between Altrincham and Manchester City Centre. Sale benefits from three Metrolink stations on the Altrincham line; Brooklands to the south, Sale in the centre and Dane Road to the north of the town centre. Trams operate on a frequency of every 12 minutes with an approximate travel time of 20 minutes to the City Centre and 10 minutes to Altrincham.
- 2.13 A new water taxi service has launched known as 'Waxi' on the Bridgewater Canal. This service offers sustainable and unique mode of transport with a station at Sale providing a direct link to Old Trafford and Manchester City Centre.



Sale's Role

- 2.14 Sale Town Centre provides an important shopping function for its residents and visitors including The Square Shopping Centre, which although a dominant feature of the town centre, perceptions are not always positive. Sale also provides other key services associated with a typical town centre including Sale Leisure Centre, the Waterside Arts Centre (including theatre, library, conference and community facilities), Crossford Bridge, and the Bridgewater Canal.
- 2.15 There is no formalised market space within the town centre, however, Sale hosts a monthly farmers market selling local produce and is located on School Road and in The Square Shopping Centre.
- 2.16 Sale has an improving evening economy with a particular concentration of popular pubs and restaurants along School Road and Northenden Road, incorporating the canalside and plaza fronting the arts centre.
- 2.17 In terms of the town centre hierarchy in Trafford, Altrincham is the sub-regional centre and Sale, Stretford and Urmston are defined as strategic centres. Sale Moor District Centre is approximately 10 minutes walking distance from the town centre at the south-east end of Northenden Road. Ashton Village District Centre lies to the north of Sale town centre and is approximately 10 minutes walking distance.

2.18 Sale is a town with plenty of greenery and School Road is characterised by large mature trees that line either side of the road. There are a number of parks and gardens within short walking distance to the town centre including Worthington Park, Ashton Park, Kelsall Street Park, Walkden Gardens and Walton Road Park. Sale also has excellent links to Trafford's waterways including the Bridgewater Canal, Sale Waterpark, and the Mersey Valley. However, it is felt that these recreational places have yet to be fully exploited in terms of their potential as leisure destinations.

2.19 Sale is well catered for in terms of educational provision with approximately 14 primary schools that serve Sale, as well as Sale High School, Sale Grammar School and Ashton on Mersey School and Sixth Form College.

Town Centre Performance

2.20 Sale town centre is in fairly good health. However, there is limited diversity of uses, particularly in The Square Shopping Centre and the quality of the retail offer is poor in some areas of the town.

2.21 There are approximately 240 ground floor properties in Sale town centre. The vacancy rate for January 2017 was 6.4%, which is well below the North West average of 16.1%.

2.22 Independent business representation is strong in Sale town centre, accounting for around 50% of the retail and leisure businesses.

2.23 Parking is well distributed, throughout Sale town centre. The majority is within private ownership but there are also a small number of Council owned street parking spaces available on

Northenden Road, Hope Road, Ashfield Road, Claremont Road and Broad Road. The numbers of spaces in the private car parks are shown in Table 1 and on-street spaces in Table 2.

Table 1. Number of private parking spaces

Private Car Park	Number of spaces
Q Park, Broad Road	440
Sainsbury's	361
The Square	300
Aldi	114
Tesco	244
M&S	60
Total	1519

Table 2. Number of on street car parking spaces

On Street Car Parking	Number of spaces
Ashfield Road	18
Claremont Road	12
Broad Road	4
Northenden Road	17
Hope Road	8
Total	59

Private Car parking in Sale is relatively inexpensive:

- £1.50 up to 3 hours in The Square Car Park or £6.00 for up to 10 hours at Q-Park compared to around £12-18 in central Manchester.
- On-street parking is a nominal 20p for the first 30 mins and 50p for up to 2 hours. This is the same as elsewhere in Trafford and amongst the lowest in the North West.
- Supermarket parking is free for customers via a redemption system.

Business Rates

- 2.24 In October 2016, the Valuation Office Agency responsible for assessing all rateable values of non-domestic properties across England and Wales, has completed its revaluation of rateable values, which are now published online. The Town Centre team will promote initiatives relating to business rates relief.
- 2.25 From 1 April 2017 the government will:
- Permanently double Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) from 50 per cent to 100 per cent and increase the thresholds to benefit a greater number of businesses. Businesses with a property with a rateable value of £12,000 and below will receive 100 per cent relief. Businesses with a property with a rateable value between £12,000 and £15,000 will receive tapered relief.
 - The threshold for the standard business-rates multiplier will increase to a rateable value of £51,000 (from £18,000), reducing business rates for many shops and small businesses.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

Draft Greater Manchester Strategic Framework (GMSF), October 2016

**GREATER
MANCHESTER
SPATIAL
FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 Over the next twenty years there is a need to deliver continued sustainable economic growth, creating more jobs and new homes for the people of Greater Manchester.
- 3.2 Greater Manchester's local authorities are working together to deliver this growth to ensure new homes and jobs are provided in the right places with the transport infrastructure (roads, rail, Metrolink) to support communities and manage growth sustainably. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) will give greater control over the allocation of land and will ensure that the development of new homes comes with investment in roads, school places, green spaces and public transport.
- 3.3 In October 2016, the Draft GMSF was published for consultation. For Trafford there is a commitment for 23,100 new homes, at least 1million sqm of industrial floorspace and 120,000 sqm of office space. In respect of the Trafford's town centres, the role centres is to drive the local economy and will be the primary focus for retail, office, leisure and cultural activities. These centres are complimented by smaller centres, of which Sale is one of them and will be considered as part of the revised draft Land Allocations which will commence in early 2017.

Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (January 2012)

- 3.4 Sale town centre is identified in the Trafford Core Strategy as a location for “regeneration and change”. In Sale, the aim is to consolidate and improve the town centre including: improvements to the mix and quality of the existing retail offer; new retail floorspace (4,000sqm); new commercial office accommodation (3,000sqm); additional leisure, hotel and community facility development; and additional residential accommodation (100 units). Other relevant objectives include providing opportunities to support the growth of economic clusters around the town centre, particularly those employment sites along the A56 Corridor, and securing improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities along the Bridgewater Canal.

Retail and Leisure Study (2007)

- 3.5 The Study stated that, although there is no overriding need for quantitative expansion of Sale town centre, the policy focus through the Local Plan should be on delivering a greater qualitative uplift to the town centre retail offer.

Sale Town Centre Road Map (2014)

- 3.6 A Town Centre Road Map was produced in early 2014 which provided a short-term overview covering physical, economic and community development activities taking place in Sale town centre. The Improvement Plan represents a progression from this previous work with a greater focus on the physical aspects of the town centre and delivery.

Draft Land Allocations Plan (2014)

- 3.7 The Trafford Land Allocations Plan (LAP) which will provide more detailed, site specific guidance set town centre

boundaries for allocated sites and will be accompanied by a new Policies Map.

3.8 The draft LAP identified the following action areas for Sale, which are included in Section 3 of this document:

- The Square Shopping Centre.
- Land at Washway Road, School Road and Hayfield Street.
- Public Realm Improvements.

3.9 The Council will revisit the LAP early 2017.

SPD2: A56 Corridor Development Guidelines (March 2007)

3.10 Sites identified within the SPD as major or minor development opportunities in and around Sale town centre have now been developed or are in the process of being redeveloped. However, there are other potential sites not identified in the SPD close to the town centre along the A56 which could be redeveloped such as the land and buildings adjacent to the Shell petrol station on Cross Street.

Sale Town Centre Boundary

3.11 The area referred to as the “town centre” within the Improvement Plan is defined in the Trafford Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as shown in Section 4 (figure 1).

3.12 The rationale for this boundary is that it includes: the main shopping area; the main areas for leisure activities including the Sale Waterside and Northenden Road; the key action areas identified within the LAP Consultation Draft; the main

town centre car parks; and supermarkets. This area also includes a number of sites where there are opportunities for intervention or new development.

Trafford Vision 2031

3.13 Sale is a destination for a number of assets and activities associated with the leisure industry. These include Sale Leisure Centre, Waterside Arts Centre, the Bridgewater Canal, Sale Waterpark, Crossford Bridge and the rest of the Mersey Valley.

3.14 Despite being home to these leisure assets, it is considered that Sale has an even greater role to play as a leisure and sporting destination and that these assets could be exploited and developed much further in order to stimulate the visitor economy for the area as well as improving the vitality and viability of the town centre.

3.15 The Council is looking at a Plan for the borough with an emphasis on further establishing Trafford as an international destination for sport and leisure. These assets in Sale could potentially play a vital role in this Plan moving forward.

4. SALE EXISTING CHARACTER

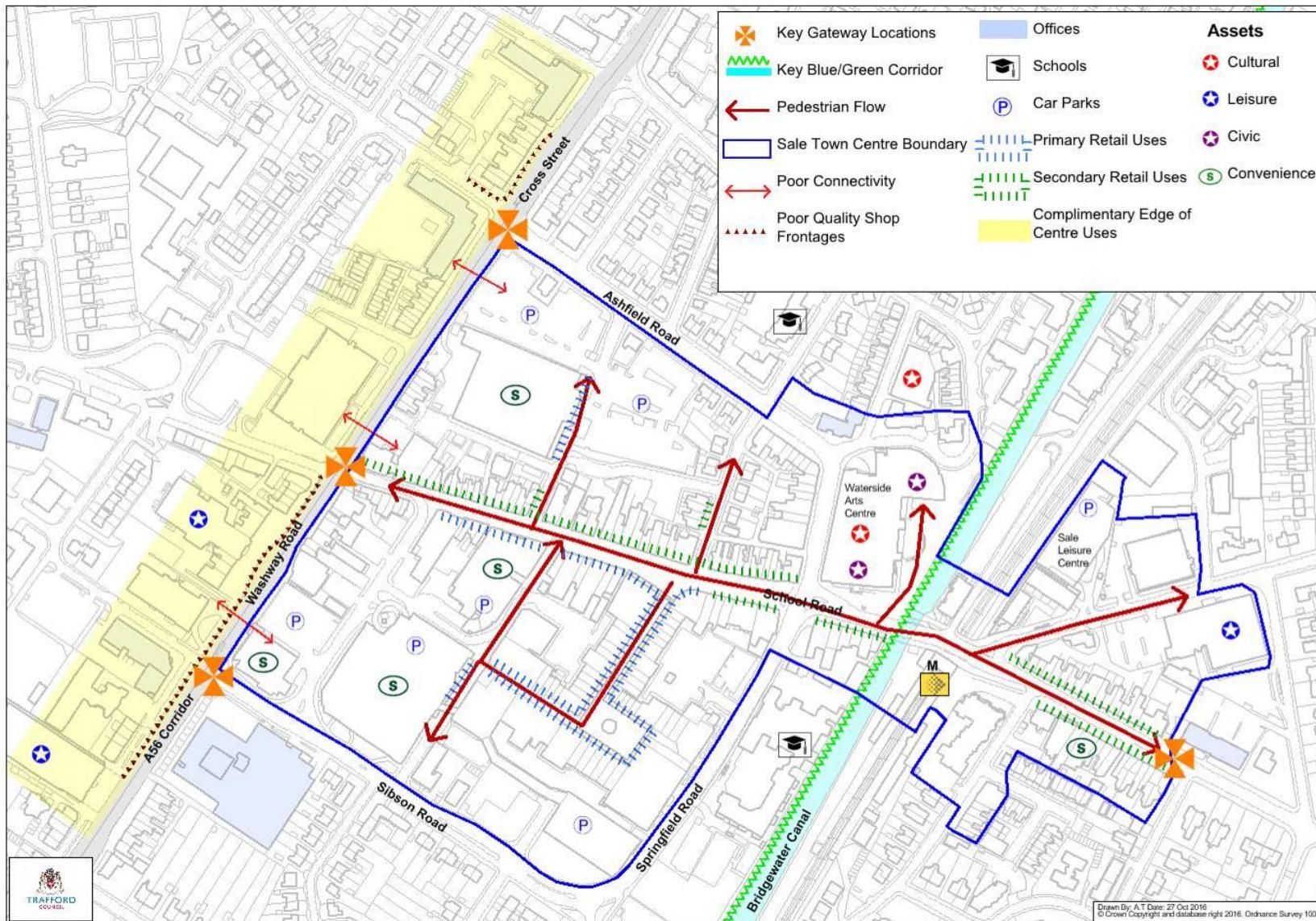


Figure 1. Sale Town Centre Analysis

- 4.1 This section of the plan considers the key elements and spatial character of Sale as a basis for establishing the principle opportunities for developing a coherent strategy for the town.

Overview

- 4.2 The town centre itself is partly characterised by the 1960's shopping centre (The Square Shopping Centre) which is identified as a priority for redevelopment. The Shopping Centre has seen a number of improvements over the years however; it is in need of refurbishment and/or redevelopment in order to meet the requirements of today's retailers and to improve the diversity of the offer in order to be able to compete with other centres and to adapt to the impacts of online retailing. Many other retail and key services exist along School Road, Ashfield Road, Northenden Road, Tatton Road and Hayfield Street.

Primary Retail Area

- 4.3 The primary retail area (see fig. 1) includes The Square Shopping Centre and units either side of School Road. The vacancy rate at 6.4% is well below the north-west average and there is a good mix of multiple retailers and independents in the town centre. The greatest concentration of vacant premises is around the outdoor section of the Square Shopping Centre. The periphery on most sides of the shopping centre looks in on itself and there are no active frontages along Springfield Road and Sibson Road, although a new gym facility will be opening early 2017 which will provide an active frontage onto Springfield Road.

- 4.4 Constructed in the 1960s, this privately owned⁴ shopping centre forms part of the primary retail core within the town. It consists of an indoor mall and an outdoor shopping precinct, including an outdoor public square which is used for occasional events and food festivals. Despite the Trafford Centre opening in 1998, the Square performed well in the early 2000's and underwent a £7 million refurbishment in 2003 including the construction of new gates which restrict access to the centre between 6pm and 8am. This means that certain uses (i.e leisure uses associated with the evening economy) are restricted. As it stands, some of the units will not meet the requirements of modern retailers. There are no vacant units in the indoor mall and the Shopping Centre is well maintained.
- 4.5 The occupiers within The Square are primarily retailers including two small cafes. There are a number of multiple retailers present including Boots, Wilkinsons, New Look, WHSmith, Specsavers, Poundland, Quality Save, Farmfoods and Ryman alongside a variety of independents. Overall there appears to be a tendency towards the budget end of the retail market which, ensuring that some vacant units are occupied, does lead to a lower quality retail offer and a perception of the town as location for lower quality shopping. The Square is currently closed in the evenings meaning the scope for further leisure uses in the retail core is fairly limited at the present time.
- 4.6 The market for groceries is well serviced by the five town centre supermarkets (which also provide a smaller comparison offer) and the budget offer is well serviced by the likes of B&M, Quality Save, Poundworld, Peacocks and a number of different charity shops. However there is a strong

⁴ MAR Group Ltd

need to improve the overall quality of the retail offer where there is a lack of variety of retail. For example, there are no retailers specialising in good quality shoes, sportswear or men's/ women's clothing. A critical mass of quality retailers may be required to prevent the local population venturing further afield to the Trafford Centre, Manchester City Centre and Altrincham. One potential barrier is that the sizes of units that are available in Sale town centre are generally too small and unsuitable for many national retailers.

- 4.7 School Road is a key pedestrian thoroughfare, much of which is pedestrianised. The Square may well be considered the main part of the retail core in the town centre however, School Road performs a primary retail role in the town centre and there are very few vacant units. As with The Square, the retailers are largely focused on lower order uses but there are a number of key multiples present including Argos, Aldi, Costa, Boots and Peacocks. There is a reasonable leisure offer with cafes, pubs and bars, including a cluster of restaurants and bars on the non-pedestrianised section opposite Sale Town Hall. At the opposite end near to the junction of Washway Road / Cross Street there is a collection of Estate Agencies and financial advisors.

Sale Waterside - including The Waterside Arts Centre, The Robert Bolt Theatre, Sale Town Hall, and the Plaza

- 4.8 Located next to the town hall and the Bridgewater Canal, Sale Waterside is a civic, leisure and cultural destination with attractions including a plaza, a library, and Arts Centre including the Robert Bolt Theatre, the Lauriston Gallery, and the Corridor Gallery. The Arts Centre was opened in 2004 and regularly hosts concerts, exhibitions and other community events.

- 4.9 The plaza consists of good quality public realm although the area is overly cluttered with street furniture which impacts the types of events that could take place here. There is a good leisure offer with restaurants and public houses surrounding the plaza and canal. It includes a five-storey office block which is occupied by the Council and its partners, providing services for local residents.
- 4.10 It would seem that in recent years, the Waterside Arts Centre has lacked direction and an identity. It is considered that the Waterside Arts Centre and plaza could be reinvigorated to incorporate food and drink, events, conferencing and other activities in a more dynamic and formalised capacity.

- 4.11 Sale Town Hall provides a civic function in this area, including hosting weddings and undertaking birth registrations.

Night-time economy (School Road/Northenden Road)

- 4.12 Leisure uses including a number of independent restaurants, cafes and pubs associated with a mixed use night-time economy are located at the western end of School Road and the eastern end of Northenden Road. More recently, this particular stretch has welcomed a number of good quality independent restaurants and drinking establishments.

- 4.13 There are a number of restaurants, takeaways and leisure uses along the A56 corridor adjacent to the town centre which also contributes to the town centre evening economy.

Convenience Offer

- 4.14 The town centre has a strong convenience offer comprising a number of small, medium and large supermarkets including Sainsburys, Tesco, Aldi, M&S and the Co-op. There are a number of independent businesses including butchers, fish mongers, and bakers that contribute to the convenience offer.

A56 Corridor (Washway Road/Cross Street)

- 4.15 Historically, Sale town centre was focused around this stretch of the A56 route with many buildings developed to showcase the importance of this location. Today, this stretch of the A56 still lies on a key arterial route from the south of Manchester to the city centre and is highly congested at peak times.
- 4.16 The general development profile of the street frontages remains mainly traditional in appearance, with the Grade II listed former cinema building, now fitness club, the Bulls Head public house and turreted building on the opposite corner of the junction with School Road, providing traditional townscape features.
- 4.17 The A56 acts as a physical barrier to pedestrian movement between the town centre and this corridor although there are pedestrian crossing points outside M&S and Sainsburys.
- 4.18 As a location, Sale benefits from excellent accessibility by road and public transport, affordable office rents and proximity to the major employment locations of Manchester City Centre, Trafford Park and MediaCityUK. A recent search of available office space indicates that there is less availability than a year ago given the recent conversions of office to residential of large office blocks of Six Acre House and Fairburn House. The majority of available floorspace tends to be concentrated at Jackson House, Chester House and Sale Point. The office

space that is available is of varying quality but includes high-quality 'Grade A' space.

- 4.19 At the current time there does not appear to be an overriding need to create additional office space in Sale. However, future demand needs to be examined, including opportunities for managed and flexible accommodation. The GMSF identifies a requirement for additional office space across the borough.

Residential

- 4.20 Sale is a popular destination for people of all ages, and in particular for young families and commuters given its good accessibility to the city region and wider GM area. There are a number of residential areas surrounding the town centre providing the town with a high level of footfall with key services in walking distance to these residential areas. The recent redevelopment of Six Acre House which is a conversion of a long term vacant eight-storey office block to form 80 apartments will contribute further to the footfall in the centre.
- 4.21 The residential property market in Trafford has historically been strong relative to the performance of the regional and sub-regional market. Residential property prices in Sale are higher than the average for Trafford, with values now exceeding £252,000 (August 2016⁵).
- 4.22 The GMSF has identified a need to deliver approximately 23,000 new homes across Trafford over the next 15 years. New residential development within Sale town centre will not only meet the identified need for new homes in Trafford, but

⁵ Rightmove.co.uk

will also support the development of the town centre retail and leisure offer by attracting additional footfall and expenditure and bring vacant sites back into active use.

Amenity and Green Space

- 4.23 Amenity space comprises areas including the Waterside Plaza, School Road and The Square within the shopping centre. Street furniture that occupies these spaces includes seating areas and benches and recently upgraded planters. These areas also double up as event spaces for markets and other activities.
- 4.24 One of the key concerns about the town centre is directional signage to key destinations and car parks. Although the total number of car parking spaces in Sale does not appear to be a problem at the present time, it may be difficult for visitors who are unfamiliar with the town centre to locate the long stay car parks such as the Q-Park and The Square, which are the greatest distance from the A56.
- 4.25 There is little green space in the town centre itself however there are a number of good quality, accessible parks that are within walking distance of the town centre.

5. VISION AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The Improvement Plan is based around the priorities, aims and aspirations of the local community with an emphasis on 'quality' and the overall experience for visitors to the area and for those who live and work there as well. The vision and objectives build on the extensive consultation carried out in preparing this plan and the improvement plan that pre-dated this latest version.

Vision

The vision is: '*To ensure Sale town centre is a prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe destination with a good quality shopping, leisure, services and employment offer that meets the needs of residents and visitors.'*

To achieve this Vision: '*The Plan will help to deliver a strong sense of place within Sale town centre.*

There will be a clear and distinctive identity that takes advantage of its cultural offer, its excellent accessibility by foot, cycle and public transport and its environmental assets including links to the Bridgewater Canal.

There will be a balance of independent and quality retailers as well as a more diverse offer, alongside national chains in a high quality, attractive and well maintained shopping environment.

Objectives

- 5.2 The Plan will assist the Council and stakeholders to identify the opportunities which exist within the town centre over the next 5 years to secure the successful regeneration of Sale town centre and provide a prosperous, vibrant, attractive and safe destination. The objectives of the Plan are:
1. To bring forward sustainable development and encourage private sector investment that realises the full potential of Sale town centre, including residential development.
 2. To drive footfall, dwell time and spend by improving the overall quality of the town centre and improve the diversity of its retail, leisure and services offer, including the evening economy.
 3. To maintain a low percentage of vacant properties within the town centre.
 4. To improve the quality of the public realm throughout Sale, with a focus on School Road, Northenden Road, and The Square to create an attractive shopping environment.
 5. To create a strong sense of place within the town centre and improve key town centre gateways.
 6. To provide clear signage in the town centre and improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility through the area.
 7. To promote the commercial offering in Sale.
 8. To encourage town centre businesses and other stakeholders to work together to deliver change.

6. PRIORITY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 6.1 At the heart of Sale is a shopping centre that is poorly perceived by visitors and some multinational retailers, evident by the lack of interest expressed in locating in Sale in recent years. There is potential to attract new occupiers that would breathe life into the centre (and the town as a whole). Discussions between the Council and the owners of the shopping centre are ongoing.
- 6.2 In general, but with potentially notable exceptions, current demand is from low quality commercial uses. These alone will not deliver the improvements in the market's perception in Sale that is required to build on its potential and on the aspirations of the local community.
- 6.3 Spatially and in development projects this emphasis on quality is underpinned by approaches to developing and enhancing:
 - **A retail core** that benefits from the redevelopment of the existing shopping centre. This is fundamental to the revitalisation of Sale town centre and in raising the profile for those who live, work and spend time there.
 - **An improved shopping environment** with improvements to the public realm along School Road and recreating the Waterside Plaza space.
 - **A buoyant evening economy** that is a destination for good quality café's, bars and restaurants along Northenden Road and the eastern end of School Road.
 - **Important shop frontage and gateway improvements** along the A56.
 - **Improved signage** for arrival and parking.

- **Reducing the barrier that the A56 poses** by improving crossings for those wanting to access those services on both sides of the road.

- 6.4 The following section identifies a number of development and investment opportunities that have the ability to positively influence economic growth in Sale town centre, building upon previous strategic work carried out by Trafford Council. It is important to note that the area within the Sale town centre boundary is almost fully developed with only a small number of vacant sites that limits the scope for new development opportunities. However there may be scope for substantial redevelopment of The Square Shopping Centre.



Farmers Market, School Road

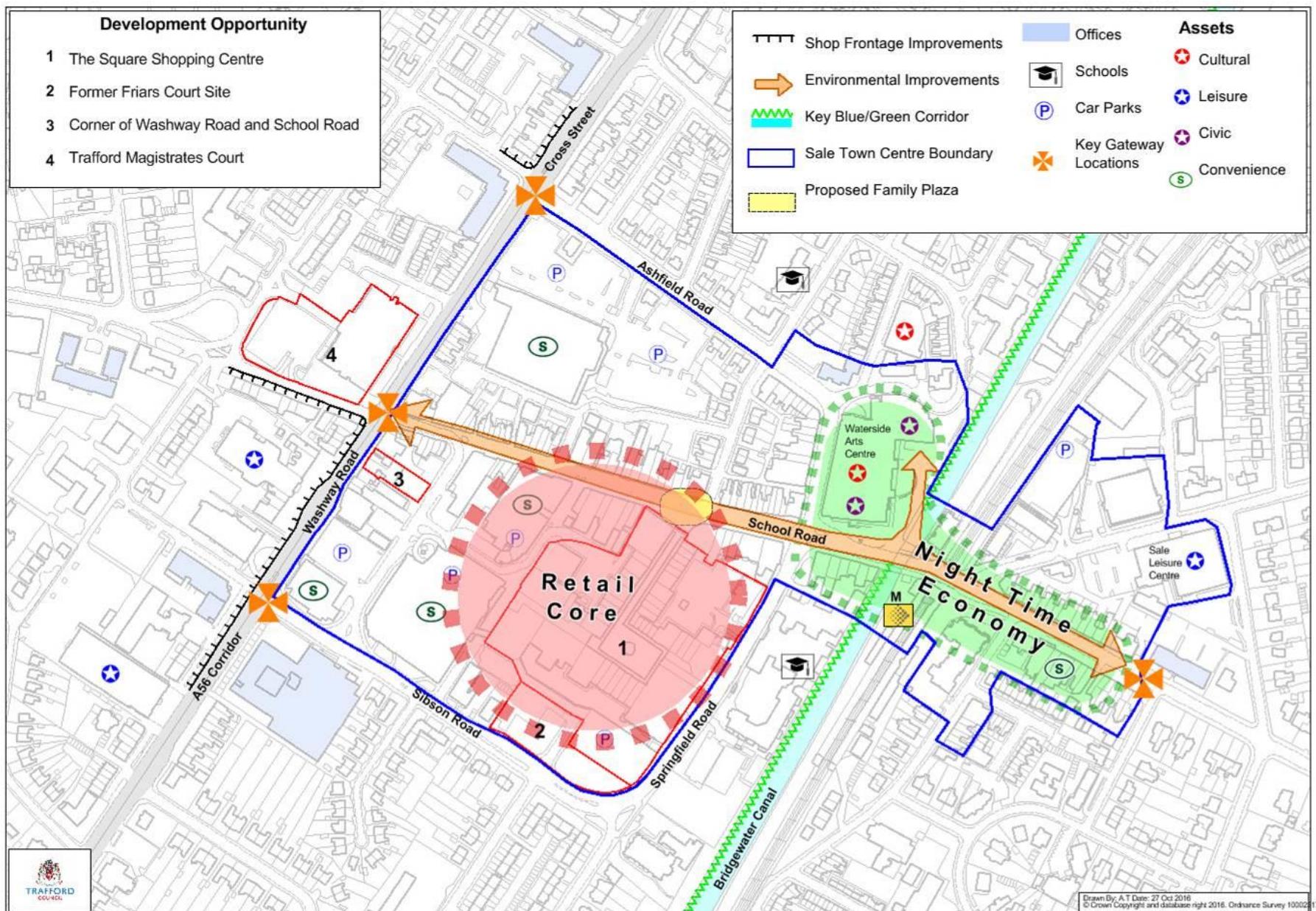


Figure 2 Town Centre Analysis

Development Opportunities and Improvements

1 The Square Shopping Centre

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- 6.5 The Square Shopping Centre owned by MAR Group Ltd is central to the economic health of Sale town centre and its redevelopment will not only secure much needed revitalisation of this part of the town centre, but it will enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre and to raise the profile of Sale as a whole.
- 6.6 The Council has been engaged with MAR for a number of years in regards to the future of the shopping centre. Discussions with the owners have recently take place and it is understood that the owners have clear intentions for redevelopment is likely to be focused on the southwest of the existing shopping centre and will include the existing multi-storey carpark, retail units between WHSmith and Wilkinsons, former Friars Court site and adjacent grassed area, as well as the potential for including adjoining sites.
- 6.7 A redeveloped shopping centre would provide modern retail and town centre uses with a focus on providing larger units,

new residential units, an improved public realm and streetscape, and the creation an active façade along Sibson Road and Springfield Road. Although the redevelopment is likely to be retail-led, there is an aspiration to attract some leisure and other non-retail uses to The Square Shopping Centre.

- 6.8 Future phasing proposals regarding the redevelopment of those units and public realm along The Mall should also be considered.

Redevelopment Strategy - Design Principles

- 6.9 The Council will support the redevelopment of The Square Shopping Centre site, together with adjacent buildings to provide:
- New quality buildings, with a focus on the south west of the site.
 - Larger units to attract and meet the requirements of modern retailers.
 - New retail units to the south west of the site that act as an anchor and create a retail ‘loop’ for those accessing the town centre.
 - Significant new quality residential accommodation.
 - Improved pedestrian linkages and permeability through the shopping centre providing a more accessible facility for the surrounding community and visitors.
 - Removing the shopping centre’s ‘gated’ status meaning access is no longer restricted and alternative non-retail uses such as leisure may be introduced which would increase dwell-time and attract the local catchment population that currently go elsewhere.

- ‘Opening up’ the southwest section of the shopping centre in to create a pedestrian link into the centre from the southwest in order to positively integrate the surrounding community.
- Improvements to the quality of car parking facilities and signage which potentially involves the demolition of the existing multi-storey car park.
- New quality public realm and improve existing streetscape to ensure there is space in the redevelopment for events and space that will increase dwell time.
- Refurbishment of remaining shopping centre units including the internal Market Walk section of the shopping centre.
- Interactive street furniture and/or children’s play equipment to cater for Sale’s young families that regularly visit the town centre.

2 The Former Friars Court Site, Springfield Road

6.10 Friars Court was a multi-storey, Council-owned office block. It was recently demolished, having been vacant for some time. The site is now cleared for development.

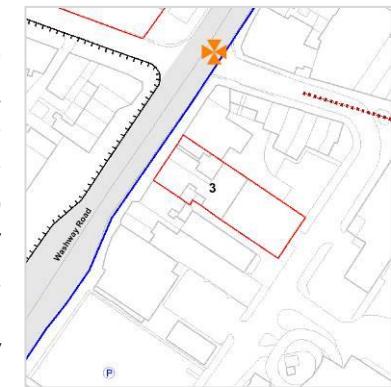


6.11 The site is in the Council’s land sales programme for disposal. The Council would consider the inclusion of this site in order to support the redevelopment of the shopping centre as part of a comprehensive masterplan.

- 6.12 However, if no firm proposals come forward from the owners of the shopping centre which include the Friars Court site, alternative proposals will be sought to develop this site which would lend itself to a standalone residential and/or office type development. Adjacent to the former Friars Court site, there is an area of unallocated green space which might also be included in any proposals for this site.
- 6.13 Sibson House is a residential block of approximately 12 apartments owned by Trafford Housing Trust and is immediately adjacent to the former Friars Court site. Dominion House, home to the Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors is next to Sibson House. Proposals for the redevelopment of the former Friars Court site may also consider the future uses of these buildings.

3 Units 9 -13 Washway Road

- 6.14 Also known locally as ‘Sale Snips’ this site is located at a key gateway location to Sale town centre. Buildings have recently been demolished due to being in a poor state of disrepair and refurbishment was not a viable option. An application relating to this site has recently been submitted and involves the development of a new building comprising retail uses on the ground floor and D1 use on the first floor. The planning permission has yet to be implemented, and so the site is still available for development until building works have commenced.



4 Trafford Magistrates Court, Cross Street/Ashton Lane

- 6.15 Although not strictly within the town centre boundary of Sale, Trafford Magistrates Court is a major development opportunity that could contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.



- 6.16 Approval has been granted by the Courts & Tribunal Service to transfer the site to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) by March 2017. A valuation of the site has been completed for the HCA. The Council is working closely with HCA to get a decision on disposal arrangements and to ensure that development on the site meets local need. The development will be a residential led scheme.

School Road Environmental Improvements

- 6.17 A programme of investment and improvement works was undertaken on School Road between March and June 2015. The project consisted of new street furniture, paving improvements and tree removal/improvements.

- 6.18 The Council is keen to see further improvements to School Road particularly in light of the previous works that were recently undertaken. It is also important to ensure that



the maintenance of any further public realm improvements is considered.

Future Phasing

- 6.19 The improvements implemented on School Road presented an opportunity to revitalise the area in the interim making it safer and more attractive. However, the limited funding available has meant that the scope of the works was restricted to key priorities that were identified through stakeholder consultation. A future redevelopment of the Square Shopping Centre may contribute to the refurbishment of School Road and extending the works to include Northenden Road would help to support the wider town centre economy.

- 6.20 The delivery of the improvements will act as a catalyst for the comprehensive regeneration of Sale and also facilitate the delivery of future growth and investment in the Town Centre. The Council is awaiting a decision in regards to a submitted bid from the Local Growth Fund which could potentially contribute to these improvements. Investment in the public realm, landscaping and street furniture will create an environment for future growth and investment.

- 6.21 With this in mind, a key recommendation of this report is to commission a public realm and movement strategy.

Key frontage improvements

- 6.22 There is potential to improve the frontages of properties using the Town Centres Loan Scheme (see 7.19) allowing some of the monies to be used for frontage improvements (although available funds are limited). Another option may be to use the Section 215 enforcement powers of the Council to improve

the premises. This approach has been used successfully in other parts of the borough and could be adopted in Sale. Additional opportunities for funding to improve building frontages / public realm should also be monitored.

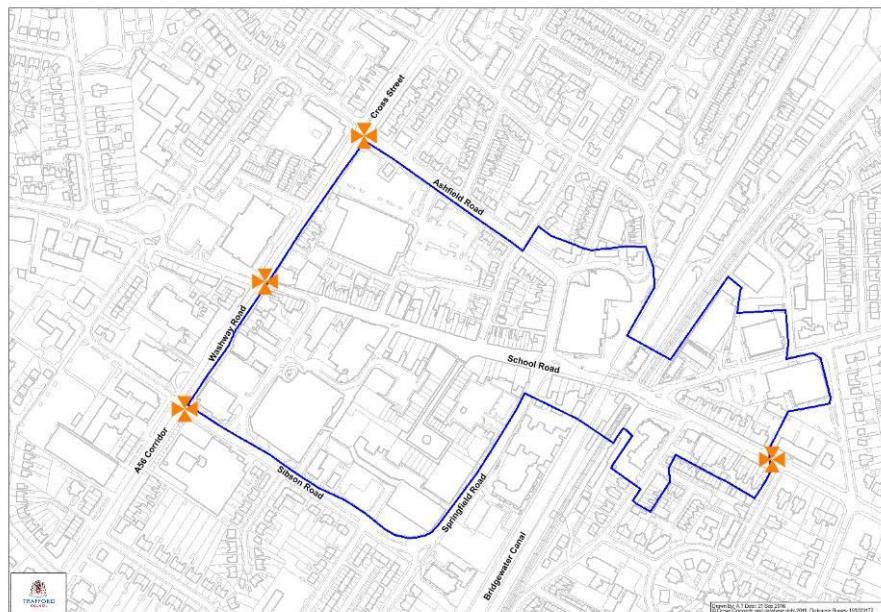


Figure 3 Key Gateway Locations into the town centre

Gateway Improvements

- 6.23 Figure 3 shows key gateway improvement locations; three of which are at key junctions along the A56 Washway Road, the other is on Northenden Road coming from Sale Moor. These locations are significant due to their prominent location on the A56 and at key arrival points to Sale. They are important in terms of: accessibility and legibility; developing perceptions of the town centre; and providing a sense of place.

- 6.24 There is a distinct lack of signage or welcome information that indicates you have arrived in the town centre. The key initiative would be to review traffic signage (including car parks) to assess whether it is adequate to ensure visitors can find key destinations. The gateways would also benefit from a ‘welcome’ board or installation that indicates to visitors they have now entered Sale town centre.

7. OTHER KEY INITIATIVES

7.1 In addition to physical development opportunities, this Improvement Plan suggests a holistic approach to the integration and management of the town centre, by introducing a number of complimentary initiatives aimed at raising the profile of Sale and providing a quality experience that encourages visitors, communities, and business to the town centre.

Sale Business Improvement District (BID)

7.2 A Business Improvement District (BID) can be designated in areas such as a town centre like Sale that would be subject to a successful ballot of the businesses. A BID is an opportunity for businesses to come together collectively to invest and improve their trading environment. During this term occupiers of all business properties defined within this Proposal will be required to pay the mandatory levy for a maximum term of 5 years. The levy is usually set at between 1% and 2% of the rateable value of each property.

7.3 A BID for Sale Town Centre would raise funds to be spent exclusively within the town centre. Following lessons learnt from the Altrincham BID, the Council are currently in the process of undertaking some initial market testing in order to gain a better understanding of the demand for a BID in Sale and what the existing issues are which will inform the type of projects that the BID might fund. Examples of projects from other BID areas including Altrincham are security, additional street cleaning, marketing and branding, and assistance towards hosting events.

Events Strategy

7.4 Events are a key driver of footfall within a town centre and can be linked to cultural, food and drink (such as markets), music, and family activities.

7.5 A recent example of how events and activities can contribute towards increasing the footfall and visitor spend in the town is the work undertaken by a local organisation Two by Two and the Sale Art Zoo.



7.6 The town should develop a formal events programme (potentially be supported by a BID) including the public spaces which are used to house the event. In particular, management of events space is important to future events in Sale. The Waterside Arts Centre, Waterside Plaza, School Road and The Square are just some of the hosting venues that should be exploited fully and considered in a formalised events strategy.

A Reinvigorated Waterside Arts Centre and a Recreated Plaza

7.7 The Waterside Arts Centre has lacked direction and a clear identity over the last few years. The Arts Centre has recently appointed a new manager who is considering various different ways to improve the potential of the centre to generate income and to establish an identity for this important town

- centre facility as a place for culture, the arts, film, conferencing, weddings and local community activities.
- 7.8 A re-branding exercise would be a good start to reinvigorating and marketing the centre in giving it a new identity and delivering commercial benefits at the same time. This branding would be incorporated into external alterations and improvements to the building including illuminated lighting and rebranded signage.
- 7.9 The centre also plays an important role for the evening economy and there are some agreements set up with local restaurants to offer discounted ticket/meal deals which are quite popular. The arts centre is looking to expand on this type of relationship which benefits the vitality of the evening economy in this area.
- 7.10 The café has undergone some recent modifications. However, further improvements are required in order to begin to attract the general public and establish the café as a place to meet and to socialise. The café has already started to open to the public on Saturdays and late Thursdays. In addition, improvements to conference facilities and a new gift/merchandise shop in the building could further strengthen the dynamism and viability of the centre.



- 7.11 The Waterside Plaza needs to be reimagined and remodelled in order to create a more flexible and usable space that is more modern and attractive for external events and increasing dwell time.
- 7.12 In the short term and at a minimum, decluttering the plaza would contribute towards this reimagined space by creating more of a blank canvas and to open up the plaza for events.

Town Centre Signage

- 7.13 Previous consultation has been identified that it can be particularly hard to locate town centre attractions and car parking locations when driving from key traffic routes such as Washway Road/ Cross Street. A review of the existing traffic and pedestrian signage should be carried out and a strategy adopted for improving signage which would also help to establish a sense of place. This could include promotion of the availability of the parking offer within the town centre publicity materials, such as websites, to raise awareness of where parking is available.

Alternative Uses for Vacant Units

- 7.14 Inventive ways to ensure use of vacant units should be explored to improve the town centre environment and promote businesses to attract footfall, including:
- 7.15 **Window Displays** – Independent retailers could create window displays in vacant units on based around particular themes for key times of year (Easter, Summer, Christmas etc.).

- 7.16 **Arts/Events** – Local community groups, schools or colleges could hold exhibitions or promote their services. There is a strong arts offer in the Town Centre based around the Waterside Arts Centre, who could be approached to jointly develop ideas to promote the arts.
- 7.17 **Pop-up shops** – Vacant units could be used to provide short term occupation for retailers trying to test the market or promote a new product.

Loan Scheme

- 7.18 There are plans to extend the Town Centres Loan Scheme which was launched in 2013 to provide loans of up to £10k to assist businesses that plan to occupy vacant town centre units. The scheme will continue to be marketed with information sent to local estate agents, banks and solicitors etc. to make their clients and customers aware of the scheme. Estate Agents will be asked to display posters advertising the scheme in their vacant retail units.
- 7.19 If future demand increases, consideration should be given to expanding the scheme, if additional funding can be identified. Another option could be to divert the funding to frontage improvements for priority units on the A56 or a landmark building at the junction of School Road, Cross Street and Washway Road. A review of the scheme will be carried out in 2017.

Cycling

- 7.20 Given that Sale's accessibility is one of its key strengths, with the A56 and Bridgewater Canal towpath providing some of the most used cycling routes in the area, there is a significant

opportunity to improve cycling access to the town centre. Initial activities that are identified as priorities for action are:

- Reviewing the provision of cycling stands to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in the locations where there are greatest requirements.
- Improving signage to/from the Bridgewater Canal.
- Consider a trial of removing cycling restrictions down School Road.

- 7.21 In January 2016, the disused station building at Sale Metrolink was transformed into a 'Cycle Hub' which offers 52 secure cycle parking spaces with membership available from £10 a year. It is currently open until 11pm but it is considered that users would benefit from 24 hour access. The hub will be part of a wider TfGM project to create a network of cycle hubs across Greater Manchester.

Public Art

- 7.22 A Council Member/ Officer Working Group is currently working on proposals for an interactive plaza on School Road with a local theme (potentially based on J.P. Joule). This group is looking at developing external bids for public art funding. The public art would help to provide a point of interest, contributing to a sense of place, and may provide opportunities for interaction with children. An alternative location for the art work could be Waterside Plaza.

Sponsorship

- 7.23 Opportunities for sponsorship should be pursued (potentially by a BID) in order to raise money to enable events and deliver regeneration activities as well as projects such as Christmas

lights. This could be extended to businesses outside of the borough.

Promotion of Commercial Offer

- 7.24 Key commercial developers and landlords have stated that Sale is one of the most significant locations for office space outside of Manchester City Centre. There is a high concentration of office space and it is important that this offer is promoted effectively. Marketing materials could be developed to promote this offer and as a minimum, this would be key information available on the Council's website and the new Invest in Trafford website. Subject to the identification of funding, a hard copy prospectus could be prepared with sponsorship by key landlords / agents.
- 7.25 Developing the employment offer close to the town centre would have wider benefits in terms of supporting the wider offer in Sale town centre, including retail.

Increasing the Residential Offer

- 7.26 Increasing the amount of residential accommodation in Sale town centre would help to support the town centre economy including retail and the evening economy. The scope for new residential is limited but some new homes may be included as part of the potential redevelopment of The Square.
- 7.27 Changes to permitted development rights that enable the conversion of buildings from office (Use Class B1) to residential (Use Class C3) without the requirement for planning permission has led to some of the office buildings in Sale changing use to residential units from vacant office space. Such developments include Fairburn House, Six Acre

House, and Ravenstone House. These recent conversions means there is now less surplus office floorspace in Sale compared to a couple years ago.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

Partnership Working

- 8.1 It is essential that all stakeholders, and in particular businesses and property owners, are involved in delivering improvements to Sale town centre. The Trafford Partnership is a single body which brings together organisations including the public, private, voluntary, faith and community sectors and local residents. Members of the Trafford Partnership work together to achieve a common vision to ensure Trafford is a place where residents achieve their aspirations and communities thrive. The Trafford Partnership takes a locality working approach, working collaboratively and innovatively to make best use of local assets. This means bringing together stakeholders, including individual residents, businesses, community and faith groups, councillors, community leaders and public sector bodies, to work in partnership, share resources and enable new ideas to develop.
- 8.2 A Landlords' Forum was established in Altrincham in 2012. It has been successful bringing together property owners as well as agents and developers to share information and progress opportunities for securing the occupation and improvement of vacant units. Discussions are taking place with potential members to assess the enthusiasm for establishing a similar group in Sale.

Locality Partnerships

Sale town centre falls within the Sale Locality Partnership area which has responsibility for deciding local priorities and shaping local services. The wards that make up this area are:

Bucklow St Martins (Sale); Ashton upon Mersey; Brooklands; Priory; Sale Moor; and St Marys. The Sale Locality Partnership has identified the need to focus on making the town centre more attractiveness.

Sale Town Centre Partnership

- 8.3 This Partnership is part of the Trafford Partnership. The Partnership contains a variety of representatives from the public and private sectors including local business representation. The legal status and structure of the Town Centre Partnership should be reviewed to enable the delivery of the improvements that Sale needs with the private sector.
- 8.4 The Membership should be strengthened to include a diverse range of business representatives including multiples/independents and representation from School Road, The Square, Northenden Road, Sale Waterside and Tatton Road/Ashfield Road. There is a need to think clearly about the objectives which could include encouraging more people to shop and stay longer in the town centre and improving its overall appearance. A particular initiative could be for retailers to come together to offer discounts to promote the leisure and retail offer. This could target particular events or times of year such as Christmas and be promoted through the Town Centre Website and printed material. The Management Group of Sale Town Centre Partnership could be strengthened with more targeted recruitment of local figureheads and stakeholders with a range of specialist skills.

Funding

- 8.5 The Improvement Plan identifies some of the key areas for investment in Sale town centre. The delivery of many of the projects will rely on private and public sector funding.
- 8.6 Town Centre Loan Scheme is available for new business looking to occupy vacant premises in the town centre and can be used towards funding for improvements to shop frontages.
- 8.7 Developer contributions (including Community Infrastructure Levy – CIL) collected as part of the planning process can provide much needed investment from the public sector which can act as a catalyst for growth and further investment in future years. The draft CIL 123 list review has recently been out for consultation and is due to be submitted to the Council for approval early 2017.
- 8.8 The establishment of a BID in Sale town centre would raise funds through the levy which could be spent on the promotion, environmental improvements, or any other projects that might be identified through a business plan.
- 8.9 The Council is awaiting a decision in the Autumn Statement 2016 in relation to a submission of a bid for Local growth Fund monies. Part of this funding could be used for a Sale Town Centre Public Realm and Signage Strategy which is identified as a key recommendation of this Plan.
- 8.11 formally came together to appoint a business growth expert. The representative provides dedicated support to growing small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), including retail and leisure businesses, in the area to provide hands-on support across a whole range of areas including business planning and growth strategies; marketing, exporting and tapping into funding opportunities.
- 8.12 Town Centre Investment Packs that are planned for completion soon will serve as a promotional tool to make businesses and investors aware of local strengths and demographics.
- 8.12 Sale Town Centre Website – The Sale Town Centre Partnership has a website containing key information about the town centre <http://saletowncentre.co.uk>. This should be promoted as widely as possible by ensuring that the link is mentioned in all town centre advertising and publications, for example, events in the town centre or Sale Waterside. Any town centre businesses or organisations with websites including The Square or Sale Waterside should also link to the website. The business directory could be improved by including addresses of businesses and a map of the town centre would assist visitors.

Business Support

- 8.10 Trafford Council's Strategic Growth Service provides advice and support to existing businesses. In May 2016, Trafford Council and the Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub

9. KEY ACTIONS

This Improvement Plan identifies the main opportunities to deliver enhancements to the town centre to ensure that it is accessible to users and create a strong and attractive destination of choice meeting the needs of local residents and visitors. The Plan will assist the Council and key stakeholders to identify and realise the opportunities which exist within the town centre within the next 5 years. This short, medium and long term plan is accompanied by ‘Annex One – 12 Month Action Plan’ detailing the immediate priorities for the town centre over the next year.

	PROJECT OR ACTIVITY	SECTION	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	LEAD	TIME
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY						
1	The Square Shopping Centre	6	1-5, 7	Continue discussions with owners and provide planning advice to bring the development forward.	PI / P&D	Long
2	Former Friars Court Site	6	1-5, 7	Discussions with owners of The Square to explore how the site could add value to the potential redevelopment. A development brief for the site should be prepared.	PI / P&D	Long
3	Land at Washway Road, School Road and Hayfield Street	6	1-5, 7	Encourage short term frontage improvements (as 3.1.4)	PI	Short
				Monitor developer interest and market conditions for comprehensive development of site. Planning to prepare a development brief if project becomes viable.	PI/ P&D	Long
4	Trafford Magistrates Court, Washway Road/Ashton Lane	6	1-5, 7	The work closely with HCA to get a decision on disposal arrangements and to ensure that development on the site meets local need. The development will be a residential led scheme.	SG	Medium
KEY TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS						
5	Environmental Improvements	7	1-5	Commission a Sale Town Centre Public Realm and Signage Strategy.	H	Short
6	Frontage Improvements	7	1-2, 5	Explore potential funding sources to deliver future phases of improvement.	H / SG	Long
				Review targeting the Town Centre Loan Fund monies at frontage improvements.	SG	Short
7	Gateway Improvements	7	1, 5-6	Review signage through the public realm strategy.	H	Medium
				Use enforcement powers to deliver improvements to landmark	PI	Short

				buildings on Washway Road/ Cross Street Junction. Review targeting the Town Centre Loan Fund monies towards frontage improvements for landmark building.		
OTHER TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES						
8	Business Improvement District (BID)	7	1-5,7,8	To undertake soft market testing to ascertain if there is a desire for a BID from businesses and whether or not a BID would be viable. If it is considered that a BID is appropriate, a steering group should be established to begin the formal process.	SG	Short
9	Events Strategy	7	4	To develop a comprehensive, year round events strategy to include themes around food and drink, family activities, and arts and culture.	P&C	Medium
10	Reinvigorated Waterside Arts Centre	7	2, 4	Continue to liaise with the Waterside Arts Centre Manager providing support and advice where needed regarding any funding opportunities to finance the implementation of improvements to the building and its function.	P&C	Short to Medium
11	Town Centre Signage	7	5-6	Review and improve signage to town centre locations including car parks. This should link in with the Sale Town Centre Public Realm and Signage Strategy identified in Action 5.	H	Medium
12	Alternative Uses for Vacant Units	7	3-5	Discussion of ideas for uses and business engagement through the Sale Town Centre Partnership and Locality Partnership, including Waterside Arts Centre and The Square's management.	SG/ P&C	Short
13	Loan Scheme	7	1-4	Continue to monitor and promote loan scheme targeting estate agents, banks and solicitors etc.	SG	Short
14	Business Rates	7	3	Identification and contact of businesses who haven't claimed reliefs.	BR / SG	Short
				Business Rates Fact Sheet.	SG	Short
				Continue to monitor circumstances which could give grounds for appeals to the Valuation Office.	SG	Ongoing
				Encourage businesses to check their business address against the re-valuation of rates.	SG	
15	Cycling	7	4	Review provision of cycling stands.	H	Short
				Improve signage to / from canal.	H	Medium

				Consider viability of removing cycling restrictions on School Road.	H	Short
				Continue to engage with TfGM regarding the extension to opening times of Sale Metrolink Cycle Hub.	SG	Short
12	Public Art	7	5	Identify funding sources and progress funding applications related to an installation that commemorates 200 year anniversary since the death of JP Joule.	P&C / WAC	Short
13	Sponsorship	7	1, 4	Identify potential sponsorship opportunities.	P&C / H / EG	Short
				Develop sponsorship packages and engage businesses.	P&C / H / EG	Ongoing
14	Promotion of Commercial Offer	7	7	Agree format and develop promotional materials.	EG	Short
15	Increasing the Residential Offer (potentially linked to The Square redevelopment)	7	1	Engage The Square's owners with regard to redevelopment scheme.	PI / P&D	Ongoing
				Support appropriate office conversion schemes.	PI / P&D	Ongoing
16	Landlords Forum	7	8	Scope out the desire and need for a Landlords Forum for the town centre.	SG	
17	Town Centre Partnership	7	4,10	Review purpose, structure and membership.	P&C / SG	Short
18	Direct Business Support	7	1-4, 7	Continue to promote the business support offer provided by Economic Growth Team.	SG	Ongoing
19	Website	7	4	Implement improvements to town centre website.	P&C	Short

(Lead Service Key: Planning: PI = Property and Development = P&D / Strategic Growth = EG / Highways = H / Partnerships and Communities = P&C / Business Rates = BR / Waterside Arts Centre = WAC)

Timescales: Short = <1 year, Medium = 2-3 years , Long = 4-5 years