



CIVIC ENGINEERS

Tameside Metropolitan Borough

A Public Realm Strategy for Ashton-under-Lyne



Ladysmith, Ashton Library and Ashton Market



Phase 2 - Wider Town Centre

A catalyst for further regeneration

Ashton Old Town



Ashton Interchange



Executive Summary

This Public Realm Strategy was produced by Planit on behalf of Tameside Council to devise a strategy to deliver improvements to the Public Realm around the Market Grounds and surroundings areas of Ashton-Under-Lyne Town Centre.

Tameside Council has commissioned the production of this Public Realm Strategy. This is a unique opportunity to consider the wider context of Ashton-under-Lyne and its vision, heritage values and character. Environmental sustainability, diversity and inclusion, health and well-being, and accessibility are highly significant contributing factors in creating a sense of place and a unique destination for Ashton Town Centre.

Phase 2 Public Realm Strategy

The Public Realm Strategy is Phase 2 of the overall Public Realm Strategy for the Town Centre and its streets and spaces around the Market Square.

This public realm strategy also includes visions and concept proposals for Stamford Street Central, Old Street and St. Michael's Square. It will incorporate proposals for Wellington Road and extend to Katherine Street, Penny Meadows, Oldham Road.

Public Realm Strategy themes

- Inclusive and accessible
- Townscape context
- Responding to heritage
- Connectivity and accessibility
- Sustainability
- Safer streets and spaces
- Culture and events
- Health and well-being
- Way-finding, lighting and signage
- Brand identity and public art

People and place focussed

Our approach is place and people focused, we started by getting to know the place in which we are working, and the people who know it best.

It is about building strong relationships, identifying the priorities, gaining insight from the people and understanding of the essence of the place. This has enabled us to define the objectives, aims and ambitions of an effective Public Realm Strategy.



The Catalysts Creating Positive Change

There are several economic catalysts which are and have been accelerating positive change in Ashton Town Centre, aiming to support current delivery of Phase 1 - the Market Square and the economy and future growth of the town in future phases:

Ashton Mayoral Development Zone

The establishment of an Ashton Mayoral Development Zone will significantly raise the profile of Ashton and Tameside, helping to position the opportunities that exist for future funding, investment and Greater Manchester support.

Mayor's Challenge Fund (MTF)

Concept design proposals for improved cycling infrastructure have been developed under the Mayor's Challenge Fund.

One of these projects is Ashton Streetscape (Albion Way and Wellington Road) which aims to achieve segregated cycle tracks on both sides of the road, a modified junction at the exit from the bus station and the Ashton retail park, and measures to slow and control vehicle speeds and provide enhanced priority for pedestrian users.



Map showing zones for the catalyst for change areas

Levelling Up Fund 2021

The Council has gained further grant funding to continue this comprehensive transformation of the town centre and was successful in its £19.87m Levelling Up Fund bid to support the next stage of regeneration. This included;

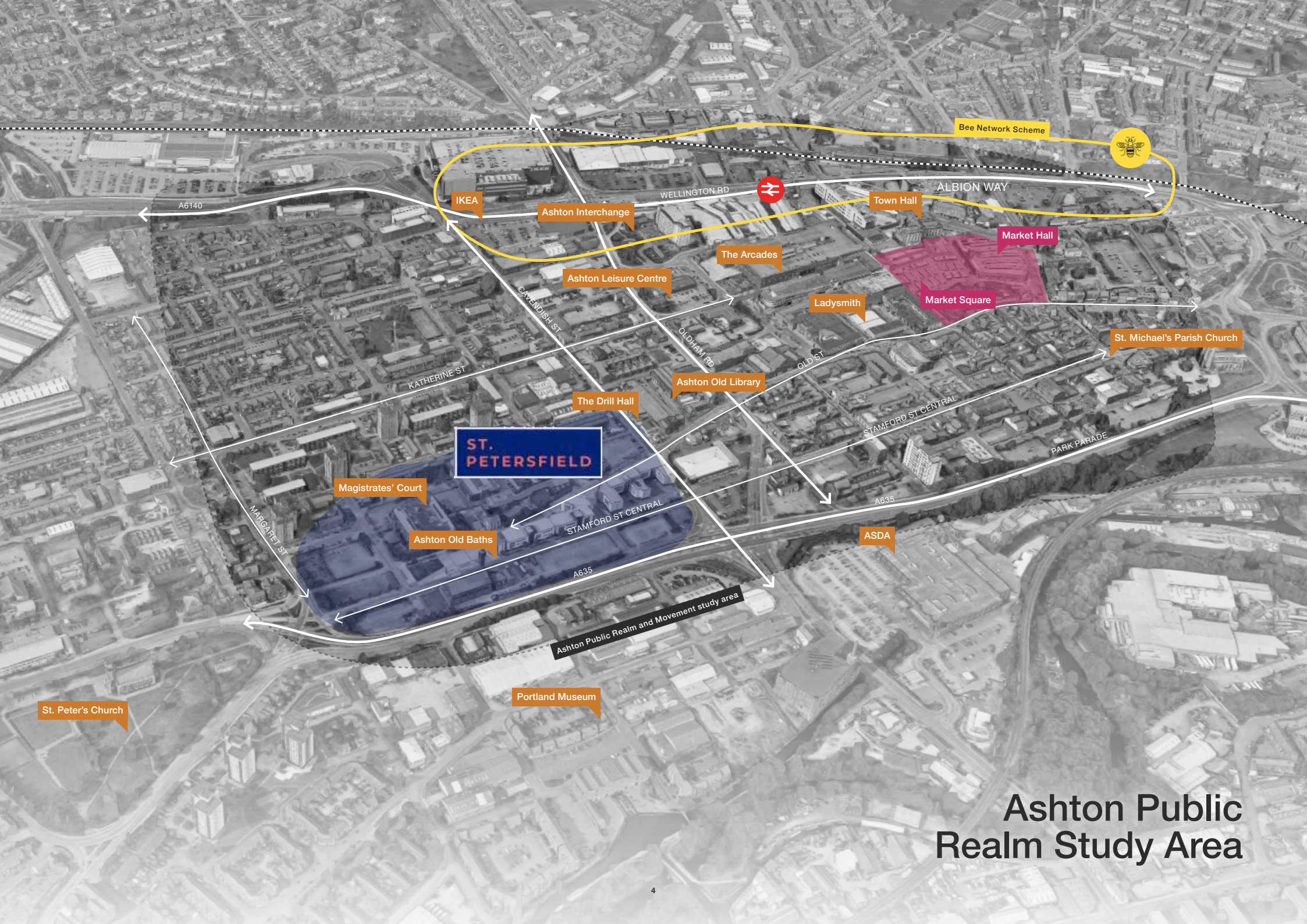
- A. Land remediation of the former interchange site
- B. Cycling and public realm improvements
- C. Restoration of Ashton Town Hall
- D. Further development of St Petersfield into a cutting edge business park for innovation and tech firms
- E. Residential, leisure and the delivery of a wider diversity of town centre uses with increased town centre living.

Wellington Road Proposals

The Wellington Road and Albion Way proposals are currently progressing and construction has started on-site. The strategy and design principles for Phase 1 - the Market Square will integrate into wider proposals underway.



Visualisation of Albion Way proposals



Bee Network Scheme



IKEA

Ashton Interchange

Town Hall

Market Hall

The Arcades

Ashton Leisure Centre

Ladysmith

Market Square

St. Michael's Parish Church

Ashton Old Library

The Drill Hall

ST. PETERSFIELD

Magistrates' Court

Ashton Old Baths

ASDA

Portland Museum

St. Peter's Church

Ashton Public Realm Study Area

Stage 1 Public Consultation Love Ashton Engagement

The Love Ashton engagement event took place on Saturday 13th March 2022, at Ashton Market Hall, the feedback shaped the public realm strategy plans.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council appointed Planit and Civic Engineers to undertake a Public Realm and Movement strategy for Ashton-under-Lyne Town Centre. We gathered the public's initial ideas and thoughts about how they wanted to see improvements in the town centre, the feedback helped to shape our proposals.

Key Messages

- Market square is characterless-missing the vibrant atmosphere from the past. It should be an attraction and destination rather than a cluttered space.
- Generally unkempt, with deteriorating materials, and lack of greenery.
- Market stalls are unattractive, impractical and in bad condition.
- Safety issues in the square, related to anti-social behaviour, poor lighting and visibility.
- Accessibility from public transport should be improved, as well as connections to St. Petersfield and the rest of Ashton Town Centre.

Make the area more of a community hub where meetings can take place forums and maybe even as a wedding venue.

Market stalls are unattractive and not practical

Missing the once vibrant market stalls and atmosphere

Lack of greenery

Attract more big stores to Ashton

Housing which is affordable and sustainable

Improve signage to the town

Offer of jobs to all

Residents need safe and attractive walks

Love Ashton Event



Love Ashton Event



Future Vision

The aim for Ashton Town Centre is to breathe new life into the town centre and attract investment, and prosperity for years to come.

Ashton Town Centre will be known for celebrating its unique heritage and distinctive identity. A compact, well-connected, and sustainable place.

A friendly and welcoming place for future generations to enjoy. A destination where people can socialise and relax.

The Market Square will be the beating heart of the town; a modern market and public space enlivened by events, cafe culture and a vibrant evening economy.



Diagram illustrating vision objectives

Public Realm Strategy Plan

Our plans capture the essence of Ashton-Under-Lyne Town Centre by celebrating its history and unique assets. We have defined the opportunities and character zones to help shape a comprehensive vision for the future.

Key

-  Linking Ashton with the River Tame and Canal green infrastructure
-  Enhancing Ashton's cultural quarter and supporting the workforce
-  An emerging commercial district (St Petersfield)
-  Old Town Heart - creating a boutique retail offer, supporting the community and providing a high quality residential offer
-  Town Centre living
-  Extending the evening economy, enhancing the food and beverage offer
-  Consolidating the retail and arrival area
-  Identifying Ashton's heart
-  Supporting Ashton's workforce
-  Levelling Up Funding Zone Market Square to provide flexible spaces and events
-  Key Spaces
-  Key crossings
-  Key streets
-  Key linkages
-  Key junctions

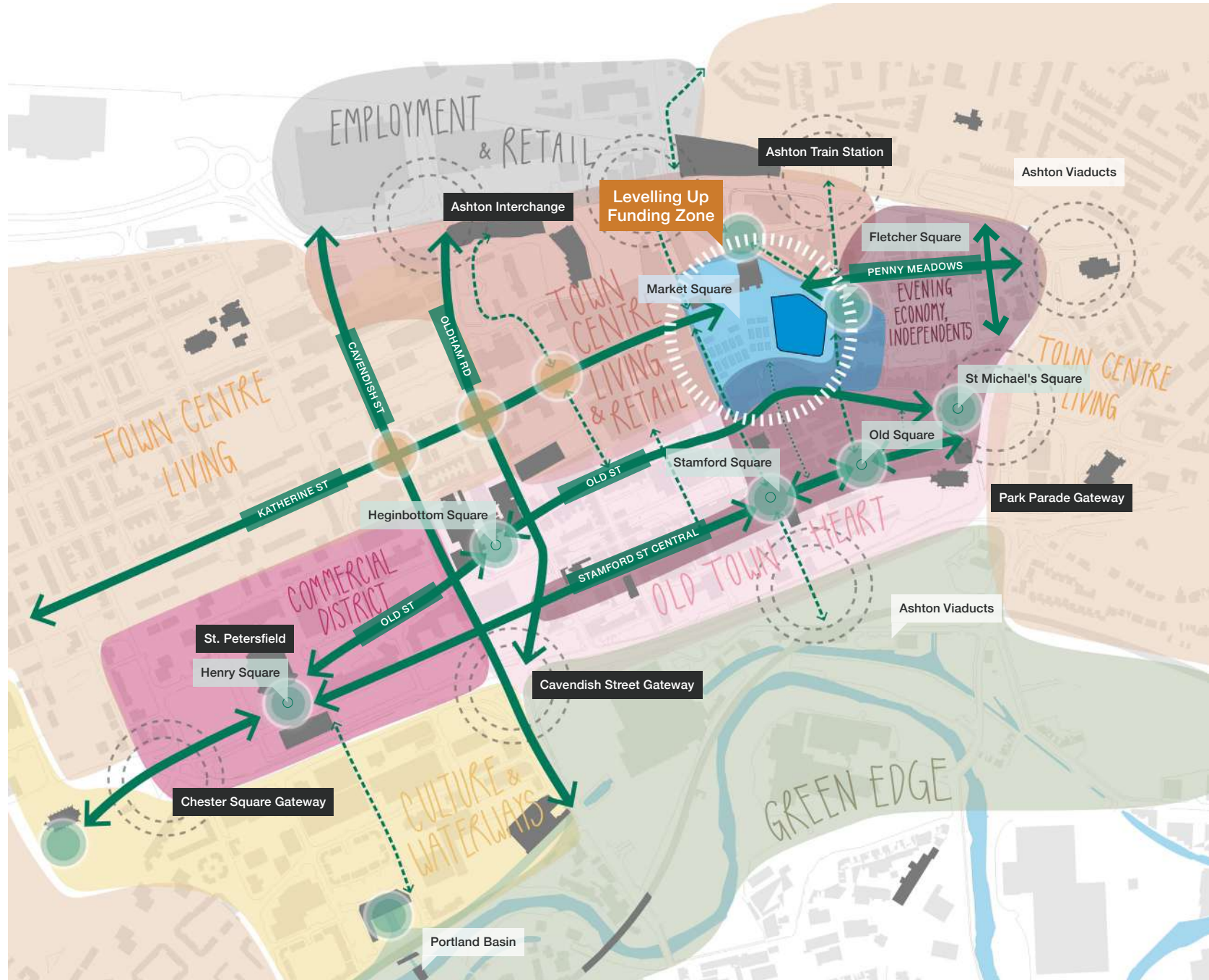


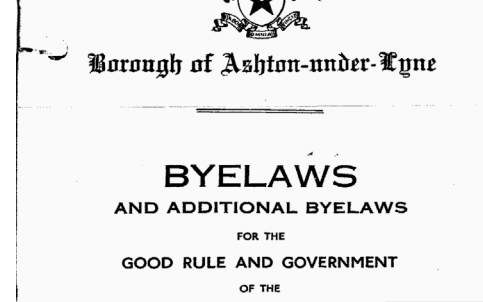
Diagram illustrating character areas and the overall vision

Historic evolution of Ashton town centre



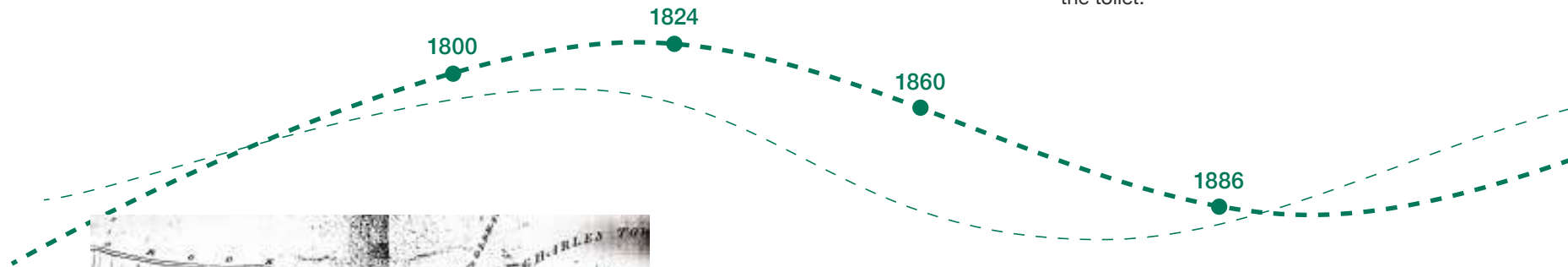
1824

Ashton was a very small market town from medieval times until late in the 18th century.



1886

Improvement Act (1886) passed bye-laws that raised housing standards for working classes. These laws stipulated minimum yard sizes, ceiling and window heights and that nobody could sleep or work in a room over the toilet.



1800s

Ashton's new town centre was planned by The Earl of Stamford. The street plan was laid in grids on top of fields, and many of the mains streets were named after Stamford's family members. The plots were leased to speculative builders, who had to fulfil aesthetic and size criteria for their new constructions.

Industrial Revolution led to population increase from 8,000 to 36,000 in years 1800-1851. The growth of the town's textile industry led to the construction of estates specifically for workers. Prominent figure in improvement of worker's well being was mill owner and social reformer Hugh Mason.



Oxford Mill

1860



Hill Biscuits manufacture factory in 20th century

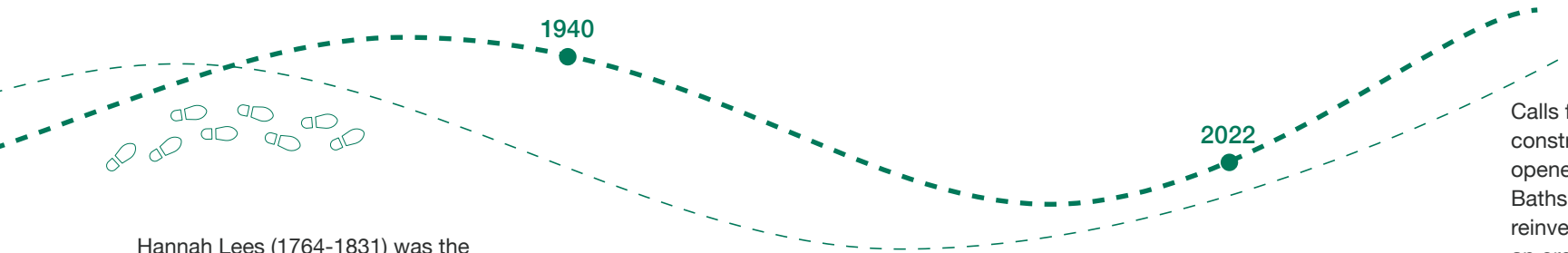
1940

With the collapse of the overseas market in the 1920s, the town's cotton industry went into decline, and by the 1930s most of the firms and mills in the area had closed. The town was forced to develop a variety of light industries, with many mills converted from cotton to other uses.

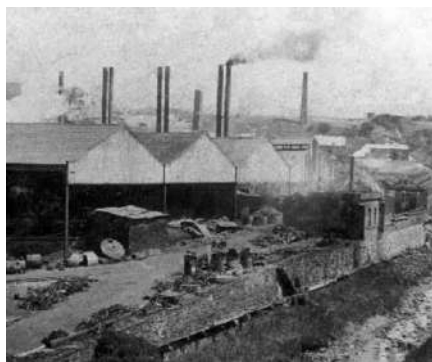


2022

Ashton now - reestablishing itself as a market town building on its rich industrial history



Hannah Lees (1764-1831) was the owner of one of the earliest and largest iron works in the Manchester city region during the late 18th and early 19th century. At a time when the new industries were dominated by men, and with her large family to look after (she had 12 children), Hannah played the major role in ensuring the continuance of the ironworks.



Park Bridge Ironworks

Ashton Market exists since the early 15th century. The original market was close to St. Michael's parish church, but was moved to the present site in 1828. The current market hall building was built in 1867. In 2004, it was devastated by a fire, after which the market was rebuilt and officially opened in 2008 with its original exterior walls.



Ashton Market in 1950s

Calls for better sanitation led to the construction of a vast swimming baths, opened in 1870. By 1975 when the Baths closed, the building had been reinvented into several uses including an orchestra venue and tennis courts. Nowadays it hosts a digital hub with various types of workspaces.



Ashton's Old Baths

A Distinctive and Unique destination

Ashton Town Centre is rich in heritage and distinctive character. Its unique assets will be celebrated and revitalised to attract visitors to a landmark destination.

Rich in History

The historic streets and buildings contribute to Ashton's distinctive character including Ashton Town Hall, Market and Mill buildings.

Stamford Street Central and Old Street, once busy and vibrant streets, include a number of beautiful buildings. Some of these buildings are vacant and have potential to be refurbished to become successful commercial spaces.

Well Connected

Ashton is located in a unique position, within proximity to both Manchester and the Peak District. Proposals will be sustainable, encouraging active modes of travel such as walking and cycling. There is potential to rationalise the car parking, reduce the amount of cars to create people friendly streets, reducing air pollution.

Unique Assets

Ashton Town Centre presents an opportunity to connect distinctive heritage buildings and spaces, to create an arrival experience and journey through its characterful streets. A variety of facilities and uses will attract people to visit.

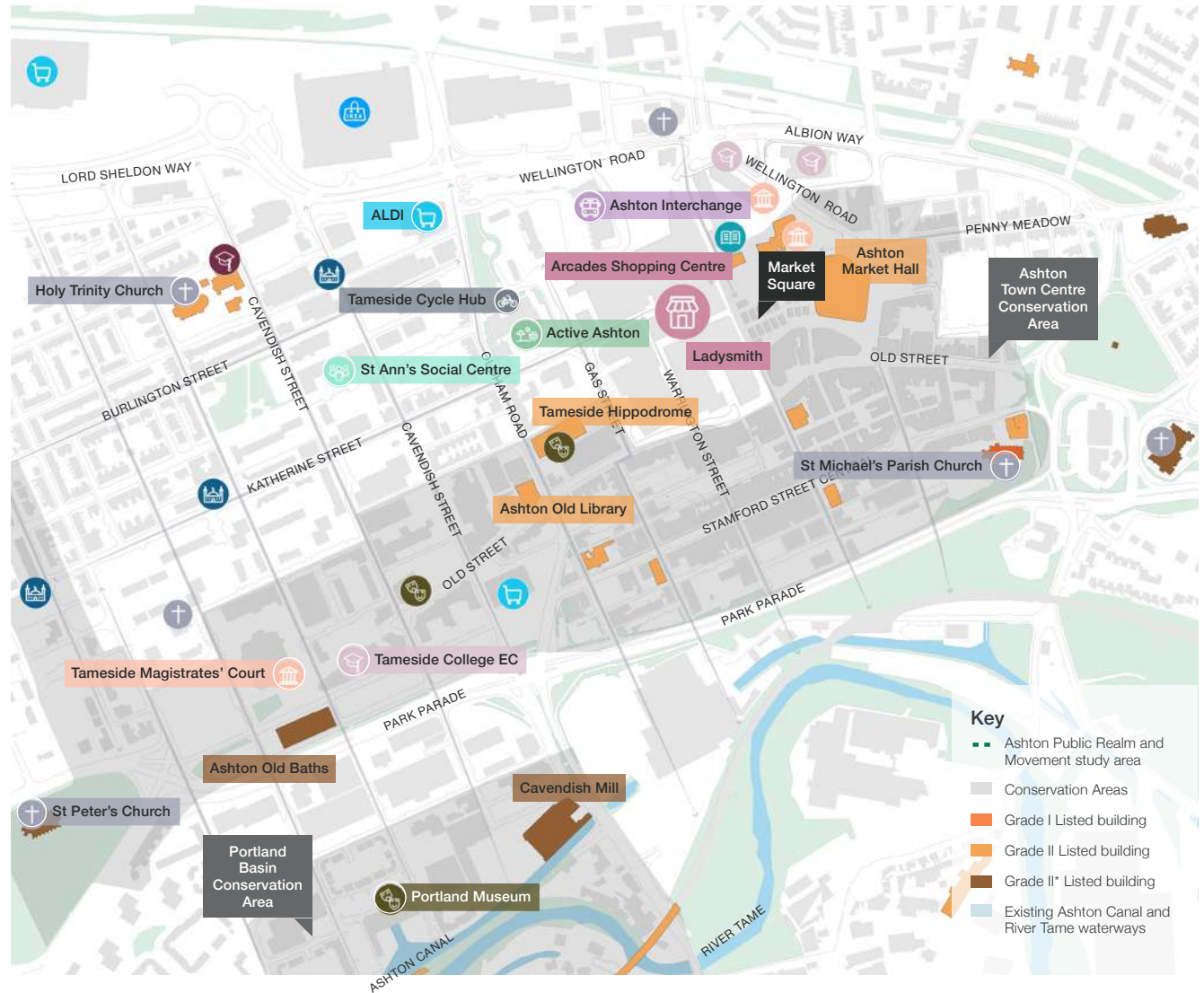


Diagram locating of Ashton's destinations and assets

The Opportunities

Opportunities have been identified as part of the contextual analysis carried out for this Phase Two public realm strategy. The opportunities shape the future regeneration of Ashton's public realm.

Streets and spaces have been identified for design proposals and interventions to support the future ambitions and a cohesive public realm strategy for Ashton-Under-Lyne. There is the opportunity to improve the following:

- The arrival experience into the town centre
- Movement and connections by creating a network of people friendly streets and spaces
- Connections to the train station and interchange to the market
- Safety for pedestrians through new and improved crossings
- Access to the market from the west (Katherine Street)
- Connections between St Petersfield to the Market.

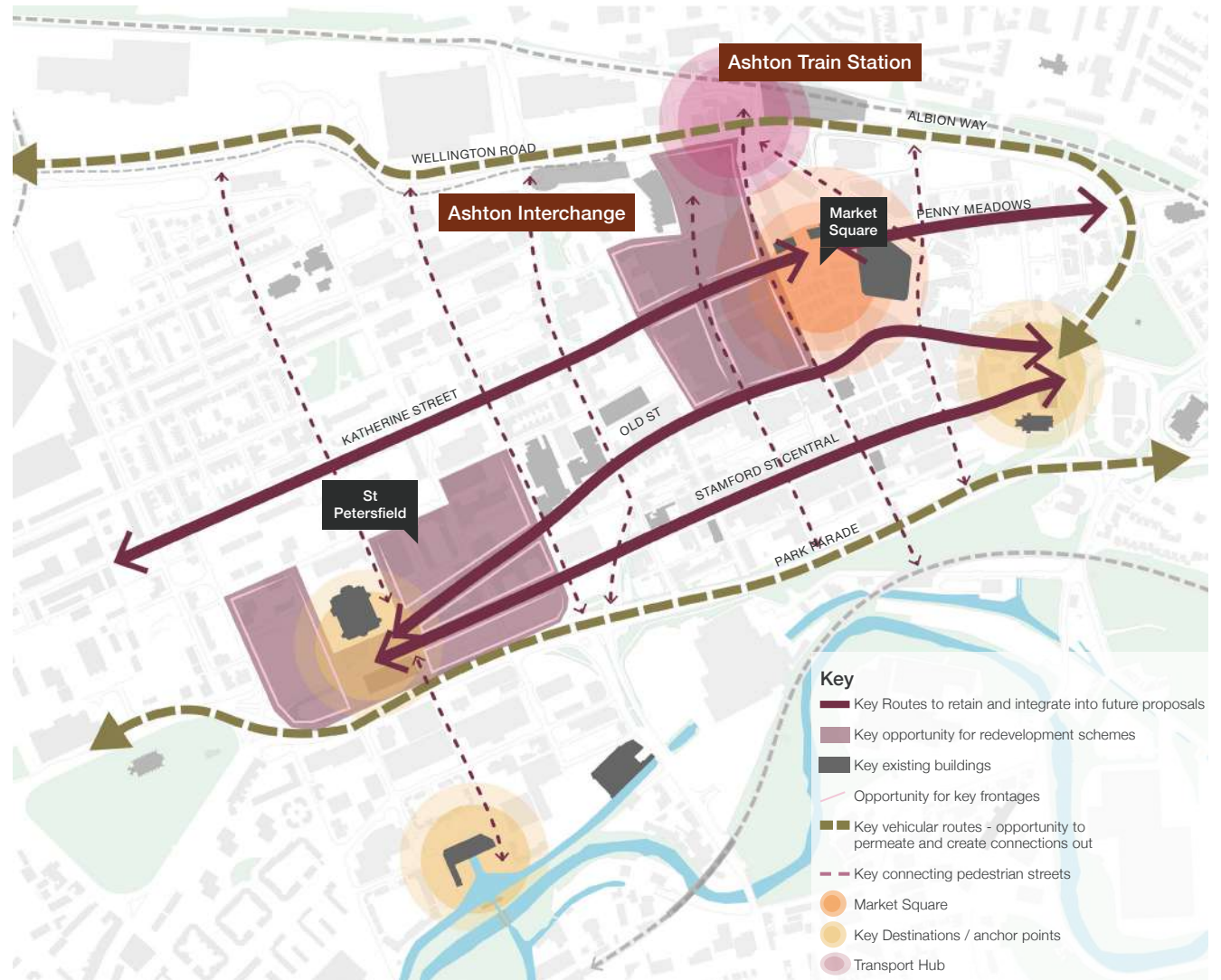


Diagram illustrating the opportunities in Ashton Town Centre

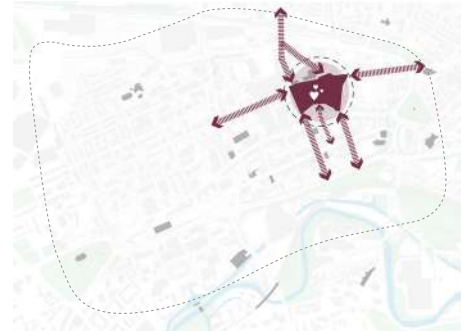
Key Ideas

A series of design principles respond to the context of the Town Centre and underpin the public realm strategy. The design principles are specific strategies and spatial proposals that will help to shape the future of Ashton Town Centre and the delivery of the vision.



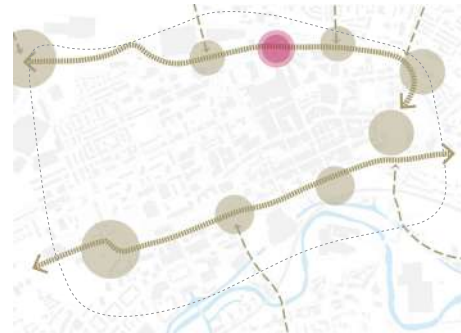
Connect St Petersfield to the heart of the town

Bridging the south west area of St Petersfield with the Market square and the Old town of Ashton, creating a more cohesive, walkable and legible town centre



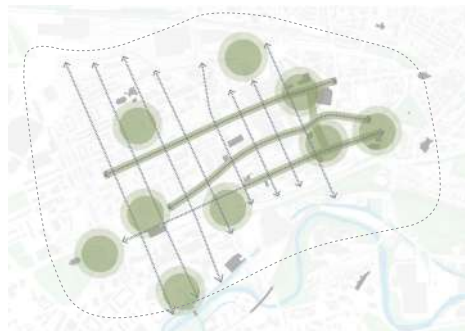
Redefine the Market as the heart of the town

Enhancing connections from and to the Market place, creating a destination within the town centre



Enhance the arrival to the Ashton Town Centre

Improving arrivals and gateways, as well as creating better pedestrian crossings and streets. Encouraging footfall into the town centre from key assets e.g. Ikea and Ashton Interchange



Creating a series of spaces

Public realm and landscape spaces to create key destinations within the movement network of the town centre



Define the connections

Enhancing historic north-south connections from Wellington Road to the river, and east-west connections from Katherine St. to the Market, to improve people movement around the town easily

Movement Strategy

The Movement Strategy will create a people-focused town centre, providing safe and attractive streets. The proposed strategy will divert cars from the heart of Ashton, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists to freely and safely move around the town. The strategy aims to achieve a balanced approach to movement, whilst considering practical needs of parking, servicing, taxi movement and accessibility.

The public realm strategy proposal illustrates the need to balance competing street demands between pedestrians, cyclists, vehicular traffic, public transport including buses and taxis. The key transport and movement aspirations have been divided into the following movements;

1. Pedestrian Friendly Streets

- Create a pleasant pedestrian-focused area to Ashton suitable for all levels of ability, connecting new development areas and points of interest within the town centre
- Reduce the reliance on vehicular movement in the centre of Ashton
- Increase number of pedestrian crossings

2. Secure Cycling

- Connect the National Cycle Network through Ashton, establishing strategic connections to the wider context
- Create safe and secure cycling routes through the town centre
- Provide secure cycle parking and cycle hubs

3. Quality Public Transport

- Establish a community shuttle bus, connecting Ashton Old Town and St Petersfield to create a residential and commuter friendly public transport network

4. Calm Traffic, Taxi Movement and Efficient Servicing

- Reduce congestion and rat-running in the town centre along key streets
- Create balanced streets which prioritise pedestrians and cyclist movement
- Establish clear drop-off points for taxis
- Any public realm improvements to not compromise space available for servicing in the town centre

5. Smart Parking

- Consolidate surface car-parking in the town centre
- Identify opportunity for development infill where there is council ownership
- Establish clear wayfinding to car parking areas in the town centre, decreasing the need for through-movement

Pedestrian Movement

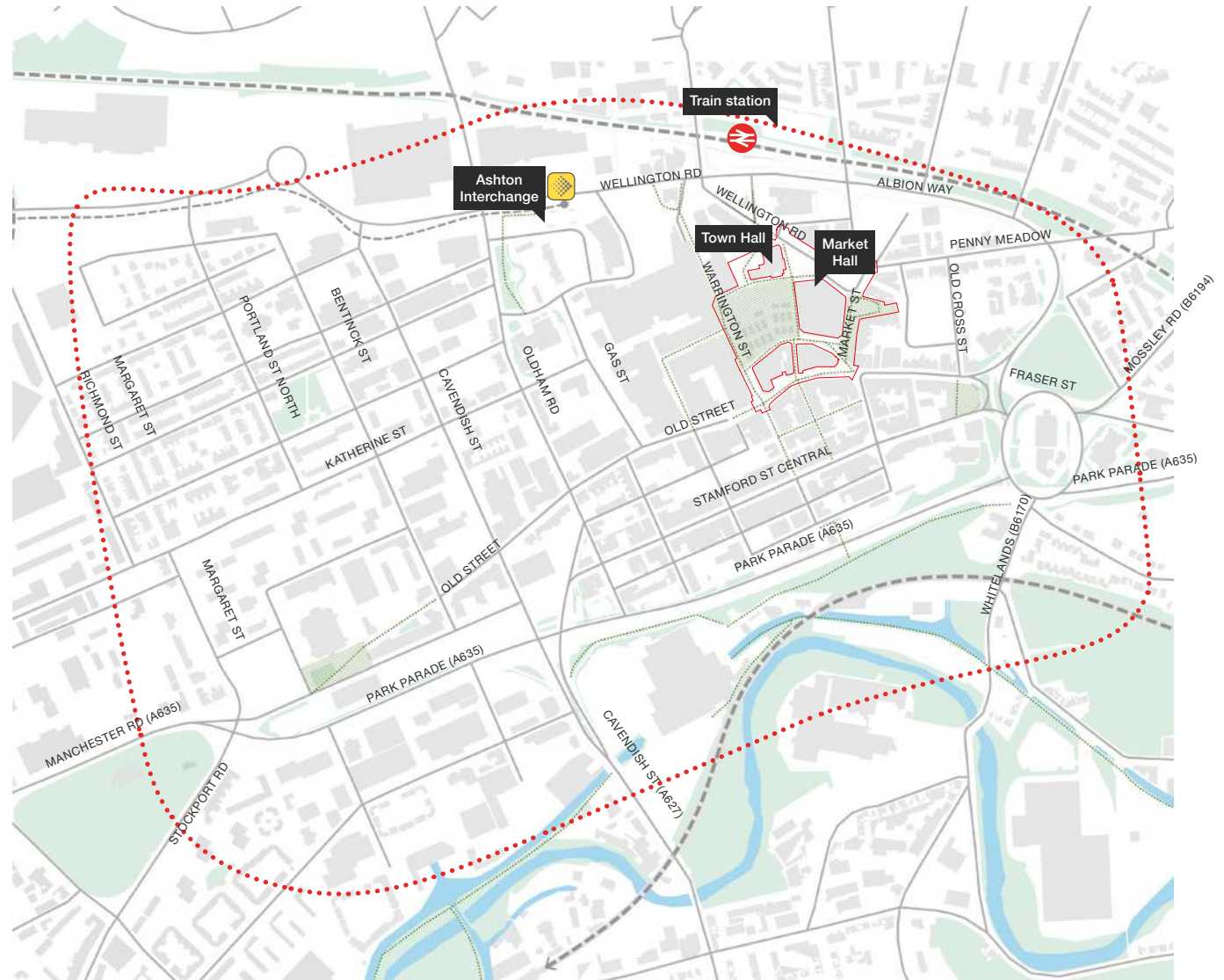
Existing Pedestrian Movement

Ashton-under-Lyne town centre is dominated by vehicular movement through most of its streets, limiting safe and easy pedestrian movement to key destinations. The particular areas requiring improvement to the pedestrian environment, including increased width of pavements, improved surface materials and safe pedestrian crossings;

- Potential to extend and enhance the pedestrian-only area around the Market Square
- Area towards and around Ashton Old Baths from the town centre
- Pedestrian access to Portland Basin Museum
- Pedestrian access to and through St Michael's Square
- Movement from Ashton Interchange through New Radcliffe Freedom Gardens
- Through Ladysmith and Arcades Shopping Centres



Existing poorly connected street for pedestrians - Stamford Street Central



Existing pedestrian movement

Key

- Public Realm study area
- Market Square Levelling Up scope site boundary
- Vehicular movement
- Pedestrian only areas
- Pedestrian movement

Pedestrian Movement Strategy

People-friendly streets, encourage pedestrians to move safely around the town, whilst considering the practical needs of parking, servicing, taxi movement and accessibility.

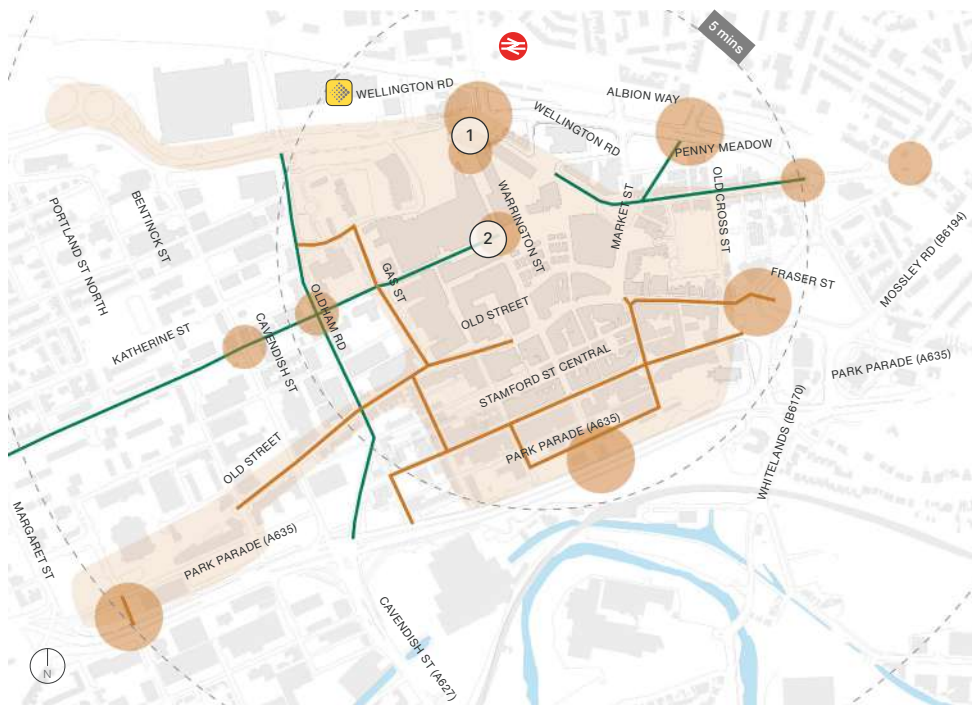


Diagram to illustrate proposed pedestrian friendly streets

Key

- Existing pedestrian only streets / pathways
- Proposed pedestrian priority streets (vehicular access is allowed in specific places)
- Walking distances
- Proposed pedestrian crossing improvements
- Proposed Pedestrian Priority Zone
- Proposed equal priority streets (serve to reduce vehicular speed and road dominance)
- 1. Ashton Interchange to Market Square
- 2. Katherine Street to Market Square



Signage and wayfinding along the key routes help with navigation



Pedestrian routes to key destinations with street furniture to provide dwell space and trees for shade and seasonal interest

Proposals and Objectives:

- Improved or new pedestrian crossings at key junctions to improve connectivity around Ashton and its surroundings streets
- Improve wayfinding, signage and lighting to create a safe place for pedestrians
- Increase the pedestrian priority zone to connect Market Square to St Petersfield along Old Street and Stamford Street Central,
- Celebrate views in and out of Ashton town centre.
- Informal, sheltered seating and play to allow people to dwell.
- Spill-out, encouraging small businesses, active ground floors and streets
- Public realm improvements to Old Street, Warrington Street, Stamford street Central, Katherine Street and Oldham Road.
- Improve pedestrian movement from Ashton interchange to the Market Square and Old Street, along Gas Street and Warrington Street.
- Narrowing of carriageways where appropriate, to increase footpath widths and improve the environment

Cycle Movement

Existing Cycle Movement

Ashton-under-Lyne town centre is dominated by vehicular movement through most of its streets, limiting safe and easy cyclist movement to key destinations. The particular areas requiring improvement to the pedestrian environment, including increased width of pavements, improved surface materials and safe pedestrian crossings;

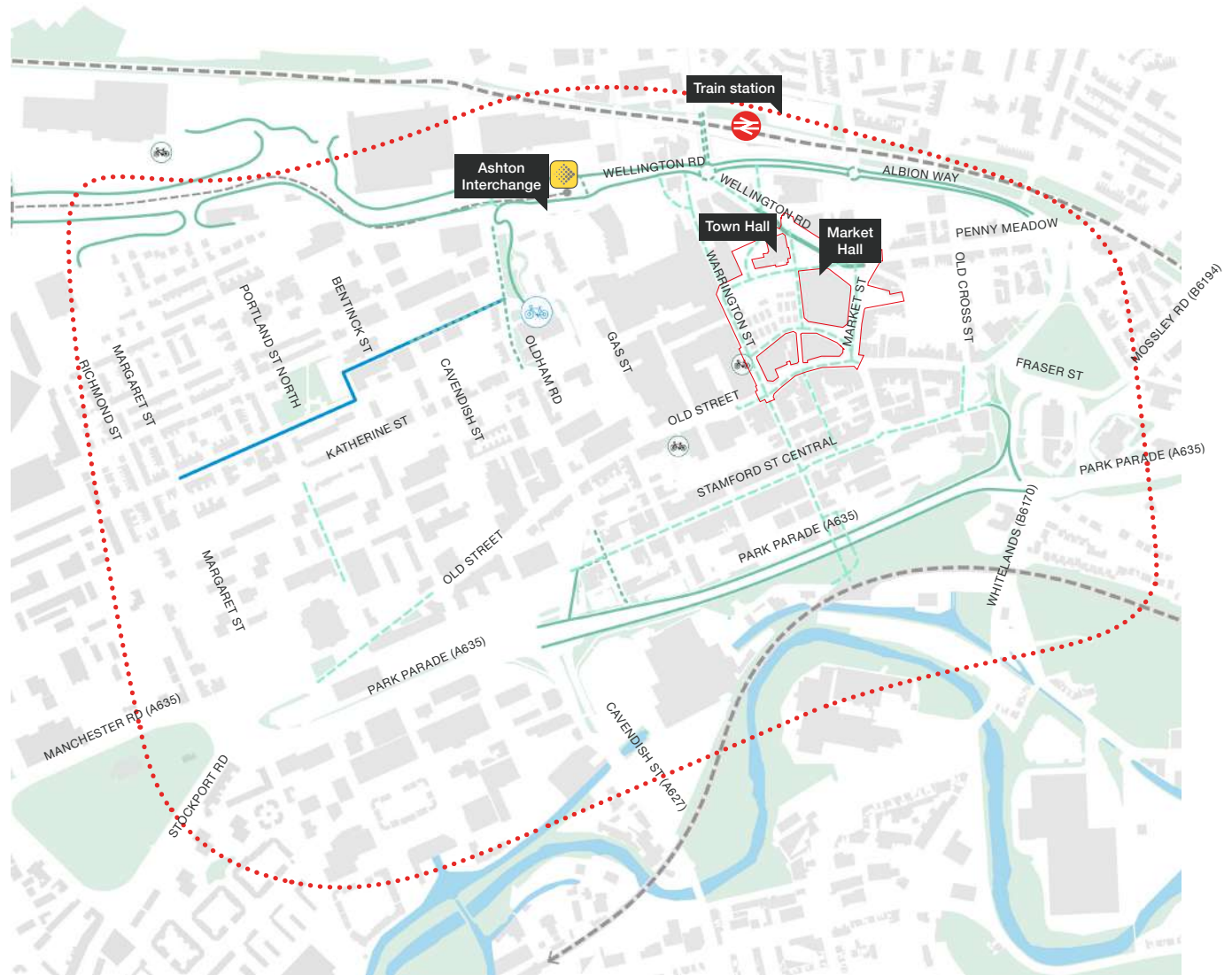
- There are a number of existing cycle access routes on to the market square, as illustrated in the Existing cycle movement and cycle parking diagram. It is proposed to promote active travel in Ashton and in doing so it is proposed to include additional cycle parking strategically located in the centre of Ashton.
- Interventions to encourage active travel in a safe and secure way should be considered so that people of all ages and abilities feel confident to cycle through Ashton safely.



Existing poorly connected street for cyclists

Key

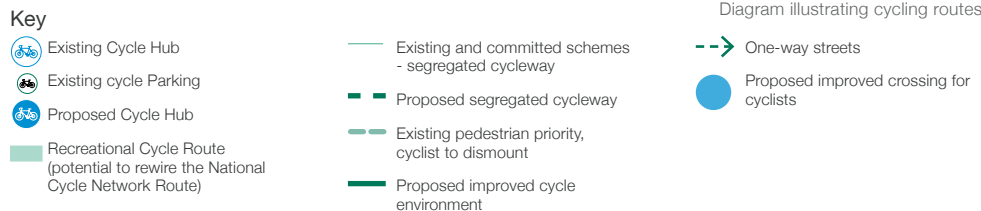
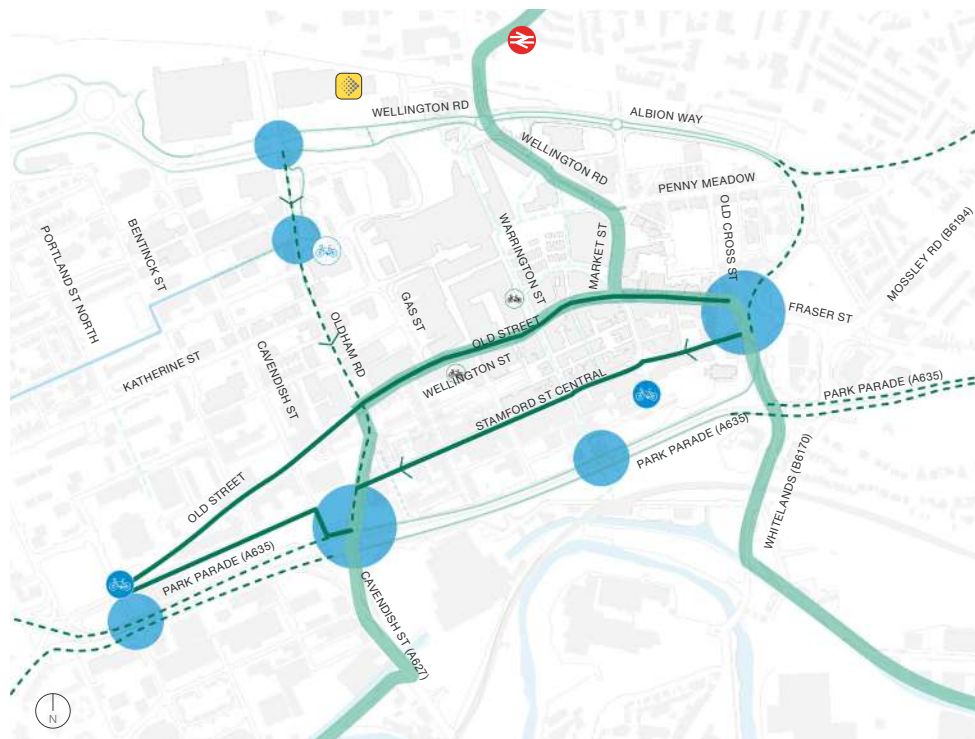
- Public Realm study area
- Market Square Levelling Up scope site boundary
- Existing cycle Parking
- Existing Cycle Hub
- Shared cycleway and footpath
- Pedestrian priority cyclist to dismount
- Existing Contraflow lane
- Existing designated cycle route



Existing cycle movement and cycle parking

Safe and Secure Cycling Routes Movement Strategy

A safe cycling environment encourages active travel, to encourage sustainability and healthy living for the community.



Proposals and Objectives

- Connect to the National Cycle Network route through Ashton and improve the cycling environment through the town centre
- Supply more strategic cycle parking in the centre of Ashton
- Enable people of all ability to feel safe cycling around and through Ashton
- Reduce conflict between cyclists and parked cars
- A connected network of safe and secure cycle parking facilities
- Improved cyclist information and navigation using signage and wayfinding, as part of an overall wayfinding strategy for the town centre taking into account the needs for all modes of transport.
- Improved cycling environment connecting residential areas of Ashton to the Market Square and transport links
- Balanced streets which prioritise cyclists and pedestrians along Old Street and Stamford Street Central, connecting St Petersfield to the Market Square



Balanced streets with cycling crossings create a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians



Designated cycling paths encourage active travel

Car and Taxi Movement

Existing Car and Taxi Movement

Ashton-under-Lyne is reliant on car travel in and around the town centre, creating an unattractive and polluted urban environment. Reduction on the reliance on car movement across the town will be paramount to provide an element of pedestrian and cycle safety. Consolidation of vehicle access and deterring “rat running” within the town centre should be an important focus. Areas and streets which require particular improvement include;

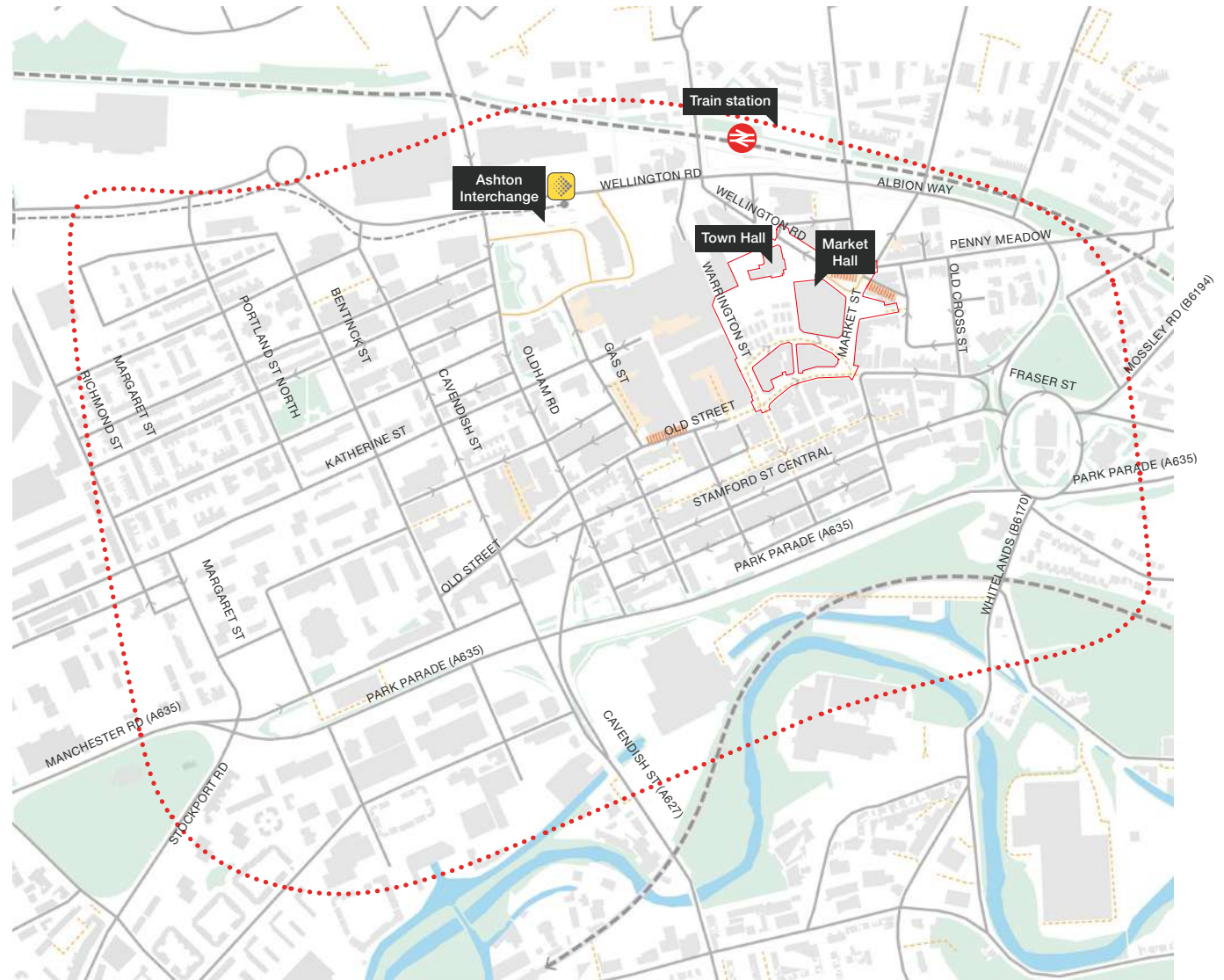
- North-south routes (Oldham Road and Cavendish Street) sever the town centre from the residential area to the west
- Car dominant streets particularly Old Street and Stamford Street Central
- Rat-running along Stamford street Central



Existing car dominated streets surround Ashton town centre

Key

- Public Realm study area
- Market Square Levelling Up scope site boundary
- Vehicular movement
- Existing Bus/ Taxi only
- Existing one-way street
- Existing taxi rank
- Existing servicing areas
- Existing service roads



Existing vehicular movement, taxi (and bus) only areas and servicing routes



Calm Traffic (Vehicles, Taxis and Servicing Routes) Movement Strategy

A sustainable town centre focuses on balanced streets which prioritise pedestrian and cyclist movement, and carefully design vehicular movement.

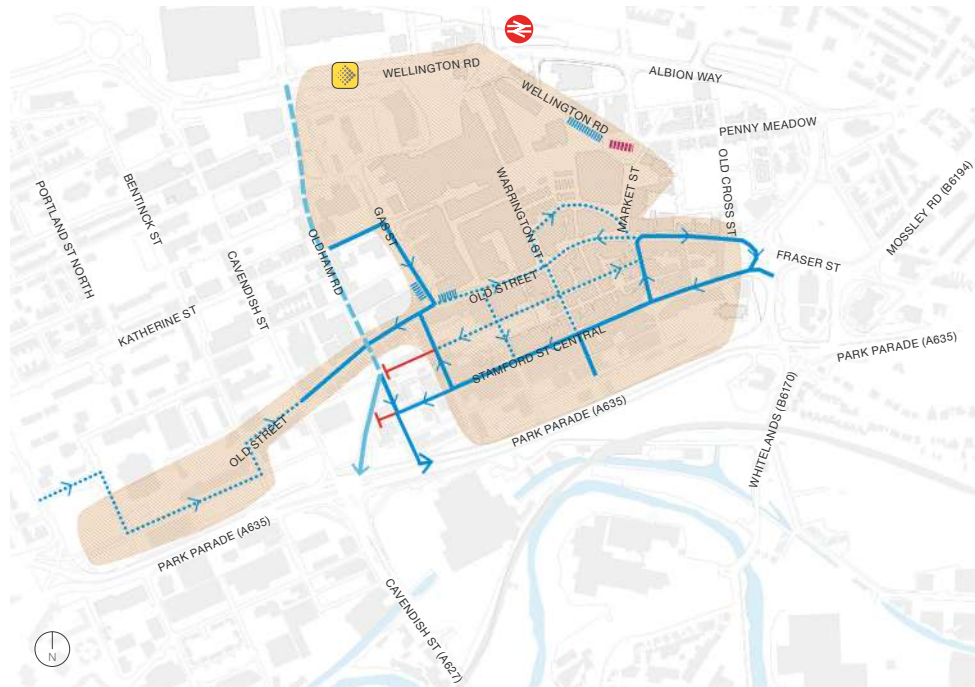


Diagram illustrating proposed vehicles, taxi's and servicing routes

Key

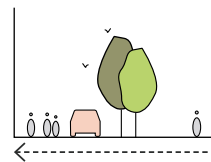
- Proposed narrowed and improved carriageway to one lane with designated cycle lane
- Proposed improved carriageway, two lanes and improved cycle environment
- Proposed balanced street giving priority to pedestrians
- Proposed removal of through-route for vehicular movement
- Proposed pedestrian priority street, restricted access for servicing only
- Proposed Pedestrian Priority Zone
- Proposed new one-way street (traffic permitted)
- Proposed taxi rank
- Removed taxi rank



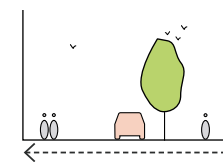
A balanced street including high quality materials, crossings, and street trees. Prioritises pedestrian and cyclist movement and accommodates vehicular traffic



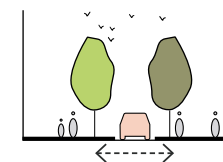
Providing wider pavements allows more space for spill-out from ground floor cafes and restaurants, to activate the streets and boost the economy.



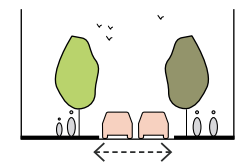
Pedestrian priority street: vehicular access is allowed in specific periods



A balanced street (equal priority): serve to reduce vehicular speed and dominance



Vehicular priority street (one-way): a differentiation of road and pavement



Vehicular priority street (both ways): a differentiation of road and pavement

Proposals and Objectives

- Create a sustainable town centre and support projects and initiatives that reduce reliance on cars, to
- Support walking, cycling and public transport initiatives to reduce congestion and create a connected town centre without reliance on the car.
- Reduce traffic speeds with interventions such as crossings, reduced carriageway widths, single surfaces.
- Pedestrian priority zone in the heart of Ashton with only servicing vehicles allowed in some locations.
- Improved carriageways along Old Street and Stamford Street Central
- New or improved pedestrian crossings.
- Relocation of taxi ranks to improve pedestrian movement along Old Street.
- Reduce to a single carriageway along Oldham Road to provide space for cycle route and bus movement
- Avoid rat running with improved circulation by consolidating east west access and movement along Stamford Street Central though to Oldham Road.

Bus Movement

Existing Bus Movement

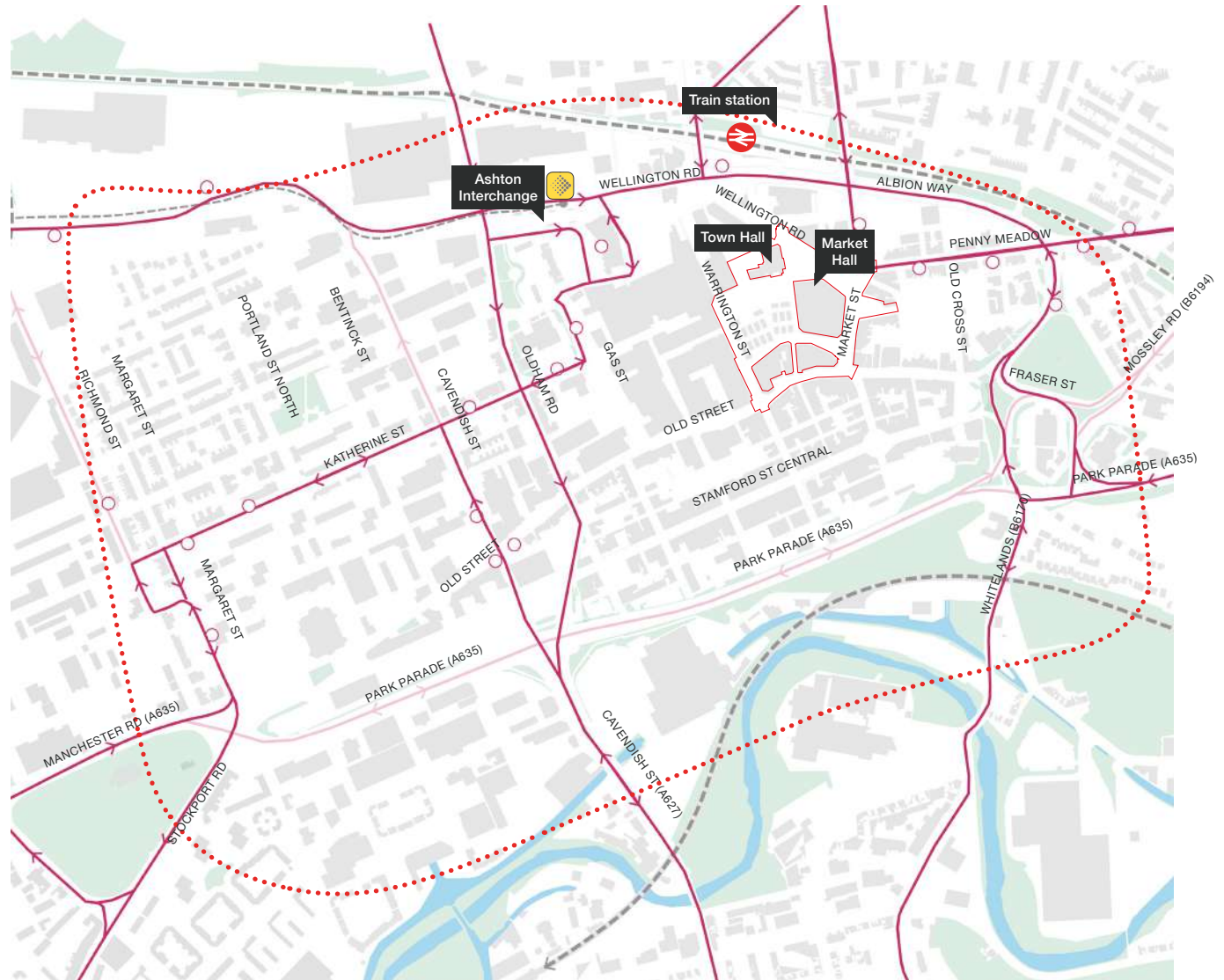
The following points highlight the existing situation for bus movement around Ashton town centre;

- Ashton Interchange is integrated into the Metrolink stop which connects into Ashton from Manchester city centre
- Pedestrian connectivity from Ashton Interchange to the surrounding area needs to be improved with better wayfinding and signage
- Opportunity to create safe and secure bus stops which provide clear wayfinding and signage to the Market Square and Hall
- Ashton Train Station is within close proximity to the Market Square and also requires clear signage for pedestrians to locate themselves in the surrounding area.



Ashton Interchange

- Key**
- Public Realm study area
 - Market Square Levelling Up scope site boundary
 - Existing public bus routes
 - Existing school bus services
 - Existing bus stops
 - One way streets



Existing bus transport routes



Connected Public Transport Movement Strategy

A well connected bus service will allow people to move around the Town Centre more easily to support activity in all areas of Ashton town centre.

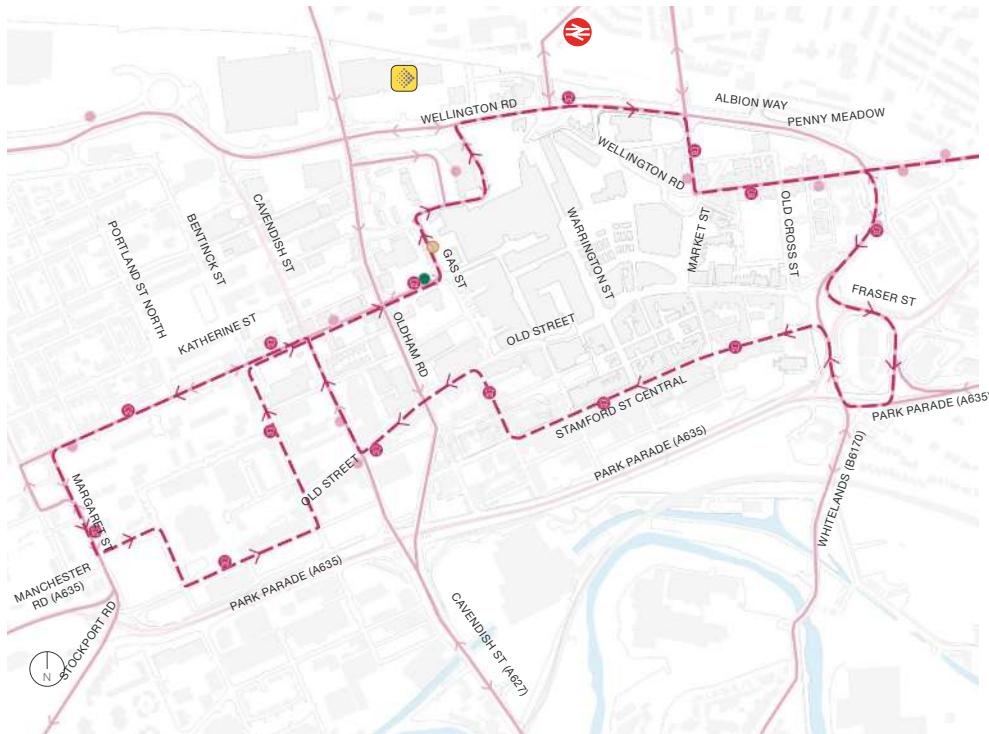


Diagram illustrating proposed bus route

Key

- - - Proposed community shuttle bus service
- One way streets
- Proposed re-location of public bus stop
- Proposed shuttle bus stops
- Proposed removal of public bus stop



Opportunity for streets to be designed to integrate community bus routes



Attractive bus stops with clear branding, sheltered seating and opportunity for green roofs

Proposals and Objectives

- Integrating bus movement through the town centre allows people to move around the Town Centre easily.
- Connect St Petersfield with the Town Centre and Market Square, Ashton Interchange and uses to the east of supporting businesses and employees.
- Transport strategy to support the recent Ashton Interchange development and movement flow.
- Community shuttle-bus network connecting the south of Ashton Town Centre (Stamford Street Central) with St Petersfield to support a night-time economy.
- Proposed removal of bus stop along Gas Street and relocation along Katherine Street to create a balanced street along Gas Street, prioritising pedestrian and cyclist activity.

Car Parking

Existing Car Parking

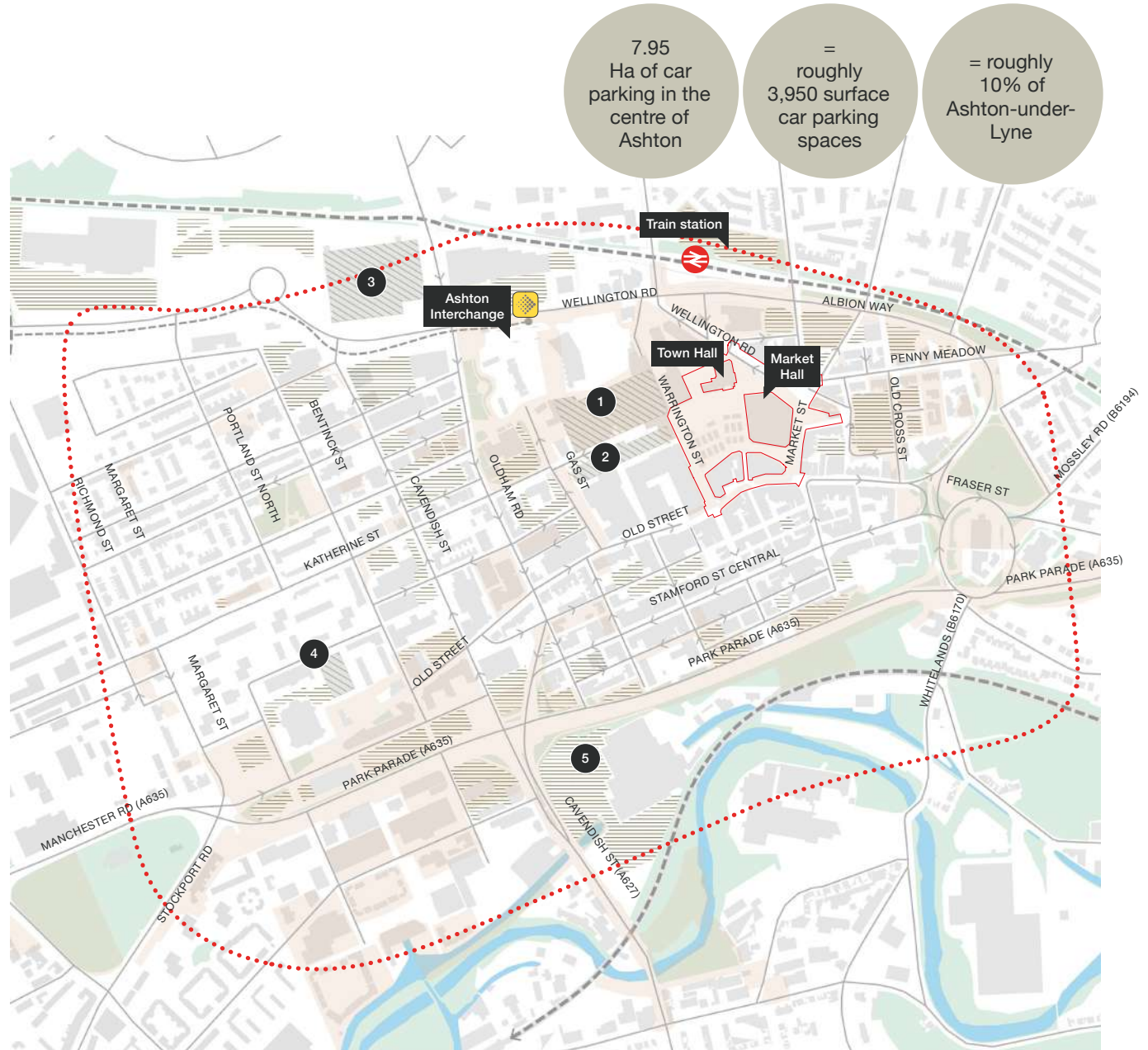
The following points highlight the existing situation for car parking within Ashton town centre;

- The Arcades car park is an active multi-storey car park which sits on the edge of the Market Square
- Pedestrian movement from The Arcades multi-storey to the Market Square and Hall should be improved with clear wayfinding and signage
- Surface level car parks are on the periphery of the Market Square and provide close proximity to the heart of Ashton for pedestrian movement
- Clear wayfinding and signage should excite and entice movement towards the Market Square, from the surrounding surface car parking areas

The multi-storey car parks and the number of spaces are:

1. The Arcades car park = 523 car parking spaces
2. Ladysmith car park (currently closed) = 200 car parking spaces
3. Ikea car park (free) -
4. Dale Street East car park = 198 car parking spaces
5. ASDA car park (free) = 600 car parking spaces

- Key**
- Public Realm study area
 - Market Square Levelling Up scope site boundary
 - Existing surface car park
 - Existing multi-storey car park
 - Council ownership
 - Vehicular movement



Existing town centre car parking and council ownership

Car Parking Strategy

An effective car parking strategy will support a sustainable and compact town centre, reducing pollution, improving air quality, safety and free up space for socialising and dwelling.



Diagram illustrating plan to rationalise car parking in the Town Centre, to retain the core for people friendly streets

- Key**
- Multi-storey car parks
 - Proposed St Petersfield development
 - Car parking areas with clear signage and wayfinding
 - Surface-level car parks

Proposals and Objectives

- Improve wayfinding, signage and lighting to improve legibility for car parking.
- Improve existing surface car parks with improved lighting and surveillance to create safe and attractive environments.
- Improve air quality and reduce pollution by rationalising surface car parks to the edges of the core only, creating a pedestrian priority zone.
- Revitalise the existing multi-storey car park to create a central mobility hub, consolidating the amount of surface car parking.
- A compact town centre. Potential to utilise the existing surface car parks for suitable town centre uses that could support growth and economy.
- Identify development opportunities where there are existing surface car parking areas within Council ownership



A clear signage strategy will encourage better connections and more efficient parking



Example of a bespoke car park with natural green walls and place specific imagery on the exterior to make attractive








Clear signage for a multi-storey car park

Streets and Space Character

A network of streets and spaces encourages people to move around the town more easily, promoting sustainable travel. Improved streets and spaces will encourage healthy activities such as walking, cycling, recreation, leisure and entertainment.


Key








-  Key buildings of character and heritage
-  Gateways and Crossing Enhanced pedestrian and cycle connections into Ashton
-  Arrival Space
- 1. Ashton Interchange (Metrolink Station and Bus Station)
- 2. Ashton Train Station
-  Market Square / Quarter
-  Key spaces

Proposed key spaces

- 3. Wellington Square
- 4. Market Square
- 5. Fletcher Square
- 6. St Michael's Square
- 7. Old Square
- 8. Heginbottom Square
- 9. St Petersfield (Henry Square / Chester Square)
- 10. Portland Basin
- 11. Active Ashton and Tameside Cycle Hub

Key Streets

-  Lord Sheldon Way / Wellington Road
Introduce a cycle route & improved pedestrian crossing points in strategic locations to maximise ease of crossing

-  Katherine Street
A community boulevard which provides a main approach and direct route for residents into the Market Square, the Town Hall and Market Hall
-  Stamford Street
A film set for everyday life - bringing the internal uses into the streetscene, creating a vibrant high street
-  Old Street
A creative re-use and expression of the beautiful old buildings along the old high street
-  Oldham Road
More pedestrian crossing points, improved cyclist connectivity and opportunity for linear green features adjacent to the road
-  Lanes
Improved characterful north-south routes, connecting Ashton's arrival space (Ashton Interchange) with the rest of the town centre
-  Market Avenue and Stamford Arcade
Unique Avenue routes with room for business spill out and creating attractive routes
-  Park Parade
Improved pedestrian and cyclist crossing points

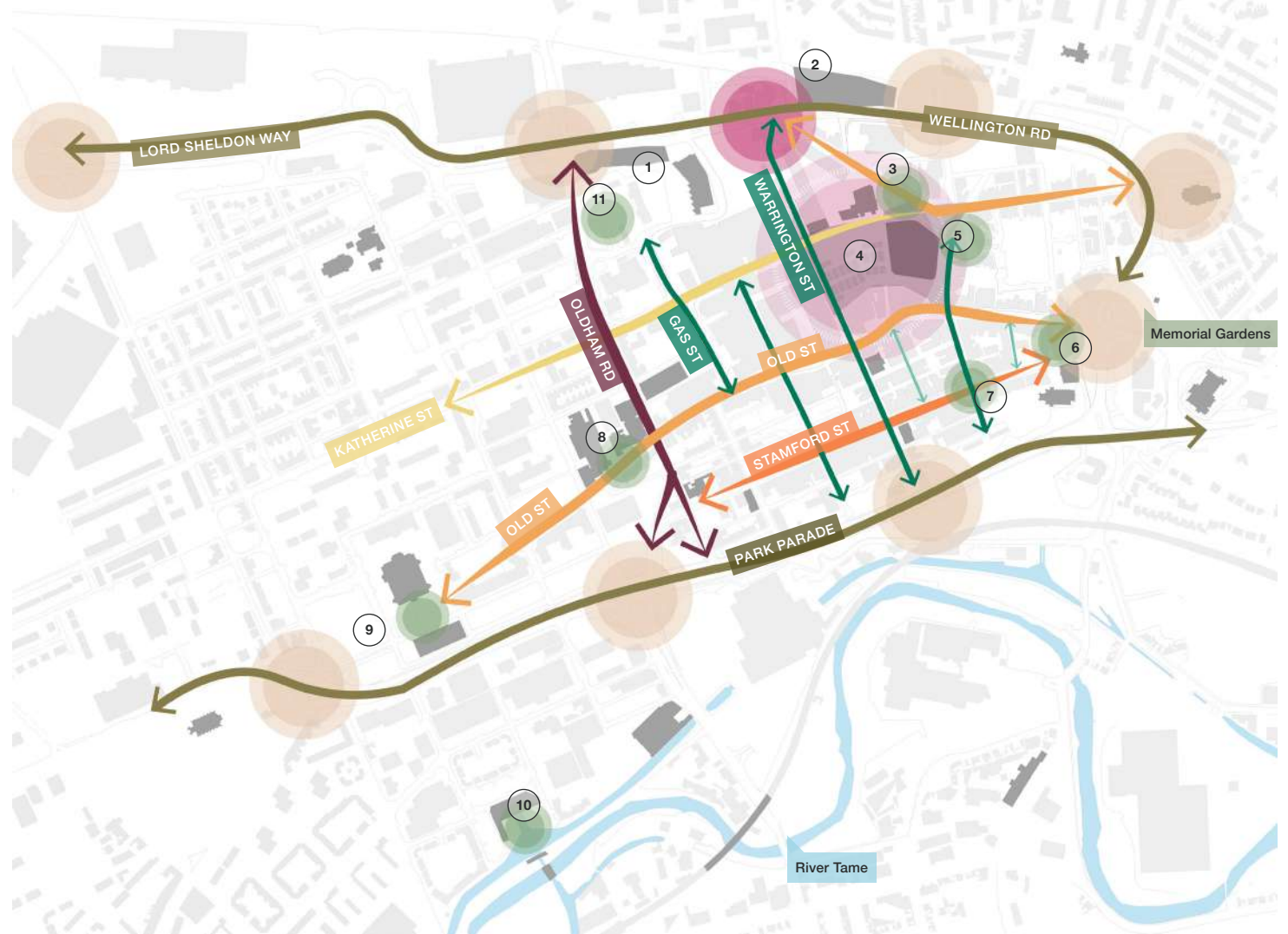
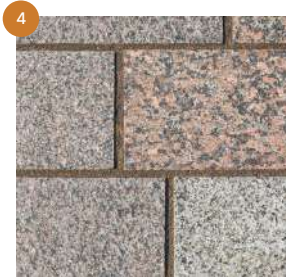
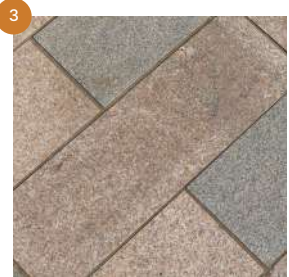
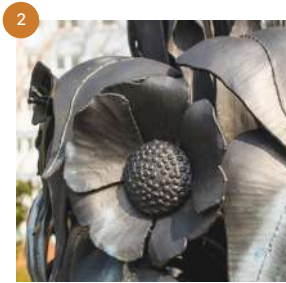


Diagram illustrating street character and key spaces

Materiality

Ashton is rich in heritage and its unique character will inspire a palette of complimentary surfaces, materials and street furniture to create a consistent approach in the Town Centre. Contrast in specific areas will create interest and variety.



1. Existing inlays in paving highlights landmarks in the town centre
2. Existing sculptural elements create contrast with street materials
3. Existing paving materials by Ashton Old Baths
4. Existing paving materials by the Ashton Interchange
5. Market Hall consists of red brick and stone detailing

Heritage Character

Ashton Town Centre and its Market Grounds consist of a variety of materials. The heritage buildings are predominantly red brick with stone detailing and occasional land mark buildings are made from stone such as the Town Hall. There are modern buildings framing the square to the east and south frontages, these are inappropriate and poor quality. The materials palette will avoid replicating these buildings.

Materials and structures within the proposals for the streets and spaces will consist of either similar materials or complimentary materials.

To minimise waste and reduce embodied carbon emissions, materials will be recycled or re-used where possible.

In order to fully understand the potential to reuse existing paving it is essential to understand the existing laying conditions, the depths of the unit sizes, and the ability to successfully lift the material without excessive breakages. A ground investigation is required to establish the existing situation.

There are many considerations associated with the re-use of materials:

- Tiles could be damaged or broken
- Ground conditions will need to be investigated
- Method of laying tiles and incorporating new tiles

Complimentary surface materials and patterns will allow for flexibility of materials and contingency associated with the re-use of materials.

There is potential to recycle broken surface materials and paving into unique street furniture elements, inviting local artists to design installations and usable street furniture, this could be incorporated in the surrounding areas of Ashton.



Design Drivers

Materials and street furniture will include high quality, robust and sustainable materials to create an attractive environment that is durable. The materials palette will be informed by the design drivers below:

- Contextual character - Materials must draw on the historical and present day palette of materials.
- Cohesive - Creating a cohesive public realm that expands and enhances the quality of the existing area.
- Inclusive and accessible - Ensuring that hard material selection and arrangement meets the needs of all users.
- Scale - Ensuring materials are of an appropriate scale and character for the use of the space or street.
- Durability - Material selection must be durable ensuring that each material is fit for purpose, easily sourced, has manageable maintenance regimes, meets all applicable B.S and E.N safety/quality standards.
- Sustainability - Credentials and carbon impact of the materials and products being used, in terms of manufacture and shipping/transportation.

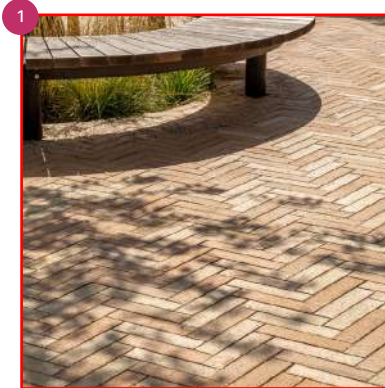
The specification of materials will be decided at detailed planning stages, costs and budgets will influence proposals. The following examples are inspiration for the selection.



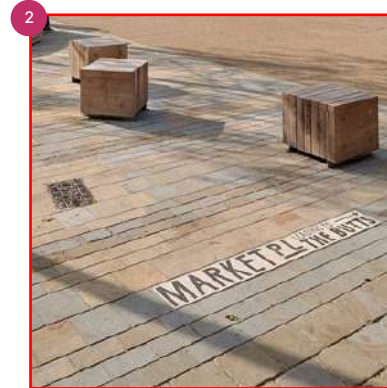
Heritage Streets, Bradford



Variation in flag and sett size to create defined spaces



Jyllinge Recreational Square



Reference to heritage engraved in surfaces



Example of existing floor materials combined with new surfaces



Kärđla Central Square, Estonian island Hiiumaa



Sustainability Ambitions

Ashton Town Centre will be a thriving and sustainable community for people living there today and for future generations, not just from an environmental point of view, it will include economic development, cultural diversity and social equity.



Grey to Green in Sheffield, a Sustainable Urban Drainage system which protects the local rivers from pollutants

Climate

Ashton Town Centre should support the Tameside Council and Greater Manchester Net Zero Carbon ambitions. A variety of sustainability principles will reduce carbon emissions which will be supported in the design of the surrounding streets and spaces in Ashton town centre. Improved movement and connections will encourage active modes of travel including a walking and cycling strategy.

Improving air quality and reducing pollution with supporting the existing pedestrian priority zone, by reducing the amount of cars within the core of the town. An effective car parking and transport strategy will reduce carbon emissions and encourage walking and cycling. Cycle storage and electric vehicle charging points will support the ambition to support the Net Zero Carbon ambitions for Ashton-under-Lyne.

Diversity and Inclusion

Part of the town centre vision is to create informal and formal playful spaces that encourage children and adults alike to play and interact. A variety of activities and events within the Market Hall and Square, and surrounding streets and key spaces will cater for a range of demographics. Accessibility is key within the design, to create spaces and streets which cater for all abilities and capabilities within the street scene.



Cycling is encouraged with cycle storage and dedicated cycling routes

Environmental

A vital part of the Town Centre transformation vision is that of urban greening, planting street trees, and lower level shrubs to enhance aesthetics, help mitigate the effects of climate change and encourage biodiversity net gain. Seasonal, attractive trees and planting will create improved streets and spaces for people all through the year.



Trees and planting in the streets to provide shading and absorb carbon emissions to create better air quality,



Community village co-op shops

Economic

Active edges enliven the streets and attract new visitors, establishments and relaxation. Encouragement of dwell in the town centre will allow users to recharge, and carry on exploring, boosting the local economy. A programme of events will attract visitors and local people. A compact Market Square / Ashton town centre core will encourage social and economic community. Providing a range of community facilities within close proximity to public transport infrastructure and existing community assets will support the economy.



Improvements to Altrincham Market and the surrounding public realm has been a catalyst to attract a range of businesses to boost the economy

Social

A variety of seating opportunities are suggested to suit a wide range of users and encourage dwell in different locations around the Market Square and in the surrounding streets and key spaces. All user groups can be catered for and encouraged to use and enjoy the spaces. Play and leisure facilities for children and teenagers will be provided for to allow for a vibrant mix and sense of community.



Timber furniture

Materiality

Use of sustainable and good quality materials in new built forms and the public realm is intrinsic to creating a sustainable Ashton town centre. Choice of materials is critical within the design of the surrounding streets and spaces in Ashton. The processes of production, shipping, maintenance, replacement and disposal will all have to be considered in detail.

Wherever possible, appropriate materials produced during the construction phase should be re-used within the design of the public realm across the site, reducing embodied carbon whilst tangibly celebrating the heritage of the site.

Timber furniture

New timber furniture proposed within the public realm for Ashton should be FSC certified and UK sourced.

The Study Area

The public realm strategy defines a long term vision and a comprehensive plan for Ashton Town Centre. The Market Square and Hall are the first steps of regenerating the Town Centre. This document focuses on Phase 2, the longer term interventions the later steps in further regeneration of the Town Centre.

The plan illustrates the area included within the Market Square Levelling Up scope with immediate plans for detailed design and delivery. The longer term interventions are labelled, the time-scales for these proposals will be confirmed at a later stage.

Ashton Market is the beating heart of the town.

A modern market for everyone, a destination attracting locals and visitors, hosting a range of entertaining events.

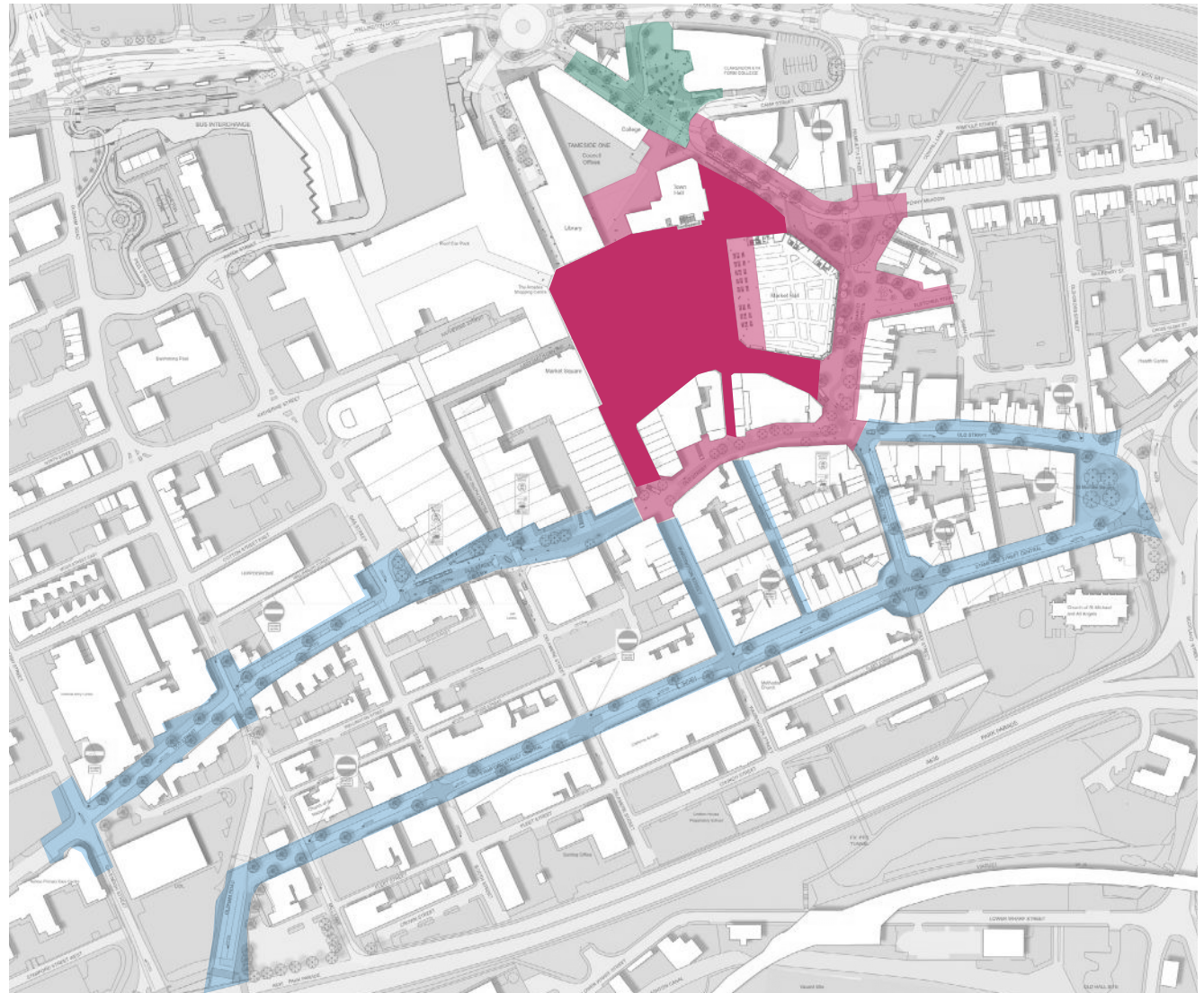


Diagram illustrating the Short term public realm interventions and the longer term interventions

- Market Square Levelling Up scope site boundary
 - Detail design TBC past RIBA Stage 2
- Works outside Tameside One and Clarendon College ('Clarendon Link') by Tameside MBC, 2022
 - Longer term interventions

Challenges and Opportunities

The regeneration of the Market Square presents an exciting opportunity for Ashton Town Centre as a new modern market town offering space for different types of events. Our plans consider the Market's strengths and weaknesses.

Challenges and Opportunities

The Market Square includes the impressive Market Hall and Town Hall also. The public realm has the potential to enhance the market and the cultural and leisure offer in the town centre.

Revitalising the Market Hall to connect the inside with the outside Market Square will encourage footfall and create a space for a variety of events. The Grade II Listed Town Hall will be refurbished and its heritage celebrated. Activities will spill out into the Market Square and encourage footfall and future investment.

Tameside One College and Clarendon Sixth Form College are within easy reach of the Market. The proposal to regenerate of the Market as the heart of the town will encourage students, young people and adults to visit and spend time in Ashton.

1. Improve visual connectivity
2. Enhanced transport hub connections
3. Town Hall activity encourages footfall
4. Opportunity for play, for families and students
5. Generous Market Square size creates opportunity for events
6. Opportunity for ground floor uses to engage with the street / public realm
7. Re-orientate market stalls to simplify space
8. Improve anti-social behaviour
9. Potential to create defined entrance to Market Hall
10. Opportunity to enhance existing food offer inside and outside

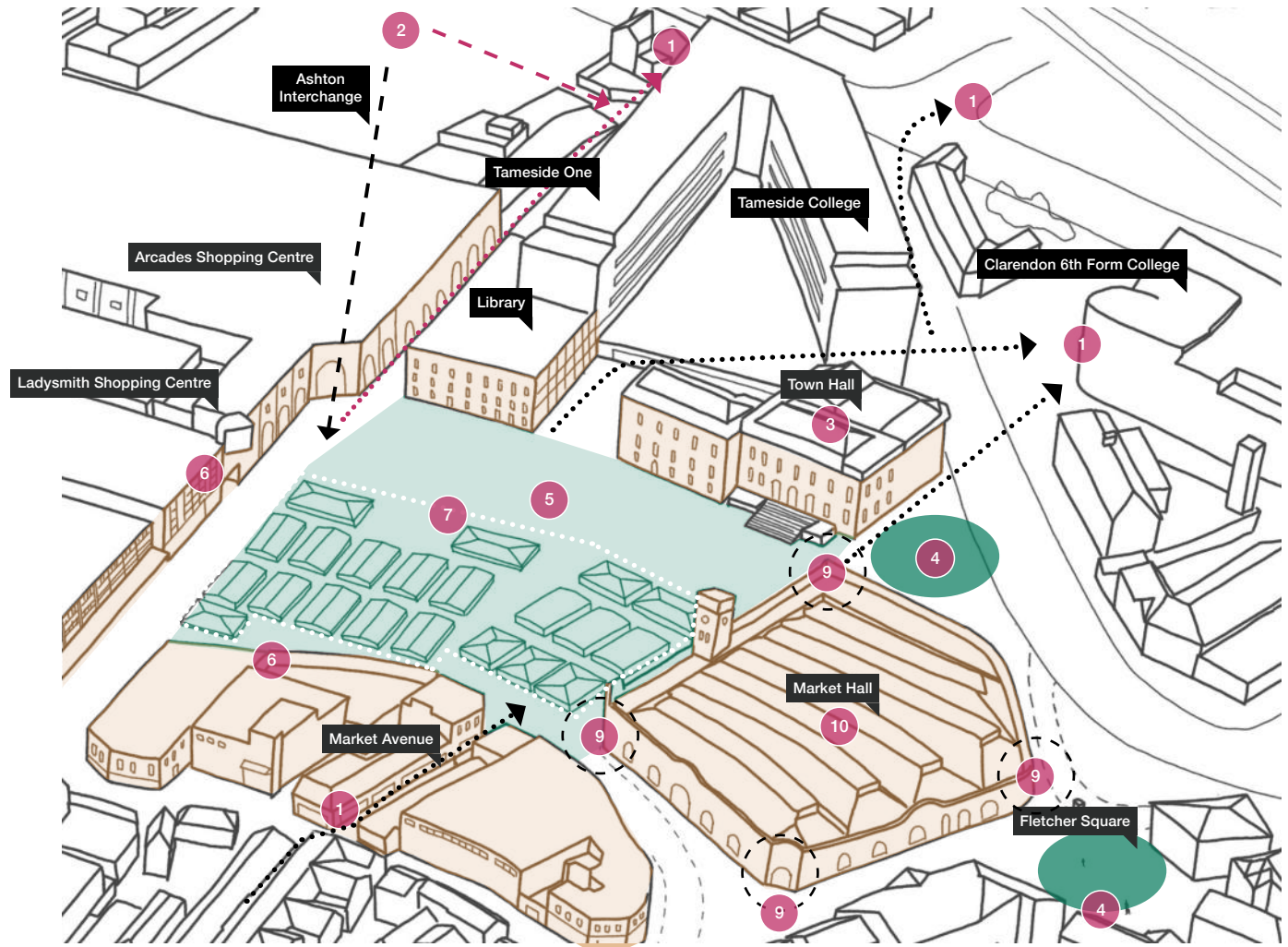


Diagram illustrating the key challenges and opportunities

Our emerging Vision for the Market Quarter

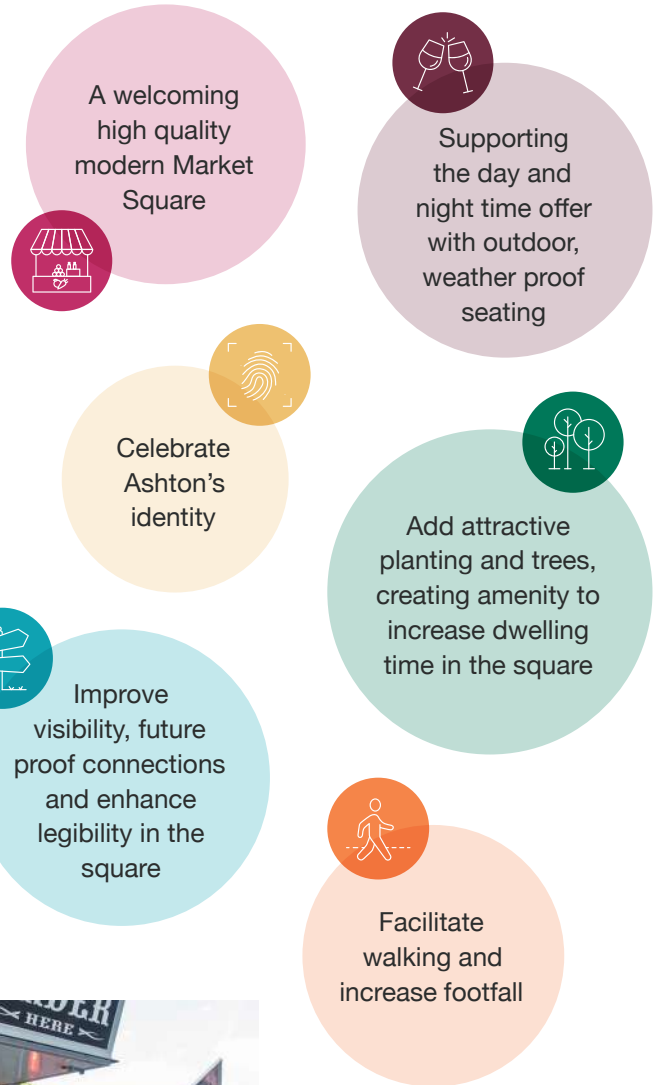
Ashton Market is the beating heart of the town. A modern market for everyone, a destination attracting locals and visitors, hosting a range of entertaining events. The surrounding streets and spaces will support the regeneration of Ashton.

The vision includes the following key design elements:

- A flexible space to support a programme of entertainment and cultural events to attract visitors into the town centre.
- Accessible and inclusive. A robust and durable single unified surface to meet modern accessibility standards.
- A layout to encourage permeability of visitors through the space, considering connections to the surrounding streets.
- Increased outdoor seating and tables for eating and drinking to support and enhance spill out from the market hall.
- A new canopy to provide a designated under-cover area for markets to include flexible and durable market stalls
- New trees and planting to create an attractive environment and improve air quality and carbon sequestration.
- An improved waste management system, improved public toilet facilities, and designated storage for stallholders.



Active edges around the Market Square will encourage footfall and activity



Umbrellas with integrated lighting provide flexibility to assigned stalls for vendors.



Umbrellas with integrated lighting provide flexibility to assigned stalls for vendors.



Flexible, specialist stalls could be hosted in the Market Square

Wellington Road Gardens

A key arrival space situated by the Town Hall and drop-off which has the potential to become an inviting green gateway to the Market Grounds.



Location plan

Wellington Road Gardens will complement the Market Square offer of a public, accessible and calm green space to dwell. Key qualities include:

- Multi-functional planting design; Trees and planting species designed to reflect the history of the Market Grounds with “edimentals” - plants which are both edible and ornamental, as well as increasing biodiversity and aesthetic value;
- High quality design and materials which are consistent and cohesive with the Market Square;
- Buildings are orientated to provide natural surveillance to create a safe environment for all ages;
- Seating is designed to surround the space to provide overlooking;
- Integrated and screened bin store/ storage area;
- Maintenance/access route integrated within the design.

1. Existing trees integrated within the design
2. Bin and market storage building containing 20 x 1000L Eurobins and 8 store cages. Building to be screened with surrounding planting
3. Sustainably sourced timber furniture to planting beds allowing dwell opportunities and creating pocket spaces within the sunny arrival area
4. Reused porphyry paving laid in a crazy paving pattern to define the pocket spaces within the arrival area
5. Emergency vehicle route
6. “Edimental” edible and ornamental planting beds



Wellington Road arrival space design

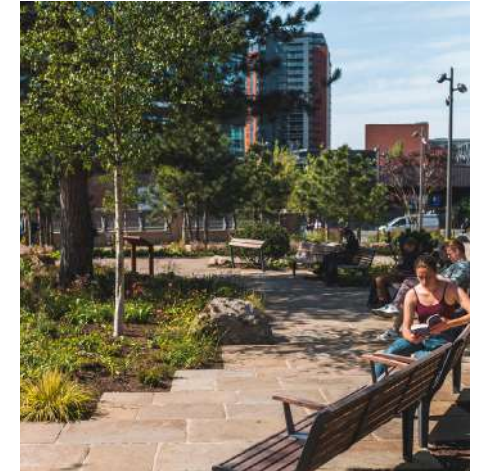




Social Seating Opportunities, Bright Building Technology Park, Bruntwood



Planting buffer creates separation from busy main road, Meadow Lane, Leeds (Planit)



Tree planting offers shade in sunny sport, Glade of Light designed by BCA



Wider seating offers potential (Planit)



Wayfinding establishes a sense of place, Grey to Green Scheme, Sheffield



Integrated features such as bug hotels, Wellington Place, Leeds (Planit)



Market Street / Fletcher Square

Market Street forms a key north-south connection through the Grounds with incidental dwell spaces to complement the main Market Square.

Key features include:

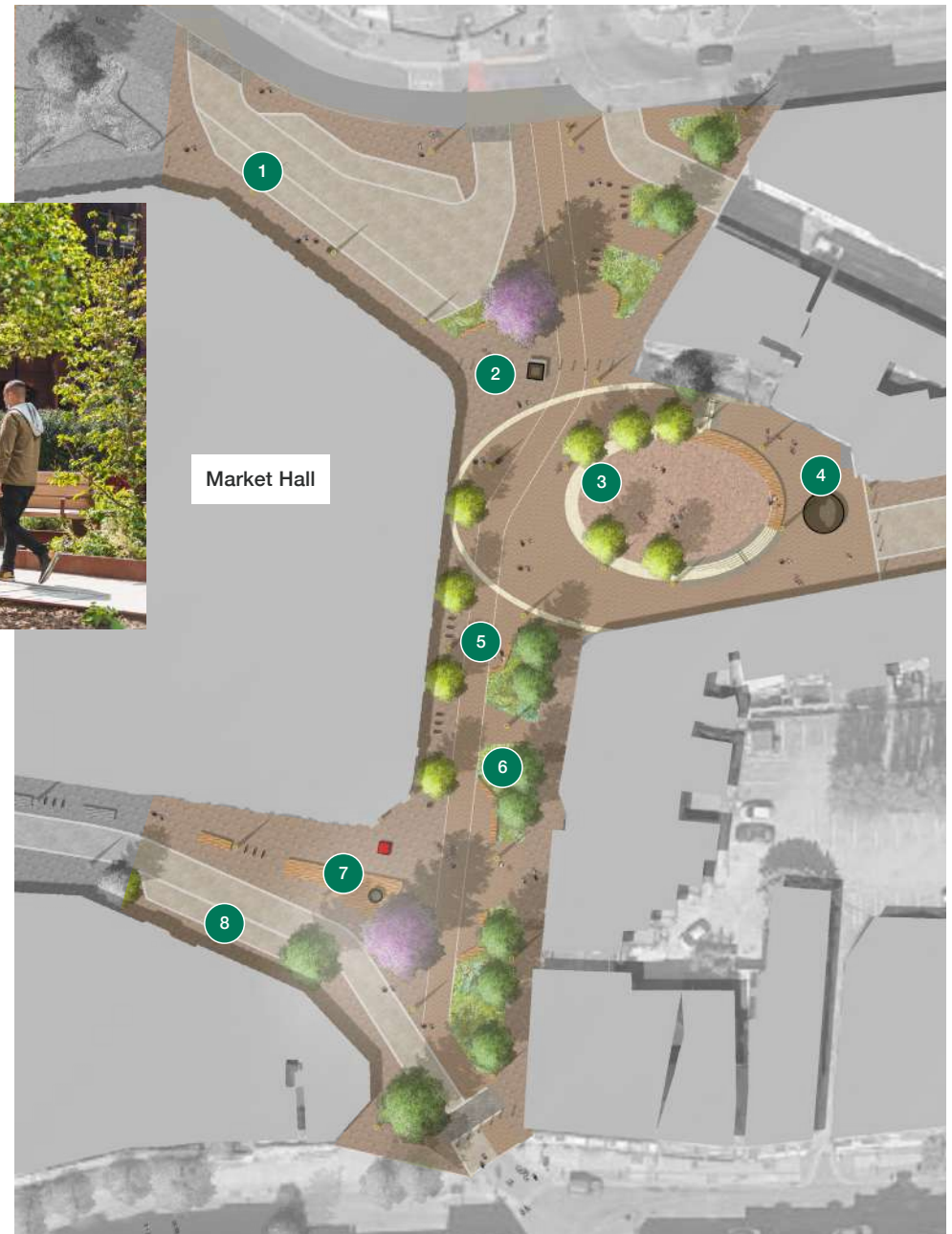
- Fletcher Square: A more intimate arrival space connecting the east of the town centre with the Market Grounds. It will create a natural gathering/seating space adjacent to the Market Hall's food and beverage offer, and spill-out from surrounding buildings, but also form a flexible event space for smaller scale events;
- A cycle route through a Street creates a critical north-south connection through the town centre highlighting in the Public Realm Strategy;
- Existing tree avenue on Market Street retained and enhanced with additional trees and underplanting designed to integrate surface water run-off;
- High quality materials used and re-used within the spaces to create attractive streets and spaces;
- A range of seating opportunities making Market Street feel less "back of house" and encouraging people to stop and stay.



Welcoming green arrival space
Lincoln Square (Plantit)



Location plan



Market Street and Fletcher Square design



1. Servicing area relocated for enhanced pedestrian experience and easier access to the Market Hall
2. Bollards in line with existing clock tower for hostile vehicle mitigation
3. Fletcher Square becoming a more welcoming spill out space for the market and surrounding units
4. 'The Family' sculpture relocated to overlook Fletcher Square, wrapping it's arms around the space
5. Cycle lane integrated into the streetscape creating an attractive green, cycle and pedestrian route
6. SuDs planting strategy continued through Market Street as a continuation of the wider design
7. Bespoke timber seat/tiered lounger with 'The Pie Man' statue relocated as a focal point moving from the West across onto Market Street
8. Servicing Bay for southern part of the Market Hall



Flexible use space for events and everyday use



A greener Market Street with circulation space and areas to dwell



Provision for pedestrians and cyclists along Market Street



Stepped seating defining the edge of Battersea Power Station



Active frontages (Plantit)

Warrington Street

Warrington Street is a key north-south pedestrian connection in Ashton Town Centre, linking the historic Old Street with the Market Square.

Key features include:

- Spill out from food and beverage and other businesses providing amenity for shoppers including new fixed seating;
- Re-surfacing using materials consistent with the Market Square for continuity;
- Retained existing trees enhanced with underplanting designed to take surface water run-off;
- Integrated on-way maintenance/service route with shared surface design approach.

1. Proposed new and existing uses animate the edges, spilling into the streets
2. Proposals illustrate integration of green elements - such as trees and SuDS underplanting, improving biodiversity and walkability
3. Signage and wayfinding reflects the identity of Ashton's Market Square and the town centre, linking the surrounding context to the heart of Ashton, the Market Square and Hall
4. Timber furniture integrated into streetscene to create a more active environment
5. Greening the street with reinforcement of the tree avenue and new SuDs planting
6. Bollards at the south end of the street to mitigate hostile vehicles and limit servicing access into the Market Square



Location plan



Warrington Street design





Existing re-used pocket park installation with seating



Signage and wayfinding



Circle Square, Manchester (Planit)



An example of a tree lined, single surface, pedestrian priority street with vehicular access, Altrincham (Planit)



Example of a pedestrian priority street with tree planting and spill out from shops, Whitfield Gardens, London



Circle Square, Manchester (Planit)

Market Avenue

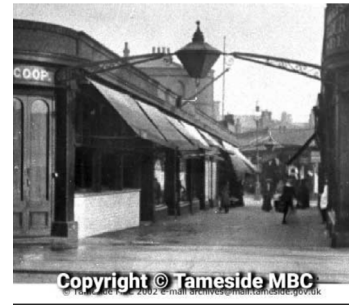
Market Avenue, a fully pedestrianised street and precursor of the modern day-arcade, is the key link between Market Square and Stamford Street Central.

Key features include:

- Spill-out from food and beverage and other businesses provides amenity for shoppers; attractive paving, street art, lighting, and installations lighten up the atmosphere and create an inviting environment;
- An inviting, human-scale route into the heart of the Market Quarter whilst encouraging dwell-time in a cosy and sheltered environment;
- Existing street art retained and refurbished where required;
- Catenary lighting improves feelings of safety and create an inviting and lively atmosphere during night-time.



Photograph of Art sculptures in Market Avenue



Historic photograph of Market Avenue

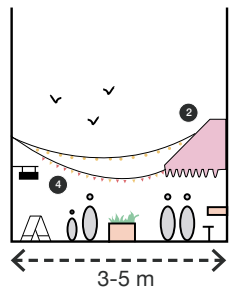
1. The narrow market avenue remains predominantly open but allows for spill out from the building units either side with a main central route
2. Catenary Lighting aims to pay reference to the old market avenue arches



Location plan



Market Avenue Design



Market Avenue - Human scale of the link is further enhanced with catenary lighting and spill-out from surrounding uses.



Coal Drops Yard, London



Cow's Lane, Dublin



Art installations provide shade and create a pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians in a shopping area, Church Alley, Bluecoat, Liverpool



Exmouth Market, London



St Lawrence Street, Bath

Clarendon Sixth Form College and Tameside One Walk

Connecting the College with the Market Square, this route has the potential to become a valuable sheltered space with seating pockets, green amenity and rear spill-out for Town Hall events.

Key features include:

- A combination of retained and new porphyry paving to create materiality links throughout the Market Grounds;
- Seating areas carved out of hardy shade-tolerant planted areas adding interest through the walk and creating visual links to the Market Square;
- Rear garden to the Town Hall which future-proofs the space for potential refurbishment and events;
- Proposed public art/lighting centrepiece with direct links to the library and Ashton's heritage. This will be visible from both Wellington Road and the Market Square to help reinforce the link between the two;
- Functional lighting to bring activity and animate the area during night-time and increase safety.

1. Hostile Vehicle mitigation bollards to prevent access into the pedestrianised area
2. Planting bed and feature tree as an arrival node into the space. Enclosed by timber seating as a resting point along the route
3. Tree planting to add further interest within this space and create a greener environment
4. Opportunity to create a small pocket park or courtyard that spills out from the Town Hall as part of any future proposals
5. Sculptural lighting/art piece outside the library and art gallery entrance. A community based piece that gives residents a sense of place and pride. Telling a story of Ashton Under-Lyne



Location plan



Clarendon Sixth form College and Tameside One Walk Design





Dwell/rest spaces off the main walking route



St Lawrence Street, Bath



Different seating types to facilitate different kinds of users



Rear garden space to the Town Hall



Lighting/artwork centrepiece visible from Wellington Road and the Square



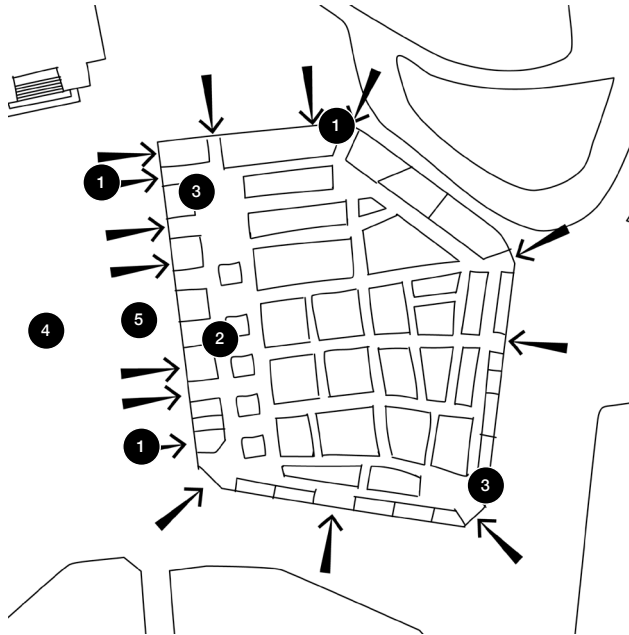
University of Manchester, Manchester

Market Hall

A key heritage asset, the vision is to celebrate the history of the Market Hall. Creating visual connections into the hall and improving dwelling areas in and around the building will allow for an improved relationship between the indoor and outdoor activities. The Market Hall will benefit from this relationship with the improved Market Square.

Proposals will look to repurpose vacant and underused spaces in the Market Hall for flexible uses including leisure, culture and events

Current Situation



Current Internal Layout Plan

The market hall will be reviewed subject to further studies and will be considered as part of future phases.

The key considerations to the existing Market Hall, include:

- 1 Multiple entrances which make wayfinding and circulation in internal market more complicated than necessary.
- 2 Toilets and stalls are adjacent to the main facade blocking the building's historic views
- 3 Few existing opportunities for eating and seating next to food and beverage offer
- 4 Market Hall activities are currently segregated from the Market Square
- 5 Outdoor seating is currently dependent on weather conditions.



Heritage assets from the Market Hall are hidden behind plaster and stalls



Informal seating from existing food and beverage vendors depend on weather conditions



A Programme of Entertainment and Events

A variety of events will be planned for the re-imagined Ashton Market Quarter including eating and drinking, crafts, culture and family fun, the heart of the town will be designed to welcome all ages and demographics.



An example of precedents for different types of events

Old Street

Old Street is a historic street in Ashton Town Centre, providing a key pedestrian connection from St Petersfield to the Market Hall and Square.

We are considering options to re-imagine this historic route, improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst balancing the access needs of servicing, taxis and emergency vehicles.

Old Street would remain pedestrianised between Delamere Street and George Street but with access for cyclists. The sections that still allow vehicular traffic would be one-way and integrated in an overall pedestrian character streetscape.



1 Street with cycle parking, lighting and seating in Flemingate, Beverley



1, 2 Street with flexible space providing short term parking, tree planting, and improved crossing in Preston

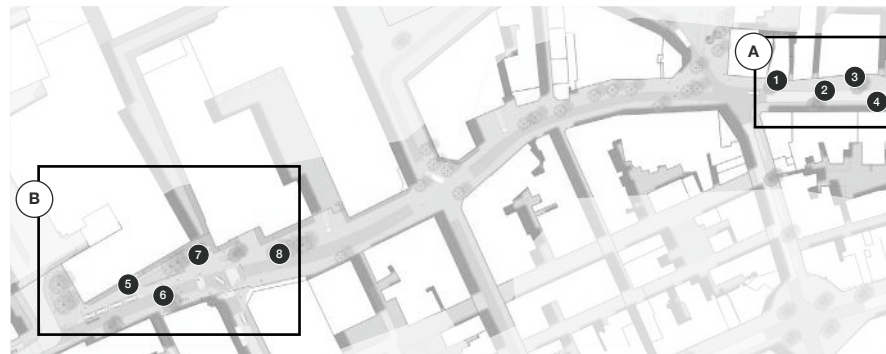
A Old Street (east) - typical section along carriageway



Old Street - A view of the proposed concept and principles, designs are subject to further detail analysis. Numbers relate to the design proposals key on the previous page.



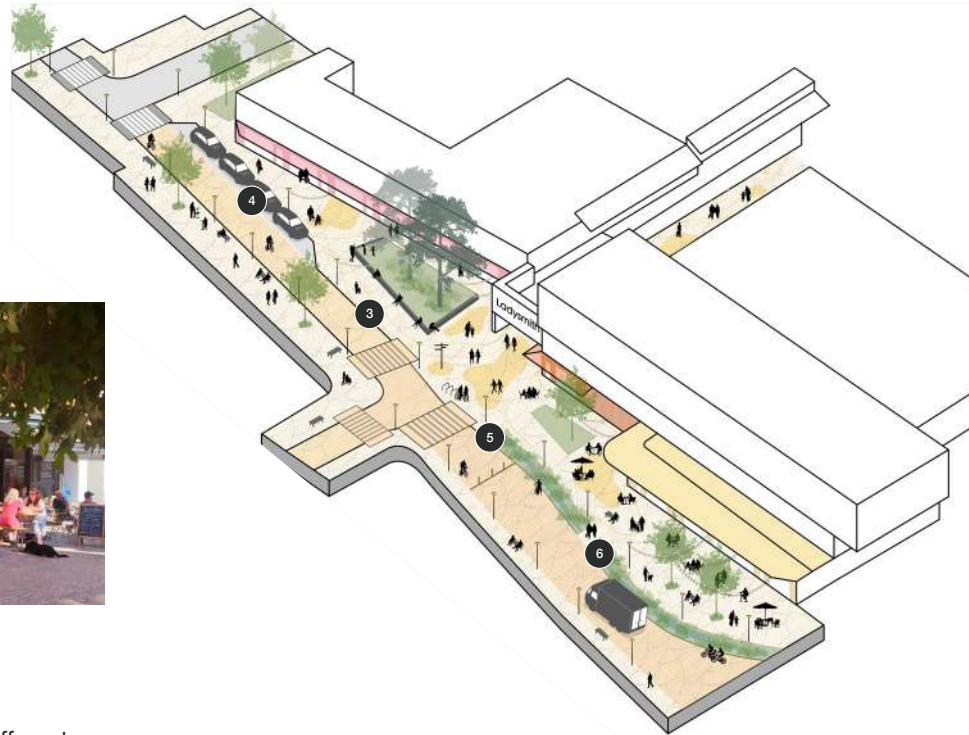
Location Plan



Location Plan

B Old Street at the Ladysmith Shopping Centre

Old Street - A view of the proposed concept and principles, designs are subject to further detail analysis



2, 8 Spill out space from shops and businesses into pedestrian footpath

1. Flexible space on footpath with different uses, including spill out space from shops and food and beverage businesses; cycling infrastructure; benches and seating; tree planting; limited spaces for loading, servicing, and short term parking.
2. Widening of footpaths to allow for pedestrian friendly streets and promote walking and cycling in the area. Improvement of crossings creating a pedestrian priority zone.
3. Active frontages from businesses and spill out.
4. Reduced carriageway with cycle route.
5. Widening of footpath to promote pedestrian movement. Green areas and tree planting with seating arrangements to provide amenity for pedestrians.

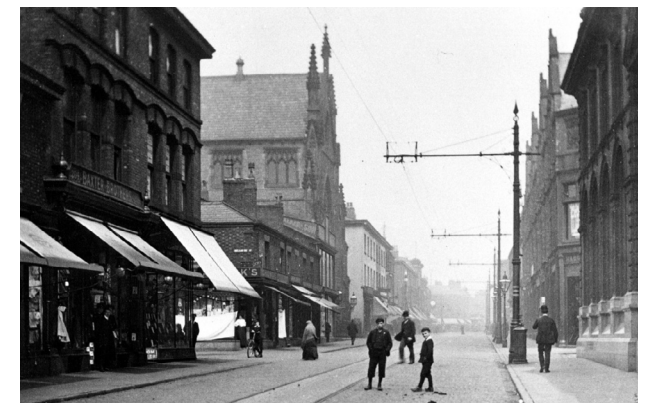
6. Taxi rank to be redesigned, relocation of some taxis around the corner to Gas Street, reduction of number of taxis on Old Street. Waiting area with greenery and seating for customers. Reduction of carriageway and restriction of vehicular access for Taxis and servicing.
7. Arrival space with improvements to pavement, wayfinding elements and cycling infrastructure.
8. Spill out space from businesses with outdoor seating. Greening and introduction of rain gardens in Old Street following the historic pattern of the street, to provide a walkable, pedestrian priority zone with restricted vehicular access for servicing.



5 An example of a pedestrian priority street with restricted vehicular access



8 Rain gardens on pedestrian footpath in Sheffield



Historic photograph of Old Street

Stamford Street Central

Stamford Street Central was once the High Street of Ashton, before the main trade shifted further towards Old Street and the modern centre.

Options to re-imagine Stamford Street Central as a film set for everyday life are being considered. The aim is to highlight the street's historic lively character while creating a walkable, pleasant and attractive zone with tree-planting and flexible spaces that will support resident's everyday life routine, as well as the area's day-time and high-time economy.

Stamford Street Central will become a east-west one way thoroughfare with pedestrian priority and cyclist traffic.



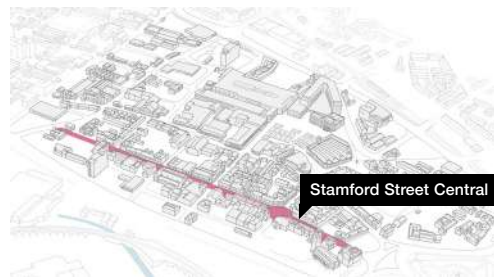
Photograph of Stamford Street Central, towards Old Square



2 Introducing art in streets and crossings to create a vibrant, pedestrian friendly environment

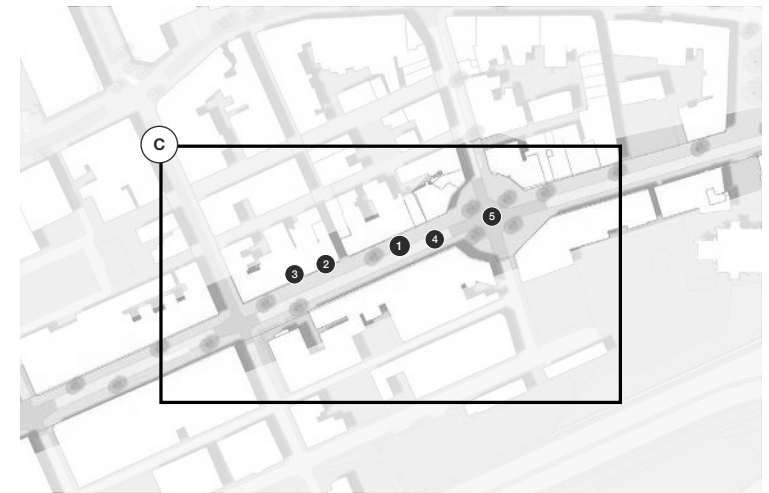


2, 6 Changes of materials at crossings and intersections help create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere



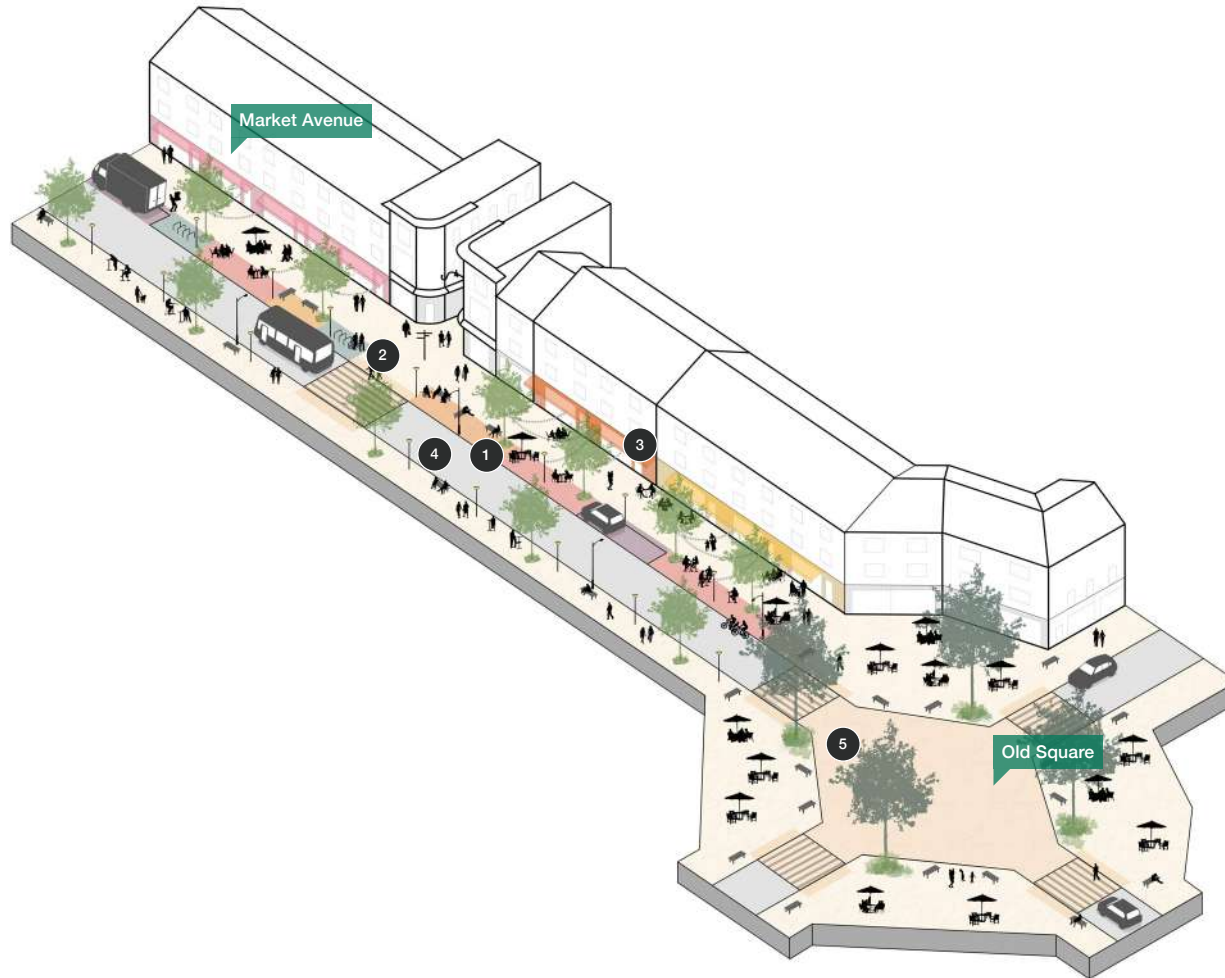
Location Plan

1. Flexible space on footpath with different uses, including spill out space from shops and food and beverage businesses; cycling infrastructure; benches and seating; tree planting; limited spaces for loading, servicing, and short term parking.
2. Widening of footpaths to allow for pedestrian friendly streets and promote walking and cycling in the area. Improvement of crossings creating a pedestrian priority zone.
3. Active frontages from businesses and spill out.
4. Reduced carriageway with cycle route.
5. Reduced carriageway and widening of footpath to promote pedestrian movement and spill out into the square. Surfacing and materials helps create a unified balanced street. Green areas and tree planting with seating arrangements to provide a pleasant environment for walking, eating and dwelling.



Location Plan

C Proposals at Old Square Junction on Stamford Street Central



Old Square and Stamford Street Central - A view of the proposed concept and principles, designs are subject to further detail analysis. Numbers relate to the design proposals key on the previous page.



1 Example of a vibrant street with flexible space in Fishergate, Preston



1, 2, 3 Spill-out from shops and crossings in a pedestrian priority street



Historic photograph of Stamford Street

Oldham Road

Oldham road is a key strategic route, leading to Oldham to the north and Park Parade to the south.

Historically industrial buildings activated Oldham Road including the Gas Works and Goods Yards. Cotton Mills terminated the street to the south and the railway station to the north.

In recent years the street has widened to accommodate vehicular traffic. Our proposal to reduce the carriageway width and improve pedestrian crossings and street trees will create an attractive environment for walking and cycling.



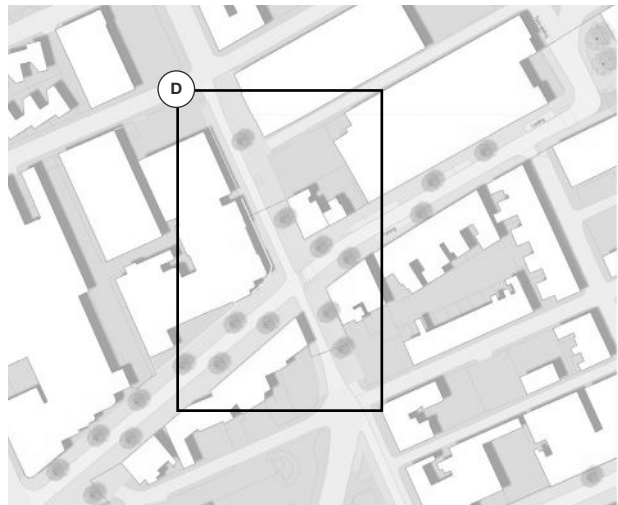
Location Plan



An example of an attractive public square situated by a historic building in Whitfield Gardens, London



An example of seating incorporated into the public realm along a key route, in Leeds



An example of a paving details which define the existing, historic building façades along the street

D Proposals at Oldham Road and Old Street Junction



Oldham Road and Old Street - A view of the proposed concept and principles, designs are subject to further detail analysis. Numbers relate to the design proposals key on the previous page.

1. Seating allows for informal dwelling space along the street,
2. Cycle storage encourages sustainable modes of transport along this key north-south road,
3. Designated cycle lane for north-south cycle movement,
4. Bus stop for the public bus.
5. New street lighting improves safety at night time.
6. Clear signage and wayfinding elements at key points of movement.
7. Improved public realm at key junctions enhances east west movement.
8. Clear signage and wayfinding elements at key points of movement.
9. Improved public realm at key junctions enhances east west movement.
10. Reduced carriageway width increases pavement for pedestrian (encouraging walking) and reduces traffic speeds.
11. Street trees create an attractive and green environment, creating shade where needed and seasonal interest.
12. Pedestrian priority crossing.
13. Spill out along the street for new and existing uses (Theatre Tavern and Hippodrome).
14. Opportunity to create a defined square (Heginbottom Square) to clearly define and activate the historic buildings of Ashton Old Library and the Old Drill Hall. Potential to create spill-out space for internal uses



An example of a designated cycle pathway which meanders along the road edge



An example of a pedestrian crossing which announces a key gateway with installations



Historic photograph of Oldham Road

Katherine Street

A historic east-west link into the Market square, Katherine Street is mainly of residential character with some pockets of commercial and community activity.

Historically terraced homes activated the street, terminating at Market Square. In recent years, the street pattern was severed to accommodate the modern arcades, restricting public access from Katherine Street into the square.

Our proposal to improve the public realm in Katherine Street will future proof the route into the town heart and promote residential growth to the west of Ashton.



Photograph of Katherine Street in the present day



An example of a tree-lined street with an attractive bus shelter with green roof

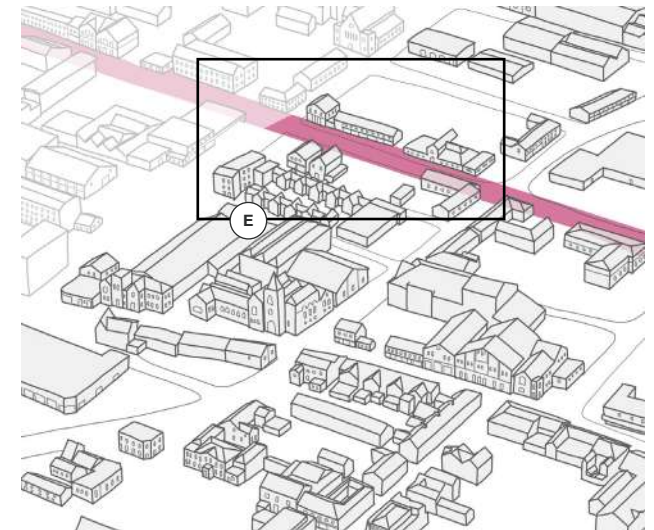


Raingardens help manage rainwater and improve biodiversity, whilst creating an attractive walking environment

1. Widening of footpath to promote pedestrian movement. Reduced carriageway width increases pavement for pedestrians to promote walking and reduces traffic speeds.
2. Street trees create an attractive and green environment, creating shade where needed and seasonal interest.
3. Bus stops for the public and community bus.
4. Seating arrangements to provide amenity for pedestrians.
5. Cycling infrastructure provides secure parking.
6. Introducing rain gardens reduces the impact of urbanisation on flooding, allowing vegetation and plants to absorb the majority of the rainwater.



Location Plan



E Katherine Street opposite Bentinck Street junction



Isometric view of Katherine Street at Bentinck Street Intersection- a conceptual aspiration of the potential for the area, designs are subject to further detail analysis. Numbers relate to the design proposals key on the previous page.



Wide footpaths and tree planting create a pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians and residents



Tree planting, cycle parking and seating in Fishergate, Preston Town Centre



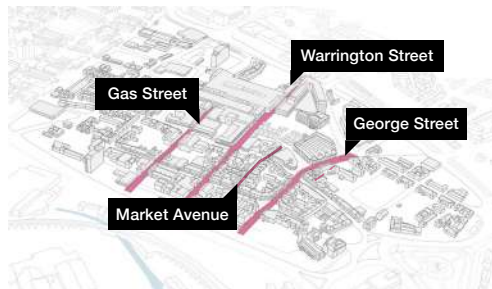
A historical photo of Katherine Street.

Lanes and Market Avenue

Warrington Street and George Street and Market Avenue are the main north-south pedestrian movement routes in Ashton Town Centre.

Market Avenue, a fully pedestrianised street and precursor of the modern day-arcade, is the key link between Market Square and Stamford Street Central.

Improvements to the public realm are proposed, creating a lively and inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors alike. Spill out from food and beverage and other businesses provides amenity for shoppers; attractive pavement, street art, lighting, and installations lighten up the atmosphere and create an inviting environment.



Location Plan

George Street and Warrington Street



An example of a tree lined, single surface, pedestrian priority street with vehicular access

Market Avenue and Stamford Arcade

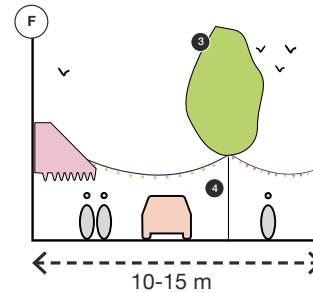


Lighting and spill out from shops on a street in Newcastle

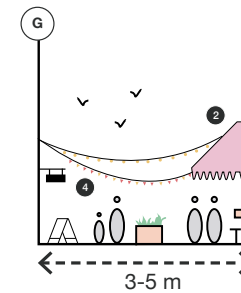
Gas Street



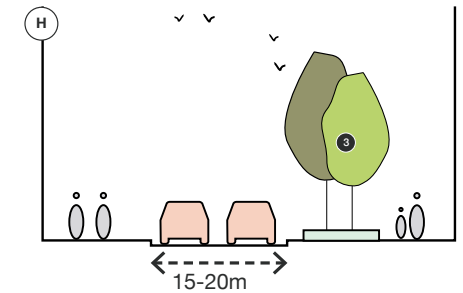
An example of a balanced street with feature planting



George Street and Warrington Street - a conceptual aspiration of the potential for the area, designs are subject to further detail analysis



Market Avenue and Stamford Arcade Section - a conceptual aspiration of the potential for the area, designs are subject to further detail analysis



Gas Street Section - a conceptual aspiration of the potential for the area, designs are subject to further detail analysis

1. With new and existing uses animating the edges and spilling into the streets, the lanes and Market Avenue should seek to create an inviting, human-scale route into the heart of the Market Quarter whilst encouraging dwell-time in a cosy and sheltered environment.
2. Highlighting and celebrating the historic significance of Market Avenue as a commercial arcade, creating spaces to dwell for shoppers with attractive art installations and seating arrangements.
3. Proposals in Warrington Street, Gas Street, and George Street seek to integrate green elements - such as trees or green walls - where possible, improving biodiversity and walkability.
4. Introducing attractive lighting ie. in trees and string lined lights, improves feelings of safety and create an inviting atmosphere during night-time.



A pedestrian only lane in Altrincham with tree planting



Lighting strategy in Rochdale Riverside creates a fun, safe, walkable environment



Street art and murals animate a street in New Zealand



Art installations provide shade and create a pleasant atmosphere for pedestrians in a shopping area in Liverpool



Photograph of Market Avenue



Photograph of Art sculptures in Market Avenue



George Street at the intersection with Old Square



A historical photo of Market Avenue

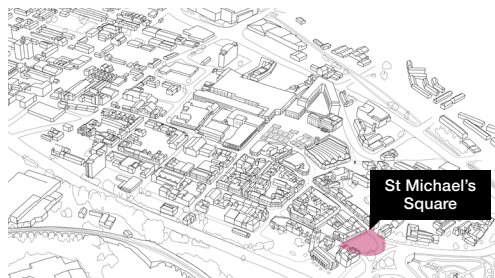
St. Michael's Square

Historically, the town of Ashton originated around this square due to its proximity with St. Michael's Church, dating back to 1262. This square also housed the original town market.

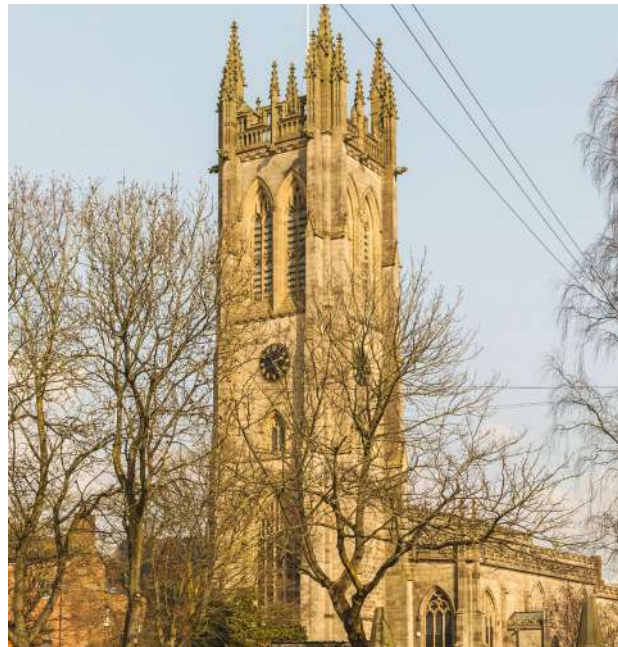
St Michael's Square is situated at the meeting point of Old Street with Stamford Street Central. There is potential to create a sense of arrival in this key intersection, with an urban square that celebrates the history of Ashton.

There is potential to relocate Ashton's Old Market Cross from Stamford Park to its original location in St. Michael's Square, celebrating and highlighting the history of the square.

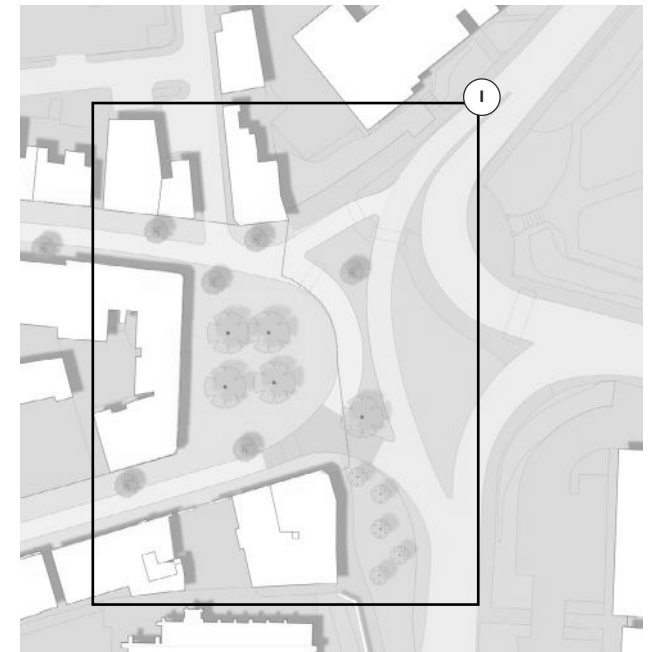
1. Existing and new uses animate the edges and spill into the square, St Michael's has the opportunity to create a pleasant environment for food and beverage.
2. Green buffer screens the busy intersection of Cricket's Lane N, with tree planting and spaces for walking and dwelling.
3. Celebrating the historic significance of the square with sculptures and seating to reference Ashton's history and play tribute to St. Michael's church.
4. Creating connections to the town centre across Cricket's Lane N to Memorial Gardens.
5. Reduction of carriageway, slowing cars and prioritising pedestrians over cars
6. Extension of cycle lane into Old Street, promoting cycle movement into the heart of the town
7. Introduction of attractive tree planting, street art, integrated seating and cycle infrastructure to create a destination.



Location Plan



Photograph of St. Michael's Church in the present day



Location Plan

① St. Michael's Square, junction of Old Street and Stamford Street Central



Concept design of St. Michael's Square, designs are subject to further detail analysis. Numbers relate to the design proposals key on the previous page.



Example of unique seating which references the character of the area - Goose Green, Altrincham



Example of a pedestrianised square with seating, planting and cycle parking. Art murals on blank façades create a vibrant backdrop to the square and opportunity to create historical references

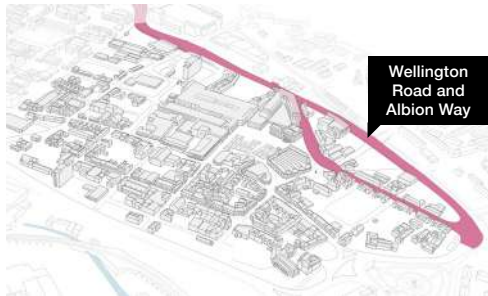


Example of nighttime economy thriving in an attractive square - Goose Green, Altrincham

Wellington Road and Albion Way

The proposals for Wellington Street and Albion Way should include the following design principles:

- Segregate cycle tracks on both sides of the road.
- Modify junction at the exit from the bus station and the Ashton retail park, incorporate a new Cyclops arrangement, providing segregated, signalised facilities for cyclists, to improve road safety for all road users.
- Measures to slow and control vehicle speeds and provide enhanced priority for pedestrian users, potentially including a reduction in carriageway width, increased landscaping, different surfacing materials and the introduction of pedestrian crossing points.
- Removal of traffic signals at the junctions at Turner Lane and Henrietta Street in order to help reduce vehicle speeds.
- Reduce the carriageway space past the interchange.



Location Plan

Precedent imagery representing proposals for Wellington Road and Albion Way



Example of junction, Poynton roundel



Segregated cycle lanes in Leeds

Visuals representing proposals for Wellington Road and Albion Way



Visualisation: Junction with Turner Lane



Visualisation: Albion Way

Brand Identity

Vibrant branding is pivotal to creating an attractive, successful and thriving town centre.

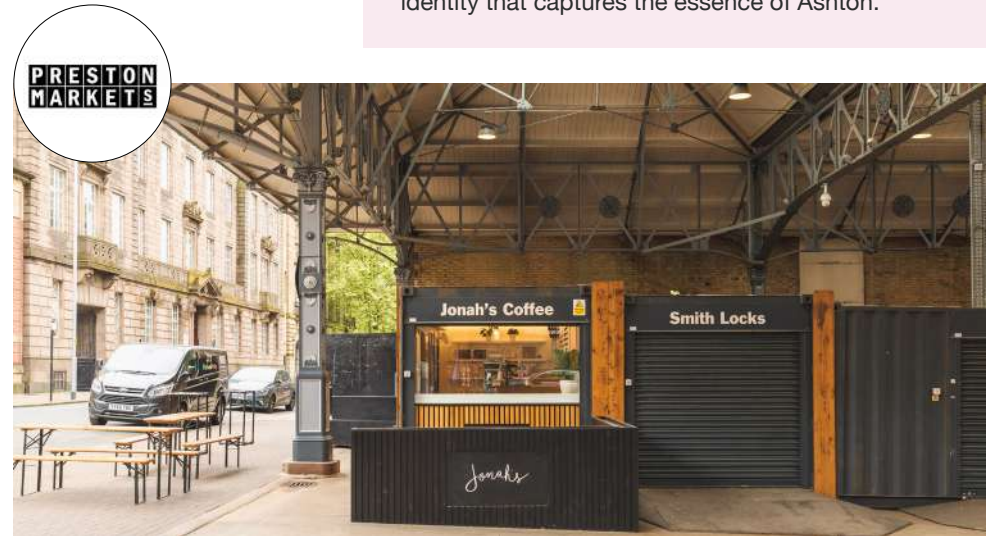
The adjacent images are all examples of successful UK markets where good branding has elevated their appeal to a wider audience.

Ashton Market Square is currently lacking branding and identity. There is potential to create an iconic logo and branding for the market and wider town centre which reflects the history of Ashton, that will give potential to create a market that is a destination venue. The branding proposals for the Market Square should interlink with the surrounding branding for Ashton town centre.

This same logo can be utilised across all social media platforms and any marketing imagery used to promote future events, drawing a wide audience to create a sustainable town for Ashton-under-Lyne.



Warrington Market has created an attractive space in the town



Preston Market - simple and successful branding defines the upgrades to the market



Altrincham Market has transformed Altrincham into a vibrant town



Hatch - a popular temporary food market in central Manchester



Mackie Mayor - a thriving central Manchester food market and evening venue

A recommendation is to create a brand identity and tool kit to be implemented within the public realm design and marketing, to create a unique identity that captures the essence of Ashton.

Lighting

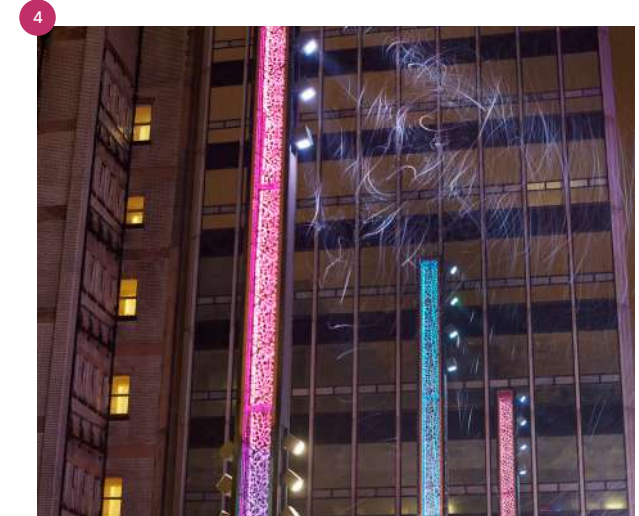
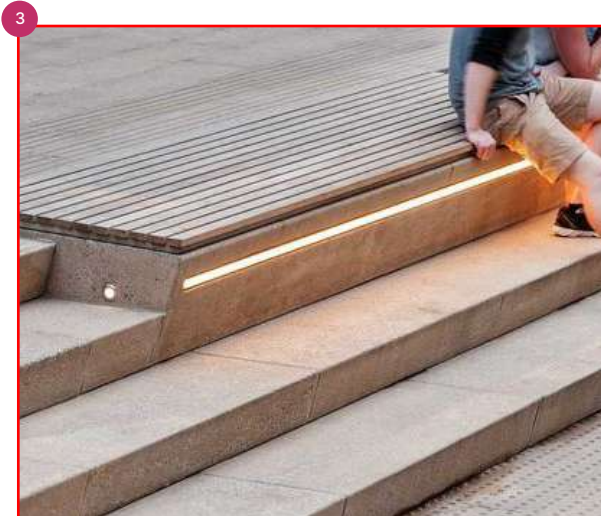
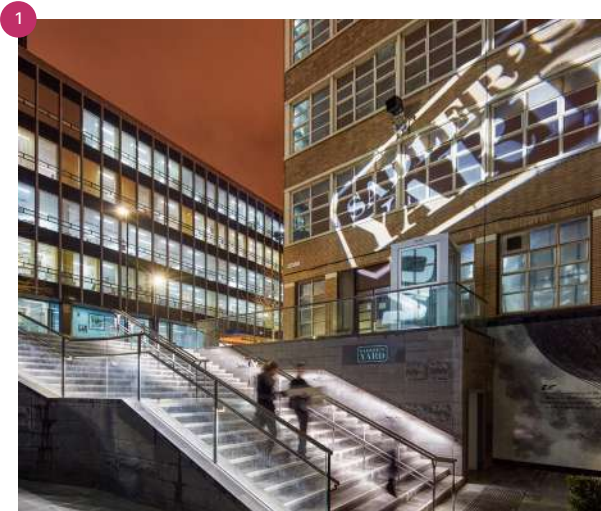
Lighting can alter the atmosphere of a place and create lively unique spaces.

Although its primary purpose is night-time visibility for security and safety, successful street lighting takes into account the human users of the street, and curates a sense of place or atmosphere. The type, placement, and wattage of street lighting affects how a street is perceived and used.

Lighting design will celebrate the distinctive identity and history and draw attention to the uniqueness of Ashton. Lighting will animate the spaces and create a safe and vibrant environment at night-time.

Lighting in the streets and spaces of Ashton will:

- Increase safety in high-use spaces and movement corridors, such as walkways and bus stops.
- Aid in geographic orientation, as people can use well-lit focal points as landmarks to help them find their way.
- Celebrate the distinctive identity and history of an area, for well-lit townscape details draw attention to the uniqueness of an area.
- Create a sense of intrigue and drama. Accentuate character and sense of place.
- Curate distinctive atmospheres and encourage particular uses.



1. Lighting illuminates buildings at night-time at Saddler's Yard, Manchester
2. Lighting on walls and floor surfaces creates safe spaces

3. Illuminated details, Chicago Riverwalk Expansion
4. Artistic interventions add colour and playful space, Saddler's Yard Manchester

Public Art and Heritage Interpretation

Through the regeneration of the Market Grounds, there is a need and opportunity to curate a positive image of place for Ashton Town Centre, celebrating cultural and heritage identity, accentuate local character and distinctiveness, and enliven the space with the use of public art and place branding.

Engagement with both artists and the community through the design process for public spaces is crucial to developing successful public art. There is an opportunity to build community cohesion and create a sense of community ownership.

Art and sculpture can help to develop a positive visual identity for Ashton, creating enriching experiences and sensory stimulation. Historical artworks, including sculptures, statues and other public art could help create sense of arrival into the town centre at key urban nodes.

Exploration of neglected streets - such as Market Avenue and Clarendon Sixth Form College Walk - which suffer from low footfall and a poor pedestrian experience, should be encouraged through the use of public art.

Where suitable, it is proposed that the artwork incorporates lighting applications by either focusing lighting onto the pieces from adjacent lighting columns or integrating lighting into/around the artwork.

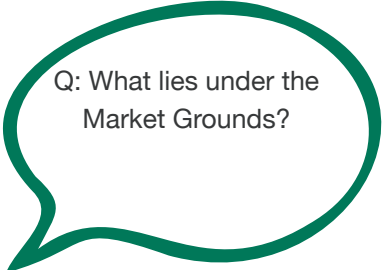
Overarching Concept: Mining the Market

Set in the foothills of the Pennines, Ashton-Under-Lyne has a distinctive geological story to tell. It is a story of dramatic forces shaping the local environment in the deep past of our planet. Here, rich seams of coal, laid down over 300 million years ago, stretch between beds of millstone grit and flag rock. Here too, preserved in peat bogs, lie the remains of the great forest of ash trees from which the town draws its name. In addition to which there are glacial deposits - boulders, gravel, fossilised plants and insects that bear witness to the last Ice Age.

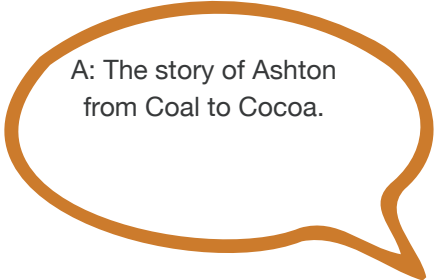
But there is also a human story to tell - a story centred on food and cultural interchange, which points to the long existence of a market on this site. This story begins with a Mesolithic settlement preserved in a peat bog and moves forward, through the various peoples who came to inhabit the area, right up to our own times. The Celts, the Romans, the Saxons, Vikings, Normans - all came to Ashton bringing different foods to grow, to trade, to smoke, to dry, to prepare in different ways. From Tudor times, the story becomes one of empire, of spices and exotic foodstuffs from around the world. Then comes the chapter on industrialisation and the development of packaged and processed food. More recently, we have the wartime chapter with its ration books and recipes for powdered egg. Remnants of it all lie only inches under the ground.

This connected story, of geological epochs moving into a timeline of human habitation, is one we can

tell through embedded artworks designed to suggest fossilised remains. Just as a rock is split open to reveal a fossil, Roman wheat, a Tudor potato or a Wartime tin of cocoa could all be shown emerging from sedimentary strata. This design concept could be expressed in several forms. There could be 2D elements set flush with the paving, created in terrazzo to look like fossils that have been cut and polished. There could be 3D objects, large enough to clamber on as incidental play features. There could also be elements integrated into the seating - either raised and carved, or else inlaid.



Q: What lies under the Market Grounds?



A: The story of Ashton from Coal to Cocoa.



Landmark public art and gateway features create a sense of arrival at Altrincham Town Centre



Sculptural street furniture inlaid with local stories



Ash tree references included in the proposed market kiosks and bespoke seating



The concept of breaking something open to reveal hidden stories



Heritage interpreted within paving - Voice of the City, Peterborough



Existing statues echoing Ashton's history restored and retained/relocated

Way-finding

Understanding users is key to implementing an effective way-finding strategy linking into the heart of Ashton, the Market Square and its surrounding streets and spaces along with the key assets of the town centre.

It is important that improvements create a legible environment and enhance way-finding for people walking, wheeling, cycling and driving. It is important to encourage walkability, and to inspire exploration of the Market Square and the wider Town Centre. Way-finding can play a significant role in making Ashton's assets feel accessible, reconnecting to the wider town and key movement nodes.

Way-finding should be curated through intuitive landscape, active building frontages, street furniture and features, landscape elements and materials, used to guide users through different areas of the space.

Consistent signage will guide people from arrival points and destinations. Good way-finding can encourage learning experiences; create a distinctive image for a place; and local pride by incorporating history or cultural details.



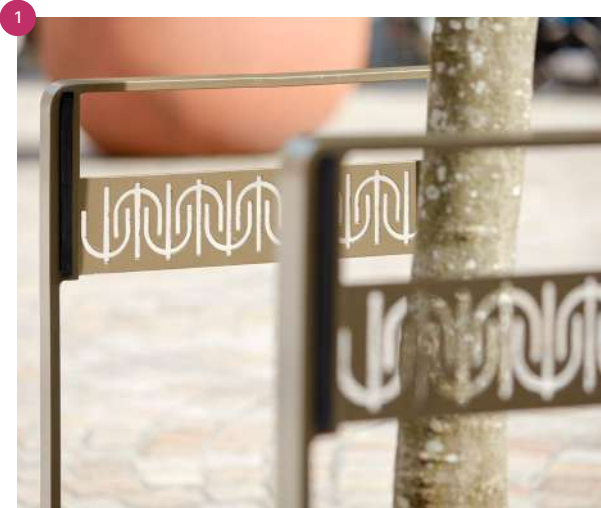
1. Way-finding and signage at Saddler's Yard, Manchester
2. Brand identity within way-finding at Cotton Field, Islington
3. Accessible Braille Navigation Charter Square, Sheffield
4. Map engraved into floor surface, The Strand, London.

Street Furniture

Street furniture will be functional and durable meeting safety requirements. Attractive street furniture will create a welcoming environment encouraging people to dwell for longer in the streets and spaces of Ashton town centre.

Cohesion will be created with high quality and accessible street furniture that is consistent with the branding and offers various arrangements for people with different levels of mobility. Street furniture will be designed for the long term, it will fit with the heritage character and avoid off the shelf standard products.

Street furniture will include bike parking and incorporate playful and interactive elements.



1. Cycle storage designed to be in keeping with the character, Altrincham
2. Seating and art could be combined with a playful element
3. Illuminated furniture and details, The Mall of Tripla, Fredikanterassi Square, Finland
- 4 Heritage interpretation incorporates public art and water to encourage play for children, Warrington

Next steps

This Phase 2 Document outlines the vision for the public realm strategy for Ashton town centre and its surrounding streets and spaces. The previous pages outline design proposals for these key streets and spaces and how they could look, supporting the ongoing regeneration of Ashton-under-Lyne.

Further funding

Stamford Street and Old Street connect the Market Square and St. Petersfield, the wider public realm strategy for the town centre will be the basis for applying for funding for the wider streets such as Stamford Street and Old Street.

Next Steps

- Delivery of main Market Square works: November 2023 – March 2025
- Seek approval via Council's Executive Cabinet to adopt Phase 2 Public Realm Strategy – September 2023
- Seek funding opportunities to support the proposals for Ashton's streets and spaces

