

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Economy Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2022

**Subject:** District Centre Regeneration

**Report of:** Strategic Director Growth & Development  
Director of Development

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### **Summary**

This report provides an update on regeneration, investment and development programmes focused on several District Centres across the City.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee is recommended to note and comment on progress to date as set out in the report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

**Environmental Impact Assessment** - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

#### Wythenshawe Town Centre

Given the nature of the buildings on site and the proposed interventions, achieving net zero at Wythenshawe Town Centre is not considered realistic at this time. However, at its core this acquisition and the wider regeneration principles amount to the Council taking control of the town centre and ensuring all regeneration works are considerate of MCC's net zero target.

A central part of the Wythenshawe proposals is the repurposing of existing buildings. Rather than demolishing and starting again, where buildings remain in a salvageable condition, they will be reused, repurposed, and revitalised in line with wider ambitions for the centre around diversification.

The multi-storey car park, vacant upper floors, and the vacant building to the east of the site are all to be reused and given new purposes as part of the proposal. The vacant former Co-op building is to be transformed into flexible working spaces and art studios to foster a new creative community.

The re-use and revitalisation of the existing buildings is eminently sustainable and saves significant embodied carbon, waste and construction impact. Further, investment will be made into environmental performance across the site.

New build developments will be considered with a fabric first approach, lowering the embodied carbon through thermal efficiency and heat recovery whilst reducing the reliance on mechanical ventilation. At the point

The balance between emitted carbon and equivalent offset will be considered through whole life carbon assessments. Choosing materials and products which are sustainably made with long life spans will reduce the need for replacement. Maximising light but limiting solar gain with natural ventilation and implementing green technologies such as MVHR with ambient heat pumps and solar arrays should be the ethos of each development.

The creation of a new Mobility Hub will address the needs of car users, but also assist in the promotion of other forms of sustainable travel, including facilities for electric vehicle charging and cycle hire. The wider masterplan places an emphasis on better linkages to areas adjacent to the town centre for active travel and the creation of a '15-minute neighbourhood'.

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Investment in district centres drives effective place making and facilitates the economic growth of the City, by creating the necessary conditions needed to promote strong growth in commercial, residential, retail and leisure related development, stimulating new employment, new homes and broadening the City Council's tax base.
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The regeneration of the city's district centres plays a key role in leveraging economic growth, including enabling commercial developments that drive growth in high-skill sectors such as the digital, cyber, creative content, cultural, advanced manufacturing and professional service sectors. Housing led investment has the potential to unlock a new sustainable supply of inclusive homes. Employment and skills programmes delivered in district centres ensure that local residents are connected to the opportunities that growth brings.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Businesses, residents and partners are proactively engaged in the development of regeneration programmes to ensure developments contribute positively to place making and meet local needs to deliver neighbourhoods people want to live in. This includes supporting developments that promote the right mix of good quality and affordable housing for Manchester residents.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Investment plays a key role in supporting Manchester's commitment to be a zero carbon City by 2038 by reducing the Council's direct CO2 emissions through continued rationalisation of the operational building estate and improving energy efficiency in council owned buildings.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Development activity both drives and reflects the connectivity and infrastructure that underpin sustainable economic growth.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

February 2020 Economy Scrutiny Committee report on District Centres

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1. This report covers the work to coordinate operational, regeneration, housing investment and development programmes District Centres across the city.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1. Economy Scrutiny were presented a report in February 2020 on the future key district centres. This outlined work to date, next steps to explore investment and development options along with a recommendation to work with stakeholders to understand the future evolution of these vital community centres and the role they play in harnessing the full economic power of the city.
- 2.2. The Council commissioned the Institute of Place Management and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to assess the role of District Centres with a focus on the creation of vital and viable neighbourhoods.
- 2.3. The MMU report recognised the strategic role centres have in the future growth of the city, the importance of local connections to inform the evidence base that prescribes the scope and function of any place based, bespoke, interventions that in turn, unlock the potential of the city's district centres.
- 2.4. It should be noted that the City of Manchester has 17 designated district centres within its Local Plan. Each centre is distinctly individual, with a variety of economic and social characteristics that have the ability to be addressed through redevelopment or investable opportunities that can be capitalised upon.
- 2.5. Since the last report, several regeneration programmes have commenced and are detailed within this report. There is not a one size fits all approach to regeneration in the District Centres.
- 2.6. It should be noted that the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdowns continue to be felt on our high streets - in particular in the retail, leisure and banking sectors. Footfall data indicates certain commercial centres, such as Wythenshawe and Harpurhey, have responded well, with the presumption of high street spend being closer to home than the city centre. It is recognised that our District Centres continue to be at the heart of our communities and form significant opportunities to drive change, deliver new homes and embed new opportunities for work and skills.
- 2.7. Complimenting investment plans into our District Centres, the Council have delivered a Small Business Roadshow through our Work and Skills programme. These have been held in Moston, Withington and Longsight to date and have concentrated on digital skills, upskilling employees, financial training and wider business community networking.

## **3.0. Funding opportunities**

- 3.1. There are several funding opportunities available to kickstart district centre regeneration and investment.
- 3.2. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority administer two specific funding streams that can be used to unlock viable development; Brownfield Housing Fund is administered to gap fund residential development on brownfield land. The current funding is allocated, and future funding rounds are expected to be announced later in the year. The Evergreen Fund is utilised to provide revenue funding to unlock employment and economic growth opportunities.
- 3.3. The governments flagship Levelling Up Funding (LUF) programme is coordinated by The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with the Department of Transport and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- 3.4. Following the UKs departure from the EU, the UK Government has agreed to match the previous European Structural Funding by the end this parliament. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) has been developed to invest into three local priorities: Communities & Place, support for local businesses and People and Skills. It mostly awards revenue funding and it is part of the Governments wider “Levelling Up” agenda.
- 3.5. The GMCA coordinates the SPF and submitted an investment plan on behalf of all ten GM districts in August 2022. Once approved, implementation of the £84m funding for the region has been delegated to the individual districts. The Council has been allocated £5m of Communities & Place funding to spend by March 2025.
- 3.6. The Councils Affordable Housing Programme can also provide viable funding to deliver housing led regeneration programmes, utilising the Manchester Housing Providers Partnership (MHPP) framework and grant funding administered by Homes England.

#### **4.0. Current District Centre Programme**

##### *4.1 Wythenshawe Civic Centre*

- 4.1.1. Wythenshawe District Centre is composed of the Forum leisure and education centre, GMP police station, NHS GP and dentist surgeries along with the shopping centre and multi storey car park previously owned by St Modwen PLC. The Council has maintained the wider freehold estate totalling c.42 acres.
- 4.1.2. It is important to note that the population of Wythenshawe is in total comparable to a large town or small city and the Civic Centre is the focus of this population. The current shopping centre has been managed in its mid 20<sup>th</sup> century condition and does not provide for the needs of the population in 2022, it has limited non-retail offering and is closed off after 6pm.

- 4.1.3. The Council and St Modwen agreed terms to acquire the leasehold interest owned by St Modwen in Spring 2022. This had been identified as the long-term blockage to redevelopment and the cause of delays to previous regeneration efforts.
- 4.1.4. The acquisition of the shopping centre forms the basis of an investable platform that seeks to drive transformational long term change at the heart of Wythenshawe.
- 4.1.5. Seeking to kickstart this transformation in July 2022 the Council applied for £20m of Levelling Up Funding (c.£31m of total project costs) to deliver the following specific interventions:
- A new culture hub in the former Coop department store, working with HOME and other local organisations to facilitate performance space, artist studios and a community cinema.
  - Selective demolition to open up the centre and deliver new accessible public realm – including the creation of a new civic events square.
  - Delivery of a new business hub and managed office space targeted at growing local SME small businesses.
  - Investment into decarbonisation and sustainable technologies.
- 4.1.6 In line with the government programme requirements, this work was done to the highest standard but was completed at pace. A public consultation with stakeholders, local organisations and on the high street informed the proposals.
- 4.1.7 It should be noted that were the Levelling Up Fund application to be successful, this would accelerate the delivery of specific interventions however the long-term regeneration of the centre is not dependent upon the Levelling Up Funding and the programme will continue regardless.
- 4.1.8 The Council is also preparing a Neighbourhood Development Framework that sets out the long-term vision for Wythenshawe Civic Centre and how it can reach its full potential.
- 4.1.9 Initial plans include game changing leisure and commercial uses alongside up to 1500 new homes. These proposals will be informed by a public and stakeholder consultation and final proposals will be submitted to Executive for in November.
- 4.1.10 Work on the ground as commenced already, with a new Grub Street Food market located on the Birches every month along with planning about to be submitted for a new Lidl food store.
- 4.1.11 The Council continues to liaise with Wythenshawe Community Housing Group on their collaboration and ability to deliver new affordable housing as part of the regeneration programme.

4.1.12 Wythenshawe Forum and other civic assets continues to be key to our regeneration vision, providing education, community and leisure facilities. Any redevelopment plans will seek to reinforce their operations and we continue to work together in developing our proposals.

#### 4.2. *Moston Lane*

4.2.1 The Neighbourhoods and Growth & Development Directorates are collaborating to deliver initiatives that will help stabilise the district centre, address antisocial issues and unlock investment.

4.2.2 Moston Lane is a busy, primarily retail driven commercial centre which services several communities across North Manchester. The Council maintains a sizeable land and property estate with potential for redevelopment to provide new housing, employment, and skills opportunities.

4.2.3. Initial stabilisation work will be funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, assisting with operational issues on the ground along with investment into public realm, green space and engagement with local businesses and residents through the Moston Matters campaign. These works are expected to commence soon and be completed throughout 2023.

4.2.4 Longer term aspirations shall be captured and set out in a new Neighbourhood Framework that will seek to provide stability and confidence to the centre – building upon its many positive attributes but also unlock opportunities for private or third sector investment. The framework will also explore options around strategic acquisitions which may assist with regeneration, opening up the high street and create opportunities for new civic spaces.

4.2.5 The baseline study that will inform the new Framework has been completed. Proposals shall be subject to public and stakeholder consultation with final proposals expected to be submitted to Executive for approval in early 2023.

#### 4.3. *Gorton*

4.3.1. Work has commenced on a new Gorton masterplan with a focus on deliverable projects suitable for future central and regional government funding streams. The project team have commenced stakeholder consultation to identify the local needs which can be addressed through investment and redevelopment of land in and around the district centre.

4.3.2. It is anticipated that the masterplan will identify key areas of physical intervention, building upon opportunities around the newly completed £22m Gorton Hub. There will be prioritisation of interventions that provide resilience to existing community and commercial functions. A placemaking led approach to deliver a new heart of the suburb will involve interaction to a newly reinvigorated market and civic square. Mixed tenure housing investment opportunities will remain a key theme throughout.



4.3.3. It is anticipated that the final masterplan and delivery action plan will be submitted to Executive for approval in December 2022.

#### 4.4. *Withington*

4.4.1. The Council unsuccessfully applied to Levelling Up Fund round one in 2021 to deliver several projects across Withington district centre. Officers continue to collaborate with Withington Village Regeneration Partnership and the wider local community in the formulation of deliverable projects that continue to momentum of regeneration.

4.4.2. Since the Levelling Up Fund application was submitted, Withington Baths has received funding for repairs, the former Natwest bank has been redeveloped into a restaurant, several housing developments have completed and Council investment into the library and an active travel programme has been delivered.

4.4.3. Investment into new public realm improvements will be delivered through Shared Prosperity Funding to deliver a new pedestrianised street on Copson Street able to host street markets, increasing dwell time and spend, and the creation of a new Civic Square on Rutherford Place that will improve accessibility, greenspace and be able to host community events. Works will commence in 2022 and be delivered by 2024.

4.4.4. The existing library continues to provide vital cultural and community services including the wider 'Build a Business' programme.

4.4.5. The Development and Strategic Housing teams continue to liaise with Southway Housing Trust on the redevelopment of land to the rear of Withington Baths and Strathblane Court sites within the district centre.

#### 4.5. *Chorlton*

4.5.1. Several sites across the central Chorlton have plans to be redeveloped. In line with the vision set out in previous Frameworks, this has the potential to deliver hundreds of new homes and reinvigorate the District Centre.

4.5.2. The Council has agreed terms for the disposal of the former Leisure Centre site to MSV to construct 49 affordable homes for the over 55s population. Southway Housing Trust continues to work with Chorlton Community Land Trust on the potential redevelopment of the Coop funeral care building and recently received planning permission to build 29 new affordable homes on the Irish Club site. Step Places have been confirmed as the preferred buyer of the MMU Ryebank site with proposals being developed to bring forward a multi-tenure residential scheme with high quality public realm.

4.5.3. Council officers continue to assist in the coordination of these various plots, providing strategic direction to appropriate housing products that match identified demand in Chorlton, upkeep environmental standards and retain the vision of previous Council frameworks.

- 4.5.4. Commercial investment is also planned for Chorlton, the Greater Manchester Pension Fund are actively marketing the Chorlton Cross shopping centre and car parks. A public announcement of their preferred development partner is expected in October 2022. Lidl are proposing the demolition of Lowry House on Nell Lane and the construction of a new supermarket.
- 4.5.5. Neighbourhood and Growth & Development officers continue to provide lines of communication between developers, ward members and local groups such as Chorlton Traders, Chorlton Voice and Chorlton Community Land Trust. This includes sharing information on complimentary development outcomes, extracting the highest social value, provide updates on consultation and delivery programmes along with coordination of construction phasing plans to avoid any conflicts.
- 4.5.6. Chorlton Cycleway investment continues to be delivered through the district centre, providing much needed improvements to the wider public realm and accessibility. Works are anticipated to commence in the new year.

## **5.0. Future District Centre Programme**

### *5.1. Strangeways*

- 5.1.1. Growth & Development officers have commenced work on a preliminary baseline study to evaluate Council owned assets, registered landowners, and businesses.
- 5.1.2. It is anticipated that a professional design team will be appointed to set out a long-term vision for the regeneration of Strangeways as a new commercial district, complementing existing legitimate business functions and the adjacent city centre but also as an attractive gateway to the North Manchester suburbs.

### *5.2. Cheetham Hill*

- 5.2.1 Works are to commence on a regeneration plan for Cheetham Hill District Centre in 2023. It is anticipated to be a collaboration with Salford Council.

### *5.3. Harpurhey*

- 5.3.1. Harpurhey District Centre continues to demonstrate strong footfall and commercial resilience following Covid lockdowns. Several Council owned land assets suitable for housing have been identified and the Development and Strategic Housing teams are exploring options around a programme of Affordable Housing led regeneration, catering specifically to provide homes that address identified local needs.

### *5.4. Newton Heath*

- 5.4.1. The Council is investing into Newton Heath District Centre on Silk Street. These new homes will be complete in 2023 however several nearby sites have been identified for redevelopment along with wider improvements to the High Street.
- 5.4.2. It is important to note that not all district centres require development frameworks. Council resources are focused on priority areas in terms of development and investment. Neighbourhoods continue to actively manage district centre environments however not all require the same level of intensive intervention.

## **6.0. Recommendations**

- 6.1. This report sets out an update on the first phase of regeneration, development, and investment programmes across the city. It has the potential to deliver thousands of homes, create spaces for employment and promote inclusive growth.
- 6.2. The Committee is recommended note and comment on progress to date as set out in the report.