

**Report to:** The Cabinet  
**Date:** 25 September 2017

**Report of:** Director of Place

**Report No:** C2/17a

**Contact Officer:** Stephen Young  
Phil Green

**Tel. No:** 336301  
336300

**Report Title:** **BOLTON TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

**Confidential/ (Non - Confidential)** This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:** This report sets out proposals for the implementation of a refreshed Town Centre Strategy and seeks approval to a series of interventions and key actions including a framework designed to support the town centre's economy.

**Recommendations:** Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) Approve the Town Centre Strategy, as outlined in this report;
- (b) Delegate authority to the Director of Place to update the Town Centre Strategy to reflect changes required as a result of matters such as planning consents, procurement exercises and construction timetables;
- (c) Approve the use of resources and funding, as detailed in the Town Centre Strategy;
- (d) Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with Cabinet or the relevant Executive Cabinet Member and the Borough Solicitor and the Borough Treasurer (as appropriate) to:
  - (i) identify the most appropriate delivery model in respect of the interventions and actions detailed in the Town Centre Strategy, to negotiate the terms of any arrangements, to enter into contractual arrangements (where appropriate) and to carry out all practical formalities in accordance with the Constitution; and
  - (ii) procure all such external resources required to deliver the Town Centre Strategy in accordance with the Council's Constitution, to negotiate the terms and conditions of any contracts and to enter into contractual arrangements; and
- (e) Authorise the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities.

**Decision:**

**Signed:**

---

Leader / Executive Cabinet  
Member

---

Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

---

---

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 In February 2016, the Council adopted the new Economic Strategy “*The Bolton Economy Our Strategy for Growth 2016-2030*” (‘Economic Strategy’), endorsed by Bolton Vision, updating the strategic policy context for a refreshed town centre strategy and masterplan framework, utilising the established ‘town centre first’ planning framework provided in the Council’s Local Plan and subsequently supported in the revised Community Strategy and Vision for Bolton 2030.
- 1.2 The refreshed strategy for Bolton town centre is outlined within this report with full details including target interventions, masterplan framework and economic benefits set out within the proposed “*Bolton Town Centre Framework*” (‘Framework’) attached at Appendix 1. Collectively this report and the Framework comprise the refreshed strategy for Bolton town centre (‘Town Centre Strategy’).
- 1.3 Town centres continue to face challenges and uncertainty in modern society, including changing consumer trends. Against that context, over the last decade Bolton has evidenced just how important the Council’s role is in facilitating regeneration with both policy and direct intervention; and the success this can bring even during periods of economic downturn.
- 1.4 Following a competitive tender, the Council appointed BDP, a major international practice of architects, designers, engineers and urbanists, together with commercial property specialist BE Group to refresh the masterplan framework. In consultation with key stakeholders, work on a refreshed Town Centre Strategy has now concluded as set out in this report and the Council has created a £100 million fund to support its delivery with the aim of leveraging further funding and investment to regenerate Bolton town centre and sustain its immediate future to the benefit of the wider Borough and its residents.
- 1.5 It is proposed that the £100m fund is targeted in key intervention areas within the town centre which will have the greatest impact, together with cross-cutting interventions such as infrastructure investment that will benefit the town centre as a whole.
- 1.6 Interventions will include strategic site assembly; getting sites ‘development ready’; and the delivery of some key developments; public realm and infrastructure. It is proposed that external advisors and services will be procured, as required, to support delivery of the Town Centre Strategy and secure the necessary private sector investment. A range of potential development delivery options will be utilised.
- 1.7 Section 2 below sets out the challenges, trends and key aims; Section 3 describes the policy context; Section 4 sets out the market drivers and analysis; Sections 5 and 6 describe the target interventions; Section 7 covers the legal and financial implications including allocation of resources and investment priorities and procurement; Section 8 describes the next steps. The Framework is included at Appendix 1. An Equality Impact Assessment is included at Appendix 2, summarised at Section 9.

## 2. Background, Challenges, Key Aims and Interventions

- 2.1 A suite of documents were originally adopted by the Council prior to the recession to support the regeneration of the town centre, inform investment decisions and attract private sector development. Forming a Town Centre Action Framework, these documents included a spatial review of the town centre setting the scene for major development opportunities and Supplementary Planning Documents such as *Building Bolton*. Whilst a number of projects were successfully delivered, some of the larger more complex opportunities such as Church Wharf and Central Street ultimately stalled as a result of a 'perfect storm' affecting town centres, including the recession and changes in consumer trends.
- 2.2 The Council's previous town centre strategy evolved during the economic downturn to reflect the challenges facing Bolton like other towns and cities across the country and the withdrawal in particular of private sector investment to deliver major development.
- 2.3 Despite a period of significant change and economic uncertainty during recent years, Bolton town centre has remained relatively resilient, helped by an expanding University, major events, cultural attractions, employment and an improving leisure offer. This is largely due to the recognition by the Council and its partners over the years, that a range of policies and direct interventions would be required if the town centre is to continue to play a key role in the economic and community life of the borough. The previous town centre strategy dated June 2013 allocated £8.9m to support its delivery. The budget was used to fund strategic acquisitions, public realm works and to support the delivery of private developments including a cinema, office accommodation, parking and to attract occupiers.
- 2.4 Over a £billion has been invested in the town centre over the last 10 years by both the public and private sector. Bolton has seen the major regeneration of the Knowledge Quarter and the expansion of the University; increased the quality and volume of office space; and attracted major investment in Moorgarth's successful redevelopment of the Market Place, delivering the cinema, retail improvements and award winning Vaults. Infrastructure and public realm improvements have included the £48m Transport Interchange (which opened on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017) and the Newport Street project, which is nearing completion alongside refurbished cultural assets such as Bolton Market, the Town Hall and Albert Halls and planned major investment in the Museum and the Octagon Theatre. Working with partners, this has been complemented by targeted investment in culture, leisure and large events such as the Food and Drink Festival to maintain the vitality and viability of the town centre. These events have increased footfall in key areas of the town centre and local spend, with Bolton's tourism industry adding £420m to the local economy.

### Vision and Economic Strategy

- 2.5 The Council and its strategic partnership 'Bolton Vision' have adopted 'Bolton 2030' as the key strategic document aimed at setting out a vision for Bolton in 2030. It sets out the partnership's aspirations ensuring that Bolton is active, connected and prosperous with key aims including successful businesses, cohesive communities and a

welcoming place to study, work and put down roots. Bolton's Economic Strategy identifies the economic vision and ambition for Bolton with a vibrant town centre at its heart. Building homes, providing employment and making the most of Bolton's quality education offer, including an expanding University are keys to success whilst facilitating an innovative and attractive environment well served by transport that supports culture, dwell time, developments in technology, and provides a distinctive place to be.

### Consumer Trends

- 2.6 The challenges facing high streets and town centres have changed and traditional retail stores in particular are under threat. Town centres have traditionally been the geographical and commercial core area at the heart of a town, focused on shopping high streets and hosting the civic centre and transport hubs. Policy has sought to continue to protect town centres, particularly from a retail perspective, and they have already diversified in the face of out-of town shopping and the changing needs of the consumer to protect their vitality and viability. The increase in leisure uses, cafes and restaurants is one example.
- 2.7 However, consumer spending curbs and the evolution and growth in online shopping presents a different challenge and the impact on the commercial value and demand for retail space is a threat to town centres as well as retail parks. In order to ensure Bolton town centre remains at the economic heart of the Borough, it is considered vital that the Council leads and facilitates the continued adaptation and evolution of its town centre through a strategy that supports a more concise retail core focused on the changing needs of the consumer, visitors, workers, students and residents alike. This requires the development and regeneration of key sites for housing, employment and leisure, complemented by the expansion of the University, cultural events and investment in transport, public realm, environment and digital infrastructure and supporting strategies such as to tackle crime and attract new occupiers. Immediate intervention is needed to address the challenges and safeguard Bolton town centre's future as a place where more people want to live, work and spend their free time.

### Investing in a Competitive Town Centre

- 2.8 As a result of these policies and successful interventions, there is now a strong basis for the delivery of ambitious regeneration and development aspirations to ensure Bolton town centre continues to thrive and evolve. The recent developments build on the strengths of Bolton town centre and provide the basis for attracting further significant investment. A number of vacant/brownfield sites present the opportunity for major development and the Town Centre Strategy is ambitious in identifying key areas that will have the biggest impact whilst supporting Bolton's socio-economic objectives.
- 2.9 Town centres continue to face challenges and without the Council's direct intervention, the risk is the necessary pace and scale of change and ultimately this ambitious vision, will not be achieved. The private sector will not deliver economic objectives on its own. Further refinement of the existing strategy, together with the introduction of a number of additional key interventions within the context of a Town Centre Strategy are now

necessary if the objectives for the town centre are to be achieved in the context of the challenges it faces.

- 2.10 In particular, more than ever before, Bolton town centre must be competitive if it is to be vibrant, diverse and successful and to achieve this, it is considered vital that the Council assists in leading, facilitating and enabling the conditions for economic growth through direct intervention in economic development and regeneration in partnership with business and communities. As such, this report refreshes the strategy and for Bolton town centre and sets the framework for the Council's £100million investment to support its delivery.

### **3. Policy Context**

- 3.1 Nationally, there is a strong emphasis on the requirement for town centres to become places of diverse use, providing for a range of shops, housing, offices, sport facilities, schools, social, commercial and cultural enterprises, as well as the meeting place for people of all ages. Government policy continues to recognise town centres as being at the heart of their communities and advocates policies to support their vitality and viability. Sequential tests remain to locate main town centre uses in town centre and strategies have sought to revive, adapt and diversify the nation's high streets including through new housing.
- 3.2 The challenges facing the eight main town centres in Greater Manchester are acknowledged by the Combined Authority whilst recognising the opportunities offered by their unique characteristics, their role as economic drivers and the need to optimise the scale and range of retail offer. Bolton town centre is the largest in Greater Manchester outside the regional core, and has the potential to grow significantly. Further, the contribution of town centres to deliver housing supply is at the heart of the emerging Greater Manchester Strategy.
- 3.3 Bolton Vision 2030 sets a level of ambition that identifies new opportunities for growth, prosperity and a thriving local economy which benefits those it serves and can be delivered in what remains a challenging financial environment for the public sector. The Economic Strategy creates a vision for the town centre as a vibrant location for growth and its continued development is at the heart of the vision and key values.
- 3.4 The Economic Strategy recognises that the continued expansion of the Innovation Zone driven by the University of Bolton including developments recently completed and now underway, as well as the planned academic village, will help to attract and retain new talent in the borough, and provide the opportunity to connect academic study and research to business start-up, expansion and growth. Furthermore it recognises that regeneration of major development sites such as Church Wharf and Merchant's Quarter remain important alongside new opportunities at gateways and key sites.
- 3.5 The Local Plan acknowledges that a transformed and vibrant town centre is essential to Bolton's prosperity and it is identified as a strategic objective with capacity for further development including 10-20% of the borough's overall housing growth.

- 3.6 It is considered that the proposed Town Centre Strategy is in accordance with this national, regional and local policy and guidance.
- 3.7 The Town Centre Strategy does not replace planning policy and guidance. It has been developed in accordance with the Local Plan as described above having taken into account full consideration of all the relevant policies such as those relating to housing, employment, conservation and urban design and will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Some areas of Bolton town centre are covered by Supplementary Planning Documents that will need to be revoked and/or replaced as the strategy is implemented.

#### **4. Market Drivers and Opportunity**

##### Retail

- 4.4 Within the context of challenges identified above, delivery of the Market Place has been a 'game changer' which enables the town centre to compete strongly against its competitors, anchoring the retail offer in that area and supporting a more efficient core area encompassing Victoria Square/Crompton Place and Newport Street. Like the Market Place, this retail offer will be strengthened by restaurants, cafes and convenience shopping, demand for which will grow with increased urbanisation.

##### Leisure, Culture and Tourism

- 4.5 Bolton is already experiencing the beneficial impacts on the town centre of a strong leisure offer equating to a stronger shopping experience and increased dwell time. The Vaults (within the Market Place) has proved the viability of Bolton town centre as a food and evening economy destination, putting it 'on the map' for further food and beverage requirements to a wider demographic including professionals and families. Local property owners are responding to these opportunities and reporting good interest for restaurant, café and coffee shop uses, especially where there is space to spill onto the street.
- 4.6 The leisure offer – including cultural assets and events – is particularly important in establishing a stronger, diverse town centre as this increases demand for residential and business space as well as boosting the visitor economy. Increased tourism drives the potential market for hotel provision with initial growth predicted to focus on the 3 to 4 star offer. Secondary growth in serviced apartments is anticipated, a sector currently supported by strong occupancy rates across both Manchester City and the outer areas, driven by a mix of cultural events and business tourism.

##### Residential

- 4.7 Over the last five years, flat/apartment values have improved by 29% in Bolton, a rate of growth comparable to that seen in Sale and Stockport and above average for Greater Manchester as a whole. The driving force behind this is the private rental market rather than owner occupation. Evidence, including research by BDP, suggests that young professionals, couples and young families identify Bolton as an attractive,

affordable alternative to high cost city centre living. This is largely due to well established public transport links and proximity of motorway networks, which provide connectivity to city centres across the region. Bolton remains relatively affordable with an income to house price ratio of 6.0, compared to a Greater Manchester average of 7.0.

- 4.8 A major growth area in the housing market is student residential reflecting both projected growth in student numbers at the University of Bolton and a need to upgrade the local student housing offer generally, in light of rising student aspirations.
- 4.9 An increase in housing in appropriate locations across the town centre is key to its long term sustainability, vitality and viability. Demand for inner city living increases with the appropriate environment and mix of uses. The current housing market in Bolton town centre is dominated by student accommodation, social/affordable housing and lower end private rented housing. Although this remains popular and in high demand it is critical to create a mix of supply and densities at appropriate sites, with infrastructure investment, to create new communities.
- 4.10 To help achieve an appropriate supply of housing, accelerated construction through modern methods of construction can mean houses are available for occupation much sooner than would otherwise be the case and should be supported. The Council's land and wider public estate offers potential for such developments where these deliver the appropriate quality alongside environmental benefits and efficiencies.

#### Office and Business

- 4.11 Bolton has seen positive growth in financial and professional services, creating demand for office space including larger footprint Grade A accommodation. Broadly, towns across Greater Manchester are considered likely to become destinations for the cost-effective location of businesses looking to position themselves outside of Manchester City Centre and The Quays as Manchester itself benefits from some relocation from the South. Regional growth is forecast to continue and to extend into Bolton which has a strong locational offer building on the success of investment such as the town centre's Grade A space as well as some other key sites.
- 4.12 Market activity comprises the churn and growth of existing local firms as well as some larger inward investment. The town centre attracts infrequent but steady interest from larger firms, including an element of inward investment, mostly from surrounding local authorities and the right land supply continues to support speculative development at the right scale, such as Bolton Central.
- 4.13 A phased supply of 20,000m<sup>2</sup> (215,000sqft) would potentially meet demand in the town centre over a number of years. More significant place-making could attract a major occupier/anchor and trigger a larger scale or phase of development.
- 4.14 The town centre offers potential for incubation space and creative clusters to establish links to the University enhancing the growing professional, science, digital and technology sectors. A concentrated inner core also creates opportunity and space for



new business and inward investment as well as local firms to expand, with heritage streets and buildings being an attractive business address for SMEs to cluster.

- 4.15 Increased business brings employee demand to the town centre and provides increased employment for residents. Bolton is performing well against a number of indicators including employment in knowledge based industries, health, education and retail which is likely to continue in future years.

#### Education

- 4.16 Alongside other educational establishments, the University and its expansion will continue to play a key role in strengthening the town centre. BDP confirm that higher education facilities should be supported and encouraged to establish creative/knowledge industries with enhanced pathways to business incubation, links to employers and job creation. The University and education sector brings profile, job opportunities and town centre demand from a student population and employees.

#### Travel and digital infrastructure

- 4.17 The town centre must remain accessible by all transport systems and attractive to people to walk and spend time, in order to be sustainable and resilient. Transport systems and town centre infrastructure investment will need to consider advances in technology and demand for digital services such as high speed fibre and public wifi. The University and public estate could offer a competitive edge with potential to explore and support advances in technology and the use of the internet. The projected growth in numbers of residents, visitors and employees coupled with the release of the majority of surface car parks for development will create a new demand for additional multi storey car parks in the town centre.

### **5. Target Intervention Areas**

- 5.1 The town centre is characterised by an inner core of retail, leisure, civic and culture extending to the Transport Interchange; surrounded by a periphery of mixed uses and sites including surface car parks and vacant buildings interspersed with some heritage assets. To the west and south, Queens Park, the University and some key opportunity areas are more detached but the open spaces and River Croal corridor offer potential for a 'green lung' to the town centre. With improved linkages, the peripheral and fringe areas offer a number of development opportunities focused on residential, commercial and education wrapped around and supporting a more concise and concentrated inner core.
- 5.2 The opportunities attract proposals to significantly strengthen the diversity of uses across the town centre, including creating spaces and places for people to meet, use and stay longer in Bolton. Driven by consumer trends, as the town centre evolves, there is an opportunity to bring forward sites on the periphery of the town centre that have not previously been considered for residential use. Land is available for the development and regeneration of five key areas within the town centre which will

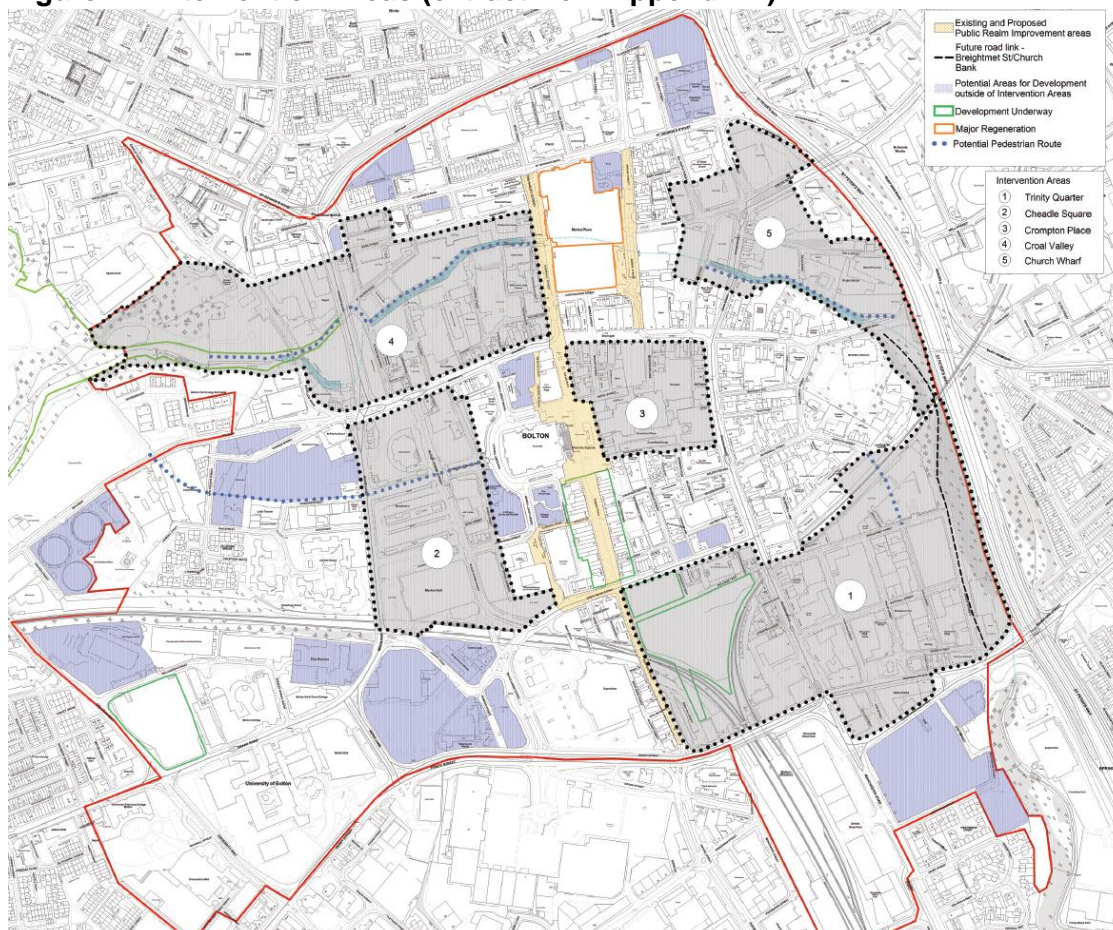
achieve the greatest impact. Each will create new destinations that will contribute to the transformation of the town centre as a whole.

5.3 The target intervention areas are described in more detail within the Framework at Appendix 1 and comprise the following areas together with some cross cutting opportunities:

1. Trinity Quarter
2. Cheadle Square/Academic/Cultural Quarter
3. Crompton Place
4. Croal Valley/St Helena/Central St
5. Church Wharf

5.4 These will be complemented by cross cutting infrastructure investment such as public realm, highway, landscaping and other works that may extend outside of those areas. See Figures 1 below, and Section 6 and Figure 2 further below:

**Figure 1 – Intervention Areas (extract from Appendix 1)**



### **Trinity Quarter**

- 5.5 To the south east of the town centre, land bounded by the Transport Interchange, Trinity St, A666 and the Clive Street car park comes together as Trinity Quarter encompassing land at Trinity Gateway and Merchant's Quarter either side of Bradshawgate.
- 5.6 This area represents a key gateway to the town centre and is characterised by older and some poorer quality buildings with mixed retail and commercial space fronting Bradshawgate and mixed industrial/commercial uses within Merchant's Quarter. The grid iron pattern of streets with industrial architecture to the back of pavement is a key feature. The Council has acquired land at Trinity Gateway for redevelopment, whilst cleared land in the vicinity of Brightmet Street and Clive Street offers the potential for an early phase of development. Newer development at River Street including the hotel and Grade A offices will remain and some buildings of localised value may be refurbished rather than demolished.
- 5.7 Within this intervention area, the Town Centre Strategy anticipates a number of phases of development around three integrated sub-areas connected to the town centre via new public realm and squares/spaces which could accommodate ground floor leisure uses such as cafes with outdoor seating. Commercial development, primarily larger footprint office space, will be the focus in proximity to Trinity Gateway and Bradshawgate where a critical mass adjacent to the Transport Interchange and the proposed new multi storey car park ("MSCP") make this area attractive to potential occupiers alongside potential residential developments. Mixed uses including live/work are anticipated within the core Merchant's Quarter area linking to residential development to the east where a variety of housing could attract a mix of residents.
- 5.8 Based on annual demand, Trinity Quarter has the potential to accommodate Bolton town centre's Grade A office space supply for at least 14 years (300,000sqft) released on a phase by phase basis or as occupiers demand, together with business and other employment space. There is potential for a hotel and 300-500 residential units attractive as a commuter destination for people of all ages. A new MSCP will provide 350-400 spaces and connect to the Transport Interchange alongside new public realm. A new road is planned to the east linking Trinity Quarter with Church Wharf and a pedestrian footbridge over the railway to Clive Street will connect people into the existing residential area of St Peter's Way.
- 5.9 BE Group estimate this investment could add over 5000 jobs and £277m GVA to Bolton's economy per annum whilst 300-500 houses could add 1000 people to the population generating £17m household spend into the economy.

### **Cheadle Square/Academic/Cultural Quarter**

- 5.10 West of the town centre to the rear of Le Mans Crescent, land bounded by Deansgate, Moor Lane, Queen Street and the railway line, including Cheadle Square, the former Odeon site and bus station presents the opportunity for a new business address, high quality residential, restaurants and student accommodation/village.

- 5.11 This intervention area benefits from existing visitor attractions which have benefitted from recent investment with more planned for the Museum and the Octagon Theatre. A number of cleared sites and surface car parks together with the closure of the Moor Lane bus station will present an opportunity for a new network of streets with mixed uses to create a new destination.
- 5.12 The proximity to the University generates demand for student accommodation and associated uses whilst maximising the opportunity created by the central location and the grand civic architecture can serve a growing business market and entrepreneurial graduates of the University.
- 5.13 Investment in quality public realm is vital, with proposed works to including a 'market' square, new streets and improvements to Queen Street to attract high quality restaurants with a historic flavour. The Framework describes development in a number of phases around five key sites within this intervention area. Land towards Deansgate offers a potential new business location, whilst sensitive demolition works to the former police station car park can open up the rear elevation of Howell Croft, providing the setting for new public realm. Residential development with ground floor mixed active uses can reinforce the image of the town's historic fabric in the central sites and a with apartments or student housing and multi-storey parking encouraging the area to become an arrival point for the town centre. Land to the south offers potential for community or cultural uses with housing above and a high quality architectural image at the Great Moor Street gateway.
- 5.14 Convenience, leisure and business could generate £82m GVA to Bolton's economy with over 1300 jobs. 400 housing units in a mix of student, high quality flats and older persons accommodation could generation almost £8m in household expenditure.

### **Crompton Place**

- 5.15 Crompton Place is situated at the heart of the town centre bounded by Victoria Square, Deansgate, Bradshawgate and Exchange Street and surrounding buildings which accommodate secondary/tertiary retail and leisure extending towards more prime frontage on Deansgate including Marks and Spencer.
- 5.16 Whilst there has been a further shift towards the Market Place for prime retail and as a leisure destination, occupancy remains good in this area anchored by Primark and M&S with potential for a stronger food and leisure offer. Improving the pedestrian routes and environment both north south and, critically, east west to Bradshawgate can provide a stronger shopper experience increasing dwell time. The Victoria Square frontage provides a major opportunity to interact with events and culture whilst respecting the important civic setting.
- 5.17 The Town Centre Strategy envisages targeted interventions to create a new pedestrian through route from Hotel Street to Bradshawgate and improve the pedestrian experience in Crompton Place with investment in the quality of the circulation spaces and internal 'squares' including the ground floor link to Victoria Square. Expansion

space for Primark is suggested with upper floor leisure uses or alternative space such as teaching or workshops. Facing Victoria Square, BDP illustrates the potential for the redesign of the façade and upper floors linked to leisure uses and galleries with restaurants occupying a new transformative terrace overlooking Victoria Square. Examples of such upper floor restaurant space are provided by BDP such as Liverpool One (as shown in the Framework). This would be further supported by improved connectivity to the retail circuit with investment in surrounding public realm such as along Market Street.

- 5.18 The revised floorspace and leisure units in Crompton Place could provide almost 500 jobs and add over £13m GVA to Bolton's economy.

### **Croal Valley/St Helena/Central St**

- 5.19 To the north west of the town centre bounded by Deansgate, Knowsley Street and Bark Street and extending into Queens Park is situated a number of sites either side of the River Croal which are collectively known as St Helena. This area comprises a mix of fragmented main road frontages as well as a number of cleared sites, surface car parks and other buildings in a mix of ownerships that are tucked away. Site levels are a key consideration as land slopes down to the River Croal. The quality of some vacant buildings has deteriorated and the peripheral and former core retail areas are in need of investment and new development.
- 5.20 The character of this section of Deansgate and St George's Road has evolved and some sites in Council ownership such as Central Street and the car parks either side of Bark Street, present a more immediate opportunity. However, any development proposals would need to integrate properly into the main road frontage which would result in some demolition of poorer quality buildings having consideration for the sensitive character and appearance of conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings as appropriate.
- 5.21 The central location and scale presents opportunity for a significant mix of housing with higher density living to the east nearer to the core town centre and lower density family accommodation to the west towards Queens Park.
- 5.22 The Framework proposes improvements along the river corridor to maximise the value of a waterside setting and natural environment including pocket parks. Clusters of housing could be developed along an integrated waterway within the urban context. Housing will need to reflect the street pattern and be orientated and align views from housing to make use of the best features of the local area.
- 5.23 As with Church Wharf below, as proposals are developed, the initial phases of investment will need to focus on appropriate site clearance and investment in high quality public realm and infrastructure including hard and soft landscaping; improvements to the River Croal environment; infrastructure and connectivity for pedestrians creating an improved sense of place to support new development. 400-500 residential units together with mixed uses will add £17m of household spend to Bolton's economy in addition to generating £10m GVA per annum.

## **Church Wharf**

- 5.24 To the north east of the town centre bounded by A666, River Croal, Bank Street and including various surface car parks lies the Church Wharf intervention area. This part of the town centre was previously the subject of major development plans that reached an advanced stage prior to the recession. Since then whilst some properties remain in a mix of commercial uses, the quality of land and buildings has further deteriorated.
- 5.25 The area continues to present a major opportunity by virtue of the land and property uses; levels; riverside frontage; and gateway location, particularly for a mix of residential development.
- 5.26 The initial phase of proposals will need to focus on site clearance and investment in high quality public realm and infrastructure including hard and soft landscaping; improvements to the River Croal environment; and connectivity for pedestrians and vehicles including through to Trinity Quarter. This will create an attractive sense of place in which to attract investment and locate a new community, particularly within the core area.
- 5.27 Since the original proposals were approved for this area; the cinema has been built elsewhere and the nature of the site presents an opportunity for an increased volume of residential development supported by an appropriate mix of uses that does not conflict with proposals for other areas of the town centre.
- 5.28 The Framework identifies the opportunity for a mix of residential scale, design and unit sizes with courtyards and public spaces and the potential for cafes to make use of an improved riverside frontage and connectivity to Church Bank and Trinity Quarter as well as attractive views. Residential could also be supported by localised scale convenience retail, craft, food and drink. The peripheral surface car park sites also offer potential for phases of residential or commercial development.
- 5.29 Subject to the development of an office pipeline within Trinity Quarter and the supply of housing in the town centre, it may be appropriate for future phases to include some commercial space, other work units or a hotel subject to demand.
- 5.30 With a mix of town houses and apartments, the core area of Church Wharf could accommodate in the region of 400 residential units alongside a mix of uses. Subject to supply and phasing, peripheral car park sites could accommodate a further 100 units generating a total of circa £14m in household spend in addition to job creation and around £30m annual GVA.

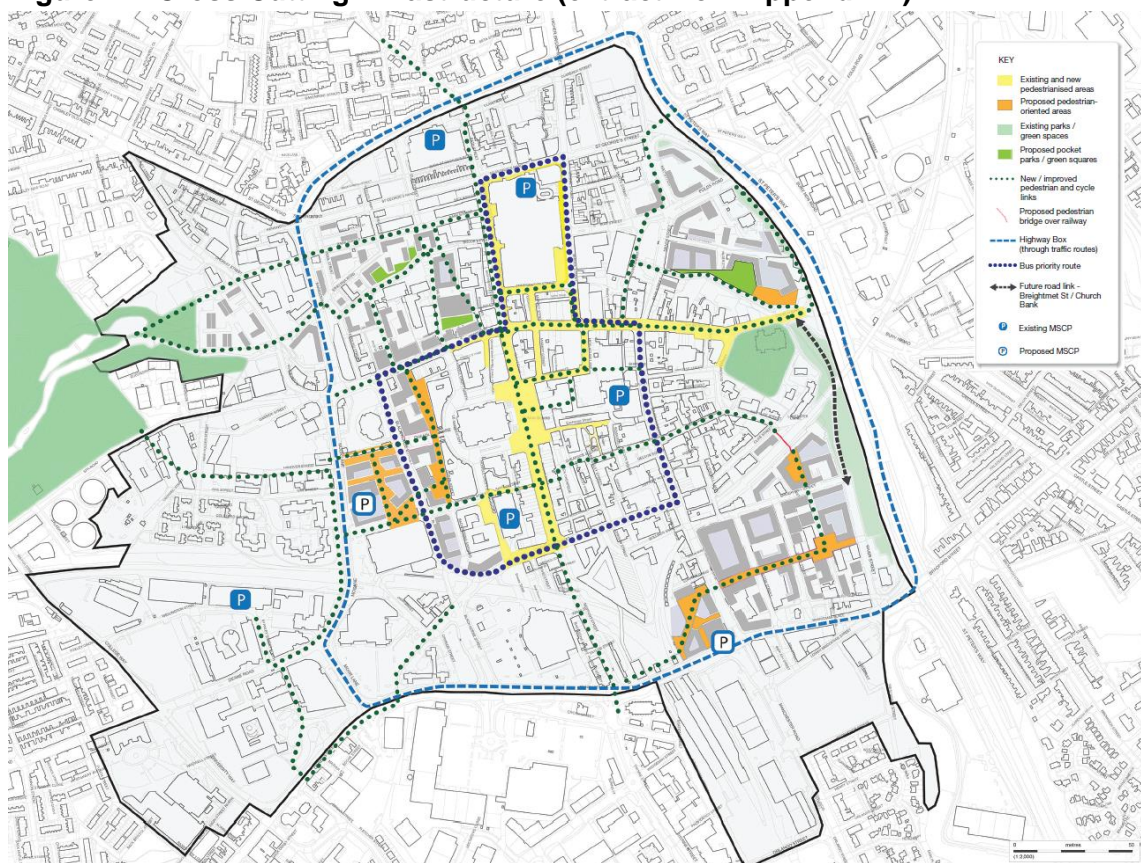
## **6. Other Interventions**

- 6.1 Cross cutting infrastructure investment such as public realm, highway, landscaping and other works shall be delivered within the town centre boundary edged red on Figure 1 above and illustrated on Figure 2 below in order to complement other plans and strategies. The delivery of such interventions will be aligned to the overarching strategy, as outlined in the Town Centre Strategy, including highways and transport;

crime reduction; culture; town centre partnership; events/tourism; licensing; support services and greenspace management.

- 6.2 Grant funding schemes will be developed in consultation with the Borough Solicitor and Borough Treasurer, where required, in order to support existing and new business within the town centre boundary and to achieve the priorities of the Council. Any grant scheme developed would be subject to open and transparent application and verification procedures and will be subject to the Constitution and any relevant laws (including state aid).
- 6.3 In addition and particularly outside the key intervention areas, other individual/windfall development sites including private schemes on private ownership may come forward on a site by site basis. These will be considered in accordance with Council policies and procedures and, where appropriate, shall be determined by the relevant authorities (planning, licensing, highways etc.) having consideration for the general principles of the Town Centre Strategy as appropriate.
- 6.4 It is proposed that the Director of Place oversees the finalisation and publication of the Town Centre Strategy.

**Figure 2 – Cross Cutting Infrastructure (extract from Appendix 1)**



## 7. Finance and Legal Implications

### Allocation of Resources and Investment Priorities

- 7.1 The Council has approved the allocation of funding of £100m to support delivery of the Town Centre Strategy. It is proposed that this funding is allocated in respect of the following investment priorities:
- **Strategic acquisitions and disposals** of land and property; and/or
  - **Site preparation and Infrastructure** (e.g. surveys, demolition, remediation, public realm works, structural or façade interventions, refurbishment, planning applications, fees, reports, utilities, digital); and/or
  - **Development and Occupation** (e.g. design, construction and direct delivery of buildings or developments, commercial investment, joint venture, economic and/or business support, incentives, grants and loans for target occupiers, uses and/or sectors); and/or
  - **Other Town Centre Initiatives** as identified by the Director of Place in consultation with the relevant Executive Member
  - **Specialist work, advice and surveys**
- 7.2 Indicative outputs in respect of above are included in the Framework.
- 7.3 A number of key actions will need to be developed along with detailed investment proposals to support the delivery of the above investment priorities and investment will be complemented by the Council's Capital Programme and internal service provision.
- 7.4 A key aim of the Council's investment includes leveraging further funding and investment to regenerate the town centre as a whole and achieve socio-economic objectives for the Borough as a whole. Intervention will build confidence and certainty to bring forward development and regeneration at a greater pace than would otherwise be the case. The £100m funding is also designed to unlock private sector and other public sector investment and to secure capital receipt and income generation to the Council, which would then be reinvested into the town centre to recycle the fund thus enabling further investment where possible. Investment will create significant development value and achieve wider economic benefits including economic spend and gross value added (GVA) summarised above. The Council will also continue to bid for relevant Government and Greater Manchester funding to support delivery of the Town Centre Strategy including investment, loan and grant funding.
- 7.5 It is proposed that authority is delegated to the Director of Place to:
- (a) develop and deliver proposals in respect of the investment priorities outlined in the Town Centre Strategy utilising the £100m; and



- (b) complete all resulting actions, matters, agreements and practical formalities associated with the delivery of the Town Centre Strategy (within the £100m budget).

#### Procurement and Other Legal Matters

- 7.6 In order to achieve delivery of the investment priorities and objectives detailed in this report; to secure the necessary pace and scale of delivery; to ensure commercial investment decisions take account of the role of the private sector; and achieve best value within the appropriate regulations; additional resources are required.
- 7.7 It is proposed that specialist advisors and services are procured in accordance with Standing Orders relating to Contracts, including (but not limited to) the following areas:
- commercial property;
  - legal;
  - economic development and planning;
  - programme and project management

Existing contracts and framework agreements will be utilised where available and appropriate. The procurement of specialist legal advice will be undertaken by the Borough Solicitor in consultation with the Director of Place, where required.

- 7.8 Within the target intervention areas identified in the Framework, it may be possible to complete some interventions quickly, particularly where minimal Council control is required in terms of outcomes and where planning policies will be more relevant; others interventions will likely be longer term regeneration schemes where the Council may wish to achieve particular outcomes and take a more active role.
- 7.9 It is, therefore, proposed that interventions are carried out utilising a range of options including, but not limited to, the following (within which there are potential variations):
- **Land Disposals and Land Acquisitions** in accordance with the Council's Constitution;
  - **Outsourcing** the delivery of works, supplies and services in accordance with the Council's Constitution (for example, contractors, developers, professional services, advisors);
  - **Joint Venture** potentially involving ownership and control by a range of stakeholders including (but not limited to) staff, the Council, or independent providers. There are a number of potential structures, including:
    - (a) Partnership based structures:
      - General partnerships (including contractual joint ventures)
      - Registered limited partnerships
      - Limited liability partnerships
    - (b) Private limited companies

- 7.10 It is further proposed that authority shall be delegated to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Borough Solicitor and the Borough Treasurer, where required, to identify the most appropriate delivery model, to negotiate the terms of any arrangements, to enter into contractual arrangements (where appropriate) and to carry out all practical formalities in accordance with the Constitution.

#### State Aid

- 7.11 Where the Council is making investment decisions, the legal requirements such as State Aid implications will be fully considered by the Director of Place and Borough Solicitor.

#### Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)

- 7.12 The development and regeneration of land not in Council ownership will be encouraged through ongoing engagement with landowners. Within the intervention areas, where appropriate, the Council will also make strategic acquisitions of land as part of its target interventions as outlined above. Where proposals require land to deliver key infrastructure and/or a critical mass of comprehensive development, the Council will give due consideration to the use of its Compulsory Purchase (CPO) powers, if necessary, to acquire outstanding land interests as required. In doing so the Council will need to be satisfied that there is a compelling case in the public interest as a key part of that consideration.

### **8. Delivery and Next Steps**

- 8.1 Delivery of the proposals and actions in this report will take place in a phased manner over a number of years. An action plan with appropriate priorities, output measures and indicators will be developed enabling annual monitoring and review reports overseen by the Director of Place and Assistant Director Economic Development and Regeneration.
- 8.2 Governance will be developed in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The Council will utilise internal resources and liaise with partners and relevant groups, where required.

### **9. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 9.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to:
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
  - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
  - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

- 9.2 It is therefore important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may positively or negatively affect this work. To support this analysis, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed for the proposals outlined in this report, and is attached at Appendix 2.
- 9.3 The EIA looks at the anticipated (positive and/or negative) impacts of the proposals on people from Bolton's diverse communities, and whether any group (or groups) is likely to be directly or indirectly differentially affected.
- 9.4 At this stage, it is not anticipated that the proposals will have a disproportionate impact on any of Bolton's diversity groups.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

10.1.1 Approve the Town Centre Strategy, as outlined in this report;

10.1.2 Delegate authority to the Director of Place to update the Town Centre Strategy to reflect changes required as a result of matters such as planning consents, procurement exercises and construction timetables;

10.1.3 Approve the use of resources and funding, as detailed in the Town Centre Strategy;

10.1.4 Delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with Cabinet or the relevant Executive Cabinet Member and the Borough Solicitor and the Borough Treasurer (as appropriate) to:

10.1.4.1 identify the most appropriate delivery model in respect of the interventions and actions detailed in the Town Centre Strategy, to negotiate the terms of any arrangements, to enter into contractual arrangements (where appropriate) and to carry out all practical formalities in accordance with the Constitution; and

10.1.4.2 procure all such external resources required to deliver the Town Centre Strategy in accordance with the Council's Constitution, to negotiate the terms and conditions of any contracts and to enter into contractual arrangements; and

10.1.5 Authorise the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities.