

Altrincham town centre neighbourhood business plan 2015 to 2030

Basic Conditions Statement



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Basic Conditions Statement

As required by the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, this Statement is submitted to Trafford Council by the Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Forum, the qualifying body for preparing the Plan.

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1. Context

Neighbourhood Development Plans must meet a number of conditions:

Legal Requirements

The submitted Plan must comply with the following requirements:

1. It must be submitted by a qualifying body
2. It must be a Neighbourhood Development Plan with proposals related to Planning matters
3. It must state the period for which it is to have effect
4. It must not contain policies which relate to Excluded Development, and
5. It must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area and no other Plan for the Neighbourhood Area should be in force.

Basic Conditions

A Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions if:

- (a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the order (see below).
- (b) Having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, it is appropriate to make the order (applies in relation to a listed building only in so far as the order grants planning permission for development that affects the building or its setting (not applicable)).
- (c) Having special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area, it is appropriate to make the order (applies in relation to a conservation area only in so far as the order grants planning permission for development in relation to buildings or land in the area (not applicable)).
- (d) The making of the order contributes to the achievement of sustainable development (see below).
- (e) The making of the order is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area (see below)).
- (f) The making of the order does not breach and is otherwise compatible with EU obligations (see below), and
- (g) prescribed conditions are met in relation to the order and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the order.

Conditions (b) and (c) do not apply to this Plan.

2. Meeting the Legal Requirements

1. The Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan is submitted by the Altrincham Town Centre Forum, designated by Trafford Council as the Qualifying Body to prepare the Plan on the 28th July 2014.
2. The submitted Neighbourhood Business Plan relates to Planning Matters concerning the use and development of land in Altrincham Town Centre and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, 2012.
3. The Neighbourhood Business Plan is to have effect to 2030.
4. The Neighbourhood Business Plan does not deal with excluded matters as defined in Section 61K of Schedule 9 (Part 1) of the Localism Act, 2011.
5. The submitted Neighbourhood Business plan relates only to the area of Altrincham Town Centre designated by Trafford Council on the 28th July 2014. There are no other Neighbourhood Plans relating to that designated area.

3. Meeting The Basic Conditions

3.1. Having Regard to National Policy (basic condition (a)) and Contributing to the Achievement of Sustainable Development (basic condition (d)).

- 3.1.1 These two Basic Conditions are taken together as the National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF - (see Appendix 4 of the submitted Plan for a link) provides the National Policy context for the Neighbourhood Business Plan (condition (a)) and is predicated on the requirement to help to achieve Sustainable Development (condition (d)). The Plan promotes a series of policies (see Chapter 4 of the submitted Plan) which taken together help:

- (a) to achieve sustainable development, contributing to each of the three dimensions of sustainable development as follows: **1) Economic** – supporting the development of the town centre economy (see Policies S1, S2 and S3 relating to Main (Primary) Shopping and Mixed Use designations; Policy R relating to new retail development; Policy CP1 relating to car parking; Policy DIGI 1 relating to Digital Infrastructure; Policy OF1 relating to Offices and Policy M1 relating to the Market); **2) Social** – supporting the delivery of more town centre homes (see Policies A1, A2 dealing with land use allocations; Policies H1, H2 and H3 dealing with Housing provision); supporting the creation of a high quality environment and encouraging the provision of local services meeting the needs of the community (see Policies DIGI 1; Policies D1, D2, D3 relating to Design and Quality; Policy G1 relating to Green Infrastructure; Policy M1 relating to the Market and policy CF1 relating to Community Facilities) and providing a flexible context within which the development needs of the town centre can be met, enabling it to respond to changing market conditions (see Policies A1, S1, S2, S3, CP1 and DIGI 1); **3) Environmental** – in addition to supporting the creation of a high quality environment (described in 2) above) the Plan also contributes to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, supporting the development of up to date Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and including a Supplementary Design Document (at Appendix 3) which describes the 4 Character Areas which make up the town centre and 16 town centre-wide design principles all to

be taken into account in determining planning applications.

The NPPF sets out 13 aims, 10 of which are relevant to this Plan (the aims to 'Support a Prosperous Rural Economy'; 'Protect Green Belt Land' and 'Facilitate the Sustainable Use of Minerals' are not relevant to Altrincham Town Centre). The following paragraphs deal briefly with each of these in turn:

- (b) Build a strong, competitive economy – the Plan seeks to do this in a variety of ways including supporting the development of the town centre office market and promoting the allocation of mixed use areas to encourage flexibility and the ability to respond effectively to changing market demands (see Policies A1, S1, S2, S3, CP1 and DIGI 1); there is strong overlap between this aim and several of the aims described below which all play a part in contributing to supporting a strong and competitive economy.
- (c) Promote the vitality of the town centre – the Plan supports the development of the town centre as a vital commercial and economic centre and the social heart of the community, with clear land allocation policies supporting flexibility; strong support for the ongoing development of the market; support for the provision of community facilities; planning positively for the future of the town centre and continuing to meet the needs of its catchment population (all Policies set out in Chapter 4 taken together, help to achieve these objectives).
- (d) Promote sustainable transport with the modernisation of the inter-modal public transport interchange; the development of 'shared space streets' giving vehicles, cycles and pedestrians equal priority; encouraging the use of a wide range of transport modes giving people a real choice including providing sufficient car parking to support the varying requirements of the wide range of town centre services and facilities (see the proposed Integrated Car Parking Strategy and Policy CP1);
- (e) Support a high quality communications infrastructure – the Plan gives priority to the development of an effective Digital Infrastructure to enable the development of fast free WiFi and charging facilities and associated town centre apps, linked to the many town centre based retail, commercial and other web sites (including a town centre web site) all aimed at developing the concept of the digital high street and providing rapid, easily accessible, up to date and comprehensive information on what the town centre has to offer its catchment population and visitors (see the proposed Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Policy DIGI 1);
- (f) Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes the Plan allocates land on the edge of the town centre for houses and apartments and encourages the use of unused/underused town centre space, particularly above ground level and the conversion of mainly unoccupied office space for residential use, even where the provision of car parking is impractical. (See Policies H1, H2 and H3). A target of at least 550 additional residential units is established, with encouragement for that figure to rise over the plan period.
- (g) Require high quality design with the establishment of a series of design related policies including the establishment of town centre wide design principles and the description of the key characteristics of the 4 Character Areas in the town centre, all set out in the Supplementary Design Document (see also Policies D1, D2, D3 and G1).
- (h) Promote healthy communities through supporting the development of the town centre as the social hub of the community; providing safe, accessible and pleasant environments; providing the context

within which a wide range of social, recreational and cultural facilities and services are provided for the community and ensuring that the planning framework is flexible enough to allow the town centre to develop and evolve to reflect the community's requirements (all Policies contribute to helping achieve these objectives).

- (i) Climate Change – a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) has been carried out by the engineering consultants AECOM on the draft Final Plan. The SEA seeks to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant positive and negative effects of the Plan and reasonable alternatives. The SEA looked at Air Quality, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Historic Environment and Landscape, Land, Soil and Water Resources, Population and Community, Health and Well Being, Transport and Economy and Enterprise. The draft SEA contained one Recommendation for improving the environmental performance of the Plan namely that it should include stronger policies on urban greening and green infrastructure. Policy G1 reflects this recommendation. The report also defines two areas where monitoring is proposed – Air Quality and Historic Environment and Landscape. Trafford Council will monitor accordingly. See Appendix 4 of the Plan for the link to the final SEA Report.
- (j) Preserve and Enhance the Natural Environment – the SEA report looked at several aspects of the Natural Environment (e.g. Air Quality, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Landscape, and Land Soil and Water resources), and the conclusions are set out in (i) above. Policy G1, dealing with Green Infrastructure, is also relevant.
- (k) Conserve and enhance the historic environment – this is particularly important for Altrincham town centre. The recent review of the 7 Conservation Areas which lie in whole or in part within the town centre boundary and the production of Management Plans for each of them, provides an up to date context for determining proposals which impact on the historic environment. These are complimented in the Plan by the description of the Character Areas and the town centre wide design principles in the Supplementary Design Document. The land allocations policy also refers to the need for Heritage Impact Statements to be submitted along with planning applications for the development of defined sites (see Policies D1, D2, D3, G1, A2, H2, H3 and the Supplementary Design Document at Appendix 3).

3.2. The Trafford Context (Basic Condition (e))

- 3.2.1 The Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy (CS) adopted in 2012, provides the most up to date context within which the Submitted Plan has been prepared. Chapter 2 of the CS, 'The Profile' (and specifically the "Altrincham and Neighbouring Communities" section) is fully acknowledged but not repeated here. Similarly, the Vision for Trafford is taken as the context for defining the Vision for Altrincham town centre in Chapter 3 of the Plan.
- 3.2.2 The Strategic Objectives set out in Chapter 4 of the CS (and in particular SO 1, 3, 4 and 8) along with the "Altrincham and Neighbouring Communities" Place Objectives set out in Chapter 5 of the CS (in particular ALO 3, 5, 8, 9, 14, 16, 22 and 29), are all taken as the basis on which the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives for the town centre have been developed (see Chapter 3 of the Plan).
- 3.2.3 The Plan seeks to exceed the minimum target of 250 additional homes in the town centre set out in the Core Strategy and sets a target of at least 550. The Plan fully acknowledges all Core Strategy Policies, including those for retail and offices, and proposes land allocation policies which protect the opportunities for the town centre to develop in the current rapidly changing technological circumstances, in a flexible way, responding effectively to changing market conditions.

3.3. Meeting EU Obligations. (Basic Condition (f))

- 3.3.1 Following discussions with the Local Planning Authority, the only requirement in order to meet EU obligations was determined to be the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).
- 3.3.2 It has been agreed with the Local Planning Authority that a Strategic Environmental Assessment should be carried out under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes 2004, to ensure compatibility with the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The SEA of the Altrincham Neighbourhood Business Plan – Environmental Report (Pre-submission) and the non-technical summary prepared by Aecom were both published on the Forum web site (www.myaltrincham.org) for the Regulation 14 public consultation from the 16th January to the 29th February.
- 3.3.3 The Conclusions of the report are as follows:
- “The outcome of the assessment is mixed. For the more socio-economic objectives it seems clear that the Plan would result in a number of positive effects of which those on 'Land', 'Population and Community', 'Health' and the 'Economy' are likely to be significant. The negatives centre on air quality and heritage assets in the area. Both of these effect predictions have a high level of uncertainty as so much is dependent on the details of the design of the developments” There is a recommendation that these two potential negatives are monitored, which Trafford Council have agreed to do.
- 3.3.4 The final SEA environmental report can be accessed on the Forum website, www.myaltrincham.org
- 3.3.5 The Neighbourhood Business Plan has regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act, 1998.
- 3.3.6 Habitats – when the Council carried out the SEA screening in 2015, it concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was required (see 3.2 to 3.4 above) but that a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) would not be required for the Neighbourhood Plan. That screening report was consulted upon as required by Regulations and no objection was raised to the conclusions by any of the statutory consultees.

3.4. Conclusion

- 3.4.1 The submitted Neighbourhood Business Plan relates to Planning Matters concerning the use and development of land in Altrincham Town Centre and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, 2012.
- 3.4.2 The basic conditions set out in the legislation are considered to have been met by the submitted Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan and all the Policies therein.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The submitted Neighbourhood Business Plan relates to Planning Matters concerning the use and development of land in Altrincham Town Centre and has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements and processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, 2012.
- 4.2 The basic conditions set out in the legislation are considered to have been met by the submitted Altrincham Town Centre Neighbourhood Business Plan and all the Policies therein.



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