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Introduction

1.1 The Whitefield Town Centre Plan

The Whitefield Town Centre Plan outlines how Bury Council and the local community want to improve Whitefield over the next 10 years. It includes short, medium, and long-term goals.

Some projects will be led by Bury Council, while others will be run by community groups and local businesses.

The people of Whitefield will be key to making this plan work. Their input and knowledge are vital for its success. Shaped together with residents and community groups, the plan takes into account their deep understanding of Whitefield.

The plan covers the area from Besses o' th' Barn Church in the south to Elms Square in the north, and from Phillips High School in the west to Whitefield and Victoria Park in the east.



Whitefield Town Centre Study Area



1.2 Purpose and Scope

This document is a place making plan for Whitefield Town Centre which includes broader elements of improvement of the town for communities and businesses. It will also help solidify the town's transition into being a successful 21st century high street.

The plan begins to consider the long-term opportunities and actions required to create important change in Whitefield Town Centre but some of these actions require careful consideration.

For example, Bury New Road is an important route in Transport for Greater Manchester's plans to encourage walking, wheeling and cycling for shorter journeys, instead of travel by car.

Any changes to this road must be studied wisely. We need to understand how these changes might affect traffic flow along this road and on other roads in the area.

This means we can't make quick decisions about Bury New Road without looking at the bigger picture of traffic in the region.



Slattery independent bakery and patisserie



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The Whitefield Town Centre Plan provides:

- A complete vision for the future of the town centre to facilitate regeneration, and ensure future investment in the town is considered;
- A detailed overview and summary of existing strategies and policy;
- A baseline analysis of the town centre's current conditions, challenges, context and opportunities;
- A breakdown of short, medium and long-term opportunities to improve the town, including a list of potential projects and how these may be delivered;
- A framework for arranging the town centre to make it better and work well for everyone;
- A breakdown of opportunities for community ownership and leadership; and
- Ideas to strengthen existing partnerships between Bury Council and the community

**A Plan for People**

Meeting the needs of Whitefield residents

Improving quality of life

Allowing residents, businesses, and charities to participate.

**A Plan for Place**

Based on understanding Whitefield's strengths and weaknesses

Creating a town centre that showcases Whitefield's history and identity.

**A Plan for Nature**

Valuing and improving natural systems in the town centre.

Using nearby green spaces and bringing greenery into the town.

Supporting the Bury borough to be carbon neutral by 2038. Bury Council's become carbon neutral by 2038, we must value and improve natural systems in the town centre.

**A Plan for Circular Economy**

We want to create a local economy that:

- Benefits local people
- Grows based on reusing and recycling resources.

1.3 The Challenge and Opportunity

Why change now?

As in other towns and cities across the UK, the economy of Whitefield Town Centre has suffered because of large scale shifts in the retail economy, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost of living crisis and a wider shift towards online retail. Because of these factors, many towns are looking to find a new way forward.

What does the town centre of tomorrow look like, and how do we make that happen?

The traditional high street of the 20th century, underpinned by retail, is increasingly disappearing due to the growth of online retailing.

What will replace the high street of the 20th century will be different in every location, but a diverse range of goods, services, and events will be highly important to every town. This diversity, strengthened by joint working with the Whitefield community is what this plan seeks to provide.



Hamilton's Bar and Restaurant – Bury New Road



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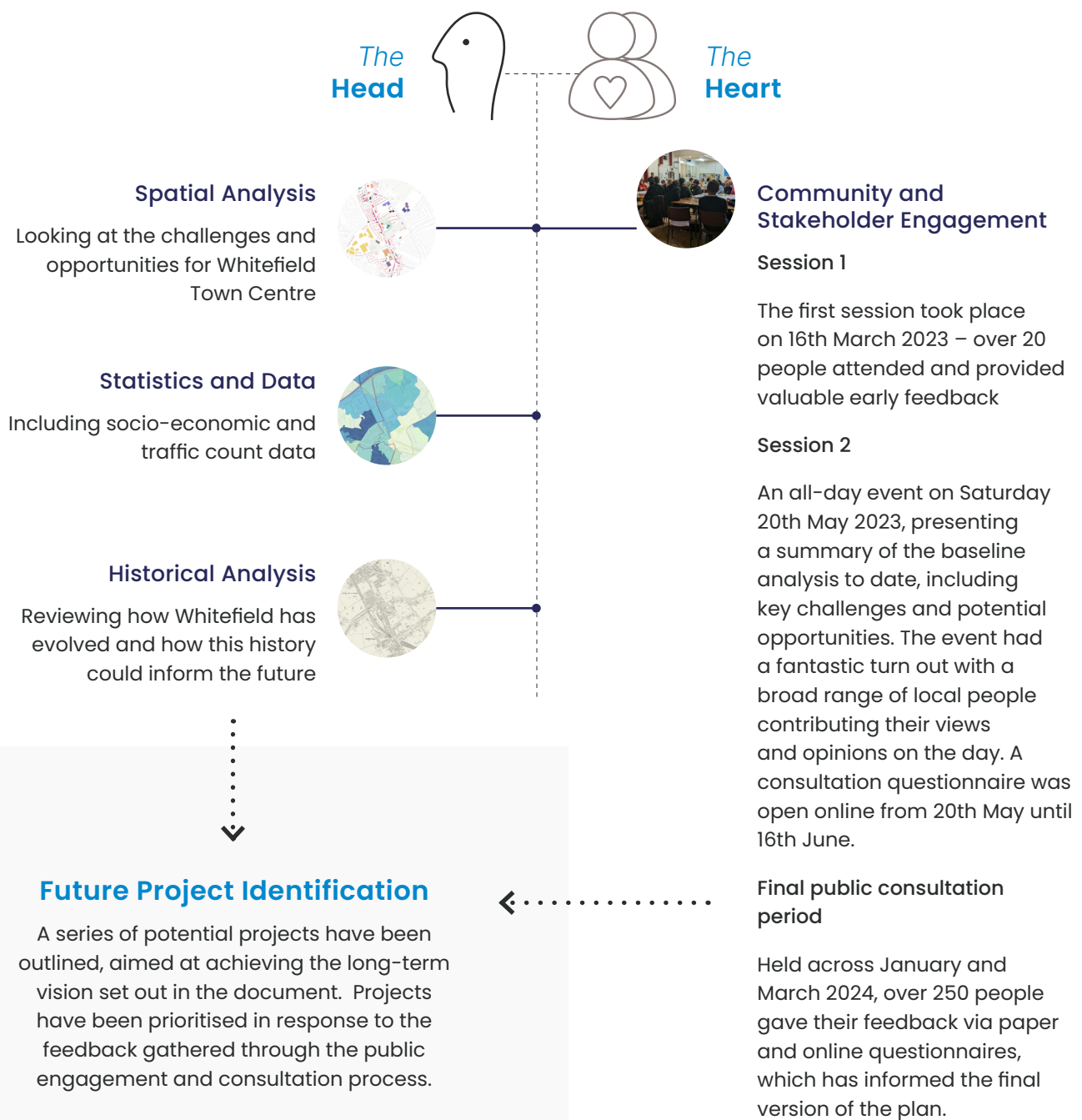
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1.4 Our Approach

The Head and Heart of Whitefield

We have undertaken extensive engagement with the local community to understand Whitefield better, focusing on both its physical aspects (the head) and the experiences and needs of its people (the heart).



1.5 Strategic Backdrop

The Whitefield Town Centre Plan exists within a broader strategic context, which emphasises investment.

Greater Manchester Strategy 2021 – 2031

Sets out a route over the next decade to make Greater Manchester greener, fairer, and more prosperous. The strategy sets out a commitment to drive investment into growth locations and create opportunities in adjacent town and local centres.

Greater Manchester Culture Strategy

Provides a cultural vision for the region and promotes regeneration projects which are connected to culture

Greater Manchester Transportation Strategy 2040

Outlines how TfGM and the Bee Network will deliver the long-term goal of 50% of travel within Greater Manchester to be made by walking, cycling and public transport. It is intended that the Whitefield Town Centre Plan feeds into the GMCA's vision zero strategy for eliminating 11 deaths and life-changing injuries on the region's roads by 2040.

5 Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester 2019 – 2024

Sets out Greater Manchester's vision to be a clean, carbon neutral, climate resilient city region with a thriving natural environment and circular, zero-waste economy where:

- Infrastructure will be smart and fit for the future;
- There will be an integrated, clean and affordable public transport system, resource efficient buildings, greater local community renewable energy, cleaner air, water and green space for all;
- Access to green space in every community, more trees including in urban areas, active travel networks, environmental education and healthy and locally-produced food; and
- Citizens and businesses will adopt sustainable living and businesses practices, focusing on local solutions to deliver a prosperous economy.

Places for Everyone (PfE)

PfE is a strategic plan that covers nine of the ten Greater Manchester districts and was adopted in March 2024. It now forms a key part of the development plans of each of the nine districts. PfE sets out the overall spatial strategy for the nine districts, including identifying the appropriate scale and distribution of housing and employment development. It also contains a series of strategic policies and allocations aimed at delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for the nine districts. These policies will be used when determining planning applications.

Bury Local Plan

The Council are currently at an early stage in the production of a new Local Plan for Bury. The Local Plan will include a more detailed set of locally specific planning policies to complement those in PFE. Once adopted, these Local Plan policies will replace the saved policies of the UDP.

Bury Unitary Development Plan

The saved policies of the Bury UDP also form a key part of the current development plan and these policies are used alongside strategic PFE policies in the determination of planning applications.

Let's Do It – Bury 2030

Provides overarching strategic direction to the Council, and outlines how Bury can achieve faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation. The strategy sets out to deliver an economic recovery strategy including regeneration plans, and broader investment within in the borough's towns, including Whitefield.

The strategy is underpinned by the guiding principles of:

- Local Neighbourhoods – empowered residents, families and local communities within our townships at the heart of decision making to make a difference to people's lives.
- An Enterprising Spirit – raising aspirations, removing barriers, and maximising opportunities to grow and develop our people and businesses.
- Delivering Together – the creation of a new relationship between public services, communities and businesses which is based on co-design, accountability and shared decision making.
- A Strength's-based Approach – a borough in which people are helped to make the best of themselves, by recognising and building on our strengths.

Bury Physical Activity Strategy

Outlines the Council's aspirations to increase the rates of physical activity through the Borough, working collaboratively with community and neighbourhood groups

Bury Transport Strategy

Sets out the vision that by 2040, Bury will be an attractive, well-connected and innovative Borough where people aspire to live, work and visit. The Borough's townships will be connected by a modern and efficient transport network, providing attractive, sustainable transport links both within and beyond the Borough.

Regarding Whitefield, the strategy proposes:

- The introduction of better crossing facilities for the A56;
- Improve access to Whitefield and Besses tram stops;
- Improve wayfinding in the town centre;
- Install a cycle hub at the Metrolink stop to support users travelling by bike;
- Increase high frequency bus routes, including on the 135; and
- Implementation of School Streets.

Bury Council Economic Strategy

Mitigates local impacts relating to Covid-19, risks associated with EU exit, and inflation, whilst setting out a clear framework for inclusive growth, community wealth building, and greening the economy.

Bury Council Culture Strategy 2022–2027

Sets out a strategic vision based on Stories, Skills, Strength, Space and Support to the development of Bury's culture.

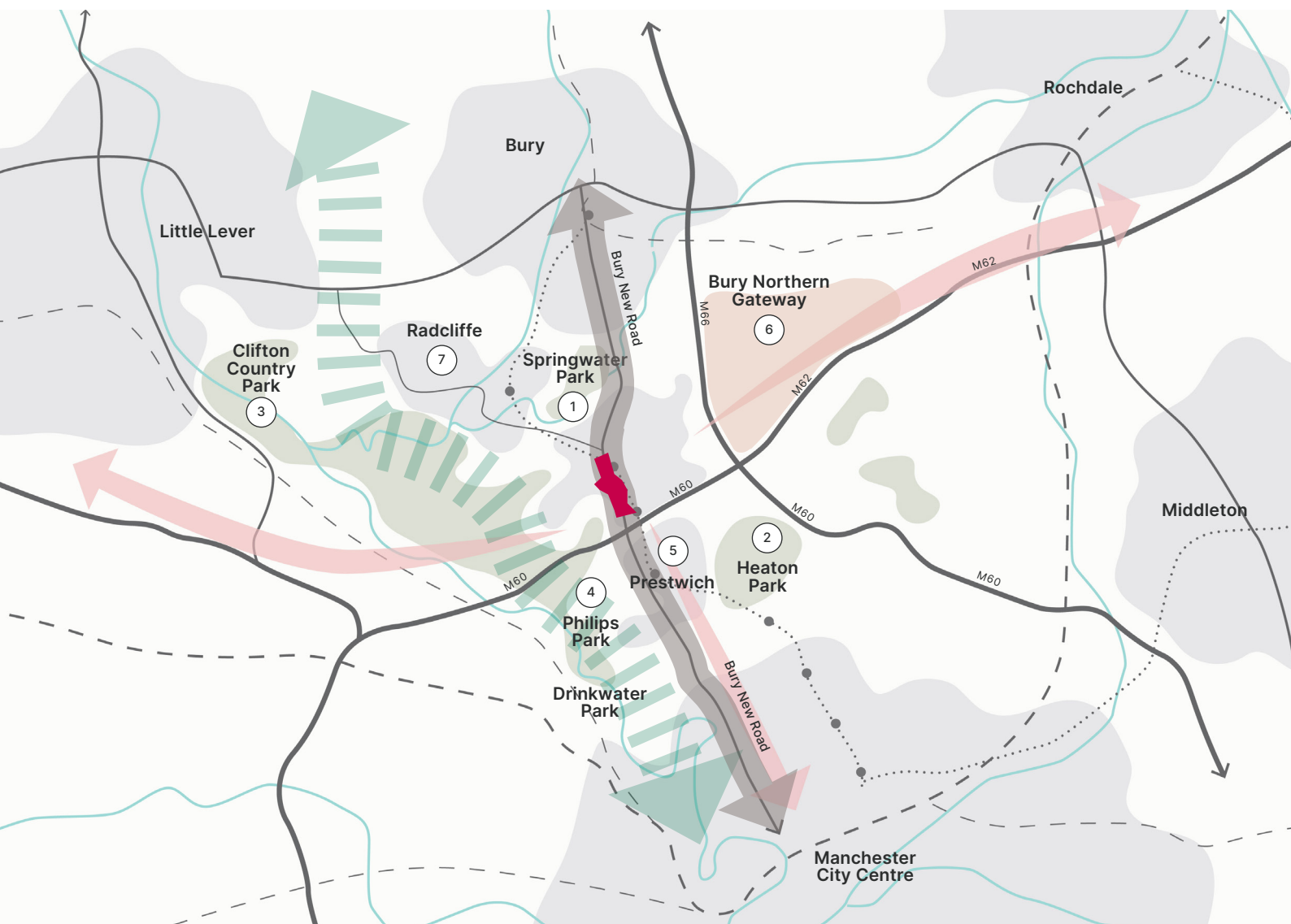
1.6 Strategic Context

Whitefield is one of a series of towns located along the Bury New Road Corridor, linking Manchester City Centre to the south with Bury Town Centre to the north.

The town centre is surrounded by several strategic green spaces, many associated with the River Irwell corridor, creating active linkages between Whitefield and Manchester City Centre.

This strategic relationship and proximity to the City Centre is major asset for Whitefield, with a central tram stop serving the town centre and a 15-minute commute to Victoria Train Station.

Access to the wider strategic green network is another key asset, despite the active travel network breaking down in residential neighbourhoods surrounding the town centre.



1. **Springwater Park** is the nearest strategic green space to the town centre, and provides access to the paths along the River Irwell corridor.
2. **Heaton Park** is Manchester's largest park, and sits in close proximity to the town centre study area to the south-east.
3. **Clifton Country Park** hugs the River Irwell, and is connected to Whitefield and Radcliffe via a network of long distance walking routes and trails.
4. **Philips Park** sits in close proximity to Whitefield, and is accessible via a bridge across the motorway.
5. Whitefield's relationship with **Prestwich** is of interest, with Prestwich having been subject to recent regeneration and road improvement schemes, as well as live regeneration proposals.
6. **The Northern Gateway** is Bury Council's largest allocation within the Places for Everyone regional development plan, and would support up to 2750 new homes and 20,000 future jobs. Strategic transport proposals will impact Whitefield as the scheme progresses, with major road and bus route proposals potentially easing congestion along the A56.
7. **Radcliffe** has also been subject to significant regeneration focus – with a strategic regeneration framework adopted in 2020 outlining the long-term vision for the town.