

TRAFFORD

PART 3: The Vision

The Round Table Workshop brought together key stakeholders all committed to the progress of Old Trafford, as well as members of the community whom understand better than anyone what needs to change in order for Old Trafford to prosper. The workshop established some key objectives for the development of Old Trafford.



Diagnosis

The picture of Old Trafford painted in Part 2 of this report is of a series of relatively strong communities in a physically fragmented and disconnected part of the city. The twin drivers of Decent Homes and Growth Point Status offers the opportunity to restructure the area and repair its urban form for the benefit of the existing community and to attract newcomers into the area.

The population of the area is more similar to the adjacent districts in Manchester than the rest of Trafford. In terms of deprivation and issues such as long-term illness the Tamworth and Hullard/Rivers estates are the most deprived. In contrast the central Shrewsbury Street area has higher levels of employment and owner occupation, yet also the highest crime levels and the lowest income levels.

The different housing types in the area attract different types of people. The nine high-rise blocks fulfil an important housing need in Trafford. The residents tend to be childless and generally younger while the turnover of flats is high (around 15% a year with higher turnover on the Tamworth Estate). The low-rise social housing estates have traditionally housed families but, as well-established areas, they accommodate a significant number of older people alongside families. The central part of the area has more private housing, mainly traditional terraces. This area is characterised by larger families and a large Asian community centred around the local Mosque. Many of these areas are within the IMD's most deprived 5% of areas nationally. However despite this and the poor layout of the social housing estates, most remain stable and are exhibiting far less signs of stress than similar neighbourhoods in Manchester and Salford.

In physical terms the area lacks coherence. As the historic plans illustrate, the neighbourhood was once part of a seamless stretch of terraced housing running from the edge of the city centre to White City. Much of this was redeveloped in the 1960's and 1970s as a series of council estates that

face inwards and relate poorly to each other. The worst connections are those over the boundary with Manchester. It is as if the estates were planned by Trafford and Manchester councils almost as if the legislative boundary was the end of the earth!

Because of its fragmented structure, its lack of linkages and the low density of some estates, much of the masterplanning area feels isolated, belying its central location. The area does not operate as one community – we have identified up to eight communities often with very few links to each other. This means, for example, that people from the Tamworth or Hullard estates are unlikely to use the Shrewsbury Street community facilities. One reason for this is the decline of the high streets. In the past Stretford Road, City Road, Cornbrook Road and Chorlton Road would have been high streets providing a community hub to unite the adjacent communities. Today the streets are dominated by fast moving traffic, are hostile, and most of their shops and pubs are gone. The estates turn their backs on the roads.

The masterplanning area therefore has significant structural weaknesses in its design and layout and yet remains home to strong and relatively stable communities. The twin drivers of Decent Homes requirement and Growth Point status offer an important opportunity to address these structural weaknesses by redeveloping or restructuring parts of the area, increasing the density of housing, repairing its urban structure and turning it once more into a thriving urban neighbourhood.

Consultations

The masterplan has been undertaken in partnership with local people through an extensive programme of consultations. The design Charrettes are described in Part 4 of this report. However the consultation started with a round table workshop on 30th June 2008 at St. Brides Church on Shrewsbury Street.

The initial workshop was aimed at stakeholders and residents of Old Trafford to set the agenda for the masterplanning exercise. The workshop included a presentation of URBED's initial findings and two interactive sessions:

- **A sustainable community:** The first session identified the elements of a sustainable community against which Old Trafford could be measured.
- **Mapping of the issues:** The second session focused upon identifying which parts of the area were most affected by these issues and what needed to change.

The feedback on each of the areas was as follows:

Hullard: This area was seen as overcrowded, with the tower blocks making it feel like people were living on top of each other. There was conflict between young people and the more established community and the lack of play facilities meant that children were seen as 'out of control'. The area was seen as having been 'thrown' together with no sense of identity and only one way in and out. There were problems with litter and too many parked cars.

The Rivers: People disliked the layout of the estate which 'may have worked thirty years ago doesn't work today'. The houses are back-to-front making it confusing and preventing people from parking near their home. The communal space is fenced-off and unusable. There is a feeling that the area is too dense and that it is surrounded by busy roads.

The Central Area: The open space was seen as inaccessible, underused and dangerous to cross. The Shrewsbury Street area had problems because streets were blocked so that the alleyways were used as rat runs. The area has also suffered gang related problems. The more recent estates were described as islands. The Community Centre was seen as a good facility but was not used by people in other parts of the area.

The Tamworth Estate: This area had the worst problems. The tower blocks were intimidating and detached from Old Trafford. The play area was very good and well-used but the open space generally was uninviting. The area had drug and alcohol issues, with high unemployment, a refugee population with language barriers, a high turnover of flats and levels of apathy. The balcony blocks were felt to have improved and had a better sense of community.

The main points raised in the second session were:

- There was a need for redevelopment of the tower blocks.
- Stretford Road and Chorlton Road were barriers preventing the integration of the area.
- There was a need for better connections between neighbourhoods
- There needs to be a much stronger community hub and focal point for the area possibly based around a new community facility.
- There was a need for improved shopping facilities, on Stretford Road, City Road and Chorlton Road.



Vision for the area

The aim of the masterplan is to address the issues described in the first part of this report. However the masterplan has the potential to be more than just a repair job. The aim should be to create a series of thriving, sustainable neighbourhoods that can integrate with each other as well as with the neighbouring areas of Hulme and Stretford.

The question is therefore what we mean by a sustainable community. The main objective for the masterplan for Old Trafford outlined by Trafford Housing Trust, Trafford MBC and Old Trafford Neighbourhood Management Partnership is to create a:

'vibrant, sustainable community, with quality housing, excellent environment, and good connections to employment opportunities together with improved retail and community facilities'

The key principles that should underlie the masterplan are:

1. Preserving what we have: We do not start with a blank sheet of paper. The area is populated by strong and stable communities and we must build on their success rather than sweep them away as has happened in some other regeneration areas.

2. Improving the quality of the environment: One of the greatest weaknesses of the area is the quality of public spaces. A focus must therefore be the transformation of the public realm, both within estates and in the large public open spaces. This will make the area feel more inviting and safer.

3. Connecting things together: One of the aims of the public realm works should be to connect the estates together, to Hulme and Stretford and to training and employment opportunities. We need to establish an integrated and permeable network of streets so that the estates no longer feel like isolated enclaves.

4. Strengthening local identity: The Old Trafford area is the most culturally diverse part of Trafford. This is a strength and is reflected in the diversity of local business. We should

capture this cultural capital to boost further business growth to revive Stretford Road and Chorlton Road as local centres and community hubs for the area.

5. A decent home for everyone: Everyone in the area should have a decent home including all of the homes that have not yet had decent homes work undertaken. The amount, affordability and quality of homes in the area needs to be improved to meet the needs of local residents.

6. A mixed and balanced community: Redevelopment and infill opportunities should be used as an opportunity to diversify the local community. The overall amount of social housing should be maintained whilst additional new housing should diversify the mix and tenure of the area with more family homes and low cost home ownership.

7. Opportunities for all: The redevelopment of the area and the mix of community facilities accessible to residents is crucial. Facilities and services should be aimed at helping local people improve their skills and qualifications and gain access to employment in the conurbation. The Old Trafford Neighbourhood Management Board will play a key role in ensuring that opportunities are linked to residents and that training and education remain at the forefront of service provision in the area.

8. A range of local facilities: There is a need to create a balanced range of local facilities accessible to the whole of the area. The main identified needs are for Youth Facilities, Training Facilities and local shopping parades. These should be focused on the Stretford Road and Chorlton Road high streets to be accessible to all of the community.

Achieving the Vision

Outlined below is a list of key regeneration objectives to support the masterplan in order for the regeneration of Old Trafford to be successful. These objectives fall under 6 categories.

Housing and the built Environment

Trafford has always been a popular choice of location for working professionals whom are drawn to the location due to easy reach of jobs in Manchester and Trafford Park. However Old Trafford is still one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the Borough of Trafford. There is also a higher population of Minority and Ethnic groups. In order to ensure local communities benefit from regeneration and the area continues to attract new residents some key actions need to be taken:

- To promote the development of Old Trafford as a housing Growth point and to develop infrastructure, transport, retail and community
- To create a more balanced mix of property types and tenures across the area
- To provide more choice and diversity to meet the differing needs of the existing population and to attract people into the area
- To provide new housing of high quality in terms of design, energy efficiency and sustainability
- To encourage stepping into home ownership by supporting people from social rented accommodation to part and full ownership
- To improve the management and availability of services to local residents

Transport and Connectivity

The Trafford Boundary is shared by Hulme, which has benefited from major regeneration that has improved the layout, introduced much improved housing and community infrastructure and has benefited from the opening of Stretford Road. The Northern tip of Trafford is serviced by a tram station which has the potential to link the community of Old Trafford to opportunities within the wider city region.

Old Trafford Gateway Development Framework

An area running from the far northern tip of Old Trafford to Stretford Road was identified in the Old Trafford Gateway Development Framework as a key gateway to Old Trafford where special consideration needs to be given to the development of the area. Key priorities for the improvements are:

- Improve access to Cornbrook Park station and other public transport nodes in order to link Old Trafford with jobs and training opportunities
- To improve connectivity throughout the area by promoting linkages between the north, central and east of Old Trafford and the rest of Manchester.
- Improve the streetscape environment and provide safer and more legible routes
- New development and public realm improvements should be based on the guidance as set out in the manual for Streets and Home Zone principles.
- There should be stricter design guidance on the development of properties along Stretford Road to strengthen the role of the route as a key connector between Trafford and Manchester.
- To promote better walking and cycling routes in the area
- To introduce better crossings on Stretford Road and Chorlton Road

Economy

The Trafford Economic Development Plan 2006-2009 outlined the importance of Trafford as an economic driver for the North and highlighted the importance of Trafford's location at the edge of the regional centre and close to many of the regions key assets. Old Trafford is in a position to exploit its prime location and tap into the economic growth for the region. Trafford has one of the highest business density rates in the north (Trafford has 49 businesses per 1000 residents compared to Manchester which has 34 per 1000 residents). There is

however a disproportionate share of business and enterprise growth in the Trafford Borough with a majority of growth in financial, professional and business services accounting for 30% of jobs in Trafford, with IT services accounting for 4.7% of jobs and media accounting for 8.7% of jobs. There is also disproportion in relation to the economic activity of residents in Trafford as wards within Old Trafford are the most deprived in the borough and nationally and have high unemployment rates. Key priorities for Old Trafford will be:

- Improve training and employment services within Old Trafford to connect local residents to opportunities within Trafford and the wider city region.
- Encourage training and targets for better quality employment
- Specific support for BME community into sectors where there is under-representation such as finance and banking.
- Support for long term unemployed to get back into work
- Continued support services geared towards confidence building and retraining for relevant skills

Environmental

The masterplan suggests improvements which will help to improve the permeability of the area as well as improvements to Tamworth Park, St Brides Fields and introduction of a new park/green corridor at Hullard Estate. Overall new layouts and buildings will adhere to Code for sustainable Homes level 4.

- To connect and enhance the network of green spaces
- To improve Tamworth Park
- To open up a green corridor between St George's Park in Hulme and Hullard Estate in Old Trafford
- To improve the layout of estates through de-radburning schemes, and promotion of better quality public realm.
- To promote sustainable development through the design and layout of new housing and facilities

Social and Cultural

The development and continued improvement to community facilities in the area is crucial to the progress of the community. These are crucial to the promotion of social cohesion in Old Trafford.

- To develop and improve community facilities within Old Trafford
- To improve youth provision in the area
- To ensure development of accessible facilities which are sensitive to the needs of local people.
- To develop an action plan for a new and improved Old Trafford Community Centre

Governance, Equity and Services

- Continued Neighborhood Management to maximize on the regeneration through management of the Old Trafford masterplan with representation and support from Old Trafford Neighborhood Management, Trafford Council and Trafford Housing Trust
- Development of a Digital Inclusion Strategy to help local residents gain computer skills to assist with training and job opportunities, and help with making computers more accessible. This could be done with the Media City, and Lets Go Global.
- Develop the Financial Inclusion Strategy in relation to Old Trafford (currently being developed with THT and The University of Salford)
- To support residents through the process of regeneration by providing assistance and information on housing options.

