



Withington Village Action Plan 2010–2020

Introduction and background

The South Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (South Manchester SRF), 'The Living City', was completed and approved in October 2007. The SRF sets out the vision, policy and development framework for the ten wards in south Manchester – Burnage, Chorlton, Chorlton Park, Didsbury East, Didsbury West, Fallowfield, Levenshulme, Old Moat, Whalley Range and Withington. One of the key actions identified in the SRF is development of district centre plans with the aim of maintaining and improving the success of the district centres. This will ensure that they provide a high-quality retail and service offer, act as a hub for community and cultural life, and provide accessible public transport, all in a pleasant and safe environment.

CBRE were appointed in December 2009 to develop a district centre plan for Withington. Between February and June 2010 a public consultation was carried out by the Council. The findings of the public consultation, along with detailed analysis of the district centre carried out by CBRE, formed the basis of the final district centre plan CBRE produced in late 2010.

The Withington Village Action Plan sets out a ten-year strategy to guide future change in the centre. While it is a non-statutory document, it reflects the statutory planning context for the district centre. It is intended to inform decision-making to realise change and achieve the vision for Withington. It reflects the findings of the baseline analysis prepared to underpin the Action Plan in terms of the physical, economic, movement and management characteristics identified. The Action Plan responds to issues highlighted in consultation with residents, businesses and public organisations.

The Withington Village Action Plan is structured as follows:

- **Section 1** sets the context for Withington Village, summarising the key baseline issues and opportunities, and the consultation responses.

- **Section 2** affirms the vision for the centre.
- **Section 3** identifies a series of actions: site-specific and area-wide initiatives to promote and manage change in Withington.

High-level actions are also described for the nearby Ladybarn local centre and Old Moat Lane Shopping Parade.

Preparing the Action Plan

The Withington Village Action Plan has been informed by detailed analysis of the centre's urban design, transport and movement, property, retail and service offer, planning and management characteristics. This background research includes desk-based investigation and site visits. Together, this work has formed the baseline analysis – the evidence base that underpins the proposed actions. The vision for Withington Village was shared with the local community to ensure that the plan's agenda for change is aligned with the residents' and stakeholders' needs and priorities, and to test the ideas for intervention and change.

Action Plan area

The core focus of the Withington Village Action Plan is illustrated in the plan below. This area reflects the retail and service core of the district centre. The Action Plan takes into account the surrounding residential area and the population the centre serves. The plan also recognises the importance of the Wilmslow Road corridor, which acts as a main link between Withington and the nearby Fallowfield District Centre.

Withington Village is broadly formed in an L shape. Wilmslow Road, running in a north to south direction, forms the main thoroughfare, with Copson Street a minor road. The heart of the district centre is characterised by a mix of retail and service uses.



Surrounding uses are mainly residential, but these are interspersed with other activities, such as employment, health and community leisure.

Context

Withington lies within the south Manchester area. South Manchester has developed a reputation as one of the most successful and attractive areas in the city of Manchester. Centres such as Chorlton and Didsbury have proved popular in terms of both their residential and retail offer. While there are some very successful centres in south Manchester, Withington has not benefited in the same way, especially given the relatively affluent residential catchment.

Withington, largely designated as a Conservation Area, has maintained the feel of a village, with a number of high-quality properties giving a distinct and intimate character to the centre (see map on page 31 for Conservation Area boundary). While the retail offer is reasonably diverse – with independent and national retailers present – it is not maximising its full potential in terms of the centre's environment and mix of uses available.

Ladybarn, a local shopping parade east of Withington Village, is focused on Mauldeth Road. It is a local centre that offers a mix of retail and service sector uses catering for nearby residents' daily needs. At the edge of Withington Village, some 100 metres to the west, is Old Moat Lane Parade – a collection of mainly service-oriented retail units.

Wilmelton Road links to nearby Fallowfield and is the main route to Manchester City Centre. This route is characterised by large detached properties with a variety of uses, including hotels and housing. The road is also a very important public transport route.

Policy

The South Manchester SRF sets out the basis for more detailed proposals and actions to guide Withington District Centre's future direction:

Mix of uses

- Improve the quality of retail units to attract further non-food retailers.
- Development and refurbishment opportunities.
- Identify sites/premises for remodelling to provide larger retail units and to attract high-quality development.
- Explore opportunities to bring vacant units back into use.

Environment and accessibility

- Protect the character and townscape quality of the centre through Conservation Area enforcement.
- Prepare a public realm strategy, including shopfronts, pedestrian improvements and landscaping.

Other key planning issues are also noted in the baseline analysis for Withington:

- There is a high proportion of students in the area, reflected by the presence of a strong private rented housing sector. This influence can place a strain on the local property market relating to housing supply, tenure and affordability.
- The potential to consider Withington in the context of the neighbouring centres of Fallowfield and Rusholme, which together form a network of centres to meet the needs of the wider catchment area.

The local community

Key statistics relating to the local catchment population:

- There is a high representation of students. Age groups 15–19 and 20–24 account for 37.6% of the population in the Withington and Old Moat wards combined, compared to England's average of 13.4%. Students have a strong



influence on the character and activity of the area, which brings both benefits and conflict.

- 21% of the population of Withington and Old Moat are from black and ethnic minority groups, roughly in line with the Manchester average. The ACORN classification index categorises the area as 'urban prosperity' and 'aspiring singles'.
- There is a very high proportion of private rented households in the area, which reflects the student population; this stands at 39.4% in Withington and 28.1% in Old Moat, compared to 19.5% for Manchester. The proportion of social rented housing is much higher in the Old Moat ward to the west of the district centre than in Withington to the east.

Management

The approach to managing Withington Village is informed by the Manchester City Council Neighbourhood Focus Strategy. The challenge is to determine how best to deliver a neighbourhood strategy that reflects the priorities of residents and the resources available.

The Neighbourhood Focus Strategy looks towards improving outcomes for people at local levels. It envisages that this can be achieved through further integration of service delivery, strengthening partnerships at neighbourhood level, and by ensuring that public sector resources are directed to meet the needs of residents. It also notes that there needs to be flexibility in the management approach so that specific issues can be tackled in individual centres.

For Withington many of the management issues are cross-related. For example, a higher student population has resulted in an increased number of homes in multiple occupancy (HMO). This can cause local conflict where they are present in established family housing areas. The management approach

will need to reflect the complex nature of these issues if it is to be successful. Existing local initiatives already suggest that community action groups, such as Love Withington, may be well equipped to assist with such matters.

The baseline analysis pinpoints the main management concerns. The number and location of HMOs are one issue. There has also been a growth in bars and takeaways, which comes with associated antisocial behaviour. A planning moratorium, which limits approval of new planning applications for these establishments, has controlled their growth in Withington compared to neighbouring Fallowfield. There is a particular problem in Withington with on-street drinking and vagrancy, which can cause intimidation for shoppers and residents.

Overall, a clean, safe, secure, sustainable and welcoming environment will make the centre more attractive. Co-ordinated and proactive management could help steer towards this goal. The baseline analysis recognises that a large number of students can have a disproportionate effect on the environment and local economy. A key management strategy would be to better support the students in the community alongside enhanced co-ordination of services between Manchester City Council and other key agencies. This has been realised with the appointment in 2010 of the Off-Campus Student Affairs Manager at Manchester Student Homes, funded jointly through The University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. It is important that the Withington Village Action Plan links closely with the Manchester City Council Student Strategy in managing issues and maximising benefits relating to the student population.

Urban design

Withington has a strong village character, which is well defined and includes good-quality buildings. Part of this character is due to the narrowness of Wilmslow Road in the central section of the centre. Copson Street is a more secondary shopping area with lower levels of traffic. It provides a less constrained environment than Wilmslow Road. Retail ground floor uses dominate both Wilmslow Road and Copson Street. In the north along Wilmslow Road there is a greater concentration of bars, cafes and takeaways. On Copson Street the emphasis is mixed, with service sector, food and non-food retailers present. Upper floors in the centre are typically used for residential, office or storage purposes.

Building heights in Withington are typically low rise, being only two and occasionally three storeys high. A good number of attractive buildings exist that reflect the local heritage and relate to the Conservation Area. Opportunities exist to further enhance their appearance and setting to emphasise the quality of Withington.

Overall, in design terms, the key issues for Withington are:

- **Poor shopfronts** – there is a lack of co-ordination in the design of shopfronts. This negatively impacts on the appearance of the centre, and does not take advantage of buildings with heritage value.
- **Inhospitable environments** – the Co-op car park at Copson Street and the car parks to the west of Wilmslow Road and at Egerton Crescent have a poor street environment and suffer from exposed servicing areas and a lack of active frontage.
- **Lack of green infrastructure** – particularly on Copson Street.
- **The former Council estate** – now owned by Southways Housing Trust, this is not configured to good-quality urban design principles and lacks natural surveillance as a result. There is also a visual barrier around the estate in the form of a brick wall. This adds to the feel of an inhospitable environment.
- **Pedestrian barriers** – the junction of Palatine, Burton and Wilmslow Roads marks the southern end of the village. The use of pedestrian barriers at the junction negatively impacts on the streetscape.
- **Community facilities feel separate from the centre** – The Christie Hospital, Old Moat Park, Withington Leisure Centre and the Adult Education Centre are all nearby but feel separate from the district centre.
- **The former Cine City site** – this site's present disuse gives a negative first impression.
- **Limited public space** – the only public space, Rutherford Place, opposite the library is small and does not provide a significant focal point for the centre.
- **Vacant shops** – a considerable number of vacant units together with other shuttered premises during the day negatively impact on the street environment.
- **Evening economy** – there is a concentration of evening-economy uses on Wilmslow Road. The often brash and insensitive signage detracts from the quality of the centre, especially given the Conservation Area status.

To enhance Withington, the Action Plan needs to concentrate on tackling these issues. In particular, opportunities exist for an improved public realm, differing strategies for Wilmslow Road and Copson Street, shopfront improvements, enhancing pedestrian movement, and improving linkages to edge-of-centre uses.

At Ladybarn local centre, the quality of the public realm is generally poor, especially the paved areas on the south side of Mauldeth Road. There is also a lack of planting or other soft landscaping. However, the centre does benefit from wide pavements, although informal parking on the pavement detracts from the ambience of the centre.

For Old Moat Lane Parade, there is scope to enhance the quality of the environment through new and better paving and some soft landscaping such as trees.

There are few development opportunities apparent in Withington. Those that do exist could play a key role in the centre's renewal. Key opportunities include the reuse of the White Lion and the former Cine City site, prominently located at the junction of Wilmslow Road and Copson Street. There may be other opportunities to intensify uses and extend or reconfigure units, for example the Co-op store at the western end of Copson Street and units more centrally positioned on this parade.

Withington's retail and service offer and the wider property market

Withington's retail and service mix is comparable to that of a typical UK centre, save for the comparison sector, which is somewhat underrepresented. The service sector accounts for 35.6% of units, which is average for a centre of this type. However, unit vacancy levels are higher than the UK norm, particularly on Copson Street, with available units generally small. Although Withington has a reasonably diverse retail offer, increasing the range of food retailers may create a more robust centre. This is especially the case given that there may be considerable trade leakage to larger stores close to the centre, particularly to the Sainsbury's store in Fallowfield.

Demand for retail units in Withington is reasonable, and mainly focused on independent and food store requirements. It is recognised that independent traders fulfil an important role in the distinctiveness of Withington. There are a large number of charity shops in the centre, and although they are valuable to some sections of the community, too many can reduce the desirability of a centre. Withington would benefit from additional comparison (non-food) multiple-retailer representation. The lack of larger units in the centre, however, limits the opportunities for multiple retailers to move to the centre.

According to the CBRE National Survey of Local Shopping Patterns, Withington attracts 0.68% of the catchment area's population on a regular basis for comparison good shopping. This can be compared to Chorlton, which captures 1.09% (although still a small percentage, this is considerably more than Withington), and is evidence that relatively few local residents regularly shop in their district centre.

In addition to the retail uses available, Withington offers a number of community uses, including a library, a veterinary surgery and churches. There is also a community leisure centre and an adult education centre located within easy walking distance of the centre on Burton Road.

Demand for residential properties in Withington is reasonable, with demand focused on students and young professionals as well as families and older people. In Withington, small housing units are likely to prove more viable in the district centre location, and could assist in generating a greater level of residential living in Withington.

The Wilmslow Road corridor may offer opportunities for redevelopment and improvement. This could be realised through longer-term redevelopment of existing sites for new residential and hotel accommodation, were demand to arise and as sites become available.

In Ladybarn, a new small foodstore is already planned on a prominent available and cleared site. There may also be scope for more use of the car park to the rear of Ladybarn Road on its eastern side. The mix is predominantly convenience and service sector outlets, with some residential uses stacked above ground floor retail premises.

Transport and movement

Withington lies along a Quality Bus Corridor and accessibility by bus to the centre is good, with strong links to Manchester City Centre, the universities and Didsbury. However, Withington experiences significant traffic congestion, causing journey delays and detracting from the environment. This is in part due to the narrow road through the district centre. There is also a poor environment for cyclists, in particular at the Wilmslow Road/Parsonage Road/Burton Road junction.

There are opportunities to improve the district centre in terms of accessibility and movement. There is potential to create a far greater degree of pedestrian priority, especially at the eastern end of Copson Street, which would promote the retail offer on this road. This is especially the case given that surveys indicate there is a relatively low traffic flow along this stretch of Copson Street. There is also potential to improve the pedestrian environment in Withington, such as through improved pavements and greenery. In addition, cycling lanes could be improved, especially at key junctions.

Any improvement to the quality and environment of public parking in the centre would assist accessibility. At present, the main car park behind Wilmslow Road is difficult to locate, and better signage would improve access and promote the car parking offer to visitors. The small car park on Egerton Crescent is well located for visits to the centre, but is in very poor condition and poorly signposted. It is recognised that there is limited space within Withington to implement further car parking provision, and funding opportunities are limited at this stage.

Ladybarn local centre benefits from good access, with Mauldeth Road railway station close by, and Mauldeth Road itself being an orbital bus route. A good level of car parking is available too (albeit rather informal in places), aiding the accessibility of the centre.

While Old Moat Lane Parade is adjacent to Withington Village, a roundabout at Copson Street creates a barrier to movement. Better pedestrian crossing facilities here would serve to improve connections and potentially strengthen this parade.



Stakeholder aspirations

Public consultation on the Fallowfield and Withington plans took place between 24 February and 14 June 2010 (with a six-week break for elections). Consultation was carried out through a combination of meetings and presentations to community and resident groups and local traders; promotion stands at key community venues and sites; attending school assemblies and speaking to parents at school gates; and door knocking and walkabouts around the two centres. Promotion of the consultation was included on the Manchester City Council website, where an online version of the questionnaire was available. There was also promotion on the Manchester City Council Libraries Facebook page, in ward newsletters, local press releases, and posters and flyers.

The Fallowfield and Withington Action Plans consultation events received 1,288 responses, which were broadly representative of the local population in terms of age, employment status and ethnicity. The responses drew out key aspirations and priorities for the centres. Many of these echo the opportunities identified in the baseline analysis. The consultation asked respondents to prioritise their issues for Withington. The five highest priorities were:

1. Reducing antisocial behaviour
2. Improving the street environment
3. Increasing security at home and on the street
4. Developing the former White Lion and Cine City sites
5. Increasing the amount of good-quality public space

These key issues and opportunities inform the vision for Withington, and set the context for the range of specific actions identified in the plan.

Other stakeholder priorities for Withington are:

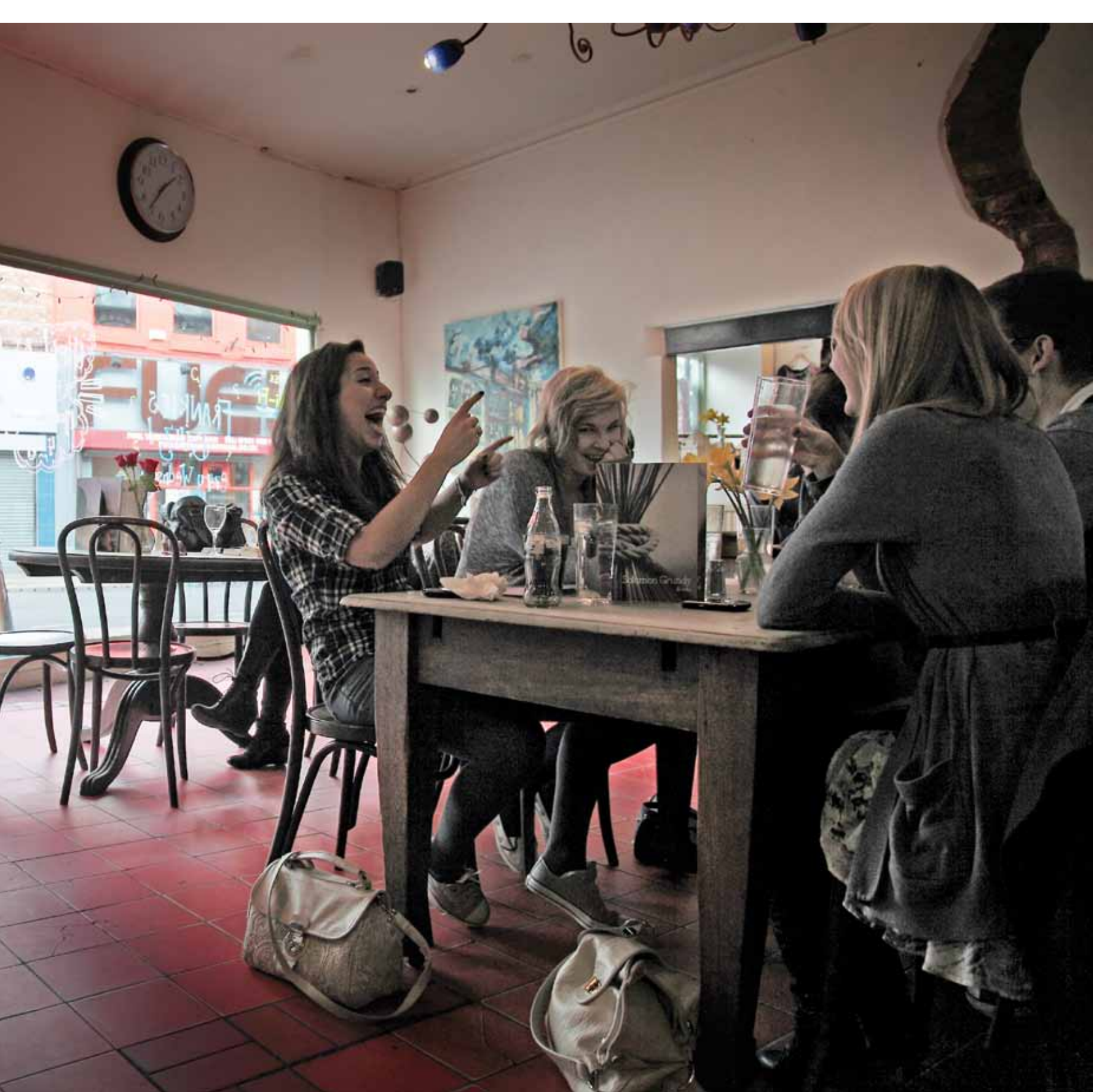
- An improved public realm – seen as a very high priority
- Better use of existing facilities, such as the library and leisure centre
- Branding and marketing of the centre
- Copson Street and links to the local community
- Shopfront improvement.

A wider Manchester City Council Resident Perception Survey (2009) provides further views on people's sentiments toward and use of Withington's facilities:

- Only a small proportion used Withington to do their main grocery shopping. This recorded the lowest response rate across all the district centres surveyed. A considerable proportion felt that food shops were missing from Withington.
- There was a low level of positive ratings for the general appearance of Withington. There was also a notable proportion of those surveyed who felt Withington was getting worse.
- The majority of those surveyed indicated that there was a weak sense of community in the district centre.

More positively, a good proportion of residents used Withington Library, underlining the importance of this asset, as well as the importance of a diversified retail and service offer.







The vision for Withington

At a strategic level, the Manchester City Council Community Strategy sets out a series of important themes for the subregion. These are:

- Delivering popular neighbourhoods
- Achieving full potential in education, skills and employment
- Successful communities – individuals, families and neighbourhoods.

Leading from these themes, the priorities established in the SRF, and the findings of the baseline analysis, an overarching vision for Withington was established. The vision describes the broad aim of the plan, with initiatives tailored to realise this goal. The agreed vision is:

‘Withington will continue to play a key role as a sustainable district centre that is an attractive location to live, work and shop. The centre will continue to be a viable retail location with a good range of shops alongside service and community provision.’

The expansion of shopping opportunities will ensure that the centre meets all the needs of the local population. Its conservation area status and buildings of good architectural quality will be promoted and enhanced to ensure a distinctive village character.

Withington will benefit from an improved street environment and offer safe and easy movement for pedestrians, cyclists and buses. Copson Street will provide an improved shopping environment. The environment of car parking areas will be improved and will be less of a back space. The Christie Hospital, Withington Leisure Centre and Old Moat Park will all be better linked to the district centre’.

The Action Plan

The Withington Village Action Plan sets out a series of initiatives and site-specific projects geared towards achieving the vision. The principal actions are centred on several core themes:

- **Retail and Service Offer** – ensuring that the offer in Withington serves the wider mix of residents in the area, and where possible restricting the cumulative impact of bars and takeaways.
- **Development opportunities** – where identified, sites or buildings that once redeveloped or refurbished could contribute to achieving the vision for Withington.
- **Urban design improvements** – these will be made with the objective of enhancing Withington’s overall environment to make it more attractive to the community and to maintain a strong village identity.
- **Movement** – facilitating ease of movement and access is important to enhancing the effective functioning of the centre.
- **Management of the District Centre** – this will have the objective of providing a framework that enables the key actions to be progressed, in light of often complex multi-agency issues to be addressed.

The themes are viewed as those areas likely to have the most positive impact on the future of Withington. These key objectives and supporting actions also relate to the recommendations of the SRF for the centre, with broad timescales for implementation indicated for each.

The envisaged timeframe for each project is described, using the following broad periods:

Short term	1–5 years
Medium term	5–10 years
Long term	10 years +

An illustrative Action Plan is provided at the end of this section. A number of actions are also outlined for Old Moat Parade and Ladybarn Local Centre.

Delivering the Action Plan

In delivering the Action Plan it is recognised that the local authority, Manchester City Council, is a key regeneration agent with considerable regeneration powers – in particular, planning. The delivery of the Action Plan will principally rest with Manchester City Council’s locally based South Manchester Regeneration Team, and with the ward co-ordinators and support officers. Manchester City Council is also responsible for many of the services needed to enable change – planning, highways, licensing, among others. The ability to liaise and co-ordinate with these services will be crucial to the Plan’s delivery. This role may range from simply enabling lines of communication between various stakeholders, setting the planning policy through to strategic intervention. Overall, Manchester City Council and the Regeneration Team are expected to perform a significant role in the delivery and implementation of the proposals to ensure that the objectives of the Action Plan are realised.

Other stakeholders will also be expected to play a crucial role in delivering the Action Plan, and Manchester City Council forming strong partnerships with relevant bodies is viewed as key to success.

Other partners are likely to include:

- **Other public sector bodies** – these will include The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University, Greater Manchester Police (GMP), among others.
- **Transport bodies** – Manchester City Council Highways Department and possibly GMPTE will have an important role in the delivery of highway changes proposed for the area.
- **Community groups** – active participation with interested groups, such as residents and traders, will engender a sense of plan ownership and offer wider resources.
- **Landowners** – key private and public sector landowners are important to the delivery of scheme proposals, especially if they have a more active approach to dealing with their land and property.
- **Developers** – any parties that intend to develop sites in the centre.

Funding the Action Plan

To deliver the Action Plan will require funding. There is a range of possible channels:

- **Private sector investment** – such as through new development.
- **Section 106/278 contributions** – potentially pooled from the wider Withington area to maximise the opportunity for co-ordinated change.
- **Public sector funding** – identifying and securing funding for specific proposals where grants are available. This will require ongoing research in the light of often rapidly changing funding availability.
- **Existing resources** – channelling of existing resources to better match the defined priorities and needs of the community, and directed towards the delivery of the Action Plan proposals.

Development/refurbishment opportunities

Location	Land at junction of Wilmslow Road and Copson Street (Cine City site)
Proposal	Redevelopment of this strategically located site. There is potential for a mixed-use redevelopment of this site.
Rationale and benefits	<p>Reuse of this important corner site would provide a visual improvement in the heart of Withington. Potential to provide modern new retail floorspace to meet retailer requirements, perhaps through creation of larger units, alongside residential units.</p> <p>Could address an area of currently poor-built quality and maintain a compact village feel to the centre.</p> <p>Could potentially meet demand for residential property in Withington and increase the opportunity to live in the centre.</p>
Delivery mechanism	Private sector-led through implementation of planning permission or acceptable alternative development.
Key parties	<p>Existing landowner/developer</p> <p>Manchester City Council Planning/South Manchester Regeneration Team.</p>
Funding	Envisaged to be self-funding, subject to market conditions.
Next steps	Proposals for development
Timescale and priority	<p>Medium term</p> <p>Priority: high</p>

Location	Vacant building at junction of Wilmslow Road and Burton Road (the White Lion)
Proposal	Planning permission has been granted for reuse of the building to accommodate a retail unit at ground floor and residential accommodation on the upper floors.
Rationale and benefits	<p>Will reactivate the use of this building of good-quality architectural merit, and enhance the quality of Withington's built environment.</p> <p>Will improve the image of Withington generally, and more specifically this key prominent gateway site.</p> <p>Will provide new space in Withington for the convenience sector.</p>
Delivery mechanism	Delivered by private sector.
Key parties	<p>Existing landowner</p> <p>Manchester City Council Planning/South Manchester Regeneration Team.</p>
Funding	Self-funding
Next steps	Retail and residential use to begin with.
Timescale and priority	<p>Short term</p> <p>Priority: high</p>

Location	Copson Street, Withington
Proposal	Creation of a new regular street market along Copson Street. Proposal should also be considered in conjunction with a public realm strategy for Withington.
Rationale and benefits	<p>To create more activity and vibrancy along Copson Street.</p> <p>To increase the range and diversity of goods available in Withington.</p> <p>To help attract new operators to the centre, and create possible opportunities to foster the growth of local businesses in the area.</p> <p>To enhance the sense of place and unique offer of Withington, and make the centre more attractive and diverse for shoppers.</p>
Delivery mechanism	Manchester Markets
Key parties	Manchester Markets/South Manchester Regeneration Team Local traders.
Funding	Set-up costs of market to be funded through public sector.
Next steps	Discussions have taken place with interested and possible affected groups and individuals. A Scoping Study has been prepared in order to identify issues to be addressed in setting up a market, and how these could be dealt with. A regular monthly market has been confirmed by Manchester Markets. Promotion and development of the market will now be important.
Timescale and priority	Short term Priority: moderate

Wider areas of change

Further opportunities for change, enhancement or redevelopment exist at:

- **10–22 Copson Street** – existing low-rise retail block with possible scope to extend, amalgamate existing retail units or intensify development.
- **35 Copson Street** – currently occupied by a small Co-op foodstore and surface car parking. Possible scope to provide a larger anchor store through extension or redevelopment of the existing unit. Anticipated to be a self-funding private sector-led initiative.

- **Wilmslow Road Corridor** – where sites become available along Wilmslow Road to the north of Withington, opportunities may arise to redevelop buildings to bring new hotel and residential accommodation to the area. Proposals considered on a site-by-site basis, and expected to be private-sector led.

These opportunities are afforded a lower priority. Timescales are viewed as medium to long term, although proposals could be implemented sooner subject to owner and occupier aspirations.



Urban design initiatives

Location	Withington Village
Proposal	<p>Preparation of a public realm strategy for Withington. This should be succinct and produced in the context of the conservation area status, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Setting out a co-ordinated approach to improving Withington’s public realm – A design guide, including reference to preferred materials – Identifying where to create public focal points – Location for street furniture as appropriate – seats, bins, cycle facilities – Locations for hard and soft landscape design, including tree planting – Promotion of key walking routes within the centre and key community venues, including the Leisure Centre, Old Moat Park, the Adult Education Centre and The Christie Hospital – Strategy to improve legibility through better signage – Assessing costs for improvements – Strategy for implementation – Timescales for delivery. <p>Key public realm priorities are envisaged to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Copson Street – Wellington Road/Withington Library.
Rationale and benefits	<p>Withington presently offers a mixed-quality urban realm environment. Providing an overarching public realm strategy will enhance the quality of the district centre and the Conservation Area through targeting areas where benefits could be maximised. Public realm improvements will also create a greater sense of place, and make it a more attractive retail centre benefiting shoppers and traders alike. Improved signage and connections, particularly to Morris Street and Egerton Crescent car parks, Withington Leisure Centre, Old Moat Park and The Christie Hospital, would increase ease of access.</p>
Delivery mechanism	<p>Preparation of a public realm strategy to guide change to streetscape. Lead taken by Manchester City Council with input from key stakeholders, including traders and residents.</p> <p>Discussions are taking place between The Christie Hospital, Redrose Forest, the five branches of Manchester Rotary and the Withington Civic Society regarding walking routes to The Christie via Palatine Road and Wilmslow Road. This is part of a wider Green Infrastructure plan at The Christie.</p>

Location	Withington Village
Key parties	Manchester City Council Planning/South Manchester Regeneration Team/Highways Public Sector stakeholders Community and resident groups Traders.
Funding	Initial cost of preparing the public realm strategy borne by public sector. Delivery costs to be identified according to availability and interested parties.
Next steps	Manchester City Council to prepare a public realm strategy for Withington District Centre.
Timescales and priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public realm strategy Short term Priority: high 2. Implementation of strategy Short to long term Priority: high

Location	Withington Village
Proposal	Preparation of a shopfront design guide and improvement scheme through the city-wide Guide to Development refresh that will address district centre issues and include a generic shopfront design guide.
Rationale and benefits	Withington suffers from unattractive and inconsistent treatment of shopfront designs and signage, especially along Wilmslow Road, which falls within a Conservation Area. This detracts from the quality of historic buildings and the urban environment. The solution is to enhance shopfront quality to the benefit of shoppers and traders, through guiding change in a more co-ordinated way. The shopfront design guide should be taken forward in conjunction with the public realm strategy.
Delivery mechanism	The shopfront design guide will be a public sector-led document prepared by Manchester City Council and developed in conjunction with stakeholders. Implementation through engagement with traders and other interested parties will promote its delivery.
Key parties	Manchester City Council Planning/South Manchester Regeneration Team Community and resident groups Traders.
Funding	Shopfront design guide will be public sector-funded, with possible scope to attract sponsorship from key traders and stakeholders. Explore prospect of Manchester City Council match-funding for traders to implement shopfront improvements alongside other funding mechanisms.
Next steps	Manchester City Council Planning to lead on development of a generic shopfront design guide for the city.
Timescales and priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shopfront design guide Medium to long term Priority: high 2. Implementation of shopfront improvements Medium to long term Priority: high

Movement

Location	Copson Street
Proposal	Greater pedestrian priority along Copson Street. To include improved public realm along this road together with facilitating a street market.
Rationale and benefits	<p>To improve the public realm quality of Withington.</p> <p>To enhance shopper and visitor mobility in the centre and to provide a contrast to the traffic-dominated thoroughfare of Wilmslow Road.</p> <p>To accommodate a new street market.</p>
Delivery mechanism	<p>South Manchester Regeneration Team to liaise with the Manchester City Council Highways Department on the practicality of creating greater pedestrian priority along Copson Street. Extent to which Copson Street is stopped up (either on a regular temporary basis or permanently) to be the focus of investigation and in the context of facilitating a new street market.</p> <p>In parallel, Manchester City Council to consult with residents and businesses that might be affected by any stopping up proposals for Copson Street. Discussions also required with GMPTe regarding rerouting of bus services currently operating along Copson Street.</p>
Key parties	Manchester City Council Highways Department/South Manchester Regeneration Team GMPTe.
Funding	Costs to fall within the wider public realm strategy.
Next steps	South Manchester Regeneration Team to liaise with Manchester City Council Highways Department, residents and businesses along Copson Street and GMPTe. Co-ordination of proposal alongside Public Realm Strategy.
Timescale and priority	<p>Short term</p> <p>Priority: moderate</p>



Location	Wellington Road/Wilmslow Road junction
Proposal	Stopping up of the Wellington Road/Wilmslow Road Junction to provide increased public space in front of the library.
Rationale and benefits	To enhance the amount and quality of public space and greenery in the district centre, and to create a good-quality public focal point.
Delivery mechanism	Delivered through public sector initiative by either securing a Road Closure/Stopping Up Order or through a Public Realm Improvement application. Proposals to be integrated into the Public Realm Strategy.
Key parties	South Manchester Regeneration Team/Manchester City Council Highways.
Funding	Costs to fall within the wider Public Realm Strategy.
Next steps	South Manchester Regeneration Team to confirm extent of land to be affected by the proposal, and then to identify who owns the land and is responsible for its management. Manchester City Council to prepare a traffic survey of the junction.
Timescale and priority	Short term Priority: high

Location	Barbican/Gledhill/Morris Street and Egerton Crescent car parks
Proposal	Car park enhancement, including surface and boundary treatment, signage, and lighting improvements.
Rationale and benefits	Barbican Street and Egerton Crescent car parks are the centre's main parking areas, but currently offer a weak environment with little security for patrons. They are also inadequately signposted. Improvements would create a more attractive and safe parking environment that is more appealing to shoppers visiting the centre. In turn, this would benefit traders through increased patronage during the day and evening.
Delivery mechanism	South Manchester Regeneration Team to liaise with Manchester City Council Highways Department to agree a programme of improvement works for the car parks and timescales for delivery.
Key parties	South Manchester Regeneration Team/Manchester City Council Highways.
Funding	Publicly funded, with possible private funding.
Next steps	South Manchester Regeneration Team to work in partnership with Manchester City Council Highways Department to discuss and detail works required.
Timescale and priority	Short term Priority: moderate

District centre management

Location	Withington Village
Proposal	Management of Withington Village. Management led by the South Manchester Regeneration Team and ward co-ordinators to build on and strengthen the existing management system and community partnerships to facilitate and deliver the Withington Village Action Plan. Approach is based on maintaining and enhancing neighbourhood partnerships to meet aims.
Rationale and benefits	<p>To work with community groups, the private sector, relevant Council departments and public service providers to create a successful management network to meet the specific challenges of Withington.</p> <p>To establish a clear management structure that allows for community input.</p> <p>To generate a sense of community ownership and responsibility for Withington's management, and to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan proposals.</p> <p>To create greater community awareness of proposals and strategies for Withington.</p>
Delivery mechanism	Management through regular meetings to ensure effective engagement with community representatives, private sector, key stakeholders and other service providers. Relevant representation from Council departments and services drawn into management process as required to deal with district centre issues.
Key parties	<p>South Manchester Regeneration Team/ward co-ordinators</p> <p>Manchester City Council departments</p> <p>Local community representatives</p> <p>Local traders and businesses</p> <p>University representatives</p> <p>Public Service providers (GMP, NHS among others).</p>
Funding	Public-sector funded, using existing resources.
Next steps	Regeneration Team and ward co-ordinators to identify list of potential involved parties. Establish network of connections (and identify where gaps arise) and resources available relevant to Withington Village. Establish management arrangements, including frequency of meetings, roles and responsibilities, and key attendees.
Timescale and priority	<p>Short term</p> <p>Priority: high</p>



Key management initiatives

1. Supporting businesses

Explore opportunities to support existing businesses and entice new operators to the centre.

To include: branding opportunities, including shopfront strategy; shop local campaigns; promotional events focusing on retailers in centre; promoting positive stories about Withington; improving the range of information available about services on offer via the internet; business advice; helping businesses to prevent crime by promoting the use of GMP's Crime Reduction Advisers.

Benefits: strengthening awareness of Withington's offer; business support for existing traders; attracting new operators to the centre.

Priority: high

Timescale: ongoing

2. Planning policy

Use of development control to limit, where possible, further cumulative impact of increasing A4 (bars) and A5 (takeaways) representation.

Liaise with Manchester City Council Planning department to discuss potential planning controls through local policy framework. Approaches could include: limiting A4/A5 uses to a prescribed percentage of units in any given frontage; presumption against change of use to A4/A5; presumption against non-A4/A5 uses in new retail development.

Benefits: potential to maintain existing retail diversity and limit future cumulative impact of bars and takeaways.

Priority: high

Timescale: short term

3. Licensing controls

Co-ordinated approach with Manchester City Council's Licensing Department to agree strategy to limit where possible the impact of licensed premises.

With the intention of moving away from licence applications being considered on a case-by-case basis, and to protect Withington from any significant disbenefits arising from the evening-economy service sector, and particularly late-hours opening. The principal aim is to ensure that licensed premises are an asset to the area and respect the character and identity of Withington. Management of licensed premises will be consistent with Manchester City Council's Manchester Statement of Licensing Policy 2011–2014.

Benefits: continued and strengthened control of impact of bars and takeaways; controlling antisocial behaviour.

Priority: high

Timescale: short term

4. Homes in multiple ownership (HMOs)

Greater enforcement of maintenance of HMOs.

Expansion of programme to sign up landlords to voluntary agreements in order to support improvements to standards in rented accommodation. Investigation of discretionary HMO licensing schemes through Manchester City Council Private Sector Housing in areas of high student accommodation and those areas likely to be impacted in the future. Potential for Planning measures to manage the number and size of HMOs, delivered through an Article 4 Direction. Approach to be agreed and delivered through partnership of Manchester City Council Private Sector Housing, Manchester City Council Planning, and Manchester Student Homes.

Benefits: improved maintenance and standards of HMOs.

Priority: high

Timescale: short term



5. Conservation area enforcement

Manchester City Council Planning Department will carry out a Conservation Area appraisal and develop a Management Plan with a view to future enforcement to ensure that the special character of the area is understood, preserved and enhanced.

Benefits: enhancement of Conservation Area; more attractive centre for shoppers and visitors; promotion of 'placemaking' and encouragement of inward investment.

Priority: moderate **Timescale: short term**

6. Improve safety and security in Withington

Examine the opportunities to improve safety and security in Withington. Partnership approach between the Council and key partner agencies (including GMP, local community groups, and traders) to identify and implement safety and security measures. This relates to specific locations, wider campaigning and awareness and directing available resources effectively. Approach to include:

- Student safety and security awareness – building on current university and police-led initiatives to ensure that new entrants (especially students) attracted to the area are aware of safety and security matters in Withington and measures that could be put in place to minimise risks. GMP currently carries out intensive engagement work. Encouragement of the Home Watch scheme could help to prevent burglaries.

The benefits are improved safety and security, both physical/design-related and personal.

Priority: high **Timescale: ongoing**

- Prevention and control of antisocial behaviour and noise nuisance associated with late night drinking and HMOs. Work with the local police service and the universities to explore strategies to prevent and reduce antisocial behaviour. GMP currently carries out night-time patrols of Wilmslow Road to prevent and reduce problems. A Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) for Withington was passed by Manchester City Council in November 2010; this allows police officers to confiscate alcohol from people believed to be drinking on the street, and will be a useful tool to reduce nuisance. GMP also has a commitment to reducing the problems of vagrancy in the centre. The newly appointed Off Campus Student Affairs Manager will be important in raising awareness of the impact of antisocial behaviour among students, and engage with problematic households and areas.

The benefits are an improved feeling of safety and security, improved satisfaction with the local area for residents, and an improved relationship between different resident groups.

Priority: high **Timescale: ongoing**

- Secure by Design – where new development is proposed, building design should accommodate safety and security measures and create an opportunity for natural surveillance where possible. GMP has Architectural Liaison Officers who advise on designing out crime, and South Manchester Regeneration Team will liaise with GMP to assess areas of concern and suggest ways to improve safety and security. Two areas considered to suffer from low surveillance are Copson Street and Morris Street car parks.

Benefits: improved safety and security, both physical/design-related and personal.

Priority: moderate **Timescale: ongoing**

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

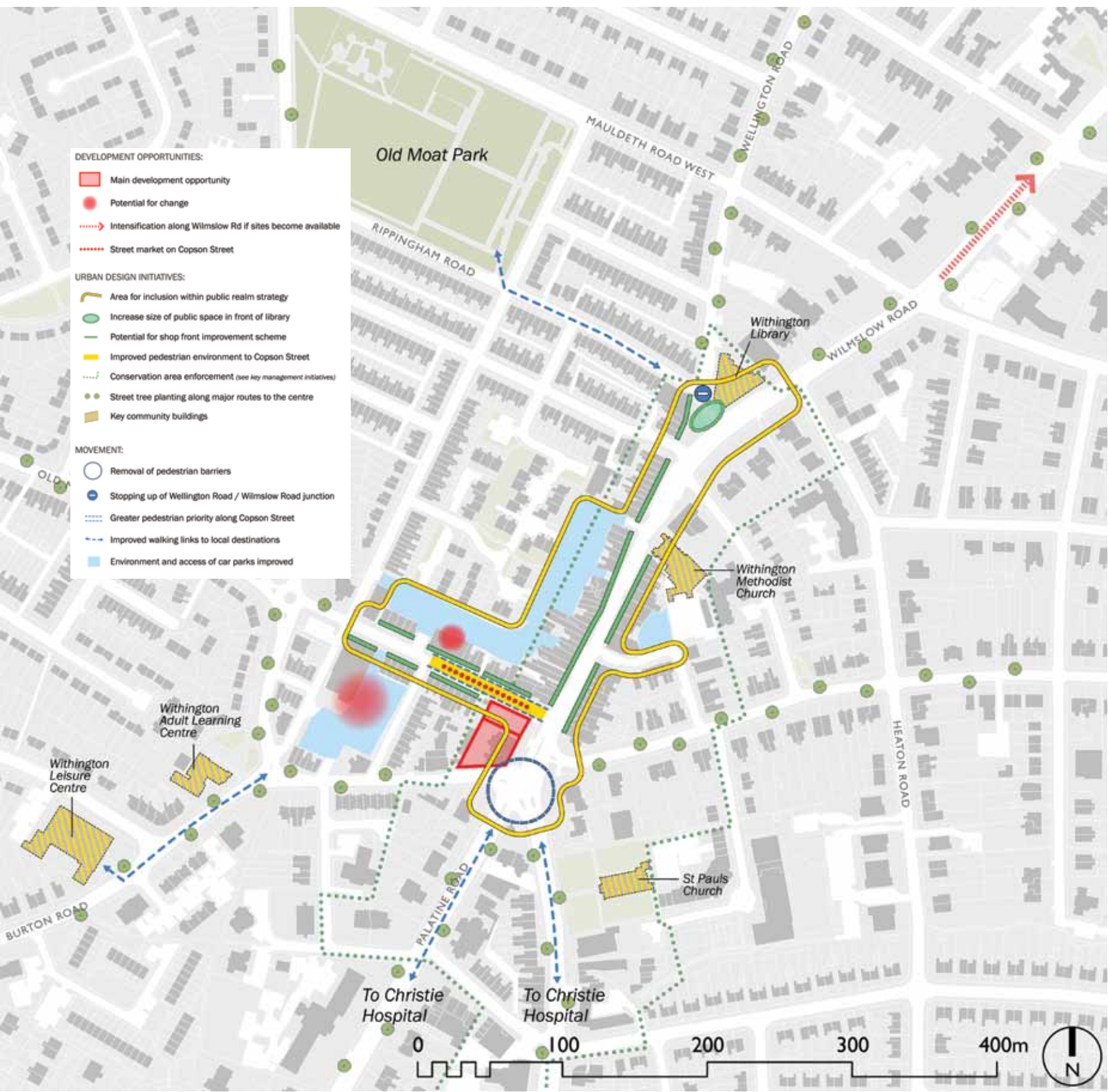
- Red rectangle: Main development opportunity
- Red circle: Potential for change
- Red dashed arrow: Intensification along Wilmslow Rd if sites become available
- Red dotted line: Street market on Copson Street

URBAN DESIGN INITIATIVES:

- Yellow outline: Area for inclusion within public realm strategy
- Green oval: Increase size of public space in front of library
- Green line: Potential for shop front improvement scheme
- Yellow line: Improved pedestrian environment to Copson Street
- Dotted line: Conservation area enforcement (see key management initiatives)
- Green dots: Street tree planting along major routes to the centre
- Yellow building icon: Key community buildings

MOVEMENT:

- Blue circle: Removal of pedestrian barriers
- Blue circle with dot: Stopping up of Wellington Road / Wilmslow Road junction
- Blue dashed line: Greater pedestrian priority along Copson Street
- Blue dashed line with arrow: Improved walking links to local destinations
- Blue shaded area: Environment and access of car parks improved



Old Moat Park

Withington Library

Withington Methodist Church

St Pauls Church

Withington Adult Learning Centre

Withington Leisure Centre

To Christie Hospital

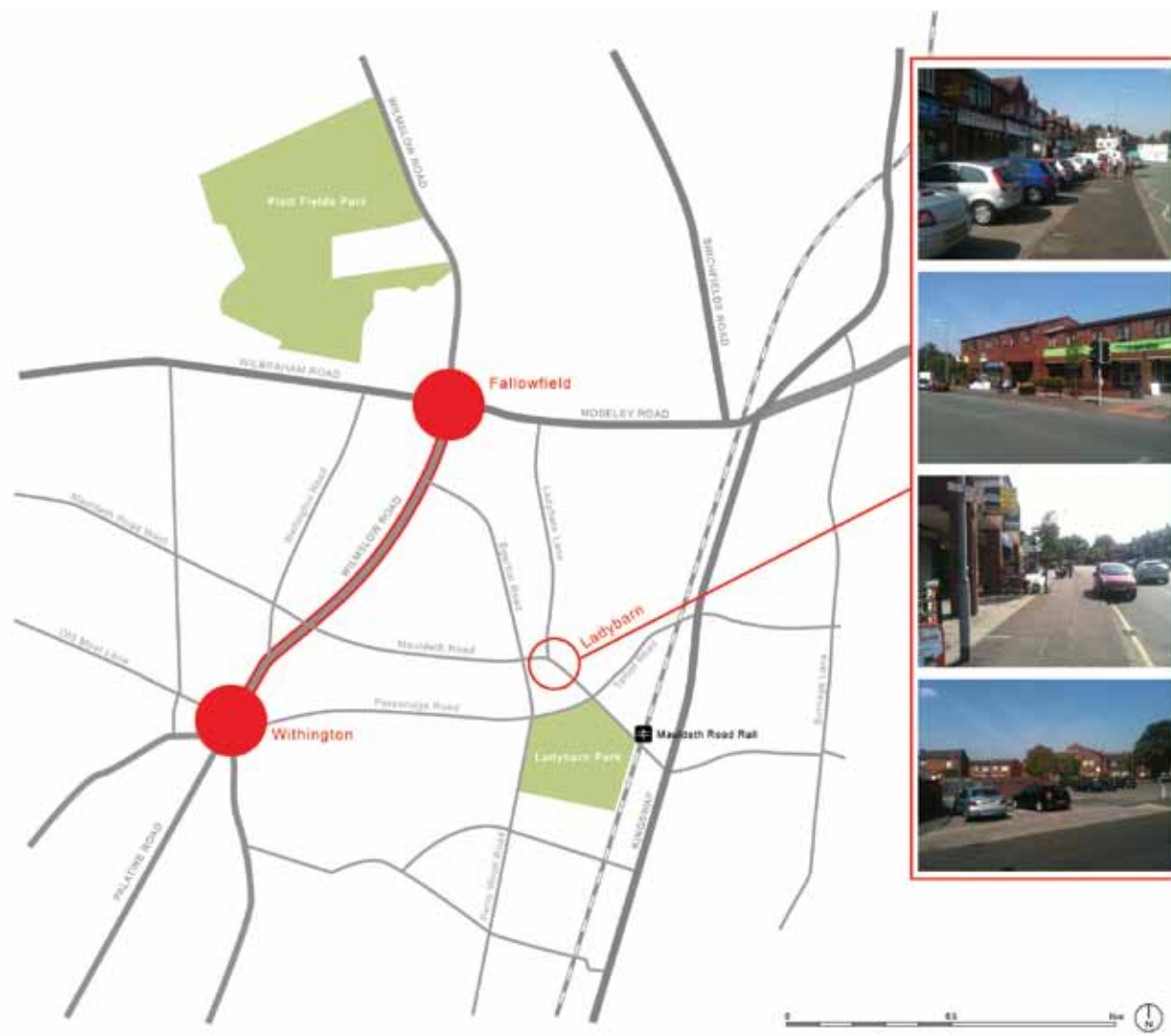
To Christie Hospital

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Ladybarn Local Centre

The location of Ladybarn Local Centre is illustrated below, together with a number of images depicting the centre and its attributes.



Key actions

The key actions identified for Ladybarn centre are:

Development opportunities

- **Intensified use of car park** to the rear of the retail units on east side of Ladybarn Lane. Positive scope to increase retail floorspace with residential uses above.

Urban design initiatives

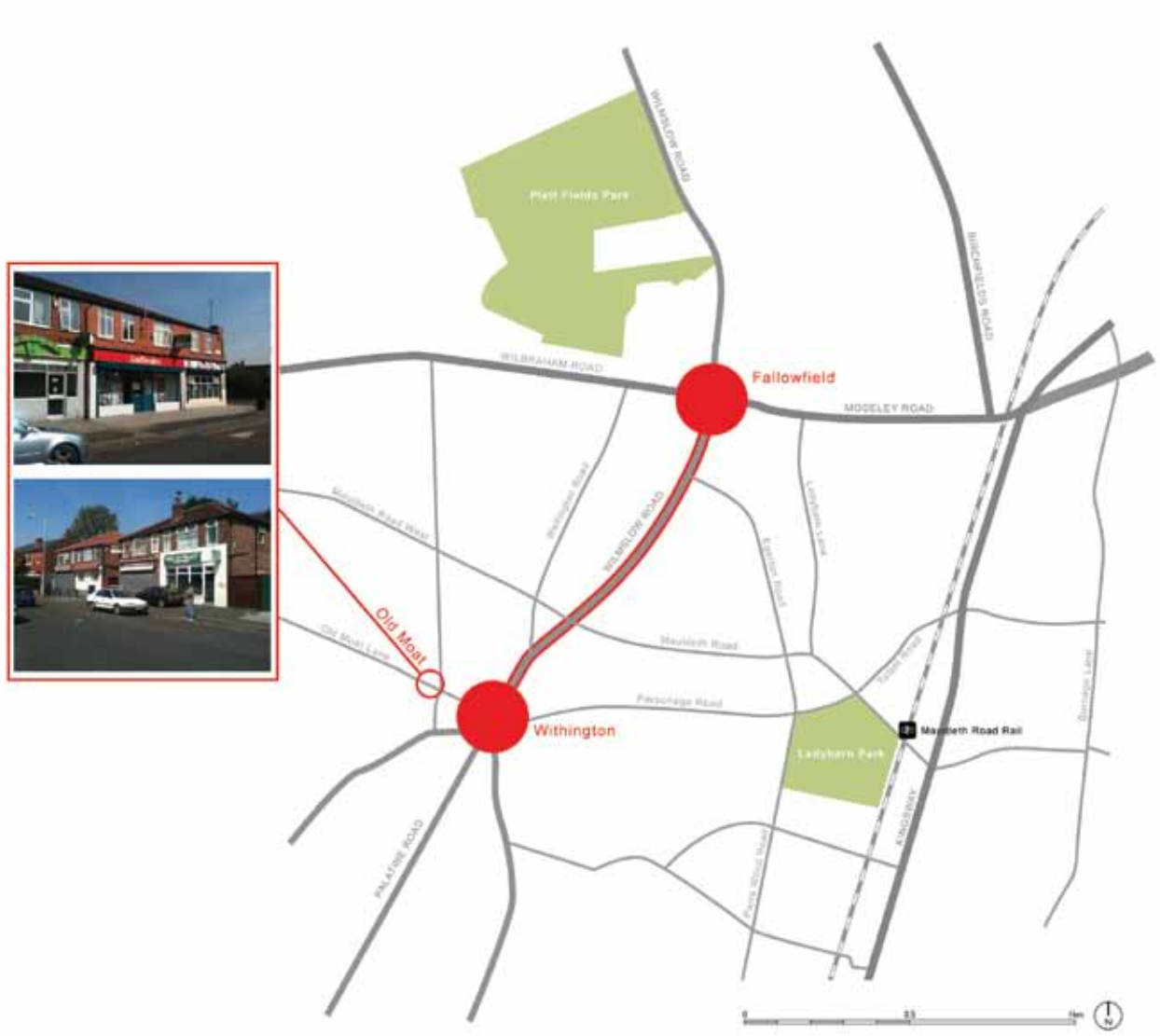
- **Public realm improvements.** Presently the centre is characterised by a generally poor-quality streetscape. Work to improve the quality of pavements with initial focus on the south side of Mauldeth Road, alongside potential to co-ordinate with new street furniture at key locations would enhance the ambience of the centre. The improvements should also incorporate softer initiatives, such as tree planting to create a more attractive and distinctive location.

Movement

- **Reconfigure on-street parking.** Presently, parking occurs on Ladybarn's wide pavements and appears not to be managed effectively. This detracts considerably from the centre's quality. Given the space available, there may be the scope to formalise/reconfigure this paving space to accommodate some car spaces within marked bays. Careful design would also improve the visibility of units due to haphazard parking. Potential to formalise on-street/pavement parking while ensuring that public realm benefits too.
- **Pedestrian crossings.** In light of the new foodstore proposal, there may be a need to review pedestrian crossings at this location to ensure that shoppers' mobility is optimised in the centre and is as safe as possible.

Old Moat Parade

Old Moat Parade lies immediately to the west of Withington Village. In tandem with the actions described for Withington, a number could be specifically progressed for Old Moat.



Key actions

- **Consolidating retail/service uses** – there are presently a number of retail unit vacancies that serve to fragment and weaken the offer. If businesses in the parade are deemed not to be viable in the longer term, then rationalising the parade by possible changes of use – beginning in the west – could be examined. This approach would need to be coupled with good-quality boundary treatment and, if possible, private amenity space at the front of any converted properties.
- **Enhanced public realm** – the public realm strategy for Withington should also encapsulate Old Moat Parade. The parade would benefit from improved paving and the planting of a small number of trees. The public realm improvements could also define a number of dedicated on-street short-stay parking places.
- **Enhanced links** – although near to Copson Street, the roundabout at the eastern end of Old Moat Lane serves as a barrier to movement. Improved pedestrian links would serve to connect this parade better into Withington Village and help to draw trade to Old Moat.

