

**Manchester City Council
 Report for Resolution**

**Report To: Economy, Employment & Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 – 3 February 2010**

Subject: City Fringe Spatial Development Framework

Report of: The Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of New East Manchester

Summary

To seek the Executive’s endorsement to a series of proposals that have emerged from the City Fringe Spatial Study, a report commissioned jointly between the City Council and New East Manchester, which will help facilitate the commercial expansion of the city centre north and east wards along with providing improved access and connectivity to and from the neighbourhoods within North and East Manchester.

Recommendations

Members are requested to:

1. Comment and approve the City Fringe Spatial Development Framework, as the basis for consultation with key stakeholders in the area.
2. Request a further report on the outcome of the consultation as appropriate.

Wards Affected: City Centre, Harpurhey, Cheetham, Ancoats and Clayton, Bradford

Community Strategy Spine	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
Performance of the economy of the region and sub region	Improvements to the physical appearance of the inner ring road will enhance perceptions and improve investment potential and remove the "barrier effect" of the ring road in its current form
Reaching full potential in education and employment	Improving connectivity and access to and from the city centre as well as inter-neighbourhood will help with the movement of people from deprived communities to the opportunities and facilities that can help them achieve their potential
Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect	Enhanced connectivity and new investment will improve perceptions of the area, thereby raising the self esteem of residents and businesses within the area. New/improved connections will be

	aimed at removing barriers (physical and perceived) that prevent all members of the community from accessing opportunities and facilities
Neighbourhoods of Choice	Enhanced connectivity will improve the attractiveness of the neighbourhoods within and immediately beyond the City Fringe

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue none

Financial Consequences – Capital none

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

The 2008 – 2018 East Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework, Executive, 19th December 2007

The Co-operative Complex, Executive, 8th July 2009

City Fringe Spatial Strategy - Urban Strategies Inc / GVA Grimley /La Sande

Ancoats Development Review - EDAW

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The economic health, vitality and competitiveness of the city are crucial to the long-term economic success of the national and regional economy. As such it is imperative that the reach of city centre continues to extend so that it can, and will, play a fundamental role in building a modern, sustainable and competitive regional economy based on high value, knowledge intensive activity.
- 1.2 This report aims to set out the outcomes of the “City Fringe Spatial Development Framework” that was undertaken during 2009. A full copy of the report accompanies this report. The study was focussed on the Great Ancoats Street Corridor that stretched from Ashton Old Road / Mancunian Way intersection through to the New Bridge Street / Cheetham Hill Road intersection. The study area extended out to Alan Turing Way, the intermediate ring road, in particular around Sportcity. Map 1 identifies the study area. For the purposes of this work only this area was referred to as the “City Fringe”.
- 1.2 The purpose of this more detailed review of the “City Fringe” area was to bring forward a medium to long term strategy that ensures that neighbourhoods on the north and east periphery of the city centre are more effectively connected with the city centre. Addressing this issue would enable the “City Fringe” area to make a much more powerful contribution to the growth of the city and secure positive regeneration benefits for the wider area. As such the work which was commissioned sought to bring forward a spatial development framework for the City Fringe area make recommendations that would:
- Reinforce the role of the Great Ancoats Street corridor as a focus for new employment opportunities with particular capacity to support creative and knowledge based businesses;
 - Set out guidance for appropriate growth of the City Fringe and establish Sportcity and other regeneration priority areas as accessible extensions of the City Centre;
 - Identify measures to improve connectivity between local neighbourhoods and the wider districts of north Manchester, east Manchester and the City Centre;
 - Suggest criteria for the provision of retail and hotel development to achieve maximum regeneration benefit; and
 - Identify opportunities for new retail development to serve local need now and in the future.

The remainder of this report summarises the key findings and puts forward recommendations for the City Council to consider.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Arising out of the adoption of the 2008 – 2018 East Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework in late 2007 there was a clear recognition that if the area immediately to the East of the city centre was to maximise its potential in both economic and residential terms then work would need to be brought forward that sought to resolve some of the key challenges that were slowing the realisation of the potential of this part of the city.
- 2.2 Feedback from developers and a range of other stakeholders highlighted the need to strengthen linkages between neighbourhoods. At the heart of these concerns was a recognition that the eastward expansion of the city was being constrained by the character of Great Ancoats Street, which acts as a physical and psychological barrier, with businesses and residents feeling disconnected from the city centre. It was clear that many of these issues not only applied to the defined area covered by the East Manchester Strategic Framework but also impacted on those parts of the city covered by the North Manchester Strategic Framework and indeed a number of the emerging frameworks within the City Centre, for example, the Co-operative Complex.
- 2.3 In addition to further enhancing this part of the city as an area of opportunity it was further recognised that in order for development to be sustainable and capable of supporting wider regeneration aspirations then the location, quality and nature of development would be critical. This is particularly the case in relation to hotel and retail uses which, in the right place and in an appropriate form, can underpin wider regeneration objectives but equally can inhibit them if developed without sufficient regard to the wider context. This is particularly relevant to the Great Ancoats Street Corridor where, over the last two years, developers has sought to bring forward a range of proposals that have the potential to undermine wider regeneration objectives.

3.0 Policy Context

- 3.1 The strategy for the City Fringe has been developed within the context of regional and local policies and regeneration frameworks. A robust City Fringe will support the objectives set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS), which promotes the Manchester regional centre as a key economic driver for the North West and the primary focus for economic development, providing a hub for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism. It will also contribute to physical regeneration in a manner that addresses economic and social disparities. Consistent with the current Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP), it will support the vision for 'holistic regeneration' within the City Fringe and beyond, in order to deliver a step change in the quality of life and environment for local residents and visitors alike. To this end, the City Fringe needs to support a high-quality mix of amenities that help to meet the needs of a growing and economically active residential and business population. Additionally, the quality and location of hotel uses within the City Fringe must contribute to the overall quality of the Manchester hospitality offer. The strategy also reflects the broad aims of the emerging Core Strategy. It will be important that the strategy forms part of the

evidence base for the Core Strategy, in order that appropriate planning policy framework can be developed.

- 3.2 The City Fringe strategy aims to ensure that the objectives and priorities set out in the North Manchester Regeneration Framework and 2008-2018 East Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) can be realised. In particular, it focuses on the area where North and East Manchester meet the City Centre. It recognises that targeted regeneration efforts have brought about substantial progress within individual neighbourhoods, but that sustainable regeneration will be greatly enhanced by greater links between revitalised areas, as well as the long-term integration of East Manchester, North Manchester and the City Centre. Additionally, it aims to reinforce Great Ancoats Street as an arc of employment, as established in the SRF for East Manchester.
- 3.3 Appropriate development within the City Fringe must promote high-quality development and effective gateways at the edge of the City Centre, in a manner complementary to the high aspirations set out guidance for local areas, including the Ancoats Urban Village Supplementary Planning Guide and the Strangeways Local Plan. Further into the City Fringe area, better established linkages and public realm improvements should improve interconnectedness and support the vision for healthy, primarily residential neighbourhoods within the Lower Irk Valley and Miles Platting as set out in the Collyhurst Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan for Miles Platting.
- 3.4 Additionally, given the significance of Great Ancoats Street, proposals for the City Fringe must recognise and align with the aspirations set out in the forthcoming Regional Centre Transport Strategy.

Key Issues

- 3.5 The following key issues were identified as needing to be addressed in the establishment of an appropriate strategy for the City Fringe:

Significant progress but much more to be achieved

- 3.6 Over the past ten years, guided by regeneration frameworks for North and East Manchester, the neighbourhoods within the City Fringe have benefited from significant public and private investment. Evidence of the successful implementation of regeneration strategies within North and East Manchester is mounting.
- 3.7 Within the Corridor, Sportcity stands out as a significant area of opportunity and focus of investment. Major development projects in areas such as Ancoats Urban Village, the Green Quarter, Beswick, New Islington and Miles Platting are well underway, reversing a long pattern of decline. However, continued efforts are necessary, to ensure that progress within North and East Manchester becomes self-sustaining and that these areas are able to contribute fully to the regional economy. The current global economic problems bring this into even sharper focus as the fragility of emerging areas

is more prone to destabilising influences than their more established neighbours.

The need for a robust context to consider applications for hotel use

- 3.8 Within the current regeneration context, a key challenge is to set out an appropriate spatial framework to guide development, and to respond to market realities and pressures within the Corridor. There is a need to ensure that development undertaken supports wider regeneration objectives and is sustainable in the long term, this requires considerations as to quality as well as use and location, although the picture is becoming increasingly positive. The slowdown in residential - and, to a lesser extent, office - markets has led to numerous sites being put forward for hotel use, and many of the proposals are not likely to be viable. Whilst hotels have a clear role to play in the regeneration of the City Fringe, their location and quality will have a major impact on other development adjacent to them and there is a need to ensure that hotel consents that are granted have a realistic chance of delivery. The creation of criteria that will guide both planning decisions and developers in formulating their proposals would have clear benefits.

Convenience retail and other amenities

- 3.9 The projected increases in population, business and commercial activity will require a greater range of amenities and convenience retail. There is a reasonably good distribution of local shopping provision within the City Fringe, but there is considerable variation in quality. Some existing facilities would benefit from environmental improvement, enhanced offer and/or consolidation with other facilities. New or enhanced facilities are planned as part of wider mixed use developments to provide the increasing number of residents and workers with choice and easy access. However, a number of areas have more disparate provision of convenience retailing and planned residential and related development may lead to a deficit.

Emerging foodstore demand in and around the City Fringe

- 3.10 Recent years have seen a substantial improvement in the distribution of main foodstores in the East and North Manchester areas, but Asda at Sport City is the only main foodstore within the City Fringe (at its eastern margins). For many residents the travel distance for main food shopping trips is too great and local public transport does not provide a comprehensive service. Equally, residents within and close to the City Centre have access only to small and medium sized foodstores. This gap in provision has been noted in a study commissioned by the City Council (the Quantitative Retail Needs Study). Whilst now a few years old, it found that City Centre residents (including those in the City Fringe) generally travel to main foodstores outside of the City Centre. There appears, therefore, to be a case for a new main foodstore to serve the City Centre and City Fringe residents.

Placing demand for hotel and other amenity provision with a regeneration context

- 3.11 A framework for the City Fringe must address hotel and retail market challenges while supporting the priorities and objectives set out in the regeneration frameworks for North and East Manchester. Notably, the provision of amenities must promote social inclusion, good access to town centre uses and facilities, and encourage investment in deprived areas, creating additional employment opportunities and an improved physical environment. Hotels should be of a quality appropriate to their location, contribute to the regeneration priorities for the areas in which they are sited, and reinforce a high-quality hospitality offer within the City as a whole.

4.0 Key Findings

- 4.1 Urban Strategies along with GVA Grimley and La Sande have brought forward a very detailed spatial analysis of the City Fringe Study area along with a series of proposed criteria to help frame new hotel and retail development within the area. This section summarises the key findings of this work.

The Great Ancoats Street Corridor

- 4.2 In respect of this important corridor the study proposes that actions are considered that:
- Transform this current impediment to connectivity by achieving a better balance between pedestrian and vehicular priorities;
 - Undertake major public realm and junction improvements to support street life and commercial activity; and
 - Promote increased usage of the Intermediate Ring Road, in particular the eastern section of the inner relief route to Alan Turing Way, in order to strengthen the potential of Great Ancoats Street to support a balance of street life and vehicular activity whilst maintaining its role as a distributor for the Regional Centre. These interventions should be developed in line with the forthcoming Regional Centre Transport Strategy.

Focus Areas and Community Connections

- 4.3 In addition to existing mixed-use concentrations and regeneration priorities, such as the Northern Quarter, New Islington and the Ancoats Urban Village, additional opportunity areas exist within the City Fringe area. The Northern Gateway, The Canals, Piccadilly/Medlock and Sportcity are new Focus Areas with significant new, mixed-use development opportunities. They are distinct from established districts which are progressing within an agreed-upon planning framework, although they intersect with them and will help to support the viability of areas such as New Islington.
- 4.4 These new Focus Areas can support a high-quality mix of uses, reinforce linkages to the City Centre, between neighbourhoods, to rail and Metrolink stops, and become concentrations of activity. These are to be reinforced, in addition to existing priority areas for mixed-use development.

- 4.5 Additional, smaller community hubs are to be supported in residential neighbourhoods such as Miles Platting.
- 4.6 In terms of strengthening connections between neighbourhoods the study sets out proposals to improve linkages between neighbourhoods and initiatives to provide better north-south connectivity through the City Fringe area. Emphasis is also given to improving the Medlock/Pollard Street Corridor, an important east-west linkage between Sportcity and the City Centre.

Hotel and Retail Provision

- 4.7 Studies of the hotel and retail sectors were undertaken by La Sande Ltd. and GVA Grimley Ltd., respectively, as part of the development of the study. Their work reviewed the overall context, challenges and potential within the City Fringe to determine areas of opportunity and to provide recommendations on the optimum disposition of these uses to maximise regeneration benefits. This study was not intended to replace more detailed market analysis and the establishment of a thorough and specific evidence base that would inform planning applications. It does, however, identify how the site-ing of particular uses can support fundamental regeneration objectives and contribute to the establishment of a spatial development framework that underpins sustainable growth over the longer term. The Study is intended to provide a basis from which the City Council and NEM can work with the development community through the planning process, to encourage an ideal mix and spread of uses. This is particularly important at a time of considerable market uncertainty.

Hotel Uses

- 4.8 Within the Final Report the view is expressed that many of the current hotel development aspirations within the City Fringe are unlikely to proceed as viable schemes. Nonetheless there is a need to establish some clear parameters to assist in determining the appropriate provision of hotels: in terms of type, quality and location. The importance of reviewing every proposal on its own merits cannot be overstated. However there are overall principles, which can help to ensure that the provision of hotels contributes to the delivery of wider long-term regeneration and sustainable development objectives. These are set out below:

Engage with Hotel Operators

- 4.9 In addition to reacting to development proposals that come forward, the City Council should take proactive steps to promote a realistic and appropriate mix of hotel uses. The hospitality industry in the overall City economy is already significant and will continue to grow as Manchester improves its international standing. It is a large employer (across a range of skill levels) and it provides a key platform for business and leisure tourism. Given this context, it is essential that the City Council engages directly with the major operators. This engagement should be at a senior level within the Council, to ensure a sufficient overview of both the economic and physical strategies is promoted across the city, to provide appropriate insight and feedback. It is suggested

that the Head of Regeneration undertake this role. Equally, it is important that operators are represented by individuals at a sufficiently high level to appreciate the wider aspirations of the City. This should ensure that unsupported proposals are quickly disposed of and that operators can help shape citywide policy to further underpin commercial ability of sites that would be supported.

Criteria for Appropriate Hotel Applications

4.10 A combination of regeneration, quality and commercial criteria are vital for the implementation of a successful and sustainable hotel offering in the City Fringe area, indeed throughout the City. The following criteria were proposed to assist the City Council in identifying appropriate hotel proposals. These criteria incorporate regeneration, quality and locational considerations. The commercial indicators included here should provide a firm basis upon which to judge the viability of hotel proposals, without which any hotel scheme is likely to fail. Developers should be encouraged to demonstrate the appropriateness of their proposals, using these indicators. The following criteria have been put forward for consideration in terms of assessing prospective planning applications for hotel development. Each planning application should be accompanied by evidence that there is a:

- Commitment of an operator, with evidence such as a binding letter of intent, subject to planning consent;
- Proof of funding;
- Involvement of an Operator with a proven track record;
- Clear willingness to contribute to the overall quality of the Manchester hotel market;
- Qualified development programme;
- Evidence of commitment to quality in design and finishes;
- Appropriateness of hotel quality (e.g. budget vs. four-star) for the location;
- Demonstrated consistency with Strategic Regeneration Framework priorities;
- Evidence of regeneration benefits, including a commitment to local employment and training; and
- Contributes to a wider masterplan, or, as a standalone proposal, does not undermine (within the context of the City Fringe Study area) the Focus Areas.

Retail Uses

4.11 The right amount, mix and location of retail uses is important for supporting regeneration and meeting the needs of growing communities, particularly in North and East Manchester, and at the edges of the City Centre. In addition to providing a vital service for communities, retail can perform an important role in diversifying the mix of uses within an area or particular scheme, introducing activity on key frontages, generating employment opportunities and increasing the viability of a development through enhanced values and footfall – in short, it has the potential to have a substantial regenerative benefit.

4.12 The Study Report proposes that the scale, location, and type of retail uses within the City Fringe should achieve the following regeneration objectives:

- Link communities with new physical connections and opportunities for interaction;
- Promote positive perceptions of North and East Manchester;
- Achieve urban repair: improve frontages, urban form, street presence;
- Deliver high-quality design regardless of the scale, format and type of facility;
- Be a key element in establishing a balance of high-quality uses along both sides of Great Ancoats Street;
- Complement current and proposed regeneration investment and the mix of uses planned for new communities;
- Promote the clustering of services, to reduce the need to travel;
- Establish stability in declining areas through the replacement of outdated facilities;
- Improve the quality and range of retail within or adjacent to growth areas, and respond to proven “gaps” in provision; and
- Provide a range of shopping facilities for City Centre residents, which can be accessed by sustainable transport.

4.13 Specific recommendations are made for the provision of retail in the area is as follows:

Focus on Convenience Retail

4.14 There is a substantial amount of comparison retail floorspace (stores selling items not bought on a frequent basis, for example televisions and white goods) within the Study Area, mainly at Manchester Fort, Central Retail Park and to a lesser extent at Sport City. The City Centre retail core lies a short distance to the west and exerts its influence over the whole of the area and beyond. Cheetham Hill district centre has a significant and recently expanded comparison retail offer, and Openshaw will be redeveloped to provide a major foodstore as part of the new District Centre.

4.15 There is little evidence, therefore, of need to plan for additional comparison retail within the Study Area. Any emerging proposals should be assessed in accordance with the City’s established retail policies. In general, new retail provision should be based on emerging needs as areas are developed and the focus should be on convenience retail (outlets selling everyday essential items, such as food and newspapers).

Focus Retail in Existing and Planned Concentrations

4.16 New retail provision should be focused in viable locations and where it will have the greatest benefit. The City’s established network and hierarchy of City, district and local centres provides the primary basis for this, and established policy seeks to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of those centres. There is recognition, however, within the North Manchester

Strategic Regeneration Framework, the East Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework and the non-statutory Local Plans of the need for and benefit of a sustainable distribution of local shops and services, beyond those established centres, which will support new and developing communities. That guidance remains relevant and appropriate.

- 4.17 Within the City Fringe, the existing designated District Centre at Sportcity is performing well and has potential to grow as Sportcity expands. Additionally, existing concentrations of retail at Manchester Fort Shopping Park, along Great Ancoats Street, and in smaller neighbourhood centres provide an important role in the shopping network and overall offer, providing choice and access to a range of facilities. The presence of such provision should continue to be supported, in accordance with guidance set out in applicable policies and the North and East Manchester Regeneration Frameworks.
- 4.18 The provision of local community or neighbourhood hubs represents an important element in the retail hierarchy. The Collyhurst Plan for the Lower Irk Valley provides a means of focusing local facilities in accessible ‘hubs’ where their viability is more assured and communities can benefit. This approach should be extended throughout the Study Area. New retail should strengthen existing District Centres as well as existing and planned neighbourhood retail concentrations. In many areas within the City Fringe and particularly along Great Ancoats Street, retail can support residential and commercial growth, to generate activity and interest. Where there is no existing retail concentration in proximity, the establishment of small concentrations of neighbourhood amenities and services, including convenience retail to serve daily needs, should be encouraged in accessible locations, for example directly around Metrolink stops.
- 4.19 Existing evidence points to the need for a new main foodstore to serve the City Centre and provide an alternative “main shop” shopping destination, thereby providing amenity for residents and business and reducing the need to travel by car. The City Fringe has the ability to meet this need, by providing an easily accessible location that is effectively integrated with the City Centre and able to attract City Centre residents, whilst also serving residents and workers within the City Fringe itself.
- 4.20 Central Retail Park (CRP) clearly offers the optimum location and opportunity to deliver such provision within this area, also providing significant regeneration benefit through increased investment and local employment opportunities. This potential to deliver substantial regeneration benefit has been confirmed in a separate report, commissioned by the Council and undertaken by Drivas Jonas, which examined the relative regeneration impacts of various potential foodstore locations. As currently configured, CRP is a major barrier to the effective integration of New Islington and adjoining areas of change with the City Centre. CRP has a detrimental effect on the area, in terms of appearance and profile. The reconfiguration and revitalisation of CRP as a mixed use development has been identified as a key priority, and the anchor of a main foodstore would provide the necessary value to bring about this change – the opportunity could provide the impetus for early,

dramatic and beneficial change. Such a use would also provide the opportunity to reduce the barrier effect of both CRP and Great Ancoats Street itself; pedestrian movement would be encouraged across Great Ancoats Street, effectively extending the City Centre to the east, in a similar manner as is intended by the planned Co-op Headquarters development. The location of the site on the East Manchester side of the street and the opportunity for more effective integration could be of symbolic and psychological significance.

- 4.21 The impact of any proposal would have to be studied in detail to determine what would be appropriate, in absolute terms and comparatively. Effects on the trading performance of other existing stores are a key consideration but have to be viewed in the context of a growing but underserved population and consequent growing demand, but the regeneration benefits of such a proposal would be substantial. The provision of a foodstore on the CRP site could specifically address policy guidance that seeks to promote social inclusion, encourage investment in deprived areas, and connect areas of opportunity to areas of need, particularly those areas in need of physical, social and economic restructuring and regeneration. As with hotel provision, retail has a significant role to play in establishing a robust framework to support long-term regeneration and community growth. In this particular case, the benefits could entail hosting a high-quality, mixed-use development that improves connectivity between New Islington, the City Centre, and neighbouring areas, through promoting regular interaction and greater integration. Such a development could also provide a step change in the appearance and function of the CRP lands, which are currently a symbol of decline.

5.0 Concluding Remarks

- 5.1 The City Centre is moving towards a critical mass of economic activity and is set to experience further, significant, employment growth in the coming years. To accommodate this anticipated growth the city centre needs to continue to grow and diversify its employment base. To fulfil its potential it must be able to accommodate the needs and requirements of a growing and diverse range of commercial and residential occupiers.
- 5.2 The City Fringe Spatial Development Framework has been brought forward with the very explicit intent of building upon the existing frameworks that are in place. It makes a series of proposals that will support the future development of commercial and residential markets on the north and east fringe of the city centre by helping to integrate the fringe area into the city centre.
- 5.3 Taking into account the views of Scrutiny Committee it is intended that key stakeholders are consulted on the Development Framework and the outcome of the consultation is reported back in due course.
- 5.4 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

6.0 Contributing to the Community Strategy

(a) Performance of the economy of the region and sub region

- 6.1 The strategy for the City Fringe has been developed within the context of regional and local policies and regeneration frameworks. The development of a robust City Fringe will support the objectives set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West, which promotes the Manchester Regional Centre as a key economic driver for the North West, in particular providing a primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism.

(b) Reaching full potential in education and employment

- 6.2 Improvements to connectivity between neighbourhoods and into the city centre, along with improvements to the inner ring road, will make it easier to access employment and education opportunities.

(c) Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect

- 6.3 Improved connectivity will provide access to key facilities and employment opportunities, improving prospects for all residents, thereby enhancing individual and collective self esteem and thereby engendering greater mutual respect.

(d) Neighbourhoods of Choice

- 6.4 Accessible neighbourhoods with easy and convenient access to facilities and employment opportunities become more desirable places to live.

7.0 Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

- 7.1 Improved connectivity to amenities, facilities and opportunities will assist all residents equally.

(b) Risk Management

- 7.2 None

(c) Legal Considerations

- 7.3 None

Map1: The City Fringe Study Area

