This area contains the single largest concentration of commercial, cultural and educational facilities in the North of England. The great variety of activities found in the Regional Centre, together with its heritage and fine buildings and open spaces, give it a vitality and special quality. It provides employment for around 120,000 people and is an important source of jobs for Manchester residents.

A primary function of the Regional Centre is its role as a commercial centre in serving not just the City of Manchester and the Greater Manchester conurbation but the northwest region and beyond. The banking, insurance and related sectors need a City Centre location with the benefits of accessibility, interaction and prestige which this brings. The picture is not a static one, however, and activities which no longer need a central location may move out, to be replaced by new activities requiring to be in the City Centre.

In addition to its business function, the Regional Centre fulfils a role as a regional shopping centre with a range of retailing choice including national stores, speciality shopping, markets and "alternative" shops. The Regional Centre also contains a variety of cultural and leisure activities including theatres, concert venues, museums, restaurants, pubs and bars. Such uses help to create activity in the evenings and at weekends.

In recent years an increasing number of people have chosen to live in the Regional Centre. Both new housing developments and conversions of older warehouse buildings to residential use have taken place. This adds to the vitality of the City's cultural life.

The number and variety of employment opportunities, public and private services, and leisure attractions located in the Regional Centre make it essential that the Centre is accessible to all sections of the community. When the Inner Relief Route is complete, it will take through traffic out of the core of the Regional Centre but within the core the requirement is for private car users to have efficient access to car parking spaces and for the servicing requirements of businesses to be met. The focus of the Council's efforts will be in securing improvements in public transport provision and in the conditions enjoyed by pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, the Regional Centre needs to be accessible to disabled people and to those whose mobility is impaired.

There are many spin-offs from the activities which take place in the Regional Centre but the most important linkages are those between the Regional Centre's commercial role and the process of economic regeneration elsewhere in the North West region. The fostering of linkages with other secondary centres spreads the benefits of economic regeneration. One important secondary centre is found at Salford Quays and Trafford Wharfside where major commercial development has taken place since the mid-1980s. Development along the River Irwell and Manchester Ship Canal corridor will reinforce the linkages between the Regional Centre and the Salford Quays area. Similarly, with the regeneration plans for the Hulme area immediately south of the Regional Centre proposing the creation of significant commercial floorspace, functional and physical linkages with the Regional Centre will need to be fostered.

There are also numerous spin-off benefits from the Higher Education Precinct which occupies land either side of Oxford Road to the south-east of the City Centre core. Major land users are Manchester University, Manchester Metropolitan University, UMIST and the major regional hospitals. They are major employers in their own right but, more significantly, the higher educational establishments represent a significant resource of knowledge to the local economy, while the student population adds to the vitality of the City's cultural life.

The Regional Centre is a dynamic area, the effective management of which is essential to the economic well-being of the citizens of Manchester and a wider area beyond the City. As a consequence, the statutory planning framework which guides change in this area needs to be kept up to date.

In 1984 the Council adopted the City Centre Local Plan as the statutory planning framework for a major part of the Regional Centre and this Plan has been incorporated into the Manchester Plan. In 1988, the Government established an Urban Development Area covering an area of land across the south of the Regional Centre. Responsibility for regenerating this area was given to the Central Manchester Development Corporation (CMDC), which was granted powers to decide planning applications and has published aninformal development strategy for the area.

The Council considers that the policies contained within the former City Centre Local Plan continue to provide a useful and relevant planning framework for today's Regional Centre. However, the Council recognises that the policies may not remain useful and relevant throughout the projected lifetime of the Manchester Plan. Following adoption of the Manchester Plan, and as part of the on-going process of monitoring and review, particular attention will need to be given to the Regional Centre, and the Council expects that one of its earliest tasks will be to carry out a review of the planning framework for the Regional Centre and to promote amendments and revisions where appropriate.

The argument for retaining the existing planning framework for the Regional Centre within the Manchester Plan, and carrying out a review at an early stage following the Manchester Plan's adoption, is reinforced by the timetable for winding down the Central Manchester Development Corporation, which is currently proposed for April 1996. A review to coincide with the winding down of the Corporation will enable the Council to develop a comprehensive planning framework for the whole of the Regional Centre in the post-Development Corporation period.

Because of the complex and dynamic nature of development issues which arise in the Regional Centre, the Council may from time to time prepare additional material in the form of non-statutory plans and supplementary guidance which complements the statutory planning framework. One good example of the dynamics of the Regional Centre is provided by the "Gay Village" area around Bloom Street which has emerged as a much more clearly defined area since the former City Centre Local Plan was adopted, and where the Council will work with the gay and lesbian communities and other interested parties in the development of firm proposals. In addition, and in recognition of the importance which the Council gives to retaining and enhancing Manchester City Centre's architectural and urban design qualities, the Council intends to publish more detailed supplementary guidance about design matters in the City Centre.

THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR THE CITY CENTRE

The policies for the city centre are set out below. They comprise:

(1) policies RC1 and RC2 which are new policies introduced into The Manchester Plan;

(2) policies RC3 to RC19 which are the General Policies taken from the former City Centre Local Plan;

(3) policy RC20 which sets out proposals for the 27 sub-areas taken from the former City Centre Local Plan and the 4 new sub-areas introduced into The Manchester Plan. Minor changes have been made to the text of the incorporated sub-area material to take account of implementation since the adoption of the former Local Plan. This is by no means exhaustive.
RC 1 The policies contained in the former City Centre Local Plan are incorporated into the Manchester Plan. In line with the general approach set out in the former Plan, the Council and, within the Urban Development Area, the Central Manchester Development Corporation will continue to provide more detailed supplementary planning guidance in relation to specific topics, areas and sites to ensure that there is a clear and up to date context within which the process of renewal and regeneration can take place.

Reasons :-
The Council is satisfied that the policies contained in the former City Centre Local Plan as a whole remain useful and relevant and this fact justifies their incorporation into the Manchester Plan without modification. Insofar as they presently overlap, the Central Manchester Development Strategy will continue to sit alongside The Manchester Plan. It was never intended that the former City Centre Local Plan would deal with all eventualities. Rather it provides the general context for the management of change and for development control. Where necessary both the City Council and the Central Manchester Development Corporation have issued more detailed guidance, for instance in the case of the Shudehill area, the area around G-ReX and the Victoria Station area, to facilitate the process of regeneration. This approach will continue and will inform the anticipated review of the Manchester Plan as it relates to the City Centre.

RC 2 For the purposes of the Manchester Plan, the Council defines the Regional Centre more widely than the area covered by the former City Centre Local Plan. The area covered by the former City Centre Local Plan is to be extended to include four new sub-areas. These are:-

a) St. George's (Area 28);
b) All Saints (Area 29);
c) The University (Area 30); and d) The Hospitals (Area 31).

The Council will apply all the general policies contained in the former City Centre Local Plan in taking decisions about the use and developement of land in each of the four new small areas.

Reasons :-

The Higher Education Precinct provides a regional role and has strong functional linkages with uses found in the area covered by the former City Centre Local Plan and in the area covered by the Central Manchester Development Corporation. The St. George's area, although excluded from the former City Centre Local Plan is within the Central Manchester Development Area. It has the potential for attracting uses of a character appropriate to the Regional Centre and for acting as a physical link between the core of the Regional Centre and the Salford Quays and Trafford Wharfside areas. There is therefore good reason to extend the area covered by the former City Centre Local Plan to include the Higher Education Precinct and the St. George's area and to include these areas within the area defined as the Regional Centre for the purposes of the Manchester Plan.

RC 3 MIXED USES
Compatible mixed uses will be encouraged throughout the area. Mixed use schemes will be preferred to single use schemes whether on redevelopment or using existing property. Proposals for major mixed use development will generally be required to include a significant proportion of housing.

Reasons :-

A great variety and mixture of uses is one of the major characteristics of the City Centre. Many of the activities, the different patterns of land use and even different uses within buildings support one another. The very complex relationships between all the various activities in the City Centre give rise in part to its special character and atmosphere. Mixed uses both in new development and in existing buildings would add to the existing variety and diversity of activity in the Centre.

In essence the Plan's proposals for mixed uses aim to ensure that every opportunity is available for such a positive mix of activity to become an even more characteristic part of the City Centre than it is at present, albeit without overlooking the need to avoid mixing uses which do not relate well together. The Plan has identified in the small area proposals a area where a single main use, such as industry or housing, needs to be protected from conflicting development but for the remaining majority of the area this general mixed use policy will apply. In addition, for particular development sites which are especially suited to mixed use redevelopment, some specific proposals have been made in the small area frameworks.

Examples of where further mixtures of new activities can add to the attractions of the regional centre are many and varied. In the core area the main commercial and retail activities could be complemented by the further addition of other uses which can serve (and attract more) workers and shoppers - cafes, public houses, entertainment, incidental open space, cultural facilities - in fact almost anything that would not be environmentally unsuited to the area. Also in the core, but more especially in the peripheral areas, introducing housing components into the mix of uses could begin to meet the latent demand for City Centre housing whilst adding new life to presently declining areas.

RC 4 ENVIRONMENT
The following areas will receive priority in public environmental improvement programmes. Private development within them will be encouraged to make a positive contribution to the same end:

a) land adjoining the City Centre Waterways;
b) Conservation Areas within the City Centre;
c) the major gateways to the City Centre;
d) areas of major pedestrian activity including (in addition to the above) the central shopping area, major areas of public open space/civic squares, routes between railway and bus stations and the commercial core, and major surface level car parks.

Reasons :-

These areas have been singled out for special attention for a variety of reasons but, in general terms, they are where environmental improvement will yield particularly high benefits in terms of either enhancing existing high quality areas or increasing the attractiveness of and thereby the activity within especially important or currently neglected areas. There is also a clear emphasis upon improving conditions and facilities for pedestrians. The Great Ancoats Street frontage, for example, is presently the least attractive city centre fringe area, characterised by pockets of vacant land, drab and often poorly maintained buildings and an absence of landscaping. All this combines to produce a general air of neglect and a disincentive to further investment. It is, however, a prominent and increasingly important corridor of vehicle movement (forming part of the proposed Inner Relief Route) and one where improvements to the road network could be made at a relatively low cost. The scheme is designed to give the whole area a fresh impetus and a new image through better pedestrian access and pedestrian friendly design.
RCS WATERWAYS
Action will be taken to improve the public accessibility and amenity value of the City Centre's waterways. Development proposals for sites adjoining the waterways will accordingly be required to allow for walkways along the River Irwell, the River Medlock and the canals and where possible, to promote closer integration of the waterways into the adjoining areas.

Reasons:
- The City's waterways represent a large and substantially untapped recreational and environmental resource which the Council is anxious to exploit as fully as possible, particularly in view of the paucity of recreational open space elsewhere in the City Centre. In essence the approach to be adopted will be directed at extending the considerable improvements which have already been achieved in the higher reaches of the rivers and will reflect the different character and potential of the individual waterways.
- In the case of the River Irwell, the Council is currently preparing supplementary planning guidance for development control purposes and setting up a rolling programme of environmental works. The works, to be undertaken by the Council in co-operation with other private or public bodies where appropriate, will be aimed at:
  a) improvement of City Centre 'gateway' bridging points;
  b) the opening up of views along the river corridor;
  c) cleaning and painting the road and rail bridges;
  d) street planting;
  e) linking up existing paths and access decks to create a continuous landscaped footpath along the river;
  f) improving unsightly plots of land and buildings;
  g) increasing the provision of riverside open space and introducing more extensive and more appropriate landscaping.
- The proposed development control guidelines will further these aims and help to ensure that the opportunities offered by new development are fully exploited. In particular, new development will:
  i) be set back to allow for public access to and along the river.
  ii) be expected to present an attractive building elevation on the river bank and provide adequate and appropriate landscaping.
- As with the Irwell, the upper reaches of the River Medlock have been substantially improved and these improvements now extend to the fringe of the Medlock Valley area. However, the scope for further widespread improvements of the Medlock and its surroundings within the City Centre is limited, at least in the short term. Nevertheless, the City Council is anxious not to leave any opportunity for improvement unexplored. In particular where redevelopment is proposed, the feasibility of opening up those stretches of the river that are at present culverted should be given detailed consideration and appropriate steps taken to improve the public accessibility and amenity value of the river. Whilst the rivers generally benefit from soft landscaping, the canals are rather different in character with, for the most part, built form associated with the canal-side. However, in order to increase their recreational value the Council will encourage the provision of small open spaces at a limited number of points as and when opportunities to do so arise. As with the rivers, canal-side development will be required to provide for public access to the canal.

RC6 TOURISM
The Council will actively promote the development of tourism in the City Centre, and seeks to increase the level of hotel, conference, exhibition, recreation and entertainment facilities. Developments which make a contribution to tourism will be encouraged.

Reasons:
- Tourism development has an important role to play enhancing the regional character of the City Centre and complementing business and shopping core activity. Hotel, exhibition and conference facilities all need to be expanded to reflect the growing 'business tourism' market whilst recreational, cultural, exhibition and entertainment facilities, readily available in the City Centre represent the special attractions that a truly Regional City Centre should offer those who might work, shop and live within it. Such activities have the potential to bring economic benefits including providing significant employment opportunities for residents of the areas of the City close to the Regional Centre.
- The Plan intends to build on existing assets and particularly to encourage tourism development closely allied with the environmental changes that will make the City Centre a physically more attractive place. The development of an exhibition centre and other facilities at the former Central Station site is seen as especially important (see Policy RC20 Area 23). The historic Castlefield area has the potential to become a tourist attraction in its own right, based on the recent development of museums here and on the opening up of its waterside areas. Other canal-side and riverside areas in the City Centre offer the potential to provide attractive settings for a range of new activities contributing to improving the character of the Centre as a place to visit. In the Smithfield area Manchester Craft Village has brought small scale craft workshops into the City Centre - a valuable starting point for related uses. On Oxford Street, already an important entertainment centre with the Palace Theatre, cinemas, clubs and other facilities, the Plan seeks to encourage further consolidation of entertainment uses.

RC7 GATEWAY SITES
Development on prominent sites adjoining the 'gateway' entry points into the City Centre will be required to achieve high standards of environmental treatment. Accordingly such developments will be required to adopt design and/or landscaping treatment which reflects the importance of a particular site in terms of:
- its prominence relative to main radial entry roads into the City Centre; and/or
- its prominence relative to the River Irwell or the Inner Relief Route (Mancunian Way/Great Acornts Street/Swan Street/Miller Street/New Bridge Street).

Reasons:
- It is important that the entry points into the City Centre create a good initial impression for the visitor and express to some extent a sense of 'arrival' at the Regional Centre. High standards of architectural and/or landscape treatment will therefore be particularly appropriate. The Plan's detailed proposals include identification of the most important of these sites. Design considerations coupled to the locational advantages and general proposals in respect of offices, commerce and industry, all point towards a suitability for mixed use development and these particular opportunities have been highlighted in the small area frameworks.
- The Council will be seeking to co-ordinate its own activities in undertaking environmental improvement with application of the 'gateway sites' environmental policies to maximise the impact of public and private sector action in these vicinities.
AREA 5 – GENERAL POLICIES FOR THE CITY CENTRE

RDC AMOUNT OF OFFICE DEVELOPMENT
In considering proposals for major office development, particular regard will be paid to:

a) the level of outstanding planning permission for office development;
b) the level of existing vacancies in office floorspace;
c) the availability and suitability of sites and buildings identified in policy RCD.

All relative to the demand for new office floorspace.

Reasons -
Office activity is a major and vital part of the Regional Centre, providing substantial, wide-ranging employment opportunities and helping to sustain, both directly and indirectly, a wide variety of other uses and activities. The Council is therefore anxious to ensure that existing and potential new activity is not constrained by a lack of suitable accommodation and places considerable emphasis on the benefits that office development can bring in terms of jobs, higher levels of activity and urban renewal. The Small Area Proposals accordingly provide a varied choice of development opportunities consistent with the diverse needs of the market and the characteristics of small areas within the City Centre.

This policy, in ensuring that the level of outstanding planning consents does not outstrip likely demands for new floorspace, will help achieve this by introducing a greater element of certainty into the development market. Thus, prospective developers should be better placed to judge the prospects of successful development and, in turn, to secure funding, without having to assess the potential future supply of new floorspace clouded by the existence of numerous widespread and excessive speculative planning consents which have no real prospect of implementation. At the same time, the policy will serve to promote orderly progress in the development of sites and focus pressures for renewal and refurbishment onto those areas where they will be of greatest benefit and, in particular, where they might take advantage of the action being taken by the City Council to improve operating conditions. Furthermore, in helping to ensure that planning consents are tailored more closely to real development prospects, the policy will reduce the inhibiting effect that hope values based on unrealistic speculative office consents may have on attempts to introduce other uses into the City Centre.

RCD LOCATION OF OFFICE DEVELOPMENT
In considering office development proposals in locations other than those identified in Small Area Frameworks, office development will be acceptable only where it can be shown that one or more of the following applies:

a) the development is small scale and designed to cater for local needs and could not therefore be suitably located in the identified locations;
b) the development can be shown as necessary to meet a specified use’s requirements and no equally suitable identified locations are available;
c) the development involves the refurbishment of an existing office, a listed building or a building within a Conservation Area;
d) the development forms an ancillary part of a mixed use scheme which would result in a substantial environmental or other planning benefits such as the provision of housing, public open space or public car parking or would create an appropriate main road frontage in townscape and environmental terms to existing or proposed uses; and the proposed development would not conflict with other policies and site-specific proposals in the Plan.

Reasons -
Whilst the small area frameworks seek to identify an adequate range of sites which will be attractive to office users and where office development can make the most positive overall contribution to the future regional centre, they clearly cannot anticipate every individual user’s needs nor every opportunity that may arise to maximise the benefits that office development may present. The four instances listed in this policy allow exceptions to be made in appropriate cases where consistent with the general aims of the Plan.

a) Allowing small scale ‘local needs’ offices in areas allocated broadly for other uses need not inhibit these alternative uses and indeed could prove useful supportive facilities in the local economy and further the aims of the Plan to encourage a mix of uses. Clearly the assessment of what constitutes such development will vary from area to area but will not normally exceed 1000 sq metres of floorspace.
b) A general presumption in favour of owner occupied development or development where a substantial pre-let is shown to exist, is consistent with the overriding theme of the Plan to stimulate activity within the City Centre. Such development would nonetheless be subject to normal detailed local planning considerations, including the compatibility of the proposed use with existing or proposed adjoining uses.
c) The Plan generally aims to conserve the considerable architectural and historic heritage of the City. The City Council is therefore anxious to ensure that no opportunity to attract potentially viable uses which would result in the enhancement of a Conservation Area or the refurbishment of a Listed Building is lost, provided that such refurbishment did not detract from the particular attributes of the building or Conservation Area which give them their special character.
d) The City Centre would benefit significantly from the introduction on a greater scale than hitherto of uses such as open space, housing and public car parking. However, the nature of many sites within the city centre is such that these uses are very difficult to achieve by themselves. The inclusion of an office element in association with such uses can be of considerable advantage in making such mixed use schemes more economically viable and providing more appropriate frontages both in townscape terms and in relation to the housing environment.

RCO SHOPPING
New shopping development will be limited to a scale appropriate to consolidating the role of the central area and, except where one or more of the following circumstances apply, will normally be required to be located within or adjacent to the central shopping area:

a) the proposals are for small-scale shopping facilities serving the daily needs of people living or working in or visiting a particular locality;
b) the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that such facilities are required to meet the need for retail outlets of a type which it may be acceptable or more appropriate to locate outside the central shopping area and whose activities would not undermine existing retailing in the central shopping area;
c) the proposals are for an ancillary retail element in a proposed mixed use development fronting a major pedestrian route and of a scale consistent with that required to create a lively and interesting ground floor facade. In such cases individual shop units should not normally exceed 150 sq.m. of gross shopping floorspace; and the proposed development would not conflict with other policies and site specific proposals in the Plan.

Reasons -
Policy 20 (Areas 3, 6 and 9) outlines the proposals for the central shopping area. The exceptions set out in this policy are designed to ensure that those retail users for whom the existing core will not be an appropriate location are adequately catered for in the city centre area, so that the contribution that local and specialist elements of retailing can make to increasing the level of activity and diversity in the City Centre as a whole are not lost.

1) Small-scale local shopping will include, for example, tobacconists, newsagents, sandwich shops and similar retailing serving everyday needs. Where substantial concentrations of housing exist small convenience food shops may justify inclusion in this category.
AREA 5 – GENERAL POLICIES FOR THE CITY CENTRE

Reasons (cont): –

ii) Certain specialist retail uses, for example, car showrooms and large DIY stores have particular locational and/or site requirements arising from the nature of the goods they sell and their mode of operation. Recognising the benefits of such activities to the City Centre, the plan seeks to encourage their location in the City Centre periphery. However, where peripheral locations are sought for a specialist retail use, primarily in order to achieve extra parking facilities, the application will be required to demonstrate that such provision is essential to the operation and illustrate why the central shopping area with its public car parking and public transport accessibility is unsuitable.

iii) Major stores would not normally satisfy the criteria in (b) because of their impact on trade in the existing shopping centre and the opportunities available within it. A number of streets, particularly those leading to and from major public and private transport termini, carry substantial pedestrian movements and on such frontages retailing can contribute a valuable service and introduce vitality and visual variety into a coherent scene. However, limits need to be applied in order to preclude any undue competition with the central shopping area and a size limit is therefore applied to individual units.

RC11 HOUSING

The provision of additional housing will be encouraged and where feasible consideration to its adoption is made within the City Centre will be given towards proposals for appropriate types of housing development.

Reasons: –

Different sites and areas have varying potential to accommodate particular types of housing. Some may be better suited to flats or terraced housing than other sites which may be more suited to residential or mixed-use development. The location of housing suitable for any site, or for families or other households, will vary according to the nature of the surrounding environment and uses and the provision of local education and other facilities. Equally, as it is made clear in the Level 3 Frameworks, the means of achieving it will vary from time to time, in some cases redevelopment, in others, rehabilitation and conversion. All of these factors will be taken into consideration in determining individual proposals but in general the starting point will be a presumption in favour of housing and the Council will endeavour to co-operate in tackling any problems which might arise.

The form of encouragement and assistance which the Council can offer will itself depend on individual circumstances. In some cases it will take the form of assisting prospective developers to the opportunities offered by a particular site or building. In others it will carry out its own feasibility studies or undertake concerted programmes of environmental improvement and traffic management to support residential use. Further encouragement might be given by using its discretionary powers to provide grants for conversion or by examining the scope for a relaxation in building regulations where these proved unduly restrictive. It would, however, be inappropriate for the Plan itself to deal with these issues in any detail. Rather, the Plan sets the framework for the considerable amount of further investigation which is required, establishes the Council's general intent and gives this a firmer spatial dimension where appropriate.

Envisaged 27th September 2007

RC12 HIGHWAYS

It will be the policy of the Council, through its transport proposals to:

a) remove extraneous through traffic;
b) improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and the disabled;
c) achieve environmental improvements;
d) provide better access for buses;
e) improve traffic circulation in the City Centre.

The following proposals will implement this policy:

i) In the short term, the provision, by selective improvement and traffic management, of a more attractive route between Albion Street and Great Ancoats Street for circulatory traffic. Miller Street will also be widened;

ii) In the longer term, the construction of a complete Inner Relief Route (also passing through the adjoining part of Salford). This will utilise Mancunian Way and follow the lines of Water Street, Irwell Street, Swan Street and Great Ancoats Street.

Reasons: –

This is intended to improve bus passenger amenities and accessibility in the central area and also result in the general improvement of areas with major pedestrian activity or civic importance. The provision of new terminals depends, amongst many other factors, on the future development of the central areas railway station and its stations. Changes in the relative importance of central railway stations could also result in changes or additions to the existing Centreline bus service.

RC13 THE BUS NETWORK

The Council and the Passenger Transport Executive will pursue a longer term policy of extending routes to a restricted number of purpose-built bus stations, ultimately replacing Stevenson Square and Victoria Bus Station (Salford) as terminal areas. Passenger waiting conditions in Parker Street and at other important boarding points will be improved.

Reasons: –

This is intended to improve bus passenger amenities and accessibility in the central area and also result in the general improvement of areas with major pedestrian activity or civic importance. The provision of new terminals depends, amongst many other factors, on the future development of the central areas railway station and its stations. Changes in the relative importance of central railway stations could also result in changes or additions to the existing Centreline bus service.
RC14 THE RAIL NETWORK
The Council and the Passenger Transport Executive will improve access between City Centre stations and the central core. The possibility of linking suburban rail services by cross-city centre links in the longer term is under investigation.

Reasons :-
It is intended to enhance the public transport accessibility of the City Centre and to improve the utilisation of the existing rail system. The intention to provide new suburban stations, where justified, will be complemented by the policy concerning accessibility to City Centre stations. The Council and British Rail have established a Joint Study Group to examine possible cross-city centre links to follow the implementation of the Manchester/Preston/Blackpool electrification and construction of the Windsor Link in Salford. The detailed alignment of any firm proposals to emerge will be discussed with the local planning authority to ensure that they are compatible with other existing or proposed developments.

RC15 USE OF PUBLIC CAR PARKING
Public car parking will be required to give priority to short and medium stay parking.

Reasons :-
Within the core the demand for land and the intensity of activity is such that, by and large, it is simply not possible to provide parking on any significant scale. The Plan accepts, therefore, that parking to serve this area (broadly bounded by Deansgate, Peter Street, Mosley Street and Cannon Street) will have to be provided in the more peripheral parts of the City Centre. The need to maintain an adequate supply of convenient spaces for shoppers and other visitors means that those spaces which are best related to the core will be used for short and medium stay visitor parking. All day commuter and contract parking will therefore have to be provided further from the core. Such discrimination may be achieved either by means of a selective pricing structure or by restricting the length of stay, depending on the circumstances of particular locations.

RC16 PROVISION OF PUBLIC CAR PARKING

* Except where land values or land characteristics create circumstances in which the provision of an adequate number of car parking spaces requires the construction of multi-storey parking facilities, the additional public parking needs of the City Centre will be provided for in the form of landscaped surface level car parks.

Reasons :-
A large amount of multi-storey public parking is already provided. However, in looking at the opportunities for additional parking, multi-storey provision is extremely expensive. When resources are scarce and have to be used to provide car parking in more than one area, surface level parking is the most attractive option. It is important too to note that surface level parking can be provided on an incremental basis. If surface level parking is to be satisfactorily integrated into the urban fabric, it will be essential that it is constructed to a high standard to avoid the unsightly appearance that tends to characterise surface car parking. Careful planning and landscaping associated with car parking could also contribute to the amount of public open space in the core area.

Expiry 27th September 200_1

RC17 PRIVATE CAR PARKING
The provision of private car parking in association with new developments in the City Centre will be required provided that this does not, in the opinion of the Council:

a) unduly prejudice proposals for environmental improvements and improved conditions for pedestrians;

b) create unacceptable traffic conditions; or

c) result in a development which cannot be satisfactorily integrated into the neighbouring urban fabric.

This requirement will be applied so as to give a lower level of provision in the core in the periphery.

Reasons :-
Provision of adequate car parking in the City Centre is one of the fundamental objectives of the Plan. The Plan also seeks to encourage successful new developments that will result in increased activity in the City Centre. The extent to which it is necessary or possible for developments to have car parking associated with them depends on the type of activity being promoted and the proposed location. This policy seeks to establish a framework within which the amount of car parking associated with a new development will be sufficient to make that development successful.

It has to be recognised however, that the overall objectives for the City Centre depend on the implementation of a range of improvements of which car parking is but one element. It is also necessary to ensure that the provision of car parking does not make it more difficult to achieve these wider aims.

This policy seeks to reflect the attitudes that are taken towards the provision of public car parking. Financial, environmental and traffic reasons impact is likely to result in a lower level of provision in the core than in the periphery. This highlights the importance of and the emphasis placed in the Plan on the need to improve the provision of short stay public car parking in the core area. Beyond this area it is likely that new developments will provide for a greater proportion of their parking needs.
RC18 PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS
The Council will seek the provision of safe, pleasant and convenient conditions for pedestrians and cyclists at appropriate locations within the City Centre.

Reasons :-
Pedestrians and cyclists may often need assistance to enable them to compete on more equal terms with other road users. The City Centre is a major focus of pedestrian activity and it is important that people are able to move around easily and safely if it is to be an attractive place for people to visit. However, in developing traffic circulation systems designed to facilitate improved conditions it is important that care is taken not to create problems for cyclists, for whom major traffic intersections can be particularly difficult and dangerous. Cyclists may also require assistance along the major radial routes into the City Centre.
A variety of measures are available to aid both pedestrians and cyclists. These include:
 a) the pedestrianisation of main shopping areas, at least during the principal shopping hours;
 b) the introduction of priority facilities at major junctions;
 c) giving explicit consideration to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people in the design of new traffic schemes;
 d) the provision of cycle parking facilities.
In many cases measures which are primarily for the benefit of pedestrians can also provide benefits for cyclists. This may mean exempting cyclists from restrictions which will apply to other road users.
However, in the event of this leading to conflict between the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, priority would be given to pedestrians.

RC19 IMPLEMENTATION
The Council will, from time to time, publish informal planning guidance to supplement the wider framework provided by the Plan. In particular, it will bring forward more detailed proposals to amplify the provisions of the Plan in respect of:
 a) environmental improvement;
 b) conservation;
 c) specific proposals for the development of particular sites.

Reasons :-
As a statutory plan, the Manchester Plan must be sufficiently firm and detailed to give a clear and positive lead to encourage activity and development and to make provision for this development to be accommodated. At the same time it is intended to be sufficiently flexible to allow for changes in circumstances without recourse to a formal review. Part of the robustness of the Plan lies in its aim to provide a general framework for managing change rather than a shopping list of proposals which may well date quickly.
RC20 SMALL AREA PROPOSALS

In considering proposals for development, regard will be had to the general aims and objectives of the Plan; to the policies in Part 1; to Area 5 Policies RC1 to RC19; and to the detailed proposals which will apply in the following 31 small areas of the City Centre.

Area 1: Victoria Station/Cathedral Area
Area 2: Corporation Street/Miller Street/Shudehill/Withy Grove
Area 3: Arndale Centre/Market Place
Area 4: Swan Street/Shudehill/Tib Street/Church Street
Area 5: Blackfriars Street/Deansgate/Bridge Street/River Irwell
Area 6: Deansgate/St Mary’s Gate/Cross Street/John Dalton Street
Area 7: The Financial Core
Area 8: Oxford Street/Portland Street/York Street/Mosley Street
Area 9: Piccadilly and Oldham Street
Area 10: Oldham Street/Lever Street/Newton Street
Area 11: Port Street/Store Street
Area 12: The Rochdale and Ashton Canal Basins
Area 13: Piccadilly Station/Trading Estate
Area 14: Fairfield Street/Mancunian Way/London Road
Area 15: UMIST
Area 16: Piccadilly/London Road
Area 17: Princess Street/Whitworth Street/Portland Street/Atkinson Street
Area 18: Whitworth Street/Princess Street/Portland Street/Oxford Street
Area 19: Oxford Road/Railway/Princess Street/Mancunian Way
Area 20: Medlock Street/Railway/Oxford Street/Mancunian Way
Area 21: Oxford Street/Lower Mosley Street/Mosley Street/Railway
Area 22: Chester Road/Medlock Street/Mancunian Way
Area 23: Deansgate/Peter Street/Lower Mosley Street/Whitworth Street West
Area 24: Princess Street/Mosley Street/Peter Street/Deansgate/John Dalton Street
Area 25: Bridge Street/Deansgate/Quay Street/River Irwell
Area 26: Quay Street/Deansgate/Liverpool Road/River Irwell
Area 27: Rivers Medlock and Irwell/Liverpool Road/Chester Road/Egerton Street
Area 28: St Georges
Area 29: All Saints
Area 30: The University
Area 31: The Hospitals

Reasons:-
The City Centre consists of a great variety and mixture of activities many of which have complex relationships with each other. Areas in the City Centre each have their own particular character, atmosphere and range of activities. One of the main objectives of the Plan is to seek to enhance this aspect of the character of the City Centre. This objective, coupled with the need to offer detailed planning guidance throughout the City Centre, has resulted in the division of the City Centre area into the 31 small areas shown on the proposals map. The small area frameworks set out the main local planning considerations that the Council will seek to progress. They also provide the context for local changes and will form the background to the Council’s development control action as well as making firm proposals for sites where the aims of the plan imply that this needs to be done. It has to be recognised, however, that in a continuous and complex urban area like the City Centre, any attempt to sub-divide must be somewhat arbitrary and each statement must be considered together with those for adjoining areas and against the Plan’s wider aims and objectives.
In countering these problems, the Plan's proposals aim to exploit the benefits of the area's location, close to the core of the city and its character, which stems from its architectural features and the adjoining River Irwell. The main concerns are, then, to promote the maintenance and improvement of the suburban rail network and the way it serves the core, to maintain access to the core both by foot and by car and public transport, to provide an appropriate level of car parking serving both the core and the needs of Victoria Station, and to enhance the character and environment of the Conservation Area and the Irwell and the Corporation Street corridors. All of these are important considerations and not one of them need, or will, be pursued to the exclusion of the others.

Environmental improvements will be given high priority and other proposals will be required to be consistent with this. In particular, high standard environmental treatment incorporating an element of open space will be sought on the land lying between Victoria Station and Corporation Street (1). The area in front of the Corn Exchange on Hanging Ditch (2) should be given over predominantly to open space use. There is a strong case for similar treatment and the use of the site in front of Victoria Station (3) which is not only an important entry point to the City Centre but may also be used to enhance the setting of Chetham's.

Similarly, means of enabling the creation of a better setting for the Cathedral (4) and a stronger, more integral relationship with the River Irwell will be investigated. Other ways of opening up the Irwell will also be advanced as and when opportunities arise. Subsequent detailed local planning needs to investigate the street scene in the vicinity of the Cathedral, and reducing traffic on Fennel Street (5) in order to improve the relationship between the Cathedral and Chetham's and the pedestrian links between the area, the station and the core.

The use of land for car parking within the area generally remains important in terms of supporting both the needs of Victoria Station and those of the commercial activities in the neighbouring core of the City Centre. The area to the north of the railway lines (6) adjoining the proposed Inner Relief Route is especially well-suited to long-stay permanent car parks and such a use is to be encouraged in conjunction with environmental improvements and the maintenance of existing activities.

There is a current outline planning consent for an hotel on the site west of Corporation Street, between Fennel Street and Todd Street (7). Presently used predominantly for car parking, the site makes a valuable contribution towards meeting the needs for car parking in this area to serve both the core and the station. Consequently, the present proposals for an hotel development not be implemented, high priority will be given to securing more permanent high standard environmental improvements of the car park.

In addition, the surplus space within Victoria Station (8) would be of particular value in accommodating vehicles (buses, taxis and cars) serving the station.

The theme of environmental improvement and the enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area will be reinforced not only by a sensitive, balanced approach towards car parking, but also by, amongst other things, ensuring that any development in the area complements the proposals for the environmental improvement of the land to the east and south west of the station. Priority will be given to improving the attractiveness of these areas as open spaces, although should Chetham's School require additional development for expansion or additional facilities every effort will be made to accommodate their needs within the immediate vicinity. In such a case built form will be sought on the Long Milgate frontage (9).
In view of their importance to the Regional Centre and its economy the primary consideration in the area is to retain the major commercial activities - CNS, CIS, and those at Thompson House, within the City Centre. To this end in the short term particular emphasis will be placed on improving the servicing arrangements for Thompson House (1) in conjunction with the provision of well-screened permanent car parking on the land to the rear of Thompson House and the new Co-op Bank (2). Although this site and the wider area to the north has planning consent for major office development the present office market is such that this consent is unlikely to be taken up in its present form. Nonetheless renewal of older floorspace for owner occupation remains however acceptable in principle and the broad mix of commercial uses in the area is confirmed.

The main road frontages to Corporation Street and Miller Street are considered high priority environmental improvement corridors and so high standards of design and environmental improvement will be sought here. More specifically the Miller Street/Amber Street site (3), in view of its prominent location fronting the Inner Relief Route, will be subject to these considerations. This site has particularly good locational advantages and whilst there will normally be a presumption against major speculative office development, development tailored to a specific users’ requirements or mixed commercial development (for example a combined commercial/light industrial/administrative/show room use), would be acceptable. Any development would be required to be of high design standard and to provide for its own car parking needs. Where practical, the inclusion of a residential and/or public car parking element will also be encouraged.

The area is well located for the provision of permanent long stay public car parking serving either neighbouring activities or those of the core. Whilst at present there is only one specific firm proposal for public car parking (adjacent to Garden Street, at the rear of Thompson House) this use is considered acceptable in principle throughout the area provided satisfactory environmental standards and access arrangements are achieved.

Within the south-east quadrant (4) bounded by Hanover Street, Dantzic Street and Withy Grove/Shudehill the main concern will be to retain existing activities. Commercial development will therefore be expected to be consistent with the scale and character of existing activities. There may be scope for introducing a residential element into the mixture of uses north of Withy Grove/Shudehill and therefore, where opportunities arise this use will be encouraged.
The level and diversity of shopping facilities in the City Centre are a vital component of its regional role and character. Consequently this is an area where the theme of improving and building upon existing assets is especially important and relevant. For the most part this theme finds expression in the firm emphasis placed on improving the attractiveness of the area, particularly its pedestrian environment, for the potential shopper and visitors. Significant progress will be made when the permanent environmental treatment of Market Street (1) is completed. This scheme needs to be viewed in terms of the street scene as a whole - not just ground treatment but also environmental improvements to buildings, street lighting, and so on. There is also scope for further enhancement of the shopping environment, particularly on the fringes of this area.

In promoting environmental improvements, both within the area and around it, the importance of maintaining accessibility for shoppers must not be underestimated. In this context, the Plan's policies and proposals for improving the provision and effectiveness of short-stay car parks and the way these, and the transportation network generally, serve the core are very important indeed, as also is close attention to more detailed matters such as the provision of convenient bus routes and bus stops. It will also be important to ensure that measures designed to reduce traffic levels and improve conditions for pedestrians are not detrimental to cyclists and disabled visitors. Special parking arrangements for both these sections of the community will be provided wherever possible. In short a balanced approach to environmental improvement and accessibility needs to be pursued.

The aim of an attractive, safe and accessible shopping environment will be further complemented by a favourable attitude towards proposals which would add to the level of activity on shopping frontages. Thus, whilst the predominantly retail character of the main shopping streets will be safeguarded, a limited introduction of uses such as public houses and cafes will be encouraged. Similarly the introduction of further residential uses (e.g. at the upper level south of Market Street) will be encouraged.

Lying to the immediate north of the financial core and the established shopping area in and around St Ann's Square, this area is part of the Regional Shopping Centre and contains the major proportion of shopping floorspace in the City Centre, including numerous large multiples. The Arndale and Market Place developments dominate the area and provide modern, largely covered and traffic-free shopping facilities set in a lively environment. Other significant uses in the area are housing (at Cromford Court above the Arndale Centre), modern offices and substantial amounts of multi-storey and underground car parking. The only older properties in the area are on the south side of Market Street and are of varying architectural quality.
The Plan's aim to introduce further housing into the City Centre is especially important and relevant in the area north of Thomas Street (1). The need to build upon the substantial residential component (both existing and planned) and improve its surroundings will be the principal and critical reference point against which all proposals in the adjoining areas will be judged.

In particular, the Copperas Street/Edge Street (2) area is considered suitable for further accretions of housing use by way of single and mixed use infill development or conversion. Consequently, whilst existing activity will not be actively displaced, any redevelopment should be clearly linked in scale and character to the existing commercial activities or those of the Craft Centre. In the event of larger sites becoming available, housing, open space or car parking will generally be the only acceptable uses.

In parallel with all this, action needs to be taken to make the environment generally more conducive to housing. In particular, high standards of landscaping of sites used for car parking, itself a valuable and appropriate use in terms of existing activity and in view of the area's location relative to the core, will be sought as will further areas of open space.

The Swan Street frontage (3) north of the existing and proposed housing adjoins the proposed Inner Relief Route. It is therefore an appropriate location for a mixture of commercial uses and the present uses are therefore confirmed in the Plan.

On and to the south of Thomas Street (4), the emphasis will be on retaining the existing activities and their scale and character. To this end investment in existing buildings and the provision of better access, servicing and car parking facilities will be sought in association with other environmental improvements. Where vacant sites do become available public parking or parking to meet local needs will normally be preferred, as will open space use.

A very diverse mixture of uses occupy this area at present. The area south of the former Wholesale and Retail Fish Markets is currently used for a mixture of small scale commercial activities housed in predominantly old and often obsolescent premises. Although occasional vacancies and numerous small cleared sites are evident, especially in the Copperas Street/Edge Street area, most of the buildings are in active use despite their age, condition and lack of adequate parking, servicing and access facilities. Thomas Street is the principal local street through this part of the area and acts as a lively focus for the textile trades which predominate in the surrounding area. Small scale, often highly specialised, retail uses are predominant on Tib Street, whilst more substantial broadly commercial uses front Swan Street. The Church Street multi-storey car park is located in the south-east corner of the area.

Moving northwards, the former Fish Market buildings are important features of the area and both are the subject of works by the City Council. The Retail Fish Market building has been converted into a Craft Centre creating a permanent working base for artists and craftsmen. Alongside the former Wholesale Fish Market site is an encircled as a walled open space integrated into the extensive cleared area to the north currently used as a surface level car park. The whole area is earmarked for a further substantial housing development extending the housing newly developed by the City Council through to Shudehill.
The area alongside the river has little potential for change. The main scope for positive action will be in relation to opening up the Irwell banks for access and environmental improvement. This is particularly true on Bridge Street, an important route into the City Centre for both vehicles and pedestrians, where some work has already been undertaken and where there is further scope in the Motor Street area (1).

The effects of the concentration in shopping brought about by the Arndale development means that whilst the presence of Kendals ensures that this area remains very much a part of the Regional Shopping Area, it may become increasingly necessary to accept the introduction of non-retailing uses. So far as shopping is concerned, it will be important to strengthen the links between this area and the remainder of the Regional Shopping Area. Deansgate (2) is, an important traffic route, although its role will change when the Inner Relief Route is completed.

This area includes important elements of the City Centre's office and retailing activities. The shopping activity ranges from the Kendal Milne Department Store on Deansgate to a wide variety of small shops in Bridge Street, King Street West and in Deansgate itself. The office activity, which is concentrated along the Irwell, includes a substantial amount of both new and refurbished older premises. The street scene at St. Mary's Parsonage, together with the open space, in Parsonage Gardens, contributes to generally attractive surroundings. The King Street West multi-storey car park serves the area well.
The heart of this area is an important part of the Regional Shopping Centre, providing a link between the Arndale and Market Place Developments and Deansgate. It is of fundamentally different character to the modern developments north of Market Street and this character is something which it is important to reinforce. This will mean ensuring that new ground level uses on King Street (1), St Ann's Square (2), St Ann Street (west of the Church) (3), Market Street (4), and Cross Street (north of St Ann Street (5), remain consistent with the character of these frontages as predominantly retailing locations. The uses in this area tend to be those relating to high environmental quality and the basic approach to this area must start from a desire to further enhance its physical qualities.

None of the streets in the area are of fundamental importance in terms of through traffic. The primary need is to ensure the accessibility of the area for essential vehicles and at the same time move towards the creation of an attractive environment for pedestrians. This has already been achieved in King Street (1), St Ann's Square (2), Barton Arcade (6) and Police Street (7) and there is further scope for similar improvements in the area, particularly in Ridgefield (8). The objective will be to promote improvement in the physical appearance of the area by use of a floorspace treatment to define the whole of this area as one in which pedestrians should, in general, have priority, without this being achieved at the expense of accessibility.

It will also be necessary to improve the links between this area and the Arndale Centre. Cross Street (5) is an important public transport route and provides for access to the King Street (1) area. It will be necessary to both ensure that it is able to fulfil this role and also to look at ways of making its environmentally a more attractive street which is easier for people to cross. It is extremely important that the improvements envisaged to both parts of the Regional Shopping Area are not lost because of difficulties encountered in trying to move between them.
In view of the area's importance as a major source of employment and its vital contribution to the regional role of the City Centre, the prime consideration here will be to sustain the existing level and character of activity. Particular encouragement will be given to further refurbishment for office use.

The maintenance of a high level of activity in the Financial Core is not simply a local concern but a main aim of the Plan and its office policies generally. This will therefore be a major consideration in determining the acceptability of proposals for office development elsewhere in the City Centre. With little scope for physical change within the area itself, the measures most relevant to progressing this aim, notably improving the availability of convenient short-stay parking and enhancing the City Centre environment generally, will mainly have to be progressed elsewhere, although where there is opportunity for improvement of both these components by better management of the space between buildings within the area, this will be taken up.

Where appropriate opportunities arise, a more lively and interesting street scene will also be sought by, for example, the introduction of an active ground floor use or by a sensitive approach to the design of frontages. Such measures are especially appropriate on Fountain Street (1) with its substantial pedestrian flows. Indeed this street may also offer scope for environmental improvements although these must not undermine its important role as an access route. Upper King Street (2) too may offer scope for both environmental improvements and marginally increased on-street car parking although here again its essential access role must not be prejudiced by such measures.
Reduced traffic levels in Mosley Street (1) will ease access for buses and make it more pleasant for pedestrians. Conversely there will be an increase in traffic on Portland Street where it is intended that a long established road improvement scheme that would have affected much of the Portland Street frontage should not now go ahead. Improvements will now be restricted to the section between Charlotte Street and Piccadilly (where the carriageway will be widened without affecting any of the frontage property) and to the junction of Oxford Street and Portland Street (2).

This area is seen to lie outside the present office and shopping core areas, although proximity to the financial core is an important feature. The need for short to medium stay parking relevant to the financial core may be met in this area by either multi-storey or surface level car parks or a combination of both. The low activity and often poor property offer scope for the incremental assembly of sites for surface level parking that could combine the provision of open space and environmental gains in parallel with the provision of parking. Part of the area, lying between George Street and Faulkner Street north of Nicholas Street is the site of a current City Council proposal for car parking (3), and the area generally is one of the few locations suitable for providing the additional short stay parking which is central to the Plan's aim of maintaining activity in the core. Consequently, with the exception of the main road frontages incremental assembly of sites for car parking/open space will be encouraged and new development for other uses will not normally be acceptable. In the event of applications for private car parking, high standards of landscaping will be required.

The recent growth of the Chinese community in the area has been closely related to the availability of cheap floor space and, whilst seeking to see those buildings that have little or no further usefulness replaced by parking, continued encouragement will be given to users willing to take on and maintain the more viable older properties. The frontages to Oxford Street, Portland Street, Charlotte Street, Princess Street and Mosley Street are prominent and are occupied by buildings of a higher general standard and use level than the core of the blocks behind them. Consequently, the retention of commercial uses in frontage buildings and infill office or other commercial redevelopment at a limited scale on frontage sites is appropriate and need not preclude car parking provision behind.
The main emphasis will be on enhancing the character and appearance of the area, making it even more conducive to pedestrian activity whilst at the same time ensuring continued access to and free movement around the core. Particular attention will be given to the improvement of pedestrian links to the bus station and those pedestrian routes through the area leading to Piccadilly Railway Station.

The Market Street pedestrianisation scheme has resulted in improvement on Market Street between Lewis’s and Debenhams (1). Furthermore the proposals for Portland Street/Lever Street/Newton Street, together with the promotion of the use of Travis Street and Whitworth Street as a through route, will not only cater for movements of general traffic around the City Centre but also offer further scope for enhancing the pedestrian environment notably in Oldham Street (2) and Piccadilly Gardens (3) and its surroundings as well as improving accessibility by public transport.

Yet further improvements would accrue from a reduction in the prominence of bus station activities around Piccadilly Gardens. The Council and the Passenger Transport Executive will concentrate bus terminal stands in the Parker Street Area (4) and remove the bus stands fronting Piccadilly (5). In addition, bus services will be extended from Greengate (in Salford) and from Lever Street to Parker Street, whilst those presently routed north to south through the Piccadilly area will be rerouted to concentrate on Oldham Street and Mosley Street.

One of the attractions of the area is its lively, commercial and undeniably urban environment. Two of the essential features contributing to this are the form and appearance of surrounding buildings and the uses within them. In this context retailing is both a vital element in the City Centre’s role as a regional centre and provides a lively and interesting atmosphere. Although two major retailers, C & A and British Home Stores have relocated from the area into the Arndale Centre, leaving two substantial vacancies on Oldham Street (2), it is intended that shopping will continue to be the predominant frontage use. However, there are also numerous non-retail services which not only contribute to street activity but also complement neighbouring shops and provide a useful service to the substantial numbers of people walking through the area. Uses such as building societies, estate agencies and job centres are therefore to be encouraged provided the predominantly retailing character of the area is not lost.

The opportunities for major redevelopment in this area are likely to be very limited. Existing office and hotel uses in the area are confirmed, whilst a mixture of uses, including, for example, housing will be encouraged on refurbishment of existing buildings or in any limited redevelopment, subject again to shopping remaining the dominant use of the area.
The shift in the City Centre shopping pattern brought about as a result particularly of the Arndale Centre Development has brought evident loss of trade for retailing on Oldham Street and Tib Street, with the broadly based comparative shopping on Oldham Street (1) more markedly affected than Tib Street’s smaller specialist shops (2). The general assumption here is that some degree of non-retail or quasi-retail uses need to be accepted or even encouraged, particularly on Oldham Street where the generally larger buildings offer scope for cash and carry/retail warehousing use. Newton Street and Lever Street link Portland Street with Great Ancoats Street and the rest of the Inner Relief Route and together represent a better and more attractive route than Oldham Street in catering for cross-city movements of general traffic. There will be a reduction of general through traffic on Oldham Street and this will allow improved bus operations and pedestrian improvements in the part of Oldham Street within this area. Improvements to parking and servicing will be important to encouraging a diverse mix of new uses and the provision of additional public parking on a site at Bradley Street/Spear Street (3) would be particularly relevant both to activity on Oldham Street and to maintaining activity levels in commercial buildings around Lever Street.

None of these measures need imply major change in the character of the area and the aim overall will be both to retain existing activity and encourage further additions to the mixture of uses. In the longer term, with housing uses proposed on the two adjacent areas of Smithfield and the Canal Basins, housing could play a positive part as one of the elements in the mixture of uses in this area.

Retailing in Stevenson Square (4) and the strong wholesaling element also apparent are clearly linked to the area’s garment trade. The Square’s role as a bus and taxi terminus tends to dominate its character at present. The attractiveness of the area would clearly be improved if it were possible to remove some buses and carry out environmental works to create a more attractive urban space, linking also to environmental improvements elsewhere in the area. The potential for this may be limited in the short term but will be substantially increased when the intention of the Council and the Passenger Transport Executive to replace Stevenson Square as a bus terminus is fulfilled.
The two most important considerations in this area are the adjacent proposals for single use housing development at the Rochdale Canal Basin and for a significant housing element at the Ashton Canal Basin and the existence of the Inner Relief Route (Great Ancoats Street) with its opportunities for uses of a commercial character notably in the retail warehousing and service industry fields. Whilst it is important to retain existing commercial and industrial activity, in the long term extension of housing from the Rochdale Canal Basin across Tariff Street (1) would appear practicable as would extension of housing from the Ashton Canal and Basin onto vacant sites in the Store Street/Meadow Street/Ashton Canalside area (2).

With a similar attitude to existing uses, it is proposed to promote new activity on the Great Ancoats Street frontage (3) and to identify a ‘commercial frontage strip’ consistent firstly, with the aim of encouraging frontage development of a scale and character appropriate to the Inner Relief Route (with an emphasis on mixed commercial/service/retail warehousing components) and secondly, enabling long-term housing development of sites to the rear as accretions from the canal basins’ proposals. New uses will be expected to complement this approach and behind the commercial frontage strip only housing, open space or parking use of cleared sites is envisaged.

The area as a whole has attractions for long-stay parking acting to offset lost capacity displaced from the Canal Basins on their redevelopment. Suitably landscaped parking would be a particularly appropriate interim use for longer term housing sites in this area.

This area contains a variety of uses and separates the Rochdale and Ashton Canal basins from the Inner Relief Route along Great Ancoats Street. The Loos Street/Store Street area is industrial and although active has seen recent decline with evident vacant premises. Commercial premises on the Great Ancoats Street frontage are, on the whole, in poor condition. The Ashton Canal forms the southern boundary of the area.
The introduction of housing into the City Centre is one of the key themes of the Plan and sites of sufficient size and character to enable housing to create an 'internal' residential environment are rare. The Rochdale Canal Basin (1) offers perhaps the best example of such a site and housing is considered to have overriding priority here. One of the greatest assets of both canal basins for housing is the opportunity to create a distinctive waterside environment which could give a housing development a strong and attractive character. To realise this potential it will be particularly important to promote environmental works immediately around the canal basins and to open up canalside pedestrian routes and recreational opportunities. Since these could be potentially important elements of the City Centre environment as a whole as well as an asset to on-site development, it will be important to ensure that public access to an improved canalside environment is secured in connection with housing development.

The area as a whole lies outside the core and is well placed to offer parking. This use is not inappropriate until such time as housing development can be secured. Whilst the retention of car parking at the Rochdale Canal Basin is not regarded as so essential as to preclude its use for housing, a significant parking component should be retained in any development of the Ashton Canal Basin area (2) in association with major housing and open space uses.

The retention and re-use of important older buildings in the area will be encouraged, particularly the Ashton Canal Basin warehouse (3) where any use appropriate to its retention and future maintenance will be allowed. The Plan as a whole seeks to sustain the level of existing activity in older commercial premises including those around the Rochdale Canal Basin. Any scope for practical attention to servicing and local parking difficulties where these arise will be considered.

The Plan’s broad approach to ‘accretions’ of housing adding to short-term developable sites points to the potential for extensions of housing use into adjacent properties and also to the possibility of extending new housing development ultimately into the area lying between the Canal Basins and the Inner Relief Route. In the Dale Street/Tariff Street area (4) existing older commercial floorspace may offer residential conversion prospects. In the event of vacant sites arising on demolition of any existing property, this approach to the area as a whole points to only housing, permanent landscaped car parking or open space uses being appropriate.
New small industrial units have been built near Store Street and there are further cleared sites nearby which offer the potential for additional development to take advantage of the area's ready access to the Inner Relief Route and to the rail network. The Great Ancoats Street frontage offers particular opportunities for mixed commercial uses where consistent with the general policies for the City Centre Area.

The largest single user in the area is British Rail with Piccadilly Station's bulk effectively divorcing much of the area from the heart of the City Centre. However the general area immediately behind the station is not inappropriate for long-stay parking use as already exists at Sheffield Street (1).

The potential of Travis Street as a traffic route is an important consideration in improving access to the City Centre and especially relevant to catering through traffic seeking to avoid the core. The increased use of Travis Street, which connects well into Whitworth Street, is proposed. Store Street is restricted as a traffic route by its limited width at the canal aqueduct (2) and its junction with London Road. The attraction of new uses to the area should seek not only to generate new activity but also to integrate it more closely into the City Centre as a whole.

Environmental works throughout the area will be relevant to increasing its attractions as a working environment and these, together with improved access arrangements and parking provision where appropriate, will be important in sustaining and encouraging existing activity. The provision of adequate on-site parking will be required on redevelopment. Environmental measures, which will be valuable in this area, need to reflect the importance of the Great Ancoats Street frontage (3).