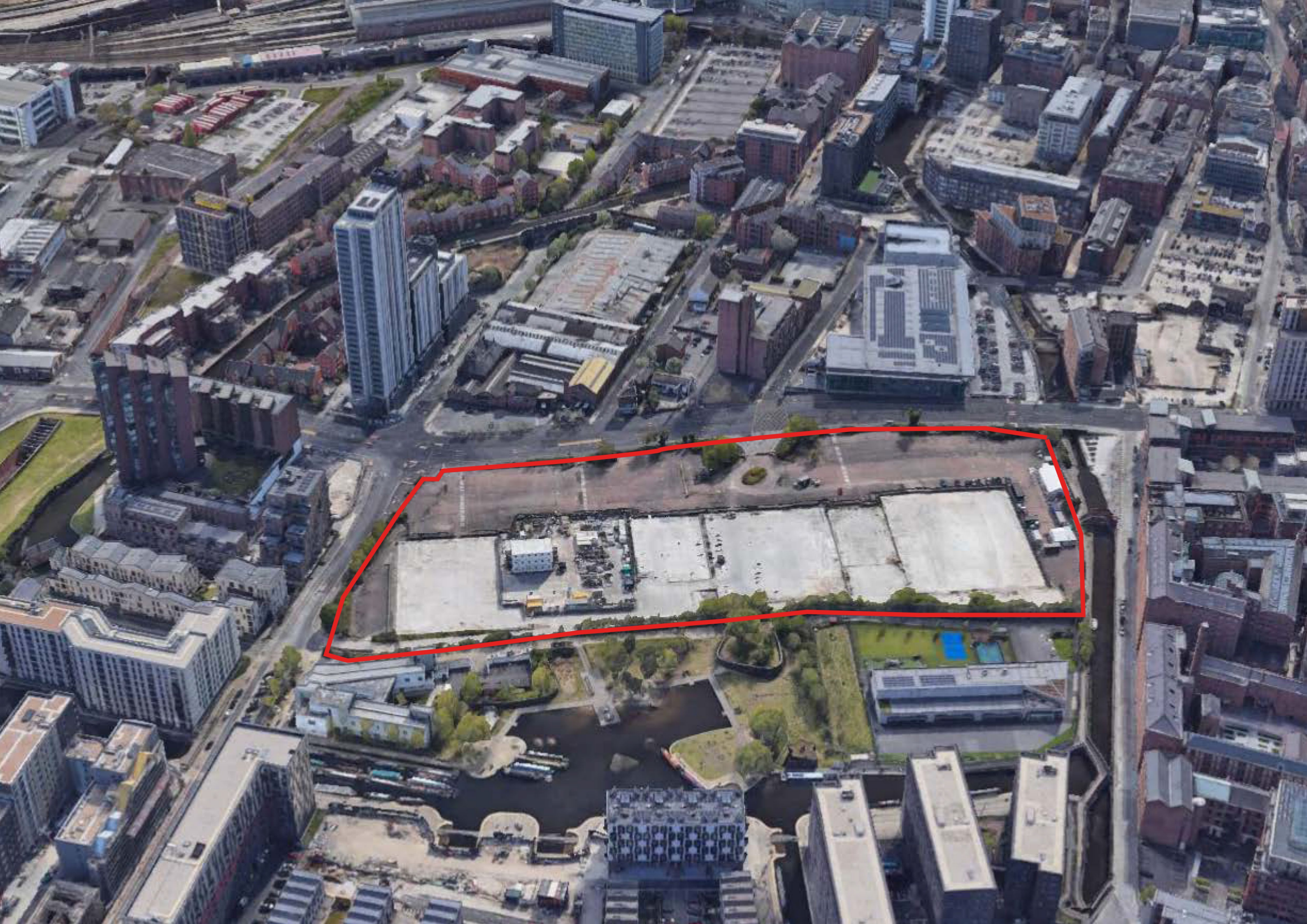


STRATEGIC REGENERATION FRAMEWORK

FORMER
CENTRAL
RETAIL PARK

DRAFT - DECEMBER 2022



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01 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision for the Former Central Retail Park is to create a high-quality, sustainable office district with an attractive public realm at its centre, including a new green space. This scheme builds upon the strategic location of the site and its strong connections to the local neighbourhoods, city centre, and transport networks. The site will include ancillary retail and leisure accommodation, providing facilities for those who live and work in the area.

The proposals respond positively to the area and surrounding uses, creating public routes through the site, new connections, and building upon Cotton Field Park, New Islington Marina and the Rochdale Canal.

The site is vacant and owned by Manchester City Council (MCC). This Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) provides a comprehensive approach to the development of the site, supporting Manchester City Council's aspirations to drive economic growth through the provision of new high-quality Grade A offices to attract new businesses to Manchester. It also responds to potential interest from the Government Property Agency (GPA) to locate Government offices on the site. The GPA are working collaboratively with the Council to help unlock this development opportunity. Were GPA to commit to offices at Ancoats this would provide the catalyst to realise the masterplan and deliver significant socio-economic benefits to the area.

The SRF supersedes the 2020 Former Central Retail Park Development Framework, which promoted commercial offices and a mixed residential scheme. It builds on many of the key design principles set out within it and positively responds to latest market requirements to provide purpose-built offices and high-quality facilities for staff. The significant amount of new public realm will be attractive, safe, and fully integrated with the wider community and promotes well-being. The new SRF sets out design drivers informed by the site parameters, the potential requirements of the GPA and a detailed understanding of the local context.

Supporting Regeneration and Economic Growth

Manchester's reputation as a world-class city continues to grow attracting an increasing volume of commercial office and business activity. As companies recognise the growing opportunities available in the city region, investors continue to view Manchester as a highly viable investment option. The city is well placed to facilitate new and future developments with high-quality infrastructure, diversity, a flourishing residential market, and high-profile organisations such as the Google and Amazon, etc., bringing increased job opportunities and skills to the jobs marketplace.

As Manchester's economy continues to develop and diversify, further provision of new office stock is required to facilitate this expansion. The regeneration of the site responds precisely to this need and aids key strategic objectives relating to place making, job creation and supporting local communities.

Regional investment – GPA is exploring options for delivering office solutions in Manchester to meet the needs of various civil service departments, which supports the Government's commitment to locate more civil servants outside of London and support levelling up. GPA is looking at Ancoats as a potential option, and by securing investment from the GPA this would be a significant boost to the future economic growth of the local area and the region.

New employment opportunities – The proposal will deliver a range of new employment opportunities through the design, construction, and occupation of the scheme, providing significant opportunities for local residents including apprenticeships and training opportunities. Once developed the scheme is likely to support in excess of 8,000 jobs, many of which are new to the city.

High quality office spaces – The proposals are capable of delivering circa 1.0 – 1.25 million ft² (circa 93,000 – 116,000 m²) of new office accommodation, making a significant contribution to Manchester City Council's policy to deliver over 20 million ft² (circa 1.85 m²) of new office floorspace by 2037. This will strengthen the city economy, enable its continued growth agenda and deliver substantial local socio-economic benefits.

Connectivity – The Former Central Retail Park is strategically located, with Great Ancoats Street to the south, the inner-city ring road that connects to important routes that further lead to the M60 and M62 regional and national connections. The site will benefit from its proximity to Manchester's two main rail stations, Piccadilly, and Victoria, including the proposed investments of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). New Islington Metrolink tram stop is also on the doorstep of the site providing local connection across the city. Future investment will further enhance its position as a premier office location, providing access to a larger and more diverse pool of skilled labour.

Variety of office space – The Northern Quarter and the Ancoats neighbourhoods have become popular destinations for a variety of businesses in many sectors. As a result, the demand for space has increased significantly and the lack of floorspace has led to rapidly rising prices. The site provides the opportunity to create a business hub that is a vibrant and attractive destination for all business sizes, thereby helping to also meet existing office demand from local businesses and allowing them to grow. High quality new public realm and improved connectivity – At the centre of the site, a variety of new spaces are proposed which provide benefit for the local community and the building occupants. In addition, the SRF proposes to deliver extensive new public realm, with new attractive and safe routes connecting New Islington and East Manchester back to the rest of the city.

A new public park – Serving the local community, occupiers of the site and visitors, providing an attractive green space in which to relax, play and promote well-being.

New retail and leisure facilities – A range of retail and leisure facilities will be promoted to serve both local residents and the office workers, providing a new and exciting offer and associated employment opportunities.

Investment – The scheme will attract substantial financial investment which will deliver positive socio-economic changes for Ancoats, New Islington and Greater Manchester as a whole, providing opportunities for people and local businesses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Principles

Place making – Place making has been a key part of the masterplan from the outset as it helps deliver the overarching vision for the new district. The proposals will create a mix of spaces including the public realm and retail facilities. This will help create a vibrant destination for employees and visitors alike. Creating a high-quality integrated development will be a key driver as it will have a positive effect on future growth and job creation.

High quality development – The SRF promotes high-quality architecture and urban design that responds to the local context while establishing its own distinct character. New offices should be of high-quality architectural design with the use of appropriate materials. The public realm will also be a high-quality inclusive open space for the local community, staff and visitors. A new green space will be at the centre of a new masterplan.

Connectivity – The SRF promotes new and improved links and permeability for pedestrian and cycle routes in the area, making it easier, safer and more attractive to walk or cycle into the city or towards key transport hubs. The site's proximity to Manchester's main transport routes will make it a prime location for future business. Building upon wider connections will promote accessibility to the site and enable business collaboration.

Sustainability – The development, including the buildings and landscape areas, will aim to achieve the highest standards of sustainable design. The public realm will extend Cotton Field Park and the Marina, creating new ecological habitats that contribute positively to the city's sustainability goals.

Scale and mass – Scale and massing follows the key principles already established by the previous 2020 Development Framework. As you transition from Old Mill Street towards Ancoats conservation area, the offices become lower in height and are respectful of the listed mills. Conversely, and in the other direction, the height increases towards the eastern side of the site, where it will be well integrated into the existing urban context.

Form and layout – The public realm will enable the site to be separated into two developable areas allowing a phased delivery. The two parcels of land naturally extend the urban grain of Ancoats and New Islington, stitching the site into its local context. The significant green space serves as the centre of the scheme and provides multiple new connections between existing elements.

Use – Primarily a commercial office led proposal the scheme is focused on delivering a significant amount of new office space to meet the potential requirements of GPA and recognised market demand. This will be complemented by a retail and leisure offer. The uses will be distributed across the site, with retail and leisure at ground level providing primary active frontages along key routes to secure the area's vitality throughout the week.



SITE LOCATION PLAN

Report Structure

The Report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 1 – Executive Summary:** Setting the scene for the SRF.
- **Chapter 2 – Introduction:** Setting out the development. Strategic economic, regeneration and planning context that is driving the redevelopment of this key site.
- **Chapter 3 – Site Context:** Analysis of the Former Central Retail Park site in a comprehensive Manchester city context.
- **Chapter 4 – Site Opportunities and Parameters:** Analysis of the parameters informing the future opportunities on site.
- **Chapter 5 – Vision:** Development objectives setting out the focus for Former Central Retail Park, parameter plan and conclusion.
- **Chapter 6 – Illustrative Masterplan:** Illustrative Masterplan and conclusion.



02 INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) has been prepared by Manchester City Council (MCC) with input from the GPA to guide the future development of a key long-term strategic regeneration site in the city centre.

This SRF area covers a site of approximately 10.5 acres in Manchester City Centre and was formerly an 'out of town' style retail destination, characterised by large retail warehouses surrounded by car parking. However, changes in shopping habits in recent years led to many of the units becoming vacant, and the retail park became increasingly out of place amidst the on-going regeneration of the surrounding areas. Following acquisition by MCC, and supported by planning policy, the retail park has been demolished. The site now presents a strategically important location for the city both as a site in single ownership with the potential to create a new commercial office led district of real ambition, and as an opportunity to improve links and permeability between the surrounding districts which the former retail park had always turned its back on.

The redevelopment of the Former Central Retail Park is a long-standing strategic priority for MCC and identified for development in previous documents, including the Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework (2016) and previous Development Frameworks for the site prepared in 2015 and 2020.

This new SRF provides a comprehensive approach to the future redevelopment of the site, supporting MCC's aspirations to drive economic growth through the provision of new high-quality Grade A offices to attract new companies to Manchester. It supersedes the 2020 Former Central Retail Park Development Framework, which promoted a speculative commercial office-led mixed-use development. While many of the key design principles set out in the 2020 Development Framework are carried over, the new SRF is focused on delivering an entirely commercial scheme positively responding to

The vision is to create a new high-quality, sustainable office district with attractive public realm at its centre. A new park will provide an appealing green space and recreational facility for the local residents, new office workers, employees, and visitors. The proposals build upon the strategic location of the site and its strong connections to the city centre and transport networks. The GPA has a need for commercial offices in Manchester and this site would provide flexibility to meet future office demand in the city centre. It will include ancillary retail and leisure accommodation, providing attractive new facilities for the new working population of the site as well as local people who live and work in the area.

SRF Process and Status

Process

The SRF has been developed with full regard to National Planning Policy, Manchester's Statutory Development Plan Documents and the suite of strategic and regeneration policies that are driving renaissance in the city.

A period of consultation on the draft SRF with the local community, businesses, landowners and other key stakeholders will be undertaken following its endorsement by MCC's Executive. MCC is committed to work in full collaboration with key stakeholders and the local community.

Role of the SRF

Following endorsement, the final SRF will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications relevant to the SRF area. Whilst it does not form part of the Development Plan, it has been prepared to be consistent with the policies of the Council's adopted Development Plan. The SRF replaces the following non-statutory regeneration frameworks where they are relevant to the SRF area, including the Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework (2016), the Central Retail Park Development Framework (2015), and the Central Retail Park Development Framework (2020).

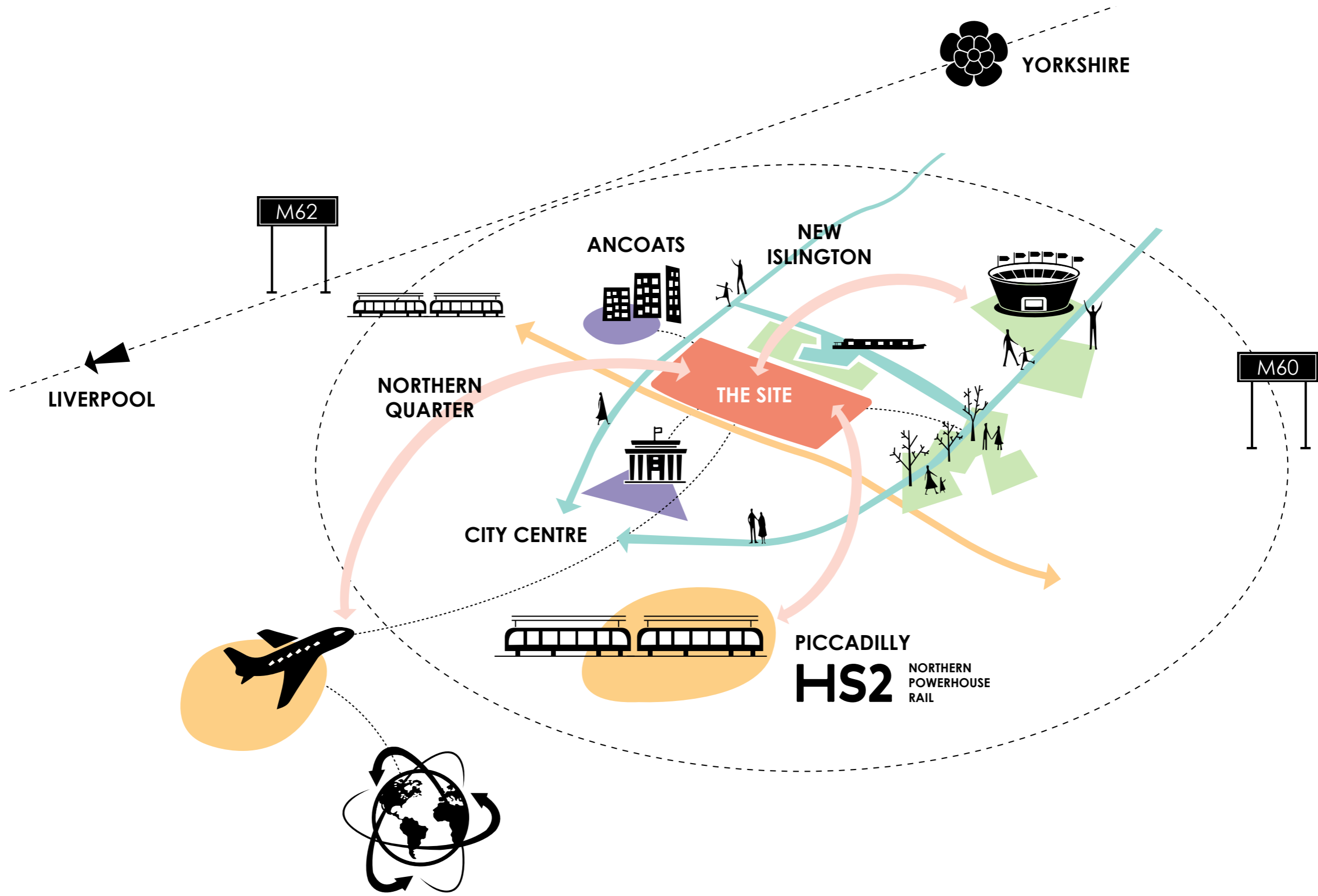
Delivery Partners

MCC has worked collaboratively with the Government Property Agency (GPA) in the preparation of this SRF. GPA is an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office and a national organisation, working with government departments across the UK. GPA delivers property and workplace solutions across government, delivering benefits through efficient and effective use of the civil estate.

GPA delivers great places to work for a modern Civil Service. The creation of departmental office accommodation in Manchester and across the UK represents an opportunity to provide cutting edge and innovative working environments, attracting and developing a skilled and talented workforce.

These facilities will be closer to the communities they serve and able to deliver better outcomes. GPA is committed to investing in regional growth and delivering office solutions meeting Government's needs and objectives. GPA welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the SRF, which once endorsed will open up an option for the GPA. GPA is keen to work collaboratively with Manchester City Council to help facilitate the regeneration of the site.





03 SITE CONTEXT

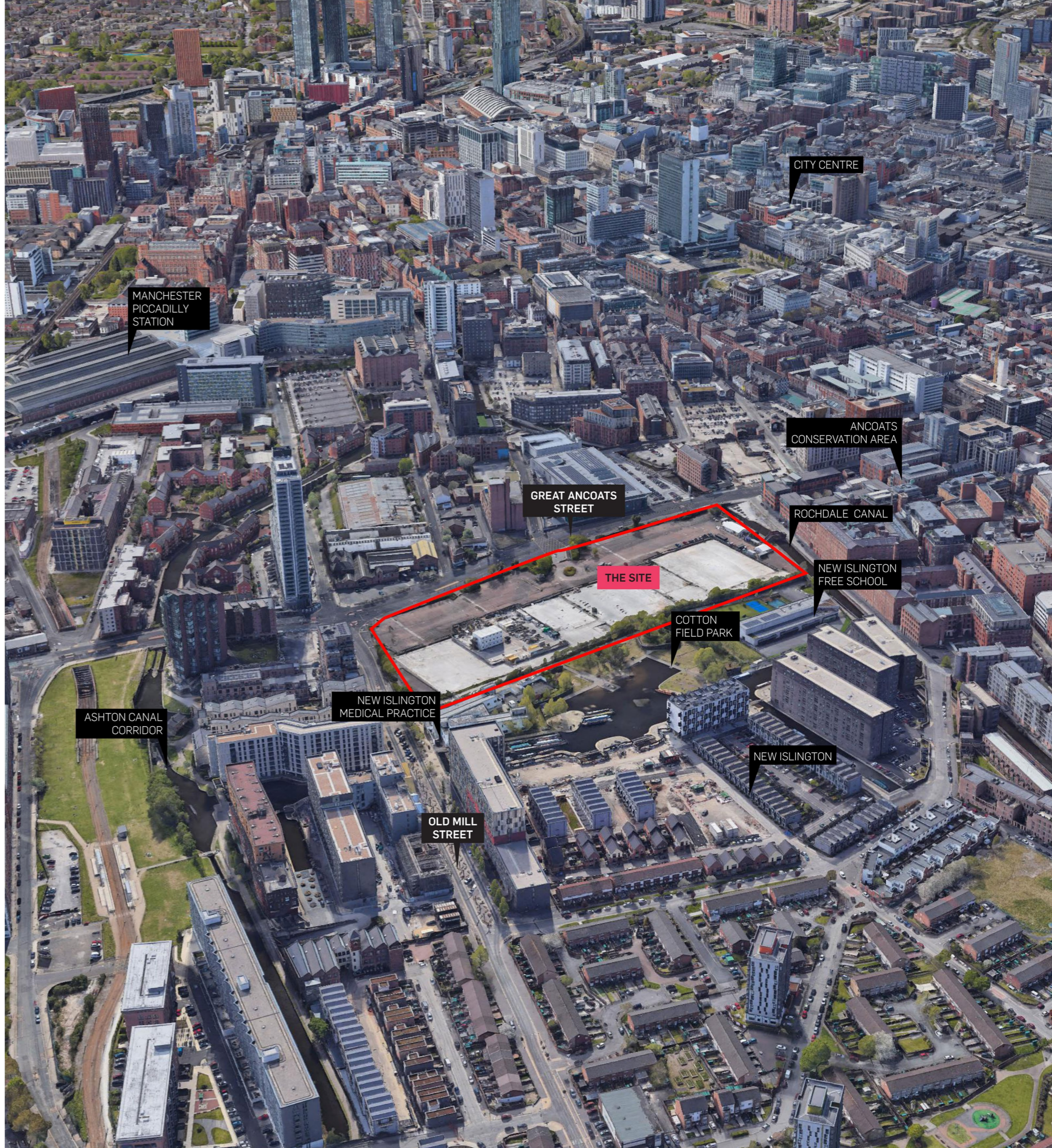
THE SITE

The 10.5-acre site is located within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council (MCC). It sits on Manchester city centre's north-eastern fringe, in an area undergoing significant change and redevelopment.

The site was acquired by MCC in 2017 with aspirations to bring forward an office-led business district. The site was formerly a retail park, which has now been demolished and the site is now vacant. There is a significant level change across the site, with a 5-metre difference between its north corner, descending towards its south corner of Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street. This level difference is currently reflected in the form of tall retaining walls along the site's eastern and northern boundaries (along Old Mill Street, New Islington Medical Centre and Cotton Field Park).

To the site's north-west boundary sits New Islington Free School and to its north-east end site New Islington Medical Practice, and Cotton Field Park. Although it does not sit within the Ancoats Conservation Area, the boundary of the conservation area runs adjacent to the site boundary along the banks of the Rochdale Canal.

The site has a main vehicular access point, which is off Great Ancoats Street, and a secondary access point off Old Mill Street, formerly used for deliveries and waste collections.



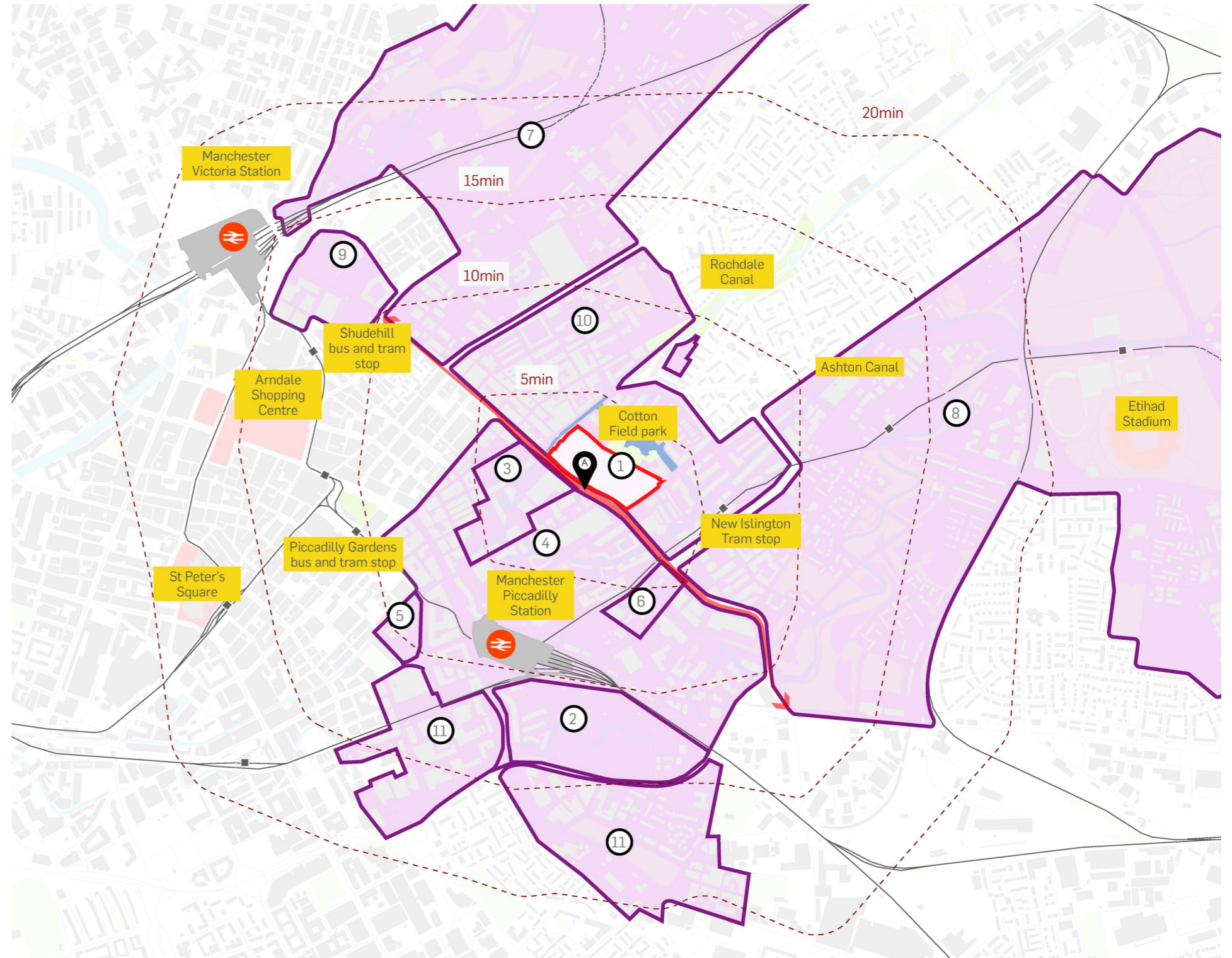
CITY CONTEXT

The site is approximately a 10 minute walk from Piccadilly Gardens, 10 minutes from Piccadilly station and within Manchester's vibrant city centre. It has the opportunity to capitalise on its ideal location and its proximity to other successful key regeneration projects, such as the Ancoats and New Islington NDF and the mixed-use quarter of Manchester Piccadilly SRF.

The site has good transport connections, including the delivery of the Metrolink station at New Islington which was added in 2013 and increases access to Piccadilly from the north.

The site sits parallel to the Rochdale Canal, which runs through the city, and provides strong connectivity along it. On its northern boundary the site is bounded by the newly restored New Islington community which includes the Marina and Cotton Field Park. The canal, the park and Marina have proved to be very popular and successful, providing opportunities for entertainment and leisure. The New Islington area is an attractive asset that has opened up opportunities for future development and businesses.

-  Site boundary
-  Existing key destinations
-  Regeneration projects (planning policy)
- ① Central Retail Park Development Framework (2020)
- ② Mayfield SRF
- ③ Piccadilly Basin SRF
- ④ HS2 Manchester Piccadilly SRF
- ⑤ Aytoun Street "Kampus" SRF
- ⑥ Portugal Street East
- ⑦ Northern Gateway SRF
- ⑧ Eastern Regeneration Framework
- ⑨ NOMA Strategic Regeneration Framework
- ⑩ Ancoats and New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework
- ⑪ North Campus SRF
- ⑫ Ardwick Green NDF
-  Existing green spaces
-  New Islington Marina
-  Great Ancoats Street
-  5 to 20m walking isochrones from point A



Wider City Context Plan and Key Regeneration Areas

ROAD HIERARCHY & LAND USES

The New Islington neighbourhood, Free School and Medical Practice sit along the northern boundary of the site. Towards its south, across from Great Ancoats street, there is an industrial and retail development which includes a gym space and a supermarket (ALDI). The south-eastern boundary is defined by various warehouses and the recently built 32 storey high residential tower, 'Oxygen Manchester'.

There is a key open space, Cotton Field Park, to the north of the site and there are a number of other public spaces nearby.

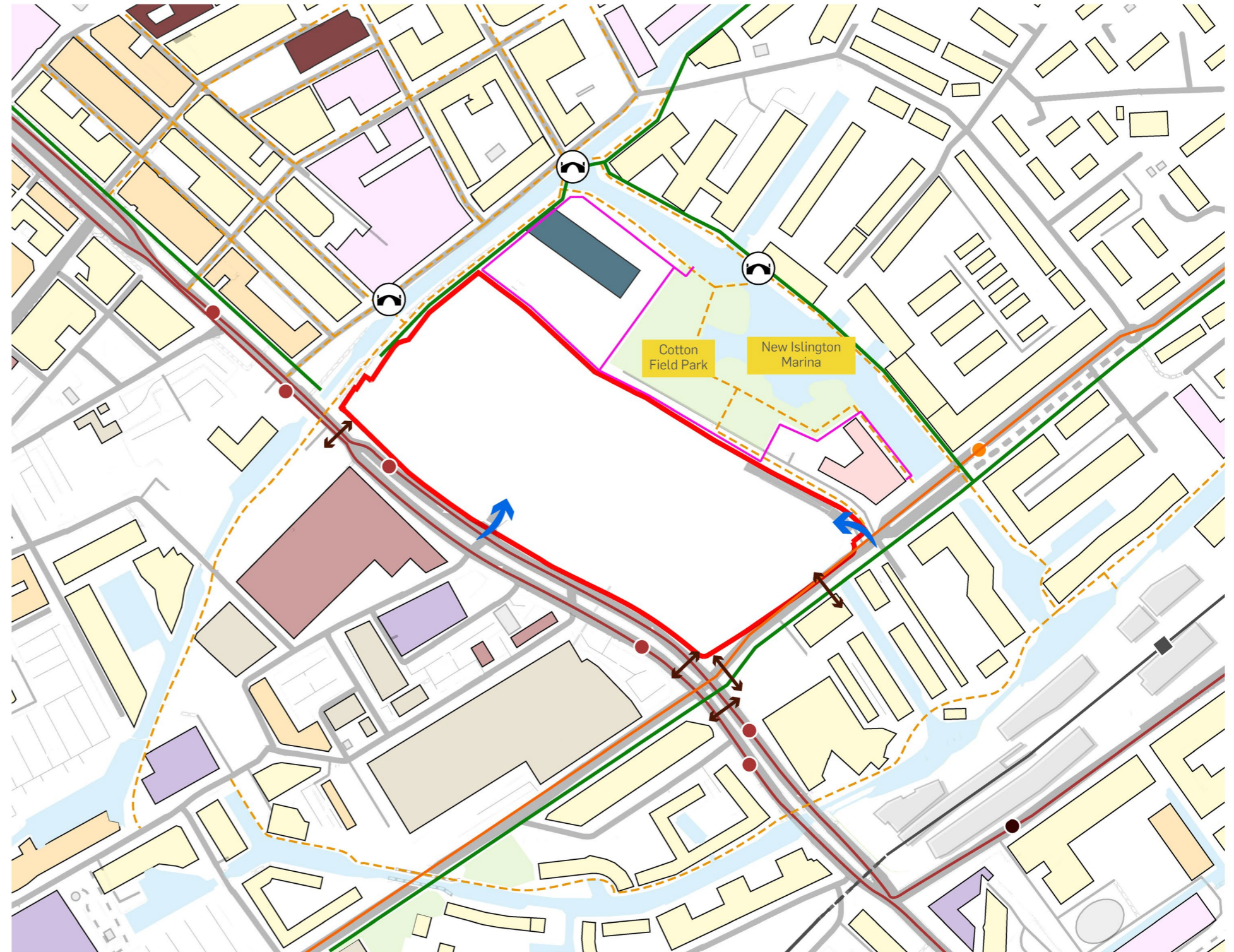
The site is bounded by Great Ancoats Street (the city's Inner Ring Road) to the south and is well connected to a variety of arterial routes that lead to the M60 and the wider motorway network.

Great Ancoats Street is a 3 by 2 lane carriageway, with a speed limit of 30mph. It is a car-dominated road, with heavy traffic and currently acts as a visual and physical barrier.

There are two vehicular access points to the site, which were part of the former retail park, which are now fenced off and barricaded. The first from Great Ancoats Street and the second from Old Mill Street. Access from Great Ancoats Street is signalised, allowing full movement when previously exiting the former retail park. The signal also allows for vehicles on Laystall Street to either turn right onto Great Ancoats Street or move directly into the former Central Retail Park. The second access from Old Mill Street was previously for delivery and services. The site is currently fenced and inaccessible.

The SRF will improve accessibility to the site by opening it up to local neighbourhoods around it, helping to stitch them together and connecting them to the city centre. It will also have a positive impact on its direct surroundings.

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|--|
|  | Site boundary |  | Great Ancoats Street (City inner road) |
|  | Residential |  | Secondary road – one way, three lanes |
|  | Mixed Use |  | Secondary road – two way, two lanes |
|  | Commercial |  | Local road – two way, two lanes |
|  | Retail |  | Local road – one way, two lanes |
|  | Educational |  | Local road – one way, one lane |
|  | Health care |  | Restricted access road |
|  | Industrial | | |
|  | Green / Open spaces | | |
|  | New Islington Marina | | |



Road Hierarchy and Land Uses














PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

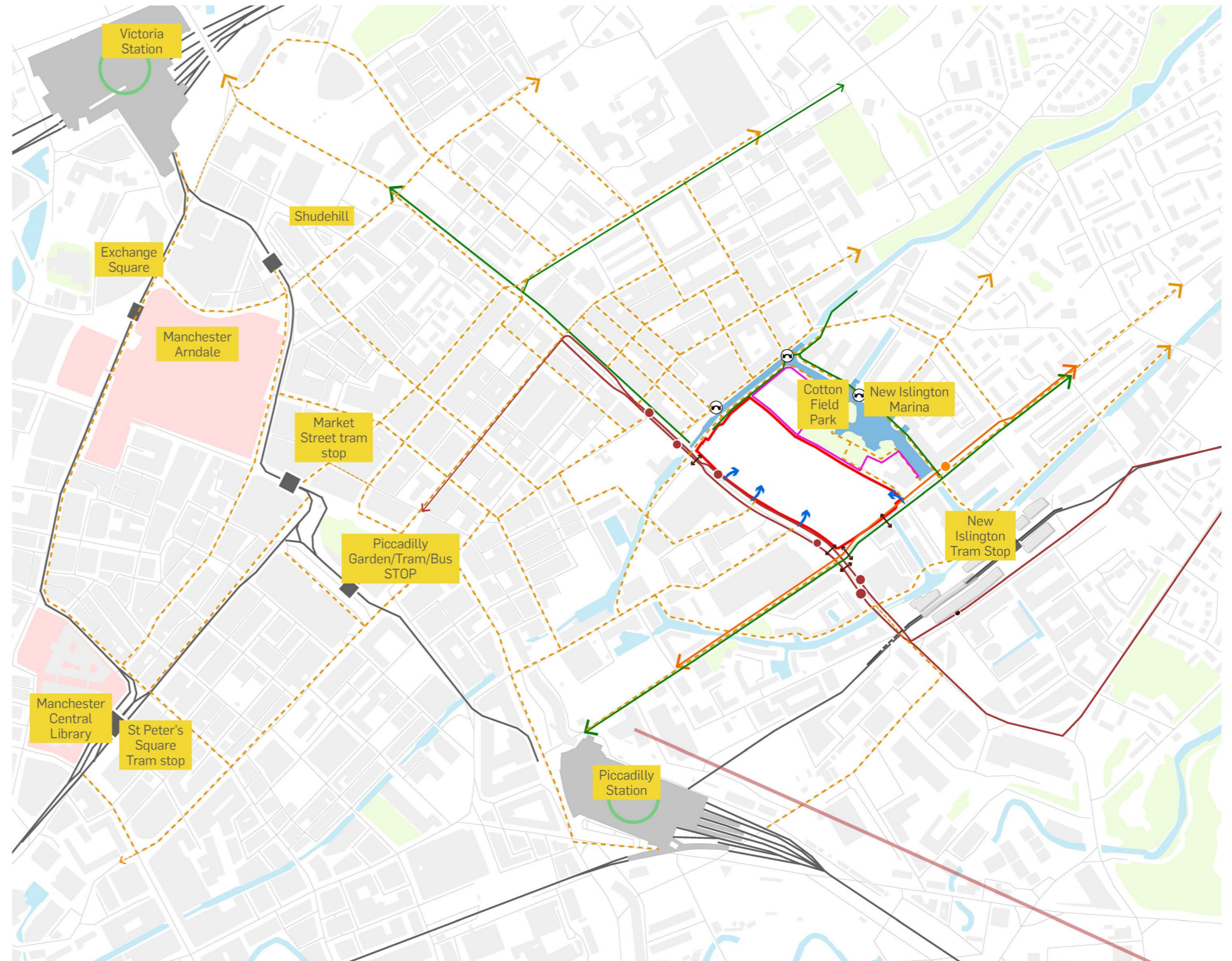
The site is currently fenced, preventing access. However, the former Central Retail Park previously had four pedestrian access points, three of which were located towards the south of the site along Great Ancoats. Great Ancoats Street is a major car-dominated road with limited pedestrian crossings. The pedestrian crossing in close proximity to the Rochdale canal provides a connection point into the site and to the tow path of the canal. The fourth access point is on Old Mill Street, towards the east of the site. There are no other pedestrian access points to the site.

In terms of public transport, buses run along Great Ancoats Street and Old Mill Street, with a frequency of 15 to 30 minutes. The site is also in close proximity to key transport points, such as New Islington tram stop which is a 7-minute walk from the site, and key transport hubs, such as Piccadilly train station which is a 10-minute walk from the site.

There are existing cycle routes surrounding the site as part of the Transport for Greater Manchester cycle network. However, none of these routes have an allocated cycle path, instead they are classified as on-road routes or shared surfaces with pedestrians.

The masterplan will look to enhance links to existing transport networks, maximising the opportunity to create a sustainable district in travel terms. Pedestrians and cyclists will be given priority over vehicles to promote a sustainable and people led development.

-  Site boundary
-  Pedestrian links
-  Existing pedestrian access to site (currently fenced)
-  Existing pedestrian crossings
-  Existing bridges
-  Existing fences around Cotton Field park
-  Bus routes and stops (230, 216, 231)
-  Bus routes and stops (709, 230, 216, 231)
-  Bus deviation (216)
-  Existing cycle routes, part of the TfGM cycle network
-  Green / Open spaces
-  Tram routes
-  HS2 line



Public Transport Plan

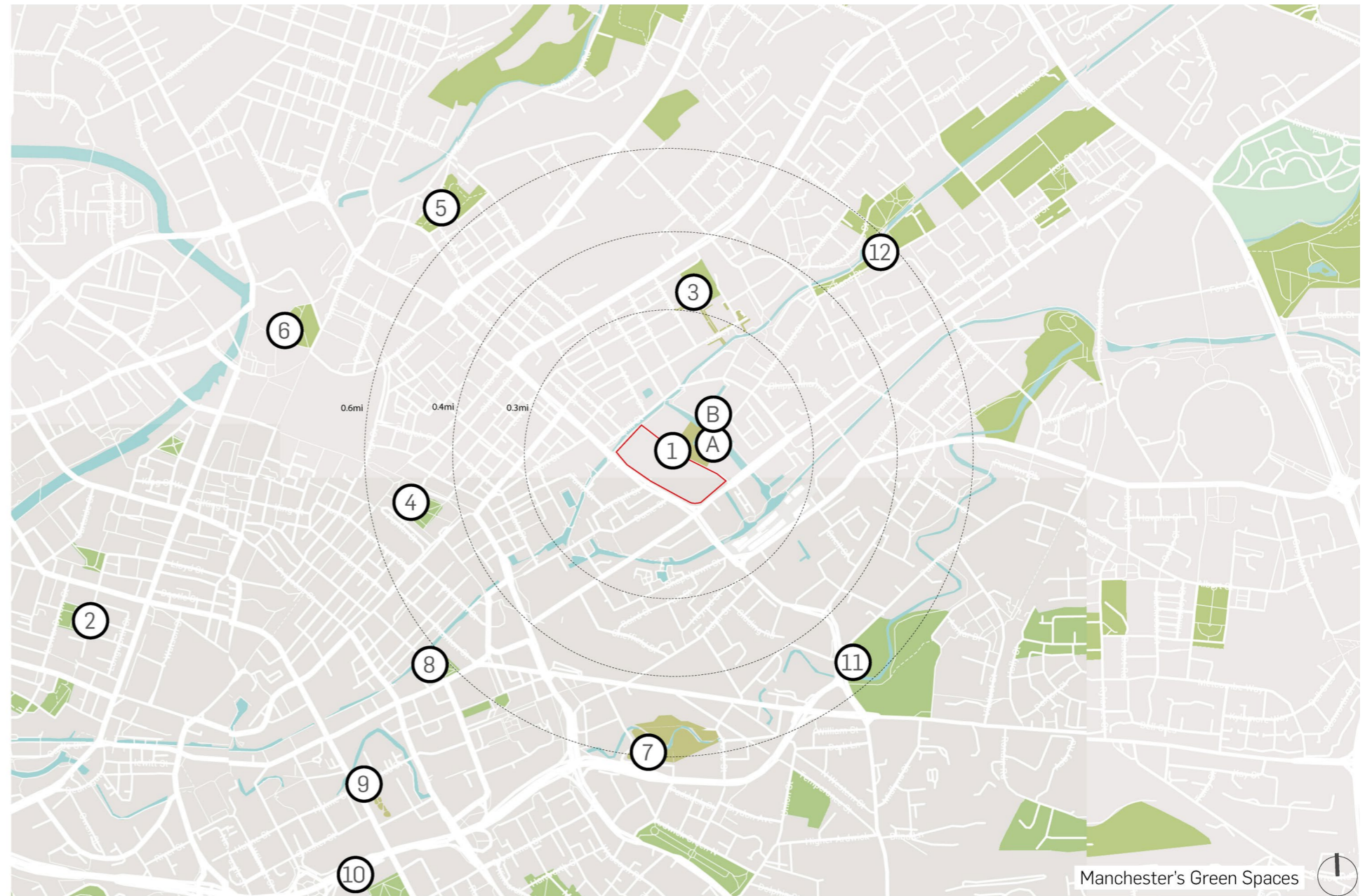
Manchester's green space

The site is located directly adjacent to Cotton Field Park, the Rochdale Canal and New Islington Wharf, and is within close proximity to a number of major public parks and green spaces including, Mayfield Park and the planned enhancements to Ancoats Green public realm.

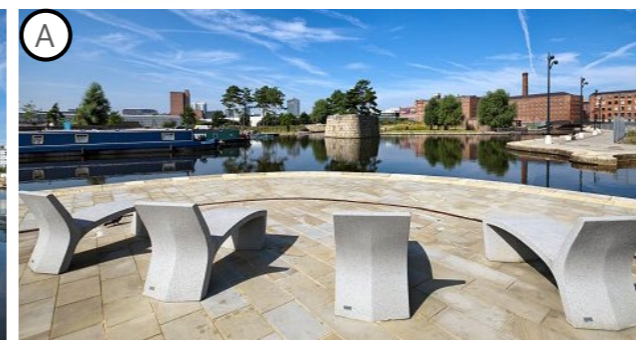
The site is bounded to the north by Cotton Field Park, an urban park at the centre of the New Islington community which opens from 8am to 8pm.

The site provides an opportunity to add to the existing green and public spaces by delivering a significant new public realm connecting to and extending Cotton Field Park. This will give east Manchester a series of green spaces for pedestrians to travel into the city centre. The new public realm will help provide a connection to the existing green spaces located around the city as well as establishing its own sense of place and becoming a destination for the local and neighbouring communities.

- Site boundary
- ① Cotton Field Park
- ② St Johns Gardens
- ③ Ancoats Green
- ④ Piccadilly Gardens
- ⑤ St Michael's Flags & Angel Meadow Park
- ⑥ Cathedral Gardens
- ⑦ Mayfield Park
- ⑧ Sackville Garden
- ⑨ Circle Square
- ⑩ All Saints Park
- ⑪ Pin Mill Brow
- ⑫ Ashton Canal Park



Cotton Field park



Cotton Field park



New Islington Marina

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Ancoats Conservation Area

A key consideration for the future of the site is its location immediately adjacent to a number of key heritage assets, and in particular, the Ancoats Conservation Area. Ancoats was once one of the most densely developed industrial landscapes. During the 18th century it was home to textile mills and was the centre of manufacturing of machinery, glass, and newspapers. During the second half of the 20th century, the district saw a decline with factories closing down and communities leaving the industrial areas for the suburbs. The area includes several Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings, many of them facing Rochdale Canal. The Ancoats Conservation Area boundary reaches the western edge of the site.

The area has gone through significant investment. The successful and sensitive regeneration has maintained the special character of the area and has made Ancoats into a popular destination. Businesses have capitalised on the popularity of the area and helped it grow and build upon its character.

The Rochdale Canal

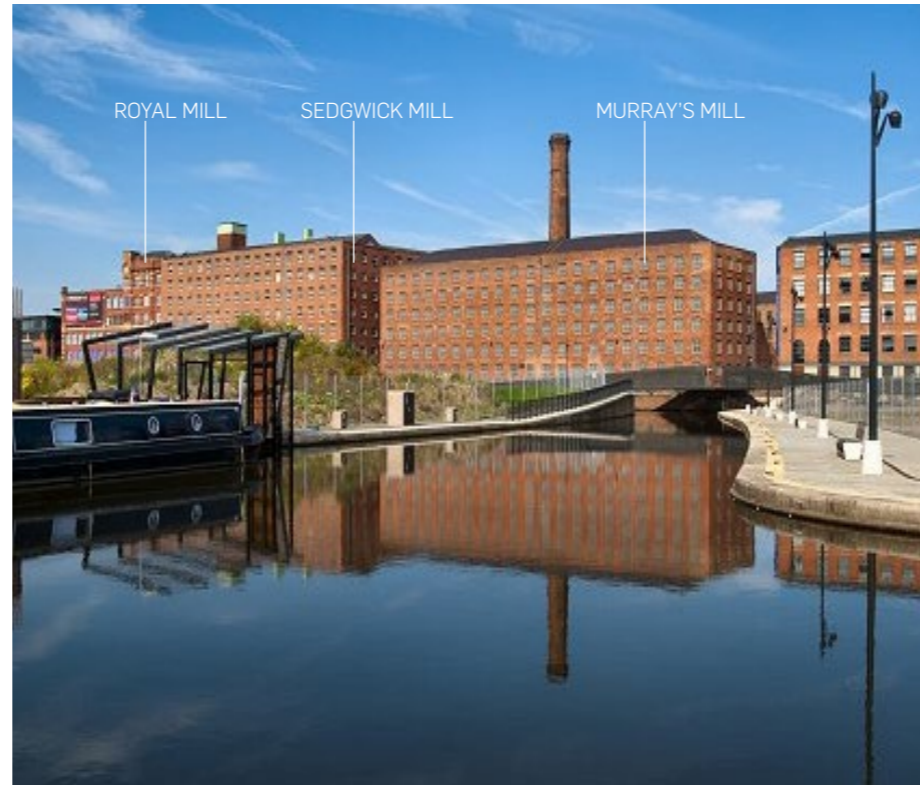
Alongside the historic buildings in the city the canal infrastructure is a key defining feature of Ancoats, with two major waterways crossing the area:

- The Rochdale Canal, defining the west boundary of the site
- The Ashton Canal, to the east of Old Mill Street.

Canals were the essential prerequisite to the area's industrial development as they allowed transporting materials at a much cheaper rate than using roads. Smaller branches from the major waterways used to serve the major industrial sites within Ancoats and New Islington, creating a local network of waterways.

The Rochdale canal dates back to 1804, and the first mills defining its frontage go back beyond that. An example of that is Old Mill, which dates back to 1798. The mills alongside the west side of the Rochdale Canal have historically presented an impressive frontage to what is now the designated Ancoats Conservation area.

The locks, which sit to the southwest of the site and the canal wall define the west of the canal, are also protected assets.



View from Cotton Field park towards Ancoats Conservation Area.



Mills at Rochdale canal in 1820



Long Mill and Old Mill defining the frontage of Rochdale canal in 1913
Source: 'Ancoats. Cradle of industrialisation.' English Heritage



Mills at Rochdale canal in 1835

Residential community

In the last 20 years, the area has experienced rapid residential growth, including the development of the New Islington Community along the new marina and the Ashton canal corridor, to the east of Old Mill Street.

The new residential-led developments in New Islington and Ancoats are coming forward in a coordinated manner under policies presented in the adopted Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF). New Islington has become a popular destination for living with typologies ranging from townhouses to apartments, defined by award-winning architecture and public realm.

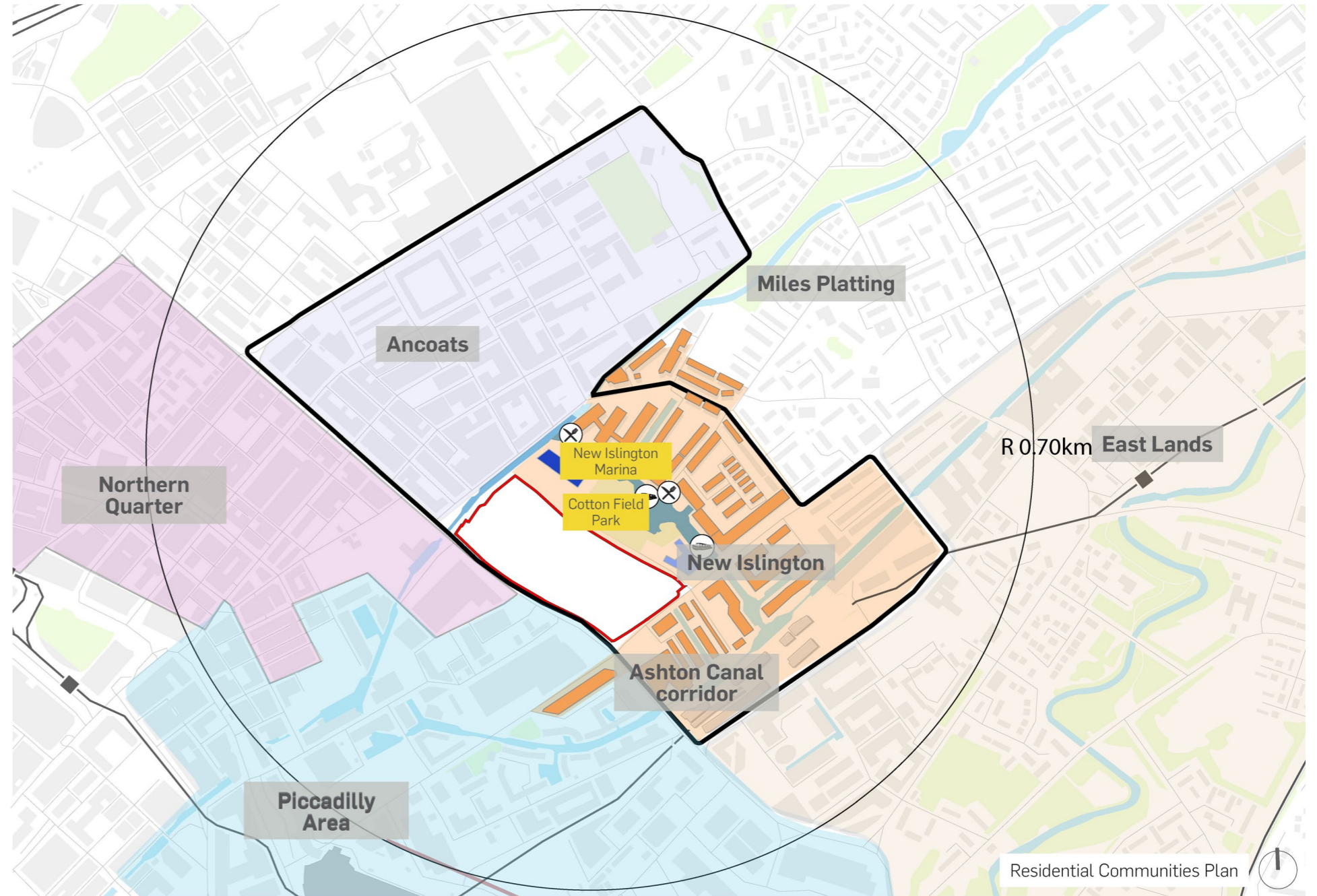
There is a thriving existing community living in the Rochdale canal basin, with 33 permanent residential units and 7 visitor moorings.

The community in New Islington is supported by new social infrastructure such as the New Islington free school, opened in 2016, and the medical practice, both sitting to the north of the site.

The site is connected to the Etihad Stadium by the metrolink via New Islington and Piccadilly tram stops. The Etihad Stadium forms the centre piece of the significant regeneration being delivered pursued in the Eastlands regeneration framework. This is supported by the investment of Manchester Life, a partnership between Abu Dhabi United Group and MCC. The partnership has the long-term goal of regenerating the immediate surroundings of the Etihad Stadium and establishing wider benefits for the area.

Further development has taken place close by high-rise buildings located towards the southeast boundary of the site. This includes the 32-storey "Oxygen Manchester" residential tower on Store Street.

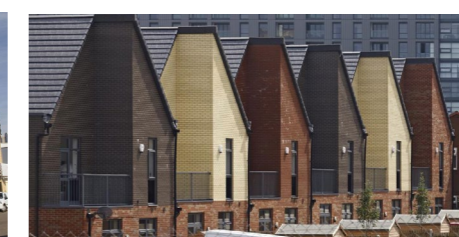
- Site boundary
- Ancoats and New Islington NDF area boundary
- New residential developments
- New Islington Free School
- Medical Practice
- Existing green / Open spaces



Chips Building



Woodward Place housing, New Islington by Fat



Coppersmith Road Residential



Urban Splash Housing Development