



# A market town revived: The story of Altrincham

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# Introduction

Altrincham is a historic market town and Trafford's largest town centre. It is home to over 400 retail / food and drink businesses and a thriving commercial sector. Its regeneration has led to national interest and media coverage.

Presentation will cover:

- How change was achieved in Altrincham
- The legacy
- Trafford's other town centres
- Lessons learned



# Town Centre Challenges

- Five competing town centres in close proximity
- Trafford Centre and other out of centre retail
- Accessibility of City Centre and competition from nearby centres such as Chorlton and boutique centres in Cheshire
- Online shopping and changing retailer strategies – loss of major retailers
- Poor environmental quality and public realm
- Rising vacancy rates

# Altrincham Town Centre

In 2010, Altrincham was branded a 'ghost town' in the national press:

- Vacancy rate of 30% - highest in UK.
- Poor public realm, underachieving retail offer, developer inactivity.
- Town's decline could not just be blamed on the Trafford Centre or growth of online shopping.
- Decreasing civic pride with local residents choosing to shop and socialise elsewhere.
- Something had to be done.

GHOST TOWN VACANCY RATE	
<b>1. Altrincham</b> 30.04% - up 8.67%	<b>6. Morecombe</b> 25.01% - up 8.15%
<b>2. Blackpool</b> 28.93% - down 0.20%	<b>7. Bradford</b> 24.64% - up 3.94%
<b>3. Margate</b> 27.55% - up 0.48%	<b>8. Wolverhampton</b> 23.78% - up 4.44%
<b>4. Dewsbury</b> 27.44% - up 10.51%	<b>9. Doncaster</b> 23.70% - up 5.31%
<b>5. Stockton-on-Tees</b> 27.27% - up 6.86%	<b>10. Leith</b> 23.44% - flat

\*Source: LDC

# Where we came from



# What We Did - Altrincham

## Council made Altrincham a priority:

- Altrincham Forward was established in 2011
- Community Engagement
- Vision and Action Plan (2012) - “Modern market town”.
- Objectives: increase footfall, dwell time & spend.
- Public Realm Strategy (2012).
- Landlords Forum - share intelligence, market the town, and improve properties in poor condition.
- Section 215 notices secured improvements to properties
- Altrincham Strategy (2014)

# Altrincham Investment

Key developments and regeneration activity has included:

- Town Team established in 2013.
- c£900k Refurbished Market House and Market – catalyst for regeneration.
- c£4m Public Realm Improvements to date.
- £19m Transport Interchange.
- £17m New Hospital.
- Town Centres Loan Scheme – over £250,000 loaned to new businesses in Altrincham to date.

# Altrincham Business Improvement District (BID)

Altrincham Forward made the decision to start developing a BID and the Council worked closely with businesses to develop the proposal.

- Successful BID ballot in November 2015.
- Altrincham Forward wound up in December 2016.
- £1.4 million over 5 years.
- The drive, focus, commitment and strong partnership continues through 'Altrincham Unlimited'.
- Council continues to work closely with the Altrincham Unlimited to deliver a holistic approach to regeneration supporting not just retail but B2B, community groups and other stakeholders.



# What was the legacy?



**New Transport Interchange**



# What was the legacy?

## An Award Winning Market



# What was the legacy?

## Improved Public Realm



# What was the legacy?

## New Hospital



**Everyman Cinema**



**Chapel Square- Mixed Use Development & Car Park**



**Altair – Mixed Use Development**



**New Library**



# Why was establishing a partnership so important?

Altrincham Forward provided the strategic direction and a 'whole town centre' approach:

- It helped instil confidence in the town from businesses, investors and residents.
- Delivered business and skills support initiatives and a whole range of events and promotional activity.
- It influenced and lobbied the Council to focus resources.
- It stimulated a thriving night-time/leisure economy.

# What next for Altrincham

- Council continues to work closely with the BID.
- Acquisition of Grafton Shopping Centre – Council is seeking a development partner.
- Acquisition of Stamford Quarter Shopping Centre.
- Bringing forward new development and supporting an increased residential offer (e.g. Altair and Chapel Square).
- Further phases of public realm works planned for 2020/21.
- The Council has committed additional finance to loan scheme.
- Responding to COVID-19 and recovery planning.
- Altrincham Together Business Task Force Team established with the BID to support in coping with challenges of COVID-19.

# Stretford Town Centre

- **Cycle of Decline**
  - Identified as failing to meet the needs or aspirations of the community and in a cycle of decline with Stretford Mall not fit for purpose.
  - Vacancy rates are 26.4% in Stretford, compared to 9.3% Trafford average.
  - Dominated by A56 and highways infrastructure
- **Bruntwood Works**
  - Council/Bruntwood JV acquired Stretford Mall to deliver the regeneration of Stretford Mall to create renewed Town Centre with increased town centre living.
- **Future High Streets Fund**
  - £17.6m Future High Streets Fund bid to deliver first phases of development and enabling infrastructure to unlock wider redevelopment.





# Sale Town Centre

- **Poor quality public realm**
  - Public Realm and Movement Strategy to improve the town centre environment and connectivity between key areas.
- **The Square Shopping Centre**
  - Poor mix of retail, limited leisure offer, closed off in evening.
  - Working with owners, MAR Developments, to bring forward a major residential led redevelopment including retail and leisure
- **Former Magistrates Court**
  - opportunity for mixed-use leisure / residential development.



# Urmston Town Centre

- **Town Centre was struggling in early 2000s.**
  - Proximity to Trafford Centre
  - Vacant units, poor environmental quality
- **Eden Square**
  - Core of town centre completely redeveloped
  - Completed 2012
  - Anchored by Sainsbury's with other multiples: Costa Coffee and Aldi, as well as quality independents.
- Continuing to develop a very strong independent food and drink offer for the local area
- Vacancy Rate remains below 5%



# Partington Town Centre

- **Partington Shopping Centre**
  - Redevelopment of the 1960's shopping area completed in 2014 supporting wider regeneration of Partington.
  - 100% occupancy with Tesco Express and Heron Foods as anchor tenants.
  - Includes the Hideaway family play and education centre – operating as community response hub in COVID-19 response.
- Proposals being developed for new housing on adjacent land.
- Further opportunities for expansion of the retail area to support planned housing growth



# Lessons Learned

- Town centres need to adapt to a changing and challenging environment with an increased focus on town centre living and creation of centres that act as a 'destination'.
- Important that the Council plays a strong leadership role.
- A 'whole town centre' approach is vital.
- Importance of a USP (e.g. Altrincham Market).
- Important that all sectors are engaged e.g. business, education, transport, landlords, developers and community.
- Targeted public realm improvements encourage footfall and investment.
- BIDs are critical to sustaining longer term investment and resourcing.
- Importance of monitoring performance, marketing and social media.

**Thank you.  
Any questions?**