

Delivering The Vision

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8.1 Intended Outcomes

The SQRF has been prepared by PCC, LCC and UCLan and sets a new Vision for Preston Station Quarter. It is a statement of intent by the partners of their commitment to deliver the transformation of the Preston Station Quarter. The preparation of the SQRF has created a momentum which now needs to be continued by the development and delivery of priority actions.

The SQRF seeks to deliver investment and development across the Station Quarter which captures the unrealised potential of the western part of the city centre, underpinned by the value and importance of Preston Station as a key transport hub and City Gateway, and a comprehensive and strategic approach to new land uses, development, public realm and connectivity.

As a long term strategy, phases of development are expected to take place over a period of 10-15 years. Nevertheless the SQRF seeks to enable a coordinated and complementary approach so that individual development proposals contribute to the delivery of the shared vision for the area.

The SQRF is expected to deliver the following outcomes in line with the nine objectives (see Section 1) established for the Station Quarter:

1. The strategic planning and regeneration of the Station Quarter

The application of the SQRF principles will result in the coherent and transformational development of several key and underutilised sites around Preston Station, delivering a westward expansion of major development within the city centre that becomes a destination in its own right, but with stronger connections to the rest of the city centre and north to the UCLan masterplan campus. The Station Quarter will be transformed from an underwhelming

arrival experience, dominated by surface car parks, lacking any sense of place and without clear onward routes, into a true city gateway; with a strong sense of arrival, a vibrancy arising from a mix of appropriate city centre uses accommodated in a distinctive urban townscape, within a high quality public realm setting that also signposts routes to Preston's city centre cultural, commercial and educational destinations.

2. Capitalising on the increasing footfall associated with the growth of rail services at Preston station

Growth in regional and national rail connectivity, through enhanced local rail services and future HS2 compatible services will be facilitated through station and rail infrastructure improvements, including better passenger facilities, station access and circulation. The already strong footfall will grow with increasing rail services and modal shift to more sustainable travel options. The future land uses around the station will also reflect the strong footfall and benefit from the high levels of pedestrian activity through the daytime and until late at night, which will increase the pedestrian perception of safety in the area in the evenings.

3. Capitalising on connectivity

The new developments in the Station Quarter will both accommodate and capitalise on footfall driven by people arriving and leaving the city by train and also using a new active travel hub at the station. New buildings will front and have active frontages animating key routes from the station to city centre destinations including Fishergate, UCLan, Winckley Square, County Hall and towards Avenham and Miller Park.

4. Design quality, intensification and enhancement of public realm

The SQRF illustrates the significant development potential of the planned urban townscape which represents a considerable densification of the area in comparison to the existing low density character, with significant areas dominated by surface car parking and depots occupied by rail maintenance teams and the Royal Mail for example. The SQRF sets out the urban design principles including movement infrastructure, development sites, massing and character that delivers significant development in a way that strengthens the sense of place and identity. The Station Quarter will become a recognisable and valued part of Preston city centre.

5. Diversifying the economy of the city centre including enhancing 'liveability'

The movement away from retail as the dominant, defining role of the city centre is widely recognised. The SQRF will strongly contribute to the diversification of the city centre, including reinforcing and restoring civic and commercial functions such as higher education, business and culture, whilst also reversing trends of declining city centre residential populations and meeting increased demands for city centre leisure and entertainment.

The SQRF demonstrates the position of the area to accommodate a new Central Business District offering Grade A office space, growing Preston's role as a public sector hub but also providing new build floorspace for locally-grown and relocating private sector business; some attracted simply by the excellent connectivity of the Station Quarter and the wider amenities of Preston's hinterland, others by proximity to UCLan or association with the growing advanced technology economy of Lancashire. The SQRF will also increase UCLan's presence in

the city centre, through better connections from the station to the heart of the UCLan campus, but also through the development of facilities and businesses that service and spin out from the University, its students, staff and visitors. A successful, attractive and vibrant city centre is a key consideration in decision making for students making their university choices. The SQRF supports the potential to bring enhanced university presence into the city centre.

Enhancing the 'liveability' of Preston's city centre is a key objective of a number of partners and the SQRF demonstrates the potential of the area to accommodate a significant number of new homes, including apartments and townhouses. These will support the wider aspirations of improving the choice, quality and sustainability of homes in the city centre. Potential also exists to enhance the student accommodation offer, though these will be evaluated in the context of existing provision and need – including a premium student accommodation offer which will reinforce the attractiveness of UCLan.

6. Establishing Preston city centre as a location for national and international investment

The SQRF provides a rare opportunity to meet a large scale public sector or other office relocation requirement from the Southeast of England in a city centre location adjacent to a major rail station. The SQRF helps to inform the business case for selecting the Station Quarter, illustrating the wider vision for the area and the catalytic impact of any such investment. The SQRF establishes the added value of a strategic investment in this location.

7. Reinforcing a local character and identity

Preston station is a listed building and the SQRF includes elements of three surrounding conservation areas. Far from being a constraint, these heritage assets will inform a detailed building and urban design response that recognises the particular character and identity of Preston. This will ensure that the future Station Quarter has a strong sense of place, encourages high quality design of individual phases of development and engenders a strong sense of pride in all those who work, live in or visit the area.

8. An environmentally sustainable, low-carbon community

The SQRF promotes sustainable development to meet the local and national policy objectives for low / zero carbon development. This includes infrastructure including EV charging points, encouragement of low or zero carbon on-site energy generation, and green roofs and walls to support biodiversity.

9. Remodelled road and transport infrastructure

In order to unlock development, the SQRF progressively removes the existing surface car parking dominating a number of key sites, reorganising provision in strategic locations to accommodate those who travel by car. This provision will be influenced by strategic transport, highways and analysis of car parking demand and also of the surrounding highway network being undertaken by county and city councils as well as the objectives of individual development sponsors. The strategic work will include the promotion of investment in sustainable infrastructure, including active travel modes. This is intended to help reduce city

centre car journeys, control movement through and around the city centre, and promote change in travel behaviours by city centre users.

8.2 Enabling Delivery

Enabling Delivery

Having established the Regeneration Framework for the Station Quarter, attention now needs to turn to its delivery. This will involve the following stages which are considered in turn below:

- Alignment with wider policy context;
- Establishment of governance structures to determine and oversee delivery;
- Refinement of the strategy and preparation of Quadrant Development Frameworks;
- Determination of strategic interventions; and
- Engagement with key partners to support buy in and participation.

Alignment with wider policy context

The SQRF has established a vision for the Station Quarter to support the wider growth aspirations of the city. It has been prepared and endorsed by key stakeholders including PCC, LCC and UCLan and its delivery has been identified as a strategic priority in the Preston City Investment Plan.

It now needs to be further embedded within the city and county councils' wider policy and strategy. In particular with the emerging local plan policies of the new Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Consideration will be given to preparing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Preston Station Quarter in order to provide a clear statement to developers that all future planning applications must demonstrate that they are not prejudicing the comprehensive delivery of the SQRF and align with its priorities

In addition, in determining actions coming out of other strategic documents such as the Greater Lancashire Plan and the City Transport Plan it will be important to ensure that the SQRF and any subsequent SPD provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate the case for investment by relevant partners in the Station Quarter.

Establishment of Governance Structures to determine and oversee delivery

Having established the broad principles that will guide development across the quarter more detailed work is required to support the strategic landowners and other stakeholders to determine detailed proposals within each of the quadrants.

In order to support delivery of the SQRF a Strategic Board and Programme Steering Group are being established to realise the Vision for the

Station Quarter. The purpose of these proposed groups is to:

- Guide, encourage and oversee the ongoing development of projects and activities to achieve the vision set out in the SQRF.
- Develop and implement an ongoing programme of activities and actions
- Ensure that the work of the groups is consistent with the objectives of the PCC, LCC and UCLan, as well as City Deal, the City Investment Plan, the City Centre Plan and the emerging Lancashire Plan.
- Agree joint communication approaches with professional guidance and support from partners' in-house communications teams.
- Prepare and approve quarterly update reports for submission (for information and noting purposes) to the City of Preston Towns Fund Board on the implementation of the Collaboration Plan.

The groups will not be responsible for site specific development; site specific development will be overseen by the individual landowners and developers.

The groups will comprise of key partners including PCC, LCC and UCLan. Other partners will be invited to become involved at appropriate stages and operational project delivery teams will be established to focus on specific actions. Other partners are likely to include the Martin Group, Network Rail and Homes England.

The Strategic Board may determine the need to try to encourage partners to progress specific elements of the SQRF at a quicker pace than is happening on the ground to meet the objectives of the SQRF and/or the city council. In some cases it may be decided that a landowner is not a credible partner and it may be agreed that PCC/LCC or Homes England should intervene to acquire specific sites.

The groups will provide regular update reports for information to the Preston Towns Fund Board.

Refinement of the Strategy and preparation of Quadrant Development Frameworks

Delivery of the SQRF will be assisted by the fact that there is a major strategic landowner within each of the quadrants who will be able to lead on the refinement of the development framework for each of the areas:

- LCC - County Hill
- Martin Group - Station East / Fishergate Centre
- UCLan - University Walk
- Network Rail - Station West

Strategic landowners will drive forward the delivery of the SQRF in terms of the following:

- Determination of Quadrant Development Frameworks
- Engagement with PCC/LCC
- Engagement with other local landowners
- Engagement with other stakeholders
- Agreement of phasing of key sites

Development frameworks will be required to be prepared by the strategic landowners for each of the quadrants to start to identify key opportunity sites, consideration of design, massing and heights and also provide further details on access, public realm and gateways.

In determining the development frameworks each of the strategic landowners will need to engage with the following to both determine the strategy and site specific proposals:

- Individual landowners
- PCC / LCC
- Station Quarter Steering Group
- City of Preston Towns Fund Board

Determination of Strategic Interventions

The SQRF has established expectations around the quality of build, connections through the area by road, cycle and foot, key gateways and open space. The aim being to create people friendly places, to make visiting, working, studying and living in the city centre an attractive and compelling proposition. Further work will be required to determine the following SQRF wide strategies which will need to align with wider city strategies and in due course with the Central Lancashire Local Plan:

- Movement – to ensure the principles of active travel are embedded in development proposals. This will need to align with wider transport proposals and will focus on reducing the need to use cars by supporting walking and cycling
- Car Parking – future development will require the rationalisation of existing car parking, replacing expansive surface car parks with Multi-storey car parks in locations that reduce cross-city traffic. Any interventions in terms of car parking will need to be considered in the context of wider proposals for the city centre and any impacts on the wider highway network as well as potential changes in car ownership
- Public realm - this will need to establish where new open space is required - including its quantum and function - as well as creating a series of links to connect the new areas together and into existing green spaces such as Avenham and Miller Parks.
- Utilities – to establish what investment is needed in terms of energy, water, waste, ground improvements and technology to support investment in the Station Quarter
- Social Infrastructure – as detailed proposals are worked up consideration will need to be given as to what social infrastructure will be required to support the investment

such as new health and education provision. Guidance on expectations on this will be set out in planning policy but consideration should also be given to the quality of existing and future provision

Once these strategies have been prepared consideration will need to be given to how they will be funded and the optimum phasing. Whilst some investment will be able to be delivered via site specific investment and planning contributions some will require additional funding – private and public sector borrowing, support from council capital projects or funding sought from external sources such as further rounds of the Levelling Up Fund. These projects will need to be supported by robust business cases.

Engagement with key partners to support buy-in and participation

The SQRF has started to articulate a new Vision for the Station Quarter. Whilst PCC, LCC and UCLan have been aware of the potential of the Station Quarter for a number of years and the priority has been established in the City Investment Plan, details have not been articulated widely to date.

The new Vision and Objectives now needs to be shared with key stakeholders to encourage them to buy into it and potentially to play a role in its delivery. An Engagement Strategy will be determined by the Steering Group and delivered with the strategic landowners as appropriate. Engagement will be undertaken with the following:

- City of Preston Towns Fund Board
- Stakeholder consulted with as part of the preparation of the SQRF
- Local businesses/groups
- Local residents/community partnerships including students

Ensuring wide buy-in to the vision will support smoother delivery and momentum for change.

