

Ashton Mayoral Development Zone Business Plan 2024 / 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

Places for Everyone is the long-term plan for the delivery of jobs, new homes and sustainable growth across Greater Manchester. The plan will ensure that all new developments are sustainably integrated into Greater Manchester's transport network or supported by new infrastructure.

Places for Everyone includes six growth locations which represent opportunities for the whole city-region to bring forward development at a scale which can drive transformational change across the whole conurbation.

The Eastern Growth Cluster Growth Location is entirely within Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council's administrative area and contains the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (AMDZ). The AMDZ provides an opportunity to delivery large scale employment growth and residential led mixed use regeneration creating new quality jobs and low carbon homes linked to sustainable transport.

Tameside Council received approval from its Executive Cabinet to establish the AMDZ on the 27th September 2023 with GMCA approving the same on the 27th October 2023. The AMDZ will focus on the delivery of the following key sites:

- Ashton Moss
- St Petersfield
- Ashton Town Centre

These three projects have the potential to provide c3,000 new high quality jobs, c1,500 new mixed tenure homes and c150,000 square metres of employment space through public-private partnership.

Ashton Moss

Ashton Moss is a strategic employment site located on the edge of Ashton-under-Lyne Town Centre in close proximity to Junction 18 of the M60 motorway. Ashton Moss is split in to two definable areas, Ashton Moss East (AME) (also known as Plot 3000) and Ashton Moss West (AMW), extending to approximately 70 hectares in total. All of the land at Ashton Moss is in private ownership and suffers from problematic ground conditions.

Ashton Moss is the largest employment opportunity site within Tameside and provides the opportunity for higher paid and skilled jobs for residents in the Borough in line with the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy. The site is well located on the road, tram and bus networks and is adjacent to the Ashton Moss retail, leisure, commercial and industrial area.

The vision for the site is to create a dynamic, attractive and thriving innovation park, embedded in and contributing to a greener, cleaner society for Tameside.

St Petersfield

St Petersfield is located in the western part of Ashton Town Centre, forming the southwestern gateway into the town for pedestrians and vehicles. The area is characterised by a range of uses including office, residential, education, civic and health care. The site currently hosts a range of occupiers such as; the Magistrates court; Ashton Old Baths; Tameside College and the Ashton Primary Care Centre. Although the area has benefited from development in recent years, including a new public realm scheme, a large proportion of St Petersfield comprises cleared sites and temporary surface car parking, all of which are within the Council's ownership.

The approved St Petersfield Masterplan has identified nine development opportunities (owned by the Council) that offer something special: a mixed use residential and modern business district, which is accessible, green and designed to the highest sustainability standards.

Ashton Town Centre

The Council has identified Ashton Town Centre as one of its growth priorities, supporting delivery of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26 in making its town centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector.

Once a leading destination for both local and out-of-town shoppers, it has been identified that change is needed in Ashton Town Centre, which has experienced shop closures and declining levels of footfall in recent years exacerbated by national trends.

The Town Centre has undergone improvements in recent years, with the Council's ambition evident through the significant investment of c£60m under the Vision Tameside programme that has delivered a new transport interchange, enhanced digital connectivity, learning facilities, the Council Head Office and public realm. However, despite this investment, fulfilling the objectives for the regeneration of Ashton cannot be maximised unless the existing issues and barriers are addressed.

Since the MDZ was established, Sub-Groups (outlined in more detail in Section 4) have been formed to drive forward development, growth and skills across the AMDZ area.

Overall, the AMDZ presents one the biggest opportunities in Greater Manchester to attract inward investment and long-term economic growth, focusing on advanced materials and the manufacturing sector as well as residential led regeneration. This is a long-term ambition that will take significant resources and time to deliver. This document sets out what needs to be done during 2024 / 2025 to ensure real progress is made and the overall ambition is realised in years to come.

2. VISION

The AMDZ will utilise its expertise and influence to unite local stakeholders to unlock funding, drive forward progress and deliver the vision. The over-arching draft vision of the AMDZ is:

The AMDZ will create aspirational opportunities that retain and attract talent, and will home grow skills. Building on strong industry foundations in digital, creative and manufacturing, Ashton will be integral to Greater Manchester frontier sector innovation.

In a well-connected place that has beautiful surroundings, the AMDZ will create a thriving, highly sustainable eco-system, supported by a revitalised town centre and high quality homes for all, making it a fantastic place to live, work and learn.

The AMDZ Investment Prospectus sets out the following Objectives to deliver its Vision:

- Improve the choice of homes in particular modern energy efficient homes for rent and sale including affordable homes
- Capitalise on the short term development opportunity at Ashton Moss which is available for development without the need for strategic infrastructure
- Attract large scale employment in target sectors - especially Advanced Materials and Manufacturing but also Health Innovation, Digital, Creative and Media and Clean Growth
- Increase footfall in the Town Centre
- Grow and diversify the Town Centre offer including housing, leisure, health and culture
- Enhance connectivity between different parts of the Town Centre in particular St Petersfield and the public transport interchange - including walking/cycling routes and quality of public realm
- Reduce vacancies by repurposing space to create a more diverse offer in the Town Centre
- Attract inward investment to deliver modern commercial floorspace which will draw in occupiers in key sectors
- Enhance training and employment opportunities
- Support the growth of existing businesses and local supply chains

3. BUSINESS PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES

This Business Plan sets out the activity that the AMDZ Board will oversee during 2024/2025 to deliver the long-term ambitions and vision of the Mayoral Development Zone.

- MDZ to be established and wider governance/delivery groups agreed
- MDZ Business Case to be prepared
- Preparation of Investment Prospectus
- Launch Prospectus
- Stakeholder engagement strategy to be prepared and signed off
- Agreement of early phase of TMBC sites which could be taken to market and route to market.
- Agreement of optimum option for shopping centres
- Delivery of LUF programme (ongoing)
- Go to market with first tranche of opportunity sites
- Determination of delivery strategy and business case to support transformation of the shopping centres (subject to Stage 1 work)
- Understanding of potential occupiers interested in Ashton Moss
- Agreement of initial due diligence to be undertaken on Ashton Moss
- Preparation of funding bids to start to unlock early phase opportunity sites
- Roll out stakeholder engagement programme
- Implementation of the car parking strategy
- Lobby for further investment to support active travel
- Review of underutilised buildings which could attract future investment
- Communication to public and key stakeholders (ongoing)

Progress on the above will be presented to the AMDZ Board via the programmes Delivery Strategy monitoring.

4. ASHTON MAYORAL DEVELOPMENT ZONE BOARD GOVERNANCE

The AMDZ Board oversees the alignment and agreement of long-term aspirations and strategy for the sites, whilst developing and maintaining strategic relationships with key external stakeholders. In addition, it provides a centralised and consistent forum for the resolution of high-level issues encountered during the delivery of the three sites programmes and projects where issues have been escalated from supporting groups.

The main purpose of the MDZ Board is to:

- Set in place a time-limited but long-term structure and business plan that would sit outside other organisational contexts and pressures. This would ensure that there was a committed and certain resource set in place to underpin its Investment Strategy
- Assist in strategically focussing and accelerating development activity across the area which takes account of interdependencies, between the various components of the development process and assets in operation and the significance and timing of these components
- Be the entity that has strategic oversight of land assembly, masterplanning, development facilitation, site preparation, infrastructure and place creation; and the ability to harness the resources of local and national government to secure maximum impacts and efficiency
- Create a profile that can help to attract public and private sector investment and create a diverse mix of investment propositions
- Be able to bring together appropriate experience and capacity in development and place-making from across the public and private sector, and at Board-level to create the momentum to support delivery of a programme that supports inclusive growth and transformational change
- In doing its work the AMDZ Board will at all times consider how the proposed development will benefit the wider Eastern Growth Cluster and Tameside as a whole
- Drive and monitor progress of the AMDZ Delivery Plan, providing strategic support and advice to unlock barriers to delivery and specifically to:
 - Direct the development of project briefs and business cases
 - Provide a regular forum for considering and resolving key strategic issues
 - Provide a clear direction and steer to projects
 - Clarify and set programme requirements and direction
 - Remain focused on key principles deferring detailed analysis to Sub-Committees
 - Monitor high level risks and issues.
- Link with Growth Locations and the Growth Location Steering Group; reporting as any other area and feed into the Investment Pipeline
- Make full use of the Devolution Deal levers in the area, specifically the Brownfield Housing Fund, Single Settlement relating to Housing and Transport, Influence of the Affordable Homes Programme, and partnership with Network Rail

- Enable a strategic, single place integrated approach for all key activities that will optimise the relationships between democratic responsibility and the economic and social priorities of the Mayor, Combined Authority and the Council and other public/private partners. There will be a requirement to report to both Tameside Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority to ensure that its proceedings can be scrutinised within existing democratic structures
- Publicly communicate the milestones, achievements, and successes of the Ashton MDZ

Tameside Council has formed the following Sub-Groups that are tasked with the delivery of the key sites in the AMDZ:

- Ashton Moss Delivery Group
- Ashton Town Board
- St Petersfield Delivery Group
- Tameside Strategic Estates Group
- Tameside Inclusive Growth Board

An organogram of the AMDZ group structure is set out below:

