

## Part 2

# VISIONING

**The baseline work fed into a assessment of the health of Prestwich town centre. This was then discussed in one of the largest roundtable workshops that URBED has ever run. This helped us to develop a vision for Prestwich as an “urban village within Greater Manchester that, provides a hub for a growing local resident and business community with a lively high street, and access to the most extensive areas of open space in the region”.**



# Diagnosis...

**Prestwich Village Centre is significantly underperforming compared to what one would expect given the spending power of its local community. This is partly because of the impact of the Tesco store but also because of the poor environment caused by traffic on Bury New Road and the condition of the Longfield Centre. The strategy needs to address these fundamental weaknesses.**

The baseline analysis shows that Prestwich is a relatively prosperous suburb of Manchester with a retail centre that is comparable in size to places like Chorlton and Didsbury. However, compared to these places it is doing very poorly, despite the investment and improvements that have taken place in recent years. The reasons for this underperformance are threefold.

The first is the opening of the Tesco store outside the town centre. While this may not have directly impacted on the local shops it did lead to the closure of the Sainsbury's on the site of the Radius Scheme which took away an important anchor for the centre.

The second reason is the level of traffic on Bury New Road. The centre is dominated by traffic, the road is difficult to cross and the pavements are narrow, noisy and polluted. Retailing on the western side of the road, away from the parking and the Metrolink stop has suffered particularly.

Thirdly, the quality of the Longfield Centre is very poor. The centre is dated and unattractive and the dog leg in the arcade means that much of it is hidden from passing trade. The access points are dark and feel threatening.

These three factors have caused the decline of the centre so that it is currently underperforming significantly.

This has not been reversed through the environmental works implemented a few years ago. Something more fundamental is needed to address these deep-seated weaknesses, particularly by improving the environment on Bury New Road and redeveloping the Longfield Centre.



Facing Page: The Roundtable workshop on 13th March and the consultation bus at the fun day in 11th May 2008 (right)



# Consultation...

**On 13th March 2008 a round table workshop was held in the Longfield Suite attracting some 126 people. Subsequent to this a consultation was held on the options at the Prestwich Clough Fun day on 11th May and through a subsequent exhibition in the library. Full details of the consultation are available in the consultation report on the project web site.**

The consultation illustrated the great loyalty to the village that exists in the local community, and the sadness that it has become so run down. People particularly valued the independent retailers, the access to open space, the village feel and the facilities such as the library and Longfield Suite. This affection for Prestwich is reflected in the slogan 'Love Prestwich' which has been widely accepted locally and which we have used as the title of this report.

Public concerns related to traffic and the impact of supermarkets on local retailers. There were worries about crime and the way that the area was changing as more people commuted out of the village to work. There were also specific concerns about the Radius scheme that was seen as too

large and which was blamed for some of the crime problems because of the number of buy-to-let properties.

The visioning session at the workshop saw Prestwich developing into an urban village like Chorlton, Didsbury, Moseley in Birmingham or Headingley in Leeds. It was also compared to smaller towns like Ramsbottom, Hebden Bridge and Knutsford. This fed into a series of vision statements, reproduced in the consultation report that has been used as the basis for the vision in this section.

The consultation on options uncovered some specific issues:

- There was particular resistance to new apartments in the centre, as a result of the Radius scheme.

- There was a desire to see more employment uses so that there were more people working locally.
- There was an appetite for radical change and a pragmatic view about how this should be achieved.
- Most people were prepared to accept the development of new retail space, even the expansion of the Tesco store, provided that it was in character with the village and would be a catalyst to wider improvements.





# An Urban Village

**The vision for Prestwich is that it becomes a sustainable urban village - like Hampstead in London, Moseley in Birmingham or Chorlton in Manchester. These are places that once were true villages and have retained their identity as they have been engulfed in the expanding city.**

**Like these other urban villages Prestwich will develop a reputation for being a distinctive, ethical and creative place, where people live and work and where the village centre provides a focus for the life of the community.**



# A Community Hub...

**Prestwich is an urban village within Greater Manchester that provides a hub for the local community, where people can meet, socialise, access services and shop.**

◀ **Moseley Village:** The suburb of Moseley in South Birmingham has travelled the path that we are suggesting Prestwich should follow. Originally an affluent area Moseley was run down in the 1980s. it started to call itself Moseley Village in the late 1980s and the community set up a Village Trust to promote its regeneration. The focus for this was a annual festival which has developed into a series of regular events including the farmers market (pictured).

**Luton Health Centre:** This shows how new PCTs can be developed as part of a high street. ▶





# A lively high street...

**The village will be centred on a lively high street, full of independent retailers, where the traffic adds to the vitality of the street scene rather than dominating the environment.**

We don't need to go very far to find good examples of major arterial roads that have been brought back to life as high streets. There are some particularly good examples in Manchester:

◀ **Levenshulme:** The A6 through the centre of Levenshulme carries 26-29,000 vehicles a day - the same as Bury New Road. It has been designed as a single carriageway in both directions with built out parking bays, wide pavements and street trees. The centre has revived in recent years as a centre for the antique trade.

**Cheetham Hill Road:** Even closer to home Cheetham Hill Road has been treated in a similar fashion. The centre is a good deal more impoverished than Prestwich but is far livelier. ▶





# Gateway to parkland...

**Prestwich will be the gateway to the two most extensive areas of parkland in the North, Heaton Park and the Croal Irwell Regional Park - the Hampstead Heath and Wimbledon Common of the North, which will become Manchester's urban playground.**

◀ **Hampstead Heath:** But it could be a view from the Croal Irwell Regional Park looking back towards Prestwich. The scale of ambition of the regional park is equivalent to Hampstead Heath and will transform perceptions of the area.

**Barnes Visitor Centre:** The park will become a centre for active recreation and wildlife. The World Wildlife Fund Visitor Centre in Barnes South London shows how visitor facilities might be developed. ▶

**'Go Ape'** : High Wire Adventure Park at Delamere Forest. ▶▶





# A place to live...

**Prestwich will develop its attractions as a good place to live in a diverse community. It will continue to attract people who work in central Manchester as an alternative to places like Chorlton and Didsbury to the south of the city.**

◀ **Ecohomes:** The attraction of Prestwich should be as a place where you can buy good quality, low energy, affordable housing overlooking fantastic open space.

**BedZED:** This could also include new housing developed to provide an attractive sustainable alternative such as the Beddington Zero Energy scheme in South London. ▶





# A place to work...

**Over time Prestwich will attract creative, ethical and knowledge businesses out of Manchester. It will exploit its location on the motorway and Metrolink and its attractive environment to become a good location for business.**

◀ **Berlin:** Prestwich could seek to promote a business park taking advantage of its location on the motorway. However, a better option is likely to be a strategy to attract small creative and ethical companies out of the centre of Manchester with small workshops and live/work accomotation such as this in Berlin.

**The Northern Quarter:** Manchester has seen a significant growth of creative industries in areas like the Northern Quarter. ▶



