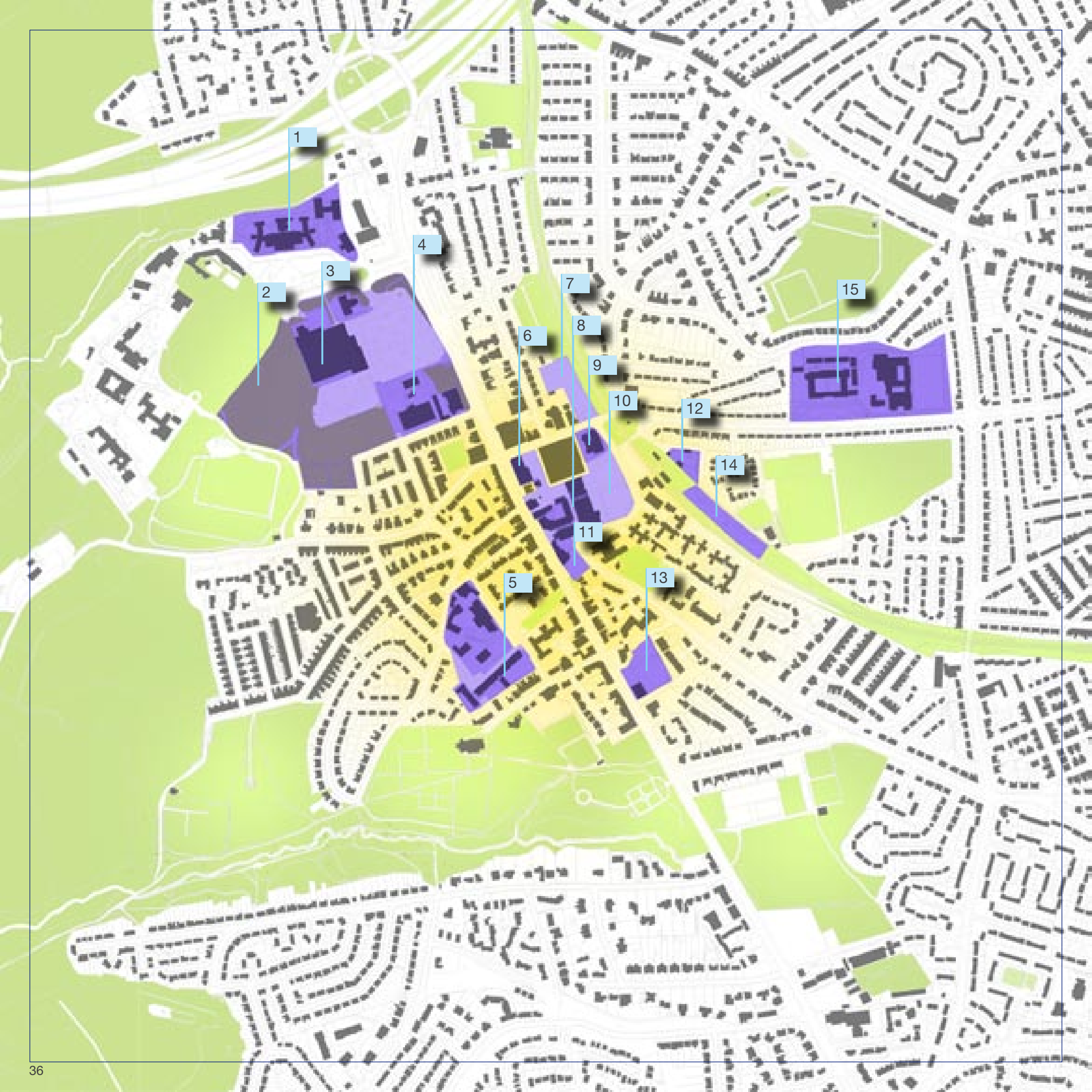


## Part 3

# GETTING THERE

**The vision set out in the previous section has the potential to transform Prestwich. However, in order to realise the vision it is important to map out a route from where we are now to where the vision suggests we might go. Prestwich does not benefit from access to major public sector resources. However, over the 10 year life of this plan there is an opportunity to harness development interest in the centre and planned investment in public sector health and education facilities to transform the centre.**

**In this section we look at the opportunities for change in Prestwich before outlining the options that we have explored and the way that they have been assessed.**



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# Opportunities

**The plan to the left shows all of the areas of potential change in Prestwich. These include all of the main development sites, sites where it is understood that the owner has plans and vacant sites where change is desirable. These are described in more detail within the baseline report.**

1. Prestwich Hospital is the largest local employer with 1500 staff and is the HQ for the Bolton, Salford and Trafford Mental Health NHS Trust. A major investment programme is underway which may see the release of part of the site for commercial development and for conference facilities.
2. The site to the rear of Tesco is a former nurses home and is now owned by Tesco. They have explored both residential and commercial development on this site linked to the expansion of the store.
3. Tesco have aspirations to redevelop their current 7,000m<sup>2</sup> store to create a 10,000m<sup>2</sup>+ store. The plans include an entirely new store on the Bury New Road frontage built over the car park.
4. The Tesco store, if it were to proceed would involve the redevelopment of the Post Office and business unit to the rear. Both occupiers would be relocated within the area.
5. This is a residential scheme currently on site called Abbots Place (part of the former Tulle Court scheme). It is being developed by Richardson Homes for 36 homes, completion late 2008.
6. The site of the former Tower Buildings which was a Coop department store and which is now a retail block including FADs and a Lloyds TSB Branch. The owner has engaged architects with a view to redevelopment for a mixed use scheme.
7. The surface level car park off Fairfax Road has been suggested as a possible site for the new Health Centre although it is not currently their preferred location.
8. The Longfield Centre is a 1970s shopping precinct. The freehold is owned by the Council and the shops are let on a long lease, currently held by the Hollins Murray Group. The Longfield Suite, Library and surface car park are owned outright by the Council. The Hollins Murray Group have been progressing plans for the redevelopment of the centre.
9. The Health Centre is to be redeveloped as part of the LIFT (Local Improvement Finance Trust) programme. The Primary Care Trust are seeking a site for a 4,000m<sup>2</sup> facility which will replace the existing centre releasing a potential development site.
10. The surface level car park includes 170 spaces and is owned by the Council. The parking is free and unrestricted, as a result of which there is a significant amount of park-and-ride use linked to the Metrolink.
11. The former National School site has been vacant for many years and it is understood that the owner is unwilling to sell. This is a crucial site for Prestwich and it may be that a CPO underwritten by a developer is required to bring it forward for development.
12. A planning application has been made for 12 residential units on this site and it is a possible site for live work units.
13. The HPL Car sales site has been the subject of development interest for a small supermarket development.
14. GMPTE have explored the possible development of this site as a park and ride facility.
15. Prestwich Arts College is preparing a schools for the Future bid to redevelop the school as a community school on the same site.

Key

	Retail space
	Community space
	Residential space
	Office Space
	Parking



# Option A

**The first option that we explored was to take advantage of the proposed expansion of the Tesco store, and the way this could consolidate the town centre towards the north. This option would see the development of the high street north of the Longfield Centre and the repositioning of the southern part of the high street away from retailing and towards service uses or housing.**






This option would anchor the village centre around a new Tesco store, the M&S and the redeveloped Longfield Centre. If Tesco were to redevelop their store on the site of the Post Office this would bring it onto the high street and create a better relationship with the centre. Their initial proposals suggested a bridge over the road (which we have not included in this option) and new shops on the M&S car park. This would create a retail frontage between the Tesco and the Longfield Centre with the M&S car parking reprovided on the Carpet World site.

The Longfield Centre proposals on the main drawing are based on a reworking of initial proposals tabled by the leaseholders of the centre, the Hollins Murray Group (their proposals have since changed). This scheme included a new medium sized supermarket at the rear of the site and further new retail units facing a square along the side of the Radius scheme. It proposed the demolition of the Railway and Naturalist Inn, The White Horse and the Barclay's Bank on Bury New Road. New apartments were proposed over the retail space in a series of four storey perimeter blocks.

The main drawing shows the demolition and reprovion of the Library and Longfield Suite in line with the development proposals currently being progressed. However because of concern about the viability of rebuilding the Longfield Suite, the inset plan was developed as an option showing how it could be retained with a new foyer fronting the square. The inset option also shows the retention of the properties on the Bury New Road frontage.



Key

	Retail space
	Community space
	Residential space
	Office Space
	Parking



# Option B

**The second option sought to regenerate the retail function of the southern part of the high street and to explore the possibility of redeveloping the Longfield Centre as a more local shopping and leisure scheme. This option is therefore anchored at either end by the M&S and a new smaller supermarket in the south.**

The second Option is based on the consolidation of the historic retail centre from Fairfax Road southwards. This would involve rejecting the Tesco scheme in favour of a smaller supermarket on the showroom site at the southern end of the centre. This, together with the M&S would anchor either end of the shopping centre improving the footfall on Bury New Road and the prospects of existing businesses.

In this option the Longfield Centre would be redeveloped primarily for retail, leisure and community uses to create a new Village Centre. This would include retailing concentrated on the Bury New Road frontage with a new Library and Longfield Suite to the rear. This scheme also shows the FADs site redeveloped for retailing, while the proposed new Health Centre is brought out onto the Bury New Road frontage. Parking is provided in a decked car park next to the Metrolink and housing and offices are provided on the upper floors.







# High Street Options

**Which ever of these options is chosen there is a need to address Bury New Road. Based on a careful study of high streets in Greater Manchester we have explored three options. The first is to improve the existing situation without changing the carriageway; the second looks at widening pavements on the lower section of the high street and the third extends these improvements to the Fairfax Road junction.**

**Option 1:** This is based on the current situation - two traffic lanes running in each direction with parking bays available at off-peak times. The problem with this is that illegal parking can mean that the two lane running is blocked at peak times. Accommodating two lanes leaves little room for pavements. Improvements to the quality of surfacing and materials would therefore improve the appearance of the centre but would not address the fundamental problems.

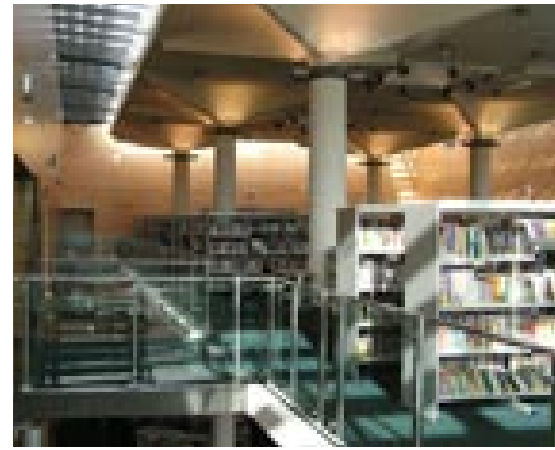
**Option 2:** The second option looks at the introduction of single lane running in each direction in the southern part of the centre. This would allow pavements to be widened with built-

outs for parking bays. This is something that has been introduced in other parts of Manchester – including Great Ducie Street – the Manchester section of Bury New Road. This could be introduced in the southern part of Prestwich where there are no major junctions without affecting the traffic capacity of the street (currently 29,000 vehicles a day).

**Option 3:** The third option extends single-lane running to the Fairfax Road junction and therefore incorporates the heart of the centre. There are examples of this being done on streets that carry similar volumes of traffic to Prestwich, so that it need not reduce traffic capacity. This however will require

careful design and in the short term is likely to lead to an increase in congestion. This approach has however been successful in reducing traffic volumes in the medium and long term elsewhere in Manchester. It is also effective at reducing the disruption caused by congestion to pedestrians and shops. This option is therefore the only one that will enable the revival of the town centre since it will allow the creation of wider pavements, tree planting and short term parking in the heart of the village. While this is not dependent on the Congestion charging scheme, the projected reduction in peak traffic levels being projected by GMPTE as a result of the scheme would further facilitate this option.





# Community facility options

**There are a range of options that relate to the community facilities in Prestwich. The two key issues are the location of the new Health Centre and the future of the Longfield Suite.**

Central to the strategy for Prestwich is the future of the community facilities in the Village Centre. There are three main facilities: the Health Centre the Library and the Longfield Suite.

**The Health Centre:** The PCT are proposing to redevelop the health centre and require a site for a new building of 4,000sqft. Three options have been explored for this, a redevelopment on the existing site, part of the surface car park on Poppythorn Lane and the former National School site on Bury New Road. The PCT's preference has been for the last of these options because it would give them a prominent position on the high street. However this is not in public ownership and may require the exercise of Compulsory Purchase Powers to make it available. The outcome of this is uncertain so that it is considered prudent to include a fall-back site in the proposals and the second preference is for the Poppythorn Lane site. Indeed if

this site could be linked to the Library it could even be the preferred site.

**The Library:** The current facility is in a two storey building and is well used by around 300,000 people a year. The library is on the ground floor with a council information point, with meeting and training rooms on the first floor together with a Jewish and heritage museum. The facility is outdated and unattractive and the council is keen to see it redeveloped. The new facility would have a similar floor area to the current building but preferably all on the ground floor. The ideal location is as close as possible to the current building.

**The Longfield Suite:** This is one of four civic suites in Bury run by the Council. It includes a large hall with a capacity of 400 and a smaller memorial hall with a capacity of 70. It is a well used facility, in 2007 it had 1,257 bookings and was used by just under 100,000 people and

the conclusions from our consultations are that there is strong local support for the facility. However it is understood that Bury's civic suites requires a significant trading subsidy and that the Council is undertaking a review of the service. Subject to the outcome of this review a modernised facility could play a potential role in creating a community hub for the village. Should the review conclude that a facility should be retained within Prestwich we have considered two development options for how this could be achieved:

1. Reconfigure the existing building
2. Provide a new building for a replacement community centre

The cost of constructing a new community centre of equal size to the existing facility would be significantly higher than enhancing the existing facility. This would impact on the overall profitability of the scheme to

redevelop the Longfield Centre and the scope to generate money to fund other parts of this strategy. The most viable development option is therefore likely to be one that reconfigures the Longfield Suite to create an adaptable and flexible community venue as part of the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre.

The preferred option is therefore one that retains and reconfigures the suite to create a more flexible community facility as part of the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre. The ability to subdivide the rooms and make more flexible use of the space would allow it to be used by a greater variety of groups. This will allow the building to cover its ongoing revenue costs in the future.





# Options Appraisal

**The options have been appraised on the basis of three criteria: The views of local people; the viability of the scheme and the regeneration impact.**

**Community:** The community were split fairly evenly between the different options. There was concern about the dominance of the centre by supermarkets but an acceptance that they were likely to be necessary to make the scheme financially viable. The main concerns expressed related to the height of proposed schemes, the inclusion of apartments (because of problems with the Radius scheme) and the risk of losing the Library and Longfield Suite in the options that proposed their redevelopment.

The road options were discussed specifically with the Area Partnership's Town Centre Regeneration Working Group who opted overwhelmingly for Road Option 3

**Viability:** We have been advised on viability in the preparation of this report by AGD Regeneration. The improvements to the high street and other environmental works which are central to this strategy are likely to cost £2.5–3 Million. There is unlikely to be public sector grant funding for this so that it will have to come from Council resources or be generated as part of the strategy.

There are two options for the latter; S106 contributions from planning approvals for new development and the potential release of resources created by the increase in value of the council's assets as a result of the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre. Both of these should be pursued however the importance of the latter means that the Longfield Centre must be central to this

strategy. In viability terms the options appraisal would therefore not favour development proposals that potentially undermined the viability of the Longfield Centre redevelopment.

**Regeneration:** Prestwich's problem is that the relative affluence of its population is not reflected in the condition and economic health of its centre. The main problems are on the high street which continues to struggle despite the investment that has taken place. The regeneration of the high street is therefore, central to the strategy and investment should be focused in this area.

This would favour options that developed or redeveloped retail space with a frontage on to the

high street. The initial proposals by Tesco to redevelop their store with a frontage onto Bury New Road could go some way towards this. This principle has also influenced discussions about the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre and caused us to discount the layout shown in Option 1 with a supermarket to the rear of the site. However the regeneration of the Longfield Centre with a strong retail frontage onto Bury New Road is preferable in terms of regeneration to even a repositioned Tesco store that would still be outside the town centre boundary. This is in line with the sequential test set out in government guidance on retail development.





# Preferred option

**The preferred option is therefore an amended version of Option B. This is based on giving priority to the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre in terms of planning policy, regeneration and viability.**

The regeneration of Prestwich needs to be anchored by new retail investment to attract customers back to the centre and to support the smaller and independent retailers in the centre. There are currently two potential sources of this investment; the redevelopment of the Tesco store and the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre.

The Prestwich Town Centre Retail Capacity Assessment 2009 together with the independent advice from AGDR taken by the council suggests that in retail capacity terms it would not be possible for both these schemes to proceed (at least for the next five years). The independent advice (which recognised the need to keep the position under review) was that if a major retail development outside the town centre (such as the Tesco proposal) was to be approved before the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre had taken place then it is likely that the latter would not proceed.. This is because the Longfield Centre

redevelopment needs to be anchored by a supermarket and it would be very difficult to secure an operator in the face of expanded provision outside the centre. Given the importance of the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre to the regeneration of Prestwich and the viability of the overall strategy, the preferred option must be to give it priority.

This is in line with planning policy that puts in place a sequential test giving priority to retail development within a town centre over development outside or on the edge of the centre. While proposals for new retail development outside the town centre would be treated on its merits, it is therefore likely to be resisted while there is a prospect of the Longfield Centre being redeveloped. If, at a future date, the Longfield scheme had no prospect of proceeding, then in sequential terms it would be possible to reconsider development on the edge of the centre in order to anchor the regeneration of Prestwich.

As we describe later in this report, we recommend that the council, as land owner, enters into an agreement with the leaseholders of the Longfield Centre to secure its redevelopment as the centre piece for the regeneration strategy for Prestwich. As part of this the council should agree a timetable for the redevelopment.

The Longfield scheme is the centre-piece of option B which involves the regeneration of the high street from Fairfax Road southwards. To facilitate this the most radical of the highway options is preferred. In terms of community facilities, the redevelopment of the Longfield Centre could allow the provision of a new library and the reconfiguration of the Longfield Suite. The preference for the health centre is to bring it out onto the high street. This preferred option has formed the basis for the masterplan and regeneration strategy set out in the following section.

