

Planning Policy Context

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3.1 Policy Context

Introduction

As noted in Section 3, the SQRF is a planning tool to articulate PCC's ambitions for the Station Quarter and to inform the submission and determination of planning applications within the area. As such, it is important that proposals align with the existing development plan as well as respond to the vision for the Station Quarter.

This section of the document will outline the planning policy context and highlight key policies which have informed the development of the SQRF and which will be key to the determination of planning applications within the station quarter. This section also provides guidance to developers by establishing five key principles to apply to all applications for major development within the Station Quarter.

Strategic Context

In 2019, Lancashire's 12 districts, two unitary councils, the county council and the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership (LEP) agreed to develop a strategic vision and ambition for Lancashire now being developed as the Lancashire 2050 Plan. Alongside this, Lancashire authorities have begun to draft an Infrastructure Plan for Lancashire, which brings together known key assets, sites, proposals and aspirations with a view to understanding the significance of individual schemes and the relationship between them.

During 2020, the focus of activity was temporarily shifted from the longer term plan to recovery planning in light of the social, economic, and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2020, Redefining Lancashire: Our Approach to Recovery was published, reconfirming the development of the longer-term strategic ambition for Lancashire and associated infrastructure and capital investment projects through the longer term plan. Following on from the completion of the Recovery Plan, and in developing an evidence base for the Lancashire 2050 Plan, an Independent Economic Review (IER) has commenced in collaboration with the Environment Commission to provide detailed economic and environmental analysis of key areas.

The SQRF and City Investment Plan will help to position the Station Quarter within the strategic prioritisation process of the Lancashire 2050 Plan, in turn assisting the delivery of the ambition by aligning it with emerging funding opportunities.

Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the overarching guidance for local planning authorities and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and preparation of Local Plans. The NPPF is premised on a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through into Preston local planning policy.

The Preston SQRF area is located entirely within Preston City Centre which is guided by the Preston City Centre Plan (An Area Action Plan to 2026), adopted in June 2016. The Corporation Street and Winckley Square Opportunity Areas, identified in the plan, are both partially located in the SQRF area.

The Preston Local Plan adopted in July 2015 guides development in Preston as a whole, with policies applicable to the entire wider Preston area rather than the city centre in particular.

The Central Lancashire Core Strategy, adopted in 2012 by Preston City Council, Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council, recognises Central Preston as a 'strategic location' for major investment in retail and leisure and also emphasises its role as a transport gateway of more than sub regional significance.

In 2018, a review of the Core Strategy and individual Preston, Chorley and South Ribble local plans commenced with a view to delivering a single Central Lancashire Local Plan (CLLP) anticipated for submission in 2023. Once adopted, policies contained within the CLLP will be a material consideration in applications for development within the Station Quarter.

Key Policies

The Preston SQRF supplements the following key parent plan policies:

Preston City Centre Plan (An Area Action Plan to 2026), adopted June 2016:

EV1: Main Shopping and Other Main Town Centre Uses states that within the Primary Shopping Area, shopping development, including major redevelopment proposals, will be permitted. Other main town centre uses will be supported both within the Primary Shopping Area and elsewhere within the city centre.

SP1: Public Realm Design Principles states that development proposals should support the enhancement of public realm within the city centre.

SP2: Public Realm Improvements states that general public realm improvements will be supported throughout the city centre and development which would have a negative impact on the ability of the Council to achieve these desired improvements will not be supported.

SP3: City Centre Gateways states that development proposals should seek to improve the public realm, cycling infrastructure, pedestrian facilities, and accessibility of the major gateways to the city centre, including Preston Station.

SP4: Housing Allocations lists the sites allocated for housing development within Preston City Centre. This includes the former St. Joseph's Orphanage Site in the Station Quarter.

OP1: Corporation Street states that in the area identified as Corporation Street on the Policies Map, proposals for new, high quality, mixed-use development will be permitted.

OP2: Winckley Square states that development proposals should conserve and enhance the general environment and appearance of the conservation area.

MA1: Pedestrian and Cycling Accessibility states the council will support and encourage proposals which improve pedestrian and cyclist facilities and general accessibility across the city centre.

Preston Local Plan 2012-26 (Site Allocations and Development Management Policies), adopted July 2015:

EN2: Protection and Enhancement of Green Infrastructure states that development proposals should seek to protect and enhance existing green infrastructure.

EN3: Future Provision of Green Infrastructure states that new development will provide appropriate landscape elements, conserve and enhance environmental assets, and provide access to well designed cycleways and footpaths.

EN8: Development and Heritage Assets provides guidance for proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings.

EN9: Design of New Development states that all new development should be designed with regard to the principles set out in the Central Lancashire Design Guide SPD.

Central Lancashire Core Strategy, adopted July 2012:

Policy 1: Locating Growth states that the Strategic Location of Central Preston should be a focus for growth and investment.

Policy 2: Infrastructure states that developer contributions should be secured to ensure that

new development meets the on and off-site infrastructure requirements necessary. It also states that the Council will set broad priorities on the provision of infrastructure ensuring that appropriate enabling infrastructure is delivered in line with growth.

Policy 3: Travel outlines the approach to planning for travel including: reducing the need for travel, improving pedestrian facilities, improving opportunities for cycling, improving public transport, enabling change of mode during trips, managing car use, and improving the road network.

Policy 16: Heritage Assets states that opportunities should be sought to protect and enhance the historic environment, heritage assets, and their settings.

For a full list of the range of policies applicable to development in the Station Quarter, refer to Appendix 2.

Planning Applications

The following overarching principles will apply to all major applications within the Station Quarter. This is not intended to take the place of formal pre-application consultation with the council, indeed schemes which are informed by these principles are more likely to benefit from a positive and constructive pre-application consultation response.

1. The Station Quarter is wholly within Preston city centre and proposals which will enhance the vitality of Preston city centre will be encouraged. Development for high quality office space, leisure uses compatible with the location, new retail provision and appropriately designed and sited residential development are all considered to have the potential to enhance the vitality of the city centre.
2. As a gateway to Preston, the Station Quarter is a highly sustainable location for means of access via public transport and is capable of supporting a wide range of uses without reliance on the private car. The Station Quarter also has the potential to provide a sense of arrival in Preston and all schemes will need to include appropriate public realm to make the most of this opportunity. Individual applications will also be expected to contribute on a proportional basis toward public realm improvements across the Station Quarter as a whole.
3. The Station Quarter contains a number of significant heritage assets and other historic buildings of high quality. All applications will need to consider the potential impact upon the fabric and setting of heritage assets in the Station Quarter. Where applications are to be in outline only, there will need to be an appropriate level of information on layout, scale and massing to adequately assess the

potential impact upon the setting of heritage assets. This impact may not necessarily be negative, as well designed proposals in the Station Quarter have the potential to enhance the setting of heritage assets.

4. Significant development within the Station Quarter will be visible across the wider Preston city centre. A number of sites within the Station Quarter are prominent within the wider context of Preston city centre. The SQRF also identifies key views that should be protected. The SQRF identifies the potential for significant development to come forward on a number of these sites and as such, major planning applications will need to consider the potential impact upon townscape and visual amenity. This impact may not necessarily be negative, as well-designed proposals in the Station Quarter have the potential to significantly enhance townscape and visual amenity.
5. Applications will need to provide an appropriate level of design detail to assess the proposals ability to meet the objectives of the SQRF in terms of connectivity (both to the public realm and local highway network and to other component parts of the Station Quarter), massing, scale and layout. The indicative 3D model which accompanies the SQRF illustrates a minimum level of detail on layout and massing across the whole of the Station Quarter. Planning applications will be expected to build upon these principles and in the case of outline applications provide appropriate indicative plans and parameter plans to inform robust assessments.

The SQRF sets out the opportunity areas, a range of acceptable uses and a starting point for plot layout and massing. A masterplan-led approach is needed to ensure that individual proposals do not prejudice the comprehensive delivery of the SQRF including wider public realm and movement infrastructure, requiring developers to place their proposals within a wider conceptual masterplan if necessary. Proposals which accord with the five key planning principles should enable the delivery of the SQRF objectives as a whole. However, a wider concept masterplan will provide greater certainty for developers as well as set the context for new public realm and transport infrastructure required to maximise the potential of the Station Quarter.

Developer Contributions

All applications for development in the SQRF area will be expected to demonstrate a wider commitment to the delivery of infrastructure improvements and public realm enhancements, in line with adopted planning policies MA1, SP2 and SP3 of the City Centre Plan and Policy 2 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

Preston City Council will seek planning obligations under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to assist in the delivery of infrastructure and other improvements in the area. This SQRF identifies a number of public realm, movement and access, and urban design-based improvements which require central co-ordination and therefore developer contributions. In addition, the SQRF identifies opportunity for a significant expansion in the provision of city centre housing, which would in turn generate need for affordable housing and education contributions. Planning obligations will be considered on a case by case basis and contributions will be assessed in the context of size, wider impact, and viability of the proposed development.

The Central Lancashire Core Strategy also introduced a levy approach to securing developer contributions for infrastructure in 2012. Preston City Council will seek Civil Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments for certain types of development based on a per square metre of net additional floor space. CIL payments will apply to all applicable developments coming forward in the SQRF area and are non-negotiable. Further details are available on the city council's website at <https://www.preston.gov.uk/CIL>.

Figure 3.1.1: Preston City Centre Area Action Plan with SQRF boundary overlay



