

ASHTON PRIDE IN PLACE PROGRAMME

**ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE
REGENERATION PLAN**



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CHAIR FOREWORD



PHILL BROWN MBE
CHAIR OF ASHTON NEIGHBOURHOOD BOARD

As Chair of the Neighbourhood Board, I am delighted to present this plan for regenerating Ashton. This plan has been developed through extensive engagement with local organisations and community groups in Ashton – engagement that will continue across the ten-year programme. Since the programme's launch, we have gathered a wide range of ideas and insights from those engaged, which has been instrumental in shaping the plan to date. As we move into project selection and delivery, continued engagement will be key to ensuring the programme remains responsive to local priorities.

Ashton-under-Lyne has been selected as one of 250 places nationally to receive £20m 'Pride in Place' funding from the Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The funding will unlock £20m of investment in Ashton's local regeneration priorities over the next 10 years. Our Regeneration Plan for Ashton aligns with the three strategic objectives of this Government programme.

1. **Thriving places** – Ashton's town centre and neighbourhoods must evolve and regenerate to meet the needs of our community.
2. **Strong communities** – Relationships must be rebuilt in Ashton to restore a collective sense of belonging to the community, bringing people together so they can feel proud of and safe in their neighbourhood.
3. **Taking back control** – Ashton's children should have the best start in life and adults should be able to live the life they want to. Empowering people to enter the workplace, workers to progress, and enabling businesses to grow can help this.

Our regeneration plan comprises two key components:

1. **10-year vision** setting out the strategic vision for Ashton
2. **4-year investment plan** outlining how the funding will be utilised in the first investment period of the programme.

This document sets out a ten-year vision for Ashton, but the longevity of the Pride in Place funding enables the Board to be responsive to change. This will be important in ensuring that the programme delivers meaningful, lasting impact for Ashton's communities.

The Board and I recognise that it will take more than Pride in Place funding to deliver this vision, which is why we are committed to working with partners to convene existing organisations in Ashton, and capitalise on existing initiatives and investment. The flexibility underpinning the programme gives us a unique opportunity to target investment where it is most needed, to fill gaps that other funding streams cannot reach.

The strength of the Neighbourhood Board also lies in its ability to bring people together – residents, community groups, businesses, and public services – to shape a shared future for Ashton. It is this convening power that makes the Board so valuable: not only as a decision-making body, but as a platform for connection, partnership, and collective ambition. Together, we can ensure that Ashton's regeneration is not only delivered, but owned and shaped by those who live and work here. The Board and I will work closely with the community throughout the delivery phase to ensure that this ambition is realised.





MP FOREWORD



ANGELA RAYNER
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

The people of Ashton-under-Lyne are at the heart of every decision I make in Parliament so I am delighted that the town will benefit from Pride in Place. The programme is backed by record Government funding and puts power back in the hands of local communities.

It represents the change I fought for in Government that is now being delivered in Ashton and presents us with a real opportunity to regenerate disadvantaged communities through truly locally-led projects.

Getting elected as the Member of Parliament for Ashton-under-Lyne in 2015 was the honour and privilege of my life and I am so proud to have represented such a wonderful place and incredible people for the past decade.

Pride in Place provides resources and new powers to local people to improve high streets, public spaces and assets with the ultimate aim of building stronger communities, creating thriving places and empowering local people to lead change themselves.

Residents don't need to be told what is required to improve their communities, they already know. They just need the right support to get the ball rolling.

Pride in Place is community-led and I have been truly inspired by the feedback and ideas we have received so far thanks to the effective engagement of our board members. This provides us with a real opportunity to change lives, improve communities and make Ashton a place we can all continue to be incredibly proud of.

Change doesn't happen overnight but Pride in Place will help to bring people together and take back control of their areas in the ways they know will work best.

I am proud of the plan we have devised and I am excited to move onto the next stage.

10 YEAR VISION FOR ASHTON

LOCAL CONTEXT

ASHTON'S PAST AND STORY SO FAR

Ashton-under-Lyne is located in the borough of Tameside, approximately six miles east of Manchester City Centre. Whilst Greater Manchester has seen significant growth and transformation over recent decades, particularly in the city centre, some of Ashton's residents feel the town has not fully shared in this prosperity, despite its strategic location, historical importance, and previous role as one of Greater Manchester's most thriving market towns.

Ashton has long been shaped by industry and commerce. Historically a rural market-town, Ashton underwent a period of transformation in the 18th century, when the convergence of canals, and later railways, positioned Ashton as a key hub for transporting coal and cotton in and out of Manchester. By the mid-19th century, Ashton emerged as an important mill town, leading to an economic boom in spinning, weaving and coal mining which led to the granting of municipal borough status in 1847.

The 20th century brought further development, Ashton saw new infrastructure such as electric trams, housing estates, new schools and Ashton Library - one of the first open-access public libraries in the UK. However, during this time, the decline of heavy industry in the UK greatly affected Ashton's economic base and left behind a legacy of underused industrial infrastructure.

Recently, Ashton has seen meaningful investment, particularly in its town centre which has undergone gradual improvement to revitalise it into a major destination for leisure, employment and living. As the main retail and commercial hub for Tameside, Ashton Town Centre is comprised of a range of key assets including Ladysmith and The Arcades shopping centres, Ashton Market and the Market Square, Ashton Town Hall (Grade II listed), Tameside Council's Head Office, Clarendon Sixth Form and Tameside College, which opened a new campus in the town centre in 2018.

Over the past five years, the town centre has benefited from a £60 million programme to deliver improved transport infrastructure, enhanced digital connectivity, modern learning facilities, and a new Council HQ, alongside extensive public realm improvements. Other key successes include the refurbishment of Ashton Old Baths, which has repurposed the historic building into a hub for the digital sector, creating 72 jobs and delivering a borough-wide data centre. Major upgrades to the market are also underway, including a revamp of the market square with flexible event spaces, and improvements to the Market Hall to help enhance the town's appeal. The Council is also exploring opportunities to redevelop the Arcades and Ladysmith shopping centres as part of a wider regeneration strategy.

Alongside investment in the town centre, investment is also being directed towards Ashton Moss, a significant employment development site with potential to support Tameside's advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors. Ashton Moss responds to the shortage of development-ready land and offers a strategic opportunity to attract further inward investment. A development framework has been prepared, and a Memorandum of Understanding is in place between Tameside Council and the University of Manchester.

Despite these existing and planned investments, the longstanding challenges facing Ashton have not yet been addressed. To maximise the impact of regeneration, there is a need to tackle persistent barriers and extend investment into surrounding communities and neighbourhoods. These barriers have been identified as target priorities for the Pride in Place Programme.

Ashton's Neighbourhood Board has been established to represent a broad cross-section of the local community, ensuring that diverse voices help to shape these target priorities for regeneration across Ashton.

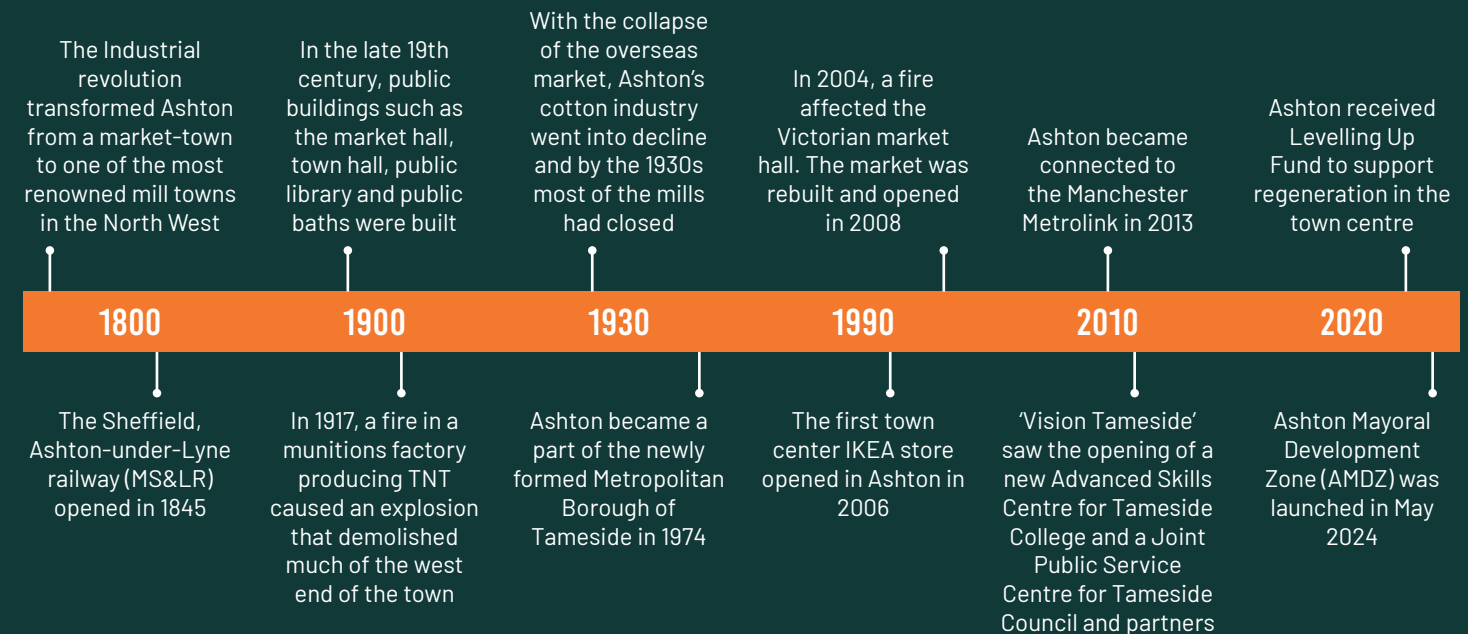


FIGURE 1: TIMELINE OF KEY MILESTONES IN ASHTON



ASHTON'S CURRENT ECONOMY

Today, Ashton's economy is largely driven by public services, particularly health and social care and education. Ashton experiences significant social and economic disadvantage on a range of metrics such as lower income levels, educational attainment, and economic productivity compared to national averages. These challenges signal a clear opportunity for community revitalisation.

Ashton has already begun to harness this potential through a series of strategic interventions, including town centre regeneration and the launch of the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (AMDZ) in 2024. The AMDZ brings together Tameside Council, GMCA, TfGM, Homes England and private sector partners to unlock Ashton-under-Lyne's full potential through a coordinated approach to regeneration. Centred on three strategic sites, Ashton Moss, St Petersfield and Ashton Town Centre, the AMDZ builds on existing investment and plans, positioning Ashton as a key location within Greater Manchester's Eastern Growth Cluster.

The Eastern Growth Cluster is one of six designated Growth Locations across Greater Manchester, identified for their potential to drive transformational change and rebalance the regional economy.

It is a focal point for innovation-led development, supporting Greater Manchester's ambitions for inclusive growth, advanced manufacturing, and digital transformation.

The AMDZ will deliver over 3,000 high-quality jobs, around 1,500 mixed-tenure homes, and approximately 150,000 sqm of employment space, with several sites already in public ownership. It will create aspirational opportunities that retain and attract talent, home-grow skills, and build on Ashton's strengths in digital, creative and manufacturing industries. As Tameside's principal town with strong connections to Manchester, Ashton is well positioned for regeneration and inclusive growth, and the AMDZ provides the framework to deliver it.

ASHTON'S IDENTITY AND PEOPLE

Ashton's identity reflects both its proximity to Manchester and its own distinct sense of place, defined by the town's civic history, vibrant culture, and its strong community networks.

Despite its challenges, Ashton has always retained its position as a centre of commerce. Ashton Market is one of the largest outdoor markets in the UK and the presence of independent retailers continues to anchor the town's distinctive character. Through extensive community engagement, these assets and Ashton's heritage have been consistently identified as sources of local pride. Maintaining and enhancing Ashton's proud market town identity is therefore a key focus for its future regeneration.

Whilst the town is shaped by its industrial past, it is also shaped by the those who continue to invest in its future - including local businesses, educational institutions and community organisations. There are over 100 charities and 80 community organisations operating in Ashton-under-Lyne. Furthermore, of the 1,223 Voluntary, Community, Faith And Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations operating across Tameside, 59 operate in the St Peter's ward alone. This rich civic infrastructure reflects a high level of active citizen participation, with many residents engaged in shaping their community. This strong foundation of community-led activity, is a key asset in Ashton's regeneration journey, helping to ensure that future growth is inclusive, locally rooted, and reflective of the town's unique character.

SPATIAL TARGETING

The Pride in Place (PiP) funding for Ashon-under-Lyne will be targeted within the spatial boundary below in Figure 3. Selected projects will either fall within this boundary, or will be of benefit to the residents who reside within the boundary.

The Ashton PiP boundary encompasses four distinct wards: Ashton St Michael's, Ashton Hurst, Ashton St Peter's, and Ashton Waterloo.

These areas share some common challenges relative to UK and Greater Manchester averages (prominent deprivation / low skilled employment) and opportunities (relatively young and growing populations), although it is recognised that each presents unique characteristics, as shown in the dataset below.

It is recognised that ward-level data does not illustrate socio-economic disparities within these wards, rationalising the need for a hyperlocal approach to investment.

This is central to Board's vision - **selecting funding and directing funding towards the communities and neighbourhoods of greatest need, focusing investment into existing, active community assets where possible.** Based on the community engagement and data analysis undertaken to date, St Peter's, located close to the town centre, along with the concentration of other pockets of deprivation across the other three wards have been identified as particular areas of focus.

As can be seen in Figure 2, there are significant pockets of deprivation across Ashton, but particularly located in St Peter's, the ward that covers the majority of the town centre.

The Neighbourhood Board will ensure a considered balance between investment within the neighbourhoods that are most disadvantaged, and investment in the town centre which will complement existing regeneration investment and have beneficial spillover impacts by providing surrounding communities with access to an improved environment and opportunities. Accessibility will be a key consideration, recognising that some communities within Ashton do not frequently visit or are able to easily access the town centre.

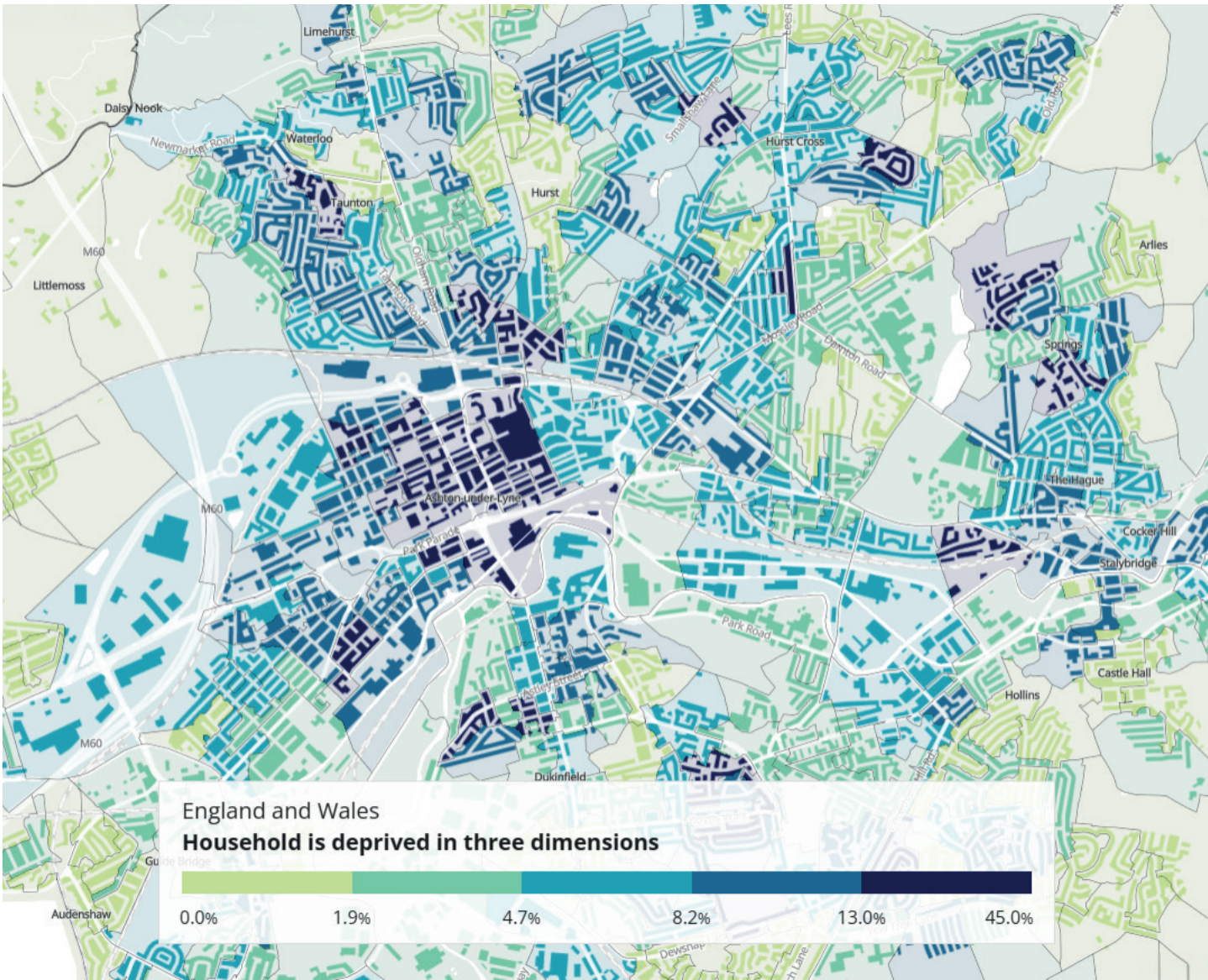


FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN ASHTON THAT ARE DEPRIVED IN THREE DIMENSIONS

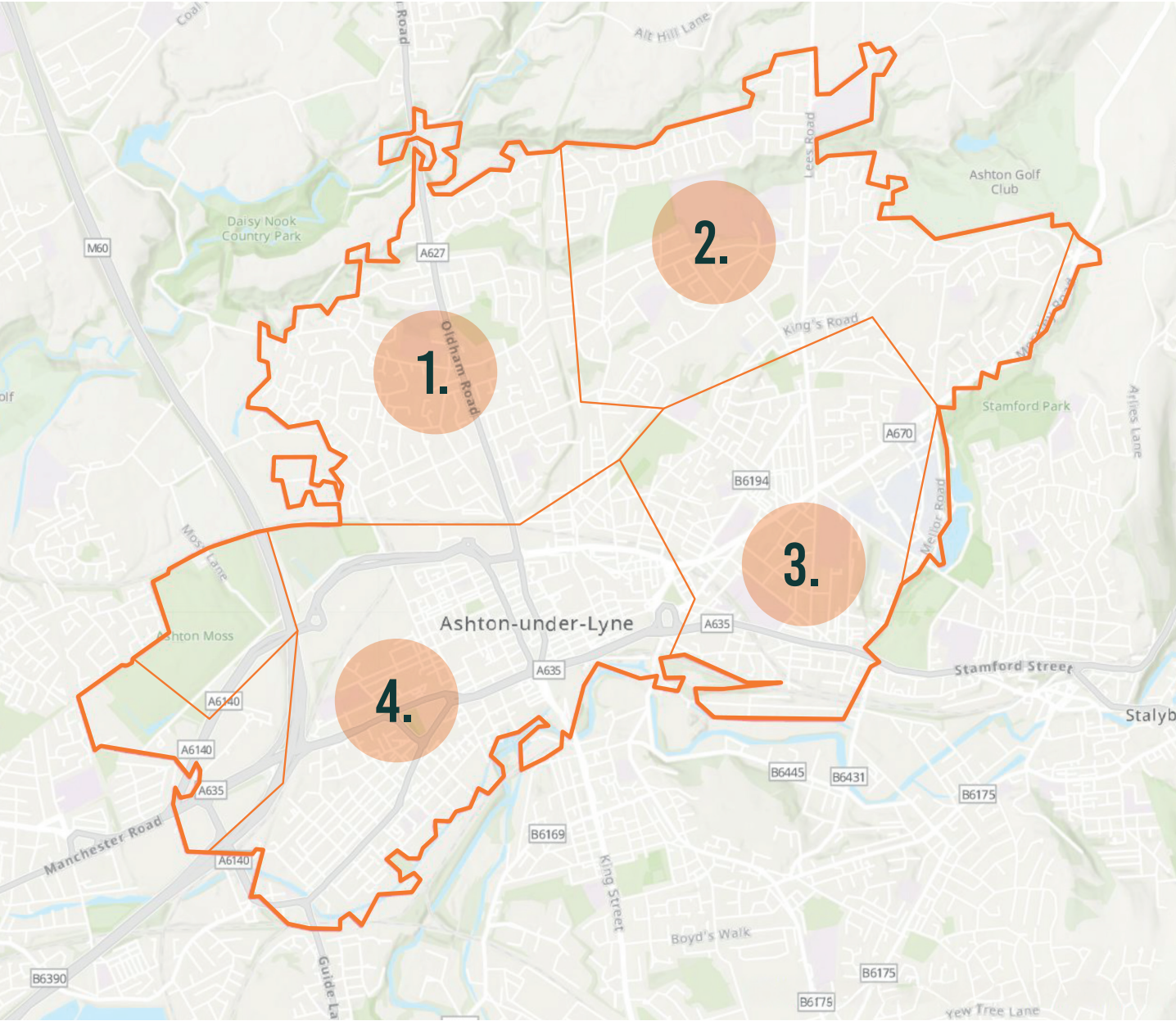


FIGURE 3: AGREED PIP BOUNDARY FOR ASHTON

ASHTON’S PIP BOUNDARY

The default boundary proposed by MHCLG has been extended to include Ashton Moss, following a recommendation by the Ashton Neighbourhood Board, recognising that this is as a key area of change and economic potential. Ashton Moss, within the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (AMDZ), is earmarked for significant regeneration and inclusive growth as part of the Ashton Growth Corridor, alongside St Petersfield and Ashton town centre.

WARD PROFILES

WARD	POPULATION	ECONOMIC INACTIVITY	INDUSTRY	SKILLS	KEY CHARACTERISTICS
GM Average	2,867,769	40%	Retail (14%) Human health (14%)	No Qualifications (20%) Level 3+ (49%)	N/A
English Average	56,490,045	39%	Retail (14%) Human health (13%)	No Qualifications (18%) Level 3+ (51%)	N/A
1. Ashton Waterloo	11,695 People High proportion of pension age residents	43% Mainly due to high number of retirees	Health & Social Care (25%), Retail (16%)	25% no qualifications 39% Level 3+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mixed residential and commercial areaSlightly older demographicHigh homeownershipRelatively lower deprivation compared to other wards
2. Ashton Hurst	11,685 people High proportion of pension age residents	44% Mainly due to high number of retirees	Education (43%)	23% no qualifications 41% Level 3+ Highest qualification levels in Ashton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Slightly older demographicEducation led employmentHigh owner occupationHighest qualification levels in Ashton
3. Ashton St Michael's	12,685 people	39%	Health & Social Care (71%) Home to Tameside Hospital	23% no qualifications 40% Level 3+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong working age presenceHealth-led employment from Tameside hospitalHigh rental rate
4. Ashton St Peters	14,541 people Significant Asian community (33%)	44% Driven by high levels of long term sick and looking after home / family	Retail (22%), Manufacturing (15%) Town Centre ward	28% no qualifications 37% Level 3+ Lowest qualification levels in Ashton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Low proportion speakers with English as main languageHigh prevalence of social housingHigh claimant countPoor health outcomesHigh proportion of children living in relative low-income families

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The vision for Ashton is to create a place where everyone feels at home, empowered to grow, and truly valued. Ashton’s future is underpinned by four key themes.



A PROUD TOWN

Already home to one of the UK’s largest markets, Ashton will be a location of choice for visitors, businesses and traders, and a town celebrated by its residents. Through the conservation of heritage and community assets, local identity and history will be reinforced, and there will be more spaces for historic and social connection.



A SKILLED AND INNOVATIVE PLACE

Reflective of its entrepreneurial history, Ashton will be established as a forward-thinking, business-driven town in Greater Manchester’s Eastern Growth Cluster, with the town centre an extension of Ashton Moss Innovation Park. Ashton fosters entrepreneurship, offering opportunity, high-quality jobs and is an accessible business location. Poverty and homelessness have been addressed in a sustaining way.



AN INCLUSIVE AND VIBRANT PLACE

Ashton will be an inclusive and vibrant place for those of all ages, providing enjoyment for children, attracting and retaining those in their early careers whilst also being welcoming for older residents. The environment feels safe and is attractive, sustaining an active daytime and evening economy. Higher footfall and activation have benefited Ashton’s young residents, reducing levels of anti-social behaviour.



A GREEN AND CONNECTED PLACE

Ashton’s public spaces will be green, attractive and inclusive, encouraging community cohesion and belonging. Building on Ashton’s position as one of Greater Manchester’s best-connected transport hubs, improved wayfinding and linkages within the town centre have increased safety, accessibility, and time spent by residents, visitors and workers in the natural environment. Active travel has increased, improving health outcomes.

For a full overview of the intended priorities for change and outcomes, please refer to page 27 and 28 respectively.

BUILDING A SHARED VISION FOR ASHTON

The vision for Ashton was developed through a collaborative and iterative process, initially involving the Town Board formed under the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme. A visioning workshop was held where Board members explored Ashton’s key strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This initial discussion informed the first version of the vision, which was formally agreed by the Board in May 2024.

Following the programme’s refresh to become the Plan for Neighbourhoods, the original vision was revisited during a working session on 15th July 2025. This session was designed to allow Board members to provide comments on the vision and shape its direction ahead of the first formal meeting of the Board. Feedback from this session led to updates to the vision, which were reviewed and confirmed at a working session held with the Board on 25th July 2025. The vision was formally agreed and ratified in the first Board Meeting on 19th September 2025.



STRATEGIC CASE FOR CHANGE

Through a combination of baseline data analysis and extensive community engagement, a set of priority thematic areas has been identified to guide future interventions in Ashton. The findings from both the data and engagement activities are detailed in the following sections.

The priority thematic areas for Pride in Place funding are set out below:

- Regeneration, high streets and heritage
- Health and wellbeing
- Cohesion
- Work, productivity and skills
- Safety and security
- Education and opportunity

While housing and transport are important issues, they are not considered by the Board as key priorities for Ashton's Pride in Place funding. They were not identified as key focus areas through engagement to date, and it is considered that these areas will benefit from existing funding streams including those available through the Combined Authority / Mayoral Development Zone. It is noteworthy that this position will be kept under review, reflective of the fact that some housing-related projects (for example) may deliver wider benefits, for instance on health and wellbeing. As such, projects that fall out with the thematic areas above will still be brought forward for consideration by the Board and assessed on their individual merits.

THE UNDERPINNING EVIDENCE

A comprehensive analysis has been undertaken to understand the opportunities and challenges present across Ashton, supplemented by a deeper dive in each of the 4 wards located within the boundary. Throughout, qualitative insights into residents' and business' views are also captured, drawn from a ZenCity survey conducted in Ashton between April and May 2025. The opportunities cited in this section also highlight the key themes identified through the significant engagement that has been undertaken in Ashton to date (see page 34). This baseline analysis has been strategically segmented by the PiP objectives (Thriving Places, Stronger Communities and Taking Back Control) and the corresponding PiP intervention themes. This has helped to inform both the priorities for change and the spatial areas of focus for interventions.

Ashton is characterised by deep and widespread deprivation across multiple domains. As illustrated in the graph below, Ashton faces significant challenges across a range of deprivation domains, particularly crime, health, employment, income and education / skills, placing it among the most deprived areas nationally.

These challenges are deeply interconnected; poor health can limit educational attainment, which in turn affects employment prospects and income, while inadequate housing and unsafe environments can exacerbate all of the above. Recognising these interdependencies, it is considered that **targeting interventions through the PiP programme that address multiple domains of deprivation simultaneously have the potential to the greatest impact.**

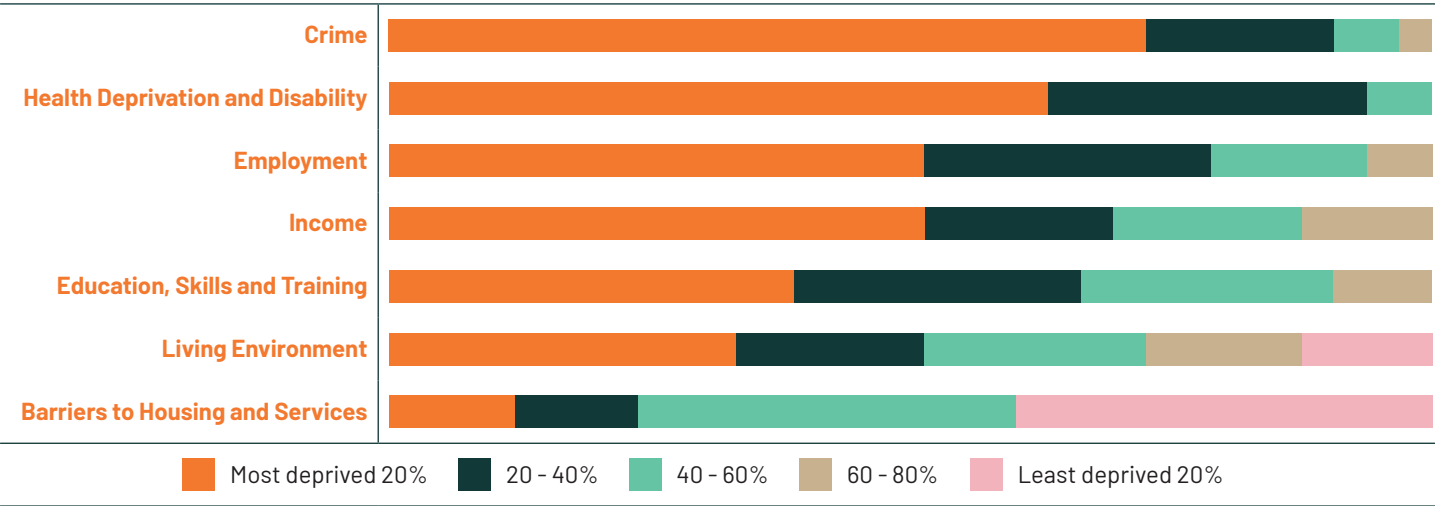


FIGURE 4: DOMAINS OF DEPRIVATION IN ASHTON (SOURCE: IMD, 2019)

Thriving Places

Regeneration, high streets and heritage

Key Strengths: Footfall in Ashton is greater than other built-up-areas of a similar size, and there is significant investment proposed that will benefit the town centre.

Key Challenges: The commercial vacancy rate in Ashton is higher than average. Alongside this, residents lack pride and satisfaction in the local area, largely due the look and feel of the area and to safety concerns.

The market square, a key heritage asset, is also currently undergoing redevelopment, and Ashton's proud market heritage remains a source of local pride, cited by 28% of residents as a reason for feeling positive about the area. **Footfall in Ashton is greater than other built-up-areas of a similar size**, with data showing significantly more outbound journeys than the national average for towns of similar size (index of 133.9 vs 100). Data suggests that Ashton has **a high number of leisure outlets** (37 per 1000 people vs the national average of 25).

However, **15% of business premises are currently vacant, around 50% higher than the national average**, which presents an opportunity to repurpose vacant but occupiable commercial units.

However, a **lack of pride and satisfaction** is evident among residents, with 72% not feeling proud of their local area. The most common reasons include perceptions that the area is "run down" and concerns about safety and antisocial behaviour. Additionally, dissatisfaction with town centre services and amenities is high, with 28% of respondents expressing strong discontent.

Opportunities for Pride in Place Funding identified through data analysis and engagement to date:

- Capitalising on the existing footfall and successful market
- Celebrating Ashton's proud heritage and heritage assets
- Investment in public realm and social spaces to improve perceptions and quality of place
- Repurposing vacant but occupiable commercial units to diversify uses on highstreets

Transport

Key Strengths: Ashton benefits from exceptional connectivity, with strategic road and rail links, Metrolink, rapid access to Manchester City Centre and the airport, short travel times to key services, high levels of walking to work, and widespread access to parks and green spaces.

Key Challenges: Difficulty wayfinding in the town centre, however transport did not emerge as a primary theme / challenge during stakeholder engagement or data analysis.

Ashton benefits from **exceptional connectivity**, positioning it as a well-linked and accessible urban centre. The town is served by a **strategic transport network** – including the **M60, A635, A57** and the **Manchester-Yorkshire rail corridor** – with rapid connections to Manchester Victoria (10 minutes) and Manchester Piccadilly via **Metrolink**, and close proximity to **Manchester Airport**. Figure 5 illustrates the strength of Ashton’s public transport, showing how far residents can travel from the train station during peak morning hours.

Residents also enjoy **short travel times to key services** such as schools, hospitals, and employment centres, often under 10 minutes by car and within 15–20 minutes by public transport or walking, with times consistently better than or comparable to averages across Tameside, the North West, and England.

A higher proportion of **residents walk to work** (15% vs 11% nationally), and most neighbourhoods are within a 10-minute walk of greenspace access points. There are a variety of parks within Ashton including: Cedar Park, King George V Playing Fields, Oxford Park, West End Park and Waterloo Park.

Housing

Key Strengths: Compared to national averages Ashton has accessible and affordable housing, with limited barriers to accommodation and essential services, supported by lower-than-average house prices and strong levels of homeownership in most neighbourhoods.

Key Challenges: Housing did not emerge as a primary theme / challenge during stakeholder engagement or data analysis.

Nearly **40%** of Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs) rank among the **least deprived nationally in terms of access to housing and services**, and none fall within the most deprived 20%, suggesting relatively few structural obstacles to securing housing or accessing essential services. Affordability may contribute to this. The **average house price in Ashton is £205,835**, which is lower than both the North West average (£210,000) and the national average (£291,000).

Homeownership rates across St Michaels, Hurst, and Waterloo averages at 59%, which is broadly in line with the national average 62%. However, in **St Peter’s** only **34% of households own their home**, and **39% live in socially rented accommodation**, more than double the national average of 17%.

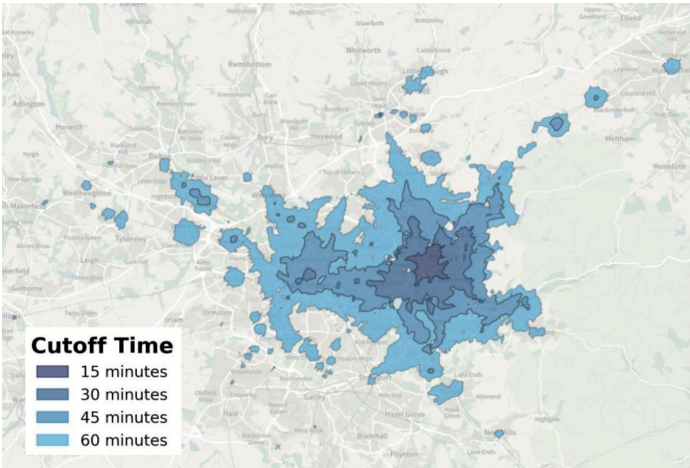


FIGURE 5: PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY BY JOURNEY TIME (2022) FROM ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE TRAIN STATION, BETWEEN 7:15AM AND 9:15AM (SOURCE: MHCLG DATA PACK, 2025)

Stronger Communities
Health and wellbeing

Key Strengths: Health and wellbeing are being actively prioritised through the Live Well Greater Manchester programme.

Key Challenges: High levels of health deprivation and disability in Ashton are reflected in elevated rates of long-term sickness and above-average disability prevalence, alongside poor access to and satisfaction with primary care.

Ashton faces high levels of health deprivation and disability. **64% of Ashton’s LSOAs are among the top 20% most deprived nationally for health and disability**, with none ranking among the least deprived 40%. **Disability prevalence is high relative to regional and national averages**, with 20% of residents identifying as disabled under the Equality Act, compared to 18% in Greater Manchester and 17% nationally. The proportion of those who are **economically inactive due to long-term sickness is on average 16%** in Ashton, significantly above the national average of 10%. The issue is particularly acute in St Michaels (17%) and St Peter’s (19%).

‘Ashton’s Primary Care Network’¹ (PCN’s) **severe mental health² prevalence (0.92%) is similar to the GM (1.05%) and national (0.95%) averages**. However, there are high levels of hospital admissions related to self-harm and alcohol in Ashton. **Self-harm admissions are 55% above the England average, and alcohol-related admissions are 42% higher**. In St Peter’s, these are 108% and 86% higher, respectively. This is compounded by **below-average GP appointment rates** (446 per 1,000 patients vs 472 nationally) and **low satisfaction with GP contact**, with only 52% reporting a good experience compared to 67% nationally.

¹ The Ashton Primary Care Network is made up of 8 GP Practices, located in the Tameside North community neighbourhood; Albion Medical Practice, Ashton GP Service, Ashton Medical Group, Gordon Street Medical Centre, HT Practice, Stamford House, Waterloo Medical Centre, West End Medical Centre
² As noted in the Health Inequalities Data Report from the Ashton Primary Care Network in June 2022.

Whilst access to green space is linked to improved physical and mental health, Ashton has a range of greenspace available to residents, with 21m² of green space per person, much higher than the most deprived green space neighbourhoods where the average amount of public green space is less than 9m². A very high proportion of Ashton is within a 10-minute walking distance of greenspace access points.

The ‘Live Well Greater Manchester’ programme is a Greater Manchester-wide initiative led by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in partnership with NHS Greater Manchester and the VCFSE sector. The programme is actively prioritising health and wellbeing in the area, focusing on tackling the root causes of health inequality through community-led, accessible support. Engagement is ongoing to inform the focus areas for this programme.

Opportunities for Pride in Place Funding identified through data analysis and engagement to date:

- Build on the investment into health and wellbeing through the Live Well programme.
- Enhance the inclusivity, accessibility, and quality of Ashton’s green spaces to support community wellbeing.

Work, productivity and skills

Key Strengths: Ashton has strong foundations for economic growth, including high job density and economic activity, a resilient manufacturing sector, excellent digital connectivity to support modern business development and well-established business support networks through initiatives such as ‘Tameside Means Business’ and the Business Growth Hub.

Key Challenges: Ashton faces persistent issues with low job quality, weak productivity, and high levels of economic deprivation that limit inclusive access to opportunity.

Ashton has a **high job density**, with 0.86 jobs per resident, well above both the national average of 0.77 and Tameside’s 0.49. **Economic activity is broadly in line with national levels**, with 56% of residents aged 16+ economically active. Ashton also has a **well-established manufacturing sector**, accounting for 11% of local jobs and rising to 15% in St Peter’s, marking it as a key industry. The Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ) is expected to further strengthen the local economy by creating higher-value, more productive jobs in sectors aligned with Greater Manchester’s frontier industries, such as digital, creative, and advanced manufacturing. Combined with strong broadband infrastructure, **88% of premises have access to high-quality connectivity**, Ashton is well-positioned to attract and support modern businesses. The dark fibre network installed by Cooperative Network Infrastructure has helped elevate Tameside to **6th nationally on Think Broadband’s connectivity index**. Ashton also benefits from a strong business support ecosystem anchored by ‘Tameside Means Business’ (led by Tameside Council’s Strategic Growth Unit) and the GM Business Growth Hub.

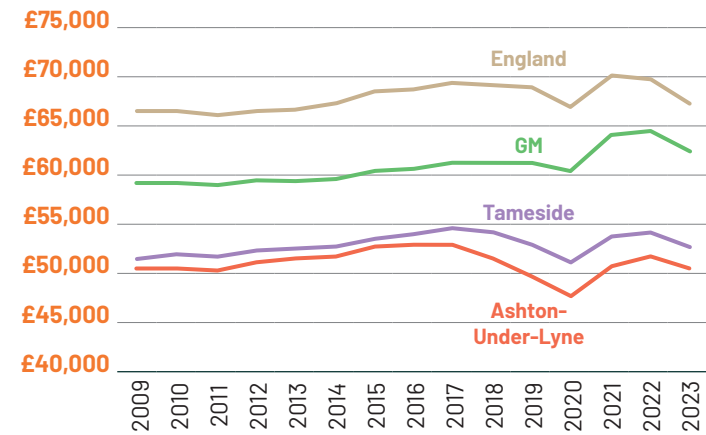


FIGURE 6: AVERAGE GVA PER JOB IN CONSTANT 2023 PRICES (ONS, 2025)

However, job quality and productivity remain challenges in Ashton. **Just 33% of local jobs are classified as high-skilled** (SOC 1–3), compared to 44% across Greater Manchester and 46% nationally, reflecting a labour market dominated by low-paid, low-skilled roles. This contributes to lower average earnings, with median **weekly pay at £615**, below both the North West (£696) and national (£732) averages.

Like much of the UK, **labour productivity has stagnated since the 2009 Financial Crisis**, with very little real growth over the past decade (as can be seen in Figure 6). In 2023, Ashton’s GVA per job stood at £50,339, significantly below Greater Manchester (£62,480) and England (£67,338).

Economic deprivation is also a concern, with **7% of residents aged 16+ claiming out-of-work benefits**, rising to 11% in St Peter’s. Child poverty is particularly acute, **with 41% of children in Ashton living in relative low-income families**, and 54% in St Peter’s, more than double the national average of 22%.

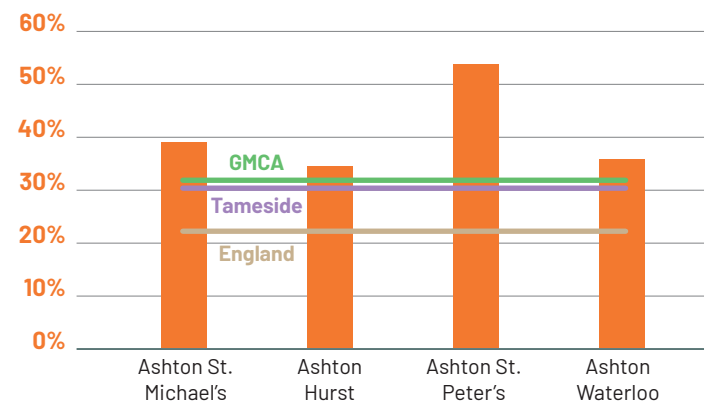


FIGURE 7: PROPORTION OF CHILDREN IN RELATIVE LOW INCOME FAMILIES (ONS, 2025)

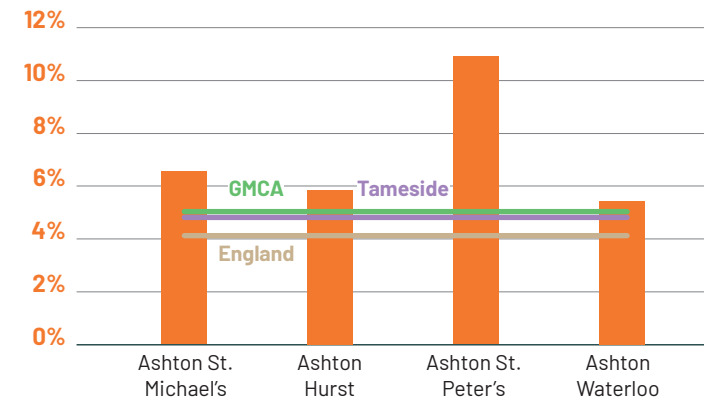


FIGURE 8: RESIDENT (AGED 16+) CLAIMANT COUNT (ONS, 2025)

Opportunities for Pride in Place Funding identified through data analysis and engagement to date:

- Leverage planned MDZ investments and Ashton’s strong working-age population to boost access to high-value, productive employment, in partnership with business.
- Expand initiatives across Ashton to tackle income deprivation and improve economic inclusion.
- Enhance training provision and invest in advanced skills to strengthen competitiveness, attract inward investment, and retain talent.

Education and opportunity

Key Strengths: Ashton’s relatively young population and above-average growth rate provide a strong foundation for future workforce development and economic resilience.

Key Challenges: Low levels of educational attainment and advanced qualifications limit access to opportunity and risks undermining Ashton’s competitiveness and long-term economic growth.

Ashton’s **median age is 37**, younger than both the Tameside and England averages (40). **Its population grew by 8.2%** between 2011 and 2022, outpacing growth in both Tameside (6%) and England (7.7%), suggesting a strong foundation for future workforce development and economic resilience.

However, educational attainment remains a significant challenge. Across all four Ashton wards, **25% of residents have no formal qualifications**, which is notably higher than the averages for Tameside (22%), Greater Manchester (20%), and England (18%). This limits access to employment and training opportunities contributing to cycles of deprivation. Ashton also lags behind in higher-level qualifications. **Only 39% of residents hold Level 3 qualifications or above**, compared to 42% in Tameside, 49% in Greater Manchester, and 51% nationally. This gap in advanced skills could hinder local economic growth and reduce the town’s competitiveness in attracting investment and high-value employment.

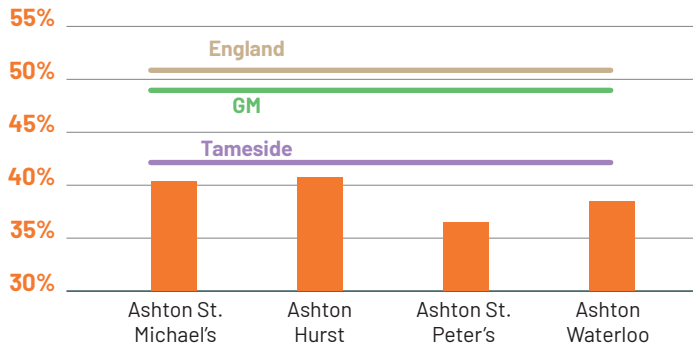


FIGURE 9: PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS (AGED 16+) WITH LEVEL 3+ QUALIFICATIONS (CENSUS, 2021)

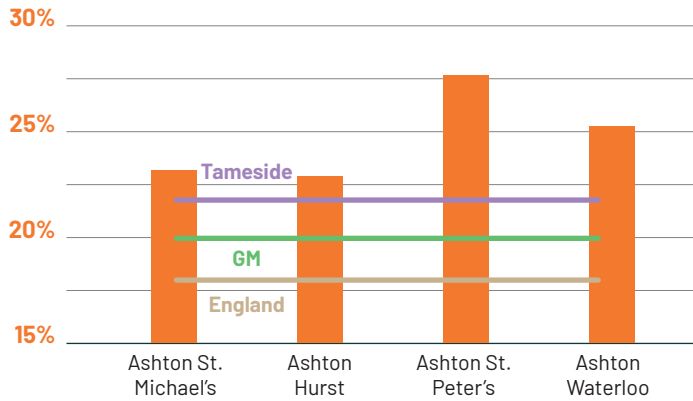


FIGURE 10: PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS (AGED 16+) WITH NO QUALIFICATIONS (CENSUS, 2021)

Opportunities for Pride in Place Funding identified through data analysis and engagement to date:

- Invest in lifelong learning for Ashton’s young and growing population.
- Expand initiatives that increase inclusive access to skills, training and apprenticeships.

Taking Back Control
Safety and security

Key Strengths: Strong community awareness and engagement around safety and crime related issues.

Key Challenges: Crime and anti-social behaviour are deeply rooted in Ashton, with widespread deprivation and negative perceptions of safety undermining pride and wellbeing in the area.

Safety and security are major concerns in Ashton, with **crime and anti-social behaviour deeply embedded** across the town. **75% of Ashton’s LSOAs rank among the top 20% most deprived nationally for crime**, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019). Three out of every four neighbourhoods in Ashton experience crime levels that place them in the most severely affected areas across England.

These high levels of crime have a direct impact on how safe residents feel in their neighbourhoods. The top areas residents want to see improvement in are anti-social behaviour (52%) and tackling crime (44%).

There is a strong perception among residents that children are at risk of getting involved in crime or gangs, with agreement levels 7% higher than the average across the 75 Pride in Places towns that were surveyed. **Drug-related activity** (41%) and **vehicle-related anti-social behaviour**, rank among the top three specific issues identified by residents. These perceptions contribute to a broader sense of unease and lack of pride in the area, with 54% of those not proud to live in Ashton citing that “some people here can be disrespectful or troublesome.”

Opportunities for Pride in Place Funding identified through data analysis and engagement to date:

- Providing more activities for young people, helping to reduce youth involvement in crime.
- Measures that ‘design out’ crime.
- Exploring the role of community champions who could mentor young people and act as positive role models for young people and build stronger social ties.



Cohesion

Key Strengths: There are a wealth of community and voluntary assets in Ashton.

Key Challenges: Civic inclusion and social trust are low, with many residents feeling unheard in decision-making and language barriers limiting access to services and opportunities.

Civic inclusion and social trust are major challenges in Ashton, with **86%** of residents feeling **they haven't been consulted on local services**, well above the 72% average for other market towns, **and 42% believing their voice is never heard in decision-making. Social trust is also low**, with Ashton scoring -15%, below both the national average (-3%) and Tameside (-13%), reflecting a lack of confidence in others and a barrier to building cohesive communities. Ashton does, however, benefit from a high number of charities (100) and community organisations (80), which can serve as vital platforms for engagement, support, and social connection.

The proportion of households with English as a main language is below the English average in two of Ashton's wards. In St Peter's, only **79% of households speak English as their first language**, 10 percentage points below the national average and the lowest among Ashton's wards. It is important to be cognisant of how this can affect community engagement, access to services, employment, and training opportunities.

Opportunities for Pride in Place Funding identified through data analysis and engagement to date:

- Empower residents to feel heard and involved in local decision-making.
- Utilise the extensive community assets to bring people together and encourage community cohesion.

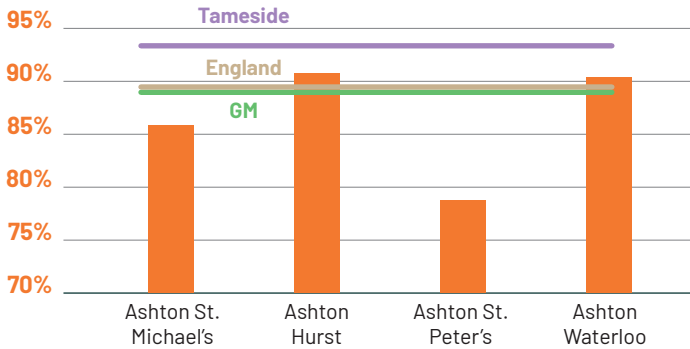


FIGURE 11: PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ENGLISH AS A MAIN LANGUAGE (CENSUS, 2021)



THE PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

The comprehensive baseline assessment of strengths, challenges and opportunities has identified priorities for change across all three themes of the programme. These priorities will guide investment, but PiP funding will be targeted to complement and add value to existing initiatives, ensuring it fills gaps and addresses needs that are not met elsewhere. These are:

1. Increase accessibility to safe, diverse, and social places for people to come together, improving and repurposing existing community assets within neighbourhoods where possible.
2. Catalyse on existing regeneration investment to create a thriving town centre with improved perception.

3. Support residents in accessing opportunities for skills development and high-quality jobs, building on existing initiatives, including work by Tameside Means Business, the GM Business Growth Hub and programmes such as Work Well.
4. Support measures that improve the health and wellbeing of residents, aligning with existing initiatives including the Live Well programme.
5. Support measures that address anti-social behaviour and crime, particularly amongst young people by improving recreational facilities and access to activities.

The following diagram outlines the case for change, illustrating how these priorities correspond with Ashton's identified needs.

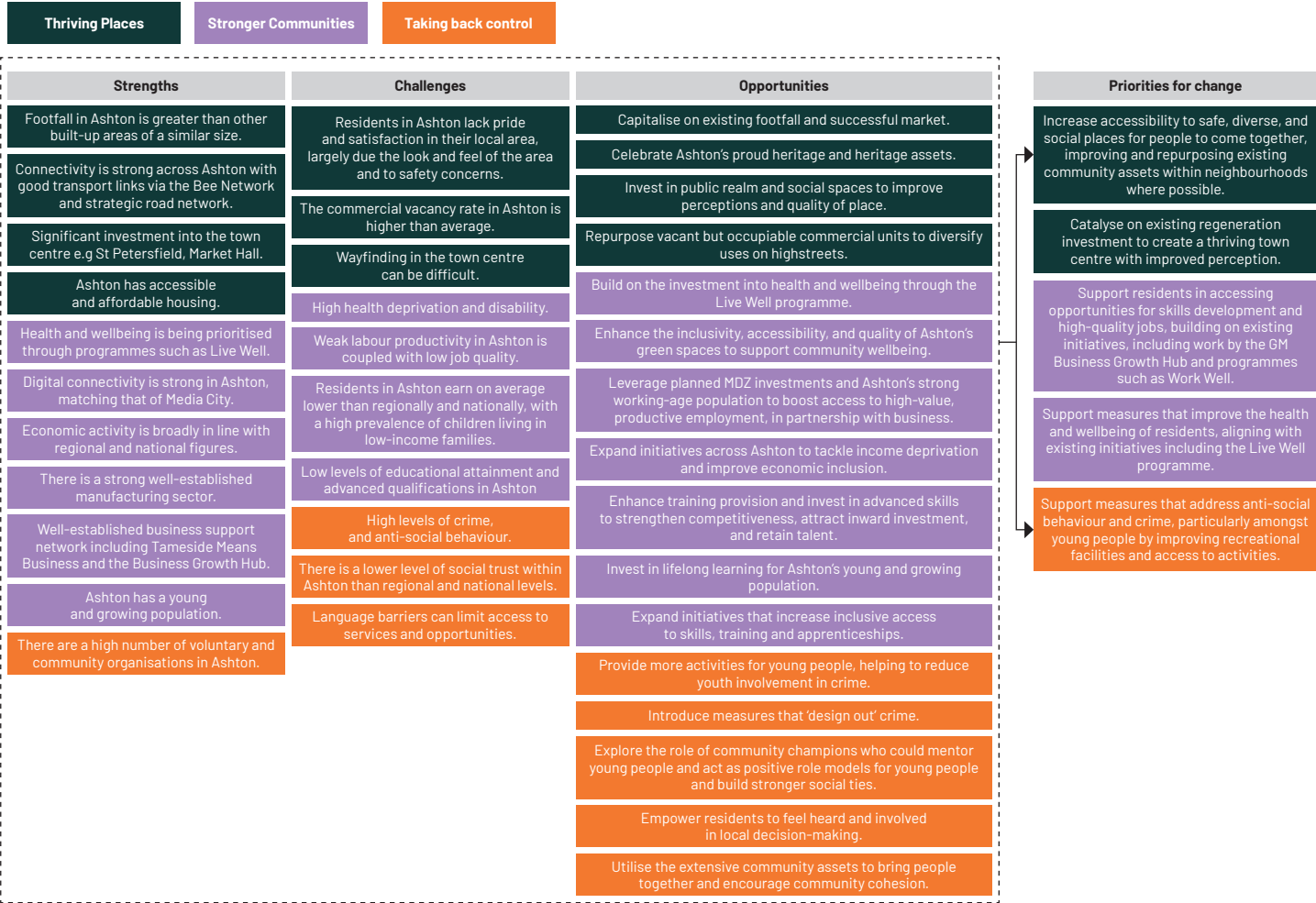


FIGURE 12: PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE IN ASHTON

INTENDED USE OF POWERS

No specific powers have been identified by the Board for use at this stage, but Board members will use powers if and when required.

THE LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

An overarching logic map has been developed that clearly links the priorities of change with the vision for Ashton’s PiP. The map consists of the required inputs, the intervention themes and possible interventions, and the outcomes. The logic map also shows the anticipated outcomes of the proposals over the short, medium and long term.

There is clear alignment between the PiP priorities and the evidence of need and interventions for Ashton.

While the logic map outlines the outcomes that the PiP Plan aims to achieve, it is recognised that PiP will not deliver these outcomes in isolation. There is a vibrant wider landscape of ongoing programmes, investments, and business-as-usual activity in Ashton, already contributing to these goals. PiP will focus on identifying and addressing gaps in provision, enabling a more targeted, complementary approach whilst reaching where existing programmes do not. The Neighbourhood Board will play a convening role in this, signposting residents and businesses to existing programmes and business as usual.

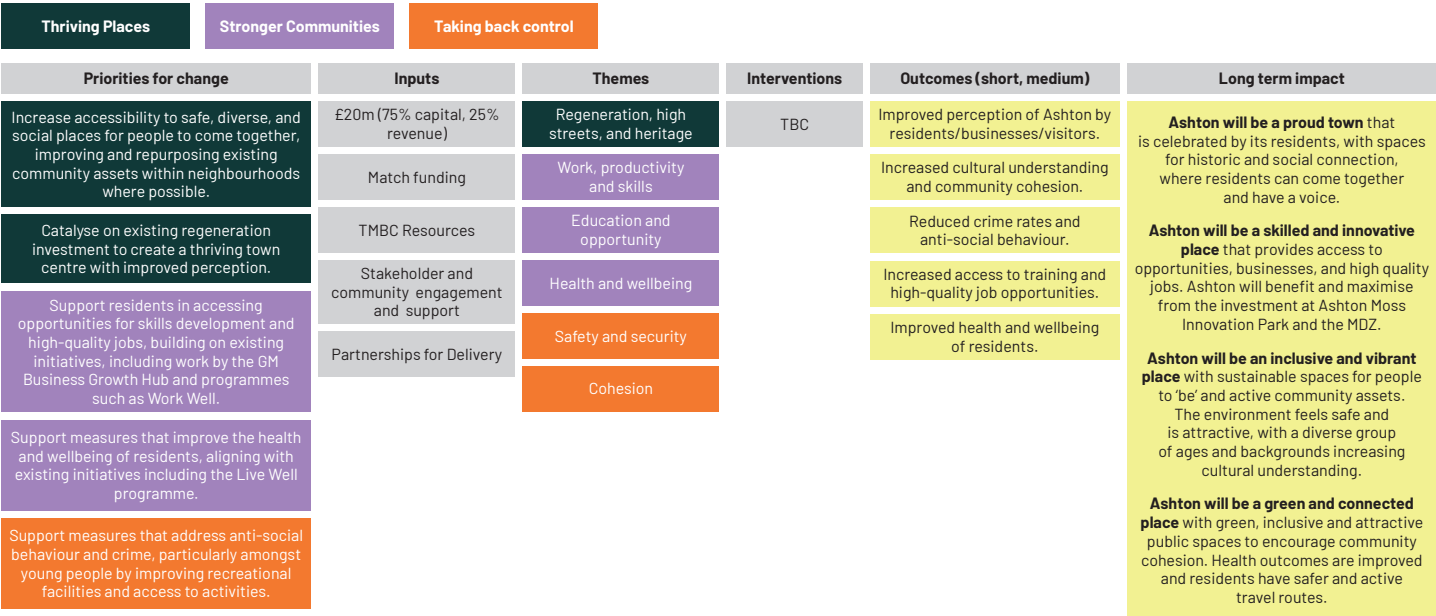


FIGURE 13: LOGIC MAP FOR ASHTON

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES AND INVESTMENTS

Ashton has seen meaningful investment in recent years (see page 8). At a national level, Ashton has received Central Government funding including in the form of Levelling-up Funding, Shared Prosperity Funding, and investment through the WorkWell Programme. Ashton has also benefited from regional funding through the GMCA, for example through the Live Well Programme, investment through the GM Business Growth Hub, in addition to local government funding and private sector investment.

Projects funded by the Pride in Place Programme will align with and, where possible, complement existing and planned local, regional or national investments, programmes and strategies as set out in the tables below.

Before allocating funding to any interventions, it is proposed that a comprehensive gap analysis be conducted to ensure that funded activities represent additionality rather than continuation of existing provision. The Board will ensure that individuals seeking support for services already in place are appropriately signposted to the relevant organisations and contacts.

TABLE 1: LOCAL INVESTMENTS, PROGRAMMES & STRATEGIES

LOCAL INVESTMENTS AND PROGRAMMES	INITIATIVE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT WITH PIP
Ashton Levelling Up Fund (2021)	Existing funding programme	Awarded £20m in 2023 to deliver the restoration of Ashton Town Hall; public realm improvements, with a focus on the Market Square; new cycle routes; and enabling works on the former interchange site.	These investments will significantly improve the quality of place within Ashton, making it a more appealing place to live, work and visit, attracting skilled labour, businesses, visitors and further investment. These current investments align with the vision for the PiP programme – particularly the ambition for Ashton to be a proud town and an inclusive and vibrant place, celebrated by its residents.
Ashton UK Shared Prosperity Fund	Existing funding programme	Awarded £3.812m of grant funding to deliver the Ashton Creative Improvement District (including repurposing Ashton Old Baths) and the re-purposing of part of Ashton Market Hall.	
St. Petersfield Masterplan (2021)	Planned investment	Provides the long-term strategy for the delivery of new development across an area of Council owned sites. The area is identified for the development of a mix of uses including residential and additional employment space for innovation and the growth of the digital, creative and tech sectors.	
Ashton Moss	Planned investment	A significant employment development site with potential to provide growth space for Tameside's manufacturing and engineering sectors. Ashton Moss responds to the current lack of available development space in the Borough, and provides an opportunity to attract inward investment. A development framework has been prepared and an MoU put in place between TMBC and the University of Manchester.	

LOCAL INVESTMENTS AND PROGRAMMES	INITIATIVE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT WITH PIP
Ashton Regeneration Partnership	Local partnership model	The Ashton Town Centre Vision & Spatial Framework has been prepared to consolidate existing masterplans and proposals which have been assembled by the Council over recent years. The Framework will support the delivery and procurement approach for the Ashton Regeneration Partnership to secure a long-term developer partner for the Town Centre.	The Ashton Regeneration Partnership aligns with PiP as a strategic delivery model for regeneration across multiple sites in Ashton, with projects that could leverage PiP funding.
Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021 to 2026	Local strategic document	The strategy is centred on the principle that growing the economy and reducing poverty are linked activities. It outlines the strengths of and challenges within Tameside and details how to grow the borough's economy inclusively.	The strategy's focus on delivering better quality of life though more and better employment opportunities aligns with PiP's focus on 'Thriving Places' & 'Taking Back Control'. It also closely aligns with the vision for Ashton.
Tameside Housing Strategy 2021 to 2026	Local strategic document	The strategy is driven by the vision to shape a balanced housing market through sustainable growth, providing good quality and affordable housing for all residents, helping to build successful lives and promote healthy communities. The strategy emphasises people-centred solutions and improving existing neighbourhoods.	The strategy's people-centred approach and commitment to enhancing existing neighbourhoods directly support the PiP ambition to create inclusive, resilient, and well-connected places where residents can thrive.
Tameside Climate Change & Environment Strategy 2021 to 2026	Local strategic document	The strategy outlines the Borough's commitment to achieving a "Net Zero" carbon future by 2038. The strategy focusses on realising the priority of achieving "Modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations".	The strategy's emphasis on sustainability, greenspace, and low-carbon living aligns closely with the Ashton vision to create a 'green & connected' place.
Skills Workshops	Local Programme	Tameside Library delivers weekly digital skills drop-ins via the national Learn My Way programme. Tameside also has a local Digital Inclusion Officer and the TechKnow Festival. PC Refurb also provides community-based sessions, devices, and 1:1 support. Some activities are delivered within the neighbourhood boundary and funded through local, GM, and national programmes.	Supports inclusive access to skills development and digital literacy, contributing to PiP priorities around work, productivity and skills as well as education and opportunity.
Social Economy Board and Tameside Talks Business	Local Programme	The Board brings together business support for the VCSFE sector and SMEs, including Action Together, Build a Business, GM Business Growth Hub, and TMBC's Strategic Growth Unit. It was established to engage sectors historically underrepresented in business support events. A survey via Action Together identified key challenges, leading to events, workshops, and 1:1 support. The Board has since merged the Social Economy and Tameside Talks Business networks, tailoring messaging to sector needs.	Supports inclusive economic growth and engagement with underrepresented sectors, particularly aligning with the PiP priorities for work, productivity and skills.
Tameside Means Business	Local Programme	A local initiative designed to support business growth, skills development, and networking across the Tameside borough. It offers tailored support to startups, SMEs, and large employers through events, partnerships, and training programmes.	Through its support for entrepreneurship, skills development, and inclusive growth, Tameside Means Business illustrates the work already undertaken in Ashton with regards to work, productivity and skills.

TABLE 2: REGIONAL INVESTMENTS, PROGRAMMES & STRATEGIES

REGIONAL INVESTMENTS AND PROGRAMMES	INITIATIVE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT WITH PIP
Greater Manchester Places for Everyone joint development strategy (2024)	Regional strategic document	The strategy sets out the plan for sustainable growth in the nine districts between 2022-2039. The strategy recognises Ashton-under-Lyne as one of 8 main town centres in GM, stating that these town centres are <i>“immensely important to their host districts, and Greater Manchester as a whole, as a source of local identity and pride, the prime location for shops and services, and a major supply of employment and leisure opportunities”</i> . The strategy also showcases policy JP:A27 Ashton Moss West as delivering around 160,000 sqm of employment floorspace within Research and Development.	As the strategy sets out key policies relating to sustainable and resilient places, places for jobs, greener places, places for people, and connected places, it aligns well with the key strategic objectives for PiP.
Greater Manchester Together We Are Strategy 2025-35	Regional strategic document	The strategy sets out the collective vision for the next decade of Greater Manchester - to see a thriving city region where everyone can live a good life.	The pledges and aims within the document align with PiP through investing in Ashton to grow the economy and support the local people.
Live Well	Regional programme	Live Well Greater Manchester is a partnership across GMCA, Greater Manchester Integrated Care (NHS GM), the Greater Manchester voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector, the 10 LAs and communities across Greater Manchester. It is a community-led movement focused on improving health, wellbeing, and opportunity across the region, designed to help residents “live well” by addressing the root causes of inequality and providing support that's local, accessible, and tailored to individual needs.	The PiP programme's emphasis on health and wellbeing aligns closely with Live Well's commitment to delivering everyday support across Greater Manchester. It also complements Ashton's vision, particularly its focus on inclusivity, as Live Well seeks to tackle the root causes of inequality within the region.

TABLE 3: NATIONAL INVESTMENTS, PROGRAMMES & STRATEGIES

NATIONAL INVESTMENTS AND PROGRAMMES	INITIATIVE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT WITH PIP
Plan for Change	National strategic document	National government has set out their milestones, as a mission-led government, to reach by the end of this parliament. The missions include strong foundations, kickstarting economic growth, an NHS fit for the future, safer streets, break down barriers to opportunity, and make Britain a Clean Energy Superpower.	PiP aligns with the Plan for Change through its vision and objectives. It specifically aligns to the following missions; kickstarting economic growth, safer streets, and break down barriers to opportunity.
Department for Business and Trade, The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (2025)	National strategic document	The strategy sets out a new economic approach to backing the UK's strengths, with ambitious plans for eight high-growth sectors. These align with some of the key sectors identified in Tameside's Inclusive Growth Strategy such as advanced manufacturing and clean growth.	PiP aligns with this strategy through identifying the priority to increase business investment in the town, enhance skills and drive innovation.

TABLE 3: NATIONAL INVESTMENTS, PROGRAMMES & STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

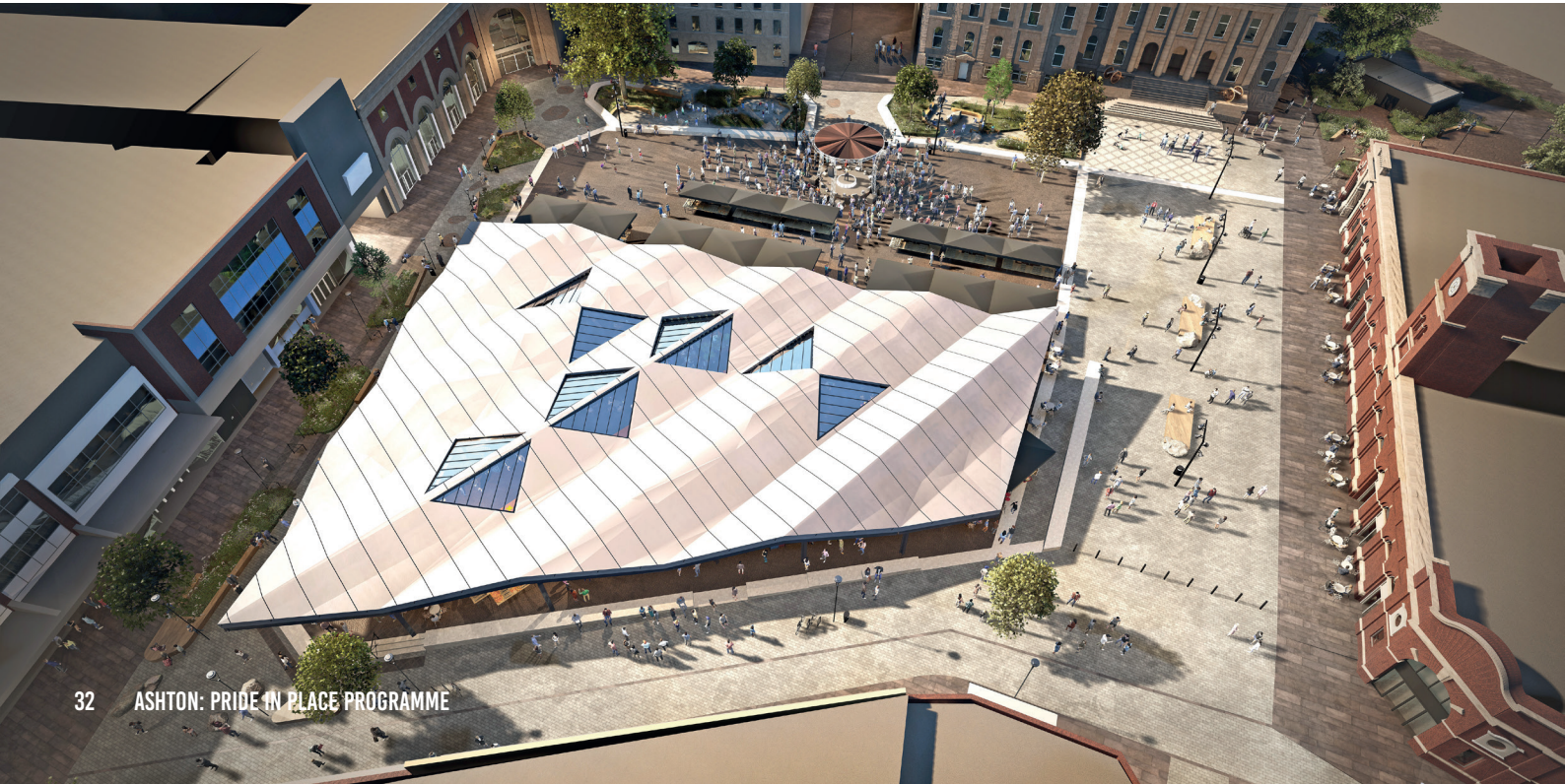
NATIONAL INVESTMENTS AND PROGRAMMES	INITIATIVE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ALIGNMENT WITH PIP
Work Well	National Programme	<p>WorkWell is aimed to address the rising flow of people out of work. It is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care, and aims to support long-term sick or disabled people to start, stay, and succeed in work through integrated work and health support.</p> <p>In Tameside, WorkWell supports residents who are struggling with their health while working, have recently lost their job, or need help with health, skills, or finding work. The service offers personalised support, workplace adjustments, and access to health and employment advice. It is a voluntary programme designed to remove barriers to employment and improve wellbeing.</p>	Work well contributes to the priorities identified within the PiP plan by advancing inclusive employment, health and wellbeing, and skills development by supporting residents facing complex challenges.
Economic Inactivity Trailblazer Programme	National Programme	<p>A national initiative launched by the Department for Work and Pensions to address high levels of economic inactivity, particularly among people with long-term health conditions, disabilities, or barriers to employment. It provides targeted funding and flexibility for selected local areas to design and deliver bespoke support.</p> <p>Tameside, as a trailblazer site, aims to pilot innovative, community-based offers that help residents who are not in employment, not actively seeking/starting work to start moving towards or back into work. This includes people with a health barrier, caring responsibilities (including looking after family, other dependants or the home) and those discouraged or lacking confidence to find work.</p>	This supports PiP priorities around inclusive employment, health and wellbeing, and community resilience by engaging economically inactive residents.

MATCH FUNDING AND LEVERAGED INVESTMENT

The Neighbourhood Board will have regard to other investments across the lifespan of the programme to ensure that investments are considered holistically – i.e. outcomes are mutually reinforcing (‘pulling in the same direction’) and opportunities from existing investments are capitalised upon, including the identification of match funding.

Public and private funding will be leveraged to maximise investment. Delivery of the Ashton Pride in Place programme will anticipate delivering additional public and private sector investment through:

- **Public and third sector** – The Board will explore other funding programmes such as from the GMCA, National Heritage Lottery Fund, Heritage in Place Programme and other central government funding.
- **Private Sector** – Through investment across Ashton, it is anticipated that private sector interest will be triggered in the longer term as business and investor confidence grows.
- **Philanthropic investment** – The Board will explore opportunities for this where possible, recognising its potential to complement and enhance other funding streams.



COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Since the announcement of the £20m investment for Ashton, significant engagement has been carried out with the community. The most recent phase of engagement, held between September and October 2025, built upon earlier activities as outlined below. A key principle guiding this process has been to build on existing knowledge and insights, while ensuring that engagement is targeted towards key groups within the community to capture a diverse range of perspectives.

The responses received through engagement to date have informed the key focus areas for the plan – the priorities for change – as summarised on page 27.

ENGAGEMENT TO DATE

There has been considerable community engagement in Ashton in recent years, which has enabled a good understanding of the challenges faced by the local community as well as highlight the opportunities for changing the future of Ashton. These findings have supported the evidence base for this regeneration plan.

A summary of engagement prior to the launch of the Long Term Plan for Towns (now Pride in Place) is provided below:

- In early 2020, owners of the Ladysmith shopping centre, Ellandi, undertook a comprehensive community engagement programme, supported by the Council, to identify the challenges and opportunities for the future of Ashton. Community engagement was completed via a highly extensive intercept survey. A total of 535 respondents participated in the survey, reflecting the demographic profile of the Town Centre. The Intercept Survey feedback, along with baseline data and benchmarking analysis, has informed the Ashton Town Centre Masterplan Vision.
- In March 2022, public consultation was carried out as part of the Ashton Public Realm Strategy over two stages in March and November 2022. Activities included workshops, briefings, events such as Love Ashton held in the Market Hall, meetings and engagement with key stakeholders. In addition, a survey was launched which generated a total of 551 responses.
- Various engagement activities have been undertaken for the St. Petersfield Masterplan. In May 2021 engagement was undertaken with council members, officers, Tameside College, and local businesses, and additional one-to-one engagement with key stakeholders to identify the key challenges, opportunities, and indicators of success for the area.

Engagement to date under the LTPfT Programme and the Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme

In May 2024, under the previous Long Term Plan for Towns, an Engagement Working Group was set up as a subsidiary of the Board. The Working Group included members of the Board. The purpose of the working group was to agree the approach to engagement for the programme. Based on the consultation and engagement activities since 2020, it was considered that there was already a recent understanding of the challenges faced by the community, and the opportunities.

The Engagement Working Group agreed that engagement activities to inform the Plan should build on existing knowledge from the extensive engagement already undertaken. This was later ratified by all members at a meeting of the Board. As such, a targeted engagement approach to engagement was taken forward, to engage with the community on ideas and proposals, as opposed to the identification of broader, strategic challenges.

Targeted engagement took place in May and June 2024, focused around the vision and key themes to understand potential projects for the plan. An engagement representative was identified for each organisation / community group to provide feedback to the Board members. Feedback was collected via an online form, and paper copies were also made available. The organisations engaged at this stage are in the adjacent list.

- Active Tameside
- Action Together
- Ashton Central Mosque
- Ashton Old Baths
- Ashton Pioneer Homes
- Ashton Town Team
- Ashton Under Lyne Cricket Bowling and Tennis Club
- Ashton United
- Carpenters Arms
- Curzon Ashton
- Great Academy Trust
- Growth Hub
- Holy Trinity Community Centre
- Indian Association Tameside
- Jigsaw Homes Group
- Katherine Street Mosque / Hamzah Mosque
- LEAP Centre
- New Life Church
- People First Tameside
- Samson Boxing Gym
- Tameside College
- The Garside Kidd Community Centre
- The Station Pub / We Shall Overcome
- The Union Club (engaged but no feedback)
- West African Development

There were 121 project ideas, and 24 projects identified through this stage of engagement.

A gap analysis was undertaken following this stage of engagement to understand which organisations and groups were not represented. However due to changing government guidance, further engagement was subsequently paused. Following receipt of updated government guidance as part of the Plan for Neighbourhoods and a broadened set of interventions, the Neighbourhood Board revisited the identified gaps in stakeholder groups. These were summarised as follows:

- Residents including the young, older residents, LGBTQ+ groups and the Polish community.
- The health sector and health related organisations.
- The police.
- Smaller community groups.
- Businesses, including smaller business owners in Ashton.

A workshop was also held in January 2025 with TMBC's Council officers to feed in their service area's priorities for Ashton.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

To shape the next stages of engagement and seek to address these gaps, an engagement strategy was developed and submitted to MCHLG in August 2025 (available on TMBC's website). Action Together CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) - the infrastructure organisation for the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Oldham, Rochdale, and Tameside - has been a key advisor to the Board on developing and undertaking the engagement strategy.

The strategy sets out key principles underpinning the engagement, and identifies the following three workstreams, as key areas of work between August and December 2025, with the intention of building on the engagement undertaken through the Long Term Plan for Towns and Plan for Neighbourhoods.

Workstream 1: Updating those previously engaged (September - October 2025)

As part of Workstream 1, those previously engaged through the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme were re-contacted to test and refine the priorities identified earlier in the process. This engagement helped ensure that project ideas remained relevant, particularly under the revised government guidance. It also provided an opportunity for new suggestions to be shared, given the extended list of interventions that are now eligible for considerations. The same engagement leads as previously allocated reached out to groups using previously successful methods, with questions focused on validating the updated vision, exploring ideas for interventions, and gathering feedback aligned to the programme's key principles.

Workstream 2: Seeking to address gaps identified following the previous engagement period (September - October 2025)

As part of Workstream 2, targeted engagement was carried out to address gaps identified during the earlier Long-Term Plan for Towns engagement period. This included seeking to reach underrepresented groups such as young and older residents, LGBT communities, the Polish community, health organisations, the police, smaller community groups, and local businesses. Engagement activities were tailored to each group, with support from partners including Action Together, who hosted a dedicated focus group with underrepresented groups. A range of small business owners were also engaged through existing forums such as Tameside Women in Business. It is noteworthy that gaps continue to be identified and noted. For example, the Ukrainian community has since been identified as an underrepresented group through the engagement so far.

Additional organisations engaged through this workstream, including:

- St Micheal and All Angels' Church
- Tameside Council - Housing Department
- Businesses who are members of Tameside Women in Business
- FavourCare Digital Help
- Anthony Seddon Fund
- Groundwork
- Cedar Park
- Save the Children
- Khushamdid
- Greater Manchester Police

Workstream 3: St Peter's deep-dive engagement pilot (December 2025 - Early 2026)

As part of Workstream 3, a deep-dive engagement pilot is being undertaken in St Peter's ward, identified as a priority neighbourhood for intervention. This work is part of GM's 'Live Well' initiative and separately funded through GMCA and NHS GM. This is a commissioned piece of engagement work organised by Action Together, delivered by local VCFSE groups trusted by these communities.

Stakeholder mapping undertaken through this initiative has identified a list of key groups for targeted outreach. The target groups for this work will be white working-class residents and those of South Asian descent, alongside youth voices via the ASPYA partnership. Action Together already support a Youth partnership in St Peter's - ASPYA made up of local VCFSE groups delivering funded youth provision in the area. This will enable the voices of young people to be heard.

While the Live Well engagement is not yet complete, discussions are anticipated to focus on what helps residents "Live Well" in St Peter's.

Further information on the engagement undertaken to date can be found within Ashton's Engagement Strategy approved by MHCLG and published on the TMBC website in August 2025.



PROJECTS AND IDEAS GATHERED TO DATE

Since 2024, Board members have engaged with / facilitated engagement with c.40 organisations and groups across Ashton, generating 190 project ideas³ and 24 projects⁴ across the multiple rounds of engagement. While final project selection has not yet taken place, ideas submitted to date have been mapped against the government’s pre-approved interventions⁵. This has significantly contributed to a more detailed understanding of community priorities. Of the proposals put forward, the level of detail provided varies, with some proposals requiring further input and development to ensure a robust assessment process. To support transparent and fair decision-making, the Board has been considering the appropriate assessment criteria, as outlined in Section 3.8.4. Engagement will be continuous to refine existing proposals and identify additional opportunities.

FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Initially, it is proposed that additional engagement activities be concentrated within St Peter’s Ward led by Action Together (see Workstream 3 above). Beyond this, the Board will continue to engage with the local community organisations and businesses to hold information sessions in order to raise awareness of the Pride in Place Programme and to ensure that projects identified are community led. Engagement will be a recurring item at future meetings of the Board. The composition of the Board ensures strong representation and connectivity across education, police, healthcare, education, civil society and business, facilitating effective engagement with diverse community groups. Sustaining and building these relationships throughout the duration of the programme will be critical in securing support from local stakeholders.

3. A project idea is defined as an idea which is not fully formed but aligns with the themes of the Ashton vision.
4. A project is defined as a project in existence or development.
5. Pre-approved interventions are those interventions that can be funded by MHCLG, without requiring further approval from Government through a business case.



GOVERNANCE

OVERVIEW

The role of Governance is to prioritise, authorise, direct, empower and oversee management, and assure and review performance. The investment programme is governed by the Neighbourhood Board in partnership with Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC) and the local community through engagement. The section provides an overview of the governance structure for the PiP programme.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND ROLES

The governance structure has been set up to ensure accountability and effective decision making. The diagram below sets out the governance structure for Ashton PiP. Working in partnership, the key roles are:

- **TMBC:** As the Accountable Body, TMBC and its Executive Cabinet will oversee the delivery of Ashton PiP and be the final approval for key decisions such as funding. Funding will be managed within the Council’s existing local authority accountability and assurance regime, under the oversight of each authority’s chief financial officer, Section 151 officer.
- **Neighbourhood Board:** The Ashton Neighbourhood Board will be the vehicle for the Ashton PiP programme and will provide challenge and accountability to ensure local priorities are progressed and delivered in a timely, cost-efficient way through the review and monitoring of the implementation of the programme. The Neighbourhood Board will report to TMBC on any recommendations or decision-making.

- **Advisory Board:** The Advisory Board will report to the Neighbourhood Board at key stages of the PiP, providing advice on key recommendations.
- **Programme Delivery Team:** A programme delivery team will be assembled. There is currently allowance in the capacity funding to support a council officer to lead the delivery in the first investment period. Following the first investment period, the delivery team is expected to include officers from TMBC with wider support drawn upon from partner organisations and advisors.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC)

TMBC is the Accountable Body responsible for the Ashton PiP programme and will work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Board. The role of the Accountable Body is to convene the Neighbourhood Board to ensure alignment with the governance standards and policies of the council including around whistleblowing, conflicts of interest, and complaints. TMBC will also ensure that public funds are distributed fairly and effectively and have been managed in line with the Nolan Principles and Managing Public Money principles. They will also be responsible for compliance with legal responsibilities in relation to subsidy control, state aid and procurement, and ensure transparency requirements are met through publication of information on their website.

Neighbourhood Board

Ashton’s Neighbourhood Board, also referred to as the Executive Board, has been established to represent a broad cross-section of the local community, ensuring that diverse voices help to shape Ashton’s regeneration plans. The Neighbourhood Board has representation from parliamentary representatives, local councillors, the voluntary and community sector, local businesses and employers including the NHS and private sector employers, community leaders, education providers, the police and individuals with a deep connection to the area.

The Chair of the Board is Phill Brown MBE is a Tameside businessman and philanthropist who has chaired boards at Tameside Council, Active Tameside and Tameside College, as well as served as a trustee for the Stockport County Community Trust. Board members have been selected by the Chair in partnership with Tameside Council in bringing together members with a deep connection to the local area including local businesses, grassroots campaigners, education providers, workplace representatives, and other relevant organisations in the Ashton area. The Chair is responsible for leading the Board and will regularly review and monitor Board membership in line with government guidance and at key stages to ensure that there are the appropriate skills on the Board as the Plan progresses from strategy to implementation.

The Deputy Chair of the Board is Paul Westwell. Paul is a Managing Partner at Bromleys Solicitors, whilst at Bromleys Paul has been the clerk of a charitable trust and more recently has become the president of the Tameside Chamber of Commerce, where he represents the interests of local Chamber businesses at a regional level. Paul has also previously led the PiP Engagement Working Group.

BOARD MEMBER	ORGANISATION
Phillip Brown MBE (Chair)	Chair Active Tameside, Trustee Willow Wood, Tameside College
Angela Rayner (MP)	Member of Parliament
Paul Westwell (Deputy Chair)	Managing Partner Bromley Solicitors
Philip Milson	MD Milson Group (Architects), Ex Chair Willow Wood
Jackie Moores	Principal Tameside College
Stephanie Sloan	NHS Tameside
Anna Hynes	Director Tameside Action Together
Atta Rasool	Community Activist St Peter’s Ward
Member Vacancy	Previous member declined
Andrew McIntosh	GMCA
John Walmsley	The Casey Group
Chris Foster	Greater Manchester Police
Kelly Gray	Greater Manchester Growth Hub
Cllr Stephen Homer	Executive Member (Towns, Transport and Connectivity)
Cllr Andrew McLaren	Executive Member (Growth, Housing and Homelessness)

The role of the Board is:

- Identifying the issues and priorities to focus on within the PiP, including supporting a process of ongoing community engagement.
- Working with the Council to develop the PiP, setting out how local partners will use their knowledge, powers, assets and new funding to deliver for their communities.
- Identifying opportunities for Board members to utilise specific powers to deliver the PiP.
- Identifying opportunities to bring in additional investment.
- Overseeing the delivery of projects set out in the PiP.

The Board will meet quarterly and on ad hoc occasions to ensure that milestones are met in accordance with the PiP plan and government guidance. The Board will report to TMBC and make recommendations when decisions are required by the Executive Cabinet, or in any event, on an annual basis.

The Board has established Terms of Reference (ToR) which are published on TMBC’s website.

Since its inception, the Board has also acted as a convener of local people and organisations, facilitating collaboration and unlocking practical solutions to community needs.

- During community engagement, it was identified that Central Mosque Ashton required additional storage for its growing foodbank. The Board is supporting the mosque to seek a private sector sponsor in order to secure a 30ft storage container to provide additional space for the growing food bank.

- The Board’s engagement with Jigsaw Homes revealed a gap in digital inclusion support for elderly and vulnerable tenants. While Jigsaw distributes around 200 refurbished laptops annually, they lacked the resources to provide digital skills training. The Board facilitated a partnership with Tameside College, connecting IT lecturers and students to deliver communal sessions on basic internet access and computer usage, helping bridge the digital divide.

These examples reflect the Board’s commitment to shaping a better future for Ashton, and will ensure that the Pride in Place funding is directed towards the needs and aspirations of Ashton’s residents.

How the Neighbourhood Board governance and transparency requirements will be met

The Board will operate in a transparent and objective way. It will publish the details of its membership, governance arrangements, meeting papers and agendas (5 working days in advance of meetings), and minutes of meetings (within 10 working days of the meeting) on the TMBC website for public inspection. Further details on confidentiality and exempt information are provided in the ToR.

Alignment with Nolan Principles

Within the Neighbourhood Board ToR it is stated that members of the adhere to the Nolan Principles and Code of Conduct, specifically:

- 1. **Selflessness** – Board members should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- 2. **Integrity** – Board members must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- 3. **Objectivity** – Board members must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- 4. **Accountability** – Board members are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- 5. **Openness** – Board members should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- 6. **Honesty** – Board members should be truthful.
- 7. **Leadership** – Board members should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The Nolan Principles will be adhered to by all Board members and TMBC.

Advisory Board

The PiP Advisory Board will be consulted at key stages in the plan preparation, advising and reporting to the Neighbourhood Board on key recommendations. The Board is made up of the following members:

NAME	ORGANISATION
Kamlesh Rajput	Sterling Finance
Mark Robinson	New River
Pauline Town	We Shall Overcome
Brianna Harvey	Digital Flamingo
Val Unwin	Decisions Clothing
Amanda Crossland	A-List Fancy Dress
Peter Marland	MD Ashton Pioneer Homes
Jon Butterworth MBE	CEO National Gas

ROUTE TO MARKET

Working in partnership with TMBC, the Board will execute a rigorous procurement process which fully comply with the European and HM Treasury regulation on tendering and procurement and is a ‘contracting authority’ under the Public Contracts Regulations. Any procurement carried out as part of the PiP will follow the Council’s procurement procedures.

Tameside Council embeds social value into procurement to ensure that financial spend delivers wider benefits for the community. By partnering with suppliers to contribute to outcomes like local employment, environmental sustainability, and community wellbeing, Tameside transforms routine contracts into opportunities for lasting impact. This collaborative approach ensures that services not only meet operational needs but also strengthen the borough as part of everyday delivery.

PROCESS FOR APPRAISING AND APPROVING INVESTMENTS

A project prioritisation tool has been developed to support the Board in prioritising projects that align most closely with the PiP strategic priorities and Ashton’s long-term vision. The tool will help to ensure that projects are prioritised based on strategic fit, financial viability and deliverability. The tool is structured in two stages – the initial sift in which projects go through a preliminary pass or fail, and the assessment stage in which projects are evaluated against a set of criteria which are based on strategic, financial, and deliverability outcomes. Whilst none of these criteria represent absolute constraints, they will help guide project prioritisation.

The criteria are defined as:

- 1. **Strategic Fit** – scoring against evidence of need and potential impact
- 2. **Financial Criteria** – assessing whether the budget is sufficient, the route to securing any assumed match funding, the potential for financial sustainability or long-term investment needs, and the availability of alternative funding sources
- 3. **Deliverability Criteria** – assessment of the maturity of delivery arrangements, the capacity and capability of delivery partners, the level of risk, and stakeholder buy-in and support

By taking an outcome-based approach, it will enable Ashton to address problems holistically, addressing multiple themes across the PiP. The tool will support the Board in effective decision making on the most suitable projects.



ASSURANCE

An assurance framework will be developed by TMBC to support decision making and set out the governance structure for the PiP. The purpose of the framework will be to:

- Enable accountable and transparent decision making
- Ensure value for money
- Ensure effective monitoring and evaluation

As per the PiP guidance assurance will follow the Three Lines of Defence model by HM Treasury. TMBC will take the 1st Line of Defence leading on quality assurance of documents, reporting, and financial control.

Assurance reviews will be undertaken by TMBC to demonstrate that the work is being managed in a way that supports safe and successful delivery of the intended policy, strategy and objectives set out in the investment plan.

MANAGING PUBLIC MONEY

As the Accountable Body, TMBC will take receipt of and defray any programme funds. TMBC will ensure proper management of any public money relating to the PiP, this includes:

- UK subsidy control implications
- Overseeing the development and application of any procurement process
- Ensuring any funding agreements reflect the conditions that need to be in place and that these are upheld
- Retaining copies of all relevant documentation as required
- Ensuring transparency of quarterly and annual accounts
- Maintaining the official record of the Board proceedings and documents
- Reviewing Board decisions are lawful and follow the correct procedure



