



# City Centre **Retail Strategy**

Creating a world-class destination

October 2015

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## Foreword

Birmingham has a highly attractive and successful Retail Core that positions the City as one of the top shopping destinations in the UK. Success stories such as the Bullring and The Mailbox are part of what makes the City a great place to visit and we are seeing £220 million being invested in and around the Retail Core which will further enhance the visitor experience.

The investment comprises the £150 million Grand Central development including the new £35 million regional flagship John Lewis store, a £50 million renovation of The Mailbox and £20 million refurbishment of Selfridges.

In addition to this, over £30 million is being invested into improving the City's public realm to create a high quality and exciting environment and upward of £300 million is being invested in the Metro network enhancing connectivity across the centre. In the longer term, Enterprise Zone investment and High Speed 2's arrival in the City will bring huge additional benefits.

The proposals for Birmingham Smithfield will further strengthen the centre's offer with the creation of an exciting new development with vibrant markets, family leisure, public spaces, new pedestrian routes and integrated public transport.

Together, these investments will further transform the Retail Core and make a significant contribution to its success as a top visitor destination. The continuing regeneration of the centre is testament to our ongoing commitment to the improvement and enhancement of the City.

We recognise that while the centre is a successful shopping destination there is more that needs to be done both now and into the future to ensure it retains and strengthens its position.

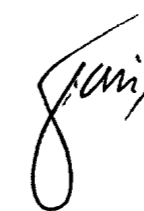
This will include diversifying the offer to provide for changing demands with leisure, family entertainment, food and beverage and enhanced retail markets.

This diverse offer needs to be matched with a highly attractive environment and our focus will also be upon ensuring improvements to the public realm and pedestrian experience are secured. The outcome will be a truly outstanding Retail Core that remains a destination of choice for the millions of people that visit the City Centre every year.

This strategy sets out the vision and actions to create this outstanding Retail Core and ensure the City Centre remains a top visitor destination.



**Sir Albert Bore**  
Leader  
Birmingham City Council



**Councillor Tahir Ali**  
Cabinet Member for Development,  
Transport and the Economy  
Birmingham City Council







# 1

## Introduction

introduction



# Introduction

Birmingham City Centre is ranked as one of the best retail centres in the UK, attracting over £2 billion of visitor expenditure and more than 30 million visitors per year.

## The role of the Strategy

Over the last decade the City Centre, through schemes such as the Bullring and The Mailbox, has seen its retail offer transformed creating a vibrant shopping experience. The major investments and redevelopments that are currently planned and underway will further strengthen this position. While the centre has become hugely successful it still faces a number of challenges, including how it plans for the future to ensure it remains competitive and attractive. Recognising the opportunity to build on its successes but also the need to respond to the challenges, the City has produced this Retail Strategy.

The strategy's focus is on the Retail Core, which sits at the heart of the City Centre, and is the primary destination for Birmingham's shopping offer. The strategy takes a comprehensive

view of the Retail Core, setting out the ambition for the future and identifying key interventions and actions. The approach emphasises the need to diversify the offer to create a rounded destination with leisure, family entertainment, food and beverage and enhanced retail markets alongside a truly outstanding environment with a great public realm.

In producing this strategy the City acknowledges that Birmingham has a rich and varied retail offer that extends beyond the Retail Core. Within the City Centre this includes the Jewellery Quarter, Digbeth and Southside with their specialist and alternative retail, leisure and cultural offer. Across the wider Birmingham area there is a network of district and local centres that serve local communities and contribute to the City's overall attraction as a place to visit. This wider retail offer is

covered through a range of other documents both existing and emerging. For the City Centre the specific approach to the future of the areas outside the Retail Core will be put in place through the emerging Neighbourhood Plan in the Jewellery Quarter, proposals in the Birmingham Curzon masterplan covering Digbeth and through a development framework for Southside. Improving connections to these areas from the Retail Core is key and the strategy acknowledges the importance of this.

What is clear is that the Retail Core, which is seeing major changes and will continue to face challenges, requires a comprehensive approach to put in place a strategy that can help the City plan for the future and direct investment decisions and target actions.

## The status of the document

This strategy builds on the vision of the City's Big City Plan (BCP), published in 2010, taking a comprehensive view of the Retail Core, planning for its future to ensure its integrity and attractiveness is maintained and its position as a top destination is strengthened.

It has been prepared in the context of the City Council's plans for growth both for the City Centre and the City as a whole. A key part of the City's growth strategy is to deliver high quality, sustainable places, strengthening Birmingham's position both nationally and internationally.

A strong retail offer and successful City Centre are key elements of the growth ambitions, and this strategy seeks to respond to these aspirations.

Supporting the City's growth agenda is Birmingham Connected, which is Birmingham's long term strategy for its transport system. Its vision is to reinvent the system to meet current and future mobility challenges; facilitating strong and sustainable economic growth.

The strategy has been prepared in collaboration with a range of stakeholders, including the Retail Business Improvement District, retailers, property owners and their agents, shoppers and residents. An initial engagement exercise was undertaken to gain the views of

stakeholders on the future of the City Centre as a destination.

Formal public consultation was undertaken on the draft strategy document. This was key to establishing a clear understanding of the challenges facing the Retail Core and what can be done to strengthen its position in the future.

The strategy responds to the outcomes of the consultations to provide the City with a strategy to inform decisions on future development and investment in the Retail Core and define an agreed position for the future.

*“ Birmingham has a rich and varied retail offer ”*







# 2

## The Retail Core

retail



# The Retail Core

The Retail Core, at the heart of the City Centre, is the focus for Birmingham's retail offer.

This Core area is focused on New Street, Corporation Street, High Street, The Mailbox, the Bullring and Grand Central.

Its attraction as a top shopping destination is supported by a strong mainstream retail offer at and around the Bullring and Grand Central with big name retailers set in a high quality, modern shopping environment and complemented by successful restaurants, bars and cafes. Grand Central Birmingham, a premium shopping destination for the City and the £35 million John Lewis flagship store, both developed as part of the £600 million New Street Gateway transformation, opened their doors to shoppers in September 2015.

The Bullring's offer will be further enhanced by Selfridges' £20 million renovation which is set to complete in 2017, the refit includes an expanded Beauty Hall and Menswear department.

The Mailbox is the Retail Core's destination for premium and high-end shopping and eating in an attractive canal-side setting. The Mailbox's £50 million refurbishment completed in September 2015, has doubled the size of Harvey Nichols and enclosed the mall to create an attractive sky lit space.

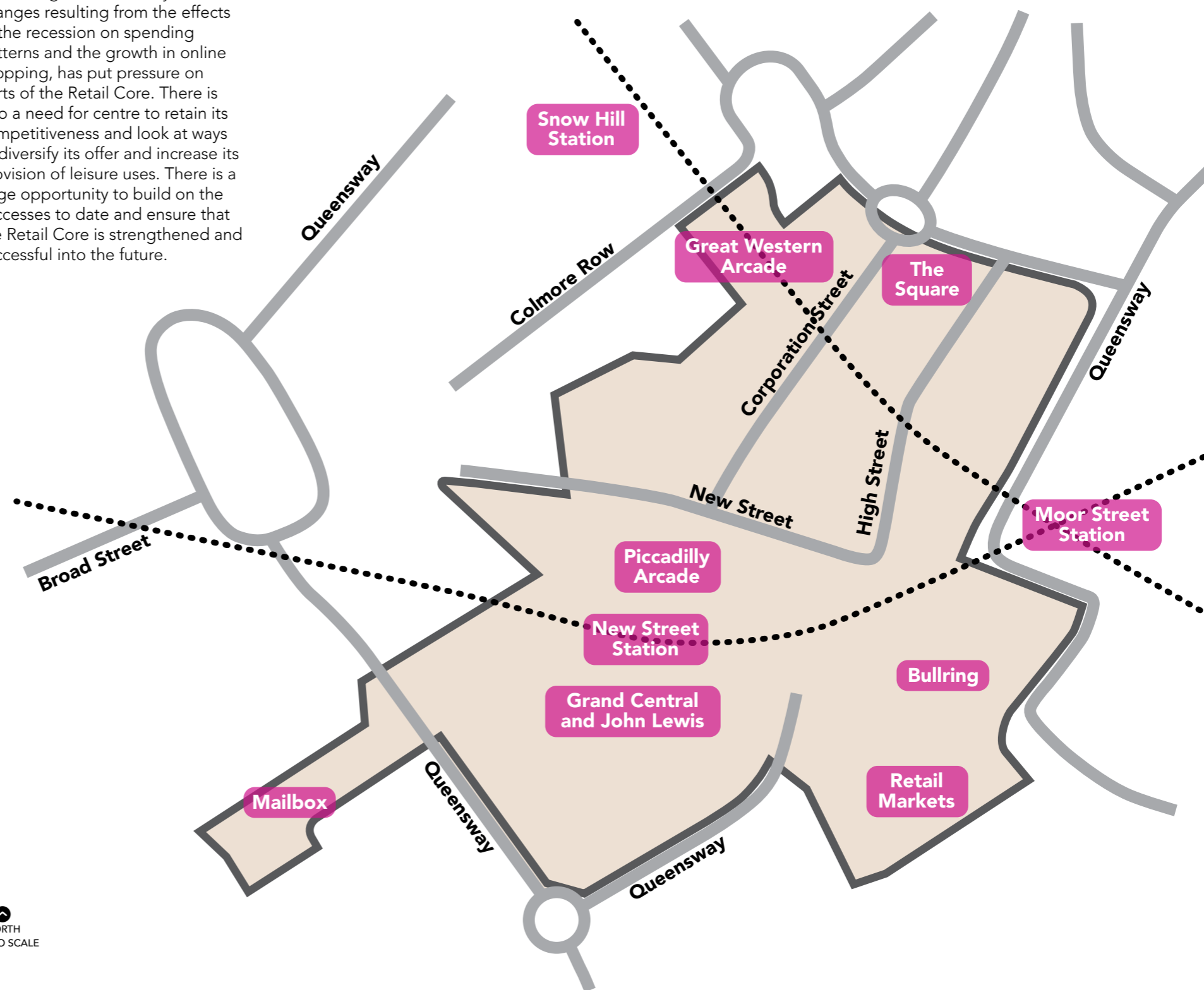
Clusters of independent and specialist retailers are located throughout the core such as those in the historic Great Western Arcade and Piccadilly Arcade that provide an interesting and unique shopping experience.

There is a value retail offer around The Square and the vibrant indoor and outdoor markets at the Bullring offer a wide variety of shops and services. Successful pockets of restaurants, bars and cafes can be found throughout the Retail Core, such as those around New Street and Bennett's Hill, support the shopping offer.

Over the last decade, the retail landscape has undergone a dramatic transformation driven by the successful redevelopment of the Bullring which created a high quality, modern shopping environment that has attracted many high profile retailers to the City. This has led to a shift in the focus of the Retail Core away from the traditional shopping areas of New Street, Corporation Street and High Street to the Bullring.

While parts of the traditional Retail Core, such as lower New Street and High Street, have coped well with this shift in emphasis, other destinations, such as Corporation Street, have suffered and show higher vacancy rates than elsewhere in the centre.

This, along with nationally felt changes resulting from the effects of the recession on spending patterns and the growth in online shopping, has put pressure on parts of the Retail Core. There is also a need for centre to retain its competitiveness and look at ways to diversify its offer and increase its provision of leisure uses. There is a huge opportunity to build on the successes to date and ensure that the Retail Core is strengthened and successful into the future.



- KEY**
- Retail Core boundary
  - Main highways
  - Rail lines

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PLAN 1 The Retail Core





# 3

## Context



context



Building on the vision of the Big City Plan, this Retail Strategy takes a comprehensive view of the Retail Core, planning for its future to ensure its integrity and attractiveness is maintained and position as a top destination is strengthened.

**Current developments**

Significant investment is already underway in the City Centre that will support the aspirations for the Retail Core, strengthening the offer and further raising its profile as a major destination.

This includes the recent completion of Grand Central, John Lewis and the investment in The Mailbox and Selfridges that is helping to transform the retail offer. The Retail Core is also benefitting from wider investment in the city centre, highlights include:

- The 180,000sq.m redevelopment of Paradise Circus will provide a combination of offices, leisure uses, cultural and civic amenities. It will deliver radical transformation removing the barrier between the Retail Core and key visitor attractions.

- Arena Central will deliver a 200,000sq.m landmark scheme comprising office space, leisure, retail, residential, hotel and leisure uses incorporating significant new public realm. HSBC will occupy the first office building with their regional headquarters.
- Birmingham City Centre Metro Extension will open late 2015 extending Metro from Snow Hill Station into the centre of the City to New Street Station. Further extensions to the network are planned to Centenary Square, Five Ways, the HS2 station Curzon and Digbeth.
- Ongoing investment in Interconnect is providing an easy to interpret and consistent means of finding your way around the City Centre integrated with public transport.

**Future proposals**

A number of future proposals will also contribute significantly to the overall aspirations for the centre as a vibrant destination for visitors and shoppers.

- Birmingham Smithfield will build on and strengthen the City's success as a top visitor destination. There is an opportunity to deliver vibrant markets, family leisure, public space, new pedestrian routes and integrated public transport.
- High Speed 2's arrival in Eastside in 2026 will significantly enhance the City's connectivity, creating a major new arrival point. It will act as a catalyst for development and regeneration activity.
- Martineau Galleries will become a new focal point following HS2's arrival as the key link between Eastside and the Colmore Business District. There is an opportunity for this area to become more focussed on office and residential orientated schemes.

**Wider city centre retail offer**

The primary retail focus is complemented by:

**Southside**

Southside has a rich mix of existing activities giving the area a unique spirit and vibrancy. The area is home to the Hippodrome Theatre, 'back-to-backs', Chinese Quarter and Gay Village. These provide significant cultural assets for the City Centre sitting alongside successful bars, restaurants, shops and residential apartments.

Investment is being made to further enhance the area's attraction as a destination for culture, entertainment and leisure. The transformation of New Street Station will vastly improve pedestrian connections from the City Centre Core to Southside. Hurst Street, Bromsgrove Street, Sherlock Street and Kent Street will be important pedestrian routes connecting many of the area's assets. Ground floor uses, activities, higher quality public realm and street trees will help transform these routes.

A new network of open spaces linked by the local walking routes will create an improved range of places that enrich Southside's character. This will include improvements to Theatre Place to deliver a higher quality and memorable setting for the Hippodrome Theatre and the 'back-to-back' houses. A new Village Square at the Gay Village end of Hurst Street is proposed where active uses will surround a green oasis for the area's residents and visitors.

**The Jewellery Quarter**

As an important part of the City's heritage the Jewellery Quarter has an exciting future as a location for businesses, residents and visitors. Its rich and varied character and range of uses is integral to the overall success of the City Centre. A Neighbourhood Plan is being produced for the area to guide future development. A focus on connections to the City Centre Core will be key.

“ Significant investment is already underway in the City Centre that will support the aspirations for the Retail Core ”





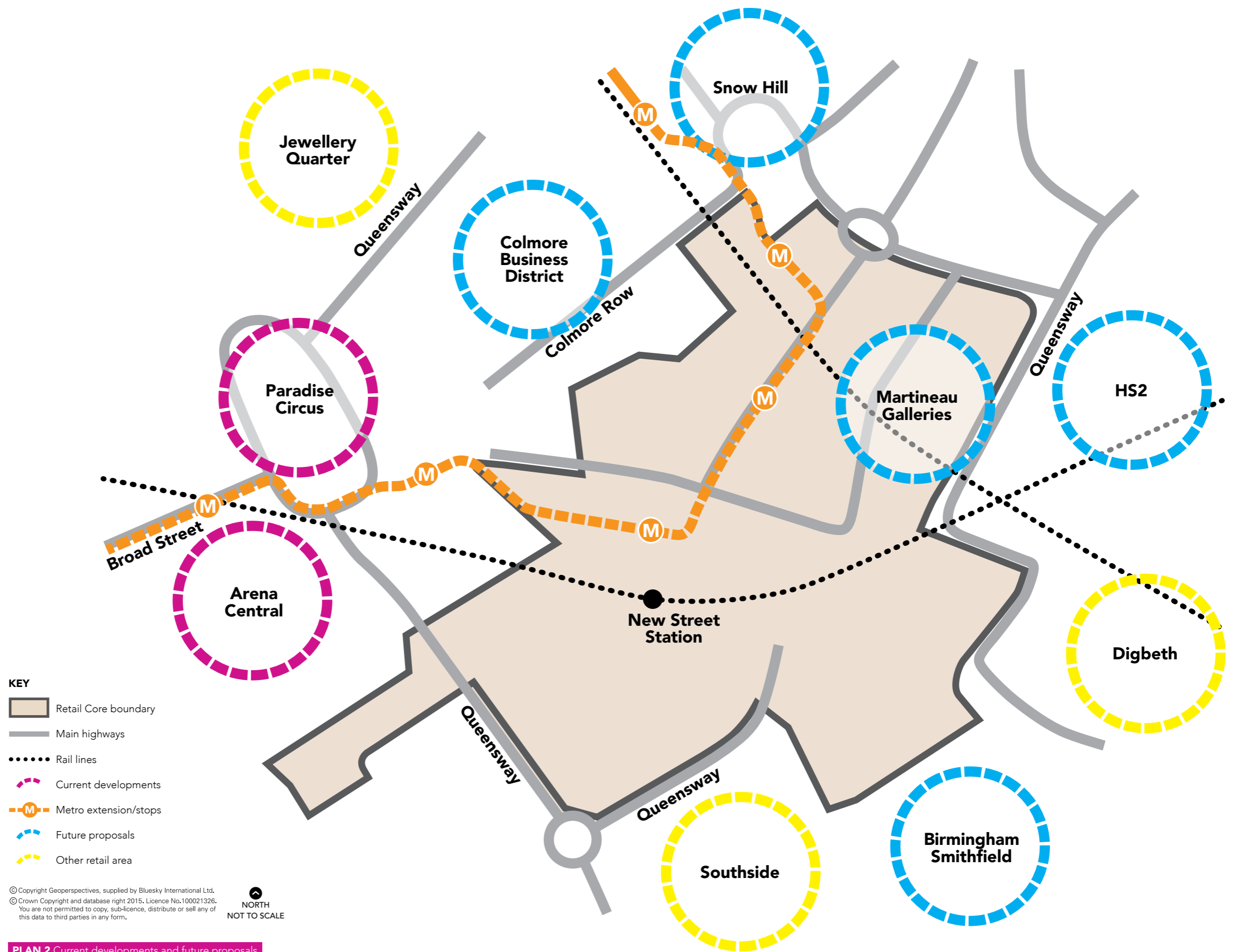
### Digbeth

Digbeth is a flourishing creative hub for the City, with a focus on digital, media and ICT industries. It is also home to a growing cluster of independent, niche and alternative retailers focused around The Custard Factory and Fazeley Studios. Alongside this sit a wealth of bars and pubs and the businesses and organisations of the Irish Quarter. These activities contribute to the thriving and vibrant nature of the City. Digbeth's proximity to HS2 will bring new impetus and activity to the area utilising its historic fabric and creating new places.

### Colmore Business District

Located to the north of the Retail Core is the City's business district which is home to one of the largest clusters of the business, professional and financial services sector outside London. The district is home to a selection of shops and services that cater to the business community. The expenditure generated by the business community here and throughout the City Centre is important to the success of the Retail Core.

A masterplan for the Snow Hill business area, adjacent to the Colmore Business District has been prepared. Covering both Snow Hill and Colmore area its identifies key opportunities for major investment. Proposals include the reconfiguration of Snow Hill Station to provide a greatly enhanced passenger experience and significant opportunities for office development that will take advantage of new pedestrian links and the improved transport interchange. Improved connections to the Jewellery Quarter will be emphasised.



PLAN 2 Current developments and future proposals





4  
 Creating a world-class destination

destination





# Creating a world-class destination

Two key strands are essential to creating a successful destination; creating an attractive environment with distinctive streets and places and delivering a unique and diverse offer.

This strategy focuses on these two strands to ensure the ambition is achieved.

### Creating an attractive and distinctive Retail Core

A City's public image is shaped by the quality of the public realm; attractive, safe and well maintained streets and spaces are essential to the success of the City. A City Centre and its different areas are defined by not only the buildings and uses, but the spaces between them.

A high quality environment, an attractive public realm, effective lighting, public art, convenient connections and the creation of an 'experience' is central to encouraging people to spend time and money within a City Centre and its strength and ability to secure investment.

People are using City Centres differently; from a 'get in and out' shopping experience, to one of

a broader leisure experience of shopping, eating, relaxing, working, browsing and culture. As a result, expectations of what a City Centre should offer are high, with visitors wanting to be inspired and excited by local character and culture, in a safe, relaxed and comfortable environment.

Research has identified that high quality surroundings and connections bring economic benefits to City Centres by attracting investment, increasing land and property values, attracting visitors, enhancing image and increasing tourism.

For a City to enhance its Retail Core to meet future demands, there needs to be a focus on creating an attractive and distinctive environment.

Public realm improvements that create a network of complementary, pedestrian friendly, clutter free streets and spaces of consistent quality will need to be delivered.

Transforming the look and feel of the streets within the Retail Core to create an experience that makes Birmingham one of the top retail destinations in the UK, is a priority.

The pedestrian schemes and public realm improvements of the 1990's transformed the look and feel of Birmingham's key streets and squares.

Twenty years later, the time has come to rejuvenate the public realm of these streets once again, to meet aspirations for an outstanding centre with distinctive, contemporary and sustainable streetscapes.

Consultation with City Centre stakeholders emphasised this, with a consensus that the centre's image needs to be improved. High quality public realm, centre management, and a safe and secure experience are ways to make these improvements.

### Creating a unique and diverse offer

A range of shops and services and a unique and diverse offer is the second key strand to creating an outstanding experience. Offering a distinctive and unique range of shops and services that includes mainstream retailers as well as a range of other retailers is important in creating a City Centre that stands apart from others and appeals to as wide an audience as possible.

Leisure and cultural uses, in the form of food and beverage (cafés, bars and restaurants), and family-friendly attractions (cinemas, bowling alleys, street festivals, museums, art galleries and music venues) are an important part of an experience, encouraging people to stay longer in a centre and complementing the retail function. Visitors now come to centres for a 'day out' looking to eat, drink and visit the cinema or an exhibition, for example, as well as shop. Centres must redefine themselves as destinations for shopping, culture and leisure, diversifying and strengthening all aspects of their offer in order to attract visitors.

It will be important that the offer on the shopping streets and within the Retail Core is broadened to attract visitors to shop and explore its entirety. Expanding the range and choice of activity within the Retail Core to create a unique and diverse offer is central to creating the lively mix of experiences that lead to the creation of a destination of choice.

“ A city's public image is shaped by the quality of the public realm ”



A high quality public realm will be sought in the Retail Core similar to that delivered on Church Street



Birmingham has done very well at creating a strong mainstream offer. Bullring, The Mailbox, John Lewis and Grand Central are the Retail Core's prime retail destinations, anchoring the core with the strong mainstream and high-end offer and high quality, modern environment. Continuing to attract high profile names to the City, their success will benefit the whole of the Retail Core through improved connections along New Street and Corporation Street and between the different character areas.

Focus will need to be placed on attracting a variety of retailers to the core. This will build on the success of existing independent, niche and specialist retailers in the City Centre, such as those in the Piccadilly, Great Western and Burlington Arcades.

The Retail Core has a successful and growing food and beverage offer located in clusters on Spicel Street, New Street, Bennett's Hill, Temple Street, John Bright Street and The Mailbox. These clusters will need to be further expanded

and increased provision sought throughout the Retail Core. Family-friendly leisure attractions are, however, lacking.

The expansion of the food and beverage offer and the provision of family-friendly attractions will be needed throughout the Retail Core, to encourage shoppers to stay longer in the centre and encourages more families to visit.

*“ Focus will be placed on attracting a variety of retailers to the core ”*







5  
Achieving the ambition

achieving



# Achieving the ambition

The ambition for the Retail Core is to ensure that it continues to be one of the top retail destinations in the UK providing an outstanding experience, with a unique and diverse offer set within an attractive high quality environment.

Across the Retail Core a range of interventions and actions will be taken to deliver the ambition.

## Improving the environment

- Support the improvement of the public realm and environment through the production and implementation of a Public Realm Strategy for the City Centre. The Strategy will support the delivery of a high quality environment that builds upon the distinct identities of the centre's different areas and destinations.
- Rationalise and remove the clutter of advertising and street signs.
- Actively seek to improve the quality of frontages and signage through the production of detailed guidance to promote improvements that raise the quality and contribute to an improved street scene.
- Working proactively with groups who use our streets to manage their presence.
- As part of wider connectivity improvements for the City Centre, support and promote the rationalisation of vehicular traffic on key streets in the Retail Core to create pedestrian friendly environments that are accessible to all.
- Continue to support initiatives that deliver the Interconnect Birmingham, Vision for Movement and Birmingham Connected strategies.

- Promote a joined up approach to ensure the Retail Core does not develop in isolation and is well connected to the wider City Centre in particular Digbeth, the Jewellery Quarter and Southside.

## Diversifying the offer

- Delivering Birmingham Smithfield to create a vibrant new destination for the City that builds on the success of the centre and its existing attractions. Birmingham Smithfield will be home to vibrant markets, family leisure, new public spaces, pedestrian routes and integrated public transport.
- Promote the further diversification of the retail offer throughout the Retail Core through the implementation of Policy TP22 'Small shops and independent retailing' of the Birmingham Development Plan. Seeking a range of retail premises in new development will be important in meeting all potential needs.
- Independent and niche retailers will be supported throughout the City Centre, particularly in key areas of Digbeth, Jewellery Quarter, Southside and the Cathedral Walks, in which they are currently located. A review will be commissioned to look at how best to support the diversification of the retail offer and support such retailers to create of a truly unique and vibrant Retail Core.

- Support the introduction of family leisure uses throughout the Retail Core implementing Policy TP23 'Promotion of diversity of uses within centres' of the Birmingham Development Plan.
- Cafés, bars and restaurants will be encouraged around new squares and spaces with the opportunity to spill out. Regulatory arrangements will be reviewed to seek to support this.
- Promote a strong working relationship with landlords and maintain a flexible approach to lease arrangements, planning and licensing to promote the diversification of an appropriate offer and reduce the number of vacancies. This could be achieved by seeking alternative uses for units and introducing flexibility into lease arrangements. As a City Centre landlord, the Council will look at its own landholdings to spearhead this flexible approach.
- As part of mixed-use developments or building conversions encourage more residential apartments throughout the City Centre on upper floors to create a larger residential population that will support shops and services and enliven the heart of the City. In encouraging a mix of uses, consideration will be given to the needs of both residents and businesses

## Management

- Continue to promote a coherent partnership approach to the management of the City Centre including its function in the operation, maintenance and enforcement of initiatives.
- Co-ordination of key Council services to ensure a pro-active and positive approach is established to managing the environment.
- Improve the public realm through better maintenance and management of street cleaning, lighting, hard surfaces, street furniture and planting.

## Promotion and branding

- Provide a co-ordinated approach to promoting and branding the City Centre as a unique visitor destination to a world wide audience.
- Improve the quality, offer and utilisation of public spaces for events to enhance the role as a visitor destination. Supporting festivals, street markets and quality street entertainers to create a lively and vibrant street scene.





**Distinctive character areas**

Alongside its overall offer, part of the attractiveness of the Retail Core are its distinctive character areas.

The Retail Core is comprised of five distinctive character areas offering a varied shopping experience, from specialist retailers in the Cathedral Walks, high street retailers at the Bullring to the Mailbox's high-end offer.

Each of the distinctive character areas are defined by their own particular characteristics and strengths:

- New Street and Corporation Street are Birmingham's prime shopping streets, offering a variety of shops and services. They form key walking routes linking the different areas of the Retail Core.
- The historic streets of Cathedral Walks are home to a range of independent, niche and specialist retailers.
- Grand Central, John Lewis, Bullring and The Mailbox provide a strong shopping offer, with many high profile retailers and leisure uses set in a high-quality environment.
- The environment of High Street and Martineau Galleries will be refocused with High Speed 2's arrival at Eastside.
- Birmingham Smithfield presents the opportunity to create a new, mixed use, visitor destination and a vibrant markets and family leisure quarter for the City Centre.

Within each area a number of actions will be implemented to help these places thrive and maximise their potential, positively contributing to delivering the overall ambition. This builds upon the core-wide actions.

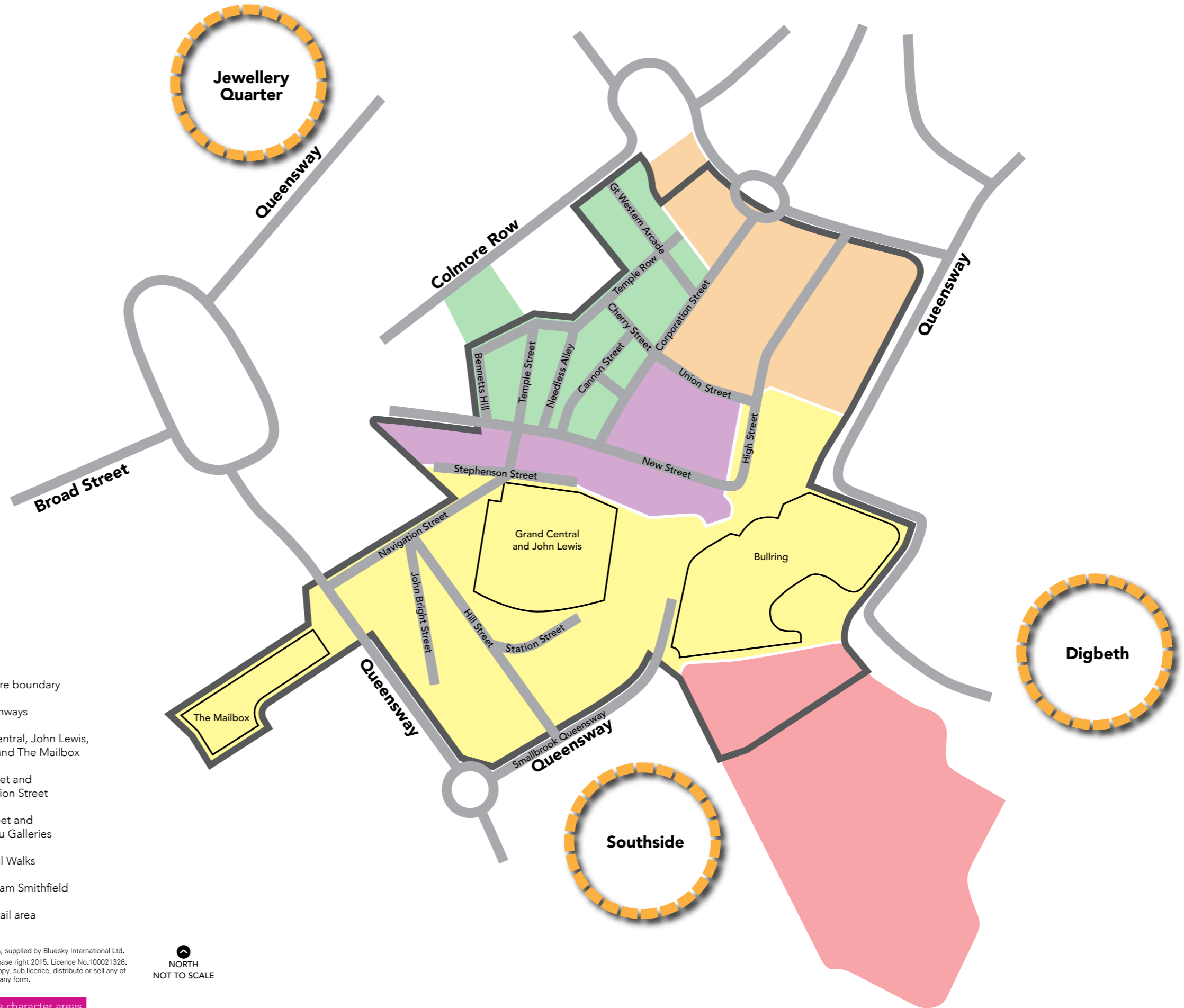
**KEY**

- Retail Core boundary
- Main highways
- Grand Central, John Lewis, Bullring and The Mailbox
- New Street and Corporation Street
- High Street and Martineau Galleries
- Cathedral Walks
- Birmingham Smithfield
- Other retail area

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NORTH  
NOT TO SCALE

**PLAN 3** Distinctive character areas





Key interventions

- Public realm and environmental improvements to New Street and Corporation Street will be sought in order to create a high-quality shopping experience and to strengthen their role as the Retail Core's prime shopping streets.
- The diversification of uses to include cafés and restaurants will be encouraged and supported.



Introduction to the area

New Street and Corporation Street are Birmingham's prime shopping streets. New Street is the City Centre's most prominent street, offering a range of shops and services; it is the key walking route linking the civic heart of the City at Victoria Square to the Bullring. It comes to life with regular markets and events throughout the year.

Corporation Street is the second of the City Centre's core walking routes between New Street Station and Aston University. Home to the House of Fraser department store and linking into the Cathedral Walks shopping area, it provides a key connection between the mainstream shopping offer and the wider offer.

Strengthening New Street and Corporation Street as the Retail Core's prime shopping streets offering a high-quality shopping experience, will be important in creating an outstanding destination.

New Street and Corporation Street will need to offer a dynamic, stress-free, safe, high quality shopping experience that visitors will remember and keep coming back to, and where retailers will want to invest.

It will be important that they connect into a wider network of shopping streets and areas as well as the business, civic and leisure elements of the City Centre. By strengthening these two principal

streets the links across the wider Retail Core will be improved and better connected into the City's leisure and economic activity.

Vision for the area

The streetscape will be rejuvenated, opportunities will be sought to redesign and upgrade the streets extending the quality and feel of the Bullring along New Street to the transformed environment around New Street Gateway, up to Victoria Square and Paradise Circus. The look and feel of Corporation Street will be transformed with the introduction of Metro and the public realm improvements it will bring.

A quality, clutter free environment will be essential. Paving materials will be of a simpler layout, preferably with natural stone to provide a high quality finish and feel to the environment. Street furniture will be minimal and consistent. A commitment to reducing and rationalising the clutter of advertising, street signs and market stalls, particularly on New Street, will be implemented through the use of enforcement powers. Options to prune or replace the existing street trees along New Street will be considered.

In the longer term, consideration will be given to the use of these streets as event space as part of a wider strategy of cultural activities in the City Centre. Through this

“ By strengthening these two principal streets the links across the wider Retail Core will be improved ”

strategy the quality, offer and utilisation of public spaces for events will be strengthened to enhance the Centre as a visitor destination.

The reconfiguration of units on New Street and Corporation Street will be supported to create larger floorplates in order to attract occupiers to the area. The reconfiguration and improvement of the units that form the block bounded by New Street, High Street, Union Street and Corporation Street will be encouraged. The location of restaurants and cafés that spill out onto these streets will be supported to introduce further vibrancy to the street scene.

New Street and the surrounding streets, Bennett's Hill, Temple Street and Lower Temple Street

are home to a successful cluster of restaurants, pubs and bars. This cluster forms a destination for eating and socialising between Bullring and Paradise Circus as well as drawing visitors up into the Cathedral Walks. The strengthening and growth of this cluster will be supported as a key part of the City Centre's leisure offer.

The residential apartments above the retail unit on the corner of New Street and Temple Street bring activity to this part of the centre outside of the working day. The further introduction of residential uses on upper floors along these streets will be promoted, contributing to the creation of a larger City Centre residential population that will support shops and services and enliven the heart of the centre.



- Key interventions**
- Public realm improvements to create a high quality and vibrant environment.
  - Supporting established retailers and encouraging new retailers to locate in the area to strengthen the unique offer.
  - Branding and promoting the area as the home of specialist and niche shopping.



**Introduction to the area**  
 The historic Cathedral Walks area comprises the streets between New Street and St Philip’s Cathedral including Bennett’s Hill, Cannon Street and Temple Street. The area has successfully established itself as home to independent and specialist retailers, such as those in Great Western Arcade, and is complimented by cafés, bars and restaurants serving office workers, visitors and shoppers. Existing residential uses on upper floors bring added life and vibrancy to the area.

Strengthening the role of the Cathedral Walks will be important for the ongoing success of the Retail Core.

The footfall generated by the business community, due to the area’s location at the meeting point between the Colmore Business District and the Retail Core, the historic quality of the streetscape, smaller and characterful retail units and pedestrianised streets make the Cathedral Walks the ideal location for independent and specialist retailers.

**Vision for the area**  
 The Cathedral Walks will be well established as a destination in the Retail Core. The area will offer a unique, interesting and high quality shopping experience that will draw visitors and shoppers from throughout the City Centre with each of the streets having its own unique feel and focus.

The area will have a vibrant feel and a high quality environment will be essential in achieving this. The street environment will be transformed, using a palette of coherent, high quality materials, street furniture, trees and lighting, to respect the area’s authentic historic character and reinforce local distinctiveness.

Historic shop frontages will be given prominence in the street scene. The improvement of the quality of shop frontages and signage will be sought to emphasise the area’s historic setting. Signage that announces arrival into the Cathedral Walks at key entrance points, such as Cannon Street, Cherry Street and Fore Street, will be key in drawing shoppers into the area. Design guidance will be provided to steer these improvements.

Pedestrians will be prioritised and streets, such as Temple Street, will be rejuvenated to provide clear pedestrian links drawing people from the high quality environment of New Street Station into the Cathedral Walks, an area of equivalent quality and interest, and towards St Philip’s Square.

Cannon Street, with its historic buildings and characterful shop frontages, will be enhanced, upgraded and branded as one of the area’s principal shopping streets. Its character will be

capitalised on to create an attractive, vibrant street that links to and forms a shopping circuit with Cherry Street, Temple Row, Needless Alley and Temple Street.

Walking links between Cathedral Walks and the Jewellery Quarter, through Colmore Business District via Church Street, Great Charles Street and Newhall Street, will be enhanced, linking these two areas of specialist retailing. Connections will be identified through the Snow Hill Masterplan and Jewellery Quarter Neighbourhood Plan.

The House of Fraser department store, a destination for premium fashion, beauty and homeware brands, is located in a prominent position on the corner of St Philip’s Square and the top of Corporation Street. The potential to reconfigure the store, in particular the ground floor, and enhance signage to create a lively frontage that entices shoppers into the store

and to the Cathedral Walks area will be supported. Opportunities to reconfigure upper floors and introduce new uses should be fully explored.

The introduction of leisure uses throughout the area will be encouraged and the continued success of the clusters of restaurants and bars on Temple Street and Bennett’s Hill will be supported through public realm improvements to allow more street activity. The high quality walking links between these clusters and New Street Station will encourage visitors into the area.

Branding, promoting and managing Cathedral Walks as a destination and place to visit for anyone exploring the City Centre will be essential in strengthening the area. This will be achieved by working in partnership with retailers and occupiers, Marketing and Visit Birmingham and the Retail BID.

“ The area will have a vibrant feel and a high quality environment ”



- Key interventions**
- Public realm improvements to create a high quality, modern shopping environment that extends around the Retail Core.
  - Capitalise on the investments made in the area, to strengthen and spread their benefits.



**Introduction to the area**  
 Grand Central, John Lewis, Bullring and The Mailbox sit at the heart of the Retail Core. Bullring and The Mailbox have been at the centre of Birmingham’s success in establishing itself as one of the top shopping destinations in the country.

The Bullring provides a high quality, modern shopping environment anchored by Selfridges and home to many high profile retailers such as Hollister, Reiss and Michael Kors. Since opening in 2003, the Bullring is a big draw for shoppers visiting the City. Thriving restaurants, cafes and bars support the shopping offer - Spicetail Street is home to Jamie’s Italian, Wagamama and Browns amongst others. As part of the £800 million Bullring development city landmarks such as the Rotunda, Moor Street Station, St Martin’s Church and the retail markets were restored, revitalised and incorporated into public squares and spaces. Bullring links into the busy shopping streets of High Street and lower New Street, home to the Pavillions and key retailers such as Marks and Spencer and Boots.

The Mailbox, anchored by Harvey Nichols, is the destination for premium and high-end shopping and leisure in the Retail Core, with high profile retailers such as L.K.Bennett, Jaeger and Emporio Armani. Attracting visitors to the City Centre, it is home to a very successful canalside restaurant and bar offer, which plays a key role in enhancing the City Centre.

Capitalising on the redevelopment of New Street Station to deliver a bright, modern transport hub for the City, The Mailbox’s £50 million refurbishment includes an enlarged Harvey Nichols store and new Everyman Cinema. The refurbishment further enhances The Mailbox’s position as the Retail Core’s premium shopping and leisure destination and harnesses the opportunity to provide a high-end, luxury offer in the City.

Birmingham is continuing to strengthen this offer through the transformation of the Pallasades Shopping Centre to create Grand Central Birmingham.

Grand Central is a premium shopping destination anchored by the largest John Lewis department store outside of London. As well as retail, Grand Central provides a range of cafes and restaurants. The development of Grand Central is part of the £600 million investment in the redevelopment of New Street Station.



*“ Thriving restaurants, cafes and bars support the shopping offer ”*



**Vision for the area**

Through investments in Bullring, The Mailbox, Grand Central and John Lewis, Birmingham will continue to transform its retail offer and visitor experience to create a successful and vibrant centre. Together these developments provide a strong focus for the Retail Core and reinforcing Birmingham’s position as a top retail destination.

These successes will be built upon to ensure the ongoing vibrancy of the City Centre. This will be achieved through the delivery of strong connections between Grand Central, John Lewis, Bullring

and The Mailbox and the wider Retail Core. New entrances to New Street Station, Grand Central and John Lewis will open out onto high quality public spaces and streetscapes on Hill Street, Stephenson Street and Navigation Street improving connectivity and enhancing the visitor experience.

The link between New Street and The Mailbox will be strengthened and clearly signposted to draw visitors to the area. High-quality paving, wall treatments, street furniture and lighting will be used to create an outstanding arrival experience.

Improvement of the canal-side routes that link The Mailbox with Brindleyplace and the business tourism generated by the ICC will be explored. Improved signage, lighting and footways will be sought to further enhance this pleasant link.

The further diversification of the offer to allow for more food, beverage and leisure uses in the area will be supported. Restaurants, cafes and bars will enliven key routes, encouraging shoppers to spend more time in the Retail Core.

Enhanced public realm and pedestrian links across the Smallbrook and Suffolk Street Queensways, will allow shoppers to move easily between the station, John Lewis and Grand Central, The Mailbox and the leisure and cultural attractions of Southside, such as the Hippodrome, Arcadian, Chinese Quarter and Gay Village. Public realm improvements and the creation of a vibrant leisure offer will be essential to creating links between this area, the Retail Core and Southside, encouraging the flow of shoppers and visitors between them.

The integration of the wider Retail Core with these developments will allow other areas to tap into this success. Of equal importance will be connections north into the wider City Centre Core with targeted public realm improvements.

“ *New entrances to New Street Station, Grand Central and John Lewis will open out onto high quality public spaces and streetscapes* ”

John Bright Street, for example, is a pedestrianised street located next to New Street Station, with good quality public realm and historic buildings. It is a location for both residential and leisure uses. A mix of uses on such streets will be important in bringing diversity and life to the centre with the relationship between uses carefully managed.

It is growing as a location for restaurants, cafés and bars anchored by the casino and the New Alexandra Theatre. John Bright Street will be supported as a destination for leisure uses and links made with Southside. The transformation of streets such as John Bright Street will be important in providing a diverse range of uses in the Retail Core. Of equal importance will be connections north into the wider City Centre Core with targeted public realm improvements.





- Key interventions**
- Supporting the remodelling of High Street to create a revitalised environment and to fully integrate the Retail Core into the Eastside and Digbeth Quarters.
  - Supporting the transformation of the Martineau Galleries area to capitalise on its new role as a key link between Eastside and the Colmore Business District.
  - Working with landowners and developers to bring forward a development brief for this area that will support and maximise the opportunities for development presented by HS2's arrival.



**Introduction to the area**

High Speed 2's arrival at Eastside will create a new focal point within the City Centre, providing the opportunity to unlock a range of development opportunities and accelerate regeneration initiatives in Eastside, Digbeth and the Retail Core. The Birmingham Curzon HS2 Masterplan (July 2015), prepared by the City Council, sets out the overarching ambitions for maximising these opportunities by identifying 6 'Places for Growth' which include the High Street and Martineau Galleries area of the Retail Core.

This part of the Retail Core will become a transition zone between the wider Retail Core, a predominantly retail and mixed use area, and the Central Business District. Pedestrian connections will be vital to enlivening routes and spaces in the area.

**Vision for the area**

High Street will become a key route for shoppers and visitors arriving in the City Centre from Birmingham Curzon Station. This provides a great opportunity to revitalise the environment in this location through the remodelling of key blocks to integrate the Retail Core into the Eastside and Digbeth Quarters and refresh the public realm to create a more contemporary character.

Martineau Galleries, which comprises The Square and surrounding blocks, will become a key link between Birmingham Curzon and the Colmore Business District. Providing a significant opportunity to transform this area, with potential for a mixed use, office, residential and leisure orientated scheme.

A new high quality pedestrian linkage between High Street and Rotunda Square and the proposed new Station Square outside, Birmingham Curzon Station, are proposed as part of the HS2 proposals. The new link through the Pavilions block will connect Birmingham Curzon to High Street and through to New Street Station. It will help to integrate this area with the Bullring and through to Southern Gateway.

Reformatted department stores or a smaller retail and restaurant offer will be developed on High Street. Redevelopment will provide a stronger frontage to Moor Street with a greater sense of activity and enclosure, contributing to the overall delivery of a high quality experience as part of the Birmingham Curzon station.

Martineau Galleries will become a location for prime offices, unlocking the potential of key blocks in the area with the opportunity for large

*“ High Street will become a key route for shoppers and visitors arriving in the City Centre ”*

floorplate Grade A office space immediately opposite Birmingham Curzon station. Buildings will be set around new, high quality public squares and spaces, with strong pedestrian links through the development. Shops, restaurants, cafés and bars will enliven the ground floors of this key route. Residential uses on upper floors will be encouraged. The development will become an extension to the Colmore Business District and Snow Hill to the west.

An extension to the Metro network will serve this area with a new station at Albert Street, fronting onto the new Birmingham Curzon Station Square at Moor Street. This will connect this part of the Retail Core with New Street Station and Centenary Square.

Pedestrian connections between High Street and Martineau Galleries, leading on to the wider City Centre including Union Street,

will be enhanced. Station Square and Moor Street will become a new high quality pedestrian destination space fronting Birmingham Curzon station and surrounded by new development including the new pedestrian route through the Pavilions focussed on the landmark Rotunda. Paternoster Place, a wide public space, will transform pedestrian connections into Digbeth and create gateway development opportunities.

Setting a single vision and direction for the future of the area in a development brief is central to delivering the redevelopment of this area as it will provide clarity to landowners and developers in formulating their plans and bringing forward development. The brief will build on the Birmingham Curzon HS2 Masterplan and focus will be placed on working with landowners and developers to secure development in the area that will respond to its new role.



#### Key interventions

- Developing a framework to guide change in Birmingham Smithfield to ensure that the opportunity presented by the relocation of the Wholesale Markets is capitalised on.
- Ensuring that future development supports the strengths of the Retail Core and diversifies the offer.



#### Introduction to the area

Birmingham Smithfield covers 14 hectares of land bringing together a comprehensive site that includes the Wholesale Markets, which is planned to be relocated to new premises, the Bull Ring Markets and Moat Lane gyratory.

By bringing this site together there is an opportunity to reimagine this part of the City Centre, retaining and strengthening such assets as the Bull Ring Markets and introducing new uses and attractions.

Harnessing the development opportunity presented by the Wholesale Markets relocation is important in capitalising on the success of the centre and its existing attractions and securing further diversity in the City Centre's offer.

The City Council are producing a masterplan for Birmingham Smithfield. The first stage of this was the launch of the Birmingham Smithfield Visioning Document in March 2015.

The redevelopment of Birmingham Smithfield will act as a catalyst for the wider transformation of the Southern Gateway area of the centre.

#### Vision for the area

The masterplan will respond to the area's advantageous location on the doorstep of the Bullring, proximity of New Street Station, Grand Central/John Lewis and next to the culture and vibrancy of Southside and Digbeth. It will build on the high level vision set out in the Big City Plan which envisages that the area will form a thriving part of the City Centre with opportunities for markets, family orientated leisure and entertainment, complementary retail and residential.

The centrepiece of the area will be a new public square that will create a focus for local culture, leisure and performance around which a diverse variety of uses and activities will be encouraged including a new visitor attraction that enhances the City's profile as a visitor destination. The provision of family leisure attractions will be important in drawing more visitors to the City Centre and more dwell time. Cafés, bars and restaurants will be encouraged around new squares and spaces with the opportunity to spill out.

The City's vibrant retail markets are an important part of the Retail Core's shopping offer. Its profile as a destination for markets shopping will be raised by encouraging new niche and themed traders to complement and extend the existing market offer.

As part of this opportunity it is envisaged that new residential neighbourhoods will be created contributing to the Big City Plan's aspiration to increase the City Centre's residential population. New housing should be attractive to families, complementing the existing largely apartment-based residential community which will be expanded closer to and within the City Centre Core.

Through the redevelopment, the historic street pattern will be restored and enhanced, with a clear hierarchy of street use and character. Pedestrians will be prioritised and the use of shared surfaces explored. Strong, attractive walkable routes with wide pavements and street trees will link Highgate and Camp Hill to the heart of the City Centre. Clear pedestrian connections will be

made across the area, connecting Southside to Digbeth, HS2 and beyond. Public transport will be focused on the High Street, Sherlock Street and Bradford Street.

Contemporary streetscape design, street furniture and distinctive lighting of places and buildings will provide visual interest, encourage use, enhance safety and create a sense of place.

The relocation of the Wholesale Markets is a priority for the City Council and will kick start the regeneration of the wider Southern Gateway area. In the short to medium term the focus will be on securing the relocation of the Wholesale Markets. A masterplan will be brought forward for consultation in Spring 2016 to guide the development of the area.

“ The relocation of the Wholesale Markets is a priority for the City Council ”



GRAND CENTRAL



6

Delivery

delivery



The delivery of this strategy has four elements:

- Working in partnership.
- Embedding the strategy in the statutory planning process.
- Utilising the strategy to secure funding.
- Setting and delivering priorities.

**Working in partnership**

The strategy will not just be the City Council’s vision for the Retail Core, but one owned by a range of public and private sector organisations. This is vital as delivering the strategy requires a partnership approach focusing effort and resources.

This will be achieved by:

- Continued cooperation and joint working with the Birmingham City Centre Partnership and City Centre Business Improvement Districts to deliver the fine grain improvements.
- Joint working with Marketing Birmingham on branding and marketing the City Centre’s visitor offer, its distinctive character areas and the opportunities for investment within it.
- Strengthening links with the private sector through the creation of stakeholder bodies for the Retail Core.
- Partnership working with residents and stakeholder groups in the delivery of improvements.

Key to the strategy’s success will be ensuring that new development and investment helps to strengthen the centre as an outstanding destination and improve its environment for all those who shop, visit, trade, live and work in the City Centre. Working in partnership with these stakeholders is central to ensuring that the strategy is successful.

**Statutory planning**

The principles of this strategy will be reflected in the statutory planning process through the Birmingham Development Plan and through the preparation of planning documents for Birmingham Smithfield and Public Realm, Streetscape and Way Finding. The preparation of these planning documents will be a priority for 2015/2016.

**Securing funding**

Having clear ambitions is vital to securing funding. The production of the Big City Plan enabled the City Council and Local Enterprise Partnership to secure Enterprise Zone (EZ) status for the City Centre and the funding this status brings

with it, to enable public realm and connectivity improvements. Local Transport Board and Local Growth Fund monies have been secured for making public realm enhancements and improving connections in the City Centre. The clear ambitions for the Retail Core set out in this Retail Strategy, will enable any future funding sources, to be bid for and secured on the basis of a clear strategy and set of priorities.

**Setting and delivering priorities**

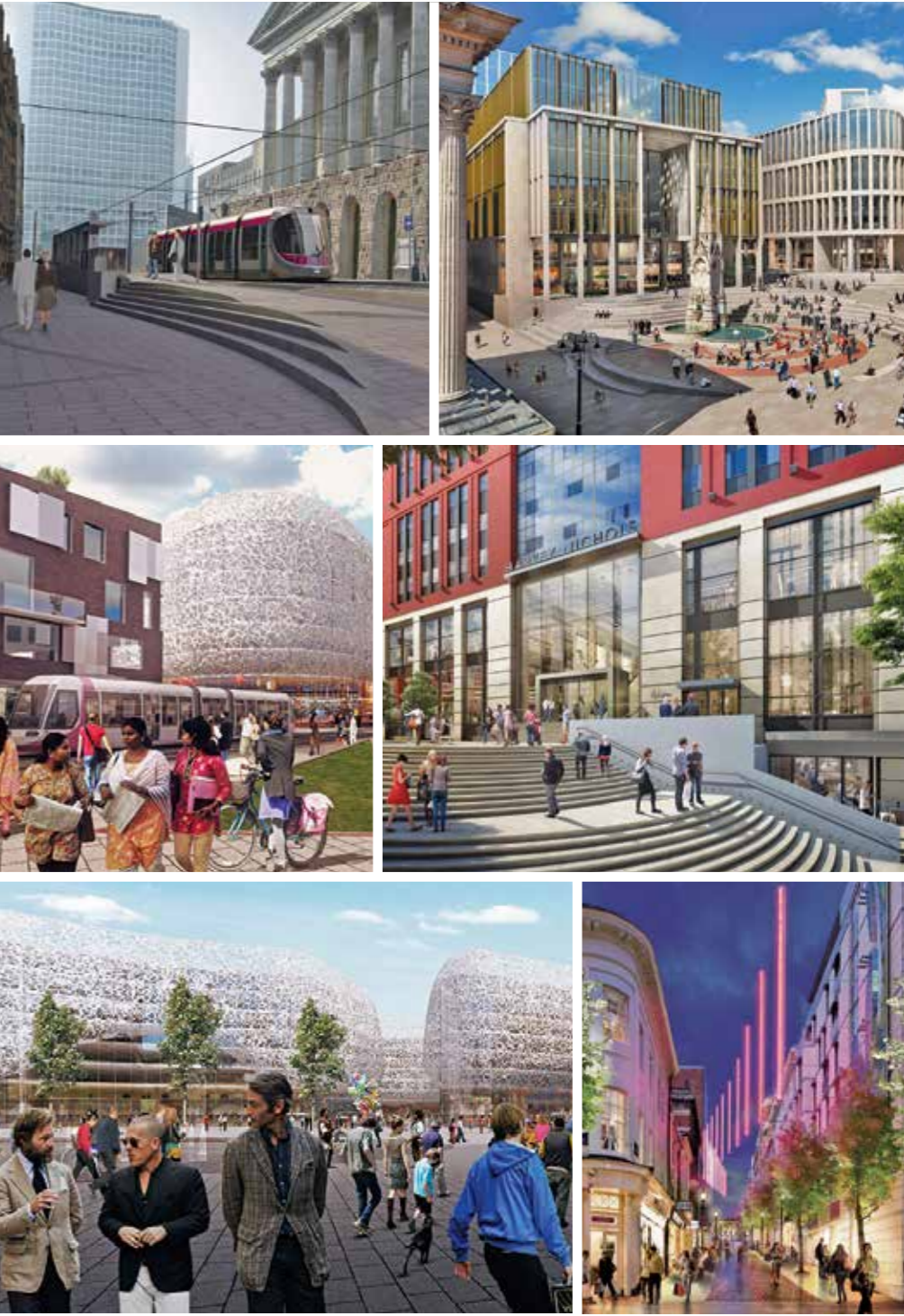
Action plans will be produced to set out detailed interventions to secure the changes envisaged.

**Delivery timeline**

The following are some of the headline milestones for activity:

- EZ Connectivity Programme 2015.
- New Street Gateway completes 2015.
- Metro extension completes end 2015.
- John Lewis opens 2015.
- Grand Central opens 2015.
- Paradise Circus starts 2015.
- Public Realm Strategy in place 2016.
- Birmingham Smithfield Masterplan 2016.
- Selfridges renovations complete 2017.
- Wholesale Markets relocated 2017.
- HS2 completes 2026.

Delivering our ambitions for the Retail Core will require a focused approach building on its current strengths and diversifying its offer. Through a partnership approach and pooling resources we can deliver a destination that befits the aspirations for the City. This can only be achieved through the involvement of the wider Birmingham community; businesses, landowners and developers, residents, our public sector partners and the citizens of Birmingham.



“ Having clear ambitions is vital to securing funding ”

**Waheed Nazir**  
Director of Planning and Regeneration  
Birmingham City Council









**'City Centre Retail Strategy'**

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