



MIX MANCHESTER

MIX Manchester Draft Strategic Regeneration Framework 2024



Introduction

Framework Area

Airport City North (to be rebranded as MIX Manchester under these proposals) is located c.400m to the north of Manchester Airport and c.12km to the south of the city centre, separated from the Airport by the M56 and A555 Ringway Road West which runs along the southern boundary of the site. The site is surrounded to the north by the well-established residential community of Wythenshawe, to the east by the existing employment uses at Manchester Business Park, by Manchester Airport to the south and to the north by the existing greenspace at Painswick Park.

Partners

MIX Manchester is being promoted by a joint venture partnership, established in 2014 and comprising Columbia Threadneedle Investments, Manchester Airports Group, Beijing Construction Engineering Group International, and Greater Manchester Pension Fund. A team of leading architects and property specialists are supporting the partners to help deliver MIX.

Purpose & Status

The Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) will guide development to ensure that proposals come forward in a coordinated manner in line with the overarching vision and objectives. The SRF positions MIX as a highly sustainable development which widens access to jobs and skills, improves local connectivity, and supports the continued growth of the region's innovation sector.

The SRF aligns closely with Manchester City Council and GMCA's strategic priorities for the local area and wider city-region. The SRF will not form part of the Development Plan for Manchester, however once approved it will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

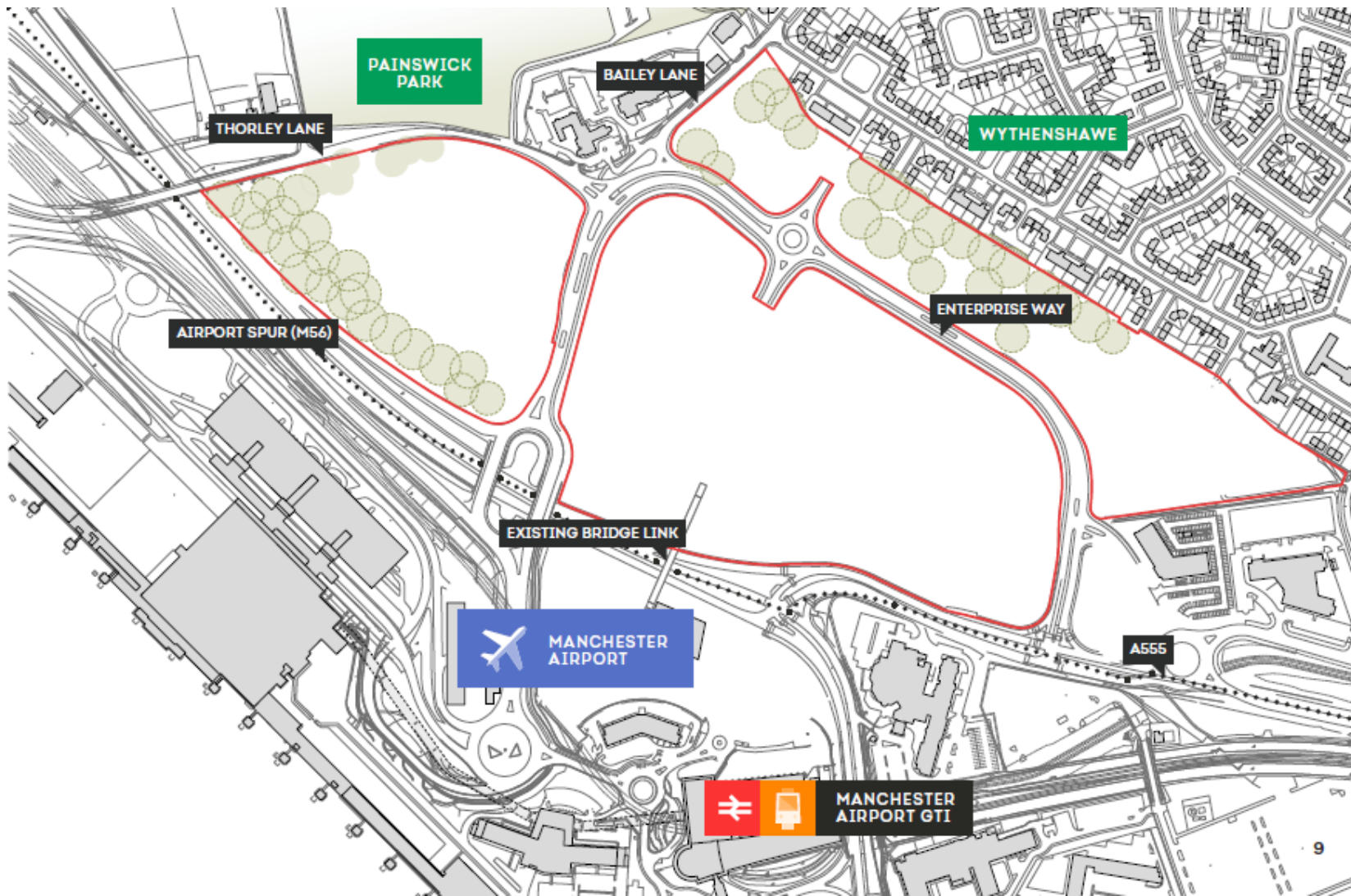


Figure 1 Red Line Plan

Background

The Story So Far – Airport City

The Framework area has historically been known as Airport City North, which covers a substantial part of the wider Airport City estate. Progress to date at Airport City has included:

- **Manchester Airport City Enterprise Zone** – MCC adopted a Framework Plan in October 2012 which sets out a high level economic and spatial plan.
- **Airport City North** – An office-led masterplan was developed by 5Plus Architects in 2012. The proposal received outline planning consent in 2012, however this lapsed in 2015. Several individual plots have since gained full planning permission, and some work has commenced.
- **Footbridge** – A new pedestrian footbridge was opened in 2021, forming an attractive, walkable connection through to the Airport and Ground Transport Interchange (GTI).
- **Hotel District** – Historically considered as part of Airport City North, recent development has included a new Holiday Inn and ibis Budget, along with TRIBE which is under construction.
- **Global Logistics** – Established as a prime logistics site providing significant local employment.

The Opportunity – MIX

Since the adoption of the Airport City Enterprise Zone Framework Plan in 2012, major economic and societal changes have had a significant impact on the office and wider property market, both in Manchester and across the country. These trends were accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to a greater focus on research and innovation uses and a shift towards hybrid working. The Manchester Airport City North proposition therefore needs to be refreshed in line with these trends.

The SRF proposes to re-purpose Airport City North as MIX Manchester – a new science, innovation and manufacturing campus in an unrivalled strategic location which promotes the city's strengths on the world stage. MIX is intended to be the UK's best-connected science and innovation destination, which could provide 2m sq ft of advanced manufacturing, research and development, laboratory, and office space alongside complementary hotel and amenity uses.

The SRF has been prepared to reflect the change in vision and proposition to ensure that the proposals remain viable and attractive and to maximise the benefits that can be delivered for the city and its residents. It is based on up to date market evidence, reflects best practice design principles and ensures that sustainability is the 'golden thread' maintained throughout.

Strategic Context

Airport City is a key regeneration area identified as the focus for job creation within the 'Airport & Southern Growth Cluster', one of Greater Manchester's six Growth Locations, which is essential for realising the city-region's international potential. In 'Investing in Success: An Economic Strategy for Manchester' (2023), MCC recognise Airport City as one of the city's most important pipeline developments due to its unrivalled connectivity to the international gateway at Manchester Airport.

The commercially led mixed-use scheme is of strategic importance to the future success of the city. Its delivery could provide up to 8,000 new jobs, boosting productivity, promoting opportunities for local people, supporting the next phase of Manchester's growth and success, and building upon its existing sectoral strengths in life sciences and advanced manufacturing. It could also deliver ancillary amenities and facilities, new public realm, blue/green infrastructure and increased permeability and connections to surrounding areas, benefitting local residents and supporting sustainable and inclusive growth.

Further details of the scale of the opportunity and strategic context, including the national, regional and local planning policy framework and full details of the spatial analysis undertaken, which has informed the MIX SRF proposals can be found within the wider MIX Manchester SRF context document at mix-manchester.com.

Vision & Objectives

Vision

MAKING. CHANGE. REAL.

MIX Manchester could become the UK'S best-connected science, innovation, and manufacturing campus, where forward-thinking occupiers have the flexibility to bring their ideas to life.

Designed with biodiversity, sustainability and wellbeing at its core, MIX could provide a high-quality urban environment to deliver cutting-edge advanced manufacturing, R&D, laboratory and office space with complementary hotel and amenity uses, set within attractive public realm. MIX would be perfectly placed to complement and support the growth of the region's established life sciences, advanced materials, digital and technology, and clean technology economies.

Taking advantage of its unrivalled connectivity and central location, MIX Manchester could provide a unique opportunity to work collaboratively with education and research institutions, whilst utilising the local talent pool to create a thriving community of like-minded businesses, where they can succeed on an international stage.

Objectives

The vision for MIX is underpinned by a series of strategic objectives:

1. **Fuel Northern Innovation** – MIX could complement and support the North West's established and fast-growing innovation economy, focused on the frontier sectors of life sciences, advanced materials, clean technology, and digital, giving businesses the ability to locate and grow on a scale unrivalled in the North West.
2. **Raise Manchester's Profile** – MIX could support the city-region's aspirations to become a global leader in research and innovation by creating an internationally competitive destination for pioneering innovation businesses, while acting as a gateway to the region's thriving innovation ecosystem.
3. **Promote Local People** – MIX could open up significant employment, education and training opportunities to local people to develop and grow careers in sectors not currently available to them, making a positive contribution to the Wythenshawe community.
4. **Enhance Biodiversity** – It is proposed that MIX would protect, enhance and support biodiversity to create a development which has a positive impact on local habitats and wildlife, while ensuring this is carefully aligned with Manchester Airport's safeguarding requirements.
5. **Embed Sustainability** – MIX would focus on developing environmental sustainability at its core, taking a multifaceted approach through accredited building practices, climate resilience, and positive environmental management, to sustainable transport infrastructure and a commitment to our local community.
6. **Quality Urban Environment** – It is proposed that MIX embodies a simple design concept which puts people, activity and connections at the heart of the proposals, offering a high quality physical environment blending secure, contemporary workspaces with attractive public realm and amenities.
7. **Unrivalled Connectivity** – MIX would have the opportunity to capitalise on its unique multi-modal connections to surrounding ecosystems and talent pools to provide unrivalled access to the very best the region has to offer, while enhancing connectivity to neighbouring areas and widening accessibility for local communities.

Development Principles

The SRF has been prepared to guide future development of the site. The design approach is based around a simple concept which puts people, activity and connections at the heart of the proposals. This design concept provides a framework which could support a vibrant scientific community and be flexible enough to respond to market demands and the changing landscape of life sciences and advanced manufacturing. The SRF could respond to the challenging and specialist requirements of scientific tenants, whilst utilising the principles of placemaking to create welcoming and active public spaces that could promote health and wellbeing for all.

A 'long life, loose fit' approach provides an opportunity for MIX to expand within an agreed framework, whilst allowing for the needs of the future occupier which might not yet exist, with the scientific discovery yet to follow.

The development principles set out below seek to ensure that MIX would remain a viable and attractive proposition over the coming years and generate a significant number of jobs for local people, benefitting the city and its residents.

1. Flexible Framework for Growth

The SRF would provide a flexible and adaptable framework which acknowledges and builds upon the previous proposals and future development across the wider Airport City and surrounding areas, whilst maintaining flexibility to respond to occupier requirements and be adaptable over time, across a range of sectors. This would help ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth, providing jobs for local people as well as opportunities for training and apprenticeships.

The MIX principles propose to achieve this by providing:

- A range of uses including large and medium scale manufacturing; Mid-Tech Industrial; R&D/ office/ education; and hotels.
- Potential development plots.
- Acknowledgement of wider/ future Airport developments and transport connections.
- An 'Active Core' (see below) which is at the heart of the SRF area, with outer areas which could accommodate different uses, forms and appearances of buildings which would be defined through detailed planning applications as each phase comes forward.

Economic Growth

The Framework area is estimated to provide 8,000 new jobs in the life science and advanced manufacturing sectors, representing a significant opportunity for local people. The wider economic benefits of MIX will:

- Create jobs for local people, as well as training opportunities and apprenticeships.
- Bridge the gap between research and industry by facilitating collaboration and collision.
- Deliver initiatives with the local community, not for them, and ensure they are meaningful and inclusive to effectively address challenges within the community.
- Maximise social value and social inclusion to leave a positive legacy for communities.

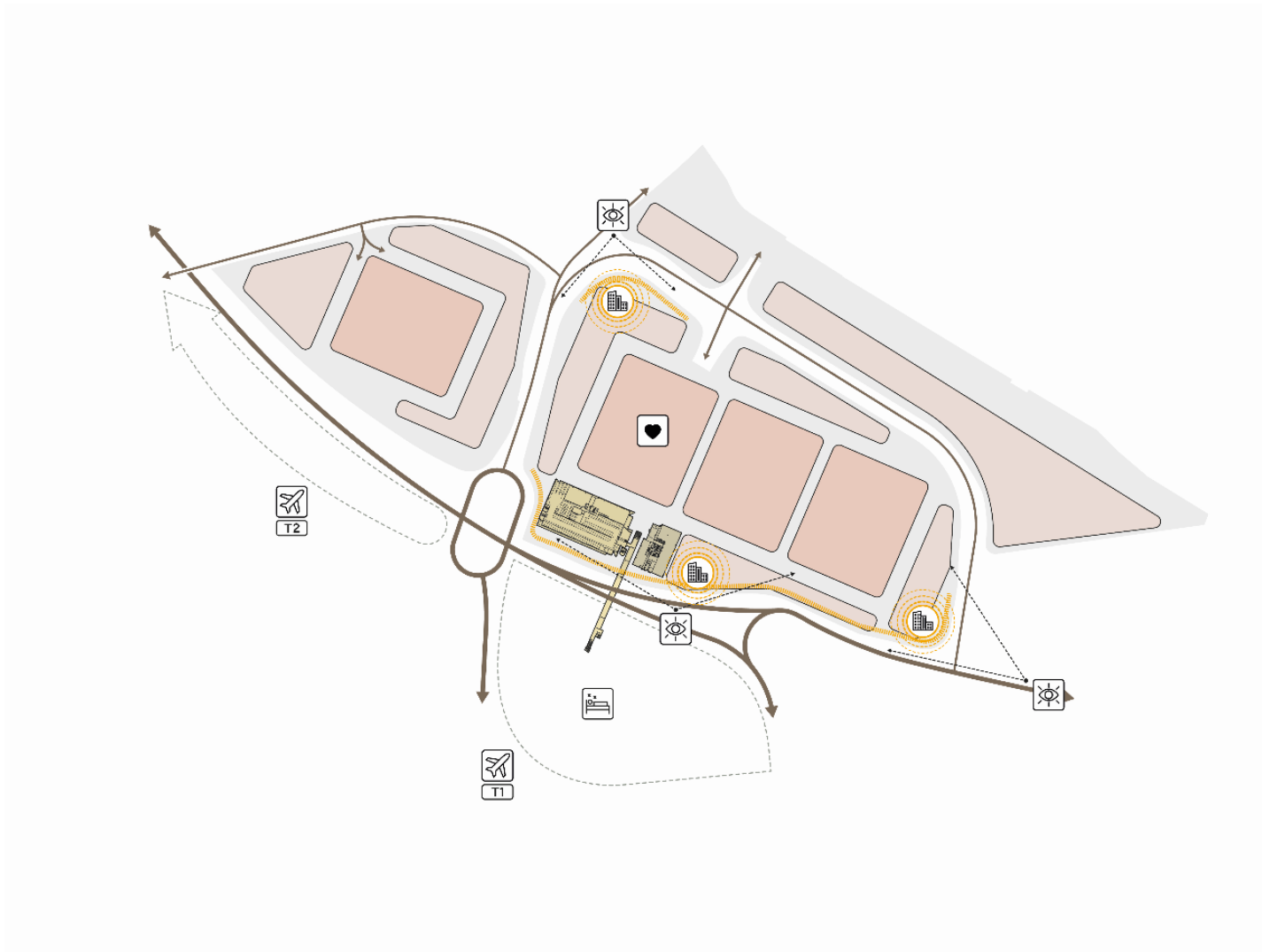


Figure 2 Flexible Framework for Growth

Building Typologies

The design approach would enable a dynamic mix of tenants and building typologies, across all stages of the life sciences life cycle, whilst creating a critical mass of activity within the active core of the site. MIX is anticipated to include a range of building typologies such as large and medium scale manufacturing; mid-tech industrial; R&D/ office/ education; and hotels.

Building typologies and parameters which could be considered appropriate have been suggested to provide guidance to future occupiers, including potential maximum building heights, gross internal areas, typical floorplates, and any specific details relevant. Potential building heights will be defined by aerodrome safeguarding restrictions, ensuring that no buildings (including exhaust flues) exceed these maximum heights.

However the details of each of these typologies would be led by potential end users and would come forwards as part of any subsequent planning application.

Mid-Tech Industrial

- GIA: c.10,000 -50,000 sq ft
- Height: c.10-15m
- Flexible Lab / Manufacturing / Industrial
- Anticipated to be single storey with opportunity for additional mezzanine floors
- Suitable for pilot plant and scale-up facilities



Figure 3 Illustration of a Mid-Tech Unit

Large Scale Advanced Manufacturing

- GIA: c.50,000 – 500,000 sq ft
- Height: up to c.30m
- Large Batch / Late Stage Manufacturing
- Anticipated to be large footprint, single storey industrial buildings
- Could be supported by R&D / office facilities



Figure 4 Illustration of a Large Scale Advanced Manufacturing Unit

Medium Scale Advanced Manufacturing

- GIA: c.50,000 - 100,000 sq ft
- Height: up to c.30m
- Small Batch / Early Stage Manufacturing
- Anticipated to be multi-storey buildings suitable for a range of uses



Figure 5 Illustration of a Medium Scale Advanced Manufacturing Unit

R&D / Office / Education

- GIA: up to c.100,000 sq ft
- Height: up to c.30m
- Lab Enabled Office Fit-Outs
- Anticipated to be multi-storey buildings
- Shared or single tenant workspace
- Could also be suitable for education / academic institutions



Figure 6 Illustration of a R&D / Office/ Education Unit

Hotel

- GIA: c.50,000 - 100,000 sq ft
- Height: up to c.30m
- Diverse Hotel Operators
- Anticipated to be multi-storey buildings
- Could also offer flexible meeting, conferencing and hospitality settings



Figure 7 Illustration of a Hotel

2. Active Core

The Framework area is proposed to focus around an 'active core' which sits centrally within the site. It would address the primary pedestrian movement route from the Airport and transport hub to the south.

The active core is proposed to comprise a mix of land uses, ensuring the necessary facilities and amenities are located centrally to meet occupiers' requirements. It could also create a campus which is vibrant and thriving during the day and into the evening.

It could provide a location for collaboration between research and industry and businesses within the key sectors identified. This central hub could also provide amenity and facilities for employees, visitors and residents alike, alongside well designed buildings of a higher density than elsewhere.

The active core could accommodate the primary public realm zones, including spill out areas, dwell spaces and pedestrian movement routes for employees, visitors and residents traversing the area. Hard landscaping would be concentrated on areas of highest footfall. Areas of planting could be included, providing valuable amenity space and contributing to the surface water drainage strategy. Ornamental planting and seating would be encouraged to frame key spaces, and create a usable, varied and textured public realm. Dwell spaces could be provided, to enliven these spaces and support the ground floor active uses.

The active core could provide opportunities for temporary and permanent events and activities to take place as part of a carefully curated placemaking strategy for the area; well-placed temporary interventions along important site connections will animate key routes and create dwell spaces and opportunities for trails and themed linking spaces.

The outer areas could provide quieter, more distributed development around areas of soft landscaping. These areas will typically have lower-rise buildings and a more open grain of development. This will help to mediate the difference in scale and activity between the neighbourhood blocks and the surrounding context of the area

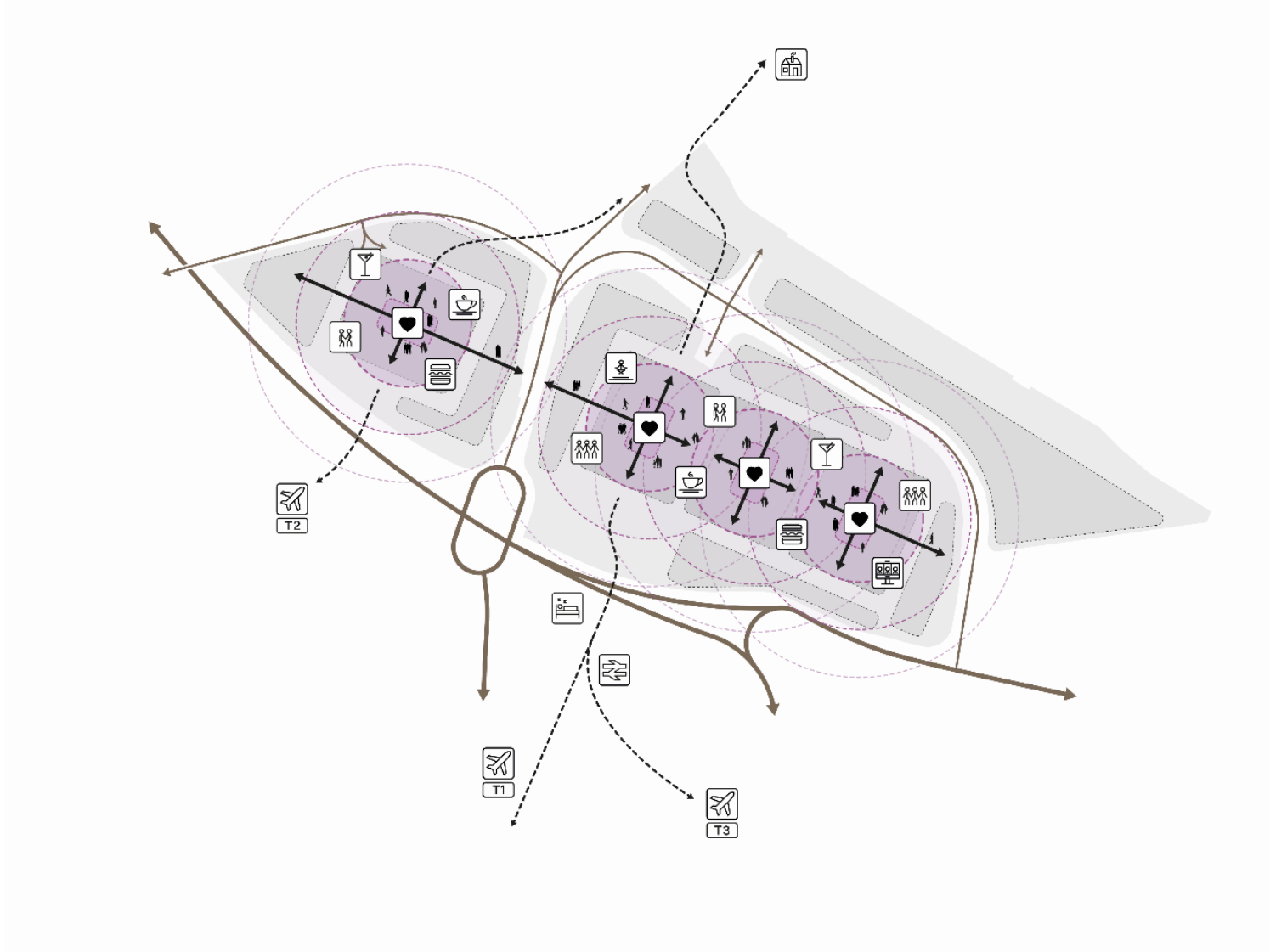


Figure 8 Active Core

3. Landscape & Ecology

The Framework proposes to include new landscape interventions which would seek to enrich the existing ecology and enhance biodiversity while connecting the area to the surrounding landscape amenity.

Interventions could include the following:

- Linear parkland and greening across the site.
- Connections to local amenity including Painswick Park.
- Integrated SUDs / blue infrastructure.
- Providing a natural buffer to the north.
- Ecological gain and habitat creation within the operational constraints of aerodrome safeguarding.
- Increased and interconnected green infrastructure.

Existing biodiversity assets within the SRF area would be protected and, where practicable, enhanced in accordance with legislation and existing policy and guidance. To the north and to the south-west of the site, there are existing areas of significant vegetation which are proposed to be retained to limit biodiversity loss. This includes the woodland to the northern boundary which includes some mature oak specimens and understorey and canopy species.

The areas of existing vegetation to the north of the site would be further enhanced to improve the landscape buffer to the residential areas of Wythenshawe to the north. Greening the proposed internal estate roads, pedestrian and cycle routes, through tree planting, encouraging greater biodiversity, and improving connectivity between habitats would also enhance the framework area. Trees as a key element of design would line main streets to form urban boulevards and announce destinations, with anchor trees accentuating corners.

An environmentally sustainable approach would be at the heart of the landscape ethos with tree planting, rain gardens, naturalistic SuDS channels and permeable paving enabling the delivery of a sustainable approach to surface and storm water capture, within the limitations of what can be achieved from an aerodrome safeguarding perspective.



Figure 9 Landscape and Ecology

4. Permeability & Connectivity

Designed with sustainability at its core, the SRF area is strategically located between the existing communities in Wythenshawe to the north, and the range of facilities at Manchester Airport to the south. A simple and easy to navigate environment for pedestrians and cyclists could be created, providing the missing links to connect these communities and facilities, and encouraging a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of travel.

The area is well connected to all forms of public transport, minimising the need for car journeys to and from the area, and pedestrian and cycle routes would be prioritised. Similarly, the road layout has been already designed for simplicity and clarity, with a clear hierarchy of routes across the area.

Significant weight has been given to reducing the impact of vehicular movement and providing a network of interconnected pedestrian and cycle routes; vehicles would be mostly restricted to a one-way looped system, to minimise the need for vehicles to enter the neighbourhoods. Private vehicle use would be restricted using ANPR management systems.

Pedestrian access would be focused around two key routes, running N-S and E-W across the Framework area. Whilst cycle access would consist of a mix of segregated lanes and shared surface routes. The legibility and interconnectivity of these routes is key to establishing a campus that is easy to navigate and legible at a human scale.

MIX would be well placed to take advantage of its strategic location for public transport connections at Manchester Airport, including the Ground Transport Interchange (GTI) c.700m to the south. The recently constructed pedestrian and cyclist footbridge over the M56 spur would be utilised to create an easy to navigate route between the Framework area and the GTI.

Individual occupiers would be responsible for preparing Travel Plans as appropriate to encourage employees and visitors to travel to the site via sustainable modes.

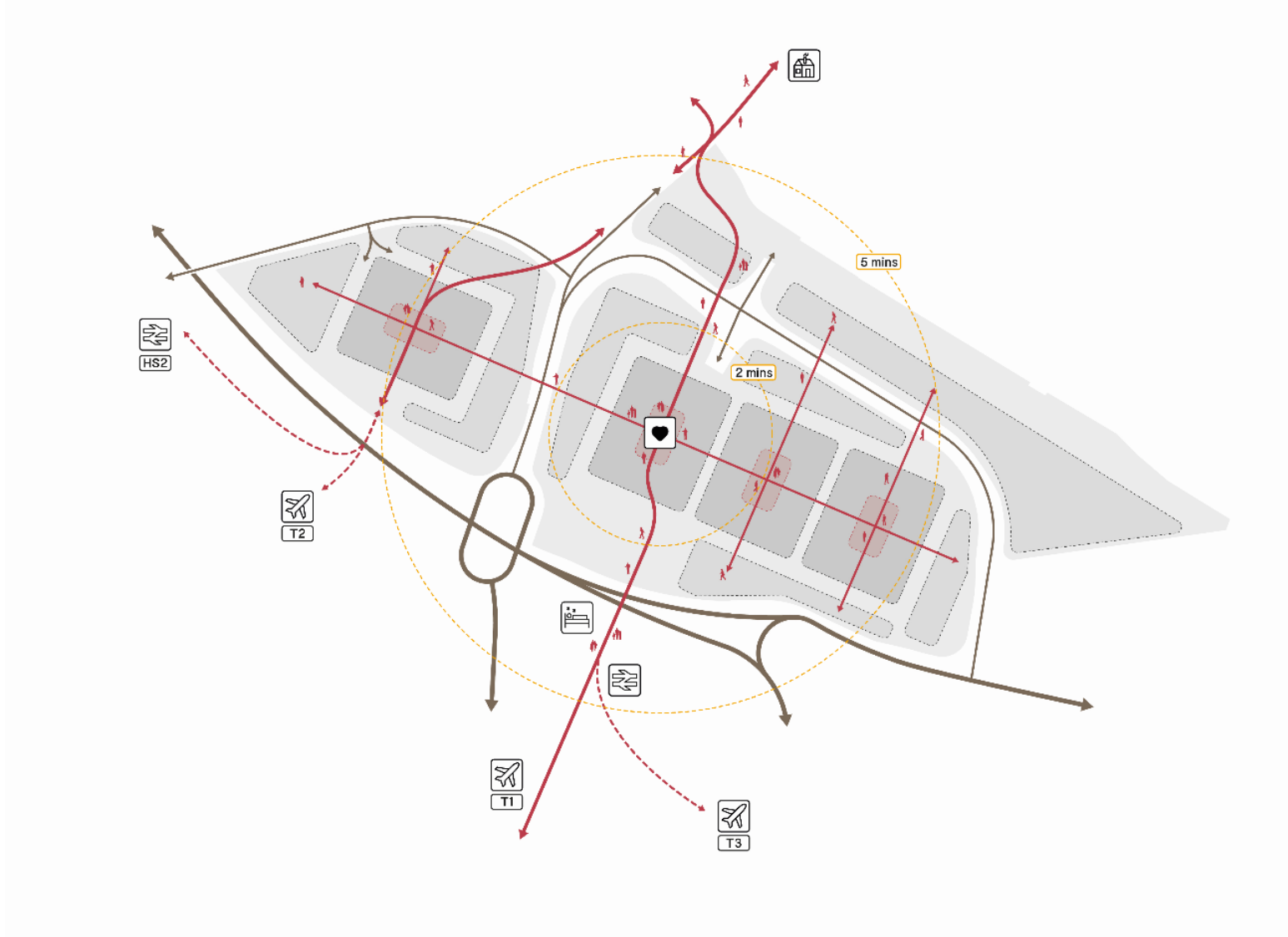


Figure 10 Permeability & Connectivity

5. Servicing & Infrastructure

In order to significantly accelerate sustainable and inclusive economic growth across the site, the specialist needs of prospective MIX occupiers have been carefully considered. A robust approach to servicing and infrastructure would be required, to ensure buildings can be powered and serviced easily and safely whilst ensuring sustainability objectives could be realised.

The nature of development means that the SRF area will likely have high power requirements. A robust site-wide infrastructure strategy has been developed to ensure that the capacity of the Framework area is scalable and resilient to ensure continued operation. The use of renewables has been included as part of this strategy and is an important part of the wider sustainability objectives for the area and drive towards net zero.

Drainage solutions could be driven by and integrated within the landscape design, with a focus upon passive and sustainable drainage solutions, while conforming to aerodrome safeguarding restrictions.

In relation to servicing, whilst the emphasis has been on a pedestrian focused environment, the approach to highways design would account for the specialist needs of the tenants. Segregation and management of traffic would ensure that large vehicles will be able to navigate the site and access buildings easily, whilst ensuring the overall character and pedestrian-focused nature of the public realm would not be impacted.

Several multi-storey car parks (MSCP) would be provided for staff and visitors, to be evenly distributed across MIX. Nevertheless, there is an ambition to consolidate and reassess parking levels given the ease of access to and encouraged use of sustainable modes of travel and new technologies, which is anticipated to result in lower levels of actual parking demand.

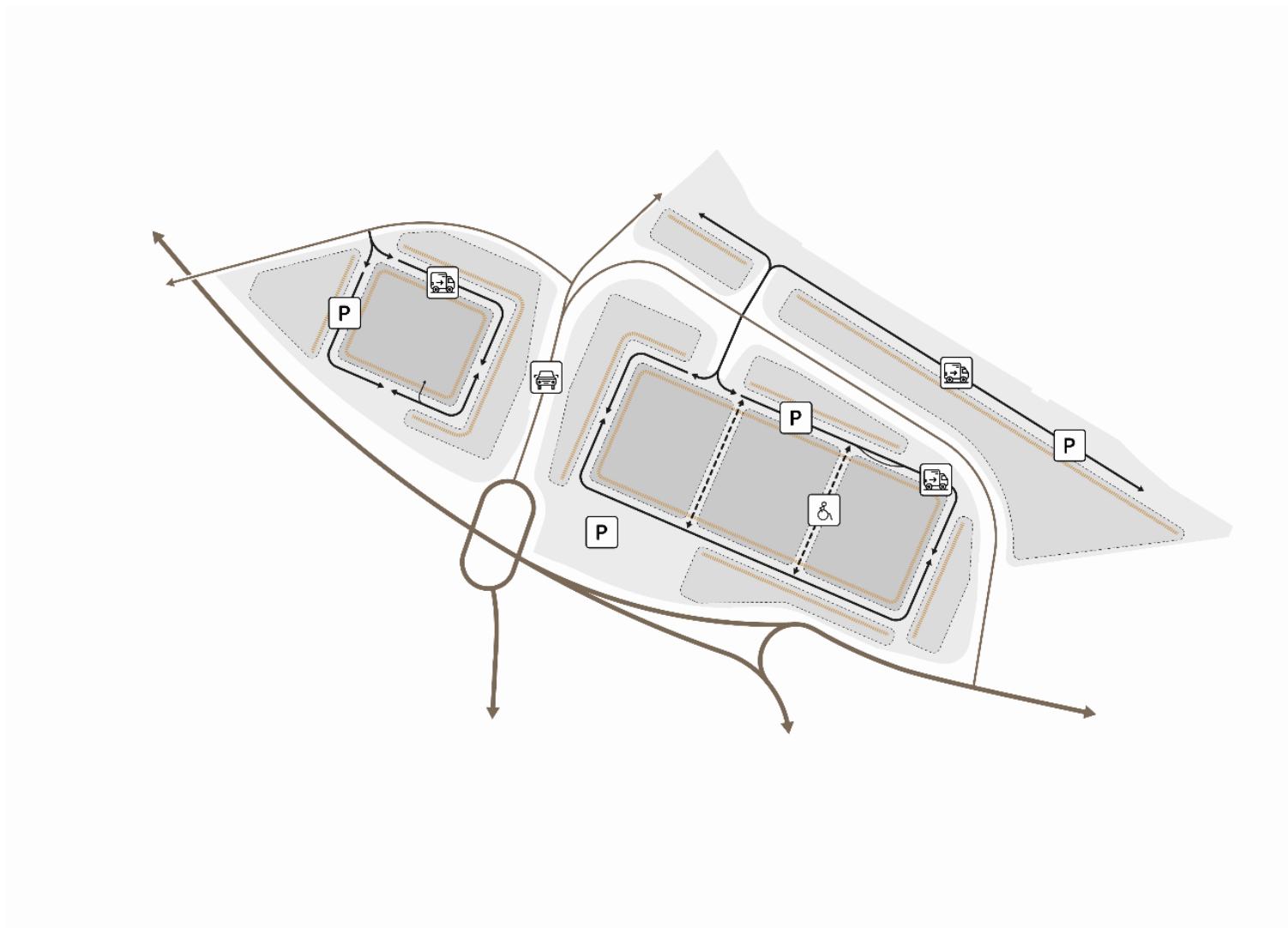


Figure 11 Servicing & Infrastructure

Masterplan

The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates how proposals for MIX could potentially be accommodated over the next 10+ years. This Masterplan is proposed to be refined following feedback received during the public consultation period in summer 2024 and following engagement with key stakeholders. Moving forwards, the Framework can be responsive to changing circumstances and retains an element of flexibility to adapt as conditions change.



Figure 12 Illustrative Masterplan

Implementation

The SRF for MIX has been designed and is intended to be flexible in relation to delivery, ensuring that development could come forward as needed, to meet the commercial needs and market demands, as they arise. This flexibility would require a phased approach to delivery, to ensure that the full potential of the site is realised efficiently whilst having regard to commercial requirements and market fluctuations.

Phase 1

The initial phase of development could deliver the first neighbourhood including part of the active core of the site, including the connecting development to the north landing of the bridge. This would establish a strong association with the hotel district, wider airport and associated transport interchanges to the south. Some key public realm dwell spaces would be delivered as well as an initial loop of the primary vehicular route, establishing the proposed one-way system.

Meanwhile Uses

Meanwhile uses would form a vital component of the delivery of the vision for the Framework area, in particular to areas which are undergoing development but have yet to reach a quantum of built form that sustains more permanent amenity uses.

A carefully curated programme of events would embed social value within the proposals, continuing MAG and its partners existing activities in the local community, including working with local schools and colleges to focus on STEM skills and alternative skills programmes such as degree-level apprenticeships.

Local Employment & Training

MIX intends to be inspired by, and ambitious for, the local community that it proudly calls its neighbours. Local people could expect a range of opportunities, and the support they need, to grow and thrive. Proposed local employment and training initiatives include:

- **Skills and Apprenticeships** – Approximately 8,000 jobs could be generated, with the potential for alternative skills programmes such as degree level apprenticeships to address growing skills needs, providing access to opportunities for local people.
- **STEM Summit** – MAG and its partners would work closely with the Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) to bring together schools, colleges and businesses from across the north, with a focus on aviation, advanced materials and connectivity.
- **Mentoring** – Mentors from occupier businesses could be paired with entrepreneurs and local young people, guiding them on the skills they would need to develop to be successful.
- **Community Food Initiative** – MAG and its partners would seek to establish a community food and drink hub at MIX, including linking with neighbourhood activities and initiatives by taking the successful 'Platform' programme into the local community.
- **Educational Institute** – There is potential for the establishment of an onsite college in collaboration with existing Greater Manchester Higher Education Institutions.

Sustainability and Environment

MAG and its partners would seek to establish a series of events and activities in relation to sustainability as a key Strategic Objective. Proposed initiatives include:

- **City of Trees at MIX** – A partnership with the City of Trees to develop a long-term planting and community engagement programme.

- **Cycling and Sustainability Mobility** – A programme of activities to ensure cycling is at the heart of MIX and encourage a modal shift away from the private motorcar.
- **Annual Making Change Festival** – An annual celebration to mark the achievements of all on-campus businesses who are excelling within their social and environmental contribution.
- **Individual Carbon Pledges** – A programme of pledges would encourage businesses to take responsibility for their carbon footprint, and to work towards reducing it.

Next Steps

Executive approval was granted at committee on the 24th July 2024 for the MIX SRF to go out for public consultation. Following the completion of the public consultation exercise, a further report will be brought forward, setting out the comments received and any changes to the proposed final version of the draft updated MIX SRF. If the draft updated MIX SRF is subsequently approved by the City Council, it will become a material consideration for the Council as Local Planning Authority when determining any applications within the SRF area.