

Appendix F – Newton Heath District Centre Health Check

- 1.1 To assist in determining the likely economic impacts associated with the proposed development, this section of the report establishes the baseline health of Newton Heath district centre.
- 1.2 The health check utilises survey data provided within the Manchester City Council District Centre review, dated 2007 prepared by Council. It also draws on information provided by GOAD in its centre report for Newton Heath, dated March 2021. This data has been updated through Mango's own survey work and site visits in November 2021.

Overview

- 1.3 The district centre boundary for Newton Heath, as defined in the adopted Core Strategy, runs immediately through the application site along the former boundary between the retail warehouse and the now demolished petrol filling station fronting on to Oldham Road.
- 1.4 The district centre is relatively well spread out with retail provision focused along Oldham Road and Old Church Street. The retail provision on Oldham Road is relatively larger format (i.e. it includes a large Chinese convenience store and a Farmfoods outlet) and is intermixed with employment and residential uses. A McDonald's drive-through restaurant at the junction with Eagar Street forms the eastern boundary of the centre.

Diversity of Uses

- 1.5 The provision along Old Church Street comprises free standing Lidl, Iceland and Asda supermarkets in addition to a concentration of traditional terraced shop units predominantly occupied by independent retailers. A health centre and library are prominently located off Old Church Street. To the east of Old Church Street beyond the

terraced shops are employment uses and the police station on Droylsden Road.

- 1.6 The survey identified a total of 61 units within Newton Heath district centre.
- 1.7 The national multiples represented are predominantly foodstores, such as Lidl, Farmfoods, Asda and Iceland. Other convenience retailers include a large Chinese supermarket/wholesale store, plus two bakeries, and a 'Eurofoods' small convenience store.
- 1.8 In terms of comparison traders, these are mainly small independent stores which given its role in the retail hierarchy is unsurprising. These retailers are situated in the smaller units in the traditional terrace along Old Church Street, which serves as the 'high street' area of the district centre.
- 1.9 The independent convenience businesses perform "specialist" and niche roles within the sector, catering for local residents' and visitors' day-to-day/basket shopping needs. Moreover, these stores clearly benefit from their proximity to the relatively broad range of other retail/service and commercial uses within the centre and the pedestrian flows associated with these attractions and commercial facilities.
- 1.10 In addition to the retail uses referred to, there are also a number of important non retail uses within and adjacent to the centre, including two banks, a Job Centre, Health Centre, church and public houses. Many of the commercial units along Old Church Street also have residential flats above.

Proportion of vacant street level property

- 1.11 There was only one vacant property at 29-31 Old Church Street which was under refurbishment at the time of the visit. This equates to a vacancy rate of just 1.6% significantly below the national average as defined by GOAD of 14.7% (average as at March 2021).

Pedestrian flows

- 1.11 Pedestrian footfall provides an indication of which parts of the centre are most attractive to residents and visitors and assists retailers in identifying the most attractive part of a centre in which to locate.
- 1.12 The Mango survey identified Old Church Street as having the largest footfall, where the majority of retail uses are located. Footfall decreased towards the periphery of the centre, although the area around the Lidl store was particularly busy.

Accessibility

- 1.13 Newton Heath is served by a range of means of transport including public transport, car and also has strong pedestrian and cycle links with surrounding residential areas.
- 1.14 A railway line and tram line runs along the boundary of the application site and the centre benefits from links to Oldham, Rochdale, Manchester city centre and beyond.
- 1.15 The Rochdale Canal also runs through the centre of Newton Heath to the rear of the Lidl store with several houseboats and barges.

Town centre environmental quality

- 1.16 The environmental quality of the centre is reasonably good with obvious signs of investment. The environment around the canal locks provide an attractive historic area, and provides character to the centre. The majority of areas within the centre and the retail area are well maintained and free from litter.
- 1.17 In terms of proposed investment, the site currently occupied by Y.E.S Group as a Chinese supermarket, and the land surrounding it has recently obtained planning permission for redevelopment of a mixed use, predominantly residential scheme with

around 150 dwellings proposed.

- 1.18 On the whole it is evident that within the centre an effort is being made to maintain a quality local environment.

Perception of safety and occurrence of crime

- 1.19 No evidence of vandalism was noted on our visit and adequate street lighting outside daylight hours adds to the perception of safety and security.

Conclusion

- 1.20 In summary, the assessment concludes that despite the difficult economic conditions of recent years and the subservient role Newton Heath plays to larger centres, it is performing well. The retail offer fulfils the requirements of the local population whilst also offering a range and choice to attract visitors.