



TOWN GROWTH PLAN

Mossley



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CONTEXT

The story of modern Mossley is based in the once thriving textile industry, firstly a village full of weaver's cottages and then as a hub for cotton and woollen mills, located along the valley of the River Tame and Huddersfield Narrow Canal. The arrival of the railway in 1849 (London and Northwestern Railway) and the expanding source of employment provided by the textile industry, led to a drastic increase in population for the village in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Remnants of that industrial landscape are present in the remaining repurposed mills and industrial buildings from that era, and the rows of stone terraced houses that once accommodated the mill workers and weavers. Clusters of light industry have replaced the mills, but many residents now use the railway and road network to commute to jobs elsewhere in Greater Manchester, Oldham and Yorkshire.

Mossley - OS Six Inch 1888
- 1915 and modern aerial
imagery circa 2022



Historic Development of Mossley
Mossley's neighbourhood contains a diverse historic landscape that demonstrates continuous human activity from prehistoric times through to the modern era. Prehistoric evidence includes Mesolithic and Neolithic flint scatters, a Neolithic hand axe, and an Early Bronze Age cremation burial at Luzley (c. 2018-1778 BC). Later prehistoric remains are limited; however, upland areas retain high archaeological potential. Romano-British activity within the area is minimal, represented by a single pottery sherd and an unconfirmed Roman road alignment. This suggests that Mossley was a marginal zone with limited Roman development. The Early and Late Medieval periods mark the emergence of Mossley as a settlement. The place name indicates Anglo-Saxon origins ('moss' meaning bog or peaty area and 'leah' meaning a clearing in a wood), while Buckton Castle—a Scheduled Monument dating to the 12th century—reflects high-status Norman influence. Settlements such as Mossley and Luzley developed during this period, primarily as agricultural communities. The original hamlet of Mossley was in the parish of Ashton-under-Lyne in Lancashire but lay very close to the boundaries with Cheshire and Yorkshire. As the town grew during the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, the urban area came to straddle the three counties. To the east, it extended into the townships of Stayley and Tintwistle, both of which formed part of the parish of Mottram-in-Longdendale in Cheshire.

Significant expansion occurred during the post-medieval period, supported by improved transport networks and continued farming activity. Many of the heritage assets present today originate from this era. From the mid-18th century, Mossley underwent industrialisation, transitioning from cottage-based wool production to large-scale cotton manufacturing powered initially by water and later by steam. Mills were concentrated along the Tame Valley and supported by Huddersfield Narrow Canal (Mossley section opened c.1811) and railways (Manchester to Huddersfield line c.1949). Associated industries included brickmaking and quarrying. Numerous listed and non-designated heritage assets survive from this period.

In 1864, Mossley became a local government district with boundaries crossing three counties and four townships, administered by an elected local board. It was granted a municipal charter in 1885, creating a borough council, which later purchased Mossley Hall in 1891 to serve as the Town Hall. Following the Local Government Act 1888, Mossley was placed entirely within Lancashire, and in 1894, a single civil parish was created to match the borough's area. The borough was abolished in 1974 under the Local Government Act 1972, and Mossley became part of the Metropolitan Borough of Tameside in Greater Manchester.

In the modern era, heritage assets are primarily associated with military history, including memorials and sites linked to the First and Second World Wars. Livingstone Primary School (1915) represents a notable educational heritage site. Many historic buildings have been adapted for contemporary use, although further identification of modern heritage assets is required. Overall, Mossley's historic environment illustrates a pattern of continuous evolution from prehistoric activity through industrialisation to modern development. While some sites have been lost or redeveloped, significant heritage assets remain, and areas of archaeological potential persist, particularly within upland terrain and former industrial sites.

Distinct Character of Mossley

Mossley is a distinctive Pennine-edge mill town located at the north-eastern edge of Tameside, acting as a gateway to the Peak District and historically divided between three counties—Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. Its development was shaped by the wool and textile industries, with stone-built mills, terraces, and workshops defining much of its character. Today, many of these industrial buildings remain as heritage features, some converted to housing or business use, and the town boasts forty listed buildings. Mossley's unique position, close to Manchester, Huddersfield, and the Peak District, offers opportunities to connect its rich heritage and distinctive spaces to the surrounding countryside, reinforcing its strong sense of identity.

The settlement lies within the steep valley of the River Tame, with development concentrated in the lower areas and residential neighbourhoods climbing the valley sides. Both the eastern and western edges rise to prominent hilltops, creating a dramatic townscape of layered streets and rooflines. In places, terraced houses are built along steep slopes with rooflines forming continuous diagonal bands, while in other areas stepped roofscapes appear, creating striking views across the town and outward to the surrounding moorland. Mossley is polycentric, comprising three historic centres: Top Mossley, Bottom Mossley, and Micklehurst.

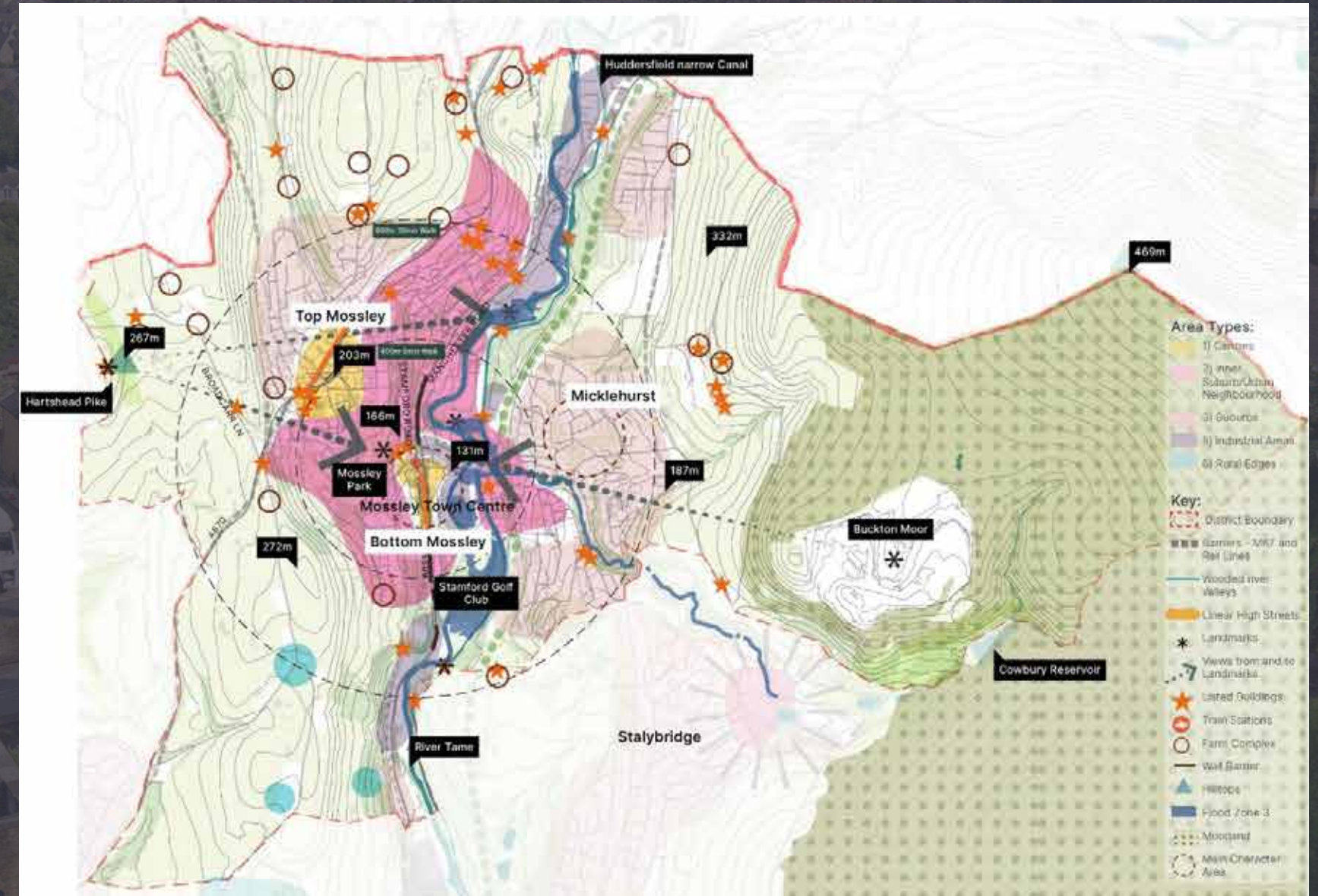
The town's material palette is strongly defined by the use of local stone in historic housing, mills, and churches, though red-brick terraces also appear—sometimes even opposite stone-built rows along the same street. This interplay between stone and brick highlights the evolution of Mossley's urban fabric. Traditional farmhouses and farm complexes remain on the rural edges, reinforcing the town's strong connections to its agricultural past.



EXTENT

Today, Mossley is a picturesque and popular commuter town, voted the Best Town to Live in the UK by the Sunday Times in March 2025. It retains a strong sense of identity and charm, with two main streets—Top and Bottom Mossley—serving as focal points for local activity. Key facilities include George Lawton Hall for community events, The Vale arts venue, independent shops, and a range of pubs and bars. Mossley also has its own Town Council, established in 1999. The built environment reflects its heritage, with traditional weavers' cottages and terraces complemented by modern housing developments, including the 1960s Micklehurst estate.

Mossley benefits from excellent transport connections, with a railway station providing direct links to Manchester (approximately 20 minutes) and Huddersfield (approximately 23 minutes). Junction 23 of the M60 motorway is only a 15-minute drive away, and the Bee Network offers bus connections to Ashton and Saddleworth. Its location on the edge of the Pennine hills and near the Peak District provides residents and visitors with easy access to walking, hiking, and cycling opportunities in the surrounding countryside. Scenic landmarks include Buckton Moor to the east and Hartshead Pike to the west, while Saddleworth Moor and its villages lie close by.



CENTRES

Strengths

- Top 10 places to live (Times)
- Active town council
- 2 centres – Mossley Top and Mossley Bottom – range of independent shops & services
- George Lawton Hall – library and events
- Market Ground
- Creative industries
- Close to Peak district and open countryside
- Proximity to Rail, Ashton-under-Lyne and Stalybridge
- Rail connects between Manchester and Leeds, via Huddersfield
- Nighttime economy
- Specific efforts to address independent provision through community initiative

Opportunities

- Protect independent shops
- Shop front improvement scheme in original period style
- Improve pedestrian and retail environment
- Robust HSP policy to positively manage change
- Tourism promotion and public art
- Heritage retention and marketing
- Station improvements
- Frequency of public transport
- Uniqueness and branding
- Enhancement of the Market Ground

Weaknesses

- Varying quality of shopfronts
- Poor bus connections & frequency
- Need to preserve character
- No discount supermarket
- Having two centres but still too many convenience stores
- Two centres can't consolidate due to topography
- Lack of promotion and marketing of the town.
- Lack of communal toilets

Challenges

- Lack of choice for shopping requiring the need to travel to external supermarket (only Co-op).
- Lack of housing choice for follow-on homes (family growing or elderly).
- Lack of affordable housing options.
- Decline of shopping areas with increasing change in shopping habits
- Protection of local, independent shops from national change



FOOTFALL

August 2025

470,522

COMPOSITION OF MOSSLEY TOWN CENTRE:



COMPARISON:

552 sq.m floorspace = 9% - 7 units



CONVENIENCE:

1,232 sq.m floorspace = 20% - 5 units



FINANCIAL SERVICE

181 sq.m floorspace = 2.9% = 3 units



LEISURE CENTRE

1,355 sq.m floorspace = 22% = 13 units



RETAIL SERVICE

585 sq.m floorspace = 9.5% = 12 units



VACANT

2,249 sq.m floorspace = 36.5% = 14 units

ENVIRONMENT

Strengths

- Mossley Park and Egmont street playing fields
- River Tame and Huddersfield Narrow Canal
- Greenbelt & access to countryside
- Access to walking cycling, hiking via Tame Valley Trail & Pennine Bridleway
- Brunswick Dam conservation Group
- Mossley Energy Co-operative

Opportunities

- To promote Mossley as a place to visit and live – with excellent countryside access.
- Connect with landowners and other stakeholders over maintenance.
- Opportunities around river and canal – active travel routes and enhancement/ maintenance and improvement of connections.
- Uplands offer opportunities for conservation
- ‘Slow the flow’ – natural management of upland areas via re-wilding and organic flood management
- Bin shelters on Arundel Street could help relocate bins from Lancaster Street and the commercial waste bin near the general store on Stamford Street

Weaknesses

- Environmental assets need more maintenance and promotion to encourage use.
- Quality of town/ maintenance
- Bin refuse collection

Challenges

- Threat to Green Belt and countryside areas
- Topography provides mobility issues
- Need to monitor countryside uses and ensure landscape protection.



1 Country Park
Stalybridge



2 Nature Reserves
Brushes Valley
Castle Clough &
Cowbury Dale



9 Sites of Biological
Importance

- Alphin Pike & Buckton Moor (North)
- Alphin Pike & Buckton Moor (South)
- Castle Clough
- Cliffs at Mossley
- Hartshead
- Huddersfield Narrow Canal (South)
- Old Kiln Lane Quarry
- Puddle Clay Pits
- Swineshaw Moors and Boar Flat

HOMES

Strengths

- Attractive residential neighbourhoods
- Sense of town identity and heritage.
- Some homes are listed buildings.
- Rising house prices.
- Good starter homes are available from the significant stock of Victorian terraces.
- Some new home developments – for example larger homes at Old Mill Drive/Riverside.
- Rail station in centre

Opportunities

- Some potential housing sites (former employment and close to rail station) which can be linked to further opportunities fronting the River Tame.
- Opportunities on small sites
- Design code / policy for area to ensure character is retained.
- Vacant retail units and space above existing shops
- The car park behind the shops on Manchester Road should be sold for housing

Lower Quartile house price change (2007-2024) = £114,000 To £150,000 = 31.6%

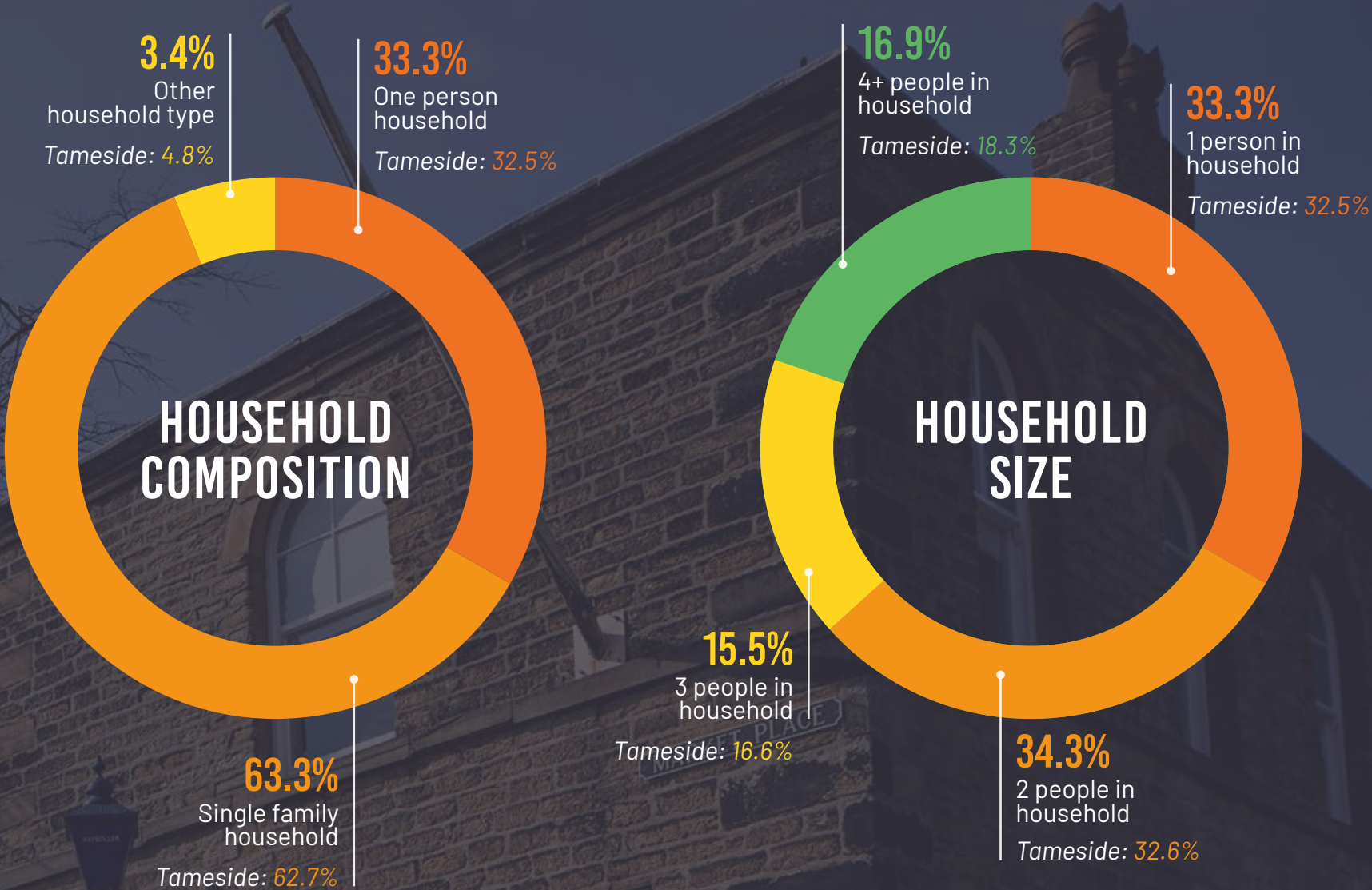
Medium Quartile house price change (2007-2024) = £139,950 To £180,000 = 28.6%

Weaknesses

- Limited opportunities for new residential development in the area, due to topography and Green Belt constraint
- Increased affordability ratio for housing, and a lack of ‘genuinely’ affordable homes for young people and larger family homes.
- Concerns around perceived over-development of Mossley and need the for commensurate infrastructure

Challenges

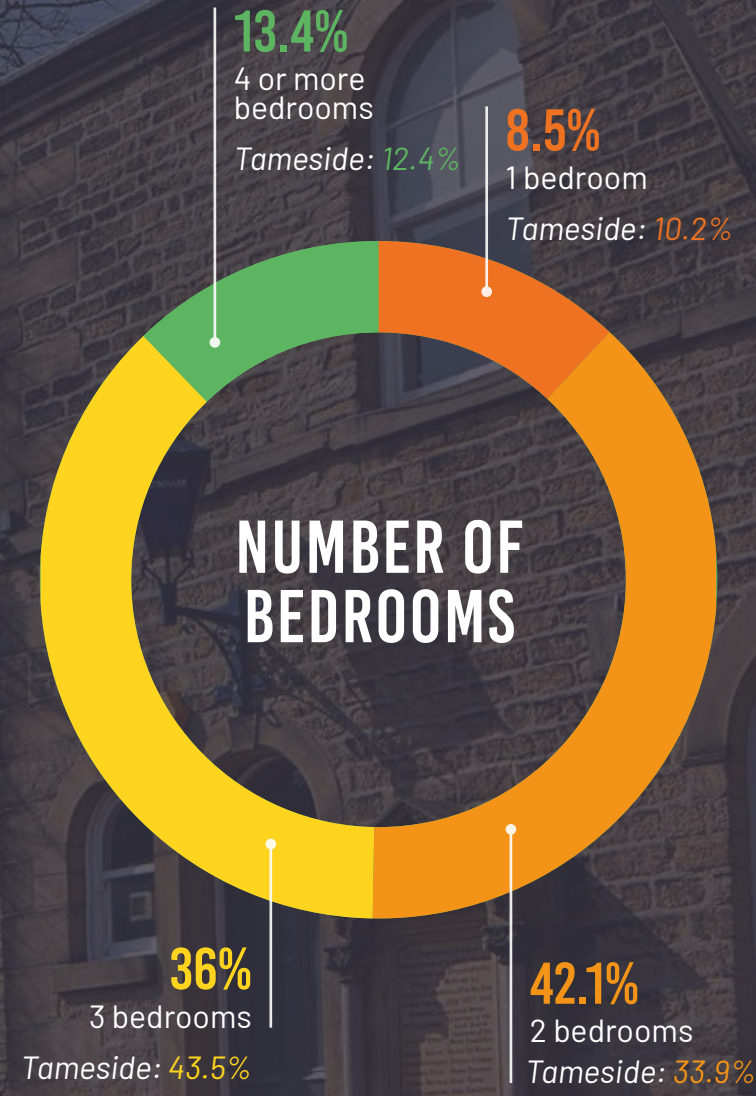
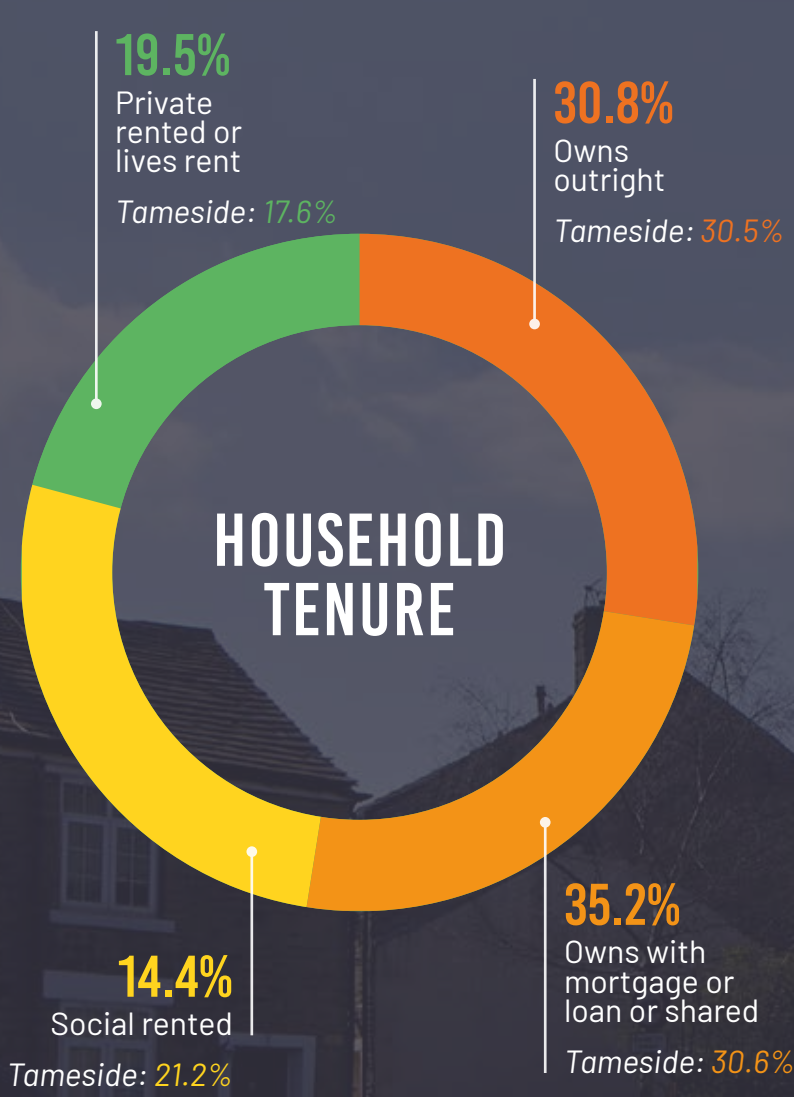
- Constrained by Green Belt and limited opportunities.
- Flood risk along the River Tame corridor.



Lower Quartile rent each month = £793

Medium Quartile rent each month = £873

HOMES



- Older people living alone = **35.9%**
- Overcrowded houses = **4.5%**
- Households in fuel poverty = **14%**
- Second Homes - **6**
- Vacant Properties - **108**
- HMOs - **5**

JOBS

Strengths

- New spaces for businesses and existing companies
- Higher level of socio-economic employment than Tameside overall – eg. Professional Occupations
- Countryside economy – farms, kennels, equestrian uses and landscape
- Service and cultural sector (The Vale being a good example of this)

Opportunities

- Link new jobs with local employment. E.g. upland areas offering opportunity for tourism
- Build on and promote employment and skills opportunities.
- Redevelopment of existing older employment sites to retain/ attract business and industry within the borough.
- Improve Bee Network connections to jobs e.g. rail and bus frequency, active travel

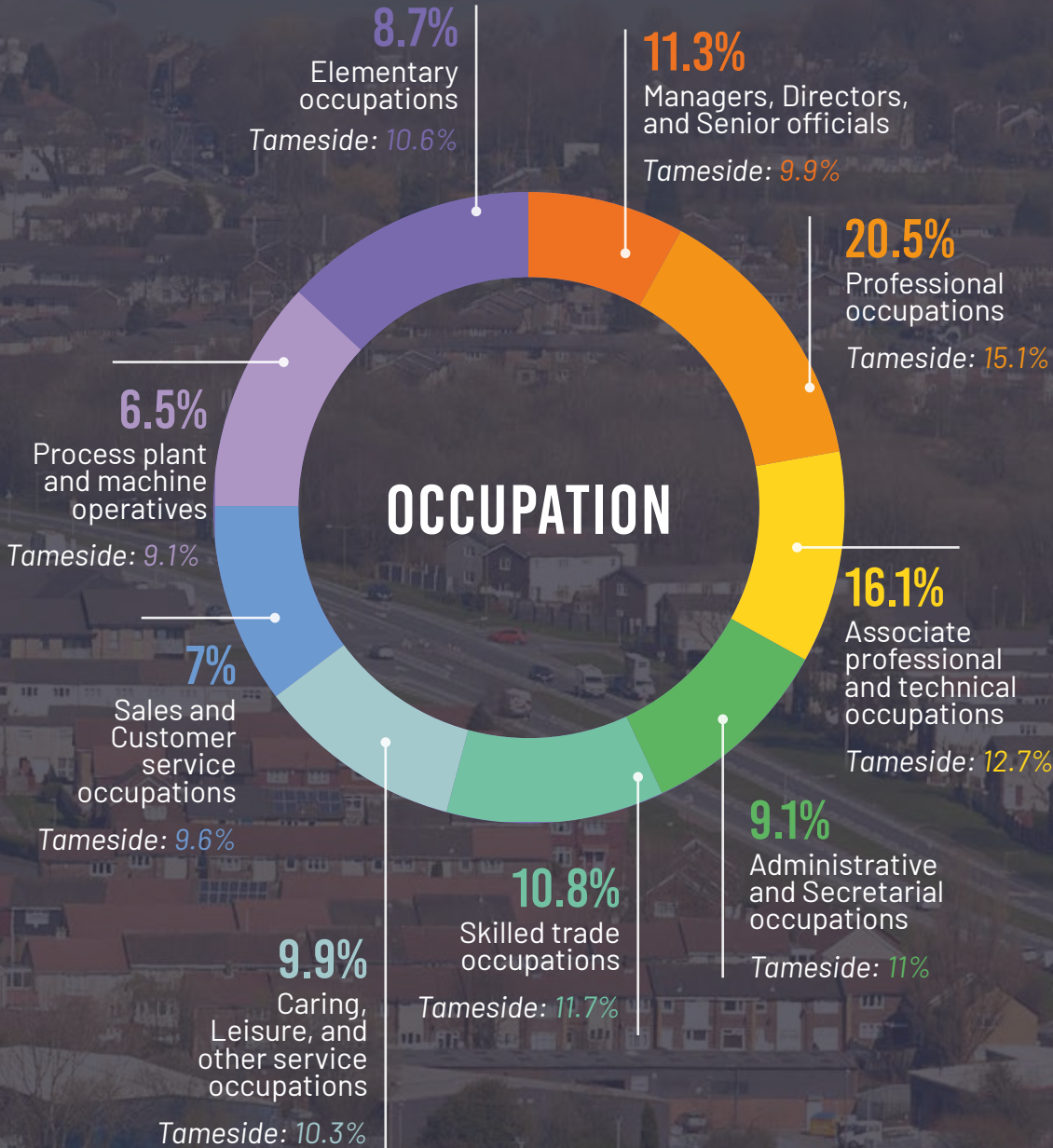
Weaknesses

- Local employment opportunities are limited and, therefore there are high levels of out commuting to Huddersfield, Manchester, Ashton, and Stockport alongside high levels of work from home.
- Mix of C.19 mill and works buildings.

Challenges

- Lack of skills.
- Access to jobs.
- Loss of employment sites to housing

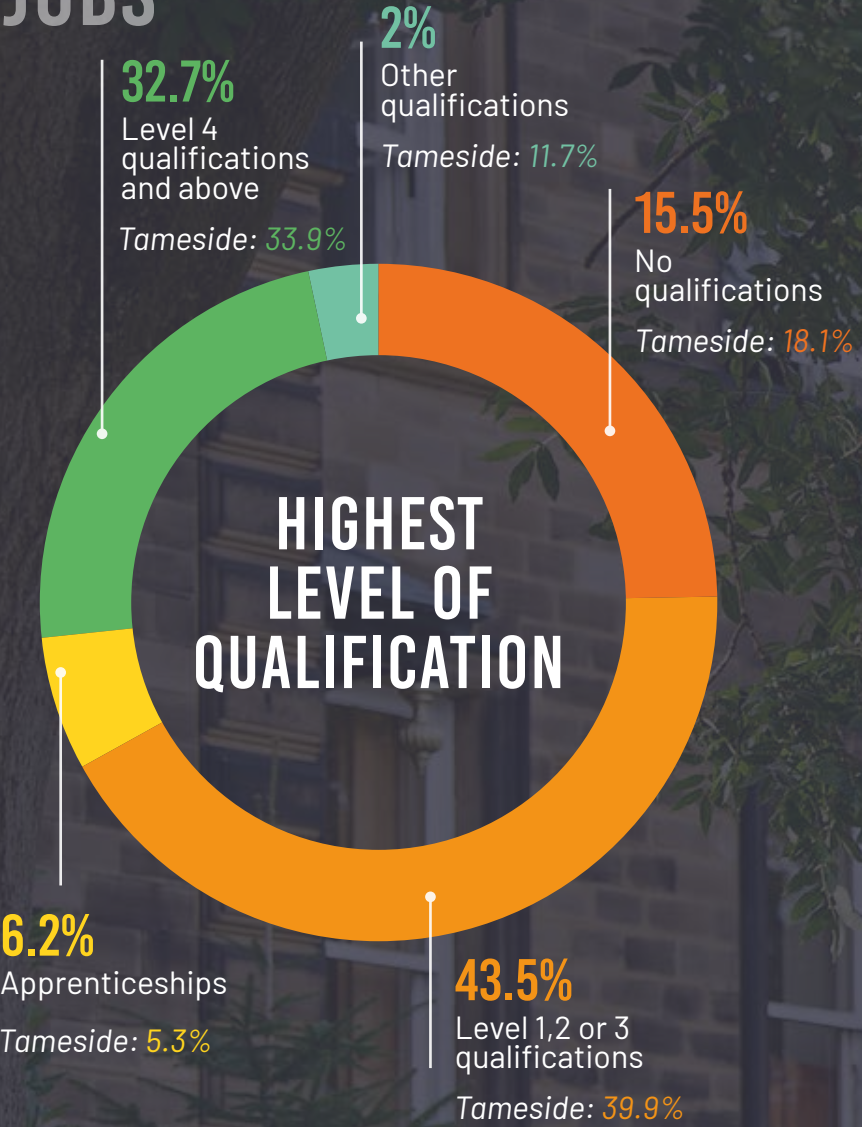
OCCUPATION



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STATUS



JOBS



2 Sites for 3198 sqm of floorspace



THE
GREAT WAR
1914-1919
TO
OUR GLORIOUS
DEAD

PEOPLE

Strengths

- Arts groups and creatives – cultural ideas
- Gateway to Peak District National Park, outdoor living and sports
- Sense of community and identity as a village
- Egmont – café and community centre – planning application
- Initiatives for young people, creativity and theatre
- Mossley AFC
- Range of schools and associated sport and community facilities
- Mossley heritage Centre and tourist trail
- Formed in 1999 – unique town council - advocate for town, opportunities for initiatives such as active travel, funding (grant scheme for community, creative support fund) and Neighbourhood Plan; stat consultee and some powers

Opportunities

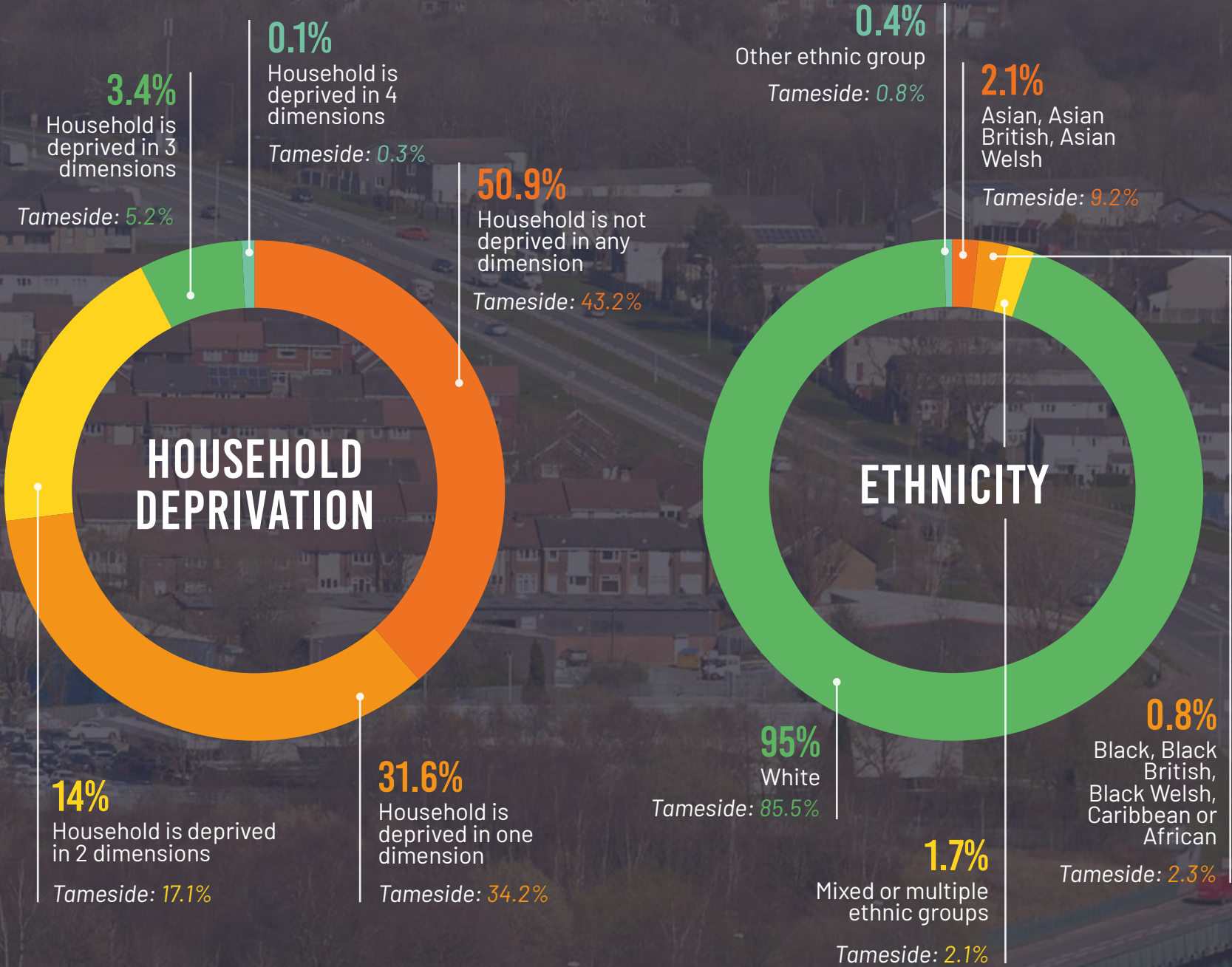
- Consolidation/ extension of educational facilities
- Access to and improvements of parks and greenspaces including country parks.
- Opportunity for more forest schools, countryside Waymarking on country routes and historical interpretation.
- Manage process with Neighbourhood Plan forum to ensure support for vision and plan.
- Neighbourhood forum concern over housing, except for affordable housing; need to work with forum/ town council on issues such as affordability.

Weaknesses

- Maintenance and management of country parks and open spaces.
- Sustainability of Primary schools in long term.

Challenges

- Schools under-subscribed
- Limited access to healthcare services.
- Internal movement limited across steep slopes pose safety concerns



PEOPLE

DISABILITY

81.5%
Not disabled under
the Equality Act
Tameside: **82.5%**

18.5%
Disabled under
the Equality Act
Tameside: **17.3%**

12.4%
Fair health
Tameside: **12.7%**

4.3%
Bad health
Tameside: **4%**

34.1%
Good health
Tameside: **33.7%**

1.2%
Very bad health
Tameside: **1.2%**

48.1%
Very good health
Tameside: **48.5%**

GENERAL HEALTH



5 Primary schools
1 Secondary schools

Emergency admissions in children under 5
(crude rate per 1000) = **167.5**

Emergency admissions for injuries in children
under 5 (crude rate per 10,000) = **168.7**

Emergency hospital admissions for injuries in
under 15 (crude rate per 10,000) = **118.9**

Emergency hospital admissions for injuries in
15-24 (crude rate per 10,000) = **220.1**

TRAVEL

Strengths

- Nearest train station is in Bottom Mossley and the journey to Manchester takes 20 minutes (every half an hour at peak time)
- 350 Bus route Oldham - Delph - Greenfield - Mossley - Ashton-under-Lyne.
- Walking and Cycling strategy for Mossley.
- Local Walking festival

Opportunities

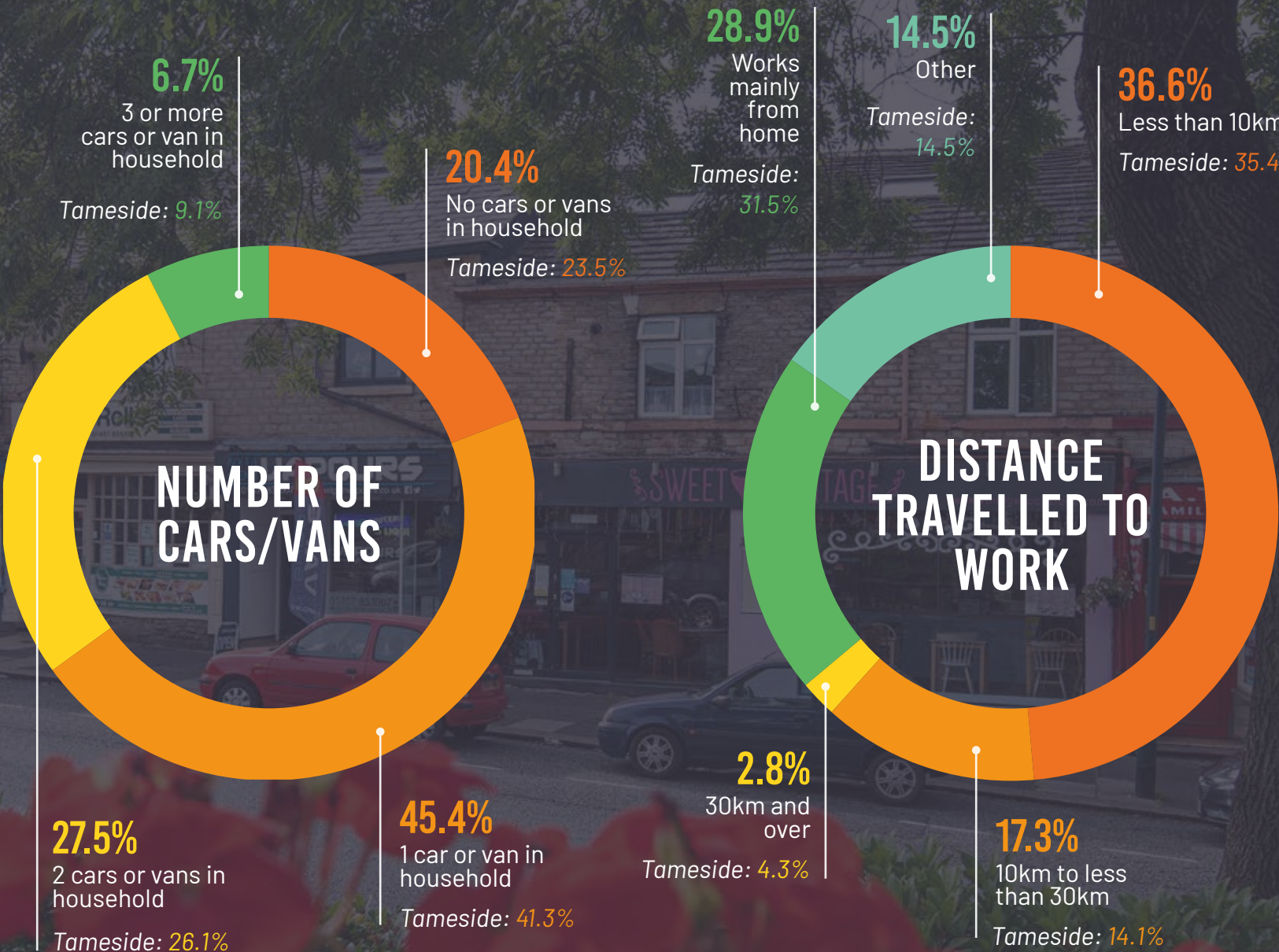
- Improve station
- Walking and Cycling strategy for Mossley
- Bus service improvements – including frequency
- EV charging opportunities
- Improvements to walking, cycling, wheeling along River Tame
- Improvements to highways and public realm to villages, road safety
- Improve connections to river/ canal network for active travel and leisure
- Improve public transport links to train and key centres and other town centres

Weaknesses

- Bus frequency is irregular.
- Disruption to services due to Trans Pennine Route upgrade and station improvements;
- Only one single main connecting road between Top and Bottom Mossley.
- No publicly available EV charging.

Challenges

- Cost of trains travel, capacity, frequency of off-peak services
- Valley topography limits mobility and local permeability
- Car park domination of Manchester Road
- Poor access to motorways



PLACES

Strengths

- Strong textile/industrial heritage & identity along River Tame
- Undulating topography; leads to landscape views and value
- Rich history and established tourist trails/ interpretation boards that tell stories of WW1 and industrial heritage
- Numerous listed buildings and structures – contribute to the character of Mossley
- Stone and slate; traditional terraces
- Dramatic Pennine backdrop
- Landscape heritage Interest of valleys at gateway to Peak District
- Landscape views across the Valley Tame

Opportunities

- Protection of heritage assets and conduction of heritage studies
- Waymarking and promotion of history; work with Civic Society
- Flood management and river strategies
- Conservation designation of canal network
- Sense of place – band events – local community engagement
- Retain Mossley’s heritage through design – building in stone, late 18th & 19th Century style, retaining cobbles etc enhancing the potential to become a destination for “tourists.”
- The existing railway station could be retained and extended as a combined “Visitor Centre, Museum, Exhibition Space. The latter could be used for sales of artists’ and local craft work
- The station car park retained as visitor and shopper parking.
- Community art projects using the car park walls as an open air art gallery could help to engage young people

Weaknesses

- Undulating topography leads to issues for elderly
- Town Council working to expansion of creative groups in George Lawton Hall
- Build on opportunities of town council and work closely to promote place to live, and visit
- Lack of conservation areas

Challenges

- Threat to heritage and character of places.
- Topography – steep hillside developments
- Connectivity



44 Listed buildings
all Grade II



1 Article 4
HMO



VISION

- Attractive place to live
- High-quality public realm connections – with its existing network of historic footpaths and alleyways, there is the opportunity for enhancement and improvement. However, the topography makes some of these challenging. Therefore, options should be considered for improving the quality and safety of the main pavement connecting top and bottom Mossley along Stamford Road.
- Opportunities presented by the re-location of the rail station will be fully realised and options for the productive re-use of the historic station will be explored.
- Improve footfall – Maximise the use of existing buildings and quality. Improve the public realm in the town centre of Top Mossley, including the market grounds, and along the local shopping parade on

Manchester Road in Bottom Mossley. Explore the possibility of controlling the overconcentration of certain use classes and tackling poor quality design of shop frontages.

- Urban regeneration – Major opportunity around Britannia Mill/Britannia New Mill/Queens Mill taking full advantage of their unique riverside setting, including the opportunity for the creation and enhancement of an accessible waterside park and trail.
- The thriving independent businesses and cultural assets will be nurtured and grown to enhance the socio-economic resilience of the town.
- Mossley will be known for celebrating its unique heritage and building on its distinctive identity. A compact, well-connected, and

sustainable place. A friendly and welcoming place for future generations to enjoy. A destination where people can socialise and relax.

- Opportunities for economic growth and employment will be embraced where they enhance the unique character of the town. The continued use of historic buildings will play a key role in this, alongside opportunities for creating a variety of modern workspace, including exploring the potential for flexible office workspaces to enable start-ups and entrepreneurs to flourish.

DELIVERY

- Retain heritage and identity through aligning future development with current building design, including slope and length of rooflines, as well as pattern of local farmstead - to ensure sensitive transitions between countryside and town.
- Develop future settlement clusters embed into agricultural setting by using green buffers, hedgerows and dry-stone walls.
- Enhance connectivity and public access of river corridors and hilltop viewpoints through the development of green infrastructure.
- Encourage active use of ground floor buildings in the Town Centre, along Stamford Street, with apartments above to sustain vibrancy, supply accommodation and encourage economic engagement/employment.
- Support independent shops/ creative tourism and promote villages; regular events such as Maker markets, food events and heritage events
- Engage in discussion around TransPennine rail upgrades to better improve connectivity to wider regions in England
- Market Mossley as a 'Market Town' with as a Unique selling point, highlighting it's culture, heritage and local identity to increase attractiveness thus footfall into area
- Regeneration of brownfield, vacant and derelict sites - repurposing of space to meet local needs such as floorspace for office, industrial and residential requirements
- Introduction and development of processes of sustainability for reach low-carbon emissions, such as implementation of EPV charging stations
- Develop a broad mix of house types including new social rented and private rented apartments for first time buyers, benefitting from the excellent lifestyle and good links into major employment areas of Manchester



POLICY APPROACH

- Support the TransPennine rail upgrade programme and the opportunities it provides to the wider neighbourhood: improving connectivity; catalysing support for emerging food and beverage uses and enhancement of shop frontages.
- Strengthen the uniqueness of Mossley's market town selling point, securing a positive future for the town's market square through small scale public realm interventions to increase footfall and economic activity on event days and encourage sustained informal use of the space throughout the year.
- Deliver a net increase of around 870 new homes across Mossley.
- Support improvements to the pedestrian environment along Manchester Road and Stamford Street, seeking opportunities to lessen car dominance, improve the high street and create a safer and more pleasant environment.
- Support the regeneration of Bottom Mossley, specifically through the use of derelict mills to provide new high-density residential accommodation.
- Seek opportunities to enhance connectivity and linkages between Top and Bottom Mossley, mindful of gradients and the potential need for resting places.
- Improve active travel links via upgrading the permeability of the canal and river corridors.
- Maximise the positive opportunity to reuse the former Mossley train station buildings resulting from the TransPennine upgrade programme.



