Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Agenda
Cabinet

Wednesday, 29 September 2021 at 3.30 pm
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, B69 3DB

This agenda gives notice of items to be considered in private as required by Regulations 5 (4) and (5) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

1 **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.

2 **Declarations of Interest**
Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 **Minutes** (Pages 9 - 30)
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021 as a correct record.

4 **Additional Items of Business**
To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 **Corporate Plan 2020-2025 - Refresh 2021** (Pages 31 - 64) — **Leader of the Council**
To recommend the Council to approve the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025 – Refresh 2021.

6	**Use of COVID-19 Emergency Funding & Contain Outbreak Management Fund** (Pages 65 - 70) To approve proposals for the use of COVID-19 Emergency Funding and Contain Outbreak Management Fund.	**Finance & Resources**
7	**Extension of contract for a non-executive director of Sandwell Children's Trust board** (Pages 71 - 78) To extend the contract of a non-executive director of Sandwell Children's Trust board.	**Children & Education**
8	**Appropriation of 34/36 Bridge Street West Bromwich B70 9HN, General Fund into Housing Revenue Account** (Pages 79 - 84) To authorise the appropriation of the property to accommodate subsequent use by housing as part of the housing stock.	**Regeneration & Growth**
9	**Sandwell Local Development Scheme 2021** (Pages 85 - 102) To approve the updated Sandwell Local Development Scheme 2021.	**Regeneration & Growth**
10	**Refurbishment of Low Rise Blocks of Flats - The Lakes, Lion Farm** (Pages 103 - 110) To award a contract for the refurbishment of low rise flats at The Lakes, Badsey Road, Lion Farm, Oldbury.	**Housing**
11	**Roofing Repairs to Council Properties** (Pages 111 - 118) To award the contract to undertake roofing repairs to Council properties.	**Housing**
12	**Smethwick to Birmingham Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan Revision** (Pages 119 - 266) To see approval to the revised documents on the Draft Smethwick to Birmingham Regeneration Corridor Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan for consultation.	**Regeneration & Growth**
13	**Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Top Up** (Pages 267 - 278) To agree a policy whereby businesses can benefit from the remaining ARG funding and agree how the funding is to be distributed to businesses who qualify	**Regeneration & Growth**

for support.

14	**Establishing an Equality Commission Team** (Pages 279 - 284) To fund the Equality Team from Council Reserves support the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion agenda.	**Neighbourhoods and Communities**
15	**Sandwell Land and Property Ltd - Future Use and Options** (Pages 285 - 296) To approve the Sandwell Land & Property Limited being placed be placed into Members' Voluntary Liquidation.	**Children & Education**
16	**Co-operative Working with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust** (Pages 297 - 304) To extend the Co-operative Working Agreement for Public Health Services with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.	**Adult Social Care and Health**
17	**Exclusion of the Public and Press** That the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting. This is to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to the financial and business affairs of any person, including the authority holding that information.	
18	**West Bromwich Towns Fund - Digital Den Full Business Case Approval** (Pages 305 - 342) To approve the Full Business Case for the West Bromwich Towns Fund Digital Den Project.	**Regeneration & Growth**

Kim Bromley-Derry CBE DL
Interim Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution
Councillor R Singh (Leader of the Council)
Councillors Ahmed, Bostan, Carmichael, Crompton, Hartwell, Millard, I Padda, Piper and Simms

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Minutes of The Cabinet

Wednesday 1 September 2021 at 3.30pm
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor R Singh (Chair);
Councillors Hartwell, Millard, I Padda and Simms.

Also present: Councillors L Giles and Mabena.

Officers: Kim Bromley-Derry (Interim Chief Executive), Nicholas Austin (Interim Director – Borough Economy), Melanie Barnett (Acting Operational Director – Children's),Rashpal Bishop (Director of Adult Social Care), Neil Cox (Director of Business Strategy and Change), Gillian Douglas (Director of Housing), Simone Hines (Director of Finance), Sue Stanhope (Interim Director HR), Surjit Tour (Director - Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer) Katharine Willmette (Interim Strategic Director – Children and Education) and Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy).

141/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahmed, Crompton, E M Giles, Moore and Shackleton

142/21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

143/21 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 21 July 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

144/21 **Additional Items of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider at the meeting.

145/21 **Consultation on the Future of Walker Grange**

It was reported that Walker Grange was designed and built in the 1980s and had now become dated, proving unsuitable to meet the changing care and support needs of some individuals. Rooms were not big enough to accommodate non-standard wheelchairs, along with additional equipment needed to meet people's care and support needs, such as mobile or fixed hoists.

The layout of the building and the mechanism of the entrances and exits did not provide suitable infrastructure to best support tenants with dementia and they did not offer best practice in dementia specialisms.

Approval was therefore sought for a 12-week consultation period for tenants and a 30-day consultation period for the affected staff group. The consultation would be developed to encourage and facilitate participation by all affected parties.

It was noted that following the completion of the consultation with tenants, stakeholders and affected staff, a further report would be presented to Cabinet where a decision would be sought to agree the future of Walker Grange.

Reason for Decision
Whilst Walker Grange had capacity for 39 properties, there was only 22 tenants in situ. This was as a result of decreased demand in recent years, exacerbated by the closure to admissions because of the pandemic. Similarly, the onsite day service had capacity for 20 attendees per day, 7 days per week. Prior to the pandemic 8 to 15 people had attended daily with 26 people registered. The day service had not operated throughout the pandemic. When day service clients had been contacted there had only been a small number who had wanted to consider day care options in the future once these services were back and operational. The consultation process, would look to support anyone wishing to continue with some form of day care to explore all available options at the appropriate time.

Alternative Options Considered
Options Appraisal:

Option 1 – Do nothing – continue to provide Extra Care Housing at Walker Grange.

Option 2 – Look at the closure of Walker Grange & the transfer of Tenants to Willow Gardens or other suitable ECH provision.

Option 3 – Look at Upgrading Walker Grange to ensure it is fit for purpose for the future.

The 3 Options were explored, and the advantages and disadvantages can be seen in the above tables. Based on the above summary, Option 2 was recommended as the most viable option.

Agreed:-

(1) that approval be given to commence consultation with the tenants of Walker Grange and their relatives, on the future of Walker Grange;

(2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, approval be given to commence consultation with affected Council staff members;

(3) that a further report be presented to Cabinet, to agree the future plans for Walker Grange following completion of the consultation.

146/21 **Sandwell Children's Trust Annual Review 2020/21 and Improvement Plan**

Consideration was given to the Sandwell Children's Trust Annual Review 2020/21. The Service Delivery Contract between the Council and Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) required that an annual review of services was completed and presented to the council. At the Cabinet meeting on 22 March 2017, it was agreed that the Cabinet would perform this function on behalf of the council in its executive role to agree certain 'reserved matters' that are set out in the Contract.

Reason for Decision
The Service Delivery Contract required SCT to meet the requirements of 'any improvement plan as agreed between the Council and the Trust and as amended from time to time'.

The initial improvement plan agreed with the Trust covered the period 2018 to 2021 and was presented to Cabinet on 19 September 2018.

The report presented SCTs Annual Review 2020/21 and updated Improvement Plan. Consideration of these reports by the Cabinet formed an important part of the governance of SCT; providing assurance to the council in its capacity as the body that was responsible and accountable for the for the discharge of the relevant children's social care services functions.

Alternative Options Considered
At its meeting on 19 October 2016, Cabinet was advised of the Government's Statutory Direction (under Section 479A of the Education Act 1996) to set up a new arrangement in the form of a children's trust to deliver children's social care services. As a result, Sandwell Children's Trust started operating on 1 April 2018. Any alternative to the current arrangement must be agreed by the Secretary of State for Education.

Agreed that the Cabinet, in its capacity as the body that is responsible and accountable for the discharge of the relevant children's social care services functions:-

a) formally receives the Sandwell Children's Trust Annual Review 2020/21;

b) notes the progress made to date by Sandwell Children's Trust in delivering services as set out in the Contract between the Council and the Trust, as set out in the Annual Review 2020/21;

c) formally receives the updated Improvement Plan 2021/24;

d) notes the feedback from the Department for Education following its recent 6-month review of Sandwell Children's Trust;

e) notes the reports from Ofsted for the period covering the Annual Review 2020/21.

f)

147/21 **Sandwell Children's Invest to Save Proposal**

Approval was sought for the Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) Invest to Save Proposal. The Service Delivery Contract between the Council and SCT allowed SCT to make an Invest to Save proposal which required an increase to the Contract Sum in the short term, but which would be paid back to the Council in terms of a future reduction in the Contract Sum.

Reason for Decision
The financial mechanism allowed SCT to request changes to the annual contract sum. These requests fall into 2 categories, Type 1 or Type 2.

Type 1: there had been an increase in the demand for the Services and/or an additional cost to the Trust that could not reasonably have been anticipated when the overall budget for the relevant Contract Year was agreed by the Parties; or (ii) a business case proposal which would require an Increase to the Contract Sum but would deliver an improvement in the Services

Type 2: where the Trust wishes to make an Invest to Save proposal which would require an increase to the Contract Sum in the short term, but which it would pay back to the Council in terms of a future reduction in the Contract Sum

The investment amount being requested was £287,500, split across Early Help and Strategic Commissioning. Both proposals would see additional investment in 2021/22 and 2022/23, with the investment being returned to the Council in 2023/24 and 2024/25 by a reduction in the overall contract sum.

The impact of the activity would be assessed after 12 months and if the anticipated progress in making savings was at significantly slower rate or significantly lower value than detailed in the proposals, the continuation of the activity and associated funding from the Council would be reviewed.

Alternative Options Considered
The Council was not obligated to agree to the proposals put forward by SCT. SCT may not be able to undertake the identified work which may in turn impact on its ability to achieve positive change for children and/or delay the achievement of a 'Good' rating from Ofsted.

Agreed:-

(1) that the Cabinet, in line with the Service Delivery Contract with Sandwell Children's Trust, considers the Invest to Save proposals put forward by the Trust and:

a) agree the increase to the Contract Sum in the short term as per the Strategic Commissioning Invest to Save proposal, to be paid back to the Council via a reduction in the future Contract Sum;

b) Agree the increase to the Contract Sum in the short term as per the Early Help Invest to Save proposal, to be paid back to the Council via a reduction in the future Contract Sum.

(2) that, subject to (1)a) and (1)b), the Executive Director of Children's Services take the necessary actions, as laid out in the Service Delivery Contract, to vary the contract sum.

148/21 **Contract for the Supply of Liquid Fuels - Appointment of Contractor**

Approval was sought for the appointment of a contractor for the supply of liquid fuels. The Council's current contract was due to expire on 30 September 2021.

Participation in the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Framework would enable the Council to continue to obtain Liquid Fuels at regional competitive rates, based on the industry standard weekly lagged pricing model with supplier delivery margins fixed for the duration of the Contract.

The nominated contractor on the ESPO Framework for the West Midlands region is Certas Energy Ltd who were also the supplier on the current contract so there would be a seamless transfer across ensuring delivery lead times would be maintained and delivery site familiarity.

Reason for Decision
The Council had an ongoing requirement for the supply of bulk tanker deliveries of Ultra Low Sulphur Diesel to the depots at Taylors Lane, Oldbury and Waterfall Lane, Cradley Heath.

There was also a requirement for Heating Oil to be purchased for a range of sites including Sandwell Park Farm, Redhouse Park, West Smethwick ark, Tanhouse Centre as well as the out of Borough Residential Centres.

It was proposed that participation in the ESPO Framework wold be for the period 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2024 and based on current levels of expenditure, would have a value of £750,000.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board sought clarification on why the contract had not gone through the regular tendering process. Councillor Millard responded that the process had gone through the correct framework for contracts under £250,000. It was noted that the contract was for 3 years and would save money as it allowed the Council to buy fuel in bulk.

Alternative Options Considered
One alternative option would be to undertake a tendering exercise on behalf of the Council in isolation or in conjunction with the other Black Country Boroughs. However, the levels of consumption would not be sufficient to improve of the pricing that could be obtained by participating in the ESPO Framework.

Agreed:-

(1) that approval be given to utilise Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Framework 301_20 to appoint Certas Energy UK Ltd to supply Liquid Fuels for the period 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2024 following the result of a procurement market review exercise undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules;

(2) that in connection with (1) above, the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into an appropriate contract with Certas Energy Ltd.

149/21 **Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy**

Approval was sought for the Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy. The UK government had committed to banning the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2030. The resultant societal shift from petrol and diesel, internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV) would require widespread support from local authorities. It was projected that there would be an additional 42,500 ULEVs within the Black Country by 2025. The Black Country ULEV strategy set out a framework for how the Council could support the transition. Failure to support the transition would result in the borough and Black Country being left behind.

Reason for Decision

Adoption of the strategy would support reductions in air pollution. The whole of Sandwell had been a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) since 2005, because of lower than average air quality across the borough. This low air quality had resulted in increased prevalence of heart and lung disease. Adoption of the strategy would support a transition away from (ICE) vehicles to cleaner electric ULEVs. It was forecast that a transition based on a 2030 ICE ban would, by 2025, result in a 12% reduction of transport Nitrous Dioxide (NOx) emissions and a 36.6% reduction in transport Particulate Matter (PM) emissions across the borough. By 2040 these reductions are forecast to be 83.4% and 90.1% respectively.

Adoption of the strategy would support emissions reduction. Following the UK Government's legislative commitment to the country reaching net-zero Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions by 2050, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) had committed to the metropolitan area reaching net zero by 2041, a target which had been matched by the Council for the borough. Transport was the biggest contributor to CO2 emissions nationally, regionally and locally. It was forecast that a transition to ULEVs based on a 2030 ICE ban would result in a 4% decrease in transport CO2 emissions by 2025. This transition and resultant decrease in transport CO2 emissions would contribute to Sandwell meetings its own, regional and national emission reduction targets.

Adoption of the strategy would enable the council to use the document as a central plank for ULEV charging infrastructure bids such as the On-Street Residential Charging Scheme.

Alternative Options Considered

The 2030 ban on the sale of ICE cars would remain in place at a national level regardless of the formal adoption or not of local ULEV strategies.

Not adopting the strategy at a local level would decrease local 'buy in', increasing the likelihood of Sandwell and the Black Country continuing to lag behind the rest of the UK in terms of ULEV adoption and its consequent carbon emission and air pollution reductions.

Agreed that approval be given to the Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy and Implementation Plan.

150/21 **Q1 Budget Monitoring 2021/22**

The Cabinet received and noted the Q1 Budget 2021/22. Section 151 of the 1972 Local Government Act required the Chief Financial Officer to ensure the proper administration of the council's financial affairs. Budgetary control, which included the regular monitoring and reporting of budgets was an essential element in discharging this statutory responsibility.

Reason for Decision
Services were projecting an over spend of £4.621m against allocated budgets however, after adjusting for reserves, corporate resources, RCCO and the application of centrally held Covid-19 grant funding the adjusted projected outturn was an under spend of £6.185m.

Services were continuing to experience the financial impact of the pandemic, most significantly a loss of income due to suspended or significantly reduced services. Pressures of £7.610m were expected to be managed through the centrally held Covid funding which was from the unused balance of grants received in 2020/21 and additional grants received or anticipated for part of 2021/22.

In addition to the Covid related issues, services were reporting a number of significant ongoing operational pressures which would need to be incorporated into the next refresh of the corporate medium term financial strategy.

The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board commented that the budget would be looked at in greater detail at the next Scrutiny Board and it was hoped that Councillor Crompton would attend.

Alternative Options Considered
There are limited decisions within the recommendations, Cabinet could vary the proposed transfer of Covid funding to the Sandwell Children's Trust or the requested virements within Public Health which reflected increases in the available resources since the 2021/22 budgets were approved.

Agreed:-

(1) that the financial monitoring for individual directorates as at 30 June 2021 (Quarter 1 2021/22) be noted and referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for consideration and comment;

(2) that the projected financial position be noted; in particular, where services are projecting an over spend of £4.621m against allocated budgets and an underspend of £6.185m after adjusting for the movement on reserves, use of corporate resources and the application of centrally held Covid-19 grant funding;

(3) that the following budget virements above the higher of £0.25m or 1% of the Gross Budget of the service area be approved:

Virements above £0.250m or 1% of Gross Budget for approval by Cabinet	£'000	£'000
Public Health		
Communicable Disease - Test & Trace Grant carry forward		(1,142)
Grant funded expenditure for Test & Trace	1,142	
Communicable Disease Community Lateral Flow Testing grant		(279)
Grant funded expenditure for Lateral Flow Testing	279	
Long Term Conditions In year PHE award for Adult Weight Management.		(321)
Grant funded expenditure for Adult Weight Management Services	321	
Substance Misuse & Smoking - In year PHE award for Drug Treatment Crime and Harm reduction.		(407)
Grant funded expenditure for Drug Treatment Crime & Harm reduction.	407	
TOTAL	2,149	(2,149)

(4) that an allocation of £514,083 to Sandwell Children's Trust to fund Covid-19 pressures be approved which is not currently reflected in the projections within the Children's Services monitoring;

(5) that the revised Capital Programme be amended to include the urgency decision taken by the Leader on 31 August 2021.

151/21 **Use of Local Council Tax Support Grant 2021/22**

Approval was sought for the use of local council tax support grant 2021/22. As part of its response to Covid-19 the government announced in May 2021 that it would provide local authorities in England with new grant funding in recognition of the anticipated additional cost of the LCTRS in 2021/22. Sandwell had been allocated funding of £3,586,869 for 2021/22.

Government funding had been provided in 2020/21 however the criteria for its use was more rigid. There was £500,000 remaining from the 2020/21 funding and this had been used to continue to provide support to residents who had been affected by the pandemic and were struggling to pay their Council Tax. Sandwell's LCTRS was one of only a few schemes nationally that provided 100% support to the lowest income households and the current cost of the scheme was £30.9m for 2021/22.

Any Local Council Tax Support Grant remaining at the end of 2021/22 could be used towards the cost of Sandwell's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Reason for Decision
Each local authority had been issued funding based on national published LCTRS workload data.

The fund would administered by the Revenues and Benefits Service. Full funding would be provided to cover the costs of the grants and a New Burdens funding had also been provided to cover the council's administration costs.

Alternative Options Considered
The council could use the funding in recognition of the anticipated additional cost of LCTRS in 2021/22 however this approach would not target additional support to residents affected by the pandemic who are struggling to pay their Council Tax

Agreed:-

(1) that approval be given to the use of the Local Council Tax Support Grant 2021/22 to provide financial support to those Sandwell residents who are struggling to pay their Council Tax;

(2) that the use of some of the Local Council Tax Support Grant to fund the cost of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2021/22 be approved.

(3) that approval be given for the households and hierarchy to be considered for an award as detailed below:-

- Use the Local Council Tax Support Grant funding to award up to £150 to all working age LCTRS recipients – where they have an annual amount to pay. This could equate to 8,000 households being supported and would cost around £840,000;

- Council tax support where required to residents based on the hierarchy below:

  • Families in receipt of free school meals
  • Residents affected by the pandemic that are in arrears with their Council Tax who contact us to advise that they are struggling to make payment and for whom a hardship payment will help to reduce or completely pay their council tax for 2021-22
  • Residents affected by the pandemic identified by Revenues and Benefits, Welfare Rights, voluntary sector organisations and/or Citizens Advice Bureau who will benefit from receiving financial support to help to pay their council tax
  • Make an additional award to our working-age LCTRS claimants who have already received a payment if the funding allows. In all such cases only award an amount up to the balance outstanding on the account so as not to cause a credit

152/21 **Premises 106/107/108 High Street, West Bromwich - Approval to accept surrender of lease prior to the break date of 30 June 2024**

Approval was sought to accept the surrender of the lease of premises 106/107/108 High Street West Bromwich prior to the break date of 30 June 2024. The opportunity had arisen to obtain vacant possession of 106/107/108 High Street West Bromwich, currently owned by the Council and leased to Argos on a lease which runs to 2029. By taking the opportunity to obtain vacant possession now the Council would avoid significant costs in having to acquire a leasehold interest later. Vacant possession of the properties was necessary to relocate the indoor market and to deliver the emerging West Bromwich Masterplan.

Whilst the opportunity to take a surrender of the lease has arisen earlier than ideal, it was a time-limited opportunity with obtaining possession at a later date likely to be more difficult and much more expensive.

Reason for Decision
A central element in the masterplan would be the relocation of the indoor market to a more central location where it could benefit from, and also contribute to, an increased level of footfall.

The new indoor market was a critical element of the Retail Diversification Programme which forms part of the Council's Towns Fund programme. This programme initially focuses on: Bull Street (incorporating the Queen Square Shopping Centre) and the Kings Square Shopping Centre (incorporating the Indoor Market and former Kings Square Cinema). This equates to circa 4.4 ha of land for regeneration. The programme aimed to kickstart regeneration and transformation of the West Bromwich retail submarket through site assembly and demolition.

Alternative Options Considered
The Council could decline to accept the offer of a surrender at this stage and delay the decision until the West Bromwich Masterplan was approved and a full business case developed for the market relocation.

The Council could consider acquiring another similar property in the town centre for the new indoor market. This would involve negotiating with property owners and tenants and would involve the Council paying premiums to tenants rather than receiving one.

The Council could consider the construction of a new market hall on an alternative site as part of the masterplan. This would inevitably be more expensive and might damage the viability of the masterplan as it would displace alternative uses e.g. residential or leisure.

Agreed:-

(1) that the Interim Director of Regeneration and Growth be authorised to conclude negotiations with the lessee's agents to agree a surrender premium for a surrender of the lease of 106/107/108 High Street, West Bromwich with effect from 10 September 2021;

(2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to prepare and agree formal surrender documents to allow the Council to obtain vacant possession of the premises;

(3) that the Director of Finance be authorised to make an adjustment to the income target for Strategic Assets and Land to reflect the loss of income.

153/21 **Award of a Framework Agreement for the Strong and Provision of Tree Maintenance & Arboricultural Services**

Approval was sought to award the Framework Agreement and appoint the contractors for the Provision of Tree Maintenance and Arboricultural Services.

The Framework Agreement would include, but not limited to provision of the following tree maintenance services and Arboricultural services:

• Tree pruning / cutting / clearing
• Hedge cutting / pruning
• Crown reduction
• Tree / large shrub removal (felling, sectional, dismantling, crane assisted)
• Stump removal / chemical treatment
• Associated waste removal
• Emergency call out and make safe 24 hour response

• Arboricultural advice and tree surveys

The Framework Agreement approach ensured continuity of service, including during peak times, i.e. storms, high winds and also encourages competitive pricing schedules.

Reason for Decision
The total expenditure over the four year life of the Framework Agreement was estimated to be £2.4m.

The Framework Agreement was procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 following an EU compliant open tender process. Contractors were invited to submit tenders on a 70% price and 30% quality basis with the top three submissions being appointed to the Framework Agreement.

In response to the tender advertisement, five compliant tender submissions were returned by the deadline of 8 January 2021.

Tender submissions had been scored in accordance with the stated evaluation criteria by officers from the Council's Corporate Procurement Service and Urban Forestry Unit.

Alternative Options Considered
Do nothing. The current agreement lapses and the Council would have to go out for quote/tender for individual tree work requests. This would result in numerous independent Tree Contractors working within the Borough and with the loss of the Framework Agreement prices and Officers time to deal with this would increase significantly.

Agreed:-

(1) that the Interim Director – Borough Economy be authorised to award the Framework Agreement for the Provision of Tree Maintenance & Arboricultural Services for the period 9 September 2021 to 31 July 2025 (subject to satisfactory performance and price competitiveness) to the following Contractors:

- Acorn Environmental Management Group
- Beechwood Trees and Landscapes Ltd
- Midland Forestry Ltd

(2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter in to appropriate contracts with Acorn Environmental Management Group, Beechwood Trees and Landscapes Ltd and Midland Forestry Ltd.

154/21 **Schools Capital Programme 2021-2024**

Approval was sought to allocate School Condition Allocation funding for cyclical maintenance to support maintained schools. The balance would be retained for a future school replacement building programme.

Following Cabinet approval on 17 March 2021 (Minute No.79/21 of Cabinet refers), to allocate £850,000 from the council's Special Education Needs and Disability capital grant to fund extension works at The Meadows School (9-19), detailed design and survey work had now been completed, and full planning consent obtained. In particular, the survey work had established that significant ground works are required to enable construction, including an alternative foundation piling solution, and safe disposal of contaminated waste, which had been unknown at the time of the initial approval. Commencement of the works had now been delayed until mid-September.

Basic Need Allocation was providing new places in the borough. Data shows by the academic year 2023/24 there would be a shortfall in secondary places. It was the Local Authority's statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.

Reason for Decision
The DfE had confirmed a new allocation of £10,733,158 Basic Need capital grant funding to the Authority.

It was currently projected that an additional 828 places would be required in secondary schools by September 2024. The project at Health Futures University Technology College (UTC) would provide 360 of those places. The shortfall was in addition to the proposed opening of two new secondary free schools that were due to be opened by the DfE in September 2022 and 2023 respectively.

Alternative Options Considered
There were either no alternative options, or options had already been discounted through project development:

• The terms of the School Condition Allocation met funds have to be spent on maintained school's cyclical maintenance.

Within the maintained schools sector, it was the primary school building stock that would also require a programme of replacement to commence shortly. The deteriorating condition of school buildings wold otherwise continue to be a drain on the School Repair Account.

• Early feasibility at The Meadows School identified the proposed location for the extension works as the most suitable and appropriate. The Authority does not have an alternative secondary special school to admit the additional pupils to, that could meet their individual special needs.

• Health Futures UTC – the alternative option would be the Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust sponsored secondary free school proposed for West Bromwich Town Centre in partnership with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra that had already been approved by the DfE and will provide 750 additional secondary school places required in the town.

Agreed:-

(1) that approval be given to a sum of £1.5m of the School Condition allocation to be used to support cyclical maintenance;

(2) that approval be given to the allocation of an additional £200,000 from the council's Special Education Needs and Disability capital grant to fund extension works to The Meadows School (9-19), Dudley Road East, Oldbury B69 3BU;

(3) that approval be given to the allocation of £4,575,000 from the Department of Education (DfE) Basic Need allocation to fund remodelling and refurbishment at Health Futures University Technical College, 350 High Street, West Bromwich B70 8DJ as part of the Schools Capital Programme 2021– 2024;

(4) that in connection with Resolution (3), approval be given to the allocation of £2,035,000 from the council's School Condition balances to enable works to be completed;

(5) that in connection with Resolution (1), (2) and (3) above, that the following actions are implemented to reduce any risk to the council:-

- In connection with School Condition, ensure that repair / maintenance work for schools is undertaken following an analysis of pre-determined criteria and that records are maintained to demonstrate the priority need of each school;
- Maintain project programmes for each scheme within the Schools Capital Programme to ensure that effective project monitoring can be undertaken to aid the timely delivery of the programme
- Ensure that corporate Risk Registers are maintained and reviewed for all projects, and ensure all risks are appropriately identified and assessed, with adequate mitigation;
- That cost estimates are reviewed to ensure that any future costs can be managed within the allocated funding;

• Ensure rigorous financial monitoring is undertaken on the Schools Capital Programme to ensure future funding needs can be met;
• Ensure that the Council enters into such form of legal agreements as required to allow capital works on all proposed sites; and
• Post project evaluation should include specific outcomes, to monitor the successful delivery of each project, along with benchmarking of final costs to ensure value for money is achieved; and
• Project evaluation information is reported at an appropriate level for accountability and to ensure future improvements in programme implementation.

155/21 **Cabinet Petitions Committee Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Petitions Committee held on 23 June 2021 were noted.

Meeting ended at 4.00pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Corporate Plan 2020-2025 - Refresh 2021
Cabinet Member:	The Leader of the Council Councillor Rajbir Singh
Director:	Kim Bromley-Derry Interim Chief Executive
Key Decision:	Yes (c) to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.
Contact Officer:	Sarah Sprung, Senior Lead Officer Sarah_sprung@sandwell.gov.uk Kate Ashley, Strategic Lead Kate1_ashley@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That Council be recommended to approve the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025 – Refresh 2021.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The approach to refreshing the Corporate Plan has been very much about building it in a collaborative way to ensure we capture and take account of key issues and concerns from a wide range of our stakeholders.

2.2 The resulting intelligence from the conversations with our stakeholders has informed the draft set of actions within the proposed refreshed Corporate Plan that will achieve the strategic outcomes and address the key issues affecting the borough and our organisation.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

3.1 The Corporate Plan sets out the strategic priorities for the council and details future service provision to achieve them. The Corporate Plan then informs how each directorate will spend the target budget available to them. A refresh of the detailed actions that underpin the delivery of the strategic objectives is required at this time to ensure that the Corporate Plan takes into account the impact of the pandemic on Sandwell as a whole and on the organisation.

4 Context and Key Issues

Background

4.1 Our Corporate Plan – Big Plans for a Great Place, sets out what the Council will do to deliver Vision 2030, and Sandwell's 10 ambitions, over the period 2020 to 2025. The Corporate Plan was approved by Council on 10 March 2020.

4.2 Following this, the intention during the first half of 2020/21 had been to work with staff, members, partners and communities to develop delivery plans for each of the strategic priorities contained in the Corporate Plan. These delivery plans would have mapped out the detailed actions to achieve the strategic priorities.

4.3 However, the coronavirus pandemic reached the UK at the end of March 2020. This meant that focus of the council and its partners was diverted to the initial response and establishing longer-term support mechanisms as the pandemic has continued into 2021.

4.4 The pandemic has impacted on many aspects of everyday life, communities and on our economy. At the same time, businesses and other organisations were preparing for the UK's departure from the European Union. It was clear that the impact of the pandemic on Sandwell Council and the borough as a whole needed to be understood to ensure our priorities and future actions would address the needs of our communities.

4.5 We commenced work to understand the initial impact of Covid on our communities, on our economy and specifically on the council. This work was presented to Cabinet in detail on 23 September 2020.

4.6 The report set out that whilst the impact of the pandemic had been far reaching, it had exacerbated known issues affecting Sandwell rather than raise any new areas for exploration. The findings formed the basis for a series of engagement events with members, staff and partners throughout the autumn, and drove the second phase of our reset and recovery planning to develop actions to address the key issues affecting our residents.

4.7 At its meeting on 10 February 2021 Cabinet approved proposals to refresh the Corporate Plan. Within this was a comprehensive Communication and Engagement Framework. The Framework placed emphasis on rebuilding our corporate plan with our key stakeholders. We have committed to utilising the principles of co-production in our Corporate Plan refresh. Nesta define co-production as:-

"delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are coproduced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change."

The Starting Point for Conversations

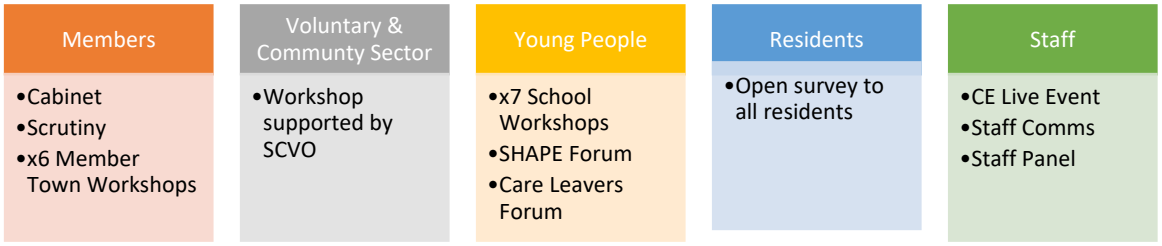
4.8 Building on the impact assessment work with managers across the council and Leadership Team resulted in the creation of a set of principles to guide the refresh and embed into everything we do as a council. These principles would be used to test against our actions and decisions to ensure we are continually working towards delivering the strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan.

4.9 The principles depicted below focus on creating a fairer Sandwell, a place where no one gets left behind, where we do things with our communities and not to them, where we focus on making sure our money is spent locally and where we take our green agenda forward in all aspects of our business, and try to help our communities to do the same.

4.10 In addition to these principles a set of key challenges for the Council were developed, these challenges were derived from the impact assessment work undertaken and further intelligence from staff. This document is appended at Appendix 1. These challenges were then used as the basis of conversations with stakeholder groups to test whether there were any further issues that needed to be addressed in the refreshed Corporate Plan.

Co-producing our Corporate Plan

4.11 The image below outlines key strands of co-production activity that have taken place:-



4.12 All of the conversations that have taken place have sought to build on existing intelligence generated though the impact work and the challenges.

4.13 The sections below outline the approach for each stakeholder and key themes from the various strands of conversation that have taken place.

Members

4.14 A Cabinet Workshop was held in June 2021 to discuss the proposed fairer Sandwell principles and the key challenges to be addressed through the refresh. The fairer Sandwell principles were endorsed by Cabinet Members to include in the further conversations with stakeholder groups and seek their views. Discussion at the Cabinet workshop identified the following areas that needed to be reflected in the Plan:-

- clean and green streets, including refuse collection and tackling long-standing unused land
- mental health and wellbeing support

- engagement with communities
- young people and their future prospects
- support for vulnerable people, particularly housing

4.15 A series of members workshops were run in July and August, one for each of the six towns in the borough. Discussion focused on the principles and the key challenges facing the borough. Headlines from these conversations are detailed below:-

- Universal support for principles and agreed with the challenges.
- Words are good, we have the right principles and have identified the right challenges but how will we deliver all this? Ensuring principles underpin everything and we can demonstrate we have adhered to them. Need to report back regularly, including to residents so they can see change.
- Getting the basics right. Particularly around litter, fly tipping, bins, grass cutting. Appearance of an area gives either right or wrong message.
- Digital exclusion and accessing services for those who need face to face services big issue. Particular difficulties around non-digital access and lack of access to services locally which disadvantages already disadvantaged groups and people. Getting through to the council can be difficult for residents.
- Engagement and communication with residents needs to improve considerably. We need to let people know what we are planning and doing around corporate plan and in their areas; more importantly listen to them.
- Employment/ Economy was universally supported but recognition that quality of life and living well mattered just as much. Priority was young people.

4.16 A further Cabinet Workshop was held in September 2021, focus at this session was to assess key themes from conversations against the strategic outcomes and underpinning headline actions. Members welcomed the clear narrative on how conversations had influenced the content of the Plan and the proposals to develop a Young Persons version of the Plan in autumn/winter 2021/22.

4.17 Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board will consider the strategic outcomes and draft underpinning actions at their meeting on 21 September. A report will be tabled for Cabinets consideration with any commentary or recommendations Scrutiny wishes to put forward.

Voluntary and Community Sector

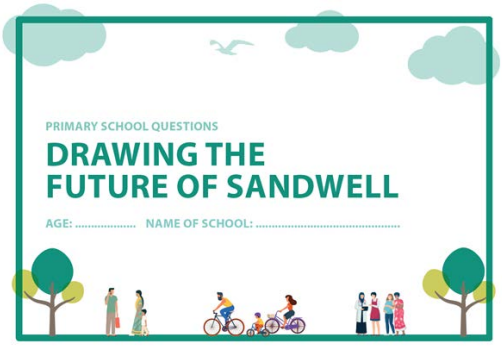
4.18 A virtual event was organised with the support of Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). Whilst the principles were shared together with the challenges, the focus was on collecting the experiences, views and perspectives from our partners in the voluntary and community sector.

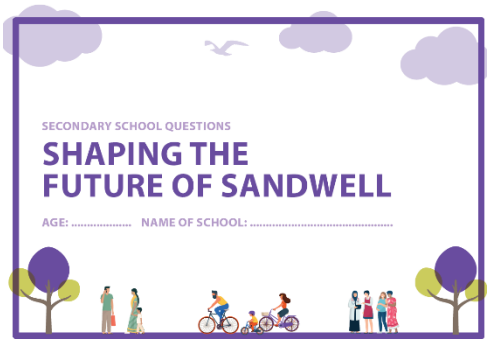
4.19 Some 39 organisations attended the session which was led by the Director of Business Strategy and Change. The commentary from the session was rich and insightful, providing a grassroots perspective on key issues in the community, particularly from those groups that have traditionally been harder to engage with. A summary of the key points is detailed below:-

- There is a need to look at how the council engages with the voluntary sector
- Agreement with Fairer Sandwell principles but more detail needed on how these will be implemented
- Long term impact of Covid will be huge. Need to address recovery and living with on-going threat
- Tackle health inequalities
- Role of the voluntary sector needs to be recognised
- Focus on community housing
- Young people's access to jobs needs particular focus and attention

Young People

4.20 We ran virtual workshops with seven schools across the borough. Workbooks were posted out to all schools ahead of each session to support discussion, with different versions for primary and for secondary schools. The booklets included topics such as the impact of the pandemic, what children and young people liked about their local area, what they would like to see change and their future aspirations.





4.21 Sessions were run at three primary schools and four secondary schools:-

Primary	Secondary
Christchurch	St Michaels
Grove Vale	Shirelands
St Phillips	Q3 Langley
	Q3 Tipton

4.22 Each session was led by a director and Cabinet Member or Cabinet Advisor.

4.23 The points below are the key themes from these sessions:-

- Mental health and wellbeing services need to be signposted and advertised widely, the need for these services is greater than ever
- More green spaces that are safe for young people
- Climate change is an issue for everyone, so let's work together
- We need to prepare young people for adult life with life skills sessions

- The community is what pupils liked most about Sandwell
- Pupils will move away from Sandwell to University and for more job opportunities

4.24 Following the school events the SHAPE Youth Forum were presented with commentary and key themes from the school sessions and invited to provide further feedback.

4.25 The SHAPE Forum considered the following points were the most important areas for the council to focus on from the perspective of young people:-

- Preparation for adult life
- Ensuring everyone feels safe in their community
- Facilities for young people
- Climate change

4.26 Members of the SHAPE Forum agreed to work with the council to develop a Young Persons version of the Corporate Plan and were committed to holding the council to account for delivering the actions.

4.27 The Care Leavers Forum also received a presentation on key themes from school sessions and were invited to share their perspective on key issues and challenges.

4.28 Young people present at the meeting highlighted the following key issues:-

- Living independently from a very young age is challenging - more support is needed, particularly people to talk to for advice;
- Waiting list for mental health services is excessive, often young people are struggling with issues and need more immediate support to avoid the situation escalating;
- Digital poverty is a major issue;
- There aren't enough youth facilities for young people to access - not only do facilities address social need, they also provide a place to get advice, support and signposting;

- Difficulty in securing housing because of the high level of proof required from care leavers.

4.29 The challenge provided to the council from the Care Leavers Forum was that every section of the Corporate Plan, and Directorate Business Plans, needed to consider the council's responsibilities as a Corporate Parent.

4.30 Members of the Care Leavers Forum felt that the proposals to develop a Young People's version of the Corporate Plan were positive and that it would be a good tool to hold the council to account for its actions.

Residents' Survey

4.31 Capturing the views, concerns and thoughts of residents is paramount to developing a Corporate Plan that really focuses on areas that are important to residents.

4.32 The survey covered communication and information, digital inclusion, satisfaction with the council, participation and influence, council spending and priorities, neighbourhood issues and improving Sandwell.

4.33 The online survey ran from 27 July to 16 August, with a total of 1,268 responses being received.

4.34 Whilst the level of response received is encouraging and provides insight into the views of residents, it must be noted that, due to the survey being available online only, the sample is not truly representative of the demographic make-up of the borough. Key points to note about the sample include: -

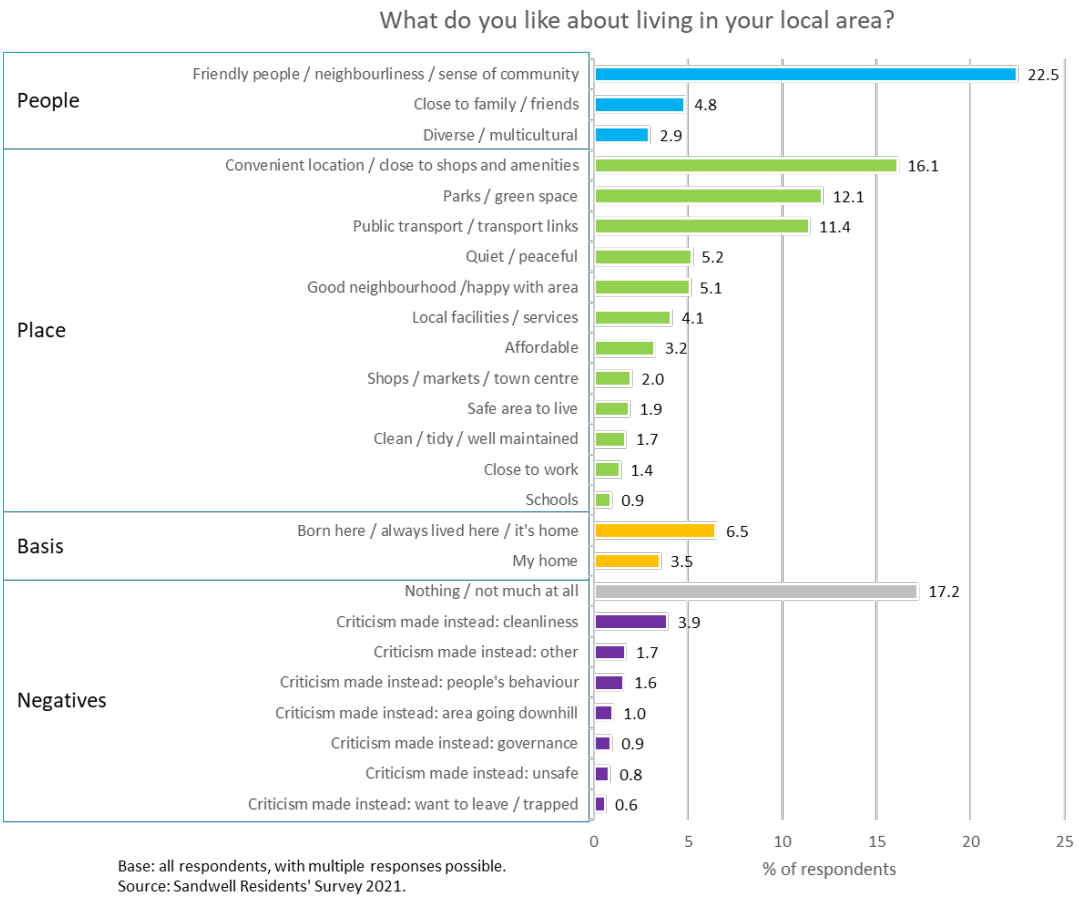
- Over-represented groups: females, 45-54; 55-64 and 65-74 ages and White British
- Under-represented groups: males, 18-24 and 25-34s and 75-plus ages, BAME and economically active
- High response from residents in Wednesbury and Oldbury; low response from residents in Smethwick and West Bromwich

4.35 Therefore, the results cannot be used alone to determine the future of the council or measure service performance. However, building this data into the wider intelligence gathered through our engagement work, the findings from this survey support the key issues that will direct the refresh of the Corporate Plan.

4.36 The survey asked, without any prompts, why people liked their local area and what they would like to see improved. The charts below highlight perceptions of those who competed the survey in relation to what they like about living in their local area and what they would like to see improved.

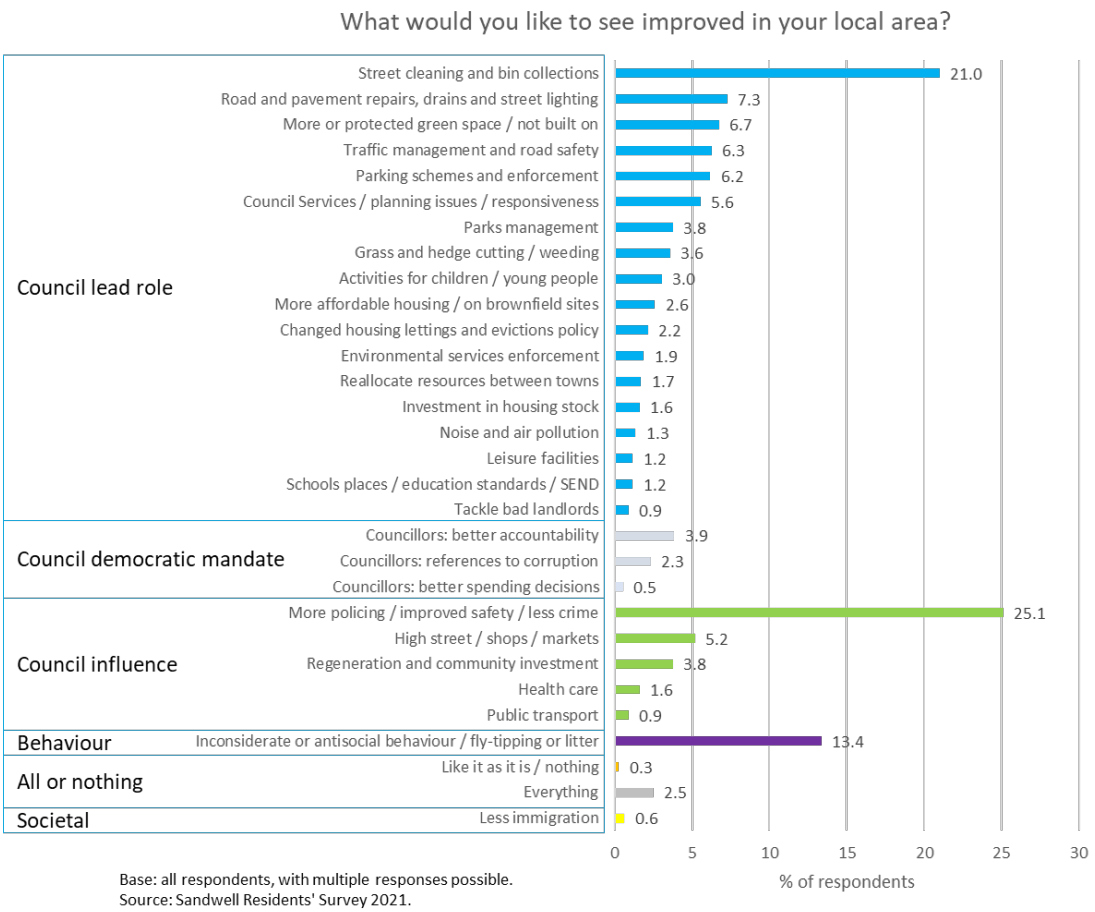
4.37 Figure 1 below shows that nearly one quarter (22.5%) of respondents felt that their local area was a friendly place with a sense of community, and over 15% of respondents said that it was a convenient location close to amenities. However, almost a fifth (18.7%) of respondents offered no view on what they liked in a survey they otherwise completed. Of those commenting on their area, 17.8% said they liked nothing about it, and many offered specific criticisms, conveying feelings of area decline and neglect.

Figure 1: Residents Survey August 2021 - Living in Your Local Area



4.38 Figure 2 below shows the people-based aspects (community, family, diversity) valued and the place appeal (convenience, green space, transport). This chart analyses calls for improvement and distinguishes between issues the council leads on (including the democratic dimension) and where the council contributes or has an influence only. Street scene dominates the first category with over 20% of respondents saying improvements in street cleaning and bin collections were important to them. Policing and community safety issues were the high priorities for improvement in the second category.

Figure 2: Residents Survey August 2021 - Improvements to Local Area



Base: all respondents, with multiple responses possible.
Source: Sandwell Residents' Survey 2021.

4.39 Importantly, the items scoring highest in areas that residents would like to see improved (street cleaning and bin collections, more policing/improved safety/less crime and inconsiderate or antisocial behaviour) have all been strengthened within the proposed refresh of the Corporate Plan, specifically within the Strong and Resilient Communities strategic outcome. These areas have been strengthened as a result of the combined analysis of intelligence from all of the engagement activities carried out during this refresh.

Staff

4.40 Leadership Team have sought to keep staff informed of the need to refresh the Corporate Plan and about the outcomes from the impact assessment work undertaken. Virtual staff conferences have taken place in July 2020, September 2020, December 2020 and April 2021.

4.41 The Corporate Plan has also been an item of each of the 'Team Talk' slide decks issued to managers across the council. These slides form the basis of discussion at team meetings and ensure that consistent messages are communicated.

4.42 All staff were invited to join a Staff Panel which was established in May 2021. The aim of the Panel was to harness the knowledge and experience of staff across the council in developing corporate strategy and policy. Whilst the Panel was established to aid the development of the Corporate Plan, it is intended that the Panel will be a longer-term platform for staff to influence plans across the council.

4.43 There are currently 87 staff signed up to the Staff Panel from a range of services and levels across the organisation.

4.44 Headline comments from the Staff Panel are:-

- Need to review and monitor regularly for success in delivering success
- Need to be realistic in what we can promise and deliver and match resources to deliver outcomes
- Value for money and buy local
- Do everything efficiently and green
- Listen to staff and give them the resources, both financial and staffing, to deliver.
- Need to be honest and transparent in what we can do and what and how we are delivering
- Need to engage with and work with community and make co-design and co-working everyday practice
- Need to celebrate and share our successes with communities and employees

- Lead by example on climate change and the green agenda and build this into all our functions
- Listen to staff and our communities

Ensuring Conversations Influence Plans

4.45 We want to be a council that listens and responds. Whilst this report only contains the headlines from each of the strands of conversation, in developing the revised actions that underpin the strategic outcomes directors were provided with the relevant individual comments in order that these could be considered and help to shape each outcome.

4.46 Conversations that have taken place have led to changes from the original iteration of the Corporate Plan. These conversations have specifically strengthened:-

- Our commitment to improving standards of cleanliness across the borough;
- Our drive to ensure that everyone feels safe in the communities they live in;
- Our commitment to whole life care and choice.

4.38 It is not intended that any of these conversations are isolated ‘one offs’. Our aim is to keep the conversation going with all of our stakeholders. For example, we will return to each of the schools we visited in the autumn to tell them how their feedback has helped to shape our plan and get their help to develop a young person’s version of the Corporate Plan.

Our Reshaped Plan

4.39 Appendix 2 details the strategic outcomes together with the proposed underpinning actions. These are draft and will be developed further before being presented to Full Council on 12 October.

4.40 Included in this appendix is further detail on the influence of conversations on proposed actions within the strategic outcomes.

4.41 Following consideration by Cabinet the refreshed plan will be presented to Council on 12 October for approval.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The Corporate Plan was originally approved by Full Council in March 2020 and was for a five-year period, this would expire in 2025. Therefore, the existing document could have remained in place without refining the actions to ensure the council's resources are focused on responding to the impact of the pandemic on the borough or the organisation.

5 Implications

Resources:	The Corporate Plan sets out the strategic priorities for the council as a whole and informs how the council's resources are used to achieve them.
Legal and Governance:	The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by 11 March each year prior to the start of the relevant financial year. The agreement of the refreshed Corporate Plan up to 2025, aligned to the needs of the borough and the organisation, will inform the development of the council's medium-term financial strategy and support the delivery of a balanced budget within the required timescale.
Risk:	Risk implications have been considered by services during the development of the refreshed priority actions. Further detailed work on managing risks will be carried out through directorate business planning.
Equality:	The work carried out during 2020 to understand the impact of the pandemic on our communities has been used as evidence to inform the refresh of the Corporate Plan, this together with the conversations that have taken place over Summer 2021 provide an excellent evidence base for the refresh of the Plan. An Equality Impact Assessment is appended to this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	This information is contained within the main body of the report and the Corporate Plan.

Social Value	Embedding the Fairer Sandwell Principles in all council activity will ensure that social value will be delivered. Within the One Council, One Team strategic outcome, a key action will be to develop a Social Value Policy. By embedding the Fairer Sandwell Principles in this policy, we are providing clarity for all our suppliers on what additional social value we expect to be achieved through our spend.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Key Challenges
Appendix 2 – Strategic Outcomes

8. Background Papers

Report to Council 10 March 2020 – Corporate Plan – Big Plans for a Great Place for the people of Sandwell
Report to Council 2 March 2021 – Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025
Report to Cabinet 23 September 2020 – Reset and Recovery Phase One Findings
Report to Cabinet 10 February 2021 – Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025 and Budget

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Strategic Outcomes	Challenges
One Council, One team	• Balancing the budget • Developing the new operating model and transformation agenda • Developing the digital offer • Combatting digital exclusion • Embedding senior management restructure • Strategic communication • Positive mental wellbeing of staff • Equalities Commission • Updating our governance arrangements
Best Start in Life for Children and Young People	• Rising poverty and household stress, notably food insecurity • Increasing safeguarding concerns and need for family support • Young people disproportionately affected by the pandemic • Lost teaching in pandemic worsening existing education gap and risk of those Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) increasing
People live well, age well	• Widening health inequalities • Pandemic gravely affected specific groups, notably BAME and disabled people • Combatting mental ill health and social isolation • Promoting wellbeing and preventing the need for longer term support. • Joined up care • Vaccination take-up and risk of localities where Covid persists
Strong, Resilient Communities	• Rising reliance on benefits, poverty, debt and inequality • Impact on our high streets • Anticipation of increasing homelessness • Building on the increase in civic participation • Digital exclusion made worse • Action to address climate change as an organisation and in the community, a green recovery • 40% increase in waste collection
Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods	• Aspiration for new house building programme delivering green, environmentally-friendly and affordable homes • Fire safety in our high and low-rise blocks critical following Hackitt Report • Vulnerability in private rented accommodation

	• Isolation of families in high rise blocks
A Strong, Inclusive Economy	• Low wages, low Skills, and higher levels of deprivation • Meeting additional skills and retraining needs • Increasing need for digital skills and equipment • Increasing need for improved support for businesses • Disadvantaged groups being left behind • Impact on high streets and other economic scarring • Making the most of government funding opportunities
A connected and accessible Sandwell	• Continuing development of sustainable travel opportunities to build on increased walking/cycling • Securing funding/investment and delivering major transport projects • Implementing 5G infrastructure

Best Start in Life

First 1000 days
We will bring together all partners to transform services through an Early Years Transformation Academy.
We will work with partners to deliver the EY Outcomes Framework and specifically, create new pathways for support that meet the needs of our residents and fill in the gaps in services for children aged 12-24 months.
We will ensure that culturally sensitive and accessible service hubs are in all six of our towns, and that community-led support is available.
Ready for School
We will establish programmes that specifically address language development, in partnership with other local authorities.
We will support improvements in home learning environments.
We will promote the importance of communication and language to parents, and we will provide earlier support to children who need it.
We will ensure that professionals work together, across agencies, to develop their expertise in early childhood matters by delivering a multi-agency workforce development plan.
We will seek additional support for social mobility projects that address early language, with an intention to increase aspiration and ability.
We will provide enough good school places that offer families choice and confidence that their children can experience high quality education and achieve good outcomes.
We will work with schools and other learning providers to improve educational outcomes for children and young people.
Children and young people that need more support
We will work with partners to make sure that vulnerable children in our community receive the right support to enable them to thrive and have successful adult lives.
We will be a council that understands the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma, with a workforce that provides services with compassion and understanding.

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We will work with Sandwell Children's Trust to improve the quality of children's social care.
We will be a good Corporate Parent for the children in our care, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family', and promoting fostering and adoption.
We will work with partners to ensure early help is available to children and young people at the earliest opportunity depending on their need.
We will ensure that children and young people with SEND can access high quality local services when they need them, by working with partners to ensure there is a comprehensive local offer available to children and families
We will ensure that emotional health and wellbeing support is in place for children and young people.
People Live Well and Age Well
Rebuilding
We will work with the Council's Equalities Commission to ensure that no one is left behind. In particular, we will identify and tackle health inequalities that have been widened by the Covid pandemic, including inequalities emerging across ethnic groups.
We will increase investment of public health funds into community, voluntary and faith sector grants to support Covid resilience and recovery.
We will continue to respond to the pandemic and play our part in the vaccination roll out.
We will work with our partners, including the community and voluntary sector, to reduce social isolation and ensure people are connected within their local communities and beyond.
Healthy Lives
We recognise our responsibility to invest in our community to promote wellbeing and help people live healthy lives. We will increase the role of local people in initiating, designing and delivering health improvement initiatives.
We will create lots more community-based opportunities with local people, working across our partnerships, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, and we will commission a range of services that make the most of Sandwell's assets (including leisure centres, libraries, parks, community centres, youth centres, museums, canals and Sandwell Valley).

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We will develop a strength-based approach to further develop a Stronger Sandwell, by working with our public-sector partners and voluntary and community organisations.
We will support people through easily accessible information, advice and guidance.
We will continue to support access to food through food banks and opportunities for children in school holidays.
We will ensure that we have sufficient mental health provision and we will promote good mental health through a range of initiatives, ensuring equitable access to mental health support.
We will contribute to better air quality and climate change through raising public awareness, increasing active travel and supporting organisations to reduce carbon emissions.
We will ensure new investment into health and wellbeing services including drugs and alcohol, adult obesity and smoking cessation.
Choice and Independence
We will help people make everyday choices around not just how they are supported, but also how they choose to live their lives.
We will promote access to employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and those with mental ill health.
We will review access to day care provisions to ensure that people have access to community resources to improve independence and choice.
We will ensure our safeguarding processes are effective. We are committed to continuous learning to keep vulnerable adults safe from harm.
We will ensure the right provision to enable people to stay independent for longer.
We will work with our partners to ensure that everyone who needs it receives the good, personalised care they should be able to expect at the end of their life.
We will ensure that all carers in Sandwell are offered support in a timely way and that they have access to the information, guidance and advice that they need.
Joined up Health and Social Care
We will develop a workforce strategy with partners
We will work with partners to develop prevention pathways
We will establish and develop governance around the Integrated Care System at both the local and Black County levels
We will continue to develop health and social care integration plans and models.

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Strong Resilient Communities

Vibrant Community
We will ensure our grant funding of community/voluntary sector activity supports the priorities we're outlining in this plan.
We will deliver the Towns Investment Plans in West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis, secured through £64.5m of Town Deal funding.
Through working with the SHAPE Forum, we will make sure that our towns become welcoming places for young people and that they have jobs, activities and facilities to give them a part in the local community.
We will put the needs of our residents at the heart of what we do, establishing processes to engage with them to ensure that our residents guide and influence our services.
We will strive to maintain Green Flag status, whilst also working to enhance our existing green and open spaces, create new places to play and committing to plant a tree for every child starting school in Sandwell up to 2030.
Culture
We will develop and deliver a libraries strategy that works together with the community. We will start to roll out the Open+ model which represents a different way of working for public libraries.
We will deliver the operational requirements to ensure the smooth running of the Commonwealth Games and ensure a lasting legacy for Sandwell
We will showcase local, regional, national and international talent in an engaging and inspiring programme
We will explore and develop a Sandwell Valley phased investment programme over the next five years – towards the Valley becoming a key Visitor and Destination Gateway into Sandwell.
Green
We will work with partners to deliver initiatives that will help up to achieve our climate change strategy and the target of being a carbon neutral borough by 2041.

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We will embed climate change considerations into our decision making to enable us to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.
We will invest in our buildings and fleet, so both are low carbon and compatible with 2030. Working with our partners, we will make refuse collection and street cleansing greener with the rollout of electric street cleansing vehicles and participation in pilot projects to test other green vehicles.
We will work to make our own housing stock greener by implementing minimum energy performance standards for existing and new build council homes and exemplar schemes for modern methods of construction.
Clean
We will recover, improve and transform our street maintenance programmes post Covid. We will harness community spirit and action by working with communities to address litter and to improve the environment; including establishing community based clean schemes.
We will increase recycling rates and encourage cultural change.
Safe
The Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board is working with the other statutory Boards and wider partnership to tackle crime and ASB and promote community safety in Sandwell. Sandwell's Community Safety Strategy will be reviewed and priorities will include ongoing work around prevention of violence and exploitation, reducing offending reoffending and serious organised crime and supporting victims. We will develop a revised Domestic Abuse strategy in line with the requirements the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the new statutory duty on local authorities
We will continue to work with partners and agencies to ensure that there is a joined up and effective approach to hate crime.
We will strengthen our approach to supporting victims of modern slavery, developing an understanding of the threat, risk and harm modern slavery and human trafficking poses and target resources to the best effect. We will raise awareness across partner agencies, businesses and communities, to address modern slavery and work collaboratively to target perpetrators and victims.
We will strengthen our multi-agency Tasking processes steps to foster resilience, shared understanding, support networks and cross-community working

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We will deliver more responsive, robust and co-ordinated enforcement across the council. To do this we will establish an Enforcement Co-ordination Board that will bring together intelligence and expertise from across the council to tackle issues by theme or by geographical area.

Quality Homes

Building New Homes
We will deliver much needed new homes across the borough, especially affordable homes, on our own land and other viable sites in order to help meet the demand for affordable housing in our communities We will help keyworkers to access affordable housing in order that Sandwell can attract and retain a strong local health and social care workforce for the benefit of our communities. We will aim to keep people independent in their own homes as long as possible which includes incorporating lifetime homes adaptable standards in to as many new homes as possible.
We will focus more of our ambitious house building programme on the needs of our children and young people who have complex needs and those who have been in care, so we have a good housing offer for them in Sandwell when they become adults.
We will focus more of our council house building on the needs of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs.
We will develop the second Council House Build Programme.
We will incorporate more renewable energy measures into existing and the design of new-build Council homes, including modern methods of construction and heating.
We will work to identify the needs of the most vulnerable people in Sandwell and work upstream to prevent homelessness where ever possible.
We will work to prevent and end rough sleeping.

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We will increase our engagement with tenants, including tenants in high rise blocks.
We will explore all options for housing delivery, including community-led schemes and self-builds.
Regeneration and Resources
We will introduce town centre living in appropriate locations ensuring council developments maintain excellent standards in urban design.
We will continue to progress the review of the Black Country Plan to ensure the policy base is robust and meet the needs of Sandwell and the Black Country.
We will take a proactive approach to accessing national funding for Sandwell that benefits our tenants and people who are homeless or in housing need.
Existing Estate
We will modernise our tenancy and estate management offer, delivering a more proactive service, early identification and intervention to mitigate risks to tenancy sustainment and a new neighbourhood management working in partnership with communities to address their priorities.
We will work to ensure our tenants live in safe and thriving neighbourhoods and that social housing is a tenure to be proud of.
We will ensure that council homes are safe places to live by fully complying with fire and building safety requirements and regularly reviewing compliance. We will support people in the private rented sector to ensure their landlords comply with safety standards too.
We will deliver a rolling programme of upgrades to our stock that improves energy efficiency and plan for the installation of alternative heating systems.
We will aim to be a Borough of Sanctuary, offering a safe place for asylum-seekers and refugees to live, while recognising our leadership role in promoting integration and community cohesion.
Strong Inclusive Economy
Spend our money and invest locally

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We will lead our partners in Sandwell to make the most of all our assets, spend local wherever possible and make long-term investment decisions that benefit our borough.
We will spend more money directly with suppliers in Sandwell. We will do this by developing better intelligence and improving our knowledge of local supply chains, as well as working with major contractors to encourage spending and sub-contracting with local suppliers.
We will develop and commit to delivering a Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan which ensures sustainable economic, wellbeing and cultural benefits of the Games for our communities.
We will work proactively with our partners at the Local Enterprise Partnership, West Midlands Combined Authority and in central government to take maximum advantage of funding opportunities to secure additional funding for Sandwell regeneration projects.
We will work with our health partners to deliver the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital and to maximise the significant regeneration benefits to the wider surrounding area, including training, traineeships, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.
We will deliver the agreed Town Deals in collaboration with our partners across Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich
We will work with the Department for Education to deliver a facility for a new school aligned to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
We will work with local providers to ensure local spend also has green outcomes
We will have a current strategic plan for the Borough that feeds into the Black Country Plan and ensures we allocate appropriate development land to meet our future needs for housing, employment opportunities, amenities and community facilities.
Working with businesses
We will work more closely with strategic businesses to develop shared opportunities
We will strengthen our business sector so that local people can benefit from quality jobs that are stable and well paid through our work with Stronger and Inclusive Economy Board
We will develop and implement an economic recovery strategy to support businesses and deliver economic growth in Sandwell following the impact of Brexit and Covid
We will work with our partners to support the development and growth of business start-ups in Sandwell
We will support local businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and work towards carbon zero targets
We will establish more business networking and support events utilising Sandwell's Business Ambassadors
Jobs and Training

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We will ensure that local people have the skills and knowledge to fill any vacancies by reduce the number of residents with no/low qualifications and offering local training and skills development opportunities via the Adult Education Budget.
We will work with our partners and voluntary sector to improve and develop digital skills in the community to minimise digital exclusion and maximise employment and training opportunities.
We will work to ensure our young people to have access to good jobs and we will work with all education institutions to guide young people to the pathways that enable them to meet their aspirations. We will do this through the provision of independent advice and guidance.
We will support people into employment through the delivery of the Skills Strategy with our strategic partners in the Employment and Skills Partnership.
We will offer quality work experience placements within the council.
We will continue to deliver the Apprenticeship Levy and increase the take up of apprenticeships, particularly within small businesses in Sandwell through transferring some of the Apprenticeship Levy to that sector.
A Connected and Accessible Sandwell
We will work with the WMCA to ensure that our residents can access employment opportunities across the region, particularly by public transport.
We will continue to work with partners to deliver the Midlands Metro extension connecting Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and the SPRINT scheme.
We will ensure improvements to the highway network are facilitated to support the local economy and the movement of goods and people across the borough.
We will ensure that the responsibilities of the Local Highways Authority are delivered and continue to maintain standards in relation to highway condition.
We will deliver accelerated funding projects relating to connectivity as part of the Town Deal.
Clean & Green

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We will enable people to get around in a healthy and sustainable way, supporting our health and wellbeing and our climate change strategies.
We will continue to implement Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and deliver a programme of infrastructure improvements across the borough.
We will ensure that all public transport options available locally are as green as possible, including lobbying for clean green buses for our borough.
Partnerships
We will maximise government funding opportunities for infrastructure through working with our partner organisations including the Black Country Transport Team and Transport for West Midlands.
We will develop and maintain relationships with Midlands Connect to profile major transport interventions in Sandwell.
We will continue our partnership work with the Canal and River Trust to enable us to make the best use of our waterways.
We will work with the Environment Agency in our role as Lead Local Flood Authority to adopt a Flood Risk Management Plan for 2021 to 2027.
Key infrastructure projects
We will continue to deliver our key transport infrastructure projects, namely the major upgrade of Birchley Island, metro corridor walking and cycling programme, and Blackheath interchange
We will continue to develop and deliver projects that reduce barriers to the use of public transport and sustainable travel choices including working with Transport for West Midlands in relation to bus and metro provision and the Rail Alliance.
We will ensure Sandwell is well placed to support the move towards electric vehicles by delivering key infrastructure requirements.
Digital
We will ensure that Digital Inclusion matters when designing services and making key council decisions
We will work with WM5G to ensure Sandwell maximises opportunities for 5G infrastructure
One Team One Council

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Council Organisational Structure
We will create a modern, outstanding council, one where our organisational structure, business systems, process and people and cultural working practices are fully aligned to deliver our strategic outcomes.
We will complete a review of all directorate and departmental structures to ensure they are aligned to supporting the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan.
We will build a One Council: One Team ethos, breaking down departmental barriers and building collaborative team working.
We will implement new operating models for the delivery of services in a safe way, and ensure that staff are supported to work in the most appropriate location.
Access to services/council
We will design a corporate approach to improve both the accessibility of Council services and the quality of service we deliver; to make sure that Sandwell people get a good quality, consistent level of service, however they choose to contact the council.
We will ensure that adequate support is in place where people need support to access services digitally.
We will invest in digital platforms to enable better access for our residents and other service users and to build on the benefits of increased digitalisation of our services
We will exploit the potential of new technology and 5G to deliver services more effectively and efficiently across the organisation
Organisational Development
We will invest in a range of opportunities, qualifications and experiences for our workforce. We will do this through workforce development plans to ensure our workforce is an enabler for current and future service delivery. We will continue the roll-out of our leadership development programmes to create Sandwell's leaders of the future.
We will enable all our staff to fulfil their full potential and have opportunities to progress within the organisation regardless of their protected characteristics by understanding the barriers faced by employees, establishing stakeholder staff groups and implementing the approved workforce action plan .
We will continue to build on existing workforce mental health and wellbeing resources, by proactively responding to emerging challenges and trends, enabling our employees to effectively support their own, and their colleague's, positive mental health and wellbeing.
We will develop and embed excellent people management practices, by effectively leading, supporting and improving our workforce, fostering a workforce that is engaged and productive

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We will promote our successful work experience, apprenticeship, intern and graduate programmes to local people.
Systems and Governance / Review of corporate policies, strategies, systems and processes
We will build robust and effective systems which improve transparency and co-ordination around decision making and service delivery.
We will review all governance arrangements including a Constitution refresh, completion of the scrutiny review and refresh of the council's decision-making and performance management arrangements.
We will deliver the Equalities Commission and implement its recommendations in order to ensure we meet our specific equalities duties and drive the equalities agenda at the heart of our organisation.
We will develop the social value policy and implementing the social value portal
We will review and refresh of the organisations digital strategy and digital platforms
We will embed the newly designed Communications and Corporate Affairs Strategy to ensure we are communicating effectively with both our internal workforce and external stakeholders.
Listening, Learning and Accountable
We will embed co-design and collaboration as the standard approach for designing our services and developing our future priorities.
We will listen to and work alongside Sandwell residents and partners to make sure that everything we do is focused on achieving the best outcomes.
We will make sure that vulnerable groups who find it difficult to make their voices heard, influence and shape all of our plans and decisions and those of our partners.
We will review how we manage complaints and customer feedback within the council to make sure that when things don't go to plan, we put them right and learn from what has happened.
Making the Most of Our Resources
We will set a sustainable and balanced budget each year
We will update the Medium Term Financial Strategy in line with the 2021 Spending Review, Settlement and longer-term impact of COVID-19
We will ensure all our services provide value for money and are run as efficiently as possible.
We will implement a new Corporate Asset Management system to ensure the Council has sufficient, comprehensive information to make best use of its assets and assist with timely and accurate completion of annual accounts.

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Use of COVID-19 Emergency Funding & Contain Outbreak Management Fund
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Councillor Maria Crompton
Director:	Director of Finance Simone Hines
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Rebecca_Maher@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That approval be given for the COVID-19 Emergency Funding to be used as set out in Appendix 1, totalling £18.377m.

1.2 That approval be given to use some of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to cover the continuation of the Contact Tracing team (£0.701m) and various additional deep clean/sanitising requirements at the Aquatic Centre build site (£0.415m).

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Council received a total of £33m COVID-19 Emergency Funding between 2020 and March 2021. An allocation of £11.2m has also been received for 2021/22. This funding is unringfenced and can be used more flexibly than most other COVID grants.

2.2 The Council has also been allocated £2.9m of Contain Outbreak Management Fund for 2021/22 and brought forward grant of £7.6m from 2020/21. This must be used for more specific purposes aimed at reducing the chances of any COVID outbreaks within the borough.

2.3 At the beginning of the pandemic, the Council's Financial Regulations were revised to allow the S151 Officer to make use of this emergency funding in the most appropriate and efficient way. Any significant spending decisions were approved by Emergency Committee. As the Council is no longer considered to be in an 'emergency' situation, Cabinet are now required to approve planned expenditure against these grants.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

3.1 Details of the individual proposals in Appendix 1 set out how these deliver the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

4 Context and Key Issues

Emergency Funding

4.1 At the end of 2020/21 £20.245m COVID-19 Emergency Funding was remaining and held in a reserve for future COVID-19 related budget pressures.

4.2 Leadership Team have been working on identifying COVID related budget pressures and these have been split between items to be funded from the Emergency Funding or COMF grant. The proposals for the use of the COMF grant will be presented to the October Cabinet meeting. The majority of pressures relating to the loss of income up to 30th June 2021, as a result of COVID, are not included here and will be claimed for through the Sales, Fees and Charges grant. Income pressures for the remainder of the year will need to be funded from the Emergency Funding.

4.3 Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT) have submitted a Type 1 Change Request requesting additional funding of £0.522m in the current financial year. This can be accommodated within the £1.9m proposal in Appendix 1.

4.4 All of the proposals have been thoroughly reviewed and agreed by Leadership Team and Cabinet are now requested to approve. The planned use of the COVID-19 Emergency Funding leaves approximately £6m of grant to fund continuing pressures relating to the long-term impact of the pandemic. There is no further COVID related funding expected for 2021/22 or beyond so this remaining funding will need to be carefully managed especially if the Council's income sources, such as car parking, take a longer period to recover.

COMF

4.5 Proposals are still being collated for the use of the COMF grant. However, there are two immediate requirements which relate to: -

- The continuation of the Contact Tracing Team during 2021/22 at a total cost of £701k.
- Additional deep clean/sanitising requirements at the Aquatic Centre build site in order to minimise the spread of COVID amongst workers. The cost of this is approximately £415k in total.

4.5 A further report will be bought to Cabinet in October on further spend to be funded from COMF, and officers are mindful that there may be a greater call on this funding if there are further waves of the pandemic during the winter months.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative option would be for these proposals to not be agreed and for Cabinet to request alternatives to be presented for approval. This will delay the expenditure against these grants.

6 Implications

Resources:	The resource implications are set out in the main body of the report.
Legal and Governance:	Legal Services will be consulted and involved in any of the proposals that require contracts or Service Level Agreements to be drawn up or in any other circumstances considered necessary.
Risk:	The main risk of Cabinet agreeing to these recommendations is that there may be some clawback of unspent grant by central government. However, this is highly unlikely with regard to the Emergency Funding as it has been paid as a Section 31 unringfenced grant with no conditions attached. There is also a contingency remaining of £6m therefore all of the funding is not currently committed.
Equality:	Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for individual proposals where it is considered appropriate.
Health and Wellbeing:	The use of the COVID-19 funding will help to support areas that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic or reduce future outbreaks in the borough.
Social Value	Social Value targets will be included in any contracts as appropriate.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Use of COVID-19 Emergency Funding

APPENDIX 1: COVID EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS 2021/22 - EMERGENCY GRANT

REF	Total Pressure (£)	DESCRIPTION
ADULTS		
1	322,500	Continue with the ASC Provider Offer (extend the period we pay for after death or hospitalisation and consider any specific requests for financial assistance on a case by case basis).
2	326,900	Additional staffing to respond to increased demand in safeguarding
	649,400	
CHILDRENS		
1	126,589	Domestic Abuse Support Family Action - £38,589 Black Country Women's Aid (MASH DIVA) £27,500 Black Country Womens Aid (Our Futures) - £60,500
2	21,550	Online Safety and Trusted Adult training
3	46,000	Additional Assistant Educational Psychology Support
4	30,000	Developing emotionally resilient children in care affected by lockdown. Specifically young people preparing to leave care whose prospects have been greatly affected by the social and economic uncertainty ahead. Creating an EDO role focusing on the emotional barriers preventing young people from accessing employment and training.
5	84,000	The limited access to schools during the Covid lockdown period March 2020 to March 2021 has created a backlog in safeguarding cases that would have come to light had those children been more visible to schools. During this time domestic abuse has increased due to more families being confined in the home due to lockdown etc. As a consequence, of the foregoing, there is an increased requirement for the LA to provide additional support, guidance and training to schools' designated safeguarding leads with regard to thresholds, early help and targetted services etc. Grade F £62k x 2 - Note addional support covered by A&P Officers during lockdown now required to return to substantive attendance duties In order to deliver this suport it will be necessary to release and backfil the role of the MASH edcuation officer from her call centre duties to work directly with schools particularly those already known to School Improvement to be in need of additonal suport.
6	1,920,000	SCT - Projected cost pressures as per 2020/21
7	2,891,200	To request investment to support children adversely impacted by Covid-19 where they have been either exposed to domestic abuse or have emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns. It is proposed that a grant fund of up to £3m is identified to support and intensive programme of support that can address the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people, and also work with the wider family. The benefits of this approach will improve outcomes on a system and individual level by: • Increasing access to emotional wellbeing and mental health • Provide increased options for those impacted by domestic abuse • Increased feeling of safety • Stability for VCS organisations adversely impacted by COVID-19
8	108,800	Complex Comms and Autism Team
	5,228,139	
REGEN & GROWTH		
1	35,000	Backlog in personal searches, as defined by Section 8 of the Local Land Charges Act 1975, is an inspection of the Local Land Charges Register that has to be carried out in person at the office of the Registering Authority (the council). Basically this is companies acting for the solicitors of house purchasers. This service attracts a zero fee.
2	26,390	Maintenance of temporary social distancing measures no longer funded from EATF grants
3	40,000	Security costs at sites
	101,390	
BOROUGH ECONOMY		
1	15,000	Football changing facilities have been mothballed and will require recommissioning. This will include full inspections and then repairs carried out as required and full water system flushing. This will ensure that changing facilities are safe to use
2	60,000	Covid Marshals costs at site including PPE, washing faciliites (agreed to be funded at Stat Officers group)
3	100,000	Additional funding for posts in UC Claims, Welfare Rights, Homelessness, ASB to cover backlog and increased used of services through use of COMF grant
	175,000	
LEGAL		
1	20,000	covid enforcement
2	60,000	additional costs of remote hearings during lock down
3	10,000	contracts work mortuary
	90,000	
REGISTRATION SERVICES		
1	20,000	Automated door system to allow the Registry Office (Highfields) is covid secure
2	19,000	Continuation of webcasts for ceremonies as risk assessment highlights maintaing the upper limits in attendees
3	30,000	Agency Staff To be kept for additional 12mths
4	37,000	Agency Staff - To be kept for additional 12mths
5	64,000	Continuation of webcasts for cremations as risk assessment highlights maintaing the upper limits in attendees
6	55,000	Agency Staff
7	2,225,000	Build of a new cemetery due to capacity issues since pandemic started (amount claimed is 50% of costs outstanding)
8	67,000	Additional purchase of burial chambers
9	25,000	Additional staffing due to table service 1 x FT Band C
10	250,000	Creation of second court, jury rooms and required equipment allow the site to be covid secure and to meet covid safety requirements
11	40,000	Upgrade to Civica to allow staff to use system while WFH
12	30,000	Temporary Facility in response to the pandemic
	2,862,000	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES		
1	45,000	Alternative count venue (1/3 of costs sought other 2/3rds to be paid by Central Govt) Ensuring social distancing at election count and managed safe entry and exit at polling stations (1/3 of costs
2	17,000	sought other 2/3rds to be paid by Central Govt)
3	150,000	Note:there were a number of reactive election costs that are currently being calculated. It is envisaged that costs will increase from the previously calculated £350,000 to circa £500,000
4	16,000	Protective screening in the council chamber
5	25,000	Council managed devices for newly elected members
	253,000	
BUSINESS STRATEGY & TRANSFORMATION		
1	41,400	2 additional staff for 6 months
2	49,400	Oracle: Extension of Technical Support & Licences
3	600,000	Parallel running of Oracle Fusion & SBS for a longer period than planned; implementation date has been rescheduled from October 2020 to October 2021.
4	44,000	Extension of temp posts for 24 weeks
	734,800	
REGULATORY SERVICES		
1	13,500	Approved - support for activities to establish new model of working
2	60,000	4 x Temp Rapid Response Operatives
3	45,000	3 x Temp Environmental Enforcement Support Officers / Triage
4	40,000	Temp Citizen and Consumer Protection Officer Trading Standards
5	80,000	2 x Temp Citizen and Consumer Protection Officer Environmental Health officers
6	15,000	additional vehicle costs, overtime
7	15,000	additional costs to service due to home working
8	20,000	Additional noise equipment - backlog of noise complaints/issues to respond to. Service income impacted as a result of covid.
9	176,000	The additional resource for the Police has been key to the joint working. Whilst it is anticipated easement will be complete by end of June there remains unknown areas regarding any remaining legislative requirements, and the postion re surges due to variants. Potential to consider whether additional resource might be beneficial - however would need to consider authorities as total grant allocated to date is £245,000
10	40,000	Trading standards - due to difficulties in recruiting for the activity described above it would be beneficial to retain the indivdual, once appointed,to year end.
11	80,000	Environmental Health - due to difficulties in recruiting for the activity described above it would be beneficial to retain the staff, once appointed,to year end
	584,500	
PUBLIC HEALTH		
1	50,000	Alcohol Underage & Trading Standards - COVID Related Activity
2	125,000	Environmental Hlth & Trading Stds COVID Related Activity
3	26,000	Food awards COVID Related Activity
4	36,600	Tobacco Enforcement Smokefree COVID Related Activity
	237,600	
CORPORATE		
1	954,625	PPE
2	4,052,000	Estimated loss of income above Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation
3	2,455,000	Commercial Income Dividends
	7,461,625	
	18,377,454	
GRAND TOTAL	**24,335,454**	
REMAINING	**5,958,000**	
	(650,001)	Parking and markets income

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Extension of contract for a non-executive director of Sandwell Children's Trust board
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Children and Education Councillor Karen Simms
Director:	Interim Strategic Director Children and Education Katharine Willmette Acting Operational Director Children and Education Melanie Barnett
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Mandip S. Chahal, Senior Commissioning Manager for Statutory Services Mandip1_chahal@sandwell.gov.uk

1. Recommendations

That the Cabinet, as sole owner of Sandwell Children's Trust:

(a) notes the completed sequence of events that are contractually required to extend the contract of a non-executive director of Sandwell Children's Trust board;

(b) notes and takes into account in its decision-making, the response from the Secretary of State for Education;

(c) agrees the extension of contract to Stephen Rimmer as a non-executive director of Sandwell Children's Trust for the period of up to two years from 1 November 2021.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

2.1. The appointment of the non-Executive Director Stephen Rimmer took effect from 1 November 2017 and was for an initial term of 4 years. The board wishes to secure the continuity of the current non-executive directors at a time when there are personnel changes in the Chief Executive Officer post, and in light of the full Ofsted inspection expected in 2021.

2.2. The Council has written to the Secretary of State requesting consent to extend this appointment for a period of up to two years from 1 November 2021. At the time of writing this Cabinet report, DfE officials have confirmed by email that the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families has approved the recommendation.

2.3. Following the completion of the required process to consult the Secretary of State, and to take into account the response, the Cabinet is now recommended to agree the recommendations set out in this report.

3. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people SCT works with families, foster carers, schools, statutory and voluntary providers to support the achievements of vulnerable children and those in the care of the council SCT works to ensure that children in the care of the Council receive the support and opportunities that any parent would give their child.

	People live well and age well SCT ensures coordination between social care and the NHS to better protect vulnerable children.
	Strong resilient communities SCT supports families to improve children's life chances SCT works closely with the police to ensure that children are protected from the impact of crime, domestic violence, and all forms of exploitation.
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods SCT supports care leavers to live independently in the community, working closely with Housing to ensure care leavers are able to good quality accommodation in Sandwell.
	A strong and inclusive economy SCT works with families to access services and support so that they are able to improve their economic well-being and the life chances for their children.

4. Context and Key Issues

4.1 At its meeting on 19 October 2016, Cabinet was advised of the Government's Statutory Direction (under Section 479A of the Education Act 1996) to set up a new arrangement in the form of a children's trust to deliver children's social care services. As a result, Sandwell Children's Trust started operating on 1 April 2018.

4.2 On 22 March 2017, the Cabinet considered the types of decisions that would be of such strategic importance that they could not be decided at the board of the Trust but would be "reserved to" the owner of the Trust (the Council) for decision:

- As the decision maker for the Council in its capacity as the body that is responsible and accountable for the discharge of the relevant children's social care services functions; and

- As the decision maker for the Council in its capacity as owner of the Trust in relation primarily to the Reserved Matters, as set out in the Memorandum of Understanding, and other legally required decisions.

4.3 The Cabinet agreed that: “In order to fulfil the role as sole owner of the Trust, it is recommended that the full Cabinet itself operates as the decision-making body for matters in relation to the Trust.” It also agreed that, in order to clearly differentiate between decisions which Cabinet is considering in its two roles (i.e. as owner of the Trust and as children's services authority), separate reports be prepared to set out clearly which role the Cabinet is undertaking at any time. In relation to decisions taken in its role as owner of the Trust, the Cabinet agreed that any recommendations should include authority for officers then to formalise the decision in relation to any company law paperwork.

4.4 The Memorandum of Understanding which the Council has entered into with the Department for Education sets out the composition of the board of directors of the Trust as follows:

- A Chair (non-executive director) as appointed by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Council;
- Three executive directors comprising the Trust’s Chief Executive and two other members of the executive management team;
- Three non-executive directors with collective knowledge and expertise across children’s services, public services;
- Two additional non-executive directors appointed by the Council (e.g. members and /or officers).

Apart from the appointment of the Chair, all other appointments are required to be made in consultation with the Secretary of State for Education. The appointment of the two non-executive directors appointed by the Council is a ‘Reserved Matter’ and therefore a decision to be taken by the Cabinet.

4.5 Appointed individuals will, as executive and as non-executive directors of the Trust, have a fiduciary duty to the Trust board, meaning that they will act in good faith, and in the best interests of the Company.

4.6 The Council, as sole owner of the Company (Sandwell Children's Trust) is required to consult with the Secretary of State on certain 'Consultation Reserved Matters' prior to notifying the Company of its decisions in respect of that Consultation Reserved Matter. The Secretary of State is invited to: *"make written representations to the Council within 10 working days of being notified of the matter…. In making its decision the Council must take into account the representations made by the Secretary of State."*

4.7 The Consultation Reserved Matters relevant to the recommendations in this report are:

- Approval of the registering of any new member of the Company;
- Approval of any Additional Executive Director removals or appointments (including the approval of appointment terms for Additional Executive Directors and any amendments to such terms);
- Approval of any Independent Non-Executive Director removals or appointments (including the approval of the appointment terms for Independent Non-Executive Directors and any amendments to such terms).

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative option would be for Sandwell Children's Trust to begin a recruitment process for a new non-executive director. However, this would cause uncertainty at a time when there are personnel changes in the Chief Executive Officer post and considering a full Ofsted inspection expected in 2021.

6 Implications

Resources:	Sandwell Children's Trust receives a significant financial resource to deliver the Council's statutory responsibilities for children's social care, this includes the cost of the non-executive Directors. The Contract Sum amount that SCT receives is agreed annually in line with mechanisms set out in the Service Delivery Contract.
Legal and Governance:	The Governance Side Agreement between the Council and Department for Education sets out the composition of the board of directors of the Trust. The Council is required, as sole owner of Sandwell Children's Trust, to consult with the Secretary of State on certain 'Consultation Reserved Matters' prior to notifying the Company of its decisions in respect of that Consultation Reserved Matter. The approval of any Independent Non-Executive Director removals or appointments is such a matter.
Risk:	The corporate risk management strategy has been complied with and risks have been identified arising from the recommendations being sought. This has concluded that there are no significant risks that require reporting and that suitable measures are in place to mitigate the risks identified to acceptable levels.
Equality:	An Equality Impact Assessment screening is not required for this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	SCT continues to support children and families in Sandwell and as the quality of service that they deliver improves so does the impact they have on improving the health and wellbeing of children and families.
Social Value	SCT supports children to achieve, feel safe, be supported and access opportunities. SCT supports care leavers to access education, employment and training. Having strong governance and oversight supports SCT to achieve service improvement and better support children and families in Sandwell.

7. Appendices

None

8. Background Papers

Cabinet papers dated:

19 October 2016
04 - Formation of a Children's Trust
04 - Formation of a Children's Trust - Appendix

7 December 2016,
04 - Formation of Children' Trust - MoU
04a - Appendix 1 Strategic Project Risk Register
04b - Appendix 2 Formal Commissioner Response

22 March 2017
22 - Role of Sandwell MBC in relation to Sandwell Children's Social Care Trust

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Appropriation of 34/36 Bridge Street West Bromwich B70 9HN, General Fund into Housing Revenue Account
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Iqbal Padda, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth
Director:	Tammy Stokes Interim Director for Regeneration and Growth
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Lee Constable Strategic Lead – Strategic Assets & Land lee_constable@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That approval be given to declare 34/36 Bridge Street, West Bromwich, B70 9HN, formerly known as The Willows, surplus to the current council services provision under General Fund (Site plan identification reference SAM/06980/005).

1.2 That subject to 1.1 above, that the Director -Regeneration and Growth be authorised to appropriate the land and premises shown for identification purposes as Appendix A from the general fund to the housing revenue account at a value of £210,000.

1.3 That the Director – Housing be authorised to manage and let the premises as referred to in 1.1 above as part of the council's housing stock

1.4 That the Director of Finance is authorised to make the appropriate adjustments to the Capital Financing Requirement of the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account to reflect the appropriation as set out at 1.2.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The purpose to this report is to authorise the appropriation of the property identified under section one of the report to accommodate subsequent use by housing as part of the housing stock within the remit of the housing revenue account

2.2 The property will then be refurbished to provide a specially adapted large dwelling to meet urgent housing need.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods The proposal will make much better use of a council asset to provide a much-needed renovated property for a disabled resident. Planning consent has been granted and subject to consent work will commence quickly.
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Willows is currently within the general fund allocation. The property is to be appropriated into the HRA account. Housing and Strategic Asset and Land are to obtain approval from Cabinet for the appropriation.

4.2 Currently unoccupied but previously used as temporary bedsit accommodation, the two existing dwellings have provided various care and housing provision over the years. Notwithstanding this the property still sits in the General Fund accounts. Given the proposed use it is appropriate to move it to the HRA.

4.3 The proposed project is being undertaken by Urban Design and Building Services on behalf of Housing. The project consists of the conversion of an existing property formerly known as 'The Willows', 34/36 Bridge Street, West Bromwich, B70 9HN, to create a suitable dwelling to house a large family with specific disabled housing requirements. The family consists of 7 adults 5 of which are disabled adult children that require urgent accommodation suitable to their needs.

4.4 This report seeks approval from Cabinet for the required appropriation.

4.5 This will support the Council's ambition to provide new homes and accessibility to meet a full range of housing needs.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Do nothing. The building is currently under used. There is an opportunity to make better use of this asset.

5.2 Sell the Building. This would prevent the council from providing much needed social housing in the West Bromwich area. A sale would also mean the council losing influence on how this building, which is within a residential area is managed. A sale of the building increases the risk of future anti-social activity.

6 Implications

Resources:	The property has an asset valuation as at 31 March 2020 of £210,000.
Legal and Governance:	Section 122 of the local Government act 1972 allows a council to appropriate land that belongs to the council which is no longer required for the purposes it was acquired for and subsequently held. A title check has taken place and no issues have been identified that prevent the recommendations outlined in this report taking place.
Risk:	A family has been identified to make use of the new building. The family have specific housing needs due to various disabilities.
Equality:	An equality impact assessment (initial screening) has been completed and no issues preventing the recommendations in this report found.
Health and Wellbeing:	The re purposing of the dwellings will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.
Social Value	This will provide urgent housing requirement based a specific need.

7. Appendices

Site identification Plan attached and marked Ref SAM/06980/005.

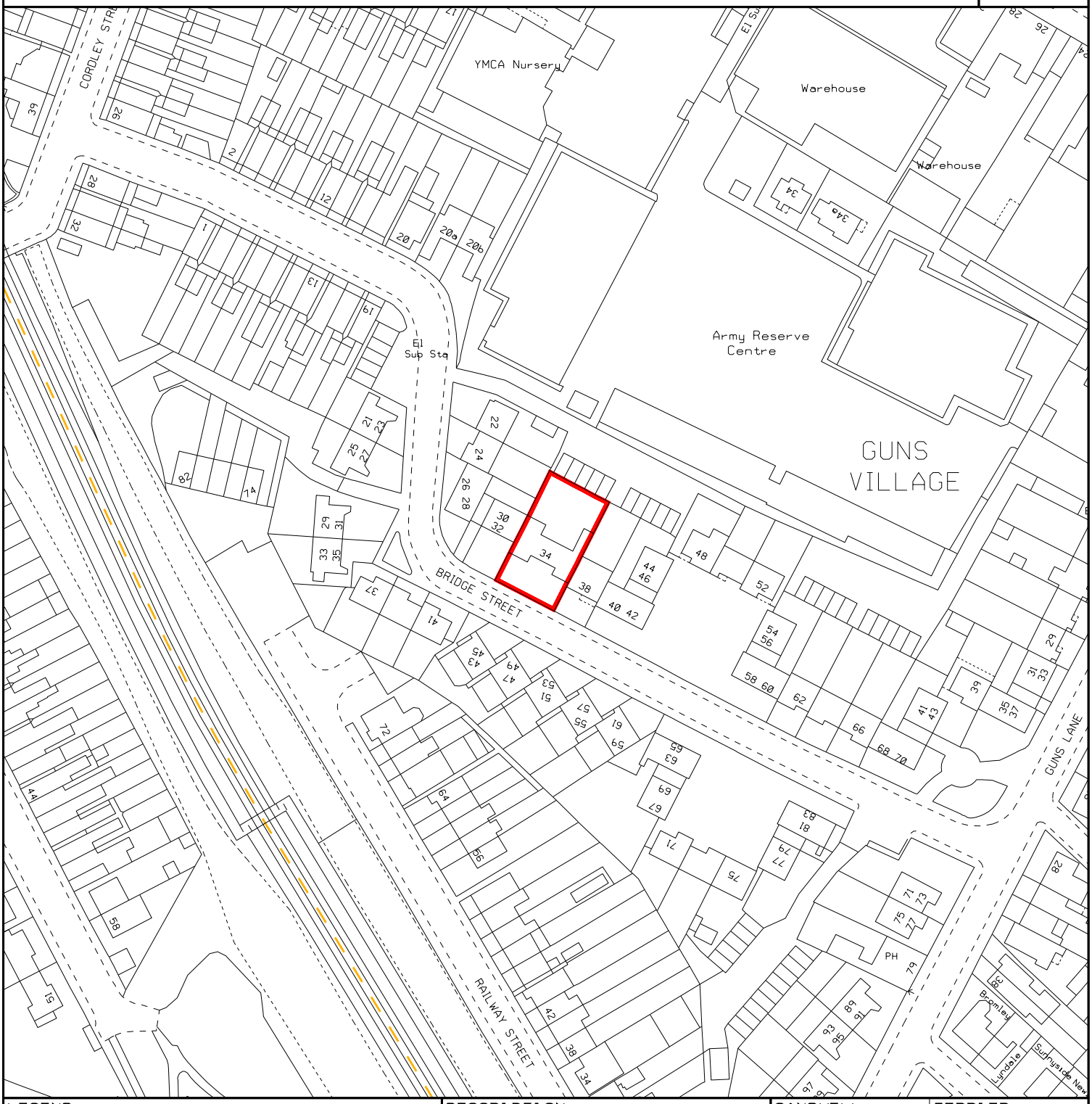
8. Background Papers

None

REGENERATION AND PLANNING

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT

NORTH



LEGEND

DESCRIPTION

34 BRIDGE STREET

WEST BROMWICH

B70 9HN

SANDWELL	TERRIER
SO9991NE	180
SCALE	CENTROID
1:1250	399702/291672
DRAWN	DATE
JR	23-AUG-2021

AREA

425.1 M2 508.4 Y2

PLAN NUMBER

SAM/06980/005

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SANDWELL MBC
LICENCE NO 100032119
2021

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Sandwell Local Development Scheme 2021
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth Councillor Padda
Director:	Director for Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Senior Planner Samantha Holder samantha_holder@sandwell.gov.uk Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager Andy Miller Andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

ONE COUNCIL
ONE TEAM

1 Recommendations

1.1. That approval be given to the updated Sandwell Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2021 as set out in the Appendix. That the Director for Regeneration and Growth be authorised to make minor changes to the Local Development Scheme that may be required prior to making it available to the Public, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the updated Local Development Scheme 2021.

2.2. The LDS is the Council's three-year project plan that identifies which local plan documents will be produced by the Council, in what order and by when. All documents would be subject to Cabinet and Full Council approval at the relevant stages.

2.3. The Council needs to review its planning documents at regular intervals to assess whether some or all of them need updating. The LDS therefore also provides information on the timetabling of several existing approved planning documents which need to be reviewed.

2.4. Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare their LDS and make it available to the public; there is no longer a requirement to submit or report on them to the Secretary of State.

2.5. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out. The LDS is a programme of the documents to be produced over the next three years and does not in itself create policy. Each document within the LDS will be subject to an EIA as part of its preparation.

2.6. For these reasons it is recommended that the updated Sandwell LDS be accepted.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people – the LDS helps to set up policies that will contribute to the delivery of facilities, services and opportunities for children and young people through the local plan process.
	People live well and age well - Health and wellbeing is a key theme addressed throughout the documents of the LDS. It will promote healthy living and create opportunities for active lifestyles and healthy transport choices including walking, cycling and outdoor recreation.
	Strong resilient communities - The LDS will build in effective community involvement and will be important to local communities.
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods - The LDS will play an important part in delivering the spatial and land use aspects of the Council's vision 2030, particularly as it relates to housing, employment, transport, environment and education goals.
	A strong and inclusive economy - The BCP and Sandwell Development Plan will provide the regeneration framework for future investments and projects.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell - Sustainability is a key theme addressed throughout the documents of the LDS. The LDS will help to deliver sustainable, prosperous communities, an integrated transport network and reduce the need to travel by car.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1. The initial LDS was approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport on the 1st February 2005 and has subsequently been revised annually. The last LDS review was approved by Cabinet in September 2020 (minute 75/2020 refers). The LDS sets out the documents that will be prepared by the Council as part of the Development Plan for the Borough.

4.2. Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare their LDS and make it available to the public; however, there is no longer a requirement to submit a report on them to the Secretary of State.

Local Plan Update - Black Country Plan [BCP]

4.3. A plan-led system operates in England, involving the preparation of plans by the Local Planning Authority that set out what can be built and where. Under the current planning system, the Council is required to prepare local plan documents that set out how the local area may change over the next few years.

4.4. In Sandwell the Local Plan currently consists of:

- Black Country Core Strategy – adopted 2011
- Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Development Plan Document - adopted 2012
- West Bromwich Area Action Plan – adopted 2012
- Smethwick Area Action Plan – adopted 2008
- Tipton Area Action Plan - adopted 2008

4.5. The existing Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and provides the framework for various Site Allocation Documents and Area Action Plans, which set out local policies and site allocations for individual authority areas. The existing Strategy has shaped the housing, industrial and retail growth of the area, whilst protecting the environment and greenbelt. It has also been successful in supporting regeneration for the past nine years.

4.6. The Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document identified sufficient sites and areas to meet the Borough's housing and employment needs, and protects the Borough's historic, built and green infrastructure. The Area Action Plans set out a vision and strategy for the future development of West Bromwich, Smethwick and Tipton and guide future change and development in these areas.

4.7. Following consideration of the issues raised during previous public consultation and the evidence produced to date it became clear that the scope of the new BCP would need to be significantly wider than that of the higher level, strategic Core Strategy previously adopted. The BCP will allocate a significant number of development sites, to demonstrate fully how the four authorities are meeting the housing and employment land requirements of the Black Country. ABCA agreed this approach to identifying sites in 2018. This approach will have the benefits of providing greater certainty for investment decisions and funding applications and supporting the delivery of sites where Compulsory Purchase Orders are required.

4.8. This means that the BCP now allocates: -

- Sites to be released from the Green Belt (details to be confirmed)
- All new housing allocations (details to be confirmed)
- All new employment allocations (details to be confirmed)
- Any other new allocations for other uses
- All current housing allocations over 50 units
- All current employment allocations over 0.4ha
- All changes to site allocations from existing plans

4.9. All site allocations were previously delegated to second-tier plans, such as Site Allocation Documents and Area Action Plans. This means that these extant allocations will also be considered at the Examination in Public and will therefore require the approval of all four Cabinets in the Black Country Authorities for them to be reallocated in the BCP.

4.10. This change in scope significantly increases the evidence requirements and complexity of the strategic planning process. However, the burden on second-tier plans will be correspondingly smaller.

4.11. The NPPF was originally revised in February 2019 and is used in plan-making and the determination of planning applications and appeals. The changes further emphasis the need for authorities to keep their plans up-to-date and to make sure enough housing is built to meet local needs.

4.12. The NPPF was revised further in 2021. The presumption in favour of sustainable development has been retained, but for plan-making (paragraph 11a) it has now been updated to have a “greener” focus, including new requirements for development to improve the environment and mitigate climate change.

4.13. Due to the impact of COVID19 on the workings of local authorities across the Black Country and beyond, a decision was taken in 2020 by the Association of Black Country Authorities to extend the period for the preparation of the BCP, in recognition of the difficulty of meeting the original schedule. This meant that the timetable was updated to reflect this change, which had implications for the other local plan documents related to it.

4.14. As a result, Sandwell's LDS was updated again last autumn, sooner than anticipated, to ensure that local people and Councillors were in possession of the most accurate timescale for forthcoming plans and documents that will affect them and their environment.

4.15. The current programme for the preparation for the Black Country Plan (subject to local authority ratification) is:

- Issues and Options consultation (completed) - July – September 2017
- Publish revised timetable
- Publish further evidence
- Open 'call for sites' consultation for 6-8 weeks - June-July 2020
- Publish delivery evidence - December 2020
- Cabinet consideration of Draft Plan - July 2021
- Draft Plan Public Consultation (eight weeks) - August-October 2021
- Cabinet consideration of publication version of BCP - July 2022
- Publication Public Consultation - August-September 2022
- Submission of Plan - March 2023
- Examination - April 2023 - March 2024
- Adoption - April 2024

Second-tier Plans – Sandwell Development Plan

4.16. The current second tier of the Local Plan is made up of the Site Allocations & Delivery DPD and the West Bromwich Area Action Plan. Both documents were adopted in December 2012 and cover the period up to 2021. As the Council is committed to reviewing plans every five years, the review of both documents should now be underway. However, as the second-tier plans must be in conformity with the first-tier plan, i.e. the BCP, last year's change in approach and the delay to the BCP review timetable has had a knock-on effect on their review.

4.17. It was always the intention to run the Sandwell Development Plan review approximately twelve months behind that of the BCP. However, the delays to the review timetable creates resource challenges in relation to the drafting of the new local plan and the various stages of consultation. To avoid consultation duplication on any stage of the Sandwell Development Plan coinciding with those of the BCP, the proposed timetable has been amended accordingly:

- Issues & Options Consultation -January 2022
- Draft Plan consultation - October 2022

- Plan Publication - October 2023
- Submission to Secretary of State - March 2024
- Examination in Public - Summer 2024
- Adoption - March 2025

4.18. Adoption of the Sandwell Development Plan will now take place beyond the date of the current plan period. The Planning Inspectorate have advised that current plans can continue to be given weight in decision-making beyond 2021 but from that date they will effectively be treated as being based on out-of-date evidence. Therefore, decisions taken based on the policies in such plans are at increased risk of challenge and, in the case of refusals, being overturned at appeal. This risk increases with time, so it remains important to prepare an up-to-date local plan as soon as possible.

4.19. As explained previously, the BCP will, unlike its predecessor, allocate sites for housing and economic development. As a result, the second-tier plan(s) will not include all the borough's site allocations.

4.20. It is therefore proposed to call the reviewed document the *Sandwell Development Plan (SDP)*. This will provide some commonality with the upper tier. The SDP will continue to address nature conservation, open space and other types of allocation along with Sandwell-specific policies such as are included in the current SAD DPD.

4.21. The West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP) forms part of the Statutory Development Plan; it was adopted in 2012 and expires in 2026.

4.22. The proposals in the WBAAP have largely been delivered. Due to changing market conditions, however, it is now appropriate to adopt an updated and flexible approach to securing further regeneration in the centre. This will be achieved through the production of an Interim Planning Statement and an associated Masterplan, to effectively bridge the gap between the WBAAP and the adoption of its successor document. The interim statement and plan will provide certainty for developers bringing forward new schemes.

4.23. It is important to note that the Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan for West Bromwich will not be part of the statutory development plan and will not therefore be formally adopted; rather, they are a statement of future intent.

4.24. Work is currently underway on the production of the West Bromwich Masterplan, in tandem with the emerging Interim Planning Statement. Public consultation has been carried out on the emerging masterplan recently and a number of comments have been received.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Preparation of a LDS is a requirement of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. As such there is no alternative to its preparation.

6 Implications

Resources:	The costs of preparing the Local Development Framework for Sandwell, and subsequent Local Development Documents, will be met from existing revenue budgets. The planning policy documents will be produced using existing staff resources within the Planning Policy and Transportation Team in the Spatial Planning and Growth Service Area
Legal and Governance:	In accordance with section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, every local planning authority must prepare planning policy documents and maintain the LDS specifying the documents that will be local development documents, their subject matter and area, and the timetable for their preparation and revision
Risk:	The Council's corporate risk management strategy has been complied with, to identify and assess the risks associated with this decision / recommendation. This has identified that there are no significant risks that need to be reported.
Equality:	An EIA has not been carried out. The LDS is a programme of the documents to be produced over the next three years and does not in itself create policy
Health and Wellbeing:	Health and wellbeing is a key theme addressed throughout the documents of the LDS. It will promote healthy living and create opportunities for active lifestyles and healthy transport choices including walking, cycling and outdoor recreation
Social Value	The Local Development Scheme will play an important part in delivering the spatial and land use aspects of the Council's vision 2030, particularly as it relates to housing, employment, transport, environment and education goals.

7. Appendices

LDS Report 2021
LDS Summary Timetable 2021

8. Background Papers

The Sandwell Local Development Scheme (LINK)
The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
The Localism Act 2011
The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

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Sandwell MBC Local Development Scheme

September 2021

[IL0: UNCLASSIFIED]

1. Introduction

1.1 This Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and sets out: -

- the Local Development Documents (LDDs), which are to be defined as Development Plan Documents (DPDs);
- the subject matter and geographical area to which each DPD is to relate;
- which DPDs are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authority; and
- the timetable for the preparation and revision of the DPDs

1.2 The LDS sets out the timetable for the preparation or revision of any LDDs covering Sandwell for the period 2021-2024 and supersedes all previous versions of the Sandwell LDS.

2. Sandwell Development Plan Documents

2.1 The Local Development Documents, which are to be defined as Development Plan Documents, covering the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council local authority area through this LDS are: -

- Black Country Core Strategy – adopted 2011 (now Black Country Plan)
- Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Development Plan Document - adopted 2012
- West Bromwich Area Action Plan – adopted 2012
- Smethwick Area Action Plan – adopted 2008
- Tipton Area Action Plan – adopted 2008
- Statement of Community Involvement - adopted 2016

2.2 The Black Country Core Strategy is a strategic plan prepared jointly by the four Black Country authorities to cover the Black Country area (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) for the period 2006-2026. The Core Strategy addresses strategic priorities for the Black Country, covers all subject areas at a strategic level and indicates broad locations for development on a key diagram. When it was adopted in 2011, the Core Strategy replaced various policies and allocations in the Sandwell Unitary Development Plan (2014).

2.3 The Area Action Plans were prepared to set out local policies, allocations and designations for key regeneration areas identified in the Black Country Core Strategy. These Area Action Plans replaced various policies and allocations in the Sandwell Unitary Development Plan when they were adopted.

3. Timetable for Preparation and Revision of Sandwell Development Plan Documents

3.1 The NPPF requires all local planning authorities to complete a review of DPDs that have been adopted for five or more years and to decide either:

- that their policies do not need revising and publish their reasons for this decision; and / or
- that one or more policies do need revising and update their LDS to set out the timetable for this revision.

3.2 This LDS fulfils the requirements of the NPPF in this regard, as set out below:

DPD	Years since adoption	Need for revision 2021-24?	Current position and way forward
Black Country Core Strategy / Black Country Plan (BCP)	10	Yes	Review currently underway and revision timetable included in this LDS.
Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (Sandwell Development Plan)	9	Yes	Review currently underway and revision timetable included in this LDS.
West Bromwich Area Action Plan	9	Yes	Review of AAP will form part of Development Plan and will help deliver the BCP. Not yet underway, although an interim planning statement and masterplan is in the process of being prepared, to help bridge the policy gap prior to adoption of the revised AAP
Smethwick Area Action Plan	13	Yes	Review of AAP will form part of Development Plan and will help deliver the BCP. Not yet underway.
Tipton Area Action Plan	13	Yes	Review of AAP will form part of Development Plan and will help deliver the BCP. Not yet underway.

3.3 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council is currently working with Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall Councils to review the Black Country Core Strategy. The subject matter scope of the new Plan will be wider than the existing Core Strategy, including new site allocations and a review of existing

allocations, where appropriate. The new Plan will include all the strategic policies for the Black Country, as defined in the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Black Country Core Strategy will in future be known as the "Black Country Plan" to reflect the guidance set out in the NPPF.

The timetable for the review is set out below:

Black Country Plan (formerly Black Country Core Strategy) Preparation Timetable

PLAN PREPARATION STAGE	**TIMESCALE**
• Issues and Options consultation	July – September 2017
• Publish revised timetable • Publish further evidence • Open 'call for sites' consultation for 6-8 weeks	June-July 2020
• Publish delivery evidence	December 2020
• Cabinet consideration of Draft Plan	July 2021
Draft Plan Public Consultation (eight weeks)	August - October 2021
• Cabinet consideration of publication version of BCP	July 2022
Publication Public Consultation	August-September 2022
Submission of Plan	March 2023
Examination	April 2023 - March 2024
Adoption	April 2024

3.4 It is the intention to run the Sandwell Development Plan review approximately twelve months behind that of the Black Country Plan. To avoid consultation duplication on any stage of the Sandwell Development Plan coinciding with those of the Black Country Plan, the proposed timetable is set out below:

Sandwell Development Plan (formerly Sandwell Site Allocations Document)

Issues & Options Consultation	January 2022
Draft Plan consultation	October 2022
Plan Publication	October 2023

Submission to Secretary of State	March 2024
Examination in Public	Summer 2024
Adoption	March 2025

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Sandwell Local Development Scheme Programme Summary 2021

Year	2020											
Month	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Black Country Plan						CfS	CfS					
Sandwell Dev't Plan												
SHLAA											SH	

Year	2021											
Month	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Black Country Plan							CC	DP Co	DP Co			
Sandwell Dev't Plan												
SHLAA											SH	

Year	2022											
Month	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Black Country Plan							CC	P CC	P CC			
Sandwell Dev't Plan	IO									DP Co		
SHLAA											SH	

Year	2023											
Month	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Black Country Plan			S	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex	Ex
Sandwell Dev't Plan										P		
SHLAA											SH	

Year	2024											
Month	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Black Country Plan	Ex	Ex	Ex	A								
Sandwell Dev't Plan			S	*Ex*	*Ex*	*Ex*	*Ex*	*Ex*				
SHLAA											SH	

Year	2025											
Month	**J**	**F**	**M**	**A**	**M**	**J**	**J**	**A**	**S**	**O**	**N**	**D**
Black Country Plan												
Sandwell Dev't Plan			*A*									
SHLAA											SH	

Key Milestones

A	Adoption	**IO**	Issues and options
C	Commencement	**P**	Publication of Plan
CC	Cabinet Consideration of draft plan	**S**	Submission of Plan
CfS	Call for sites	**SH**	Annual SHLAA update
Co	Public Consultation		
DP	Draft Plan		
Ex	Examination		
Ex, A	Indicative timescales		

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Refurbishment of Low Rise Blocks of Flats – The Lakes, Lion Farm
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Zahoor Ahmed
Director:	Director of Housing Gillian Douglas
Key Decision:	Yes Above £250,000 threshold
Contact Officers:	Jonathan Rawlins, Business Manager 0121 569 5045. Jonathan_rawlins@sandwell.gov.uk Andy Jukes, Procurement Business Partner 0121 569 3635. Andy_jukes@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That approval be given to authorise the Director of Housing to award a contract for the refurbishment of low rise flats at The Lakes, Badsey Road, Lion Farm, Oldbury to Lovell Partnerships Limited, for the sum of £10,962,999.41 and for a period of 86 weeks, from November 2021 to June 2023.

1.2 That the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into an appropriate contract for the Refurbishment of Low Rise Blocks of Flats – The Lakes, Badsey Road, Lion Farm, Oldbury with Lovell Partnerships Limited.

1.3 That any necessary exemptions be made to the Council's Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 above to proceed.

1.4 That resources of £1.096m are allocated from the balance of receipts generated for 1-4-1 housing replacement from the sale of council properties under Right to Buy.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 This report seeks approval to award the contract to undertake the Refurbishment of Low Rise Blocks of Flats at The Lakes to continue the substantial investment in the Council's housing stock. The contracted works will deliver an upgrade to the 5 blocks and 20 new units of social housing by adding an extra storey to each block.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods. This contract will provide a complete transformation of the existing buildings creating dwellings that will meet people's needs, in addition to providing 20 new affordable homes. The external walls of the blocks will receive rain screen cladding that will conform with all relevant regulations. This treatment will not only improve the look of the block but will also improve energy efficiency which will assist in lowering tenants' fuel bills. The environment around the block will be modernised to provide much needed car parking as well as a more aesthetically pleasing area. Ambition 5: Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Council is seeking to appoint a contractor to undertake the Refurbishment of Low Rise Blocks of Flats – The Lakes for a contract period of 86 weeks, from November 2021 to June 2023.

4.2 The Lakes are within the Langley ward.

4.3 On 18th October 2017 Cabinet approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Housing Investment Programme report. The report set out a refreshed 10-year HRA investment plan to enable the delivery of new build projects and to continue investment into existing stock and communal spaces in our neighbourhoods.

4.4 One of the key aspects to the report was to maintain our existing stock.

4.5 This scheme comprises the alteration and refurbishment of 5 low rise blocks of flats including the construction of an additional storey to each block providing an additional 4 x 2-bedroom flats per block. In addition there is a 6th block and the contract will include alteration and refurbishment of that low rise block of shops and flats.

4.6 The 5 existing 3 storey blocks, each made up of 12 x 2 bedroom flats are to be converted into 4 storey blocks of 2 bedroom flats. The total number of flats in these 5 blocks will therefore increase from 60 flats to 80 flats. The works include: new front and rear entrance canopies; 2 new lifts to each block; construction of a new 3rd floor to form 4 new flats per block; modifying and extending staircases; internal works, including fire precaution works to communal areas; minor internal works to the flats; remedial structural works; new pitched roof; full height rain screen cladding; replacement external windows and doors; hard and soft landscaping; mechanical and electrical installations; new incoming services.

4.7 The 6th block which is a 3 storey block of 6 shops and 6 x 3 bedroom flats is to receive a new entrance canopy; works to communal areas including fire precaution works; minor internal works to the flats; remedial structural works; new pitched roof; full height rain screen cladding; replacement external windows and doors; minor hard and soft landscaping; mechanical and electrical installations; new incoming services. No new units of housing will be added to this block.

4.8 The project aims to provide modern council owned accommodation to a high standard suitable for rent to council tenants and will provide an additional 20 new affordable homes.

4.9 In order to comply with the council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, tenders were invited using the Homes England framework agreement. This ensured that only contractors with suitable refurbishment experience were invited to tender.

4.10 Expressions of interest were published via the Homes England framework in June 2021, to which 3 responses were received.

4.11 Invitations to tender were issued in June 2021 and 2 tenders were received.

4.12 The Procurement Business Partner has been consulted and their advice is that an exemption is required as a result of fewer than three tenders being received from advertisement through the Council's procurement portal. This is in accordance with Procurement and Contract Procedure Rule 8.10.

4.13 In accordance with the Council's Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules (Rule 15) an exemption from any rule for a contract above £250,000 must be approved by Cabinet.

4.14 The two compliant tenders received have been evaluated in accordance with the criteria stipulated within the tender documentation, 80% Price and 20% Quality.

4.15 The Contractor with the winning submission is Lovell Partnerships Limited.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative is to not invest in our Council Housing Stock which in turn may lead to dissatisfaction from existing and potential new tenants as well as disrepair and additional burden on the Housing Revenue Account.

6 Implications

Resources:	The cost of the refurbishment of the Lakes blocks is £8.173m and will be funded from within currently approved HRA budgets. These budgets were approved by Cabinet in October 2017 with allocations against High Rise and Low Rise improvement works. The borrowing cost associated with this is included within existing HRA budgets. The cost of the additional 20 flats on top of the existing blocks is £2.790m. This is an average of £140k per flat. If there is no other funding available, then the repayment period of this would be 42 years. However, there is a balance of £6.1m of Right to Buy 1-4-1 replacement receipts available that can fund 40% of the scheme costs. By including funding of £1.116m the repayment period of the borrowing would be reduced to 28 years and is within the 40 year time period used for new build repayments on previous projects.
Legal and Governance:	This procurement has been undertaken via the Delivery Partner Panel 3 framework as maintained by Homes England and following approval the contract will be awarded in accordance with the council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015
Risk:	No Risks
Equality:	Works will be undertaken to all properties where required and as such an assessment has not been undertaken. To improve accessibility, 2 new lifts will be installed per block making the properties more accessible to disabled residents and families with young children.
Health and Wellbeing:	The work will ensure the buildings remain wind and weather tight as well as improving the thermal efficiency.

Social Value	Social Value will be achieved through the inclusion of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) contained within the formal contract with Lovell Partnerships Limited. The plan includes contractual performance indicators such as work experience placements, apprenticeships in addition to school engagement and community activities. Lovell Partnerships Limited, through their tender submission, welcome the opportunity to further provide substantial benefits to the Lion Farm, Oldbury and Sandwell (SMBC) community. They will continue to develop their 16-year long partnership and collaborate with SMBC to achieve and exceed your social value objectives and provide resources to deliver measurable benefits. The Lovell Legacy will continue to flourish within the Sandwell community, through the continuation of social value activities improving employment and training opportunities and look to reduce environmental impacts. Local Labour - on their current Sandwell contracts, 100% of workforce live within 25 miles of the office and 45% within the Borough of Sandwell.

7. Background Papers

None

8. Appendices

Tender results: -

SMBC 20088 Lion Farm – The Lakes				
	Price Score	**Quality Score**	**Total**	**Rank**
Lovell Partnerships Limited	80.00	18.00	98.00	1st
Contractor B	74.09	14.00	88.09	2nd

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Roofing Repairs to Council Properties
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Zahoor Ahmed
Director:	Director of Housing Gillian Douglas
Key Decision:	Yes Above £250,000 threshold.
Contact Officers:	Jonathan Rawlins, Business Manager 0121 569 5045. Jonathan_rawlins@sandwell.gov.uk Wendy Jones, Procurement Officer 0121 569 6098. Wendy_jones@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That approval be given to authorise the Director – Housing to award contracts for the delivery of Roofing Repairs to: -

1.1.1 Hardyman Group Limited and Roy Hankinson Limited – Lot 1 Pitched Roofing Repairs, for the sum of approximately £796,500 (£265,500 per annum) to Hardyman Group / £265,500 (£88,500 per annum) to Roy Hankinson Limited and for a period of 3 years, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2024.

1.1.2 IJS Roofing and Building Limited and Hardyman Group Limited – Lot 2 Built Up Felt and Sheet Roofing Repairs, for the sum of approximately £888,750 (£296,250 per annum) to IJS Roofing and Building Limited / £296,250 (£98,750 per annum to Hardyman Group Limited and for a period of 3 years, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2024.

1.1.3 Roy Hankinson – Lot 3 Asphalt Roofing Repairs, for the sum of approximately £453,000 (£151,000 per annum) and for a period of 3 years, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2024.

1.2 That the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into appropriate contracts for Roofing Repairs with Hardyman Group Limited, Roy Hankinson Limited and IJS Roofing and Building Limited.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 This report seeks approval to award the contract to undertake Roofing Repairs to Council properties.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods. This contract is required to allow Sandwell MBC to continue to maintain and upgrade its housing stock as and when required. Ambition 5: Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Council is seeking to appoint three contractors to five contracts to undertake roofing repairs to Council properties for a contract period of three years, from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2024.

4.2 The current contract was due to expire on the 31st January 2023.

4.3 Expenditure levels on the current contract were forecast to exceed the contract sum figure. To comply with Public Contract Regulations 2015 a decision was made in conjunction with Procurement Services to terminate the current contracts in accordance with the termination provision contained within the contract and to re-procure the contracts to ensure compliance. Correspondence was issued to all contractors in February 2021, including a termination date of 30th September 2021.

4.4 In response to the contract notice published on the Government's Find a Tender website in March 2021, four compliant tenders were returned against Lot 1, four compliant tenders were returned against Lot 2 and two compliant tenders were returned against Lot 3, by the deadline of 30th April 2021.

4.5 All compliant tenders received have been evaluated in accordance with the criteria stipulated within the tender documentation, 80% Price and 20% Quality.

4.6 This tender has been divided into the following lots:

Lot 1 Pitched Roofing
Lot 2 Built up Felt Roofing
Lot 3 Asphalt Roofing

4.7 Tenderers were afforded the opportunity of applying for one, two or all three Lots. Two contractors were to be appointed to Lots 1 and 2 with one contractor to be appointed to Lot 3.

4.8 Tender results are as detailed within the Appendix.

4.9 The Contractors with the winning submissions are

Lot 1 Hardyman Group Limited/Roy Hankinson Limited
Lot 2 IJS Roofing and Building Limited/Hardyman Group Limited
Lot 3 Roy Hankinson Limited

4.10 A call off process will be applied to both Lots 1 and 2. The Primary Contractor under the required Lot shall be approached to carry out works and shall be required to provide timely confirmation in writing of their availability to provide the works and confirm whether or not they have sufficient level of capacity to deliver the required works within the requisite timescales set by the Council. In the event that the Primary Contractor confirms they do not have capacity to undertake works in the required timescales in accordance with the terms of this Contract or have not provided the Council with satisfactory evidence that they have sufficient level of capacity, then the works required will be offered to the Secondary Contractor.

4.11 The anticipated combined value of the contracts, including all Lots, is in the region of £2.7 million (£900,000 per annum) for a period of three years.

4.12 Hardyman Group Limited are based in Solihull
Roy Hankinson Limited are based in West Bromwich
IJS Roofing and Building Limited are based in Walsall

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Sandwell MBC's Asset Management and Maintenance team have eight directly employed roofers. This contract is required to pick up the overspill of work. The contract also has a provision to repair and renew Asphalt walkways and balconies as the council does not have suitably trained employees to undertake this work.

6 Implications

Resources:	The original roofing contact award was for £2.9m over 3 years. However, this contract was used by other areas of the authority resulting in £2.796m being spent within the first 20 months. Budgets are available for the full value of the new contract within HRA resources. Other areas of the authority have been made aware that they will need to procure their own contracts where required.

Legal and Governance:	The contract will be awarded in accordance with the council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
Risk:	No Risks
Equality:	An Equality Impact Assessment was not undertaken as this is a renewal of an existing contractual arrangement. The contract will be monitored to ensure compliance.
Health and Wellbeing:	The award of this contract will enable Sandwell MBC to quickly repair roofs and walkways at our properties. This contract is still required in order for Sandwell MBC to continue to maintain its current housing stock.
Social Value	Social Value will be achieved through the inclusion of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) contained within the formal contract with Hardyman Group Limited, Roy Hankinson Limited and IJS Roofing and Building Limited. The plan includes contractual performance indicators such as work experience placements, apprenticeships in addition to school engagement and community activities. Hardyman Group Limited, through their tender submission, have committed to support a full range of local opportunities for this SMBC contract, as detailed within the ESP. Specifically, for this contract they will work with Sandwell MBC to make a positive impact to the local economy by: • Providing training, including work experience and apprenticeships • Maintaining and recruiting local employment • Creating opportunities for SMEs • Contributing to education • Sourcing materials locally Additionally, they are committed to protecting the environment and, therefore, will work to achieve the following objectives as part of this contract: 1. Target zero carbon footprint 2. Significantly reduce waste to landfill, through recycling 3. Reduce the use of plastics 4. Purchase of materials from a sustainable source

	Roy Hankinson Limited, through their tender submission, have committed to create relationships with local colleges and engage with residents through newsletters, social media and their website and provide opportunities for students and tenants with work experience opportunities for a minimum of 1 week. Over and above this they will provide opportunities for a local apprenticeships and traineeships. The majority of the works will be completed by themselves, however, when resourcing labour and materials, they commit to keeping this within the boundaries of the project area. Hankinson confirm and commit to ensuring that they recycle as much of the waste produced from our construction activities as possible, they are currently recycling in excess of 92% of the waste their activities produce. They do this by working with their waste partner along with working with suppliers to receive back their packaging for future use. They have committed to achieving carbon neutral status from their activities by 2035. IJS Roofing and Building Limited, through their tender submission, have committed to deliver a positive impact on the local economic, social, and environmental well-being of the local area. 100% of the people they employ are from the local area. This enriches our environment by providing a more highly skilled workforce and generating wealth within the community. Should they secure the contract, this will also allow them to take on one other apprentice and they will be happy to provide on-the-job training as part of a wider shared apprenticeship scheme run by one of the local colleges or training companies. IJS Roofing is committed to operating in a sustainable manner and protecting the environment with a sensitive and responsive attitude. They are acutely aware of the effects that our services, waste materials and packaging may have on the environment and endeavour to always mitigate against any negative impact on the local environment.

7. Background Papers

None

8. Appendix

Tender results: -

Lot 1 Pitched Roofing Repairs				
	Price Score	**Quality Score**	**Total**	**Rank**
Hardyman Group Ltd *(primary contractor)*	80.00	17.17	97.17	1st
Roy Hankinson Ltd *(secondary contractor)*	70.18	16.25	86.43	2nd
Contractor C	62.89	20.00	82.89	3rd
Contractor D	44.51	12.85	57.36	4th

Lot 2 Built Up Felt and Sheet Roofing Repairs				
	Price Score	**Quality Score**	**Total**	**Rank**
IJS Roofing & Building Ltd *(primary contractor)*	80.00	20.00	100.00	1st
Hardyman Group Ltd *(secondary contractor)*	77.83	17.17	95.00	2nd
Contractor C	70.97	16.25	87.22	3rd
Contractor D	43.07	12.85	55.92	4th

Lot 3 Asphalt Roofing Repairs				
	Price Score	**Quality Score**	**Total**	**Rank**
Roy Hankinson Ltd	80.00	16.25	96.25	1st
Contractor B	54.92	12.85	67.77	2nd

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Smethwick to Birmingham Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan Revision
Cabinet Member:	Regeneration and Economy Cllr Iqbal Padda
Director:	Director Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Key Decision:	Yes Type c) significant effect on two or more Wards
Contact Officer:	Planning Regeneration Team Leader, Hayley Insley Hayley_insley@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That Cabinet approves the revised documents on the Draft Smethwick to Birmingham Regeneration Corridor Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan, to be consulted on for six weeks commencing October 2021.

1.2 That the Director Regeneration and Growth be authorised to make minor changes to the Area Framework or Masterplan prior to consultation commencing if required.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Draft Area Framework and Masterplan were presented to Cabinet on 16 June 2021 and approved for consultation. As the documents are a cross boundary commission with Birmingham City Council they were also presented to the Director of Planning at Birmingham for sign off who then requested changes to be made to the Area Framework only, prior to being released for public consultation.

Although the Cabinet report authorised the Interim Director Regeneration and Growth to make minor changes if necessary, it was considered that the scale of changes made were more significant and that the revised documents should be presented to Cabinet for approval again. Following approval from Cabinet, it is intended to commence consultation in October.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Proposals within the Area Framework and Masterplan consider the need for new education facilities
	People live well and age well New housing proposed within the area will seek to address the needs of all members of the community and include improved public realm and green spaces, improved transport links and access to facilities and increase employment opportunities.
	Strong resilient communities New housing proposed within the area will seek to address the needs of all members of the community and include improved public realm and green spaces, improved transport links and access to facilities and increase employment opportunities.
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods The Masterplan will seek to attract a range of house types and tenures that are sustainable and will meet the needs and demands of the future residents.
	A strong and inclusive economy Sites that could assist in delivering new jobs and learning opportunities will be identified within the Area Framework. Improvements to transport connections will improve residents' ability to access key transport hubs and hence their access to employment and education prospects and will contribute to attracting and retaining businesses in Sandwell.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell The Area Framework will identify a transport strategy that aims to consider current and future transport needs and promoting alternative safe and convenient modes of transport other than the private motor car, including new cycling and walking routes.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The area around Grove Lane is to see significant transformational change with the introduction of the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital due to open late 2022. The area surrounding the hospital has been identified for regeneration for some time with sites being allocated for residential since 2012. The area was awarded Housing Zone status in 2016 and one of the projects in the Towns Fund bid addresses the need to kick-start development here by acquiring and remediating some sites adjacent to existing public owned land to act as a first phase of development.

4.2 However, other opportunities for growth within the corridor exist between Smethwick and City Hospital in Birmingham. Partners with an interest in this regeneration corridor considered the preparation of an Area Framework which seeks to identify regeneration and redevelopment opportunities and deliverable, costed, place-making projects for the Corridor for the Partners to take forward. It will also look at a transport strategy to identify highway improvements and promotion of alternative modes of transport to the motor car and how the corridor can contribute to net zero and inclusive growth.

4.3 More detailed masterplanning around Grove Lane has also been undertaken to ascertain the amount and type of development that could be accommodated for the future residents, linkages and green spaces and the provision of a new primary school.

4.4 The partners leading on this work consist Sandwell Council, Birmingham City Council, WMCA and TfWM, Homes England, Canal & River Trust and the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust. This work is being funded jointly by Birmingham City Council, Sandwell Council, WMCA and Homes England.

4.5 Consultants were appointed in December through a procurement process led by Birmingham City Council and utilising the Homes England Framework. They have undertaken stakeholder engagement which has lead onto developing draft projects to be considered. Running alongside the development of the Area Framework will be the detailed masterplanning for Grove Lane.

A webpage has been available for residents to register interest in finding out more during the forthcoming consultation period and relevant members from both authorities have been briefed with details of the ongoing work. All consultation will be undertaken within the Covid guidelines operative at that time. A range of consultation methods will be utilised to ensure engagement with as wide an audience is achieved as possible.

4.6 The Area Framework is a cross boundary document involving Birmingham City Council as well as other partners. Following Cabinet approval in June to consult on both the Area Framework and Grove Lane documents, further amendments were requested from the Director of Planning at Birmingham City Council. Whilst the strategy and general aims of the documents remain the same as the original, the Area Framework has been reduced in length, the format altered and additions made to show how the corridor contributes to net zero and inclusive growth. It was considered these alterations would not fall under the definition of minor changes permitted under the previous Cabinet recommendation. Some slight changes are also proposed for Grove Lane Masterplan.

4.7 It is intended to commence with public consultation for a period of six weeks in October following approval of the amended documents. A report on the consultation responses and proposed changes will be brought to Cabinet in due course.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Not progressing with a Masterplan for the area surrounding the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital would not create a platform from which to promote development opportunities in this area. The continued regeneration envisioned for this area will not be achieved and it would prevent the development of up to 800 much needed homes, a primary school and employment opportunities not being realised within one of the most deprived areas of Sandwell. The changes proposed in the revised documents do not dilute the strategy for this area but ensure the information is more succinct and focussed on demonstrating the contribution to net zero and inclusive growth.

6 Implications

Resources:	The Area Framework and Masterplan preparation is being developed by consultants funded by Birmingham City Council, Sandwell Council, West Midlands Combined Authority and Homes England and supported by officers within these authorities and agency. The proposals contained within these documents will assist in bringing forward some landholdings within public sector ownership
Legal and Governance:	There are no direct legal implications in relation to this report. The Area Framework and Masterplan will be informal non-statutory documents.
Risk:	There are no direct implications with regard to risk in relation to this report. All consultation will be undertaken in line with any Covid restrictions currently in place at the time to ensure safety is maintained.
Equality:	An EIA has not been carried out. The Masterplan does not create policy, it sets out the expected direction of travel of emerging policy, and can be a material planning consideration when determining applications
Health and Wellbeing:	The Area Framework and Masterplan will offer a range of health and wellbeing benefits through improving and developing new sustainable homes and public spaces, providing associated infrastructure to support new communities being created and assets and places for people to go and improvements to infrastructure including cycling and walking routes.
Social Value	The opportunities identified within the Area Framework and Masterplan will acknowledge how inclusive economic growth may be achieved.

7. Appendices

Draft Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan

8. Background Papers

None

SMETHWICK TO BIRMINGHAM CORRIDOR

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

SEPTEMBER 2021

SMETHWICK TO BIRMINGHAM CORRIDOR

THE DELIVERY PARTNERS

Sandwell Council is leading on the preparation of the development framework and the Grove Lane masterplan in collaboration with the other partners. The council is the largest Black Country authority and is pursuing an ambitious and proactive inclusive growth agenda.

Birmingham City Council is leading of the preparation of the development framework in collaboration with the other partners. Birmingham is the largest local authority in Europe and has an extensive track record of delivering large-scale urban renewal.

West Midlands Combined Authority is the combined authority for the West Midlands. The authority works collaboratively to deliver on its priorities including housing and regeneration, productivity and skills, economy and environment. WMCA is working with partners on the redevelopment of the area around the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital. **Transport for West Midlands** co-ordinates investment to improve the region's transport infrastructure and create a fully integrated, safe and secure network.

Homes England is the government's housing accelerator. It is focussed on making possible the new homes England needs, helping to improve neighbourhoods and grow communities. Homes England is working with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust to bring forward the redevelopment of the City Hospital.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust operates City Hospital and its new hospital, the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, is under construction. The Trust is also leading on the development of the Midland Met Learning Campus which will provide education and skills opportunities for the local population focused on accessing careers in the health and related sectors. The project has been allocated funding from the Towns Fund and is a collaboration between Sandwell College, Aston University, University of Wolverhampton and Sandwell Council. The Trust is the largest employer in the corridor and is committed to improving the lives of local people, maintaining an outstanding reputation for teaching and education, and to embedding innovation and research.

Canal & River Trust is the charity that looks after and brings life to 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales, including the Birmingham Main Line Canal within the corridor. The Trust is working to transform canals into spaces where local people want to spend time and feel better.

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OUR VISION FOR THE CORRIDOR

Page 125

1

OUR VISION FOR THE CORRIDOR

1 OUR VISION FOR THE CORRIDOR

Introduction

The Smethwick to Birmingham corridor is Birmingham and Sandwell's historic canal district, stretching from The Roundhouse just west of Brindleyplace to Galton Bridge in Smethwick. It is the historic link between Birmingham and the Black Country and a cradle of the industrial revolution.

Today the corridor is one of the most significant areas of brownfield urban renewal in Europe, with potential to deliver 4,000 new homes. We want to realise the opprtunities of that transformational scale of change.

Change is underway with new neighbourhoods under construction at Port Loop and Soho Loop and the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital nearing completion. We want to continue those changes and ensure they enhance the area for existing and future residents.

This framework sets out our plan for doing that. It:

- Creates a vision for the area and guiding principles which will be used by all the delivery partners in the detailed design and development of the main redevelopment sites in the corridor and by private sector partners in delivering development.
- Provides a joined-up transport strategy for the corridor, which will be used by the councils and Transport for West Midlands to create and seek funding for a corridor-wide package of transport improvements focused on walking and cycling.
- Adds additional detail to the planning policies of the councils (summarised in the Appendix) by providing design principles for the main allocated development sites to be applied by developers in designing their schemes and by the councils in determining planning applications.
- Showcases all the changes happening in the corridor and demonstrates the commitment of the delivery partners to making them happen, creating the platform for continuing private and public sector investment.

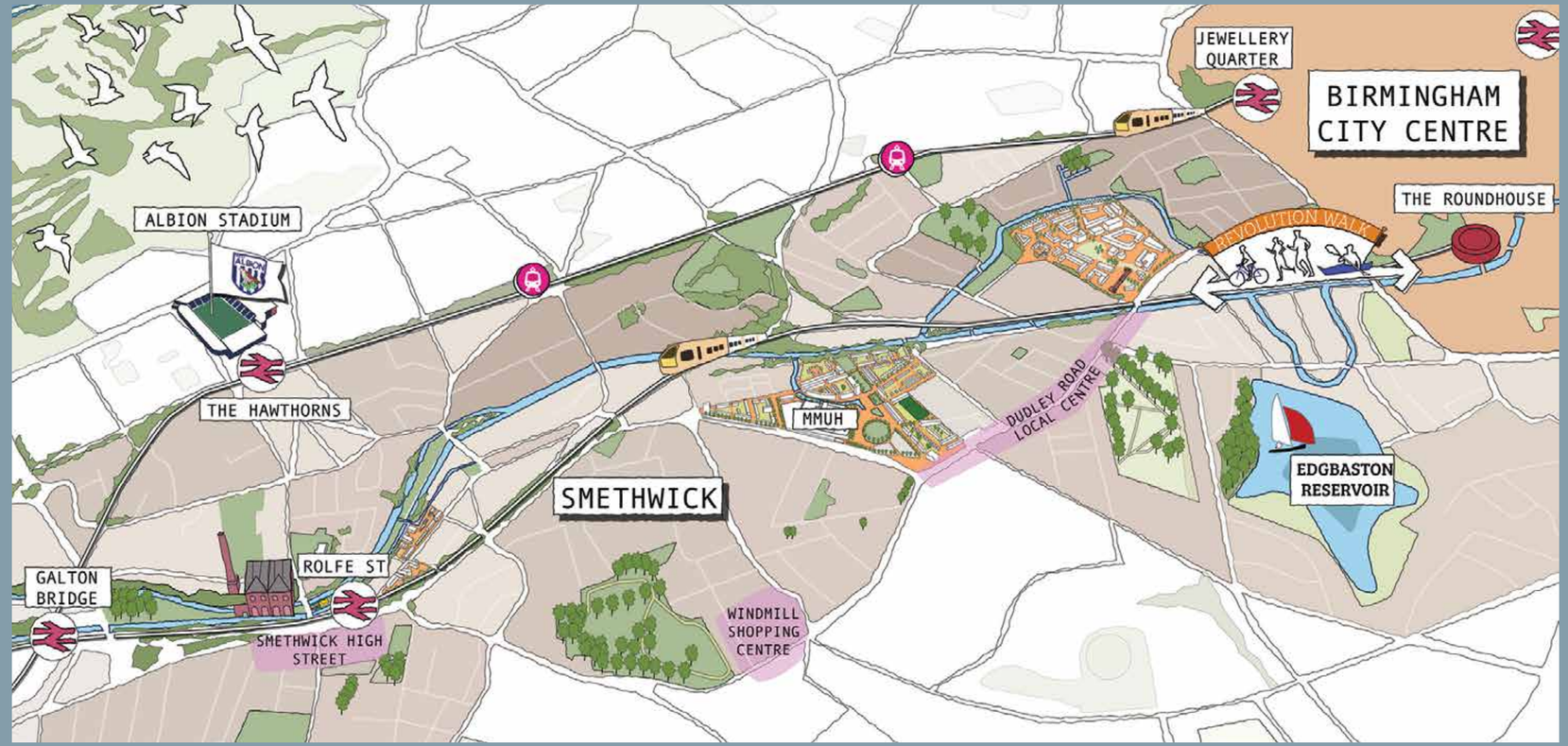
This framework is prepared jointly by Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council in close collaboration with Homes England, The West Midlands Combined Authority, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and the Canal & River Trust.

Relationship to the Grove Lane masterplan

The Grove Lane masterplan builds on this framework to set out in more detail how the Grove Lane area surrounding the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital can be redeveloped. A more detailed masterplan for the Grove Lane area is needed to show how the site can be developed and set the basis for its delivery.

The development framework and the Grove Lane masterplan are intended to be read together.

"The corridor..is the historic link between Birmingham and the Black Country and a cradle of the industrial revolution"


JEWELLERY QUARTER
BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE
THE ROUNDHOUSE
REVOLUTION WALK
ALBION STADIUM
THE HAWTHORNS
MMUH
DUDLEY ROAD LOCAL CENTRE
EDGBASTON RESERVOIR
SMETHWICK
GALTON BRIDGE
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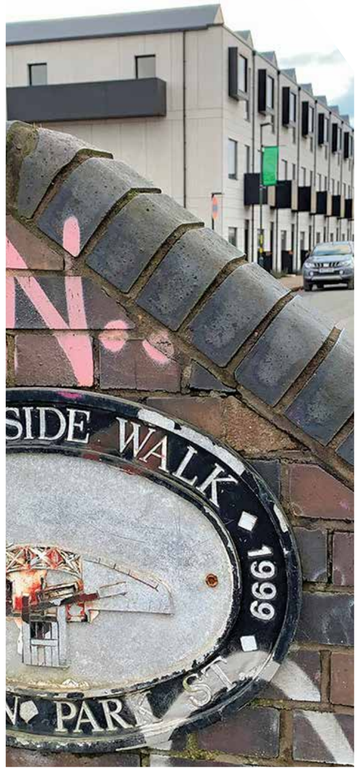


The corridor area

The Smethwick to Birmingham corridor lies centrally within the West Midlands, the UK's third most populous urban area and one of the largest metropolitan regions in Europe.

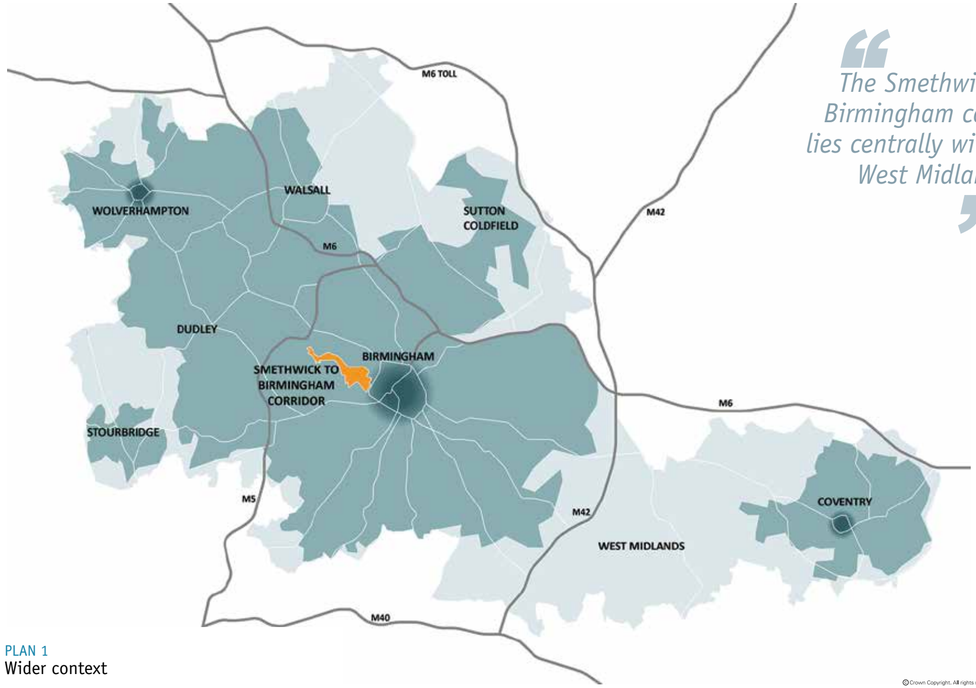
The corridor runs from the edge of central Birmingham at Ladywood, through the Winson Green area of Birmingham, to the town of Smethwick in the Borough of Sandwell and straddles major road, rail and canal routes between Birmingham and the Black Country.

The Birmingham Canal Navigations Main Line canal, which runs through the corridor to the west of Brindleyplace and Gas Street basin, is at the heart of the British canal network.

The corridor includes two mainline rail stations at Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street on the West Coast Mainline between Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

The A457 through the corridor is one of the principal arterial routes between Sandwell and Birmingham.

The corridor crosses administrative boundaries, with the western part of the corridor lying within Sandwell Council's area and the eastern part within Birmingham City Council's area.



"The Smethwick to Birmingham corridor lies centrally within the West Midlands"

PLAN 1
Wider context

NORTH
NOT TO SCALE

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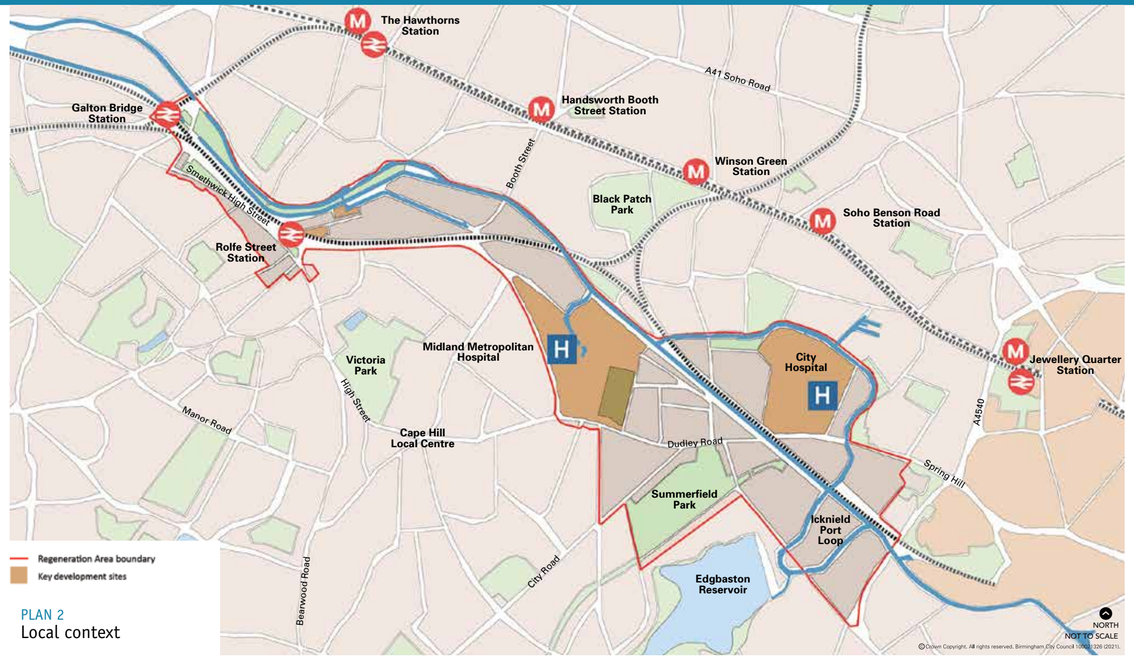
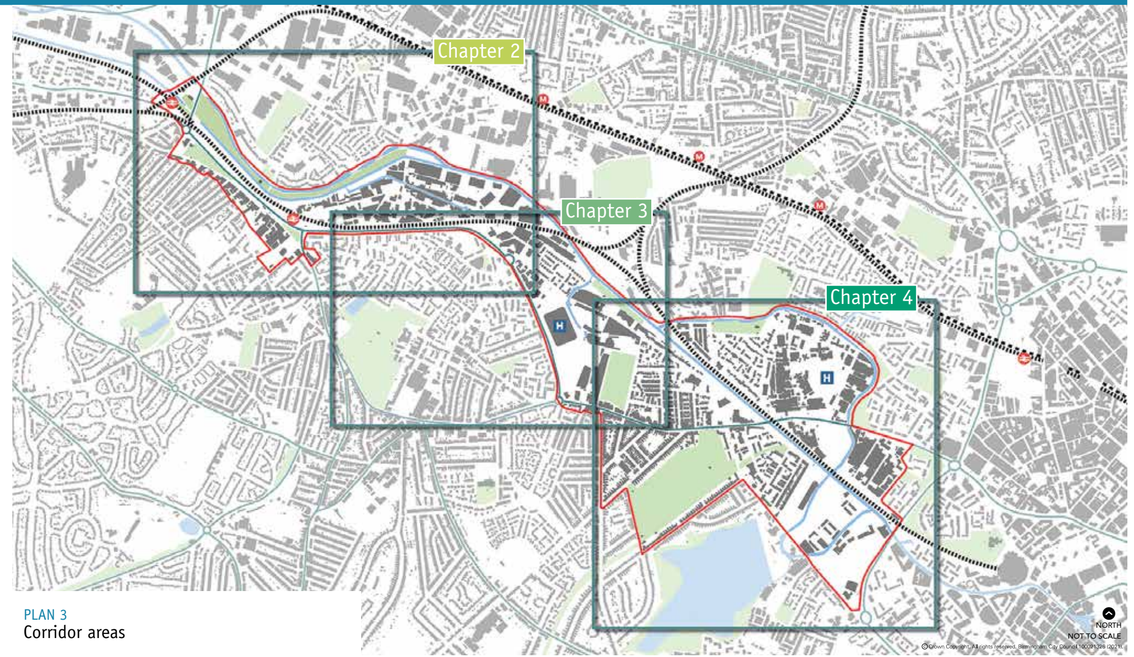
Local context



PLAN 2
Local context

The corridor

We have divided the corridor area into three separate neighbourhoods which are shows on the map below. In the west Smethwick Galton Bridge to Rolfe Street (see Chapter 2), in the centre of the corridor the Grove Lane area around the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (see Chapter 3), and in the east the area between Grove Lane and the City Hospital, including Dudley Road (see Chapter 4).



PLAN 3
Corridor areas

Vision

Our vision for the corridor is:

Making a healthy community

The corridor will be a place that people want to live in now and into the future, a place that is aspirational, where people feel proud to live, work, visit and be educated, that is well connected and provides sustainable transport choices, where access to the areas heritage and natural beauty is maximised and a place that forms and bolsters new and existing communities.

"The corridor will be a place that people want to live in now and into the future"

"Our vision is..promoting the future corridor as a healthy place with a healthy environment and a positive outlook built on its history and identity"

Guiding principles

We have established six principles to guide the delivery of the vision and the corridor's contribution to net zero and inclusive growth.

Healthy centres

We want to protect and enhance Dudley Road and Smethwick High Street local centres as the heart of the communities around them. We want to ensure that commercial or retail development elsewhere does not undermine their function.

A new hospital as an anchor institution

We want to integrate the hospital with its surroundings and maximise the improvements it brings to the local area. Benefits include employment, a catalyst for further regeneration, raising the aspirations of the community, and bringing new people into the area. This will take place alongside NHS investment at City Hospital.

A green corridor

The corridor is defined by its historic arterial transport routes linking Birmingham and the Black Country. The framework sets out how, through new and improved green spaces connected by the canals, the corridor can become a green artery contributing to improving biodiversity and our response to climate change.

An active travel exemplar

With thriving local centres, mixed land uses and public transport links the corridor has many of the ingredients for 15-minute neighbourhoods in which residents can access most of the facilities they need within 15 minutes' walk. The missing elements currently are walkability and cycling infrastructure. This framework sets the way forward to addressing that.

Green new neighbourhoods

With some of the largest redevelopment sites in the midlands, most in public ownership, the corridor is an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in design and sustainability. A range of new housing should be provided, while retaining the corridor's character as a family neighbourhood.

Healthy sense of place

We want to make the most of and enhance the things that make the corridor distinctive, including its heritage and diversity. This will give people a sense of pride and belonging in the area they live and build a sense of community.

The corridor's contribution to net zero

Through these guiding principles the development of the corridor will contribute to achieving net zero by improving green spaces, encouraging sustainable travel choices, reducing congestion and delivering sustainable new homes.

Timeline

The corridor has an important history as a cradle of the industrial revolution and multiculturalism in Britain. This history informs our vision and guiding principles for taking the corridor forward. The timeline below sets out the changes already underway and the projects that will shape the future of the corridor. The following chapters outline the future changes in more detail for each of the corridor neighbourhoods and set out our corridor-wide transport strategy.

"This history informs our vision and guiding principles for taking the corridor forward"

1760's James Brindley's main line canal

1795 Boulton and Watt's Soho Foundry pioneers modern manufacturing

1829s Thomas Telford's new main line canal

Late 1900s Rapid population growth

1958 Guru Nanak Gurdwara

2005 Birmingham Treatment Centre

Windmill Eye area housing developments complete

Soho Loop development

Icknield Port Loop development

Past

Present

Future short term

Future medium to long term

2021 Smethwick Town Investment Plan of £23.5m receives 'in principle' approval

2022 Midland Metroploitan University Hospital

2022 Commonwealth Games at Sandwell Aquatics Centre

2022 Cross-city bus improvement scheme

City Hospital redevelopment

Learning Campus at Midland Metroplitan University Hospital

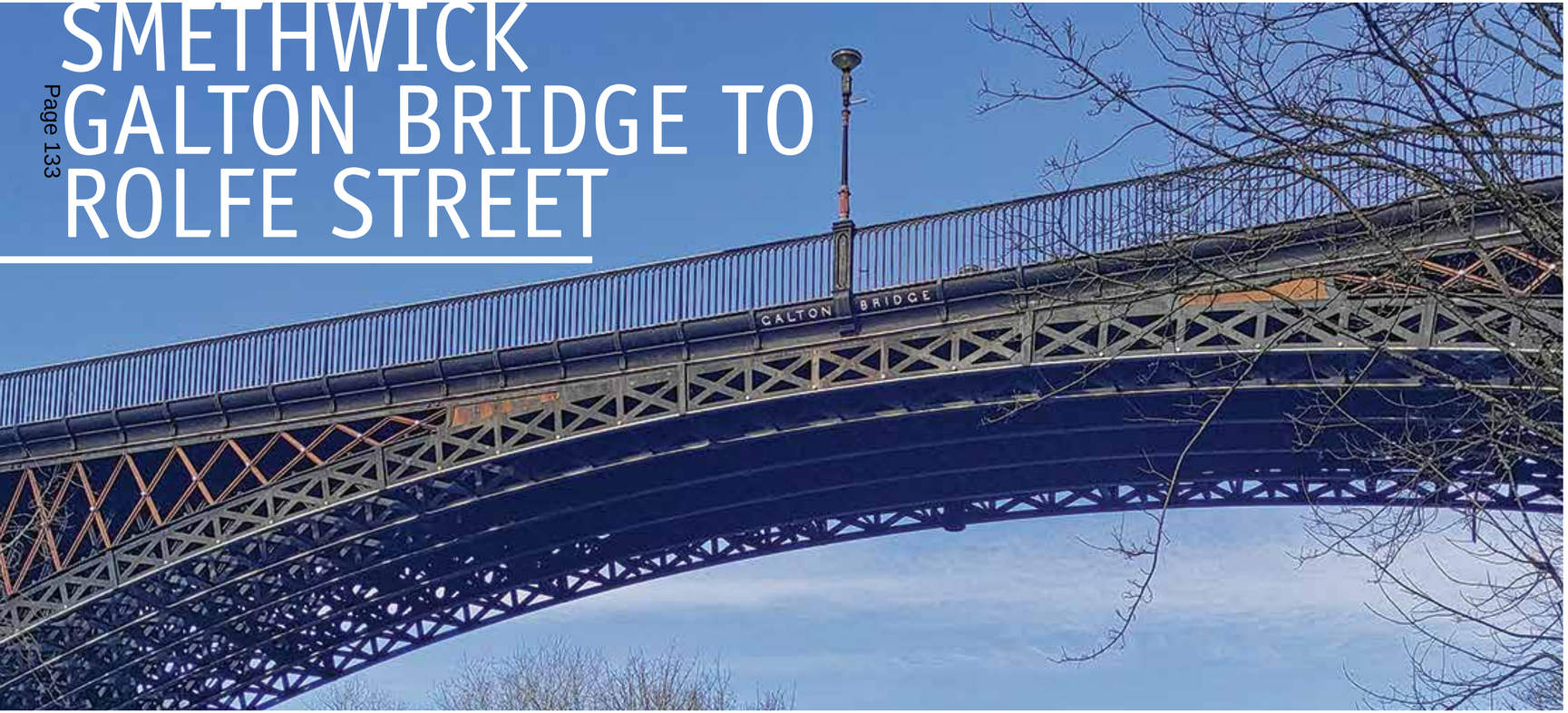
Grove Lane redevelopment including new primary school

Smethwick Enterprise Centre and Rolfe Street area redevelopment

Corridor wide transport package focussed on walking and cycling

Greening the corridor package

SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE TO ROLFE STREET



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SMETHWICK
GALTON BRIDGE TO
ROLFE STREET

2 SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE TO ROLFE STREET

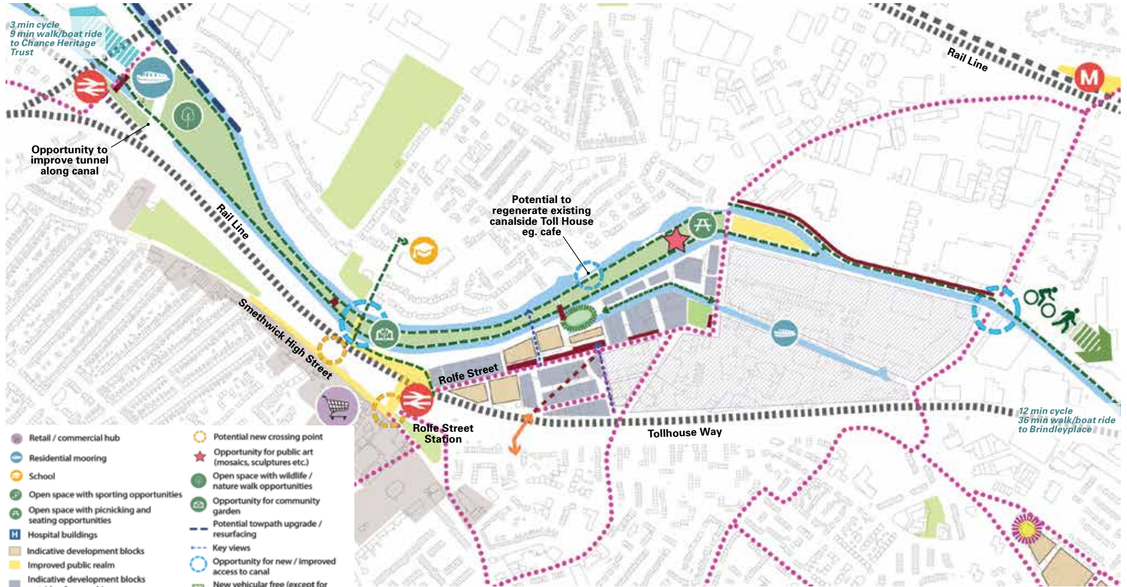
Introduction
The corridor is at its narrowest here, as the three canals (including the aqueduct branch) converge, along with the railway line and the A457. Rolfe Street station lies close to this convergence of routes and is the main train station to access the new hospital. Improvements to the station are currently planned, including lift access from Rolfe Street.

The canal corridor is wide and green with unique heritage features, not least Grade I listed Galton Bridge, the Grade II* listed Engine Arm Aqueduct and the landmark Galton Valley Pumping Station (now the Galton Valley Canal Heritage Centre). The canal, canal basin and surrounding Victorian industrial buildings create an attractive and characterful area which lies mostly within the Smethwick Galton Valley Conservation Area.

Smethwick High Street is a vibrant and attractive local centre with a range of shops serving the neighbourhoods to the south west but could be made to be a hub for those to the north and east through improved connectivity.

Nonetheless, there are challenges, in particular car dominance, and the difficulties this creates in encouraging walking and cycling even over short distances. This dominance is not limited to the passing traffic using the A457, but also on Smethwick High Street where on street parking and loading is often unauthorised, and in the industrial areas to the east on Rolfe Street where pavement parking and heavy good vehicles make for an intimidating environment. Further, the nature of the land holdings in the industrial areas - both freeholds and leaseholds - may make comprehensive change more difficult.

PLAN 14
Smethwick Galton Bridge to Rolfe Street location



PLAN 15
Smethwick Galton Bridge to Rolfe Street framework

NORTH
NOT TO SCALE

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Objectives for the area

Rolfe Street station

- Improve public realm and walking routes to key locations around the station, particularly crossings over the A457 to Smethwick High Street, Buttress Way and the route to Brasshouse Lane.

Smethwick High Street

- Address parking and loading issues on Smethwick High Street, initially through enforcement and over the longer term through a clear parking strategy.
- Improve areas of public space between A457 and High Street; seek community input to ideas and implementation.

Heritage and canals

- Establish the location around Galton Bridge and Engine Arm Aqueduct as a focal point for heritage-led regeneration.

Movement networks

- Improve canal pathways and access to them.
- Improve links to Metro stations at The Hawthorns and Winson Green.
- Create clearer and safer routes between development opportunities/Brasshouse Lane and Rolfe Street Station and Smethwick High Street.

Development opportunities

- Enterprise Centre.
- Former Baths site.
- Engine Arm Peninsula. Accessed from Bridge Street North, but with possible links to the Enterprise Centre site, the Engine Arm Peninsula site is in private ownership and represents an opportunity for future residential development. Development would need to be sensitive to its location within the historic canal corridor. All of the site is previously developed, and derelict industrial buildings remain at the eastern end, fronting Bridge Street North.

A closer look: Enterprise Centre

The Enterprise Centre on Rolfe Street is owned by Sandwell Council. It is a self-contained site on the north side of the street, with an important waterfront boundary at the Engine Arm Aqueduct. A mix of single, two and three storey buildings, the the site has some interesting historic features and references that could be drawn upon or drawn into a redevelopment scheme. The site has a change of levels, dropping down to the canal, and commands good clear views across and along the canal corridor. Within walking distance of the station and other services, the site could suit a dense form of development that reflects the industrial make up and history of this site and the environment around.

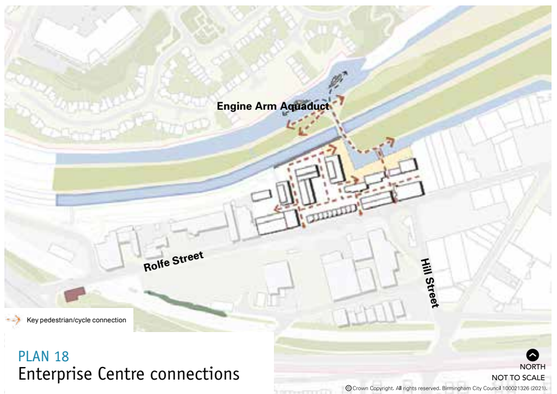
Redevelopment is mooted in the Smethwick Town Investment Plan (TIP) and is expected to be for residential use. The TIP proposes the clearance of the site, though Rolfe House would need to be maintained on the site, and some of the older buildings - such as the former Fire Station - are highlighted within the Conservation Area Appraisal as having local heritage interest and could also be retained. With the wider area in industrial use, integration of residential development will need to be managed carefully, though the site aims to be a catalyst for further change and investment, alongside sites at the former Baths, and the Engine Arm Peninsula site that fronts Bridge Street North.

PLAN 16
Enterprise Centre location

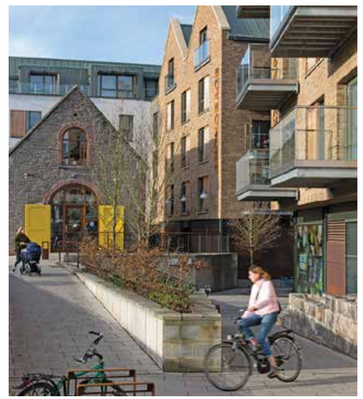
PLAN 17
Enterprise Centre masterplan

Connections

- Building line maintained on Rolfe Street, with connections into the site between buildings for vehicles and for pedestrians/cyclists (potentially segregated).
- Internal circulation space around the site, including to the waterfront.
- Access to key waterfront locations, particularly close to the aqueduct. Opportunity for improved connections across the Engine Arw Aqueduct.
- Desirability of connections to the canal towpath for access to the canal corridor and other destinations (e.g. Metro).
- Rolfe Street as a key route to Rolfe Street station and other services (e.g. High Street).



PLAN 18
Enterprise Centre connections



Open space

- Distinct and clear split between private space for residences and public space for access to the canal corridor and waterfront.
- Internal semi-private spaces within the development, reflective of industrial style courtyards and service yards.
- Glimpses of the canal corridor though gaps in the built form tells a story about the place.

Frontages

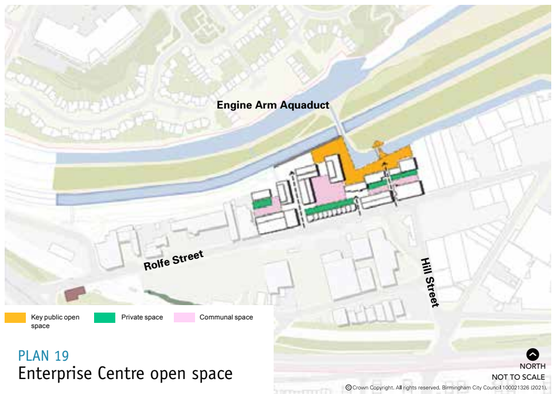
- Maintenance of clear frontage to Rolfe Street defined by the red brick connected to the street's past.
- Frontages to active connections into and through the site where activity takes place.
- Capitalise on frontages to the canal, benefitting the outlook for residents and providing a sense of overlooking onto the public spaces on the canal.

Retained buildings

- Site has potential for retaining buildings on site for conversion.
- Retention of buildings provides a link to the past and helps reflect the character of the area.
- Key building on Rolfe Street is the former Fire Station (1911), which has a distinctive tower, which may assist with placemaking and identity.
- Warehouse style building in centre of the site may be suitable for conversion; lends status to the site; provides a basis for wider design in terms of form, massing.
- Northern wall alongside the aqueduct is listed.

Views

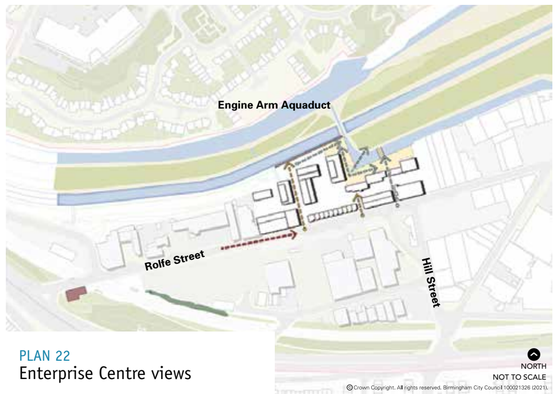
- Short and longer views create a sense of place and location within the wider context, and aid understanding of a place.
- Clear views along Rolfe Street provide easy links to key services and facilities.
- Glimpses from Rolfe Street through the site create connections to the canal and open spaces beyond.
- Views of key buildings help to orientate and direct people to and through the site.
- Views along the canal corridor and aqueduct help with orientation; key views of heritage assets and the canal context create distinctiveness.



PLAN 19
Enterprise Centre open space

PLAN 20
Enterprise Centre frontages

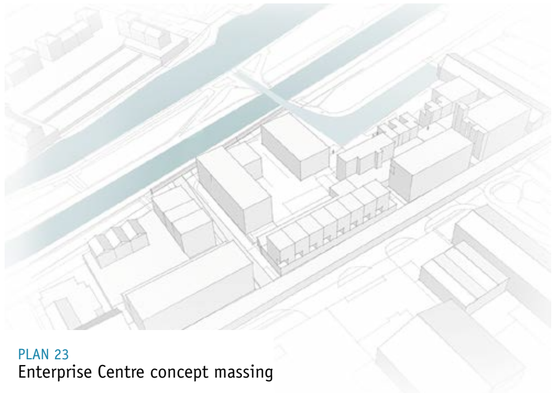
PLAN 21
Enterprise Centre retained buildings



PLAN 22
Enterprise Centre views

Massing

- Town Investment Plan identifies the Enterprise Centre as a residential opportunity close to the station in an area of change.
- Location in a traditional industrial area points to an urban, warehouse style of development echoing the distinctive development of Smethwick as a pioneering and innovative place.
- Red bricks dominate with functional detailing associated with former industrial uses.
- Use of buildings and spaces - courtyards, delivery areas, relationships with streets - provide design cues for future redevelopment.
- Proximity to station and services points to a higher density development which may also reduce reliance on car-ownership.



PLAN 23
Enterprise Centre concept massing

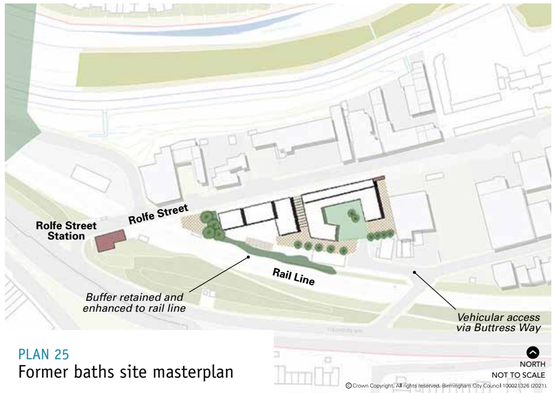
Precedent streetscape

A closer look: Former Baths site
The original Smethwick public baths - a striking piece of nineteenth century civic architecture - were located adjacent to the station on Rolfe Street. The original three storey building has been relocated to the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, and the site where it once stood has become open and overgrown with trees and scrub.

The site is allocated in the development plan for housing.

The former Baths site has a long frontage to Rolfe Street which terminates at the station building. The south side of the site abuts the railway, but there is an access to this area via Buttress Way. The site is constrained by its location alongside the railway by noise and possible vibration, and differences in levels, limiting its development potential, but the site is owned by Sandwell Council and is well located to provide a catalyst for the development of the wider area alongside the Enterprise Centre opportunity.

PLAN 24
Former baths site location



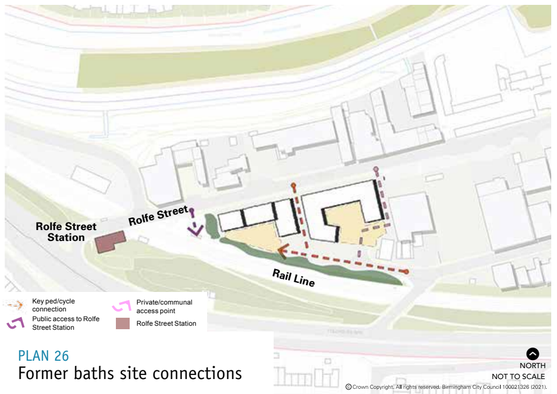
PLAN 25
Former baths site masterplan

Connections

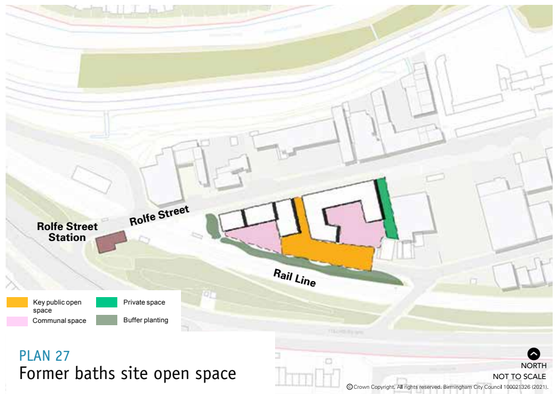
- Principal connection with Rolfe Street, which fronts the site and provides access elsewhere.
- Buttress Way connects to the rear of the site, and might be able to provide another non-vehicular link to the station through the site.
- Private/communal access to terraces along eastern edge to be provided where the former entrance to the Baths site was located.
- Changes in level between Rolfe Street and the south side of the site alongside the railway.

Open Space

- Buffer area would need to be provided between development and the railway to prevent detrimental intrusion (noise, pollution, vibration).
- Communal spaces and landscaped setting to be provided for residents, distinct from public areas of open space (e.g. a public link to the station from Buttress Way).



PLAN 26
Former baths site connections



PLAN 27
Former baths site open space

Frontages

- Maintenance of clear frontage to Rolfe Street defined by the red brick connected to the street's past.
- Frontage to public railway access to west must be carefully treated so that residential privacy is not compromised.

Retained buildings

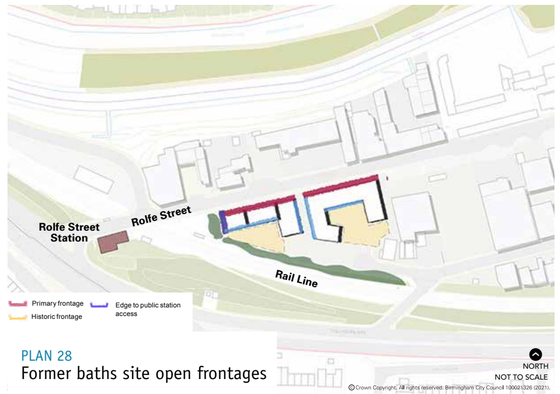
- The site has no existing buildings of note.

Views

- Clear views along Rolfe Street provide easy links to key services and facilities.
- Glimpses from Rolfe Street through the site may be beneficial if a station link is possible.

Massing/land use

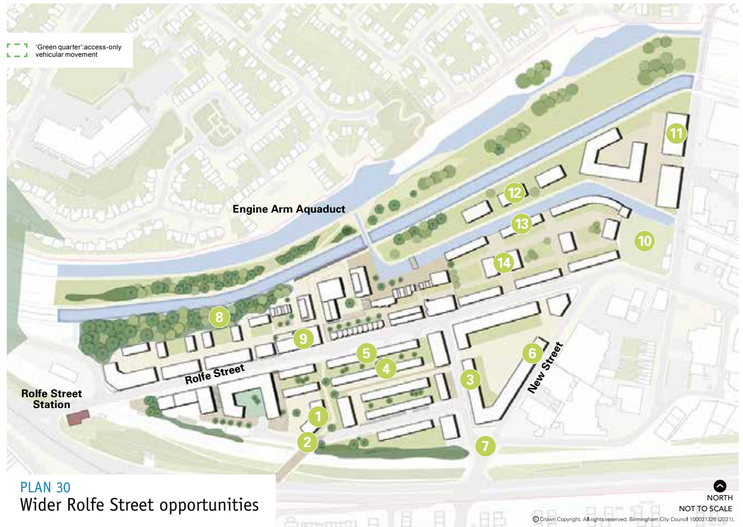
- Location in a traditional industrial area points to an urban, warehouse style of development echoing the distinctive development of Smethwick as a pioneering and innovative place.
- Red bricks dominate with functional detailing associated with former industrial uses.
- Use of buildings and spaces - courtyards, delivery areas, relationships with streets - provide design cues for future redevelopment.
- Proximity to station and services points to a higher density development which may also reduce reliance on car-ownership.
- Former Baths building can be an inspiration for built form.



PLAN 28
Former baths site open frontages

Comprehensive masterplan
In combination with the Enterprise Centre and Rolfe Street baths sites, there is an opportunity to bring change to the wider area between Rolfe Street station and New Street. This would aim to bring other sites together and form a new residential quarter. The masterplan below shows how this could be done.

1. Opportunity to respect historic street alignment through built form.
2. Opportunity to close off Cross Street for pedestrian access only, with a new crossing proposed across Tollhouse Way to reconnect the fragmented communities.
3. Opportunity to create a 'green quarter' to the west of Hill Street, with access only for vehicular traffic and the rationalisation of the road infrastructure, including the closure of the western branch of Hill Street joining Rolfe Street, and Cross Street as discussed in part 2.
4. To the south of Rolfe Street there are intimate terraced and mews streets.
5. Strong frontage overlooking Rolfe Street, with a continuous building line.
6. Transition from residential to urban in mixed-use blocks, with residential units fronting Hill Street and mixed-use/flexible workspace fronting New Street.
7. Clear legibility between industrial space and residential development when entering via New Street from the south.
8. Variety in buildings siding on and fronting onto the canal, respecting the former urban grain along this working watercourse with differing set backs.
9. Retention of buildings to the north of Rolfe Street. This location is the first red-brick industrial building when approaching from Rolfe Street Station and is an important gateway.
10. Set Engine Arm is an improved publicly accessible area of open space.
11. Strong frontage overlooking Bridge Street North.
12. Buildings breaking down further west from Bridge Street north, with blocks sitting in open space leading towards Engine Arm Aqueduct.
13. Direct waterside living to create variety in enclosure of the canal reminiscent of the industrial era.
14. Series of communal courtyards with direct views towards canal arm from Rolfe Street.



PLAN 30
Wider Rolfe Street opportunities

Corridor projects: green corridor

The corridor's open spaces are an oasis for urban wildlife and an important leisure space for residents. Our goal is to knit the corridor's green spaces together into a green lung between Smethwick and Birmingham which enhances biodiversity, contributes to tackling climate changes and helps make the corridor an attractive place to live. We can do this through new and improved green spaces at Rolfe Street, new green spaces linking the canal to Moilliett Street Park at Grove Lane, and new green spaces linking to the canal and All Saints Park at City Hospital. There is also an opportunity for corridor-wide biodiversity enhancements focussed on the canals.

GROVE LANE AREA

3

GROVE LANE AREA

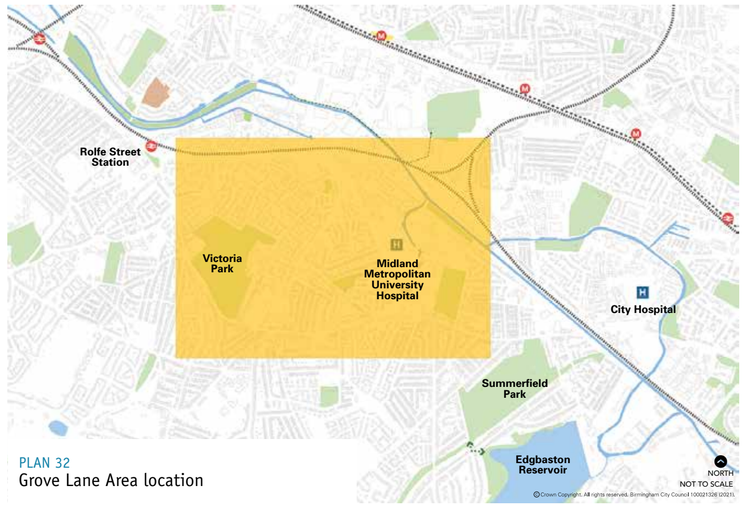
3 GROVE LANE AREA

Introduction
The corridor widens out in this central strip, encompassing the area between Grove Lane and the Main Line Canal. The dominant area of interest for the framework is the MMUH and the land surrounding it, much of which is either vacant or underused, or occupied by small to medium industrial and commercial businesses occupying fairly low-quality building stock. While the industrial and commercial uses themselves are not unattractive or bad neighbour uses, their impacts often spill into the wider area in the form of parking, blocked pavements and heavy traffic amongst residential streets.

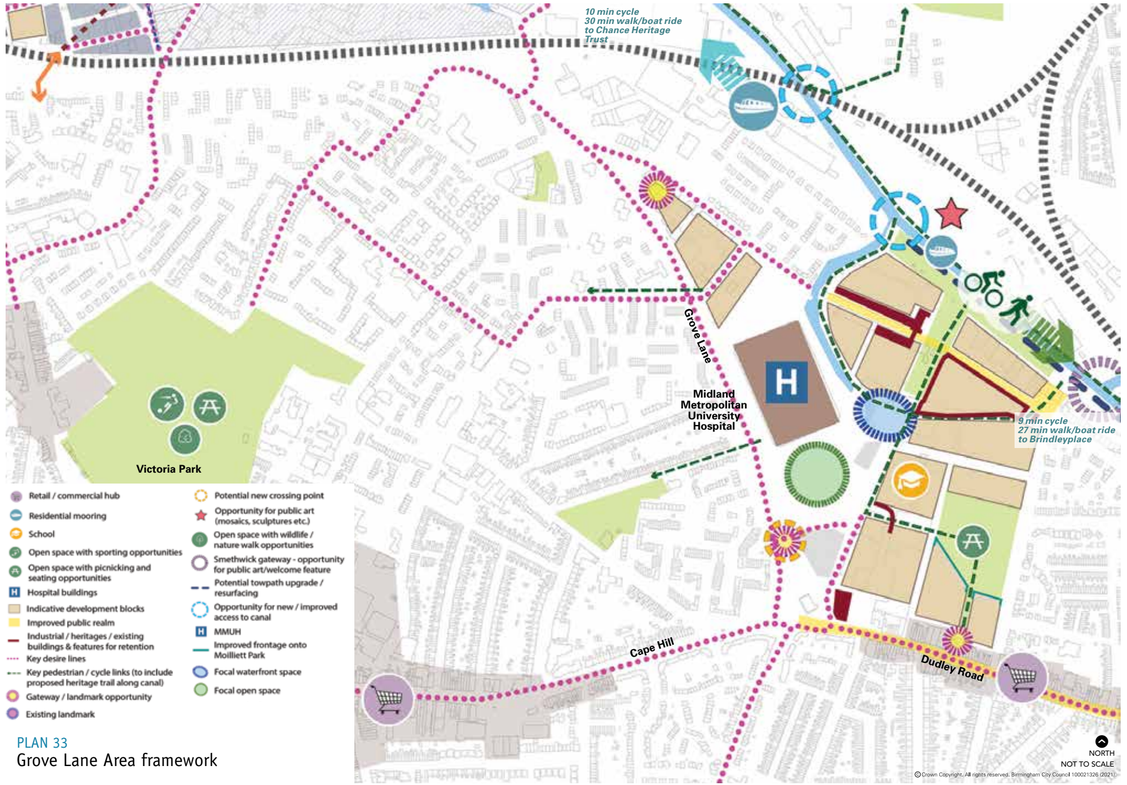
The hospital will bring change. It is a major building, with height and mass. Alongside the hospital, a learning campus, bringing a university presence to Smethwick, is proposed. People from across the region will have reason to visit here as patients, visitors, professionals, students and employees.

The location has two nearby centres at Dudley Road and Cape Hill and is also well connected to Birmingham by road and public transport. The hospital site has a branch of the canal coming into it, which could form the basis of a high-quality public space based around water. There are older buildings on the Grove Lane masterplan site that are of interest and could be incorporated into development or form cues for the design of new buildings. The neighbouring community of Windmill Eye have produced a detailed neighbourhood plan, which provides a good basis for informing aspirations for the corridor.

The Grove Lane area is the subject of a more detailed masterplan created alongside this framework.



PLAN 32
Grove Lane Area location



PLAN 33
Grove Lane Area framework

Objectives for the area

Layout principles

- Develop clear edges using retained historic buildings where possible, and complementary new buildings to reflect the historic nature and identity of the area as part of the canal corridor.
- Open up the canal (Cape Arm) creating a public route through and forming a positive relationship with the hospital edge.
- Integrate focal buildings and celebrate Smethwick's heritage.
- Integrate the area with the Dudley Road high street.
- Locate a new primary school within the heart of the Grove Lane masterplan site to be fully integrated within the community.
- Introduce a mix of housing types including an identified need for family housing.

Hospital site

- Integrate the hospital building and grounds into the masterplan to create a neighbourhood that responds to its form and size, and creates an appropriate transition to the existing neighbourhoods.
- Improve public spaces and walking routes to and around the hospital site, particularly crossings over the A457 to and from Windmill Eye, links to and beyond Cranford Street and Heath Street to the canal and links to Dudley Road.
- Create a strong edge on Grove Street to address the hospital in order to help contain the large open space.

Heritage and canals

- Incorporate designs that reflect the industrial context and history. Consider re-use of industrial buildings where possible to enhance the sense of place. Key buildings are located on Cranford Street and Heath Street.
- Aim to bring back into use the Cape Arm branch, and reflect former canal alignments where they cannot be reinstated.

Movement networks

- Overcome land ownership constraints to enable to the creation a smooth, unified and seamless network of streets and spaces with an attractive public realm for people to enjoy.
- Establish connections to the canal, both within the development and through the connections from the redevelopment site to canal access points.
- Enhance canal pathways particularly from the Cape Arm to the main canal.
- Enable clearer and safer links between new development and nearby centres and facilities (e.g. Dudley Road local centre, Cape Hill, Moilliett Street Park).

Open Space

- Establish a clear structure of green and blue infrastructure within the area that complements the built form, provides connections within and beyond the area, and provides different forms of outdoor recreation (eg. play areas, neighbourhood parks, spaces for hospital users).
- Use the internal open space structure to provide pointers to green space beyond the area (such as Summerfield Park) to widen the opportunity to find natural space and recreation.
- Improve and remodel Moilliett Street Park.

A closer look: Grove Lane

The Grove Lane area is the centre of the framework corridor and the place where much of the change will happen. The new hospital, which sits on Grove Lane at the heart of this area, is scheduled to open in 2022.

The remainder of the site is allocated in the development plan for housing.

The development opportunity takes in the land around the hospital between Grove Lane, Cranford Street, Heath Street and the Main Line Canal. It has been awarded Housing Zone status with potential to deliver approximately 800 new homes over almost 18 ha of brownfield land. Some of these have already been provided with approximately 140 constructed north of Cranford Street. Moilliett Street Park - which lies across the authority boundary within Birmingham City Council's area - abuts the Grove Lane Housing Zone and needs to be considered as part of the masterplan.

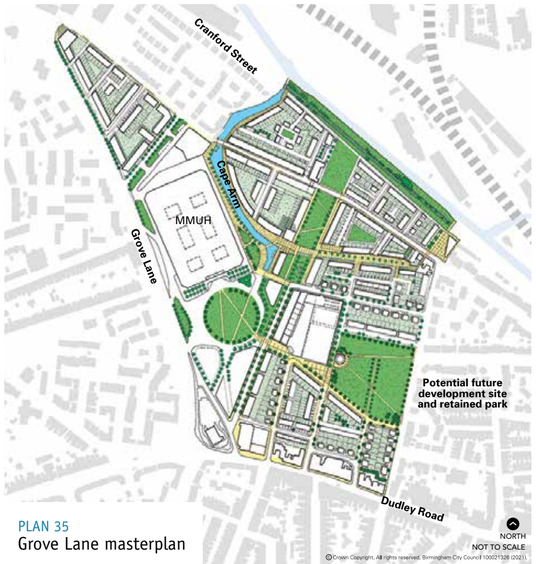
The development of the land should be comprehensive, creating a people centred neighbourhood that supports existing local centres, provides a new school, connects with the canal and promotes active travel. It is important that development is not purely based on achievable numbers of homes but delivers a quality place that sets a high standard for the regeneration of the wider area.

The hospital itself is a dominating presence, a prominent building that is significantly taller than most of the surrounding buildings. To the south of the hospital building, a large open space is planned as an entrance point; the space could also be used as a public open space and is not intended to be exclusively for the hospital. South of this space, the Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust have ambitions for a learning campus and for temporary living accommodation (e.g. nurses' accommodation, a hotel). The eastern side of the hospital fronts Cape Arm, a branch off the main canal, though not currently accessible as a waterway for boats or for pedestrians.

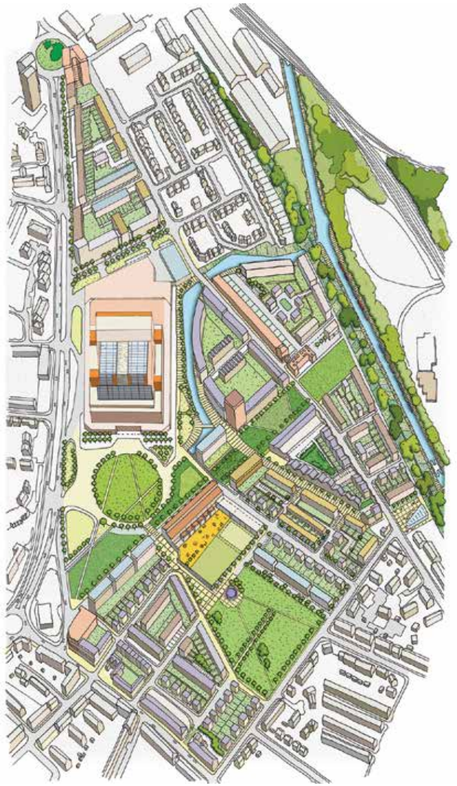
Most of the industrial units to the east of the hospital are low rise and over fifty to sixty years old, and many seem tired. However, elements speak to the area's history and heritage, and some of the brick patterns and openings have a distinctiveness that is worthy of note in redevelopment ideas.

PLAN 34
Grove Lane location

Concept view from the new hospital looking south



PLAN 35
Grove Lane masterplan

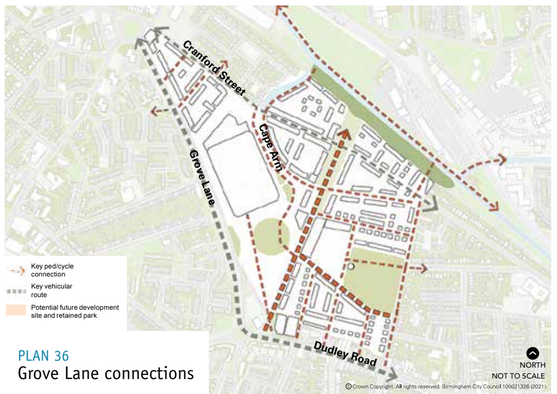


Connections

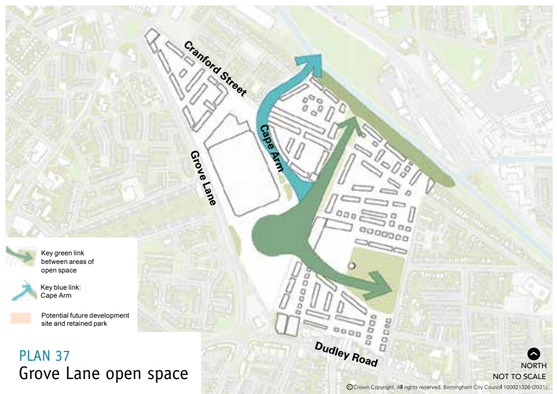
- Key north-south and east-west pedestrian/cycle axes which connect the primary areas of open space.
- Internal connections improved by the development of the MMUH, particularly around its entrance and Cape Arm.
- Utilises existing street network. Cranford Street/ Heath Street improved for pedestrian/cycle movement (see Transport Strategy).
- Pedestrian connection along Cape Arm and across canal connecting into towpath.
- Change in level between northern boundary of site and canal feeder. Crossing opportunity to be explored in the north eastern corner of the site for improved connectivity to the towpath.
- Aim to improve connections beyond the site edges, and across existing transport infrastructure.

Open space

- Defined areas of green and blue corridors connect the site together and form its heart.
- Improved accessibility along Cape Arm will allow people to enjoy the waterfront, with the opportunity for a moored boat with a cafe onboard bringing life to the water.
- Green corridors connecting the hospital open space, Moilliett Street Park and the key north-south green link. The primary school is located adjacent to this open space network.



PLAN 36
Grove Lane connections



PLAN 37
Grove Lane open space

Corridor project: Moilliett Street Park

Currently the park suffers from fly-tipping and the impacts of surrounding industry. An improved park could form the heart of the new Grove Lane neighbourhood and provide new walking and cycling routes linking Dudley Road to the new hospital and school.

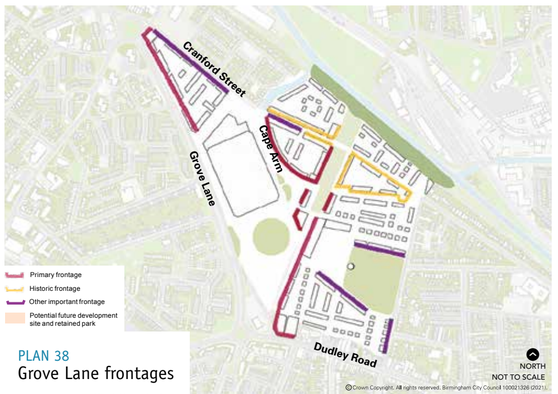
Closing Moilliett Street to traffic at its junction with Dudley Road could allow creation of a new pocket park. Building new homes on the southern and northern edges of the park could improve those edges and help fund the improvements.

Any development of the park would need to accord with Birmingham Development Plan Policy TP9 or come forward through the new Birmingham Plan.

Example pocket park, Derbyshire Street, Bethnal Green, London

Frontages

- Primary frontages overlooking Grove Lane, Cape Arm and the hospital, and the key north-south movement axis.
- Heritage frontages along Cranford Street, creating a distinctive and positively enclosed streetscape reminiscent of the sites former use.
- Important frontages activating the edges overlooking Moilliett Street Park, and along Cranford Street amongst the heritage frontages retained.



PLAN 38
Grove Lane frontages

Land use

- MMUH located in the centre of the site, with public realm overlooking Cape Arm to the north.
- Retail and food and beverage outlets retained fronting onto Dudley Road to the south.
- Retained former cinema building potentially to be re-purposed for community use.
- Primary school located adjacent to the key areas of open space.
- Education campus to south west of hospital.
- Establish a mix of houses and flats to offer a range of accommodation to existing and new residents.
- Opportunities for residential moorings on the canal.

Retained buildings

1. Retained former cinema building forms a gateway entrance to the site and could be used for community uses.
2. The curved red brick wall that defines the eastern edge of Halberton Street should be partially retained. A sensitively designed opening within the wall could provide a distinctive and attractive gateway through to Moilliett Street Park for pedestrians and cyclists.
3. The perimeter wall around this parcel is a distinctive feature within the site. The pitched industrial roofs here and red brick wall should be retained as a facade to new build development, with a series of carefully considered access points into the plot.
4. The red brick buildings to the north and south of Cranford Street, including the bridge and canopy between buildings, should be retained if possible, creating a unique setting defined by the sense of enclosure and architectural style that is rooted in the site's history.

PLAN 39
Grove Lane land use

PLAN 40
Grove Lane retained buildings

Corridor project: Smethwick Learning Campus

A collaborative proposal between Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, Aston University, Sandwell College and the University of Wolverhampton will create a new FE/HE university campus in Smethwick.

It will bring together The Learning Works, a Nursing and Midwifery School, development of an Advanced Clinical Practitioner programme, a satellite School of Pharmacy and a Regional Centre of Excellence for Health Professions.

Aston University
BIRMINGHAM UK

Sandwell College
West Bromwich

UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON

Image courtesy of Jim Stephenson

GROVE LANE TO CITY HOSPITAL

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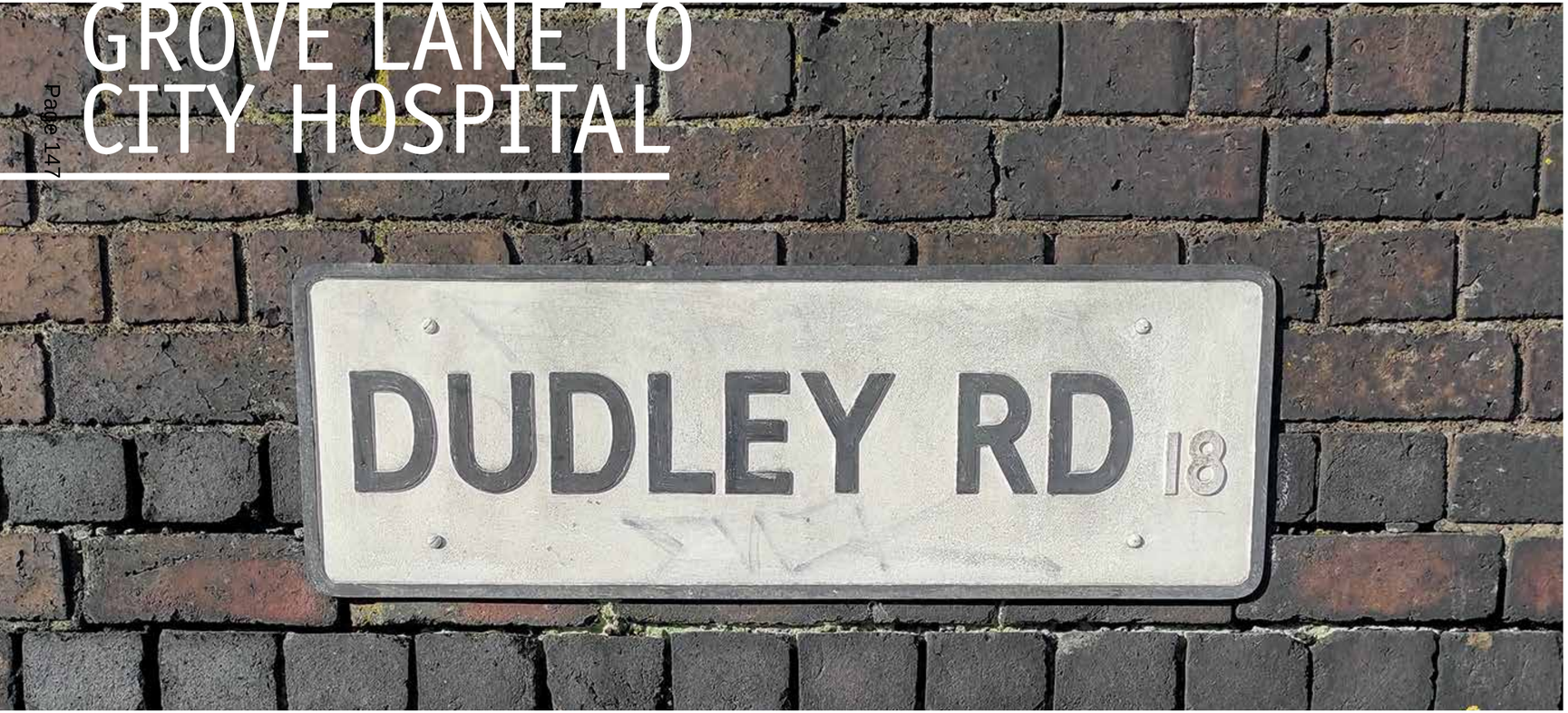

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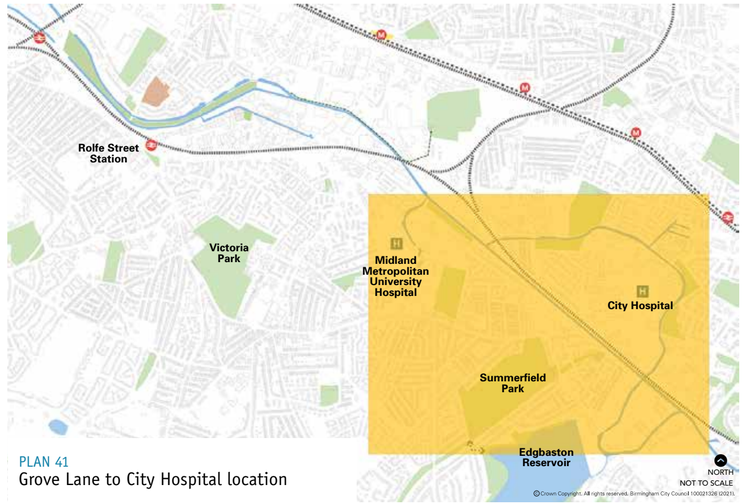
GROVE LANE TO CITY HOSPITAL

4 GROVE LANE TO CITY HOSPITAL

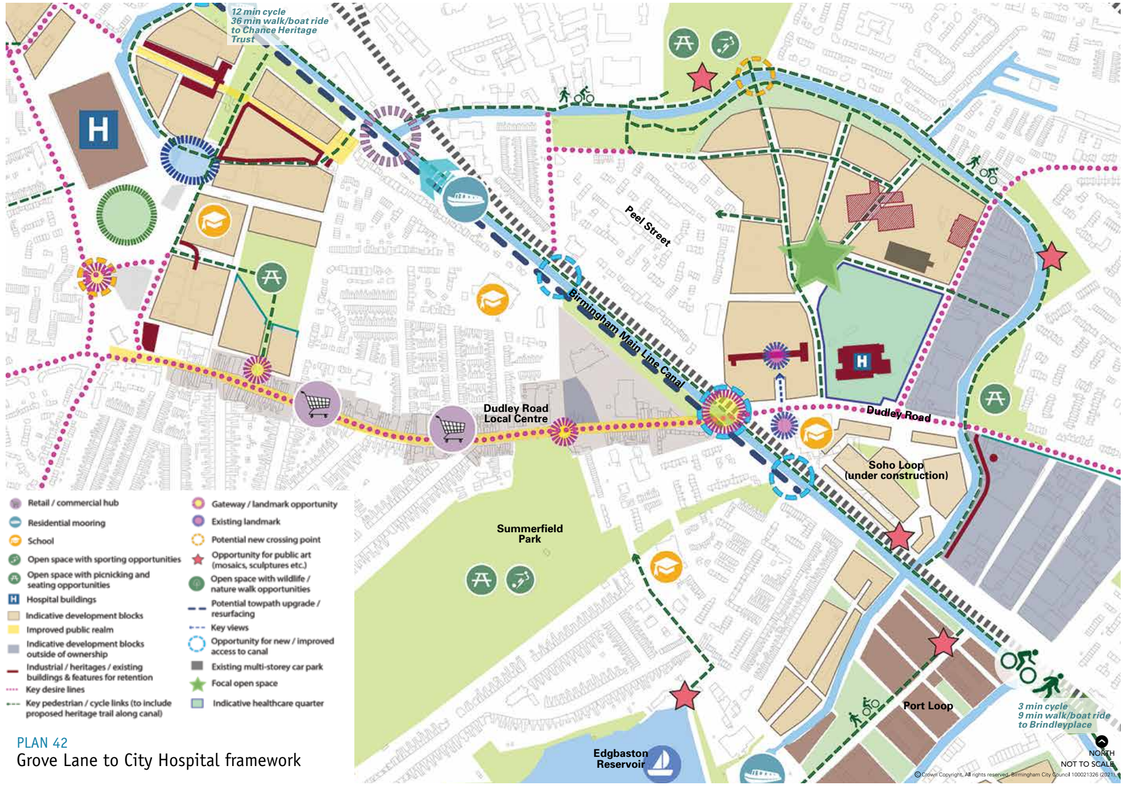
Introduction
The Main Line Canal runs through the middle of this area, and the Old Line forms a loop around the City Hospital site.

Dudley Road is a busy local centre providing a range of shops and services for the surrounding communities. It is locally focused, comprising mainly family-owned Asian and African-Caribbean shops, rather than chains, though it is bookended by Lidl in the east and McDonalds in the west. Summerfield Park and Moilliett Park public parks lie within this area, but they would benefit from improvement.

The Port Loop redevelopment has started to deliver innovative, modern urban housing in a canal setting with high quality open spaces. Soho Loop, off Spring Hill, will deliver more urban housing in the form of flats and town houses, and part of the City Hospital site will become available for residential development in 2022 when the MMUH opens and some services relocate.



PLAN 41
Grove Lane to City Hospital location



PLAN 42
Grove Lane to City Hospital framework

Objectives for the area

Dudley Road local centre

- Use City Council land holdings to improve entrances to Moilliett Street Park.
- Address parking and loading issues on Dudley Road, initially through enforcement and, over the longer term, through a clear parking strategy.
- Improve connections to the centre, enabling communities to reach it easily and safely, particularly by walking and cycling.
- Enable improved access by public transport.

Heritage and canals

- Seek to reflect the area's heritage within the redevelopment of the City Hospital.
- Create better links to the canal pathways.

Development opportunities

- City Hospital.
- Icknield Square: Icknield Square/Freeth Road is outside of the red line planning application boundary for Port Loop, though is part of the Port Loop site allocation. In phasing terms, it is likely to be some time before it is built on, and, perhaps will be a continuation phase after the current permission is built out (15 phases at Icknield Port Loop).
- A linear strip of land at the southern end of Heath Street which has gone over to scrub with immature trees. The front strip to Heath Street is narrow, and a wall exists to separate the land from the canal, which is set in a cutting beyond the wall.
- Western Road and Spring Hill. The Western Road site (3.4ha) currently comprises industrial buildings in fragmented ownership. It is located opposite the City Hospital site on the eastern side of Western Road. The Spring Hill site was assessed in the Birmingham SHLAA 2020 as having capacity for up to 360 dwellings. It is also in fragmented ownership and has potential to be contaminated. Both sites are currently identified as locations for employment growth in policy GA2 of the Birmingham Development Plan. Both sites may be difficult to assemble in the short term and would likely need a business relocation strategy to support redevelopment.

Corridor project: lighting the way

Appropriate lighting in high-use areas along the canal can increase security and encourage use particularly in winter. This could be used between Port Loop and Birmingham City Centre, around the new Hospital and on the Soho Loop around City Hospital.

A closer look: City Hospital

City Hospital is located on the western side of Birmingham city centre and is currently one of the principal hospitals in the city. It sits on a significant site, north of the Dudley Road (A457) and is located on an island created by the Birmingham Canal Old Line and Main Line. The surrounding context is one of change; land to the south around the canal loop (Soho Loop 750 homes/Port Loop 1,150 homes), is coming forward for residential and industrial areas around Western Road and Spring Hill are identified as possible development sites in recent housing land availability assessments.

City Hospital is a typical established hospital site that has developed over many decades and comprises a mix of buildings dating from the Victorian period through to recent times. Whilst the original Victorian buildings have some merit, they are not listed, and there are no other designated heritage assets on site. Parts of the hospital will become redundant when the new hospital opens in 2022.

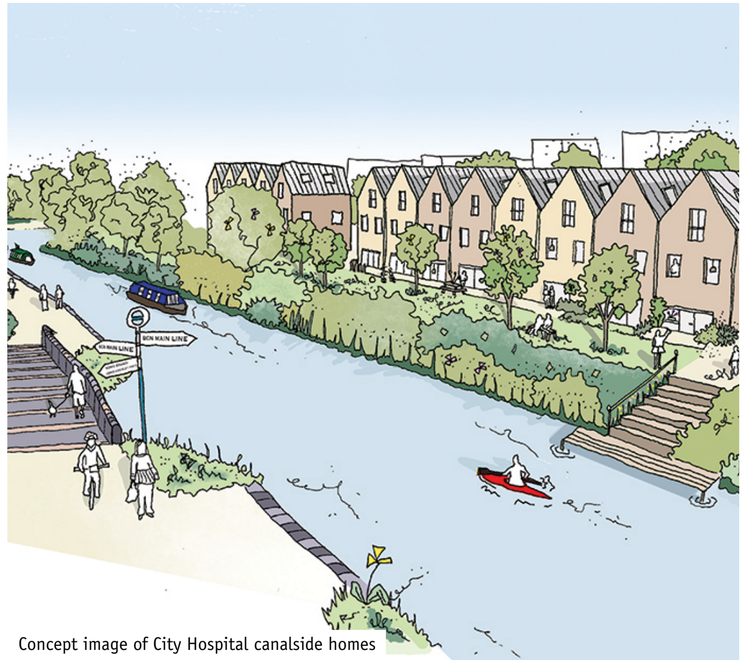
PLAN 43
City Hospital location

The Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust will retain the Eye Hospital and Treatment Centre on the eastern side of the site. This retained land is closest to Western Road. As the site is within a wider area of redevelopment and regeneration, the City Hospital can contribute to changing perceptions of the area, and it benefits both from the good access to the city centre via the A457.

The Greater Icknield Masterplan (2016) envisages the site coming forward for around 750 dwellings, alongside ancillary retail and commercial uses. More recent estimates may see the whole site achieve up to 1000 new homes but this will be dependent on eventual house types and mix.

Because of the location of the site within easy access of the city centre, there is some potential for higher density and higher rise living. The site is notable for its long frontage (but lack of connection) to the Birmingham Old Line canal, and there is opportunity to front water and to improve movement along the canal corridor and make connections to key sites beyond the canal line, such as All Saints Park.

The site also marks a gateway on Dudley Road, marking a transition from the more suburban areas to the west in Smethwick, and the more urban city centre to the east, particularly as Dudley Road crosses the canal and railway lines just to the west of the site.



Concept image of City Hospital canalside homes

Corridor project: activating the canal

Across the corridor the canal has great potential as a transport link, leisure space and wildlife corridor. To activate the canal:

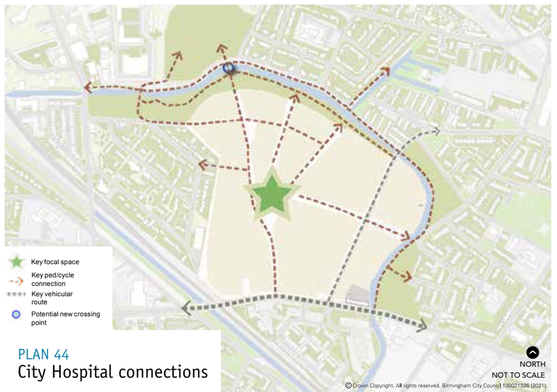
- New buildings need to front it, not turn their backs.
- Opportunities for new and improved accesses to the canal need to be explored in detail.
- Towpaths need to be improved following the Canal & River Trust Towpath Design Guide. There is an opportunity for a continuous dual-use towpath on the southern side of the main line canal.
- Subject to the Canal & River Trust's agreement, recreational use of the water will be encouraged.
- Developers are encouraged to engage with the Canal & River Trust as early as possible to develop detailed proposals.

Connections

- Redevelopment means the site can be opened to and connected physically with surrounding streets (e.g. Norman Street, Carlisle Street) for the first time.
- Direct physical links to the canal should be explored, including the creation of a new canal bridge linking the site along its northern edge, creating improved connections to All Saints Park, subject to further technical design and delivery agreements.
- Frontages and crossings at Dudley Road to be enhanced for pedestrians.
- Internal connections and pathways based upon links at the edge of the site, to ensure straight routes and clear legibility.

Open space

- Redevelopment allows consideration of existing open spaces within the hospital site, and adjacent spaces to plan and manage a clear open space structure.
- Creating a focal point and 'green heart' to the new residential neighbourhood that is accessible and useable by the whole community.
- Green spaces will play an important role in delivering Sustainable Urban Drainage. This should incorporate swales and basins, particularly on lower lying land in the north of the site, where there is an opportunity to create public green space linked to the canal alongside any new residential development.
- Significant trees on the site should be retained and protected to contribute to development character and residential amenity.
- Physical and visual connections can take advantage of off-site open spaces (Norman Street Park, All Saints Park, Clissold Passage)



PLAN 44
City Hospital connections

PLAN 45
City Hospital open space

Frontages

- Key frontages to face main routes to ensure clear definition and overlooking.
- Urban block structure, also emphasising open space network and key views/routes.
- Frontages to work with retained buildings within the NHS estate.
- Frontages overlooking the canal. Opportunities for direct waterfront housing should be provided where the development faces New Spring St N to the north east.
- Development adjacent to existing housing must respect the privacy and amenity of these homes by either siding or backing onto their rear property boundaries.

Retained buildings

- It is understood that the Local Planning Authority wishes to see the Gothic Infirmary frontage building facing Dudley Road, which is a local landmark with strong local historic value, retained, clearing away later additions. Retention and conversion will be subject to technical feasibility and financial viability.

PLAN 46
City Hospital frontages

PLAN 47
City Hospital retained buildings

Views

- Emphasis on short and longer views to and through the site, particularly making connections to any determined key buildings and spaces within and outside the site.
- Glimpsed view of hospital building/health provision from Dudley Road for wayfinding.
- Distinctive views towards St. Patrick's Catholic Church.
- Includes relationships between any retained buildings, views into the site from Spring Hill, views to adjacent spaces and across the canal.

Massing/land use

- The site will comprise a mix of apartment buildings and houses. A graduated approach to density is appropriate.
- Health care uses concentrated in a cluster on the south eastern corner.
- High density residential appropriate surrounding the health care cluster and on the Dudley Road frontage.
- Residential uses to the western and northern edges; higher density around the central core and to the waterfront, facing outward, lower densities moving outwardly to the western edges in light of the scale of neighbouring existing housing.
- Area to the east of Western Road has a longer-term development opportunity for housing but this will need to be managed in such a way not to displace the existing business needs. It is this long-term aspiration that is shown on the principles diagram above.

PLAN 48
City Hospital views

PLAN 49
City Hospital massing/land use

Icknield Square

Icknield Square is located on the eastern edge of the corridor, adjacent to Ladywood and a relatively easy walk from Birmingham City Centre. This site, of around 3ha, is surrounded by the Port Loop development.

The site is currently occupied by a two small groups of industrial units. Whilst much of the waterfront land is currently vacant, the late Victorian Biddle and Webb buildings fronting Icknield Square have heritage value and significant potential to contribute to place-making, especially when integrated with high quality new architecture.

Given its location and context, a residential-led, mixed use development would be appropriate for this site. The Victorian buildings fronting Icknield Square would also be suitable for commercial uses.

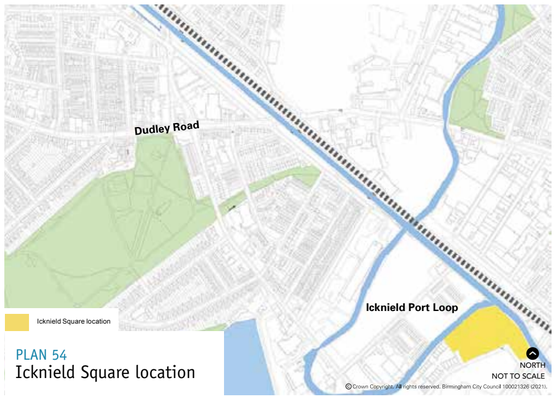
Heath Street (south eastern end)

The strip of land at the south-eastern end of Heath Street between the road and the canal may provide an opportunity for development.

The land has gone over to scrub and has several immature trees along its whole length. The area is prone to some fly-tipping and litter.

Development may be possible to improve the general environment and allow frontage to both the street and the canal. If this was possible, a residential development may be suitable, but the location of the site close to the Dudley Road centre may lend itself to a non-residential use.

There is no public access over the site to the canal, but nearby Northbrook Street may offer some inspiration for short term treatment of the strip to either bring environmental improvement or possible access to the towpath.



PLAN 54
Icknield Square location

PLAN 55
Heath Street location

TRANSPORT STRATEGY

5

TRANSPORT STRATEGY

5 TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Transport baseline
The area of interest for transport is wider than the core framework area, as it covers the networks and facilities that enable the movement of people and goods to and from the core area, not just within.

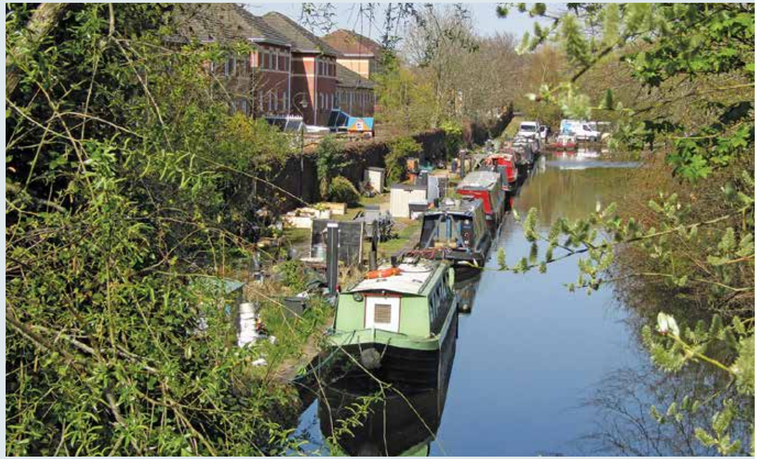
The area has a reasonably dense network of connections, but there are numerous challenges in respect of the current operation of the transport network in the corridor and its ability to accommodate future demands, including new development. These include:

- Significant peak period congestion on the principal highway network.
- Capacity constraints for the rail corridors in the peaks, in terms of the number of paths for local stopping services and of the length of trains (due to the shortness of platforms).
- Passenger accessibility constraints at Rolfe Street and Galton Bridge stations.
- All Metro stops being more than a 15-minute walk from any part of the core area, and most being accessible only from the north of the rail/ Metro corridor.
- Bus journey times and reliability are adversely affected by general traffic congestion and the lack of priority.
- The canal towpaths are in variable states of repair, physically remote from homes and other trip generators (e.g. shops, schools and workplaces), have a limited number of access points - fewer still that are easily accessible, and are not lit.
- Conditions for cycling on-street are generally very poor across the core and wider areas, with little to no separation from motor traffic.
- Walking conditions within the core area, and between it and the Metro stops to the north are similarly poor.

Research undertaken to inform the emerging Key Route Network (KRN) Action Plans revealed that 41% of journeys under 2km in the West Midlands are undertaken by car. It also found that 77% of rush-hour drivers say they would not swap modes, despite increasing congestion.

These findings go to the heart of what the Transport Strategy for the corridor needs to address. Making all alternatives to car travel appreciably more attractive is essential if new trips are to be accommodated, and old trips re-moded in line with the over-arching policy priorities of Sandwell, Birmingham, TfWM, WMCA, other transport agencies and the Government.

“Making all alternatives to car travel appreciably more attractive is essential if new trips are to be accommodated”



"The Transport Strategy comprises a large number of schemes, most of which are designed to make walking, cycling and public transport significantly more attractive"

Strategy

In the context both of the issues relating to the current transport networks in the corridor and of the challenges set out within national, regional and local policy documents, it is clear that the Transport Strategy must embrace the widest possible range of schemes and initiatives aimed at enabling a substantial shift in the movement of people and goods to walking, cycling and public transport and away from cars and other motor vehicles.

The scale and urgency of the changes needed are daunting but should also help focus thinking and action in bringing forward a co-ordinated package of measures for implementation over the next 10 years. This challenge is not, of course, restricted to this corridor, and all the work undertaken as part of this strategy will require to be integrated with the wider transport strategies and programmes of TfWM, Sandwell and Birmingham.

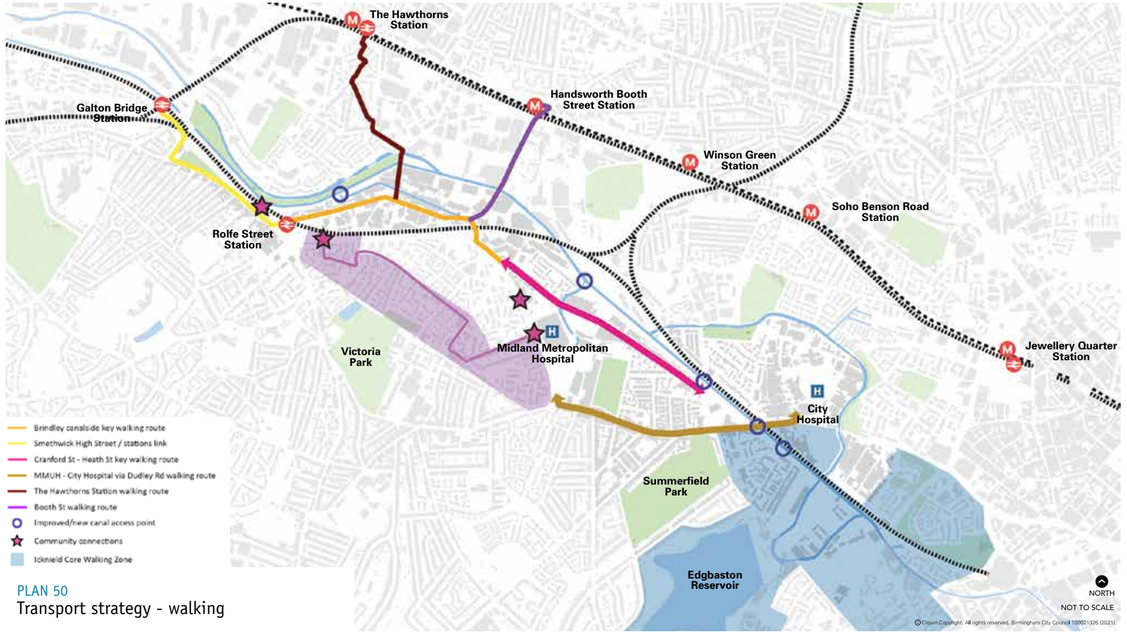
There will be temporary measures implemented in the corridor as part of the 2022 Commonwealth Games Transport Plan. The draft Commonwealth Games Transport Plan, subject to public consultation, sets out transport proposals for access to the Sandwell Aquatics Centre. These include shuttle buses from The Hawthorns rail station and walk routes from Smethwick Rolfe Street and Galton Bridge stations. There will also be a temporary Games Route Network for travel movements of officials and athletes during the Games.

The Transport Strategy comprises a large number of schemes, most of which are designed to make walking, cycling and public transport significantly more attractive than at present, and thereby both to provide a better level of service to people who already uses these modes and, critically, to make credible the substantial mode shift from car travel (and to a lesser extent from the use of motorised goods vehicles). The full range of schemes proposed is listed in Table 1, with the broad categories of measures summarised as follows.

Walking

Packages of measures for identified key routes, as pilots/exemplars/templates for future work throughout the area. Adapted to the local context, these packages will feature most or all of the following.

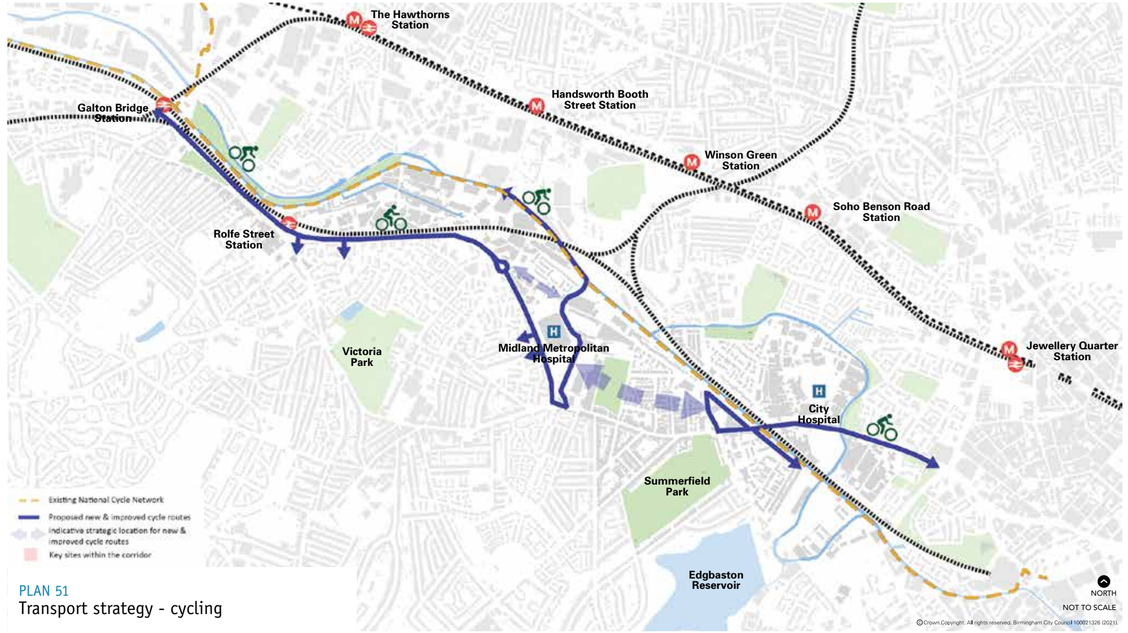
- Improving footway condition.
- De-cluttering/widening footways.
- Removing footway parking.
- Narrowing bellmouth junctions.
- New ‘green man’ signal stages.
- New formal/informal crossings.
- Signage/wayfinding measures.



PLAN 50
Transport strategy - walking

Cycling

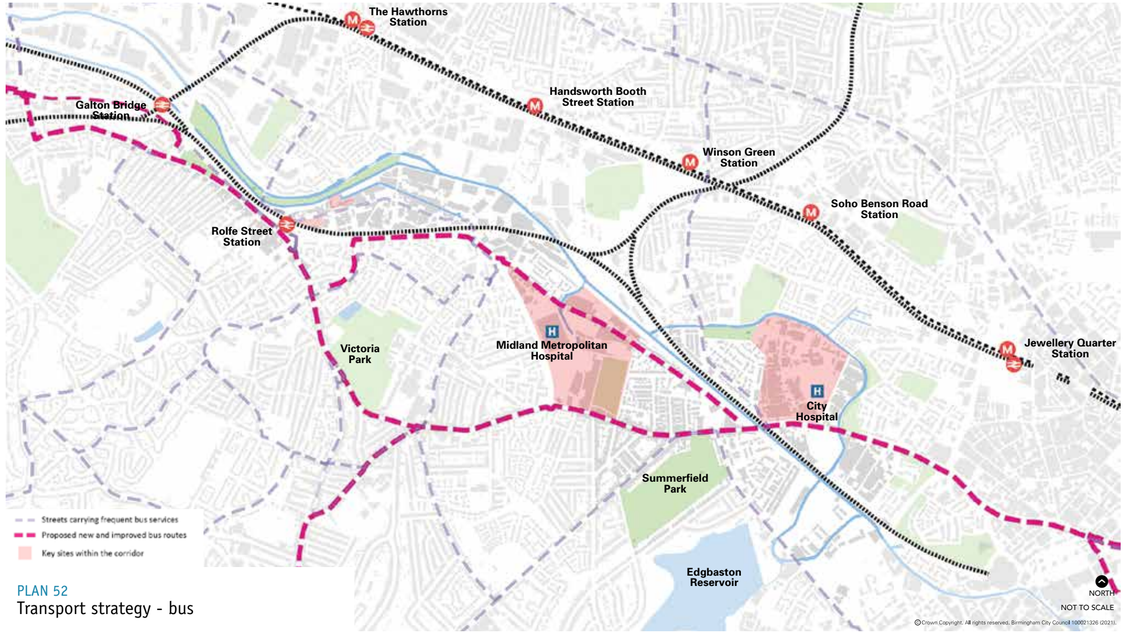
A focus on new protected cycleways on key routes, with supporting traffic calming and other measures on other roads and local streets. There will also be supporting measures such as secure cycle parking and cycle hire. Scheme designs will need to be in accord with new Government design guidance - LTN 1/20.



PLAN 51
Transport strategy - cycling

Bus

Enhanced bus priority on the key routes, along with possible new services and improvements to existing services, such as in connection with MMUH or justified by demand associated with other new development.



PLAN 52
Transport strategy - bus

Metro

Focus on improving walk routes to/from and at-stop-immediate public realm and access improvements.

Rail

Access improvements at Rolfe Street, Galton Bridge and Hawthorns stations, including the station-immediate public realm. Significant changes in local rail capacity in the longer term are subject to review of the current West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy. This review is also considering the potential for new stations across the West Midlands, including the Dudley Road corridor, and will take into account longer-term rail capacity increases.

Highways and parking

The focus of these measures is on management, not the creation of new capacity. Specific congestion management proposals will come through the Key Route Network Action Plan for Route 14, and include the Grove Lane/Soho Way/Cranford Street junction. The management/ enforcement of parking in high street locations (Smethwick High Street and Dudley Road) and trials of footway parking exclusion zones are core proposals.

Supporting measures

These include several innovative measures to enable mode shift - for the movement of goods as well as of people - and will often involve working in partnership with third party service providers.

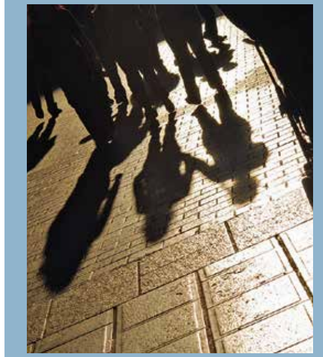


TABLE 1
Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Transport Schemes

Ref	Mode	Scheme description	Status/Funding/Programme	Link refs
1	W,C	Smethwick Connected Phase 1 (Smethwick High Street)	Near completion (by June 2021)	11
2	W,C	Smethwick Connected Phase 2 (High Street-Rolfe Street link)	Town Investment Plan (TIP)-funding confirmed, subject to full business case. Due in 2021/22 FY. But subject to works at Rolfe Street connected with the Commonwealth Games.	
3	W,C	Smethwick Connected Phase 3 (Rolfe Street to Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH) via Windmill Eye)	TIP-funding confirmed. Intended 2022/23	15
4	W,C	Smethwick Connected Phase 4 (to Cape Hill r/a)	TIP-funding confirmed. Intended 2022/24	21
5	W,C	Smethwick Connected Phase 5 (Cape Arm link, MMUH-Mainline)	TIP-funding confirmed. Intended 2024. May be earlier, if Canal & River Trust can expedite. Canal & River Trust, Sandwell Council (SMBC) and maybe NHS are the only land-holders.	
6	W,C	Birmingham City Council (BCC) Dudley Road Major Scheme	Design development. For Levelling Up Fund (LUF) funding.	
7	W,C	Cranford Street-Heath Street Cycle Route	Sandwell Council preliminary concept. Concept design development in 21/22 with funding bid for Intra City Transport Settlement (ICTS) in 22/23 or after.	8
8	W	Cranford Street-Heath Street Key Walking Route Package (KWRP)	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	7
9	W,C	Dudley Road Active Travel Measures Scheme - A457/Cape Hill r/a to A4040	Linked to Cross-City Bus Package 3 (West). Space reallocation and improved management/enforcement of on-street parking. Also related to Key Route Network (KRN) Route 14 Action Plan.	10, 27, 42
10	W	MMUH to City Hospital via Dudley Road KWRP	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	9, 27, 42
11	W	Smethwick High Street: Galton Bridge Station to Rolfe Street Station KWRP	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	
12	W	Brindley Canalside: Rolfe Street Station to Grove Lane r/a KWRP	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	15
13	W	Brindley Canalside to Hawthorns Station Walking Route Package (SWRP)	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	
14	W	MMUH to Handsworth Booth Street SWRP	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	
15	W	Sandwell Core Walking Zone 2 (Rolfe Street Station to MMUH direct)	LCWIP/Cycling and Walking funding.	3, 12
16	W	Icknield Core Walking Zone - various local walking route improvements	LCWIP/Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	
17	W	Community Connection: New, accessible Smethwick High Street to Brasshouse Lane footbridge	Proposal. Cycling and Walking funding; possibly ICTS.	
18	W,C	Community Connection: Surface crossing of A457 Tollhouse Way between Lynton Ave & Cross St	Proposal. Local funding or part of wider 'Community Connections Programme' funded through Walking and Cycling pot.	
19	W,C	Community Connection: Surface crossing of A457 Grove Lane between MMUH and e.g. Woodlands St	Proposal. See Ref 19.	
20	C	Icknield Area (62) Local Cycle Routes	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan/Cycling and Walking funding.	
21	W,C	Canal towpath improvements, including 'dualling'	Canal & River Trust Proposal. Canal & River Trust/ NHS/Councils funding.	4, 22
22	W,C	'Heroes Way'	Proposal by partners. Cycling and walking funding.	21
23	W,C	Improved Canal Connection: Winson Green Bridge (Winson Green Rd steps north of Heath St)	Proposal. Walking and Cycling funding in partnership with Canal & River Trust.	
24	W,C	Improved Canal Connection: Northbrook Street steps/ramps	Proposal. Walking and Cycling funding in partnership with Canal & River Trust.	

Ref	Mode	Scheme description	Status/Funding/Programme	Link refs
25	W,C	New Canal Connection: Lee Bridge (Dudley Road near Northbrook Street)	Proposal. Walking and Cycling funding in partnership with Canal & River Trust.	
26	W	New Canal Connection: Engine Arm Aqueduct to Rolfe Street/ Enterprise Centre	Proposal. Walking and Cycling funding in partnership with Canal & River Trust.	
27	B	Cross-City Bus Package 3 (West) - Routes 82 and 87	Better Deal for Bus users funding; on-site 2022	9, 10, 42
28	B	MMUH Bus Service Modification and Bus Stop Package (Travel Plan)	NHS as developer contributions	30
29	B	X7 Bus via Cranford Street and Heath Street	Proposal. Reinstatement of previous short-lived service. Financial support needed.	28
30	B	Additional/amended services on existing routes (e.g. 80A, 11)	As required	
31	W,M,R	Hawthorns Station public realm scheme	Proposal. ICTS/Walking and Cycling funding.	
32	W,M	Handsworth Booth Street Stop public realm scheme	Proposal. ICTS/Walking and Cycling funding.	
33	W,M	Winson Green Outer Circle Stop public realm scheme	Proposal. ICTS/Walking and Cycling funding.	
34	W,M	Soho Benson Road Stop public realm scheme	Proposal. ICTS/Walking and Cycling funding.	
35	R	Rolfe Street Station Access for All scheme	Committed, funded Network Rail Access for All scheme that will be delivered in 2022.	
36	R	Galton Bridge station improvements	WM Stations (WMSA) Alliance Proposal	
37	R	Train capacity increases: longer trains/platform extensions	2018-47 Rail Investment Strategy (under review)	38
38	R	New Dudley Road railway station	Mayoral proposal.	37
39	MV	A457/B4135/B4136 Grove Lane/Soho Way/ Cranford Street Junction	Options development in progress. HIF funding now lapsed, so ICTS funding.	4
40	MV	Key Route Network 14 Action Plan	In development. ICTS	
41	P	Smethwick High Street parking management scheme	Proposal. SBMC/Walking and Cycling funding	11
42	P	Dudley Road parking management scheme	Proposal. BCC/SMBC funding.	9, 10, 27
43	P	Footway parking management pilot schemes (see Key Walking Route Packages)	Proposal. BCC/SMBC joint approach with TfWM support.	8, 10-14
44	O	Last-mile logistics pilot (MMUH; Smethwick High Street; Dudley Road)	Proposal. To be developed. TfWM lead.	
45	O	Electronic Vehicle charging programme	Existing proposal. BCC/SMBC.	
46	O	Rolfe Street Station Mobility Hub	Proposal. SMBC, WMSA, TfWM.	
47	O	Local Mobility Hub Network pilot	Proposal. TfWM lead.	
48	O	Wider E-cycle/scooter share pilot	Proposal. TfWM lead.	
49	O	West Midlands Bike Share	Existing proposal. TfWM lead.	
50	O	Corridor MaaS Pilot Scheme	Proposal, TfWM lead. ICTS.	

DELIVERY

6

DELIVERY

6 DELIVERY

In the Rolfe Street area a number of the sites are owned by Sandwell Council and redevelopment in this area has gained momentum through the successful Town Investment Fund (TIF) bid. The Council will drive forward proposals for transforming the area over the longer term alongside public sector partners and private sector landowners and interests.

The Grove Lane Masterplan, which has been prepared alongside this framework, provides a more detailed delivery strategy for this part of the corridor. Sandwell Council has attracted funding through the TIF to help instigate its redevelopment. The public sector has some land ownership within the area and these sites will be instrumental in delivering early phases of development and acting as a catalyst for the wider regeneration.

At the south eastern end of the corridor, redevelopment is underway at Port Loop and Soho Loop. Homes England and Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust are developing a detailed masterplan for City Hospital setting out how it can be redeveloped once parts of the hospital facilities are relocated to the MMUH. The masterplan is supporting a future planning application for the site, following which Homes England will be seeking to bring forward development of the site with a private sector developer(s).

Delivery of the vision will take time and will require the joint working of all of the delivery partners. The framework and masterplan now provide a coherent and consistent basis for doing this which provides greater clarity and a basis for decision making, alongside providing a tool to engage and collaborate with third party landowners, developers and investors.

Delivering the transport strategy

Implementing the Transport Strategy is critical for delivering the wider vision for the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor; and funding is critical for implementation.

The number and range of proposed schemes, and the importance of a co-ordinated approach in bringing them forward points to the strong desirability of developing, as far as possible, a single package of proposals for funding through as small a number of large pots as possible.

Irrespective of the specific source(s) of funding, it makes sense for TfWM, Sandwell and Birmingham to work together on the business case for a large package of measures, which would then be subject to WMCA's assurance process, rather than for numerous business cases for single schemes or smaller packages to be developed by individual authorities. As part of this approach, all individual Key Walking Route Package schemes and possibly Station Walking Route Package schemes will be considered for development as a phased single Key Walking Routes Programme, as part of this wider corridor approach.

The Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) will continue into 2022/23, but it may now be too late to make new bids for funding from this source. However, 2022/23 is also the year that the five-year Intra-City Transport Settlement (ICTS) becomes active, and it is hoped that this will provide £700m-£1bn of capital funding for transport projects in the West Midlands. Although details of the ICTS process are yet to be clarified by the Treasury/ Department of Transport, the timing gives TfWM, Birmingham and Sandwell enough - but not too much - time to prepare a cohesive package of interventions for the corridor to be implemented prior to 2030. Developing a large package of transport proposals for the study area is also in line with TfWM's current thinking in terms of focusing much transport investment on six Inclusive Growth Corridors, of which Smethwick-Icknield is one.

In addition, to the ICTS, it seems likely that additional major funding could also be accessed through the Levelling Up Fund (LUF). The LUF has a focus on regeneration rather than specifically transport, but schemes in high street and employment areas should qualify in principle. Birmingham City Council will bid for LUF for its Dudley Road Major Scheme.

Other identified funding sources for schemes covered by the Transport Strategy include the government's £2bn Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy, with an announcement on the next tranche of delivery funding expected in June.

In addition to the £20m of government funding that the West Midlands has been allocated for cross-city bus route priority measures, future funding for better bus services should be available through the new National Bus Strategy for England (March 2021). In connection with this, TfWM, Sandwell and Birmingham will need to work together to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan by October 2021 and have an Enhanced Partnership in place by March 2022. The West Midlands is already close to concluding the details of its Enhanced Partnership, so is ahead of the curve in this regard.

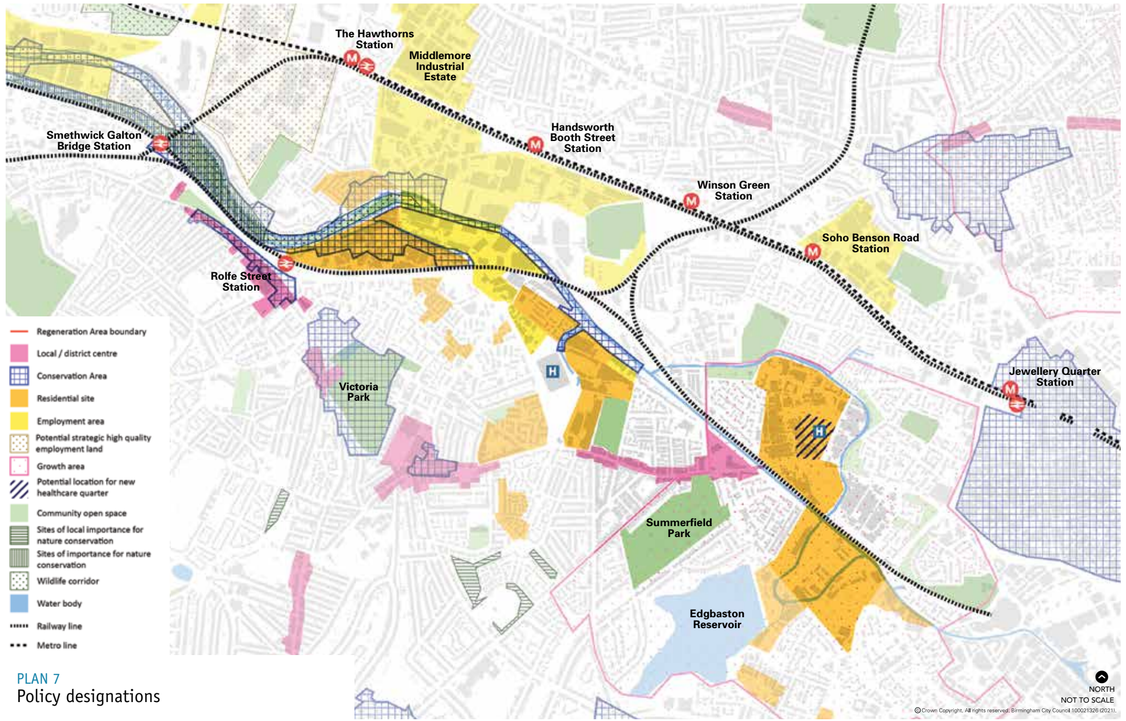
As mentioned above, funding for rail projects will be subject to the review of the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy.

> *"Implementing the Transport Strategy is critical for delivering the wider vision for the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor"*

APPENDIX

A

APPENDIX



PLAN 7
Policy designations

Sandwell Council policy

Black Country Core Strategy (2011)
The Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision, objectives and strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026. It identifies regeneration corridors of which Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick is one.

Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (2012)
The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (SADDPD) adds further detail to the Core Strategy's regeneration corridors. The plan states that the focus for new housing within the next few years will be within the Smethwick area of the Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick corridor (corridor 12). The plan identifies the following sub-areas within corridor 12 that also lie in part within the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor: Area 7 Smethwick High Street and Environs, Area 8 North Smethwick Canalside, and Area 9 Cranford Street. Areas 8 and 9 are identified on the policies map as 'long term residential'.

Area 9 Cranford Street includes two sites which broadly correspond to the Grove Lane site. The policy table says the following of the Grove Lane site: "Masterplan prepared for site to include residential and Business B1 uses. Will need to be done in phased manner. Some occupiers will need relocating.". Area 9 is listed as a housing allocation to which SADDPD Policy SAD1 applies. SAD1 supports residential development and states that other uses appropriate for residential areas, such as health facilities, community facilities and local shops, may be acceptable where there is a gap in service provision and where they can be integrated successfully into the residential environment.

Smethwick High Street, a designated district centre, is also within corridor 12 and the SADDPD identifies opportunities to improve the centre through redevelopment of the Tollgate Precinct for town centre uses and to develop land between St Paul's Road and Tollhouse Way for a health centre and retail uses.

Sandwell Residential Design Guide SPD (2014)
Sets design principles for development.

Black Country Plan (emerging)
The Black Country Plan, which will replace the Black Country Core Strategy and the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, is currently being prepared.

Birmingham City Council policy

Birmingham Development Plan (2017)
The Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) is the principal planning policy document for Birmingham covering the period to 2031. Most of the part of the corridor lying within Birmingham City Council's administrative area is designated by BDP Policy GA2 as within the Greater Icknield Growth Area.

Policy GA2 allocates Icknield Port Loop, Soho Loop and City Hospital as residential development sites.

The supporting policy text for the City Hospital site states "Following the relocation of the City Hospital (note that not all of the hospital facilities are moving, the Birmingham Treatment Centre, BMEC and other services will be retained) to the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Sandwell the site will be redeveloped for a new mix of living and local shopping facilities, with some medical facilities retained.".

The supporting text to Policy GA2 states that "New family-based models of urban living will be explored and will be supported by a full range of community facilities, local shopping and working opportunities, and better-quality streets, parks, squares and gardens. Connections by public transport, walking and cycling will be enhanced including links to the City Centre utilising the canal network and existing primary routes.". Improvements to Dudley Road shopping centre, which is listed as a local centre in BDP Policy TP21 (The network and hierarchy of centres), are also identified as needed.

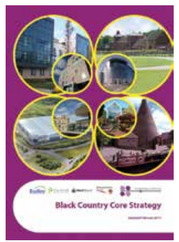
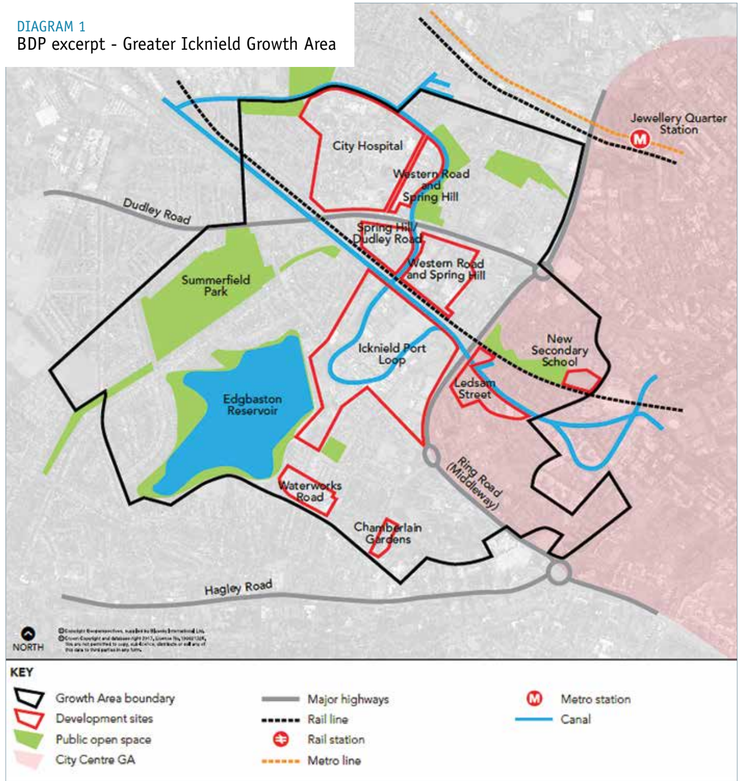


DIAGRAM 1
BDP excerpt - Greater Icknield Growth Area



Development Management in Birmingham DPD (emerging)

The plan supplements the BDP and includes additional policies.

Greater Icknield Masterplan (2016)

Adopted a year before the BDP, the masterplan provided evidence to support BDP policy on the Growth Icknield Growth Area and identified development principles for the BDP site allocations. Once approved, The Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Development Framework will replace the Greater Icknield Masterplan.

Future planning policy

Preparation of the Birmingham Plan (BDP update) is now underway with details of the latest plan-making timetable available in the council's Local Development Scheme available on its website.

Birmingham Supplementary Planning Documents

A number of SPDs have been adopted by Birmingham City Council and would apply to development in the Birmingham part of the corridor. The Birmingham Design Guide is of particular relevance.

Overarching objectives

Inclusive growth

Inclusive growth is an important agenda across the West Midlands. The West Midlands Combined Authority has defined inclusive growth as: "A more deliberate and socially purposeful model of economic growth - measured not only by how fast or aggressive it is; but also by how well it is created and shared across the whole population and place, and by the social and environmental outcomes it realises for our people.". This is reflected in the West Midlands Inclusive Growth Framework (2018).

Sandwell Council is giving effect to these objectives through its Inclusive Economy Deal (2020) which represents the start of a new partnership between Sandwell Council, businesses, residents, the voluntary and community sector and Sandwell's anchor institutions. The Midland Metropolitan University Hospital and surrounding regeneration is highlighted in the deal. This recognises the opportunity for the new hospital as an anchor institution to drive inclusive growth in the area.

Net zero

In Birmingham and Sandwell, the two largest contributors to carbon emissions and residential buildings and road transport. This framework provides an opportunity to contribute to reducing future emissions from these sources.

In summer 2019 the West Midlands Combined Authority set a target of the region becoming new zero carbon by 2041. The WM2041 Plan proposes a range of actions towards this target, including active travel and cleaner transport, zero carbon homes, tree planting and energy devolution. The plan also links the net zero target to inclusive growth, seeking to change the economy without leaving anyone behind.

Sandwell Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020-2041 sets out Sandwell's plan for achieving the 2041 target. This includes action plans for important sources of emissions, including the built environment and transport. The built environment action plan includes a commitment to undertaking studies on the development of heat networks. The transport action plan seeks the implementation of highway measures and transport facilities that fully accommodate and promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking, making journeys by such methods easier, faster and safer, alongside measures to discourage car use. In also promotes the Introduction of facilities at developments through the planning system to increase use of shared and cleaner transport modes and reduce car parking spaces. The resilience and adaption and natural capital action plans focus around enhancing and creating green spaces.

Birmingham City Council is seeking to achieve net zero carbon by 2030, ahead of the wider West Midlands target. The council's publication Route to Zero Call to Action (2021) mirrors Sandwell's focus on emissions from residential buildings, in particular municipal housing, and transport. The Birmingham Transport Plan will be an import focus for action to reduce transport emissions.

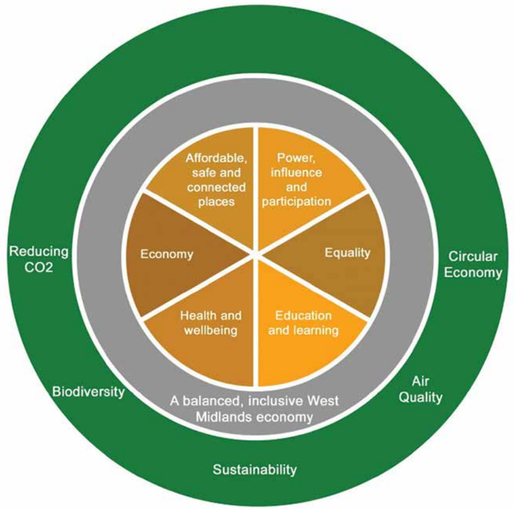


DIAGRAM 2
WM Inclusive Growth Framework

Transport policy

In April 2021, the UK government announced its intention to set the world's most ambitious climate change target into law to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This was the latest of several government initiatives in recent times that reflect the growing urgency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generally, with emissions from transport being a focus.

In March 2020, the government published 'Decarbonising Transport (Setting the Challenge)' in which the Secretary of State for Transport wrote that "Transport has a huge role to play in the economy reaching net zero. The scale of the challenge demands a step change in both the breadth and scale of ambition and we have a duty to act quickly and decisively to reduce emissions."

This was followed up, in July 2020, with the publication of 'Gear Change - A Bold Vision for Walking and Cycling', which stated that "We want - and need - to see a step-change in cycling and walking in the coming years. The challenge is huge, but the ambition is clear. We have a unique opportunity to transform the role cycling and walking can play in our transport system, and get England moving differently".

The government's sense of urgency is further demonstrated by the fact that Point 5 of its 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (November 2020)' is green public transport, cycling and walking. "We must increase the share of journeys taken by public transport, cycling and walking. We will therefore accelerate the transition to more active and sustainable transport by investing in rail and bus services, and in measures to help pedestrians and cyclists".

The urgent need to decarbonise transport is one of the reasons why WMCA, TfWM, Birmingham and Sandwell have all formally declared or otherwise acknowledged that there is a Climate Emergency, and this is reflected in a range of policy documents, several of which pre-date such declarations and respond to other key policy priorities including, economic growth, the provision of new homes, public health and social and economic inclusion.

TfWM's Movement for Growth strategic transport plan takes into account all these challenges, stating specifically that "local air quality needs to be improved... transport related ambient noise needs to be reduced... (and that) the West Midlands will play its full part in reducing carbon emissions in line with the national target". As noted above, that target has now changed significantly - from an 80% reduction of 1990 levels by 2050 to a 78% reduction by 2035.

In the same vein, TfWM's new draft Local Transport Plan Green Paper entitled Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands notes that "Significant challenges remain in tackling the defining issues of our time, such as climate change, air quality, our health, and our economic recovery from the pandemic (but that) by thinking and acting differently we can create a place where transport improves the opportunities available to all".

The West Midlands Cycling Charter sets out the strategic approach to increasing cycling in the West Midlands, with a target of a 5% mode share of all journeys by cycling by 2023, and 10% by 2033.

The foreword to the draft Birmingham Transport Plan is explicit about the need for and benefits of changing how we move: "Over-dependence on private cars is bad for the health of ourselves and our families, bad for our communities and bad for business as measured by the millions of pounds of lost productivity caused by congestion. Ultimately, it is bad for the future because of the very significant damage caused by vehicle emissions and their impact on climate change. The more journeys we take by walking and cycling, the more we will improve air quality and our health and the more we will reduce congestion. For longer journeys, buses, trams and trains will be the backbone of a new, go-anywhere transport system."

The Council further emphasises the pressing need for radical change in the Introduction to Our Future City Plan: "The urgent need for action to tackle climate change has been set out through the City Council's ambitious commitment to eliminate carbon emissions through the 'Route to Zero' initiative. Birmingham aims to become a global leader in tackling climate change, meeting the challenges head-on and grasping the opportunities of being at the forefront of a green revolution."

For Sandwell's part, Action Plan 3 (Transport) of its Climate Change Strategy 2020-2041 has these themes: promotion of sustainable travel; develop a low carbon transport system; and planning policies to support sustainable transport choices. On developing a low carbon transport system, the Strategy couldn't be clearer in describing the first of the actions that the Council can take as being to "implement highway measures and transport facilities that fully accommodate and promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking, making journeys by such methods easier, faster and safer, alongside measures to discourage car use".

Throughout all these documents referenced, and others, there is the explicit or implicit juxtaposition of "the need for change" with "the challenge is huge". This neatly encapsulates the scale and importance of the task faced in developing a Transport Strategy for the Smethwick-Birmingham Corridor.

> *"Accelerate the transition to more active and sustainable transport by investing in rail and bus services, and in measures to help pedestrians and cyclists"*

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Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Birmingham City Council

West Midlands Combined Authority

Homes England

NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust

Canal & River Trust
Making life better by water

Tibbalds planning and urban design

Aspinall Verdi property regeneration consultants

urban movement

SMETHWICK TO BIRMINGHAM CORRIDOR

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

SEPTEMBER 2021

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SMETHWICK TO BIRMINGHAM

Grove Lane MASTERPLAN

DRAFT DOCUMENT 2021

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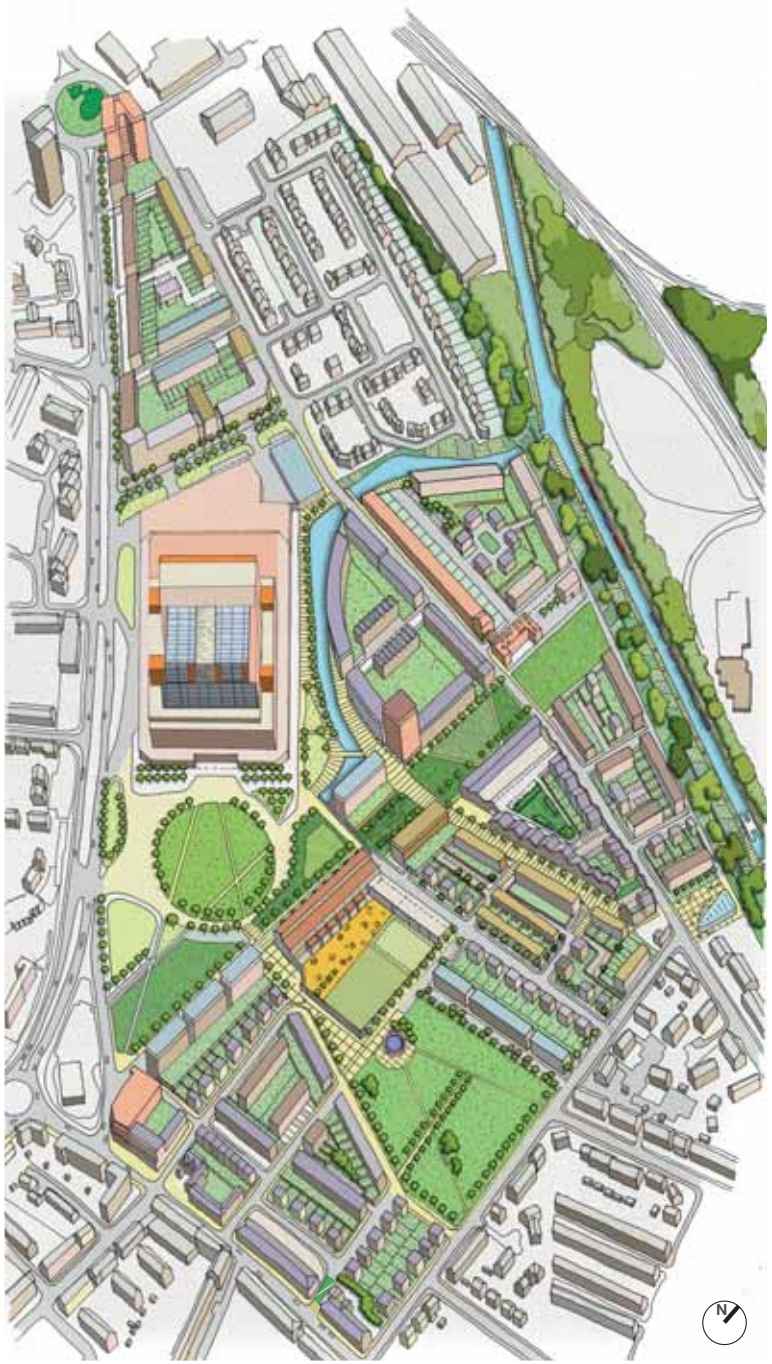


Fig. 0.1 - Grove Lane Illustrative Masterplan

The Delivery Partners

Sandwell Council is leading on the preparation of the development framework and the Grove Lane masterplan in collaboration with the other partners. The Council is the largest Black Country authority and is pursuing an ambitious and proactive inclusive growth agenda.

Birmingham City Council is leading of the preparation of the development framework in collaboration with the other partners. Birmingham is the largest local authority in Europe and has an extensive track record of delivering large-scale urban renewal.

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is the combined authority for the West Midlands. The authority works collaboratively to deliver on its priorities including housing and regeneration, productivity and skills, economy and environment. WMCA is working with partners on the redevelopment of the area around the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital.

Transport for West Midlands co-ordinates investment to improve the region's transport infrastructure and create a fully integrated, safe and secure network.

Homes England is the government's housing accelerator. It is focussed on making possible the new Homes England needs, helping to improve neighbourhoods and grow communities. Homes England is working with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust to bring forward the redevelopment of the City Hospital.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust operates City Hospital and its new hospital, the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, is under construction. The trust is the largest employer in the corridor and is committed to improving the lives of local people, maintaining an outstanding reputation for teaching and education, and to embedding innovation and research.

Canal & River Trust is the charity that looks after and brings life to 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales, including the Birmingham Main Line Canal within the corridor. The Trust is working to transform canals into spaces where local people want to spend time and feel better.

Fig. 0.2 - Engine Arm Moorings, Smethwick

INTRODUCTION

1

INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Smethwick to Birmingham corridor is Birmingham and Sandwell's historic canal district, stretching from The Roundhouse just west of Brindley Place to Galton Bridge in Smethwick. It is the historic link between Birmingham and the Black Country and a cradle of the industrial revolution. Today the corridor is one of the most significant areas of brownfield urban renewal in Europe.

At the heart of this corridor, the Grove Lane area of Sandwell Council is the location of the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH), which will open in 2022. With the surrounding land, it is one of the major intervention sites in Sandwell. Alongside this masterplan, a high level strategic framework has been prepared to guide development across this area.

The Grove Lane area, which takes in land between Grove Lane, Cranford Street, Heath Street and the Main Line Canal, has been awarded Housing Zone status with potential to deliver approximately 800 new homes over almost 18 ha of brownfield land. Some of these have already been provided with approximately 140 constructed north of Cranford Street.

The development of the land parcels should be comprehensive, creating a people centred neighbourhood that supports existing local centres, provides a new school, connects with the canal and promotes active travel. It is important that development is not purely based on achievable numbers of homes but delivers a quality place that raises aspirations for the regeneration of the wider area.

This masterplan is prepared jointly by Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council in close collaboration with Homes England, The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and the Canal & River Trust.

What happens next?

We are seeking opinions on this draft masterplan from [date] to [date] 2021. We will reflect on the comments we receive and use them to produce a final version in autumn 2021.

Fig. 1.1 - The new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH) is being built at the heart of the Grove Lane area. It is located close to the canal and Moilliett Street Park.

PURPOSE

B GILL LTD
HOUSE
Balfour Beatty
Midland Metropolitan
University Hospital Project
Project Office &
Visitor Parking

2

PURPOSE

2 PURPOSE

Purpose

A Masterplan & Delivery Strategy document for Grove Lane was produced in 2010 which considered potential development in part of the Grove Lane area, setting out proposed land uses and phasing of development. However, given the passage of time and the adoption of the Sandwell Sites and Delivery DPD, this document is now out of date and a review is required.

The purpose of this document is to prepare an amended masterplan to take account of recent changes and the current context, and to visualise how the area could look and function in the future. The masterplan has considered factors that would influence its viability and delivery, and these provide further grounding for the vision and objectives.

Relationship to the Smethwick to Birmingham Development Framework

The Smethwick to Birmingham Framework sets out a strategic plan for the whole Smethwick to Birmingham corridor. The Grove Lane masterplan builds on the framework and sets out in more detail how the Grove Lane area surrounding the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital can be developed.

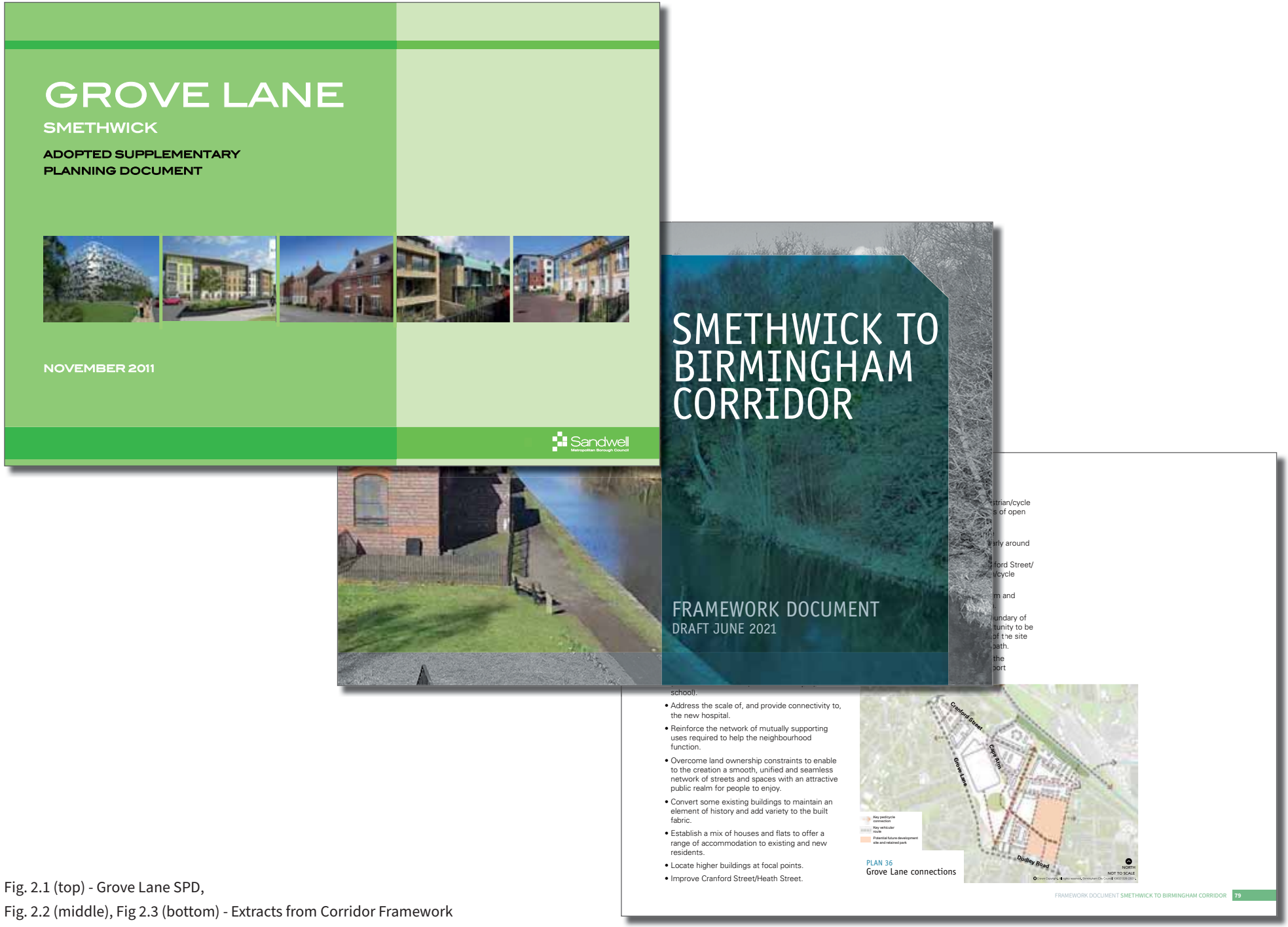


Fig. 2.1 (top) - Grove Lane SPD,
Fig. 2.2 (middle), Fig 2.3 (bottom) - Extracts from Corridor Framework

CONTEXT

3

CONTEXT

Wider Location

The Grove Lane area sits within the wider Smethwick to Birmingham corridor, which is itself sited on the western side of Birmingham city centre, roughly 2.5km from the main retail and commercial areas.

At this point in the city, the dense urban character of the city centre is beginning to break up, and the corridor represents a transition between the urban and the suburban, with the scale and form of development and the nature of the environment less dense, lower and becoming more spread out.

That said, the corridor was defined during the Industrial Revolution by the Main Line Canal, and was characterised by industrial development, and housing has developed historically around it. The A457 and the main line railway between Birmingham and Wolverhampton all now pass through the corridor, and other radial routes stem from the city centre north and south of this corridor (notably the A41 and Snow Hill railway line to the north, and the A456 Hagley Road to the south).

The corridor remains a place where small and medium industrial interests remain, attracted by competitive and lower property values, and good access to wider transport networks – the M5 is a short drive to the west – and the local labour force. Outside of the corridor area, residential neighbourhoods dominate, the closest of which is the Windmill Eye.

The Grove Lane area has a new prominence in the area because of the construction of the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital (MMUH).

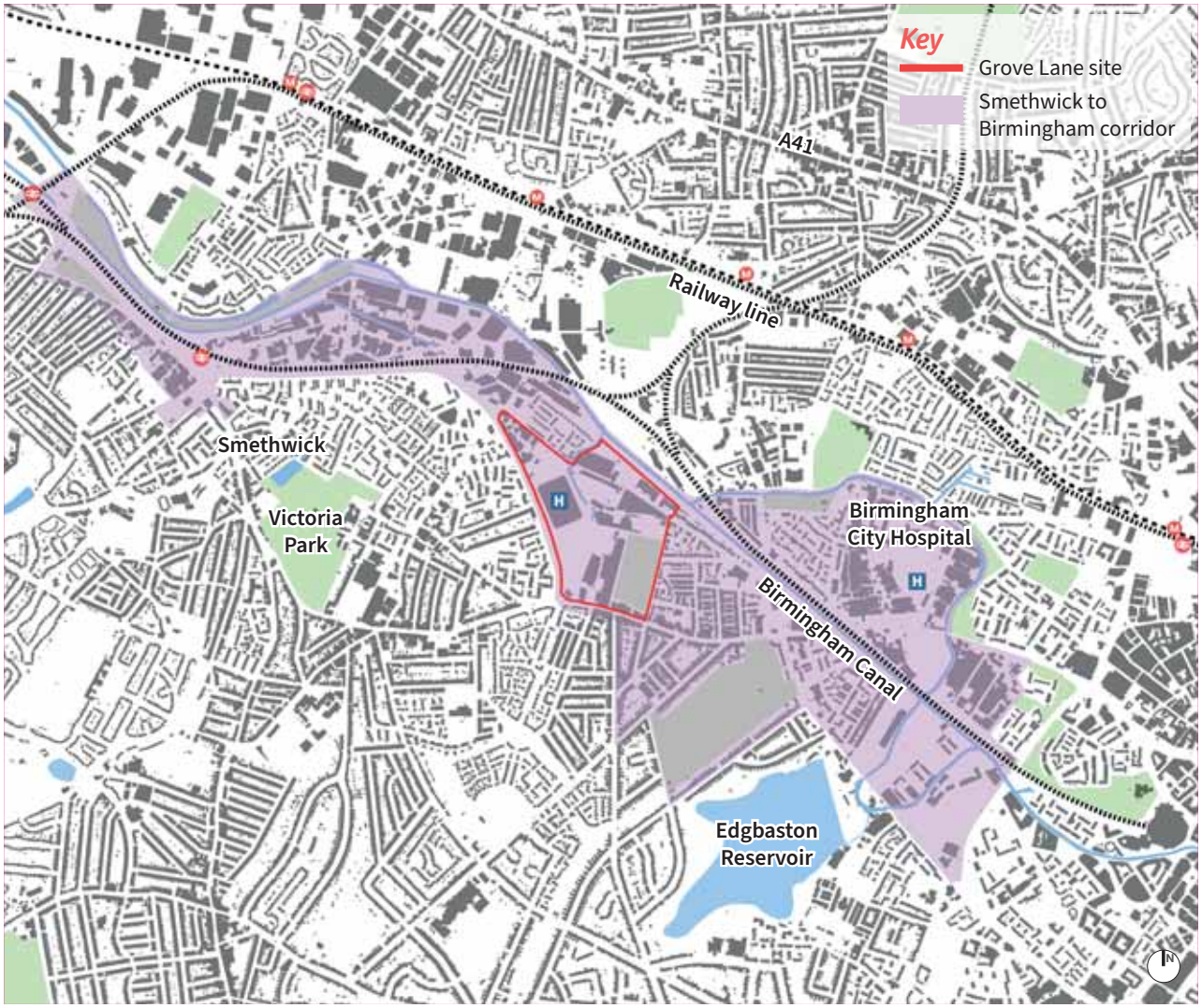


Fig. 3.1 - Location of the Smethwick – Birmingham corridor in the wider context of west Birmingham

It will replace some of the functions that are presently carried out by Sandwell General Hospital in West Bromwich and Birmingham City Hospital which will transfer services from its location a short distance to the east, when the new hospital opens.

The new hospital will transform the area. It will see people coming into this area who have not engaged with it before. This will include professionals, visitors, employees, students and people looking to live in the area. It will mean that current residents will see significant changes over a long period.

The Site

The Grove Lane area comprises land between Grove Lane to the west, Dudley Road to the south, Moilliett Street Park and Winson Street to the east and the Birmingham Canal to the north. The new hospital is located centrally in this area, abutting Grove Lane. A series of sites surround the hospital to the north, east and south.

The hospital itself is a dominating presence; a prominent, tall building that is significantly taller than most of the surrounding development. To the south of the hospital building, a large open space is planned as an entrance point which is intended to be used as a public open space. South of this space, the Hospital Trust have ambitions for a learning campus and for temporary living accommodation (e.g. a hotel).

Much of the surrounding area is occupied by dense, low rise industrial activity and is characterised by warehouses, workshops and surface parking areas. The range of industry is varied, but some of it is noisy and unsightly (e.g. scrap, vehicle storage). Parts of this area have become derelict and underused, particularly around Abberley Street, while other parts have already been redeveloped (Cranford Grange, north of the hospital) or have been the subject of speculative planning applications . Areas left open – such as front yards and service spaces – are often used for parking.

Many of the industrial buildings to the east of the hospital is low rise and over fifty to sixty years old, and much of it seems tired. However, elements speak to the area's history and heritage, and some of the brick patterns and openings have a distinctiveness that is worthy of note in redevelopment ideas. To the west, across Grove Lane, Windmill Eye is a residential neighbourhood that has already seen significant regeneration through funding from the Homes & Communities Agency.

The Cranford Grange development to the north of the hospital is the first area of redevelopment for residential use. The scheme is a suburban style development of two and three storey semi-detached family homes with front and rear gardens and off-street parking.

Fig. 3.2 - Boundary of the Grove Lane masterplan area

Key

Grove Lane site

Land Ownership

Public ownership in the Grove Lane area around the site of the new hospital is limited. The WMCA have a relatively large land holding on the north side of Abberley Street, and have received a demolition consent for the removal of the current buildings, granted in early 2021. Birmingham City Council owns MoilliettStreet Park; the Council is considering development of part of the park to support improvements to the park.

There are significant private landholdings in and around the Grove Lane area, which are characterised by their industrial and commercial uses. The history of the area as a focus for industry and its transport routes contribute to the area remaining a relatively successful location for commercial and industrial activity, albeit characterised by older, smaller and lower quality stock. This also contributes to a fragmented land ownership picture, which makes land assembly and redevelopment in Grove Lane more difficult.

Within this general picture, there are larger sites in single ownerships and this includes key sites north and south of Cranford Street immediately east of the Cape Arm canal branch .

Sites around Halberton Street and to the north of the hospital are both within multiple ownerships, and some include long term leaseholders.

Land Parcels

The masterplan addresses the Grove Lane area holistically, but with the definition of the Housing Zones, the mix of land ownerships, development planning activity and the nature of physical characteristics, the area can be seen as a series of parcels. In practice, these factors will influence the masterplan, particularly through the phasing and delivery. Initial activity on delivering the new neighbourhood will be driven by those characteristics of each part of the area that makes delivery easier, or more complex.

The parcels that have provided a structure for the masterplan proposals is set out at Appendix B.

Opportunities

The masterplan responds to a number of opportunities that will enable it to contribute to the regeneration of the wider Smethwick to Birmingham corridor and benefit existing communities. These are:

- Integrating the area with the Dudley Road high street;
- Incorporating the Cape Arm canal into the design strategy;
- Reconnecting Cranford Street/Heath Street with Dudley Road;
- Replacing a large industrial employment site with a predominantly residential neighbourhood (element of mixed use/education campus/ school);
- Addressing the scale of, and provide connectivity to, the new hospital;
- Reinforcing the network of mutually supporting uses required to help the neighbourhood function;
- Overcoming land ownership constraints to enable the creation of a smooth, unified and seamless network of streets and spaces with an attractive public realm for people to enjoy;
- Converting some existing buildings to maintain an element of history and add variety to the built fabric;
- Establishing a mix of houses and flats to offer a range of accommodation to existing and new residents;
- Enabling the creation of green and blue open space network as a structure to the neighbourhood and to meet recreational demands, including improvements to Moilliett Street Park;
- Distributing scale and density to reflect a changing character; and
- Locating higher buildings at focal points.

Characteristics of the Grove Lane Area

Connections

The site is well defined by Grove Lane and Dudley Road, and by the canal. The internal connections are defined by Cranford Street and Heath Street – which connects the Soho Way roundabout and the east end of Dudley Road – and the streets coming off this north – south, which include London Street and Winson Street. Internal connections will be improved by the development of the hospital, particularly around its entrance, and the Cape Arm, which currently has no access for boats or pedestrians, also offers the opportunity for a distinctive connection to the canal.

Connections beyond the site are more difficult. Grove Lane is a wide, busy dual carriageway with limited crossing points to and from Windmill Eye, and connections to Dudley Road – particularly Halberton Street and Dugdale Street – are compromised by the industrial environment and the poor quality of Moilliett Street Park as an open space. Whilst the canal is just to the north, there are no connections to it which limits pedestrian and cycle access to the areas to the north. Notwithstanding the width of Grove Lane, walking routes to Cape Hill are relatively straightforward.

Grove Lane and Dudley Road offer public transport routes, which can only improve as the hospital opens. They are both part of the A457, a significant route into Birmingham and the primary link between the MMUH and the City Hospital site. This route is part of the key route network, along with Cranford Street / Heath Street. This latter connection provides an alternative to the Grove Lane / Dudley Road, which has made it something of a rat-run; this will need to be addressed sensitively if it is to see its context change markedly from industrial to residential.

Open spaces

The principal open space in the area is Moilliett Street Park. The park was created from slum clearance in the 1970s. It has a regular shape and provides play space and neighbourhood green space for the residential areas around, which are principally to the east. The space is largely grass, but has some trees and is open on all sides.

The park is compromised by being surrounded on two sides by industrial land, and the Dugdale Street frontage is entirely blank. The park has had issues with anti-social behaviour, which is longstanding and perpetuates the perception that the park is not fulfilling a purpose.

There are no other open spaces within the Grove Lane area, though the canal network offers potential if a connection can be made. The space in front of the hospital is intended to form a new public space with a community function and promises to be well managed. It could form the basis of an open space structure if combined with Moilliett Street Park and the canal.

Fig. 3.3 - The hospital is nearing completion, and has a prominent frontage on to Grove Lane

Fig. 3.4 - The canal corridor close to Grove Lane, though connections to and from it are limited

Fig. 3.5 - Moilliett Street Park

Massing and built form

The Grove Lane area is a traditional industrial area, and has been dominated by low rise, small scale traditional industrial buildings, which still cluster around the eastern side of the new hospital on Cranford Street, Halberton Street, Heath Street and Abberley Street. Where newer industrial buildings have appeared in the post war period, buildings have tended to maintain the form, mass and height of the area (see Fawdry Street), though more recent warehouses on the north side of Heath Street have introduced a functional form more in tune with modern businesses and the needs of vehicles serving them, notably with buildings set back behind a service apron or parking area.

Cleared land exists behind the frontages to the south side of Cranford Street along Cape Arm, and Abberley Street has also recently been cleared. These are close to the open space of Moilliett Street Park. To the east, low density family housing begins to dominate, mixed in with older terraces.

Nearby Dudley Road is the closest retail and commercial centre, and is dominated by two and three storey terraced units. A former cinema remains on the western end of Dudley Road – currently being used as a kitchen and bathroom showroom -, which has a landmark status through its size, isolation on the plot and its architecture. Dudley Road has a bustling atmosphere, partly on account of it being on the main route to the city centre.

The new hospital has altered the dynamic significantly, bringing in a large building of up to ten storeys, which does allow for an increase in height in redevelopment to echo the new scale in the area.

Grove Lane does border significant areas of residential development as well, especially to the west in Windmill Eye. There are some significant residential buildings of scale here, notably the high-rise flats on the roundabout which do have some impact on the acceptability of scale on the neighbouring Grove Lane/Cranford Street corner.

Heritage

Whilst the canal is within a conservation area further to the west, the stretch of canal closest to Grove Lane is not. There are no listed buildings within the Grove Lane area, though there are industrial buildings of note remaining on Cranford Street, which retain some interesting industrial architecture, including two-tone brick and vertical windows fronting Cranford Street.

Fig. 3.6 - The former cinema at the western end of Dudley Road

Fig. 3.7 - Older industrial buildings fronting Cranford Street, some of which retain interesting architectural features

Fig. 3.8 - Dugdale Street alongside Moilliett Street Park

Strengths and Challenges

As a whole, the area is compact, and has within it a varying urban environment with both strengths and challenges to be considered.

Strengths

- Proximity of the canal; the canal is a potential asset with recreational value and which provides historic context
- Cape Arm branch; the branch off the Main Line provides additional waterfront potential which could be capitalised upon
- Potential for good public realm and spaces around hospital; the scale of the hospital gives it the potential to frame significant public spaces. This could lead to a range of interesting spaces for varied purposes
- Good connections by road; the nearby road network links well to surrounding places of note, particularly radial routes
- Some interesting heritage / older buildings, particularly in Cranford Street
- Proximity to local centres, including Cape Hill and Dudley Road, which offer a diverse set of commercial and retail services

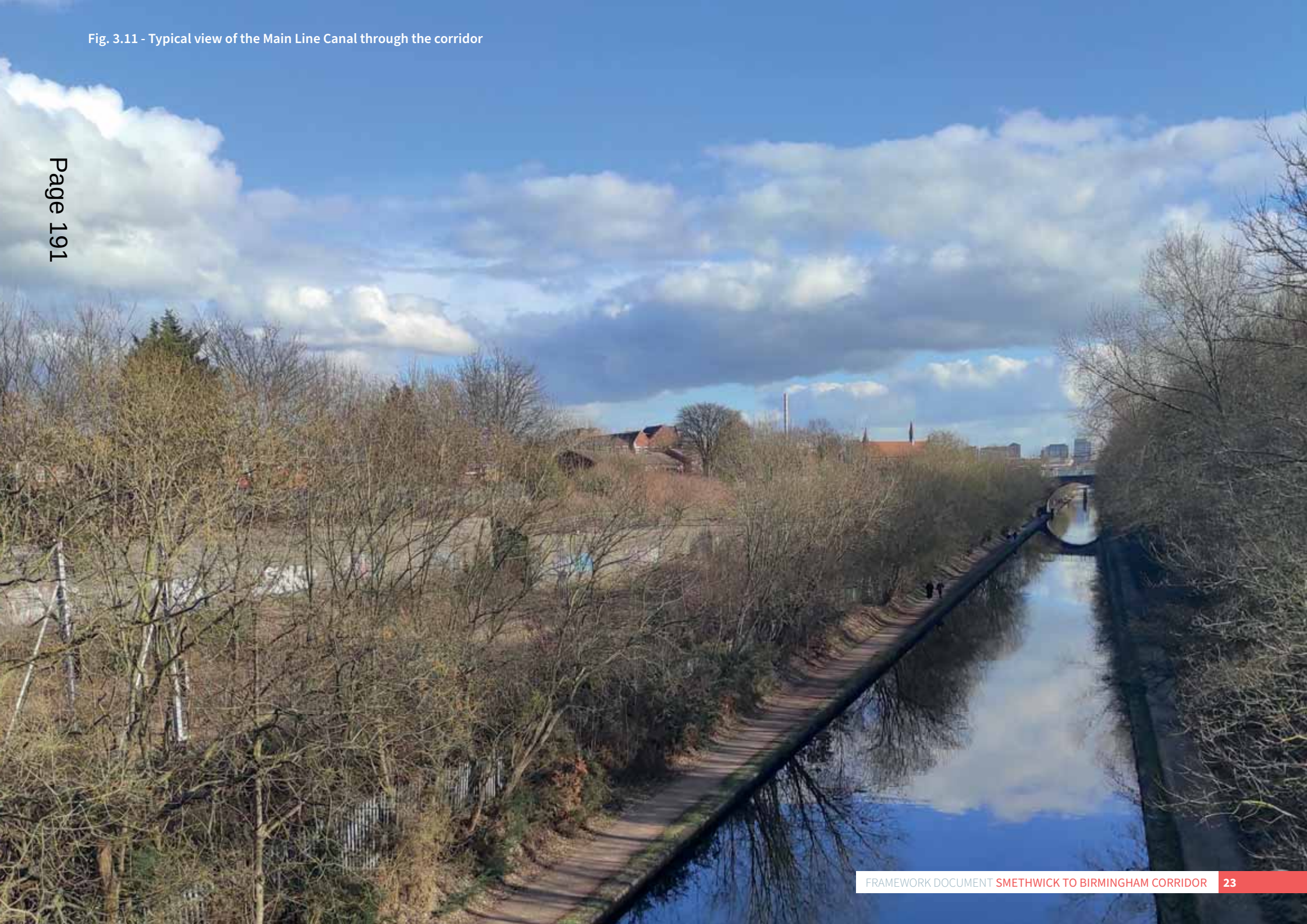
Challenges

- Poor pedestrian and cycling infrastructure; pavements and roads are often narrow and can be compromised by rat-running and heavy traffic. The non-vehicular network is poorly maintained.
- Poor connections to rail-based public transport. Links to the Metro and traditional rail are difficult, and stations are not within easy walking distance.
- The area is dominated by a traditional industrial built environment
- Heavy traffic serving the industrial area
- Pavement parking

Fig. 3.9 - The Cape Arm branch off the Main Line Canal, with a strong relationship to the hospital

Fig. 3.10 - Typical industrial uses in the Grove Lane area

Fig. 3.11 - Typical view of the Main Line Canal through the corridor



THE MASTERPLAN

4

THE MASTERPLAN

The masterplan relates back to the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Development Framework, and our Vision for the wider corridor is:

Making a Healthy Community

The Framework also sets out 5 key principles for the corridor to support this vision, which apply to the development of the Grove Lane area. These principles are:

- Healthy centres: Resilient local centres within walking distance
- Healthy transport: Enabling attractive alternative forms of transport to the private car
- Health workers/returning to health: Integrating the new hospital community
- Healthy families: Nurturing a family neighbourhood
- Healthy outdoor spaces: Valuing green spaces and the connections between them; and
- Healthy Context: Capitalising on the industrial heritage and unique townscape

The Midland Metropolitan University Hospital is a significant catalyst for change; change will happen, and the Smethwick to Birmingham Framework will guide it. The hospital will be integrated effectively into existing communities, whilst acting as an anchor institution for the area's regeneration.

New development will enhance the best of what already exists – in particular the area's historic importance and its diverse population. Existing local centres will continue to be places where people can meet everyday needs and be a focus for community.

The area will accommodate a significant number of new homes alongside improvements to education provision including further and higher education and job creation.

Connected neighbourhoods will encourage active travel and a reduction in car use and traffic dominance. The Corridor will benefit from improved green spaces, with the canal network as a blue and green spine providing the common visual and physical connection.

The masterplan has been developed based on a series of robust urban design principles and in accordance to the objectives for the corridor area set by the delivery partners.

Creating a vision for the site that is shared amongst the whole community and key stakeholders is critical to the long term success and viability of the scheme.

The vision needs to be robust and deliverable and seeks to create a fully integrated mixed use quarter and place that people enjoy to live, work and visit.

The masterplan aims to show a preferred approach to the comprehensive redevelopment of the Grove Lane area over the coming years, which will see a new community develop alongside the exiting community, and integrate the hospital and its community into this part of the city.

(Top) Fig. 4.1, (middle) Fig. 4.2, (bottom) Fig. 4.3 - The Port Loop development to the south east of Grove Lane represents new development of a high quality that has good open spaces and waterfront. The ambition for Grove Lane is one of a coherent community that enjoys living in its neighbourhood.

Brief for the Grove Lane Area

The MMUH sits within the Grove Lane area. It is expected to accommodate around 800 homes alongside a new primary school. The new neighbourhood must encourage active travel and a reduce car use and will benefit from improved green spaces, which includes connections to the canal.

The partners have identified the following objectives for the Corridor which are pertinent for the Grove Lane area and include:

- Housing provision –a mix of good quality housing typologies, tenures and densities that reflect local need, meet design standards, can adapt to changing lifestyles and property market considerations.
- Economic regeneration through construction opportunities and through the expansion of healthcare, research, commerce, environmental science and technology and the enabling of start-up and small businesses
- Active travel and connectivity – prioritise active travel and create '20-minute neighbourhoods' (i.e. the availability of most services or needs within a 20 minute walk or cycle from home)
- Canal network – enhance its recreational and daily commuting role. Create direct and barrier free linkages. Green the canal corridor. Create opportunities for waterside living.
- Place-making people-centred communities and existing local centres. Enhance the existing characteristics of the area as well as creating a distinct identity informed by the historic environment.
- Education – meet defined education needs through provision of a new primary school at Grove Lane. Seek a higher education presence linked to the Midland Metropolitan Hospital.
- Sustainability – reduce air pollution and help de-carbonise transport. Explore opportunities for renewable energy generation, sustainable construction and a heat network.

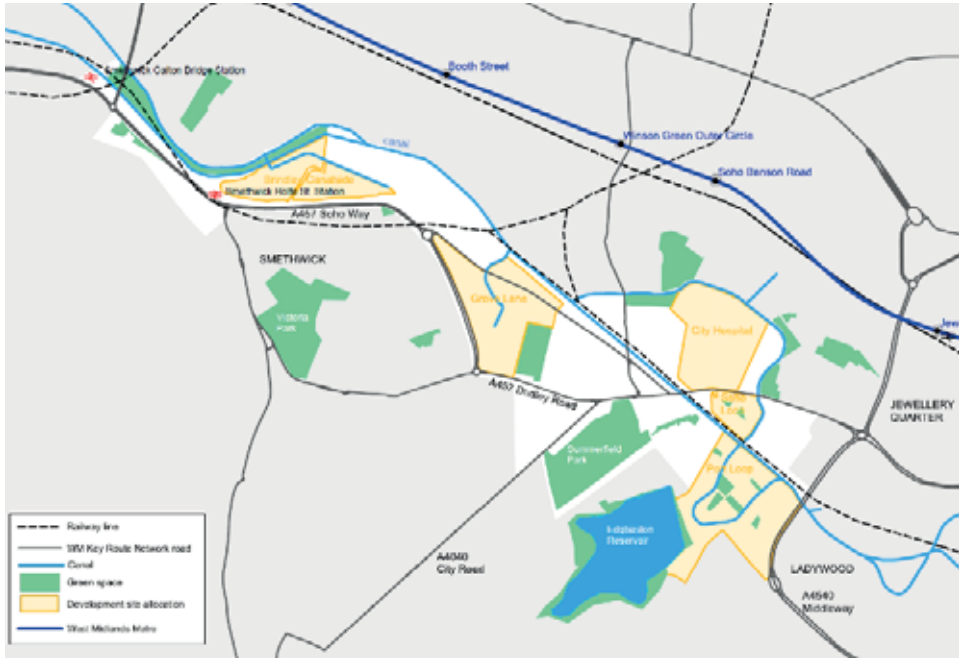


Fig. 4.4 - An overview of the whole of the Smethwick to Birmingham corridor

Purpose of the Masterplan

Based on the assessment of the area, and its existing character and features, the masterplan has established a set of principles for redevelopment.

Purpose

The purpose of the Illustrative Masterplan set out within this document is to set a vision for the area, to provide inspiration for the design of a viable, high-quality place and to raise aspirations for the regeneration of the wider area. The illustrative material is drawn to inspire, and it is acknowledged that in some places it doesn't fully comply with the current policies set out within the Sandwell MBC Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document SPD. Where this occurs, the principles shown within this document have taken inspiration from best practice projects across the country, to demonstrate how the appropriate densities and capacities on the site could be achieved as part of an exciting, forward thinking new development around the major new hospital. This document does not provide a template for a planning application, rather an illustration of the vision for the sustainable and high-quality place that the Partners are looking to deliver.

The illustrative masterplan demonstrates how the agreed objectives can be translated into an environment that:

- Encourages walking and cycling through compact development forms and attractive street environments that prioritise people, such as mews streets;
- Provides access to green space and nature;
- Provides a variety of different housing typologies to enable a mixed community; and
- While meeting local standards, allows future flexibility should the anticipated modal shift towards less car usage be achieved.

Car Parking

The Illustrative Masterplan is based on current best practice parking approaches. This incorporates flexible parking approaches that provide sufficient car parking spaces in line with current standards, but in a way that is in line with the overarching health and wellbeing objectives. The provision of a higher percentage of on-street and shared parking spaces would accommodate a shift change to reduced private car use in the future. Any detailed design will need to take account of local car parking standards.

Residential Design

The Illustrative Masterplan comprises a range of housing typologies that respond to the existing market needs, the predicted future market and the responses received from developers in the local area. This includes family housing in the form terraces, semi-detached and detached homes alongside town houses and mews typologies. Flat provision is located within the areas of the site most suited to higher density development.

The masterplan is drawn at a high-level and does not drill down into the detail of housing design. At the detailed design stage, the amenity of the existing and new dwellings must be considered not only in terms of back-to-back distances, but with a view to using articulation of rooms and windows to achieve the required privacy levels. The detailed design of specific blocks and buildings will need to consider sun- and day light considerations alongside the aforementioned privacy to protect the amenity of all residents.

Aims and objectives for the area

Based on the assessment of the area, and its existing character and features, the masterplan has established a set of principles for redevelopment.

Layout principles

- Develop clear edges using retained historic buildings where possible, and complementary new buildings, to reflect the historic nature and identity of the area as part of the canal corridor
- Opening up the canal (Cape Arm) creating a public route through and forming a positive relationship with the hospital edge
- Integration of focal buildings and celebration of Smethwick heritage
- Integration of the canal within a design strategy
- Location of new primary school within the heart of the site to be fully integrated within the community
- Introduce a number of housing typologies including an identified need for family housing

Midland Metropolitan University Hospital site

- Integrate the hospital building and grounds into the masterplan to create neighbourhood that responds to its form and size, and also allows the existing neighbourhoods to accept new development
- Improve public realm and walking routes to and around the hospital site, particularly crossings over the A457 to and from Windmill Eye, links to and beyond Cranford Street and Heath Street to the canal and links to Dudley Road
- Create a strong edge on Grove Street to address the hospital in order to help contain the large open space

Heritage

- Recognise the industrial context and buildings on and around the site and consider their re-use where possible and where it enhances the sense of place. Key buildings are located on Cranford Street and Heath Street
- Establish connections to the canal, both through the layout of the built form, and through the connections made from the site to canal access points
- Aim to bring into use the Cape Arm branch, and reflect former canal lines where they cannot be reintroduced

Movement networks

- Enhance canal pathways and open spaces to enable movement and encourage activity (see overarching strategy for canal corridor)
- Enable clearer and safer links between development parcels and nearby centres and facilities (e.g. Dudley Road local centre, Cape Hill, Moilliett Park)

Open Space

- A series of linked high quality open spaces – creating a public route through a series of public spaces, linking the area to the hospital, to the canal basin and to the canal to the north
- Establish a clear structure of green and blue infrastructure within the area that complements the built form, provides connections within and beyond the area, and provides different forms of outdoor recreation for people who engage with the spaces (e.g. play areas, neighbourhood parks, spaces for hospital users)
- Use the internal open space structure to provide pointers to green space beyond the area (such as Summerfield Park) to widen the opportunity to find natural space and recreation
- Maintain and rejuvenate Moilliett Park as a local park

Site-wide Principles

- Connectivity
- A series of linked public spaces
- Establish an edge along the canal to create a positive relationship with the water
- Integration of primary school
- A mix of housing typologies
- A future for Moilliett Park
- Land Uses
- Movement
- Retention of heritage buildings - creation of a strong edge along Cranford Street
- Tall buildings
- Character areas

Key Principles

Fig. 4.5 - Site-wide Key principles

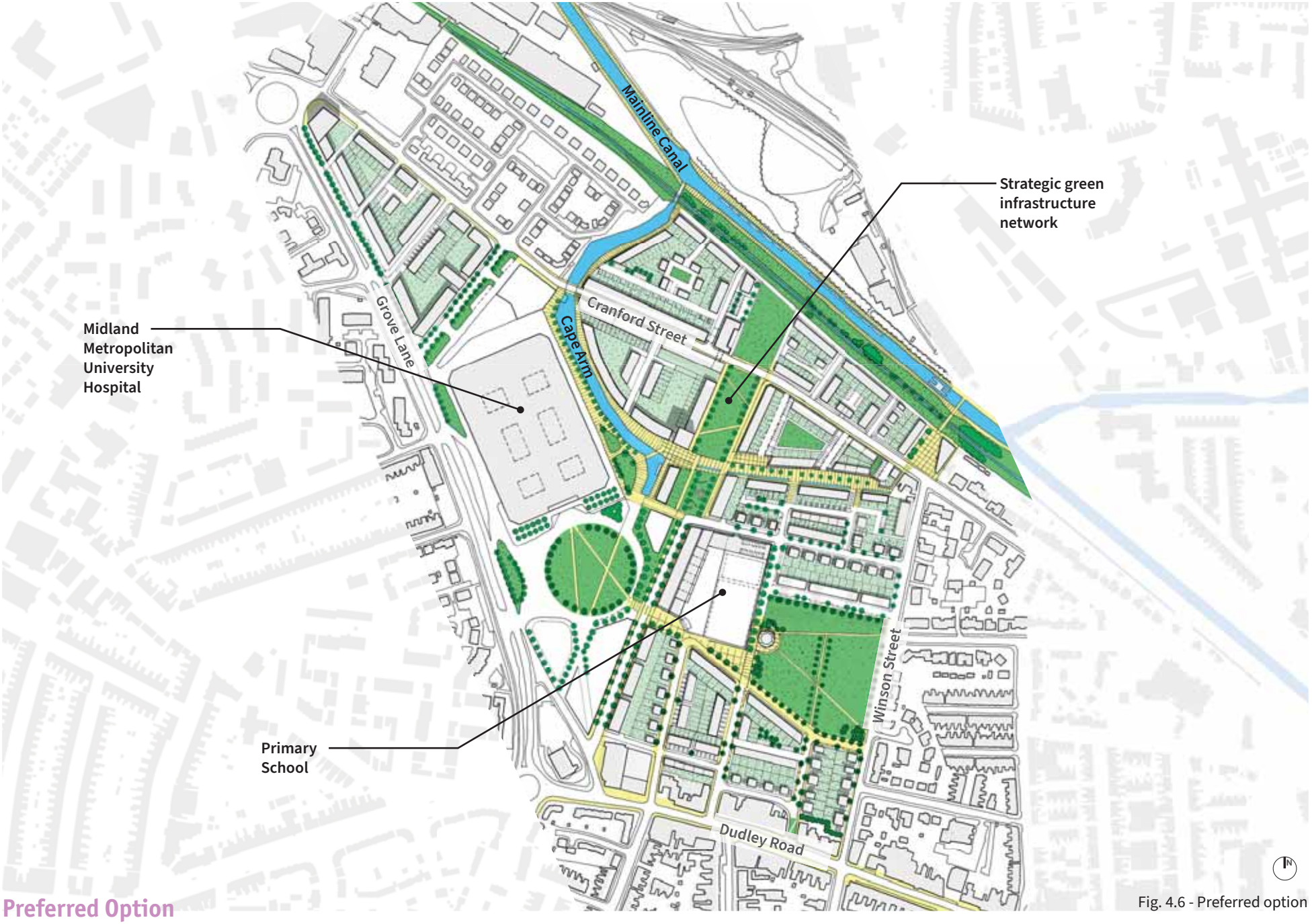
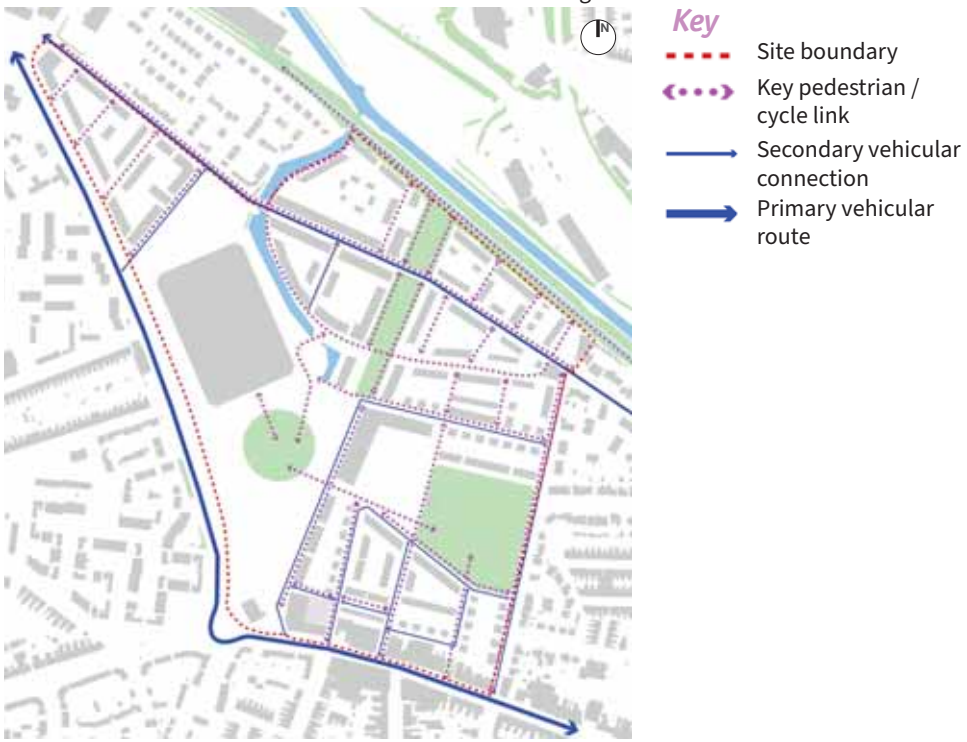


Fig. 4.6 - Preferred option

Preferred Option

Connectivity

Fig. 4.7

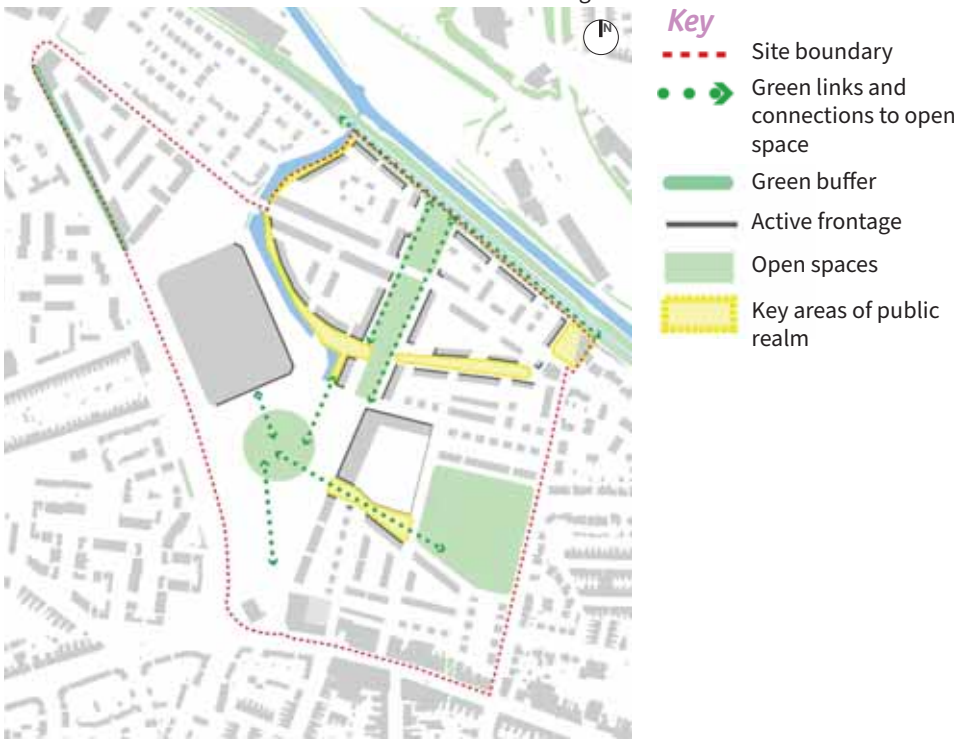


Connectivity

- Proposed and existing – pedestrians, cycles, vehicles
- Streets to end in streets
- Enable movement through and across the site through clear pathways
- Pedestrian focus within development areas, through improved walking environment and external links
- Through traffic encouraged towards A457
- Traffic movement limited on Heath Street
- Bi-directional cycle route on Cranford Street / Heath Street
- Importance of links to Dudley Road Centre, particularly to and from the hospital

A series of linked public spaces

Fig. 4.8

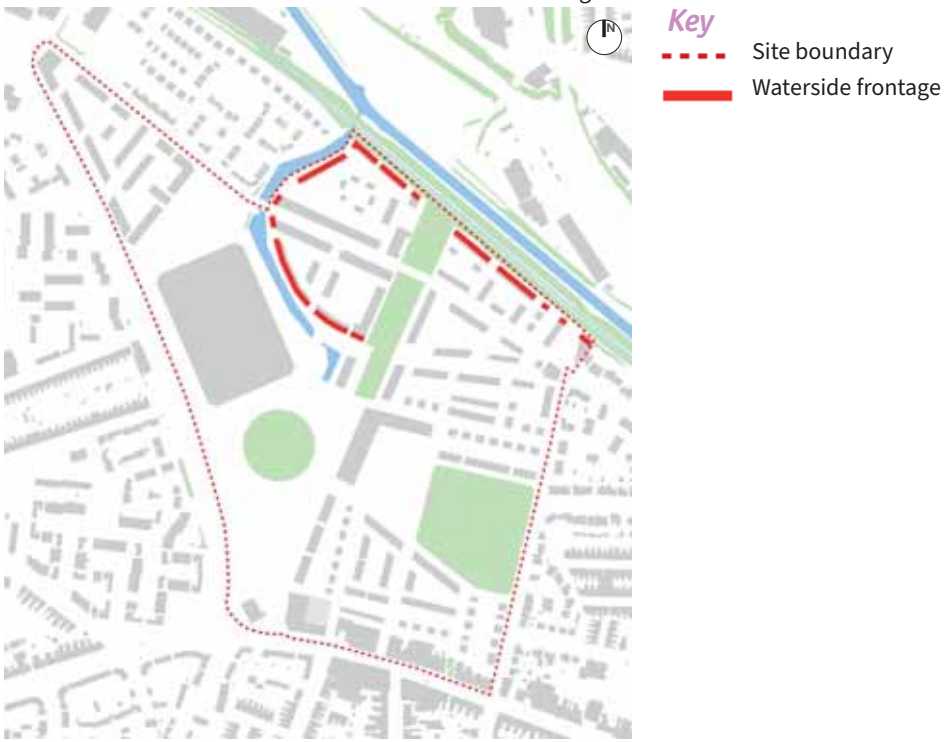


A series of linked public spaces

- Public space to be of varying scale and form, creating a series of destination spaces interlinked with one another
- Key public and community space to the front of the hospital as a focal point and link to Moilliett Street Park and Heath Street
- Importance of high quality linkages between spaces
- Moilliett Street Park as a reimagined neighbourhood park
- School spaces to be secure, but integrated into wider open area
- Green infrastructure to link with the available blue infrastructure

Establish active edge with canal

Fig. 4.9



Establish an edge along the canal to create a positive relationship with the water

- Buildings to positively address water frontages on Cape Arm
- Frontages to face key features – inc. hospital elevations and waterfront – to help define and enclose public spaces

Integration of primary school

Fig. 4.10

Integration of primary school

- Provision of a 2FE primary school into the heart of the community, including indoor and outdoor space
- Innovative approach seeks to provide a compact school appropriate to a new urban neighbourhood drawing on good practice
- Safe and secure whilst contributing to the overall townscape
- Seek to include elements of parking, but ensure safe routes for non-vehicular access
- Avoids proximity to busiest roads

A mix of housing typologies

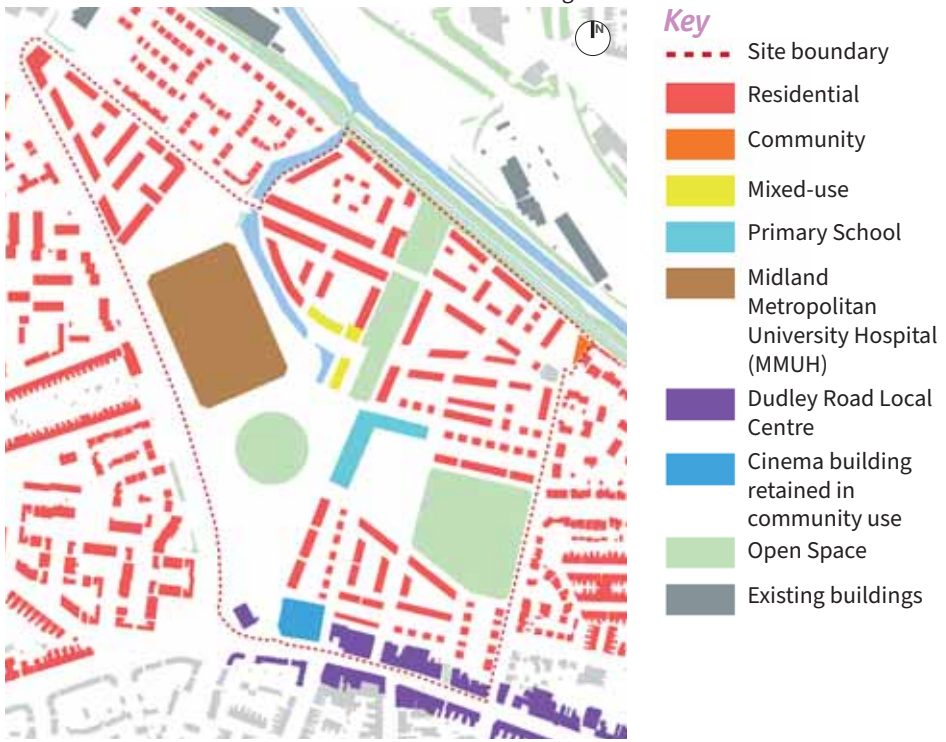
Fig. 4.11

A mix of housing typologies

- Responsiveness to a local need for family housing
- Open to new groups looking for accommodation, drawn by the impact of the hospital (e.g. key workers, professionals, students)
- Reflective of prevailing market conditions Responsive to the urban nature of the opportunity
- Aim to create critical mass and a place where people want to live, and stay

Land Uses

Fig. 4.12



Land Uses

- Predominantly a new residential area, connecting existing neighbourhoods in Windmill Eye, Cape Hill and Summerfield
- Mix of housing types and forms
- Commercial and community uses in key locations, particularly towards the heart of the neighbourhood
- Primary school located away from main roads and close to family housing
- Focus for retail and commercial services remains Dudley Road

Movement

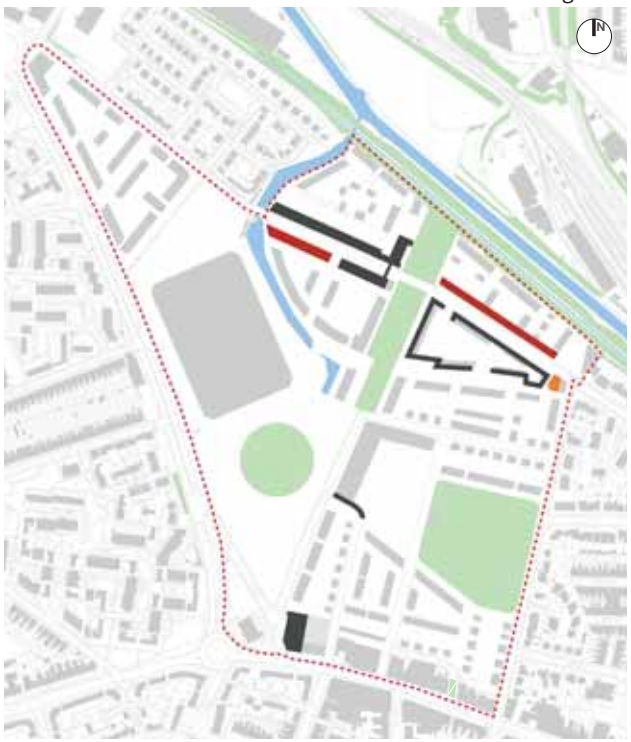
Fig. 4.13

Movement

- Movement is based upon a clear hierarchy of streets and waterways
- Key route network (KRN) for through traffic (Grove Lane and Cranford Street / Heath Street)
- Network of existing roads within the area, particularly London Street, Winson Street and Grove Street
- Series of footways, access roads and servicing links to provide comprehensive connectivity within the housing areas

Retention of heritage buildings

Fig. 4.14

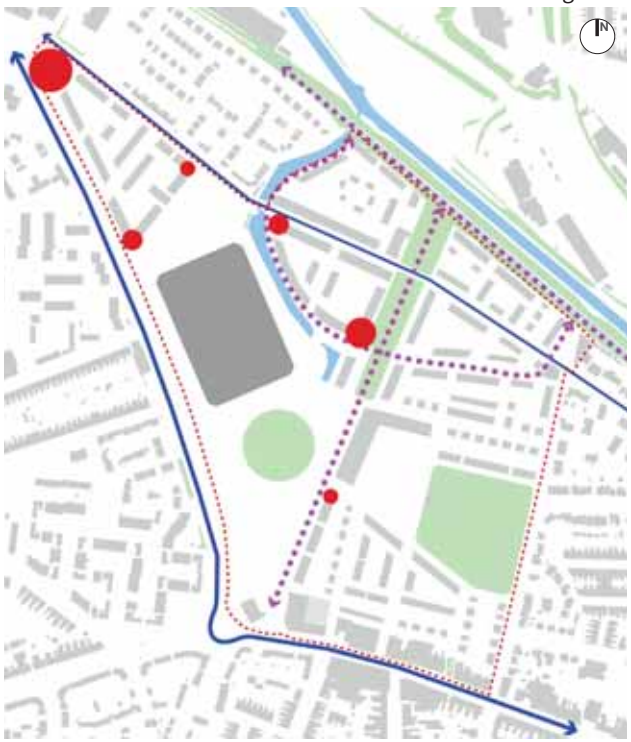


Retention of Heritage Buildings – creation of a strong edge along Cranford Street

- Where possible, and supported through technical and financial evidence alongside detailed design strategies for the configuration of buildings, encourage retention and conversion of heritage buildings
- Maintain a strong building line to Cranford Street / Heath Street
- New development to echo existing patterns of built form

Tall buildings

Fig. 4.15



Tall buildings

- Taller buildings placed at focal points on Grove Lane, including Soho Way roundabout and London Street
- Opportunity for a focal taller building at canal basin, at the heart of the neighbourhood
- Height used in a way to provide scale around the hospital building, and provide stepped decrease to lower heights and forms in the surrounding context

A future for Moilliett Street Park

- A neighbourhood space at the heart of a community
- Create frontage to the park, enclosing, defining and overlooking
- Enable easy access and routes to and across the park
- Resolve perceptions and issues with the park through thoughtful design response

Parking

- All hospital parking provided within the building
- Public transport and non-vehicular options improved, reducing the need for car travel
- Residential parking provided in a mix of on and off-street locations
- Residential parking off-street in a mix of methods, including integral / undercroft and parking courts
- Parking solutions responsive to housing typologies and context

Improving connections - a transport strategy

The wider corridor framework document proposes a transport strategy based around improving the overall infrastructure for walking and cycling, and encouraging that shift from an area dominated by cars and car use, to one where other options are more practical and positive. The Grove Lane area is an important area for this change, and to achieve a coherent and connected community, the Grove Lane area needs to see the delivery of a package of improvements that will feature:

- Improving footway condition
- De-cluttering/widening footways
- Removing footway parking
- Narrowing bellmouth junctions
- New 'green man' signal stages
- New formal/informal crossings
- Signage/wayfinding measures
- A focus on new protected cycleways on key routes, with supporting traffic calming and other measures on other roads and local streets

One key element of this is the establishment of a bi-directional cycleway between the Soho Way roundabout an the eastern end of Dudley Road via Cranford Street and Heath Street, which is discussed in more detail in Character Areas 2 and 6.

Landmark Buildings

The use of landmark buildings within the masterplan will help to create a legible urban quarter and will also contribute to reinforcing the distinctiveness of the neighbourhood. The diversity of the different types of landmarks from historic to new build will give a richness to the experience of moving through the area.

The key landmark buildings are:

- The three retained warehouse buildings - symbols of the industrial heritage of the site, refurbished for residential use
- The bridge over Cranford Street and canopy off it - symbols of the industrial heritage of the site
- The taller building on Cape Arm - a visual marker and key node by the canal and open space will create a distinct skyline
- The taller buildings along Grove Lane
- The former cinema at the western end of Dudley Road
- The new MMUH

Within the masterplan the taller elements cited as landmarks within the list above have been appropriately located to address the new and existing townscape within, and around the site. These address the key focal point in the heart of the site, and major gateways into the development. The heights strategy for the wider site adopts a lower scale of development that sensitively weaves the site into its existing urban context. This reduction in scale also provides the opportunity for these taller point blocks to rise above the skyline to create distinctive and legible landmarks.

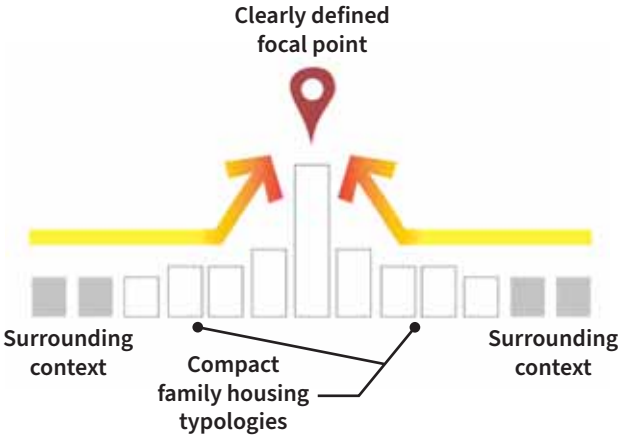


Fig. 4.16 - The heights strategy for the masterplan supports generally lower scale development with strategically placed taller buildings to mark definitive focal points for the site. Make this quite small so it is a thumbnail like others on the spread.

Fig. 4.17 - Illustrative sketch highlighting landmark buildings

Smethwick Heat Network

Sandwell Council is exploring the opportunity for a heat network within the Grove Lane area as part of the regeneration opportunity. The operation of the system – which would utilise heat from a low carbon canal-sourced heat pump system – requires some high-level information from the masterplan about the nature and number of residential units proposed in the area. Whilst no specific site has been identified within the area, the needs of the energy centre can be accommodated without significant impact upon the preferred option. Alternatively, space could be taken within proposed building blocks.

Key points to note:

- the heat network will accommodate potential changes in 2025 restricting the installation of boilers in new build properties;
- provide an opportunity for new homes to be connected to low-carbon alternatives;
- will assist in future-proofing development;
- complement the Climate Change agenda and address fuel poverty currently an issue in Smethwick;
- will require laying on heat pipe work / cabling between an energy centre and each connected property;
- the energy centre will need to be appropriately located, centrally within the development land or potentially built within a property;
- use could be made of the canal subject to Canal & River Trust approval; and
- an additional option is to investigate an extension to an alternative heat source potentially located in West Bromwich.

CHARACTER AREAS

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CHARACTER AREAS

CHARACTER AREAS

Introduction

Seven character areas are identified within the masterplan area to help define distinctive spaces.

Each one has unique characteristics that respond to specific location on site, to local conditions and to the relationship it has with the external context.

They are all shown on the adjoining map and are:

- Cranford Street / Heath Street / Canal
- Cape Arm
- The Open Space network
- Grove Street / MMUH /School
- MoilliettStreet Park
- Abberley Street
- Grove Lane / Cranford Street / London Street

Each character area has a mood board that comprises aspirational images for the area. These mood boards are intended to communicate a 'feel' for the required character. The intention is not that these images are prescriptive in design terms.

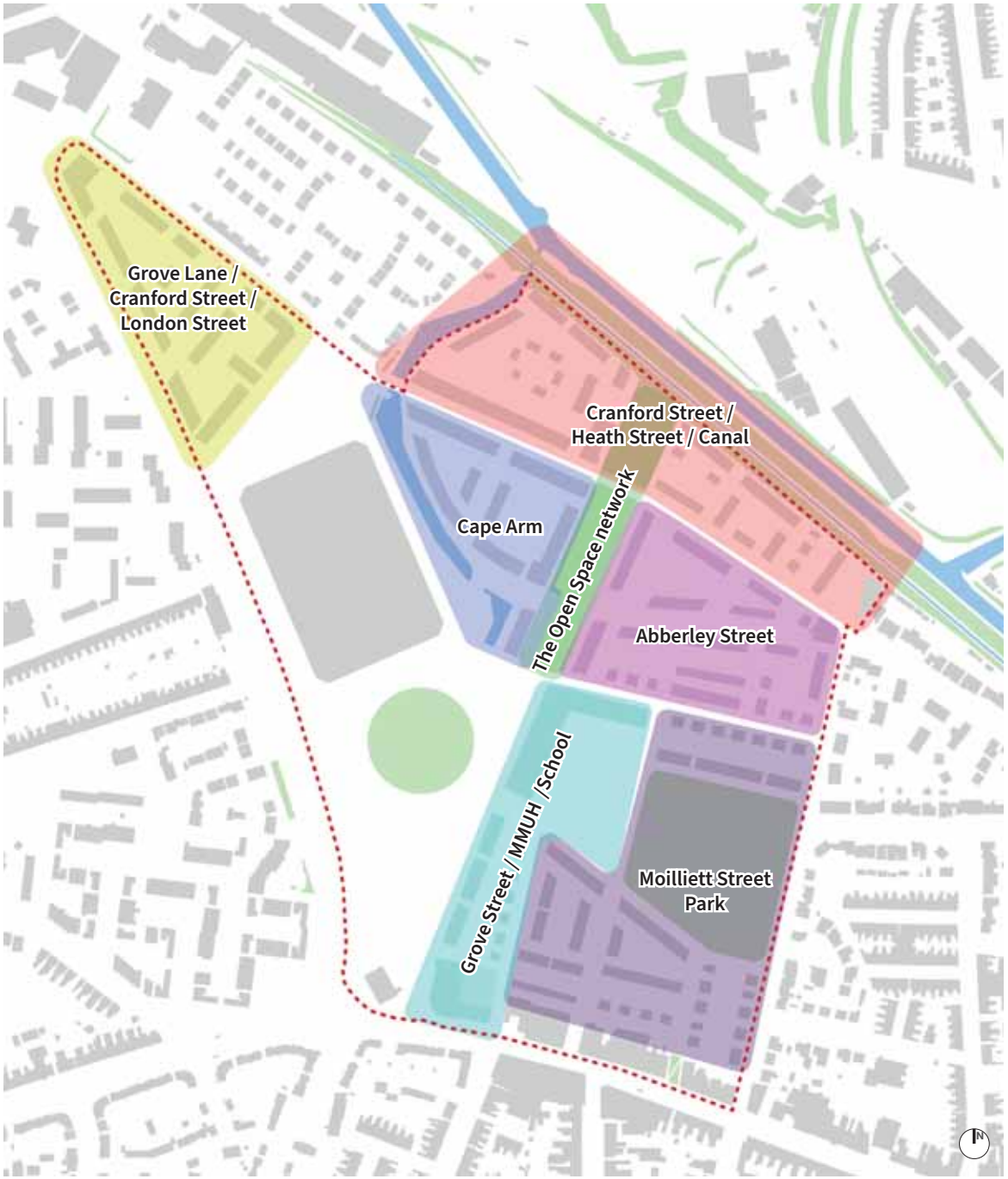


Fig. 5.1 - Character areas plan

Cranford Street / Heath Street / Canal sits between Cranford Street and the canal in the north of the Grove Lane area. The masterplan envisages some retention of the existing buildings to Cranford Street and a mix of housing typologies that can provide a frontage to the Canal feeder. A new north-south public space would connect Cranford Street to the northern boundary.

Cape Arm sits within the boundary formed by the canal branch and Cranford Street. The masterplan envisages a development that can sit alongside the scale of the hospital, perhaps providing a landmark building on the canal basin. Public space along the canal front / towpath can create a public space that animates the waterside space.

The Open Space network provides some structure for the Grove Lane area, enabling movement between different spaces and beyond the site to adjoining areas. The spaces are of different scales, character and function, related to their immediate context.

Grove Street / Hospital / School is an important area between two key community functions required in the area, and the form of Grove Street needs to enclose the space and enable a link across the character area to Moilliett Street Park and beyond to Dudley Road. Residential blocks will be higher, closer to the hospital. The school will front Grove Street.

Moilliett Street Park is the heart of the residential neighbourhood, and the reimagined park will be a central feature. The current park is not well used, and a smaller park, framed by surrounding and new development, with clear paths to and through it, should enable the space to function more effectively and become an asset for residents.

Abberley Street is central to the residential neighbourhood, but also an important link between the north-south open space and Heath Street. The western end has a relationship with the canal basin, and will be an important point both on this and on the proposed north-south link.

Grove Lane / Cranford Street / London Street is a more isolated triangular island of mixed use, compromised to some extent by the tapering nature of the northern end and the proximity to the roundabout and the road junctions. It is, however, a prominent site on the main road and can take taller buildings as a focal point and pointer along the strategic road network and within the heart of the corridor itself. The site could take a mix of housing typologies across its area.

Character Area 1: Cranford Street / Heath Street / Canal

Residential neighbourhood with a strong relationship to the waterways, with an urban structure that maximises views and fosters connections towards the canal and Cape Arm.

Indicative capacity:

Density: Up to 38 dwellings per hectare (dph)

Residential dwellings: Approx. 100-115 no.

A long, narrow site fronting Cranford Street and backing onto the canal, this area has potential to deliver a mix of housing types across its tapering area.

Structurally, the site is split into two halves by the north-south open space that seeks to make that connection between the canal basin / hospital and the canal to the north east, over the raised canal feeder.

The western half is characterised by the long industrial building that fronts Cranford Street and is to be retained, if possible, and converted to a residential use, maintaining the two-tone brickwork of the front. A second existing building, which is currently connected to the bridge over Cranford Street, is also sought to be retained, and marks the southern edge of the site.

The masterplan foresees a residential development to the rear of the site, making the most of the frontage to the Cape Arm – enabling access to a new towpath and making a connection at the Cranford Street Bridge – and also fronting the canal to the east. Three storey housing at the canal boundary would have a view over the canal feeder embankment to the canal beyond.

Parking provision can be made on the site through integrated and surface parking. A mix of houses and flats can be provided, with a balance in favour of houses, suggesting a relatively low rise, lower density quarter of the overall area.

The eastern half has a longer frontage to Heath Street, but becomes narrower in depth as it gets closer to Winson Street. The masterplan again proposes a residential mix of houses and flats, with a strong balance towards houses, and parking provided within the site. Whilst some frontage can be maintained to Heath Street, orientations may need to be varied to maximise the potential of the site. The masterplan provides for a small commercial block at the southern end, where the site is narrowest.

Fig. 5.2 - Cranford Street / Heath Street / Canal: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.3 - Character Area Extent

Fig. 5.4

Central green spine

Fig. 5.5

Focal entrance space

Fig. 5.6

Repurposed industrial buildings

Strong connections to Cape Arm and the canal

Fig. 5.7

Fig. 5.8

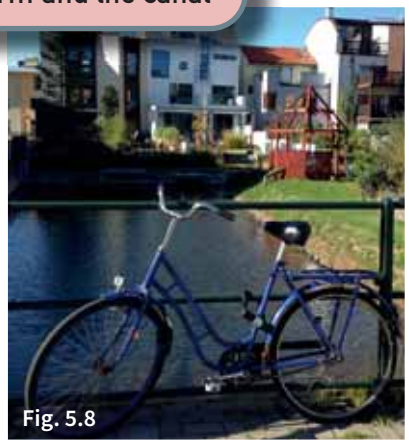
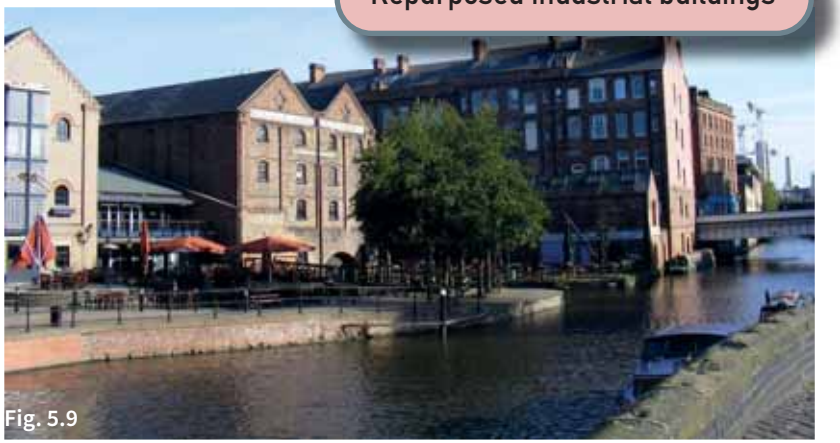


Fig. 5.9



Key Principles:

1. **Existing industrial buildings** - retained refurbished and converted into residential use offering a special type of architecture and materiality
2. **Positive relationship with the feeder canal edge** – three storey family houses will form a continuous built edge opposite the raised feeder canal with a new public pedestrian/ cycle shared surface route running along allowing limited car access for residents and servicing
3. **Building form to create visual interest and respect the retained historic buildings** – it is envisaged that the built form will break down into individual elements to provide a distinct rhythm scale and enclosure
4. **Visual and physical links to the canal** – a continuous 2-3m wide public towpath will provide access to pedestrians and cyclists at all times as well as connecting to the wider network beyond
5. **Active edges** – all external edges of the residential blocks will be animated with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum
6. **Strong urban form to the canal edge** – three storey family townhouses will form the new edge on to the canal providing an appropriate scale next to the retained two storey industrial building.
7. **New public space forming a gateway to the canal crossing** – a small square forms a setting for a pavilion structure with community uses. The space acts as a key link to the areas east of the canal and the new hospital on Grove St and the areas across the canal. Depending on the detailed design of this north eastern gateway, the pavilion could be replaced by public art or a landscaped gateway space, for example with education boards linking to the canal heritage trail.
8. **Landscaping** – the landscape design must take into consideration the direct relationship of the site with the feeder canal embankment as well as the open space creating a seamless visual and physical connection between the two.
9. **Direct connection across to the canal from the Grove Lane** – direct physical and visual connections from the existing residential neighbourhoods in the southwest
10. **Parking** – access is directly off Cranford Street and parking accommodated in a number of ways, either within the building footprint, in external garages or in parking courts where they will be fully integrated within the overall landscape strategy

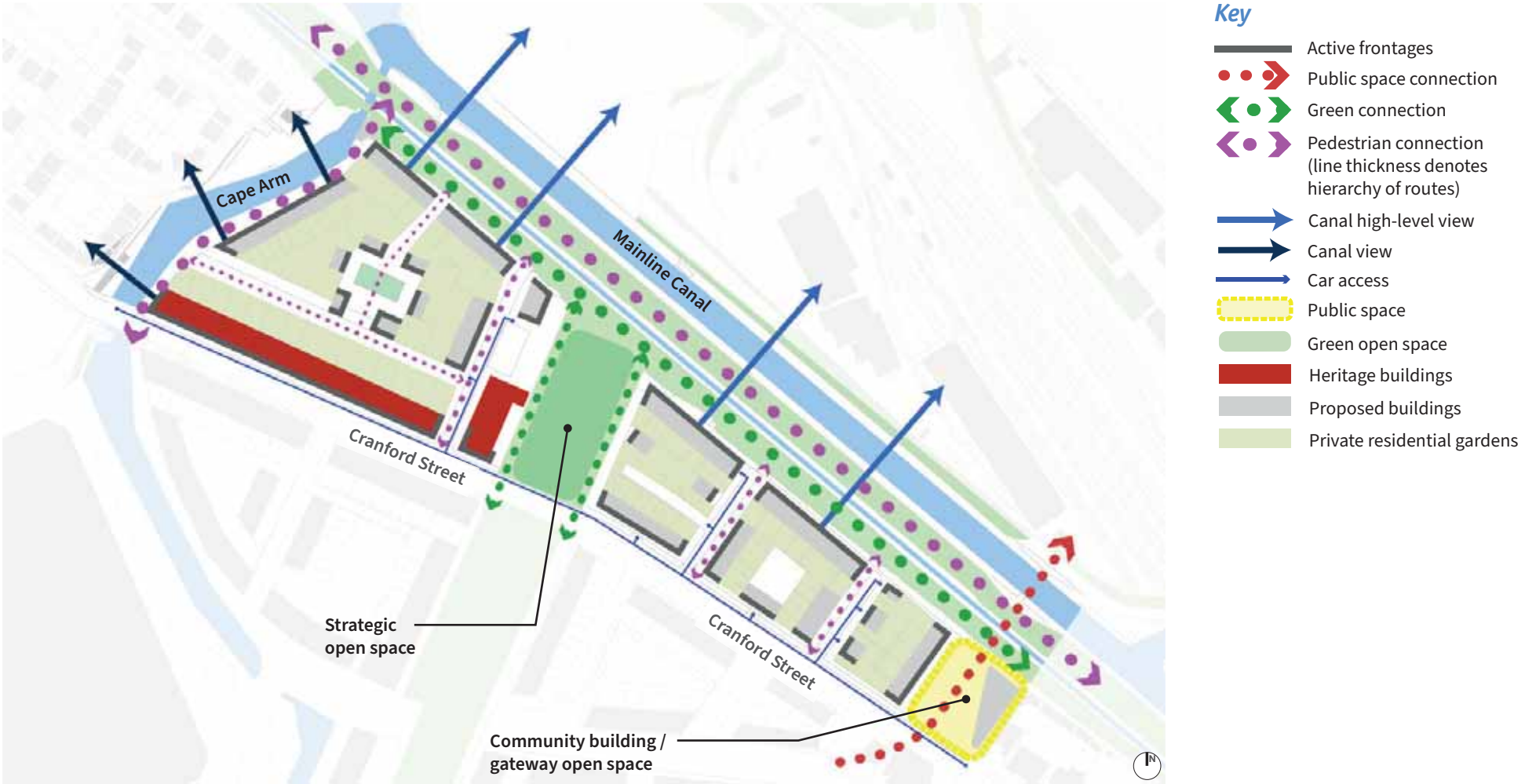


Fig. 5.10 - Key principles diagram

This page illustrates how the preferred option of the masterplan could be designed to achieve the design principles set out for this character area.

1. The retention of the industrial buildings will positively contribute to their surroundings by providing strong edges along Cranford Street, the public open space and the residential neighbourhood
2. The introduction of a public space and community pavilion at the intersection of the new public route through the masterplan and Winson street will mark and celebrate the only canal crossing within the vicinity and create the opportunity to learn about the history of the site.
3. Three storey houses will form interface with the feeder canal. Viewing balconies at the upper levels will allow views across to the Mainline canal and beyond.

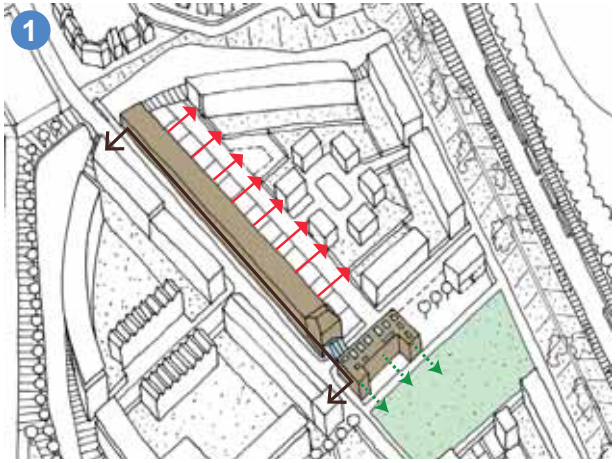


Fig. 5.11 - Retained industrial building

Fig. 5.12 - Public space and potential community pavilion

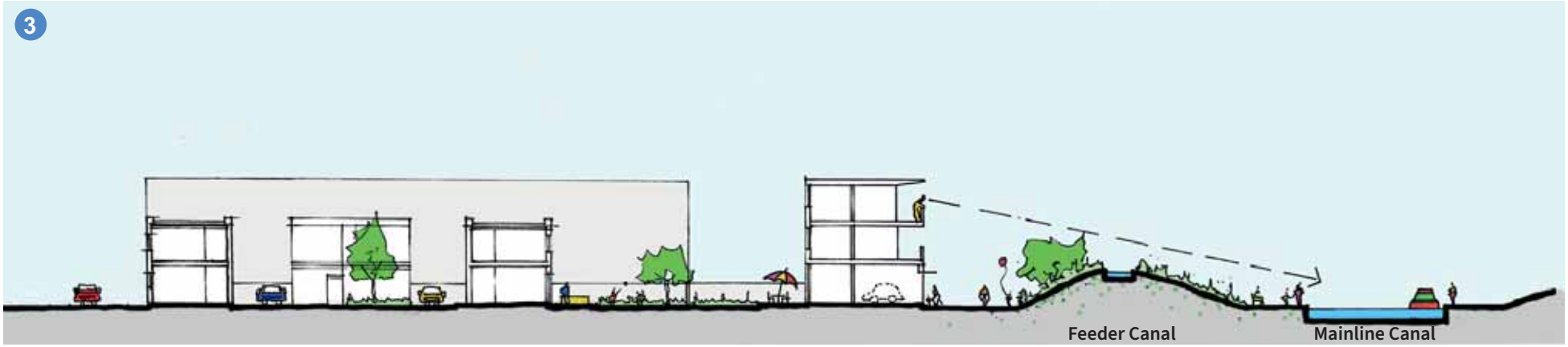


Fig. 5.13 - Interface with Mainline Canal

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Character Area 2: Cape Arm

Formal urban structure with waterfront frontages within the heart of the development.

Indicative capacity:

Density: Up to 80 dph

Residential dwellings: Approx. 160-170 no.

Cape Arm is a crucial part of the site, centrally located and adjacent to both the water and the hospital. The masterplan proposes the retention of an industrial building (with conversion to residential) on the southern side of Cranford Street if possible, although other potential proposals such as the bi-directional cycle route which requires road widening may alter this (see below).

New development would be primarily for residential use. There is scope for taller buildings along the waterfront, both to define the public realm along the waterfront, and to reflect the height of the hospital on the southern side.

The ground floor of the waterfront development lends itself to commercial development because it is alongside key public spaces and close to the heart of this new community – both the hospital community and new residents.,This location also lends itself to a focal building. High quality public spaces and good connectivity with help to animate the public realm. Apartments are favoured on the landmark blocks over the ground floor commercial uses, with houses on the remainder of the site; the balance between houses and flats is more equal. The commercial offer will need to reflect the requirements of the local catchment and be in line with local planning policy thresholds.

Development on all sides frames public space, and strong frontages are required; this applies to the north-south open space on the south side of this plot.

Learning campus

The NHS are considering developing the second phase of their learning campus within this Cape Arm character area, and is seeking to acquire a small landholding within this area to help enable this (the first phase would take place on land close to Dudley Road). The Trust would require up to 5,000sqm of space, either as a standalone building or as space shared with another use. This requirement would be for simple classrooms and community / administrative space. A design exercise for this facility will take place during Summer 2021.

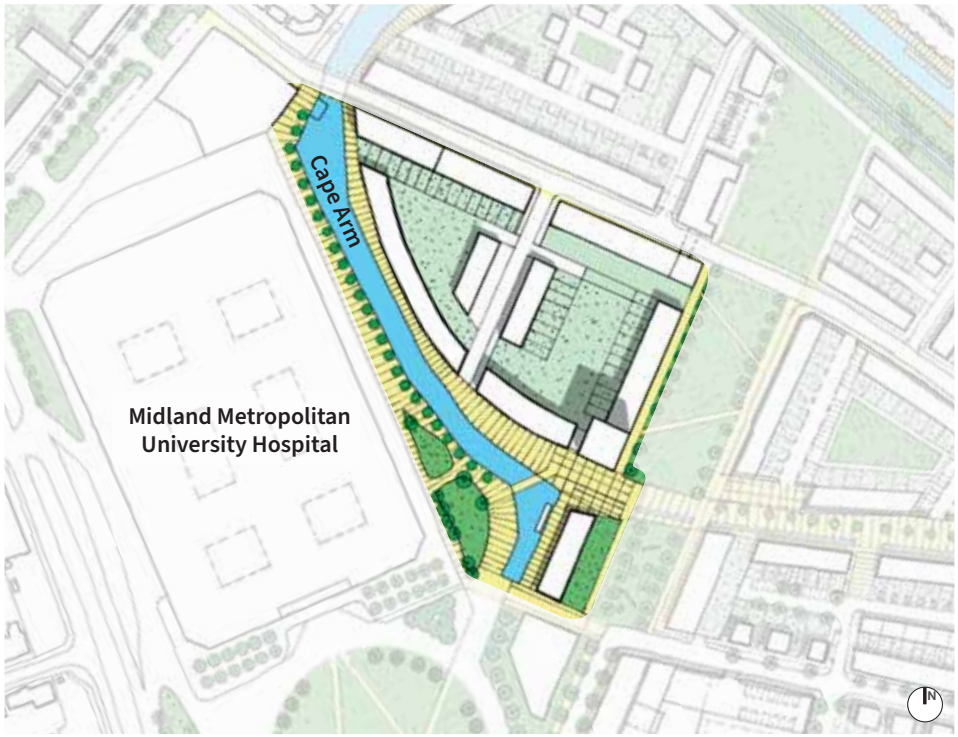

Fig. 5.13 - Cape Arm: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.15 - Character Area Extent

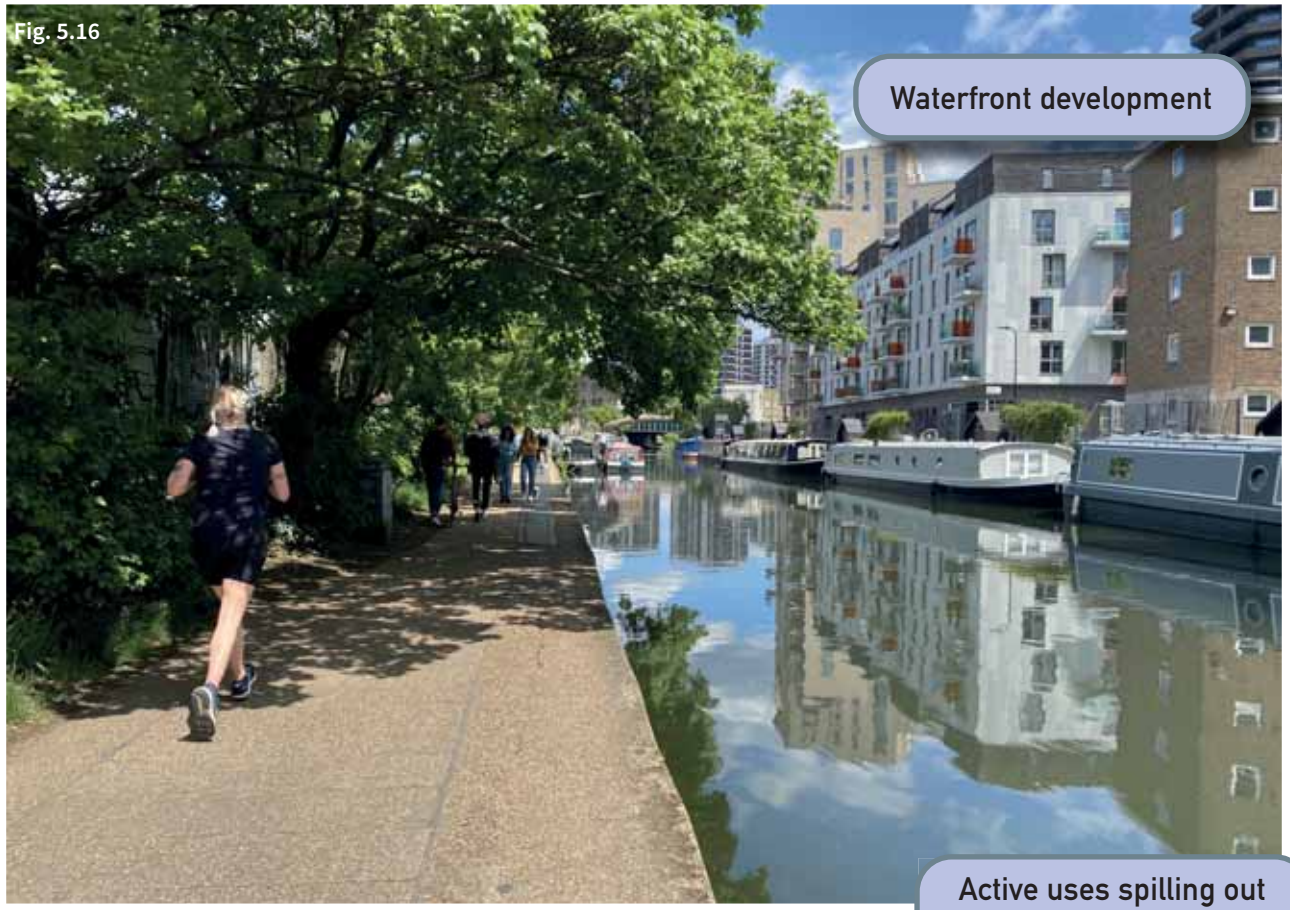

Fig. 5.16

Fig. 5.19

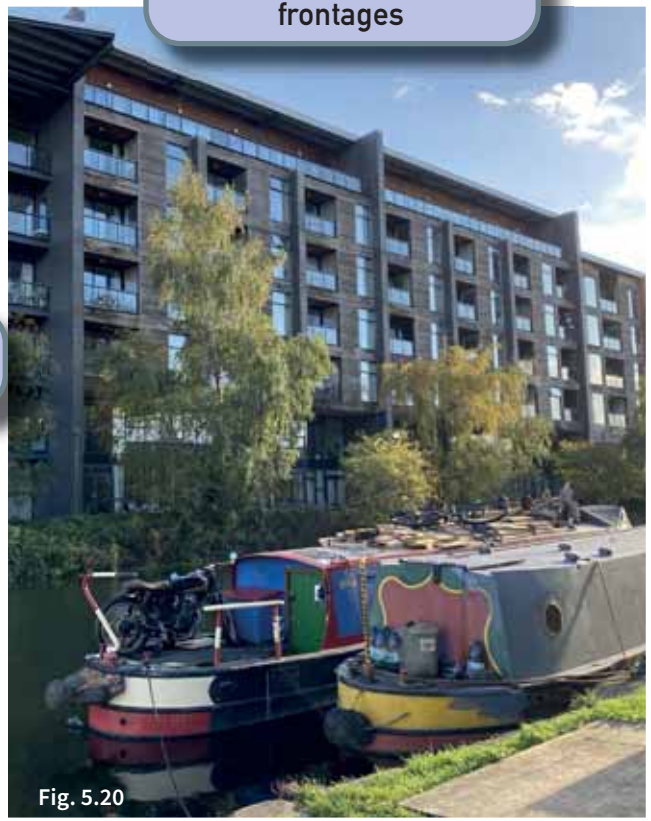

Fig. 5.20

Fig. 5.17

Fig. 5.18

Key Principles:

1. **Strong urban form** – clearly defined perimeter blocks of minimum three to five storeys with raised courtyards. The blocks will form a strong edge facing the public realm
2. **Existing industrial building** - retained refurbished and converted into residential use offering a special type of architecture and materiality
3. **Positive relationship with canal edge –** four storey townhouses will form a continuous built edge along the canal opposite the hospital
4. **Five storey apartment block** – will front the canal side stepping up from the 4st townhouses culminating in a 10 st tall building
5. **10 storey residential tower of landmark status** – the canal and open space together will form the setting for a tall building at this key junction. This is the hinge point where the two public routes meet
6. **Building form to create visual interest and respect the retained historic buildings** – it is envisaged that the built form will break down into individual elements to provide a distinct rhythm scale and enclosure
7. **Positive relationship with the open space** – 4 storey townhouses will form a continuous built edge along the open space
8. **Visual and physical links to the canal** – a continuous 2-3m wide public towpath will provide access to pedestrians and cyclists at all times connecting to the wider network beyond
9. **Active edges** – all external edges of the residential blocks will be animated with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum
10. **Strong urban form to the canal edge** – four storey family townhouses will form the new edge on to the canal stepping up to 5 storey apartment block and the landmark building to provide an appropriate scale to the open spaces and hospital across the canal building.
11. **Landscaping** – the landscape design must take into consideration the direct relationship of the site with the canal as well as the open space creating a seamless visual and physical connection between the two.
12. **Direct connection** across the canal to the hospital
13. **Parking** – access is directly off Cranford street and parking accommodated within an undercroft arrangement with raised residential courtyards.

The tallest point of the masterplan is within the Cape Arm area, where the canal branch terminates in the main open space. This point, close to the adjacent hospital, is at the heart of the area and can provide a focal point and a landmark for the neighbourhood. It also provides an important connection between the Cape Arm waterside and the principal open space, enabling movement, connection and orientation.

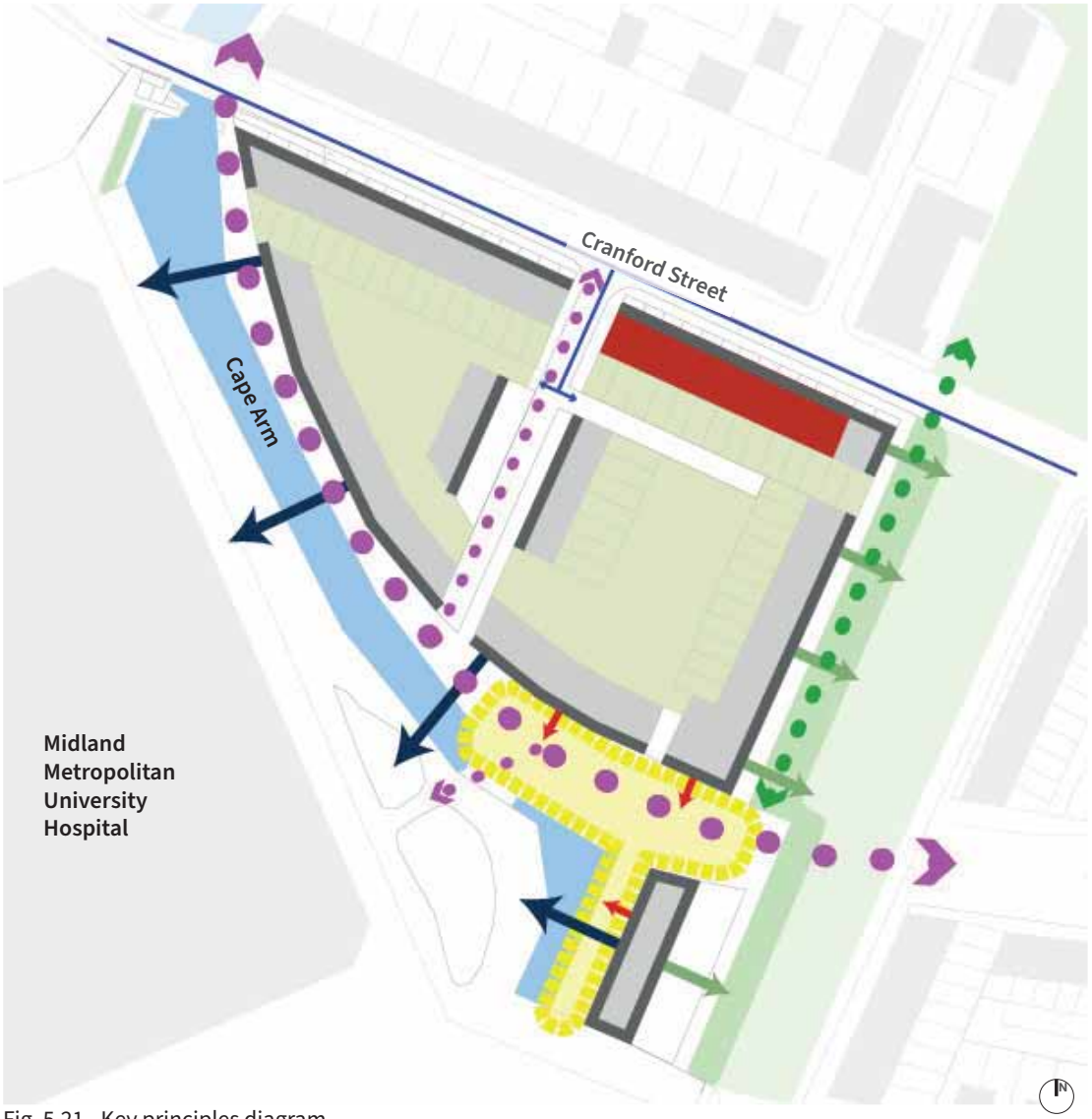

Fig. 5.21 - Key principles diagram

Cranford Street highway widening

The proposed Birmingham to Oldbury cycle path has a missing link which runs along Cranford Street. Sandwell Council has plans to widen the highway between Cape Arm and Winson Street, which would require the removal of all existing buildings on the southern side of Cranford Street (see also Abberley Street character area). The current carriageway would remain the same, but the bi-directional cycleway would be added to a minimum width footway. These plans are at an early stage, and further work will be required to understand the full extent of the impact on adjacent land.

The masterplan seeks the retention of some historic buildings to both give character to the new development by drawing on the past, and to reflect the industrial nature of the area, which is so important to its identity.

A solution to these two positive elements may require a compromise. The retention of the buildings would require a different traffic solution to this stretch of Cranford Street or the building's loss will have to be accepted. However, any radical solution may undermine its role on the key route network. The masterplan presents the two options to help develop the thinking in this area.

Fig. 5.22: Section location plan

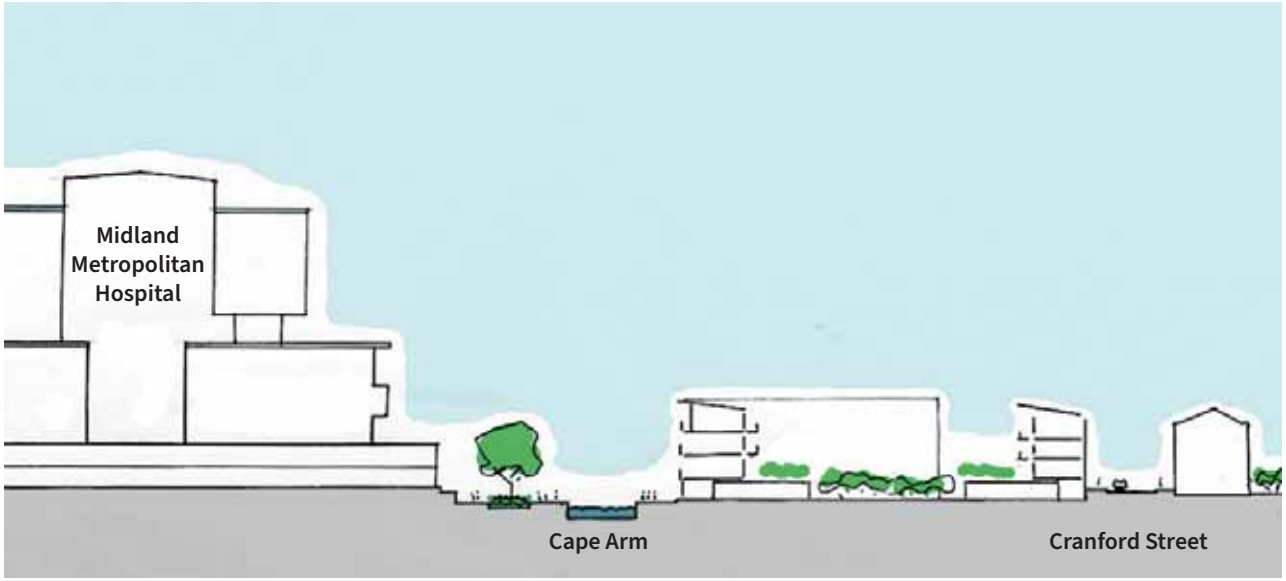

Fig. 5.23 - Illustrative section showing Cranford Street as existing within the Cape Arm character area.

Proposed cycle route on Cranford Street

Fig. 5.24 - Cranford Street as existing, overlaid on masterplan.

Fig. 5.25 - Cranford Street widened to accommodate the cycle route on its southern side, overlaid on masterplan

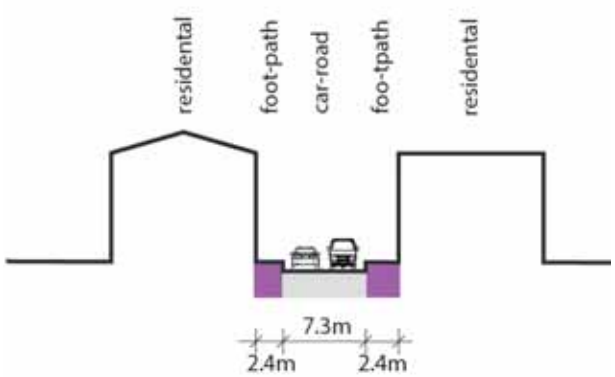

Fig. 5.26 - Section A-A: Cranford Street as existing

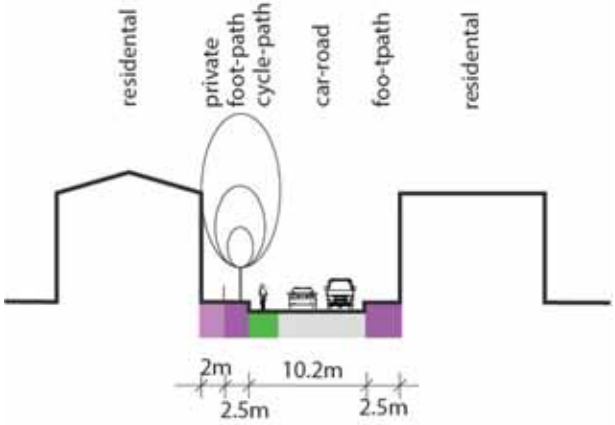

Fig. 5.27 - Section B-B: Cranford Street widening as proposed.

The tallest point of the masterplan is within the Cape Arm area, where the canal branch terminates in the main open space. This point, close to the adjacent hospital, is at the heart of the area and can provide a focal point and a landmark for the neighbourhood. It also provides an important connection between the Cape Arm waterside and the principal open space, enabling movement, connection and orientation.

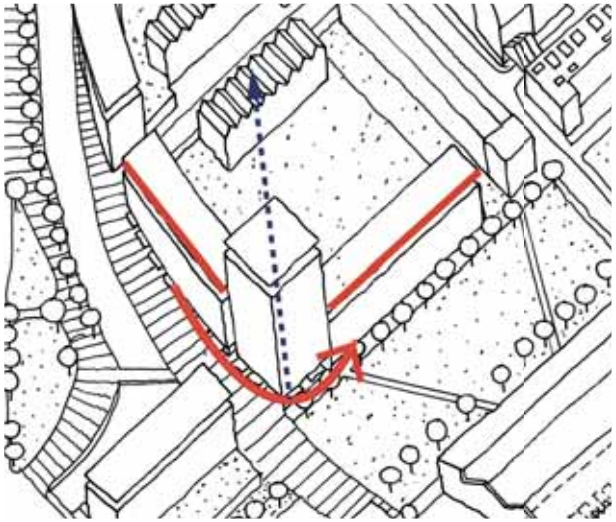

Fig. 5.28 - The focal building provides an important connection between areas of open space

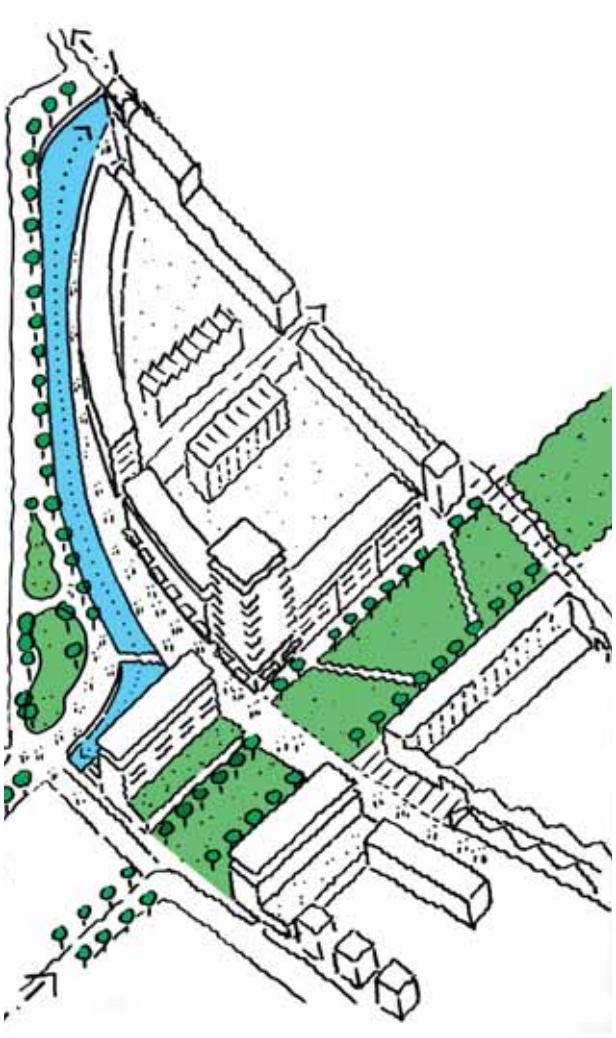

Fig. 5.29 - 3D illustration showing how the tallest element within the masterplan marks the heart of the site where the blue and green network converge.

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Character Area 3: Open Space network

Open space overlooked by strongly defined frontages forming the green spine through the site.

The open space network is crucial to the structure of the new neighbourhood. The large public space is planned and under construction for the front of the hospital, and is designed as a place for all.

Moilliett Street Park is presently an underperforming local park, but the masterplan seeks to allow development on the northern and southern sections of the park to create a higher quality neighbourhood park framed by the community it serves, and overlooked making it feel safer. The connections to and across the park are defined by the streets around it and make connections beyond the Grove Lane area itself – into Dudley Road and across Winson Street to Tudor Street.

From the hospital entrance, a spur of open space drives north towards the canal, seeking to make that connection to the canal – itself an important and underused open space. It is a key structural space, requiring development to frame it, and defining the character areas within the overall scheme.

Whilst not reinstating the canal loop that did exist between the basin and the Winson Street junction with Heath Street, the masterplan acknowledges this route and allows the opportunity for a reinstatement of the canal if this becomes possible in future.

The masterplan allows for a range of types of open space to be provided. This ranges from the expansive formal space provided by the hospital entrance, to the neighbourhood park, which could provide general amenity space alongside children's play space. More natural space can be provided by the canal corridor, if a link can be created, and the waterfront spaces around the canal arm offer an opportunity for leisurely urban space.

It is vitally important that the structure of the public realm provides easy, clear, safe routes between major public spaces both within the Grove Lane area and beyond it, to spaces such as Summerfield Park and amenity areas in Windmill Eye where new residents may connect with the existing communities.

Fig. 5.30 - Open Space Network: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.31 - Character Area Extent

Interlinked blue and green network

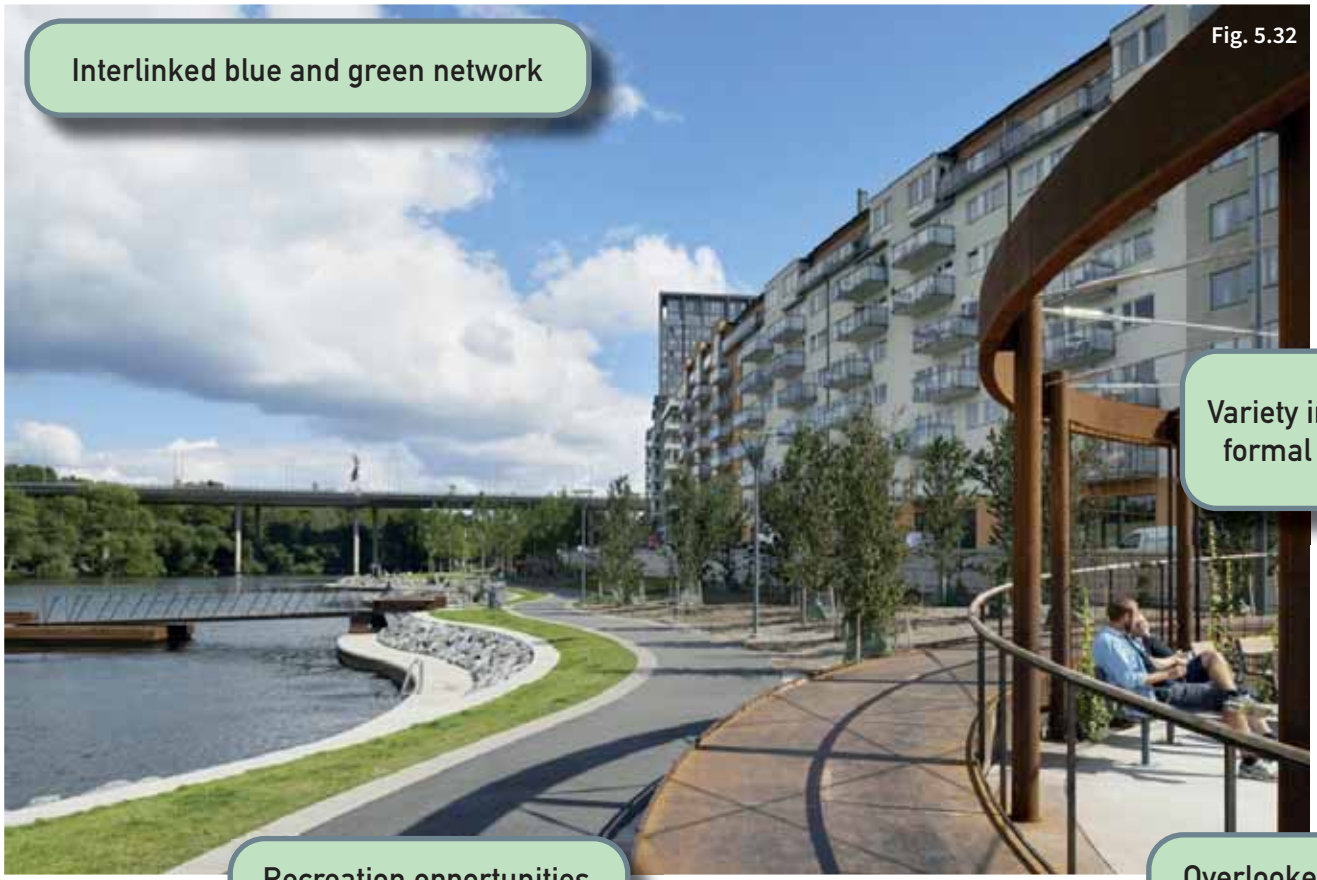

Fig. 5.32

Fig. 5.33

Variety in character, from formal to more natural

Fig. 5.34

Recreation opportunities

Fig. 5.35

Overlooked by development

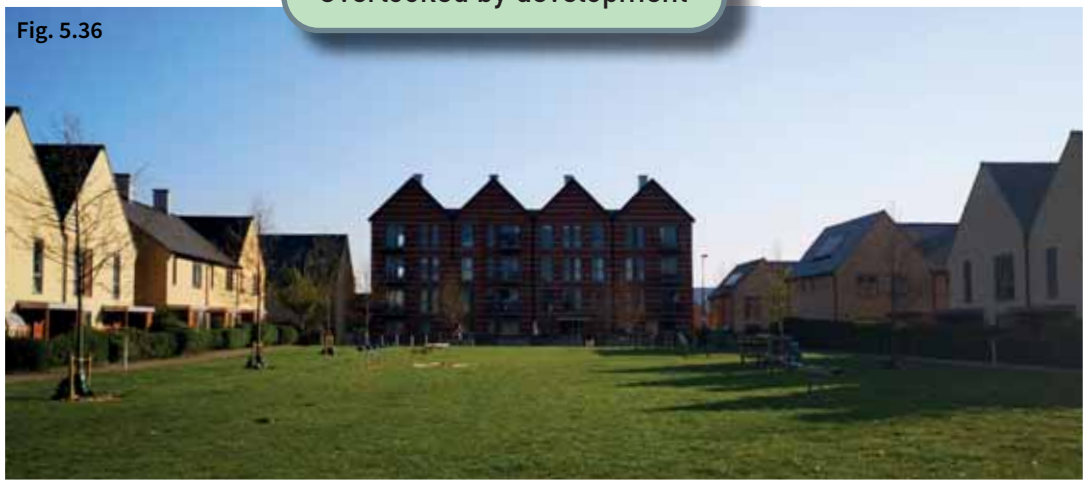

Fig. 5.36

Character Area 3: Open Space network

The main linear open space sits within the core of the neighbourhood, and has a role not only in enabling movement between places, but in providing different settings and activities within it. Towards the north, the lower rise buildings make for a more informal setting that feels wide and open and may lend itself to walking, informal activity and reflection.

Towards the south, as the building height and density changes, the space between them feels more contained and more structured, which may allow for greater numbers to gather for events and formal activity, whilst also providing overlooking from the higher buildings. This area may lend itself to a more structured form of public realm with harder landscapes and more street furniture.

Key

- Active frontages
- Green connection
- Green space view
- Green open space
- Proposed buildings

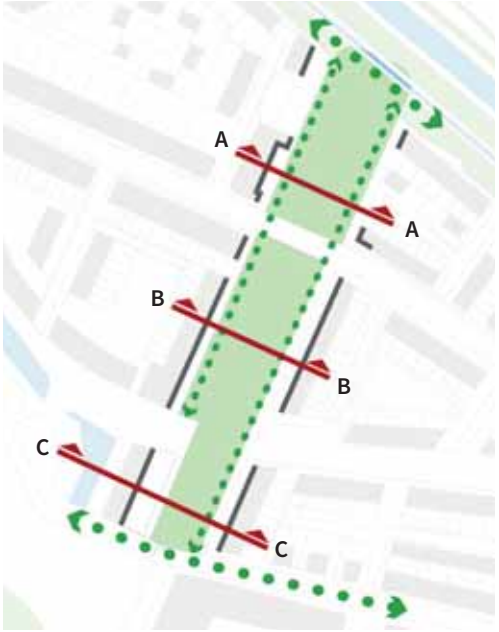

Fig. 5.37 - Section location plan

Type A - Informal

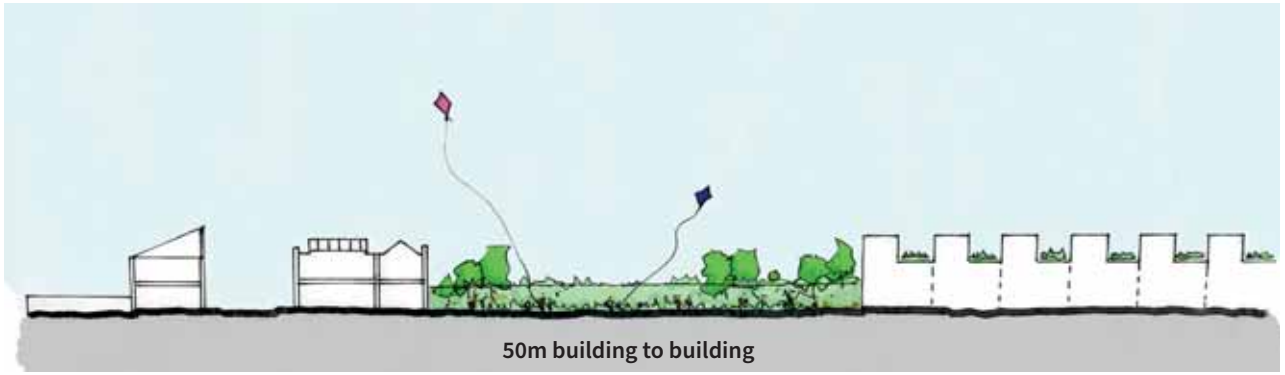

Fig. 5.38 - Illustrative section of informal open space

Type B - Formal

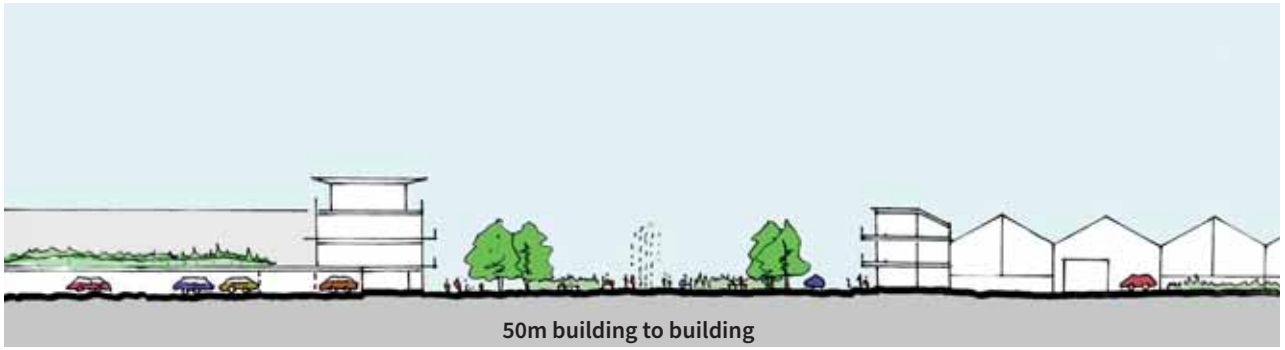

Fig. 5.39 - Illustrative section of formal open space

Type C - Playspace

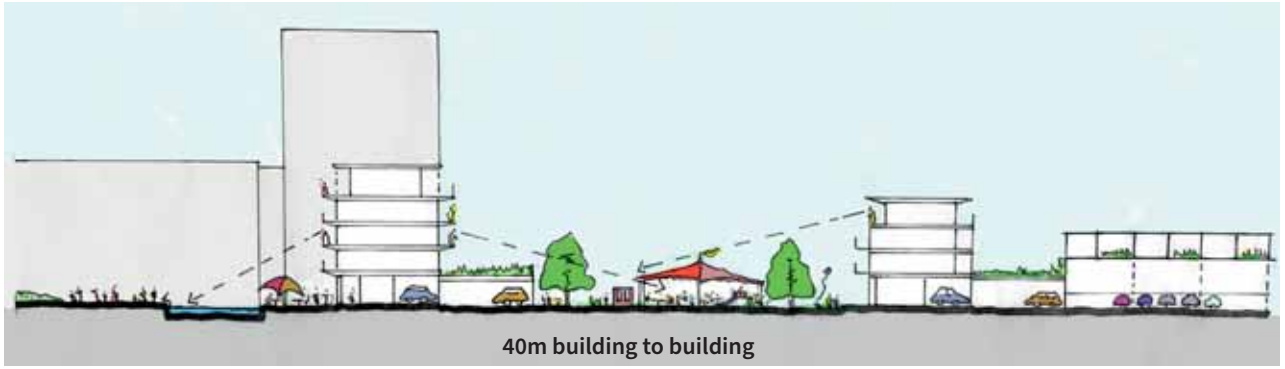

Fig. 5.40 - Illustrative section of playspace

Open Space Standards

Sandwell Council have standards for the provision of open space for new developments, and the standards are set on the basis of an assessment of open space already available in the borough. Open space is defined across a range of different types of space, which includes allotments, amenity space, natural space, children's play areas and parks. Sandwell sets the standard per 1000 people at a rate of 4.42ha across all types of open space.

The masterplan for Grove Lane proposes around 800 new homes, which would imply an overall need for around 9 or 10 hectares dependent on the household size assumption, though the masterplan provides for between 3 to 4 hectares, including the hospital's public space.. This is a significant under provision.

However, consultation with Sandwell officers has clarified that the standards ought not to be regarded as an absolute on quantity; there is a regard to the quality of open space as well. With existing green spaces easily accessible within the vicinity – including Green Flag park, play areas and the canal network - the provision of open space as part of a planned structural network that would enable movement between spaces and to spaces beyond the Grove Lane area is therefore considered to be suitable. If a connection can also be made more directly to the canal, this would be further improved.

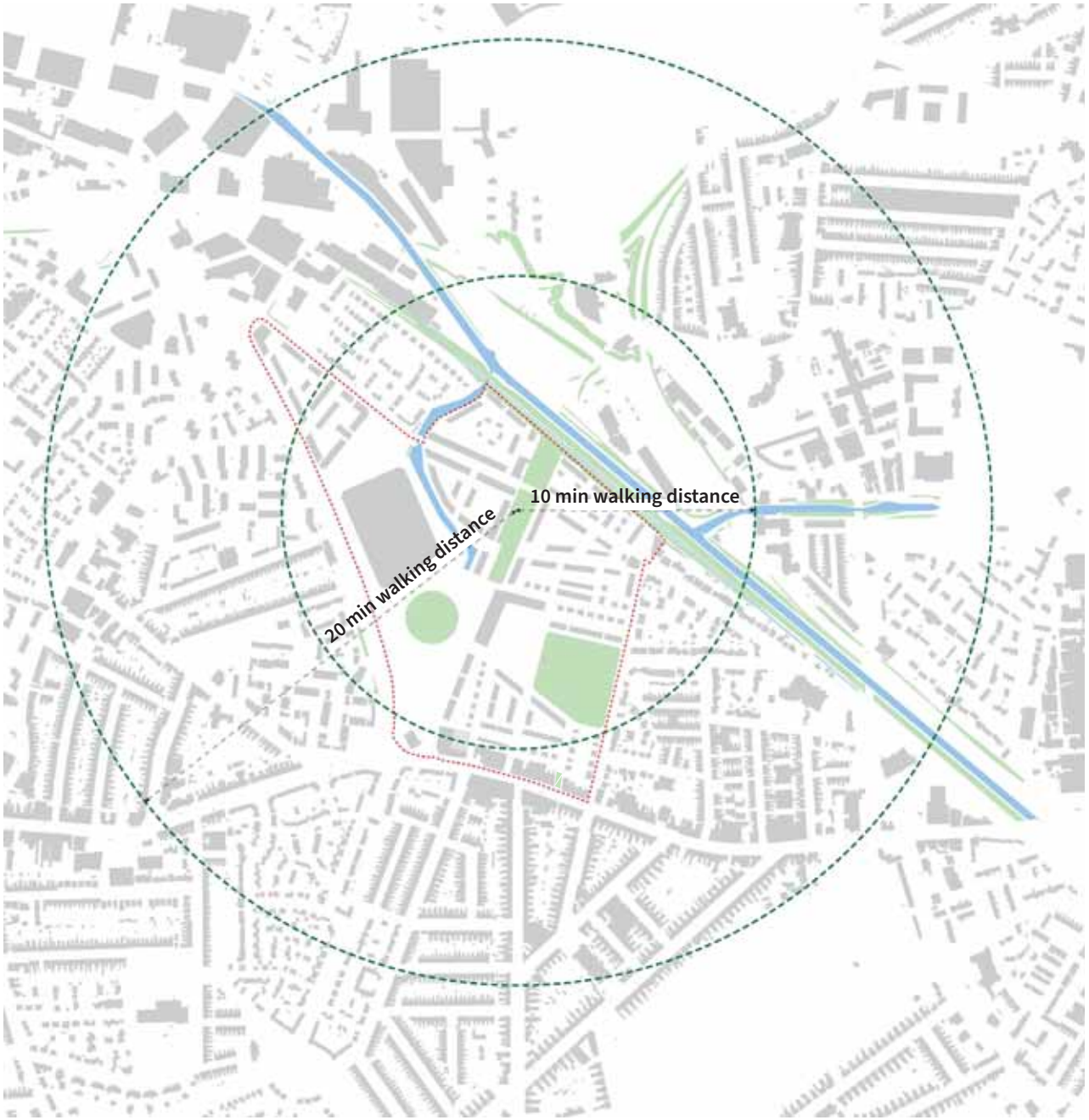

Fig. 5.41 - Grove Lane masterplan - Walking Distances - Central green Wider context

Character Area 4: Grove Street and Primary School

Neighbourhood creating gateway entrance to the site from Grove Lane and a considered transition between the hospital and Moilliett Street Park

Indicative capacity:

Density: Up to 145 dph

Residential dwellings: Approx. 70 - 85 no.

The Grove Street area faces the MMU hospital entrance and its open space and will provide a key access to the preferred school location, which is bounded by Grove Street, Abberley Street and Dugdale Street. In addition, the Grove Street area incorporates an important connection that links two areas of strategic open space: the landscaped area in front of the hospital and Moilliett Park.

In respect of the housing provision on the southern parts of this area, the importance of the frontage needs some height and mass, and the masterplan looks to have five storey buildings on Grove Street, and a housing mix that strongly favours flats and apartments over houses. Houses would front Halberton Street.

Fig. 5.42 - Grove Street and Primary School: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.43 - Character Area Extent

Fig. 5.44

Fig. 5.45

Fig. 5.46

Fig. 5.47

Fig. 5.48

Grove Lane school

The area requires the provision of a 2 form entry primary school to serve the future community. Engagement with the Sandwell Education team set out a preference for:

- A site area of between a minimum 2.3 ha and a maximum of 2.8 ha;
  - both playing fields and hard-standing / playground areas;
  - a securely enclosed playing field that could be made available for public use. There is a statutory requirement to provide 'team game area' (playing field) for children age over 8 years of age for new school developments. Preference for a playing field in school control to overcome continual risk assessment processes.
  - a site exclusively in education use (i.e. the shared shouldn't be shared with other uses, particularly residential use due to safeguarding issues).

The Grove Lane area has few potential sites that might be suitable for a school, but the provision of any site to meet the above expectations would have a significant impact on the overall masterplan. The map, right, shows a red line boundary / shaded area across the preferred site and the adjoining site to the southwest. Assuming this would include playing fields, this level of land take takes 125 units (71 flats and 54 houses) dwellings from the overall capacity of the Grove Lane area, but also compromises the compactness and connectivity of the area as a whole.

The preferred location is between Grove Lane and Heath Street at the northern end of Halberton Street. This location is distant from the main traffic corridors (and so from traffic pollution and noise), is close to the open areas at Moilliett Street Park and the front of the hospital and would be at the heart of the family housing in the new neighbourhood. A compact site central to the community encourages walking and cycling.

At the detailed design stage, the school boundaries must be secure, yet attractive. The boundary treatment may be a hedge and railing – continuous solid fences or galvanised security fencing should not be promoted. Railings should be painted or powder coated to appear painted. Where fences are unavoidable alongside streets, these should be designed to be attractive and make a positive contribution, by for example integrating art work or hedges.

The preferred masterplan has drawn on examples of urban schools within Sandwell and Birmingham and in other parts of the country where a smaller land provision is required. By providing a two-storey building with innovative use of available surfaces (including roof space) a compact facility can be provided that provides safety and security in a modern, stimulating environment and maintains other elements of the masterplan that are important, including sustainability, connectivity and a healthy neighbourhood.

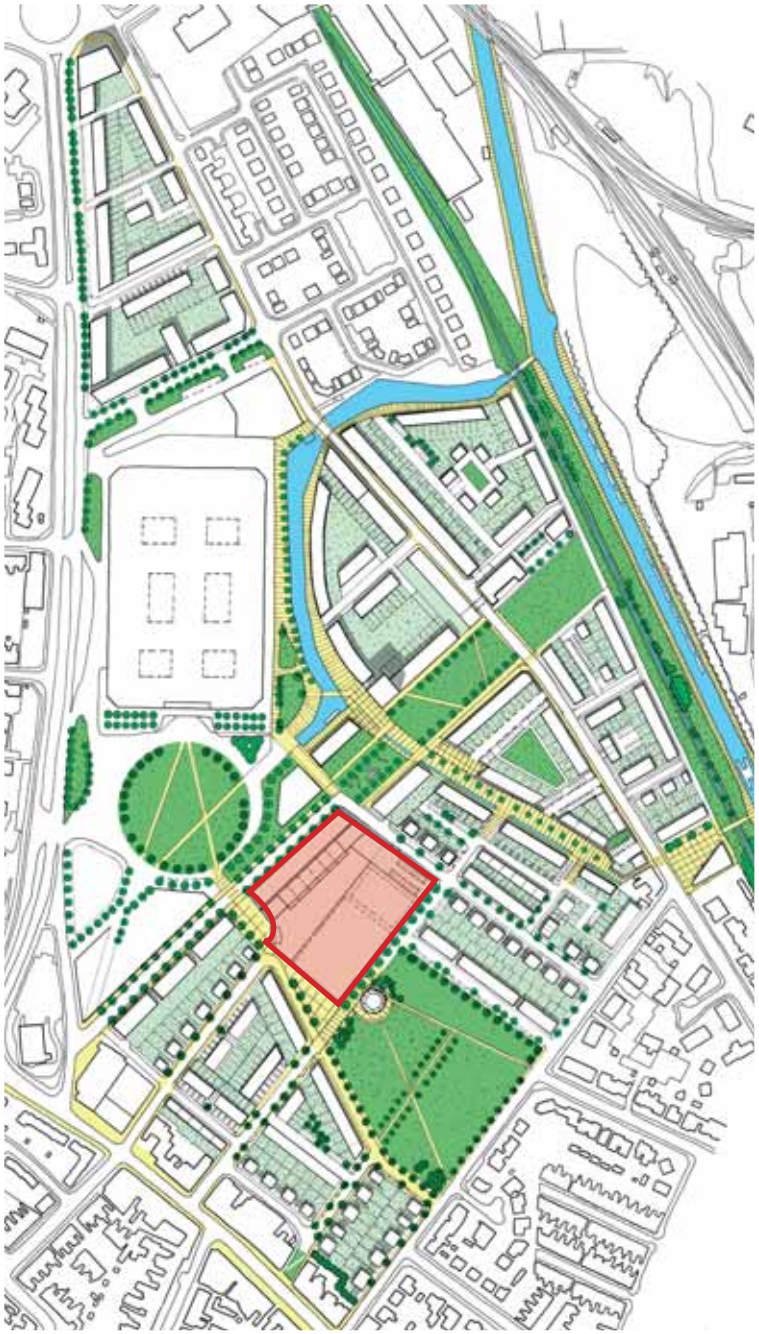

Fig. 5.49 - Existing land take for school (1.1ha)

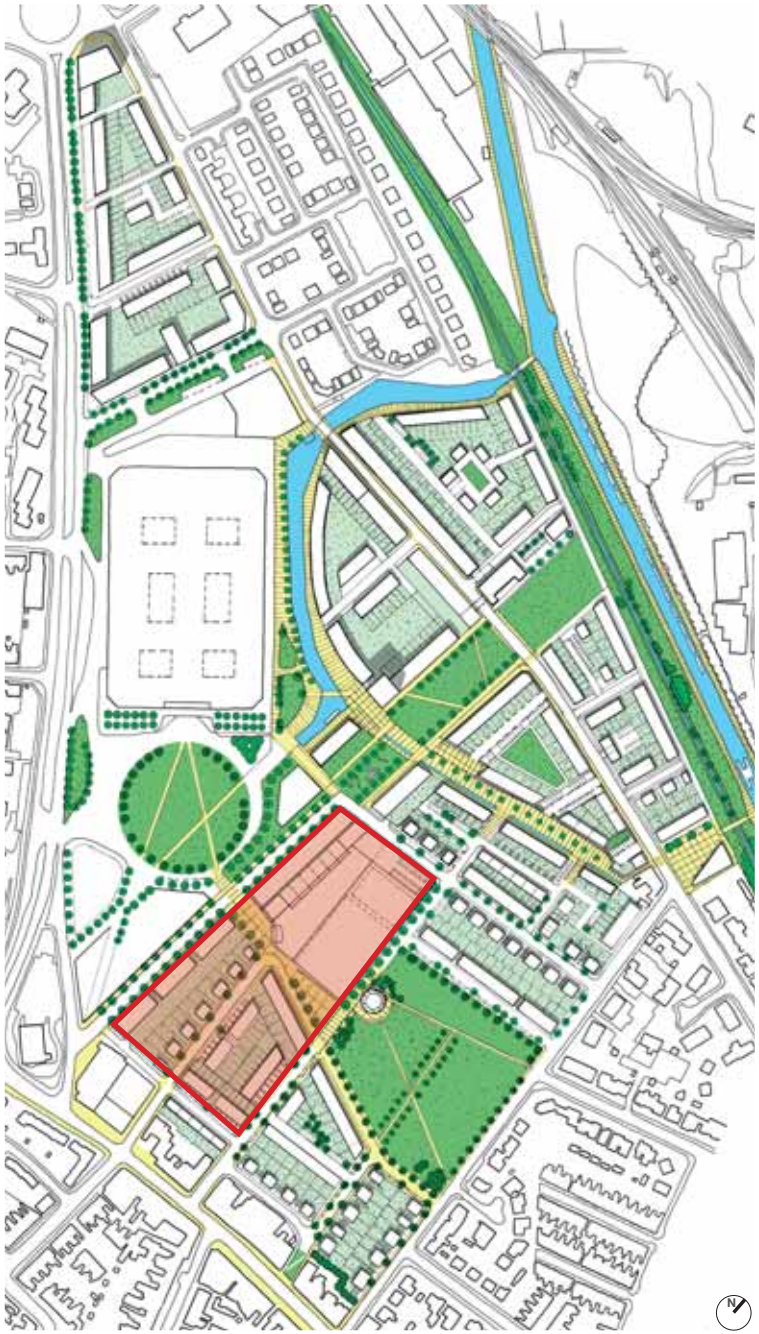

Fig. 5.50 - Larger school site (2.6ha)

Key Principles:

1. **Strong urban form onto Grove Street** – five storey apartment block will form a new edge on this primary route into the site and opposite the hospital
2. **Location of Primary school** – will form a strong presence along the main route with its entrance along the key connecting route between the hospital and Moilliett Street Park
3. **Retained historic curved wall** – this is an important urban fabric with a distinct form that needs to be retained and incorporated within the school design strategy if feasible to do so.
4. **A safe and attractive environment** – the tree lined street is the main route into the site and will form an important part of the public realm and must be of the highest quality. The key pedestrian and cycle connection that passes the school to the south and provides the link between the hospital and Moilliett Park must be designed to be multifunctional. This space, or series of spaces, should provide some enclosure to create variety and interest when moving between the two larger areas of open space at its eastern and western end. This should be designed to accommodate urban landscaping, spaces for people to sit, waiting space for parents outside of the school and opportunities for play
5. **Views** to the Hospital landscaped grounds
6. **Active edges** – all external edges of the residential blocks will be animated with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum
7. **Scale** - Three storey family houses on Halberton Street will step down from the taller block fronting Grove Street and form a new residential edge and appropriate scale within the residential neighbourhood
8. **Gateway** – retained art deco cinema refurbished and extended to form a cultural quarter at this key location along the high street. This will turn the corner into the site, connecting into both Dudley Road Local Centre and the new development
9. **Strong visual and physical link** between the hospital landscaped open grounds and Moilliett Street Park
10. **Parking** – access to the school will be off Abberley street, residential access will be off Grove Street immediately on entering the site thus limiting car movement within the development

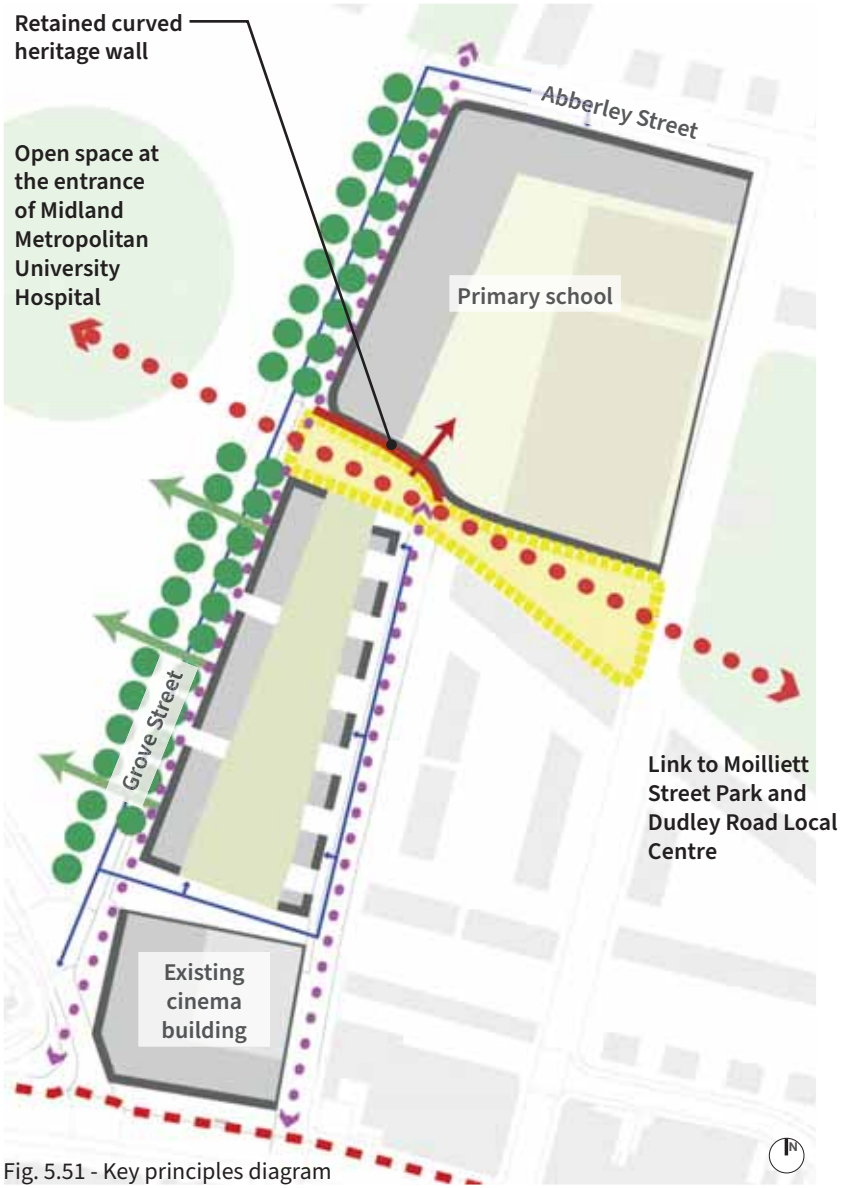

Fig. 5.51 - Key principles diagram

Key

- Active frontages
- Public space connection
- Green connection
- Pedestrian connection (line thickness denotes hierarchy of routes)
- School entrance
- Green space view
- Car access
- Public space
- Green open space
- Proposed buildings
- Private residential gardens

The Grove Street character area has the potential to form the heart of the new community in Grove Lane. Central to the area, and adjacent to some of the taller landmark buildings, it also has a role in providing the primary school and in bringing the scale of the development down from the hospital to the family housing expected to be delivered towards the south and east of the area.

The section, below, shows how development fronting Grove Street plays a role in addressing the public space to the front of the hospital with a higher and denser form, before stepping down toward the lower, family housing which exists beyond Winson Street. The masterplan proposes some development on Moilliett Street Park, and this should reflect the need for family type housing whilst meeting other objectives for this character area. The section also shows how parking and building separation might be achieved, respecting privacy and integrating parking off-street where possible.

Residential development will surround the school, and access to the school by car will be expected, though a Travel Plan should be established to optimise all forms of travel and make walking and cycling attractive. Attention will need to be paid to the accommodation of on-street parking within the public realm.

Fig. 5.53: Section location plan

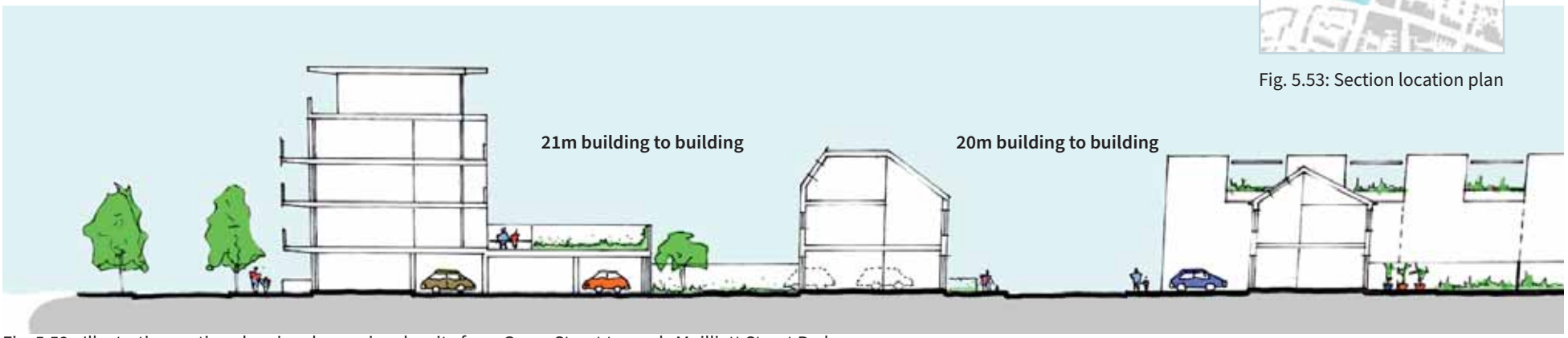

Fig. 5.52 - Illustrative section showing decreasing density from Grove Street towards Moilliett Street Park

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Character Area 5: Moilliett Street Park

Open space well overlooked by development which forms a coherent link between Dudley Street Local Centre, the site and the canal.

Indicative capacity

Density: Up to 43 dph

Residential dwellings: Approx. 100 - 120 no.

Moilliett Street Park is an important green space in the locality, and one of very few amenity spaces in the area. In light of the acknowledged shortage of green space in the area, it should be retained and made to work in an improved way for the community. The park currently suffers from under-use and has associated problems that both contribute to, and result from, this. The masterplan proposes some development within the park to help to frame it, concentrate activity and encourage use.

Fig. 5.54 - Moilliett Street Park

The masterplan proposes a development of houses on the northern and southern parts of the park, framing it, and providing new footpaths across it as part of the open space network. The new route would link Dudley Road to the MMUH. The park would be the heart of the new residential neighbourhood, which would meet a need for family houses in the area. The open space would still have sufficient area to provide family play activities and general amenity space..

Moilliett Street is currently an unattractive street to the rear of properties that front Dudley Road. The street is not overlooked by buildings and there are problems with littering. The masterplan seeks to address this by providing a new building frontage to the northern side of the street.

A higher quality development could be achieved if the former pub site on Winson Road, and the car park at the north western corner of Moilliett Park, were planned together to achieve a comprehensive approach.

In addition, Plan 5.55 illustrates a proposal to close Moilliett Street at its southern end to vehicular traffic, instead creating a pocket park which would form an attractive entrance to the site from Dudley Road.

Fig. 5.55 - Moilliett Street Park: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.56 - Character Area Extent

Fig. 5.57

Fig. 5.58

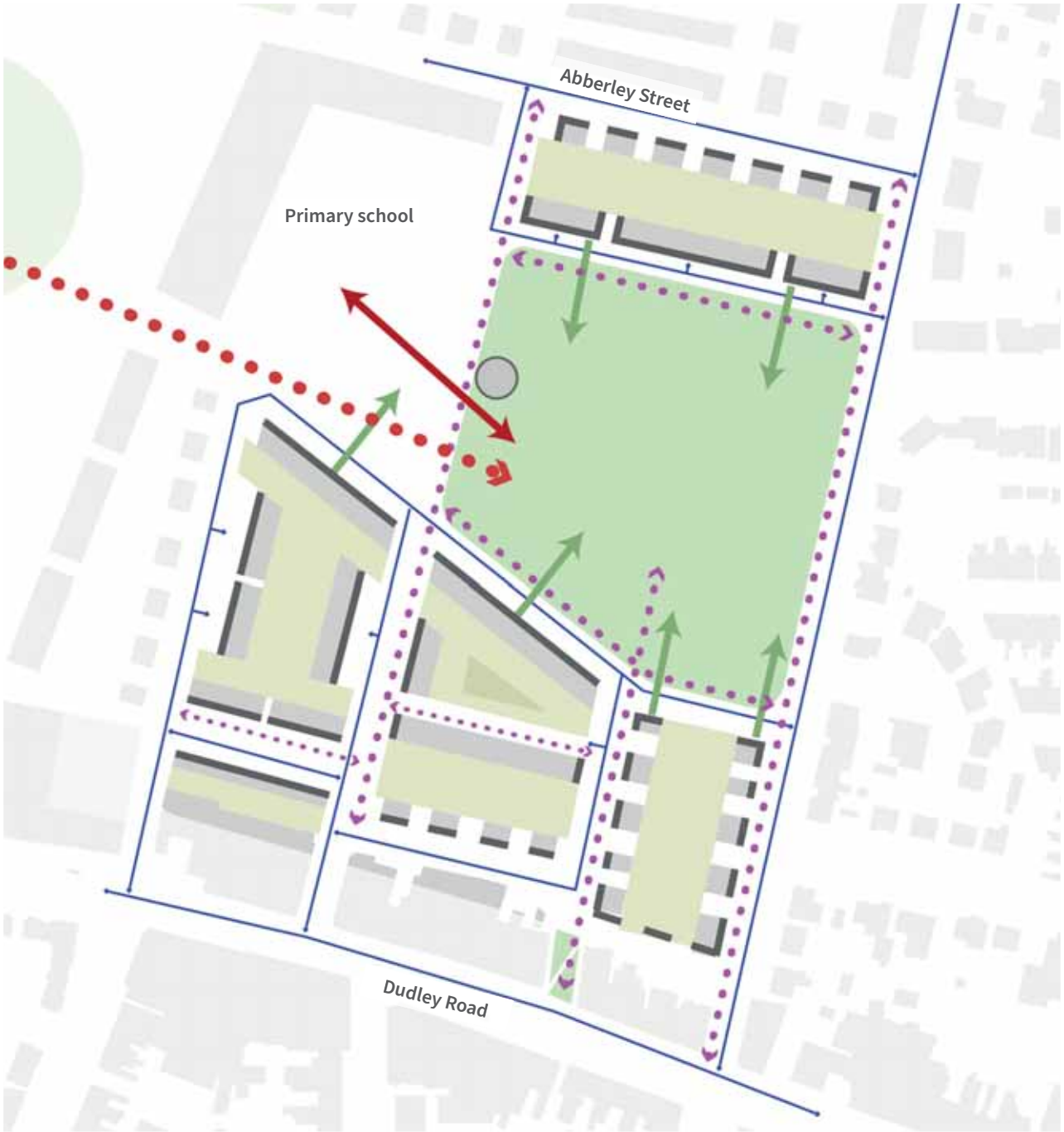
Frontages framing Moilliett Street Park

Fig. 5.59

Fig. 5.60

Key Principles:

1. **Moilliett Street Park** – a reconfigured and redesigned park of good proportions will become the focus for the surrounding residential community on a local and town wide scale. It must be a safe and attractive public space for people to visit and enjoy
2. **A well defined enclosure** – new buildings forming clearly defined perimeter edges to the north and south of the space will be three storey family houses of a distinct typology to frame the park.
3. **Active edges** – surrounding the park will be family houses, all frontages active with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum
4. **Direct and visual link** to the hospital and to the open space network
5. **Direct relationship with the school** – opportunity to have direct connections and use of the open space
6. **Active edges** – all external edges of the residential blocks will be animated with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum. Residential units to the north and south of Moilliett Park must front onto, and overlook the space.
7. **Key view to and from Grove street**
8. **Key views to and from Dudley Road**
9. **Routes through** – vehicular/pedestrian/cycle
10. **A range of housing typologies** of two to three storey dwellings to create variety and interest within the new neighbourhoods north and south of the park
11. **Landscaping** – a well considered soft landscaped open space providing amenity space for the residents of the immediate and wider area
12. **Parking** – parking access will be from the surrounding streets and will be accommodated in a variety of ways, either within the building footprint, at the front or sides of the houses or in small parking courts integrated within a landscape strategy.
13. **Provide a pocket park** at the south of Moilliett Street, which will create a gateway entrance into the site from Dudley Road.



Key

- Active frontages
- Public space connection
- Green connection
- Pedestrian connection (line thickness denotes hierarchy of routes)
- School entrance
- Green space view
- Car access
- Green open space
- Proposed buildings
- Private residential gardens

Making an entrance

Birmingham City Council have landholdings on the corner of Dudley Road and Moilliett Street which could allow environmental improvements to be made to the access point into Moilliett Street and the park as part of a connected and comprehensive approach to improving the park, the connections across it and towards the hospital and the environment on Dudley Road itself.

Fig. 5.61 - Dudley Road Local Centre

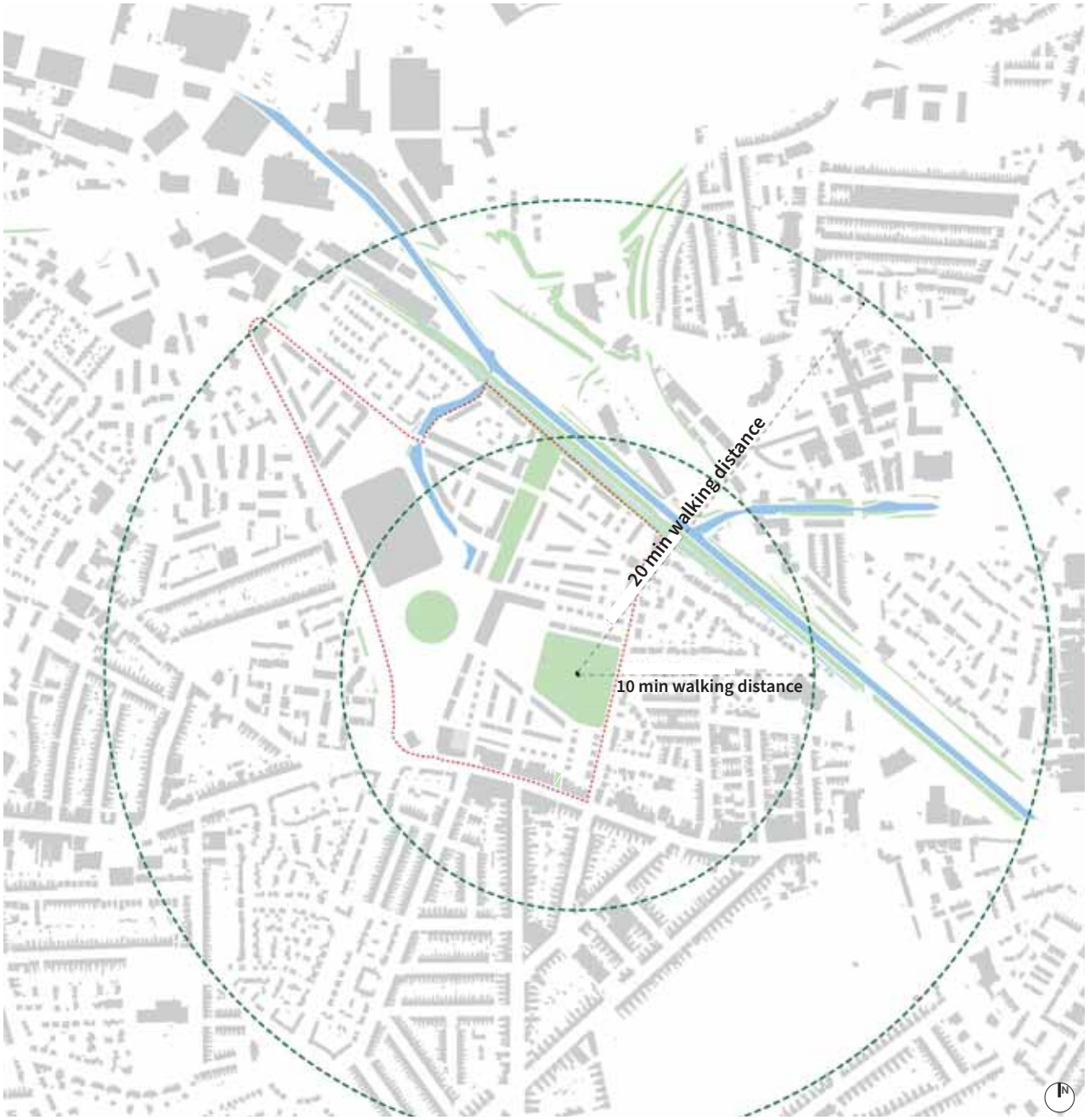


Fig. 5.62 - Moilliett Street Park Walking Distances

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Character Area 6: Abberley Street / New route

Residential area creating a key link between Moilliett Park and the strategic green spine through the site

Indicative capacity:

To be determined via more detailed design work.

Abberley Street is at the northern side of Moilliett Street Park, and connects with Grove Street to the west and Winson Street to the east. It is a key part of the movement network.

Development of the site has a number of roles to play, which are important to the success of the whole area. It has to frame the north-south open space at the western end, close to the canal basin; it has to provide a strong relationship to Moilliett Street Park and development that may take place at its northern end, and it needs consider its relationship with the route of the former canal, proposed as part of the movement network.

The masterplan proposes strong frontages to the movement channels and a particular emphasis on the western end of the site.

The preferred approach is set out in the masterplan that aligns with current evidence of need and demand for this area. A higher density solution may also be possible if future demand dictates, subject to also meeting spatial and parking requirements set out in the adopted design guidance.

The warehouse complex to the north – Heath Street Industrial Estate – is a historic element of the area, and the preferred approach of the masterplan has been to maintain this and convert to residential. This, however, would be dependent upon the introduction of the bi-directional cycleway which would require land alongside the southern edge of Heath Street and would therefore prevent retention of these units. In addition, the masterplan currently retains the former Queens Arm building on the corner of Heath Street / Winson Street. The retention and restoration of this distinctive tiled frontage could form an attractive anchor to this north eastern gateway into the site.

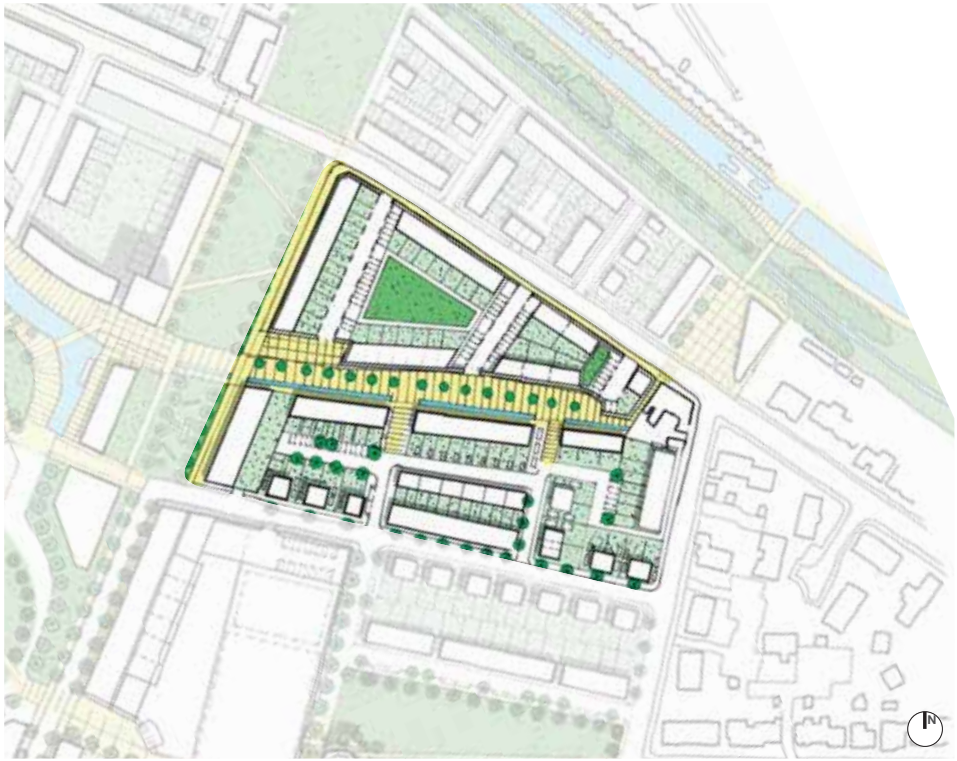

Fig. 5.63 - Abberley Street / New route: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.64 - Character Area Extent

Fig. 5.65

Fig. 5.66

Distinctive heritage roofline

Fig. 5.67

Fig. 5.68

Fig. 5.69

Direct relationship with central open space

Key Principles:

1. **Existing industrial building** - retained refurbished and converted into residential use offering a special type of architecture and materiality and will form a continuous edge to the north side of the public route
2. **New pedestrian and cycle route** following the historic route of the canal will provide a direct link to the canal and will add quality and legibility to the place
3. **Proposed southern edge** – a mix of dwelling types will form the southern edge of the new public route facing the retained building, providing an appropriate scale and enclosure to the space
4. **Building form to create visual interest and respect the retained historic building** – it is envisaged that the built form will break down into individual elements to provide a distinct rhythm, scale and enclosure
5. **Active edges** – all external edges of the residential blocks will be animated with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum
6. **Visual and physical link to the canal basin** - the new route will form an important part of the public realm providing direct views and links and fully integrating with the green open space
7. **Positive relationship with the open space** – the retained and refurbished building and an apartment block will form a continuous built edge along the open space
8. **Landscaping** – the landscape design must take into consideration the direct relationship of the site with the open space creating a seamless visual and physical connection between the two.
9. **Parking** – access is directly off Cranford Street in the north and Abberley Street in the south and parking accommodated in different ways, either within the building footprint, in external garages or in parking courts where they will be fully integrated within the landscape strategy

Cranford Street highway widening

As previously mentioned, whilst the preferred option is to retain some of the heritage buildings along the Cranford Street frontage, both to the north and south of the highway, proposals that assist in promoting more walking and cycling in the area would hinder the retention of the units.

Whilst the carriageway itself would remain as existing, to incorporate a bi-directional cyclepath that connects the cyclepaths both in Birmingham and Sandwell, the footpath itself would require widening, hence this would necessitate some land take on at least one side of Cranford Street.

Two options have therefore been provided to assist in finding a solution that would achieve the best outcome.

Fig. 5.70 - Key principles diagram

Key

- Active frontages
- Green connection
- Pedestrian connection
- Green space view
- Public space view
- Car access
- Public space
- Green open space
- Heritage buildings
- Proposed buildings
- Private residential gardens

The Abberley Street area provides the opportunity to retain existing older buildings, though this would be more limited in the event of land being required on the northern side of the plot for the cycleway. Maintaining the existing façades could both offer a connection to the past and the heritage of the area, whilst also giving a prompt to the form and rhythm of new buildings.

The southern side of the character area forms a missing link between the Cape Arm basin and the Main Line, and could be retained as a focal space and movement corridor, again reflecting past uses. The masterplan envisages development fronting this space and a link all the way to the canal towpath itself.

The section through this parcel demonstrates the lower nature of the intended built form, with good distances between buildings and parking integrated and provided for off-street where possible.

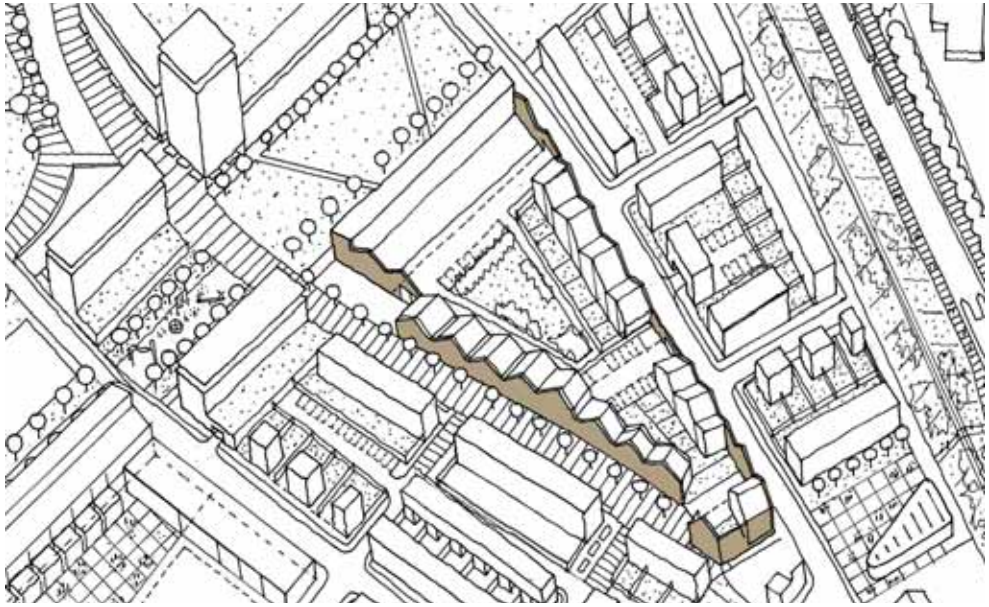

Fig 5.71- Distinct rhythm, scale and enclosure afforded by retaining the facade of the buildings that overlook the route to the north

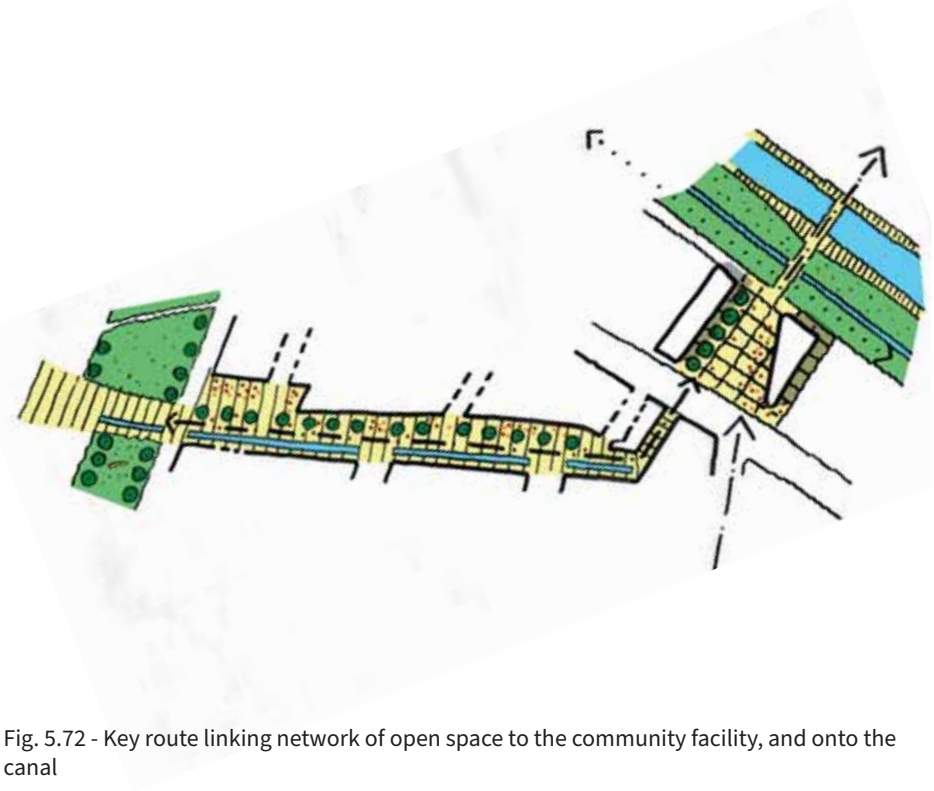

Fig. 5.72 - Key route linking network of open space to the community facility, and onto the canal

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Character Area 7: Grove Lane / Cranford Street / London Street

Formal approach to MMUH from the west, with a landmark corner on Soho Way Roundabout.

Indicative capacity:

Density: Up to 105 dph

Residential dwellings: Approx. 200 220 no.

The triangular site north of the hospital is isolated from the main part of the Grove Lane area, but is linked to the remainder through its close relationship with the hospital.

The hospital is a dominant feature to the south of this site, which along with the heavy road infrastructure to the south, makes taller buildings appropriate here. The masterplan proposes a high proportion of flats against the number of houses (a 70% / 30% split) within this parcel. The site also lends itself to taller buildings as focal points, particularly on the northern edge alongside the Soho Way roundabout, and on the south western corner adjacent to the hospital which may relate to the high storey blocks of flats opposite.

There is a certain urgency to getting this site right, and connecting it to surrounding communities both to the south of it in the Grove Lane area, and to the west in Windmill Eye, partly because it lies to the rear servicing area of the hospital, and it also provides a challenge due to its shape and depth, particularly to the north.

Whilst being at the back of the hospital, this site remains highly visible within the wider corridor and all traffic using the A457 will see it, regardless of whether their journey involves Cranford Street or Grove Lane. It will have a huge impact on the perception of the area. The site context of this character area lends itself to higher density development, to address the scale of the streets to the south and west. Lower scale family housing would be at risk of being overwhelmed by the scale of the surroundings, and would potentially not succeed in providing adequate enclosure or frontage onto the street.

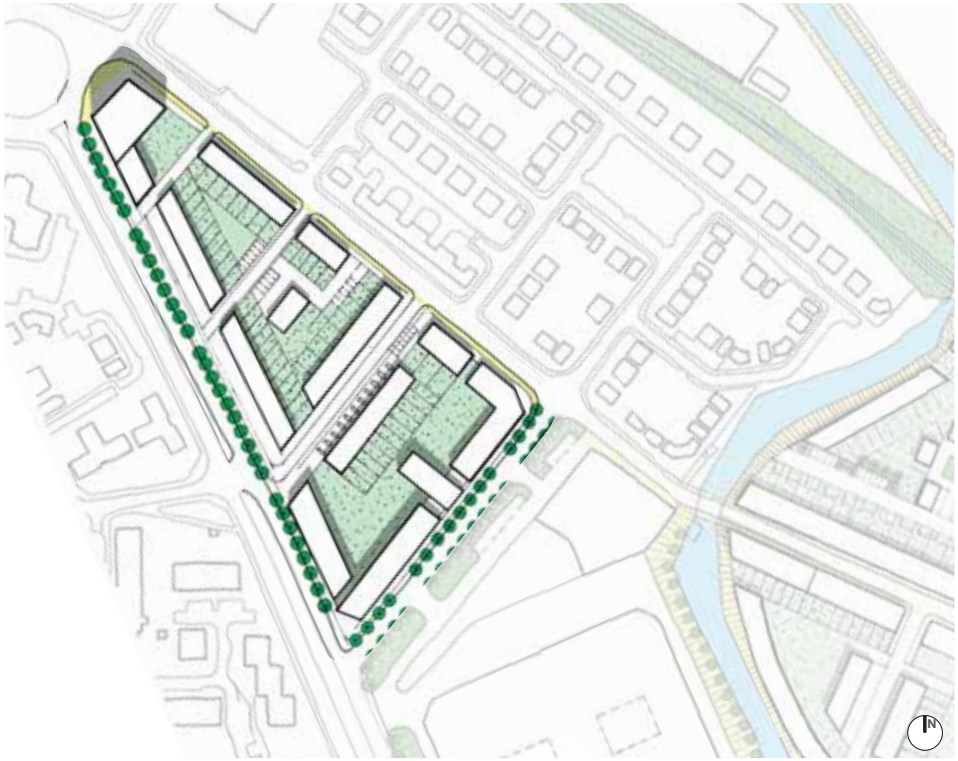

Fig. 5.73 - Grove Lane / Cranford Street / London Street: Extract from Illustrative masterplan

Fig. 5.74 - Character Area Extent

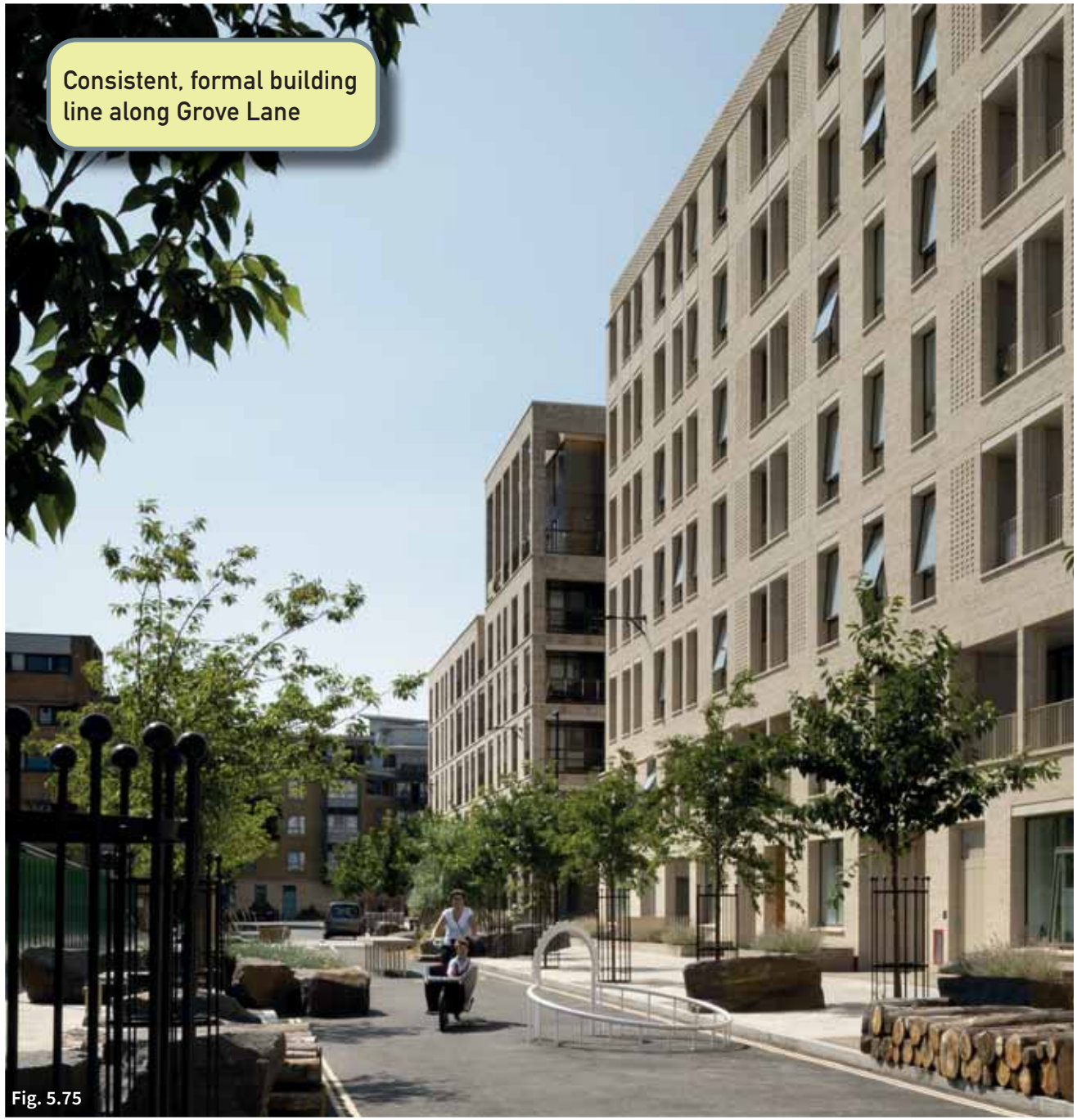

Fig. 5.75

Fig. 5.76

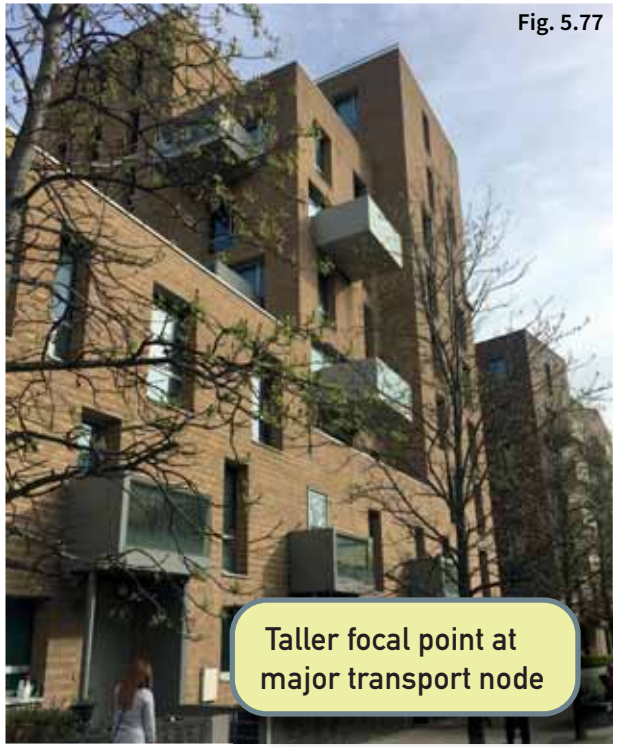

Fig. 5.77

Key Principles:

1. **A well defined enclosure** – Buildings will line along the perimeter of the plot and clearly define the edge. Three storey houses will line up along Cranford Street rising to four storey town houses along part of London Street then to six storey apartment blocks with a nine storey elevated corner where London St / Grove Lane meet. To the north an eleven storey tall building will face the Soho Way Roundabout and at the western edge three storey houses are accessed via a slip road with parking arranged at the front in order to set back the buildings from the traffic ridden Grove Lane.
2. **Strong urban form** – the perimeter along this plot is clearly defined by five/six storey apartment blocks on London St and Grove Lane to address the scale of the hospital stepping down to four/three storeys on Cranford Street and responding to the existing context here. The blocks will form a strong edge facing the public realm whereas to the rear a landscaped communal area and some gardens will provide amenity space for the residents.
3. **Visual interest** created by variation in building form.
4. **11 storey residential building of landmark status** – the tall building will mark the entry to the masterplan area from the north. Positioned at this end of the site it will signal arrival and approach to the area creating a distinct landmark against the skyline
5. **Active edges** – all external edges of the residential blocks will be animated with entrances and windows keeping blank façades to an absolute minimum
6. **Private gardens and courtyards** – all houses and apartments will have some form of open space either as individual or shared gardens
7. **Strong landscape strip** – an appropriate landscape treatment will be required along Grove Lane in order to create an attractive aspect to the new dwellings along the perimeter as well as enhance the current character of the dual carriageway
8. **Parking** – access is directly off Cranford Street with parking accommodated in a number of different ways. Undercroft parking will serve the apartment blocks whereas the dwellings will either have on plot parking or in parking courts where they will be fully integrated within the landscape strategy

Fig. 5.78 - Key principles diagram

The development heights across the site have been influenced by the scale of the surrounding existing buildings, mainly the new Hospital on London Street in the southern part of the site and the existing tall point blocks of the Cuin Road estate in the north. The massing rises up to the south and north with two landmark buildings located at each end relate both to the approach to the site from each direction as well as acting as punctuation points to the lower development that runs through the middle of the site.

The scale of this is influenced by the the 2/3 storey Aurora residential development to the east of Cranford Street.

The use of landmark buildings within the development will help to create a legible urban quarter but also contribute to the image of the 'place'. The sighting of the tall buildings will become markers to the site and act as a point of reference for the area.

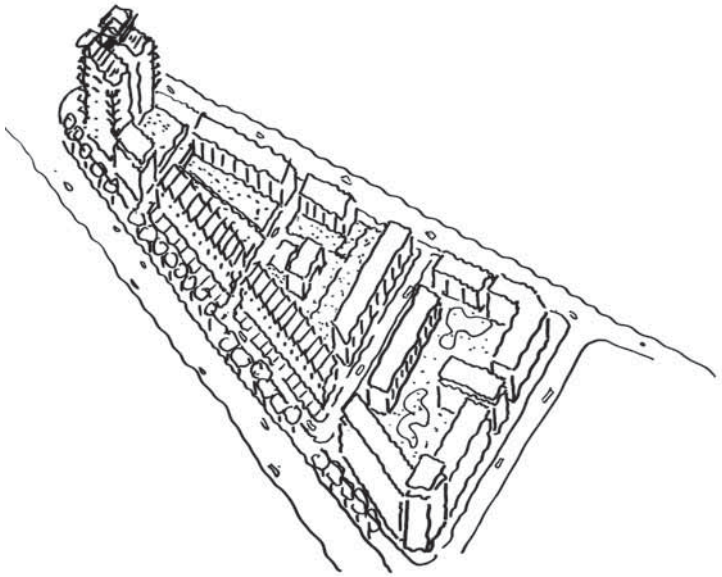

Fig. 5.79 - Illustrative sketch showing focal point marking the western entrance to the site.

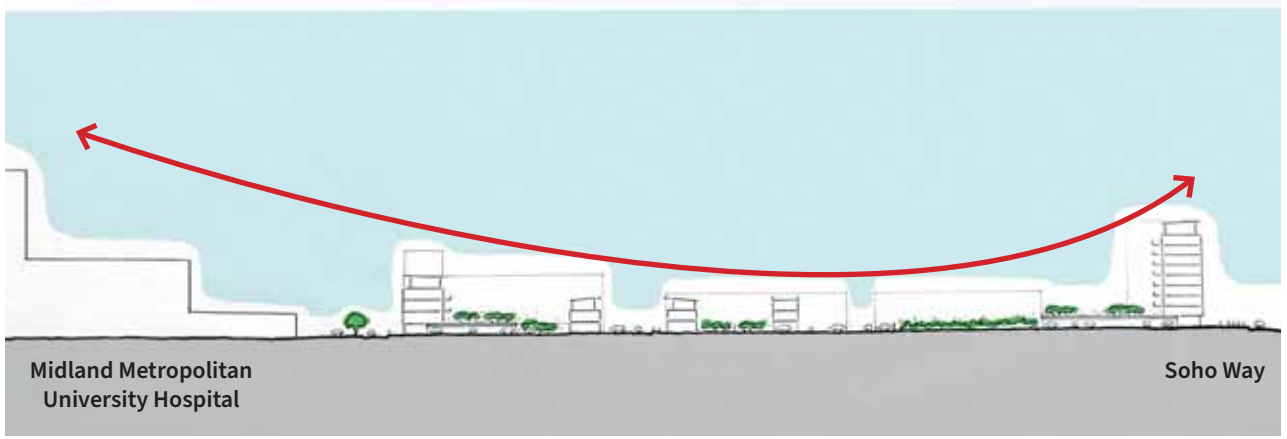

Fig. 5.80 - Illustrative section showing massing and landmark building onto Soho Way

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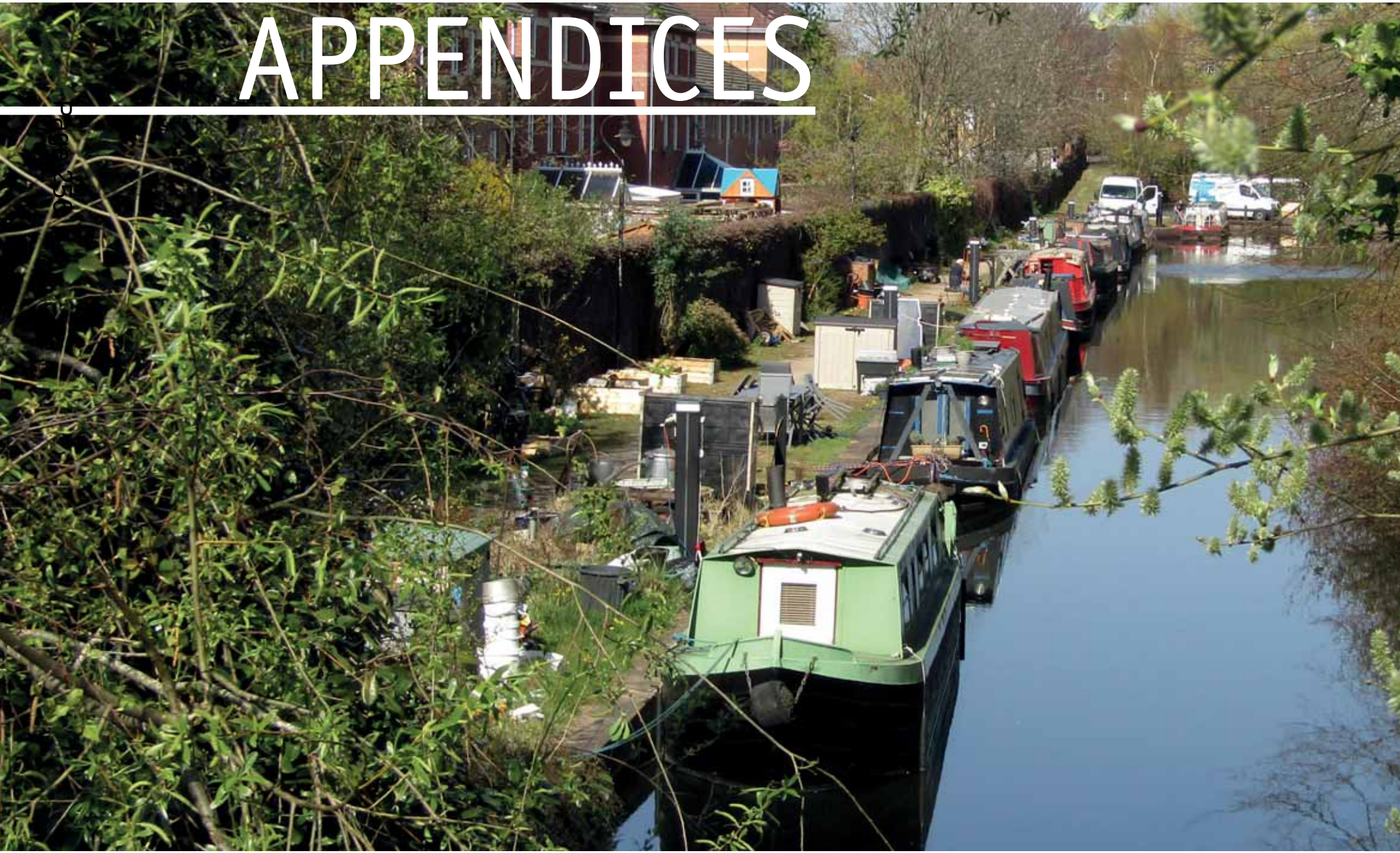
APPENDICES



6

APPENDICES

Appendix A:
Planning Policy & Context

The Grove Lane area was included within the Smethwick Area Action Plan as a residential and mixed-use allocation in 2008 but which has since been superseded by the Sandwell Sites and Delivery DPD. It is located on the border with Birmingham City Council and included within the Greater Icknield and Smethwick Housing Growth Area Prospectus produced jointly by the Local Authorities in 2016.

Black Country Core Strategy (2011)

The Core Strategy sets out the spatial vision, objectives and strategy for future development in the Black Country up to 2026. It identifies regeneration corridors of which Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick is one.

Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (2012)

The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD (SADDPD) adds further detail to the Core Strategy's regeneration corridors. The plan states that the focus for new housing within the next few years will be within the Smethwick area of the Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick corridor (corridor 12). The plan identifies the following sub-areas within corridor 12 that also lie in part within the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor: Area 7 Smethwick High Street and Environs, Area 8 North Smethwick Canalside, and Area 9 Cranford Street. Areas 8 and 9 are identified on the policies map as "long term residential".

Area 9 Cranford Street includes two sites which broadly correspond to the Grove Lane site. The policy table says the following of the Grove Lane site: "Masterplan prepared for site to include residential and Business B1 uses. Will need to be done in phased manner. Some occupiers will need relocating.". Area 9 is listed as a housing allocation to which SADDPD Policy SAD1 applies. SAD1 supports residential development and states that other uses appropriate for residential areas, such as health facilities, community facilities and local shops, may be acceptable where there is a gap in service provision and where they can be integrated successfully into the residential environment.

Supplementary planning guidance on residential design (Sandwell Council, 2014)

This guidance on residential design provides detailed design guidance for all aspects of new residential development. The comprehensive policy document sets out detailed design policies on a wide range of subject matter including highway design. It aims to raise residential quality consistently across the borough as well as ensuring that housing environments are attractive, integrated, accessible, flexible, comfortable, safe and identifiable for those people who live in the borough, as well as improve the perception of housing in Sandwell.

The guide is designed as a working document that enables developers, officers and other interested parties to reference detailed design policies linked to Building for Life 12 (BfL12).

Black Country Plan (emerging)

The Black Country Plan, which will replace the Black Country Core Strategy and the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery DPD, is currently being prepared. The draft plan (regulation 18) consultation will take place in summer 2021.

Planning applications

The area has not seen any significant change for several years except for the new hospital development and housing off Cranford Street. There have been a few key applications for some of the sites including a block of apartments and a multi-storey car-park, use of buildings for a Community Centre and Prayer Hall and demolition of one major building .

Appendix B:
Grove Lane area - definition of parcels

Parcels

There are nine parcels in the Grove Lane area, defined on the basis of ownership and availability. They represent the way in which the pieces of the site may be able to come forward.

These parcels are:

- Parcel A: Heartlands Furniture,
- Parcel B: Heath Street Industrial Estate (north side of Heath Street)
- Parcel C: Pall Mall site
- Parcel D: Heath Street Industrial Estate (south side of Heath Street)
- Parcel E: Grove Street / Abberley Street (split into E1 (owned by the WMCA) and E2)
- Parcel F1: Eastern side of Halberton Street
- Parcel F2 and G2: Moilliett Street Park
- Parcel H: Western side of Halberton Street
- Parcel J: London Street

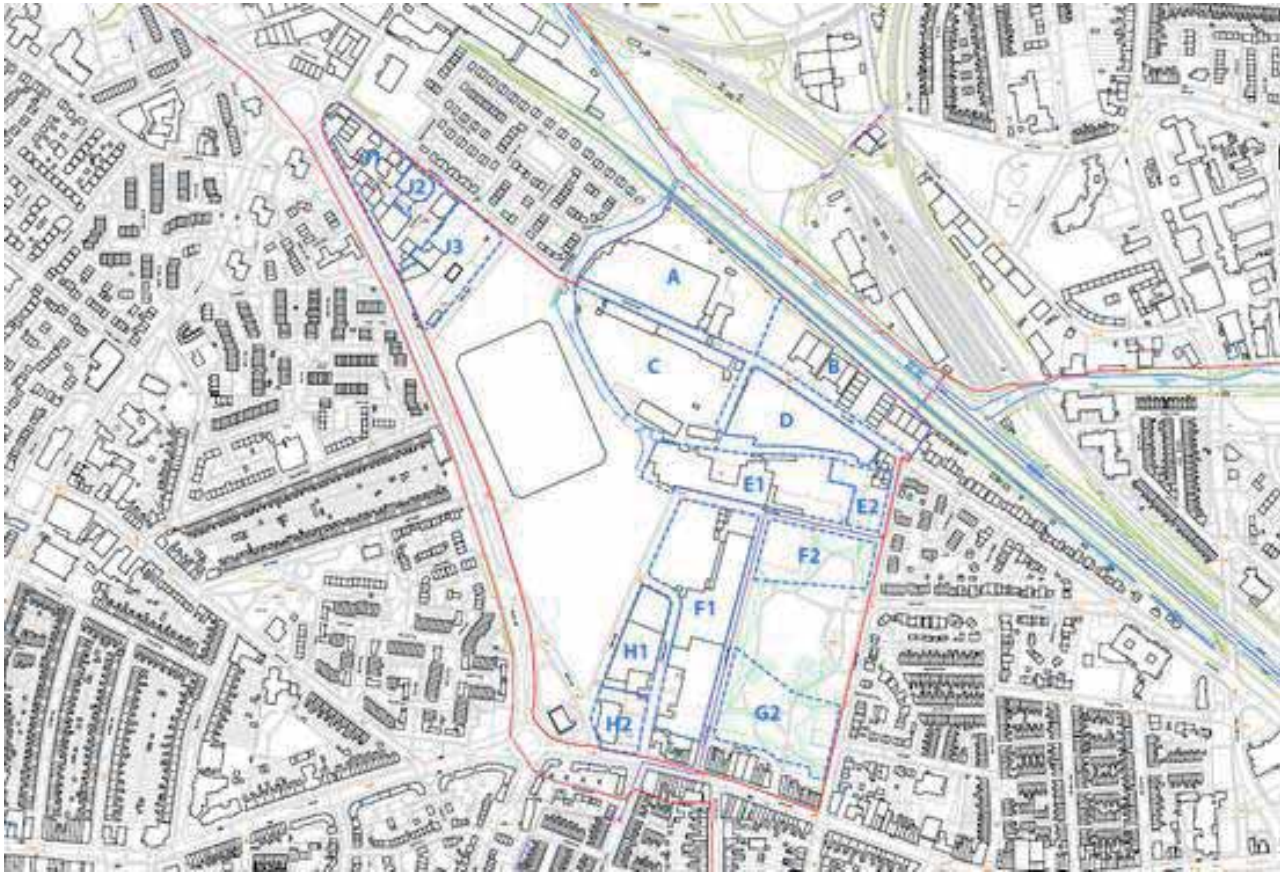


Fig. 6.1 - Land parcels plan

Grove Lane Area		800 homes, defined in the Grove Lane SPD (2011)
Parcel A: Heartlands Furniture, north side of Cranford Street	Site bounded by the old canal to the north and Cranford Street to the south and occupied by two storey red brick industrial warehouses.	
Parcel B: Heath Street Industrial Estate (north side of Heath Street)	Site bounded by Heath Street to the south and the canal to the north and occupied by a series of warehouses in industrial use	
Parcel C: Pall Mall site	Site bounded by Cranford Street to the north and Cape Arm / the former canal line to the south. Occupied by former industrial buildings to the north, and parking to the inner areas. Site appears to house the project office and parking for the hospital project. Frontage to the remaining canal arm to the west.	
Parcel D: Heath Street Industrial Estate (south side of Heath Street)	Site bounded by Heath Street to the north and by the access road to the south (the access road comes off Abberley Street). Occupied by densely packed light industrial warehouses	

Grove Lane Area		800 homes, defined in the Grove Lane SPD (2011)
Parcel E: Grove Street / Abberley Street (1.3ha) Status: north of Abberley Street owned by WMCA	**[E1]** The site ownership extends to the full length of Abberley Street, and to the line of the former canal on the northern side. No planning application has been submitted. The site gained demolition consent on 1 February 2021. **[E2]** The eastern end of the parcel is outside of the ownership of WMCA	
Parcel F1: Eastern side of Halberton Street	Site occupied by a series of larger commercial and industrial uses, including Orbit International, Golden Foods and open storage for Thandi Coaches. Dominated by large, low rise warehouses and industrial buildings. Little frontage to Moilliett Street Park.	
Parcel H: Western side of Halberton Street	[H1] Site occupied by various industries in low rise industrial buildings. [H2] Former cinema located on Dudley Road frontage in a prominent position now used for worship, surrounded by hardstanding used for parking and storage / metal recycling.	

Grove Lane Area		800 homes, defined in the Grove Lane SPD (2011)
Parcel J: London Street	Triangle of land in mixed industrial use that includes car sales, van hire and a petrol station. Opposite the Aurora development, and adjacent to the major roundabout to the north on the A457. **[J1]** Small area bounded by Grove Lane and Cranford Street with a mix of industrial, commercial and retail uses **[J2]** Building on Cranford Way owned by WMCA, who have ambitions to develop residential block on the site, preferably as part of a wider approach. **[J3]** Southern side (between Fawdry Street and London Street) has a planning application pending.	**[J3]** Proposed erection of a multi-storey car park and a mixed-use building of between 6 and 9 storeys to include 201 dwellings and commercial floorspace (flexible within Use Classes A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional), A3 (restaurants), A4 (drinking establishments), A5 (hot food takeaways), D2 (assembly and leisure) or mix thereof), office (Use Class B1) plus associated amenity space and demolition of existing buildings].

Appendix C:
Reference image copyrights

Page no.	*Project name and location*	*Developer*	*Architect / Landscape architect*	*Local authority*	*Image credit*
Page 51, fig. 5.19 Page 81, fig. 5.75	Kings Crescent Estate Phase 3 & 4 or Barley Court, 3 Casbeard Street, London N4 2GD	-	Karakusevic Carson Architects / KCA / Muf architecture/art	The London Borough of Hackney	Photograph © Jim Stephenson

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Homes England

urban movement

Birmingham City Council

NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

Aspinall Verdi property regeneration consultants

West Midlands Combined Authority

Canal & River Trust Making life better by water

Tibbalds planning and urban design

Transport for West Midlands

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Top Up
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economy Councillor I Padda
Director:	Director of Regeneration and Growth – Tony McGovern.
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Regeneration Manager, Jenna Langford jenna_langford@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That Cabinet approve the revised Additional Restrictions Grant Top-up policy.

1.2 That the Director for Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, and the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate and administer £1.54m of Additional Restriction Grants.

1.3 That the Director for Regeneration & Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth and the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate and administer £120,000 in business support activities.

1.4 That the Director for Regeneration & Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth and the Director of Finance be authorised to make any changes necessary to the Additional Restriction Grant Policy, including amounts allocated between 1.2 and 1.3 above; in order to respond to any unforeseen circumstances which may arise between October 2021 and March 2022, in order to ensure all grant funding is expended within time frame.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Additional Restrictions Grants policy is being changed because since the earlier part of 2021 businesses have now returned to trading as usual and the previous policy was focussed largely based on businesses which had been adversely affected by lockdown restrictions. In this instance we wish to reward businesses who retain staff, particularly given that the governments furlough scheme ends in September 2021.

2.2 On 3 March 2021, BEIS announced that a further £425 million would be made available for Local Authorities, through a conditional top-up to the ARG Grant, subject to Local Authorities having spent their previous ARG allocations for financial years 20/21 & 21/22 by the 30 July 2021.

2.3 Sandwell Council has now reported to BEIS that all ARG funding has been spent, and the council has now received £1.66m of ARG top-up in late August 2021.

2.4 Sandwell Council's Business Growth team has already administered over £9.6 million of ARG directly to businesses and sole traders.

2.5 The ARG Top Up funding scheme aims to support businesses severely impacted by the recent economic downturn created by the pandemic. Local Authorities can use ARG funding for business support activities and for funding a form of discretionary grants.

2.6 All funding must be spent by the 31 March 2022 and as such, the way in which the council utilises this funding must be aligned to available resources; the council's decision-making processes; and procurement regulations. Flexibility will also be required to enable the council to respond to any changing circumstances over the grant period and therefore this is the reason for the delegation in 1.4 above.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Businesses who have furloughed staff which are in many cases young people can apply for a new grant.
	People who are business owners or staff in Sandwell will be supported and empowered with financial support

	Supporting a range of business including those with lower turnovers with grants helps provide stronger more resilient communities
	A stronger and more inclusive economy is created by helping businesses and workers with support during a period of economic recovery from the pandemic

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The purpose of this report is to agree a policy whereby businesses can benefit from the remaining ARG funding and agree how the funding is to be distributed to businesses who qualify for support in line with criteria set by BEIS and Sandwell Council.

4.2 The council is ensuring that our ARG policy and process are in accordance with the guidance provided by the funder the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

4.3 Once approved this grant can be opened and launched online via a grant approval website called Ascendant which is being used by officers to administer current grants.

4.4 Two categories of grants will be offered: Category one- to provide further support to VAT registered businesses who have retained staff following their participation in the HMRC furlough scheme, which ends on the 30 September 2021; and Category two- to provide opportunity for any businesses which have not previously received any Sandwell Council Covid support grants to apply for funding.

4.5 It is estimated that approximately £1 million of funding will be provided in Category one- these grants will be made available for companies and organisations which have furloughed workers and later retained them. Where a business can demonstrate they have done this via HMRC documentation they would be awarded a one-off grant payment of £10,000.

4.6 It is estimated that approximately £540,000 of funding provided in Category two- these grants are for any remaining companies and organisations who have not previously been in receipt of any previous Sandwell Council Covid support grants. Awards of £5,000; £7,500 or £10,000, based on evidenced numbers of employees, will be made available.

4.7 The proposed wider business support package is aimed to assist Sandwell businesses and residents recover more fully from the recent economic downturn.

4.8 The Business Support package will be split into three elements.

4.9 Business support element one: this is a proposal to pay for between 10-20 business reviews of strategic companies who import and export goods and who wish to receive further specialist advice on markets, documentation requirements, and tax criteria relating to international trade. This is because a combination of Covid and EU exit consequences have adversely affected the trade supply chain. The benefits of this element will be to ensure the businesses remain stable and continue to employ staff. This was also recently offered by Shropshire Council and was well received.

4.10 Business Support -element two: this is a proposal to pay for between 100-200 free annual memberships of the Federation of Small Businesses to eligible businesses which apply, on a first come first served basis. They would receive a catalogue of support measures for a twelve-month period. This was also recently offered by Wolverhampton Council and has been popular with local business there.

4.11 Business Support -element three: this is a proposal to support residents and entrepreneurs in the Borough with an 'entrepreneurial business school'. We are wishing to support our residents with developing their business ideas to increase the number of business start-ups. It is envisaged that this will provide two weeks of informal client focussed training which increases participants awareness of entrepreneurship, and enterprise skills at no cost to them via a bookable online course. A similar proposal has recently been offered by Solihull Council and received a good take up.

4.12 Given that grant application levels can fluctuate, and government policies change there needs to be a degree of flexibility allowed in administration of this funding, and therefore this authority is sought, in line with recommendation 1.4 above.

4.13 It is recommended that the council provide £1.54million (92.8%) in grants and Business support interventions worth £120,000 (7.2%). The reason this option is preferable is that it provides several elements of strategic support to help businesses and economic sectors who have been adversely affected by the economic downturn. The grants will provide an element of financial support to eligible businesses, whilst the business support interventions will provide strategic advice to ensure Sandwell business are resilient and Sandwell Residents are encouraged to upskill and become more entrepreneurial.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 To provide £1.66million (100%) in grants directly and not offer the £120,000 (7.2%) Business Support interventions. The downside of this is that it would remove a level of extra support advice for up to 200 businesses, specialist guidance on trade and exporting goods for up to 20 Sandwell companies, and remove the opportunity for Sandwell Residents to participate in an 'Entrepreneurial Business School'.

6. Implications

Resources:	The financing is resourced by external government funding which would come from the business support element of the Additional Restrictions Grant. The staff who currently operate the other Additional Restrictions Grant would be able to deliver the top-up grant.
Legal and Governance:	Like all external funding this grant is subject to audit and monitoring and reporting delivery to government.
Risk:	Risk implications on the grant scheme are low, with the grant open online for several months to allow for people to be able to apply. The business support elements are medium risk given procurement requirements and the need to spend the grant by March 2022. However, this is mitigated to some extent through recommendation 1.3 which gives the flexibility to move between the two elements.

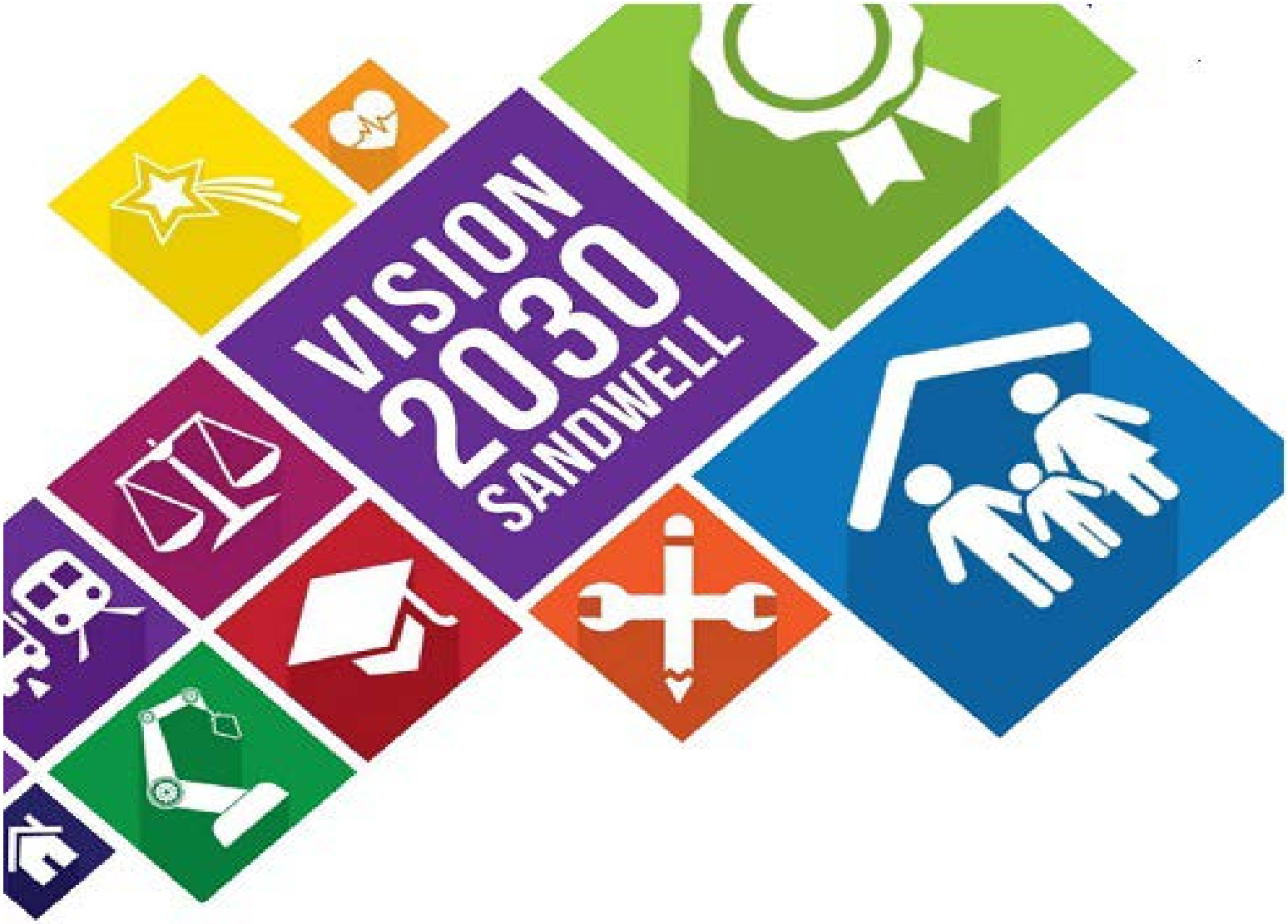
Equality:	Furloughed workers returning to employment is more likely than not to benefit people who were at a higher likelihood of being furloughed which is likely to benefit younger people and people from BAME backgrounds
Health and Wellbeing:	Implications for on health and wellbeing should be positive given that is additional funding is going to fund business and residents during a recession.
Social Value	Activities promoting companies retaining staff within their workforce, and the offer of entrepreneurship and enterprise training to any interested Sandwell resident via the Pop-up Business School will give people with lower formal academic skills and those on lower wages increased support.

7. Appendices

Additional Restrictions Grant Top-up Scheme Policy 2021.22

8. Background Papers

None



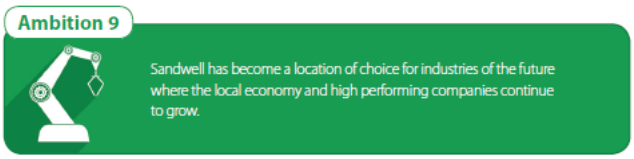
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Additional Restrictions Top Up Grants Policy

2021/22

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Meeting Ambitions 9 and 10



1. INTRODUCTION

The Additional Restrictions Grant (Top-Up) ARG is a discretionary scheme to support those businesses affected by the pandemic who are not generally eligible to obtain support from the other grant schemes. The ARG funding will be used to make discretionary grants directly to eligible businesses and to undertake wider business support activities.

This policy outlines Sandwell's application of the ARG top-up scheme.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Businesses that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made, are not eligible for funding under the ARG scheme.

In Sandwell the ARG discretionary scheme will be available to support Sandwell businesses which have been adversely affected by Covid-19:

- Category 1- A VAT registered business which has reintroduced staff into the workforce from the Furlough scheme in the past 6 months and which still employs them as of 1st October 2021.
- Category 2 - Who have not received a previous Local Authority Covid-19 related Business Support Grant.

For Category 2	Eligible
No grants claimed	✓
Any Local Restrictions or National Restrictions Support Grants	×
Any Discretionary Grants	×
Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)	×
Restart Grants	×

All qualifying businesses must have a business bank account, not a personal account used solely for business.

Businesses can only apply for one scheme.

Sandwell will consider the following factors when determining eligibility and the amount of grant payable:

- The circumstances of the businesses
- The social value the business brings to the borough
- The importance of the business to the local economy

Businesses will be subject to State Aid rules and where these limits are exceeded will not qualify for a discretionary grant under this scheme and applicants will be required to complete appropriate disclosures.

3. AMOUNTS PAYABLE

Awards made through this scheme will be either:

Category 1	a £10,000 one-off grant payment for reintroducing furloughed staff back to work.
Category 2	a one-off grant payment of £5,000, £7,500 or £10,000 dependent on number of employees.

As this is a cash limited scheme the application window will close once the funding has been committed.

Payment will be made directly to the business' bank account via an electronic transfer (BACS).

4. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

An online application form will be made available via **https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportforbusinesses**

Businesses will be asked to provide evidence to support their application and the online facility will enable them to upload documents.

The application form will gather all the information required to satisfy the eligibility criteria set by the BEIS (Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy) and locally to determine the amount of grant payable.

Local Authorities are also required to collect information from businesses receiving these grant payments; and will be required to account for how the funding has been spent. Grant recipients should note that they may be contacted for research purposes, and that their data will be shared with BEIS (Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy) for research and evaluation purposes.

Sharing of personal data and how it will be used by Sandwell Council.

The details will be stored securely and retained in compliance with GDPR and the new Data Protection Act. This information will be used to evaluate the Additional Restrictions Grant – Top Up scheme and report to The Department of Business Energy and Industrial Skills (BEIS) for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

5. PUBLICITY

To maximise take-up the council will publicise the scheme using a variety of media, including the council's website and social media. We will work with all interested parties to achieve this.

A copy of this policy statement will be made available for inspection and will be posted on the Sandwell Council website **via**

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/supportforbusinesses

6. DECISION MAKING PROCESS

Given this is an online application, all applicants will be notified of the decision via the online portal.

The scheme does not allow for any formal right of appeal and all decisions are final.

7. OVERPAYMENT AND FRAUD

The council will seek to recover all grants found to be erroneously claimed.

The council is committed to identifying and subsequently investigating suspected fraudulent claims made under this scheme.

Businesses who falsely declare their circumstances will have committed a criminal offence, which may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Establishing an Equality Commission Team
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Kerrie Carmichael Neighbourhoods and Communities
Director:	Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Surjit Tour
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Maria Price Service Manager - Legal and Assurance

1 Recommendations

1.1 That approval is given to fund the Equality Team from Council Reserves for the current financial year 2021/2022 and a budget allocated to meet the costs of the Team for subsequent financial years.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 Emergency Committee approved the establishment of the Sandwell Equalities Commission as a catalyst to drive forward the Council's equalities agenda. To achieve this, it aims to break down barriers prohibiting an inclusive society, tackle unfairness caused by inequality and encourage community cohesion through increased understanding and awareness. For this reason, the scope of this project is extensive and far reaching.

2.2 Initially the resources for the Commission were met from internal staff. However, additional resources are required to deliver the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Agenda.

2.3 It is therefore proposed that a new team to support the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Agenda be established. There is no specific allocated/approved budget for the cost of this addition, however sufficient budget has been identified in reserves to meet the cost of this team during 2021/22 with further funding to be secured for subsequent years as part of the forthcoming budget setting process.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

The proposal supports all of the council objectives and the Corporate Plan in ensuring that the Equality Team can deliver the objectives of the Equality Commission and drive Sandwell's exciting Equality Agenda.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The current resourcing model seeks to utilise existing council resources, however it is recognised that a dedicated resource is required in order to drive the Equalities Agenda with the level of pace, focus and drive expected by the council, employees, stakeholders and residents.

4.2 In addition to this, where possible, employee network members (Ethnic Minorities, LGBT+ and Disability) have also been encouraged to engage and help shape the future direction of this Agenda.

New Resourcing Model

4.9 A dedicated Equalities team is proposed to support the Equalities, Inclusion and Diversity Agenda.

4.10 A desktop regional benchmarking exercise has conducted to help inform the new Equalities team structure.

4.11 Dudley Council are in a similar position to Sandwell MBC, in that they are in the process of setting up a dedicated resource, which will be made up of one Equality Manager and one Equality Officer. This is currently being job evaluated so no salary information was available. Similarly, Solihull Council, has one manager, who is looking to recruit two Equality Officers.

4.12 Walsall Council, has a much larger structure of 17 employees to oversee equalities and community cohesion work. There are two equality roles within this team (Consultation and Equality lead and Consultation and Equality Officer) who look after corporate equalities, whereas the remaining job roles are community based. The equalities lead role is comparable to a Service Manager (Hay 1), and Officer role is a band H. (The grades have been amended to reflect Sandwell's salary grades).

4.13 Wolverhampton Council, employ 7 staff to oversee equality-based work, this is made up of a Service Manager (Hay 1), a Project Manager (band G), Project Officer (graduate, band E), 1 Data Officer (band F) and 3 Equality Advisers (band F) for Race, LGBT and Disability. Wolverhampton Council's equalities objectives are similar to those outlined in the Equality Commission's Terms of Reference. (The grades have been amended to reflect Sandwell's salary grades).

4.14 Wolverhampton Council are looking to strengthen their team by recruiting two further managers to oversee strategic and operational equalities duties.

4.15 The Commission has a broad remit, and this is illustrated by the mission statement:

"To promote equality and challenge discrimination and intolerances in all its forms. To break down barriers prohibiting an inclusive society by confidently tackling unfairness caused by inequality and encouraging community cohesion through increased understanding and awareness."

This mission statement illustrates the breadth of the Commission's work along with the 8 key objectives it hopes to achieve. The Commission may also choose to establish Task Groups to conduct further work in respect of equalities imperatives such as Black Lives Matters, tackling disability discrimination, tackling homophobia and transphobia, celebrating Sandwell's diversity and other such groups as it deems necessary in pursuit of its objectives.

4.16 To support this extensive agenda, it is imperative a dedicated core team is established which support the delivery of the council ambitious equalities, diversity and inclusion agendas.

Subject to Cabinet approving the recommendation in this report, the proposed Equalities Team structure is as follows:

TABLE 1

Post	**Number**	**Grade**	**Cost (£) (inc on costs)**
Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Manager	1	J	72,920
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team Leader	1	I	67,147
Equality Advisor	1	G	53,685
Community Engagement Officer	2	G	107,370
Project Manager	2	F	90,854
Project Support Officer	1	E	38,509
Total			**£430,385**

4.17 Subject to funding being approved, all posts will be recruited in accordance with the council's normal recruit processes, namely they will be internally advertised before any remaining vacant posts are advertised publicly.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The council could continue with the existing arrangements, which consists of support being provided by various departments to help deliver the Equalities Agenda. This does not provide the level of capacity, skills, expertise needed to drive this agenda with the level of pace and vigour required.

5.2 Alternatively, the council could second 2 or 3 employees to support and lead on the work of the Commission. While this option will result in some benefits, it will not be sufficient to achieve the ambitions and outcomes sought by the council.

6 Implications

Resources:	There is no allocated budget for the Equality Team. Finance have indicated that there is sufficient resource in the Council reserves to fund this year's team with resources to be secured in the council budget for subsequent years.
Legal and Governance:	The Council must comply with it legal duties and obligations arising under the Equality Act 2010.The additional resources will enable the council to do so and achieve the outcomes detailed within the Terms of Reference of the Sandwell Equalities Commission.
Risk:	If resources are not provided to support the project the project is at risk of not delivering the Council's Equality Agenda.

Equality:	The project promotes equality and challenges discrimination and intolerances in all its forms. To break down barriers prohibiting an inclusive society by confidently tackling unfairness caused by inequality and encouraging community cohesion through increased understanding and awareness.
Health and Wellbeing:	Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities

7. Appendices

None

8. Background Papers

Equalities Commission - Terms of Reference

Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Sandwell Land and Property Ltd – Future Use and Options
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Karen Simms Cabinet Member for Children & Education
Director:	Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer – Surjit Tour Director of Finance – Simone Hines
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Mark Bodley Trading Business Partner - Solicitor mark_bodley@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1. That Cabinet, on behalf of the Council as sole shareholder of Sandwell Land & Property Limited agrees the recommendation of the Board of Directors of Sandwell Land and Property Ltd made on 10 May 2021, that the company has served the purpose for which it was incorporated, and has reached the end of its useful life, and that the company be placed into Members' Voluntary Liquidation.

2. That Cabinet agrees to provide an indemnity on the terms detailed in Appendix 2 to this report to the appointed Insolvency Practitioner concerning Sandwell Land and Property Limited.

3. That the Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer be authorised to take the necessary steps to appoint appropriate professional practitioners and requisite actions necessary to administer the Members Voluntary Liquidation of Sandwell Land and Property Ltd.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The company has served the purpose for which it was incorporated, and has reached the end of its useful life. Ceasing the use of a property holding company will simplify the administration and the accounting treatment of the Council's Education portfolio.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people – Sandwell Land and Property Ltd has reached the end of its useful life, and cessation of the company will simplify the administration of the Council's Education portfolio

4 Context and Key Issues

Background

4.1 On the 13th October 2010, Cabinet meeting resolved to authorise the Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, to take all necessary steps including appointment of company officers and the preparation of relevant documentation to incorporate a Local Authority Controlled Company to receive and hold school land assets on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Executive Director of Children and Families.

4.2 With the emergence of the academies programme, there was uncertainty and concerns raised over the loss of the freehold interests in educational land and property assets held by the council. The establishment of Sandwell Land and Property Limited sought to provide assurance with regards to protecting the freehold interests.

4.3 The incorporation of Sandwell Land and Property Limited therefore sought to insulate the freehold of the assets, in the event that schools changed status (eg: converted to Academy status). Government guidance confirms that a Community School converting to Academy status, is entitled to a lease of the site that it previously occupied.

4.4 Pursuant to this report, Sandwell Land and Property Limited (company registration number 07492864) was incorporated on 14th January 2011, and Directors appointed to run and administer the Company.

4.5 The Education Asset Portfolio was transferred to Sandwell Land and Property Limited (SL&P), in return for shares issued, with a nominal value equivalent to the unencumbered value of the assets transferred. The Education Asset Portfolio consisted of 108 registered titles relating to 99 separates sites across the borough, valued at £217,543,642.00. Shares with a nominal value of £217,543,642.00 were issued to the Council

4.6 Long leases (125year term) were granted back to the Council (at an annual rent of £1.00 per site, if demanded) to allow the Council to continue to deliver the Education function. SL&P holds the freehold reversion of the properties, subject to the 125 year leases of the sites, held by the Council.

4.7 Since the incorporation of SL&P, where schools have converted to Academy Status, sub-leases have accordingly been granted to the school by the Council.

External Audit Recommendations

4.8 The Council's external auditors have identified two major issues relating to the way the property is held by SL&P. Firstly, some shares issued by the company has not been properly evidenced (in Companies House records or any board minutes) that an ordinary resolution was made for these share issues. Secondly, other shares have been issued (with a resolution) in relation to property assets in respect of which the Council held the legal title but not the beneficial title.

For example, some assets ought to have been transferred to other bodies, such as the Governing Body of a Foundation School or the Lichfield Dioceses, rather than to SL&P. Where the Council does not hold the beneficial title, the freehold title should be transferred to the body holding the beneficial interest in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

4.9 The Council's external auditors have recommended that the use of SL&P should cease. In their 2019-20 audit findings report Grant Thornton stated that,

> "We have identified a number of matters which are currently unresolved and provide uncertainty over a number of transactions. Without the company and ourselves undertaking substantive additional work, including seeking further legal and technical advice we have an uncertainty in relation to opening balances of tangible assets. At the October 2020 Board meeting we discussed with Directors whether the Board should consider winding up the company and this would seem an appropriate way forward".

4.10 Having considered the advice obtained, the legal position, and the recommendations of the Council's external auditors, the Board of Directors resolved that the company has served its purpose and has come to the end of its useful life, and should cease to be used by the Council as a property holding company, and the company's interest in the properties transferred back to the Council. The transfers necessary to other bodies (such as the Governing Body of a Foundation School or Lichfield Dioceses) will be undertaken following a thorough due diligence exercise to ensure only transfers that a legally required are executed.

External Advisors/Assistance

4.11 The Board of Directors appointed an external firm of solicitors to investigate the most efficient and effective way to cease the use of Sandwell Land and Property Limited, and to return the assets to the Council.

4.12 Weightmans were appointed and presented a series of options, and after due consideration, there were two options that the company and the Council could pursue, which were

4.12.1 Voluntary Strike Off (VSO), and
4.12.2 Members Voluntary Liquidation (MVL).

The relative benefits and consequences of each option were considered, and the Board has resolved that the most suitable option would be MVL. A summary of the options is attached at appendix 1.

4.13 The MVL route is the route used when a company has come to the end of its useful life, is fully solvent and is wound up leading to the settlement of any outstanding liabilities and the return of its assets to shareholders, in this case the Council, and the dissolution of the company at Companies House. It involves the appointment of an independent third party to act as Liquidator, who takes over administration of the company, and is able to distribute the assets held by the company immediately, having retained sufficient assets to cover known liabilities.

4.14 The Liquidator takes responsibility for contacting any debtors or creditors of the company and will finalise the company's pre-liquidation tax position, including settling any tax liabilities. The process to appoint the Liquidator is quick and the Liquidator is appointed by the shareholder passing a written shareholder resolution.

Indemnity

4.15 SL&P is a non-trading company, and acts as a holding company only for the Council's Education Asset Portfolio. It does not enter into trading contracts or arrangements with any other third party (except professional advisors), so there are no contractual liabilities. The only assets held by SL&P are the freehold reversions of the Council's Education Asset Portfolio, so any liabilities on the part of company would be met by the Council, as the sole shareholder. There have been no claims against SL&P since its incorporating and the risk of liabilities are considered extremely low.

4.16 Upon appointment of the Liquidator, the administration of the company passes to the Liquidator, for the purposes of liquidating the company, this involves identifying any creditors or debtors, settling any debts, distributing any assets, and removing the company from Companies House. In the normal course of events, the Liquidator would retain control of the assets held by the company, until all liabilities have been resolved, which can take a number of months (even where no liabilities exist), and

any assets would be used to discharge any liabilities identified. In order to ensure the effective and efficient management of the Education Asset Portfolio, it would be preferable for the assets to be returned to the Council as soon as possible, and having considered the situation, the proposed Liquidator has agreed that as the possibility of any potential liabilities is extremely low, it will return the assets to the Council as soon as possible after appointment, provided that an indemnity is given in respect of any liabilities that may be identified (notwithstanding the risk of any such liabilities emerging being extremely low).

4.17 The proposed Liquidator, is potentially personally liable in administrating the company, hence why an indemnity is sought from the shareholder to enable them to distribute the assets of the company shortly after their appointment and before creditors have had the opportunity to make a claim in the liquidation. Should an unexpected claim arise against the company (considered to be highly unlikely – see 4.15) the Liquidator will be able to revert to the shareholder to seek settlement of the claim. This risk remains irrespective of whether a Liquidator is appointed given that the Council is the shareholder of SL&P. Therefore, granting the indemnity does not expose the Council, as shareholder, to any greater risk of liability than what already exists.

4.18 SL&P is a non-trading company, and has entered into no contracts during its existence, so there will be no creditors/debtors.

4.19 Once the Liquidator is appointed, the company is no longer required to file accounts or the other usual filings with Companies House (although management accounts will need to be prepared up to the date of liquidation for Corporation Tax purposes).

4.20 SL&P is a particularly unique organisation, it is not believed that any other Local Authority has established a company for this purpose, and so the number of firms that are able to advise and assist with this project is very limited. During the course of this project, the Council has been consulting with a firm of Insolvency Practitioners, who would be qualified, and experienced to act as Liquidator for SL&P. The Company is Kroll (formerly Duff & Phelps), and it has assisted the Board of Directors and in examining the options available. The Council would look to appoint representatives from Kroll to act as Liquidator.

4.21 Kroll (formerly known as Duff & Phelps) was identified by the external legal advisors, as a firm that was able act as Liquidator in respect of SL&P, and has provided an indicative estimate of the fees, at between £30k - £50k. The element of work that the Liquidator will be undertaking will be ancillary to the work the external legal advisors were appointed to undertake. Due to the value and nature of the work to be undertaken by the proposed Liquidators, and the level of detailed knowledge that Kroll has relating to this project, it is not practicable for SL&P to consider appointing another independent firm to act as Liquidator in respect of SL&P.

Current Position

4.22 The current position is that the Board of Directors (currently comprising one single Director, after a series of resignations of the previous members of the Board) of SL&P has resolved that the company should be placed into Members Voluntary Liquidation as it has reached the end of its useful life. It currently creates an administrative barrier to the smooth operation of the Education portfolio and is preventing or hindering the rectification of historical anomalies with regard to the registration of a number of Education assets.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative options were considered and summarised in a report to the Board of Directors prepared by the external advisors (with input from Kroll)

6 Implications

Resources:	The management of the Education Asset Portfolio will be simpler and require less procedural steps.
Legal and Governance:	Administration of limited companies is dealt with primarily under the Companies Act 2006, and the rights and duties of shareholders are set out within the relevant legislation. The Council as sole shareholder in this company is entitled to make this resolution
Risk:	The company is a non-trading, wholly owned, property holding company, and so the risks are limited, however the appointment of external advisors, to deal

	with the administration of the process, will effectively manage any risk involved in the process.
Equality:	There are no Equality Implications relating to the content or subject matter of this report.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no implications for the health and wellbeing of our communities related to the content or subject matter of this report.
Social Value	There are no implications for social value related to the content or subject matter of this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of MVL and VSO procedures

Appendix 2 – Indemnity to the Insolvency Practitioner

8. Background Papers

None

DUFF & PHELPS

Protect, Restore and Maximise Value

ELIMINATING UK COMPANIES – MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION (MVL) VS. VOLUNTARY STRIKING OFF (VSO)

When considering whether to use MVL or VSO to eliminate a company, directors should consider past trading activity, remaining corporate memory and the prospect of actual or contingent third-party liabilities. If a company has dealt with third parties, there is a lack of corporate memory or a possibility of actual or contingent liabilities, then MVL could be the preferred option.

The ultimate decision rests with the directors. In our experience, most directors prefer MVL. It brings the highest level of finality to a company's life and the directors responsibilities, irrespective of net assets or trading history.

	MVL	VSO
Nature of process	▪ Formal solvent liquidation process governed by the Insolvency Act and rules ▪ Simple and quick to appoint liquidators	▪ Administrative process governed by the Companies Act 2006 ▪ Quick process, only if no objection received from creditors, including HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)
Required conditions	▪ Must be solvent ▪ 75% of shareholders voting must approve resolutions ▪ Generally easy to satisfy	▪ Company must not have traded or changed its name in three months prior to VSO application ▪ Pre-VSO tax clearance from HMRC is recommended ▪ These factors can cause delay
Due diligence (DD)	▪ DD should be carried out prior to MVL to identify and quantify any actual or contingent creditors	▪ Similar level of DD recommended for VSO ▪ Directors are required to send the VSO application to interested parties such as creditors (actual and contingent) and shareholders
Assets	▪ Liquidators distribute assets as capital, so treated as a capital receipt in the hands of the shareholders. This can be tax effective ▪ Assets can be distributed immediately upon appointment of the liquidators	▪ Assets become property of the Crown ▪ Can't lawfully distribute capital ▪ Distributable reserves often need to be created through capital reduction ▪ Pre-VSO dividends accounted for as income (unless <£25,000). This is not always tax effective

Creditors and their claims	▪ Liquidators invite creditors to prove debts within a specified timeframe (usually four to six weeks following appointment) or risk not getting paid
	▪ Liquidators have the power to:
	  ▪ Agree, settle and reject claims
	  ▪ Place a value on claims of contingent creditors
	  ▪ Disclaim onerous contracts
		▪ Creditors' claims remain
		▪ Creditors can obstruct process by objecting to the VSO application
		▪ Post-dissolution creditors can apply for company restoration
		▪ HMRC often object if tax affairs are not up to date or pre-VSO clearance has not been provided

	MVL	VSO
Timing	▪ Can be started quickly ▪ Creditor claims or outstanding tax matters need not delay the MVL ▪ Will take approximately six months to complete. Obtaining tax clearance to conclude the liquidation from HMRC is often the reason for this timeframe ▪ Liquidators submit final return of the company to the Registrar of Companies (RoC) at the end of the liquidation ▪ Company dissolved by RoC three months thereafter	▪ Company dissolved two months after VSO notice published by Registrar of Companies if there is no objection to dissolution
Restoration	▪ Within six years of dissolution–by application to Court ▪ Limited benefit to restoration following liquidation as assets will have been distributed by the liquidators and they will have advertised for claims ▪ Restored with liquidators in office	▪ Within six years of dissolution–by application to Court ▪ Assets which have become property of the Crown revert to the company and can be used to meet creditors' claims ▪ Restored with directors in office
Cost	▪ Liquidators' fees and disbursements payable ▪ Reduced significantly (on a per company basis) where liquidations are commenced in batches	▪ Direct cost of VSO is minimal ▪ Professional fees often incurred relating to the process can include dealing with objections from creditors, finalising the tax position and capital reduction to enable the distribution of assets ▪ These fees are often comparable to the cost of liquidation
Advantages	▪ Quick appointment process ▪ Low risk–liquidators "step into the shoes" of directors to finalise company's affairs ▪ Creditor claims can be locked out, valued and rejected ▪ Tax effective, where shareholders prefer capital receipts ▪ No requirement for tax clearance prior to MVL ▪ Capital lawfully returned to shareholders ▪ Reduced probability of restoration	▪ Quick process, only if no objection ▪ Can be cost effective

In summary, MVL brings more certainty than VSO, particularly in dealing with creditors, and enables capital to be returned lawfully to shareholders. However, striking off can be a cost efficient way of eliminating companies that have no known issues and modest share capital.

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Appendix 2 – Summary of the terms of the deed of indemnity

Parties

(1) The Borough Council of Sandwell as sole shareholder/member (the "**Council**");

(2) Sandwell Land and Property Limited (the "**Company**"); and

(3) Kroll Advisory Ltd. of The Shard, 32 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9SG (the "**Liquidators**").

1. **INDEMNITY**

1.1 The Council will indemnify and hold harmless the Company, the Liquidators and the Liquidators' Representatives against:

1.1.1 all losses, liabilities, costs, damages and expenses that the Liquidators do or will incur or suffer,

1.1.2 all claims or proceedings made, brought or threatened against the Liquidators by any person and all losses, liabilities, costs (on a full indemnity basis), damages and expenses the Liquidators do or will incur or suffer as a result of defending or settling any such actual or threatened claim or proceeding,

1.2 in each case arising out of or in connection with:

1.2.1 the appointment of the Liquidators or the performance of their duties as such Liquidators or the exercise of any power, authority or discretion or the performance or discharge of any duty vested in them by virtue of their appointment as liquidators of the Company;

1.2.2 payments made by the Liquidators in their capacity as liquidators of the Company to the Council;

1.2.3 payments which have or should have been made to other creditors of the Company entitled to be paid in priority to the Council;

1.2.4 the winding up of the Company and any costs incurred in contemplation thereof, including, without limitation, the Liquidators' remuneration, out of pocket expenses and legal and other professional charges; or

1.2.5 any act effected on the Council's instructions or with the Council's agreement;

1.3 the Liquidators are not agents of the Council;

1.4 this indemnity will not apply to any liability or obligation incurred by the Liquidators or the Liquidators' Representatives by reason of fraud, negligence or wilful default of the Liquidators or the Liquidators' Representatives in the discharge of their powers or the performance of their duties;

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS

2. The Council agrees to pay to the Company on demand such sums identified and notified to the Council.

3. The Council agrees to pay to the Liquidators their proper remuneration, disbursements, costs, expenses and liabilities incurred in relation to the liquidation of the Company.

4. This indemnity will remain in force until the date falling six years after the date of this Deed, notwithstanding the termination or conclusion of the Liquidators' appointment, office or functions as liquidators or the dissolution of the Company.

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Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Report to Cabinet

29 September 2021

Subject:	Co-operative Working with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health – Cllr Suzanne Hartwell
Director:	Director of Public Health,
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Liann Brookes-Smith, Public Health Liann_Brookessmith@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

1.1 That the Director of Public Health be authorised to extend the Co-operative Working Agreement for Public Health Services with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust by 4 months on the same terms and conditions for the period 1 October 2021 to 31 January 2022.

1.2 That in connection with 1.1 above, to approve the cost of the extension to the Co-operative Working Agreement for Public Health Services with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, which totals approximately £2,709,670.

1.3 That with reference to Minute No. 117/20 taken by the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in relation to the term of the new Co-operative Working Agreement, this now be reduced by 4 months as a means of offsetting the costs of the extension.

1.4 That the decision taken by the Cabinet on 9 December 2020 in relation to the new contract (see Minute No. 117/20), the term of the contract be amended for an initial period of 2 years 8 months, namely from 1 February 2021 to 30 September 2024 (reduced from three years) with an option to extend for a further two years to 30 September 2026.

1.5 That the Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Director of Public Health, be authorised to approve variations up to a maximum of 10% of the contract value, should they be necessary.

1.6 That the Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer be authorised to execute any documentation necessary to enable the above recommendations to be implemented.

1.7 That subject to approval of recommendations above, any necessary exemptions to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules be approved to enable the course of action to proceed.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The reason for the recommendations are to strengthen the governance around the Co-operative Working Agreement with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBH). In particular, in relation to Regulation 12(7) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

2.2 By extending the current agreement and reducing the duration of the new agreement by the same time period, the Council and SWBH would gain an opportunity to strengthen the governance around the new agreement without any impact on patients, services or budgets.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people The services in the agreement are health visiting and support for teenage parents supporting the development of Sandwell's children
	People live well and age well The agreement includes sexual health services supporting the community to receive support and treatment.
	Strong resilient communities
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 In August 2015 Cabinet approved the development of Co-operative Working with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBHT) for the purpose of achieving shared objectives for health and social care (Key Decision ASCH007). Through Co-operative Working the two organisations are seeking to:

- achieve common objectives;
- integrate care pathways;
- improve service quality and maximise opportunities for innovation;
- secure value for money and make the most of resources.

4.2 To progress Co-operative Working, the council entered a contract with SWBHT under regulation 12(7) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. This allowed the Local Authority to enter into a contract on a collaborative arrangement, and without competition, where public services are provided with the aim of achieving common objectives between the public sector contracting parties.

4.3 Improving the health and wellbeing of the local population requires organisations to work together as solutions are often multifaceted. SWBHT is the key provider trust for acute and community healthcare services in Sandwell. The development of Co-operative Working on shared Public Health objectives has enhanced current working relationships across health and social care services. It has bought greater opportunities to:

- Develop and preserve integrated care pathways
- Improve service quality and scope for innovation
- Secure value for money, including areas which are more difficult to place a direct monetary value such a research and evaluation.

4.4 Co-operative Working is overseen by a joint governance arrangement that includes a Joint Co-operative Working Board which is supported by a Co-operative Working Steering Group.

4.5 The operation of the Co-operative Working relationship has been assessed and is considered to satisfy the conditions of Public Contracts Regulations 2015, regulation 12(7); however, there is a need to elaborate the collaborative arrangements in the new Co-operative Working Agreement for Public Health Services. The extension period of 4 months to the existing contract will enable this to be undertaken.

4.6 The governance of the Co-operative Working Agreement would continue and monitored compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015, regulation 12(7) and the value and impact of Co-operative Working.

4.7 The Joint Public Health Plan articulates the shared Public Health objectives between the council and SWBHT. The plan details how each organisation will be contributing to the achievement of goals and targets relating to the shared objectives. This plan has been updated for 2021.

4.8 Following the proposed extension, the contract will be for four years and 8 months. An initial period of 2 years 8 months from 1 Feb 2022 to 30 September 2024, and an option to extend for a further two years to 30 September 2026.

Table 1: Anticipated cost for the 4-month extension of current contract

Service	4-month Extension
0-5 Services	£2,128,022.33
Sexual Health Services	£567,648.00
Infection Prevention Service	£14,000.00
Total	£2,709,670

Costs have been estimated with SWBH on a reimbursement basis as per the requirements of section 12 (7) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and therefore could change in delivery of the services.

Table 2: Estimated changes in cost due to 4-month extension

Service	5 yr contract (2021 - 2026) (3yr +2yr)	4yr 8 m contract (2022-2026) (2yr 8m +2yr)	4m Extension Current (2017-2021) Contract	Extension plus new contract Total
0-5 Services	£31,920,500	£29,792,467	£2,128,022	£31,920,489
Sexual Health Services*	£10,000,000*	£9,333,333*	£567,648	£9,900,981*
Infection Prevention Service	£215,000	£200,667	£14,000	£214,667.00
Total	£42,135,500	£39,326,467	£2,709,670	£42,036,137

* Sexual health services will always include contingency to cover a predicted range of performance, financial saving from the 4-month extension is based on current tariff and 2020/21 activity.

4.9 Note that the cost of a 4-month extension in the current Co-operative Working Agreement followed by the new 4 year 8 month contract, is estimated to generate a £344 decrease in cost compared to starting the new Co-operative Working Agreement for the five year period from 1st October 2021.

THE CURRENT POSITION

4.10 The Co-operative Working Arrangement is operational however the contract ends on 30 September 2021.

4.11 The governance arrangements are in place and working effectively including the Co-operative Working Management Board, the Co-operative Working Steering Group and the joint performance management of services under Co-operative Working. The operation of the Co-operative Working relationship has been assessed and is considered to satisfy the conditions of Public Contracts Regulations 2015, regulation 12(7).4.12 Services are performance managed and have all performed well over the lifetime of the contract. There are currently no concerns with performance of the services contained within the contract.

4.13 The Joint Public Health Plan has been updated for 2021.

CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

4.14 Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust have been consulted and are in support of this proposal. There is no direct consultation with service users or wider stakeholders required as no change is being proposed to the service.

4.15 However, when and where necessary consultations are undertaken as required for individual services that are delivered through the Co-operative Working Agreement.

5 Alternative Options

5.1 The council could consider the procurement of the services in question; however that is likely to result in less co-ordinated, efficient and cost effective services being delivered. The collaborative approach with the NHS Trust ensure greater proficiencies and enables both public sector bodies to achieve more effectively key objectives.

6 Implications

Resources:	All financial changes have been negated.
Legal and Governance:	Contracts would need to be awarded in accordance with the Local Authority's Procurement Contract Procedure Rules which would generally require competition for contracts of the value in question. An exemption to the council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules is required for a direct award. Under regulation 12(7) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the local authority may enter into a contract without competition where the contract is with another contracting authority (public body) and establishes or implements co-operation with the aim of ensuring that public services the authorities have to perform are provided with a view to achieving objectives they have in common and are governed solely by considerations relating to the public interest. Detailed external legal advice has been taken from Bevan Brittan in relation to application of regulation 12(7) to this contract and the issuing of a VEAT notice to mitigate any risk. They have carried out a legal analysis of the contract and are of the view that, on balance, it is more likely than not that the envisaged arrangements would be found to comply with regulation 12(7). A key reason for their conclusion is that both the Council and the Trust take a key role (through the Co-operative Working Management Board) in the strategic direction of the services for the mutual benefit of both organisations and with a view to fulfilling their joint aims – as evidenced through the Joint Health Plan. Following a fresh review the team at Bevan Brittain have advise bolstering the contract in respect to the above.
Risk:	The process of the extension is to permit further risk aversion by strengthening the co-operative contract.

Equality:	There are no equality implications.
Health and Wellbeing:	There are no health and wellbeing implications.
Social Value	There are no social value implications.

7. Appendices

7.1 None

8. Background Papers

8.1 None

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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