

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?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people Proposals within the Area Framework and Masterplan consider the need for new education facilities</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>



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

