



# 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

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# 1

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## 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 opportunities 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

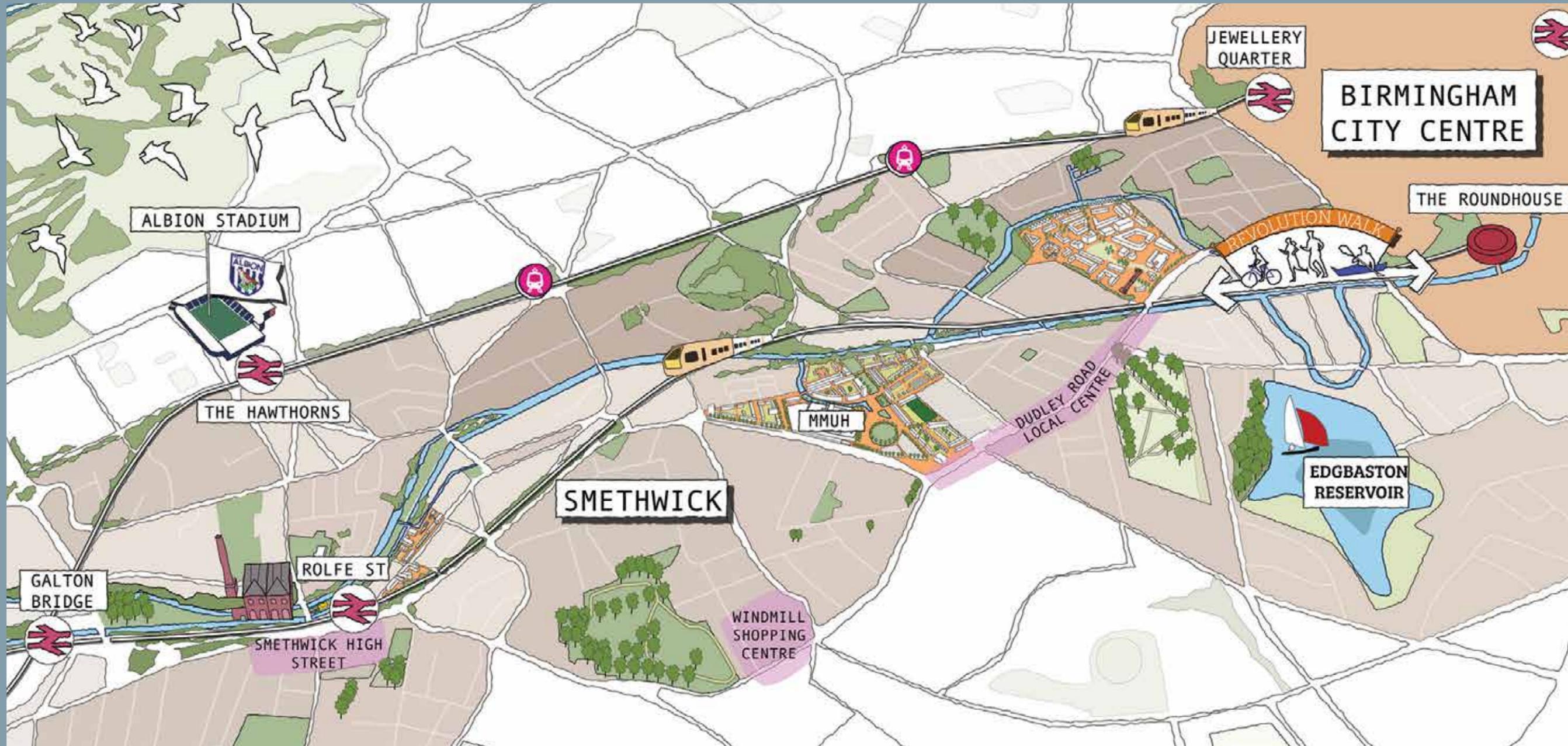
The Grove Lane masterplan builds on this framework to set out in more detail how the Grove Lane area surrounding the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital can be redeveloped. A more detailed masterplan for the Grove Lane area is needed to show how the site can be developed and set the basis for its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

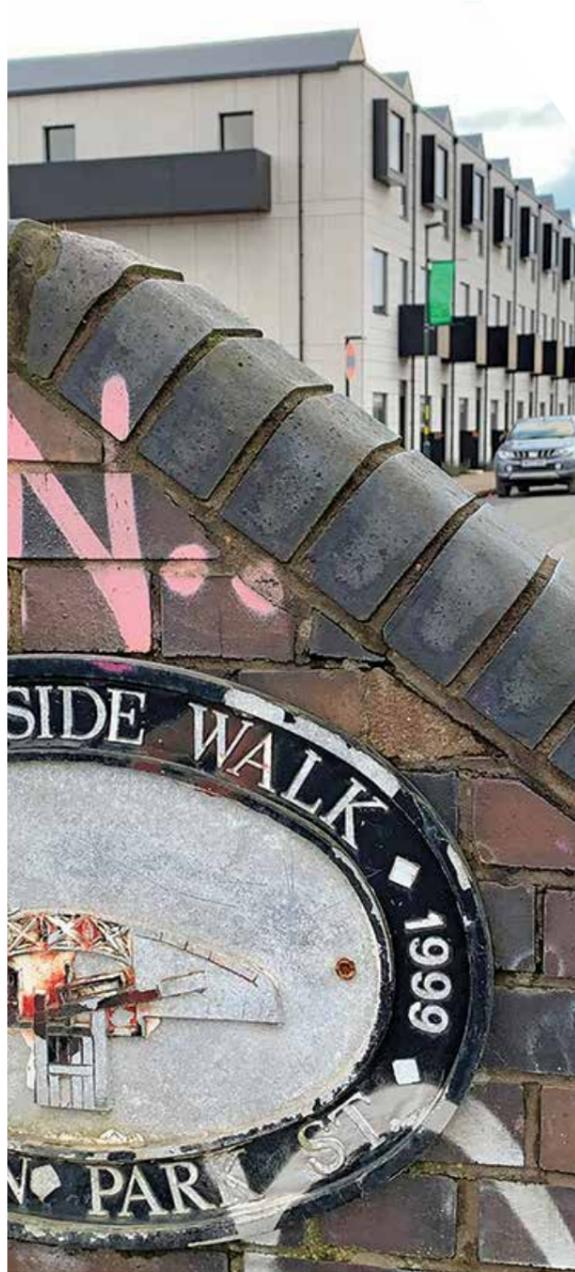
The development framework and the Grove Lane masterplan are intended to be read together.



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







### 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.

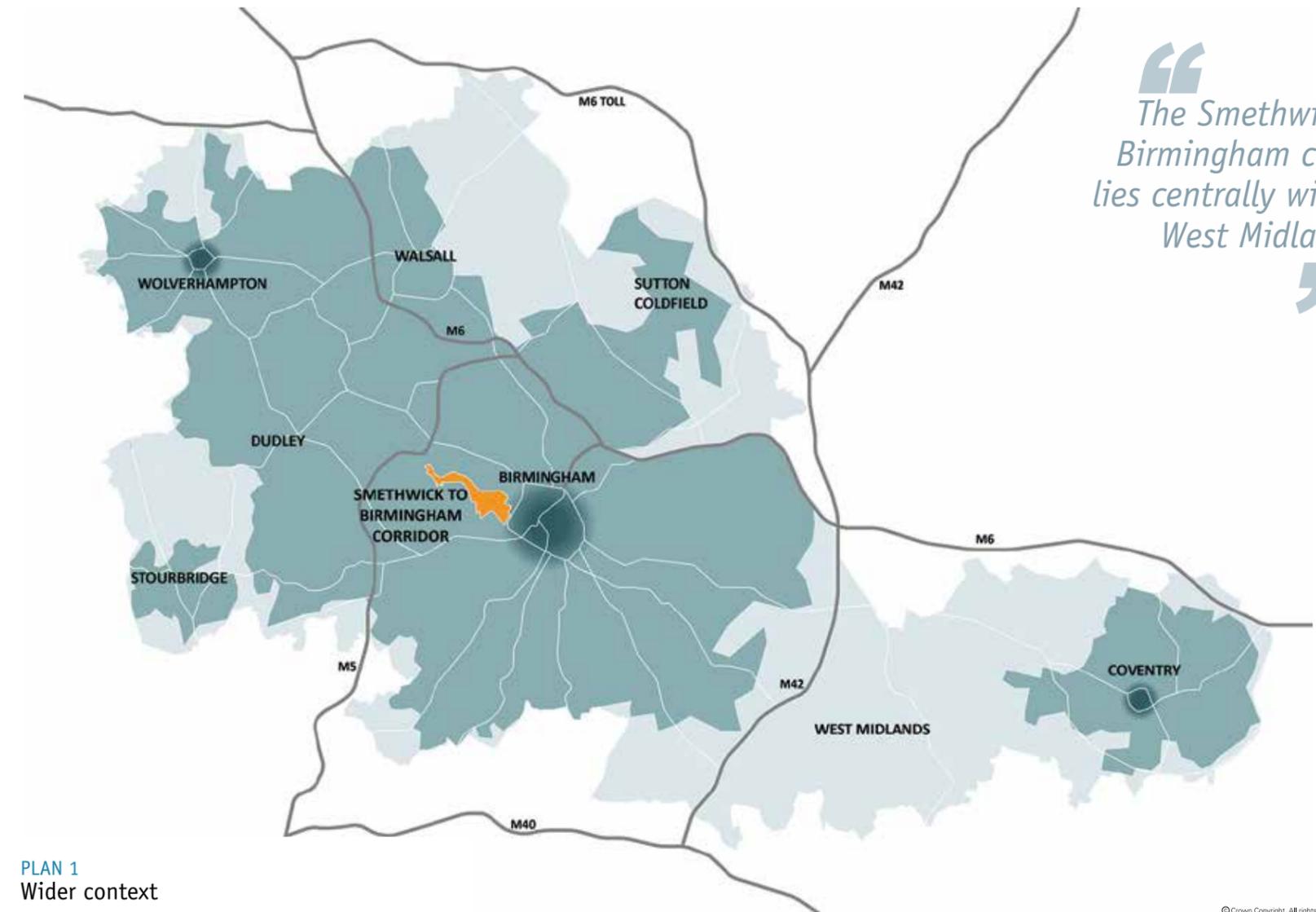
The corridor runs from the edge of central Birmingham at Ladywood, through the Winson Green area of Birmingham, to the town of Smethwick in the Borough of Sandwell and straddles major road, rail and canal routes between Birmingham and the Black Country.

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.

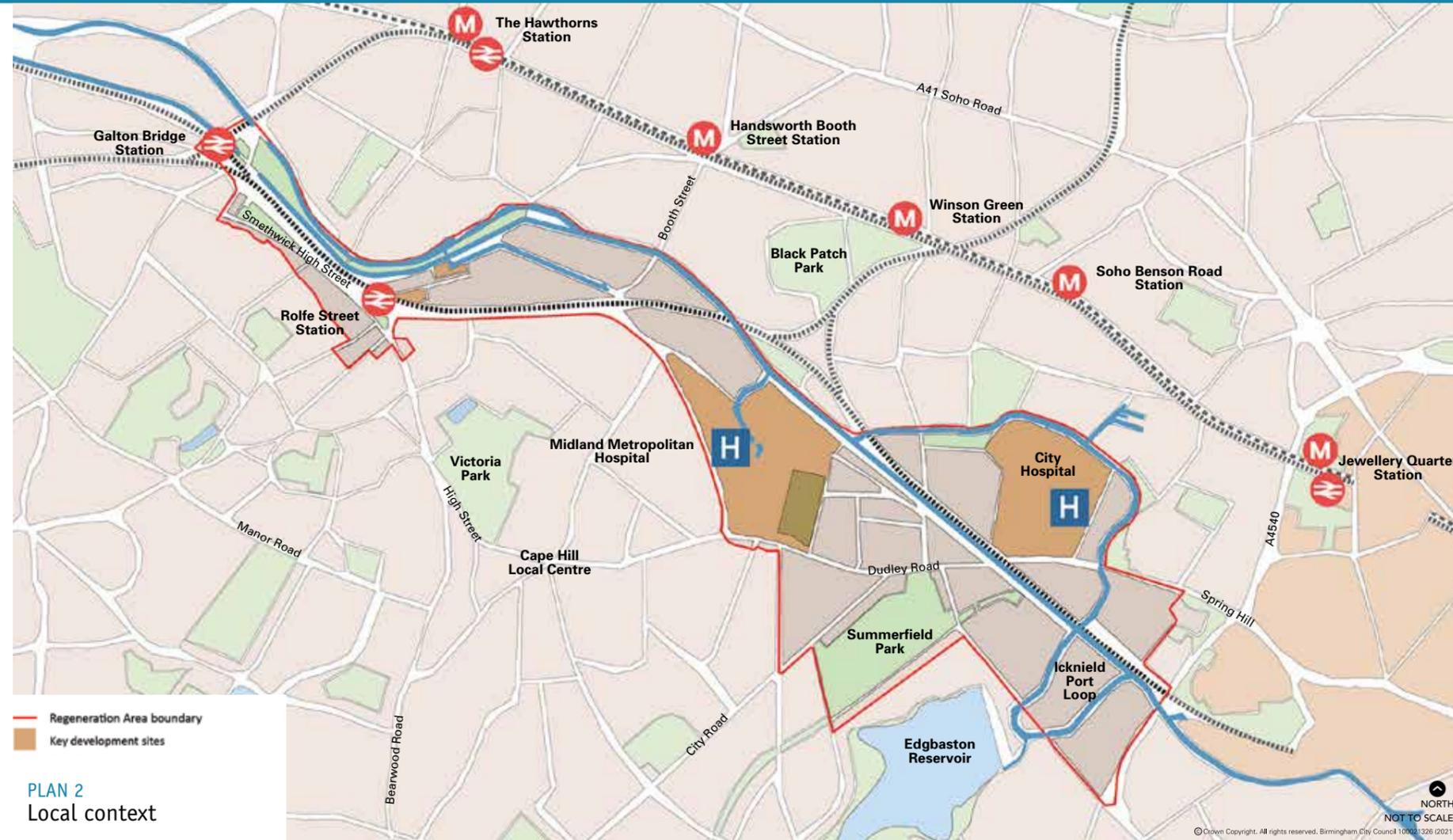


“  
The Smethwick to Birmingham corridor lies centrally within the West Midlands  
”

PLAN 1  
Wider context

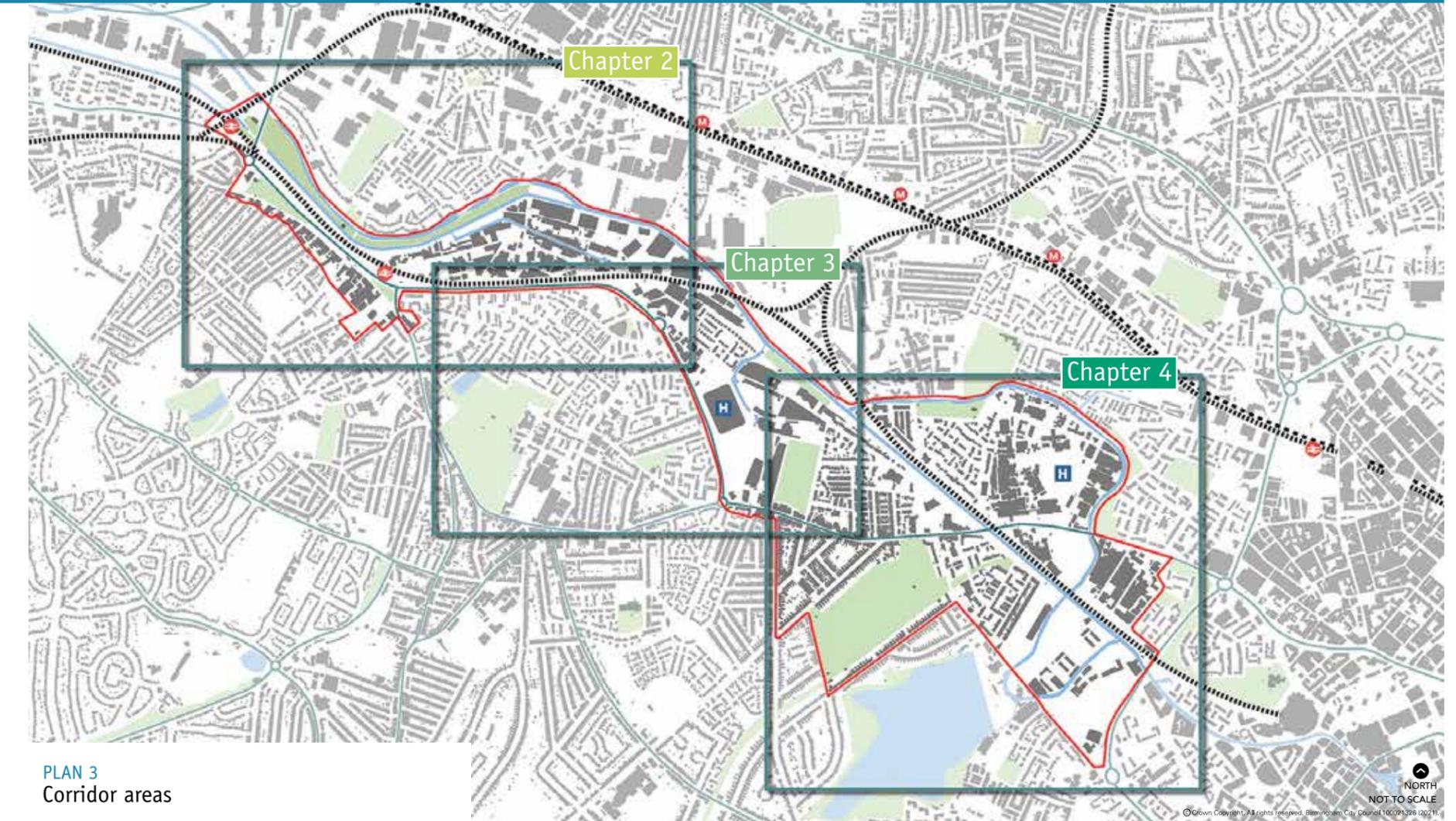
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## Local context



## The corridor

We have divided the corridor area into three separate neighbourhoods which are shown 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).



## 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.



### 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.



### 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.



### 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.



### 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.



### 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.

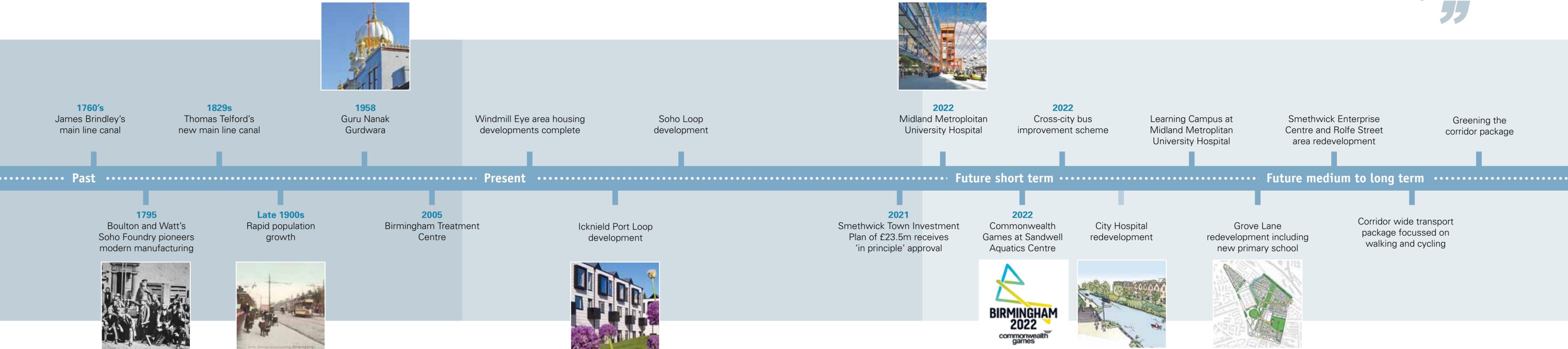
## The corridor’s contribution to net zero

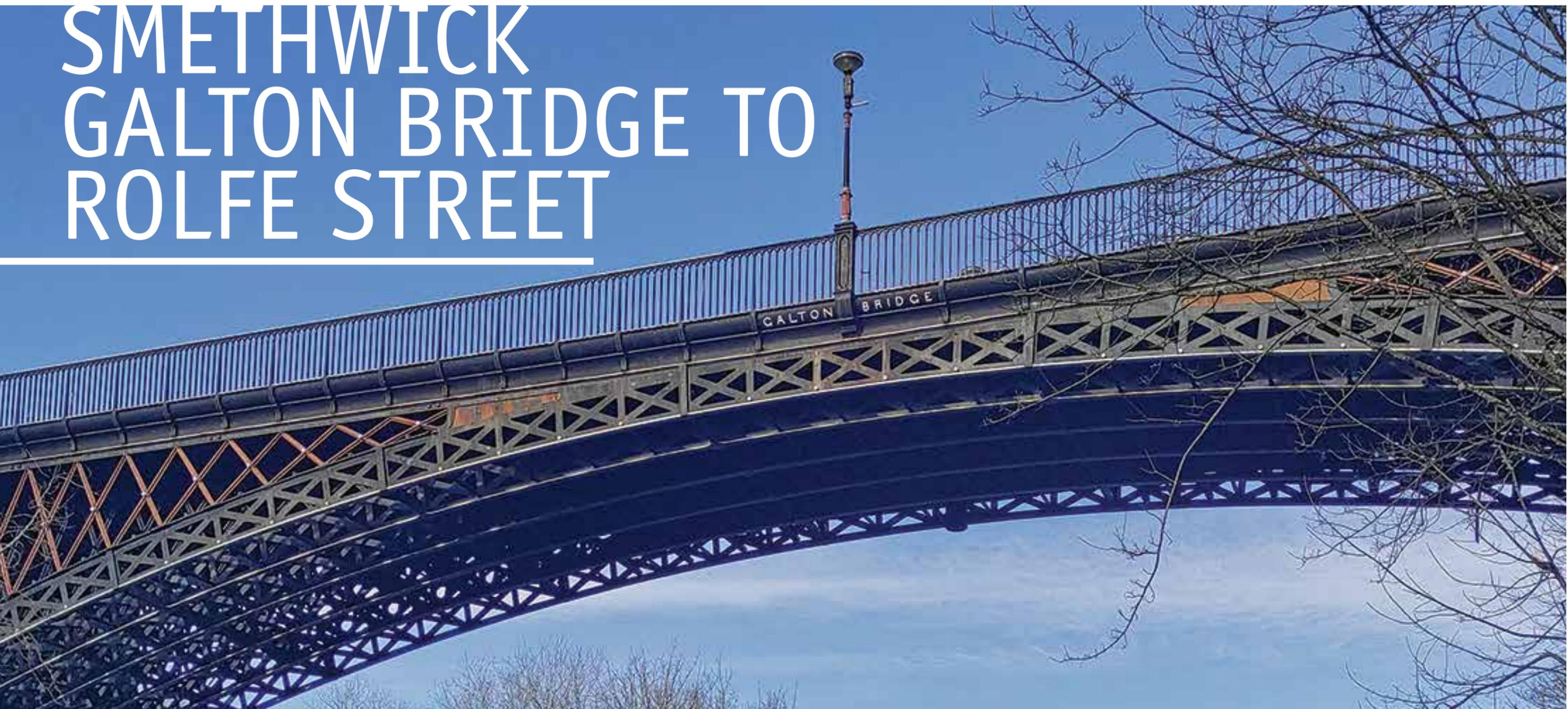
Through these guiding principles the development of the corridor will contribute to achieving net zero by improving green spaces, encouraging sustainable travel choices, reducing congestion and delivering sustainable new homes.

## 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”*





# SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE TO ROLFE STREET

## 2

### SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE TO ROLFE STREET

# 2

## SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE TO ROLFE STREET

### Introduction

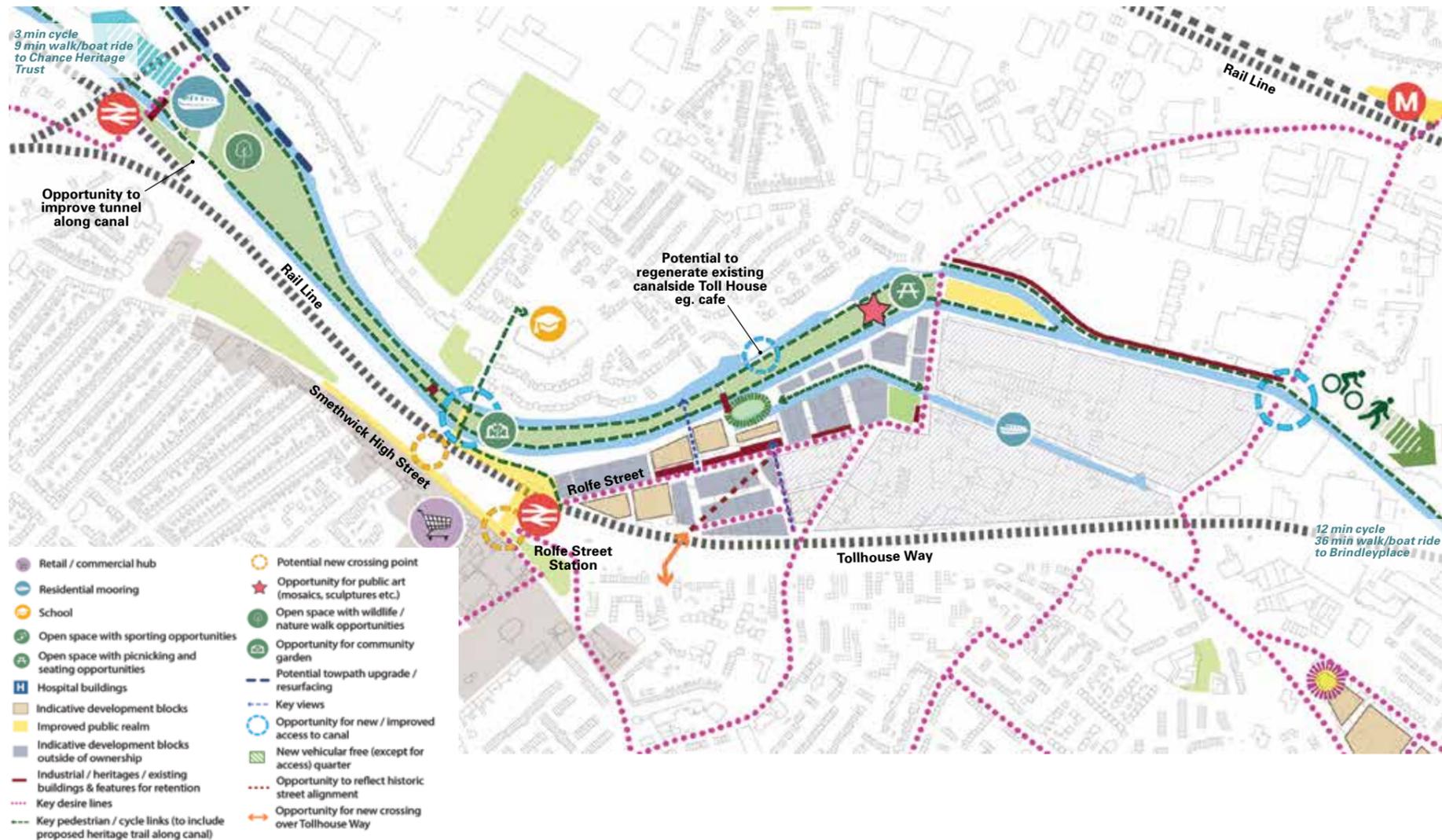
The corridor is at its narrowest here, as the three canals (including the aqueduct branch) converge, along with the railway line and the A457. Rolfe Street station lies close to this convergence of routes and is the main train station to access the new hospital. Improvements to the station are currently 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 15  
Smethwick Galton Bridge to Rolfe Street framework

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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

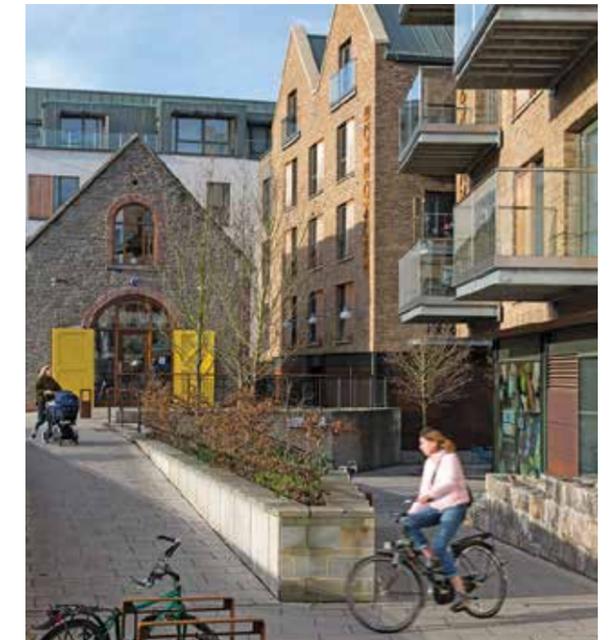
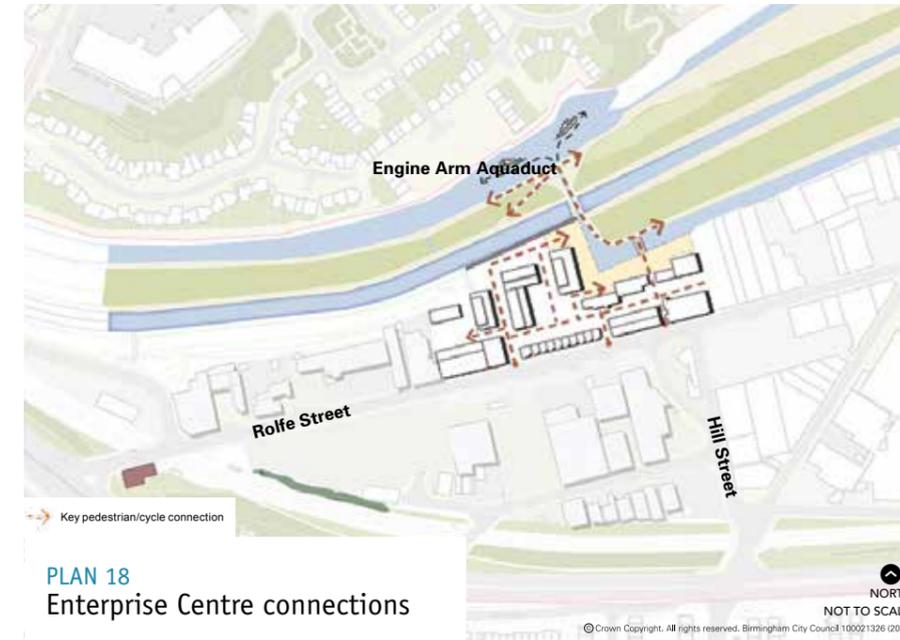
The Enterprise Centre on Rolfe Street is owned by Sandwell Council. It is a self-contained site on the north side of the street, with an important waterfront boundary at the Engine Arm Aqueduct. A mix of single, two and three storey buildings, the site has some interesting historic features and references 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.



### 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 Arm 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).



### 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 through gaps in the built form tells a story about the place.

### Frontages

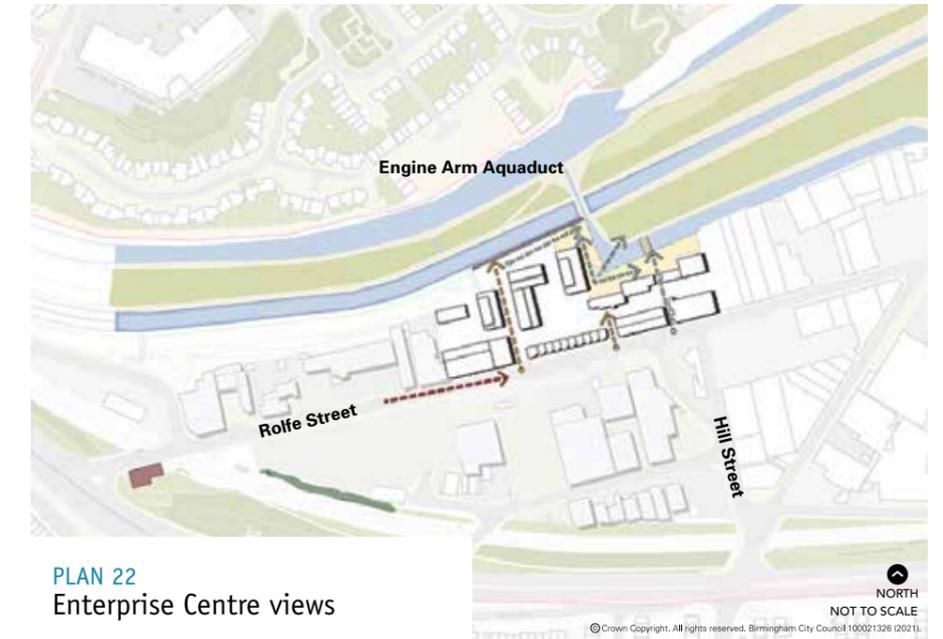
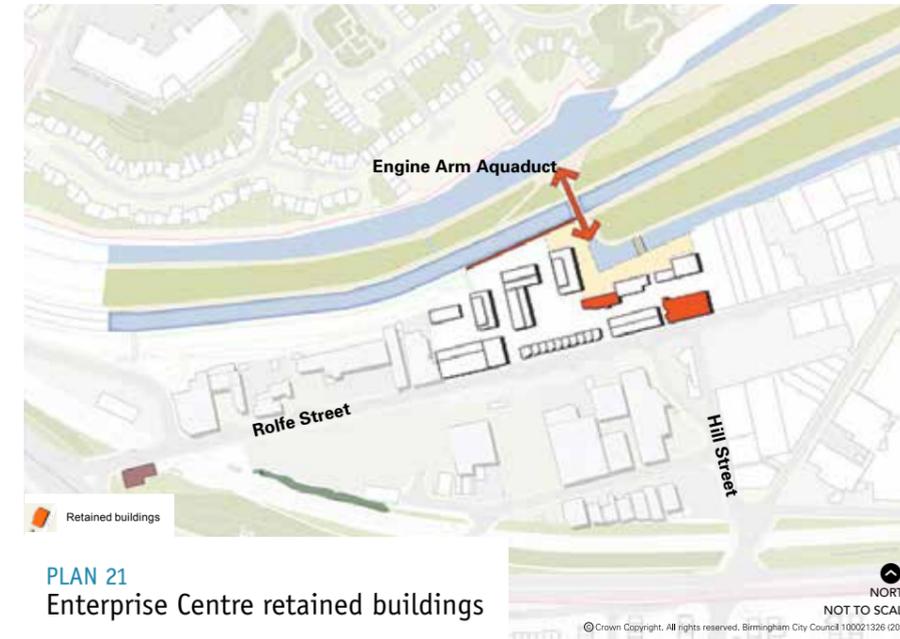
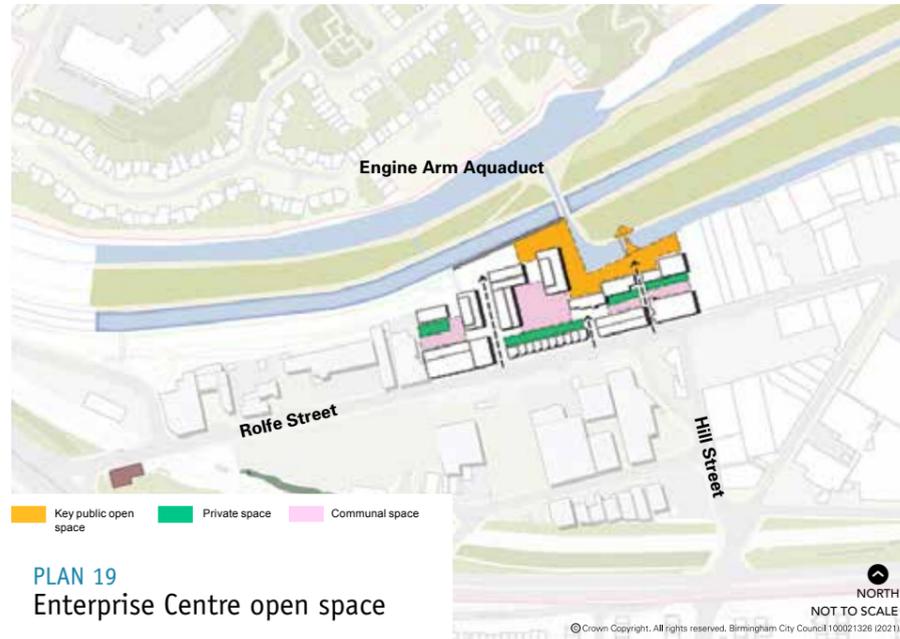
- Maintenance of clear frontage to Rolfe Street defined by the red brick connected to the street's past.
- Frontages to active connections into and through the site where activity takes place.
- Capitalise on frontages to the canal, benefitting the outlook for residents and providing a sense of overlooking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



### 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

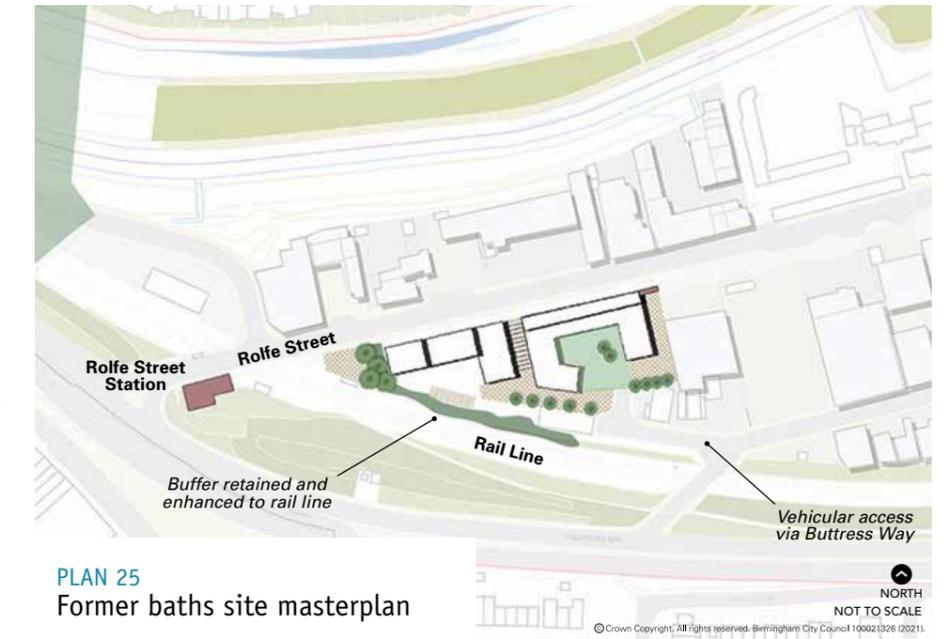
The original Smethwick public baths - a striking piece of nineteenth century civic architecture - were located adjacent to the station on Rolfe Street. The original three storey building has been relocated to the Black Country Living Museum in Dudley, and the site where it once stood has become open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



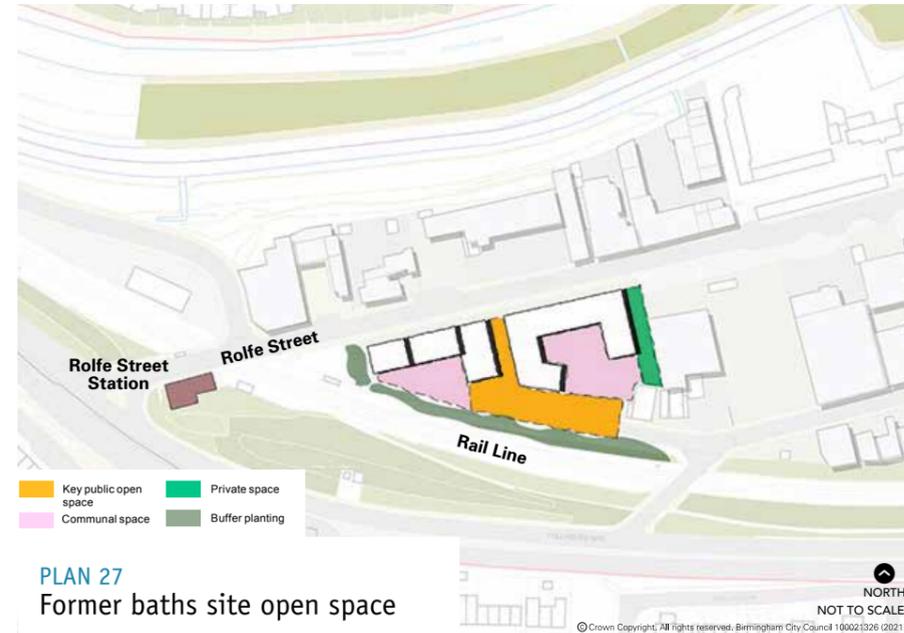
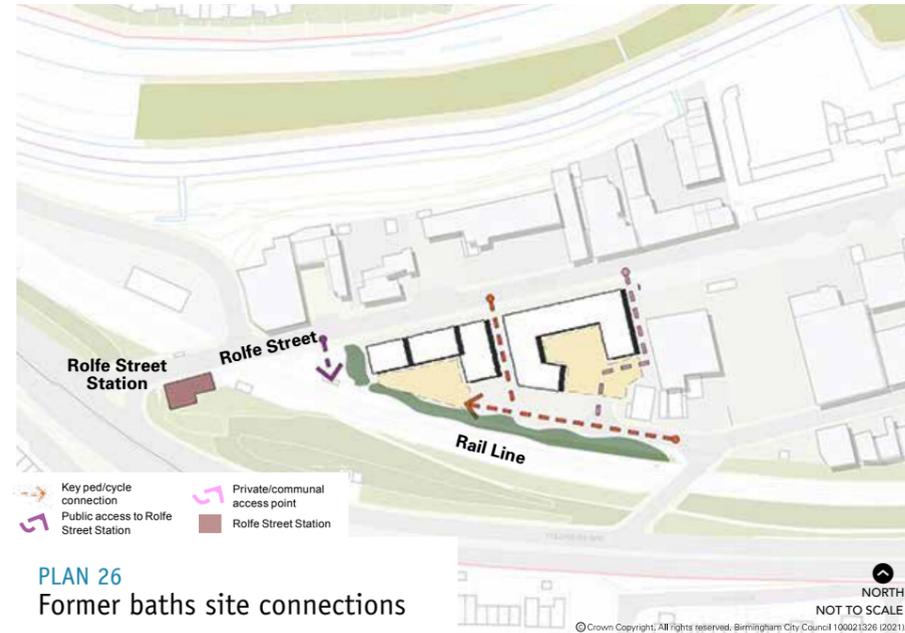
PLAN 25  
Former baths site masterplan

### 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).



### Frontages

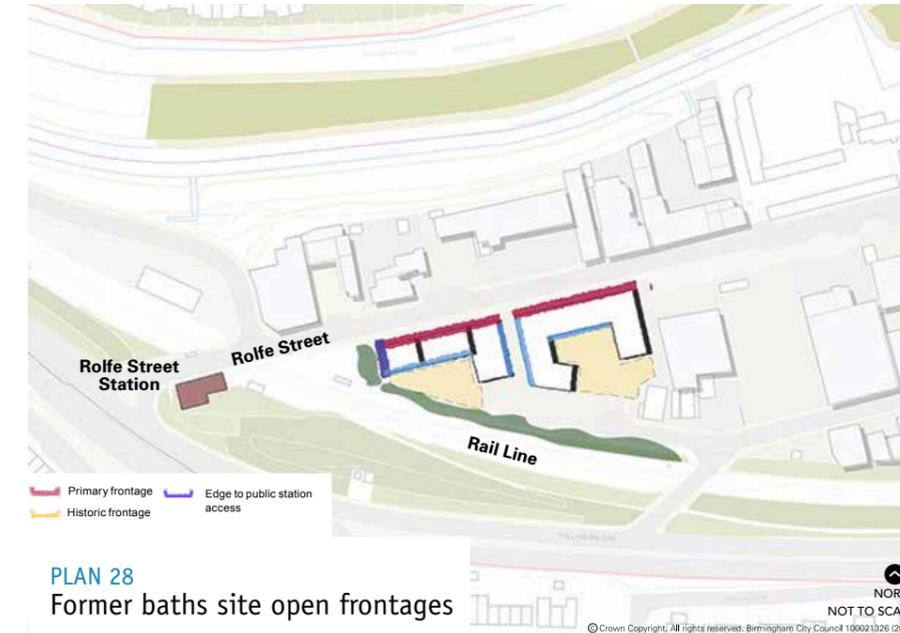
- Maintenance of clear frontage to Rolfe Street defined by the red brick connected to the street's past.
- Frontage to public railway access to west must be carefully treated so that residential privacy is not compromised.

### 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.



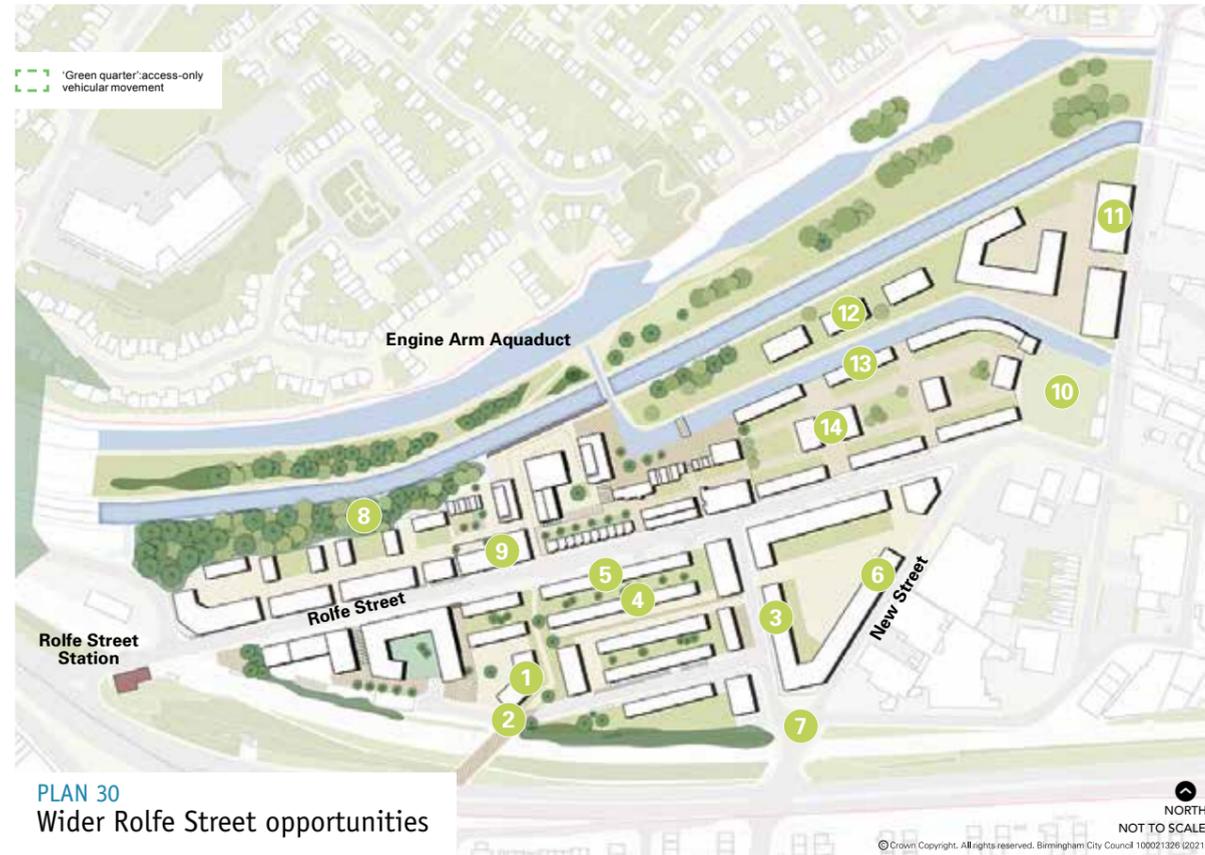
### Comprehensive masterplan

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.



### 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

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# 3

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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.

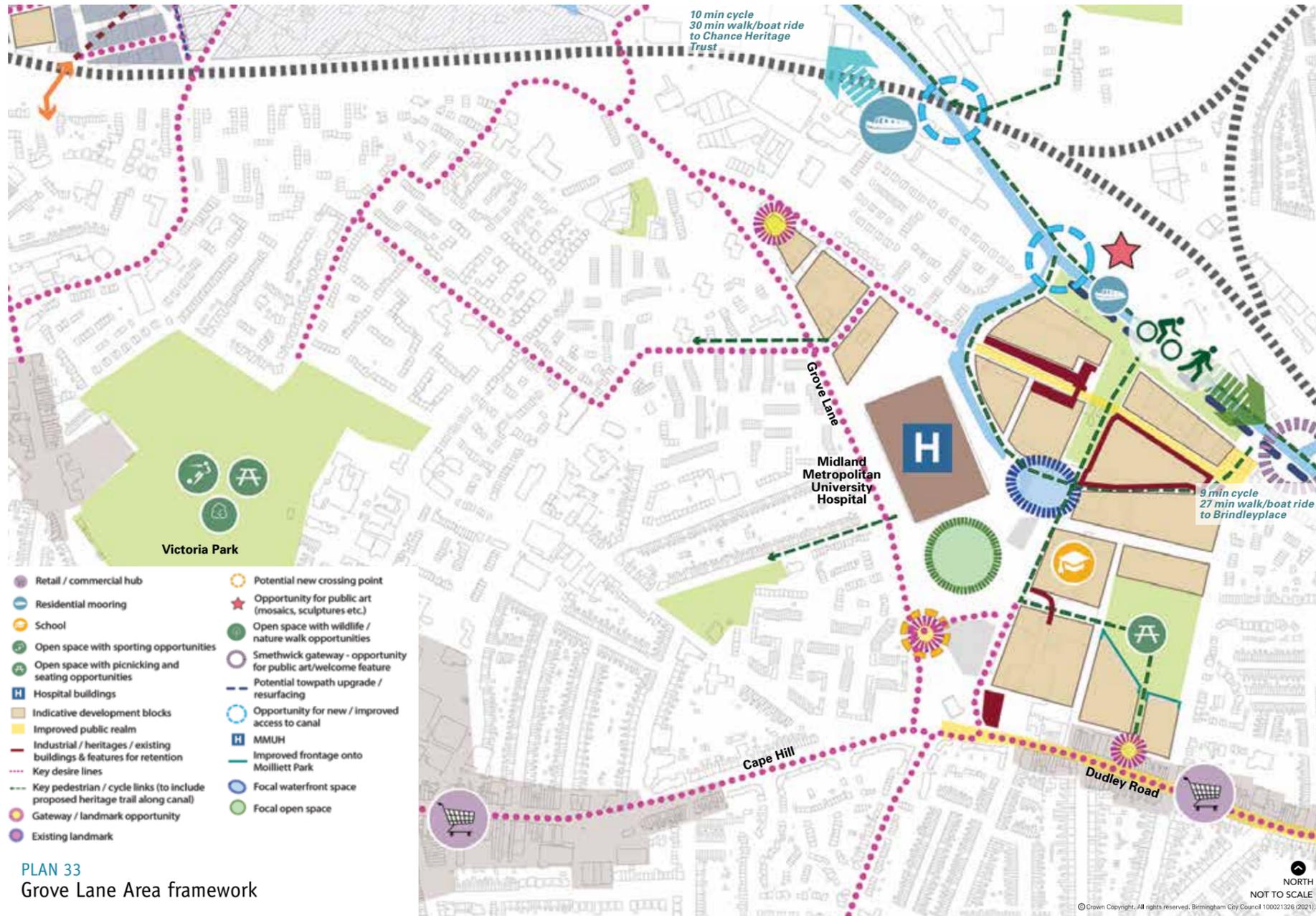
The hospital will bring change. It is a major building, with height and mass. Alongside the hospital, a learning campus, bringing a university presence to Smethwick, is proposed. People from across the region will have reason to visit here

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.





## Objectives for the area

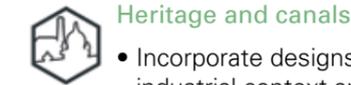
### Layout principles

- 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 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.



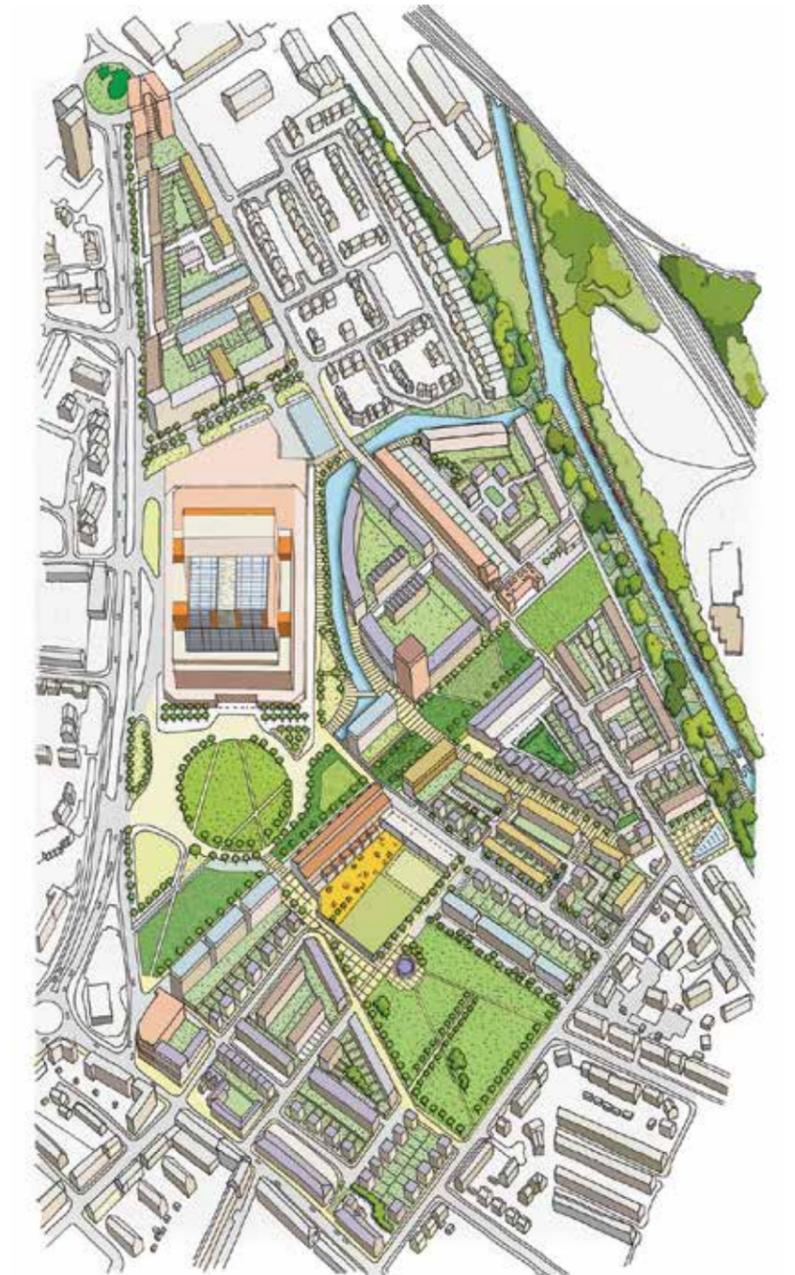
PLAN 34  
Grove Lane location



Concept view from the new hospital looking south

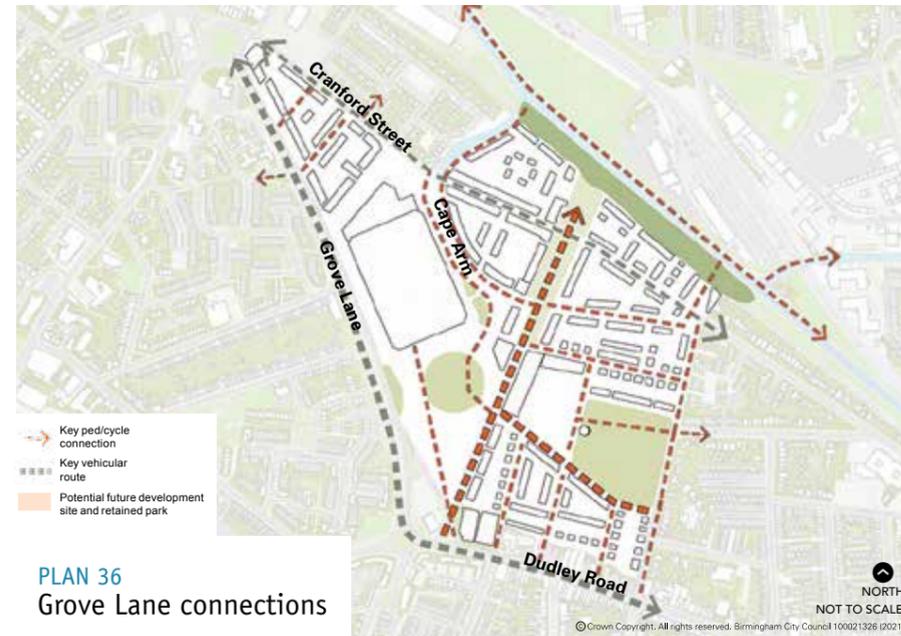


PLAN 35  
Grove Lane masterplan



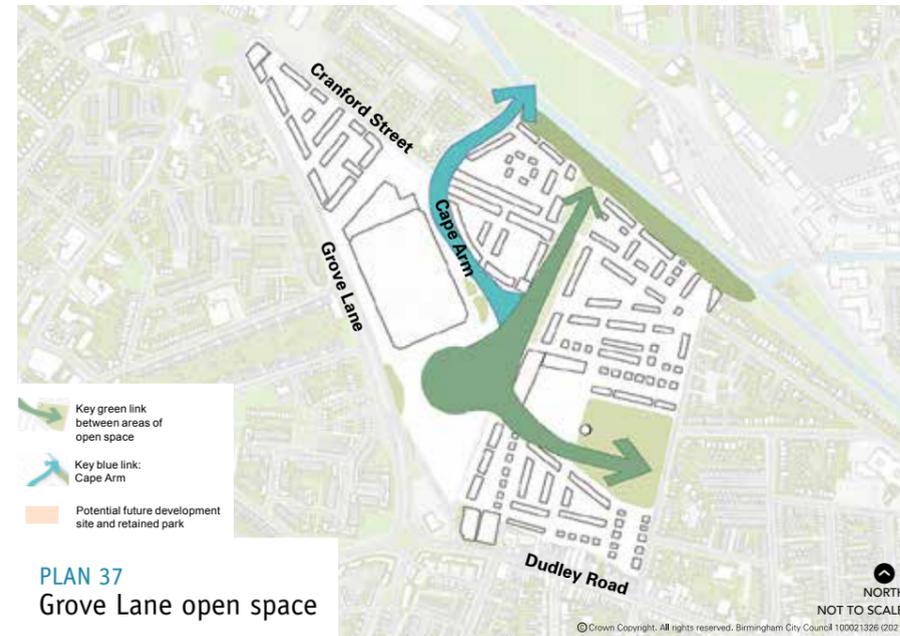
### Connections

- 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.



### 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.

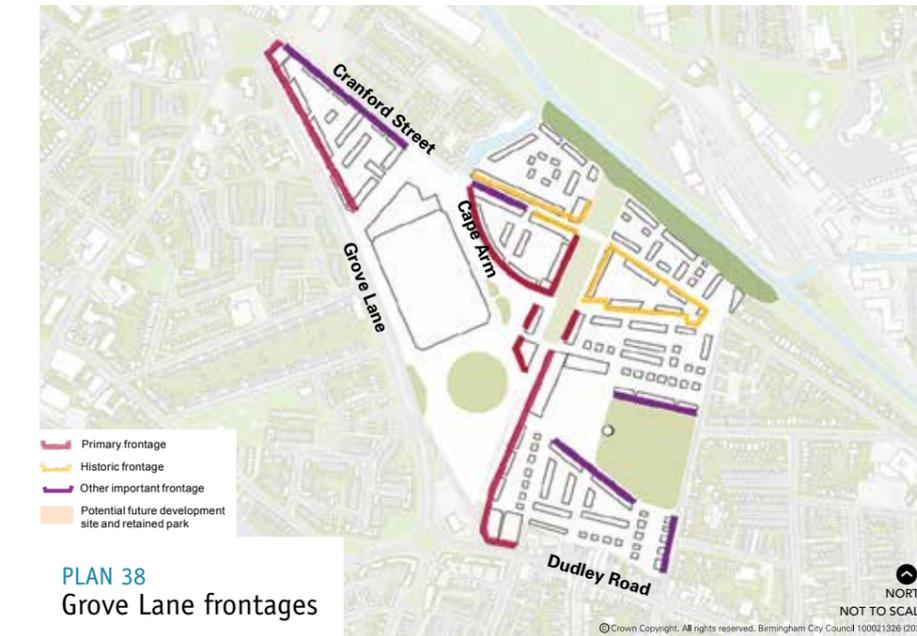
Any development of the park would need to accord with Birmingham Development Plan Policy TP9 or come forward through the new Birmingham Plan.



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.



### 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.



Image courtesy of Jim Stephenson

# GROVE LANE TO CITY HOSPITAL

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4

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GROVE LANE TO  
CITY HOSPITAL

# 4

## GROVE LANE TO CITY HOSPITAL

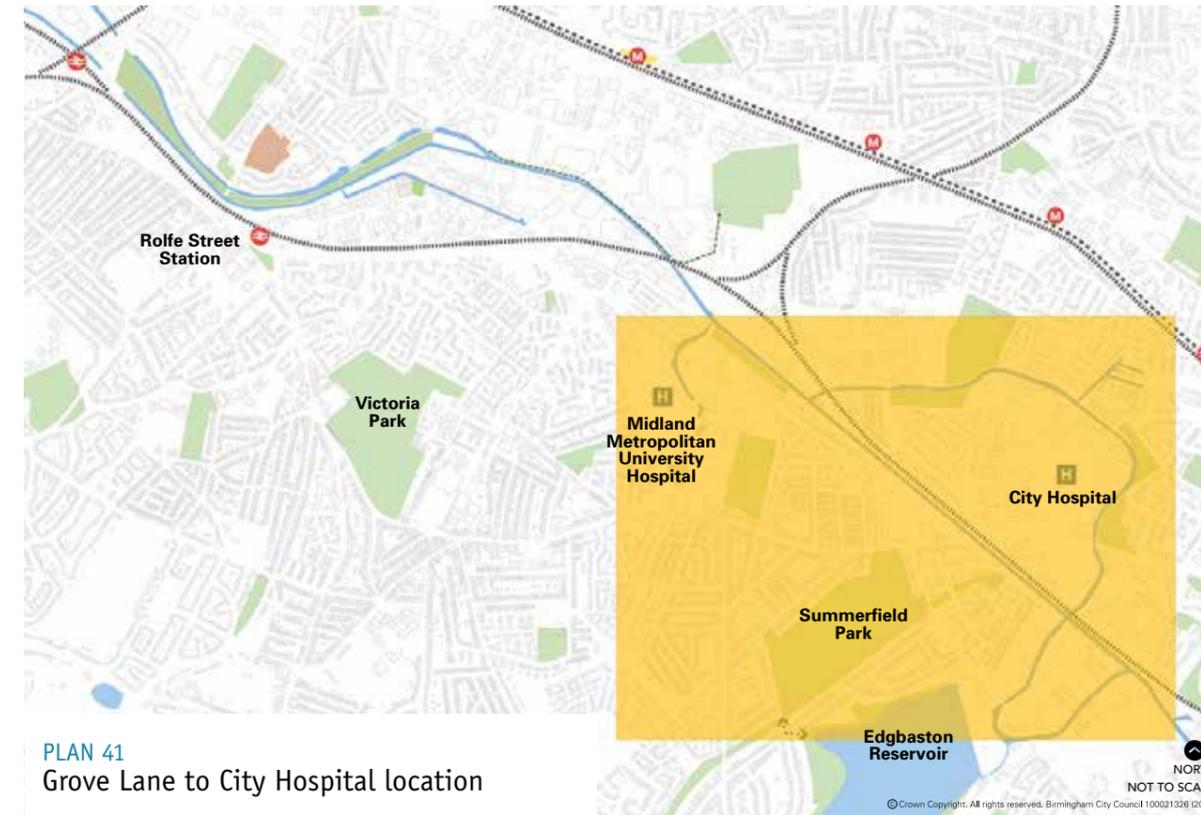
### Introduction

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

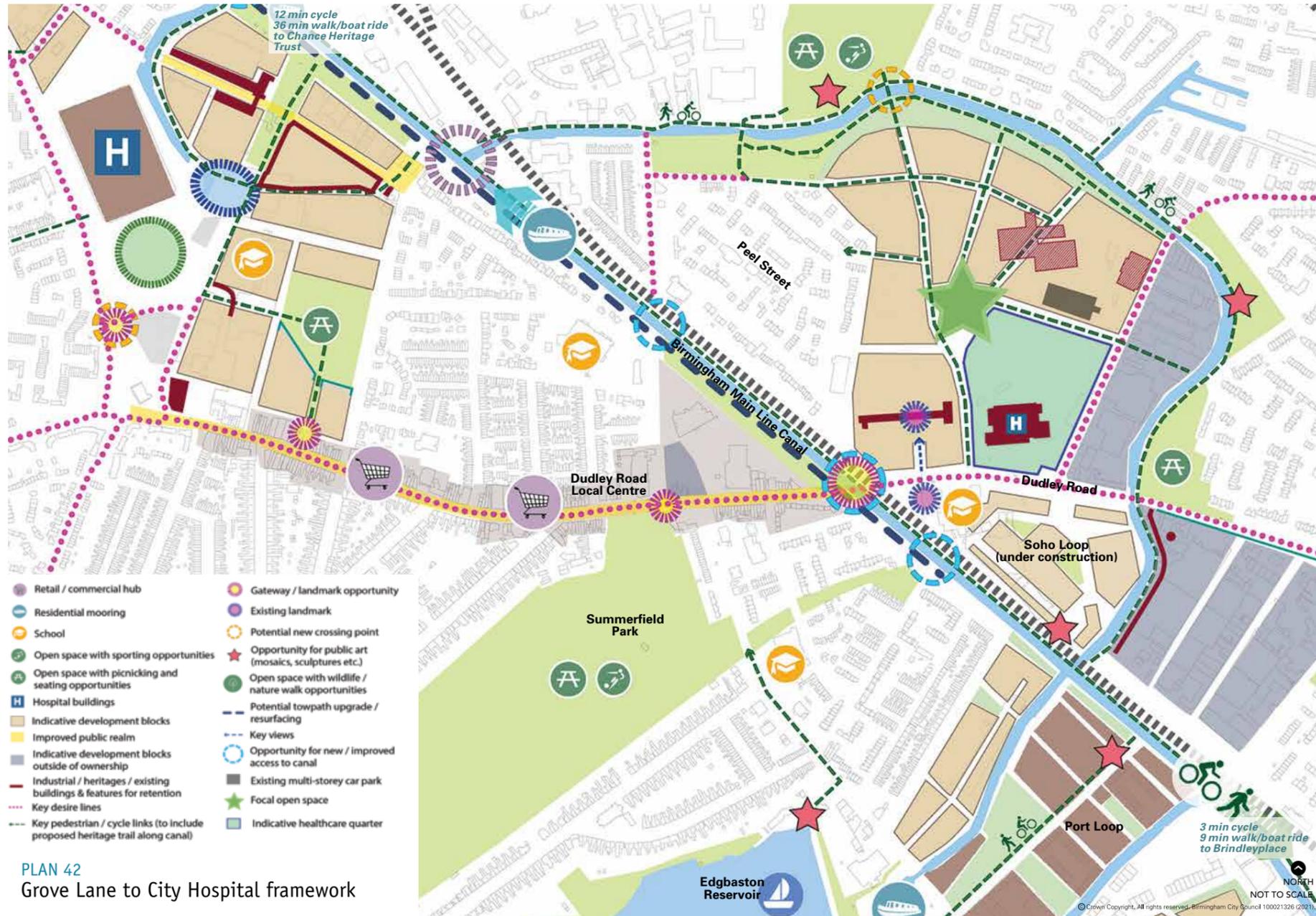
lie within this area, but they would benefit from improvement.

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





### Objectives for the area



#### Dudley Road local centre

- Use City Council land holdings to improve entrances to Moilliet 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.

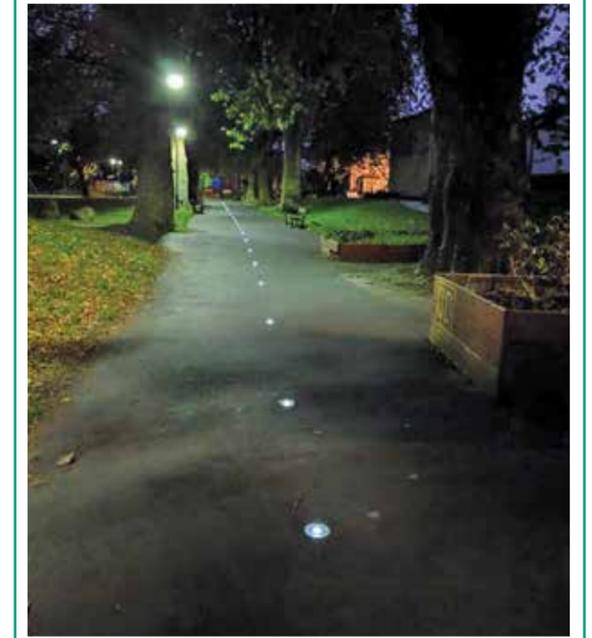
### Development opportunities

- 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.

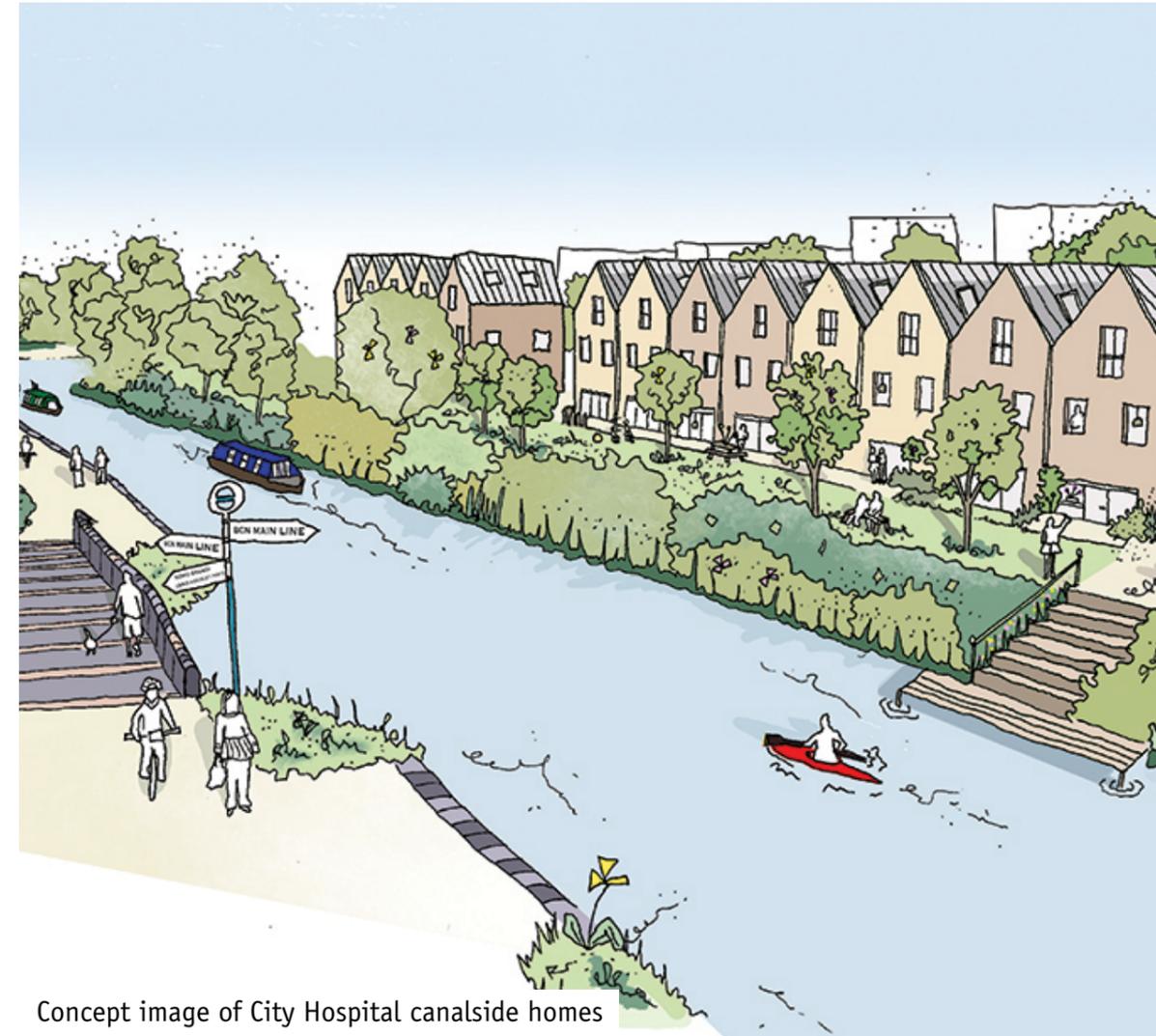
City Hospital is a typical established hospital site that has developed over many decades and comprises a mix of buildings dating from the Victorian period through to recent times. Whilst the original Victorian buildings have some merit, they are not listed, and there are no other designated heritage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

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.

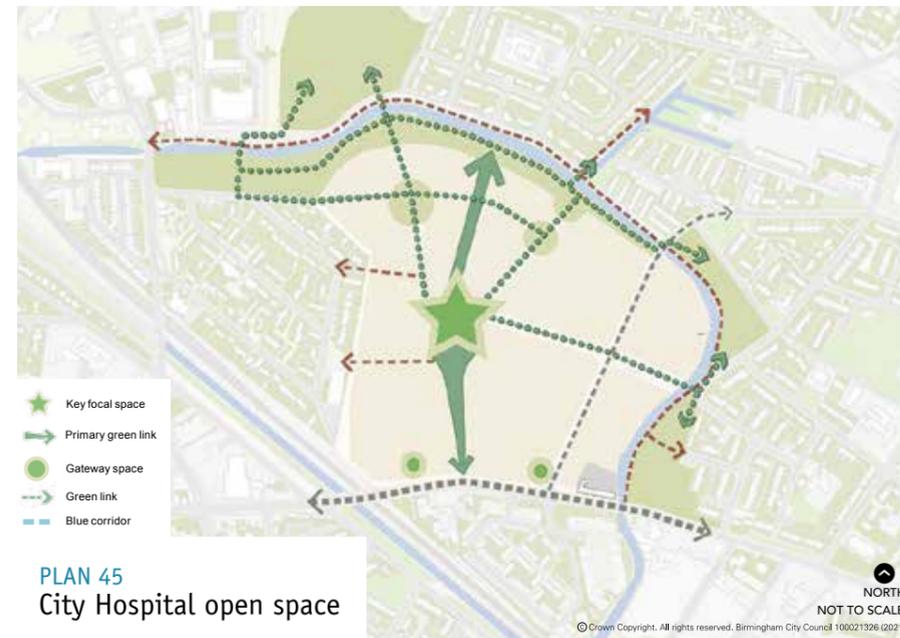
- Significant trees on the site should be retained and protected to contribute to development character and residential amenity.
- Physical and visual connections can take advantage of off-site open spaces (Norman Street Park, All Saints Park, Clissold Passage)

### 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.



## 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.

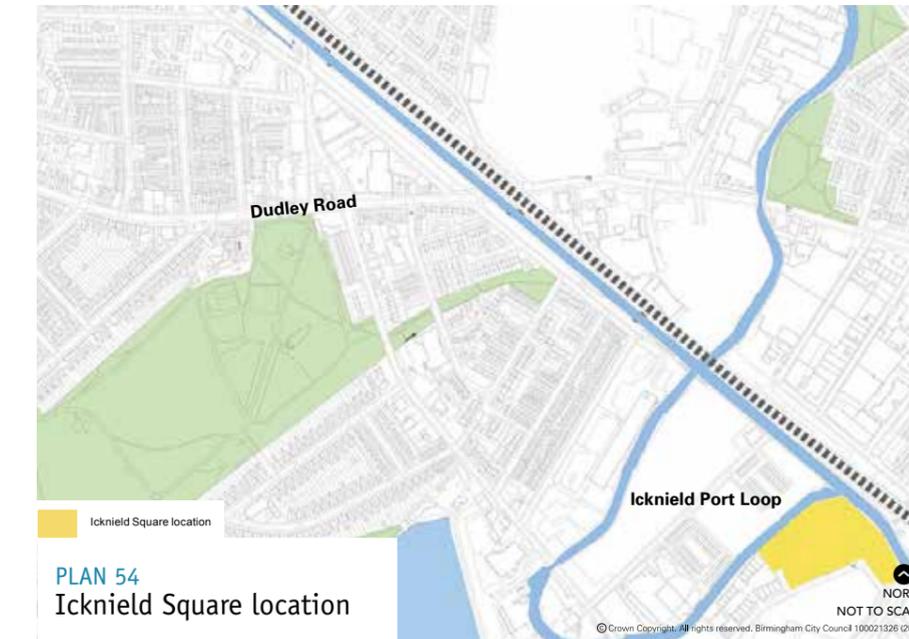


## Icknield Square

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.



# 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

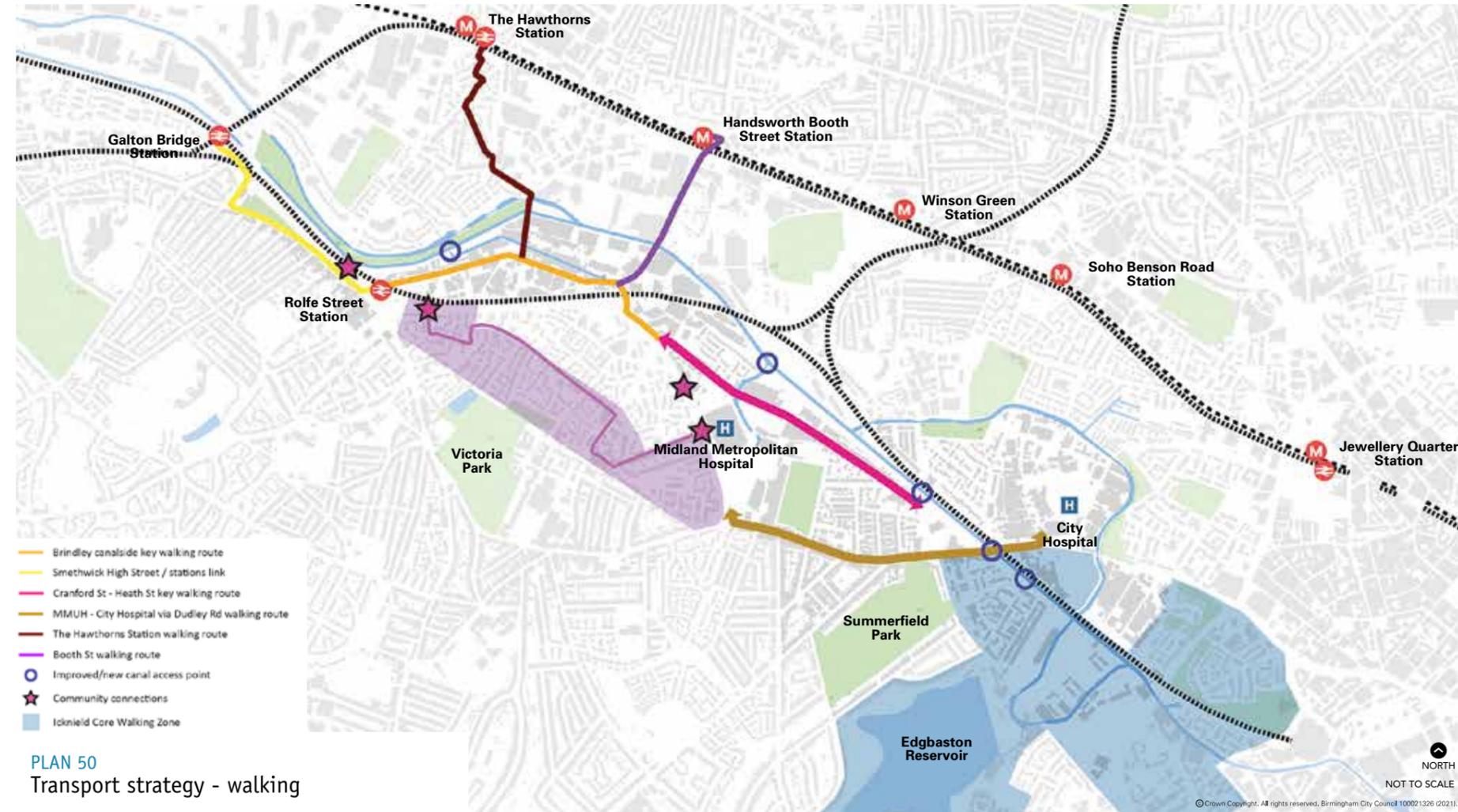
be a temporary Games Route Network for travel movements of officials and athletes during the Games.

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.

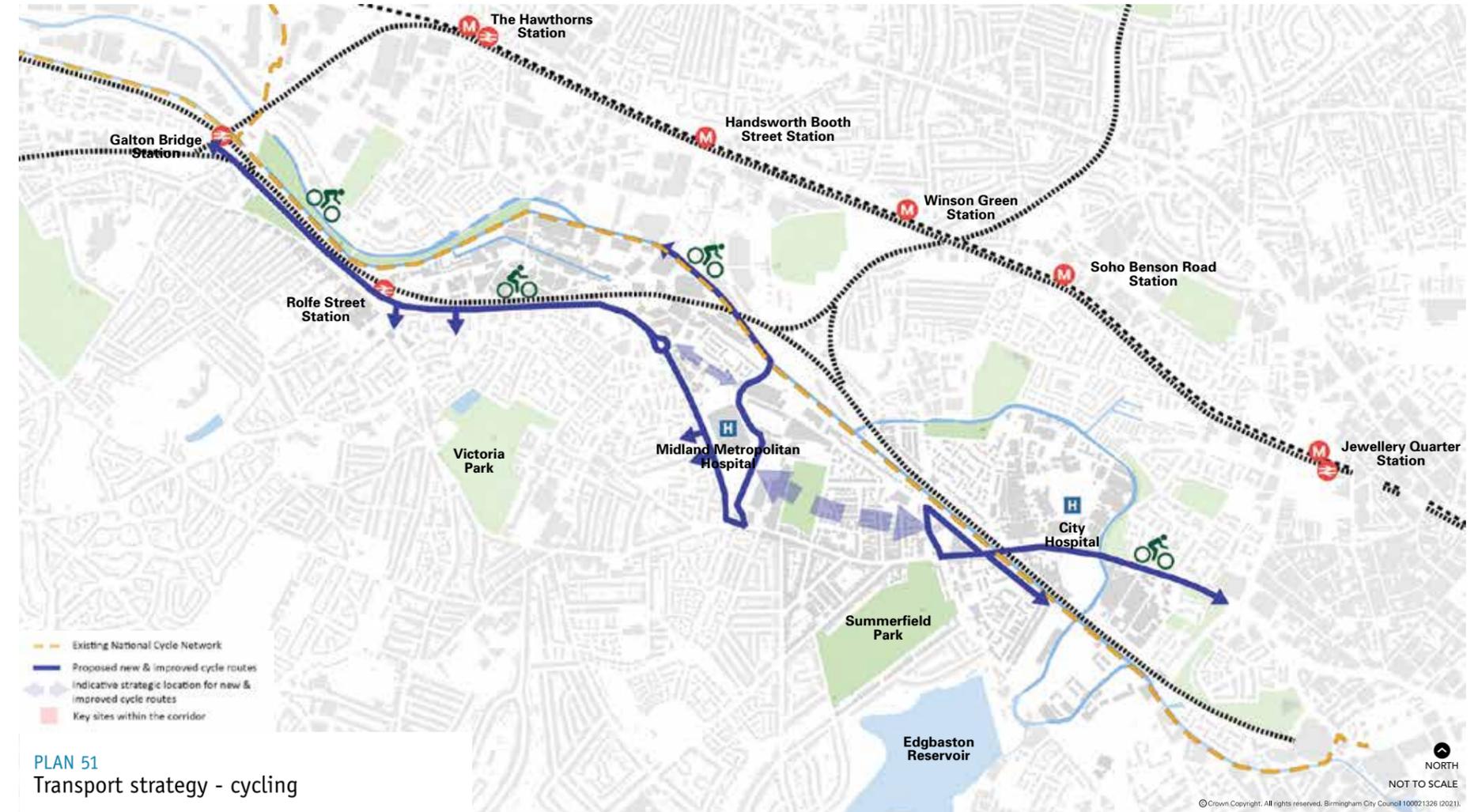
- Improving footway condition.
- De-cluttering/widening footways.
- Removing footway parking.
- Narrowing bellmouth junctions.
- New 'green man' signal stages.
- New formal/informal crossings.
- Signage/wayfinding measures.



### Cycling

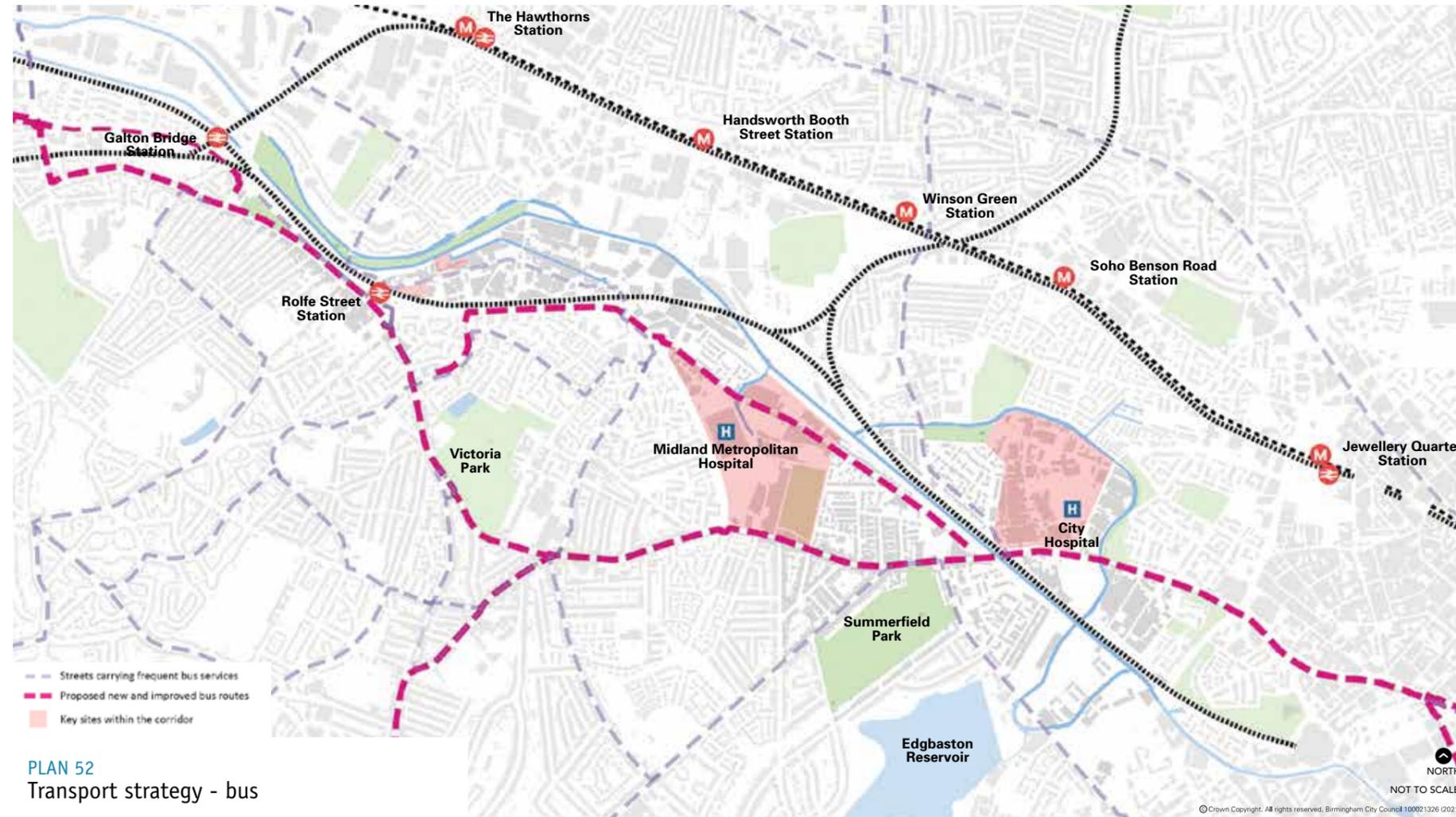
A focus on new protected cycleways on key routes, with supporting traffic calming and other measures on other roads and local streets. There will also be supporting measures such as secure

cycle parking and cycle hire. Scheme designs will need to be in accord with new Government design guidance - LTN 1/20.



## 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.	

Ref	Mode	Scheme description	Status/Funding/Programme	Link refs
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

Ref	Mode	Scheme description	Status/Funding/Programme	Link refs
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”*

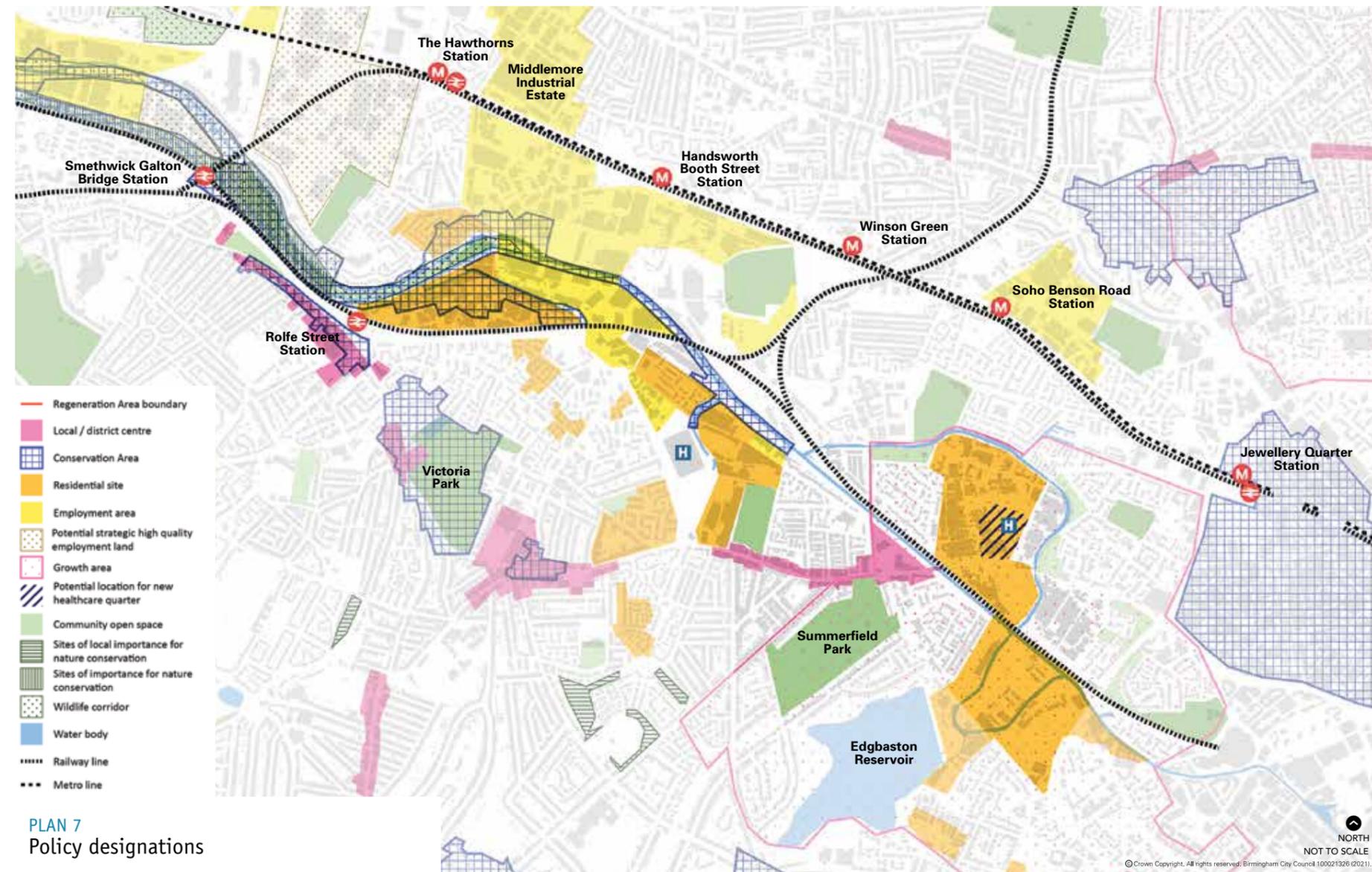
# APPENDIX



# A

## APPENDIX

## Planning policy



## 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.

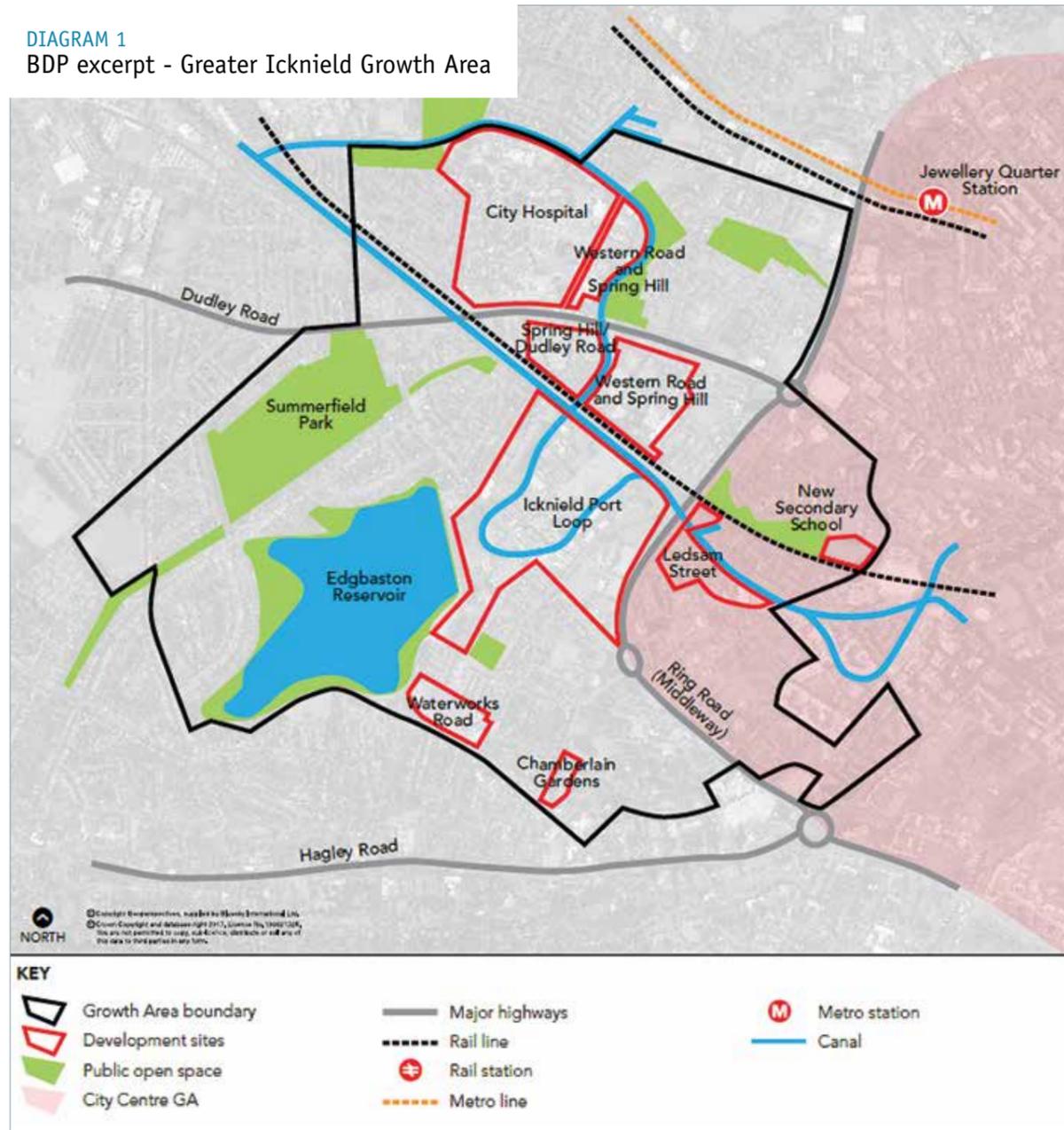
Policy GA2 allocates Icknield Port Loop, Soho Loop and City Hospital as residential development sites.

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**

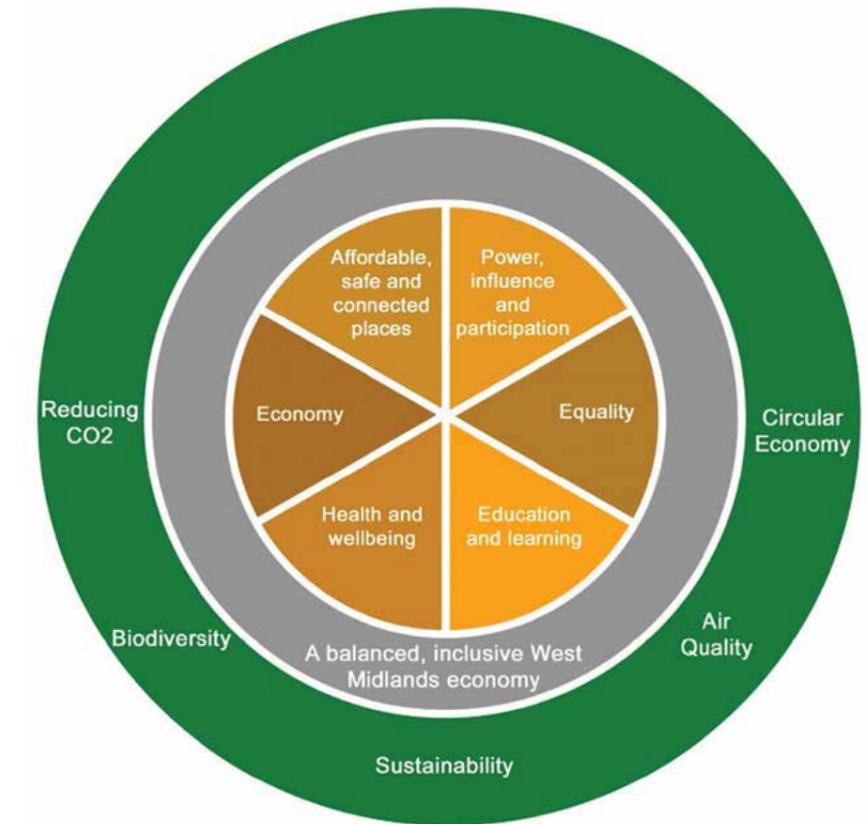
In Birmingham and Sandwell, the two largest contributors to carbon emissions and residential buildings and road transport. This framework provides an opportunity to contribute to reducing future emissions from these sources.

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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# SMETHWICK TO BIRMINGHAM CORRIDOR

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT  
SEPTEMBER 2021