

Birmingham City Council

Economy & Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6th March 2024



Subject: Our Future City 'Central Birmingham Framework 2040' Update

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide formal feedback on how the committee's representation to the Draft Our Future City Plan 'Central Birmingham Framework 2040,' has been considered and incorporated into the final framework. To also provide a summary on the key headlines to the committee from the formal Draft Framework engagement, out for 12-week consultation from May-August 2023.
- 1.2 Lead officers on the Our Future City Plan have engaged with the Scrutiny Committee since the 'Shaping Our City Together Engagement Document' 2021 and officers attended several meetings last year to provide a progress update.

Formal Representation

Comments from Birmingham City Council Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 12 July 2023. For Submission to the Our Future City Draft Central Birmingham Framework 2040 Consultation:

- 1.3 'The Committee supported the vision for the City to becoming a greener city of more jobs, better transport options and higher quality, energy efficient new homes and the focus that extended beyond the city centre. However, Members commented that the term 'central' may still be interpreted as city centre focussed and suggested that an alternative name for the strategy may better reflect the localities it covers. Members questioned the reliance on the property development model of development.
- 1.4 The Committee also wanted to understand the links with neighbourhood governance arrangements including Neighbourhood and Ward Plans and how communities will be genuinely engaged with the proposals. Community engagement must be integral at each stage of the proposals and development which will require time and resources. It was the view of the Committee that the

Our Future City Plan document should set out clearly how communities will be involved in the further development and delivery of the plan.

- 1.5 Members requested further information to come to the Committee on the economic, environmental and sustainability impact of the proposals.
- 1.6 It was noted that the framework sets out the connection with the Birmingham Transport Plan and the benefits of increase sustainable and active travel. The Committee want to ensure that the opportunities that will be created will be accessible to communities that have higher levels of disadvantage and that the implementation of the Our Future City Plan and the Birmingham Transport Plan are aligned.
- 1.7 Members also questioned the Council's policy on undeveloped held and unheld land. Members want the Council to be proactive in seeking opportunities to develop these to the benefit of local communities and achieving best value.
- 1.8 The Committee supported the proposals for high density housing that will provide better quality, community orientated houses with access to local green spaces.
- 1.9 The Committee highlighted the revenue implications for the Council and that the plan will need to be reviewed in line with the Council's financial plan. Members supported the use Section 106 agreements to cover the revenue costs of green spaces. It was noted that artists impressions in the plan are not an accurate representation and as a development progresses the revenue cost for the Council of maintaining trees may limit the planting schemes.'

Officer Response

- 1.10 The framework area goes beyond the Inner Ring Road, in recognition of the reality that 'Central Birmingham' comprises many destinations, centres and neighbourhoods each with their own offer, character and opportunities that can deliver growth across our communities. The framework is geographically grouped into five key areas:
- **City Heart:** Bull Ring, Colmore Business District, Snowhill and Steelhouse, Southside and Westside;
 - **Central North:** Eastside and Aston Triangle, Gun Quarter, Nechells and Newtown.
 - **Central East:** Bordesley, Digbeth and Small Heath;
 - **Central South:** Balsall Heath, Edgbaston and Highgate; &
 - **Central West:** Hockley, Jewellery Quarter, Ladywood and Spring Hill.
- 1.11 The OFC Central Birmingham Framework 2040 will be supported by an ongoing investment strategy. Much of the Framework's Delivery Plan is dependent on the existing Council strategies and investment plans which have informed the Framework's Bold Proposals, including the funding strategies that underpin them. These include the following.
- Housing Strategy (2023-2028);
 - Digital Strategy;

- Property Strategy;
 - Transport Delivery Plan.
- 1.12 An investment strategy for a Framework of this scale and scope will evolve over time as the programmes and projects required to deliver the Bold Proposals are shaped by the changing political and socio-economic landscape over the years.
- 1.13 In addition to the existing strategies that are shaping the investment strategy it's important to recognise the evolving political and socio-economic landscape that will inform the funding opportunities that will take it forward.
- 1.14 The 'Trailblazer Devolution Deal' announced in the Spring 2023 budget presents a significant opportunity for the West Midlands to shape and fund its own functional and place-based investment strategies. The Bold Proposals within this Framework align with the region's Functional strategies of:
- Housing and Regeneration;
 - Local Transport;
 - Adult Skills;
 - Local Growth and Place;
 - Retrofit.
- 1.15 Informing how these functions will be delivered will be a number of place-based strategies that will come together to bring about multi-year transformation and create critical masses of investment in specific geographies, or 'corridors', below the sub-regional level.
- 1.16 This Framework will be a key element within the place strategy for Birmingham and presents a significant opportunity to draw in investment for a number of the Bold Proposals. In addition to this overarching regional investment strategy there are also a number of place focussed investment programmes that will support the Framework's delivery plan. These include the Enterprise Zone which is already funding a number of the major development sites such as Smithfield. Other programmes include the Council's £1.4bn investment in housing to bring the stock up to decent standards and unlock new opportunities for investment, including in the Housing Action Areas.
- 1.17 The Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) 2031 Delivery Plan aligns with the OFC Central Birmingham Framework transport ambitions and proposals in terms of delivering sustainable neighbourhoods that are well-served and connected by making it easier to travel by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 1.18 The OFC Framework has a clear vision for mobility which prioritises sustainable and accessible modes of transport including walking, cycling, buses and trains. The Birmingham Transport Plan 2031 contains a set of principles that will guide investment in the city's transport and deliver a number of the OFCP Bold Proposals. The BTP vision, driving transformational change through travel demand management, will produce a smart, innovative, carbon neutral and low emission network to support sustainable and inclusive economic success,

tackling the climate emergency, and promote the health and well-being of Birmingham's citizens.

1.19 From the outset the Central Birmingham Framework has considered all relevant adopted Area Action Plans, Supplementary Planning Documents, Masterplans and Neighbourhood Plans to ensure the delivery opportunities reflect the shared visions in the areas. Neighbourhood Plans as a result communities, landowners and key stakeholders will be empowered not only to shape and influence the strategy but also to play a leading role in delivery. Neighbourhood Plans become part of the development plan and the policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications.

1.20 The OFC Central Birmingham Framework Cabinet Report will be accompanied by an Equalities Assessment and Environmental and Sustainability Assessment.

Formal Engagement Headlines

1.21 Prior to the formal consultation period, a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify the communities, stakeholders and partners who would be most impacted upon by the proposals. This also helped identify any 'seldom heard groups' across Birmingham allowing for a targeted approach towards engagement. This involved working with the council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit to identify key channels of communication within each of the wards covered by the plan, reaching out to organisations and community groups and using these networks to help promote the engagement.

1.22 The Draft Framework consultation was supported by a comprehensive engagement strategy. The strategy aimed to ensure all individuals and organisations in the city had the opportunity to have their say on the draft framework. The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Test the proposals within the draft framework;
- Spark debate and engagement with the entire community;
- Build market and business confidence;
- Show the city has opportunities and aspirations;
- Develop relationships with stakeholders and foster ongoing engagement; and build trust with the community.

1.23 The headlines from the consultation were:

- 20 consultation events across the city – spoke to over 800 people;
- 330 formal representations received;
- 250 responses via BeHeard;
- 80 emails received;
- Online workshops – approx. 90 people engaged.

1.24 The final framework will strengthen the wording on:

- The need to deliver a mix of type and tenure to meet the identified local need and for houses to be affordable and sustainable;
- Safety and creating safe accessible spaces and active travel routes;
- Sustainability, route to zero carbon emissions, climate change mitigation and increasing biodiversity;
- The need to protect and enhance heritage and cultural assets through a new heritage and culture chapter for each area section (City Heart, Central East, North, South and West);
- The bold proposals within each chapter have been streamlined and reordered to improve consistency throughout the document;
- The Delivery chapter to provide a greater level of detail on projects and delivery mechanisms including ongoing community engagement; & also
- Minor amendments to growth zone boundaries to reflect responses.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 For the committee to note the feedback provided on the representation and how this will be incorporated into the final OFCP Central Framework 2040 going to Cabinet on 14th May.

3 Any Finance Implications

- 3.1 These will be considered by the formal Cabinet Report.

4 Any Legal Implications

- 4.1 These will be considered by the formal Cabinet Report.

5 Any Equalities Implications

- 5.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- 5.1.1 eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - 5.1.2 advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - 5.1.3 foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 5.2 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; Whether any positive

opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

- 5.3 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

6 Appendices

- 6.1 N/A