

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

14<sup>th</sup> May 2024



**Subject:** Publication of the 'Our Future City: Central Birmingham Framework 2045'

**Report of:** Strategic Director Place, Prosperity, and Sustainability

**Relevant Cabinet Members:** Councillor John Cotton, Leader

**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Councillor Katherine Iroh, Economy and Skills

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Are specific wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Ladywood, Nechells, Newtown, Soho and Jewellery Quarter, Bordesley and Highgate, Bordesley Green, Edgbaston, Balsall Heath West, Sparkbrook, North Edgbaston and Balsall Heath East		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 010173/2022		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To seek approval for the 'Our Future City: Central Birmingham Framework 2045' (CBF 2045) to be published as the City Council's non-statutory planning vision to guide the future redevelopment of Central Birmingham up to 2045. The successful engagement on two previous consultation documents has ensured the

CBF 2045 has a shared vision and wide support for the future delivery and investment plans.

- 1.2 This non-statutory planning document will act as an investment and engagement prospectus for the city. It will show potential investors and developers what the Council's ambitions are for the central city core.
- 1.3 This report does not seek authority for any plans for particular council owned assets within the central city core or to incur any financial costs. Any such proposals in the future would be subject to separate approvals in line with the Council's constitution, and in the prevailing financial situation of the Council.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet supports the changes to the Framework following formal draft consultation and adopts the final CBF 2045 Document (attached in Appendix 1), as the Council's vision and land use ambitions for the area. The Framework will shape development within Central Birmingham and guide future investment.
- 2.2 To endorse the CBF 2045 as a significant place-based strategy to unlock regeneration opportunities to secure and deliver growth aligned to the proposals.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 The CBF 2045 combines a compelling vision with a clear route map for forging Birmingham's future. With the ambition of establishing our City as a world leader in sustainable living and working by 2045, the Framework combines community, connectivity, housing and proactive plans for investment and jobs to create a greener, more liveable city for everyone.
- 3.2 Through collaboration with key stakeholders, communities, landowners and developers, we have developed an inclusive Framework that will embody these principles. The CBF 2045 sets out a clear, city-scale ambition for the next 20 years of economic and social growth. Our goal is for Birmingham to set a benchmark for transformative change that builds on its strong history, demonstrating what the future can hold for any growing city striving to create a sustainable future for all.
- 3.3 The CBF 2045 is a non-statutory planning document and will replace the Big City Plan. It has informed the Birmingham Local Plan 'Preferred Options Report' by identifying strategic Growth Zone areas, proposals, and the infrastructure to support the anticipated levels of growth.

### **Spatial Area of Development**

- 3.4 The CBF 2045 marks a major change from previous approaches to the city centre, with a clear intention to spread the benefits of development and investment into the surrounding inner-city areas, supporting access to infrastructure, jobs and improved public spaces.

3.5 Unlike previous documents, the Framework area goes beyond the Inner Ring Road, in recognition of the reality that Central Birmingham comprises many destinations, centres, quarters 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, North Edgbaston and Spring Hill.

3.6 The CBF 2045 is critical for meeting some of the city's major challenges including unemployment, which is double the national average, the ten-year gap in life expectancy between the poorest and most affluent areas in the city and the fact that over 40 per cent of Birmingham's children grow up in relative poverty. The Framework outlines the potential to create 74,000 new jobs – an 80 per cent increase on the city centre's current employment capacity, as well up to 35,000 new homes for Birmingham's young and growing population.

3.7 By creating vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods there would be a doubling in population density, bringing Birmingham into line with other major European cities, but not at the expense of green open space. Delivery of the Framework's ambitious vision would double the City's green spaces to a level comparable with Vienna and double Birmingham's network of active travel routes to 200km – the same level of healthy transport infrastructure as in Copenhagen, with the aim for the city to become a benchmark for meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in its own right.

3.8 The CBF 2045 framework includes:

- A Vision and aims to set the aspiration for Central Birmingham for the next twenty years.
- Six city themes to set out the potential actions to deliver the vision.
- Bold proposals including potential Growth Zones, Housing Action Areas and Major Development Sites identified in each area to achieve the objectives of each city theme.
- Delivery requirements to support a comprehensive, partnership-based approach which continues community engagement and involvement.

### **Delivery Approach**

3.9 The CBF 2045 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

3.10 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. 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.

3.11 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

3.12 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. 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.

3.13 In addition to this overarching regional investment strategy, there are also a number of place focused investment programmes that will support the Framework's delivery plan. These include the Enterprise Zone which is already funding several 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.

3.14 The Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) 2031 Delivery Plan aligns with the CBF 2045 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.

3.15 The CBF 2045 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 (BTP) contains a set of principles that will guide investment in the city's transport and deliver a number of the CBF 2045 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.

- 3.16 The CBF 2045 is a non-statutory planning document, but the vision and aspirations set out in the Framework have informed the preparation of the Birmingham Local Plan (BLP) and will be reflected in the policies and land uses proposed in its future consultation stages and its final version. The identified Growth Zone areas will have detailed policies and land use allocations in the emerging BLP Review and set out proposals and the infrastructure to support the levels of growth.
- 3.17 From the outset the CBF 2045 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 become part of the development plan and the policies contained within them are then used in the determination of planning applications.

#### **4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal**

- 4.1 **Option 1 – Do Nothing:** Should the Council decide not to adopt the CBF 2045 there will be a lack of strategic vision and shared ambition to address challenges, opportunities to benefit from potential investment and funding to deliver the Council's inclusive growth agenda.
- 4.2 **Option 2 – Do not publish the CBF 2045 and instead rely on the current Birmingham Development Plan 2017-2031:** This is not recommended as the role of the CBF 2045 is to introduce new strategic priorities and development growth aspirations which reflect Council priorities such as creating fair, inclusive and green neighbourhoods that benefit all communities. Therefore, reliance upon the existing strategies would not be sufficient in helping to achieve this ambition and the Birmingham Local Plan is currently being reviewed as it was adopted over 7 years ago. Furthermore, The 'Big City Plan' is over ten years old and many of its proposals have now come forward or are currently being delivered.
- 4.3 **Option 3 – Publication of the Central Birmingham Framework 2045 (CBF 2045):** This is the preferred option. This allows for an up-to-date strategy to be published for the city centre and surrounding wider Central area that reflects the aspirations of our communities given the extensive consultation with partners, stakeholders, and local people to influence the final framework before it is presented at Cabinet for approval.

#### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The CBF 2045 has been produced by undertaking comprehensive engagement with our citizens, businesses, developers, and investors. It meets the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on how we consult on new plans, policies and planning applications, to ensure we

respond appropriately and consistently to the views and needs of local communities, businesses and stakeholders.

5.2 The engagement started in January 2021 when the City Council published the 'Our Future City Plan (OFCP): Central Birmingham 2040 Shaping Our City Together' document for public consultation which started the conversation with Birmingham's communities to create a shared vision for the city. The proposals and ideas outlined in 2021 were then developed in more detail to form the "Bold Proposals" of the OFC 2040.

5.3 The CBF 2045 was launched in May 2023 at UKREiiF (UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum) in Leeds on the 16<sup>th</sup> and at Highbury Hall on the 25<sup>th</sup> in Birmingham to kick-start the formal 12-week consultation period.

5.4 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.

5.5 The summaries of the consultation comments, and responses to them are detailed in Appendix 4. The headlines from the consultation were:

- 21 consultation events across the city – spoke to 850 people;
- 330 formal representations received;
- 250 responses via BeHeard;
- 80 emails received;
- Online workshops – approx. 90 people engaged.
- Extensive publicity via a range of social media channels.

### **Final Consultation Changes**

5.6 The final framework will:

- Strengthen references regarding the need to deliver a mix of type and tenure to meet the identified local need and for houses to be affordable, sustainable and meet the Decent Homes Standard;
- Strengthen wording regarding safety and creating safe accessible spaces and active travel routes;

- Strengthen references and detail added regarding sustainability, route to zero carbon emissions, climate change mitigation and increasing biodiversity;
- Have increased reference to improving health and wellbeing for Birmingham residents;
- Clarify the structure of the document including its relationship with the emerging Birmingham Local Plan in order to provide further detail on how the vision will be delivered;
- Streamline the vision and city themes to reduce duplication, ensure they are complimentary and increase readers' accessibility;
- Increase guidance regarding the need to protect and enhance existing heritage and cultural assets through a new heritage and culture chapter for each area section (City Heart, Central East, North, South and West);
- Streamline the Bold Proposals within each chapter and reorder to improve consistency throughout the document;
- Increase readers' accessibility by including a definition of each Bold Proposal in the introduction and each Bold Proposal includes an introduction paragraph explaining its purpose;
- Include amendments to Growth Zone and major development site boundaries to reflect responses received, existing project progress, internal discussions and wider plan making; and
- Strengthen the Delivery chapter to provide a greater level of detail on projects and delivery mechanisms including ongoing community engagement.

5.7 The draft Our Future City Plan engagement documents leading to the Central Birmingham Framework 2045 have been considered by the Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee at each stage since 2021 to inform the Committee on progress and on the engagement approach taken. At the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 the Committee encouraged a statement of involvement to be developed setting out how communities will be involved in the implementation of the Framework. This should include how residents in the communities affected will be involved in governance and accountability. It was also suggested we should make more use of digital involvement with community engagement. For example, using social media platforms and our website more effectively.

## **6 Risk Management**

6.1.1 The key risk is that CBF 2045 will not have an achievable vision in a reasonable timeframe. To mitigate this, the Framework has been produced in collaboration with key external public sector agencies/partners, landowners/ developers, and relevant departments within the Council to ensure the vision is deliverable. The CBF 2045 will be supported by an ongoing investment strategy aligned to existing Council investment plans.

## **7 Compliance Issues:**

### **7.1.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

7.1.2 The CBF 2045 will contribute towards the following outcomes and priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026:

- A Bold Prosperous Birmingham (specifically Priority 1 'Support Inclusive Economic Growth', Priority 2 'Tackle Unemployment', Priority 3 'Attract Inward Investment and Infrastructure' and Priority 4 'Maximise the Benefits of the Commonwealth Games')
- A Bold Inclusive Birmingham (specifically Priority 5 'Tackle poverty and inequalities', Priority 6 'Empower citizens and enable the citizen's voice' and Priority 7 'Promote and champion diversity, civic pride and culture')
- A Bold Safe Birmingham (specifically Priority 9 'Make the city safer' and Priority 11 'Increase affordable, safe and green housing')
- A Bold Healthy Birmingham (specifically Priority 13 'Tackle health inequalities' and Priority 14 'Encourage and enable physical activity and healthy living')
- A Bold Green Birmingham (specifically Priority 18 'Improve air quality', Priority 19 'Continue on the Route to Net Zero' and Priority 20 'Be a City of Nature')

## **7.2 Legal Implications**

7.2.1 The relevant guidance for preparing and undertaking public consultation were met in line with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2020). This states there is a requirement to publicly consult on the draft Framework for a minimum of four weeks. However, to ensure comprehensive engagement was undertaken we undertook 12-weeks of consultation.

7.2.2 The proposals contained within the Framework are in line with the Birmingham Local Plan (BLP) Preferred Options Report and will be tested as part of the review to demonstrate they are capable of implementation. For example, the proposed Growth Zone designations and allocations will be subject to screening assessment under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 as part of the BLP Review.

## **7.3 Financial Implications**

7.3.1 The CBF 2045 has been prepared using existing Planning and Development staff resources. Costs from undertaking the public consultation of the Draft CBF 2040 were met from approved revenue budgets within the Place, Prosperity and Sustainability Directorate.

7.3.2 This report and the Framework do not commit the Council to any financial agreements or proposals. The Council is currently facing significant financial

challenges and all present and future investment decisions must be made in the context of limited investment capacity and challenging budgetary position. The Framework is a 20+ year vision and strategy with the majority of proposals expected to be delivered through the private sector. Therefore, a key objective for the Framework will be to attract private finance and investment without the need for funding from the Council. It will also be a key component for the Council's Place Based Strategy, that will be instrumental in securing Single Settlement funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority, alongside funding from other public sector partners such as Homes England. A key role for the Council will be as a facilitator and enabler to shape and influence new developments, which will be undertaken through its statutory roles as the local Planning and Highway Authority. For example, the Framework has informed the Birmingham Local Plan, which will be the statutory document that will secure S106 planning obligations, Community Infrastructure Levy, affordable housing and new open space, without costs to the Council.

### 7.3.3

7.3.4 Where possible costs incurred by the Council for developing projects from outline to full business case will be capitalised against externally funded programmes to ensure there is no impact on the general fund. All future programmes/projects/schemes resulting from the publication of the CBF 2045 will be progressed in accordance with the Council's Gateway and Related Financial Approval Framework, which will include the identification of financial implications and associated resources. Any additional costs falling to the General Fund will be approved and identified in line with the Council's Financial Approval Framework.

## **7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)**

7.4.1 N/A

## **7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)**

7.5.1 N/A

## **7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty**

7.6.1 An Equality Analysis (EIA) has been undertaken and is attached in Appendix 5. The EIA looks at a range of internal and external sources to ascertain the landscape of residents in the Central Area with each of the nine 'Protected Characteristics', as identified in the Equality Act 2010. It also explains how groups with each characteristic were engaged throughout the 12-week consultation on the draft Framework, and any specific issues raised from them, alongside any issues raised on equality in the formal representations. It details what measures and proposals in the Framework work to benefit each protected characteristic, and how the final plan version has been amended to account for particular groups in its aims and ambitions. It concludes that while each characteristic is likely to

be impacted in some way, this would be wholly positive in nature, and no negative adverse impacts are likely to occur as a result of it.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Our Future City: Central Birmingham Framework 2045 (CBF 2045)
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Central Birmingham Framework 2045 Boundary Plan
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Central Birmingham Framework 2045 – Text Version
- 8.4 Appendix 4 – Consultation Statement (With appendices)
- 8.5 Appendix 5 – Ward Member Consultation
- 8.6 Appendix 6 – Equalities Analysis
- 8.7 Appendix 7 – Environment and Sustainability Assessment
- 8.8 Appendix 8 – Risk Register

## **9 Background Documents**

- 9.1 Central Birmingham 2040 Shaping Our City Together (January 2021)
- 9.2 Draft Central Birmingham Framework 2040 (May 2023)