

# **Birmingham Druids Heath Estate Development Brief**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction & Purpose**

This Project/Development Brief is a supporting document for the Birmingham Druids Heath Estate Regeneration Cabinet Report and for the subsequent procurement process. It provides information on the site context and current Birmingham City Council's (BCC) operations and policy aspirations alongside the currently known residents' aspirations and requirements for the regeneration. This brief notes the development opportunity to help guide the delivery of the widest benefits possible.

The regeneration of the Druids Heath Estate will be brought forward as two distinct areas: Druids Heath North (Area 1) and Druids Heath South (Area 2). This approach responds to the different housing markets and contexts in which the regeneration will come forward.

It is crucial that this vision and objectives are supported and owned by the existing community who will help guide the development of a strategic masterplan and then development proposals for specific sites.

The development of a shared vision and objectives will be undertaken in partnership with residents alongside property and financial modelling which will be undertaken simultaneously to ensure proposals deliver maximum opportunity and can be delivered.

## 2. SITE CONTEXT

### 2.1 Overview

Druids Heath is a purpose-built municipal housing estate that is located approximately six miles south of the city centre and lies on the periphery of Birmingham and Bromsgrove local authority boundaries. It is within the Druids Heath and Monyhull Ward and borders green belt land which is within the local authority of Bromsgrove District Council. Appendix 1 shows the extent of the Estate and its location.

The area has good access to the motorway network and local bus services. Local rail services 3 miles and 4.5 miles away at Cotteridge [Kings Norton] and Shirley. Druids Heath is predominantly a residential area, primarily developed in the 1960's with smaller extensions in later decades to provide a mixture of low rise and high-rise accommodation. The majority of homes and roads are a Radburn style layout, largely cul de sacs, and there are substantial areas of incidental open space permeating the area which are largely unused and have no identified recreational purpose. The area has remained largely unchanged since it was built, with only smaller extensions in later decades.

There are four key residential areas in Druids Heath, as described below and detailed in Appendix 1.

- Druids Heath East has approximately 1180 properties and of those 80% are Council properties, 16% are private and 4% are Registered Social Landlord properties. This area was the focus for intervention following the Cabinet report in 2018, clearance and rehousing commenced.
- Druids Heath South has approximately 1050 properties and of those 79% are Council properties and 21% are private. This area is also seen as requiring major intervention due to the poor quality of the existing properties and estate layout and high levels of anti-social behaviour.
- Pennyacre has approximately 220 properties in Pennyacre and of those 45% are Council properties and 55% are private. This is a stable, mainly owner-occupied area that requires little or no intervention, other than to address its interface with the rest of the estate and some development on under-used open space to improve security.
- Bells Farm have 530 properties in Bells Farm and of those 61% are Council properties and 38% are private. This is a stable popular area that requires little or no intervention, other than to address its interface with the rest of the estate and some development on under-used open space to improve security.

Within the estate there are three primary schools but no secondary school. There are two small shopping parades on the estate (one located within the east, in Birmingham City Council ownership and one within the south, in private ownership) and a number of individual

convenience stores (both private ownership and leased from Birmingham City Council). There are four community buildings, owned by Birmingham City Council (Bells Farm and Manningford Hall), and a Youth Centre and Library. The area is well served by public transport along Bells Lane and Alcester Road #50 and a bus service that runs through the estate #19. The 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (a grouping of deprivation measures including health, education, access to services, quality of housing, crime etc as well as income and employment), reveal that the LSOA covering the core part of Druids Heath is ranked 45 out of the 32,844 LSOAs in England, putting it in the worst 0.14% in England and the most deprived area in Birmingham.

## 2.2 Strategic Overview

Birmingham has an ambitious growth agenda to deliver the homes, jobs and infrastructure to support its growing, dynamic and diverse population. By 2031 the city's population will have grown by 15% and billions of pounds of infrastructure investment including High Speed 2 will have been delivered. The city council is leading the implementation of this major growth strategy which includes transformation of the City Centre and areas beyond the City Core. In delivering this growth agenda the City Council is committed to achieving inclusive and sustainable development. This includes ensuring that Birmingham is

- **a great city to live in:** This scheme will provide a significant quantum of new homes and create a new aspirational neighbourhood.
- **an entrepreneurial city to learn and work and invest:** activity within the construction sector will create jobs and apprenticeships in the city. Activity in the supply chain industries, will support the local economy through the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility.
- **an aspirational city to grow up in:** new homes will be developed which will provide a safe, warm, sustainable and connected neighbourhood in which our children can thrive.
- **a fulfilling city to age well in:** the links between health and housing are well recognized. New thermally efficient, economical to run new homes which are designed to high standards of quality and internal space standards will be more affordable for residents and will offer a higher quality of life leading to better health outcomes.

### 3. PLANNING CONTEXT

**3.1** The Birmingham Development Plan (2017) is the statutory development plan, and principal policy framework, against which applications are assessed, supported by supplementary planning guidance/documents which are material considerations. The BDP seeks to deliver the growth agenda to meet needs of the growing population including homes, jobs and infrastructure.

The BDP identifies Druids Heath and Maypole as one of the priority areas under TP32 for the regeneration and renewal of existing housing areas to ensure that high quality accommodation and environments are provided in line with the principles of sustainable neighbourhoods. The Druids Heath Estate will be the focus of redevelopment and renewal to create a new neighbourhood, and deliver long-term social, economic and environmental improvements including over 500 mixed tenure homes.

TP32 notes that replacement rates on cleared sites will be maximised subject to the provision of high quality accommodation within a high quality environment. In redeveloping cleared sites the focus will not only be on addressing housing needs but, where appropriate, will need to identify and provide opportunities to improve local employment, open space provision, playing fields, sports facilities and the quality of the local environment and community, health and education facilities.

Further to this the BDP identifies the importance of Housing regeneration and the renewal of existing housing areas to ensure high quality accommodation and environment areas are provided. This aligns with the overall aim of the BDP to develop Birmingham as a City of sustainable neighbourhoods that are safe, diverse and inclusive. The BDP has a strong focus on creating high quality development with an emphasis on place making.

The opportunities for estate renewal are identified in the relevant policy along with provisions for other areas to come forward over the plan period with a proactive approach between the Council, delivery partners and local residents being promoted.

The future masterplan for redevelopment will need to accord with policies in the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) 2017, 'saved' Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (2005), Emerging Development Management DPD and all relevant SPG/SPDs to include but not limited to Places for All, Places for Living, Public Open Space in Residential Developments, Car Parking Guidelines, Affordable Housing, Lighting Spaces and Nature Conservation Strategy.

## **4 VISION AND OBJECTIVES**

### **4.1 Council and Community Vision and Objectives**

The development of the Druids Heath estate creates the opportunity to deliver a good quality residential neighbourhood through sustainable development that can make use of existing resources such as the canal and open spaces and provide improved connectivity within the estate and to the surrounding area. The future redevelopment will need to achieve growth of mixed tenure and affordable housing, consideration of route to zero and sustainability and reinvestment in public open space.

The Birmingham Development Plan has established principles which provide an overarching vision for the regeneration of the estate:

- The Druids Heath Estate will be the focus of selective redevelopment and renewal to create a sustainable neighbourhood, and deliver long-term social, economic and environmental improvements including over 500 homes.

This vision will be delivered through a series of objectives which will be integral to meeting the ambition to transform Druids Heath including –

- To secure sustainable homes through energy efficiency specifications as part of a well-designed neighbourhood with an ambition to support the sustainable retention of existing homes and retrofitting where this can be delivered.
- To provide a safe and attractive network of connected public open spaces and pedestrian routes encouraging active travel and improving connectivity within and to Druids Heath.
- To develop the local the Maypole local centre with facilities and amenities to serve the local community and to make best use of council assets through a hubs approach and exploring opportunities for relocating and consolidating amenity provision.
- To enable the enhancement of open spaces which should be flexible and inclusive, providing a range of uses as well as supporting play and growing spaces.
- To create a complementary mix of commercial and other uses to support a vibrant active neighborhood and sustainable Local Centre will require a whole Council approach.
- To ensure the retention of the existing community by including residents whose homes are redeveloped within the returners policy.

The overarching ambition will be that Druids Heath benefits from levelling up agenda.

### **4.2 Proposed Development (Red-Line) Area**

The Druids Heath Estate, attached at Appendix 1, and delineated by a solid red-line, extends to 99 hectares approximately overall, and includes 77 hectares of council-owned land. The opportunity area has been divided into two areas, North (taking in land north of Bells Lane, Druids Heath East, Pennyacre and Bells Farm areas) and South (taking in land south of Bells Lane, Druids Heath South area, and bordering Bromsgrove Council LPA land), reflecting the estate extent.

## **5. OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This section details the Council's and residents' objectives and the minimum requirements & scheme aspirations / considerations for Birmingham Druids Heath. It includes an initial paragraph on overall Masterplan objectives, followed by topic specific requirements.

The purpose of the partnership[s] will be to create vehicles through which the Council and local community can create a sustainable neighborhood and enable the residents of Druids Heath to flourish.

### **5.2 Masterplan Requirements**

It should be noted that these points will be considered by the community and council in partnership understanding the financial and property modelling which will enable the delivery of a viable and achievable masterplan. The masterplan will be developed into a full business case alongside this modelling to deliver successful and viable implementation

- • Viability Considerations:
  - The regeneration and housing development should be a viable and fundable scheme that is led by the Council and partners but able to secure sufficient private sector funding on reasonable and appropriate terms to help deliver the scheme and unlock public sector funding where gap funding is required and further opportunities for a sustainable development.
  - Sustainable finance opportunities should be considered to maximise ongoing regeneration opportunities and to make regeneration sustainable.

Site Layout & Massing Considerations:

- -The layout of development should address the 1960s Radburn layout and create a coherent scale and pattern of blocks fitting within a logical and legible network of streets and spaces. Comprehensive approach should be taken to the areas planning to ensure well designed and integrated places are created.
- Development will need to create safe and inclusive environments and integrate high quality public realm.
- Public spaces should be integrated into the layout of the scheme, should be enclosed and be a focal point for mixed uses and activity to create natural surveillance.
- The scale of development should acknowledge the areas topography with building heights reducing as the levels drop toward the Village Green and Chinn Brook to acknowledge the transition for the built environment into the Green Infrastructure and enable that Green Infrastructure to be experienced by a wider range of residents.

The masterplan requirements and objectives seek to improve all aspects of the lives of people in Druids Heath. The objectives of the strategy are divided into the following key themes:



### 5.3 Equality

We want Druids Heath to be a fair place where people (regardless of their background, age, ability, and needs) respect one another, have high aspirations, equal access to opportunities, and can achieve what they want to achieve.

We aim to:

- Improve people's overall quality of life (including education, health, and crime levels).
- Improve opportunities and fairness in employment, including supporting those who have not had a job for long time into secure work.
- Improve opportunities for education, skills and training supporting young people into employment, education, or training.

The city council has made a commitment to support local co-operatives and community enterprises alongside maximising resources that can be utilised at a local level. These will provide ownership and enable people to drive the development of their local economy through community-led economic development.

The city council introduced a White Paper, *Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods*, and is furthermore committed to the goal of helping local neighbourhoods and communities to have more influence over the services and the decisions that affect their lives.

### 5.4 Residential

To create an inclusive and sustainable residential neighborhood(s) that provide a mix of good quality social, affordable, and private residential units within an attractive green setting, supported by local amenities and services. The housing development should be integrated with and connected to its surroundings.

The re-provision of, as a minimum commitment, all demolished social housing homes with an additional 10% increase in social housing numbers.

A comprehensive stock condition survey will be undertaken to establish a baseline capital investment programme for existing homes to include retrofit requirements to achieve net zero carbon to support achieving to route to zero. This will be subject to further approvals.

A mixed typology of homes reflecting local and city housing need with flats and houses. The approach should be in line with the policies of the Birmingham Development Plan and emerging Birmingham Design Guide. There should be a consideration of the appropriate space requirements for storage, bicycles, waste, and recycling which should all be integrated into the design.

To help address local and citywide housing need.

To support the Council Plan outcome that Birmingham is a fulfilling city to age well in and working with supported housing in the area.

## **5.5 Public Realm and Open Spaces**

The provision of attractive and innovative high-quality public spaces including the greening of spaces, ensuring open spaces are inclusive and flexible, and amenity space enables play and recreation. Safe spaces for children to enjoy natural play.

There should be enhanced linkages including improvements to open spaces, connection to and opening of the canal and active travel routes and improvements to the Village Green with connectivity to and through this space.

We aim to:

- Protect and enhance our environment for current and future generations.
- Improve the natural environment and neighborhoods, including parks and green spaces.
- Increase the number of people using sustainable methods of transport.

Open spaces and parks should aim to meet the policy requirement for a ratio of green space to new homes but should seek to create and improve spaces rather than solely deliver increased spaces. Open spaces and parks should be linked by green corridors to provide wider connections, encourage active travel, and support biodiversity. The masterplan will align with the Public Open Space strategy connecting to existing assets and noting the potential to create high quality park and play spaces through the delivery of substantial numbers of new homes.

The Local Ward Plan has a long-term ambition to install a new play park in Druids Heath and improve access and protection for very open spaces such as the Dell. There is also a more short-term ambition to give more structure to parks and open spaces through things like wildflower meadows bulb planting for example and to install raised beds & gardens on small incidental housing land.

## **5.6 Connectivity, linkages, and active travel**

To improve connections within Druids Heath estate, noting the four areas that make up the estate, as well as connections outside. Active travel routes for pedestrians and cyclists should be improved and provide safe walking and cycling links to public transport corridors and to local centres.

We aim to:

- Encourage cycling and walking routes to provide active travel.
- Create strong linkages through the estate and to connect to the local centre and between Druids Heath and neighbouring wards.
- Recognise current movement and movement desires which should be enhanced and responded to.

The Ward Plan notes the need to improve road & street safety, including tackling, congestion, speeding and parking issues including pavement parking.

## 5.6 Skills, Education and Training

We want people in Druids Heath to benefit from the best start in life and to be able to obtain the knowledge, skills, and qualifications that will help them achieve their potential and succeed in secure and sustainable employment.

We aim to:

- Increase the number of children who thrive and whose fundamental physical and psychological needs are met.
- Increase the number of children who are school ready.
- Increase the number of children meeting their developmental goals and improve children's academic performance.
- Increase the number of people with qualifications.
- Increase the number of young people in employment, education, or training.

The addition of a significant number of additional homes alongside the replacement of social housing will support education provision in the primary schools on the estate and will support pupil places for secondary schools in Yardley Wood and Kings Norton.

The increased use of Building Birmingham Scholarship to provide opportunities to young people in Druids Heath directly funded by new home delivery.

Druids Heath has high levels of unemployment and the regeneration will benefit job creation with employment opportunities to be supported by the Council's Youth & Education programme.

Druids Heath is in the 014% of the most deprived areas in England and the ambition is to create an opportunity to deliver a high quality residential neighbourhood which is a fair place where people (regardless of their background, age, ability, and needs) respect one another, have high aspirations, equal access to opportunities, and can achieve what they want to achieve.

Part of creating this vision is to have a well-resourced youth facility which provides young people with enjoyable opportunities and challenging experiences together with information, support and guidance in order to enable them to achieve and develop their skills, abilities, self-esteem, values and identity in their transition to adult life.

The youth service:

- Provides a place where young people can be young people. Where they are treated as a young person and not a young person that needs to get a job, or a young person that needs to pass exams, or a young person that carry's a knife, or a young person that need to fulfil their court order.
- Makes sure that place is a safe place
- That place needs to be accessible to all young people

- That place should be somewhere where young people can achieve and develop their skills, abilities, self-esteem, values and identity. This personal and social development will support young people to overcome challenges and disadvantages – youth workers will help young people to reach their full potential.
- A place where young people can make informed choices about their life

A well-resourced Youth Centre within 20 minutes of every young person will enable young people to:

- Access information, support and advice – not only from a youth worker but also other professionals e.g. careers workers, sexual health services, mental health services, etc.
- Somewhere that belongs to them and they feel safe in. Young people are all too often asked to compromise their space to adults – they need to know that this is their space. A space that reflects them as young people and not somewhere that reflects adults.
- Opportunities for young people to get involved - somewhere where they can take part in different activities, broaden their horizons, learn new things, make mistakes in a safe space. This will give them a sense of achievement, a sense of self-worth and being valued.
- Volunteering Opportunities – a chance to give something back as well as learning new skills and gaining experiences which can enhance their cvs.  
An opportunity to have their voice heard - to make their space, community, city and country a better place to live in.
- Through the activities, programmes and opportunities young people will have the opportunity to
  - Explore and understand their identity and to find a sense of belonging
  - Understand issues relevant to their health and well being
  - Understand their right to have healthy and safe relationships
  - Have more control over their economic and financial aspects of their lives
  - Support leadership, civic engagement and participation
  - Engage in art, culture and heritage
  - Have fun and develop their creativity
  - To consider their environment
  - Learn new skills

The youth centre is also a **focal point in the community** – it provides affordable spaces for local organisations' to deliver to young people but also to the wider community.

## 5.7 Smart Cities, Sustainability and wellbeing

To incorporate where feasible digital and smart technology within the regeneration and development to create a better place that improves wellbeing, mobility, equality, communities and prosperity and seeks to address digital poverty and exclusion.

To future proof buildings, infrastructure and technology to address issues of digital poverty and exclusion.

To work with the Digital Learning Partnership and partners to enable Druids Heath to actively benefit from the developing Digital Inclusion Strategy.

## **5.8 Partners in Communities**

Address priorities in Local Ward Plan which highlights priorities as Sustaining & Improving Community spaces (inside and outside) including community buildings, parks and play parks. We will work with the NDSU to align these aspirations within the masterplan.

## **5.9 Leisure, Sport and Community Uses**

To ensure that the regeneration supports Sports England's 10 principles of Active Design in its design and community engagement and aligns with focus on active travel.

The masterplan will seek to consolidate sports priorities in alignment with leisure and neighbourhood services, recognising sporting bodies and community aspirations.

## **5.10 Employment, business, and development opportunities**

Birmingham City Council is pursuing new ways of works (NWOW) which will be looking at creating locality workspaces and services delivered through a series of community hubs. The masterplan will seek to identify a suitable opportunity site for such a space in Druids Heath.