

Birmingham City Council

Report to Leader of the Council

16th November 2020



Subject: Public consultation on Draft Supplementary Planning Document for Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan

Report of: Acting Director Inclusive Growth

Relevant Cabinet Member: Councillor Ian Ward, Leader

Relevant O &S Chair(s): Councillor Lou Robson, 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): Sutton Trinity		
Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference:		
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

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 To seek authority to undertake public consultation on the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan (Appendix 1).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Approves the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Appendix 1) for public consultation for a period of eight weeks commencing 20th November 2020 ending on the 15th January 2021.
- 2.2 Notes that following the consultation, a further report will be produced for Cabinet to adopt the SPD as part of the City Council's planning framework.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Birmingham Development Plan (2017) identifies Sutton Coldfield town centre as playing a “leading role in the continued transformation of Birmingham” and allocates the centre as a Growth Area (Policy GA4). The plan recognises that the limited retail and leisure offer, coupled with increased competition from other shopping destinations, means the centre is underperforming and in need of transformation. The need to improve the vitality and viability of the town centre is well established and is outlined in detail in the ‘Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document (2009)’. However, given the level of change town centres have undergone since 2009, there is a need to update the evidence base and review the strategy for delivery.
- 3.2 The sustainable urban extension at Langley will provide further opportunities for the town centre to expand its catchment area and there is considerable investment in public transport proposed within the town centre. Sutton Coldfield town centre includes a number of opportunity sites which can help strengthen its role now and in the future. The City Council is a key land owner in the town centre and up-to-date evidence is needed to support any future decisions in regards to the opportunity this presents.
- 3.3 The need for an updated strategy for transformation is reflected in the inclusion of Sutton Coldfield town centre within the recently adopted Urban Centres Framework (January 2020). The Framework highlights the opportunity for a potential of mixed investment in the town to reinforce its position as a major centre for retail, leisure, cultural and community uses as well as provision of new residential space.
- 3.4 Building on the existing planning context, there is a need to develop a detailed masterplan that can provide a framework for the centre’s transformation and provide further details on the opportunities within the centre. It is also crucial that the strategy reflects the impact of Covid19 by providing a framework for the centre to re-position itself economically, but also provide improved public environmentally resilient spaces that support communities’ health and wellbeing. Revisiting the detailed strategy for the town centre also provides an opportunity to include proposals that will help to tackle climate change and encourage sustainable living.
- 3.5 In October 2019 Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Partnership (of which the City Council is a member), commissioned the consultants Tibbalds to undertake a masterplan for Sutton Coldfield town centre. The project was funded jointly by Sutton Coldfield Town Council, Sutton Coldfield BID and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP). The City Council has been actively involved with the commissioning and drafting of the masterplan.

3.6 The purpose of the masterplan is to:

- Provide a bold and ambitious vision for the town centre that unites stakeholders;
- Identify the impacts, influences, constraints, consequences and opportunities for the town centre, in relation to the challenging economic environment;
- Present deliverable transformational opportunities for the Council and Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Partnership to take forward with partners;
- Provide confidence to private-sector developers, investors and businesses to commit long-term to the town centre.

3.7 The consultants undertook public consultation on the 'Big Moves' in February 2020 to guarantee the views of local communities, visitors, businesses, investors and other stakeholders to inform the final proposals in the masterplan. Land owners, including the City Council, have been engaged throughout the process to ensure that the masterplan is deliverable and reflects stakeholders' aspirations. Other key stakeholders such as Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) have helped shape the proposals within the masterplan.

3.8 The Regeneration Partnership fully endorsed the masterplan at a meeting on the 13th August 2020 and the masterplan was subsequently endorsed by Sutton Coldfield Town Council at a meeting on 19th August 2020. The masterplan is now in the public domain and work on its implementation has already started.

3.9 In order to give the masterplan sufficient weight in decision making and fully support the Regeneration Partnership in securing the delivery of the vision, the masterplan should be adopted as a SPD. This would ensure the City Council has an up-to-date planning framework to support the Development Management function and the delivery of the centre's regeneration. Once adopted, the masterplan will supersede the outdated Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Framework SPD (2009).

3.10 Draft Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan:

The draft Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan SPD provides a framework for the centre's transformation (see Appendix 1). In summary the draft SPD includes:

- A **Vision** to unite stakeholders and a set of clear **Objectives** that identify the key themes that are fundamental to the transformation of the town centre: Connecting, Communicating, Celebrating, Community, Changing and Complementing.

- A number of **Big Moves** to deliver the vision around three headings: Movement and Transport, Economy and Centres, and Built Environment and Identity.
- **Town Centre Projects** and a **Delivery Strategy** to clearly demonstrate how the masterplan can be implemented and to provide a set of deliverable projects that will be achieved through a partnership-based approach.

3.11 An engagement strategy has been developed to set out how the public consultation will be carried out on the draft SPD, and to ensure that the consultation meets the requirements of relevant regulations and guidance. This approach builds on the frontloading that was undertaken by the consultants when producing the masterplan. A broad range of specific and general stakeholders will be informed of the draft SPD. Views will be sought from the public and other stakeholders on the guidance the draft SPD contains. The approach to consultation has been adapted to meet Covid19 restrictions, in particular the use of online events to provide an alternative to public meeting or drop-in consultations.

3.12 The SPD needs to be adopted by the City Council in a timely manner to ensure the guidance can influence planning application decisions in the town centre. To ensure this happens, the preparation of the SPD will progress as follows:

- Public consultation on Draft SPD – November - January (eight weeks);
- Review comments and prepare final SPD – January 2021;
- Adoption of final SPD by Cabinet – February / March 2021.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

4.1 Option 1 – Do nothing. Should the Council decide not to publish the draft and consult on the SPD, it would limit the weight of the masterplan in planning decisions. Not having an up-to-date adopted plan with the full weight possible could impact the Council's ability to deliver projects identified in the masterplan and capitalise on potential investment. Without full commitment from all partners Sutton Coldfield town centre will decline further.

4.2 Option 2 – Rely on policies in the Birmingham Development Plan (BDP), existing 2009 Town Centre Regeneration Framework SPD and the Urban Centres Framework. It is not intended that the SPD becomes a statutory planning tool. However, once adopted, it will provide a greater level of detailed guidance than the BDP. Town centres have changed significantly over recent years and there has been further decline within Sutton Coldfield town centre since the previous SPD was adopted. Some elements of the existing SPD are now out-of-date and relying on this plan would not address the need for a transformational approach to how

the centre functions. There would also be potential for confusion and conflict between the draft masterplan and the existing dated SPD. The Urban Centres Framework provides a more up-to-date vision for the centre but does not include the level of detail or have sufficient weight to drive forward the transformation.

- 4.3 Option 3 - Recommended Proposal – Consult on the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan Draft SPD. Birmingham City Council will seek views on proposals within the draft SPD.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 Local Ward Councillors have been briefed on the draft masterplan and encouraged to provide comments as part of the consultation process undertaken by the consultants. They will be encouraged to partake in this formal stage of consultation on the SPD.
- 5.2 The draft SPD has been prepared in collaboration with the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership, which includes the following members: Sutton Coldfield Town Council, Sutton Coldfield Town Centre BID, Sutton Coldfield Chamber of Commerce, GBSLEP, TfWM, West Midlands Combined Authority and Friends of Sutton Coldfield Library.
- 5.3 There has been continuous engagement with land owners within the town centre to ensure the plan reflects their aspirations.
- 5.4 The consultant-led public consultation on the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan lasted for four weeks during the period of 13th February 2020 to 9th March 2020. Consultation material consisted of: an explanation of the purpose of the masterplan, what the masterplan focuses on, initial ideas for 'Big Moves' on three themes – transport, economy and community, heritage and environment - including a brief summary of existing conditions, and the key themes and objectives for the future of Sutton Coldfield.
- 5.5 Public consultation material was published and shared using a variety of methods including:
- Online in a storyboard format and promoted by Town Centre Regeneration Partnership member communication channels;
 - Two workshops where members of the community were invited to partake;
 - A local business drop-in session;
 - Two public exhibitions - one in the Gracechurch Centre and one in the foyer of Sutton Coldfield Library in the Red Rose Centre. Members of the consultant team were available at these exhibitions to answer questions;
 - Four separate lunchtime drop-in sessions at nearby local centres including Walmley, Wylde Green, Boldmere and Mere Green;
 - Via A4 leaflets which were available for people to take away from all public drop-in events; and,

- A dedicated email address for members of the public to contact the consultant team with questions or comments throughout the consultation period.

- 5.6 Over the four-week consultation period around 200 people participated in and/or visited the nine organised workshops and drop-in events. Formal responses were sent by 97 people and another 32 people submitted fully or partially filled-out response forms. Overall there were 1,940 views of the dedicated storyboard website.
- 5.7 A summary of the consultation undertaken and the main themes is included in the Consultation Summary attached as Appendix 2.
- 5.8 Building on this frontloading exercise, formal views will now be sought on the masterplan as part of the public consultation on the draft SPD. The consultation will follow the principles set out in the Birmingham Statement of Community Involvement Temporary Amendments due to COVID-19 Restrictions. The consultation document will be published online and all those on the Planning Policy Consultation Database, including all Birmingham City Council Elected Members, will be notified. The database includes a wide range of consultees covering voluntary, ethnic, religious, disability, environmental and business groups, statutory bodies, agencies and other key stakeholders. All feedback and comments received will be taken into consideration in formulating the final version of the SPD which will be presented to Cabinet for adoption alongside a summary of the comments received

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 There are a number of risks associated with this decision. One risk is that the draft SPD will not be supported by stakeholders and the public. This risk has been significantly reduced by the involvement of the Regeneration Partnership in the plan's production and the level of engagement already undertaken by the consultants. The consultation on the draft SPD allows for a final testing of the masterplan with stakeholders to ensure the plan has the necessary support.
- 6.2 Another risk is that consultation is considered by some to not be meaningful, due to the fact the masterplan has been endorsed by the City Council in its role on the Town Centre Regeneration Partnership. Planning regulations and the City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement place clear requirements on the Council to take into consideration all representations made as part of a SPD consultation. Therefore, by undertaking the consultation the Council will provide all interested parties the opportunity to make formal representations on the masterplan that will require the Council to show how they have been taken into consideration. Where appropriate the masterplan will be amended to reflect the consultation responses.
- 6.3 Consultation will be undertaken during a period of Covid19 restrictions and as such no face-to-face meetings or public events are proposed. Materials will be

available on the website and online events arranged to provide an opportunity for the community to ask questions. This is in line with the recently amended Statement of Community Involvement.

7 Compliance Issues:

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

7.1.1 The SPD will contribute towards the vision contained in the City Council Plan: 2019-2023 that looks to maximise the potential of centres, including *"Birmingham is a great city to live in"* and *"Birmingham is an entrepreneurial city to learn, work and invest in"*. The draft SPD is in line with the Birmingham Development Plan.

7.1.2 The SPD will also contribute towards the City Council's commitment to Route to Zero and achieving carbon neutrality. The SPD places tackling climate change at the forefront, and a number of proposals included in the masterplan will result in a more sustainable, greener and resilient town centre for future generations.

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 The relevant legal powers for preparing and undertaking public consultation on the draft SPD are set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended), with detailed requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), and the Birmingham Statement of Community Involvement. There is a requirement to publicly consult on SPDs for a minimum of four weeks before they can be adopted. SPDs also need to be consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Birmingham Development Plan.

7.2.2 The City Council has carried out a screening assessment of the draft SPD, (Appendix 4) under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 and concluded that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Views from the statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England), will be sought as part of the consultation for the draft SPD.

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 The draft SPD was commissioned by Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Partnership and was jointly funded by the Town Council, Sutton Coldfield Town Centre BID and the GBSLEP. The SPD process has been funded using existing Planning and Development staff resources. Direct costs to undertake the public consultation on the draft SPD are estimated at £1,300 and will be met from approved revenue budgets within Planning and Development.

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 has been undertaken and is attached in Appendix 3. The initial assessment found that the SPD will have no specific impacts on protected characteristics. The developments will lead to improvements for the local population including improved town centre facilities, services and attractions. The developments will also create new homes and result in a town centre that promotes healthy living through improved public transport and a greener environment. Rejuvenating the town centre will also help support the economy, including job retention and creation in an accessible location. The Equality Analysis will be updated following a review of the consultation feedback, and will inform the preparation of the final SPD.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1– Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan Draft SPD
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan Consultation Document
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Equalities Analysis
- 8.4 Appendix 4 - Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening for Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan Draft

9 Background Documents

- 9.1 Birmingham Development Plan Adopted 2017
- 9.2 Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Framework SPC Adopted 2009
- 9.3 Urban Centres Framework Adopted 2020
- 9.4 Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Masterplan Baseline Study