

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015 - 2031

**BALSALL HEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING FORUM
(Birmingham)**

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2031

Contents

Page

Summary of the Plan

Section 1: Introduction: Looking Forward to 2031

6

Section 2: The Balsall Heath Neighbourhood

13

Section 3: Development Needs, Vision and Aims

17

**Section 4: The Planning Context for the Balsall Heath
Neighbourhood Development Plan**

24

Section 5: Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies – Overview

28

Section 6: Neighbourhood Development Plan - Policies and Proposals

31

Section 7: Delivering the Plan

58

**Annex to Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan
'Community Action Projects'**

62

Maps, Plans and Perspectives

NDP Main Proposals Map

Other Maps

Map 1: Boundaries of the NDP area.

Map 2: Sub-Areas of Balsall Heath

Map 3: 'Orphan' spaces

Map 4: Site of the former Joseph Chamberlain College

Map 5: **Annex to NDP**: Locations of potential 'Area Markers'

The following plans and perspectives in this document are for illustrative purposes only and do not represent specific development proposals.

- **Fig 1A/B**: Town Square, Moseley Road: plan and perspective
- **Fig 2**: Ladypool Road improvements: plan
- **Fig 3A/B**: Highgate Road housing site: plan and cross-section
- **Fig 4**: Railway station: perspective
- **Fig 5**: River Rea renaturalisation: cross-section
- **Fig 6: Annex to NDP**: Balsall Heath Park improvements: plan

Annex

**Annex to Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan
Community Action Projects**

Appendices:

- Appendix 1. Consultation Statement
- Appendix 2. Basic Conditions Statement
- Appendix 3. Housing Demand: Background Information
- Appendix 4. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

Foreword

Balsall Heath grew up in the age of manufacturing and the expansion of Birmingham. Its once green fields became filled with densely packed terraced housing. With the decline of manufacturing industry, many people in Balsall Heath became unemployed and some moved out in search of other jobs. The community became weak, the 100-plus year-old housing stock deteriorated; and the streets became litter-strewn and uncared for. Things became so bad that some observers told residents that there was little it could do to improve matters, and that they should move out in search of a better neighbourhood.

Many residents could not afford to move, and banded together to see if they could improve the environment and rebuild the strength of their community. It took many years, but a variety of voluntary agencies, street groups and the neighbourhood-wide Forum were formed to boost spirits and represent the area. From being one of Birmingham's least desirable areas, it became one of its best. More and more residents resolved to make a difference and to further improve their area.

So it was both a boost, and very timely, when Balsall Heath was chosen to be a neighbourhood planning frontrunner. To complement the improved social care and spirit of the place, people said it was time to also improve its physical environment, streets and parks. And, to complement and deliver the Plan, people called for the neighbourhood's budget to be disentangled from the wider budgets which were spent city-wide.

Government responded well, by saying that it was time that the resident customers knew what was spent in the small neighbourhoods in which they lived, and could influence that budget to improve their living conditions. So, the area became both a neighbourhood planning frontrunner and a neighbourhood budgeting pilot. In a real sense, the two are flip sides of the same renewal coin. That is, you can't really have a plan without a budget, and vice versa.

It was natural for Balsall Heath Forum to be chosen as the body to develop both initiatives. As a recent ward councillor said 'The Forum is the beating heart of the community.' It is the urban equivalent of a rural parish council, and its 18 annually-elected non-party political board members are representative of the whole community.

Because so many people are now actively engaged in the further renewal of the neighbourhood, it was practical common sense for the developing Plan to be discussed at the many street groups which cover the area, and at a series of communal meals attended by 300-plus residents and elected councillors, as well as at the Forum's own elected board. The plan was displayed for comment on the pages of the area's community newspaper, and in a series of well attended public venues. So, many hundreds of people have been engaged in making and refining suggestions, and shaping the final Plan.

All concerned now look forward to the formal acceptance of their Plan, and the beginning of its implementation. It is expected that other residents from other parts of Birmingham and other regions of the country will be very interested. Many are already looking at the Forum as a model of renewal which they wish to emulate.

Abdullah Rehman Chief Executive
Dr Dick Atkinson Past Chief Executive

Balsall Heath Forum

Acknowledgements:

The Balsall Heath Forum and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum acknowledge the contributions made by Joe Holyoak (Architect and Urban Designer, lead consultant), Richard Hammersley (Planning Aid lead volunteer), Ben Simm (Planning Aid volunteer) and the team at Birmingham City Council, Planning and Regeneration – plus, of course, all the other members of the Planning Forum and local residents and businesses.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Summary of the Plan

The **Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Planning Forum** has prepared a “Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)” for this part of Birmingham in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. This Plan will guide the City Council and other interested parties (including developers) in their decisions about development in the area, through to 2031. ‘Development’ here means new buildings and different uses of land; in other words, most of the things that need planning permission.

Section 1 of this document introduces the reasoning behind the preparation of the Plan and the players and activities involved in the plan making process, including the consultations undertaken with residents and businesses and other interested organisations.. The Section includes some Guiding Principles which seek to ensure that development takes place in a beneficial and sustainable way.

Section 2 looks at the characteristics of Balsall Heath, **including the plan boundary and a history of the area and local community profile.**

Section 3- Sets out the development needs in the area including housing, economic, social and environmental issues. The area is a deprived ‘inner city’ zone; it needs economic, social and environmental improvement – especially in its two local centres. Cleared sites are few and housing is seen as the priority for those sites.

It also sets out the vision for Balsall Heath and the main aims of the Plan.

Section 4 establishes the planning policy context for the NDP. The NDP must ‘conform’ to the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** of central government and to the existing city-wide Birmingham Unitary Development Plan and the draft **Birmingham Development Plan (BDP)**. There are some other local planning policy documents (SPDs and SPGs) which also must be taken into account.

Section 5 of the document gives an overview of the policies and proposals which are the heart of the Plan. There is a list of the planning policies and proposals made.

Section 6 of the Plan has the full wording, including any relevant plans and explanation, of the policies which are proposed for the Balsall Heath neighbourhood. The first substantive Sub-Section has general policies which are applicable to the whole area with general guidance about what would be required for planning permission to be given:

- the building of a **sustainable community (plan policy number BH1)**
- **design and conservation objectives (BH2).**
- **the enhancement of open/green spaces (BH3)**
- the improvement of **highways and traffic management (BH4)**, including cycleways and pedestrian crossings

The following policies are generally relevant, but are applicable to a number of specific places:

- the strengthening of **community services and local centres (BH5)**
- the enhancement of parks **(BH6)**
- the encouragement of a series of **landmark features (BH7)** at the entrances and a to the Balsall Heath area and its local centres.

Several of the latter policies are illustrated by “**Community action projects**” in the **Annex to the NDP at the end of the document** which exemplify the types of development which might follow from these policy initiatives.

The Section then moves on to a series of specific **policies and proposals** for particular **locations**.

A major proposal for the **Moseley Road**, near the Baths and Library, is to encourage the development of a **‘Town Square’ within a local centre of mixed community and commercial uses (BH8/9/10)**. There is also a related proposal to **improve the environment** of the **‘Old’ Moseley Road** northwards from the ‘Square’ **(BH11)**. The Plan does not have specific site proposals, but the expectation is that public and private sector developers will come forward with schemes which will give this area the look and feel of a ‘central community space’. The **Ladypool Road/Stoney Lane** commercial areas (the ‘Balti Triangle’), is seen as requiring **traffic and environmental improvements (BH12/13/14)** in order to make the area easier to access and pleasant to use. The Plan’s intentions for this sub-area are that it should remain a vibrant and popular location for business, with scope for more local job opportunities

The two biggest development sites available in the area are the **former Joseph Chamberlain College site (BH15)** and the open land adjacent to and **south of Highgate Road (BH16)**. On the ex-College site, a **mixed use** approach could be used, incorporating a substantial number of new dwellings, but also such uses as a hotel, shops and offices. The Highgate Road site would be mainly **housing**, accommodating upwards of 100 new dwellings arranged alongside the improved main road.

The plan also seeks the creation of a **railway station** in the area, preferably located **between Clifton Road and St Paul's Road (BH17)**, to make use of the proposed new train service along that track; negotiations are continuing with Centro and Network Rail. Specific environmental proposals include, in the vicinity of **Calthorpe Park**, the **renaturalisation of the River Rea (BH18)** and the creation of **new allotments (BH19)**. The Plan also encourages the creation of **new Youth Centres (BH20)**, especially within the local centres of **Moseley Road and Ladypool Road**.

Section 7 of this document deals with the implementation and delivery of the proposals. The Plan envisages that proposals will be delivered by a variety of private, public and voluntary organisations. In particular the Plan seeks to guide the City Council towards local priorities in its relevant development programmes. A major resource to help realise proposals will be the share of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Discussions with the City Council's District Committee will help identify locally determined priorities. There is also the potential for resources to become available through the Business Improvement District (BID) which will be coming into being for the Ladypool Road/Stoney Lane part of the area. Other sources of finance, including the Lottery, should also be explored.

Annex to the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan – Community Action Projects

The **annex** outlines some actions and developments which landowners, developers and public authorities could undertake to implement Plan policies. These '**community action projects**' are supported by local residents and businesses and, while not forming planning policies, are seen as creating the land uses, environments and buildings which will deliver the objectives of the Plan.

There are several **Appendices** which should be read as part of the full set of documents. The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations require there to be:

- A Consultation Statement – which details the processes and events undertaken for consultation with local residents and businesses, and the responses to those consultations;
- A Basic Conditions Statement – which details how the Plan conforms to the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the objective of sustainable development, the local planning policies of Birmingham City Council and any relevant European Union obligations.

Other appendices are:

- Background information on the need for housing, especially affordable housing
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). These studies helped clarify the impacts of the Plan proposals and amend the Plan accordingly; the studies found no major negative issues, except for the potential loss of green space to development; this issue is addressed by offsetting these losses through improvement to the quality of the remaining green spaces and incorporating appropriate green spaces in new developments.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Section 1: Introduction: Looking forward to 2031

1.1 Neighbourhood Planning (NP) for Balsall Heath

1.1.1 The Localism Act 2011 creates the power for local communities to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The NDP for Balsall Heath, Birmingham, will be the most local – and most detailed – tier in the hierarchy of Development Plans which will guide spatial planning (including development management) decisions relating to development proposals in the area. The NDP must conform to the policies of the higher level Plans, comprising currently the Birmingham Plan (UDP), the draft Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) of Birmingham City Council, plus the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of Central Government. Reference will also be made to a range of other development and regeneration policies and proposals which are relevant to the NDP.

1.1.2 The NDP follows the requirements and procedures laid down in the Localism Act and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The NDP will spell out the precise policies and proposals for the use and development of land which are relevant to the area and to the purposes of the Town and Country Planning Acts; these policies and proposals will be explained and justified in the corresponding text. The ultimate time horizon for the Plan was set at 2031 as this is the time horizon for the draft Birmingham Development Plan. The NDP has been prepared by the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Planning Forum (BHNPf), which itself was set up by the Balsall Heath Forum to meet the requirements of the legal framework; the role and membership of both Forums are explained in Sub-Section 1.3.

1.1.3 Furthermore the NDP is set locally within a broader context of the process of Neighbourhood Planning which incorporates many “neighbourhood management” issues and policies reflecting the – usually more immediate – needs for social, economic and environmental actions. This context will often be referred to in this document, indirectly as potential guidance for non-planning decisions and directly as part of the reasoned justification for the planning policies and proposals. In particular the Balsall Heath Forum is engaged also in the Government’s “Neighbourhood Budgeting” pilot project and the two processes have informed one another.

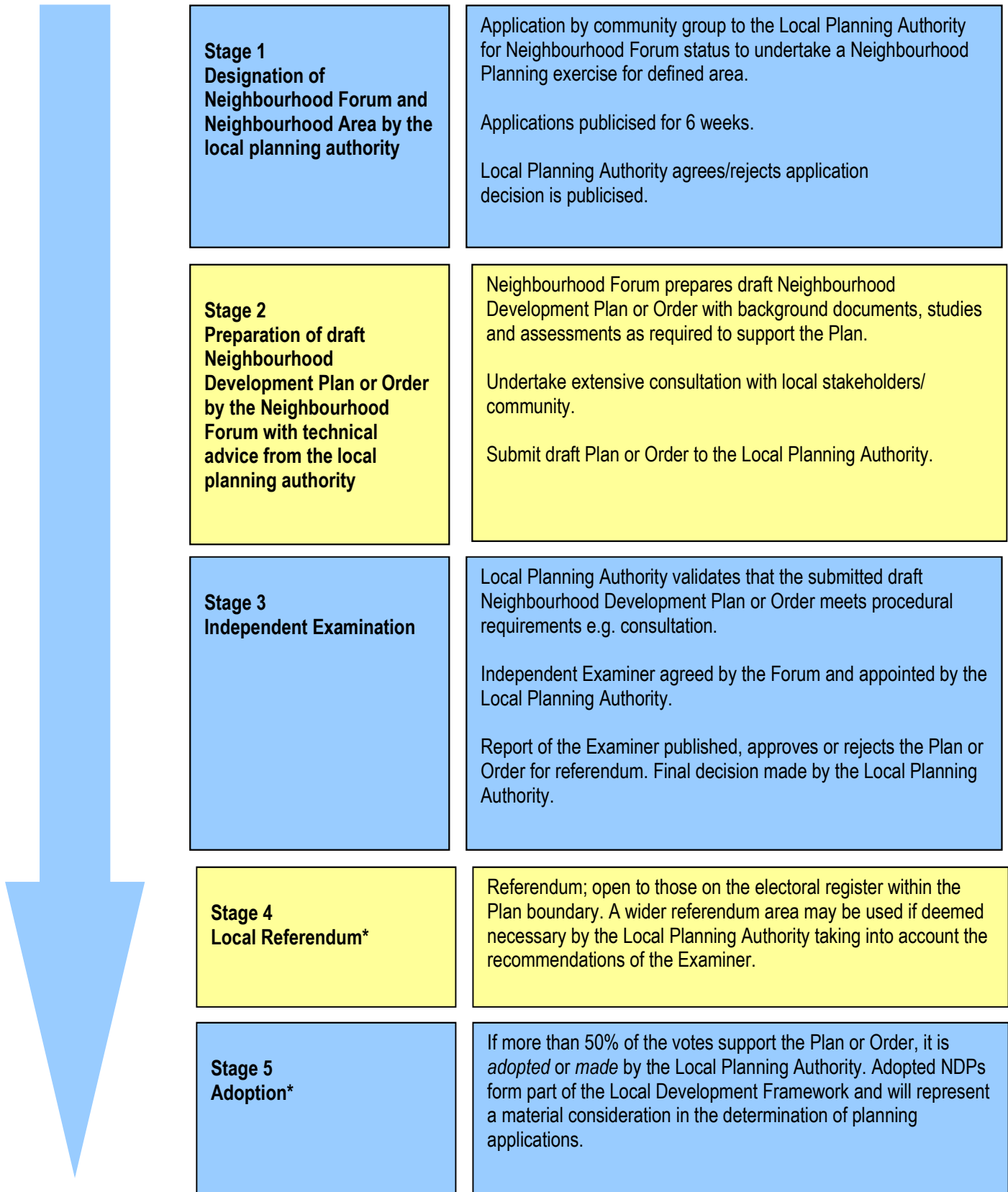
1.1.4 All policies and proposals are based on evidence gained from wider-scale reports, documents, statistics and objectives, and from local surveys and consultations. A particular effort has been made to consult with local businesses, landowners, estate agents and land developers (including social landlords) to ascertain development needs and pressures in the area. A specific requirement is that the NDP should reflect the wishes of the community through wide consultation and a final Referendum. The outline of the consultation process can be found in Sub-Section 1.5 of this document, but the detail of all the consultation processes and outcomes can be found in the Consultation Statement appended to the NDP. All the proposals have in some way been the result of this local consultation process.

1.1.5 The Localism Act seeks to encourage locally driven growth and the preparation of NDPs is a means of achieving this. The Balsall Heath NDP embraces the government’s pro-growth agenda. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (April 2013) make provision related to neighbourhood funding, which is intended to incentivise development. Although Birmingham’s CIL will not come into force until 2015 at the earliest, where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) in place, the proportion of CIL that will be spent on locally identified priorities is higher (25% rather than 15%), which could be used to help deliver some of the proposals within the NDP. Note is also taken of the recent relaxations of Permitted Development Rights as a further way of encouraging development in the area, particularly affecting commercial properties in the relevant two local centres.

1.2 Process and Timeline for Plan Preparation

1.2.1 The initial drive to prepare a NDP arose from discussions between the Balsall Heath Forum and the City Council in early 2011, when the Department for Communities and Local Government had embarked upon its pilot neighbourhood planning initiative across England. The Forum decided to embark upon the preparation of a draft NDP. A Steering Group was convened, comprising a range of interested organisations, including BHF, to oversee the project. It agreed to appoint a consultant to lead the process and act as coordinator of the activities and volunteers engaged in this process. A Planning Group (later named the 'ThinkTank') was subsequently formed to prepare this document..

1.2.2 The Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Planning Forum submitted an application to the City Council in September 2012 for the designation of the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Area and for the Neighbourhood Planning Forum as the relevant body to prepare the Plan. The City Council publicised the application and formally designated the Neighbourhood Area and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum in accordance with the Regulations in February 2013.



1.2.3 A programme of plan preparation was initiated in September 2011 and a series of consultation events were undertaken (see Sub-Section 1.5 below and the appended Consultation Statement). The programme also included evidence-gathering to identify issues, problems and new ideas, with a view to supporting the proposals for development. A range of partner organisations was identified, alerted to the NDP programme and called upon for proposals and supporting evidence. Use was also made of a number of reports and surveys carried out by organisations in recent years.

1.2.4 Once the potential for some substantial development was identified, it was agreed in October 2012 that a **Strategic Environmental Assessment** (SEA) Screening would be undertaken to accord with European legislation; this Assessment was carried out independently by LEPUS Consulting. The trigger for SEA was the fact that some of the proposals in the emerging Plan were deemed likely to give rise to significant environmental effects when brought forward and that the best way to explore these and mitigate any such negative effects was the preparation of an SEA. The opportunity was taken to widen the SEA to include a **Sustainability Appraisal** which enabled the draft policies within the NDP to be assessed in social, economic and environmental terms.

1.2.5 The plan document which was used for the SEA/SA process was a draft as formulated in late 2012. Following the SEA/SA and other contributions from the consultation processes, the draft plan was substantially amended. In the main the amendments comprised of a 'shifting' of proposed actions from 'policies and proposals' to 'projects; that is, it was recognised that many worthwhile and popular ideas were not susceptible to becoming planning policies under the requirements of the legislation. Indeed many ideas were good examples of policy implementation rather than policies themselves. Hence the plan document was renumbered and therefore the SEA/SA report should be read with this in mind.

1.3 Role and Membership of the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Planning Forum

1.3.1 The Balsall Heath Forum is a long-established neighbourhood forum which, since the 1980s, has been effective in transforming both the reality and the reputation of social conditions in Balsall Heath. The Forum is a Company Limited by Guarantee; its membership is open to all residents in the neighbourhood who are over nineteen years old; there are several hundred members. Each year for each of three years the full membership elects six residents to form their Executive, giving a total of eighteen, thus giving continuity. Each year the eighteen select a chair, two vice-chairs, a secretary and treasurer. They also co-opt four others to join them, giving a total of twenty two. The full Executive meets every month to fulfil the Forum's main aims which are:

- ⤴ To represent the area to its-self and to statutory bodies.
- ⤴ To build the capacity and social capital of the neighbourhood.
- ⤴ To deliver some safe, clean and green services.
- ⤴ To provide a focal point for the more effective management of the neighbourhood, support a Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership and help one-size-fits-all, statutory services to join-up their provision and tailor-make it to suit the needs of the area and resident's plans for it.
- ⤴ To develop and replicate best practice.

1.3.2 The current membership of the Executive is: Danny Bailey, Bijay Chandra, Makhdoom Chisti, Zhor Malik, Edna Shaw, Maisie Dill, Ian Edwards, Nassim Saif, Mohammed Yusuf, Subah Rasab, David Smithers, Cristina Pinero Maese, Andy Donovan, Steve James, Chris Poolman, Dalal Olewa, Louis Robinson, Naseem Akhtar, Anita Halliday, Roger Lynch and Kamran Fazil.

1.3.3 The Forum employs nine staff, including a Chief Executive, a Neighbourhood Manager, a Capacity Builder, two Neighbourhood Wardens and administrative support. Many residents contribute to the activities of the Forum voluntarily. Every three years the Forum has produced a social plan for the area which guides the action of the partnership. It is intended that the NDP will complement and develop the social plan.

1.3.4 As the constitution of the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Forum does not meet the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, a parallel body – the **Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Planning Forum** – was established to take the NDP forward. The Neighbourhood Planning Forum has been specifically created to prepare the NDP and its designation as the relevant body to prepare the document is valid for five years from the date it was made (12 February 2013).

1.4 Partner Organisations and their Involvement

1.4.1 The statutory providers of services in the area and the Town Centre Manager (BID) all sit on a Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership (NSP) and are contributing to this plan. The NSP is a loose collective of local organisations, facilitated by the BHF, providing a further forum for discussion of the area's needs. It currently has no administrative status, but allows members to guide and influence each other, while fulfilling an advocacy role for the neighbourhood.

1.4.2 The following officers/organisations have informed the preparation of the draft NDP.

- Birmingham City Council (various departments: the District Office, Planning & Regeneration, Housing, Environmental Health, Waste Management, Parks)
- Local Councillors
- West Midlands Police
- West Midlands Fire Service
- Friendship Care and Housing
- Midland Heart Housing
- Moseley and District Housing
- Accord Group Housing
- St Paul's Trust
- Jericho Foundation
- Saheli Women's Organisation
- NHS Community Health
- Balsall Heath Forum

1.4.3 There is also a Balsall Heath Voluntary Sector Alliance on which key voluntary organisations sit, including those listed above plus various Christian and Muslim organisations. They send two representatives to the NSP and are also contributing to the plan, hosting meetings, publishing newsletters about it, engaging residents and so on.

1.4.4 In addition to being a pilot study for neighbourhood planning, Balsall Heath is also one of the ten pilot studies for Neighbourhood Budgeting, the only place in England to be both. Balsall Heath Forum is the designated body for this pilot study, and believes that the co-existence of the two initiatives provides a unique opportunity for mutual cooperation, for the benefit of Balsall Heath. Neighbourhood Budgeting is seen as a potential source of finance for the implementation of some the plan proposals (see also [Section 7](#)); approval of this plan by the referendum gives added weight to these proposals in the budgeting process.

1.4.5 Throughout the preparation of this plan, the Neighbourhood Planning Forum has been conscious of the need to conform to human rights legislation and to ensure compatibility with European Union obligations. There has been a particular focus on ensuring that no sector of the population is discriminated against in terms of their human rights. Furthermore there has been a specific effort to ensure that EU legislation is observed; the SEA process is an EU obligation and the process did throw up some difficulties relating to nature conservation. Although there are no EU designated sites, there is the potential for a loss of nature conservation assets in the sites allocated for development. The plan seeks to offset those losses with enhancements elsewhere in the neighbourhood, especially in the various parks and 'orphan sites' of the area – and hence meet the requirements of EU and domestic nature conservation legislation.

1.5 Community Consultation

1.5.1 This Sub-Section is a brief summary of the community consultation activities undertaken in the preparation of the Plan. The full programme of consultation events – and analysis of the outcomes – is described in the Consultation Statement appended to this document.

1.5.2 Informal, preliminary community consultation started in May 2011 and continued until May 2012, asking the question: *what would you like to see included in the Plan?* The main focus of consultation was in the period September 2011 – February 2012 and involved groups, individuals and organisations. A major consultation event was undertaken in December 2011, organised by the Prince's Foundation, and attended by 40 invited participants in the workshops sessions and approximately 100 people who came to the following public meeting. A further consultation meeting was organised by the St Paul's Community Trust (a local charity) which was attended by over 100 people. A series of 'Children's Workshops' took place in January 2012 in each of the five local primary schools, where around 30 children participated.

1.5.3 A major neighbourhood-wide consultation on the draft proposals was undertaken in June/July 2012, including an exhibition of draft proposals and asking the question: *this is what we are proposing – what do you think?* The exhibition was open to groups, individuals and organisations. In the light of this consultation process, the Plan was amended to respond appropriately to the comments put forward.

1.5.4 The final Pre-submission consultation was in September – November 2013, asking the question: *we have now revised proposals and written policies - is it now right?* This process was open to all, directed to groups, organisations and statutory agencies; further minor amendments were made.

1.5.5 However the main continuing mechanism for local consultation has been through the meetings and activities of the Balsall Heath Forum itself. The Forum is a representative and consultative body, providing regular opportunities for interactive discussions; while these meetings discuss all relevant local issues, since May 2011 a specific focus has been on the Plan process.

1.5.6 The local community newspaper ("The Heathan") is delivered to all households and businesses in the area and provides a good means of communication with those who are not actively engaged in the plan-preparation process. At all stages The Heathan has carried summaries of the proposals, with opportunities given for feedback. Other means of communication have been provided by active involvement from Business in the Community,

the BID Partnership and the Police, plus the daily contact the BHF staff have with local people and organisations.

1.5.7 Account has been taken throughout of the City Council's 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI). This has been taken as pertinent guidance for the processes and mechanisms of consultation with local residents and businesses.

1.5.8 The BHNPF is grateful for the active cooperation and guidance of the City Council Planning and Regeneration Department. This help has meant that many pitfalls and conflicts have been avoided. The Department has also acted as a facilitator of dialogue with other departments of the Council. The Forum expresses its thanks for this help. We are also grateful for the support expressed by the local Ward Councillors, the Ward Committee and the District Officers.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

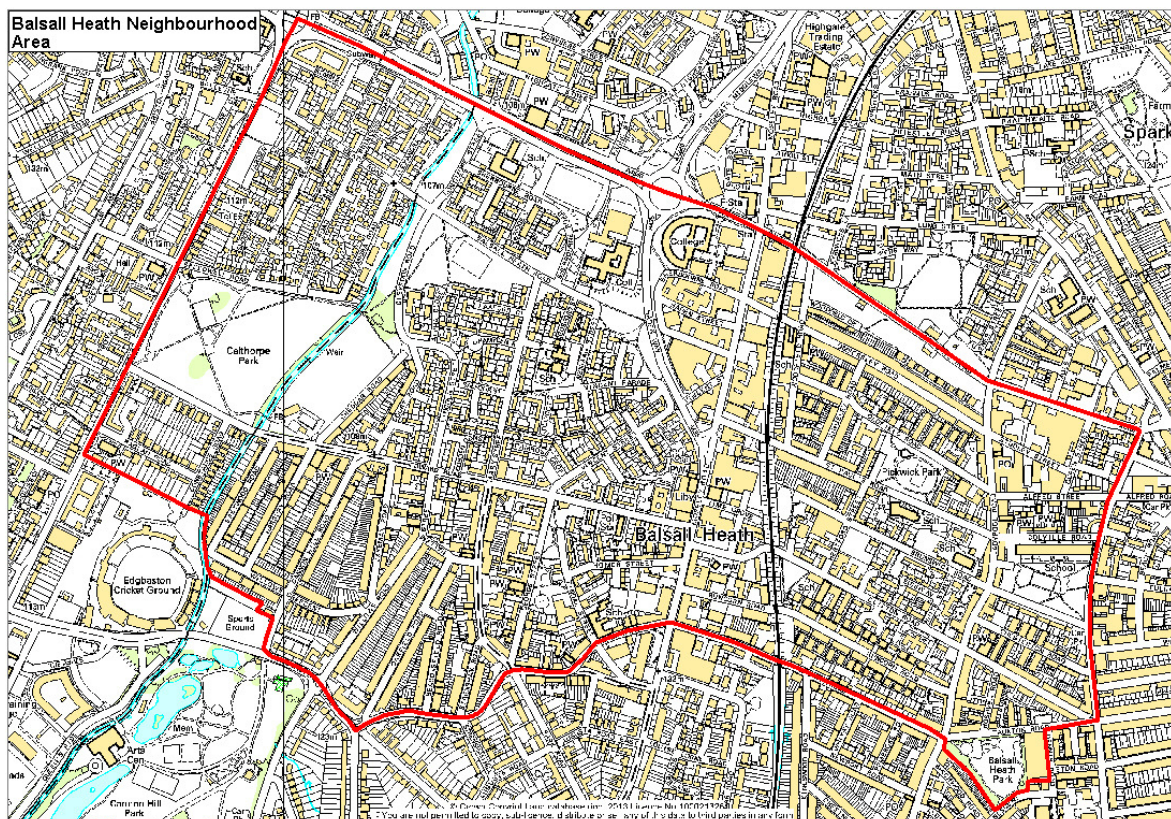
Section 2: The Balsall Heath Neighbourhood

2.1 The Plan Area

2.1.1 Balsall Heath neighbourhood is located about 2km to the south-east of Birmingham city centre. The plan area is bordered to the north by the city centre ring road (Belgrave Middleway) and Highgate Road; to the west the boundary is aligned along the Pershore Road (A441) and along Stoney Lane in the east; to the south the boundary skirts the Edgbaston Cricket Ground and then follows a variety of roads, including Brighton Road and Taunton Road, eastwards to include Balsall Heath Park. This southern boundary is, in the main, coterminous with that of the community-led Moseley SPD. The area includes two important transport corridors, Highgate Road and Moseley Road; both are integral parts of the Strategic Highway Network of the city.

2.1.2 The Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Area has been formally designated by the City Council and the extent of the area is shown on Map 1 below.

Map 1: Boundaries of the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Area



2.2 A very brief history of Balsall Heath

2.2.1 As the name implies, until the 1850's, the area was largely heathland with a scattering of farms and a mud path which cut through the middle, leading from the small City Centre to the village of Moseley. Then came the industrial/manufacture revolution and the fields quickly became filled with typical Victorian terraced houses built to accommodate those who came from the countryside to staff the new manufacture industries. The new roads conformed to field boundaries and were built for pedestrians and a few horse drawn carts, although the Moseley Road soon became an even more important through route. At the end of the 19th century Balsall Heath was offered a Baths and Library building in return for becoming a part of the City of Birmingham. The Moseley Road became the focal point of the new white working class community, which maintained some stability through to the post-WW2 years.

2.2.2 By the 1960's and 70's and the once growing manufacture industries slowly ground to a halt, unemployment spread and 'urban renewal' replaced one third of the 100+ year old terraced houses with more modern ones. Four small parks were created to add to the existing Calthorpe and Balsall Heath Parks. Many of the existing population were re-housed in outer ring areas and newcomers, first from Ireland, then from Africa, the Caribbean and Pakistan took their place. The population then stabilised at around 60% Asian, 20% Black and 20% native White. It also took a while before those cultures got to know and trust each other and build a new, cohesive community with a pride in the neighbourhood. Now that this new community has arisen, it is keen to see the physical appearance and economic potential of the area match its pride and adjust to new circumstances.

2.3 General characteristics of Balsall Heath

2.3.1 Balsall Heath comprises the western part of Sparkbrook Ward within the Hall Green Constituency of Birmingham. According to the 2011 Census, the resident population of the NDP area is approximately 15,000 in around 4900 households, with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Over half of the population is of South Asian background with most being of Pakistan origin. It is also a young population with 30% under 16 and 45% under 25 years of age. Almost half of households are families with dependent children; the area contains a relatively high proportion of large families. Around half the dwellings in the Plan area are terraced, with only 8% living in detached houses.

2.3.2 The available statistics (from the City Council website) demonstrate that the area is subject to multiple deprivation and would benefit greatly from investment in jobs, homes, the appropriate range of community/commercial facilities and good accessibility both within the area and to the rest of the city and the nation. As shown in the statistics for the Ward (Sparkbrook Forum, 2012), in 2011 approximately half the population was shown as being in the most deprived 10% of the nation. Analyses from the City Council indicate that in 2011 nearly 30% of adults had a personal income of less than £7000. The unemployment rate for the ward in December 2013 stood at 18.4% compared with a city average of 9.2% and the JSA claimant rate, at 10% was almost double the city average. Nearly half the working age population have no qualifications and over 20% have limiting long-term illness.

2.3.3 Due to the level of deprivation, Balsall Heath is one of the 31 Priority Neighbourhoods identified by the City Council. Community cohesion is considered strong in a 2008 survey (carried out by the then Local Strategic Partnership) with consistently more than the city average being positive about their neighbourhood; however a more recent survey has suggested that levels of community satisfaction have reduced.

2.3.4 In terms of social infrastructure, there are five primary schools in the area – mainly of recent construction – but all are under pressure of numbers; there is no state secondary school, but there are several small faith (Muslim) schools. The Joseph Chamberlain College provides a major further education facility, including a Sports Hall which is available to the general public on a restricted basis. There is a substantial Health Centre, a part-time Police 'Hub', a Library and public baths – located close together on Edward Road/Moseley Road; but there is no recognised major 'community centre' catering for all sections of the population. Also there is a perceived lack of leisure facilities other than the public baths. However the Balsall Heath Forum, the St Pauls Trust and others provide a range of community development opportunities, albeit on a small scale. There are numerous places of worship serving the various faith communities across the area.

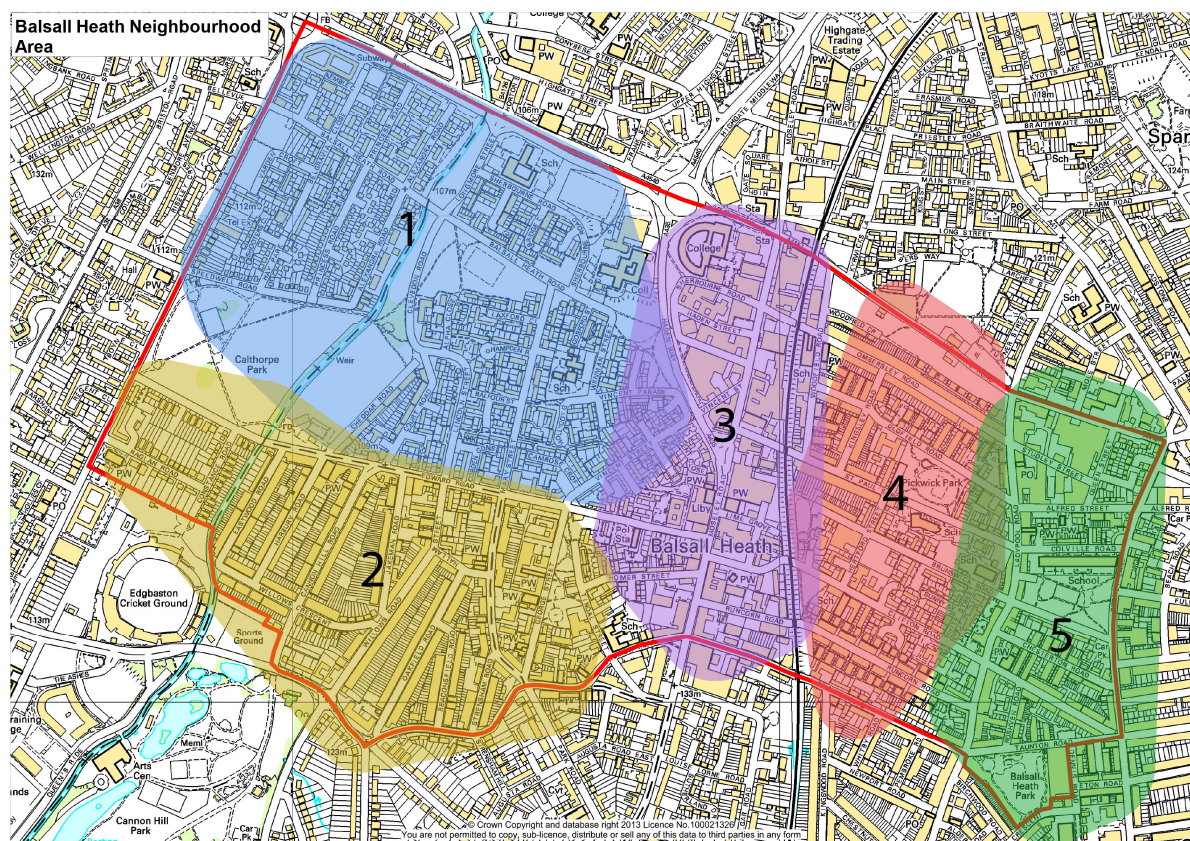
2.3.5 In economic terms, employment opportunities are characterised largely by local public services and small firms – many of the latter are part of, or supplying, the South Asian restaurant and wedding goods trade focused on the Balti Triangle. There are several 'business units' available in the area for start-up and small firms, plus a number of business advisory services.

2.3.6 There have been a number of studies carried out in recent years to identify and analyse the extent and character of the deprivation in Balsall Heath and the surrounding area. Some of these studies have been promoted by the Balsall Heath Forum itself; the Forum has produced a series of "Neighbourhood Plans" which have guided local organisations and the City Council towards relevant and effective actions. A partner organisation, the Chamberlain Forum, has published other, more theoretical, studies (such as "Theories of Community Strength (2011)") which feature the Balsall Heath community. The City Council has produced statistical analyses which indicate the levels of social and economic deprivation in the area.

2.3.7 In physical terms, the NP area can be split into five sub-areas (see Map 2 below):

- 1. A north-western part comprising largely of 'council housing' dating from the 1960s/70s, but also containing Calthorpe Park and the cleared former site of the Joseph Chamberlain College
- 2. A south-western part largely with terraced housing dating from the late 19th century
- 3. A central north-south belt, along the Moseley Road (A435), with mixed industrial, commercial and social uses, including the Joseph Chamberlain College
- 4. A further north-south residential belt of mixed 19th century and modern housing in between the two local centres of the area
- 5. An eastern zone, identified with the 'Balti Triangle', of largely commercial uses, including restaurants, shops and offices, but with some older housing.

Map 2: Sub-Areas



2.3.8 In the west of the area, there is the relatively large open space of Calthorpe Park, through which runs the culverted River Rea. In the east there are Pickwick and Balsall Heath Parks, which are relatively small formal parks. While much of the area is within 400m of open space, there is a perceived deficiency of usable open space, especially within the close-packed terraced housing areas. There are also numerous small 'pockets' of open land (referred to below as 'orphan spaces'), usually 'left over' from previous redevelopment and now often untidy and neglected. Furthermore there are small areas within the formal boundaries of the parks which are not fully utilised and are unkempt.

2.3.9 There is currently one major cleared site – the former site of the Joseph Chamberlain Sixth Form College adjoining Haden Way (A435) and the Middle Ring Road. Planning permission has been granted for a retail warehousing development; **although pre-commencement conditions have been discharged and material operations to secure the consent have been carried out construction has not taken place.**

2.3.10 Another substantial potential development site runs alongside Highgate Road; this was originally cleared for the widening of the road, but a significant, if elongated, site will remain as and when the road is completed in the form currently proposed by the City Council. This site is currently largely 'green space' but cannot be used for full recreational purposes. A review of the highway improvement line has been proposed to release the site's development potential. The draft NDP contains specific proposals for both these sites.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Section 3: Development Needs, Vision and Aims

3.1 Development Needs.

3.1.1 Balsall Heath has undergone change in the past with a variety of urban renewal programmes and periodic influxes of immigrants. It now has a growing and diverse population, but is a largely settled community and, over the past twenty years, has developed a community spirit and pride in the neighbourhood. However many issues remain and the key drivers for further development arise partly from continued 'wear and tear' by intensive use of the physical fabric of the area, and partly from increased needs and expectations of the residents.

3.1.2 Development issues, identified in the consultation process and in various studies carried out by partner organisations, include:

- Meeting the housing needs of the local population, especially affordable housing for large families;
- Supporting the viability of the local centres within the area (Moseley Road and Ladypool Road) including the needs of potential visitors to the area that are attracted by its 'offer' (mainly the food, clothing and jewellery outlets of the 'Balti Triangle');
- Meeting the changing demands for services, both commercial and social, from the local population including the creation of an identifiable 'central point';
- Improving the physical environment and street scene and ensuring the future of the many underused buildings in poor condition;
- Making the best use of the open space in the area, including the small 'orphan' sites;
- Reducing the carbon footprint of the area and contributing to climate change proofing, particularly for new built developments;
- Improving the connectivity of the area, especially with the city centre, while reducing car dependency and improving public transport, walking and cycle routes and improving accessibility for those with limited mobility..

3.1.3 For all these development needs to be addressed, it will be necessary to reconcile the views of the community with the aspirations of landowners and the planning objectives of the City Council. Producing a statutory spatial framework will provide clear guidance and direction to investors and developers and will become the basis for a long term delivery plan, implemented by a variety of partners.

3.1.4 In the public consultation processes undertaken, it became apparent that the main concern of residents was to ensure a sufficient and varied housing stock. However there were also major concerns relating to job and skill levels, the availability of local services and to the quality of the environment. To meet all these concerns will require the development of homes, commercial premises and social and 'green' infrastructure. To find land capable of meeting these development needs will mean that there must be some redevelopment of existing premises and some building on land which is currently open. The Plan identifies some sites for new-build which currently provide a level of 'green space'; however it is contended that the losses of such green space will be offset by the enhancement of other green spaces within the area. This offsetting is recognised by the NPPF (paras 9/109), given that there should be an overall net gain for nature in the area. This conflict is picked up by the SEA carried out into the Plan, but is judged to be satisfactorily dealt with, given that much of the land in question is poor in terms of bio-diversity and recreational potential.

Housing Issues

3.1.5 The city-wide demand for and supply of housing land has been analysed in two documents prepared by the City Council: the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2013) and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment - SHLAA (2013). The former demonstrates a demand for housing units in the city of around 80,000 to the year 2031; the latter demonstrates a current supply of around 1,200 sites offering space for around **38,600** units. There is clearly a shortfall in the supply of housing land for the city as a whole. Furthermore the analyses demonstrate a growing need for affordable housing.

3.1.6 The SHLAA includes one substantial site within Balsall Heath: part of the area of land to the south of Highgate Road, in the ownership of the City Council and released from a Highway Improvement Line and currently open space. The site identified here is 1.15ha and has the capacity for around 50 houses. However this site does not cover all the land which might be available for housing development, as identified in NDP in **Section 6** below. The only other significant housing site identified is Clifton House, Clifton Road, offering the availability of 0.47ha and 24 houses. The NDP has identified a further large site – the ex-Joseph Chamberlain College site off Haden Way – with a potential capacity for upwards of 200 houses; this site does not feature in the SHLAA because it had an extant planning permission for commercial development. With the support of local residents, the NDP proposes that the site is developed for a mixed use development incorporating both housing and commercial elements – **see Section 6** – and the land-owner of the site has not objected to the policy for a mixed use proposal.

3.1.7 The local circumstances of the housing market are analysed further in Appendix 3: Housing Needs: Background Information. The locally active Housing Associations have been deeply involved in the Plan's preparation and have jointly submitted the following statement in support of new housing proposals in the area.

3.1.8 There is a strong demand for affordable housing in Balsall Heath. The area has a number of locations that contain disused industrial and other units, confused and underused spaces and buildings that are no longer in use. There is a need for all types of affordable housing in Balsall Heath. It is anticipated that demand for both smaller units for young families and individuals as well as larger dwellings for large and extended families is likely to remain high and that demand will continue to be higher than supply. There are a number of Social Landlords already working closely together in Balsall Heath who are in a position to give advice on housing demand and housing provision. These Landlords can also give consideration to new housing developments. It is proposed that input from Landlords is requested to locate suitable sites for new affordable housing to be developed. Further to this Landlords can assist by giving consideration for their organisations to develop new housing schemes.

3.1.9 There is no evidence of interest from large-scale private housing developers (given the lack of land on the market and the poor local market), but there has been in recent years some interest from small-scale builders in refurbishment projects as suitable existing houses come on the market. There is some interest from the 'student housing' market but the area is not popular with the student population and there is little evidence that this is a substantial market pressure.

Economic and Social Issues

3.1.10 Being a deprived area (see Sub-Section 2.3 above), there is a range of economic and social infrastructure development issues. There are high levels of unemployment and worklessness in the area and many families living at or near poverty levels. The area contains a substantial number of places of employment – generally in the service sector – but virtually all are small-scale (less than 20 employees). The largest employers are the Joseph Chamberlain College, the local schools and various offices of the City Council. There is little space suitable for larger-scale employment-based development, but it is important to protect and encourage the SMEs in the area. There are now several training and enterprise centres which are crucial to the future success of the area economically. The draft Birmingham Development Plan envisages large-scale employment-based development in the City Centre (especially Southside and Eastside) and a number of ‘growth areas’, including the nearby Bordesley Park area. It is expected that job opportunities in the growth areas will become available to Balsall Heath residents and likewise the spending power of the growth areas will percolate through to the Balsall Heath area.

3.1.11 The existing social infrastructure of the area is substantial but still in need of strengthening to match equivalent standards elsewhere. There are a number of primary schools in the area, but no secondary school; there is some pressure on places but the LEA has no proposals for new schools. The Joseph Chamberlain College (Further Education) is a major asset for the area and could expand through the use of redundant buildings in the vicinity. Primary health care is provided through a number of GP surgeries, including a substantial group practice on Edward Road; but improved health care provision is needed to match the facilities found in nearby neighbourhoods. The Victorian library and swimming baths on Moseley Road are very needed assets and all should be done to protect these services; similarly the parks in the area are all well-used, but in need of some enhancement.

3.1.12 Given the context to the economic and social development needs and potentials of the area, an appropriate focus for such development would be on **the former Joseph Chamberlain College and on** the existing neighbourhood centres of Moseley Road (plus the ‘old’ Moseley Road) and Ladypool Road,. There is scope here for the regeneration of relatively small sites to achieve an intensification of use resulting in enhanced employment opportunities and improved social infrastructure.

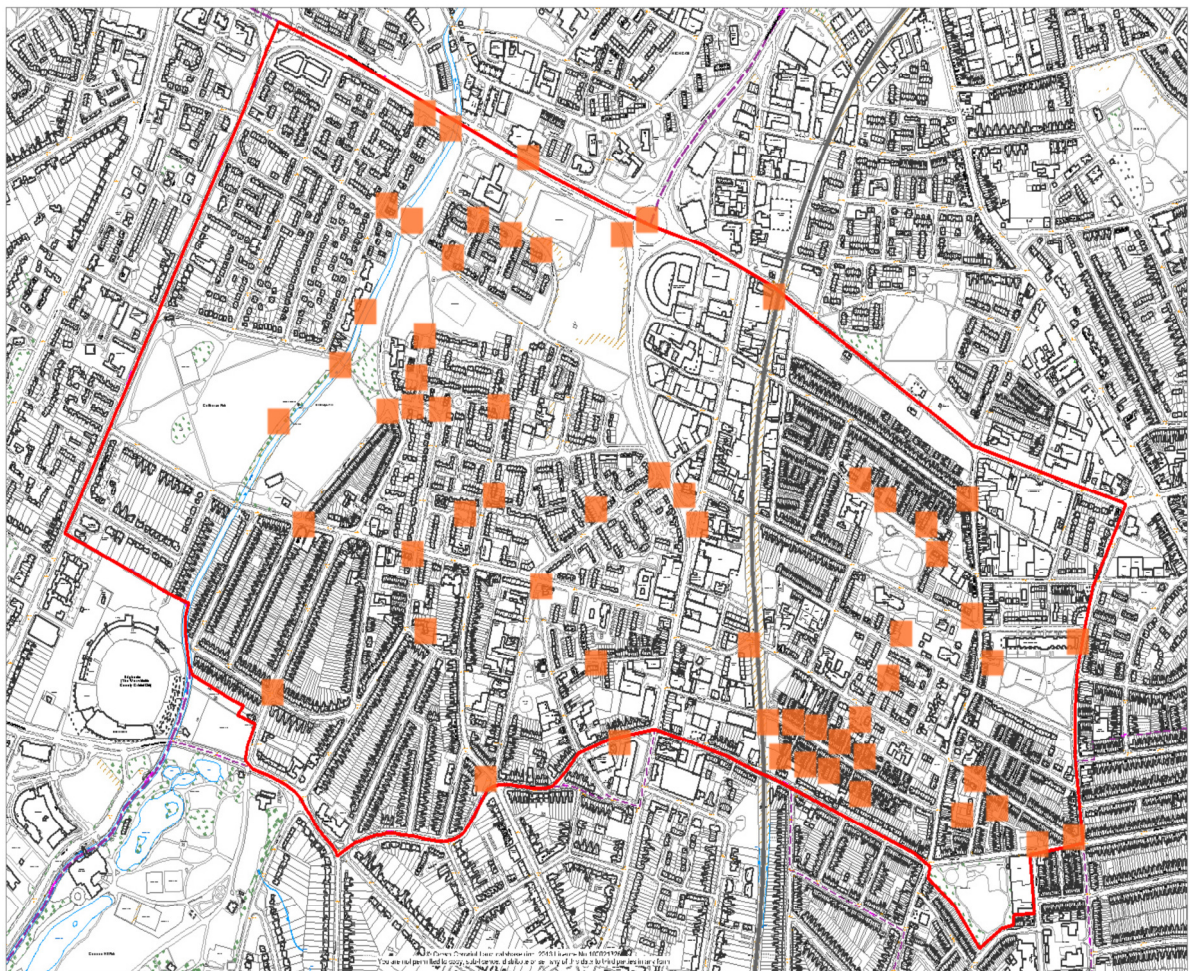
Environmental Issues

3.1.13 The environment of the area requires improvement, for its own sake and to support the response to economic and social needs. As well as the enhancement of green spaces, there is a need to improve the ‘street scene’ and many of the sites and buildings fronting on to the streets. Careful design of new developments will contribute to the overall uplift of the local environment; an ‘urban design framework’ would provide a mechanism to achieve this objective. There are some buildings of architectural and historic value in the area (especially along the Moseley Road) and active conservation of these assets will also contribute to the improved ‘look and feel’ of the area.

3.1.14 There are about seventy unmaintained ‘confused’ or ‘orphan’ spaces in Balsall Heath – see Map 3 below, which indicates the locations of the main problem spots. Post-war housing developments created small green spaces for informal activity or merely as visual features. Unfortunately the owners of these spaces – now mainly the social landlords – did not conclude satisfactory maintenance contracts for the land. Because they became uncared for, people dumped litter and black bags on them and they became eyesores and attracted crime. In addition to these ‘orphan’ spaces, there are even more untended gardens and alleyways owned by social landlords; a proper maintenance programme needs to be put in place for these spaces.

3.1.15 A potential solution to this problem lies in transferring these orphan spaces to a responsible community body and to the residents themselves. Some of these 'orphan' spaces could be used for alternative 'green' purposes, potentially requiring planning permission. The opportunity to create community allotments in these spaces will be explored; the Balsall Heath Forum and other voluntary bodies have already promoted such schemes in the area and further developments will be encouraged, potentially expanding into social enterprises and job creation. Biodiversity/nature conservation is recognised as an appropriate use or management programme for some 'orphan spaces' and such uses should not be seen as incompatible with other potential uses, such as community food growing and education.

Map 3: 'Orphan' Spaces



Carbon Footprint

3.1.16 The public consultation process revealed strong support for the idea of Balsall Heath making its full contribution to the objectives of carbon reduction and climate change proofing. Built developments should conform to high standards for the reduction of their carbon footprint and carbon reduction throughout building life. Proposals were made for the environmental enhancement of the area through tree planting, other landscaping and the development of allotments. Particular support was given to the renaturalisation of the River Rea, which would provide both environmental improvement and flood protection. A significant asset for the area is the 'Carbon Neutral House' which has been developed on Tindal Street; this can act as an exemplar for others to follow.

Connectivity

3.1.17 There is concern that the area needs better connectivity with the rest of the city. Bus services are adequate, but there was great interest in the reestablishment of a rail service to the area. The proposal to reintroduce local passenger services along the rail line through the area was warmly supported, but the current lack of firm proposals for a rail station was thought damaging to the objective of making public transport more available. Other transport related concerns focused on the management of traffic and parking in the area. Concern was also expressed for the difficulties experienced by the disabled and the elderly in moving around the area by foot and by wheelchair.

3.2 Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan for Balsall Heath?

A 'Vision' for Balsall Heath

3.2.1 Balsall Heath is an inner city neighbourhood with a population of around 15000 and with an array of acute issues, many of which can be addressed through a Neighbourhood Development Plan. As will be detailed in Section 2, the neighbourhood suffers from multiple deprivation and a poor environment in places. Nevertheless it also exhibits many signs of vibrant entrepreneurship, social cohesion and architectural landmarks. The NDP will endeavour to respond to the problems with externally and internally generated investment and maximise the many synergies resulting from concerted and planned actions. The NDP will provide a basis for encouraging developments which will provide more local jobs and businesses, new and improved housing, reinforced and accessible social and physical infrastructure and an improved and accessible environment. The overall objective is to reach towards a sustainable urban neighbourhood, with internal cohesion and external connectivity.

3.2.2 Within and adjoining the NDP area is an emerging Business Improvement District (BID), sponsored by the Sparkbrook and Springfield Town Centre Partnership, which was established following a ballot in September 2013. At the time of submission of the NDP, there has to be a rebalot before the BID is legitimated, but we have assumed in the NDP that the BID will exist. It is focused on the Ladypool Road/Stratford Road area, including what is known as the "Balti Triangle" of largely South Asian restaurants, related food outlets and clothes/jewellery/ wedding shops. The NDP provides an opportunity for relevant aspects of the proposed BID programme of actions to be incorporated into a formal development plan in parts of the Plan area. The existence of a BID in the NDP area will assist in the process of consultation with the business community about the Plan and its

implementation. The BID will also have access to finances which could be used to progress elements of the NDP.

3.2.3 The following ‘Vision Statement’ has been agreed by the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Planning Forum to act as Guiding Principles in the preparation of the Plan:

“The Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to guide and promote change in land use and development, within the Balsall Heath NDP area, to achieve the following objectives:

- ***economic development which can provide an appropriate and sufficient range of local job and training opportunities and promote business growth at appropriate locations in the area;***
- ***social development which can provide an appropriate and sufficient range of new and improved housing opportunities and social infrastructure to support the well-being of local residents;***
- ***environmental and urban design improvements which will enhance the quality of life for residents and the state of the physical environment, including measures to address climate change;***
- ***transport infrastructure which enables the effective and safe movement of people and goods around and through the area, including by foot and bicycle.***

Within the above objectives, priority will be given to actions which address the needs and aspirations of the most deprived sectors of the local population, including those with disabilities.”

This vision has been developed into the ‘Primary Aims’ of the Plan (see Sub-Section 3.3) and has been used as a basis for the development of the Policies and Proposals of the Plan.

3.2.4 The Plan includes a series of policies which will guide planning decisions in the future (Section 6 of the Document). However some of the laudable, necessary and beneficial ideas and actions brought forward in the consultation process are not suitable as a ‘policy’ in terms of the Planning Acts. Some of these ideas and actions can nevertheless serve as indicators and examples of forms of development which express the objectives of the planning policies in the Plan. This document therefore makes a distinction between planning ‘**Policies**’ (indicated in bold type and numbered) and the potentially resulting ‘community action projects’. The key community action projects, brought forward in the consultation process and which are seen as important during the lifetime of the Plan, are listed within an annex at the end of the document.

3.2.5 Throughout this document, there are sketches and schemes which seek to illustrate the issues and potentials for development in the area. These sketches are for indicative purposes only and are not to be seen as defining a specific development scheme. Such schemes will be subject to further detailed discussions and decisions – within the framework and objectives of these planning policies.

3.3 Primary Aims for the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan:

3.3.1 The aims of the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan have been derived from the 'Vision Statement' adopted by the BHNP (see Para 3.2); these aims are listed below together with the relevant emerging Birmingham Development Plan policy references:

- **To promote a sustainable and healthy community in Balsall Heath which satisfies the social and economic needs of the population while protecting and enhancing the environment (PG3/TP26)**
- **To create a 'heart' for the community in the form of a physical focus for community activities and social interaction (TP20)**
- **To protect and enhance the range of commercial and social uses within the local centres of Moseley Road and Ladypool Road (TP21/22/23)**
- **To enhance the range and quality of housing in the area to match better the needs of local families and their right to decent housing (TP29)**
- **To promote the capacities of the area to provide suitable local jobs and training opportunities while contributing to the economic well-being of the city and wider area (TP19)**
- **To enhance the physical environment of the area in terms of the effective and healthy use of green infrastructure, open space, the quality of the street scene and the reduction of pollution (TP7/8/9)**
- **To conserve and effectively utilise the heritage assets of the area, especially the listed buildings in Moseley Road local centre (TP12)**
- **To improve the connectivity of the area in terms of the movement of people, including the disabled and elderly, and of goods and service providers (TP37)**
- **To reduce car dependency and promote walking, cycling and public transport (TP38/39/40)**
- **To reduce the carbon footprint of development, address climate change issues and promote sustainable waste management (TP2/3/13)**
- **To provide a framework within which the land and property owners, investors and the Balsall Heath Forum and its partners can work together to achieve the above aims.**

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Section 4: The Planning Context for the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

4.1 Alignment with the draft Birmingham Development Plan and National Planning Policy Framework

4.1.1 The Balsall Heath NDP has been prepared with the intention of conforming to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of March 2012, to the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as modified in 2005, and to the draft Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) – further consultation on the latter is currently taking place, with a view to its adoption in early 2015. The NDP meets the requirements in these policy frameworks. The time horizon of the draft BDP of 2031 has been adopted for this NDP.

4.1.2 The current Local Plan for the area is the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan; the UDP dates originally from 1993 with some modifications in 2005. Given that this plan is so out of date, it was considered more appropriate to use the draft Birmingham Development Plan as the template against which to develop policies for the NDP. However the NDP's policies have been checked against the UDP policies ([sub section 4.3](#)) and no conflict has been found. The new BDP is likely to be the relevant Local Plan for much of the duration of the NDP.

4.1.3 The NPPF gives the following guidance about the scope of NDPs: “Outside these strategic elements (in the UDP/BDP), neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area”. The NDP also takes into account especially paragraphs 69-77 of the NPPF which address the planning objectives of “Healthy Communities”. An overall theme within the Draft BDP is the creation, enhancement and protection of “sustainable neighbourhoods (TP26)”. Hence the fundamental aim of the Balsall Heath NDP is to promote a sustainable and healthy community, in the form of a ‘sustainable neighbourhood’.

4.1.4 The Balsall Heath area has been the subject of several urban regeneration programmes over the years, but currently there are no major programmes specific to the area. There are some programmes operating over broader areas which are relevant to Balsall Heath; of particular significance is the “Property Assistance and Key Opportunities Funding Programme” from the European Regional Development Fund. As this and other programmes are formulated, the NDP can provide a basis and context for funding applications for relevant schemes.

4.2 Relevant draft BDP Proposals

4.2.1 The draft BDP has noticeably changed from the Core Strategy Consultation Draft, which was consulted upon in December 2010, to take account of the National Planning Policy Framework and the emergence of higher population projections for the City.

4.2.2 Most 'city-wide' policies in the draft BDP are relevant in some way to the Balsall Heath. However the following are particular relevance to Balsall Heath (the relevant policy references are given):

- the making of sustainable places: "creating a strong sense of place, high standards of design and environmental sustainability, climate proofing and supported by high quality infrastructure and facilities" (TP26)
- making a contribution to the provision of new housing (TP28) in suitable locations (TP27) with support for the provision of affordable housing (TP30)
- Balsall Heath (ie Moseley Road) and Ladypool Road are recognised as important 'local (neighbourhood) centres' where their retail, service and community/social functions will be maintained and enhanced (TP20/21/22)
- Ladypool Road centre is also recognised as a commercial centre for a wider area in terms of its provision of Asian restaurants, food, clothing and jewellery; this role is to be promoted with further development of the 'Balti Triangle' as a significant visitor destination (TP23)
- ensuring that development contributes towards a healthy city (TP20/36)
- the A435 Moseley Road (which includes the central sector of the Balsall Heath area) is identified as part of the "Strategic Highway Network" (TP37)
- protection to be afforded to heritage assets and encouragement given to developments which bring back into use a number of vacant and under-utilised historic buildings (TP12)
- a proposal to reintroduce passenger rail services on the Camp Hill line and to create rail stations at suitable points (TP40)
- protection of land for the highway improvement of Highgate Road (TP43)
- encouragement of further investment in traffic management and use of public transport, as well as walking and cycling (TP38/39/40/43)
- ensuring that development contributes to addressing climate change (TP2).

4.2.3 In neither the current UDP nor the draft BDP are there any specific allocations of land within the Balsall Heath area; in particular there are no housing land allocations. However the draft BDP demonstrates a need to consider favourably proposals for housing development when it is consistent with the policies in the plan (TP27). New housing will take account of current and future demographic profiles in assessing the type and size of new housing, whether it is a small infill site or the creation of a new residential neighbourhood (TP29). The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment of 2013 is an important part of the evidence base for the BDP; it has been noted that much of the Highgate Road housing proposal represents a major opportunity for housing growth within the area.

4.2.4 It is noted that Balsall Heath is not one of the 'growth areas' identified in the emerging BDP. However the residents of Balsall Heath wish to participate in the City's 'growth agenda' and benefit from investment in the wider area. The growth areas of the city centre (especially Southside and Eastside) and the Bordesley Park area are in relatively close proximity and Balsall Heath will seek any 'spill-over' benefits from this growth.

4.3 Relevant Birmingham UDP Policies

4.3.1 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is the current strategic land use plan for Birmingham and is applicable until it is replaced by the Birmingham Development Plan in the near future. Where policies are out of date, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) should be referred to as well as emerging policies in the Birmingham Development Plan.

4.3.2 The UDP comprises of city wide policies (Chapters 1-8) and specific area chapters (9-21). Many of the area –wide policies are relevant to Balsall Heath in some way and the main policies which apply to the NDP area are set out below.

UDP Paragraph

17:26- 17:30 Balsall Heath (part of Sparkbrook Ward)

3.14 The Design of New Development

3.16 Accessibility and Safety

3.20 Conservation of the Built Environment

3.25 Listed Buildings

3.37 Nature Conservation

3.47 – 3.60 Open Space

3.62 Allotments

5.20 The Residential environment

5.25 The Location of New Housing Development

5.26 Meeting the City's Housing Requirements

5.29- 5.32A New Housing Provision

5.37 Affordable Housing

6.18-6.20 Transport

6.28- 6.30 – Rail Developments

6.38 – Birmingham's Strategic Highway Network

6.41 - Improvement Priorities

6.43 – Cycling

6.45 Pedestrians

6.49 – Improvement Lines

6.49A/B – Car parking

7.21-7.31– Other Centres and Edge and Out- of-Centre Shopping

8.6 Hot Food Shops and Restaurants/Cafes

4.4 Other Relevant Planning Documents

4.4.1 Birmingham City Council has a range of Supplementary Planning Documents, many of which are relevant to planning policies for the area. Account has been taken of these documents in the preparation of the NDP. The most relevant SPDs are:

- Places for Living 2001
- Places for All 2001
- (Draft) Your Green and Healthy City (likely to be adopted following the BDP)
- Shopping and Local Centres 2012
- Public Open Space in New Residential Development 2007
- Car parking Guidelines 2012

Other planning documents which are relevant to this NDP include:

- Green Living Spaces Plan 2013
- (Draft) Community Infrastructure Levy (likely to be adopted 2015) and (Draft) Infrastructure Delivery Plan

4.4.2 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is also relevant to the highways, public transport and rail station policies of the NDP. Similarly the city-wide Economic Strategy and Community Strategy have many elements which are supportive of the proposals in this NDP. The NDP also takes note of the work done recently by the City's Planning and Regeneration Team on the improvement and development of the Moseley Road local centre.

4.4.3 There have been various studies and proposals from the City Council relating to the 'Moseley Road Corridor' (the A435 running north-south through the area). These proposals have focused on the traffic and pedestrian problems of the road itself and the development potential for sites adjoining the road. In particular the number of listed and historic buildings has been seen as a means of promoting development interest. A recent study has called this area the 'Moseley Road Heritage Corridor' and this terminology is used in this Plan. However the City Council is currently referring to this emerging and ongoing work as the 'Moseley Road/Alcester Road regeneration framework'.

4.4.4 Of local relevance is the emerging Ward Development Plan (for Sparkbrook Ward as a whole) which will be important in setting the local priorities for the Community Infrastructure Levy, once introduced, and other implementation actions. It is anticipated that some of the proposals emanating from this NDP will feature prominently in the WDP. The physical development policies and proposals of the Stratford Road/Ladypool Road Business Improvement District (BID) are relevant to the NDP and have been incorporated where appropriate.

4.4.5 Recognition is also made of the priorities and proposals in the plans drawn up by the neighbouring Sparkbrook Forum, which covers the rest of Sparkbrook Ward to the east and north. Similarly the Moseley Regeneration Group prepared a Supplementary Planning Document for their area which was which abuts Balsall Heath to the south, which was adopted in 2014. There are currently no localised plan formulation processes in the areas to the west of Balsall Heath in Edgbaston Ward, although there has been recently considerable development activity in and around the Cricket Ground.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Section 5: Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies – Overview

5.1 Neighbourhood Development Plan Policies – Introduction and Overview

5.1.1 This Section contains the headings for the planning policies and proposals which constitute the heart of this Neighbourhood Development Plan. These policies have been the specific subject of ‘Examination’ to ensure they meet the Basic Conditions as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and applied to neighbourhood plans by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The policy proposals have been numbered sequentially in the form of **BH1 to BH20**, the prefix referring to Balsall Heath.

5.1.2 The first seven policies are for **general application** across the whole of the neighbourhood, although Policies **BH5 - 7** also have direct relevance to specific locations within the plan area. The policies reflect the particular concerns of the local community relating to homes, jobs, commercial and social infrastructure and the environment. These general policies should be read in conjunction with relevant policies in the Birmingham Plan (UDP), the draft Birmingham Development Plan (BDP), Supplementary Planning Documents and the National Planning Policy Framework (see Section 3). Many planning issues are covered by these other Plans and relevant policies are not repeated here. The policies stated here are cross-referenced to the relevant draft BDP Policies.

5.1.3 The rest of the Plan’s policies (BH8 – 20) are aimed at **specific sites** within the plan area. These policy proposals seek to address development issues and opportunities in conformity with the general policies of this plan and the draft BDP, SPDs and the NPPF. Because of the detailed and local nature of these proposals, there is no cross-referencing to the draft BDP.

5.2 Area-wide Policies

Policy BH1: A Sustainable Community

Policy BH2: Design and Conservation of the Built Environment

Policy BH3: Environment and Open/Green Space

Policy BH4: Connectivity and Movement

5.3 General Policies with impacts on specific locations

Policy BH5: Community Infrastructure and Shopping and Local Centres

Policy BH6: Parks

Policy BH7: Marking Significant Places and Spaces

5.4 Place Specific Policies and Proposals

Policy BH8: Land-Uses within the Balsall Heath Centre

Policy BH9: Historic Buildings and Design Standards in Balsall Heath Centre

Policy BH10: Street Scene and a “Town Square”

Policy BH11: Improving the ‘Old’ Moseley Road

Policy BH12: Land-Uses within the Ladypool Road Centre

Policy BH13: The Street Scene in Ladypool Road

Policy BH14: The Street Scene in Stoney Lane

Policy BH 15: Regeneration of the former College Site

Policy BH16: New Housing on Highgate Road

Policy BH17: Balsall Heath Railway Station

Policy BH18: Renaturalising the River Rea

Policy BH19: New Allotments

Policy BH20: Youth Centres

5.5 Plan Format

5.5.1 Section 6 gives the full wording of the policies and proposals of this Neighbourhood Development Plan. Each policy is introduced in its context and is followed by detailed explanations and any appropriate plans. These policies give a direction of travel for development proposals and proposed means and timings of implementation are addressed in Section 7.

5.1.2 Section 6 details the planning policies proposed in this document. The text gives the full policy wording and then gives further explanation and description. Section 6 is divided into three parts: Section 6A gives the general policies applicable over the whole neighbourhood; Section 6B gives policies which, while generally applicable, have impacts in specific locations within the neighbourhood; Section 6C gives policies which relate to specific locations within the neighbourhood.

5.1.3 The Annex at the end of this document describes some detailed 'community action projects' which, while not plan policies, are illustrative of those policies and represent appropriate implementation of those policy objectives.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Section 6: Neighbourhood Development Plan – Policies and Proposals

6.1 Introduction – Building a Sustainable Community in Balsall Heath

6.1.1 The strategic objective of the Neighbourhood Development Plan is to create and maintain a sustainable community based on the Vision and Aims of the Plan laid out in sections 3.2 and 3.3. A sustainable community requires appropriate housing and employment opportunities to meet current and future needs; it also requires the social, environmental and physical infrastructure to support the people living in and using the area.

6.1.2 The Plan supports the City's housing growth aspirations and Section 2 and Appendix 3 (Housing Demand), provide the local evidence for a need for additional housing – especially affordable housing – with a suitable mix of tenures and sizes. Therefore the major substantive land allocations proposed are for housing and associated uses, including in part at the former Joseph Chamberlain College site (BH15) and at Highgate Road (BH16). There is also an area-wide policy (BH2) promoting good design principles for any other redevelopment opportunities relating to housing.

6.1.3 Section 2 also provides evidence for increasing the level of employment opportunities. However it recognised that there is little space available for large-scale employment-related development in the Plan area. Therefore the Plan places much of its reliance for job opportunities on areas nearby, especially in the City Centre, the A435 corridor and the Bordesley Park areas. The Plan also supports the growth of more local job opportunities including those provided through the regeneration of the former college site with mixed use development and smaller-scale businesses within the two local centres identified: Balsall Heath/Moseley Road and Ladypool Road (Policies BH5, BH8 and BH12, BH15).

6.1.4 The social dimension of a sustainable community is addressed by various policies, but the main focus is on strengthening the role of the local centres of Ladypool Road and Balsall Heath/Moseley Road. Especially the latter is seen as a place where the community can meet, access public and private services, communicate and enjoy themselves in pleasant surroundings (Policies BH5, BH8-10). Local parks and green spaces are seen as vital contributors to well-being, as well as providing opportunities for active leisure. A specific example of a social need is that for further Youth Centre provision; this is addressed by Policy BH20.

6.1.5 The quality of the local environment was identified as important through the public consultation processes. A range of policies address this aspect of a sustainable community, including conservation of the built and natural environment, enhancement of streets and parks and the protection of individual households from negative impacts. The Plan takes account of climate change issues and policies aim at reducing the 'carbon footprint' of the area.

6.1.6 Underlying the above requirements for a sustainable community is the need to maintain and enhance physical infrastructure. The area is well served by most forms of

infrastructure, but the Plan identifies a need for improved connectivity. The main relevant planning policies of the Plan relate to the provision of a station on the intended reopened rail line through the area (Policy BH17) and the improvement of the 'street scene' along the Moseley Road (Policy BH10 and 11) and in the Ladypool Road area (policies BH13 and 14).

6A Area-wide Policies

6A.1.1 These general policies should be seen as a giving further guidance about locational and design objectives which will apply to all proposals for change to the use and development of land in the Plan area. The figures in brackets refer to the main relevant Policy(ies) in the emerging BDP.

Policy BH1: A Sustainable Community (TP1-3, TP13, TP19, TP26-30)

The Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan will seek to maintain, develop and enhance the sustainable qualities of the area.

Proposals for the development and use of land and buildings will be supported which:

- a) **encourage** an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures, with a particular focus on the provision of affordable housing
- b) **support** the improvement of employment prospects by encouraging economic development and training opportunities in appropriate locations
- c) **support** developments which enhance the availability and accessibility of social infrastructure, especially those which promote health and well-being
- d) **encourage** high quality and well-designed residential and commercial environments incorporating appropriate green spaces
- e) **ensure** that the interests of disabled people and other minority groups are appropriately protected in accordance with the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010
- f) **encourage measures to adapt to the impacts of climate change including locating development away from areas at risk of flooding, and promotion of sustainable surface water drainage and sustainable energy use**
- g) **support** the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, including foot and cycle, and improved public transport including access to rail services
- h) **provide** access to a variety of high quality open spaces and sport and leisure opportunities
- i) **protect** and enhance bio-diversity rich areas, balancing any loss of green areas with improved quality on site or elsewhere.
- j) **Encourage measures to create and maintain surroundings that design out crime and establish safe and accessible environments.**

6A.1.2 This initial overall policy framework seeks to give direction, purpose and justification to the other policies in the Plan and conforms to the overarching principles in higher order national and local land use policies. In particular the policy seeks to promote a vision of a sustainable community in which the aspirations of the residents can be partially achieved through the continuing and appropriate development of land and buildings, balanced by the protection of community, environmental and heritage assets. A specific concern has been that space for new housing will mean that certain green areas are lost; this loss will be offset by the enhancement of other green areas, especially the local parks. The need for housing land, particularly for affordable housing units, is addressed in [Section 2.3](#).

6A.1.3 It is intended that a Schedule of Community Assets be collated by the Balsall Heath Forum and used to promote the active management of these assets by the various organisations responsible for their use and maintenance.

6A.1.4 Following on from the overarching policy framework above, a major objective is the enhancement of the two local centres within Balsall Heath, providing a suitable mix of community facilities, commercial opportunities and 'people-friendly' spaces.

Policy BH2: Design and Conservation of the Built Environment (TP12)

The NDP seeks to enhance the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Proposals for the development and use of land and buildings will be supported which:

- a) **ensure that all new built development achieves high standards of design, optimising its contribution to environmental sustainability and minimising negative impacts on neighbouring properties**
- b) **support the imaginative conservation, preservation and use of heritage assets, particularly the listed buildings in the Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Centre and along Moseley Road**
- c) **improve the physical environment and 'street scene' throughout the area, including the creation of a safe and pleasant pedestrian network**
- d) **incorporate trees and green spaces into the street scene and historic sites and frontages**
- e) **encourage under-utilised buildings and land to be brought back into appropriate use and make a positive contribution to the street scene**
- f) **positively contribute towards the regeneration of the environment and community safety. Developments should meet 'Secure by Design' standards and include measures to improve natural surveillance and create active street frontages.**

All new development proposals will be required to reflect the Urban Design Framework for Balsall Heath once prepared.

6A.1.5 All development should maximise positive contributions to reducing the carbon footprint of the city, through sustainable construction methods, climate change proofing of buildings and other measures. Development should minimise negative environmental impacts, throughout their construction and use, for neighbouring properties. The area needs improvement to the 'look and feel' of the local environment and high standards of design can help achieve this objective. An Urban Design Framework can guide new development to ensure high quality design. Resources need to be identified to enable this work to be done, with potential assistance from the City Council, developers and university students undertaking a planning or urban design course.

6A.1.6 Residents and their community organisations have made great headway in improving the 'feel' of the local area; this progress needs to be maintained and relevant public and private landowners encouraged to participate positively in this process. The City Council's interest in an emerging regeneration framework for the Moseley Road/Alcester Road (A435) corridor is noted as a potential means of achieving economic and community development and conservation objectives. Past studies have shown the potential for a 'heritage corridor' stretching from the city centre, through Digbeth, Balsall Heath and Moseley, to Kings Heath and beyond. There are numerous listed buildings and areas of conservation interest along this route and the NDP has a particular interest in using this concept to promote more economic and social development, a better environment and more 'people-friendly' spaces.

6A.1.7 There may be scope for ‘enabling development’ to make a contribution, whereby a development scheme creates the opportunity for further development and/or improvements to land and buildings. Finding alternative uses for listed buildings may also act as a catalyst to their refurbishment and regeneration. Opportunities should be taken to register appropriate buildings as ‘assets of community value’, especially where there is a conservation interest.

6A.1.8 Trees and formal and informal green spaces are important for the historic environment and can impact positively on the street scene. Developers, building owners and the managers of public spaces should be aware of this.

Green Infrastructure

Policy BH3: Environment and Open/Green Space (TP7/8/9)

The NDP recognises the importance of green space for biodiversity needs and seeks to enhance the quality of the environment and open spaces.

Proposals for the development and use of land and buildings will be supported which:

- a) improve and make best use of the environmental assets in the area, especially the parks, water courses and green spaces, while recognising that some current green space can be used more beneficially for other purposes
- b) ensure that appropriate uses and management programmes are in place for open and green spaces (including small ‘orphan’ spaces), which promote the creation and maintenance of safe and accessible environments, and reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.**
- c) ensure that appropriate uses and management programmes are in place for the many small “orphan” spaces
- d) ensure that development addresses any existing and potential issues of air, water and land pollution
- e) promote the contribution of development to a healthy neighbourhood
- f) promote where appropriate, the use of land for allotments, leisure gardens and community-based horticultural social enterprises
- g) ensure that no development imposes unacceptable environmental impacts on neighbouring people and properties.

Where wider regeneration objectives outlined in this Plan warrant the development of ‘orphan spaces’ with limited environmental or bio-diversity value, robust justification will need to accompany any planning application, if such a use requires one.

6A.1.9 It is intended that new development should be ‘eco-friendly’ and ‘health promoting’, achieving relevant high environmental standards; where funding programmes and investment opportunities allow, existing buildings should be upgraded towards these standards. The Plan also seeks to improve the quality of open spaces but proposes that some open spaces of lesser quality are used for other purposes, thereby maintaining a positive balance in favour of environmental objectives.

6A.1.10 Most of the NDP area is densely developed, offering few opportunities for wildlife and it is recognised that all green spaces (including formal parks and open spaces, informal ‘orphan’ spaces, private gardens and railway corridors) provide valuable habitat resources at the local level, even though they are not designated as nature conservation sites or priority

habitats. Where green infrastructure is retained or created as part of new development, its role in providing habitat resources is recognised and promoted alongside other uses.

6A.1.11 Some of the ‘orphan’ spaces, identified in **Section 3** and on **Map 3**, could be used for alternative purposes. A few spaces could be developed for built or hard surface uses where the spaces contribute little to the greenness of the area and where there are pressing needs for such developments. However for many ‘orphan spaces’, the opportunity to create community and green infrastructure benefits will be explored and encouraged. Biodiversity/nature conservation is recognised as an appropriate use or management programme for some ‘orphan spaces’ and such uses should not be seen as incompatible with other potential uses, such as community food growing and education. Overall the Plan intends that there will be a balance in favour of good quality green spaces.

6A.1.12 There is scope for the promotion of the development of allotments and associated cooperative food-growing enterprises on a range of ‘orphan’ and unused plots; a more substantial potential allotments site is identified in Policy BH19 in **Section 6**.

6A.1.13 The Multi-Layered Challenge map contained in the City Council’s recently adopted Green Living Spaces Plan indicates the supply of and demand for, ecosystem services across the city, and is seen as a valuable evidence base for informing decisions which impact upon green space in the NDP area.

Policy BH4: Connectivity and Movement (TP37-40, TP43)

The NDP seeks to enhance the connectivity of the area to the rest of the city and secure safe use of transport networks. Proposals for the development and use of land and buildings will be supported which:

- a) Improve accessibility by public transport**
- b) Improve driver, passenger, cyclist and pedestrian safety and convenience within the plan area.**
- c) Effectively manage traffic, congestion and parking especially in and around the local centres and other community facilities.**
- d) Take account of the specific transport needs of children, the elderly and disabled.**

6A.1.14 The public consultation process identified a number of movement-related issues which need to be addressed. The area is crossed by two major strategic highways and a railway; there is a close woven pattern of residential and commercial streets largely reflecting the standards of the Victorian era. Within this pattern is an intense variety of people and vehicle movements, all contributing to a potential for conflict. The Plan seeks to prioritise safety and connectivity. A specific demand was made for a new railway station in Balsall Heath; this is addressed by Policy BH17 in the next Section.

6A.1.15 The creation of ‘Home Zones’, as described in Para **6B.1.11** above, will contribute to safety and traffic management. A specific need is to ensure safety around the schools in the area and to this end it is suggested that the ‘Home Zones’ are created. These are described further **in the Annex to the NDP as ‘community action projects’ 4, 5 and 6** which implement the general policy objective above. Such traffic control measures will also contribute to the safety of the disabled and elderly.

6A.1.16 It is suggested that the City Council reviews the provision of pedestrian crossings in the area and new crossings are provided where they are needed. Residents have expressed a view that some crossings are ‘in the wrong place’ and that more crossings would be welcome, especially for parents taking children to and from school.

6A.1.17 The need was identified for the creation of a new cycle route through Balsall Heath, connecting with the existing Rea Valley cycle route, and running from Stoney Lane to Pershore Road. The route could follow Clifton Road and Edward Road, crossing Moseley Road on the way, and would connect with a future Balsall Heath railway station. Bicycle parking could be provided at both Moseley Road and the railway station (see annex to NDP, community action project 7).

6A.1.18 In order to improve the safety of road users and ease congestion, a review of the traffic regulations on Ladypool Road is suggested, with a view to exploring minor design changes to the road layout and on street parking. Responding to the concerns of local businesses, there is no suggestion for any restrictions on vehicular traffic through Ladypool Road, but it does aim to make traffic more compatible with comfortable and safe movement by pedestrians and cyclists, and to reduce the congestion caused by illegal car parking.

6A.1.19 Whilst numerous schemes have been delivered to aid and address parking and traffic issues on Ladypool Road, congestion and pedestrian and cyclist safety concerns remain. The BHF will work in partnership with the City Council to identify locations where pinch points and obstacles to the ease of traffic flow can be modified, developing suitable and deliverable solutions and strategies. These identified improvements should be taken forward in consultation with local traders and the City Council.

6A.1.20 It is also suggested that a new car park be provide off Ladypool Road adjacent to the junction with Highgate Road (see annex to NDP, community action project 10). The BID process (and consultations carried out for this Plan) has identified a need for more car parking space in the area; it is suggested that extra parking spaces are funded and maintained through the BID process. The frontage of Sparkgreen Park on Stoney Lane could be improved, enhancing the safety of park users and visual quality. Both sites are currently open space, but both are unkempt areas which contribute little to the greenness of the area.

6B General Policies with impacts on specific locations

6B.1.1 Some general policies proposed here will have impacts on specific parts of the area. Some of these general policies are followed through as further policies in 'Place Specific Policies and Proposals' in Sub-Section 6C; others are illustrated through 'community action projects' in the annex to the NDP.

Policy BH5: Community Infrastructure and Shopping and Local Centres (TP20-23, TP36, TP44)

The NDP seeks to maintain and enhance community and physical infrastructure throughout the Plan area, but in particular improving the vitality and viability of the local centres (Moseley Road and Ladypool Road) as defined in policy BH8 and BH12 and the proposals map. This will be achieved through:

- a) the strengthening of the retail, office and entertainment roles of the Moseley Road local centre with a focus on neighbourhood scale community facilities.
- b) supporting the continued development and improvement of the Ladypool Road centre, as part of the 'Balti Triangle', in conjunction with the Sparkbrook and Springfield Town Centre Partnership (with a more flexible approach to business uses as recognised in the Shopping and Local Centres SPD)
- c) encouraging the development of further community facilities to ensure that an appropriate array of health, policing, education, sporting, leisure and other related uses is available to the local residents

Outside of the above centres, retail and restaurant/takeaway activity will only be supported where the policy tests within the NPPF and the BDP are satisfied.

6B.1.2 The area is in need of further investment in community facilities and the Plan sees the strengthening of the local centres within the area – defined in the Shopping and Local Centres SPD – as the main means of further enhancing community cohesion and the provision of local jobs. The boundaries of the two centres are illustrated in **Maps 4 and 5** below. The Moseley Road centre is seen as a focus of community facilities, consolidating the ‘civic centre’ of the Plan area. The jobs potential of the ‘Balti Triangle’ is also recognised, catering for the needs of potential visitors to the area who are attracted by its ‘offer’ (mainly the food, clothing and jewellery outlets). The policy seeks to meet the changing demands for services, both commercial and social, from the local population. The various public and voluntary bodies will be encouraged to fulfil the potential for community uses, while the private sector will be encouraged to provide appropriate and supporting commercial activities.

6B.1.3 More detailed policies and proposals for these two local centres can be found in Section **6C**.

6B.1.4 For the Ladypool Road area, implementation of some proposals can be sought through the mechanisms of the Business Improvement District as well as any activity of the City Council. Note has been taken of the recent changes in Permitted Development rights for businesses – including the greater flexibility for small-scale development found in the temporary rule changes of May 2013 – and the contribution this might make to the functioning of the area.

Policy BH6: Parks (TP7-11)

The Plan **proposes** that for each of the formal parks in the plan area a programme of improvements should be **prepared** to enhance the environmental benefits and community use of these assets, including:

- (a) the boundaries and entrances should be enclosed by good quality and distinctive boundaries, for example ornamental steel railings, with substantial and clearly-visible gateways in appropriate locations
- (b) opportunities should be taken to facilitate the functional integration of the parks with nearby schools
- (c) opportunities should be taken to improve facilities in the parks, for example, of sporting and leisure activities, but also for the provision of green infrastructure.

These programmes of improvements will be implemented in association with the grant of planning permission for development proposals which depend on the parks for provision of public open space and recreation facilities.

Development proposals to extend uses related to Edgbaston Cricket Ground which adversely affect Calthorpe Park will be resisted.

6B.1.5 There are seven substantial public parks within the Plan area, all of which are well used and valued by the community. However, their quality is moderate at best and they all require and deserve investment, improvement and appropriate management. Most of the parks have inadequately defined boundaries and understated entrances, which results in them lacking identity and sense of place. The improvement of the parks would be a major element for the offsetting of the loss of some open spaces elsewhere for built development.

The Plan sets out the community's aspirations for the improvement of these parks in the form of 'community action projects 1, 2 and 3' in the annex to the Plan.

6B.1.6 Much of the programme of enhancement can be achieved through the normal processes for parks maintenance and improvement. However local schemes for substantial improvement should be encouraged, whereby local voluntary bodies could become involved.

6B.1.7 Calthorpe Park is a large, historic and well-established park and has a well-used play centre. The Plan has a proposal (policy BH18 in Section 5) for the renaturalising of the river in Park; reference should also be made to community action project 12 in the annex to the NDP. While locating further recreational facilities in the park would be desirable and acceptable, there are no specific development proposals in the Plan. There is conflict when the Park is used for car parking associated with Test Matches at the nearby Cricket Ground; this is an issue for management of the Park, but any development proposal, requiring planning permission, to extend uses related to the Cricket Ground will be resisted.

6B.1.8 The "Redgra" pitch in Balsall Heath Road is an important existing community resource, but is in need of improvement, security and good management.

6B.1.9 It is noted that a plan was drawn up in 2006 by the Friends of Balsall Heath Park, following the destruction caused by the 2005 tornado (see annex to NDP). The public consultation process showed that there is still local support for the implementation of this plan. The two most significant parts of this plan are the proposed community building near the Taunton Road boundary, and the new square at the corner of Taunton Road and Ladypool Road. The design of this square should be coordinated with the redesign of the crossroads to improve its safety, and will form a significant local landmark at the southern end of the Ladypool Road neighbourhood centre.

6B.1.10 Five of the parks are adjacent to or near to primary schools and in these cases projects to facilitate the physical connections between the schools and the parks could be pursued. In addition, the possibility of the schools taking on some degree of responsibility for the management of the park will be the subject of further discussions with the City Council and School Governors. In particular the Nelson Mandela School has expressed interest in a proposal that, during school hours, part of the Sparkgreen Park adjacent to the school would be used exclusively by the school while outside school hours it would revert to public use (see community action project 3 in the annex to the NDP).

6B.1.11 It is suggested that the links between schools/children's centre and their nearby parks could be enhanced by the designation of the intervening streets as 'Home Zones'. In the annex to the NDP, a list of three potential 'Home Zones' is made: Tindal Street School and George Street Park (community action project 4), Clifton Road Children's Centre and Severn Streets Park (community action project 5) and Clifton School and Pickwick Park. (community action project 6)

Policy BH7: Marking Significant Places and Spaces

Development opportunities at entrance points and key focal points in the plan area will be expected through their architectural design, materials, lighting and proposals for public art to mark out and enhance Balsall Heath’s ‘gateways’, promoting a sense of place and local distinctiveness.

6B.1.12 Many of the Neighbourhood Development Plan proposals, apart from any other benefits they bring, will add to the distinctive identity of Balsall Heath. But in addition, there are several places that act as key entrances to the area or parts of the area, and it is proposed that these locations should be deliberately and prominently marked. This might be done not only by a sign that says *Welcome to Balsall Heath*, but more substantially by architecture, public art, lighting, signage, or a combination of these. **The annex to the Plan contains** a list of seven proposed locations and an indication of the potential type of ‘area marker’; the locations are indicated on **Map 7**.

6C Place Specific Policies and Proposals

6C.1.1 This part of the Section focuses on place-specific land-use and development policies and proposals. The proposals are intended to reinvigorate Balsall Heath as a good place in which to live and work – a sustainable neighbourhood. The Plan looks to the future with proposals which will promote new housing, new businesses, new community services, improved connectivity and an enhanced environment.

6C.1.2 The policies and proposals are set out in the following order:

- policies for the two neighbourhood centres and associated locations – **Balsall Heath** (Moseley Road/‘Old’ Moseley Road) and **Ladypool Road/Stoney Lane**; [**policies BH8-14**]
- land allocations for the two larger available development sites – the **Ex-Joseph Chamberlain College** site and the **Highgate Road** site [**policies BH15-16**]
- other proposals: **Balsall Heath Railway station, the River Rea and Youth Provision** [**policies BH17-20**]

6C.1.3 Each group of policies has an introductory statement followed by relevant policies and proposals; these are expressed as written policy statements, which are numbered sequentially and are in bold type; these are then followed by brief written explanatory texts. Some of the policies/proposals are accompanied by illustrative and indicative sketches of how the place could look in the future when the proposals are implemented.

6C.1.4 **The main NDP Proposals Map** indicates the locations of the more substantial place-specific proposals which seek to achieve the objectives of the Neighbourhood Development Plan; many of the following Sub-sections of the written document refer to a location indicated on this map.

6C.1.5 The BHMPF has been careful to identify those proposals which are appropriate for formal policies within the definitions of the Planning Acts and Regulations. Some of the proposals which follow from these policies – and which have received enthusiastic support at the public consultation events – are not appropriate as formal planning policies, but are included as ‘Projects’, which are listed **in the annex to the Plan**.

6C.1.6 The proposals described below are the result of the proactive seeking out of ideas and opinions from the community – as recorded in the accompanying Consultation Statement. The proposals reflect the desire of local people to create a better physical environment, enhanced social cohesion and more local job prospects. The achievement of these development aspirations will be a substantial move towards satisfying the needs and desires of the local people and attaining a sustainable neighbourhood.

Codes	Place Specific policies
BH8	Land-use within the Neighbourhood centre
BH9	Historic Buildings and Design Standards
BH10	Street Quality and a “Town Square
BH11	Improving the ‘street scene’ in ‘old’ Moseley Road
BH12	Land-uses within the Ladypool Road centre
BH13	Improving the ‘street scene’ in Ladypool Road
BH14	Improving the ‘street scene’ in Stoney Lane
BH15	Regeneration of the former college site
BH16	New Housing on Highgate Road
BH17	Balsall Heath Railway Station
BH18	Renaturalising the River Rea
BH19	New Allotments
BH20	Youth Centres

(Refer to Main NDP Proposals Map and Annex to NDP ‘Community Action Projects’ at the end of the document)

6C.2 Balsall Heath (Moseley Road) Neighbourhood Centre

6C.2.1 Moseley Road is where Balsall Heath first began and is a place where the various sub-communities of Balsall Heath can come together. It is the location of a number of significant institutional buildings, some of them of historic importance, which already provide a focus for the community as a whole. Several of the major buildings are in a critical state of disrepair, the road is traffic-dominated, and currently the main road divides Balsall Heath instead of being its centre. The NDP proposes that improvements be made that will strengthen the role of Moseley Road, between Brighton Road/Cromer Road and Vincent Street, as the local centre of Balsall Heath, uniting the area which the road currently divides. The important role of Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Centre is recognised in the draft Birmingham Development Plan and the Shopping and Local Centres SPD; the boundaries of the centre are **shown in the main proposals map**. The development of the City Council's heritage corridor will strengthen the role of the Neighbourhood Centre.

Policy BH8: Land-Uses within the Balsall Heath Centre

Within the Primary Shopping Area of Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Centre (as identified on the proposals map), 50% of all ground units should be retained in retail (A1) use. In order to avoid an over concentration of hot food takeaways (A5), no more than 10% of units within the centre, or frontages, shall consist of hot food takeaways. Applications for restaurants and cafes (A3), drink establishments (A4) and hot food takeaways (A5) will only be permitted provided that an over concentration and clustering of such uses is avoided. Elsewhere in the neighbourhood centre, a broader mix of uses will be supported, including live/work units, institutions and community facilities, where there is no detrimental impact on nearby residents.

6C.2.2 The Shopping and Local Centres SPD (2012) examined the viability of all the city's local centres and established appropriate percentages for various activities, to maintain the primary retail function of centres and prevent an over concentration of non retail uses. These are reflected in this Plan in order to achieve a balance of different uses.

6C.2.3 Monitoring of the Shopping and Local Centres SPD in 2014, shows that within the Primary Shopping Area, the number A1 retail uses are currently at the threshold level and at above the threshold level for A5 Hot food takeaways.

6C.2.4 The Plan seeks to encourage the development of the Moseley Road centre as a place which is recognised as the focal point of the neighbourhood, with a vibrant mix of uses and an appropriate range of community and commercial services. The Plan seeks to maintain and strengthen the array of public and voluntary services, such as the Library, the Public Baths, Police Station and the Health Centre together with faith buildings and education/training opportunities; the locating of further services, and the development of existing services, will be supported. It also supports the growth of business and job opportunities through commercial development; in particular initiatives by independent businesses and retailers will be encouraged.

6C.2.5 In order to assist in developing and protecting the 'community focus' of this centre, use should be made of the legislation enabling the registering of 'assets of community value', thus offering the potential for retaining such assets.

Policy BH9: Historic Buildings and Design Standards in Balsall Heath Centre

The Grade 2 and Locally Listed buildings, others with architectural merit and those structures which form the setting of these buildings, will be given priority in protection. Physical enhancement of, and appropriate new uses for, these buildings will be encouraged. New buildings throughout the centre will be designed to high standards (including energy, low carbon and climate change standards) and should respect the characteristics of the historic buildings.

6C.2.6 There are no Grade 1 listed buildings in Balsall Heath, but the historic buildings on Moseley Road – one of which is Grade 2 listed and two others are ‘locally listed’ – are assets which are presently not flourishing, or contributing to the area as they should; they are ‘buildings at risk’. These buildings, and their settings, should be prioritised for protection and enhancement and legislation used where appropriate to require owners to maintain their buildings.

6C.2.7 Opportunities should be sought to find funding to improve this ‘Heritage Corridor’ (as a recognised local priority) and the fabric of the buildings, leading to more beneficial usage. Use should be made, where appropriate, of the mechanisms to register ‘assets of community value’. Sources of finance, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and CIL, should be sought to enable a programme of conservation.

6C.2.8 New development should be designed to enhance the qualities of the historic buildings, creating improved coherence in the frontages and better sustainability, while still observing high standards of construction and climate change proofing – such as BREAM levels 4-6.

Policy BH10: Street Scene and a “Town Square”

A comprehensive scheme will be drawn up by the City Council and local partners to improve the quality of the public realm and street scene of Moseley Road, as part of the City Council’s A435 regeneration and heritage corridor programmes. Development proposals along Moseley Road will be expected to be designed in accordance with the scheme to assist in delivering its objectives and in accordance with the Balsall Heath Urban Design Framework once prepared (See policy BH2).

6C.2.9 This programme of street scene improvements may include the redesign of the ground surface, improvements to building frontages, signage, tree planting, lighting, pedestrian crossings, street furniture and removal of clutter. The promotion of public transport, pedestrian and cycle movement will create the opportunity to reduce car dependency. The programme should include the creation of a new “Town Square” for Balsall Heath at the junction of Moseley Road and Haden Way. New development should be required to contribute towards the preparation of this scheme through appropriate s106/CIL contributions. The “Town Square” proposal could also include the reconfiguration of vehicle routes, the creation of a new pedestrian area and, with the cooperation of landowners, the possible development of a new landmark building on the north side of the square, between Moseley Road and Haden Way (discussions are continuing with the landowners). A sympathetic refurbishment and possible new use of the Baths/Library buildings will also contribute to the enhancement of the ‘square’. Reference should be made to **community action project 8 in the annex to the NDP**.

Fig 1A: Balsall Heath 'Town Square': illustrative



Fig 1 B: Balsall Heath 'Town Square': illustrative plan



6C.3 “Old” Moseley Road

6C.3.1 The NDP area also includes that part of Moseley Road which stretches northwards from the local centre and which has been bypassed by Haden Way. It runs from the junction with Haden Way, where the new “town square” is proposed, to the junction with Highgate Road. The environment here has become run down and degraded, although it contains several buildings of character – albeit some under- and un-used. It is recognised that the southernmost parts of the road are used intensively for parking (‘stop and shop’) while using the shops and other premises around the proposed square. The traders in this area are keen that proposals do not detract from the availability of short-stay on-street parking to the north of the proposed square.

Policy BH11: Improving the ‘Old’ Moseley Road

The NDP seeks environmental and highway improvements incorporating appropriate parking areas for Old Moseley Road between Haden Way and Highgate Road. These improvements will include planting, lighting, paving and street furniture.

Encouragement will also be given to landowners to improve buildings in a poor state of repair and to bring underutilised sites forward for development, as well as relocating unsuitable land uses. A diverse range of land uses are appropriate along

Old Moseley Road, including commercial, associated live/work units, industrial and community uses.

Development and refurbishment proposals along 'Old Moseley Road' will be expected to be designed in a way that assists in delivering environmental and highway improvements and in accordance with the Balsall Heath Urban Design Framework once prepared (See policy BH2).

6C.3.2 It is proposed that a Design Code – as part of the Urban Design Framework proposed in Policy BH2 – is prepared to give guidance on the design of new buildings and shopfronts. Such a Code will encourage the development of a coherent visual impact, reflecting improvements to the public realm.

6C.3.3 Proposals to develop nos. 332-340 Moseley Road for workspaces, associated residential and community provision are currently being considered. This development can be used as a catalyst to encourage other regeneration projects to happen nearby in accordance with the NDP and the City Council's Moseley Road Corridor proposals. Reference should be made to **community action project 9 in the annex to the NDP**.

6C.4 Ladypool Road Neighbourhood Centre

6C.4.1 Ladypool Road is the second neighbourhood centre in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and while busy and without many empty shop units, it is also a place of confusion and congestion. The special role of Ladypool Road Neighbourhood Centre is recognised in the draft Birmingham Development Plan and the Shopping and Local Centres SPD; the boundaries of the centre are illustrated in **the main proposals map**. The NDP proposes to increase its appeal and identity and to reduce its traffic and visual problems, while protecting its prosperity and contribution to job creation. The Business Improvement District (BID) status of much of the area should be used to promote these policies and BID finances used to implement appropriate elements of the Plan.

Policy BH12: Land-Uses within the Ladypool Road Centre

Within the Primary Shopping Area of Ladypool Road Neighbourhood Centre (as identified in the main proposals map and the Shopping and Local Centres SPD) 50% of all ground units should be retained in retail (A1) use. In order to avoid an over concentration of hot food takeaways (A5), no more than 10% of units within the centre, or frontages, shall consist of hot food takeaways. Applications for restaurants and cafes (A3), drink establishments (A4) and hot food takeaways (A5) will only be permitted provided that an over concentration and clustering of such uses is avoided. Elsewhere in the neighbourhood centre, a broader mix of uses will be supported, including live/work units, educational and training establishments, institutions and community facilities, where there is no detrimental impact on nearby residents. Some exceptions to this policy may be permitted given its location within the Balti Triangle; however each application will be determined on its own individual merits.

6C.4.2 The Plan seeks to encourage the development of the Ladypool Road centre as a place which is recognised as a focal point within the neighbourhood. A vibrant mix of uses is envisaged with an array of cafes, restaurants, takeaways, shops, commercial services and offices. An appropriate range of local community services, including faith buildings and education/training opportunities, can be accommodated, but the main neighbourhood focus for such services will be Moseley Road. The Plan also supports the growth of business and

job opportunities through commercial development; in particular, initiatives by independent businesses and retailers will be encouraged.

6C.4.3 Monitoring of the Shopping and Local Centres SPD in 2014 shows that within the Primary Shopping Area, the number A1 retail uses are currently well above the threshold level and below the threshold level for A5 Hot food takeaways.

Fig 2: Ladypool Road improvements: illustrative plans



Policy BH13: The Street Scene in Ladypool Road

The NDP seeks environmental and highway improvements incorporating appropriate shopper and resident parking areas for Ladypool Road. These improvements will include planting, lighting, paving and street furniture. Encouragement will also be given to landowners to improve buildings and land in a poor state of repair.

Development and refurbishment proposals along Ladypool Road will be expected to be designed in a way that assists in delivering environmental and highway improvements and in accordance with the Balsall Heath Urban Design Framework once prepared (See policy BH2).

6C.4.3 Opportunities will be sought for funding for environmental improvements to Ladypool Road, such as paving, signage and street furniture. New tree planting is proposed in each of the new squares, but it is not thought that trees can be accommodated in the road itself because of its restricted width. A new 'square' could be created at the northern end of Ladypool Road at the junction with Highgate Road as part of the development of the Highgate Road site (see Sub-Section 5.7) The development and refurbishment of buildings and shopfronts should take into account the Urban Design Framework (see policy BH2).

6C.4.4 There is potential for the creation of extra car parking spaces at the northern and southern ends of the Ladypool Road centre. These car parks will be welcomed by the businesses and residents of the area. (See community action project 10 in the annex to the NDP)

6C.5 Stoney Lane

6C.5.1 The issues for Stoney Lane are similar to those for the nearby Ladypool Road, but they are different in that Stoney Lane has fewer shops and restaurants, and has a greater amount of through traffic from outside the area; it is also a bus route. The Plan proposes that there can be a series of improvements which can improve Stoney Lane's quality, comfort, safety and convenience. Some of the area is covered by the BID and this status should be used to promote and implement appropriate elements of the Plan.

Policy BH14: The Street Scene in Stoney Lane

The NDP seeks environmental and highway improvements incorporating appropriate shopper and resident parking areas for Stoney Lane. These improvements will include planting, lighting, paving and street furniture. Encouragement will also be given to landowners to improve buildings and land in a poor state of repair.

Development and refurbishment proposals along Stoney Lane will be expected to be designed in a way that assists in delivering environmental and highway improvements and in accordance with the Balsall Heath Urban Design Framework once prepared (See policy BH2).

6C.5.2 Opportunities should be sought for funding for environmental improvements to Stoney Lane, such as paving, lighting, signage and street furniture. Consideration can be given to new tree planting where there is space to accommodate it. These proposals could

be funded through new development in the area; its maintenance and management could be part of the BID process or a local community development initiative. The design of new buildings and shopfronts should observe the guidance of the proposed Urban Design Framework (see policy BH2), in order to bring more visual coherence to the appearance of Stoney Lane.

6C.5.3 Opportunities should be taken for improvement of traffic management measures, including the enhanced provision of car parks for shoppers and residents. There are considerable numbers of residents living on either side of Stoney Lane without car parking spaces close to their houses; changed parking restrictions will improve the lives of residents. These changes should be organised in such a way as to minimise any increased traffic seeking to avoid the congestion on Ladypool Road and Stoney Lane; these changes should also avoid losing highway capacity.

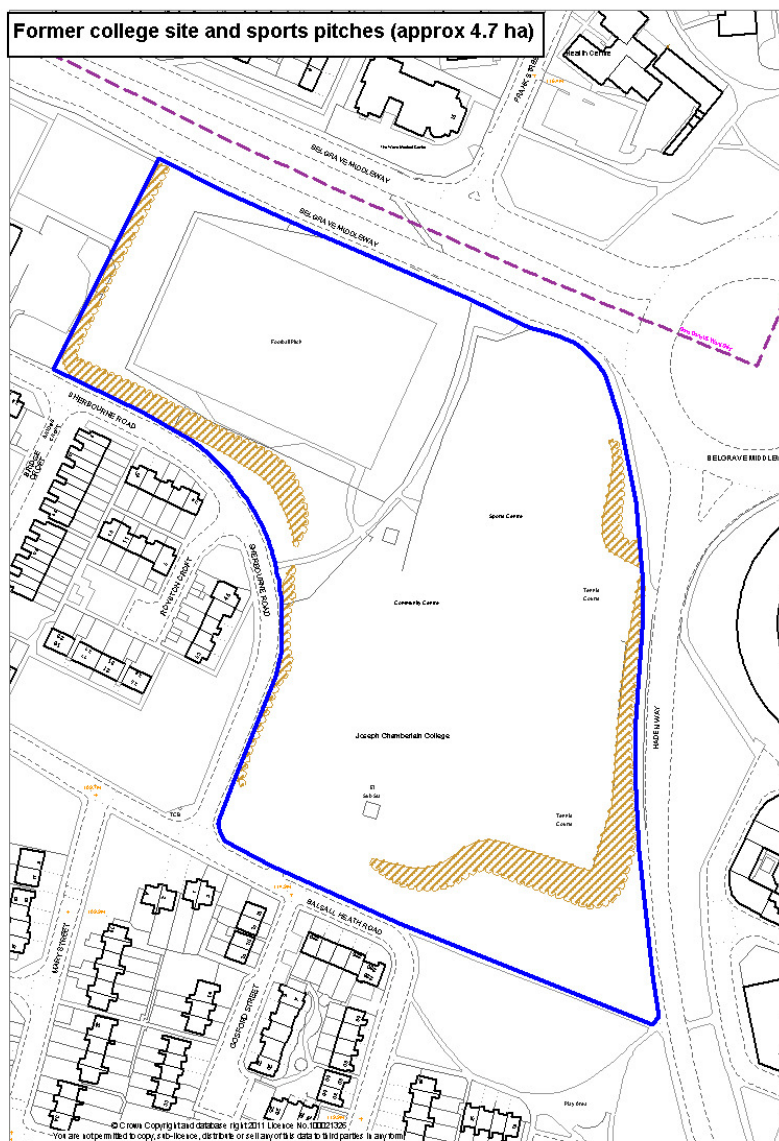
6C.6 Ex-Joseph Chamberlain College site

6C.6.1 This currently cleared piece of land is the biggest opportunity for new development in Balsall Heath – the full site is depicted on Map 6 below. It has an existing planning permission for 25,000 square metres of non-food retail development, granted in 2006 and renewed in 2011. **Although pre-commencement conditions have been discharged and material operations to secure the consent have been carried out, construction has not taken place.**

6C.6.2 Supporting the NDP's thrust for positive change, and at the same time offering development potential to the owner, a mix of uses, including residential and convenience retail, would be acceptable. **However if convenience retail is part of the mix of uses proposed for the former college site proposals must be subject to the results of a sequential test and, if retail floorspace is to exceed 2500m², subject to the results of a retail impact test on Moseley Road as required by the NPPF.**

6C.6.3 Given the site's 'gateway' location and the regeneration benefits to the A435 corridor, a mixed use scheme, with a high level of design quality, for this site will be supported. To improve viability, a hotel and/or education facility may also be acceptable on this site.

Map 4: Site of the former Joseph Chamberlain College



Policy BH 15: Regeneration of the former College Site

In accordance with the overall regeneration objectives of this NDP, a mixed use development of this site, including housing and related green areas, **will** be supported. Hotel, retail, education and leisure uses may be appropriate, provided the design and layout acknowledges its prominence and importance and the contribution the site can make to meeting housing needs.

6C.6.4 A Development Brief should be prepared to include the appropriate land uses, where they are to be placed on the site, building heights, vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation, public spaces, the quality of design, and materials. A preferred option for this approx 4.7ha site is for residential development on Sherbourne Road and Balsall Heath Road, facing the existing houses, while on the main roads of Belgrave Middleway and

Haden Way, there could be non-residential development of a bigger scale, appropriate to the importance of these roads. Depending upon the mix of uses, a substantial number of dwellings could be accommodated on this site. Consideration should be given to exploiting the extensive views of the city centre available from the site, and to an appropriate form of architecture as a neighbour to the new Joseph Chamberlain College across Haden Way.

6C.7 Highgate Road

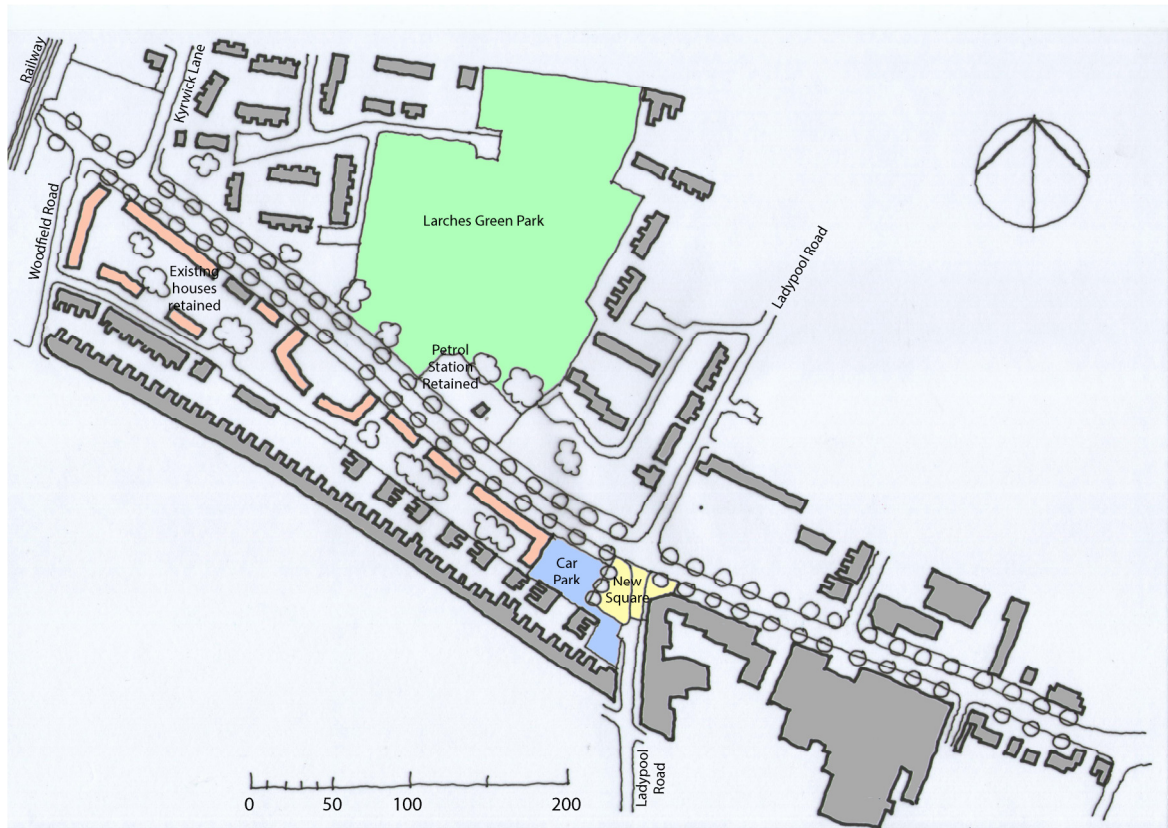
6C.7.1 Between the railway bridge and Ladypool Road, Highgate Road passes through green spaces which resulted from housing clearance a long time ago. These spaces are pleasant scenery and have some bio-diversity interest, but they are not used in any substantial beneficial way. As part of the Strategic Road Network, Highgate Road has a highway improvement line on it, also of long standing. As part of the plan-making process associated with this NDP, the City Council has revised its proposals for this road, making more land available for other purposes.

Policy BH16: New Housing on Highgate Road

The NDP proposes that the vacant land (approximately 2.6ha) to the south of Highgate Road is developed for residential and associated purposes. A development brief will be prepared to guide the development of the land, retaining improved green space and respecting the highway improvement line and the role of the road as part of the Strategic Highway Network, but at the same time becoming an attractive place to live.

6C.7.2 This site can accommodate around 100 new dwellings, while retaining green spaces (but significantly improving their quality) and with suitable protection from traffic noise on the 'new' Highgate Road. It could take the form of 'boulevard-style' development, interspersed with small areas of retained greenery. *The development could be mirrored by similar development on the other side of the road, although this land is outside the Plan area and does not form part of the Plan proposals.*

Fig 3A: Highgate Road Development Site: illustrative plan



6C.7.3 The junction with Ladypool Road is proposed as a significant landmark location, marking the entrance into the neighbourhood centre. It could be marked by the local square previously mentioned in the proposals for Ladypool Road and Highgate Road (see policy BH13 and **annex to NDP**). A small car park, as part of the proposed Highgate Road development, could be created at this point to assist with traffic management. These two elements can be delivered as one scheme at the same time.

Fig 3B: Highgate Road housing site: illustrative cross section



6C.8 Rail Connectivity

6C.8.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan advocates that a programme of transport and street improvements be developed which will enhance the accessibility, attractiveness and environment in Balsall Heath. Several suggestions are made for highway and street scene improvements in [the annex to the NDP](#).

6C.8.2 Longstanding proposals by Centro are taken into account to reinstate part of the Camp Hill Train line through South Birmingham with new stations proposed at Hazelwell, Moseley and Kings Heath to Moor Street Station. It is an aim of the NDP to promote a further station along the line at Balsall Heath which would greatly benefit the local community and improve public transport connections.

Policy BH17: Balsall Heath Railway Station

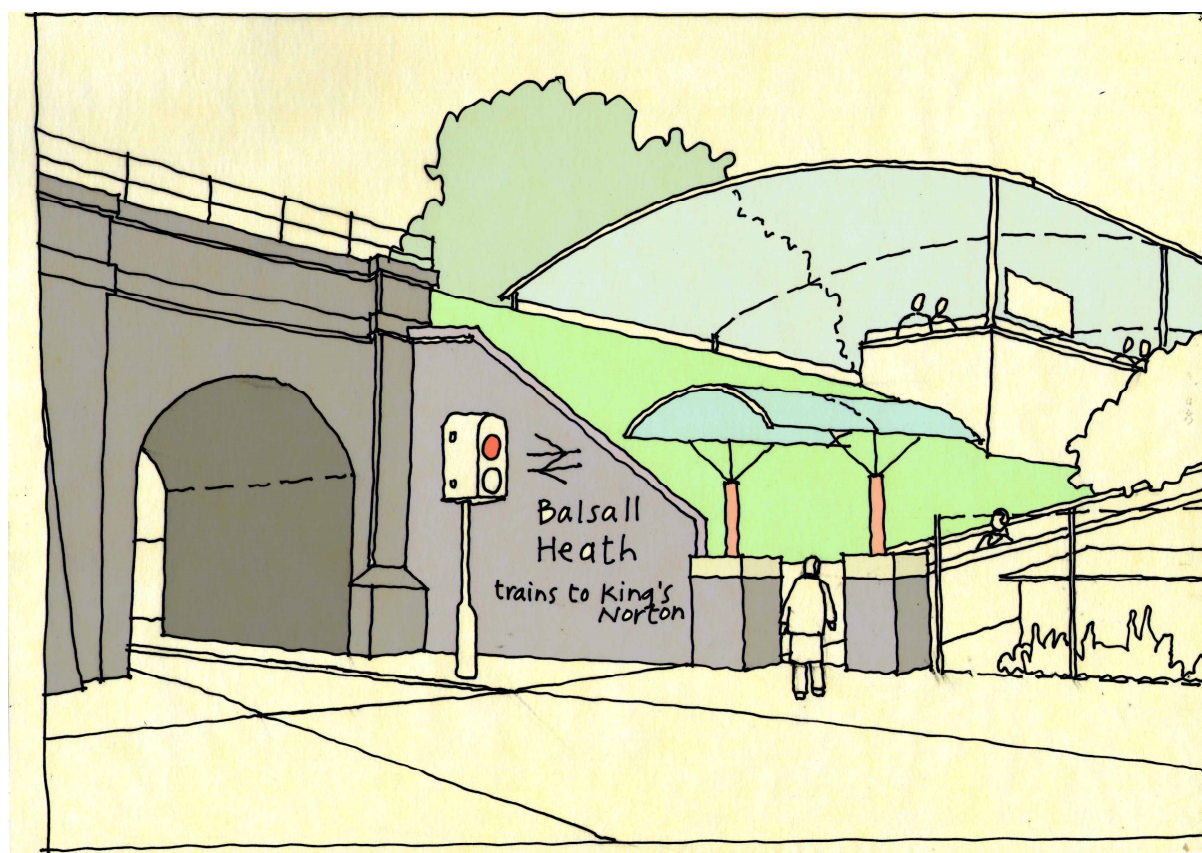
The Neighbourhood Development Plan proposes that, in consultation with Centro, Network Rail and the City Council, a new Balsall Heath station **will be investigated**, so that local residents can take advantage of the proposed new rail service.

The NDP proposes that the new station **should** be central to the neighbourhood, located between Clifton Road and St Paul's Road, with convenient pedestrian access from all the Seven Streets.

6C.8.3 The public consultation process saw strong support for a railway station to serve the Balsall Heath community; this was seen as a major step in improving the connectivity of the area to the rest of the city, especially the city centre, and in encouraging the use of public transport and reducing the carbon footprint.

6C.8.4 It is noted that the Local Transport Plan does not envisage a station in Balsall Heath, but this Plan seeks to promote and accommodate a new station, in anticipation of significant future demand and usage. The precise location of the station is subject to further discussion, but the clear wish of local people was for a location close to the Moseley Road neighbourhood centre. Reference should be **made to community action project 11 in the annex to the NDP.**

Fig 4: Balsall Heath Railway Station: illustrative perspective



6C.9 River Rea

6C.9.1 The river, which flows through the Plan area between Edgbaston cricket ground and Belgrave Middleway in a storm culvert, has the potential to become an attractive and enjoyable resource. However at present it is inaccessible and largely invisible, enclosed within brick walls and fenced off. Aspirational proposals here seek to make this space available and attractive to residents. Discussions with the Environment Agency have confirmed 'in principle' support.

Policy BH18: Renaturalising the River Rea

The Plan proposes that, with the agreement and cooperation of the Environment Agency and the City Council, a series of improvements are identified to improve the profile, **setting, use and biodiversity value of the River Rea** within the Plan area.

6C.9.2 Opportunities will be taken to widen the river where appropriate; the present brick culvert walls should be removed where possible and the banks landscaped to enable appropriate public access. It is suggested that a pool could be created in Calthorpe Park, avoiding any impingement on the recreational playing areas.

6C.9.3 Because of the considerable change in level of the river which follows rainfall, there are critical technical issues to be considered in these proposals. The possibilities of using the flow of water to generate renewable energy should be investigated. Reference should be made to **community action project 12 in the annex to the NDP**.

Fig 5: River Rea naturalisation: illustrative cross-section



Policy BH19: New Allotments

It is proposed that the area of land between the River Rea and Clevedon Road/Longmore Street be considered for allotment use for local people through a food growing co-operative or community forum.

6C.9.4 There is an area of grassed land which is 'left over' and unproductive. It is joined to Calthorpe Park but is not part of the park and could easily be converted to allotments. The site offers potential for biodiversity in the area but its use by a community enterprise food-growing cooperative, managed by the Balsall Heath Forum, could also support and achieve both objectives and incorporate the renaturalisation of the River Rea at this location. Such a scheme could be linked to the actions of the Forum and other partners in promoting the development of allotments and associated cooperative enterprises on a range of 'orphan' and unused plots (**see also community action project 13 in the annex to the NDP**).

6C.10 Youth Provision

6C.10.1 Consultations with local people and interested organisations indicate that Balsall Heath is short of social facilities provided specifically for young people. There is a Council-run youth centre in Sparkbrook, but in Balsall Heath there is a good centre in Calthorpe Park, some faith-based groups, and not much else. There is a problem with disengaged youth, particularly in the eastern half of Balsall Heath, and we need to have more and varied facilities to provide activities for them.

Policy BH20: Youth Centres

It is proposed that, in consultation with the City Council and other interested organisations, new youth centres should be identified to accommodate youth activities in or near to the Moseley Road local centre and to Ladypool Road local centre.

6C.10.2 The new centre for the Ladypool Road area should be part of the proposed Balsall Heath Park improvements (see [annex to NDP](#)). The location of the Moseley Road centre can be determined as part of the proposal for the improvement of Moseley Road; the former Sure Start building in St Paul's Road could also be a possible location. Discussions are continuing with the City Council's Youth Service, with a view to a community-based organisation pursuing this initiative.

Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Section 7: Delivering the Plan

7.1 Implementation through a Delivery Vehicle

7.1.1 This draft Neighbourhood Development Plan is an exciting vision for the future of a sustainable neighbourhood in Balsall Heath. The NDP is truly reflective of the views of the whole community and will be of great potential benefit to Balsall Heath, its residents and traders and its partners in the provision in community services. The key question is how to turn these policies into actions which realise that potential.

7.1.2 Once the Neighbourhood Plan has been 'made' by Birmingham City Council the Council will determine all planning applications and other proposals in the light of policies set out in the plan. Applicants for planning permission will be expected to demonstrate in their applications how proposals conform to the neighbourhood plan policies.

7.1.3 In addition to implementation through development management, the Balsall Heath Forum is a long-standing and permanent community organisation representing the neighbourhood who will actively promote the delivery of the plan. Working with the City Council and other partners in the Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership (NSP – see Sub-Section 1.4) will help monitor the implementation of the Plan, its policies and projects. The Forum aims to use the NSP as a major vehicle for the Plan's implementation.

7.2 Finance

7.2.1 The Forum and its NSP are also one of the ten national Neighbourhood Budgeting Pilots, which are designed to see how to use existing statutory revenue funds more cost effectively by creating a pooled neighbourhood budget from savings made by preventative work. This budget is expected to eventually total several million pounds.

7.2.2 One of the objectives of Neighbourhood Budgeting is to allow local people to influence the direction of spending of statutory partners. Translating current revenue expenditure budgets into support for some of projects mentioned in this Plan will be challenging, but once in place, the Forum and NSP can use a part of these monies to attract inward investment and therefore assist in the implementation of the Plan.

7.2.3 Many of the proposals in the NDP will be implemented by statutory bodies using their own mainstream financing mechanisms; the Plan will focus the attention of these bodies on the needs of the area and will be a catalyst towards the implementation of proposals. In particular the investment programmes of Birmingham City Council will be crucial to implementation and the Plan will provide a basis and guidance for decision-making. Furthermore local Housing Associations have been actively involved in the preparation of this Plan and have indicated preparedness to invest in many of the housing proposals. The business community has indicated throughout the consultation process that it can make its contribution towards implementation of plan proposals, especially through the Business Improvement District process in the eastern part of the area, but also potentially through commercial investment opportunities in the Moseley Road local centre. The area is fortunate in having several voluntary sector economic development and training organisations; these bodies sit on the NSP and are prepared to assist in the implementation of many policies and proposals aimed at job creation and training. The Forum/NSP will also

be looking to local residents, businesses and developers to take up smaller-scale development opportunities throughout the area.

7.2.4 Funding for projects may also be available through s106 Agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The precise mechanisms for this are still unclear, but the national Government has stated that it expects appropriate shares of such monies to be spent locally. Government policy also dictates that, where a NDP exists, 25% of relevant CIL receipts should be spent in the locality. Further consultations will need to place with the District Committee to determine CIL priorities.

7.2.5 There follows a schedule of suggested priorities for CIL-based expenditure (Infrastructure Delivery Plan):

1. Expenditure contributing towards the creation of the 'Town Square' in Balsall Heath local centre (Policies BH3 and BH10 and **Project 8 in annex to NDP**)
2. Assistance for the conservation and development of the heritage assets in the Balsall Heath local centre (Policies BH3 and BH9)
3. Funding for the 'street scene' improvements in Ladypool Road local centre (Policies BH3, BH13 and BH14)
4. Contributing to the improvements to the parks in the area and the creation of various 'Home Zones' (Policies BH5 and BH6 and **Projects 1-6 in annex to NDP**)
5. Along with any Cycle City Ambition Grant, helping the creation of the cycle route (Policy BH6 and Project 7)
6. In the longer term, assistance with the renaturalisation of the River Rea (Policy BH18 and Project 11 in **annex to NDP**).

7.3 Short Term Actions

7.3.1 Once the plan is formally approved, the Forum and NSP aim to "hit the ground running" with some eye-catching short term measures. They aim to paint the unsightly railings on the Moseley Road black and gold with the help of paint donated by Carillion Plc. They aim to erect "Welcome to Balsall Heath" signs at key entry points, again with sponsorship from Carillion and other Business Partners.

7.3.2 The Forum and the NSP aim to start the process of transferring to local ownership of the dilapidated and unsightly "orphan sites" and to clean and green them within the first few years of the plan. This process will be an on-going commitment into the longer term. The cleaning and greening of Balsall Heath relates to making it more welcoming and healthy and adds to the well-being of the area. Not only will it make a substantial visual and caring impact on Balsall Heath, as the months and years go by it will result in the significant devolution of resources and budgets to the area and the cost effective coordination of resources. Not the least of these resources will be the engagement of residents.

7.3.3 The "Hub" development on Moseley Road is anticipated to go ahead with investment from the land owner in the near future.

7.3.4 The future of the Baths/Library building is an immediate challenge and early steps must be taken to ensure its appropriate protection and use. Use can be made of the 'assets of community value' mechanism to ensure temporary protection, but efforts need to be made by local partners to secure an appropriate ownership vehicle, likely to be a community-based organisation. This could also move towards achieving, in the medium term, the other plan objective of enhancing community facilities at this location, including the policy to create youth centres. However the future care and maintenance of the building is a more long-term endeavour.

7.3.5 By these and other measures, the Forum and NSP aim to attract attention to the plan and the need to muster the reserves to implement medium and long term proposals.

7.4 Medium Term Actions

7.4.1 Medium term actions include the initiation of the main housing proposals. With the City Council's modified Highgate Road highway improvement lines, it is likely that the land required for the Policy BH16 housing proposal will become available. It is also anticipated that the ex-College site will become available for development in the next few years, given the interest of the landowner in progressing the development of the site.

7.4.2 The programme of renewal for the local centres is likely to be initiated in the next few years. In the case of Moseley Road, this is anticipated through the City Council's A435 regeneration projects, and in the case of Ladypool Road/Stoney Lane, through the BID process. The work of 'street scene improvements' can be seen as policy objectives achievable in the medium term through a rolling programme.

7.4.3 Proposals can also be implemented for developing the relationship between each School and each local park and furthering the cleaning and greening strategy, making Balsall Heath more attractive to residents, visitors and the customers of businesses. A start should also be made on the creation of 'Home Zones' and the proposed cycle route.

7.4.4 These medium term aims will take a few years to achieve. However, we believe that they will all be made more readily achievable by the proposed short and medium term measures and, once achieved, will make it more likely that the following and more ambitious but costly long term objectives will be delivered.

7.5 Long Term Actions

7.5.1 Making the River Rea more accessible and enjoyable, creating new allotments, creating a passenger train station, improving the Baths, Library and other buildings along the Moseley Road will all take time. Again, we anticipate that the task of the Forum and NSP in progressing these projects will be made easier because of the success of the short and medium term objectives. The role and commitment of community-based organisations will be crucial in delivering most of these objectives. That is, we see the NDP as being a rolling programme where different and early stages prepare the way for later ones which are more difficult to achieve.

7.6 Delivering the Plan – a Summary

7.6.1 Finally, it is important to emphasise that Balsall Heath is also a Neighbourhood Budgeting Pilot. Indeed, it is the only neighbourhood in the country which is both. This is a distinct advantage, as the two pilots are the flip-side of the same development coin. Birmingham City Council is eager to learn from the pilots and use them as examples of neighbourhood development, which it aims to use to trigger the cost-effective renewal and development of many neighbourhoods. The introduction of the city-wide Community Infrastructure Levy will present opportunities to implement many of the short term actions, and plan for the medium term ones. This document will therefore help inform the prioritisation of schemes within the local schedule.

7.6.2 These are major opportunities which the Forum and its NSP delivery agency aim to exploit and realise over the coming months and years. However, they wish to emphasise that whilst key parts of this plan can be realised in the short and medium term, other parts of it may take up to ten or more years.

7.7 Monitoring and Review

7.7.1 The Neighbourhood Development Plan will require monitoring and review during its lifetime. It is proposed that this is facilitated by the Balsall Heath Forum together with the Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership (see para. 1.4.1) in conjunction with the City Council as local planning authority and as a major partner in the implementation of policies. It is intended that reviews are carried out every five years.

7.7.2 Such reviews will meet one of the recommendations of the Sustainability Appraisal and will follow any procedures for review as may be set out in neighbourhood planning regulations applying at that time. The first review is due in 2019/20.

Annex to Balsall Heath Neighbourhood Development Plan

Community Action Projects

1 Introduction

1.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan contains twenty policies which seek to assist the implementation of a variety of proposals for the use and development of land. These policies will guide planning decisions made over the next two decades in the Balsall Heath area. However the public consultation process produced many fresh and good ideas for the positive development of the area; not all of these ideas are suitable for translation into planning policies which meet the requirements of planning law. Therefore some of the ideas put forward in the consultation process are listed here as 'community action projects', which are capable of implementation and conform to the objectives of formal policies laid down in Section 6 of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

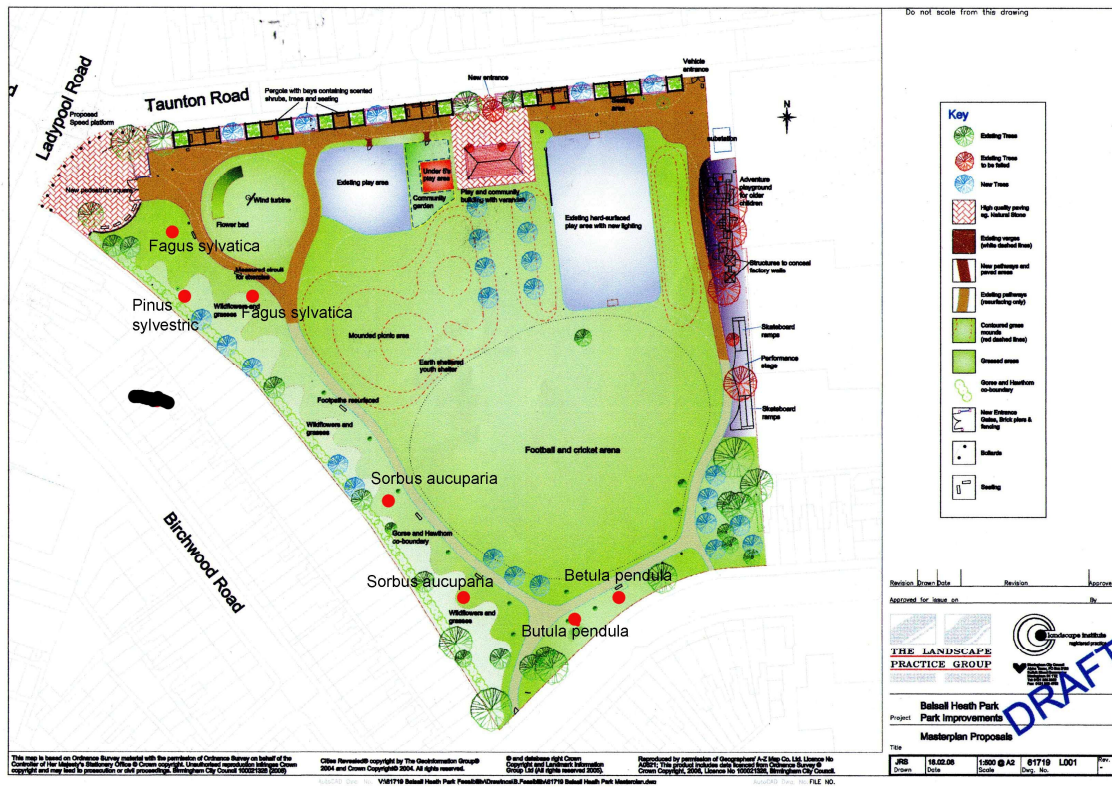
2 Community Action Projects Identified for Implementation

2.1 The tables below identify those projects which are proposed to be implemented within the lifetime of the plan in accordance with the policies identified within the NDP, and wider BDP and National Planning Policy Guidance.

Project 1	Redgra Pitch, Balsall Heath Road
Policy:	Policy BH6: Parks
Description:	The policy asks for the improvement of the parks in the area; this could include here a range of sporting activities, such as a football pitch and play equipment for small children.

Project 2	Balsall Heath Park
Policy:	Policy BH6: Parks
Description:	A plan was made in 2006 by the Friends of Balsall Heath Park, following the destruction caused by the 2005 tornado. This plan should now be implemented, using the voluntary efforts of the Friends and any resources available from the City Council (possibly via CIL funding), plus approached to the National Lottery, etc.

Balsall Heath Park improvements: illustrative plan



Project 3	Sparkgreen Park
Policy:	Policy BH6 : Parks, Policy BH4 : Highways and Traffic Management and Policy BH14 : Improving the 'Street Scene' in Stoney Lane
Description:	This project proposes that part of the park adjacent to Nelson Mandela School, which has limited outdoor play space, should be made available to the school at appropriate times. The School has indicated its support for this proposal and discussions are continuing with the City Council. It is further proposed that the frontage of Sparkgreen Park on Stoney Lane is improved, enhancing the safety of park users and visual quality, as part of the on-going maintenance and development of the park.

Project 4	Home Zone around George Street Park
Policy:	Policy BH6 : Parks and Policy BH4 : Highways and Traffic Management
Description:	It is suggested that Tindal Street should be redesigned as a 'Home Zone', making a better connection between Tindal School and the park. This project could be funded through the City Council's highways and parks budgets and/or through s106/CIL

Project 5	Home Zone around Severn Streets Park
Policy:	Policy BH6 : Parks and Policy BH4 : Highways and Traffic Management
Description:	It is suggested that Clifton Street should be redesigned as a 'HomeZone', making a better connection between the Children's Centre and the park. This project could be funded through the City Council's highways and parks budgets and/or through s106/CIL.

Project 6	Home Zone around Pickwick Park
Policy:	Policy BH6 : Parks and Policy BH4 : Highways and Traffic Management
Description:	It is proposed that this section of St Paul's Road be redesigned to reduce the speed of vehicles and establish a closer connection between the Clifton Junior School and the park. This project could be funded through the City Council's highways and parks budgets and/or through s106/CIL.

Project 7	Cycle Route between Stoney Lane and Pershore Road
Policy:	Policy BH4 : Highways and Traffic Management
Description:	It is proposed that a new cycle route is identified through Balsall Heath, connecting with the existing Rea Valley cycle route, and running from Stoney Lane to Pershore Road. Funding for this Project could be found from such sources as the City Council's highways budget, Sustrans and/or the Cycle City Ambition Grant from central government.

Project 8	Creation of a 'Town Square' for Balsall Heath at the Junction of Moseley Road and Haden Way.
Policy:	Policy BH10: Street Quality and a "Town Square"
Description:	A comprehensive scheme will be drawn up by the City Council and local partners to improve the quality of the public realm and street scene of Moseley Road, as part of the City Council's A435 and Heritage Corridor programmes, incorporating 'shared space' principles. The scheme should include the creation of a new "Town Square" for Balsall Heath at the junction of Moseley Road and Haden Way. New development should be required to contribute towards the preparation of this scheme through appropriate s106/CIL contributions. In line with Policy BH10, new development/redevelopment/refurbishment in the vicinity will contribute to the 'look and feeling' of community heart.

Project 9	“The Hub” Development
Policy:	Policy BH11: Improving the ‘Street Scene’ on ‘Old’ Moseley Road
Description:	Proposals to develop nos. 332-340 Moseley Road for workspaces, associated residential and adult education provision will be supported. These Grade II listed former houses are the location of a project called “The Hub”, promoted by their owner and the Joseph Chamberlain College, for the development of workspaces and the like.

Project 10	New Square and Car Park at junction of Ladypool Road and Highgate Road
Policy:	Policy BH4 : Highways and Traffic Management, Policy BH13: Improving the ‘Street Scene’ in Ladypool Road, BH16: New Housing on Highgate Road and BH7: Making Significant Places and Spaces
Description:	As part of the road improvements/proposed housing development alongside Highgate Road, create a new pedestrian square and car park in the south-west quadrant of this junction. This could also be the location for an ‘entrance marker’ for the Balti Triangle. The funding for this Project could be part of the highway and housing schemes.

Project 11	Balsall Heath Railway Station
Policy:	Policy BH17: Balsall Heath Railway Station
Description:	<p>The proposal for a rail station at Balsall Heath has received strong support, complementing and strengthening the public transport links within the city. This Project would be delivered by Network Rail and Centro; local organisations and the City Council will need to lobby for this Project to be included in the developments required for the reopening of the line to passenger traffic.</p> <p>The proposed location between Clifton Road and St Paul’s Road is conveniently close to the neighbourhood centre on Moseley Road, with its proposed new square, with easy access via Clifton Road, Lime Grove and St Paul’s Road. Opportunities would be sought to improve the environmental quality of these connections. It is also proposed that the station itself should be designed so as to be a significant local landmark, visible on the embankment from several viewpoints. Care will need to be taken in managing any consequent traffic and parking issues.</p>

Project 12	Renaturalising the River Rea
Policy:	Policy BH18: Renaturalising the River Rea
Description:	The Project proposes that the present brick culvert walls should be removed where possible and that the banks be landscaped to enable appropriate public access. Opportunities will be taken to widen the river where appropriate. It is suggested that a pool could be created in Calthorpe Park, avoiding any impingement on the recreational playing areas. It is acknowledged that this Project is aspirational and will be largely dependent upon the Environment Agency's funding programmes. However contributory funds generated through this NDP may lever in such investment.

Project 13	New Allotments between the River Rea and Clevedon Road / Longmore Street
Policy:	Policy BH19: New Allotments
Description:	New allotments on this site could be developed and managed by the Balsall Heath Forum, other partners and associated cooperative enterprises. Similar schemes could be initiated on a range of other 'orphan' and unused plots (see policy BH3).

2.2 There follows a list of seven proposed locations and an indication of the potential type of 'area marker'; some of the suggested developments are already proposed in policies above. Locations are indicated on Map 8 below.

1. *The junction of Pershore Road and Edward Road:* This might be a large piece of public art in the corner of Calthorpe Park, which might in addition have a useful function for users of the park, such as a pavilion.
2. *The junction of Belgrave Middleway and Longmore Street:* This might be a large piece of public art related to the River Rea. There is an existing precedent for this across the Middleway at Horton Square in Highgate, and the additional piece might be seen as complementary to this.
3. *The junction of Belgrave Middleway and Haden Way:* This could be a distinctive building which is a part of the new development on the ex-Joseph Chamberlain College site, and is complementary to the new college building opposite, which is already a significant landmark.
4. *The junction of Belgrave Middleway and Moseley Road:* The Grade II listed buildings which occupy this prominent site on the crest of the ridge, although derelict, already have a landmark quality. Their restoration and conversion into the proposed "Hub" development should be done in such a way as to reinforce this quality.
5. *The junction of Moseley Road and Cromer Road/Brighton Road:* This is the boundary of the Moseley Road neighbourhood centre, and the proposed environmental enhancements to Moseley Road should emphasise this as an important gateway. *In addition, there is an opportunity for imaginative landscaping of the wooded site to the south of Cromer Road, although this is just outside the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.*

6. *The junction of Ladypool Road and Brighton Road/Taunton Road:* It is proposed that this, the southern gateway to the Ladypool Road neighbourhood centre, be marked by a new square on the corner of Balsall Heath Park.
7. *The junction of Ladypool Road and Highgate Road:* This is the northern gateway to the Ladypool Road neighbourhood centre. It is proposed that it is marked by a new square on Ladypool Road. Funding for this proposal will be sought on the back of the residential development on Highgate Road.

Map 5: Locations of Potential 'Area Markers'

