

Examination of the Development Management in Birmingham Development Plan Document

Opening Statement

Good morning. My name is Maria Dunn – Head of Development Policy. I am grateful to the Inspector for allowing me to make short opening statement to the examination into the Council’s Development Management in Birmingham DPD.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome all those attending the examination and to say thank you to the individuals and organisations who have commented on the document and responded to the Council’s consultation exercises. These comments and representations have helped us in shaping and developing the Plan to best meet the needs of Birmingham and its existing and future communities.

Over the last 30 years Birmingham has been experiencing high population growth and this growth is set to continue over the plan period and beyond. Between 2011-2031, the city’s population will rise from approximately 1.1 million in 2011 to 1.25 million in 2031.

The Birmingham Development Plan, which was adopted in January 2017, sets out the spatial vision and development strategy for the sustainable growth of the city. The Plan contains strategic policies and site allocations, organised by growth areas and a suite of thematic policies.

The overall vision of the BDP is to establish Birmingham as an enterprising, innovative and green City that has delivered sustainable growth, meeting the needs of its population and strengthening its global competitiveness.

The strategy for growth continues to reflect the urban renaissance principles that have been at the heart of planning in Birmingham for many years. In helping to deliver the city’s inclusive growth agenda, the plan seeks to ensure that development creates high quality, innovative and resilient places that enhance their physical surroundings; provide welcoming, healthy, safe and attractive environments; and produce places and buildings which are accessible, adaptable and efficient.

One of the key priorities of the BDP is the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods and the supply of high-quality housing to meet the wide-ranging housing needs of Birmingham's existing and future residents.

The continued revitalisation and modernisation of the City's economy is central to the growth agenda, ensuring that jobs and prosperity are generated for all. The Plan seeks to ensure a continuous supply of land to meet a diverse range of economic needs, protect core employment areas, maintain a thriving network of urban centres and contribute to building a skilled workforce.

The City's future growth will be pursued in the most sustainable way possible; aiming to reduce the City's carbon footprint and creating resilient and adaptive environments. The Plan expects new development to be built to high sustainability standards, supported by appropriate infrastructure and set within quality environments. Innovative design is encouraged while respecting and enhancing the character and heritage of the City and Birmingham's wide variety of natural environments and ecology.

The transport vision of the plan is to create a sustainable, high quality and integrated transport system by improving public transport, cycling and walking networks, reducing the negative impacts of road traffic, and ensuring that development supports and promotes sustainable travel.

Birmingham is also at an important juncture in its evolution. As the need to address climate change becomes increasingly critical, the City has committed to becoming net zero carbon, placing itself at the forefront of climate action. Improving air Quality is also a key priority with Birmingham having some of the highest levels of nitrogen dioxide exceedances outside of London. As the city transitions to a zero carbon, clean air environment, the role of future investment and growth will become increasingly important.

Building upon and being fully aligned to the Birmingham Development Plan, the DMB will set out the detailed development management policies, replacing the Development Control Policies in the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan 2005.

The purpose of the DMB is therefore to provide non-strategic up-to-date development management policies to support the delivery of the BDP. The DMB is consistent with BDP and will help to ensure that the objectives of the BDP are met.

It is evident that the City has an excellent record of delivering housing and jobs, and the DMB will continue with the goals we set ourselves in the BDP.

We have consulted widely with residents, businesses, organisations, as well as with statutory consultees and key delivery partners throughout the preparation of the DMB. We have used the suggestions received at each consultation stage to inform and refine the Plan. We have also used the changes suggested at the Regulation 19 Publication Stage to improve the plan through the schedule of proposed changes.

I consider that we have arrived at a Plan which is appropriate for our city when set against reasonable alternatives. I believe the Plan is positively prepared, justified by the evidence that we have collected, deliverable and in line with the BDP and national policy.

Birmingham remains committed to a “plan led system” shaped by extensive consultation and partnership working and supported by a robust evidence base. Subject to any modifications that may be felt necessary by the Inspector, the Council has submitted what it considers to be a sound Plan.