



Our Future City Plan

CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM 2040

Shaping Our City Together

January 2021

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1. FOREWORD

We are a city with a wealth of knowledge, skills and creative potential in our communities. Over the last 30 years, the city centre has undergone a transformation, attracting unprecedented levels of investment and development into the city, providing jobs, opportunities, homes and environmental improvements that we need as a growing place. Exciting future developments such as Smithfield, HS2 and the completion of Paradise will ensure we continue to be one of the largest growing city economies in the UK.

At the same time, we face a number of significant challenges. Climate change, increasing economic disparity and wider economic, social and environmental changes necessitate that we must evolve our existing strategy. In declaring a climate emergency in June 2019, we must now adapt our built environment for a zero-carbon future in which we work with nature rather than against it. The Covid-19 pandemic has intensified the deep structural inequalities that exist for people across our city with many people struggling and too many children not having the opportunities to thrive in life.

Our Future City Plan (OFCP) outlines a template for major change in our city. Using the climate emergency as impetus, we are setting a new direction, one where we aim for a zero-carbon approach to development. In addition to this, we will build inclusive growth principles into the very foundation of all plans to ensure that every citizen in Birmingham benefits from development.

As the first document to be released within the OFCP programme, this 'Shaping Our City Together' document sets out an inspiring vision and strategy for Central Birmingham - one that could create a fair, inclusive and green place that benefits all. We are taking a more collaborative approach with our civic family from individuals, businesses and charities, to ensure we are creating a shared vision and strategy for the future. The feedback received during this first stage of engagement will inform the draft OFCP Central Birmingham Framework 2040, to be released in the summer, where many of the ideas and proposals that come out of this exercise will be developed in more detail.

Taking the spirit of the artist and engineer from the city's coat of arms, we will move forward together. As we are a city with a wealth of knowledge, skills and creative potential in our communities to ensure once again, we will be at the forefront of finding and delivering solutions to the major social, environmental and economic challenges we face.

Birmingham's future success is a common endeavour, and the next great chapter of our proud city will require everyone to pull together for the benefit of all.

Ian Ward

Leader
Birmingham City Council

2. INTRODUCTION

Our Future City Plan - a new direction. Over the past decade Birmingham has witnessed a surge in development and investment, providing jobs, homes, improved public transport and public spaces that we need as a growing city

These achievements have reaffirmed our place as the country's premier regional city and a strengthened commercial and financial centre, with seeds planted for the future success of the city and its residents. However, we face a number of existing and emerging challenges that must be addressed as we look to the future.

The urgent need for action to tackle climate change has been set out through the City Council's ambitious commitment to eliminate carbon emissions through the 'Route to Zero' initiative. Birmingham aims to become a global leader in tackling climate change, meeting the challenges head-on and grasping the opportunities of being at the forefront of a green revolution.

As digital technology changes our life and work styles, together with the economic and social uncertainty and change accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the future of our city centre has been brought into question: what needs to be done to stay relevant and thrive; how does it become greener and cleaner; how does it evolve and grow as a destination for living, learning, working, shopping, enterprise, culture and leisure, and how does it remain attractive to inward investment?

Whilst these urgent challenges make the headlines, we know that the growth and investment we have seen in the city doesn't always meet the needs of all of our residents, and endemic deprivation and inequality remains at unacceptable levels in parts of our city, often in those communities closest to areas of intense development.

Building new homes is a priority for our communities and there is demand for a range of homes to suit many different needs and aspirations. In a dense urban area, innovative ways need to be found to deliver new, quality homes and neighbourhoods, ensure affordability for all and create healthy, happy and attractive places to live.

These challenges require us to take a major shift in direction. Our Future City Plan will provide a new vision and strategy for investment that will stimulate green, inclusive growth that meets our diverse needs, and maximises the potential of all Brummie communities.

Central Birmingham 2040 For the last 30 years, the regeneration and growth of the city centre has been focussed within the area defined by the Middle Ring Road. The central civic, cultural and economic core of the city has expanded with many exemplar developments, with surrounding quarters evolving and developing their own identities leading to great opportunity.

In defining the city centre by the ring road, this has however often resulted in physical and perceived barriers between areas, with the city centre considered separate from the surrounding inner city - this will no longer be the case.

As we look forward to the next 20 years, Our Future City Plan will incorporate the entire Central Birmingham area from city core to inner-city suburbs, going beyond the ring road to promote and link opportunities and investment that meets the growth needs of more communities.

Central Birmingham 2040 will be a collection of successful, interconnected places, each having and developing their own identities yet supported by a much wider built, social and natural network.

The area comprises all or parts of the following city wards:

- Balsall Heath East.
- Balsall Heath West.
- Bordesley Green.
- Bordesley and Highgate.
- Edgbaston Ladywood.
- Lozells.
- Nechells.
- Newtown.
- Small Heath.
- Soho and Jewellery Quarter.
- Sparkbrook.

2.1 Shaping Our City Together - get involved!

We believe the future of our city can only deliver the best for the community when we have a diverse set of voices shaping it. This document seeks to engage with our communities before we have even drafted a plan. Whilst a template for change has been outlined here, it is not a final blueprint - we want a spread of ideas, thoughts and perspectives to shape the next stage of work - a draft Central Birmingham 2040 Framework. The publication of this document is the beginning of a continuous process of engagement through which

Birmingham's communities will be empowered not only to shape and influence the strategy and decide how it is to be delivered, but also to play a leading role in that delivery.

This document begins by outlining the context of the area, key challenges and opportunities. This is followed by a proposed vision and a set of guiding principles which lead into six strategic themes - the 'City Themes' which suggest potential actions and bold changes that could shape Central Birmingham over the years to 2040 and beyond.

There will be other ideas that come forward across the Neighbourhoods and Quarters of Central Birmingham - and this is the start of the journey and the chance to identify them and promote those proposals.

The feedback received on this document and over the coming months will go on to inform 'Our Future City Plan: Central Birmingham 2040 - Draft Framework' to be launched for consultation in autumn 2021, and will shape future statutory and non-statutory planning policy and guidance in the future.

January 2021

Our Future City Plan - Engagement and feedback

Summer 2021

Our Future City Plan - Draft Framework and feedback

Winter 2021

Our Future City Plan - Approved Framework and feedback

2021 – 2040

Our Future City Plan - Delivery Plan: Review of the Birmingham Development Plan Area and theme based Supplementary Planning Documents, Briefs, Masterplans and Frameworks Development of major projects

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 A city moving forward

Built out of enterprise, skill and determination, our 'City of a Thousand Trades' played a critical role in the manufacturing and industrial revolution of an earlier era. Known for its enterprising and welcoming nature, people from around the world have made Birmingham their home and have all added to the social, cultural and built fabric of our community.

Following a period of post-industrial decline in the early 1980s, a City Council led approach set out a clear vision and strategy for the future of the city centre. By building partnerships and attracting investment, significant development activity has transformed the centre of the city, as a place to work, shop, live and visit.

The last two decades have seen new residential communities formed in the central area alongside world class cultural, retail and business destinations.

Connectivity has improved with new cycling infrastructure and Metro tram links, and a New Street Station we can be proud of. In addition to the larger scale developments, a wealth of small enterprises and new creative and cultural oases have grown providing an eclectic mix of spaces, uses and people.

Neighbourhood centres in Central Birmingham have continued to evolve and meet many local shopping, cultural and service needs alongside the unique destination retailing and food offers that attract visitors from beyond the city boundaries.

Today, Birmingham has emerged from the endeavours of its industrious past. The 'Workshop of the World' and its artistic, crafted engineering output, is now home to people from every corner of the world who have established a rich texture of interconnected cultures, music, food and art. The culture of Britain's second city is a window onto the world making us truly a modern global city, diverse, connected and resilient.

Several key developments in the city are currently underway and other proposals are coming forward including:

Paradise Circus has opened the first two buildings around a newly rebuilt Chamberlain Square and pedestrian street linking to Centenary Square. A third building is under construction and plans for a landmark residential tower, and hotel

development are taking shape, with opportunities for investment in the final phase being considered.

Icknield Port Loop has seen the first of 1,150 family homes occupied in a new neighbourhood being developed on former wasteland.

Arena Central has provided headquarters buildings for a national bank and Government agencies, and the University of Birmingham are opening a new hub building. A final phase of development is being progressed with detailed and outline planning consents.

Smithfield will be a mixed-use development over 14 hectares creating a new city quarter with a new building for the city's historic markets, a new public square as a major event space, a new primary school and over 2,000 new homes with a neighbourhood park at its heart.

The Commonwealth Games 2022 will place Birmingham on the world stage and is bringing investment in improved sports facilities and delivery of new homes as part of a major regeneration initiative in Perry Barr.

Curzon Enterprise Zone centred on construction of the HS2 railway is underway with the planned Curzon Station providing a step-change in connectivity for the city and the region, unlocking major cultural, development and investment opportunities.

Martineau Galleries proposals were approved in 2020 for a new city quarter of 1,300 homes, a new hotel and office workspace in the heart of the city

Proposals will emerge for other major developments such as, Ladywood Estates, Snowhill Station and Bordesley Wheels, which are all on the horizon and will be shaped through the detail of Our Future City Plan.

3.2 Challenges

As a city we face significant challenges that we must address to ensure that we can build a fair, inclusive and green city of the future.

Climate change - the City Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and is striving to achieve net zero carbon. The latest Action Plan was endorsed by Full Council in January 2021, setting out the key priorities for the next two years. This declaration underlines the critical need to adapt the way we do things to create a more equitable and cleaner world benefiting the entire planet's species. In order to achieve net zero carbon, the aspiration needs to be embedded in everything that we do.

Economic change - Covid-19 has resulted in significant economic impact on business and residents, with the retail, arts, culture, leisure and hospitality sectors hardest hit by the downturn. There are short-term impacts, and several business survival measures have been put in place to help to address these. Long-term trends in change

to retail patterns have been accelerated, and trends in working from home will alter the patterns of working in the central area. Whilst the full extent of the changes are not yet known we need to ensure that the city is flexible and adaptable to future trends. We need to find new ways to keep our offer attractive, relevant, flexible and resilient.

Delivering quality homes and places - we need to be focused on creating the best quality of life for all our residents putting in place the necessary changes that put people and communities at the heart of the way we do things to support delivery of homes that meets all needs, and places that people will love to live in.

Tackling inequalities - too many of our people and places do not see the multiple benefits that can emerge from development and investment. We need to address the issues of poor health and low skills base, breaking down barriers that stop people accessing what they need. Continuing to attract inward investment remains key to the success of the city, however this must lead to tangible improvements to the quality of life and opportunity for all our communities.

3.3 Opportunities

With major shifts in society, economy and the environment also come opportunities to fundamentally transition the way we operate and to build people-centred places.

Global leader in a Green Future - as an enterprising and innovative city we have always been at the forefront of significant shifts in the economy, society and environment. The green economy offers exciting opportunities to transition to a cleaner and greener place that can deliver jobs, homes and places in a sustainable way.

Proud of Brum - we have a captivating history born out of the innovation and hard work of the industrial age, a city of immigration that continuously adds to our layers of heritage, diversity of character and culture, and a youth population full of promise and creativity. In positioning and promoting our city on the world stage we need to shout louder about our heritage, world class arts, dance, music, food and cultural offer, and grasp the chance to build sporting excellence and long-term health benefits through the Commonwealth Games and beyond

Multi-centre city with thriving neighbourhoods - we can promote Central Birmingham as a collection of diverse, exciting destinations maximising the potential of their individual identities and offers, with the means to support a critical mass of homes, jobs, and education to provide resilience to independent retail, night-time and visitor economy, and local services.

Local living with communities at the heart - we need to create places that people love with social amenities, green spaces within the area, prioritising walking and cycling creating healthier, attractive, cleaner, safer and more connected communities.

Connected and smart - located at the centre of the country's physical rail and motorway networks, and with Birmingham Airport's international connections, we have opportunity to use our advantageous location to attract inward investment and to build

new innovative, smart and digitally connected clusters to support job growth in emerging industries.

4. VISION

This vision has been formed from an understanding of the key opportunities and challenges facing the city over the coming decades. It is framed to ensure we are achieving all three of the objectives of sustainable development - a city that delivers social, economic and environmental gains to its people. Our vision is:

An innovative, global city where prosperity is *shared by all* - happy, healthy and affordable. Our connected, culturally-distinct neighbourhoods showcase *the best* environmental quality, resilience and adaptability. A city *proud* of our unique identity and diversity *that embraces* technology and creativity, beauty and imagination.

Principles

To deliver the vision for Central Birmingham 2040, the following principles will underpin and guide the development of actions - the ideas, plans and proposals that will form the detail of Our Future City Plan

Green city - Central Birmingham as a place at the front of a green revolution - a city that respects and encourages the diversity of the natural world and makes it easy for communities to make environmentally friendly choices in the way they live, work and play. We will be pioneers in green technology. The city has moved away from polluting industries and towards green growth focused on technology, innovation and manufacturing.

Equitable city - a city where no one is left behind, with access to jobs, training, housing and healthcare, being available to all in our community. A destination that is nationally and internationally competitive, where new investment and development is spread across the whole of Central Birmingham to ensure that communities are feeling the full benefit that arises, including new and affordable homes, access to schools and training, and a range of employment opportunities. A place that is a hub for hosting large, medium and small enterprises offering opportunities for realising entrepreneurial vision to launch new start-ups, and to develop existing businesses creating a circular economy and resilience.

Liveable city - a family friendly city known for its unique and diverse neighbourhoods that are attractive, distinct and green, connected by walking and cycling routes to schools, local shops and community facilities all within a short distance of home. Neighbourhoods will be characterised by strong citizen engagement taking responsibility for change in their own areas, transport connectivity, new and improved green spaces and safe, attractive public realm.

Distinctive city - a city that promotes and is proud of Brummie character and diversity through the design and activity within development. Every neighbourhood will share its own stories of people, identity, history and place. A city that has prospered and evolved to capture the diverse nature of our city which is reflected in the places created. A city that provides the resources and opportunities so that our youth can be future generation of leaders, makers and creatives to change the world for the better.

5. CITY THEMES

Six 'City Themes' have been developed to group together the potential actions that will ultimately deliver the vision of Our Future City Plan for Central Birmingham 2040.

5.1 CITY OF CENTRES

Birmingham is more than one place - it is a collection of centres of activity that have evolved over centuries and there is the potential to develop this further as a 'City of Centres' - multiple destinations and mixed-use neighbourhoods that attract visitors and succeed as places that are loved by their communities, with a sense of pride and belonging.

Within Central Birmingham there are established quarters and neighbourhoods with existing communities, and potential for other areas to grow and evolve and become attractive as places to locate the new homes and employment space we need as a growing city.

The planning and highway engineering solutions to rebuilding our city during the middle of the 20th Century has left a legacy on our city that focussed commercial activity within a relatively small area, creating single-use zones - retail, office, civic, industry, and social housing, with traditional inner-city local centres disconnected and negatively impacted by congestion and poor environmental quality. Over the last 30 years, the introduction of more city living, removal of parts of the former inner-ring road, and rejuvenation of some of the quarters around the central area, has already started to create new mixed-use neighbourhoods and to begin to repair a finer grain of activity in our city.

Looking forward, the way we live, work and shop is changing significantly and rapidly. The role of the traditional 'Central Business District' at the heart of the city has to adapt; it will need to provide for increased flexibility and quality of spaces and uses, becoming a place that encourages social interaction, collaboration and shared experience - responding to new ways of working, living, shopping, enjoying leisure and culture.

Central Birmingham can adapt and grow to meet many different needs by being promoted as a diverse network of centres and neighbourhoods - places with their own specialisms, character, and uniqueness that offer a range of amenities for local living and working with easy walking, cycling and public transport access.

Our 2040 goals are to:

- Establish Central Birmingham as an integrated collection of vibrant, distinct and liveable neighbourhoods with services and amenities to ensure that residents can meet their daily needs within walking and cycling distances.
- Support residential development at densities that make local services and public transport viable.
- Promote mixed use developments providing employment, open spaces, leisure and social infrastructure within walking, cycling and public transport environments.
- Ensure that communities have the resources, skills and support to build resilience within their areas.

What actions could we take?

- **Connected Centres as Destinations**
Central Birmingham has a range of centres of activity - clusters of commercial uses, most with surrounding residential communities. Working with residents and existing businesses, detailed plans will be developed to identify projects and opportunities that will strengthen and promote the individual character and individuality of offer of each centre, to create destinations that meet both local needs and enhance the City's national and international appeal as a visitor destination. Improved walking, cycling and public transport connectivity between centres will be key to delivery.
- **A network of 15 Minute Neighbourhoods**
Identify a network of 15-minute neighbourhood areas and ensure that the amenities and services are put in place to make local living possible, including infrastructure such as green spaces, locally accessible schools, and community places within a healthy, vibrant and well-connected environment.
- **Creating diverse and affordable homes**
Strengthen planning policy to maintain affordably priced living space and to ensure a range of housing types that meet all needs and aspirations.
- **Remodel local highway infrastructure for people-centred places**
Supporting improvements to residential streets, shopping and business areas and centres, that will encourage and allow more people to choose walking and cycling for local journeys and connect to public transport options. Within these places, the dominance of cars in the environment can be reduced. This could take the form of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood with 20mph speed limits

alongside major highways devoted to cycling, walking and improved rapid public transit reducing the need for cars.

- **Locally Grown First**

Building environmental and community resilience through identifying and providing support for the development of urban farming opportunities and decentralised energy grids to support locally sourced renewable energy.

5.2 CITY OF GROWTH

Birmingham is the largest city economy in the UK outside of London and key driver of growth in the West Midlands and wider region. A thriving, inclusive, resilient and liveable Central Birmingham is vital to improving quality of life and place and drives a strong and inclusive West Midlands and UK economy. The focus will be on green and sustainable growth.

Our city needs to continue to welcome inward investment and to promote and provide the opportunities for a range of major developments for new homes, workplaces, leisure, culture and social infrastructure. We also need to ensure that there are the right conditions for home-grown businesses to start-up, thrive and grow - from those serving local community needs to the small Brummie based businesses serving national and global markets.

Whilst we have seen the huge benefits that come from growth and development, this has often been concentrated in specific parts of our city. We have this opportunity to look at where change is focussed and promoted so that any gains that come from development are more evenly spread amongst the population and places within Central Birmingham. The ultimate value of inward investment is greater and resilient where wider social needs are met.

Urban places work best when they are activated by people - living, working, playing, visiting and exercising. For Central Birmingham to remain attractive and to become more vibrant, there is potential to promote a greater mix of uses across the area led by introducing more residential activity and at greater density in well-designed, more efficient use of land to deliver more homes as part of well-designed places.

This will require a series of targeted interventions to support development and maximise the opportunities across the whole of Central Birmingham.

Our 2040 goals are to:

- Meet our city growth needs for provision of a range and diversity of affordable housing, healthcare, jobs, skills and opportunities for all in our community.
- Ensure that the social, environmental and economic benefits of development and growth make a positive difference for everyone.
- Strengthen our global position as an attractive place for inward investment and first-choice location for a range of companies to be based here.
- Ensure opportunities for a robust, flexible and diverse range of industries to thrive, focused on green technology, digital innovation, culture and other growth areas to provide economic resilience and new employment opportunities.
- Take a zero-carbon approach to development working towards circular economy principles.
- Maximise the benefits of our unique qualities of diversity and identity, heritage, heroes, leisure, arts and culture to boost our visitor economy.

What actions could we take?

- **Beyond the Ring Road**
Looking to 2040 we will begin to develop ideas for change and growth that are outward looking and embrace more communities both within the traditional city heart and across the wider Central Birmingham area - connecting neighbourhoods, quarters and local centres to maximise their growth potential and unlock wider benefits for communities. The ring road will cease to be a barrier to how our city evolves
- **Central Renewal Areas**
Identifying and promoting 8 Central Renewal Areas with potential for significant change and reimagining to unlock new opportunities for mixed use redevelopment to provide housing, jobs and public spaces within new and existing neighbourhoods. The Central Renewal Areas will highlight key development opportunities as a catalyst for facilitating wider investment and supporting infrastructure needs will be identified. The City Council will be proactive in developing, enabling and encouraging innovative delivery partnerships across community, development and investment sectors to bring about change.
- **Major Development Sites**
Ongoing developments such as Paradise, Arena Central and Icknield Port Loop are delivering space for new homes and major employers. Our Future City Plan will continue to promote these alongside proposals including Smithfield, Axis Square, Martineau Galleries and New Garden Square. The impacts of Covid-19 will be seen through how we use existing buildings, particularly where they have become obsolete for their original purposes. A proactive approach will be taken to develop ideas and proposals for re-imagining and re-use and where alternative development forms could unlock green space, and a broader range of activity and new homes. Looking forward, within a wider area of opportunity, additional Major Development Sites will be identified and promoted to secure investment across Central Birmingham.

- **Delivering a diverse range of affordable, quality homes**
Continuing the Council BMHT initiative to develop affordable, quality housing. Working with our private sector partners and seeking innovative approaches to supporting development across Central Birmingham to deliver diversity of homes to meet a full range of needs. In addition, strengthening existing requirements for affordable housing and supporting family homes in statutory planning policy.
- **Increasing activity**
Identify opportunities for a greater density of residential development which will bring increased activity into central areas to support day-to-day retail needs, leisure and cultural economy. New areas for tall buildings can be promoted and will be linked to ensuring access to new and improved quality green spaces and networks. Tall buildings will need to be carefully crafted to deliver beauty and innovation in their design and sustainability.
- **Connect investment with jobs and skills programmes**
Young people have been most severely affected by the impact of Covid-19. Full integration of major investment into a skills programme is needed to ensure all residents have the skills to take up new employment opportunities
- **Local first**
Develop policies and projects that support our diverse range of local and independent businesses, working together with a range of partners including Business Improvement Districts and traders' associations to identify area based or thematic proposals and actions.

5.3 CITY OF NATURE

The ability to easily access nature within our city is essential to providing a high quality of life, tackling climate change, and creating attractive places to live in.

Whether we realise it or not we all have an inbuilt connection to nature. The presence of the green and open spaces within our city environment provides us with a range of direct and indirect economic, social and environmental benefits, including improved health and wellbeing, reducing air pollution, urban cooling and storm water interception.

As a whole Birmingham has a significant amount of green space with several outstanding parks and gardens, however there are significant gaps in green space provision within the central areas of the city. This is having a negative effect on people's health, and the quality of the public realm and movement, with the urban population expected to rise this effect could be exacerbated.

We seek to make a radical transition by putting nature back at the very heart of the city - to be a Biophilic City. Residents, visitors and workers will be able to access safe and diverse green and open spaces within walking distances of their home and places of work. We can use nature to transform the way we build, layout our public realm, and improve connectivity, as well as supporting the restoration and viability of urban areas providing more space for living, working and playing.

Our 2040 goals are to:

- Create a connected and diverse network of green and open spaces meeting a spectrum of community needs.
- Encourage children and young people to be connected to nature through education and play and provide opportunities to take part in sport and exercise that are accessible for all.
- Ensure delivery of nature-based solutions to support environmental, social and economic outcomes including improving citizen's health and well-being,

reduced energy costs, improved drainage and water quality, and removing pollutants from the atmosphere.

- Deliver biodiverse landscapes that create new opportunities, protect and enhance existing habitats and support vulnerable species and their movements across the city.
- Restore urban waterways to become major destinations not only for development, but also for leisure and open space.

What actions could we take?

- **The Brummie urban forest**

Grow our Tree City status by expanding the urban canopy throughout the city environment creating a 'forest' of quality, well designed range of planting within and beyond Central Birmingham linking to the city-wide and regional network. Children and young people will be involved to support education and ownership of these new green spaces. Diverse and sustainable tree planting will need to be both at ground level and atop buildings providing a multistorey canopy and vertical and horizontal habitat connectivity

- **City Greenways**

Identify opportunities to transform arterial routes and remodel highway infrastructure into linear 'Greenways' to connect communities with new open spaces, cycleways and walkways. These routes will be lined by trees and diverse range of plants attracting pollinators - supporting movement and access for people, insects and animals. Remodelling highway infrastructure will also reconnect under-used sites that have been severed and isolated for over 50 years - providing opportunities for new homes and commercial activity.

- **The park web**

Identify proposals for a network of new and improved green spaces throughout Central Birmingham. This will involve proposing a range of opportunities from courtyards within new development, local pocket parks and the improvement of existing parks and open spaces, to address the gaps in areas with low coverage of green spaces by proposing new and improved parks.

- **Edible Brum**

Give local people the opportunity to grow their own food in urban environments. Identify public and private spaces on walls, roofs and underutilised spaces for growing of edible fruit and vegetables, bee keeping, hydroponic crops, fish farming and brewing. This could be supported by building networks and supply chains to local businesses.

- **Reviving our waterways**

Support the ongoing renaissance and restoration of canals and rivers throughout Central Birmingham to ensure access to new and improved green and blue space, habitat creation, reduction of flood risk and improved drainage - as well as supporting viability and improving the setting of surrounding development where appropriate.

- **Building greener**
Promote opportunities to provide multifunctional green infrastructure and renewable energy as an integral part of new and existing building designs
- **Green guardianship**
We need to address the challenges of how we look after open spaces by working together across a range of organisations - and not just those responsible for parks, canals, rivers and wildlife but also to include those involved in healthcare, education and skills, heritage and culture. Community involvement and 'ownership' of our green spaces shall be developed, and new ways to look after our natural environments explored.

5.4 CITY OF LAYERS

We are a unique and distinct city with a wealth of interesting stories, heritage, historic landmarks and a place full of past and present pioneers and creatives. We have a diversity of people, places, traditions, values and beliefs. We have a cultural offer that resembles no other place in the UK, or the world - and it supports thousands of jobs directly and indirectly

As the role and purpose of city centres change and lifestyles and workstyles merge and evolve, it is the sense of community and belonging - the social interactions experienced through culture at all levels that people will want to come to cities for. Social activity is an essential part of the attraction of city life.

Through the growth and evolution of our city, be it the development of new housing, parks, green spaces, commerce, places of learning and worship, or centres of cultural and leisure, opportunities must be taken to tell the stories and lives of all of our citizens to shape our city. Birmingham can therefore be a 'City of Layers' - a city rich in not just diversity of people and their stories, but of art, industry, food, music, gaming, technology and performance.

The built environment now needs to find responses to these 'Layers' of culture and creativity and allow the city to not only showcase its output commercially as a vital part of our visitor, leisure and night-time economy, but also to celebrate and build on it for its own citizens, for their growth, employment and careers, and the enrichment and quality of life. Our buildings, places and spaces not only reflect the history of our city but present opportunities to forge a new outlook responding to communities that live and work here.

Our 2040 goals are to:

- Be proud of, own, celebrate and protect the rich diversity of our built and social heritage and be ambitious in our approach to keeping it relevant and robust as trends and needs change.

- Ensure that opportunities for our rich arts, cultural and creative diversity and talent are embedded into the life of the city as central to the social and economic future of Central Birmingham.
- Ensure that new development is crafted to tell the stories and shared memories that form distinct community identities and adds to the character, community ownership, and diversity of places and neighbourhoods.
- Maximise opportunities to build on the 2022 Commonwealth Games to create a strong sporting and community legacy.
- Become a destination city of choice for visitors by showcasing and promoting our cultural offer and global uniqueness.

What actions could we take?

- **Proud of Brum**

Working together with communities across Central Birmingham, we will develop the 'Birmingham Brand' by identifying and telling important stories of our places and people at a small, local scale through to being part of the offer of our nationally and internationally renowned arts and cultural venues, festivals and events. For example, the city has a unique music heritage as the birthplace of heavymetal, through the dance music scene of the 1990s, to the contemporary live music scene and online creators of today - all could be emphasised in the way we promote our city globally and attract visitors.

- **Diversity of cultural destinations**

Promote opportunities and strengthen policy support and protection for a broad range of cultural facilities and activities - temporary and permanent - that brings employment and depth of activity and experiences to our city that make it a great place to live and visit time-and-again. Our city contains an unrivalled wealth of community organisations and activity; a leisure and night-time economy offer that includes theatre, comedy, drag bars, music, dance - and a wide range of globally inspired cuisine.

- **The Digbeth Cultural Hub**

Support and extend Digbeth's established arts and creative mix with the creation of a major new Cultural Hub, with potential for a destination development with international appeal to anchor a range of media, arts, and digital industries alongside new homes and green spaces.

- **Heritage asset review**

Work with communities to identify and review buildings and local historic buildings and features, make the best use of the city's existing rich heritage capital and to support rejuvenation of heritage at risk by promoting potential for new uses through conservation and adaption.

- **City of sporting excellence**
Identify a range of projects to maximise the legacy of the Commonwealth Games and promote strong physical and mental health by ensuring that opportunities that support participation in formal and informal sports and exercise are protected and built into new developments.
- **Cultural Strategy**
Work with the developing Cultural Compact of key stakeholders across the city to consult on, design and implement a new Cultural Strategy that has genuine ambition and ownership from all those involved.
- **Visitor Destination Plan**
Engage with key stakeholders and relevant agencies to ensure that Our Future City Plan is aligned to the development and implementation of the Visitor Destination Plan for Birmingham and the Regional Tourism Strategy.

5.5 CITY OF CONNECTIONS

Located at the heart of the country, Birmingham is at the centre of the national transport network, with excellent rail and road links, and a major international airport. However, currently in many parts of Central Birmingham, vehicles and their supporting infrastructure still dominate resulting in disconnected places, poor public realm and unhealthy living conditions, with traffic congestion and air pollution rising.

Supporting the comprehensive proposals set out in the Birmingham Transport Plan, we are setting out a people-centred approach to connectivity within neighbourhoods, providing walking, cycling and public transport on major gateways and limiting the accessibility of cars in places. We understand that there will always be a need for a limited number of cars, but we want to reduce the need for cars by making the alternatives much easier, affordable and safer.

Increasing reliance upon and general use of digital connectivity opens opportunities for different ways of working and living - all communities need access to modern infrastructure to benefit from these changes.

Our 2040 goals are to:

- Enter an era of excellent connectivity for moving people: high quality, walkable public realm; safe and attractive cycling facilities; micro-mobility solutions such as e-scooter and cycle hire; and enhanced cross city transit movements for bus, Metro and Sprint services.
- Achieve full integration of the entire Central Birmingham area with roads no longer acting as major barriers to movement of people by walking and cycling. Inclusion and integration of communities based in the inner-city areas, ensuring that benefits are fully realised in these areas and existing problems with vehicular movements are not displaced to surrounding areas.

- Ensure safe, easily accessible and affordable sustainable transport in dense neighbourhood environments to support long distance movement of people.
- Support efficient and unobtrusive access for goods and servicing to support economic activity.
- Support provision of world class digital infrastructure throughout the Central Birmingham area supporting digital access for homes, schools and businesses.

What actions could we take?

- **Active travel in neighbourhoods**
Proposals will be developed to encourage more walking and cycling around Central Birmingham with residential neighbourhoods and local centres becoming places for people rather than cars. Improving pedestrian safety is essential to encouraging greater levels of activity. Identifying and delivering 'School Streets' will support safe and sustainable trips to school and a limit of 20mph will be standard on all local roads.
- **Improved public transport connections**
Supporting long distance journeys and cross-city connections through increased rail, metro and bus integration and capacity through reallocation of road space away from single occupancy private cars to support the delivery of a public transport system fit for a global city, fundamentally changing the way that people move around the city.
- **Connections for growth**
Identifying opportunities for new and improved rapid transit routes (such as Sprint and Metro) to provide connections from existing networks into Central Renewal Areas to provide a stimulus for new development and activity.
- **Grey to green proposals**
Identify urban infrastructure that can be remodelled to improve pedestrian and cycling connectivity within Central Birmingham and beyond as well as supporting access to green space for local communities.
- **City segments**
Rationalising access to the areas within the ring road for private cars, with reduced opportunities for traffic to circulate, and restrictions on through trips by

private vehicle. Links within Central Birmingham are enhanced for public transport, walking and cycling.

- **Freight management**

Ensuring managed access and routes, freight consolidation and cleaner greener vehicles will be the foundation of this important strand to city life.

- **Digital connectivity**

Creating a high-quality digital environment by enhancing digital infrastructure, working with partners to expand the 5G network across Central Birmingham. Using data and smart technologies to inform changes to public realm and improve transport efficiency. New homes and businesses should benefit from access to digital networks.

- **Managing demand for parking**

All on-street parking in areas within the Ring Road will be subject to controls and charges. A Workplace Parking Levy will be considered, with funds re-invested into sustainable transport. Where development potential exists, land currently occupied by car parking shall be put to more productive use.

5.6 CITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

As a City, innovation and entrepreneurship are in our DNA; we have a strong record of being at the forefront of major innovations in industry that have shaped the world we live in today.

As we look ahead, it will be crucial to focus on supporting growth of the knowledge, technology, innovation and creative sectors. This will require a creative approach to adapting the built environment, supporting resilience and growth of businesses, as well as growing a skilled population to compete in an evolving job market.

Emerging technology areas such as Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing and drones are going to play a crucial role in the way people interact with their environment in the future. These technologies offer great hope in many areas of urban life, including improving transport efficiency, reducing our impact on the environment, supporting better health outcomes and creating safer environments.

Technology and innovation are also about solving the world's problems, from climate change to finding new treatments to eradicate life threatening illnesses. As a city we should be leaders in delivering these solutions.

Our universities and colleges provide the city with a great advantage as a driver for the economy and cultural offer. Students and staff bring activity and footfall for businesses across the city. Multi-million pound investment by the universities in their facilities is providing a range of world-class facilities attracting students from both the local and global stage alike. As students graduate, there needs to be opportunities to retain the talent in the city, and the right conditions for them to grow and flourish and become join the long list of Birmingham's great pioneers.

Our 2040 goals are to:

Strengthen and expand hi-tech and R&D sectors and improve eco-systems and cross linkages with universities and industry.

Ensure equality of skills provision.

Support the development of our world-class universities.

Create a smart city that captures the potential of technology and data to solve urban problems.

Provide effective support for start-up businesses to grow and develop their ideas to solve global problems.

Support the development of creative, arts and media industries.

Create community hubs across the city to encourage a future generation of innovators across all sectors.

What actions could we take?

- **Innovation Districts**
Building on the city's Knowledge Quarter, there are opportunities to identify and promote a range of locations to cluster green, hi-tech, innovation and research and advanced manufacturing industries. This could involve repurposing of retail or other commercial spaces, purpose-built facilities, improved access to digital infrastructure, as well as providing affordable workspaces and residential units within green, mixed use environments.
- **Supporting our Universities**
Support the growth plans identified by the city's universities and connecting them with the schools and colleges to develop the knowledge and skills required for our young population. The universities need improved physical connectivity, and support to reach out and become the hearts of neighbourhoods and communities.
- **Affordable Creative, Cultural and Start-Up space**
Develop planning policies and proposals to provide a range of flexible, start-up and affordable workspace across Central Birmingham.
- **Develop a series of Smart City Initiatives**
Using data analytics and emerging technologies to inform and deliver better solutions to urban problems. Technology can also be used to facilitate citizen engagement to support co-creation of places.
- **Community Hubs**

Work with the private and charitable sectors to develop community hubs across the city, with access to the latest technologies and learning to stimulate the creative energy of the next generation of innovators.

- **Open Data Brum**

Develop a city dashboard and interactive map to store collect and analyse data to address urban challenges and improve public services. The open data portal will give planners, public and organisations real time data on subjects like traffic flows, schools, land usage patterns and air quality to facilitate innovations and better decision making.

6. NEXT STEPS

How can you be part of this?

The City Council is launching this new approach to guide how the city grows and changes over the next 20 years, seeking involvement from all communities to help shape the plans.

The ideas within this document are the start of the conversation on our future and we invite you to feedback on this. All ideas, proposals, comments and views received will help to form a more detailed Draft Planning Framework to be launched for more discussion later in the year.

We would also like to hear your ideas about how we make changes happen and if you would like to be part of that journey. Further information and updates on the consultation events can be found on Our Future City Plan webpage: www.birmingham.gov.uk/ourfuturecityplan



CONTACT - click the following link to get in touch about this document

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