

**Title of Equality Impact Assessment**

Our Future City: Central Birmingham Framework

**Reference No.**

EQUA1129

**EA is in support of**

New Strategy

**Review Frequency**

Annually

**Date of first review**

10/05/2024

**Directorate**

Inclusive Growth

**Service Area**

Planning and Regeneration

**Responsible Officer(s)**

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**Quality Control Officer(s)**

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**Accountable Officer(s)**

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**Purpose of proposal**

The Central Birmingham Framework will set out the future vision for redevelopment and regeneration in Birmingham’s central area. It identifies a broad range of place-making interventions and strategic actions arranged under six ‘City Themes’ which encompass topics such as housing and employment growth, digitalisation, sustainability, connectivity, green spaces and neighbourhoods. It follows and builds upon the Shaping Our City Together consultation in 2021, which sought endorsement of the Draft Framework vision and its key principles. Once published, the Central Birmingham Framework will be a key document informing the ongoing preparation of the statutory Birmingham Local Plan.

**Data Sources**

Survey(s); Consultation Results; relevant reports/strategies; Statistical Database (please specify); relevant research

**Please include any other sources of data**

Census 2021

**ASSESS THE IMPACT AGAINST THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

Protected Characteristic	Impacted	Commentary
Age	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>Age is an important consideration in the Central Birmingham Framework. According to the recent Census data (2021), around 30% of Central Birmingham's resident population are aged 19 or under, with 64.6% of people aged 20-64, and 6.5% of people aged 65 and older. Central Birmingham contains a much higher proportion of young people (19 or under) than the rest of the city. In addition, the neighbourhoods of Central South and Central North have relatively higher proportions of people aged 19 or under compared to the other areas in Central Birmingham.</p> <p>During the 'Shaping Our City Together' consultation in 2021, there was targeted engagement with young people under the age of 20. This consisted of a tailored consultation document which sought views on how the city centre could be improved to accommodate the needs of younger people. The consultation resulted in over 150 responders providing comments on the document and these have gone on to inform the Draft Framework. In addition, the Shaping Our City Together document was presented in person at the city's main universities to students, in order to ensure they were involved in shaping the Framework, as well as at a secondary school in the city centre.</p> <p>The Framework seeks to grow and improve neighbourhoods, the built environment and the public realm within Central Birmingham for all people regardless of their age. Proposals for new residential uses in the Central Birmingham area will be encouraged to provide a mix of different housing types to accommodate multiple demographics, including family housing and dwellings specifically suited for older people. The Framework supports an overall increase in the provision of open green space across the area, as well as improvements to existing green assets. This will provide benefits to people of all ages but particularly children and the elderly, by increasing their access to nature and (for children) providing more opportunities for play, which contributes positively towards their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Prior to the start of the consultation on the Draft Framework, community/stakeholder mapping will help identify organisations and groups within Central Birmingham's neighbourhoods who represent the interests of specific demographics, such as young people and the elderly. During the consultation itself, several different engagement methods will be used to encourage people to participate and raise their views. These will include in-person engagement sessions at venues located within each of the five neighbourhoods and the distribution of consultation documents via the Council's social media accounts. In addition, there will be publicity of the Draft Framework's strategy at various events being held in the city over the consultation period, in order to attract as wide a reach of different demographics as possible.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Impacted	Commentary
Disability	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>During the Shaping Our City Together consultation, comments were raised about the city centre's poor quality pedestrian environment, and the difficulties that people face in moving around the city due to the dominance of road infrastructure in many places. Air pollution was raised as a serious concern in parts of the central area, particularly around the city's Ring Roads. Many people also commented on the general lack of attractive open spaces across the area, and the need to provide more greenery in the city centre.</p> <p>One of the strategic interventions in the Draft Framework is to improve connectivity and public transportation networks in Central Birmingham. Through proposals such as the 'Greenways', the Draft Framework is seeking to improve connectivity and mobility options across Central Birmingham which currently has many areas characterised by poor public realm and car dominated spaces, resulting in poor connectivity for pedestrians as well as causing air pollution. People with mobility problems are often adversely impacted by these poor quality environments. The Draft Framework seeks to accommodate the needs of all pedestrians and create more attractive and convenient travel routes around the city centre. In addition the Framework recognises the need to provide housing which can accommodate people who are likely to have restricted mobility in later life.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time, all consultation events were required to be held virtually. Events were hosted by BCC officers introducing each of the six City Themes via video conferencing applications, and over 50 people were in attendance. As they were carried out virtually, the events were made more accessible to people with physical disabilities and those with mobility problems, as they could attend from their home instead of having to travel to a venue elsewhere.</p> <p>The consultation on the Draft Framework will involve organisations and groups who represent the interests of disabled people and encourage them to participate in the ongoing production of the Framework. These organisations will be identified via the stakeholder mapping exercise prior to the consultation start date.</p>
Sex	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>Several responses from the 'Shaping Our City Together' consultation raised issues regarding the safety of women in the city centre, particularly during the night-time. The Central Birmingham 2040 framework recognises these concerns by supporting new and improved public spaces that are well lit, overlooked by buildings and are kept active during all hours of the day. In addition, proposals to improve the walking routes along the canal towpaths will be closely linked to redevelopment site allocations aligning the canals and these will be encouraged to maximise activity and natural surveillance onto the towpaths where practicable, to ensure that these routes are safe and well-used.</p>
Gender Reassignment	Not applicable	<p>No specific comments relating to gender reassignment were raised during the Shaping Our City Together consultation.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Impacted	Commentary
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Not applicable	No specific comments relating to this protected characteristic were raised during the Shaping Our City Together consultation.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>No specific comments relating to pregnancy and maternity were raised during the Shaping Our City Together consultation. However, as mentioned previously, general comments were raised about enabling better mobility for people travelling across the central area of Birmingham, as well as making public transportation much more accessible and easier to use, and the need to increase access to green and recreational spaces across the city centre. Poor connectivity and mobility, as well as a lack of accessible open spaces, can disproportionately impact upon both pregnant women and women with very young children.</p> <p>The Draft Framework has responded to these comments and several principles and aspirations in the Framework seek to help deliver positive impacts for all people in Birmingham. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating well-connected green and open spaces that serve the needs of the communities in Central Birmingham</li> <li>• Promoting and restore the urban waterways for recreation, leisure and tourism</li> <li>• Creating networks of pedestrian streets and public spaces integrated with public transport services, with roads no longer creating barriers to people walking and cycling</li> </ul>

Protected Characteristic	Impacted	Commentary
Race	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>Birmingham is a highly diverse city, and the central area covered by the Framework is home to a large number of ethnic minority groups. The recent Census data indicates that the Central North, Central East and Central South neighbourhoods in particular are home to high proportions of people from ethnic minority groups. In the Central North (containing the districts of Newtown and Nechells) nearly 30% of the residents are of African descent, and in Central East which encompasses Bordesley and Small Heath, nearly 30% of residents are of Pakistani descent. Some of these areas are also amongst the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city.</p> <p>Responses to the Shaping Our City Together consultation did not raise any specific issues concerning the protected characteristic of race. However, general comments were raised about the need to deliver regeneration benefits and encourage investment in order to improve the economic standing of deprived neighbourhoods within Central Birmingham. The Draft Framework looks to spread the benefits of regeneration beyond the city centre and the Middleway ring road (which has been seen as a major barrier to growth in the past) and into these inner city communities and transform them into vibrant, attractive and inclusive places for all residents and visitors. There are also proposals to ensure that they are well connected to the city centre and to neighbouring areas, so they are no longer physically 'cut off' or perceived as being isolated. Interventions identified in the Framework include the identification of major development opportunity sites to provide new housing, jobs and services, improved walking and cycling routes, and improve access to green spaces.</p> <p>The consultation on the Draft Framework will encourage participation from organisations and groups within Central Birmingham's neighbourhoods representing the interests of ethnic minority groups and arrange in-person or online meetings with Council officers to discuss proposals if requested. Stakeholder mapping will help identify these organisations so that they are notified of the consultation.</p> <p>Not strictly based upon ethnicity but still an important consideration is English being a second language; according to the 2021 Census approximately 25% of people who live in Central Birmingham speak a different main language to English. During the Shaping Our City Together consultation, the vision document and its supporting materials were made accessible on the Council website and versions translated into other main languages were available on request and the same approach will be taken for the next stage of consultation on the Draft Framework.</p>

Protected Characteristic	Impacted	Commentary
Religion or Beliefs	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>The Draft Framework acknowledges that Birmingham is a highly diverse city, and the central area it covers is home to a large number of different ethnic minority groups. Whilst not exclusive to those from ethnic minority groups, there are large proportions of people from different religious backgrounds. The Framework's interventions and proposals are aimed to address the needs of people from all religious backgrounds. Specific interventions include strengthening the provision of community assets (which include places of worship) within Central Birmingham's neighbourhoods and make them more easily accessible through improved physical connectivity between them.</p> <p>During the Shaping Our City Together consultation, the Archdiocese of Birmingham submitted a formal response. The Archdiocese represents the interests of the Catholic community in Birmingham and the wider region and plays an important role, as both a place of worship and in wider community outreach. With regard to the vision and principles set out in the Shaping Our City Together document, no adverse impacts to the protected characteristic of religion were raised in their response. However comments were made on the need for the Framework to identify opportunities that would improve the setting of St Chad's Cathedral in the city centre and maximise its community use, by improving the square to the front. In response the Draft Framework has identified opportunities to greatly improve the public realm between Great Charles Street and Lancaster Circus, which will encompass improvements to the area around St Chads Cathedral and strengthen pedestrian connectivity, making the cathedral more accessible to the local community.</p> <p>Consultation on the Draft Framework will encourage participation from local organisations and groups who represent the interests of the various religious communities. Stakeholder mapping will help identify these organisations so that they are notified of the consultation.</p>
Sexual Orientation	Service Users / Stakeholders; Employees; Wider Community	<p>There were some responses received during the Shaping Our City Together consultation which raised concerns about the loss of LGBTQ+ entertainment venues in Southside. In response to this, the Framework seeks to protect and retain all late-night venues both within Southside and elsewhere in the central area of Birmingham and ensures that they can also co-exist with neighbouring uses such as housing without causing adverse impacts on the amenity and operation of either use.</p> <p>The consultation on the Draft Framework will encourage participation from local organisations and groups who represent the interests of the LGBTQ+ community in Birmingham. Stakeholder mapping will help identify these organisations so that they are notified of the consultation.</p>

## **Socio economic impacts**

The Draft Framework promotes a strategy for delivering inclusive and sustainable growth, bringing socio-economic benefits for all communities within the area, some of which are currently amongst the most deprived within Birmingham. Interventions and proposals within the Framework will encourage investment that have a positive impact upon all people in Central Birmingham by providing new homes, jobs and infrastructure, improving access to green and blue spaces, improving connections to neighbouring areas and strengthening community resilience.

The Draft Framework sets out the following as its vision statement:

*By 2040 Birmingham will be a leading international city, operating on a global stage, where prosperity is shared by all – healthy, happy 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.'*

- *Inclusive – embraces diversity, prosperity shared by all, healthy, just and affordable communities*
- *Creative – A unique identity, cultural neighbourhoods, innovative beautiful and embraces technology*
- *Resilient – adapts to climate change, flexible communities and economy, quality environment and enhanced biodiversity*
- *Connected – connected neighbourhoods, UK hub, global city*

The vision statement takes into consideration the three pillars of sustainable development – social, environmental and economic – and there is a commitment to supporting the city's diverse neighbourhoods and cultural mix, ensuring they are protected and are able to prosper through the Framework's proposals and interventions.

**Please indicate any actions arising from completing this screening exercise – n/a**

**Please indicate whether a full impact assessment is recommended – No**

**What data has been collected to facilitate the assessment of this policy/proposal?**

This Equality Impact Assessment has been informed by a number of demographic and socio-economic datasets sourced from the most recent national Census carried out in 2021.

The Draft Central Birmingham Framework has been informed by a proportionate evidence base, as well as by the responses received by members of the community and organisations during the Shaping Our City Together consultation in 2021 and any further engagement carried out since. The Draft Central Birmingham Framework has also been developed in accordance with national planning policy set out by the Government, the local planning policies in the



Council's adopted planning framework, the relevant planning guidance and evidence prepared by both the Government and the Council, as well as other relevant strategies and plans prepared by the Council and its partners.

### **Consultation Analysis**

The Draft Central Birmingham Framework has been informed by the Shaping Our City Together consultation held between January and March 2021 for six weeks. The consultation sought views on the vision statement introducing the six City Themes and their underlying principles, which now underpin the proposals and actions featured in the Draft Framework.

All email contacts listed on both the Planning Strategy and City Centre Development Team consultation databases were notified of the consultation prior to its start date. A stakeholder mapping exercise was undertaken to identify organisations and groups at the local community level. This helped ensure that 'seldom heard' groups were informed of the consultation and given opportunities to participate. 'Seldom heard' groups often include individuals with protected characteristics.

In addition, comprehensive 'activity mapping' data was also generated, showing an array of different organisations within Central Birmingham, ranging from community projects, organisations and local facilities such as schools, medical practices and leisure facilities. These have been analysed at ward level, to provide a further picture of assets in the area – which was then used to help guide and support a number of principles in the strategy.

There were approximately **790** representations and comments received for the Shaping Our City Together consultation. The main consultation channels available for people to submit comments and representations were as follows:

- BeHeard questionnaire with questions on each element of the vision as well as early aspirations for regeneration opportunities in the central area (Highgate Park, Hockley flyover, Gas Street Basin) presented as CGIs
- Short survey distributed over the Council's social media accounts
- The City Centre Development Team Shared Inbox for email representations and comments submitted in file formats such as PDFs
- The People for Public Services forum coincided with the consultation period in early March 2021. This generated a further 300 individual responses on the Shaping Our City Together document.

All submitted comments and representations received during the consultation have helped inform the Draft Framework. Overall the responses received were very positive and supportive of the vision and its underlying principles, however responders tended to provide suggestions on how the vision and principles could be strengthened further. A broad summary of the issues received during Shaping Our City Together are provided below:

- Heritage and historic buildings should be protected, reused, and enhanced.

- High-quality affordable housing should be delivered.
- Request for high-quality design and vision should address the climate emergency.
- Concern the vision doesn't cover outer areas of the city and the character of different areas of the city should be protected.
- Need to provide appropriate transport, health and education infrastructure to meet the demand of new residential development.
- Centres should provide green infrastructure and accessible and appropriate facilities for residents.
- Build on the existing identities of local centres and improve connections between local centres.
- Support local businesses.
- Include opportunities for renewable energy and climate adaptation measures.
- Concern regarding impact of tall buildings.
- Improve quality of public realm and ensure new developments contribute to carbon neutrality.
- Avoid gentrification and protect identity of existing centres and communities.
- Ensure new developments and open spaces are fully accessible.
- Deliver employment opportunities for local residents.
- Support delivery of green open space, infrastructure, and proposals to improve the canal network and repurpose roads.
- Increase lighting in parks and open spaces to improve safety.
- Question what ongoing management and maintenance of new green space is proposed.
- Council should encourage community involvement to help local residents feel ownership of green spaces.
- Heritage and historic assets should be protected and enhanced.
- Council must commit to safeguard the culture of the LGBT+ community.
- More investment in culture and cultural facilities.

- Historic buildings that are vacant should be repurposed.
- Support improvements to affordable sustainable travel modes, public transport, cycling and walking links.
- Concerns regarding pedestrian and cyclist safety.
- Need to ensure sustainable travel options are fully accessible.
- Need to incentivise businesses to relocate to Birmingham.
- Universities have a role in upskilling tech industries.
- Need to offer learning and education for all levels and abilities, should utilise existing libraries and community centres.

With regard to the protected characteristics, the Draft Framework has responded to feedback and comments received during the Shaping Our City Together consultation by:

- Seeking to provide a range of affordable housing types and affordable workspace at sustainable locations within each of the 5 Central Areas.
- Improving the quality of public realm, and strengthening connections between neighbourhoods in Central Birmingham as well as to areas outside the Draft Framework boundaries
- Creating an accessible, high-quality network of new and improved green spaces across the central area of Birmingham.
- Aligning with the Birmingham Transport Plan priorities by supporting the provision of a low-cost, frequent, wide reaching and sustainable public transport network
- Safeguarding and protecting the entertainment and night-time economy across the city and considering policy intervention to protect night-time uses in Southside and Westside.
- Improving pedestrian safety and perceptions of safety through enhanced lighting along all major walking routes, and maximising natural surveillance upon green spaces and canal frontages
- Strengthening the provision of community assets in neighbourhoods across Central Birmingham, which include community centres, libraries, exhibition space and places of worship
- Improving employment opportunities and access to higher education

### **Adverse impact on any people with protected characteristics**

The Draft Framework is deemed to have an overall positive impact upon across the whole community in Central Birmingham and across all protected characteristics. The points raised in this impact assessment will be thoroughly tested during the consultation on the Draft Framework and up to its final publication to ensure that it does not adversely impact upon any of the protected groups.

### **Could the policy/proposal be modified to reduce or eliminate any adverse impact?**

This is not considered necessary at this stage as no adverse impacts have been identified in the Draft Framework. However, more detailed planning and delivery work will be needed on the individual proposals listed in the final Framework and this will be supported by further equality analysis that will identify any potential adverse impacts. In addition, as the purpose of the Framework is to inform policy options and site allocations for the Birmingham Local Plan process, further detailed Equality Analysis will be required to be undertaken on any proposals or interventions

### **How will the effect(s) of this policy/proposal on equality be monitored?**

Following publication of the Central Birmingham 2040 Framework, the proposals within the document will be developed further during the preparation of the Birmingham Local Plan and closely considered for site allocation and/or planning policy options. All proposals and policies within an adopted Local Plan are required to be monitored annually. Business cases for any identified proposal in the final Framework, both planning and non-planning related, will require proportionate level of equality analysis undertaken prior to approval by the Council.

### **What data is required in the future?**

None

### **Are there any adverse impacts on any particular group(s)**

No – there are no significant adverse impacts arising from the Draft Framework. The vision, principles and bold proposals seek to deliver an overall positive impact upon all protected characteristics and does not disproportionately affect one protected group or characteristic over another. It will contribute to equality of opportunities by providing a framework for growth and investment that benefits all.

### **Summary and evidence of findings from your EIA**

The Draft Central Birmingham Framework is considered to have no adverse impacts upon any of the protected characteristics. The Draft Framework seeks to deliver positive impacts upon all protected groups in the central areas of Birmingham through its proposals and interventions. The Draft Framework addresses the issues raised during the Shaping Our City Together consultation in regard to protected characteristics and groups. Further equality analysis

will be undertaken for the final Framework, as well as for future development plan documents and business cases prepared by the Council which will help deliver the aspirations set out in the Framework.

Consultation on the Draft Framework will run from 23<sup>rd</sup> May to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The consultation will test the updated vision, principles and the bold proposals within each of the five central areas. This engagement will involve 8 weeks of activity, inviting people to join in with a conversation about the future of our city. Promotion of the consultation will be visible in key locations such as local libraries and community centres. Physical events / activities will be included in the programme and advertised on the Council website.

The consultation on the Draft Framework will:

- Test the updated vision, principles and bold proposals for each of the five central areas
- Gather views and further evidence to help support the Central Birmingham Framework going forward
- Focus on seldom heard groups, as well as young people, through targeted engagement and tailored events
- Build trust with the community and demonstrate that we are listening.
- Build investor confidence in the vision
- Develop relationships with stakeholders and foster ongoing engagement

Responses to the consultation will be subject to analysis and reported upon in the consultation statement accompanying the final version of the Framework; this will ensure that the proposals do not disproportionately impact upon protected groups.