

## **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**5th SEPTEMBER 2013**

**WARDS: NECHELLS**

#### **BRISTOL STREET & ST LUKE'S DRAFT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report explains the background to the draft planning document – the Bristol Street & St Luke's Development Framework and consultation that has been undertaken on it.

##### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1. Planning Committee provide any responses on the content of the draft Bristol Street & St Luke's Development Framework.

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##### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Cabinet approved, in principle, the disposal of 4.27 hectares (10.55 acres) of land within the St Luke's estate comprising the sites of former residential towers, the Highgate Centre and public open space. A subsequent Cabinet approval on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012 approved the formation of a Joint Venture Agreement (JV) with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to seek a joint disposal of the St Luke's sites together with the HCA owned former site of Matthew Boulton College on Bristol Street.
- 3.2 The disposal of 8.93 hectares (21.97 acres) of largely cleared land will provide a major high-profile regeneration opportunity at a key location within the city centre. The Big City Plan identifies these sites as a major opportunity for residential led mixed use development with a range of housing types and tenures, high quality public open space and commercial uses which could bring jobs and activity to the area.
- 3.3 The Cabinet approval of 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012 also establishes that a planning framework would assist in promoting the regeneration opportunities of the sites and ensuring the existing planning policy requirements (such as the re-provision of Public Open Space) and development viability could be achieved.
- 3.4 The draft Bristol Street & St Luke's Development Framework builds upon the principles of the Big City Plan and existing planning policies of the Birmingham Plan Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (UDP), "Places for Living" and "Places for All" SPDs. The draft Framework sets out requirements for:

- New homes of a mixed size, type and tenure including affordable housing;
- Opportunities for mixed-use development and landmark buildings on Bristol Street/Belgrave Middleway;
- A reconfiguring and improvement of Public Open Space as part of a new development to include new facilities including a re-provided football pitch;
- Retention of existing significant trees and boulevarding of Sherlock Street;
- Potential to reuse St Luke's Church and elements of the Highgate Centre.

3.5 The Bristol Street & St Luke's Development Framework is not a Statutory Planning document, but having it endorsed by the City Council will give it significance as the framework for future development of the Bristol Street and St Luke's sites, guiding discussions with developers. Where proposals need to be embedded in the statutory planning process, to enable land use change and development activity, this will be achieved through the Birmingham Development Plan.

#### **4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

4.1 The Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Regeneration approved the draft Bristol Street & St Luke's Development Framework for consultation on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

4.2 Public consultation on the draft document was carried out between 26<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and 7<sup>th</sup> August 2013. Letters were sent to residents of the St Luke's and Southacre estates providing an overview of the document, details of the consultation and how to make comments by post, email or through a questionnaire on the Council's BeHeard website. Three resident drop-in sessions were held at St Martin's Youth & Community Centre where officers were available to explain the document and answer questions. Officers attended a Ward Committee meeting and resident meetings to provide details of the document and consultation.

4.3 The comments received were generally positive, supporting the redevelopment of the sites and the development principles set out in the framework. All comments received will be considered and the framework amended where appropriate before final endorsement is sought from the Cabinet Member.

#### **5. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

The Big City Plan 2011  
Bristol Street and St Luke's Draft Development Framework



WAHEED NAZIR  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION



# Bristol Street and St. Luke's Draft Development Framework

April 2013

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## 2 Introduction

The Big City Plan identifies significant redevelopment opportunities in the Southside and Highgate Quarter that have the potential to strengthen the area's character and create a vibrant, liveable and well connected part of the City Centre.

The sites at Bristol Street and St. Luke's provide a significant opportunity within the quarter to create a high quality, sustainable, mixed-use development; with high-profile commercial sites and the elements for a new residential neighbourhood.

### What the development framework does

This development framework sets out the vision and development principles for the future regeneration of this key part of the City Centre, in order to guide an appropriate level and scope of sustainable development.

### Status of the document

The development framework is informal planning guidance, that has been prepared in accordance with, and builds upon the guidance in the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (UDP). The overriding aim of the UDP is to encourage a broad range of activities within the City Centre. The UDP provides the following detail relevant to the sites:

"The Ring Road acts as an entry point on routes into the City Centre. The intersection of key radial routes with the Ring Road gives rise to gateway locations and significant development opportunities. In such locations a concentration of activity with an emphasis upon mixed-use schemes (e.g. offices, servicing, distribution, showrooms, hotels) may be appropriate" (paragraph 15.22).

The UDP also states that:

"Whatever the area, development in the City Centre must contribute

to an improved physical environment. It should seek to make the City Centre more user friendly, whilst maintaining both accessibility and the potential to accommodate further activity." (paragraph 15.22)

New development should:

"Emphasise and where appropriate reinstate street frontages. Ground floor activity consistent with a pedestrian environment should incorporate lively mixed uses but strictly avoid car parking fronting the street" (paragraph 15.22 (c)).

In line with Big City Plan aspirations, the main principles of this guidance will be embedded

within the City Council's emerging Birmingham Development Plan - the statutory planning document that will provide the planning policy framework and overarching strategy for the whole of the City.

Relevant design guidance that inform future development of this part of the City Centre can be found in 'Places for All' and 'Places for Living'.

### The location

Southside and Highgate forms one of the City Centre's 7 quarters. This development framework focuses specifically upon the Bristol Street and St. Luke's sites which are located on the quarter's southern boundary.



New high density housing



Plan 1 City Centre Quarter's defined in the BCP

# The opportunity

In close proximity to New Street Station, this part of the City Centre is a key gateway with opportunities for major redevelopment and expansion of the residential population.

The Big City Plan identifies the potential of the sites for providing a variety of new homes of mixed type and tenure, to form a much improved neighbourhood; and in developing sites on Bristol Street that will provide an appropriate gateway to the City Centre and a focus of activity that will draw people through the Chinatown and Gay Village areas to the City Core. The sites are also adjacent to the Southern Gateway Area of Transformation where regeneration opportunities will be brought forward over the next 20 years.

Connections to the heart of the City Centre will be improved further by proposals in the Big City Plan for the transformation of the Southern Gateway site into a new retail/entertainment/city living destination.

In order for this area to fulfil its potential future development will need to:

- Create a mix of housing types and tenures to include affordable housing.
- Create good quality, active streets, open spaces and better connections with the City Core and neighbouring areas.
- Support and create strong, vibrant communities by dealing with vacant and underused land and buildings.
- Achieve the remodelling of the St. Luke Estate, including the under-utilised open space, to accommodate both new housing and more functional and better quality spaces.

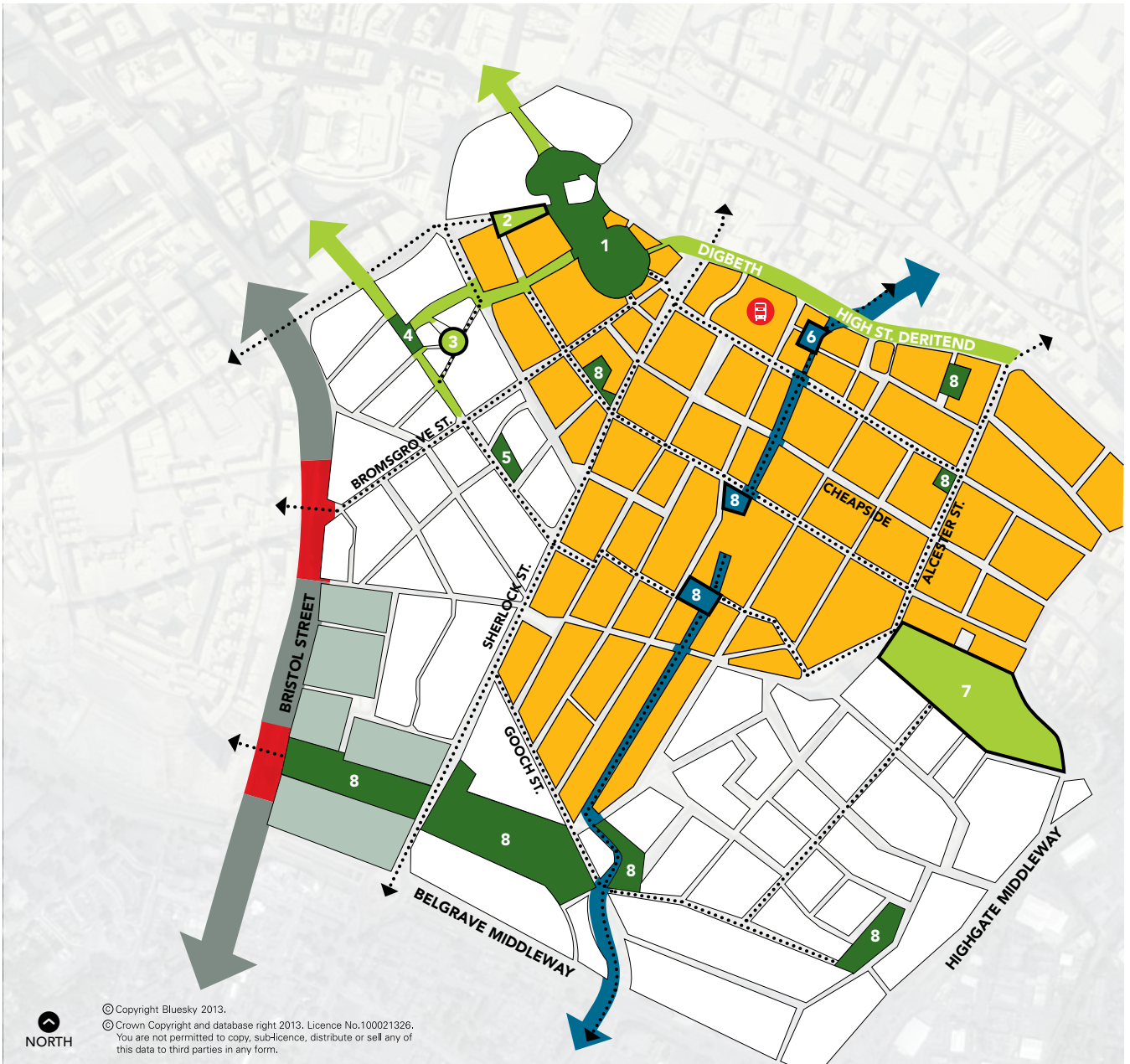
- The Bristol Street site, with its prominent frontage to Bristol Street and Belgrave Middleway, presents an opportunity for a major mixed-use landmark development based around a significantly improved public open space. The development will provide strong links to Sherlock Street and Kent Street as local walking routes connecting into the City Core. The site will support a mix of uses that help to provide a magnet to draw economic and pedestrian activity into this part of the City Centre.

- Bristol Street will remain a key vehicular route into the City Centre from the south and forms part of the A38. Opportunities will be sought to transform the currently harsh pedestrian environment and to improve the number and quality of crossing points in order to better connect Attwood Green with Southside.













The plan opposite illustrates the overarching vision for the area set out in the Big City Plan.



Mixed tenure apartments



**KEY**

-  Birmingham Coach Station
-  Existing block structure
-  Blocks within Southern Gateway major transformation area
-  Blocks forming part of other major developments
-  Existing open spaces
-  New open spaces
-  River Rea space interventions
-  Primary walking routes
-  Local walking routes
-  River Rea
-  A38 Corridor
-  Major road interventions and improved pedestrian crossing

**Open spaces**

- 1** NEW - St Martin's and Moat Square
- 2** Edgbaston Street public realm
- 3** Arcadian public realm
- 4** NEW - Theatre Square
- 5** NEW - Village Square
- 6** NEW - Connaught Square
- 7** Highgate Park
- 8** NEW - other key opportunities for new/improved open spaces

**Plan 2** Southside and Highgate Masterplan

# Development principles

Future development of the sites should deliver a high-quality urban neighbourhood that meets the needs and expectations of existing and future residents. Commercial and mixed-use opportunities will be expected to provide a quality of scheme befitting the prominent sites at the gateway to the City Centre.

New development must be based on a thorough understanding of the site and its historic, physical and planning context. It should aim to incorporate existing site assets, address existing instances of poor design and protect the amenity of existing residents.

Most of the development sites are surrounded by housing developed in the 1960's, with the exception of the north-eastern part of the Bristol Street site which is behind the Bristol Street Motors car showroom.

## Growth

Across the area there are significant opportunities to deliver new development supporting economic growth and expansion of the City Centre's resident population.

The St. Luke's sites would only be suitable for residential uses, although reuse of the Highgate Centre could also lend itself to

community, office or educational uses in addition to residential conversion.

Bristol Street is a prominent and accessible location and has potential for a variety of uses. The frontage to Bristol Street and the Ring Road could accommodate commercial uses such as showrooms, small-scale retail, hotel, community uses (religious/educational) and student accommodation. The remainder of the site would lend itself to residential development related to the green space and to integrate with the existing residential properties on the north-east boundary to the site.

## Building form and scale

The development should take the opportunity to create a new place in the City Centre that will complement nearby major regeneration at Southside and the residential neighbourhood

at Attwood Green/Park Central. Although development layout and massing must pay heed to the existing 1960s housing immediately around the site, it should have its own strong identity and achieve a high quality environment in terms of urban design and architecture.

Plan 3 sets out an illustrative example of the scale of buildings based upon the following principles:

- Development character should be distinctly urban (rather than suburban) to reflect its City Centre location.
- Buildings along Belgrave Middleway and Bristol Street should provide a level of enclosure that responds to the scale of the roads and marks junctions. For example, buildings between 6 and 12 storeys are appropriate at the junction of Bristol Street and Belgrave Middleway to mark it as a 'gateway' road junction.

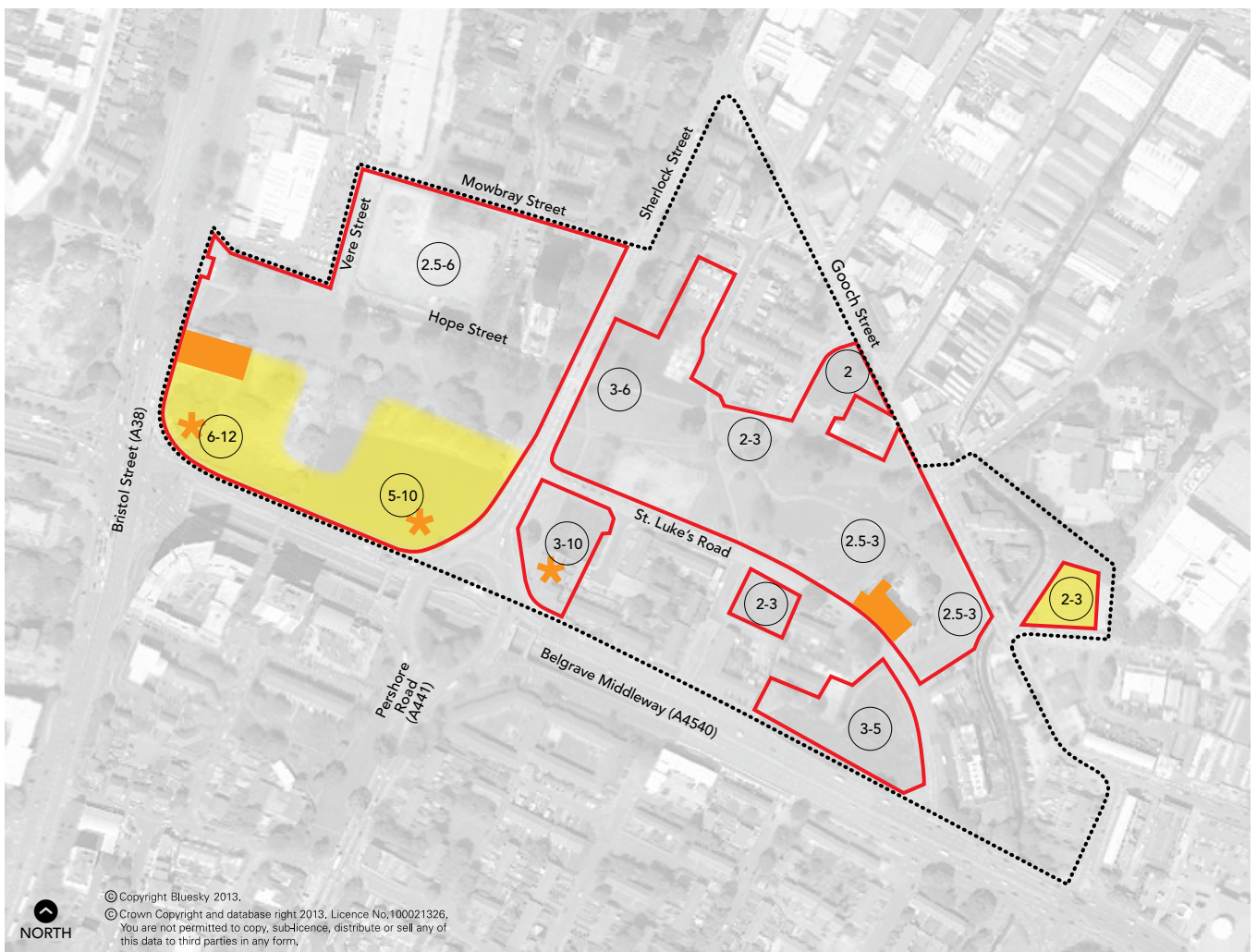


Different types and scale of new housing

## KEY

- ..... Bristol Street and St. Luke's boundary
- Development sites
- Buildings worthy of retention and conservation
- Potential for commercial/residential mixed uses
- ✳ Potential landmark development sites
- ②-3 Indicative building height ranges (number of storeys)

- Amenity of existing homes should be protected; taking account of issues such as overlooking, shading, noise and security. The new and existing housing must create a coherent urban neighbourhood.
- Sense of place and legibility should be enhanced by a layout that makes the most of existing assets such as the green space and heritage buildings and introduces distinctive new buildings and features.
- Retention and reuse of the Highgate Centre and St. Luke's Church should sensitively integrate them into the overall scheme, perhaps incorporated into new urban blocks.
- Public and private spaces should be clearly defined. Fronts should face fronts and backs should be private and secure.
- Active frontages will be required with doors and windows at ground-floor level to residential accommodation. Ventilation grills and under-croft parking should be avoided along main pedestrian routes into and around the sites. Development along Bristol Street and Belgrave Middleway, if commercial in nature, will also be required to have a strong, continuous active frontage.



**Plan 3** Building form and scale

## Connectivity

The redevelopment of the area should contribute to transforming the connections in the City Centre and the delivery of high quality public open spaces.

### Open space - creating parks and squares

The transformation of the existing public open spaces that run through the centre of the sites is a key requirement of any development. The open spaces will form the heart of the new development turning currently strategically valuable, yet significantly under-utilised green areas, into an attractive setting for new homes with high-quality facilities that create a community asset for new and existing residents.

The design and layout of the open spaces and their weak relationship to existing development creates poorly overlooked, insular spaces that feel unsafe to walk through. It is accepted that a quantity of public open space will be lost to enable development but in return the remaining open space will have to achieve a significant improvement in the quality and usability - and to ensure an over-all improved layout of built form and pedestrian connections.

Plan 4 shows the broad areas where there is greatest potential for retaining and improving green open space. The details of boundaries, size and position of facilities (such as play equipment and football pitch) will be subject to detailed layout proposals.

The following key design considerations will need to be addressed in any development proposals:

- Definition of the role of the spaces is needed to ensure that facilities meet local needs with a range of activities designed to appeal to all sectors of the existing and new community;
  - St. Luke's open space should feel more like a park and a local destination, rather than just an open space to walk through.
  - Bristol Street's open space could form one, or more, large public garden squares with tree-lined walkways. It should also accommodate play/recreational facilities.



Plan 4 Trees and Green Corridors

- A strong new built frontage will be required in order to provide activity and create natural surveillance across the remodelled open spaces.
- Completing existing perimeter blocks will also provide definition to the spaces by securing existing exposed rear garden boundaries.
- Remodelling the topography to remove or minimise the artificial mounding across the sites will be vital in order to open up sightlines and views, to increase natural surveillance over the area and create more useable spaces.
- The sites contain many very good tree specimens. Where possible, many of the existing trees should be retained. In order to address wider issues of design and layout, together with the creation of developable sites, it is accepted that there would be some tree loss. Plan 4 identifies the most important groups and how they could contribute to the requirement for green space/corridors as part of the development. Future development should avoid level changes to retained tree Root Protection Areas.
- A clear, strong green pedestrian link is required between the remodelled open spaces. The swathe of linear open space forms part of a strategic network of open spaces within the City. This could be achieved for example,

## KEY

- ..... Bristol Street and St. Luke's boundary
- Development sites
- Existing trees of value
- Green corridor
- Potential open space concentrations
- Potential new tree planting
- River Rea



High density homes

by wide pedestrian tree-lined avenues/boulevards between the spaces to provide continuity.

Requirements for open space:

- Quantity: The UDP requires 2ha per 1000 population.
- St. Luke's 'Neighbourhood Park' will be required within the development area, the features of such a park include:
  - Grass pitch: retain or replace existing facility - marked out, well-drained pitch (year-round), 50m x 36m minimum.
  - Play areas: infant area 625m<sup>2</sup>, junior area 1225m<sup>2</sup> including 30m passive buffer zones to nearest residential units. Desirable to have outdoor gym equipment (5 pieces).
  - Allow several functions: sufficient room for community events and areas for passive enjoyment of the natural environment.
  - Street furniture: benches, lighting and litter bins to be provided.
  - Defined boundary treatments: Existing railings/piers to Gooch Street edge and 'Sunflower Arch' on Gooch Street Bridge over River Rea, forming link

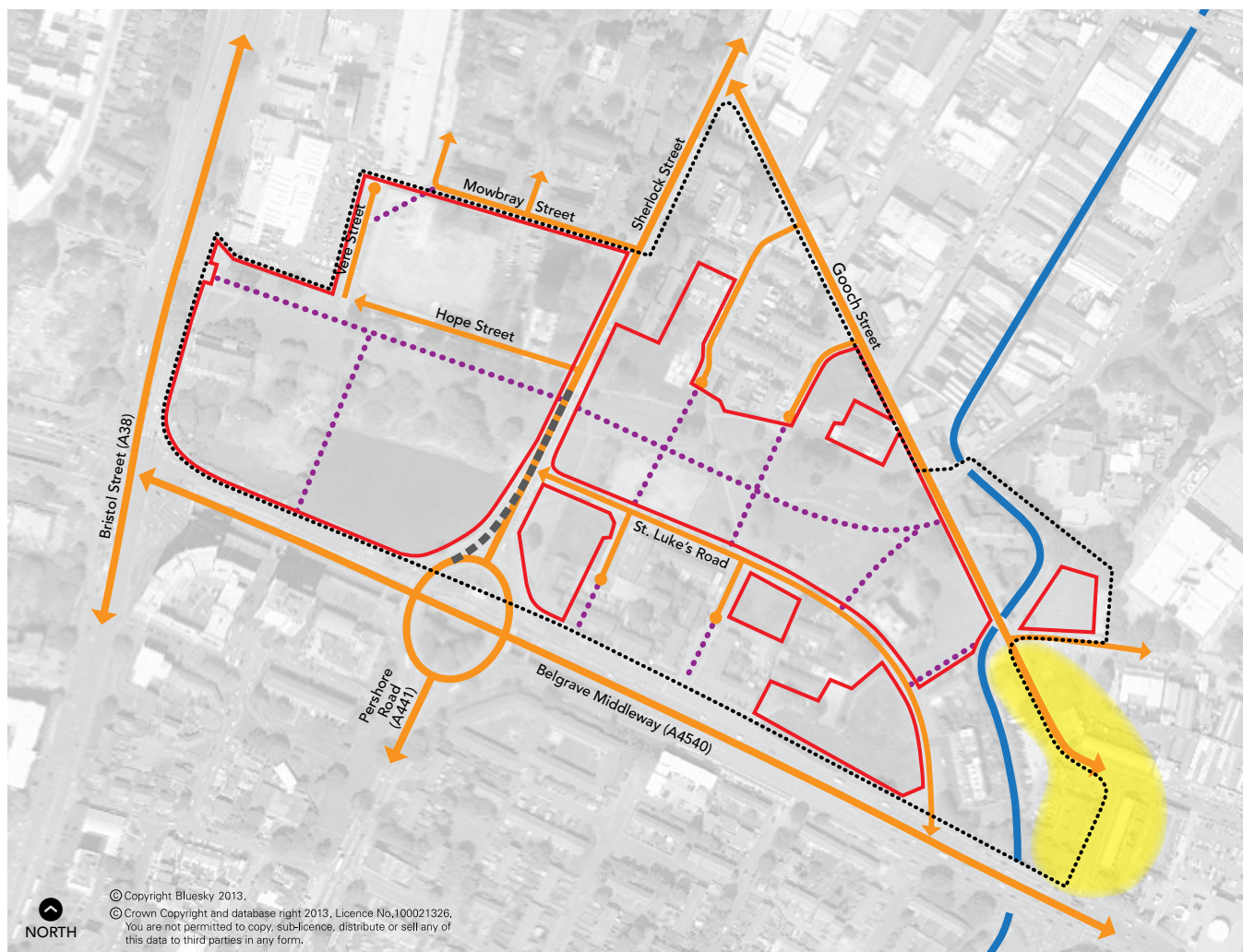
to Highgate local centre - retain and extended with the sunflower motif to other park boundaries.

Consideration should be given to the ongoing maintenance of open space and facilities. This may be through a commuted sum or another legal agreement.

## Streets and parking

Scheme design must promote walking, cycling and use of public transport and facilitate easy access to facilities on the doorstep at Highgate district shopping centre (Horton Square) and the City Centre. The amount of car parking should take into account the City Core location and easy access to facilities, and could be further reduced through options such as a car club. Other sustainability measures such as electric charging points should also be considered. (See 'Car Parking Guidelines' SPD). In addition:

- Car parking must be carefully designed so that it is a discreet element of the public realm. A range of solutions will be needed that could include on-street parking, which is more flexible than parking within house plots. The use of rear parking courts for family homes should be



### Plan 5 Connectivity

minimised and designed to be safe and secure with restricted access.

- Existing parking courts - many of the sites within St. Luke's adjoin existing parking courts. Detailed layout design should seek to provide greater security and improved environment of the courts as part of the integration with the existing residential properties.
- New residential streets should be designed in accordance with the 'Places for Living' SPD, as attractive spaces with priority for pedestrians and cyclists, which can also accommodate vehicles. Measures include different surfacing materials, narrow carriageways and tight radii at junctions. Signage, street markings and clutter should be minimised.

Redevelopment proposals should be accompanied by a Transport Assessment that considers access by all modes resulting from the development.

#### Heritage

There are few examples left of the historic fabric of the area due to previous comprehensive redevelopment schemes. Future development should seek to retain/reuse those assets that remain.

#### Buildings of value

St. Luke's Church, fronting onto Bristol Street and the Highgate Centre, off St. Luke's Road are Victorian buildings of architectural and historic interest, although not statutorily protected they are the last surviving examples of the original buildings in the area and provide local landmarks and contribute to a neighbourhood sense of place.

The Highgate Centre has an attractive frontage building to St. Luke's Road with an attached former caretaker's house (currently offices) both of which are suitable for re-use, conversion and incorporation into a surrounding block of development. The rear wings of the building have less merit, their loss could allow for a successful reconfiguration of the frontage buildings (perhaps just the façade of the 'workshop' element) and development of the remainder of the site that would relate better to the surrounding public open space.

St. Luke's Church has some merit, and should be retained and re-used if possible. It can be altered internally, added to or extended and would suit a range of uses including residential flats, student housing, sheltered housing, hotel, educational, religious,

## KEY

- Bristol Street and St. Luke's boundary
- Development sites
- Key vehicular and pedestrian routes
- Key pedestrian links/potential
- — — Highway improvement line
- Horton Square local centre
- River Rea

entertainment, restaurant/bar, commercial/offices. It could be incorporated into a new urban block at the entrance to the open space.

### Sustainability

Future development across the area will have an important role in the delivery of wider sustainability objectives for the City. Along with general issues of design, energy and transport some location specific factors need to be addressed to ensure future development is the most sustainable it can be.

### Sustainable neighbourhood principles

Development at St. Luke's and Bristol Street will be expected to deliver the principles of sustainable neighbourhoods:

- A balanced mix of housing sizes, types and tenures.
- Access to facilities such as shops, schools, leisure and work opportunities.
- Convenient options to travel by foot, bicycle and public transport.
- A strong sense of place with high quality design.
- Environmental sustainability and climate proofing.

- Attractive, safe and multi-functional public spaces.
- Effective long-term management of buildings, open spaces and facilities.

### Landscape

As stated above, where possible many of the existing trees should be retained. Trees could be retained in courtyard/public square setting or in private residential gardens. Plan 4 identifies the most important groups and how they could contribute to the requirement for green space/corridors as part of the development.

There are a number of significant mature trees across the Bristol Street site both within the existing open space and within the former college car park. The best groups of trees should be retained and improved. A tree survey will be required.

New tree planting will be sought as compensation for any lost trees. The trees should be of a sufficient quantity, size and quality to mitigate the negative impacts of loss of mature trees. Opportunities for planting should be explored:

- Along the green corridor of Sherlock Street (which is an identified Highway Improvement Line), as the future redevelopment of this will allow Sherlock Street to be extended north westwards as far as a proposed new public square in the Southern Gateway. The existing green character of Pershore Road and parts of Sherlock Street (e.g. fronting Southacre Estate and Wellsbourne Tower) could be strengthened thereby improving this important approach to the City Centre. Street trees or formal planting in a green verge to the back of footway (by retaining and extending existing verges), will be required to create this urban boulevard.

- Along the frontage of Bristol Street, to improve the environment and bring a greater sense of human scale and enclosure for pedestrians.
- Within landscaped/open spaces within the development.

### Noise and air quality

Bristol Street (A38) and Belgrave Middleway (Ring Road A4540) present potential sources of noise and air pollution that will require appropriate surveys and consideration of mitigation measures in the detailed design stages.

### Flood risk and SUDs

The proximity of the River Rea to the St. Luke's site necessitates the consideration of flood risk. Across the wider site the sustainable management of water will need to be incorporated as part of development. This can include the provision of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS). Such measures should be incorporated into new development to both maximise the environmental benefits and management of water/surface water run off.

### Planning obligations

As required by UDP policy, S106, S278 or other appropriate legal agreements would need to be considered to meet requirements including:

- Affordable housing.
- Public open space.
- Improvements to highways.
- Education/health provision.

### Supporting documents

The following studies will be required as part of any future planning applications:

- Ecology.
- Archaeology.
- Flood Risk.

# Delivery

The framework sets out the vision and development principles for the future regeneration of this key part of the City Centre. Setting out the vision and development principles will allow developers to formulate plans that will deliver the ambitions for the sites.

The focus for the council will be on:

- The City Council owns part of the site and will be working in partnership with the other landowner, the Homes and Communities Agency, to bring together the land for sale to a developer.
- Working proactively with the developer to bring forward the phased development of the sites.

It will be expected that any future developer will provide a comprehensive masterplan for the site that responds to the content of this development framework. In formulating the masterplan, developers should fully understand the sites' infrastructure requirements and how the needs of the local community can be addressed.



**Waheed Nazir**  
Director of Planning and  
Regeneration



High quality public realm and innovative design



