



SMETHWICK WINDMILL EYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Supplementary Planning Document

July 2011

This document can be made available in large print on request.

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SMETHWICK WINDMILL EYE
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

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Windmill Eye Study Area

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project programme & brief

The overarching purpose of the Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan is to produce a clear, attractive, and shared vision for the area, developed with local residents, community and business partners, which will co-ordinate the actions and investments of a range of partners, including the council, over the next decade or more. The aims of the plan are as follows:

- Set out the layout of new development, extending the choice and quality of housing;
- Create better connections to amenities;
- Increase access to, and quality of, open spaces such as Victoria Park and the canal network;
- Improve the accessibility and presence of health, education, and other community amenities;
- Develop further the character and image of the area, especially at key arrival points;
- Identify how the new Acute Hospital can positively contribute to the regeneration of Windmill Eye area;

- Strengthen the 'High Street' in terms of its setting, and quality and diversity of offer; and
- Identify steps to an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable future for the area.

The brief for the Neighbourhood Plan emerged from the recommendations of the earlier Smethwick Area Action Plan (AAP), adopted by the Council in 2008. This AAP proposed a boundary for the Neighbourhood Plan area, and proposed its preparation as a statutory planning document to be presented to the Council's Cabinet for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This status will enable the council to better guide the form, distribution, and sequence of development and investment in the area. A programme for the full engagement, review, consultation, and adoption processes is set out opposite.



Date	Stage	Key Parties	Description
Summer 2009	Stage 1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Community Advisors facilitate a group of local residents to come together to discuss the future of the area. • Group advises the council on the selection of a team of Neighbourhood Planners.
Autumn 2009 – Spring 2010	Stage 2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	Windmill Eye Team = Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group + Stakeholders + Council Officers + Neighbourhood Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A larger group of local residents, community, business, and statutory partners work with the consultants to develop proposals for the area. • Iterative process involving workshops and project development.
Spring 2010	Stage 3 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PREPARATION	Council Officers + Neighbourhood Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Planners work with Council Officers to produce the detailed Neighbourhood Plan document and delivery plan.
Summer 2010	Stage 4 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW	Ward Members & Council Officers + Neighbourhood Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Officers review the Neighbourhood Plan and consult, edit, and advise on content of Consultation Draft SPD.
Autumn 2010	Stage 5 CONSULTATION DRAFT SPD	General Public, Community, and Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhood Planners produce Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Document • Local residents, stakeholders, and the general public respond to the Neighbourhood Plan, through a local exhibition, presentations, focus groups, and surveys.
Spring 2011	Stage 6 EXECUTIVE DECISION on SPD ADOPTION	Council Executive, Ward Members, & Council Officers + Neighbourhood Planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Officers brief Neighbourhood Planners on final amendments to Supplementary Planning Document; • Preparation of officers' reports; • Presentation to Cabinet for decision on formal adoption.

1.2 Community & Stakeholder Consultation

Local residents have been at the heart of the preparation process of this plan, which is led by the Council and supported by its partner Urban Living. Engagement with local residents and partners has been channelled through a consultative group called the Windmill Eye Team, which has included representation from Tenants and Residents Associations, Friends of Parks groups and other community-based organisations, faith groups, and voluntary groups as well as service providers, traders, and council officers. In all, over 70 people took part in the three Windmill Eye Team events, and have had a significant role in developing and testing the proposals in this Neighbourhood Plan. Further consultation with stakeholders has taken place in the intervening period. A full report on community and stakeholder consultation undertaken in the development of this plan will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

A dedicated Residents' Steering Group formed the core of the Windmill Eye Team. This group predates the project and were instrumental in the commissioning process for the plan itself, and will continue to oversee the implementation of the plan over the coming decade or more. In the period since the Windmill Eye Team events, there have also been periodic meetings, presentations, and workshops attended by the Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group, consultant and client teams, which have helped shaped the vision and detail of the plan proposals. The Steering Group also produced a Charter to guide the development and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan, which is set out in more detail in the following chapter of this document. A separate report by the Independent Community Advisor will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

WINDMILL EYE TEAM EVENTS

EVENT 1: NOVEMBER 2009

This event opened with a presentation by the Windmill Eye Residents Steering Group, followed by a presentation by Urban Initiatives and workshops to develop and test ideas for the plan. The focus of the work was to identify what needs to change in the area in order to realise the ideas. Issues of transport, enterprise, environment, community, sports, leisure and culture, housing and young people were considered. The workshops identified priorities for providing new housing, linking the Shopping Centre and High Street, and using the new hospital as 'an anchor' for improvement and change in the neighbourhood.

EVENT 2: DECEMBER 2009

This event began with an overview of Event 1's outcomes, followed by two workshops. The first workshop covered the five themes of transport, the high street, open space, community buildings and housing. The second workshop brought these themes together, using a large working model to help identify locations for different sorts of new buildings and spaces. Key outcomes included the need for phased renewal and replacement of some housing estates, ideas to support Victoria Park as a shared space for all sections of the community, and the importance of improving the setting of the High Street and Cape Hill.

EVENT 3: JANUARY 2010

This event took place at the same venue on 30th January 2010. The event was attended by a cross-section of 43 local residents, officers and partners, who were asked to make comments on the same themes as explored in Event 2, and similarly link these to the model. In addition, open discussion explored questions and answers, and a film shown about the Windmill Eye area. Issues such as co-location of community facilities, major investments in the Shopping Centre and connections to the High Street, and the redistribution of public open space were discussed.

1.3 Community Action Research Team (CART)

Community Action Research is an innovative programme of training and support that provides local people with the skills to undertake research in their community, as well as paying them for the work they undertake. This approach values the skills and knowledge that local people can bring as experts in their own community. As part of the process for the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan, four local people were recruited, trained, employed, and mentored to carry out research in the neighbourhood. This 'Windmill Eye' Community Action Research Team has carried out two pieces of research to date. The first, in February 2010, examined housing and environmental issues facing residents in a number of estate across the Windmill Eye area. The second, in August 2010, sought the views of people who live and/or work across the whole area on some of the emerging ideas for change and improvement. The research team achieved very good response rates to both surveys – approximately 190 for the former and 350 for the latter – and provided the Neighbourhood Planning Team with a detailed picture of needs and priorities in the area, and informed the development of the plan. This work has complemented the other community engagement activity undertaken with the Residents' Steering Group and Windmill Eye team events. A separate report on the two surveys will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

1.4 Equality & Cohesion Impact Assessment (ECIA)

Equality and Cohesion Impact Assessment is a process that enables a policy, plan or service to be systematically tested to examine how it affects groups or individuals differently. It ensures that the Council identifies, understands, and responds to potential equality issues in the Plan. For the purposes of this Neighbourhood Plan, the assessment groups are based on the equality categories of race, gender/transgender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation, as well as general cohesion issues between groups. The assessment involves reviewing a wide range of existing evidence and data from a range of sources, as well as collecting further information for example through the Community Action Research work for example. By examining this evidence, the potential impacts of the plan proposals can be determined, and whether there is a potential to negatively affect any group(s) in particular differently. In such cases, the assessment will suggest ways in which the Plan can be revised to avoid this adverse impact. The assessment process is ongoing, and its initial findings have already informed the development of the Plan. The assessment will be completed at the end of the public and stakeholder consultation events, as it draws on information collected through the consultation process. It will then be used to inform the Council's final changes to the contents of the plan before presentation to the Council's Cabinet. A separate Equality and Cohesion Impact Assessment report will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.



Residents' Steering Group members at work



Windmill Eye Team Event



Community Researchers

1.5 Service Provider Review

The process for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan includes a Service Provider Review, which examines the provision of services in the area and the implications of, and opportunities within, the Neighbourhood Plan proposals to improve the delivery and efficiency of services. The objectives of this review are to:

- Draw together a clear picture of the key priorities, objectives and targets across a range of existing service providers and to identify how activity currently links to support common objectives;
- Consider how the emergent objectives and outputs from the Neighbourhood Plan can be creatively designed to best support and complement service provider objectives and how service providers can best support the delivery of the plan;
- Consider the opportunities for the area and the Neighbourhood Plan from the proposed new hospital, health and youth facilities in the area;
- Identify the implications for Service Providers of the plan as options are developed;
- Consider any existing best practice in service provision which can be drawn upon in shaping the Neighbourhood Plan and its delivery;

The study will consider the provision of public and third sector services primarily, and therefore does not examine access to shops and retail services. This work is ongoing and will be completed at the end of the public and stakeholder consultation events, as it draws on information collected through the consultation process. It will then be used to inform the Council's final changes to the contents of the plan before presentation to the Council's Cabinet. A separate Service Provider Review report will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

1.6 Carbon Footprint Assessment

The Council has commissioned a separate assessment of domestic energy use in the area to inform the plan proposals in particular with respect to the potential need to improve and/or replace some existing homes in the area. Using a range of existing information on housing type, transport, energy use, and consumer behaviour, consultants Experian are currently conducting a detailed study of the Windmill Eye area to examine and map the estimated 'carbon footprint', behaviour, awareness and attitudes of every household in the area. The detail of these assessments will inform decision-making at the delivery stage of the plan proposals. A separate Carbon Footprint Assessment report will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

* Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment

1.7 External Scrutiny & Review

The process for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan also integrated two independent reviews to scrutinise the emerging plan proposals and their potential design, delivery, and impact. Both reviews took place in August 2010 when the emerging proposals were at an intermediate stage, with sufficient time to respond to recommendations. Both involved a study visit, presentations by the Council and Neighbourhood Planning teams, a formal panel discussion, and confidential feedback from panel members. A separate report on the external scrutiny process will be attached as an appendix to the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

SPECIALIST ADVISOR REVIEW

A panel of seven local and regional specialists in Social Enterprise, Local Economic Development, Housing, Energy Efficiency, Health, Poverty, Urban Design, Architectural Conservation, Community Cohesion, and Project Delivery were invited to join the panel for a day-long study visit and panel review. One panellist is a member of the regional design review panel run by the West Midlands architecture and built environment centre MADE. The event took place at Smethwick Council House and St. Philip's Parish Centre, Messenger Road.

CABE* DESIGN REVIEW

The national urban design and planning supervisory body CABE conducted a formal Design Review of the emerging plan proposals. A panel of five national, regional, and local design professionals reviewed the proposals in terms of urban design, housing, landscape design, and delivery. The panel was briefed by a nominated Design Advisor, who conducted a day-long study visit to the area and met with Council officers and the Neighbourhood Planning team. The Design Review took place at CABE's offices in London.

A HEALTH

- A.1 Future site of New Acute Hospital
- A.2 Victoria Health Centre
- A.3 Cape Hill Health Centre
- A.4 Smethwick Medical Centre

B EDUCATION

- B.1 Sandwell College
- B.2 Shireland Collegiate Academy
- B.3 Victoria Park Primary School & Ron Davis Centre
- B.4 Cape Hill Primary School
- B.5 St. Matthew's Primary School
- B.6 St. Philip's Primary School
- B.7 Former site of Crockett's Lane School

C COMMUNITY, FAITH, & HERITAGE

- C.1 St Matthew's Church
- C.2 St. Philip's Roman Catholic Church & Parish Centre
- C.3 Smethwick Pakistani Muslims Association
- C.4 CAP Centre
- C.5 Site of mosque currently under construction
- C.6 Guru Nanak Gurdwara
- C.7 St. John's Methodist Church
- C.8 Smethwick Heritage Centre
- C.9 Smethwick Youth Centre

D TRANSPORT

- D.1 Rolfe Street Station

E SHOPS

- E.1 Windmills Shopping Centre & Market



Windmill Eye Study Area with principal landmarks

Aerial photo © Copyright 2010 BLOM Norway

2

CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the evidence base that supports the plan proposals, drawing on existing planning policy, social and demographic statistics, and information on neighbourhood and housing issues, transport and movement patterns, local employment and shopping, open space, architectural conservation, and strategic development constraints, as well as an overall urban design appraisal. The analysis is presented as follows:

2.2 Strategic Regeneration Context

2.3 Planning Policy Context

2.4 Community Profile

2.5 Neighbourhood Profile

2.6 Housing Issues

2.7 Transport & Movement Issues

2.8 Environment & Design Issues

2.9 Summary of Opportunities & Challenges

2.2 Strategic Regeneration Context

The Windmill Eye is located within an area undergoing major change and regeneration and represents an important opportunity to meet the strategic regeneration objectives of the Council for Smethwick and the borough as a whole. To ensure development is comprehensive, co-ordinated, and integrated with its surroundings, the Neighbourhood Plan should be considered within the context of the regeneration and development in the wider area.

The Black Country Core Strategy (adopted Feb 2011) sets out the Council's vision for the borough to 2026, based on sustainable communities, environmental transformation, and economic prosperity. It establishes a 'Growth Network' as the focus of growth, regeneration and land use change over the plan period to 2026. The Growth Network is comprised of Strategic Centres, Town Centres, and Regeneration Corridors. Cape Hill is designated as a Town Centre, and the Windmill Eye area as a whole lies within the Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick Regeneration Corridor [RC12]. The strategy envisages a significant amount of new development within Smethwick as a whole, and the proposals include the provision of around 2000 new homes in a quality canalside environment, transforming former industrial sites. In addition there is potential to retain and incorporate industrial buildings for residential use, as well as retaining 60 hectares of local employment land by the railway line."

The Smethwick Area Action Plan (December 2008) (AAP) sets out a framework for the development and the regeneration of the North Smethwick area. As an adopted Development Plan Document (DPD), this document allocates a number of sites within the area for specific uses, including housing within the Windmill Eye area. It identifies the need for a Neighbourhood Plan in order to provide further detail on the site

allocations within the area addressing issues such as urban design, layout and access. It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan provides a comprehensive approach to development and to ensure that it is phased so that there is no loss of services as a result of necessary demolitions.

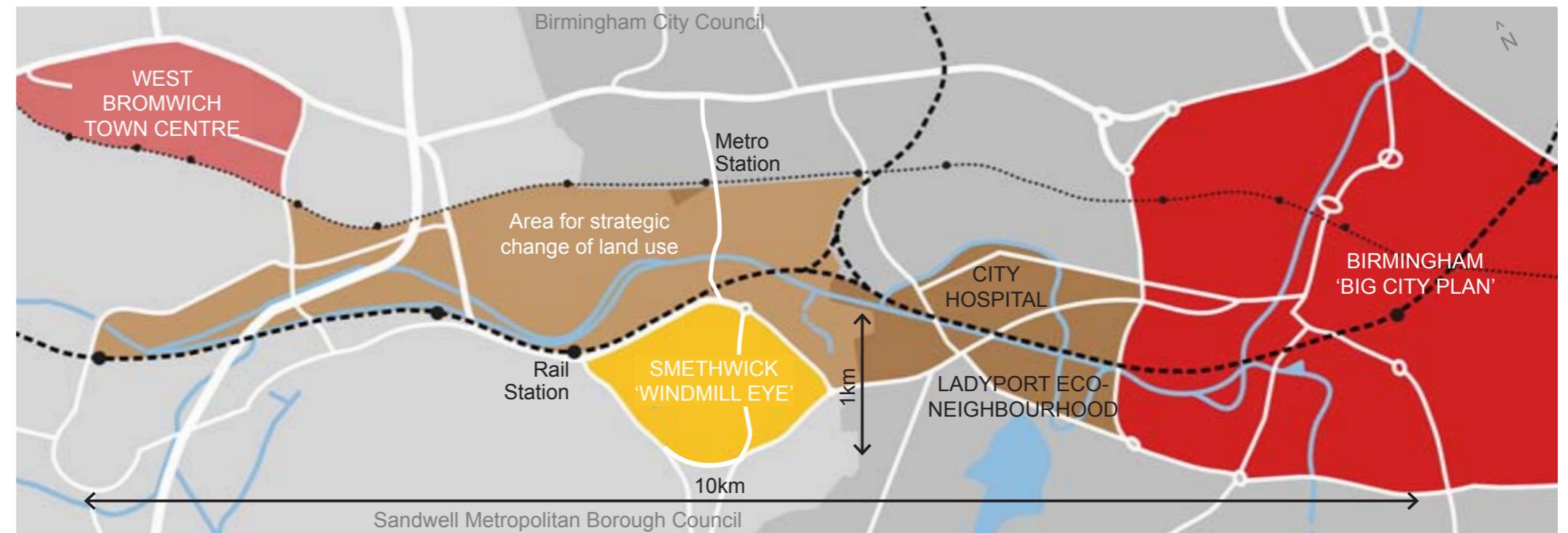
The Windmill Eye is also part of Urban Living's Western Growth Corridor (WGC), which establishes a fifteen-year programme for the 1000 hectares of land across the borough and the wider West Midlands, and the Arc of Opportunity Regeneration Zone. There are a number of regeneration initiatives planned for the area surrounding the Windmill Eye, most notably the development of the new Acute Hospital immediately to the east of the Neighbourhood Plan area is expected to act as a major catalyst for local regeneration.



Brownfield site of the future Acute Hospital



The canal network serves and structures the corridor



The Windmill Eye's central location in the Western Growth Corridor

2.3 Planning Policy Context

The Black Country Core Strategy (adopted Feb 2011) is the primary planning policy document relating to the Windmill Eye area. However the earlier Smethwick Area Action Plan (Dec 2008) establishes more detailed guidance for the Neighbourhood Plan in terms of housing, environmental improvements, local centres, and heritage conservation.

HOUSING

The Core Strategy locates the Windmill Eye within the Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick Regeneration Corridor [RC12]. Regeneration Corridors should provide for existing and new residential communities well-supported by community services and local shops, set within and linked by comprehensive networks of attractive green infrastructure with cycling and pedestrian routes. They should provide for a balanced mix of housing types. Development of Very High Density (60+ dwellings per hectare net) is envisaged in Strategic and Town Centres only, which includes Cape Hill. Development of High Density (45-60 dwellings per hectare net) and Moderate Density (35-45 dwellings per hectare net) will therefore be appropriate for most of the Windmill Eye area.

The earlier Smethwick AAP also identified the Windmill Eye area as a location for change in terms of a range of housing issues, including construction of new dwellings on sites already cleared, and residential redevelopment at Sandwell College. The AAP anticipated that the vacant sites on Messenger Road will form part of the first phase of the redevelopment of the Windmill Eye, and due to their prime location adjacent to the strategic road network it is important that the redevelopments are of the highest quality. It envisaged that 90% of the new dwellings should be developed at 40 dwellings per hectare net, and the remaining 10% should be at 50 dwellings per hectare net. In addition, Policy Sme 3 of the AAP required that 25% of new residential development in the Windmill Eye should be of affordable tenure.

The Council's adopted Housing Strategy (2008-11) identifies the need for a range of housing types and tenures in Smethwick. Major developments (over ten units) will be expected to offer a range of family houses, including two-bedroom dwelling house designs (Residential Intensification Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2007).

ENVIRONMENT & OPEN SPACE

Improvements to the environment, in terms of both meeting national carbon targets and public realm improvements are a high priority for Smethwick as a whole. In the Windmill Eye area, this is not only important in terms of meeting national and local objectives, but also in order to reverse trends of net out-migration and low levels of investment. The Windmill Eye area is well served by larger parks and gardens, with five green spaces with unrestricted access located in the area (Sandwell Green Space Audit, 2006). However, no part of the Neighbourhood Plan area is within a two kilometre catchment area for natural and semi-natural spaces. The principal open spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan area are Victoria Park and Unett Street Park. All of the existing open spaces will require further investment in order to increase their amenity and better serve the surrounding residential areas.

LOCAL CENTRES

In 2007, Sandwell Council produced a series of 'Town Centre Health Checks' for the three retail parades and local centres which border the Neighbourhood Plan area. Both Smethwick High Street Upper and Lower were considered to be functioning well and require limited intervention to ensure they continue to thrive, however this work does not consider the potential impact of the relocation of Sandwell College in 2011. The Health Check for the Cape Hill area found the

recently developed Windmill Centre to be acting in retail terms as a 'stand alone' development which is having a negative commercial and spatial impact on the rest of Cape Hill. It recommends the improvement of the public realm in Cape Hill in order to encourage shoppers to visit the rest of the high street.

HERITAGE

Despite the presence of a number of high quality buildings within the Windmill Eye area there are very limited policies for the protection of the local heritage. There are seven Grade II Listed buildings within the area, and a number of further listed buildings adjacent to the boundary, however there is no adopted Local List for this area. Redevelopment of listed Buildings will be resisted, favouring re-use for appropriate uses instead. Buildings which are not statutorily listed but have historic or architectural merit will also be retained wherever possible. Potential sites of architectural interest will also be safeguarded, or at least recorded prior to development taking place.



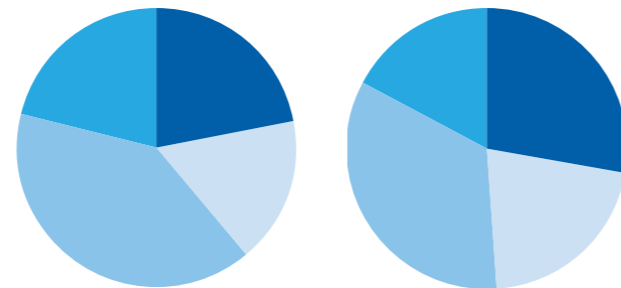
Smethwick Area Action Plan (2008)

2.4 Community Profile

Approximately 5,655 people (2001 census) live in the Windmill Eye area. The area is characterised by a relatively young, diverse population, and suffers from high levels of multiple deprivation. There are a range of communities from different ethnic and faith backgrounds with different experiences and aspirations of the area. This has contributed to community cohesion lower than other parts of Sandwell generally. Integration issues are also expressed spatially throughout the area, with particular groups focussed within specific locations, with a strong Pakistani presence in the Cape Hill North area, primarily Black Caribbean and White in the Town Houses area and a fairly even split of Indian, Caribbean and White residents in the Victoria Park area.

Health is a major issue in the area with relatively low-life expectancy and high-levels of long-term illness. The younger age profile of the Windmill Eye area means that actually there may be more serious problems that are being masked. This could be indicate that there are problems with poor health in younger people in Windmill Eye area or there are higher levels of poor health in older people. Residents in some parts of the Windmill Eye area also suffer from problems of crime and anti-social behaviour. Just over 50% of the local population have no qualifications, which is significantly higher than the borough and national averages. Census data from 2001 also shows a level of unemployment significantly higher than Sandwell, regional and national averages. Local employment is particularly reliant on the manufacturing sector which is in long-term decline.

AGE



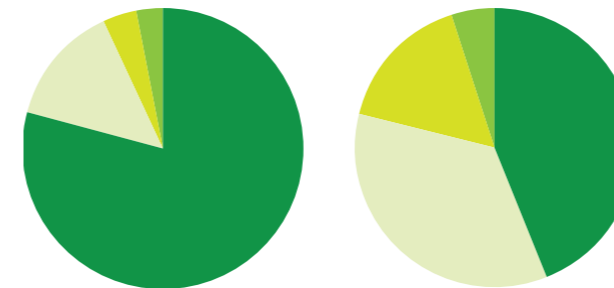
SANDWELL

0-15:	22%
16-29:	17%
30-59:	40%
60+:	21%

WINDMILL EYE

0-15:	28%
16-29:	21%
30-59:	34%
60+:	17%

ETHNICITY



SANDWELL

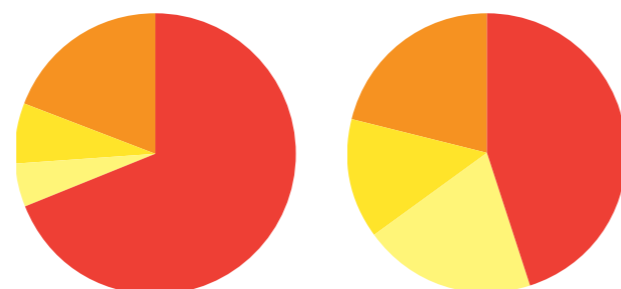
White	80%
Asian	14%
Black	4%
Other	3%

WINDMILL EYE

White	44%
Asian	35%
Black	16%
Other	5%

Source: Census 2001 & Research Sandwell 2007
 Note recent migration has altered the distribution of age, ethnicity, and household composition.

FAITH



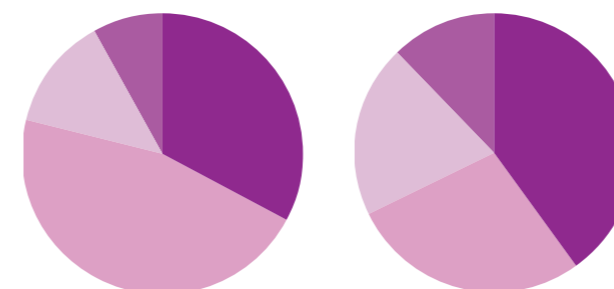
SANDWELL

Christian	69%
Muslim	5%
Sikh	7%
Other	19%

WINDMILL EYE

Christian	45%
Muslim	20%
Sikh	14%
Other	21%

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION



SANDWELL

1 person	33%
Cohabiting	46%
Lone parent	13%
Other	8%

WINDMILL EYE

1 person	40%
Cohabiting	28%
Lone parent	20%
Other	12%

2.5 Neighbourhood Profile

The Windmill Eye area is currently fairly well provided for in terms of social and community infrastructure, and there are a number of proposals for new facilities within the area.

There is currently one neighbourhood health centre and two medical centres. As part of the 'Right Care Right Here' Programme, Sandwell & West Birmingham Hospital NHS Trust is also planning to build a new Acute Hospital in Smethwick. The new Hospital will be a major new building providing services to meet the health needs of communities across the east of the borough and neighbouring areas, and is anticipated to open in 2016. The proposed site is on Grove Lane, bordering the eastern boundary of the study area. Future engagement with the Primary Care practices will ensure that need and demand for healthcare facilities can be accommodated in the area.

While the area is currently adequately provided for in terms of primary school provision, it is anticipated that new residential development in the Windmill Eye area over the coming years, in addition to continuing high birth rates in the area, will increase demand for school places in the neighbourhood. There is currently no secondary school within the study area, and residents of the Windmill Eye area attend a number of schools outside the area. The Plan will not lead to the requirement for a new secondary school, but students and staff of Shireland Collegiate Academy have been consulted to understand how to incorporate consideration of this secondary school in the provisions of the Plan. This is

particularly important given the impending loss of a further education presence in the Windmill Eye area, when the Smethwick Campus of Sandwell College relocates. However there may be potential for some continuing educational provision on the former college site.

There is a wide range of community, faith, culture, and youth amenities serving residents in the area, including the Smethwick Heritage Centre, Victoria Play Centre, and the Smethwick Pakistani Muslims Association. Many of the buildings can generally be characterised as physically introverted, with little positive relationship to the public domain, or to other buildings around them. There are significant opportunities to link together these amenities both physically and thematically, and to invest in and improve their setting.

The Windmill Eye area is also well-provided in terms of the quantity of public open space. There are a number of sports facilities and formal equipped play areas across the Windmill Eye area. However, there are significant deficiencies in the accessibility, layout, quality, and diversity of open spaces. The principal open space initiative for the area, the Victoria Park Management Plan 2009-2014, is currently in the final stages of completion, and sets out an action plan for council actions over the next five years, a key objective of which is to gain Green Flag status. One of the most striking features of the neighbourhood, however, is the extent of vacant open spaces in the area – a legacy of a full two decades of housing demolition without any housing reconstruction. The uncertainty

and insecurity created by such vacancy and disuse imposes a cumulative blight on the lives and livelihoods of individuals, households, and communities who live in this neighbourhood. The early improvement of clearance sites, through a combination of temporary and permanent means, will be an important way to build confidence in the neighbourhood and confidence between its partners – resident and stakeholders alike

The scope and scale of potential change in the Windmill Eye area over the coming decade or more presents a major opportunity for development that incorporates principles of sustainability. The Council is examining the existing patterns of energy use in the area in order to inform decisionmaking on investment in improvement and/or replacement of existing housing. The Council is also working with stakeholders to consider the potential for the installation of a Combined Heat & Power and district heating system in conjunction with the new Acute Hospital and surrounding development opportunities.



CAP Centre, Windmill Lane



Smethwick Pakistani Muslim Association, Corbett Street

2.6 Housing Issues

There is currently high demand for housing in the area, but there is a poor fit between demand and the available type and tenure. Affordable housing is predominant in the area, with 56% managed or owned by a social landlord. This is higher than the Council's current affordable housing policy of 40%. The remainder of housing stock is owned privately – including owner-occupied and privately rented. The economic means of the existing community reveals a high level of benefit dependency which drives the demand/need for affordable housing. Increased demand from outside and within the area continues to reinforce this pattern.

There is also currently insufficient choice of 'move-on' accommodation for households which are growing. The majority of homes in the area comprise of two- and three-bedroom homes with a limited number of larger four- and five-bedroom homes. This has contributed to overcrowding levels three times the borough level, with 15% of households affected. In addition, homes specifically designed for vulnerable people are in short supply. Options for low cost home ownership and shared ownership are limited.

Research suggests that there is a higher level of property turnover of residents in Cape Hill and Windmill Eye than the rest of Smethwick. This may apply primarily to Sandwell Homes stock and is driven by the area's "reception" function, as residents move from their initial home to seek larger or more permanent housing. Housing Association providers all report high demand and very low turnover in all property types with

the exception of the high-rise blocks, which also support the area's "reception" function.

Housing stock condition does not appear to be a pressing issue in the study area and certainly does not appear to have any adverse effect on demand. Past demolitions have dealt with the poorest high-rise housing stock in terms of image, neighbourhood impact, condition and popularity (at the time) resulting in the various cleared sites in the area. Much of the planned "decent homes" programme has already been completed or is committed with the result that the Decent Homes Standard will be achieved by 2010. Internal works to the high-rise housing are being undertaken at present. Elements of the overall investment programme have focussed on "affordable warmth", using energy efficient boilers for example, but little more has been done to improve the thermal efficiency (of the high rise blocks for example).

The Council have been very proactive in delivering its Private Sector Housing approach in the Windmill Eye area. The key concern for the older private sector housing in the study area concerns the southern end of Windmill Lane which formed the former Cape Hill Renewal area. Substantial volumes of renovation grant support have been provided in this area but there are clear signs of property and area deterioration.



Pre-1919 terraces



Towers and 'townhouses'

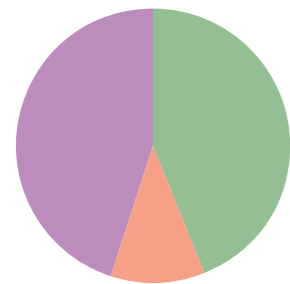


Maisonettes



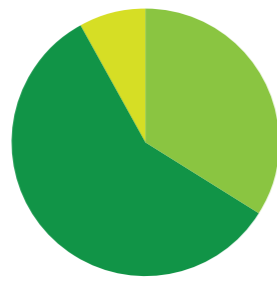
'Radburn' type houses

2.7 Transport & Movement



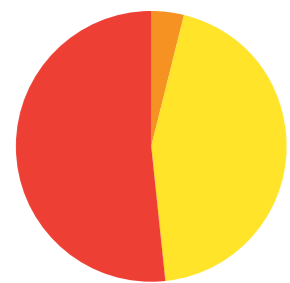
TENURE MIX

Council	44%
RSL	11%
Private	45%



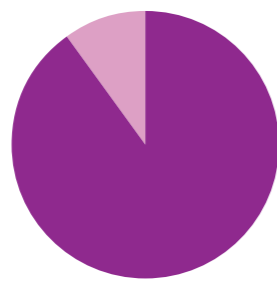
COUNCIL

1-2 bed	34%
2-3 bed	58%
Other	8%



RSL

1-2 bed	57%
2-3 bed	39%
Other	4%



PRIVATELY OWNED

2-3 bed	90%
Other	10%

Source: Sandwell Council & Sandwell Homes



A457 Tollhouse Way at junction of Rolfe Street



Rolfe Street Station with view to High Street

The study area is bounded by two important routes – Grove Lane/ Soho Way/ Tollhouse Way to the north, and Smethwick High Street/ Cape Hill to the south – each of which are very different in the context within which they pass through, and the type of movement they provide for. The A457 Tollhouse Way, Soho Way and Dudley Road serve as the main vehicular route from Sandwell into Birmingham City Centre. This corridor is a dual carriageway and observation suggests that there are a large number of heavy goods vehicles using this route. In contrast, the A4092 High Street and Cape Hill route is a vibrant “mainstreet” with retail and service uses along both sides, which as is typical of such areas, suffers from congestion caused mainly by poor parking arrangements and enforcement. Within the study area, Windmill Lane is the only North-South route linking Waterloo Road to the South to Rabone Lane to the North. The area’s internal street network has evolved in response to the different postwar housing estate types being delivered over time. As a consequence it consists of a mix of connected Victorian streets interspersed with an array of disconnected and confusing cul-de-sac street arrangements associated with the poorly laid out ‘Radburn’ type and other postwar estate designs. Some roads experience parking problems, especially on the periphery of Cape Hill Centre, most notably Corbett Street. These will need to be monitored and measures implemented where problems persist. Examples may include parking permits reduced speed areas or home zones.

The study area is reasonably well served by a variety of bus services to a wide range of destinations in the West Midlands including the major centres of West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Dudley and Birmingham. Bus services are concentrated on the areas principal bus corridors and interchanges at Dudley Road, Cape Hill and High Street corridor, with a local terminus for

some services at Windmills Shopping Centre. No services use Tollhouse Way/ Soho Way/ Grove Lane (except one infrequent evening service on Grove Lane) as it has little active land uses along it and is a very inhospitable route for bus users. In terms of train services, Smethwick Rolfe Street Station lies at the north west corner of the study area at the junction of Rolfe Street and Tollhouse Way. The station entrance is poorly configured and there is no step-free access to the platforms. Walking connections to the station are poor and circuitous, with only one staggered pedestrian crossing across Tollhouse Way in the near vicinity. Metro services are accessible from Handsworth Booth Street, 100m north of Soho Way.

Cycling and walking routes through the study area require crossing the major boundary routes to the north and south. Along the dual carriageway routes to the north, crossing facilities are generally very poor (or absent altogether) and the environment is dominated by adjacent motor traffic and heavy goods vehicles. In contrast, conditions along Cape Hill and the High Street are much better and the Council has invested in some public realm improvements for main street users. Internal walking connections through the study area are provided on a mix of public access streets and off street footways through estate areas, and in many cases are discontinuous and/or indirect. The Birmingham Canal lies to the north and east of the study area. It provides for walking and cycling along its length and forms part of the National Cycle Network Route 5 through to Birmingham City Centre. However access to the canal from the Windmill Eye area itself is indirect and limited to Brasshouse Lane, Bridge Street North, Rabone Lane and Foundry Lane. Also to be useful for utility and commuting trips all year round, security issues will need addressing and the towpaths would need to be widened with sealed surfaces.

2.8 Environment & Design Issues

The Windmill Eye study area is essentially a product of the rapid urbanisation of a rural landscape over the second half of the 19th century, which was then substantially redeveloped in the latter half of the 20th century. It is a complex, fragmented and multi-layered neighbourhood, and includes a number of distinct character areas. Most notable is the Crockett's Lane area with its concentration of municipal buildings, the High Street with its numerous listed commercial buildings, and the Trafalgar Road area with its intact pre-1919 residential streets. The Windmill Eye area is predominantly residential in nature, with retail focussed along Cape Hill and High Street, and clusters of community facilities located within the housing areas. Industrial and employment uses, including the site for the new Hospital, surround the study area to the North and East.

The relationship of buildings to surrounding streets is of varying quality across the area, with the highest quality frontages focussed along the High Street, Cape Hill and the pre-1919 terraces. Some of the newer estates present very poor frontages to the public realm. There are also a number of cleared sites, which disrupt the quality of the street frontages, and reduce the sense of enclosure. The dramatic topography of the area and its surrounding context enables a number of long distance views focussing on landmarks within and beyond the area. In some parts, however, the confused layout of the housing estates is disorienting to those unfamiliar with the area.

There are seven Grade II listed structures within the Neighbourhood Plan area, with a number of additional listed buildings directly adjacent. In addition, a number of buildings and structures in and adjacent to the study area have been identified by Sandwell MBC as potential candidates for local listing. The majority of the heritage assets date from the late Victorian and Edwardian period, with notable clusters in the vicinity of Sandwell College and the Council House, and on and around Cape Hill. There are no designated Conservation Areas within the study area.



Poor relationship of maisonette block to street



Cape House Dispensary, Cape Hill



Terraced housing on Unett Street facing vacant site



St. Matthew's Church, Windmill Lane

2.9 Summary of Opportunities and Challenges

The following table summarises the key issues arising from the above analysis and the implications for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Issue	Description	Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan
Strategic Regeneration Context	The Windmill Eye area represents a key site to meet the strategic regeneration objectives of the Council for Smethwick. The site sits within an area undergoing major change and regeneration.	To ensure comprehensive development occurs across the area, the Neighbourhood Plan should be considered within the context of the regeneration and development occurring in the wider area.
Planning Policy Context	The Windmill Eye Area Neighbourhood Plan will be adopted and form part of Sandwell's Local Development Framework (LDF). The main objective of the Neighbourhood Plan will be to express policies established in the Smethwick AAP.	The Neighbourhood Plan will need to meet the objectives of higher level policy for the area, for both environmental improvements and housing interventions in the area, to provide appropriate housing types and tenures in order to meet local needs. In addition it should express the standards set in other LDF documents.
Community Profile	The area is characterised by a relatively young, diverse population. The neighbourhood experiences from high levels of multiple deprivation, including low life expectancy, high levels of long term illness, low proportion of people with qualifications and skills, high unemployment and high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. In addition, community cohesion is lower than any other part of the Borough.	The plan should contribute to lowering levels of deprivation, therefore linkages to service provider responses will be crucial. The design and environmental improvements should aim to address issues of health as well as enhance safety and improve security in the area.
Neighbourhood Profile	The Windmill Eye area is currently fairly well provided for in terms of social and community infrastructure, and there are a number of proposals for new facilities within the area.	Key issues to consider will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating new health facilities; • Future need for new primary school provision; • Mitigating the loss of further education provision; • Potential to improve links between services which already co-located; and • Prioritise early improvement of vacant sites including the integration of green infrastructure where appropriate.
Housing issues	There is currently high demand for housing in the area, but there is a poor fit between demand and the available type and tenure.	There is a need to diversify the types and tenures available, while recognising matters of housing need, affordability and demand.
Movement	There are a number of issues associated with the road and street network. Tollhouse Way/ Grove Lane causes severance and particularly impacts pedestrian and cycle routes to Smethwick Rolfe Street Station. The internal street network consists of a mix of connected Victorian streets, interspersed with an array of disconnected and confusing cul-de-sac street arrangements. The area is reasonably well served by public transport, however there is a need for improved services to the east of the neighbourhood.	The Neighbourhood Plan address connectivity issues, through taking the opportunity of major redevelopment to redesign major junctions and improve links to the railway station and canal, as well as reconnecting 'missing links' through the neighbourhood. The new Hospital will act as a bus hub, with local routes serving the east of the neighbourhood.
Environment and Design Issues	The study area is of interest mainly due to the presence of 9 listed buildings, a number of others recommended for local listing, and the fragmentary survival of an older street pattern. The study area is predominantly residential in nature, and is comprised of 6 distinct character areas. The quality of frontages varies throughout the area. The dramatic topography of the area and its surrounding context presents a number of long distance views and enhances the legibility of the study area. The clearance sites have had a particularly negative impact on the built environment, which form large holes in the urban fabric.	The Neighbourhood Plan can be of positive benefit to the heritage value and urban form of the area. Redevelopment of cleared sites offers the opportunity to recognise and enhance the presence of habitats and species, reinstate missing links and enhance the east west permeability of the area. Where there is redevelopment of existing estates, attempts should be made to remove unsupervised pedestrian routes, and open up cul de sacs to encourage through movement, with combined vehicular and safe pedestrian routes.

WINDMILL EYE RESIDENTS' STEERING GROUP CHARTER

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SHOULD...

Consultation

- Create fair opportunities for residents to be involved, consulted and fed back
- Use plain English and employ a number of different communication methods to involve the community
- Ensure residents voice can influence the project through local resident, business and youth panels



Community

- Involve local residents in the development of their own community
- Enhance facilities and streamline service provision to bring the community together
- Support community involvement and create pride and ownership of the area through greater social interaction
- Encourage opportunities for co location of facilities and services



Housing

- Develop attractive, affordable, sustainable and quality housing for all that is well designed, well maintained, and looked after
- Ensure there are housing options for all need
- Identify and seek funding for new social and private housing
- Develop empty sites to enhance the local environment and meet local need
- Bring existing housing to basic standards for the 21st century to increase energy efficiency and use renewable resources
- Work with private landlords to improve all housing



Open Space

- Create more routes to help the community move about safely, freely and independently
- Create opportunities for cycling and walking
- Create shared attractive open spaces for all to enjoy
- Maximise the use of green spaces for multiple purposes, including leisure activities
- Preserve and encourage wildlife and food growing
- Enhance & improve links between the canal and key facilities in the area
- Realise the potential of the canal as a transport, wildlife & recreation facility
- Encourage landscaped gardens and an attractive environment



Movement

- Improve access to main transport links, ensuring they are safe, accessible and fit for purpose
- Ensure clear signage on main transport nodes
- Create safe walking and cycling routes
- Seek to Improve public transport services in terms of frequency and routing



High Street

- Improve & enhance street scape & public realm with resting and green spaces
- Create safe, clearly sign posted and attractive high street environment
- Improve and promote safe pedestrian crossings
- Create pleasant shopping experience for the local & wider community
- Promote new business and support existing business development in the area
- Minimise congestion and improve traffic management



Employment

- Work with developers to employ a percentage 3% of local labour and offer apprenticeships to local people
- Work with community organisation to streamline training & capacity building programmes
- Establish key links with outside partners to directly benefit the community and create employment and training opportunities
- Support creation of social enterprises for and by local people



VISION & CONCEPT

3

3.1 Vision Statement for the Windmill Eye

This Vision Statement was developed in conjunction with the Windmill Eye Team and Residents' Steering Group. It sets out the Council's intentions for the area in response to the aspirations of local people and the opportunities and challenges identified in the area.

In April 2009, the Residents' Steering Group produced a Charter (opposite), which sets out how the vision can be realised in ways that are meaningful to local people. The Charter was developed by the Steering Group with the

support of the Independent Community Advisor in the months following the Windmill Eye Team meetings. It sets out a range of objectives under seven categories, which have been informed by the group's in-depth knowledge of the process and their understanding of the scope of the plan. The charter lies at the heart of this document and provides it with an organisational structure through which to describe, quantify, and evaluate the plan proposals set out in more detail in chapters 4-8.

A growing family neighbourhood confident and secure in its workplaces, playspaces, and homes

- ... Rooted in the heritage of its founding industries and diverse people;
- ... Realising the opportunities of its strategic location;
- ... Developing its unique assets – its people, park, and hospital; and
- ... Looking forward to a shared sustainable future.

ROLFE STREET STATION

Rolfe Street Station provides mainline rail services across the region and is an important asset to the Smethwick area as a whole, in particular to the area around Crockett's Lane. It is also vital to the delivery of sustainable mixed-use regeneration in the adjacent growth area of Rolfe Street where Council policy supports the residential redevelopment of brownfield lands. However, the Station is positioned on a busy junction of the Tollhouse Way dual carriageway and Rolfe Street, which currently serves a significant amount of freight traffic. The quality of pedestrian access is poor: the crossing to Smethwick High Street is staggered, and the radius of the slip road junction with Rolfe Street is particularly large, prioritising vehicular movement over pedestrian crossing. While the station is manned on a part-time basis, there are separate entrances to the two station platforms via flights of 24 and 26 stairs respectively, with no step-free access. The platform level is therefore significantly below the surrounding street level, and the station is further secluded behind high brick walls and dense tree cover.



Existing view of secluded entrance to eastbound platform from Rolfe Street



Wide-radius junction at pedestrian crossing at junction of Tollhouse Way and Rolfe Street

It is important to improve the accessibility, image, and user experience of the station in order to increase patronage of public transport and secure the long-term viability of the station and the adjacent high street. The station is currently flanked by council-owned lands, the management and development of which can support such an aim. Though it lies outside the SPD area, it is vital to the success of the Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan to transform the station into a visible and functional 'anchor' for the area. This could be realised, subject to availability of funding, by working with Network Rail, Centro and the Local Highway Authority to achieve the following:

- Provide direct step-free access to the westbound platform by re-landscaping the council-owned lands on Tollhouse Way, improving visibility between the platform and the High Street;
 - Reconfigure the Rolfe Street slip road and traffic island on north side of Tollhouse Way to improve pedestrian access and safety; and
 - Provide direct step-free access to the eastbound platform by incorporating new ramped access in the redevelopment of the adjacent council-owned lands on Rolfe Street
- Rapid transit to areas beyond the Windmill Eye is provided by Midland Metro Line 1, accessible from Handsworth Booth Street stop, approximately 1000m to the north of Soho Way. An enhanced and signed route plus addressing the perceived problem of cycle parking security at the stop could provide residents of Windmill Eye with additional transport to facilities and employment opportunities.

However this is not a proposal of the this plan but shows the vision of what can be achieved with Rolfe Street Station and how it can assist in accessing the Windmill Eye area, subject to further discussion with partners.



Potential future view of new step-free access to Rolfe Street Station, with view to Smethwick High Street



Existing view of Rolfe Street Station with secluded platforms

3.2 Strategic Concept for the Windmill Eye














The spatial concept for the Windmill Eye sets out how the Neighbourhood Plan can realise its role as part of the Oldbury-West Bromwich-Smethwick Regeneration Corridor in the Black Country Core Strategy's 'Growth Network'. It also shows how the Neighbourhood Plan can realise Urban Living's larger 'Western Growth Corridor', a strategic development area of over 6km in length which stretches from West Bromwich to Birmingham. The Windmill Eye is a key link in both corridors, as noted in the following documents:

- Sandwell Council's adopted West Bromwich Town Plan (Supplementary Planning Guidance 2004), which focuses on proposals in and around West Bromwich Town Centre and environs, which will experience significant change during the next few years in its consolidation as the primary town centre for Sandwell;"
- Sandwell Council's adopted Smethwick Area Action Plan (AAP), which sets out proposals for the western end of the area, and which the Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan currently in preparation will complement in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- Birmingham City Council's Ladyport Development Framework, currently in preparation, which will set out proposals for the central area in the form of a non-statutory masterplan; and
- Birmingham City Council's adopted Big City Plan Area Action Plan (AAP), which sets out proposals for the city centre.

In this context it is important to understand how the provisions of the Neighbourhood Plan compare, relate, and link to those of the other plans. A number of strategic issues are common to these projects and cross-cut the entire area as follows:

- Rehabilitation and redevelopment of extensive disused 'brownfield' lands and housing clearance sites
- Local economic development associated with high street, hospital, and enterprise areas
- Continuity and quality of major linear elements of road arteries, canals, public transport services (including rail), high streets, and walking and cycling routes
- Improvement of quality and choice in the existing housing market offer across the area, and the co-ordination of market release of new housing in the corridor as a whole
- Transition of health services and associated supply chains from the existing City and Sandwell General Hospitals sites to the new Acute Hospital and local Community Hospitals



- ROUTES**
-  'Windmill Way' local walking & cycling routes
 -  Windmill Eye vehicular through-route
 -  High Street
 -  Dual Carriageway
 -  Railway & Station
 -  Canal & Towpaths
- CENTRES**
-  Local high street shops & services
 -  Catchment within 5 mins. walk
- OPEN SPACES**
-  Existing open spaces improved
 -  Extended or new public open spaces
- AREAS OF CHANGE**
-  Proposed areas of change within the Windmill Eye
 -  Site of New Acute Hospital
 -  Anticipated areas of change outside the Windmill Eye



Aerial photo © Copyright 2010 BLOM Norway

3.3 Spatial Concept for the Windmill Eye

Building on the evidence base and analysis presented in the previous chapter, the vision for the Windmill Eye can be expressed as a spatial concept for the area, involving a structure of improved **Routes, Centres, and Open Spaces** within which there are a number of major **Areas of Change**.



Routes

The plan supports and extends the existing hierarchy of routes through the area, linking up the principal amenities to create safe routes to schools, shops, and workplaces for young and old alike

High Street	Improving the setting of the high frequency public transport route of Smethwick High Street & Cape Hill;
Dual Carriageway	Moderating the impact of the heavy vehicular route of Tollhouse Way, Soho Way, & Grove Lane;
Distributors	Delivering visible change along the local distributor routes of Crockett's Lane and Windmill Lane which cross through the area;
'Windmill Way'	Creating new local walking and cycling routes, to 'the Windmill Way' linking up existing and future amenities along existing and future streets and rights-of-way across the area.



Centres

The plan supports and extends the existing hierarchy of centres in the area, improving residents' access to local shopping, community facilities, and other services

Smethwick High Street	Improving the management, setting, and performance of the existing local high street
Cape Hill	Improving the management, setting, and performance of the existing local high street
Soho Way	Creating a new local focus for the provision of shops and services to serve the existing and future residential and employment community



Open Spaces

The plan supports and extends the existing hierarchy of open spaces in the area, to better serve residents in the surrounding residential areas, and complement activities in adjacent community buildings

Victoria Park	Supporting continued improvements within the park, in access to the park, and in its relationship to surrounding properties
Unett Street Park	Extending the park to improve its layout and provide additional amenities including games area and landscaped garden space
Local Parks & Play Areas	Creating a network of improved pocket parks and smaller open spaces across the area to improve access to open space and play facilities



Areas of Change

Within this overall structure, the plan identifies areas of change of a higher and lower degree, and of a faster or slower speed, in different locations across the neighbourhood

Improvement	Minor change + Slow speed e.g. Investments in existing housing
Catalyst	Minor change + Fast speed e.g. Relaunch of Windmills Market
Transition	Major change + Slow speed e.g. Future of Sandwell College site
Transformation	Major change + Fast speed e.g. Redevelopment of clearance sites

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

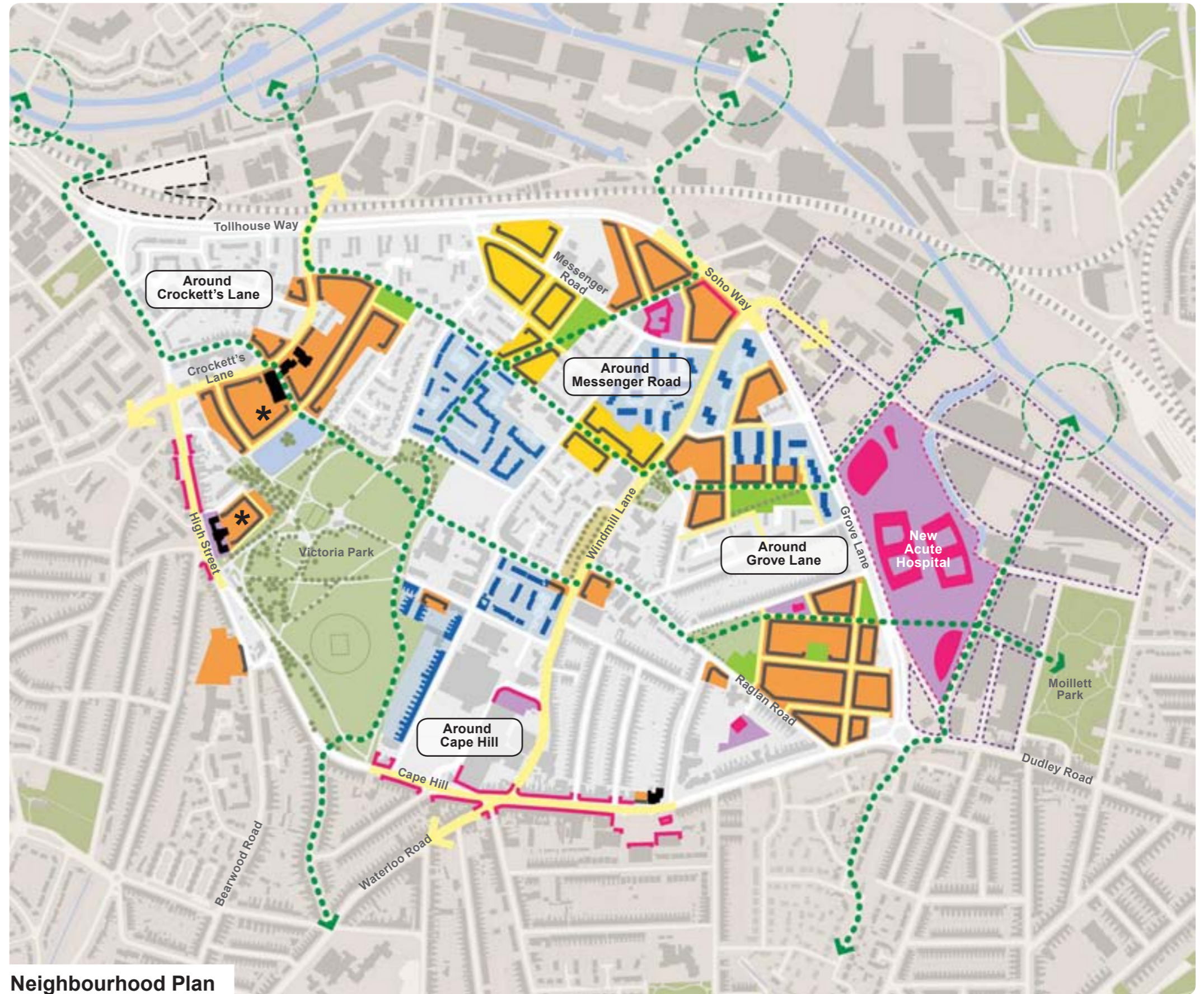
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Neighbourhood Plan

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NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



4.1 Localities, Themes & Phases

The Windmill Eye area can be thought of as four localities of markedly different character in terms of their physical layout, housing type, and mix of land uses:

- Around Crockett's Lane
- Around Cape Hill
- Around Grove Lane
- Around Messenger Road

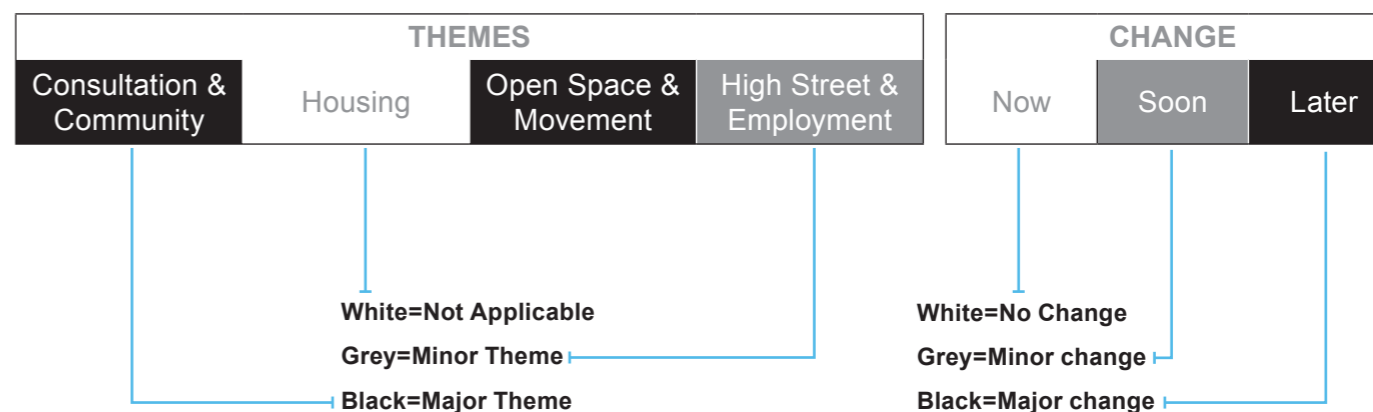
Each will require a different level of change in terms of land-use, physical and environmental changes, and new amenities. In all cases, the localities overlap each other, as well as substantially straddling the Neighbourhood Plan boundary to include surrounding areas. Some changes are shown beyond the boundary proper, however these are indicative only and will be taken forward by other Development Plan Documents and local guidance as appropriate.

Proposals for each locality are discussed in detail in chapters 5-8.

In their Charter, the Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group identified range of objectives, organised into seven categories, through which to evaluate the plan. To facilitate the monitoring of the plan, these categories have been reorganised into four themes which structure this plan document. All of the plan proposals contribute to one or more of the four themes as identified in the table accompanying each proposal in chapters 5-9.

Similarly, the plan proposals are categorised both by the degree of change and the timing of change. The degree of change is considered as a spectrum from major (involving comprehensive redevelopment) to minor (involving incremental improvement). This categorisation is intended as a guide for purposes of comparison. The timing of change is separated into three approximate phases: Now (2011 – 2016), Soon (2016 – 2021), and Later (2021 – 2026). This categorisation is indicative, and to be explored in more detail through the delivery planning that will be required to implement this plan.

Locality	Landmarks	Predominant Housing Type	Character
Around Crockett's Lane See Chapter 5	Sandwell College Smethwick Council House	Pre-1919 terraces Radburn estates Semi-detached estates	The former municipal heart of Smethwick
Around Cape Hill See Chapter 6	Victoria Park Windmills Shopping Centre	Pre-1919 terraces	The local high street
Around Grove Lane See Chapter 7	New Acute Hospital Crofts Estate	Tower blocks Townhouse estates	Housing estates and disused industry
Around Messenger Road See Chapter 8	CAP Centre Clearance Sites	Maisonette estates Radburn estates Detached estates	Housing estates and disused industry



COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

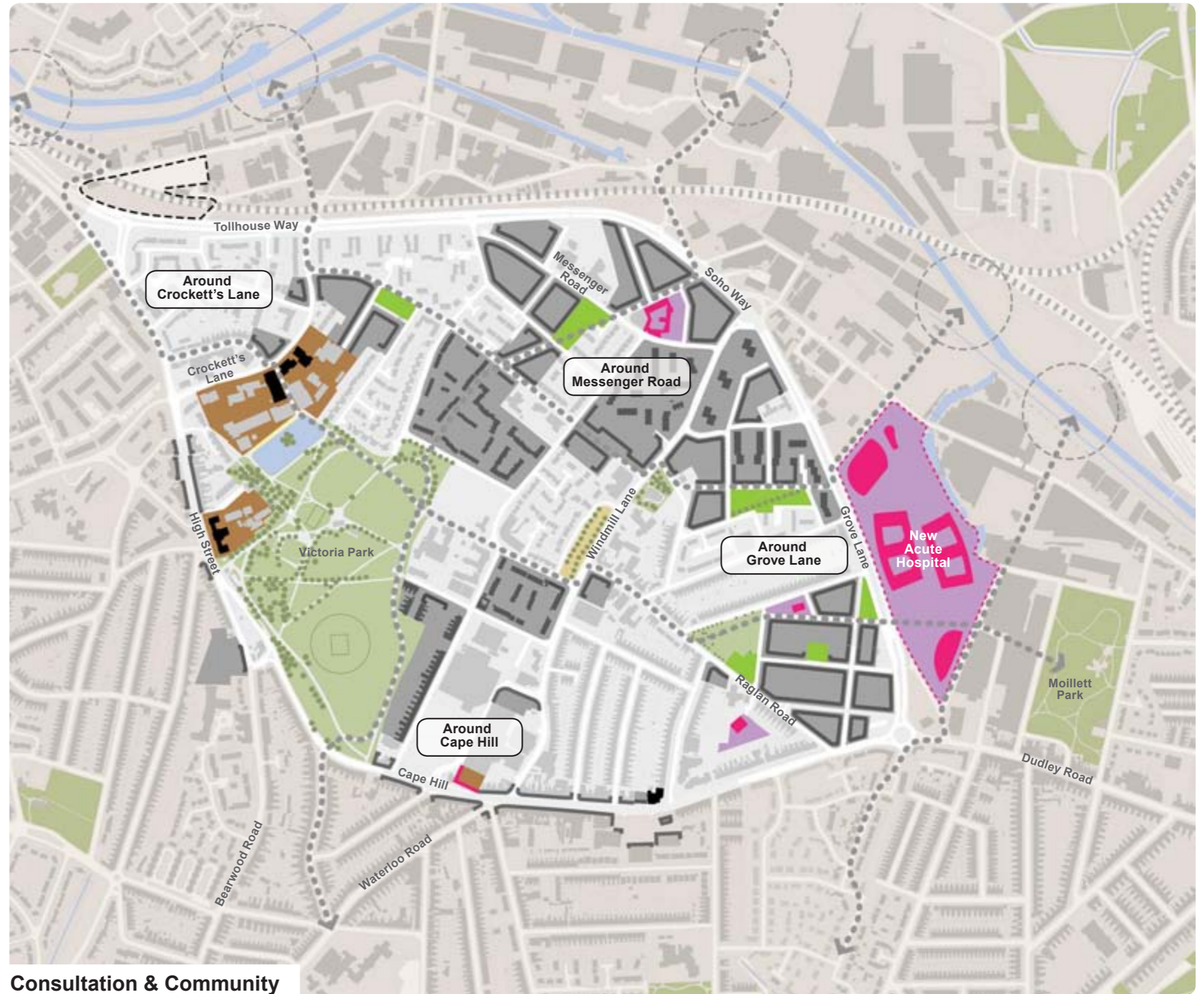
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Consultation & Community

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4.2 Consultation & Community

Some general principles guide the approach to consultation and provision of community facilities. Residents of the Windmill Eye area as well as users of services provided there should be involved in the decision-making process for change, particularly for the proposals which most affect them. In a period of economic uncertainty, it is also important to get the most out of community facilities in order to ensure their long term viability, for example through co-location of different services as well as potentially social enterprises. In addition, there are some guiding principles for specific issues in the Windmill Eye area as follows.

HEALTH DIVIDEND

Develop a partnership between the new Acute Hospital and other stakeholders

The new Acute Hospital, planned to open in 2016, will be the biggest single public investment in Sandwell to date and will have a major impact in the Windmill Eye area. In social terms, it will draw a significant number of people into the area on a regular basis – over half a million patients annually (not including visitors). In economic terms, it will be a major local employer – in the short term creating over 600 construction jobs and in the long term employing over 4,000 staff, though most of these will be relocated from the existing City and Sandwell General Hospitals. In environmental terms, it will be the major landmark in the area by virtue of its eight-storey height, deep floor plates, and extensive site.

The scale of these impacts will be matched by the scale of the opportunities that they create for the neighbourhood, if approached in an innovative and integrative way. Firstly, physical openness of the hospital estate and the accessibility of its non-medical facilities for community use could enable the integration of the Hospital in the social life of the neighbourhood. Secondly, the Hospital can support local employment through its supply chain and social enterprise opportunities (estimated between 60-200 in the construction phase and 400-1200 in the operational phase). Thirdly, the size of the Hospital building can create significant economies of scale to underwrite the viability of a range of sustainable technologies and management systems of local benefit. With all of these proposals, the challenge is to engage a range of stakeholders to integrate these opportunities with the social, economic, and environmental future of the neighbourhood as a whole.

COLLEGE LEGACY

Reintegrate the college campus into the Crockett's Lane neighbourhood

Sandwell College plans to close its Smethwick campus in 2011 to consolidate its new West Bromwich campus. This will bring a range of benefits to the quality, efficiency, and attractiveness of further education opportunities in the borough as a whole, and will release the attractive college site for residential redevelopment as designated in the Smethwick Area Action Plan. However, the transition of land uses in this location raises a number of concerns. On the one hand, there may be adverse effects on local access to education, the viability of some local businesses (particularly in the adjacent High Street area), and the safety and security of the site and adjacent Victoria Park. On the other hand, in the context of current market conditions there may be a significant delay before residential redevelopment of an appropriate quality will be viable, in which case prolonged vacancy of the site will negatively impact the surrounding neighbourhood – including Crockett's Lane and the adjacent High Street – as well as potentially jeopardize the future of its three heritage buildings.

The principal challenge here is the management of the transition from college to residential neighbourhood in a way that ensures continuing uses, improves physical linkages, and safeguards the heritage and biodiversity of the site. Firstly, the site needs to be carefully 'decommissioned' as an institutional site in order that it can integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood to ensure that new housing does not take the form of 'gated development'. Secondly, the legacy of education uses on the site could be continued on a temporary and/or permanent basis, ensuring the future of its valuable heritage buildings. Thirdly, temporary uses could be useful in managing the transition of land uses on the site to maintain activity and security in the area. The short- to medium-term co-ordination of these approaches is critical to realising the intrinsic value of this strategically located site in the long term.

EXTENDED SCHOOLS

Get the most out of schools as accessible community amenities

Primary schools are the most local of all community amenities, and therefore have the potential to act as access points to services for a range of services for adults and young people. However schools face a number of challenges in terms of design, access, specification, security, and management that prevent wider use of their spaces and facilities. While there are four existing primary schools within the Windmill Eye area, it is anticipated that increased demand for school places in the neighbourhood over the coming years will require increased school capacity. This will require the extension of some existing schools in the wider Smethwick area and/or the construction of a new primary school. While school place planning is beyond the scope of this document, the potential commissioning of new or extended school buildings in the Windmill Eye area opens up the opportunity to address the lack of quality and convenience of existing community premises, exploring possibilities for co-location and co-operation.

There are a number of approaches that can help 'unlock' these facilities for more universal use. Firstly, if existing schools are considered for extension, there is an opportunity to anticipate and design for wider community use of the new internal and external spaces. Secondly, there is a number of valuable heritage buildings in the Windmill Eye area which are vacant and/or underused, which could successfully be adapted for education and community use. Thirdly, existing underused community spaces could be adapted for use by other groups, for example young people. Any proposals for providing additional school or youth facilities in the area should be informed by extensive further consultation with stakeholders and the general public. This will also assist with realising the aims and objectives of the Sport & Physical Activity Places Strategy recently completed by the Local Authority.

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

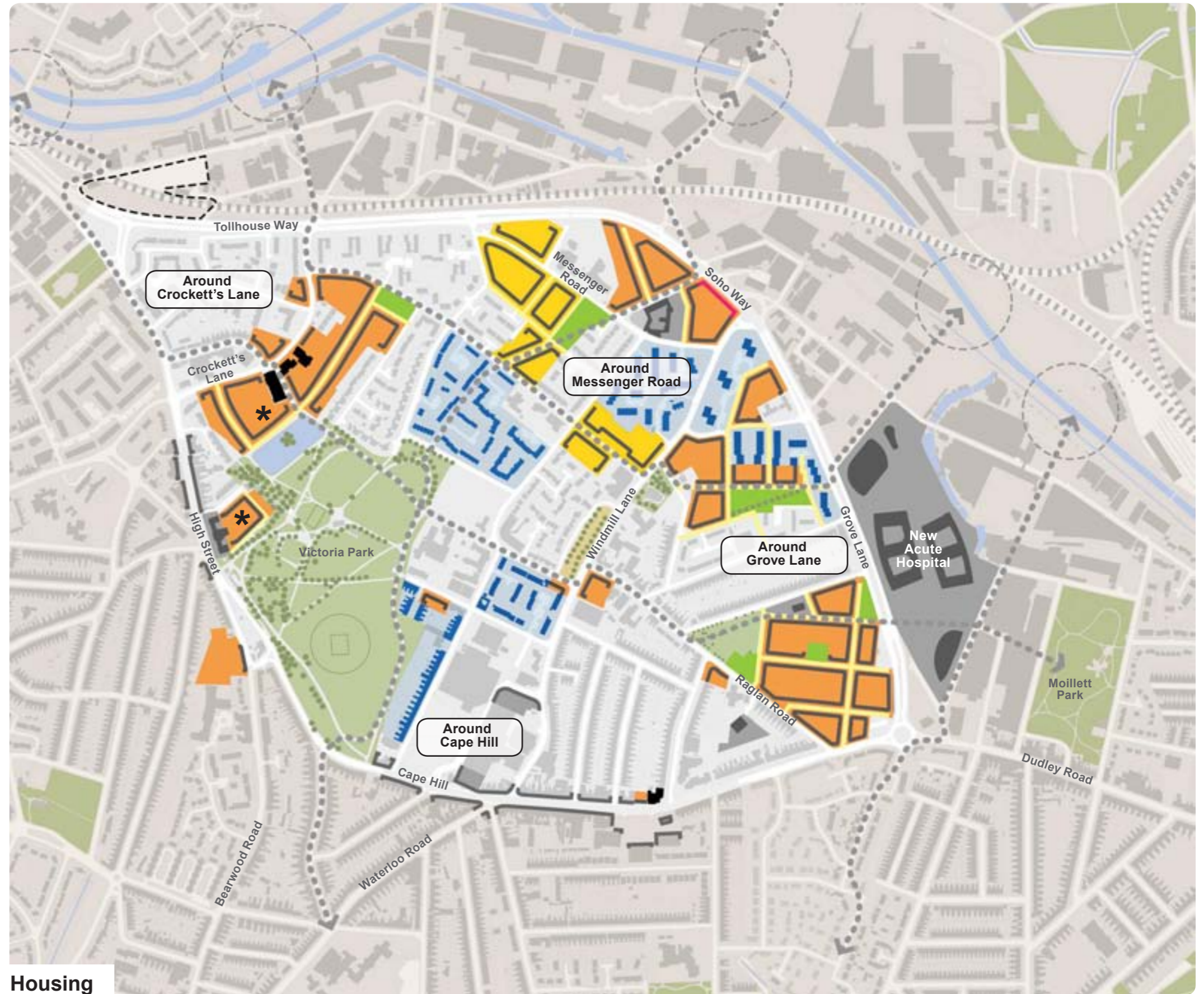
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Housing

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4.3 Housing

Some general principles guide the approach to housing in the plan. Existing residents will be closely involved in considering the options for their estates when identified for investment. A package of support measures (including the opportunity to remain within the Windmill Eye area) will be available for those whose current homes are planned for replacement. New developments are required to provide 25% social and affordable housing, though the mix within these categories is negotiable. Dwelling types are required to provide a mix of unit types and sizes, though the mix within these categories is again negotiable subject to delivering a balance as set out in the table below. Density guidance is provided in the plan opposite, with examples in the photographs to the right. Given the high accessibility of the Sandwell College and Council House sites, and their location overlooking Victoria Park, the Council will consider increased densities in these locations at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate. Guiding principles for the future of housing in the Windmill Eye area are set out as follows.

Bedrooms	People	Gross Floor Area	Storeys	% of mix
5	8	145sqm	3	5%
4	6	125sqm	2	10%
3	5	85sqm	2	60%
2	4	76sqm	Varies*	25%
	3	65sqm		

*includes apartments & bungalows

Newbuild housing mix (average across all tenures), with construction to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4

GREAT ESTATES, GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Support improvement in existing housing estates

Extensive areas of housing in the Windmill Eye are managed by Sandwell Homes. Stock condition is generally good, however there may be long-term liabilities associated with energy use and housing type – particularly with maisonette blocks, with townhouse-type units. In addition there are environmental and management issues associated with particular estates, related to their layout, house-type, and lettings policies. Many of these issues can be addressed through retention and improvement of the housing stock, together with improved governance and environmental management of estates. In some areas, however, there is a clear mismatch between housing type and housing demand, some intractable issues of layout, and the potential opportunity for phased renewal to transform the quality and perception of the estate. Different solutions will be appropriate in different locations, depending on the priorities of residents in those areas, the opportunities and challenges of the particular estate, and on the economic situation over the coming decade in particular. Options will need to be generated, evaluated, and considered on an estate-by-estate basis according to the sequence identified in the phasing proposals. In all cases, proposals will require careful consideration of the projected investment required to maintain and upgrade existing housing stock over the coming years.



New Housing: Moderate Density = 1-3 storeys

THE “SMETHWICK HOUSE”

A unique housing offer for the Windmill Eye area

One of the most urgent challenges for the Neighbourhood Plan is to address the negative impact of housing clearance sites in the north of the Windmill Eye area and in Messenger Road in particular. Many of these sites have been vacant for 5 years or more, and act to sever the neighbouring residential areas particularly after dark. Furthermore, the clearance sites tend to be remote from public transport and local shops and services, and are therefore by their nature less attractive for residential redevelopment. While in the short term, temporary landscaping and other interventions are possible for these areas, because of their current low market value these sites could also be considered for a more innovative residential offer. Given that these are already serviced sites, they could provide an affordable route to home ownership through low-overhead site subdivision and parcelling, allowing development via self-build, self-procure, or local building company arrangements. To ensure design quality, strong and clear guidance will be required on the scale, materials, layout, and density of new development. These issues will be covered in Planning and Design Briefs prepared by the Local Authority. Innovative planning instruments such as ‘Local Development Orders’ could be considered to expedite the planning process and build confidence in potential take-up.



New Housing: High Density = 2-4 storeys

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Supporting homeowners, tenants, and landlords to improve the energy efficiency of their property

Much of the housing stock in the Windmill Eye area – ‘pre-1919’, ‘Radburn’, or ‘Townhouse’ type stock in particular – suffers from poor energy efficiency due to inadequate insulation, glazing, and heating facilities. It is likely that the difficulties in home heating are particularly acute for residents suffering from overcrowding, poor health, and restricted incomes. Furthermore, at a national scale the country is aiming for an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. Housing accounts for 27% of carbon emissions, and yet more than 80% of the houses we will be living in by 2050 have already been built. Therefore we must dramatically improve the performance of existing housing stock. This can be addressed in an integrated way by supporting homeowners, tenants, and landlords with an integrated package of technical, organisational, and financial measures in response to the specific problems associated with different housing types. This could include supporting owner-occupiers and landlords to improve the energy efficiency in the existing housing stock, as well as working with private sector landlords to improve standards of private rented accommodation. Wherever possible, changes to incorporate energy efficiency measures should be carried out whilst preserving the character of the older buildings which compliment the areas identity. A more detailed understanding will be needed of private stock condition, household financial resources, and other issues in order to develop and implement these proposals.



New Housing: Priority sites = 3-6 storeys

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

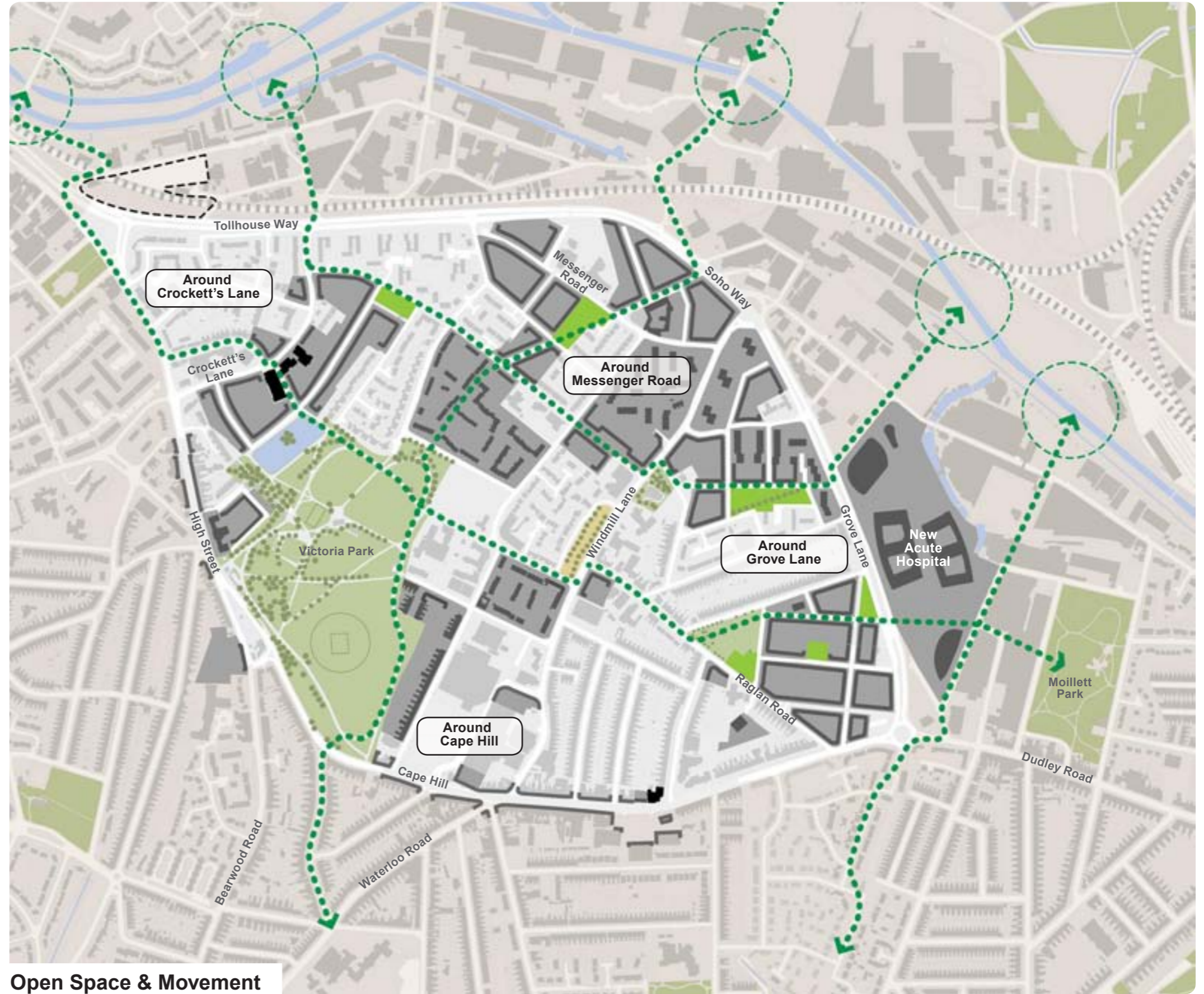
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Open Space & Movement

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4.4 Open Space & Movement

Some general principles guide the approach to open space and movement in the area. Public open spaces work best when overlooked and fronted by housing, community, and other buildings. Walking and cycling become more attractive and useful when they link up community amenities such as parks, schools, stations, health centres, etc. to create safe local routes. Incorporation of Environmental Infrastructure Guidance when proposals come forward will assist in developing a network of multi-functional green spaces which will contribute to improved health and better quality of life for residents. Measures could include green roofs, street trees and Sustainable Urban Drainage. Good quality public realm should also be created adjacent to public transport hubs to aid legibility and improve accessibility to public transport provision. In addition, there are some guiding principles for specific open space and movement issues in the Windmill Eye area as follows.

COMMON GROUND

Create a diverse network of public open spaces with strong links to public and community buildings

Victoria Park is the principal public open space in the Windmill Eye. It provides a variety of attractive landscape settings which encourage a wide range of people to use it. Many different activities overlap in the unified space of the park, and it benefits greatly from the patronage of visitors to the Smethwick Heritage Centre as well as staff and students of Sandwell College. The boundaries of Victoria Park are clearly defined, and the space within it is well-populated and well-policed throughout the day. There is strong evidence that it is used by local people of all backgrounds irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, or income. While people may work in different areas, shop in different parts of the high street, or observe different religious practices, the park is a place people from different backgrounds can enjoy together.

This plan therefore takes Victoria Park as a model for other public open spaces in the area, new and existing, to give them a similar sense of being 'common ground' for all residents of the Windmill Eye. A number of new public open spaces are proposed in this plan, to address the current 'gap in provision' and the lack of access particularly in the north of the Windmill Eye area. While different types of landscape settings will be appropriate to different sizes of public open spaces, all should incorporate play elements, habitat settings, and garden spaces to some extent. New open spaces should be located adjacent public and community buildings to facilitate outdoor activities, and should have a strong physical and visual relationship to all surrounding buildings to enable 'passive surveillance'. Friends of Parks groups, Tenants & Residents Associations, and adjacent community and public buildings can also make valuable contributions to the management and maintenance of public open spaces.

WINDMILL WAY

Create a network of pedestrian- and cycle-friendly routes across the area

Walking routes to and through the Windmill Eye are generally discontinuous, confusing, and poorly landscaped. While it is no more than 2km – a twenty minute walk – east-west from the site of the new Acute Hospital to Rolfe Street Station, pedestrians and cyclists have little choice but to travel along one of the two main routes, neither of which is direct – Soho Way/Grove Lane, a remote dual carriageway, or the High Street, with its bustle and traffic. Similarly, travelling north-south from the Super Youth Centre to Shireland Academy involves a route through confusing 'Radburn' housing areas.

This plan proposes to establish clear, direct, continuous, safe and attractive pedestrian- and cycle- friendly routes linking the principal amenities of the area including community amenities, public open spaces, and public transport. Importantly, this proposal does not involve a segregated route, rather an identified route shared with other road users along existing and new streets and open spaces. This can provide residents not only with an alternative to public transport or the car, but also with the incentive to avail of local services.

The routes can be realised through a range of landscaping improvements, road crossing upgrades, and lighting and signage systems. An east-west route, which covers a distance of 1,800m, will link Rolfe Street Station to the New Acute Hospital, via Sandwell College and New Hope Estate. A north-south route, which covers a distance of 1,100m, will link Shireland Academy and new local facilities at Soho Way. The two routes overlap in Victoria Park, the Windmill Eye's best public open space.

CANAL ROUTES

Enable improvements to access for walking and cycling from the Windmill Eye to the canal and metro

Canal amenity provides one of the distinguishing features of the West Midlands. In Smethwick the Canals provide particularly valuable, although not consistently usable, routes for cyclists travelling to West Bromwich and Birmingham as an alternative to the busy main roads. To be useful for utility and commuting trips all year round, security issues will need to be addressed and the towpaths will need to be widened with sealed surfaces. The canals also provide access to natural open spaces which are currently underprovided in the Windmill Eye area in particular. However, because the canal in the Windmill Eye follows the same corridor as other major infrastructure such as the Grove Lane dual carriageway and the Birmingham – Wolverhampton railway, it is particularly difficult to access. There are only four points of access to the canal along the northern boundary of the Windmill Eye area. While these points of access to the canal are located beyond the limits of the Windmill Eye study area targeted public realm interventions in these locations can improve visibility and accessibility to the canal by upgrading road crossing facilities at critical points enabling direct access to the canal. With future regeneration also anticipated north of the canal, these improvements also support access to Handsworth Booth Street Metro stop.

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

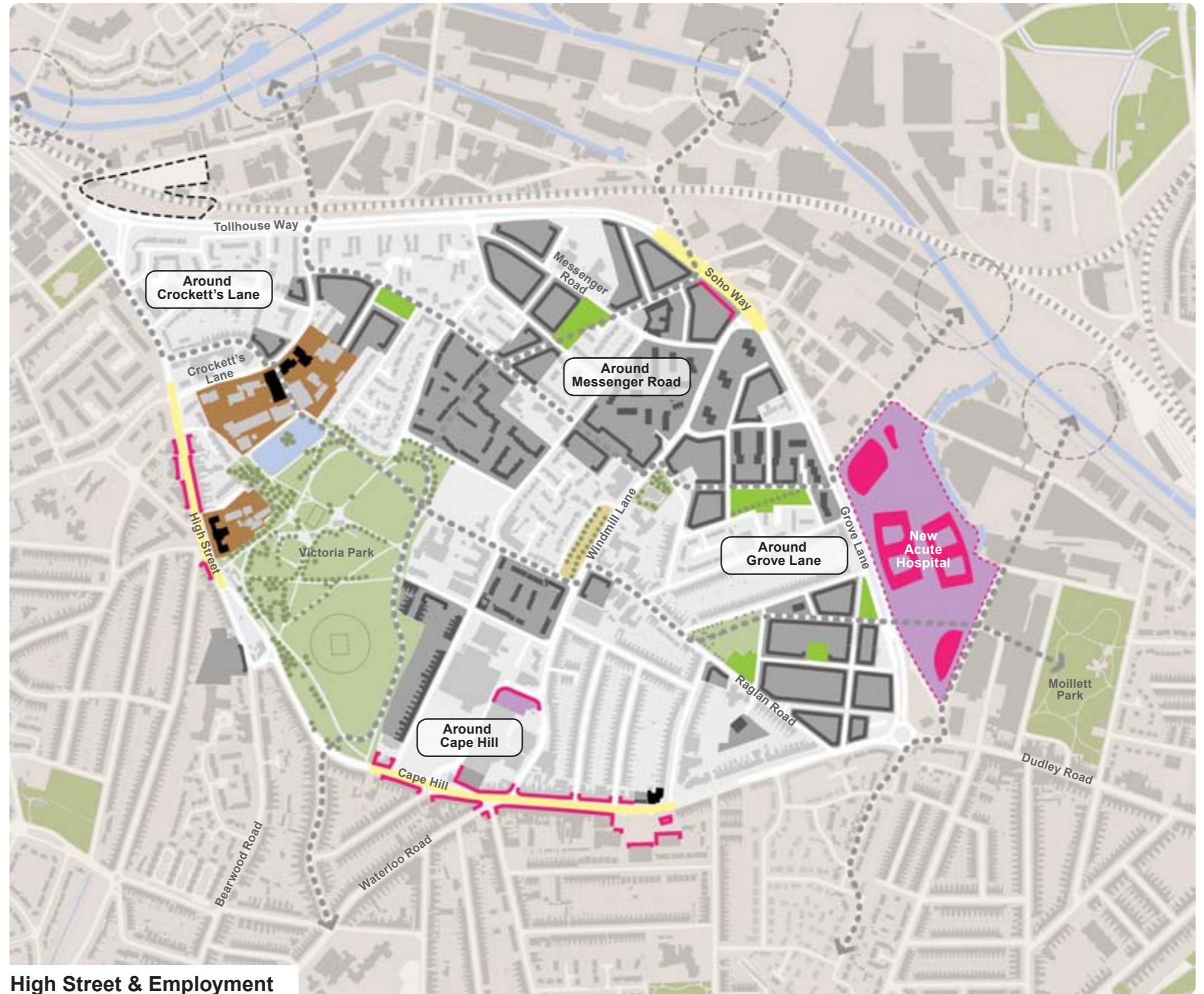
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- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



High Street & Employment

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4.5 High Street & Employment

Some general principles guide the approach to local services and employment in the area. Firstly, the major employers in the area in the short term will remain Sandwell College, and in the medium and long term the New Acute Hospital. As public service providers, these institutions already have a strong mandate to source local skills and services and support local supply chains where possible (see above). Similarly, the key to the success of any High Street is its approach to management, including car parking, seasonal events, waste and recycling. In addition, there are some guiding principles for specific high street and employment issues in the Windmill Eye area as follows.

ANCHOR THE HIGH STREET

Each part of the high street needs an economic driver and a social hub

High Street services are concentrated in three locations in the Windmill Eye area. At its West end, starting at Rolfe Street Station, Smethwick High Street offers a wide range of retail and community services for Smethwick as a whole. At its East end, the High Street is a parade of local shops and commercial services located between Sandwell College and Smethwick Council House. At Cape Hill, the major Shopping Centre and High Street shops offer retail services to an even wider catchment. Currently however, each of the High Street areas is to some degree struggling. In each case, there appears to be a lack of physical connections, or a mismatch between what ought to be the anchor of the high street, and the character, range, and quality of services that are actually provided. At the west end of Smethwick High Street, the connection between Rolfe Street Station and the High Street is particularly poor, limiting the evolution of this High Street area into a more mixed offer. At the east end of High Street, the continuing use of the Sandwell College and Council House sites is in question, which could have major impact on the patronage of shops and services in this area. In Cape Hill, the physical connections between the Windmills Shopping Centre and the High Street are so poor that they appear to function independently, again with negative impact on the patronage of shops and services on the High Street. In each case the physical connections between anchor and high street are critical, and it is here that investment and effort should be concentrated. New public, community, civic, or cultural uses could also safeguard the future of local Heritage Buildings which are key to the High Street setting. Currently, however, there is little quantitative or qualitative evidence on which to base or justify significant interventions in each location. Each of the potential projects will therefore require further research including extensive consultation with planning officers, traders, and other stakeholders as necessary.

IMPROVE THE IMAGE

Identify ways to lift people's perceptions of the area

Currently the environmental quality of the high streets in the Windmill Eye is generally poor. Street landscaping is generally cluttered and rather dated, and crossing points prioritise vehicular traffic rather than pedestrians and cyclists. Shop fronts are of uneven quality, and many upper floors of shop units are in poor condition and/or underused. Seasonal celebrations are not currently marked in an organised way, and there are no traders associations active in the area.

However these main through-routes form the principal approaches to and through the area, and are key to establishing a positive image of the neighbourhood for those living and working in the area, as well as those arriving by train, bus, car, bicycle, or on foot. They are also of direct concern to traders on the high street itself, who rely on 'passing trade' as well as 'major anchors' to generate business. In each case, the management of the high street is critical, which can be better informed by improving cohesiveness in the activities of all the high street stakeholders including traders, the Council, and potentially other service providers. Public realm investments can then be agreed and targeted to the areas of greatest opportunity and maximum impact.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Improve access to local services around Messenger Road

The Smethwick Area Action Plan anticipates significant residential growth not just within the Windmill Eye area proper, but also to the north on Cranford Street, Grove Lane, and Rabone Lane. Currently there is minimal provision for local shops and services in this area, and the recent demolition of the Windmill Precinct leaves Cape Hill as the location of the nearest available services – at least a twenty minute round-trip on foot.

This plan proposes a new local focus for shops and community services to serve this new residential and working population, and also to establish a clear identity for the developing residential area within and beyond the Windmill Eye study area. Viability will be a crucial factor for any new enterprise or service provision, therefore in considering potential locations to concentrate new local shops, opportunities to capture 'passing trade' are crucial. Coincidentally, the junction of Windmill Lane, Rabone Lane, Soho Way, and Cranford Street is a location of significant convergence of traffic currently managed by a roundabout, however this requires major redesign in order to address its poor performance in regulating traffic. This plan therefore proposes to address these two issues together through an integrated approach to the reconfiguration of traffic circulation and new development in order to create a new focus for local retail and community services. Close co-ordination between highways and mixed-use redevelopment will be key to transforming this key gateway to the Windmill Eye area.



Around Crockett's Lane: NOW 2011-2016

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Around Crockett's Lane: SOON 2016-2021



Around Crockett's Lane: LATER 2021-2026

AROUND CROCKETT'S LANE

The Crockett's Lane area is of strong architectural character extending from Rolfe Street to Victoria Park. At its western end is the beginning of Smethwick High Street and Rolfe Street Station. At its eastern end are Smethwick Council House and the Sandwell College campus, both on the fringes of the park. This part of the park is low-lying and sheltered, with attractive mature landscaping surrounding a large pond. Crockett's Lane crosses the area, and provides access to a range of municipal buildings including the Police Station, Law Courts, Primary School, and College, a number of which are recommended for local listing. Adjacent the Council House is a short parade of shops fronting the High Street, with independent retailers and other active ground floors uses, and some residential uses above. The remainder of the area is formed by a range of different housing types of generally good condition, including pre-1919 street housing, 1970's 'Radburn' type and townhouse housing, small 1980's housing association and private housing estates, and some recent private housing facing Victoria Park.

The main proposal for the Crockett's Lane area is to manage change on the Sandwell College site to benefit the neighbouring High Street and surrounding residential areas. After the college relocates to West Bromwich in 2011, the Council proposes to support continuing education, employment, and community facilities on the site on a temporary basis, until it can be redeveloped for new homes.

5

The plan proposals concern the following locations:

5.1 Sandwell College, Crockett's Lane School, & Car parks

Manage the transition of the sites to residential use

5.2 Chamberlain Walk

Redevelop and re-provide housing and public open space

5.3 Tollhouse Way

Improve the safety and directness of access for pedestrians and cyclists

5.4 Council House

Plan for the future of the Council House

5.5 Smethwick High Street

Support the long-term vitality and viability of the high street



Variety of buildings on the Sandwell College site



View of route between Crockett's Lane and park



5.1 Sandwell College, Crockett's Lane School, & Car Parks

Managing the transition of the sites to residential use

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Crockett's Lane has been a focus for municipal and education uses for more than a century. This continuity has been broken by the recent relocation of the Crockett's Community Primary School to Coopers Lane nearby, and the impending consolidation of Sandwell College in a new site in West Bromwich in 2011. However, the College and school sites are strategically located close to Rolfe Street Station and the High Street, with good vehicular access from Crockett's Lane and extensive frontage to Victoria Park. The Smethwick AAP designates these sites (Ho162) for residential redevelopment, with requirements to incorporate the Grade II listed building, address the potential for flooding, and contribute to the improvement of Unett Street Park.

This is the single most important development site in the Windmill Eye area due to the intrinsic value of its location and setting. By virtue of its size and significance, change on this site will have a major impact on the surrounding areas including Victoria Park, Smethwick High Street Lower, Crockett's

Lane, and the adjacent housing areas. In order to properly integrate this large institutional site with the surrounding neighbourhood, this plan proposes that the redevelopment of the Sandwell College and former Crockett's Lane School sites be considered in conjunction with the adjacent Chamberlain Walk estate (see below) as an integrated area of major change. Furthermore, the process through which this transition is managed will be critical to mitigating the impacts of change on the surrounding areas. This plan recommends the facilitation of interim training, employment, community, and residential uses on the site in order to maintain activity and security on the site and its surroundings.

Particular consideration should also be given to the following issues and opportunities.

SITE DECOMMISSIONING

Improve the relationship of the college site to the surrounding neighbourhood

The Sandwell College site is by its nature an institutional site with limited points of access and an internalised organisational layout. In the long-term transition to residential use, it is important that the institutional enclosure of the site be 'decommissioned' and it be fully integrated into the surrounding residential neighbourhood. This can best be achieved through site assembly and/or co-ordinated redevelopment of the adjacent Chamberlain Walk estate. The pedestrian through-route from Crockett's Lane to Victoria Park can be improved in material terms through public realm investments in paving and lighting, and by orienting new development to overlook and front onto this route. New residential development should front onto the park, and a new residential street created alongside the existing pond and connecting to Brook Street. A range of landscaping improvements to the pond are already envisaged as part of the Victoria Park Management Plan, and these should be delivered in conjunction with the residential redevelopment.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Co-ordinate of the redevelopment of Sandwell College, Crockett's Lane School, and Chamberlain Walk estate through site assembly, land-swap, or other agreement;
- Provide a mix of new housing overlooking Victoria Park, including conversion of the existing Grade II listed building, in a network of public streets and spaces accessed from a new perimeter street flanking the existing pond and connecting to Brook Street;
- Relandscape the margins of the existing pond to provide a greater variety of settings and habitats in conjunction with the adjacent wildlife space on the canal feeder embankment;

THROUGH ROUTE

Secure and improve right of way through college site to Victoria Park

Sandwell College enjoys an elevated site along the western boundary of Victoria Park, however effectively blocks access to the park from Crockett's Lane. During college opening hours, there is through-access on foot to the western entrance to the park. In the short term, the impending vacancy of the site could have a range of impacts on its surroundings, including reduced access and activity in a secluded part of Victoria Park. In the context of long-term change of land use for residential redevelopment, it is important to establish the principle of free access through the site on a statutory basis. In order that the Windmill Way can be realised as a continuous pedestrian and cycle route across the neighbourhood, this section of the route should be established as a through-route in the public domain, fronted by existing and new development as appropriate.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Improve the quality of public realm connection and confirm public right of way through the college site from Crockett's Lane to entrance of Victoria Park to encourage pedestrian and cycle movement.



Artist's illustration of potential future view of Sandwell College site viewed from Victoria Park, with 'Windmill Way' route through to Crockett's Lane



Existing view of Sandwell College viewed from Victoria Park



Artist's illustration of potential future view of Crockett's Lane, with public and community uses in the existing heritage buildings, and new development facing the street on both sides



Existing view of Sandwell College frontage to Crockett's Lane

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Develop new public, community, civic, or cultural use for Heritage Buildings

The college site has a number of fine civic buildings – listed and unlisted – which are key to the character, history, and institutional life of Crockett's Lane. In the short term, the impending vacancy of the site could have a range of impacts on the condition not only of the buildings themselves, but also their surroundings, including dramatically reduced patronage of the nearby shops and services on Smethwick High Street.. It is critical to work with stakeholders to manage the transition of heritage buildings in particular, and develop new public or community uses for these valuable civic assets. The range of potential uses could include temporary or interim uses, co-location of different uses (including social enterprise) to create a 'critical mass', as well as independent and private community uses for residential, education, health, or faith groups. Re-use of historic buildings is strongly supported by Planning Policy. Notwithstanding the appropriateness of such an approach, building refurbishment will face a series of challenges – including building condition, energy consumption, and accessibility particularly at thresholds and vertical circulation – which may place an additional premium on construction costs.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with a range of community stakeholders to find new uses for heritage buildings on the Sandwell College site;

EDUCATION USES

Retain an educational legacy on Crockett's Lane

This area has been in continual educational use for at least a century since the construction of the Smethwick Technical School in 1910. This Grade II listed building lies at the centre of a large estate of institutional buildings which are an important link not just to the area's history but also to educational access for local residents. There are a number of ways to mitigate this loss of this asset. A Sandwell College 'satellite' could be retained on the site to provide a resource base for local ESOL and other outreach programmes as a 'gateway' for residents to potential further educational involvement at West Bromwich. The existing trades workshops could be retained in the interim as a local skills centre associated with the construction of the proposed new Acute Hospital, in conjunction with 'Think Local' and Future Skills Sandwell. In the longer term, the legacy of institutional buildings on the site could potentially accommodate one or more new schools in the public or independent sector. A private or 'free' school (i.e. parent-led school) at primary or secondary level would, in this location, enjoy a high quality park-side environment. This would not only support the public domain of the park, but also provide an impetus for community pride and potentially stimulate the local housing market.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Retain, support, and develop educational uses on the college site.

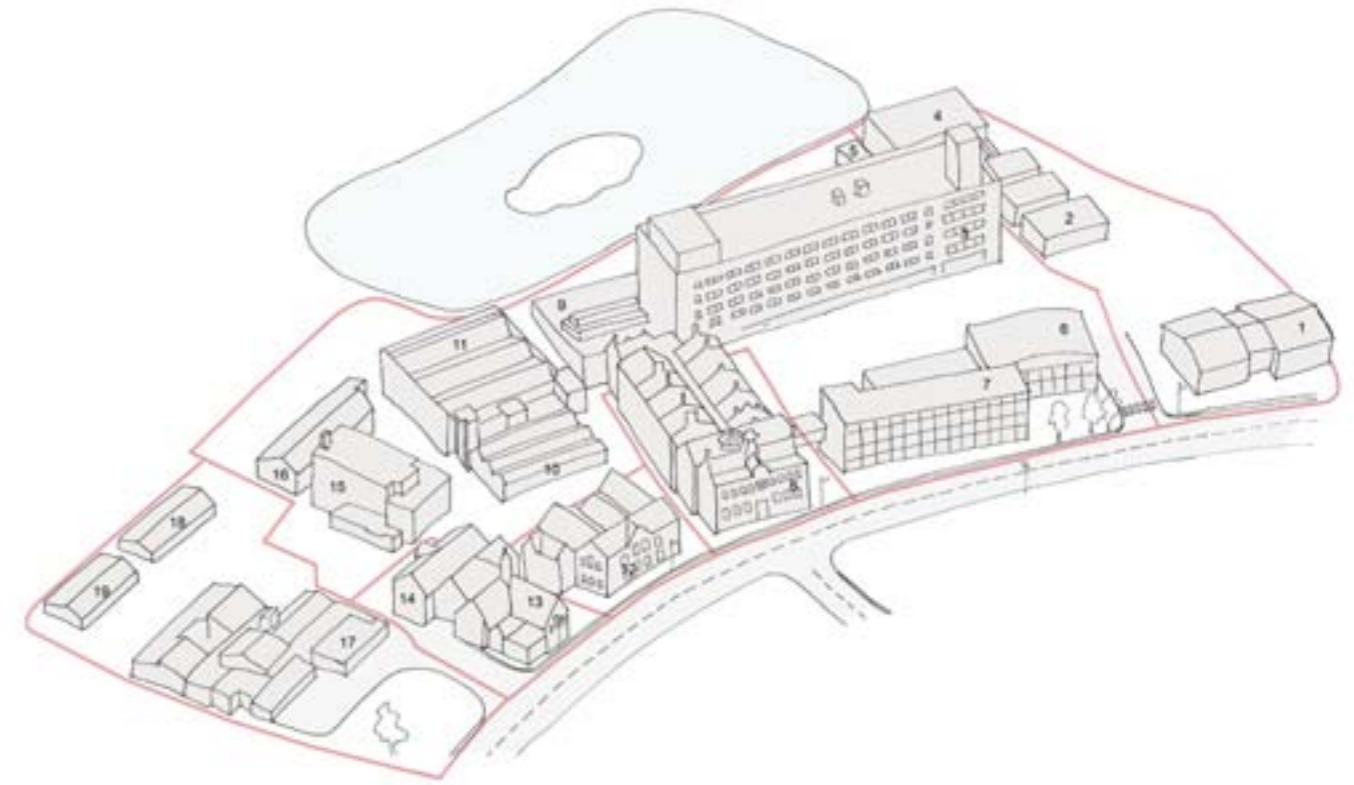
INTERIM USES

Manage the transition of the college site to residential use

Sandwell College plans to close its Smethwick campus in 2011 and consolidate at West Bromwich. It is likely that appropriate residential redevelopment of the site will not be viable in the short term. The consequent vacancy of the site and loss of college-related activities could have a significant effect not only on local access to education opportunities, but also on the viability of local businesses particularly in the adjacent High Street area, and on the safety and security of Victoria Park. The management of interim uses on the site could play a valuable role in securing the surrounding area in social, environmental, and economic terms. Interim uses could include educational uses (skills centre, primary school, nursery), residential uses (student accommodation, live-work accommodation), and employment uses (workshops, serviced office space). Key to the process will be the 'matching' of uses to the available variety of buildings (as suggested in diagram, right).

This plan therefore proposes the following:

- Promotion of interim uses on a time-limited basis within and adjacent to the college site.



Variety of building types on Sandwell College & Crockett's Lane School sites and potential suitability for alternative interim uses:

1, 3, 7	Office spaces & meeting rooms
2, 4, 5, 9	Lecture rooms
6	Multi-purpose hall
8, 12, 13, 14	Grade II Listed or other heritage building
10, 11, 15, 16	Trades workshops
17, 18, 19	Former Crockett's Lane school buildings

5.2 Chamberlain Walk

Redevelop and reprovide housing and public open space

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

This area dates from after 1960 and is formed of a number of different housing types and tenures. At Chamberlain Walk, short terraces of two-storey houses and two-storey warden housing are organised in a poor layout separating pedestrian and vehicular access ('Radburn' type). Longer terraces of three-storey townhouses back onto Crockett's Lane. There is a moderate proportion of homeowners. At St. Michael's Court, a short terrace of eight private houses are set back from the road behind garages. The Council's Environmental Grading survey reports regular problems in this area. The Community Action Research Team found that the majority of respondents were satisfied with their homes, though there are problems in Chamberlain Walk with the small size of rooms and the large size of gardens. Some reported significant problems with refuse and antisocial behaviour in car parking areas at the rear of properties. This area is located close to Rolfe Street Station, and occupies a strategic location capable of improving access to the large Sandwell College site adjacent (see above), ensuring its integration into the surrounding area.

This plan proposes to:

- Work with tenants, leaseholders, and homeowners to agree terms for the redevelopment and potential re-provision of their homes;
- Create a new local park and play area to serve local needs, at the junction of Pool Road and Brook Street overlooked by existing and new housing;
- Co-ordinate redevelopment with the neighbouring Sandwell College and Crockett's Lane School sites;



'Radburn'-type housing at Chamberlain Walk

5.3 Tollhouse Way

Improve the safety and directness of access for pedestrians and cyclists crossing Tollhouse Way

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Tollhouse Way is a busy dual carriageway which severs and isolates the western part of Smethwick High Street from Rolfe Street Station and access to the Birmingham Canals. The existing crossing to Rolfe Street Station is positioned on a busy junction, which currently serves a significant amount of freight traffic. The quality of the pedestrian crossing is poor as the crossing is staggered, and the radius of the sliproad junction with Rolfe Street is particularly large, prioritising vehicular movement over pedestrian crossing. The existing crossing at Hill Street is a busy junction with traffic lights but without pedestrian signals, and again the radius of the junction sliproads are particularly large. Prioritising vehicular movement over pedestrian crossing

This plan therefore proposes to work with the Local Highways Authority to:

- Reconfigure the Rolfe Street slip road and traffic island on the north side of Tollhouse Way to improve pedestrian access and safety, in conjunction with potential new step-free access to Rolfe Street Station;
- Upgrade the existing signalised crossing of Tollhouse Way at Rolfe Street to a "super crossing" to improve access between Smethwick High Street, Rolfe Street Station, and the canal;
- Upgrade the existing signalised junction of Tollhouse Way at Hill Street to a signalised crossing to improve access between Crockett's Lane and the canal.



Large-radius slip road privileges vehicular movement

5.4 Council House

Plan for the future of the Council House site

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

The long-term future of the Council House is uncertain, as the ancillary buildings to the rear of the Grade II Listed Council House are in poor condition. If it is to continue as a site for local administration, it will require substantial investment in the estate in the medium term. If the site is to change use in whole or in part – most likely to residential use – it is critical to develop new public or community uses for the Council House building itself. These could include independent or private community uses for education, health, or faith groups. Notwithstanding the appropriateness of such an approach, building refurbishment will face a series of challenges – including building condition, energy consumption, and accessibility particularly at thresholds and vertical circulation – which may place an additional premium on construction costs.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with a range of community stakeholders to plan the future of the Council House site.



Smethwick Council House

5.5 Smethwick High Street

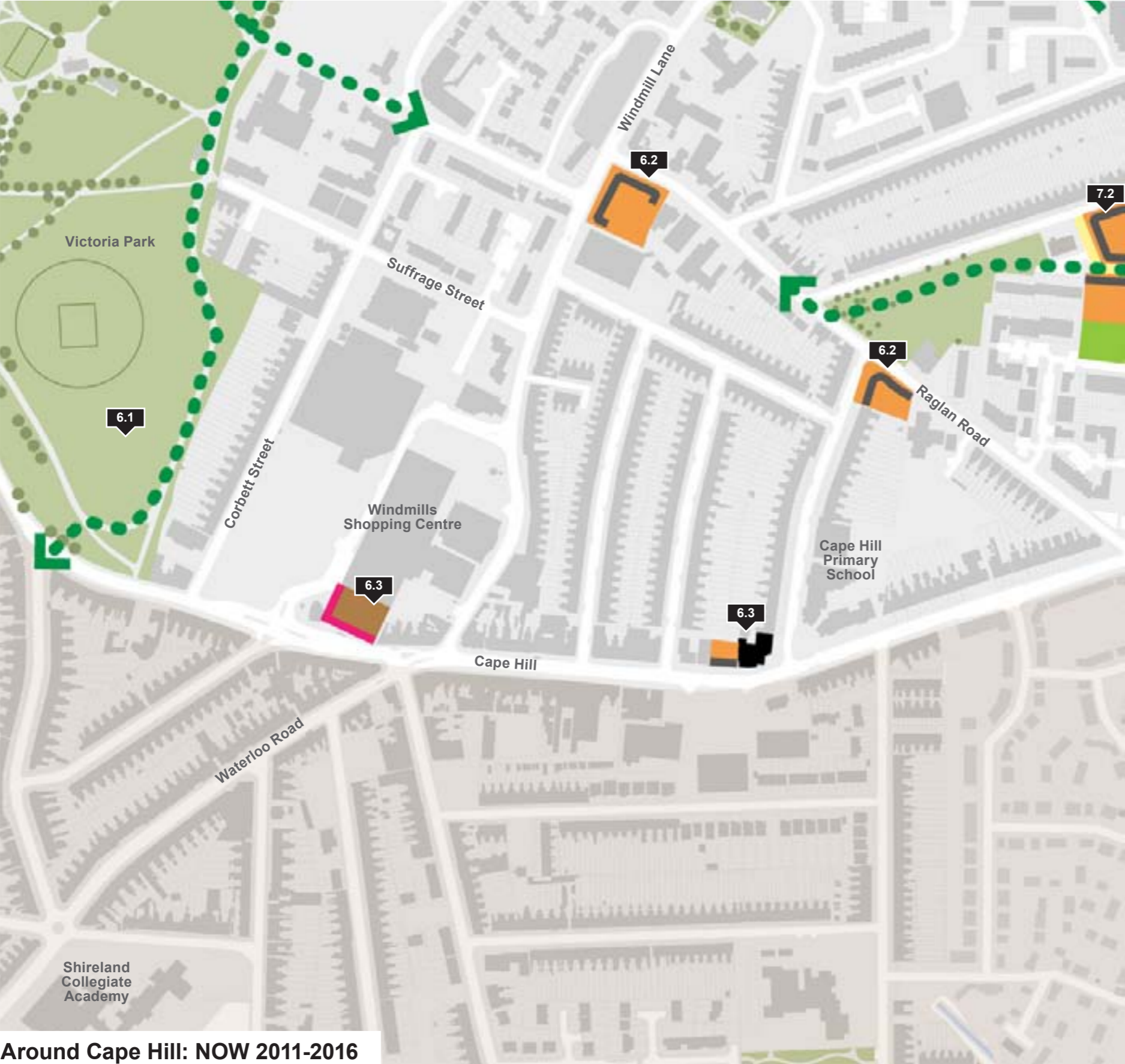
Support the vitality and viability of the high street

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Smethwick High Street requires coordinated action among all stakeholders – traders, statutory agencies, and service providers – in order to realise its potential and in particular to manage the trade-offs between the requirements of retail and commercial uses and the demands of this important artery for public and personal transport. Currently there is no active traders’ association. Uncertainty as to the future of the Sandwell College and Council House sites could threaten existing businesses and deter new ones. High Street requires concerted investment to improve its attractiveness for residents and other patrons, and to improve its image and perception for those passing through the area. High street landscaping investments should involve integrated improvements in street paving, seating, lighting, planting, signage and general decluttering, as well as provision for short-stay carparking, servicing including deliveries and waste management, and improvements to shop-fronts and advertising elements.

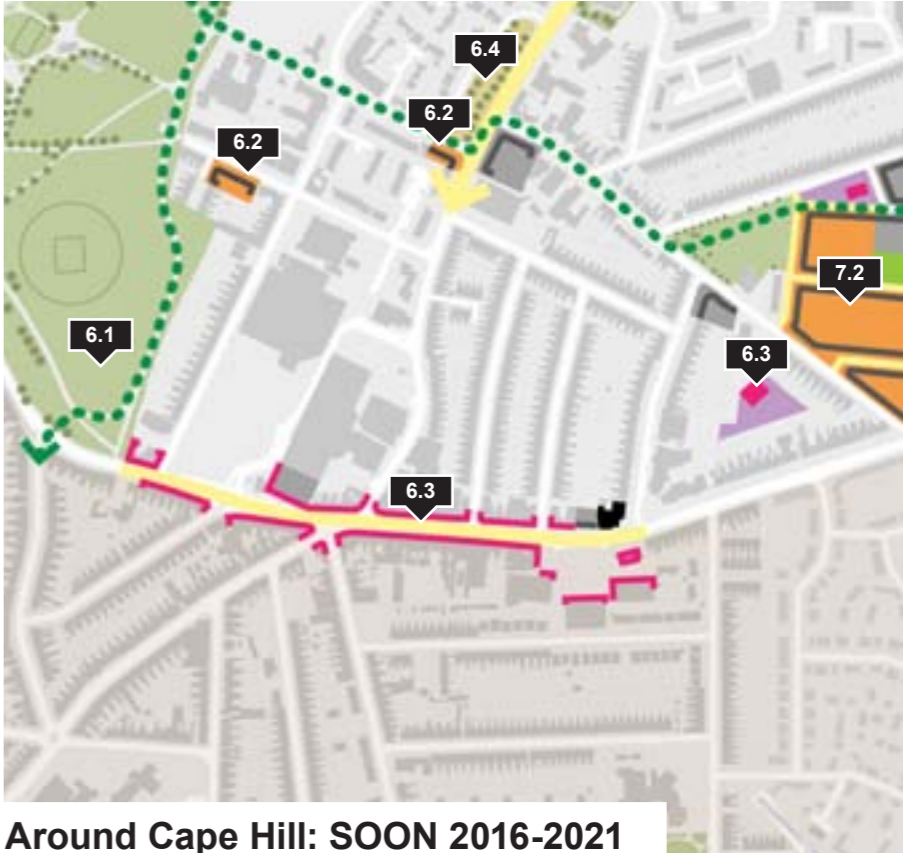
This plan therefore proposes to:

- Support the reorganisation and renewal of local Traders’ Associations to act as an intermediary for consultations between public and private stakeholders;
- Support interim uses for vacant retail premises and promote “living above the shop” to bring activity back to the high street;
- Support collective solutions for recycling and energy to lower the cost of doing business and create a stronger network and shared identity amongst traders;
- Develop an event programme to bring seasonality and local cultural expression to the high street;
- Invest in improvements to street landscaping, street scene, and crossing facilities.



Around Cape Hill: NOW 2011-2016

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Around Cape Hill: SOON 2016-2021



Around Cape Hill: LATER 2021-2026

AROUND CAPE HILL

Cape Hill is the principal shopping area for the neighbourhood, as well as its oldest residential area. Much of the high street is of fine architectural quality with a number of buildings which are listed or merit consideration for local listing. The junction of Waterloo Road and the High Street is distinctive formed by the listed landmark buildings of the former Lloyds Bank and Waterloo Hotel. However the Windmills Shopping Centre is separated from the rest of the High Street by an continuous run of vacant shop units. The high street provides a mix of shops and services, terminated to the east by the fine listed Cape Hill Primary School and Cape House Dispensary. Behind Cape Hill on both sides lies a network of streets with pre-1919 housing of good intrinsic quality but of uneven condition. The western edge of this area is formed by the area's only terrace of 'back-of-pavement' housing, on Corbett Street backing onto Victoria Park. Nearby, the Suffrage Street entrance to the park is at the crown of Cape Hill, with attractive views westwards, and a group of community buildings serving family education needs for all ages.

The proposals for the Cape Hill area include improving the connection between the shopping centre and the high street so that the range of shops and services complement each other. This will involve close consultation with traders and support of a range of high street initiatives.

6

The plan proposals concern the following locations:

6.1 Victoria Park

Link the existing park more closely with the activities that surround it

6.2 Existing and new housing

Improve existing housing and develop new housing in infill sites

6.3 Cape Hill High Street

Improve the quality, vitality, and viability of the high street

6.4 Windmill Square

Replace maisonettes with a new public open space at the junction of Windmill Lane and Raglan Road



Route through park from High Street to Suffrage Street



Route from park to Ballot Street currently closed



Pond located at edge of Sandwell College



Route from park to Ballot Street currently closed



Corner of Edgbaston Road, route to Shireland Academy



Rear of Corbett Street backing onto Park

6.1 Victoria Park

Link the existing park more closely with the activities that surround it

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Victoria Park is one of the Windmill Eye's greatest assets, both in terms of its physical and environmental amenity, but also because of its role as the principal focus for life of different communities in the area. The Green Flag-winning Park has an active Friends group, who worked closely with Sandwell Council to produce the recent Victoria Park Smethwick Strategic Management Plan 2009-2014. While many of the Management Plan's provisions focus on improving the amenities within the park, this plan proposes to complement these with a range of proposals to improve the physical relationship of the park to

the surrounding buildings and residential areas. In particular, the Ballot Street park entrance has been gated at Exeter Road to effectively privatise this section of street within the Victoria Park School grounds. In order that the Windmill Way can be realised as a continuous pedestrian and cycle route across the neighbourhood, this section of the route should be established as a through-route in the public domain, or at least accessible during daylight hours. However, this will need to be done which does not hinder the safety and security of the school or children. Further discussion will be required on this issue.

This plan proposes to:

- Establish a clear hierarchy of routes through the park, differentiated by landscaping treatments, signposting and lighting, to encourage pedestrian and cycle movement along the Windmill Way;
- Work with stakeholders to reopen the park entrance at Ballot Street on a trial, periodic, or permanent basis to encourage pedestrian and cycle movement along the Windmill Way; whilst protecting the building and school children.
- Relandscape the margins of the existing pond to provide a greater variety of settings and habitats in conjunction with the redevelopment of Sandwell College*;
- Establish a Volunteer Programme to increase the number and range of volunteers involved in the park and its management*;
- Work with stakeholders to develop physical links and activities between the park and the public and community buildings surrounding it, including the Victoria Park Primary School, Sandwell College, the Pakistani Muslim Community Association, and the Council House.
- Work with householders to establish a Boundary Improvement Scheme to soften landscaping and reinforce the privacy and security of boundaries with private properties.

**Note these strategic proposals coincide in whole or in part with Action Plan provisions in SMBC's Victoria Park Smethwick Strategic Management Plan 2009-2014.*

6.2 Existing and New Housing

Improve existing housing and develop new housing in infill sites

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Housing in the vicinity of Cape Hill High Street is predominantly of pre-1919 stock and of intrinsically good layout and street pattern. However it faces two basic problems.

Firstly, most of the existing buildings are privately owned or rented, and of uneven condition. Due to the age of the buildings, it is likely that many households struggle financially to heat and maintain these properties. The combination of poor thermal performance of buildings, ineffective heating systems, and restricted financial means, can be of sufficient intensity to be categorised as fuel poverty, which can have significant impacts not just on the comfort of the home but more critically on the physical and mental health of the whole household. Up to 15 or 20% of the population of Soho and Victoria Ward may be experiencing fuel poverty according to its current government definition. A direct means of addressing fuel poverty is to support householders and landlords to improve the energy efficiency of housing in the area. While central government programmes will be anticipated to address some of these liabilities, this plan identifies particular areas where investment should be prioritised in order to support wider regeneration objectives. Improvement of the back-of-pavement housing on Corbett Street will address some of the most vulnerable stock in the area, while supporting the improvement of the high street in general. Improvement of housing the Ballot Street / Suffrage Street similarly will address some of the most vulnerable modern stock, and support public realm investments in Windmill Lane and the Windmill Way.

Secondly, there are a number of locations where the street pattern is interrupted by vacant sites at a number of key locations. Sympathetically-scaled housing development on such 'infill' sites will support wider regeneration objectives such as the Windmill Way and other investments in the public realm. Proposals for housing developments on sites at Tudor Works and Suffrage Street are of particular importance. Similarly the council is demonstrating its commitment to improving the range and quality of housing in the area through new developments on former Council housing sites at Raglan Road and Bearwood House, two infill sites with 15 and 28 dwellings respectively.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Assess existing housing in the designated areas to identify priorities for investment including energy retro-fitting;
- Work with residents to develop and implement a programme of housing renewal in the identified areas.
- Support residential development of appropriate scale on infill sites.



Pre-1919 housing at Corbett Street: Improvement



Maisonettes at Suffrage Street: Improvement



Bearwood House: New Council housing under construction

6.3 Cape Hill High Street

Improve the quality, vitality, and viability of the high street

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Cape Hill High Street requires concerted action among all stakeholders – traders, council, statutory agencies, and service providers – in order to realise their potential and manage the trade-offs between the requirements of retail and commercial uses and the demands of this important artery for public and personal transport. Currently there is no active traders' association, and the high street areas lack cohesion, particularly between the Windmills Shopping Centre and Cape Hill High Street where there is an unbroken run of vacant shop units. The success of the shopping centre also has a major impact on parking in the vicinity, with the residential Corbett Street suffering from commercial carparking pressures.

Particular consideration should also be given to the following issues and opportunities.



Grade II Listed Cape Dispensary, currently vacant

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Support the reorganisation and renewal of local Traders' Associations to act as an intermediary for consultations between public and private stakeholders;
- Support interim uses for vacant retail premises and promote "living above the shop" to bring activity back to the high street;
- Support collective solutions for recycling and energy to lower the cost of doing business and create a stronger network and shared identity amongst traders;
- Develop an event programme to bring seasonality and local cultural expression to the high street;
- Develop a high street club card (e.g. Smethwick Card or Cape Hill Card) to support local independent retailers and market stall holders, to encourage people to shop locally and provide retailers with better information on their target market;
- Invest in improvements to street landscaping, street scene, and crossing facilities;
- Develop a residents' parking scheme for residential areas in the vicinity of the shopping centre.

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Support new commercial public, community, civic, or cultural use for Heritage Buildings

Cape Hill High Street has a number of fine civic buildings – listed and unlisted, particularly on its north side – which are key to the character, history, and institutional life of the high street, including:

- Grade II* Waterloo Hotel (1907), at corner of Waterloo Road and Shireland Road;
- Grade II Former Lloyds Bank (1907), at corner of Cape Hill and Waterloo Road;
- Grade II Former dispensary Cape House (1907), at corner of Cape Hill and Durban Road;
- Grade II Former Rank Cinema (1930), now The Victoria Suite, on Windmill Lane;
- Unlisted Seven Stars public house (c.1900), at corner of Cape Hill and Windmill Lane;
- Unlisted Barclays Bank (c.1910), at corner of Cape Hill and Salisbury Road;
- Unlisted Dudley Arms public house, at corner of Cape Hill and Rosebery Road; and
- Unlisted Cape Primary School, at corner of Cape Hill and Durban Road.

Some of these have viable existing uses, such as Cape Hill Primary School which is in continuing use, albeit on a restricted site. There may be scope to extend the school playground to the rear in conjunction with the Cape Hill Medical Centre, which occupies part of a large site contiguous with the rear of the school, which enjoys independent access from Raglan Road. Some of the heritage buildings are however vacant and under threat, in particular the Cape Hill Dispensary. Planning permission for the conversion of the building to a hotel – a highly appropriate use for an attractive civic building – has recently lapsed, however it will remain suitable for residential or other civic use. Notwithstanding the appropriateness of such an approach, building refurbishment will face a series of challenges – including building condition, energy consumption, and accessibility particularly at thresholds and vertical circulation – which may place an additional premium on construction costs.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with a range of commercial and community stakeholders to support existing uses and/or develop new uses for the area's heritage buildings.



Artist's illustration of potential relandscaped high street



Existing junction of Cape Hill & Waterloo Road

WINDMILLS SHOPPING CENTRE & WINDMILLS MARKET

Work with stallholders to transform Windmills Market

With the development of Windmills Shopping Centre, Cape Hill has significantly improved its attractiveness as a retail centre since 2000 and now serves a wide catchment with a expanding range of high street multiples. However, despite the centre's growing popularity, the retail units which directly face the high street frontage have largely remained unlet and boarded-up since their construction. Consequently, there is little 'spin-off' to high street activity as a whole. The Windmill Centre effectively functions as a 'stand alone' retail destination, as identified in the most recent Town Centre Health Check conducted by Sandwell Council in 2007. Indeed it appears that in the intervening years the vitality and viability of Cape Hill may be in some decline. Many high streets benefit from the presence of a market to provide a convivial setting to complement a range of larger and more specialised traders. In Cape Hill, the long-standing Windmills Market is incorporated in the shopping centre, where it has been reconfigured as an indoor market space with entrances from the shopping centre and Windmill Lane. It appears that this new arrangement has not functioned effectively for a number of reasons including its location, layout, offer, organisation, and remoteness from passing trade. Indeed it is more

accurately described as a mini-mall rather than a market, with traders occupying secure units rather than open stalls, and paying individual rates rather than collective charges. Despite these conditions, a core group of anchor traders including a Market Café, Fishmonger, and Key Cutter continue to attract clientele. However the ethos of a market as a thriving space for social and economic interaction, with low overheads and barriers to access, is largely absent. The market management company has now ceased trading, and the market is currently managed by the Shopping Centre management company. The consequent uncertainty as to its long-term management and ownership are likely to have significant impact on investment, retention and marketing, leading to a cycle of decline. It is clear that the market will need a major rethink in order to survive and flourish, which could include consideration of its relocation, potentially to the vacant high street frontage of the shopping centre. This could effectively "fill the gap" with a lively, diverse, and colourful offer in an open-sided arrangement, benefiting from passing trade and generating a new clientele. This will require negotiation between the market and high street traders, the Windmills Shopping Centre, and the council. At the same time, the relocation of the market would release the current market building for alternative uses including retail and leisure uses.



Artist's illustration of potential future view of frontage of Windmills Shopping Centre, together with improvements to landscaping of high street

This plan therefore proposes the following:

- Work with the market traders, the Windmills Shopping Centre, and other stakeholders to develop an integrated and co-ordinated strategy to improving and/or relocating the market;



Existing view of Windmills Shopping Centre frontage to Cape Hill



Windmill Lane Maisonettes

6.4 Windmill Square

Replace maisonettes with a new public open space at the junction of Windmill Lane and Raglan Road

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

The Windmill Lane maisonette estate dates from after 1960 and is composed of four interlinked blocks of managed by Sandwell Homes. Units are accessed via two external stairways on Croxall Way, and back onto Windmill Lane. There are no homeowners in these blocks. Sandwell Homes' Environmental Grading survey reports serious problems in most of the environmental survey categories. The Community Action Research Team found that the majority of the respondents were happy with their home, however did report problems in terms of noise transfer from neighbouring properties both laterally and vertically. Externally, major problems with refuse and fly-tipping were reported, linked to the poor arrangement of bin stores and exposure of the site to litter from passers-by, as well as the lack of play space. In the adjacent housing on the north side of Ballot Street, the Community Action Research Team found that there was a particular shortage of open space for children's play.

The windmill after which the area is named was originally located at the junction of Windmill Lane and Ballot Street, one of the highest points in the area. This location is effectively the 'crossroads' of the neighbourhood, where the main north-south route of Windmill Lane meets the main east-west route along Raglan Road. It is also the at the heart

of the area's community facilities, with the police station, St Matthew's Church and School, the CAP centre, and the new mosque currently under construction all in the vicinity. The replacement of the existing maisonette housing is an early priority for this plan and makes possible the creation of a new public open space at this strategic location. This space could be potentially landscaped as a flexible space for play, meeting and/or community events.

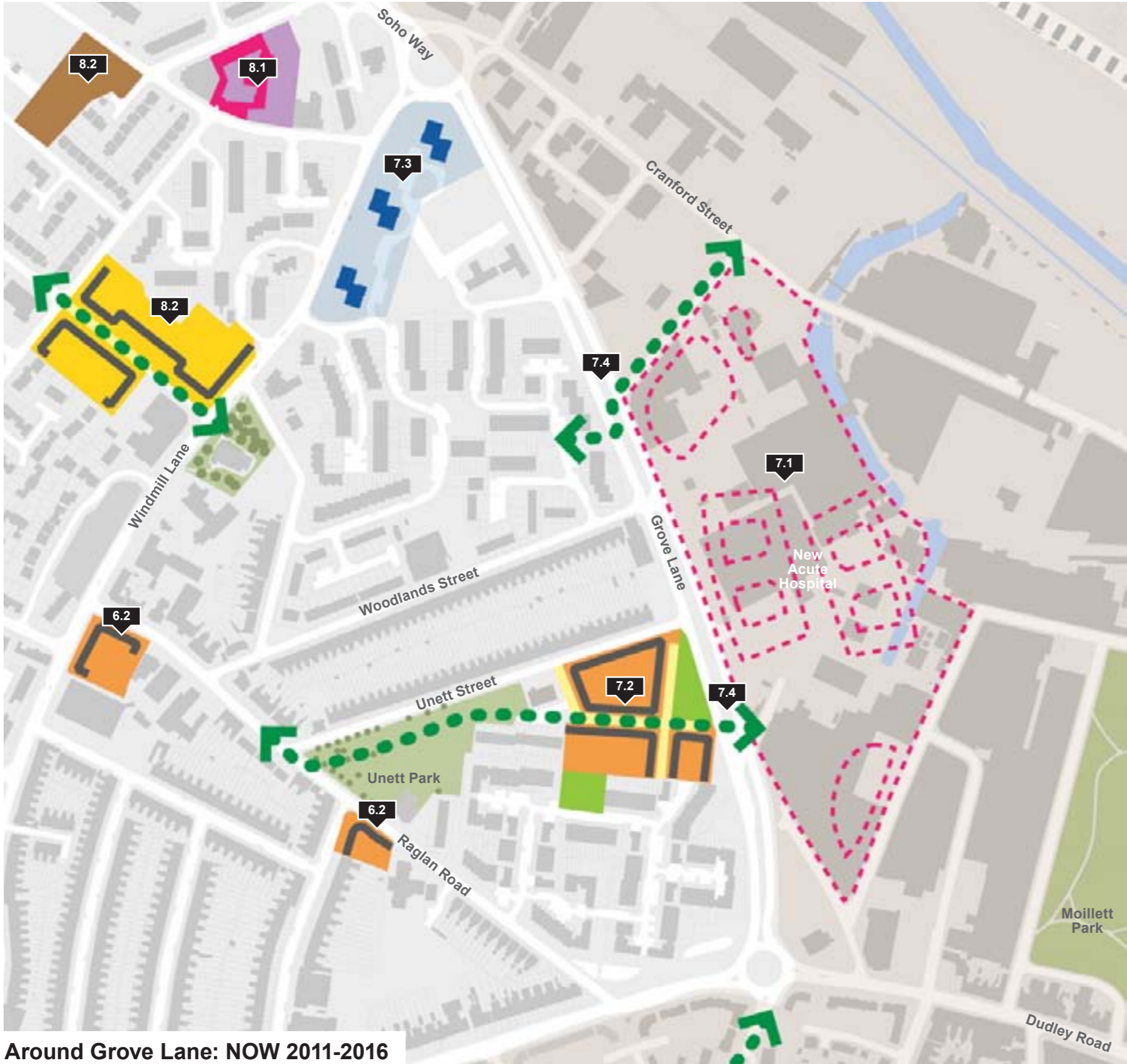
This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with tenants to agree terms for their relocation and the demolition of the existing maisonettes at Nos. 155-178 Windmill Lane;
- Potential to create a new local square on the site of maisonettes as a civic focus for the Windmill Eye in conjunction with the Windmill Way.



Artist's Sketch of potential future view of new Windmill Square

Existing view of Windmill Lane with maisonettes to right of shot



Around Grove Lane: NOW 2011-2016

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Around Grove Lane: SOON 2016-2021



Around Grove Lane: LATER 2021-2026

AROUND GROVE LANE

Grove Lane is a major dual carriageway that cuts off the housing areas in the Windmill Eye from largely disused employment lands to the east. The area's most distinctive building is the listed Church of St. Matthew. The two 'townhouse' estates at New Hope and Cuin Road have an inward-looking and confused arrangement of cul de sacs. The houses mostly turn their backs to the surrounding streets and to the unstructured green space and playground facilities that form their edges. Two very long, slightly sloping terraces of pre-1919 housing separate the two estates. South of Cape Hill, the old Cape Hill Brewery has been redeveloped for a large, self-contained residential quarter. High Street shops along Dudley Road begin one block to the east of Grove Lane. Behind this frontage are a number of large parcels of 'brownfield land', where site assembly is currently underway for the construction of the new Acute Hospital and the development of housing and commercial uses. These sites currently separate the Windmill Eye area from any access to the canal or to the substantial Moillett Street Recreation Ground adjacent.

Services currently provided in the City Hospital will be relocating to a new purpose-built Acute Hospital on Grove Lane, which is planned to open in 2016. This will have a major impact on the area, including the regeneration of the canal lands surrounding the hospital. The proposals will ensure the new hospital and residential areas are well-connected to the Windmill Eye so that existing residents can benefit from this important new amenity.

7

The plan proposals concern the following locations:

7.1 New Acute Hospital

Integrate the hospital with the surrounding neighbourhood physically, socially, and economically

7.2 Townhouse Estates

Work with residents to plan the future of the New Hope & Cuin Road Estates

7.3 The Crofts Estate

Invest in improvements to the existing towers and open space

7.4 Grove Lane

Improve the safety and directness of access for pedestrians and cyclists crossing Grove Lane

7.1 New Acute Hospital

Integrate the hospital with the surrounding neighbourhood physically, socially, and economically

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

The New Acute Hospital will open in 2016. The physical design of the hospital is at an early stage of planning. While the general layout of the buildings and access have been determined, the detail of the building specification, layout, and design are yet to be established. The design brief is currently in development by the NHS Trust, with involvement of a broader-based Hospital Design Group which draws membership from Council and Community.

Particular consideration should be given to the following principles.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with tenants to agree terms for their relocation and the demolition of the existing maisonettes at Nos. 155-178 Windmill Lane;
- Create a new local square on the site of maisonettes as a civic focus for the Windmill Eye in conjunction with the Windmill Way.



Artist's impression of New Acute Hospital

Open Access

The hospital will occupy a substantial site between Grove Lane and the Cape Hill canal arm. Free pedestrian access to the canal north-south through the hospital site is already envisaged in the outline planning application for the proposed development. However an east-west connection through the site could also be of substantial benefit and improve access to the public open space at Moillett Street Park. In order that the Windmill Way can be realised as a continuous pedestrian and cycle route across the neighbourhood, this section of the route should be established as a through-route in the public domain, fronted by the new hospital development. This principle could be extended to facilitate access to a some of the hospital's non-medical facilities for use in health-related community outreach and education work, such as a weekly community kitchen facility, monthly community arts programme, or annual health fair. Where the building fronts the public streets directly, or

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Provide direct pedestrian and cycle access through the hospital estate from main entrance at junction of Grove Street & Halberton Street to Moillett Street park, to encourage pedestrian and cycle movement;
- Identify hospital facilities which could in principle be accessible for community use, and configure their specification, location, design and access arrangements to facilitate direct visibility and entry from the public domain;
- Use public, commercial, and social media to 'signpost' and provide information on public access, facilities and events in the hospital estate;

there are public access routes past the face of a building, it will be important to consider and design the ground floor frontage to be visually open and accessible. For example, where there are facilities which could be shared with the neighbourhood, these should be located on the ground floor with active open frontages and welcoming points of entry. Ideally these should be provided with double entrances – that is, both to the hospital interior and to the public domain – in order to provide clarity for security and cleaning protocols. Finally, the physical and social presence of the hospital in the wider neighbourhood should also be explored through 'signposting' of facilities and events through physical signposting and using local print and electronic media – commercial, public sector, and social.



Outline Planning Application - Site Plan

Local Procurement

Integrate the hospital with the surrounding neighbourhood economically

The current City Hospital already sources some resources locally and works with social enterprise providers on a range of in-hospital facilities. The construction of the new hospital provides a major opportunity to increase the level of local procurement of the hospital's everyday needs such as catering, cleaning, transport and on-call accommodation, as well as procurement and employment during the construction phase. This will enable the public sector to pursue economic, environmental and social objectives concurrently by channelling its existing purchasing power, and support the case for implementation in the face of budget restrictions. In order to understand the scope for local procurement, it is essential firstly to identify and map procurement needs (not just of the New Acute Hospital, but also local GP practices and even schools and other

service providers), and potential sources of supply (ranging from local social enterprises to regional commercial farmers). This information can be sourced through existing databases and supplementary surveys, and enable clear linkage of potential local supply chains, and identification of gaps which a business start-up could potentially address. This information can then provide the basis on which to bring together public sector clients and potential providers to establish a partnership approach. Together, all parties can then explore particular opportunities and barriers in the procurement process. These may range from particular knowledge and skills (e.g. of social enterprise providers) to issues of supply aggregation (meeting of minimum threshold scale required for contracts). Key stakeholders in this process will be the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency and Sandwell Council's local purchasing programmes such as with "finditinsandwell".

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Map existing local procurement needs and sources, in order to enable the identification of opportunities and barriers;
- Establish a local partnership approach to local procurement between the stakeholders identified;
- Identify opportunities for social enterprise in conjunction with hospital services on- and off-site.

Sustainability Anchor

Use the economies of scale provided by the Hospital to deliver sustainable infrastructure

The scale and consistency of energy demand by the new Acute Hospital are sufficiently significant that community heating and/or Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems should be considered by the NHS in partnership with the Council. There are significant opportunities to conjoin the proposed development of the new hospital not only with the surrounding Grove Lane Masterplan east of Grove Lane, but also with the Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan provisions west of Grove Lane, particularly as the housing programme involves significant upgrade and redevelopment. Linking the Hospital with the Windmill Eye housing regeneration programme could enable capital infrastructure costs to be shared, reduce revenue liabilities to both residents and the proposed Hospital, whilst also, in the medium term, providing a mechanism for community revenue

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Explore potential for local energy production, distribution, and waste management as part of the planning stage of the new Acute Hospital in conjunction with surrounding developments on both sides of Grove Lane.

if delivered via a community energy service company (ESCO) or similar. Such an approach could reduce the local carbon footprint, and also be used to alleviate fuel poverty, with significant benefits in terms of local health and other social outcomes. Such systemic approach to upgrading the Neighbourhood Plan area can complement efforts to improve the quality of accommodation in the private sector, where landlords and owner occupiers may be hard to reach and the private and individual means of upgrading housing may appear to be restricted. Planning risks to the NHS and the neighbourhood as a whole could be mitigated by siting the facility within or adjacent the new Acute Hospital site, where the potential impacts on sensitive receptors (i.e. the patients at the new Hospital) can be effectively controlled. Similarly, the scale of the hospital could support an integrated approach to waste management in co-ordination with the surrounding residential development proposed.



CHP plant at BedZed eco-village development

7.2 Townhouse Estates

Work with residents to plan the future of the New Hope & Cuin Road Estates

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later



A typical narrow-frontage townhouse property



Cuin Road estate

Three-storey narrow-frontage townhouse estates are the predominant house type in the Grove Lane area, forming two estates centred on Cuin Road in the north and New Hope Road in the south. In both cases, the street layout is poor, and public open space and play amenities are inadequate for estates of this size. Both lack a focus for neighbourhood life and general wayfinding. The houses themselves are particularly narrow in internal dimension, and the private gardens to the rear of the houses are small with back-to-back distances in some cases as little as 18m. A moderate proportion of residents in this area are homeowners.

The Council's Environmental Grading survey reports serious problems in more than half of the environmental survey categories, and finds these are the areas of greatest concern in Windmill Eye area. While recent refurbishment works under the 'Decent Homes' programme have improved housing condition, there appear to remain significant problems of thermal insulation, noise

transfer, and internal and external privacy. In terms of the estates as a whole, respondents reported some concerns associated with refuse, anti-social behaviour, crime, and young people socialising in the open spaces of the estate, however these do not reflect the severity of problems identified in the Council's Environmental Grading.

The Community Action Research Team found that many respondents here were dissatisfied with their homes, in terms of internal and external layout, and quality of construction. Recurrent complaints concern the narrowness of rooms, and the separation of kitchen/dining and living rooms onto different floors, though other cited this as an asset, suggesting that the issue may be a mismatch between housing layout and household size. Respondents also reported concerns associated with fly-tipping and refuse, as well as anti-social behaviour, and crime. Some respondents reported a lack of facilities for young people, and problems associated with young people socialising in the open spaces of both estates.

The size, condition, and internal layout of the houses, in addition to the estates' poor layout, lack of open space, and evidence of management problems, suggest that major change is warranted. However the extent of the problems will require detailed consultation, careful planning, and extensive investment of a scale that is beyond the scope of this plan to determine.

This plan therefore proposes to commence a process that will seek to address in the long term the range of problems with the estate. This process will:

- Engage with residents at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for the future of each estate;
- Improve residents' accommodation either through investment in their existing houses and flats, or demolition and local re-provision of new accommodation of a high standard, or a combination of both;
- Improve the safety, quality and access to open space including play facilities, garden, and wildlife spaces.

While the two estates face very similar issues, there are particular considerations that indicate different approaches may be appropriate as follows.

Cuin Road Estate

This estate is formed entirely of terraces of three-storey townhouses in an extremely confusing layout, with numerous 'back-to-front' conflicts, poor continuity of streets, and poor visibility of through-routes. The estate has a small play area in its centre at Cuin Walk, however this is insufficient for an estate of this size.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of these proposals at this point in time, this plan shows an indicative arrangement that could address some of the most urgent issues of layout:

- Clear up to two thirds of the existing houses (180 dwellings) in the centre of the estate, Brindley Way and Norton Close, and redevelop new housing in a modified layout facing onto a new larger open space with garden and play facilities;
- Co-ordinate development of adjacent Council and private housing at Brindley Way and Norton Close to provide a direct visual, walking, and cycling connection through the estate from St. Matthew's Church to the pedestrian crossing of Grove Lane at London Street (proposed as part of the New Acute Hospital);
- Retain approximately one third of the existing houses on the estate, and invest in improvements to address the identified problems of thermal and acoustic insulation.

This arrangement could establish a much improved layout in terms of visibility, security, and access to public open space. These proposals are also compatible with comprehensive redevelopment of the remaining housing on the same basic 'footprint'.



Artist's Sketch of potential future view of transformed Cuin Road Estate, with St. Matthew's Church on Windmill lane visible in distance



Existing view of Cuin Road Estate



Artist's illustration of showing potential future approach from Dudley Road to redeveloped New Hope Estate



Existing view of approach from Dudley Road

New Hope Estate

This estate comprises three different housing types – predominantly townhouses, but also bungalows and flatted blocks – in an introverted estate layout with units backing onto the surrounding streets on all sides, with some mature landscaping. Most of the streets are formed of terraces of townhouses, with three-storey flatted-blocks with integral ground-floor garages located on street corners and closing the 'ends' of streets leading to Grove Lane. Two terraces of single-storey bungalows on Wills Way occupy the margins of the estate, flanking Unett Street Park. The adjacent clearance site of Hamilton House provides the opportunity for early redevelopment which could support phased renewal and relocation of existing residents of the estate. In addition, the estate backs on to the boundary of the adjacent Unett Street Park and Puffing Billy public house. While the park has good children's play facilities, it has little variety in its landscaping, and no facilities suitable for teenagers or young adults.

This estate is located at a strategic position in terms of its proximity to the new Acute Hospital, its good access to local services of the High Street including public transport, and its visibility at a major 'gateway' on a major arterial route from Birmingham city centre. However, the estate may also face significant impacts from the proximity of the new hospital, including overshadowing and overlooking, as well as increased footfall and opportunistic parking.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty of these proposals at this point in time, this plan shows an indicative arrangement that addresses the most urgent issues of housing condition and layout:

- Early redevelopment of housing on the Hamilton House clearance site, establishing the proposed Windmill Way pedestrian and cycle route linking through the New Acute Hospital site to the canal and Moillett Street Park;
- Phased clearance and redevelopment of the New Hope Estate to provide a mix of new housing in a modified layout facing onto a new larger open space at the centre of the estate with garden and play facilities;
- Improvement of the relationship of the estate to the surrounding streets, creating clear entrances to the estate, retaining the existing mature landscaping where possible, and recognising the strategic approach from Dudley Road;
- Clearance of the Puffing Billy public house to enable the development of new residential frontage to Unett Street and the extension of Unett Street Park to provide improved amenity and a greater range of open space facilities for the area.

This arrangement could establish a much improved layout in terms of visibility, security, and access to public open space.



Artist's illustration of potential future view with transformed New Hope Estate overlooking extended park and roofline of New Acute Hospital visible at end of Unett Street

Existing view of Unett Street with edge of New Hope Estate to right

7.3 The Crofts Estate

Invest in improvements to the existing towers and open space

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

The Crofts towers are a major housing asset located at the centre of an area of major change to the north and east as set out in the Smethwick Area Action Plan (AAP). This estate dates from after 1970 and is formed of three 15-storey residential towers managed by Sandwell Homes. The estate is relatively remote from local shops and services, and in particular there is an absence of good quality public open space within easy access. The estate includes a number of clearance sites, which are largely grassed and maintained but do not provide a good quality of amenity. It is understood a commitment was given at the time of clearance of maisonette housing on the site to retain part or all of these lands as open spaces. A small proportion of residents own their flats. Sandwell Homes' Environmental Grading survey reports regular problems in this area.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Engage with residents at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for investment in the existing towers and the surrounding open spaces;
- Refurbish flats in the existing towers, potentially including external re-cladding to improve their energy efficiency and visual quality;
- Improve the existing open spaces around the towers and create a new amenity space in the centre of the estate to provide a range of recreation and play facilities;
- Redevelop the clearance site adjacent to Painters' Corner for new housing fronting onto new garden square and Grove Lane.



Artist's illustration of potential future view of Crofts Estate viewed from Cuin Drive



Existing view of Crofts Estate viewed from Cuin Drive

7.4 Grove Lane

Improve the safety and directness of access for pedestrians and cyclists crossing Grove Lane

Consultation & Community	THEMES			CHANGE		
	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Grove Lane is a busy dual carriageway which severs the Windmill Eye area from the site of the proposed new Acute Hospital and the surrounding Grove Lane masterplan area. At a number of locations the two carriageways are grade-separated, and there are no signalised crossing facilities. The outline planning application for the hospital proposes new signalised junctions at the New Hope Estate and at London Street, which will be the principal vehicular entrance for staff. A 'bus hub' at the former junction will be an important point of access for public transport.

Dudley Road is the busy high street to the east of the Windmill Eye area, continuing into Birmingham, and accommodates strategic through-traffic as well as high-frequency bus services and local traffic generated by the many shops and services along the street. The junction of Dudley Road and Grove Lane has recently been reconfigured as a roundabout in response to increased local traffic generated by the Cape Hill Brewery residential development and the future Acute Hospital. Roundabouts of this size impose particular restrictions and detours on pedestrian movement, and while there are pedestrian crossing points at each arm of the roundabout, those at Dudley Road are currently not signalised. In the near future this crossing will be of particular importance due to its proximity to the new Acute Hospital and the associated 'bus hub', as well as its continuity with the existing cycle way through the Cape Hill Brewery development and leading northwards to the new canal arm access provided as part of the

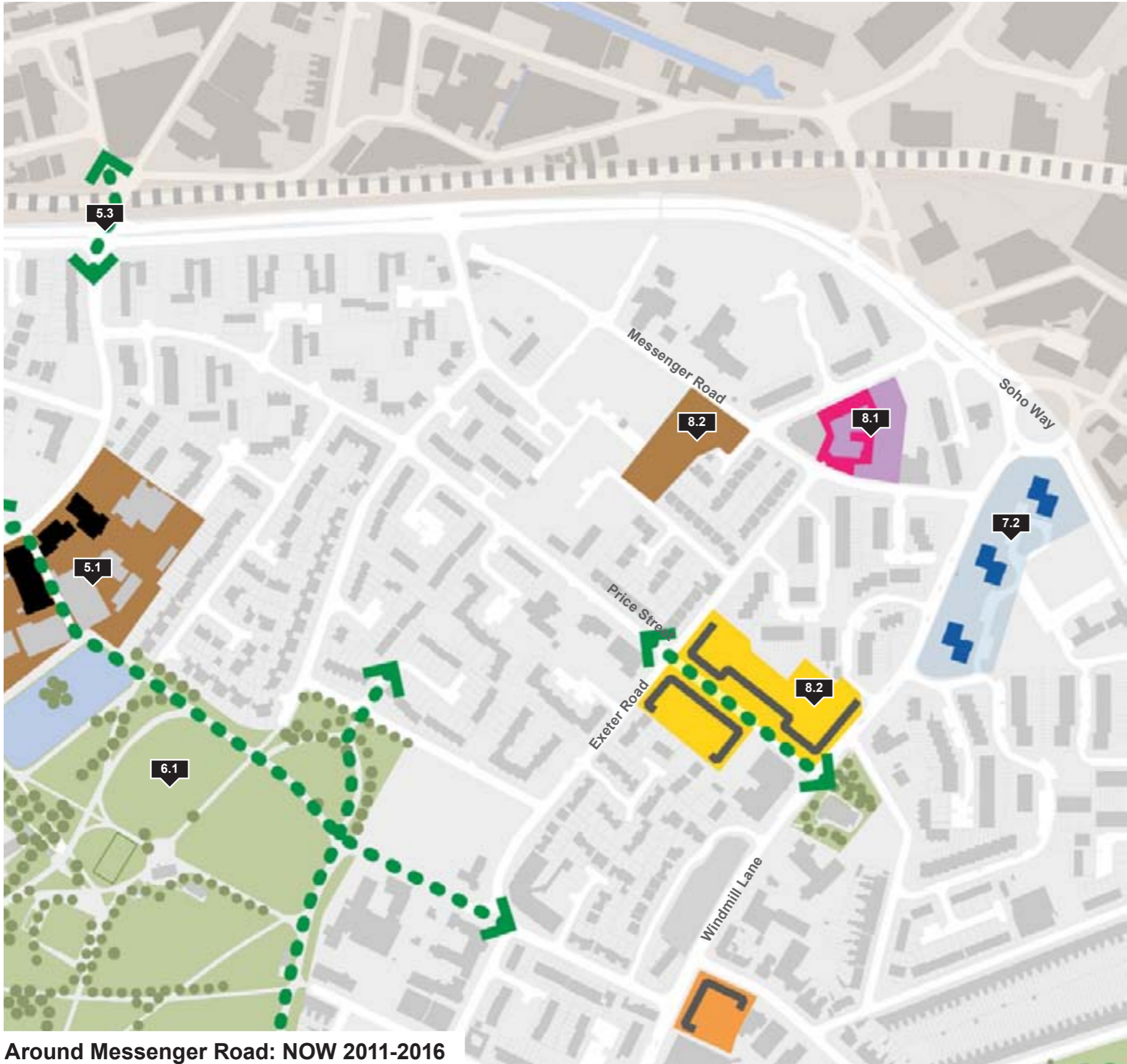
new Acute Hospital development. An improved crossing point in this location will be important not only in terms of walking and cycling, but also in terms of ensuring access to public transport services where bus routes are not diverted to use the hospital bus hub. Note that any works to improve this part of Dudley Road can best be delivered as part of the wider improvements to the Dudley Road corridor improvements.

This plan therefore proposes to work with the Local Highways Authority to:

- Upgrade the proposed signalised crossing for pedestrians and cyclists at the New Hope Estate, to facilitate pedestrian and cycle access between Unett Street Park, the New Hope Estate, the 'bus hub' and Moillett Street Park;
- Upgrade the proposed signalised crossing for pedestrians and cyclists, to facilitate pedestrian and cycle access between Windmill Lane, Cuin Road Estate, London Street, and the canal;
- Provide a new signalised crossing at Dudley Road, to facilitate pedestrian and cycle access between the Cape Hill Brewery development, the bus hub, the Acute Hospital, Moillett Street Park and the canal.

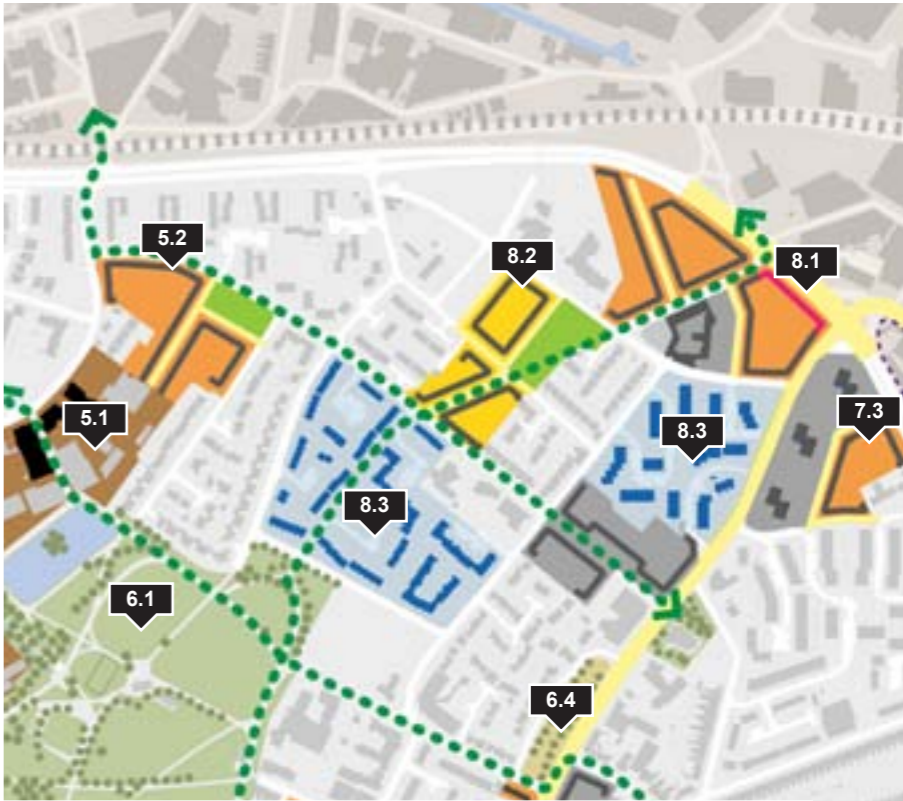


Existing crossing point at Keen Street, location of future signalised junction providing access to the new Acute Hospital site



Around Messenger Road: NOW 2011-2016

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Around Messenger Road: SOON 2016-2021



Around Messenger Road: LATER 2021-2026

AROUND MESSENGER ROAD

Messenger Road is an elevated road with fine views to the north and west. This road lies at the centre of an area that has endured a cycle of clearance, construction, re-clearance, and reconstruction which has left it with an array of different types of post-war housing, including low-rise, mid-rise and tower blocks set within a vacant landscape of empty sites. Most of the housing reflects the various norms of the day, including stepped frontages, cul-de-sacs, and large areas of carparking and unstructured incidental open space, some of which are well landscaped. There are moderate-to-severe problems with the environmental quality of these estates and with the suitability of the housing stock for their inhabitants. North of the wide and hostile Soho Way, this is an essentially nondescript and unstructured industrial area, similar to land and development in the adjacent Black Patch, Soho, and Grove Lane neighbourhoods. There is very poor access to local services, community amenities, and public transport.

The Neighbourhood Plan includes proposals for major changes to the roads and junctions of Soho Way with Windmill Lane and Rabone Lane. This will provide a new street setting for new local shops and services to serve the surrounding area. New housing and public open space is proposed for the vacant sites on Messenger Road and the Windmill Precinct.

8

The plan proposals concern the following locations:

8.1 Soho Way

Redevelop junction with Windmill Lane as a mixed use area with local services

8.2 Clearance Sites

Create options for new housing unique to the Windmill Eye area

8.3 Existing Estates

Invest in housing and environmental improvements in existing estates

8.1 Soho Way

Redevelop junction with Windmill Lane as a mixed use area with local services

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

Soho Way is a busy dual carriageway which severs the Windmill Eye from the areas to the north, including access to the Birmingham Canal. At its western end, the junction with Rabone Lane was, until recently, an accident 'hotspot', lying at a bend in the road with a reverse camber. The introduction of speed camera on this route has since reduced the number of accidents. At its eastern end, the transition between Soho Way and Grove Lane involves a complex junction with Soho Street, as well as a large-diameter roundabout at the junction with Windmill Lane and Cranford Street. The layout and scale of these junctions currently give rise to concerns in terms of traffic management and vehicle speeds through the area.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with the Local Highways Authority to reconfigure the existing roundabout at Windmill Lane and Cranford Street as a signalised junction with pedestrian crossing facilities;
- Downgrade and re-landscape Soho Way between junctions of Windmill Lane and Rabone Lane, to improve road safety, enable pedestrian and cycle crossing, and facilitate short-stay car parking;
- Promote new mixed-use development to replace the existing housing and public house at Soho Close and Oakfield Road;
- Provide and/or relocate retail and community services in ground floor units with active frontage to Soho Way;

The Smethwick Area Action Plan (AAP) identifies this location as an area of major change for residential and commercial redevelopment. It is anticipated in the medium term that over 2,000 people will live within 5 minutes' walking distance of the existing roundabout at the junction of Windmill Lane and Cranford Street. This includes existing residents within the Windmill Eye area, and future residents within and beyond it to the north and east in redevelopment sites identified in the AAP. With the recent demolition of the Windmill Precinct, this area has no focus for local shops and community amenities. New facilities will therefore be required to service this population, and if located at this critical junction, substantial additional local demand for shops and services could be generated by passing vehicular trade and by the significant numbers of employees, patients, and visitors to the proposed new Acute Hospital nearby.

This location also coincides with major council-owned assets such as the Soho Close and Oakfield Road estates as well as the London Apprentice public house. Co-ordinated redevelopment in this location could provide a significant quantum of new residential development as well as retail and service uses on ground floor. It could also act as a stimulus for the regeneration of the areas to the north of Soho Way, and as a springboard for access northwards to the canal and Handsworth Booth Street Metro Station.

Particular consideration should be given to the following locations.

SUPER YOUTH CENTRE

Transform the Windmill Community Centre into a Super Youth Centre

Since extensive clearance of residential buildings in the Messenger Road area, the Windmills Community Centre has lacked purpose and patronage. Furthermore, the recently-constructed CAP Centre on Windmill Lane provides modern facilities of a much higher standard. The council is working with a consultation group of local young people to consider options for a new Super Youth Centre to serve the Smethwick area. Work is ongoing on converting the existing Community Centre into a new Super Youth Centre for young people aged 11-25, with a focus range of 13-19. The first phase of planned improvements to the building include social facilities (internet café, coffee lounge, performance area, and games room), sports facilities (sports hall, dance studio, and boxing club) and education facilities (car skills, life skills, and arts and crafts), as well as ancillary facilities such as an office area, changing facilities, and courtyard. The second phase of plans include the development of a small recording area, and evolving governance of the centre to enable it be self-managed by young people.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Work with young people to transform the Windmills Community Centre into the Super Youth Centre with a range of social, sports, and education facilities;
- Extend and develop the second phase of the Super Youth Centre in conjunction with adjacent development on the Soho Estate.

SOHO ESTATE

Demolish and redevelop the Soho Estate

This area dates from after 1960 and is formed of four-storey maisonette blocks managed by Sandwell Homes. The poor layout of the block separates pedestrian and vehicular access, with units backing onto a major urban highway. Currently, there are no homeowners in these blocks. The Council's Environmental Grading survey reports serious problems in this area, particularly in terms of environment, vandalism, and void security. The Community Action Research Team found that some housing issues raised by respondents involved a mismatch between the size of the household and the size of the housing unit. In terms of the estate as a whole, respondents identified major problems with refuse, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, and drugs-related crime. Over half of respondents reported that they don't feel safe in the evenings.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Engage with residents at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for their tenancy;
- Demolish the estate and replace with a mixed-use development incorporating housing, local retail facilities, and community services;
- Explore the possibility of developing the block as a residential extra care facility with public access amenities on ground floor;
- Relandscape the street and pavements to create an attractive high quality street setting incorporating street trees and furniture, onstreet parking, and pedestrian and cycle crossings.

OAKFIELD ESTATE

Demolish and redevelop the Oakfield Estate

This area dates from after 1960 and is formed of four-storey maisonette blocks managed by Sandwell Homes. The poor layout of the block separates pedestrian and vehicular access, with units backing onto a major urban highway. There are no homeowners in these blocks. The Council's Environmental Grading survey reports regular problems in this area, particularly in terms of vandalism and environment. The Community Action Research Team found that the majority of the residents who were interviewed were not satisfied with their home, and cited the small size of rooms, lack of private gardens, and roof leakage. In terms of the estate as a whole, respondents identified problems with refuse, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, and crime. Some respondents reported that they don't feel safe at night.

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Engage with residents at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for their tenancy;
- Demolish the estate and replace with residential development;
- Explore the possibility of developing the block as a residential extra care facility with public access amenities on ground floor;
- Re-landscape the street and pavements to create an attractive high quality street setting incorporating street trees and furniture, on street parking, and pedestrian and cycle crossings;
- Explore the possibility of incorporating and extension to the neighbouring St. Phillip's Roman Catholic Primary School to address local needs.



Artist's illustration of potential future view of Soho Way, with new local shops and services, and improved crossing facilities and street setting



Existing view of Soho Way

8.2 Clearance Sites

Create options for new housing unique to the Windmill Eye area

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

One of the most urgent challenges for the Neighbourhood Plan is to address the negative impact of housing clearance sites in the north of the Windmill Eye area, and on Messenger Road in particular. Many of these sites have been vacant for five years or more, and act to sever the neighbouring residential areas, particularly after dark. However, the vacancy of these sites is also an opportunity. All the sites are in Council ownership, and their existing road layout, servicing, and availability enable early redevelopment without requiring extensive new infrastructure. This plan proposes new housing development in these locations, which should be of low density (up to 50 dwellings per hectare). Arrange of house types should be provided, from larger family dwellings in formal terraced and semi-detached street settings to smaller 'dormer bungalow' dwellings in an informal mews setting. Housing should be configured to overlook new and existing local parks and incidental open spaces.

In the current financial climate, however, an innovative approach will be necessary to truly change perceptions in these vacant locations, respond to changing market conditions, empower groups often excluded from the development process, and ultimately deliver change in the short- and medium-term. The key to managing this uncertainty is to reduce the risks by sharing them. The council, as landowner and planning authority, is in a strong position to control the process of land release and redevelopment. Rather than releasing these sites to a single party to develop at their convenience, this plan proposes that the existing

clearance sites be subdivided into building plots and released in a carefully-managed sequence to multiple parties under specified conditions of sale. This will enable a whole range of clients, developers and builders of different scales and compositions to share the development risks with the Council. This could include self-builders, co-operatives, a local building company, and smaller Housing Associations or Specialists.

All partners, regardless of size, will need to develop within a basic set of rules and limitations defining building configurations, specifications, and dimensions. It is this common set of rules – for example, guidance on building widths, façade heights, roof profiles, window arrangements, etc. – which can establish a new local vernacular – a “Smethwick House” – distinctive in the West Midlands. In this way, the variety of housing in the area is expanded beyond the conventional range, and could transform perceptions of Smethwick as a place to live. Critical to the success of this process is the maintenance of confidence during the potentially protracted period between the start of the subdivision process and the completion of the final building. The incorporation of a strong interim landscaping scheme into the management plan for the clearance sites could reassure residents and investors alike of the continuity of the process and the security of the site.

While the two groups of clearance sites face very similar issues, there are particular considerations that indicate different approaches may be appropriate as follows.



Artists view of potential redeveloped Windmill Precinct

This plan therefore proposes to:

- Engage with residents and potential clients, developers and builders to discuss options for the future of the clearance sites;
- Manage the release of land in a controlled sequence to a variety of parties;
- Implement an interim site management plan incorporating a strong landscaping scheme to support confidence in the process;
- Oversee the application of a co-ordinated set of rules to guide new residential development on these sites.



Existing view of vacant site at Windmill Precinct



The former Windmill Precinct, looking towards the rear of the CAP Centre and St. Matthew's Church, from the corner of Price Street and Thomas Street



Former site of James Watt House and maisonettes, this is the highest part of the study area with a commanding view across the borough, and the proposed location of the new 'High Park'

WINDMILL PRECINCT

Develop new housing

The site of the former Windmill Precinct on Windmill Lane is the most high-profile and most visible of the clearance sites in the area. It is closely surrounded by existing development as well as community amenities including the CAP Centre, Methodist Church, and St. Matthew's Church and Primary School. Early investment in this location is on the one hand more viable because of the coherence of its surroundings, and on the other more beneficial as it directly redresses the blight of vacancy in the centre of the Windmill Eye area. Redevelopment in this location is therefore a major opportunity to 'showcase' the potential of the area, and could warrant the use of part of the site for a design competition, show-home, and/or launch event. The location of the site adjacent to the CAP Centre could enable part of the site to be released for related community uses, for example a community garden or enterprise space. However, consideration will need to be given when planning the redevelopment of this area to ensure that new uses do not affect the operation of the CAP centre.

HIGH PARK

Develop new housing fronting a new local park

High Park takes its name from the former High Park Road, now Messenger Road, one of the highest points in the Windmill Eye area. There are commanding views of the Galton Valley to the west, north, and east. This dramatic location is currently dominated by a large vacant housing clearance site which imposes significant blight on the residential areas around it. It is anticipated that housing redevelopment could be delivered here in the medium term, incorporating a new local park to serve the surrounding residential area as a whole. This could include the re-provision of bungalows at Nos. 163-173 Price Street to improve the layout of the new park. However it is vital in the short term that positive change is delivered in this area, whether by bringing forward the creation of the park to establish its landscaping in advance of development, or by identifying an interim use such as temporary land art, city farm, allotment space, or other.



Artist's illustration of potential future view of new High Park, overlooked by a mix of new housing



Existing view of vacant site at Messenger Road



Townhouses on Thomas Crescent, backing onto Thomas Street

8.3 Existing Estates

Invest in housing and environmental improvements in existing estates

THEMES				CHANGE		
Consultation & Community	Housing	Open Space & Movement	High Street & Employment	Now	Soon	Later

While the Messenger Road area will undergo major change in the medium term, much of the existing housing will be retained and benefit from improved access to open space and local shops and services. Some of these estates – Windmill & Thomas Crescents and Honiton, Kingsbridge, & Shaldon Walk Estate – will however require investment in order to secure their long-term sustainability. While all are located centrally within the Windmill Eye area, none occupies a strategic position in terms of the wider growth agenda, which suggest that this they do not warrant major change.

While the two groups of estates face very similar issues, there are particular considerations that indicate different approaches may be appropriate as follows.

This plan proposes to:

- Engage with residents at the earliest opportunity to discuss options for the future of the estate;
- Improve residents' accommodation through investment in their existing houses and flats;
- Improve the safety and quality of open spaces on the estate through environmental investments.

WINDMILL & THOMAS CRESCENTS

This area dates from after 1970 and is formed of terraces of three-storey townhouses owned by the Council. The estate suffers from a confusing internal layout, and units also back onto the surrounding streets externally. The houses themselves are particularly narrow in width (under 4m), and back-to-back distances are in some cases as little as 18m. A small proportion of residents in this area are homeowners. The Council's Environmental Grading survey reports occasional problems in this area.

The Community Action Research Team found that a majority of respondents were dissatisfied with their homes, in terms of internal and external layout, and quality of construction. Recurrent complaints concern the narrowness of rooms, and the separation of kitchen/dining and living rooms onto different floors. While recent refurbishment works under the 'Decent Homes' programme have improved housing condition, there appear to remain significant problems of thermal insulation, noise transfer, and internal and external privacy. In terms of the estate as a whole, respondents reported significant concerns associated with young people socialising in the open spaces of the estate, and some problems with bins and refuse. Over half of respondents reported that they don't feel safe at night.

HONITON, KINGSBRIDGE & SHALDON WALK ESTATE

Invest in housing and environmental improvements

This area dates from after 1960 and is owned by the Council. It is formed of short terraces of two-storey houses and warden housing in a poor layout separating pedestrian and vehicular access ('Radburn' type), with houses backing onto parking courts. Homes suffer from poor thermal performance. There is a moderate proportion of homeowners. The Environmental Grading survey reports occasional problems in this area.

The Community Action Research Team found that, although a majority of the respondents were happy with their homes, many complained of noise from neighbours due to poor construction of party walls. Respondents also reported some problems due to the topography and demarcation of private open spaces. In terms of the estate, many reported significant problems with refuse and antisocial behaviour in carparking areas at the rear of properties. Some respondents don't feel safe and avoid walking on the street at night.

This area is strategically located close to Victoria Park, however houses do front onto the park and given the general satisfaction of residents with their homes, this area does not warrant major change. However, Shaldon Walk is part of the proposed new Windmill Way walking and cycling route north-south through the area, linking Victoria Park and the proposed new High Park and St Phillip's Church and Primary School. Currently this is a narrow pedestrian route through the estate, and residents have already raised concerns at the small size and steep topography of their front gardens. Public realm investment in terms of surface, tree-planting, lighting, and boundary treatment will therefore require sensitive consideration in terms of the impact on adjacent properties and their residential amenity.



Shaldon Walk looking towards St. Philip's Church

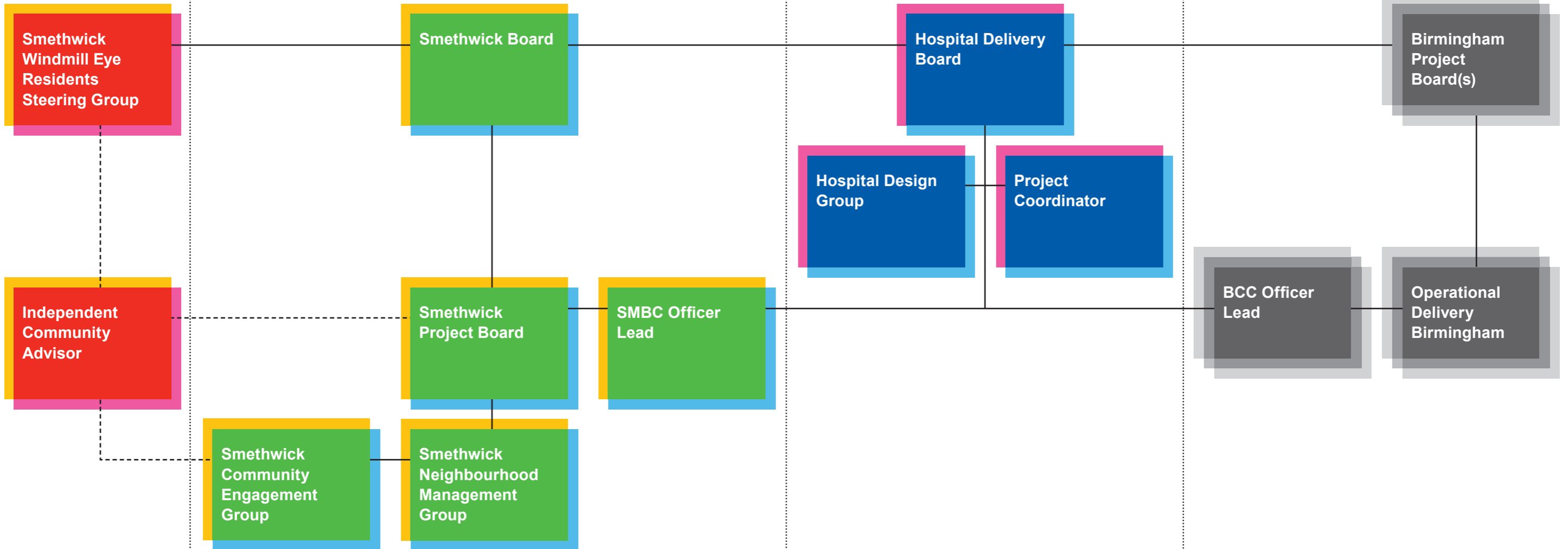


RESIDENTS

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SANDWELL & WEST BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL



Governance Structure

GOVERNANCE, MONITORING & PHASING

9

9.1 Governance

A project of this complexity needs to be driven by a committed, multi-agency partnership, with representatives of the local community at its centre. Stakeholders from each of the project theme areas, including housing, public realm, public support services, employment and business creation, and economic regeneration all have a role in contributing to its delivery. In preparation for the implementation of this Plan, the Council, working with the Community and key partners, have put in place a Governance Structure, set out opposite, designed to guide the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan over its life.

Overseeing the process will be the Smethwick Delivery Board, which includes 2 appointed Resident Representatives, Elected Members of the Soho & Victoria ward, and the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Leader of the Council. A dedicated project team reports directly to the Board, and liaises with a range of delivery partners, service providers, and departmental officers. This arrangement is closely linked to

similar arrangements for the new Acute Hospital, which take the form of a Hospital Delivery Board and Hospital Design Group, with participation from local residents and stakeholders including Birmingham City Council. The Governance Structure is broad-based and multi-level. The Council intends that the implementation of the plan will continue in the spirit of the community and stakeholder involvement involved in its production, through the ongoing and future work of the Residents' Steering Group, Community Action Researchers, and Service Providers. Equality and Cohesion impacts will continue to be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Residents Steering Group

The Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group has acquired considerable knowledge and expertise about the Neighbourhood Planning process. The group is keen to continue to be involved and engaged in planning for development and change in the area, and would like to take on more responsibility in a gradual way with the appropriate support. It is currently considering a range of options including:

- Formal constitution of the group;
- Further capacity building and support from the Council and/or other stakeholders;
- Developing links with Council and/or other stakeholder initiatives (e.g. neighbourhood management, youth service activities, new Acute Hospital);

This could include a formal role in the following areas:

- Overseeing all consultation activity on plan on behalf of the Smethwick Board;
- Involvement in consultation panels on all estates where housing renewal is considered;
- Monitoring and scrutiny of the delivery of the Windmill Eye Neighbourhood Plan;
- Advising the Council on the development of community benefit clauses, procurement of development partners, selection of monitoring indicators, etc.;
- Managing small budgets for local improvements/consultation;
- Exploring options for community assets.

Community Action Research

The two research studies undertaken by the Community Action Research Team in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan provided a wealth of information that has informed its development. There is much detail that will also be of value as delivery gets underway, for example, responses received or issues raised on particular estates within the area. The reports that have been produced contain further detail on the findings – this detail can be explored as particular schemes and developments are progressed.

With the skills and expertise they have developed, the community researchers themselves are a valuable resource for the local community, Council, and stakeholders. They have earned excellent employment references from the work they undertook, which they have already used to help find further work. Their details have also been passed on to local agencies which may have a need for community research work in the future.

Service Provision

The Service Provider Review conducted as part of the plan preparation process identified a series of challenges and opportunities in the Neighbourhood Plan for services and provides recommendations for the Council and other services in the area. Many of these recommendations relate to delivery activity, for example:

- Ensuring that supply chain and procurement opportunities for local employers are maximised (through existing services such as Find It In Sandwell that operate in the Borough);
- Ensuring local services can feed into governance and delivery arrangements for regeneration activity, through appropriate networks or forums, to ensure that local needs can be met in the most effective way;
- Co-ordinating, from an early stage, an approach to meeting the accommodation needs of local service providers, linked to the opportunities that may arise from new sites/old buildings;
- Exploring the potential for development of neighbourhood agreements between residents and service providers – particularly in areas subject to improvement works;
- Improving opportunities for joint working between services in the area – those that want to improve how they engage with communities to work more closely with those that are good at it.

The Council will consider these recommendations and integrate them into future delivery planning as appropriate, making linkages made with appropriate services and agencies.

Equality and Cohesion Impact

The Equality and Cohesion Impact Assessment, conducted as part of the plan preparation process, has proved a valuable tool in identifying where potential negative impacts can be mitigated and positive impacts maximized. It makes a series of recommendations to be considered as development and regeneration activity moves forward, for example:

- Consideration of ‘Lifetime Homes’ and ‘Secure by Design’ standards as well as cultural design needs in new developments;
- Specification of training and apprenticeship opportunities and community benefit clauses in procurement processes for developers and contractors;
- Assessment of the needs of potentially vulnerable residents in decant processes and linking to appropriate support services;
- Involvement of local people in the design of public realm and open spaces to promote community cohesion;
- Work with private landlords to improve private rented stock and standards, including the possibility for landlord accreditation;

The Council will consider these recommendations and integrate them into future delivery planning as appropriate, making linkages made with appropriate services and agencies.



9.2 Monitoring

The Smethwick Delivery Board and the Neighbourhood Plan Project Team will evaluate progress on the Neighbourhood Plan on a regular basis in order to measure performance, inform decision making, and adjust the programme priorities as necessary. Progress will be measured against the Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group Charter, which sets out a detailed range of community aspirations for their neighbourhood. As with the thematic organisation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the monitoring process will use the four categories of Consultation & Community, Housing, Open Space & Movement, and High Street & Employment, with an additional category of 'Strategic Performance' to evaluate the contribution of the Windmill Eye area to wider regeneration objectives in the Western Growth Corridor as a whole. A detailed methodology for this process will be developed as an early output of this plan, and should include evaluations on an annual basis as follows.

Baseline Appraisal

The baseline appraisal will be based on a number of Neighbourhood Indicators for each category. These derive from a range of existing datasets provided by others, weighted to provide a robust and balanced measure. This is not envisaged as a resource-intensive exercise as it depends on the collation of selected secondary data, however the 'calibration' of this evaluation will be an important challenge at the outset. Responsibility for this evaluation will depend on the emerging governance arrangements for delivery of the plan.

Residents' Appraisal

Evaluation by residents, based on their subjective knowledge and experience of the area over the previous year. This should be conducted by the Windmill Eye Residents' Steering Group and/or successor bodies, and may for example, involve local surveys, focus groups, and monitoring teams.

SMBC Corporate Appraisal

Evaluation by the Council in consultation with other partners, based on their subjective knowledge and experience of the area over the previous year.

Each of these evaluations will be expressed as a 'Traffic Light' Score and Rating, potentially also with an up/down arrow to indicate direction of travel. It is proposed that a delegated and representative group meet annually to review the three separate evaluations, consider any emerging issues, agree an aggregate score, and produce a summary report. Indicative evaluations of the three anticipated phases are presented at right.

9.3 Phasing

The implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan proposals will be delivered in three phases of five years each, co-ordinated with the Black Country Core Strategy:

- Now 2011-2016
- Soon 2016-2021
- Later 2021-2026

Projects will be delivered in consultation with residents and other local partners, and may involve actions in all three phases. An indicative timeline for each of the proposals is set out on the following pages.

	Baseline Appraisal	Residents' Appraisal	SMBC Corporate Appraisal	Aggregate Score
Consultation & Community	?/10	?/5	?/5	= ?/20
Housing	?/10	?/5	?/5	= ?/20
Open Space & Movement	?/10	?/5	?/5	= ?/20
High Street & Employment	?/10	?/5	?/5	= ?/20
Strategic Performance	?/10	?/5	?/5	= ?/20
Total				= ?/100

Structure of indicative evaluation of progress to be conducted on a periodic basis

Score	Rating	Traffic Light
5	Excellent	Green
4	Good	Green
3	Adequate	Amber
2	Poor	Red
1	Very Poor	Red
0	N/A	No colour

Traffic Light Scoring System

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

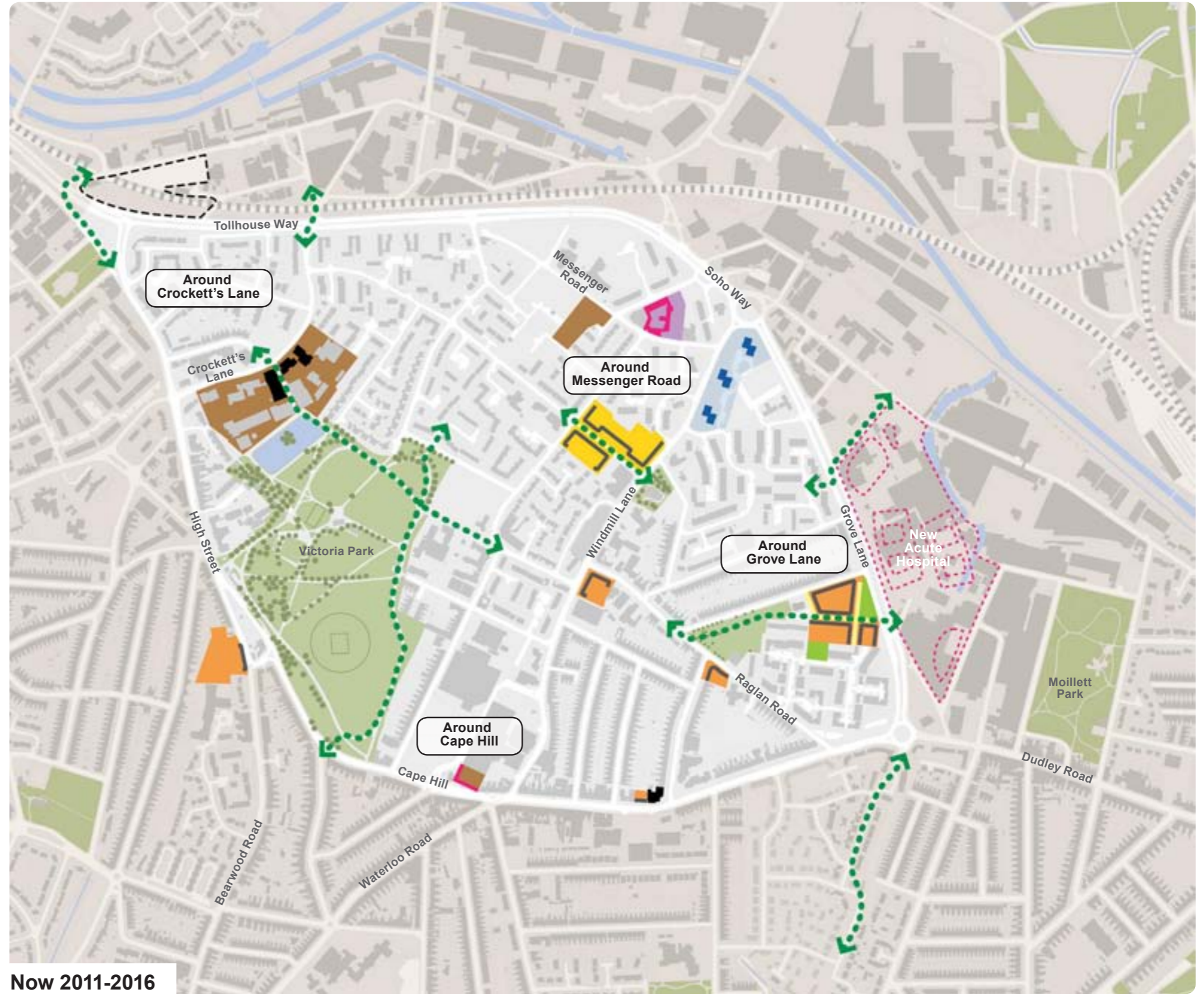
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

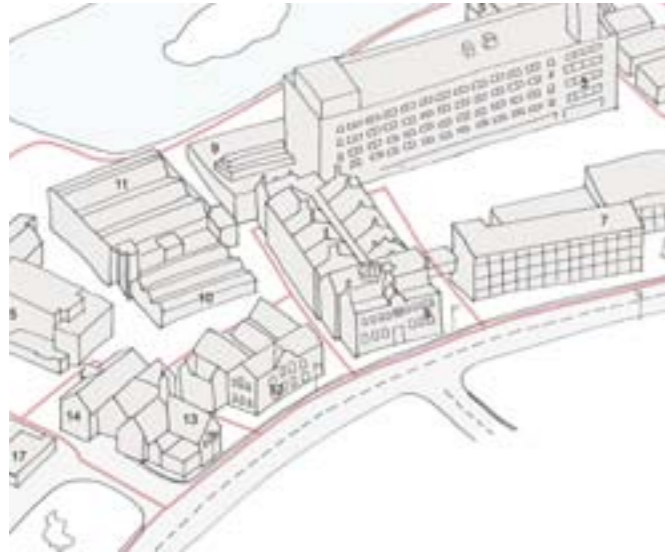
HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Now 2011-2016

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AROUND CROCKETT'S LANE
Interim uses on the Sandwell College site



AROUND CAPE HILL
Interim uses at front of Windmills Shopping Centre



AROUND GROVE LANE
New housing on former Hamilton House site, Unett St.



AROUND MESSENGER ROAD
New housing on former Windmill Precinct site

Now 2011-2016

The focus of the first five years is to stabilise the neighbourhood. This will involve improvement of existing community facilities and open spaces, construction of new housing on existing vacant sites, improved crossings of main roads, and generation of temporary uses to safeguard the Sandwell College site. Projects include:

Indicative Development	AROUND...	Crocketts Lane	Cape Hill	Grove Lane	Mess'ger Road	TOTAL
Consultation & Community	Improved amenities					
	New amenities				1	1
Housing	Improved dwellings			270		270
	Demolished dwellings					
	New dwellings		50	85	60	195
Open Space & Movement	Improved open spaces					
	New open spaces					
High Street & Employment	Improved facilities	1	1			2
	New facilities					

Ref.	Proposal
Around Crockett's Lane	
5.1	Interim uses on Sandwell College site
5.3	Improved crossings at Rolfe Street Station and Tollhouse Way
Around Cape Hill	
6.1	Continuing improvements in Victoria Park
6.2	New housing development at Bearwood House and Raglan Road
6.3	Improvements to Windmills Shopping Centre frontage to Cape Hill
Around Grove Lane	
7.1	Construction of New Acute Hospital
7.2	New housing development at Hamilton House
7.3	Refurbishment of Crofts Estate
7.4	Improved crossings at Grove Lane
Around Messenger Road	
8.1	Improvements to Windmills Community Centre to provide Super Youth Centre at Messenger Road;
8.2	New housing development at Windmill Precinct
	Temporary landscape and/or community uses for other clearance sites

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

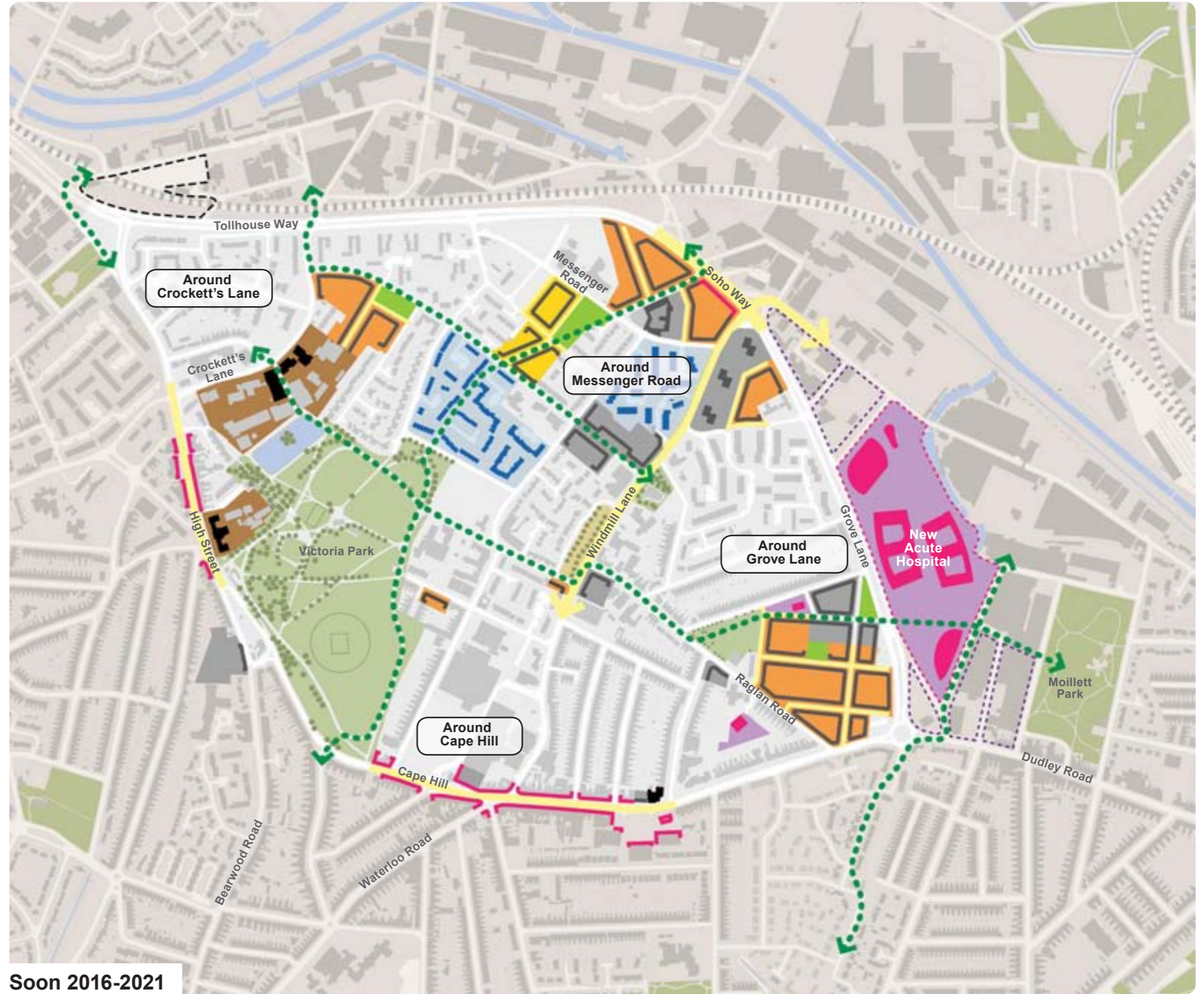
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Soon 2016-2021

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AROUND CAPE HILL
New Windmill Square on current site of maisonettes



AROUND GROVE LANE
Redevelopment of New Hope Estate



AROUND MESSENGER ROAD
New housing and open space on Messenger Road



AROUND MESSENGER ROAD
New local shops and services on Soho Way

Soon 2016-2021

The focus of the second five year is to change people's perceptions of the neighbourhood. This will involve selected housing demolition and redevelopment in consultation with residents, the creation of a new local focus for shops and services at Soho Way, the opening of the New Acute Hospital, and investment in key existing and new streets and public open spaces. Projects include:

Indicative Development	AROUND...	Crocketts Lane	Cape Hill	Grove Lane	Mess'ger Road	TOTAL
Consultation & Community	Improved amenities	1				1
	New amenities					
Housing	Improved dwellings				305	305
	Demolished dwellings	90	55	210	95	450
	New dwellings	110	5	235	225	575
Open Space & Movement	Improved open spaces			1		
	New open spaces		1		1	2
High Street & Employment	Improved facilities					
	New facilities				1	1

Ref. Proposal

Ref.	Proposal
Around Crockett's Lane	
5.1	Continuing Interim uses on Sandwell College sites
5.2	Redevelopment of Chamberlain Walk estate
5.4	Interim uses on Council House site
5.4	Improvements to Smethwick High Street
Around Cape Hill	
6.1	Continuing improvements in Victoria Park
6.3	Improvements to Cape Hill High Street
6.4	Creation of Windmill Square in the centre of the neighbourhood
Around Grove Lane	
7.1	Opening of New Acute Hospital
7.2	Redevelopment of New Hope Estate
7.3	New development on vacant sites at Crofts Estate
Around Messenger Road	
8.1	Transformation of Soho Way including provision of new shops and services in a mixed-use development
8.2	Construction of new housing along Messenger Road fronting onto a new local park
8.3	Housing improvements to Windmill & Thomas Crescents, Shaldon Walk area

COMMUNITY

- New community building and site
- Listed or other heritage building

HOUSING

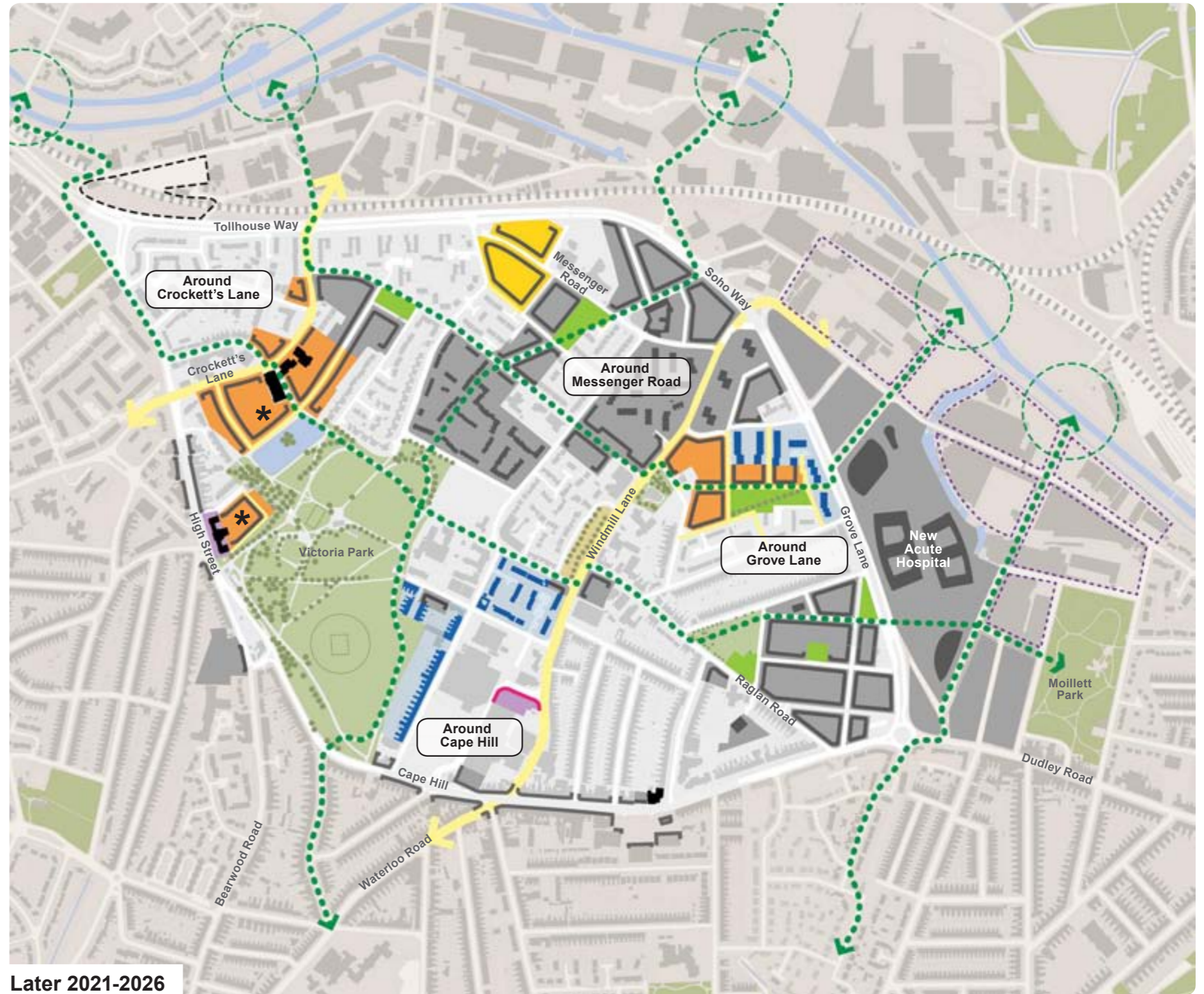
- Improved Housing & Environment
- New Housing: Moderate Density
35-45 dwellings per hectare net
- New Housing: High Density
45-60 dwellings per hectare net
- * New Housing: Priority Sites
The scale and frontage of new housing in these locations should relate positively to the adjacent open space. Increased densities could be considered at the detailed planning and design stage in conjunction with high-quality design and community benefit, if deemed appropriate.
- New or Improved Streets
- New Housing or other development outside SPD area

OPEN SPACE & MOVEMENT

- Existing Open Space
- New Open Space with play area
- New Local Square with play area
- Windmill Way walking & cycling route
- Rolfe Street Station (see p.20)

HIGH STREET & EMPLOYMENT

- New or Improved frontage to shops & services
- New or Improved street setting and crossings
- Interim employment or other use of existing buildings



Later 2021-2026

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AROUND CROCKETT'S LANE
New uses for historic buildings on Crockett's Lane



AROUND CROCKETT'S LANE
New housing development fronting Victoria Park



AROUND GROVE LANE
Part of Cuin Road estate redeveloped for new housing



AROUND GROVE LANE
Part of Cuin Road estate refurbished and improved

Later 2021-2026

The focus of the third five years is to comprehensively redevelop Sandwell College and Council House sites, improve the Cuin Road estate, and consolidate improvements across the area by completing final elements and linkages. Projects include:

Indicative Development	AROUND...	Crocketts Lane	Cape Hill	Grove Lane	Mess'ger Road	TOTAL
Consultation & Community	New facilities					
	New amenities					
Housing	Improved dwellings		120	90		210
	Demolished dwellings			185		185
	New dwellings	360		120	30	510
Open Space & Movement	Improved open spaces					
	New open spaces		1		1	2
High Street & Employment	Improved facilities		1			1
	New facilities					

Ref.	Proposal
Around Crockett's Lane	
5.1	Comprehensive redevelopment of Sandwell College sites
5.4	Comprehensive redevelopment of Council House site
Around Cape Hill	
6.1	Continuing improvements in Victoria Park
6.2	Housing improvements to Corbett St and Suffrage St
Around Grove Lane	
7.1	Opening of New Acute Hospital
7.2	Housing improvements to Cuin Road estate
	Partial redevelopment of Cuin Road estate
	Extension of Unett Street Park
Around Messenger Road	
8.1	Transformation of Soho Way including provision of new shops and services in a mixed-use development
8.2	Construction of new housing along Messenger Road (second phase)

