

Consultation Statement

Rolfe Street Masterplan

June 2023

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1. Introduction

Following on from the approval of the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Framework in February 2022, Sandwell Council commissioned a further, more in-depth masterplan covering the Rolfe Street area in Smethwick. The draft Masterplan was consulted on from 6 February to 20 March 2023. This statement sets out the engagement strategy undertaken in the lead up to and during the public consultation, provides an overview of the responses received and how they have been addressed in the revised document.

2. Background

During 2021, consultants undertook the preparation of the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Framework which set out guiding principles for the future development of key sites within this regeneration area and also prepared the Grove Lane Masterplan which provided more detail on how this area could be brought forward. Partners for this work included Sandwell Council, Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority and Transport for West Midlands, Homes England, Canal & River Trust and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust. A collaborative approach resulted in the development of both documents that subsequently were approved by both Sandwell Council and Birmingham City Council in February 2022.

Another key area within the corridor is that around Rolfe Street. This area has been identified for residential led mixed use development since 2008 when the site was allocated in the Smethwick Area Action Plan, now incorporated within the Sandwell Sites and Allocations Delivery DPD. The area has a prime location adjacent to the Birmingham Canal, is within proximity of Smethwick High Street and Rolfe Street Railway Station with easy access to Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

Unfortunately, proposals for residential development have not come forward, possibly due to fragmented land ownership meaning comprehensive development could not be achieved. Given the majority of the land uses being industrial in nature, piecemeal development would not have been supported.

However, the council has secured funding from the Government's Towns Fund to assist in bringing forward a site within the Rolfe Street area ready for residential development. The Smethwick Enterprise Centre site adjacent to the canal will be cleared of existing structures and remediated to a stage where redevelopment can take place for a potential 115 new homes. This is seen to be the catalyst for further regeneration opportunities to come forward in the Rolfe Street area.

To facilitate this regeneration it was considered that a masterplan covering the area from Rolfe Street Railway Station up to and including New Street and Bridge Street North should be prepared. This would build upon the principles set out in the

Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Framework to develop a coherent and comprehensive masterplan, providing clarity to developers on the aspirations for the area, the potential capacities and density that would deliver a well-designed community environment.

Consultants were commissioned to undertake this work. The Masterplan was to consider how the area could be developed, taking account of its location adjacent to the canal and proximity to local shops, services and public transport. Given the historic nature of the area, the masterplan was also to include a heritage assessment, looking at any particular buildings or structures that would require retention, and a transport strategy to ensure that the quantum of development could be accommodated within the existing or improved highway network.

3. Public Consultation

The Rolfe Street Masterplan was published for public consultation between 6 February and 20 March 2023. Hard copies were deposited at Smethwick Library and Sandwell Council House and links were available to view the Masterplan on a dedicated website. In addition, there was an online questionnaire for public and stakeholders to complete as well as paper copies left at the venues mentioned above.

The consultation was published on the council's social media accounts, Twitter and Facebook and a face to face event was organised in Smethwick Library on 1 March 2023 for anybody wishing to discuss the Masterplan in person with officers.

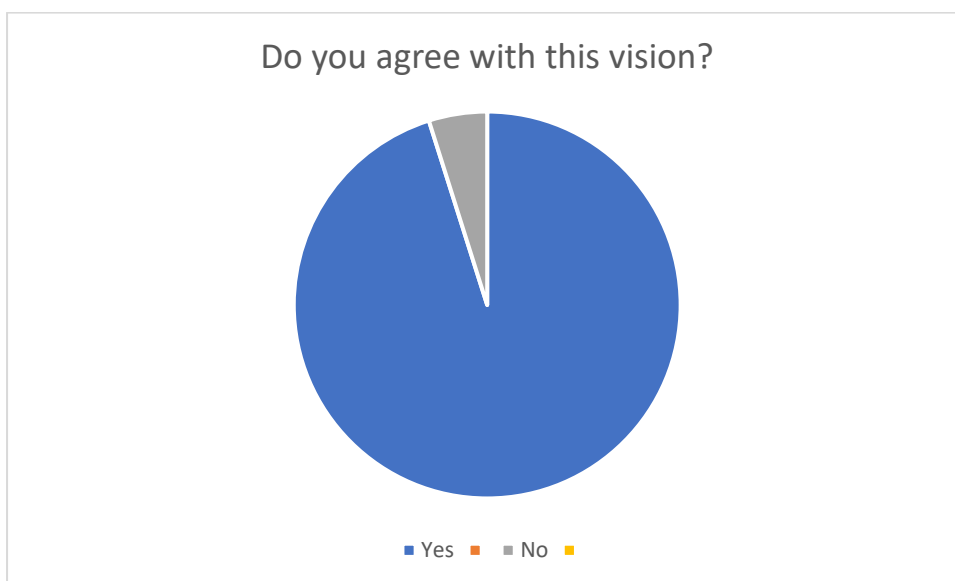
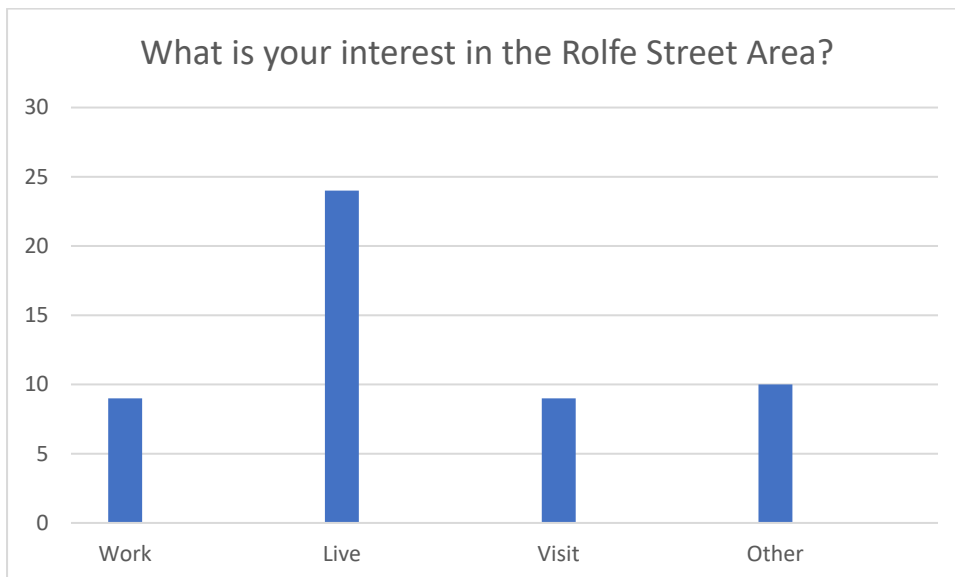
Smethwick Town Members were briefed on the emerging Masterplan and consultation in December 2022. There have been weekly meetings between the client and consultants to discuss progress on the developing masterplan since their appointment in September up to the public consultation event, and other agencies have also been engaged during its preparation to ensure interested stakeholders are able to help in shaping the final plan.

Notification of the Masterplan consultation including links to relevant documents was emailed to Statutory Consultees and any pertinent local community groups or interested parties.

4. Summary of response to the consultation

The consultation generated 41 responses to the online questionnaire although not all respondents replied to every question. There were no paper copies of the questionnaire received. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix 1.

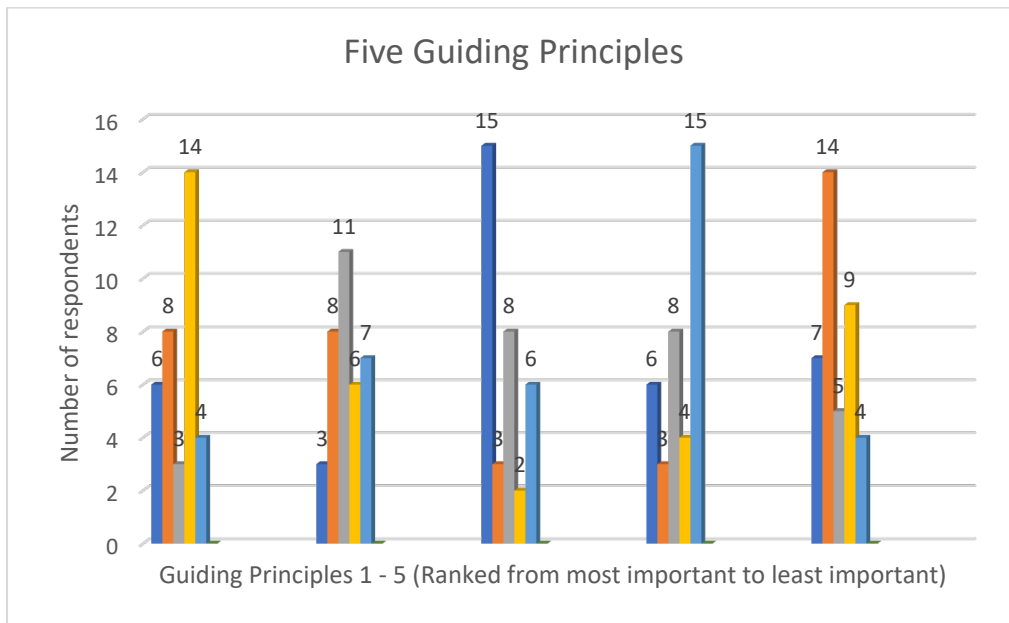
The majority of people who completed the questionnaire lived in the area (58%) and of the responses received, over 95% agreed with the overall vision provided by the Masterplan.



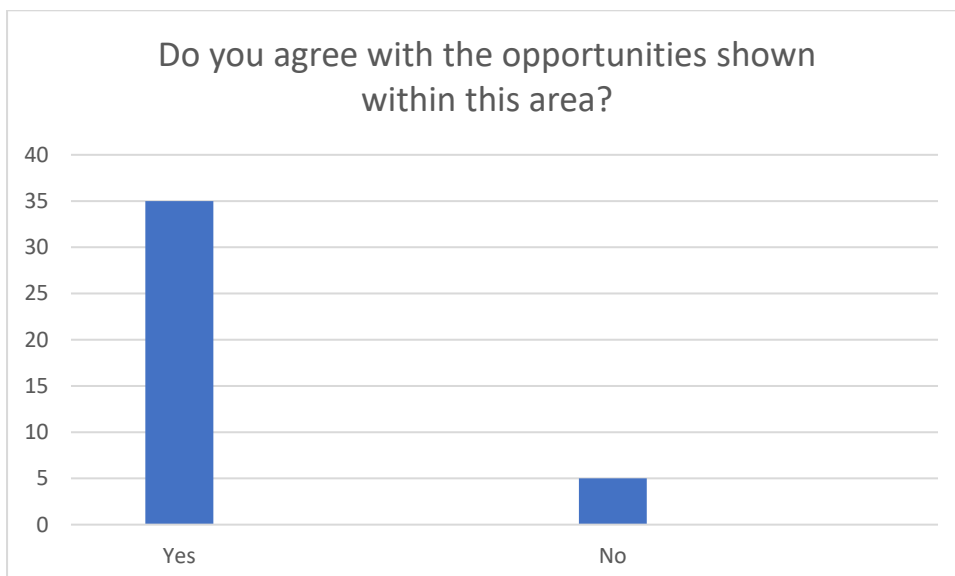
The Masterplan set out five guiding principles to shape the future of the area which included;

- ❖ A place that is Smethwick - an exemplar for the past and future of the Black Country
- ❖ A historic place - heritage at the heart of a new community
- ❖ An aspirational place - high quality family homes for all
- ❖ A connected place - a zero carbon mobility hub, heart of a cycling network
- ❖ A green place - new public spaces for a new community, the canal as a green lung

Respondents were asked to rank each of these principles in order of importance. The most important principle was making the Rolfe Street area an aspirational place with high quality family homes for all which was ranked at over 44%, with the least being 'a connected place – a zero carbon mobility hub, heart of cycling which was voted least important to over 41% of respondents. Of the five principles those that ranked between 1 and 3 of importance, providing family homes yielded most votes, with providing new green spaces second, making it an historic place third.



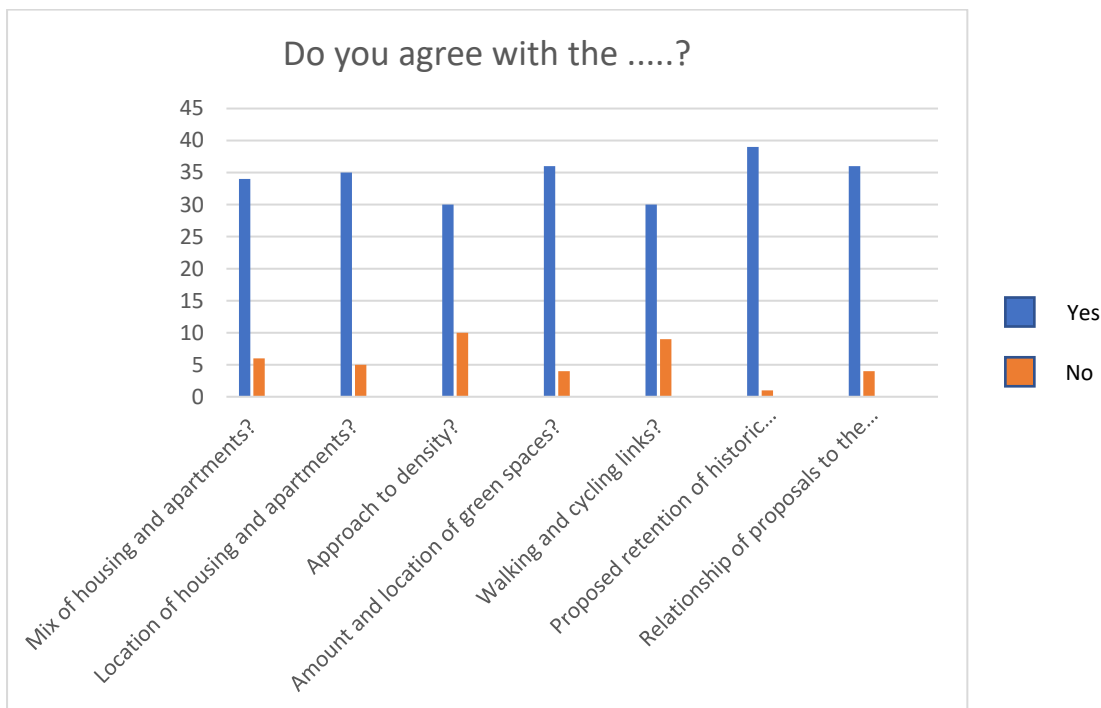
Over 87% of respondents agreed with the opportunities that had been set out within the Masterplan. With regards the package of walking, cycling and road improvements proposed there were mixed reactions with 82.5% in agreement and 17.5% not.



The final question asked if the respondent agreed with a number of proposals set out in the Masterplan. These included;

- ❖ The mix of housing and apartments
- ❖ The location of housing and apartments
- ❖ The approach to density of the housing
- ❖ The amount and location of green spaces
- ❖ The walking and cycling links
- ❖ The proposed retention of historic buildings, and
- ❖ The relationship of proposals to the canal.

In the main the responses to each of these was very positive. The proposed retention of historic buildings provoked the most responses (97.5%) which indicated that the proposals within the Masterplan to attempt retention if possible for some of the buildings would be welcomed.



Specific comments were received from stakeholders with an interest in this area for example Transport for West Midlands and Canal & River Trust. These are documented on Appendix Two.

From the social media links, there were the following responses;

Facebook : 19,902 views with 38 comments, mainly positive with some irrelevant to the actual masterplan being promoted.

Instagram: 1,610 views with 16 likes.

Twitter: 1,915 views with 85 engagements.

GovDelivery (residents e-newsletter)

No comments.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Draft Rolfe Street Masterplan- Public Consultation Questionnaire

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council are consulting on the Draft Rolfe Street Masterplan. This area within Smethwick has been allocated for housing within the Sandwell Development Plan Document for some time. The Draft Masterplan sets out a vision to provide new quality homes in a highly sustainable, historic, canal side location and builds on work already carried out through the Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Framework (completed February 2022).

The Draft Rolfe Street Masterplan is out to Public Consultation from 6th February 2023 to 20th March 2023. If you have any comments to make on this document, please use this form provided. Further information and an online form can be found at:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/RolfeStreetMasterplan

1. What is your interest in the Rolfe Street Area (tick all that apply)			
Work		Visit	
Live		Other	
The vision for this Rolfe Street is;			
To be an aspirational place where people want to live, a place that has a unique character which fosters a strong sense of community. This will be achieved through maximising the nationally significant history of the site, a history that connects Rolfe Street to the critical role the Black Country played in the industrial revolution. It will be underpinned by high quality architecture, streets and spaces.			
2. Do you agree with this vision?		Yes/No	
3. The Plan contains five guiding principles to shape development in the future. Out of the five principles, please rate them in order of importance for you (1- most important, 5 least important)			
A place that is Smethwick- <i>an exemplar for the past and future of the Black Country</i>		A connected place- <i>a zero carbon mobility hub, heart of a cycling network</i>	
A historic place- <i>heritage at the heart of a new community</i>		A green place- <i>new public spaces for a new community, the canal as a green lung</i>	
An aspirational place- <i>high quality family homes for all</i>			
4. Do you agree with the opportunities shown within this area?		yes/no	
4a. If no, please give details?			

Transport Strategy		
5. Do you agree with the package of walking, cycling and road improvement proposals for the area?		yes/no
6. Are there any further improvements you feel would benefit connectivity to, through and within the area? If so, please give details here.		
7. Do you agree with	7a. Mix of housing and apartments?	yes/no
	7b. Location of housing and apartments?	yes/no
	7c. Approach to density	yes/no
	7d. Amount and location of green spaces?	yes/no
	7e. Walking and cycling links?	yes/no
	7f. Proposed retention of historic buildings?	yes/no
	7g. Relationship of proposals to the canal?	yes/no
8. Are there any further comments you wish to make on the Rolfe Street Masterplan?		

Please return this form to the address below by 20th March 2023

Regeneration and Growth Sandwell Council Oldbury Council House Freeth Street Oldbury B69 3DE
E-mail: Ldf_planning@sandwell.gov.uk

Name:

Address:

Contact email:

All responses will be used for the purposes of this consultation only.

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS AND RESPONSES

Summary of Representation	Response
Q. 4a Do you agree with the opportunities shown within this area? If no, please give details?	
<p>As a canal enthusiast of both living on boats for over 50 years, canal restoration groups for over 60 years and a strong personal interest in the Galton Valley canalside and historical buildings. I am a bit concerned about over development of canal side areas for major housing regeneration. With experience people living in developments by canals do not have much consideration for boaters moving around network, and look on waterside as their own water front not to be used by boats mooring or travelling in area.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Zero carbon agendas are not welcome in Smethwick. People cannot afford to go carbon neutral neither can it afford the stress associated with trying to comply</p>	<p>Comments noted. However there is a requirement for local authorities, developers and other agencies to address the climate change agenda by incorporating measures wherever possible.</p>
<p>There is too much focus around the initial Rolfe Street area. The High Street area and up past the roundabout by Galton Bridge should also be a key focus. The High street area is quite frankly a mess and let's down what could be an amazing project. The bridge by Galton train station should be a welcoming focus for visitors however the area is difficult to navigate and the high traffic flow and general aesthetics of the area let it down. Both sides of the dual carriageway need to be presented well to encourage visitors not just to Rolfe Street but up to West Smethwick Park and ultimately the aquatic centre. It is not a pleasant route nor safe route to walk. Litter, shabby housing and crime are a deterrent for visitors.</p>	<p>Comments noted. However, this masterplan deals with the Rolfe Street area only and does not address issues in the wider area.</p>
Q. 6 Are there any further improvements you feel would benefit connectivity to, through and within the area?	

Even though the plan is to make use of greener transport links, this mode may not offer the right solution, please consider additional parking / charging points.	Parking issue will be dealt with in more detail when applications are drawn up for development.
More cycle lanes. Rental bikes, rental scooters.	Comments noted.
A Nursery will be nice plus more café alongside the canal to. Just concerned about the traffic that is already a bit too busy	Comments noted. There may be opportunities to incorporate other community uses once detailed development proposals emerge in the future.
More pelican crossings zebra crossing etc	Comments noted.
Safety for women and children with CCTV cameras and police patrols	Comments noted.
What arrangements are being made to improve access for the disabled? Train station has stairs and access is poorly located at the extreme end of the platforms. Will there be easy access to the canal?	Improvements to Rolfe Street railway station have recently been made which includes lifts and easy access to platforms. Improving access to the canal when the area is redeveloped will be considered wherever possible.
Regular waterbus service to Birmingham city centre.	Comments noted.
Not bothered about the cycling but decreased road works during the day would be appreciated.	Comments noted.
Potholes on roads should be your first priority as vehicle users pay road tax. Cyclists / escooters etc are a danger to pedestrians and cars users and cause obstructions and violations of the Highway Code	Comments noted.
More pedestrian crossing points. The new crossings will help however it would be great to see the walking / cycling route extended and improved to the surrounding areas i.e. further along the A457. It's difficult to walk to Rolfe Street from Messenger Road so people end up driving. The new housing developments look fantastic and will improve the Rolfe Street area which is undesirable and unsafe at points for pedestrians.	Comments noted. Walking improvements through Cape Hill are part of the Smethwick Connected project for the Smethwick Towns Fund which should assist pedestrians wishing to visit the Rolfe Street area. Improved cycle path links are also planned for the area.
Parks to be looked after more, litter awareness and hefty fines, litter is ruining the area	Comments noted.

<p>I hope that the fire station and Rolfe House are not going to be demolished under the new plans, both buildings are part of Smethwick's proud history and could with some regeneration be attractive and useful buildings. Smethwick lost a lot of historical buildings during the middle of the last century, I hope this will not happen in the 21C.</p>	<p>As the developments come forward, a decision will be made as to whether the retention of some heritage buildings are feasible and viable. This will be dealt with as part of detailed planning applications in the future.</p>
<p>No one really uses them.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>As suggested, however congestion impact must be considered as created by current works on dual carriageway by Rolfe St</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Parking areas are already very few and far between for both visitors and residents. Having lived here for over 20 years I regularly have to park 1 or 2 roads away and walk. There is little thought for this. Also the use of scooters is concerning. Areas such as Harborne where these have been piloted see scooter left/dumped creating hazards on pavements. Also I would question the safety to pedestrians on already narrow streets, retail areas on the high street and busy dual carriageways acting as a thoroughfare.</p>	<p>Parking will be dealt with in more detail when applications come forward for development schemes.</p>
<p>Would be lovely to see a water sports club/community space for stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, boating, fishing but maybe as part of a bigger community offer to help with community cohesion/connectivity. Not sure how polluted the canal is? Reinventing the canal is critical and the backbone of the heritage of the area. All these developments often have little community space. Hopefully there's interest to have something near the station/coffee shop etc.</p>	<p>Comments noted. There may be opportunities to incorporate other community uses once detailed development proposals emerge in the future. There will be ongoing consultation with Canal & River Trust.</p>
<p>A new primary school must be built to meet the needs of the local residents as part of this development. There is a huge crisis in the area for school places. Connecting the residents of other side of the canal would make this neighbourhood more cohesive and connected to the rail network.</p>	<p>The current trends show that there will not be a need for additional primary school as a result of any development. However, this will be closely monitored as the developments come forward in the future and addressed if required.</p>
<p>Q.8 Are there any further comments you wish to make on the Rolfe Street Masterplan?</p>	

<p>Consider reducing the density especially the highest density & high to medium, provide a more open feel.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Please don't just put housing/apartments. Give people a reason to come along and enjoy the area and use the canal</p>	<p>There may be opportunities to incorporate other community uses once detailed development proposals emerge in the future.</p>
<p>Please limit the number of private landlords buying properties to convert to HMOs and homeless shelters. St Pauls has one of the highest numbers of HMOs in Sandwell and become unrecognisable over the years. Additionally, what are the plans for schools, GPs and dentists for the increased population?</p>	<p>The issue of private landlords cannot be addressed by the masterplan. There are no plans for additional schools, GP's and dentists within this area as they are already provided for in the vicinity.</p>
<p>How will the historic infrastructure of the canal be protected?</p>	<p>Any development will ensure that the heritage features, buildings and infrastructure are protected.</p>
<p>I feel the regeneration of Rolfe Street area is very much needed as are the new homes. The masterplan looks amazing and I like the fact it is taking into consideration the strong history that Smethwick has and appears to incorporate aspects of the industrial heritage in the designs. I also like that there are green spaces where the community can come together have been included on the plans. The current area is very run down, it doesn't help that a lot of the buildings are old and don't appear to be looked after. In its current state it feels like a no-go area for pedestrians. This is the part of Smethwick that is letting down the area. My only concern would be with parking along Rolfe Street and how that will be managed. Currently with the industrial units along the road, there are certain sections of the road where a lot of vans are parked on both sides of the street making it difficult for traffic to pass in both directions at the same time especially as lorries use this route a lot and also the junction near to North Western Road is difficult to pull out of, again due to the way vehicles are parked (half on the pavement/road) - So would parking restrictions be put in place to prevent these problems e.g. double yellow lines to prevent residents/visitors parking along here?</p>	<p>Comments noted. It is envisaged that as the area changes through the implementation of this masterplan, the nature of traffic flow and generation will also change. However, these issues will be addressed when more detailed development proposals come forward in the future.</p>
<p>As I'm not local (live in Birmingham and not in Sandwell), I don't want to comment about issues such as the mix of housing and apartments. However, in view of the size of this</p>	<p>The masterplan sets the vision for the Rolfe Street area. The detail on how</p>

<p>exciting development, I think there's an issue that's important to all of us (even if we don't live locally), which is not covered in the masterplan. I couldn't see anything in the masterplan about the crucial importance of making sure that all of the new homes are constructed to be low-carbon emitting and highly energy-efficient. There should be requirements about constructing the new homes with (a) low-carbon means of heating and (b) high quality and effective energy efficiency features. The latter will help to keep home energy costs down for residents as well as reducing the output of greenhouse gases.</p>	<p>the houses/apartments are constructed to meet these concerns will be part of the detailed conversations once development proposals come forward in the future.</p>
<p>Good links to heritage assets like Boulton & Watts Soho Foundry and Chance Brothers Glassworks.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>More houses and less apartments.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Cycling routes are not required no one uses them now and they are not worth investing the money in. I drive this route two times a day and I rarely see any cyclists on this route and to invest money in this provides little to no benefit</p>	<p>Comments noted</p>
<p>The money spent on creating a cycle lane on tollhouse way is a disgrace. I have never seen a single cyclist using the route. I say this as an ex policy advisor for roads in the DFT</p>	<p>Comments noted</p>
<p>Fantastic!</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>The areas housing development should consider Secured by Design and developers should demonstrate that they have consulted with West Midlands Police Design Out Crime Team as part of pre-application process. SDB is proven to reduce crime and ASB by 86% (Police Scotland 2018).</p>	<p>The masterplan sets the vision for the Rolfe Street area. The detail on how the houses/apartments are constructed to meet these concerns will be part of the detailed conversations once development proposals come forward in the future.</p>
<p>Everything is very good apart from the cycling lanes.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>How would I apply to be on the waiting list for housing. Currently working in the area as district nurse</p>	<p>The masterplan is a vision for the development of this area moving forward. It does not deal with detail regarding housing allocations.</p>

<p>Will the homes be council or private? If private, will help be given for first time buyers?</p>	<p>The masterplan is a vision for the development of this area moving forward. This detail will be dealt with once development proposals come forward in the future but there will be an aspiration to meet the current policy for affordable housing.</p>
<p>If both sides of the dual carriageway are not connected both physically and asthically a division would be created. The pathway from Galton Bridge to West Smethwick Park would be fabulous to incorporate community. There is so much to offer but public safety, confidence and crime is a huge consideration too. I personally will not leave my house after dark. I definitely would not venture around the canal area as I feel too vulnerable. This needs to be addressed as the area could be fabulous. I would love to take my children to the canal area and pumping station etc but no way at present would I as I do not feel safe.</p>	<p>The area from Galton Bridge to West Smethwick Park is not within the Masterplan boundary. However safety will be a key feature when discussing proposals that come forward within the Rolfe Street and canalside area.</p>
<p>Pg. 20 - the document states that 'The Smethwick to Birmingham Corridor Framework sets out the principles the Council wish to build upon at Rolfe Street... Green Corridor' - If this is the case, then why is the canal's importance as a green corridor, and opportunities for the development to contribute towards this, not addressed in this document? Pg.30 - the document states that dwelling densities in excess of 60 dwellings per hectare may be appropriate for the development. This is contrary to policy HOU2 of the Black Country Core Strategy, which states that densities of 60+ dwellings per hectare would only be appropriate in a Strategic or Town Centre, which Smethwick is not. Even though this is just an early planning stage of the Masterplan, it is not too early to start integrating measures for achieving an overall net gain in biodiversity as part of the development into its design. It is not enough for the development to rely solely on the existing biodiversity value of the canal corridor in order to be considered a 'green' development. How will this proposed development feed into and enhance the wider Birmingham and Black Country Nature Recovery Network (of which the canal is a part) and promote biodiversity? What measures are proposed to promote ecological permeability of the site?</p>	<p>The masterplan shows a vision of how the area could develop over time and has taken on board the emerging policy with regards increasing densities in certain areas. Issues of biodiversity net gain, addressing the nature recovery network and linking the development to obtain the best outcomes for this canalside location will be explored in more detail once development proposals come forward.</p>

<p>Looks great - just a pity it couldn't have been completed before the commonwealth games. I just hope this happens and quicker than the usual drawn out developments. Hopefully the area benefits with an improved security aspect (cctv network will be improved/police resources). As I mentioned earlier community space/businesses close to the train station or maybe a barge coffee shop could be added but hopefully some sport aspects could be incorporated into the design also. Hopefully road improvements can be made also around Dudley Road and the local schools/health capacity can cope with the added population to the area.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Canal area needs to be improved to allow residents to spend quality time with family and neighbours with better access facility.</p>	<p>The aim of the masterplan is to improve the quality of and access to the canal for residents and visitors.</p>
<p>Comments from Transport for West Midlands</p>	
<p>Overall we feel this masterplan consider several policies outlined in the region's emerging new West Midlands Local Transport Plan (WM LTP) 5 on ways new developments could be designed, managed and used for the transport network. The WM LTP5 Core Strategy was approved by WMCA Board in February and provides the firm policy tone and direction within which the remaining LTP components will be developed for transport strategy in the West Midlands. This includes the proposed Area Strategy for the Black Country (where we will work alongside Black Country Transport Officers) to explore opportunities to reimagine the transport system and how sustainable modes will benefit people and businesses in the West Midlands - with well-connected 15-minute neighbourhoods within a 45-minute region. The vision is based on a combination of walking and wheeling, cycling and scooting, and riding travel options that require neither an expensive private vehicle or a full driving licence. It means that a good range of everyday services within our neighbourhoods can be accessed in a round trip of no more than 15 minutes, and a good range of places across our region to undertake work, leisure and socialising can be accessed within a 45-minute trip. This masterplan therefore complement's this wider LTP vision and we are supportive of the concepts proposed in principle.</p>	<p>By approving the LTP5 Core Strategy, the principle of 15-minute neighbourhoods and a 45-minute region has been approved as WMCA transport policy. But to become effective, it has to be delivered through land use change and reflected in individual LA's Local Plans. At present it isn't Sandwell Council planning policy and the earliest it could be, is late 2025. The basic principles are perfectly sound in describing a well-connected, accessible and sustainable location which is similar to the aspirations of 15-minute neighbourhoods.</p>

<p>The masterplan also aligns with our <i>Draft Big Move 2: Accessible and Inclusive Places</i> through encouraging higher density development in locations close to public transport corridors and hubs and through adopting a brownfield first approach</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>With this in mind, under 2.2 of the Planning Policy section TfWM request that reference to the WM LTP is included, to demonstrate the overall transport vision, objectives and strategy for the region and help guide the development and delivery of transport policies until the end of 2041. Such policies, measures and interventions (as outlined in the LTP) help local people shape what they want future developments to look like; ensuring they take a dynamic approach to transport planning - bringing wider benefits to local businesses, communities and residents in the form of improved cycling, walking and wheeling options as well as public transport</p>	<p>The Planning Policy section is only concerned with policy adopted by the Local Authority.</p>
<p>Yet at the same time, the masterplan only seeks to provide some initial direction for the Rolfe Street area, and while we appreciate more detailed designs and measures will be presented in future planning applications for the site, we have outlined some key points made across several directorates which you may want to factor in further within the masterplan. These include;</p> <p>Bus Service Comments: TfWM see many benefits to delivering a ‘Mobility Hub style interchange’ close to Smethwick Rolfe Street Station, integrating rail with cycle storage, West Midlands Cycle Hire and e-mobility (in the form of e-scooters); helping to increase rail usage. However, while interchanging with bus has potential, this may not be the most suitable location given that services are only every 30 mins to New Street. Consideration of a Mobility Hub at Galton Bridge station, which is only a short distance away with a better railhead, more frequent services and greater choice of destinations, including 4 trains an hour on the Snow Hill lines should be explored and appreciated in the masterplan - providing for far better bus/rail interchange. While Galton Bridge Station is outside the site boundary, we feel addressing improved connectivity and integration with the site, through improved bus operations and wider active travel infrastructure will bring considerable</p>	<p>Comments noted. However reference to e-scooters will be removed. Sandwell are not in a position at the moment to support e-scooter legislation. This may change in the future however, at the time of publishing this masterplan the council has no intention of approving locations for or usage of e-scooters. Galton Bridge Station is outside of the masterplan boundary and therefore it would be difficult to deliver as part of this masterplan. Rolfe Street is closer to the retail centre so is ideal location.</p>

<p>benefits and should be acknowledged, with a mobility hub interchange also having potential at this station.</p>	
<p>We strongly welcome bus routes serving the site, but as the development is built, more frequent bus services should be explored to enhance connectivity, with strategic bus movements being prioritised at key junctions, close by and through the site. Easy bus connectivity between the site, its nearby railway and metro stations and the new Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital must be a priority for public transport</p>	<p>Comments noted. However more discussion as to how this will be achieved and funded will be required.</p>
<p>In terms of road widths, TfWM have concerns with the design code for Rolfe Street and option 1 on page 49. The code indicates a 3-metre road width, but for bus, this maybe too tight bearing in mind a bus is 2.55m in width plus mirrors and so further discussions with TfWM's Bus Infrastructure Team would be required, to ensure road widths are adequate</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Following on from the above point, a bus gate is further welcomed within the development but as mentioned in the above bullet point, provisions should be made to ensure the road continues to be wide enough for this mode, with bus lanes considered and an additional bus gate explored at the other end of the site, to provide clear priority measures for bus movements as well as allowing cyclists</p>	<p>This will require further discussion and analysis with partners and LA Highways to understand the wider implications of this proposal.</p>
<p>The proposal to reduce traffic flows on Rolfe Street is welcomed but traffic calming may not be sufficient to achieve suitable conditions. Limiting access through the proposed Station Square to only buses, cycles, pedestrians and wheel modes would be preferable and would address our concerns with road width restrictions along Rolfe Street, reduce potential conflicts between active travel modes and general traffic, and make the 'mobility hub' proposal more attractive to users (see cycle comments as well concerning Rolfe Street road widths).</p>	<p>This will be looked at in more detail as proposals come forward.</p>

<p>Finally, TfWM see opportunities for delivering more consistent and improved bus shelter designs, similar to those used on the 'Sprint' bus rapid transit corridors for key bus stops throughout this development in terms of size, shape, branding, colour, seating, lighting and RTI features, with options being funded through 106 contributions.</p>	<p>Comments noted. However more discussion with partners as to how this will be achieved and funded will be required.</p>
<p>Rail Comments: Smethwick Rolfe Street Station has recently been made fully accessible, providing the masterplan area with regular half-hourly train services to Birmingham New Street, Oldbury (via Sandwell and Dudley Station), Tipton and Wolverhampton, which should be noted.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>As referenced in the above bus comments, the masterplan should note Smethwick Galton Bridge station which is less than a mile from the masterplan area – providing far greater connectivity than Rolfe Street station, with an additional four trains per hour to Birmingham's Snow Hill and Moor St stations and to local Black Country destinations such as Rowley Regis, Cradley Heath and Stourbridge. Additionally, Smethwick Galton Bridge Station provides direct train services from the Smethwick area to wider regional destinations such as Stafford, Kidderminster, Worcester, Shrewsbury, Telford, Solihull and Stratford upon Avon as well as to the important interchange station at Crewe, for onward journeys to Liverpool and the north. This station may therefore be suitable for a Mobility Hub Style interchange facility, which TfWM are happy to explore with Sandwell Officers</p>	<p>Noted. This will be dealt with separately as Galton Bridge sits outside the Masterplan area.</p>
<p>Therefore enhancing bus and active travel access from the masterplan area to Smethwick Galton Bridge station will further enhance the wider sustainable transport offering in the area including new developments across Smethwick and the wider corridor.</p>	<p>Good active and sustainable transport links have already been delivered with the segregated cycleway along the A457 which currently ends at Galton Bridge Station. Provision has been made within the recent highways improvements for bus stops ready for provision by TfWM and partners.</p>

Active Travel Comments:

Sandwell has some of the UKs most inactive and deprived residents, so providing high quality safe cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure will contribute to inclusive growth and increased participation in physical activity. It would also be useful to see the Strategic Transport Assessment undertaken by Stantec, with TfWM reserving the right to comment further on the transport proposals on receipt of this document. However, in the meantime, TfWMs Cycling and Walking Team have provided some outline comments below:

Connectivity

Full consideration should be paid to pedestrian desire lines with additional crossing points installed, especially at junctions outside of the site. High quality pedestrian and cycling priority measures should also be a major consideration in light of recent highway code changes.

Noted.

<p>All cycling and walking measures and infrastructure introduced throughout the development should follow guidance in LTN 1/20 and Manual for Streets as well as the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance (2022) Details of the image asset West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance 2022 Asset Bank (assetbank-server.com) and be of high quality design and be fully referenced in the masterplan under the section on active travel. As more detailed designs are drawn up, it will further be important for the developer(s) to work closely with TfWMs Walking and Cycling Team and the West Midlands Cycling and Walking Commissioner on ensuring high quality standards are met.</p>	<p>This will be picked up when more detailed schemes come forward in the future.</p>
<p>The masterplan should note the West Midlands Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Black Country LCWIP. It should also refer to and demonstrate the Port Loop as part of WMLCWIP – which is a core walking zone together with the routes linking Smethwick to Bearwood in the Black Country LCWIP which pass this Smethwick Rolfe Street area</p>	<p>Port Loop is outside of the Masterplan area.</p>
<p>On page 10 there is mention of a planned cycle route but is marked on the map as defined/not defined. This needs to be made clear what strategic plan / route this forms part of.</p>	<p>The reference to the defined/not defined route (on page 10) is because the alignment of the section from Soho Street to the borough boundary is still being considered as part of the CRSTS scheme for the corridor.</p>
<p>While the canal was upgraded and has been supported by behaviour change initiatives, it is still not well utilised as some other canals because of anti-social behaviour and limited access points. The masterplan should therefore consider how it will address these issues, ensuring it forms a ‘green lung’ for the community.</p>	<p>This aspiration is contained within the masterplan.</p>
<p>This site needs to ensure that permeability allows for cyclists to safely connect with any existing and future planned infrastructure (as mentioned above) including nearby bus</p>	<p>This is the aspiration for the masterplan area and will continue to</p>

<p>stops, Metro stops, Rolfe Street Station and Galton Bridge Station. This should be well-signposted, permeable, well-lit, coherent, attractive, continuous and safe; allowing for all walking, cycling and wheeling options.</p>	<p>be discussed as projects come forward.</p>
<p>The plan should consider wider access to local amenities including schools and explore opportunities for improving access by cycling, walking or wheeling measures. With several schools within the vicinity of the site, this needs to be far more prominent</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p>
<p>Public realm measures should further be fully connected and integrated with any wider active travel routes in and around Smethwick, as well as be joined up fully with other nearby facilities, amenities and key nodes.</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p>
<p>While the masterplan considers access to Birmingham, it fails to consider other parts of Sandwell such as Oldbury, West Bromwich, Bearwood and other local centres as well as links to the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, which should be a priority. It should therefore make stronger reference to accessing rail and bus infrastructure through active travel modes; allowing for those wider connections and destinations to be fulfilled and ensuring use of the 'mobility style hub'.</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p>
<p>Road safety and inclusion Reducing speed limits throughout the development to 20mph together with tackling wider road safety concerns, on surrounding roads should be of greater consideration within the masterplan</p>	<p>Comments Noted.</p>
<p>Reference is made to providing a toucan crossing of Tollhouse Way, yet these crossings are shared use and are not preferred. Therefore, other crossing options should be explored.</p>	<p>Although toucans are 'not preferred' in some instances, there are over-riding reasons for them. This needs further investigation. Text to change to 'crossing suitable for cyclists' which provides more flexibility on providing the best solution on a case by case basis.</p>

As noted by the KRN team below, such measures should be accompanied by traffic management measures to reduce traffic flows on New Street and allow for a safer environment to cycle, walk and wheel.

Comments noted

<p>The importance of inclusion within transport needs to be referenced – with consideration paid to disabled people, older people or more vulnerable road users wishing to cycle, walk or wheel. The masterplan should also demonstrate an aspiration to provide an inclusive environment where all sustainable travel is a realistic and safe opportunity for everyone.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Street Hierarchy The Street Hierarchy, as referenced on page 28 should present walking and cycling at the forefront to deliver on low traffic neighbourhoods with opportunities for wider measures such as continuous footways and same-level highway/footways. Making reference to the ‘Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy’ as set out in the new LTP – setting out priority for different users may be a useful tool for delivering on this.</p>	<p>The masterplan has been prepared with providing access to a range of modes of transport, with walking and cycling being considered most important.</p>
<p>Two possible cross sections are given for Rolfe Street – two-way with 3m shared use paths on both sides and one-way with a footway, shared use on one side and a separate two-way cycle track on the other. Shared use is not preferred and will attract adverse comments from Active Travel England as a statutory consultee. If traffic flows are less than 2000 vpd and speeds are 20mph or lower, there will be no need for separate cycle infrastructure. Yet if these conditions are not met, protected space for cycling will be needed, as well as space for buses to pass each other comfortably (see bus comments), which could be achieved using a one-way system. However, this design is not shown on the plan for Rolfe St on page 48, and further clarification is needed concerning these proposals, so bus and cycle provision standards can be fully met. We therefore recommend further discussions are had with TfWM on Rolfe Street road widths and its general design.</p>	<p>This can only be addressed through the design process. This will require further discussions when more detailed projects come forward.</p>
<p>Cycle parking Enhanced cycle parking should be a consideration and be located close to existing routes and under surveillance by CCTV and/or passers-by along with cycle parking storage in new homes, which is safe and secure and fulfilling the number of</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>

<p>recommended cycle parking stands for this development, as laid out in the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance.</p>	
<p>Developers should also explore installing West Midlands Cycle Hire docks and the purchasing of minute bundles for new residents, and could be included as part of a residential travel plan for the site.</p>	<p>This will need to be explored in more detail once development schemes come forward and would rely on a firm commitment from TfWM to provide the docks and cycles.</p>
<p>Key Route Network Comments: The KRN team welcomes the redirection of traffic flow from Rolfe Street. However additional measures should be considered to encourage use of Soho Street rather than New Street to access the industrial areas north of the railway line.</p>	<p>This will need to be dealt with by a more comprehensive HGV strategy for the wider area which falls outside the scope of this masterplan.</p>
<p>It is considered that the width of New Street would potentially limit the capability of receiving two-way HGV traffic. This road also experiences indiscriminate parking and the parking bays that have been proposed will be insufficient and inappropriate to serve the existing businesses that are located on the road, including a builder's yard and wholesale grocers.</p>	<p>This will require further consideration when developments come forward for this part of the masterplan.</p>
<p>The signalised junction of Soho Street/A457 Soho Way already has a left filter lane to support HGV movements into Soho Street, without impacting through traffic movement on the A457 as well as a separate signal phase for Soho Street, to minimise conflicts for vehicles turning right and joining A457 Soho Way westbound</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>If the likelihood of vehicles using New Street remains, to help minimise disruption to the flow of traffic on A457, consideration for MOVA-enabled signals (if not already MOVA-enabled) at the junction of A457/New Street should be considered.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>

<p>Additionally, the number of vehicle movements into and out of Rolfe Street at its junction with A457 Tollhouse Way should reduce. Therefore, there is scope for amending the phasing of the signals at this location, or to introduce MOVA, if not already present, to maximise the throughflow of vehicles on A457 Tollhouse Way.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>A full impact assessment to A457 Tollhouse Way needs to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Housing densities could be far higher within the masterplan, especially as this development is within a town centre and close to key transport corridors, train stations and metro stops. Our review of minimum densities in other UK City Regions presents density levels as high as 100 dwellings per hectare in similar centres. Increasing dwelling densities, in built-up urban areas will then help create more walkable mixed-use developments, with excellent sustainable mobility options and may help reduce the housing shortfalls in the longer term across Sandwell – with the highest densities being focused around the Station Gateway section and the western-most plots.</p>	<p>Whilst 100 dph has been achieved in places, these are predominantly in city centres with excellent turn-up and go public transport. Emerging policy recognises that higher densities can be achieved, but only in strategic centres. The only strategic centre in Sandwell is West Bromwich. Smethwick High Street is a District Centre. Whilst higher densities are considered for some parcels, 100 dph across the area is not considered appropriate.</p>
<p>The masterplan doesn't mention its limitation of car parking spaces and wider behaviour change. If the masterplan is serious about reducing traffic and increasing active travel measures, there should be measures included to reduce car parking available.</p>	<p>The masterplan does look at reduced car parking provision as an option, subject to justified evidence to support this option. This will be dealt with more fully when detailed proposals come forward.</p>
<p>Consideration of a residential parking scheme for the on-street parking bays should further be considered, as demand for Smethwick Rolfe Street railway station will likely increase, due to its improved environment. This should also be accompanied with additional parking measures that prevent indiscriminate or dangerous parking within the</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>

<p>site, helping to maintain a pedestrian-focused environment with such measures also considered for other nearby housing estates.</p>	
<p>This site may also be a prime location for a car club to be trialled (as part of a mobility style hub), especially where coupled with reduced parking and good access to public transport and active travel infrastructure. TfWM are currently working with Enterprise and will be happy to explore this option further with Sandwell Council and developers.</p>	<p>Comments noted and for consideration/discussion when more detailed proposals come forward.</p>
<p>The importance of digital connectivity and innovation is also currently missing from the masterplan. As technology evolves, it has a greater potential to reduce our need to travel and will be a vital tool to help us meet traffic reduction targets. Digital services will also further enhance people's accessibility levels, through delivering on well-designed digital platforms, data sets and digital access points across the transport system, along with the roll out of electric charging points.</p>	<p>Digital connectivity is being discussed boroughwide as part of the digital strategy.</p>
<p>Finally, the West Midlands is playing a leading role at the heart of the UK Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) ecosystem, with the region being a test-bed for CAV and through the arrival of 5G areas. CAV will therefore become a future mobility option and should be fully considered in all new developments and be ideally referenced within the masterplan.</p>	<p>Sandwell has yet to come to a position on CAV technology so will not be addressed in this masterplan.</p>
<p>Comments from Canal & River Trust</p>	
<p>The New Mainline Canal is within a principle cutting relative to the masterplan site. There is also a listed retaining wall recorded here to the west of the listed Aqueduct at the top of the cutting. In terms of the potential development on the site and how it relates to the cutting/listed retaining wall, the indicative plan already shows the potential for a landscape buffer. We would welcome the document setting out a specified 'no-build zone' to the crest (top of the cutting/retaining wall) of 5.0m. This would help to ensure the structural integrity of the waterway infrastructure and to facilitate space for future inspections and to reduce loading to the cutting. Having the space as a landscaped area would be appropriate. We would also welcome the document setting out that any future planning submission submitted on the site here includes cross sections showing the proposed development in the context of the canal</p>	<p>Comments noted. Protection of the Listed retaining wall will be priority when development takes place in the future. Any designs will ensure that there is sufficient space retained to enable inspections.</p>

cutting, with levels and relative offsets included	
<p>Creating linkage to the canal network from the site seems to be a key driver which is welcome. In terms of constraints and opportunities at section 2.8 the pedestrian links from the masterplan area to the canal are noted as being poor, which we consider to be a fair assessment. The opportunity to open up and improve access to the canal is noted. The majority of the masterplan area is next to the offside of the Engine Arm. The existing towpath surface along the Engine Arm is generally unsurfaced/overgrown which is commensurate to its current level of usage. The sensitive upgrading of this surface would be welcome as part of the redevelopment and its inclusion as public realm.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Partners will be encouraged to work together to ensure linkages from this area to the canal are clear and safe.</p>
<p>There is a modern brick wall/structure covered in ivy next to the listed Aqueduct which prevents access from the masterplan site to the Old Mainline towpath from the offside. In terms of any proposals to remove the brick structure on the Engine Arm Aqueduct to enable access this would need listed building consent and scheduled monument consent to enable its removal. To achieve the desired access improvements the removal of this brick structure would be crucial.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>In terms of wider access to the canal network, there is an existing sloped towpath access point from the Old mainline to the New mainline just to the west of the Junction bridge. There is also an informal access just to the south of Lock 1 which links to the New Mainline. Although these accesses are outside the masterplan area, we note that the plan on page 29 shows the potential street movement hierarchy and shows pedestrian/cycle links on both sides of the Engine Arm and linkage to the new Mainline/Old Mainline. As part of the redevelopment, we would like to see a recommendation to resurface the Old mainline towpath, at least to Brasshouse Lane and Bridge Street North. The slope immediately adjacent to the Engine Arm linking to the New Mainline is steep and this would also benefit from regrading to reduce the slope. Likewise, the unsurfaced slope that leads to the toll island and connecting the Old and New Mainline canals should be formalised to provide a number of accessible connections to the canal network from the surrounding area. A package of towpath</p>	<p>Improvements to the canal towpaths to allow for more direct accessibility will require further discussions with parties to ascertain scope of works and funding sources.</p>

<p>improvements and wayfinding and signage would be beneficial to facilitate access to the canal network and should be referenced in the document to be delivered as part of the future development.</p>	
<p>The overall masterplan indicative layouts have many positives that feel engaged with the canal and offer to create a sense of place, community and connectivity to our network. However, certain aspects do need to be resolved.</p> <p>Section 5.3 Corporation Yard, the heart of the plan area, covers both the Engine Arm and the Engine Arm Aqueduct. The layout shown forms an open sided square feeding views and connectivity onto the Engine Arm. A ground floor community or mixed commercial use would be required within this area to create life and openness through the frontages and to animate this space. Fenced off residential at ground floor would result in a dead space and should be avoided. We consider that heights here are certainly shown at the limit and we would like to see a visual analysis on how the building closest to the Engine Arm Aqueduct sits within the setting from the New Mainline eye level view. Some scaling down or setting back is likely going to be required given heritage significance. Furthermore, as shown on page 36, the corner detailing of the building in the listed Aqueducts immediate background will be key. A residential apartment at ground floor here would result in defensive design, which the axonometric on page 37 and visual on page 41 likely suggests as an outcome. We consider an open corner entrance or community use is needed here as the welcoming area to the development from the Aqueduct, which the visual on page 36 is more inclined to suggest. Page 36 also refers to undercroft parking, with drops in levels, this would not be an acceptable canal facing interface.</p>	<p>This masterplan shows the vision for this area and how it could relate to the canal. Further detail will need to be discussed with partners as and when the schemes are being developed in the future.</p>
<p>The row of linear apartments facing the Engine arm moving to the east starts incorporating a visual set back in the elevation which is positive as the stretch merges into the lower residential Engine Wharves character area. Residential at ground level along this block requires defensible but welcoming spaces. Engine Wharves shows a series of apartments on the towpath side, they feel very close, as above there would need to be a sense of defensible but welcoming open space which could only be found in a suitable set back. The masterplan seems to set up for front doors straight onto the towpath or tall defensive minded boundaries or planting. We are unsure about using the</p>	<p>Comments noted. However, discussions would need to be held with partners in the future on more detailed aspects of the layout and design of structures alongside the canal to ensure that the canal infrastructure is protected as well as providing defensible space for the new units.</p>

current canal warehouse frontage effectively as a rear garden boundary wall to the properties, it closes off the space and views and creates dark den like rear yards. How would this boundary frontage work if the walls required maintenance in the future? What if the owners start knocking holes through it or putting lean- to extensions up against it? We would suggest that using the existing warehouse frontage as a second skin to a new habitable building would be a better approach.

Unfortunately, the design coding section 6.0 does not have any mention of the canal or attempt to address the various interfaces being proposed, which is disappointing considering the canals prominence within the scheme. This should be addressed within the future draft of the plan to help ensure a successful waterside place is created. The following guiding principles should be taken into account so that, where appropriate, new waterside development should:

- positively address the water
- integrate the towing path and open up access to the water
- use the waterspace itself and animate the space to create dwell time
- incorporate access and other improvements
- engage with and tease out the qualities and benefits of being by water
- reflect the scale of the local waterway corridor to the wider neighbourhood

The existing wharf/basin gives a grain, a historic clustering around the former Corporation Yard, this should be retained, though it has altered over the decades. The derelict buildings further along the Engine Arm branch, going towards the roving bridge (Basin Bridge, Bridge Street), add character, especially those comprising the water tower. Though decrepit, they have character and the use of pierced brickwork and the top ventilated, pitched roofs at 90 degrees to the waterway give a strong sense of place, as does their staggered building line, their topography, or roofscape should be reflected, or retained if possible. The structural integrity of these will be critical as the structures/walls appear to form the offside of the canal (as shown in the image on page 44). A survey should be undertaken setting out what remedial or strengthening works

Design coding will be covered in more depth through the Local Plan currently being prepared. Comments are noted regarding the potential to retain or replicating some of the character from the current buildings alongside the canal. However, these issues will be part of more detailed conversations in the future.

<p>might be required to ensure the long term stability of these.</p>	
<p>The medium density of townhouses and apartments (blue zone, page 31) seems to ignore the existing warehouse frontages which have been highlighted as a positive {page 44}. This should be clarified.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>The retention of as many historic buildings across the site would be welcomed, including those in 'Corporation Yard' (for example 'Block 800', which appears to be alluded to/illustrated on page 35-36 and page 52, though not consistently throughout the document). Retention of as many historic structures as possible, brings a ready - made sense of place, character, immediate identity. and promotes embedded carbon. Plus, they are adaptable and can prompt innovative, interesting, and imaginative transformations.</p>	<p>For clarification we consider this is reference to block 300, not 800. Retention of heritage buildings will be encouraged where it is feasible and viable to do so. In addition, their retention should positively address the overall aims of the masterplan in delivering a good quality place for a new community.</p>
<p>The imagery within the masterplan document includes the potential for a proposed new bridge linking the 'Engine Peninsula' {park area}. The details of this bridge need to be carefully considered. Whilst we welcome the principle of creating connectivity the depiction of a single lightweight span is clearly just illustrative at this stage. Any bridge crossing would need to be Equality Act compliant, which requires sufficient space for the structure, and designs could look cumbersome. We would require far more detail on aspects of this footbridge such as clearance over the waterway. ramps, covered spaces, drainage arrangements, materiality and detailed design details.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The masterplan shows the potential for a new linkage across the canal but further detail and discussion with CRT will be required should this proposal be brought forward.</p>
<p>The new footbridge would also require the separate consent of the Canal & River Trust and would be required to achieve a minimum clearance above the waterway /towpath and ensure navigational safety is maintained. The document should include reference to the need for our consent for this footbridge. A formal agreement and rights would need to be agreed and fees would be payable. As a charity the Trust would not want to take on an additional maintenance liability for this footbridge.</p>	<p>As the requirement to obtain consent from CRT for a new bridge is a statutory regulation, there is no need to incorporate this within the masterplan. As previously mentioned, should this bridge be proposed sometime in the future, further</p>

	discussion on its construction and long term maintenance would be required.
<p>There are some residential moorings along the Engine Arm. Section 4.2 of the document mentions improving access to the canal which would allow greater use of the canal for recreation and water-based activity, including on the Engine Arm (in co-operation with the Trust). The moorings here, are fully residential, they are private, and we keep them pretty well full with very few, if any, reported incidents. We are concerned that this privacy is retained for the boaters. We would be concerned if the development would result in any loss of amenity to these residents. Any water-based activities would also need to be kept well away from these moorings. If there is an opportunity to increase the number of berths in this area, then this should be explored and could potentially be incorporated into the masterplan. There could also be scope for visitor moorings to be provided towards the Engine Arm Aqueduct this would just require bollards/rings to be provided to enable boats to stop and safely moor.</p>	Comments noted.
<p>Any water-based business or moorings for anything other than personal, private, or pleasure use will require our consent, as it will be considered to be for business use. This includes any kind of public use, even if it is by a charity or local club. Any proposed use will require our written permission. Permission should be sought by submitting an operating proposal for review and a formal response. https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/business-and-trade/business-boating/starting-or-expanding-a-boating-business. This could usefully be included with the document to avoid any future ambiguity.</p>	As this is already a requirement, we do not feel that this needs to be incorporated within the masterplan.
<p>Interestingly the masterplan does not really touch upon ecology or biodiversity, it might be that this is being left to other policy documents, however we think it should include reference and a section should be provided on the natural environment and an assessment of its current value and potential to be enhanced. There are a lot of derelict buildings on site which could support protective species and/or nesting birds, so potential provision for these should be considered along with potential mitigation. The document should include details of planting native wildflower species, native trees, fruit trees and enriching the canalside flora with planted coir rolls to enhance the biodiversity</p>	There are references to biodiversity within the masterplan but this will be dealt with in more detail through the introduction of Biodiversity Net Gain for future developments.

<p>on the site.</p>	
<p>Much of the area within the proposed space is urban, however there are significant green areas alongside all of the canal corridors and immediately east of Rolfe Street Station. The canal corridors include lots of attractive (and potentially attractive) waterside locations and walks which either do or could provide valuable habitats for a number of key species. Canals are only referred to as green corridors, but they are so much more in this region. The canals are designated as county wildlife sites, and, given the intense urban nature of the area offer significant green infrastructure and potential for biodiversity net gain, carbon offsetting and flood management. Reference is made to the canals in the area as a "green corridor" and a "green lung", however there is little or no detail as to how this will be achieved or improved. Green spaces should include a proportion of native wildflower and tree planting, rather than just amenity grassland (which seems to be suggested in some pictures). The developments should seek to maximise the benefits of the canal's green corridor by providing a generous green buffer between canal and buildings, as opposed to having buildings too close to the water's edge. A greater element of soft, green landscaping could be utilised to reduce surface run-off into the canals, along with associated pollution issues.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>According to our records there are a number of existing outfalls recorded along the site boundary to the canal. These would need to be located and sealed as part of any redevelopment and to prevent potential contamination of the canal. There might also be the scope for new discharge of clean surface water from the redevelopment as part of Sustainable Drainage Solutions. Any discharge to the canal would however require the separate consent of the Trust and be subject to commercial agreements. We are not a land drainage authority and are not obliged to accept drainage to the canal.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Comments from National Highways</p>	

<p>Given the distance of the site from the Strategic road Network National Highways we do not have any substantive comments to make at this stage however we look forward to working with you as your wider Local Plan progresses and would draw your attention to our recently published policy paper Circular 01/23 Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development (link below) which set out our role in the plan making process. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development/strategic-road-network-and-the-delivery-of-sustainable-development#engagement-with-plan-making</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Comments from The Coal Authority</p>	
<p>Our records indicate that within the Rolfe Street Masterplan area there are no recorded coal mining features present at surface or shallow depth which may pose a risk to surface stability. On this basis the Planning team at the Coal Authority have no specific comments to make on the masterplan document.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>