Druids Heath Together

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Resident & Community Engagement Summary Report

Delivery Phase 2: January 2022 – April 2022

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Following the first getting to know the estate phase and Cabinet approval in December 2021, a resident and stakeholder engagement plan was agreed at the Druids Heath Regeneration Project Board in January 2022 and presented at the Druids Heath Monyhull Ward Forum and Druids Heath Monyhull Housing Liaison Board.

Key engagements in this phase included:

(a) **Big Conversation** – engaging the community with the regeneration and establishing what would make for a 'good life' for residents, exploring residents' views and identifying key stakeholder priorities to kick-start the design process.
(b) **Neighbourhood Planning** to use findings to develop first design concepts that would provide initial 'pieces of the jigsaw' for the first verison of the Masterplan.
(c) **Stakeholder consultation** – beginning conversations with a range of local groups, businesses and representatives across the estate.

Key Highlights:

- The team started conversations at community 'gathering points' to facilitate 'good life' conversations with residents and key stakeholders drawing on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) methods.
- Exploration of resident's feelings towards the regeneration to identify key priorities, shape development of vision and design concepts for the regeneration.
- Commission and production of a 3D estate model as a useful tool for engagement in the neighbourhood planning events.
- Engagement and deployment of a children and young person's engagement specialist to begin work with schools and youth groups, ensuring young people's voices are heard.

Outcomes:

Through the accumulation of the activities as set out in the resident & stakeholder engagement plan, the team made a total of 450 engagements in the phase including:

- 'Good life' conversations with 110 individuals as part of the Big Conversation, giving constructive insight into resident's feelings on life in Druids Heath.
- Group work with two primary schools initiating young people's engagement.

- The good life and stakeholder conversations shaped seven 'thematic priorities', further explored in more depth in a later postal and electronic survey, to inform the five design concepts in phase 3.

Activity Summary

The emphasis of engagement activity in this period was to reach out to as many residents, community groups and local stakeholders as possible in the places and spaces they used on a day-to-day basis and at 'gathering points' including the school gate, the youth club, library, the Dell, play areas, open spaces and the three community hubs; Manningford Hall, Spearhead Trust at Bells Farm and Kath's Cafe.

Initially the team used a method called 'good life conversation' designed to capture people's feelings about the place they live and their lives. The answers provided give the 'ingredients' of what would make the regeneration work for residents and those who might live on the estate in the future.

(a) Big Conversation

The team badged the proposed conversations across the estate as the 'Big Conversation'. For the first part of this phase, the team developed a fieldwork discussion guide based on the principles of ABCD. The aim was to explore residents' feelings about their neighbourhood before undertaking more detailed engagement through a survey in phase 3, and discussions using a physical 3D model of the estate.

The topic guide for these 'good life' conversations included:

- What makes a good life for you in Druids Heath?
- What makes Druids Heath a good place?
- What gets in the way of a good life in Druids Heath?
- If you had three wishes for Druids Heath, what would they be?
- If a VIP was visiting Druids Heath, where would you show them & why?
- What do you want from the regeneration of Druids Heath?
- What suggestions would you make to improve Druids Heath?

b) Conversations with schools

Working with local schools is key to capturing the voices of children and young people currently living on or around the estate.

Initially, two primary schools (The Oaks and St Jude's) agreed to participate. To enable this to happen a specialist Children and Young Person's Engagement Officer was recruited into the team.

Early engagement with pupils in the two primary schools showed a keen interest in how family homes and the estate amenities such as community facilities, shops, and open spaces could change for the better.

c) Estate 3D Model

To enable focussed and practical discussions a 3D model of the estate was commissioned to provide a scaled version of all the buildings and spaces in the target area covering from Bells Farm to the canal and including the Village Green. This will be used for focussed discussions with residents and community groups during a series of events planned for the Easter holidays.

Summary of Findings

Often, research and engagement methods focus on the negative or deficit issues on estates such as Druids Heath such as anti-social behaviour and high levels of deprivation.

However, by using 'the good life' conversation approach, positive views around the estate were brought forward, presenting a strong basis of understanding on the community assets and resources that should be conserved and built on to enable a regeneration that reflects local needs.

Some of the messages received about Druids Heath from 110 residents engaged tell us that Druids Heath has:

- A strong sense of community and identity and heritage value.
- Fantastic open and green spaces.
- Good community infrastructure such as Manningford Hall and Bells Farm Community Centre.
- Good community services such as the Library and Youth Centre.
- Great local schools and a positive learning environment for children.
- Good local shops and a bigger retail offer at Maypole.
- Kath's Café – a genuine warm hub of food and wellbeing.
- Occupies a prime strategic position as a southerly gateway to Birmingham from the motorway network.

- Good local bus services connecting Druids Heath to local centres and the city.

From the summary of conversations identifying resident's priorities and exploring views on how the estate could be regenerated, emerging themes have developed:

1. Community and local facilities
2. Environment
3. Housing
4. Moving around
5. Economy and jobs
6. Shopping
7. Estate Design

Key Actions for Next Phase

- To explore further resident's list of what makes a 'good life' on the estate.
- Explore wider issues arising from this such as children's play, green spaces, community facilities, access and homes.
- Build on information gathered through Big Conversation to establish an emerging resident's vision.