Druids Heath Together

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Resident & Community Engagement Summary Report

Delivery Phase 4: May 2022 - July 2022

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An initial design brief shaped by residents and key stakeholders to reflect their thematic priorities identified from 'good life' conversations was developed. Following this, the retained architect for the programme, BM3 produced five design concepts to present to residents and local stakeholders as initial ideas as part of phase 4.

Key Highlights

- **Postal and electronic questionnaire** developed and distributed across the estate.
- **Development of five design concepts** shaped by 'good life' conversations with residents and key stakeholders.
- **Discussions, workshops and events** to gather more in-depth views and consult on themes and priorities.
- Team began **engaging with residents on the doorstep**, launching a door-knocking pilot in the East of the estate.
- **Continuing active engagement with key stakeholders** including shop owners.
- A focus on groups including **children, young people and older people**.

Outcomes

- 140 responses to the postal survey providing insightful analysis on residents' regeneration priorities.
- Door-knocking pilot engaging residents with in-depth conversations to inform masterplanning process.
- Pupils engaged in the poster competition reflecting vision of young people.
- Local stakeholders and the local Councillor provided useful feedback on open green spaces workshop leading to creation of a green open spaces manifesto which could inform the regeneration.
- Well attended Neighbourhood Planning events.
- Older people consulted at Harrison House, highlighting a need for further communication on issues raised.

Activity Summary

The engagement approaches used mixed methods to ensure accessibility and reach reflecting demographics of the area and included:

(a) Postal survey delivered to 1180 properties
(b) A door knocking pilot and in-depth discussions
(c) Individual stakeholder discussions with local shop owners
(d) Youth and young people engagement
(e) Open green spaces workshop
(f) Neighbourhood planning events
(g) Engagement event with older people

Also at this time five initial design concepts were produced from good life conversations together with results from survey findings. These ideas and principles are the 'first piece of the jigsaw' for the regeneration that can be incorporated into a masterplan.

These initial design concepts will be presented to residents and stakeholders through Neighbourhood Planning events and further outreach and engagement over later phases and feedback obtained and used to create the first version of a masterplan.

The five design concepts built on and respond to good life conversations and the priorities identified through conversations with residents:

1. **Public Square with Opportunities for Start-Ups and Shops** – responding to the outline vision for a defined village centre to provide the heart of the estate with homes, a range of shops and new start-ups looking on to a well-designed public square.

2. **Sports Pitches & Community Amenities** – responding to the outline vision and thematic priorities this concept includes multi-use sports pitches and integrated community amenities. An option for separating the sports pitches and changing rooms and sporting infrastructure from wider community amenities – community / youth / library emerged strongly.

3. **Village Green Enhancements and Bridge Connection** – a strong identified priority of improving the open and green spaces up within and beyond the red line defined regeneration area as set out in the December 2022 Cabinet Report and creating a bridge to develop new links and access to open spaces.

4. **Safe Streets** – a recurring theme in the current and previous engagement has been the priority of creating designs for the estate that helps design in safer homes, streets and public spaces, reducing anti-social behaviour and making Druids Heath safer.

5. **New Sustainable Tenure Blind Homes and Local Parks** – the emerging vison informed by the early engagement has shown an interest in tenure blind homes with equitable design and build standards and integration as well as parks and usable green spaces.

The location of these amenities will be shaped by continued community dialogue and the next stage master planning process.

The Village Green, public square and sports pitches design concepts will be used to inform a Levelling Up Fund bid into Central Government.

Outcomes related to the five design concepts included:

- Design concepts aligning with the principles set out in the Birmingham Druids Heath Development Brief which was part of the December 2021 Cabinet Report:

    - Addressing the development of the Radburn layout and ensuring well-designed and integrated places.
    - Creating safe and inclusive environments that are enclosed and a high-quality public realm.
    - Public spaces integrated into the layout and a focal point for mixed uses and activity promoting natural surveillance.
    - Acknowledging the topography of the estate with building heights reducing as the levels drop recognising the transition between the built environment and green infrastructure.
    - First iteration of design concepts that could shape the development of the masterplan for further engagement and development.
    - Basis for developing initial proposals for a Levelling Up Bid.
    - Basis for continued dialogue with residents, community groups and local stakeholders.

In addition, a vision for the estate was developed:

A village centre, easy to get about on and off the estate, a landscaped park with play facilities with better community amenities opening out into green corridors, through the Village Green and Canal, sports pitches and leisure amenities. Good local shops, an opportunity for small enterprises to grow, good local schools and access to secondary schools and colleges. Quality, sustainable and safe homes, more social homes integrated tenure blind with owner occupied homes with assisted home ownership opportunities designed around the village centre.

a) Postal Survey

A postal and electronic survey was developed, promoted and issued extending into the next two periods of engagement before full analysis was conducted. The survey went live in May 2022 and was distributed to all residents in Druids Heath East and made available online, as well as advertised through the newsletter, at events attended by residents across Druids Heath and other communications.

Some issues were encountered with the distribution of postal surveys from the distributor and unforeseen issues with the provision of postage stamps for return. Action was taken to mitigate that including supplying postage stamps and hand distributing surveys to residents who had not received them. Vouchers were advertised to enter into a prize draw to stimulate responses.

Overall, 140 surveys were received (postal and electronic) from 1180 properties in Druids Heath East, a 11.86% response rate. This is not untypical for postal and electronic surveys of this kind and reflects a good cross section of the geographical area in line with the demographic profile.

While the results cannot provide responses that are statistically significant, they do provide a range of insightful responses which when analysed alongside the other engagement tools, to build up an emerging narrative.

The survey aimed to understand stakeholder attitudes to the regeneration and focussed on the seven themes and priorities that had been established through the Big Conversation and agreed through the Druids Heath Regeneration Project Board.

Overall, the survey responses found positive feeling towards the regeneration, with residents hoping for improvements to green spaces and community facilities and better and additional social housing.

Around 75% of respondents stated that their reasons for wanting to stay in Druids Heath such as feeling part of the community and liking the greenery. Those who wished to leave for 'push and pull' factors such as a push from the level of anti-social behaviour and pull being closer to family and friends.

Around a half of respondents were happy with the condition and type of home they lived in with concerns focussing on energy efficiency, security/safety and lack of storage space. Feeling of not being safe were pervasive amongst respondents affecting confidence in moving about.

Those respondents in employment were more than 2-3 miles from Druids Heath and with a strong interest in seeing local employment opportunities.

- There were mixed views on the inclusion of other property types (other than the tower blocks) in the regeneration with 50% reporting they would like other property types to be included and 38% reporting they would not.

- There was very strong support for equality in standards and amenities across all housing types with 92% favourable responses, which aligns with the design concept '*sustainable tenure blind homes*'.

- Support for a Village Centre was also strong with 93% in favour, aligning with design concept '*public square with opportunities for shops and start ups'.*

- Keen interest in sustainability measures in new homes with 61% of respondents wanting to see improved insulation, 54% wanting renewable energy and 44% favourable to double-glazing.

- Of the seven themes and priorities, *Community and Local Facilities* had the most interest closely followed by *Housing*, then *Environment and Open Spaces*. Respondents were also interested in moving about within and beyond the estate, the overall design of the estate, shopping and the local economy and jobs.

- A recurring theme was a consensus that the area has a strong sense of community but that anti-social and disruptive behaviour was negatively impacting on this.

- Residents felt strongly about the importance of retaining and enhancing open and green spaces on the estate but felt again this was being negatively impacted by anti-social behaviour, including issues with drugs, motorbikes, dog mess and litter.

- A sense of mistrust with the regeneration process was reported and a need to improve communication on what was happening and how residents could get involved.

- There was a consensus that the housing stock is of poor quality and condition with a lack of amenities and poor design.

- In terms of getting about, the survey found concern with walking routes on paths and roadways in poor condition, and a feeling of being unsafe due to the different elevations and steepness.

- Suggestions for improvements included improving paths and road, linking houses to green spaces and green walkways through the estate, better use of green spaces and parks, more activities in green spaces, a community garden and green spaces for wellbeing and building family houses with gardens and bungalows for older residents and the removal of alleyways.

- Comments related to lack of facilities for all ages of young people such as secondary school and swimming, sports amenities and football facilities closely followed by general community facilities and activities for bringing people together.

Detailed analysis of survey responses is provided in Appendix 1.

b) Piloting Door Knocking and In-depth Discussions

During this period, the team commenced the face-to-face door knocking approach which has become one of the main tools of engagement in subsequent engagement periods. While highly valuable, this approach is time-consuming and the team secured a response rate of around 15% with interviews taking between 30 and 45 minutes.

In later engagement periods, the response rate has improved. Where a door-knock has been unsuccessful, a postcard flier has been left inviting the occupier to attend a drop-in event. The pilot door knocking included:

- Harrison House
- Middlefield House

- Parker House
- Bungalows on Manningford Hall.

General comments include:

- **Amenities:** More local shops such as hairdressers, cafe, butchers, green grocers - nice and varied local shops, a community market, library needs to be used more.
- **Green spaces:** Grow your own vegetable garden, parks close to every street.
- **Environment**: Reducing fly tipping/rats/rubbish.
- **Safety**: older people are scared to go out, noise and anti-social behaviour, drug use.
- **Community**: some people feel disconnected, want community events that bring people together.
- **Homes**: garages never used and bring damp up into the flat.
- **Affordability**: needs to be affordable housing.
- **Employment**: local jobs are important especially for young people.
- **Young people**: more activities and services to raise aspirations.
- **Older people**: social spaces and housing for older people.
- **Parking**: new housing developments need to consider parking.
- **Connectivity**: better paths and road surfaces, proper street lighting.

c) Individual Stakeholder Discussions – Shops

The team visited all the shop owners on the estate to gather views on how they would like to feature in the regeneration process. The team also held discussions around the potential for community enterprises to be a feature of the economic development approach of the regeneration. Generally, there was positivity around the concepts including Village Square and enhanced measure and community facilities with some concern over increased competition in the retail space, customer awareness of new location and leases.

Suggestions for improving the area included:

- A community centre with lots of stuff for kids - wrap around provision
- Community sports days
- Planters looked after by local people

d) Youth and Young People Engagement

The Pioneer Group Youth and Children Engagement Specialist was commissioned in this phase and began engagement with the three local primary schools, the Youth Centre and youth activities at Manningford and Bells Farm.

Arrangements were made to present the design concepts board to pupils and teachers in the last three weeks of summer term and the first period of the summer holidays with youth groups.

A key activity with schools was a competition inviting pupils to design a poster of their 'dream place to live'. This aimed to draw out what they liked about where they live, what they would add or takeaway, and the difference they would like to see. Posters were displayed at the events and workshops held in this period.

The narrative from these pictures showed a strong fit with the wider narrative generated through the engagement process across the estate:

- An appreciation of green spaces ("I like the fields") and nature ("I cannot wait for the summer when the leaves have bloomed").
- A desire for a park and desire for a new house.
- Around 25 pupils engaged in the poster competition.

e) Open Green Spaces Workshop – 8th June 2022

Druids Heath Green and Open Spaces Stakeholder Workshop was held at Druids Heath Library on the 8th of June. Local stakeholders and the local Councillor attended the workshop with a focus on Village Green Enhancements and Bridge Connection.

Key themes included:

- A holistic regeneration involves a more integrated approach: housing needs, green spaces, potential for businesses, moving in and around, community facilities, sports.
- Questions about where to information about the regeneration and the going live date for the website.
- Questions about how much money will be allocated for improvements in the area and where the money would come from.
- Discussions around the canal bridge – some concerns with the other side or loss of biodiversity and mitigating the impact on wildlife.
- Questions about the Dell

- whether it is possible to restore the old football pitches in the grassed area
- whether it is possible to build on the Dell
- whether ecological surveys been carried out
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- Questions about how many how many houses are going to be lost in the development of Bicknell Croft.
- Questions over how much of the green area residents are going to lose.
- Questions over how to stop vehicles from accessing green spaces.

Key asks for the regeneration

- More activities and opportunities for younger children.
- Get houses facing green areas so parents can see children playing (safer).
- More small parks/play areas are better than just one big one.
- Better and safer green spaces on route – think about destination (edible trees, raised beds).
- Destination/orientation/position is important.
- More accessibility and enhancement of Chinn Brook without damaging biodiversity.

f) Neighbourhood Planning Events – 8th and 11th June 2022

The two flagship engagement events were held on Wednesday 8th June at Druids Heath Library and 11th June at Manningford Hall. As with the two events held over the Easter holiday for the Big Conversation engagement (Phase 1), the design workshop element was held in both Druids Heath Library and Manningford Hall with a range of family activities being held outside the venues.

At these events the Team shared the design concepts and recorded feedback.

Overall, between both events over 270 people attended with around 160 actively engaging and providing feedback. Just under 150 comments were recorded.

Of interest was the public square, sports pitches and community amenities, village green enhancements with most interest focussed on the green and open spaces stakeholder workshop. Safer streets and green new sustainable homes were also seen as key issues.

g) Older People: Harrison House event – 17th June 2022

The event was held in the common room of Harrison House with five people in attendance. Findings included:

- Four out of the five attendees overtly want the block demolished but to remain in the area – belief that they will not be offered anything as spacious despite all the shortcomings.
- Overall positivity for the design concepts particularly green spaces.
- A need for 'convenience', ease of access highly valued.
- Heating existing homes a big concern.
- A specific question on the 'Compulsory Purchase policy'.
- Suggestion to develop a community energy scheme in place of burying the pylons and have e-scooter charging points.

Summary of Key Findings

So far, the feedback on all 5 design ideas has been overwhelmingly positive, with improvements to the area welcomed and a general recognition that current housing and estate design is creating problems such as anti-social behaviour for residents and the wider community.

Overall, residents and stakeholders agree with design concepts and welcome improvements to green spaces and community facilities with some questions on how much money will be allocated for improvements in the area and where the money would come from.

Residents are in favour of better and additional sustainable housing with equality in standards and amenities across all housing types. They want estate design that improve safety, reduces anti-social behaviour and improves overall connectivity on the estate and further afield with consideration to parking.

Residents are keen to see more activities for children and opportunities and amenities for young people as well as better and inclusive community facilities that can serve to bring the community together, stimulate the local economy and create employment.

Residents would like enhanced green spaces and green walkways through the estate, with better use of green spaces and parks and more activities in green spaces, whilst ensuring biodiversity and mitigating impact on wildlife.

Key Actions for Next Phase

- Putting the jigsaw pieces together – engaging residents on how the different functions and components fit together to deliver the vision and thematic priorities.
- Build on further engagement on 5 initial design concepts and refinements with as many residents as possible.
- Reviewing the design principles for tower blocks where demolition is approved.
- Further engagement with flats over shops and bungalows through door knocking.
- To focus the approach on neighbourhood engagement through door knocking and questionnaires.
- More targeted stakeholder engagement – all groups and networks.
- To increase accessibility and build community presence through scheduling regular scheduled drop-in sessions in key community venues enabling residents to have up-to-date information and contact point to address concerns and have questions answered.
- Increase communication flow through website and social media.

Appendix 1: Detailed analysis of survey responses on thematic priorities

1) Community and Local Facilities

Of the 93 comments identified as relating to Community and Local Facilities, the primary focus of the comments referred to concern for facilities for all ages of young people, closely followed by general community facilities for bringing people together.

Young people	Community	Library	Sports	Residents	Arts	Religious	Café
49%	42%	11%	16%	1%	5%	2%	5%

80% of the comments relating to young people are concerned with the lack of, or desire for more activities available for young people of all ages, with 28% concerned with issues or desire for improvements to parks or playgrounds.

13% of the comments regarding young people were surrounding sports facilities (16% overall). One third of the comments were speaking generally about sports facilities but specific desires included provision for football, swimming, cycling and basketball.

Of the adult facilities, Manningford Hall was mentioned in 44% of the comments with 77% being in praise of the facility with the remainder stating decline, underuse or location as negative factors. Other important facilities noted included the library and cafes.

Comments included:

More community events, sports activities, dance, crafts, biking etc. for young people. Need improved play areas, tennis court, football pitches, running and cycle paths, outdoor gym, more variety and options, things more easily accessible.

More activities to come to and places to meet people. This included more spaces for meals (pop-up cafes) and activities. In addition, a community garden, more stay and plays. Ways for people to interact.

Respondents told us that they felt Druids Heath was a great community, where good people have lived all their life. The green spaces and nature areas are important, as are the library, Kath's cafe, Manningford Hall. The Maypole Centre was described as somewhere that 'could be' important.

2) Environment

Of the 79 comments on the environment were 13% positive statements, 37% negative and 51% neutral (where they were stating their desires for the regeneration). 43% of the comments related to green spaces, closely followed by play spaces (39%) It was noted (in 10% of the comments) that ASB issues prevented use and should be considered as a limiting factor.

Comments include:

Better use of green spaces and parks, more activities in green spaces, a community garden to help kids learn to grow things, Walker's Heath could be a real sanctuary / quiet space / wellbeing.

Green spaces are great but inaccessible. Views from the flats are stunning. The architecture should utilise that.

Dell is important but needs developing. Community garden, allotments, café / coffee hut.

Need more good quality green spaces, more water, trees, more habitats and diversity, more connections, green corridors to connect green spaces (tunnels for hedgehogs), more

management of green spaces, more paths to open up and expose Chinn Brook, create a bridge in the canal. The village Green needs higher trees on one side to act as a windbreak, have fruit trees accessible, management of brambles. Do guided walks and increase signage so people know where things are. He opposes having buildings in this green space. Ensure that paths are cleared and mapped out. More activities in the Dell, he remembers old events held in the area.

1. Housing

Comments on the housing were 15% positive statements, 38% negative and 47% neutral (where they were stating their desires for the regeneration).

Where the comments were concerning preference or requests the largest proportion of comments were related to a desire for family houses (with gardens).

Houses	Flats	Bungalow	Drive/Parking	Garden
48%	3%	7%	4%	23%

The negative comments focussed mainly on two themes, which were condition or quality of current housing provision and lack of appropriate housing (e.g. family homes rather than tower blocks or increased provision for elderly).

Would like to see more like maisonettes or houses and gardens in the new housing. Lives in a tower block and she does not like it, she would those living on her part of the Maypole the parks and Tower block feels unsafe, playgrounds are too far away. There is ASB, rubbish and wants playgrounds to be everywhere, easily accessible for all residents.

2. Moving Around

The comments relating to movement around the estate were a mix of explaining how they normally move around or how they would like to. The majority walked around the estate, and many expressed that the walking routes need to be improved, e.g. 'Safe maintained level routes for walking', 'Walk everywhere and the steps and slopes are a nightmare', Moving around is ok but walking routes could be improved.'
The concept of safe routes was mentioned in relation to cycle routes too, with 10% stating safety, intimidation or other potential ASB related issue with moving around.

Cycle routes	Walking routes	Bus lanes/ routes	Driving	Canal	Accessible transport	Train	ASB
17%	50%	33%	21%	5%	2%	5%	10%

Comments include:

It is easy to move around the estate, Druids Heath has very good connectivity. From Bells Lane there are bus lanes taking you to different areas of the city.

It can be intimidating to walk around the estate as youths hang around.

Driving is okay but walking is more difficult.

Need a route and a bridge to be able to get onto the canal towpath. Wants to see cycle routes.

3. Shopping

Of the comments regarding shopping, 39% were positive, 24% negative and 36% were neutral or offering suggestions.

30% of the comments suggested they liked or used local facilities, with other important shopping facilities being supermarkets and cafes.
Comments include:

- *DH has a few supermarkets, some more expensive than others but glad they are local and can walk to them*

- *Positive to be so close to the main shops.*
- *Very rarely use local shops but Kath's Cafe is an important connecting space.*
- *Would like more local shops including a coffee shop, like for example to Rowheath Pavilion in Bournville.*

4. Economy and Jobs

93% of the comments regarding economy and jobs stated a lack of job opportunities, support or skill centres (or a desire for this to increase). The main sources of employment stated were retail or hospital workers.

Adult Education	Careers/Skills	Opportunity for Jobs
29%	36%	64%

Comments include:

- *More green jobs, get more young people involved, the area needs more support in terms of skills, jobs and training.*
- *More local shops that can bring a community feel. People you knew at local shops and small businesses that helped grow the economy and provide income / jobs.*
- *More green jobs, get more young people involved, the area needs more support in terms of skills, jobs and training.*

5. Overall Estate Design

Address ASB	Village centre /feel	Improved access /movement	Area Insight	Green space /Gardens
21%	21%	34%	7%	38%

Of the 29 comments received relating to estate design, 38% mentioned green spaces, open areas or garden. 21% stated a preference for a village feel; referring to ideas such as developing the village green, a village centre or village lake at the centre. 21% also considered that measures to tackle ASB should be considered when planning the estate, specific issues raised were:

- Use of natural surveillance
- Remove alleyways
- Prevent Joyriding
- Issues with travellers

34% of the comments related to some degree of improved access or movements, specific thoughts on this related to:

- Links with the canal
- Green walking routes
- Connectivity
- Increased pedestrian crossings
- Consideration of slopes in the design of walking routes
- Issue with alleyways

Comments include:

- *Link houses and the green spaces, the Dell and the canal. Create Village together so can walk through the estate. The position of houses and their outlook - making the most of the way shops and the area is laid out with hills etc., playgrounds.*
- *Better use of green spaces and parks, more activities in green spaces, a community garden to help kids learn to grow things, Walker's Heath could be a real sanctuary / quiet space / wellbeing.*
- *Love to develop the Village Green area.*
- *Want to see green walking routes - use and the green spaces to create some local activities, involve young people and possibly even some small social enterprise for local jobs and apprenticeships. Connectivity, and make the most of the green spaces and opportunities.*
- *Create a central location with football pitches and enable people to connect including the elderly.*

Analysis of responses identified three key issues from the postal survey, which also were recurring messages in the big conversation discussions:

Key issue 1: Safety

This theme emerged as something that was of concern to the respondents and appears to impact on many aspects of the discussions, e.g. housing, environment, community facilities and moving around.

97% of the comments relating to safety were negative in tone. The majority of the comments were general statements of not feeling safe, with ASB being mentioned by 28%. There were specific mentions concerning criminal activity or lack of police, litter, drug use, lighting, and alleyways.

ASB	Drugs	Litter/ Fly tipping	Dog mess	Lighting	Alleyways	Vehicle	Unsafe	Other	Crime/ Lack of Police
28%	8%	19%	3%	8%	6%	3%	39%	11%	19%

Comments include:

- *Open up the Dell to more people and it will drive out those who use it to take drugs.*
- *The estate has become dirtier, more littering and fly tipping everywhere.*
- *There is more ASB, problems in the blocks.*
- *Safety concerns, CCTV is required on Druids Heath Road.*

Key issue 2 – Schools

This was another issue, which emerged from the returned comments primarily relating to the issue of a lack of secondary school and the impact this will have on future generations. Stating a concern about the education and increased chance of young people missing out by having to travel so far for school.

'Junior schools are good but a secondary school is needed in the area.'

'He had campaigned to not have the school closed and was very angry that that had happened, and felt people had let down Druids Heath. He was concerned for young people's education because they have to travel so far to secondary school.'

'She is moving out because there is no secondary school in the area. Son will start at Kings Norton in September.'

Key Issue 3 - Communication and Trust

There were comments relating to the engagement and thoughts regarding concern or mistrust with the regeneration, highlighting a lack of communication and feeling of being ignored.

- *Need clarity on block clearance, where moving to and guarantees of being able to move back.*
- *Feel the regeneration has, needlessly, been put on hold by a few community voices who do not speak for the majority of residents.*
- *Wants to move, but needs clarity on where. Concerned for mental health if moved.*
- *People think nothing is going to happen; they have no support, area feels exploited by embezzlement, engagement difficult as what is the point.*
- *Co-produce leasehold agreements with residents*
- *Involved with regeneration discussions for 10 years, many promises made.*