Druids Heath Together

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Resident & Community Engagement Summary Report

Delivery Phase 6: September 2022 to December 2022

Delivery Phase 6: October-December 2022

The focus of the autumn 2022 period of engagement was primarily to provide feedback on the five design concepts co-designed with residents in the first two phases between January 2022 and September 2022 using a variety of engagement approaches from public meetings, drop-in sessions, work with specific stakeholders including schools and community groups.

Key Highlights

- Architects BM3 developed the first version of the masterplan reflecting stakeholder response from community engagement phases 3 and 4.
- Development of ongoing engagement of Druids Heath residents and key community stakeholders to identify views and attitudes towards the regeneration and the design concepts within the draft masterplan.
- Launch of monthly drop-in sessions at Manningford Hall and Spearhead Trust with the aim of providing a regular and consistent presence in the community.
- Team deployed traditional face to face tools including design concept boards and post-it notes as well as VR headsets and IPads developed through central government's investment in this area.
- Feedback on all design concepts were generally positive and supportive of the proposals.

Outcomes

- First version of masterplan produced.
- Residents were actively engaged through a combination of informal drop-in sessions and events.
- Young people plus teaching staff were engaged through sessions with four local primary schools and young people through Maypole Centre youth groups.
- Residents engaged through doorstep consultations, feedback will be used to shape next version of the masterplan.
- Increased output on social media leading to increased visits to website and better communication.
- Website better utilised with news and information to improve communication for residents.

Activity Summary

Following the themes that arose from the Big Conversation and emerging vision and design concepts created alongside residents, a first version of a masterplan reflecting resident's feedback was developed.

The Pioneer Group Engagement Team undertook engagement on this draft masterplan alongside representatives from Birmingham City Council and the retained architects BM3 with identified key stakeholder groups in the area including local schools, businesses, community groups and residents.

Every opportunity for residents, community groups and the wider engagement to respond to the emerging proposals above was provided from public meetings, walkabouts, door knocking, and drop-in meetings combining face-to-face engagement and the use of Virtual Reality and digital tools as well as use of social media and the Druids Heath Together Website.

Key activities undertaken by the community engagement team during the reporting period are outlined below.

October 2022

- October 7th – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- October 8th – Housing Liaison Board (HLB) meeting
- October 14th – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- October 19th – school session with Bells Farm Primary School
- October 19th – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- October 21st – informal conversations at Manningford Hall (door knocking cancelled due to heavy rain)
- October 26th – half term engagement event Manningford Hall
- October 26th – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation

November 2022

- 2nd November – school session at Bells Farm Primary School
- 2nd November – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- 7th November – Drop-in at Manningford Hall cancelled due to BBC filming
- 9th November – Druids Heath and Moneyhull Ward Meeting, Manningford Hall

- 11th November – informal 'coffee and chat' drop-in at Kath's Café
- 11th November – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- 16th November – drop-in session at Spearhead Trust
- 18th November – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- 23rd November – school session at Grendon Primary

December 2022

- 1st December – attended partnership launch St. Vincent de Paul Society and Manningford Hall
- 1st December – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- 5th December – drop-in session at Manningford Hall
- 7th December – doorstep conversations through door-to-door consultation
- 9th December – informal 'coffee and chat' drop-in at Kath's Café
- 8th December – school session at The Oaks Primary School with St Jude's Primary School
- 12th December – engagement event with Maypole Youth Group
- 13th December – community relationship building through Carol singing event at Kath's Café
- 14th December – drop-in session at Spearhead Trust
- 15th December – community relationship building through attending Manningford Hall Christmas lunch.

The Engagement Process

A total of 155 residents were actively engaged over the reporting period through a combination of doorstep conversations, informal drop-in sessions, and events.

a) Doorstep conversations
b) Events and drop-ins
c) Local businesses and amenities
d) Sessions in schools
e) Social media
f) VR headsets

The community engagement process aimed to identify the attitudes of key stakeholders towards the emerging vision for Druids Heath including views on:

- Sports pitches and community amenities
- Public square 'village centre' with opportunities for start-ups and shops
- Enhancement to green spaces
- Clearance of homes and retrofitting
- New sustainable tenure blind homes
- Village green enhancements and bridge connection

The following section provides an overview of the engagement methodologies.

a) Doorstep Conversations

In this period the resident engagement team engaged on the doorstep with 91 households highlighted to be affected by the regeneration. Doorstep consultation was conducted weekly targeting areas of the estate most affected by the regeneration as set out in iteration 4 of the masterplan.

13 of the 91 residents stated that they were not interested or did not have time to talk. Postcards detailing information and contact details were left with these residents if they wished to follow up.

A further 30 properties were visited and knocked as part of the door-to-door engagement, but residents were not in or did not come to the door. The engagement team left a postcard with further information and contact details.

b) Events and Drop-ins

Events have been a great way for residents to interact with the masterplan concept boards, ask questions and feed opinion into the master planning process, giving their ideas on what they liked and did not like about the designs.

Residents and key stakeholders have also been able to engage with Virtual Reality technology to interact with the vision for the estate. This has been particularly useful enabling people to get a more immersive impression of what the design concepts will lead to and bringing this to life.

In November, we launched monthly drop-in sessions at Manningford Hall and Spearhead Trust with the aim of providing a regular and consistent presence in the community.

In total, we have delivered four monthly drop-in sessions where residents were invited to meet The Pioneer Group Engagement Team, key Birmingham City Council representatives

and Architects. Both morning and evening sessions were available to ensure wide accessibility.

Towards mid-November more informal drop-in sessions at Kath's Café, Idmiston Croft were added, taking place on the second Friday of the month. These sessions help engage customers of the café in a more informal, conversational way and again establish presence. Masterplan boards are also on permanent display within the café.

We have also been building presence through attendance at general community events. These events have an important role to play in building relationships and ongoing trust.

On the 9th of November, the Team attended the Druids Heath and Monyhull Ward Meeting at Manningford Hall. The meeting focused specifically on Druids Heath Regeneration with around 30 residents or stakeholders. Chaired by the local Councillor, presentations were provided by the City Council and the Engagement Team followed by questions and answers.

- The focus of the discussion on the Q&A session was primarily on the rehousing issues relating to the decant of tower blocks and potentially how this would work for any low-rise blocks in the future. Overall, residents were concerned and had strong feelings in relation to this issue.
- The meeting then broke out into workshop sessions relating to the five design concepts making use of the Virtual Reality platforms. This produced a more positive interaction and broad endorsement and support for the design principles. The VR kit was particularly useful as it brought to life more fully the design principles.
- The Manningford Christmas lunch on 15th December was, again, another opportunity to build community relationships and build presence in the community. Here, we spent significant time with Andy from SVP, a key relationship going forward.

c) Local business / amenities

Library staff were consulted on the relocation of the library. Staff were keen to find out more and it was recorded that 'relocation of the library sounds interesting'. There were questions on accessibility of the new library particularly for older people if not on the ground floor, walkability, parking and capacity.

In addition, the team spoke to an established local retailer running a family business in the area for the past 6 years employing local people. The retailer expressed concerns about car parking - in the current plans for Manningford the car park is not visible from the main

road, which will affect business. Multiple occupancies will benefit the shop, need to be a place that accommodates big and small shops, units need to be relatively big.

d) Sessions in schools

Monthly sessions with primary schools have generated helpful feedback on the needs and priorities of young people in Druids Heath.

In the period October-December 2023, we began work in two new schools, Grendon Primary and Bells Farm Primary School. We delivered three sessions with each of their school councils and a more general conversation about regeneration and community. There were 12 students in each school.

This work in schools has helped us to develop our local relationships and both Grendon and Bells Farm are willing to publicise our events/drop-ins and are open to more specific regeneration work.

On Thursday 8th December, we coordinated a joint school council event between The Oaks Primary School and St Jude's Catholic Primary School. The Oaks provided a buffet lunch and then the students (16 in total) were invited to have a go with the VR Headsets. They were particularly encouraged to focus on the sports pitch and community centre. It was reported by The Pioneer Group young people's lead that this was a 'lovely session' and the two members of staff from each of the schools talked of doing more together.

e) Social Media

Social media has been used actively this quarter to inform, update and foster two-way communication with Druids Heath residents and key stakeholders.

Social media communications have been through the dedicated 'Druids Heath Together' Facebook page (Druids Heath Together | Facebook) and the Druids Heath Together Twitter account Druids Heath Together (@OurDruidsHeath).

In addition, the dedicated website (www.druidsheathtogether.co.uk) enables stakeholders to access key information, the regeneration journey and provide feedback on plans. The website has also been a useful tool for sharing latest news and key documents, and will be better utilised and following structural changes that are currently in progress, enabling a clearer referral pathway between social media accounts and website content.

A few residents have also used social media to ask questions and obtain up-to-date information on the regeneration.

This has included questions on the clearance and refurbishment of specific properties including the tower blocks, and requests to view plans. We have responded privately to comments where needed.

g) VR Headsets

The team has enjoyed exploring use of the VR Headsets as part of our community engagement work and it has been interesting to see how approaches to community engagement can be enhanced through use of technology.

VR headsets were used during sessions at schools (The Oaks Primary School and St Jude's Catholic Primary School Council session) the HLB meeting and Ward meeting, and were useful in providing a focus, breaking up delivery and bringing a different dynamic to a session as well as encourage deeper dialogue on the wider regeneration.
VR headsets were also used in two of the main public meetings during the autumn**.**

Use of the headsets when out in the community door knocking has been limited; doorstep conversations typically do not lend themselves to the use of this type of technology usage and therefore we have not used the VR widely for this.

Summary of Findings

Generally, stakeholders were keen to give their feedback on the proposals and took interest in how the plans would affect their immediate locality.

Engagement over this period indicates that the overwhelming number of residents and stakeholders engaged are in favour of the design principles within the masterplan and agree that the vision and changes proposed would bring improvements to Druids Heath.

Key themes raised by respondents during consultation included:

- Strong support for the creation of new, usable public spaces and parks for play – including green and open areas with a focus on the safety and accessibility of these spaces.
- Strong support for enhancing green spaces for the community and natural green spaces for wildlife.
- Strong support for increased connectivity with the estate and to other areas, particularly the canal bridge.

- Support for the provision of a Village Centre with a range of mixed quality shops and health and community facilities to bring people together, with some questions about accessibility, ownership and location.
- Overall support for sports facilities and sports pitch on the Baverstock site, with some opinion that housing should take a priority over development of sports pitches.
- Comments that the area needs more activities and facilities for young adults.
- Questions regarding the types of new homes being built and the occupancy of these.
- Some questions regarding the impact of building on the dell within the proposals and impact on neighbouring properties.
- Some questions regarding the mix of new homes to be provided – in terms of size and tenure.
- Some questions regarding impacts on traffic and local parking provision.
- Some questions regarding impacts on local services – including healthcare and education.

Overall, the consensus of the residents consulted is positive towards the regeneration and masterplan vision, with an optimism about the changes to Druids Heath, with some questions about implementation, type of housing and impact.

Most residents understood why changes were needed and were keen to see progress, particularly residents of tower blocks who expressed concern with existing living conditions and safety, whilst recognising there are a few residents who expressed anxiety about moving due to their specific personal circumstances.

Overall, the general feeling towards the regeneration was positive with the majority indicating favour and agreement with the proposals.

See also Appendix 1 for in-depth resident feedback.

Key Actions for Next Period of Resident and Community Engagement

- Continue with drop-in sessions as way for residents to keep up to date with plans and have direct questions answered as proving useful to residents who have specific questions about how the regeneration effects them.
- Continue to explore feelings and views on first version of the masterplan through door step conversations, drop-ins and community outreach to feed into and shape next version of the masterplan.

Appendix 1 In-depth resident feedback

Design Features – Scorings

During engagement residents were prompted to comment specifically on these key design features and were asked to rate their opinion on these proposals based on whether they 'agreed strongly' or 'not at all' on a scale of 1 to 5 to produce a score.

It is important to note that it has not always been possible to apply this scoring criteria consistently especially at the doorstep where time may have been limited or residents have preferred to have broader and more generalised conversations. No scoring criteria was applied to tower block demolition. It is also important to review this scoring in line with attitudes drawn out in conversations, which are summarised below.

Table to show scoring attributed to key design features

	Score (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree)				
Design feature	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Sports Pitch	1	0	0	12	42
Village Centre	1	1	3	14	43
Build on the Dell	5	8	7	17	19
New Housing	6	2	3	2	7
Canal Bridge	0	0	0	0	21

Additional Feedback

In addition to consultation around the key features of the masterplan, stakeholder feedback was also recorded on the wider regeneration and is summarised below.

Anti-social behaviour and crime	• Several residents raised concerns about ensuring anti-social behaviour was designed out of the estate particularly in green spaces such as the Dell where quad bikes are an issue. • Fly tipping was raised as an issue by many residents and something that the regeneration needed to address.
Green spaces and building on the dell	• Building on the Dell raised most resident concern, with strong views around loss of green space although most residents understood the need for housing. • Residents overlooking and in the vicinity of the Dell were particularly vocal, raising concerns about loss to their existing green outlook. 'From a selfish point of view, I'd would prefer not to have any houses there as it will spoil the view, but I understand that houses are needed.' • 'You pay a lot of money in other areas to have the view I have.' • There were a few concerns on impact with regards to privacy and effect on everyday dynamics, noise impact, as well as type of houses (tenancy), and the access residents will have to the Dell. • Questions were raised around whether housing will be built to 'blend in' with existing properties. • Concern raised by several residents about who may move in. • 'It depends on who is moved to the area. If houses were to be built I would like the Council to be selective with who moves in'. • Despite the strong feelings for the Dell the majority of residents were aware of the housing shortages in the area and recognised that 'everyone deserves a house' and smaller green spaces were acknowledged to be a 'trade off.' • 'Need properties so build on the Dell.'

	• A few concerns were raised over flooding - if houses are built on the Dell the construction of a new road and drains will help reduce flooding, as currently houses and roads flood when heavy rain.
Parking, garages and roads	• A large number of residents particularly around the FOGS expressed a need to ensure sufficient parking as getting a parking space can be difficult. • Concerns about loss of garages and spaces to park cars • 'What will happen to the garages, will there be new ones built?' • Need charging points for electric cars. • 'Speed bumps in the road would be brilliant.' • Need car access at the front of the property. Would be happy for a new road outside the property (away from Manningford Road).
Shops, businesses, and community facilities	• 'Incubator spaces for people to start their own enterprise'. • Several residents raised a need for local healthcare services including doctors / walk-in centre, opticians, pharmacy and dentist. • More sustainable eco-friendly shops, led by local people with opportunity for start-ups. • Several residents asked about ownership of community facilities and were keen that any community buildings are led by local people and organisations.
Play parks and green spaces	• Most residents were in favour of creating usable green spaces especially for children to play. • There was an overarching sentiment that spaces should be 'natural' to encourage nature and exploration 'so kids appreciate nature and what they have at their doorstep.' • 'Keep green spaces accessible and looking natural.' • Several residents suggested allotments and growing spaces.

	• ‘Could a community garden be considered as opposed to a playground?’ • A community garden for residents to grow together. • BMX track for Children, need parks for children.
Young people	• A few residents commented that the area needs more groups/activities for young adults, and that young people’s groups need to interact more with other groups. • ‘More to do for young people like a skate park or Bowling Green. Get them also involved!’ • ‘It would be good to have activities delivered in the village green and along the Chinn Brook run from the new building.’
Sports pitch development at Baverstock	• Although the vast majority of residents we consulted were in favour of a sports pitch and saw it as a great asset for the local area, when questioned several residents stated that they would prioritise housing. • ‘Baverstock should be for houses.’ • ‘We don't need an AstroTurf pitch as much as houses.’ • ‘Pitch takes up too much room when should be building houses.’
Clearance	• A small number of residents from the tower blocks recognised the need to be moved but expressed anxiety about being moved out of the area, especially those that were caring for children with autism that may need to move schools.
Retirement Village	• Several tower block residents aged 50+ stated that they liked the idea of a retirement village. • ‘Retirement village a great idea. Harrison has declined significantly in recent years’.
Village Centre	• Generally, the Village Centre proposals were well received. They are seen as an improvement and ‘a

	good idea' to 'help bring people together and create a place to meet up'. • Several residents commented that they liked the idea of the Village Centre however, the proposed location was 'too far away' and that the existing location of shops was convenient due to bus routes. • Accessibility was mentioned, particularly with a high number of residents living in the area are elderly and some with mobility problems. • 'The village centre needs to be accessible for all age groups and disabilities; it needs to be community led.' • Car parking was again raised, with a need for a car park for the Village Centre.
Bridge over canal and connectivity	• Very positively received by all residents consulted with. • Wants to see a cycling path along Bells Lane, wants to see more opportunities for cycling. • Road layout that reduces traffic and increases walking paths. • Encouraging people to use public transport is good but parking would be also important.
Housing, tenancies and other	• Concerns over who will be moving in and the types of tenancy. 'Are the houses going to be affordable? Help-to-buy schemes? Who would be given priority to buy/rent?' • Concerns were also raised from a tenant of a private landlord over the process, where tenants have done work on property. • Houses will need to blend with each other so there is no big contrast with existing houses. • A number of residents expressed that they were very against the demolition of bungalows near Baverstock.