

Sandwell MBC

Black Patch Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan

Report on Consultation

November 2018

Introduction

This report sets out the consultation that took place in the lead up to and during public consultation of the Sandwell MBC Draft Black Patch Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan (in this document referred to as the Draft Statement) from 6 August to 17 September 2018. It reviews the consultation responses received, the number of representations made and a summary of the main issues raised by the representations.

This document has been prepared to set out a summary of the main issues raised with the consultation responses, and how those issues have been addressed.

Once approved, the Black Patch Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan can be treated as a material consideration for any forthcoming planning applications in the area.

Background

This Interim Planning Statement was prepared to set out Sandwell Council's current position on the area around Black Patch in Smethwick, and seek to establish the intentions regarding its future land use. It will provide an overview of the area and identify the development priorities and proposed land use changes during the interim period whilst the Local Plan is being reviewed and adopted.

The incremental change from a residential community to that of an industrial hub has led to the deterioration of the Black Patch Area. Due to the lack of a community, the Park has been left unused due to the decreasing facilities it has to offer. In addition, lack of investment due to funding issues has led to limited upkeep of the Park grounds with anti-social behaviour and vandalism becoming more prevalent which has also resulted in the demolition of the once popular Community Centre and the environmental quality of the area has declined significantly.

The vision for this area is to re-establish itself as a residential community surrounding an improved central park with the necessary infrastructure in place to support the residents. However, the sites are currently allocated for employment use or as white land (unallocated) which would not allow for a residential development to come forward. Any proposal for housing would be against planning policy and is likely to be refused. Whilst the statutory Local Plan, the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD has commenced its review, the process from commencement to adoption is lengthy and it is unlikely that a plan will be adopted to alter the land use allocation for a few years. Therefore the aim is to put into place an Interim Planning Statement that will be treated as a material consideration for any future development proposals put forward for this area.

This Interim Planning Statement does not establish new planning policy but, through setting out the background and context to the regeneration plans, aims to help encourage the type of development that is in keeping with the future vision of the area.

This document will not constitute a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the Local Development Framework. However if adopted following consultation, it will be treated as a material consideration for any forthcoming planning applications or development proposals until such time as there is a review of land use allocations in the adopted statutory plan for this area.

Public Consultation

The Draft Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan was approved for public consultation by Cabinet on 27 June 2018. Public Consultation was held from 6 August 2018 to 17 September 2018. Details of the document and consultation were placed on the Council's website.

Notification of the Draft Statement consultation was emailed to:

- Statutory Consultees including adjoining Local Authorities
- Local Plan database contacts including individuals, developers and community groups.

Hard copies of the Draft SPD were made available in the local library at Smethwick. A copy was also made available at the Council House, Oldbury and also emailed to the Local Ward members.

Two public consultation events were held. One on 1 September 2018 near to the existing residential area in Black Patch. The other event was held on the afternoon/evening of 6 September 2018 at Newbiggin House, Handsworth New Road. Details were placed via poster around the Black Patch area, on the website, on Twitter and on the Facebook page from Friends of Black Patch Park.

Comments were requested via email to ldf_planning@sandwell.gov.uk or by completing a Representation Form.

An email address and contact telephone number was provided on all the consultation material and the website, for those who wanted to ask questions and seek further information.

Summary of Response to the Consultation

The Council received a total of 15 responses via email and post to the consultation. A summary of the representations made, details of the respondent and the proposed action in response to the representations are set out in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 – Summary of responses

	Name	Summary of Representation	Response
1	Mr D	<p>General support for the decision to regenerate Black Patch for residential use rather than to pursue employment use on these two sites. They are on board with the proposals and are happy that the council has listened to the Friends of Black Patch Park Group. They thank the council for including their two footprints into the plan and look forward to helping the council achieve the national and regional targets including social housing provision.</p>	<p>The comments are noted. The council has developed the Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan due to a request from the Leader to look at these sites for residential. The Friends of Black Patch Park have been engaged in this process. The sites identified for residential use are council owned and no decision has been made to date as to the future disposal of these sites. Therefore, whilst the support to investigate the proposal for housing in the Black Patch area is noted, no agreements have been made to work with any particular developer at this moment in time and sites remain in the ownership and control of the council.</p>
2	AW	<p>Support the new housing proposals. Would help the existing tenants feel part of a community and not so isolated.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
3	LB	<p>The community want housing in this location. Would not want to encroach onto any green space and supports improvements to the park for the residents. Would like to see allotment space provided as part of any development. Would be unhappy if the transit site is moved to another area of the Borough. Schooling would be required.</p>	<p>Comments of the support for housing and park improvements have been noted. The decision about the provision of any allotments will come out at the design stage. However, text will be included within the document to reflect that allotment provision may be accommodated if appropriate. The transit site is currently subject of a temporary planning permission and it is unknown at this stage what the future intentions will be for providing this facility. Social infrastructure to serve any new development will need to be considered once designs are forthcoming and the demand is known.</p>

4	Mr B	Supports the provision of housing in the area but would also support allotments in the area too.	Comments are noted. Text will be included within the document to reflect that allotment provision may be accommodated if appropriate.
5	YH	Supports housing being provided at Black Patch	Comments noted
6	Friends of Black Patch Park	<p>The Friends Group welcome the vision for the Black Patch area to re-establish itself as a residential community surrounding an improved park. In particular they welcome the new housing, retained housing, improved park and potential housing on the current transit site should it become available in the future. However, they would like to suggest that a portion of the Merry Hill Allotments is retained for allotments or a community garden. This could be the portion between Hockley Brook and the embankment, near Handsworth New Road, adjacent to the Metro station or along the railway embankment.</p> <p>They would also like to link the existing cycle route from the canal through Black Patch Park and Allotments to the Metro Station.</p> <p>The Friends Group would welcome more co-operation and integration with Birmingham City Council with regards the provision of social infrastructure, particularly with regards school provision.</p> <p>Suggest that new housing especially on Kitchener Street should face the park to enhance safety and security for park users and</p>	<p>The council welcomes the support from the Friends of Black Patch Park Group and their engagement in assisting bringing forward the Interim Planning Statement and Masterplan.</p> <p>The council notes the reference to incorporation of allotments within the area and text will be included in the plan to reflect this desire. The future designs for the proposed housing may dictate where allotments may be positioned if appropriate and a justified need at that time. Links to and through the proposed housing areas will be considered when more detailed proposals are forthcoming in the future. The council is keen to link and improve any cycle and pedestrian routes through the area to existing routes, shops, services and public transport provision and will work with the necessary agencies to achieve this. This is already acknowledged within the Statement.</p> <p>Discussions with Birmingham City Council to ensure there is sufficient provision for social infrastructure within the area will continue, especially when more detailed plans are forthcoming.</p> <p>The layout and design of the new houses will need to meet with the council's current residential design guide spatial requirements in place at the time proposals are submitted. This will be considered once more detailed plans are available in the future.</p>

		enhance the park as a focal point within the proposed new developments.	
7	VG	Reusing these two brownfield sites for residential would be supported. New housing would also provide the need to regenerate the park and community open space. The new Midland Metropolitan Hospital will also have an impact on the area and should be considered.	Comments are noted.
8	The Coal Authority	Although the area indicated in the Masterplan is on the coalfield, we hold no records of any coal mining activities or features being present at shallow depth and the area is not identified as having any Surface Coal Resource. Therefore we have no comments to make.	Comments are noted.
9	Historic England	Comments are without prejudice to any observations we may wish to make in future on the emerging statutory Local Plan and Site Allocations and Delivery DPD. We have no objection to the proposal to allocate land adjacent to Black Patch Park for housing and consider this will have a generally neutral impact upon the historic environment of the area. The housing should be designed so as to reinforce local distinctiveness at this location. We also consider that the intended improvement to the Park itself attendant upon the housing developments will bring environmental benefits and make a positive	As a Statutory Consultee, Historic England will be provided the opportunity to engage with the council and provide comments on any forthcoming Development Plan documents in the future. We note Historic England's support for the land use change.

		contribution to this historic informal open space.	
10	Highways England	<p>The proximity of the sites to the Midland Metro provides a sustainable transport alternative to private vehicle. Therefore we are pleased to see the proposals seek to locate housing near to these facilities.</p> <p>The development of the proposed 180 new homes does not give rise to transport implications on the Strategic Road Network in itself. However, should this approach be replicated across the Black Country Core Strategy area, the loss of employment land will result in significant pressure for new employment sites on greenfield sites. This will need to be considered as part of the work being undertaken on the Joint Core Strategy Review.</p>	<p>The council note and welcome the comments from Highways England regarding the need to locate housing near to sustainable transport provision.</p> <p>It is not the intention of the council to replicate the principle of bringing forward allocated employment sites for housing. The allocation of sites will be dealt with as part of the Joint Core Strategy review which Highways England will be able to engage with at the appropriate time.</p>
11	SB	<p>I and others believe that the challenge for Sandwell MBC is to attract people to live in an area that has, over three decades, been the victim of the largest retreat of private capital in the whole West Midlands.</p> <p>The well-intentioned Leasehold Reform Act of 1967 began the decline of a 'community of place' that had grown and thrived around Black Patch Park since the Industrial Revolution.</p> <p>Sandwell MBC are audacious in taking on the challenge to regenerate the Black Patch area,</p>	<p>The comments are noted and the council welcomes the acknowledgement that the project to deliver a longer term strategy will be challenging.</p>

		<p>given the difficulties presented by private and public abandonment of the area.</p> <p>Three earlier initiatives, on a scale as significant as that now proposed in the 2018 Interim Planning Statement, have been unable to resist decline or kick-start regeneration around the Black Patch – Housing Pathfinder in the 1980s, Advantage WM Area Focus in 90s and early 00s, Single Regeneration Budget 5 and SRB6 between 1999-2005.</p> <p>The area has been left in a public policy and private economy limbo. This is a circumstance that the Leader of Sandwell MBC has described, in 2017, as ‘the Black Patch conundrum’.</p> <p>What is exciting about Sandwell MBC’s 2018 Interim Master Plan for the Black Patch is that it focuses, specifically, on parts of the larger area ignored by the previous regeneration initiatives. It begins to redress this ‘public policy limbo’ by opening to consultation an Interim plan initiating an incubator project for new housing on Kitchener Street and adjoining Merry Hill allotments.</p> <p>Whether this bold initiative will eventually return a thriving community to the Black Patch depends crucially on how Sandwell MBC initiates this phased re-introduction of housing to the area via this incubator project.</p>	
--	--	---	--

		<p>The purpose of this comment is to help ensure that no-one has any illusions about how challenging it will be to bring people back to the Black Patch, and to make the point that Black Patch Park - its location, appearance and history - that is the 'magnet'; the core feature of the larger area's regeneration.</p>	
12	Severn Trent Water	<p>The results of our high level desktop assessment highlights some possible risks of the proposed development on the sewerage network. Our concerns relate to the complex nature of the sewerage system in this area and the need for diversions to accommodate the dwellings proposed. In the absence of a detailed study we anticipate that a capital scheme will need to be promoted to enable the delivery of this development. The extent of this needs to be confirmed by further investigation. We encourage regular contact with Severn Trent Water throughout the development of this site to ensure the necessary arrangements can be made.</p> <p>Further guidelines were provided relating to Sewage Strategy, Surface Water and Sewer Flooding, Water Quality, Water Supply and water efficiency.</p>	<p>The council notes the comments made by Severn Trent Water and acknowledges that by bringing forward housing in this area, there may be an impact of the capacity of the sewerage system. However, the purpose of the Interim Planning Statement and masterplan is to understand the principle of altering the land use, and the design and layout of the developments will need to be considered at a later stage. This will be where capacity and provision will need to be discussed in greater detail.</p>

13	Cllr Chaman Lal (Birmingham CC)	I attended the consultation event and I am fully supportive of the Masterplan for the Black Patch area.	Comments are noted.
14	Black Patch Local Area Participating Group/Smethwick Environment Group	The Group welcomes the approach to looking at the regeneration of the area, including the improvements to be made to Black Patch Park. They also welcome the Interim Plan for housing in the area but would welcome more detail on the timelines for submission to the Secretary of State to release the allotments for development.	The plan acknowledges the five year strategy being drawn up by the council's Parks and Green Spaces section in conjunction with the Friends of Black Patch Park. However whilst this is an important project in itself to assisting in the regeneration of the area, it is not addressed in more detail in the plan which has been prepared to address the change of land uses for two main sites within the area from employment and allotments to residential use. The submission to the Secretary of State is still ongoing and is not detailed further in the plan with regards timescales as this was not known at the time of publication. However, submission is likely to be before the end of this calendar year.
15	Joanne Jones Smethwick Environment Group	The Group welcomes the approach to looking at the regeneration of the area, including the improvements to be made to Black Patch Park. They also welcome the Interim Plan for housing in the area but would welcome more detail on the timelines for submission to the Secretary of State to release the allotments for development.	The plan acknowledges the five year strategy being drawn up by the council's Parks and Green Spaces section in conjunction with the Friends of Black Patch Park. However whilst this is an important project in itself to assisting in the regeneration of the area, it is not addressed in more detail in the plan which has been prepared to address the change of land uses for two main sites within the area from employment and allotments to residential use. The submission to the Secretary of State is still ongoing and is not detailed further in the plan with regards timescales as this was not known at the time of publication. However, submission is likely to be before the end of this calendar year.