

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Executive - 8 February 2017

Subject: Great Northern, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay
Strategic Regeneration Framework

Report of: The Chief Executive

Summary

This report informs the Executive of the outcome of a public consultation exercise with local residents, businesses and key stakeholders on the draft Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the Great Northern Warehouse, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay, responding to issues raised, and seeks the Executive's approval and endorsement of the final SRF.

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- i. Note the comments received on the Regeneration Framework and the response to these comments;
- ii. Agree the proposed amendments to the Strategic Regeneration Framework arising from the comments received;
- iii. Formally endorse the principles in the revised Great Northern, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay Strategic Regeneration Framework and request that Planning and Highways Committee take the Framework into account as a material consideration when considering planning applications in the area.

Wards Affected:

City Centre

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	<p>The comprehensive redevelopment of this site will provide a major focus for new investment within the area. The Framework will contribute towards both the growth in employment opportunities and the economic performance of the Civic Quarter and the wider city centre.</p> <p>The Regeneration Framework will see the enhancement of a unique leisure and retail</p>

	<p>destination delivered through utilising the potential of the Great Northern Complex, which will provide a range of new employment opportunities in the city centre.</p> <p>The Framework includes land to the rear of Manchester Central and the surrounding area with the objective of delivering a distinctive city centre area which will support the continued growth of the city's economy.</p>
<p>A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success</p>	<p>Development will see the creation of opportunities for local employment, training and procurement. In the heart of the city centre, the site's location within the Civic Quarter is ideally positioned to support the city's drive for high calibre graduate talent retention through job creation.</p> <p>Development of the Great Northern Complex, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay will create new employment opportunities across a range of sectors through the expanded retail and leisure offer, in addition to the creation of new commercial space within the area. This will attract new organisations to the city and enable the expansion of existing businesses, facilitating the creation of a number of new jobs.</p> <p>The Framework also includes scope for a significant number of new homes within close proximity to the job opportunities at both the Great Northern complex and Manchester Central, but also within key established and emerging city centre neighbourhoods.</p>
<p>A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities</p>	<p>The Regeneration Framework complements development at adjacent city centre neighbourhoods including St Michael's, St John's and First Street. The Great Northern and Manchester Central sites will augment what is a strategically important and historically significant location, through the delivery of a new mixed use city centre destination which is well connected and distinctive. It will transform the image of the area as a visitor destination, and help to create job opportunities within the locality and the wider city centre.</p> <p>The Framework utilises the potential capacity of the SRF area through the provision of an expanded residential, retail and leisure offer which will contribute towards further developing a city centre</p>

	neighbourhood of choice.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	<p>The SRF area benefits from excellent public transport connectivity, sitting in close proximity to Oxford Road and Deansgate Castlefield rail and Metrolink Stations. This demonstrates the area's strong public transport links, which ensures that the area and its amenities are accessible by visitors, residents and commuters without a reliance on car usage.</p> <p>The Framework includes a refreshed vehicle parking offer improving access to quality car parking provision for essential car users.</p> <p>The addition of high quality public realm space alongside new residential, commercial and leisure amenities will ensure the area is a popular neighbourhood of choice to live, visit and work.</p> <p>Sustainable design and development principles will be tested at the planning application stage.</p>
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	<p>The Great Northern and Manchester Central area benefits from strong public transport links, as outlined above. The development Framework prioritises pedestrian walkways and connectivity, which will provide residents with improved linkages to the public transport connections and surrounding city centre districts.</p> <p>The area already experiences significant annual visitor numbers, and development of the neighbourhood's amenities will further enhance the reputation of the area as a leisure destination.</p>

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

None

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no financial consequences resulting from this report. The Council has a

land owning interest which will be developed as part of the overall scheme. Proposals for this will be reported to a future Executive, along with any financial consequences.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- Report to Executive – The Civic Quarter - Framework – 21 October 2009
- Report to Executive – The Civic Quarter Regeneration Framework – 10 February 2010
- Draft Strategic Regeneration Framework – Great Northern Warehouse – December 2015 (withdrawn)
- Report to Executive – Great Northern Complex, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay Strategic Regeneration Framework – 2 December 2015
- Draft Strategic Regeneration Framework – Great Northern, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay – July 2016
- Report to Executive – Great Northern Warehouse, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay Strategic Regeneration Framework – 27 July 2016
- Strategic Regeneration Framework - Great Northern, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay – January 2017

All held in Room 303, Town Hall

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 27 July 2016, the Executive endorsed, in principle, a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the Great Northern Warehouse, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay area, and requested that the Chief Executive undertake a public consultation exercise in relation to it.
- 1.2 This report summarises the outcome of the public consultation on the SRF.

2.0 The Consultation Process

- 2.1 Consultation letters have been sent out to 1,543 local residents, businesses, and stakeholders informing them about the public consultation, how to engage in the consultation process, and where to access the Framework. The Strategic Regeneration Framework was made available on the Council's website, and comments were invited on this.
- 2.2 The formal consultation closed on 23 December 2016, following a six week period of consultation.
- 2.3 In total 8 responses were received to the consultation, broken down as follows:
- 5 from individual residents
 - 1 from a local business owner
 - 1 from a stakeholder organisation
 - 1 from a statutory/public organisation

3.0 Consultation comments

Individual responses

- 3.1 The responses received were generally supportive of the SRF for the Great Northern Warehouse, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay. Specific positive points raised included the following:
- 3.2 The SRF is exciting, visionary and well thought out, particularly the public realm and place making sections within the document.
- 3.3 Support for proposals for the land adjacent to the railway arches and Rochdale Canal as a fantastic opportunity to create high quality public realm. This response commented that the development of the open space would help to help to minimise any anti-social behaviour within the area.
- 3.4 It was positive that views were being sought on the proposals and a public consultation exercise undertaken.
- 3.5 The current proposals were more positive than previous proposals for the site and demonstrated better potential prospects for the city, its citizens and visitors.

- 3.6 The clarity of the Framework in respect to public realm was welcome, with the wider proposals being well detailed and building on existing successes to create high quality assets delivering economic potential.
- 3.7 A number of specific points of detail were also made within the responses to the consultation. These are set out below.
- 3.8 In contrast to the response described in point 3.6, three respondents felt that the proposals for the SRF were not defined or ambitious. A separate respondent also commented that the SRF was repetitive and lacked clarity and vision, adding that the Framework appeared to focus on short term and commercial returns.
- 3.9 A further point was raised on the Great Northern Square. It was felt that the square is currently underutilised and that the SRF does not present sensitive treatment for the square that achieves the correct balance between daytime and evening commercial activities within a residential neighbourhood.
- 3.10 A local business respondent documented their support for regeneration within the area, with a strong desire to remain in the area, and requested continued further dialogue and engagement throughout the development.
- 3.11 It was suggested that the SRF should include reference to the Roman masonry within Arch 25 of the railway viaduct, and that this significant Roman Heritage should be marked as a major tourist attraction and benefit from linked pedestrian routes to Castlefield Arena and the Roman Gardens.
- 3.12 One response requested that further clarity be given specifically to proposals for the Leisure Box and South Watson Street, in particular whether the height of the Leisure Box will be increased. It also added that care was needed in relation to the privacy and light of Great Northern Tower residents.
- 3.13 Two respondents felt the long term future of the car park at the south of the Great Northern Warehouse was ambiguous within the SRF. They felt that the existing car park was of a poor quality, and detracted from its high value environment, and suggested it be demolished and replaced with high-quality, high-value taller buildings.
- 3.14 Concern was expressed by two respondents on the potential impact of noise on both existing and proposed new residents from the imminent re-use of the pavilion building. A further respondent felt that the pavilion building detracts from the area and impedes the view of the Great Northern Warehouse, adding that the future of the building is not mentioned within the SRF.
- 3.15 Two respondents commented that continued improvements in communication and management of the Great Northern Warehouse should take place alongside proposed physical regeneration.

TfGM response

- 3.16 The following comments were submitted in response to the consultation by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). This response supports the proposed development within the SRF area and makes the following observations; mainly in relation to Metrolink.
- 3.17 The pedestrian routes and connections into the recently enhanced Deansgate-Castlefield Metrolink stop should match passengers' needs as well as fulfilling the aspirations of the Framework. Access to the stop from the north and west is currently not particularly legible.
- 3.18 There are occasions when the Deansgate-Castlefield stop becomes the temporary terminus for all services entering the city centre from the south and west routes of the Metrolink Network.
- 3.19 TfGM supports the proposal to develop a new vertical pedestrian connection from Watson Street to the Deansgate-Castlefield Metrolink stop. The new lift should comply with best practice accessibility standards, have comprehensive security including CCTV coverage and be maintained to a high standard. In addition, the hours of operation need to match Metrolink operational hours so it can fulfil its potential as an access route to the Metrolink stop.
- 3.20 There is a requirement to maintain and ideally enhance alternative, non-mechanical step free access towards Watson Street/Windmill Street. This will ensure that pedestrians who rely on step free access are still able to access the Metrolink stop in this direction. This requirement is currently fulfilled by the existing step/ramp arrangement to the side of Manchester Central.
- 3.21 TfGM agree that, with appropriate design approvals from Metrolink, building over the Metrolink line appears to be feasible in this location.
- 3.22 In reference to paragraph 5.85, which details the creation of a podium structure above the service yard and Metrolink stop, there are a number of considerable operational and technical challenges associated with this concept. The following issues would require careful consideration and resolution if the concept is to be progress:
- A required closure period would impact on Metrolink operation and revenue.
 - The stop would effectively be "underground" leading to a loss of light which would be detrimental to the passenger experience and lead to the loss of vegetation within the stop.
 - In order to construct the podium structure the current tenants of the arches would need to vacate their premises due to the significant structural work required.
- 3.23 TfGM support the proposal to develop improved public realm and a landscaped pedestrian connection into Castlefield. They would wish to see an enhanced vertical pedestrian connection in this area and a general improvement in the quality of the route to the Deansgate-Castlefield Metrolink stop.

- 3.24 TfGM also note that the boundaries of the SRF indicated on plans in Appendix A, do not match.

Historic England response

- 3.25 The following comments were submitted in response to the consultation by Historic England:
- 3.26 Historic England welcomes a strategic approach to sustaining and enhancing the heritage of this historically important part of the city centre. They note that the SRF area includes buildings and structures that are of great architectural and historic significance including the grade II* Great Northern Warehouse, the elongated form of the grade II Deansgate frontage and parts of the grade II Castlefield Viaduct.
- 3.27 The Framework provides the opportunity to realise the re-development potential of highly significant historic railway structures, which are currently poorly utilised and would benefit greatly from enhancement. Celebrating and conserving this railway heritage should be a catalyst for the area's regeneration.
- 3.28 The Great Northern Warehouse and Castlefield Viaduct have an important role in contributing towards the city's sustainable development and vitality, given their proximity to re-development proposals in the immediate area.
- 3.29 There is a particular need for a rigorous, yet sympathetic urban design response to overcome key constraints in the SRF area. In this context, consideration of the area's accessibility, permeability, legibility and sense of place, along with the potential to enhance these qualities through its historic context, is particularly important.
- 3.30 Section 5 of the SRF, contains significant detail on proposals for the various sites within the area. It describes specific proposals, such as the creation of "Dean Street" between the Great Northern and Deansgate frontage, the residential conversion proposals for the Great Northern Warehouse and re-development proposals for the Castlefield Viaduct. These proposals also include indicative illustrations. Given the potential impact on important heritage assets, the precise use, form, massing and layout of new development are matters which require more considered assessment, at the planning stage. They therefore consider this level of detail not appropriate for a Strategic Framework document as it could limit the range of approaches which could be taken to re-develop the area.

4.0 Response to consultation comments

Response to individual comments

- 4.1 As a strategic, rather than detailed planning document, the focus of the SRF is

- to articulate the issues, constraints and opportunities for the site, and set out high level development principles.
- 4.2 The SRF sets out a long term comprehensive delivery strategy over a 10 year period. It will see existing public spaces retained and enhanced and significant new spaces created, in addition to pedestrian friendly connections produced throughout and conversion of the listed Great Northern Warehouse. This demonstrates a long term strategy with a commitment to place making.
 - 4.3 The SRF proposes the re-use of vacant viaduct arches on Watson Street for retail, leisure or commercial uses. This represents a significant opportunity to enhance this part of the city centre and is an important principle in the SRF. This will be facilitated by much of the surrounding development and public realm enhancements proposed.
 - 4.4 The concern of the business owner raised in paragraph 3.10 is fully noted and, as further more detailed information becomes available, further communication and engagement with the occupier will be undertaken by the landowner and their representatives.
 - 4.5 The Roman remains are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and the SRF text has been updated to both reflect this point and also state that any public realm strategy for this area should enhance the setting of the remains and promote public accessibility and interpretation.
 - 4.6 The phasing strategy specifies that proposals for the leisure box are likely to come forward from 2021; however, there is an ambition to bring forward the works sooner than this. As such, attempts are being made to negotiate early lease surrenders where it is practical and viable to do so. In advance of that, achieving a detailed design for the leisure box would be challenging and potentially redundant as market conditions and context may well change significantly in the intervening period.
 - 4.7 With regards to the car parking facility, the potential requirement for alternative car parking in order to free up the Grade II* Listed Great Northern Warehouse for a more sensitive residential use, is noted and is not being discounted at this stage. The SRF identifies the impact that the current inward looking and impermeable structure has on its surroundings. There is therefore an opportunity for this element to either be re-modelled or replaced. The detail of this will be identified following further negotiations with occupiers, detailed design work and the testing of viability options. As these details come forward, they will be consulted upon with local residents and, ultimately, be the subject of a formal planning application process. Any tall buildings will need to be carefully considered and evaluated in terms of townscape, visual impact, architectural quality, microclimate, and amenity in accordance with established planning policy. With regard to the concern raised around privacy and light, paragraph 5.3 bullet point 15 within the 'Development Principles' section of the document states that new development should create an environment where the amenity of local residents is maximised. Matters of light and privacy are referenced within this section, and will be a key consideration in the creation of

- any detailed design proposals for this part of the site. However a critical influence will be viability and whether high value residential development would be sustainable here. This would have to be considered alongside the wider development proposals for the area and how overall these contribute to the successful creation of place.
- 4.8 The document identifies that there are some fundamental principles that any proposal should address. This includes that the quality of uses is high; that the scheme positively interacts with new public spaces (Alport Square) and at-grade connections around this part of the site.
- 4.9 The SRF identifies that the southern side of the site, which is currently occupied by a car parking facility is capable of accommodating scale, likely in the form of taller buildings. The precise positioning of this development would be determined by any re-working or replacement of the Leisure Box.
- 4.10 The pavilion building was inherited by the site owner, with a 25 year lease to an operator. The SRF outlines a vision for the pavilion to be a well-managed, high quality facility. As a result of this existing lease, alternative proposals for the pavilion building could only be brought forward upon vacant possession. There is an ambition from the site owner to accelerate that process as far as is viable, in order to deliver the vision for high quality uses. However, it is appropriate that the SRF focuses on only high level principles. Any future development proposals for the Pavilion site must reflect the existing footprint and height.
- 4.11 As a licensed premises, the existing occupant of the pavilion building will have to adhere to the terms of their licence as set out by the Council to negate impact on local residents around the site.
- 4.12 The detailed design of the public space will be consulted on extensively prior to the submission of any planning application. The SRF sets out high level principles based on best practice and a detailed assessment of the existing constraints and opportunities. The commitment to consult further and bring forward detailed proposals is confirmed in section 5.95 of the Framework.
- 4.13 Whilst we are open to design that improves functionality and usage of the public realm space at the Great Northern Warehouse, there is no question of fundamentally changing the character of the area nor to allow any diminution of open space. The vision remains for the provision of public realm that works successfully with the adjoining buildings to successfully animate and add vitality to this part of the city centre.
- 4.14 In relation to the views of the Great Northern Warehouse, it is noted in the SRF that removal of the corner feature clock tower should take place in order to open up views of the Grade II* Listed Building.
- 4.15 Comments received relating to communication and management have been noted and there is a clear commitment from the owner, as reflected in the SRF, to ensure that the management of the Great Northern Square is

enhanced. This approach will also be extended across the area.

Response to TfGM comments:

- 4.16 TfGM's support in principle for the redevelopment of the area, particularly to the rear of Manchester Central, is noted and welcomed.
- 4.17 TfGM identify the need to create a new legible route through from Deansgate Castlefield Interchange to the city centre. This need will become more pressing at peak travel times and also given adjacent regeneration and the resulting population and visitor increases. This is a key objective of the SRF, the successful delivery of which will directly address this requirement, resolve the existing substandard arrangement, and deliver key public benefit.
- 4.18 TfGM's support for the proposed vertical link onto Watson Street is noted, this being the key means by which the above mentioned improved connections will be delivered. Comments with regards to the quality, accessibility, operational hours and security of all lifts delivered within the area to link the viaduct to street level is also noted, and would be delivered through detailed planning applications.
- 4.19 Provision of a new ramped access within a redevelopment scheme is likely to be highly challenging and non-viable without it being of significant detriment to the urban design principles underpinning a successful scheme. The significant change in levels would require a disproportionate land-take and have a greater impact on the listed viaduct structure. An electrical substation located adjacent to the Beetham Tower also significantly curtails opportunities to deliver the grade of ramp required. The inclusion of an accessible lift in addition to a new feature staircase onto Watson Street, is considered appropriate to ensure that all needs are catered for, reflecting the arrangement delivered by TfGM to the south of the Metrolink station onto Whitworth Street West.
- 4.20 Dialogue is ongoing with TfGM with regards to bridging a commercial building over the tram line. Confirmation that this would be feasible, subject to detailed design, is welcomed.
- 4.21 Section 5.85 within the SRF, relates to the 2009 masterplan, which is included as an Appendix for information purposes. These points are not of relevance to the current proposals, which do not seek to create a bridge across the top of the Metrolink Station, negating the concerns raised by TfGM.
- 4.22 TfGM's support in principle for the improvements to public realm and landscaping leading into Castlefield is welcome. Their suggestions with regards to lighting and vertical connections will be fully addressed through the detail of any planning application for this part of the site.
- 4.23 The SFR boundary error identified by TfGM has been noted and amended in Appendix A of the final SRF.

Response to Historic England comments:

- 4.24 The SRF is only intended to set out principles rather than seek approval for any detailed proposals. In this regard, there is no illustrative information provided in the appendices with regarding Manchester Central. This is only background information regarding previous proposals, reflecting the planning history of the site. The development principles are framed for Manchester Central around key headings – arrival experience, public realm, connections, heritage, place-making, access, servicing, scale, uses. This level of detail is commensurate with the nature of the SRF, and we accept that further detailed discussion will be required with Historic England as detailed planning and listed building application proposals come forward.
- 4.25 The principles of Dean Street and the conversion of the Great Northern Warehouse were previously agreed with Historic England in January 2015. We accept that the detailed execution of these elements is a matter that will require further dialogue and consultation with Historic England as detailed planning applications come forward, and we will fully and positively engage in this process.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Great Northern, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay area is a key area of city centre with significant potential to contribute towards the regeneration and growth ambitions of the city.
- 5.2 Enhancements in connectivity are a critical component of the SRF. This will prioritise improving pedestrian linkages and accessibility to adjacent city centre districts and key public transport hubs.
- 5.3 The Great Northern, Manchester Central and Castlefield Quay draft SRF has been revised to reference that the Roman remains are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and indicate that any public realm strategy for this area should enhance the setting of the remains and promote public accessibility.
- 5.4 An amend has been made to the SFR boundary in Appendix A, which ensures that it remains consistent with the remainder of the SRF.
- 5.5 Options for the site of the car parking structure to the south of the Grade II* Listed Great Northern Warehouse building will be fully evaluated, this will include establishing the viability of whether the site can sustain tall buildings. The evaluation will be informed by any privacy and right to light impacts and also if residential development in this location is sustainable. The final SRF has been amended to reflect this.

6.0 Key Polices and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 A key aim of the regeneration Framework is to ensure that local people can access and benefit from the employment opportunities and community facilities being created, In addition, there is a commitment to ensure that the design standards throughout the redevelopment will comply with the highest standards of accessibility.

(b) Risk Management

- 6.2 Not applicable

(c) Legal Considerations

- 6.3 If adopted by the Executive, the regeneration Framework will not form part of the Council's Development Plan but would be a material consideration when development control decisions are made.