

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Resolution**

**Report to:** Executive – 20 October 2021

**Subject:** Manchester Fort – Draft Development Framework

**Report of:** Director of City Centre Growth and Infrastructure

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**Summary**

This report informs the Executive of the outcome of a public consultation exercise with local residents, businesses and stakeholders, on the draft Development Framework for the Manchester Fort site and seeks the Executive’s approval of the framework.

**Recommendations**

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Note the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Manchester Fort Development Framework, and subsequent suggested revisions to the draft framework.
  2. Subject to the views of the Executive, approve the Manchester Development Framework and request that Planning and Highways Committee take the framework into account as a material consideration when considering planning applications for the area.
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**Wards Affected:** Cheetham

**Environmental Impact Assessment** - the impact of the decisions proposed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

This report provides detail on a Draft Development Framework for the Manchester Fort Shopping Park, an existing and important retail facility which is located on a main arterial road and on a major bus route. The site is adjacent to the Victoria North SRF area, where the City Council is seeking to bring forward up to 15,000 new homes as the city centre expands northwards as a residential destination. The provision of appropriate retail facilities and other supporting uses in this location will reduce car journeys from the communities in the north of the city to more distant out of town retail locations.

The modification or development of new facilities will seek to increase and promote use of public transport and active travel and will seek to utilise state of the art technologies and low carbon construction methods in order to transition towards zero carbon targets.

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 Manchester Fort Shopping Park provides over 700 jobs. The purpose of the Framework is to guide and co-ordinate future redevelopment opportunities to sustain and grow the long-term employment potential of this location.</p> <p>The potential for new hotel accommodation will further stimulate the growth of the city as a popular visitor destination and provide a range of employment opportunities.</p>
A highly skilled city: world class and home-grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The provision of good quality retail facilities helps to attract and retain economically active residents.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The Manchester Fort is an important local employment centre in North Manchester. The Draft Framework seeks to promote opportunities to safeguard existing and promote new employment opportunities for local communities.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The provision of appropriate neighbourhood retail and leisure amenities is important in the creation and sustenance of neighbourhoods of choice in North Manchester. The improved offer helps to maximise the contribution of the Shopping Park to the urban fabric, economy and social wellbeing of the area, thereby supporting the wider regeneration ambitions for North Manchester.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	<p>The provision of retail and leisure facilities in accessible and appropriate locations plays a critical role in connecting neighbourhoods and driving economic and residential growth.</p> <p>The Development Framework promotes a mix of public and active modes of transport and improved pedestrian connectivity. The site benefits from being located on a main arterial bus route with the city centre, and Metrolink services at the Queens Road tram stop.</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**

There are no direct revenue consequences resulting from this report, however, the Development Framework will support the retention and development of existing and new commercial space, maintaining and generating Business Rate income.

## **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None directly from this report.

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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 officers above.

- Manchester Fort Draft Development Framework – March 2020
- Report to the Executive – Manchester Fort Draft Development Framework – 11 March 2020

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 11 March 2020, the Executive endorsed, in principle, the draft Development Framework for the Manchester Fort site and requested that a public consultation be undertaken in relation to it with the local community and other stakeholders. This report summarises the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Development Framework.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Manchester Fort Shopping Park occupies a strategic location in North Manchester; adjacent to the intersection of the main radial routes of Cheetham Hill Road and Queens Road.
- 2.2 Manchester Fort was established as a bulky goods shopping destination in 2004 and has since evolved into one of the largest and most successful retail parks of its kind in the North West. It is a well-known feature of the city's shopping landscape.
- 2.3 The Shopping Park is a key economic driver in North Manchester, supporting local employment, with over 700 employees and generating a total consumer spend of over £500 million annually. The site benefits from a largely local customer base and offers a mix of 'high-street brands', along with a limited selection of leisure uses.
- 2.4 The framework was produced in collaboration with Nuveen who are the owners of the site. In response to evolving market trends within the retail sector, Nuveen are seeking to diversify the shopping park in order to maximise its potential and create flexibility to adapt to the changing market. The vision and development principles set out within the framework seek to secure the long-term prosperity of the park and ensure that it continues to play an important role for the communities of North Manchester.
- 2.5 North Manchester is set to benefit from major investment over the next decade and beyond. The £4bn Victoria North scheme will deliver 15,000 new homes for a community of over 40,000 people phased over the next 20 years. The regeneration of this 155-hectare scheme will create new park space and public realm alongside amenities including new schools, healthcare facilities and transport links. The £600m redevelopment of the 67-acre North Manchester General Hospital site also represents a transformational redevelopment project in the north of the city. The development of this "healthy living campus" is a catalyst for several surrounding residential schemes and infill housing sites being delivered.

## **3.0 The Consultation Process**

- 3.1 A consultation was undertaken in July 2019 by the landowner during the initial development of the draft proposals.
- 3.2 Following the presentation of the draft proposals at the Executive in March

2020, formal consultation took place between Monday 2 November and Monday 28 November 2020. The consultation was accessible on the Manchester City Council Consultations webpage.

- 3.3 Publicity for the consultation was provided via Manchester City Council social media channels and media releases.
- 3.4 The consultation webpage also directed interested parties to the external development project website ([www.manchesterfort2020svision.co.uk](http://www.manchesterfort2020svision.co.uk)). This site provided details of three online drop-in sessions that stakeholders could attend. The sessions were led by Nuveen's representatives, Turley, and were also attended by a Manchester City Council Neighbourhood Manager.
- 3.5 The online drop-in sessions were scheduled across a range of times and days to increase accessibility and took place at the following times:
  - Saturday 14 November 2.15pm -2.45pm
  - Friday 20 November 3.15pm - 3.45pm
  - Thursday 26 November 6.15pm – 6.45pm
- 3.6 Across the drop-in sessions, six people registered their attendance with one resident requesting a recording of a session which was provided. It is felt that the low attendance, and the low number of responses to the consultation, may partly be explained by the fact that the consultation took place during a period of lockdown due to Covid-19.

#### **4.0 Consultation Comments**

- 4.1 A total of 33 responses were received to the consultation, broken down as follows:
  - 23 online feedback forms via the MCC consultations webpage.
  - 10 emails.
- 4.2 The consultation provided three pre-set questions alongside the opportunity to provide any additional comments on the proposals. The results from the pre-set questions are as follows.
- 4.3 73% of respondents 'strongly agreed' that they supported the long-term plan to introduce new flexible retail space, an expanded food and drink offer, a hotel and a cinema whilst 18% 'agreed', 5% (one respondent) 'didn't know'; and 5% (one respondent) 'strongly disagreed'.
- 4.4 70% of respondents 'strongly agreed' that they supported plans to extend the usage of Manchester Fort Shopping Park to contribute to the evening economy. 13% (three respondents) 'agreed'; 9% (two respondents) 'strongly disagreed'; and 9% (two respondents) 'neither agreed nor disagreed'.
- 4.5 83% of respondents 'strongly agreed' with plans to enhance the environment of the shopping park whilst providing better accessibility for pedestrians. A

further 4% (one respondent) 'agreed'; 4% (one respondent) 'strongly disagreed' and 9% (two respondents) 'neither agreed nor disagreed'.

4.6 The feedback from the text comments is categorised and summarised below.

4.7 Nine respondents noted their general support for the scheme, with specific comment given to:

- The positive impact that the proposals would have on the local community and North Manchester.
- The welcome need to update the retail offer of the park and introduction of new uses.
- The creation of new employment opportunities

### **Tenant and Use Mix**

4.8 Several comments received in response to the consultation related to the current and proposed retail / leisure mix at Manchester Fort. These comments included:

- The park lacks affordable stores which are needed for local residents that don't drive.
- There aren't enough cafés on the site.
- Two respondents noted the benefits that a supermarket would deliver.
- Gym provision would benefit the local area.
- The site lacks a newsagent style offer.
- Drive through food outlets should be avoided.
- Expanding the offer is welcome and will mean that a full day can be spent at Manchester Fort.

4.9 Three respondents raised specific concern regarding the potential removal of B&Q from the site. These respondents noted that the store was the only supplier of this type locally with the nearest alternative B&Q in Ashton. Two of these respondents also expressed concern about the potential loss of Halfords.

4.10 Two respondents expressed support for a potential cinema / leisure complex whilst a single respondent questioned demand for this type of use.

4.11 Three respondents questioned the inclusion of a hotel on the site with one citing that the hotel adjacent to the Irish World Heritage Centre and nearby city centre offer would satisfy demand in this location, whilst a second felt the site too remote.

4.12 A single response suggested the inclusion of the site opposite (currently B&M retail use) could house the cinema or hotel, in order to increase retail and leisure options at Manchester Fort.

### **Litter and Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 4.13 A single respondent raised concern that there would be increased anti-social behaviour and noise in the evenings, while a further response noted a concern that there would be an increased level of littering from any food outlets.

### **Detailed Delivery**

- 4.15 A number of suggestions were made for specific facilities at the site. These included:
- The inclusion of a Juke Box within a coffee store.
  - The creation of a food court style space made up of independent operators and with the ability to hold events.
  - Weekend food and drink and craft markets with fixed or semi fixed vendors.
  - A cinema with a seating and dining option similar to modern facilities such as Vue (Media City).

### **Highways, Transport and Parking**

- 4.16 A respondent suggested improved access to the site could be provided as currently there are increased traffic volumes when entering from the south.
- 4.17 A request was made to simplify the Cheetham Hill Rd junction to make it friendlier for pedestrians/cyclists.
- 4.18 One respondent requested an increase in vehicle parking facilities, whilst conversely, a second felt there should be a reduction. A respondent was concerned by visitors parking in inappropriate locations when the car parks reached capacity.
- 4.19 Three respondents noted the need for safe and secure cycle parking to reduce vehicle use.
- 4.20 Two comments received related to bus provision, with one respondent stating that a free local electric bus service should be considered and a second noting the potential to improve bus stops along Cheetham Hill Road to better serve the shopping park.
- 4.21 A respondent felt that the Queens Road Metrolink stop could be better connected so that pedestrians do not need to walk out of the site and around the front to enter.

### **Environment, Public Realm and Pedestrian Access**

- 4.22 Three respondents highlighted the importance of including green infrastructure within proposals to provide a barrier to the roads and create a space that is attractive to spend time in. One response so added a desire to see all-weather outdoor seating.

- 4.23 A respondent commented on the importance of properly reflecting the images shown and implementing design of the highest standards.
- 4.24 A respondent commented on the impact of the site's drainage. The respondent felt that the current situation overloaded local drains, potentially causing flooding in both the River Irk and Irwell. A request was made for the consideration of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to be incorporated into the new designs.
- 4.25 Three responses welcomed the emphasis that the proposals place on enhancing pedestrian access, and the opportunity to improve this from the current situation.
- 4.26 A comment was also received highlighting the importance of enhanced connectivity and accessibility within the site particularly for those with limited mobility.

### **Planning, Construction and the Consultation Process**

- 4.27 A respondent was critical of only becoming aware of the draft proposals at the formal consultation stage and commented that local residents could have been contacted directly.
- 4.28 Clarification on whether an Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken was requested.
- 4.29 Clarification on the timescales for both planning and construction was requested by one respondent.
- 4.30 A respondent asked whether a professional team had yet been appointed for the delivery of proposals on the site.

### **5.0 Additional Stakeholder Representation**

- 5.1 An additional response was also received on behalf of a landowner and operator of a site within Manchester city centre which includes a range of leisure operators, which, due to its length and content, has been summarised separately below.
- 5.2 This landowner has recently secured planning permission to deliver a range of works to the external and internal appearance of their site, to ensure that it remains at the forefront of the leisure market.
- 5.3 The response highlights that the committed investment could be impacted, should a major leisure-led development come forward at Manchester Fort. The concerns raised within their response predominantly focus on the proposed expanded uses detailed within the draft Development Framework for Manchester Fort, and are set out below from 5.4 – 5.13.

## **Proposed Uses and Demand**

- 5.4 The leisure uses proposed at Manchester Fort have the potential to divert custom away from the range of leisure venues within the city centre.
- 5.5 The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic continues to significantly impact the leisure economy. Demand assessments for an additional multi-screen cinema (at appendix 1), fails to account for the current commercial climate and the impact of the pandemic on the leisure market and particularly the cinema market.
- 5.6 The city centre's vitality and footfall have been particularly impacted as a result of Covid-19. It is imperative that the Council actively protects the regional centre and supports the future recovery of its existing retail and leisure offer.
- 5.7 The demand analysis provided is based on 5 and 10-minute drive-time catchments from existing facilities, and fails to recognise the importance of customers using public transport interchanges, such as Victoria Station to access leisure facilities in the city centre, and therefore the wider catchment area that is served by the city centre.
- 5.8 A more sophisticated commercial market and capacity assessment is needed, which takes account of, not only the qualitative capacity, but also the quantitative capacity within the city. The analysis used is based on 2017 figures, which was a record-breaking year for cinema takings and is not reflective of the current market.
- 5.9 The response highlights that the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for Great Northern Warehouse (which includes a cinema and other leisure uses), notes that it has generally been underutilised, and recommends that the proposals for the site reflect demand and include additional commercial office space. In their view, this indicates that Manchester has struggled to support two vibrant major entertainment complexes near one another.
- 5.10 The proposed impact of the new arena at Eastlands together with new retail and commercial uses will also divert a significant amount of custom away from the city centre and its leisure operators.
- 5.11 It is recognised that the framework is an aspirational document, however, large-scale strategic developments should be the subject of scrutiny to determine whether they represent the most appropriate strategy for the area and for the city as a whole.

## **National Planning Policy**

- 5.12 This response also questions the application of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in relation to the retail and leisure proposals in the Development Framework. It notes that the Manchester Fort proposals seek to provide significant future leisure uses, but fails to objectively identify the need which the proposals would cater for.

5.13 The sequential and impact tests set out within NPPF are felt to be of direct relevance to retail and leisure development and the framework should clearly set out the tests to be applied to future planning applications, as follows:

- The NPPF sequential test, states that edge of centre locations should only be considered if suitable sites are not available / expected to become available within a reasonable period.
- The impact test requires an impact assessment for retail and leisure development outside town centres, which are not in accordance with an up-to-date plan, including the impact on public and private investment in surrounding centres, and town centre vitality and viability and the wider retail catchment.

## **6.0 Response to comments**

6.1 The following section provides detailed comments in response to the points raised by respondents.

### **Tenant and Use Mix**

6.2 The general support given to the long-term plan to introduce new flexible retail space alongside an expanded food and drink offer, hotel and a cinema is noted and welcomed.

6.3 The retail mix will be considered in the coming years, as the leases of existing stores come up for renewal. The retail and leisure offer will be responsive to market demand and requirements.

6.4 As the leases of existing retail tenants expire it is proposed within the framework to review the type of uses including the bulky goods offer. This will enable the delivery a more diverse visitor experience which will help to secure the future success of Manchester Fort.

6.5 In response to the comment on drive-through food provision, there has been this type of use on the site for a number of years. No management issues have been reported in relation to these facilities. The type and mix of future food offer will be considered and subject to a planning application, which will require further consultation.

6.6 Based on the latest available figures (2018), the tourism sector supports over 100,000 FTE's within Greater Manchester, 53,000 of which are within Manchester (Source: STEAM; Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor, Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd.). Hotels have, and continue to play, a key role in this sector. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the total number of hotel rooms available across the region, with much of this growth in accommodation concentrated in the city centre. Whilst Covid-19 significantly impacted the sector in the short-term, evidence suggests that recovery in hotel demand has been particularly buoyant, driven by leisure users. Evidence shows that prior to the pandemic, during major events at the nearby AO arena, theatres and surrounding sporting venues,

hotels often reached capacity. Despite this, as any detailed planning application for hotel usage is submitted, further demand analysis will be required. A response to the particular issues around uses raised by the city centre leisure operator is provided in section 7.

### **Litter and Antisocial Behaviour**

- 6.7 Manchester Fort is a privately-owned site, with the operators holding responsibility for its maintenance, and cleaning. Outside of the site, on the adjacent public highway, street cleansing is undertaken on a scheduled basis. The response relating to litter has been passed on to the relevant Council service to allow for investigation.
- 6.8 It is not envisaged that the proposed uses for the site would lead to any increase in anti-social behaviour within the area. Both the operators and individual tenants will be required to continue to manage safety and security with their respective premises and the wider site. A management plan for the site, including arrangements for dealing with any anti-social behaviour, will be a requirement of any future planning application for the site. Greater Manchester Police would also be engaged as a statutory consultee of any future planning applications for the site.

### **Detailed Delivery**

- 6.9 In response to the comments related to specific facilities at the site, it should be noted that the role of the Development Framework is to provide the overarching strategic principles for development, not prescribe detailed design proposals. The design and operation of new retail and leisure units will be addressed as part of any future planning applications, which themselves will be subject to public consultation.

### **Highways, Transport and Parking**

- 6.10 The general support provided for plans to enhance the environment of the shopping park and providing better accessibility for pedestrians is welcomed.
- 6.11 A preliminary Highways Feasibility Study has been undertaken to understand the potential implications of the proposals on the surrounding highway network. There will be a requirement, moving forward, for any future planning applications to be accompanied by an appropriate Transport Assessment, to demonstrate that the proposed developments can be safely accommodated within the highways network.
- 6.12 The framework seeks to encourage sustainable and active travel. However, there will be a specific requirement for future planning applications to be accompanied by an appropriate Transport Assessment, to demonstrate that sufficient car park provision exists to accommodate the anticipated demand. The preliminary Highways Feasibility Study shows that capacity exists in the current car park to accommodate the anticipated increase in demand.

- 6.13 The draft Development Framework states that future development proposals should encourage sustainable travel including provision for cycle parking. This aligns with major investment being made across the region into cycling infrastructure. Greater Manchester's 'Bee Network' is a 10-year, £1.5 billion plan to create 1,800 miles of routes and 2,400 new crossings connecting every neighbourhood, school, high street and public transport hub in the city-region.
- 6.14 Manchester Fort is located on an arterial bus route into / from the city centre, with services providing frequent connections from the site to north Manchester and the city centre. These services are currently used by both residents, commuters and would be able to facilitate additional demand created by the new proposed uses. On this basis, there aren't currently any proposals to introduce a free bus service into the area.
- 6.15 There is a range of activity and initiatives being progressed in relation to bus travel across the city. The creation of City Centre Bus Routing Plan is in the early stages of development. This will set out the overarching plan for buses in the city centre. The Council are also working with TfGM on the Northern Gateway/M62 corridor express bus corridor, seeking to enhance connectivity in this part of the city.
- 6.16 The Irish World Heritage Centre is located between the Queens Road Metrolink stop and the Manchester Fort site, making a new pedestrian route unfeasible. The existing access to the stop serves both Manchester Fort and the residential communities immediately to the north and east of the stop.

### **Environment, Public Realm and Pedestrian Access**

- 6.17 Comments highlighting the importance of green infrastructure and appropriate seating are noted. All sketches included within the draft Development Framework are indicative of the ambition and vision for the site. The detailed proposals for both street furniture and planting will form a component of any future planning applications brought forward for the site.
- 6.18 The landowner has been reminded of the need to engage with United Utilities at the earliest opportunity to discuss their development proposals. Opportunities to review drainage on the site and any potential for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems will be considered in respect of planning applications brought forward for the site.
- 6.19 Enhancing pedestrian connectivity for all users is a key aim of the Development Framework. The landowner will be expected to present proposals at planning stage which are fully accessible.

### **Planning, Construction and Consultation Process**

- 6.20 Early informal consultation was undertaken by the landowner in July 2019 with local residents. Following this, the draft proposals for the site were presented to the Executive, which gave approval for a formal consultation process to be

carried out. Given restrictions and social distancing measures in place during this consultation period, it wasn't possible to facilitate in-person events. Instead, three online events, open to residents and at a range of times, were hosted in addition to comments being invited online. Any detailed planning applications developed which relate to this site will themselves be subject to further formal consultation, to which stakeholders can provide their views.

- 6.21 An Equality Impact Assessment will be a requirement of any future planning applications for the site.
- 6.22 The draft Development Framework sets out the long-term vision for the site. The current retail and leisure occupiers hold leases for the spaces which they occupy. As a result, there are no specific timescales for development delivery, and appointment of a professional team has not yet been made.

## **7.0 Additional Representation Response**

- 7.1 The points raised by the city centre leisure site owner are noted. In the Development Framework, it is acknowledged that the site's principal function should be to support a vibrant mix of commercial floor space, with a strong and sustainable retail and leisure offer. Achieving this will be fundamental to the long-term future of Manchester Fort.
- 7.2 The role of the Development Framework is to provide the overarching strategic principles for development and not prescribe detail on the design or future tenants for the site. However, careful consideration has been given to what would be appropriate uses, based on the site and the requirements of the local community.
- 7.3 The proposals seek to deliver an appropriate balance between retail outlets, building on the success of the existing offer, whilst responding to trends within the sector, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Alongside this retail offer, delivering a mix of leisure uses will ensure the long-term sustainable function of the site.
- 7.4 The city centre continues to function as the region's economic hub, providing a strategic employment location, visitor destination and place to live. The growth in the numbers living, working and visiting the city all helps to sustain a thriving leisure sector within the city centre.
- 7.5 Whilst the rate of growth in the short term has been impacted by Covid-19, the city centre is expected to continue to grow over the medium-longer term, and this growth will be essential to the city's, and the UK's economic recovery. Manchester's Recovery and Investment Plan was developed and launched last year in partnership with the private sector to ensure the expedited return to pre-pandemic momentum, as the UK's leading regional city for growth. A fundamental element of this will be focused investment in the city centre, to help it attract further investment and support further growth, for example, through enhanced public spaces and improved environmentally friendly travel options.

- 7.6 When assessing future demand both for Manchester Fort and within the city centre, it is important to note the scale of development at Victoria North, one of the country's largest regeneration projects. Victoria North covers 155 hectares running adjacent to Manchester Fort and the city centre in addition to the communities of north and east Manchester. The scheme will see the creation of 15,000 new homes across seven neighbourhoods over the next 20 years. The redevelopment project will also create better-connected public spaces, new and improved transport links, and more homes, parks and retail spaces for the city's growing population.
- 7.7 In addition to Victoria North, there are a range of other schemes which would increase demand in this part of the city. For example, the Manchester College's new city centre campus is currently under construction with the facility set to open in September 2022. This new academic campus is also a short walk from NOMA, a phased regeneration project delivering the redevelopment of the historic Co-operative Group's Estate to create a distinctive neighbourhood to live, work, create and innovate in. NOMA has recently begun its next phase of development, with a further 5,300 jobs expected to be delivered within the area in the next two years. NOMA has the potential to deliver a further 1.7m sq. ft. of commercial space once fully developed. Given its location, it would be envisaged that the retail and leisure offer of both the city centre and Manchester Fort will benefit from the growth delivered at Victoria North, NOMA and the new Manchester College campus.
- 7.8 The draft Development Framework has been updated to emphasise the continued future importance of the city centre and its vitality as the region's economic and employment hub.
- 7.9 The draft Development Framework has been strengthened with regards to the requirements set out within the National Planning Policy Framework, highlighted by the consultation respondent. Future planning applications for the site will need to be supported by appropriate sequential and impact assessments, as set out in the NPPF, which robustly demonstrate:
- A thorough assessment of the suitability, viability and availability of locations for the proposed town centre uses.
  - The impact of proposals on existing, committed and planned investments in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal, and
  - The impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability. These assessments are to be in accordance with both Local Planning Policy the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 The draft Development Framework has now been subject to an initial period of landowner-led consultation activity in July 2019 and formal consultation in November 2020. Manchester Fort is an important retail and leisure outlet for the communities of North Manchester. The response rate to the consultation was fairly low, but it is felt that this could be attributed to the consultation being

delivered at a time of government restrictions resulting from Covid-19. The consultation was delivered in the most appropriate way possible in the circumstances, consistent with other consultations undertaken in this period.

- 8.2 The response received from individuals to both consultations has been generally positive, with some specific issues of detail raised.
- 8.3 The Manchester Fort Shopping Park occupies a strategic location in North Manchester. The development of the site will seek to provide existing and emergent local communities with access to a range of retail and leisure amenities. Diversifying the offer at the park will ensure its long-term future viability as a visitor destination, north of the city centre.
- 8.4 In response to the consultation, the draft framework has been updated to accurately capture the role and importance of the city centre and reaffirm the need for future relevant planning applications to be subject to planning policy requirements throughout as detailed in paragraph 7.8.

## **9.0 Key Policies and Considerations**

### **(a) Equal Opportunities**

The draft Development Framework is seeking to protect and sustain the function of the Manchester Fort shopping park, an important retail amenity and employment centre in North Manchester. The Framework will help safeguard and create new employment opportunities and support plans for the creation of new residential growth in the adjacent Victoria North and NOMA areas.

### **(b) Risk Management**

N/A

### **(c) Legal Considerations**

If approved by the Executive, the Manchester Fort Development Framework will not form part of the Council's Development Plan but would be a material consideration when development management decisions are made.