

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Executive - 9 September 2020

Subject: Withington Village Framework

Report of: Strategic Director (Growth & Development)

Summary:

This report presents the Executive with details of the draft Withington Village Framework and requests that the Executive approves the draft for public consultation. Withington Village is a key district centre in south Manchester. The draft Withington Village Framework sets out a vision and opportunities in the Village. It has been developed following a series of community consultation events and stakeholder meetings. It provides a guide to investment and development within Withington Village and a framework to support applications for future funding.

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

1. to approve the draft Withington Village Framework as a basis for public consultation with local stakeholders;
 2. to request the Strategic Neighbourhood Lead (South) to undertake a public consultation exercise on the draft Withington Village Framework with local stakeholders; and
 3. to agree that a further report be presented to summarise the outcome of the public consultation, respond to the comments received, and to present a final draft for approval.
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Wards Affected:

Withington and Old Moat

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

The Framework identifies actions to address carbon emissions by creating a greener healthier environment with improved local facilities and local partnership and collaborative working.
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Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive	The Framework sets out how the Village can contribute to a thriving and sustainable City by

economy that creates jobs and opportunities	diversifying the economy, attracting cultural activities and generating footfall, creating local job opportunities
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The Framework sets out how the Village can support the growth of local enterprises and innovation.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The Framework identifies the key role of the local partnership structures and collaborative working to bring about the vision, objectives and projects.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The Framework identifies actions to address carbon emissions by creating a greener, healthier environment and more liveable centre.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The Framework identifies opportunities to improve the public realm, reduce traffic movement, improve access and movement for pedestrians and cyclists within the Village.

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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.

1. Institute of Place Management – Vital and Viable Withington, October 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Withington Village is a key District Centre in south Manchester which serves the Withington and Old Moat population. It provides a hub for the community and services. It has active community stakeholders who are committed and engaged in its development.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In Autumn 2017 the Withington Village Regeneration Partnership (WVRP) was established to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for environmental improvements and shop front enhancement in Withington Village. Subsequently in March 2019 WVRP, in collaboration with Manchester City Council, submitted a bid to the Government's High Street Fund for the regeneration of the Village. Both these bids were unfortunately unsuccessful and the Village has narrowly missed out in attracting funding.
- 2.2 Despite the setbacks WVRP has continued to meet. It consists of representatives from local traders, investors and residents, Withington Civic Society, Love Withington Baths, Manchester City Council, Southway Housing, The Christie Hospital and local councillors.
- 2.3 WVRP has achieved a number of successes including supporting local residents in developing a scheme to improve a Pocket Park, establishing pop up cultural activities in vacant buildings and setting up a local business group 'We are Withington.' WVRP has organised 'Withington by night' events, changing opening hours of businesses to when footfall in the centre is strong. WVRP also organised the successful 'Withington Walls' crowd funding campaign to brighten up walls and shutters through quality artwork.
- 2.4 To support the strong partnership working and develop a long term strategy for Withington Village, the Council has commissioned the production of a draft Framework. A series of community consultation events and stakeholder meetings were undertaken in its production. The draft Framework incorporates the Institute of Place Management's 'Vital and Viable' report for the Village. Subject to the Executive's approval, it is planned that the draft Framework will be the subject of a wider public consultation exercise involving businesses, residents, investors and other key stakeholders in the Village. The outcome of the public consultation to be presented to a future Economy scrutiny meeting for consideration before a final Framework document is presented back to Executive for approval
- 2.5 The purpose of the Withington Village Framework is to support existing planning policy by:
- Establishing a vision supported by the community, to guide and inform development decisions.
 - Generating confidence in the prospects of the Village to encourage further investment.
 - Providing a basis for future funding bids.

- Illustrating through a series of precedent images and layouts how design objectives could be achieved.

2.6 The draft Framework identifies a vision for the centre as a liveable place that meets the needs of its diverse community. It will build on its cultural and physical heritage broadening its service offer and cultural assets. New public spaces will be created with an improved street environment and movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

2.7 It identifies a series of aims on how these can be achieved based upon on the '4R's' of repositioning, reinventing, rebranding and restructuring. It includes a series of spatial strategies for public realm, movement, heritage and streetscape. The appendix identifies a series of potential projects, with precedent images through which the objectives of the Framework can be achieved. This includes:

- An enhanced public space outside the Library (Rutherford Place)
- A more pedestrian friendly environment on Copson Street
- Enhanced public realm along Wilmslow Road
- Reviewing the use of public car parks as possible public spaces.
- Enhanced gateways to the Village
- Improved walking and cycling routes to the Centre from its catchment.
- Restored heritage features including enhancing shop fronts
- Encouraging appropriate development in the Village.

2.8 It is not yet known precisely what the impact of Covid-19 will be on small businesses and local traders in Withington. There has been a reduction in footfall similar to that of other District Centres in Manchester and a number of businesses have yet to reopen. The objectives of the framework including making a more liveable centre, reducing the dominance of vehicles, allowing more space for pedestrians and cyclists, are relevant to responding to the issues arising from the Covid-19 situation. Many people within the local catchment are likely to want to remain local for the foreseeable future when seeking out leisure and retail opportunities.

3.0 Conclusion

3.1 The draft Framework identifies a vision for the centre as a liveable place that meets the needs of its diverse community. The proposals within the Framework were developed from a series of initial consultation events. Approval is requested from Executive to undertake a wider public consultation exercise. A further report will be brought to the Executive summarising the outcome of the public consultation and responding to the comments received before the Framework is presented to a future meeting of the Executive for approval.

3.2 The recommendations are found at the beginning of this report.

4.0 Key Policies and Considerations

4.1 **Equal Opportunities:**

The draft Framework identifies a vision for the centre as a liveable place that is accessible and meets the needs of its diverse community. The public consultation will engage with a wide range of stakeholders, enabling all interested parties to be engaged and comment on the Framework.

4.2 Risk Management:

None at this stage.

4.3 Legal Considerations:

Subject to Executive approval to undertake the consultation, a further report will be brought to the Executive at the end of the public consultation exercise, setting out the comments received and any changes proposed to the Framework. If the Framework is subsequently approved by the Executive, it will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications by the Council as Local Planning Authority.