

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Executive – 11 November 2020

Subject: A Draft Neighbourhood Development Framework for Ardwick Green

Report of: Strategic Director - Growth and Development

Summary

A draft Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) for Ardwick Green has been developed to guide and co-ordinate development activity in this key part of the city, in support of adopted planning policy. Proposals set out in the draft NDF have been developed following initial discussions with residents and other local stakeholders prior to a full statutory consultation exercise, which will be undertaken subject to the Executive's approval. Following the consultation a final version of the NDF will be brought back to the Executive for further consideration and approval. When approved in a final form the NDF will act as a material consideration in the determination of subsequent planning applications that fall within its scope.

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Note the short and long term ambitions of the draft NDF, together with initial considerations that will need to form part of an Implementation Strategy, as set out in section 7 of the draft document.
 2. Note the overarching and details objectives of the draft NDF in section 6 of the draft document.
 3. Endorse the draft Neighbourhood Development Framework for Ardwick Green as set out in Appendix 1 of this report as a basis for public consultation and note that a final version, taking account of comments and representations made, will be brought back to a future meeting of the Executive for approval.
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Wards Affected Ardwick

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

The Ardwick Green Neighbourhood Development Framework recognises that future development within the area will need to respond to the City Council's objective of achieving zero-carbon target and will be expected to move towards this aspiration through the active utilisation and deployment of leading building technologies. The City Council will use its land interests in the area to deliver this outcome.

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	The proposals contained within the draft Ardwick Green Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) offer the potential to bring forward mixed - used development that will contribute to the creation of jobs within the area and provide a range of residential accommodation for the growing population of the city.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The draft NDF for Ardwick Green seeks to protect and support existing businesses in the area and will provide additional commercial space to meet demand from existing and newly established businesses, thus creating and sustaining employment opportunities within this area of the city centre.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	The proposals contained within the draft NDF offer the potential to help deliver the Manchester Residential Growth Strategy and meet the growing demand for new homes in a range of tenures that are close to quality amenity space and within easy access of employment opportunities. The creation of additional commercial space will help create new and sustain existing employment opportunities.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The draft NDF reaffirms the Council's commitment to deliver zero carbon growth and sets out the intention of creating sustainable neighbourhoods with enhanced active travel routes and improved public realm and public open spaces.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	The NDF will help guide and coordinate the future development of Ardwick Green and area on the edge of the city Centre. The existing challenges for pedestrian movement and connectivity around and beyond the NDF area could be addressed through the principles set out in the NDF.

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 financial implications for the City Council arising from this report.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no direct financial implications for the City Council arising 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 contact officers above.

- Manchester Zero Carbon 2018 – Manchester City Council’s Commitment, Executive, 13th March 2019;

- Council Resolution on Declaring a Climate Emergency, Executive, 24th July 2019;
- Delivering Manchester's Affordable Homes to 2025, Executive, 11th September 2019
- Manchester Strategy 2016-25 ("Our Manchester"), Executive, January 2016
- The Residential Growth Strategy, Executive, March 2016
- Manchester Residential Quality Guidance, Executive, March 2017
- The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, Executive, July 2015

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ardwick Green neighbourhood is located on the south-eastern edge of the city centre. The area benefits from proximity to the Regional Centre; the principal economic driver for the City Region and a focus for employment, leisure, retail and cultural facilities. Ardwick Green is immediately adjacent to the Mayfield strategic regeneration area, the vision for which is to deliver a world class, transformational, distinctive and imaginative commercially led neighbourhood centred around a new 6.5-acre park. It also borders Brunswick which is undergoing a £106m regeneration programme seeing the remodelling of the neighbourhood with over 650 homes refurbished and over 500 new homes developed, including a 60 place extra care unit; new parks; a new retail hub and neighbourhood office.
- 1.2 The Ardwick Green area is increasingly attracting the attention of developers and investors. The development of a Neighbourhood Development Framework will guide and co-ordinate the future development of this key area, in line with adopted planning policy and build on existing regeneration initiatives in Mayfield and Brunswick.
- 1.3 The draft Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) has been prepared to guide the future development of Ardwick Green in order to steer the quality of new development and supporting public realm, highways and other community infrastructure that will seek to deliver a safe, accessible, vibrant, unique and sustainable neighbourhood.
- 1.4 The development of this draft NDF was jointly commissioned with One Manchester who own and manage housing in the neighbourhood.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Ardwick Green is a modestly sized mixed use area with a residential community at its heart located on the edge of Manchester City Centre. A concentration of creative businesses - photography, video, and sound – has developed in recent years and a couple of large, old, former industrial buildings provide office and work space for a range of businesses many of which are related to the fashion and clothing industry which have relocated out of the Northern Quarter.
- 2.2 One Manchester and Arawak Walton own and manage residential stock in the neighbourhood. One Manchester has a small estate on Cotter St and Billing Avenue. The properties date from the 1960s and need investment. There are two areas of housing owned by Arawak Walton which have been developed more recently.
- 2.3 The area began to take on an urban form in the late 18th century and, as such, offers a distinctive character that differentiates it from other neighbourhoods close to the city centre, due to the retention of a number of its Georgian features. It was historically, and is still, centred on the valued

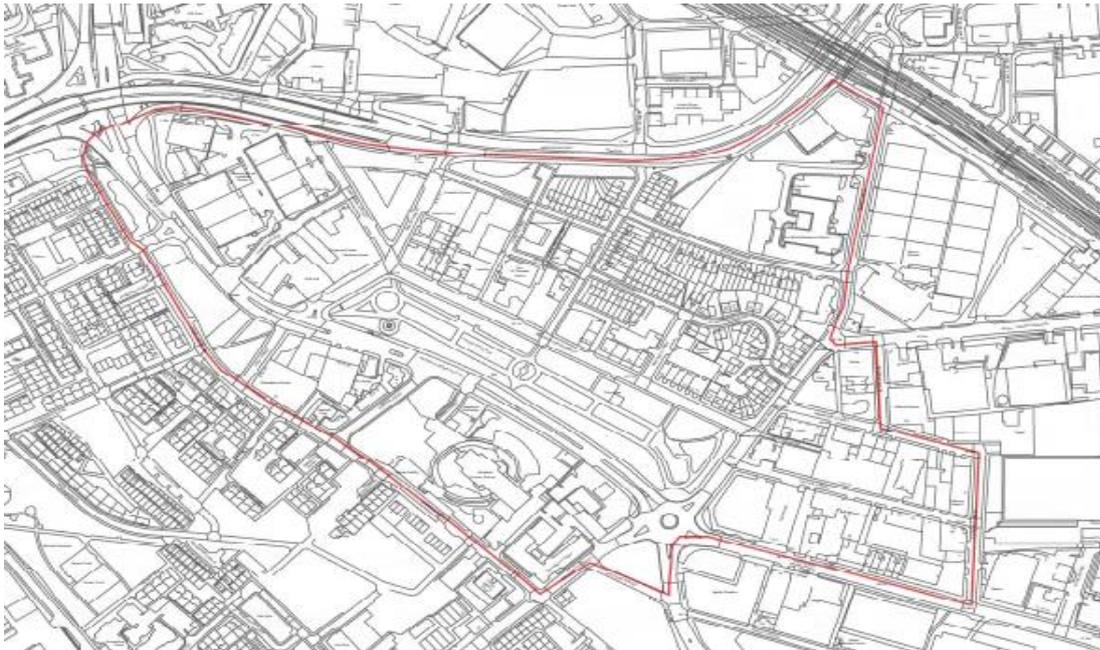
Ardwick Green Park that was originally bordered by a series of Georgian properties that still remain to an extent.

History of the area

- 2.4 Ardwick was first recorded in the 13th century and was recognised as an independent township in the ancient parish of Manchester in the 17th century. Historically, the River Medlock formed a natural boundary to the north of Ardwick, providing a sense of enclosure from the city centre. During the 18th century, the principal focus of the emerging township was 'Ardwick Green'. The three-acre recreation ground was originally created for private, residential use. Georgian townhouses were promptly constructed overlooking the Green, with a number of grand country villas occupying the outskirts.
- 2.5 By the early 19th century, Ardwick had grown from a rural settlement into a pleasant and wealthy suburb of Manchester but the character of Ardwick was transformed as a direct result of industrialisation. By the late 19th century, areas such as Ardwick became populated by the working classes. Large textile warehouses and expansive rows of terrace housing were built on the once open meadowland around Ardwick Green. The former grounds of Ardwick Hall were developed in the early-20th century to form the Empire Music Hall (later renamed the 'New Manchester Hippodrome') and in 1938, the Apollo Theatre was constructed south of the hippodrome. Originally a cinema, the art deco building has become one of Manchester's most notable live music venues and is a significant landmark on the periphery of the NDF area.
- 2.6 Following the Second World War, however, a number of buildings were cleared as a result of German bombing raids and the population of Ardwick dramatically reduced. Between the 1940s and 1960s the majority of the surviving 18th and 19th century properties surrounding the Green were demolished and in part redeveloped with social housing. The introduction of the Mancunian Way in the 1960s drastically altered the townscape and severed the township of Ardwick from Manchester city centre consequently discouraging redevelopment and footfall within the area.

Red Line boundary

- 2.7 The draft Ardwick Green NDF spans the area bounded by the Mancunian Way (A635), Ardwick Green South (A6), Union Street, Harkness Street and Dalberg Street, as shown below:



- 2.8 In addition to the 'core' Ardwick Green area bounded by the Mancunian Way, the A6 (Ardwick Green South and Downing Street) and Higher Ardwick/Union Street, the area to the East of Higher Ardwick (including Palfrey Place, Harkness Street, Dalberg Street and Dolphin Street) was included within the boundary of the NDF as it forms the gateway into the residential area of Ardwick Green and includes some land and property currently in a poor condition. The area to the South of Ardwick Green South was included to join up with the Brunswick PFI area. Longer term the intention is to extend the NDF so that the whole area from Ardwick Green up to West Gorton to the North side of Hyde Road is included. The Ardwick Green NDF is intended as a first phase of this work.

Traffic and parking issues

- 2.9 The Ardwick Green NDF area is bordered by heavy road infrastructure into and out of the City Centre including the major traffic routes of the Mancunian Way and Ardwick Green South. The heavy traffic along these routes creates negative effects for local residents, businesses and pedestrians in terms of air quality, noise and mobility across the area and to surrounding areas.
- 2.10 On street and on pavement parking is a significant issue in Ardwick Green and it appears to be the result of non-residents parking in the area, a common problem for residential areas close to the City Centre. Parking on footways impedes pedestrian movement through the neighbourhood.

3.0 Key Objectives for the Ardwick Green NDF

- 3.1 The aspiration is to see improved social, environmental and economic outcomes from well-designed developments in the local context and a sense of place. The starting point for the NDF is to address concerns, whilst protecting and enhancing the qualities of the local community that have been identified through research and extensive consultation. The draft NDF includes

detailed and targeted objectives that could improve the liveability, functionality, design and connectivity of Ardwick Green. The overarching principles of the draft NDF are:

- **Protect and preserve:** the area is under significant development pressure due its location on the edge of the city centre. To protect and preserve the existing community, any future opportunities could consider whether they are in conflict with the needs of protecting the local area or exacerbating existing problems identified, such as commuter car parking.
- **Positively engage:** in the formulation of site specific development proposals, the Council wish to see early engagement with community and interest groups in the local area to maximise the potential to create positive change, offer and allow for a community-led approach.
- **Enhance:** where there are opportunities for higher density commercial or residential development, the NDF envisions that this development would seek to enhance the level of amenity for the local area, reflect the spatial context in which the opportunity exists and complement existing features and fabric of the area.

Zero Carbon

- 3.2 In July 2019 the City Council declared a Climate Emergency with a stated ambition for the city to become carbon neutral at the earliest possible date. Amongst other things, it set an objective that all new development is to strive to be net zero carbon. Pending the Executive's approval of the Final Action Plan that will detail how Manchester can stay within its carbon budget, it is intended that the updated NDF will seek to minimise carbon emissions from new development.
- 3.3 The objectives contained within the draft NDF aim to create a more sustainable neighbourhood, with communities and lifestyles that have a reduced carbon footprint. Ardwick Green presents an opportunity to bring forward development that responds to the need to reduce carbon output through design and construction methods that utilise cutting edge technologies, and through the creation of mixed-use neighbourhoods providing employment opportunities adjacent to residential development that reduces the dependency on car travel and encourages active travel. The provision of enhanced and well linked green spaces will provide useable amenity space and promote pedestrian movement.

Affordable Housing

- 3.4 The City Council's Executive approved a report in September 2019 that increased the numbers of Affordable Homes in the city to be delivered in the ten-year period to March 2025 to 6,400. In doing so the Executive noted that the delivery of new affordable homes in the city would be dependent on robust partnership relationships with Registered Providers, which currently have the financial and delivery capacity to deliver those homes. The Executive also agreed to an approach to the disposal of sites in Council ownership for the provision of new affordable homes in the city.

- 3.5 Registered Providers One Manchester and Arawak Walton own and manage social housing stock in the residential heart of Ardwick Green. The existing residential stock is mixed in terms of type, tenure and age, some of which could be considered suitable for renewal. The area has the capacity to help achieve the key objective of increasing the quantum of affordable housing with the potential to accommodate new and improved social rented, affordable and market sale homes. The draft NDF envisages the provision of a high quality affordable housing offer close to the city centre.

Transport, movement and connectivity

- 3.6 Accessibility within, to and from the area all present challenges that could be addressed through the principles set out in this NDF. There are illegible walking routes, blocked footpaths from parked cars, severance caused by busy vehicular routes and poorly lit environments. The adjacent highway network is busy and could be adapted to be more balanced in favour of pedestrians and cyclists in order to improve safe and sustainable local connections to key destinations including local services, schools and public transport stops.
- 3.7 The connections ought to be primarily improved by enhancing pedestrian connectivity through enhanced footway provision, improved crossings at junctions and restriction of on street commuter car parking to keep pavements clear. Improving connectivity to and through Ardwick Green could also assist with onward longer journeys made via public transport.
- 3.8 In accordance with planning policy, there ought to be a focus on sustainable modes of transport, particularly active travel. This, in tandem with the sense of place being created, means that there ought to be prioritisation of people friendly streets to create a healthier and more pleasant environment for the local community.

Vision and themes of the draft NDF

- 3.9 The Vision for the area is that Ardwick Green will be enhanced as a vibrant community-led neighbourhood, where the distinctiveness and history of the area is apparent and preserved, whilst it looks forward to a brighter, greener and cleaner future.
- 3.10 There are five themes to the Vision, developed from site analysis and consultation (see section 4 of this report) and are outlined as follows:
- 3.11 **Community-centred activity:** Supporting the aims and ambitions of the passionate local community through continued engagement and participation, when bringing forward development proposals and taking steps to ensure that future development delivers or enhances environmental improvements and community infrastructure.

- 3.12 **Green public place making:** Future development proposals should increase the amount of greenspace, ecology and biodiversity in the NDF area, with an emphasis placed on maintaining the scale of the park. This also includes maintenance by internal and external stakeholders.
- 3.13 **Being ‘Appropriately Ardwick’:** Recognition that Ardwick Green is comprised of smaller, defined character areas (see section 3.13 below)
- 3.14 **Harnessing heritage:** Ardwick Green contains historic buildings of note and interest, including several listed, high-quality Georgian properties surrounding the park. Future activity and development in the area should allow the history of the area and the story of Ardwick Green as a community to be understood.
- 3.15 **A place to live, work and play:** The vision is to retain the mixed residential and commercial character of the area as a whole, preserving and developing the creative industries that have made the area their home and providing a neighbourhood in which they can flourish, alongside a high quality affordable housing offer close to the city centre.

Character areas

- 3.16 Ardwick Green encompasses a diverse range of streets, spaces, residential properties and businesses, whilst offering the opportunity for new development that could enhance its distinctive character, add to the quality of place and improve liveability, if approached in the appropriate way. The draft NDF has been prepared on the basis of distinctive, but interconnected, Character Areas that are each afforded their own nuanced objectives.
- 3.17 **Ardwick Green Park:** the green focal point of the neighbourhood presenting the opportunity to be enhanced and better presented for the benefit of the community.
- 3.18 **Community/cultural hub:** the area between Ardwick Green South and the Brunswick PFI area including the Medlock Primary School, Vallance centre, and the Apollo. The petrol station near the Apollo roundabout is currently the only convenience retail store for the neighbourhood.
- 3.19 **Ardwick Green North** (the residential heart): the area to the north of the green and home to the residential community.
- 3.20 **Ardwick Green South:** the area north of the Medlock Primary school leading down to the Mancunian Way.
- 3.21 **The ‘Knitting District’:** the area around Dolphin Street with Victorian warehouses still largely in manufacturing use.
- 3.22 **Gateway to Ardwick:** the approach from the City Centre to Ardwick Green currently a large modern warehouse district.

3.23 **Union Street:** characterised by modern commercial buildings set out in a business park style.

4.0 Consultation to date

4.1 Manchester City Council officers and Master-planning team partners have been consulting with stakeholders continually throughout the NDF process. An Our Manchester approach of early engagement with stakeholders, including, residents, community groups, local businesses and landowners and Executive and Ward members has been adopted. These have taken place in the form of face-to-face meetings, consultation drop-ins and online.

4.3 The initial stages of consultation (pre Covid) centred on gaining an in-depth understanding from the people who live and work there of the issues and opportunities that are present in the area. At these meetings initial thoughts and drafts of documents were shared and discussed with key stakeholders and feedback and this collaborative working style robustly helped the team to develop the NDF.

4.4 The necessity for social distancing has meant that face to face workshops with those residents that volunteered through the initial stages of the consultation have been replaced with online video meetings and the opportunity for further discussion over email and telephone in order to ascertain views on initial layout proposals.

4.5 The Coronavirus pandemic meant that a planned face to face consultation was moved to an online consultation which was carried out July-August 2020. The public consultation on the Ardwick Green NDF ran from 31st of July to 21st August 2020, via an online questionnaire hosted on Manchester City Council's website. This consultation asked respondents to view the NDF 'Vision', and asked their views on the proposals. In total 35 responses were received from residents, landowners, employees and visitors to the area. This consultation told us that:

- 74 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed with the vision to continue to engage with the community as proposals emerge and recognising the need for new infrastructure to support existing and new parts of the local community.
- 85 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed that Ardwick Green Park should remain a green heart for the community, provide a central point for greening Ardwick and implementing key linkages through environmental improvements to make streets more liveable.
- 62 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed that the area is defined of smaller character areas that need to be appreciated individually so that Ardwick Green can be greater than the sum of its parts.
- 82 per cent expressed strong or very strong support for retaining heritage in the area for the benefit of the local community and allow its history to be understood.

- 65 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed that the NDF should aim to retain and enhance the mixed residential and commercial character of the area as a whole.
- 77 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed that existing residential communities should be preserved and enhanced through the proposals.

5.0 Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to the Executive's approval, the intention is that the draft Ardwick Green NDF will be the subject of a public consultation exercise that will take place between November and the end of December 2020, involving local residents, landowners, businesses, developers, statutory and non-statutory bodies and other local stakeholders.
- 5.2 The consultation process will be designed to raise awareness of the objectives for the Ardwick Green neighbourhood among key audiences, including local stakeholders within the area and a wider audience across the city. Feedback will be gathered to help refine and finalise the NDF with an opportunity for concerns/issues relating to specific areas to be addressed and for consideration to be given to any new suggestions that may enhance the draft proposals.
- 5.3 Once comments have been received and assessed, a final version of the NDF document, incorporating any necessary amendments will be brought back to a future meeting of the Executive for consideration and approval, together with details of an Implementation Strategy for the Ardwick Green to support the delivery of the proposals set out. It is likely that such an Implementation Strategy will need to address issues such as:
- The potential requirement for a Sustainability Framework to underpin ambitions relating to Zero Carbon and the provision of improved green spaces and public realm;
 - The funding and provision of supporting community and social infrastructure including appropriate measures to address the issue of on street parking in the area.

6.0 Contributing to a Zero-Carbon City

- 6.1 As set out above, the draft NDF establishes that future development in Ardwick Green will be required to respond to the City Council's Zero Carbon policy through the use of low carbon technologies and solutions in the design and delivery of buildings and infrastructure. The proposals set out in the draft revisions support the provision of residential and employment uses close to the conurbation core and will promote the use of public transport and active travel routes as the primary means of movement; reducing commuting distances and reliance on private cars as the primary means of transport.

7.0 Contributing to the Manchester Strategy

(a) A thriving and sustainable city

7.1 The objectives will contribute to the delivery of residential and commercial development that will support the city's economic and residential growth objectives and contribute to the continued growth of the local and regional economy.

(b) A highly skilled city

7.2 The objectives of the draft NDF confirm that Ardwick Green will continue to provide new commercial space in line with adopted planning policy to meet demand from existing and newly established businesses, thus creating and sustaining employment opportunities.

(c) A progressive and equitable city

7.3 The draft revisions to the NDF offer the potential to meet Manchester's residential growth targets, contributing to and meeting the demand for new homes in close proximity to the city centre in a range of types and tenures meeting the needs of a growing workforce who wish to live close to the Regional Centre.

(d) A liveable and low carbon city

7.4 The draft revisions to the NDF will support the delivery of high quality residential development using state of the art technologies to reduce the carbon footprint and create neighbourhoods with a range of amenities to support its residents close to the conurbation core. The Ardwick Green park is established as the green heart of the neighbourhood and proposes improvements to it while identifying opportunities for green fingers to spread out and begin to sow seeds of change in the surrounding areas through tree planting and pocket parks.

(e) A connected city

7.5 The draft NDF supports better linkages through the Ardwick Green neighbourhood and beyond which will provide lifestyle benefits, health benefits and improve the overall accessibility of the area through walking, cycling and other modes of active travel.

8.0 Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

8.1 The draft Neighbourhood Development Framework will be consulted on with a wide range of stakeholders, enabling all interested parties to engage in the process.

(b) Risk Management

8.2 Not applicable at this stage of the process.

(c) Legal Considerations

- 8.3 The Executive will receive a final version of the updated Framework early in 2021 which will include the results of the public consultation exercise proposed above. Once the Framework has been approved by the Executive it will become a material consideration for the City Council as Local Planning Authority.