

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Planning Development Control Committee  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Head of Planning Services

### Report Title

**Cornbrook Hub Strategic Regeneration Framework**

### Summary

This report seeks approval of a Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the Cornbrook Hub area of Old Trafford. The SRF would provide the context for future development at the site and allow its full economic, social and environmental potential to be achieved.

### Recommendation(s)

That Committee is recommended to:

1. Endorse, in principle, the new Strategic Regeneration Framework for The Cornbrook Hub site; and,
2. Request the Chief Executive to undertake a public consultation exercise on the SRF with local residents, businesses and stakeholders, and to report back to Planning Development Control Committee on the outcome of the consultation.

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

**Name:** Rob Haslam  
**Extension:** 4788

### Background Papers:

Cornbrook Hub Strategic Regeneration Framework – November 2013 (Manchester Ship Canal Developments / 5plus Architects).

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	Economic Growth and Development; Safe Place to Live - Fighting Crime;
Financial	None directly from this report.
Legal Implications	None directly from this report.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None directly from this report.
Sustainability Implications	None directly from this report.
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	None directly from this report.
Risk Management Implications	None directly from this report.
Health and Safety Implications	None directly from this report.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Cornbrook and St Georges area is situated on the fringe of the city centre and is part of a ribbon of development around the Bridgewater Canal and railway lines that links the city centre with other parts of the regional centre within Salford and Trafford. Whilst the Cornbrook/St Georges area has many attributes including the presence of a Metrolink station, and has benefited from some development within Manchester, principally residentially led, it is unlikely that significant and comprehensive change can or will take place here in the absence of a coordinated approach to its regeneration.
- 1.2 Manchester Ship Canal Developments (MSCD) which is owned by Peel (51%) and Manchester Mortgage Company (49%) has a significant land holding in this area, within both Manchester and Trafford, and they propose to develop large scale residential schemes on the Pomona site within Trafford. As part of their broader strategy, they have identified the area around the Cornbrook Metrolink station as a place where early activity and intervention could act as a catalyst to redevelopment within the broader area.
- 1.3 In order to drive this forward, MSCD has produced a regeneration framework for Cornbrook to identify how the area could be transformed to create a new place. The area is located at a strategically important gateway to the city centre. It is adjacent to Chester Road, the Bridgewater Canal and the Cornbrook Metrolink station and is situated partly in Manchester and partly in Trafford. It contains around 2.3 hectares (ha) of land that is divided into three distinct parcels by an operational railway viaduct that is used by heavy rail and the Metrolink system. The land in Manchester is around 1 ha and bounded by Chester Road, the railway viaduct and Cornbrook Road. It is largely vacant with some land occupied by a mix of low grade uses.
- 1.4 The remaining land is in Trafford, bounded by the Bridgewater Canal and the viaduct and divided into two parcels by Cornbrook Road. The northern part is 1.10 ha and is occupied by heavy industrial uses and the southern part is around 0.21 ha and is vacant.
- 1.5 The existing uses comprise heavy industrial and low grade activity and in this sense the area is typical of a city centre fringe location. The scrap metal and

open storage yards detract from the environmental quality of the area and contribute little to the economy or the environment. The area is therefore very different in its character and appearance to areas that have been successfully regenerated elsewhere within and around the regional centre. The St. Georges area immediately to the north had very similar characteristics, but, as stated above, has now been regenerated as a residential location with over 1,000 apartments along with office space and retail and leisure facilities. The Cornbrook Metrolink station functions as an interchange facility within the Metrolink network, and whilst it does have ground level access from Cornbrook Rd, the general lack of activity and the poor quality and hostile nature of the environment mean that the station is underused.

- 1.6 The area of Trafford covered by the Cornbrook Hub SRF includes a Grade II listed structure known as Brindley's Weir. This is Mid-18<sup>th</sup> Century culvert basin and drain sump, designed to allow the Corn Brook to flow under the Bridgewater Canal. The basin and drain sump represent an important example of ancillary canal engineering associated with James Brindley, one of the most important engineers of the canal era.

## **2.0 Proposals**

- 2.1 The redevelopment would need to be of sufficient scale to transform and regenerate the area and deliver the step change required to ensure that Cornbrook becomes a place where people choose to live, work and invest and complements regeneration in the broader area. The SRF explains that a regenerated site could deliver:

- a new gateway to the city centre and an enhanced Cornbrook Metrolink Station;
- high density of commercial mixed use development and distinctive architecture;
- new uses that would add vitality to the area including residential, office space, retail, hotel, and community facilities; a high quality environment with the highest possible standards of urban design reflecting local distinctiveness with well-designed and integrated public space;
- around 1,750 new jobs during construction and upon occupation;
- enhanced public realm around Cornbrook Metrolink station, to drive increased patronage and create investor and occupier confidence;
- an area that is integrated and well connected with its surroundings;
- the replacement of incompatible land uses with high quality buildings within a much higher quality environment; and
- the reuse of the railway arches; improved permeability through the site providing improved access to the Metrolink Station, the Bridgewater Canal and Irwell River Park and associated pedestrian / cycling routes and the provision of local amenities for the community.

- 2.2 The SRF recommends that the area could accommodate a variety of uses including residential, retail, offices, hotel, community facilities and a range of uses that could support nearby residential communities. The precise location, distribution and balance of uses would be the subject of further detailed consideration, but the overall objective is to create a commercially-led mixed

use scheme. The land within Manchester has been identified as being suitable for the provision of a hotel, due to its proximity to the Metrolink station, and to the range of activities and attractions that are available across the regional centre, and this could be the anchor use on this site. It is envisaged that the arches could accommodate a range of temporary and permanent uses and help to drive footfall to areas beyond. Buildings on the land within Manchester could be of a higher density and scale than elsewhere within the area in order to mark the gateway to the city centre.

- 2.3 The land within Trafford has been identified as being suitable primarily for the provision of office and business suites. The SRF identifies approximately 19,00sqm of B1 office floorspace being developed on the land within Trafford across 4 buildings either side of Cornbrook Road.
- 2.4 The provision of retail space is considered to be crucial to the creation of a vital and vibrant place. Retail activity would enliven the ground floor environment, promote pedestrian movements and act as a catalyst for the other uses on the site. The retail offer would include specialist local independent retailers and modest food-led convenience, in a range of accommodation from purpose built units to 'pods' inserted within railway arches. The public realm could accommodate temporary events which would help to establish a destination at weekends and evenings throughout the year.
- 2.5 A variety of lease structures would be offered to encourage a mix of retail uses including flexible and turnover related deals for local traders, with long term leases for larger established retail operators. Convenience retailing would be targeted at and provide top-up shopping facilities for nearby communities, new residents and Metrolink users.
- 2.6 It is proposed to open up some of the railway arches to improve access and permeability. A direct pedestrian linkage would be created through the site linking residential communities to the pedestrian/cycle routes alongside the Bridgewater Canal. Connectivity to St Georges Island, Pomona Island and Timber Wharf would also be enhanced.

### **3.0 Delivery Strategy**

- 3.1 It would be necessary to manage the relocation of the existing uses on the site and to ensure that more sustainable and appropriate accommodation is identified for those seeking to relocate.
- 3.2 Development parameters are provided in the SRF that would help to deliver the overall vision and guide the preparation and submission of detailed development proposals. This would inevitably be a complex process that would involve two distinct phases. Firstly, preparation works would need to be undertaken across the whole site including any necessary remediation and the provision of infrastructure. Subsequent phases of development would need to be brought forward alongside a strategy for interim uses on residual land. It is envisaged that the area in Manchester would be developed as the first phase. This would create a mass of activity and create an environment

and the conditions that are required to support the development of subsequent phases in Trafford. The 'meanwhile/interim' uses would help to bring visitors to the site to help restore and promote the regeneration of the Cornbrook area.

- 3.3 Essentially, the SRF envisages that the development within Manchester (including the railway arches) would come forward in the first 5 years, with the office elements in Trafford coming forward over the next 5 to 15 years.
- 3.4 The sites within Trafford identified by the Cornbrook Hub SRF for offices are proposed to be allocated as such in the draft Trafford Local Plan: Land Allocations which is currently out for consultation. Policy EM3.2 Cornbrook Station Office Area allocates the land for offices (Use Class B1) and small scale ancillary/community uses (Use Classes A1, A2, A3, D1 and D2) limited to a level to meet the needs of the occupiers. The land also lies within the Pomona Strategic Location covered by Core Strategy SL1 and draft Land Allocations Plan Policy POM1, the latter of which seeks to deliver 20,000sqm of office floorspace in the Plan Period. Consultation on the draft Land Allocations Plan runs until 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The full regeneration benefits of the development of the Cornbrook Hub can only be achieved if there is certainty in relation to the delivery of a comprehensive scheme, and therefore secure the satisfactory development of the site. The SRF provides a vision of how the area could be developed in order to create a new place and provide significant regeneration benefits within both Manchester and Trafford.
- 4.2 It would be important to ensure that any new development is of the highest quality and the initial phase, which would almost certainly be within Manchester, must create a critical mass of economic activity to act as a catalyst and promote and encourage investment and growth opportunities within the broader area.
- 4.3 The SRF promotes well connected development opportunities that would complement successful regeneration in nearby areas, including the development of the wider Pomona site and support the ongoing role of the city centre as the driving force of the regional economy.
- 4.4 The sustainability and long-term success of this site will depend upon its full integration into the physical and economic fabric of the area. It will also be important to ensure that the area is properly connected to adjacent communities in Manchester and Old Trafford, so that residents can benefit from the job opportunities that will be created.
- 4.5 Subject to endorsement by the Planning Development Control Committee, the framework will go out to public consultation. A further report will be brought back to the Committee in due course detailing responses to the consultation exercise.

# Site Plan

