

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 26 February 2024
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration

Report Title

Draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Draft Trafford Wharfside Masterplan

Summary

This report provides an update on the Draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Draft Trafford Wharfside Masterplan studies that are key documents in setting the future development potential of this strategically important area.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (i) Approves that the Draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Draft Trafford Wharfside Masterplan go out to public consultation.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Stephen James (Head of Growth, Communities and Housing)
Rebecca Coley (Head of Planning and Development)

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework

Appendix 2: Draft Trafford Wharfside Masterplan

Appendix 3: Draft Trafford Wharfside Masterplan - Parameters Plans

Implications:

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	The Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Masterplan documents both support the Council's corporate priorities of 'Reducing health inequalities', 'Supporting people out of poverty' and 'Addressing our climate crisis' by setting a vision and framework that promotes places where people can be active, where affordable quality homes can be developed and contains measures that will reduce the borough carbon footprint.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	At a GM level the Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Masterplan documents will support the growth ambitions articulated within the Places for Everyone Plan (PfE) and the GM Strategy.
Financial	Both documents have been funded by a mix of external grants, partner contributions and reserves. The consultation will be funded from existing budgets.
Legal Implications:	None arising specifically from the content of this report. The Masterplan will need to be adopted in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) as it will be part of the Trafford Design Code and thus a Supplementary Planning Document.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Both documents support the Corporate Equality Strategy 2021-25 in promoting the development of accessible places, supporting the emerging Design Code that will include guidance on improving accessibility in developments
Sustainability Implications	The Draft Framework and Masterplan will be underpinned by sustainability principles both in the specifics of new development and also in the promotion of, for example, active travel.
Carbon Reduction	The Framework encourages greater use of public transport and active travel in accessing local amenities. Potential future development could encourage less reliance on the use of private vehicles from people living, working, and visiting Wharfside.
Resource Implications e.g., Staffing / ICT / Assets	Existing staff resources are in place to facilitate the public consultation activity and adoption of the

	Framework and Masterplan. The Masterplan will be accessible via the digital platform for the Trafford Design Code.
Risk Management Implications	None as a consequence of this report.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None as a consequence of this report.
Health and Safety Implications	None as a consequence of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Trafford Wharfside area (study area c87ha – see section 2.2 Appendix 1) represents a major development and regeneration site in the borough due to its size, strategic position on the southern bank of the Manchester Ship Canal, opportunities for future residential, employment and mixed uses, and home to major businesses such as Manchester United. Due to the area’s mixed-use potential, and the need to set an overall strategy to guide future development, the Trafford Wharfside Development Framework (see Appendix 1) was commissioned in Spring 2022 to set the vision for the area and how it should operate as a ‘place’. Potential development sites have also been identified set in the context of an overarching plan that complements policy and provides guidance to landowners/potential developers.
- 1.2 Due to the strategic importance of the Wharfside area, the draft Framework has been produced in partnership with key stakeholders i.e. Peel Group, Manchester United Football Club and Salford City Council. As the Framework was underway, production of the Trafford Design Code was near completion and responding to a specific request from the DLUC as part of the Design Code Pathfinder Programme, a Masterplan for the Wharfside area (see Appendix 2) was commissioned in May 2023, The work on the Trafford Design Code identified a gap in the baseline information for the Trafford Wharfside area, which went beyond the brief for the Development Framework, broadly corresponding with Coding Process 2C - Master planning in the National Model Design Code (NMDC). Whereas the Development Framework sets out the broad scope of the ‘what’ and ‘where’, including public realm and other ground level interventions; the Masterplan builds that up into a more detailed assessment of development potential, the mitigation of existing constraints, parameters and robust urban design principles.
- 1.3 The Masterplan therefore will form part of the Trafford Design Code which means it, like the Design Code, will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document but will also be a ‘digital first’ document bolted onto and accessible via the Design Code website. Both the Framework and Masterplan will serve as an evidence base

document for the emerging Trafford Local Plan, and specifically Policies TP2 – Trafford Wharfside and Pomona; and AF2 – Trafford Wharfside.

- 1.4 The Trafford Wharfside Framework and Trafford Wharfside Masterplan, together with the Design Code, will enable the Council to steer and support the delivery of transformational change of exemplar design quality across the Wharfside area.

2.0 Draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Trafford Wharfside Masterplan

2.1 Draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework

As identified above, the key function of the Framework is to set the overall vision for the Wharfside area and to guide future development, focusing on how the area should operate as a 'place'. In identifying this, the key sections of the Framework are as follows:

- Section 4 – Strategic regeneration context
- Section 5 – Local context and spatial analysis
- Section 6 – Strategic placemaking principles/placemaking vision
- Section 7 – Delivery and phasing
- Section 8 – Public realm and placemaking framework

In setting the Vision for the Wharfside area, a number of placemaking making principles were identified:

- placing nature and landscape at the heart of the vision,
- connecting and celebrating the waterfront,
- creating a place defined by its streets,
- connecting Wharfside to the city,
- framing key landmarks, and
- creating opportunities to facilitate a healthy, active and engaged community.

Based on those principles, and the Wharfside's excellent connectivity both in terms of transport and access to employment and leisure centres, the area offers an opportunity to create a new place which balances major destination places with more community focused spaces. Therefore, the vision for Wharfside area is for it to become a dynamic and ultra-connected network of 5-minute communities where all amenities, landmarks and public spaces are easily accessed within 5 mins walk. These 5-minute communities would come together to connect the whole of the Wharfside area, with amenities and public open space being strategically paced where these communities meet. Ultimately, the vision will create a greener, more natural place

which offers a balance between engaged community spaces and major global destination spaces. The result will be an attractive, connected and natural place to live, visit and dwell.

In terms of delivering future development, the Framework identifies the potential for the area by broad uses (i.e. commercial, residential, mixed-use and sports uses) as shown in 7.1 Appendix 1. This is then followed by a number of principles and considerations as to how delivery and phasing of development could be supported/achieved. The Framework identifies the following delivery principles:

- **Climate Resilience:** Ensuring that any delivery within Trafford Wharfside contributes positively to addressing the climate emergency.
- **Collaboration and Partnership:** Making the most of opportunities to work collaboratively to share resources and accelerate, positively shape, secure 'marriage value' and refine delivery.
- **Positivity and Problem Solving:** Approaching delivery positively and having a 'can do attitude' to solving problems and overcoming barriers.
- **Commitment and Focus:** A shared long-term commitment to responding to the challenges and opportunities identified and driving forward delivery.
- **Innovation and Creativity:** Experimenting with innovative project ideas and exploring innovative approaches to leverage funding; and,
- **Agility and Pace:** Working rapidly together to deliver change and continuously reviewing projects to ensure they respond to changing needs.

The delivery strategy (see 7.2 Appendix 1) details an approach for sites in both private and Council ownership. This includes the use of a proactive and clear development control/management approach to private development to ensure positive outcomes in line with the Framework's objectives; and potential tools that could be used should the Council wish to acquire sites, including option agreements/deferred purchase and compulsory purchase orders, and potential funding sources. Where sites are in Council ownership the strategy identifies a number of delivery routes including self-delivery, joint venture, development agreement, land sale, and strategic master developer. The strategy also covers public realm creation/ improvement and identifies Section 106 contributions as a source of funding for this work (though does highlight the need for budgets for ongoing maintenance/ management).

As an overarching approach to development and delivery in the Wharfside area, the Framework identifies that development should be primarily focused along the waterfront and stadium zone, leading outwards over time.

Following on from the delivery and phasing element, the Framework also identifies five-character areas (see 8.15 Appendix 1) that reflect different scale, character and uses. The Framework identifies potential uses in each of the character areas which consist of:

- (i) Trafford Wharf – north area of Wharfside bordering the Manchester Ship Canal.
- (ii) Heritage Quarter – adjacent to Trafford Wharf.
- (iii) Stadium District – Manchester United area.
- (iv) Innovation Quarter – western area of Wharfside.
- (v) Wharfside Heart – connects the four other character areas together

The remaining section 8 provides detailed proposals for improving the public realm in a number of key areas in Wharfside, improving connections to Salford, targeting ‘streets’ improvements, proposals to prioritise walking and cycling, identification of key heritage assets and how all can improve sustainability and wellbeing.

2.2 Draft Wharfside Masterplan

The Trafford Wharfside Masterplan demonstrates through a set of urban design principles how a new community can be delivered at Trafford Wharfside. This is shown on a suite of plans as follows:

- An overall masterplan showing development blocks, public open space, greening opportunities and public realm.
- A plot boundaries plan demonstrating that each land ownership parcel is capable of being delivered independently and equitably.
- A land use plan showing areas for residential development, commercial development, a new school and a mobility hub.
- An open space plan showing the location, size and type of open space and public realm.
- A building heights plan showing the maximum expected heights of buildings, ranging from 6 storeys to 30 storeys.
- A building types plan showing a mix of building forms, types and layouts, including townhouses; different apartment types; commercial buildings and buildings which are to be retained.

The Masterplan is underpinned by a series of ‘plot development plans’ as detailed in the Parameters Plans (see Appendix 3) which show how development could come forward on each individual plot. This is to demonstrate that plots can come forward equitably, with each site contributing to the wider whole. These Parameters Plans, and the Masterplan as a whole, has taken into account developer and landowner aspirations for sites, where these are known.

Very indicatively, the Masterplan demonstrates that the capacity of the Wharfside area for residential development (assuming no residential south of Wharfside Way) is c. 5,000 units. The majority of these would be apartments but in order to deliver a mixed community around 250 townhouses are assumed. The apartment mix is indicatively 30% 1 bed, 50% 2 bed, 15% 3 bed and 5% 4 bed. The dwelling mix is indicative and would ultimately be controlled by development plan policy.

It is not expected that all 5,000 units would be delivered in a plan period (usually 15 years). The approach taken here is similar to the Civic Quarter Area Action Plan. The overall development capacity of the area has been calculated via a masterplanning exercise. This will need to be followed in due course by a housing trajectory (as part of a future Local Plan process) to understand the amount and phasing of future development in the area. It is likely, however, that this will be similar to the Civic Quarter with around 2500 units being able to be delivered in plan period and the remainder thereafter.

There is currently a lack of green open spaces in the Wharfside area and these will need to be created to serve the new community. The open space shown on the Masterplan includes a number of areas and types of open space, including parks, urban civic spaces and tree protection areas. A substantive (1 hectare) new linear park and view corridor between Manchester United and the Imperial War Museum North is shown together with the greening of the Manchester Ship Canal and Bridgewater Canal corridors and new areas of public realm. The equitable nature of the Masterplan means that where sites are expected to deliver new public open space, they are also able to build out the remainder of their site at a higher density – normally equating to a taller building.

It is anticipated that the area can accommodate a large number of tall buildings, ranging from 6 storeys to 30 storeys. The heights plan's shows the locations of tall buildings, and how height is expected to be distributed across the Wharfside area. This is important to deliver a new planned and coherent skyline and respect the setting of assets such as Victoria Warehouse and IWMN. The skyline is important, but where very high-density developments are delivered, they need to be masterplanned to ensure that land is used efficiently whilst also creating an attractive and sustainable place. The appearance of the buildings on the skyline is important, but the quality of the development at ground level – where people interact directly with those buildings, is just as vital and can often be an afterthought.

Unlike the Development Framework, and with the exception of showing greening of the Bridgewater Canal corridor, the area of the Masterplan has been limited to land north of Wharfside Way due to a lack of information from a key landowner. If this

position changes, then the Masterplan could be updated in the future to include the area not covered.

3.0 Trafford Planning Policy and Status of the Framework and Masterplan

3.1 Planning Policy Framework in Trafford

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (hereafter referred to as 'the Act') requires that "where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise".

Section 38(3) of the Act states that outside of Greater London the development plan (in England) comprises:

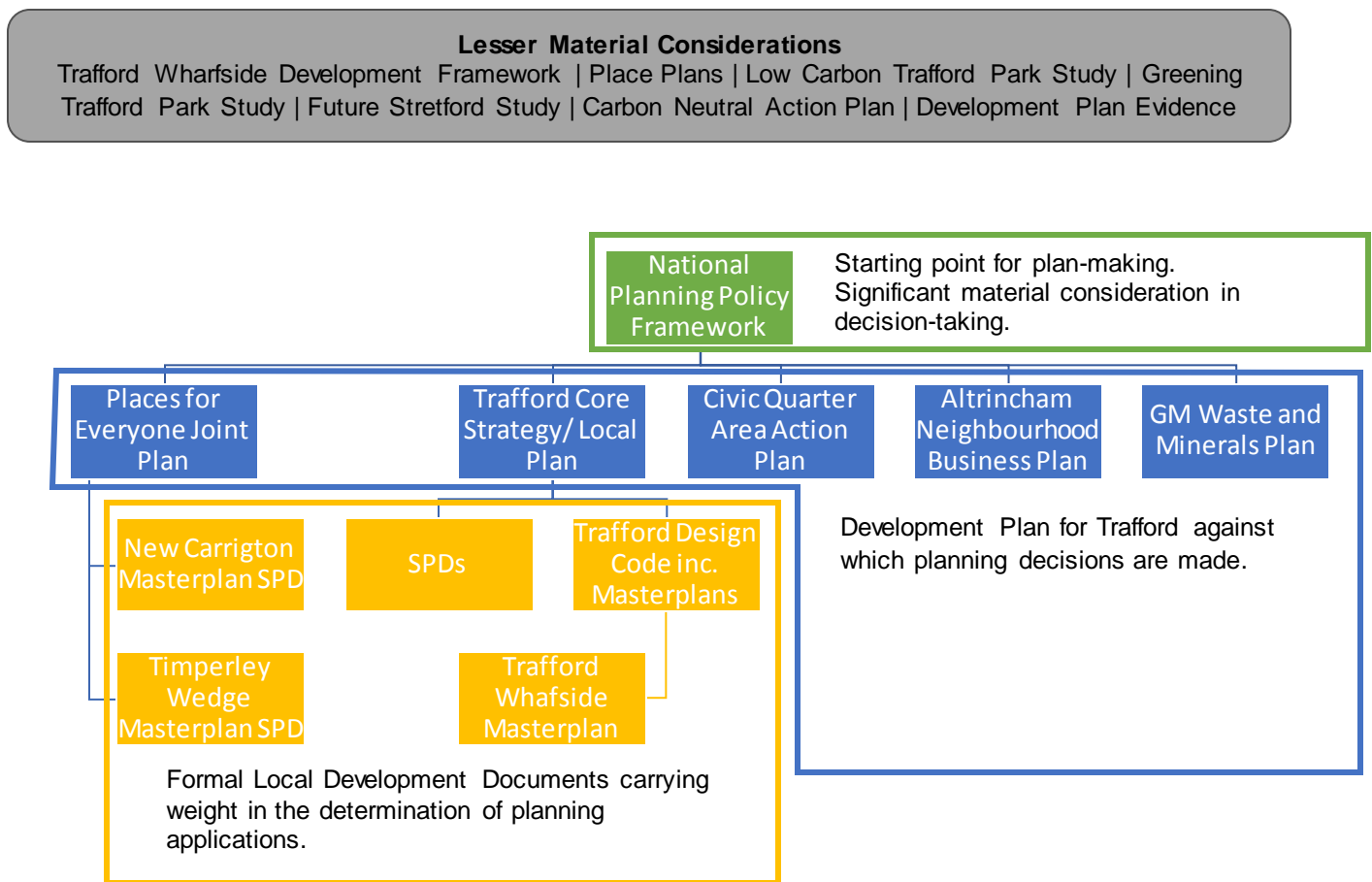
- Development plan documents (taken as a whole) which have been adopted or approved in relation to that area; and
- The neighbourhood development plans which have been made in relation to that area.

Planning decisions can therefore only be made against the adopted Development Plan. There are however other layers to planning policy at both a national and local level, which as not part of the Development Plan are 'material considerations' to be weighed in the planning balance.

The planning policy framework for Trafford is thus made of statutory development plan documents (DPDs), national planning policy and other Local Development Documents (LDDs), such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Below all of these 'planning documents' sit a raft of other place-based and/or planning related information which may also be material considerations in the planning balance, albeit to a lesser extent.

Figure 1 below depicts the current and emerging planning policy framework in Trafford:

Figure 1: Trafford Planning Policy Framework



3.2 Policy Context for Trafford Wharfside

Trafford Wharfside is identified as a Strategic Location in the adopted Core Strategy (2012) alongside five other locations in the borough. Policy SL2 of the Core Strategy sets out that the area will be promoted “for the creation of a mixed-use area of regional and international significance. The focus will be on opportunities for new economic (particularly digital and media industries), leisure (hotels and visitor attractions) and residential development”. In particular, Policy SL2 considered that the area could deliver 10 ha of (mainly) B1 office and light industrial uses, leisure (including hotels), 900 new homes and ancillary/ supporting retail and community uses.

Little of this transformational development has been delivered and Core Strategy policy SL2 is now somewhat out of date; primarily because it will partially be replaced by Places for Everyone policies JP-Strat 1: Core Growth Area and JP-Strat 3: The Quays, which have been informed by (among other things) an updated assessment of housing land and delivery in the area. Policy JP-Strat 1 sets out that the economic role of the Core Growth Area will be protected and enhanced and will be complemented by a significant increase in the number and range of homes. The

increase in anticipated homes, must not be at the expense of the area's economic function. Policy JP-Strat 3 encompasses some of the Trafford Wharfside Strategic Location and establishes that area as continuing to develop as an economic location of national significance characterised by a wide mix of uses, ranging from business and housing to leisure and tourism.

This future direction of travel for Trafford Wharfside is also reiterated in the draft Trafford Local Plan (2021), where along with Pomona, it forms one of Trafford's 12 Places that will (among things) deliver an attractive, functional and innovative mixed-use neighbourhood. Trafford Wharfside is also identified as the second Area of Focus (AF2) for the borough, capable of delivering approximately 2,000 new homes, 25,000 sqm of office space alongside 2.3 ha of new open space and/or green infrastructure.

3.3 Planning Status

Neither the Development Framework nor the Masterplan have been or will be prepared as Development Plan Documents and will therefore not form part of Trafford's Development Plan.

Paragraph 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *"design guides and codes can be prepared at an area-wide, neighbourhood or site-specific scale, and to carry weight in decision-making should be produced either as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents"*.

The Development Framework has in many cases already served its purpose, resulting in a Masterplan for the area being created. As illustrated in Figure 1, it has not been prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and as such will have no formal planning status. It will serve as an informative place-based document which will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and may help to inform the Trafford Local Plan.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the Masterplan is a chapter of the Trafford Design Code, which upon the advice of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was expanded to specifically address the Trafford Wharfside area. The Design Code is being prepared as an SPD and will carry weight in the determination of planning applications. As a chapter of the Design Code SPD, although prepared separately, the Trafford Wharfside Masterplan will also have SPD status.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Following Executive approval, it is proposed to carry out an online consultation on the draft Framework and Masterplan using Citizen Space. It is anticipated this will commence early March 2024 for a six-week period. Following the consultation period, all comments will be reviewed and both documents will be amended where practicable and necessary. It is then aimed to take the final Framework and Masterplan to the Executive for approval in summer 2024.

5.0 Wider Corporate Links

- 5.1 The draft Framework and Masterplan are consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan and vision '...where all our residents, businesses and communities prosper'. They also complement the sub-regional Places for Everyone plan.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 Throughout the production of the Trafford Wharfside Development Framework the consultants regularly engaged with the three partners/stakeholders (i.e. Peel Group, Manchester United Football Club and Salford City Council). The consultants engaged with stakeholders at regular project meetings and independently, meeting key individuals from each organisation (including Trafford Council) to discuss proposals and provide input into the options for their sites. Further consultation was carried out with other Wharfside stakeholders, such as TfGM, in the development of the Development Framework. The consultants sent correspondence to landowners informing them of the process and offering an opportunity to take part in a one-to-one meeting with the project team to discuss proposals, as they had done with the key stakeholders.
- 6.2 The development of the Wharfside Masterplan has been mindful of the feedback given by stakeholders and consultees on the Development Framework. In addition, a Member briefing has been held with Ward Members for Gorse Hill and Cornbrook; Longford and Old Trafford, and the Executive Member for Economy and Regeneration. Interested developers and landowners have been invited to individual pre-consultation briefings with officers. The bulk of the consultation on the Masterplan will however be carried out following the approval of the consultation draft.

7.0 Other Options

- 7.1 The main option is not to consult on the Framework and Masterplan but this would undermine the robustness of the documents in terms of gaining views/comments and ultimately support. To be able to be adopted as an SPD, the Masterplan must be consulted upon in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the Council's

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). To future proof the Masterplan from potential changes to the planning system, it is recommended that consultation takes place for a period of not less than six weeks.

8.0 Reasons for Recommendation

8.1 The Executive is asked to approve the public consultation of the draft Trafford Wharfside Development Framework and Trafford Wharfside Masterplan in order to ensure a robust process before final approval by the Executive, and to meet requirements under relevant planning regulations.

Key Decision No


If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?

In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Finance Officer Clearance *PC*

Legal Officer Clearance *IA*

DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.