

CIVIC QUARTER AREA ACTION PLAN

TRAFFORD COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE INSPECTOR'S MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

Matter 12 – Appendix 1 - The Neighbourhoods

DATE: March 2022

Introduction:

This hearing statement has been prepared by Trafford Council in response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination hearing sessions. It addresses Matter 12: The Neighbourhoods – Appendix 1.

The following key documents are relevant to this response:

- The Civic Quarter Area Action Plan Regulation 19 Version (January 2021)
A01
- Proposed list of minor modifications (November 2021) – see Matter 1 hearing statement
- Proposed further list of minor modifications (March 2022) – see Matter 1 hearing statement

12.1 *Does the Plan provide appropriate and realistic planning guidance in relation to the overall vision and detailed suggestions for specific sites for the following neighbourhoods:*

A: Central Neighbourhood

B: Southern Neighbourhood

C: Western Neighbourhood

D: Northern Neighbourhood

E: Eastern Neighbourhood

12.1.1 Yes. The Area Action Plan, as a development plan document, comprises a number of component parts. This includes a Vision for the Civic Quarter and then 11 area-wide policies. Policy CQ1 – the first in the document – embodies and secures the preceding Area Action Plan Vision, and then the remainder of the policies follow. Policy CQ1 refers to the three parameter plans forming part of the policy. Policy CQ1 thus expresses through its plans much guidance for the individual neighbourhoods.

12.1.2 Appendix 1: “The Neighbourhoods” considers each neighbourhood in turn. The five neighbourhoods were devised having regard to their geographical location, their similar existing attributes, and the ability to form part of a regenerated neighbourhood with shared characteristics but which would assimilate well with each adjoining neighbourhood. For each of the five neighbourhoods, Appendix 1 includes two images based on the same single option for its redevelopment. These are described as ‘illustrative masterplan’ and ‘illustrative landscape masterplan’. Consistent with their titles, these images are purely indicative in showing how the intent of the Area Action Plan, the parameter plans and the policies may be carried through. Their focus is on the arrangement of buildings, open spaces and routes, and some symbols are used to denote particular uses or to show heritage or other assets.

12.1.3 Those illustrative masterplans have been informed by the basic principles and approach of the Area Action Plan regarding the amount of development that can be accommodated, together with objectives and intentions surrounding building heights, design principles, improved connectivity, the provision of open space, and the incorporation of a mix of uses (as informed by the evidence base and the vision of the Area Action Plan). They are considered to be helpful in establishing a potential layout, both for individual sites and also the neighbourhood as a whole. They seek to establish a framework for development, in terms of the use of perimeter blocks, the need for enhanced permeability through each neighbourhood and for better

connectivity between the neighbourhoods (including improved pedestrian junctions) as required by the policies of the Area Action Plan, and a density of development that would still allow for intervening green spaces and green infrastructure (including public and private amenity space, and public parks). However, the masterplans do not impose a layout for any site, including sites that are central to the Area Action Plan's ambitions. It is the intention that the detailed design of all sites would develop through the development management process, including at pre-application stage. With this in mind, the Area Action Plan does not seek to establish a required structure for each neighbourhood. Should individual developers/landowners need to work in partnership to secure a more extensive redevelopment which would deliver the objectives of the Area Action Plan (for example, to ensure the delivery of open space or the Exhibition Walk), again this would be achieved through development management negotiations.

12.1.4 Whilst this flexibility in approach to the neighbourhood guidance is still promoted, on reflection it is considered that it might be helpful for the Area Action Plan to make it clear that applications need to consider the 'bigger picture'. This could take the form of some additional text in Policy CQ1 that would highlight the need for each individual scheme coming forward to be consistent with, and not to prejudice, the appropriate comprehensive development of adjoining plots. It has always been the intention that bespoke, cross-site arrangements between developers/landowners would be encouraged to ensure that developments would dovetail. However, again, this could be made more explicit in the text (to Policy CQ1) if considered necessary. Suggested wording covering both elements could be, as follows: 'Development should be designed such that it would not prejudice the comprehensive development of the Civic Quarter or the ability of neighbouring development sites to come forward in accordance with the vision of the Area Action Plan. Development schemes shall be resisted where there is evidence that a more comprehensive development would better meet the objectives for the Civic Quarter'. Please note that these changes have not yet been incorporated within the suggested list of minor modifications, but could form part of a further list.

12.1.5 The written text accompanying the masterplans outlines the main opportunities for each neighbourhood, particularly in relation to key development sites, and then they also set some guidance for the height and scale of new development and how particular locations within each neighbourhood may be developed consistent with the parameter plans. Some landscape design principles, unique to each neighbourhood, are then put forward (for the treatment of streets and spaces, the approach to car parking, to boundary treatments, trees and planting, and the selection of materials). Again, the text is intended to provide helpful guidance in interpreting the masterplans and informing the evolution of planning proposals, but is not

intended to be prescriptive. This text is supported by the other remaining appendices of the Area Action Plan, Appendix 2: Design Code, and Appendix 3: Public Realm Code. The Council's position regarding the Design Code in particular is set out in its response to Matter 6.6.

12.1.6 Some further adjustments to Appendix 1 are suggested. These changes have been categorised as minor modifications, and affect both the images and the accompanying text. The changes have come about to respond to matters raised in representations, for the purposes of clarification or update, or to ensure consistency with the rest of the Area Action Plan's contents. The proposed minor modifications affecting Appendix 1 include those which were identified at the time of the Area Action Plan's Submission, as well as those which have been identified more recently, including as part of the preparation of Statements of Common Ground.

12.1.7 Overall, it is considered that the Area Action Plan, as a whole, provides a suitable and realistic framework to guide future development within the Civic Quarter. The overall vision is consistently carried through throughout the eleven policies and three parameter plans, and then with detail applied within the Appendices, including for the five neighbourhoods. Whilst this detail has no policy status, it is a helpful and informed suggestion to guide continued discussions. However, the development management process would be used to confirm all matters of design detail, on the expectation that each proposal coming forward would, as a minimum, be in conformity with the Area Action Plan's policies and parameter plans.