



# Birmingham Smithfield

## The visioning document

March 2015



# Foreword

It is an exciting time for Birmingham. The City is experiencing unprecedented levels of investment in infrastructure and major new development schemes are coming to fruition. Coupled with the wealth of existing cultural and economic assets Birmingham's national and international standing is going from strength to strength.

Cities cannot however stand still and in an ever globalised world they need to look to the future and at opportunities that can enhance their position and diversify their offer.

Birmingham Smithfield, encompassing one of the largest redevelopment sites in single ownership in the country created by the planned relocation of the wholesale markets, presents one such opportunity to build upon our recent successes and deliver a truly unique asset for the City.

Drawing upon the vibrant heritage as the home of markets and location of the historic medieval manor house and moat, Birmingham Smithfield calls on the area's original name. Building upon this rich heritage, Birmingham Smithfield can strengthen the City's position creating a successful new destination with vibrant markets, integration of Midland Metro, a major new public space with Market Square, new activities to diversify the City's offer including a family leisure quarter and new pedestrian routes and spaces.

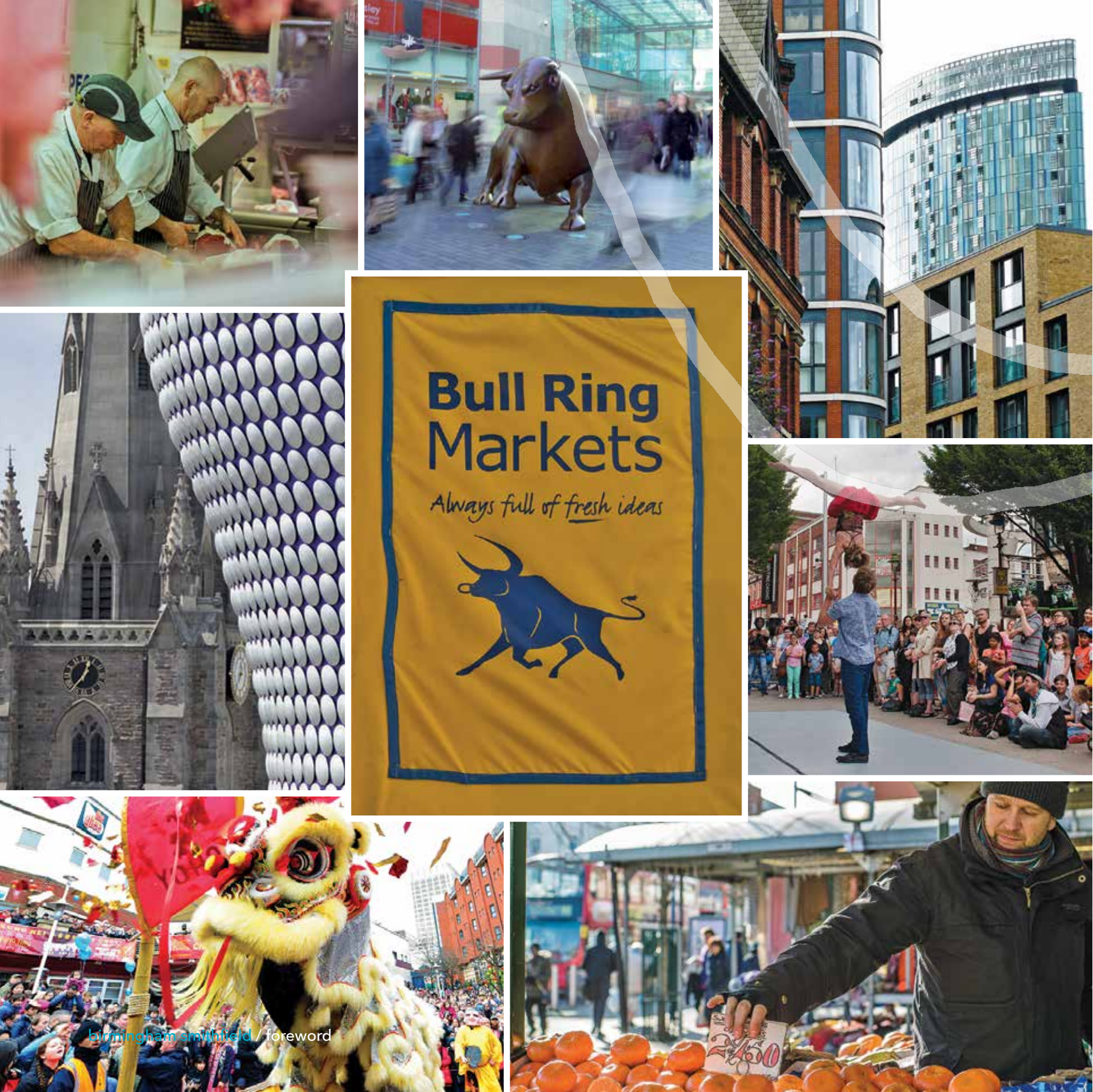
This new destination will sit on the doorstep of the existing city centre core with assets such as the Bullring which attracts over 40 million visitors a year spending £2 billion in the local economy. The proximity to major public transport hubs like New Street Station, used by 51 million passengers a year, and the proposed high speed rail terminus at Curzon, will offer unrivalled accessibility to the site for both local residents and international visitors.

Delivering Birmingham Smithfield will also be central to unlocking a much wider area for transformation along the River Rea Corridor and deliver new residential communities and employment opportunities.

What is clear is that Birmingham Smithfield is a once in a generation opportunity to transform this part of the City. We are delighted to be launching this visioning document as the first step toward realising this potential and delivering a true legacy for Birmingham.

**Sir Albert Bore**  
Leader  
Birmingham City Council

**Councillor Tahir Ali**  
Cabinet Member for Development  
Transport and the Economy  
Birmingham City Council





Located in the heart of the city centre Birmingham Smithfield covers 14 hectares of land bringing together a comprehensive site that includes the wholesale markets, which is planned to be relocated to new premises, the Bull Ring Markets and Moat Lane gyratory.

By bringing this site together there is the opportunity to reimagine this part of the city centre, retaining and strengthening assets such as the Bull Ring Markets while reconnecting the area and creating new activities and environments. The Bull Ring Markets including the Indoor, Rag and Outdoor, which for the purposes of this document will be termed the retail markets, have played an important role in the City's development since 1166. The current markets are located at the north end of the site adjacent to the Bullring shopping centre.

Birmingham Smithfield is in close proximity to a number of other existing assets which add to the vibrant mix and provide opportunities that can be utilised in its future development. These include:

#### Connections

**New Street Gateway**, the £600 million major redevelopment scheme of New Street Station will, when it opens in September 2015, give Birmingham a bright, modern 21st century transport hub that will generate and support greater visitor numbers, having a profound impact on the whole of the City and its economic success. New entrances to the south of New Street Gateway, including a grand entrance and new public space on Station Street, will galvanise the regeneration

of its southern neighbourhoods in Southside and bring the station closer to Birmingham Smithfield. The project includes the £150 million Grand Central Birmingham, a premium shopping destination for the city centre developed as part of New Street Gateway, which will be home to the £35 million regional flagship John Lewis store.

Upward of £300 million is being invested in extending **Midland Metro** throughout the city centre. The Birmingham City Centre Metro Extension, due to open at the end of 2015, will extend the network from its current terminus at Snow Hill Station into the centre of the city and to New Street Station. Further extensions to the network are planned including the Centenary Square Extension to take the line from the new terminus stop at New Street Station to Centenary Square and the Birmingham Eastside Extension to serve the new high speed rail terminus at Curzon, and linking into East Birmingham. This network will be on the edge of Birmingham Smithfield with the potential for future integration into the site and to the south of the City.

The proposed **High Speed 2 (HS2)** rail link, initially between Birmingham and London, will bring radically improved rail connections into the city centre when it opens in 2026, along with enhanced city region connectivity once phase 2 is completed. Curzon, the new city centre terminus station and surrounding

development zone, will be located within close proximity to Birmingham Smithfield.

#### Visitor destination

Birmingham City Centre is already a highly attractive and successful retail destination, ranked as one of the top

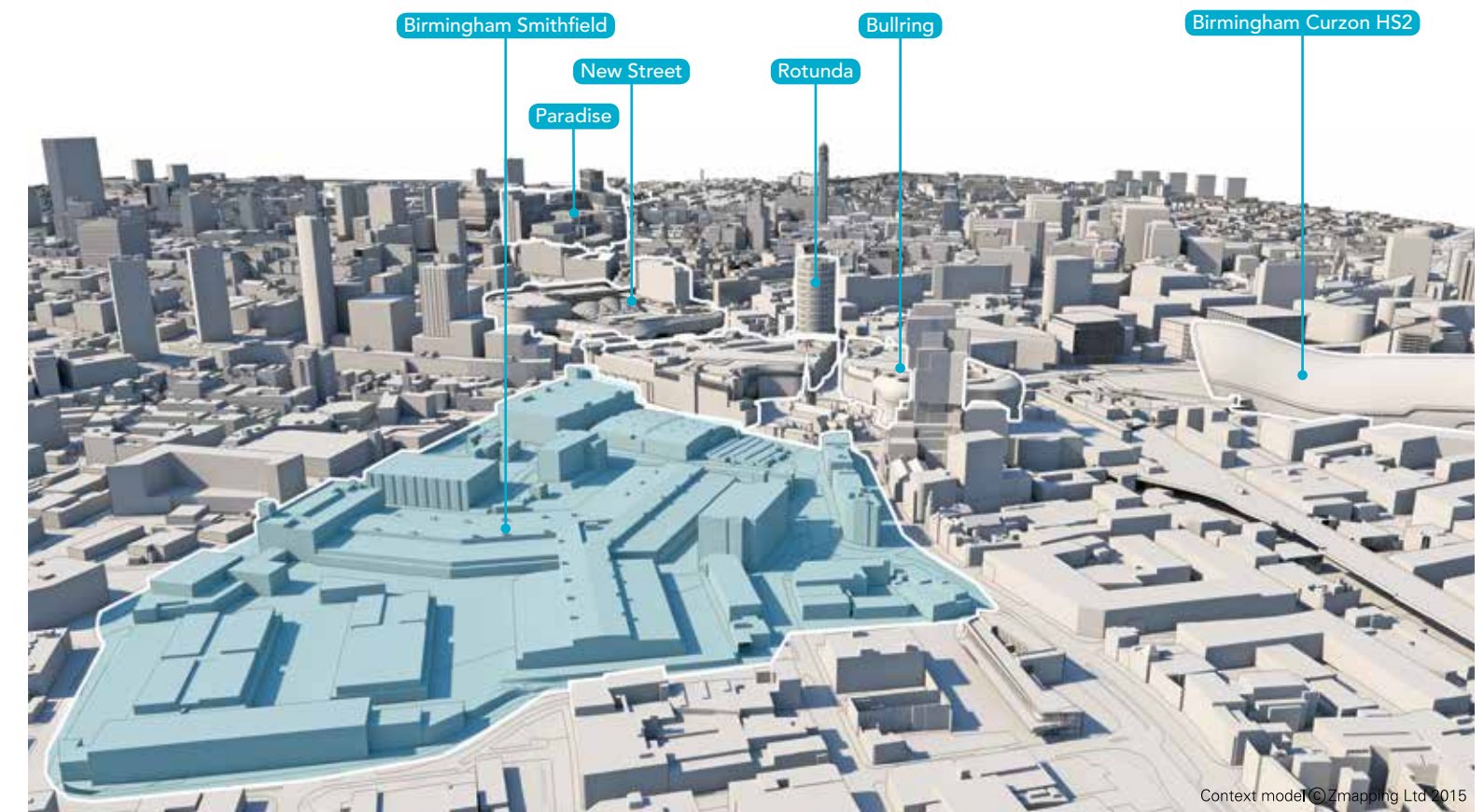
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visitor destinations in the country, attracting over £2 billion of expenditure and more than 40 million visitors per year.

Success stories, such as the **Bullring** and **The Mailbox**, are part of what makes the City a great place to visit. Sitting immediately adjacent to Birmingham

Smithfield, the Retail Core is the focus of the City's shopping offer. It is seeing £220 million being invested in and around the Retail Core which will further enhance the visitor experience. The investment includes **Grand Central Birmingham** and **John Lewis**, as well as the £50 million renovation of The Mailbox and £20 million refurbishment of

**Selfridges**. Together, these investments will further transform the Retail Core and make a significant contribution to the centre's success.





### Economic hub

Located to the north of the Retail Core is the City's **business district** which is home to one of the largest clusters of the business, professional and financial services sector uses outside London. There are over 500 businesses, including a significant number of regional and national HQ's, employing over 35,000 people. The nearby Learning Quarter is home to 25,000 students.

### Cultural and creative assets

Adjacent to the western boundary of Birmingham Smithfield is **Southside**, one of the City's most culturally diverse areas. The cluster of theatre, entertainment and leisure activities, including the Hippodrome Theatre, National Trust 'back-to-backs', Birmingham's Gay Village and Chinatown, create a lively cultural focus.

Birmingham's **Gay Village** has become well-established within Southside over

the last 20 years. Vibrant café bars, pubs, clubs, shops and services cater for the community from Birmingham and the wider region. More than 75,000 visitors attend its Pride Festival, the UK's biggest, every year.

**Chinatown**, with its restaurants, shops, services, leisure attractions and growing residential community, is focused on and around the Arcadian Centre. The quarter brings in thousands of international visitors every year and hosts the City's Chinese New Year celebrations.

To the east of Birmingham Smithfield is **Digbeth**, a flourishing creative and cultural hub for the City. The area is growing as a location for the digital and media sector which is focused around The Custard Factory and Fazeley Studio's. The proximity to HS2 will bring new impetus and activity to the area utilising its historic fabric and creating new places.

Alongside is the **Irish Quarter**, which has a strong history in Digbeth, centred on St Anne's Church and community club.

The area contains a wealth of Irish-based businesses, bars, The Irish Club and related organisations. These activities contribute to the thriving and vibrant nature of the area.

### City's growth agenda

The future of Birmingham Smithfield fits within the City's exciting growth agenda. This includes delivering 51,000 new homes, 100,000 jobs and the infrastructure by 2031 to support the City's growing population and continue to strengthen its national and international standing. The city centre will be central to this future growth agenda as the economic hub for the City and principle visitor and cultural destination.

The growth potential for Birmingham Smithfield was first established within the Big City Plan launched in 2010. As the strategic masterplan for the city centre the Big City Plan seeks to

grow the city centre core and deliver improved connectivity, the strengthening of the centre's authentic character and the diversification of its economic and cultural base.

Five strategic 'areas of transformation' are identified to deliver this growth. Birmingham Smithfield will be at the heart of the largest area, the Southern Gateway, which extends over 82 hectares.

Supporting the growth agenda is Birmingham Connected, the long term strategy for the City's transport system. It will reinvent the transport system to meet current and future mobility challenges; facilitating strong and sustainable economic growth. Measures include challenging the car culture, significant investment in walking and cycling and new mass transit routes such as a Bus Based Rapid Transit Sprint Network and Midland Metro.

### Purpose

This document sets the vision for what Birmingham Smithfield could be like in the future, how the area could be transformed; what kind of uses, buildings, activities and spaces could be developed there. The nature of the opportunity and a number of big moves are proposed along with a series of development principles to help shape the future of the site.

The document's launch and the following public consultation is intended to start the debate on the future of the area, enabling ideas to evolve and develop. Following this consultation a masterplan will be produced defining the approach for the areas future development.

## “ THE CLUSTER OF THEATRE, ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES... CREATE A LIVELY CULTURAL FOCUS ”





# The opportunity

Creating Birmingham Smithfield will be as much about capitalising on the opportunity as strengthening the area's character and utilising its unique history.

Growing from the original heart of Birmingham around the medieval manor house and moat, the area has played a key role in the City's development as a meeting place, focus for trade and sharing of goods and ideas. It is home to the City's retail markets which will be central to the area's future success.

Throughout its history, the area has evolved to meet changes and adapt to the needs of new communities and businesses. The proposed relocation of the wholesale markets marks the beginning of a new era and the opportunity to maximise the role of existing assets such as the retail markets and introduce new activity and focus bringing greater numbers of visitors to the area.

## Big moves

To maximise the opportunity and create a vibrant and exciting destination a number of big moves are proposed that should be at the heart of creating Birmingham Smithfield.


- Vibrant market and family leisure quarter:
  - Markets have always been a central part of the city's heritage. Capitalising on these assets will be vital in creating a vibrant part of the City. Retail markets will be at the

heart of Birmingham Smithfield with the potential to deliver improved buildings and encourage new traders, niche and specialist retailers that complement and extend the existing offer to raise the profile as a visitor destination.

- Complementing this and the City's existing retail offer is a family leisure quarter focused on providing the attractions and activities that will strengthen the City's offer, create a new focus and draw more people into the site.

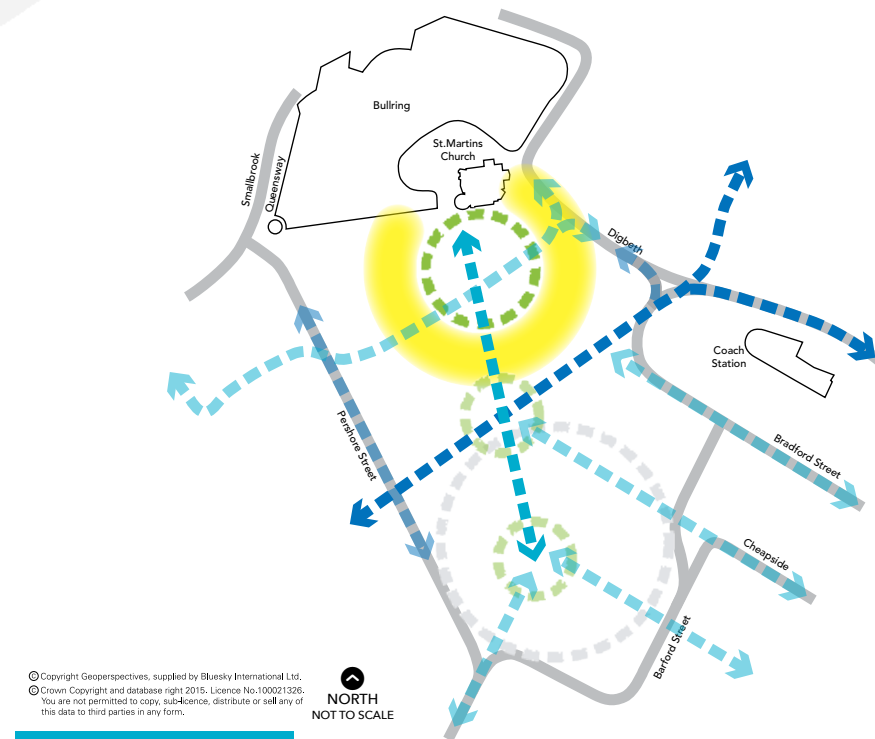
## KEY

Big moves

-  Pedestrian spine
-  Public transport corridor
-  Market Square
-  Markets and family leisure

Other key interventions

-  Pedestrian/cycle routes
-  Public transport routes
-  Public spaces
-  Residential Hub



The big moves plan

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**NORTH**  
NOT TO SCALE

## Market Square:

- Reflecting the unique heritage of the site this new major public space will be the focal point around which the vibrant markets and the family quarter can be located. It should provide a setting for St Martin's Church and offer a space that is of the highest quality design incorporating water and hard and soft landscape features. It can become a hub for cultural events and give the City a landmark space that is well connected and accessible by public transport. Delivering the Square will

involve the closure of Upper Dean Street and reconfiguring Moat Lane gyratory. Market Square can be the centrepiece public space as part of a series of spaces laid out across the site.

## A pedestrian spine:

- Radically improving the permeability of the site for pedestrians will be vital in opening up the area, fully maximising the opportunity. A pedestrian spine should run north-south and connect into a wider network of pedestrian/cycle routes.

## Integrated public transport:

- Connecting the site to the wider City will be of central importance and through an extended Bromsgrove Street, linking east-west through the site, there is the potential to extend the Midland Metro and integrate it within Birmingham Smithfield. Other modes of public transport will also need to be incorporated raising levels of accessibility for the whole site.



Scale of the opportunity

Context model © Zmapping Ltd 2015





View of Market Square from St Martin's Church





View of Market Square looking east from entrance to the new indoor markets



# Development principles

Complementing the big moves are a series of development principles which should be central to creating a high quality sustainable place. These development principles can draw upon precedents from other successful places to provide new ideas and concepts informing what Birmingham Smithfield could become.

## Design

The transformed area must meet high standards of sustainable design and construction that will be essential in creating an adaptable environment that will stand the test of time. Consideration will need to be given to the inclusion of measures reducing energy and water consumption and using sustainable building materials. It will need to be resilient to the potential impacts of climate change with the effective on-site management of water at its heart.

Digital technology will be an important tool in the future knowledge economy. The provision of infrastructure and new technologies which enhance digital connectivity will form a central part of any development.

The transformation will need to be supported by suitable social and green infrastructure that is set within environments that reflect the character and history of the area. Integrating new infrastructure will contribute to creating more sustainable patterns of development.

As a new visitor destination for the City, the architecture of Birmingham Smithfield will need to be designed to the highest standard and contribute to a strong sense of place. It will need to reinforce or create a positive character and local distinctiveness, with design that responds to site conditions and

use of innovation. The proximity to the Conservation Area and the existence of archaeological remains will be key aspects informing the future approach.

## Connectivity

For the area's potential to be capitalised on, it will need to be reintegrated into the fabric of the city centre and easily accessible by key transport hubs. New and improved pedestrian routes will be central to delivering a more sustainable and successful area that is easy to access and attractive to visit and live.

The site must be opened up and reconnected introducing permeability to the area with east-west and north-south connections. This will be achieved through the big moves but these key routes will need to be complemented by a much wider network of high quality pedestrian and cycle friendly streets.

The closure of Upper Dean Street to traffic should create a further key pedestrian route through the site linking from the heart of Southside and towards Digbeth and Curzon. This also has the potential to link into a redesigned and pedestrian friendly Ladywell Walk. Moat Lane gyratory and the development block it surrounds will also need to be reconfigured and the block integrated into Birmingham Smithfield to realise the potential of the area and enhance movement and permeability.

It will be vital that routes around the periphery of the site are attractive and useable for pedestrians and cyclists. While pedestrians will be the focus within the site facilities for cyclists will need to be integrated, with full consideration to the design of routes and spaces to enable this.

Private traffic will be moved around the edges of Birmingham Smithfield and car parking rationalised to reduce the dominance of road infrastructure.

Adequate arrangements for servicing will need to be integral to future development to ensure that the 24/7 nature of the activities can be operated in a manner which supports a liveable and attractive destination.

The area's transformation will need to be in line with the ethos of Birmingham Connected and further enhance the overall attractiveness of public transport, improving walking/cycling routes to interchanges as well as creating additional priority with general traffic removed from key areas. The integration of public transport will be key and the potentially extended Bromsgrove Street connecting east-west can act as a focal point. Extending the Midland Metro from Curzon through Birmingham Smithfield and out to the south of the City radically improving local access.

These measures will be of significant benefit to the area in terms of connectivity, movement and activity. Along all of these routes high quality public realm and active frontages will be critical.

Improvements to connectivity will be important in allowing better access to jobs, raising aspirations and supporting growth.

Alongside key routes and improved connections will be a network of public spaces including green spaces and paved squares. These spaces will provide places to meet, sit, relax and play in a high-quality, exciting environment. Alongside the major new public space of Market Square a number of local spaces will complement activity. These spaces must provide focal points within the network of pedestrian/cycle routes, providing a setting for buildings, stimulating investment and locations for public art.

- 1 Marina Village Barcelona, Spain.
- 2 Mixed use tower Berlin, Germany.
- 3 Buenos Aires mixed use development, Argentina.
- 4 Millennium Park Chicago, United States.





Uses

Getting the optimum layout for Birmingham Smithfield that re-connects the area and makes it easy to move around will also open up opportunities to integrate a range of new uses and activities.

There is enormous potential for a variety of new development, activities and uses that capitalise on the enormous footfall generated by the surrounding area and its various cultural, retail, creative and business assets. There are opportunities to introduce new residential environments and leisure activities. The mix of uses needs to complement the surroundings and provide new and diverse activities to deliver a vibrant and exciting destination.

Family friendly leisure and cultural uses, such as cafés, bars and restaurants and attractions including cinemas, bowling alleys, street festivals, museums, art galleries and music venues, should be an important part of a city's offer. Birmingham Smithfield provides the space to deliver such inclusive leisure and cultural uses and this will be explored to further enhance Birmingham as a visitor destination that appeals to families and as wide an audience as possible.

Birmingham Smithfield has the potential to become an attractive place to live in the City, with the opportunity to provide housing as part of the mix of uses delivered to create a vibrant and active community, that are supported by private and shared open spaces, an improved network of pedestrian routes and community facilities.

- 5 Bordeaux Tram, France.
- 6 Rotterdam Markethal, Netherlands.
- 7 Barcelona Ramblas, Spain.
- 8 Federation Square Melbourne, Australia.
- 9 Sheffield City Centre, United Kingdom.
- 10 Example of modern housing.
- 11 Example of city centre apartments.
- 12 Shoppers in the Rotterdam Markethal, Netherlands.
- 13 Festival of lights Potsdamer Platz Berlin, Germany.
- 14 Old Spitalfields Market London, United Kingdom.







New Bromsgrove Street



# Next steps and delivery

The redevelopment of Birmingham Smithfield will have a transformational impact, presenting an opportunity to deliver a new destination for the City and unlocking the growth potential of the wider area. Realising this development potential will require investment in the site, supporting infrastructure and connectivity.

The City Council as owner of the wholesale markets site will be working on a delivery strategy setting out a process to realising the areas potential. The approach will adhere to both the big moves and development principles established when the visioning document is finalised in a masterplan following public consultation. The future delivery strategy will include the approach to securing investment and procuring an investment partner.

The approach to the big moves and development principles in this document have been informed by work undertaken by Gensler - international design firm. Their contribution reflects the hugely exciting nature of Birmingham Smithfield and its appeal to both local and international audiences.

The designation of the site as an Enterprise Zone site will bring added impetus to the area, boosting economic activity and supporting delivery, particularly in the context of funding and the provision of infrastructure. One of the principle benefits of the Enterprise Zone initiative is the ability for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) who is responsible for the Enterprise Zone, to retain uplift in business rates generated within the zone and recycle these to fund economic priorities. Funding has been allocated by the LEP to support future delivery in this area.

We want to hear your views on what Birmingham Smithfield could become. The contents of this document are intended to set parameters for the future development and a starting point for the evolution of this part of the City. This will enable ideas to develop to ultimately inform decisions and define an agreed position for the future. The transformation of Birmingham Smithfield will need to be the City's vision, owned by the people of Birmingham. This will be vital to fully harnessing the opportunity and ensuring long term success.

Following this consultation the visioning document will be finalised with a set of big moves and development principles in a masterplan that will inform future planning and procurement exercises for the area.

**Waheed Nazir**  
Director of Planning and Regeneration  
Birmingham City Council



Residential tower



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