

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 06 February 2024

TITLE	Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework	
Ward(s)	Lawrence Hill	
Author: Abigail Stratford	Job title: Head of Regeneration	
Cabinet lead: Mayor	Executive Director lead: John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	
Proposal origin: Mayor		
Decision maker: Mayor Decision forum: Cabinet		
Purpose of Report:		
Frome Gateway:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To seek approval of the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework which sets out a long-term vision for the transformation of the predominantly industrial area in St Jude’s. 2. To note proposals to deliver the following requirements on two Council owned sites in the Regeneration Framework area: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Universal House: where a last-mile logistics hub is proposed to provide multi-operator sustainable and efficient delivery services for the city centre and local area, as well as provide employment opportunities for local residents. b) The Wellington Road Depot Site: where an energy centre is proposed to support the expanding district heat network, co-located with residential above including larger affordable family homes. 		
Bedminster Green Land Acquisition:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Approve the acquisition of the land to the north of Plot 3 to enable the delivery of the river restoration project. 		
Evidence Base:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework sets out the vision and principles for the regeneration of the predominantly industrial area in St Jude’s. The area extends from Wade Street / Houlton Street to Junction 3, and Newfoundland Way to Pennywell Road. A map of the Frome Gateway regeneration area can be found in Appendix A(1). Its purpose is to guide redevelopment in an area where change is anticipated, prioritising the provision of inclusive growth through local employment, new homes and community spaces. It is designed to stand the test of time and respond to changes in economic, property and funding environments. It also makes technical recommendations for the area to mitigate flood risk, due to parts of the framework area being in Flood Zone 2 and 3. 2. The framework seeks to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 1000 new homes, with a mix of tenures and sizes to meet local need including larger homes to support family and intergenerational living 		

- A diverse range of employment spaces
- New community spaces to support existing community and cultural groups and encourage new ones
- Enhancements to the existing park spaces, as well as new pocket parks and high-quality streets that are inclusive and highly accessible
- Enhancements to the River Frome and surrounding setting, with development sensitively designed to create a high-quality new neighbourhood that face onto the river
- The prioritisation of health outcomes for the benefit of the local community
- Improved active travel links to surrounding neighbourhoods

3. The final Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework is attached in Appendix A(2).

4. To achieve the vision, the Framework proposes the following key changes:

- New and enhanced accessible and attractive streets that integrate green infrastructure and high-quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, that prioritise active travel.
- Enhancement of Riverside Park and Peel Street Open Space to better meet the needs of the community and environment.
- A new network of ‘pocket parks’ to increase the overall amount of green space
- Enhancement of the River Frome to increase the amenity value, visibility of and access to the riverside while enhancing its ecological functioning.
- Upgrading the strategic cycling route running through Riverside Park and Wellington Road.
- Enabling dedicated ground floor community spaces to meet the needs of community groups and organisations
- A local lettings policy to ensure local people have priority for new affordable homes
- New homes that meet local need, including larger, affordable family homes.
- The consolidation and diversification of employment and businesses, with the co-location of employment space at ground floor with residential above.
- A dedicated light-industrial, and night-time economy use area to the north, benefiting from access to the M32 and separation from the residential-focused area further south.

Consultation and Engagement:

5. Comprehensive and meaningful engagement has ensured the framework has been informed by an understanding of how people feel about the area at the moment and what they hope it could be like in the future. A two-year programme of community, business and stakeholder engagement and consultation events has included:

- Community walkarounds and door-to-door conversations
- An online interactive map and survey
- Story of Place mapping to tell the historical story of the Frome Gateway area
- Community and stakeholder workshops, exhibitions and presentations
- Focussed session with cultural venues
- 1-1 business engagement
- Bespoke engagement with specific stakeholder groups (such as Al-Baseera Mosque, St Nicholas of Tolentine Primary School and local youth organisations)
- 1-1 landowner / developer engagement and via a bespoke monthly Landowner & Developer Forum
- Design Review Panels with Design West
- Artist in residence to support more creative opportunities to partake in the engagement and visioning process
- An Access Audit and further engagement with the West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL)

- Utilising the Environment Agency Discretionary Service

6. Formal consultation on the draft Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework was undertaken between 23rd October and 3rd December 2023. A programme of 24 engagement activities was delivered during this period with 343 people in attendance. A consultation survey was used to collect feedback which received 327 responses. 11 formal representations were also received via letter. The consultation demonstrated significant support for the framework, vision and regeneration objectives and offered many valuable comments that helped to provide important and useful updates to the framework. All updates are documented in the Consultation Response Report, however the most significant changes included:
- Amendments to the Industrial Quarter to reduce its size but deliver industrial space exclusively, including intensified industrial workspace
 - Ensuring strategic travel routes are better represented
 - Creation of a new 'Physical Accessibility' page
 - Creation of a new 'Flood Risk Management' page
 - Amendments to affordable housing delivery
7. Full details of all consultation and engagement and its influence on the framework can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement, Consultation Report and Consultation Response Report. All are included as Appendices (Appendix B).

Inclusive Growth:

8. Through the regeneration of Frome Gateway we aspire to create a green and inclusive economy which reflects local culture and diversity, enhances the prosperity and wellbeing of the Lawrence Hill community and positively influences the evolution of a fairer and greener Bristol. To achieve this the Council will seek to partner effectively with landowners, developers, businesses and wider strategic and community partners. The following delivery priorities have been identified to help to progress our ambitions of creating a green and inclusive economy;
- Committing to the provision of commercial, community and cultural space across the ground floors
 - Scoping the delivery of a Low Carbon Logistics Hub on BCC owned land (Universal House), in partnership with potential operators
 - Committing to the delivery of the Frome Gateway District Heat Network (DHN) Energy Centre on Council owned land (Wellington Road Depot)
 - Establishing a ground floor affordable lettings approach
 - Production of a business relocation and retention strategy
 - Creating a Frome Gateway Social Value Strategy
 - Producing a Frome Gateway Local Lettings Policy

Delivery and Next Steps

9. Bristol City Council will use its power and influence to promote the aspirations for the transformation of Frome Gateway in line with the Framework. This includes the council's roles as Local Planning Authority, landowner, project funder and through its relationships with developers, businesses and institutions in the city. Redevelopment of individual sites will typically be delivered by private developers, but Bristol City Council is a landowner in this area, which provides a significant opportunity for influence over new development.
10. As developments are brought forward by private developers, they will be required to contribute financially to local infrastructure improvements, such as through Section 106 and Section 278 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

11. Further public sector funding will also be required to implement the Framework in full. Approval is therefore sought to explore and submit external funding bids to try and secure additional investment to deliver our plans for the Framework. It is envisaged Cabinet approval will be sought for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding in the future.

BCC Freehold:

12. The Council is a significant landowner in Frome Gateway. The Council's freehold ownership is one of several 'tools and levers' that can be used to influence the delivery of new development in Frome Gateway and achieve desired benefits which cannot be achieved directly through the planning process.

13. As developers bring forward sites for redevelopment in the Frome Gateway, where the Council is the freeholder, there is a requirement to re-gear leases to enable;

- Compliance and alignment with the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework
- The delivery of 40% policy compliant affordable housing with local nominations via Home Choice, including homes for rent and affordable home ownership products, and safeguarding of key worker homes.
- A larger proportion of 3+ bed homes as set out in the framework to meet local housing need
- Homes with private balconies and designed to comply with Design Guide and Urban Living SPD
- Connection to the District Heat Network
- Safeguarding ground floor space for affordable letting for community or cultural uses
- Enhanced sustainability and ecological requirements
- Alignment of the recommendations set out in the Frome Gateway Health Impact Assessment to maximise public health benefits through new development and regeneration
- Enhanced local employment and training provision
- New ground lease on commercial terms to be agreed to include a future income stream for the Council

14. If it is demonstrated through evidence that for viability reasons 40% policy compliant affordable housing cannot be delivered, the Council would be willing to consider the delivery of 20% planning policy compliant affordable housing with a commitment through the lease to explore the delivery of 20% affordable housing using affordable grant funding post planning.

15. The cost of delivering these objectives will be considered in achieving best consideration usually interpreted as the open market value.

16. If land is held within the Council's general fund it can be disposed of at an undervalue through the General Disposal Consents 2003 provided the undervalue does not exceed £2m. A valuation setting out the undervalue, undertaken by a qualified valuer (member of the RICS) would be required to support any disposal.

17. If the land is held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) any undervalue we will need Secretary of State consent to the disposal. All decisions around terms and conditions will be subject to and in accordance with the Property Scheme of Delegations.

Universal House Site

18. The Frome Gateway Framework has identified the area has the potential to accommodate a low carbon logistics hub, which serves the last mile logistics needs of the city centre in a more consolidated and

efficient way and (in the future) delivering zero carbon approaches to moving goods around. This was a recommendation of the Frome Gateway Inclusive Economy Strategy which has informed the Frome Gateway Framework.

19. The Council has committed to exploring the redevelopment of the Universal House site as identified red on plan at Appendix A(3) into a Low Carbon Logistics Hub as part of a wider sustainable last mile logistics and distribution network.
20. This site, at the north end of Frome Gateway, is Bristol City Council owned and has great potential to support 'last mile logistics' into the Broadmead/ City Centre area via cargo bike or smaller electric vehicles. This is due to its proximity to Junction 3 of the M32, and existing bike path connecting it to the city centre.
21. This would see the co-location of some of the city's larger logistics providers within new industrial space and would deliver strongly against the circular economy aspiration both for Frome Gateway and the wider city centre. An upgrade to the strategic cycle route running through Frome Gateway in the City Centre and associated infrastructure would need to be delivered to facilitate this.
22. An outline business case for the strategic cycling infrastructure is currently being developed and it is envisaged this may be submitted to the Combined Authority for further funding to progress the project in the future.

Wellington Road Depot Site

23. The Wellington Road Depot Site as identified on plan at Appendix A(4) is in the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ownership. In the future, as and when the site comes forward for redevelopment, it will be required to accommodate the district heat networks energy centre to ensure all new developments in the area can connect to the heat network. In addition, to address local housing the Council aspires to deliver larger affordable accommodation on the site. A local lettings policy will also be put in place to ensure the existing local community can benefit from these homes.
24. The delivery of the energy centre will support the city wide response to the climate emergency, while also supporting the long term resilience and environmental credentials of Frome Gateway as a place to live and / or do business.

Environment Impact Assessment Summary:

25. *BCC's Environmental Impact Assessment has determined significant beneficial impacts from the proposal:*
The proposed development framework is part of a city-wide strategic approach that is intended to have positive impact on carbon neutrality and emissions through expansion of heat network connections and reduced reliance on car transport. The framework is also expected to make improvements to the ecological value and climate resilience of the development area.
26. *BCC's Environmental Impact Assessment has determined significant adverse impacts from the proposal:*
The physical delivery of the regeneration vision will mean a significant amount of construction over the next 15 years. Building and construction materials are commonly accepted to have a high carbon footprint.

Bedminster Green:

27. In November 2021, Cabinet approved the acquisition of the land to the north of Bedminster Green Plot 3; as represented by the pink area on plan at Appendix A5, to enable the river restoration works.

28. This acquisition was subject to securing a financial contribution from the current landowner towards the costs of repairs to the structure of the riverbank infrastructure. Further details can be found in the November 21 Cabinet Report and supporting appendices.
29. The land in question is required to deliver the river restoration project. Without this land, a comprehensive redesign would be required at significant time and cost to BCC and other project partners. Even if the scheme is redesigned, a revised river restoration design may not deliver the same flood risk benefits the current design will deliver. The river restoration is required to support the occupation of developments in Bedminster Green due to flood risk in the local area.
30. Since November 2021, the freeholder of the land in question has changed from one landowner to a group of businesses (ManCo) who occupy the neighbouring industrial units. BCC has been in discussions with the ManCo about acquiring the land in question. The ManCo have stated they don't have the capital to make a financial contribution but would transfer the land to BCC for a nominal fee (£1). Approval is therefore now sought to acquire the land to the north of Plot 3 to enable the river restoration works for £1.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That cabinet:

Frome Gateway

1. Approve the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework and note that it will be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.
2. Authorise the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor to secure the freeholder requirements set out in this report through lease re-gearing negotiation in the Frome Gateway area and to note the costs of these requirements will be considered when determining best value.
3. Authorise the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Mayor to take all steps required to deliver a last-mile logistics hub on the Universal House site and an energy centre with larger family accommodation on the Wellington Road Depo Site as set out in this report.
4. Authorise the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Mayor, to explore and to submit funding bids (which may be over the key decision threshold) to enable the redevelopment of Frome Gateway, noting that the acceptance and spend of any funding award over the key decision threshold will be subject to further approval in accordance with the decision pathway.
5. Authorise the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Mayor, to explore and to submit funding bids (which may be over the key decision threshold) to enable development of a Community Land Trust or similar appropriate vehicle to run and manage community and cultural spaces in Frome Gateway, noting that the acceptance and spend of any funding award over the key decision threshold will be subject to further approval in accordance with the decision pathway.
6. To authorise the Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration, to implement a local lettings policy in the Frome Gateway Regeneration area.
7. Note the consultation report at Appendix B.

Bedminster Green:

8. Authorises the Executive Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Regeneration to take all steps required to acquire the land as outlined in this report.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. **Homes and Communities** – the regeneration of Frome Gateway will deliver much needed new homes, including affordable homes.
2. **Economy and Skills** – the regeneration seeks to secure new affordable community and employment space, that seeks to support inclusive growth and support the night time economy.
3. **Transport and Connectivity** – the sustainable transport and public realm improvements will improve connections across the city and support active and sustainable travel, by making it easier to walk, cycle or take public transport. This, combined with new trees and vegetation planting, will help support the level of growth coming forward in the area, improve air quality and help improve climate resilience.
4. **Health, Care and Wellbeing** – making active travel easier and creating a high-quality pleasant public realm, combined with improved green space for people and wildlife will support healthier lifestyles. Provision of new community space will encourage integration of existing and new communities. A Health Impact Assessment has been produced and published alongside the Framework to encourage and support healthier placemaking and maximise positive public health benefits through regeneration.

City Benefits:

1. The regeneration of Frome Gateway will deliver new homes alongside new employment and community use to create a vibrant place.
2. At least 1,000 new, good quality homes, including affordable housing, will help create greater equality of opportunity and quality of life. Creating a mixed and balanced community with a strong sense of place and liveable environment can help benefit mental and physical health, social interaction and security.
3. Improvements to highways and public realm will support climate resiliency by: i) increasing tree cover and reducing the urban heat island effect, ii) provide infrastructure to support more active forms of travel and the resultant benefits to health, air quality and congestion

Consultation Details:

1. Consultation details have been set out in the supporting documents in Appendix B.

Background Documents:

[Corporate Strategy 2022-27 \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/corporate-strategy-2022-27)

Revenue Cost	£ 0	Source of Revenue Funding	
Capital Cost	£ 0	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:

1. Finance Advice: The report seeks Cabinet approval of the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework. Delivery of the framework will be funded through Section 106 and Section 278 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) along with other public sector funding. The report notes that approval to spend CIL funding will be sought at a future date and that only approval to explore sources of public sector funding is sought at this point.

The Framework assumes that the Universal House Site, for which the Council owns the Freehold but not the leasehold, will include a logistics hub. The Wellington Road Depot Site is also part of the pipeline for Goram Homes so will be transferred along with the obligation to build an energy centre and associated heat network.

Finally, as part of the Bedminster Green River restoration works the Council will buy a stretch of riverbank for a

nominal fee of £1.

Finance Business Partner: Ben Hegarty, Finance Business Partner Growth and Regeneration, 11 January 2024

2. Legal Advice:

Consultation

The consultation responses must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the decision. The leading cases on consultation provide that consultation should occur when proposals are at a formative stage, should give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and should allow adequate time for consideration and response. There must be clear evidence that the decision maker has considered the consultation responses, or a summary of them, before taking its decision.

Property

For the Bedminster Green site the Council’s power to acquire property by agreement and at market value falls within the Local Government Act 1972 for the purpose of any of its functions or for the benefit, improvement or development of the area.

The Council is also under a duty by virtue of S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to achieve best value for its assets and any disposal should be at the best price reasonably obtainable. The duty to seek best consideration is subject to certain exceptions, most notably section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 providing the Council with well-being powers to accept a disposal at undervalue within the £2 million threshold, where the authority considers the disposal will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its citizens. A valuation setting out the undervalue, undertaken by a qualified valuer (member of the RICS) would be required to support any disposal.

If the land is held within the Housing Revenue Account any undervalue will need Secretary of State consent to the disposal.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones and Andrew Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 10 January 2024

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect 30 November 2023

4. HR Advice: There are no HR implications evident.

HR Partner: Celia Williams - HR Business Partner 23rd January 2023

EDM Sign-off	John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration	29 November 2023
Cabinet Member sign-off	Mayor’s Office	16 January 2024
For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off	Mayor’s Office	16 January 2024

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal A(1) Frome Gateway regeneration area boundary A(2) Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework A(3) Universal House Red Line Plan A(4) Wellington Road Depo Red Line Plan A(5) Land to the north of Bedminster Green Plot 3	YES
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external i) Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework: Formal Consultation Report	YES

ii) Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework: Consultation Response Report	
iii) Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework: Statement of Community Involvement	
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny The Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework project attended BCC Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny on Wednesday 25th January 2023. Minutes and decisions can be found at: https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=133&MId=10433&Ver=4	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO
Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO