

Albion: A Garden City

Entrant Reference: 13487980

The Wolfson Economics Prize 2014





“How would you deliver
a new Garden City
which is visionary,
economically viable,
and popular?”





Contents

1. Non-technical summary.....	04	6. Community and enterprise.....	24
Non-technical summary		Business benefits	
2. Introduction.....	07	Incomers welcome	
Introduction		The M5 Mile	
Site location		7. Governance and 'ownership'	28
Phase 1		Looking back	
3. Design.....	13	'Localism' for real	
My Garden City home		We made the New York Times	
Success by design		Community ownership and management	
The green heart of the Black Country		8. Economics	33
4. Innovation.....	17	Right location, right time	
Creating a 'smart grid'		The 'Garden City premium'	
People love food		Unique benefits, unique challenges	
The new Copenhagen?		9. Communications and engagement..	37
5. Identity and culture	21	Small beginnings	
Where is Albion?		The virtual Garden City	
I wanted to be part of it		Growing involvement	
		Communicating Albion	
		10. Long-term viability	42
		Looking forward to Phase 2	



1. Non-technical summary





Non-technical summary

This is a proposal for Albion, a new Garden City.

Albion will be located in the Black Country, with a first phase to be developed in Smethwick and Oldbury within the borough of Sandwell at the heart of England's biggest conurbation. However, this is not simply a regeneration project or an exercise in urban densification. Albion will be a new place with its own clear identity. It will also clearly be a garden city, drawing on the principles of the garden city movement and reinterpreting them for the 21st Century.

Albion will have a distinctive architectural style which will ensure its developments stand out from the surrounding communities. It will incorporate the best in landscape and urban design. With existing large-scale formal and informal parks and wildlife habitats close by, it will not be necessary to create more of these, instead there will be an intimate integration of green elements into the street scene through street trees, green walls, planters, shared gardens. Food growing will be a prominent feature of Albion life. The contrasting contemporary architecture will help to highlight the area's post-industrial heritage assets and 20th century infrastructure which will add both character and edge to Albion, making it attractive to all age groups.

Albion has a great economic advantage over new settlements in rural areas in that all major infrastructure is already present. There is a mainline railway station as well as smaller commuter and metro lines. There is water, sewerage, electricity and gas infrastructure which, thanks to industrial decline, is over-specified for the current population. There are existing public services ready to expand to meet the needs of new citizens. While Albion will create jobs by creating an enterprise-friendly mixed-use urban form, its citizens will have access to a wide variety of existing jobs including high-paid employment in the financial, legal, research, higher education and commercial sectors in central Birmingham – also via metro, train and main arterial routes to new high value-added employment around Wolverhampton including Bilston and i54, home to Jaguar Land Rover. High standards of insulation and air-tightness in construction, a smart grid and the use of energy from old mine workings will ensure that energy costs are low.

Albion will also benefit from existing plans for public expenditure, such as a large new hospital to be built alongside the first phase. So while Albion will not require any special or additional funding from Government to make it happen it will take full advantage of existing opportunities for public support.

The first phase of Albion is just 6 minutes by train from the centre of Birmingham where city-living apartments attract some of the highest prices in the region. By creating exemplary housing in prestigious developments which will capture the public imagination Albion will command similar values for its market housing. The margins secured will thus be both attractive to private investors and allow for contributions to fund the remaining remediation, infrastructure and public realm needs. The combination of a design code and special planning zone will make Albion uniquely attractive to house-builders and other developers. They will know that if they build according to the code they will have deemed consent for their proposals.

The development of Albion will be led by a community development trust which, working with the local authorities and local economic partnership (LEP) will assemble land, raise investment, produce a masterplan and design code and communicate with residents and businesses. The Albion Development Trust will not become a monolithic, remote organisation, but will stay close to the communities it serves by devolving ownership and stewardship of Albion's assets, and aspects of its governance, to a variety of allied but independent entities. These will include more area-specific development trusts and community land trusts; housing and trading co-operatives; business improvement districts; and building preservation and nature conservation trusts. In addition there will be opportunities for citizens to make Albion for themselves through self-build housing projects, pop-up businesses and enterprise centres.

The Albion Development Trust will develop mechanisms which will allow for widespread popular investment through shares and loan-stock in the development of the garden city by its residents and businesses. A citizen of Albion will therefore be able to achieve ownership on a number of levels; as a shareholder in the development, as an owner or tenant of property, as a participant in one or more of bodies that drive the development and govern the garden city, and on a psychological level as someone who loves the place where they live.

Albion will also exist as a virtual city with the Albion App enabling citizens to find out what is going on in their community, to buy from local businesses, to participate in discussions and decision making, to search for property and to invest.



Albion will not be a new development where there is a long gestation period before spades hit the ground. From day one Albion will start to happen in Smethwick and Oldbury. There will be planting, street-greening, pop-up businesses, performing arts activity. Within the first year, the M5 mile, an edgy canal-side happening of shops, cafes and bars in shipping containers, performance areas, boat trips, skate-parks and other attractions, will begin operating in the unique and stunning canal-side environment under the motorway.

In contrast to proposals for new settlements in the countryside Albion will be welcomed by the local population. Even as a

competition entry it has already excited widespread interest in the area and garnered support from key bodies. The Black Country has a long history of collaboration between the local authorities and the private sector to bring about regeneration. This spirit of co-operation is now embodied in the Black Country LEP. There is strong support for this proposal from members of the LEP board and offers of help with this submission.

So by choosing this unique and special location we have given Albion a number of distinct advantages which will ensure that this new garden city will be visionary, economically viable and popular.

Entrant Reference: 13487980
March 1st 2014





2. Introduction





Introduction

When we decided to enter the competition for the Wolfson Prize we did so with the intention of subverting its premise. Our Garden City would not be a new settlement in the countryside, but located on brown-field land in the centre of England's biggest conurbation.

However, the more we worked on this proposal the more we became convinced that this was precisely the right place to build, and that what we were proposing would be genuinely new and genuinely a Garden City. We believe that our location gives us massive advantages in terms of existing infrastructure, public service, parks and green spaces, access to employment and a history of co-operation between public and private bodies that translates into big savings in the costs of development. With visionary Garden City design these can also translate into high returns on investment that can make this proposal viable.

Since we announced that we were entering this competition we have been joined by architects, urban designers, property developers, solicitors, public health practitioners, housing associations, transport consultants, sustainability advisors, engineers, students and graduates. We have received support

from the Black Country LEP and many key institutions and businesses in the area. The interest this idea has excited also indicates one reason why it will be successful. This is not an area where you will find 'NIMBYs' opposing development.

The founders of the garden city movement were visionaries who promoted the most up-to-date thinking about planning and design. Unlike many visionaries they turned their visions into reality in places like Letchworth and Welwyn, and in the many garden suburbs. They did this with a mix of drive, pragmatism and style.

Garden city thinking should not be trapped in the 1920s. All that we have learnt in the late 20th century and since about urbanism, city living, street design, urban regeneration, the property market, localism, development trusts, and sustainable transport and energy should inform the 21st century garden city. That is what we have done with Albion.

We have also taken a different approach to presenting our proposal. In the rest of this document it is 2025 and the first phase of Albion is complete. The citizens of Albion will explain how they have built a successful garden city.

Entrant Reference: 13487980
March 1st 2014

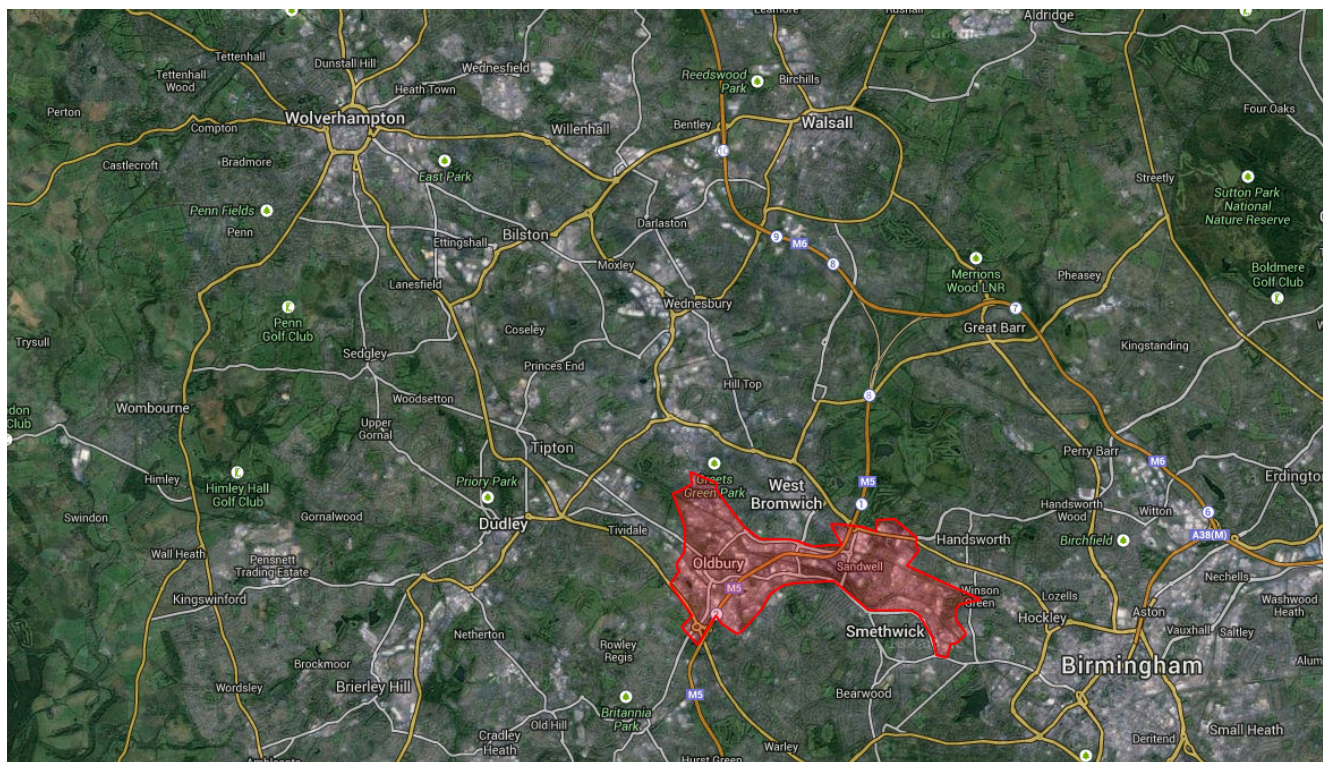


The M5 Mile



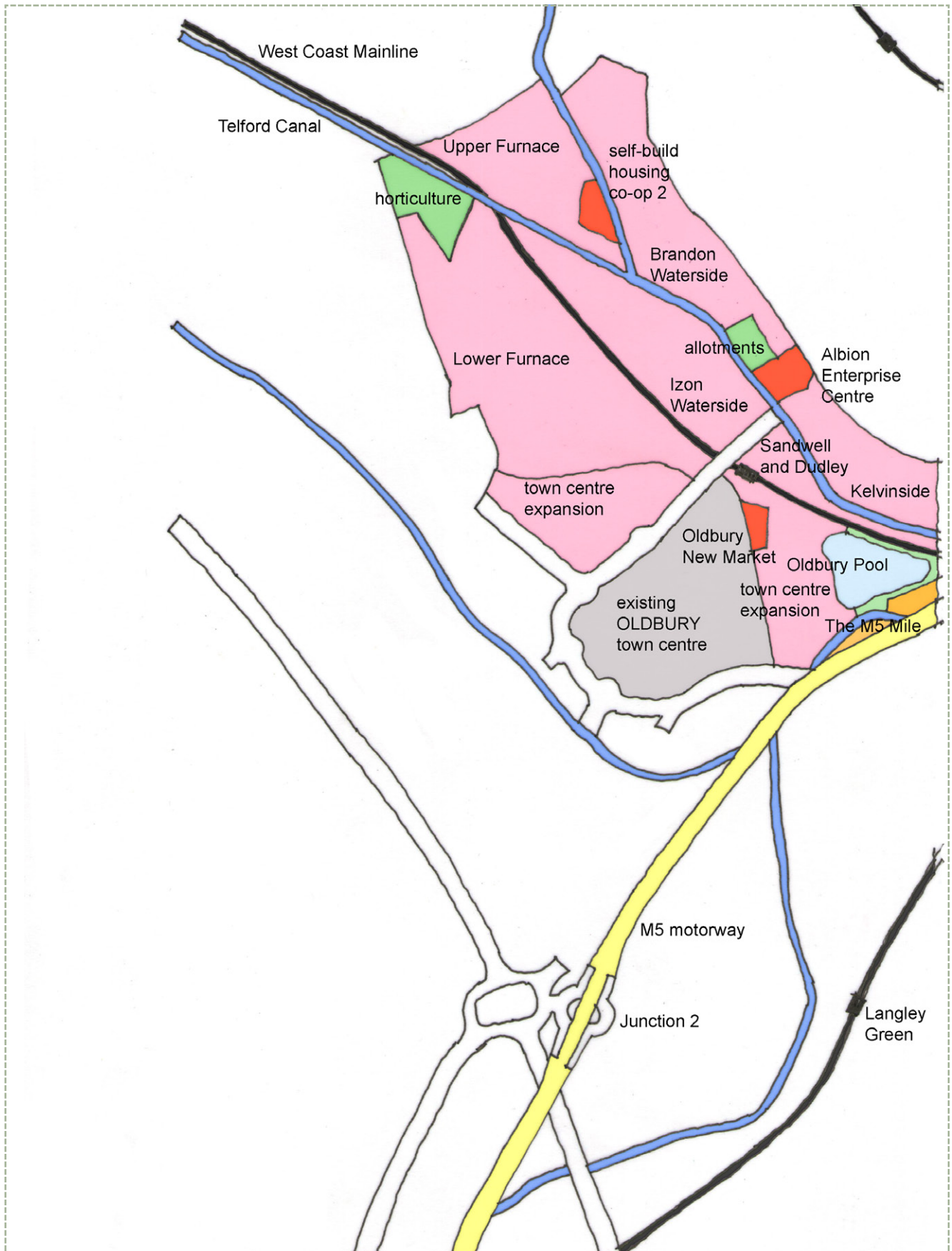


Site location

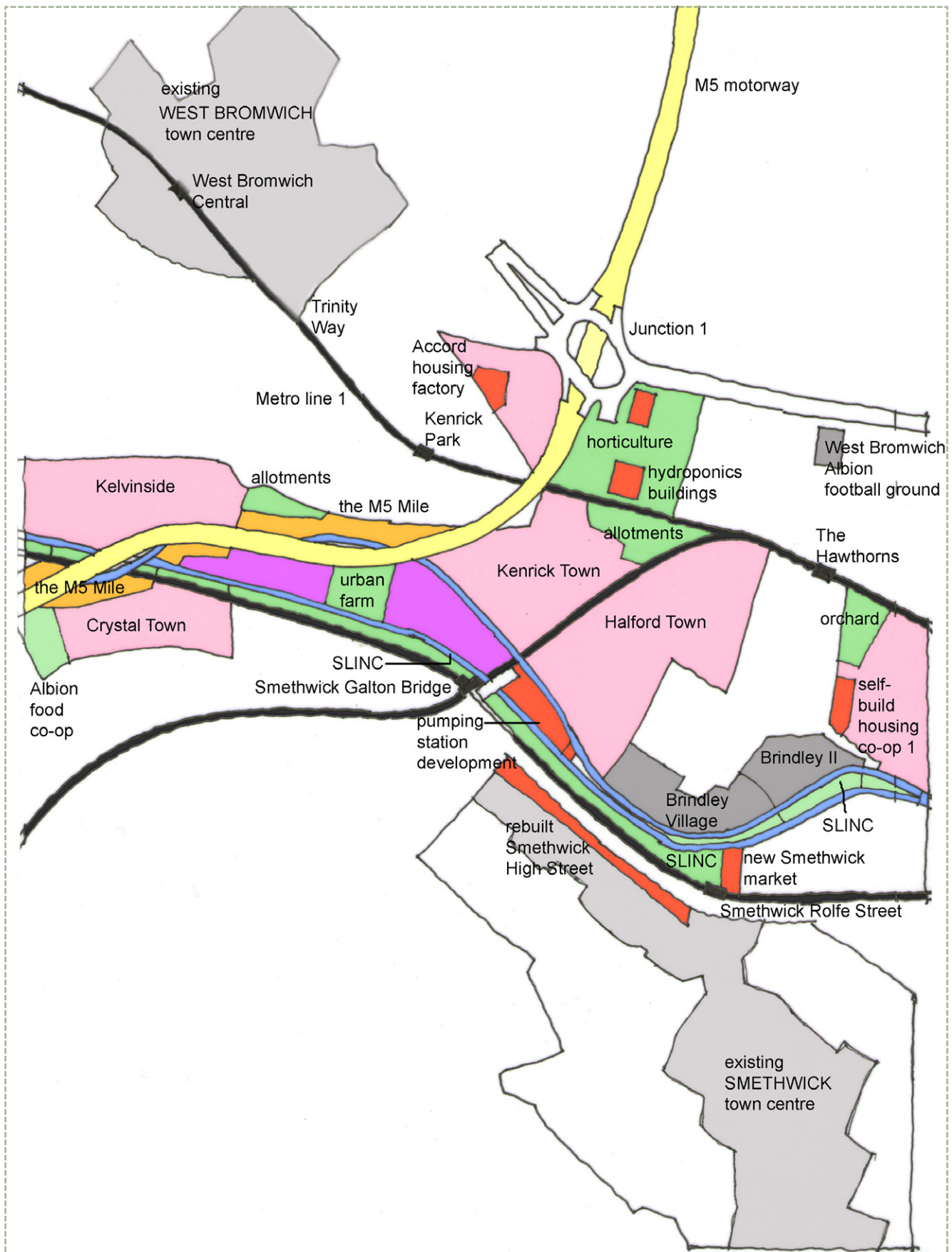


Phase 1

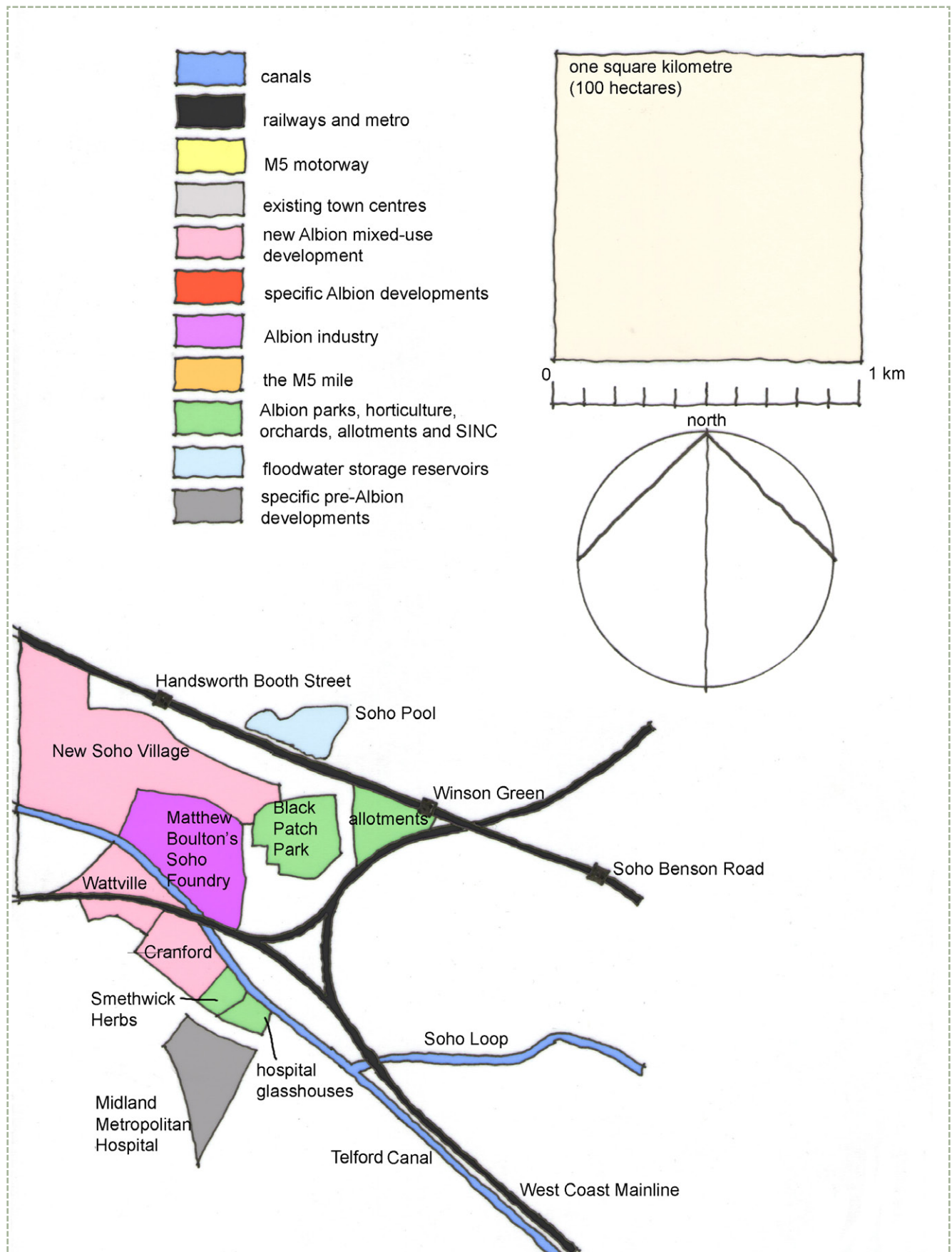




Phase 1 detail – west



Phase 1 detail – central



Phase 1 detail – east



3. Design





My Garden City home

Marcus Walsh – resident of Albion

I love my home. I've lived here for ten years now and was one of the very first residents of the Garden City – a pioneer if you like. Why do I love it? Well first and foremost it is part of a community within which my family and I feel safe – what is it they say – location, location, location!

I suppose that starts with the design of the streets. All the streets in my neighbourhood are designed for people first, not cars. Of course this is helped by the electric car club – why have a car cluttering up your street when you don't need one, but it does mean it was safe for my children to play in the road as they were growing up which meant we got to know our neighbours well.

My house is just a simple terrace; however, it feels like the Tardis. Each house in our street is individual, different materials and colours means we feel a real pride in ownership, it's not just one in a row. It was designed to something called 'Lifetime

Homes Plus' standards which means it's adaptable. When we moved in – with a mortgage from the Albion Development Trust – there was just the two of us – upstairs we just had two bedrooms and a bathroom, with a massive, cathedral like space over the living room – what light! Of course, the lack of rooms kept costs down; we were able to add bedrooms as the children came along – one in the attic and one above the living room. As we get older the house should also be adaptable for our old age.

It's sustainable too – a buzzword from 10 years ago – I like to think of it as sensible. Because Albion Garden City was conceived as a proper community with a co-operative philosophy at its heart, investment was made in the right infrastructure – not just the roads and schools, but power, recycling facilities, water, sewerage. I'm proud to be a shareholder in the Albion Development Trust, proud that my ownership pays me a dividend each year, and proud that my home's solar cells contribute to the community – my excess power helping to heat the school and charging the cars in the car club.





Success by design

Hilda Brook – Sandwell Councillor, Planning Committee member

It was a bit embarrassing really – a local team had won something called the Wolfson Prize for a new Garden City. Having won they then needed the help of the Councils, Sandwell to begin with, to deliver it.

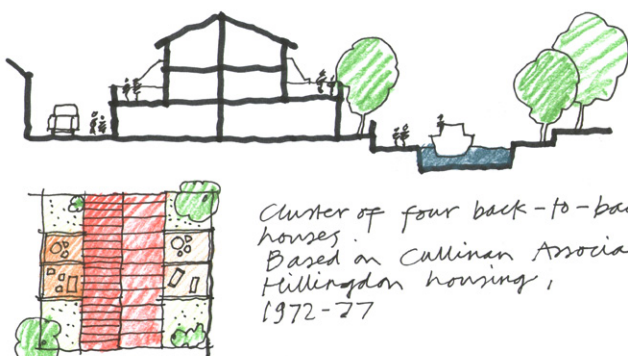
We were sceptical at first, how much of this was just flannel? Could they really deliver on promises for thousands of new homes, new schools, shops, doctors surgeries, the electric car club, all within a self-sustaining infrastructure of water, waste and energy.

And creating a major attraction under the M5, 'The M5 mile', the maddest idea of all! We were concerned that, as the local authority sponsoring some of the early schemes, we would be left with an embarrassing white elephant. How wrong we were.

Clearly we needed the buy in of the Councils, otherwise there was the real danger of the garden city being thwarted by a rogue planning committee decision. The solution was a partnership agreement with the Development Trust, with all four Councils contributing Officer support and a joint planning committee to determine applications – a committee that I was lucky enough to chair – although I didn't feel that lucky at the time.

Our idea was to develop a Special Planning Zone for Albion. The whole of the Garden City was to be underpinned by a Design Code which meant, if the Design Code and various other parameters were complied with, the proposal had 'deemed consent'. The code to be right therefore, with enough flexibility for different sites, environments and demographics, but tight enough to ensure the delivery of all the guiding principles of the Garden City. It prompted so much debate, what should the palette of materials be, should houses have front gardens, how will car parking be dealt with, what size should gardens be, how close can houses be to each other? The first draft of the 'Code' ended up being 200 pages thick. Then we had to cut it down to something that the house-builders, social landlords and self-builders could use.

But nothing prompted as much discussion as to whether houses should have pitched roofs! I must confess to being a stickler for tradition and all the houses of any quality in the Black Country have pitched roofs. To me that was the tradition, the only houses I knew with flat roofs were failures, part of the Council stock of the 1960s and synonymous with failed communities. However, the authors of the design code convinced us otherwise. We were taken to award winning housing schemes, some were flat roofed, some were pitched roofed, all, were fantastic. In the end the design code was written to be silent on roof pitch, and in the intervening years, some phases have been developed flat, and some pitched – all however are excellent homes.



Cluster of four back-to-back houses.
Based on Callinan Associates'
Hillington housing,
1972-77



Robust buildings: a terrace of three-storey houses above a ground floor of retail or commercial spaces.



The green heart of the Black Country

Ziba Moshaver – Sustainability Advisor, Albion Development Trust

Albion has the aspiration to be the very green heart of the Black Country conurbation as a flourishing low carbon community resilient to economic, political and climate change. Albion is the node which invigorates the flows of people, resources and natural environment passing through it.

The economic strength of the area is symbolised by the humble bee – flourishing in the garden city it is the vital worker that supports the agricultural production in surrounding counties and across the UK. Hives are exported seasonally to provide the pollination of food crops valued at £1bn annually that otherwise would fail due to the lack of wild bees. Similarly the garden city provides the engine for local economic growth and community wellbeing.

In the early days, four key garden partnerships were formed. South were the original sites of the Salop Drive Market Garden and the Malthouse Gardens. North, the site grew at Barlow Road in Wednesbury and became a centre for children and families. Its close link to the M6 and its new pack house attracted regional significance. The Balaji Temple was west and it specialised in coppicing, biomass and sustainable energy. They also grew flowers for ceremonies and festivals. East, bordering Birmingham was the Midland Metropolitan Hospital Glasshouses which not only trained gardening apprentices but carried a design vision for food throughout the new hospital.

Blue and green infrastructure in the garden city supports the mental and physical wellbeing of the citizens, provides rich biodiversity habitat and is the management system that provides resilience to excess rainfall and drought. Homes storing up to 100 litres each of rainwater and grey-water, take the pressure off the drains and prevent surface water flooding and contamination by sewerage as water levels rise. The same water irrigates the garden city in dry periods.

The glass sided separation and recycling plant is a top tourist attraction for visitors from around the world. Residual domestic and commercial waste that cannot be managed down through reduction and recycling feeds waste to energy plants – part of the energy generation infrastructure for the area.

The area exports energy with all suitable roofs used for solar PV or hot water, new designs for lightweight roof structures mean the covering fabric is an energy generator. The mine workings provide heat storage and exchange for heat pump systems and preheating of hot water.

The green city is truly green with walls, roofs and streetscape planted, moderating temperatures and air pollution and providing water retention and biodiversity and looking good. Phase 1 of Albion can be said to have built itself. New off-site manufacturing centres were constructed so that local people gained local employment and manufactured their own homes ensuring that the millions of pounds of investment in new housing was re-circulated through the local community. Now this is the 'Green Country', manufacturing green homes to erect in a green Garden City.





4. Innovation





Creating a 'smart grid'

Caroline Black – Engineer, Albion Smart Grid Ltd

In 2014 the innovators and entrepreneurs were still unsure of what a smart grid that included existing properties might look like. So we worked back from the outcome we wanted in order to establish some key principles. The desired outcome was a city with an affordable, secure, clean energy supply available to all residents and businesses. The key principles we agreed on drove us towards some stretching targets that in turn stimulated local business to new ways of operating, collaborating and diversifying.

The vision was that we could take a "People's Power Station" approach – reducing demand by at least as much as a new power station would generate and so succeed in winning the government prize of investment into our smart grid equivalent to the cost of a new power station. We flipped planning for the smart grid from a focus on the cost and difficulty of infrastructure investment to a strategy of investment opportunity. We created a communication network to drive change by the internet rather than by pipes and wires and thereby increase consumer engagement. We tackled fuel poverty and drew down on the £11bn of investment in smart meters nationally to 2020 and the £1bn market locally delivered 1600 new jobs.

Today, we have a city energy system and storage assets that provide free and low cost energy to citizens and businesses

because we have reduced our energy consumption to such a low level that we can even export some of the energy generated in the city. We have pursued a strategy of largely invisible advances to create a smart grid ranging from citizen engagement to consumer control and upgrades to heating and appliance controls and sub stations. My bills are a quarter of what they were as my smart appliances only run when they are told electricity is at its most economical. I can walk into my house to the smell of dinner cooking because I could turn the oven on as I left work. I can hang up the washing as soon as I get up in the morning and have all day for it to dry because the wash cycle started at 4am when electricity was at its lowest tariff. My car is charging using energy I have generated. I enjoy walking past homes built of the innovative energy generating materials that were developed as a result of collaboration between aerospace engineering and construction material manufacturers because I know how the seeds were planted that have blossomed in our garden city.

We had serious issues to address around data privacy but the opportunities to engage customers more actively in the energy system resulted in them benefiting from energy generation revenue and opportunities for jobs and skills training. We worked with community groups, trusts, credit unions and locally-run energy services companies may all have roles to play in delivering smart grids effectively.





People love food

Elsbeth Derbyshire – Owner, Smethwick Herbs

The idea was that we, the food businesses, would each symbolise the Garden City. All food grows somewhere - and if it was grown locally, regionally or nationally we made that very visible. If it wasn't, we found another Albion principle to focus on e.g. sustainably produced food, innovations in local manufacture or processing of foods. A range of healthier improvements was made but taste and quality improved most. People started to talk about it and demand this better quality food. It was fascinating because every business had a different method to achieving it. They had to come up with their direction but they knew support was available. They were very creative.

A chip shop started 'bigging-up' their Herefordshire potatoes, the Indian take away advertised that it used regional vegetables in 50% of its dishes. The ideas just kept coming. All shops that sold fresh produce displayed it to the best of their abilities in/outside. To keep their turnover high and get closer to the homes, they made collective use of temporary local markets and developed logistics to contribute to carbon reduction.

As soon as they invited us to the table businesses were bursting with ideas. We realised we could be a centre of innovation in food even when we had limited land to grow

it. The fact was that over 13% of local employees were already involved in food. It didn't matter whether you were working in a takeaway, food shop, a nursery, the hospital or manufacturing food, we all got specialist support.

Businesses invested in hydroponics using the old factory buildings. They provided the perfect shells for the hi-tech production of food. With such a diverse cultural profile of business owners and local residents we discovered unlimited ideas for land use. Many required research and business development support which they received promptly.

All our schools have their own growing spaces, and are linked to our demonstration city farm, and our network of community allotments. Produce is integral to school meals, and gives a real plot to plate experience for the whole community.

We encourage local and regional producers through Albion Community Agriculture which gives a great sense of local food, a fair price, and short supply lines; we are proud to be at the forefront of good practice and run frequent seeing is believing tours for visitors from across the UK and beyond who are keen to learn from us.

We never imagined the impact we could make to the programme. People love food. It was a brilliant way for people to learn about what we were doing in a bigger sense.



Growing everywhere





The new Copenhagen?

Transport Today, interviews June Taylor, Albion's Director of Placemaking

Albion has been praised for achieving rates of walking and cycling comparable to Copenhagen and Amsterdam. How did you achieve that?

We are proud of the levels of sustainable transport that we have achieved in Albion, in recent years around 20% of trips are made by walking, around 20% by bike with public transport usage around 30% and private cars around 30%. The levels of walking and cycling are the highest in Britain. The vision from the beginning was to make Albion the most liveable and healthiest city in Britain. We completely integrated the planning, urban design, engineering and public health functions so that every piece of infrastructure was designed by a team containing all of these functions. It freed them from traditional and institutionalised ways of thinking and was the single most important innovation we made.

So what did these multi-disciplinary teams do?

We looked at best practice from around the world and this involved reallocating space away from cars to walking and cycling, to make the public space attractive and somewhere people would spend time in. It wasn't just a case of making footways wider or providing cycle lanes, we had to produce a safe, legible and continuously connected network for walking and cycling. This was the first task in terms of planning the city. We designed a street network that was direct and

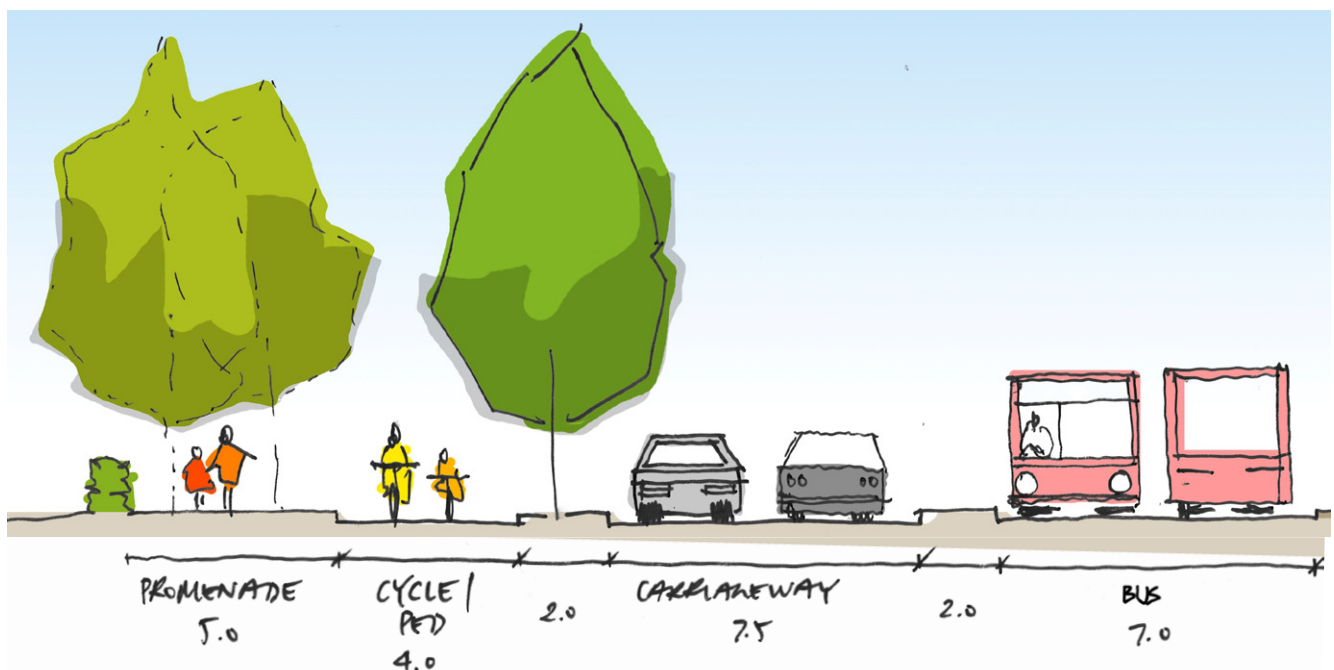
connected, had sufficient capacity for the levels of walking and cycling we wanted, was looked over by active frontages but also still had levels of car use that were sufficient to animate a place.

How did you achieve that balance? Car use has always been very high in the Black Country.

In fact, levels of car ownership in Albion are relatively high compared to some urban area but levels of second car ownership are very low. This is the result of our city-wide car club which means there are cars available to use as and when required. This allows families to restrict themselves to one car. We also designed our streets to remain accessible by private vehicles. The general layout of the street network is a continuously connected grid so we don't have a hierarchy of streets with fast moving, high capacity links at one end and pedestrianised streets at the other. There is a choice of routes which means that no-one route gets too busy and our junctions are not bloated acres of tarmac. We use traffic signals less (which saves costs) and we narrowed the lanes for cars so that speeds are lower.

So design has been a key feature in the transport network?

The good design of the transport network has been critical to our success and allowed us to reduce car parking in the main centres, make more efficient use of space and contributed to the economy of the various centres.



Reallocation of space away from cars to walking and cycling



5. Identity and culture





Where is Albion?

Simon Carter – Telegraph Regional Correspondent

The chances are you have heard of Albion. The regeneration phenomena of the last decade that has transformed parts of the Black Country by re-inventing the idea of the 'garden city'. But where is it?

I went in search of Albion and getting off the train at Smethwick Galton Bridge I could see where the garden city began and ended. Opposite the old high-street, there were the distinctive houses, flats and businesses of Albion, white rendered, flat roofed, big windows. But, look beyond the architecture and its not quite so clear. Another trade-mark of Albion is the well-designed streets, often shared spaces punctuated by street trees, but this style has infected nearby traditional streets that have been given an Albion makeover. Also spreading beyond the Albion developments are the green walls, roof gardens, vegetable patches, raised beds and window boxes everywhere.

I thought I would ask the people where Albion was. "I live in Smethwick" said long-time resident Nancy Grimley, "and I always have done." Others were not so sure. Narinder Singh a transport manager who has lived in Smethwick for all of her 30 years said it depended who she was talking to. "Even though I live in one of the new Albion houses, if I'm talking to someone local I'll say I live in Smethwick, but when I meet people at work, especially if they are a bit younger, I will say I live in Albion, because they have heard of that and they think it's a cool place to live."

Local estate agent Alan Nicholls had a different perspective, "When it comes to selling houses geography is flexible. If we can call somewhere Albion, we will. There's an 'Albion premium'. It's got to be worth 20%, often 30%, and we don't want to miss out."

I thought maybe Constance Deesey, communications manager at the Albion Community Development Trust could give me a straight answer. I was wrong. "You have got to start by understanding that this is the age of multiple identities. I have Jamaican and Irish parents, I was born in Austria because my dad was working there, but I grew up in Worcestershire, so I think of my self as English and I'm a UK citizen, and now I live here, in Albion or Oldbury or Sandwell or the Black Country. Confused? Welcome to the modern world. If we had built Albion out in the countryside it would have taken in places that already had names: hamlets, farms, fields, hills. Maybe we would have tried to save those names by using them for streets, neighbourhoods, buildings. In Albion, we not only keep the old names but they are a source of strength, they add value because they are part of the character of the place, like the old buildings or the canal. Albion is a name that evokes the spirit of the garden city and all that it means in terms of quality buildings and places, creativity, enterprise, community, greenness." So perhaps I had finally tracked down where Albion is located, in the hearts and minds of its citizens.





I wanted to be part of it

Antonia Aldred, craft shop owner

As soon as I saw the units at the pumping station I knew they would be perfect for my business. The place had such a buzz.

I had lived in Bearwood, an area close to Albion, since before it was developed. When I first moved there I didn't consider it to be a particularly cool place to live – the funky suburbs like Moseley and Kings Heath and Harborne attracted all the creative types – but it was nice enough. I did however find Bearwood's Crafty Muthas and became a regular member creating things for their craft fairs and attending the Bearwood tapestry nights each month above the Bear Pub.

And then Albion came. Bearwood suddenly began looking North towards the Black Country rather than to Birmingham – for everything – for jobs, for leisure, for homes. Like other neighbouring suburbs we wanted to be part of it. Eventually I knew I had to move there, it is such a wonderful place for a young family.

As a resident I was the first to hear about the new opportunities at the Pumping Station. The Albion App is the first place to find out about the things going on in Albion. I was able to get a special deal and support to help me set up my business. My experience with the Crafty Muthas told me that crafty people

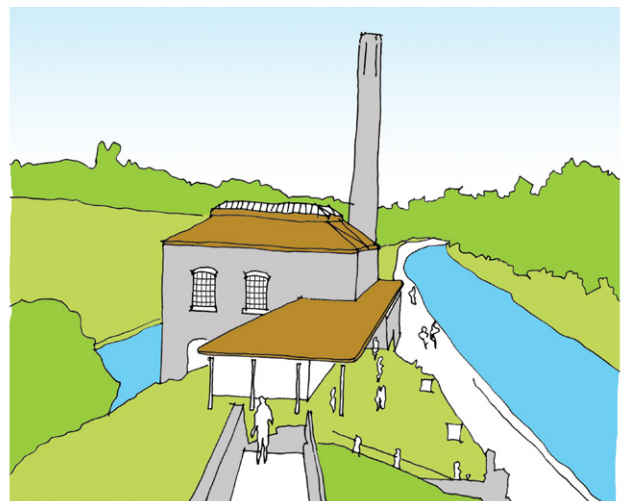
lived all over the place but the Garden City reinforced this – Albion has such a great vibe things seem possible here – and that brings new residents, new groups, new initiatives, new businesses. I knew my business would fit right in with the others there – there is a gallery, a photography studio, a record shop, café and a bar famous for its gin and tonics using Langley gin – a local product brought back into production again when the Garden City came.

The canal at the back of the pumping station is directly linked to other parts of the garden city and places like Birmingham. People walking or cycling along the tow path will always stop here, sit by the canal-side, browse round the shops, eat and perhaps pick up some local produce grown here in Albion from one of the market stalls. It's only 5 more minutes to the M5 Mile and we often hold workshops and fairs up there in one of the pop up spaces. We also run programmes with the local schools and businesses, our grow-and-sew sessions held in parks, allotments and other growing places means the less green fingered amongst us can still get out and enjoy something fun and creative alongside friends, family and other members of the community.

I have never looked back since opening my shop – the sense of community here, the optimism and the reputation this place has means that it can only go from strength to strength.



The pumping station





6. Community and enterprise





Business benefits

George Green – Managing Director, Avery Weigh Tronix

We are a global manufacturer of high quality weighing products and systems. Our company is based at Soho Foundry in Smethwick, and our site, along with the surrounding Soho Park district, forms part of Albion, the garden city. The original Soho Foundry used to be in our ownership, and it's still on our campus. It was regenerated between 2015-2020, as part of the first phase of the garden city.

Without Albion's vision for a new community in Smethwick, covering housing, employment, education and public realm, the regeneration of the Foundry would have never got off the ground. And without a major focus for the first phase— a big historic building, – the Albion project wouldn't have got off to such a clear and confident start.

Matthew Boulton's 1796 Foundry, is now fully restored, along with the adjoining Mint and the Erecting Shop. The Foundry, is a centre of learning and houses a fascinating history of the earliest phases of heavy industry. The Mint contains small businesses and incubator space, while the Erecting Shop is an Energy-from-Waste plant, generating about 15 MW of green energy and heat for the locality. Our own Weights and Measures Museum has been enhanced, along with the beautifully restored William Murdock's Cottages. The Foundry's original Canal Port has been reinstated, with the help of the Canals and Rivers Trust. Waterbuses travel along the Main Line Canal.

The neighbouring allotments are restored. There's an urban farm and an organic food-store and there is new housing along Foundry Lane, developed by the Albion Development Trust. Hockley Brook has been rehabilitated, and is teeming with wildlife.

Avery's role was to create a separate, local Development Trust, which made the case for the project, and eventually took custody of the buildings. It then entered into a partnership with the Albion Development Trust; and between them, they promoted a strategy for the whole area, with the support of Sandwell Council and the Black Country LEP.

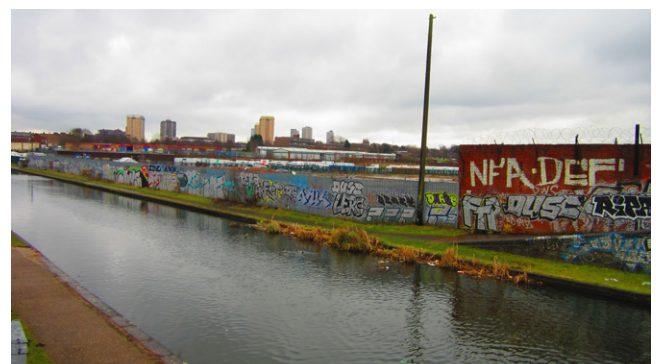
The aim was to blend new commercial development with housing, heritage conservation, educational and community facilities around the Foundry site. It's run by professional staff working across a range of disciplines and accountable to the shareholders.

Once the Foundry was restored, it brought our business huge benefits. We sold off surplus space. New clients from around the world were impressed. People wanted to come here, even live here. We recruited more apprentices and engineers locally. Other businesses have clustered around us.

I can't believe how tired and tawdry this area used to be. It's a distant memory now.



Character and 'edge'





Incomers welcome

Martin Pike – long-term Oldbury resident

In 2015 I was unemployed, unhappy and to be honest I just wanted out of the area. I joined the Learning Centre course because the job centre told me that I had to. It was half direct food industry training (food hygiene and customer services) but it was half about Albion and all the ideas behind it. My mind opened. They taught us using examples from the food supply chain as it really is. I didn't know that these types of jobs existed here. Once we had finished the training we developed projects on specialist topic areas. Mine was hydroponics. I had to learn about it from scratch, but I was coached on the job. Now I manage three separate locations and a team of twelve people. Each year we increase and expand. Wolverhampton is planning two new sites this year.

There are incomers who are coming to Albion to learn or coming to share ideas. There are those who come to live here, or who come to use services or to shop here.

Something I noticed was that young families were choosing to buy/rent houses here. It wasn't that it became a trendy place to live, but we had a supportive environment. People knew what we were doing and that it was open to them if they wanted more.

Birmingham was a good friend. I know that people define themselves as either Brummie or Black Country here but the fact was that we did well from Birmingham's success also. The new library forged a relationship with our libraries, schools and learning centres.

The unexpected 'incomers' were all the birds, the bees and the trees that settled too.





The M5 Mile

Louise Guest – fashion student at Sandwell College

The M5 Mile? Well, the party generally happens every Saturday night. We always have a good laugh there, and there's always something unexpected happening.

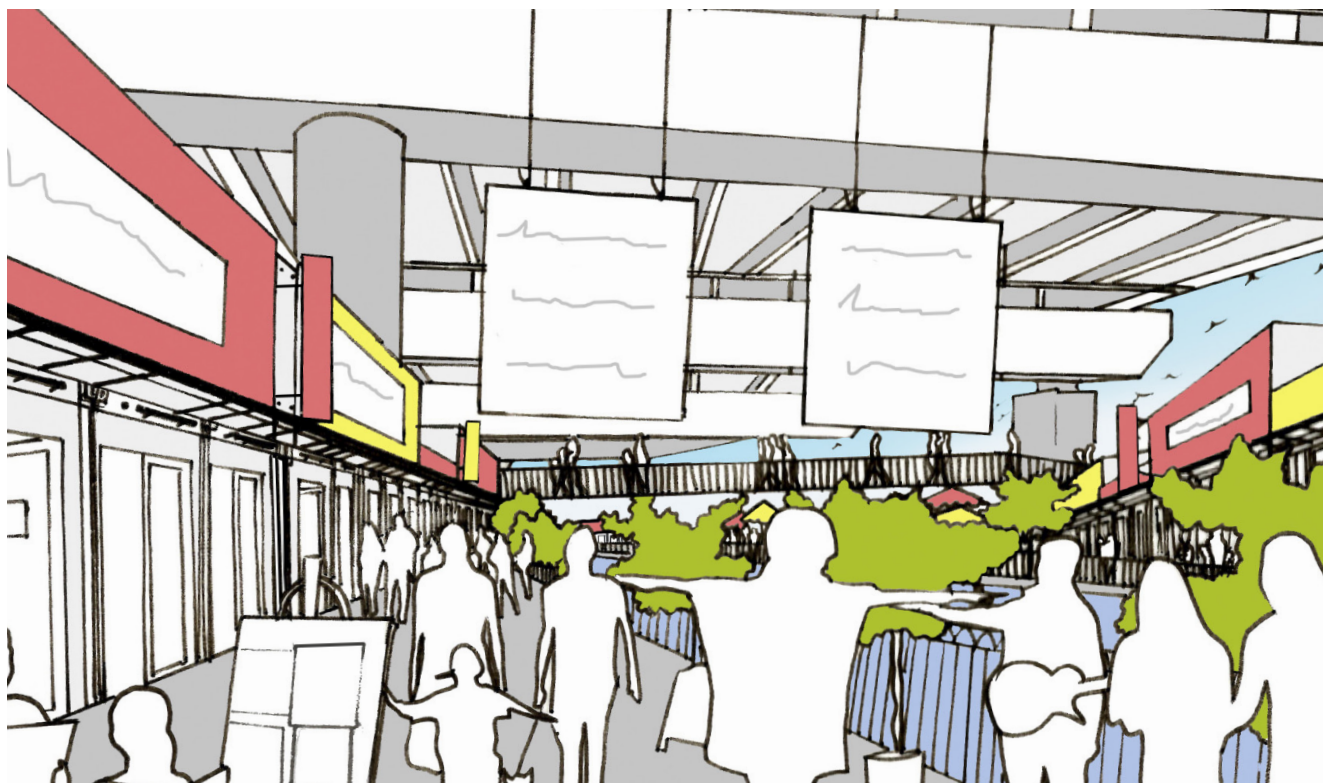
It goes on along the canal under the motorway. Last night we met up for a drink in the Summit, then we walked down to the canal at Spon Lane. The canal goes under the motorway for quite a distance. If it rains you can stay dry! My uncle Steve lived in Oldbury before the garden city, and he says it used to be like empty space there when he was a kid twenty years ago. It was just a place where kids used to like go and smoke weed, and a few old geezers fishing. Now it's a buzzing place, like Camden Market. They started it with a few containers selling vintage clothing, and takeaways, and it got bigger and more permanent. There's a big indoor sports hall under the viaduct too, and an artificial snowboarding slope.

On Saturdays they have stages with live music, three different bands last night. One of them was 1000 Watts, who started out in Smethwick, but it's not all rock'n'roll and stuff, there was a gospel choir as well. There's lots of food stalls, Asa and me had falafels and all the works from that Syrian place in Brasshouse Lane. There's lots of stuff to choose from. And there's bars

selling drinks too, and bonfires on the water burning nice-smelling wood.

They have light shows projected on to underneath the motorway, like really huge. They light up Galton Bridge too, different colours every time. Did you know that was once the biggest bridge in the world? And there was a woman walking a tightrope between the canal embankments. You can just stroll along the canal and take it all in, there's masses of people. Or if you've got money you can go on a narrowboat, lie on your back and look up at the show. We meet up with lots of our mates from college at M5 Mile, it's a regular thing. But it's for all kinds of people - my mum and grandma always go.

Near the Seven Stars there's a big skateboarding place on the canal, and on Saturdays it's always busy, they have a burger stall there and coloured spotlights on the ramps and things. Becky took her skateboard last night, I had a go but I fell off. My bum's still sore! At M5 Mile in the winter, they've got a canal arm which they can freeze, and we go skating. At New Year we were still skating at two in the morning. We're really lucky in Albion to have the M5 Mile – I don't think there's anything quite like it anywhere else. It's like one of the things that makes the place really special.



The M5 Mile



7. Governance and 'ownership'





Looking back

Charlotte Granger – Chair of the Albion Development Trust

When we set up Albion Development Trust, we were determined that it would be a different sort of development company, one that would combine a social housing provider with a high quality real estate developer. We were determined to build into the company's culture the highest standards of professionalism. In this, we were to some extent recapturing the qualities of the enlightened businesses that built Letchworth and Hampstead Garden Suburb, but we reckoned that we had to design the company and its strategy in a way which would attract institutional investors, investment funds and pension funds, as well as locally-based businesses and private individuals.

The Trust's roles are twofold: first to act as advocate, arguing the public interest case for the Garden City project as a whole; secondly, as delivery vehicle, to procure the design, construction and stewardship of the garden city assets for the benefit of the local community.

As a Community Interest Company model all our businesses decisions to buy, sell, borrow and invest - must be directed to generating a profit in ways which benefit the community beyond our shareholders. That means the residents and businesses of Albion and the Black Country as a whole.

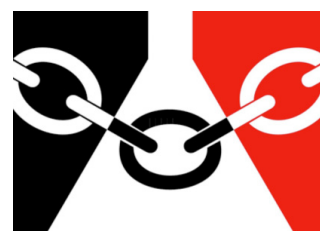
We issue shares to investors, and we pay dividends, subject to a cap equal to 30 per cent of pre-tax profits. The rest is

recycled into new projects. I'm pleased to say that a number of major house-builders and other big concerns have invested in the Trust and have helped with its working capital. All the shareholders have a democratic voice, on a one-member-one -vote basis whether they are house-builders who put in £500,000 or a local couple who have put in £500. They all have an equal voice in the shaping of our strategy. And they all expect their investments to be managed prudently. There is an asset-lock written into the Trust's constitution, such that assets can only ever be disposed of for full market value, ensuring long-term financial resilience.

The assets that we have delivered include 5,000 units of mixed tenure housing (half the housing in Phase 1) with shared infrastructure, communal gardens, and community facilities.

We've procured two new schools, both of which are technically free schools, but whose curriculum we have set with support from the local authority. We've delivered two clinics and a well-being centre; we've done arts and cultural facilities at Soho Foundry; and we've restored green spaces and promoted nature conservation projects.

We seek to run ourselves professionally, imaginatively and democratically. We are a crucial and effective bridge between private investors, the public sector and the community on the ground.





'Localism' for real

Albert Withers – Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Sandwell Council

The great virtue of Albion is that it has persuaded huge numbers of ordinary people that it really is possible to take control over your life by taking responsibility, and promising to other stakeholders that you will take responsibility, for caring for your own home and your community. This is a promise that's backed with a covenant to pay the Garden City Tariff which in turn provides Albion with, first, a sinking fund for infrastructure and asset maintenance; and, secondly, a revolving fund to support new developments in order to meet changing patterns of need. Some residents go further and invest in a range of businesses connected with the Garden City that have provided jobs and training for people across the area.

The sceptics thought that the Garden City would undermine local democracy and would prove socially divisive. They couldn't see the justification for a particular group of residents carving out for themselves a privileged position – winning their own planning powers, powers to provide and manage their own public services. These critics saw all that as the direct responsibility of the local authority rather than a bunch of amateurs.

The trouble with this view is that it fails to face up to the harsh truth that Whitehall has not taken local government seriously since the 1950s, and most of the previous efforts at regeneration have been through top-down bodies and institutions working to central government's agenda. From the Urban Development Corporations of the Thatcher-Major to the regional development agencies of the Blair-Brown years, the message always seemed to be, leave it to us, Mother knows best.

On the other hand, Albion's success comes from recognising that a grassroots democracy that's contingent to some degree upon the status of property ownership attracts a natural respect. We tend to think that people who have a tangible stake in their own community can be trusted to make proper decisions about investment in that community. This line of thought gave rise to the Localism Act of 2011. In many ways it set the framework within which Albion Garden City could be developed.

I think that Albion has shown successfully what the Chartists tried to show in the 1840s and the cooperative movement has been trying to show ever since – that democracy is not a middle-class luxury, but that democracy delivers increased prosperity for all.



Led by its citizens and businesses





We made the New York Times

Jennifer Carragher – Ward Councillor and social worker

I'm a Conservative councillor for the Claremont and Grove Vale ward – we are a rare breed in Sandwell. I have worked as an adoption adviser, since 2004. I must say that when I first heard about the Albion Garden City plan in 2015, I was unimpressed. I imagined it was going to be like one of the ecotowns that Gordon Brown's Labour government proposed in 2007. The idea was a nonstarter.

In Sandwell there was certainly opposition, both from our side, and also from the Labour group. Or rather, it wasn't so much opposition as scepticism. What could they do that we hadn't managed to do already? We had built quite a lot of new houses on old industrial land, and planted I forget how many thousand trees. Maybe none of the housing schemes would win any prizes for design, but we were building homes. We had built Brindley Village by the canal, and we were about to start on Brindley II. In West Bromwich there was a big Tesco and a new cinema.

However, some local people got excited by the garden city idea, and it certainly generated a lot of favourable press for Sandwell. We were particularly impressed when the New York Times listed Sandwell as one of its places to go in 2020! I think what tipped it for me was the visit by Grant Shapps and Wayne Hemingway. They convinced me that we hadn't been aiming high enough, and that we had in our hands a huge opportunity to make not just a really brilliant place to live, but a place that would set standards for the rest of Britain.

Anyway, the scepticism didn't last very long once we realised what it could do for Sandwell, and since then all parts of the Council have been totally on board with Albion Garden City. We've given it our full cross-party support. Technically, Albion has an independent existence from the Council as a development trust, but in practice we are all batting on the same side, and there is very rarely any disagreement on policies between the Trust and the Council. There are two councillors sitting on the Trust board. The garden city is seen as just a part of Sandwell – a big and special part admittedly – and we on the Council are very proud of it.



Existing public services





Community ownership and management

Jo Pearson – Head of Housing Development, Albion Development Trust

We formed a partnership with the local community and key stakeholders through the Albion Development Trust which has the long-term responsibility for stewardship. This is a joint venture between the community, the Council, the developers, housing associations and other stakeholders. During the development stage the developers had a significant role due to their risk exposure, but their involvement reduced as we entered the stewardship phase.

The Trust is seen as a long-term vehicle. It was set up in perpetuity to manage the housing and open spaces. It is a public benefit organisation, run for and by the community, involving representatives from a local Community Forum and supported by key stakeholders based upon community ownership and co-operative principles. It is income generating and acts as a "collection point" for any charges on behalf of the community

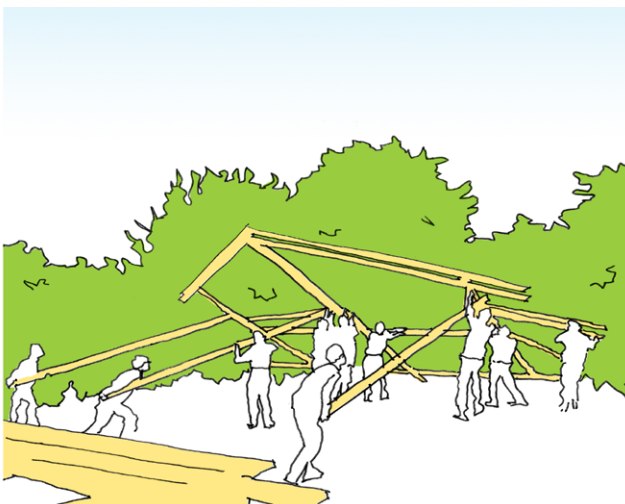
It is responsible for public realm management through a partnership agreement. A locally negotiated management Plan was developed which included project milestones, clear and locally-agreed standards, targets and performance management information within an overall context of continuous improvement. Through the Albion Development Trust we deliver home services, open space management and support of local enterprises.

The aim is that each and every resident takes a stake in their neighbourhood through their membership of the Community Forum and the Albion Development Trust. Wherever possible residents were encouraged to shape the growing neighbourhood, taking part in setting management standards and bringing forward ideas for local services and projects. All residents were actively involved in specific community engagement options working with professionals with expertise in building and sustaining community relationships.

People choose to live here because they want to join this new community. The new housing was built to high design standards; they are energy efficient, wired up, with lifetime homes features, and incorporating Secured by Design and home-zone principles.

Within this overall design framework we were offered a range of different living options and choices that allowed residents to customise their homes to meet their specific needs and aspirations including design choices within and around homes, for example a bedroom or a resource area, a bathroom or a shower room?

There is a choice of tenure with flexible ways of moving from one tenure to another and homesteading packages where residents could complete homes to their personal specification.



Self-build opportunities



8. Economics





Right location, right time

Lucas Brodowski – Director, Albion Development Trust

When we commenced Albion we had great opportunities with the strong infrastructure and low land values prevalent in the area. In the latter part of the 20th Century the Black Country Development Corporation had begun our work by assembling some of the major sites and installing new roads. However, the strong industrial heritage was also a factor with services and communication facilities all in place and great access to the nearby M5 and M6 motorways. All that was needed was the Albion garden city initiative to kick it off. The local property owners are used to change and the benefits it brings. They committed early to our masterplan and design code and thus benefitted from growth in values. At commencement we were able to prove that potential growth in value without the need for major infrastructure enhancement was far more economical than a green-field location.

When we won the competition equally placed against two other out of town locations, it soon became clear that the high cost of providing new infrastructure in green field locations and the detrimental environmental impact would cause problems

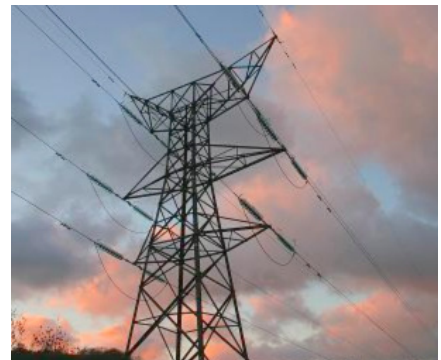
for the other sites. They also had major resistance from local populations and with the election at the time this became a political issue. All these factors favoured Albion. Our local population encouraged the plan and the LEP brought local business and local authorities into the mix in a very positive way.

Initially we worked closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Black Country LEP welcomed our initiative and we had direct interaction with the major landowners working on and improving local projects so that they complimented and supported the garden city initiative. Initially we secured land under option and building agreements sharing the enhancement in value with landowners, developers and housing associations. As development progressed we were able to build our own funding “pot”. This became the Albion Garden City Rotating Fund. Surplus profits were ploughed back into new projects or into the wider landscaping that has resulted in the re-greening of this historic industrial area.

The Albion Garden City project was exactly right for its time and has been extremely successful by all measures.



Existing infrastructure





The 'Garden City premium'

John Munroe – Regional Director, Barratt Wimpey

We forget that Albion Garden City commenced at the end of one of the longest recessions in our history. The market in housing was changing from home ownership to rental. The Housing Associations' roles were changing too as they converted from owners to managers of both public and private residential portfolios. At Barratt Wimpey we already had a good track record in both low cost and quality housing in the area. The Garden City helped us capitalise on this developing new private rented sector products designed to attract young professionals into high quality rented housing with great links to the nearby cities of Birmingham and Wolverhampton both well connected by rail. Perhaps our new residents were attracted by the improving links to London with the prospect of HS2 and the excellent motorway communications. Due to low initial land values we were able to incorporate Albion Garden City's green vision and this has now become a feature of all our schemes. The Design Code and Special Planning Zone gave us certainty and significantly reduced the cost of securing planning.

Low property values, a young regional population and a massive shortfall in housing provision in the recessionary years all combined to bring about an environment for rapid development and rapid growth in values. On top of this the quality that the Design Code guaranteed and the way the buzz around Albion captured the imagination of young professionals meant that values quickly reached those found in the better parts of Birmingham and houses sold quickly. This was the Albion Garden City premium that local landowners, the Trust and developers like us have shared as the city has grown rapidly. Demand continues to grow and even with growth in values we still show far better returns and better value for money here than with equivalent projects in the South East. We had a long way to catch up but all the ingredients were there for a successful initiative.



Existing character





Unique benefits, unique challenges

Ravi Maheswaran – Chair, Black Country LEP

Our challenge was to develop a new type of Garden City that maximised the use of existing infrastructure but which offered the opportunity to develop a new community within the urban infrastructure. The Black Country has traditionally comprised a patchwork of land use sitting side by side linked through local transport networks from the canals to the road network, rail and Metro. Albion started with all the gifts and penalties of the industrial revolution. There was so much space, parks and industrial history and under the ground too there was a legacy of the engineering that was needed to support this place.

Our biggest challenge was the contamination. By working with the landowners, communities, councils and everyone who cared we were able to start thinking about how the most challenging of these individual sites could still be used, but supporting part of a larger more successful whole.

As Albion has developed the value of that land has increased. There have been limited requirements to invest in infrastructure and as we have done so the value of the land has increased even more. This is how we are repaying the investment in

remediation which we funded through a revolving loan fund (not a one-off grant) enabling an initial investment to be reinvested time and time. It all required a little bit of bravery at first, but with some judicious early land assembly and lots of local support we were able to show what could be done. People started to get happier about working together and sharing the benefits. It meant that land that could not be used for one thing was seen as an asset used as another. This in turn supported other land owners by adding value to their space, who were then brave enough to share some of the benefit. By working together local people have broken the cycle of decline – they just needed a bit of help.

The real reason this has worked is that everyone has been prepared to give a little. Land Owners who now boast extensive residential and employment spaces have supported those who inherited the worst land of the industrial age, by realising the value of space everyone has benefited.

And there is a lesson in what we have done, because by looking at the whole and working together, accepting that no one body can do everything, we have all managed to achieve more.

Residual value calculation

Total value of development	£ 1,669,086,073
Building costs	£ 791,585,000
Infrastructure costs @ 10%	£ 79,158,500
Landscaping costs @ 5%	£ 39,579,250
Remediation Costs	£ 50,000,000
Total construction cost	£ 960,322,750
Professional fees @ 12.5%	£ 120,040,344
Contingencies @ 5%	£ 48,016,138
Sub total	£ 1,128,379,23
Short-term finance @ 8% p.a. (Assuming 2-year construction period)	£ 90,270,339
Sub-total	£ 1,218,649,570
Developer's profit @ 20% of cost	£ 243,729,914
Sub-total	£ 1,462,379,484
Agents and selling fees @ 5%	£ 73,118,974
Total development cost	£ 1,535,498,458
Residual value = total value - total cost	£ 133,587,616
Development site area Ha	260.0
Value/Ha	£ 513,799
Housing units	10,000
Residential density (u/ha)	38
Plot ratio	0.41



9. Communications and engagement





Small beginnings

Natasha Hussain – Assistant Manager of the Albion Enterprise Centre

When the Development Trust started up in 2015, I was running a cafe in Smethwick High Street. It was just a greasy spoon place really, but it did reasonably good business, because the snooker hall was upstairs, and the job centre was next door. Anyway, the Trust used to meet nearby so I got to know most of them, and I started to take an interest in what they were doing.

Sandwell was having a difficult time then, with lots of closed-down factories, and people out of work. One of them was my husband Omar, who lost his job when The Public in West Bromwich closed down in 2013. Our High Street was a pretty poor place too: one side of it had been demolished in the 70s and a lot of the trade had disappeared.

The Trust had big ideas, but they wanted to get some things working quickly too. I remember they had a big event in the Gurdwara a few doors away, and asked for people's ideas for some quick fixes. One of them became the beginning of the rebuilding of the other side of the High Street. An agricultural shed was put up, and it became a regular market – second

hand clothes on Mondays, old furniture on Tuesdays, and so on – and grew from there. The shed moved to the Tree Nursery in Oldbury, and now we've got the Arcade development on the High Street.

There was a similar problem in Oldbury, with a lot of empty shops in the town centre. With the Prince's Trust, they helped unemployed people set up businesses in the empty shops. There were two friends of my son who started a bike repair business. They now run Velocity next door to this Enterprise Centre.

The Trust promoted self-build housing co-ops – Omar and me were members of one of them. The Council gave the co-op some derelict land and we used a timber-framed system a housing association had designed. We planted an avenue of hornbeam trees in Lewisham Road too. After we started building we got the site next door as well, which became the Albion community orchard.

The Development Trust had few resources to start with – small beginnings. But Albion has grown into a big thing because it had people with inventive ideas, and bags of energy and ambition.



Space to start-up, self-build, invest, create





The virtual Garden City

Julie Wilson – Developer, Digital Albion Ltd

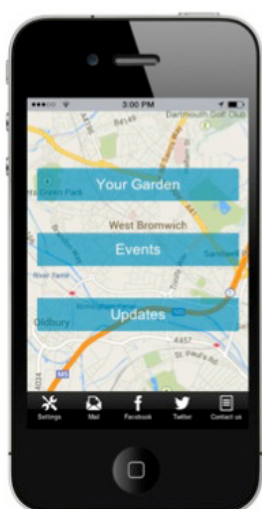
Albion came along at just the right time when the development of smart-phones and tablets could play a central role in involving people. Part of our vision for the garden city was to promote community engagement both 'offline' and online. Along with all the other ways people can get involved, the garden city has always had a virtual online space. The garden city's online presence also makes its core themes and designs easily transferable, so as we begin Phase 2 in Wolverhampton the virtual garden city is ready.

When Albion started 36 million adults in Great Britain (73%) accessed the Internet every day. That is now over 90%. At that time access to the internet using a mobile phone was at 53%, it is now over 80%.

We found that 'time poverty' limited the levels of face-to-face community engagement, even given the excitement of Albion. An online platform for citizen engagement helped extend that engagement.

The Albion App is how 9 out of 10 Albion citizens engage with the organisations and business that affect their lives. It brings people closer to the garden city. Using the app they can view and book events, comment on debates and vote on decisions, order from local businesses, search for property for sale or to rent, even invest in the different share offers and loan funds that finance Albion

In addition to the mobile phone app, the Albion Development Trust has created an online blog accessible to the public. The blog transcribes real-time developments happening 'live' and gives citizens the opportunity to engage in online discussions.



PERSONAL ONLINE
ACCOUNT AS PART
OF LIVING IN THE
GARDEN CITY

COMPREHENSIVE
UPDATE OF ALL
EVENTS HAPPENING
ACROSS THE
GARDEN CITY

INFORMATION ON
THE GARDEN CITY
DEVELOPMENT TRUST
INCLUDING MEETINGS,
DECISIONS & VOTING



Growing involvement

Pat Smith – resident and mother

My son has ADHD and at eight he was already nine stone. He was breathless climbing the stairs and had few friends. He used to sit in his room playing the computer. I know he spent all his pocket money on snacks and fizzy drinks. I'd tried all the different things I knew about being healthy but I was giving up. It seemed like climbing a mountain when we were surrounded by takeaways. He was the one who asked me to dig up the garden. He said that we could be a part of something big and he would plan it all out.

It was just 3 by 3 metres but it took us a good part of a week to get everything organised. In these 9 squares he planted herbs, salad and some veg. I had never seen him concentrate so hard and be so determined. He talked to the children at school about it and he took pictures.

Something happened. It affected our everyday. He became more focused, calm and happier. He related many things to that patch. It grounded him and he understood things through it. Because school was also growing things and the shops were displaying fresh produce he felt a part of something. He knew he was part of the world and that it was worth discovering, learning and creating. Now he is 18. He rents a flat with his girlfriend.

Big businesses sponsored small plots for community growing (even the national supermarkets). Housing associations developed a 'grow-your-own' programme. All over Albion and in the streets and neighbourhoods around it people started growing in pots and on window-sills. Traditional plots continued and developed organised Albion food swaps. The whole concept of a food bank was turned on its head. It is now a shop on the high street that anyone can buy from.



Growing everywhere





Communicating Albion

Constance Deesey – Communications Manager, Albion Community Development Trust

Working for Albion has totally changed the way I think about my profession. I had previously been a communications manager in a housing association. We used to produce newsletters for the tenants, issue press releases, run events in community centres. The people here had a totally different approach and I found it quite challenging at first.

We do a lot of walking around, knocking on doors talking to people, more listening than telling. People's stories are important they help to build the picture of the place, identify what is important. It helped that things started happening from day one, planting, markets, performances, the beginnings of the M5 mile. There was none of that consultation fatigue you get when you see lots of plans but nothing happens on the ground.

Then we would have pop-up consultations, in the street, in the park, we get people drawing, sharing photos, more stories, talking about their future. The idea is to have a big conversation about the place and plan it together. That way we found people are more open to new ideas. If you just put a proposal in front of people they start looking for the problems, then they start saying "no".

It's not that we do not value experts; architects, urban designers, landscape architects, the people that know about sustainable technology, water, ecology, growing, but these experts are part of the conversation. What we do is more of an exchange. We also have different artists involved, some on long-term residencies, some on shorter commissions. Artists engage people in a different way. Social media is important as well. It carries on the conversation 24-hours a day. I can't remember the last time I produced a leaflet or a newsletter.



Consultation and planning together





10. Long-term viability





Looking forward to Phase 2

Lucas Brodowski – Director, Albion Development Trust

Phase 1 (2015–25) focused on Smethwick and Oldbury. Phase 2 (2025–32) will be centred further west down the transport corridor in Wolverhampton. Here we are looking to provide another 15,000 new homes. Of this, we intend that 70 per cent will be private (market) stock, and about 30 per cent will be owned or managed by the Trust. Of our stock, about half will be tenanted and half of it, we hope, will be transferred into co-operative or co-partnered ownership, with the Trust offering to provide management services.

We are also aiming to deliver:

- a free school, with the support of one of the major cooperative societies as business sponsor;
- a business centre and design hub, with one of the major high-end manufacturers as business sponsor;
- a local health and well-being centre, managed by a local NHS body, and also sponsored by a major retail cooperative who has agreed to purchase block membership for its card-carrying members;
- a community cluster: neighbourhood centre, library and learning facility, which will be funded by a major Islamic charity and financial institution;
- a second urban farm and organic food centre, sponsored by a major food company with strong links to India; and

- another energy-from-waste centre, in joint venture with a specialist energy company.

We will achieve all this, as we have always done, by working in joint ventures with private developers, the local authority, housing associations, community trusts, academy trusts, NHS bodies and arts and cultural organisations.

Because the Trust has access to finance and considerable business freedom, we will often (but not always) acquire the site and execute the scheme, or project-manage it. When the scheme is complete, the asset will either be sold or transferred or leased to a partner with a long-term stewardship role. Housing stock which is not traditionally owner-occupied is either retained and managed by the Trust or is put into co-operatives.

On this last point, it needs to be understood that we are a housing trust in our own right, in the manner of a garden city corporation, holding and managing our own stock. By virtue of our five year alliance with Matrix Housing Partnership, we have access to a number of funding streams from both public and commercial sources. And we are a constructor: our in-house design-and-build service has grown from its early days, as a production facility for timber framed homes in a former Walsall tannery, into one of the largest co-operative enterprises in the UK, with a turnover of c £200m.

It's a great future.



Albion: A Garden City

Entrant Reference: 13487980

The Wolfson Economics Prize 2014

