

COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY FOR BIRMINGHAM GREEN PAPER

**Forward together to build a fair and inclusive
city for everyone**

May 2018



FOREWORD



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Birmingham is a city with a strong tradition of social action and civic engagement. The City's voluntary and community groups play a crucial role in fostering meaningful integration and cultivating a sense of belonging. We must draw upon this experience and knowledge, this record of practical action, if we are to meet the challenges that undermine community cohesion. We must also harness opportunities such as HS2, the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the growing economic success of the city.

Birmingham faces a number of difficult social issues that have an impact on cohesion; whilst these are not unique to our city, we cannot assume that national government policy will address them. These are complex challenges and they are also rapidly evolving. Collectively, Birmingham should lead by example in challenging anything that prevents our citizens from reaching their full potential, including discrimination, poverty, segregation or a lack of ambition

We will never know enough about the city and our communities. That is why, we need to work together to take an active role in listening to the real concerns of communities and continually learn about how needs are changing. Promoting community cohesion has to be an ongoing approach that adapts and responds to ever-changing local, national and global challenges and opportunities.

We are not in the business of producing documents for no reason. The Council has a responsibility to work with government, regional bodies and city partners to access opportunities that will benefit all communities and ensure consistency and alignment in our approach. The Council is in a unique position in having a formal approach at this time that supports our strategy.

This strategy will ensure that we are all clear about what community cohesion means in Birmingham. It sets out a collaborative cross-party approach, one in which the city council works alongside residents, local organisations and city partners – marshalling scarce resources, breaking down silos and making more creative use of the assets and skills we have in our city and neighbourhoods. Together we will make a commitment to ensure that Birmingham becomes stronger and more resilient, and is a place where people from different backgrounds can come together to improve things for themselves and their communities.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Our vision

Community cohesion is about how we all live, work, learn and play together and where there is a shared vision that promotes a sense of belonging and trust in and across our communities. It means breaking down the barriers to social and economic inequality that damages individual and family's lives and cause divisions between communities and neighbourhoods. Promoting community cohesion will enable a shared vision of fairness and greater social integration.

Birmingham is a welcoming city where everyone has an opportunity to contribute and benefit from the success of the city. The City and its neighbourhoods are safe and flourishing places to live, work and grow up in, they are well connected places where people from all backgrounds trust and support each other. People of all backgrounds realising their full potential and exercising their rights and responsibilities.

Birmingham is proud of its diversity of cultures, people and communities with individuals and families from over 200 different countries making it their home. As a City of Sanctuary, Birmingham is committed to creating a culture of hospitality and support to people seeking refuge and asylum. Our dynamic population is rich in its diversity of entrepreneurship, creativity, skills and experiences that contribute to the city's social and economic vitality. The City has a proud history of civic engagement and social action - these are just some of our strengths which we will continue to build on to make Birmingham a great city of opportunity for all.

Birmingham is a growing and increasingly diverse city in its people, places and cultures, our social and economic landscape is also changing as a result of global, national and regional influences. That is why a long-term commitment on community cohesion is required; building on the strengths of our diverse communities and responding to our challenges. This strategy sets out the city's vision and overarching approach to promoting community cohesion. It is a strategy for an ambitious and inclusive city where everyone can contribute and play their part to improve the life chances of individuals and families of all backgrounds; build resilient communities and celebrate our diversity. This is our commitment on how we will work in partnership across the city, together as communities, voluntary and faith sectors, public agencies and businesses.

What do we mean by community cohesion?

The complex nature of community cohesion means it can have different meanings to different people. While there is no universally agreed definition of community cohesion, it's a widely used concept to describe what needs to happen to encourage diverse communities to get on well with each other and foster trust and good relationships. Birmingham's strategy does not narrowly focus on backgrounds based on ethnicity and faith alone, but also includes social class, economic disadvantage, disability, gender and sexual orientation.

For many years, the Council has been proactively championing positive community cohesion. In 2016, a cross party definition and statement on community cohesion was published. Subsequently, the Council in dialogue with partners and community organisations felt the Commission for Integration and Cohesion's definition reflected a joint understanding of what community cohesion means in Birmingham:

- A defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and groups to a future local or national vision
- A strong sense of an individual's local rights and responsibilities
- A strong sense that people with different backgrounds should experience similar life opportunities and access to services and treatment
- A strong sense of trust in institutions locally, and trust that they will act fairly when arbitrating between different interests and be subject to public scrutiny
- A strong recognition of the contribution of the newly arrived, and of those who have deep attachments to a particular place – focusing on what people have in common
- Positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, schools and other institutions.”

Source: Commission for Integration and Cohesion¹ (CIC, 2007)

¹ <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Education/documents/2007/06/14/oursharedfuture.pdf>

We believe that Birmingham must not be a city where an individual's postcode or background holds back their ambitions and achievements, nor a barrier to developing social interactions and friendships with people of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY HOSTING NETWORK (BIRCH)

Birch was established in 2011 and is a volunteer led charity working to harness the enthusiasm of local people to offer friendship and hospitality to people seeking sanctuary in Birmingham. Birch supports asylum seekers and refugees through three separate projects: a Hosting Network, Family Befriending project and a Meet and Greet project.

The Hosting Network aims to relieve the destitution of asylum seekers whose support and accommodation from the Home Office has been cut off. Over the last seven years, volunteers in Birmingham have welcomed guests into their homes and provided over 9000 nights of accommodation to asylum seekers in need.

The Family Befriending project matches young refugees (aged 16-25) with volunteer families who offer to share a weekly or fortnightly meal with them on a regular basis. The young refugees who benefit from this project have all come to the UK alone without their families. They benefit from being welcomed into a family environment and feel better supported and less isolated.

The Meet and Greet project runs a weekly lunch, play and activity session in central Birmingham for newly arrived asylum seeking families. The majority of the families live in a nearby hostel where conditions are cramped and children are without school places whilst awaiting longer term accommodation. The Meet and Greet has an emphasis on improving well-being and provides families with some rest bite from the difficulties of day to day life, with around 40 children and adults attending each session.

The work that Birch and its volunteers carries out enables newcomers to our city, who are often in great need of support, to connect with and feel valued by local people.

Website: www.birchnetwork.org

Why is Community Cohesion important?

Globalisation and patterns of migration has brought individuals and families from all over the world to settle in Birmingham resulting in rapid changes in neighbourhood populations. These changes in populations coupled with economic insecurity can spark fears of competition for jobs, services and limited resources – at worst causing community tensions between new and settled communities. Evidence suggests activities that promote community cohesion can help dispel fears and myths of the 'other' by building understanding and trust.

In 2015, The Casey Review² found segregation has reached a 'worrying level' in some areas in Britain with deepening inequalities. In some parts of Birmingham we are seeing neighbourhoods and schools segregated by ethnicity and economic inequality.

As city of many faiths, races, cultures, including a history of migration and settlement across Birmingham, we are seeing increased inter-racial and inter faith relationships, social mixing across cultures and social backgrounds. Identity is no longer confined to race and faith, but also intersecting across social and cultural identities. Community cohesion is an approach that enables us to respond to the wide ranging and kaleidoscope of identities, rather than simply focussing on historical notions of identity.

The increasing use of social media has meant that many people communicate with friends and family locally and across the world via computers and phones. These digital platforms are essential in everyday living and communication, but could mean that some members of the community live more isolated lives and may have lost the time, confidence or opportunity to talk and share thoughts and concerns with others in their neighbourhood. Negative information can easily be shared via social media in a very short space of time, influencing perceptions about issues in communities, which can undermine cohesion.

Our communities have told us that being confident in communicating in English enables them to integrate and engage with wider society; access health services, employment and learning opportunities more easily. Promoting access to improve English language speaking has to be a key priority to enable greater social and economic integration and cohesion.

Individuals and families lack of participation in mainstream economic, social and cultural activities are more likely to become isolated and disconnected from social networks and communities. Over the years we have seen civil society organisations in Birmingham step up to support communities impacted by austerity, welfare reforms and earnings stagnation. It is this grass roots understanding of diverse communities' and individuals needs and vulnerabilities which supports activity that promotes cohesion: providing a warm meal and shelter for homeless people, setting up Places of Welcome for new arrivals, supporting financial resilience and facilitating routes into employment. We know from evidence that an individual's economic prosperity not only contributes to community cohesion but also supports to the economic development and growth of the City.

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf

PLACES OF WELCOME

The idea of Places of Welcome was developed in 2012 while thinking about whether Birmingham was a welcoming city. Places of Welcome are run by local community groups who want everyone in their neighbourhood to have a space to go where they feel safe to belong, connect and contribute. Places of Welcome are community spaces that are open to all and take place in different kinds of venues including temples, libraries and community centres.

There are five principles that underpin a Place of Welcome:

- **Place** - An accessible and hospitable building that's open at the same time every week
- **People** - Open to everyone regardless of their circumstances or situation, and staffed by volunteers
- **Presence** - A place where people actively listen to one another and guests are treated as individuals
- **Provision** - Offering free refreshments and basic information about the local area and signposting to key organisations
- **Participation** - Every person will bring talents, experiences and skills that they may be willing to share locally

Birmingham currently has over 50 Places of Welcome around the city and efforts are being made to encourage more groups to participate. The idea is developing across the country, with over 200 places open nationally as people respond to the challenge to make our cities and neighbourhoods more welcoming.

Places of Welcome offer a non-judgemental and unconditional welcome in a relaxed environment and they enable people to come together as equals and to connect to others in their local community.

Website: www.placesofwelcome.org.uk

Factors affecting Community Cohesion in Birmingham: Our challenges

Factors that affect community cohesion are complex and multi – layered, varying across different neighbourhoods and communities. Evidence from our analysis in appendix one, shows that an individual's personal characteristics, including social economic status, attitudes and actions coupled with characteristics of the community they live in contribute to community cohesion. Equally, ethnicity, identity, national and local politics, crime, civic participation and social capital and immigration are all factors that impact upon cohesion. As such, a cross sector and cross cutting themed approach is necessary to promote cohesion.

Our diversity and changing identities

As a consequence of changing patterns of migration and labour markets, Birmingham's demographic landscape is becoming increasingly ethnically and socially 'super diverse'. We are seeing neighbourhoods with 'old settled' migrants and communities living alongside 'newly arrived' migrants. And as result, the makeup of our communities and neighbourhoods are becoming more dynamic,

complex and culturally diverse - which means a greater understanding of the changes in cultural norms, identities and social shifts in how we live work and learn is needed.

Social and neighbourhood segregation

The national policy direction on promoting community cohesion and integration has a focus on addressing the 'increasing' levels of segregation. The national language and debate on segregation centres around ethnic minorities living 'parallel lives' and 'self-segregation' of communities. However, the drivers of social and neighbourhood segregation are much more complex than narrowly focussing on ethnicity alone. How we define and respond to social and spatial segregation needs to be understood from a Birmingham context, including the social and economic factors that undermine and those that promote cohesion.

Neighbourhood deprivation

Birmingham is a city of contrast with some neighbourhoods experiencing greater inequality with deep-seated, long term, persistent deprivation as a feature for a number of decades; with this even continuing during periods of economic growth.

Neighbourhoods are local communities of place where cohesion can thrive under the right conditions, including: decent secure homes, economic security, neighbourliness, mutual support and respect, friendly social interactions and high levels of social capital. However, creating these conditions becomes increasingly challenging, due to structural factors such as a shrinking affordable housing sector, accessible healthcare, welfare reforms, educational disparities and rising populations. These are just some of the challenges that undermine cohesion.

Gender inequality

Low pay and skills, poverty, poor health and homelessness are some of the outcomes that disproportionately impact women, as illustrated in appendix one. These outcomes threaten the social stability of individuals, families and communities. Furthermore, gender based violence such as domestic abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriages and other harmful practices are first and foremost, a violation of human rights and illegal; leaving lasting emotional and physical scars that exacerbates the inequality of life chances.

Economic insecurity

Economic insecurity is a key driver that threatens cohesion. An ambition of our strategy must be to find ways to support people into secure and decent jobs that will help them, their families and communities flourish, but also make our economy a success.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL'S LIVING WAGE BOOSTS INCOME

The Council is an accredited Living Wage (LW) employer. Contracted suppliers and their subcontractors will pay the Living Wage to employees servicing Council contracts as part of their commitments under the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility (BBC4SR).

The Council works closely with the LW Foundation to encourage all employers to pay the LW and 96 of those organisations are accredited to the Charter on a voluntary basis (i.e. not contracted by the Council) and pay the LW.

When the Council became LW accredited organisation, over 3000 employees were uplifted to the LW. These are mostly part time cleaners and lunch time assistants at schools.

The council works with the WMCA to raise awareness and promote adoption of the Living Wage and is also working with the Social Value Portal and Social Value + who both promote best practice and support organisations to deliver greater social value.

The LW is not the same as the National Living Wage which is a statutory requirement as a minimum wage for over 25s. The LW is based on the cost of living and is promoted by the Living Wage Foundation. It was uplifted in November 2017 to £8.75 (to be implemented by April 2018).

The evidence base in the city, and the policy trends and factors that undermine cohesion highlighted above and in the data analysis set out in appendix one, places a strong emphasis on the need to create the conditions for social and economic opportunity within Birmingham's vision and strategy to promote cohesion; a city where the diversity of local people and neighbourhoods is valued and where there is a sense of belonging. We want our city to be a place where people of different backgrounds have real opportunities and similar outcomes and, where there are strong and good relationships in the workplace, schools, and neighbourhoods between people of different ethnic and social backgrounds, sexual orientation, age, religion and belief, and disability.

A living strategy: Proactive and adaptive to new challenges and opportunities

The growing and changing population and; national and local policy drivers impacting on the social and economic life of the city mean our approach needs to be resilient and flexible, adapting and responding to new challenges and opportunities.

It's through collaboration that we will address the social and economic inequalities that blight too many lives and undermines the cohesion of our city. Birmingham's strategy will be a living document that will adapt and respond to

new ideas, qualitative and quantitative research and lived examples of cohesion in action. Birmingham will develop a repository of knowledge that will help build our understanding of our people, communities, neighbourhoods and city and measure our progress. Our collective knowledge and understanding will support evidence based policy and practice.

MINDAPPLES – HODGE HILL ARTS FORUM

During 2016, Hodge Hill Arts Forum ran an arts project that was part of a 2 year Connecting Communities through Culture Programme (funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, Arts Council England, and Birmingham City Council). The project focussed on improving mental wellbeing after people living and working in the area identified depression, isolation and a lack of provision for families as significant issues for them. The project used the Mindapples framework which encourages everyone to take care of their minds in the same way we take care of our bodies.

Hodge Hill Arts sits under No. 11 Arts which is an umbrella organisation created to support Birmingham's network of neighbourhood arts forums. No 11. Arts promotes and facilitates arts activities with communities across the city since research has shown that arts based approaches can help people to stay well and experience a better quality of life.

Mindapples encouraged local citizens in Hodge Hill to take up regular creative activity to relax, meet new people, spend time with loved ones, and be kind to their minds. People were first asked to share their 5 Mindapples and were then invited to take part in a range of free arts activities in their local area across three venues and over several months.

Mindapples provided people with the opportunity to come together with others and participate in arts activities in a safe space and over a sustained period of time, and the outcomes of this project were extremely encouraging with participants showing and referring to great changes in their mental wellbeing. Many participants are still linked into the host groups and venues, now regularly participating in other creative, health and fitness related activities, as well as having access to support groups and other No. 11 Arts projects and activities.

SECTION 2

BIRMINGHAM'S VISION AND APPROACH: CITY, COUNCIL, COMMUNITY & INDIVIDUAL

As a partnership of communities, city and council we want Birmingham to be a fair, caring, welcoming and inclusive city where people with different backgrounds should experience similar life opportunities. This overall aim of the strategy will be achieved through a collaborative approach between city, council and community. Our vision:

Birmingham is a welcoming city where everyone has an opportunity to contribute and benefit from the success of the city. The City and its neighbourhoods are safe and flourishing places to live, work and grow up in, they are well connected places where people from all backgrounds trust and support each other. People of all backgrounds realising their full potential and exercising their rights and responsibilities.

Our bold and challenging vision developed from the views of communities and partners' will set out our longer- term ambition for the City.

Over the years, the council, partners and our diverse communities of place and identity have engaged in structured dialogues about the ever changing challenges we face. As a city we continue to learn and adapt to new challenges and opportunities as illustrated in the case studies throughout this document.

During 2017, the Council convened a number of focussed discussions to agree on a collective understanding and responses to community cohesion in Birmingham. Representatives from the public sector; business community; universities, health, colleges and schools; faith, voluntary and community organisations came together to discuss and identify:

- The challenges facing the city and the opportunities in achieving community cohesion;
- The role organisations can play and our commitment to improving cohesion;
- What the next steps might be to working together towards a shared vision of cohesion.

From our discussions so far, there is a consensus that building strong community cohesion is everybody's business and no single agency alone can combat the

barriers to cohesion. Participants also felt that as a city, our approach should build on the experience and skills of the voluntary sector and local faith networks and celebrate and shine a bright light on the many success stories; agree a shared vision for Birmingham that sets out a collective understanding of what good cohesion looks like in Birmingham. We will continue ongoing dialogues with young people, communities and other stakeholders to ensure our approach is inclusive and relevant. We will exploit the use of new technology and innovative approaches to make engagement more accessible and current.

Birmingham will take a dynamic approach to promoting community cohesion. Adapting and responding effectively to changing global, national and local influences.

SPARKBROOK CLEAN UP

The Sparkbrook Neighbourhood Forum was set up in 2011 and is run by local people who want to make a difference. After speaking to residents, the Forum found that the top priority in the local area was to tackle litter and fly-tipping which affected them on a daily basis.

The Forum created an on-street campaign, 'Clean Medina', which runs every 3 months and has up to 100 people taking part. Volunteers include parents, children and neighbours from the local church, Mosque and community organisations, as well as councillors and the police. Children participating in the clean-up are rewarded with either a healthy treat bag or activity, such as a visit to the Safari Park, London Science Museum or thrill activities. As the initiative is becoming a constituted body, volunteers can apply for small pots of funding to help pay for these trips, treats and much needed equipment. The Forum has recently bought a community litter pickup truck and Birmingham City Council provides free access to the Council's tip which means volunteers can regularly drive round the area picking up rubbish.

The benefit of working together has not only meant that hundreds of tonnes of rubbish has been collected over the years, but residents have managed to create better relationships with one another and fulfil dreams that may never have happened, such as going horse riding. Clean Medina has meant that residents have become better organised and are now working across different faiths to tackle local issues in the community.

Our strategy

Our Community Cohesion Strategy outlines the city's joint commitment and approach to promoting cohesion. Eight guiding principles, identified from city-wide discussions, will support our vision and underpin the strategy. Community cohesion and integration happens at different levels, including across the city, in neighbourhoods, schools and work places. Therefore, the success of our approach will rely on the city, council and communities embedding the principles in strategic and local approaches that promote cohesion and support communities develop a sense of belonging.

The following set of proposed guiding principles should be integrated in policies, plans and initiatives:

1. Mainstream cohesion: making cohesion everyday business

Mainstreaming community cohesion means becoming part of everyday policy and practice design and delivery - it should not be just a bolt on project or agenda. Instead, all partners will have a collective understanding of community cohesion; it needs to be integral to partnership plans and practices, embedding a joint approach in core services and responsibilities, this will help with early recognition of challenges and prevention of issues escalating.

2. Connecting and exchanging ideas that promote cohesion and mobilise social action

Connecting places, people and communities to share knowledge, exchange ideas and drive local innovation will be critical in building confidence and tackling local challenges.

Support residents to reimagine the possibilities for their neighbourhoods. If agencies are able to co-produce services and develop solutions alongside communities, it will shift the relationship of communities as passive receivers of services to more active participants of change.

3. Nurturing and supporting aspiration of young people

Young people from all social backgrounds should realise their ambitions and hopes for the future and not be held back because of the lack of resources, social and professional connections. They should be able to safely travel around the city to build social connections and access opportunities that enhances their wellbeing. It is vital that young people have safe spaces to play and socialise; access to youth facilities that steers them away from criminal gangs and crime.

4. Promote rights and responsibilities

A city where everyone has a strong sense and understanding of their rights and responsibilities: what is expected of them and what they expect of others. We will tackle issues that exist within and between communities and promote understanding of our diverse communities which requires respectful attitudes and behaviours towards others who may be different than us. Promoting access for all to advice and guidance on rights to decent housing, financial inclusion and good quality education.

Increase take up and provision of ESOL training to support non-English speakers understand and exercise their rights; engage with democratic processes, access services and the city's economy opportunities. The all Parliamentary report on cohesion and integrations argues: 'the ability to speak English should be viewed as a right extended to everyone in our society no matter what their background or income level'³.

SMART WOMEN COMMUNITY TRAINING CENTRE

Smart Women Community Training Centre is a grassroots organisation based in Sparkbrook that was set up in 2012. The centre provides a safe and supportive space for women to meet, as well as facilitating a range of activities such as coffee mornings, gym and fitness, sewing, and national and international trips.

The centre supports up to 50 women a day in different ways including offering support to women who are victims of domestic abuse, teaching them about their rights, and supporting them to improve their English. The centre also enables women to come together to identify local issues and possible solutions to these problems.

In 2017, using funding from the Big Lottery, the centre organised a marketplace event that was attended by members of the local community, police officers and councillors. Local women were invited to have a stall for things they wanted to sell, such as dishes or items they'd made themselves.

The centre enables local women to come together as a community whilst also empowering them, reducing social isolation and enabling them to have completely new experiences.

Contact email address: swctc@hotmail.co.uk

5. Progress equality in all spheres of social and economic life

Eliminate all forms of inequality and gender based discrimination and violence in Birmingham. Challenge practices and social norms that hold back individuals from realising their ambitions and participating in the city's social and economic life.

³ <https://the-challenge.org/uploads/documents/APPG-Integration-not-Demonisation-Report.pdf>

6. Promote inclusive economic growth that benefits everyone across Birmingham

Benefits of economic growth should be shared and accessible to everyone. Working with partners at a local, regional and national level will seek to ensure that economic strategies are inclusive and impact locally; addressing the distinctly social, economic and cultural challenges and opportunities within our neighbourhoods. Improve social mobility by promoting routes into employment, career progression in work and create opportunities to boost earning power.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

The Women's Leadership Programme began in 2017 and was run by Near Neighbours. The two six-month long leadership development programmes supported women from different faith backgrounds who were active locally and had the potential to be regional or national leaders.

The sessions enabled women to develop their skills and confidence, look at habits that damage success, develop self-awareness and build strong, supportive relationships. The first programme included a two day residential in which the participants learnt to use coaching techniques and the courses concluded with a conference on International Women's Day (called Women, Equality and Faith) which looked at issues that marginalise women in the faith and interfaith arena.

During the final session of the last course one woman said, "when I stood in the room, I was myself for the first time – and I was astonished by the impact that has on others". Another said, "I felt more in control at work – and happier about the things I can't control".

After the formal part of the programme ended, the women continue to meet in four local coaching groups offering support and development to others. Near Neighbours intends to continue to offer workshops and conferences to build on the confidence, skills and relationships that have been nurtured over the past year.

Website: www2.cuf.org.uk/thrive-together-birmingham/near-neighbours-birmingham

7. Empowered and engaged neighbourhoods

Citizens to be active participants in the conception and design of solutions that promote community cohesion rather than passive recipients of poorly conceived responses. Promote shared spaces that build social interactions, safely discuss and challenge misconceptions within and across communities and neighbourhoods.

Individuals, families and communities are afforded the opportunity to shape their own futures. Therefore, we will take an asset based approach to promoting cohesion; recognising and building on the strengths within the neighbourhood including: the skills, expertise and experience of local people, community networks and also the buildings and public spaces. And to move

away from only focusing on the problems within the neighbourhood that only serve to stigmatise the area, instead to celebrate the assets.

PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES

Pushing the Boundaries is a project that was set up by brap – a charity that seeks to transform the way people think about and act on equality. Pushing the Boundaries launched in 2017 to support people to have open conversations about integration in a non-judgemental way. Pushing the Boundaries rests on the idea that shutting down negative views can actually cause people to have unanswered questions which, in turn, may lead to divisions between communities. Instead, brap aims to create different ways for people to communicate and listen to one another to enable a range of views to be heard.

As part of the project, brap have been holding a series of discussions across the city using new methods and approaches to help people have more honest conversations about the things that really matter to them, such as immigration, religious diversity and hate crime. By opening up new types of conversations with different communities and facilitating the discussion of sensitive topics and views, Pushing the Boundaries supports the building of an equal and diverse society.

Website: www.brap.org.uk/pushingtheboundaries

8. Unite people and communities through art, culture and sports

Arts, culture and sports to promote health and social benefits; social integration across people of different ethnicities, social class, disabilities and social and economic backgrounds. We will build on our arts and cultural offer to engage widely on a range of social issues, such as local women challenging gender based issues through theatre performance; meaningful social mixing between young people through arts, sports and music. Similarly, the 2022 Commonwealth Games presents an opportunity for the city to unite together to capitalise and build on its rich and diverse sports and cultural offer.

COLOUR ME QUEER

Colour Me Queer was a series of workshops aimed at young LGBTQI people of colour. They were run in 2017 in Balsall Heath by The GAP and UNMUTED and commissioned through Birmingham City Council's Next Generation Arts Activities funding. The GAP is a Birmingham based company that originally has its roots in education and theatre, and now runs as a venue and project space working in drama and other forms of creative and cultural action. UNMUTED is a community led social and peer support network in Birmingham for people of colour who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Intersex (LGBTQI).

Participants were supported by queer artists of colour to create a series of three 'zines' (non-commercial magazines), in a space they could call their own, and to hold a public launch event. Providing dedicated time, space and a public platform for young queer people of colour was a key achievement, and it was apparent in the first few sessions just how much this was needed. The workshops provided the opportunity for young queer people of colour to share their experiences, produce work together and support one another, and the launch event gave the participants a platform from which to share their stories and raise public awareness about issues relating to a minority group.

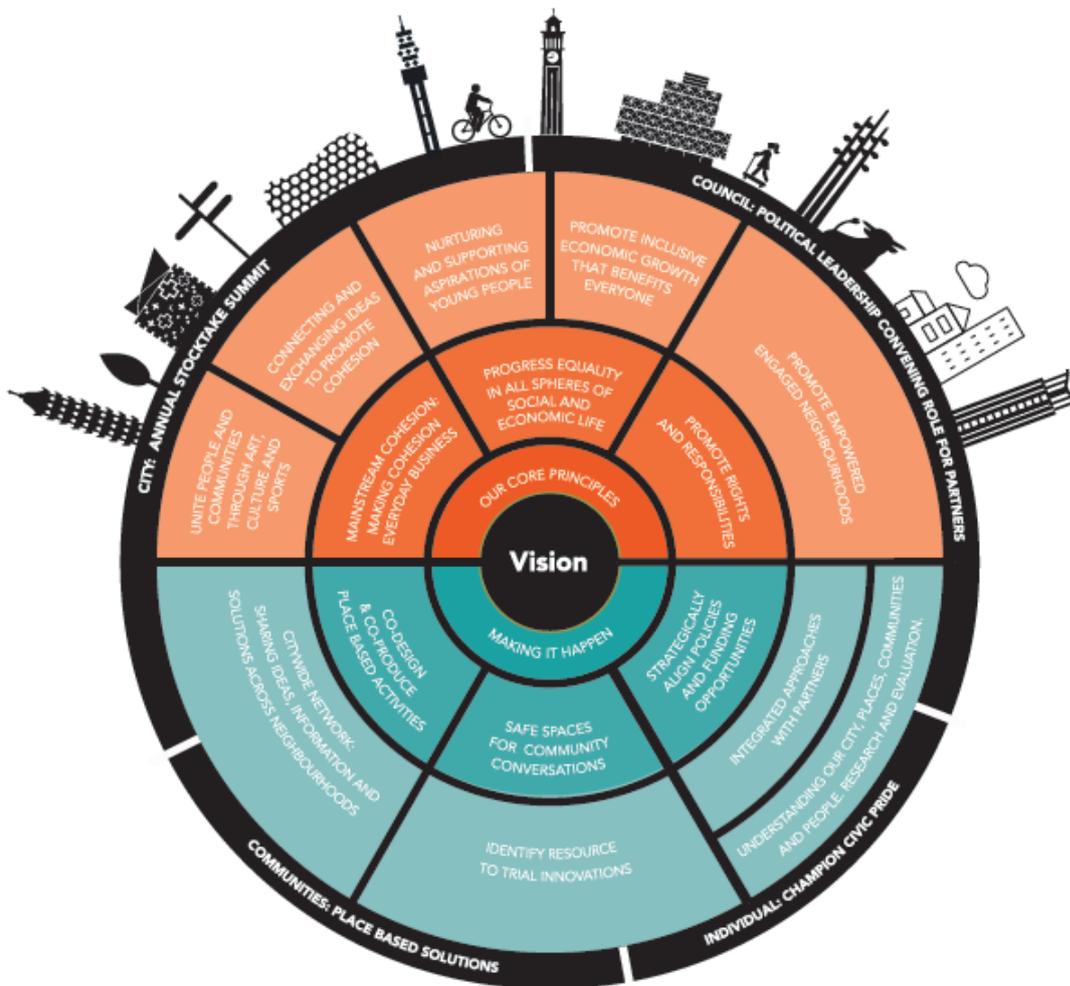
The production of zines that focus on the experiences of young LGBTQI people of colour, written and edited by them, and available to the public, is an important achievement of the project as there is limited literature available on the subject, and certainly barely any produced by these people themselves. This is a source of significant pride for each of the participants and has created a sense of collective identity for the group that continues after the project ended.

Websites: www.thegapartsproject.co.uk
www.unmutedbrum.com

SECTION 3

BUILDING BLOCKS TO MAKING IT HAPPEN

Community cohesion strategy for Birmingham



OUR VISION Birmingham is a welcoming city where everyone has an opportunity to contribute and benefit from the success of the city. The City and its neighbourhoods are safe and flourishing places to live, work and grow up in, they are well connected places where people from all backgrounds trust and support each other. People of all backgrounds realising their full potential and exercising their rights and responsibilities.

Leadership

Strong balanced leadership and a long term commitment is needed from across the city, council, community and individual to deliver the ambitions of our approach.

City: At a city level, our strategic approach will focus on delivering improvements in community cohesion that help improve effectiveness of policies to tackle issues such as crime, anti-social behaviour, low educational attainment, poor health, social care outcomes, all forms of discrimination. To make this happen we will focus on better transport links that connects the city and its people, economic opportunities accessible to all; access to good quality shopping and financial amenities, and safer open places; and ready to respond to any risks that threaten the security and safety of our city; all of which are important to creating better and safe environments, promoting greater economic participation and more cohesive communities, as well as cultivating social capital. There will be moments when strategic partners, at a city-wide level, can celebrate success, confront challenges together and share learning from local initiatives.

Council: The Council will fulfil its democratic mandate from Birmingham communities to provide leadership and accountability on promoting cohesion. Equally, it will provide strong cross-party political leadership, influencing policy at a city region and at a national level; and continuing to work with government on dismantling structural inequalities that undermine cohesion of the city. The Council will also play a convening role for partners that go beyond the 'usual suspects' to share and exchange ideas and champion 'what works'. Similarly, monitor and respond to any local or national influences that threatens cohesion. It will be vital to support a robust evidence base by working with partners and communities to collect and analyse data and local intelligence from national and local sources.

Community: Neighbourhoods are where many people construct a sense of place and identity. Local communities and individuals have a crucial role to play in building resilience by supporting each other to overcome challenges, hardship and divisions. The voluntary, community and faith sector organisations are well placed to provide leadership in identifying and supporting community based solutions. There is strong evidence that is already happening across the city and we will build on this by supporting the sector. Local Councillors in their community leadership role will deliver on

Localism by working with communities and local organisations to design place based approaches that shapes council policy and practice.

Individual: Individual action and championing civic pride makes a positive contribution to cohesion. There are ranges of ways in which individuals promote cohesion. Engaging in volunteering that empower individuals to affect positive change and form networks with new people in their communities. Participate in civic life to design the right solutions that promote cohesion. Challenge and reject: all forms of discrimination and extremism that undermine equality and fairness; gender based violence, harmful sociocultural norms and practices.

Understanding our city and communities

A central plank to our approach is about building our knowledge and understanding of the dynamic nature of diverse communities. Continual research and analysis of the challenges and opportunities will enable evidence based policy and decision making. We will do this by:

- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative research that takes a deep dive into root causes, risks and quality of life/wellbeing factors
- Capturing and recording data from: local community insights and narratives, local Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and Councillors. Using different channels to capture data including social media and online platforms.
- Integrated approaches with partners, including universities, government, public agencies, social researchers, VCS. Developing robust information governance and joint analysis
- Building on global, UK and regional insights - look at 'what works' and lessons for Birmingham

This approach will help us monitor progress and impact.

A partnership-led approach

Through strong partnerships we will help create the conditions for a fairer and cohesive city. Making a success of our approach will require leadership and commitment from city partners, council and community – working together. We believe that the partnerships which underpin our approach span the public sector, faith and community organisations, communities; universities, colleges and schools; business community and arts and cultural sector. Our collective approach will enable individuals, families and communities take control of their own lives and participate fully in social and economic life of the city. Partners and communities to jointly explore strategic opportunities, including:

- 2022 Commonwealth Games
- Inclusive Growth Strategy
- HS2
- Skills agenda
- Joint initiatives with West Midlands Combined Authority partners
- Working with government departments to influence and shape national thinking and policy making.
- Share learning across city regions
- Developing Place based approaches

We will continue to build on the work of our existing partnerships where community cohesion is integral to the successful delivery of their plans and strategies, including (but not limited to): Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, Financial Inclusion Partnership, City Partners, Birmingham Social Housing Partnership, Birmingham Education Partnership, Birmingham Migration Partners, Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

How do we make it happen?

As city, we need to work collectively but also provide leadership in our different spheres of influence to effect real change. We will do this by:

- Holding an annual citywide Community Cohesion Summit and local dialogues. The Summit will enable communities, council and city partners to understand and responding to the changing needs of our city and communities; share learning and exchange ideas; forge new relationships and identify opportunities for joint working; evaluate our learning and identify what works and what doesn't and collectively respond to new opportunities and challenges. As a city, we will never know enough about how our communities are changing and what needs to happen to help foster social cohesion. Therefore, it's crucial that we are continuously learning and taking stock of our approaches through ongoing dialogue and engagement between communities, practitioners and partners from different spheres of influence.

- Where it makes sense for Birmingham, we will strategically align our approach to national and regional policies, including the government's Integrated Communities Strategy and the West Midlands Combined Authority's approach to inclusive growth, and work constructively with national and region teams.
- Co-designing and co-producing local solutions that promote an asset based approach to local problem solving, such as improvements to open public spaces; friends of local parks groups; and community clean-ups. This approach enables individuals and communities to find local community-led solutions; encourage collective action to build stronger and more resilient places.
- Establishing a city-wide network and a repository that will facilitate sharing ideas, information and solutions across a network of neighbourhoods. Gather good ideas and good practice from around the country and communicate it widely to enable people to be inspired by things happening elsewhere.
- Encouraging all schools to be awarded as Rights Respecting School to improve well-being and develop every child's talents and abilities to their full potential
- Creating safe spaces to generate community conversations on real community concerns and grievances – to help dispel misconceptions and myths.
- Designing research and evaluation that informs mainstream agency spend and delivery.

Identify resources to trial innovations

To support the effective delivery of the strategy will require resources to innovate, upscale and test out new ideas by looking at how we can reshape our existing resources. Equally, we will work Government departments, the West Midlands Combined Authority and funders such as Big Lottery to explore piloting activity that promotes community cohesion.

NEXT STEPS

WE WOULD LIKE YOUR VIEWS

To deliver this vision and strategy, we would like to know your views on the proposed approach to promoting community cohesion in Birmingham.

Consultation questions

- Do you agree with the draft vision of a future, cohesive Birmingham?
- Are the proposed eight guiding principles the right ones to promote community cohesion across the city?
- How can businesses, public sector agencies, communities, faith organisations, schools, further and higher education providers play their part?
- How can we best capture and celebrate Birmingham achievements, identify new challenges and learn from excellent practice in the city?

Please send your responses and any examples/stories that illustrates community cohesion in action to the consultation by 31st August 2018

To: equalities@birmingham.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

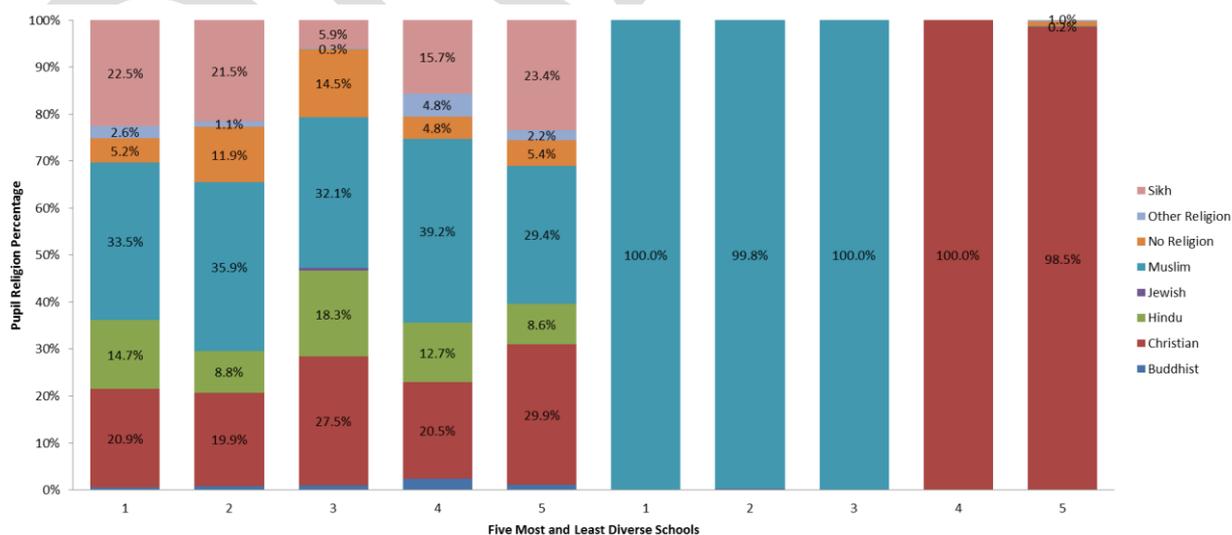
Factors affecting Community Cohesion in Birmingham

Factors that affect community cohesion are complex and multi-layered. These include: ethnicity, identity, where people live and socialise, social and economic status, national and local politics, crime, civic participation and social capital and immigration.

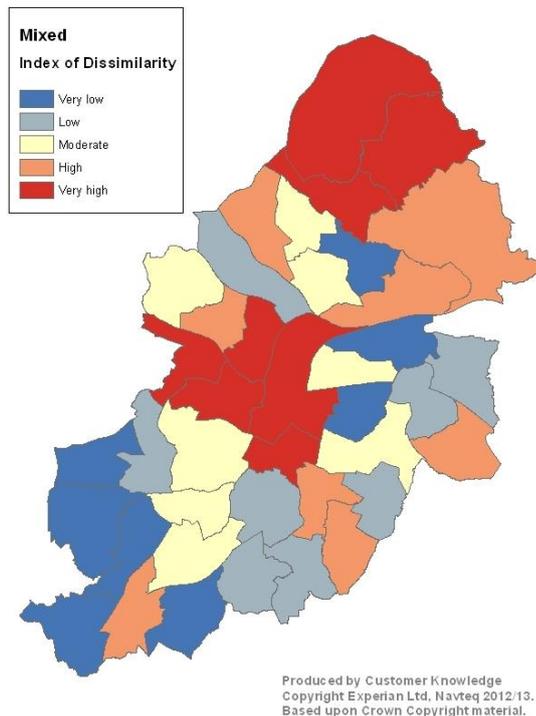
Social and spatial segregation

Structural and social inequalities are factors that determine spatial and social segregation. In Birmingham there is a strong association between deprivation and spatial segregation, with neighbourhoods with higher concentrations of ethnic minority groups experiencing greater levels of disadvantage in comparison with members of the same ethnic group residing in other wards. Data also reveals a strong ethnic-based segregation, i.e. the wards that are the most socially excluded are those with the highest proportion of Black Asian Minority Ethnic residents. The term 'neighbourhood effect' has been coined to refer to the impact living in a particular place can have on the life trajectories of individuals.

School population diversity (index of dissimilarity by Religion)



In Birmingham, we are seeing an overall decrease in spatial segregation between white and non-white ethnic groups during 2001-2011 (8.9% reduction in Index of Dissimilarity value ward). While, some of our schools have over 80% of pupils from one ethnic background. Furthermore, there is an increase in neighbourhoods polarised by economic inequality. These structural and social inequalities are factors that determine neighbourhood and social segregation. Therefore, a more sophisticated debate is needed on how we define and agree our understanding of segregation, so that our policy responses are inclusive and make the greatest impact on promoting community cohesion.



Mixed population spatial segregation (2011):

Changing patterns of residential settlement and churn exacerbates neighbourhoods from becoming sustainable, as people move for work, for affordable housing or move from inner city areas to more affluent areas of the city.

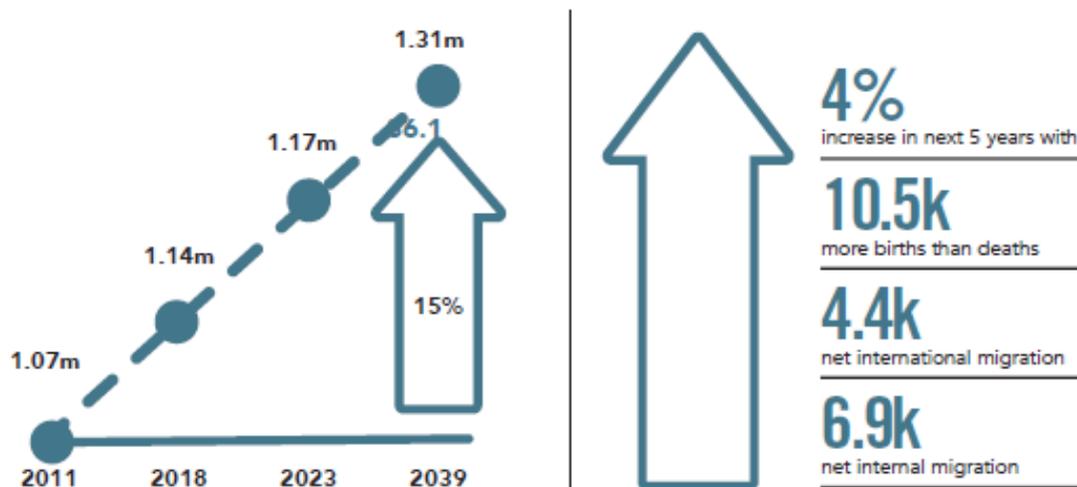
Neighbourhood deprivation

Despite the efforts of successive initiatives, community cohesion becomes a particular challenge in neighbourhoods and areas in which communities have not benefited from the perceived economic growth experienced in other parts of the city. This leads to a sense of being 'left behind' and that wealth is not fairly distributed, instead offered to other areas and communities. These real concerns of marginalised communities cause misunderstanding and mistrust of other areas and communities. Part of the problem has been historically flawed social and economic policies and planning programmes that have allowed some areas in the city to fall into decline, where High streets are lined with betting shops, fast food outlets and off licences; local parks and public spaces become unsafe because of gangs, anti-social behaviour or littered with drug paraphernalia; homelessness, crime and poor housing.

Our population

Birmingham is a growing dynamic and vibrant global city with a population of 1.18 million people; it is the second largest city in the United Kingdom. Our growing and diverse population presents both strengths and challenges for the city.

In the next 5 years we will see a population growth of 4% - largely due to 'natural changes' of more births than deaths.



A young city

We are a young city, 46% of our population is under 30. Having a younger population means a larger pool of working age residents for businesses to draw from and great potential for the economic growth of City. However, low skills and educational attainment, poverty and poor health are holding back some of our most disadvantaged young people.

Based on 2014 levels, by 2022 the population aged between 0 to 4 is due to grow by 3.8% to 88,1000 children; the 5 to 9 population is expected to grow by 4.5% to 84,000 but the largest growth rate in Birmingham's children will be the 10 to 14 age group – increasing by 14.6% to 82,600.

42% of Birmingham's school children have a first language that is known or believed to be other than English. Growing school age population places demands on school places and good quality childcare. Educational attainment levels vary in relation to different areas of the city and social backgrounds. Schools are places that cultivate and promote social cohesion; bringing children of different backgrounds to build tolerance and understanding of different cultures and faiths.



Median age in Birmingham
39 for England and Wales



Birth rate per 1,000 population
12 for England



Age under 5
4% increase since 2011



Under 18
Much higher than other core cities and UK (21%)

THINK FAMILY



30.9%
Crime/ASB



25.4%
School Absence



64.8%
Childhood Need



37.3%
Jobs/£



19.9%
Domestic Abuse



29.1%
Health

26%

of children are driven to school



LESS THAN

1%

of children cycle to school



SCHOOL POPULATION OVERALL

	Birmingham	Nationally
BME	68.9%	31%
EAL	41.8%	18.5%
FSM	26.7%	14.7%
SEN	16.8%	14.3%



CHILD OBESITY 2015/16

	Birmingham	England
Reception 4-5yrs	11.5% 1 in 10	9.6%
Year 6 10-11 yrs	25.2% 1 in 4	20%

The overall trend for the last five years is that obesity amongst reception and year 6 pupils is getting worse.

Outer city areas worst performing at key stage 4

Chart 3.8 shows Birmingham compared to the national performance, along with the three best and worst performing wards for each Key Stage 4 measure. Although Birmingham as whole performs close to the national average, there are very wide local variations, with the lowest attainment being in general in outer city wards, traditionally white working class areas. White British disadvantaged boys are 17% below the LA average for Key stage 2, reading, writing and maths. Pakistani disadvantaged boys are 11% below LA and Bangladeshi disadvantaged boys are 3% below LA average

Chart 3.8: Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 2016⁴

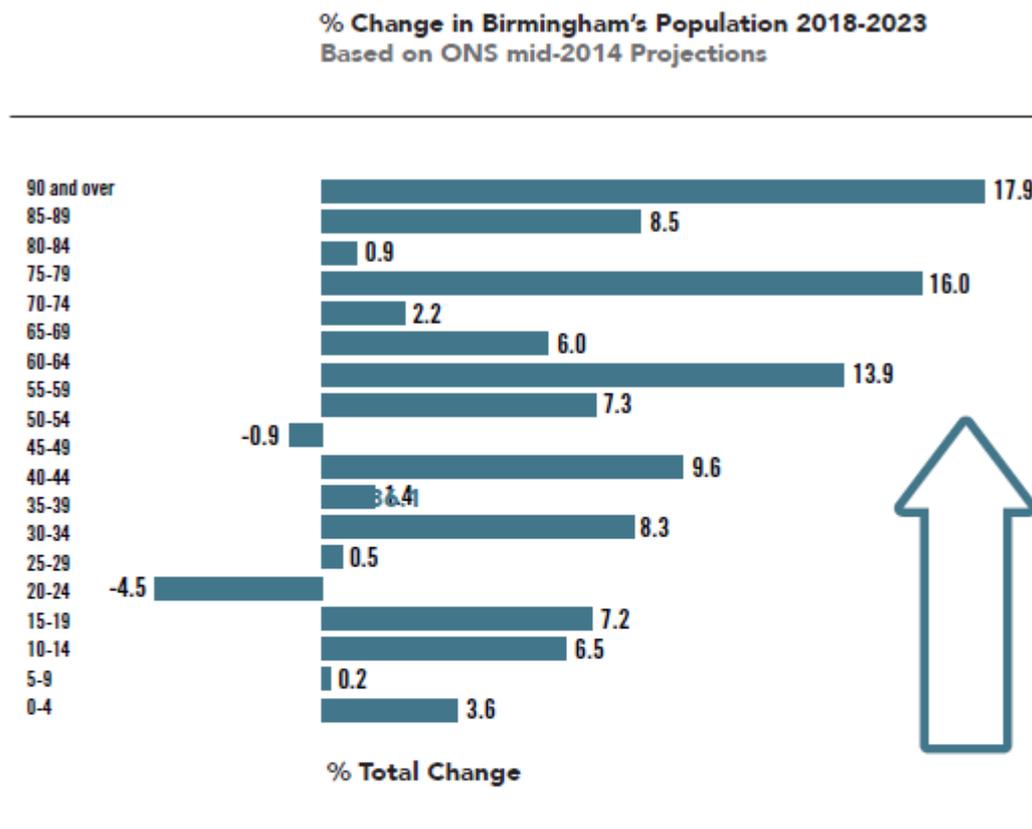
Attainment 8	Progress 8		A*-C in English & Maths		English Baccalaureate		
Birmingham	49.4	Birmingham	0.00	Birmingham	59.9	Birmingham	24.6
England	49.8	England	-0.03	England	63.0	England	24.7
Top 3 wards							
Edgbaston	58.0	Moseley & Kings Heath	0.49	Sutton Four Oaks	86.4	Harborne	45.9
Sutton Four Oaks	58.0	Harborne	0.37	Sutton Vesey	80.7	Sutton Four Oaks	44.7
Harborne	57.6	Selly Oak	0.30	Edgbaston	78.9	Edgbaston	44.2
Bottom 3 wards							
Shard End	43.8	Longbridge	-0.30	Kingstanding	46.0	Tyburn	13.9
Kingstanding	43.6	Kingstanding	-0.35	Tyburn	45.5	Oscott	13.8
Longbridge	43.5	Shard End	-0.37	Ladywood	43.5	Longbridge	12.5

Source: DfE/BCC

⁴ **Attainment 8** measures the achievement of a pupil across 8 qualifications including maths (double weighted) and English (double weighted), 3 further qualifications that count in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) measure and 3 further qualifications that can be GCSE qualifications (including EBacc subjects) or any other non-GCSE qualifications on the DfE approved list.
Progress 8 is a value added measure and compares the Attainment 8 scores of similar pupils grouped using their prior attainment at key stage 2.

Our ageing population

Despite being a young city, we are expected to see a larger growth of older adults age 65+ (7%) and 90+ (18%) whilst children under 15 will increase 3% by 2023.



90+ = largest growth of 18%
65+ = grow by 7% overall

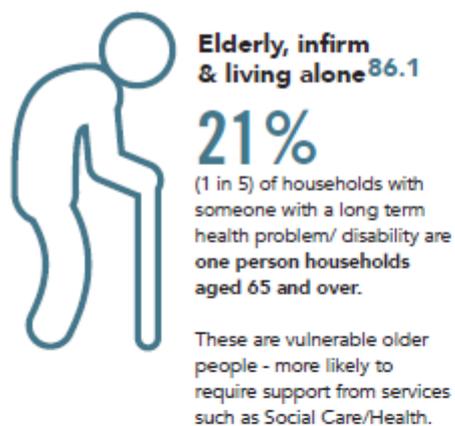
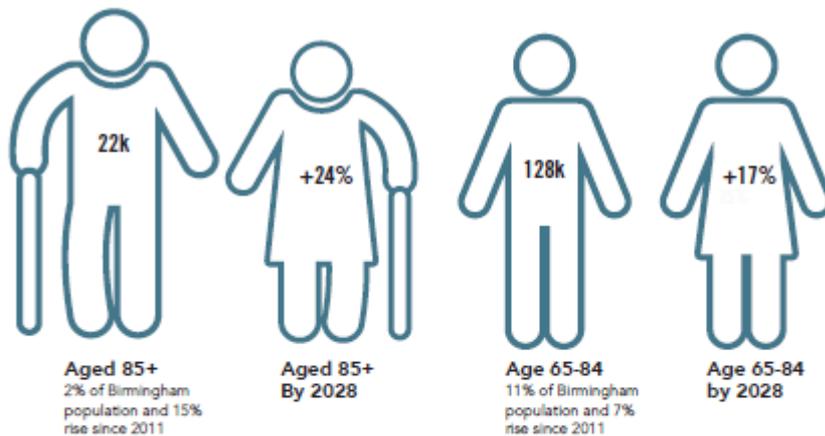
(Source: ONS Projections (2014))

The older adult population has and will continue to rise in Birmingham, with increases of 24% for those aged 85+ years expected in the next 10 years.

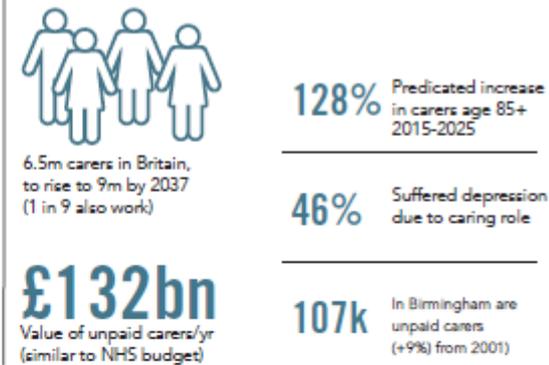
With nearly a fifth of households being older people living alone with health problems and/or disability, there needs to be a joined up approach to services that support this vulnerable group.

There are over **100,000 unpaid carers** in Birmingham. Carers themselves are ageing – by 2025, it's predicted there will be a 128% increase in carers over the age of 85+ years; a large scale survey of carers found 46% have suffered depression due to their caring role.

Older people living alone or as carers make them vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness, this can have adverse effects on their health and wellbeing and is growing challenge for the city.



A Caring population



Sources:
Population Age: *ONS Population Projections (PP) 2014* (Census 2011 used to calculate 2011-2018 change, and projections to 2028 based on 2018-2028 change using PP only).
A caring population: *Carers UK website* (based on Census 2011 and their own research)

Our diversity

The city is also very diverse, with 42% of the population being from an ethnic minority background, reflecting the city's rich and varied cultural heritage. Birmingham is a “super-diverse” city. Academic research suggests that there are people from nearly 200 countries who have made Birmingham their home.⁵ The 2011 Census revealed that 42.1% classified themselves within an ethnic group other than white British, compared to 30% in 2001, a rise of 12%. Birmingham is soon to become a majority minority city.

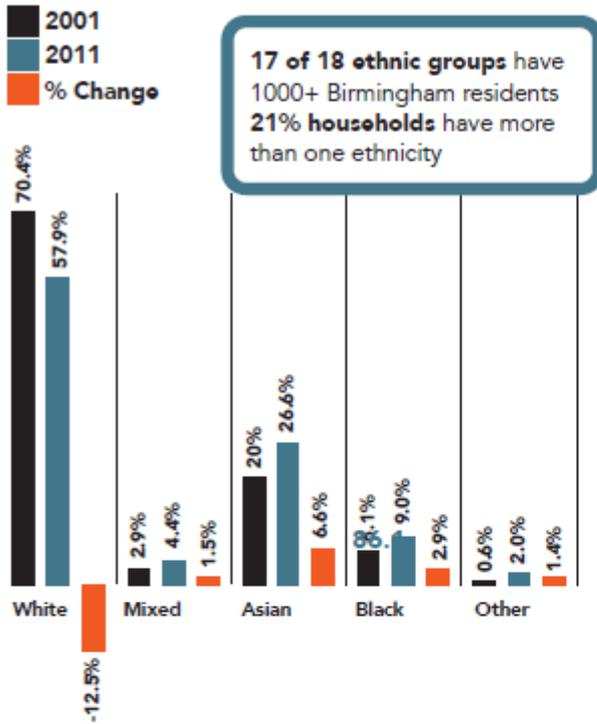
The demographic makeup of Birmingham's young people has also changed significantly over recent years and is becoming increasingly diverse. For example, according to the 2011 census over 60% of the under 18 population is now from a non-white British background, compared to around 44% in 2001.

Ethnic diversity can bring many benefits such as transnational trading links and high levels of cultural resource. Birmingham has benefited from its diverse migrant communities who have settled in the city and successfully contributed to its economic vitality, becoming leaders in education, medicine, sports, arts and business and providing employment opportunities to local people.

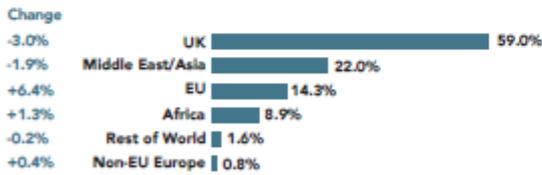
Our demographic landscape is increasingly becoming ethnically and socially 'super diverse', which means a greater understanding of the changes in cultural norms, identities and social shifts in how we live work and learn is needed. Community cohesion is an approach that enables us to respond to the wide ranging and kaleidoscope of identities, rather than simply focussing on a white majority and small number of ethnic minority identities.

⁵ (Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) University of Birmingham 2013)

Diversity



Live Births by Mother's Country of Birth 2016



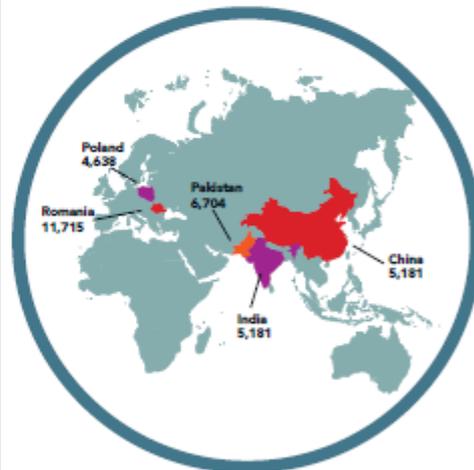
47,005

known to be living in Birmingham unable to speak English

New Immigration GP Registration (2013 - 16) Top Five Countries of Origin

By Year
2013 - 16,765
2014 - 18,475
2015 - 22,284
2016 - 23,790

81,314



Christian
494,358

46.1%
of Birmingham
Population in 2011
-14.4 change
since 2011



Muslim
234,411

67.4%
of Birmingham
Population in 2011
-21.8% change
since 2011



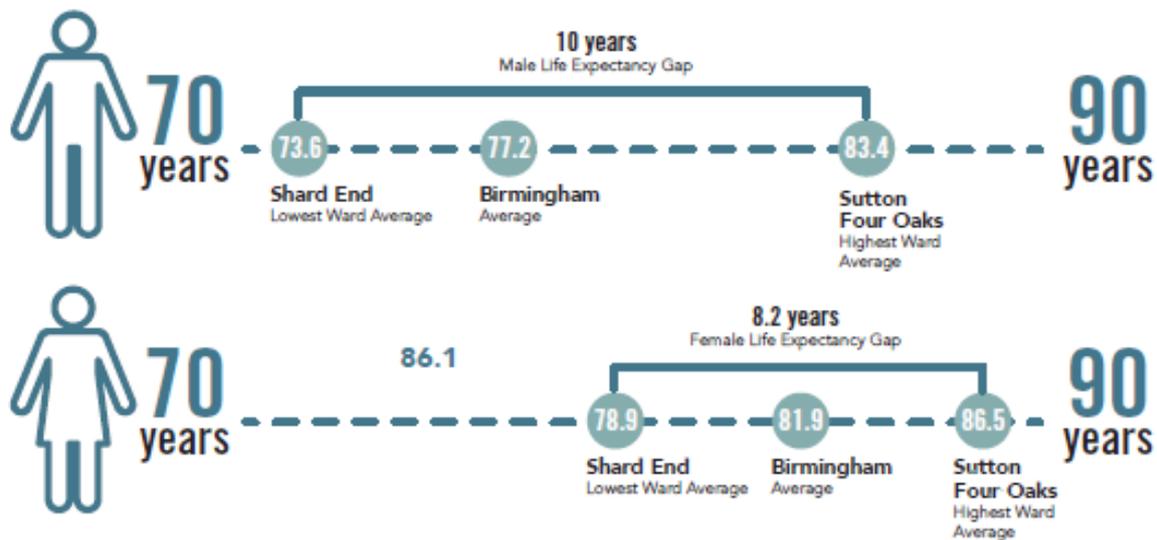
No Religion
206,821

46.1%
of Birmingham
Population in 2011
-18.3 change
since 2011

Gender inequality

Birmingham's population is made up of 50.4% females and 49.6% males (2011 census). Females in Birmingham earn less than males, with average gross incomes for full time workers having a £5K gender pay gap. The city has the 5th lowest share of women in higher skilled jobs amongst the Core Cities and the rate is lower than the national average 42.6%. Male employment rate is 72%, while female rate is 55% and 51% of black and ethnic minority working age females are economically inactive.

Most victims of sexual offences are women (83% of reported total crime victims). Worryingly, domestic abuse of women and children has been increasing since the economic downturn in 2009. More men are victims of homicide than women.

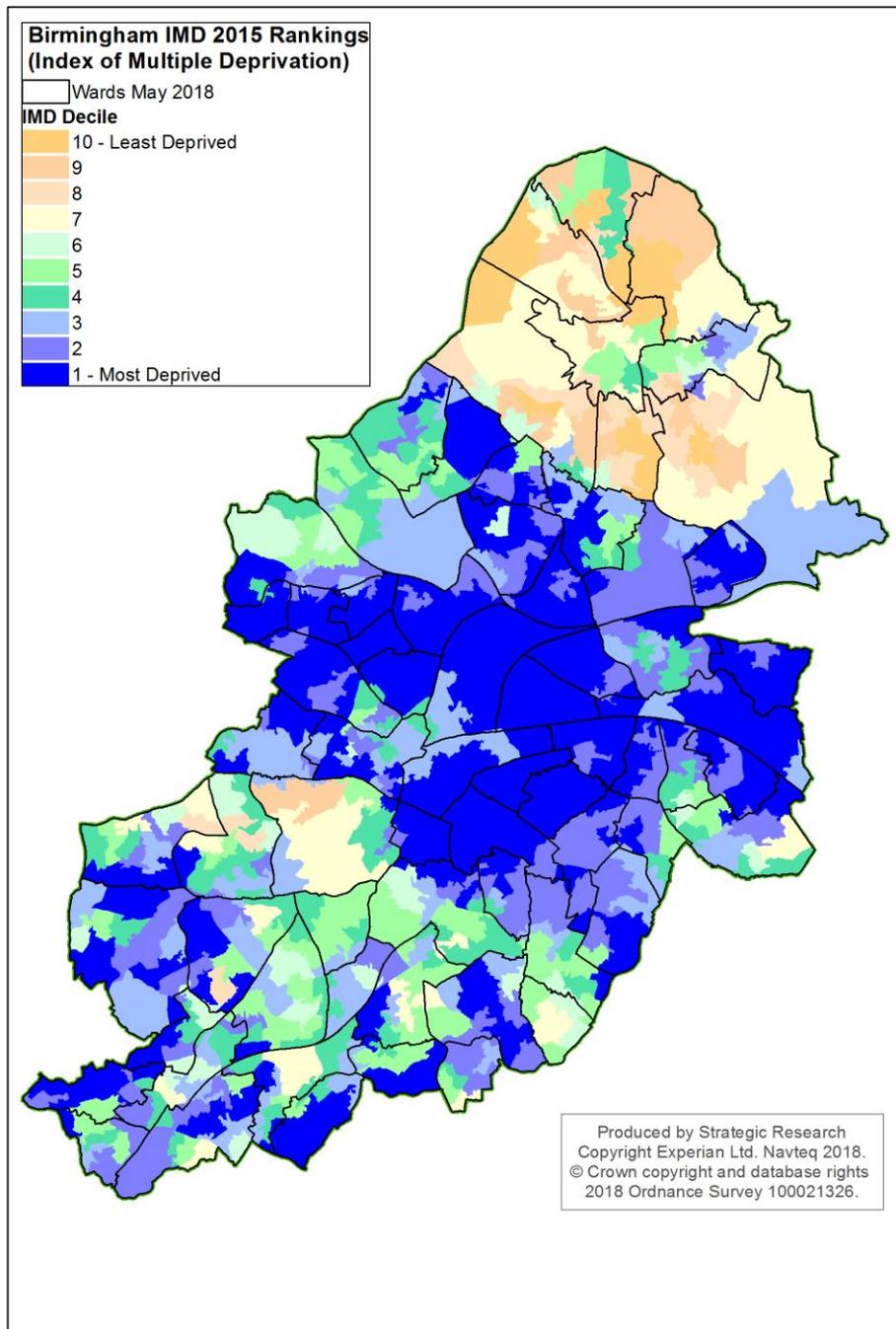


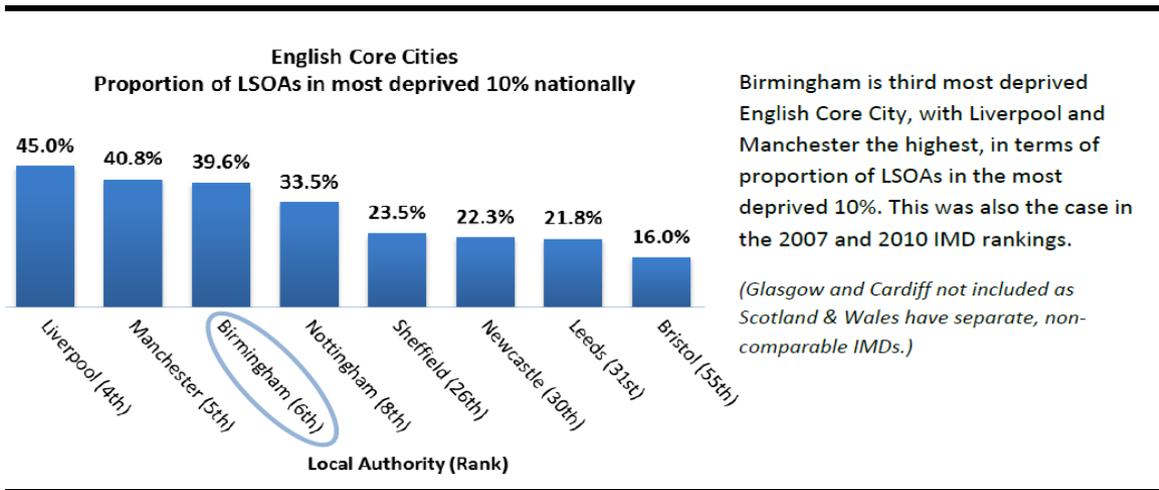
(Source: ONS mortality)

In 2015/16, almost three quarters (74%) of applications deemed homeless and in priority need were female applicants; with 26% being male. If left unchallenged, these gender inequalities based on discriminatory: social norms, values, practice and structures will seriously damage life chances. Notably, social class, race and ethnicity create deeper inequalities and exclusion.

poverty and income inequality

Poverty and income inequality is a well-researched factor that undermines community cohesion. Birmingham is the 6th most deprived local authority in England according to the 2015 English Indices of Deprivation and 21.3% of Birmingham's Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) were in the 5% most deprived areas in England. Some parts of the city rank amongst the poorest in England.





Child poverty

There are neighbourhoods in the city where over 50% of all children are growing up in poverty, two thirds of these children live in working households.

Almost 3 in 10 (29.8%) households with children in Birmingham are living in lone

parent households, against an England and Wales average of 25%. According to the Birmingham Child Poverty Commissions report⁶, over half (54%) of parents in poverty believing their children will have a worse life than their own, compared to just 30% of those parents not in poverty.



Families in insecure or low incomes jobs are more vulnerable to financial insecurity. In many cases, taking out payday loans with high interest rates is the only option to meet rising household costs - this can exacerbate an already difficult situation.

⁶ [file:///C:/Users/perasrbs/Downloads/Child_Poverty_Commission_Report%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/perasrbs/Downloads/Child_Poverty_Commission_Report%20(1).pdf)

Health of our population

Having good health creates a state of wellbeing. Social factors such as low income, poor and unstable housing and education undermine good health outcomes.

There are significant health inequalities across the city and across different community groups. Earlier deaths, higher rates of ill-health and the socio economic consequences of ill-health such as poverty disproportionately impact on those least economically able to cope. Activities that prevent social isolation promote greater mental wellbeing and quality of life.

Housing and neighbourhoods

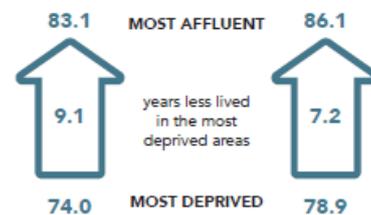
Neighbourhoods are local communities of place where cohesion can thrive under the right conditions, including: neighbourliness, mutual support and respect, friendly social interactions, high levels of social capital, decent secure housing. Decent affordable housing creates stability and a sense of belonging. Individuals and families having to move frequently, experience homelessness or are living in temporary accommodation affects their education, health, ability to find sustainable employment, unable to build friendships and social networks.

Due to a shrinking affordable housing sector and rising populations we are experiencing both a national and local housing crisis leading to rising levels of homelessness.

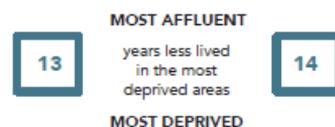
Birmingham City Council's homelessness review identified the key housing challenges as:

- The local population is growing at a faster rate than homes are being built, leading to an increase in overcrowding across all tenures of housing.
- There are more than 20,000 households on the BCC Housing Register (April 2016).
- Annually social housing allocations meet a quarter

LIFE EXPECTANCY



DISABILITY FREE YEARS



3821

homeless households
in Birmingham

82.78%

Priority Homeless

9.87%

Non-Priority Homeless

7.35%

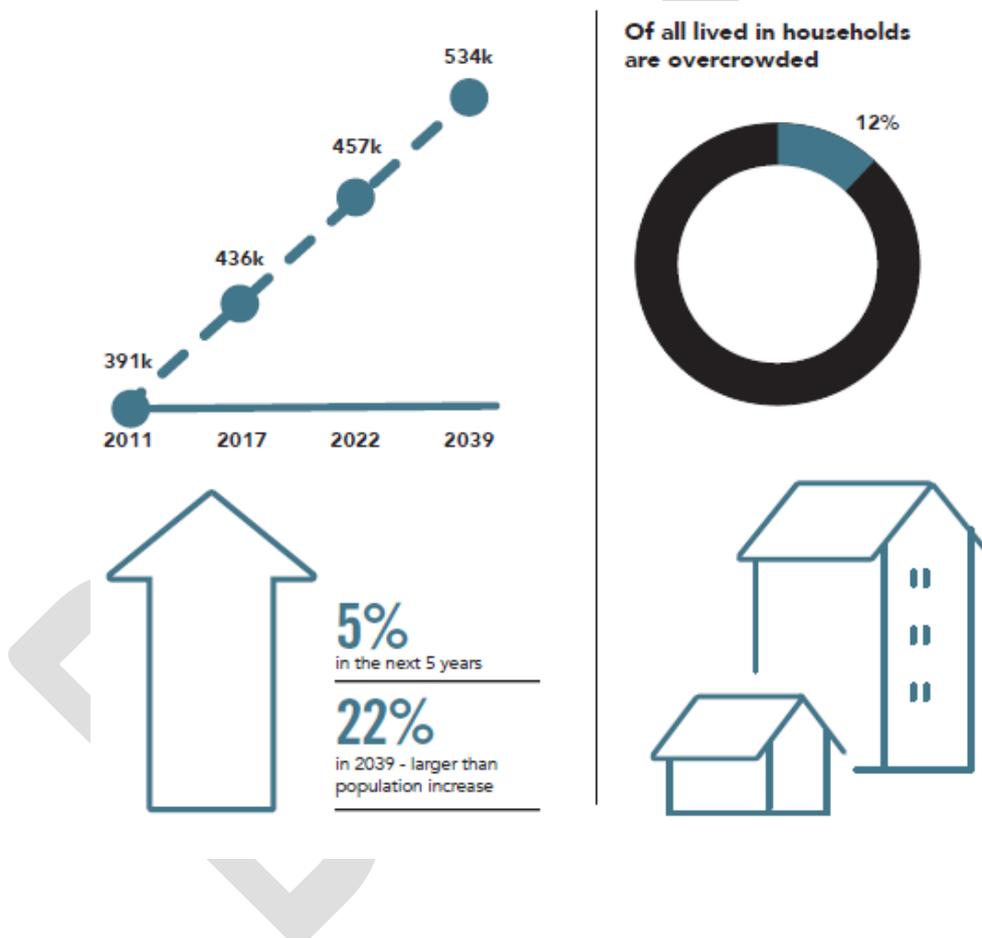
Intentionally Homeless

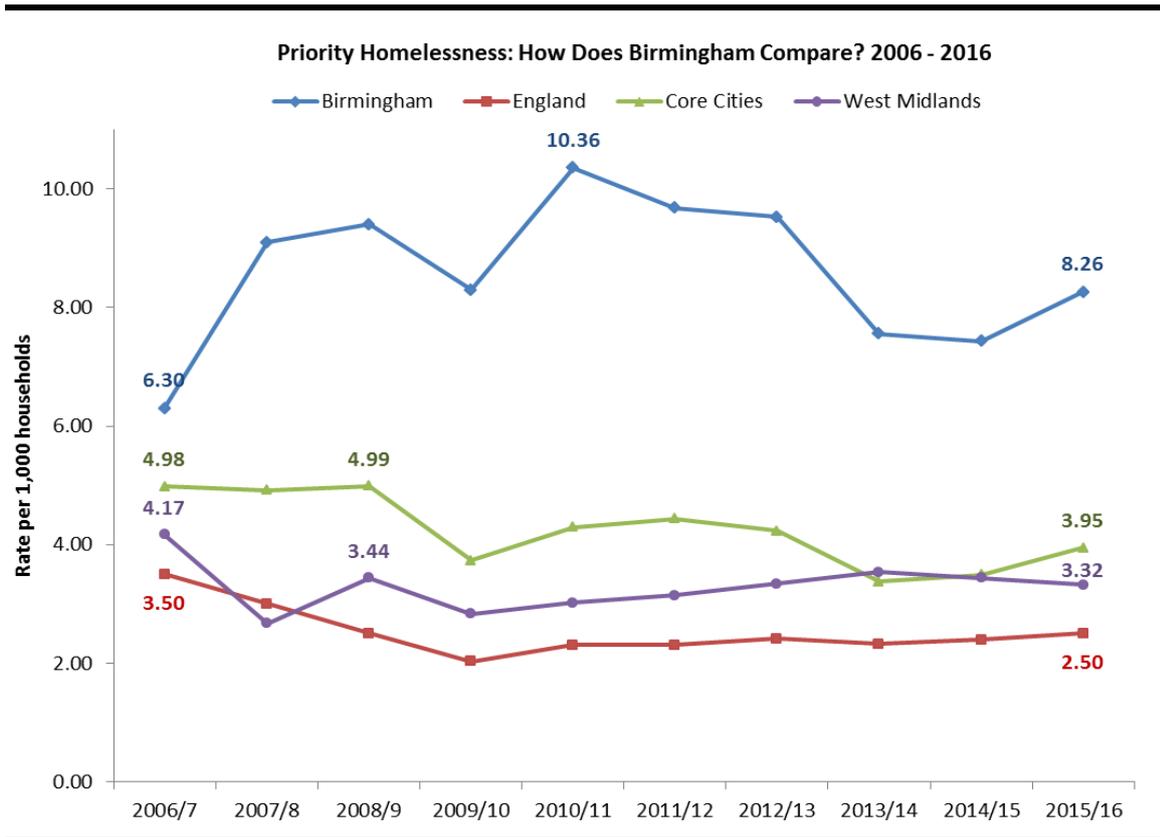


of Birmingham's overall registered housing need

- There are reducing housing options for low-income and benefit-dependent households – especially Under-35s and large households affected by the Benefit Cap.

Homelessness has become a significant challenge for the city. Of all homeless applications, 15% are from outside Birmingham – approximately half of which are related to domestic abuse. More than 3820 households in Birmingham are homeless. This instability causes strain on individuals and families. Children in temporary accommodation and poor housing suffer higher rates of ill health, low educational attainment and poor life chances.





DRAFT

Jobs and skills

Birmingham has a growing reputation internationally as a city that offers world-class business and cultural facilities. As a key driver of the regional economy, Birmingham is a leading business destination with an economic output of over £20bn. More recently, we have seen major investment in infrastructure such as HS2 and the Midland Metro. The City has also attracted international companies such as Deutsche Bank and HSBC. Furthermore, Birmingham offers high quality education facilities through its five universities and ten further education colleges.

Despite these opportunities and successes, unemployment remains high in Birmingham and our skills deficit means people are unable to take up better paid jobs. The City has a higher proportion of residents with no qualifications (21%) compared to the average in England which limits access to employment and training opportunities. Qualification levels are low in the city for some communities. A particularly high percentage of Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents have no qualifications, and a low percentage have higher level qualifications. Over 47,000 people who live in Birmingham cannot speak English.

Discrimination in recruitment, low wages and insecure employment are some of the challenges that hold back the life chances and social mobility of individuals and families.

Being unemployed can have deep seated effects on community cohesion, it impacts on the social stability of families, individuals and communities. Having a decent paid job leads to a good standard of living and financial stability. Equally, the workplace can help develop social connections through daily social interactions between people of different ethnic backgrounds - a driver of social cohesion.

Economic growth and investment is overwhelmingly concentrated in the city centre, if there is an expectation that this growth will ripple outwards, those living in the outer ring of the city 'white working class' are furthest away from any potential benefits. These are some of the conditions that create a mix of low aspiration and low self-worth, isolation, neglect and misunderstandings and tensions. Policy makers, including the council need to involve residents in shaping regeneration plans and policies that affect local areas at the early stages that are based on evidence of need.

Qualifications Levels - 2016

NVQ+4



No Quals



461,900

Resident Employment
Working age 16 - 64 year olds
Birmingham 64.5%
National 74.0%



517,000

Employment Growth (2016)
Birmingham 2.6% National 1.6%

Largest sub-sector growth seen in:
Healthcare (11,000 jobs created)
Retail (5,000 jobs created)



31,096

Unemployment
Seasonally adjusted claimant count
(Uk - 2.4%)

