

- Assistant Leaders identified need for a local resource for action and co-ordination. Dedicated new posts were not affordable and in the March 2018 report 'Localism in Birmingham' Relationship Managers were proposed as part of the solution to making key local services more responsive, and were subsequently introduced in June 2018.
- The original list of 11 services has subsequently been added to and now includes Business Improvement Districts, Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit and Police Sergeants.
- The role of Relationship Managers is
  - as a contact point for Ward councillors for matters relating to that service function in that ward that cannot be addressed through the standard reporting channels (contact centre etc)
  - Forming part of a virtual team for the Ward along with other Relationship Managers to respond creatively to issues that may arise
  - Where required the Relationship Manager would input into the Ward Plan as a proactive measure to meet priorities and avoid service demand
- During early 2019 the Neighbourhoods service met with officers undertaking the Relationship Management function to provide further clarity on the role of Relationship Managers and to obtain feedback. The key feedback was
  - There were areas where Relationship Managers were not engaged in the Ward Planning process either in setting priorities or in identifying solutions
  - Some Relationship Managers were being heavily engaged but many had only had limited additional contact
  - Some service areas needed to have their Relationship Managers contact details updated
- During November 2019 fourteen members completed a city wide survey to obtain feedback on Relationship Management from a local councillor perspective. The key feedback was
  - 11 of the 14 have engaged with the Relationship Managers with the vast majority engaging with them more than 10 times.
  - The main reasons for engaging with Relationship Managers were to resolve matters that couldn't be resolved through the normal reporting channels and/or for complex issues that required a multidisciplinary approach.
  - A smaller number of Councillors had engaged Relationship Managers over their Ward Plans, which aligns with the view earlier in the year from the officer meetings.
  - Of those that had engaged with Relationship Managers almost half were very or extremely satisfied, with no respondents being 'not at all satisfied'
  - Other comments included
    - More face to face meetings are required
    - Some functions such as housing need more specific contacts i.e. tenancy and estate management, housing options etc.
    - Further functions should be added, Adult and Children Social Care, Education.
    - Relationship Managers need to be more proactive in working with members
    - We need to ensure that Relationship Managers have the time and training to be able to carry out the role more effectively.
    - A wider generic co-ordination role is required