

# **East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy Update**

**24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This report is to:

- i. update the Economy & Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress with respect to the East Birmingham and North Solihull Inclusive Growth agenda following previous reports in April and September 2020.
- ii. report on the public engagement activities relating to the draft East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy which commenced in March 2020 and concluded in October 2020.
- iii. provide an update on progress towards transitioning the East Birmingham work from the strategy-making into the delivery phase.

## **2 Progress since last update**

2.1 At the time of the previous report to this committee, consultation on the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy (the Strategy) was still underway. The previous report therefore provided an interim update on the consultation and also gave some initial indications of what the next steps would be, including the adoption of the Strategy. The following progress has subsequently been made:

2.2 Consultation on the Strategy was formally closed on 18th October 2020. Section 3 of this report and the attached consultation report (Appendix 1) provide a detailed account of the engagement activities and outcomes. Following analysis of the representations received the Strategy was amended and updated and brought to Cabinet for adoption on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The Strategy was approved by Cabinet, with a request that an annual progress report should be brought to Cabinet providing details of progress towards the delivery of the Strategy.

2.3 In late November 2020 a new East Birmingham Board (the Board) was established to take forward the delivery of the Strategy. The Board is chaired by the Member of Parliament for Birmingham Hodge Hill and the membership includes:

- Local political representation including the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members and ward members
- Senior Officers from the City Council including the Chief Executive and relevant Directors
- Representatives of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

- Representatives of key partners including the West Midlands Combined Authority, Birmingham Children's Trust, Transport for West Midlands and the Birmingham and Solihull Sustainability and Transformation Partnership
  - Representatives of local businesses, educational institutions and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector
- 2.4 The key objectives of the new Board are to deliver growth and to bring forward the key interventions to enable local residents to benefit from the jobs and opportunities created. The Board will guide the delivery of growth to maximise opportunities for decarbonisation and to ensure there is a "just transition" to a green economy.
- 2.5 The Board will meet four times a year to:
- Agree and regularly review an implementation plan setting out the projects and activities which will deliver the Strategy.
  - Lead dialogue and negotiations with the Government relating to strategic requirements such as funding for major infrastructure
  - Provide a forum for the formal agreement of partnership commitments of resources and funding
- 2.6 A Ward Members' Forum has also been established for all Councillors whose Wards are within or partly within the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy area. The Forum is chaired by the Leader of the Council and includes 26 Councillors from 20 Wards.
- 2.7 The Ward Members' Forum met for the first time in October 2020 and again in February 2021. Agendas to date have included details of consultation activities, a regular summary of proceedings at the Board, and discussions relating to local aspects of implementation including stakeholders and Ward priorities. It is intended that the Forum should continue to meet on a quarterly basis.
- 2.8 During the interval since the previous report to this committee significant progress has also been made on the development of proposals for the implementation of the Strategy. This is covered in Section 4 of this report.

### **3 Consultation Summary**

- 3.1 A full report on the consultation is appended as Appendix 1. In summary the principal consultation activities were as follows:
- On Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020, a launch event was held at South and City College Birmingham's Bordesley Green Campus. 96 individuals attended included representatives of a wide range of community organisations and other stakeholders.

- A page was created on the Council's website and an online survey was published on the Council's consultation portal *Be Heard*.
- Information was also published on the Council's social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter, and internally via Yammer.
- Copies of the strategy were placed in the eight local libraries within the area and provided to numerous community organisations and the local Neighbourhood Network partners.
- Direct consultation emails were sent out to approximately 400 stakeholders, predominantly local organisations.
- Printed leaflets were provided to libraries and stakeholders,
- Stakeholders distributed consultation details including the electronic leaflets to large numbers of contacts within their networks
- Meetings were held with 109 stakeholder organisations
- Hard copies and electronic details were provided to the 26 Ward Members and 4 MPs whose areas of responsibility are affected.
- Briefings have been offered to all affected Ward Forums.
- A Ward Members' Forum was established for all affected Ward Members and the initial meeting took place on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020.
- Information packs were provided to all local schools and nurseries, including key questions for schools to invite children to consider.
- Contact has also been made with key individuals in the education community, including the chair of the Eastwards Consortium of Birmingham Schools and Children's Centres, to further encourage engagement with schools and nurseries.
- Two focus group sessions were facilitated by local partners
- There were two dedicated meetings of the City Council's Citizens Panel
- Following initial feedback from consultees a second, simpler online survey was set up to provide a fast and simple method for obtaining input from stakeholders who may not have been willing to complete the longer survey. This was intended to facilitate the type of brief comments which are usually gathered at public consultation events.

3.2 Following the initial contact made during the consultation, engagement is ongoing with members of the East Birmingham team regularly attending meetings including Neighbourhood Networks steering groups, the Local Employment and Skills Board and various stakeholder groups including Birmingham Open Space Forum.

- 3.3 As a consequence of the pandemic, it is recognised that the engagement will have been skewed towards elements of the population who are accessible via digital channels. It is also recognised that there was limited engagement with young persons, and this is particularly important given the demographics of the East Birmingham area.
- 3.4 However, in light of the greatly extended duration and additional channels of engagement it is anticipated that the consultation will have reached at least a similar proportion of the East Birmingham population as would have been expected to be engaged by the original 12-week programme, and that the responses on the Strategy are generally reflective of the views of the public.

#### **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 In order to realise the vision of the Strategy a programme of activities is now being planned to cover the period up to 2040. The following principles have been identified for the programme, informed by the Strategy and discussions at Board and the Ward Members' Forum:
- A comprehensive multi-agency approach facilitated by the East Birmingham Board
  - Linking the macro (major infrastructure and development) and the micro (local projects and grassroots community development).
  - Long term, sustainable investment: a 20 year+ programme of activity with continuity and resilience.
  - Taking a flexible iterative and incremental approach to implementation: scale up over time but deliver initial benefits quickly while working towards bigger opportunities.
  - Development, infrastructure and real estate as catalysts for social value, community wealth building and the just transition to zero carbon.
  - Enhancing, accelerating and co-ordinating projects and activities across a wide range of workstreams and using East Birmingham as the preferred location for pilots of wider initiatives e.g. Digital inclusion, R20, Transport Plan.
  - Lobbying for the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure which will amplify the benefits of place-based interventions.
  - The initial investment into the programme will leverage much larger external funding – both public and private.
  - Establishing strong and productive relationship with local communities and VCSE partners with BCC leading by example on procurement and recruitment. Empowering the community to play a key role in the programme.
  - Actively supporting the development of community assets, community enterprises, community leadership and economic resilience.
  - Investing in the future through prevention and early intervention.

- 4.2 A business case for the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth programme is now being developed in conjunction and co-ordination with other projects and programmes within the wider Inclusive Growth Portfolio. The business case will contain full details of the programme, in line with HM Treasury Green Book methodology. It is anticipated that the programme business case will be brought to Cabinet for approval during Summer 2021.
- 4.3 In conjunction with the development of the overall programme business case, work is also underway to bring forward business cases for an initial tranche of projects which will begin the delivery of the Strategy. Details of these project proposals will be compiled into a combined programme implementation plan which will be brought to the East Birmingham Board and Ward Members' Forum for discussion.
- 4.4 Milestones:
- East Birmingham Board Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021
  - Ward Members' Forum meeting late May 2021 (date tbc)
  - Approval of programme business case Summer 2021
  - Approval of initial project business cases Q2 2021/22 onward