

**HOUSING AND HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TUESDAY 16 MAY
2017**

**PRIORITY REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPARENCY, OPENNESS &
EQUALITY**

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR TRISTAN CHATFIELD

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update on the progress made in my portfolio and any future issues.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

I have accountability for:

Social Cohesion and Inclusion	<p>Approaches to ensure that all Birmingham citizens have increasing access to opportunity across the social and economic life of the city.</p> <p>Holding to account other relevant Cabinet Members and officers for the delivery of those functions that impact on social cohesion and inclusion.</p>
Equalities within the Community	<p>Development and promotion of shared values and mutual respect across the diverse communities of Birmingham.</p> <p>Ensuring that community and cultural events promote social cohesion and inclusion.</p>
External Challenge	<p>Ensuring that partner agencies, private or third sector organisations are challenged on their contribution to improving social cohesion and inequalities.</p>
Safer Communities	<p>Strategic citywide leadership to community safety in Birmingham, including anti-social behaviour, fear of crime and road safety and ensuring effective support for victims of crime.</p> <p>Effective relationships and clear shared priorities with the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Police.</p> <p>Leadership on youth offending issues.</p> <p>CCTV and liaison with Police.</p>

3. PRIORITIES UPDATE

Since taking up my executive position in March of this year, I have worked with elected members, officers, communities and range of partners across the city to progress previous portfolio commitments and to understand the priority areas of work, given the huge financial challenge faced by the Council in the years ahead and the wider national issues affecting Birmingham citizens.

Our challenge remains to ensure that every Birmingham citizen has access to opportunity across the social and economic life of the city, within a safe city – including in education, employment, housing, health and social care, civil society and political participation – whether these are delivered by the City Council itself, partner agencies, or by private or third sector organisations.

Priority	Progress to date
Take forward recommendation of the Child Poverty Commission.	<p>A Cross-Party Implementation Group has been established to oversee and monitor progress of the implementation of the Birmingham Child Poverty Commission's recommendations. Considerable progress has been made to deliver the recommendations including a commitment from the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to exempt care leavers from Council Tax up to the age of 25, from 1st April 2017• not to engage Bailiffs for families in receipt of Council Tax Support, effective from 1st April 2017. The Council will continue to implement its Council Tax Support Scheme providing protection with 100% of council tax to low income families.• to review its housing standards enforcement by consulting with communities and businesses over Selective Licensing in target wards with high levels of Private Rented Sector (over 19%) and affected by issues of low demand, poor property conditions, or anti-social behaviour. <p>An Independent Birmingham Child Poverty Action Forum supported by the Council has been established to ensure the city continues to promote, monitor and support citywide and national activity to combat child poverty; building on the evidence and the Commission's recommendations.</p> <p>A Child Poverty Action Forum website is planned to be formally launched in June 2017. The website will be a communication channel for wider debate, engagement and information sharing of local and national good practice.</p> <p>A Best of Birmingham event is to take place in Summer 2018</p>

	celebrating the talents and skills of the city's children, young people and adults that support them.
Ensure that all Birmingham citizens have increasing access to opportunity across the social and economic life of the city	<p>Birmingham's Financial Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2020 was approved by Cabinet on 18th April 2017.</p> <p>This strategy replaces the Birmingham City Council Financial Inclusion Strategy, Counting the Cost 2010-2012, which saw the creation of a multi-agency Financial Inclusion partnership to deliver on its aims and reflects the changes in landscape following the introduction of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, Local Government Finance Act 2012, Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 and the Care Act 2014 impacting Birmingham citizens greatly.</p> <p>The Financial Inclusion Strategy has been developed, and will continue to be developed, as a multi-agency approach, in consultation and with the involvement of partners and stakeholders through the city's Financial Inclusion partnership.</p> <p>There are 6 objectives within the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FINANCIAL PRODUCTS & SERVICES - "Improve access to financial products including affordable and responsible credit, an appropriate bank account, basic home contents insurance and savings facilities" • ADVICE, INFORMATION & FINANCIAL EDUCATION - "Build financial resilience by ensuring citizens can access appropriate advice, information and financial education" • FOOD & FUEL - "Tackle inequalities by reducing the number of citizens living in food poverty; tackle inequalities that cause citizens to be living in fuel and food poverty whilst ensuring we are addressing the crisis" • STRATEGIC INFLUENCE – "Coordinate and embed standard financial inclusion , to improve strategic coordination of city led financial inclusion targets" • EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, SKILLS & TRAINING – "To provide support with education, skills and training to help people into sustainable, meaningful employment in order to achieve financial security" • DIGITAL INCLUSION - "Increase digital access through the development of digital skills, confidence whilst ensuring that digital products and services meet the needs of residents"

	<p>The aim of the partnership is to bring opportunities to citizens in Birmingham regardless of their start in life or situation. We will look to test and trial different approaches to meet the changing needs of citizens over a life time; addressing inequalities and building a set of common standards in our activities that will raise consistency and quality of service provision.</p> <p>A draft action plan to deliver on a number of priorities has been developed with the partnership and updates on progress will be provided.</p> <p>The Financial Inclusion Strategy has been developed to support and complement other BCC policies, plans and strategies including; Birmingham Child Poverty Commission Report, Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Birmingham Homelessness Strategy and the national Financial Capability Strategy.</p>
Review how the City deals with Hate Crime	<p>Birmingham continues to review its approach to hate crime. On the 9th November 2016 a workshop was held, supported by Birmingham Race Action Partnership (BRAP), to explore the city's response to hate crime. The outcomes from the workshop were shared with the Birmingham Hate Reduction Partnership to develop its future priorities, objectives and action planning.</p> <p>On the 22nd November 2016 an interactive workshop was held by Birmingham City Council with schools supported by TELL Mama national organisation which deals with hate crime across the UK. 130 students participated, explored different types of hate crime, debated the issues of hate crime, and contributed as to how Birmingham City Council and its partners can eradicate hate crime. The feedback from this workshop was shared with the Birmingham Hate Crime Reduction Partnership in terms of future action planning and engaging schools to address hate crime.</p> <p>On the 7th December 2016 a workshop run by Birmingham City Council was held with communities and public agencies in order to draft the Birmingham Hate Crime Reduction Partnership Action Plan, taking into account the feedback from the above-mentioned workshops.</p> <p>The Birmingham Hate Crime Reduction Partnership will continue to meet bi-monthly and the action plan will be further developed by the partnership.</p>
Develop a Birmingham model for tackling extremism, engaging with the Home Office and Birmingham	<p>Birmingham City Council has been delivering against the Prevent Programme since 2007 and is considered a model of good practice.</p> <p>It is important for communities and stakeholders to be well-informed of Prevent activities in the city and have the opportunity to engage and contribute to the programme. The Council has now</p>

communities	<p>introduced an independent Prevent Community Reference Group (CRG). The aim of the Prevent CRG is to increase awareness, involvement, trust and confidence in Birmingham's Prevent programme. The Prevent CRG is intended to provide the opportunity for the city's diverse communities to engage and provide inputs on current and future Prevent initiatives. We are currently working with stakeholders on finalising a terms of reference for the group.</p> <p>The Council has finalised a screening tool with guidance for schools and has established a workforce development and training structure that enables schools to embed training locally. We have trained over 500 individuals as Home Office approved WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) trainers.</p> <p>Following the attack in Westminster, officers and members have taken part in responding to media interviews on the BBC (Midlands Today and Inside Out) to discuss the Prevent programme in Birmingham and the Council hosted a visit of the Home Secretary on the 6th April who spoke highly of the Prevent programme in Birmingham and the work of partners in the city.</p> <p>The Council has also recruited a dedicated Prevent Community Engagement Officer and been successful in securing funding from the Home Office for an additional Prevent Schools Officer for 2017/18.</p> <p>Birmingham's Prevent programme continues to be seen as a leading programme drawing interest internationally. Birmingham will be hosting a delegation from the city of Denver in the United States in May to help share best practice around Prevent and will also be sending a delegation to Denver in July. The exchange is fully funded through the US Embassy and in consultation with the Home Office with the aim to share experiences, approaches and lessons learnt between international cities working to counter violent extremism.</p> <p>When the English Defence League came to Birmingham in April, we sent out a clear message that they are not welcome in this city and they will never be welcome. On the day, I attended a tea party at Birmingham Central Mosque alongside faith leaders, elected members, organisations and Brummies from across the city, uniting, celebrating our diversity and showing we are One Birmingham.</p>
Develop a City of Birmingham Equality Strategy	<p>Our aim is to embed equalities in everything we do and assess the impacts of our decisions and services on communities.</p> <p>We are looking to provide as much useful demographic data and ward profiles to Elected Members and partners to help address some of the challenges and help shape services in local areas.</p> <p>A diversity and inclusion strategy is currently being drafted, which will seek to establish a stronger position for diversity and inclusion within the organisation by strengthening the position of the network</p>

	groups, strengthening the quality of demographic information and focussing on how talent from these groups can be recognised and moved across the organisation.
Develop a community cohesion strategy for the city with partners	Work is now underway to develop a community cohesion strategy. A paper on the key issues and proposed approach will be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team in June, followed by a discussion at the Executive Management Team.
Undertake review of current services to Asylum Seekers and Refugees	<p>In December 2015 Birmingham became recognised as a City of Sanctuary providing a culture of hospitality and welcome, especially for refugees seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.</p> <p>In February 2017, Cabinet approved a policy position statement, developed by partners and the council.</p> <p><u>Multi-Agency Forum</u> Through the development of the City of Sanctuary Migration Position Statement, this has provided a more dedicated focus and drive to re-purpose the use of the Birmingham Multi-Agency Forum. The Forum is made up of voluntary, community and statutory partners from across the city that provides services and support to asylum seekers and refugees. The work with the forum will look to develop a clear action plan on the roles that we can plan in working as a collective to develop and enhance the service offer for the individuals in the city.</p> <p><u>Asylum Seekers</u> The work to develop the on-going working relationship with the Home Office and G4S continues, this includes work on increasing the take up of health screens for those in Initial Accommodation and the detailed discussions about the use of hotel accommodation in the city as well as the impacts that this has on mainstream services such as health services.</p> <p>The incoming changes to the Immigration Act will affect the level of support asylum seeking families receive as well as the number of appeals individuals can make being reduced. Once formal guidance is received from the Government this will need to be reviewed to look at the potential impacts on the local authority.</p> <p><u>Syrian Refugees</u> Birmingham City Council, working with partner agencies, was at the forefront of the national response to the Syrian crises, to confirm early acceptance of 50 Syrian refugees into the city. Following this was a cross-party decision to accept a further 500 Syrian refugees. As of the 18th April 2017 there are 108 Syrian refugees that have been resettled within Birmingham with further refugees arriving later this year.</p> <p>Resettlement support services for Syrian refugees are being commissioned utilising the Government grant which covers the</p>

	<p>costs of the refugees during their initial 12 months of resettlement and the Council has confirmed its support for the piloting of a community sponsorship approach working alongside the Methodist Church which will see a Syrian family supported within this faith based community.</p> <p><u>Syrian Refugees – Community Sponsorship</u> As work progresses on the development of a Birmingham Community Sponsorship model in partnership with the Methodist Network. The first family of 4 should be arriving within the coming months.</p> <p><u>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children</u> Birmingham has also received 119 UASC children. The majority of these children (106) were spontaneous arrivals. 2 of these children arrived through the National Transfer Scheme, 1 Dubs amendment case is being supported alongside a further 10 failed Dublin III cases. More arrivals are expected. There is a 0.07% national ceiling as the benchmark for Councils (Birmingham's total is 198 young people).</p> <p><u>Community Cohesion</u> As part of our work on community cohesion, we worked with the Birmingham City of Sanctuary to hold a workshop with a number of schools across the city in March to explore the ways in which Birmingham welcomes asylum-seekers and refugees who come here seeking safety. It will also highlight the important bond that brings together the many peoples of Birmingham, including new arrivals.</p>
Support for BCC staff networks	<p>The BCC Employee Networks were reviewed in 2011 and as a result, reduced from eight networks, and consolidated into the Corporate Black Workers, Disability Advisory and LGBT Network. The terms of reference were revised and agreed and a lead BCC officer was appointed to each Network respectively as a Champion in terms of direction and support.</p> <p>On 1st April, the Employee Networks transferred to Corporate HR to ensure the priorities and support is fully embedded in our HR strategy.</p> <p>The Council is in the process of developing a 3-year draft workforce equality, diversity & Inclusion strategy which will be the subject of consultation with relevant stakeholders, including staff, trade unions, management and members. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that as far as practicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council aspires to be an inclusive organisation that accurately reflects the demographics of the citizens of Birmingham • The Council improves trust within the organisation to encourage staff to share diversity data

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People feel more engaged and have improved wellbeing • All policies reflect good practice in equality & diversity • Job applicants and service users feel confident that they are treated fairly • A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion runs throughout the culture of the Council <p>The draft strategy will be completed by the end of May. Following consultation in June, a final version will be available by the end of July.</p>
Support the development of early intervention and prevention activity which can create safer communities	<p>The following activities highlighted at your meeting in October 2016 are still in place:</p> <p>The Think Family programme, which is now embedding itself in the Council's approach to preventing children and young people from getting involved in crime and ASB, or reducing the opportunity for escalation of that involvement.</p> <p>There are other initiatives and activities in progress to develop this approach. In terms of children and young people, there are also youth activities and projects funded and coordinated via the Local Community Safety Partnerships to provide diversion and engagement opportunities for young people. Additionally work is now in progress to develop joint work on community safety outcomes within the Early Help strategy and agenda.</p> <p>In terms of adults there is the development of a Birmingham Street Homeless Population Tasking process to identify and engage with members of the street community to help them exit their current lifestyles and prevent harm to themselves and others. There is also joint work with other Council services and external partners to develop Supporting Adults Panels which support adults whose needs place them at risk of self-neglect, hoarding, victimisation or offending, as well as joint projects moving forward with mental health services on housing and mental health issues.</p> <p>However there is not a Small Grants Fund available this year as in previous years. The BCSP does have other funds available which community organisations can bid into, to address community safety priorities.</p>
Support the strengthening of community safety partnership activity and relationships, particularly at a	<p>Through the existing relationships with partners such as West Midlands Police, as well as the local structures such as the Local Community Safety Partnerships and Safer Communities Groups, there is much work ongoing to develop and embed partnership approaches to using tools in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. These include Community Protection Notices, Public Space Protection Orders and Community Triggers.</p>

local level	<p>There are also a number of joint operations with the Police and other partners which are ongoing or planned, such as Operation Wraithbane to address off-road biking concerns, as well as serious and high profile cases being managed within the partnership.</p> <p>BCSP&C Board have spent some time reviewing its membership and ensuring representation that supports the delivery of its community safety programme. The Partnership's Delivery Group ensures representation from the Chairs of the city's four Local Community Safety Partnerships and the LCSP Coordinators to ensure a strong local and citywide relationship and understanding of priorities.</p> <p>Each Local Community Safety Partnership has delivered a plan of interventions aligning to the BCSP strategic priorities. The work they do has included conducting a twice yearly "health check" of the local community safety tasking arrangements in each respective area, this is designed to ensure that the Police and Council are responding to the community safety issues that matter most in areas. Also facilitating monthly Safer Communities Groups in respect of multi-agency problem solving to deal with the most serious ASB affected neighbourhoods.</p>
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4. OTHER KEY ISSUES

Youth Offending Service

The Service continues to sustain its good performance in relation to the Youth Justice national indicators of: reducing first time entrants into the criminal justice system, reducing reoffending and reducing the use of custody. However, there are challenges with custody rates remaining above the national average, although comparable to other core cities and within the context of a national reduction in the young people coming into the criminal justice system. Those that do progress beyond Court stage are presenting with increased complexity in relation to vulnerability and risk.

Budget reductions, along with unfunded budget pressures in 2016/17, resulted in the Service facing a significant budgetary deficit. A new operating model is now being embedded in order to ensure that the statutory responsibilities of the Service are not significantly compromised and delivered within budget.

The Youth Justice grant has not been reduced for 2017/18 and partnership funding has remained at similar levels to 2016/17. The Service, however, faces a budget pressure in relation to remands to custody, which are principally decisions made by the Courts, where young people automatically adopt Children in Care status. In 2016/17 this budget was overspent and has subsequently been reduced in 2017/18 by the Youth Justice Board. The Service is required to mitigate this budget pressure.

The Youth Offending Service is part of the shadow Children's Trust and in 2017/18 will see the development of this and the position and role the Service will take. The national review of youth justice undertaken by Charlie Taylor was released in February 2017 alongside the Government's response. This saw the continued support of the Youth Justice model going forward with work towards improvements in the secure estate and early prevention being identified as priority areas.

5. KEY BUDGET ISSUES

Equalities and Community Safety

There was a net revenue budget of £2.4m in 2016/17 to deliver services within my portfolio (this included resources provided for the Equalities Team, Public CCTV, Neighbourhood Information & Advice Services and the provision of independent external Legal Advice Services for citizens). These resources were supplemented by other funding including the Community Safety Grant of £1.9m provided through the Police and Crime Commissioner and £0.7m from the Home Office for the national Preventing Violent Extremism Programme.

These resources were well managed during the year given the many challenges (full spend was achieved on the Community Safety Fund and the PVE Programme and the new operational model for the Neighbourhood Service was approved and implemented). However, it is expected that the expenditure will exceed the budget by £0.4m in 2016/17 (this relating primarily to the on-going complex consultation and delay in the re-structuring of the Equalities Team and additional expenditure on the public CCTV service).

Looking forward to 2017/18, the Council has increased the resources for the public CCTV service by £0.3m (this representing savings agreed for 2016/17 that will no longer be pursued). Further, there are no additional savings proposed for my services other than for the Equalities Team – the latter will be £0.27m for 2017/18 and increasing to £0.36m in 2018/19 thereafter on an on-going basis.

Councillor Tristan Chatfield

Cabinet Member for Openness, Transparency and Equality