Public Report

Birmingham City Council
Report to Cabinet

22nd January 2019

Subject:	Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods, White Paper
Report of:	Jonathan Tew, Assistant Chief Executive
	Chris Jordan, Assistant Director Neighbourhoods & Communities
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Cllr Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes & Neighbourhoods
Relevant O &S Chair(s):	Cllr John Cotton, Co-ordinating O & S Chair
Report author:	Tony Smith, Policy Executive

Are specific wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No – All wards affected
Is this a key decision If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 005737/2018	☒ Yes	☐ No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	☒ Yes	☐ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :	☐ Yes	☒ No

1   Executive Summary

1.1   A Green Paper on Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods was approved by cabinet in March this year. This paper set out proposals for working in partnership with people in their local area to make services more responsive to local needs and preferences and to improve local neighbourhoods.

1.2   Approval was given at this Cabinet meeting for a consultation exercise to take place on the proposals outlined in the Green Paper. This consultation took place over the summer and the findings have now been reviewed, analysed and reflected in the White Paper.

2   Recommendations

2.1   That Cabinet approve the White Paper and endorse the policies it sets out.

3   Background

3.1   Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods sets out the council's approach to working more closely with neighbourhoods to enable active citizens and effect improvements in local areas.

3.2   A number of options/models to facilitate this are included in the paper (outlined in the Framework of Relationships), one being to create new parish, town or neighbourhood councils.   This is the most formal model of neighbourhood governance, but there are many other possibilities that the City Council will wish to support.

3.3   These proposals were consulted on over the summer via a Be Heard Consultation and a number of consultation events. The findings have been reviewed and taken into account to develop the White Paper.

3.4   The approach included in the White Paper has not changed significantly from that outlined in the Green Paper since 54% of the consultation respondents supported our overall approach to working with neighbourhoods and only 31% were opposed. The main changes are to refine the proposals, incorporating some of the many useful suggestions put forward in the consultation.

4   Options considered and Recommended Proposal

4.1   Following the decision of Cabinet in March, the City Council was committed to consulting on the Green Paper and producing a response to that consultation. The recommended policies set out in the White Paper reflect the views received in the consultation.

5   Consultation

5.1   See information included in background.

5.2   Cllr O'Reilly, Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, has also been consulted on this paper given the potential procurement implications.

6   Risk Management

6.1   There are some reputational risks associated with the consultation and the policies presented. It is important that the City Council responds positively to the many views given in the consultation and respects the time and effort that residents have put in to giving their views. It is also important that the City Council follows through on the commitments made in both the green and white papers.

6.2   Some of the policies set out in the White Paper will carry their own specific risks when implemented in specific neighbourhoods, for example in the proposed devolution of services to parishes and the need to ensure proper accountability

and probity in neighbourhood arrangements. As indicated in the White Paper these will be assessed and mitigated as policy is implemented.

6.3 Other specific risks may include ensuring we have sufficient resources to enable the relevant changes in the digital platform (public facing) and the commissioning processes, managing the potential for changes in our contract prices, the need to ensure value for money and legal compliance.

7 Compliance Issues:

7.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

7.1.1 Proposals are consistent with the Localism in Birmingham: A Framework for Future Policy that was approved by Cabinet in March this year, they will also support the outcomes included in the Birmingham City Council Plan: 2018 – 2022.

7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 There are no immediate legal implications of this report. There will be specific legal implications to do with governance structures and service delivery with taking forward some aspects of the White Paper and again these will be addressed as arrangements are developed in specific neighbourhoods.

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 There are no specific financial implications of the policies in the White Paper. Although the White Paper does refer to a partnership based resources review, the City Council has not built any additional costs into its own future financial plans at this stage. Therefore the interim assumption is that any new way of working does not add to the City Council's costs.

7.3.2 If there are financial implications in taking forward some of the proposals, such as devolved services, they will be considered as these initiatives are developed. There are also wider resource pressures in this policy area and those will be assessed as part of the partnership based review referred to in the White Paper.

7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)

7.4.1 There are no immediate procurement implications in this report. However, there will be procurement implications for future projects in terms of stakeholder consultation; possibly extending to existing contracts subject to their period, scope and terms.

7.4.2 There will likely be a need to have appropriate mechanisms built into contracts to trigger changes when required, as well as further developing the City Council's website in order to improve transparency of contract information and enable the appropriate interaction of citizens and providers.

7.5   Human Resources Implications (if required)

7.5.1   The implementation of the policies in the White Paper will require some human resource input from the City Council, however this will be dependent on the take up of the policies. The policies will be delivered within a partnership based approach and within existing staff resources.

7.6   Public Sector Equality Duty

7.6.1   Assessment to be completed. We do not anticipate any adverse impact on protected groups.

8   Background Documents

8.1   The White Paper Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods attached.