



“Forward in Partnership”

Erdington District’s Policy Statement 2015/16 (Draft)



Erdington District Policy Statement

1. Introduction - District Executive Member, Councillor Josh Jones

Having been the chair of the Erdington District Committee and its Executive Member for the last year, my aim is to continue and build on the foundations put in place by Councillor Penny Holbrook when she was the chair of Erdington District and to take Erdington District 'forward in partnership,' through our working with our many great partner organisations and community groups.

Erdington continues to be a vibrant and diverse district, rich in community, people and social engagement. We have a wide range of economic activity with a vast array of businesses, communities and active groups. Our sense of community and pride is often hidden by statistics and a humility that prevents us from celebrating our abilities.

Together in partnership we are stronger and more resilient to face the considerable challenges across the district. Birmingham is facing its biggest cuts in history and this means some services will remain and some will be lost. The Government's Austerity agenda means there have been constant cuts to services and budgets since 2010, with even greater cuts to come, that has removed and continue to remove support for some of those most in need and limiting the opportunity to influence change.

Our collective *vision* for Erdington, formed by residents, community groups, businesses, Birmingham City Council and its district officers and elected representatives is of a "*prosperous and vibrant community, where everyone has equality of opportunity and where fairness is at the heart of everything we do and those most in need are supported.*"

Our guiding principles are that everyone has a right to a decent, affordable, warm home in pleasant and safe surroundings, access to a good standard of education and the opportunity to have a decent paid job or career and, above all, a community where no one is left behind and everyone is valued. Progress toward these aims will be delivered through five work streams:

- Employment, Skills & Enterprise
- Clean and Green
- Housing
- Health
- Community Safety

Of personal concern to me is the fact that residents across Erdington District live, on average, 8 years less than residents of neighbouring Sutton Coldfield District just a few miles away. I applied to the Leader of the Council for Erdington to be recognised as a Social Innovation Zone which may give the district more freedom and flexibility in the way it operates and this request has been granted. My ambition is to improve the health and well-being of Erdington residents to match that of our neighbours but this will not happen overnight and is a 20 year vision and objective I will work towards. This challenging agenda, and indeed all the other priorities set out above, cannot be delivered by the council alone. Collectively, with all our partners, and led by the residents, we firmly believe we can move towards the above vision.

This District Policy Statement has been developed with our friends and partners and sits alongside our District Development Plan. Both documents are vital in identifying the direction we need to take, and who can play a role in helping to deliver the vision.

This District Policy statement will cover the following:

- Context - the Leaders Policy Statement
- Erdington District Policy Statement
- Erdington District Priorities
- Erdington District – Involving Local People and Neighbourhoods

2. Context - Leaders Policy Statement.

Each year the Leader of the City Council presents a policy statement to a meeting of the full City Council. The statement sets out progress on the plans announced the year before and new actions for the year ahead. It provides a political statement of the council's priorities and objectives and also enables people to see what progress has been made.

The emphasis in the Leaders Policy Statement is on the following:

A Fair City – where people are safe, especially the most vulnerable, from crime, violence and abuse. Where health and wellbeing, housing quality and life expectancy are all at national levels for all and where older people are able to stay in their own homes and communities. Children are protected and young people are able to access opportunities regardless of background or special needs. Poverty amongst children and families is down to national averages – Birmingham has an ethical approach as a “Living Wage City” and no social groups or local areas are blighted by extreme levels of unemployment and low incomes.

A Prosperous City – where people have access to a good education and opportunities to equip them for a career, where jobs and the economy are growing, with affordable suitable housing in clean and sustainable neighbourhoods where people of all backgrounds get along. A city that fulfils its role as the regional capital and provides a quality of life that attracts more investors, visitors and employees.

A Democratic city – creating a new model of governance - to help local people from all backgrounds engage in local democracy, and have more influence on local decisions and localised services. To assist communities and individuals to make their contribution to the life of the city and with governance arrangements based on openness and transparency.

3. Erdington District Priorities

For each of the key themes of employment, health, housing, clean, green and safe there are more detailed and specific action plans containing delivery activities and desired outcomes within the *Erdington District Development Plan* available from the Erdington District Office. However in brief, the priorities for Erdington are as follows:

Employment, Skills & Training:

Helping young people achieve their potential by reducing youth unemployment and NEETS

- Reducing levels of worklessness, particularly in neighbourhoods and with families experiencing complex multiple barriers to the labour market
- Increasing self-employment, social enterprise development and the establishment of small businesses.

Health:

- Increasing smoking cessation

- Tackling alcohol and substance misuse
- Reducing obesity levels in children and adults
- Helping older people improve their general health including falls prevention
- Contributing to improved mental health and well-being

Housing:

- Future housing development - best use of land and quality homes for all
- Private rented sector – improving the sector through new models, development of a registration scheme and options for bringing flats above shops into use
- District housing panel – maintain an all tenure strategically influential panel supporting housing improvements and shaping better neighbourhoods.

Clean, Green & Safe:

- Developing the green partnership with representation from all four wards.
- Enhancing green open spaces and promoting their value for physical activity
- Maintaining street cleanliness standards
- Work to ensure the wheelie bin programme is successfully implemented
- Maintaining a coordinated approach to engaging and working with young people and providing interventions that contribute toward the reduction of crime and anti social behaviour.
- To raise awareness of domestic abuse issues and contribute toward interventions designed to reduce the occurrence of domestic abuse
- To create a coordinated approach to dealing with drug and alcohol abuse.
- Building engaged and informed neighbourhoods right across the district

4. Erdington District – Putting People at the Heart of Everything We Do.

Key to all decisions we make are local peoples' needs, aspirations and views. All of the priorities set out in this Erdington District Policy Statement have come from what local residents and partners have told us. All can be involved and make their views count by responding to Council consultations on line (via www.birmingham.gov.uk) or via social media tools such a facebook and twitter that the Council is now using more frequently. You can also raise complaints, comments and compliments about council services on line or using forms available from district buildings such as libraries and neighbourhood offices.

To tackle the complex wider priorities of the district a partnership approach is required as no single agency has all the answers and much more can be accomplished by working in collaboration. The Erdington Advisory Group brings key partners together. In addition, there are sub-groups established examining the needs, priorities and interventions required to make a difference to employment, health, housing, community safety and green issues..

Erdington District elected members and officers from the Council's Erdington District team will have a key role to play in leading, shaping and influencing the outcomes from the various district partnership groups. The District Team will also aim to unblock barriers that hinder local progress. We also understand that many of our aims can only be achieved by working at a city/regional level so the District Team will work collaboratively with colleagues beyond its boundaries

As we strive to make progress on this district agenda we will maintain openness and transparency about the challenges we encounter and work collaboratively with residents and delivery partners. Together we will move ***forward in partnership*** toward developing an even more prosperous and vibrant Erdington District.