



Localism in Birmingham

Co-ordinating O&S Committee

7th December 2018

1 Background

Scrutiny Inquiry: Partnership working between BCC and Parish/Town Councils

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Inquiry explored the partnership working between the city's Parish/Town Councils and the City Council. The final report was presented to the City Council in December 2017. The report can be found [here](#).¹
- 1.2 The inquiry found that the majority of the issues raised by the town and parish councils focused on operational issues: not having appropriate contacts within the council, difficulty in navigating City Council processes. There were good examples of joint working, and evidence of a personal commitment to make things work, but no framework to advise or guide officers in responding to requests and applications from the town and parish councils.
- 1.3 The recommendations therefore focused on building the governance apparatus needed to facilitate successful relationships and co-working between the City Council and parish/town councils.
- 1.4 The recommendations were accepted by City Council, and there have been two reports on progress of the implementation of the recommendations; the most recent at your last meeting in November.

The Green Paper

- 1.5 In March 2018, Cabinet approved a Green paper on "Working Together with Birmingham's Neighbourhoods". The Green Paper was then to be subject to a wide ranging consultation and engagement during the summer months, with a report back to Cabinet.
- 1.6 The Green Paper (which can be found [here](#))² summarised the direction of travel proposed following the report of the former Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on working with parishes; and further broadened the focus to other sorts of neighbourhood governance and the contribution that each can make to the city.
- 1.7 The following key policy positions were set out within the draft policy statement:
 - How the council understands the role of different sorts of local community organisation;

¹ https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/8914/partnership_working_bcc_and_parishtown_councils

² <https://birmingham.cmis.uk.com/birmingham/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/10032/Committee/2/Default.aspx>



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- How the framework fits within the City Council's broad strategic approach to localism in the city (which was also approved by Cabinet in March 2018);
- The basic principles for how the City Council will work with neighbourhood organisations;
- The City Council's approach to the issue of creating further parish, town or neighbourhood councils and the outline process for this.
- The City Council's offer of "Local Devolution Deals" with parish, town or neighbourhood councils and the outline process for agreeing them.

- 1.8 The consultation ran from 23 July to 28 September 2018. A summary of the consultation findings was distributed by Cllr Thompson to all Councillors in November.
- 1.9 A White Paper has been drafted, which closely follows the Green paper structure and content which was broadly supported by consultation respondents. It has attempted to address the main concerns raised in the consultation and includes a number of actions that will be taken forward throughout 2019, including a partnership based review of the resources available to support neighbourhood working.
- 1.10 The White Paper also includes a fully worked up Framework of Relationship which more clearly explains the range of options for greater neighbourhood involvement and governance the City Council supports.
- 1.11 The White Paper and report back to Cabinet is scheduled for January 2019.

2 Next Steps

- 2.1 A draft White Paper, following the consultation, will be circulated to members of the Committee to consider (this will be a late paper). This is an opportunity for members to influence final content, to challenge assumptions that may have been made as the decision was developed; and to consider what risks might arise from the implementation of the decision and how those risks might be mitigated.
- 2.2 Members are asked to consider these matters in relation to the proposed White Paper, and feedback suggestions or recommendations to the Executive on this and the wider policy offer, ahead of the submission to Cabinet in January.

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