

“Birmingham 2020 - Forward Together”

A contribution to a future vision for the city

November 2015

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Birmingham, Forward, Together

Birmingham's motto is "Forward". Since 1838, as a city, we have been innovating and evolving to the benefit of residents and the next five years, to 2020, will be our biggest challenge yet.

Our vision, in the face of austerity, is for everyone who calls Birmingham "home" to have a happy, healthy life here. We want everyone to have access to a decent affordable home, a good job, a great school for their children and extra help if they need it.

To unleash our city's full potential, we need a city with a strong economy, successful communities, and thriving neighbourhoods. And we need a modern council that works with all the people, partners and organisations across the city.

Where do we want Birmingham to be in 2020?

We are engaged in a wide debate with a range of partnership groups to refine our shared vision for the city. The following is a contribution to that vision from the city's elected leaders and illustrates how the council will support it.

Our overall mission is to help create a fairer, more prosperous and more democratic city. Within those broad goals we want to see a city with:

A strong economy

- An enterprising, innovative green city delivering sustainable growth, meeting the needs of the population and strengthening Birmingham's global standing
- A living wage that generates value locally, prosperity shared and the distinct and different strengths of our communities harnessed. Employment is the route to independence and out of poverty
- The potential for waste to be a resource, energy use optimised and sustainable housing, skills and employment pathways supported by infrastructure and transport links
- An integrated skills system that reduces the skills gap, supports employers to take on people furthest from the labour market and drives down unemployment

A modern council

- Citizens accessing council services through a one contact approach which aims to get it right first time. The council does what it says it will do when it says it will do it, puts people first, endeavours to achieve excellence and acts openly and honestly, and where there is accountability when things go wrong
- A council that provides value for money and where duplication is eradicated. The City Council and the Combined Authority are strategic influencers, rather than always being direct providers of services

Safety and opportunity for all children

- Every child having a fantastic childhood and the best preparation for adult life. Children will benefit from an integrated early years and health service, and be well prepared to start formal education

- Every school rated good and working together in the Birmingham Education Partnership, and with the council, parents and other partners innovating and further improving them
- Families and children receiving targeted help as early as possible to overcome whatever issues are in their way and, if needed, with a team of great social workers and specialists to help the child and their family further
- Special educational needs and disability services focused on enablement and personalised to each family

A great city for young people

- No young person left behind, and education and employment used to address inequality and introduce fairness; where vocational and technical skills are as accessible and valued as academic ones; and young people are given the very best in careers advice and exposure to the world of work

Thriving local communities

- More and more citizens accessing the life, economy and benefits of living in Birmingham, from employment to leisure and culture; where citizens have an entitlement to specified services in their communities and can enjoy a vibrant cultural offer driven by arts and culture organisations, not the City Council
- Libraries, learning centres and community hubs that provide the essential community services and one front door for City Council services, all of which are focused on learning and increasing residents' independence
- Every citizen living within a strong and cohesive community which values and supports each of its members, and is empowered to influence the services and decisions affecting their neighbourhood. Everyone feels they belong and shares the benefits of living here.

A healthy, happy city

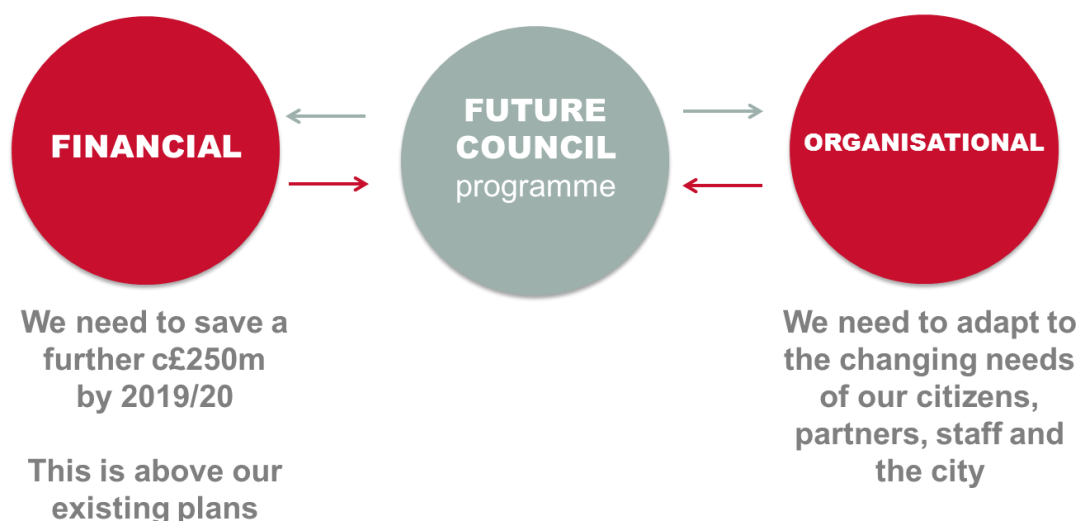
- Citizens having a high quality of health and same life expectancy irrespective of where they live in our city
- Every citizen accessing an affordable and decent home
- Vulnerable citizens feeling safe, living with dignity and independence and having engaged lives in their communities; citizens have access to fully integrated health and social care services that help maintain independence and provide care to those who need it

- A seamless health and social care provision so people can get the service they require or the correct information and advice in one place, with people who need services able to access the services they need irrespective of who the provider is
- Citizens having greater control and independence and making informed choices about who they want to provide the care and support they require and where they want it provided; with all citizens who have an assessed, eligible care need have access to either a direct payment or individual budget
- Sports and physical activities that contribute to people's health and wellbeing and delivered in partnership with others, where parks and open spaces are maintained and enhanced to enable citizens to improve their health and quality of life.

Our vision is simple, but delivering it will only be possible with everyone in our city working together. To succeed in 2020, collaboration and innovation will have underpinned our actions and been the root of the city's success and our response to austerity.

Together we can move Birmingham forward.

Birmingham 2020 – the Future Council: why do we need to change?



We must respond to several key trends if we are to design a council that can live up to our values in changing times.

- By 2020 the City Council may be operating with a dramatic fall in income it had in 2010, because of withdrawal of government grant. Spending on local government services will be significantly lower for the foreseeable future, whilst spending across the whole public sector is not falling, due to extra costs in other service areas. We need a new, joined up way of running our local services
- Developments in information technology are opening up new ways for people to access services and information, take control of their lives and engage with their communities
- The population of the city overall is becoming younger and more diverse whilst at the same time there are increasing needs for social care across all age groups. The huge diversity of the city means it is no longer possible or desirable to just provide standardised services
- The economy is slowly recovering from the long recession and there are skills shortages in some sectors. The city as a whole still has a low level of skills and a skills gap at the higher levels. For too many, the economy offers only low paid and low skilled jobs and economic insecurity. This has a knock on effect on social security costs and all public services.
- At the same time, many people expect much more flexibility and choice and some traditional public services are no longer relevant to many. Attitudes to public services inevitably vary between those that depend on specialist services

and those that consume them in a more discretionary way or make use only of universal services.

How we will change

- **We start with the outcomes we want to achieve.** The work that we do and how we do it must be based on the outcomes we want to achieve not the functions, services and buildings we have inherited. In designing our organisation we will see the council's services and resources as just some of the tools the city has to achieve those outcomes.
- **Partnership is the way we achieve our goals.** Big challenges need partnership solutions – because no one organisation has the power to address them alone. We will be a partnership based organisation because we are ambitious for the city.
- **The purpose of government is to empower others to achieve their goals.** It invests in building stronger and more resilient people, families, organisations and communities so that both our shared and our individual goals can be achieved. We will build a partnership between city council and communities in which each supports the other.

The design principles

- We will take a Whole Place, Whole City view - the future approach will be based on partnerships and influence.
- We will target our resources on our key priorities and outcomes.
- We will focus on reducing or preventing future need and better managing current demand pressures.
- We will promote the independence of citizens.
- We will operate at three levels – regional, city, and local.
- We will have a variety of delivery models for services with no presumption that the council should be the direct deliverer.
- We will have flexible and adaptable workforce - whether directly employed or delivering on our behalf.
- We will govern ourselves in a way that aligns with our political and organisational values.

The Roles of the Council: Triple Devolution

City government is complex and multi-level and in the future it will need to better reflect the diverse activities required to balance a city's role in the global economy with local place shaping and community leadership with an integrated set of governance relationships that can serve the needs of a whole city from the functional economic region down to the local neighbourhood.

We have established the triple devolution framework for the future of city government in Birmingham and the city region that will guide the Future Council design work. In the years ahead, our public services and political leadership will operate at three levels, characterised by three new ways of working.

The city region – with fiscal and policy-making powers devolved from central government and exercised collectively by the member councils. The initial focus of the West Midlands Combined Authority will be on economic development, transport, regeneration and skills. Support resources in the fields of economic intelligence, investment planning, skills and local regeneration will be pooled. The Combined Authority will also be part of future public service reforms, potentially including employment and skills, integration of health and social care around individual needs and further reducing elements of youth offending.

The city – with a more strategic role to oversee the integration of local services and provide leadership to the city itself. We will develop in partnership with other public bodies a “whole place” budget for the city so that we can align spending priorities across the public sector. A core City Council resource will be needed to support strategic planning and leadership (policy, research, commissioning, performance management, financial planning) and the council's regulatory functions (planning, licensing, consumer and environmental protection) and there will also be an integrated, efficient support services function (finance, human resources, legal advice, payment and revenue systems, contact centre).

The neighbourhood – where elected representatives will work with others in the community to provide community leadership and where most local services will be provided in new ways. New local service hubs will be developed to provide integrated neighbourhood services in a responsive, efficient way, focused on the needs of different local places in the city. We will develop an integrated place management approach, which brings together housing, environmental and other services. Housing will be central to this vision because it is the bedrock of people's lives and their communities.

Members' leadership role will need to operate at each of these three levels, and this could bring with it significant changes to current governance arrangements.

Our approach to spending reductions

Managing demand to meet needs better

Our vision of the Future Council is for services and functions to be redesigned constantly to ensure they adapt more effectively to changing needs and resources in the future – making it a “demand focused” organisation.

We must accept that **all public services in the city will have to actively manage demand rather than passively responding to it.** This changes how we interact with people and how we plan and manage our services. We need to:

- Have better intelligence and planning for needs
- Actively plan to avoid unnecessary service pressures and focus on helping people to address their own needs
- Provide better access and reduce multiple contacts, solving issues fully and effectively first time instead of only dealing with some of the problem
- Take collective responsibility as a whole public service system, not passing the job to someone else and thinking the job is done.

This requires an organisation that makes best use of information and analysis and manages performance more effectively.

The Council as enabler, provider of services and employer

- Where appropriate we will still directly deliver quality services, but commissioning services from others will be an increasingly important part of our ability to help people meet their needs. We will **prioritise direct spend and delivery in areas of need, low skill levels and high deprivation**
- **The focus will be on services not buildings.** There is no assumption that activities will be based in current buildings. The location and ownership of buildings will be bespoke to each neighbourhood. We will **rationalise office space** further and co-locate with others, with all strategic functions being delivered in just one or two locations.
- The cuts will necessitate a **significantly reduced workforce.** This workforce will need to be **agile and use technology to enable and facilitate mobile working.**

Five key themes are being adopted to help shape the budget reductions in line with the demand management focus.

Preventing family breakdown

Preventing family breakdown gives children a better chance in life. Targeted Family Support helps families solve problems. Better quality social work with families with high needs helps improve parenting, reduce conflict and the need for children coming in to care. Good care planning, including fostering provision, helps children who do need to come into care find permanent families quickly.

Maximising the independence of adults

A significant proportion of demand from older adults can be prevented or delayed by improving resilience and maximising independence. This will be done through targeted support across a redesigned health and social care system, pooling budgets with the NHS and enabling significant savings in acute services for reinvestment in prevention.

Sustainable neighbourhoods

Creating a more sustainable environment reduces costs and is better for the health and wellbeing of residents. Changing citizen and business behaviours to reduce waste and increase recycling rates will have direct cost savings for the Council. But we must make sure our services get it right first time before we can expect citizens to change their behaviour. We must combine enforcement, education and community ownership of cleaner streets.

Our Open for Learning strategy will protect front-line services and remove their reliance upon unfit for purpose buildings so that we can focus on the service delivery, learning and skills - focusing money on service delivery not buildings.

Libraries, adult education, youth services, early years and school services will combine to provide a single access point for council services, focused on learning and skills.

Working with other partners – housing associations, voluntary organisations and community groups will ensure that local services are properly joined up and co-ordinated, with a ‘whole place’ approach to neighbourhoods, where collaboration and shared resources deliver the best outcomes for local people.

Growth and jobs

Sustainable economic development activity and support to job creation, skills training and sustainable business growth can impact greatly on the prosperity and wellbeing of the city and lead to a reduction in demand across a whole swathe of public services. Further, this will have an even more direct impact on our income through the local retention of growing business rates. The future will be framed by collaborative working at a regional and sub-regional level.

Achieving good educational outcomes starts at an early stage and therefore we need to make our children “school ready” for early years and at key transition points in their educational career, and “work ready” by the time they leave school. This demands better consideration of equality and inclusion and a single strategy to better manage transition points where no-one gets left behind, tailored to the needs of vulnerable individuals and the economy.

The changing workforce

Our direct workforce will be substantially smaller reflecting that outcomes and services will be delivered through new models where staff are not necessarily employed directly by the Council. The core workforce will be working more flexibly with better technology support and different skills and capabilities. There are two main areas: those options not requiring contractual changes and those that do require a contractual change. These options are in addition to current workforce planning activity.

The Big Shifts: how our City Council will change

One way to think about how our council will look in the years ahead is to think about the big changes that we will see. The new focus outlined above will mean a number of “big shifts” including:

- From an all-purpose council to a strategic council, working with others to deliver fewer, predominantly targeted services
- From big to medium size employer - fewer staff (and fewer councillors)
- From fixing problems later to earlier targeted prevention
- From running services to influencing service provision - from service provider to service gateway
- From single tier to multi-level city government – the Triple Devolution Model
- From just responding to demand to understanding and appropriately influencing demand
- From council-led to partnership-led
- From top down service management to arms-length, citizen-focused and responsive services (whether in-house or external)
- From small numbers of big providers to a diverse network of providers
- From investment in internal capacity to investment in community capacity
- From extensive asset ownership to using our assets to enhance others’ capacity to deliver
- From extensive administrative support to a small core, sharing intelligence and supporting strategic and community leadership
- From dedicated services to shared services – both back office and frontline – without presumption that Birmingham City Council is the direct deliverer
- From departmentalised support services to a single support services function (which may be shared or externalised)
- From 2000 IT to 2020 IT – new, agile solutions and new providers
- From a reactive member role to a proactive one which finds solutions and offers community leadership.

Help us shape our vision

The vision for the Future Council will evolve and more detailed plans will be brought forward over the years ahead and we want everyone in the city to be able to engage in that process. This paper is a contribution from the elected leadership of the city. It sets the direction of travel, but it is not the end of the story.

We will engage with a wide range of stakeholders to develop this vision further. It must be a vision that belongs to all the people of the city.

We have started this engagement through a number of “take the council to the people” workshops across the city. A separate report is available which summarises the initial messages from those events.

Over the months and years ahead there will be numerous opportunities for people to get involved in developing the vision further, through events in specific places or looking at specific services and through a range of online and social media channels. Throughout this process we will welcome events, discussions and contributions organised by others and we will take on board the input you want to make.

This will include engagement with the opposition political parties on the City Council. This paper sets a vision from a Labour-led administration and it is important that it reflects the democratic outcomes of local elections. But there will also be core principles and aspects of change that can be accepted across all parties and we will explore those with them.

If we are to change the council in the ways we set out in this paper then we must also change the way we make those changes.