

East Birmingham Rapid Policy unit

## Appendix 2: East Birmingham Programme Summary



## Introduction

This note summarises the scope, nature and methodology of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Programme as set out in the East Birmingham Enhanced Business Case (July 2021). It is intended to form an executive summary and companion document to the Business Case.

## Background – Inclusive Growth in Birmingham

Over the course of the last 30 years, Birmingham City Council and many partners have delivered extensive physical and economic regeneration in the city and wider West Midlands Combined Authority area. We have seen a significant change in our physical landscape, growth in our economic output, an enhanced local business base, and the growing success of the city as a location for both national and international investment.

However, this physical and economic regeneration has not always been matched with a reduction in the gap in inequality between some of our more and less prosperous areas, nor has it always brought social, community and environmental benefits. In recent months, these inequalities have been significantly worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic which has severely impacted the most vulnerable in society, both in terms of health and employment security.

Evidence and experience show that better and more sustainable outcomes can be realised if physical and economic regeneration is effectively used as a catalyst for, and inherently linked to, community, social and environmental benefits. This is why Birmingham City Council has embarked in recent years upon delivering an approach to regeneration framed by the term Inclusive Growth. Fundamentally this is about delivering growth in such a way that the benefits are shared more fairly, thus reducing inequality. This requires a holistic, partnership approach and the interweaving of capital investment, socio-economic interventions and systems change and transformation.

The Council's approach to inclusive growth has been informed by wider policy agendas such as localism, community cohesion and equality. It also incorporates learning from the West Midlands Combined Authority's Inclusive Growth Framework, national examples of best practice and innovation, and also local projects and activities, most prominently the USE-IT! (Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together) project which ran in North-West Birmingham from 2016 to 2019 and which sought to connect the local community with the benefits of the major growth and development occurring around the Icknield Port Loop area. A key element of this work was linking local residents and social enterprises to opportunities emerging from the new Midlands Metropolitan hospital

The East Birmingham programme represents an opportunity to build upon and mainstream this approach to inclusive growth to ensure that capital investment brings real benefits for the economy, for people, and for the environment.

## The East Birmingham Programme

The inclusive growth agenda in East Birmingham responds to the unique opportunity afforded by the investments associated with HS2, including the proposed East Birmingham to Solihull Midland Metro extension and the major development around the new Curzon and Interchange HS2 stations which will bracket the area with new growth. The challenge is to maximise the benefits of this activity to tackle the entrenched deprivation in the East Birmingham area which have been exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The programme proposal has been developed to deliver the vision of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy (EBIGS) which was prepared by the Council in partnership with stakeholders and the

wider community and adopted in February 2021. The Strategy has some elements in common with the Council’s previous successful growth strategies, in that it sets out a vision for the East Birmingham area over the next 20 years, the key interventions (or Big Moves) required to achieve the vision, and the principles of the approach which is required. It differs from previous strategies in that it has a much broader scope, directly addressing socio-economic factors including skills, health, education, and community development. As such it reflects the first major expression of the Council’s approach to place-based inclusive growth.

**East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy Vision**

*The Council and its partners will make use of the unique opportunities and potential of East Birmingham to create a clean, safe, prosperous, and well-connected place where citizens from all backgrounds have access to excellent housing, education, healthcare, green spaces, and employment opportunities. Local communities will work together as part of the team to achieve their aspirations and will share a strong sense of ownership and pride in their area. The main role of East Birmingham within the wider city region will be as a desirable yet affordable residential area with excellent amenities which is particularly suitable for families with children, and as a centre for low carbon and sustainable industries.*

To date, work on the East Birmingham agenda has been progressed with very limited resources, nevertheless the Strategy has been delivered, key working and governance structures have been established, including the East Birmingham Board and Rapid Policy unit, some initial priority projects have been mobilised, and funding has been secured for the area totalling in excess of £1.5m. The programme will build on these foundations.

The Strategy sets out a holistic set of objective themes (as per Table 1 below), from which the programme investment objectives are derived. The overall objective of the programme is not just to mitigate or reduce deprivation in East Birmingham; it is to bring it up to at least the national average by 2041. This bold objective would have a transformational effect on the lives of the 240,000 people who live in the area, with commensurate benefits for the city’s economy and that of the region.

To achieve this, the business case proposes to:

- Use the Council’s initial financial commitment as the basis for securing much larger public and private investment.
- Identify and exploit opportunities to scale up and to make the programme financially sustainable beyond the initial phase of activity.
- Take a holistic approach, progressing a diverse range of interventions in parallel. This will include both place-based regeneration, and also systems change and transformation projects to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of services.
- Bring forward interventions at a range of scales including local, area-wide, and regional.
- Create sustainable outcomes which are not dependent on short-term funding.
- Invest in the capacity of the Council and its partners and the community to deliver inclusive growth.
- Prioritise East Birmingham as the place to develop and implement new approaches through pilot projects which will also address the area’s urgent need for investment.
- Invest in the future in line with principles of early intervention and prevention.

**Table 1: EBIGS Objective Themes**

Equality
Education and Learning
Health and Wellbeing
Affordable, Safe and Connected
Economy
Power, Influence and Participation
The Environment

- Support the development of community assets, community enterprises, community leadership and promote the growth of local economic resilience.

The core of the business case proposal is for the Council to put in place a programme team with the budgets it will require to develop and deliver a comprehensive package of projects that will address the full scope of the Strategy vision. This will include the development of business cases, funding bids and the commissioning of delivery through appropriate routes. There will be continuous engagement with stakeholders, ensuring that the community play a key part in shaping the programme and the projects within it. Part of this work will focus on close working with the Ward Members who represent the 20 Wards directly affected by the programme.

The programme team will also work with and through the East Birmingham Rapid Policy Unit (RPU) – a multi-agency virtual team which has been set up to embed multi-disciplinary working within the programme and to drive forward policy development which will both shape the programme and inform the Council's wider inclusive growth agenda. The RPU cuts across silos and organisational barriers and is expected to attract additional membership and input from a range of partners as the programme grows.

The programme will overlap with many areas of Council activity, and that of its public sector partners. As such many of the projects within the programme will represent accelerated and/or amplified aspects of existing corporate commitments including elements within the Inclusive Growth Portfolio, such as the Birmingham Development Plan, Our Future City Plan and the Birmingham Transport Plan and wider priorities such as the Route to Zero and developments in skills, education, social care and health. The intent will be that the programme will support, co-ordinate and maximise the benefits of all Council activity affecting East Birmingham.

During the initial phase of activity funded with the investment sought by the business case the programme team will work with the East Birmingham Board partners to identify and address options to expand the scale of the programme and to make future phases financially self-sustaining. This will include consideration of large-scale finance and delivery vehicles on the scale of the Birmingham Enterprise Zone. At the end of the first phase a further business case will be prepared which will set out the case for any further City Council financial commitment required for the next stages of activity.

It is difficult to quantify the outcomes and benefits that will ultimately be delivered by the programme, due to the complex and extensive nature of the challenge, and also because it is through the development of the project business cases that the outputs will be determined. This is why the business case identifies indicative benefits which will be subject to further development and refinement through project business cases and an ongoing benefit realisation workstream within the programme. With this said, it is expected that this approach will bring significant wider benefits, both in the short term (next three years) and into the longer term (next twenty years). Some of these benefits will arise directly, for example through the creation of homes, jobs and physical improvements to Council and community assets. Others will be realised indirectly through the interaction of various factors which improve outcomes including health, education, and employment. In the long term it is these indirect benefits which are likely to have the greatest impact.

In conclusion, by investing £3.6 Million in the future of East Birmingham and its people during the period 2021/22-2024/25 we estimate that significant progress can be made towards the delivery of the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy. This activity will also establish a strong foundation for the next steps in the delivery of sustainable inclusive growth, which is ultimately expected to have a combined value, in economic terms, significantly more than £1 Billion, and a profound impact on the health, wealth and life prospects of people in and around the East Birmingham area.