

“Connecting Communities & Assets”

Wednesday 12th July, 9:30am-12pm and 1-3:30pm
Cinema Room, Stirchley Baths, 2-4 Bournville Lane

What is it?

A day of workshops to provide a space through which a range of stakeholders can contribute their ideas and experiences about developing different and more imaginative uses of council (and wider publically) owned assets.

Who's it for?

Anyone who has an interest or a role in shaping how public assets are used. This is particularly in a way which can connect them better to the communities which they serve. This includes Councillors, council officers, other public sector staff, voluntary and community sector organisations and groups, funders and investors, as well as anyone else who can contribute to this agenda.

Why come?

To share your ideas and expertise about land, property, communities, funding or finance particularly in a way which can help to shape and influence Birmingham City Council policy and strategy concerning public assets.

What's the intended outcome?

The Council's Cabinet Committee – Local Leadership has commissioned a “Connecting Communities & Assets” pilot in Hall Green and Selly Oak Districts, which is exploring how a number of different buildings and sites might be used differently and more innovatively. This is with a view to influencing and changing current practices in general.

The Workshops are primarily focussed around the pilot area of Hall Green and Selly Oak Districts but have also be opened up citywide to other stakeholders who are interested and have experience in this area of work

The Council is also developing a community property strategy for its land and property assets. The learning, ideas and actions developed through the Connecting Communities and Assets pilot, including these workshops, will be fed into the strategy.

Available Spaces -40 per workshop

AGENDA

Morning workshop: Creative ideas and approaches for connecting assets and communities – exploring good ideas and practices inside and outside of Birmingham, stretching the boundaries of our imaginations, as well as looking to the future

Time	Item
9:30am	Welcome, introductions and housekeeping (Karen Cheney)
9:35	Introducing “connecting communities and assets” and Birmingham City Council’s aspirations and intentions (Councillor Karen McCarthy – Selly Oak District Chair; Councillor Claire Spencer – Hall Green District Chair; Councillor John Clancy – Leader of Birmingham City Council)
9:50-11:20	Facilitated workshop style discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities - Good ideas developing from Brum for Brum - Looking into the future and imagining Birmingham in 5, 10 and 20 years’ time
11:20-11:50	Feedback from across themes – headlines, principles, ideas
11:50-12pm	Summing up and next steps

Afternoon workshop: How we can support and invest in creative ideas and approaches to make them happen – exploring different ways of financially investing in assets, as well as the important role of communities in making good ideas and projects happen

Time	Item
1-1:05pm	Welcome, introductions and housekeeping (Karen Cheney)
1:05-1:15	Introducing “connecting communities and assets” (Councillor Karen McCarthy – Selly Oak District Chair; Councillor Claire Spencer – Hall Green District Chair)
1:15-1:30	Summary and areas to consider and focus on from the morning workshop
1:30-3:00	Facilitated workshop style discussions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involving communities - Exploring finance and funding
3-3:20	Feedback from across themes – headlines, principles, ideas

3:20-3:30

Summing up and next steps

Connecting Communities and Assets Workshops – 12th July @ Stirchley Baths

Morning Workshop 9.30am – 12pm

Theme

Creative ideas and approaches for connecting communities and assets – explaining good ideas and practices inside and outside of Birmingham, stretching the boundaries of our imaginations, as well as looking to the future.

Practical and Pragmatic Blue Sky Thinking

Attendees

- Councillor John Clancy – BCC Leader
- Councillor Karen McCarthy – Selly Oak District Chair
- Councillor Claire Spencer – Hall Green District Chair
- Councillor Kate Booth – Quinton Ward
- Councillor Peter Griffiths – Cabinet Member – Housing & Homes
- Bel Sixsmith – West Midlands Police
- James Sandy – South & Central CCG
- Sophie Tobin – Sported
- Manisha Patel – Lottery
- Peter Cunnison – Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Adam Ruffinato – Charity Bank
- Peter Helly – Accord
- Gordon Lee – Malachi Trust
- Angela Fenwick – Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies
- Noreen Akhtar – BCC Economy
- Hiteshree Kundalia – BCC Economy
- Ghaz Hussain – BCC Economy
- John Mole – BCC Neighbourhood Development & Support Unit
- Phil Andrews – BCC Property
- Pat Whyte – BCC NDSU
- Robyn Miller – BCC Policy & Strategy
- Tracey Murray – BCC Policy & Strategy
- Austin Rodriguez – BCC NDSU
- Karen Cheney – BCC NDSU

Afternoon Workshop 1 – 3pm

Theme

How we can support and invest in creative ideas and approaches to make them happen – explaining different ways of financially investing in assets, as well as the important role of communities in making good ideas and projects happen.

Attendees

- Councillor Claire Spencer – Hall Green District Chair
- Councillor Marje Bridle – Assistant Leader
- Councillor Roger Harmer – Acocks Green Ward
- Bel Sixsmith – West Midlands Police
- Matt Doran – National Trust
- James Sandy – South & Central CCG
- Peter Cunnison – Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Adam Ruffinato – Charity Bank
- Gordon Ludlow – Ethical Property Foundation
- Peter Helly – Accord
- Angela Fenwick – Birmingham Centre for Arts Therapies
- Tony Thaper – Moseley CDT
- Barry Toon – Selly Oak CP450
- Noreen Akhtar – BCC Economy
- Hiteshree Kundalia – BCC Economy
- Neil De Costa - BCC NDSU
- Jamie Goodman – BCC Policy & Strategy
- Robyn Miller – BCC Policy & Strategy
- Salim Meah – BCC Housing
- Austin Rodriguez - BCC NDSU
- Karen Cheney - BCC NDSU

Connecting Communities & Assets

Creative ideas and approaches for connecting assets and communities

Summary

Relevant and good ideas come from people and communities, the approach therefore needs to be to identify who and where they are and how to connect them to opportunities and assets to help develop and realise those ideas

General principles

- Ideas and land/building uses need to be tailored to individual locations and neighbourhoods, from a bottom-up perspective, so that ideas can reflect local changes and losses over time and important assets can be replaced or renewed
- The most purposeful ideas are those which can connect to current priorities in some capacity, e.g. homelessness and housing, mental health
- Applicable to:
 - The whole public estate and local buildings like pubs
 - Buildings and open spaces
 - Back-garden and communal garden spaces – particularly “unloved” spaces
 - Land which could be used for housing
- Three types of opportunity:
 - Mixed use with some continued ownership and use by public sector (e.g. schools). This is particularly where there are empty or unused parts of buildings and land – either permanently, seasonally or at particular points during the week
 - Transfer/sale of assets from public sector
 - Development of new build/assets

Developing ideas

- BCC culture change – being open to ideas, proposals and innovation
- Identifying, supporting and enabling individuals and organisations – particularly small and medium sized
- Community led and cooperative housing – including smaller plots and assets
- Small open spaces for wellbeing, sports and arts activities for instance
- Moving from consultation to co-design and co-production approach
- Better balancing and understanding of risk vs reward
- Informing and inspiring people, as well as matching them to opportunities
- Re-balancing top-down vs bottom-up needs, priorities and directions
- Digital engagement and increased access/availability of information and opportunities

Things Birmingham City Council can do

- The ideas are out there amongst entrepreneurial individuals and organisations – the approach needs to be to identify where they are and how to connect them to opportunities to develop and realise those ideas
- Larger organisations, particularly commercial organisations already have good access to opportunities and assets. Small and medium sized organisations tend not to and need to be given the same access and opportunities
- Address BCC culture and processes to open them up to innovation and alternative ideas – signal that BCC is “open for business”
- Acknowledge and address political uncertainty – locally and nationally
- Look at whole land and property estate, including schools and opening them up

Things others can do

- Share good examples, practice and case studies – particularly from outside Birmingham, e.g.:
 - Church Stretton – shared use between NHS and Voluntary Sector. Asset owned by NHS but transferred to voluntary sector organisation on long-term lease with investment from Lloyds Bank Foundation. NHS retain use and access to the building but through rental agreement. Benefits:
 - Reduction in financial costs to NHS
 - Retention and ongoing use of community asset in local area
 - Development and growth of voluntary sector organisation
 - Redditch Cooperative Housing – community led housing approach to provide more community input, engagement and ownership

Things which can be done in partnership

- Identify and engage with small and medium sized organisations, to realise the value and ideas they have – providing equitable access to opportunities and assets
- Engagement with young people to help design and develop assets for the future

How we can support and invest in creative ideas and approaches to make them happen

Finance and funding

Summary

The funding, finance, support and investment is all out there, what is missing are the means of bringing these together for the right people, organisations, assets and opportunities, as well as the right processes to help things work in practice.

General principles

- Frame around three stages:
 - Stage 1 – investing in the organisation, its capacity and framework
 - Stage 2 – investing in the capital asset
 - Stage 3 – investing in the sustainability of the idea
- VCSE sectors generally lacking in capacity, skills and expertise concerning property issues and development. Therefore any approach needs to address this
- Hybrid, partnership owned/led model needed which brings together different assets and roles to provide access to funding, finance, skills, access, opportunities as part of one overall investment package
- Accessibility and visibility of opportunities, assets, funding and finance – they're all out there but hard to find and even hard to match
 - Those with the greatest need for support and investment may end up being the ones least able to access it – visibility and access issue
 - Brokerage/matching – the scale of a project's value will determine who will want to/can invest in it
 - Engaging with digital to make everything more visible, accessible and engaging – including to young people or developing people/orgs currently outside the mainstream
- Same process and approach regardless of land ownership, be it BCC, Church, NHS or privately owned – just different decision-making
- Risk vs reward, with the outcome being to ensure that the org, idea and asset are as investable as possible

- There are different ownership models – including the potential for shared ownership, which can spread the risk for instance
- Reducing risk through better understanding and defining it, better feasibility and planning, spreading it across stakeholders, better mitigation including investment in the asset
- Mitigating risks via trusted resources, trusted people and orgs, reliable partners
Increasing the reward through better understanding the “market” and product/services, providing more flexible terms/SLA, investing in the asset and reducing costs
- Lots of people can afford to say “no”, approach to change so people can’t afford not to say “yes”
- Equity – equal and universal access won’t mean the right people, places and organisations are engaged so needs to be complemented with an intelligence led and directed approach

Things Birmingham City Council can do

- Understand that role needs to change, no longer a funder but holds physical assets – across political and officer leadership
- Involve funders much earlier – currently tend to be involved at “stage 3” but could be involved at or before “stage 1”. This includes sharing (even if just information) opportunities at the earliest possible point, before any ideas or decisions have been formed.
- Develop a policy and process approach to assets which is consistent across the council, fits the funding environment and is consistent with other public sector practice – currently not deemed to be fit for purpose
- Develop an assets “plus” approach which would be similar to grants “plus” being adopted by funders. This provides or brokers support and investment which can help make the asset a success, through providing additional capacity or access to skills and expertise, for instance.
- Develop the CSR and social value work in a way which can broker support and investment to develop and sustain land and property assets, which are in VCSE management/ownership
- Be less risk averse in its approach and more focused on outcomes – including in its openness and approach to innovation, developing more flexible terms and processes to support entrepreneurial ambitions, as well as doing things which enable commercial interest and investment
- Consider including funders, financiers and other stakeholders in decision-making processes, as a minimum in an advisory capacity (e.g. panels about individual assets)
- Finance – whilst BCC might not be able to directly provide funding it may be in a position to underwrite loans and finance to orgs taking on its assets – can increase trust and confidence, as well as reduce risks for funder
- Finance – consider policy approach in terms of providing exemptions and discounts to reduce costs on VCSE orgs taking on assets, e.g. business rates exemptions
- Planning and development – Building in shared use to new developments so that space is allocated to VCSE/community use as part of planning process. This can help to increase the supply of land/property available.

Things others can do

- Lobby, nudge, push, pull and encourage the council to change and/or embrace new ideas and opportunities
- Share good examples, practice and case studies – particularly from outside Birmingham
- Identify and share the wider range of opportunities on church, NHS or private land (e.g. pubs) where similar approaches and thinking might be applied
- Develop approaches to CSR and social value to provide larger cohort of those (commercial) organisations who are willing to support and invest in VCSE orgs and ideas

Things which can be done in partnership

- Sharing information, raising awareness and brokerage via conferences, workshops, networks, communications, sharing of case studies which can cover:
 - Individuals or organisations to support and develop
 - Supply of and demand for land/property assets

- General sector strengths and development areas
 - Partnership opportunities between public and private sector, as well as in VCSE sectors
 - Funding for each of the three stages
- Developing an “assets plus” offer or model to support and invest in organisations, their ideas and the physical assets, which could include:
 - Training
 - Awareness raising around risks and challenges
 - Leverage and access via support of high profile “brand”/organisation
 - Access to revenue and capital funding/finance
- Consider the development or investment in a shared brokerage “service”/function:
 - Identify and develop navigators, connectors and brokers to bring people, organisations and ideas together
 - Could be virtual/digital
 - Who’s responsibility to fund and finance

The role and investment of communities

General principles

- Re-balancing top-down and bottom-up.
 - Top-down is well understood, including the need for building new housing. However bottom-up isn’t as well understood – need a mechanism for identifying what’s needed, what’s wanted and what’s been lost in neighbourhoods to understand what needs renewal/replacement.
 - Current mechanism are neighbourhood plans, e.g. Moseley and Balsall Heath, but these can take four years and require lots of social capital – so not appropriate for all places.
 - Need something less formal and lighter which all areas can engage with – potentially Ward plans
- Renewal of social capital and community involvement for the next generation – relevant engagement, managing expectations and encouraging optimism in communities
- Digital – being connected to communities
 - Going to digital platforms which people are using, e.g. young people using Instagram, south west Birmingham via B31 Voices
 - Using technology to develop the sharing economy and matching ideas to opportunities and partners
 - Using tech and digital to make information about assets and opportunities accessible, visible and available – pop-up notifications based on location of smartphone or 3D modelling and imaging to help people visualise things

Things Birmingham City Council can do

- Identify the people with the ideas and support them to make those ideas happen
- Question of philosophy and culture, which needs to:
 - Be open to innovation and different approaches – “open for business” not just to large organisations but small and medium size too
 - Connect wider agenda of prevention and early intervention
 - Link investment to outcomes and understand wider social benefits from different uses of assets
 - Broker partnerships and connect opportunities to people
 - Support and champion opportunities, ideas and people
 - Engage with digital
- Need to decide and act now in order to realise impact in 5-10 years’ time
- Move from consultation about ideas and uses for assets, to co-design and co-production to involve communities, individuals, groups and organisations much earlier
- Explore the use of Ward plans via Councillors to influence, shape and counter top-down policy and strategy concerning assets

Things others can do

- Lobby, nudge, push, pull and encourage the council to change and/or embrace new ideas and opportunities
- Share good examples, practice and case studies – particularly from outside Birmingham
- Broker partnerships and connect opportunities to people
- Support and champion opportunities, ideas and people

Things which can be done in partnership

- Supporting and investing in areas with a lack of social capital and/or which has a democratic deficit to inspire, engage and involve individuals, groups and communities
- Renewal of social capital and community involvement for the “next” generation

Connecting Communities Workshop 12.07.17

Morning A

Table 1

B/H

1. Mixture of heritage baths, industrial, public asset – railway
→ complicated. Community demand but not a lot of money → income generation.
Need to look holistically/in the round.
2. Issue of social landlords/private
Landlords/social housing
Not transactional → relationships (communication) and working together, partnerships → complex.
3. Interesting community enterprise activity in Shirley locality.
Different vibe
(Match community assets to the community)
Bottom up not a paper exercise
4. Be aware that active citizenship needs people to be time rich
5. Issue of community capacity
6. Focus on Place not service
Try to reduce duplication with public services//sharing accommodation

Joint ownership of buildings

Community (not city council/police/fire – cross agency
→ better usage

Assets have a value – community have a value – not just about money – need new financial modelling

Emphasise the importance of community hubs not service outlets – long term impact/intervention/preventive

Committed & meaningful → empower community.

Engagement with communities



Relationships and trust (good and different decisions)



Sustainable/viable future

Door is open for change → Leader
 → Officer?



Evolution of devolution



New ward structure → plan for neighbourhood

Recession/lack of finance → positive effect that get organisations to talk collaboratively and do things differently

Involvement of social finance in the discussions at the beginning not at the end

Utilise bright young things – Unis

Not either (public service/LAs) OR (community/Third sector) →
Do things differently – new ways of delivery/joint

If new strategy re community involved in neighbourhoods
Need capacity/revenue fund to support/involve new financing
In period of transition strengthen community and have connectors/enablers/capacity building and bring out potential/tech support

Flip side – can't save every building/asset

"Think outside the box"
Win/win → not lose/lose

Assets = physical and people

Retaining intelligence/for places

Technology



Pass on knowledge

→ Future cities catapult

Bring all assets together

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Afternoon Session - Tony

Assets (liabilities?) are not the right solution for each community

"Communities in the lead" (lottery)

Consistency of approach of officers and philosophy "servant leader"

Establishing a "dialogue" not a "monologue"

2 way + speak and listen co-design

Issues of "fragmentation" and "accountability" – of public agencies

Officer/Member relationship is key

Relationships and trust – PINCh

"People and Places" → win/win not lose/lose

Need political driver

Cabinet Member with Neighbourhoods portfolio

Key theme – as core priorities along with services

Machinery in place to support this priority

Is there an infrastructure

Takes a partnership to make a neighbourhood work and a city to work

Acknowledge the value of communities/residents/beneficiaries



Engagement and expertise

Need key performance outcomes re engagement?

Approach/behaviours

Good idea – JUST DO IT! Seek forgiveness not permission

Every Neighbourhood has an active group



Crowd source, aims and objectives



1 PAGE

Aspiration and operational → can have influence

Reward collaboration not competition eg Data sharing/open data

Involve private sector

How do you “deconstruct” the past culture → dependency → move forward → rewarding social action.

Be clear about what we mean by “community”?

Who do we involve – community housing

Unpick

What is the offer from public agencies and be clear of the offer



Don't over complicate the offer and overlook the obvious

Flexible boundaries;

Focus on neighbourhoods/communities not artificial boundaries

Residents /natural

Community Hub not a service outlet

Active engagement

Community engagement – onto the new ward boundaries

Development of neighbourhood partnerships

Involving communities in assets

Planning policy neighbourhood Cllrs

What does different look like?

Making good ideas and projects happen

- Information
- Advice
- Community support
- Enable
- Action
- Collaborative

Seems to be a lull – get rid of blockages/barriers

Importance of “Community Hubs” – community groups

CATS – don’t have the expertise

Bottom up approach/aspiration of communities

Drag engagement into 21st century

Importance of the “give” of community work and assets (housing)

Make localised working happen (cuts forcing change) “Bottom up” stuff

Need to invest in communities (not just city centre)

Public Sector –

- Enable/don’t lead
- Facilitate
- Work together