Briefing to Housing and Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee

From Cabinet Member – Housing and Homes

Tuesday, 11th October 2016

"Housing for Birmingham"

Purpose

To update the committee on progress with producing a housing strategy for Birmingham.

Background

Local authorities are no longer required to produce a housing strategy (with the exception of a homeless prevention strategy).

Housing is however both a national and local priority and this has been reflected in recent legislation (The Housing and Planning Act 2016) and Birmingham City Councils contribution to its vision for the future of Birmingham. Housing is one of the four key priorities for the Council and we are developing a new set of objectives to deliver on this priority. I recognise however that Birmingham City Council alone cannot deliver on the outcomes we want for our citizens.

We need:

- ➢ A strong supply of new high quality homes in a mix of tenures (inclusive growth that meets identified need)

- ➢ Better homes – improved housing stock, supply of homes for specialist client groups, dealing with fuel poverty

- ➢ Preventing homelessness and promoting housing choice

- ➢ Strong and sustainable communities – thriving prosperous neighbourhoods

Our "Housing for Birmingham" strategy will therefore take on a new inclusive approach that reflects the views of all stakeholders and organisations that have an interest in meeting the housing challenge.

A multi-agency committee 'Housing Birmingham' has already been established (jointly led by the Chair of Birmingham Social Housing Partnership and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes) and has identified five key work streams.

This committee is seen as a key contributor to the delivery of the strategy which will focus on the key outcomes outlined above in a short document that is underpinned by a plan of action.
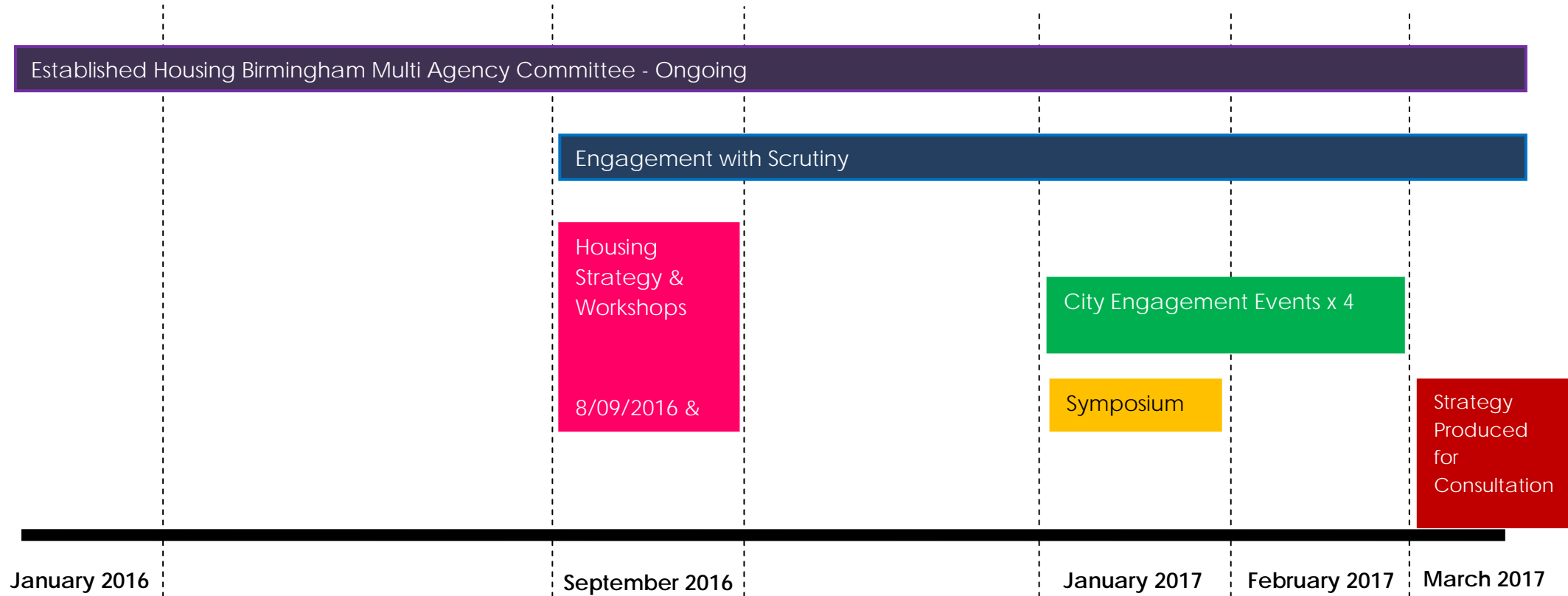
<u>Consultation and Engagement and Next Steps</u>

In order to capture a wide range of views and perspectives for the strategy using the following consultation and engagement tools:

1. A number of agencies are already contributing to the work stream identified by 'Housing Birmingham'.

2. Wider engagement through the workshops held on 8th and 29th September 2016.

3. Ongoing updates and engagement with Scrutiny (to be determined).

4. A Symposium to be organised in January 2017 with all stakeholder including elected members, housing developers, private landlords, registered social landlords, West Midlands local authorities to share the work undertaken and to obtain buy in to the vision, strategy and further develop the plan of action.

5. Four local engagement events in Birmingham to shape the response to local housing need and create sustainable communities and neighbourhoods to include elected members, HLBs, Registered Providers etc.

A timeline is attached at Appendix one, but it is intended to publish the 'Housing for Birmingham' strategy by the end of March 2017 for formal consultation and launch of Housing Birmingham Strategy in the summer of 2017.
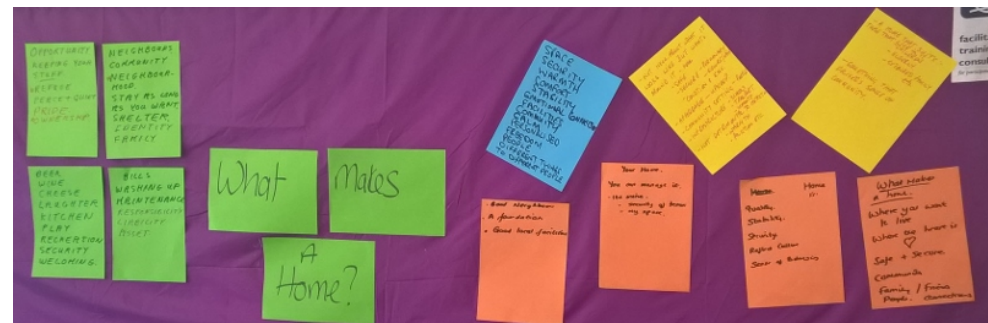
Timeline

Established Housing Birmingham Multi Agency Committee - Ongoing

Engagement with Scrutiny

Housing Strategy & Workshops

8/09/2016 &

City Engagement Events x 4

Symposium

Strategy Produced for Consultation

January 2016

September 2016

January 2017

February 2017

March 2017

HOUSING AND HOMES IN BIRMINGHAM

WORKSHOP 1: 8/9/2016

1   WHAT MAKES A HOME

- Neighbours
- Community
- Neighbourhood
- Good neighbours
- Good local facilities
- Not necessarily about what it looks like, but what's around it
- Safe environment
- Secure environment
- Condition and environment
- Community setting
- Infrastructure – schools
- Infrastructure – transport
- Something that delivers sense of community

- Identity
- Personalised
- Reflect culture
- Suits those that live in it – children, elderly, extended family…
- Different things to different people
- Opportunity
- Pride
- Ownership
- Stay as long as you want
- Keeping your stuff
- Freedom
- A foundation
- You can manage it
- It's mine
- Security of tenure
- My space
- Sense of belonging
- Where you want to live

- Refuge
- Peace and quiet
- Shelter
- Warmth
- Comfort
- Calm
- Security
- Stability
- Safe

- Where the heart is
- Family
- People
- Friends
- Emotional connection
- Welcoming
- Laughter
- Play
- Recreation
- Beer
- Wine
- Cheese
- Kitchen

- Space
- Facilities
- Bills
- Washing up
- Maintenance
- Responsibility
- Liability
- Asset
- Affordable – upkeep
- Not detrimental to health
- Quality

2   REFLECTIONS ON BIRMINGHAM INFOGRAPHICS

(HOUSING, ECONOMY, DEMOGRAPHICS, LIFE COURSE)

OUR QUESTIONS

o   What do you class as affordable?
o   How do we release land for building?
o   Why is the private rented sector increasing?
o   How do we provide housing for younger people?
o   How do we free up under occupied homes?
o   Where is the under occupation?
o   What is being done about vacant commercial stock?
o   Are all methods of construction being considered?
o   Can we manage demand differently?
o   Can we meet demand differently?
o   What about the quality of homes?
o   How do we turn back time?
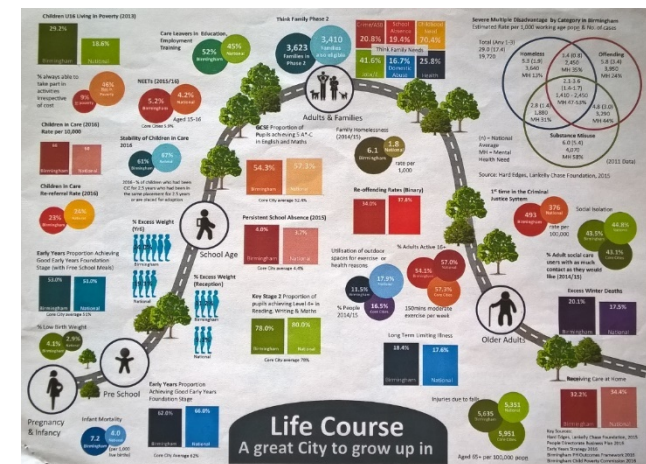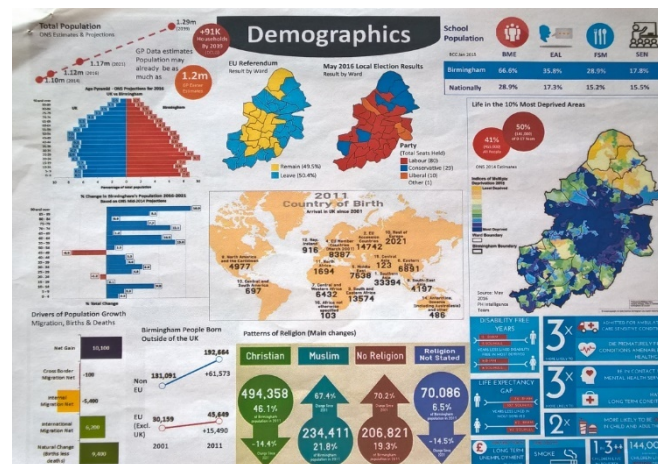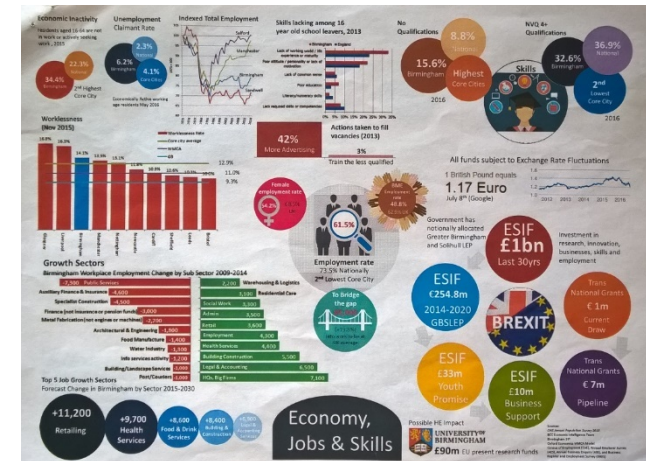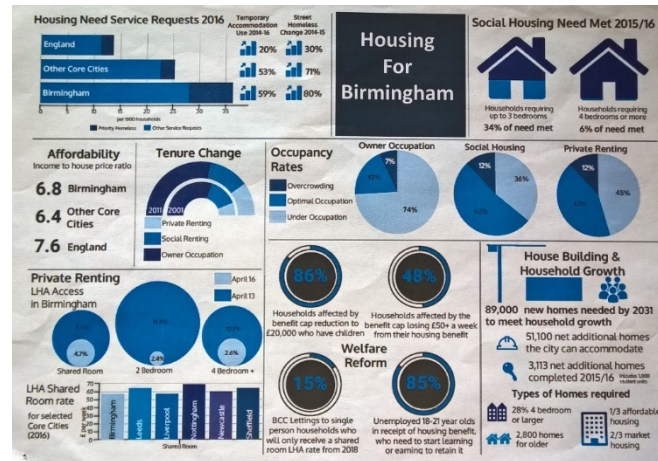
3 PRIORITY AREAS

A STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

HEADLINE OUTCOMES	HEADLINE ACTIONS
o Successful places for communities	o Identify appropriate leadership and coordination – not one size fits all
o Greater engagement and social capital	o Stimulating local action, activity and agency
o Engaged, strong and sustainable communities	o Agencies come together around commitment to clean and safe environment
OTHER OUTCOMES	OTHER ACTIONS
o Core expectations but different environments o Social and physical infrastructure o Cohesiveness o Giving back, friendly, connected	o Place making not house building o Who ensures the success of neighbourhoods? o Community outreach events o Student volunteering o Place managers not planners

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER

How can communities influence their neighbourhoods?
Encouraging new voices in communities

Volunteering brings community together
Good relations with neighbours
Community outreach events
Social activity
Student volunteering in community

What does a safe and secure home look like in different communities
Location that works for me at my time of life
Life journey of housing need
Alternative offer for young people – lower rents
Deconversion of HMOs to family homes

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Ownership and control of social/ rented housing by tenants
Review lettings policy
Intervention needed in mono tenure estates
Tackle poor tenants and quality of life
Pool resources to pay and manage
Who is best placed to manage estates/ communal space?
(Council) place managers
Who leads in ensuring the success of neighbourhoods – some need this
Design of built environment affects community – mixed neighbourhood and properties
New policies on pay to stay act against stable communities

Homes are homes – tenure blind?
Shared outcomes in communities irrespective of tenure

Connectivity and access
Communities need social infrastructure, transport, schools etc
Targeted resources to school to improve
Where the box is located – safe and secure – location most important

Pet friendly parks
Garden villages approach

Can the clock be turned back in, eg Selly Oak?
Core expectation but different in its application

Negative perceptions of some communities

INSPIRATIONS

Homebaked CLT Liverpool – Community ownership and early stage engagement
Alexandra Road Housing Estate, Camden
Castle Vale LHA
Retirement villages
Witton Lodge

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B   BETTER HOMES

HEADLINE OUTCOMES	HEADLINE ACTIONS
o Higher standard of existing stock as well as new build – increased pride in properties and improved tenant maintenance	o Increased and consistent regulation across the housing sector
o Matching homes to needs	o More research into demographics in terms of needs and aspirations for housing
o Better community in locations and infrastructure to improve perceptions and areas and therefore improve homes	o Students volunteering in the community to not only benefit locals, but also improve employability of those students o More volunteering opportunities for students within the community o Infrastructure before building community and housing
OTHER OUTCOMES	OTHER ACTIONS
o Improved quality of private rented property – esp students o Better use of/ more stock o Better community/ location is key to a better home – but also needs to be affordable o Good design	o Consistent Birmingham minimum standards o Licensing scheme for better regulation o Recycling underused stock for alternative client groups o Ease restrictions on size of house o Focus on environment o Fair subsidy for all renters o Incentives for people to invest in their homes o Community caretakers – not single tenure – also help elderly owner occupiers and service for private landlords

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MISCELLANEOUS OTHER

Encouraging academic institutions to help fund better regulation
Improved and regulated housing
Consider minimum standards
Improved regulation of estate agents
Minimum quality and re-let standards – all sectors

Enable more custom and self-build

What do we mean – quality/ affordable etc…

Better regardless of sector

Enhancing management key
Neighbourhood caretaking schemes
More than just physical
Links to 'strong and sustainable communities'

Invest in good design
Linking design to how people choose to live
Future proofing new properties
Recycling under used stock – eg Cat 2 for alternative client groups

INSPIRATIONS

o   Manchester landlord accreditation regulation scheme

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C   DRIVING HOUSING GROWTH

HEADLINE OUTCOMES	HEADLINE ACTIONS
o Land supply	o Unlocking o Remediation o Landbanking – CPO o Challenging what can't be built on
o Best use of available assets	o Acceleration o Force the market o Densification/ regeneration
o Ensuring skills, labour, materials, access to long term finance	o System build o Longer term programmes o Procurement
OTHER OUTCOMES	OTHER ACTIONS
o Land reform o Market intervention	o Use existing CPO powers fully o Land remediation and pump priming o Use the WMCA to free up land o Encourage smaller builders o Promote supported lodgings – target under occupied properties o Building upwards

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER

Coop approach   Sites with planning permission must be developed
Encourage smaller developers   More land needs to be released
Community land trusts   Speed up delivery by removing empty properties

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Community led housing

Self and custom build

Encourage smaller builders to acquire land – social enterprise

RSLs acquiring land as a consortium

Land reform

CPO (land and houses)

Freeing up more land from developers

Land supply coordination – all asset holders

Land supply register

Financial levers to release land?

Market intervention

Pump prime development

Internal investment

Providing benefits for renovation for more density in current areas

Housing delivery is based on shareholder returns

Empty homes and commercial

Build in back gardens

Green belt

Density

Better use of existing

Land remediation

Trade off quality and quantity – energy efficiency? affordability?

Skills and labour shortages

Allow housing associations and developers to build in Birmingham

Genuine growth

Better build

Planners too prescriptive

Overlay all housing stock in the city

75% of people don't want housebuilder products

Other local authorities (outside Birmingham)

Combined authority

Duty to cooperate (other LA areas)

INSPIRATIONS

o   Custom/ self-build – Holland

o   Berlin model (LA options all land)

o   Coventry – subsidy

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D   HOUSING CHOICE

HEADLINE OUTCOMES	HEADLINE ACTIONS
o A range of flexible pathways that encompass the housing options to stable housing	o Develop pathways, explore models, supported lodgings
o Housing accepted and seen as a home	o Address the tension and opportunity between housing as both a right and a privilege
o Mobility across tenures	
OTHER OUTCOMES	OTHER ACTIONS
o More flexible pathways to appropriate housing – especially for under 30s and older residents	o Review LHA rate o Custom build o More choice for elderly in owner occupation o Explore the emerging models of community owned housing to bring a new option and opportunities

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER

Options for community led community owned housing – tenure neutral
New forms of ownership
More pathways to different housing
Diversity of provision in each community

Increase awareness of choices
Managed expectations
Choice or need – is there a dichotomy?

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Can everyone have housing choice?
Rights and responsibilities

Break away from the silos of private rent/ social/ home ownership
Use partnership: LA and private rented sector to provide homes

Choice is location, not just property

Limited range of products for younger and older people

Get an appropriate LHA rate for Birmingham to meet need
Uniform rate for housing subsidy for rent on all sectors
Better institutional investment for PRS

Using properties smarter

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1   WHAT MAKES A GREAT NEIGHBOURHOOD

- o People
- o Community cohesion
- o Community
- o Community spirit
- o Neighbourliness
- o Supportive neighbours
- o Good neighbours
- o Nice neighbours
- o Look out for each other
- o Having each other's back... but to a point
- o Involvement
- o Active residents able to have say in area

- o Security
- o Safe
- o Feel safe
- o Safety
- o Feel it's a safe place
- o Secure

- o Local facilities
- o Transport
- o Safe walk to local shops
- o Good infrastructure
- o Accessible
- o Things to do

- o Food
- o Good housing
- o Looked after properties
- o Built environment

- o Clean
- o Green
- o Peace and quiet
- o Good environment
- o Green space

- o Pride
- o Inclusive
- o Sharing
- o Belonging
- o Want to be there
- o Energy
- o Support people to help themselves
- o Productive - put in more than you take out
- o Vibrant

2 OUR VISION FOR HOUSING IN BIRMINGHAM - CHALLENGE, PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

Councillor Trickett set the context for the workshop by setting out the key elements of Birmingham's challenge and emerging vision

OUR CHALLENGE

1.1m Residents
SUPER diverse — Most diverse population of all of the core cities
46% under the age of 30
150,000 Expected growth in Birmingham's population through to 2031
89k The number of homes that need to be built through to 2031 – the city only has the capacity for 51,000
30% Of Birmingham's children live in a deprived household
3x Homelessness is well above the national average
59% The number of children achieving A* - C grades in Birmingham
UNEMPLOYMENT 6.2% above the national average of 2.3%
54% of adults undertake moderate exercise each week

And focus the priorities on a set of clear objectives

CHILDREN A great city to grow up in
Make the best of our unique demography and create a safe and secure city for our children to learn and grow in
- To create an environment where our children have the best start in life

HOUSING A great city to live in
Provide housing in a range of types and tenures, to meet the housing needs of all of the current and future citizens of the city.
- Creating and sustaining good quality housing provision across the City
- Making best use of our existing stock
- Improved partnership delivery
- Supporting local people to access good quality housing provision

JOBS & SKILLS A great city to succeed in
By 2031 Birmingham will be renowned as an enterprising, innovative and green City that has:
- Created conditions for inclusive economic growth that sustains and delivers jobs across the city
- Invested in infrastructure and improved connectivity to facilitate growth
- Supported local people to access employment opportunities
- Enabling thriving distinctive neighbourhoods

HEALTH A great city to lead a healthy and active life
Helping people become healthier, especially relating to physical activity and mental wellbeing by:
- Increasing levels of physical activity in Birmingham and developing a healthy eating environment.
- Creating a healthier environment for Birmingham
- Reducing health inequalities
- Leading a step change in the mental wellbeing of all people in Birmingham.
- Promoting independence of all our citizens
- Better integrated health and social care system

Birmingham City Council

PROPOSED OUTCOMES

HOUSING A great city to live in
- A strong supply of new high quality homes in a mix of tenures
- Better homes - improved existing housing stock, supply of homes for specialist client groups, dealing with fuel poverty
- Preventing homelessness
- Strong and sustainable communities – thriving prosperous neighbourhoods

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3 DISCUSSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Groups formed around issues that people felt passionate about, in the context of the overall vision for housing and homes in Birmingham – A Great City to Live In, and the questions:

o What new, innovative or existing ideas can help make Birmingham a great city to live in?
o How do we really listen and engage with people to help us make Birmingham a great city to live in?

STOP BUDGET CUTS AND IDENTIFY NEW FORMS OF FUNDING

New Sources of Funding:

o Pension funds
o Community bonds
o More/ efficient charges for services
o Recovery of legal costs

REDUCE ROUGH SLEEPING

o Engagement – how do we engage with people who don't want to engage with us?
o Shelter mentors – using their stories to shape our services
o Direct conversation – listening to their stories

o Definition?
o Why?
o Rough sleeping/ begging

o Whole system approach

o Other city successes
o Learning from other areas

o Home first and wrap around

o Making best use of empty properties – being more imaginative
o Leeds – Canopy and Latch – work with homeless people to do up empty homes
o Homeless people could caretake empty properties

o Alternative giving scheme – getting the message out to people
o Helping homeless people with pets find accommodation

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HOW DO WE MOVE FROM SUPERFICIALITY TO DELIVERY

LAND	FINANCE	WILLINGNESS	EMPTY HOMES

LAND

o Available but not liberated
o Quality
o Quantity
o Ability to assemble (scale)
o Small parcels for community-led housing
o 10% of public land could meet housing need

AGREED:
Shortage of housing land makes Birmingham an expensive place to build
- Build on other public land
- Out of Birmingham
- Grey
- High densities
- Conversion
- Empty homes
- New models
- Liberate small sites
- Assembly of land

FINANCE

o Land costs due to availability
o Use of surplus?
o Shared resources
o Collaborative approaches
o Joint investment
o Lack of coherent strategy ?? competition – pushes up land prices

SKILLS

o Pipeline of skills required
o Brexit???
o Apprenticeships
o Training, BBS, BYP, youth promise
o Use of data and analysis - share

WILLINGNESS

o Who is best placed to assemble and build?
o Self interest
o Wider public interest – all – not just Council
o Perception is that BCC wants to build itself
o Is size a benefit or barrier?

EMPTY HOMES

o Community Infrastructure Levy difficulties
o 5000 private sector
o Registered providers?
o Birmingham City Council?

o Quantify
o Investment
o Use? – change of
o CPO powers
o Capacity of team

o Empty Homes Tsar

o Investment?

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GET BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY / CREATING EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY LEADERS / 'THIRD WAY' – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ ENGAGEMENT
INSPIRE AND ENABLE COMMUNITY LED HOUSING / CLEAN STREETS EVERYWHERE

o   Identify issues

o   Explore funding to improve neighbourhoods
o   Use of innovation fund

o   Do things differently to show impact

o   Have pride in the area and take ownership
o   Street Champions
o   Creating clean and cared for streets encourages people to take care of their own gardens and properties

o   Look wider for good practice

    ACTION
o   Washwood Heath Partnership – suggests a way forward. Community based meeting already planned for 6/10/16 – involving:
-    Resident groups, police, fire, place manager, HLB, schools, faith leaders, community groups, housing associations, councillors, local traders...

ENGAGING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE / HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

o   Volunteering – give young people rewards (points/ food/ rent)
o   Utilise the same ideas for prospective council tenants/ benefit recipients
o   Reduce cost of living for students – less need for part-time work, more time for volunteering

o   Young people need to be asked specific questions rather than invited to participate

o   Apprenticeships – young council tenants

o   Community – bringing people together at local festivals

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INNOVATION – HS2 - ATTRACT YOUNG PEOPLE TO STAY IN OUR CITY
INNOVATION – TRAM NETWORK – JOBS AND GROWTH
HOW DO WE BECOME A CITY WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF NEW COMMUNITY START-UPS

Explore how we:

o   Create larger number of community housing start ups
o   Housing innovation lab
o   Explore European models of self-build community led development
o   Increase density
o   Modular housing
o   City's land portfolio – a new approach

LOCAL INVESTMENT IN REGENERATING COMMUNITIES TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

o   Create partnership with developers, Has and social investors for
    longer term investment in City/ priority areas
o   Create local jobs/ training to deliver development
o   Inward investment model for services to businesses
o   Community investment funding
o   Invest to reduce housing costs – e.g. heating/ energy
o   Create flexible building spaces

ACTIONS:
o   Source investors
o   Build agreement on what investment should produce
o   Approach LEPs
o   Dialogue with WMCA
o   Pilot approach in selected localities

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SOME FURTHER ISSUES/ QUESTIONS RAISED BUT NOT ADDRESSED AT THIS WORKSHOP

o   How do we create a vision for Birmingham that learns from other great cities
o   Zero carbon housing
o   Good citizenship – pride in the city: taking ownership of the city, not just your own home
o   Recognition that not everyone is 'nuclear' – most people aren't
o   Build a system that anyone can understand – and in plain English
o   Can we give these questions about listening to schools – pupils, teachers, parents
o   Citizen investment bond
o   How can the City Council open up and form genuine delivery partnerships
o   Utilise unused council building in a park for a community hub to tackle health and wellbeing issues
o   How I get a family of 9 living in a one bedroom house somewhere that the kids can grow, learn and live in a way that respects others… which doesn't have damp, be broken and which can be paid for by universal credit
o   Is failure an option?
o   Inclusivity of refugees and migrants

4   NEXT STEPS

o   Talk to people – all out! – find out what people in communities think and feel, and what other ideas they have

o   Reference group to work up vision and strategy. Offers of participation to Jacqui

o   Challenge our norms (if you do what you've always done, you get what you've always had)

o   Barriers – remove them (be a ladder, not a snake)

o   Self interest – set aside?

o   This is just a start – we will create and encourage ongoing dialogue (including digital) – and all participants to date will be included

o   Extend involvement (a problem shared is a problem halved)

o   We are a young city – we must find ways to involve young people in this process

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