

BE BIRMINGHAM PARTNERSHIP 25TH JANUARY 2008 – STOCK TAKE REPORT

PURPOSE & INFORMATION

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the views and decisions of the Be Birmingham Partnership on proposals to strengthen and develop the function and operation of the Be Birmingham Partnership. They set out a broad direction for the development of the partnership arrangements, building on what already exists but also seeking to respond to future needs and local circumstances.
2. At its meeting on 17th January, the Programme Board reviewed recommendations arising from the work of Jerry Le Sueur and Malcolm Green, Neighbourhood Renewal Advisors reporting to their Stock-take Steering Group. Further detailed work on supporting the implementation of the proposals will be undertaken subject to the agreement of the Be Birmingham Partnership to the headline proposals included in this report.
3. Depending on the views and decisions of the Be Birmingham Partnership, the Programme Board will oversee the development of further detailed work on implementation and planning. An update report will be presented to the Be Birmingham Partnership at its next meeting scheduled for March 2008.
4. Specific and further detailed work, based on agreement to proceed, will be overseen by the Programme Board and include task and finish groups focusing on, amongst other things:
 - Mutual accountabilities of partners, including the Accountable Body and “Duty to Co-operate” responsibilities of partners
 - Practical arrangements to ensure effective operation, inclusion and involvement of the proposed larger group of stakeholders in meetings of the Be Birmingham Partnership
 - The role and remit of the proposed Neighbourhoods Board
 - Arrangements for addressing cohesion and community engagement across the Be Birmingham partnerships
 - Appropriate proposals for the inclusion of Sport, Leisure and Culture in the revised partnership arrangements

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The Be Birmingham Partnership are recommended to:

Be Birmingham partnership framework

- a) agree that the partnership framework structure as illustrated in Appendix 1 and set out in paragraphs 12 - 17 should be adopted. This will include a Neighbourhood Board and Partnership to provide a link between the constituencies and Be Birmingham Partnerships as well as supporting the delivery of the single neighbourhood programme and the 'local' delivery of LAA objectives.

Be Birmingham Partnership

- b) agree that the Be Birmingham Partnership should be strengthened to include a broader range of organisations and interests to reflect the future needs of the Partnership with responsibilities, role and indicative composition as set out in paragraphs 18 – 23.

Be Birmingham Programme Board

- c) agree that the current Be Birmingham Programme Board should be re-titled as the Be Birmingham Executive Board with role, responsibilities and composition as set out in paragraphs 24 -29.

Be Birmingham Strategic Thematic Partnerships

- d) agree that the Be Birmingham Partnership and strategic thematic partnerships adopt their broad Local Area Agreement (LAA) role and responsibilities covering the points set out in paragraphs 38 – 45
- e) note that strategic thematic partnerships may have other required or self-determined responsibilities that are not pertinent to the delivery of the LAA. These will up to individual partnerships to decide on.
- f) agree that the strategic thematic partnerships should adopt (where appropriate and if they have not already) the model of an executive board with a broader partnership of key stakeholders, validated by the Programme/Executive Board (See paragraph 33).
- g) agree that the thematic executive boards should be chaired by a relevant service manager who has a responsibility and accountability for a major service central to the work and objectives of the partnership. This person will also sit on the proposed Be Birmingham Executive Board (See paragraph 34).
- h) Agree that the strategic thematic partnerships should be chaired or vice-chaired by a relevant Birmingham City Council (BCC) cabinet member to strengthen the linkages between the city and the partnerships (See paragraphs 35 – 36).
- i) note that as is already the practice, strategic thematic partnerships will determine their membership and composition arrangements to reflect what they consider to be appropriate for the delivery of their part of the LAA and any other objectives that they may have.

Governance/Accountable Body Role

- j) note that further to the Be Birmingham Partnership meeting on 30th November, work is taking place involving the Partnership Director, BCC's Head of Legal Services and Director of Resources to develop appropriate protocols and practices covering the role of BCC where it has Accountable Body responsibilities. The outcome of this work will be brought to the Programme/Executive Board for consideration. This will be further strengthened through work by a task and finish group of the Programme Board to identify "mutual accountabilities" of partners based on their "duty to co-operate".

Implementation arrangements

- k) note that subject to the views and decisions of the Be Birmingham Partnership, further detailed work will be necessary on developing and implementing the proposed partnership arrangements. This will include refining the role and remit of the Neighbourhoods Board, partner accountabilities, operations and relationships between partnerships to ensure that there is clarity on responsibilities and for cross-theme working.

Partnership Infrastructure Support

- l) note that arrangements for reviewing the future requirements and organisation of the central Be Birmingham central support team are underway and will need to reflect the decisions of the Be Birmingham Partnership on the above recommendations. The outcome will be reported to the Programme/Executive Board in due course.

BACKGROUND

6. At meetings during 2007 the Be Birmingham Programme Board agreed that there should be a stock take to review the working of Be Birmingham Partnership. It was agreed that it should cover the following strands:
 - a) the role structure and remit of the BSP (Be Birmingham) and its related partnerships
 - b) the function and organisations of the BSP (Be Birmingham) Team and partnership secretariat/support functions
 - c) the evaluation of NRF projects and activities
7. The main work on a) and b) above took place during November and December of last year. This included a presentation to the Be Birmingham Partnership on 30th November. The Programme Board have received a separate report on the evaluation of NRF projects and activities.

8. Over 50 stakeholders were interviewed as part of the stock take. These included representatives from the Be Birmingham Partnership, the Programme Board, Strategic Thematic Partnerships, Birmingham City Council (as the Accountable Body), the Constituency Boards & Partnerships as well as key partnership support staff. This extensive consultation provided a good view on the main issues that need to be addressed.
9. The proposals developed and agreed by the Programme Board (assisted by Neighbourhood Renewal Advisors) reflect the observations and comments from those interviewed. The broad consensus being that much has been achieved but there are partnership arrangements which need to be strengthened, clarified or changed and in some cases developed e.g. the proposed Neighbourhood Board. There is also a need to reflect developments which have taken place over the last 12 – 18 months (e.g. the setting up of the City Housing Partnership, Birmingham Prospectus Group) as well changes ahead (The Working Neighbourhoods Fund and the new role for Advantage West Midlands).
10. General stock take observations included:

Be Birmingham Partnership

- There is confusion and a lack of clarity about its current role – it is not an executive
- It has real potential to play a much stronger consultative and strategic role. For example, helping to develop and shape the vision for Birmingham, considering City/Region issues etc
- Together with BCC, it should agree the Sustainable Community Strategy and LAA and then take an overview on delivery and performance
- Representation could be strengthened and it should meet less regularly

Be Birmingham Programme Board

- Has strengths and experience to build on with a focus on delivery and performance
- Accountabilities and links with Strategic Thematic Partnerships need to be strengthened
- Its important to ensure that the right people are at the table
- Working with the Strategic Thematic Partnerships, it should have a clear executive accountability for the delivery of the LAA as well as related strategies and action plans

Be Birmingham Strategic Thematic Partnerships

- *Enterprise & Economic Development*: needs to reflect the role of the Birmingham Prospectus Group and the changing responsibilities for RDAs and LAs on economic development .

- *Safer & Stronger*: has a huge remit covering Community Safety, Housing, Environment & Leisure & Culture. This should be rationalised.
- *Children & Young People*: there is a need to build engagement and linkages with the Programme Board and other Boards/Partnerships
- *Health and Well-being*: there is a need to build engagement and linkages with the Programme Board and other Boards/Partnerships
- *General*: there is a need to promote cross cutting partnership working and common operational protocols for all Boards/Partnerships.
- *General*: Boards/Partnerships need to be flexible and adaptive enough to respond to new challenges ahead.

Other Points

- *Neighbourhood/Constituency*: Links between the Constituency's and the broader Be Birmingham partnership arrangements are unclear and fragmented. There is a need to develop arrangement that will help and support constituencies as well as the Be Birmingham partnerships with the delivery of the LAA and single neighbourhood programme.
- *Community Engagement & Community Cohesion*: It is important to develop clear strategies and action plans to support Boards and Partnerships in their work and to meet agreed LAA objectives.
- *The Be Birmingham central support team*: needs to be reviewed to fit with the new partnership arrangements
- *Accountable Body role*: This needs to be worked through with BCC to ensure there are clear and appropriate protocols and practices and which also include relevant cabinet representation in the Be Birmingham partnership arrangements.
- *Communication arrangements*: These need to be strengthened to support communication within and across partnerships as well as with the broader Birmingham community. This should be picked up as part of the review of the central support team

PROPOSALS

11. Taking account of the above observations, the following proposals are recommended as a basis for strengthening the operation and work of the partnerships.

Be Birmingham partnership framework

12. The current Be Birmingham partnership arrangements have developed since the initial LAA was agreed. Some of these have been incremental changes responding to local needs (e.g. establishing the City Housing Partnership and Environmental Partnership), Others have responded to new and developing agendas (e.g. the Birmingham Prospectus Group). These new arrangements have developed outside of the original

partnership framework without being integrated into Be Birmingham. This needs to be addressed.

13. Additionally, the lack of formal partnership arrangements between the constituencies and Be Birmingham needs to be resolved. This is not helpful to the constituencies or the Be Birmingham Partnership as a whole. It is proposed that this be dealt with through the establishment of an appropriate 'neighbourhood' partnership/board arrangement.
14. The proposals acknowledge the 'de facto' existence of the Housing and Environment Partnerships and bring them more clearly into the formal partnership arrangements of Be Birmingham.
15. This has implications for the current Safer & Stronger Partnership Board which covers Housing, Environment, the Community Safety Partnership and Sports, Leisure and Culture. Many stakeholders felt that this was an extremely broad and difficult remit for the Safer & Stronger Partnership Board given the size of Birmingham and the complexities of the various agendas. Within this, Housing and Environment have developed 'de facto independent' partnerships to reflect the demands and needs of these service areas.
16. Similarly, the establishment of the Birmingham Prospectus Group alongside the Birmingham Economic Development Partnership (BEDP) has created a need to review the current partnership arrangements to consider how these might be brought together into a new Enterprise & Economic partnership arrangement which is beneficial to all involved. This is particularly important given the focus of the new Working Neighbourhoods Fund as well as providing a more effective way in which to engage with Advantage West Midlands on the single regional strategy
17. The proposals for the new partnership arrangements are illustrated in Appendix 1 and include the following:
 - The *Be Birmingham Partnership* – strengthened with a clearer role
 - A *Be Birmingham Executive Board* – building on the current Programme Board
 - An *Enterprise & Economic Partnership & Board* – bringing together the BEDP and the Birmingham Prospectus Partnership
 - A *Safer Partnership & Board*
 - A *Children & Young People Partnership & Board*
 - A *Health and Well-being Partnership & Board*
 - A *Housing Partnership & Board*
 - An *Environment Partnership & Board*
 - A *Neighbourhoods Partnership & Board* – this will need to be developed over the coming months with a clear relationship with all the other strategic thematic partnerships but particularly the Housing and Safer Partnerships.

Be Birmingham Partnership

18. All those contributing to the stock take were keen to see a clearer role for the Be Birmingham Partnership. There was also a broad consensus that it should have a much stronger consultative and strategic role and that coupled with this, that representation on the Partnership should be strengthened to reflect both the breadth of organisational and community interests within Birmingham but also ensuring that those organisations with a 'Duty to Co-operate' are fully included in the work of the Partnership.
19. Taking account of these views, the proposed main role for the Be Birmingham Partnership should be:
- to agree and sign off Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Community Strategy with Birmingham City Council.
 - to delegate responsibility for the delivery of the LAA to the Executive Board with a scrutiny and review role on the overall delivery of the LAA/Community Strategy. This could be through an annual review of progress and performance
 - to act as a strategic consultative forum for major city issues and as appropriate, input in to other city/region strategies
 - a forum which can consider and explore how different sectors and services can work together in the interests of the city
 - to have a responsibility for the periodic review of the health and development of the Be Birmingham partnership arrangements
20. To strengthen the representation on the Partnership, including Duty to Co-operate Organisations it is proposed that the membership should be drawn from the following:
- Chair: the Leader or Deputy Leader of Council or an Independent Chair
 - Birmingham City Cabinet Members
 - All Executive Board members
 - Advantage West Midlands
 - The Birmingham Universities
 - The Birmingham Primary Care Trust's
 - Operational Command Unit Commanders of West Midlands Police
 - Duty to Co-operate Organisations e.g. Local Probation Boards, Youth Offending Teams, NHS Foundation Trusts, Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus, Health and Safety Executive, Fire & Rescue Services, Transport Authorities, Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Natural England, Homes & Communities Agency, Others
 - The Business Sector
 - The Voluntary Sector
 - The Community Sector
 - The Faith Community
 - BME Community
 - The Neighbourhood Partnership/Board
 - The Government West Midlands
 - Observers (Non-Voting. Can contribute at open sessions)

21. It is to be noted that at the Birmingham Partnership meeting on the 30th November 2007 there were some concerns expressed about increasing the size of the partnership related to how this would function and also allow for contributions. The current membership stands at around 35 which will substantially increase if the above proposal is agreed. Some thought will need to be given to the practical arrangements for partnership meetings including a mix of small group sessions coupled with full plenary sessions. Many forums already effectively operate on this basis.
22. Arrangements will also need to be developed to cover representation from the Community, Faith and BME Community. These don't exist at the moment. There needs to be a transparency and clarity of accountability on how representatives are selected or nominated to sit on the Partnership and their role. Representation from the Voluntary Sector could be through the 3rd Sector Assembly.
23. It is also recommended that the Be Birmingham Partnership meets less regularly (perhaps 2 - 3 times per year) but meets for longer to allow for a broader strategic agenda as well as for different ways of working.

Be Birmingham Programme Board

24. It is clear that the current Programme Board has made a positive and effective contribution to partnership working in Birmingham with its focus on delivery and performance of the LAA and Community Strategy
25. However, there is a recognition that it should have a designated executive responsibility for the delivery and performance of the LAA and Community Strategy with a direct accountability to the Be Birmingham Partnership for this work. This should be explicit with the Programme Board re-titled the Executive Board.
26. The Board needs to have the authority to work with the Strategic Thematic Partnerships to ensure delivery of the LAA and the Community Strategy. Within the framework of the overarching LAA and Community Strategy objectives agreed by the Be Birmingham Partnership and Birmingham City Council, it will need to be able to make decisions during the course of the year on strategies, resources and priorities to ensure that the LAA and Community Strategy is delivered.
27. This arrangement is also reflected in many other major city LSP's.
28. The proposed primary role of the Executive Board should be as follows:
 - to lead & agree the draft LAA and Community Strategy for approval by the Be Birmingham Partnership and Birmingham City Council.
Contributes to other relevant strategies e.g. RDA Single Integrated Strategy

- to monitor performance and delivery of the LAA and Community Strategy with executive authority (working with BCC as the Accountable Body) to take necessary action to ensure that the LAA and Community Strategy objectives and budgets are met. Reports periodically to the Be Birmingham Partnership and Birmingham City Council on this.
- to work with and support the Strategic Thematic Boards/Partnerships with their LAA responsibilities and encourages cross cutting work by the partnerships
- to promote the development of robust delivery arrangements for the LAA
- to support BCC in undertaking their Accountable Body responsibilities
- to promote good practice and new ways of working
- to lead on communication arrangements for promoting the work and achievement of the Be Birmingham Partnership and Strategic Thematic Partnerships/Boards
- to oversee development and delivery of practical arrangements for strategic commissioning for delivery and performance monitoring of LAA outcomes

29. In order to fulfil this role, it is critical that the right people are at the table. It is proposed that the Board should be made up of senior representatives from the following:

- A Chair nominated by the Executive Board Members but ratified by the Be Birmingham Partnership annually with input from BCC
- The Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council
- The Chairs of the Thematic Strategic Boards.
- Advantage West Midlands
- West Midlands Police
- Job Centre Plus
- Learning & Skills Council
- A private sector business representative - nominated through the new Enterprise & Economic Board
- A voluntary sector representative nominated by the 3rd Sector Assembly
- A community Sector representative nominated by the Be Birmingham Partnership
- BCC Chief Executive and Head of Resources
- A Cabinet member to be nominated by BCC
- GOWM – observer status
- Non-voting co-optees where this will assist the work of the Board. They will not have an automatic right to sit on the Be Birmingham Partnership

Be Birmingham Strategic Thematic Partnerships

30. The proposed new partnership arrangements are set out in paragraphs 11 – 16 and illustrated in Appendix 1. They reflect:

- partnerships that are already established (Children & Young People and Health and Well-being);
 - partnerships that have been established but never formally incorporated into the Be Birmingham Partnership framework (Housing, & Environment);
 - partnerships which have been established outside of the Be Birmingham Partnership framework where there is benefit in drawing these together with an existing Be Birmingham Partnership (Birmingham Prospectus Partnership and BEDP)
 - partnership arrangements which need to be developed in order to help with effective cross partnership working and the delivery of the LAA/Community Strategy (the Neighbourhood Partnership/Board)
31. There is a degree of consensus on the proposed partnership framework, though there were observations on linking Housing with Neighbourhoods. There are arguments for and against this. On balance, it is considered that there should be a 'stand alone' Housing Partnership. Housing has a major role to play in bringing in new resources and business/employment opportunities into the city as well in accommodating existing and new residents. Central government sees housing as having a central role. This is reflected in the Housing and Regeneration Bill and the setting up of the new Homes and Communities Agency which will focus on delivering more new and affordable homes across all tenures as well as invest in infrastructure regeneration.
32. Whatever the final partnership arrangements, there needs to be strong and clear links between Housing and Neighbourhoods at both a strategic and operational level. This is also the case for other thematic partnerships e.g. the Safer Partnership. The detail will need to be sorted in discussions across the partnerships. Some of this will depend on the agreed final remit of the Neighbourhoods Partnership/Board.

Operational arrangements

33. Some of the strategic thematic partnerships already operate with an executive board and a broader stakeholder partnership. It is proposed that all of the thematic partnerships should, where appropriate, adopt this model both to strengthen engagement in their partnership work and in Be Birmingham as well as to ensure that there is a smaller 'executive' team who has a responsibility for delivery. They will be accountable to their partnerships and to the Be Birmingham Executive Board & Partnership for delivery of their LAA objectives.
34. It is recommended that the Chairs of the thematic boards should be at a senior officer/manager level with responsibilities for a major service central to the work of the partnership. It will be for the partnership to determine who this should be. This person will automatically sit on the Be Birmingham Executive Board and therefore should be at a sufficiently

senior level to be able to make service and strategic decisions at the Executive Board.

35. Government guidance (e.g. ODPM LAA guidance and documentation, DCLG: Development of the new LAA framework Operational Guidance and DCLG: Creating Strong, safe and prosperous communities- statutory guidance – draft for consultation) and best practice emphasise the importance of Councillors and the central role of Council's within the work of LSPs. This is important in respect of delivery, partnership building and strengthening the linkages between the City and the partnerships.
36. It is proposed that BCC Cabinet members be asked to Chair or Vice-Chair their relevant thematic partnerships. Coupled with this, it is proposed that there should be one additional place reserved on the Executive Board (in addition to the Leader/Deputy Leader of the Council) for a Cabinet Member. It will be for BCC to determine who should fill this place.
37. As to thematic partnership composition, this should be left to partnerships (as is already the practice). Partnerships should determine their membership and composition arrangements to reflect what they consider to be appropriate for the delivery of their part of the LAA and any other objectives that they may have

Role & responsibilities

38. In general terms, it is proposed that each of the thematic strategic partnerships/boards should have the following broad set of responsibilities.
 - Responsibility for the delivery and achievement of their specific LAA objectives including agreed cross cutting targets.
 - Preparing an annual operational plan and Delivery Plan
 - Ensuring consistency of their thematic strategies with the Community Strategy
 - Implementing robust monitoring systems to help with the systematic tracking of LAA delivery and performance.
 - Ensuring that there are appropriate risk management arrangements in place for the delivery of the LAA.
 - Ensuring that appropriate accountable body delivery arrangements are in place for the delivery of those parts of the LAA that the Partnership is responsible for.
 - Responsible for such other non-LAA strategies, priorities, targets and objectives that the Partnership may agree to.
 - As appropriate, promoting cross cutting and neighbourhood initiatives
 - Promoting good practice and new ways of working
39. Within the above, the specific service focus for Children & Young People, Health and Wellbeing and Housing will not change.
40. The amalgamation of the Birmingham Prospectus Partnership and BEDP will draw together their respective current remits and also take account of

whatever is required through the new Neighbourhood Working Fund. It is also proposed that further work needs to take place to determine arrangements for inclusion of Sports, Leisure & Culture functions within the Economic and Enterprise or other appropriate thematic partnerships (It currently sits within Safer & Stronger).

41. It is proposed that the Environment Partnership should focus on the following:
 - *Climate Change* – strategy, Action Plan, implementation and performance management (the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is due for Cabinet approval by end of March)
 - *Quality of Life* – covering environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure, the City's growth agenda and the neighbourhoods
 - *Resource Conservation* – addressing issues associated with water, energy, sewerage etc.
42. This has implications for the terms and composition of the current Environment Partnership which will need to be worked through with the Partnership. There are also elements of 'environment' activity that will continue to sit with the Safer Partnership and which will also link with Neighbourhoods. Again the detail of this will need to be sorted as we move forward with implementation of the partnership arrangements.
43. The Safer Partnership will continue to be responsible for Community Safety agenda, plus elements of environmental related work. The exact detail of these responsibilities and linkages will need to be sorted in discussion.
44. There is also a need for Be Birmingham to develop its strategic work on community cohesion with a thematic partnership to lead this on behalf of Be Birmingham. It is suggested that this be discussed with the Safer Partnership but it will involve all partnerships collaborating to ensure that their respective strategies and action plans reflect this important area of work.
45. The remit and composition of the proposed Neighbourhoods Partnership & Board needs to be developed and agreed over the coming months. In general, it is proposed that Neighbourhoods should have a responsibility for:
 - The Single Neighbourhood Programme
 - A delegated executive role and responsibility for neighbourhood development issues on behalf of the Be Birmingham and the Executive Board.
 - Leading the development and implementation of relevant neighbourhood focused strategies and action plans and where appropriate consulting with other strategic thematic partnerships and the Executive Board on these

- Contributing a neighbourhood dimension of other relevant strategies e.g. RDA Single Integrated Strategy, Regeneration Zones, LSC City Strategy etc.
- Monitoring performance and delivery of the LAA in Priority neighbourhoods with authority to take necessary action to ensure that the LAA neighbourhood objectives and budgets are met.
- Working with and supporting other strategic thematic partnerships on the delivery arrangements for the LAA
- Promoting good practice and new ways of neighbourhood working through constituency, neighbourhood and area based initiatives

Governance/Accountable Body Role

46. Work is taking place to develop appropriate protocols and practices covering the role of BCC where it has Accountable Body responsibilities. This involves the Partnership Director, BCC's Head of Legal Services and Director of Resources.
47. The final protocols will also need to take account of relevant government guidance (DCLG: Development of the new LAA framework Operational Guidance 2007 and Creating Strong, safe and prosperous communities' – Statutory guidance – Draft for Consultation).
48. The outcome of this work will be brought to the Programme/Executive Board for consideration in due course.

Partnership Infrastructure Support

49. It is important to review the partnership support team arrangements to ensure that resourcing, skills and experience and the team's organisation fit with the needs of the partnership. This has not been reviewed for sometime and as has been referred to above, several changes and developments have taken place which are placing additional demands on the current team.
50. A review is underway which will need to take account of any stock take recommendations agreed by the Be Birmingham Partnership.
51. The outcome of the review will be reported to the Programme/Executive Board in due course. It will be important to complete any re-organisational changes for the central team as soon as possible to ensure that there is appropriate support in place for the development of Be Birmingham as set out in the proposals above.

IMPLEMENTATION – NEXT STAGE

52. Implementation of any agreed changes to the current partnership arrangements will require support. This cannot be planned until there is agreement on the broad proposals set out in this report by the Be Birmingham Partnership. There may also be additional or different

proposals which the Programme Board and Be Birmingham Partnership want to introduce which will impact on implementation arrangements.

53. If there is broad agreement, it is envisaged that a detailed implementation plan will be developed, led by the Director of Partnerships and overseen by the Programme/Executive Board.

**APPENDIX 1 – BE BIRMINGHAM
PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK**

**STRATEGIC THEMATIC BOARDS & PARTNERSHIPS,
(INCLUDING FORUMS, SUB-GROUPS & CROSS
CUTTING TIME LIMITED WORKING GROUPS)**



