

Report to Birmingham Strategic Partnership 30th November 2007

Consultation Draft Community Strategy

1 Purpose

To present to BSP the proposed consultation draft of the new Community Strategy that was presented to Birmingham City Council on 26th November.

2 Background

BSP is asked:

- To approve that this draft of the Community Strategy be published for public consultation between December 2007 and February 2008.
- To note that the draft Community Strategy will be subject to minor text changes for Plain Language accreditation, which will be sought on the version of the document agreed by City Council Cabinet.
- To note that a pamphlet summarising the community strategy will be used as the primary consultation tool that will signpost consultees to the formal draft community strategy should they require the detailed information.

3 Recommendation/decisions

Birmingham City Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Community Strategy with the involvement of local partners. The long term Community Strategy sets the direction and strategy to underpin the Local Area Agreement, which is being prepared in parallel and acts as the key action plan for the first three years of the new Strategy.

The draft community strategy – **BIRMINGHAM 2026** - has been prepared with partners as the overarching long-term strategy for the future of the City. The public consultation period will also allow for further involvement of partner agencies, the third sector and other stakeholders.

The Community Strategy is being produced to take account of changes introduced by the new legislation and emerging Government Guidance, trailed in the 2006 Local Government White Paper. It also has to address issues raised by the CPA inspectors in 2006/07.

Key features

- *the longer timeframe of the Strategy* – the 2026 “end date” is consistent with the Birmingham Growth Prospectus
- *the Strategy will be more explicitly specific to Birmingham* - there have been two community engagement events during the last year, funded by the BSP, which have encouraged residents to share their experiences of living in the City and their hopes for the future and provided useful material which has been drafted into the priorities contained within the draft Community Strategy;
- *there will be much clearer “read across” between the Strategy and the Local Area Agreement* – both now adopting the outcome framework developed by the City Council for its own Plan;
- *partners have been engaged in the preparation of the Community Strategy from an early stage* – the first presentation was to the Programme Board in February, and the matter has been discussed by the BSP and Programme Board since. This included an event in September involving the BSP in thinking about the challenges facing the City, and prioritisation for actions to be taken to address these. Three multi-partner Community Strategy Task Group meetings were also held between June-October 2007.

Consultation Proposals

It is imperative that Birmingham people are aware of the opportunity to contribute their thoughts and feelings about what Birmingham is today and what their City should be like in 2026, as well as practical ideas for achieving this.

It is proposed that presentation packs be made available to community groups and organisations and that a “popular” summarised version of the community strategy. A leaflet has been prepared will invite comments through a freepost address. Posters will be placed on City “dressing” sites and BCC/BSP websites to further raise awareness. There will be local press campaigns run to raise awareness of the consultation.

To ensure effective and widespread consultation, targeted activity will seek to reach some groups that often don’t engage with the City and its partners.

Specific options are also being considered for further consultation with young people – including the possibility of a meeting with the Birmingham members and deputies of the UK Youth Parliament.

We will also use a planned conference for voluntary sector groups at which the 5 main themes are discussed, hosted by the existing Voluntary Sector Assembly.

Equalities Impact Needs Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

An Equalities Impact Needs assessment initial screening of the consultation draft of the Community Strategy has been undertaken – this to inform how the document might better address key equalities issues and the way in which proposals affect equalities; a full assessment will be undertaken on the completed Strategy next Spring.

During the consultation period there will be a Sustainability Appraisal undertaken on the Strategy.

Jason Lowther
Head of Policy and Performance
Birmingham City Council

23rd November 2007

