



## Be Birmingham Executive Board Brief

The meeting of the executive board on 14th May considered the following:

The focus of this month's board was upon three distinct areas which all contribute to Birmingham's place shaping agenda. This agenda sees Be Birmingham's partners working together to create attractive, prosperous, vibrant, safe and strong communities where people want to live, work and do business, thus fulfilling the ambitions set out in Birmingham 2026, the sustainable community strategy.

The main area of board discussion included:

- Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)
- Joint commissioning
- Total Place pilot programme

### Addressing Birmingham's needs

A peer review by an independent challenge team will help Be Birmingham prepare its self assessment ahead of the Audit Commission's first Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

The CAA is a new way of assessing how effectively local partnerships are working together to deliver local people's priorities. The self assessment covers three areas; understanding the needs of the people of Birmingham; performance and future prospects.

Currently, Birmingham has a number of different needs assessments that each focus upon a specific theme, for example health and wellbeing, housing or community safety. The partnership has therefore adopted a pan-partnership approach to developing a comprehensive assessment, which will for the first time provide the public and regulatory bodies with an overview of the needs of the city.

As well as the peer review, the Audit Commission will also be checking the ongoing progress in a new 'no surprises approach'. The final assessment will be made publicly available towards the end of November.

### Together we can

Peter Hay, the council's strategic director for Adults and Communities, described the long journey towards joint commissioning undertaken by Birmingham City Council and Primary Care Trusts. After 14 challenging months, he described relationships as now stable with real trust existing between the organisations. Mr Hay added that the partnership work developing and delivering the local area agreement was also a key driver for the new-found collaboration.

Joint commissioning is an innovative approach that puts the needs of all citizens including the most vulnerable at the heart of all services. For this approach to succeed, partners must look beyond their organisational boundaries and work together. As well as delivering a more user-focused service, this approach will provide better value for money.

The aim is to create a one pot approach to public funding for people with learning disabilities or mental health needs and their carers.

Key to the success of joint working is having the right mindset and culture across public sector organisations which provides strong strategic leadership and empowers staff, particularly on the frontline, to come up with new ways of working.

As a result of the positive impacts provided by this approach, the board agreed to consider further joint commissioning as part of the Total Place pilot.





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### Total Place pilot programme

Be Birmingham is committed to addressing complex cross-cutting issues that cannot be addressed or solved by one agency. This is not only reflected in its focus on joint commissioning (outlined above) but also in its work to create a pan-partnership culture of providing better, more joined up ways of delivering services. The aim is to become both more efficient and effective within highly complex public sector and economic environments to ensure we work together to deliver the right services to those most in need.

To ensure the partnership realises the above ambition, it is employing a design-led approach to services with those that actually use the services being given the opportunity to help shape the way those services are delivered. This involves a more collaborative way of working across agencies, with pooling of budgets and human resources to maximise the benefits to citizens.

The beginning of this process involved mapping all of the public sector resources coming into Birmingham. This Be Birmingham research tracked more than £7bn coming into the city each year.

This work also attracted national recognition with government citing Be Birmingham as best practice as it launched a national pilot scheme, Total Place, of which Birmingham is one of 13 pilots.

The focus of the Be Birmingham-led pilot will build upon the resource mapping by aligning those resources with the biggest priorities in the city; upon joint commissioning, and leadership & empowerment, particularly of those on the frontline delivering services, so that they can identify new ways of working. It will also involve talking to government with a view to identifying and removing the barriers to a successful pilot.

The board agreed the following joint commissioning proposals for the pilot:

- People with learning difficulties
- People with a mental health issues
- Children leaving care
- Families affected by drug and alcohol abuse
- A demonstration "Total Community" project

### Future Jobs Fund

The board agreed that it will work to develop Birmingham's bid for a share of the government's new £1bn challenge fund for 16 to 24-year-olds over a two year period.

### Summit

So far 80 people have confirmed their attendance at BB's next summit on June 26th. Liam Byrne, Minister for the Cabinet Office and MP for Hodge Hill will be one in a series of high profile speakers, who will lead the event examining the current economic crisis and Birmingham's short, mid and long term response to it.

### Next meeting

The next meeting is to be held on 24th June 2009 at 8.30am.

Jackie Mould  
Director

