

after London

The Combined Authority will give us the platform from which to reach for the real prize – a devolution deal that will enable us to realise our ambitions for the West

So we have also been carrying out the economic analysis and developing our vision for the West Midlands Engine for Growth and, together, we will shortly be publishing our prospectus.

At our meeting last week the Chancellor welcomed our focus on the economic outcomes we want to achieve. In the meeting, he did not mention the

is likely to be an impact in areas such as Early Years funding and our Public Health budget.

Responding to the challenges

It falls to this leadership to address the challenges I have outlined.

We will not just invest in growth and hope that it trickles down to the most deprived and vulnerable in our communities.

We must work for a recovery for all the people of the city, not just the few.

all

So, in our priority programmes,

We will improve schools through the Birmingham Education Partnership, with

We will take forward the Birmingham Youth Promise, launched last year, to guarantee young people employment, education, training or work experience within four months of leaving a job and help with careers advice, transport and a new digital access point for services

We will set out a new Birmingham Skills Investment Plan and work to create an Apprenticeship and Internship Agency

And we will increase the number of companies paying the living wage and signing up to our Business Charter for Social Responsibility and tackle issues such as exploitation of children and young people

And we will develop a comprehensive new housing offer, to ensure affordable, safe and decent homes, a better deal for tenants and a more integrated approach to homes and neighbourhoods.

As we say in the document, our most important goal is to create a more equal society.

We know that is an ideal shared by the majority of people in this city.

It is an ideal that motivates untold numbers of active citizens and voluntary and community organisations day in and day out.

Birmingham remains a city in which people value their community and stick up for one another. It is a city where people believe in fairness and justice.

To adapt a quotation from Bill Clinton, I would say that there is nothing wrong with

The Future Council

Lord Mayor, I believe that sentiment is also true of the City Council.

Our other big priority for the years ahead is the creation of a new City Council and a new landscape of local public services through the Future Council programme.

I am proud of the staff and councillors of this City Council who make a real difference, whether it is helping someone to find a home, getting families the support they need to ensure their children can get on at school, helping an older person to stay in their home or working with the community to clean up a local neighbourhood.

But, if we are honest, all of us must accept that the weaknesses of the council organisation have been apparent for many years. In some areas we have not been bold or radical enough in moving with the times, modernising what we do and how we do it.

Much of the Cabinet and senior officer energy during 2015 has been focused on our improvement plans and developing the Future Council programme.

Since the turn of the year we have been on the front foot, designing our own plans for change and improvement and focusing not on the past but on what we are going to do to make things better in the future.

We are getting back in control of our own destiny and these will be improvement plans, not those of the government or anyone else.

Our top priority remains the transformation of our C Safeguarding service. As summarised in the policy statement and in our three-year Improvement Plan, we

are making good progress and we have clear plans for the next two years. Above all, we have addressed the issue of recruitment and retention and we have invested a total of £31m extra in the service.

We are also making good progress in addressing the weaknesses of our corporate governance arrangements, with a new role for district committees established in the

It is not about pursuing ideological models of the future of local government which result in mass outsourcing to large corporations and the loss of all democratic control for local people.

It is about creating an organisation that can achieve the outcomes we want and Birmingham people want, within the resources we have available.

The alternative is a rapid decline, leaving a residual and threadbare safety net of services.

Change will be difficult. But we have set out the direction and the principles that should guide us and the outcomes we want to improve. That must be our disciplined focus in the years to come.

Conclusion

Lord Mayor, the document I have presented today sets out the political vision and values that will guide all the work of this City Council as we work in partnership with others.

It sets the vision for the city and the Future Council.

We want to see a fairer Birmingham, where everyone can make the most of their talents and abilities, inequalities are reduced and public services and the community are there to help those in need.

We want to see a more prosperous Birmingham, a place where everyone can share in economic success, a city of enterprise where entrepreneurs can find a home, a city of modern transport and clean, safe neighbourhoods.

We want to see a democratic city in which every citizen has a voice, a city with a strong civil society and excellent public services accountable to the public.

Lord Mayor, in the 1960s national government took the perverse decision to restrain Birmingham was overheating.

Not since those days have we seen growth or employment to match the national level.

Well, . It is time to recreate the economic performance of the 1950s and 60s.

As a city region, I believe we should set the target of being the fastest growing of all the core cities.

If we work together, we can move towards that fairer, more prosperous and more democratic city.

If we work together, we can turn the page, start that new chapter in our history and create a Future Council we can all be proud of.

If we work together we can truly achieve that Birmingham renaissance and that

Colleagues, this is a time for change.

This is a time for Birmingham.

Thank you.