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This is a year in which Birmingham and the wider region stands poised to grasp economic opportunities not seen for decades. The economy is already outperforming other parts of the country in terms of growth, exports and inward investment and healthy job creation is driving down unemployment. The region is

These vital improvements have been the focus for much of our work in the last year. But there are many achievements to celebrate as well. These include the launch of the Birmingham Youth Promise, the almost 200 businesses that have now signed up to our Business Charter for Social Responsibility, the establishment of the Child Poverty Commission, the start of work on the Paradise redevelopment, the publication of the Curzon Masterplan and the launch of Birmingham Connected, the continued roll out of a modern refuse collection service and our skills offer, available to more schools from September.

I am proud that Birmingham City Council, its councillors and its staff achieve great things for the people of Birmingham every day – truly making a positive difference every day to people’s lives.

But the weaknesses in parts of our City Council and some of our local services have been evident for some years – we have not shown sufficient boldness and radicalism in adapting to the changing world around us. Now is the time finally to take those big steps forward and to embrace a new future for public services.

We need to change to achieve the outcomes that matter to us all: decent homes and neighbourhoods, feeling safe and healthy, a connected city, joined-up health, care and early intervention, opportunities through excellent education and training and a city that celebrates and makes the most of its diversity and youthfulness.

People’s homes and neighbourhoods are at the heart of their lives in our city. This Leader’s Policy Statement announces that we will maintain and intensify the focus on housing in the years ahead, led by a Cabinet Member. It has been more than a decade

council, ensuring democratic accountability for all our more detailed plans and programmes.

It reflects the changing context in which we are working, as we develop our new strategic planning process. It takes account of the Future Council programme, an emerging new City Partnership that will assist with a collective vision for the city, the agenda of the new UK government and the severe and still increasing financial pressures facing the council.

We remain committed to our mission of working together for a fair, prosperous and democratic city, enabling individuals and communities to be more independent, more resilient and more in control.

We have a renewed mandate from the people of Birmingham arising from the local elections, where our vote share increased to 46%. This document sets out a renewed vision for city government and the future of Birmingham, with a clear focus on priorit

# 1. Our values and our vision for Birmingham

## Our values

Our most basic belief is that we can achieve more through working together than we can alone. The public sector and our civic institutions are one important way we do that, alongside the communities, voluntary groups, organisations and families that we all belong to. So we see the City Council as much more than just an organisation that gets services delivered. It is the democratic government of Birmingham – with a wider responsibility for leadership and for making a difference to people in the city.

Our most important goal is to create together a more equal society. To do this we must create a fairer balance of power between different communities, but also strengthen personal freedom, mutual responsibility and accountability and build stronger communities.

A successful economy is vital to making progress on these goals. But a stronger economy needs a stronger society. A truly successful economy is one which improves the lives of all citizens, not just some. It is also a sustainable economy with long-term investment and an emphasis on using technology to protect the environment. Birmingham has always been a city where the public sector works closely with an enterprising and innovative private sector to promote economic success alongside social justice.

Our Business Charter for Social Responsibility captures those values and calls upon businesses across the city to commit to paying a Living Wage, training and development for their staff and a wider engagement with the city and its people.

We believe that the City Council must be an active force for good and for change, not just a deliverer of services. We will be active in bringing together new partnerships to achieve our goals, for example in forging links between businesses, voluntary groups, trade unions and schools to open up horizons for young people.

Together with our belief in collective action and mutual responsibility sits our belief in diversity and the spreading of power. Without the power and the freedom to act people cannot

## **Our vision for Birmingham: a fair, prosperous and democratic city**

A fair city is one in which everyone can make the most of their talents and abilities, regardless of their background. It is a place where all communities value and respect one another; are able to live in decent, affordable housing and enjoy good

Some public services are for everyone in the city (refuse collection, street lights, roads and footpaths), or for all of us at particular times in our lives (schools, hospitals). Others are provided only to those with specific needs, but no services should be “one size fits all” – they must be responsive to the needs of individuals, communities and places if greater equality is to be achieved.

### **Triple devolution**

We have established a framework for the future of city government in Birmingham and the city region, known as triple devolution. This will guide the Future Council design work. In future our public services and political leadership will operate at three levels, characterised by three new ways of working:

- x **The city region** – with fiscal and policy-making powers devolved from central government and exercised collectively by the member councils. The initial focus of the combined authority will be on economic development, transport, regeneration and skills. Support resources in the fields of economic intelligence,



The overall framework for change

### **Principles for the Future Council**

In line with our overall vision and our values, we want the City Council, working at all three of these levels, to be an organisation that:

- x **Champions equality, dignity and respect** in all it does and **empowers people and communities**, through raising their abilities and skills, supporting their organisations and listening to their needs and concerns. In order to build

x

- x **Social Care and Health** – accelerating the path to an integrated health and social care service, enabling older and disabled people to remain in their homes and communities and make less use of acute services.
- x **Housing** – developing a comprehensive “Housing Offer” setting out how we will meet the needs and aspirations of individuals and families who need affordable, decent homes.
- x **Services for young people** – Implementing the Youth Promise that will ensure that every young person is in education, work or training. Birmingham will be a city that responds to the needs of young people with a youth service that empowers, supports and protects them.
- x **Libraries** – Developing a new model library service as an integral part of our local service hubs.
- x **Support services** – creating integrated and efficient “back office” functions.

## The outcomes we are working towards

The following outcomes, derived from our vision and goals, are set out in the Business Plan, published in March.

Primary goal	Key themes	Outcomes we seek
<b>A Fair City</b>	Safety	People are safe, especially the most vulnerable – from crime, violence and abuse
	Health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing, housing quality and life expectancy are at national levels for all. Older people are able to stay in their own homes and communities.
	Children and young people	Children are protected and young people are able to access opportunities regardless of background or special needs.
	Tackling poverty	Poverty amongst children and families is down to national averages – Birmingham has an ethical approach as a “Living Wage City” and no social groups or local areas are blighted by extreme levels of unemployment and low incomes.
<b>A Prosperous City</b>	Learning, skills and local employment	People have the qualifications they need for work, including school leavers and the working age population. Young people are exposed to the world of work and career options. Skill levels are high and all young people are in employment, education or training. Everyone has access to the digital economy. The city has amongst the lowest levels of youth unemployment of all the core cities.
	Enterprise City	The economy is growing, business start-ups are the highest in the country and good jobs are being created.
	Infrastructure, development	There is a sufficient, affordable and low energy use housing supply to meet needs,

Primary goal	Key themes	Outcomes we seek
	and Smart City	provision for employment land and high levels of investment in transport, including cycling and walking and other infrastructure such as digital technologies and district energy systems.
	A Green and Sustainable City	Birmingham is more environmentally sustainable, with higher levels of recycling, lower energy use and cleaner neighbourhoods. There is a thriving green economy.
	Regional capital and reputation	The city fulfils its role as the regional capital and provides a quality of life that attracts more investors, visitors and employees.
<b>A Democratic City</b>	Engagement, influence and contribution	Local people from all backgrounds are engaged in local democracy, and have more influence on local decisions and localised services. Communities and individuals are able to make their contribution to the life of the city and governance is based on openness and transparency.
	A New Model of City Government	The government of the city will be transformed to match modern needs.

Modern services that serve our citizens

Services work together, make use of new



## Some important challenges

At the same time there are many challenges facing the city. Whilst some are already benefitting from the return of growth, others remain locked out of prosperity. Too many are in **low-skilled, low-paid and insecure jobs** and too many are still out of work. Whilst there are many skilled workers in the West Midlands, there are also **skill shortages** in key areas and the city region needs to raise its skill levels dramatically to be more globally competitive.

Birmingham is famously a young city, which gives us great dynamism and a huge resource of future skills and enterprise to draw on. But our **young people** are facing huge challenges in terms of education, skills, transport and housing. The overall performance of our **schools** is similar to the national average, but there remain too many schools, including a growing number of academies, not performing adequately. Youth unemployment and in particular long-term unemployment remains too high and many of the most vulnerable young people need more support to be able to access the labour market. The costs of housing and transport have become prohibitive for many young people, making it more difficult for them to live fulfilled and independent lives. The new government is planning to end housing benefits and Job Seekers Allowance for young people under 21 (to be replaced by a temporary allowance).

We also face a continuing challenge to ensure **the safety of the youngest of our citizens**. This remains our top priority in terms of improving the work of the City Council and its partners. Safe families provide the start in life that every child deserves. Tackling **domestic violence** and supporting **troubled families** with a range of other challenges through our Early Help Strategy is also a key priority.

There is a pressing need to increase the supply of new **homes** to meet forecast demand from the growth in jobs and population and this will need to be co-ordinated with our neighbouring councils. But we also need to step up the supply of new social housing and ensure that the quality and affordability of private rented housing is improved, tenants are better protected and poor landlords robustly challenged. This needs to be delivered in the context of changing central government policy on housing. Our own housing service also needs to improve, through better repairs services and giving tenants more control over their homes and neighbourhoods.

We also face the ongoing challenges and opportunities of our diverse communities. The city has for many years succeeded in welcoming newcomers and offering economic opportunities to people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and this will continue for new generations ahead. But there are also threats to **social cohesion** in the city from those who oppose that diversity and the liberties we all enjoy. Of particular concern is the need to ensure that all children and young people are protected from extremism and are included in an open and liberal society. Above all we need to respond to the social exclusion and poverty that blights too





### **3. Delivering our plans**

**A fair city**

Progress:

- o Better assessment of children's needs - including the multi-agency Safeguarding Hub.
- o A third more referrals due to improved access and tackling unidentified risk.
- o Establishing a Children's Strategic Leaders' Forum.
- o Speeding up decisions about children in care proceedings from 54 to 28 weeks on average.
- o Agreeing a multi-agency Early Help Strategy with partners and an agreement

strengthen the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility to tackle issues such as exploitative zero hour contracts.

- x **A comprehensive new housing offer.** This will set out how we will work to ensure that all Birmingham residents have the opportunity to enjoy affordable, safe and good quality accommodation. We want to better understand the

x Starting

- x **Cultural Strategy.** We will work with partners to focus on developing new funding models for arts organisations, making culture and the arts sustainable by developing the “cultural pound” and ensuring the city retains a programme for major sports and cultural events, enhancing Birmingham’s reputation as a great place in which to live, work and visit.

## **A democratic city and Future Council**

Progress in the last year has included:

- x Designing and starting the Future Council programme which will transform the way the City Council operates over the next five years. Key first steps have been to talk with a large selection of staff through “Big Conversations”, secure staff and management resources to lead the programme, to plan the work and to agree basic design principles for the organisation, as well as engaging with partner organisations about our shared vision for the city and how we will work together in the future. The Future Council also includes improvement areas to do with the corporate governance of the City Council (see box below).

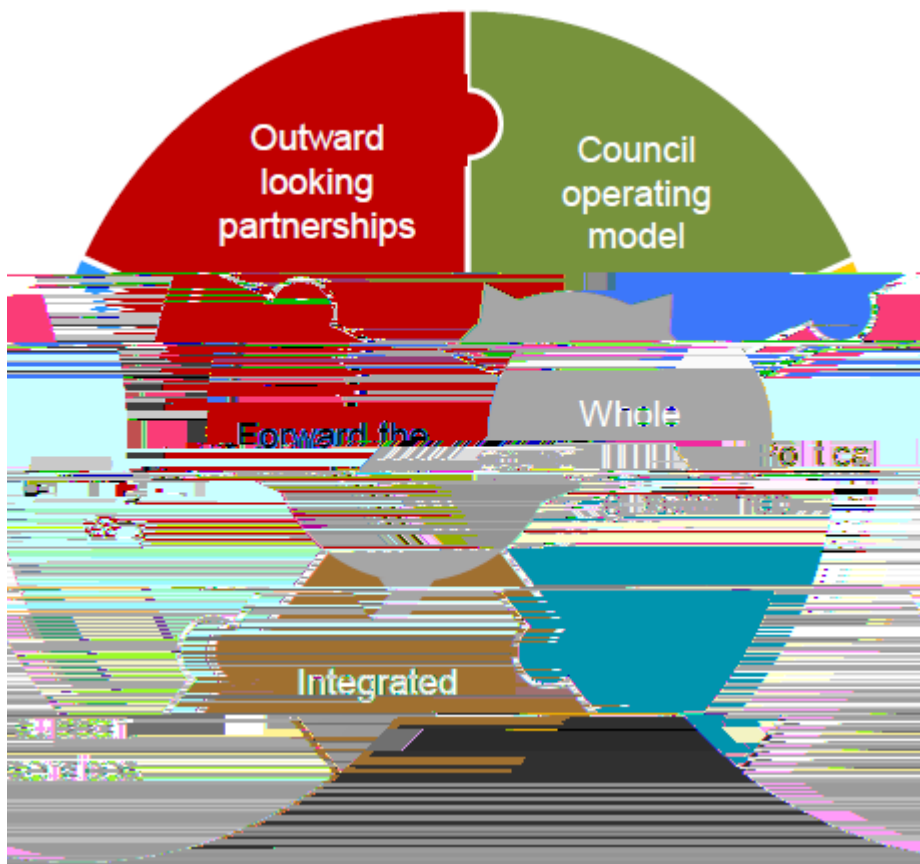
### **Future Council ±progress**

### **A new role for district committees**

The council's revised constitution includes a new 'terms of reference' for the ten district committees. Their new role includes:

- x Working with partners to produce a Community Plan for the area.
- x Ensuring tenant engagement in social housing.
- x Promoting safer neighbourhoods, working with the local police.
- x Promoting cleaner neighbourhoods, better street cleaning and litter enforcement.
- x A Neighbourhood Challenge function –

The Future Council will transform the way the City Council operates



**Our priority programmes are:**

- x **The Future Council programme.** The overall programme will drive changes to the council's leadership and direction, its size and structure and its values which shape staff behaviour and performance, implementing the political vision for the City Council set out in section one. The main areas of work in the programme are shown in the diagram above and outlined below:
  - o **Whole council** – this is the strategic framework for the programme that will run through everything we do and set the direction of travel for the organisation. The work is refining our ambition as a fair, prosperous and democratic city and our purpose and outcomes. It is identifying the design principles for the organisation (a set of ideas and standards) and the values and desired behaviours that will sit at the heart of the new organisational culture we want to create.
  - o **Political governance** – looking at the democratic system within the city, our approach to devolution, the relationship between councillors and the community and the changes in ward boundaries being considered by the

Standing up for Birmingham campaign. It will include developing the new role



- x **Securing a devolution deal** – we will continue to work with neighbouring authorities to create a Combined Authority

