

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL SERVICE REVIEWS

GREEN PAPER: DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Birmingham City Council is facing a big challenge, having to cut the budget we can control by half over seven years. In the past we have often made changes to improve our services and get better value for money. But we now face cuts in government funding on a scale that has never been seen before.

We will need to make big changes to balance the books in the years ahead. These changes will have an impact on everyone in the city, so we want to discuss them with you before going ahead.

The key question we are seeking to answer is:

How can we continue to provide essential services to residents and guide the city through such difficult times, whilst supporting greater fairness and future prosperity?

We will need to be clearer on our priorities and ensure that we only spend money on things that support those priorities. We will need to develop new structures and ways of working with services such as the NHS. And we will need to work with the people of Birmingham to get maximum value from all the resources available to the city.

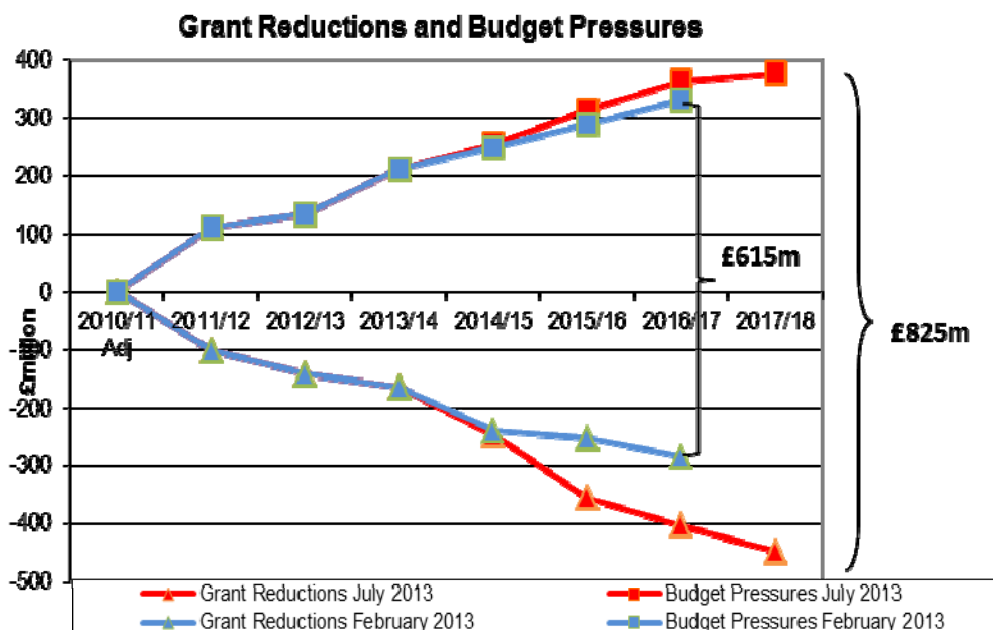
To do this we have begun a detailed programme of reviews looking at all our services and how the council works overall. This has never been done before on this scale and it might well lead to fundamental change in how services are provided and how key priorities are delivered.

THE BUDGET NUMBERS

The Government's programme to cut public spending has meant a severe reduction in local authority funding. At the same time, there are big pressures to spend more to meet inflation, the changing population, changes in the law and so on.

If we are to respond to this in time we must plan ahead and work out what the funding situation will be over the next three to five years. Our latest forecast is shown in the graph overleaf. As you can see the position has become much worse since the council set its budget in February this year. Even so this may still need to be updated further following future Government announcements.

The Council faces huge cuts in its grants from Government and increases in demand.



Source: Birmingham City Council, Corporate Resources Directorate, July 2013

The Council has already made significant savings in recent years, for example £275m has been saved in the last two financial years, with the non-school workforce reduced by 27% since April 2010. But despite this we still need to save at least a further £450m by 2017-18, in addition to over £100m of savings in the current financial year.

The total estimated saving of £825m is about two thirds of the funding in 2010-11 that we had any choice over how to spend (what we call the “controllable budget”). Because of this combination of grant cuts and spending pressures we may not be able to deliver some of the services we now offer and it is likely to become more and more difficult to deliver those that we are required to provide to an appropriate quality, unless we change the way that we do things.

Focusing on the next two years in the first instance, for which information is more certain, this is likely to mean that we need to find further reductions on average across our services of 25% of the “controllable budget”.

BACKGROUND TO THIS REVIEW

The review has looked at a wide range of services focused on local neighbourhoods and working directly with local communities. These are listed in the table overleaf along with their current budgets. Many of these are devolved to our ten district committees, each covering four wards.

Services included in the review **GREEN** = devolved SLA, **RED** = devolved district management

Service Area	Budget Year 2013/14 (£ millions)					
	Gross Expend	Cap Costs	Income	Grants/ Recharges	Other Adjustment	Controllable Budget
Library Services						
Strategic Library Services (Local Services)	27.398	1.430	-0.991	-0.241	-6.628	20.995
Community Libraries (Local Services)						
Community Support & Advice Services						
Local Advice Offices (Local Services)	5.001	0.099	-0.060	-1.172	-0.039	3.829
Legal Entitlement (Local Services)	0.958	0	0	0	0	0.958
Community Chest & Ward Support (Local Ser)	0.653	0	0	0	0	0.653
Community Development Services						
Youth Services (Local Services)	5.120	0.448	-0.600	-1.041	0.193	4.120
Connexions Services (Local Services)	0	0	0	0	3.514	3.514
Adult Education Services (Local Services)	14.209	0.231	-2.804	-11.815	0.180	2.393
Community/Local Development Services (Local Services)	2.304	0.541	-0.982	-0.122	-1.842	-0.101
Community/Local Play Services (Local Services)	0.878	0.048	-0.244	0	0.196	0.878
Equalities Function (Local Services)	1.603	0	0	-0.063	0	1.540
Social Cohesion Challenge Function (Development & Culture)	0.286	0.368	0	0	0	0.654
Local (District) Car Parks (Local Services)	0	0	0	0	0.342	0.342
Housing Services						
Council Housing Service (Local Services - HRA)	65.379	0	0	0	-65.379	0
Homelessness Service (Adult Services)	11.678	0	-7.584	-0.472	7.585	11.207
Supporting People Grant (Adult Services)	34.654	0	0	0	0	34.654
Health and Wellbeing Services						
Public Health (Adults Services)	78.636	0	0	0	0	78.636
Healthwatch (Adults Services)	0.650	0	0	0	0	0.650
Parks and Nature Services (Local Services)	29.999	0.080	-4.008	-10.528	2.247	17.790
TOTAL	279.406	3.245	-17.273	-25.454	-58.435	182.713

The controllable budgets that were reviewed by this Service Review total £182.713m and this includes services delivered by Adults & Communities (£125.147m), Local Services (£56.912m) and Development & Culture (£0.654m).

A significant portion of the services in the Local Services Directorate are devolved, with either direct local management through district teams or devolved services delivered through service level agreements. These devolved services represent 19% of the controllable budget of the services in the review:

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Repairs
- HRA – Estate Management
- HRA Local Office Housing
- Community Libraries
- Youth Services
- Community Development
- Local Play Services
- Lifelong Learning
- Off Street Car Parking
- Local Advice Offices
- Ward Support Officers
- Parks and Nature (approximately 55% of the budget is devolved)
- Grounds Maintenance (approximately 55% of the budget is devolved)

It is clear that we should be challenging services to develop bold and innovative solutions. The central theme in the review is encouraging service areas to deconstruct traditional service delivery patterns and put a clear focus on delivering outcomes for citizens, to maximise prioritised social inclusion outcomes within the parameters of a challenging resource environment.

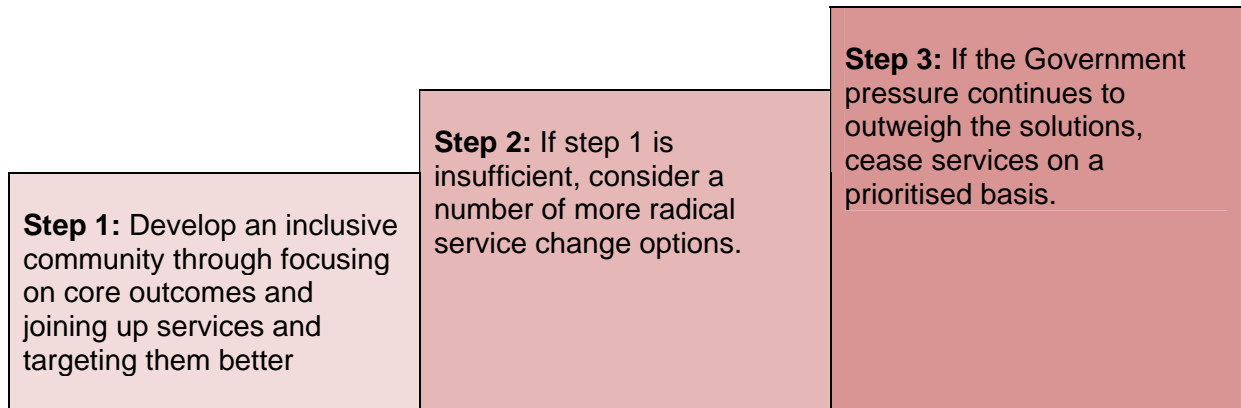
THE APPROACH ADOPTED

Taking on board the commitment in the Leader's Policy Statement 2013-14 that localisation is "at the heart of the policy agenda", a challenge is required for each of these services to be developed through strategic frameworks for local decision making. This builds on the model developed in advance of the Green Paper for the development of Sport and Physical Activity facilities in Birmingham.

Accordingly, we believe that in order to help embed a sustainable model for service delivery we need to consider a number of changes to the basic way in which we do business as a local authority - the details of which are outlined below.

It is acknowledged that no service reviews are constrained by crude savings targets but should be able to identify a route to successful future service delivery even in the face of significant savings requirements.

As a result, an approach which enables the council to progress through a series of stages in order to deliver the savings and the priorities required should be adopted. This is as follows:



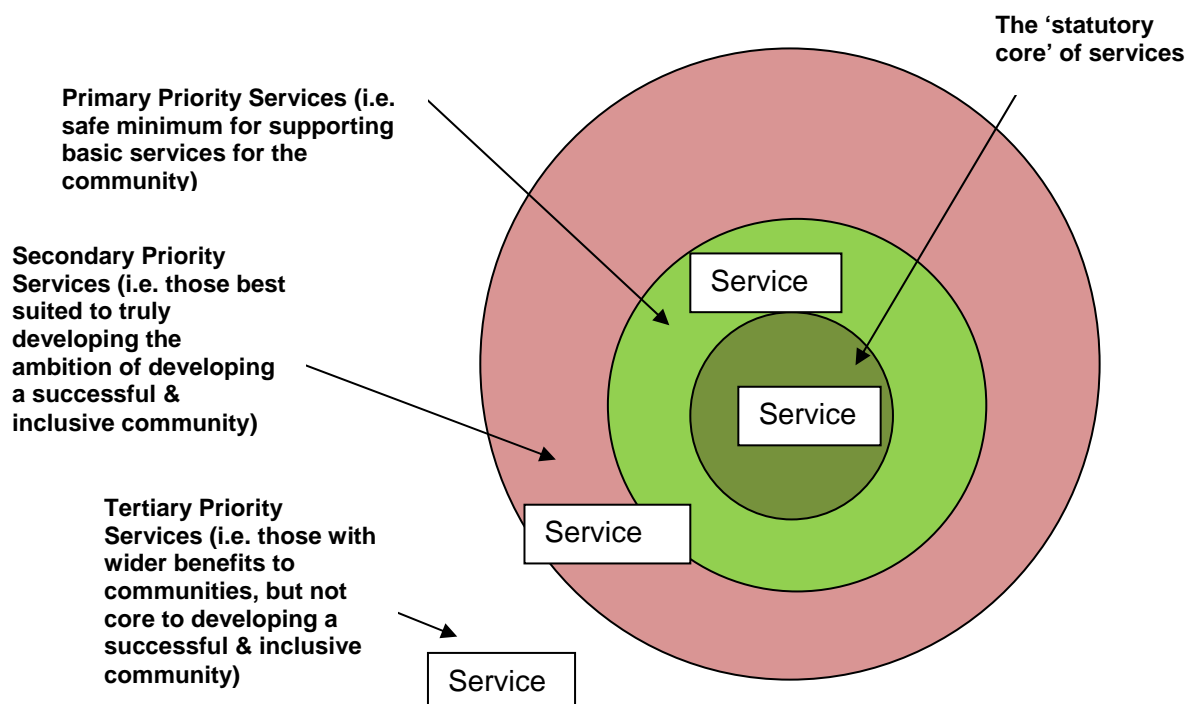
Each step has within it a number of specific proposals, which in turn can help realise a range of potential savings. We are acutely aware that this is a time of unprecedented financial challenge for Birmingham City Council and that the traditional approaches to reducing budgets (efficiencies and “salami slicing”) are no longer sufficient. A number of concepts which represent more radical means to secure both improvements in the support for the community services and savings for the city council have been considered and developed.

There are early savings from reducing back office capacity, better integration, closer working with the private and third sector and increasing partner contribution to citywide priorities, but budget costs will undoubtedly go beyond these opportunities.

Whilst there are some proposals in this document which will create efficiencies and better integrate services, the scale of Government cuts mean that some very difficult decisions will have to be made about who we are able to provide services for. Therefore, in most instances the proposals require careful testing with elected members, stakeholders, partners and the public before being considered for full implementation. However despite the challenges presented, these concepts offer potentially significant gains and so this is the right time to be considering them.

Any proposals for a reduction or discontinuation of services, however unpalatable, will need to be considered within a model approach illustrated in the diagram overleaf.

Outline concept for prioritising services



The controllable service budgets that have been delegated and devolved for delivery by the districts total £52.4m. This will be redistributed to match the profile of need and priority outcomes of each district. On a citywide basis, preliminary analysis would suggest that the distribution of services across the priority categories might be:

Service Description	Budget (millions)
Statutory Core (50% but with local differences following redistribution)	£26.20
Statutory Core + Primary Priority Services (65% but with local differences following redistribution)	£34.06
Statutory Care + Primary + Secondary Priority Services (75% but with local differences following redistribution)	£39.30
Statutory Care + Primary + Secondary + Tertiary Priority Services (100% but with local differences following redistribution)	£52.40

District Committees will be asked to follow the criteria and methodology set out in the review to provide recommended priorities for services devolved to District Committees, but within adjusted budget allocations that reflect the need and priority outcomes of each district, within the defined timescales.

THE INITIAL PROPOSALS ARISING FROM THE REVIEW

PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

The review undertaken has concluded that Birmingham's communities are strong and resilient – but that many people are not able to participate. It has also concluded that the following criteria are important to the development of more successful and inclusive communities:

- Improving Community Life
- Building Social Capital
- Improving Well being
- Improving Community Engagement.

By focusing on these priorities, which are themselves catalysts for promoting change, we hope that communities in Birmingham will be empowered contribute to positively to things that are important to them.

Joined-up Services

- **Local Single Points of Access.** Services operating near to each other in neighbourhoods should be delivered in a joined-up way to benefit citizens. The council has successfully applied this model in areas of the city, such as The Shard, in Shard End, or the Sparkbrook Community and Health Centre (Farm Road).
- **The complementary nature of some services.** Some services naturally fit together, particularly where a citizen who uses one council service is likely to need others as well. An example of this could be linking together services under one banner of supporting the most vulnerable children and young people: Youth Services, Connexions, employment and training, teenage pregnancy unit, voluntary sector youth provision, young people's drug and alcohol education services.
- **Access to services through all access points.** Each service will consider a flexible approach to service delivery so that people looking for support can be helped by all council services. This could include digital access points and not necessarily council staff. If specialist support is required this would be on a targeted and specific basis dependent on the needs of individuals.

Targeting Services

The review has challenged whether it is appropriate for the council to deliver each service across the city and to all citizens or whether they should be targeted at the most vulnerable in our society. It has asked services to consider only delivering services which make a significant difference to outcomes for the citizens of Birmingham. It has also challenged services to reduce council activities where other

agencies and providers have the legal responsibility or are currently serving the same groups of people.

Prevention

We need to move the focus of services from dealing with the symptoms and issues that citizens raise to addressing the underlying reasons why they occur. This approach is consistent with social care services where considerable effort has been made to operate in this way. This indicates that there are considerable savings to be achieved by directing services to early action and prevention instead of more costly support later. The services in this review also need to work with social care, for example in offering early support to families.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DISTRICTS?

We place great importance in the role on the District Committees, in line with the significant commitment in the Leader’s Policy Statement 2013-14.

It is proposed that District Committees undertake an assessment of those devolved services in scope and make recommendations to deliver savings and prioritised outcomes. However, there is a need to ensure that this process is aligned with the strict timetable for the development of the 2014-15 budget and that it is informed by a strategic framework approach. At the heart of this process is a need to move away from the historic alignment of budgets to service to an approach that focuses resources on addressing needs and priority outcomes.

Of the devolved services in scope, there are four broad areas that will require a framework for districts to engage with. For each, in line with the findings of this review, a set of core outcomes, a financial envelope and strategic principles will be defined.

Library Services & Community Support and Advice	Community Development	Health & Wellbeing	Housing Services
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved literacy and learning opportunities • Welfare and employment advice needs addressed 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways into learning and employment secured • Individuals and communities enabled and empowered to co-produce services 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health inequalities addressed 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation of Place • Vulnerable people supported and protected

Methodology

1. Refer to priority outcomes for each service area
2. Assess current service delivery against priority outcomes and whether the current delivery model is fit-for-purpose (e.g. universal or targeted, building based, outreach or web enabled, etc.)
3. Redistribute resources to match need (away from historic allocations)
4. Identify a citywide framework for market subvention (e.g. Sports and Leisure framework) or social market subvention (e.g. co-production through volunteering/community asset transfer)
5. District Committees undertake appraisal of their services to determine primary, secondary priority and tertiary services
6. District Committees make recommendations.

ISSUES FOR DISTRICTS ACROSS ALL SERVICES

Assets and buildings

The council controls a land holding amounting to some 40 square miles or 40% of the city by area. This includes property outside the city boundary. The percentage is in line with other authorities, the scale and extent being commensurate with the size of the city. The property is used for many and varied purposes such as markets; council offices; libraries; roads; recreation grounds; cemeteries; housing; leisure centres; shops; industrial estates; care homes; schools; development land and parks. If we exclude the residential estate and the highway network, this amounts to some 3,900 buildings across 5,000 individual sites, all controlled in one way or another by the Council. The value of the estate as set out in the published accounts for 2011/12 accounts is £4,878m, as at 31 March 2012. The annual cost of maintaining these assets is approximately £70m.

We must focus on the services provided and their underlying outcomes, not the building and assets in which they are located and from where they are being delivered. There are a considerable number of buildings which are underutilised and that, in many instances, the management and budgets associated with managing and maintaining the buildings has distracted from the more important discussions about achievement of outcomes and interventions.

It is recognised that District Committees have a key role to play in helping to manage the buildings and assets that community services are to be delivered from. The evidence gathering stage of the review has identified that there are a lot of buildings that are only used by one service with capacity to be used by others in terms of the space available and times that the building is currently used. There are also a number of older buildings in need of costly repairs, without the infrastructure or capacity to support a modern council service.

Within each set of challenges to services there is an inherent assumption that the service will engage in dialogue with the relevant District Committee to:

- Reduce the number of buildings
- Increase utilisation
- Reduce the burden of maintenance and renovation and
- Reduce the facilities costs.

Work is underway to build on pre-existing asset management plans held by districts and in the development of a Local Facilities Programme (loCAL).

It is understood that there will need to be in place a series of incentives and disincentives to encourage districts to take a proactive approach to property rationalisation. These include:

Incentives

- Modernisation and investment of retained stock of facilities
- Potential for release of some capital receipts
- Consideration of historic premises costs.

Disincentives

- Removal of expenditure budget for facilities that do not fit with priority outcomes.

“Co-production” and self service

A vision is needed whereby local government and the public sector need to change so that they stop delivering support in a paternalistic model. This means that the council, alongside other public sector agencies, needs to change its service delivery models from ‘doing to’ to ‘delivering with’. This is a significant change from the traditional role played by council services and will for some communities be a difficult transition. It is, however, a reality that the council and its citizens will have to come to terms with and step-up to co-delivering.

It is also recognised that citizens in the city are consumers of our services but can also be producers of these services, where the conditions are right for this. This will mean that the role of the community must be re-evaluated so that they can shape their own environments and futures.

In Sutton Coldfield library, for example, self-serve technology has been introduced to enable service users to take and return books and CDs they have borrowed. We should be looking at ways in which more services can be accessed by individuals without the need to visit council offices and speak to council staff, which is an inefficient and expensive way of providing information.

Volunteering

It is clear that there is a role for volunteers to support the delivery of services, leading to a model of service delivery 'by citizens for citizens'. We consider volunteering not only a significant contribution from an individual or group to their community but also as a positive benefit for individuals as it can help them develop skills and experience in order to go on to secure paid employment. As well as giving something back, volunteering can be a counter to social isolation and to improved health and wellbeing.

For example, in Birmingham we have developed a volunteer programme which has resulted in 16,000 volunteer days over the last two years (in specific parts of the city) where citizens are involved in maintaining and supporting the council's parks and open spaces. Other examples could include incentives to encourage local citizens supporting council services such as housing services or youth services. At present the support provided is in addition to council intervention, rather than replacing services.

The council should consider engaging with private sector employers who are running their own Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. The reality of the council's situation is that we will be expecting individuals and groups to play a larger part in delivering services that the council cannot afford to fund.

The role of wider partners

There is a role for other public and private sector agencies, which are currently operating in the city and providing similar or complementary services to citizens individually or collectively. As the council's budget reduces, so does the ability of the council to continue to replicate what others are doing. The same is true of many of our partners who are also facing budget constraints. The council will need to have local and citywide conversations with these partner agencies in order to sensibly rationalise the services in order to protect the delivery of outcomes.

In a number of instances the council is providing services which reduce the costs that will be incurred by other public sector partners. An example of this is the Supporting People Services which reduces the burden on the health sector. In these instances, the council will increasingly be asking the relevant partner agencies to contribute to the cost of these services provided by the council.

The overriding conclusion is that the council needs to map the range of interventions where we are supporting the longer term outcomes and aspirations of partner agencies. In each case, officers of the council with member support will be required to develop strong relationships and dialogue where these difficult conversations can take place where those who are benefitting from the council's interventions are asked to contribute. The discussions taking place must be centred on the need to protect outcomes whilst supporting the overall reductions in budgets that the council is facing.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES TO SPECIFIC SERVICES

Birmingham Library Services

The suite of library services cost £20.995m each year. There are currently 722,594 registered library members, with over 175,000 regularly borrowing books from Birmingham libraries. We fully appreciate the significant savings that have been achieved over the last few years by Community Libraries Services in particular, but take the view that the traditional approach of taking percentage savings will lead to unsustainable services. A more radical approach is required which fundamentally evaluates what a modern library service is and integrates this with a range of other community-focused services, such as Neighbourhood Offices, advice centres or with services provided by the Third Sector.

The vision for this service is to have an integrated City and Neighbourhood Library Service driving literacy. Its purpose would be to provide a range of services targeted at literacy, learning and employment outcomes.

The components of this are:

- Stronger links between the Library of Birmingham and Community Libraries
- Revenue budgets prioritised on face-to-face library services
- Where practical, Community Libraries integrated with Neighbourhood Offices, other council or partner agency facilities as holistic hubs
- Closure and disposing for sale or Community Asset Transfer of surplus buildings as determined by each District Committee
- Council resources prioritised to Community Libraries in areas with literacy deficit and greatest deprivation
- Volunteering and Community / Voluntary Sector / Parish-town-neighbourhood management of Community Libraries in non-priority literacy areas and housebound and mobile services.

The Library of Birmingham has been requested to consider how it will remodel its services provision so it complements and supports the delivery of library outcomes linked to literacy, and the services being provided through community libraries, the mobile library service and the housebound service.

This must include extending the technological and wider resource platform it has across the network of community libraries and the mobile and housebound service.

The Library of Birmingham will be asked to provide outreach support to Birmingham community libraries for those who cannot travel to the Library of Birmingham site in the City Centre.

Community Library Services

Community libraries are managed locally through the ten districts and deliver a service through 39 community libraries and four self-service neighbourhood libraries.

There are four broad areas where libraries have an impact: literacy, knowledge, leisure and community support interventions. The services will be challenged to consider how they contribute to achieving literacy and knowledge outcomes for specific groups of citizens such as older people, long-term unemployed and school

children. Responding to this challenge will reposition the service to a targeted service to those most in need of literacy support.

Districts will be asked to consider how other providers such as schools, colleges and the university libraries replicate services that community libraries provide and to evaluate the effectiveness of their non-literacy outcomes (such as addressing loneliness, encouraging community activity, improving prospects, improving well-being and providing access to services) for key groups of citizens. The challenge is to consider realignment to fit with other services currently provided by the council or partner agencies, including health services, children centres, neighbourhood offices, voluntary groups and third sector organisations.

A strategic framework will be needed that is about greater service integration within the wider local services asset base that will enable District Committees to provide a community library service alongside other services and assets or with the support of partner agencies.

The Mobile Library Service

The service is asked to review its operating model to enable the District Committees to provide a service linked to literacy and knowledge outcomes as they see necessary. This will include complementary working with community libraries and smarter targeting of specific groups.

The Housebound Libraries Service

The service is being asked to review its operational model to reflect district priorities, so that it focuses on specific client groups, such as those that are housebound and do not have other intervention from public sector services. For those in receipt of public sector services such as social care support, the housebound service works with those agencies to support the individual. This might include:

- Targeting particular areas with citizens with high needs
- Consider whether this service can be developed as a traded service and purchased using personalised budgets
- Reviewing the feasibility of procuring hand-held reading devices in place of the home-visiting service
- Exploring whether third sector agencies, such as faith groups, might wish to deliver these services for citizens
- Exploring if volunteers working with Birmingham Community Libraries could provide this service.

Community Support & Advice Services

The vision for these services is that we meet welfare and employment advice and related support needs through integration of neighbourhood advice and third sector advice, with continued provision of neighbourhood offices in areas based on demographic need. The council would expect the third sector and community-led

advice to play a part and in particular those areas where there is a lesser need. The council itself would look to improve online and self-service advice, so that more enquiries are dealt with without the need to visit or have face-to-face contact.

Annual grants are given to third sector organisations to provide legal support to citizens. The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide this service and there are a number of different organisations that provide advice services in the city, only some of which the council supports financially. We will map the current levels of advice services available and refocus support to areas where there are none.

Community Development Services

There are a range of services that are provided by the council to support communities which are devolved to districts. Community Development Services will need to be re-shaped to provide a contribution to community empowerment and employment according to need.

The vision is to support sustainable and successful communities by placing greater emphasis on enabling and empowerment through devolution and the Transforming Place strategy – helping citizens and communities to manage local services or co-produce local services. There would be a modern youth and community development service with less emphasis on delivering outcomes through stand alone buildings and more on outreach and flexible use of existing buildings, particularly libraries and leisure facilities. A further aspect of the community development service is made up of three elements; the management of community buildings; community facilitation via community workers; and support to the third sector. The service works with adults and older people groups and overlaps with outcomes for the Equality and Diversity Team and other services provided by the council, as well as some work undertaken by the parks services.

It is recommended that the services are now focused on literacy, learning and employment-related activities, where possible from the same premises from which other services are provided. A key aspect of the service would also be to build capacity in communities where there is low social capital in order to promote approaches such as co-production of services which save money in other services such as parks or youth services.

Community Chest

The Community Chest is a valuable local resource which continues to be required to undertake some of the local work that cannot be prioritised from mainstream budgets. It is recommended that District Committees:

- Consider the proposals for future Community Chest projects in terms of how to sustain their own district priorities
- Consider using Community Chest to commission services rather than respond to bids

- Consider whether a new approach based on maximising external funding should be introduced, aligning Community Chest with programmes such as Community First.
- Review the administration of Community Chest

Youth Service

This is presently a service for all young people that promotes volunteering and leadership opportunities, but also provides information, advice and guidance at a neighbourhood level. There is a statutory requirement on the local authority, but one which is not defined in quantitative or qualitative terms.

We recognise that the Council is a minority provider of youth activities. There are a considerable number of organisations, community groups and clubs that are operating in our localities that could be accessed by the young people currently attending council youth facilities, such as scouts, cubs, park cricket and football clubs. We need to improve the relationships with these bodies as well as signposting young people to them. Youth Service interventions should be targeted to areas of low third sector provision. In some areas, schools and colleges have shown interest in taking on the running of youth centres, which are usually empty in the school day.

The Youth Service should significantly remodel their services so that they are focused on preventing young people from falling out of education, employment and training and supporting those who are in that situation. The service should consider how it could provide specialist support as early intervention alongside Troubled Families or the Teams around the Family. As this is a devolved service, a strategic framework should be prepared by the Youth Service for each District Committee to determine local solutions, taking on board the principles outlined above.

This could include:

- Consideration of establishing district or area Youth Community Service Boards for young people, bringing a range of agencies with a stake in services for young people
- A review of the current provision in the city from all sectors and including the Youth Service with a focus on rationalising the estate, including community asset transfer
- Consideration of a more flexible and targeted approach with outreach and other forms of flexible youth provision
- Consideration of a commissioned approach with District Committees undertaking local commissioning
- The Youth Service engaging with specific schools so that they can provide funding to support interventions for young people who attend their school
- Retention of a limited number of youth services hubs, including the two 'My Place' buildings running a range of youth-focused services with a mixed package of provision from the council, voluntary sector, clubs, networks etc.

Connexions Service

This is a universal service for young people aged 13-19 (and those up to the age of 25 years who have a learning difficulty or disability) with a statement of education need or who are not in education, employment or training. The purpose of the service is to provide support to move into education, employment or training. A careers information, advice and guidance service is also offered to schools and colleges as a traded service. The service will continue to provide the statutory support to the above groups.

However, it is recognised that a considerable proportion of schools are now purchasing Connexions support from elsewhere or recruiting in-house staff to tailor a service to their own needs.

In a digital age, Connexions should consider themselves to be a key supplier of information via the web about what other services and support are available for young people locally.

Adult Education Service

Adult Education is a provider of adult learning at different venues in the city. The service provides education and training to learners who are often disadvantaged and supports them through the first step back into learning. This is a non-statutory service provided by the Council, 100% funded from grants and fees apart from costs associated with the buildings that the services are provided from.

The primary purpose of the service, in terms of how it complements the Community Services offer, would suggest:

- Sharpening the focus as a pathway to further education, continuing professional development or to employment and target this more effectively in areas of particular need and with client groups with particular needs
- Considering if there are potential funding sources so that the service can change from only supporting adults to considering post 14+ years support if this is required in the community. An example of this might be home-educated 14-16 year olds who could either self-fund or qualify for Government funding
- Building on the partnership approach on community learning, with colleges, on the skills agenda
- Undertaking a citywide review of assets to improve the quality of teaching and learning facilities on a par with colleges, rationalising and divesting from these where necessary, maximising co-location with libraries and colleges, minimising the risk and liability for the local authority in the future
- Working with employers to develop new courses to meet identified skills needs which are funded by them
- Looking at an arm's length delivery arrangement from the Council as a "Community College".

Local Play Services

The play service devolved to districts provides play provision to children aged 4 – 13 years primarily via 14 play centres. This includes nine stand-alone buildings and five community use buildings.

- District Committees, in the context of the framework approach to Community Library and Youth Service provision, should consider: Commissioning this service, in future, in alignment with children's centres
- Discontinuing the service where it duplicates other provision or is in areas of low need

Local (District) Car Parks

This service is the provision of off-street car parks for public and business use. The city provides a range of sites from city centre multi-storey car parks to small local sites supporting small shopping areas.

The local car parks are managed by the districts and the income fed into District Committee budgets. In 2012-13 the income targets were not achieved which meant that an additional £219k needed to be taken from District Committee budgets to cover this cost. These car parks include pay and display sites and some free sites. There is provision for residents and businesses to have contract parking in congested areas.

It is questionable whether the council should be providing these services. Either:

- They could be managed corporately, as a strategic asset, whilst still delivering for the benefit of districts with a possible service level agreement arrangement
- Analysis should be undertaken of these sites to determine if any have significant market value that can be realised and information gathered on current usage rates and potential income levels to determine whether they should be maintained as off-street car parks
- The local car parks that the Council does not wish to retain should be commissioned, either as part of the Business Improvement District process or to operators on long leases, to provide a financial benefit to the council as well managed and maintained.

Housing Services

The vision is for housing management to play a leading role in our wider strategy for neighbourhoods and in shaping the information and advice services in response to welfare reform. Housing will support services which are part of this service review in order to bring in greater investment.

Council Housing Services

Birmingham City Council is responsible for 67,000 tenancies, including 215 high-rise, 4,500 low-rise buildings with the remaining comprising of houses and bungalows. Housing services are funded from rents within the ring-fenced Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Housing Services are requested to review their operations to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the HRA. The service is asked to consider whether there are services currently covered by other sources of funding that should be maintained within the HRA. For example, the service is requested to continue to explore and expand examples of joined-up working such as Housing Services employing Fleet and Waste Management staff to undertake cleaning of housing land and charging this to the HRA.

Housing Services are asked to review its service offer for localities with higher proportions of housing tenants to include additional services such as children's centres, libraries etc. This review would need to be mindful of the rules linked to double charging of citizens from council tax and their housing rents.

A key component of the HRA spend is the repairs and maintenance contract totalling approximately £65m each year, which will be re-commissioned in the next two years. The service is requested to undertake a full evaluation using the Council's Commissioning Toolkit in order to achieve the best outcome.

Homelessness Services

Despite successfully preventing homelessness for over 7,000 households, the city has the highest level of statutory homelessness in the country, and accepted a statutory duty to rehouse 4,000 households last year. The cost of the service to the Council is £11.207m each year. The negative impacts of homelessness in terms of health, education and employment are significant, and this is reflected in the priority given to preventing homelessness in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. As well as achieving better outcomes for individuals, a focus on prevention makes good financial sense. Evidence from a Shelter-commissioned report called 'Value for money in housing options and homelessness services' suggests that the minimum amounts that could be saved per household prevented from becoming homeless, compared to a 'full duty' acceptance, is £1,286.

The service has started to redesign provision. Key housing policies are under review, the front-line service has been redesigned to place greater emphasis on housing advice and support for the most vulnerable, and commissioned support and prevention services are under review.

We must support the changes to the service which increase the focus on preventing homelessness. The service is requested to continue to develop a case management and personalised approach. As part of the focus on preventing homelessness, the development of a Social Lettings Agency should be supported for private sector landlords who want the security of a professional service with the assurance that the city can provide in terms of standards.

The service needs to investigate why people are presenting as homeless and address these issues through preventative measures. The long-term goal should be, as in other areas of the council, to shift spend from crisis help to preventative measures. The service must undertake cost-benefit analysis of their interventions with a view to presenting a business case to agencies which benefit from the Homelessness Service, effectively resolving issues.

Supporting People Grant Services

Supporting People (SP), is a national programme which began in 2003. In Birmingham, SP-funded services deliver responsive and tailored housing-related support services to approximately 45,000 vulnerable people, including a range of services that assist people to secure and maintain suitable accommodation. Government research, commissioned in 2009, demonstrated that Supporting People represents a very effective 'invest to save' programme. Applying the research methodology to Birmingham showed that, in total £51m of annual spend on housing-related support saved £108m of more costly interventions later on. In mental health, a £1 investment gives a £2.20 saving and in services for older people a £1 investment gave a £6.45 saving.

The services are recognised as contributing to supporting the most vulnerable in the community and in many instances prevent more costly interventions being required from the council or other public sector agencies. The service is asked to evaluate its interventions and develop a business case for discussion with other public sector agencies to seek financial support, to potentially increase the preventative outcomes of the service.

Health and Wellbeing

The council provides a range of different services which impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The vision for these services is to tackle health inequality and promote wellbeing. Currently, the provision for sport and leisure and parks services is being refocused as drivers of health and wellbeing improvements through:

- Retained investment in Sport and Physical Activity in Wellbeing Centres in areas where there are no market or community alternatives with market or community delivery elsewhere
- Alignment of public health and other health funding for Wellbeing Centres and activities in parks
- Development of a Wellbeing Bond.

Public Health

The public health function was established in the council in April 2013 and spends £78.6m of funding to deliver mandatory functions and improve public health. About £25m is spent on substance misuse services and £20m on sexual health services. The majority of this funding is tied into NHS contracts which can only be stopped

after a notice period and with additional payments for early termination. Newly commissioned programmes are agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The service should actively engage and commission interventions from council services in order to prioritise and target key groups. These target groups were identified as:

- Those under five years, in order to instil and reward positive behaviours
- Those over 70 years, in order to keep the person active and independent
- Those contacting the homelessness service
- Those with mental health issues and learning disability
- Those being identified or considered high risk in terms of drug and alcohol misuse.

It is appreciated that the service has a role in engaging with the health services, clinical commissioning groups and GP practices in order to commission preventative interventions from the council services. One example of this has been the Be Active programme which is delivered through leisure centres. The service was asked to use evidence-based research to focus on funding interventions which would reduce or stop more intensive services or costs being incurred later.

Priority commissioning areas include:

- Developing lifestyle programmes for those under five years or over 70 years, those who are obese, or with mental health illnesses. The Sports and Parks Services could develop its role to help these groups
- Promoting volunteering and paid employment opportunities for those with learning disabilities
- Working with the Homeless Service to prevent issues escalating to the point that someone requires housing.

Healthwatch

The City Council is funding the provision of an independent organisation called Healthwatch, which is required by law to promote citizen engagement and involvement in health services. The budget is currently provided by the Council in the form of a grant of £0.65m of which £0.31m is financed from ring-fenced Local Reform and Communities Voices Grant.

Healthwatch should be commissioned by the Health and Wellbeing Board, with the allocation of funding next year in the form of a contract with clearly identified measures to assess performance.

Healthwatch should be encouraged to consider how to generate income so that over the next two years it requires less council funding.

Parks and Nature

The service manages 591 parks, open spaces and recreation grounds and 115 allotments. It provides a grounds maintenance service for parts of the city (as part of

contracted arrangements). The service also provides floral enhancements for the whole city and nursery plant production at three sites. In recent years awards have included Chelsea Gold Medal and the National Britain in Bloom Gold Medal. The service costs £17.8m each year, 55% of the budget being devolved to districts.

Consideration should be given to ways that allotments can be further opened up to community groups and schools. The intention would be that capacity is increased within Allotment Associations so they all become self-sustaining within the next two years.

There are times when the parks are currently underutilised. The service must work with community groups, faith organisations, clubs and partners to increase the utilisation of parks and open spaces and also with Public Health to develop initiatives and programmes that can be commissioned by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

There is scope for additional income to be generated by the service. Ideas to be explored include:

- Investigating charging for car parking, particularly where non-park users (such as employees of local businesses or those going to the local shops) are benefiting from using them
- Investigating extending commercial interests in parks
- Investigating commercial sponsorship of flowers beds, litter bins etc

A large proportion of the costs of parks are linked to cutting and maintaining the grass. At present the cost of maintaining the parks and nature/grounds maintenance services is £17.790m each year. The service is asked to consider developing a business model which includes:

- Planting slow growth grass which requires less maintenance
- The cost implications of reducing the standard for grass cutting and tree pruning
- Working with Business Improvement Districts in order to sponsor floral enhancements and displays
- Involving volunteers who are supported to provide service, thereby reducing the overall costs of the service.

There is a competitive market available in the city for services that provide landscape practice, and nursery plant production. The service is asked to introduce further initiatives that will add income to the council.

Sport Services

These services are subject to a separate green paper which has been published and available on the Council's website www.birmingham.gov.uk/servicereviews.

Districts must consider whether to retain or update existing leisure facilities as 'wellbeing centres' balancing the profiles and priorities of their district with the contribution to tackling deprivation and raising health outcomes.

KEY QUESTIONS

The scale of Government cuts mean that some very difficult decisions still need to be made about who we are able to provide services for. As such, your voice is more vital than ever in determining how we do this in the fairest way possible.

1. Where services are currently universally delivered across the city irrespective of the circumstances of individuals, should the council target services to the most vulnerable people in Birmingham?
2. Where elements of services are not statutorily required should the council stop delivering these services?
3. Where a service or element of a service is being replicated in parts of the city and/or delivered by others, should the council stop delivering it?
4. Where a service has robust evidence to support early intervention and prevention, should the council direct more of its resources to stop costly interventions later?
5. Where a local asset is being under used or is costly in terms of maintenance/renovation costs, should the council close the building and move the service to a different one so it is more cost effective? This could include co-located services where a number of services are delivered from the same building or Community Asset Transfer where it is appropriate.
6. Would you support a service in changing the way it works with citizens so it was co-produced, or expected you to self-serve?
7. Would you support a service in changing the way it works so that volunteers were enabled to provide services?
8. During tough economic times, are these the correct priorities for the Birmingham library services? Do you agree that the options set out for all areas of the service will result in a more targeted, integrated and sustainable service?
9. Do you agree with the proposals for specific services? Comments are welcome on any of the proposals:
 - a. Birmingham Library Services (the Strategic Library Service, Mobile Libraries Service, Library Services at Home, Community Library Services)
 - b. Community Support & Advice Services (Local Advice Offices, Legal Entitlement, Community Chest and Ward Support)
 - c. Community Development Services (Youth Service, Connexions Services, Adult Education Service, Community/Local Development Services, Local Play Services, Local Car Parks)
 - d. Housing Services (Council Housing, Homelessness Services, Supporting People Grant Services)
 - e. Health and Wellbeing (Public Health, Healthwatch)
 - f. Parks and Nature

If not, how would you change the service to continue to deliver the council's vision whilst reducing the costs?

THE DIALOGUE

This round of dialogue will continue into autumn 2013. Following that there will be a formal budget consultation for 2014-15 that will be a separate exercise which we are legally required to carry out.

All the information you need will be posted at:

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/servicereviews>

You will be able to take part in the dialogue by:

- Sending your comments by post or email
- Submitting comments on Facebook and via Twitter
- Attending the next meeting of your Ward Committee

Details for all these are on the website.

In addition we will be holding discussion sessions on specific services with groups of service users and other interested people.

If you are part of the network of people and organisations involved in our social inclusion process, led by the Bishop of Birmingham, you will also be able to join in discussions of how we can limit the impact of cuts on social exclusion and inequality.

City Council staff will also be encouraged to join in the debate.