



urbancentres toolkit

November 2018

Toolkit

The toolkit below provides practical advice and information to communities, businesses, local groups, landowners and other organisations on how to make their local centre more active, attractive, and connected.

Enhancing activity

enhancingactivity



Organising an event

Events can be a great way to draw people to centres and parades, bringing communities together ranging from local markets and community festivals to pop up shops. They can showcase what's going on in a place and generate interest. The Council's Outdoor Events Organisers Guide provides useful advice to help organisers plan and run successful events:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/267/outdoor_entertainment_events_guide



Holding an occasional market or fair

Markets and fairs can attract people into centres to spend money, as well as support local producers and small businesses. If you would like to hold a one off or an occasional market or fair in Birmingham, you must apply for a licence from the City Council:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20150/markets_and_street_trading/275/hold_an_occasional_market_or_fair



New housing

High quality housing in urban centres breathes life into these places particularly in evenings and at weekends. A growing residential community also supports local shops and businesses. Centres will have under-used or empty property on upper floors or around the edges of the centre. Conversion to residential use will, in principle, be supported. For guidance on developing new homes in or close to centres and parades contact the Council's Planning and Regeneration Department:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningandregeneration



Getting planning permission

It is important to check if planning permission is required before making improvements or changes to a property. The link below provides a step-by-step guide and you can apply for permission online:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20008/planning_and_development



Business support

Enterprise is critical to creating active urban centres whether it might be in the private sector, social enterprise or a community group. For support and advice you can contact:

Birmingham Business Hub provide a range business support and advice:

www.gbslepgrowthhub.co.uk

Getting start-up business loans:

www.startuploans.co.uk/funding

Grant support for existing B2B SMEs:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/bgp

Advice on starting food business:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/runningafoodbusiness

Registering your business with HMRC:

www.gov.uk/new-business-register

Business rates guidance:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/businessrates

Assistance with recruiting and training employees:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/employmentaccess



Enhancing local identity and design

enhancing local identity and design



Improving a shopfront

Appropriately designed shopfronts and their continued maintenance have a great impact on the attractiveness of a centre. Undertaking improvements to a shopfront may require planning permission. It is always good to get advice from the Council's Development Management Team. The City Council's Shopfront Design Guide provides useful guidance on good design and sets out how proposals will be assessed:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1185/shopfront_design_guide



Marketing and promotion

Communicating what a centre has to offer and the activities that are taking place helps centres and parades raise customer awareness and generate sales. For advice on centre management and marketing contact Business Improvement Districts via the City's BID Coordinator:

wayne.pell@birmingham.gov.uk

Association of Town Centre Managers:
www.atcm.co.uk

Marketing Birmingham:
www.marketingbirmingham.com



Empty homes

Homes that stand empty can sometimes be a target for squatters, vandals or burglars. As part of a nationwide plan to get empty properties back into use, the City Council asks you to tell us about empty homes:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20006/housing/749/report_an_empty_home



Enhancing public space

The City Council maintains grass, shrub beds, flowerbeds and hedges on land owned by the Council. You can report overgrown hedges or shrubs to the City Council:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20089/parks/167/grass_cutting_shrub_and_hedge_maintenance/3



Enhancing connectivity

enhancingconnectivity



Public transport

Network West Midlands provides details of routes and timetables:

www.networkwestmidlands.com



Walking and cycling

The Council is encouraging cycling through a comprehensive programme of improvements to routes, facilities, training and events as well as cycle loans and hire:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/sustainabletravel
www.bhamcyclerevolution.org



Parking

The Council's car parking guidance provides information on appropriate levels of parking for various uses:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/carparkingSPD

Public car parking within centres both on and off street is managed by the Council's Highways Management Team:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20013/roads_travel_and_parking

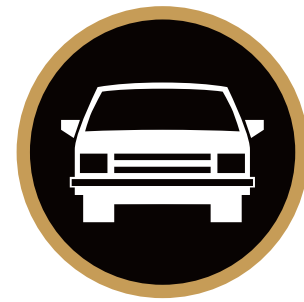


Digital connectivity

Access to fast and reliable broadband is essential for many businesses and attracts residents and visitors. The Council requires that all new commercial and residential developments include the appropriate infrastructure to provide high speed internet access.

For advice on how to bring digital connectivity and smart technologies to your area contact Digital Birmingham:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/digitalbirmingham



Car clubs

Car clubs are an alternative to owning your own car. They provide the opportunity to reduce overall dependence on the car.

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20013/roads_travel_and_parking/510/car_clubs



Green Travel Districts

Birmingham Connected is Birmingham's long term strategy for its transport system. Its vision is to reinvent the system to meet current and future mobility challenges; facilitating strong and sustainable economic growth by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport. Green Travel Districts are acting as a catalyst in reducing private car use by prioritising investment in sustainable modes of travel.

www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20013/roads_travel_and_parking/498/birmingham_connected





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toolkit

The Urban Centres Framework Toolkit produced by
Birmingham City Council, Planning and Development, Economy Directorate.