

# lighting places

A lighting strategy for the city centre  
and local centres of Birmingham

the **birmingham** plan  
birmingham's local development framework

 Birmingham City Council

JUNE 2008



## foreword

Lighting Places has been written as a response to an increasing desire by the development community and Birmingham City Council to enhance the night-time environment of the City and show it off to best effect. The strategy aims to create a dynamic, exciting and safe night-time City environment with an iconic, easily recognisable skyline. To this end Birmingham was one of the original signatories to Lighting Communities International (LUCI) an international association of cities committed to developing and sharing strategic and technical innovations in the use and promotion of light.

Lighting the City will happen in many ways. Developers, land owners and the business community will incorporate lighting proposals into developments; organisations will include lighting as part of celebrations, events and festivals and the City Council will initiate and facilitate lighting partnerships between the public and private sectors, as well as managing the planning process to achieve enhanced lighting within the City.

There have already been a number of new lighting schemes including, the Hall of Memory, turning Selfridges green for St Patrick's Day, St Paul's Church and in 2006 Birmingham held its first Light Festival in Eastside.

This is just the beginning, the cumulative effect of lighting schemes as part of new developments, particularly within the City Centre, will place Birmingham at the forefront as an international City at night as well as during the day.

Councillor Neville Summerfield,  
Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

Councillor Peter Douglas Osborn,  
Chairman of the Planning Committee.



# lighting places

Supplementary Planning Document



JUNE 2008

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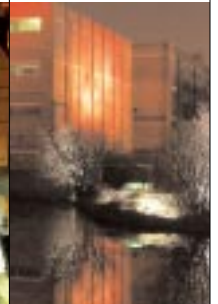
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THE PEOPLE'S

# 1

## introduction

**Birmingham is an international city with a thriving business community, a high quality built environment, a rich and diverse cultural community an arts programme and a growing number of visitor attractions.** As a 24 hour city there are increasing levels of activity into the night that should be supported by a co-ordinated lighting strategy that compliments guidance for the built environment generally and the city centre and local centres specifically.

Lighting Places supports the aspirations of the other design policy guidance for Birmingham by providing guidance aimed at enhancing the functional and aesthetic quality of lighting in all its forms as they relate to amenity and safety in the external public places, streets and squares, and on the outside of buildings within the city centre and local centres. It is not a general street lighting strategy, dealing with the complex technical aspects of lighting. That is covered by a sister document 'Street Lighting Design Policy' May 2005. It is a guidance document that should be used by developers and architects to inform the lighting element of their planning submissions. These will be submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement now required to accompany all planning applications.

Lighting is a key element that affects how we feel about a place. It will influence whether we will visit places after dark, how we travel around places in the dark, whether we feel safe enough to walk or use public transport. Lighting can influence how visually attractive a place is at night, it can be used to highlight whole buildings or architectural features, to define streets and spaces and reflect

the architectural and use character of a place. It can also be public art in its own right both as a light sculpture for example or as specially designed street furniture, and it can be used to create a spectacle for celebrations, special places or occasions.

The function and aesthetic of lighting in external public places is determined by the street lights used and the form and character of the light produced. Not everywhere will require specially designed street lights, light sculptures or architectural lighting, but everywhere needs lighting appropriate to the neighbourhood uses, the character of the place and the level of actual or predicted activity. The lighting used on the major highways will vary from the public squares and pedestrianised areas. Residential lighting will be different to that found in the entertainment areas while lighting in industrial areas will be different again.

The city centre is made up of different areas with different uses, different architectural characteristics and qualities and different levels and types of activity at different times of the day and night. Each area needs to be considered on its merits and lighting requirements. Some areas will see no change either in the built environment or in the lighting provided. In other areas there will be considerable change and it is here that Lighting Places should have the most impact. Similarly local centres have their own character that lighting can help reinforce. Adopted policy and guidance on lighting for specific areas will encourage developers to provide imaginative lighting that helps define the character of the area, but also enhances the night-time appearance of the schemes.

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Lighting other than functional street lighting has predominantly been through individual initiatives not part of an overall vision for the city. Consequently the impact overall is less than if it had been orchestrated collectively through a shared vision. A function of this strategy is to draw together the variety of different lighting initiatives and guide them.

Lighting the city will happen in a number of ways. The emphasis will be for developers, land owners and the business community to incorporate lighting proposals either individually or as groups into redevelopment and refurbishment programmes. Organisations will include lighting as part of celebrations, events and festivals and the city council will initiate lighting partnerships with the public and private sector.

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# 2

## the world connection

**Over the past four years** Birmingham has extended its close relationship with the City of Lyon, a city recognised as a World City of Light, to develop a working relationship on all aspects of lighting. In 2001, at a conference focussed around Lyon's annual Festival of Light, Birmingham was one of the original signatories to an international association of cities committed to developing and sharing strategic and technical innovations in the use and promotion of light. The association subsequently formed is known as LUCI, the Lighting Urban Communities International.

[www.luciassociation.org](http://www.luciassociation.org)

Birmingham, as a member of LUCI, supports the organisation's primary objectives, as follows:

- To foster multilateral exchange of experience, ideas, creations, technologies and expertise.
- To encourage exchange of technical experts.
- To organise theme based meetings.
- To help public authorities undertake concerted action to promote illumination projects.
- To provide a structure for this exchange within the scope of an international network of local public authorities.
- To create arenas for research and experimentation and/or operations.
- To include lighting issues within a perspective that is both environmentally friendly and in favour of sustainable development.
- To enable the cities to develop an identity by means of their artistic or technical choices.
- To impose lighting as a tool for promotion of the cities.





# 3 aim of the strategy

The Lighting Strategy has been prepared based on the general guidance set out in Chapter 3 - Environment and Chapter 15 - City Centre of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005 (incorporating Alterations approved by the City Council for adoption on 11 October 2005).

Paragraph 3.14G of the Plan states of the City at Night that:

*'The image of the City at night, and particularly of the City Centre, should have the highest quality if Birmingham is to be seen as an attractive place after dark. At a basic level, well-designed lighting helps to improve pedestrian safety, road safety and legibility. An approach combining high quality lighting of buildings, places and spaces, can enhance the quality of the environment and even change it to create a more exciting night-time character. However, the City Council wishes to limit light pollution by avoiding unnecessary uplighting. The local planning authority will encourage developers to provide imaginative lighting that enhances the night-time appearance of the scheme and the amenity of the area. In appropriate circumstances these will be secured through the use of Section 106 agreements. This will be particularly important in the case of major projects in prominent locations.'*

The Big City Plan currently being prepared is an ambitious plan looking to the next 15-20 years in the life of the city. The city at night will be a key part of this and consequently so will lighting the city.

the image of the city at night, and particularly of the city centre, should have the highest quality

Following from this the aims of Lighting Places are:

To enhance the functional and aesthetic quality of lighting in all its forms in order to:

- Create an exciting and dynamic night-time city environment.
- Develop an iconic city skyline.
- Make public places safer.
- To give greater amenity value to public places.

As a consequence this should contribute to attracting more people and businesses to Birmingham, particularly the city centre. This in turn should:

- Increase the vibrancy of the city centre.
- Expand the functions of the city centre over a wider area.
- Enhance the city centre 'quarters' distinctiveness, individual character and interest.

The strategy is designed to guide lighting proposals made as part of new developments, and for the enhancement of existing streets, buildings and spaces including water. To encourage lighting schemes as part of festivals and celebrations and to recognise the

role lighting in the city centre can play in publicising Birmingham to a widespread audience.



nine

300 33

# 4

## areas covered by the strategy

The strategy will cover **Birmingham city centre** as defined by the Birmingham Plan and local centres in greater Birmingham. These are identified in the constituency chapters of the Birmingham Plan.

The city centre will be where most new lighting initiatives and events will be concentrated. This is because of its size, status and the high level of activity it enjoys. As a consequence the detail within Lighting Places concentrates on places in the city centre where enhanced lighting is appropriate.

There are proposals within Lighting Places that are specific to the city centre, these will be considered along side other existing policy that also applies to the city centre when development proposals are prepared and assessed.

Local centres are addressed collectively. There are some policies specific to local centres although the general principles behind the type and quality of lighting provision that is made applies equally to the city centre and local centres.

The city centre is bounded by the ring road. Within this area there are a number of areas or quarters defined by their built characteristics, the primary uses within them and the levels of activity they enjoy. The Birmingham Plan defines these areas. In this document some have been subdivided to identify in more detail where significant changes are taking place, for example the Irish Quarter, Attwood Green/Park Central, Bath Row/Mailbox.





# both the city centre and local centres thrive on activity

Within greater Birmingham there are many local centres characterised predominantly by retail, entertainment and leisure uses at their centre and surrounded by residential uses. Many of these have developed from villages and often retain some of that character and heritage. Some are still referred to locally as 'the village'.

For the purposes of Lighting Places a local centre is taken as being the main shopping street or area where there is significant commercial non residential activity.

Local centres are subject policies set out in the Birmingham Plan as well as Supplementary Planning

Documents that can be area or topic specific. Lighting Places will add to this existing raft of policies and will be considered alongside them when development proposals are prepared and assessed.

Both the city centre and local centres thrive on activity. Good quality appropriate lighting is one element of urban environments that helps sustain activity by making places safer and more attractive, consequently people are more confident to use them.

The general principles behind the type and quality of lighting provision that is made applies equally to the city centre and local centres.

Guidance on floodlighting sports facilities and car parks is set out in a separate Supplementary Planning Document.





# 5 night-time city skyline

**Lighting can have a significant effect on the city's skyline** viewed from both within and outside the city centre. The city's built skyline is changing; new taller buildings are piercing through it with dramatic effect. Taller structures punctuating views and rising above neighbouring buildings give the opportunity to introduce lighting schemes that act as beacons guiding people to different parts of the city.

The city centre ridge either side of Broad Street, Colmore Row and Steelhouse Lane, dropping down to the Rea and Hockley valleys

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creates a dramatic skyline with its taller buildings that can be seen from many vantage points around the city. This will add to important long views of the city skyline from as far away as Barr Beacon and Coventry as well as from nearer into the city centre around Newtown, Highgate, Balsall Heath and Gravelly Hill.

Lighting to complement this built form will emphasise the topography at night and add to the drama of the night-time skyline of the city centre.

The skyline effect, particularly within the city centre can also be enhanced through temporary lighting installations as part of special events and annual celebrations and festivals like Arts Fest.

The quality and character of the night-time skyline is also important for people travelling around or through the city centre whether on foot or by car, train or bus. Views of the collective effect of lighting, both general street lighting and more dramatic lighting of buildings and spaces, will have a significant impact on people and needs to be orchestrated to best effect.

Night-time lighting should similarly improve local centres but at the same time be mindful that many have residential uses very nearby. Consequently lighting schemes in local centres and on buildings in the greater Birmingham area will be different to those in the city centre.



# 6

## general principles

Lighting is concerned with more than just illuminating a place to meet a specific technical standard. Lighting within the public spaces and on the exterior of buildings of Birmingham will be carefully managed through planning control and street lighting processes within the City Council. To ensure that lighting proposals in the street provide the required level of lighting, and the hardware is of an acceptable standard that can be maintained the guidance provided by the City Council's Lighting Engineers relating to Street Lighting Design Policy; Specifications for the Supply of Lighting Materials and Standard Detail Drawings for Lighting will be used. These documents should be used in conjunction with this document 'Lighting Places' which is about the aesthetic quality of light and lighting hardware, light as public art and celebration lighting. Lighting Places establishes criteria relating to location, and building character, to identify where enhanced lighting should be concentrated. In addition it considers the form of the light used and lighting the city in a sustainable way.

lighting is concerned  
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illuminating a place

### policy

### 1

Enhanced lighting schemes will be expected in places or on buildings that contribute to the regeneration of the city centre or local centres because of their location, use, heritage or design. Such schemes will assess how illumination can add to both the economic and amenity value of a development, enhance the city's environment and add to the distinctiveness, individual character and interest of the city centre quarters or local centres.

Where a lighting scheme is proposed or required details of the proposal including a design rationale will be submitted as part of the Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application.

Detailed issues that need to be considered are:

- What is being lit.
- That a calculation will be made by Birmingham City Council in respect of commuted sums to include but not necessarily be restricted to the following:

- Energy.
  - Maintenance.
  - Accessibility.
  - Replacement of whole unit or component parts.
  - Vulnerability to wilful or vehicular damage.
- Where the City Council would be responsible for future running and/or maintenance of the installation.

- The role of the lighting proposal in enhancing safety and security in a building or space.
- Whether there is a need for an Aerodrome Safeguarding Assessment.
- Responsibility for future maintenance of lighting installations.
- The lighting columns or lanterns used, including consideration of future management and maintenance, minimising light pollution, sustainability and energy conservation measures.
- The form of the light.

- The colour of the light, for example white light sources show more natural colour.
- The position of the lights.
- The impact/effect/intrusion of the lighting hardware and the light shed, particularly in relation to residential uses, light pollution and possible nuisance to neighbours.
- The subtlety or extravagance of the light.
- The light required to create the desired mood/ambience in areas of different character or different uses, including containment of light within the area it is designed to light.
- The potential to vary the light to provide for different circumstances/activities and to switch off lights when not needed.
- Appropriate additional use that can be made of the lighting hardware - banners/flowers/signage, public art, celebration lights.



# 7 sustainability

**Within Birmingham public expectation and safety dictate that levels of night-time light are good.** Added to this is the aspiration to create an exciting and dynamic night-time city environment through enhanced lighting. This has to be achieved within a context of sustainability, that is energy conservation, minimising light pollution and nuisance and protecting biodiversity.

Enhanced lighting is not simply about more, brighter lights; it is the intelligent management of light to achieve specified aims. This will not guarantee that less energy will be used overall but it will require that installations are energy efficient and that the use of renewable forms of energy is a consideration in the design of new schemes.

## Energy conservation

The City Council is committed to increasing its use of renewable forms of energy, reducing carbon emissions and being more efficient in the way energy is used (see the Birmingham Plan paragraphs 3.79-3.79D Energy). Lighting the city at night uses significant amounts of energy, in both the public and private sectors. Regeneration and development, public and private, that includes lighting proposals provides an opportunity to make lighting the city more energy conscious and efficient while still contributing to a dynamic night-time city. Replacement of inefficient street lights for example with more efficient, technologically intelligent equipment could provide better lighting at similar energy cost. If this is coupled with more innovative lighting schemes involving partnerships between the public and private sectors more efficiencies may be possible but with better more aesthetically pleasing lighting schemes.

## Light pollution and statutory nuisance

Light pollution from Birmingham makes it one of the Country's 'hotspots'. This is to be expected because of the dense and extensive nature of cities and the amount of night-time activity that takes place within them, in the city centre particularly. Birmingham will continue to glow more than the rural areas around it, because of this. It is a regional centre and night-time activity is part of this function. However light pollution is made worse by poorly designed and controlled lighting. This wastes energy by allowing light to spill up into the sky. Uncontrolled undirected light can also cause nuisance, for example, preventing or interrupting sleep, or creating glare that hinders visibility. Under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 problems caused by artificial light emitted from premises so as to be prejudicial to health, or a nuisance can be actioned by the City Council as a statutory nuisance.

## Biodiversity

Artificial light at night can adversely affect the habitat of some plants and animals, particularly in sensitive locations like the canal network, other watercourses like the River Rea and areas of green open space. New lighting proposals will need to provide an assessment of their impact on natural habitats or notable species.

The Council has a statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity, and is required to take account of legally protected species (such as bats and peregrine falcons) and other species of conservation importance through the planning process. The City Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity across the city and is a partner in the Biodiversity Action Plan for Birmingham and the Black Country.

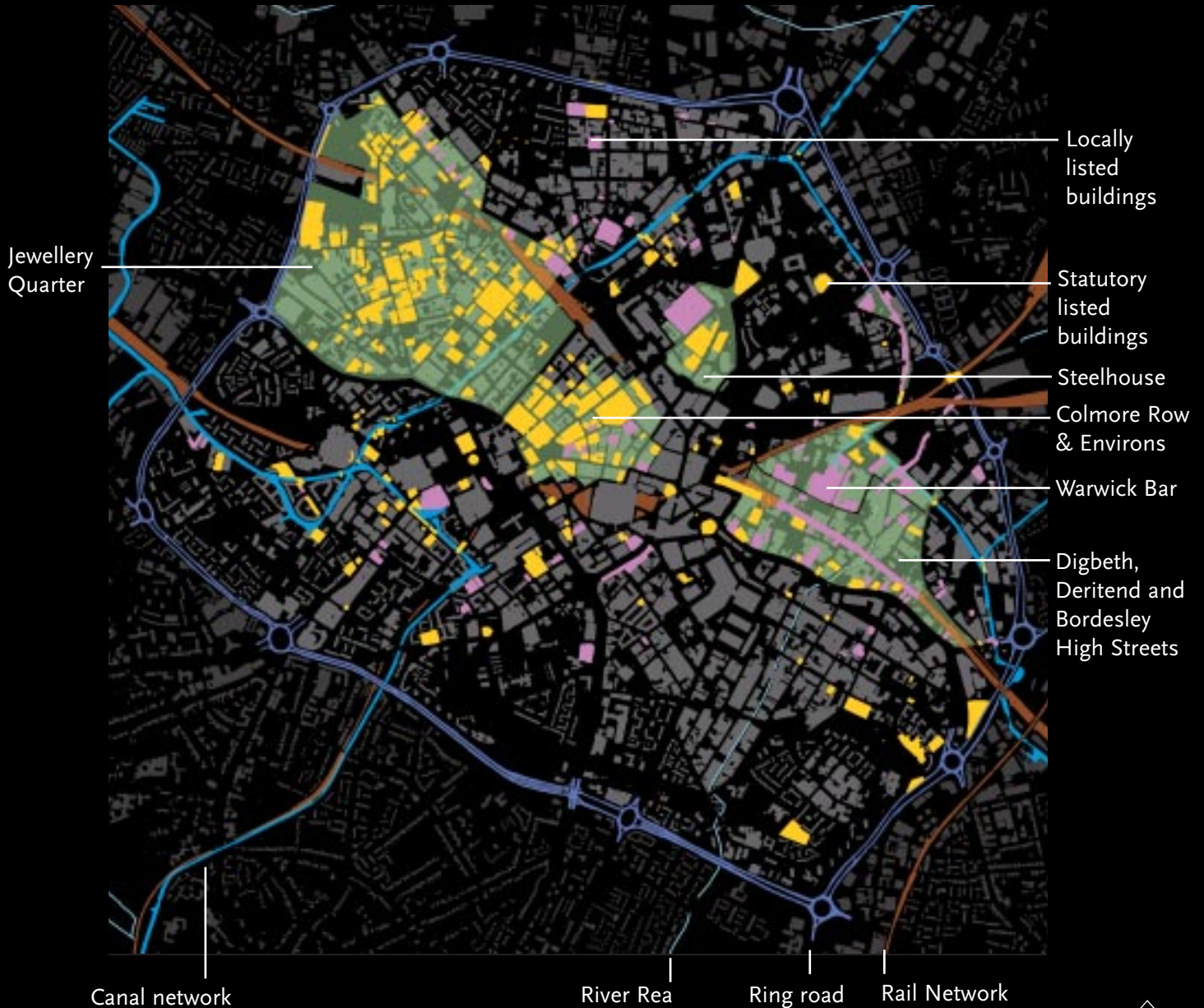
Better designed and controlled lighting schemes can save energy, control light pollution, and reduce the impact of artificial night-time light on flora and fauna in the city, but at the same time improve the aesthetic quality of the light and the lighting equipment used.

enhanced lighting is not simply  
about more, brighter lights



## policy 2

- New lighting proposals will assess as part of the overall design process the use of renewable sources of energy. This will be included in the design and access statement submitted as part of the planning application to demonstrate a commitment to a reduction in carbon emissions.
- New lighting schemes will use durable energy efficient lighting equipment that is easily maintained. The guidance provided by the City Council's lighting engineers should be used in the preparation of the design. Where necessary their approval will be sought, for example enhanced street lighting.
- Where appropriate lights will be switched off in the early morning in order to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions. Each proposal will be assessed on its merits but this will apply particularly to external decorative lighting of buildings, light sculptures and celebration lights. This will be the subject of planning conditions where appropriate.
- Any new lighting schemes in sensitive locations will not damage or adversely affect the habitat and night-time activities of notable species. A statement demonstrating this based on specific survey work to assess current usage of the site and environs, by wildlife, will be included as part of the planning application. The advice of the City's ecologist and biodiversity officer should be sought at an early stage in any lighting proposal.
- Measures to direct and control light to prevent light spillage and nuisance will be integral to the design of the proposal. Detailed design drawings demonstrating this will be submitted as part of the planning application, or exceptionally in order to discharge a planning condition.
- Opportunities for lighting to be multifunctional, for example lighting the street and the exterior of buildings at the same time should be explored as part of the initial lighting requirement assessment. Innovative solutions to provide sustainable lighting are encouraged.





## local distinctiveness and conservation

**The city centre is divided into quarters that reflect their character** in terms of building age, style and use. Within these are a significant number of listed buildings and structures and extensive conservation areas. Similarly local centres have their own individual character, and often include listed buildings and conservation areas like Aston Hall, Edgbaston Conservation Area and Perrots Folly. Maintaining a distinction between places and building through diversity rather than creating homogeneity will help increase the interest and vibrancy of the city centre and cater for the differing needs of a wider range of people.

The land uses and conservation status of different areas will affect the type of

lighting that is appropriate. Lighting should contribute to local distinctiveness and be appropriate to the uses of the area.

The lighting used will be appropriate for the existing and new uses that are moving into the city centre. Lighting within the Jewellery Quarter and the City Core for example will in some parts reflect the historic character and the conservation status of many of the buildings and spaces. Whereas in areas of significant change like the Bath Row/ Mailbox area and the Irish Quarter where there is more contemporary architecture mixed with reused 19th and 20th century industrial buildings more flexible imaginative lighting schemes could be appropriate.

Supplementary Planning Documents have been prepared for a number of conservation areas within Birmingham. The guidance set out in these documents will be followed when designing new lighting proposals within these areas, in conjunction with the policies in this document.

English Heritage have also produced guidance for the external lighting of Historic Buildings that can be found at: [www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/External\\_lighting2.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/External_lighting2.pdf)

### policy 3

Local distinctiveness and heritage in the city centre and local centres will be reinforced through good quality, appropriate lighting of both buildings and spaces.

lighting should contribute  
to local distinctiveness



# 9

## areas of change

### The City Centre

The city centre is in the process of significant change. New development is happening across the whole area within the ring road and this is the catalyst needed to create a distinctive night-time environment through imaginative and innovative lighting schemes.

Regeneration strategies stimulate change that results in planning applications for specific development sites. Redevelopment of much of the area south west of the city, around Brindleyplace and Attwood Green has happened in this way. The same is happening to the east through Eastside, the Irish Quarter and Aston University. There is potential for further change around Southside and the Gun Quarter. The expansion of city centre activities, and particularly the increasing amount of residential accommodation as part of mixed-use developments, will draw people into the city and stimulate activity across the wider area.

Consequently there is a need, and an opportunity for different lighting regimes that can contribute to the aspiration to enhance the functional and aesthetic quality of lighting, in all of its forms, and create an exciting and dynamic night-time city environment.

### Local centres

Enhanced lighting in local centres will normally be confined to the main shopping/commercial area and will mainly relate to public realm works like street lighting and lighting in public squares. Lighting of buildings in local centres will generally be of buildings of architectural merit or significance where this will not cause a nuisance to neighbours.

### policy

### 4

Change through new development and enhancement of the city's streets, spaces and buildings provides the opportunity for enhanced lighting and will be used as the catalyst to provide functional and aesthetic lighting that contributes to a dynamic and exciting night-time city environment.

New developments in specific locations that meet the criteria set out in policies 5,6,7,8 and 9 of 'Lighting Places' will be expected to consider enhanced lighting as part of the development proposal.

Developers will be expected to prepare a lighting scheme as part of the Design and Access Statement submitted with the planning application, where a lighting scheme is appropriate.

Enhanced lighting schemes will be secured through planning conditions where necessary.

create a distinctive night-time  
environment through imaginative  
and innovative lighting schemes







# 10

## lighting buildings, streets and spaces

**The city centre and local centres need to make a statement on a number of levels, one of which is lighting.** They will be exciting and vibrant places but at the same time have quieter calmer areas where people live and where activity diminishes later into the night.

Streets and public spaces are places where a variety of activities take place. They are places where people live, work, shop and enjoy leisure time. They are places we travel through. They can be narrow or wide, enclosed or open. They can be pedestrianised, public transport routes, for access or through traffic or a mixture of these. All these activities have functional lighting requirements and there is an opportunity to enhance the character and quality of the place through the lighting we use.

Streets and public spaces all need some level of lighting when it is dark. Buildings are lit internally when in use and this light will spill out into the public realm and create an effect on the streetscape but they can also be lit externally.

The base standard of street lighting can be augmented or substituted with lighting for different purposes, floodlighting buildings, highlighting architectural features, festival lighting and artistic lighting for example. The form, character and location of lighting should all contribute to achieving successful, appropriate and sustainable lighting schemes in different areas of the city. Innovative lighting proposals could contribute to more sustainable lighting of the city not only through the type and quality of the lighting

hardware used but by making lighting systems dual purpose, functional and aesthetic for example.

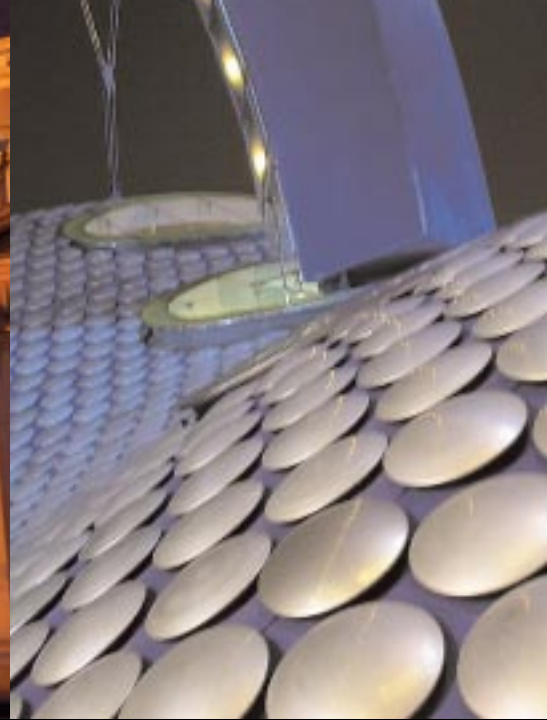
As city centre activities spread over a wider area so the lighting character of places will change. Mixed-use developments logically lead to mixed-use streets. Competing demands for street space and more pedestrians will result in different lighting design solutions within the public realm, on and within buildings.

Main access roads into the city centre will continue to carry most traffic but there will be demand for their built character and how the streets are used to change, consequently lighting regimes may need to be modified to accommodate this.

The spread of entertainment, leisure and residential activities will also affect how more minor streets are used. The more direct and connected streets are the better they are for pedestrians and the more they will be used, thus good quality street lighting will be important.

An advantage of living in both the city centre and local centres should be that it is safe and easy to walk from home to work or the shops or the station for example. New residential developments in the city centre particularly need to be part of walkable neighbourhoods and good street lighting is part of this.

enhance the character  
and quality of the place  
through the lighting  
we use



## Gateways and Landmarks

Gateways are literally the point of entry into a place. Mostly they do not need any special definition but there are locations where the change in the built character, scale, form and massing of buildings, the level of activity and a sense of arrival mark them out as special places. Gateways in this sense are more often found in the city centre than local centres. Local centres often straddle main radial roads into the city centre. They are a local destination and a place that is passed through on route to the city centre or elsewhere. The scale, levels of night-time activity and sense of arrival experienced in a local centre do not generally create gateway locations.

There are some significant routes and junctions into the city centre that are gateways. Spaghetti junction is a nationally recognised Birmingham location on the M6 and creates a gateway entrance into the city along the A38M. Similarly the A45 is the main route into the city centre from the airport and creates a first impression of the city. It could be described as a gateway route, and could benefit from co-ordinated lighting to mark it as such. Tyseley incinerator is next to the A45 and the public art lighting scheme on the building creates a landmark on this route.

Everyone approaching the city centre by road arrives at their destination through one or more key junctions either on the ring road or as they approach the city core. The radial roads into the city centre cross the ring road and destinations will be anywhere within the city quarters or the city core. Gateways occur where the radial roads cross the ring road and where they arrive at the edge of the city core.

Railway stations and the coach station are also places of arrival and in the city centre these are often buildings of status and importance creating both a gateway and a landmark. Bus interchanges similarly are places of arrival where there are increased levels of activity, making them appropriate places for enhanced lighting.

gateways are an  
appropriate location for  
enhanced lighting



Landmarks are memorable structures that identify a particular location. They help make places more legible, and are often visible from far away. For landmarks to function effectively at night they need to be made visible through lighting. Landmarks need to be able to function as such during the day and at night, so making a building a landmark at night only, by lighting it, is not necessarily appropriate.

Gateways are an appropriate location for enhanced lighting, particularly where new development is proposed. A number of gateways marked on the plan are also a focus of change, Snowhill, Lancaster Circus, Jennens Road, James Watt Queensway, Moor Street Queensway, Sherlock Street, Bristol Street, New Street Station and Paradise Circus for example and provide an opportunity for lighting schemes as part of the development.

In conjunction with this particularly near to the city core there is an increase in the scale and massing of buildings. Gateways on Queensway are often locations for tall buildings like Beetham Tower, Alpha Tower and the proposed Arena Central. Tall buildings at gateways that are imaginatively lit contribute to both an exciting night-time city and a dramatic night-time city skyline.

As city centre functions spread out towards the ring road, and uses and the built character change so will the character of the ring road junctions. Five Ways is a busy junction for both pedestrians and motorists, buildings create a gateway and signal the entrance to Broad Street. New development around the ring road junctions next to east side and elsewhere will similarly signal the entrance to the city centre. These are places where, as part of new developments lighting can be used to emphasise the buildings and spaces and distinguish them as gateways.

Overall there will be a network of streets and spaces supporting an increasing mixture of uses that will lead to increased levels of night-time activity over a wider area.

Lighting will be an integral part of the changes and will be included as part of new buildings, enhanced streetscapes and new public squares and parks.



Gateways

Coach station

Canal network

Railway stations

River Rea

Ring road

Rail network



## Movement

Across the city the network of streets are managed and maintained according to a regularly reviewed hierarchy of carriageways and footways. This relates to traffic flows, vehicular and pedestrian, risk assessment and functionality. In urban areas the contribution of the footway to the quality of public space and the street scene is particularly important \*(1).

Generally lighting requirements for a particular place will be determined by the highway maintenance category that is set by its position in the hierarchy. However there are exceptions, including the city centre and local (district) centres. Within the city centre area, subject to ensuring the safety of the highway proposals, lighting equipment design and lighting standard will be individually assessed\*(2).

Many areas have a unique character and it is important that any lighting arrangements are tailored to enhance the area rather than being 'standardised'. Lighting improvements should form an integral part of all environmental enhancement schemes\*(2).

Lighting proposals within the public realm will contribute to the general enhancement of streets, squares and public open space in the area local to the development. A balance will need to be struck between different elements of public realm environmental works to ensure appropriate works are carried out in the correct location. Piecemeal enhancements within the public realm, like installation of new lighting columns within part of a street will not be acceptable. Lighting Places will inform decisions about where enhanced lighting in the public realm is needed and will be considered as part of the financial contributions made by the developer towards wider environmental works that are deemed necessary within the local area.

\*(1) Based on - Well Maintained Highways - Code of Practice for Highway maintenance. \*(2) Based on - Street Lighting Design Policy May 2005.

## Address streets

Lighting Places is concerned with the aesthetics of night-time light in the city centre and local centres. The existing hierarchy of roads in the city centre has been used as a basis for determining where enhanced lighting should be concentrated. From this a network of address streets has been identified for the city centre, these are the most direct, most connected streets within the city centre along which the highest levels of activity are concentrated. They are the most public face of the city centre. Address streets include, strategic routes, main distributor roads, secondary distributor roads, prestige walking zones, and primary walking routes.

The local centres identified in the Birmingham Plan are those suitable for enhanced lighting. Within these centres the main shopping street(s) is where enhanced night-time lighting is most appropriate. Side streets where there may be a mixture of commercial and residential uses are less suitable because of potential for nuisance for residents.

Enhanced lighting in these streets and spaces could be external lighting of a building or structure, for example highlighting architectural features, illuminating entrances or signage, non standard street lighting equipment, public art or temporary light installations.

Some new development proposals particularly on larger sites may include new routes that by virtue of their location, and the connections they create, become 'address streets' and thus also appropriate locations for enhanced lighting schemes.



New developments or refurbished buildings next to address streets in the city centre will include external lighting in the following circumstances:

- Where the building is tall in the context of High Places.
- Where the development is at an identified gateway.
- Where the building terminates a long view.

In addition:

- Pedestrian entrances next to address streets will be externally lit.

The details of these proposals will be submitted as part of the design and access statement accompanying the planning application.

Address streets will be where enhanced lighting of the public realm will be concentrated. Where proposals on address streets to externally light buildings do not meet the specified criteria they will be considered on their individual merits. The design of any lighting scheme will pay regard to and compliment the heritage, architecture and use characteristics of the area.

Enhanced street lighting may be required where there will be increased pedestrian activity on the street as a result of new development as part of wider public realm environmental and amenity works within the neighbourhood and will be funded from the financial contributions made by the developer towards this.

Where necessary lighting requirements will be secured through planning conditions.







Address Streets

A38

Canal network

River Rea

Ring road

Rail network





## Access streets

In addition to address streets a network of access streets have been identified. These are based on the existing road hierarchy link roads and secondary walking routes. These are less prominent, less direct streets often with lower key activities, but they facilitate pedestrian movement around the city's quarters. Good street lighting is essential here to create safe pedestrian routes and walkable neighbourhoods. There is scope to mark the junctions of access streets and address streets by lighting corner buildings.

## policy 6

New developments next to access streets in the city centre will be required to contribute towards enhanced street lighting as part of wider public realm environmental and amenity works within the neighbourhood of the new development:

- Where there will be increased pedestrian activity on the street as a result of new development.

External lighting of buildings at the junction of access streets and address streets is encouraged, particularly emphasising building entrances.







## Waterways

The spectacle created by water and light is entrancing. There is tremendous scope in the city centre to capitalise on this through lighting schemes next to the extensive network of city canals. The desire to make the River Rea in the city centre visible again could be assisted by lighting schemes within the river channel and lighting off the redevelopment taking place next to the river through Digbeth, the Irish Quarter and Eastside.

### Canals

Chapter 3 - Environment of The Birmingham Plan Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005 (incorporating Alterations approved by the City Council for adoption on 11 October 2005) includes policies relating to the city's canal network. This will affect how light can be used within and next to the canal corridors.

Paragraphs 3.34 and 3.36 state:

*3.34 Birmingham lies at the heart of the national network of canals, which played an important part in the town's early industrial development. The historic importance of canals is acknowledged, and wherever possible, important groups of canal buildings and features will be protected. Canals are a major focus for urban regeneration. Accordingly, new developments adjacent to canals will be expected to enhance their setting and use. Where appropriate, the enhancement of canals and their settings will be secured through S106 agreements.*

*3.36 Canals are also important for wildlife and make an important contribution to the City's network of "Key Wildlife Corridors" as set out in the Nature Conservation Strategy for Birmingham. (Canals also) In addition, they offer (great) further potential for tourism, recreation and leisure, as well as for freight transport, and as commuting routes for pedestrians and cyclists.*

Birmingham's industrial heritage has left a city centre virtually surrounded by a magnificent canal system that is increasingly being used by pedestrians and cyclists as well as boaters. In many places it provides a calm separate route away from traffic between major attractions in the city centre like Mailbox and Brindleyplace. Frequent access points make it easy and convenient to use.

Extensive regeneration of areas next to the canals around the Convention Centre, Brindleyplace, Sherbourne Wharf and Mailbox are catalysts of change and imaginative lighting schemes are and should continue to be part of this. The use of water and light together as part of these development initiatives, plus festivals, celebrations and events draw people into the city centre and help to sell it as a vibrant and exciting place to live and work.

Further development is proposed across Eastside, the Jewellery Quarter and the Gun Quarter where the canals are being taken as the focus for new residential and mixed-use schemes. This will stimulate increased use of the canal network by pedestrians and cyclists and consequently, as part of this, the canals will need enhanced lighting to ensure safety. However lighting designs should not adversely affect the habitats of notable species within the canal corridor.

The character of the canals varies in different areas of the city, in places it is hard and urban with buildings immediately next to the towpath; in others it has a green almost rural character. This coupled with the canal heritage adds interest and enhances the potential for change. As a result different lighting solutions will be required along different parts of the canal, as development takes place that enhances the inherent character of the place as well as making it a safe place for people at night.

Separate guidelines are being prepared for the City Centre Canal Corridor and these will be available separately.

the spectacle created  
by water and light  
is entrancing

New developments next to the canal will be required to contribute, through planning conditions, towards enhanced lighting as specified in the City Centre Canal Corridor Lighting Guidelines:

- Where there will be increased pedestrian activity on the canal as a result of the new development.
- As part of wider canal environmental and amenity works within the neighbourhood of the new development.
- Any new lighting schemes in sensitive locations like canal corridors will not damage or adversely affect the habitat and night-time activities of notable species. A statement demonstrating this based on specific survey work to assess current usage of the site and environs, by wildlife, will be included as part of the planning application. The advice of the City's ecologist and biodiversity officer should be sought at an early stage in any lighting proposal.

External lighting of access points to the canal and buildings next next to the access points is encouraged.

### River Rea

The River Rea is in a deep though not unattractive channel between Highgate Middleway and Lawley Middleway, across the city centre. It is largely invisible to people using the streets and bridges above it, but it was crucial to the development of Birmingham.

It has long been a desire to make the River Rea visible. Lighting is one way of doing this; especially with the wide spread redevelopment proposals through Digbeth, the Irish Quarter and Eastside.

The River Rea provides the potential to add another section of publicly accessible water to the canal network within the city centre. The River is crossed by the Grand Union canal to the rear of Fazeley Street. Links between the two, plus imaginative lighting would raise the profile of the Rea, make it more visible and potentially more accessible, as its amenity value is realised through regeneration proposals.

Making the bridge parapets more open and adding lighting immediately highlights the course of the Rea. Add public art to this approach and the river has an added dimension and becomes a more interesting and attractive location. The excitement of the river in spate can be more easily seen and augmented through imaginative lighting installations as part of new developments.



## policy 8

New developments next to the River Rea will be expected to acknowledge the presence of the River. This will be achieved through external lighting schemes that will illuminate/spotlight the river channel. However, new lighting schemes in sensitive locations like river corridors will not damage or adversely affect the habitat and night-time activities of notable species. A statement demonstrating this based on specific survey work to assess current usage of the site and environs, by wildlife, will be included as part of the planning application. The advice of the City's ecologist and biodiversity officer should be sought at an early stage in any lighting proposal.

The emphasis will be for new developments adjacent to the River Rea corridor within the city centre to enhance their setting and use through external lighting schemes. As part of wider riverside environmental and amenity works within the neighbourhood of the development, enhanced lighting schemes will be secured through planning conditions.

### Fountains and Pools

Fountains and pools are ideal foils for artistic lighting schemes. New developments at Bullring, Brindleyplace and Victoria and Centenary Squares have included fountains and pools within public spaces that include lights as part of the effect. Illuminated water gives an added dimension to these public spaces at night and increases their attractiveness to visitors.

## policy 9

Where water is used within new or enhanced public spaces this should include a lighting scheme that plays on the water and illuminates it at night.









## Buildings

Many individual buildings in the city centre are already illuminated in some way, either by lighting of the whole building or by highlighting architectural features. This is mostly done at the desire and discretion of the individual user or owner, not through collaboration or management to enhance the street or area. Listed or public buildings are often lit in this way. The Council House, Hall of Memory and Digbeth Police Station are three such buildings.

Buildings used for entertainment, like theatres, cinemas, bars, restaurants and clubs often have night-time lights as signage, decoration, spot or floodlights to encourage people to use them and create a 'bright lights' atmosphere. People visiting areas like Broad Street, Hurst Street, Mailbox and Brindleyplace at night will experience this. Tall buildings and buildings in prominent locations also have scope for external lighting schemes that will make the night-time city skyline more exciting and dynamic.

Identified address streets into and around the city centre, gateways, squares, plazas and pedestrianised streets are all locations where buildings can be lit with effect.

Address streets are identified as the main location for enhanced lighting. However not all buildings in these locations will be suitable for external lighting, the location of a building is only one determining factor. Buildings of architectural merit like the Council House, iconic buildings like Selfridges or tall buildings like Beetham Tower are examples of buildings suitable for external lighting.

Where lighting schemes are for more than one building they need to be co-ordinated. They should have an overall design objective, particularly where the uses within the buildings vary, and the proposal should compliment the character of the individual buildings. All lighting proposals will need a rationale to explain their purpose and design.

## policy 10

Lighting of new or refurbished buildings will be required if:

- The building is tall in the context of High Places.
- The development is at an identified gateway.
- The building terminates a long view.
- The proposal is for an iconic building, that is a building that is or will become a symbol of or associated specifically with Birmingham like Selfridges or the Rotunda.
- Proposals to light existing buildings that meet these criteria will be considered favourably on their individual merits.
- New or refurbished buildings around external public spaces like squares and plazas will include an external lighting scheme. This should contribute to lighting the external space as well as the architectural qualities of the building.
- New, refurbished or existing buildings at the junction of access streets and address streets may include external lighting on the element of the building that addresses the corner. Buildings on access streets will not normally be externally lit.
- New, refurbished or existing buildings used for entertainment, leisure, religious, civic or public purposes may include lighting to accentuate their function. Each scheme will be considered on its merits in the context of other policies within this document and other city council policy.
- External lighting designed to accentuate and celebrate the architecture of notable buildings will be considered on its merits.
- Any proposal to externally light buildings will require a lighting design rationale to be provided as part of the design and access statement submitted with any planning application.

# 11

## lighting character

**The character of city centre lighting will vary depending on where you are.** The lighting will reflect the architectural and use characteristic of the place. The entertainment areas will be a blaze of light, through both external lighting and light spilling from inside the buildings, while residential areas will have more subdued lighting.

All streets will have lighting that makes them safe at night but streets that are heavily trafficked with either or both vehicles and pedestrians will have higher levels of lighting than quieter streets.

### Form and function of light

The form and function of light will affect the character of a place at night. All lighting should have a clear and appropriate function.

Where enhanced lighting is appropriate is established in chapter 10. The form of the light used for both street lighting, aesthetic lighting and signage needs to be carefully considered, with sustainability being a primary concern.

The form of light should relate to the use, location and level of night-time activity on the street, different circumstances including temporary installations for festivals and celebrations, will require different lighting solutions. The light may be coloured as it was when Selfridges was lit green for the St Patricks day celebrations, it may be projected or moving as at has been at the entrance to Mailbox, reflected off water, tight narrow beams, lasers or directed light.

The extravagance or subtlety of the light will be affected by the mood/ambience that is desired in areas of different character or of different uses. Restaurant, night club and entertainment areas will be lit differently to shopping, heritage, residential areas and the canal side.

Within these areas there is the potential to vary the light to provide for different circumstances or activities at different times. The area around Bullring, the markets and the Arcadian could come alive at night with restaurants and out door eating like the markets and the Ramblas in Barcelona, encouraging outdoor theatre, street entertainment and promenading.

All lighting will require some form of lanterns and/or columns. The impact or intrusion of these needs to be considered carefully. Are they to be a feature of the street scene, multipurpose and also used for festival lights, banners or hanging baskets, or to be as recessive as possible? Lighting can be specially designed or 'off the peg' depending on what is required.

Lights can be positioned in many ways, for example:

- Pairs of street lighting columns.
- Staggered columns.
- On buildings/structures to light the street.
- On buildings/structures to light the building.
- Front or back of the footway.
- Floodlights from the ground.

Leading to different effects on the street scene, for example:

- Rhythm along the street.
- Enclosure on a wide road.
- Making a dull place interesting.

Whatever the type of lighting chosen it needs to perform well and meet the functional requirements that should be established as part of any new development or public realm enhancement. Lighting should be easy to maintain, sustainable and adaptable where this may be needed. An important factor in achieving agreement to public realm enhancements will be the potential costs of repair or replacement if the proposed equipment fails or is accidentally damaged.

## policy 11

- The design of new lighting installations should consider the aesthetic as well as the functional quality of the lighting used.
- When lighting new buildings the form of lighting to be used should be considered early in the design to ensure it is sympathetic and appropriate not only to the individual building but also to the existing street scene.
- Sustainability will be a primary consideration of any new lighting proposals as set out in chapter 7.
- Lighting equipment and installations as part of public realm improvement works will be subject to approval by the City Council.



*Turin, Italy*

the form of light should relate to the use,  
location and level of night-time activity

## Public art

The importance of public art is embodied in the policies of the Birmingham Plan and lighting is an ideal medium to be used artistically in new developments.

### Chapter 3 - Environment

#### The Birmingham Plan

#### BIRMINGHAM UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2005

(incorporating Alterations approved by the City Council for adoption on 11 October 2005)

#### Public Art

*3.15 In order to add variety to the visual environment, the local planning authority will in appropriate cases encourage the provision of new works of art as part of schemes of development and will have regard to the contribution made by any such works to the appearance of the scheme and to the amenities of the area. In appropriate circumstances these will be secured through the use of Section 106 agreements. This approach will be of particular importance in the case of major projects in prominent locations.*

Light as public art has already been used in many new developments across the city and artists have demonstrated the scope and ability of lighting to create new dimensions and different perspectives to the night time environment.

The City's first permanent example of lighting as public art, was Ron Haseldon's *Birdlife*, 1988, a multi-coloured, kinetic neon sculpture marking the entrance to the International Convention Centre.

The first artist to work with architects to incorporate lighting as an integral part of the design of a building was Martin Richman, whose complex computer controlled programme, animates and defines the massive industrial structure of the Tyseley Incinerator.

The new Bullring has demonstrated how the collaboration of artists, designers, engineers and planners can achieve the realisation of a vibrant public realm that is both attractive and responsive to its evening visitors. A number of installations that light spaces, buildings and are art works in their own right were an integral part of the overall development process.



TONY HANCOCK 1924 - 1968



I do not think I ever met a man as modest and hu

Peter Fink and Gross Max produced distinctive lighting features in its public squares, one using water and light together. Marks Barfield architects designed a café in the form of a glowing shell-like sculpture and the historic Church of St Martin has been lit by DPA. A lighting scheme for Selfridges was developed jointly between the architects Future Systems and city planning officers, the flexibility of which has subsequently allowed Selfridges to be lit green for the St Patrick's Day celebrations.

At Attwood Green, Birmingham's largest housing regeneration scheme, a team of three artists; Nayan Kulkarni, and Lucy and Jorge Orta, have developed a public art strategy, in consultation with residents, based on our relationship and dependence on light. A light based network of features and connections will create a real sense of identity within the area.

Light in some form is part of all new developments, where light is used externally whether on the building or in the surrounding spaces the expression of light as public art will give added value to the development and can provide an opportunity to engage with the local community. Major developments around the city have already demonstrated the success of this approach and there is significant scope, particularly in the city centre for light as public art to be part of new developments.

## policy 12

- Developers and their architects are encouraged to engage with artists and specialist designers at the earliest opportunity, in order to identify lighting opportunities and incorporate lighting equipment as an integral part of the design.
- Artist briefs should be developed in consultation with appropriate city council officers, these could include planning, highway and lighting engineers, conservation, and public art officers.
- The principles of sustainability set out in chapter 7 must be observed.

## Celebrations/Events/Festivals

The diversity of Birmingham's resident population gives the opportunity to celebrate the variety of cultural events through temporary lighting installations.

Celebration lights are used widely across the city in both the city centre and local centre's to enliven shopping and entertainment areas, often through partnerships between the city council and local business communities.

Individual low key initiatives like for example illuminated Christmas trees on cranes across the city centre one year, or individual houses or streets decked out in Christmas lights, often for charity, can be fun and unexpected.

Annual events like the Arts Fest and Jazz Festival are an opportunity for temporary lighting installations to be associated with art and music.

Increasingly special events and celebrations use lights to emphasise and excite the activities that take place. In 2006 Birmingham held its first Light Festival in Eastside. Streets, buildings, spaces and canals were artistically lit by international students, led by renowned lighting designers.

Selfridges spectacular lighting was changed to green to celebrate the St Patricks Day parade and pink for the Gay Pride Festival.

### policy 13

- Temporary lighting installations associated with celebrations, special events and festivals are encouraged in appropriate locations, subject to the policies in this document and other city council policy.







# 12

## making at happen

**A number of lighting initiatives are already proposed that could make an important contribution to the aspirations of this Strategy, they are likely to include:**

- The Hall of Memory - illumination.
- The Rotunda - illumination of the top.
- City Centre - laser show.
- Bradford Street - street lighting as part of wider environmental enhancements.
- Broad Street.
- Arena Central.
- The Cube.
- Colmore Plaza.
- Snowhill.
- Spaghetti Junction Project.
- Eastside Railway Viaduct.
- Eastside City Park.

Developers, landowners and the city council are undertaking these lighting proposals both individually and in partnerships. This is only the beginning, lighting the city will be an ongoing process designed to contribute to a vibrant and exciting 24 hour city, raising its profile both nationally and internationally and as a consequence attracting more business and visitors.





# 13

## limitation of liability

This SPD is intended to be as helpful as possible and is believed to be accurate at the time of issue. However, information may be subject to change and no responsibility can therefore be taken for inaccuracies or omissions. The City Council advises that it is the responsibility of developers to check site areas, conditions and the availability of services etc, prior to entering into contracts.

Any views expressed by the Local Planning Authority represent the current policy at the time and may be varied by the Local Planning Authority as necessary.



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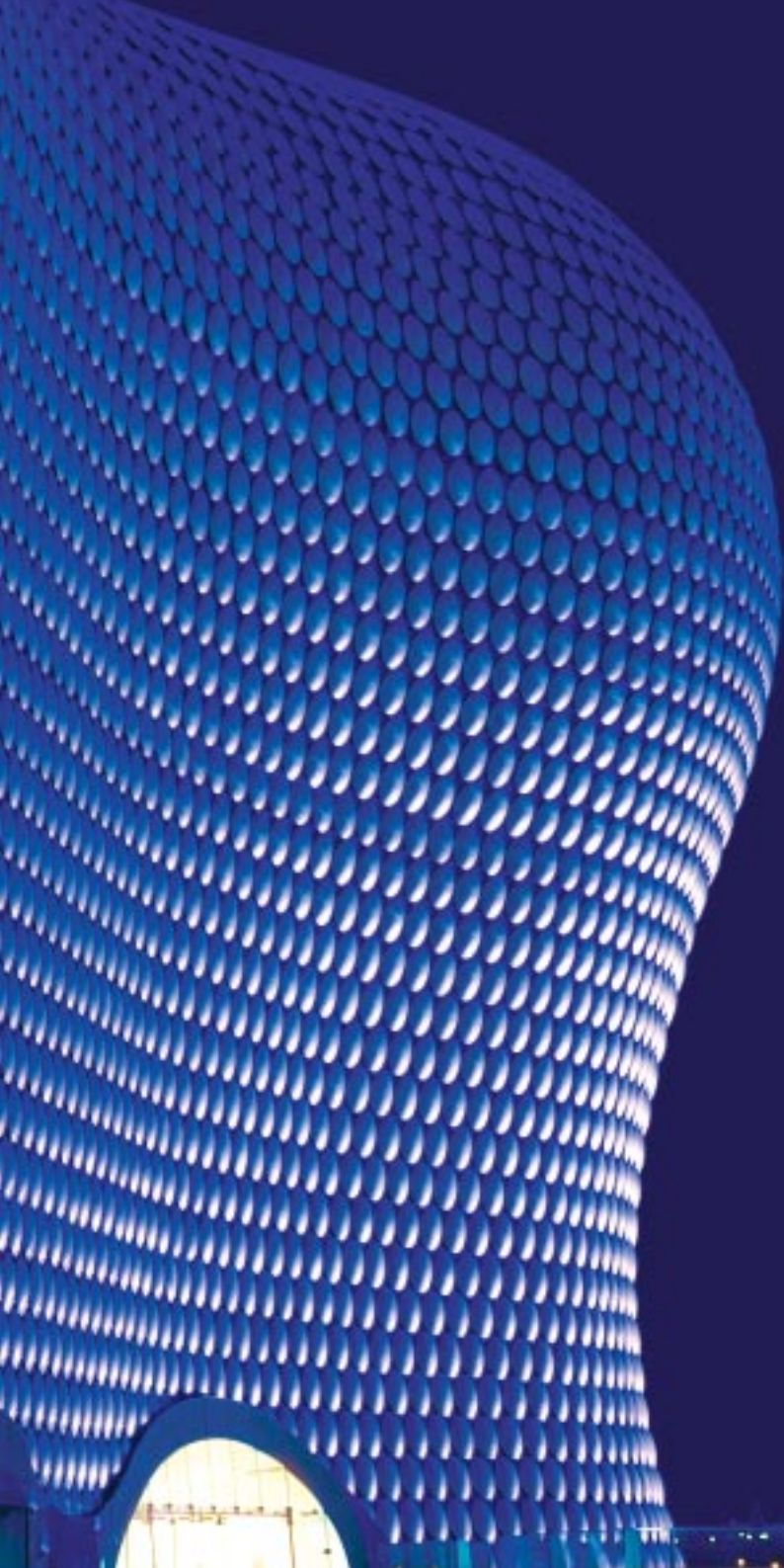
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# lighting places



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