

BE BOLD

BE BIRMINGHAM

BE SPARKBROOK AND BALSALL HEATH EAST



WARD PLAN

2024/2026



Councillors for Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East



Shabrana Hussain (Labour Party)

shabrana.hussain@birmingham.gov.uk

[Read](#) more about Councillor Shabrana [Hussain](#)



Saima Ahmed (Labour Party)

saima.ahmed@birmingham.gov.uk

[Read](#) more about Councillor Saima [Ahmed](#)



MP for Hall Green Constituency: Tahir Ali MP (Labour Party)

tahir.ali.mp@parliament.uk

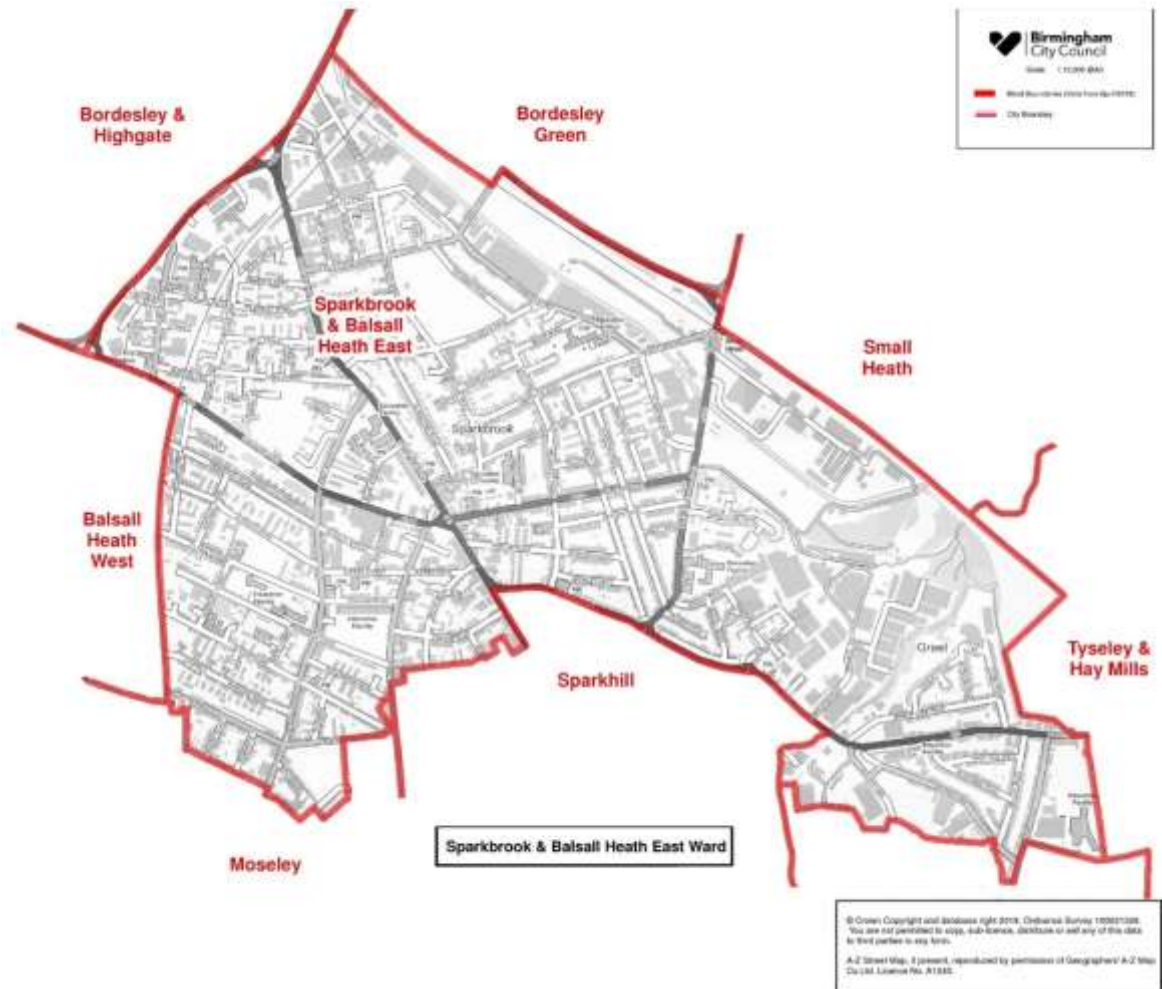
[Read](#) more about Tahir Ali [MP](#)

Further Ward Information:

[CLICK](#) for Ward profiles

[CLICK](#) for Health profiles

[CLICK](#) for Economic Profiles September 2024



SPARKBROOK & BALSALL HEATH EAST

Forward

It is with great passion and determination that we have agreed in principle to focus on key priorities underpinning the councils Corporate Plan, to support, to serve, to level up by connecting people and initiatives for the benefit of citizens in the ward of Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East.

Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath Ward has significant barriers and challenges, a decision was made to work using a cross-cutting model to achieve the greatest impact that prevents people and communities achieving positive outcomes. On this basis, and part of the council's plan priorities of building a Prosperous, Inclusive, Bold, Healthy, Green and Local City. We will use this opportunity to build a strong local infrastructure and network by improving opportunities and increase capabilities in our communities, getting stakeholders and communities working together on common themes and achieve outcomes by March 2025 building the foundation to deliver a more robust future action plan.

We have recognised to build a stronger community, we require leadership, connectivity and inclusiveness. Our Priority is building a strong footprint to connect people to places and using the power of data, information and knowledge to bring everyone to the same level playing field.

We will work with a vision of collaboration with a clear objective of connecting all citizens, stakeholders and places together building our core priorities.

We are working towards tackling exclusion in the Sparkbrook and Balsall East Ward, and together, we can achieve to place capabilities and skills at the heart of our vision for our ward – to be part of the solution, where every Citizen, Community and business can be part of something amazing.

Councillor Saima Ahmed

Councillor Shabana Hussain

Our Sparkbrook.

The Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East ward is located southeast of Birmingham's city centre, a vibrant and culturally diverse ward shaped by a rich history and strong community spirit. It is home to a diverse spectrum of people across the world, the area is internationally known for its cultural richness. However, it also faces significant challenges related to health, economic deprivation, and environmental concerns. Birmingham City Council and its partners are committed working in collaboration, driving transformative changes focused on health, prosperity, and sustainability.

Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath have an enriched history since the industrial boom. These neighbourhoods became an economic and cultural hub for immigrant communities after 1960's, particularly migrants from the Commonwealth. This diversity continues to define the area today, seen in its vibrant food culture, fashion, religious institutions, and community life. Many generations have suffered high poverty rates, unemployment, and substandard housing creating many significant complex barriers for residents.

Economic prosperity is another priority for the ward with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East suffers from high unemployment and underinvestment, but the area has significant potential, especially along Stratford Road, Ladypool Road a key commercial hub. Small businesses and independent shops thrive here, reflecting the community's entrepreneurial spirit. Partners with the business community, educational institutions, and local charities are working tirelessly to create jobs, support business growth, and offer training programs. This economic development strategy seeks to attract investment and provide residents with the skills needed for sustainable employment targeting initiatives across the Balti Triangle and Tyseley Energy Park.

Health and wellbeing are a major concern in the ward, with high rates of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart conditions, particularly among the South Asian community. Many residents face limited access to healthcare, exacerbating these issues. Birmingham's health strategy aims to reduce these inequalities by improving healthcare access, promoting preventive care, and working with community organisations. Local charities and groups are leading health initiatives and promoting healthier lifestyles, while the council is enhancing healthcare infrastructure in partnership with the Integrated Care Board.

Environmental sustainability is critical for improving quality of life in the ward. Poor housing conditions and a lack of green spaces contribute to health problems and lower living standards. The city's environmental strategy focuses on improving housing, better use of unused spaces, promoting energy efficiency, and increasing access to parks and green areas. Collaborative efforts with housing associations, environmental charities, and community groups are essential in regenerating the area. The Sparkbrook Health and Community Centre, a local landmark, serves as a hub and can be made as a place helping residents adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Central to the transformation of Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East is the involvement of local residents. Engaging citizens in decision-making and community initiatives ensures that changes reflect their needs and aspirations. Charities, faith-based organisations, and community groups play an essential role in connecting residents with resources and opportunities. Notable landmarks across the ward acting as community assets contributing to the community's cohesion and cultural heritage.

In conclusion, Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East are undergoing significant transformation through a collaborative effort between Birmingham City Council, local institutions, charities, and citizens. By focusing on health, economic growth, and environmental sustainability, the ward is on a path to becoming a more prosperous, healthier, and resilient part of Birmingham.

Our Priorities.

The Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath Ward has undertaken a series of conversations and meeting to identify what are the key purpose and intentions to create a great place to live.

We have identified our purpose to achieve our goals and include,

This can only be achieved by collaboration, partnership and working together. We endorse the council vision and priorities and will be setting the framework to underpin the following themes for this year

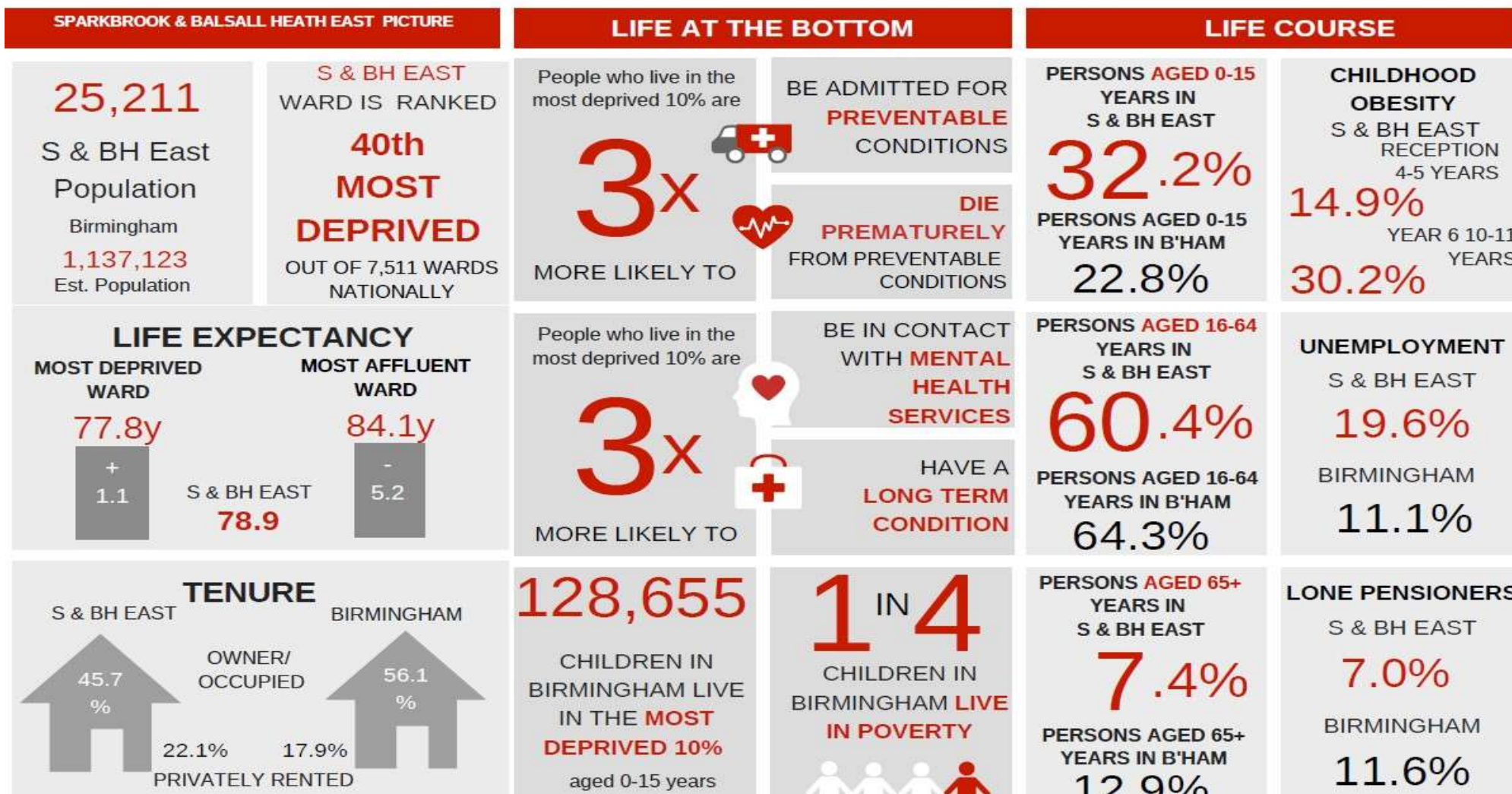
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|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Skills & Economy | <i>To be part of the working economy</i> |
| 2. Health Inequality | <i>Our Health, Mind, Body, and Spirit</i> |
| 3. Learning and Education | Promote Learning and Promote Creativity |
| 4. Inclusive Community | All involved, All Equal, All engaged |
| 5. The Environment | Our People, Our Place, Our Future |
| 6. A connected Community | Promote Digital Inclusion |

Profiles Snapshot.

BIRMINGHAM SPARKBROOK & BALSALL HEATH EAST WORKING TOWARDS A HEALTHY CITY: HEALTH INEQUALITIES



Public Health, March 2019
Numbers have been rounded



BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL - CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2026

We are committed in meeting Birmingham City Council six Corporate Priorities and will underpin our own objectives of achieving our goals and aspiration.

The current corporate plan principles are presented below.

1. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION
Many of the challenges facing the city and its citizens stem from historic and structural inequalities within our society and economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and compounded the difficulties our most vulnerable citizens face in their daily lives. The rising cost of living has added further pressures. For too many of our citizens the opportunities in the city are out of reach. This holds people back from reaching their full potential and often pushes people to seek help from us and our partners, increasing pressure on the cost and provision of public services.
2. UNEMPLOYMENT, SKILLS, AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY
The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting closure of businesses and reduction in trade and revenue has had a damaging impact on the Birmingham economy, setting back the impressive economic growth we have seen in recent years. Jobs have been lost, unemployment rates are high, we have below national average levels of skills, and too many people have low rates of pay. This affects the quality of life, health, and pressure for affordable housing.
3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Health inequalities in Birmingham remain stark and have been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Low life expectancy and chronic conditions such as diabetes afflict our poorest communities far worse than those living in more affluent circumstances. Birmingham also has a high rate of limiting, long-standing and chronic illness which starts earlier in life and means more people risk being excluded earlier from opportunity and living healthy lives. We must prevent ill health and maximise health and wellbeing for everyone in Birmingham through safe and secure homes and shaping a healthier environment for citizens that enables them to achieve their potential and aspirations at every age.
4. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE, COHESION AND LIVING STANDARDS
Birmingham has long been a vibrant and diverse place that is a proud home to a diverse mix of people of all ages, ethnicities, faiths, and lifestyles. But there is a need to further strengthen resilience and cohesion within our communities given the inequalities that have been intensified by the pandemic, the inequalities given focus through the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements, and the serious issue of engrained violent crime. Our citizens have weathered the hardships of the pandemic, and we must now work with them to help to build resilience and opportunities, celebrate and strengthen local communities so all people in the city can thrive in Birmingham's future.
5. CLIMATE EMERGENCY
The climate crisis has never been more urgent for our city, nation, and humanity. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) lays bare the state of Earth's climate and nature emergency and the need for us to take action to address it. We have embraced our responsibilities to the climate, with the council declaring a Climate Emergency, establishing a Route to Zero taskforce, drawing up a plan to be a City of Nature and launching a Clean Air Zone. Leadership and drive are required to achieve our climate goals, going beyond them where possible, and linking to work on transitioning our economy to become fairer and to grow sustainably.
6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Our young people are one of our greatest strengths and represent a bright future for Birmingham. But the pandemic has been particularly tough on them, and we need to help build a bright future for them. Too many of our children and young people do not get a good start in life, with nearly 40% of children living in relative poverty. They need to prosper, and for many their prospects have been damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lots of our young people are unemployed and struggling to find work and disparities between attainment of pupils in the state and independent sectors has worsened.

Working Together – Cross Cutting Themes

Birmingham has committed to 20 priorities across the five thematic areas of operation, we will work with other stakeholders aligning and connecting to the same priorities and bind them into the Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath ward proving a strong place for people to work collaboratively to achieve our common endeavours

This is shown below.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL - CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2026



1. A bold and Prosperous Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East

Priority 1:	Skills and Economy
Why has this been chosen as a priority?	To improve the economic and prosperity for every citizen, business and stakeholder working or residing in the ward
Who will own this priority?	The priority will be owned by those stakeholders with a corporate, commercial, economic or financial interest in the ward
Which organisations and groups do we need to engage and/or work with?	Working with Employers, Training Providers, Colleges, schools, JCP
What does good look like? How will we know we have achieved our ambition?	Every Citizen of Birmingham who has an economic interest in the ward of Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East thrives effectively and is content in the progression in employment or business endeavours

Set up to three clear, realistic goals that we want to achieve locally

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
1	Support East Birmingham Employment Zone "Work and Skills Hub" of local Stakeholders to develop a skills Resource Network.	Building a robust Network of Employment Support Providers working together	BCC leading on this in partnership with third sector	Inclusive Growth Programme, Muath Trust, ACP, BCC. JCP	Dec 24
2	Identify local stakeholders; identify the assets, resources and opportunities in skills. development and delivery.	Co-ordinate local provision, identify services supporting people. Support and build pathways for Unemployed	Link with Birmingham Employment Programmes	BCC, Inclusive Growth Team, Colleges and Universities	Apr 25
3	Research and evidence on the skills gaps and consider a strong case for local provision utilising stakeholders as employers.	Develop a business case for each of the business Corridors – develop local traders forums.	Work with the WM business Growth and Align with WMCA	Local traders, Research funding, business support	Dec 24
4	Create new and support existing businesses to become more competitive and stimulate growth	Increase access to support, grants and develop new markets	Develop with local businesses with opportunities	This will be difficult but required to stimulate the local economy	Mar 26
5	Develop partnership with local businesses and institutions – Rebranding the Balti Triangle – Develop a new commercial corridor – ICOB as a gateway.	Create a local brand to stimulate the local economy	Working with Shared Prosperity Fund and Regional Government.	Various Stakeholders	Dec 25

2. A Bold Healthy Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East

Priority 2:	Addressing Health Inequalities across the ward of Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East
Why has this been chosen as a priority?	The complexity and level of health and wellbeing is one of the most chronic issues facing citizens; every stakeholder meeting has identified health as a major priority
Who will own this priority?	Health Practitioner, BCHC, ICB, NHS, third Sector, Community Sector, Public Health
Which organisations and groups do we need to engage and/or work with?	Any organisation with a strategic focus to address health inequalities
What does good look like? How will we know we have achieved our ambition?	Every Patient having the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

Set up to three clear, realistic goals that we want to achieve locally

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
1	Reduce health inequalities by creating mechanisms improving access to health services and promoting healthy lifestyles within the community.	Increase uptake of health prevention services; impact reports;	Establish better networks to promote and deliver services.	Integrated Care Board / BVSC / BCHC / GP / Pharmacies	Dec 24
2	Conduct research and evidence to identify prevalent health issues and disparities in the community.	Data and Information collected across the ward through various means	Stakeholder engagement and participation activities	Third Sector Providers / NIHR, Universities, Community Groups	Jun 24
3	Launch awareness campaigns on key health issues such as diabetes, mental health, and nutrition.	3 health events led by stakeholders	Working with commissioned activities	BCC Prevention Public Health Early Intervention Team	Dec 24
4	Improve Health Access in primary Care; build stronger neighbourhood level activities	Creating health pods within Primary Care provision	Funding targeted with local areas working together	Health and Social Care Board / ICB / Partners	Mar 25
5	Stakeholder representation on key health and wellbeing bodies to influence and have a voice on the decision-making bodies	Influence and advocate for the needs of Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East	Greater Representation on boards, public engagement;	Align with current policy on Citizen engagement, and patient participation by Agencies	June 25

3. A Bold Learning Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East

Priority 3:	Learning and Educational Attainment
Why has this been chosen as a priority?	Educational attainment and access to opportunity is the lowest in the ward – the rate of progression into opportunities is also the lowest.
Who will own this priority?	This will be jointly owned by the institutions and agencies with objective of learning and personal development
Which organisations and groups do we need to engage and/or work with?	Work Programmes, JCP, WMCA, BCC, ICB, Colleges, Universities, Schools, training providers.
What does good look like? How will we know we have achieved our ambition?	Every person having access to good education and learning experience to live better lives and have the tools to be empowered.

Set up clear, realistic goals that we want to achieve locally

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
1	Every child and young person can access education, training and learning to unlock their true potential.	Reduce “out of roll” pupils; increase students into FE; promote adult learning	Working with local schemes and programmes to connect locally	Schools, Children Services; Education providers and careers	April 25
2	Develop the East Birmingham Student Movement in Sparkbrook	Support students in higher education living in Sparkbrook	Working with Universities	Birmingham City University agreed to support the programme for East Birmingham	Dec 25
3	Provide a network of providers to the local community to access learning for all	Key anchor organisations committed in partnership and working together	Link in with existing strategies with WMCA and DFE	Connecting with new initiatives and programmes	Jan 25
4	Increasing access to training and employment opportunities that meet the needs of the local economy.	Improve access for all Citizens for learner to access Entry level to Level 7	Working with local Partners offering learning in partnership	Training Providers Local Business, Retailers, BCC	Oct 25

4. A Bold Inclusive Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East

Priority 4:	Community Inclusion and Engagement
Why has this been chosen as a priority?	The greatest engine in our communities are the people who make up the community – To mobilise people to ensure unlock the full potential of every citizen and stakeholder to achieve the goals and aspirations
Who will own this priority?	All stakeholders
Which organisations and groups do we need to engage and/or work with?	All stakeholders
What does good look like? How will we know we have achieved our ambition?	To create a sustainable, happy and wonderful place to live People want to come to the area and people are proud where they live.

Set up clear, realistic goals that we want to achieve locally

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
1	Establish a think tank to bring communities together tackling issues together. This will lead to subgroups led to promote the physical, emotional and spiritual uplift of our community.	More joined up and collaborative work across the ward	Potentially a game changer if working together	Stakeholder Engagement	Dec 25
2	Promote social cohesion and inclusion by engaging specific minority community groups e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Somali, Yemeni and others though fostering a sense of belonging.	Agencies and other initiatives to connect with other stakeholders	Third sector taking up the challenge connect with local groups to gain reach	Partners	Jan 25
3	Create community access hubs to provide community services and advice as a gateway to access services to improve people's life opportunities.	Work with potentially 100 charities registered in Sparkbrook and Balsall East	Working with funder and commissioners to join up plans	Multiagency support	Mar 25
4	Identify and engage with specific vulnerable groups, such as elders, people at risk, immigrants, and low-income families.	Increase referral and pathways to community-based activities	Working with existing commissioned services	Themed activity with Groups	Feb 25

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
5	Create an Area Board of stakeholders for the purpose to bring resources and utilise assets in our community to become the power engine for our area – A Birmingham Movement	Planned quarterly meetings	High risk but greater return de communities	Stakeholders	Dec 25

5. A Bold Cleaner and Greener Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East

Priority 5:	Clean and Green Sparkbrook
Why has this been chosen as a priority?	Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath east has the lowest green spaces and recycling rates – There is very limited opportunities to improve green spaces
Who will own this priority?	All Stakeholders
Which organisations and groups do we need to engage and/or work with?	All Stakeholders
What does good look like? How will we know we have achieved our ambition?	A great place to see, visit and experience.

Set up to three clear, realistic goals that we want to achieve locally

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
1	Establish regular litter Picks involving groups and stakeholders.	Targeting key areas with high street rubbish; incorporate cleaning with education initiatives.	There are many litter pick already across the ward – a campaign to increase this in other areas	Partnership BCC environmental team with resources from cleaner green streets; Brum breathes initiatives	Continuing
2	Publish the MHRC trucks, including other waste disposal options.	Tonnage collection results, Leaflets delivered, area requests	This is a BCC MHRC service and is in place	Councillors will design, print, and post all information	Ongoing
3	Work with the enforcement to tackle illegal driving and parking	Reduction in complaints of driving and parking offences.	Increase enforcement patrols.	Ban pavement parking on affected roads.	Annual review of accident and complaint data.

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
4	Work with Neighbourhood Action Coordinator (NAC) to improve locality	Plan of action defined by NAC	Neighbourhood Action Coordinator (NAC) in place for the ward	NAC Developing strong relationship with local traders, partners and stakeholders	Quarterly reports
5	Eliminate Fly tipping through enforcement action	Monthly enforcement action data	Yes	Review required on existing enforcement resources.	Monthly enforcement action data

6. A Bold Connected Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East

Priority 6:	Digital access for all
Why has this been chosen as a priority?	The purpose is creating a foundation to connect and engage, building a community asset infrastructure for the purpose of connecting all to every opportunity available to their fingertips.
Who will own this priority?	This will be a shared vision and will be owned by all stakeholders committed to providing digital inclusion and take lead in driving this vision
Which organisations and groups do we need to engage and/or work with?	This initiative will work with all stakeholders who have a digital footprint or wish to promote digital access for citizens of the Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath ward
What does good look like? How will we know we have achieved our ambition?	<p>Stakeholders and local Citizens are digitally connected across the Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath Ward with the resources and assets to increase access and opportunities for all in our ward.</p> <p>To deliver our Priorities with; People, having great digital capabilities; a place, with a strong network, to develop a vision of making our area, GREAT.</p>

Set up to three clear, realistic goals that we want to achieve locally

	Specific: Clear and well defined	Measurable: With criteria for how progress will be measured	Achievable: Attainable and not impossible to achieve	Realistic: Within reach and relevant to your means and resources	Timely: With a clear timeline, including a target date
1	Create local access points offering digital skills and capabilities covering areas of health, education and employment	No. of locations No. of Registrations No. of Referrals No. of Local Hubs	Identify partners and stakeholders to establish place-based locations	Working with partners offering Digital Skills provision in the ward	Commence Sept 24 Fully operational Mar 25
2	Develop a local Market of digital skills access specialising groups; women, children, elderly	No of people accessing IT resources and Broadband	Accessible devices across the network		
3	Training Provision offering ESOL and Basic IT skills in a community setting	Leading people into employment opportunities	Working with stakeholders offering a tailored provision on mix learning – link with 1.	Build a training infrastructure leading people into traineeships, training, apprentices and work experience	Dec 2024
4	The use of Patch- work blended learning to support the learner	Improving digital access to local services			
5	Digital Champions across the ward – Digital connectors	Create strong foundation of local citizens acting as advocates	Working with Training providers and local organisations to build an asset base	Clear Action plan	March 2025

7. APPENDIX: Project Sparkbrook

PROJECT SPARKBROOK

Empowering Leadership: Mobilising People for Transformative Change

Partners and Stakeholders agree in principle to follow these actions

1. Partnership and Leadership:

- Health-themed partnerships with designated leads.
- Identifying missing leadership and establishing drivers for initiatives.

2. Community Engagement and Task Accountability:

- Ensuring community involvement in identifying issues and verifying task completion.
- Monitoring success and dissemination of outcomes from external initiatives.

3. Incorporating Local Voices and Trust:

- Incorporating Sparkbrook voices in decision-making structures.
- Advocating for a citizen-led solutions approach over top-down methods.

4. Action-Oriented Engagement and Trust Building:

- Transforming ideas into action for a cohesive delivery model.
- Building trust through community engagement, e.g., themed activities like Litter Picks.

5. Empowering Citizens and Real User Voices:

- Taking power back to the citizens for effective strategy.
- Incorporating real user voices and ensuring understanding for effective services.

6. Effective Connectivity and Resource Mapping of Agencies:

- Facilitate real-time sharing of information and resources within the community, supported by the creation of a comprehensive directory of relevant contacts and organizations.
- Ensure seamless connectivity with statutory agencies providing similar health services, fostering a collective approach for empowered change.

7. Community Skills Identification and Impactful Provision:

- Identifying and harnessing community skills effectively.
- Reducing duplication and increasing impactful services.

8. Investment and Business Engagement:

- Advocating for real investment, possibly engaging with the business community.
- Exploring ways for businesses to invest and contribute to community well-being.

9. Sustainability and Economic Opportunities:

- Seeking a sustainable funding model for long-term community support.
- Promoting social and economic mobility through job creation and opportunities.

10. Optimising Human Resources and Changing Narratives:

- Ensuring the right people are in the right roles for improved quality of life.
- Challenging negative narratives, focusing on community successes and leveraging untapped skills.

11. Effective Utilization of Physical Assets:

- Utilizing physical assets in the community more effectively.
- Empowering local leaders and developing a consistent action plan for Sparkbrook.

12. Presenting Human Resources Effectively:

- Presenting human resources in the best possible way.
- Balancing passion with problem definition and solution-oriented communication.