

Community Governance in Birmingham: The Next Decade

Paper 1: Introduction and Background



February 2015

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Foreword

Through this consultation, continuing into the summer, we want to enable a range of people to comment on our Community Governance Review. This will set the framework for the future development of our local democracy and local service delivery.

Birmingham City Council has for many years been at the forefront of efforts to bring decision-making closer to local people. We have recognised that this is a big city with a large council organisation that can sometimes seem remote and difficult to work with. But there is also a great diversity and vibrancy in our local communities and a heritage of civic pride and good governance that stretches back to the early years of the city's history.

It is a history that includes successful neighbourhood forums and residents' associations, ward committees and experiments with neighbourhood management, community budgeting and neighbourhood planning.

There has long been a cross-party understanding that Birmingham is not just a whole city but a patchwork of "Flourishing Neighbourhoods", "Vibrant Urban Villages" and communities. Therefore our community governance arrangements will always need to be flexible and locally relevant.

In 2004, after four years of intense debate, consultation and planning following the recommendations of the independent Democracy Commission, Birmingham took a radical step with the introduction of devolved district committees. This passed down some decision making and budgets to the committees and localised the delivery of services through a range of models.

A comprehensive plan for changing the role of the City Council was set out. The intention was to establish neighbourhood management and to work in partnership with communities and other agencies.

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Not enough of this vision has been realised and we need to learn the lessons from that. One key lesson is that we must start from a focus on the communities and individuals the council is here to serve, rather than our internal bureaucracy. Community governance is not an 'add-on' to the organisation – it is about the spirit and manner in which we operate. This time we must ensure there is a “whole council change” in which all parts of the organisation are focused on local places and all our staff and councillors believe in working with communities to achieve results, rather than delivering top-down standardised services.

The role and functions of local government are changing rapidly as funding is drastically reduced and early steps are taken towards the integration of local public services. Information technology has moved on over the decade and more services and functions are now outsourced to private companies, impacting on how people engage in democracy and how services are delivered.

So, a decade on from 2004, it is time to take stock, to revise our governance and service delivery arrangements again in the light of changing times and to make changes that will take us through the next decade.

Our renewed vision must be about “turning the council inside out” and putting communities and citizens first. Far from retreating from our commitment to localism and community empowerment, we must take it forward in a much more radical way that can truly make a difference to people’s lives. We must ensure people feel they have more say in local decisions that affect the places where they live.

To do this we will need to re-think our idea of public services and civic society – rebuilding them for the changing world in which we live. We want to preserve the community spaces and the values that give us a healthy democracy and civic society and ensure that services are accountable through elected councillors. But we also need to create services that are able to focus on customer care, quality and responding to needs rather than council bureaucracy.

The Community Governance Review, launched by the City Council in September 2014 and debated at a special event at Highbury in November, provides an opportunity for all councillors, communities, individuals and organisations in the city to engage in the debate about how we should do this. It will also consult on how we implement some of the recommendations of the Kerslake report on the corporate governance of the City Council.

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The Review will ultimately provide our response to the proposals for a Sutton Coldfield Town Council, submitted through a petition. In Paper 3 we set out an analysis of the implications of the Sutton Coldfield proposals. Following consultation with local people we will publish our draft response in the summer and enable the people of Sutton Coldfield to have a final say.

We would urge you to get involved in this consultation and let us know your ideas, thoughts and concerns about the future governance of the city.

**Cllr Sir Albert Bore,
Leader of the Labour Group and Leader of the Council**

**Cllr Paul Tilsley CBE,
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group**

The purpose of this consultation and how to respond

This consultation is about the proposals, options and ideas we are exploring in our Community Governance Review. The Review is concerned with:

- The future of our democratic arrangements within the city, such as district and ward committees and neighbourhood bodies
- The community leadership role of elected councillors and others and how people and organisations can work in partnership in local places
- The future of our local services – how we organise them and what will be delivered
- The proposal for a Town Council for Sutton Coldfield

Many of the issues discussed in this paper will be addressed over the year ahead or over the longer term. This consultation will be supported by five separate papers published between now and September 2015:

The Future of Community Governance in Birmingham – looking at local democratic structures – published alongside this introduction (Paper 2)

Sutton Coldfield Town Council – Initial Analysis (Paper 3)

Sutton Coldfield Town Council – Final Response – to be published in the summer (Paper 4)

A New Partnership between Civic and Civil – how neighbourhoods and communities can engage in our democracy and make their contribution – to be published in the summer (Paper 5)

The Future of Local Services in Birmingham – to be published in the summer (Paper 6).

There will also be specific consultation on the details of many of these changes at a later date. **Instead of a one-off consultation we want this to be a conversation about change for the better that will continue through the months and years ahead.**

How to respond

This initial consultation will run until 30 March 2015.

The easiest ways to respond to these papers are:

By emailing your comments to

communitygovernanceviews@birmingham.gov.uk

Please let us know if you are commenting on behalf of a group or organisation.

By completing the online survey at the Be Heard website:

www.birminghambeheard.org.uk

By posting your comments to:

Community Governance Views

Room 217

2nd Floor

Council House Extension

6 Margaret Street

Birmingham

B3 3BU

Four area community briefings will take place across the city. Go to birmingham.gov.uk/community-governance-review for details.

Ward committees are being encouraged to hold their own discussions. We would also encourage organisations in sectors such as higher education, media, public affairs and business, as well as neighbourhood forums, to organise their own debates on community governance and send their feedback to us.

The Twitter hashtag for discussing these issues is **#brumcgr15**

An independent report on all responses will be prepared for the council and will be available after the initial consultation on the website.

Geographical areas and other references

These consultation papers refer to a range of different geographical boundaries and they use some phrases which are not in everyday language. At the back of this paper we have provided an explanation of these with the aim of creating a wider understanding of the issues.

Background and context

The Community Governance Review

A formal Community Governance Review is carried out by a local authority to determine changes to local arrangements such as parish and town councils, area committees, tenant management organisations, residents' associations and neighbourhood management. A review may be initiated by a petition from residents or by the council itself. Such reviews must also take into account the wider context of local governance and the impact that any changes will have¹.

Birmingham City Council has received a petition calling for a new Town Council to be established for Sutton Coldfield and decided on 16 September 2014 to conduct a review to decide on whether to accept this proposal. This must be completed within one year. However the council has also decided that this would be an appropriate time to review all of the current arrangements for local democracy and local services, because the proposal would have implications for local arrangements elsewhere in the city and because circumstances have changed – as set out later in this paper.

Together, the six consultation papers will set out our proposals for change and our response to the Sutton Coldfield proposal. We are inviting anyone with an interest in the city to give us their comments and ideas on the issues raised.

¹ More information on Community Governance Reviews can be found in the guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

The current arrangements

The current arrangements for community governance in Birmingham include:

- The full City Council which consists of 120 members from 40 wards and meets monthly. The council approves the annual budget, holds the Leader and Cabinet to account and receives scrutiny reports compiled by non-Cabinet members and petitions from residents
- A Leader and Cabinet system for strategic decision making
- Nine Overview and Scrutiny Committees (plus two joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees) to hold to account the Cabinet and to conduct policy development work which is reported to the full council and passed on to the Cabinet as recommendations
- Ten District Committees, established in 2004, covering the same boundaries as the Parliamentary Constituencies of the city and containing 12 councillors elected to the four wards in each district. The committees have some decision-making powers passed down from the Cabinet and included in the council's Constitution, approved by the full City Council
- A range of approaches to providing local services, chosen to achieve effective and efficient management whilst localising them as much as possible. In 2004 the models were:
 1. Services managed centrally – e.g. museums, the Library of Birmingham and waste disposal
 2. Existing local outlets that came under district management – e.g. neighbourhood offices, community libraries, community centres
 3. Services managed centrally but with localised budgets to allow for local influence and planning – e.g. public conveniences
 4. Services under local management through "Service Level Agreements" between the district and the service, setting out the standard of service to be provided and reviewed annually. These had fully localised budgets, but the service was still delivered from specific locations, such as depots – e.g. refuse collection, street cleaning, parks and grounds maintenance
 5. Services that were fully localised – i.e. all staff, management and budgets moved to constituency offices – this included just a small number of services such as pest control, local car parks, local arts development, community development and play.

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In 2010 responsibility for road maintenance and street lights passed to the Private Finance Initiative contract with Amey PLC. These services were in category three above. In 2012 Districts were given further powers, in particular responsibility for oversight of the council housing service.

- Ward committees in each of the city's 40 electoral wards, each consisting of three local councillors elected in that ward. Their role is to involve local communities in decision-making and until recently they also controlled the small Community Chest budget for local initiatives. They also support Neighbourhood Forums through approving small grants for communications with residents
- A number of Neighbourhood Forums, usually covering about a quarter to a third of a ward. Forums are community led organisations that enable residents to meet together and raise local issues as well as taking their own initiatives to improve the neighbourhood. Residents' Associations also perform a similar role but are not supported financially by the City Council
- Housing Liaison Boards and Tenant Management Boards provide for tenant engagement and management of the council housing service
- One Parish Council at Frankley in the south west of the city
- A number of community organisations providing local services and community engagement in specific neighbourhoods, such as the Castle Vale Community Housing Association and Witton Lodge Community Association.

How the context has changed

We recognise that the context for local services and local governance has changed dramatically in the last decade and that this requires us to review how we currently provide local services and represent or engage with local communities. This has been the conclusion of our own scrutiny reviews, the work of our internal Localisation Board and the recent Kerslake Review of Corporate Governance (see page 15). Some of the most important things that have changed are:

- The drastic reduction in funding for local government which means that we have to rethink the services we can afford to deliver, how they will meet changing needs or objectives most efficiently and the costs and effectiveness of our arrangements for local democracy
- Improvements in technology that are changing the way that people communicate, receive services, form communities and take part in politics and democracy
- Changes in society such as the great diversity and youth of the population and the shifting needs of young people, alongside the growing need for services for the older population
- Changes in the economy which are altering the nature of work and the skills needed by employers, with implications for the relationship between schools, colleges and business
- The desire of many local communities to be able to take greater control over their neighbourhoods and to make a bigger contribution to tackling local issues
- The recognition of the need to provide more joined-up services and focus on prevention and early intervention, through working more closely with service users and communities
- Changes in legislation. In recent years central government has been encouraging the establishment of parish councils in urban areas and these can now be called neighbourhood or community councils. The Localism Act of 2011 has given new rights to community groups to secure ownership of local assets and to develop their own Neighbourhood Plans, in conjunction with the local authority.

All of these have important implications for the local services the city needs and how they are provided.

“Triple Devolution”

Birmingham is a large city, but it is only part of a much larger conurbation or city region within which people travel to work across council boundaries and companies and their supply chains are dependent on a complex interconnected web of local connections. It is important that we are aware of the context of that wider city region when considering our local governance arrangements.

We have developed the so-called “Triple Devolution” approach to summarise how we want to see the governance of the whole city region developing in the years ahead. It calls for devolution by central government to enable joined-up planning at the city region and city level, alongside our own commitment to devolution within the city, as discussed in this consultation. But all the three levels must be linked together to ensure good governance of the whole city region. That is the job of the leadership team at the city council, working with other agencies and our neighbouring councils.

- City region – we are developing detailed proposals for a new Combined Authority, enabling us to work much more effectively with neighbouring councils, businesses and other agencies on issues such as economic development, strategic land use planning and transport. We are asking central government to pass down joined-up funding pots so we can plan this work more effectively
- City – we will be continuing our work with the NHS to create an integrated health and social care system, with pooled budgets. We will also be establishing a new partnership to set out a vision and plan for the city as a whole, covering all public services and our more local plans for the economy. We are asking central government to provide funding for public services in a more joined-up way to enable us to work with our partner agencies to plan spending more locally
- Local areas – this consultation focuses on the local level, where we want to create integrated local services and empower local citizens and communities to make a bigger contribution to running the city.

It is important to recognise that good governance and service delivery across each of these tiers can deliver positive benefits at every level. For example, effective joint planning arrangements at a regional level on housing growth can help shape housing development providing employment opportunities and vibrant neighbourhoods. Effective development and management of transportation can improve the city’s

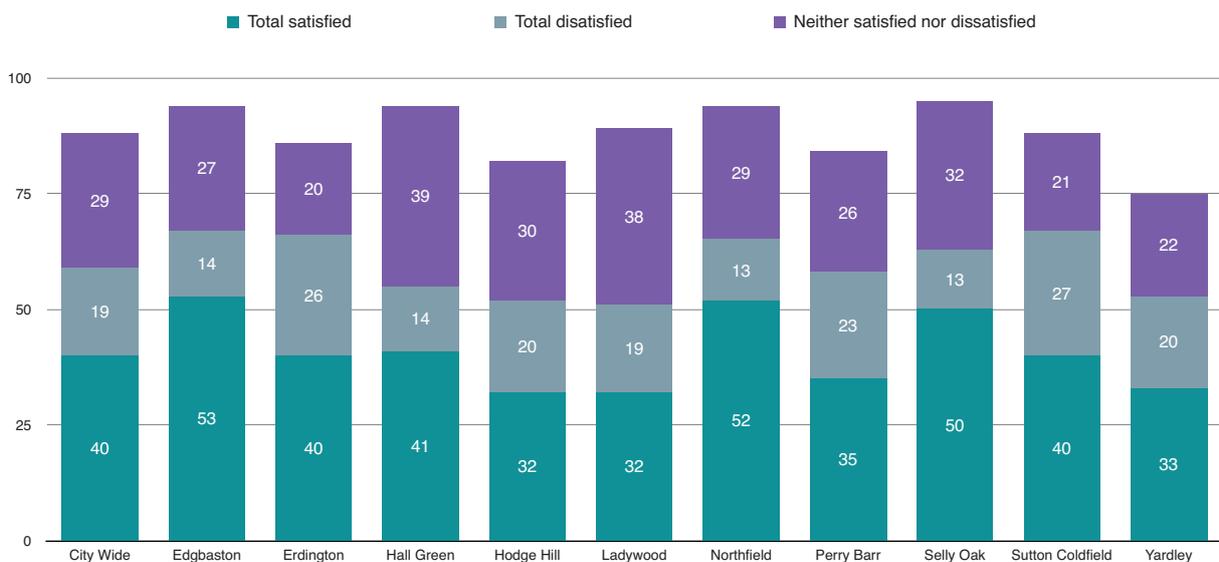
‘travel to work’ arrangements boosting regional growth and quality of life at a neighbourhood level. Good design of community services at the neighbourhood level can help improve employment prospects and contribute to the overall skills profile of the city workforce.

Your views

This is not the start of the consultation on the Community Governance Review. The **Highbury 4 Convention** in November 2014 kicked off this review and brought together 120 people from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. Some key conclusions are summarised in the box on page 14. We have also held some focus groups with members of the People’s Panel (a group of over 1,000 residents who we consult regularly) to assess attitudes to devolution within the city.

Our regular opinion surveys also provide valuable feedback on your perceptions of local democracy and services. For example we track public perceptions on issues to do with democracy against targets we have set. The chart below shows the wide variation across districts in satisfaction with how you can get involved in local decision-making. Our target for this measure is 50% and this is met in just three of the ten districts at present.

Satisfaction with the range of different ways that you can get involved with influencing local decision-making¹



¹Numbers in percentages

Key conclusions from the Highbury 4 Convention

- To build effective partnership working at a city-wide level, we need to start from agreeing the outcomes we want and how we can integrate services flexibly to deliver them
- The district model is a good one and many are committed to making it work. Effective devolution is about harnessing all resources from all stakeholders in an area, not just about changing governance structures
- We need to move away from a one-way, top-down view of communication and service delivery. The roles of districts in bringing people together to tackle local issues need to be made clearer to residents and especially young people. Districts are a visible presence of the council in a local area and enable local communities and partner organisations to communicate better with the council
- Saying everything should be local is not the answer; we have to agree where more local decision-making and delivery produces the best results for people
- There are a lot of good examples of local governance in Birmingham. We need to learn from these and actively engage citizens in existing governance models, many of which are working well and need to be kept and improved
- We need different governance models to engage the diverse communities in the different neighbourhoods of our city. These must be centred on enabling independent action, building community capacity and bringing local people together
- If we want civic good, we need a strong civil society. We all need to change our behaviour – council officers, elected members, businesses, voluntary organisations, community groups, citizens – to make this happen. Community governance needs to be based on strengthening civil society
- We need to be explicit about the outcomes we want to achieve and develop an agreed, values-based, collective leadership of the city which demonstrates these shared values through its behaviour.

Relevant scrutiny reviews

Some recent scrutiny reviews are relevant to this consultation and can be found at

<http://birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite/scrutinylibrary?packedargs=website%3D4&rendermode=live>

Devolution: Making it Real, January 2013

Citizen Engagement, February 2014

Working with Housing Associations, April 2014

Are Ward Committees Fit for Purpose?, January 2015

The Role of Councillors on District Committees, February 2015

Some of the recommendations of these reviews will be taken forward in this consultation.

The Kerslake Review

Between September and December 2014, Sir Bob Kerslake (former Permanent Secretary in the Department for Communities and Local Government) conducted a review of the corporate governance arrangements of Birmingham City Council. His report **The Way Forward** was published on 9 December 2014 and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/birmingham-city-councils-governance-and-organisational-capabilities-an-independent-review>

It makes some recommendations that are relevant to this review, so these consultation papers will include an outline of our intended responses to those, indicating which we will implement quickly and which will be subject to further consultation.

We have made it clear that we will respond positively to all the recommendations, but we are inviting your comments on the details of how we will implement some of the changes proposed. Our draft **Action Plan** covering all the recommendations was approved by Cabinet on 16 February and can be found at

<http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/democracy/Pages/AgendaDetail.aspx?AgendaID%3d83964>

Key recommendations in the Kerslake Review

- The Secretary of State should move Birmingham City Council to 'all out' elections every four years replacing the current election by thirds (in which one third of councillors are elected each year). This will be implemented in 2017 (rec. 4)
- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England should conduct an Electoral Review that reflects existing communities. It should aim to complete its work to enable elections by May 2017. The issues that the Commission will look at are summarised in Paper 2 (rec. 4)
- The council should focus on improving basic services and where appropriate organise them into four areas of the city, aligned with those of other agencies such as the police (rec. 7a)
- The District Committees should not be responsible for delivering services or managing them through Service Level Agreements. Instead they should be refocused on shaping and leading their local areas through influence, representation and independent challenge of all public services located in the district, including those of the council (rec. 7b)
- The districts should be provided with a modest commissioning budget to purchase additional services that help meet local priorities. Their meetings should be open to the public and take place in the locality (rec. 7c)
- The number of city-wide Scrutiny Committees should be reviewed in light of this and potentially reduced to no more than three (rec. 7d)
- Councillors should concentrate on regular, direct engagement with the people and organisations in their wards and their role as community leaders (rec. 7e)
- There should be a programme of culture change that is owned by both councillors and officers (rec. 3d).

The overall vision for change

Our mission and values

Our mission is to “make a positive difference every day to people’s lives”. The values we want the City Council to adopt are putting residents first, acting courageously, being true to our word and achieving excellence. The future of our community governance needs to support the mission and values.

The outcomes we want to achieve

This consultation is about our vision of how things will change for the better in terms of how the city is run and the local services its residents receive. Some of it will be about structures of decision-making and service management, but these are only a mechanism for achieving our bigger aims. As reflected in our mission statement above, what matters is the difference all of this makes to the lives of the people of Birmingham. We will only see real change if we can change the way we work – our “organisational culture” – and truly live by the mission and values set out above.

Our overall role and the goals and outcomes we want to achieve are set out in the Leader’s Policy Statement and the **Draft Business Plan for 2015+** (www.birmingham.gov.uk/budgetviews).

A “whole council” approach to change

The overall aim of our radical service redesign agenda is to “turn the council inside out” and ensure that we focus on the needs and priorities of citizens, not the City Council’s own internal structures and management.

Governance is an essential part of this change because it is about accountability and democracy. We must create services that genuinely belong to their users and to the citizens of the city as a whole. We must put greater emphasis on community leadership, community empowerment and partnership and less on formal council structures, budgets and service management. We must implement change through a “**whole council**” approach (with all parts of the organisation changing together), not by adding on new functions to unchanged central structures.

In addition we must work more as a “whole city” – allowing others to take the lead and working closely with the business community, other public agencies and civil society at all levels.

We remain committed to the principle that Birmingham is a city that cannot be run from a central point. The spirit of devolution and localisation must not only be continued but strengthened as we reform our community governance and local services. As part of our Triple Devolution model, the local neighbourhoods of the city will remain as important as the city and the wider city region to achieving good governance.

The focus for devolution will shift from institutional structures to networks and communities and from handing down power to sharing power so that we achieve more together. We want to create services that work for the “**Whole Place**” and the “**Whole Person**”. This means creating integrated services, with a single “front door” where different agencies and professionals work together to meet all the needs of a place or a citizen.

The framework for change

A phased programme

The long-term plans for change outlined in these reports will not be delivered in one month or one year. This will be a process of change stretching over several years. A small number of changes will take place within the first year but there will be many more opportunities to engage in consultation as we move on to implement different stages of the programme.

Our aim is to create a flexible model for a decade ahead and to allow it to develop according to changing needs and wants. Further changes are likely to be made to governance structures as services continue to evolve and, if communities want more influence and involvement, the council must be in a position to meet those aspirations. We want the overall framework to be a starting point – to be added to by the ideas and initiative of the people of Birmingham.

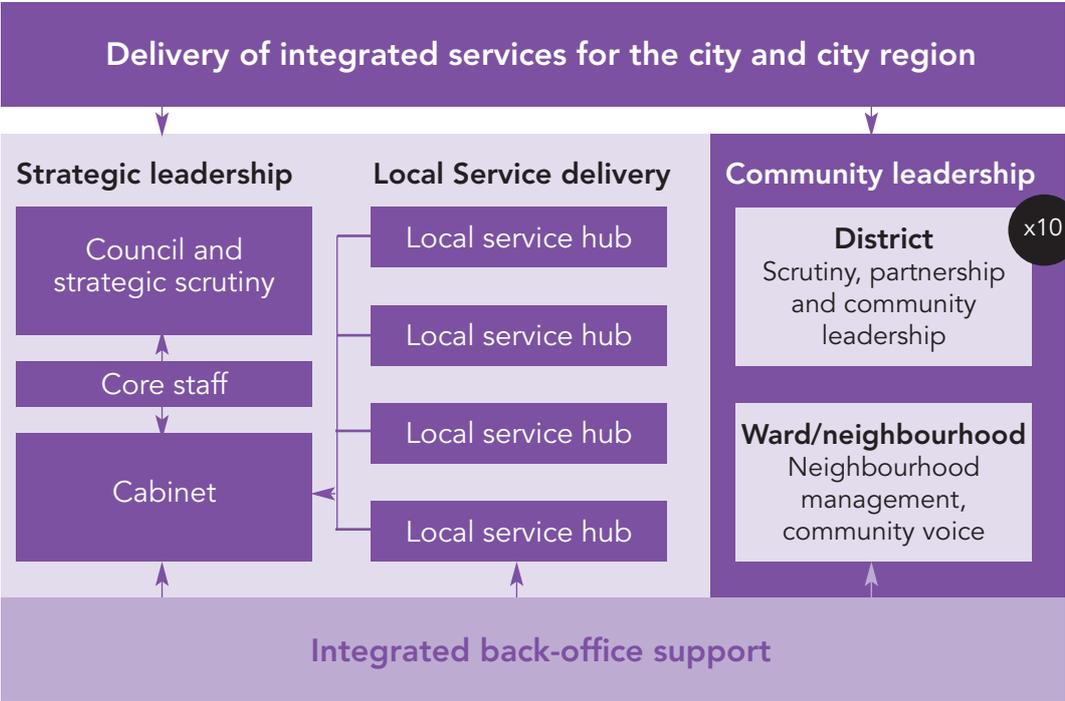
In order to drive change effectively across the whole City Council, a strategic implementation plan, **The Future of Local Services in Birmingham** will be drawn up at the completion of this consultation.

We need to set a clear direction of change if we are to ensure that our more detailed plans are all aligned. The overall model of the future city council is likely to have the elements set out in the box on page 19.

The structural framework we are proposing to work towards

- **City Council, Cabinet and a streamlined scrutiny function**, focused on setting and maintaining the overall direction for the city: strategic leadership, budget setting, performance management and commissioning
- **New strategic partnership arrangements**, bringing together business, public sector and civil society partners to provide collective leadership and set out shared long-term plans for the city
- **A very small strategic centre**, focused on supporting the political leadership, developing external partnerships and networks and strategic commissioning. This will eventually consist of a unified structure rather than separate directorates
- **An integrated corporate support services function**, providing efficient “back office” support to the strategic centre and all the localised or “arms-length” service delivery functions
- **Public Health, Social Care and support services to education** operating in close partnership with the NHS, schools and local providers, at city-wide and a more local level
- **Four Local Service Hubs** delivering more local services. These will be the mechanism for achieving a transformation in the quality of local services and the customer services that people receive. The hubs will be given the freedom to focus on service quality and the satisfaction of local residents. The whole of the City Council’s functions, along with key partnerships will be focused on supporting this new way of working – not just the current Place Directorate. More details of this will be set out in Paper 5
- **New models of co-operation across housing providers** and greater tenant involvement in the management of council housing, potentially through more locally based organisations. This will open up the options for housing providers to play a wider role in the provision of local services, such as advice, information and environmental services
- **Ten District Committees or partnerships**, focused on working with partners and stakeholders at the local level, supporting neighbourhood working and community engagement and scrutinising all public services in the area
- **Neighbourhood management** arrangements with a clear leadership role for ward councillors. A range of potential models such as neighbourhood or parish councils, forums and local partnerships will be encouraged and supported, along with the range of community rights.

Diagram showing the overall framework for change



Glossary of words and phrases

Boundary Commission	The Local Government Boundary Commission is the body responsible for reviewing electoral arrangements in local councils and making recommendations to central government about changes.
City Region	A city region is the wider conurbation or urban area surrounding many large cities and also the area from which many people travel to work in the main city. In Birmingham this is the wider West Midlands area, including the Black Country.
Community Governance Review	A review of local governance arrangements such as parish councils conducted by a local authority. It may be triggered by a petition or by the council itself.
Community Leadership	The term used to describe the leadership in local areas shown by a range of people in community organisations, businesses, public services or elected positions. This might include driving local projects, inspiring people to participate or bringing people together in partnerships.
Community Rights	<p>A range of rights granted to community organisations in the Localism Act of 2011. They are:</p> <p>Community Right to Challenge – to take over the running of a local service from a public body</p> <p>Community Right to Bid – the power to have an asset placed on a register kept by the council and then to bid for it if it comes up for sale. This covers private assets (e.g. pubs) not just public ones (e.g. libraries).</p> <p>Community Right to Build – enables communities to propose small developments.</p>

District Committee	Ten committees of 12 councillors introduced in Birmingham in 2004, each covering the area of one Parliamentary constituency (four wards). Under the 2000 Act they are "Area Committees" to which decision-making powers may be devolved by the Cabinet.
Electoral Review	A review carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission or by the Boundary Commission for England in the case of Parliamentary seats.
Governance	The word used to describe the way in which places are governed by both elected politicians and a wider set of organisations and groups. It has a wider meaning than "government" which refers just to the elected politicians or the state.
Leader and Cabinet system	Under the Local Government Act 2000, the system of strategic leadership used by many councils and similar to that used by national government. A Leader is appointed by the majority group and the whole council and she/he then appoints a Cabinet of up to nine other councillors. The Leader and Cabinet form the "Executive" of the council and make most day-to-day decisions not delegated to officers.
Neighbourhood Budgeting	Bringing together public services and other organisations in a neighbourhood to jointly plan the spending of money and the use of assets.
Neighbourhood Forum	A voluntary community organisation formed to enable local people to have more influence on decision-making and to carry out their own initiatives to improve the neighbourhood. The City Council has a set of standards and a kite mark for forums that it recognises (see box on page 14 of Paper 2).

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Neighbourhood Management	Different local services and organisations working together with residents and businesses in a neighbourhood to focus on priorities and share resources. Sometimes a Neighbourhood Manager is appointed to ensure co-ordination and provide a single point of contact for residents.
Neighbourhood Plan	A plan setting out policies for the physical development of a neighbourhood. Under the Localism Act 2011, it may be drawn up by recognised local bodies, such as a forum or parish council. They must be in line with Local Development Plans and national planning policy (see Appendix 2 of Paper 3).
Neighbourhood Tasking	Bringing together local residents and community groups, the council and the police to discuss community safety and environmental priorities and to plan action together.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Alongside the Leader and Cabinet system, the 2000 Act introduced Overview and Scrutiny committees to hold the executive to account and to conduct reviews of new or existing policy. These are presented to the Cabinet and the full council.
Parish or Neighbourhood Council	The lowest formal level of local government in England (see box on page 15 of Paper 2). Since 2007 Parish Councils can be called "Neighbourhood", "Community" or "Village" councils.
Town Council	A parish council that covers a whole town, usually a much larger area and population than most parishes.
Triple Devolution	Our label for the approach we are taking to local governance at three levels – city region, city and local or neighbourhood. We are arguing for devolution of funding and decision-making from central government to the city region and the city. We are committed to the third level of devolution to local neighbourhoods.

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Ward Committee	40 committees of the three councillors in each ward which have existed for many years in Birmingham. Their main role is to engage the local community.
Whole Council	A way of thinking about the changes we want to see that involves every part of the council's organisation working together, rather than as separate departments or functions.
Whole Person	The phrase used to describe an approach to service delivery that looks at all a person's needs rather than requiring them to go to different services about different issues. It requires different services and professions to work together.
Whole Place	The phrase used to describe an approach to governance that focuses on a whole area (city, neighbourhood or whatever) rather than separate services or budgets.

Local areas within Birmingham

Different people use different words to describe local areas of different sizes. We think it's important for people to be able to participate in the debate on community governance through having, as far as possible a shared understanding of the areas being discussed. So in this consultation paper we will use the following terms in the ways indicated:

Community – this is a word which can have many different meanings. It may mean a very small local area, such as a few streets or a community of people who share a common background, interest or identity, which may be dispersed rather than concentrated in one location. For example, the city is home to many different ethnic communities. Sometimes the word “community” is used to mean everyone in the city as a whole community. In these documents we will use the word to mean either ethnic or cultural communities or those living in a neighbourhood.

Community governance – refers to the process of running the city through democratic arrangements including elected representation as well as the active participation of local people and organisations.

Neighbourhood – a neighbourhood is a small area of the city, usually consisting of up to about 10,000 people that is distinguished by a common understanding of the name given to the area by its residents and other people in the city. One analysis has found that there are 140 such areas in the city, with an average population of 7,500. These are therefore “real boundaries” and they do not need to match the electoral or service areas below.

Electoral areas – these have fairly arbitrary boundaries selected to ensure roughly equal representation by elected politicians. A **ward** is currently the area in which three councillors are elected to the City Council and there are 40 wards in total in the city. They have an average population of around 25,000 so they each contain several neighbourhoods.

Parliamentary Constituencies are the areas represented by a Member of Parliament and there are currently ten in the city, each containing four wards. The **District Committees** of the City Council use the same boundaries as Parliamentary Constituencies, so they consist of 12 councillors from the four wards. These areas have an average population of over 100,000.

Service areas – many public organisations deliver their services within areas they define for that purpose. These include **Police Command Units** and **Clinical Commissioning Group** areas in the NHS. This paper introduces new **Local Service Hubs** based on four areas made up of two or three districts.

Map of Birmingham: districts and wards



