



Local Centres

05 April 2005

Report to the City Council

Local Centres



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Preface

By Councillor Mark Hill

Chairman, Regeneration
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
April 2005



The continuing renaissance of Birmingham City Centre has been rightly recognised as one of the most successful examples of urban regeneration in the United Kingdom. However, Birmingham's network of local centres is just as important to the City's well-being. Local centres provide the food shops, post offices, newsagents, banks and similar facilities, which people use on a day-to-day basis, and so the quality of these centres is an integral part of our quality of life. If we are to achieve our vision of Birmingham as a city of 'vibrant urban villages' we will need to ensure that our local centres are easy to get to, safe and pleasant places where people feel secure, and which they are happy to visit on a regular basis.

I am grateful to all those who have taken the time to give evidence to the Committee in the course of this review. The evidence we have heard has revealed many examples of good practice in delivering improvements to local centres. However, it has also identified some issues which need to be given greater priority in the future, and highlighted areas where we need to be more effective. These issues are set out in our conclusions and recommendations.

The City Council has already committed itself to reviewing its existing Local Centres Strategy and Local Centres Regeneration Programme. This will provide an important mechanism for taking our recommendations forward, and I look forward to seeing the outcome of this process in due course.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Hill'.



1 Summary

- 1.1.1 For several years local centres have been a focus for regeneration activity co-ordinated and promoted by the City Council. This activity has taken place within the context of a Local Centres Strategy and a Local Centres Regeneration Programme. The purpose of this review is to consider the impact and effectiveness of this activity in advance of a review of the Strategy and Programme.
- 1.1.2 The Review took the form of a series of evidence sessions at full meetings of the Committee, a written report on progress in delivering the Regeneration Programme, a site visit and a questionnaire survey.
- 1.1.3 There are over 60 local centres in Birmingham, providing for essential local facilities such as post offices, newsagents, banks, hairdressers and grocery stores. Because local centres are used regularly by local people they also often come to provide a sense of identity to local communities, and their continuing health is important to the delivery of the 'vibrant urban villages' element of the Council Plan 2005+.
- 1.1.4 The need to support local centres is reflected in national regional and local planning policies. The issue of access to essential local services such as fresh food shops is becoming increasingly important in this context.
- 1.1.5 In 2001 the Council adopted a Local Centres Strategy to provide a clearer context for its work in seeking to regenerate local centres. This was followed by a Local Centres Regeneration Programme. This identified a programme of action, and prioritised centres across the City in relation to a number of criteria.
- 1.1.6 All those who gave evidence to the Review recognised the importance of local centres, and the Review therefore confirms the continuing case for action to improve centres. The key issues concern the appropriate scope of public intervention, the mechanisms for developing and delivering this, and the priority to be attached to different approaches.



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1.1.7 The findings of the review are set out in detail in Section 4 of the report and the conclusions in Section 5. The key findings were as follows:

- The activities that take place within local centres, and in particular the retail sector, are subject to national market trends which there is little ability to influence. Some of these trends - for example, the growth of large supermarkets - may work to the disadvantage of local centres, but within this context it should still be possible for local centres to maintain a role, provided that they focus on meeting the distinctive needs of their local communities;
- Lack of sufficient well-signposted, secure, conveniently-located car parking is a significant problem in many centres. Greater priority needs to be given to addressing this. At the same time it is important to remember that 38% of households in Birmingham do not have access to a car, so public transport also continues to be important;
- People need to feel safe when they visit a local centre if they are to return on a regular basis. Improving security within centres also needs to be a priority. CCTV can be an important tool in achieving this;
- Anti-social behaviour, such as drunkenness, is also a problem which needs to be addressed. It is likely that there will be different solutions to this problem in different centres depending on local circumstances;
- There is a need for better management of issues such as street cleaning, pavement maintenance and the enforcement of parking and other controls within centres. Town Centre Management represents an important way in which these issues can be addressed, as is clear from the experience in Erdington, where a manager was appointed about two years ago, and this initiative should be extended to more centres;
- Upgrading the quality of design and of the environment within centres can also have significant benefits, both in terms of encouraging more visits and by making a centre more attractive and pleasant for those who use it regularly;



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- Funding for centre improvements currently comes from a variety of sources, including the Council's capital programme, SRB (Single Regeneration Budget), ERDF(European Regional Development Fund), NRF(Neighbourhood Renewal Fund) and Section 106 monies. This is likely to continue to be the case, and it will continue to be necessary for the Council to devote its own capital resources to this area of activity in order to make the most of the potential of these other sources of funding. The potential to raise additional funding from private sector sources, including traders, also needs to be investigated. Business Improvement Districts provide a possible way of achieving this;
- District Committees and District Partnerships have potentially important roles to play in local centre regeneration. They should be encouraged to become more involved in identifying local solutions and in relation to smaller centres and parades of shops;
- Progress in delivering local centre improvements has been broadly in line with the priorities established in the programme. The evidence indicates that local centre improvements have been effective, but it would be helpful to have more consistent data to demonstrate their impact.



2 Introduction

2.1 Reason for Review

- 2.1.1 For several years Local Centres have been a focus for regeneration activity co-ordinated and promoted by the City Council. This activity has taken place within the context of a Local Centres Strategy, which was approved by the Regeneration Advisory Team in June 2001, and the Local Centres Regeneration Programme, which was approved by the Regeneration Advisory Team in November 2001. The purpose of this review is to consider the impact and effectiveness of this activity, in advance of a review of the Strategy and Programme.

2.2 Terms of Reference

- 2.2.1 The Review seeks to:
- Consider how effective the Council's existing Local Centres Strategy and Local Centres Regeneration programme are in delivering improvements to local centres and impact on local communities;
 - Formulate recommendations for improvements to the Strategy and Programme, to be taken into account in the review of these documents which is to take place later this year.

2.3 Methodology

- 2.3.1 The approach to be followed in the Review was agreed at the Committee's meeting of 21 September 2004. The Review took the form of a series of evidence sessions at full meetings of the Committee, a written report on progress in delivering the Regeneration Programme, a site visit, and a questionnaire survey.



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2.3.2 The evidence sessions were as follows:

- 19 October 2004 - Officers from Planning and Economic Development explained the background to the Local Centres Strategy and Programme, gave examples of recent experience in implementing the programme, and highlighted current issues;
- 23 November 2004 - Mr Pal Singh (Birmingham Chamber of Commerce), Dr Surendra Sahota (Dudley Road Traders Association and Chair of Institute of Asian Businesses) and Mr Faisal Kapasi (Lozells Road Traders Association and the North West Federation of Traders Associations) provided a local traders' and business perspective, with particular reference to centres in North West Birmingham;
- 14 December 2004 - Mr Robert Barnes (CB Richard Ellis) provided evidence on the market trends affecting local centres;
- 18 January 2005 - Mr Chris Haynes (Transportation) provided evidence in relation to accessibility issues, and in particular the Council's approach towards car parking in centres. Mr Rob Hetherington (Head of Regeneration Policy, Advantage West Midlands) explained the role of AWM in promoting the regeneration of centres.

2.3.3 On 20 January 2005, the Committee undertook a site visit to Erdington Centre. In addition to visiting the centre itself, this provided Members of the Committee with the opportunity to hear the views of a range of people involved in work to regenerate that centre, including:

- Councillor Jilly Bermingham - Chair of the Ward Advisory Committee;
- Mr Nigel Godfrey - Erdington Town Centre Manager;
- Mr Graham King - Erdington Town Centre Partnership;
- Inspector Richard Youds - West Midlands Police;
- Mr Gary Morris - Co-op Supermarket Manager.

2.3.4 A written report was provided to the Committee showing progress in relation to the delivery of the Local Centres Regeneration Programme.

2.3.5 A postal questionnaire survey was undertaken, seeking residents' views on their local centre. A total of 2000 questionnaires was sent out, half to randomly selected residents living within 800 metres of Kingstanding Centre and half to randomly selected residents living within 800 metres of Acocks Green. A response rate of 30% (599 replies) was achieved, split approximately equally between the two centres. A copy of the questionnaire form is attached as Appendix 1. A report on the outcome of the survey was presented to the 18th January meeting of the Committee.



3 Background

3.1 What Are Local Centres, and Why Are They Important?

- 3.1.1 There is no universal definition of a local centre. However, a local centre is usually accepted as comprising at a minimum a small group of shops and service uses, including what might be considered 'essential' local facilities, such as a post office, newsagent, bank, hairdresser, and a grocery store or stores, although the actual range of what exists in any individual case is inevitably influenced by market forces. Within the context of Birmingham all centres outside the City Centre which at least meet this description have customarily been treated as local centres, and these range in size from small places, such as Shard End or Walmley, which mainly serve a very local walk-in catchment population, to much larger centres such as Erdington and Kings Heath which draw on more extensive catchment areas. On this basis over 60 local centres can be identified in Birmingham, and these are shown on the map at Appendix 2. In addition to this it is also important to remember that there are many smaller centres and local parades which are valued by local people.
- 3.1.2 The above definition points to the main reason why local centres are important. They provide essential services in accessible locations, close to where people live. This is important from both a social inclusion perspective - it ensures that everyone has access to these essential services, regardless of age, access to a car etc - and from the point of view of sustainability - a good network of local centres reduces the need for people to travel long distances to get to shops, and other businesses providing for day to day needs. Because they are used on such a regular basis, local centres often come to provide a sense of identity to local communities. In many parts of Birmingham, local areas are defined by their local centre. For this reason the continuing health of local centres makes a very important contribution to the delivery of the 'vibrant urban villages' element of the Council Plan 2005+.



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- 3.1.3 Intervention by the public sector to promote and improve local centres has a long history. In the more recent past, activity in this area took on a new impetus in the early 1990s, when national planning policy began to move away from a 'Laissez faire' approach to out-of-centre retail development, creating new commercial opportunities for some town centres. At the same time in Birmingham the increasing success of City Centre regeneration began to generate pressures for a similar approach to be taken towards centres elsewhere in the city. In response to this, initiatives were pursued in relation to a number of other centres, focussing on environmental, highways and economic development issues. It was the need to provide some overall context and some prioritisation for this growing area of work which led to the preparation of firstly the Local Centres Strategy, and then the Local Centres Regeneration Programme.

3.2 National and Regional Context

- 3.2.1 National planning policy toward local centres is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6: Town Centres and Retail Development (PPG6). This introduced the important concept of the 'sequential approach'. In essence, this says that new town centre uses (such as shops, banks, offices and many leisure uses) should normally be located in centres. If no in-centre locations are available, then they should be located on the edge of the centre, and only if no in or edge-of- centre site is available should out of centre locations be considered.
- 3.2.2 PPG6 was published in 1996, and has been influential in shifting the focus of retail investment in particular away from out of centre sites, back towards centres. However there is concern that the 'stick' of the controls imposed by PPG6 has not been matched by the carrot of a more pro-active approach to creating investment opportunities in centres. PPG6 is currently being reviewed and the revised version is likely to place much greater emphasis on the need for positive action by local planning authorities in partnership with others, to improve centres, and make them more attractive to investment.
- 3.2.3 Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport includes advice on car parking. In particular it specifies that car parking standards should be set as maxima, rather than minima, and that developers should not normally be required to provide more car parking than they consider necessary to serve their development.



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- 3.2.4 The issue of access to essential facilities is also taking on increasing importance in Government thinking. In the late 1990s the work of the Social Exclusion Unit, and in particular Policy Action Team Report 13 (PAT13), identified the importance of access to food shops. It highlighted the threat of 'food deserts': areas where those without a car could effectively be denied access to opportunities to shop for fresh food. This highlighted the importance of maintaining an accessible network of vibrant local centres. This issue has been investigated in Birmingham, through the Birmingham Local Centres Study. This concluded that there are no areas within Birmingham which could truly be identified as 'food deserts' but it did demonstrate that the choice and variety of food shopping varies significantly between areas, and it went on to identify certain 'gap areas' where food shopping needs improvement. The issue of food deserts was also considered in the recent report on Children's Obesity undertaken by the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2004.
- 3.2.5 Further work on identifying standards of accessibility to key facilities is now being undertaken in the context of work on the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.2.6 Planning policies at the regional level (which are set out in RPG11, Regional Planning Guidance for the West Midlands), also emphasise the importance of city, town and local centres, and aim to support them. The Council's own planning policies, set out in the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan and the Proposed Alterations to this Plan also seek to focus new retail investment in existing local centres.
- 3.2.7 The importance of local centres in wider strategies for regeneration is also noted in the Regional Economic Strategy, produced by Advantage West Midlands, and in the North Birmingham/Solihull, and the North West Birmingham Zone Implementation Plans.

3.3 The Local Centres Strategy

- 3.3.1 The Local Centres Strategy aims to provide a more coherent context for regeneration work in relation to local centres. It reviewed current trends influencing the health of centres, and suggested ways intervention could be developed to make it more effective.
- 3.3.2 The key issues identified in the Strategy were:
- Decline in the demand for small shop units;
 - Variable performance of centres across the city, with larger centres and those in the suburbs, tending to perform more strongly than smaller centres and those in inner areas;
 - Varied initiatives being taken by the City Council to support centres in different locations;



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- Variable access to local centres and local shops in different parts of the city, but no true 'food deserts';
- Decline in the independent retail sector.

3.3.3 The Strategy suggested the following approaches:

- Preparation of Local Centre Action Plans, in partnership with all stakeholders, to include local community business and voluntary groups, to provide a framework for social, economic and physical regeneration;
- Build on success, by addressing infrastructure or other constraints on new investment;
- Manage decline, in cases where there is no prospect of centres regaining their former status, by encouraging redevelopment to alternative uses;
- Filling in gaps in the network of centres in areas where access to local facilities is poor;
- Encourage local centre management;
- Develop a local centres action programme;
- Assemble land through compulsory purchase if required.

3.4 The Local Centres Regeneration Programme

3.4.1 The Local Centres Regeneration Programme was prepared in response to the last of the approaches identified above.

3.4.2 It was based on a review of all local centres across the city, which assessed them in terms of:

- The health of the centre (in the light of indicators contained in PPG6);
- The importance of the centre (in terms of the size of the population it serves);
- The needs of the area (in terms of the availability of alternative local shopping and service provision);
- The potential of the centre to attract new activity.

3.4.3 In the light of this assessment, centres were placed in one of four categories:

- Category 1 - Centres with resources committed, but more investment needed (a total of ten centres, including Erdington, Northfield and Stirchley);



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- Category 2 - Centres where preparatory work had been undertaken and funding was required within three years (a total of twelve centres, including Frankley, Lea Village and Witton);
- Category 3 - Centres where preparatory work was now required (a total of fifteen centres, including Acocks Green, Kings Heath and Stechford);
- Category 4 - Centres to be considered in the longer term, (a total of seventeen centres, including Harborne, Mere Green and West Heath).

In addition, seven centres did not appear in any category, because work was complete or nearing completion in relation to them (for example Soho Road).



4 Findings

4.1 General

4.1.1 A wide range of evidence was considered by the Committee during the course of this review, and inevitably this touched upon an equally wide range of issues. However a number of key themes emerged:

- The extent to which intervention in local centres can have a sustained impact in the face of adverse market trends;
- The need to provide improved car parking provision;
- The need to address issues of personal security, including the use of CCTV;
- The need to address anti-social behaviour;
- The potential of town centre management;
- The need to improve the quality of the environment;
- Resources - and in particular the need for initial investments to be sustained over the longer term;
- The need for local approaches, and the links to the localisation agenda;
- Progress on implementing the Local Centre Regeneration Programme.

In the rest of this section, these themes are addressed in turn.

4.1.2 However, at the outset it should be noted that all of those who gave evidence to the review recognised the importance of local centres, and considered that improving centres should remain an important part of any overall regeneration strategy. The questionnaire survey also provides support for this. Over 98% (586) of respondents reported that they used their local centre, and about 90% (525) used it at least once a week. The Review therefore confirms the continuing case for actions to improve local centres: the key issues concern the appropriate scope of public intervention, the mechanisms for developing and delivering this, and the priority to be attached to different approaches.



4.2 Market Trends: The Context

- 4.2.1 The activities which take place within local centres and in particular the retail sector are subject to national market trends, which intervention to support centres has little ability to influence. The key national trends are:
- Stronger sales growth amongst the large retailers as compared to small retailers in both the food and non-food sectors;
 - Decline in the High Street's share of trade;
 - Growth in the number and the market share of the supermarkets;
 - Decline in shop numbers;
 - Fewer, but larger shops, in fewer, but larger centres;
 - Drop in demand for small shop units - but at the same time a drop in vacancy rates in many areas;
 - The need to create sustainable mixed use areas which achieve a balance between retail and other uses, such as restaurants.
- 4.2.2 Local traders expressed particular concerns over the impact of national multiple retailers on local trading patterns, and specifically the impact of large supermarkets. These were considered to draw in large amounts of trade but to provide few benefits to local businesses in return. Several members of the Committee sympathised with this view and pointed to the impact of large supermarkets in their own areas. This was a particular problem in cases such as Perry Barr, where the supermarket was physically separate from existing local shops and pedestrian links between the two were very difficult. It was suggested that where large supermarkets are permitted, they should be integrated with centres and not be allowed to trade in isolated locations. In these circumstances it was felt that there was potential for supermarkets to play an important anchor role in helping to sustain local centres.
- 4.2.3 In the context of Erdington, the Town Centre Partnership took the view that the right response to the competition provided by the national multiples should not be to compete directly with them, but to identify alternative 'niche' markets - in the case of Erdington, based on personal service and value for money. A similar view was expressed in relation to the North West Birmingham area, which is more culturally and ethnically diverse than Erdington, and where it was felt that opportunities existed for local traders to focus on specific local needs, that the national multiples could not satisfy.



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- 4.2.4 Overall, the evidence indicates that national trends will continue to impact on local centres, not always to their advantage, but within this context it should still be possible for local centres to maintain a role, provided that they are able to focus on meeting the distinctive needs of their local communities and that a realistic view is taken of this role, as appears to be the case in Erdington. This process will also be assisted by ensuring that new investment by national multiples is integrated with centres wherever possible, an approach which is increasingly supported by national planning policy.
- 4.2.5 Arising from this, and supported by many of those who gave evidence, is an acknowledgement of the need to ensure that centres retain a range of essential services - specifically post office, pharmacy, facilities for accessing cash, and basic food shopping. The position in relation to post offices has, of course, been considered in detail in the recent Regeneration and Local Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on proposals for local post office closures. The importance of retaining key anchor stores was also emphasised.

4.3 Car Parking

- 4.3.1 During the course of the review, car parking was mentioned more frequently than any other issue, as something which needed to be improved within centres.
- 4.3.2 Most traders see plentiful, well-signposted, secure car parking, conveniently located to their business as an essential requirement - and something which is not adequately provided for in many centres. Equally as important is the need for the pedestrian links between car parks and shops to be convenient, short and safe. Because of this traders are often reluctant to accept measures such as Red Routes or pedestrianisation, if these restrict or limit car parking without suitable alternative arrangements being made. It is therefore essential that car parking needs are fully taken into account when such initiatives are promoted.
- 4.3.3 Lack of off-street parking inevitably results in parking taking place on-street, and sometimes on pavements or shop forecourt areas. This can cause damage and can result in obstructions to pedestrian flow. This applies not simply to parking by cars, but also to parking by vans and delivery vehicles. Lack of enforcement of parking restrictions is a significant issue here.



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- 4.3.4 In some cases, even where off-street car parking exists, it is not subject to any co-ordinated management. In Erdington, there are a number of adjoining off-street parking areas, which are owned and managed separately, when a more co-ordinated approach could bring benefits to the centre as a whole. This is an issue which is now being addressed through the Town Centre Manager and the Town Centre Partnership. The Erdington example points to a more general potential for private parking areas to be used more effectively, and for traders to be encouraged to provide parking where possible.
- 4.3.5 Surveys confirm that traders' concerns over the adequacy of car parking are soundly based. The most recent city-wide surveys indicate that over 50% of convenience shopping trips in Birmingham are made by car, and the survey undertaken for this review indicated that about a third of trips to Acocks Green and Kingstanding were by car. About 50% (250) of respondents to this latter survey thought that car parking provision was 'poor' or 'very poor' and 44% (25) of those responding to the question identified more car parking as something which would encourage them to visit more often.
- 4.3.6 In contrast, public transport access was identified as 'good' or 'very good' by almost 70% (380) of respondents, and less than 10% (53) identified improved public transport as something which would encourage them to visit more often. Most local centres enjoy good access by bus and no evidence was presented to the Committee to suggest that the quality of bus access is currently a significant issue. However, the 2001 Census shows that 38% of households in Birmingham do not have access to a car and so it continues to be important to ensure that high quality public transport access is maintained.
- 4.3.7 The evidence clearly indicates that lack of adequate car parking provision is a significant problem in many places. The solutions to this will inevitably differ from place to place and the reality may be that in some cases there will be no space to provide additional parking. However, it should be a priority to devise strategies to make the best use of existing parking and if possible provide additional safe off-street parking where this is practicable and where it is required. New development may provide opportunities for this, and in such cases it is important that any new parking provision should be available for the centre as a whole and not just the new development.



4.4 Security

- 4.4.1 Issues of personal safety were raised in evidence to the Committee almost as frequently as car parking. Indeed, the two issues are linked in that examples were highlighted of situations where off-street car parks had been provided, but were not used because they were perceived to be too dangerous.
- 4.4.2 The importance of security was also highlighted by the survey undertaken for this Review. About a third of respondents (197) thought security was 'poor' or 'very poor' and over 50% (297) said that 'better security' would encourage them to visit their local centre more often.
- 4.4.3 The availability of Home Office grants has enabled the deployment of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems in several local centres. While there may be some doubt as to the actual impact of such systems, it is clear that they do have a significant effect in improving perceptions of safety. The perceived success of CCTV where it has been introduced has therefore generated pressures for it to be introduced elsewhere. This issue was considered in more detail in the recent Scrutiny Review of CCTV.
- 4.4.4 In Erdington the local police confirmed that the introduction of CCTV had led to a significant number of arrests and convictions and to a reduction in levels of crime. This had been the case not only in the centre, but also in the immediate surrounding area, i.e. there was no indication of a local displacement effect, although it was not clear whether there had been displacement to other nearby local centres, such as New Oscott. A different view was taken by traders from the North West Area, who felt that the effect of CCTV was to displace criminal activity. Again, this issue was considered in the recent Scrutiny Review of CCTV.
- 4.4.5 It should also be emphasised that CCTV was not the only security measure to be introduced in Erdington. An alcohol-free zone has also been declared and an increased police presence provided, and so it is likely to have been the combined effect of this package of measures which has produced results. This emphasises the need for security issues to be considered in the context of the centre as whole, including side streets and car parking areas. Where CCTV is employed, it is important that the design and location of cameras includes these areas, and that ways of meeting the long-term revenue costs are considered.



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4.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

- 4.5.1 Associated with the issue of personal security is the need to control anti-social activities such as alcohol abuse and prostitution. This was raised in relation to a number of centres.
- 4.5.2 At one level this problem may not appear to be as serious as the more extreme instances where there is a genuine fear of crime or physical violence. However it may well be more prevalent and it is clear that the threat of coming into contact with anti-social activity can be a significant deterrent to visits or repeat visits to a centre which experiences this problem on a regular basis.
- 4.5.3 The evidence available to the Committee does not conclusively point to a single solution to this issue and the related issue of personal security. Indeed, it is likely that different solutions will be appropriate in different centres, depending on local circumstances. What does however emerge clearly is that security is a pre-requisite for the success of any local centre and that measures to address local security issues need to be a priority.

4.6 Town Centre Management

- 4.6.1 A further theme to emerge strongly in the evidence was a concern over what might be described as 'maintenance' issues within centres. Issues raised under this general heading include:

- Litter, fly-tipping and dirty streets and public areas;
- Badly maintained paving and street furniture;
- Poor quality public facilities or the complete absence of such facilities (e.g. seating areas, public toilets);
- Obstructions to pedestrian movement (e.g. delivery vans parked on the pavement);
- Failure to enforce parking or other controls.

It was also felt, particularly by the local traders, that it was often difficult to identify who was responsible for resolving these issues, and that responsibilities were fragmented. There was no single point of contact, no one with overall responsibility for the centre as a whole. There was a need for someone to take on this responsibility, with the power to take action to resolve problems. Extension of town centre management was suggested as one way in which these issues could be addressed.

- 4.6.2 The survey commissioned for the Review confirmed that these issues are generally perceived to be a problem: 41% of respondents (233) thought that the cleanliness and upkeep of their local centre was 'poor' or 'very poor', and 64% (359) thought that the quality of public facilities was 'poor' or 'very poor'.



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- 4.6.3 The concept of town centre management is relatively new to the UK, but rapidly became established during the 1990s as a means of providing a co-ordinated approach to the management of our major town and city centres. Birmingham City Centre has had a full-time City Centre Manager for over 10 years, but experience of town centre management in local centres in the city is limited. A number of those giving evidence to the Committee pointed to the contrast between the environmental and maintenance standards which have been achieved in the City Centre, and those which are often found elsewhere. While welcoming the success of the City Centre, the feeling was that the same standards should also be achievable in local centres.
- 4.6.4 Erdington is one of the few local centres in the city to have experimented with town centre management and the development of the approach in that centre was outlined in the course of the Committee's site visit. The initiative was promoted by the Ward Committee and the Ward Advisory Board and funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. It has led to the appointment of a full-time town centre manager, who has succeeded in developing a strong and broadly based-town centre partnership. Through this mechanism it has not only been possible to begin to address the 'maintenance' and 'house-keeping' issues identified above, but also to develop local strategies to address car parking and security issues, and to promote the centre through events, newsletters and other forms of publicity.
- 4.6.5 Town Centre management in Erdington is relatively new, but its initial results are undeniably impressive. The evidence from Erdington and from the City Centre indicates that the appointment of a Town Centre Manager can be an effective way of providing a co-ordinated approach to the small-scale maintenance issues which can be very important at a local level. It can also help generate local partnerships and local traders/business associations to address broader issues, and to promote the centre. In the case of centres like Northfield, which are about to experience major physical change, creating new development opportunities, could also include the promotion of new business activity.
- 4.6.6 However, it should also be noted that Erdington is one of the larger local centres in the city. It is unlikely that 'small' local centres could justify a full time town centre manager and so if the idea is to be extended to this level it will be necessary to consider grouping centres together within a single management regime. This is an area where District Committees may be able to play a role.



4.7 Environmental Quality

- 4.7.1 There is a close connection between this issue and the concerns discussed in the previous section. Abuse of paving areas, boarded up shops, fly-tipping etc all have a damaging effect on the quality of the environment. However the main focus here is with the quality and design of features such as paving, street furniture, signage, shop fronts and soft landscaping. These features were considered to be 'poor' or 'very poor' by 42% (220) of respondents to the survey commissioned for this Review.
- 4.7.2 This issue arose in relation to the North West area. Local traders were generally impressed with the work which had been undertaken in Soho Road, where substantial investments in improving the quality of the environment had taken place in line with an adopted Local Action Plan. The concern was that these investments had not so far been matched by equivalent investment in other centres in the area, so that Soho Road had benefited but other centres had not.
- 4.7.3 A phased programme of improvements is in the process of implementation in Erdington, in line with the Local Centres Regeneration Programme. These initiatives were seen as important by the Town Centre Partnership as a means of changing perceptions of the centre, attracting more passing trade and as a way of resolving some inherent 'design faults' which encouraged anti-social activity.
- 4.7.4 It is important to recognise that responsibility for achieving environmental quality does not rest solely with the City Council. There is also an obligation on local businesses to ensure that they contribute to the maintenance of high environmental standards both in respect of their own property and the public realm generally. Examples of where this has not occurred emerged from several centres.
- 4.7.5 Overall, the evidence confirmed the view that upgrading the quality the of design and of the environment can have significant benefits, both in terms of encouraging more visits, and by making a centre a more attractive and pleasant place for those who rely on it and use it regularly. Environmental improvements can take many forms, from relatively minor initiatives such as the introduction of public art or the provision of gateway features, to major projects such as full or partial pedestrianisation. The importance of not ignoring the real benefits that can flow from small scale (and therefore relatively inexpensive) improvements was emphasised by some of the traders and by the Erdington experience. However, the view was also expressed that to produce a real transformation resources were required on a significant scale, as happened in the City Centre and Soho Road. This inevitably raises the issue of where those resources can be found.



Local Centres

4.8 Resources

4.8.1 The Committee heard that most local centre regeneration projects are financed from a package of funding from a variety of different sources. The key funding sources that are currently utilised are as follows:

- The City Council's own capital programme;
- Single Regeneration Budget Programmes (SRB);
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF);
- Section 106 (S106) monies, secured through planning applications.

In addition there are some cases where major highway expenditure will pave the way for local centre improvements. A good example is Northfield, where the construction of a relief road will relieve the centre of much through traffic and enable environmental enhancements to proceed. Resources available from the Home Office for the installation of CCTV have also been utilised in a number of cases.

4.8.2 There are limitations on the use of SRB and ERDF funds, in that these are not available in all parts of the City, and match funding is normally required. These constraints do not apply to the Council's own capital funding. The use of devolved NRF money has been at the instigation of Ward Committees and Ward Advisory Boards, two good examples being Erdington, where it has funded CCTV and the town centre management initiative, and Weoley Castle where it has been used to fund environmental improvements.

4.8.3 Contributions to local centre improvements can also be negotiated in appropriate cases from developers when planning applications are submitted in or on the edge of a centre. Where major developments are proposed, such as supermarkets, this can be a significant source of funding. Northfield is again an example of this. Inevitably this source of funding is only available to centres which are able to attract new development proposals. It was felt that there was a need for a more 'joined up' approach to the negotiation of S106 Agreements and that it was important that these should always take account of local centre initiatives.

4.8.4 Advantage West Midlands (AWM) are one of the major sources of funding for regeneration activity. In their evidence to the Committee, they recognised the important role that local centres play, but said that AWM did not have an overall strategy to support local centres. Their primary concern was with business creation. This included such small-scale activities as hairdressers and accountants and local centres are important in providing opportunities for this kind of business to start up. However, in this context AWM's focus was likely to be on larger rather than smaller centres.



Local Centres

- 4.8.5 It seems clear that in the future it will be necessary for future funding for this area of work to continue to be drawn from a range of different sources, and that this will continue to influence the potential to promote activity in different locations. To make the most of this potential, and to ensure that local centres which do not have access to special funding regimes such as SRB or ERDF, or to funding from development activity through S106 agreements, do not lose out, it will also be necessary for the City Council to continue to allocate capital resources to local centres. Given the number of centres in Birmingham and continued local pressures for centre improvements it also seems inevitable that there will continue to be a need for priorities between centres to be set.
- 4.8.6 The potential to raise additional funding from the private sector and in particular the local businesses which may benefit from public investment was also raised during the course of the review. It was emphasised that this needed to include not just local traders, but also larger private sector investors, and the national multiple retailers where these were represented within a centre. One area where this appeared to have particular potential was in contributing to the on-going revenue costs of certain types of initiative, such as CCTV or town centre management. The initial reaction of the traders was to oppose this idea. They tended to the view that this type of initiative benefited the whole community and not simply the business sector, and so it was appropriate for it to be funded through publicly generated funds.
- 4.8.7 In the longer term, the introduction of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) may provide a mechanism to promote this approach. This enables businesses within a defined area to agree, by means of a vote, to pay an additional business rate to be used to pay for additional services within the area.
- 4.8.8 Two BIDs are currently being proposed: in the City Centre and Erdington. The Erdington Town Centre Partnership saw this as a natural development for the initiatives that have been put in place in that centre. It was thought that an Erdington BID could involve over 200 businesses and would raise about £100,000 per year for town centre management activity.
- 4.8.9 BIDs do appear to have potential to provide a means of generating additional resources for individual centres and in centres like Erdington where strong local partnerships have been established, and there is a clear view on local priorities, they may be a realistic way forward. However, in the absence of this, the natural reluctance of businesses to pay more rates than are already required is likely to make it difficult to secure a 'yes' vote.
- 4.8.10 It seems unlikely that BIDs will be a significant factor in local centres in the immediate future but it is important that efforts continue to be made to engage local businesses in local enhancement projects, to encourage them to invest in such initiatives and to work towards the kind of approach now enabled by BIDs.



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- 4.8.11 The issue of long-term funding for the running costs of CCTV was raised on a number of occasions. This is clearly an important issue for those centres where CCTV has already been introduced and it requires resolution. However it is also clear that this is a city-wide and indeed a national issue, and it is one which received more detailed consideration in the recent Scrutiny Review of CCTV, and so it is not considered further here.

4.9 Localisation

- 4.9.1 One recurring message to emerge in the course of the review was that, while there are common issues which affect all centres, it is also true that at the detailed level all centres are different and have individual strengths and weaknesses. This means that successful approaches at the local level need to be built on effective local consultation, and to be developed in partnership with local businesses, and residents. It is particularly important that local elected members are involved in this process, and there was some concern that this had not always been the case in the past.
- 4.9.2 Local traders from the north west of the city were critical in this respect of consultancy work undertaken by DTZ in their area, in that they considered that the consultants had not engaged at a sufficiently detailed level with local people. Similar observations were made by members of the Committee in relation to the role of Advantage West Midlands. It was felt that AWM operated at too strategic a level and there was a difficulty in connecting the strategy to the detailed reality of experience in a particular local centre. This was a criticism which AWM acknowledged to be valid at least to a degree, although it was partly inherent in their regional role.
- 4.9.3 However, in contrast to this, it was also noted that local centres do not operate in isolation. Changes in one centre may have implications for its neighbours, and so it is also necessary to retain a wider strategic view, while encouraging the emergence of local solutions. There is also a need to ensure that good practice developed in one place is publicised and shared more widely and it was suggested that there might be a role of a local centres champion to undertake this.
- 4.9.4 On a related point, the Committee also noted that while the Local Centre Regeneration Programme dealt with the 60 or so centres covered by the definition at the beginning of this report, there were also a large number of even smaller centres and shopping parades across the city. When considered from a strategic, city-wide perspective such centres individually appeared to have limited significance. However from a local perspective they could be very important, and collectively their well-being needed to be recognised within the Strategy and Regeneration Programme.



Local Centres

4.9.5 One thread which appears to link some of these issues is the formation of District Committees and District Partnerships through the localisation process. Some Districts have already identified local centres as a concern and there is clearly potential for Districts to take on a more active role in relation to local centre regeneration. This could include:

- Helping to establish a realistic vision for centres within their area;
- Addressing some of the co-ordination and management issues raised in previous sections;
- Mapping smaller centres and parades and encouraging appropriate policies;
- Providing a mechanism through which local members can be involved in the development of policies for individual local centres.

4.10 Progress on Implementing the Local Centres Regeneration Programme

4.10.1 The Committee received an update on progress in delivering the Local Centres Regeneration Programme, the broad principles of which are outlined in Section 3.4.

4.10.2 This report indicated the following:

- Activity and investment have been broadly in line with the priorities established in the programme;
- Plans and funding are now in place for all centres identified in Category 1;
- Plans and funding are now in place for some centres in Category 2, and are being progressed in relation to most others;
- Preparatory work has commenced in relation to some centres in Category 3, but with one exception plans and funding are not in place;
- There has been little progress in relation to centres in Category 4;
- In a number of cases implementation is dependant on major private sector developments or highway schemes;
- There are likely to be significant additional funding opportunities in the North West area and in the longer term in the eastern corridor area.



Local Centres

- 4.10.3 The report concluded that it would now be appropriate to review the priorities of the programme in the light of experience and changed funding opportunities. This should aim to ensure that the revised programme takes forward the vibrant urban villages element of the Council 2005+.
- 4.10.4 The Committee heard a significant amount of evidence on the effectiveness of local centre schemes, all of which was positive. However this was backed up by relatively little hard data. In the case of Soho Road, where projects were funded under ERDF, specific target outcomes had been identified, and the Committee heard that those had been exceeded. Similar processes apply to all schemes which are funded under specific programmes such as ERDF or SRB. In Erdington it was reported that use of car parks had increased, crime had declined, vacancy levels had fallen, and in the centre as a whole, turnover had increased.
- 4.10.5 The survey also sought to address this issue. It looked at two centres, one (Kingstanding), which had been subject to recent improvement work and one (Acocks Green) which had not. In the case of Kingstanding 37% (105) of respondents thought the centre had improved over the past 2-3 years, while 34% (88) thought it had declined. In Acocks Green 32% (99) thought there had been an improvement compared to 38% (115) who reported a decline. This does suggest that views of Kingstanding are somewhat more positive, but this conclusion should be treated with some caution, in view of the relatively small differences.
- 4.10.6 Overall the evidence certainly confirms that local centre improvements are perceived to be effective, and that there is continuing pressure for more activity to take place. The more limited hard evidence also suggested that improvement initiatives have had positive outcomes. It would however be helpful if in future a more rigorous approach was taken to assessing outcomes against the strategic objectives of the Local Centres Strategy and Regeneration Programme when particular initiatives are implemented.



5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 Having considered the evidence presented to them, the Committee came to the following conclusions.
- 5.1.2 Local Centres play an essential role in the life and well being of communities and can contribute to sustainability and social inclusion. Promoting the regeneration of local centres should therefore continue to be a priority for the City Council, in line with the vibrant urban villages element of the Council Plan 2005+.
- 5.1.3 National trends in the retail and other sectors will continue to affect centres and some of these trends - for example, the growth of large food stores - may well have an adverse impact. However, even within this context there is still potential for local centres to flourish, providing that a realistic view is taken of their role, and they are able to focus on meeting the distinctive needs of the communities they serve. This means that the role of some centres is likely to continue to decline. In these cases there will be continuing need for measures to manage decline.
- 5.1.4 Lack of adequate car parking provision is a significant problem in many centres. There is a need at the local level to devise strategies to make the best use of existing parking areas and to provide additional safe off-street parking where opportunities arise. Steps are being taken in Erdington to provide improved management of off-street parking including the main Co-op supermarket making its car park available for general use for a charge which is refunded to Co-op Customers. This provides an example of what can be achieved. It is also essential that the impact on car parking of initiatives such as Red Routes is properly understood and that steps are taken to ensure that such initiatives do not restrict car parking availability to the detriment of local trade. Where parking is provided in connection with new developments, this should be available to serve the centre as a whole. In emphasising the importance of car parking it is also recognised that there is continuing need to ensure that centres are accessible by public transport and for those travelling on foot.



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- 5.1.5 Security and anti-social behaviour are also significant problems in many centres. CCTV has clearly had a beneficial effect in some locations, although there are continuing concerns over whether it displaces crime to other locations, and over the ongoing revenue costs. These issues are addressed in the Scrutiny Review of CCTV. Overall, there does not appear to be a single, one-size fits all, solution to this problem, and it is likely that different solutions will be appropriate in different centres, depending on local circumstances. However if centres are to be successful people need to feel safe when they visit them and so measures to address local security issues need to be a priority.
- 5.1.6 There is a need to provide a more co-ordinated approach to maintenance and management issues within local centres and to promotion and marketing. The appointment of a town centre manager has been shown to be an effective way of addressing these issues and the town centre management approach needs to be extended to a greater number of centres.
- 5.1.7 Upgrading the quality of design and the environment of local centres can have significant benefits by making centres more attractive and pleasant places to visit, encouraging a greater number of visits. This could for example include the provision of seating areas, and public toilets, measures to control fly-tipping, the proper enforcement of regulations regarding the display of goods on pavements, parking and the delivery and unloading of goods.
- 5.1.8 It will continue to be necessary to support local centres regeneration from a variety of funding sources, for example ERDF, SRB and NRF and there is a continuing need for the City Council to commit its own resources to this area of activity. Efforts should also be made to encourage a greater level of contribution from the private sector. For example, local businesses which may benefit from public investment. In the longer term Business Improvement Districts may provide a mechanism for this.
- 5.1.9 Successful initiatives at the level of individual centres depend on effective local consultation and need to be developed in partnership with local businesses and residents. It is essential that local elected members are also actively involved. However, centres also interact with each other and so there is also a continuing need for a more strategic overview and for good practice developed in one place to be shared more widely, perhaps through a 'Local Centres Champion'. There is potential for District Committees and District Strategic Partnerships to play an important role in linking activity at the local level with the broader strategic context. This could include managing smaller centres and parades and suggesting sympathetic policy approaches for these areas.
- 5.1.10 The priorities set in the Local Centre Regeneration Programme should be reviewed in the light of experience, and changing funding opportunities. This review should seek to actively engage the Districts.



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- 5.1.11 A more rigorous approach should be taken to identifying target outcomes when improvement programmes are developed, and to monitoring the extent to which these outcomes are achieved.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
<p>R1 The general conclusions of this Review should be reflected in the forthcoming Review of the Local Centres Strategy. The Review Strategy should give greater priority to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of improved car parking, while maintaining public transport access • The need to improve security within centres • The extension of Town Centre Management, including the potential of Business Improvement Districts • The need for more rigorous monitoring of the outcomes of improvement initiatives • The need to involve District Committees and District Strategic Partnerships. 	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>October 2005</p>
<p>R2 Greater priority should be given to improving car parking in local centres where funding is available. There should be explicit recognition of the need to address this issue when local centre action plans are prepared and improvement programmes produced. Where new developments are approved in or on the edge of centres, wherever possible car parking areas should be designed and managed to serve the centre as a whole, and not just the new development. This approach should be reflected in the Council's Revised Car Parking Guidelines which are to be produced as part of the Local Development Framework.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration/Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services</p>	<p>January 2006</p>
<p>R3 Good public transport links exist to most centres at the moment. The importance of good public transport access to local centres should continue to be recognised and promoted and the Council should seek to ensure that this is reflected in the Local Transport Plan.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration/Cabinet Member for Transportation and Street Services</p>	<p>October 2005</p>



Local Centres

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R4	Planning policies should seek to ensure that any new large supermarkets are only developed in locations where they are properly integrated with a local centre. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration should review existing planning policies to ensure that they are consistent with this objective.	Cabinet Member for Regeneration/ Chair of Development Control Committee	October 2005
R5	Greater priority should also be given to addressing security issues. Again this should be explicitly considered when local centre action plans are prepared	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Ongoing - progress should be reviewed in October 2005
R6	The Council should continue to explore ways of extending the principles of town centre management to a wider range of centres within available resources, and should encourage the formation of local centre partnerships. In the longer term the potential to use these as basis for the establishment of Business Improvement Districts should be explored.	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Ongoing - progress should be reviewed in October 2005
R7	There should be a more rigorous approach to monitoring the outcomes of local centre regeneration initiatives. This should incorporate the identification of clear target outcomes, reflecting the objectives of the Local Centres Strategy, the measures against which progress towards these outcomes will be assessed, and the mechanisms for reviewing progress. A protocol setting out the principles to be followed in applying this approach should be prepared.	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	October 2005
R8	District Committees and District Partnerships should take an active role in local centres regeneration particularly in relation to providing a more co-ordinated approach to management issues within centres, managing declining centres and the identification of smaller centres and parades together with the formulation of appropriate policies. Districts should be encouraged to address these and any particular local community safety issues regarding their local centres, in their District Community Plans.	Cabinet Member for Local Services	Ongoing - progress to be reviewed in March 2006.



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Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
<p>R9 Local elected members should always be involved in decisions on how local centres regeneration funds are to be spent. Local Members should also be represented on any Boards established to oversee local centre regeneration initiatives. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration should be requested to report back on the extent to which this is the case, and on the actions being taken to address any deficiencies.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>October 2005</p>
<p>R10 The priorities established in the Local Centres Regeneration Programme should be reviewed in the light of the conclusions of this Review, and experience of operating the Programme. District Committees should be involved in this process.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>March 2006</p>
<p>R11 Local Centres regeneration should continue to be a priority for funding from the Council's Capital Programme. The Council's resources should continue to be used as a basis for securing resources from other regeneration programmes, and efforts should be made to secure to increased contributions from the private sector. Levels of deprivation should be explicitly taken into account in prioritising Council expenditure on local centres, and this should be reflected in the revised Local Centres Regeneration Programme.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>March 2006</p>
<p>R12 Progress towards achievement of these recommendations should be reported to the Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee by October 2005. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter until all recommendations are implemented.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Regeneration</p>	<p>October 2005</p>



Local Centres



Appendix 1 Scrutiny Questionnaire



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRE?

Q1 Do you use your local centre for any of the following? (Tick all that apply)

Main food shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>
'Top-up' food shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-food shopping	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting the bank or building society	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visiting the hairdressers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eating or drinking out	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post Office	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take-away food	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other services (eg travel agents, video hire)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not use the centre at all	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you do not use the centre go to Question 4

Q2 How frequently do you visit the centre? (Tick one only)

Every day	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once a fortnight	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-3 times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	Once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	Less often	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3 How do you usually travel to the centre? (Tick one only)

Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorbike	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car / van	<input type="checkbox"/>
Train	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taxi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4 How would you rate the centre for the following?

	Very Good	Good	OK	Poor	Very Poor	Don't know
The layout (how easy it is to get around)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choice of shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of shops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choice of places to eat and drink	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of places to eat and drink	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality of the environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cleanliness and upkeep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convenience of car parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility by public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public facilities (seats, public toilets, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety and security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5 Over the past 2-3 years, do you think that the centre has . . .

Improved a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>	Declined slightly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved slightly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Declined a lot	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stayed about the same	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>



Local Centres

Q6 Would any of the following be likely to encourage you to visit the centre more often? (Tick all that apply)

- More shops
- Better shops
- More places to eat or drink
- Better places to eat or drink
- Longer shop opening hours
- Cleaner streets and pavements
- More car parking
- Better car parking
- Better public transport
- Better street lighting
- Improvements to the environment
- Better public facilities (eg more seats)
- More leisure facilities and other attractions
- Child care facilities
- Additional / better security

ABOUT YOURSELF

Q7 Are you...?
Male Female

Q8 What is your age?
Under 18 45 to 60
18 to 24 Over 60
25 to 44

Q9 What is the total number of people (children and adults) in your household?

Q10 Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?
White Bangladeshi
Black Chinese
Indian Other Asian
Pakistani Other

Q11 Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity?
Yes No

Please write your address below so that we do not send you a reminder.

Postcode

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Please return in the enclosed envelope or send to Planning, Birmingham City Council, P.O. Box 28, Alpha Tower, Suffolk Street Queensway, Birmingham, B1 1TU.

All data collected will be treated confidentially.



Appendix 2 Birmingham Local Centres Map

