Contents of Part One

Foreword

Cllr Mike Whitby,
Leader of Birmingham City Council

I am delighted that the City Council, along with our partner agencies is publishing Vibrant Urban Villages. The document relates to a number of issues that are critical to our vision of a better Birmingham: a Global City with a Local Heart – achieving global recognition for excellence that benefits everyone in our city's community. We hope it will initiate a debate that will engage a wide range of organisations and individual citizens across the city.

When I gave my Chamberlain lecture, in 2005, I paraphrased President John F Kennedy when I said "ask not what your city can do for you, but what you can do for your city". That spirit of commitment to our city, of pride in Birmingham and the skills and inventiveness of its people, is our most valuable asset, and one I am committed to championing. This report is about how we as public agencies can unleash that potential by working more closely with local neighbourhoods and communities.

Experience shows that when people are able to work together to tackle their shared concerns they can achieve amazing things. We need to transform our public services so that they support, rather than obstruct, that voluntary effort and social entrepreneurialism. Crucially, this can also deliver better value for money and efficiency.

The City Council and its partners have driven real improvements for Birmingham's people, including reducing crime, raising educational achievement and enhancing the environment. But experience also tells us that the public sector does not have all the answers and that many of our most pressing challenges can only truly be tackled through the efforts of independent and committed organisations and individuals. When public sector professionals are able to work in multi-agency teams, focused on a local area, they are better able to understand the problems faced in our neighbourhoods and deliver real solutions to those problems.

As part two of this report shows, there is a rich diversity of experience and innovation in our local neighbourhoods, within projects tackling everything from crime and anti-social behaviour to litter and graffiti, educational needs, health and community cohesion. We need to learn from what works, ensure that we use public money wisely and make the most of our resources.

This report is clearly focused on the outcomes we all want to achieve, linked into our Council Plan and Local Area Agreement. By combining a strategic commitment to our neighbourhoods with support to this local initiative and the commitment of Birmingham citizens, I believe we can create the right recipe for progress. Together we can build and move towards our goal of Vibrant Urban Villages, creating a global city with a local heart.

Cllr Paul Tilsley
Chair of Birmingham Strategic Partnership and Deputy Leader of the City Council

As Chair of the Birmingham Strategic Partnership I welcome this report as an opportunity to consult the organisations and people of Birmingham about how we take forward our approach to neighbourhoods. The Partnership has the collective responsibility for producing our Community Strategy, which contains our policies for neighbourhoods, as well as for implementing our Local Area Agreement (LAA) for funding from government, which contains much that is central to the neighbourhoods agenda. This consultation will help us to update these plans in line with public views.

It is appropriate that the Partnership as a whole takes a lead on neighbourhood working. As the many examples in part two of this report demonstrate, partnership working is the key to success in local neighbourhoods. This means partnership between public servants, focusing on real local problems not just delivering standard services. It also means partnership between agencies and the communities we serve, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to engage with the issues and set their own local priorities.

Working together in local areas has the potential to enhance services provided by all the agencies that are members of our Partnership. In many ways the West Midlands Police Force has led the way in developing neighbourhood policing and the Safer Neighbourhoods Projects described in this report are an example of what can be achieved. But I am convinced that this local focus and improved responsiveness to local people are the right approach for the whole of the local public sector.

I am a passionate supporter of the process of devolution – moving power closer to the people and making decisions based on full knowledge of local concerns and needs. But we need to ensure that we take the process forward with a focus on what really matters to local people: safer, cleaner, greener neighbourhoods in which there are greater opportunities for all the people of the city. We also need to ensure that we invest public money wisely, doing more of what works and abandoning unsuccessful experiments.

This report therefore focuses on how we can work together to deliver better on the outcomes we have set in our Local Area Agreement and Community Strategy.

The whole of the Partnership will look forward to receiving your responses to this report.

Cllr Ayoub Khan
Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety

My responsibilities as Cabinet Member for Local Services and Community Safety include the further development of our devolution and localisation policies, but our focus is on achieving outcomes that matter to local people: better local services and safer communities.

This consultation document goes to the heart of these concerns and covers issues that are of great importance to all local communities.

We have made a good start in making the council more responsive to local communities, but this report shows how we can take devolution and localisation further, by moving the focus to where it matters – our local neighbourhoods. I believe our constituency committees and their chairs and local partnerships are the right people to take this process forward, to innovate and to respond to local needs.

The emphasis is on achieving outcomes and taking action, not on structures for their own sake. We do not seek to propose a top-down blueprint on local activities. It is essential that local areas are able to define their own priorities and discover their own solutions – this is the essence of devolution and localisation. The role of the centre must be to support this local work, to clarify roles and responsibilities and to help to ensure that good practice and success is not only celebrated but replicated elsewhere.

I am confident that this can deliver the improved services and improved neighbourhoods we all wish to see and take devolution in Birmingham forward to the next stage.

1. Introduction

"Vibrant Urban Villages" is about public services and local residents working together to create better neighbourhoods – what we call "neighbourhood working".

You will find an explanation of some of the different aspects of Neighbourhood Working in Part Two.

As a priority this is about how to meet our shared objectives for a cleaner, greener and safer city. But Vibrant Urban Villages will also aspire to all the objectives listed on page 9. It asks how can we build on the good work in some neighbourhoods across the city to ensure that all our urban villages receive better public services focused on the needs of specific areas and delivering better value for money? How can we bring a new sense of direction to this work?

The purpose of the Green Paper is to consult on a new approach to "neighbourhood working", that is, how local residents and agencies work together to improve neighbourhoods.

This will be done by applying **best practice** to neighbourhood working at a scale that has not been done before. By helping neighbourhood groups **'do what works'**, a much bigger impact will be made on the problems that most concern them.

This approach will help the council and its partners prioritise their resources and achieve better value for money. It will also enable the council to respond to the Scrutiny review of Devolution and Localisation (July 2006) and to the Local Government White Paper. Birmingham is "ahead of the game" on these policies and we intend to stay ahead. The Cabinet Committee Devolution will consider a Framework for Neighbourhood Action, following this consultation.

Why is Neighbourhood Working Important?

Neighbourhood working can contribute to a better future for our city in three main ways (forming the "triangle of neighbourhood working"):

Better local services – "Better Services, Better Value, Better Outcomes" - joining up local public services at the local level, so that they complement each other and work as a "neighbourhood team" – solving local problems (rather than delivering set services) and finding solutions that deliver better value for money.

Better Local Democracy – improving the accountability of our public services to the people we serve, enhancing the reputation and achievements of our elected councillors and ensuring that we make better local decisions by basing them on what local people want or need.

Stronger Communities – bringing influence, control and confidence to individual citizens and communities and building stronger communities better equipped to face their shared challenges and to live together in a fast-changing world

The Triangle of "Neighbourhood Working"

Empowering all communities and individuals to play a bigger role in the future of their local area is also central to tackling **social exclusion** and promoting **community cohesion** in our diverse city – two issues of critical importance to the city's future.

But most of all, too many of Birmingham's neighbourhoods continue to suffer poor environments, high crime and social exclusion and the gap in prosperity and quality of life between these areas and the city as a whole is too wide. Working together at a local level can make a big difference to these inequalities.

How can Neighbourhood Working improve services and efficiency?

Neighbourhood working has the potential for the biggest ever efficiency drive in the city. This is because:

- It can identify and address issues and problems before they become expensive to resolve (e.g. neighbourhood caretaking).

- It engages people on issues where behaviour needs to change (health, community safety, care of the local environment).

- It allows public agencies to work together and focus on real local problems, rather than just delivering standard services.

By engaging the people of the city in addressing local problems and encouraging voluntary action, the efforts of our public services can potentially be supported by all one million residents of the city – a vast team of volunteers to help tackle local issues.

Building stronger communities, better able to prevent and tackle local issues makes sound investment sense. For example, the savings made to the public purse through crime reduction in the Safer Neighbourhoods schemes far outstripped the relatively small £50,000 annual cost of each project . How can we capture this benefit and return it to local communities?

Neighbourhood working is about working differently and achieving long-term and sustainable savings – not about adding extra costs to the existing public services.

2. Where we are now –
The Issues and the Challenges

We want to take neighbourhood working forward and build on what works. But we are not starting from a "blank sheet of paper". There is a history of community engagement in the city and many examples of past and current projects that we need to build on. A full summary of the history and background to neighbourhood working and the state of Birmingham's neighbourhoods is in Part Two.

However, these experiments have not always been sustainable over the longer term or integrated within the overall planning systems of the public sector in the city. It is essential that we now learn from this experience and seek to establish:

- A consistent and joined up approach to neighbourhood working across the public agencies in the city with improved accountability

- A clearer focus on achieving the outcomes we want to see, linked to the Council Plan, LAA and Community Strategy, but allowing individual neighbourhoods to set their own priorities as well

- A clearer approach to developing neighbourhood working based on what has worked elsewhere and on the key success factors we have identified, matched to the different needs of each neighbourhood

- Clearer ways of working, such as sharper accountability for achieving outcomes and a focus on challenging but important targets. For example, safer estates projects are using "tasking" methods in which issues and projects are managed through a shared database which records accountabilities and actions, rather than through traditional "meeting and minutes" approaches.

In summary the main success factors for neighbourhood working (see part two for more information) are:

- Effective partnerships with robust leadership

- Good neighbourhood information

- Releasing the contribution of residents and local agencies

- Managing differences and disagreements effectively

- Fostering the involvement of residents

- Devolving decision making and resources

- Harnessing the potential of voluntary contribution

- Focus on legitimacy and accountability

- A firm focus on outcomes, not just 'business as usual'

- Excellent project management

We have also learnt that partnership working and community engagement must be locally led – the more local the focus the more action-oriented the partnership and the easier it is for residents to engage with the process. Finally, it has become clear that residents, public officials and councillors learn best from each other how to do neighbourhood working, through peer-to-peer learning and sharing of experiences.

The Community Safety Partnership has been at the forefront of Neighbourhood working in Birmingham, including Safer Neighbourhoods and Safer Estates projects and Neighbourhood Policing. Their analysis of the priority neighbourhoods in the city and their new Safe and Clean Neighbourhoods Plan (including innovations such as neighbourhood tasking and Neighbourhood Performance Reward Grant) will be at the centre of our plans for neighbourhoods.

3: Where we want to be: Our aims
for Neighbourhood Working

Our ultimate aim is to help create many more **"Vibrant Urban Villages"** in Birmingham – places in which people want to live, work and enjoy themselves. This means creating neighbourhoods that deliver tangible outcomes :

NEIGHBOURHOOD	LAA	BCC
Clean, Green and Safe, with less litter and fly-tipping, less pollution and congestion, improved open spaces and buildings, and less crime and anti-social behaviour on the streets	Safer & Stronger Communities	Stay Safe
Strong, with vibrant community associations, active citizens and "good neighbours", positive community relations and a diverse population	Safer & Stronger Communities	Stay Safe, High Quality of Life/ Make a Contribution
Outward looking, with residents participating in the wider life of the city and people from other communities and neighbourhoods	Safer & Stronger Communities	Stay Safe
Well-housed, with a diversity of decent housing for all	All Blocks	High Quality of Life / Stay Safe
Healthy and Caring, with good local services to support those in need and to promote well-being and good relations between the generations	Healthier Communities & Older people / Safer & Stronger Communities	Be Healthy / Stay Safe
Places to learn and to grow, in which every child matters	Children & Young people	Succeed Economically
Economically sustainable, with a vibrant local economy, accessible local shops and services, access to employment opportunities for the whole community and sustainable locally owned asset	Economic Development & Enterprise	Succeed Economically
Connected, with good public transport to other parts of the city and wide access to information and knowledge	Economic Development & Enterprise	Succeed Economically
Well-governed, with well-managed, efficient and responsive services and strong community leadership from elected members	Safer & Stronger Communities	High Quality of Life / Make a Contribution
Generous, in which people can share values which promote contribution to their neighbourhood and active citizenship.	Safer & Stronger Communities	High Quality of Life / Make a Contribution

2 These are set out using the BSP LAA Blocks, BCC Strategic Outcomes

The Birmingham Strategic Partnership Neighbourhoods Board will monitor the delivery of these outcomes based on the action plans and performance indicators developed by each Constituency Strategic Partnership.

Emerging Priorities at a Neighbourhood Level

A survey carried out to help monitor the LAA objectives has identified that the following are the most important areas for improvement in our neighbourhoods:

- Reduced crime
- Cleaner streets
- Facilities for children
- Activities for teenagers
- Parks and open spaces
- Decent, well managed and affordable housing

Reducing worklessness is a top priority for the city and one which must be tackled at neighbourhood as well as strategic levels. The government has suggested that neighbourhood renewal beyond 2008 should focus more strongly on this issue. Creating links with area regeneration schemes and our overall economic strategy will be particularly important to achieving this focus.

Current Residents' Satisfaction with Neighbourhoods

The recent BMG survey shows that resident's satisfaction with their Neighbourhood stands at 76%. This compares well with performance in other core Cities with Birmingham in the upper quartile of performers.

Neighbourhood Working as part of our every day business

This paper consults on how "neighbourhood working" can contribute to delivering these core city-wide outcomes and priorities. While there is plenty of evidence of the value of neighbourhood working in particular neighbourhoods our approach thus far lacks consistency and a connection to a clear strategic framework that could realise benefits across the board in both our priority neighbourhoods where performance on key outcomes is poor or in other neighbourhoods where there is potential to further enrich the quality of life. The challenge is how do we move from a number of isolated examples of best practice to a mainstream change in the way that our public services work with local communities in neighbourhoods in a way that is affordable and delivers results?

Our aim is to ensure that neighbourhood working is spread to all of the priority or most deprived neighbourhoods in the city over a period of years, with some aspects of neighbourhood working also being available to all parts of the city. All of this, of course, has to be achieved within the existing and likely future resource framework of the City and its partners. While there may be some targeted resources available from external sources, in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, this is uncertain both in the total available, duration and its means of allocation. What is clear is that there will be an alignment of targeted resources so that it fits with the delivery of the City's Local Area Agreement.

How we will measure change for the better

Appendix 1 shows some of the key LAA outcomes that are supported by the ideas in this paper. Some of the indicators used to measure progress on these aims are also listed.

In addition to the LAA objectives we propose to measure progress on the following indicators, using the neighbourhoods survey conducted for first time in priority wards during summer 2006:

Residents' satisfaction with:

- Keeping the area clear of litter
- Parks and open spaces
- West Midlands Police Force

The proportion of residents feeling that the following are an issue in their area:

- Clean streets
- The level of crime
- Facilities for children young people
- Activities for teenagers
- Parks and open spaces

Residents' satisfaction with the opportunities to participate in local issues

Residents' perception that they can influence decisions affecting their area

Residents' perception that people from different backgrounds get along well together

Residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood

4. Delivering better performance:
Birmingham's single neighbourhood programme

Birmingham's single neighbourhood programme will bring together all neighbourhood activity in a single programme so that there is a more consistent approach across the city and a stronger link to the strategic outcomes designated city-wide, as well as the delivery of local priorities and aspirations. It recognises that there are different levels of intervention appropriate to the needs and priorities on the ground and that to be effective and realistic a long-term approach is required that effectively targets and prioritises the sequence and level of intervention across the City. It identifies three broad levels of intervention appropriate for:-

Level 1 – Stable Neighbourhoods
Level 2 – Neighbourhoods at risk
Level 3 – Priority Neighbourhoods

What makes up the neighbourhood programme?

It is suggested that a single neighbourhood programme would include:

1. The three **Guide Neighbourhoods**, already with national recognition and currently negotiating to deliver enhanced performance on indicators in the City's LAA. As recognised examplers of LAA practice they will be expected to spread best practice elsewhere in the programme. These are a mix of level two and level three neighbourhoods in terms of their classification.

2. The 15 Neighbourhoods receiving neighbourhood element funding on a four year programme between 2006 -10. Again these are seeking to deliver enhanced performance against a mix of locally and city-wide determined priorities. They are in the top 3% most deprived wards across the city and are categorised level 3.

3. Other neighbourhoods assessed as Level 3 and Level 2 but where no current programme funding is identified. There are somewhere in the area of 60 plus neighbourhoods in this category.

4. Neighbourhood working in Level 1 is not included in the neighbourhood programme, but this does not mean that they cannot have the benefits of neighbourhood working. These interventions can reinforce the value of our total programme and draw upon some of the methods used in the single programme such as neighbourhood agreements. There will be somewhere between 100 and 200 neighbourhoods in this level. This will be known as the Constituency discretionary programme.

A methodology for Neighbourhood Working

A Principle that applies to each level of the programme, both the single and discretionary is that the neighbourhood boundaries be drawn up by a process utilising community and residents' views as to what makes up their neighbourhood, not one determined by physical boundaries or agency determined boundaries

Action for neighbourhoods – a new approach to neighbourhood working

We think we need a clear framework for neighbourhood working which has:-

A clear delivery focus – priority outcomes for each neighbourhood, linked to the Council Plan, Local Area Agreement (LAA) and Community Strategy, but allowing individual neighbourhoods to set their own priorities as well

A clear delivery framework – a simple model to enable local agencies and communities work together to deliver a neighbourhood plan

A clear delivery method – one based on outcome –based planning, that draws on 'what works' and promotes project management to ensure real impact

So the emphasis is outcome-based, simple, deliverable and adaptable to a variety of neighbourhoods.

Strategic Support

Neighbourhood work across the city will be overseen by the BSP Neighbourhoods Board and both the Council Executive and the Birmingham Strategic Partnership will receive regular progress reports. Neighbourhood working will become one of the key means of improving performance against the outcomes contained in the City's Local Area Agreement overseen by the BSP.

Operational oversight of local work will be provided by the BSP Neighbourhood Board with input from all aspects of the LAA, in particular the stronger, safer, communities block.

At a strategic level within both the City Council and BSP there will be a focus on providing:

- Robust baseline and performance data for neighbourhoods, wards and constituencies based on factual and opinion survey data.
- Sharing of best practice across the city and from elsewhere
- "Top up" resources to supplement local activities where this is necessary
- Strong top-level commitment to neighbourhood working, including support and encouragement for public agencies who wish to explore neighbourhood working further.

Neighbourhoods Support Team

A new Neighbourhoods Support Team will focus on providing:

- Support to the BSP Neighbourhoods Board

- Robust performance management systems to ensure delivery

- Improved data and analysis to identify neighbourhood problems and monitor progress

- Targeted support to local constituencies and neighbourhoods where necessary

- Links to the Neighbourhoods Academy (see below) to ensure adequate development of our capacity for neighbourhood working

A "**Neighbourhoods Academy**" has already been established in the city as a partnership between the city council, other public agencies, the University of Birmingham, community organisations and central government. Operating as a loose partnership and bringing together existing activities, the Academy will have three main functions:

- Sharing best practice and learning, researching future policy options and properly evaluating what has been done so far

- Investing in training and development for residents, community leaders and social entrepreneurs, community groups, public sector workers and elected councillors. This will be "training by doing" with the emphasis on delivering real results in real communities – the best way for all to learn. One idea is to create a city wide "bank" of mentors or trainers who can offer support as and when needed.

- Co-ordinating the work of the guide neighbourhoods and others to provide resident led consultation and peer-to-peer learning between neighbourhoods.

A City-wide Charter for Neighbourhoods?

In some areas of the City agencies taking forward neighbourhood working are experimenting with drawing up neighbourhood charters or agreements. These outline how people can get involved in their area, what partnership arrangements there are and the service standards they can expect. An example of this is set out in Part Two. This approach could be rolled out in a number of neighbourhoods if residents and other stakeholders see the value of it.

Of course, it is also important that we establish a consistent foundation of standards across the city. We want democratic rights to be matched by responsibilities within a clear framework of standards of conduct that can help to make our system of governance more open, transparent and accountable. So this means establishing a set of basic service standards that can be expected by any resident in the city. One option would therefore be to publish, subject to consultation, a Charter for Neighbourhoods for the whole city that sets out clearly:

- the rights and responsibilities of neighbourhood associations, such as neighbourhood forums

- basic public service standards for local services across the city

- options available to residents wishing to strengthen how their neighbourhood is managed, including neighbourhood forums, neighbourhood agreements and community calls for action.

- complaints procedures of local public services and the role of the Ombudsman

- regulation and codes of conduct for community activists, councillors and public officials

Constituency Strategic Partnerships will be encouraged to add their own local commitments to the city charter – creating diversity alongside basic standards.

The delivery role of the City's Constituencies

We propose that the delivery of neighbourhood working is assigned to the Constituency Strategic Partnerships and in particular the thematic partnership work undertaken through the Local Delivery Groups (Community Safety Partnerships). Oversight will be provided by Constituency and Ward Committees, as appropriate and a prominent role for the Constituency Committee and Ward Committee Chairs. This will bring together the diverse range of neighbourhood work already underway and drive it forward across all priority neighbourhoods.

While the City Council and its partners will provide a positive framework for neighbourhood working, it will be the devolved constituencies and their local partners who will be directly responsible for developing the right solutions for each local area.

By moving to a focus on neighbourhood working the constituencies are beginning to deliver significant outcomes in terms of service improvement and neighbourhood renewal. Working with their locally focused partners in the police, health and other services, the constituencies will help community organisations to turn objectives into reality "on the ground".

Importantly **we need to develop neighbourhood working incrementally,** ensuring learning opportunities from a diversity of experiments, replicating what works and discarding what doesn't – always with a focus on achieving effective and efficient delivery of outcomes.

The framework proposed here would provide for a consistent approach to neighbourhood working, ensuring we identify what works and focus on improving services and achieving outcome targets, but not a single model for all neighbourhoods.

A key aim of the constituency framework will be to bring together the various public sector programmes targeted at specific local areas into a coherent approach focused on agreed neighbourhood boundaries and priority areas.   This includes the various area regeneration programmes established by central government or regional bodies, such as:

- New Deal for Communities programmes
- Housing Market Renewal Areas
- Advantage West Midlands Regeneration Zones

The aim will be to ensure that such programmes sit within the neighbourhood focused approach of the constituencies. They would also be expected to adopt the principles of neighbourhood working (such as partnership and community engagement) and a more integrated local approach will help to ensure that consistent standards are adopted. The constituency partnerships and local elected councillors should be able to engage fully with such programmes and ensure that they complement other local work.

We propose that **each Constituency prepares a Neighbourhood Strategy** that:

- Identifies its principal neighbourhoods based on 'natural neighbourhoods' and neighbourhood policing areas

- Prioritises action in each neighbourhood according to need:

    1. Activities available to all neighbourhoods, including service standards and ways of influencing local decision making

    2. Neighbourhoods with a higher priority for intervention, which may tip into decline without preventive action

    3. Neighbourhoods with the highest priority for action, based on crime and deprivation indicators

The Constituencies will be responsible for ensuring action plans are drawn up for each neighbourhood and for overseeing their delivery.

Neighbourhood initiatives will take the form of a number of types or "models" of action, including:

- Standard neighbourhood management arrangements, such as those being developed through the rolling programme of Neighbourhood Element funded pilots, with a neighbourhood manager attached to a single area or group of areas.

- Commissioning arrangements where local partnerships procure neighbourhood activities from public, private and Third Sector deliverers.

- Neighbourhood Area Agreements (see Part Two) between the public agencies and a local community based organisation

- Safer Estates Projects

- Safer Neighbourhoods Projects

Having established working neighbourhood definitions, constituencies would take part in assessing the needs and wishes of each neighbourhood, including assessing any governance options. However the main focus will be on how to improve services and outcomes, particularly in priority areas.

The proposed approach to this is outlined overleaf.

Our approach to systematic work with neighbourhoods

A Clear Delivery Focus

- Assessing needs and priorities in each neighbourhood
- Linking to LAA outcome objectives
- Targeting resources according to needs
- Establishing neighbourhood working arrangements based on what we are trying to achieve

A Clear Delivery Framework for each Neighbourhood

- Understand the problems of the neighbourhood – using dialogue with residents as well as statistics on crime, employment, environment and housing

- Agree amongst partners and with the community what outcomes we want to achieve

- Learn about how to achieve these outcomes, by learning from projects and ways of operating that have been successful in tackling these issues elsewhere

- Involve all key partners, including residents and community organisations

- Agree amongst partners on what projects need to be taken forward as a priority

- Prepare an Action Plan and a budget for implementing these projects

Following these steps might also lead to decisions about how to organise in the neighbourhood to achieve further advances. Some of these options are discussed later in this section.

A Clear Delivery Method

Partnerships in a particular neighbourhood will use tasking, project planning and outcomes based planning to ensure that resources are used effectively, accountabilities for action are clear and objectives are achieved.
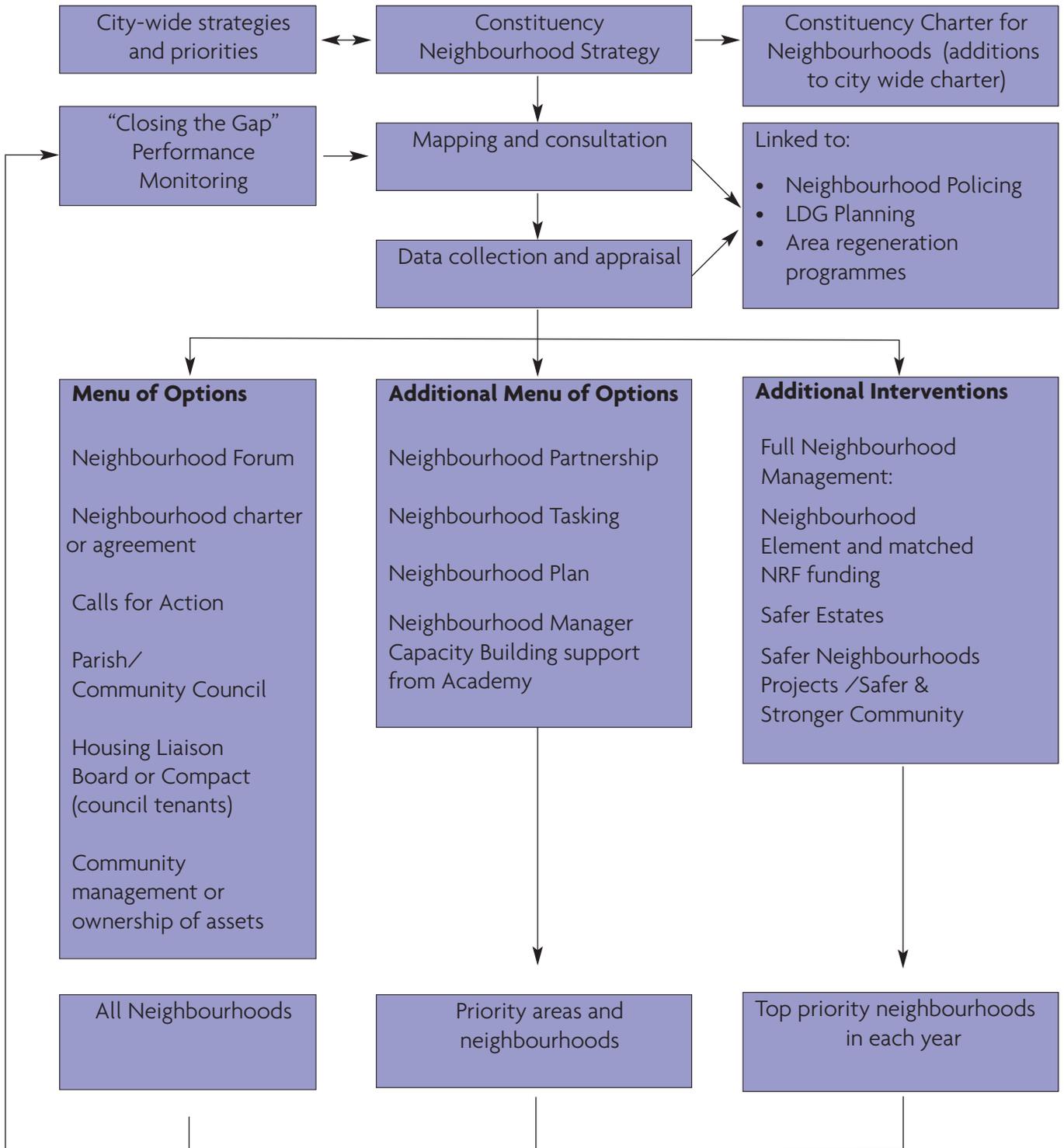
Resources

Constituency partnerships and ward committees would be encouraged to maximise the impact of allocated Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (or whatever funding supersedes the NRF after 2008) and other LAA resources by focussing on activity and programmes at the neighbourhood level within the framework of the Constituency neighbourhood renewal Statements. These outline the areas where NRF should be targeted based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

They will be encouraged to work with their partner agencies, both internal and external, to explore how more mainstream resources can be targeted on neighbourhoods in much the same way as the Police have restructured their resources to achieve neighbourhood policing).

The aim will be to progressively mainstream neighbourhood working, looking beyond the neighbourhood renewal fund and other short-term funding to ensure that it becomes one of the cornerstones of locally focussed services.

The Constituency Framework

City-wide strategies and priorities	↔	Constituency Neighbourhood Strategy	→	Constituency Charter for Neighbourhoods (additions to city wide charter)

"Closing the Gap" Performance Monitoring	→	Mapping and consultation		Linked to: • Neighbourhood Policing • LDG Planning • Area regeneration programmes

Data collection and appraisal

Menu of Options

Neighbourhood Forum

Neighbourhood charter or agreement

Calls for Action

Parish/ Community Council

Housing Liaison Board or Compact (council tenants)

Community management or ownership of assets

Additional Menu of Options

Neighbourhood Partnership

Neighbourhood Tasking

Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Manager Capacity Building support from Academy

Additional Interventions

Full Neighbourhood Management:

Neighbourhood Element and matched NRF funding

Safer Estates

Safer Neighbourhoods Projects /Safer & Stronger Community

All Neighbourhoods

Priority areas and neighbourhoods

Top priority neighbourhoods in each year

5. Questions for Consultation and
How to Respond

A. General

1. In what way does your organisation/agency engage with neighbourhood working at present? It might be helpful to refer to the triangle of neighbourhood working in the introduction – better local services, better local democracy and stronger communities.

2. Has your experience of neighbourhood working led to demonstrable outcomes for citizens and stakeholders? Please describe these.

3. Has your experience of neighbourhood working brought about the potential for working more efficiently, avoiding duplication and creating synergies between organisations/agencies working on the ground?

4. What do you think the aims and objectives of neighbourhood working should be? How would these fit with the wider aims of your organisation and potentially for the City as a whole?

B. Delivering Neighbourhood Working in Birmingham

1. Is the approach set out in the Green Paper of "mainstreaming" and making it a part of a long-term and sustained approach of engaging with local communities the right approach?

2. How do you think partners across the City should approach the resourcing of neighbourhood working in view of the uncertainty of the funding regimes that have supported this activity over the last few years, in advance of the Comprehensive Spending Review?

3. What suggestions do you have for measuring the success of neighbourhood working? Are the measures set out in appendix 1 about right? Are there any other measures required?

4. The Green Paper sets out the notion of a Single Neighbourhood Programme. This characterises neighbourhoods across the city into three levels with specific forms of intervention appropriate to each. Included in this programme are level two (neighbourhoods at risk) and level three neighbourhoods (priority neighbourhoods). Level one neighbourhoods are seen as complementing the single programme with the discretion for working in them being left with Constituencies.

   Do you think the strategy of combining level two and level three neighbourhoods in a single neighbourhood programme the right way forward for the City's Neighbourhood Strategy?

   Is this the right name for the programme?

   What are your views on level one neighbourhoods and leaving these to Constituencies and partners in Constituency Strategic partners to respond to and lead?

5. It is proposed that a Neighbourhood Board will oversee the strategy and performance of the single neighbourhood programme. This will be a reference group with cross-sector representation, including WMP, BCC, other pubic sector and the voluntary and community Sector. It will report through to the Birmingham Strategic Partnership Performance Board but will retain a close alignment with the Safer and Stronger Communities Block.

    Do you have any suggestions / views on the composition, reporting and terms of reference of the Neighbourhoods Board?

C. Specific Neighbourhood Working Proposals

1. Would a City-wide Charter be of value in supporting neighbourhood working and if so what should be included in the Charter? What is your view on the issues raised here? Do you think a local charter would be useful for your neighbourhood?

2. How important is it that neighbourhood working is driven at a constituency level? What is your experience of working with constituencies and what could be improved in the way they currently support neighbourhoods?

3. Does this provide an adequate strategic framework for neighbourhoods?

4. What else should the council and the BSP be doing to support local neighbourhoods and community cohesion?

5. What are your experiences of neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood tasking so far. How could this fit in with interventions through the single neighbourhood programme or constituency programme for level one neighbourhoods

6. Have you been involved in Safer Estates or Safer Neighbourhoods Projects? What are the best features of these projects and how can they be extended more widely?

7. Would Neighbourhood Area Agreements and Neighbourhood Reward Grants be helpful in supporting neighbourhood working? Do you know of a neighbourhood in which this approach could be trialled?

8. What other examples can you provide of services working effectively with neighbourhoods and what ideas should we explore to take this further?

9. What new methods of consultation and engagement should be used at a neighbourhood level and for what issues?

10. How can local businesses play a stronger role in their neighbourhood and what examples of good practice are there?

We want to hear your answers to these questions and about any other issues to do with neighbourhoods that you want to raise.

Constituency and Ward Committees, neighbourhood forums and community networks have also been asked to hold debates on the issues in this paper, so that the widest possible response can be achieved.

We want to hear from individuals as well as organisations – all comments are valuable. For example you may want to respond if you are:

• A resident
• A faith organisation
• A public service agency with expertise to offer, such as a city council directorate, police or health service or a school
• A community organisation
• A local political party
• A councillor
• An academic expert

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation it would be helpful if you could indicate what consultation has taken place on your response.

Privacy and Data Protection

No responses to this consultation will be published in full without the author's consent. We intend to publish summary information with anonymous quotations.

The consultation period will end on 31st December 2007

You can send your comments by e-mail or post as follows:

Neighbourhoods@birmingham.gov.uk

Neighbourhoods Consultation
Governance & Partnership Policy Team
Birmingham City Council
2nd Floor
Norfolk House
Smallbrook Queensway
Birmingham B5 4LJ

Following this consultation a summary of the responses will be published on the city council and BSP web sites. A Neighbourhoods Framework for Action will then be considered by the City Council Cabinet and the BSP.

Appendix 1: Local Area Agreement Outcomes and Innovations

The current LAA is divided into 4 blocks of funding

Block and Outcomes	Examples of indicators	How Neighbourhood working can help
Children and Young People		
Children and young people in Birmingham are safer.	Number of children and young people under the age of 18 who are victims of crime.	Neighbourhood policing linked to children's services
Integration and localisation of services	Number of under fives with access to integrated support through children's centres ("reach").	Neighbourhood working can support the development of children's centres by providing a framework for engaging with the community on their development and promoting their use
Enterprise and Economic Development		
A narrowing of the gap in the employment rate between Birmingham and England and for priority disadvantaged groups and areas.	The difference between the Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) unemployment rate in the 11 Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Target (NR) priority wards and the city average.	Linking schools with community organisations and other services can support efforts to reach those excluded from the labour market.
Healthier Communities and Older People		
To enable more people to enjoy healthier lives and to live longer.	Reduce premature mortality rates and reduce inequalities in premature mortality rates between wards/neighbourhoods, with a particular focus on reducing the risk factors for heart disease, stroke and related diseases (CVD) (smoking, diet and physical activity)	Community groups and community centres, working with health and social services provide the basis for programmes intended to raise participation in healthy activities and to promote healthier lifestyles. Neighbourhood working can make it easier to engage with and develop these groups.
Safer and Stronger Communities		
To reduce crime, the harm caused by illegal drugs and to reassure the public, reducing the fear of crime.	'Closing the Gap' – The gap between the identified 42 priority neighbourhoods and the City average for PSA1 crime.	Neighbourhood policing, working alongside other public agencies and engaging with communities is a proven approach to reducing local crime.

Block and Outcomes	Examples of indicators	How Neighbourhood working can help
To build respect in communities and to reduce anti-social behaviour.	People's perceptions of ASB	This can only be achieved through engaging communities in tackling ASB in their area.
Cleaner public spaces.	The percentage of sites with unsatisfactory levels of (combined) litter and detritus. (BVPI 199a, LPSA2 Target 3)	Community groups, street champions and "good neighbours" can be more effective than public agencies alone in improving and maintaining local public spaces.
To improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.	The percentage of people who would like to remain living in their neighbourhood. (LPSA2 Target 9c) The percentage of residents who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together. (LPSA2 Target 9a)	Improved quality of life in deprived neighbourhoods requires stronger communities and responsive public services.
To ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs and improve their delivery.	Percentage of residents satisfied with services.	Neighbourhood working leads to more responsive public services by helping them to work together, focus on solving local problems, rather than delivering standard services and engage communities in defining priorities and identifying issues.
Empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery	The number / coverage of community networks and associations The percentage of active citizens and volunteers	Many of the ideas in this paper are designed to improve how we support capacity building and empower communities to participate.

LAA Innovations that could be supported by Neighbourhood Working

Children and Young People

Integration, Localisation and Engagement: We are seeking to address the currently poor integration of services that support children and young people, particularly those at risk, the vulnerable and those with more complex needs (e.g. disabled children and young people, looked after children). Getting that right will have a positive impact on the LAA outcomes for children and young people and help sustain those improvements. We are proposing to set up multi-skilled teams, where possible located in the same building, with common goals, and clarity about which practitioner leads, to tackle the multiple issues faced by children and young people. We intend that this will lead to better information sharing and common assessment, as well as improving the engagement of children, young people, families and communities.

Enterprise and Economic Development

Tackling Worklessness. We propose to establish an 'Integrated Employment System' based on our successful experience of getting unemployed people into jobs in the Bullring and the more recent actions resulting from the closure of MG Rover. This approach will ensure that the processes of securing job opportunities, recruiting trainees and procuring tailored work-related training will be seamless and more effective in getting the target groups (which include BME, lone parents, older workers, women and people with disabilities) into work.

Empowering Business. Local business in our target wards is the life-blood of these areas. These businesses need to have a stronger role in developing the growth and potential of their local areas and the transformation of the position of local communities. Working with partners we will develop a model of business empowerment that increases business capacity and skills and which includes infrastructure improvements, crime prevention activities, and the establishment of mini Business Improvement District approaches, alongside improvements in the relationship between different agencies. An engagement mechanism through development officers will ensure consistency of interaction between businesses and agencies. This avoids confusion from the business' perspective and makes most effective use of engagement resources from the agencies' perspective. The development of a relationship of trust between the businesses and development officers will be a major asset to the partnership.

Healthier Communities and Older People

Integrated approach to reducing smoking rates. Smoking is a key cause of both early deaths and increasing health inequalities. We propose to extend our current PCT-based approach into a city-wide integrated approach to reducing smoking rates, using the change to redesign services. We intend to improve the intelligence about levels of smoking across the city and to use proposed improvements in data analysis and mapping (see above) to focus our efforts in neighbourhoods and communities with high smoking rates.

Safer and Stronger Communities

Neighbourhood Management – Effective multi-agency working The Safer and Stronger Communities Block has identified 42 Priority Neighbourhoods, based on a range of crime,

ASB, fear of crime, fire, and other indicators. Effective, holistic and co-ordinated multi-agency working in these neighbourhoods will be key to meeting the broad range of targets within the Block, and indeed, across the LAA, summed up by the term 'Neighbourhood Management.' This holistic model of intervention also requires engaging local communities directly in order to address interdependent local problems in partnership with public services. We are adopting a joined up approach to achieve better outcomes including a single point of contact for residents through a neighbourhood partnership. In support of this activity, the neighbourhood element (NE), Housing Market Renewal Area (HMRA) New Deal for Community (NDC) and other pooled funds will be used, as appropriate. We aim to spread best practice from the evaluated learning emerging from a neighbourhood focused approach. We recognise that different models of neighbourhood management will be appropriate to different areas. However the overarching aim will be to improve residents' quality of life and ensure that service providers are more responsive to meeting local needs by reconfiguring mainstream services to provide maximum impact within the given areas. We intend a key outcome to be a change in the way residents receive and interact with those providing services and a change to how mainstream services are provided.

Community Networks – Working with and through the VCS to deliver the key outcomes of the SSC block. We want to improve further links between the District Strategic Partnerships (DSP's) and Community Networks (CN's), which has sometimes resulted in a lack of systematic engagement with DSP's either on the part of the CN's or service providers more generally. We want to make the Community Networks full contributors to community engagement in the District Strategic Partnerships. To do this we intend to revitalise the links between DSP's and CN's, and revise the existing protocol on their terms of engagement. This may require changes to the governance arrangements of the programme supporting the development of CN's.

Community Street Champions – Engaging with and supporting volunteers to take responsibility for 'clean and safe' issues within their immediate locality. We propose to recruit a body of identifiable 'street champions' to promote the principle of pride in the local area, as well as to bring specific needs to the attention of the relevant service providers (local authority, police etc). In this way we intend to address the underlying causes of litter and rubbish dumping through a programme designed to engender civic pride and ownership of local streets. This initiative is also designed to help protect investment in increased street cleansing and other 'clean ups' by making improvement to the urban environment sustainable in the longer term.

Use Unpaid Work available through community sentencing to support local priorities.
Recidivism rates are high in some parts of the City, whilst attendance on community sentencing programmes is low (sometimes only 25%). There is a perception in some areas that 'justice' is poor or insufficiently 'visible.' At the moment unpaid work available through community sentencing is not strongly linked to local priorities. The proposal is to reverse this by using unpaid work to assist achieve improved Community Safety outcomes at local level. Practical examples could include: refurbishment of unused community buildings, and of property, as well as in areas blighted by criminal activity. 'Clean up' programmes could also be resourced in this way. It is hoped that by having a structured programme giving opportunities to 'put back' into the community, alienation and therefore crime and anti-social behaviour rates would drop, as well as the initiative contributing to improvements to the local environment.

Commissioning the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to deliver services. In year one, we will carry out a baseline mapping exercise to gather intelligence on the proportion and range of public services delivered by the VCS. In this year we will also establish a wide VCS consultation network through the VCS Assembly model developed by BVSC. We will develop proposals for a commissioning framework that could be shared across public sector agencies, in line with the locally agreed Birmingham Compact and based on the Social Franchise model developed by Crime Concern via the Home Office Change Up Programme. This commissioning framework will be designed to address perceived and actual capacity issues in the voluntary sector, and will aim to increase both the proportion, and range of services delivered by the VCS. Investing in the development of a practical and robust commissioning framework, that involves the VCS in all aspects of delivery including planning and scrutiny, should lead to improved quality of services, cost savings, and growth within the VCS sector, leading to a greater realisation of untapped potential.

Appendix 2: Proposals in the Local Government White Paper, "Strong and Prosperous Communities".

The White Paper and subsequent Bill provide an important context for our local policies. Its key proposals were:

- A new duty on local authorities to involve local people

- Better information to citizens about the performance of local services

- Community Calls for Action

- Extending the use of neighbourhood management

- Greater community management and ownership of local assets, such as community halls

- Easier routes to tenant management for council tenants

- Encouraging the use of local charters for neighbourhoods

- Enhancements to the role of parish councils and changes to the system for setting them up

- More diverse and representative councillors

- Local powers to enact byelaws and impose fixed penalties

- Powers for local authorities to move to single member wards where they currently have multiple member wards (Birmingham has 3 councillors per ward)

- Promoting the role of councils in creating community cohesion

The overall approach of the White Paper has been described as "double devolution" – more freedoms and powers for local councils devolved from Whitehall as well as more accountability and devolution to neighbourhoods.

The Government has also carried out a review of policies and legislation on **community management and ownership of assets,** led by Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of Lewisham Borough Council. Birmingham is participating in the Demonstration Programme that followed this review and also conducting an internal review of policies in this area.