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Birmingham: Where the World Meets

Further information regarding this report can be obtained from:

Lead Review Officers: Emma Williamson, Group Overview and Scrutiny Manager /
Iram Choudry, Research & Policy Officer

tel: 0121 464 8263

e-mail: emma_williamson@birmingham.gov.uk /
iram.choudry@birmingham.gov.uk

Reports that have been submitted to Council can be downloaded from
www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny.



Preface

By Councillor Waseem Zaffar MBE JP, Chair of the Social Cohesion and Community Safety O&S Committee



Birmingham is a rich mix of people from all over the world. And it's not just a random mix. Birmingham has a rich history of welcoming incomers from all corners of the globe. Almost uniquely in Europe, we have big scale settled communities who've been here for generations, as well as many others who have settled here more recently.

One of the real challenges facing us as a City as well as an organisation is what can we do to promote cohesion. Is it even seen as being important? I would argue that cohesion is at the very centre of our city, it is the heartbeat of our organism. We have to find a way of making us all feel that we belong, whether we have lived here all of our lives or just recently arrived. It's not just about ensuring that newer communities have a stake, it's about making sure that we all see this as our home regardless of age, gender, faith or culture. We are all Brummies.

I really do feel that addressing the inequality gaps and ensuring that future generations of Brummies are able to compete globally will go a long way towards ensuring that Birmingham is a socially cohesive city.

I can't pretend that any of this will be easy. There isn't a one size fits all solution. But what I have realised during the course of this review is that there is genuine drive and energy within our communities to make this a better place for all of us. Rather than concentrating on the things that make us different, why not concentrate on all the things we have in common?

Birmingham truly is the place where the world meets. I can't take credit for the title of this report; this has to be given to Mike Hughes (@blindmike47), a disability rights campaigner who came up with this title during the course of our workshop. Thank you, Mike!

The common link between all these different communities and people is that we choose to make Birmingham our home. Either we recently came, or maybe our grandparents came, our parents stayed, and we, generations later, still choose to call home this extraordinary city. This is a city of 'we'. The question we wanted to explore was who 'we' are and whether we are united in our great diversity.



Birmingham: Where the World Meets

This report is the conclusion of a significant debate about how people living within a locality can do so equally and with harmony, pride, respect and understanding. The City Council's role in creating an environment where this can happen is important and is the main focus of this report.

I would like to thank the Councillors involved in carrying out this inquiry; Councillors Barrie, Eva Phillips, Roberts and Walkling, and the officers Rebecca Short, Iram Choudry, Ruth Mugabe and Emma Williamson for helping bring the large amount of evidence received together to form the conclusions reached in this report. In particular I would also like to thank the organisations and individuals who contributed to this inquiry. The level of public interest and participation has been encouraging and people from not only this city but across the UK have joined in the debate via social media. I'd also like to give a special note of thanks to all of the local media who have supported us with this review in particular Neil Elkes, Phil Mackie, Adrian Goldberg, Pauline Geoghegan aka Politics in Brum and of course Daniel Cremin and his team from Civico for helping to ensure the live streaming went off without a hitch.

It's easy to dismiss some of the issues covered in the report as too abstract to merit the Council's consideration. Identity, affiliation, sense of belonging, sense of place – these can sound vague and unreal compared to the more obviously concrete elements of concern: housing, education, employment, healthcare.

In fact, the two strands are inextricable. Who we are, how we feel, what we stand for, what it means to be a Brummie – all are both determined by the 'harder' variables that are more easily recognised as the stuff of 'politics' but also, in their turn, determine them.



Summary of Recommendations

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|---|---|------------------------|
| R01 | The Register Office should be supported (with the support of the private sector in Birmingham) in developing a 'welcome pack' for new citizens in Birmingham, including signposting options to community groups, other support and general information about Birmingham. | Leader | September 2013 |
| R02 | The City Council should explore the appetite to achieve City of Sanctuary status with organisations across the city, and strive towards gaining this title if supported. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | September 2013 |
| R03 | In reviewing the objectives and organisation of the Social Cohesion Forum, the Cabinet Member should ensure that the forum is reflective and representative of all communities in the city, including young people, females and white communities. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | May 2013 |
| R04 | Council Committees and external boards should be more representative of the city as a whole. The City Council should look into how this can be achieved. | Leader | September 2013 |
| R05 | Better communication around how organisations and individuals can engage with council processes is needed. Ways to achieve this should be explored and in particular each ward should have a clear strategy on how to engage local communities. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion & Equalities (working with Executive Members for Local Services) | September 2013 |
| R06 | That the Executive sets out how it intends to use social media to increase engagement in City Council's democratic activities, taking into account issues raised in this report, the District & Public Engagement OS& Committee's report on Devolution, and the Governance, Resources & Member Development's report on Public Engagement in Council Meetings. | Deputy Leader | September 2013 |



Birmingham: Where the World Meets

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|--|--|------------------------|
| R07 | <p>The Cabinet Member should aim to increase transparency with regards to the support given to community groups, to negate the perception that only specific groups receive support from the City Council. This should include:</p> <p>Establishing a set of criteria which requests for support are matched against; Making this criteria widely available; Making a list of the supported groups publicly available alongside reasons for this support.</p> | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities (working with Executive Members for Local Services) | September 2013 |
| R08 | <p>In his role in challenging service areas to meet cohesion and equality objectives, the Cabinet Member should encourage a move away from focusing on groups based on a single demographic, towards one which focuses on community based on locality or neighbourhood, so that competing needs and entitlements can be discussed and balanced. Districts will be key in helping this happen. Where specific support to one particular group is needed, this should be on a task and finish basis.</p> | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities (working with Executive Members for Local Services) | September 2013 |
| R09 | <p>The City Council should explore how all schools can be encouraged to incorporate teaching about local history and cultures into the curriculum. This could include:</p> <p>exploring the potential for holding a Brummie history week with special emphasis on work in schools and colleges, in order to raise awareness of the development of Birmingham, its achievements and how different cultures and groups have contributed to the city; exploring the potential for the development of resource packs to support teachers in delivering aspects of the curriculum eg history of a range of cultures, citizenship with a local focus; encouraging "twinning" between schools in different parts of the city to enable schools to share information and learn from one another.</p> | Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services supported by Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | September 2013 |
| R10 | <p>The City Council should explore how to integrate a common strand into major Birmingham events that promotes awareness and history of local communities.</p> | Leader | September 2013 |



| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|---|--|------------------------|
| R11 | The City Council should explore opportunities for handmade and food markets to be re-established in Birmingham and examine how these can be taken into different parts of the city. | Deputy Leader | September 2013 |
| R12 | The City Council should re-examine its communication methods to ensure that arts, sports, cultural and other events are better promoted across the city. | Deputy Leader | September 2013 |
| R13 | The City Council should develop a programme of work to further raise the profile of Birmingham internally amongst residents. This should include a focus on events which are of local, regional and national significance as well as the success of local people. | Leader | October 2013 |
| R14 | An assessment should be made to determine whether an Ambassadors programme could be usefully re-introduced into Birmingham. | Leader | October 2013 |
| R15 | An assessment of progress against the recommendations and suggestions made in this report should be presented to Scrutiny. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities. | September 2013 |



1 Purpose of this Inquiry

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 At the beginning of the 2012/13 municipal year Members of the newly formed Social Cohesion and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee (“the Committee”) agreed to look at how social cohesion is strengthened through the promotion of shared values, common ground and understanding between people in Birmingham. The concept of being ‘Brummie’ was chosen as a theme to explore because it was something which we felt people could easily relate to. Given the nature of the publicity that the inquiry received it went on to commonly be known as ‘The Brummie Inquiry’.
- 1.1.2 This report summarises the findings of this inquiry. It attempts to examine levels of social cohesion in Birmingham currently and the ways in which the City Council both helps and sometimes hinders that move towards greater cohesion. It then looks at some of the structural and practical ways through which the City Council, partners and residents can support cohesion in the city and create a greater sense of belonging and pride in Birmingham.
- 1.1.3 It is not intended that the conclusions reached in this inquiry will end the debate, just as the inquiry itself was not the start of the debate. Further questions and discussion about belonging, cohesion and integration should continue and as such not all questions within this report have been answered.

1.2 Aims

- 1.2.1 The aim of this inquiry was to promote a city wide debate, bringing together the opinion and experiences of as many people as possible to understand cohesion in the city. This included, for example, exploring notions of superdiversity (section 2), pride (section 3) and the understanding of different cultures (section 5). We then wanted to explore how the City Council and other partners can further enable cohesion across the city. The inquiry outline, which was agreed by Councillors on the Committee, is available in Appendix 1.

Birmingham’s Social Inclusion Process

- 1.2.2 This inquiry took place at the same time that a piece of work by the Birmingham Partnership Team (formerly Be Birmingham) was being developed and carried out. The Social Inclusion Process, chaired by the Bishop of Birmingham, aimed to look at how social inclusion can help alleviate poverty and deprivation and tackle disadvantage in communities. There were several areas which were explored, including:
- Place; why are some places better off, and how can those that are worse off be improved?



- People; how can we maximise the potential of our rapidly changing and diverse population?
- Wellbeing; how can the wellbeing of the people of Birmingham be improved?
- Inclusive Economic Growth; how can everyone share in the city's growth and prosperity?
- Young People: what can we change to better encourage all our young people to fully develop their talents in a positive way?

1.2.3 That piece of work concluded in October and the findings were presented through a consultation paper towards the end of 2012¹. There were some obvious overlaps with this inquiry, and efforts were made to keep both sides informed of each other's work to ensure the two pieces were balanced. Two separate 'angles' did appear to emerge, with this inquiry looking more closely at interaction, belonging and understanding between people and the Social Inclusion Process looking more widely at the link between cohesion and deprivation.

1.2.4 We expect that some conclusions will complement each other and that some may not. The Executive will need to take both perspectives on board in determining any way forward on social cohesion, inclusion and measures to tackle poverty.

1.3 Conducting the Inquiry

1.3.1 A mix of qualitative and quantitative data was collected through a variety of means, recognising that this type of inquiry needed to reach out to as many people as possible, with perception and opinion as important as data. As well as drawing upon a range of academic and policy work that was available, a large number of people were involved in providing evidence, a list of which can be found in Appendix 2.

Public Call for Written Evidence

1.3.2 Following the new ways of working in Scrutiny, at the very start of the inquiry a public 'call for evidence' was issued via the Scrutiny website, outlining the main themes of the inquiry and inviting people to respond with a written statement. The call for evidence was also sent out to specific organisations asking them to put forward written submissions. The local media, including the Birmingham Mail, Birmingham Post and BBC WM were of great support and promoted the inquiry throughout the period we were collecting evidence.

1.3.3 The committee received a total of 30 written responses from both members of the public and various organisations. This written evidence can be found on the Democracy in Birmingham website² or by contacting the Scrutiny Office and as such this report will, for the most part, not duplicate that evidence.

¹ For further information, see <http://fairbrum.wordpress.com/>

² <http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/democracy>



Oral evidence gathering

- 1.3.4 A number of witnesses were identified and were asked to attend one of the oral evidence gathering sessions which were held in public to either discuss their written response in greater detail with the Members or to provide other evidence. Three public sessions were organised and a number of witnesses from different organisations across the City attended.
- 1.3.5 As part of a wider council initiative to broadcast future Council meetings, the inquiry was chosen to be live streamed over the internet.³

Local/national media

- 1.3.6 The inquiry received a good deal of coverage in the local as well as national media, with the chair appearing on The Daily Politics Show, BBC Radio 4 and 5 Live, Sky Sports News and BBC WM as well as having articles published in the Birmingham Post and Birmingham Mail newspapers. This included three debates on BBCWM where residents of Birmingham phoned in to give their responses to the key lines of enquiry, hosted by Adrian Goldberg, Carl Chinn and Joe Aldred.

Social Media

- 1.3.7 For the first time in a Scrutiny Inquiry, we chose to gather evidence and promote the inquiry through social media, such as Twitter and Facebook. This not only raised awareness of the inquiry, but allowed people who could perhaps not attend the evidence gathering sessions to contribute to the inquiry.
- 1.3.8 Tweets posted using the hashtag #mybrum were collated and contributed to the conclusions made in this report. Members of the inquiry and the public "tweeted" live from the meetings, adding to the value of the discussions that were taking place.
- 1.3.9 The first live streamed session was one of the most talked about items on twitter and was amongst the top 10 "trending"⁴ items of the day.

Workshops and debates

- 1.3.10 The review group was also of the opinion that the voluntary and community organisations played a key role in promoting social cohesion across Birmingham and in order to try and encourage a wide ranging debate, a workshop was held with voluntary organisations from across the city. Over 40 people attended the session.
- 1.3.11 The community activists engagement session was organised with representatives from four wards, Lozells & East Handsworth (inner city ward with the most diversity in the city) Kingstanding (North Birmingham ward where there has in the past been a threat of far right activity), Bordesley Green

³ These can be viewed on www.civico.net/birmingham

⁴ Trending: A word, phrase or topic that is tagged at a greater rate than other tags is said to be a *trending topic*. Trending topics become popular either through a concerted effort by users or because of an event that prompts people to talk about one specific topic



(Inner city ward where one minority group is in substantial majority) and Brandwood (South Birmingham ward).

1.3.12 The participants were asked to discuss three key questions:

- Whether the heritage of the city plays an important part in social cohesion, and whether more needs to be done to build that understanding amongst communities;
- How the diversity of Birmingham impacts on Social Cohesion and whether more should be done to encourage people to mix with different cultures in different parts of the city;
- What perceptions are of Birmingham both internally and externally and how this impacts on cohesion and the profile of the city.

1.3.13 We would also like to extend our thanks to both the Birmingham Leadership Foundation and Birmingham Forward who both chose to host round table discussions with young people across the city in relation to the inquiry. They then fed this information back into our evidence.

1.3.14 Overall we felt that the methods used to gather evidence worked well. With the benefit of hindsight, there are of course things that we would have done differently but we think this was a positive step forward for public engagement and in particular the use of social media.



2 Background

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 We believe that there has never been a better incentive to build social cohesion. Its importance has been widely recognised, with the Government's 2004 report on Social Cohesion suggesting, for example, that it should be on a par with other areas, such as education and health⁵.
- 2.1.2 In thinking about social cohesion as a concept we concluded that it has the potential to help tackle some of the difficult problems we face at the moment. Cohesive societies that promote participation, integration and interaction can encourage people to support each other independently of public service support and perhaps place less strain on already stretched services.
- 2.1.3 Some might also raise the question, as one member of the public did during this inquiry, as to whether "a sense of belonging [is] that applicable in a modern transient large society". With a variety of people coming together in a locality to live beside one another and with more transnational networks find themselves running through the city, we felt that social cohesion again becomes an increasingly important issue. This concept has become commonly labelled as 'superdiversity' and will be touched on later in this chapter.

2.2 Definitions of Social Cohesion

- 2.2.1 By accepting that social cohesion is important in today's Birmingham, it is then important to understand what social cohesion means and to determine just how aspirational we want our definition of cohesion to be; whether, for example, we want to move away from a traditional urban context where people maintain cordial relationships to one where there is deep and meaningful civil interaction.
- 2.2.2 There are various definitions of Social Cohesion which can be found within relevant literature. These definitions focus on varying themes but all appear to be complementary. In general terms cohesion can be described as, for example; "A process of building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they

⁵ House of Commons ODPM: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee: 'Social Cohesion' Sixth report of the session 2003-04.



are members of the same community"⁶; or more simply "the capacity of a society to ensure the well-being of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding marginalisation."⁷

2.2.3 The government-commissioned *State of the English Cities* thematic report published in 2006⁸, lists several areas which can be considered fundamental to Social Cohesion;

- i. Material conditions and access to opportunity: Particularly around employment, income, health, education and housing. Relations between and within communities suffer when people lack work and endure hardship, ill-health, poor skills and bad living conditions;
- ii. Social order: Tolerance and respect for other people, along with peace, safety and security;
- iii. Positive interactions: Active social relationships between individuals and communities;
- iv. Integration: People's sense of belonging to a city and the strength of shared experiences, identities and values between those from different backgrounds.

2.2.4 More recently, the policy document *Creating the conditions for integration* was published by Central Government in February 2012. This intends to be complementary to other policies, such as the Equality Strategy and the Cabinet Office's Social Mobility Strategy and sets out five key factors for integration and cohesion:

- i. Common ground: a clear sense of shared aspirations and values, which celebrates what we have in common rather than our differences;
- ii. Responsibility: a strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, which brings personal and social responsibility;
- iii. Social mobility: people able to realise their potential to get on in life;
- iv. Participation and empowerment: people of all backgrounds have the opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life;
- v. Tackling intolerance and extremism: a robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder, that deepen division and increase tensions.

2.2.5 Regardless of the variety of definitions, there are common themes such as access, equality, participation and interaction. For the purposes of this inquiry we will reflect on these and the above factors in conjunction with the evidence that was submitted.

⁶ Maxwell, J. (1996) 'Social dimensions of economic growth. Eric John Hanson Memorial Lecture Series', University of Alberta, p.13

⁷ Council, of Europe (2008). Report of the High Level Task Force on Social Cohesion in the 21st century.

⁸ www.communities.gov.uk/documents/regeneration/pdf/154184.pdf



2.3 The Case for Cohesion

- 2.3.1 In economic terms, there are a number of potential benefits from achieving positive social cohesion. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) suggest in their report *The Economic Case for Cohesion*⁹, for example, that more cohesive areas might experience lower crime levels. The reason behind this is that 'high levels of social integration can lead to the community sharing the same values and goals, and these include keeping the neighbourhood safe and free from crime.'
- 2.3.2 There are also a number of other benefits to social cohesion. Better relationships with people and an increased sense of belonging will help foster social order and interaction. We feel this, in turn, has the ability to make people feel valued, to challenge isolation and to potentially reduce the vulnerabilities that lead to issues around mental health, well-being and extremism. If the people who took part in the summer disturbances in 2011 had a greater sense of belonging and understanding of the city, for example, would they have been so quick to damage it?

2.4 Superdiversity

- 2.4.1 Superdiversity is not a new term, but it is a relatively young one. Steven Vertovec, a lecturer and prominent author of work on superdiversity explains it as a level of complexity surpassing anything experienced in a society¹⁰. Over the past twenty years, globally, more people have moved from place to place, resulting in new and complex social formations with an increased number of variables.
- 2.4.2 In relation to Birmingham, the city has progressed from being multi-cultural to one of Europe's most 'super diverse' areas. Data gathered from GP registration records shows that there have been arrivals from around 187 countries of origin over the past few years. Within these there are obviously an interplay of complex influences; ethnicity, language and religious transitions being some obvious ones, but in addition:
- Age;
 - Migration channel (i.e. legal status of citizens);
 - Human capital;
 - Access to employment and experiences of the labour market;
 - Pattern of spatial distribution of migrants;
 - Transnationalism.

⁹ Department for Communities and Local Government, 'The economic case for cohesion', 2009

¹⁰ See Vertovec, S. [2007] 'Super-diversity and its implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29(6): 1024-54



- 2.4.3 Both verbal and written evidence was received from the University of Birmingham, who have recently established an Institute for Superdiversity. This Institute will focus on five work streams including theories and methods (ie. new approaches to mapping), health and wellbeing, language, role of business and government, role of religion and culture. Representatives from the University outlined some of the challenges of Superdiversity as how to:
- Engage with people, and the ability of some migrants to do so;
 - Encourage connections;
 - Foster links with the private sector;
 - Focus on the asset model of communities rather than the deficit model.
- 2.4.4 Superdiversity will clearly bring with it its own challenges. However what is encouraging is the added benefit that superdiversity could bring to Birmingham, including the exchange of knowledge amongst cultures and a greater innovation and creativity.



3 General Observations

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 We initially chose to explore whether people feel a sense of belonging to Birmingham and what gave Birmingham people their identity. We also wanted to find out whether the term 'Brummie' is relevant and helpful for cohesion within the Birmingham landscape. The following general observations are based on the written and verbal evidence received, serving to set a helpful baseline for taking the inquiry forward.

3.2 Findings

3.2.1 The response and reaction to the term 'Brummie' was mixed. For many of those that understood the term, it did appear to create a sense of pride and belonging. People cited various traits associated with the term, such as 'hard working', 'creative' and a tendency to be self deprecating (which was seen as both a positive and negative thing). Particularly for those that attended a workshop organised for the inquiry, people saw no conflict in having more than one heritage and cultural identity and almost all associated themselves with the term 'Brummies'. Individuals also recognised, however, that an external perception of a 'Brummie' tends to be very different, highlighting the difference between the rhetoric and the reality of what it means to be from and part of Birmingham.

3.2.2 However as we moved further into the inquiry and spoke to some particular communities, we found that the idea of being 'Brummie' does not mean anything to some people and some groups. These tended to be the communities that felt least engaged with the city and with political and civic processes. Carl Chinn suggested that 'Brummie' was an important term, but can be perceived as an old fashioned one, applying to white working-class communities and not to those from newly arrived communities. We will draw on this in more detail later in the report.

Some, when asked the question, were not familiar with the term "Brummie" as a reference to someone who lives in Birmingham. Clearly this signifies the extent of how uninformed and disengaged the Latvian community is.

Latvian resident, Nash Dom

3.2.3 When we moved on to talk about the level of pride in the city, individuals often referred to pride in the physical assets that the city has, rather than people or culture. This is perhaps unsurprising because of the number of assets that the city has. If our physical assets are an important factor in increasing cohesion and belonging, we need to ensure that people can access the opportunity to



appreciate and use these assets. This again will be considered in more depth throughout the report.

I am proud of all the old buildings we have e.g. Aston Hall and Church, Town Hall, two Cathedrals, churches in the Jewellery quarter and Bull Ring, the Museum, Bournville and all of their histories.

Member of the Public

Table 1: Marketing Birmingham's assessment of the number of physical assets in the Core Cities

| Local authority | Arts | Sports | MLA¹¹ | Heritage | Total |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Manchester | 82 | 431 | 31 | 138 | 682 |
| Liverpool | 80 | 386 | 36 | 161 | 663 |
| Sheffield | 62 | 665 | 38 | 197 | 962 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 34 | 242 | 29 | 114 | 419 |
| Sheffield | 62 | 665 | 38 | 197 | 962 |
| Birmingham | 87 | 920 | 54 | 215 | 1,276 |
| Leeds | 81 | 922 | 70 | 293 | 1,366 |

3.2.4 In asking people to think about where they are from and where they belong to, we found that attachment tends to be to a direct locality, rather than the city as a whole. Locality can be as small as a street and is not always necessarily linked to where a person is living. Young professionals who work in the city centre, for example, told us that they felt on the whole the area around Colmore Row and the people they associate within it was their 'community'. Some felt very little affinity with the area in which they lived. One participant who took part in a Birmingham Future debate on this issue commented that with no particular faith to practice, no children in local schools and not knowing neighbours very well there was nothing to create that sense of attachment to the area they lived in. This is perhaps an unsurprising conclusion to hear, with research into generational difference showing that younger generations tend to associate more closely with work colleagues, building social relationships within that sphere because they have fewer ties with residential areas and are far more mobile in terms of employment.¹²

3.2.5 The terms 'isolated villages' and 'bubbles' were mentioned regularly as part of this particular discussion. Individuals often spoke of being comfortable feeling contained within a small area. We believe this poses a few questions for the debate on cohesion going forward;

- Are 'isolated villages' and 'bubbles' damaging to overall cohesion?
- Should cohesion be a city wide or a small area endeavour?
- What would the impact of 'bursting the bubbles' be and would it do more damage than good?

¹¹ Museums, Libraries and Archives

¹² CIPD / Penna Joint Survey report 'Gen Up: How the four generations work', 2008



- 3.2.6 The notion of 'isolated villages' was also reinforced in the evidence that suggested there are barriers that stop people from moving around the city. Many spoke of disengagement with the city centre, some on the basis of a lack of access and others on the feeling that the centre had nothing to offer them or their particular community.

Greater visibility in the centre would be beneficial in terms of addressing marginalisation, increase diversity and improve harmony and cohesion amongst citizens.

- 3.2.7 Cost of transport appears to be a factor in hindering social inclusion – particularly in respect of families. This was also reflected in the findings of the Social Inclusion process, citing that some people, particularly families, cannot afford to move around the city because of high public transport fares. The Social Inclusion Process recommends that work is undertaken with transport providers to find a solution to this. Whilst this is admirable, we would question how realistic a reduction in fares might be achieved and whether instead, alternative transport measures, such as cycling, should be examined in the context of their importance to cohesion.



4 Diverse but Separated?

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Better cohesion cannot be fostered by enforcing and instilling rights, rules and customs, it should include interaction and civil integration. With people from at least 187 different countries living in Birmingham, we wanted to explore just how much people tend to interact, integrate and importantly, to look at whether our structures support or stop this from happening. One of our key considerations was whether the way in which the City Council engages with and supports different communities helps or hinders cohesion. The City Council cannot impose a form of social cohesion that it would ideally want, it should however try to create an environment through which social cohesion can be fostered.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 A Birmingham Resident Tracker Survey is undertaken regularly to monitor a range of measures, including those around community, inclusion, quality of life and participation. Each month, around 250 interviews are conducted across the city, with approximately 6-7 interviews conducted per month per ward in a randomly selected census output area. The results generally show that in terms of people getting on well there are positive scores, however this does differ in various parts of the city, with the lowest scoring constituencies often being the same across most measures (Table 2). There are also some interesting findings when comparing the different measures, for example many people in Hodge Hill agree that the local area is one where people from different cultures and religions can live together without difficulty, but scores poorly in terms of trusting people in the local area.

The harmony and mutual respect that exists in multi-cultural communities in the city is taken for granted and not highlighted enough.

Sion Simon

4.2.2 We were provided with some good examples from parts of the City Council where work is undertaken with different groups to promote cohesion and integrate people into the city. The Citizenship Ceremony service for example, which is provided by the Register Office, provides an excellent service welcoming new residents into the city. The Register Office is the busiest in the UK and since 2004, ceremonies have been held for 35,000 new citizens. Comparisons to the other core cities show that the Birmingham Office deals with more than twice as many new citizens each year.



Table 2: Sample of Resident Tracker Survey results – Quarter 2 2012/13¹³

| Measure | Highest Scoring Constituency | Lowest Scoring Constituency |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Agreement that the local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on | Edgbaston (96.8%) | Hodge Hill (84.7%) |
| Agreement that the local area has a good sense of community | Hall Green (86.9%) | Yardley (66.2%) |
| Agreement that the local area where people from different cultures and religions can live together without difficulty | Hall Green (95.5%) | Hodge Hill (85.1%) |
| Agreement that respondent feels valued by society | Edgbaston (88.9%) | Hodge Hill (57.5%) |
| Agreement that respondent feels lonely living in the local area | Edgbaston (93.1%) | Selly Oak (80.4%) |
| Strength of feeling of belonging to local area | Sutton Coldfield (89.5%) | Yardley (63.2%) |
| General level of trust of local people | Sutton Coldfield (61%) | Hodge Hill (14.5%) |
| Agreement that the respondent can influence local decision making | Yardley (40.4%) | Hodge Hill (25.5%) |
| Agreement that the respondent knows how to influence local decisions | Northfield (69.6%) | Hodge Hill (34.6%) |

4.2.3 The Citizenship Ceremony is a celebration of people becoming British and is attended by a local civic dignitary, usually the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor or Lord Mayor's deputies, who often deliver speeches on the history of Birmingham and draw on their own personal experience. New citizens are then given a Certificate of Nationality and a gift. It was pleasing to find out that customer satisfaction with this service is high, at 97% and we were also encouraged to hear about some of the innovations that officers within the team were hoping to implement, including a 'goodie bag' for new citizens which would contain further information about Birmingham. This type of innovation should be fostered and we would support the development of a goodie bag or welcome pack that would not only help welcome new residents into Britain but help them to understand Birmingham and signpost people to community groups and other support. Districts have a positive part to play in this in making local and specific information available, as well as the business community.

¹³ Results are based on 12 month rolling data



| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|--|-----------------------|------------------------|
| R01 | The Register Office should be supported (with the support of the private sector in Birmingham) in developing a 'welcome pack' for new citizens in Birmingham, including signposting options to community groups, other support and general information about Birmingham. | Leader | September 2013 |

4.2.4 Welcoming people is clearly something we do well. This led us to consider how this can be built on and in particular we discussed the integration of new arrivals to Birmingham. We were told by one community organisation about a 'City of Sanctuary' movement which started in Sheffield in 2007 to welcome new arrivals (asylum seekers and refugees) to that city¹⁴. Organisations came together to request that Sheffield be declared a 'City of Sanctuary'. A resolution of the City Council was passed that year to that effect and subsequently a series of events were arranged to encourage new arrivals to be involved in the life of the city. This has grown and a number of cities have now been recognised as Cities of Sanctuary, but Birmingham is not yet on that list.

4.2.5 The former Leader of Birmingham City Council, Cllr Mike Whitby pointed out in his evidence that we were already a welcoming city in terms of asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of a title. However we see no harm in aspiring to attain this title, alongside other major cities in the country and would hope that organisations across the city would like to take this forward with the aim of encouraging new arrivals to have a stake in society and their communities.

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|--|---|------------------------|
| R02 | The City Council should explore the appetite to achieve City of Sanctuary status with organisations across the city, and strive towards gaining this title if supported. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | September 2013 |

4.2.6 Another example of a service which aims to bring people together is the Youth Service. We were provided with evidence by both the Head of the Youth Service and a youth worker who was preparing for the opening of the Lighthouse Centre in Aston Ward, a new facility open to all young people. We were told that work was being undertaken to seek feedback from young people and the community as to what they would like to see provided and to raise awareness of the youth facility in the community, particularly in schools. It was acknowledged that there would be challenges in seeking to bring together young people from diverse backgrounds and from different

¹⁴ See <http://www.cityofsanctuary.org/>



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parts of the city but the aim was to break down the barriers and to seek to ensure that they considered the facility to be a safe environment.

There are inequalities across all communities (black and minority ethnic groups and white communities) and the Council has a responsibility to address those inequalities regardless of faith, race etc.

Mashuq Ally, Assistant Director Equalities and Human Resources

4.2.7 Primarily, we considered the work of the Council's Equalities Unit, as one of its main roles is to work with communities to foster good social cohesion. We were told that this happens in a number of ways and the Unit supports two main groups in this respect;

- A Social Cohesion Forum, chaired by the Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities, which is made up of a range of community organisations such as older people's groups, disability groups and ethnic community groups;
- A Faith Round Table focusing on the role that religious groups across the city have in promoting integration and cohesion and also acting as a communication link between the Council and faith communities.

4.2.8 It was encouraging to see that the membership of the Social Cohesion Forum in particular encompassed a range of communities and groups, including older people's groups, disability groups and a women's group. This reassured us that the focus on 'community' is not just on race, religion or ethnicity, which the Commission on Integration and Cohesion considers "is a narrow and in any case partial view of cohesion that largely omits other factors, such as class, wealth, gender and age, to name some"¹⁵. However we feel there may be some gaps which need to be filled. Aside from the work of the Young People's Parliament, young people in particular are not well represented in the Council and this group would seem a good place to rectify that. There also appears to be a lack of representation from established white communities. Ways to encourage their involvement should be explored.

4.2.9 We would also like to be reassured that the organisations which the Equalities Unit and the Council more widely works with are truly representative of the communities they claim to work with. BRAP in their evidence questioned the viability of the representative model we currently use, asking whether this model of community engagement is suitable. Given the city's superdiversity and the spread of communities across the city, we would ask the same question.

There are many migrant and refugee community organisations claiming to represent people from a particular ethnic or country of origin background. These

¹⁵ Commission on Integration & Cohesion 'Community Cohesion & Deprivation: A discussion paper for the Commission on Integration & Cohesion' 2007, page 5



organisations rarely work collaboratively and certainly do not represent all the new migrants in Birmingham.

Jenny Phillimore, University of Birmingham

4.2.10 We are aware that the organisation of the Social Cohesion Forum is under review, and hope that issues of adequate representation will be addressed, without making the size of the forum unmanageable. This is of course though not the only opportunity to improve the participation of more representative individuals. More widely, getting people involved in trusts and organisations set up and supported by the City Council could help encourage people to have a stake in society and become more engaged, for example, the Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee has two specific places allocated for young people. The young people have played a very positive role in not only highlighting issues affecting young people within the city, but they have also played a pivotal role in determining the work programme and priorities for the committee. We believe this is something that the Trusts and Charities Committee in particular could take a view on.

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|--|---|------------------------|
| R03 | In reviewing the objectives and organisation of the Social Cohesion Forum, the Cabinet Member should ensure that the forum is reflective and representative of all communities in the city, including young people, females and white communities. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | May 2013 |
| R04 | Council Committees and external boards should be more representative of the city as a whole. The City Council should look into how this can be achieved. | Leader | September 2013 |

4.2.11 The Equalities Unit, as well as other parts of the City Council, provides ad-hoc support to specific community groups to support events and on occasion provides governance and administrative support to ensure that groups and forums are set up in an effective way. We were told by the Assistant Head of Equalities and Human Resources that these groups will only receive support if they approach the Unit and their event or piece of work helps contribute to the Council's priorities, particularly around cohesion and integration. It is this point that has perhaps caused some concern and, whilst not intentional, may have reinforced a perception that specific groups receive more attention and support from the City Council than others. The fact that the City Council is seen to be working in these silos with different groups makes us question whether this approach fosters good cohesion.



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The Council needs to support community networks but should be aware of the problems of perception of particular groups and the impact on effective engagement.

Simon Pemberton, University of Birmingham

4.2.12 We would question whether there is any better way of supporting and engaging communities, for example by supporting groups based on neighbourhood or locality, rather than specific community. This would encompass everyone within an area, negating the perception that some are supported above others, encouraging them to have a stake in society and has the potential to bring people in a locality closer together. We already know there has been success in working in this way from the written evidence we received, for example from the Bournville Trust and from West Midlands Police.

4.2.13 Regardless of the approach chosen, transparency and communication are paramount. With regard to the latter, we are concerned that the opportunities for people to get involved in Council and City processes and the awareness or support available has not been well communicated, meaning new emerging communities, as well as some established communities, are not aware of the routes to engage. The Eastern European community in particular suggested in their evidence that they feel like 'ghosts' and have had little opportunity to become engaged in political processes. The Social Inclusion Process found the same, that new communities in particular are often most excluded because they don't know how to access services or who to talk to.

The integration of newer communities in Birmingham has historically been organic, with communities themselves feeling their way through the system, understanding how to secure resources, negotiating tentative alliances with other communities and through the development of single identity community based organisations, tackling myths and stereotypes.

BRAP

4.2.14 With regard to transparency, the perception that particular groups are being supported above others can be rectified if the Council makes clear the reasons for the support it provides. We were informed by the Equalities Unit for example, that events or groups are only supported if they meet the Council's priorities and will encourage cohesion; however we were not presented with any specific criteria that each request is matched against. Having something like this and making it widely available will make the process more open. In addition publicising the events which are receiving support will not only raise awareness of them but make clear the reasons why they are being supported.

4.2.15 All of the above needs to be supported by good data on the evolving nature of neighbourhoods. Working with other partners in data sharing is a great asset. West Midlands Police provided some



excellent examples of work being undertaken within local areas to work with and understand the developing nature of their neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood police teams work in partnership at a local level to understand communities, with regular meetings which are often linked with schools and feed into Neighbourhood Tasking groups where appropriate. Examples of neighbourhood policing initiatives provided to the inquiry included proactive work to build relationships with new communities, through setting up a police base in a school to engage with newly arrived pupils and measures to ensure more effective communication, such as Urdu language classes for officers. Overall it was felt that community mapping and impact assessments could be undertaken quite easily by the Council as providers of public services.

The job of ensuring effective service provision for all has never been harder, with basic information lacking about who is out there, what their needs are, and how those needs might be met.

Jenny Phillimore, University of Birmingham¹⁶

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|---|---|------------------------|
| R05 | Better communication around how organisations and individuals can engage with council processes is needed. Ways to achieve this should be explored and in particular each ward should have a clear strategy on how to engage local communities. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion & Equalities (working with Executive Members for Local Services) | September 2013 |
| R06 | That the Executive sets out how it intends to use social media to increase engagement in City Council's democratic activities, taking into account issues raised in this report, the District & Public Engagement OS& Committee's report on Devolution, and the Governance, Resources & Member Development's report on Public Engagement in Council Meetings. | Deputy Leader | September 2013 |
| R07 | The Cabinet Member should aim to increase transparency with regards to the support given to community groups, to negate the perception that only specific groups receive support from the City Council. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a set of criteria which requests for support are matched against; • Making this criteria widely available; • Making a list of the supported groups publicly available alongside reasons for this support. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities (working with Executive Members for Local Services) | September 2013 |

¹⁶ www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/superdiversesociety.aspx



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|------------|---|---|----------------|
| R08 | In his role in challenging service areas to meet cohesion and equality objectives, the Cabinet Member should encourage a move away from focusing on groups based on a single demographic, towards one which focuses on community based on locality or neighbourhood, so that competing needs and entitlements can be discussed and balanced. Districts will be key in helping this happen. Where specific support to one particular group is needed, this should be on a task and finish basis. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities (working with Executive Members for Local Services) | September 2013 |
|------------|---|---|----------------|



5 History, Heritage and Culture

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 An important part of our inquiry was to find out how the heritage and history of the city can help support cohesion. We also wanted to find out whether more work should be done to raise awareness of the different cultures within Birmingham. Ensuring that people know about other cultures, commonality and learning to appreciate them might mean they are more accepting of other people and more willing to integrate and interact.

5.2 Findings

- 5.2.1 The consensus from those who provided evidence was that not enough is done to promote the heritage and history of the city. Many thought that the history of Birmingham should be taught because it gave everyone a sense of place and belonging. It did not replace identity, but enhanced it. We are pleased to see work like this already beginning, for example the 'Birmingham Histories' exhibition in the Museum and Art Gallery.

People feel an affinity with the city, regardless of where they were born or how long they have lived there, because of their knowledge of the city

Member of the Public

We need dynamic teaching of local history... history matters...local history for me is not only about the past, it's about the present, it's about the future, it will bring together the people of Birmingham

Professor Carl Chinn

- 5.2.2 There was a strong desire amongst those that we received evidence from to hold an event or exhibition examining the history of Birmingham. This is something that we believe should be explored and could be done under the banner of a Birmingham History week. Innovation again is key and we feel there is a need for both an online and offline approach.

Perhaps if there were history boards in each district telling of its origins and people they may learn more about the city's history.

Member of the Public



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5.2.3 In addition to a specific event there's an opportunity to better use the events we already have. Firstly, evidence suggests that these need to be promoted more widely than just to those already 'in the know', in order to encourage people to attend events that they would not normally go to. For example, during the workshop session some of the participants suggested using Black History Month to commemorate the thousands from all over the world who had fought in the First and Second World Wars, a shared history of many Birmingham citizens.

5.2.4 During the course of the evidence sessions what became quite clear was a strong feeling that promoting and learning about the history of Birmingham and the contributions made by all communities would go some way towards an increased sense of belonging and unity.

**Being part of Birmingham gives us a sense of identity
(Workshop participant)**

5.2.5 Secondly we feel there needs to be a common theme running through major events, which focuses on local history and communities within Birmingham. Taking smaller events around the city would also negate the difficulties of people not being able to reach the city centre. Markets are an excellent example of people coming together (the Bull Ring Market being a prime example) and should be encouraged not only in the city centre but across the city, as these kinds of contact are the daily stuff of existence. Smaller local markets, allowing local producers and designers to showcase their talent, also play a part, as our city centre shopping experience that does not reflect the culture, skills and creativity of Birmingham. One example is the Moseley Arts Market which has a range of original artworks, traditional and contemporary crafts, and handmade jewellery from professional and semi professional designer/makers. The Jewellery Quarter also had a Christmas market, selling food, crafts, gifts and jewellery. Previously there had been a Handmade Market at the Bull Ring, a weekly Arts and Craft Market. This was a good example of how Birmingham's talents could be showcased in the city centre, and act as a stepping stone for young entrepreneurs.

5.2.6 There was support amongst our witnesses for nurturing the use of such markets for local goods and for re-establishing the Handmade Markets and for establishing food markets and stalls. We received evidence from young people, who felt it was difficult to make their first step into business in this city in particular with products they were producing, and from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, who felt that the city centre trade was not reflective of the city, but BME led businesses cannot always find the resource to set up high street stalls. This would clearly be that avenue for them to start off and have a stake in the city centre. We also believe that food markets from different communities are a means of bringing communities together and educating about cultures. We have therefore asked the Cabinet Member to consider opportunities for this, and to build on the success of the German Markets and Jamaica in the Square which were very positively received by all communities.



5.2.7 Finally, we feel that more work needs to be done around sharing cultures and disseminating knowledge about different cultures. There is already some good work starting on this, with a heritage centre being developed in Handsworth which will bring together various exhibitions from different communities and establishing an accredited course which people can take around promoting the journey of communities in Birmingham as well as the heritage of neighbourhoods.

I remember a project where we took a bunch of people from Northfield to Small Heath for the afternoon to find out what regeneration involved... how the money was being spent... what local people felt about it. And there was a return trip too, so that people from Small Heath went to Northfield to find out what living in the outer city was like and how people felt.... At the end of it, they didn't find out much more than they knew to start with about the differences between them: they already knew they lived in a multicultural city, whether or not their particular neighbourhood was very diverse. What they did discover, however, was a lot about what they had in common.

Paul Slatter

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|---|--|------------------------|
| R09 | <p>The City Council should explore how all schools can be encouraged to incorporate teaching about local history and cultures into the curriculum. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring the potential for holding a Brummie history week with special emphasis on work in schools and colleges, in order to raise awareness of the development of Birmingham, its achievements and how different cultures and groups have contributed to the city; • exploring the potential for the development of resource packs to support teachers in delivering aspects of the curriculum eg history of a range of cultures, citizenship with a local focus; • encouraging "twinning" between schools in different parts of the city to enable schools to share information and learn from one another. | Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services supported by Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | September 2013 |
| R10 | The City Council should explore how to integrate a common strand into major Birmingham events that promotes awareness and history of local communities. | Leader | September 2013 |



| | | | |
|------------|---|---------------|----------------|
| R11 | The City Council should explore opportunities for handmade and food markets to be re-established in Birmingham and examine how these can be taken into different parts of the city. | Deputy Leader | September 2013 |
| R12 | The City Council should re-examine its communication methods to ensure that arts, sports, cultural and other events are better promoted across the city. | Deputy Leader | September 2013 |

5.2.8 When thinking about heritage, history and culture, the issue of schools came up time and time again. We believe, as others do, that not enough is done within schools to teach a local aspect to history and to learn about different cultures and practices that make up Birmingham.

One of the ways the council leadership can facilitate unity through diversity is through education

Professor Carl Chinn

I firmly believe not enough is taught in local schools about how important Birmingham is or what a fantastic history and breadth of culture it contains

Member of the Public

5.2.9 We do recognise that there are issues in implementing this, including:

- The national curriculum giving little space to teach local history;
- Teachers may not have the knowledge to teach local history as they may not be from the area and would need additional support and resources; a local resource to inform them of the changing face of the City could help to provide current teaching of key developments;
- Young people often have a number of identities that they associate with;
- The constraints on schools in terms of funding, teacher cover and transport.

5.2.10 During the workshop session held, the participants felt that the national curriculum gave no space to teach local history and they thought that this was a great loss. They thought that the history of Birmingham should include more recent history, including the mass immigration from the 1950s and 60s so that children understood why they were here and their part in history.

Learning about history would not mean that you lose your own heritage because Birmingham has always been a global city with trade links all over the world, so the history of Birmingham is the history of the world.

(Workshop participant)



- 5.2.11 However there are examples of schools doing some good work. Birmingham City Council in partnership with local schools worked with local schools to develop a scheme of work to help young people in school understand more about the census through a series of lessons, for example pupils learnt how the data collected from the census could be used to understand changes in society and to help with planning services for the people of the city.
- 5.2.12 However the curriculum is being used in some ways to teach about values and common ground. Guidance from the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education in Birmingham (SACRE) provides teachers with a set of values which can be explored through learning about religion. The 24 dispositions which regardless of faith, or having no faith, should help to bring people together. As to examples of where the syllabus made a difference, attention was drawn to a film on the SACRE website showing exemplar lessons on religious education. From the film it was clear that young people from a range of different religious backgrounds were comfortable about sharing views on their faith.

Agreement on the dispositions, which has already drawn the Faith Traditions together, will also draw children and young people together by voluntary association on the basis of the inherent merit of the dispositions rather than by compulsion.

Guy Hordern, SACRE

- 5.2.13 We think this a very positive example of learning which should be encouraged and we look forward to receiving further information demonstrating the success of this approach. We are concerned however, that the implementation of Academies and Free Schools may result in approaches like this being lost, as they do not need to conform to local authority rules and procedures. We would like to see these types of schools actively support and promote the SACRE work and resources.
- 5.2.14 We believe there is potential for something more to be incorporated into the wider curriculum within schools. The citizenship programme would be an ideal avenue for this. The citizenship curriculum aims to provide young people with the skills and understanding to play an effective role in wider society. There are a number of key areas which underpin the citizenship curriculum including democracy and diversity, rights and responsibilities and identity and diversity. There is also potential for 'Brummie' historians from a range of communities to be involved.



6 Perception of Birmingham

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Finally, we aimed to explore how the perception of Birmingham affected people's pride in the city. Initially, we expected this to be an internal focus, but given the nature of the publicity that the inquiry received, part of this debate became about how Birmingham people are perceived externally.
- 6.1.2 Further work within the city itself to make people aware and helping them to understand the achievements of others across the city could promote further cohesion. With so many global links in Birmingham because of our super diverse nature, disseminating this knowledge can only be a good thing.

6.2 Findings

- 6.2.1 Our general observation was that whilst a positive brand has been developed by Marketing Birmingham in order to attract inward investment, it was not clear how well understood or accepted this brand is within Birmingham itself. Part of this could be that people are not made aware of the positive achievements of Birmingham. The benefit of sharing these experiences and successes with residents have been clearly evidenced through the comments made by Usain Bolt about Birmingham during the 2012 Olympics, which created a greater sense of pride in the city.
- 6.2.2 We believe there is a need to make more of our success stories, raising awareness locally about what happens in Birmingham that is of local, national and international relevance. For example, the Soho Road in Handsworth is famous across the European Union, but how many Birmingham residents know that, have been to it or would choose to go there? This should be coupled with an effort to maximise on the success of our people, who could take on some responsibility for promoting Birmingham. Whilst celebrities and other famous faces are important in this, we would want to see local residents who have made significant achievements showcased, to show what 'average Brummies' can do. This would help tackle some of the negative perceptions that seem to be prevalent outside Birmingham'.¹⁷

Media perceptions should be challenged and prejudices dispelled...we should not pander to prejudices and negative stereotypes about Brummies

Professor Carl Chinn

¹⁷ Responses from individuals attending an Inquiry session when asked 'what do people outside of Birmingham think about Birmingham and Brummies?'



6.2.3 We were interested to hear about a 'Birmingham Ambassadors' Programme which was delivered by Marketing Birmingham in 2010. This was a training programme aimed at encouraging local residents to become an Ambassador for their city. The focus of the initiative was to encourage residents to provide an approachable local on-street welcome to all visitors on behalf of Birmingham. The programme ran for a year and involved around 200 people. The programme closed due to the ending of grant funding. We have seen this kind of approach used more recently elsewhere, through the Games Makers during the Olympics in London and in Coventry.

We don't publicise what we have to local people. It should be easier to find out about what Birmingham has to offer in all areas.

Member of the Public

6.2.4 We feel there is potential for a programme similar to this to be brought back to Birmingham, creating ambassadors that could raise awareness of areas in Birmingham and the cultures and history within it. This could also go some way to addressing the need to make more of our success stories. It could be tailored to try and inspire residents to enjoy and feel proud about their city and its achievements. Ambassadors for the City could create a friendly and welcoming environment for visitors and there is no reason why this programme could not be linked to local businesses. Beginning with an ambassador for each ward, for example, would automatically create a core of 40 people who could help promote the city.

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|
| R13 | The City Council should develop a programme of work to further raise the profile of Birmingham internally amongst residents. This should include a focus on events which are of local, regional and national significance as well as the success of local people. | Leader | October 2013 |
| R14 | An assessment should be made to determine whether an Ambassadors programme could be usefully re-introduced into Birmingham. | Leader | October 2013 |



7 Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This inquiry aimed to examine how social cohesion could be strengthened by promoting common ground and understanding between people in Birmingham. It has gone some way to achieving that but is only one part of a wider debate and discussion into how social cohesion can be improved, particularly in this difficult economic climate.

7.1.2 We knew that residents in Birmingham come from many different places, countries and backgrounds. We also knew that they have many different cultures, tastes and traditions. What we were not clear about was how integrated different individuals and groups of people actually are, whether they interact positively and whether there is opportunity to learn and understand different cultures. There is a need to be united in our diversity, and we are unsure whether this is being achieved currently.

7.2 Way forward

7.2.1 We are never going to create a Birmingham where everyone is close friends with everyone else, the scale of Birmingham compared with other places makes that impossible to achieve. A positive move would be to see a Birmingham where people are understanding of people different to themselves, one where people can come together to have a stake in society, where people can move around easily to experience life in different parts of the city and are confident that they have the same opportunity to engage with life in Birmingham. The City Council cannot impose this kind of social cohesion but it can begin to put the things in place for it to be more easily achieved.

7.2.2 Some of the recommendations listed in this review are structural, focusing on the City Council improving its approach to working with different communities. Others are practical and we would like them to be explored. The Social Inclusion Process can play a role in helping make some of these recommendations happen, best placing them alongside the conclusions of their own work, so that they can be further enhanced.

7.2.3 We have been greatly encouraged by the number of people that chose to get involved in this inquiry and hope the debate will continue in an effort to ensure that cohesion in Birmingham is strengthened.

| | Recommendation | Responsibility | Completion Date |
|------------|--|---|------------------------|
| R15 | An assessment of progress against the recommendations and suggestions made in this report should be presented to Scrutiny. | Cabinet Member for Social Cohesion and Equalities | September 2013 |



Appendix 1: Inquiry Outline

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Lead Member: | Councillor Waseem Zaffar | |
| Inquiry Members: | Councillors Phil Walkling, Eva Phillips, David Barrie | |
| Key question: | Birmingham is a diverse city with a range of people and cultures, but what are the shared values that make us proud to be 'Brummie'? | |
| Lines of enquiry: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do residents of Birmingham consider themselves 'Brummie'? • Why do people choose to come and live in Birmingham? • What gives people a shared sense of belonging and identity – is it their street, neighbourhood, city or other factor? • How much pride is there in Birmingham as a place to live and work? • What makes businesses choose to locate in Birmingham? • What positive stories are there around people with shared values coming together to make a difference? • What impact can the local curriculum have in supporting cohesion and shared values? • How do people learn about the heritage of the city and how this has shaped today's Birmingham? • How do we engage with new communities and how do we support their integration into the city? • What more could we do to make people proud of living in our city? | |
| Anticipated outcomes: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain a better understanding of Resident's perceptions around living and working in Birmingham; what makes residents proud of Birmingham; what creates a sense of belonging to an area. • To provide a set of recommendations which support the promotion of shared values across the city; • To contribute towards a reduction in inequality across the city. | |
| Key witnesses to include: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham residents; • The Education sector; • The Business Sector; • Voluntary and Community organisations; • Faith organisations. | |
| Inquiry Plan: | <p>July September</p> <p>October</p> <p>January February</p> | <p>Launch Call for Evidence</p> <p>Call for Evidence ends</p> <p>Collation and Analysis of Evidence</p> <p>Evidence and background information to Members</p> <p>Evidence gathering</p> <p>Evidence gathering</p> <p>Member deliberation</p> <p>Report agreed and submitted for City Council</p> <p>Report to City Council</p> |



Appendix 2: Contributors

The review group would like to thank all those who contributed to the inquiry – whether through written evidence, through attending a session or workshop, or through contribution to the debate via social media.

The following contributors attended inquiry sessions:

Birmingham City Council – including

Birmingham City Councillors (Cllr Albert Bore, Cllr Mike Whitby, Cllr Paul Tilsley, Cllr John Cotton),

Cllr Alan Rudge: *Civic Enterprise in Birmingham: The Birmingham Approach to Big Society*

Mashuq Ally Assistant Director Equalities and Human Resources

Gez Hughes, Chief Superintendent Registrar

Niall Crawford, Education Adviser

Harry Fowler, Birmingham Youth Service

Desta Hall, LightHouse MyPlace Centre Aston

University of Birmingham – including Dr Simon Pemberton, Professor Carl Chinn and Jenny Phillimore

Birmingham City University

Institute of Asian Business – including Ms. Amina Bukhari and Mr. Sarabjeet Soar

Birmingham Future – Kirsten Henley and Anthony McCourt

Caribbean4Life – Victor Shaw

Business Birmingham – Wouter Schuitemaker

Standing Advisory Council Religious Education – Cllr Barry Henley, Guy Horden

Scout Association – Gerry Russell, County Secretary

Birmingham Leadership Foundation – Mashkura Begum

Social Breakfast – Jenny Smith

West Midlands Police Chief Superintendent – Surjit Manku, Birmingham South Network

Birmingham Uprising – Mobin Amin and Amina Mushtaq

Nash Dom CIC – Giorgi Pertaia

Piers Road New Communities Centre – Hon Alderman Dennis Minnis OBE



Birmingham Mail – Paul Fulford and Neil Elkes

Chamberlain Files – Marc Reeves