

Case study in practice: Birmingham [UK]

Cities as a Lens to the World

A Productive City

- How is the city helping to develop the local economy?

Advantage West Midlands is the regional development agency for Birmingham which aids the sustainable economic development of the city. It helps to make the city a better place to live, work and visit through helping businesses, improving places and supporting local people. See <http://www.advantagewm.co.uk>

- How does the city help with the essential costs of living (transport, housing, water, food, energy etc)?

Residents on low incomes are eligible for various benefits to help meet the costs of living. See www.birmingham.gov.uk/benefits.bcc

- How does the city help people to enjoy the benefits of city life?

Artsfest: Free annual weekend festival held in September which celebrates the city's vibrant creative talent. Events are held across the city. www.artsfest.org.uk

Fierce! Festival: International Performance festival held in May with events citywide. www.myfiercefestival.co.uk

A Well-Governed City

- How is the city managed (Mayor, council structure, community groups, participation etc)?

Birmingham is managed by a city council which has a complex structure. It is made up of a leader of the council, cabinet members, Ward Committees, & various other committees. All residents can vote for their local ward councillor in local elections held every 2 years. There is also a lord mayor of the city, which is voted for by council members only. www.birmingham.gov.uk/council

Birmingham Forward: Promotes the interests of the city through member firms drawn from many sectors of the professional, financial and business support services community. See www.birminghamforward.co.uk

- How are the needs and ideas of residents included in decision making?

Be Birmingham is the city's Local Strategic Partnership made up of partners from businesses, community partnerships, voluntary, faith and public sectors. It aims to improve the social & economic wellbeing of the city. www.bebirmingham.org.uk Consulted with Birmingham citizens to inform 'Birmingham 2026: our vision for the future' strategy (more below)

- How is the city planning for the future?

Birmingham 2026: our vision for the future published by Be Birmingham in September 2008 will outline city's sustainable community strategy. See www.bebirmingham.org.uk/2026

Big City Plan: Aims to produce a 'masterplan' of how the city might change for the better over the next 20 years. Consultation periods for residents to have their say. <http://bigcityplan.birmingham.gov.uk>

Climate Change festival 2008: this is a joint venture between CABE (the Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment) and Birmingham City Council. Over 9 days the festival will explore how cities are planned, designed and used through a mix of exhibitions, debates, street theatre etc. www.climatechange festival.org.uk

An Inclusive City

- How is the city providing a safe and healthy environment for everyone?

Birmingham Community Safety Partnership brings together organisations including Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police, & West Midlands Fire Service to make the city a safer place to live. See www.birmingham-scp.org.uk

- How does the city respect diversity and build a sense of community?

Faith Leaders Group is made up of leaders from the main faiths in the city: Bhuddist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim & Sikh. The group meets to discuss issues of common concern & to help with good community relations

Faiths for the City project brings together representatives of the different faith communities,

the University of Birmingham & leaders from the city. Project allows all religious communities to have a say on debates surrounding the future of the city. See www.faithsforthecity.org.uk

The city has an Equality and Diversity division of the city council.

- How does the city ensure the human rights of its residents?

A Sustainable City

- How is the city meeting its energy needs?

Birmingham Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan: One of the key areas of this plan is to reduce the demand for energy in the city.

Birmingham Cutting Co2 campaign: The Birmingham Strategic Partnership has launched this online pledge campaign to try & lower the city's emissions. See www.birminghamcuttingco2.org

- How sustainable are the transport choices in the city?

Birmingham has an extensive local train and bus network as well as a much smaller metro network. See www.networkwestmidlands.co.uk

Council producing a draft cycling strategy to encourage more people to cycle in Birmingham

- How is the city promoting sustainable waste management?

The city council website outlines the waste and recycling services available in the city. See www.birmingham.gov.uk/waste

There are five household recycling centres in the city. Additionally most households have a doorstep collection service which collects paper, card, glass, cans and plastic bottles to recycle.

60% of the city's waste is disposed of through the Energy from Waste Plant at Tyseley, which produces enough electricity to power 40,000 local homes. The council subsidises the purchase of compost bins for residents.

