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Preface

By Councillor Mark Hill
Chairman, Regeneration
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
April 2005



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



Local Centres





Local Centres

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

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Local Centres

2 Introduction



Local Centres

2.3.2 The evidence sessions were as follows:

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

2.3.3 ~~Ad 29288m 29 January 2005~~ In January 2005, the Committee undertook a site visit to Erdington Centre. In addition to visiting the centre itself, this provided Members of the Committee with the opportunity to hear the views of a range of people involved in work to regenerate that centre, including:

- Councillor Jilly Bermingham - Chair of the Ward Advisory Committee;
- Mr Nigel wu
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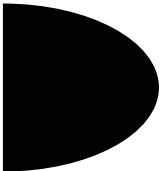
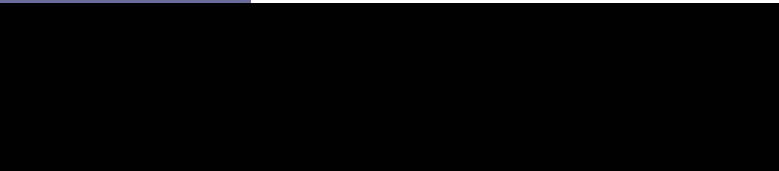
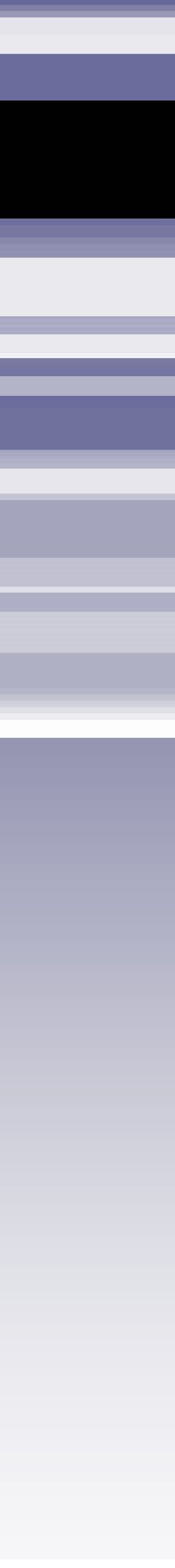


3 Background

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

- 3.1.1 There is no universal definition of a local centre. However, a local centre is usually accepted as comprising at a minimum a small group of shops and service uses, including what might be considered 'essential' local facilities









4 Findings

4.1 General

4.1.1 74036 Tm()TjA wide range of evidence was cETB0121 Tc 0.0030158610.02 0 0 10.02 27



Local Centres

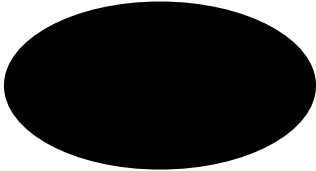
4.2 Market Trends: The Context

4.2.1 The activities which take place within local centres and in particular the retail sector are subject to national market trends, which intervention to support centres has little ability to influence. The key national trends are:

- Stronger sale
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Local Centres





Local Centres

- 4.3.4 In some cases, even where off-street car parking exists, it is not subject to any co-ordinated management. In Erdington, there are a number of adjoining off-street parking areas, which are owned and managed separately, when a more co-ordinated approach could bring benefits to the centre as a whole. This is an issue which is now being addressed through the Town Centre Manager and the Town Centre Partnership. The Erdington example points to a more general potential for private parking areas to be used more effectively, and for traders to be encouraged to provide parking where possible.
- 4.3.5 Surveys confirm that traders' concerns over the adequacy of car parking are soundly based. The most recent city-wide surveys indicate that over 50% of convenience shopping trips in Birmingham are made by car, and the survey undertaken for this review indicated that about a third of trips to Acocks Green and Kingstanding were by car. About 50% (250) of respondents to this latter survey thought that car parking provision was 'poor' or 'very poor' and 44% (25) of those responding to the A0I C0034 619.519290.0007 54815839 500.41798



Local Centres

4.4 Security

- 4.4.1 Issues of personal safety were raised in evidence to the Committee almost as frequently as car parking. Indeed, the two issues are linked in that examples were highlighted of situations where off-street car parks had been provided, but were not used because they were perceived to be too dangerous.
- 4.4.2 The importance of security was also highlighted by the survey undertaken for this Review. About a third of respondents (197) thought security was 'poor' or 'very poor' and over 50% (297) said that 'better security' would encourage them to visit their local centre more often.
- 4.4.3 The availability of Home Office grants has enabled the deployment of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems in several local centres. While there may be some doubt as to the actual impact of such systems, it is clear that they do have a significant effect in improving perceptions of safety. The perceived success of CCTV where it has been introduced has therefore generated pressures for it to be introduced elsewhere. This issue was considered in more detail in the recent Scrutiny Review of CCTV.



Local Centres

4.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

4.5.1 Associated with the issue of personal security is the need to control anti-social activities such as alcohol abuse and prostitution 10.02 0 0 10.0h00.0790.02

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Local Centres

4.8 Resources

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

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

In addition there are some cases where major highway expenditure will pave the way for local centre improvements. A good example is Northfield,0.112 Tw 10.02 0 0 10.02c 0.00169 Tw i0 0 10.02 515.51877 504.



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Local Centres

4.9.5

One thread which appears to link some of these issues is the formation of District Committees and District Partnerships through the localisation of the Local Council (see localisation of the Local Council 2017)



Local Centres

- 4.10.3 The report concluded that it would now be appropriate to review the priorities of the programme in the light of experience and changed funding opportunities. This should aim to ensure that the revised programme takes forward the vibrant urban villages element of the Council 2005+.
- 4.10.4 The Committee heard a significant amount of evidence on the effectiveness of local centre schemes, all of which was posi



5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

- 5.1.1 Having considered the evidence presented to them, the Committee came to the following conclusions.
- 5.1.2 Local Centres play an essential role in the life and well being of communities and can contribute to sustainability and social inclusion. Promoting the regeneration of local centres should therefore continue to be a priority for the City Council, in line with the vibrant urban villages element of the Council Plan 2005+.
- 5.1.3 National trends in the retail and other sectors will continue to affect centres and some of these trends - for example, the growth of large food stores - may well have an adverse impact. However, even within this context there is still potential for local centres to flourish,

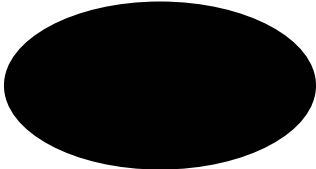
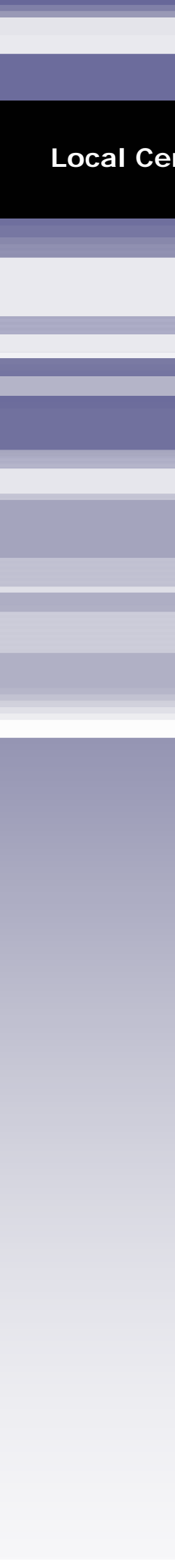




Local Centres

- 5.1.11 A more rigorous approach should be taken to identifying target outcomes when improvement programmes are developed, and to

Local Centres





Local Centres

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



Local Centres



Appendix 1 Scrutiny Questionnaire



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF YOUR LOCAL SHOPPING CENTRE?





Local Centres





Local Centres

Appendix 2 Birmingham Local Centres Map