Urbact: Vital Cities
Integrated Action Plan (Final)

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On behalf of Birmingham Urbact Local Group

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The project seeks answers on how to combat social exclusion through the redesign of public spaces in deprived residential areas by using the power and common language of sport through innovative urban sport actions, physical equipment and better orchestrated service delivery.

http://urbact.eu/vital-cities
City context......

Vision and Priorities
2017–2020

Making a positive difference

Birmingham City Council
A city of growth where every child, citizen and place matters.

Birmingham will be a city of inclusive growth where the opportunities and benefits of progress and investment are felt by all. We will focus on four key priorities – children, housing, jobs and skills and health – because we believe these represent the areas of greatest opportunity and challenge for all of us.

The importance of neighbourhoods

Our neighbourhoods have an important role in shaping the lives of citizens and the city we share.

The drivers of change in Birmingham

Connected

The desire to connect and be connected is one of the big drivers of our age. This has particular importance for Birmingham thanks to our position at the heart of the UK’s road and rail networks and our emerging role as an incubator of digital talent and new businesses.

Inclusive

Birmingham is the most youthful city in Europe with a wide range of cultural, faith and ethnic communities. Every neighbourhood in the city has seen the arrival of at least some newcomers from countries that previously were not represented in the city, enriching the lives of local people and making our neighbourhoods fascinating places to live in.

Sustainable

As the city and its population continues to grow we know that we can not continue to consume natural resources at our current rate. Reducing the amount we throw away, finding ways of re-using the things we no longer need and recovering energy from the waste we do throw away is in everyone’s interest.

Our four priorities

Children

A great city to grow up in

Make the best of our unique demography and create a safe and secure city for our children to learn and grow in.

Housing

A great city to live in

Provide housing in a range of types and tenures, to meet the housing needs of all of the current and future citizens of the city.

Jobs and Skills

A great city to succeed in

Birmingham will be renowned as an enterprising, innovative and green city.

Health

A great city to grow old in

Helping people become healthier, especially relating to physical activity and mental wellbeing.

Underpinning these priorities is a commitment to delivering inclusive growth.
We will need to address the many challenges and opportunities

1.1m RESIDENTS

46% under the age of 30

DIVERSE
we are the most diverse core city

170,000
Expected growth in Birmingham’s population through to 2031

6.3% UNEMPLOYMENT
above the national average of 2.3%

JOBS

89k
The number of homes that need to be built through to 2031 – the city only has the capacity for 51,000

29% of Birmingham’s children live in a DEPRIVED HOUSEHOLD

6.2 PER 1,000
HOMELESSNESS
well above national average

See https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/directory_record/1359/vision_objectives_and_strategy
1 in 3 children live in poverty

Obesity
24% of 10–11 year olds are obese
19% National average

Cycling
<1% Percentage of children who cycle to school

Family Homelessness
6.2 (per 1,000)

Fuel Poverty
Birmingham is ranked first for total number of fuel poor households

Life Expectancy
The difference between most affluent and most deprived areas: 7.4yrs less for men, 4.9yrs for women

Social Contact
>50% More than half of adult carers would like more social contact

Infant Mortality
7.2
Birmingham
4 National average (Rate per 1,000 live births)

144,000 children (10–15 year olds) live in the bottom decile households


Not Satisfied
16% of 15 year olds are not satisfied with life

Physical Activity
54% of adults undertake moderate exercise each week

Neighbourhoods fascinating places to live in.
City Context

- High levels of deprivation, poverty
- Inequality within societal infrastructure;
  - Environment (housing, public spaces, green space, transport)
  - Social agency (opportunity, willingness and capital to get involved)
  - Economic opportunities (jobs and being able to access them)
- Resulting in inequality of wellbeing within Birmingham’s population
  - Poor health outcomes
  - Inactivity of the population
  - Poor social cohesion with insufficient societal support (e.g. having people to count on)
How can we create a ‘vital city’ with 1.1 million active, healthy and involved people? The ingredients for wellbeing...
IAP Mission Objectives

- To seek out activity taking place across the city that can contribute to the vital city vision
- To Influence activities to strengthen their contribution to the vital city vision
- To create new opportunities, activities and collaborations contributing to a vital city vision.
The process

The Urbact method brings together a network of cities from across Europe that have a shared vision.

Each participating city then create a Urbact Local Group formed of a range of stakeholders with this shared vision.

The process to culminates in the delivery of an Integrated Action Plan (IAP).

The IAP is the local plan to take Birmingham further along its Vital City journey. It is the result of in depth research activity, shared best practice locally and internationally.

We are now at the stage of pulling our initial IAP together.
Description of Urbact process

Urbact Bid → Self Assessment → Deep Dive → Integrated Action Plan → Delivery

- International exchange
- Stakeholder engagement
- Urbact Local Group
Our approach has been to look at what strengths and opportunities are existing Birmingham both in the physical sense as well as the range of activities that are already happening that can be built upon.
For example: Birmingham has 571 parks totalling over 3,500 hectares (14 sq. mi) of public open space, more than any other European city. 

Arboreal Avenues

Tree Canopy Coverage %
- Over 40% (743)
- 30 to 40% (693)
- 20 to 30% (1452)
- 10 to 20% (3050)
- up to 10% (3918)
- No trees (509)

All tree canopy cover

% coverage over a 20m buffer from the road centreline

Source: BlueSky and Ordnance Survey Mastermap

Tapestry of Green Open Spaces

Parks, Green Spaces, Recreation Grounds, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks/Gardens of the city.

Connecting these with wild city routes

Source: BlueSky and Ordnance Survey Mastermap
The council has streamlined the process to agree a street closure so that a simple form submitted to the Wellbeing service is all that is required and they have the authority to order the closure.

Active Streets – The potential

Active Streets is a new project that supports road closures so that people can use the road as a place to play games and have community events.

The map shows the 7000+ streets that the new closure process can be applied.
Active People Model

We are clear that to build a Vital City we will need to achieve Social, Environmental and Economic outcomes.

The active people model explains how re-creating and using brilliant public spaces to get people active and socially connected achieves these outcomes.
Active People Model

How
- A focus on Behaviour Change
- Insight and evidence driven interventions
- Releasing value for people from the Activity Data
- Innovation in use of Physical Assets & Environment
- Stimulating business, community and social capacity
- Right thing, right time, right place
- Five ways to wellbeing

Social Outcomes
- Increasing Participation in Physical Activity
  - Increasing activity levels for those who are furthest
- Tackling health inequalities
  - Reducing health risks associated with inactivity
    (CHD, Diabetes, Mental Health)
- Increasing community capacity & resilience
  - Reducing risks associated with isolation
    (Mental Health, social support networks, safety nets)
  - Enhancing social & community participation
    (Volunteering, Community Activities)
- Building Community Cohesion
  - Increasing community participation for socially excluded
    (Ethnic minorities, families in poverty)

Economic Outcomes
- Health value
  - Financial cost benefit associated with improved health outcomes
- Environmental value
  - Financial benefit of reduced motorised travel
- Social Value
  - Financial cost benefit associated with improved social outcomes
- Economic Value
  - Financial value through increased market size of physical activity sector
    (employment and business opportunities)
  - Bringing investment into the city e.g. Europe, Sport England,
    Public Health/NHS, HS2

Environmental Outcomes
- Building an environment that provokes activity
  - Bringing community assets/spaces into use and increasing use
  - Influencing investment into community assets and spaces
- Increasing non-motorised ‘Active Travel’
  - Growth in non-motorised travel including transfer from
    motorised travel
A guiding principle behind our Vital City movement is the importance of insight and evidence.

Driven using initiatives like Active Data and the Birmingham Crowd which are ambitious and successful projects helping to capture data about activities and people to provide the raw material to be insight driven.
Our Urbact process also included specific insight and research activities

- **Deep Dive including:**
  - Review of strategic approach
  - Edgbaston reservoir master planning case study

- **Self-assessment including:**
  - Spatial Audit of Assets
  - Resident engagement survey
  - City Centre Doctor tool site assessments
  - Active Data insight
  - ULG Self Assessment workshop
**Public Places in my local area encourage me to be...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>% Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If it costs too much</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad weather</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they were not within walking distance from my home</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they were not easily accessible via public transport</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it wasn’t free</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues with my physical health</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have enough time</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It doesn’t fit in with my current interests</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues caused by my mental health</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not interested in being more social or connecting with people</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m not interested in being more physically active</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost remains a barrier as well as considering the British weather!

Some sense that places encourage physical and social activity but with plenty of scope for improvement or growth.

**What would encourage you to make use of or take part?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>% Total Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If they were within walking distance from my home</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it was affordable</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it was free</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m interested in being more physically active</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It looks interesting or innovative</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is an opportunity to try something new</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it’s fun</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good weather</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If they could be reached by public transport from my home</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s an opportunity to meet new people</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s an opportunity to get to know people better</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it fits in with my current interests</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m interested in socialising and connecting with people more</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have spare time that I could be using better</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing would encourage me</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Distance/ease of access, cost and elements of interest like fun or motivation are key drivers for people.

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that Birmingham should aspire to be a Vital City?**

93% of those surveyed agreed (70% strongly) that Birmingham should aspire to be a Vital City - a place that helps and encourages you to be more physically active (moving more) and connect more with your local community.

This is a major endorsement of the Vital City concept.
Barriers and target groups

- Barriers
  - Cost
  - Environmental barriers
  - Distance/travel
  - Equipment
  - Social distance

- Target groups (everyone but..)
  - Older, vulnerable people
  - Teens and young adults
  - Parents with young children
  - Cultural homogeneity
Integrated Action Plan Method

Our method as an Urbact Local Group (ULG) has been to cast our net wide to find activities large and small, simple and complex that contribute to Birmingham being a Vital City. In doing so we seek to offer the ULG networks experience and identify opportunities to add value through integration and collaboration.

We have adapted the PACT Adaptive capacity building method as a means to measure our Vital City network and its activities. It then provides a simple framework to help define how collaboratively we can influence and add value to the networks activities to achieve collective higher capacity Vital City delivery.
Adapting the PACT Adaptive Capacity Building

- People, Activities, Contexts, Technologies (PACT)
- A leading approach for assessing organisational aspects of adaptive capacity
- Learning from “Adaptation Strategies for European Cities” which has been compiled by Ricardo-AEA for the European Commission Directorate General Climate Action
- Key principles being recognising at what response level we are aiming and achieving for our Vital City Pathways and defining what would help us reach higher capacity response levels.
Response Levels – descriptions give an indication of capacity at each level

**Level 1**: Activities at this response level has only a core business focus and does not recognise a wider Vital City agenda.

**Level 2**: Activities at this response level recognises a need to act on a Vital City Agenda but are still at a very early stage. ‘Common sense’ is more motivating than ‘best practice’.

**Level 3**: Activities at this response level are proactively identifying opportunities, reaching out to achieve best practice on a Vital City agenda, have access to some resources and have some strategic support and some systematic organisational change. However, responses remain within a ‘business as usual’ context and focus on shorter term impacts.

**Level 4**: Activities begin to look at future Vital Cities impacts and to innovate and actually find responses to them. Activities that step beyond ‘business as usual’ and increasingly find ‘breakthroughs’ as well as pursuing incremental change. Emerging as activities, actors will have strategic Vital City goals and will be reach out externally to lead and influence the Vital City agenda with others.

**Level 5**: Activity has capacity to transform whole systems such as an industry, a national economy or a city and its hinterland for long term change. Demonstrating incubation of breakthroughs to a scale that achieves population level impact.

**Level 6**: Activity recognised as world leading with demonstrable sustainable impact at city, national and/or international scale. Here the game has changed. Vital City agenda culturally underpins thinking, evidence of impact, fully funded sustainable delivery with long term strategic planning.
PACT Framework

- The essential capabilities that need to be developed to develop a strong adaptation programme are represented in PACT by nine ‘pathways’ for change, comparable to 'competencies' at an individual level.

We have instead adapted this into a series of seven thematic domains within which our identified activities are positioned.
Thematic Pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Pathways</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Activities that make social connections, networks of people and create social cohesion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Activities that maximise or develop the use of the natural capital assets and quality of the environment (green, blue, grey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning/Economy</td>
<td>Activities that improve the built environment and the economy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Activities that develop sustainable and active travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Activities that maximise or develop the cultural assets of the public spaces of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination</td>
<td>Activities that promote the Vital Cities approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Activities that maximise use of data to evidence and support Vital Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery Model</td>
<td>Activities that change whole system delivery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have identified and mapped activities that taking place across the city that contribute in some way toward our Vital City goal.

Each activity has been matched to a domain, but we also recognise they will likely link and contribute to each other and to other themes.

The action plan captures details for each activity and holds this in a detailed appendix action plan. This is a working document and will be managed by the ULG.

Each activity is now visible to the network and placed within the PACT capacity framework. With ULG peer support each activity then considers how it can stretch to a higher capacity.
Each action included in the action plan has completed the following high level details.

The visibility of each action has been powerful in and of itself to build confidence and demonstrate to the Vital City ULG the breadth, extent and quality of actions that are already happening in the city.

In addition opportunities to add value and integrate are coming to light all the time. Where this is possible each action has identified how it can be stretched beyond its Business As Usual to a high level of Vital City Capacity.

The Vital City Network does not take ownership of actions, it exists to add value through peer support, collaboration. This is done with each member opening their hearts and minds to constructive feedback on how their activities can further advance Birmingham as a Vital City.

Detailed action plan attached as a separate document.
Activities have been placed providing a guide to their current level of capacity as measured against the PACT methodology. This gives us an aggregate picture for Birmingham as a Vital City in respect of actions we are taking. If we can achieve the stretch actions we can therefore improve these capacity levels as a whole. 

**Vital Cities Activity Map – Cumulative Response level self assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response level</th>
<th>L6 Champion Organisation</th>
<th>L5 Strategic Resilience</th>
<th>L4 Breakthrough Projects</th>
<th>L3 Efficient Management</th>
<th>L2 Stakeholder responsive</th>
<th>L1 Core Business Focussed</th>
<th>Delivery Domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L6 Stretch (2030)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L5 Stretch (2025)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L4 Stretch (2020)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L3 Stretch (2015)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 Stretch (2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Activities**

- Active Streets
- Urban Living
- Edgbaston Reservoir Blueprint Curzon Master plan
- BCR/BBB Velo Birmingham
- Big Sleuth Saheli
- Active Data
- USE-IT
- Active parks
- City Design Guide Natural Capital tool
- Public Art, Culture, Year of movement
- ISCA MOVE congress
- SETA
- Sport Birmingham TAWS
- Social Cohesion (BRAP)
- Air Quality Vision, Policy HS2
- Developer Toolkit Raynsford Review
- Wild City Networks CSR HSBC
- Vital City Designation
- Telefonica
- CSR (Coca-Cola)
- LDP

**Figure represents average response level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Social</th>
<th>B Environment</th>
<th>C Planning/Economy</th>
<th>D Transport</th>
<th>E Culture</th>
<th>F Dissemination</th>
<th>G Data</th>
<th>H Delivery Model</th>
<th>I Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L3-4</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>L3-4</td>
<td>L3</td>
<td>L3-4</td>
<td>L2-3</td>
<td>L3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our IAP is not looking for a specific funding pot for a specific activity. Our aim is to use our growing network, evidence and collaborative power to leverage funding from multiple sources to build capacity for existing or new initiatives.
Framework for Delivery

- 5 ways to wellbeing
- Active People Model
- ULG
- The Active Wellbeing Society
- IAP
- Wellbeing panel
- Local Delivery Pilot
- Commonwealth Games legacy.....
Key risks

The ULG have considered risks as they stand. The key risks identified are as follows;

- We have strength through our bottom up approach but there is a recognition of potential weakness through buy-in at the strategic level of the city through city leaders. Our action will be to use our IAP and evidence of delivery as a tool to bring more city leaders on board with the Vital Cities movement and our delivery network.

- Our ULG network is still relatively public sector/council centric and there is a need to build on community links, social enterprise and into the private sector.

- Our deep dive flagged the evidence of Silo working as both evident but also therefore as a risk for an integrated Vital City vision and plan. Our IAP is a major step toward tackling silo working but we must continue to try to build and strengthen the network.
Next Steps for Birmingham

- With the creation of The Active Well-being Service (TAWS) in Birmingham, which is a new independent social enterprise organisation that works as a charitable community benefit society focused on physical activity, guided by innovation, collaboration and insight, to create stronger and more resilient communities. TAWS will continue the work from the actions of the IAP.
- Honing with each of the stakeholders/action areas the specifics of actions we wish to capture.
- Use our IAP and evidence of delivery as a tool to bring more city leaders on board with the Vital Cities movement and our delivery network.
- Expand the ULG network to build on community links, social enterprise and into the private sector.
- Develop a Vital Cities Designation (label) movement.
Urban sports promotion for social inclusion, healthy and active living