

St. Paul's Community
Development Trust



Strategic Plan 2024-2027

'A Fairer and Brighter Future
for Communities'



Contents

Our Why3

Our Vision, Mission and Values3

Our Strategic Aims and Objectives4

Our How7

Thriving Communities7

- Happy and Healthy Lives7
- Lifelong Learning10
- Working Together12

Business Strength14

- Investing in People14
- Financial Health15
- Robust Governance15
- Strong Support Systems16

Conclusion18

Our Why



To us at St Paul's Trust, everyone is someone.

This is the mantra that we live and breathe and have encapsulated for the last 50 years in one way or another, since the development of the Trust, to our present, and considering our future.

Our journey has been inspirational and motivational, whilst embracing growth organically with empathy to fulfil our purpose. Since the early 1970's we have sought to do the right things at the right time, forging partnerships with like-minded people and building capacity to address what is needed for Balsall Heath and our wider constituents in line with our district and city offer.

Firmly rooted within the neighbourhood, we have a strong connection to our past, building upon our history, whilst playing to our strengths in our agility to respond to societal and local changes, embracing the rich diversity of place and people.



Vision

A fairer and brighter future for communities



Mission

Nurturing lifelong opportunities that leave a lasting impact by working together and investing in people and place



Values

Honesty
Inclusive
Togetherness
Invest

Our Strategic Aims and Objectives

Our Strategic Aims and Objectives set out our offer, which is fluid to respond to the whole person, or family approach, with a focus upon impact.

Our life-long support, from our nursery provision, childcare, to supporting the 0-19 agenda and family hubs, to our education settings, our city farm and community hubs that support local networks and vulnerable adults on a range of foci, provides the platform to enable us to achieve our vision and mission.



Thriving Communities

- Happy and Healthy Lives
- Lifelong Learning
- Working Together



Business Strength

- Investing in People
- Financial Health
- Robust Governance
- Quality Support Systems



For decades Balsall Heath, has been and remains one of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods within Birmingham, ranking high on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). With high levels of economic inactivity (54%), low skills (33% with no formal qualification), 59% in social or private rented accommodation, health inequalities (life expectancy nearly 6 years below the most affluent wards) and a poor environment with fly tipping, high levels of litter and traffic (Environmental Justice score rated red/amber), there remains work to do.

The population of Balsall Heath is diverse with 59% from Asian communities (predominantly south Asia) and the presiding faith being Muslim (73%). With the on-going priorities for the neighbourhood, there remains a rich sense of community and people being there for each other. There is a thriving Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector who support, develop, engage and enable communities to lead the way. There are several local amenities with heritage and community assets of value, with local parks and environmental projects focusing upon the clean and green agenda. Most importantly there is the will and skill to build upon the current local provision, build capacity and continue to recognise the talent of local citizens. Predominantly a community anchor organisation St Paul's Trust also operates on a wider district and city level.

Four years on from the pandemic we have continued to see the impact of Covid-19, alongside exiting Europe, with rising inflation peaking 11%, delivering a cost-of-living crisis and economic downturn, increase in poor mental health (1 in 4 now reported to present) and an increasing divide between higher earning households and those less well off. The pandemic has also seen a shift for those 'managing and getting by', falling into the 'struggling' category and an increase reporting of 'in-work poverty' (working person's income, after housing costs, is less than 60% of the national average, and they don't earn enough to meet the cost of living). Covid-19 has left a lasting mark on communities.



The added complexity of working within a city where a local authority has financial challenges and is a S114 Council means that there are less resources to meet local needs, and statutory responsibilities become the priority. The Council will be making cost savings of £300m over the next 2 years, with a £115m proposed cut to children, young people and family services, and £80m for adult social care. This will also impact upon environment, community assets, and arts funding, with increases in council tax. This places increased pressure upon our sector to fill the gaps, and that is why our strategic plan sets out our remit and focus to work collectively to achieve what we can for Balsall Heath, Hall Green and our wider city offer.

We remain committed and resilient

Whilst there remain significant structural and policy challenges, we will seek to respond to the inequalities that exist within our communities; we remain committed and resilient. Our environmental scanning evidence that there is an increasing demand for our services, yet the sector needs to remain strong to address these. The recent 'State of the Sector



2024' (NPC) report identifies and reaffirms barriers to operating effectively including full cost recovery and contract values (62% feel this is not achieved); 54% of the public respondents want the government to give more support to charities to work in poorer areas; charities who consulted their users rose from 60% in 2020 to 85% in 2023. However, the proportion of charities who say that users have a direct input into their strategy dropped from 71% to 62% over the same period; The proportion of leaders who have reviewed their mission has dropped from 72% to 60%. 73% of users say that charity staff are mostly or fully representative, compared to 51% of charity leaders.

The environmental, social, and governance (ESG) agenda is not seen as a key opportunity by many charities, with only 31% discussing it at Board level; 65% have identified lack of funding as a barrier to engaging more with the digital and data agenda. Despite this it is reported that the sector contributes £2.4bn to support state services per annum.

With a new Labour Government, it is also important to reflect upon what this means for charities and citizens we support. It is positive to note that 242 MPs in the new parliament have a background in the charity sector with eight members of the cabinet having worked in the sector. 'Lived experience' appears to have played a fundamental role in these appointments. Labour has outlined their proposals

under the 'Five Missions to Rebuild Britain' which will be enabled by mission delivery boards. These are:

- 1 Kickstart economic growth** - to secure the highest sustained growth in the G7 – with good jobs and productivity growth in every part of the country making everyone, not just a few, better off.
- 2 Make Britain a clean energy superpower** - to cut bills, create jobs and deliver security with cheaper, zero-carbon electricity by 2030, accelerating to net zero.
- 3 Take back our streets** - by halving serious violent crime and raising confidence in the police and criminal justice system to its highest levels.
- 4 Break down barriers to opportunity** - by reforming our childcare and education systems.
- 5 Build an NHS fit for the future** - that is there when people need it; with fewer lives lost to the biggest killers; in a fairer Britain, where everyone lives well for longer.

It is important that the VCFSE sector is recognised and valued, and a new Government provides a refreshed platform for political engagement at a local, city and regional level.

This Strategic Plan 2024-2027 focuses upon building upon our strengths and our offer to achieve our new vision, mission, aims and objectives set out for the next 3 years.

We are motivated to continue to respond, providing legacy and sustainability for our local communities, be that community of interest, geography, social networks, diversity, and/or family.

People are our strength, as we harness skills, experience and provide capacity to learn and grow, adapting to flex to changing needs and future proofing the charity to be here for the next 50 years.

Our How



Thriving Communities

Happy and Healthy Lives

Achieving a happy and healthy life is the golden thread that runs throughout St Paul's Trust as it is the basis for people to connect and manage their personal situation whilst providing a platform to be ambitious and focus upon the future. For many of our service users and customers, there will be the day-to-day aspects to their lives which require resilience and energy, and our gift is to provide the tools and resources needed to aid this. Our strategic aims and objectives set this direction of travel for our immediate locality and provide opportunities for growth and supporting other neighbourhoods.

Many of our current opportunities focus upon **Children, Young People and Families**.

Over the last 12 months we have

been working closely with city-wide partners to remodel Birmingham Forward Steps to align with the launch of the 0-19 years offer and the Family Hubs. We are excited to remain a partner delivering the much-valued provision within Hall Green district with The Springfield Project. The extension of this contract will ensure an on-going focus upon families that will support local needs through one-



Many of our current opportunities focus upon Children, Young People and Families

Thriving Communities

to-one work such as family support, breast feeding guidance, ante-natal services, mandated health checks for babies and infants, and engagement in targeted programmes such as emotional well-being, healthy eating, lifestyles and parenting. This will increase parenting skills and knowledge leading to improved outcomes for babies, children and the wider family supporting 'The Best Start for Life' (DoHSC 2021).

...a range of opportunities for children to explore, develop new skills and friendships

Our activities for children and young people will continue to be hosted at our community hub with access to our sports pitch and city farm. With our school holiday programmes offering healthy food, and a range of opportunities for children to explore, develop new skills and friendships in a safe environment. This complements our affordable after school club delivered by our experienced childcare colleagues. This meets local needs of working parents who are seeking variety and high-quality Ofsted rated provision for their children, impacting positively upon parents/carers and children alike. We will seek to increase our reach for this provision over the life of this plan.

Over the last year we have seized the opportunity to collaborate with other local providers to pilot a Youth Sports Network in Balsall Heath. Funded by Sport Birmingham via Commonwealth Games 2022 legacy funding this has given opportunity to consult with young people, consider current and future



requirements and develop a programme of activity including urban sports which is a positive way of engagement and has been a tool for diversionary activity.

We will develop this further via a universal and targeted youth offer, building upon our network and taking a user led approach. We already know that there are limited activities for young people outside of faith-based provision, and we will provide a generic setting for people to meet and participate in positive activities. It also means there is open access which supports the building of trusted relationships. Offering universal youth provision provides the forum for having more in-depth conversations and can be the route to more targeted delivery. We plan to implement more structured thematic youth delivery as a natural progression. Key elements from local intelligence includes a focus upon well-being as a response to the growing support required to tackle poor mental health, community safety in response to crime, exploitation and unhealthy relationships, and environmental projects. Supporting young people who are NEET (not in education employment or training) is also important and links with our aspirations for our education settings and our future employment offer.

Our youth offer will increase positive engagement, provide new experiences, raise awareness and support of key issues affecting young people and provide a positive pathway for our users. This offer should also present an increase in confidence, development of independent life skills and improving local connections and the environment.

Our **Health and Well-being** delivery has generally focused upon smaller numbers and targeted different groups. However, the direct and indirect outcomes of people engaging in such activities has been beneficial. Priorities of the Integrated Care Board's Ten-Year Strategy 'A Bolder, Healthier Future for the People of Birmingham and Solihull' (2023) sets out the aim to 'improve life expectancy'. Priorities for the central locality include a focus upon; cardiovascular health, children and young people (5+), healthy ageing, integrated neighbourhood teams, mental health, and respiratory health. We will be increasing our health and well-being offer via our community hub and city farm to respond to those areas which align with our experience and purpose. Our plans to move to a CARE farm model, to provide a more generic healthy lifestyles programme responding to local need and health data will support this.





Alongside, our on-going delivery of Birmingham Forward Steps, we will also provide support to adults, many of whom will be more vulnerable. We will tackle loneliness by providing access to engage in different activities building upon our Countrymen project, fishing, warm spaces and hosting local groups such as creative writing and Amal Yemini Women's group. This will enable opportunities for early intervention and prevention, connecting to existing programmes such as Neighbourhood Network Schemes.

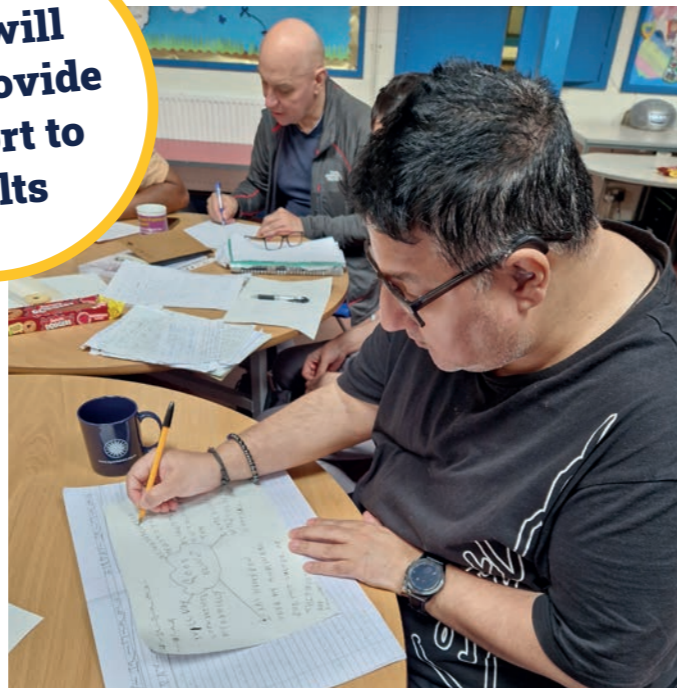
There remain significant health inequalities which are more prevalent to our local communities, and we will support citizens to navigate pathways to health services. Working with local partners who are experienced in this delivery to utilise joint resources and identify new opportunities via Fairer Futures funding and locality-based action planning.

Focusing upon these developments will lead to increased confidence of users, reduced social isolation, and improved health benefits.

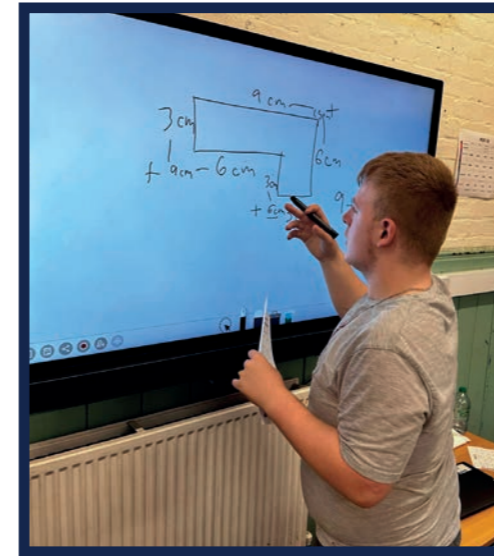
Integral to health and well-being is the wider **environment** in which people live and work. We will continue to work in partnership to deliver environmental awareness through our city farm. Providing access to small animals, the day-to-day workings of animal welfare and encouraging planting, growing your own and recycling schemes. We will also support residents in tackling clean and green issues to improve the physical environment. This will raise awareness of environmental challenges, reduce waste and contribute towards a more sustainable way of living.

Lifelong Learning

We will provide developmental and learning opportunities from 6 months and beyond. Our community nursery setting ensures we meet the needs of babies and children, focusing upon the Early Years Foundation Stage and supporting them to be school ready. We will develop this offer further increasing access to our city farm and developing a forest school agenda. Considering the economic position for our customers we are committed to retaining an affordable setting, however, need to ensure that this is viable in the long-term with the changes of government funded places and



...we will also provide support to adults



responding to increasing demand for additional support for young children.

Our Independent Specialist School and Post 16 is deeply rooted in our history of the Trust. Our founders developed an alternative provision for local young people when mainstream education was not meeting their needs. From a terraced house in St Paul's Road to a full cohort of 55 pupils across our School and Post 16 site we have continued to respond, providing a resource for social emotional mental health (SEMH) pupils across the city and beyond. However, this hasn't been without its challenges as education and regulation has significantly changed since the 1970s.

We know that there is a high level and increasing demand for specialist placements and we have been working to our own internal plan to make the required developments needed to respond to this. Many of our pupils have benefited from our setting and the positive supportive relationships with staff, whilst providing options that enable them to grow further. We will the focus upon continuous improvement and undertake a full review of our offer; planning for the long-term to continue to meet the needs of young people. This will align with BCC's Sufficiency Strategy and the on-going review of requirements for SEMH and Post 16 provision.

Focusing upon development, skills and progression will be our priority to support people into employment, training or volunteering opportunities. This will not only support our pupils through robust career information, advice and guidance; we will also widen this to support local citizens in accessing meaningful employment opportunities.

...55 pupils across our School and Post 16 site

Data tells us there are lower skills in Balsall Heath and higher levels of unemployment, however, there is a thriving local economy. We aim to work with people not in education, employment and training, and tackle generational unemployment. Developing private sector partnerships with larger businesses and local SME's will support the local economy and benefit local citizens. We recognise there may be many barriers and we are keen to increase access to opportunities for women and for communities where English is not their first language. Our creative English courses and wider community development activities will enable this. We will also respond to and seek to access wider opportunities via West Midlands Combined Authority. The above will lead to improving household financial income, developing new skills, ensuring residents are aware of their employee rights, and provide volunteering opportunities to build confidence and experience.



Working Together

We recognise that strength lies in partnership working; pooling resources, skills, knowledge and experience to work towards a common goal. The VCFSE sector within Balsall Heath, wider Hall Green and across the city is diverse. Whilst we work closely with established partnerships, there is more that can be done.

We will enter new working arrangements to achieve our strategic aims. Locality partners are key to us, making the biggest impact and discussions have already commenced to focus upon a Balsall Heath Collaborative.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (2015-2031) identifies thematic priorities regarding housing, environment, heritage, connectivity and environment (climate change) to promote a healthy and sustainable community and we will support its ongoing implementation and review.



Locality partners are key to us



We will also engage in thematic partnerships linked to our strategic objectives as outlined and seek the opportunity to develop and support a more co-ordinated approach to service delivery. Critical to our success is working with local people. The strength of our people and community assets is evident. We want to harness and support this talent, with the sharing of experiences, skills and enabling community wealth.

Understanding the communities we serve provides a strong foundation. Our local knowledge is good; however, we will develop this further through increased data, research and customer insight. This will provide the platform for reviewing and developing provision. This will achieve greater impact for local citizens on the strategic aims and objectives whilst improving value for money and evidencing a higher social return on investment.

Measuring success By 2027 we will...



Objective	Success Measures
Happy and Healthy Lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve healthy lifestyles and wellbeing outcomes • Reduce social isolation • BFS and Family Hubs outcomes • Reduce the numbers of CYP at risk • Increase in environmental awareness and action • Increase community engagement of positive activities and experiences
Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Foundation Stage achieved • School readiness • Increase childcare access • Affordability benchmark • Improved outcomes for pupils • Positive destination pathways • Improved school attendance • Ofsted ratings and inspection reports • Increase access to volunteering, training and employment • Increase Corporate Social Responsibility
Working Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve/increase outcomes • Skill sharing and development • Increase community connections • New partnerships formed



We will increase our learning and development opportunities

Business Strength

Investing in People

The people who support our purpose are our strength and without the dedication and commitment from our staff and volunteers we would not be the organisation we are today. Many of our staff have been with us for many years, some decades, and have seen the development and challenges experienced by the charity. During these years, there has been opportunity for staff to develop with a focus upon 'growing our own', however, due to our size career progression can often be limited. Therefore, we are keen to invest further in our staff to build further capacity within their roles and to future proof our purpose, our staff and the organisation.

To ensure our charities vision is achieved we will develop competencies and increase our learning and development opportunities. We are keen to develop leaders across the Trust and will implement a programme to support this. We will also provide a

more structured approach to volunteering, ensuring on going learning opportunities and linking with community skills sharing.

We will ensure equalities, diversity and inclusion are core to our charities values and provide the means to respond to this agenda with a focus upon developing cultural capital. The health and wellbeing of our colleagues is critical. We will undertake a salary and benefits review, alongside annual surveys to assess priorities to support employees where we can. This will focus upon increasing welfare and happiness and ensuring inclusivity.

We can only achieve our purpose with financial health and security

Financial Health

We can only achieve our purpose with financial health and security. Working within the charitable sector comes with its rewards, however we have had various periods of financial difficulty. This has led to the use of reserves and restructuring to see us through those times. The financial position has improved over recent years building up reserves and focusing upon key areas of expenditure that will benefit the charity in the longer-term. Even so, there remains a strong focus upon financial health to respond to the fragile external environment in which we operate; S114 for BCC, wider economic position, increased competition for grant funding. We need to increase our reserves to enable access to more larger opportunities, especially with plans to develop collaborations further.

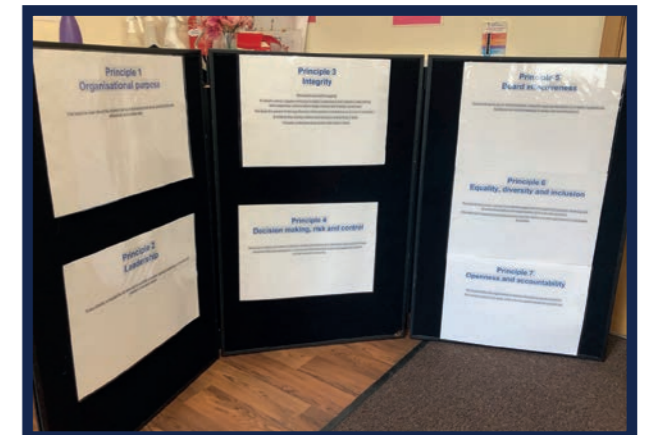
A fundamental part of financial strength is mitigating risks and diversifying income streams. Most of our funding is via the local authority through Public Health and Education delivery. The remaining income is traded, grant funded and a small percentage of donations. To ensure the charity remains viable we need to secure alternative sources of funding: the city farm is a prime example of how we can make this shift to more enterprising model to align with our CARE Farm aspirations. We will also explore traded services and increasing reach of other provision.

Our financial planning will include better use of Corporate Social Responsibility opportunities and we are keen to evidence our Social Return on Investment. This strategic plan, with an updated vision, mission, strategic aims and objectives sets out our purpose. This will ensure we remain on a direct pathway and that we secure and target resources accordingly to meet achieve our goals.

Robust Governance

During 2023-24 we undertook a Governance Review, which aligned with the Charities Code of Governance and the 7 principles. These evidenced areas of strength and actions for implementation to respond to the gaps identified.

Our Trustees are committed and provide a range of experience and skills. We have already improved the





performance framework within the Trust, recording and reporting requirements, and we will continue to implement the actions identified relating to processes, learning and development of Trustees, and schemes of delegation. We will also be recruiting new Trustees to support our strategic delivery and oversight. This will ensure our Board of Trustees continues to adhere to regulatory, compliance and contractual requirements of the Charity Commission, Ofsted and any other legislation.

On-going investment is required to make sure our facilities are fit for purpose

referenced under 'working together'. Our internal and external offer will be developed further which will provide opportunity to access and secure quality standards in the future.

We have diverse estates within our portfolio, and we will ensure these are responsive to service delivery and user needs. On-going investment is required to make sure our facilities are fit for purpose. We will undertake a review of our stock to ensure we plan ahead. Operating within the law are key and our ongoing focus upon embedding a culture of compliance remains a priority. Health and safety, data protection, safeguarding practices and systems continue to be reviewed and actions implemented.

We will also review our digital delivery with plans to develop digital support, internally and externally. We have already embarked on a branding review, and this will be completed in year one. This includes the development of a new website and marketing plan. The use of digital will not only aim to increase access and develop skills; it will also raise our profile, make people more aware of the charity and our impact and act as a portal for new partnerships and development.

Strong Support Systems

Internal support services provide the scaffold to deliver the best front-line services possible. We have been reviewing our requirements to enable this further and a focus is upon modernising the 'back office' provision. This will create more streamlined processes and systems resulting in increased efficiency and effectiveness to enable improved service-user/customer experience. This also links with quality assurance and performance management, recording and reporting to provide further insight



Business Strength

Measuring success By 2027 we will...

Objective	Success Measures
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase employee satisfaction • Increase engagement in learning opportunities • Staff recruitment and retention • Reduce sickness absence • Increase cultural capital
Financial Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income maximisation/funding bids • Succession planning –continuation of opportunities/services • Social Value/Social Return on Investment
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with Charities Commission Code of Governance • Compliance with Ofsted regulated provision
Strong Support Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased working partnerships • Improve digital confidence • Increased efficiency • Compliance confidence

Conclusion



St Paul's Trust has an interesting, innovative and motivating history.

This strategy will form the basis for the next 3 years delivery, with annual reviews to ensure a responsive and agile offer. The plan will improve our position and focus to have the biggest impact possible for the communities we serve.

We have identified resources to enable this happen and we need to secure these to bring key elements of the plan to fruition.

We aim to be here for another 50 years to continue to meet the needs and provide support to citizens of Balsall Heath, Hall Green and beyond.

The plan will have the biggest impact possible for the communities we serve

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