



Ageing Better in Birmingham

Sparkbrook Local Action Plan

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V0.10

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ageing Better in Birmingham is a six-year, £6m programme funded by the Big Lottery Fund to reduce social isolation amongst older people in Birmingham.

BVSC is the accountable body for the project and leads the Ageing Better in Birmingham Partnership. <https://www.ageingbetterinbirmingham.co.uk>

The project aims to facilitate change in the way older people are considered by communities, inspiring and empowering citizens of all ages to participate, organise and influence activities to reduce isolation in later life.

Using a grassroots, asset-based approach, we aim to create a new movement for community action on ageing and isolation.

1.1 Role of Local Action Plans

Four Local Action Plans (LAP) are being developed – Sparkbrook; Tyburn; Older Carers; and the Older LGBT community. The function of these LAPs is to:

- Build on local consultation.
- Address the underlying causes of social isolation for the community in question.
- Tackle the specific causes of isolation that consultation and research have identified for each community.
- Be different to existing activity.
- Test what works best in reducing social isolation for each community.
- Increase community resilience with regard to social isolation.
- Have a strategic and an operational impact on social isolation.
- Result in *outcomes* (rather than specific activities) that are sustainable and long-lasting beyond the Ageing Better programme.

This present version of the Sparkbrook Local Action Plan is **final**. Local Action Plans have been developed by building on initial Ageing Better research, consultation with local residents, organisations and stakeholders in the areas (or thematic groups) the plans refer to, and in small planning groups.

They are published on the Ageing Better website as part of a continuing process of consultation and refinement.

Once they have been agreed, detailed project specifications will be written to enable the activities to be commissioned using a fair, open and transparent procurement process.

A Sparkbrook-specific approach

In the case of Sparkbrook, development of the LAP also included additional consultation and market-shaping with providers to ensure that the delivery model adopted for Sparkbrook was capable of addressing three inter-related issues:

- That Sparkbrook has a rich and diverse ecosystem of groups, organisations and providers but relatively few that have the reach or capacity to cover the entirety of Sparkbrook Ward and all of its communities.
- That widely differing levels of community assets in, and different solutions are required by, different neighbourhoods.
- That transport accessibility and transport links across and between parts of Sparkbrook pose some problems that are quite particular to the Ward.

This present version of the Sparkbrook LAP was arrived at following extensive discussion with providers and stakeholders at an event held on the 3rd July 2017.

2.0 SPARKBROOK WARD: BACKGROUND

The older population of Sparkbrook is identified as a priority in the Ageing Better in Birmingham programme as initial research showed that the risk of individuals becoming isolated in later life are especially high there. In the first phase of Ageing Better in Birmingham, people who live in Sparkbrook are being supported to create more social connections through citizen-led activity to reduce isolation – in particular the development of local Ageing Better Networks.

The second phase of the programme is to look at the underlying causes of isolation in Sparkbrook, to reduce isolation now and to prevent others becoming isolated in the future. To undertake this work, the programme is creating a Local Action Plan with communities in Sparkbrook so that there as well as immediate action there is also a longer-term strategic plan to address the underlying causes of social isolation.

The programme has worked with older adults and volunteers in Sparkbrook to begin the process of co-designing the content of the Local Action Plan. This has been achieved through community focus groups and a community survey.

2.1 Key Causes of Social Isolation in Sparkbrook

Consultation with 71 Sparkbrook residents and groups identified the following key causes of social isolation amongst older people:

- a) Many older people don't feel comfortable using public transport, especially when it is dark. There is a fear of falling over when buses are busy. While Sparkbrook-City Centre public transport links are good, these routes dominate the network and services across Sparkbrook and to adjacent areas are poor. Traffic congestion is also a problem and there is a widespread perception of risks from dangerous driving.
- b) The area is rich in community buildings and venues but many are under-utilised, poorly maintained and require investment in order to maximise use and be more accessible, especially for those who have mobility issues. Community facilities need more sustainable investment in order to fully serve users, and for older adults to feel comfortable using them (e.g. accessible toilets).
- c) Community safety issues and fear of crime are prominent. Many feel that they live in an "unsafe" area where alcohol, drug and gang-related issues mean that many older people are reluctant to leave their houses. There is a feeling of a lack of trust in local policing; issues and concerns are not taken as seriously or tackled as promptly as they should be. There have been instances where older adults have been victims of crime and robberies on the streets.
- d) Language and English being a second language creates a barrier to accessing services and creating social connections. Often, written and digital formats are

not relevant or understandable to those whose communication channels are primarily verbal. Jargon used by services can be confusing and restricting.

- e) Cultural differences between generations and changes in the family unit are contributing to social isolation of older people in Sparkbrook. For example, increasing work and family commitments and younger family members moving away from parents results in some older family members feeling abandoned and unable (or unwilling) to ask for help.
- f) There is a lack of self-confidence, leading to a lack of empowerment and participation. Cultural and social boundaries leave people feeling they are unable to take part in activities that might be on offer.
- g) Services are not always felt to be inclusive and do not always operate – or appeal – across communities or neighbourhoods. There is a widespread perception that some services (and venues) are primarily aimed at specific community groups and are not inclusive.

If Sparkbrook is to become a genuinely age-friendly locality, and if services are to better serve older people, then these issues of reach, sustainability, cross-cultural activities, accessibility (physical, language and cultural accessibility), cohesion and inclusiveness and integration of services/activities need to be seen as linked and addressed together.

This will not be easy for providers, community groups or indeed communities, but in an era of constantly reducing resources and rising demand these issues must be considered as central to what Ageing Better seeks to achieve in Sparkbrook.

2.2 Priorities Identified by Residents

The benefits that Sparkbrook residents most want to see Ageing Better activities deliver for the area are:

- 1) Increased self-confidence and a more positive view of – and feeling towards – the Sparkbrook area.
- 2) More easily accessible information about what is on offer, presented in appropriate formats and languages.
- 3) Greater connectedness across and between the communities of Sparkbrook.
- 4) Improve access to community assets for older people.
- 5) Promote active citizenship and good neighbourliness.
- 6) Promote collaboration and co-operation between organisations, providers and communities to increase reach, access and inclusivity of provision.

3.0 FRAMEWORK FOR 'ADDRESSING OLDER PEOPLE'S SOCIAL ISOLATION IN SPARKBROOK'

Fine-tuning of an earlier draft of this LAP was undertaken following a consultation event with stakeholders, residents and providers on the 3rd July 2017 and the following approach was agreed, based on the letting of a single contract called **Connect Sparkbrook: Addressing Older People's Social Isolation**.

The broad detail of the contract and the outcomes desired from Ageing Better activities in Sparkbrook are described below.

3.1 Overall Approach

- a) A single contract called **Connect Sparkbrook: Addressing Older People's Social Isolation** will be let. It will be Ward-wide in delivery and capable of reaching all parts of the Ward and all communities.
- b) The contract will have two work-streams: (1) Connecting Communities and (2) Promoting Active Citizenship.
 - **Connecting Communities** will focus on **place** and will involve measures to improve local community infrastructure, increase reach and improve accessibility of community-based provision, address transport and access to transport issues, and other place-based improvements to address social isolation amongst older residents;
 - **Promoting Active Citizenship** will focus on **people** and will involve measures to support, encourage and enable active citizenship, raise levels of engagement, involvement and neighbourliness, and other people-based solutions to address social isolation amongst older residents.
- c) It is likely that the contract will require a partnership of providers in order to achieve Ward-wide scale and reach, but a single named 'lead' provider will be required for management and contract compliance purposes.
- d) As a guiding principle, all contract activities and initiatives should:
 - Work with the grain of existing community assets, facilities and capacity.
 - Take an active citizenship approach that encourages community and citizen action that can be sustained for at least five years after the contract has ended.
 - Work closely with the Ageing Better in Birmingham Sparkbrook Hub to maximise impact and remove the possibility of duplication. For example, the Sparkbrook Hub has already done some work to map assets and activity in the Ward and holds data relevant to workstream 1; there is a clear cross-over

between the Hub's community development and outreach work and workstream 2.

And should result in:

- Reduced social isolation amongst older people **now** while also tackling the underlying causes of social isolation to prevent it in the future.
- A positive change in the way older people are considered by communities, and how they consider themselves.
- Citizens of all ages being inspired and empowered to participate, organise and influence activities to reduce isolation in later life.

e) Success of delivery will be judged in three ways:

- **Participation levels:** Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people involved in activities and/or interventions during the contract lifetime and conduct monitoring and/or record-keeping that will demonstrate the degree to which these targets have been met or exceeded. These numbers will be **in addition** to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.
- **Reduced social isolation:** Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people reporting reduced social isolation during the lifetime of the contract and will be required to use the programme's established Common Measurement Framework (CMF) questionnaire to determine whether this target has been met. (These numbers will be **in addition** to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.) The CMF questionnaire has been approved by The Big Lottery Fund and is being used by the national programme evaluator. Providers will be required to complete an adequate number of the questionnaire to ensure robust data-collection towards the national evaluation.
- **Sustainable impact:** A further measure of success and 'legacy' will be sustainable change and impact for five years beyond the lifetime of the contract. In order to enable this to be assessed, providers will be required to state target numbers of older people reporting reduced isolation five years after the end of the contract and a rationale for why this will be so and how it can be measured.

The two work-streams are described in greater detail below.

3.2 Connect Sparkbrook: Addressing Older People's Social Isolation – The Workstreams

(a) Connecting Communities (2-years duration)

This work-stream focuses on **place** and involves measures to improve local community infrastructure, increase reach and improve accessibility of community-based provision, address transport and access to transport issues, and other place-based improvements to address social isolation amongst older residents.

Bidders will be required to develop a delivery plan covering all of the key activities below. In each case they will be required to indicate projected outcomes as follows:

- a) **Participation levels:** Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people involved in activities and/or interventions during the contract lifetime and conduct monitoring and/or record-keeping that will demonstrate the degree to which these targets have been met or exceeded. These numbers will be **in addition** to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.
- b) **Reduced social isolation:** Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people reporting reduced social isolation during the lifetime of the contract and will be required to use the programme's established Common Measurement Framework (CMF) questionnaire to determine whether this target has been met. (These numbers will be **in addition** to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.)
- c) **Sustainable impact:** Providers will be required to state target numbers of older people reporting reduced isolation five years after the end of the contract and a rationale for why this will be so and how it can be measured.

Key activities

- a) Activities and initiatives that enable socially isolated older people to have improved access to and make better use of transport in and across the Ward, including public, private and community-based transport provision. There should be a particular emphasis on both older mobile people and older people with limited mobility.
- b) Activities and initiatives that enable existing voluntary and community sector premises and facilities to become more accessible, more inclusive and serve larger numbers of socially isolated older people. A separate investment fund for the purpose will be managed by BVSC. The provider/s' role in the context of this contract will be to identify organisations where modest investment will enable them to extend reach and to develop a plan to demonstrate how this investment would reduce social isolation, widen services, and improve community access and cross-community working.

- c) Activities and initiatives that enable services to be extended effectively across communities.
- d) Activities and initiatives that reduce obstacles to accessibility, connectedness, participation, engagement and involvement arising from limited English language skills.
- e) Activities and initiatives that will help voluntary and community organisations improve the community assets they have, get better at applying for funding (e.g. especially from funding programmes that are under-subscribed in Birmingham, such as The Big Lottery Fund), and become more sustainable in the services and activities they offer for older people.

Please note:

With regard to the transport and accessibility actions described at (a) above:

- The contract will not fund new mini-buses or drivers or starting new community transport schemes as none of these measures would be sustainable beyond the lifetime of the programme.
- Rather, transport-related outcomes will focus on enabling better use of existing transport provision (whether public, private or community-based), especially where this is under-utilised or has excess capacity.

With regard to the improvements fund outlined above at (b):

- The overall contract will **not** include large amounts of capital spend.
- The maximum amount per applicant organisation will be limited (the precise sum yet to be determined). The applicant will be required to demonstrate how the positive impact of this investment will be sustained for at least five years beyond the end of the programme.
- Decisions regarding appropriate applications will be the responsibility of BVSC. Any physical and/or service improvements or capital purchases will be required to demonstrate a *direct correlation* to reducing social isolation amongst older people in the Sparkbrook Ward, including targets indicating the likely number of older people whose social isolation will be reduced, and how.

In this workstream it will be vital that provider/s work closely with the Ageing Better in Birmingham Sparkbrook Hub to maximise impact and remove the possibility of duplication. For example, the Sparkbrook Hub has already done some work to map assets and activity in the Ward and holds data relevant to workstream 1; there is a

clear cross-over between the Hub's community development and outreach work and workstream 2.

What this workstream must achieve

- 1) Increased self-confidence and a more positive view of – and feeling towards – the Sparkbrook area.
- 2) Greater connectedness across and between the communities of Sparkbrook.
- 3) Improve access to community assets for older people.
- 4) Promote collaboration and co-operation between organisations, providers and communities to increase reach, access and inclusivity of provision.

Sustainability

The key intention is to reduce social isolation amongst older people in all parts of Sparkbrook and all communities. Success of delivery will be assessed by:

(a) Participation levels: Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people involved in activities and/or interventions during the contract lifetime and conduct monitoring and/or record-keeping that will demonstrate the degree to which these targets have been met or exceeded. These numbers will be in addition to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.

(b) Reduced social isolation: Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people reporting reduced social isolation during the lifetime of the contract and will be required to use the programme's established Common Measurement Framework (CMF) questionnaire to determine whether this target has been met. (These numbers will be in addition to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.)

(c) Sustainable impact: Providers will be required to state target numbers of older people reporting reduced isolation five years after the end of the contract and a rationale for why this will be so and how it can be measured.

The projects will require bidders (or groups/partnerships of bidders) to provide cash or in-kind match (or a combination of both) of 20% of the contract value.

(b) Promoting Active Citizenship (2-years duration)

This workstream focuses on people and will involve measures to support, encourage and enable active citizenship, raise levels of engagement, involvement and neighbourliness, and other people-based solutions to address social isolation amongst older residents.

Bidders will be required to develop a delivery plan covering all of the key activities below. In each case they will be required to indicate projected outcomes as follows:

- a) **Participation levels:** Providers will be required to state targets for the number of older people involved in activities and/or interventions during the contract lifetime and conduct monitoring and/or record-keeping that will demonstrate the degree to which these targets have been met or exceeded. These numbers will be **in addition** to any similar targets that already exist for the Sparkbrook Hub.
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- c) **Sustainable impact:** Providers will be required to state target numbers of older people reporting reduced isolation five years after the end of the contract and a rationale for why this will be so and how it can be measured.

Key activities

- a) Activities and initiatives to promote active citizenship approaches that will achieve Ageing Better's objectives of:
 - Improving community safety and reducing fear of crime, especially for older people who are further isolated because of this fear.
 - Increasing cross-cultural and inter-generational activities that are more inclusive, more accessible and help greater numbers of older people overcome social isolation and its causes.
 - Promoting community cohesion and good neighbourliness in ways that will reduce social isolation amongst older people and in all communities and localities of Sparkbrook.
 - Changing attitudes and behaviour so that improvements in community cohesion, neighbourliness and engagement are encouraged, supported and enabled in the longer-term.
 - Creating models of active citizenship that are 'self-perpetuating' and sustainable beyond the lifetime of this contract.
- b) Creating 'pathways' that enable active citizens to communicate effectively with statutory service providers so that older people whose support needs are greater are better and more safely engaged with public services and other provision (e.g. enabling social worker visits *before* a crisis makes assessment necessary).

In this workstream it will be vital that provider/s work closely with the Ageing Better in Birmingham Sparkbrook Hub to maximise impact and remove the possibility of duplication. For example, the Sparkbrook Hub has already done some work to map assets and activity in the Ward and holds data relevant to workstream 1; there is a clear cross-over between the Hub's community development and outreach work and workstream 2.

The projects will require bidders (or groups/partnerships of bidders) to provide cash or in-kind match (or a combination of both) of 20% of the contract value.

What this workstream must achieve

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(c) Sustainable impact: Providers will be required to state target numbers of older people reporting reduced isolation five years after the end of the contract and a rationale for why this will be so and how it can be measured.

-Ends-