



Erdington Task Force Community Manifesto 2022

ERDINGTON COVID19 TASKFORCE

**ERDINGTON
Constituency**
MP Jack Dromey

**TASKFORCE
Facilitation**
Witton Lodge
Community Association



The Erdington (Covid-19) Task Force provided a crucial and rapid response to the Covid-19 crisis. Members repurposed existing and developed new services to support our communities by mobilising hundreds of volunteers and co-ordinating vital food distribution and support activities to thousands of vulnerable residents across the constituency.

On top of direct support, the Task Force created and enhanced 'deep roots of connection' by connecting local residents to the different 'layers of local,' from the street-level mutual aid responses, through to neighbourhood, ward, constituency and city-wide services and provision.

The pandemic highlighted and exacerbated deep-seated inequalities - poverty and economic hardship, health inequalities and digital exclusion to name but a few. Demand for support services is only likely to increase as inflation and other increases create a cost-of-living crisis.

Now, is the moment to refresh our partnerships and create a new settlement, which recognises and celebrates the central role of the refreshed **Erdington Task Force** in the life, prosperity and future of the constituency.

MANIFESTO THEMES

These themes have been developed under 7 key headings, setting out the issues and opportunities, which represent the 'asks' of politicians, candidates, potential partners and stakeholders.

LIVING

Increase in quality housing stock; reduction in the number of HMOs and enhanced scrutiny of those remaining; increase in affordable homes; promoting community safety.

Exempt housing and HMOs: There has been a proliferation of poorly managed exempt housing, with around 1,000 units in Stockland Green, Gravelly Hill and Erdington, providing inadequate support to vulnerable residents and a knock-on impact on the quality of life for the wider community including some of the highest crime and ASB rates in the city.

Private Rented Sector (PRS): The PRS in Erdington is larger than the Local Authority Social Rented Sector, which especially in a time of spiralling household costs means that there needs to be a focus in supporting residents to sustain their Tenancies, and in ensuring high quality landlord services including the regulation of HMOs.

Empty Homes: The number of empty homes in Erdington needs to be reduced to boost supply of high quality social and private rented homes, and a robust strategy put in place to deliver on this.

Opportunity: To work with a local housing partnership (using the community-led housing expertise of The Pioneer Group and Witton Lodge Community Association) including the City Council Housing Authority, Planning and Social Services, alongside Registered Providers including private landlords and "Best in Class" exempt providers to boost supply of homes, stabilise local housing markets and the quality of housing services.

WORKING

Increase in employment opportunities; skills – reskilling and upskilling; support local businesses.

The North Birmingham Economic Recovery (NB:ER) Task Force was convened in the Summer of 2020, in response to the economic fallout from Covid-19, which exposed and amplified inequalities. A unique partnership, it is focused on collaborative action with a particular emphasis on creating effective routes into skills training and sustainable jobs for those facing barriers and/or exclusion.

There is an opportunity to capitalise and utilise large Development/Employment Parks, such as the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, the Peddimore Development and HS2, as a catalyst for the economic recovery of North Birmingham. Both for the residents and local businesses, ensuring that local communities reap the benefits of such opportunities.

Opportunity: To raise the profile, strengthen and financially support the NB:ER Taskforce which, as a collaborative partnership, provides insight, strategic direction and visibility of opportunities. Specifically, helping to secure funding and resources that enhances community infrastructure in local neighbourhoods, deepening engagement and creating progression pathways, enabling residents to gain new skills, confidence and jobs.

SUPPORTING

Advice – financial, benefits, housing; cost of living – energy, food

Families in Erdington have been, and continue to be, hit hard as we emerge from the pandemic. Rising food and energy costs mean that families are pushed further into financial hardship, often facing stark choices between food and fuel, relying even more heavily on Foodbanks and crisis support. Both at a local and a national level, urgent action is needed now, providing financial help for struggling families to mitigate some of the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

Opportunity: To work with us as local partners to develop a joined-up Integrated Advice Offer based on the recent Birmingham Advice Strategy which will put in place a holistic package of advice and support.

GROWING

Grow up and grow old... increase in life-opportunities, families, education, nurseries.

Families, vulnerable children and those with SEND benefit most from early years education and childcare and have been disproportionately affected by the disruption. Early years education and childcare provides vital support for families. In addition to childcare, which is essential for parents/carers to work or study, it provides early education to support children's development and school readiness.

The Youth Sector has been decimated over recent years. It plays a vital role in a broader public-health approach to reducing levels of youth violence, providing support for the surge in young people's mental health challenges and combating educational underachievement and youth unemployment.

Opportunity: As a minimum, to maintain the current number of Early Years Education and Childcare places available. To work with local organisations and wider stakeholders to put in place a long-term plan to increase the variety, number and quality of Early Years provision across the Constituency to effectively meet the needs of children and families

Secure existing youth provision in Erdington and work with local partners to expand the capacity of providers, so that all young people can benefit from long-term, local, relational, open access youthwork. To give particular attention to addressing the mental health challenges being faced at Primary but particularly Secondary School, with a long-term sustainable plan of action.

INVESTING

Town Centre, business infrastructure, environmental and transport infrastructure.

Community Organisations act as local economic multipliers in the areas in which they operate. They ensure the wealth they generate is retained and distributed in their neighbourhoods by employing local people in good quality jobs, using local supply chains, and providing training opportunities so that local people can become economically active.

Erdington Task Force partners, working in partnership with the City Council, the Combined Authority and other stakeholders, have developed ambitious plans to rejuvenate the Erdington Town Centre. Our aim is to build a more inclusive and resilient local economy, re-establishing the High Street as the accessible beating heart of the community with a strong sense of place and pride

Opportunity: To develop a refreshed Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) Application to facilitate a transformation of Erdington High Street into a thriving Town Centre. Providing new start-up business incubation space by refurbishing the former swimming baths, new housing, cultural, leisure and social activities, as well as improved urban realm and physical and social connectivity within the area.

CELEBRATING

The richness, diversity and talents of our whole community

Despite the many challenges the people of Erdington face, it is also an area of rich heritage and a growing arts scene. The cultural offer over the last two years has allowed people to be connected, receive bespoke support and be part of high-quality events that celebrate the best of our locality.

Our aim is to continue to cultivate the spirit of Erdington by supporting communities across the constituency to come together and share all that is great about the people and place.

Opportunity: To bring resources and capacity into wards and neighbourhoods, to bring people together through cultural activity and foster cohesion and pride via public events. And to create permanent memorials and special events in recognition of the loss during the Covid pandemic and to support with grieving as a community.

A COLLECTIVE VOICE

The Erdington Task Force is evolving to focus on life beyond the pandemic. It will continue as an inclusive group, working collectively and collaboratively to create meaningful impact.

Building on strong foundations, we develop new community-led approaches to neighbourhood working that turns Community Spirit into Community Power, where local communities and groups are actively shaping and taking decisions that affect all aspects of their lives.

Opportunity: The Task Force came together with the determination that no-one should be left behind through the bleakest days of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that together we are stronger. It is this strong sense of purpose that will guide the work of the Task Force into the future, deepening connections with our communities and forging relationships with stakeholders to transform our neighbourhoods and improve lives.

COME AND JOIN US!

Further Information:

Although any member of the Erdington Task Force can be contacted for further information, to ensure that your enquiry is directed to the appropriate person(s), please contact:

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