

Hello, I'm Chris Naylor. I'm the chief executive of Birmingham City Council.

What are your ambitions for Birmingham City Council and it's relationship with the City?

I suppose without wanting to kind of overplay it, I think the ambition of the city is to kind of be one of the best on earth really. So none of this being the second city anymore; let's just be a great place to live, grow, and thrive. Let me just give you an example. The GDP growth of Birmingham at the moment is just over 4% per annum; so that's twice the rate of London, almost four times the rate of the UK as a whole. And that sort of economic dynamism is just something that we can make so much of, and it can be a huge kind of fiscal bonus and boost to the council's coffers, but also I think is a kind of dynamism that enables all parts of Birmingham to thrive.

What we need to do in the next couple of years is clear, right? We've got to deal with the pandemic. We've got to deal with the aftermath of the pandemic, the financial consequences, the economic and social consequences, but it's also about some really hopeful and aspirational things that we've got coming down the tracks as well. Like the Commonwealth Games, a real opportunity for us in two years' time to put on a great show for people of the West Midlands, for Birmingham residents, but for the whole world to see what we see on a day-to-day basis, which is how great this place is and its potential for the future.

What I think that means really in terms of recruitment at the moment is I'm inviting people to be a part of this movement for change inside the City Council, and the change we want to see in the city as a whole. And I think there are sort of broadly four elements to that, sort of four kind of key questions that we are permanently asking ourselves about how we can do them better. So the first is how can we increase the pace and scale of growth in Birmingham, and do so in a way that is environmentally sustainable? Be a beacon for good, green growth in the future, but also have growth that benefits as many people as possible, not just sort of shiny new offices in the centre of the city, but growth that generally ripples out to those who need it the most. So, that's question number one.

Second ... these things all connect together, right? Second though is how do we genuinely reform what we do as a council so that we move away from dealing with the consequences of people falling into crisis and instead work with them much earlier on as they start to experience difficulties and challenges. So we support them to overcome the root cause of the difficulties that they face. And the extent to which those root causes are founded in poverty and in low incomes, how do we make sure that we're connecting the people who need to benefit from the growth from the city the most to those opportunities?

Third then, all of this requires us to have an outstanding relationship of trust with the citizens that we are here to serve. Because, in a sense, we're asking people to think about their lives, think about this place that they live in, and how they can make the most out of this place. In some cases, we're asking people to change their behaviour. If we're going to be the kind of the green capital of the UK, then that is going to require people to change their lifestyle and their habits and how they commute and how they work and those sorts of things. And that's going to require them to kind of trust and understand where the City Council is coming from when we make the changes to the roads or the pavements in the local area. They need to think, I feel, that we have their best interests at heart and that we're on their side.

And then finally, if we're going to do good growth, if they're going to reform what we do so we tackle root causes, if we're going to redefine our relationship with people and have that founded on trust, then what does that mean for this organisation? What kind of organisation is built from first principles to do those sorts of things? I think that the finance community are all over this. If we're going to do good

growth, that means the council needs to be an investor in its own right, and we need to understand what that means for an organisation to invest in the future of a place.

If we're going to reform what we do so that we are genuinely focusing on tackling root causes, then that does mean that we need to understand the value both kind of ethically and morally, but also financially of what we do and the impact of our work. So that's not just about bog-standard bookkeeping, that is about understanding value and impact. If we're going to build a new relationship of trust with people, then how we become a kind of beacon for transparency, especially financial transparency, that is a mission for the finance community and has finance at its heart.

And then finally, if we are going to be this kind of new kind of organisation, one that is built for the 21st century rather than one that's kind of ... was built in the 20th century, now struggling to adapt to this new normal, then what does that mean in terms of how we model what we do in our behaviours and in our practises? And these are questions that I'm inviting the whole organisation to think through. This isn't just a job; we're going to change the world in Birmingham and I want you to be a part of that.

What are the values important to you that employees should demonstrate?

I want people to be kind of like ... I want them to be ambitious for this place, right? If you want just a job as an accountant, then there's loads of jobs. If you're going to come and work for Birmingham City Council, it's because we want to change this place for the better, forever, because that's going to benefit the people of Birmingham and the West Midlands. And if that's what you're about, then come and work for Birmingham City Council because that's what we're trying to do.

We're wanting to put a man or a woman on the moon. You know what I mean? What's the local government equivalent of that? And we want to change people's lives for the better. We've got nearly 11,000 people for Birmingham City Council. Every single day, if every single one of us did something good to change someone's life for the better, that is a lot of good things that can happen day in day out. And they're the values that I want people to bring to this job.

What message would you give to candidates considering a move to Birmingham City Council?

What I would say if you're considering coming to work for us is we're going to work really hard, but we're going to do some great stuff and you're going to ... What I really hope is that in 15, 20 years' time, you're going to look back and say, "That was the best time of my professional career; that we did some amazing things and I learnt a lot, and I've then gone on to do what I want to do, knowing that I've played a part in changing other people's lives for the better."