

# A shared goal

Sparkbrook Community and Health Centre is a £12 million development which brings together diverse NHS healthcare provision, including three GP practices, council services and community facilities under one roof – making it a vital community hub at the very heart of the area it serves.



The 4,837 sqm site is located at a prominent crossroads in Birmingham and serves to regenerate health and community services in the area through a landmark joint health and council building – the first of its kind in the city – and a new church that replaces the former Victorian Christ Church damaged following a tornado in 2005.



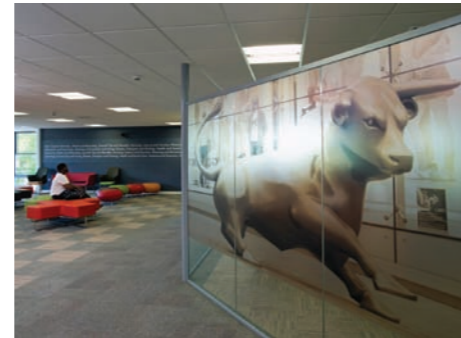


## The challenge

Sparkbrook is a bustling and dense urban area of Birmingham, with a **large population requiring essential health and community services** to meet their diverse needs. The area offered a wide range of well-loved but disparate services, including a health centre and community centre at the corner of Farm Park, where the community had developed a 'Peace Garden' to use and maintain.

The facilities were tired and outdated, so when the church at the opposite side of the crossroads was damaged in a tornado in 2005, an opportunity arose to rejuvenate primary care facilities and community services in the area, **creating one dedicated, coherent and integrated site.**

To achieve this would involve **merging several funding streams** and mastering a complex and **phased site assembly** so that **health and community services could remain operational throughout.** It would also be essential for the community to feel a sense of ownership and be engaged in the project from the start.



Healthcare specialists, One Creative Environments Ltd, designed the project in close consultation with the local population and user groups to ensure a spirit of shared ownership. This has led to the recreation of a 'Peace Garden' that previously sat in the grounds of the old Farm Road site. The scheme is also home to a number of community arts pieces, including an innovative water wall and striking graphics.



**“ Cllr Ian Ward, Deputy Leader at Birmingham City Council:**  
*This project is a vital element to the wider regeneration of Sparkbrook and is an excellent example of our commitment to a joint working approach with our partners, by delivering a best practice model for how different parts of the public sector can provide integrated services for the citizens of Birmingham. It will help improve people's lives and cut out duplication of services, saving the taxpayer money in the process. ”*



## The solution

Sparkbrook Community and Health Centre is the result of successful partnership between five key stakeholders - Heart of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust (HoBtPCT), Birmingham City Council, The Diocese of Birmingham, local LIFTCo Birmingham and Solihull LIFT (BaS LIFT) and private sector partner Prime plc.

By utilising the flexibility in the LIFT model, the five partners were able to work together to finance the project in a way that would suit their individual and joint needs. Birmingham City Council purchased its own share of the building, enabling both the NHS and Council to have equal ownership and aid the seamless integration of this landmark facility by removing traditional property and funding barriers.

Welcoming the church into the scheme, the partners worked with The Diocese of Birmingham to develop the new community and health centre on the site of the old church, with the new church to be built opposite. Careful phasing ensured minimum disruption and allowed the existing Family Centre to remain operational throughout.



**“ Dr Ann Pursey, Chief Executive of BaS LIFT Co:**  
*Through LIFT we have been able to help the primary care trust and Birmingham City Council create a new breed of community and health centre. The development at Sparkbrook demonstrates how a wide range of services can be integrated into one scheme that supports both people's health and social needs. ”*



Fronting Farm Road and Sampson Road, the 400 sqm church forms the final part of the community hub creating a cohesive development and a unified design. Part of a new generation of community facilities, it offers space to worship, rooms for general community use and a café.



# Prime comment

“ Ewan Forsyth, Development Director for Prime (UK) Developments Ltd

*The success of this mixed ownership model demonstrates how our property and funding expertise, together with a shared vision and multi-stakeholder approach, has delivered a scheme that provides improved access to health, cultural and welfare services.* ”

## Project at a glance...

### Sparkbrook Community and Health Centre

**Size:**  
4,837 sqm

**Value:**  
£12 million

#### Services/facilities:

- Three GP practices
- Community dental services
- Physiotherapy
- Community library
- Health Exchange services to support a healthy lifestyle
- Customer Service Centre providing benefits advice, housing and homeless services
- Six offices for start-up social enterprises or businesses
- Community space for hire
- Education and training facilities
- Church and community café



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## The benefits

Sparkbrook’s new community and health centre offers the local community access to an integrated and enhanced range of services in a high quality, user friendly and modern facility. One of the most significant changes has been the amalgamation of Birmingham City Council’s local neighbourhood advice and information centres to deliver a comprehensive service for benefits and homeless advice - all under one roof.

In addition, the centre offers facilities for start-up social enterprises, providing practical support for small local businesses. Community space has also been incorporated to accommodate large family and social events, encouraging maximum engagement with the building and a sense of ownership.

Providing a platform for holistic community and health services, the centre encourages ambitious ways of working. Presenting an ideal environment to encourage cross-referral between services and provide fully integrated solutions for patients and users, Sparkbrook Community and Health Centre is changing the welfare and health conventions of the area and setting a benchmark for future programmes in the city.

