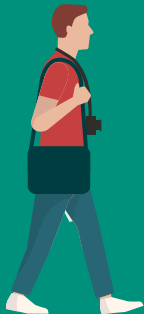




BIG PLANS FOR A GREAT PLACE

...FOR THE PEOPLE OF SANDWELL

THE SANDWELL PLAN
2020 – 2025





BIG PLANS FOR A GREAT PLACE... FOR THE PEOPLE OF SANDWELL



FOREWORD BY THE LEADER OF SANDWELL COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR YVONNE DAVIES AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DAVID STEVENS

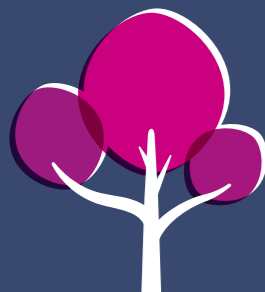
Sandwell will be a fairer, more optimistic and resilient place in future if we all work together and take control of our destiny. Big Plans for a Great Place sets out our ambitious plan to deliver Vision 2030, creating a healthier, more successful future for the people of Sandwell – working as one council and one team with our residents, businesses and partners.

**Councillor
Yvonne Davies**

Leader of the Council

**Chief Executive
David Stevens**

Sandwell Council



We want to create opportunities to put Sandwell on the map, creating a borough where people are proud of their local area, have better paid jobs and opportunities, supported by increased skills for our workforce and more opportunities for young people.

Our 2020 State of the Borough report tells us that Sandwell offers fantastic investment opportunities and a great array of assets to exploit. Big Plans for a Great Place details how we are going to deliver and capitalise on opportunities over

the next five years, including the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre, new housing developments and using new infrastructure such as the West Midlands Metro extension and the Midland Metropolitan Hospital as catalysts for wider regeneration.

We're also developing an exciting new Inclusive Economy Deal which uses collaborative ways of working with residents, businesses, the voluntary and community sectors to commit to our shared priorities. Building community wealth is at the heart of this – growing wealth in

Sandwell, for Sandwell – creating and sharing growth.

We are committed to co-designing solutions together. We promise to listen, learn and respond to our communities and engage them in our decision-making so that everyone is a part of making our plans a success. We promise to be open and transparent in everything we do.

Join us in making these exciting plans a reality...

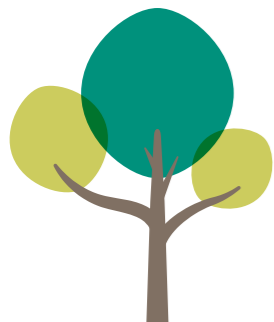




OUR BOROUGH

Sandwell is a metropolitan borough in the Black Country made up of six towns: Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich. Located in the West Midlands, Sandwell borders Birmingham, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Sandwell is divided into 24 wards and is represented by 72 ward councillors.

Our comprehensive **State of the Borough** report sets out the challenges and opportunities facing Sandwell.



PEOPLE

With 327,378 residents, Sandwell has the third largest population in the West Midlands Combined Authority area and is the 34th biggest local authority in Great Britain. It is predicted to grow faster than the West Midlands and the national average.

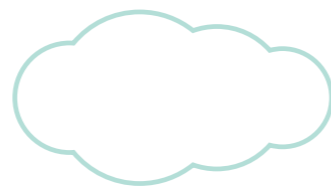
We have a young and diverse population with more than 40% of residents under the age of 30, compared to around 30% across the UK. Almost 40% of residents are from an ethnic minority, making us more diverse than the regional and UK average of 18.8% and 14% respectively.

However, Sandwell performs below the national average on many indicators relating to skills and education across people's lives. A third of our children are not ready for school and, although children make progress when they are in school, this early underachievement has an impact throughout their school lives where attainment at both KS2 and KS4 are below the national average.

As adults, we have a high proportion of low skills and qualifications which translates into lower earnings and in-work poverty.

We want every child to have a successful life but the impact of poverty on children is significant in terms of their life chances. Healthy life expectancy of our older people is also lower than nationally.





BUSINESS

We have many growing and productive businesses and a higher than average proportion of our businesses are small. Sandwell has 136,000 jobs and 8,775 businesses but residents are not always able to take up those opportunities. We are incredibly proud of being the supply chain centre of the UK but this great strength also potentially exposes us to risks in particular sectors. Our businesses need a better skilled workforce to grow and they need support to accelerate innovation. We also have a limited amount of quality land for businesses to expand and grow in the borough's industrial core.

PLACE

Sandwell is made up of six historic boroughs covering a patchwork of towns and townships, urban villages and localities that developed with industrialisation. People very much identify with their local community. Sandwell is characterised by widespread deprivation with pockets of prosperity, for instance in Wednesbury and Smethwick. The borough is the 12th most deprived English local authority out of a total of 317.

OPPORTUNITIES

Although Sandwell has many challenges, we also have a significant number of opportunities that we aim to build on over the next five years, including the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital, the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre which will host the swimming and diving events for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the extension to the West Midlands Metro line, HS2, many planned new homes, being part of the 5G testbed and bidding for major funding for three of our towns through the Stronger Towns Fund. This plan and our Inclusive Economy Deal will be focusing on the challenges for people, place and business and the opportunities we have to make a difference.





OUR TOWNS



OLDBURY

The population of Oldbury has grown by 3.9% since 2012. This is the same as the regional average and similar to the UK average, but slightly slower than the borough as a whole. Of the six towns, it is mid-rank in terms of population density, close to the borough average. It remains an industrial centre with

suburban neighbourhoods in the south. It includes the administrative centre of Sandwell. Oldbury has the highest number of jobs (38,600 jobs) and has experienced the highest job growth of all the towns over the past five years with 4,800 new jobs.

DID YOU KNOW?

Oldbury began as an Iron Age settlement and hill fort on the south-eastern slopes of the Rowley Hills, until its move to the current site of the town centre in the 15th century to take advantage of the improved road built between Birmingham, Dudley and Wolverhampton.

ROWLEY REGIS

Rowley Regis includes Rowley Village and settlements ringing the Rowley Hills including the towns of Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Old Hill. Its population is growing slowly at 1.4% – far below the borough, regional and UK averages. It has an older age profile than the West Midlands and UK and has the highest

proportion of over 65-year-olds and lowest proportion of under 19-year-olds of all the towns. Job growth in Rowley Regis has been modest at around 5%, bringing job numbers to 12,225. Rowley Regis has the lowest jobs density of the towns at 917 jobs per square kilometre.

DID YOU KNOW?

The highest point of the Black Country is Turners Hill, part of the Rowley Hills, now the location of digital radio transmission aerials. During WW2 it was the site of a heavy anti-aircraft battery protecting the Black Country and Birmingham from German air attack.



SMETHWICK

Smethwick was influenced by heavy post-war population loss after housing clearance in places like Windmill Lane, the town has grown by 7.5% since 2012, far outstripping the borough, regional and national average. It is the most densely populated town in Sandwell. It has a strong travel to work and retail relationship to Birmingham which is adjacent. It is ethnically highly diverse. Smethwick has the

youngest population with the highest proportion of young people aged 25 to 34 (22.7%) and lowest proportion of over 65-year-olds (10.7%), making it younger than the region and UK. With 19,900 jobs, employment growth in Smethwick has been lower than average at 4.5%, although it has the highest jobs density of the towns.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many of the Birmingham ironmasters moved to Smethwick and built grand houses with extensive gardens to escape the growing pollution of the city. Few survived the 19th century industrial growth, one noted exception being Lightwoods House and Park, now splendidly restored by the council.

TIPTON

Tipton is the second smallest town by population. It has grown by 4.4% since 2012, slightly under the borough average but higher than the West Midlands and UK. Tipton is the smallest town by area and has a relatively high population density. New build housing has been significant over the past 25 years. Demographically, Tipton is young

with a higher than average proportion of young residents and lower than average proportion of older residents. Employment growth in Tipton has been lower than the average at 5.1%, bringing the number of jobs to 11,950. Since 2013, there are an additional 255 businesses.

DID YOU KNOW?

Being about as far from the sea as anywhere in the UK (it's about 70 miles to the nearest coast) it is perhaps remarkable that the world's first iron ocean-going steamship was built in Tipton. This was the *Aaron Manby*, designed by Aaron Manby, owner of the Horseley Ironworks, in 1822.



OUR TOWNS



WEDNESBURY

Wednesbury is the smallest town and is growing slower than the regional and national average at 3%. Its population is slightly older than the Sandwell average, although it is still younger than the West Midlands and UK overall.

Despite being the smallest town by population, Wednesbury has a higher number of jobs than Rowley Regis and Tipton at 16,450. There has been very low employment growth of 2.7%, and business growth of 30.6% is slightly lower than the borough average.

DID YOU KNOW?

The earliest evidence for coal mining in the Black Country comes from Wednesbury, showing the industry was well-established in the town by the early 1300s. Extensive iron and pottery industries developed through the 1400s and 1500s, with Wednesbury's ceramic production so prolific the term 'Wedgework' ware came to be applied to a specific type of pottery produced not only in Wednesbury but across the Black Country.

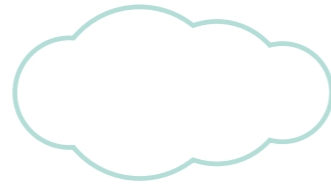
WEST BROMWICH

West Bromwich is the largest town by population size by area, giving it the lowest population density. It includes the main commercial and retail centre of Sandwell. Its housing markets include older terraced housing in the town centre, extensive council-built neighbourhoods to the north and the more affluent

suburban Great Barr area. It has the second oldest age profile with 16.6% of its population aged over 65. It has the second highest number of jobs at 36,400 and has experienced 6% employment growth since 2012. Its 2,430 businesses have experienced similar growth.

DID YOU KNOW?

West Bromwich was originally a scattered series of hamlets (known locally as 'ends') where pottery and metal working – nails, springs, locks and buckles and latterly guns – developed as cottage industries, exploiting the coal clay and ironstone found just beneath the surface.



SANDWELL VISION 2030

Sandwell has a clear vision for what the borough should look and feel like by 2030: **In 2030, Sandwell is a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.**

It's where we call home and where we're proud to belong - where we choose to bring up our families, where we feel safe and cared for, enjoying good health, rewarding work, feeling connected and valued in our neighbourhoods and communities, confident in the future, and benefiting fully from a revitalised West Midlands.

This plan sets out what the council will do to deliver Vision 2030 and Sandwell's 10 ambitions over the next five years. It is not intended to include an exhaustive list of all the functions of the council but sets out our priorities over the next five years.

Our Vision and everything we do is underpinned by our values - **Trust, Unity and Progress.**



Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.



Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.



Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy.



Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.



Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.



We have excellent and affordable public transport that connects us to all local centres and to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.



We now have many new homes to meet a full range of housing needs in attractive neighbourhoods and close to key transport routes.



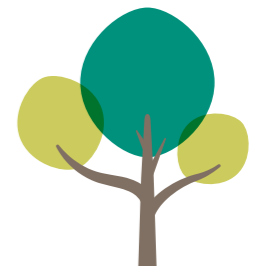
Our distinctive towns and neighbourhoods are successful centres of community life, leisure and entertainment where people increasingly choose to bring up their families.

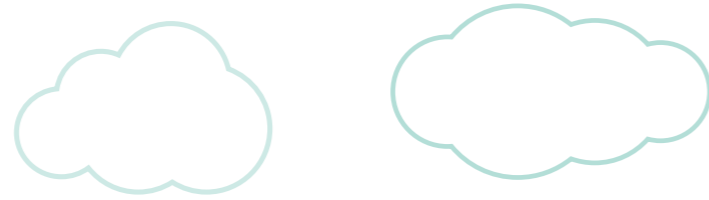


Sandwell has become a location of choice for industries of the future where the local economy and high performing companies continue to grow.



Sandwell now has a national reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focused on what really matters in people's lives and communities.





THE PLAN

Our engagement with local people and partners in developing Vision 2030 has been invaluable in helping the council shape this five year business plan – Big plans for a Great Place. The plan is not intended to provide an exhaustive list of everything we do as a council but sets out those outcomes that are strategically important for delivering Vision 2030.

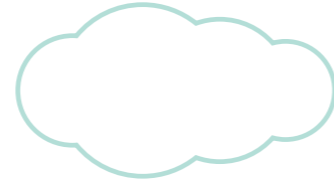
Big plans for a Great Place sets out six strategic outcomes. This is supported by our vision for one team, one council to create a modern efficient council to deliver this exciting agenda. This plan will provide the framework for delivery plans.

THE SIX OUTCOMES:

- The best start in life for children and young people
- People live well and age well
- Strong, resilient communities
- Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
- A strong and Inclusive Economy
- A connected and accessible Sandwell

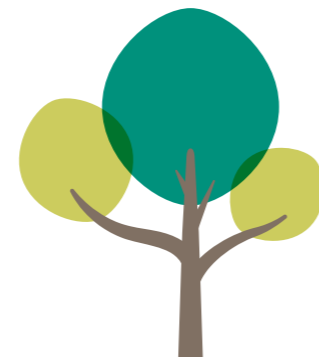
Realising our vision in Big Plans for a Great Place is a huge undertaking and will mean breaking the cycle of poverty, improving support and outcomes in a child's early years, increasing skills and education attainment, reducing health inequalities, creating an environment for more inclusive economic growth and ensuring all residents are able of benefiting from new opportunities.





OUR PARTNERSHIPS

One of our great strengths in Sandwell is our partnerships. We work with our partners to ensure our vulnerable residents are safe, to make sure our services are meeting people's needs and to look at how our services can be improved. The only way we can deliver our Vision for Sandwell is by everyone working together.



REGIONAL LEVEL

Sandwell plays a large part on the regional stage as one of seven constituent members of the **West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)**.

The WMCA is made up of 18 local authorities and three Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). It aims to drive economic prosperity across the region and is one of our key partners for bringing forward opportunities both in Sandwell and for Sandwell people across the West Midlands.

At the Black Country level, we work in close partnership with the **Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP)**. The BCLEP is a joint private and public sector body created to drive forward economic development in the Black Country. It is focused on increasing employment and improving the levels of business and enterprise.

The council is working hand in glove with both the WMCA, BCLEP and our business partners to shape Sandwell and deliver the key regeneration priorities contained within this plan.

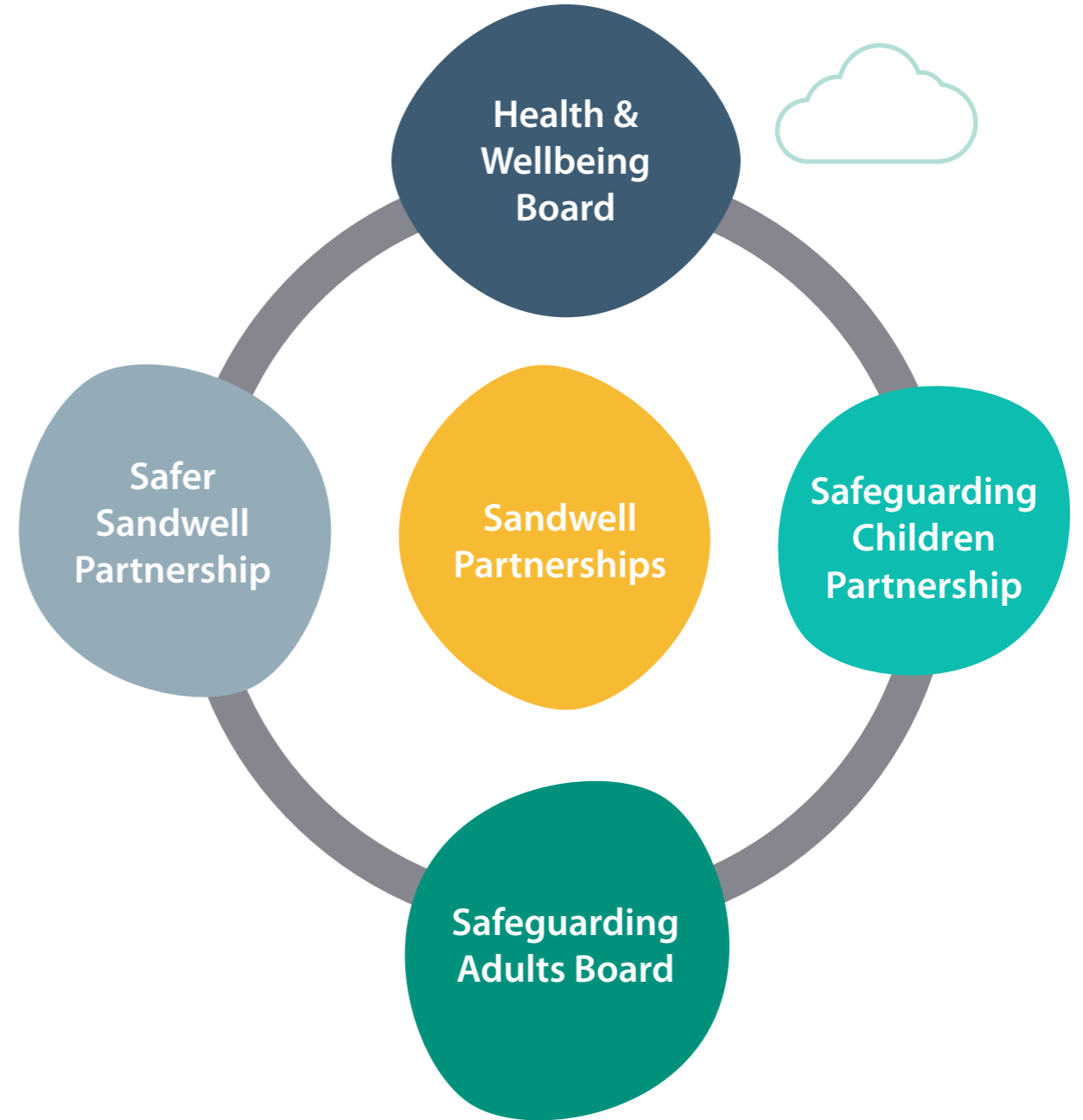
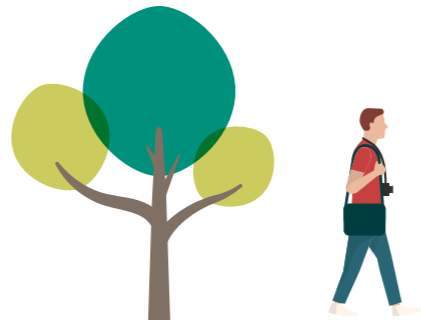
LOCAL LEVEL

Amongst a multitude of hard-working partnerships at the local level, we have four statutory partnerships that form the foundation of our collaborative working:

- Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board
- Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership
- Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board
- Safer Sandwell Partnership

VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Sandwell is immensely proud of its thriving local voluntary and community sector, who are key to the delivery our vision for the borough. Active and visible voluntary and community groups play a crucial role in building resilience in Sandwell and we will continue our long-standing history of working collaboratively.

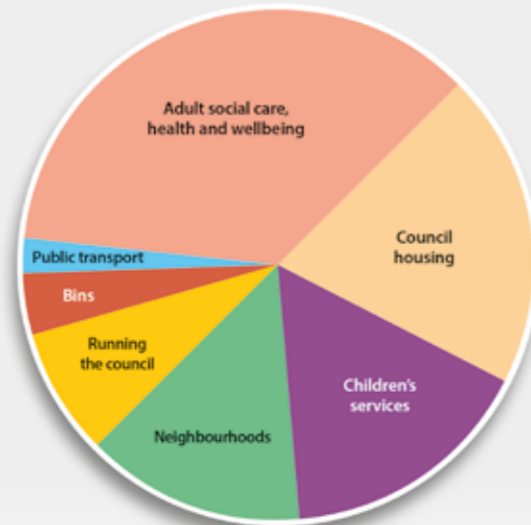


Where the council's money comes from



- Council housing rents **£118 million**
- Council tax **£104 million**
- Business rates **£99 million**
- Government business rates top up **£41 million**

What the council spends its money on



- Adult social care, health and wellbeing **£238 million**
- Council housing **£134 million**
- Children's services **£102 million**
- Neighbourhoods* **£90 million**
- Running the council and its services **£53 million**
- Bin collections, street cleaning and the tip **£27 million**
- Public transport **£13 million**

* Neighbourhoods includes roads, parks, museums, libraries, regeneration and community safety

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The diagram shows where the council's money comes from and where it is currently spent. We also distribute £349 million of government money to schools and academies to fund children's education. For the last 10 years, we have met the financial challenges of austerity and we will continue to manage our resources within the context of uncertain funding in the future.

To make this plan a reality we shall be aligning our resources to deliver on our priorities. We cannot do this alone, so we will make sure that we are working in tandem with our

partners to co-ordinate spending where possible. We will maximise our assets and build community wealth, spending more of the council's money with local businesses. This supports the local economy, it means more jobs and apprenticeships for local people – meaning more people earning, better spending power and more money going back into the economy. We want to hear from our residents when planning our spending and so we will be developing plans for involving the public in budget decision making.



OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES



THE BEST START IN LIFE
FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE



PEOPLE LIVE
WELL AND
AGE WELL



STRONG
RESILIENT
COMMUNITIES



QUALITY HOMES
IN THRIVING
NEIGHBOURHOODS



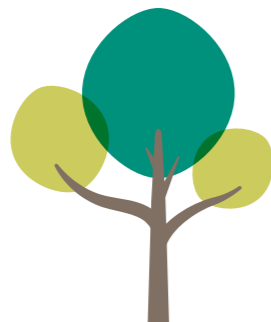
A STRONG AND
INCLUSIVE ECONOMY



A CONNECTED
AND ACCESSIBLE
SANDWELL

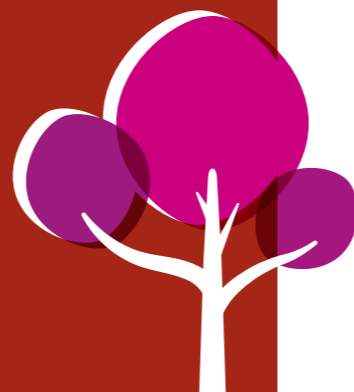


ONE TEAM,
ONE COUNCIL





THE BEST START IN LIFE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



FIRST 1000 DAYS

The start of pregnancy to a child's second birthday provides the foundation for how children develop, grow and learn and their future life chances. It is also an important time for parents as they are particularly receptive to learning and making changes.

We know that compared to the rest of England, Sandwell has more births per 1,000 women, 37.3% of which are born to women who are not UK nationals.

We also know that more babies weigh less when born and that stillbirths and neonatal mortality levels are higher. High levels of poverty can impact nutrition which in turn affects brain development and the ability to do well in school and earn a good living. Our high number of children involved with social care services because of neglect is also most prevalent in the early years.

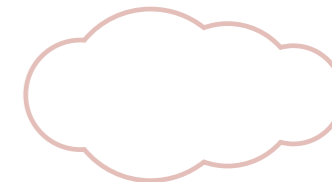
We want to make sure that Sandwell's children have the best possible start in life; the way that children are nourished and cared for in the early years, and particularly during the first 1,000 days of life, will support them in achieving a healthy and prosperous future.

The council cannot make a difference to these challenges on its own.

So, we will bring together all partners to transform services by establishing an Early Years Transformation Academy. We'll use this to work as one support system for families, weaving services together and increasing investment in the early years.

Working with maternity and midwifery services, GPs, health visitors, early years settings, children's centres, community organisations and specialist provision such as social care and inclusion services, we will create new pathways for support that meet the needs of our residents and fill in the gaps in services for children aged 12-24 months.

We will ensure that culturally sensitive and accessible service hubs are in all six of our towns, and that community-led support is available to families to help them understand how to best care for themselves and their unborn and very young children.



BEING READY FOR SCHOOL

We know that supporting families so their children are ready for the next stage in life is important. Children being ready for school, schools being ready for children and families and communities being able to support that readiness are vital.

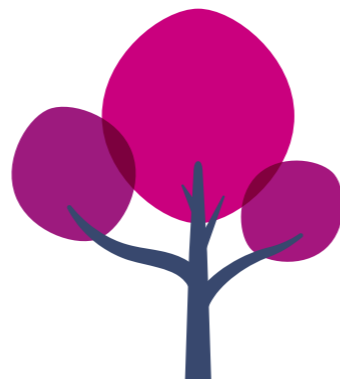
We know that the uptake of early learning and childcare provision is good in Sandwell, but the percentage of children achieving good outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is significantly below the England average.

Sandwell's children have poor language and communication skills because the percentage of children leaving the reception year with the communication, language and literacy skills they need to thrive is only 66.7% and Sandwell is ranked 144 out of 152 local authorities. We want to achieve the national target of 86% and so we will establish programmes that specifically address language development, in partnership with other

Black Country local authorities and this will include supporting improvements in home learning environments.

We will promote the importance of communication and language to parents, and we will provide earlier support to children who need it. We will ensure that professionals work together, across agencies, to develop their expertise in early childhood matters by delivering a multi-agency workforce development plan. We will seek additional support for social mobility projects that address early language, with an intention to increase aspiration and ability.

We also want parents to have great choices for their children's education in Sandwell – so we will provide enough good school places that offer families choice and confidence that their children can experience high quality education and achieve good outcomes.



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES THAT NEED MORE SUPPORT

We want to make sure that vulnerable children in our community receive the right support to enable them to thrive and have successful adult lives.

We will achieve this by being a council that understands the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma, with a workforce that provides services with compassion and understanding. We care about the children in our care and we will be a good Corporate Parent. We'll ensure that those children are fully a part of our 'family', receiving the support and opportunities that any parent would give their child.





PEOPLE LIVE WELL AND AGE WELL



HEALTHY LIVES

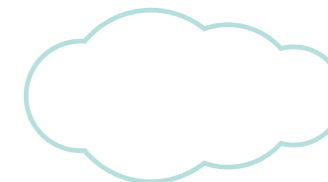
Having good health is essential to people feeling happy and living fulfilled lives.

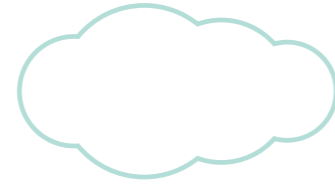
People are living longer but are often in poor health as they get older. Men experience a healthy life expectancy of 57.1 years and women 59 years. For homeless people, the average life expectancy is 47. We want people to live well for longer.

Research shows that spending time with other people is a great way to improve our health. Being

active, making healthy eating choices and having enough food are just as important. We want to create lots more community-based opportunities with local people and we will commission a range of public health services that make the most of Sandwell's assets (including leisure centres, libraries, parks, community centres, youth centres, museums, canals and Sandwell Valley). We look forward to delivering the Sandwell Aquatics Centre which will provide a state-of-the-art, world class, leisure centre for the people of Sandwell,

attracting people from the region and beyond. A healthy life can be more difficult to achieve for people in significant deprivation or experiencing crisis in their lives. We will support people through strong information, advice and guidance and our Local Welfare Provision. We will continue to support access to food through food banks and opportunities for children in school holidays.





CHOICE AND INDEPENDENCE

It is vital that people with care and support needs are enabled to make choices about the life they live. Being able to choose where you live, how you are supported, if you work or attend college and how you spend your free time are basic decisions that many people with care and support needs find it difficult to make without support.

For people who live on their own, the visit of a care worker can sometimes be the only person they see each day. Despite technology making conversation easier than ever, people with

care and support needs are often isolated and lonely within their communities.

We will ensure that the wellbeing of individuals is at the centre of all everything we do. This includes considering the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals when either receiving or providing care. We will help people make everyday choices around not just how they are supported, but also how they choose to live their lives.

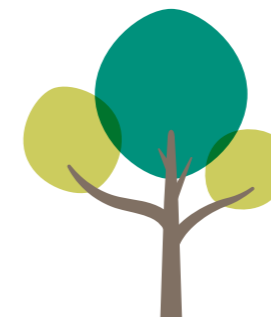


JOINED UP HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Our priority is to join up health and social care so people don't fall through the cracks, this will mean their needs are being met and we can get things right first time. It will also mean that people will only need to tell their story once, time and effort is wasted when professionals don't talk to each other and share information.

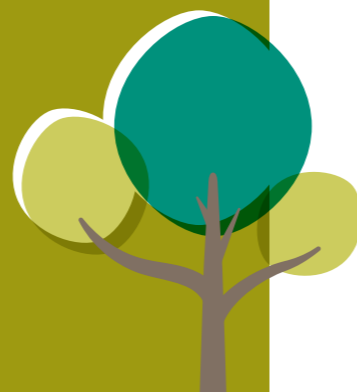
We will bring together health and social care staff to join up care and support.

We'll make sure that people don't stay in hospital for longer than they need to and we will share information across health and social care staff to reduce duplication.





STRONG RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

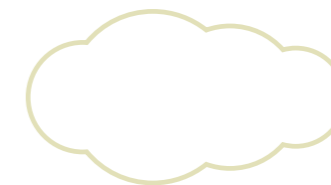


OUR TOWNS - CENTRES OF COMMUNITY LIFE

We have great ambitions for all our towns to become vibrant centres of community life. Sandwell is an area rich with heritage and culture, with historic town centres and a legacy of metalworking to celebrate. We're really proud of our six towns, of their differences and their diversity, we want to celebrate these differences and what makes them distinctive.

Our residents tell us that vibrant local towns are really important for encouraging families to stay and have pride in where they live. We will have ambitious plans in place to regenerate our towns and we will bid for the Stronger Towns Fund for West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis.

Through working with the SHAPE Forum (our forum to listen to the voices of children and young people), we will make sure that our towns become welcoming places for young people

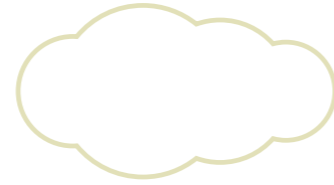


and that they have jobs, activities and facilities to give them a part in the local community.

We're really excited that 2020 will see the opening of our new hub for local services in Rowley Regis at Blackheath Library. This will bring together a number of council and partner services in one welcoming location. We'll continue to develop our plans around this for our other towns.

We have a proud history of supporting our voluntary sector and we want lots of activities taking place in our towns. We are investing in a small grants programme that will be run by the voluntary sector to achieve this. Over the next few years, we will make sure that our grant funding supports the priorities we're outlining in this plan.





CLEAN AND GREEN

Our residents tell us that creating a clean, attractive and safe living environment is a key priority. So too is developing a robust response to climate change. We know that poor environmental quality has a huge effect on people's health and wellbeing and that it impacts on the poorest in society.

The council has a key role in coordinating effective action at the local level to tackle this issue. The council has reduced carbon emissions associated with its buildings and street lighting by more than half since 2009/10, but there's much more to do. **We will bring together partners to deliver leadership and direction on the specific environmental issues in Sandwell, including air quality.** We will develop climate change plans that work towards **becoming carbon neutral by 2041.**



We will also work to **make our own housing stock greener** by implementing **minimum energy performance standards for existing and new build council homes** and **exemplar schemes for modern methods of construction.**

Sandwell has twelve parks and green spaces with prestigious Green Flag status. We will strive to maintain this status, whilst also working to **enhance our existing green and open spaces, create new places to play and committing to plant a tree for every child starting school** in Sandwell up to 2030. We will work to keep our streets clean from litter, waste and dog fouling.



SAFER COMMUNITIES

Feeling safe at home and in your community is fundamental to living well and to strong community relationships. Although Sandwell's violent crime and anti-social behaviour levels are similar to the national average, residents tell us that feeling safe is the most important thing for them and their families.

Using good local knowledge and area-based working such as tasking, our goal is to prevent violence, exploitation and abuse, reduce offending and reoffending, confront serious organised crime and protect and support affected people. Steps to foster resilience, shared understanding, support networks and cross-community working are also vital. We cannot do this alone; our partners are critical to this intelligence and prevention work. We will do this through the Safer Sandwell Partnership.

We need to enable people to keep themselves safe and develop our communities so that abuse is always

recognised and reported. We will strengthen our partnership approach through our Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board, continue to raise public awareness about what abuse is and how they can report it, and work with our providers to make sure people receive the best quality care and support.

The Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership vision is for all children to be safe at home and in their communities, where they are loved, cared for and have the stability to grow healthily and to achieve their ambitions. The Partnership will continue to raise awareness the child safeguarding is everybody's business, will ensure that everyone knows how to report concerns about child welfare, and will ensure that our workforce will be well trained to support children that need protection.

We want Sandwell to be a safe environment, whether that be the safety of our road network, our parks and open spaces, adequate street lighting or, for instance, that our residents do not get caught out by rogue traders.





QUALITY HOMES IN THRIVING NEIGHBOURHOODS



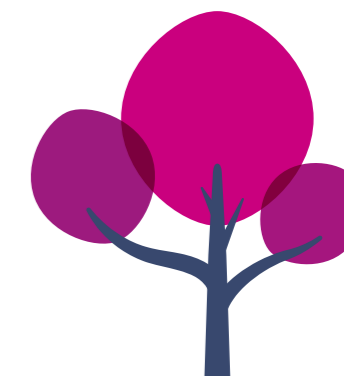
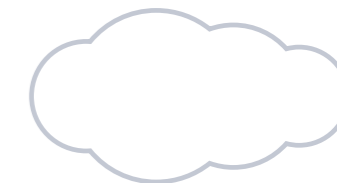
A HOME FOR EVERYONE

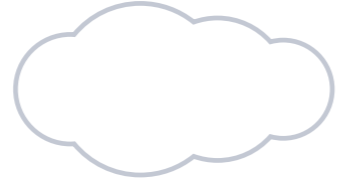
Having a warm, safe and secure home in an attractive environment is key for improving living standards. There are 133,000 homes in Sandwell and more than a fifth of those are managed by the council.

The council has an unrelenting commitment to continually improving our housing environment and housing services. A key challenge is addressing the mismatch between supply and demand for homes in some of our communities. We need to ensure there is the right mix for current and future needs and that we meet our ambitious expectations for greener, more environmentally friendly homes. In difficult funding and housing market

conditions we continue to have a very healthy council house building programme and to work productively with partners to deliver quality homes in Sandwell. We are rightly proud of our council house building programme and we are looking at options that will enable us to deliver more homes that meet our residents' needs.

By 2030, we aim to have **8,000 more new homes in the borough**. This will be a mix of council house building and homes built by registered housing providers and the private sector. We will also be working with our communities to explore the potential of community-led housing schemes and self-build. Our overall approach to growing





the quantity of homes will be driven by our Inclusive Economy principles, ensuring benefits to local people during construction and beyond.

The areas of **Friar Park in Wednesbury and Grove Lane, Smethwick**, offer great opportunities to create new communities at the highest standards of design and quality. We will ensure these new communities have access to good schools, health services and local amenities. Our plans for 90 new extra care apartments in Rowley Regis will create more supported accommodation, we know we need to build more and we will look to make this a reality. We will review the options for making these plans a reality, this will include a Council led delivery vehicle which allows the local authority to take a greater ownership of making more homes happen for the borough.

We will also **improve the quality of existing accommodation**. We have a long-established approach to ensure that our properties are safe places to live and we are reviewing our approach following the publication of the Hackitt Report and the first phase report into the Grenfell Tower disaster, which will include us establishing a Building Safety Board.

More than 4,000 Sandwell families or individuals declared themselves homeless in 2018-2019 and 65% of these were single people. We are a Housing First pilot area and we will ensure that entrenched rough sleepers benefit from this initiative and are able to access housing and support that will enable them to live more fulfilled lives. We will work to **identify the needs of the most vulnerable people** in Sandwell and work to support families who are at risk of becoming or who are homeless.

People with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs and young people with complex support needs are often placed in residential services in their communities or many miles from their family's home. These placements have generally been made based upon the availability of services rather than the person's choice.

We will focus more of our ambitious house building programme on the needs of our children and young people who have complex needs and those who have been in care, so we have a good housing offer for them in Sandwell when they become adults. We will also focus more of our house building on the needs of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs.





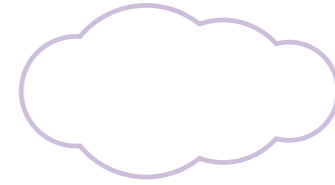
A STRONG AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY



Sandwell is the third largest borough in the West Midlands with a population of almost 330,000 and a £6.3 billion economy, the largest in the Black Country. But for our size our economy is not yet punching its weight and reaching its full potential.

We will work together to create a strong and growing Sandwell, built on fairness. An economy where no one is left behind, that benefits everyone and where we build on the collective strengths of our community.





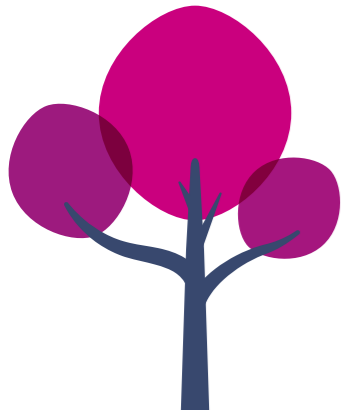
SANDWELL'S INCLUSIVE ECONOMY DEAL

Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal will be truly ground-breaking. Developed using evidence from the new State of the Borough report and extensive consultation, the deal will be a complementary document to this plan as are other council strategies which underpin the delivery of the Sandwell Plan. It will be co-produced by residents, the council, businesses and the voluntary sector. As a result, it will contain the commitments made by all these groups alongside the council's detailed commitments.

As part of this approach, we are committed to build our collective Community Wealth. Resources flow through the borough every day, many of these resources help make Sandwell strong and grow. But a lot of our resources also flow out of the borough

through the decisions we make. If we build our local resources and spend more of our money locally, this could make a huge impact on our local economy and our overall wellbeing. Our Community Wealth programme sets out the council's commitment to achieving more through our buying and economic power.

The council currently spends 15% of its contract money with suppliers in Sandwell. We want to do better. We are committed to leading our partners in Sandwell to make the most of all our assets, spend local wherever possible and make long-term investment decisions that benefit our borough. In this way we hope to retain more people, business and money in Sandwell, enabling us to grow and prosper from within.



PUTTING SANDWELL ON THE MAP

We have many exciting transformational opportunities to raise Sandwell's profile by capitalising on major new projects. The Commonwealth Games comes to Birmingham in 2022 and we are very excited to be hosting the swimming and diving events at the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre. The build for this incredible new leisure offer for Smethwick and the whole borough is under way.

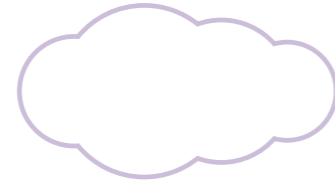
We want to use the Commonwealth Games as a catalyst for economic, wellbeing and cultural development, incorporating Sandwell Valley and other cultural venues as linked visitor attractions. Creating our Games Community will be a key theme in the run up to the Games.

We have aspirations to make Sandwell Valley a major cultural and tourist destination and we will work with our partners to make the best use of our canal network. To facilitate this, we will be developing culture and tourism strategies that will set out our key objectives and the outcomes we aspire to achieve.

Sandwell is also part of the UNESCO Black Country Geo Park project and this will be yet another opportunity to promote and celebrate Sandwell's unique history and geology.

We will work with our health partners to deliver the Midland Metropolitan Hospital and to maximise the significant regeneration benefits to the wider surrounding area. We will also deliver major new education facilities for Sandwell, for example a university presence and a facility for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. We want to work more closely with West Bromwich Albion Football Club and its international brand to develop shared opportunities.





A PROSPEROUS BUSINESS SECTOR

Sandwell has a diverse business community with strengths in manufacturing, logistics, health and social care as well as retail and wholesale. Those sectors together provide over 71,500 jobs and Sandwell is home to some fast-growing, high employment businesses.

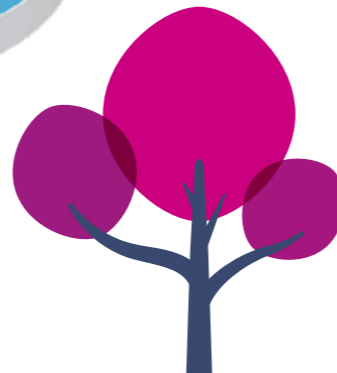
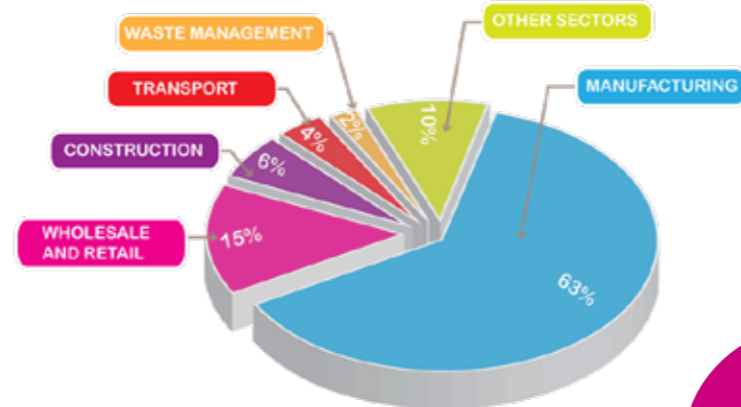
Whilst the business community in Sandwell is growing, we don't think we're growing fast enough. We want to strengthen our business sector so that local people can benefit from jobs that are stable and well paid. A thriving economy will attract new and small businesses and help keep Sandwell's employers in the area.

As a council, we really value our local businesses and want to continue to deliver high quality support that helps them thrive and prosper. Part of this is ensuring that local people have the skills and knowledge to fill any vacancies by offering local training and development opportunities – we want people to train in Sandwell, remain in Sandwell.



We know that giving people a real living wage and enough money in their pocket gives them stability and choice in their lives. Having good quality jobs that pay a real living wage will allow people to grow their own way out of poverty and build a stable future for themselves and their families

SANDWELL'S STRATEGIC COMPANY SECTORS



ASPIRATIONS, SKILLS AND ROUTES INTO JOBS

We know that there is no shortage of aspiration amongst Sandwell's young people but, as students move from Year 7 to Year 9, aspirations fall. This is because young people can't see how to achieve their goals.

We want our young people to have access to good jobs and we will work with education providers to guide young people to the pathways that enable them to meet their aspirations. We will do this through the provision of independent advice and guidance and greater promotion and integration of Sandwell's business community. We also know that people in work need support to upskill so that they can increase their earning potential. We want to develop plans for vulnerable groups and people who have not been engaged in learning for a significant period of time.

This includes young people with special educational needs and disabilities, young people who have been in care as well as homeless young people, to ensure that everyone in our community has the opportunity to get well-paid, stable employment.

As one of the biggest local employers we want to play our part. We will offer quality work experience placements within the council. We will increase the take up of apprenticeships particularly within small businesses in Sandwell through transferring some of the apprenticeship levy to that sector. We must ensure access to opportunity in that, no matter where jobs are located in the borough, our residents have the skills and transport links to make the journey. This also goes beyond Sandwell to ensure our residents can access roles from elsewhere while keeping Sandwell as their home.





A CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE SANDWELL



LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Sandwell is an important part of the West Midlands economy and partner of the West Midlands Combined Authority, we have a strategic location right in the heart of the West Midlands and are well connected both regionally and nationally. Sandwell's five motorway junctions, extensive canal network and 12 train stations are critical connectivity points. With easy access to Birmingham - as little as ten minutes by train - and Coventry.

Sandwell boasts impressive metro links and by 2022 will welcome a further link between Wednesbury and Dudley. Our national connectivity is strong with 96 minutes to both London and Manchester.

Location is a key anchor to our investment potential and an attractive offer for inward investment and existing businesses alike.

Recognising that transport can be a barrier to work, we will work with the WMCA to ensure that our

residents can access employment opportunities across the region particularly by public transport.

We are leading the delivery of the **Birchley Island transport scheme** in Oldbury, improving both strategic links and the journey times on the local rail network.

We are a partner in **Wednesbury-Brierley Hill West Midlands Metro Corridor** (£450million investment) which is the largest light rail project in Europe, and is coming to Wednesbury in 2021 creating a strategic link to Dudley and through West Bromwich to Birmingham.

We are also committed to enabling people to get around in a healthy and sustainable way which supports our health and wellbeing and our climate change strategies. We want to make sure that all public transport options available locally are as green as possible so we will lobby for clean green buses for our borough. We will be bringing forward a cycling and walking strategy to develop more routes particularly using our extensive canal network as a means for cycling and walking and invest in green infrastructure. In addition, our partnership work with the Canal and River Trust will enable us to make the best use of our waterways.

QUICKEST JOURNEY TIMES FROM SANDWELL TO:

London



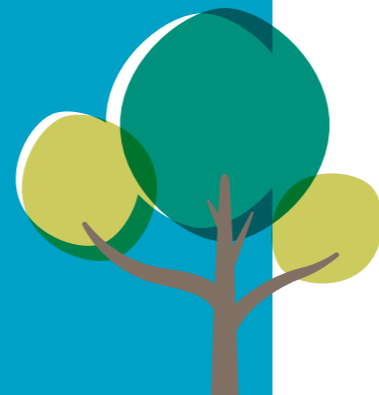
Manchester





ONE TEAM, ONE COUNCIL

To deliver this ambitious plan we will create a modern, outstanding council, one where our organisational structure, business systems, process and people and cultural working practices are fully aligned to deliver our strategic outcomes. We will build a one team, one council ethos, breaking down departmental barriers and building collaborative team working.

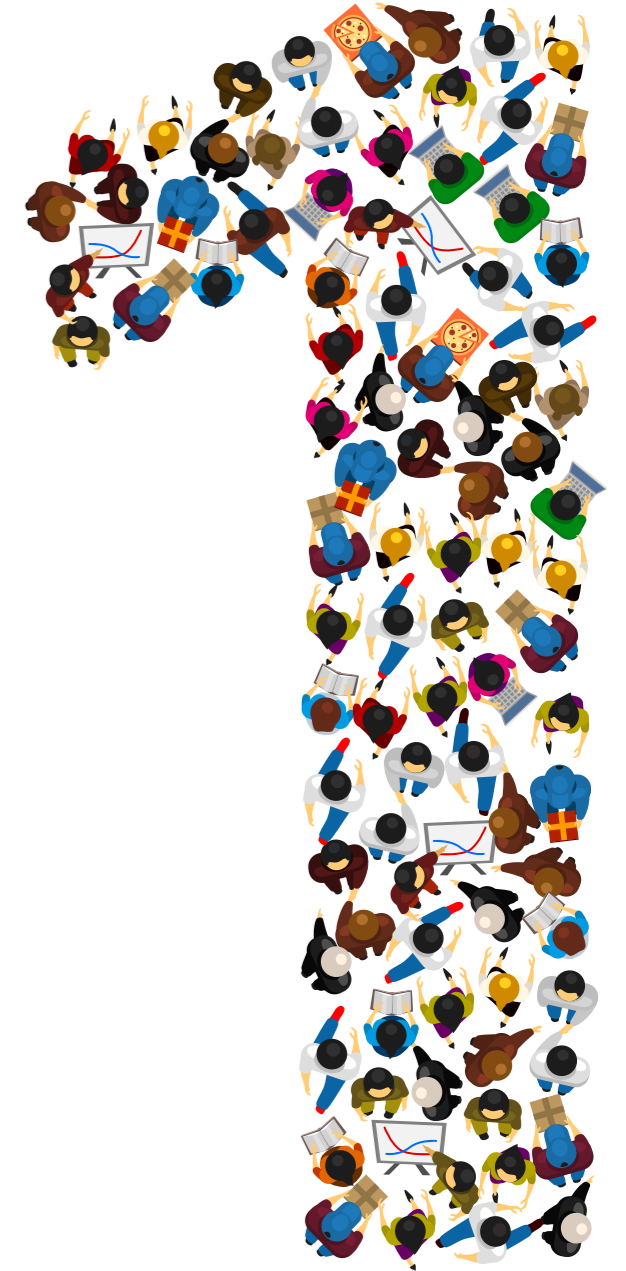


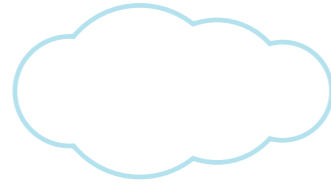
GREAT SERVICES

At the centre of everything we do are the services we provide on a day-to-day basis, the services that make life better for people in our communities.

We want to make sure that Sandwell people get a good quality, consistent level of service, however they choose to contact the council. Central to this is the development of our digital services. We already have more than 100,000 people signed up to using the MySandwell portal and this year we will be rolling out a range of other services, including a new solution for reporting repairs for council tenants.

A key part of this will be supporting those people who want help in improving their digital skills. Where people do need support to access services then we will ensure that adequate support is in place, so that there are no inequalities in people accessing services. We also want to learn from all of the experiences people have with us, so we can adapt and change to make sure we're doing the very best we can. We will review how we manage complaints within the council to make sure that when things don't go to plan, we put them right and learn from what has happened.





GREAT PLACE TO WORK

One of our many strengths as an organisation is our staff and their commitment to give Sandwell people the very best. We already have the Investors in People silver award, but we are committed to ensuring that we have the right type of environment and culture to enable creativity and collaboration to flourish. A skilled, diverse, motivated and healthy workforce is key to this success.

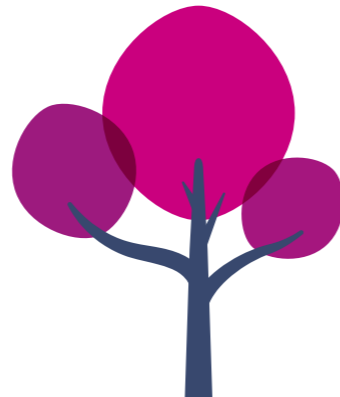
We already have successful work experience, apprenticeship, intern and graduate programmes and we will promote these to local people.

We will create a modern workplace and give staff technological tools that encourage creativity, collaboration and transformation

and which 'just work'. This will be achieved through our Workplace Vision programme, Technology Modernisation programme and Oracle project.

We want our staff to be highly skilled and we will invest in a range of opportunities, qualifications and experiences for our workforce. We will continue the roll-out of our leadership development programmes to create Sandwell's leaders of the future.

We take the health and wellbeing of our employees very seriously and offer staff an extensive occupational health service and support. Building on our recently introduced mental health toolkit, we will continue to grow our support to staff and managers to achieve positive mental health.



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR RESOURCES

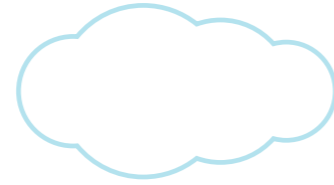
The end of austerity has been promised by Government, but the £180m a year we have lost since 2010 is not going to be replaced and we continue to face significant pressures as a result of increasing demand for our social care services.

The need to deliver efficiency savings will continue, as will the need to maintain a robust level of reserves. This plan has been developed alongside our medium-term financial strategy.

We want as much of the council's money as possible to be spent locally on delivering great services, whilst also supporting our climate change aspirations and helping us to transform the way we work.

As central government funding has reduced, the need to maximise the amount of income we collect has become increasingly important. We already have the best council tax collection rate of any metropolitan council in the country, but we need to maintain high collection rates to deliver the aspirations in this plan. We will also reduce the amount of money that we spend behind the scenes on things such as buildings, storage and cash transaction costs.





LISTENING, LEARNING, AND ACCOUNTABLE

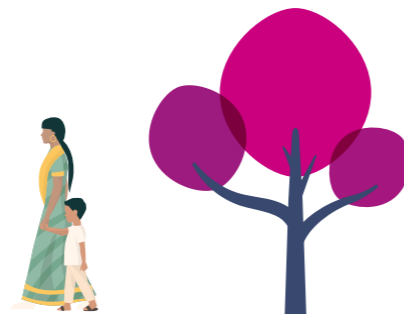
We will listen to and work alongside Sandwell residents and partners to make sure that everything we do is focused on achieving the best outcomes. We have already started through our extensive consultation around Vision 2030 and our forthcoming Inclusive Economy Deal. During 2020 we will undertake wide-ranging consultation about our future budget planning priorities. If our plans aren't working, or aren't changing things quickly enough, we will learn from this and adapt. A strong focus on evidence will help us with this challenge.

We want to make sure that vulnerable groups who find it difficult to make their voices heard, influence and shape all of our plans and decisions and those of our partners. We will continue to invest in our SHAPE forum

as a key way for us to listen and respond to the voices of children and young people. We will continue to support the Sandwell Ambassadors Forum to give the business community a strong voice.

We will bring forward plans for a decision-making framework that helps us to achieve our Inclusive Economy objectives and consider the impact of our decisions on key groups and on our climate change aspirations. This will ensure robust, open and transparent decision making.

We will publish our progress against this plan.



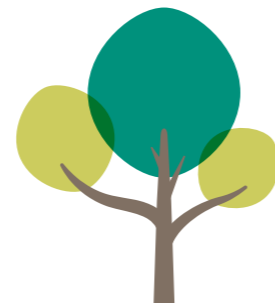
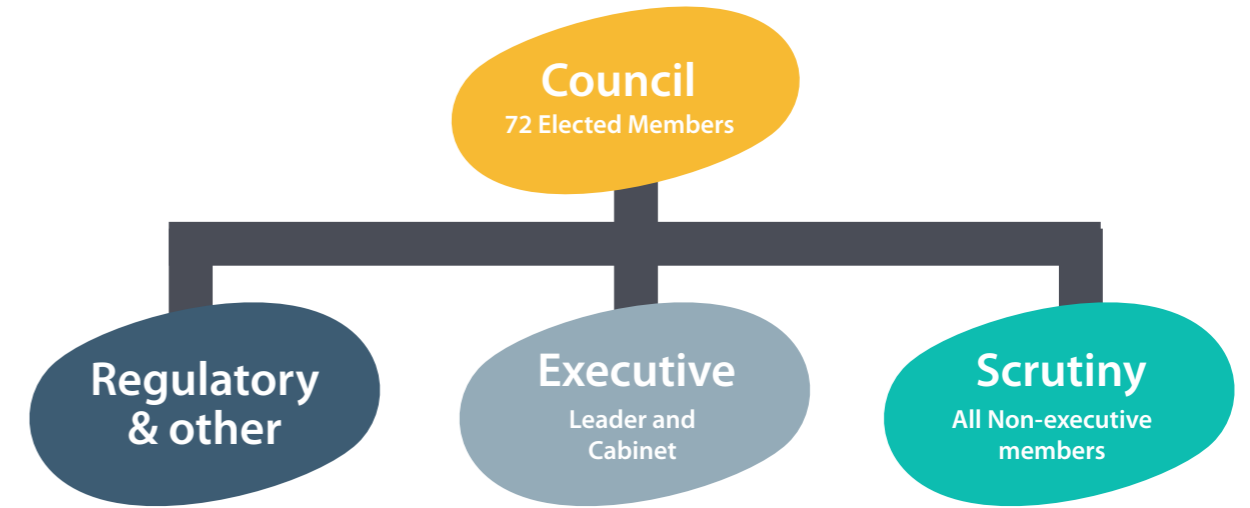
GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Good governance is at the heart of what we do and is essential for us if we are to achieve our Vision, our strategic outcomes and to drive improvement within our organisation. Good governance is about how the council ensures that it is doing things right, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable way.

In Sandwell we have 72 elected members that represent Sandwell's 24 wards. Together these councillors make up Full Council. They also have specific roles in various arms of the organisation such as the Executive, Scrutiny or Regulatory (planning, licensing, audit):-

We will make sure that the council's decisions are transparent, informed and effective, and that there is proper and robust challenge to decision-making to ensure that our residents feel confident and assured that they are getting the very best services and support possible. To achieve this we want to make sure that residents, businesses and other interested parties can hold us to account and know which decisions we are making and why, and that they have the opportunity to engage or participate if they wish.

We know that the council will need to flex and change to meet the challenges ahead. We will work with our partners and communities to meet these challenges. We need to ensure that we have the intelligence to adapt and that we learn effectively from our own and from residents' experiences so that we make changes that make real differences to the lives of the residents and communities we serve.



WEST BROMWICH

WEDNESBURY

OLDBURY

TIPTON

ROWLEY REGIS

SMETHWICK

