

**Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Board**

**Monday 22 June, 2020 at 5.00 pm
Virtual Meeting**

Please click on the link below to view the meeting live
[Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board 22 June 2020](#)

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Members to declare:-
 - (a) any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting;
 - (b) the existence and nature of any political Party Whip on any matter to be considered at the meeting.
3. Minutes of previous meeting 27 January, 2020
4. Chairs Announcements
5. Children's Services and Education Update – Presentation
6. Phased return of pupils to Sandwell schools – Report
7. Youth Facilities Scrutiny Review Report – Report

Date of next meeting - 21 September, 2020

D Stevens
Chief Executive
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution:

Councillors Singh (Chair);
Councillors Preece (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Ashman, Carmichael, Chidley, Costigan, Z Hussain, McVittie,
Millar, Phillips and Shackleton.

Co-opted Members:-

Charlotte Ward-Lewis (Church of England Diocese representative)
Vacant (Roman Catholic Archdiocese representative)
Tahira Majid (Primary School Governor representative)
Vacant (Secondary School Governor representative)

**Agenda prepared by Deb Breedon
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**Minutes of the Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Board**

**27 January, 2020 at 5.00 pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Singh (Chair);
Councillor Preece (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Ashman, Chidley, Z Hussain, McVittie,
Millar, Phillips and Shackleton.

Apologies: Councillor Carmichael, Costigan, C Ward-Lewis
and T Majid (Co-opted members).

In attendance: Lesley Hagger, Executive Director Children's
Services;
Sue Moore, Group Head, Education Support
Services
Chris Ward, Director of Education, Skills and
Employment;
Moira Tallents, SEN Advisor.

1/20 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 11
November 2019 be approved as a correct record.

2/20 **Annual Admissions**

The Board received a report and presentation from the Group Head, Education Support Services which provided an update on School Admissions. The report provided a summary of numbers of appeals and performance, to demonstrate how the Council had continued to meet school preferences against the background of higher demand.

The Board was advised that nearly 10,000 annual applications were processed per year and that in 2019 there were 4908 year 7, and 4519 reception applications, with a significant number of late requests also being received and processed up to the start of the school year in September.

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The Board noted the following comments and responses to questions:

- 2019 had the largest secondary school cohort for many years. The number of applications for the Sandwell Academy was high (1500) for the number of places available;
- provision of over 5000 new primary places had increased Local Authority ability to meet parental preference and a lower birth rate was responsible for a lower reception cohort;
- the Board considered that there may be potential for too many secondary places in the future, however successful management and introduction of the bulge classes had kept the numbers in check, the Local Authority (LA) had been putting temporary places in as projections altered year on year;
- the delay of DfE funded projects to increase secondary places had impacted on school place planning; the Chance Academy would open in 2023 and the CBSO Shireland Collegiate free school would open in 2022;
- the LA had a statutory duty to offer parents a preference, many operated with a 5–10% surplus places policy, Sandwell operated at 2-3%, which explained why figures presented for school appeals were higher this year;
- in relation to academies the Board was advised that most of the year 7 places were full, but that there were some places available in higher year groups;
- many parents selected their school preferences based on the reputation of a school, the rating of a school or that they wanted their children to go to the same school they and their family, or siblings, had attended;
- in 2019 there were 1,500 applications for Sandwell Academy and only 200 places were available, the appeals for a school place at this school were considerably higher than other schools and accounted for 30% of the total secondary school appeals last year;
- the Sandwell Academy school was attractive to parents because it was a new school, in the top 3 for performance in Sandwell and was a good example of how Sandwell children could achieve academically and in their sporting ambitions. The school intake included pupils from the six towns spread across the Borough, other schools based their offer on distance from the door;

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- the West Bromwich Collegiate school was a new school and had received 600 applications for 150 places;
- it was acknowledged that more places were required in secondary schools, that the number in primary school places had levelled out, but that there were another four years of secondary school growth to manage;
- all secondary schools followed the national admissions code and were co-ordinated by the Local Authority;
- some parents chose the option to home school their children and a full-time home education officer was in post to monitor progress;
- parents could only appeal for a place at a school once in the school year;
- the success rate for school appeals in Sandwell was less than 3%;
- there were fewer successful primary appeals due to the permitted number of 30 children per class.

The Board welcomed the success of the Sandwell Academy and were pleased to hear that learning was shared across secondary schools in Sandwell via a Headteachers Forum which met every six weeks. The Board noted that the headteacher of the Sandwell Academy School and other headteachers visited each other's schools and held regular meetings of subject groups in schools to learn from each other.

The Chair thanked officers for the update report and was pleased that progress was being made with admissions arrangements in Sandwell but highlighted that there was a need for more focus on secondary school admissions.

Resolved

- (1) that Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board noted the report and request further information relating to the percentage and number of successful school appeals in primary and secondary schools in Sandwell for 2018-19.

4/20

Exclusions and Alternative Provision

The Board received a report and presentation from the Group Head, Inclusive Learning Services which provided an update on how the Council worked with schools in managing the exclusion of pupils and

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provided suitable alternative educational provisions where necessary.

The Board welcomed that the overall the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions had decreased for the last four years, and that the percentage of pupils in Sandwell receiving a fixed term exclusion from school was less than the national and regional averages.

The Board noted the following comments and responses to questions:

- there was a downward trend in numbers of pupils excluded in primary and secondary schools from 2016 to 2019 and it was recognised that this was attributed to Local Authority support and developments in relation to intensive support, targeted support and whole school support;
- the whole school approach would provide more preventative work in schools and there would be additional support, from April 2020, with graduated approach mental health workers going into 20 schools;
- community policing was working with primary school children through the bliss system and this would be expanded to secondary school exclusions;
- the new Alternative Provision (AP) Panel had been formed to provide a single route and accountability to the decision makers. It would refer a variety of cases, international new arrivals and those with behavioural or health issues into alternative provision;
- the AP Panel consisted of senior officers (senior leaders from school and Local Authority) and the independent Chair of the Fair Access Panel. The Panel would follow the new Ofsted Inspection framework to visit, offer advice and guidance to Headteachers and consider learning from other Local Authorities;

The Board noted that the pupil referral units had improved provision and that it was intended to reduce exclusions to an absolute minimum by making fewer permanent exclusions, carrying out more preventative work and moving young people back into school.

The Board was advised that the Albright Education Centre and the Primrose Centre were moving towards a respite centre ethos. There would be improved medical provision at Albright Education Centre (formally Whiteheath Education Centre) which provided education for pupils who could not attend mainstream school and they aimed to

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return more young people to school who may have been anxious or school phobic. There had been an increase in numbers of pupils unable to attend school due to mental health problems, as a result, Schools' Forum had recently agreed to fund an additional 10 school places.

There would be an improved 'revolving door' process at Primrose Centre with more preventative school places available. Sandwell Community School had a specified role at each campus, offered preventive places, reintegration and attendance at fair access panels.

The Board noted the following comments and responses to questions:

- the Quality and Standards Board monitored numbers and breakdown of school exclusions through trends overtime, to avoid singling out a particular school or schools;
- every school was reducing exclusions year on year and the number of days lost had reduced substantially in the three-year period by more than half from 5,525 to 2,031.5;
- there was a push back against zero tolerance policy and an encouragement of schools to give a balanced approach when addressing preventative work and exclusions;
- the Fair Access Team managed the process, but there was concern that people who did not have English as a first language found the process difficult and there was a need to consider the process in the corporate parent role;
- young people with social, emotional and mental health issues were being identified and targeted work would be carried out with them in their school;
- isolation booths were the topic of debate following a television documentary relating to Educating Yorkshire and their use of isolation booths. The Board was assured that isolation booths were not used in Sandwell, there were occasions where a young person would be removed from a situation if they were difficult or causing disruption, they would remain with an adult until their behaviour recovered;
- there was other alternative provision in the form of private schools which were smaller in class size, such as Sandwell Valley School;
- other unregistered provision was also available – if a young person attended more than 18 hours per week it would have to be registered as an independent school;

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- Ofsted monitored alternative provision and the Local Authority was aware of which children were where and for how long;

The Board noted that there had been an increase in budget of £7 million from government this year for Sandwell's special needs and special provision.

The Board noted the following comments and response to questions relating to performance:

- success was measured by the numbers of children in attendance and their progress. One way to get young people back into full time education was to offer them something that interested them, such as vocational learning;
- Ofsted monitored alternative provision and there had been some interest on the success and quality of service of alternative provision in Sandwell;
- teaching staff received professional development to help them, but sometimes this lacked impact on the disruption caused in classes and it was suggested that often the easier thing was to remove the young people from the class.
- the support team was being expanded to support staff in schools to take care of their mental health and adopting an all school approach to mental health and wellbeing;
- it was recognised that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) had an impact on young people in secondary schools and there was a drive to identify symptoms in young people earlier, but not to label them;
- the Executive Director thanked the teams for their excellent work

The Board highlighted the need to look at how to improve things for the 36 excluded young people, to look at the common themes for exclusion, if they were involved in other work such as violence reduction and the impact of the revolving door policy for these young people.

The Chair welcomed the work being done and the approach being taken to reducing exclusions in Sandwell. The Board noted the focus on prevention and was pleased that good services were emerging, trends for exclusions were going down and that partners were working together.

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Resolved

- (1) That a report be requested to a future meeting to clarify the following:
 - i. what were the main reasons for exclusions
 - ii. how does the Council support better collaboration, providing a graphical analysis (causality of the issues, ethnicity, primary/secondary, which schools);
 - iii. how was the revolving door policy being implemented, could we improve on 36 permanently excluded;
 - iv. How can we understand and help improve young people? (Mental health support workers earlier support) that young people.

5/20

Youth Facilities Scrutiny Review

The Board received a report which set out the rationale and scope for the proposed review of Youth Facilities. The purpose of the review was to find out what young people have, need and want from their youth facilities in Sandwell.

The Board noted that the review would be supported by a core group of officers and the evidence gathering would reach a wide range of public, partners and youth service providers, and would include visits to facilities and forums to meet and talk to a range of stakeholders and services users, and a question time styled session to ask questions of expert witnesses.

The Board was advised that the evidence gathering activities would take place throughout February 2020 and that a schedule would be circulated to Members to enable them to participate in the planned activities and sessions for the review.

The Executive Director advised that a survey due to be circulated via the Councils website and social media would be transferred to a young person friendly document. She advised that young people had indicated that they wanted to be involved in the delivery of the scrutiny review as young scrutineers.

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The Board noted the following comments and responses to questions:

- Members could visit youth facilities on a town basis and feedback their findings to the Democratic Services Team;
- Rowley Regis had no youth club;
- Coneygre Centre was considered by Members to be a fantastic arts and drama facility;
- the Youth Service only had two buildings but were in conversation with Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) to open other buildings up to the Youth Service;
- there was a need to be realistic in the review and to recognise that the Youth Service may not have enough capacity to open new facilities with current resources;
- there was a need for a sufficiency statement to demonstrate if there were enough facilities to meet demand and to demonstrate where there were gaps;
- a sufficiency statement would provide evidence to support any future funding bids, including a potential bid for Town Development Fund which should take into account young people's needs in addition to the local economy;
- Members welcomed the flexibility of the evidence sessions, to do things in their own ward or across the Borough according to their capacity;
- other youth activities and facilities were suggested by the Board, including sea cadets, guides and scouts;
- involving young people who were not attending youth facilities was seen as a challenge, young people on street corners, on bus stops, Members identified a need to find out what they needed and wanted as well;
- A police led forum would be arranged to focus on young people who were not engaged in current facilities;
- A BAME forum would be arranged to consider involving all communities including young carers;
- further research was requested in relation to Stoke youth facilities and what had been done there.

The Chair invited all members to become involved in the Youth Facilities Review evidence gathering and invited Members to join the core Review Group to meet to consider the feedback from evidence gathering and prepare a summary report and recommendations to Scrutiny Board.

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The Chair thanked officers for their work and welcomed the participation and contribution of members to this important review of youth facilities. The first meeting of the review group would take place Wednesday 5th February, a background report, lines of enquiry and schedules of visits would be confirmed at meeting.

Recommendation:

- (1) that the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board agreed the scope of the Youth Facilities Review Group;
- (2) that Councillors Chidley, McVittie, Preece and Singh be appointed to the Youth Facilities Review Group;
- (3) that all members of the Scrutiny Board participate in the visits to youth facilities in their ward and where possible further across the Borough;
- (4) that the report of the Youth Facilities Review be presented to a future meeting of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board.


(Meeting ended at 6.38 pm)

<p>Contact Officer: Deb Breedon Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3896</p>
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REPORT TO

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION
SCRUTINY BOARD

22 June 2020

Subject:	Phased return of pupils to Sandwell schools
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Best Start In Life
Director:	Lesley Hagger, Executive Director of Children's Services Chris Ward, Director of Education
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	<p>Lesley Hagger, Executive Director of Children's Services; lesley_hagger@sandwell.gov.uk</p> <p>Chris Ward, Director of Education; chris_ward@sandwell.gov.uk</p>

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That :

1. That the Scrutiny Board notes and makes comment on the actions taken to date regarding the phased return of pupils to Sandwell schools;
2. That the Scrutiny Board receives further reports as relevant at future meetings.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Schools have been 'closed' since 20th March 2020, albeit open to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. On Sunday 10th May, the Prime Minister announced that there would be a phased return of

pupils to schools from 1 June 2020. This report seeks to ensure that Scrutiny :

- a) has up to date information about the current position in Sandwell following the government announcement that there will be a phased return of pupils to schools from 1 June 2020;
- b) is provided with further information at its meeting on 22 June 2020, as the position at the time of writing this paper is subject to daily amendments and clarifications from government;
- c) is appraised of the engagement between the Council and Sandwell's schools, both maintained and academy, and local teaching union representatives;
- d) is appraised of the engagement between the Council and the Department for Education and can compare its actions with the national and regional position;
- e) is provided with information about engagement with and communication to parents;
- f) is assured that schools attendance by vulnerable children and children of key workers will continue to be the priority.

2 **IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030**

- 2.1 From 20 March 2020 schools have been closed to all pupils except for vulnerable children and the children of critical/key workers. The Secretary of State, Gavin Williamson, wrote to Council Leaders on 22 March 2020, setting out a clear role for the local authority to manage local arrangements across all education providers:

"I am looking to you to work with all schools, both LA maintained and academies, to ensure that there is sufficiency of places for children of key workers and vulnerable children. I am also keenly aware of your crucial responsibilities in maintaining effective safeguarding and child protection services in this challenging time."

- 2.2 The letter from the Secretary of State also confirmed that the DfE would be expecting to meet regularly with Council officers. These meetings have taken place two to three times weekly since 23rd March and have involved reporting on local arrangements, interpretation and implementation of technical advice, providing data on the uptake of placements, providing information on the support provided to vulnerable children and families, and various other matters including DfE guidance

(where more than 150 different sets of guidance plus updates have been issued over the past 12 weeks).

- 2.3 Almost all of Sandwell's schools have remained open, including during the Easter period. Just over 1.8% of the total pupil population has attended, which is similar to neighbouring Councils, and this has been increasing over past weeks in line with national data. Attendance data is collected daily and schools alert the Council to any children that they may be concerned about. The Council established a 'vulnerable children's group' where partners have brought together all information about vulnerable children to ensure that they receive safe and well checks, and any additional support that may be needed. The attendance of vulnerable children has been in line with national reports at around 15%.
- 2.4 The Council has sent a briefing note/communication pack to head teachers of all schools every morning and schools have appreciated this support. The communication has covered areas such as PPE, Free School Meals, transport, non-attendance arrangements, attendance procedures, adapting the curriculum and teaching practice for remote education, supplies and distribution of additional digital devices for pupils, supporting pupils' wellbeing and keeping them motivated and engaged, arrangements for assessment and examination grading, funding, arrangements for admissions appeals, and many other areas. During this time, the Council has also kept in regular contact with Sandwell College and providers of education through Alternative Provision.
- 2.5 Regular meetings between the Council and head teachers have also continued through the Joint Executive Group (JEG), and this has been the place where agreements about local arrangements have been made. Whilst the Council can provide advice and guidance, it is for schools to make their own final decisions about their own individual arrangements. Those arrangements have been discussed regularly at the daily meeting with Trades Unions and the Director of Education has attended these meetings to discuss local measures.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 On Sunday 10th May, the Prime Minister announced that there would be a phased return of pupils to schools, beginning with Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, and also that secondary pupils facing exams next year would 'get some time with their teachers before the summer holidays'. There was also a request that more early learning and childcare settings open from 1st June (some of which are on school sites or run by schools).
- 3.2 On 11th May the Council received high level information about the government's expectations, and later that evening some further details including confirmation that vulnerable children, and children of critical/key

workers would continue to be a priority, protective measures that would need to be put in place, and guidance for parents.

- 3.3 On 12th May this was supplemented with guidance about travel arrangements and safe working practices for staff, and on 15th May the DfE published a planning guide for primary schools, and updated guidance on safe working practices.
- 3.4 Following the Prime Minister's announcement many Trades Unions wrote to the government and directly to all schools with questions about the provision of PPE, risk assessment procedures and the scientific evidence supporting the return of more pupils to schools.
- 3.5 In Sandwell, as soon as the announcement was made, the Council and head teachers began to discuss options for implementing a phased return of pupils. It was felt that Sandwell could not adopt all of the DfE guidance because of space restrictions in schools and the need for social distancing. Proposals were pulled together by the Council and presented to the JEG meeting on 14th May, where they were unanimously agreed as set out below:
- Schools will continue to remain open to vulnerable children and key worker children;
 - The priority for additional children returning to primary school is:
 - Vulnerable children
 - Key Worker Children
 - Reception Class
 - Year 1
 - Year 6
 - Nursery (non-statutory group and so social distancing harder to enforce);
 - Children in the additional year groups will not attend full time during a week but instead attend on a part time basis for set days each week (whole days not half days);
 - A maximum of 6 – 10 pupils work in each classroom area depending on the size of the room. Schools will define their own total capacity based on internal teaching space;
 - Schools will adhere to social distancing as far as possible in classrooms and school environments including at break times and lunchtimes;
 - Schools will minimise the number of pupils that each staff member comes into contact with each day and PPE is available if a child becomes unwell or the needs of the child dictate the use of PPE;

- Appropriate daily cleaning schedules are put in place for the learning environments and at the end of the school day;
- There is a different start and finish time for each year group to reduce the parental traffic and to encourage social distancing ;
- Attendance at school is not mandatory for any child but is encouraged, particularly for vulnerable groups;
- Public Health England advice is followed for all staff who are shielding, vulnerable or living with someone who is shielding or extremely vulnerable.

3.6 The proposed arrangements set out above were shared with local Trades Unions accepted that, although national Trade Unions were in ongoing dialogue with the DfE and the outcomes of this were not yet known, the Council and schools did need to prepare for a potential phased reopening. Trades Unions have also shared risk assessment and planning documents with schools to assist with this process

3.7 On 15th May, the Council provided the following documents to schools, which are appended:

- Sandwell guidance for the phased restart of schools – this includes the overall plan, a frequently asked questions section and an initial planning framework document (checklist) to assist individual school planning.
- A letter for parents to circulate with schools' own communications
- A model risk assessment document
- A PPE request form (The Council will support schools that have not got access to PPE by providing starter packs to assist you in the short term).

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Primary schools have been delivering the wider offer for 3 weeks and secondary schools for one week. Uptake of places will be outlined in the powerpoint presentation.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

5.1 Primary schools asked parents to confirm if they wish to send their child/ren back to school at this time to help complete their planning. Initial indications suggest that 20-25% of families replied to say they would like to take up the offer. Schools developed their wider offers depending on

the response from parents. However, if more vulnerable children come back to school and more key workers request places for their children the wider offer will have to be reduced according to the space available in the schools.

5.2 Ongoing conversations have taken place with local Trades Union representatives as described in paragraphs 2.5 and 3.6 above.

5.3 The Executive Director of Children's Services and the Director of Education met (virtually) with the SHAPE forum to discuss education issues, including arrangements for returning to school and prioritisation. The young people's priority groups included vulnerable children and key worker children, Year 6, Year 10 and Year 12, and children who were keen to return. The young people reported that they had been provided with good resources by their schools but missed school life and classroom discussions.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS.

6.1 A range of options have been considered including strict adherence to the government's guidance through to not extending the current opening arrangements. Everyone involved recognises the impact of the loss of education on children and young people and has worked hard to find a way to manage to increase current numbers through a safe and carefully implemented set of plans.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There has been an intense period of strategic planning over past weeks and the capacity to respond has been put in place within the Council and in schools. Operational activity between 1st June and the end of the academic year will also be strained.

7.2 School budgets and the Council's transport budget will be impacted but at this point in time it is too early to estimate. Early years providers, and their financial arrangements are particularly challenged; this is complicated further by the complex funding arrangements in place for this sector.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The local management of schools (LMS) was introduced in 1988 through the Education Reform Act. This part of the Act allowed all schools to be taken out of direct control of local authorities and passed to the head teacher and governors of a school. The Council has worked with Sandwell's schools to develop the approach to extending opening to more

pupils described in this paper, but schools are responsible for making their own, risk-assessed decisions.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Keeping schools closed to tackle the coronavirus pandemic is almost certain to increase educational inequalities between children from the richest and poorest families, according to a study by the Institute of Fiscal Studies which found that by the end of May, children in better-off families will have received a week and half more home learning than children in the poorest households during the closures. Sandwell has high levels of deprivation and vulnerable children and it is likely that the educational attainment gap between these children and their peers from less disadvantaged backgrounds will increase.
- 9.2 The proportion of Covid-19 deaths of people from BAME backgrounds is higher, and so returning to school may increase risks in areas such as Sandwell where the BAME pupil population is higher than national at 41%.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 There are no data protection implications arising from this report.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 12.1 Based on the current plans, the arrangements will be sustainable until the end of the academic year 2020. It is currently not possible to anticipate plans for the start of the next academic year in September 2020

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

- 13.1 Evidence shows that education and health outcomes are closely linked and that pupils with better health and wellbeing are likely to do better academically.
- 11.2 Schools are also a safety net for children and young people; when vulnerable children are not at school their levels of safety are impacted.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There are no implications from this report on any council managed property or land

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 There were 15 working days between the Prime Minister's announcement and the expected implementation of plans for more children to attend schools; the 15 days include 5 days for the half-term break meaning that there has been little time to plan. Nevertheless, Sandwell's schools and Council officers worked productively to develop a plan to safely manage the introduction of more children back to school from 1st June.

15.2 At the time of writing this paper, further announcements and guidance is expected from the government with regard to learning catch-up programmes and the expected return to school for all pupils.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None

17 APPENDICES:

17.1 Appendix A – Phased restart for schooling guidance
Appendix B – Checklist and risk assessment template
Appendix C - Template letter to parents and Q&A

Director Name

Director Title

Sandwell: Guidance for the phased restart of schools



Context

The government has published its planning framework for reopening schools and academes from 1 June 2020:

[Government Planning Framework](#)

This guidance paper sets out our approach and draft plans for re-set and recovery for Sandwell schools. The paper has been developed working in strong collaboration with schools through the Joint Executive Group and also from listening to the concerns of local and national union representatives. The approach started by looking at what needed to be in place regarding potential phasing of school restarts from 1st June and what practical solutions can be found in response to new and updated government guidance. It should be understood that there continues to be debate between unions and the Department for Education about the appropriateness of extending the reopening of schools. However, we have prepared this guidance in the event that the current remit of schools will change on June 1st.

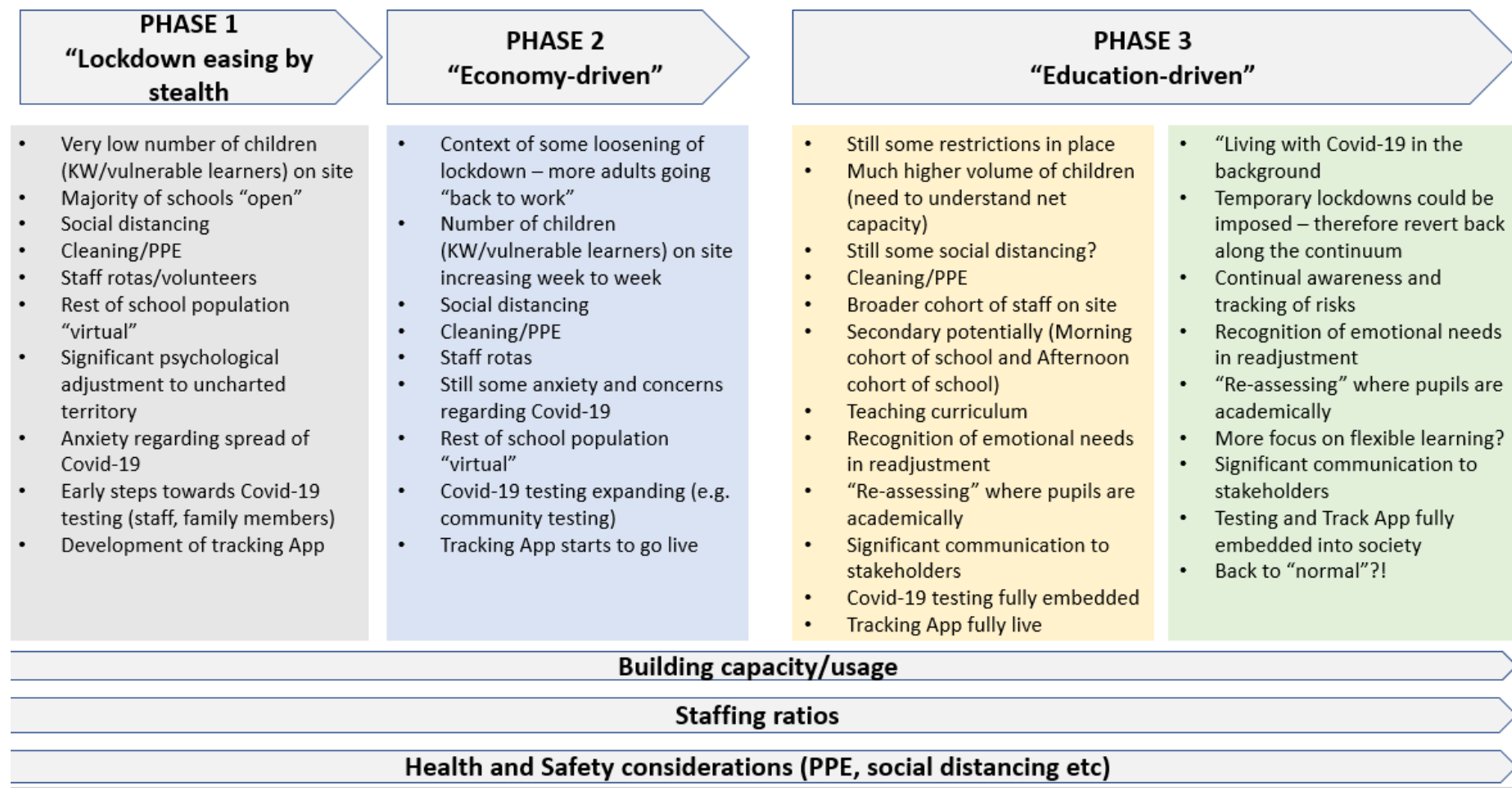
We have identified common ideals for our approach: -

- We focus on the safety and wellbeing of our children
- Our staff need to feel safe and well supported
- Our communities need to have the confidence that it is safe to send their children to school

To achieve this, we will need a consistent and co-ordinated approach across schools and academies so that not only can we cater for vulnerable children and for Key Worker children, but we can also widen our approach to include additional year groups.

Re-set and recovery continuum

The diagram below sets out a potential re-set and recovery continuum, with phase 1 and phase 2 focusing more on a care model within schools through to a phase 3 that focuses more on education. The diagram captures some of the different components that need consideration as there is movement through the phases.



DfE guidance to practical solutions for Sandwell

Government guidance has laid out a series of expectations for schools from June 1st. In publishing these there is now a level of expectation about what will be delivered by schools. The LA and Joint Executive Group considered the DfE guidance and defined a set of principles to implement the guidance which allows for the return of more pupils to school in a controlled manner, focussing on safety.

From June 1st

- Schools continue to remain open to vulnerable children and key worker children
- Priority for additional children returning to school will be
 - Vulnerable children
 - Key Worker (Critical worker) Children
 - Reception Class
 - Year 1
 - Year 6
 - Nursery (non statutory group, and social distancing harder to enforce)
- Children in the additional year groups do not attend full time during a week but instead attend on a part time basis for set days each week (whole days not half days).
- A maximum of 6 – 10 pupils work in each classroom area depending on the size of the room. Schools will define their own total capacity based on internal teaching space.
- Schools adhere to social distancing as far as possible in classrooms and school environments including at break times and lunchtimes
- Schools minimise the number of pupils that each staff member comes in to contact with each day and PPE is available if a child becomes unwell or the needs of the child dictate the use of PPE.
- Appropriate daily cleaning schedules are put in place for the learning environments and at the end of the school day.
- There is a different start and finish time for each year group to reduce the parental traffic and to encourage social distancing
- Attendance at school is not mandatory for any child but is encouraged, particularly for vulnerable groups
- Public Health England advice is followed for all staff who are shielding, vulnerable or living with someone who is shielding or extremely vulnerable

Communication with parents in Primary Schools

The LA will prepare a letter for distribution in the week before the May Bank Holiday break. This will outline the following: -

- This is a phased reopening of schools not the restart of full-time education
- Places will be limited due to the requirements of social distancing and available space in school
- Schools will use their best endeavours to manage hygiene and social distancing
- Priority for year groups will be explained.
- Schools will offer children a place depending on the space available and the priority of the year group their child is in
- Parents must inform the school if they do not wish to take up the place. They will not be penalised if they decide to keep their children at home. However, they must give the school a week's notice if they subsequently change their mind and wish for the child to have a place.
- If children have an Education Health and Care Plan the school use a risk assessment to define whether the child's needs can be as safely or more safely met at school than in the home

Secondary Schools and Academies

Secondary schools have been requested to begin a process of face to face meetings with Year 10 and Year 12 pupils from 1st June. Secondary schools have indicated that they have plans in place to make their own local arrangements in line with staffing availability and social distancing guidelines. This will allow for regular meetings with pupils and, if required, small group lessons. Online learning and other EdTech solutions will be used to continue learning remotely for the majority of children.

PPE

Although guidance states PPE is not required in most teaching situations, it is clear that PPE should be used where personal care is required or where the needs of a child require it. A number of schools have indicated that they have (or can source) appropriate PPE available for use; however, the Council is also looking to create PPE packages for all schools to assist those unable to procure it.

Risk Assessment

The Local Authority will provide a standard risk assessment form for schools to supplement and enhance existing risk assessments.

Cleaning schedules

The Government has released guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings. In essence, normal cleaning methods do kill this virus. Cleaners, caretakers and site staff play an important role in keeping people in their buildings protected. The following guidance describes the cleaning required, the appropriate disposal of materials, the cleaning of equipment and hard surfaces, and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Classroom areas should be cleaned appropriately at the end of each day and it is important that schools endeavour to implement good hygiene routines with children throughout the school day.

Initial planning framework for schools

We have included at the end of this document an initial planning framework to assist you make local decisions for your school based on your staffing availability, school space and resource availability. These are key questions for leadership teams to work through to prepare for partial reopening in June.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we not advising primary schools to restart 4 cohorts of children on 1st June?

The 1st June marks the beginning of a process and is the start date for a phased return to schooling for some children. A phased return will allow schools to gradually manage social distancing needs and staffing availability. Planning indicates that 6-10 children in one classroom area allows for proper distancing and a safer learning environment for children and staff.

Why are we recommending full day and not half day attendance for Rec, Y1 and Y6 pupils?

Half day attendances would mean that a classroom could be reused in the afternoon. However, this would require full cleaning at lunchtime. Equally parents will be able to manage any work commitments better if pupils are in school for a whole day.

Why are nursery children not a higher priority?

Schooling is non-statutory for this age group. The children will not be able to manage social distancing and will need to be taught in smaller groups with higher staffing ratios. As local childcare settings will also be opening from June 1st it will be possible for parents to access childcare if they need it.

What about special schools and focus provisions?

Schools will have completed risk assessments for all of these children and will be able to advise families which children will be able to attend. You can review all age ranges of children in your special school or focus provisions rather than just looking at the age groups identified in the DfE guidance. Risk assessments will define whether whether the child's needs can be as safely or more safely met at school than in the home.

How often during the week can children in the identified year groups come in to school?

This is entirely at your discretion and is dictated by the space and staffing you have available. Plan your teaching time and classroom spaces to accommodate social distancing. This may only allow for children to be in school one or two days a week initially and it may be sensible to split the attendance of a year group across a week so that the normal class teachers get to see the whole class as a week progresses.

What about online/remote learning?

The staff who are not involved in direct teaching can still support online/remote learning. This would also be a good option for staff who are classed as shielding or extremely vulnerable.

What's the best way to manage children?

Operate each group of children in a bubble. Give them a separate arrival and departure times to other groups in the school. Keep them with their class teachers and support assistants throughout the course of the day using one learning base or outside areas.

How do we manage school meals?

There will most probably not be enough children attending school to operate a hot/cooked meal system. Initially it would be best to discuss packed lunch delivery with your catering supplier. The Edenred voucher system will continue to operate for FSM children not in school.

Who is responsible for PPE?

Schools should look to procure their own PPE. However, to assist with this the Council will look to supply schools with an initial allocation of PPE which schools can then supplement. Schools should only request PPE from the Council if they have no supply of their own. The council system will look to support schools with regular opportunities to reorder supplies if required. This will operate on a 'just in time' principle as there will not be sufficient PPE to create large stocks in schools.

What about shielding and extremely vulnerable staff?

You should find activities for these staff which allow them to work from home or away from contact with other people. More advice on this can be found [here](#). If a member of staff lives in a household with someone who is in the most vulnerable health groups, as set out in the guidance on shielding, they should only attend work if stringent social distancing can be adhered to. You should allow staff who live with someone in the most vulnerable health groups to work from home where possible.

What about staff who are pregnant?

The Royal College of Midwives has produced occupational health advice for employers and pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every pregnant worker should have a risk assessment with their manager, which may involve occupational health. Employers should modify the working environment to limit contact with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients to minimise the risk of infection as far as possible. [Click here](#).

What about staff who are vulnerable?

Guidance is clear that these staff should be able to work as long as social distancing and use of PPE is adhered to. If this is not possible then find activities for these staff which will keep them from close contact with young people or other staff. If a member of staff lives with someone in a vulnerable health group, including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting as long as and social distancing and good hand hygiene are being practiced.

Can we have staff meetings?

Yes, but do them virtually to avoid having all staff in the same room at the same time.

Should we continue with suspended restructuring processes?

We strongly advise that you do not start, or continue, any restructuring processes until September 1st as it is difficult to hold meaningful consultation during this period and any decisions Governing Body take would risk significant challenge from unions.

Will the school need to be open on the Bank Holiday and over the half term break?

The DfE have not yet published a statement on this. However, if the role of schools does from 1st June it may be sensible for schools to close to allow time for any reorganization, cleaning or other preparation work required to support increased pupils' attendance. In the first instance it would be advisable to find out whether parents will require support over half term and if there are other local provisions nearby to assist Key Workers if they require childcare before closing the school.

What action will be taken against parents who refuse to send the children to school?

None. Parents can choose to keep their children at home if they feel it will be safer for them. We will not be issuing penalty notices for the foreseeable future. If a parent wishes to change their mind after previously refusing a place then they should give you 7 days' notice. This will allow school leaders time to plan staffing accordingly.

How do we mark attendance?

Normal school attendance registers will restart on 1st June. Some schools and academies will need to work with the LA to ensure we can get the attendance data electronically during the Summer Term. We are currently seeking advice on what code to use if a parent refuses to send their child.

What about the Summer holiday period?

Again, there is no guidance or requests from the DfE about opening over the Summer period. This may change as the term progresses. We will keep you updated.

Opening schools for more children and young people: initial planning framework for Sandwell schools.



Version 1 - May 2020

We recognise that all schools are different, and it is not possible for us to set specific guidelines that could be universally applicable. Schools and trusts will need to make their own judgments on how to plan for the safe opening of their settings based on their knowledge of their school community and premises.

We have created the following framework based on the DfE guidance to help school leaders to plan the steps that leaders might need to take to open schools from 1st June or at a point in the future. The 3rd and 4th columns have been left blank for schools to insert their own information. However, it is worth noting that the opening of schools will be dependent on the five tests set by the government and any further advice received from the DfE.

Guidance on changes needed for other areas e.g. curriculum are not covered in detail in this document and will be covered in later phases of planning. A selection of Local Authority guidance sheets have recently been issued to provide support for other areas e.g. Safeguarding, Early Years etc. Electronic copies of these guidance sheets can be obtained from the School Improvement Team if required. Please contact Donna Woollery (donna_woollery@sandwell.gov.uk)

Headteachers and governors and Trusts should keep the Local Authority informed of arrangements being made and the key strategic decisions taken.

	Children and parents	Completion date	Who by
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey parents to identify likely numbers of pupils returning. • Consider in your parent survey letter what your offer will be, so parents understand what they are responding to e.g. may be different teacher, different room, within same group all the time. • Establish the numbers of 'critical' workers and vulnerable families and encourage the children from those groups who have not attended so far to return to school. • Agree required staffing resource and approach and liaise with the L.A. on your plans. • Schools should try to offer full day places for eligible children from the 1st June in line with the guidance agreed with JEG (Joint Executive group). This may mean that schools only have physical space and / or staffing for one or two priority groups and may need to offer a rota system. Headteachers should make the best decision that they can according to their individual circumstances. 		
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Special Schools, Specialist Post-16 and Hospital Schools only, agree which additional pupils will return irrespective of year groups to achieve a phased return. • Consult with the Local Authority around transport considerations and ensure parents and carers are aware of any changes. 		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan content and timing of communications to parents and pupils (include attendance expectations and other specific things that parents should do to help prepare returning pupils, for example, arrangements for drop-off/collection). • Add message and expectations to the LA welcome letter to go to all parents. • Identify allocation of classes, timetables, parent routines on/off site, communication methods to school, payments arrangements, lunchtime arrangements/offer, parent reinforcement of children social distancing. • Ensure that everyone is clear about the school's social distancing arrangements 		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to resume taking attendance registers. • Encourage vulnerable children to re-attend through phone calls/letter. • Continue to complete the online educational setting status form to provide daily updates on how many children and staff are in school. • Identify code to be used with those that are absent by choice or through shielding etc. 		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan how children of critical workers and vulnerable children will be accommodated alongside returning year groups (unless they are extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding, or medical advice or further guidance suggests they should not attend). • Organise timetables and allocate staffing in appropriate space/rooms. • Consider risk assessments for medical needs children e.g. asthma. 		

6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree what returning support is needed/available for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged children (including any dual-registered students) • Put in place provision for the return of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in conjunction with families and other agencies. • Engage with partners who will help to provide that SEND support, for example, local authorities. • Heads/SENDCO to initiate contact with inclusion support to clarify support. • Head to contact PRU to clarify safeguarding arrangements, share documents including risk assessments and confirming who is responsible for attendance. 		
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and agree what safeguarding provision is needed in school to support returning children (e.g. where new issues have arisen, or existing ones escalated) • Consider any necessary changes and referrals as more children return to school, including those with problems accessing online offers. • Check for revised protocols from your local authority and update safeguarding policy if necessary. • Ensure all child protection records are up to date and quality assure safeguarding processes. • Check contact details are still up to date (e.g. be aware of welfare and housing changes). • Share safeguarding records on a 'need to know' basis if new staff are teaching CP children. • Consider how to share 'social distancing' approach with pupils before arrival and upon arrival in school. 		
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update behaviour policies to reflect the new rules and routines necessary to reduce risk in your setting. • Communicate behaviour routine changes to school staff, students and parents. • Review school uniform expectations. • Communicate amended school uniform policy as families may not be able/wish to purchase uniform • Add an addendum to behaviour policy where needed (e.g. walk on left). 		
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with your catering supplier to ensure meals are available for all children in school. • Consider your arrangements for meals for those year groups still out of school and eligible for benefits related free school meals. • Communicate with families as to the updated offer re meals. • Communicate to families regarding drinks during the day (e.g. water bottles to go home and be washed, before returned the following day). 		
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after-school clubs can operate (in line with the implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings guidance), and under what terms. • Ensure private before and after school provision meet safeguarding, guidance and current risk assessments. • Communicate to parents the availability of wrap around care. 		

	Staff (teachers, support staff and non-teaching staff)	Completion date	Who by
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify staff who can't return to school at this point (for example, those who are extremely clinically vulnerable or those who are clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to on site). Consider the school work that staff can do when working from home (for example, supporting remote education). Identify staff who can return to school and ensure that key roles are covered.(refer to section 2 of the DfE Planning guide for primary schools 14.5.20.) Ensure that staff medical and emergency contact details are up to date. Follow HR advice regarding those who are extremely clinically vulnerable or those who are clinically vulnerable or living with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to on site. 		
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide content and timing of staff communication(s) including if staff attend school in advance of pupils returning. Communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allocation of essential staff (e.g. DSL, SENco, site officer, cleaners etc.) Child Protection issues Procedures movement around school share risk assessments curriculum planning and expectations routine changes (e.g. a brief staff handbook) Model to children the correct procedures to be followed in school. If staff visit school prior to pupils returning, use this time to familiarise themselves with for example, one-way systems, toileting etc. 		
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider different options if necessary staffing levels can't be maintained (including school leaders and key staff like designated safeguarding leads and first aid providers). Ensure that cover options are available should a member of staff become ill. Update governors and contact the Local Authority to facilitate other options. 		
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree any flexible working arrangements needed to support any changes to your usual patterns (for example, staggered start/end times). Update and involve governors to ensure equality. 		
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree staff workload expectations (including for leaders). Update and involve governors to ensure equality. 		

6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide what staff training (either delivered remotely or in school) is needed to implement any changes the school plans to make (for example, risk management, curriculum, behaviour, safeguarding). Identify and share the health and safety procedures in school for staff and children (e.g. two metre distances, first-aid etc). Identify children who will require medical support and ensure appropriate numbers of staff are trained. Review intimate care policy and medical health care plans (if relevant). Implement training for support staff to ensure they are up to date on the curriculum, planning and delivery, under the supervision of a teacher. 		
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place measures to check on staff wellbeing (including for leaders). Plan regular contact with staff in and out of school (consider using performance management leaders to undertake this). Share information on staff noticeboards and intranets about how to access support. 		
Protective measures and hygiene (to be read in conjunction with the Local Authority agreed Health and Safety/Public Health advice).		Completion date	Who by
1.	<p>Read the guidance on implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings and think about how this will be implemented in your school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update health and safety policy and risk assessments as appropriate. Carry out a visual inspection of the site and buildings Ensure all compliance checks are up to date Water hygiene , if a full flushing regime has not been maintained or the hot water system have been isolated a full hygiene test will be required Review lockdown, fire and emergency evacuation procedures to ensure social distancing maintained, test any new procedures 		
2.	<p>Decide the physical and organisational structures needed to ensure social distancing, limit risks and movement around the building(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> entry and exit points class sizes and classroom layouts, staggered starts and end of day routines, including where parents stand break and lunchtimes including lunch queues, use of communal areas such as cloakrooms, halls, libraries, playgrounds. how to line up for movement around the school shared resources – toys, books, practical equipment <p>Agree how safety measures and messages will be implemented and displayed around school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is supervising entry and exit points? 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are clear signs up showing parents, children and staff routes around school and clear expectations? 		
3.	<p>Decide what an enhanced cleaning schedule looks like and how it will be implemented in your school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will areas be cleaned more frequently – e.g. hard surfaces such as doors, cupboards, between groups using a shared area, toilets, computer keyboards? • Who will empty bins more frequently? • Who will do the extra cleaning? Are there sufficient cleaning staff available to meet increased demand? • Are sufficient cleaning supplies in place? Maintain higher than normal stocks to ensure deep cleans when needed. • Who is keeping an oversight of cleaning? 		
4.	<p>Decide the approach to enhance hygiene (for example, toilet use, hand washing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handwashing- on entry to school, before and after eating, after sneezing or coughing and when else will children and staff be expected to wash hands? • Access to sinks, soap, hand drying facilities or hand sanitizer in classrooms • Procedures for using the toilets to avoid overcrowding • posters (for example, to encourage consistency on hygiene and keeping to own group) • soap for sinks, and where there is no sink nearby, hand sanitiser in rooms/learning environments • disposable paper towels • cleaning products • sanitising wipes for wiping some equipment • lidded bins • tape for cordoning off areas and marking floors • the availability of soap and hot water in every toilet (and if possible in classrooms) • the location of hand sanitiser stations, for example at the school entrance for pupils and any other person passing into the school to use, and their replenishment • the location of lidded bins in classrooms and in other key locations around the site for the disposal of tissues and any other waste, their double bagging and emptying • ensuring you have a good supply of disposable tissues to implement the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach in each classroom and enough to top up regularly 		
5.	<p>Plan the school level response should someone fall ill on site (in line with relevant government guidance).</p>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolate child until collected- who will supervise and where? Will PPE be required for supervising adult? Who will clean the isolation area immediately after child goes home ? Communicate with parents so they can be extra vigilant – how? What? 		
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make arrangements for the very small number of cases where personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies will be needed: if your staff provide intimate care for any children or young people and for cases where a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. Which children / staff may need PPE due to specific needs? Are there adequate supplies? Who maintains these? 		
	Pupil wellbeing	Completion date	Who by
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan likely mental health, personal hygiene, pastoral or wider wellbeing support for children returning to school (for example, bereavement support) e.g. Book apt with Ed Psych: See C Ward on 13.5.20, use Healthy Minds – Resilience and Coping Module / Or Emily Morgan. 		
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss with the Local Authority what wider support services are available – See above (resources will be signposted under the 8 Emotional Chartermark steps and forwarded out shortly) 		
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with your Local Authority to secure services for additional support and early help where possible (for example, around anxiety, mental health, behaviour, social care, or changes to mobility), (See above) How these might apply to pupils and students who were not previously affected. (see above) 		
	Learning	Completion date	Who by
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree what learning is appropriate (including the relationship between face-to-face and remote education) 		
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify curriculum priorities – what are you going to cover between now and end of term? 		
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree revised expectations and required adjustments in practical lessons, and any approaches to 'catch up' support. 		
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with parents which curriculum areas will be taught either at school or online, so that they can support at home. 		
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Local Authority or Trust (and where applicable NHS CCG) and families to identify what provision can be reasonably provided for pupils in line with EHC plans. 		

6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree the system by which you offer an ongoing learning offer for eligible pupils who can't attend school, as well as offer for those that continue to be out of school. 		
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the staff working from home be allocated to deliver learning remotely? 		
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate any arrangements for learning at home, including online learning, with parents/guardians. 		
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree ongoing approach for learning offer for vulnerable children and children of critical workers who are in school but not in the returning year groups. 		
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For younger children, the resources made available for child-initiated learning should be carefully considered. Refer to the Sandwell Early Years document: 'Implementing protective measures and actions in education and child care settings' 		
	Other considerations -	Completion date	Who by
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with other school based-provision as necessary (for example, nursery, SEN unit) to ensure policies are aligned where appropriate and then ratify amended versions 		
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree an approach to any scheduled or ongoing building works and ensure Covid-19 risk assessments are taken into consideration. 		
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan arrangements with your suppliers and check they are following appropriate social distancing and hygiene measures (for example, food suppliers, grounds maintenance, transport providers), including when in school. Communicate with office staff to implement plans. Limit the number of external visitors to the school during school hours. 		
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the impact on staff and pupils with protected characteristics, including race and disability, in developing your approach e.g. ensuring vulnerable groups working at home have access to online learning and appropriate resources 		
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a plan so all children at home are communicated with on a regular basis, suited to individual need and concerns – e.g. vulnerable may be daily depending upon CP plans etc. Decide on what and how you will communicate with parents of pupils who are not in school, over time 		
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember social distancing, regular cleaning routines and handwashing protocols are paramount to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both staff and children. 		

COVID-19: Checklist & model risk assessment for reopening of school premise after lockdown.

Schools Safety Guide

Document information

Document title	COVID-19: Checklist & model risk assessment for reopening of school premise after lockdown SSG		
Owner	SMBC - Corporate Health & Safety Unit		
Status	Live	Version	1
Effective from	15 th May 2020	Approved on	15 th May 2020
Last updated	15 th May 2020	Last updated by	HSU/TH
Review date	1 st June 2020		
Purpose	To give schools SLT direction, guidance and advise on how to ensure schools are safely re-opened following the COVID-19 lockdown period		

Introduction

The Government are now moving to a new phase in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The expectation being that businesses will now start to reopen, and employees will start returning to the workplace. All this is with the caveat that it is safe to do so, and that the “R number” (rate by which an infected person transmits to others) does not significantly increase.

Schools have been included in this phase and asked to reopen to certain year groups on June 1st, as part of a staggered return to full occupancy.

This school safety guide (SSG) should be read in conjunction with the latest Government guidelines for schools that are re-opening during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular;

- [Opening schools and educational settings to more pupils from 1 June: guidance for parents and carers.](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): implementing protective measures in education and childcare settings](#)
- [Actions for education and childcare settings to prepare for wider opening from 1 June 2020](#)

It is anticipated that the Government will be updating these guides and producing additional guidance over the coming days and weeks. Therefore, it is important that school leadership make regular visits to the [Government website](#) that is aimed specifically at schools and other educational settings.

Checklist & Risk Assessment

This SSG comes in two distinct parts;

Checklist

[Part 1](#) is a “checklist” prompt form to assist schools in ensuring all health & safety issues have been considered prior to reopening of the premises. This should be completed prior to the risk assessment.

Further guidance on the statutory testing of plant & equipment can be found in the [school premise logbook](#).

Template model risk assessment

[Part 2](#) is a template/model risk assessment that schools can adapt and adopt. As with all our model risk assessments, any red font will need to be read, amended where appropriate to ensure it is school specific.

Further guidance on the risk assessment process can be found in the [Risk Assessment SMP](#).

Further information

If you require any further information, please contact the health & safety unit via our shared email address: health_safety@sandwell.gov.uk.

Part 2: H&S Checklist

Conducted by:

Date:

Areas to consider	Y	N	N/A	Evidence/Comments	Further actions?	Who & When?
Health & safety/statutory issues						
Have all health & safety compliance checks of plant & equipment been completed prior to opening? (This can be done through referencing of the School Premise Logbook or equivalent)						
Are there sufficient numbers of staff available in safety critical roles? (e.g. fire marshals, first aid personnel etc)						
Will a test of emergency procedures (e.g. fire drill) be carried out in the first week of school reopening?						
Social distancing issues						
Have small class groups been organised as per Government guidance?						

Areas to consider	Y	N	N/A	Evidence/Comments	Further actions?	Who & When?
Have classrooms and other learning environments been organised to allow for social distancing?						
Has consideration been given to arranging which lessons or classroom activities could take place outdoors?						
Has movement around the school been reduced? (e.g. use of timetable, selection of classroom etc)						
Are there adequate signs/floor markings (e.g. one way, foot marks, hazard tape etc) in key areas to clearly identify the social distancing rules?						
Have assembly groups been staggered?						
Have break times (including lunch) been staggered?						
Have drop off and collection times been staggered?						

Areas to consider	Y	N	N/A	Evidence/Comments	Further actions?	Who & When?
Have parents drop off and pick up protocols been revised to minimise adult to adult contact?						
Have all unnecessary items been removed from classrooms and stored elsewhere?						
Infection control issues						
Have alternative arrangements been made for those adults/children who fall into the extremely vulnerable or vulnerable categories?						
Have all soft furnishing/toys etc that are hard to clean been removed?						
Has a “deep clean” been conducted of any areas of the schools that have been out of action/mothballed since the lockdown?						
Is there an enhanced cleaning regime of common contact points in place (e.g. door handles, push bars, desks, whiteboards, etc)?						

Areas to consider	Y	N	N/A	Evidence/Comments	Further actions?	Who & When?
Are additional cleaning materials (e.g. wipes) available for use of shared equipment (e.g. kettle, microwave, printers, computer keyboards, pens/pencils, paint brushes, etc)?						
Is there a good supply of liquid soap and alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) available for pupils and adults?						
Is there a ready supply of tissues for pupils and adults?						
Is contaminated waste disposed of regularly and appropriately?						
Is an isolation room available should an adult or pupil become symptomatic whilst at school?						
Communication of Plans						
Have parents been informed of the drop-off and pick up protocols?						
Are parents and young people aware of recommendations on transport to and from education or childcare setting (including avoiding peak times)?						

Areas to consider	Y	N	N/A	Evidence/Comments	Further actions?	Who & When?
Are parents clear that they cannot gather at entrance gates or doors, or enter the site (unless they have a pre-arranged appointment, which should be conducted safely)?						
Are parents clear that if their child needs to be accompanied to the education or childcare setting, only one parent should attend?						
Have staff been briefed about the plans (for example, safety measures, timetable changes and staggered arrival and departure times), including discussing whether training would be helpful?						

Part 2: Template /Model RA

Risk Assessment for: **Re-opening of Premise after COVID-19 lockdown**

School:

Assessment Date:

Name of Assessor(s):

Assessment Ref No:

Risk Matrix scoring guide:

Likelihood	
1	Very unlikely
2	Unlikely
3	Likely
4	Very likely
5	Certain

Severity:	
1	No Lost time
2	Under 7-day injury or illness
3	Over 7-day injury or illness (RIDDOR)
4	Specified injury or illness (RIDDOR)
5	Fatality, disabling injury or illness

High (15-25)	These risks are unacceptable; significant improvements in risk control are required. The activity should be halted with immediate effect until risk controls are identified/implemented that reduce the risk to an acceptable level
Medium (5-12)	Additional control measures should be identified and implemented to reduce the risks associated with the activity or workplace so far as reasonably practicable
Low (1-4)	Minimal control measures are required to be implemented to satisfy the level of risk. Maintain current arrangements for risk control

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	

Model risk assessments MUST be made school specific by editing/deleting any part(s) that do not apply and adding additional risks/hazards/controls specific to the section where appropriate.

Please delete this row once you have adapted this model assessment

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
Utilities, plant & equipment has not been inspected / serviced within the recommended timescales	Teaching, non-teaching staff, children, cleaners, cooks, parents, visitors, contractors Legionella, electrocution, CO ² exposure, burns, cuts, bruises, broken bones etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has a scheme of works whereby competent contractors are engaged to carry out statutory testing/inspection of all plant and equipment. Pre-use visual checks are carried out by the user on all equipment. All little used outlets of water have been regularly/will be flushed prior to school reopening. Any plant/equipment that has been "mothballed" during the lockdown, will be/has been inspected/checked by a competent person before coming back into use, and before reopening the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where extensions/exemptions have been granted by the HSE, a specific risk assessment for continued use of the plant/equipment has been completed. Any defects or faults are reported, and equipment taken out of use. <p>Refer to Premise Management SSG and School Premise Logbook for further guidance.</p>		2	4	8	
Lack of persons in safety critical roles (e.g. first aiders, fire	Teaching, non-teaching staff, children, cleaners,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire risk assessment kept under constant review. First aid needs assessment regularly reviewed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire drill practiced first week back to ensure school can be evacuated safely (considering social distancing at assembly 	HT – 1 st week of June.	1	5	5	

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
marshals, etc) due to self-isolation and/or shielding.	cooks, parents, visitors, contractors Illness, infection, fatality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of pupils and adults on site will not exceed the number of persons required to carry out safety critical roles as per the relevant assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> point) with new working arrangements. If numbers of those in safety critical roles falls below that required by the assessments, then overall school numbers will be decreased for the time they are off/until substitutes can be trained. <p>Refer to Fire Safety SSG & First Aid SSG for further guidance</p>	SLT – as and when need arises				
Unable to meet social distancing rules and the virus is transmitted from person to person	Teaching, non-teaching staff, children, cleaners, cooks, parents, visitors, contractors Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School drop-off/collection times are staggered to minimise numbers. Drop-off/collection zones have been clearly marked with tape/paint to encourage social distancing. Separate entrance and exit routes are in place. Smaller class sizes, re-arranged furniture (preferably not face to face seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When weather allows, lessons will be conducted outside of the classroom. Message sent to parents prior to school opening that outlines the new regime (e.g. maximum 1 adult per child) and importance of them sticking to the protocols. 	Teaching staff – daily HT – prior to 1 st June	3	4	12	

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
		<p>arrangements) and clear markings/signage to allow for "social distancing" space between pupils and adults during lessons wherever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly groups are staggered. • Break and lunch times are staggered and supervised to minimise numbers and allow for social distancing. • One-way system in place around the school to minimise close contact between adults and pupils. • Foot marks and/or tape has been used in key areas of the school (e.g. dining hall) to show "social distancing" lengths and no access areas. • Playground has been marked to encourage social distancing. 						

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents/carers can only visit the school by appointment. Regulate access to areas where it is difficult to maintain social distancing (Toilets, stairwells, storage rooms etc) limit to 1-person access at a time for example Communicate new ways of working to all staff, through posters, briefings etc. 						
Lack of hand and respiratory hygiene practices and/or facilities	As above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff and pupils made aware of the “catch it, bin it, kill it” protocol via signage posters around the school. All toilets and handwashing stations have liquid soap available. Additional hand hygiene stations with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) available at all entry points and other key areas around the school. Use of e-bug learning resources to promote and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily briefings during assembly to remind pupils of the importance of good hygiene practices. Regular checks made to ensure there is sufficient stock of soap. Regular checks made to ensure there is sufficient ABHR each day. Windows to be opened each morning in classrooms to allow for a free flow of fresh air. 	HT – Daily Caretaker / Premise Manager	2	4	8	

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
		<p>teach pupils the importance of good hygiene practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception desk/area has Perspex screen/barrier. • Enhanced/regular cleaning schedule in place that concentrates on common touch areas (e.g. door handles, bannisters, etc) • Supply of detergent and/or antibacterial wipes available for adults and pupils to clean any areas/equipment they occupy/use before and after each use. • Provide wipes for cleaning shared equipment after each use (printers, staff room equipment - kettles, toasters etc) • Any contaminated waste (used tissues etc) is disposed of appropriately (double bagged and held for 72 hours prior to 	<p>Refer to Government guidance on Health protection in schools and other childcare facilities for further information.</p>					

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
		putting in the bin) and regularly taken away.						
New way of working (including working from home) leading to feeling a lack of supervision, interaction, support and social isolation.	Teaching, non-teaching staff, pupils. Anxiety, depression, stress, poor mental health & wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep in touch (KIT) meetings regularly organised to ensure staff are supported. Managers to ensure employees are aware of the following advice: Ensure that all adults have regular breaks and are encouraged to pay regard to their work/life balance. Changes in new school protocols explained to children and individual support made available when/if needed. Arrangements in place for employees to access a confidential counselling service. Schools stress risk assessment has been reviewed regularly throughout the pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Stress SSG for more information. 		3	4	12	

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
Inability to maintain social distancing when dealing with accidents	Teaching, non-teaching staff, children, cleaners, cooks, parents, visitors, contractors Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of the injured/affected to be prioritised during incidents • 2m social distancing is not required when attending to emergency situations • People aiding others during an emergency should pay particular attention to sanitation immediately after the situation (washing hands). 	•					
Child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus and requires personal care.	Teaching, non-teaching staff, first aider, etc Illness – flu like symptoms through to fatality.	<p>PPE is only needed in a very small number of cases including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if a child, young person or other learner becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if 2 meters cannot be maintained. • If contact with the child or young person is necessary, 	•					

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how?	CONTROL MEASURES (existing workplace precautions/risk control systems in place)	What further action is required?	By Who and When?	Residual Risk rating			Date completed
					L	S	R	
		<p>then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn 						
Other school specific		•	•					
Other school specific		•	•					
Other school specific		•	•					
Other school specific		•	•					

Assessment reviewed [Date]:	Reviewed by [Name]:	Comments:
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My Ref: CW/DC

To: Parents and Carers

Date: 18 May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Starting the Phased Re-opening of Schools

You will be aware from the news that the Government has announced the phased reopening for schools from 1 June 2020. In Sandwell, we have been looking at how this will be achieved and have worked with our schools and academies to agree a common approach. Schools have reviewed the requirements for social distancing, hygiene and cleaning required daily as well as organisational changes they may need to make to the school day to open.

June 1st is the start of a process for reopening and, initially, not all children will be able to start on a full-time basis. The number of children in a school at any one time will be dictated by the size of the classrooms and the availability of staff. To maintain social distancing normal sized classrooms can only hold 6 - 10 pupils at a time. If your child is in Secondary school then the Government has requested that only those in Year 10 and Year 12 are invited individually or in small groups to begin face to face meetings with staff to assist them with their learning. Each school or academy will devise a rota for children to attend and will contact you to tell you when this will be. In the main, all children will continue to do most of their work from home.

Primary schools have been asked by Government to open to a number of year groups, Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6. However, due to the space available in each Primary school, it is not possible to accommodate all children from these year groups at the same time. Therefore, Primary schools will prioritise pupils in the following order:

- Vulnerable children
- Key Worker Children
- Reception
- Year 1
- Year 6
- Nursery

Primary schools will inform you of the arrangements they are making and will let you know which days your children can attend school from 1 June. Children in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 will need to continue to remain at home until Government guidance changes.

Whilst the Government is encouraging families to take up the places offered by schools you can choose to keep your children at home and will not be penalised for doing so at this time. Schools will make every effort to keep children in a safe environment, following Government guidance; however, I need to be clear that schools cannot guarantee there will be no transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

We have included a frequently asked questions sheet with this letter to help you understand the position from 1 June. Your schools will be contact you shortly to inform you of their individual arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Ward
Director of Education, Skills and Employment

Which years groups can start to return to school from 1 June 2020?

The Government has asked that schools start the phased return of Y12, Y10, Y6, Y1, Reception and Nursery children. Schools will manage this gradually and not all children will be in school full time as they are limited by space and staffing availability. Schools will write to parents to let them know what the arrangements are.

What about Key Worker children and vulnerable children?

Schools will continue to prioritise these children ahead of all others. This may limit the spaces available to children in some year groups.

Which additional children will be prioritised first?

Secondary schools will manage a timetabled rota for Year 10 and Year 12 pupils to attend. Primary schools will prioritise children in this order:-

- Vulnerable children
- Key Worker Children
- Reception
- Year 1
- Year 6
- Nursery

Will my child be in school full time?

Key Worker children and vulnerable children will continue to be offered full time places in both Primary and Secondary schools. All other year groups will be on a phased return. In many Primary schools this is unlikely to be a full-time place due to space and staffing availability and schools will offer places for priority year groups first. Schools may have to operate a rota system for children to accommodate them across the course of a school week.

What happens if I do not want to take up the school place?

Your school will write out to you to ask you if you would like to take a school place from 1 June. You do not have to accept the place. If you do not accept the place it will be offered to a pupil in another priority year group. If you change your mind then you must give your school at least one week's notice as they may have to make staffing changes to accommodate extra children.

Will I get fined for not sending my child to school?

You do not have to send your child to school during this pandemic. There are no plans to fine parents of children who do not attend at the present time.

How will schools keep children safe?

Schools are following National Guidance produced by the Department for Education and Public Health England. They will operate social distancing (where possible), keep children in small groups throughout the day, increase cleaning schedules and ask children to follow more stringent hygiene routines. Schools may also stagger the start and finish of the school day to reduce the number of adults arriving and departing at the same time.

Is it possible to manage the youngest children to follow social distancing rules?

The Government accepts this is very difficult. Young children naturally want to play and work together. Initially, and for as long as is necessary, children will only be able to interact with a small group of other children. Schools will do their best given the space and resources they have available to manage children.

What happens if my child has special needs?

Schools will have completed an individual risk assessment for each child. This will be used to make a decision on whether it is safe for your child to return to school or whether they will be safer at home. Schools will talk with you directly to discuss your child's needs.

Will teachers and staff have to use PPE?

If social distancing can be managed then staff will not generally use PPE. If a child becomes unwell and is displaying symptoms of COVID-19, staff will have to isolate that child from others and use PPE to protect themselves. In some circumstances, for example where a child needs personal care or has specific additional needs, staff may use PPE whilst they support a child.

My child is worried about coming back to school, how can I help them?

Talk to your child in a positive way about school, seeing friends and teachers again. Help them understand how social distancing works and make sure that they can wash their hands properly by themselves.

Will schools be teaching the National Curriculum when children return?


No. Schools will initially focus on ensuring children feel safe and anxiety free. They will deliver a curriculum designed to support children back into school routines and classroom learning. Teachers will use this time to work out what learning support children need and how they can support them further.

Will schools continue to set work or activities for children at home

Schools will continue to provide some remote learning or activities for children to do at home. This will vary from school to school depending on whether they operate, for example, an online learning platform or have a website with suggested learning activities.

REPORT TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY BOARD

22 June 2020

Subject:	Youth Facilities Working Group Report
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Joyce Underhill - Cabinet Member Best Start in Life
Director(s):	Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer - Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Deb Breedon Democratic Services Officer Deborah_breedon@sandwell.gov.uk
Lead Member	Councillor Rajbir Singh, Chair -Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board:

1. Consider the report of the Youth Facilities Scrutiny Review Working Group and to agree recommendations (set out in Appendix 1) for referral to Cabinet;
2. Consider the Review Process Evaluation Summary (Appendix 2) and refer comments to the Scrutiny Review Working Group;
3. Recommend to the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economic Growth that young people are represented on Town Deal Boards and that young people are consulted on the development of Town Investment Plans in Summer 2020.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board established a working group in January 2020 to carry out a Review of Youth Facilities in Sandwell. The focus of the working group was to find out what young people have, need and want, and to gather information to inform a Youth Facilities Sufficiency Strategy for Sandwell.
- 1.2 The working group tested several working practices during the review which were evaluated and will inform future working practices. Feedback from the evaluation of scrutiny review process will be considered and comments referred to the Scrutiny Review Working Group.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 High quality play and youth services improve the life chances of children and young people by enabling them to develop the confidence and aspirations for a successful adulthood. It is also acknowledged that children and young people have a right to enjoy their childhood. The services benefit whole communities, local neighbourhoods, families and individual children and young people.
- 2.2 Reviewing Youth Facilities, developing a sufficiency strategy to shape future services aligns to ambition 10 that Sandwell has a reputation for getting things done, where all local partners are focussed on what really matters in people's lives and communities.
- 2.3 As we start to consider Reset and Recovery post-Covid19, there are opportunities to use the information and recommendations from this report to influence the future shape of the Council's services.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Youth Facilities across the Country have been significantly depleted over the last ten-years, however, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has managed to maintain some important services for children and young people that many other local authorities have not managed to protect.
- 3.2 The Youth Facilities Working Group was established by the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board, it consisted of four members of the Board: Councillors Singh (Chair), Chidley, McVittie and Preece. Members worked independently, and as a group, to gather evidence, supported by a core officer group and the Democratic Services Team.

- 3.3 The rationale for establishing a Youth Facilities Working Group was the need to consider current local youth provision and the role and sufficiency of youth work in line with the statutory guidance for Local Authorities.
- 3.4 The Working Group conducted the review and evaluated the process that it had followed. The Working Group gathered evidence to understand more about what youth facilities Sandwell currently has, what it needs and what people want.
- 3.5 The Working Group used a project plan which tested a range of methods to gather evidence including desk top research, #Mychillzone survey on social media, visits, forums, a question time session with [SHAPE youth forum](#) members and meetings.
- 3.6 The report provides a snap shot of youth facilities in Sandwell, based on the evidence gathered from January to March 2020 which aims to inform service shaping, resource requirements and future youth facilities provision.
- 3.7 The seven recommendations arising from a findings and conclusions workshop focused on:
- need for better information and communication;
 - young people want Wi-Fi and a place of their own;
 - consider transport to youth facilities for vulnerable young people;
 - future funding;
 - sufficiency of Sandwell Youth Offer;
 - youth worker capacity;
 - involving young people in decision making.

The experience of delivering youth services during the Covid19 lockdown have also helped to inform the recommendations in this report.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Recognising and protecting the future of these valuable services is important for the children and families of Sandwell and the Working Group highlighted the importance of multi-agency working and changing what we do to meet the changing environment and needs of young people.
- 4.2 The Working Group acknowledged that this is an environment of increasing demand and resource pressures, the services cannot be 'everything to everyone' and some prioritisation would be needed, especially in light of external factors, the Covid-19 pandemic, lockdown and uncertainty of grant funding from external sources would have extreme impact on Council resources.

- 4.3 The evidence gathered in the Working Group report also provides information about youth facilities in Sandwell to strengthen the Sandwell's Town Investment Plans and maximise funding from the Governments [Towns Fund](#). Town Deal Boards for each of the three selected Towns - West Bromwich, Rowley Regis and Smethwick will develop and agree a Town Investment Plan (TIP) for summer 2020. Government Investments in social infrastructure – town centres, community spaces, schools, libraries – can create spaces for people to meet and deliver projects that build on a spirit of pride that is often strong in towns and will give a strong foundation to develop skills and health. The prospectus for Towns Fund highlights, in the skills and enterprise infrastructure section, that places should also consider how they might provide additional support to young people to help them access traineeships or apprenticeships so that they can access and progress in work, especially for those young people at risk of leaving schools and being NEET (not in education or employment or training).
- 4.4 The Covid19 lockdown period has also demonstrated that good quality youth work in parks and on streets is also important. During the lockdown, detached youth work teams have been present in all of Sandwell's parks on a daily basis, meeting young people not normally involved in the youth service, the majority of whom have said that they would like to be involved in youth service activities in the future.

5. **Evaluating the scrutiny review process**

- 5.1 The approach used by the Working Group throughout the review was to 'shine a spotlight' or 'take a snapshot' of a specific topic within a specified timescale.
- 5.2 Key elements of the approach included looking at a specific topic, providing clarity on the current situation, identifying gaps in provision, looking at implications such as resource and capacity and informing service planning, future proof services and ensure decisions are aligning to the Vision 2030.
- 5.3 The final steps of the project plan for the Scrutiny Working Group was to evaluate the process they had followed. A google evaluation form was circulated and completed by Members.
- 5.4 Feedback received about the process proved very encouraging and indicates that the scrutiny review process is a successful tool for future scrutiny work. The feedback received is attached for information. (Appendix 2).

5.5 Further scrutiny of issues identified, outside the focus of the review, during the process will not be lost, they will inform the Scrutiny Work Programme for the Boards.

6 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

6.1 Consultation with public, partners, young people and voluntary sector was carried out during the evidence gathering process of the review. Further detail is set out in the report of the Working Group.

7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

7.1 The purpose of the review is to consider whether current youth facilities meet the needs of young people and if the Council should consider alternative options.

8 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Youth Service is funded through an SMBC base budget and income generated from a variety of sources.

9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 There are no current considerations.

9.2 In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Cabinet is requested to respond to the recommendations of the scrutiny board within two months, setting out any approved recommendations, and how they will be implemented.

10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 The Youth Services provides targeted group work relevant to protected characteristics.

11 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11.1 There are no current requirements for a data protection impact assessment to be carried out relevant to this report.

12 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

12.1 There are no crime and disorder risks specifically relating to this report, however, it must be noted that the impact of youth engagement in positive activities has implications for crime reduction.

13 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 13.1 The sustainability of services is reliant on the continued provision of funding for services, some of which are directly funded through government grants or traded income.
- 13.2 There continues to be increasing demands on Play and Youth Services to support community and borough wide events. In particular, the Youth Service is called upon to provide support to local activities by providing the climbing wall, youth buses and provision of live music from Coneygre Arts Centre. In addition, there is pressure to deliver the Youth Offer in some towns where there is a shortfall in voluntary sector provision.
- 13.3 Enhanced Youth Support has proven to be an integral part of the Youth Service offer. This service provides support to both individuals and groups through targeted interventions and referrals are received through a number of partners including schools, COGs, Police and Children's Centres. The success has been such that demand is beginning to exceed capacity.

14 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

- 14.1 Play and Youth services that benefit the wellbeing of children and young people are a vital component of successful lives and contribute to social value within Sandwell's communities.

15 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

- 15.1 There are high demands on the youth buses. The double decker bus is 20 years old and given its age is prone to regular breakdown during the winter months. To replace the bus and fully kit it out would require an investment of up to £200,000.
- 15.2 The Youth Service has operational management responsibility of Coneygre Arts Centre and Malthouse Stables Outdoor Education Centre. These centres both have income targets which contribute to the core budget of the Service.

16. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 16.1 The report of the Youth Facilities Review Working Group is attached (Appendix 1). The report details the evidence gathered, findings and conclusions of the Working Group and the recommendations to be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

- 16.2 The Evaluation of the process undertaken is attached (Appendix 2). The methods used and feedback from working group members will inform the development and future working practices for the scrutiny function.
- 16.3 The experiences of the Covid19 lockdown, and engagement with young people through detached youth work during that time, has reinforced the recommendations in this report.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board 18.03.2019 - Youth Service 2017/18 [Report](#)

18. APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – Youth Facilities Review Report

Appendix 2 – Evaluation Feedback – Scrutiny Review Process

Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer - Surjit Tour
Executive Director of Children's Services – Lesley Hagger



Youth Facilities Work Group



Councillor Rajbir Singh (Chair)



Councillor Jenny Chidley



Councillor Richard McVittie



Councillor Liam Preece

Review of Youth Facilities in Sandwell

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1.0 Introduction from Chair

The 'best start for all our children' is vital for a healthy and thriving future community in Sandwell. I hope everyone will agree with this statement and take action to turn this aspiration into a reality in Sandwell.

From the outset, the overriding purpose of reviewing our youth facilities was to ensure that young people received the best possible support and services that the council and its partners can provide within a limited cash envelope.

I am very grateful to Sandwell Council officers and councillors, who engaged our fantastic young people, because they are best placed to know what our communities need and take decisions about how best to organise vital services for young people.

The Scrutiny Review Group has acted as an advocate for young people living in Sandwell and provided honest and constructive challenge during this review. Without urgent action to examine our existing youth services, we are at danger of providing services that are not relevant to young people for the longer term and risk a lost generation with nowhere to turn.

Youth Work is more than simply being in spaces where young people are, or may be, and providing something for them to do. It is an important distinction to make and to recognise this when making decisions about the purpose and functions of Sandwell's Youth Service.

We carried out the review of Youth Facilities across Sandwell to ensure that young people's perspective led our future planning.

The impact of ten years of budget cuts is a reduction in youth facilities, universal youth services and capacity to provide sufficient youth provision. The review has highlighted the need to consider how much provision is required, the way youth work is provided and the impact of youth work on crime, confidence and the best start in life.

Our play and youth services benefit the wellbeing of children and young people, they are a vital component of successful lives and contribute to social value within Sandwell's communities. The best start in life for children and young people is one of the six outcomes in the 2020 corporate plan "Big Plans for a Great Place for the People of Sandwell". We want to work with residents, partners and businesses to create a healthier, more successful future for the young people of Sandwell.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has wide ranging implications for young people and it is even more important for Sandwell to focus on the needs and wants of our youth service offer now and in the future.

This report sets out the process, findings and recommendations of the work group which will be considered by the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board and subsequently by Cabinet to respond to the findings and recommendations.

2.0 Executive Summary

In April 2019 the All Party Parliamentary Group published its [report - youth affairs](#) from the inquiry into 'The Role and Sufficiency of Youth Work', and in July 2019, the government launched a review into how the statutory guidance for Local Authorities on providing youth services can be more useful for local youth service provision and young people themselves.

The rationale for establishing a Youth Facilities Working Group was the need to consider current local youth provision and the role and sufficiency of youth work in line with the statutory guidance for Local Authorities.

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board [27 January 2020](#) agreed the scope and project plan to carry out the review from January to March 2020. More about the review process can be seen in paragraph 5 of the report.

The focus of the review was to understand the current levels of youth provision and if it was sufficient.

As a result of austerity and budget reductions Sandwell's youth service and the facilities that it offered to young people has reduced over a decade. The impact of this change has not been assessed.

Facilities for young people are not only provided by the local authority – there are many activities provided by Sandwell's community and voluntary sector and companies such as Sandwell Leisure Trust, but there is no information available to assess whether the provision meets need.

The Working Group wanted to find out Sandwell Young People's view about local provision.

During the course of the review Members visited youth facilities, met with parents, providers and young people to find out their opinions and information about our youth facilities and to hear about the facilities young people have, need and want. Young people from the SHAPE youth forum have participated in the local decision-making process, gathered evidence, participated in forums and held a 'Question Time' session with members.

This report captures current provision, where there are gaps, what young people think about the provision and what more they need and want.

The Working Group has gathered evidence, considered all findings and drawn conclusions to inform recommendations to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board. The report provides a summary of findings and a temperature gauge of what young people need and want more of for the future youth provision in Sandwell.

Sandwell's Vision

High quality play and youth services improve the life chances of children and young people and acknowledge that children and young people have a right to enjoy their childhood as well as enabling them to develop the confidence and aspirations for a successful adulthood. Youth and play services benefit whole communities, local neighbourhoods, families and individual children and young people.

3.0 Background

3.1 National Policy Context

National Youth Agency definition of Youth Work - 'Youth work is an educational process that engages with young people in a curriculum built from their lived experience, and their personal beliefs and aspirations. This process extends and deepens a young person's understanding of themselves, their community and the world in which they live and supports them to proactively bring about positive changes. The youth worker builds positive relationships with young people based on mutual respect.' (*Vision for Youth Work in England to 2020*).

The YMCA recent report '[Out of Service](#)' highlights that youth services exist to provide a sense of belonging, a safe space, and the opportunity for young people to enjoy being young. However, for almost a decade, local authorities have struggled under the weight of funding pressures, meaning youth services are being forced to endure continued and damaging cuts.

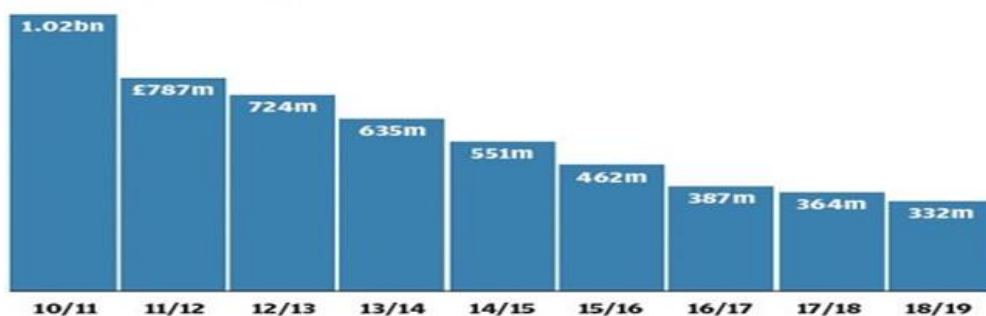
'The last decade was not good for youth work. The statistics are well known: since 2010, hundreds of youth clubs have been closed; thousands of youth work jobs lost; and more than 100,000 places for young people scrapped – the result of a 75 per cent reduction in council youth work budgets.'

Derren Hayes, Children & Young People Now Magazine, 28 January 2020

Analysis by the Commons Home Affairs Committee found that councils spent nearly £1bn less in real terms on youth services in 2018/19 than they did in 2010. Operating on dramatically reduced resources has not only seen councils slim down their youth work provision, but increasingly focus what little they have on interventions targeted at young people most in need of support.

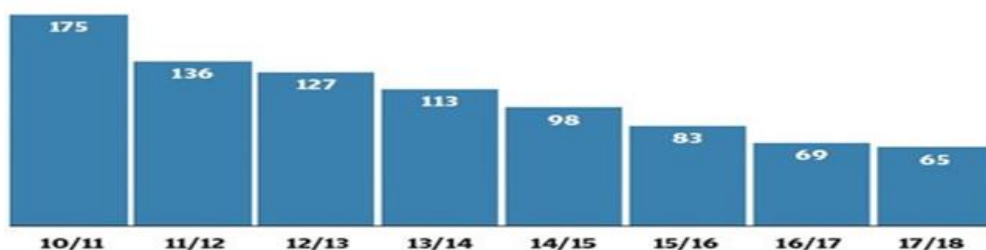
TRENDS IN COUNCIL YOUTH SERVICES SINCE 2010

Spending on young people's services



Source: Section 251 returns by local authorities, DJE

Changes in spending per young person



Source: Youth work review, APPG for Youth Affairs, April 2019

Every region of England has each seen funding for youth services cut by more than 60% since 2010. Some of the most severely affected experienced average cuts of as much as 74% in the North West, 76% in the North East, and 80% in the West Midlands.

3.2 The Cost of Austerity

The funding reductions have resulted in the amount spent on universal services, provision that is open to all young people, fall and spending on targeted provision rise. The shift has raised concerns among some youth work experts that targeted provision is seen as a short-term fix for a range of social problems rather than investing in long-term relationships with young people through informal education.

The House of Commons, Home Affairs Committee Serious Youth Violence report (July 2019) highlighted the need for partners to work together in a multi-agency approach. Serious violence has got worse after youth service cuts, police cuts, more children being excluded from school and a failure of statutory agencies to keep them safe.

The Government recognised that more needed to be done to intervene early in young people's lives, making sure they have safe places to go to and trusted adults to help them and protect them from harm. So much of this support has been stripped away, leaving children vulnerable to exploitation by criminal groups.

'Youth services are in tatters after almost a decade of austerity. Our research has shown that since 2010 government cuts have forced 940 youth centres to close with the loss of 4,500 youth workers.

Head of local government at Unison, Jon Richards.

3.3 The Value of Youth Work

The YMCA 'Out of Service' report also highlights that youth services have a vital role to play in **tackling crime, gang culture and loneliness**.

The report found that a quarter of young people do not spend time with their friends outside of school due to a **fear of gangs**. A third also stopped seeing friends away from school as they **did not feel safe on the streets**.

Only half of young people could identify any **youth services near them**, despite 55% believing they help keep young people off the streets, the report found.

In addition to reducing crime, more than half of those surveyed also said youth services gave them the opportunity to develop **new skills and improve their confidence and self-esteem**.

These findings show that what they are crying out for are the very things youth services are specifically designed to provide. Every young person deserves a **safe space, a trusted adult and the opportunity to enjoy being young**. Young people are telling us what they need – in their own words – and in order to support them now and in the future, they must be listened to and acted upon.

3.4 The Wider Benefits of Youth Work

It has long been recognised that youth work has wider benefits for youth and for the community.

'The positive impacts of youth work make it cost effective in the medium to long term and include; improved engagement with school and education; a positive impact on the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour amongst

young people; improvement in the wider learning and social skills of young people and helps to keep young people safe'. (Unite 2005)

Youth workers in communities and in specialist projects have regularly been shown to play important roles in supporting young people to make informed choices and deal with the range of challenges they encounter – from drugs and knife crime to mental ill-health and loneliness. In many cases, young people and the community themselves want more youth work above other services to help tackle these issues. (The role of Youth Services to reduce youth crime (NYA 2019)

In September 2019 it was reported that as youth budgets have shrunk over recent years, violent crime had spiked. Police chiefs and campaigners said it was no coincidence.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Mr Jamieson said:

“The Government had slashed council budgets. After years of austerity, youth services have been cut back to the bone. Young people used to be offered help, support and activities which enabled them to lead happy and successful lives”.

“Now, many of the services have been axed and it has left young people with limited life chances and no place to turn. I am deeply concerned that these cuts, combined with rising levels of school exclusions, are fuelling violent crime”.

In January 2020 the Government announced additional budget for Police services. Mr Jamieson said that ‘whilst good quality policing is crucial to reducing crime, other services have a big role to play too. We need to see an increase in youth services if the government are serious about tackling the root causes of crime too.’

In March 2020, the All-Parliamentary Group (APPG) report on knife crime and

Nationally, youth violence has become a hugely contentious public and political issue and the debate about the causes, extent and solutions seems to constantly occupy the media.

Neighbouring Authority **City of Wolverhampton Council** carried out a review of Youth Violent Crime in January 2020 and highlighted the need to support existing good work and to ensure that those with the knowledge, expertise and resources; who are best placed to make such judgements are supported and encouraged to do so.

One of the reviews ten recommendations was to continue to support young people in the City through **the provision of sustained and co-ordinated youth provision**, strategically informed by the Youth Engagement Strategy.

violence reduction - [Securing a Brighter Future](#) made some strong links between youth service closures and the rise in knife crime, as well as making recommendations for a national audit of current youth services, funding for Local Authorities (LA) to sustain youth work, statutory requirement for a minimum level of professional youth service provision in each LA area and investment in professional youth workforce.

The Local Government [Bright Futures Report 2017](#) (Updated in 2019) highlighted that there was increasing evidence about where early help can add real value, such as through preventing children and young people from experiencing adverse childhood experiences, to the value of supporting families to improve their lives.

The need for young people's voices to be central to the provision offered to them, for them to be able to participate and feel included in their communities, and able to access information, support and services they need to develop skills and knowledge and to be safe and well.

Developing services they need and want is a focus for this working group review of Youth Facilities.

5.0 Local Context

Sandwell town profiles and infographic summaries are available through following the link to [Sandwell Trends](#).

In 2017, a research project - Aspire Sandwell was conducted to evaluate the levels of aspirations amongst Key Stage 3 pupils across Sandwell. Young people were consulted and focus groups highlighted that students had high aspirations but did not know how to achieve them – often students would state option choices that did not link their future careers and that they did not know whom to talk to about their careers. Local stakeholders have been consulted during this review relating to local youth facilities.

4.1 Sandwell Council Resources

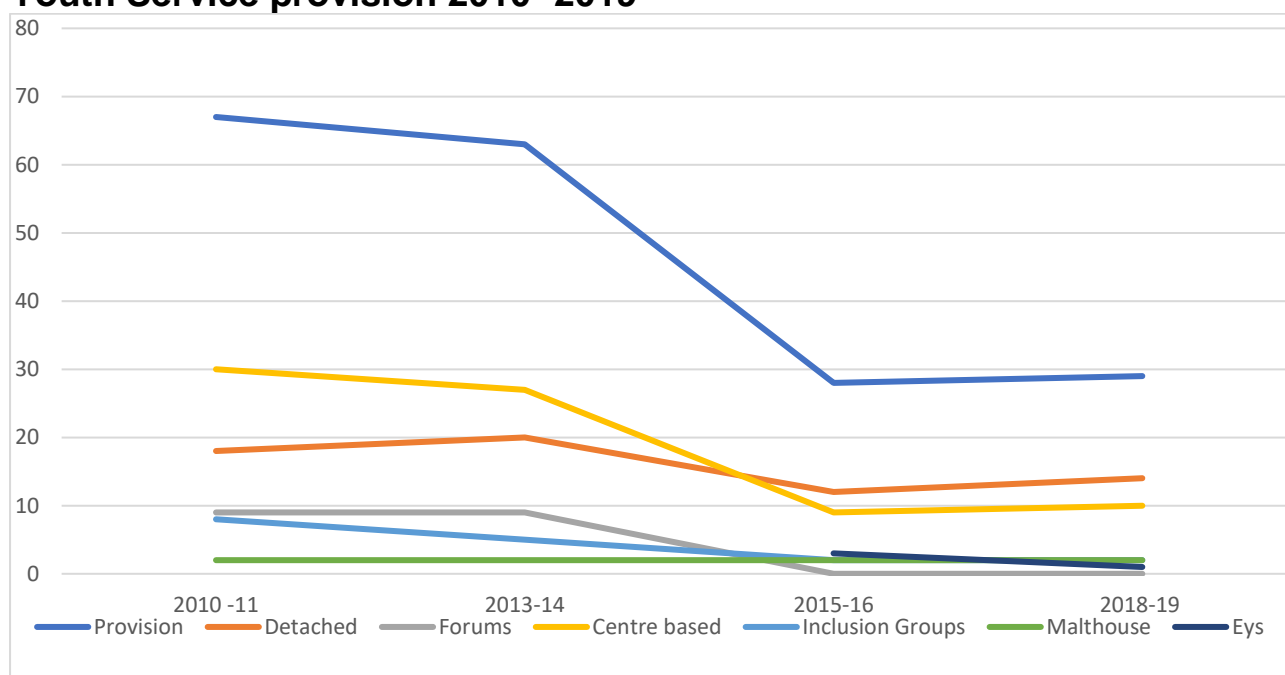
Despite recent years of austerity and the impact on local government budgets, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has maintained a budget for some important services for children and young people that many other local authorities have not managed to protect.

The figures in the table below demonstrate the reduction between 2010-2019 and how Sandwell has continued to invest in youth services.

Financial Year	Staffing Budget	Non Staffing Budget	Total Expenditure Budget	Total Income Generation	Target Funding
2010-11	2,261,000	1,357,800	3,618,800	-1,143,200	2,475,600
2013-14	1,562,600	1,036,700	2,599,300	-281,000	2,318,300
2017-18	790,600	269,600	1,060,200	-144,900	915,300
2018-19	828,100	279,200	1,107,300	-141,900	965,400
2019-20	858,700	279,200	1,137,900	-141,900	996,000

The budget reduction resulted in a marked reduction in youth provision between 2010-2019 and the way in which youth services were provided.

Youth Service provision 2010- 2019



- April 2010 - 11 – 67 provisions (18 detached teams, 9 forums, 30 centre based, 8 inclusion groups, 2 Malthouse)
- April 2013 - 14 – 63 provisions (20 detached teams, 9 forums, 27 centre based, 5 inclusion groups, 2 Malthouse)
- April 2015 - 16 – 28 provisions (12 detached teams, 0 forums, 9 centre based, 2 inclusion groups, 3 EYS Groups, 2 Malthouse) – Youth Service total loss 54%
- April 2018 - 19 – 29 provisions (14 detached teams, 0 forums, 10 centre based, 2 inclusion groups, 1 EYS Group, 2 Malthouse) Lost 1 Girls Group and 1 Boys Group
- April 2019 -20 – 28 provisions (14 detached teams, 0 forums, 9 centre based, 3 inclusion groups, 1 EYS Group, 1 Malthouse) Lost Hill Top YC and BLAST, Gained Wednesbury YC and Multi-Activity SEND Group
- Current Facilities: 8 youth clubs, Detached team, EYS (Enhanced Youth Service), Malthouse Outdoor Education Centre, Coneygre Arts Centre, Youth Buses, Teamworx, SHAPE programme.

4.2 Funding

Sandwell Council current youth provision costs in the region of £1 million. The Council continues to apply for funding for youth provision from a variety of funding pots. In 2018-19 Sandwell Council accessed external funding of £5,000 via Emerge (funded by Spirit of 2012) and Youth Services accessed £12,949 of funding for projects from Sandwell MBC Youth Offer budget.

The purpose of the Youth Offer Budget

The budget was split equally across the 6 towns and wards, was to support and empower Sandwell's young people and the provision of local services, activities and facilities that were of great value to local young people and communities.

Therefore, the budget was used to support internal and external projects that demonstrated they would support young people to be engaged in activities, feel safe and empowered to make positive lifestyle choices.

Since Town Grants funding, which included the Youth Offer Budget, were transferred to Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisation (SCVO) in January 2020 any groups internal or external who require funding would have to apply to SCVO.

Breakdown of Youth Offer Awarded 2018/2019 and 2019/20:

2018/19 Town	Total Spend
Smethwick	£ 6,667.88
Oldbury	£ 2,372.40
Rowley Regis	£ 6,259.29
Tipton	£ 4,648.40
Wednesbury	£ 6,776.05
West Bromwich	£10,726.16
Totals	£37,450.18

2019/20 Town	Total Spend
Smethwick	£ 1,800.00
Oldbury	£ 3,832.37
Rowley Regis	£ 3,432.11
Tipton	£ 4,195.00
Wednesbury	£ 10,696.11
West Bromwich	£ 6,447.05
Totals	£ 30,402.64

Further to total spend a breakdown of the Youth Funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20 for both internal and external funding awards can be seen at appendix X.

The appendix identifies the Group name, amount of funding, town and project for each award.

Future Funding

The Government has recognised the need to invest in young people's futures and announced in October 2019, a £12 million boost in youth projects across the Country, as part of the Government's commitment to help young people thrive and level up opportunities. This funding has supported Scouts and Guides groups, NHS volunteering by young people and the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme.

In December 2019, The Queens speech highlighted that a £3.6 billion Towns Fund for towns across England has been brought into level up our regions. In September, 100 places were selected to develop proposals for a Town Deal of up to £25 million, 3 Towns in Sandwell were included in the invitation to develop proposals.

In February 2020 Sandwell Council approved grant fund of £311,000 for Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to lead on awarding small grants and run the Vision 2030 Community Grants Programme. The funding is not specifically for youth facilities, however voluntary and community groups will be able to apply for small grants of up to £5,000 to support projects, activities and events that support Sandwell's Vision 2030 and are linked to the following:

- Building social connections
- Youth activities
- Healthy lifestyles

In March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic changed the landscape for services, for young people and youth work. The lock-down and social distancing requirements changed the focus of what we do to keep young people safe. Detached youth work has continued on a daily basis across the Borough with a focus on making sure young people understand the Government guidelines about social isolation/ social distancing and keeping themselves, friends and families safe. Messaging has also taken place through the [Facebook page](#) and virtual activities have been offered online.

It is almost certain that funding, in the wider emergency context, will be reviewed and that the funding assumptions highlighted in the review may be revised and public bodies be asked to divert to urgency measures.

4.3 The Current Youth Offer

There are 8 youth clubs altogether with at least one per town in Sandwell offering personal and professional development workshops for accreditation opportunities around First Aid, Food Hygiene, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) providing skills for life and Arts Award.

Workshops are also offered on drugs & alcohol, sexual health, smoking awareness, teenage pregnancy, sexual exploitation, bullying, self-image, confidence and more. Clubs provide social and recreational activities too. Youth clubs develop an action plan with young people that drive activities based on young people's needs.

The Youth Service works closely with a range of partners, particularly the police and schools, and it works well alongside the play service, but these are not currently linked together organisationally, nor strategically or operationally. Sustainability of services is reliant on the continued provision of funding for services, some of which are directly funded through government grants or traded income.

Sandwell also runs its youth participation work through the SHAPE Programme and focuses on 5 key areas; Staying Safe, Being Healthy, Enjoying & Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Economic Wellbeing. The Youth Service has been integral to the development of the programme over the past 5 years and Sandwell's Youth Service staff enable the SHAPE programme to be delivered. Youth Service staff provide both strategic and practical support to the programme and have helped develop much of the activity on the ground including SHAPE Your Talent, Youth Conferences, surveys, youth takeovers, anti-bullying roadshows and the annual Youth Festival's.

There continues to be increasing demands on the youth and play services to support community and borough wide events. In particular, the Youth Service is called upon to provide support to local activities by providing the Climbing wall, youth buses and provision of live music from Coneygre Arts Centre. In addition, there is pressure to deliver the Youth Offer in some towns where there is a shortfall in voluntary sector provision.

Enhanced Youth Support has proven to be an integral part of the Youth Service offer. This service provides support to both individuals and groups through targeted interventions and referrals are received through a number of partners including schools, Community Operating Groups (COG's), Police and Children's Centres. The success has been such that demand is beginning to exceed capacity.

The current staffing structure can be seen at appendix 1 to the report.

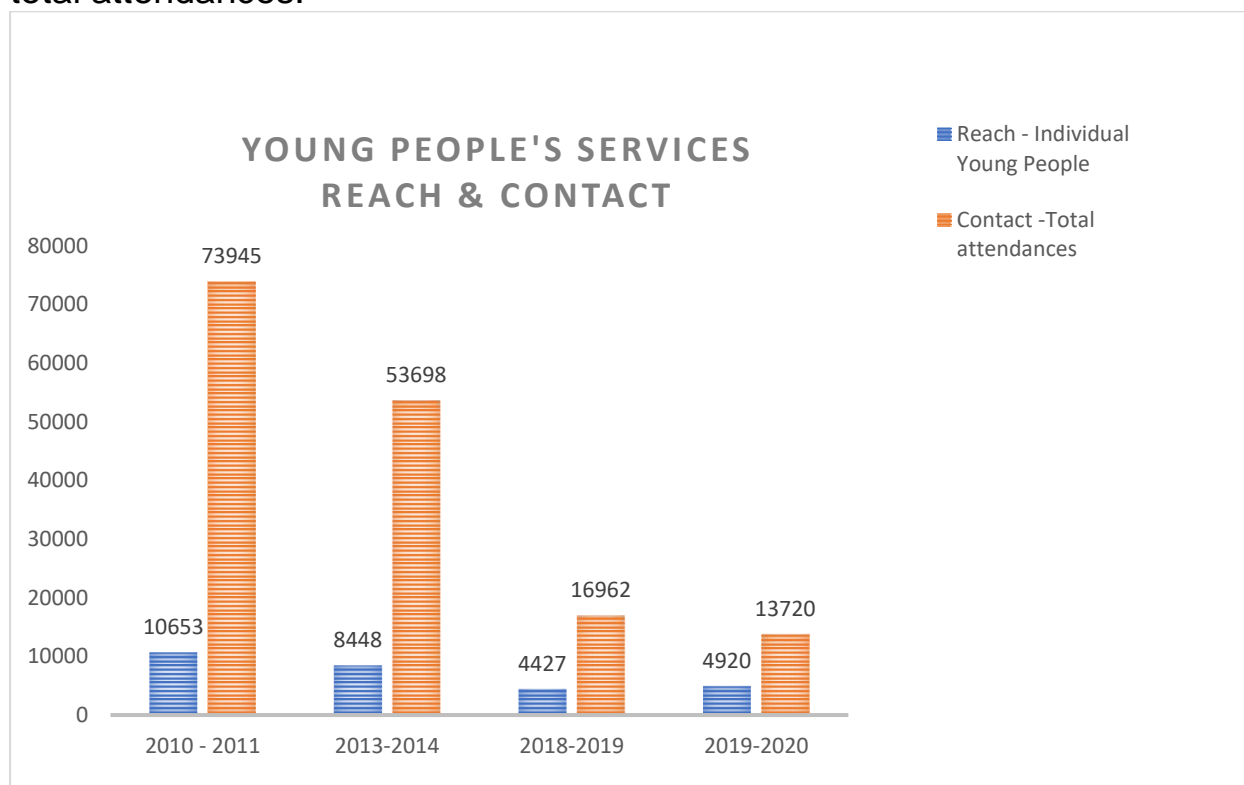
In addition to physical provision young people are encouraged to use social media, Just Youth is a [website](#) designed by young people for young people. The website is a free interactive online listings guide. Young people can register to be kept up to date of events and activities in Sandwell.

Justyouth.org.uk lets you know what's on in Sandwell, wherever you are, any time you like. The website has been stagnant for a while due to capacity to maintain and develop content but is currently being reviewed with young people to improve and maintain it going forward.

In addition to the website young people use [Facebook](#) and Instagram to participate in youth provision.

4.4 How many young people do we reach?

Physical interaction is measured in reaching individual young people and in total attendances.



With more funding youth services could reach more young people.

Youth work is an educational process that engages with young people in a curriculum that deepens a young person's understanding of themselves, their community and the world in which they live. It develops their confidence and enables them to believe in themselves and make positive choices and it is underpinned by a set of values, the first of which is that young people choose to take part.

Skilled youth workers build relationships that support young people to explore their personal, social and educational development. Youth work enables young people to develop their voice, influence and place within society.

5.0 Youth Facilities Review

5.1 **Why do a review?** The Children's Services & Education Scrutiny Board set up a working group consisting of four members of the Board to carry out a review Youth Facilities across Sandwell. Youth services was last reviewed by scrutiny in 2011. The working group agreed a focused approach to look at youth facilities from young people's perspective:

What youth facilities does Sandwell:

Have? Need? Want?

- What is the current provision?
- Does the current provision meet the needs of young people?
- What do young people want?

Scope of the review:

- to assess the impact of austerity and budget reductions on the youth service and the youth offer in Sandwell over a decade;
- to understand the needs and wants of Sandwell's youth population;
- to identify the current levels of activity and provision on offer to young people across Sandwell;
- to assess whether the level of provision, either directly provided or grant-aided/procured by Sandwell Council is sufficient to meet the needs and wants of young people across the Borough;
- to identify any gaps in current provision and how those gaps might be filled, or any over-sufficiency in provision;
- to explore best practice, technological changes and other ways of working.
- to involve young people in local decision-making.
- to use new approaches to scrutiny activity during evidence gathering.
- to produce a robust and coherent report, informed by young people, to inform a 'sufficiency strategy' for youth provision in Sandwell.

The review was member led with officers supporting, to focus on particular elements of the review, such as;

- Building the evidence base
- Capturing the local picture, through visits and meeting forums
- Considering external factors and examples of good practice

The officer steering group comprised of colleagues from Youth Service, Neighbourhoods, Democratic Services, young people from SHAPE and wider partner organisations including West Midlands Police and local support officers to ensure fit with wider policy, the Vision 2020 and the national & international context.

The review incorporated a range of methods to gather evidence, including engagement, fact-finding and research activities, over a three-month period.

Date	Activity
8 January	Scope and initial outline report
13 January	Online survey set up
20 January	Officer support meeting
21 January	Review Group - Scope meeting
27 January	Children's & Young People Scrutiny Board
3 February	Survey feedback
3 February	Invitations and planning for forums
5 February	Review Group Meeting
10 - 21 February	Members site visits to Youth facilities and Field Research
24 – 28 February	Forums: Coneygre Arts Centre Sandwell Parents of Disabled Children Police Representatives Youth Worker Staff Conference
2-4 March	Review feedback and findings
5 March	Members Question Time with SHAPE
10 March	Visit to the Factory Young People's Centre and meeting with NYA
12 March	Review Group meeting evaluation and recommendations
31 March	Draft report
April	Final Report and Recommendations
	Evaluation & Learning

The scrutiny process enabled young people to participate in democratic process and gave members and officers opportunity to trial different ways of working, as highlighted by the Review of Scrutiny Working Group in its recent [report and recommendations](#)

5.2 What did we do? - Evidence Gathering

A wide range of evidence was gathered in a short timeframe to provide a snapshot of the current 'Youth Offer' in Sandwell and the local and national context.

Method	How	Who
Desk top research	Internet research, comparator, CMIS recent reports	DfE, Specialists, other Local Authorities, SMBC
SHAPE survey	Survey feedback report	Young people
Survey #mychillzone	Social Media	Young people, Members, public and partners
Visits	<p>Virtual visits The Way, Wolverhampton, Youth Services, Stoke Reading Youth Offer, Reading.</p> <p>Members visits: Sandwell youth clubs & facilities The Factory, Birmingham</p>	Members Providers, voluntary organisations, youth workers, Members, parents, young people. Members, NYA, young people.
Forums	<p>Meetings on site Art and Drama Club, Coneygre Centre Sandwell Parents of Disabled Children, The Meadows School West Midlands Police, West Bromwich Police Station Youth Worker Staff Conference, Coneygre Centre</p>	Parents, youth workers, young people, volunteers, support workers and police officers.

Question Time Session in the Council Chamber	Working Group Members, Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life, Cabinet Member for Skills and Employment and the representative of the Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations were invited to form a panel. Facilitated by Democratic Services Officers.	Young people from the SHAPE programme and youth managers were invited to participate as the audience and to ask questions of the panel about the main themes arising from evidence gathering.
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5.3 What other Local Authorities do

The Review Group identified four Local Authorities to consider youth provision elsewhere to consider the approach they took and the issues they encountered.

Stoke: Statistical neighbour, has six towns like Sandwell are about to review youth services.

Wolverhampton: Statistical neighbour and have one main youth provision established in 2016, following a review of youth services.

Birmingham: Statistical neighbour, manage 16 youth centres.

Reading: Carried out Youth review 2016, no Council universal provision, focus on targeted and intensive services.

Stoke City Council in 2019 considered plans for a £3.3m youth hub to be built in the town of Hanley. Stoke-on-Trent is made up of six towns, young people in [Stoke](#) felt it would alienate those who did not live in Hanley and could lead to more violence by bringing postcode rivalries together in one place. YMCA in Hanley, indicated it might help bring the different towns of Stoke together. Youth workers felt that the money would be better spent on youth clubs in the six towns of Stoke, rather than in the centre.

City of Wolverhampton Council – The Way, Youth Zone is in the Centre of Wolverhampton. It first opened its doors in early 2016, in a £5.5m project by Onside Youth Zones Organisation, which is a partnership of the private sector, local authority, young people and the community forms. The Way offers activities for young people every day of the week. It has been reported that the youth zone has had immeasurable impact on Wolverhampton youngsters which helps them keep active, keep off their computers, and stay off the streets. However, feedback from a survey of nearly 12,000 children and young people and their parents and carers in 2019 highlighted the need to support the youth of Wolverhampton to be healthier, be connected and be heard.

In January 2020 Wolverhampton Council launched the [youth engagement strategy #YES](#), £2m Investment over three years to create a youth engagement team to provide better information about and signposting to events and opportunities and set up a funding pot which young people, families, groups and organisations can use to develop new activities for young people. The multi-million pound strategy designed to help Wolverhampton's young people reach their full potential was officially launched at The Way Youth Zone.

Birmingham City Council – The Factory Young People’s Centre is a modern, state of the art youth provision, located in Longbridge, South Birmingham and is part of the Birmingham City Council Youth Service. The Centre provides a multitude of activities and opportunities for young people (aged 10-25), from weekly youth club programmes and events to a range of services and support that young people may require.

Reading Council - Following a review of Youth Services in 2016 Reading Council ceased all Universal Services and approved spending for targeted and Intensive Services. Reading Borough Council (RBC) works with Voluntary sector partners to provide a full range of universal activities. The targeted youth offer to young people in the town ensured that vulnerable young people key outcomes were met. [Reading Youth](#) provides information about youth services and activities available for young people in Reading.

5.4 Workshop to consider the findings

The Work Group reviewed all the evidence in a work shop to focus on the matters that had been clearly identified as priorities for young people, parents, providers and partners in relation to what youth facilities young people have, need and want.

There were strong and clear messages about what young people **want** from the range of evidence gathered. The core officer group provided evidence of what provision, resource and capacity the Council currently **have**, and parents, partners and police gave clarity to what more they **need**.

The Review Group focused on the main themes arising from evidence gathered, however Members identified several more gaps and matters for further investigation, which have been listed in the findings table.

The financial and external pressures on Youth Provision has been captured in the context of the report. The benefits of youth work to young people, families and the community have been referred to throughout this review and the Work Group has highlighted the need for youth service to work closer with partners and the voluntary sector.

6.0 Findings

Summary of findings from the evidence gathered.

The findings are not in priority order:

Age range	Currently: 11-19 years There is a need to separate out the age groups: Play provision for a younger age group (8-11years). A range of age appropriate youth activities for middle (11-16) and older (16-19) groups.
Arts and drama	Coneygre Centre is in Tipton. Arts and drama activity is in high demand, parents and children travel from all around the area to use the facility. Young People want more provision like this and need more hours here.
Austerity	The reduction to youth provision has been too great, it has depleted the number of facilities, no investment in has been made for developing facilities or for new equipment (including the youth bus) for a decade.
Communication	External Communication is not reaching people: The mechanisms we use to communicate are not what most young people access. We need to update what we do to reach young people with information about what's on, what good practice is happening and what's on in other facilities across Sandwell. Internal: How the youth service communicates with staff and includes part-time workers. Email addresses for part-time youth workers and regular youth worker conferences would be beneficial.
Crafts and skills	Youth workers identified a gap in provision for young people to develop skills, make something and take it away, and develop interests in hobbies that grow skills and wellbeing in young people.
Disabilities	There are facilities for young people with additional needs, but transport is limited, facilities have reduced and are not easily accessible. Parents highlighted that it is not easy to find out what is happening and where.
Multi agency approach	There is some multiagency and collaborative working between agencies and this needs further consolidation to ensure all services relating to young people, take a holistic approach to ensure that they have the provision that best meets their needs.
Partnership working	Opportunities need to be created to further map the Youth Offer at a town level, including Council, voluntary sector and private provision, and to create forums for dialogue between agencies to identify further gaps and needs. There is a need to explore how local businesses can

	<p>create opportunities and pathways for young people to thrive.</p> <p>It is important for young people to feel a valued part of a multicultural society, that recognises the contribution they have to make and supports them to achieve their aspirations and agencies should work together to facilitate this.</p>
Own space	<p>We need one building for all youth provision in every town, young people want one building in each town which they can take ownership of, for local youth to own and run as their space.</p> <p>Many youth clubs and activities use shared facilities – these spaces can be limited (storage space, use of facilities and access to the building). Problems were highlighted such as the time taken to take equipment out and put it away, not being able to leave work and projects out, access times to buildings etc.</p>
Refugees and asylum seekers	<p>We want to understand how we support young people new to UK. Sandwell Council collects data from young people on their immigration status, any young person can access our youth facilities and young people between the age of 11- 18 who want to access youth provision or may need additional support could be referred from STEPS to the Youth Service Enhanced Youth Support team. EYS could then meet with the young person and provide appropriate support to enable them to have support to access universal youth provision with some 121 support if required.</p>
Residential facilities for youth service	<p>Sandwell Council has residential facilities that the Youth Service struggles to afford to take young people to. We need to make Sandwell Council facilities affordable and available when it comes to residential.</p> <p>A suggestion made was that when Council owned facilities meet their income target, the facilities could be opened up to be used by Sandwell Youth Services for the young people of Sandwell.</p> <p>The Youth Service has operational management responsibility of Coneygre Arts Centre and Malthouse Stables Outdoor Education Centre. These centres both have income targets which contribute to the core budget of the Service.</p>
Resources and Equipment	<p>Some of the equipment being used is old, much needs to be replaced, and each provision needs a resources budget for activities and to replenish equipment. Is a pool</p>

	table what they want or need? Young people want Wi-Fi and technology including games.
Sports and activity	Sandwell has a variety of teams and clubs which provide access for young people to sports and activity such as football, boxing and other team sports. Many are provided by voluntary organisations, we need to find out what is available and develop the team building and pride in their achievements.
Transport	Parents say that they want safer transport for young people to youth facilities. Transport can be an issue, it is difficult for young people to get to a facility on their own. Catching buses costs money and waiting around bus stop is a concern for parents of some vulnerable young people. Generally young people are reliant on parents taking and picking them up.
Use of public buildings	We want to find out why libraries and schools are not used in the evening. Several facilities are considered to be underused as per their potential, these spaces should be reflected in the youth offer. There is a need to do more research about how our facilities are being used and what is the path to maximise utilisation. Use of public space and how the Council uses public buildings should be a topic for future discussion.
Use of technology and Wi-Fi	Young people want access to Wi-Fi, they need it to find information and to have fun. Further investigate the suggestion of an APP for young services which could improve access to information for young people partners and parents and modernise how staff share information.
Voluntary Sector	The evidence gathered does not adequately reflect the wider voluntary sector youth facilities and how young people across the Borough are able to access services regardless of who the provider is. There is more work needed to map out voluntary sector provision and consider funding opportunities.
Youth buses	Youth workers and the older group of young people want to get the Youth Bus back on the road. The double decker youth bus has been off the road for four months for repairs, because of its age spare parts have to be made for it. The youth bus has been used as a chill out space and used primarily by older young people and detached workers. It is a safe, warm and dry space. There is a smaller bus available, but the double decker is special with activities and an upper floor of gaming, dancing and disco! There may be a need to replace the bus due to the high demands on the youth bus and the fact it is 20 years

	old and is prone to breakdown during the winter months. To replace the bus and fully kit it out would require an investment of up to £200,000.
Youth Symposium	We want to bring together partners and organisations to discuss Youth Facilities.

5.6 What did we find out?

Headlines - What young people want and need:



Dry – A place of our own, safe, flexible and dry.



Wi-Fi – connection to Wi-Fi to communicate with friends and play games.

Main messages from providers and partners:



Facilities – shared facilities, smaller space, storage and reduced capacity over last decade. Cost of space hire and residential facilities.



Upgrade – facilities and equipment not replaced, also need to modernise spaces and add Wi-Fi.



Capacity – need more youth workers to open more evenings.



Age range and access – Need to engage young people earlier and enable access for all.

Main messages from parents



Communication and information - Parents and Young people want to know what is available,



Happy and confident - Parents recognise that young people grow in confidence and meet new friends.

7.0 Conclusions

Evaluation of the findings

The key themes highlighted in our findings were raised across all forums and in the feedback from surveys. The common themes reflect matters raised about Council facilities and some voluntary provision and partnership working. We found that there was more work to do to map out voluntary sector and wider provision.

A wide range of evidence was considered, and there will be more work to look at provision, but based on evidence gathered in this review, the Work Group were minded to say that the **current provision is not sufficient to meet the needs of young people.**

There was consensus from those consulted that **local youth facilities should be retained in each Town**, and that each facility needed to be upgraded and modernised, also that **current provision should be extended** to more evenings and holiday periods.

The Work Group found that there were good facilities in some towns and good practice, but that the **lack of youth worker capacity** meant that some facilities could not meet demand, specifically the Coneygre and Malthouse youth facilities. It was also found that there were **untapped funding resources** and that more could be done to focus on funding opportunities.

In other youth clubs based in shared facilities, there were **issues about access**, having sports facilities hired out during youth club times and the storage of equipment issues all of which had a detrimental effect on the youth work and impacted on the attendance.

Another factor raised in all forums was the need to **reach young people earlier** and the need to separate out the age groups, to **allow each age group to operate an age appropriate activity.**

The lack of consistency across the youth facilities in each of the Towns was an underlying issue, but the main theme from youth was that there was not enough **local youth provision**. Many travelled to Art and Sport provision but did not know about other provision close to where they live. More work may be needed to **map out youth facilities** and if they meet the needs of the local community.

Another key theme arising was the lack of **communication and promotion** of what was available and where, and also the need to review mechanisms used to communicate information.

The Work Group looked at other Local Authority provision and considered a wide range of advice and information relating to **good youth provision** and the **impact of youth work** on young people's futures, Health and Wellbeing and the impact of youth work on violent crime and communities. All of these factors relate directly to the Sandwell Vision and to the Sandwell Plan: Big Plans for a Great Place.

OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES



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.

Being a young person in Sandwell

When young people were asked if there is anything else they would like to say about being a young person in Sandwell, the most popular response was that it was challenging and difficult for a number of reasons such as school and not being listened to, lots of homework and exams, bullying and lack of support for young people particularly around mental health.

Comments were made that Sandwell is boring and there were no opportunities or nothing to do for young people and would be good to offer 'cheaper or free facilities' and ensure young people's voices are heard. Statements were made by young people saying, 'they felt scared due to mean people' and references

were also made to knife crime. Although most of comments made were negative, a few respondents did make positive statements saying they were 'happy', 'it's good'.

Taking all the evidence gathered into consideration and listening to the feedback from young people the Work Group concluded that the following priorities need to be addressed first to inform 6 recommendations:

What	How	Why
Communication Plan	R1	Young people, parents and youth workers told us that they did not know what was available and where. The way we communicate was not how young people want information to be shared.
Wi-Fi and Dry	R2	Dry – A place of our own, safe and dry. Wi-Fi – connection to communicate with friends and play games. Facilities and better use of what we have. Upgrade Equipment.
Transport	R3	Safe travel to facilities was raised by young people and parents, especially for vulnerable young people.
Funding	R4	Access to funding pots and future funding was raised to expand current provision. There is also a need to strengthen the current Youth Service offer with revenue investment.
Sufficiency of Youth Offer	R5	The demand for youth facilities was unmet, the need to work in a multi-agency approach was Identified.
Capacity	R6	If we want to do more youth work, more work with partners we will need more youth workers. If we want to extend the age range to accommodate young people earlier, we will need additional capacity.
Democratic	R7	SHAPE participation in the review and specifically in the Question Time evidence gathering session was innovative and successful and should be embedded in the democratic processes for future scrutiny work.

8.0 Recommendations

The panel recommends that;

1. **A Partnership Framework (to include a Communications Plan and Multi-agency approach)** is developed with young people, for young people and is specifically targeted to promote current activities and future opportunities using the experts within the council to provide a joined-up plan that compliments services across the local authority.

This should consider how we currently communicate, what we currently communicate and the most effective platforms to use across a range of media.

A **Youth Symposium** should be held in early 2021 for all partners in the borough to help build a clear picture of what is available, build upon key themes arising from the Scrutiny Review, the multi-agency approach and develop closer partnership working for a joined-up offer for Sandwell. The youth symposium should draw together a joined-up approval to youth work and young people in Sandwell.

2. Young people should be afforded **safe, flexible, space of their own, with 'Wi-fi & Dry' as the basic offer in Sandwell**. The council should take a strategic approach and consider modelling 'space options' across the Borough's 6 towns, these could test:
 - a) Use of libraries within extended opening times – rethinking their use in the community
 - b) Mobile provision (through a bus or support vehicle).
 - c) Pop up shops and underused town centre units.
 - d) Leisure & Activity Centres.
 - e) Other council properties and schools.
 - f) New build, where no existing options are deemed suitable.
3. The council explores the option of providing **free or concessionary public transport for young people to enable better access to local youth activities, opening up Sandwell and all it offers**. Targeted provision should be considered in relation to vulnerable young people and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
4. The council should **take a more strategic approach to funding** and explore existing funding pots through a better use of regional partnerships and directories. Better alignment could be made to **complimentary activity within the voluntary sector** (such as SVCO's

community grants) and **to the corporate social responsibility objectives** of local businesses.

5. The Council should **develop a renewed 'Youth Offer'** which clearly identifies the very positive activities that are currently on offer and addresses those gaps which would enable a more bespoke approach. The **National Youth Agency's Standard Quality Mark Framework** should be used to measure the capacity, quality and sufficiency of youth facilities in Sandwell.
6. A renewed youth offer would aim to close the gaps in provision and ensure sufficiency of youth facilities, but in order to do would require an increase in capacity and therefore the resources required to deliver the provision would need to be reviewed.
7. Following the success of the **Question Time session** held during the review, it is recommended that quarterly Question Time sessions be scheduled into the Scrutiny Work Programme, with Shape forum the Cabinet Member / Champion for Children and Young People.

9.0 Evaluation of the Scrutiny Process

An evaluation of this review will inform the development of the scrutiny function in Sandwell. The Working Group will refer any matters outside the review remit to other scrutiny work streams, which will help to shape the scrutiny work programme for 2020-21.

The review enabled members to:

- lead on the review and work closely with core officers;
- use technology and social media channels to gather evidence and inform the public;
- engage with service users and parents through a schedule of site visits and forums across the Borough and the needs of the service.
- be the public voice, question and challenge services;
- make recommendations for service improvement to the Cabinet Decision Makers.

10.0 Comments from the Working Group

The Work Group would like to thank all young people and members of the public and partners who participated and contributed to the consultation process and forums to gather evidence for the review.

The Work Group valued the contribution of members of the SHAPE youth forum, young people have participated at all stages of evidence gathering and held a question time session to challenge the work group as part of the democratic scrutiny process.

- The evidence gathered presents a snapshot of what young people ‘Have Need and Want’ in relation to youth facilities in Sandwell in Spring 2020.
- The review findings and recommendations are the catalyst to start a larger piece of work to develop a sustainability strategy and multiagency and collaborative approach to youth facilities in the future.
- The Work Group highlighted some quick wins that the Council has already addressed and it has made recommendations for change which focus on longer-term and transformational change that will be considered in a wider forum, which will need strategic planning and resource. Our review was supported by an officer group and the scrutiny team we agreed the focus of the review and agreed which methods to use to get underneath the issues and identify the gaps in provision. We used tools and techniques to reach out and engage with stakeholders, to enable us to listen to the what providers and service users had to say.

Youth facilities in Spring 2020 is a moving picture due to Covid-19 and the need for Youth Facilities to adapt and change is even more important now.

Chairs comments

“There have been numerous advantages of this Youth Facilities Review Group, I have received many complimentary comments and would like to sincerely thank officers for managing this process to meet best practise in local government. Three themes on which I would like to make observation are;

- **Quality:** The quality of research, engagement with stakeholders and documents was excellent. The involvement of officers, councillors, young people and partners was clear, with defined roles and responsibilities.
- **Relationships:** The positive tone of engagement with young people, parents and partners sets a framework for ongoing productive relationships between the council and community.
- **Young people focus:** Throughout the review process, best-practice was followed and due to the thoughtful involvement from councillors and officers, we have produced a set of serious recommendations about meeting the needs of young people and this will result in real enhanced services.”

Councillor Rajbir Singh
Chair Children's and Education Scrutiny Committee.
Councillor for Bristnall ward.

Contributors:

Working Group: Councillors Jenny Chidley, Rajbir Singh, Richard McVittie and Liam Preece.

Childrens Services & Education Scrutiny Board Members:

Councillors Lorraine Ashman, Kerrie Carmichael, Elaine Costigan, Kay Millar, Sue Phillips, Ann Shackleton and Zahir Hussain,

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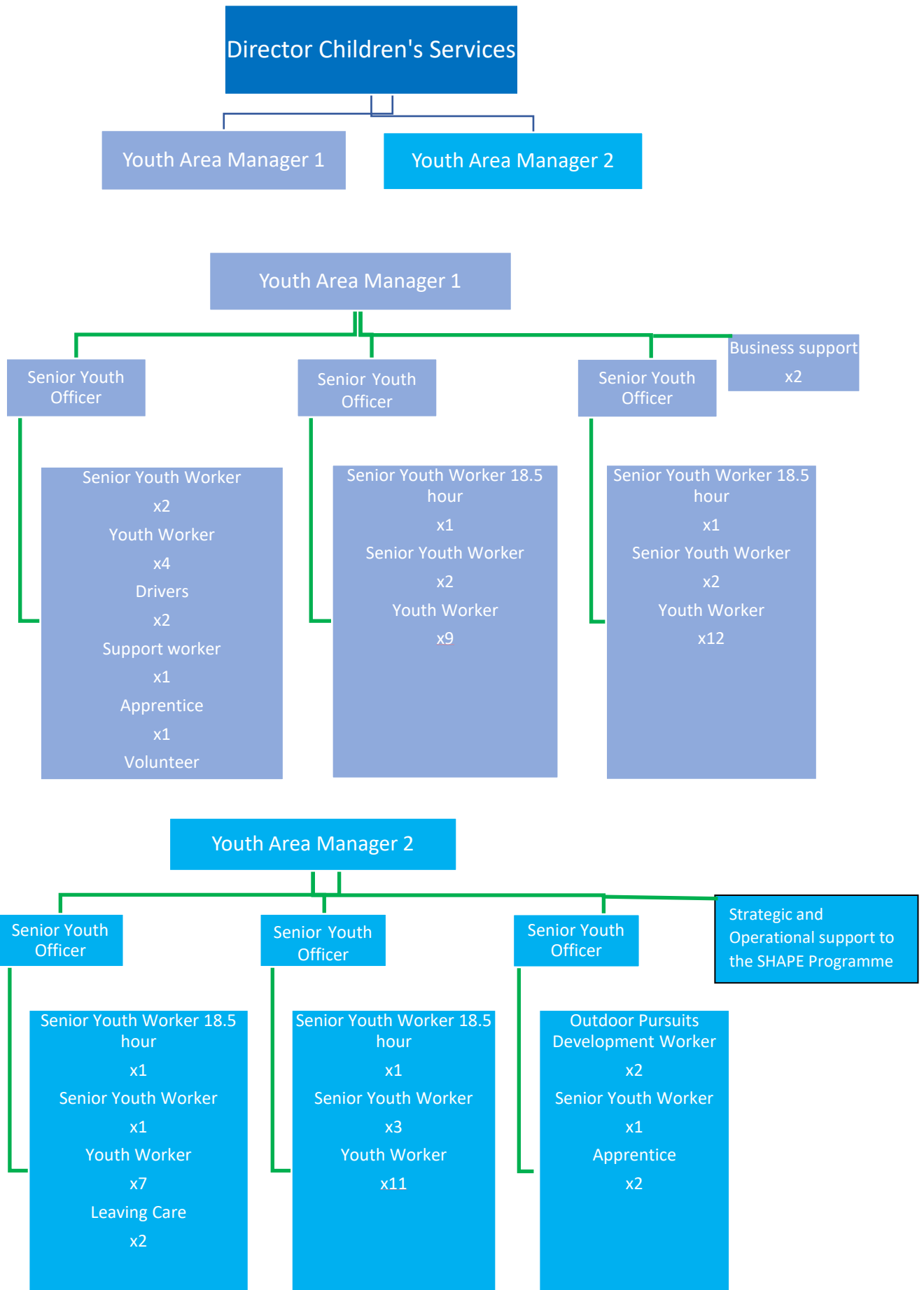
Core Officer Group: Lesley Hagger, Executive Director Children's Services
Tariq Kari, Youth Service
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Neesha Patel,
Manny Sehmbi,

Youth Workers
Shape Youth Forum

All youth workers
Jessica Mansell
Daniel Mansell
Mahmoud Suraj
Mohammed All Hasan
Suhana Khanum
Jack Dunn
Jack Murphy
Josh Jordan
Rahaf Mansour
Noah Livingston
Trinity Livingston
Jessica Hawthorn
Faiza Ramzan
Adam Shaikh
Steve Nimo
Paris Gayle

Organisations

West Midlands Police
The Factory Birmingham
Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)



Feedback Table			Appendix 2
Feedback from Youth Services Review Survey #mychillzone			Feedback from SHAPE survey relating to Youth Facilities
Oldbury			Oldbury
Have	Need	Want	
None	Somewhere for young people to go	Something for young people to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks referred to were Perrys Park, Warley Woods, Barnford Park and Hurst Green. However other parks in nearby towns such as Lightwoods Park, West Smethwick Park, Haden Hill, Britannia Park and Sandwell Valley. • Youth Clubs – Many young people had never been to a youth club, others went to Kings Community Church, brownies, girl guides, Christ Church youth club. • Leisure Centres – Langley Leisure Centre, Portway Leisure Centre. Other towns Haden Hill Leisure Centre, Thimblemill Leisure Centre, Harry Mitchell Centre, Hadley Stadium. Out of Sandwell - The Crystal Leisure Centre. • Food Outlets – McDonalds, KFC, Subway, chip shops, Pizza Pan, Saphari, Delightful Desserts, Greggs. Others away from Oldbury include Nandos, Five Guys, Starbucks, Big Johns, Pizza Hut, Dominos
Not sure – Have facilities for younger children	More after school activities and activities during school holidays that are suitable for older children.	Something for older children during school holidays.	
Don't know	Youth club. Langley youth club in langley park was great. Now it is shut, and park gates are locked we chill on the high street which is not ideal. Would like to see partnership with local restaurants to do cooking classes and fund raising for Langley.	Cooking lessons, annual local sport events for residents to raise money for the town. More life skills workshops.	
No regular ones that I have seen advertised	West Bromwich Albion (WBA) kicks - (only mini kicks at the moment).	WBA Kicks Barnford Park sessions during the Summer holidays (like the ones run a couple of years ago)	

			<p>and Burger King. Out of Sandwell include Yo Sushi and Wagamamas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre – Oldbury High Street, Retail Park but more responses for West Bromwich Town Centre and Ikea at Wednesbury Retail Park. However, the majority claimed they visited Bullring and Merryhill shopping centres, a few said Harborne high street and Halesowen • Home environment – Own home, Family, friends, relative’s homes • Out of Sandwell – Birmingham, Kings Norton, Bournville, Cotteridge, Redditch, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Halesowen, Dudley, West Bromwich Albion Stadium • Entertainment – Cinema, Starbucks, Star City, Odeon, Bowling, shops, swimming pool, restaurants, cricket club, concerts, arcades, flipout, dessert shops, ice skating, mini golf, shopping. One references was made that there needs to be more under 18s entertainment venues • Other – More under 18s, under 16s, more malls, rugby and cricket clubs
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Feedback from Youth Services Review Survey #mychillzone			Feedback from SHAPE survey relating to Youth Facilities
Rowley Regis			Rowley Regis
Have	Need	Want	
Youth club at Brickhouse and the youth bus	A bigger youth centre with wi-fi and a tuck shop.	Somewhere to go that is safe and clean and I can play my music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks referred to were Haden Hill, Britannia Park. Other parks referred to were Netherbrook park and Baremore park. • Youth Clubs – Stanley’s youth club, Brickhouse youth club • Leisure Centres – Haden Hill Leisure Centre • Food Outlets – McDonalds, KFC, Ginos, Dixys, Nandos, Eat Central • Town Centre – Blackheath, Merry Hill, Walsall, Birmingham City Centre • Home environment – Own home, Family, friends, relative’s homes • Out of Sandwell – Walsall, Langley, Dewsbury, London, Quinton • Entertainment – Under 18s club, parks, leisure centres, Cinema, Merryhill • Other – Pub, Merryhill
<p>Councillor comments – Activities for youth in Rowley Regis.</p> <p>At Youth Rowley, Go Play Rowley Regis, Beam Sandwell, JUST YOUTH - Detached Youth Work, Oakham – Tividale, Rowley Youth Club</p>			

Feedback from Youth Services Review Survey			Feedback from SHAPE survey relating to Youth Facilities
Smethwick			Smethwick
Have	Need	Want	
Lightwoods Park, Victoria Park and Warley Woods	More youth exercise machines to keep fit. More outdoor toys for the youth to enjoy and play with friends/family.	More youth exercise machines to keep fit. More outdoor toys for the youth to enjoy and play with friends/family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks referred to were Victoria Park and West Smethwick Park and others were other areas of Sandwell such as Lightwoods Park & Warley Woods • Youth Clubs – Admiral Club, Halesowen or Oldbury. A few responses said they don't go • Leisure Centres – For swimming they attend Langley Leisure Centre and Thimblemill Leisure Centre. A few mentioned Crystal Leisure Centre in Stourbridge • Food Outlets – McDonalds, KFC, Starbucks, Nandos, Pizza Hut, Delightful desserts, Toby Carvery, Chip shop, Mr Singhs, Chicken.com • Town Centre – Smethwick Linden Road and the other comments were Birmingham city centre, Merry Hill, Bullring, Dudley, West Bromwich town centre • Home environment – Own home, Family, friends, relative's homes

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of Sandwell – Leicester for family, Merryhill, Quinton, Dudley, Stourbridge • Entertainment – Star City, cinemas, reel cinema, Starbucks, inflation, rockup, Broadway plaza, football clubs • Other – Gurdwara, Arkham Asylum, Merryhill
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Councillor visit feedback

Several youth facilities listed were no longer available. We need to update information about what we have.

Visit to African French Speaking Community Support highlighted:

- The netball club is the only activity held since June 2019 for girls aged 12 to 24. The initiative is funded by Sports England for 2 years. They would like to do more but do not have the funding
- This is one of the only activities in the area that young girls can get involved in which does not impact on cultural sensitivities. Especially for girls from BAME communities where some parents are not allowing girls to participate in activities after school where boys are present.
- Not many opportunities for youth activities in the area. Relates to issues where young people are getting drawn into mischief and crime and there are gang related issues aligned to this.
- The type of activity that would attract youth include Music, Dance and Sports.
- There is a lack of opportunities for young people in the area to go on trips outside of school. Many children do not ever get to go away and some provision to take young people on trips is needed.
- Partnership working between organisations in the area is non-existent and information sharing on initiatives and activities isn't happening
- Accessibility - Referral not required; people can just turn up on the day. Although it's difficult to access the building during activities times as it's out of hours and reception staff are not on-site.
- Staff - Very welcoming and approachable. Working very well with participants.
- Space - The only space available for the session was a sports hall which was adequate for the netball session.

- Atmosphere - Very positive atmosphere and participants were getting on and having a lot of fun.
- Activities - The provision is only funded to hold one netball session a week.
- Online presence - Details are available on social media and are promoted on-line

Smethwick Windmill Youth Club - Tuesday & Thursday - 6.30pm - 8.30pm

During the visit the member spoke to 3 youth workers and 5 participants of the session. Feedback included:

- Accessibility issues – due to the restrictions in the building access was not easy. An intercom system was in place but was not user friendly. Both staff and participants recognised this is a major barrier. It was creating a closed environment
- The space was rented from the centre therefore there were issues around storage space and not been having whole control of what the areas could be used and for equipment storage.
- Participants recognised the club keeps them away from involvement in crime and trouble on the streets, including involvement in drugs and gangs. The participants praised the service and the youth workers.
- There was acknowledgment that more needed to be done to engage young people through arts, dance, music, sports, cricket, football and trips, more games, pool tables and swimming.
- Potential tournaments and working with other youth clubs
- The youth bus initiative was talked about, but young people felt this wasn't a solution to providing a safe and inclusive place for young people to engage in.
- Funding for trips and opportunities to do something different was suggested
- Accessibility – they identified issues with accessing the building and it not been user friendly. Referrals to the service are not needed.
- Staff - Very enthusiastic and engaged with participants very well.
- Space - Really good-sized room however there wasn't many activities/recourses visible for the participants. Also, there was the option of using a sports hall on site.
- Atmosphere - Very relaxed atmosphere and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves and getting on
- Activities - Mainly socialising with the options of games and sports activities.
- Online presence - All promotion is done online.

Feedback from Youth Services Review Survey #mychillzone			Feedback from SHAPE survey relating to Youth Facilities
Tipton			Tipton
Have	Need	Want	
Youth club at Malthouse and youth bus on Tibby	A dedicated youth centre or youth cafe, where we can do what we want, have access to Wi-Fi and socialise with friends.	Youth Centre that is open 5 evenings a week and on Saturdays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks referred to were Victoria Park and Jubilee Park. Other Sandwell parks visited were Brunswick Park, Langley park and out of Sandwell include Cannon Hill park • Youth Clubs – No youth clubs were stated. • Leisure Centres – Tipton Sports Academy. Other centres include Haden Hill Leisure Centres and Wednesbury Leisure Centre • Food Outlets – McDonalds, Nandos, Bella Italia, KFRC, Night Garden, Jade, Star Pizza • Town Centre – those mentioned in Sandwell include Wednesbury Retail Park and West Bromwich. Out of Sandwell Birmingham was mentioned. • Home environment – Own home, Family, friends, relative's homes • Out of Sandwell – West Bromwich for shopping, Dudley Castlegate, Birmingham • Entertainment – Under 18s parties, cinema, dance, Castlegate Showcase
None	Clubs, sports, supervision and advice	I don't know	
Unsure	Happy Programme	Anything to help get kids off streets	
None	Clubs and access to school facilities	As above	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other – Merryhill
Feedback from Youth Services Review Survey #mychillzone			Feedback from SHAPE survey relating to Youth Facilities
Wednesbury			Wednesbury
Have	Need	Want	
No comments received			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None received
<p>Wednesbury North Blast youth club (building lives around sound truth) The young people need more equipment and need more social interaction. Getting them involved in joining teams etc football maybe taking them to a game.</p> <p>They feel let down sometimes and need more support and advise around knife crime meeting with the local police team why are they never coming to meet them at the youth club? They said they need inspiring.</p>			
Feedback from Youth Services Review Survey #mychillzone			Feedback SHAPE survey - Youth Facilities
West Bromwich			West Bromwich
Have	Need	Want	
Park Basketball Area	Youth Group for teenagers including mentors	Social Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parks referred to were Hill top park, Dartmouth and Sandwell Valley Youth Clubs – 1 person stated they attend a youth club but didn't state which one • Leisure Centres – Meet friends in West Bromwich Leisure Centre • Food Outlets – McDonalds • Town Centre – New Square
Lyng Community Association clubs is	Places to go on a weekend, during the day and evening.	Drop in youth centres, places to play sports, music clubs	

nearest that I know about			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home environment – Own home, Family, friends, relative’s homes • Out of Sandwell – None mentioned • Entertainment – None specifically mentioned • Other – None mentioned
<p>There were no Youth Clubs in Hateley Heath Ward. SMBC GoPlay service currently contracted by Hateley Cross Big Local to provide research data with recommendations for a Young Voices legacy project in the Ward area. Was not able to visit the school workshops, gaining access to schools proved difficult.</p>			
<p>Tanhouse Youth Club, Great Barr (Tuesdays and Thursdays) has always been successful. Recent events highlighted at tasking in the area had an impact on numbers attending the Youth Club. Promotional work to engage new young people into the club was taking place, youth workers from Tanhouse were going out on outreach work in the area and encouraging young people to use the Tanhouse facility. At this stage I don’t feel we need additional youth work, we just need to promote what we have and encourage young people to use it.</p>			
<p>Additional Comments SEN provision across Sandwell</p>			
<p>Meadows School</p> <p>A visit to Meadows school resulted in a number of comments and suggestions made by parents who have children that attend the Meadows School. One parent was very proactive in involving their children in groups/clubs. These are current activities and ideas put forward by the parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Shephard Church has a community cinema and is well attended with 35 children. • Sneed Water Centre has paddle boarding, raft building, and canoeing. They supply wet suits and toilets are available. • Indoor skate park in Bentley, Wolverhampton. Cost £45 for family. Consider reducing cost. • Fennox BMX skate park in Perry Bar. • Swanpool in Dartmouth Park. The boating swans cost approx. £10 for 20 minutes, perhaps a more reasonable charge of £5 for 30 mins could be introduced. Also, is it possible to introduce paddle boarding/canoeing. 			

- Portway Lifestyle Centre offer a family pass. The children attend skating on a Friday night 6.00pm-7.30pm. perhaps more child friendly activities here? There is a small pool that perhaps could be used.
- The Fort in Dartmouth Park was not being used, so this would be perfect for Sandwell to utilise the building with a children's centre/youth zone.
- Dartmouth Park could offer the Tennis Courts for free?
- Link with the Bicycle shop at Dartmouth Park, potential for a Bikeability course/Sandwell 'Doctor Bike'.
- Dartmouth Park climbing rope facility is not being utilised. Ideal for Sandwell Youth workers to facilitate an activity.
- Consider a multi-facility for Tenpin Bowling/Ice Skating in West Bromwich/Sandwell.
- Create an outdoor/indoor Skate/Scooter/BMX ramp at Sandwell Valley/Lion Farm Playing fields/Sandwell,
- Young people attend a breakdance/graffiti artist session run by David at Breakmission (www.breakmissioncommunity.com). Cost is £3 per session with reductions for more than one child.
- Young people attend a forest club where they sing at the GAP in West Bromwich.
- Young people attend Go Play sessions and asked for more sessions.

Additional Comments – SHAPE Survey / forum visits

SHAPE survey responses: 78 general responses were received

- The parks referred to were Warley Woods, Lightwoods Park, Haden hill Park, Cradley Heath Park, Netherbrook Primary School Park, Perrys Park, Hurst Green Park, Highfields. Out of Sandwell the following parks were mentioned - Baremore Park, The Dell park, Netherton park, Queens Park, Clent Hills, Woodgate Valley, Howley park, Olive Hill Park, Grove Park
- Youth Clubs – Most responses were left blank or a 'no' which means they don't attend a youth club. Those who did respond stated Five Star community club, 1st Netherton Scouts troop, boys brigade, CAMHS. One person stated the youth club they attended had closed down.
- Leisure Centres – Haden Hill Leisure Centre, Langley, West Bromwich Leisure Centre. Other centres visited include crystal, Halesowen, Harborne, Windley

Appendix 3

Six Towns of Sandwell

Sandwell town profiles and infographic summaries are available through the links below.

<https://www.sandwelltrends.info/sandwell-town-profiles/>

Town	Population	Children (under 16)
Oldbury Bristnall, Langley, Old Warley Oldbury	3 rd highest 52,285 residents 11,479 under 16's 33,499 16-64	26% in poverty 29% first language is not English
Rowley Regis Blackheath, Cradley Heath and Old Hill, Rowley Tividale	4 th Highest 51,255 residents 10,859 Under 16's 31,524 16-64	28% in poverty 14% first language not English
Smethwick Abbey, Smethwick, Soho & Victoria St Paul's	2 nd Highest 60,033 residents 15,680 Under 16's 37,840 16-64	32% in poverty 53% first language not English
Tipton Tipton Green, Princes End Great Bridge	5 th Highest 41,080 residents 9,386 Under 16's 26,065 16-65	35% in poverty 24% first language not English
Wednesbury Friar Park, Wednesbury North Wednesbury South	Lowest 39,160 residents 8,582 Under 16's 24,223 16-64	32% in poverty 24% first language not English
West Bromwich Great Barr with Yew Tree, Greets Green and Lyng, Charlemont with Grove Vale, Hateley Heath, Newton West Bromwich Central	Highest 80,647 residents 17,263 Under 16's 49,999 16-64	28% in poverty 38% first language not English

Voluntary sector funding**Appendix 4**

Breakdown of the Youth Funding for 2018/19 and 2019/20 – this is for both internal and external funding awards.

NAME OF ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY / PROJECT DETAILS	TOWN	Amount
2018-2019			
We Are Bearwood	Skate Board School at Lightwoods Park	Smethwick	£600
Positive Activities Innovative Development	Sports Summer Project	Smethwick	£2,237.94
Positive Activities Innovative Development	Sports Summer Project	Smethwick	£1,959.94
Community Connect Foundation	Duke of Edinburgh Award	Smethwick	£1,870
Krunch	NA	Oldbury	£2,372.40
Stanley's Youth Club	Stanley's Youth Club Musician Sessions	Rowley Regis	£1,500.00
Oakham Evangelical Church	Equipment for Youth Club	Rowley Regis	£574.39
Stanleys Youth Club	Trip	Rowley Regis	£1,396.00
Rowley COG	Rowley Choices	Rowley Regis	£2,788.90
RSA Academy	CSE Workshop	Tipton	£780.00
Complete Kidz CIC	Youth Tipton Summer Activities	Tipton	£3,868.40
Hill Top Youth Club		Wednesbury	£ 2,521.45
Youth Services	Blast application	Wednesbury	£ 1,285.60
Wodensborough Community Amateur Boxing Club	Boxmax - boxing equipment	Wednesbury	£1,719.00
(617) Sandwell Air Scouts	Contribution towards running costs	Wednesbury	£1,250
Childrens	Teamworx	West Bromwich	£2,500.00
Youth Services	Hateley Heath Project	West Bromwich	£514.47

Moose Marial Arts Academy	Karate Wado-Ryu	West Bromwich	£1,739.69
Friends of Yew Tree and Tamebridge	Christmas Pantomine	West Bromwich	£1,134
Latifah Fultali Complex	Homework Club	West Bromwich	£4,838
2019-2020			
Paraochial Church Council of St Hilda, Warley Woods	ST Hildas Youth Group	Smethwick	£1,800.00
Tividale Academy	Girls Football Development	Oldbury	£3,832.37
Old Hill Cricket Club	Cricket Equipment	Rowley Regis	£2,145.00
Shell Corner Youth Company	Photo Art	Rowley Regis	£1,287.11
Tipton Christian Community Church	Teenscene	Tipton	£1,750.00
Time Step Dance	Time to Cheer	Tipton	£1,300.00
Jubilee Jaguars	Sports Club running sessions	Tipton	£1,145.00
SMBC Youth Services	Hill Top Youth Club - projects delivered by SMBC Youth Services (non grant)	Wednesbury	£1,173.22
SMBC Youth Services	Hill Top Youth Club - projects delivered by SMBC Youth Services (non grant)	Wednesbury	£4,477.95
Creative Academies (based at YMCA)	Just Play - project for outdoor youth activities	Wednesbury	£4,862.64
Friends of Wednesbury Library	Knit and Natter presents Father Christmas at Hilltop Library	Wednesbury	£182.30
SMBC Youth Services	Hateley Heath Youth Project - projects delivered by SMBC Youth Services (non grant)	West Bromwich	£1,009.42
Yemeni Community Centre	Youth project	West Bromwich	£2,995.93
481 Royal Air Cadets (West Bromwich)	Funding contribution towards equipment for Duke of Edinburgh	West Bromwich	£2,441.70

Sandwell Vision Ambitions



1. 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.



2. 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.



3. 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.



4. 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.



5. 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.



6. 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.



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



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



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



10. 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.

**Youth Facilities Review Process Evaluation
Feedback Table**

An evaluation form was circulated to members of the working group via google forms. The feedback will be useful to shape the process for future Working Group reviews.

1	Were you clear on the focus of the review and the intended outcomes?	Yes 3 (100%)
2	From the scene setting report and briefing did you have a level of understanding of the issue(s)?	Yes 3 (100%)
3	What information do you think the background report missed or what more could it have included?	More information on voluntary organisations. The report is very comprehensive and did not lack any information. It covered most of the required information. Some information regarding similar reviews undertaken by other LAs would have been helpful.
4	On a scale of 1-5, (1 being lowest and 5 being highest), how far did you feel you could influence the following ?	The scope of the review highest (66.7%) high (33.3%) The evidence gathering process highest (100%) The recommendations Highest (100%)
5	How useful did you find the tools in the review process: Scoping meeting Project plan Evidence pack Links to best practice Self research Meetings with core officers Social media surveys Visits to youth facilities	All tools were ranked very good or good

	<p>Key stakeholder forums</p> <p>Visit to other facilities</p> <p>Question Time</p> <p>Workshop to evaluate findings</p>	
6	Do you think the use of social media channels helpful?	Yes (66.7%) Don't know (33.3%)
7	Which platforms did you find most useful on your laptop or mobile device?	Most useful 100% google search and facebook. 33.3% Youtube (66.7%) Instagram, Snapchat, Skype (0%)
8	Do you think you had enough access to information and support during the review process?	Yes (100%)
9	What did you find most useful, how did it benefit you and what do you need more of in future reviews?	<p>Meeting the service users and providers - very useful to hear how everything works at delivery level</p> <p>I really enjoyed the workshop/conference at Conegre Arts Centre. It was good to get feedback from the Youth Workers to improve the Youth Service provision in Sandwell.</p> <p>Meeting with all the stakeholders, it gave me insight about how our services are being perceived by different stakeholders, more in-depth discussion with stakeholders.</p>
10	How effective do you think the visits to facilities were to gather evidence and meet stakeholders? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest)	3 very effective (100%)
11	What did you find most useful and how did it benefit you?	Meeting the youth workers and hearing the experience they have with access, equipment and also meeting parents to hear the wellbeing and confidence boost

		<p>that young people get from youth services</p> <p>Talking to children and staff and looking at the facilities available. When carrying out surveys its good to speak to individuals to gather as much information as possible. Also, when viewing the facilities, I was able to see what was good and what was lacking and needed improving.</p> <p>Q&A session, it was an opportunity for the youth members to raise their concerns and issues. You get know what are the real concerns that bothers them.</p>
12	How effective do you think the evidence gathering forums were, to meet partners and people who provide and use youth facilities? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest)	3 very effective (100%)
13	What do you need more of in future reviews?	<p>More opportunities to see the service in action - on site meetings and to hear different perspectives</p> <p>More involvement from all the stakeholders and more discussion platforms.</p>
14	How effective was the final work shop held to consider findings and draw conclusions? (1 being lowest and 5 being highest)	3 very effective (100%)
15	Do you feel that this review has been member led?	Yes (100%)
16	Do you feel that the conclusions and recommendations were shaped by the work group?	Yes (100%)

17	How far do you think that the Scrutiny review process achieved its objective? Give a score from 1-5. (1 being lowest and 5 being highest)	Highest (33.3%) High (66.7%)
18	What would you give as your level of understanding of the Scrutiny function now, after the review? Give a score from 1-5. (1 being lowest and 5 being highest)	Highest (33.3%) High (66.7%)
19	Do you have any further comments about the Scrutiny review process ?	<p>More in depth scrutiny I really enjoyed taking part in the scrutiny review process and I enjoyed working with all the members and staff. Deb your written report is outstanding, all 42 pages! I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the process.</p> <p>My only comment is related to the questions I was given to ask the children and staff. They did not give me in-depth answers. The more direct approach of 'what you have, want and need' questions would have been better. Also, to ask the children what hobbies they have outside school and what they enjoy inside school and where else they visit, to enable a more bespoke session.</p> <p>I appreciate the hard work done by the scrutiny officers team in organising meetings and collaborating with different organisations.</p>