

Report to Council

18 July 2017

**A new long term vision for Sandwell
(Key Decision No. SMBC16154)**

1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 Cabinet received a report on 7 December 2016 that commenced consultation and engagement around developing a new vision for Sandwell.
- 1.2 Ten ambitions were developed that focused on creating a resilient borough in terms of both Sandwell's people and the place. These ambitions provided the basis for consultation and engagement between January and March 2017.
- 1.3 To engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development of Sandwell's vision and priority areas, a communication and engagement plan was developed and endorsed by Cabinet on 7 December 2016. This plan used all existing internal and external networks and intelligence to engage fully with staff, members and stakeholders.
- 1.4 A wide ranging series of engagement exercises were undertaken. This included over 900 face to face interviews with residents in the six towns, an online survey and interactive group discussions with over 200 people.
- 1.5 Cabinet received a report on 19 April setting out the findings of the residents' survey and other stakeholder feedback and the implications of this for further developing the vision. At this point officers were requested to further refine the vision by liaising with key strategic partners across the borough, and to also build the vision into the Council's business planning process. A further report was considered by Cabinet on 28 June to consider final proposals for a Vision for Sandwell.

Further details are attached for information

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Council consider the Vision for Sandwell, as detailed in Appendix A.

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3. Strategic Resource Implications

Although the proposals in this report contain no direct implications for the Council's finances, workforce or strategic resources other than to suggest ways to strengthen the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities, the end result, the vision and performance management framework, will require that resources are aligned to the new priorities.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

There are no legal obligations or consequences for the Council arising from the consultation on the vision, and no particular statute, directive or Government guidance under which the proposals within the report are being made.

5. Implications for the Council's Scorecard Priorities

Subject to approval, the proposals in this report would see the adoption of a new vision for Sandwell and subsequently a new Performance Management Framework that will replace the scorecard.

6. Background Details

- 6.1 Cabinet received a report on 7 December 2016 that commenced consultation and engagement around developing a new vision for Sandwell.
- 6.2 A series of ambitions for Sandwell were developed around key themes identified by Cabinet. These themes were:
 - i. Building resilient, aspirational communities and families that can achieve their potential;
 - ii. Ensuring people have the education and skills to fulfil their potential and take advantage of opportunities;
 - iii. Making the most of opportunities provided through growth in the region and beyond;
 - iv. Ensuring that Sandwell is an environment where people want to live;
 - v. Breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and inequality.
- 6.3 Ten ambitions were developed that focused on creating a resilient borough in terms of both Sandwell's people and the place. The ten ambitions provided the basis for consultation and engagement between January and March 2017.
- 6.4 To engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development of Sandwell's vision and priority areas, a communication and engagement plan was developed and endorsed by Cabinet on 7 December 2016. This plan used all existing internal and external networks and intelligence to engage fully with staff, members and stakeholders.
- 6.5 A wide ranging series of engagement exercises took place. This included over 900 face to face interviews with residents in the six towns, an online survey and interactive group discussions with over 200 people.
- 6.6 Findings of the residents' survey and other stakeholder feedback are set out below:-.

Who we engaged	How?
Every member of staff within the council	Interactive engagement events x2 Express Briefings x2 Online survey Facing the Future Champions
Every elected member	Structured discussions at Quarterly Town Meetings Online survey
Residents from every ward in the Borough	Residents' Survey Sandwell Herald Online survey
Cross section of young people from across the Borough	Discussion with Shape Forum Shape Programme events at secondary and college level
Voluntary Sector Partners	Online survey via SCVO network Stakeholder consultation event
All Strategic Partners	Stakeholder consultation event Structured discussion at Strategic Partnership meetings

- 6.7 The engagement and communication plan used all the council's existing internal and external networks and existing intelligence to fully consult with staff, members and stakeholders. In addition, Enventure Research, an independent research agency, was commissioned by the Council to undertake a borough-wide survey to gather representative views on the suggested vision and ambitions for 2030.
- 6.8 This research was conducted via a face-to-face, on-street survey with residents, across the six towns of the borough. A representative sample of 907 respondents was interviewed between 11 February and 24 February 2017. Quotas were set on gender, age, working status and ethnicity according to the most up to date population data (Census 2011) to provide data that was representative of the borough's population. Approximately 150 respondents were interviewed in each of the six towns.

6.9 The conclusions drawn from the residents survey work undertaken were:-

1. People like living in Sandwell- there is a perception that **people are friendly, there is a sense of community spirit** and it is an **accessible location** with many local amenities and facilities available
2. Sandwell residents feel that the biggest priority for the future should be to **improve the level of safety** in the Borough and **reduce crime levels**, through more of a **police presence** on the streets.
3. Many residents feel that **improving local schools and education opportunities** for young people should be a priority, as well as **providing facilities** (such as parks and green spaces) and **things to do** for young people and families.
4. Many residents worry that the streets are **becoming untidier**, there is a **litter problem** and the **high streets are declining**, all of which they would like to see addressed in the future through investment and funding.
5. The availability of **good quality, affordable housing** is of importance to residents.
6. People, in particular young people, would like to see **increased and varied job and training opportunities** provided in Sandwell in the future and a **booming local economy**.

Feedback from other stakeholders on the ambitions

- 6.10 Detailed conversations around the ambitions were held between January and March 2017 with other stakeholders at three interactive events, at strategic board meetings and quarterly town meetings. An online survey was also publicised through the Sandwell Herald.
- 6.11 The stakeholders consulted were employees, members, voluntary community partners, businesses and public sector partners.

6.12 Some of the key discussion areas against the ten ambitions are contained in the table below:-

Ambition	Feedback
<p>1. By 2030, Sandwell will be a borough where families' aspirations are raised and that prides itself on equality of opportunity and resilience to change.</p>	<p>Raising aspirations is something that pulls all of the ambitions together.</p> <p>Holistic family support, more parental involvement in education leads to better outcomes for young people. Third Sector can help deliver this.</p> <p>Links between schools and industries needs to be stronger to provide young people with more of a career focus.</p>
<p>2. By 2030, Sandwell will be a place where people and families are healthier for longer and are safer.</p>	<p>Prevention is key to delivering a longer healthier life expectancy, with a more holistic approach to family health and a focus on the long term.</p> <p>Education is the link between lifestyle choices and health.</p>
<p>3. By 2030, Sandwell's young people will have better skills and working people will have developed new skills – giving Sandwell a workforce geared up to respond to changes in business needs and the economy.</p>	<p>Stronger links between schools and universities.</p> <p>Better links between schools and industry – pathways and progression.</p> <p>Improve the quality of teaching and the teaching environment to ensure that young people are resilient and able to adapt to changing job markets.</p> <p>Partnership between schools and the council to ensure consistent improvements across the borough – many benefits to collaborative working.</p>
<p>4. By 2030, secondary school quality will have been raised, and superb primary schools will be giving children the best start.</p>	<p>Good quality teaching and aspirational heads at a secondary level – 'can do' approach.</p> <p>Breath of education – more value for softer skills</p> <p>Support parents through the education process so that they can better support their children.</p>

<p>5. By 2030, crime will have fallen and anti-social behaviour incidents will be few and far between.</p>	<p>Address the root causes of crime and disorder (prevention) need a partnership approach to deliver.</p> <p>Need to focus on initiatives that bring communities together</p>
<p>6. By 2030, Sandwell will have excellent public transport links to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.</p>	<p>Affordable, efficient, cleaner and more reliable.</p> <p>Contactless payment option.</p> <p>Integration with other transport methods, including cycling.</p>
<p>7. By 2030, Sandwell will have significant numbers of new homes built along key transport routes and there will be major new employment sites.</p>	<p>Complementary uses of six towns.</p> <p>New housing near to local amenities.</p> <p>Maximise strengths – green spaces, parks, heritage.</p> <p>Influence land owners to work with us to develop sites.</p>
<p>8. By 2030, Sandwell's six towns will have continued to develop a strong sense of local identity and pride and will be a better environment in which people choose to bring up their families.</p>	<p>Enhance our heritage – local identity and pride</p> <p>Improve our environment, reduce pollution.</p> <p>Tidier, cleaner town centres with less vacant buildings.</p>
<p>9. By 2030, Sandwell will host the industries of the future and will have boosted the best performing companies to grow.</p>	<p>Provide ready sites</p> <p>Skilled work force ready to meet demands of new industries.</p> <p>Support businesses to work together</p>

<p>10. By 2030, Sandwell will have a national reputation for getting things done, focussing on what really matters in people's lives and their wider community.</p>	<p>Listen to residents. Maximise opportunities with the voluntary sector. Foster a sense of community Strive to be better – take risks.</p>
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6.13 Whilst stakeholders had some different perspectives emerging to residents, the interrelation of the ambitions was prevalent. In particular the importance of raising aspirations. To achieve this the following were of key importance:-

- Education and skills paramount to creating a resilient Sandwell;
- Retaining and attracting aspirational families;
- Creating quality places where families want to live - recognition that a package of measures is required.

6.14 At its meeting on 21 March 2017 Cabinet requested that further work be undertaken on the Vision to translate the ten ambitions into a more meaningful form that residents and other stakeholders could buy into.

6.15 Further consultation has taken place during April and May 2017 with the Voluntary Sector Leaders Forum, the Safer Sandwell Partnership, Business Ambassadors and the Head Teachers Forum to refine the wording in the ambitions so that it is more meaningful to all communities in Sandwell.

6.16 The Voluntary sector felt that partners' commitment to vulnerable people living in the borough should be stronger, taking on board this view Ambition 2 has been enhanced to specifically refer to vulnerable people living in our community.

6.17 In particular, the Safer Sandwell Partnership suggested refining the wording of ambition five to reflect that the perception of crime and the feeling of community safety was an essential task for partners in the borough.

- 6.18 The Business Ambassadors highlighted that given Sandwell's position in any league table regarding average income, an aspiration to grow income levels faster than the national average might be appropriate. They also acknowledged that Sandwell had a limited amount of development space available and so queried the potential to deliver a high number of new homes and capacity to grow the local economy. From the Council's perspective, it is accepted that there will be challenges ahead in identifying usable land on which to develop, but through funds available through the West Midlands Combined Authority it is hoped that Sandwell will be able to identify a sufficient amount of space to meet development requirements.
- 6.19 In addition, work has also been undertaken to make the 'place' ambitions more relatable to the community whilst also recognising that the achievement of the 'people' based ambitions are very much dependent upon the achievement of the place based ones.
- 6.20 Appendix A sets out the wording for the vision together with an overarching statement which summarises the intent of the ambitions.

Taking the Vision Forward

- 6.21 Recognising the challenging external environment and the ambition that Cabinet and Management Board have for a new Vision for the Sandwell, a report was presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2017. A new senior management structure for the organisation was proposed, and agreed, to allow the necessary focus on the continuation and protection of frontline services and also to align to the new performance framework that will be built around the new Council Vision to measure progress against outcomes.
- 6.22 To ensure that the Vision is at the heart of everything the Council does, work has taken place to revise the format of the Council Business Plan. The new structure ensures, in a concise way, that all activity undertaken by the Council must contribute to one of the ten ambitions that make up the Vision.
- 6.23 A template and guidance have been produced and will be rolled out over the summer to all business plan authors in the Council so that when the process of writing the new plans commences in September 2017 all areas of work undertaken by the Council will contribute to the Vision.

- 6.24 However, whilst the Council is one of the key stakeholders that will deliver the vision, it cannot be achieved in isolation. The launch of the vision will be the starting point for conversations with partners, and with the community, as we can only achieve the vision by working collaboratively across the borough.
- 6.25 Appendix B outlines the framework for the launch of the Vision and centres around collecting buy-in from key partners which will start the process of community conversations.

Sandwell's Vision 2030

In 2030, Sandwell is a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.

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

Ambitions for People



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.

Ambitions for Place



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.

Framework for launch of Vision 2030 – July-Autumn 2017

The Vision 2030 will have a main launch event accompanied by a series of mini launch “fringe events”. These events will involve key stakeholders and staff and will be located at various places around the borough.

Main Launch Event

The main launch event will be held in September/October 2017 at West Bromwich Town Hall as a drop-in session. The event will be organised around a series of themed stands, related to the 10 ambitions. There will be an opportunity to network and discuss how we will deliver the vision together. At some point in the proceedings, a formal media launch will take place, giving an overview of the vision.

Mini Launch “Fringe Events”

A series of mini launch fringe events will be held around the date of the main launch event. These will be hosted by various partners but led by the Council. The aim will be to focus each event around particular ambitions in the vision and will draw together key partners in those fields.

These events will be more informal with the opportunity for in depth discussion on delivering the vision together. Each event will be designed to engage that particular group of interest e.g. business partners, young people.

Internal communications of the new vision

Following agreement at Council, a range of methods of communication will be used to spread awareness of the new vision over the summer. This will include weekly communications to staff (particularly managers) on aspects of the vision, leading to a main briefing event in early September, following the summer period.