













Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Scrutiny Annual Report 2017-18



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Introduction

The year 2017-2018 was a very busy year for me and for the role of scrutiny in governance at all levels. At the beginning of the 2017 Municipal year, I had the honour of being appointed, not only as Chair of Sandwell Council's newly re-established Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, but also as inaugural Chair of the West Midlands Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As part of governance arrangements in local authorities, Combined Authorities, Public Bodies and Central Government, Scrutiny is now more important than ever. That is why, during the 2018-2019 municipal year, we will be reviewing the structures, practices and ways of working of Scrutiny as part of a wider governance review.

2017-18 was also a time of great change for Sandwell Council - with new Directors joining the Council; new ways of operating being introduced; preparation work for the establishment of the new Children's Trust; and, last but not least, the development (through widespread consultation) of Sandwell's new Vision 2030 Ambitions. Across all these areas (and more) there was a role for Scrutiny to review what we do, to look at how we use resources, and to influence the shape of future services.

Scrutiny represents and involves people, services and stakeholders – all of whom will be impacted upon or influenced by Scrutiny's recommendations. By working with service providers, partners and other stakeholders, Scrutiny can help to create a culture where transparency, involvement and accountability are welcomed. It can also develop an ethos where constructive 'critical friend' challenge is (and is seen to be) a positive part of decision making; and contributes directly to improved outcomes for both residents and businesses in Sandwell.

The role of Scrutiny is therefore also to amplify the voices and concerns of the public, whilst also driving improvement in public services. This coming year will be an important year for Scrutiny to carry on this role to future proof services and maintain overview of the resources. In doing this, we need to ensure that we are integral to the policy and strategy development process, and engaged early enough to influence strategy and plans, and we lay down this challenge to the Executive and Directorate!



We need to continue to ensure that we do not work in isolation, and, as Sandwell's representative on the West Midlands Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, I will ensure that there is ongoing links and synergy between the two; and encourage the Scrutiny Chairs to liaise with colleagues in neighbouring and peer Authorities.

It is my view that all the Scrutiny Boards carried out some quality and invaluable work during 2017-2018, and I would like to thank the Chairs, who led on their portfolios so ably.

Of course, all of this work would not have been possible without the excellent support and input of the Scrutiny team, to which I express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation!

I hope you find this Annual Report informative and helpful. Should you want to know more, however, or contribute ideas or provide evidence for consideration by Scrutiny, please contact us at: scrutiny_unit@sandwell.gov.uk

Councillor Peter Hughes

Chair—Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board



Governance and Scrutiny Arrangements

Overview and scrutiny is a key aspect of this Council's governance framework and integral to decision making. The scrutiny function in Sandwell informs policy making, reviews delivery, monitors performance and shapes services to support services and Sandwell Vision 2030 ambitions.

The Council appoints a Scrutiny Management Board and four thematic Scrutiny Boards to discharge the functions conferred by section 12 of the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation. The local authority has a duty to have a means of scrutinising crime and disorder, health and flood provisions under the following legislation:

- Crime and Disorder Functions – Police and Justice Act 2006.
- Health functions – National Health Services Act 2006.
- Flood risk management - Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (ceased to have effect on 6 April 2018).

The Scrutiny Board terms of reference as approved by Council, and set out in the Council's Constitution, make provision for the Council to carry out the duty.

Scrutiny powers are provided through a legislative framework for enhancing both the democratic accountability of public services at a local level and the crucial leadership role for councillors as champions of their communities. The scrutiny function maintains overview and holds to account partner and Council services through regular reports to the Scrutiny Boards:

- Annual Adults' and Children's Safeguarding Reports;
- Budget Monitoring and Outturn Reports;
- Work of the Sandwell Safer Partnership Police and Crime Board;
- Statutory Section 19 Flood report;
- Health Reports.



The scrutiny function is member led. Scrutiny work programming process ensures that the public, businesses, council officers and partners are consulted to bring forward potential topics for scrutiny to look at in the work programme. The work programme is reviewed regularly to check that items are still relevant for scrutiny, that it is the right time to look at the item, this ensures that scrutiny contributes to other processes, it does not replicate other work and that it captures emerging items and topics.

With fewer resources in local government, decisions are critical and may impact on how we deliver services. Scrutiny adds challenge on several levels and it is more important than ever to monitor performance, to check the best use of resource is being made and to monitor and challenge when things are not going to plan. Scrutiny is most effective and adds value when it is properly scoped and supported, the scrutiny function must be open and transparent.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is an integral part of the scrutiny process and good governance. It creates an environment and a platform to shape and develop policies and services with our key strategic partners for the people and communities in Sandwell.

Scrutiny Chairs actively encourage partners to participate in the scrutiny function. During 2017-18 there are several good examples of how this happens:

- local Clinical Commissioning Group, hospitals and other relevant health bodies regularly attended and contributed to the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board meetings;
- the Chair of the Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board attended the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board to update on the work of the Partnership Board;
- Police officers from policing units across the borough contributed to the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Work Group;
- the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board maintained overview of preparations and progress towards the transfer of children's services to the Sandwell Children's Trust and considered how emerging issues were being addressed. The Council retains accountability for children's services and scrutiny will continue to monitor delivery and budget.



Member Development

The Scrutiny Team delivered two training courses last year, for Scrutiny Board Chairs and for Scrutiny Members. Both sessions were well attended and feedback was excellent. Scrutiny members are offered training and development opportunities through the Council's Member Development Programme to:

- strengthen their own skills and knowledge;
- ensure that scrutiny in Sandwell continues to deliver robust challenge;
- achieve outcomes that contribute to the Sandwell Vision 2030;
- ensure that our partnership arrangements and partner organisations are effectively scrutinised in line with statutory guidance.

The Member Development Programme has recently been refreshed to provide interactive and engaging sessions for members to ascertain members learning, development and support requirements to help them to deliver the priorities contained in Sandwell's Vision 2030.

Scrutiny Boards

In 2017-18, Sandwell Council approved Scrutiny Boards to conduct the scrutiny function as follows:

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Membership:

Chair and Chairs of the four Scrutiny Boards

Chair



Cllr Peter
Hughes



Cllr Joyce
Underhill



Cllr Laura
Hickey



Cllr Elaine
Giles



Cllr Joy
Edis



Remit of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board:

Budget strategy; budget monitoring; examination of budget setting and outturn reports and scrutiny of the treasury management function. The Board is also responsible for scrutinising departmental Business Plans, and all Council functions and activities not covered by the terms of reference of the other Scrutiny Boards, including the corporate core; information and communication technology; corporate information management; organisational development; human resources and performance management.

Four Portfolio-focused Scrutiny Boards

The Council also has four Scrutiny Boards each with its own terms of reference covering aspects of the Council's, and its partners', work.

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Chair



Cllr Joyce Underhill

Vice-Chair



Cllr Sue Phillips

Vice-Chair



Cllr Caroline White

Members

Cllr Peter Allen

Cllr Lorraine Ashman

Cllr Yvonne Davies

Cllr Laura Hickey

Cllr Linda Horton

Cllr Liam Preece

Cllr Mohammad Rouf

Cllr Farut Shaeen

Co-opted Members: Rev Peter French Church of England

Tahira Majid

Remit

Children's Social Care




Children and Family Services

Education




Parent Governor



Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

Chair	Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair	Members	Remit
			Cllr Zahoor Ahmed	Economy
Cllr Laura Hickey	Cllr Lorraine Ashman	Cllr Mohinder Tagger	Cllr Keith Allcock	Employment and Skills
			Cllr Bawa Dhallu	Transport
			Cllr Maria Crompton	Environment
			Cllr Stephen Frear	
			Cllr Ian Jones	
			Cllr Barbara Price	
			Cllr Mohammad Rouf	

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

Chair	Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair	Members	Remit
			Cllr Maria Crompton	Health and Public Health
Cllr Elaine Giles	Cllr Zahoor Ahmed	Cllr Mohammad Rouf	Cllr Susan Downing	Services for older/vulnerable adults
			Cllr Carol Goult	Local safeguarding arrangements for adults
			Cllr Sandra Hevican	
			Cllr Olwen Jones	
			Cllr Stephen Jones	
			Cllr Bob Lloyd	
			Cllr Farut Shaeen	



Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

Chair



Cllr Joy Edis

Vice-Chair



Cllr Carol Goult

Vice-Chair



Cllr Sandra Hevican

Members

Cllr Keith Allcock

Cllr Babe Singh Bawa

Cllr Lorraine Ashman

Cllr Joanne Hadley

Cllr Sue Phillips

Cllr Robert Price

Cllr Joyce Underhill

Cllr Caroline White

Remit

Children's Social Care

Children and Family Services

Education

Co-opted Member: Mike Babb

Tenant Review Panel

The Scrutiny Boards use a range of methods to deliver their work programme and carry out scrutiny, such as:

- inviting witnesses or experts to provide reports and presentations;
- giving consideration of 'pre-decision' matters, where the Board considered and commented on key decisions to be made by Cabinet;
- inviting Cabinet Members, service providers and partners to attend to report on progress, performance and monitoring.

Actions arising from scrutiny meetings are recorded and monitored as part of the agenda and work programme planning process. Recommendations made by scrutiny to Cabinet are monitored to ensure the decisions and actions filter through to relevant business plans and working practices, and that the outcomes arising from scrutiny recommendations can be tracked.

More information and background to the topics considered by the Boards can be viewed on the Council's Committee Management Information System.



Work Groups

In addition to matters considered by the Scrutiny Boards at meetings during 2017-18, Chairs and Vice-Chairs established work groups for the year to carry out in depth investigation of the following topics:

- Aids and Adaptations
- Employability and Skills
- Foster Carers
- Housing Delivery Options
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Town Centre Revitalisation
- Housing Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour

Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs worked with service providers and partners to consider what was achievable and realistic for the group to focus on to avoid duplicating or frustrating other processes or bringing pressure to officer or member capacity.

Work Groups met to receive background information about the topic identified and consider the current situation brief from the relevant officers and partners. A scoping document was then considered to assist scrutiny members to agree where there were gaps and issues, and where scrutiny could add value to what the Council does and provides for residents and businesses in Sandwell, and to determine what detailed information and tools they would use to carry out the work.

All work groups were supported by the scrutiny team and focused on topics that aligned to the Sandwell Vision 2030 ambitions. The work groups provided regular updates to the relevant Board(s) and reported findings and recommendations to the relevant Board(s), Executive Directors, Cabinet Member(s) and Cabinet.

Several of the work groups have yet to conclude their work and they will roll over to 2018-19 work programme to report findings to the relevant Boards.





40 Scrutiny Board meetings

5 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny meetings held with Birmingham City Council



8 Work Groups looking at specific issues

14 Work Group meetings to scope and gather evidence



11 site visits

Met with witnesses to hear their views and experiences



Over 50 topics considered and over 100 recommendations made



Contribution to Vision 2030



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.

Aids and Adaptations

The Care Act 2014 prompted an officer review of Council policy and guidance relating to aids and adaptations to homes. A scrutiny work group was part of the consultation process on the draft policy and guidance in December 2016 and continued to monitor development of the policy and guidance to support the delivery of the service. The group highlighted the cause of blockages in the process which delayed provision of what customers need to enable them to live independently and safely in their own homes, for as long as possible. They looked at:

- the customer journey, including pathways, roles and responsibilities and expectations;
- effective use of resources and value for money;
- sustainability and future proofing of homes.

The group focused on the need to keep resident's safe whilst balancing their needs against best use of resources and making the best use of the Council's limited housing stock. Scrutiny Board recommended the revised policy to Cabinet, with emphasis on the need to take into account the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 and other policies around spending Disabled Facilities Grants



Sandwell Transition Education Partnership Services (STEPS)

Members visited the Sandwell Transition Education Partnership Services (STEPS) in Smethwick, the assessment centre was unique in the United Kingdom as it is not a school. STEPS provide a first point of contact and support for families and children/carers who are new to Sandwell and the UK, and speak English as an additional language. Before the STEPS assessment centre, there was no point of contact or transition for families coming into Sandwell, they would stay with friends or family, or rent private accommodation in Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO), the children were not known to the Education Services at an early stage of their arrival to UK.

Members observed STEPS sessions with the children and a work shop for parents. The centre provides support whilst children and families wait for a school place allocation and other organisations provide support projects at the Centre to help parents learn about money management, family finance, cultural differences and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes. Members were impressed with the commitment and success of the work carried out by staff, children and their families.

The work group found that funding was a problem, the initial funding was for a year which would end in July 2018 and no arrangement was agreed to fund the service for future years. STEPS managers attended a Scrutiny Board meeting and advised that its success had continued to grow alongside a new arrival waiting list to access the Centre services. Government Migration funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government had been secured for the STEPS Assessment Centre and services for a further two years. Further plans to expand services beyond two years were being considered.

The Centre shares its success by promoting and facilitating excellent practice in English Language (EAL) teaching and learning through the Sandwell Schools' EAL Network, and providing professional development days. Other local authorities had invited Sandwell to provide services for them. In appreciation of the continuing excellent work and success of the children and staff of the Sandwell Transition Educational Partnership Services (STEPS), the Board recommended that the STEPS staff, children and their parents be invited to meet the Mayor of Sandwell at the Big House, Oldbury.



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.



Foster Carers Work Group

The focus of the group was to consider improving the offer for foster carers in Sandwell, to explore incentives to recruit and retain foster carers and to look at best practice elsewhere to compare what we do and what more could be done. The Fostering Work Group met twice to hear from chief officers, a survey was circulated to all 174 Sandwell Council foster carers to find their perspective about the fostering offer in Sandwell and what more was needed.

Desk top research was carried out and officers in housing, council tax, leisure and children's services responded to questions about what more council services can do to support foster carers in their role and develop incentives for foster carers.

Fostering Services transferred to Sandwell Children's Trust on 1 April 2018 and will soon become an Independent Fostering Agency (non-profit making). The work to retain and recruit foster carers will continue to be a priority for the Children's Trust and for scrutiny moving into 2018-19.

Review of Oncology Services in Sandwell and West Birmingham

The Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Birmingham City Council held partners to account in relation to changes to the way solid tumour oncology services were delivered across Sandwell and West Birmingham. Following University Hospitals Birmingham's decision to withdraw its staff from Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals sites patients were required to travel to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment.

NHS England had commissioned a root and branch review of the service and the Joint Committee was maintaining close oversight of the situation both in relation to the temporary relocation of services and the impact on patients and on the progress of the review. At the time of writing the matter was ongoing and continued to be a high priority for the Committee's focus in 2018/2019.

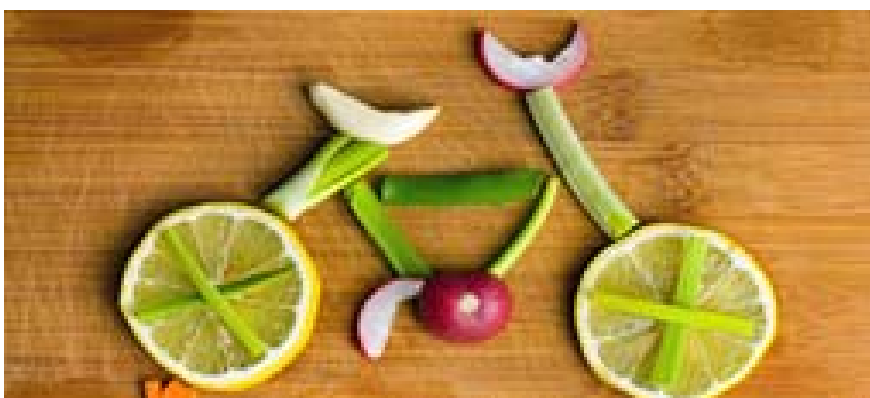


Public Health Expenditure on Lifestyle Programmes

The Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board held the Interim Director Public Health to account in relation to underspend in 2016/2017 on programmes aimed at addressing lifestyle risk factors. Underspends had arisen as a result of provider under-performance due to targets being set too high. Payment models had therefore been redesigned and targets adjusted to ensure that they were more realistic and provider interest was maintained. The Board was also advised that Public Health priorities were being reviewed to ensure that they aligned with the Vision 2030 and that funding was prioritised accordingly.

Members supported the focus on promoting the self-help agenda and heard evidence on the latest ways of working and developments being explored including mobile screening, out of hours service, digital platforms and automated messaging. Further evidence was gathered relating to the new staffing arrangements working across four settings in each of Sandwell's six towns, the move to engaging with the provider market, and the successes for Sandwell in relation to the National Diabetes Programme.

Members agreed that they could assist in championing the NHS Health Check programme and recommended that the proposed new priorities for Public Health and the performance of programmes to address lifestyle risk factors would be considered by Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board before Cabinet considered the priorities for Public Health for approval





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.

Human Resources and Initiatives to Tackle an Aging Workforce

The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board considered the suite of initiatives operated by the Council to help tackle the challenges associated with an aging workforce. This included a highly successful Graduate Scheme and a range of apprenticeship opportunities. Some graduates currently on the Scheme attended a Board meeting and shared their experiences at Sandwell. The Board welcomed the mixed approach to developing a talent blend that would meet the needs of Sandwell Council now, and in the future.



Employment Skills - Fuller Working Lives (over 50)

The Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board set up a work group which visited Oldbury Job Centre to hear about skills, employment programmes and initiatives for all ages. They found that younger people had many support mechanisms and programmes in place but that there was an emerging issue in Sandwell with an ageing population and a need to focus on skills and employment for over 50's.

The Group considered 'Fuller Working Lives' :A Partnership Approach which was a government policy that encourages businesses to retain, retrain and recruit older workers and presents the benefits of a fuller working life. The opportunity for industry is to harness more talent, retain valuable experience and reduce staff turnover.

Visits to Sandwell College revealed that the College and Sandwell Council are working together to hold events for businesses and training providers to promote Fuller Working Lives. Tackling the issues of an ageing workforce means new approaches and innovative changes should be considered such as more flexible hours or part-time working for workers caring for a family member or providing childcare or transition to a less demanding role, could tip the balance to workers staying in employment longer. They found that staying in work for a few more years can make a significant difference to income thereafter, and for most people, being in good appropriate work can be good for your health, both physical and mental.

Sandwell Adult and Family Learning (SAFL) provide adult learning provision and support mechanisms for training and gaining skills in Sandwell. The opportunity for industry is to harness more talent, retain valuable experience and reduce staff turnover.

The Scrutiny Board will continue its work on employment and skills in Sandwell in 2018-19.



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



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Sandwell Council and its partners are working together to focus on mental health and wellbeing provision for children and young people. The SEND work group met with Clinical Commissioning Group and lead officers for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Sandwell at Connor Road Education Centre to consider progress following an inspection of Special Education Needs in July 2017.

Five areas of concern in the local area had been identified in the inspection and the work group found that actions in all of areas of concern had been completed and embedded. There were a range of initiatives in place to raise awareness of training, online counselling and signposting the public and professionals to support and information on the website.

The work group findings were reported to Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board highlighting the need to focus on early support through Tier 1 and Tier 2 provision where the Council was involved in delivery and commissioning of support services.

The Scrutiny Board agreed that more work was required to monitor the impact that Tier 2 services (currently commissioned from voluntary sector by the Council) were having on numbers of young people progressing to professional support for mental health issues (tier 3 services, provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group).

There will be a future report to consider the impact of tier 2 services and future resource implications in 2018-19.





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

Anti-Social Behaviour caused by off-road motorcycles

The Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board carried out a review of partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour committed with off-road motorcycles. A round-table workshop was held with local policing representatives from across Sandwell, together with the Council's ASB manager. This highlighted the efforts made by the partnership to tackle the nuisance caused by off-road motorcycles. As a result of this review the Police and Council agreed to strengthen communication of campaigns to highlight the dangers associated with illegal and irresponsible off-road motorcycle use.



West Bromwich Public Space Protection Order

The Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board held a meeting with representatives from the Council, West Midlands Police and the West Bromwich Business Improvement District to discuss ways to help address anti-social behaviour in the town centre, including the potential for a Public Space Protection Order.

By bringing the relevant people together from the various organisations it contributed to opening up more effective communication channels which is coming to fruition with proposals since having been published with Cabinet expected to consider the approval of an Order during summer 2018.



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



Pre-decision scrutiny of major plans

Early scrutiny involvement in reviewing or developing plans and policy is an effective means of scrutiny which complements the executive role, as follows: part of the consultation stage when options and perspective can be explored and effectively considered to influence and help shape proposals; and

shortly before the decision is made to review the process followed, challenge assumptions made and to check that risks, resources and options have been thoroughly considered.

Pre-decision scrutiny of major plans:

- Parking and Traffic Enforcement policy 2017
- Road Safety Plan 2017-2020
- Black Country Core Strategy – consultation
- Air Quality Action Plan
- Statutory Section 19 Flood Report
- Highways and Asset Management Plan

The overview role of the overview and scrutiny function ensured that the Cabinet Members, service providers and partners responsible for long term transport and regeneration plans and their delivery are held to account and are invited to address scrutiny meetings.

Scrutiny is effective as an influencer and critical friend to the executive role and scrutiny provides a sounding board to help Cabinet to make key-decisions more robust.





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

Prevention of Homelessness Strategy

The Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board and its Housing Working Group conducted a pre-decision scrutiny review of the draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy. This had been proactively brought to Scrutiny by officers who were actively seeking the valuable input that elected members on the Scrutiny Board could have. Following this review, the Board commented upon and endorsed the draft Strategy, which went on to be approved by Cabinet.



Housing Delivery Options

The focus of the group was to consider Council owned housing construction and to explore alternative construction methods to find eco-friendly and cost-effective housing alternatives. The Work Group carried out a site visit to LoCal Homes in Walsall and held a discussion about manufacturing and value of wooden framed housing with the production manager. The Chair reported back to the Scrutiny Management Board meeting and heard further information from the Council housing manager.

The Work Group agreed to research and gather more evidence relating to energy efficiency, cost benefits, timelines for builds, customer experience and health benefits and meet in May 2018 to consider the evidence gathered and feedback from a survey of the Sustainable Housing Action Partnership (SHAP) which is gathering evidence in relation to modern methods of construction across the wider Midlands.

Findings of the Sandwell Scrutiny Board will inform the West Midlands Combined Authority Land Task and Finish Group.



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



Revitalisation of Town Centres

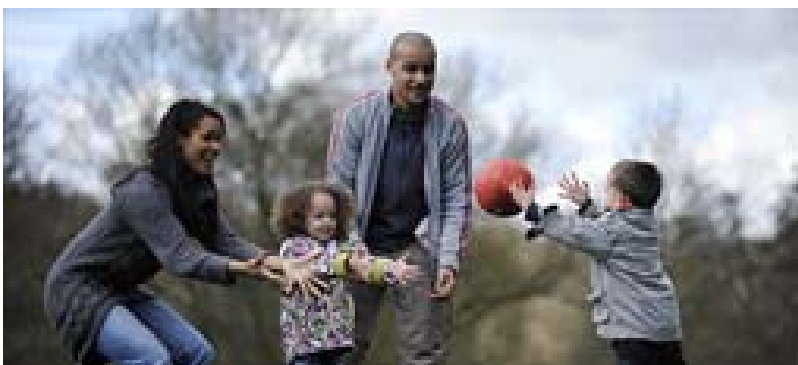
The Scrutiny Chair of Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board wanted to know more about the local economy in the six towns of Sandwell and asked what more the Council needed to do to strengthen the local night time economy, visitor economy and revitalise town centres.

All Members and Town Centre Managers were invited to respond to a consultation about their Town and to attend a Local Town Chairs meeting to consider what the six towns and Sandwell had to offer.

Local information gathered about the visitor and the night time economy offers in Sandwell was varied and quite surprising. A host of activities, attractions, events, heritage and culture were revealed and the findings helped to map out the current activities and future suggestions which were reported to the Scrutiny Board.

The Chairs work started a conversation which has informed and helped shape the six town plans and the review of the Sandwell Cultural Offer.

Scrutiny supported the vision ambition relating to distinctive towns and neighbourhoods and will inform the future visitor, cultural and night-time economy offers in Sandwell.





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

Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment – Portfolio progress reporting

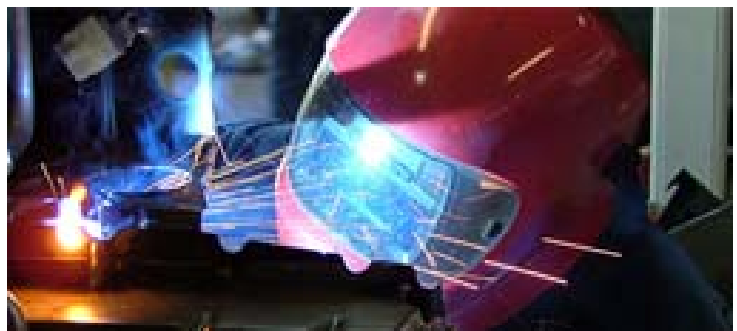
The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment reported to and responded to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Board on the plans for and progress of key work streams in Sandwell.

The Board highlighted issues of concern to the Cabinet Member such as what was being done to tackle the following:

- availability of land;
- land banking;
- unsightly land and buildings;
- unauthorised encampments;
- building premises;
- inward investment, economic growth and industries of the future;
- the pressure the 'Right to Buy' had put on Sandwell housing stock.

The Cabinet Member gave a comprehensive summary of his portfolio priorities, progress and challenges; and shared good news about access to funding, work commissioned relating to park and ride, particularly around rail travel. and planning application performance – exceeding Government performance targets.

A good relationship between scrutiny and the executive is essential to consider the underlying issues and concerns of stakeholders, and to focus on what, how, why and when we do things for the longer-term growth and prosperity in Sandwell.



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.



Robust budget monitoring

The Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has carried out extensive monitoring and reviewing of the Council's finances. The Cabinet, which recognises the significant role of Scrutiny in this work, refer budget monitoring, outturns and proposed budgets and business plans to the Scrutiny Management Board throughout the year for detailed review. This work has proven ever more vital in the face of the Government's continued austerity programme.

The Scrutiny Management Board made a number of recommendations arising from its regular monitoring including:

- requesting the development of performance tracking for the ambitions in Vision 2030 and the directorate business plans which contain key underpin them;
- requesting an invest to save initiative for small replacement and improvement works in council properties to prevent future problems such as damp;
- to protect the finances of the authority, asking the Cabinet to consider lobbying Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to request reassurance that, in delegating children's social care functions to a new Trust, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council should not incur greater costs through the value added tax and Corporation Tax regime than would be the case were it to continue providing services in house.



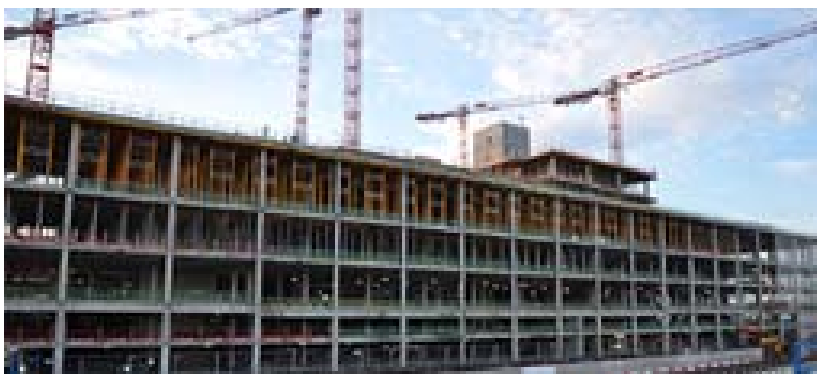
Air Quality - pollution and reducing congestion

The Health and Adult Social Care HASC and Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment ESTE Scrutiny Boards considered air quality from different perspectives. They considered the measures to reduce air pollution in Sandwell described in the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2018 – 2023 and the proposed public consultation process.

The Boards held informative and robust debate about the impact of poor air quality and how to reduce pollution and during the debates several issues of concern and suggestions were highlighted for Cabinet to consider when making its comments on the draft Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2018-2023:

- health of our residents – reducing respiratory impact;
- making our communities better cleaner air and less congestion;
- keeping traffic moving for business and commuters – traffic management;
- electric vehicle charge points to increase clean vehicles into the Borough.

On 31 January 2018, Cabinet agreed to consider offering free parking to drivers of electric vehicles, including Council employees, on all Council owned car parks in the borough. Consultation of the AQAP ends on 1 May 2018, scrutiny will consider the draft AQAP in 2018-19.



Topic List

Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

Budgets

- Outturns
- Quarterly Monitoring

General Data Protection Regulations

Communities and Local Government Committee Report - Effectiveness of local authority overview and scrutiny committees

Directorate business plans

Council recruitment processes

Addressing an aging workforce

Housing Delivery Options

Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board

Sandwell Children's Trust updates

Readiness for school - Ready, Steady, Learn

Retention and incentives for social workers

Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board annual report

Improved careers guidance in schools

Education performance

School place planning

Children's mental health

Children's oral health

Independent Reviewing Officer annual report

Sandwell Transition Education Partnership Services

Childhood obesity

Special Educational Need and Disabilities work group



**Economy, Skills,
Transport and
Environment Scrutiny
Board**

Parking and Traffic Enforcement Policy 2017
Cycle infrastructure
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic
Investment - progress in Sandwell
Road Safety Plan 2017-2022
Approach to identifying suitable sites and
programmes for the Black Country City Deal and
the West Midlands Combined Authority Land
Reclamation Fund
Statutory Section 19 Flood report
Black Country Core Strategy - consultation
Air Quality Action Plan
Employability and skills update for Sandwell
Fuller Working Lives
Highways Asset Management Plan - consultation
Employment Skills work group
Town Revitalisation work group

**Health and Adult
Social Care Scrutiny
Board**

Black Country Sustainability and Transformation
Partnership
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical
Commissioning Group - key issues and priorities
and the Treatment Policies Harmonisation
Programme
Transforming Care Together
Public Health England health profiles
Air Quality in Sandwell
Healthwatch
Delayed transfer of care
Aids and adaptations
Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board annual report
Strategy to reduce infant mortality in Sandwell



**Safer
Neighbourhoods and
Active Communities
Scrutiny Board**

Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board
Public Space Protection Orders
Homelessness
Pre-decision scrutiny of the draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy
Housing developments in Sandwell
Off-road vehicle based anti-social behaviour

**Joint Health Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

Prescriptions and medicines consultation by Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group
Oncology Services in Sandwell and West Birmingham
Place-based Models of Care

