


Report to Council

10 March 2020

Subject:	Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal
Director:	Director of Regeneration and Growth Amy Harhoff
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Nicky Denston

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That :

1. To approve Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal.
2. Agree the proposal to establish a Council led Inclusive Economy and Community Wealth Board with membership reflecting the Sandwell Community. The Board to act as the guardian of the programme to deliver the community wealth building commitments agreed at Cabinet 5th February 2020 and Inclusive Economy Deal commitments agreed at Cabinet on 26 February 2020.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal, co-developed in collaboration with residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.
- 1.2 To provide the full background which has underpinned the development of the deal, including innovative and extensive engagement to ensure that the Sandwell Inclusive Economy Deal provides a genuine reflection of the

- 1.3 The mobilisation of the Inclusive Economy Deal requires political buy-in at the highest level to ensure we deliver on the council's commitments contained within the deal are delivered and continue to evolve. The report includes a proposal for future governance to ensure the performance and delivery of the commitments within the deal.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030

- 2.1 Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal supports Vision 2030 and will drive forward jointly with residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector many interventions which will support the delivery of our ambitions.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Sandwell's Inclusive Economy is the first of its kind in the country. The deal is an informal agreement between the council and everyone who lives or works here, to work together to create a better Sandwell and deliver wealth for all. The difference between Sandwell's deal and those of other authorities, including the renowned Wigan Deal and Dudley is the clear focus on the economy of Sandwell by developing joint interventions which will have a positive impact on the local economy and ensuring wealth creation is kept and shared within the borough.
- 3.2 Our deal-based approach guarantees that it is developed and owned by our communities, businesses, anchor institutions, the voluntary and community sector as well as the Council. The insight and commitment of Sandwell's residents, businesses, voluntary and community sector and anchor institutions has been essential to the development and ongoing delivery of the deal.
- 3.3 There are three distinct deals within the Sandwell Inclusive Economy Deal; Resident, Business and Voluntary and Community Sector. Each of these deals have been developed using feedback from engagement with these groups. The style of the document is to clearly communicate what the council will do and what the resident, business or voluntary and community sector will do. It is a deal built on collaboration and an understanding of what each can offer to make Sandwell a better place.
- 3.4 The primary focus of this new approach is to make Sandwell a better place to live, work and do business – improving individual and community wellbeing, living standards and employment opportunities while also encouraging sustained investment to benefit residents and businesses across our six towns. These deals will aim to offer better living standards, greater employment opportunities and ensure new investments reach all residents and businesses.

- 3.5 We have been working with a partner, Metro Dynamics who have supported the development the Deal and have brought a constructive and open challenge to the process as well as strategic advice and insight from across the country.
- 3.6 Effective and robust governance arrangements have supported the process of developing the Deal. A steering group containing representatives from across the Council have met monthly and have been instrumental in the engagement activity, building of the evidence base and design of the content of the Deal.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The first key step to the work was the development of the Sandwell State of the Borough Report which sets out a consolidated evidence covering key themes relating to economy, housing, skills, health and education. This is an important milestone in establishing a baseline for the borough identifying our key strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. These include;
- Sandwell is the supply chain capital of the UK;
 - Sandwell is the employment hub of the black country with nearly 59,000 people travelling into Sandwell to work everyday
 - There is a diverse business sector with some high employing and fast-growing companies;
 - Sandwell has a £6.2bn economy which is growing faster than the UK average. This is the highest Gross Value Added (GVA) per head in the Black Country, despite having the lowest wages.
 - Sandwell has a young and very diverse population. 40% of residents are under 30 years old and only 15% of residents are over the age of 65. Sandwell is also diverse, with almost 40% of residents identifying within an ethnic minority.
- 4.2 The Council then built on this evidence base development phase which used open residential and business surveys, workshops, community events, media promotion, and the council's governance structures to shape the needs of the borough. The key findings from this engagement included;
- 36% of residents think better high streets and town centres would improve Sandwell
 - 50% of residents see Sandwell as a friendly place to live
 - 54% of residents see Sandwell's diversity as its greatest strength
 - 39% of businesses feel that Sandwell is a well-connected place to do business
 - 52% of business felt a better skilled local workforce would help their businesses

- 51% of local businesses would like to offer more work experience opportunities for local people

- 4.3 Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal provides a unique opportunity to showcase and promote Sandwell on a local, regional and national platform. It is distinctive in its approach for two fundamental interrelated reasons
- The comprehensive engagement has meant that rather than a traditional strategy produced by an organisation, and later consulted on, this is a deal developed by our communities for our communities.
 - The second key element is that this deal unlike others in the country has addressed economy at its core allowing for participatory economic policy making.
- 4.4 The future governance of the implementation of the deal will be critical, it is proposed that the Inclusive Economy and Community Wealth Board is, chaired by the Leader of the Council, supported by the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, lead member for Community Wealth and the Director of Regeneration and Growth and representatives from service areas across the council. Importantly we are proposing that the board includes representatives for business, voluntary sector and key institutions across the borough.
- 4.5 The Inclusive Economy Deal contains key actions and commitments for the council to deliver and the board will be the guardian on behalf of the Council to ensure that these are delivered.
- 4.6 The Inclusive Economy Deal support a number of critical objectives of the council's Corporate Plan. There is a clear synergy between the two documents but also a clear distinction in respect of their development and the dual commitment and contribution required by residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector to deliver on it.
- 4.7 The Inclusive Economy Deal will capitalise on some of the investments and opportunities happening now in Sandwell. These include the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Metro extension, Midland Metropolitan Hospital and the 5G testbed. This is a once in a generation opportunity to reinvigorate Sandwell and ensure the residents of Sandwell make the most of this chance. The Deal itself will communicate these opportunities to everyone in Sandwell which is a direct response to the feedback of many residents that they were not aware of the development activity being delivered within the borough.

4.8 Sandwell has a strong and committed voluntary and community sector. The development of the Deal in partnership with the VCS builds on the Sandwell Compact and provides some practical interventions to support the development of the sector going forward.

5 **CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

- 5.1 A comprehensive engagement programme was undertaken for the development of Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal. A range of consultation activities took place across the borough, including the innovative and popular 'community fridge' events which took place in each of the six towns. We asked residents to 'make a pledge' of something they would do to help make Sandwell a better place. Over 500 pledges were made and these have been used to develop and inform the commitments from residents included in the deal.
- 5.2 Resident and business surveys were undertaken, resulting in responses from over 80 businesses and 1700 residents. This valuable commodity of information and views provided some clear opportunities for change and improvement. The uniqueness of the deal is that is based on timely, relevant and local intelligence. This was further challenged through a series of workshops with businesses and residents to 'test' the content of the deal at different intervals throughout its development.
- 5.3 Council employees have also been heavily engaged in the development process. Over 60% of council employees live in Sandwell and for those that don't they still make financial and social contributions to the borough. They took part in the online survey and attended 'community fridge' events in our three main buildings; Council House Oldbury, Roway Lane and Providence Place.
- 5.4 Local perspectives were gained from events in each of the six towns and from ward members via the Town Board Meetings.
- 5.5 There has been significant engagement with local primary and secondary schools. This was in response to the evidence base identifying that 40% of Sandwell's population is under 30. It was identified that young people were a significant stakeholder in the development of the deal. A board game was developed to provide a fun and engaging way of capturing information on the priorities and ideas of young people.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 If the council chooses not to implement Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal it will not support the Council's vision and ambitions and will have a negative impact on our residents. It could also prevent improvements for Sandwell against many of our key challenges and measures including the deprivation indices; healthy life expectancy, improvements in resident skills levels, unemployment levels and productivity in future years.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The commitments contained within Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal will have a financial impact on the Council. Many of the commitments form part of current council activities and as such are included in existing budget allocations.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Changes to council processes are required to be legally compliant.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required at this point. Equality is a core focus of inclusive economy and the key points are highlighted within this report.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 All information held for this work has been subject to the Council's Data Protection policy.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The feedback from residents as part of the consultation and engagement activity identified crime and safety as being of major concern to them. In response the deal has identified the council's commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour and crime. Driving forward the collaboration element of the deal, residents are asked to commit to local, partnership led community safety initiatives in their towns.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 The mobilisation and delivery of the inclusive economy deal in partnership with residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector is a new approach for the Council and the borough, one which will be replicated in future work such as planned deal-based strategies for Tourism, Skills and Climate Change. The form of the Deal will continue to evolve in an iterative process of co-production and re-engagement with the community which provides the opportunity to test what works and what can be done better in the future.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 13.1 The State of the Borough Report is a detailed evidence base that describes the economy of Sandwell and looks at opportunities and challenges across and within Sandwell. It is primarily a technical document that presents the data and establishes a baseline for Sandwell. This evidence base has been used in the development of the deal by identifying areas of focus and prioritisation for delivering improvements to Sandwell. One of these areas is addressing the health and wellbeing challenges affecting the people of Sandwell, including lower than the national average for healthy life expectancy and excess winter deaths.

13.2 The commitments made within the inclusive economy deal articulate key approaches to supporting health and wellbeing. The Council is committing to closing the 5-year gap in healthy life expectancy and improving quality of life by 2030.

13.3 The Council aims to use the Inclusive Economy Deal to maximise the benefit from all money invested in Sandwell. To achieve this, it will require the commitment of businesses, voluntary and community sector and anchor institutions in the borough to embed social value into everything they do. We will demonstrate strong leadership and commitment around social value through our procurement processes and by improving the way we capture social value created through our supply chain.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

- 14.1 A key theme of the resident engagement undertaken was resident's passion to live in quality environments and estates. The uniqueness of the deal is the joint commitment by both the council and residents to make Sandwell a better place. There are clear joint commitments to deliver improvements to both council properties and land, which will have a positive visual impact as well as improving the quality of life for the people of Sandwell.
- 14.2 A major commitment from the council in the Business Deal is to unlock land to support business growth. This will support Sandwell businesses to grow and stay in Sandwell. The growth of local businesses and local recruitment will drive community wealth building in Sandwell.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal is a unique opportunity to deliver real change through true collaborative working. The request to recommend the implementation of the Deal will provide the opportunity for the council to deliver change and opportunities which will have a significant positive impact for everyone who lives and works in Sandwell.

16 APPENDICES:

Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal

Amy Harhoff
Director of Regeneration and Growth