


REPORT TO ECONOMY, SKILLS, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY BOARD

15 March 2018

Subject:	Update from Scrutiny Work Groups
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Paul Moore
Director:	Director - Monitoring Officer - Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Deb Breedon, Scrutiny Officer deborah_breedon@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board:

1. receives the updates from the Vice-Chairs;
2. comment on updates and consider any issues identified for recommendation to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Work Groups.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on the activity of the two Scrutiny work groups established by the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 The issues considered by the scrutiny work groups directly support the following ambitions contained with Vision 2030:-

Ambition 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.

Ambition 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.

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

Ambition 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.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 The Revitalisation of Town Centres Work Group has been led by the Chair of the Board. The Employability and Skills Work Group relating to has been led by one of the Scrutiny Board's Vice-Chairs.

3.2 The Groups were aligned around four key areas of the Scrutiny Board's terms of reference.

3.2.1 Revitalisation of Town Centres

The work group relates to the following terms of reference for the Board:

- the development and management of town centres;
- policies and strategies of the Council and partners that affect the economic development of the borough;

3.2.2 Employability and Skills

The work group relates to the following terms of reference for the Board:

- skills, worklessness and economic inclusion;
- the work of any relevant partnerships, including the Local Enterprise Partnership, or public bodies that deliver services to local people in relation to skills, work and enterprise;

3.3 The Chair and Vice-Chair Updates

Verbal updates will be provided at the meeting to inform the Board of the progress being made by the work groups. This is an opportunity for the Board to comment and consider the initial findings of the work groups from evidence gathered and to contribute to recommendations to Cabinet based on the evidence gathered.

3.3.1 Revitalisation of Town Centres:

The work group has carried out evidence gathering in relation to the current visitor and night time economy offers in Sandwell Towns. The findings and conclusions of the Work Group will inform the current Town Plans consultation, and recommendations will be made to Cabinet to highlight what more can be done to improve the visitor offer and the night time economy in our Towns;

3.3.2 Employability and Skills:

The work group has carried out a visit to Oldbury Job Centre, held three evidence gathering sessions and attended a meeting at the Business Solutions Centre, Sandwell College relating to fuller working lives to gather evidence relating to skills for later (working) life.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Chair and Vice-Chair will present updates on the activity of their work groups and identify any potential areas to make recommendations to Cabinet. Evidence gathering has identified several findings and areas for further clarification.
- 4.2 When the work groups have concluded their evidence gathering and evaluation, reports will be prepared detailing the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

5.1 Revitalisation of Town Centres:

The Work Group has consulted with Town Centre Managers, all Members of the Council and stakeholders at a Vision 2030 event and Council employees in the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

5.2 Employability and Skills:

The Work Group has consulted with Department of Works and Pensions, Job Centre Plus Managers and employees at Oldbury, The Business Solutions Centre at Sandwell College, Sandwell Adult Learning (SAFL) and Council employees in Education, Skills and Employment Directorate.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 Alternative options, if identified by the work groups, will be considered in the final work group reports.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Any financial and resource implications arising from the recommendations of the Work Group will be included in the final work group reports.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Any legal, regulatory, internal governance etc implications arising from the recommendation of the work group will be included in the final work group reports.
- 8.2 A scrutiny body discharges the functions conferred by Section 21 (Overview and Scrutiny Committees) if the Local Government Act 2000 and any regulations made under that section.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Town Centre Revitalisation:

Sandwell aims to have distinctive towns and neighbourhoods that are successful centres of community life, leisure and entertainment. Which will impact on all of the equality characteristics.

- 9.2 Employability and Skills:

Sandwell vision aims to have equality of opportunity in employment and opportunity to live and be part of a community where families have high aspirations. Which will impact on all of the equality characteristics.

- 9.3 Equality impact assessments have not been carried out at this stage. It is likely that the final recommendations of the work groups will have a positive impact for all residents of Sandwell.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 None arising from this report

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 None arising from this report

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 12.1 Sustainability of proposals arising from the recommendations of the Work Group will be included in the final work group reports.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 Any comments relating to benefits to individuals and community will be included in the final work group report.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 None arising from this report

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 This is an update report from the Chair and Vice-Chair. Conclusions and recommendations of the work groups will be included in the final work group reports to Board.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Work Group reports and research

17 APPENDICES:

None

Surjit Tour
Director – Monitoring Officer