

**Business Ambassadors**

*Sandwell Business Ambassadors aim to encourage Sandwell Businesses to thrive by supporting and growing existing local businesses through providing a voice to the council and wider business community.*

*The key objectives of the SBA is to engage with the wider business community, establishing links between different sectors and to establish and support solutions for fixing the skills gaps and aspiration levels of young people entering work, promoting that Sandwell as a great place to work.*

**Introduction**

Think Sandwell's Business Ambassadors (SBA) is a pilot programme with the aim to promote Sandwell as a dynamic and innovative business location. The project is made up of some of Sandwell's key strategic businesses who are working with the aim of determining how to utilise their strengths, acting as advocates to support the borough in its ambitions with regard to business going forward and linking to the Vision 2030 ambitions.

The purpose of the group's activities is not to solely focus on engagement with local business, but should support the council's Vision 2030 as well as supporting and encouraging inward investment to an international audience.

The project was initiated by the council with the aim of establishing a group of people from businesses within the borough to determine how best to promote and support both business within the Sandwell area and the council itself.

The project also offers these key strategic businesses the opportunity to engage with the council leadership and other senior business representatives and organisations (such as the chamber) to discuss key issues, topics policies etc. that directly affect their growth aspirations within the borough and the wider region.

**Aim and objectives**

- Focussing on Sandwell's economic strengths bring together private sector advocates to act as the voice of businesses
- Connecting with the wider business community in Sandwell in order to facilitate discussion and information flow between local businesses and the council
- Informing council policy and shaping council business support and developing the future vision in respect of business
- Supporting the delivery of the council's Regeneration and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Integrated Plan in order to create the conditions and environment for economic growth
- Linking with education and skills providers, supporting the identification of skills gaps and appropriate provision to address these and identify any gaps in provision

- Connecting with relevant business forums in order for Sandwell's voice to be heard e.g. the BCCC, WMCA and the LEP to enable coordination of activity and deliver a coherent message across all forums
- Ensuring that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate progress of the initiative by establishing realistic and achievable targets/indicators

### **Priorities and Activities**

- Obtain up to date local data in order to create a business support needs profile
- Build relationships with local businesses and related educational and skills providers and agencies
- Establish links with the West Midlands Combined Authority, LEP and other appropriate agencies
- Identify what kind of local business forum is required at what location and frequency and then set this up and manage the agenda and attendance on an ongoing basis
- Assist in informing council policy and supporting council vision and strategy.
- Identification of skills gaps and associated provision
- Develop a campaign to increase awareness of Ambassadors' initiative
- Promote opportunities for businesses to become involved
- Develop and supporting a marketing strategy to raise awareness of Sandwell Business Ambassadors and related council policy and business support
- Engaging with wider business community
- Promote Sandwell and its business prospects with the aim of attracting further and continued investment