

**Minutes of the Economy, Skills, Transport and  
Environment  
Scrutiny Board**

**11<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 at 5.30 pm  
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Rollins (Chair);  
Councillor Sandars (Vice-Chair);  
Councillors Crumpton, Eaves, Hackett, Padda  
and Worsey.

**Apologies:** Councillors Allcock, Cherrington, L Giles and  
M Hussain.

**In attendance:** Dr Alison Knight, Executive Director,  
Neighbourhoods;  
Alan Caddick, Director – Housing and  
Communities;  
Amy Harhoff, Director – Regeneration and  
Growth.

9/19      **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup>  
March, 2019 be approved as a correct record.

10/19      **Work Programme 2019 - 2020**

The Board received a presentation from the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, the Director - Regeneration and Growth, and the Director – Housing and Communities which highlighted the priorities for the Neighbourhoods Directorate for 2019-20 and beyond.

The Executive Director and Directors outlined the major programmes and schemes that were underway, or being planned, to deliver improvement schemes to:

- key network routes;

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- transport and metro networks;
- work with the business community;
- work on regeneration and housing development; and
- to offer a wide range of activities and services to make sure that Sandwell towns and communities were thriving places.

The Director of Regeneration and Growth highlighted the following priorities for the directorate: -

- Development Planning;
- Spatial Planning, Regeneration and Business Growth;
- Strategic Land and Assets;
- Highways.

The Director of Housing and Communities highlighted the following as priorities: -

- Housing Management (Tenancy Management, Community Safety, Income Management, Welfare Rights etc.)
- Asset Management and Maintenance;
- Tourism, Culture and Leisure (Libraries and Museums, Sports and Leisure, Sandwell Valley, Events);
- Commercial Services (Waste, parks and greenspaces).

The Board welcomed the work and development that was being undertaken by the Neighbourhoods Directorate to develop, support and plan services to deliver the ambitions of the vision by 2030.

The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods suggested potential areas where scrutiny of the issue would be valuable: -

- Parking charges across Sandwell;
- Birchley Island scheme;
- Inclusive Growth Deal;
- Community Wealth Building.

The Board received a presentation from the Director – Education Employment and Skills which highlighted the priorities for the Education, Skills and Employment Directorate. He emphasised that newly formed Careers and Employment Service brought together the following services for all age groups: -

- upskilling the local population;
- independent advice and guidance for young people;

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- work experience and apprenticeships;
- access to adult learning.

The Board was advised that over recent years Sandwell had planned and retained resources for skills and employment services to help people into work. The Director indicated that other authorities had made savings and cut back on employment and skills services.

The Board was informed that savings had been made in Sandwell by pulling together teams working on the skills and employment agenda, and that the 'Careers and Employment Service' had been introduced which had realised savings of £250,000 as a result of the restructure.

The Board was advised that the 'Think Sandwell' service and brand supported businesses to develop and grow in Sandwell.

'Think Sandwell' brand consisted of the following themed areas:

- Think Careers
- Think Work Experience
- Think Skills
- Think Apprenticeships
- Think Training
- Think Employment

The Board was advised that the next six months focus for the Careers and Employment service was: -

- to continue to develop the 'Think Sandwell' brand. Any person, young or old, any business, school or partner could access the Think Sandwell website to access information and services;
- to make good usage of the Adult Education Budget to enhance adult learning. By increasing the number of learners, the funding would also increase.
- To increase development and uptake of apprenticeship routes at lower and higher levels.

The longer-term focus was: -

- to increase the level of apprenticeships and the number of opportunities for young people with learning disabilities who are in paid employment;

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- to reduce the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEETS) especially in the 25-29 age bracket;
- to reduce numbers of the most disadvantaged young people who are NEET;
- to increase the proportion of Sandwell population who have recognised qualifications for work.

The Chair outlined guidance for members new to the scrutiny process and to the scrutiny board. She indicated the following:-

- that members read papers in advance of the meeting;
- that members indicate when they want to speak and speak through the Chair, and that she would indicate who would speak next;
- that she would encourage people to contribute;
- that members should consider the scrutiny priority tool;
- that when an item impacts on the remit of more than one scrutiny board it would be referred to the Scrutiny Management Board to ensure cross over between Boards and determine the most appropriate method to consider the item.

Due to the wide remit of the Scrutiny Board the Chair indicated that she would split the members into two groups and that the groups should meet to consider the item briefs for items they identified for the work programme. Members were allocated places as follows: -

- Economy and Skills:  
Councillors Allcock, Cherrington, L Giles, Padda.
- Regeneration, Transport and Environment:  
Councillors Crumpton, Eaves, Hackett, Hussain, Worsey.

Members considered the report and presentation to identify items for inclusion in the work programme 2019-20. The following items were listed: -

- West Bromwich Indoor Market – consultation process;
- Midland Metro and town centre revitalisation;
- the West Midlands Combined Authority - developing an Industrial Strategy and a Local Industrial Strategy;

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- looked after children (LAC) - care leavers into employment (also consider good practice at Leeds Council);
- invite partners to update the Board on their work and hold them to account;
- housing developments – consider potential for joint working to consider how the regeneration and skills agenda fit with the affordable housing and housing shortage;
- family learning - upskilling parents and school readiness, making schools ready;
- ambition 4 of the Vision 2030 – Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high-quality education, and ask who contributes to make that a reality;
- opening discussion and relationship building between schools and businesses;
- Commonwealth Games and links to work at A34, Scott Arms;
- Connexions Sandwell Guarantee – funding comes to an end in 2019, there should be a total in the Autumn and request a report to September meeting;
- transport – metro extensions;
- transport – Sprint hybrid vehicle (Sprint);
- street lighting – an update of the roll out (including white lights and concrete standards);
- ‘Business Ambassador’ programme;
- ‘Think Sandwell’ launch;
- Birchley Island – Green Waste Strategy;
- canals - transport/ regeneration.

The Chair indicated there were plenty of suggestions coming from the room and that the Board should use the scrutiny prioritisation tool, attached to the report, to focus on one or two items which they felt would have most impact.

The Board was advised that there would also be pre-decision scrutiny of key decisions to be considered by the Cabinet, such as: -

- Green Space Strategy;
- Cycling Strategy.

The Board highlighted the following items for inclusion in the work programme:

- Cycling strategy (July)

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- Sandwell Guarantee (September)

The Board discussed the long list of items highlighted and indicated that the items emerging from the list as priorities and for further scoping were: -

- Think Sandwell;
- Birchley Island (scheme, funding, across the Borough);
- parking charges across Sandwell;
- metro stations.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution at the meeting and advised that she would work with officers to prepare the work programme for the Economy, Skills, Transport and Economy Scrutiny Board 2019-20.

(Meeting ended at 6.55 pm)

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