

**Safer Neighbourhoods
and Active Communities
Scrutiny Board**

**Tuesday 5 June, 2018 at 5.00 pm
in Committee Room 1
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Agenda

(Open to Public and Press)

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Members to declare:-
 - (a) any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting;
 - (b) the existence and nature of any political Party Whip on any matter to be considered at the meeting.
3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March, 2018 as a correct record.
4. Work Programming 2018-19.

Date of next meeting – 2 August, 2018

J Britton
Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution:

Councillors Ahmed (Chair);
Councillors Crompton and Hevican (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Allcock, Chidley, Hadley, M Y Hussain, M Hussain, S Jones,
Phillips and White.

Co-opted Member:-

Mr M Babb

**Agenda prepared by Alex Goddard
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Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board**Apologies for Absence**

The Board will receive any apologies for absence from the members of the Board.

Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

Declaration of Interests

Members to declare:-

- (a) any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting;
- (b) the existence and nature of any political Party Whip on any matter to be considered at the meeting.

Minutes of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**22nd March, 2018 at 5.00pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Edis (Chair);
Councillors Goult and Hevican (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Ashman, Phillips and White.

Apologies: Councillors Allcock, Hadley, R Price and Underhill.

In attendance: Tammy Stokes (Planning Regeneration Manager);
Alan Martin (Housing Partnerships and Programme Manager).

3/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th January, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

4/18 Housing Update

The Council's Planning Regeneration Manager and Housing Partnerships and Programme Manager attended the meeting to provide the Board with an update on housing developments across the borough.

It was reported that the Cabinet had approved a three-year strategic plan for the development of Council housing in Sandwell. This had identified sites for the first 636 new Council homes, with full financial appraisals to be undertaken at individual site implementation stages and included as part of each site-specific Cabinet report. If any of the site schemes were not able to progress due to financial viability issues, there were a number of reserve schemes that had been developed to ensure unallocated resources were utilised. The updated development programme for new Council homes was presented to the Board.

Over 100 properties would have been completed and occupied by the end of the 2017/18 financial year. Combined with the site schemes that were programmed to be reported to Cabinet, the three-year target of building approximately 600 new homes should be achieved.

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The resources for the build were predominantly through the Housing Revenue Account, alongside other funding sources such as Section 106 commuted sums for affordable housing and Right to Buy receipts. There were bids with Homes England for resources from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme grant fund.

On private development sites, there were tools and measures available to the Council to encourage private owners to bring forward their sites for development. Each site was treated on a case by case basis to determine the most suitable method, for example powers under section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act were used to tidy up vacant sites that were impacting on the amenity of the surrounding areas. Such enforcement action could encourage landowners to identify a more long-term solution to a site.

Council officers, as part of Development Ready, provided support to private landowners to market their sites to house-builders, obtain planning permission and, where appropriate, apply for grant funding.

The ultimate sanction for private sites not being developed would be a Compulsory Purchase Order. There were clear risks and costs associated with such an Order so they were only used where there was a clear case in the public interest.

The Board was advised that there were significant opportunities through the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership for private land-owners and house-builders to apply for funding to cover abnormal costs in relation to land remediation or infrastructure requirements.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

- The Right to Buy had an impact on the Council's social housing stock. Any income the Council received from Right to Buy sales was paid back into the Housing Revenue Account.
- Smaller sites across Sandwell might lend themselves to a modular build approach to development.
- Through the West Midlands Combined Authority £52million was available across the Black Country for land remediation.

The Board thanked officers for attending the meeting.

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5/18

Report from Scrutiny Work Groups

The Board received an update on the activities of the two Scrutiny Work Groups. Each Work Group had been led by one of the Board's Vice-Chairs. The Groups had been aligned around two key areas of the Board's terms of reference: housing and crime/anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The Housing Scrutiny Work Group had originally intended to carry out a review of the Council and partners' response to problem/unsafe Houses in Multiple Occupation however due to an ongoing independent review of a case in West Bromwich it was not timely to undertake that review.

The Housing Scrutiny Work Group met on 14th February, 2018 to carry out a pre-decision scrutiny review of the draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy.

The Council's Service Manager – Housing Management and Housing Strategy and Research Manager attended the meeting and explained the work undertaken in developing the draft Strategy and the consultation undertaken so far which included housing associations, the third sector, as well as with Crisis, a national homelessness specialist charity.

Following the discussion, the Housing Scrutiny Work Group endorsed the draft Strategy as it was considered to meet the requirements placed upon the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The draft Strategy would be submitted for consideration by the Cabinet in April.

In addition, the Housing Scrutiny Work Group had concerns about the future sustainability of the regional Landlords Forum. This Forum had been a successful vehicle for engaging landlords and it was felt that this should be considered on a regional basis.

The ASB Scrutiny Work Group met on 14th March, 2018 to hold an evidence gathering workshop with Police and Council officers on what was being done in Sandwell to tackle ASB caused by off-road motorbikes.

The Council's CCTV and ASB Operations Manager attended the meeting and representatives from policing teams across Sandwell also attended.

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The officers in attendance explained the efforts being taken to address ASB caused by off-road motorbikes. This fell into several broad categories:-

- Building intelligence – on trends (such as areas and times where such ASB took place) and individual cases (models and colours of bikes, identities of riders and addresses);
- Enforcement – including seizing and crushing vehicles, prosecutions and civil measures (e.g. for breach of tenancy agreements);
- Education – such as leaflets, school talks and a forthcoming off-road motorbike accident VR video that would be the first of its kind nationally.

The ASB Scrutiny Work Group felt that while it was clear that there was lots of good partnership working between the Police, the Council and others in Sandwell, this wasn't always well communicated to councillors or the public.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the draft Prevention of Homelessness Strategy be endorsed;
- (2) that the Council and Partners' response to problem/unsafe Houses in Multiple Occupation be referred to the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19;
- (3) that the future sustainability of the regional Landlords Forum be referred to the West Midlands Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration;
- (4) that the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection be requested to support the continuation of partnership working between the Council and West Midlands Police to tackle off-road motorbike anti-social behaviour;
- (5) that the Director – Housing and Communities work with West Midlands Police to carry out a promotion campaign before the summer to raise awareness of the issues surrounding off-road motorbikes including safety and legal aspects;

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- (6) that the Director – Housing and Communities, Executive Director – Resources and West Midlands Police ensure that councillors are kept informed of campaigns relating to community safety, crime and anti-social behaviour so that they can help communicate the campaigns locally.

(Meeting ended at 5.55pm)

Contact Officer: Alex Goddard Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3178
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REPORT TO SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD

04 June 2018

Subject:	Work Programming 2018-19
Director:	Director – Monitoring Officer – Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	         
Exempt Information Ref:	The information contained in this report is not exempt from publication.
Contact Officer(s):	Alex Goddard, Scrutiny Officer alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board:

1. receives the presented information from the relevant Director(s);
2. considers and agrees a draft work programme for the 2018-19 municipal year for submission to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for approval.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Board is asked to consider its work programme for 2018-19 taking into account outstanding items from the previous municipal year, suggestions from the public and how it can add value, support Vision 2030 and enhance the services that the Council delivers.
- 1.2 The draft work programme that arises from this meeting will be reported to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

2 IMPLICATION FOR SANDWELL'S VISION

- 2.1 The focus of the Council's overview and scrutiny function is aligned to support Sandwell's Vision 2030 and the 10 ambitions it contains. All items selected for inclusion in the work programme for the Board must support and strengthen the Council and its partners' work to achieve Vision 2030.

- 2.2 A review of overview and scrutiny is currently being carried out in consultation with the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board. Workshop events will be held with scrutiny members during the summer to focus on effective scrutiny, aligning scrutiny's work with Vision 2030, ensuring work programming is focussed to support the ambitions, considering various engagement options with the public and stakeholders and identifying progress made to deliver intended outcomes.

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The relevant Director(s) have been invited to attend this meeting to provide the Board with an overview of the services, key issues and priorities relevant to this Board's terms of reference and how they support Vision 2030.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 In accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Procedure Rules, each Scrutiny Board is responsible for developing and agreeing its own work programme.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 The Council's Scrutiny Officers, supported by Communications Team and Councillors, have undertaken a public call for suggestions for potential work topics for overview and scrutiny. Over 90 submissions have been received and the suggestions relevant to this Board's remit are attached at Appendix 1.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not determine a work programme then the opportunity to review policies and services will not be realised meaning that improvements, savings and income generation possibilities may be missed.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Scrutiny function is directly supported by the Council's Statutory Scrutiny Officer and a team of Scrutiny Officers within the Council's Governance service. Additional technical expertise and evidence on specific matters will be provided by officers within the various directorates of the authority.

- 7.2 The strategic resource implications of the topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to members on a case by case basis.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Local Government Act 2000 states that Councils operating executive arrangements must also make provision for the appointment of overview and scrutiny committees.
- 8.2 Further powers relating to overview and scrutiny are set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 An equality implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to members on a case by case basis.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 Data protection implications of any topics included on the work programme for the Board will be reported to members at the relevant time.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 Any crime and disorder impacts of scrutiny work programme items will be reported to members on a case by case basis.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 12.1 Sustainability will be addressed within reports for each identified topic for consideration by the Scrutiny Board.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

- 13.1 These will be included in reports to members for each item of work.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

- 14.1 Any impact on Council managed land or property will be detailed in reports for each topic throughout the year.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 To ensure effective and efficient use of resources the Scrutiny Board is requested to determine its work programme for 2018-19. To assist members in this the Sandwell Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool is attached at Appendix 2. This Tool can help determine priorities for each topic and provide members with a structured method of creating a focussed work programme.
- 15.2 This will then be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for approval in accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 All relevant papers are included in the appendices to this report.

17 APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 – List of outstanding items from 2017-18 and suggestions received from the public.

Appendix 2 – Sandwell Scrutiny Prioritisation Tool














Surjit Tour
Director – Monitoring Officer








Outstanding Items from 2017-18

Outstanding items suggested or arising during 2017-18:

- Council and Partners' response to problem/unsafe Houses in Multiple Occupation
- West Bromwich Public Space Protection Order
- Modern Day Slavery

Items suggested by members of the public

Suggestion	Links with Ambitions	Notes
Ensuring (Council) tenants are looking after the inside and outside of properties.	 	2 suggestions
Allowing young adults to live in Council properties when they engage in anti social behaviour		Alleged a specific example of where a parent had died leaving young adults in a council tenancy and they were engaging ASB.
Volunteering around the Community	   	Suggestion was focussed on inclusion within the community and how volunteering could contribute to that.
Sandwell Valley – unacceptable behaviour by visitors (including dogs off leads)	 	
Anti-social behaviour by private tenants (against council tenants)	 	
Anti-social behaviour by council tenants (against private tenants/owners)	 	2 suggestions

Anti-social behaviour by neighbours (did not specify type of tenure)	 	
Housing for known problem tenants (causing problems for vulnerable people/bringing down nice areas)		2 suggestions
Parks – ASB, fencing, not feeling safe in them	 	
Free swimming for under 16s – alleged misuse by young people while swimming	 	
Youth Homelessness	 	Concerns about ‘hidden homeless’.
Library Opening Times		
Alleged Drug Dealing on the Brickhouse Estate		
Off Road Bike anti-social behaviour		
Illegal racing on residential roads		
Allegations of poor responses on ASB issues raised		
Council Housing Repairs		Specifically missed appointments resulting in problems for tenants.
Flats with age restrictions		Expressed that the age restrictions in place make it difficult for some people to get a flat

Illegal and irresponsible angling on Council owned pools	 	Alleged harm to wildlife from discarded angling matter (lines etc)
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