



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

**Safer Neighbourhoods
and Active Communities
Scrutiny Board**

**Thursday 3 October, 2019 at 5.45pm
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 1 August, 2019 as a correct record.
4. Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities.
5. Commonwealth Games – Sandwell Aquatics Centre.
6. Commonwealth Games – Legacy.

David Stevens
Interim Chief Executive

Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution:

Councillors Moore (Chair);

Councillor P M Hughes (Vice-Chair);

Councillors Bawa, Bostan, Akhter, Edwards, M Gill, M Y Hussain, S Jones, Padda and Sandars.

Co-opted Member:-

Mr J Cash

**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

**1st August, 2019 at 5.45 pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Moore (Chair);
Councillors Akhter, Bostan, Edwards, M Gill
and S Jones;
Mr J Cash (Co-opted member).

Apologies: Councillors P M Hughes, M Y Hussain and
Sandars.

In attendance: Alison Knight (Executive Director –
Neighbourhoods);
Jim Brennan (Business Manager – Sandwell
Locals);
Neville Rowe (Housing Strategy and Research
Manager).

9/19 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th July, 2019 be approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the following additional point in Minute No. 7/19:

Environmental considerations must be considered as part of the review of the Green Spaces Strategy.

10/19 **Review of Tenancy Conditions**

The Scrutiny Board received a presentation on the review of Tenancy Conditions relating to Council-owned housing. The Conditions had last been reviewed in 2009. It was reported that since that time, there had been little legislative change, with elements of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 not being progressed. However, the Housing Green Paper published in 2018 had advocated for greater tenant engagement and the revisiting of the tenant/landlord relationship.

The Green Paper set out five principles:-

- a safe and decent home, which was fundamental to a sense of security and our ability to get on in life;
- improving and speeding up how complaints were resolved;
- empowering residents and ensuring their voices were heard so that landlords were held to account;
- tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities, challenging the stereotypes that existed about residents and their communities;
- building the social homes that are needed and ensuring that those homes could act as a springboard to home ownership.

Further announcements relating to the Green Paper were expected in the Autumn, any impact of these on the review of Tenancy Conditions would be reviewed and included in a future report to the Scrutiny Board.

Alongside the principles of the Green Paper, there were a number of strategic drivers for carrying out a review of the Council's Tenancy Conditions:-

- to remind tenants of the conditions of their tenancy – both rights and responsibilities;
- to ensure the conditions were understood by both tenants and staff;
- to modernise and update the conditions to reflect new challenges in tenancy management, for example the growing use of CCTV;
- to provide officers with the tools to challenge, influence and change behaviours that were a risk of harm to others or our assets – aiming to resolve concerns before they became entrenched problems.

The programme of consultation for the review included member briefing sessions, the Management Agents Forum, Sandwell Community and Participation Service, supported housing providers and the Tenant Review Panel. Wider public consultation would be held in accordance with statutory requirements. It was proposed that the outcomes of the review would be reported to Cabinet in the winter, with the revised tenancy conditions to take effect from April 2020.

A number changes were under consideration but were yet to be decided upon. These included:-

- encouraging the use of Direct Debit to pay rent and reviewing the 'rent free' weeks;
- restricting succession rights to spouses, civil partners and cohabitees;
- prohibiting smoking whilst Council employees/agents were in attendance;
- introducing tenant obligations to pre-prepare for repairs (with assistance provided to those who were vulnerable or infirm).

In addition, it was intended for the conditions to be clarified on a number of matters including:-

- that the Council was not responsible for dividing fences, other than privacy panels;
- the need to adhere to conditions when making alterations to a property;
- tenant responsibilities in relation to various matters;
- specifying a range of types of anti-social behaviour;
- the grounds for emergency access to property and grounds for allowing access to carrying out repairs to neighbouring properties.

Members did not feel that there was sufficient evidence to make a compelling case for restricting succession rights to spouses, civil partners and cohabitees. The Board felt that this would negatively impact on, for example, grown up children where the parent holding the tenancy passes on; furthermore, it would not necessarily reduce instances of under occupancy by the person succeeding the tenancy.

In relation to 'rent-free' weeks, members felt that these were greatly valued by the Council's tenants as they fell at Christmas and financial year end, two periods where additional expense was incurred by families and individuals. The Board did not feel that there was a strong reason to amend the current practice.

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

- it was planned to introduce a proactive approach at Sandwell Locals to home visits. This would be done to ensure every tenant had a visit over a reasonable period of time;
- there was a consistently high level of demand for Council houses, with over 160 bids regularly received for such properties;
- whilst tenants would be encouraged to set up Direct Debits to pay their rent, the Council acknowledged that there would always be a choice to allow tenants to pay their rent in the way that best suited their personal circumstances and wishes;
- there were currently 14 tenant and resident associations recognised by the Council. The Council commissioned Sandwell Community Information and Participation Services to deliver services and development to Tenants and Residents Groups across the borough;
- overcrowding criteria was set by law as one bedroom per person/couple except:
 - children aged 9 and under – two children of any gender expected to share;
 - children aged 9-15 – two children of the same gender expected to share;
- there was no legal requirement to review the tenancy conditions on a set timescale, but the Board felt that it was important to determine a period for future reviews to take place. The cost associated with carrying out reviews was acknowledged; officers undertook to liaise with Legal Services about consultation methods that would satisfy the law;
- the strengthening and clarification of a range of matters within the Tenancy Conditions was welcomed and the Board felt that this could also include conditions of gardens;
- when repairs are carried out on Council properties tenants are afforded opportunities to provide feedback. The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods undertook to provide the Board with performance data including customer satisfaction.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Cabinet Member for Homes be requested to note the comments and observations of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board in relation to the review of Tenancy Conditions, in particular:-
 - (a) that the Board did not consider there was sufficient or compelling evidence to change the succession rights or 'rent free' weeks arrangements currently being operated;
 - (b) that the Board felt that an appropriate review period should be determined for the Council's Tenancy Conditions;
- (2) that a further report on the Review of Tenancy Conditions be submitted to the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board for pre-decision scrutiny prior to it being considered by Cabinet.

(Meeting ended at 6.58 pm)

Contact Officer: Alex Goddard Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3178

REPORT TO SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD

03 October 2019

Subject:	Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
Director:	Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer – Surjit Tour
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Alex Goddard alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board:

1. Consider and comment upon the information presented by the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities;
2. Identify any recommendations it wishes to make.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Board has asked the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities to attend the meeting to discuss matters relating to her portfolio.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030

- 2.1 The Safer Communities portfolio contributes to a number of ambitions within Vision 2030:-

Ambition 1 – Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.

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 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 Scrutiny Board has requested the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities to attend the meeting to discuss matters relating to her portfolio.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The Cabinet Member for Safer Communities will attend the meeting to discuss with the Scrutiny Board matters relating to her portfolio.
- 4.2 The Cabinet Member has responsibility within the Cabinet for the strategic delivery of Ambition 5 in collaboration with partners across Sandwell and the wider region.
- 4.3 Key areas of the Cabinet Member's portfolio that relate to the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Board include:-

Community Safety;
Emergency planning and civil resilience;
Sports and leisure;
Policy direction for countryside management, nature reserves, parks, green spaces and visitors' centres.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 No consultation was required in relation to this report.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not consider the information presented to it then potential recommendations and actions to improve services would be missed.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific strategic resources implications arising from this report.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no specific legal or governance considerations arising from this report.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 No equality impact assessment is required for this report.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 No data protection impact assessment is required for this report.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report, although individual subject matters discussed at the meeting may relate to crime and disorder.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 There are no specific sustainability issues associated with this report.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 There are no specific health and wellbeing implications, although individual subject matters discussed at the meeting may have an impact on wellbeing.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There are no specific implications for Council-managed property or land.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The Board is invited to consider the information presented to it and determine if there are any recommendations it wishes to make.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None.

Surjit Tour

Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

REPORT TO SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD

03 October 2019

Subject:	Commonwealth Games – Sandwell Aquatics Centre
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Maria Crompton - Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
Director:	Executive Director - Neighbourhoods – Alison Knight
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Chris Jones chris2_jones@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board:

1. Consider and comment upon the information presented on the Sandwell Aquatics Centre;
2. Identify any recommendations it wishes to make.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Board has requested to consider the Sandwell Aquatics Centre project that is underway to provide a world-class leisure and sport facility for Sandwell, as well as providing a venue for aquatic sports at the Commonwealth Games 2022.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030

- 2.1 The Sandwell Aquatics Centre contributes to a number of ambitions within Vision 2030:-

Ambition 1 – Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.

Ambition 2 – Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.

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 Scrutiny Board has requested an update on the Sandwell Aquatics Centre project and its timescales.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Following the extensive community consultation, planning approval was given to the development of the Aquatics Centre in April 2019.
- 4.2 Since planning approval was granted, enabling works commenced on the site in July 2019. These works include the demolition of the existing football changing rooms, the removal of the play equipment, the securing of the site, and ground works to create access to the site, excavation of the pools, and the diversion of the sewer. These works are on programme and will be completed by January 2020 when main construction works will commence.
- 4.3 Approval to let the main works contract will be sought from Cabinet in November 2019.
- 4.4 Officers will present further information to the meeting on the Sandwell Aquatics Centre project.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 Consultation has been carried out throughout the project so far and has been reported regularly to the Commonwealth Games 2022 – Members Steering Group.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS.

- 6.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not consider the information presented to it then potential recommendations and actions to improve services would be missed.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no specific strategic resources implications arising from this report.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 There are no specific legal or governance considerations arising from this report.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 No equality impact assessment is required for this report.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 No data protection impact assessment is required for this report.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 12.1 There are no specific sustainability issues associated with this report.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

- 13.1 The Sandwell Aquatics Centre will contribute to the leisure offer in the borough, providing a world-class facility for our residents to be active, contributing to healthier lives.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

- 14.1 The Sandwell Aquatics Centre will be in the ownership of the Council.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The Board is invited to consider the information presented to it and determine if there are any recommendations it wishes to make.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None.

Alison Knight
Executive Director – Neighbourhoods

REPORT TO SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD

03 October 2019

Subject:	Commonwealth Games – Legacy
Cabinet Portfolio:	Councillor Maria Crompton - Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
Director:	Executive Director - Neighbourhoods – Alison Knight
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Chris Jones chris2_jones@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board:

1. Consider and comment upon the information presented on the Legacy of the Commonwealth Games
2. Identify any recommendations it wishes to make.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Board has requested to consider the Legacy of the Commonwealth Games 2022.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030

- 2.1 The Legacy of the Commonwealth Games 2022 contributes to a number of ambitions within Vision 2030:-

Ambition 1 – Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.

Ambition 2 – Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.

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 Scrutiny Board has requested an update on the Legacy workstream relating to the Commonwealth Games 2022.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 To date, the priority of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre project has been centred around the design and the delivery of the new facility. This is to solely ensure that the facility is delivered on time for the Commonwealth Games 2022. However, the lasting benefits that can be achieved from the delivery of this facility and the Commonwealth Games 2022 is far broader than just the construction of the facility.
- 4.2 As the pre-construction element of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre Project draws to a conclusion, a Legacy Project will be launched to ensure that the benefits from the delivery of the new facility and hosting a venue for Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games are maximised.
- 4.3 The Legacy Workstream for the project will ensure that the Sandwell Council can develop and deliver a Legacy Plan for the project.
- 4.4 The Legacy Workstream will initially focus on the following five themes:
- Sport Development and Clubs;
 - Physical Activity;
 - Skill, Education, Raising Aspirations;
 - Regeneration, Job, Tourism and Place building; and
 - Culture and Communities.
- 4.5 These themes support the delivery of Sandwell Council's Vision 2030 and link through to the Commonwealth Games 2022 Birmingham Legacy Pillars.
- 4.6 Officers will present further information to the meeting on the Legacy workstream relating to the Commonwealth Games.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

5.1 Consultation has been carried out throughout the project so far and has been reported regularly to the Commonwealth Games 2022 – Members Steering Group.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS.

6.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not consider the information presented to it then potential recommendations and actions to improve services would be missed.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific strategic resources implications arising from this report.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 There are no specific legal or governance considerations arising from this report.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 No equality impact assessment is required for this report.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10.1 No data protection impact assessment is required for this report.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 There are no specific sustainability issues associated with this report.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 The Legacy workstream will contribute to positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Sandwell's communities.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There are no implications related to Council managed property or land arising from this report.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The Board is invited to consider the information presented to it and determine if there are any recommendations it wishes to make.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 None.

Alison Knight
Executive Director – Neighbourhoods