

**Select Committee for Policy Review**

**Tuesday 1 August, 2017 at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 1,  
Oldbury Council House**

**Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Members to declare any interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.
3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November, 2016 as a correct record.
4. A new long term vision for Sandwell.

**J Britton**  
**Chief Executive**  
Sandwell Council House  
Freeth Street  
Oldbury  
West Midlands

**Distribution:**

Councillor Worsey (Chair);  
Councillors Cherrington, Dr Jaron, Edwards, Hickey, Gill and Sandars.

**Agenda prepared by Alex Goddard  
Democratic Services Unit - Tel: 0121 569 3178  
E-mail: alexander\_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk**

## **Apologies**

To receive any apologies from members

## **Declarations of Interest**

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

## Minutes of the Select Committee for Policy Review

**23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2016 at 6.00 pm**  
**at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Worsey (Chair);  
Councillors Cherrington, Gill and Sandars.

**Apologies:** Councillors Edwards and Hickey.

**In Attendance:** Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care  
(Councillor Shackleton).

1/16

### **Sandwell Council's Approach to Preventing Loneliness and Isolation**

The Select Committee received a presentation on loneliness and isolation.

There were various factors that could lead people to suffer loneliness and isolation. These included:-

- Increasing numbers of people living alone;
- An ageing population (while loneliness was not just a problem that affected the elderly, vulnerability increased with age);
- Breakdowns of family support networks;
- Increasing numbers of people whose first language wasn't English;
- Poor transport services.

It was reported that, according to research, lacking social connections was as damaging to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Socially isolated adults were more likely to be admitted earlier to residential or nursing care, were at greater risk of emergency admission (and re-admission) to hospital and were at increased risk of a range of health problems including depression, paranoia, addiction, heart disease, stroke and suicide.

The Select Committee noted that, nationally, 23% of people aged 75 and over who lived alone did not see or speak with someone every day.

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Mental health problems and loneliness, while not always both present at the same time did impact on each other; mental health issues could cause people to withdraw or become isolated and social isolation was damaging to mental health.

In Sandwell there were over 1000 organisations delivering support and activities for local people. These helped address loneliness and social isolation through providing opportunities for people to meet, socialise, keep active and volunteer.

The Places of Welcome initiative was discussed, which was a network of churches, community spaces and cafés which held events to provide a social space for local residents. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care spoke about her experience at a Places of Welcome event in her town, which provided residents with an opportunity to meet and chat with tea and coffee.

There was a range of existing befriending services in Sandwell which catered to different needs and different communities. For example Better Understanding of Dementia for Sandwell (commonly known as BUDS) undertook home visiting for people with dementia, and Brushstrokes provided mentoring to isolated newcomers to the borough. There were also organisations providing luncheon clubs, home visiting, day care and social activities.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care had begun planning a survey of all councillors to develop an understanding of the range of community groups and facilities that operate across Sandwell. The Chair of the Select Committee for Policy Review undertook to take up this piece of work, in collaboration with and on behalf of the Cabinet Member.

The Select Committee was informed about the Community Offer. This was a pilot funded by Adult Social Care as part of the Better Care Fund from September 2014 until March 2017. The Community Offer was designed to test whether community based support reduced demand on health and social care services. The Community Offer provided a needs assessment for every service user, connecting them to a range of agencies that could best meet their needs and brought them into longer term community-based support from local groups, volunteers and good neighbours.

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The Community Offer had been evaluated and although it was acknowledged that the support offered had reduced isolation and loneliness it had not demonstrated the benefits required to sustain future funding. It had not been possible to identify any reduction in demand on health and social care services as a result of the investment in the Community Offer.

A Prevention Strategy was in development and it was confirmed that loneliness would be an element within this Strategy. The Strategy would provide an overarching focus and give direction for all Council prevention services, with a collaborative approach across all departments.

The Chair of the Select Committee commented on the opportunities that were possible with intergenerational work, highlighting a project he was aware of in London called North London Cares that brought elderly people and younger professional adults together.

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

- The Community Offer had recruited over 200 volunteers. These had been from mixed ages, although it was reported that quite a lot had been older people.
- The Cabinet Member had visited a project involving sixth form students from a Sandwell school that worked to address loneliness amongst people in the school's local area.
- Due to the financial constraints on the Council, if it were decided to commission services to reduce loneliness or isolation it would be necessary to decommission other services.
- The Council maintained a list of local care and community organisations which it listed in an online database called Information Point. While this information was available to the public, members highlighted that some of the most vulnerable and isolated members of society may not be able to access the information.

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- Although the Council had funded the Friends and Neighbours initiative it was managed by a committee of volunteers and, as a voluntary sector organisation it was independent from the local authority.
- Sustainability of funding (from whatever source) was an important issue for third sector organisations.
- It was suggested that where smaller organisations didn't wish to be advertised more widely, there could be a list available to councillors who could put people who were experiencing loneliness or isolation into touch with appropriate organisations in their local areas.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Chair of the Select Committee for Policy Review, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, carry out a survey exercise of elected members to ascertain the breadth of community groups and facilities that are involved in ward areas with activities that contribute to the prevention and reduction of loneliness and social isolation;
- (2) that the Interim Director – Resources be requested to arrange an event in early 2017 on loneliness and social isolation with appropriate organisations invited to allow networking to take place and to develop a strengthened understanding of what is already available in Sandwell;
- (3) that, after the event referred to in resolution (2) above, the Select Committee for Policy Review considers what policy recommendations it wishes to make to the Cabinet on the Council's approach to preventing loneliness and social isolation.

(Meeting ended at 6.42 pm)

Contact Officer: Alex Goddard Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3178
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## **Select Committee for Policy Review**

**1 August, 2017**

### **A new long term vision for Sandwell**

- 1.1 The Council, at its meeting on 18 July, 2017 considered and agreed a new long term vision for Sandwell. The report to Council is attached as an Appendix.
- 1.2 The vision includes ten priorities; five ambitions for People and five ambitions for Place. These have been widely consulted upon, shared with the Council's strategic partners and are being built into business planning processes within the authority.
- 1.3 Officers will attend the meeting to present information to the Select Committee on the recently agreed vision and ambitions.

**Darren Carter**  
**Executive Director – Resources**

**Contact details**  
Alex Goddard  
Scrutiny Officer  
Governance Services  
0121 569 3178

**Report to Council****18 July 2017****A new long term vision for Sandwell  
(Key Decision No. SMBC16154)****1. Summary Statement**

- 1.1 Cabinet received a report on 7 December 2016 that commenced consultation and engagement around developing a new vision for Sandwell.
- 1.2 Ten ambitions were developed that focused on creating a resilient borough in terms of both Sandwell's people and the place. These ambitions provided the basis for consultation and engagement between January and March 2017.
- 1.3 To engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development of Sandwell's vision and priority areas, a communication and engagement plan was developed and endorsed by Cabinet on 7 December 2016. This plan used all existing internal and external networks and intelligence to engage fully with staff, members and stakeholders.
- 1.4 A wide ranging series of engagement exercises were undertaken. This included over 900 face to face interviews with residents in the six towns, an online survey and interactive group discussions with over 200 people.
- 1.5 Cabinet received a report on 19 April setting out the findings of the residents' survey and other stakeholder feedback and the implications of this for further developing the vision. At this point officers were requested to further refine the vision by liaising with key strategic partners across the borough, and to also build the vision into the Council's business planning process. A further report was considered by Cabinet on 28 June to consider final proposals for a Vision for Sandwell.

Further details are attached for information

## **2. Recommendation**

2.1 That the Council consider the Vision for Sandwell, as detailed in Appendix A.

**Jan Britton**  
**Chief Executive**

**Darren Carter**  
**Executive Director - Resources**

Jane Alexander  
Senior Lead Officer  
0121 569 3279

Sarah Sprung  
Service Improvement Lead  
0121 569 3200

## **3. Strategic Resource Implications**

Although the proposals in this report contain no direct implications for the Council's finances, workforce or strategic resources other than to suggest ways to strengthen the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities, the end result, the vision and performance management framework, will require that resources are aligned to the new priorities.

## **4. Legal and Statutory Implications**

There are no legal obligations or consequences for the Council arising from the consultation on the vision, and no particular statute, directive or Government guidance under which the proposals within the report are being made.

## **5. Implications for the Council's Scorecard Priorities**

Subject to approval, the proposals in this report would see the adoption of a new vision for Sandwell and subsequently a new Performance Management Framework that will replace the scorecard.

## **6. Background Details**

- 6.1 Cabinet received a report on 7 December 2016 that commenced consultation and engagement around developing a new vision for Sandwell.
- 6.2 A series of ambitions for Sandwell were developed around key themes identified by Cabinet. These themes were:
  - i. Building resilient, aspirational communities and families that can achieve their potential;
  - ii. Ensuring people have the education and skills to fulfil their potential and take advantage of opportunities;
  - iii. Making the most of opportunities provided through growth in the region and beyond;
  - iv. Ensuring that Sandwell is an environment where people want to live;
  - v. Breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty and inequality.
- 6.3 Ten ambitions were developed that focused on creating a resilient borough in terms of both Sandwell's people and the place. The ten ambitions provided the basis for consultation and engagement between January and March 2017.
- 6.4 To engage a wide range of stakeholders in the development of Sandwell's vision and priority areas, a communication and engagement plan was developed and endorsed by Cabinet on 7 December 2016. This plan used all existing internal and external networks and intelligence to engage fully with staff, members and stakeholders.
- 6.5 A wide ranging series of engagement exercises took place. This included over 900 face to face interviews with residents in the six towns, an online survey and interactive group discussions with over 200 people.
- 6.6 Findings of the residents' survey and other stakeholder feedback are set out below:-.

Who we engaged	How?
Every member of staff within the council	Interactive engagement events x2 Express Briefings x2 Online survey Facing the Future Champions
Every elected member	Structured discussions at Quarterly Town Meetings Online survey
Residents from every ward in the Borough	Residents' Survey Sandwell Herald Online survey
Cross section of young people from across the Borough	Discussion with Shape Forum Shape Programme events at secondary and college level
Voluntary Sector Partners	Online survey via SCVO network Stakeholder consultation event
All Strategic Partners	Stakeholder consultation event Structured discussion at Strategic Partnership meetings

- 6.7 The engagement and communication plan used all the council's existing internal and external networks and existing intelligence to fully consult with staff, members and stakeholders. In addition, Enventure Research, an independent research agency, was commissioned by the Council to undertake a borough-wide survey to gather representative views on the suggested vision and ambitions for 2030.
- 6.8 This research was conducted via a face-to-face, on-street survey with residents, across the six towns of the borough. A representative sample of 907 respondents was interviewed between 11 February and 24 February 2017. Quotas were set on gender, age, working status and ethnicity according to the most up to date population data (Census 2011) to provide data that was representative of the borough's population. Approximately 150 respondents were interviewed in each of the six towns.

6.9 The conclusions drawn from the residents survey work undertaken were:-

1. People like living in Sandwell- there is a perception that **people are friendly, there is a sense of community spirit** and it is an **accessible location** with many local amenities and facilities available
2. Sandwell residents feel that the biggest priority for the future should be to **improve the level of safety** in the Borough and **reduce crime levels**, through more of a **police presence** on the streets.
3. Many residents feel that **improving local schools and education opportunities** for young people should be a priority, as well as **providing facilities** (such as parks and green spaces) and **things to do** for young people and families.
4. Many residents worry that the streets are **becoming untidier**, there is a **litter problem** and the **high streets are declining**, all of which they would like to see addressed in the future through investment and funding.
5. The availability of **good quality, affordable housing** is of importance to residents.
6. People, in particular young people, would like to see **increased and varied job and training opportunities** provided in Sandwell in the future and a **booming local economy**.

#### **Feedback from other stakeholders on the ambitions**

- 6.10 Detailed conversations around the ambitions were held between January and March 2017 with other stakeholders at three interactive events, at strategic board meetings and quarterly town meetings. An online survey was also publicised through the Sandwell Herald.
- 6.11 The stakeholders consulted were employees, members, voluntary community partners, businesses and public sector partners.

6.12 Some of the key discussion areas against the ten ambitions are contained in the table below:-

Ambition	Feedback
<p>1. By 2030, Sandwell will be a borough where families' aspirations are raised and that prides itself on equality of opportunity and resilience to change.</p>	<p>Raising aspirations is something that pulls all of the ambitions together.</p> <p>Holistic family support, more parental involvement in education leads to better outcomes for young people. Third Sector can help deliver this.</p> <p>Links between schools and industries needs to be stronger to provide young people with more of a career focus.</p>
<p>2. By 2030, Sandwell will be a place where people and families are healthier for longer and are safer.</p>	<p>Prevention is key to delivering a longer healthier life expectancy, with a more holistic approach to family health and a focus on the long term.</p> <p>Education is the link between lifestyle choices and health.</p>
<p>3. By 2030, Sandwell's young people will have better skills and working people will have developed new skills – giving Sandwell a workforce geared up to respond to changes in business needs and the economy.</p>	<p>Stronger links between schools and universities.</p> <p>Better links between schools and industry – pathways and progression.</p> <p>Improve the quality of teaching and the teaching environment to ensure that young people are resilient and able to adapt to changing job markets.</p> <p>Partnership between schools and the council to ensure consistent improvements across the borough – many benefits to collaborative working.</p>
<p>4. By 2030, secondary school quality will have been raised, and superb primary schools will be giving children the best start.</p>	<p>Good quality teaching and aspirational heads at a secondary level – 'can do' approach.</p> <p>Breath of education – more value for softer skills</p> <p>Support parents through the education process so that they can better support their children.</p>

<p>5. By 2030, crime will have fallen and anti-social behaviour incidents will be few and far between.</p>	<p>Address the root causes of crime and disorder (prevention) need a partnership approach to deliver.</p> <p>Need to focus on initiatives that bring communities together</p>
<p>6. By 2030, Sandwell will have excellent public transport links to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.</p>	<p>Affordable, efficient, cleaner and more reliable.</p> <p>Contactless payment option.</p> <p>Integration with other transport methods, including cycling.</p>
<p>7. By 2030, Sandwell will have significant numbers of new homes built along key transport routes and there will be major new employment sites.</p>	<p>Complementary uses of six towns.</p> <p>New housing near to local amenities.</p> <p>Maximise strengths – green spaces, parks, heritage.</p> <p>Influence land owners to work with us to develop sites.</p>
<p>8. By 2030, Sandwell's six towns will have continued to develop a strong sense of local identity and pride and will be a better environment in which people choose to bring up their families.</p>	<p>Enhance our heritage – local identity and pride</p> <p>Improve our environment, reduce pollution.</p> <p>Tidier, cleaner town centres with less vacant buildings.</p>
<p>9. By 2030, Sandwell will host the industries of the future and will have boosted the best performing companies to grow.</p>	<p>Provide ready sites</p> <p>Skilled work force ready to meet demands of new industries.</p> <p>Support businesses to work together</p>



<p>10. By 2030, Sandwell will have a national reputation for getting things done, focussing on what really matters in people's lives and their wider community.</p>	<p>Listen to residents.  Maximise opportunities with the voluntary sector.  Foster a sense of community  Strive to be better – take risks.</p>
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6.13 Whilst stakeholders had some different perspectives emerging to residents, the interrelation of the ambitions was prevalent. In particular the importance of raising aspirations. To achieve this the following were of key importance:-

- Education and skills paramount to creating a resilient Sandwell;
- Retaining and attracting aspirational families;
- Creating quality places where families want to live - recognition that a package of measures is required.

6.14 At its meeting on 21 March 2017 Cabinet requested that further work be undertaken on the Vision to translate the ten ambitions into a more meaningful form that residents and other stakeholders could buy into.

6.15 Further consultation has taken place during April and May 2017 with the Voluntary Sector Leaders Forum, the Safer Sandwell Partnership, Business Ambassadors and the Head Teachers Forum to refine the wording in the ambitions so that it is more meaningful to all communities in Sandwell.

6.16 The Voluntary sector felt that partners' commitment to vulnerable people living in the borough should be stronger, taking on board this view Ambition 2 has been enhanced to specifically refer to vulnerable people living in our community.

6.17 In particular, the Safer Sandwell Partnership suggested refining the wording of ambition five to reflect that the perception of crime and the feeling of community safety was an essential task for partners in the borough.

- 6.18 The Business Ambassadors highlighted that given Sandwell's position in any league table regarding average income, an aspiration to grow income levels faster than the national average might be appropriate. They also acknowledged that Sandwell had a limited amount of development space available and so queried the potential to deliver a high number of new homes and capacity to grow the local economy. From the Council's perspective, it is accepted that there will be challenges ahead in identifying usable land on which to develop, but through funds available through the West Midlands Combined Authority it is hoped that Sandwell will be able to identify a sufficient amount of space to meet development requirements.
- 6.19 In addition, work has also been undertaken to make the 'place' ambitions more relatable to the community whilst also recognising that the achievement of the 'people' based ambitions are very much dependent upon the achievement of the place based ones.
- 6.20 Appendix A sets out the wording for the vision together with an overarching statement which summarises the intent of the ambitions.

### **Taking the Vision Forward**

- 6.21 Recognising the challenging external environment and the ambition that Cabinet and Management Board have for a new Vision for the Sandwell, a report was presented to Cabinet on 8 February 2017. A new senior management structure for the organisation was proposed, and agreed, to allow the necessary focus on the continuation and protection of frontline services and also to align to the new performance framework that will be built around the new Council Vision to measure progress against outcomes.
- 6.22 To ensure that the Vision is at the heart of everything the Council does, work has taken place to revise the format of the Council Business Plan. The new structure ensures, in a concise way, that all activity undertaken by the Council must contribute to one of the ten ambitions that make up the Vision.
- 6.23 A template and guidance have been produced and will be rolled out over the summer to all business plan authors in the Council so that when the process of writing the new plans commences in September 2017 all areas of work undertaken by the Council will contribute to the Vision.

- 6.24 However, whilst the Council is one of the key stakeholders that will deliver the vision, it cannot be achieved in isolation. The launch of the vision will be the starting point for conversations with partners, and with the community, as we can only achieve the vision by working collaboratively across the borough.
- 6.25 Appendix B outlines the framework for the launch of the Vision and centres around collecting buy-in from key partners which will start the process of community conversations.

## Sandwell's Vision 2030

In 2030, Sandwell is a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.

It's where we call home and where we're proud to belong - where we choose to bring up our families, where we feel safe and cared for, enjoying good health, rewarding work, feeling connected and valued in our neighbourhoods and communities, confident in the future, and benefiting fully from a revitalised West Midlands.

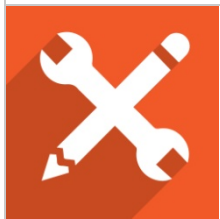
### Ambitions for People



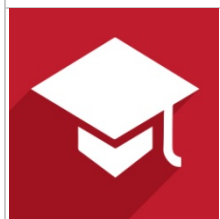
1. Sandwell is a community where our families have high aspirations and where we pride ourselves on equality of opportunity and on our adaptability and resilience.



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.



3. Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy.



4. Our children benefit from the best start in life and a high quality education throughout their school careers with outstanding support from their teachers and families.



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.

## Ambitions for Place



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.



7. We now have many new homes to meet a full range of housing needs in attractive neighbourhoods and close to key transport routes.



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



9. Sandwell has become a location of choice for industries of the future where the local economy and high performing companies continue to grow.



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.

### **Framework for launch of Vision 2030 – July-Autumn 2017**

The Vision 2030 will have a main launch event accompanied by a series of mini launch “fringe events”. These events will involve key stakeholders and staff and will be located at various places around the borough.

#### **Main Launch Event**

The main launch event will be held in September/October 2017 at West Bromwich Town Hall as a drop-in session. The event will be organised around a series of themed stands, related to the 10 ambitions. There will be an opportunity to network and discuss how we will deliver the vision together. At some point in the proceedings, a formal media launch will take place, giving an overview of the vision.

#### **Mini Launch “Fringe Events”**

A series of mini launch fringe events will be held around the date of the main launch event. These will be hosted by various partners but led by the Council. The aim will be to focus each event around particular ambitions in the vision and will draw together key partners in those fields.

These events will be more informal with the opportunity for in depth discussion on delivering the vision together. Each event will be designed to engage that particular group of interest e.g. business partners, young people.

#### **Internal communications of the new vision**

Following agreement at Council, a range of methods of communication will be used to spread awareness of the new vision over the summer. This will include weekly communications to staff (particularly managers) on aspects of the vision, leading to a main briefing event in early September, following the summer period.