

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Statement of Decisions made at a meeting of the Executive on Wednesday, 23 March 2022

Published:

The following decisions were made by the Executive at its meeting on **Wednesday, 23 March 2022**. These decisions will come into force on **31/03/2022**. A decision by the Executive may be called-in (in accordance with Part 4 – Scrutiny Procedure Rules of the Council’s Constitution) by **30/03/2022**. Should you have any queries about any decision that has been made, contact should be made in the first instance to Democratic Services at democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk. Any declaration of interest made by any member of the Executive is shown below.

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
--	------	----------------------	----------------------	---------------

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
5	<p>Community Vaccination Champions Programme</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to the Community Vaccination Champions Programme.</p> <p>1.2 That a further grant of £112,000 to Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) be approved for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £100,000 vaccination support grants fund for distribution to voluntary and community organisations • £12,000 for programme co-ordination. <p>1.3 That the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the chief finance officer, be authorised to award a grant of £112,000 to Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations for the vaccination support programme.</p>	<p>The Community Vaccination Champions Programme started in January 2021 and has proved to be highly effective in increasing the number of residents who have been vaccinated. Our approach has been to work closely with health colleagues and trusted faith and community leaders to provide reassurance and information to residents. Over 200 Vaccine Champions are involved in the programme and SCVO have awarded grants to voluntary sector organisations delivering 33 vaccination uptake projects.</p> <p>SCVO have a proven track record of delivering this programme by proactively engaging with local community groups across Sandwell and particularly those groups who represent and work with people more likely to be vaccine hesitant.</p>	<p>Distribute the funding direct to voluntary and community sector groups via an expression of interest process, inviting applications from groups. This would cost more in terms of public health officer time, compared to SCVO. SCVO's management of the programme has already demonstrated that it is effective, delivers value for money and has momentum. A different approach would not only cost more but would take time, leading to delay and loss of momentum.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
6	<p>Liberty Protection Safeguards</p> <p>Resolved (all report recommendations approved):</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the requirement to introduce Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) from a date to be determined by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) following their announcement that this will be delayed from the original date of 1 April 2022. 2. To endorse the implementation plan in preparation for the introduction of the new Liberty Protection Safeguards. 3. To the revised structure for social work service, as set out in table in the Cabinet Report, to enable the council to prepare for the implementation of LPS, and to recruit to the required posts: <p>The staffing and commissioned resources in the current DoLS team have been repurposed as detailed in the table in Cabinet Report, in line with the proposed staffing model and requirements to support implementation of the LPS.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To the commencement of the required consultation with the affected workforce and Trade Unions 5. To authorise the Director of Adult Social Care, to implement the new structure and make any minor modifications required following the guidance from the code of practice on the Mental Capacity Act and LPS. 6. To note that additional funding for Advocacy Support (Independent Mental Capacity Advocates) for the implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards is likely to be required. 7. To agree to provide a further report on progress and financial implications before October 2022 and to confirm any new timescales for the introduction of LPS and its implementation once agreed by DHSC. <p>1.2 That the Director of Adult Social Care, be</p>	<p>To enable the Director of Adult Social Care to prepare for the implementation of Liberty Protection Safeguards across Sandwell.</p> <p>The redesigned structure seeks to place an emphasis on the delivery of services and the statutory duty the Council has to ensure that people in all types of settings receive appropriate care and treatment without unlawful deprivation of their liberty freedom, or rights.</p>	<p>The alternative option is to continue with the current staffing structure, but this is not deemed a feasible or legally viable option because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would reduce the ability of the Local Authority to successfully implement the forthcoming legislation and ensure the Local Authority meets its statutory obligations around safeguarding Adults who are being deprived of their liberty; • Reduce the capacity of the Local Authority to respond in a timely way to concerns raised around safeguarding Adults who are being deprived of their liberty leading to waiting lists for statutory assessments. 	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
7	<p>Temporary Accommodation - Elm Tree Primary Academy at Connor Education Centre, West Bromwich</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>1.1 That subject to a satisfactory financial appraisal being completed by Strategic Finance, the Director of Children and Education be authorised to award a contract for the refurbishment of part of the Connor Education Centre, Connor Road, West Bromwich to provide temporary accommodation for the new Elm Tree Primary Academy Special School, following a compliant procurement exercise, in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Education.</p> <p>1.2 That, subject to 1.1, the Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into any legal agreements on terms agreed by the Director of Children and Education, as required, to allow building works to be completed.</p>	<p>The report seeks approval to grant the Director of Children and Education, delegated authority to procure and award a contract for the refurbishment of part of the Connor Education Centre to be used as a two-form entry Primary Special School for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder alongside other associated learning needs for one school year.</p> <p>The temporary accommodation will enable the school to open 12 months ahead of its formal opening and admit up to 18 children to the Reception year.</p>	<p>Although located in Smethwick, the existing Victoria Academy Trust shared site of Devonshire Infant and Junior Academies off Auckland Road was considered – through use of an adjacent parcel of land known as the former 'Devonshire Gym site'. The temporary specialist accommodation required for Elm Tree was cost prohibitive to allow for a short-term location of the school on the vacant site.</p> <p>Feasibility surveys were also completed at two sites; Connor Education Centre and the former nursery/children's centre at Ferndale Primary School. Ferndale Primary's site was deemed unfeasible and the school's proposed business plan for the site is more beneficial to the pupils of the school.</p> <p>Doing nothing is not an option as the council would be in breach of statutory regulations to ensure every child has access to a good school place.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
8	<p>Domestic Abuse Strategy</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That the 2021-24 Domestic Abuse Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.</p> <p>1.2 That approval be given to carry forward the projected underspend of £150,000 Domestic Abuse New Burdens Funding for 2021-22 as a reserve and that it be used to partly fund the interventions in 2022-23 (£62,500) and 2023-24 (£87,500).</p> <p>1.3 That approval be given to allocate New Burdens funding, outlined in Table 1 of the Cabinet report, of £907,042 in 2022-23 and £932,042 in 2023-24 to support the delivery of the strategy, ensuring that Sandwell fully complies with the new statutory duty for the delivery of specialist support to domestic abuse victims and children in safe accommodation, subject to the confirmation of the funding allocation for 2023-24 from central government.</p> <p>1.4 That approval is given to award grant funding totalling up to £223,609 (£205,737 in 2022-23 and £17,872 in 2023-24) to Black Country Women’s Aid (BCWA), as detailed in Table 2 of the Cabinet report, from New Burdens funding for a range of interventions which will assist in delivering the Domestic Abuse Strategy and the statutory duty for domestic abuse.</p>	<p>In March 2021, Statutory Officers Group were briefed on the new statutory duty for the provision of specialist support for victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation from April 2021. This duty is part of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and requires that a safe accommodation needs assessment is undertaken which informs a safe accommodation strategy.</p> <p>Linxs Consultancy were commissioned to undertake a domestic abuse needs assessment and develop a new domestic abuse strategy for Sandwell. Work on the needs assessment and strategy development has been overseen by a multi-agency task and finish group which reports to the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP), the statutory board responsible for domestic abuse.</p> <p>The proposed programme of investment includes allocation of New Burdens Funding to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of refuge accommodation and community-based support for victims of domestic abuse that is currently funded by the council and will therefore support the financial savings to be achieved by the budget strategy. • Interventions that commenced in 2021-22 funded by the first year of New Burdens funding • New interventions as identified by the domestic abuse needs assessment 	<p>The alternative option is to not approve the Domestic Strategy 2021-2024 and proposed allocation of New Burdens funding for 2022-2024. However, this would jeopardise efforts to meet the Council’s statutory duty for the provision of specialist support for victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation outlined in Domestic Abuse Act 2021.</p>	<p></p>

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
9	<p>Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022-26</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>That Cabinet supports and endorses the implementation of the Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board's Community Safety Strategy 2022-26, as set out in Appendix 1, which outlines the partnership's key priorities and direction of travel over the next five years.</p>	<p>Sandwell's Community Safety Strategy is overseen by the multi-agency Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board (SSPPCB) who oversee the Borough's approach to community safety. The existing strategy covered 2019-21 and is now due for renewal.</p> <p>The priorities reinforce our commitment to protecting and supporting vulnerable victims. We will deliver these priorities through adopting a public health approach, understanding that violence is preventable and identifying the reasons why people get drawn into crime. We will also support organisations to become trauma aware, to embed such approaches into their practice and to tackle these issues through the adoption of 4 P Plans which aim to: prevent violence, abuse and exploitation; protect those affected; reduce harm and pursue those who perpetrate.</p>	<p>Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board has a statutory requirement under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, and subsequent legislative amendments, to develop and deliver a Partnership Plan which contains community safety priorities based on the current evidence base across the Borough of Sandwell. This strategy brings together this evidence base and sets the strategic direction for community safety across the Borough for the next five years subject to annual review.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
10	<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Local Transport Capital Programme 2022/23</p> <p>Resolved (all report recommendations approved):-</p> <p>1.1 That the current position in relation to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for the period April 2022 to March 2027 as submitted to Government by the West Midlands Combined Authority following its approval at West Midlands Combined Authority Board on 14th January 2022, be noted.</p> <p>1.2 That details of the resourcing, monitoring and financial implications relating to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme be received.</p> <p>1.3 That the assurance and appraisal implications for projects and block allocations included in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme be noted.</p> <p>1.4 That, subject to confirmation by Government of the overall City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement allocation to the West Midlands Combined Authority and its subsequent approval by West Midlands Combined Authority, Cabinet approves the following programme of minor works, highways, bridges and street lighting maintenance for 2022/23 to be funded through the Local Network Improvement Plan and Maintenance Block allocations as set out in the reports to West Midlands Combined Authority Board on 14th January 2022 and 18th March 2022;</p>	<p>This report details the current position with regards to the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement programme for the West Midlands as approved by WMCA Board on 14th January and submitted to Government for approval. It sets out the specific allocations to the Authority for 2022/23 for local network improvements and highway maintenance subject to final Government confirmation and WMCA Board approval.</p> <p>The block allocations included in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme will comprise the majority of the Council's capital programme of minor works, highway and bridge maintenance for financial year 2022/23 and the following four years of the settlement period.</p> <p>Approval is sought to the programme of works outlined in the recommendations. Details of individual schemes will be reported back to the appropriate Cabinet Member(s) for approval in due course.</p>	<p>With regards to the Local Network Improvement Plan the proportion allocated to each of the individual block headings is broadly in line with previous years' ITB allocations. However, more of the 21% uplift on the 2021/22 figure has been allocated to the road safety and traffic calming categories to reflect member priorities. The option exists to allocate more funding to some headings and less to others. It also remains possible to alter the allocations 'in year' should circumstance require it. However, the use of this funding will be reported to, and monitored by, WMCA and should reflect the priorities outlined by Government through the CRSTS guidance and by WMCA through the Local Transport Plan.</p>	
Minor Works Programme				
Major Schemes Development				
Road Safety				
Decarbonising Transport				
Demand Management				
Traffic Calming				
Major Route Signing				
Named Schemes Over £250k.				
Total				

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
11	<p>Corporate Climate Change Action Plan</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That the Climate Change Action Plan as set out in Appendix 5 be approved;</p> <p>1.2 That Cabinet recommend to Council that a cross-party Member Committee on Climate Change be formally established as part of the Governance Arrangements to monitor the implementation of the draft Climate Change Action Plan.</p>	<p>The Action Plan is designed to embed climate change across the council's corporate agenda and service areas to enable us to deliver the actions set out in the Climate Change Strategy and become a net zero organisation by 2030 and net zero borough by 2041.</p>	<p>The alternative is to not produce the climate change action plan which would, however, be detrimental to Sandwell's efforts to achieve 2030 and 2041 targets on tackling climate change.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
12	<p>Contract for tyres and tyre related services</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to access the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Framework 001009 Tyres for Motor Vehicles, Plant and Related Services to conduct a further competition and put in place a call off contract for 4 years, starting 01/07/2022 and ending on 30/06/2026, at a cost of approximately £345,000 over the next 4 years funded from the annual transport budget of £1.2m.</p> <p>1.2 That in connection with 1.1 above, the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to award contracts for the provision of Tyres and tyre related services.</p> <p>1.3 Authorise the Director Law and Governance – Monitoring Officer to execute any documentation necessary to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 above to proceed.</p> <p>1.4 That any necessary exemptions be made to the Council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 above to proceed.</p>	<p>Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) will conduct a further competition on behalf of the Council, offering a quick route to market and reducing the amount of resources required when compared to conducting a full internal procurement exercise, whilst maintaining compliance with procurement regulations. This will allow resources to be deployed elsewhere as the council continues its recovery from COVID.</p> <p>The Council will maintain the ability to fully customise the contract specification, requirements and length, to the same extent as if it were to conduct an internal procurement exercise. This will ensure the contract meets the needs of the Council for the full term of the call off contract.</p>	<p>The Council could undertake an internal procurement exercise. This would require the allocation of resources from Procurement Services and will take additional time due to current workloads.</p> <p>Fleet Services could undertake the replacement of tyres and tyre related services internally. This would require purchase of equipment and specialised vehicles, the procurement of a tyre supplier, the creation of new posts, recruitment for the new posts as well as training for current employees to undertake this duty.</p> <p>The Council could make use of the direct award option available within the frameworks. This would not ensure best value for money is obtained and will not ensure a consistent level of service.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
13	<p>Vehicle and grounds maintenance equipment, spare parts, and workshop consumables</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to undertake a full internal procurement exercise and put in place a call off contract for Vehicle & Grounds Maintenance Equipment Spare Parts & Workshop Consumables.</p> <p>1.2 That the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to award contracts for the provision of Vehicle & Grounds Maintenance Equipment Spare Parts & Workshop Consumables following a compliant tendering process and evaluation at a cost of approximately £4,080,000 over the next 4 years funded from the annual transport budget of £1.2m.</p> <p>1.3 Authorise the Director Law and Governance – Monitoring Officer to execute any documentation necessary to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 above to proceed.</p> <p>1.4 That any necessary exemptions be made to the Procurement Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 and 1.2 above to proceed.</p>	<p>Procurement is required because the current contract for the supply of Vehicle & Grounds Maintenance Equipment Spare Parts & Workshop Consumables expires on the 03/07/2022.</p> <p>The purchase of Vehicle & Grounds Maintenance Equipment Spare Parts & Workshop Consumables is essential in enabling Fleet Services to maintain and repair both internal and external fleet in line with contracts and service level agreements.</p> <p>As a Fleet Operator, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure all of its vehicles and equipment are safe to use and do not pose a danger to the operator, service user or members of the public.</p>	<p>There are no recommended feasible alternatives. Without a contract in place, Fleet Services would have to treat each order as an individual tender and follow the relevant procurement rules dependant on order value.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
14	<p>Purchase of grounds maintenance plant and machinery</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to award contracts to replace the council's grounds maintenance equipment at the end of its projected life expectancy at a cost of approximately £1.8m for the next 4 years.</p> <p>1.2 That approval be given to access the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) Framework 274 and North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO) Framework Agreement to place 'call off' orders as and when required to purchase Grounds Maintenance Plant and Machinery with the call off contract from 01/10/2022 – 30/09/2026.</p> <p>1.3 Authorise the Director Law and Governance – Monitoring Officer to execute any documentation necessary to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 above to proceed.</p> <p>1.4 That any necessary exemptions be made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 and 1.2 above to proceed.</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place with Procurement Services, Grounds, Fleet services and Bereavement services sections to determine the new course of action. Following a re-appraisal of all options it has been decided that the recommendations outlined will represent the best option for the Council.</p> <p>Following the analysis of the pricing provided within the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) and North Eastern Purchasing Organisation (NEPO) Frameworks, and consultation with Client officers within Fleet Management, it is recommended that the ESPO and NEPO frameworks offer the most expedient, compliant and value for money procurement route for the Council rather than carrying out its own tendering process.</p>	<p>An alternative option is for the council to conduct a full tendering process. Research that has been undertaken indicates that as this is a very limited market, it is highly unlikely a full OJEU procurement process would produce a result that is different to what is available under the ESPO and NEPO frameworks.</p> <p>Another option existed for the council to outsource the grounds maintenance operation, therefore disbanding the need to procure new equipment.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
15	<p>Revenues and Benefits Operating Model</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 The Revenues and Benefits Operating Model be approved as set out in Appendix 1.</p> <p>1.2 The face to face Cashiers service at Kings Square, West Bromwich, and Smethwick Council House not be reopened.</p> <p>1.3 The Revenues and Benefits customer service at Kings Square, West Bromwich not be reopened.</p> <p>1.4 Subject to the above, the Kings Square office in West Bromwich be closed.</p>	<p>The majority of service requests dealt with by the Revenues and Benefits Service are now available online through MySandwell enabling customers to self-serve rather than use the costly face-to-face and telephone methods of contact.</p> <p>The introduction of payment kiosks at Oldbury and Smethwick has further increased the number of self-serve transactions.</p> <p>There are 13 different payment methods available to customer and these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash • Cheque/postal order • Debit Card • Credit card • Bank Giro • Online • Telephone payment • Automated telephone • Paypoint • Post Office • Kiosks • Direct Debit • Standing Order. 	<p>An alternative would be to continue to provide a face-to-face Revenues and Benefits customer service at Kings Square West Bromwich and continue to provide a face-to-face Cashiers service at Kings Square, West Bromwich, and Smethwick Council House.</p> <p>These were considered however based upon the reduction in demand at Oldbury Council House for cashiers since this reopened in June 2021, and the change in how residents are now accessing Revenues and Benefits' services indicates that there isn't a need or demand from residents to reopen these offices, nor would it be cost-effective to do so as we would have to recruit additional staff.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
16	<p>Revenues and Benefits Policy Framework 2022/23</p> <p>Resolved that approval is given to the Revenues and Benefits policy framework for 2022-2023 as set out in the Appendices 1 to 9.</p>	<p>The existing Revenues and Benefits Policy Framework includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Debt Recovery Policy • Council Tax Award of Discount Policy • Council Tax Discretionary Reduction Policy • Flood Relief Policy • Discretionary Housing Payments Policy • Local Welfare Provision Policy • Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery Policy • Non-Domestic Rate Hardship Relief Policy • Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy • The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy 	<p>The council is required to set out its application of areas of the legislation which allow local application of rules. The policy framework achieves this.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
17	<p>Refurbishment of Thorn Close, Wednesbury</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and to procure a contractor, in accordance with The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, working on behalf of the Council, to deliver the refurbishment works to Thorn Close, Wednesbury.</p> <p>1.2 That the Director of Housing be authorised to award the contract for the Refurbishment of Thorn Close, Wednesbury, as referred to in 1.1 above, to the successful contractor.</p> <p>1.3 That the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to the award of the contract.</p>	<p>This report seeks approval to procure, award and enter into contract with a contractor to deliver the Refurbishment of Thorn Close, Wednesbury to continue the substantial investment in the Council's Housing Stock. The contracted works will deliver an upgrade to the 3 x 3 storey blocks of flats and maisonettes, consisting of 28 units. 4 new units of social housing will also be created on the ground floor by converting the existing rear access links and bin rooms/tenant storage areas.</p>	<p>The alternatives are: -</p> <p>Option 1 To not invest in our Council Housing Stock which may lead to dissatisfaction from existing and potential new tenants as well as disrepair and additional burden on the Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>Option 2 To undertake refurbishment works to the existing 28 units, in addition to providing an additional 4 units, all as detailed within 4.6 in the Cabinet report.</p> <p>Option 3 To demolish the existing 28 units and construct 7 x 2 bedroomed semi-detached houses and 8 x 4 bedroomed semi-detached houses. This option has been estimated to cost approximately £5.285m and equates to an approximate expenditure of £0.352m per dwelling, all as detailed within Appendix 1 of Cabinet report. This option has been modelled for its viability by Finance using various financing options and it has been concluded that it does not represent value for money. If there is no other funding available, then the repayment period would be 51 years. By modelling the various funding options, the repayment period of the borrowing would not fall within the 40-year time period used for new build repayments on previous projects.</p> <p>The 3 Options were explored and based on the above summary, Option 2 is recommended as the most viable option as this contributes towards the Council's aspirations of increasing Council owned affordable rented stock.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
18	<p>Acquisition of land at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis for Council New Build</p> <p>Resolved (all report recommendations approved):-</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to the Director of Regeneration and Growth to agree heads of terms to acquire the site at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis from NHS Property Services.</p> <p>1.2 That subject ton 1.1 above, the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate the sum of £292,500 from the Council's Housing Revenue Account to purchase the site.</p> <p>1.3 That the Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal, if necessary, contract to complete the acquisition of the site.</p> <p>1.4 That approval to be given to allocate the site at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis for the development of new affordable rent council housing, subject to planning permission being obtained.</p> <p>1.5 That approval to be given to allocate funding from the Council's Housing Revenue Account to demolish the existing buildings/ structures at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis as a pre-requisite for site investigation to facilitate compliance with the Homes England funding timescales.</p> <p>1.6 That the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account, subject to being satisfied that the proposal provides value for money, to deliver the scheme and to utilise grant funding offered by Homes England, under the extended Homes England Strategic Partnership 1 Programme 2016 to 2021, to assist with the delivery of the project.</p> <p>1.7 That subject to receiving the necessary Strategic Investment Unit appraisal approval mark of 65 or above, the Director of Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing, be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and subsequently procure, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations, a contractor/contractors to develop, on behalf of the Council, the proposed housing scheme; to enter into or execute under seal any financial agreement in relation to the Homes England grant on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance.</p> <p>1.8 That subject to 1.6 and 1.7 above, the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, Homes England developer status, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the scheme and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s) and with the Homes England, as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the site with a housing scheme on terms</p>	<p>Following the introduction of greater flexibilities for local authorities the Council is able to develop this site with circa 8 homes (subject to planning consent), as part of the new strategic approach to provide more and better housing in the borough.</p> <p>The opportunity to acquire this windfall site has arisen through partnership with the NHS Trust and an agreement that the site will be valued for affordable housing and disposed of to the Council as another public sector organisation.</p>	<p>Alternative option is for the Council not to pursue the acquisition of the property.</p> <p>If the Council does not purchase the site the NHS will dispose of the site on the open market via auction. If this is the case it is likely that the site will be purchased for market sale property and the size of the site would not trigger the requirement for affordable housing. This would not increase the Council owned housing stock or replace properties lost through RTB and would result in the lost opportunity of acquiring land that could be used for this purpose.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
--	------	----------------------	----------------------	---------------

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
19	<p>Social Work Workforce - Market Supplement</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to Sandwell Children's Trust adopting the market supplement policy of £2,500 per annum for all 168 case holding social workers and funding the corresponding increase in the Contract Sum by a maximum of £432,000.</p> <p>1.2 That in connection with 1.1 above, the additional cost of £432,000 be funded from the Council's Social Care earmarked reserve.</p>	<p>In line with many other councils and Trusts across the country Sandwell Children's Trust faces workforce challenges regarding the recruitment and retention of social workers. Discussions with the Department for Education and regional colleagues clearly show that the demand for talented and experienced social workers outweighs the supply.</p> <p>Whilst pay is not the sole factor to attract and retain social workers, it has always been important. Recent detailed market analysis confirms that the salary band for Children Social Workers and Children Senior Social Workers is not competitive within the region.</p>	<p>A number of options have been considered as follows:</p> <p>i. Maintain the current position for those Social Workers who are currently in receipt of the market supplement – The risk here is that this would not achieve pay parity across the social worker workforce with some employees being paid more than others within the same teams. This would create a significant risk of challenge. Given the market analysis and regional pay rates this would impact on the Trust's ability to recruit and retain permanent social workers.</p> <p>ii. Remove the market supplement from all Social Workers that are currently in receipt of the market supplement – Whilst this would achieve pay parity, the significant risk is that the Trust would be one of the lowest paid for Social worker roles in the region. It is highly likely that those in receipt of the supplement would choose to leave the Trust to higher paid roles elsewhere. Consequently, workloads would increase with an impact on the ability to do effective work with children, young people and families. This in turn would create more financial pressure to manage demand and child protection duties safely as the Trust would need to secure additional higher cost agency staff.</p> <p>iii. Re-align the existing £150k budget to all 'case holding' social workers across the operational service – whilst this would achieve pay parity, the risk here is that it means the social worker pay would not be as attractive for potential permanent staff.</p> <p>iv. Introduce a market supplement of £2,500 – this would achieve pay parity across the social worker establishment and whilst social workers would still not be the highest paid across the region, it does mean the Trust is more attractive, when considering pay alongside all the other benefits of working in Sandwell (please see 5.4). The risk with this option is the increased financial burden to the council which would need to be absorbed alongside other competing pressures. However, in line with other areas, the financial risks of not taking this approach are greater in that it would cost more to continue paying inflated agency worker costs.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
--	------	----------------------	----------------------	---------------

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
20	<p>Sandwell Regeneration Strategy, Pipeline and Economic Recovery Plan for Businesses</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 Approve the Regeneration Strategy for Sandwell and the associated appendices, the Regeneration Pipeline (appendix A) and the Inclusive Recovery Action Plan for Business (appendix B), which taken together set out the corporate regeneration priorities for the period 2022 to 2027. The Regeneration Pipeline comprising the following number of schemes in each category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport - 23 • Housing - 15 • Education & Skills - 10 • Sustainability - 5 • Heritage Regeneration - 4 • Employment - 3 • Town Centre – 2 • Health - 2 • HRA New build programme – 1 • Digital Connectivity Programme – 1 <p>1.2 That the Inclusive Economy Deal (March 2020) is rescinded and the Regeneration Strategy for Sandwell, the Regeneration Pipeline and Inclusive Recovery Action Plan for Business, taken together become the up to date, strategic documents outlining the corporate Regeneration priorities for the period 2022 to 2027.</p> <p>1.3 That authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Growth to make any non-material amendments to the Regeneration Strategy, the Regeneration Pipeline and the Inclusive Recovery Action Plan.</p> <p>1.4 That approval be given to create a reserve for the projected underspend of £85,000 for 2021/22 of New Burdens funding and that it be used in 2022/23 to support the delivery of the Regeneration Strategy and its appendices particularly focusing on initiatives to support business recovery.</p>	<p>Sandwell's Regeneration Strategy (the strategy) sets out local requirements (evidence of need), constraints on activity (barriers) and opportunities (via a site pipeline) outlining the direction of travel for the Council to prioritise its resources to deliver transformational change for the Borough.</p> <p>Following discussions with officers involved in the delivery of infrastructure from across the organisation, horizon scanning, and discussions with our partner organisations, the strategy sets out practical actions for regeneration which support our wider economic goals.</p> <p>Alongside the Inclusive Recovery Action Plan for Business, the Regeneration Strategy presents a clear view of the Sandwell economy and our infrastructure requirements. It will enable Sandwell to shape regeneration plans to meet the needs of local people and business, setting a path towards a higher quality of life for our residents, more well-paid and fulfilling jobs, and, through these, a wealthier Sandwell.</p>	<p>Do nothing was considered as an alternative option – this would result in a lack of overarching coordination and prioritisation of our regeneration opportunities. There would be no clear pipeline for potential funders, investors, and our communities providing a lack of clarity and potentially missed investment opportunities.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
--	------	----------------------	----------------------	---------------

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
21	<p>Extension of Free Swimming Programme 2022-23</p> <p>Resolved (all report recommendations approved):-</p> <p>1.1 That approval is given to the Service Manager – Tourism, Culture & Leisure to enter into an agreement with Sandwell Leisure Trust and Places Leisure to offer free swimming to: -</p> <p>a) Children and young people aged 18 years and under (exclusively Sandwell residents only) during public swimming sessions, for seven days per week, throughout school holidays only;</p> <p>b) Adults aged 60 years and over (exclusively Sandwell residents only) during public swimming sessions, for seven days per week before 1pm all year round; and</p> <p>c) Allocate a proportion of free swimming funding to primary care settings to be distributed through a social prescribing pathway for adults</p> <p>for the financial year 2022/23.</p> <p>1.2 That approval is given to the Service Manager – Tourism, Culture & Leisure to enter into an agreement with Sandwell Leisure Trust and Places Leisure to offer free swimming lessons to: -</p> <p>(a) Children and young people aged 16 years and under (exclusively Sandwell residents only) via a voucher scheme distributed through schools (identified as in receipt of benefits/low income and unable to afford lessons plus poor swimming ability in school swimming lessons); and</p> <p>(b) primary care settings (to be distributed through a social prescribing pathway)</p> <p>for the financial year 2022/23.</p> <p>1.3 That the Director for Finance be authorised to allocate a revenue budget of £275,000 for the</p>	<p>Participating in 30 minutes of physical activity or sport per week provides residents with significant health benefits. Being physically active reduces the likelihood of having a stroke, reduces blood pressure, reduces the likelihood of suffering from a blood clot, improves cholesterol levels, and promotes positive mental health and well-being.</p> <p>Both leisure providers (SLT and Places Leisure) have reported a positive correlation between increased usage of young people and older people at the same time, i.e. young people are often accompanied by parents, grandparents or older carers. Suggesting that free swimming for young people encourages family visits and family interaction.</p> <p>Increasing the age range to 18 years and under (previously 16 years and under) will widen the reach and support those young people staying on at school until 18 or moving on to further education.</p>	<p>The free swimming programme could be dis-continued. However, if the Council does not continue the programme this would have an adverse impact on the opportunities available to Sandwell residents. It would also affect the opportunity for some of our most vulnerable residents to participate in some form of physical activity.</p> <p>The resources could be invested into other sport and physical activity programmes. However, swimming has the ability to engage and provide health benefits on a wider scale than many other activities, as demonstrated by the consultation exercise. It engages a wide range of ages and abilities and is an essential life skill.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
22	<p>Co-operative working for the provision of services from the Integrated Social Care and Health Centre</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to develop a Co-operative Working Agreement with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust for the purpose of achieving shared objectives for social care and health through the delivery of integrated social care and health services.</p> <p>1.2 That subject to 1.1 above and further consultations and detailed negotiations between the Council and Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to award and enter into a contract with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust for health-related services under the Co-operative Working Agreement on terms to be agreed with the Director of Adult Social Care.</p> <p>1.3 That subject to 1.2 above, any contract should include a five-year review of the partnership framework with an annual review of services.</p> <p>1.4 That the Director of Law & Governance be authorised to execute any documents necessary and within reasonable time to give effect to the proposals in recommendation 1.1 for the provision under the Co-operative Working Agreement with Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust.</p> <p>1.5 That any necessary exemptions be made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 1.2 and 1.3 above to proceed.</p>	<p>Under regulation 12(7) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the local authority may enter into a contract without competition where the contract is with another contracting authority (public body) and establishes or implements co-operation with the aim of ensuring that the public services the authorities have to perform are provided with a view to achieving objectives they have in common and are governed solely by considerations relating to the public interest. The opportunity to use this exemption allows the flexibility to include services other than those delivering prescribed health related functions and provides an approach that will support future developments and the integration of social care and health services.</p> <p>The development of an approach for co-operative working between Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust and the Council at the Integrated Social Care and Health Centre will bring greater opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve common objectives • Integrate care pathways • Improve service quality and maximise opportunities for Innovation • Secure value for money and make the most of resources 	<p>The only alternative option would be to defer to a tendering process which for the reasons set out in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.5 of the Cabinet Report, which would not be in the best interest of the service provision.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
23	<p>Corporate Plan Achievements 2021</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That Cabinet consider the progress made in delivering the Corporate Plan during 2021.</p> <p>1.2 That Cabinet consider the directorate actions, contained in Appendix 1, that will support delivery of the Corporate Plan on our journey ahead.</p>	<p>Report is before Cabinet to offer assurance of progress in delivering the Corporate Plan and to set out the proposed delivery vehicle for the strategic outcomes contained in the plan going forward.</p>	<p>The report details the progress made in 2021 on delivering the Corporate Plan and as such there are no alternative options.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
25	<p>Care Home Fees - Standard Rate 2022/23</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <p>1.1 That approval be given to the revised Care Home Fees, as submitted in the Cabinet Report, for 2022/23, to be effective from 1 April 2022, and that the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to communicate this to the relevant providers and implement the fee increase accordingly;</p> <p>1.2 That approval be given to a deviation to the model that was agreed by Cabinet in April 2017 which is used to calculate standard rate care home fees, to also take account of the mandatory increase to National Insurance contributions from April 2022 and the use of October data for gas, electricity, water and food.</p> <p>1.3 That the Director of Adult Social Care review the proposed care home fees rates in 6 months once the position on whether there will be any additional government funding from April 2022 has been established, and if necessary, submit a further report recommending revisions to the rates in year should they be necessitated.</p>	<p>On 19 April 2017, Adult Social Care presented a report to Cabinet (Residential Care Home Fees model and rates 2017-18 (Minute No. 87/17) seeking approval for the use of a proposed costing model to form the basis of discussion and fee setting for Care Home Fees for Older People in future years. Cabinet approved the recommendations.</p> <p>The model has been used since 2017 to calculate the increase of Care Home Fees and has been used to calculate the proposed Care Homes Fees for 2022-23, with a modification as explained in the resources section. This report seeks approval for the Director of Adult Social Care to communicate the resultant fees to the relevant providers and implement the revised fees from 1 April 2022.</p>	<p>Not approving the recommendations is the alternative option but if the recommendations are not approved, there is a risk that care home providers, and therefore the supply chain may become less resilient, particularly at a critical time for the sector as they continue to manage the additional burden that the pandemic has created.</p>	

	Item	Reason for Decision:	Alternative options:	Lead officer:
--	------	----------------------	----------------------	---------------