

Report to Cabinet

16 November 2022

Subject:	Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care & Health Cllr Suzanne Hartwell
Director:	Director of Public Health Dr Lisa McNally
Key Decision:	Yes (Borough-wide strategy)
Contact Officer:	Mary Bailey Addictive Behaviours Programme Manager mary_bailey@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations




- 1.1 That Cabinet approve the Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Strategy and its wider distribution and promotion.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 In December 2021 Government released a new National Drug Strategy 'From Harm to Hope: A ten-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives'ⁱ. The Strategy comes with a set of requirements for local areas to help towards achieving the national strategy ambitionsⁱⁱ.
- 2.2 To support delivery of the national Drug Strategy ambitions, the Government requires all local areas to have in place a local drugs strategy delivery plan informed by a local joint needs assessment reviewing local drug data and evidence.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>Maximising access and engagement with substance misuse support enables people (including those affected by someone else's use such as children, family members and the wider community) to benefit</p> <p>Parental substance misuse can have a negative impact on children and young people. Evidence suggests that in Sandwell over 500 adults with an opiate dependency live with children, of these 48% accessed treatmentⁱⁱⁱ</p>
	<p>People live well and age well</p> <p>Problematic substance misuse can cause ill health and impact on mortality rates. Preventing misuse and ensuring engagement with treatment will help individuals live longer and enjoy a better quality of life – adding years to life and life to years.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>It is estimated that around 45% of acquisitive crime is committed by heroin and/or crack cocaine users. Evidence suggests treatment helps prevent 4.4 million crimes annually^{iv}.</p> <p>Crime can have a significant impact on communities; people may feel less safe, home insurance can increase, property prices can be affected and businesses may avoid the area. Preventing use and ensuring engagement with treatment is likely to reduce crime.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 In December 2021 Government released a new National Drug Strategy 'From Harm to Hope: A ten-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives'^v. National Strategy ambitions aim to reduce drug crime and reduce the



harms that drugs cause to individuals and society, including preventing use within future generations. This national strategy is underpinned by additional investment across local areas and a set of ambitious outcomes and goals to which government and local partners will be held accountable for delivery.

- 4.2 To support delivery of the national Drug Strategy ambitions, the Government requires all local areas to have in place a local drugs strategy delivery plan informed by a local joint needs assessment reviewing local drug data and evidence.
- 4.3 Sandwell's Drug & Alcohol Strategy was informed by the 2022 Sandwell Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment which reviewed local drug and alcohol needs and the current response to them. The Strategy was created in conjunction with the Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Partnership (SDAP).
- 4.4 Sandwell's strategy aligns to the national Government's 10-year drugs plan 'From Harm to Hope' and additionally includes a focus on alcohol given needs assessment findings which show Sandwell is disproportionately impacted by alcohol. The three priorities for this all-age strategy are therefore:
- Addressing Supply
 - Delivering a World-Class Treatment and Recovery System
 - Achieving a Generational Shift in the Demand for Alcohol and Drugs
- 4.5 The strategy highlights the role that all partners have in improving an individual's treatment and recovery outcomes. The Strategy includes a set of partnership principles given its ambitions can only be delivered by the right players working together in partnership.
- 4.6 Governance arrangements for the Strategy: The Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Partnership (SDAP) is the key local mechanism which brings together partners around the agenda and is governed by the Safer Sandwell Partnership. SDAP will act as the key local body with oversight of progress and delivery against Strategy commitments.



Sandwell is also one of 7 local authorities linked into the West Midlands Combatting Drugs Partnership led by the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner chaired by Simon Foster as the nominated Senior Responsible Officer -this allows for more joined up action at a regional level especially in relation to supply and criminal justice elements.

- 4.7 Progress reporting arrangements: under each of the Strategy's three priorities sits a number of commitments which will be monitored through an accompanying action plan to enable progress feedback at timely intervals to a range of stakeholders. Progress reports will align to the National Combatting Drugs Outcomes Framework as well as additional local data and alcohol related indicators
- 4.8 Sandwell's Needs Assessment & Strategy was developed and refined through extensive consultation with key partners including:
- 420 responses received from community members to our online survey– this shows that drug and alcohol use is a key concern for the local community
 - A series of focus groups and interviews with young people and adults currently accessing local drug and alcohol treatment services
 - Over 30 responses from frontline practitioners working across the system who in some way deliver to/ experience issues related to drugs or alcohol
- 4.9 The Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Strategy covers a 10-year period from 2022 but will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to any new trends and developments

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative would be for Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Partnership, including work as a member of the new regional Combating Drugs Partnership, to continue without a supporting Strategy. This option would compromise local compliance with, and fulfilment of national OHID requirements (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities).



This would also make it more difficult to effectively communicate and monitor progress towards local and national ambitions, and could mean alignment with other relevant strategies towards efficiencies and better joined care delivery are missed.

6 Implications

Resources:	The production of the Strategy is led by the Addictive Behaviours Team within Sandwell Public Health, with much of the focus on improving partnership working across the system. There are no costs or land/building implications associated with this proposal.
Legal and Governance:	None
Risk:	A risk assessment has been carried out to identify and assess the decisions associated with the recommendations being sought. This has concluded that there are no significant risks that require reporting. For the risks identified, suitable measures are/ will be in place to manage these risks to an acceptable level.
Equality:	A focus on vulnerable and marginalised groups is an integral part of the Strategy, therefore it is anticipated that this work will have a positive impact on reducing inequalities.
Health and Wellbeing:	In addition to reducing inequalities in health, the Strategy will contribute to the wider wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.
Social Value:	Every drug or alcohol related death has wide-reaching social and economic impacts. Preventing and reducing the harms caused by drugs and alcohol will therefore have a range of beneficial impacts on Sandwell's residents and communities.
Climate Change:	The Strategy aims to reduce demand for drugs and alcohol – less demand should result in a reduction of the negative environmental impacts from drug and alcohol production.

7. Appendices

Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Strategy Equality Impact Assessment





D&A Strategy EIA
Sept2022.doc

8. Background Papers

Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Needs Assessment 2022
Sandwell Drug & Alcohol Strategy 2022



Sandwell_Drug_Alcohol_Strategy_v3.2.c

ⁱ National Drug Strategy 2021 'From Harm to Hope':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

ⁱⁱ National Drug Strategy Guidance for local delivery partners:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-strategy-guidance-for-local-delivery-partners/guidance-for-local-delivery-partners-accessible-version>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-alcohol-and-drug-use-understanding-the-problem>

^{iv} <https://app.box.com/s/p52mrjh78yryshd9smogm350s7ougg1l>

^v National Drug Strategy 2021 'From Harm to Hope':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

