



Inclusive Recovery Plan for Business 2022 - 2027

PERFORMANCE REPORT MARCH 22 – OCTOBER 22

JENNA LANGFORD, REGENERATION MANAGER

Project Progress 0-6 months

Start in Sandwell – Sandwell the Home of the Successful Start Up

Mission Make Sandwell the home of the successful start-up, bringing new businesses into our town centres and high streets.

Objective A high number of residents are starting new businesses but may lack the skills and information to make these successful. We want to change this through increased and tailored access to advice around starting a business, finance, recruitment and marketing.

0-6 month Actions	Progress
Develop a stronger enterprise start-up programme that engages with businesses from all parts of the community, offering impartial one-to-one and group support to start-ups during the first 5 years.	The Team have secured funding through the UKSPF to deliver a Start In Sandwell Business School to run between January and March 2023 to create a peer-to-peer network and mentoring links for Sandwell's entrepreneurs, provide key skills and training to set up a business and how to ensure survival. This will also include wrap-around support provision for those entrepreneurs who engage with the Business School. The team have also secured funding to operate a business start-up hub to provide this support to entrepreneurs and to also provide small grants. This programme is in development and subject to the UKSPF Investment Plan approval.
Build Sandwell' peer-to-peer networks to mentor businesses and budding entrepreneurs.	

Project Progress 0-6 months

Grow in Sandwell – Sandwell the Home of the Successful Start Up

Mission – Accelerate growth in higher value businesses, tapping into the growth of the West Midlands economy, to stimulate wider investment and opportunity

Objective - Sandwell businesses are part of West Midlands and national supply chains, creating essential components for modern engineering and manufacturing. We want to help them grow and create more good jobs by exporting more, investing in new opportunities, embracing digital markets, and changing their business models.

0-6 month Actions	Progress
Continue to support local businesses and sole traders impacted by the pandemic with £1.54m Additional Restrictions Top Up Grants, with £120,000 dedicated to business support services.	<p>During the pandemic the Team administered over £14m in discretionary grants to support 12,338 Sandwell businesses and sole traders.</p> <p>In addition, the Team continue to Black Country LA partners to co-deliver the AIM for Gold grant funding project for businesses. Sandwell is the best performing borough against the outcomes and spend on this project.</p> <p>The Team have secured £40,000 to provide 200 SME's businesses with annual membership for specialist support and advice in financial year 22/23.</p>
Put in place a refreshed relationship management plan for the top 50 fastest growing companies.	Sandwell's Top 50 Growing Businesses list for 2022 has been produced, along with a identifying Sandwell's Strategic Companies. The Team are working with the Black Country Consortium to break this down by each Sandwell Town. The team are also reviewing Account Management of Sandwell companies with the West Midlands Growth Company.

Project Progress 0-6 months

Grow in Sandwell – Sandwell the Home of the Successful Start Up

0-6 month Actions	Progress
Improve information sharing with Sandwell Business Ambassadors and agree future roles for the Ambassadors as the local interface with businesses.	<p>The team continue to work with the Sandwell Business Ambassadors, meeting quarterly with the Leader and Cabinet Members to discuss and address specific topics/issues, with Cllr Randhawa as Cabinet Champion.</p> <p>The Team have commissioned market research to determine how we can improve our online communication and interaction with our businesses. This will culminate with a new website to be launched by April 2023.</p>

Project Progress 0-6 months

Climate Resilient in Sandwell

Mission – Deliver net zero carbon emissions in Sandwell by 2041

Objective - Many of our companies face high demand for energy and premises that are not climate resilient. We want to support them by providing easy access to advice on how to become energy efficient & reduce costs. We also want firms to adopt models of circular economy including recycling and re-purposing.

0-6 month Actions	Progress
Work with the LEP to understand data available around the size and make-up of the low carbon sector, green jobs and circular economy in Sandwell.	<p>The team have been working alongside Sandwell's Climate Change Team to consider what support can be offered to support businesses to decarbonise. The WMCA have indicatively allocated £9m to support a de-carbonisation programme for the region. The Team are part of the WMCA working group to shape this programme to ensure it benefits Sandwell's priorities.</p> <p>The Team have secured funding to recruit a Circular Economy Officer, who will be responsible for supporting businesses to decarbonise as well identifying green efficiencies within Sandwell's local supply chain. It is anticipated that this post will commence by February 2023.</p>

Project Progress 0-6 months

Invest in Sandwell

Mission Increase new inward investment & investment from existing business to create more good jobs.

Objective With a young population and cheap land, Sandwell should be an attractive location for businesses to locate and grow, creating more jobs locally. Foreign Direct Investment is important to stimulating local jobs growth. We need to work more closely with the West Midlands Growth Company to have the employment land and investment offer ready to maximise investment from existing business and attract investment.

Actions 0-6 months	Progress
Develop an Inward Investment Action Plan with the West Midlands Growth Company to identify a clear portfolio of investment sites and opportunities, starting with a review of the borough's investment pipeline of employment land projects	<p>The role of the West Midlands Growth Company is currently under review at a regional level. However, the team have established an Investment Working Group who are currently scoping how the WMGC can support the council to deliver against the Invest in Sandwell objective.</p> <p>The Team have continued to work with the Midlands Engine to promote Sandwell's development opportunities.</p> <p>During the Commonwealth Games the Team supported the Business and Tourism programme with the goal of raising the profile of Sandwell and the West Midlands with international investors.</p> <p>Sandwell will be represented at MIPIM 2023, the annual international conference for the real estate industry, and an opportunity to promote Sandwell to investors as part of the wider West Midlands region.</p> <p>The Team have recruited an Enterprise Officer, who will commence in December 2022 to be responsible for delivering the objectives of the Invest in Sandwell priority.</p>

Project Progress 0-6 months

Invest in Sandwell

Actions 0-6 months	Progress
Complete the Asset Strategy for the Council to unlock publicly owned sites for regeneration.	The Land & Assets Team have developed a strategy which identifies council assets which can be made available to the market for regeneration & economic growth purposes. The Strategy is to be considered by Cabinet on the 16 November 22.
Complete the masterplans for West Bromwich and Grove Lane.	Both West Bromwich Masterplan and Grove Lane Masterplan have been completed by the Team and approved by Cabinet. The Land & Assets Team have developed a strategy as to how the council can now work with partners to deliver the sites for development in accordance with the masterplans. The Strategy will be considered by Cabinet on the 16 November 2022. In addition, the team have now commissioned a masterplan for the Rolfe Street area of Smethwick, and also a development framework for the Carters Green area of West Bromwich. Both are now underway and will complete during 2023.

Project Progress

Innovate in Sandwell

Mission Establish Sandwell as a growing centre of health & care innovation, using the hospital development to stimulate a new cluster, with the participation of local people.

Objective - Health & life sciences is a major priority of the WMCA but work is often focused around Birmingham. We need to work with the WMCA, NHS, education providers & businesses, looking at space, investment, skills & business support required to develop the new hospital site into a thriving health innovation cluster.

Actions 0-6 months	Progress
Develop the Smethwick Town's Fund business case for Sandwell's first all skills level health campus, linked to the new Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital.	The Team have secured Towns Fund Investment to deliver the Town Deal for Smethwick. This includes £12.9m for the Midland Met Learning Campus. The Team are working with the NHS to deliver the project and to secure social value outcomes.
Work with the Anchor Network to explore with the NHS how to maximise spend in local businesses through procurement.	The Network have worked to identify a Black Country supplier for a NHS contract. They will also be looking at working with the Council on joint procurement exercise for baked goods. The employment Network group are working on a number of initiatives with Sandwell College, NHS and Black Country Housing Group to support residents into employment.

Project Progress 0-6 months

Good Jobs in Sandwell

Mission Improve the amount & quality of work available, focused on raising wages & skill levels

Objective Employers told us that they like to recruit local people but sometimes struggle to find the skills they need. We need to work with employers to increase demand for higher level skills and create jobs with good pay and conditions, and with education providers to train pupils and students in the skills to meet workforce demands.

Actions 0-6 months	Progress
Work with the Black Country LEP, using its data analysis about the labour market, to identify skills needs and employer demand, now and in the future, including identifying inequalities in the labour market around gender, age and ethnicity.	Data is being used to understand the current economic conditions and support growth sectors with their recruitment needs. Some early outcomes have been gained in the Logistics and Care sectors, where residents can be supported to undertake existing training/qualifications to secure employment. Longer term plans are in place to support disadvantaged groups to benefit from future opportunities.
Use the skills strategy to develop local skills and pathways to education, training and employment linked to the current & future skills demand from Sandwell businesses – reviewing where there needs to be increased focus (for example those with no formal qualifications).	As part of a social value; there continues to be a key area for targeted recruitment and training for vulnerable and disengaged groups as a key target output.

Project Progress 0-6 months

Good Jobs in Sandwell

Actions 0-6 months	Progress
Implement the Community Renewal Fund proposal around the 50 plus Hub	A CRF 50+ pilot programme has been delivered to support our older residents to overcome barriers, upskill and seek employment opportunities. Across the Black Country, the programme has supported more than 1100 people to move closer to the labour market. It has been a project of interest for the Department of Work and Pensions who have now increased the dedicated support available for this group.

Project Progress

Spend in Sandwell

Mission - Make community wealth building a reality

Objective - We want to increase our spend with local business by changing how we procure contracts & monitor social value, embedding community wealth building across the Council. We also want to encourage our businesses to increase their local spending by raising awareness of local suppliers.

Actions 0-6 months	Progress
Review the Community Wealth Building report recommendations, starting by embedding the Anchor Network Co-ordinator and establish Sandwell's Anchor Network.	<p>The Anchor network is fully established and meets regularly to steer specific economic outcomes. The team have secured funding to continue to provide a dedicated Co-Ordinator for the Sandwell Anchor Network until March 2025. The Team have secured a new chair for the Sandwell Anchor Network – Sarah Moorhouse, Chief Executive, Black Country Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>The Network have worked to identify a Black Country supplier for a NHS contract. They will also be looking at working with the Council on joint procurement exercise for baked goods. The employment Network group are working on a number of initiatives with Sandwell College, NHS and Black Country Housing Group to support residents into employment. The Team are working to host a Black Country special event for the main developers on the West Midlands Construction Framework to consider how we can improve our social value offer and identify sub-contract opportunities for Local Businesses.</p> <p>The Team are also engaged with Sandwell's Towns Fund partnership, with project leads identifying local supply chain and employment opportunities. The Team are also in the process of increasing the council's Social Value resource by recruiting a Senior Social Value Officer to support the Spend in Sandwell and Good Jobs in Sandwell priorities.</p>

Project Progress

Spend in Sandwell



Actions 0-6 months	Progress
<p>Work with West Midland procurement leads to understand how other local authorities approach social value in procurement and monitoring.</p>	<p>Anchor Network procurement working group and Spend in Sandwell Working Groups established. The work of the group has identified that in-fact local spend in Sandwell is 37% and not 15% as previously thought. Sandwell's Social Value Policy is aligned to the WMCA Procurement Social Value Policy and with other Local Authorities within the met area, through membership of the WMCA Social Value Taskforce Group.</p>