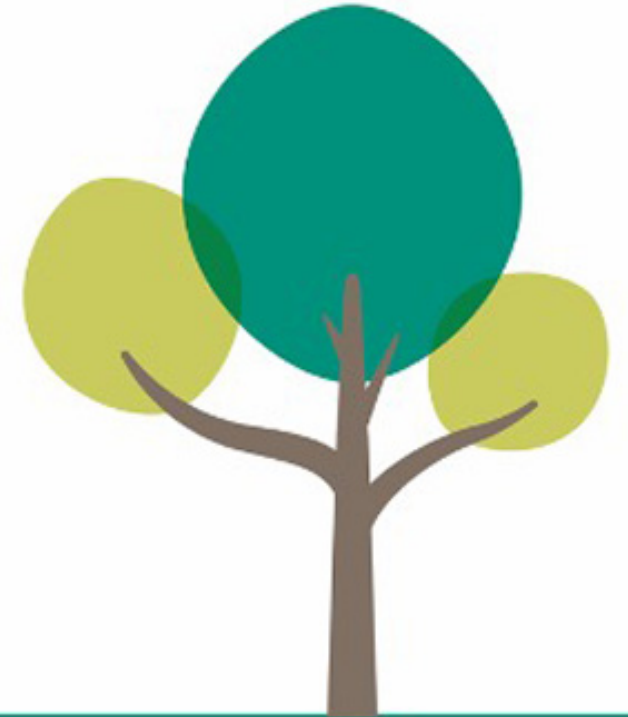




Corporate Plan Quarter 2 Progress





Overview

- Our Corporate Plan contains seven strategic outcomes that our nine directorates deliver on.
- This report details the progress made during quarter 2 (July to September 2022) in delivering the actions that underpin our strategic outcomes.
- Each action in directorate business plans that contributes to a corporate plan action has been RAG rated using the following categories:





RAG Definitions

On Track	Progress against the action is good and there is i) a low level of risk and/or issues; and/or ii) progress is in line with the delivery date with no/ minor slippage (e.g. less than 2 months); and/or that iii) there is no or minor concern around the measures of success being fulfilled.
Medium issues/risks/slippage	Progress on the action is being made but there is i) a medium level of risk and/or issues and/or ii) slippage (actual / projected) of less than 3 months; and/or iii) there is a medium level of concern that the measures of success will not be achieved
Significant issues/risks/slippage	There is a significant level of risk, issues and/or slippage (e.g. more than 3 months) or significant concern around the measures of success being fulfilled





Q1 > Q2 – Direction of Travel

	Q1		Q2
Actions on Track	252	↑	258
Medium issues/risks/slippage	85	↑	91
Significant issues/risks/slippage	7	↑	9
No update available	66	↓	53





Headlines – Corporate Plan Monitoring Q2

	Best Start in Life for Children & Young People	People who Live Well and Age Well	Strong Resilient Communities	Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods	A Strong and Inclusive Economy	A Connected & Accessible Sandwell	One Council One Team	Totals
No of Corporate Plan Actions	17	20	21	20	22	18	27	145
No of directorate actions contributing	46	127	63	33	41	28	73	411
On Track	42(39)	77 (74)	40 (44)	20 (21)	24 (17)	15 (16)	40 (41)	258 (252)
Medium issues/risks/slippage	3 (3)	42 (36)	7 (10)	6 (3)	4 (8)	3 (4)	26 (21)	91 (85)
Significant issues / risks/slippage	0 (0)	0 (0)	4*(1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (1)	2 (3)	9 (7)
No update available	1 (4)	8 (17)	12 (8)	6 (8)	12 (14)	9 (7)	5 (8)	53 (66)

*3 of the 4 red actions relate to the same issue, but as it contributes to three separate actions in the Corporate Plan it appears three times.





Direction of Travel Red Actions – Corporate Plan Monitoring Q1 - Q2

Strategic Outcome	Red Action from Q1		Q2 Update
Strong Resilient Communities	Bring together governance arrangements and budgets to ensure VCS grants are aligned to corporate objectives.		Still a red action in Q2. Team continues to support the commissioners with grant reviews as part of the council's 2022/23 savings programme. No formal decision on implementing a centralised approach to grant management made. The team continues to operate at less than full capacity due to sickness absence.
Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods	We will have a current strategic plan for the Borough that feeds into the Black Country Plan and ensures we allocate appropriate development land to meet our future needs for housing, employment opportunities, amenities and community facilities.		The Leader of Dudley Council announced that he would be withdrawing the Council from the Plan. The three remaining Councils have taken the decision to develop their own individual plans to continue to shape the development needs of their areas at the earliest opportunity. Proposals to develop these local plans are to be discussed by each Council at future Cabinet meetings between October and December 2022.
A Strong & Inclusive Economy	We will continue to progress the review of the Black Country Plan to ensure the policy base is robust and meet the needs of Sandwell and the Black Country.		See above update.
A Connected & Accessible Sandwell	Deliver the capital programme for 2022/23 of annual maintenance schemes to renew or repair highway infrastructure prioritised in red risk condition (HIAMP) £4.741 Million capital budget.		Still a red action in Q2. Budget Pressures associated with inflation and escalating red risk conditions and delays in Cabinet approval of capital funding.
One Council One Team	The refresh of the Council's Storage Area Network (SAN).		Still a red action in Q2. New hardware has now been shipped by the vendor and delivery arrangements are being made. Once onsite there will be approximately 3 months of work to install, migrate data and decommission old system. A new data backup system will also go live at the same time.
	Development of the Corporate Data Strategy to define and deliver our approach to Business Intelligence.		No further progress on this area. Resources continue to be dedicated to delivering Improvement Plan.
	Delivery of income generated from chargeable garden waste Option B through spend to save proposal.		Action has been reduced to amber. An options paper has been prepared and is to be presented to Cabinet in Q3.





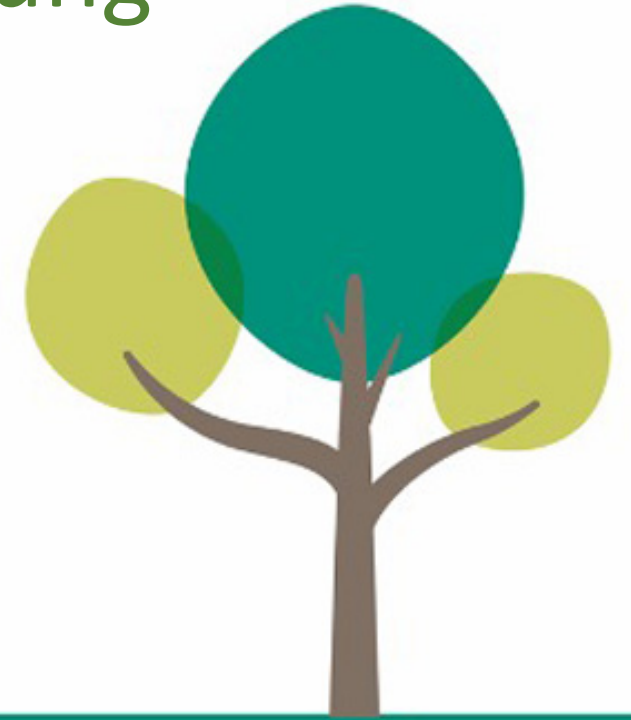
New Red Actions Q2

Strategic Outcome	Red Action Q2	Commentary
Strong Resilient Communities	Replace 4,000 high energy street lighting lanterns with low energy LED lighting and computer management, providing the same lighting levels.	Capital funding report will be considered by Cabinet in Q3.



Best Start in Life for Children and Young People

Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insight – Director of Children’s Services & Education

- Ofsted – ILACS outcome: out of inadequacy first time in over a decade
- Education Investment Area – 1 of 55 LAs / Priority Investment Area – 1 of 24 LAs
- Education Attendance – new multi agency priority setting across all agencies
- Strategy development and launches: Early Help and Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding in Education – whole system engagement / vulnerable children
- Emotional health and well-being: whole system support for CYP mental health
- SEND transport – procurement and implementation; new framework
- System-wide agreement with six strategic priorities.





Summary

- Overall there has been good progress in education and support for young people in Sandwell through Q1 & Q2. The reach of centres in Sandwell for community outreach programmes has increased by 20% compared to the Q1 figure. The percentage of children who have a repeat care plan within two years of ceasing on a care plan has also improved from Q1.
- By working in partnership with partners such as West Midlands Police to tackle youth violence and sharing good practice with early years teams in Warwickshire and Hampshire, Sandwell is striving to ensure that every child and young person in Sandwell gets the best start in life.
- No actions have been RAG rated red across this strategic outcome.





First 1000 Days

- The Black Country Early Years Outcomes team from all 4 black country LAs are currently working with the National Literacy Trust to launch First Words Together across the Black Country. The Early Years Team have been contacted by the early years teams in Warwickshire and Hampshire for support with their speech, language and communication development. Sandwell's pathway has been shared to support the strategic thinking and visits to Sandwell are being planned.
- A key priority is to establish a community outreach programme to further improve the community reach. The reach of centres in Sandwell is showing a 20% increase in Q2 (against Q1 figures).





Ready for School / Education

- The children's services Ofsted rating (ILACS) has improved from Inadequate to Requires Improvement to be Good for the first time in over a decade
- 92% of Early Years providers are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' with Ofsted
- 91.58 % success of achieving 1st, 2nd or 3rd preference for state Secondary school places. This is higher than the 91.02 % of Q1.
- Sandwell scores better than the Region and England average on the Key Stage 4: Attainment 8 indicator, which looks at the points gap between the LA disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.





Ready for School

- The Council continues to maintain a safeguarding oversight via, The MASH safeguarding team including direct work with schools, MARAC and LADO. The Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education teams focus on suitable education
- The September update to the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny review confirms the enhancement of support for EHE families
- In the academic year 2021/22 Sandwell successfully completed more than 90% of intended delivery objectives, including the use of Covid funds to enhance community engagement via the delivery of a series of community events during half terms 5 and 6
- Sandwell has less % of pupils with persistent absence in secondary and special schools than the Regional and England average. However, in primary schools it has the highest % of persistent absence compared to the Regional and England average. This has been prioritised for action in the autumn term: Attendance is Everyone's Business event 29.9.22.

% of pupils with persistent absence (> 10% absence)			
	Primary %	Secondary %	Special %
Sandwell	21	23.7	34.8
Regional	20.5	28.1	39.6
England	19.5	27.7	39.4





Children & Young People that need more Support

- The vulnerable children's group (VCG) continues to meet weekly in Q2 with a focus on the following priority themes:
 1. Violence reduction (WMP / VR Partnership)
 2. Afghan and Ukraine resettlement programmes
 3. Emotional health and well-being (CYP mental health)
- All VCG partners have supported Trust colleagues to embed the early help strategy re-launched by SMBC and the Trust with VCS in March 2022
- Sandwell children who have a repeat care plan within two years of ceasing on a CP Plan is at 11.2% and in line with regional comparison of 10.6%. This is an improvement from Q1 (11.7%). This represents a good measure to ensure we have closed children open to the service safely and robustly without further the need for statutory intervention.





Children & Young People that need more Support

- Referrals for Education and Health Care Plan needs assessments continue to rise, and all agencies including the Council's Inclusive Learning Service report capacity and staff recruitment issues
- Statutory compliance in relation to the timelines is impacted due to increase workload and staffing shortages
- Child Mental Health action plan has now been submitted and adopted by the SEND strategic board.





Children & Young People that need more Support

- Our rate of Children in Care at 98.6 per 10,000 is the fourth highest in our Statistical Neighbour Group and 3rd highest in the West Midlands. Our rate of CIC is higher compared to Statistical Neighbour Average of 94.8 per 10,000 and have 38 more Children in Care compared to SN average. The rate has improved from the Q1 rate of 102.2 per 10,000
- 55.3% of Children in care who have left school are engaged in training, employment, further education (up to the age of 21). The current performance is 7.7% below Regional and 9.7% below national average this is primarily due to lower number of young people EET at 19-21 which is just above 48% EET compared to 75 % for our 17 and 18-year olds.



People that Live Well and Age Well

Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insight – Director of Public Health

Our recent focus in Public Health has been on cost of living work. This has included the launch of the Cost of Living Champion Programme, the VCS & Faith Sector Warm Spaces and the Winter Wellness Guide.

Joint working with NHS colleagues has secured over £1m in extra funding for health inequalities work (from NHSE) as well as England's first Joint Council and ICS Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

Focused work on mental health has led to several new projects in the community. An evaluation study showed significant MH improvement.





Director Insight – Director of Adult Social Care

- We have made some positive steps towards the measures identified in the corporate plan – namely in terms of the preparations to open Harvest View in November and in preparing for ground work to progress the workstreams in regards to embedding Strength Based Practice into everyday practice. We have sought support from SCIE in developing our programme for SBP.
- Housing have agreed the funding via the DFG for the refurbishment of 16 homes in Walker Grange. The STAR review is being finalised and will be shared with health colleagues to agree next steps.
- We will also continue to focus on recruiting sufficient Navigators to deliver the 12 week assessment programme for people with learning difficulties.





Summary

- On the whole under people that live well and age well there has been progress in terms of putting the building blocks in place to help people to live healthily and independently for longer and many of the key deliverables are on track, for example the Healthy Sandwell Advice and Referral Service is working well, work has advanced on establishing the LATC to take over SLT managed facilities and various operational reviews are on track.
- There has been some slippage under each theme, but actions are in place to address this.
- There are no red RAG rated actions in this strategic outcome.





Rebuilding

- The Healthy Sandwell advice and referral service average number of contacts is well above the monthly target at 1,633; both the stop smoking support with maternity units and community based are on track.
- The engagement of the Faith Sector in Public Health work is also on track, with a Faith Board established and 200 organisation engaged.
- Development of LATC to take over operation of SLT managed facilities on track
- Draft plans in place for successful operation of new Sandwell Aquatic Centre





Healthy Lives

- Promoting healthy lives – a number of schemes are on track – the inclusive cycling programme; the Sandwell Stride programme (volunteer led walking scheme) and digital app-based walking offer; physical activity in parks and open spaces
- Programme of 1612 cultural events and activities across all libraries and museums including at Sandwell Live Site for Commonwealth Games
- Strength based practice framework approach to developing a Stronger Sandwell- developing scope and workstreams with partners
- Investment and support of community mental health programmes, including pre and post natal support groups, parenting programme and anti bullying campaign – are on track





Choice and Independence

- Draft operating model for Harvest View in place and continuing to recruit staff. Sufficient resources for phased opening on 8 November
- Options appraisal on STAR service has been drafted
- Review and option appraisal of in-house day services offer underway – 12 week assessment pilot started plus recruitment, goes live in January 2023
- Restructure and implementation of social work and therapy underway and on track
- Walker Grange – feasibility information and briefing paper for the upgrade has been drafted





Choice and Independence

- The proportion of adults with a learning disability that live in their own home or with their family was 86% in 2021/22 compared with 85% the previous year and remains at 86% in Q2
- Carers provided with support per 100,000 carer population was 2,541 in 21/22, and is 605 in Q2
- Quality of care homes - % of CQC registered locations in Sandwell rated as good/outstanding was 72% in Q2, compared with 79% regionally and 80% nationally





Choice and Independence

Ensuring safeguarding processes are effective – the following areas are on track :

- embedding the learning from safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) and internal audits;
- adult safeguarding improvements in practice and performance – completion of quality assurance audits, developments included in action plan;
- falls prevention service;
- delivery plan for new burdens funding for support in safe accommodation – dedicated monitoring officer for this;
- Draft Prevention of Violence Exploitation (PoVE) plan and strategy shared with partners.

Making safeguarding personal - % of safeguarding Section 42 Enquiries concluded during the period where the individuals desired outcomes had been fully or partially met was 97% in 21/22 and is 96% in Q2





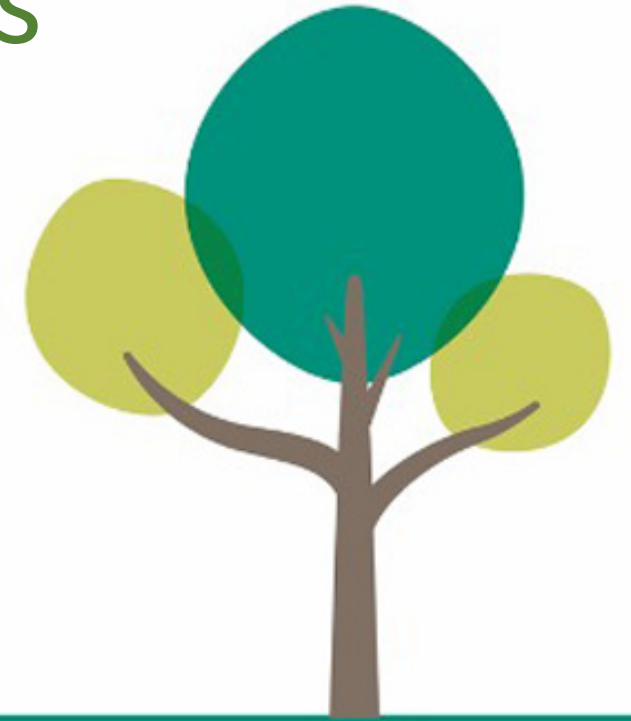
Joined Up Health and Social Care

- High level workforce strategy with partners in place and sub strategies for specific service areas is next step.
- Proportion of older people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services in 20/21 was 60% compared with 75% regionally and 79% nationally. The opening of Harvest View should further improve this measure.
- Sandwell continues to build a historically strong performance on Delayed Transfer of Care – stronger than the Black Country and England average. Transformation of out of hospital community services, including Harvest View, will further strength this performance.



Strong Resilient Communities

Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insight – Director of Borough Economy

- Numerous areas of progress are now evident with some delay in respect of key reports due to the Purdah impact on October Cabinet – this included LED replacement programme for street lighting
- Key projects continue to be developed and delivered including Master Planning tender for Sandwell Valley and Library +
- Forthcoming focus remains in place for major contracts and Q2 saw the recruitment to the Assistant Director - Contracts role (Leisure / Waste) following the departure of the waste contract manager
- LATC work continues in partnership with SLT and the appointed advisors





Summary

- We are reflecting on and learning from events run over the summer and have put in place our programme for Autumn/Winter 2022/23.
- We continue to work collaboratively with key partners in relation to community safety to deliver better outcomes for our residents, taking a more intelligence led approach to tackling key issues.
- There are also several areas where an amber rating has been applied, generally these relate to areas where we are trying to secure funding, and areas where we are experiencing difficulties in recruiting.
- Two actions in this strategic outcome have been RAG rated red, these relate to the governance arrangements and budgets for grants to the voluntary sector and capital funding for the replacement of 4,000 high energy street lights with low energy LED lighting.





Vibrant Communities

- The £67.5m Towns Fund Programme has successfully secured all funds from DLUHC for all 16 projects. 15 of the projects have now progressed to either Delivery Stage, On Site or Complete.
- West Bromwich Quarter (Town Hall and Central Library) Project – confirmation of successful grant funding from DLUHC, building work procurement has commenced.
- We have secured additional resource through the Violence Reduction Partnership for additional detached sessions and youth work training.
- We have also been successful in securing additional detached resources through the Safer Streets Fund for work in Lightswood Park. The review of the Youth Offer is ongoing.
- In relation to work bringing together governance and budget arrangements for voluntary sector grants, the action is currently red as there has been limited staffing resource to progress this workstream; however the team continues to support commissioners with grant reviews as part of the 2022/23 savings programme. No formal decision on implementing a centralised approach to grant management has been made.





Culture

- We are on track with implementing our Commonwealth Games Health and Wellbeing legacy plan, multiple work strands are underway including our community sport plan.
- Delivery of Library+ is on track with a libraries strategy being developed.
- Programme of autumn events in place for the rest of the year, including Christmas lights switch ons, support to civic events such as remembrance Sunday, October half term, and Fireworks and Illuminated Garden Weekend at Dartmouth Park
- Procurement process underway to award contract for the development of a Sandwell Valley Masterplan.





Safe

- During Q2 there have been 15 compliance visits undertaken for taxi operators and their bases.
- 57 compliance visits have been carried out to licenced premises and a further two joint operations with Police and Trading Standards.
- One premises licence has been revoked as a result of enforcement activity.
- 14 cases have been referred to our anti social behaviour response pilot and deployable cameras assigned to hotspot areas.
- A new Implementation Oversight Group that reports to the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership has been established to support the delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.
- In Q2 2056 DA crimes / non crimes were recorded (slightly above the Q1 figure of 2034) MARAC figures are not yet available and will be reported in Q3.
- In Q2 there were 9,627 incidence of crime, this is a reduction of 324 compared to Q1.
- We have reviewed the Road Safety Plan but have experienced delays in rolling out initiatives to support reductions in road traffic accidents due to recruitment difficulties.





Clean

- We are developing options for the introduction of recycling services for high rise residential buildings - Initial scoping undertaken with Serco / Borough Economy / Housing Management – a list of pilot intervention options is being prepared.
- The Serco fleet replacement programme 2022/23 has been agreed and is on track. We are working with Serco to identify smaller fleet vehicles to switch to electric together with the charging infrastructure required to support this.
- A street cleansing plan has been provided to SMBC by Serco, to improve standards of street cleansing across the Borough. Serco are to provide services and deliver this plan, this is due to be considered by the Waste Board in October 2022.



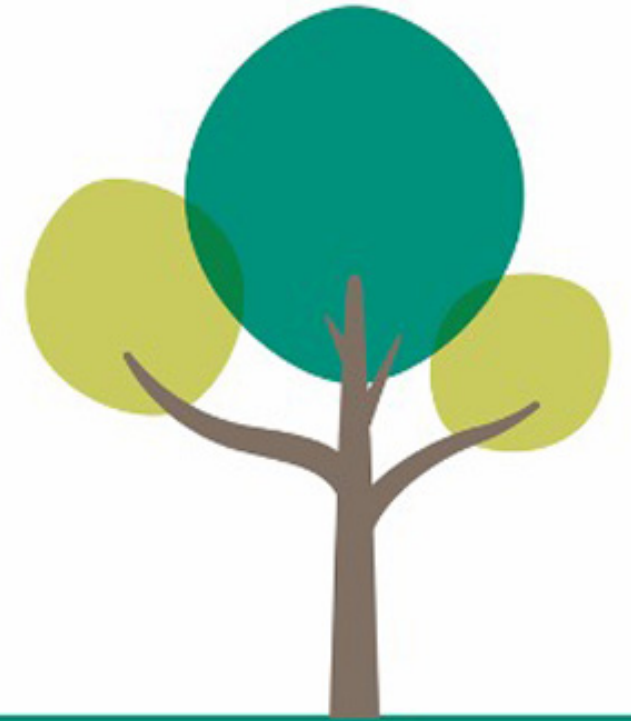


Green

- Delivery has commenced in relation to Carbon Literacy training
- We still need to secure capital funding to replace 4,000 high energy street lighting lanterns with low energy LED lighting, report due to be considered by Cabinet in November 2022.
- Whilst we continue to tackle environmental crime, the underspend we were hoping to utilise to boost capacity in this area is no longer available, alternative means to support this activity are being investigated.
- Our long term trees strategy has been drafted and is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet in November 2022.



Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insights – Director of Housing

- The Housing Needs Assessment has been produced and shows the demand for affordable housing in Sandwell is rising, including accessible housing for disabled people. This Assessment is informing the new Housing Strategy that will be adopted early 2023.
- More people are seeking help because of the risk of homelessness and this is reflected in increased numbers of households in temporary accommodation (98). We are opening more in-house temporary accommodation to avoid families being in hotels.
- We are focussing on preparation for the new social housing and building safety regulations to ensure full compliance by April 2023.





Summary

- Overall, there has been good progress in developing quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods with many corporate plan actions being on track. There does continue to be issues in sourcing sufficient resource to manage the volume of repairs to council stock.
- Importantly, it should be highlighted that we are performing well in relation to supporting our residents in the cost of living crisis, as demonstrated by the number of individuals assisted by our Welfare Rights Service. We know that this support really matters to our residents, as captured in the results of our residents' survey where 67% of respondents said the issue that most concerned them was the cost of living.
- There is one action that has been RAG rated red where there is significant slippage and uncertainty. This is in relation to delivery of the Black Country Plan.





Building New Homes

- 251 new affordable homes delivered (figure based upon planning applications)
- 194 Disabled Facilities Grants approved, supporting people to remain independent in their own homes.
- Willow Gardens fully open operationally and filling current voids
- Walker Grange plan to upgrade and refurbish some flats to be dementia friendly has been approved for implementation
- Project to deliver 54 affordable flats for young people through Live and Work Scheme is progressing with contractor starting on site January 2023





Regeneration & Resources

- The Lovell Housing site at Fountain Lane, Oldbury is now on site with the construction of 246 homes underway. The site is a pilot for ‘First Homes’ which are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of ‘affordable housing’ for planning purposes.
- Hall Green Lane, West Bromwich – developer, Countryside Properties, now on site delivering 223 homes, anticipated completion date of September 2024.
- It has been agreed that Black Country authorities will complete separate strategic plans. The impact on the delivery of the SDP is a significant risk as it could mean that we are without an up to date local plan. A report will be considered by Cabinet in November 2022 proposing a way forward.





Existing Estate

- The review of the current housing renewal and adaptations policy is underway and is not limited to major adaptations, it will encompass a wider set of interventions across private housing e.g. improving the warmth of disabled people's homes.
- The 30 year HRA Business Plan has been prepared and is going through the democratic process for adoption in February 2023. Proposals for rent setting in 2023 are being considered.
- 4,405 properties have not had external improvements with the next major refurbishment of a high rise block starting at Darley House in November 2022.
- Home checks fully operational with 1,654 being completed and resulting in follow up actions e.g. safeguarding referrals, welfare rights referrals.
- Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group fully operational with agreed 12 month work plan. The Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Group has been co-opted on to the Council's Stronger Neighbourhoods and Communities Scrutiny Board.
- A new Tenant Engagement Officer (TEO) is now in post to help deliver activities relating to the Tenant Engagement Framework and 5 Tenant Auditors have been recruited to look at the quality and safety of our council housing.





Existing Homes

- 97% of emergency and urgent repairs were completed within target timescale. Additional contractors engaged to work through backlog of repairs.
- 15.5 days was the average time taken to complete a repair. There are ongoing issues sourcing sufficient resource to manage the volume of repairs that is a legacy of the pandemic. 2 new contracts started 1/10/22 to help address this.
- Number of private sector properties reported to be in state of disrepair where Housing intervened with a positive resolution – 325 cases in last 6 months.
- Additional Licencing Scheme went live in West Bromwich 1st July with 13 small HMOs licensed under this scheme voluntarily by landlords. Enforcement plans are being developed to identify and take action in relation to unlicensed properties.
- The Empty Homes Strategy 2023-28 was considered by Scrutiny Board and will go to Cabinet for approval, with a full-time officer and funding being allocated to support implementation.





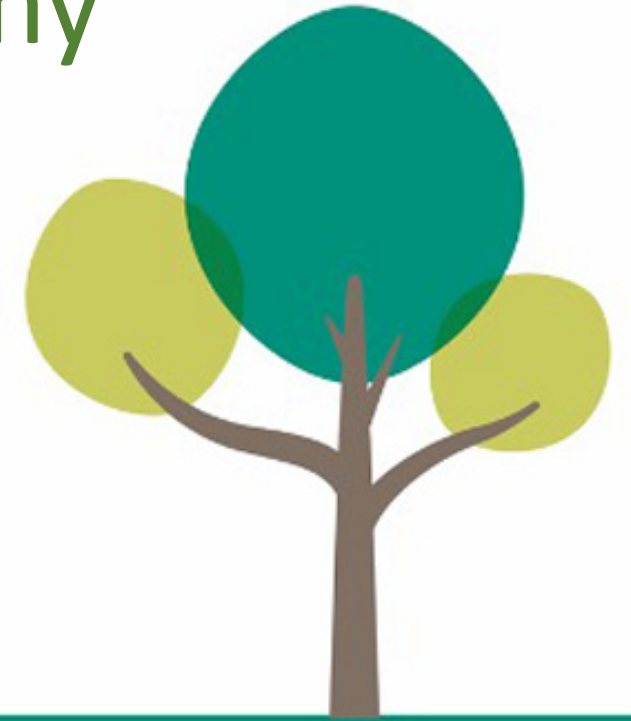
Vulnerable People, Homelessness and Community Engagement

- Homelessness Strategy is in place and a delivery plan is being developed with partners to ensure that the strategy is delivered. We are achieving a 62% homelessness prevention rate with 2,181 households seeking help in 6 months.
- Total monetary value of benefits awarded to residents assisted by Welfare Rights Service was £8.65m with 6,919 people helped.
- The expectation of Welfare Rights is to see 2,750 clients per quarter, however higher numbers have been assisted in Q2, due to the increased need for the service because of the cost of living crisis.
- Rent collection rate dipped slightly to 95% and we have plans to create a hardship fund for tenants struggling with arrears who do not qualify for discretionary housing payments.
- We are working with 44 hosts to maintain accommodation and support for Ukrainian refugees.



A Strong and Inclusive Economy

Quarter 2 Progress





Summary

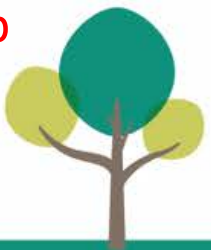
- We continue to make good progress in developing an inclusive economy across Sandwell and in maximising funding opportunities and local investment.
- Monitoring of the Regeneration Strategy and pipeline indicates that the vast majority of the 66 projects are on track or amber, meaning they are progressing through the delivery stages. 23 projects remain at the concept stage and are therefore identified as red risks
- There is one action that has been RAG rated red in this Strategic Outcome this relates to the development of a borough plan that feeds into the Black Country Plan.





Spend Our Money and Invest Locally

- £400m project for a new Waste to Energy Plant commenced construction – creating c.400 construction jobs and exploring feasibility of local heat network using plant's energy
- Negotiation with WMCA to achieve best UKSPF allocation for Sandwell to deliver Inclusive Recovery action Plan
- Legacy Build phase of the Sandwell Aquatic Centre to add local leisure facilities has now commenced and working towards refreshing the Games Legacy Plan – increasing opportunities for residents to increase physical activity
- Project for new health centre in Wednesbury being funded and delivered by SMBC for NHS commenced construction, plus 5 new council homes on site
- Sandwell's expression of interest for a new Investment Zone has been submitted to DLUHC via the WMCA- focused on sites in the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill metro extension corridor
- DfE have brought forward a proposal for a new Academy (George Betts Academy) in West Bromwich
- It has been agreed that Black Country authorities will complete separate strategic plans. The impact on the delivery of the SDP is a significant risk as it could mean that we are without an up to date local plan.





Jobs and Training

- We are working with schools and employers to improve opportunities for young people to access apprenticeships and permanent employment.
- Events schedule in place to showcase apprenticeship opportunities available in Council
- Employers regularly engaged to showcase benefits of apprenticeships. A new supported internship programme established with DPD
- Work experience taking place in Council but opportunities remain limited in service areas
- Negotiation with WMCA to achieve best UKSPF allocation for Sandwell to deliver employment and skills agenda





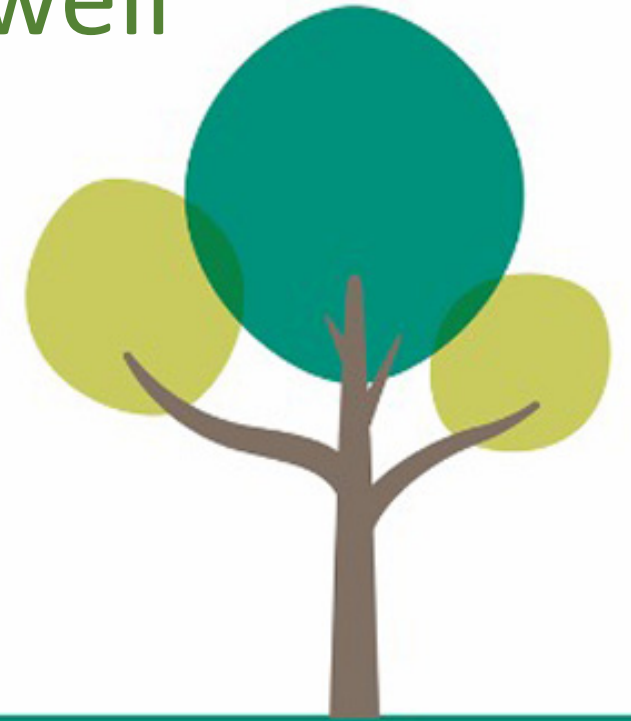
Working with Businesses

- The Business Growth Team secured funding through COMF to provide business activities, supporting the inclusive Recovery Action Plan. Recruitment is underway for the required personnel resources.
- The Business Growth Team is working with WMCA to align Sandwell's Inclusive Recovery Plan to that of the proposed Regional Business Support offer to maximise the benefit for the borough





A Connected and Accessible Sandwell Quarter 2 Progress





Summary

- Overall there has been good progress on key infrastructure pipeline projects such as the Metro extension and Blackheath Interchange which are at various stages of delivery.
- The ULEV charging scheme has progressed from business case to delivery stage. Phase I will deliver 75 Charging points, future phases will look to deliver 250 charging points by 2025. This is a clear indicator showing that Sandwell is making strides in becoming more connected and accessible.
- There has been some slippage on projects due to recruitment difficulties and also budget pressures related to inflation . If not addressed these slippages can cause further issues/delays for the projects.





A connected and accessible Sandwell

- Wednesbury to Brierly Hill Metro Extension comprises of 2 phases. Phase I from Sandwell to Dudley Town Centre is funded. Phase II from Dudley to Merry Hill is currently unprogrammed and unfunded. Phase I commenced in 2018 and is scheduled for completion 2024.
- The £16m capital programme of improvement works is underway at 48 locations in the borough. These will deliver improvements to road safety, congestion, town centres, street lighting, speed reduction, bridge refurbishment, cycling, walking, major route signing. However, progress on this project is constrained by recruitment difficulties and delayed approval of the workforce plan.





A connected and accessible Sandwell

- The Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan show that projects relating to the improvement of the highway network are to be delivered during their respective plan periods. This will support the local economy and the movement of goods and people across the borough.
- There is a significant budget risk to the delivery of the capital programme for 2022/23 of annual maintenance schemes to renew or repair highway infrastructure (£4.741 Million capital budget) Forecast budget pressures associated with escalating inflation mean that this is now a red risk, an overspend is likely is if the Council is to deliver its planned works.





Key Infrastructure Projects

- All key infrastructure projects are in various stages of delivery, detailed updates to be reported annually.
- Birchley Island is at detailed design phase, the outline business case is complete/approved. Full Business Case will not be approved until CPO has been undertaken. This will take approx. 2 years to complete. Anticipated start on site August 2024 complete November 2027.
- Funding is secured and the route from Dudley Port Railway Station to Great Bridge is currently in detailed design stage. Outline Business Case submitted by TfWM.
- Blackheath Interchange is at a prelim design stage. This is a Towns Fund project, consultation is to commence November 2022.





Key Infrastructure Projects/ Digital

- The ULEV charging scheme has progressed from business case to delivery stage. Phase I is on site and will complete during 2023 (75 Charging points). Future phases to be completed by 2025 (250 charging points).
- Teams are embedding the positive changes made during COVID to improve service delivery and accessibility giving service users greater opportunities to self-help. Children's directorate are working to revise School Self Evaluation Forms in line with new draft Local Area SEND inspection.
- Sandwell are currently working with WM5G to ensure that we maximise opportunities for 5G infrastructure.





Clean & Green

- TfWM and service providers are ensuring all public transport options available locally are as green as possible.
- We are currently working with partner organisations to identify opportunities for infrastructure improvements throughout the borough and neighbouring LAs, so that we can maximise Government funding opportunities.
- Schemes within the Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are in various stages of delivery. Rowley Regis, West Bromwich and Smethwick have progressed from business case stage to on site.





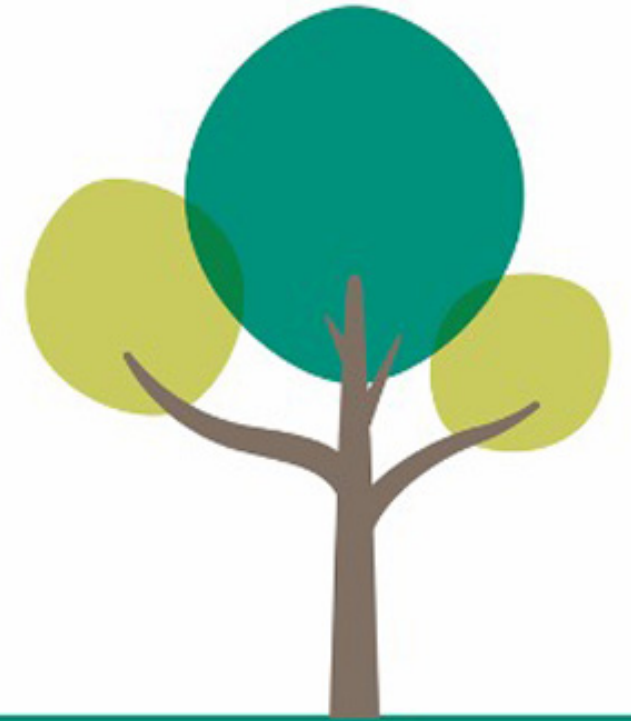
Connected Travel & Partnerships

- Towns Funding has been secured for a Canal and River Trust project in Rowley Regis. The project has progressed from business case stage to on site as of October 2022. Scheduled to complete 2023.
- We are currently on track to deliver towpath and access improvements on Dudley No2 Canal, Birmingham Old Line Canal and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital canal.
- Progress has been constrained by onerous approval processes with National Highways for the programme of works scheduled for 2022/23 of the £30m Birchley Island major junction improvement.





One Council One Team Quarter 2 Progress





Director Insights – Director of Finance

- Work continues in all areas of the plan, with some slippage in reporting timelines to Cabinet due to the pre-election period
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy review has been completed and will be reported to Cabinet in November alongside a report on the draft budget for 2023/24 and savings options
- A Corporate and Transformation Savings Plan has been developed to underpin the MTFS for 2023/24 onwards, although more work is needed to develop specific project plans for the each of the transformation workstreams
- There has also been a focus on Cost of Living initiatives and the Revenues and Benefits Team will be administering the next round of Household Support Fund which has just been launched





Director Insights – Director of Law & Governance

- Constitution Review is progressing well with engagement through the cross-member working group and wider member group sessions – Phase 2 of the review will be presented to Full Council on 8 Nov for approval. Phase 2 includes -

Council Procedure Rules	Executive Procedure Rules
Access to Information Rules	Articles 7 and 13 – Executive and Decision Making
Officer Employment Rules	Scheme of Delegation to Officers
Member Officer Protocol	Officer Code of Conduct

- Phase 3 has commenced and will report to Dec Council which will focus on the remaining elements of the constitution. A review of committee structures and their terms of reference fall outside the Gov Review.
- Member Development Plan has been reviewed again in year. The MDP is a dynamic programme and is reviewed periodically throughout the Municipal Year. Member PDPs are underway and will feed into the next MDP review. The revised MDP will be considered by the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee on 1 Nov.
- Scrutiny Review has been completed and improvement made. The outcome of the review is to be reported to Full Council on 8 Nov.
- The Council’s Equality Policy has been reviewed and will be progressing to Cabinet for approval on 16 Nov, along with approval of using the LGA Equality Framework to progress the EDI Agenda.
- Training and guidance re: decision making and the new constitutional updates (once approved) is planned during Nov and Dec. Further development work will continue into the new year.





Director Insights – Director of Business Strategy & Change

- Significant progress has been made on a number of key areas of the plan, however, the competing priority of managing the improvement plan continues to limit the resource available to move forward in some areas. Temporary resource has been identified and therefore we hope to rectify this position across the remainder of the year.
- The delivery of the Residents Well Being and Perception survey has been a highlight of this quarter, and along with the continued work to embed the corporate performance management framework provides another step towards becoming more intelligence led in our organisational decision making. To build on this work we now need to focus on the development of our business intelligence strategy which is one of the main areas to suffer as a result of the pressure on resources highlighted above
- We have continued to lay the foundations on key pieces of work which will support our wider workforce and organizational development, and in quarter 3 expect to be able to share proposals for a new set of organisational values and behaviors along with a proposed workforce strategy which supports their delivery.
- Whilst we have continued to progress the development of our Customer Access strategy, we are having to respond to immediate operational corporate wide challenges in respect of customer service which will be a key focus as we move through the next quarter of the financial year.





Summary

- Recruitment campaign for permanent CEX launched – appointment anticipated end October to provide stability in leadership and continuity of style and approach
- Progress made on implementing systems that will enable a modern, outstanding council: New Systems Integrator procured for Oracle Fusion and in final stages of agreeing implementation plan to move, and data collection in progress to determine future telephony requirements.
- Performance in customer services impacted by increased demand for face-to-face contact and additional responsibilities, e.g. energy rebate. Focus on improving customer journey – Customer Commitments drafted and feedback to be sought from customers. Progress made on digital inclusion with funding of Digital Dens agreed and recruitment of co-ordinator underway.
- Wellbeing provision has continued to be developed with appointment of wellbeing specialist. Resources identified to undertake HR policy review in support of best practice, effective and efficient people management policy and procedure.
- Progress in listening and accountable – residents wellbeing and perception and budget consultation surveys conducted and initial results shared and will be embedded in business planning. Consultation on proposed changes to election cycle conducted to help inform Council's decision in November. Development of proposal for cross-council resident engagement - to be presented to LT in Q3.
- Corporate performance reporting aligned with financial and risk reporting to provide Leadership Team and Members with oversight of key information to support decision making.
- MTFS has been reviewed and progress made across all aspects of Making the Most of our Resources. Options paper on charging for green waste developed for discussion at Cabinet in Q3, improving rating from Red to Amber.
- **Two actions in this strategic outcome remain RED rated this quarter: the refresh of the Council's Storage Area Network is dependent upon delivery on hardware which has now been shipped; the Corporate Data Strategy remains delayed due to resources being focused on the council's Improvement Plan and corporate performance framework.**
- Whilst some slippage of targets is inevitable when managing the number of actions that underpin our Corporate Plan, it should be noted that this strategic outcome has the second highest number of amber actions. In total there are 25 amber actions in the One Council Strategic outcome.





Council Organisational Structure

- Recruitment campaign for permanent Chief Executive launched, with appointment anticipated for end October 2022.
- New directorate structure implemented in Children's & Education directorate to ensure resources are aligned to corporate priorities.
- Continued progress in cross-council working and embedding of One Council One Team ethos, including Housing, ASC and R&G working together to improve the offer to vulnerable adults
- Oracle Fusion – New Systems Integrator procured and in final stages of agreeing implementation plan. Business Case being developed showing benefits and cashable/non-cashable savings. Planned to be reported to December Cabinet.
- Further data capture and analysis required to determine future needs for telephony system; lessons learned captured from other LAs to feed into scope and requirements





Access to Services

Corporate approach to improve both the accessibility of Council services and the quality of service:

- Customer Access Strategy development - Draft Customer Commitments and Strategic Objectives shared with Leadership at Away Day on 22 September 2022. Feedback on draft Commitments obtained from OSS Customers throughout Customer Services Week.
- Performance in customer facing services impacted by external demands (e.g. Energy Rebate Bills) and an increase in face-to-face visits – cross-council actions to address backlog/high demand being developed
- Exploring options for co-location and close working with key partners as part of discussion on community hubs and what the council offers
- Digital Inclusion Strategy – continued funding of Digital Dens agreed, and recruitment of Digital Inclusion Co-Ordinator underway
- Supplier identified for new case management system for Coroner’s service, but delays likely due to in year budget pressures
- Mod.gov implementation is on track with final phase aligned to Governance Review





Organisational Development

Invest in a range of opportunities, qualifications and experiences for our workforce: –

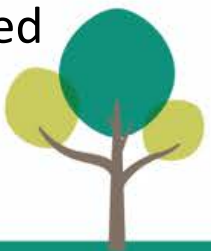
- Workforce planning toolkit is available for use at Service Manager level. To be used to identify med-long term workforce actions plans that will require input from cross functional teams within HR.
- Continuing to identify, develop and deliver wellbeing interventions and initiatives to help support managers and employees recognising the hybrid working styles of employees. Successfully recruited to the Wellbeing Specialist role who commences in November 22 and will be will launching/promoting the dedicated Wellbeing Hub space
- Resources identified to undertake HR policy review in support of best practice, effective and efficient people management policy and procedure
- Development and experience opportunities for local people (e.g. work experience, apprenticeships, etc.) to be incorporated into Workforce Development Strategy (due 2023). Funding for future graduate placements to be identified within the Strategy.





Making the Most of Our Resources

- Medium Term Financial Strategy – a fundamental review of the MTFS has been undertaken to update assumptions and forecast budget pressures. This will be reported to Cabinet in November 22, along with a set of savings proposals to meet the anticipated budget gap. A series of Star Chamber sessions were held with all directorates to identify opportunities for alternative approaches for financing services.
- Review of Fees and Charges has been completed with the development of a Cost Recovery model and Charging Strategy
- Social Value Policy embedded within the new Contract Procedure Rules approved by Council in July 2022 and included in corporate governance training to managers in September 2022.
- The Corporate Commercial Strategy is in draft form, and a report has been completed on potential business streams and high level savings estimates.
- Cyber Security Investment Programme developed and presented to Leadership Team
- Corporate Asset Management System - Some modules may have to be implemented after December deadline due to tight timescales. Vital modules expected to be implemented on time.
- Options paper drafted on charging for green waste for consideration by Cabinet in Q3 – improved from Red in Q1 to Amber in Q2.





Listening Learning & Accountable

- Sandwell Wellbeing and Perception Survey (June 2022), Budget Consultation (August 2022) and SHAPE Survey (Summer 2022) results disseminated to Leadership Team, Service Managers and Cabinet in September 2022. Focus groups to be planned on key themes, including customer experience to support improvements to the customer journey
- Corporate approach to consultation and engagement with residents developed by cross-council working group - to be presented to LT for adoption/approval in November 2022 for implementation from Q3/4.
- Focused project on analysing customer feedback and lessons learned in Housing to identify good practice and inform Customer Access Strategy
- The Vulnerable Children Group led on highly successful 'Attendance is Everyone's Business' conference with partners. Continue to work with and listen to parents from parent/carer groups in relation to SEND transport.





Systems and Governance

- New hardware for the refresh of the council's Storage Area Network has been shipped, and once delivered the work will take approximately 3 months. This is within the delivery date in the Corporate Plan, but RED rated due to uncertainty of delivery date of hardware. This impacts the ability to refresh the VMWare hosting platform
- Corporate performance management framework further embedded through a lessons learned review of Q1 monitoring approach to inform Q2 process, and reporting of performance to Cabinet and Scrutiny. Dedicated resources to be appointed in Q3.
- Corporate Data Strategy to define and deliver our approach to Business Intelligence continues to be rated Red. Resource focused on embedding the Improvement Plan, Corporate Performance Management Framework, and performance against delivery of the Corporate Plan. Due to recruitment issues to increase capacity, there is delay in determining how the information being generated via these routes informs the design and implementation to a strategic approach for utilising business intelligence.
- Corporate Governance Review – Council agreed changes to Constitution in July 2022 to support efficient and effective decision making including revised Key Decision Thresholds, Contract Procedure Rules and Land & Asset Disposal Protocol. Phase two of the review of governance arrangements is currently being considered by members, with final recommendations to be considered by Council in November 2022. Best practice has been built into the review, and wide-ranging consultation with officers and members has taken place to inform the changes. Cross-party working group has been involved at all stages of the review.
- The Equality Policy is being updated and due to be considered at Cabinet in November 2022. This will then lead to the development of a single framework Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.
- Corporate Governance Training Programme for Officers and Members was delivered in September 2022 in conjunction with the LGA. -delay to the Corporate Governance training was due to Council not approving the revised CPRs until July (original target date was April). Now this has been approved the finance and procurement elements of the training will be delivered during September (Amber risk).
- Internal communication channels were refreshed in August 2022 to ensure they are set up to engage staff in the improvement plan and support organisational culture change. The corporate affairs function was established in September 2022, creating new channels to deliver messages to members and stakeholders.

