

Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy



**Safer Neighbourhoods and Active
Communities Scrutiny Board Presentation**



Overview

- A 'Borough of Sanctuary' is a borough which provides a welcoming place of safety for people who are asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants.
- As a council, we are working towards becoming an awarded Council of Sanctuary. As part of this:
 - We are working closely with local community groups and individuals with lived experience to work in partnership to make Sandwell a more welcoming place
 - A strategy is being developed which sets out the partnership's commitments to welcoming and integrating individuals and families who arrive in Sandwell
 - An action plan will be developed that community groups and teams across the council can work towards
 - Alongside developing the strategy, there is an application process for the council to undertake to achieve the award

Council of Sanctuary- application process

The council passes a full council motion and joins the national City of Sanctuary movement's Local Authority Network



The council engages with community groups, residents and people with lived experience to develop a partnership strategy



An action plan is developed for the council and local community groups to work towards



Award application is completed to evidence where we demonstrate, and where we are working towards, the 'learn', 'share' and 'embed' principles



The application is independently assessed by a panel of local community groups and people with lived experience- application form and presentation to the panel are assessed and a set of recommendations are given by the panel



Once successful, we will be a recognised Council of Sanctuary for three years. A review will take place after three years to assess our progress and renew the award to remain a recognised Council of Sanctuary



Celebration/media- public support for Borough of Sanctuary

Council of Sanctuary- Award Criteria

LEARN

- Training for staff
- Engage and learn
- Lived experience

EMBED

- Inclusive services
- Welcome at all levels
- Community cohesion

SHARE

- Make a public commitment to CoS Vision
 - Engagement with the Network
 - Collective representation to gov

Where we are now

Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Partnership

- ▶ Working together as equals
- ▶ 75 members in the wider partnership- 10 active members

Developing a partnership strategy

- ▶ In April 2023, the partnership undertook a consultation exercise with over 40 attendees to understand what a 'welcoming Sandwell' looks like and to establish the approach we need to take to become a borough of sanctuary for all
- ▶ The consultation workshop included representation from local and national groups, residents, the council, and people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in Sandwell to understand what issues meant the most to them. A second workshop is planned to take place in September to develop an action plan to sit beneath the strategy
- ▶ Draft strategy is live on Citizen Space for a six-week public consultation period (Tuesday 20 June until Tuesday 1 August)- <https://consultationhub.sandwell.gov.uk/housing/sandwell-sanctuary-strategy>

Becoming an awarded Council of Sanctuary

- ▶ Conversations have taken place with teams across the council to capture evidence to include in our application, we are currently collating this information to include in the application form
- ▶ Updating our contact at the national City of Sanctuary movement who will support us throughout the process and be involved in the assessment of our application

Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Partnership Strategy

- The draft strategy sets out the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Partnership's commitments to welcoming and integrating individuals and families who arrive in Sandwell
- The strategy co-ordinates the approach of council officers and organisations, council-wide and borough-wide, delivering services to those arriving and settling in Sandwell



Questions

- What does a 'welcoming Sandwell' mean to you and your constituents?
- Are there any barriers that stop Sandwell being a welcoming Borough of Sanctuary in your wards? What actions could be taken by the council or community groups to tackle these?
- What is your overall feedback on the draft Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary strategy?
- Are there any things you think are missing from the strategy?
- How would councillors like to be involved in the Borough of Sanctuary Partnership going forward?

If you have any further questions or comments about the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy and our application to become a Council of Sanctuary, please email Louis_Bebb@sandwell.gov.uk and Jennifer_Collins@sandwell.gov.uk