

Corporate Plan Refresh – Strategic Outcomes with draft underpinning actions

Best Start in Life		Commentary from Conversations
First 1000 days		
We will bring together all partners to transform services through an Early Years Transformation Academy.		Voluntary Sector Engagement: Families should know from birth where they go for support and help. There needs to be an early help system/infrastructure. This is picked up in the first 1,000 days
We will work with partners to deliver the EY Outcomes Framework and specifically, create new pathways for support that meet the needs of our residents and fill in the gaps in services for children aged 12-24 months.		
We will ensure that culturally sensitive and accessible service hubs are in all six of our towns, and that community-led support is available.		
Ready for School		
We will establish programmes that specifically address language development, in partnership with other local authorities.		School Engagement: Extra support for low income families – laptop recycling scheme.
We will support improvements in home learning environments.		
We will promote the importance of communication and language to parents, and we will provide earlier support to children who need it.		School Engagement: We need to prepare young people for adult life with life skills sessions. Member Engagement: There is lower ownership of computers and lack of IT awareness in the Borough, during the pandemic children in schools needed more computers.
We will ensure that professionals work together, across agencies, to develop their expertise in early childhood matters by delivering a multi-agency workforce development plan.		
We will seek additional support for social mobility projects that address early language, with an intention to increase aspiration and ability.		
We will provide enough good school places that offer families choice and confidence that their children can experience high quality education and achieve good outcomes.		
We will work with schools and other learning providers to improve educational outcomes for children and young people.		
Children and young people that need more support		
We will work with partners to make sure that vulnerable children in our community receive the right support to enable them to thrive and have successful adult lives.		

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We will be a council that understands the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma, with a workforce that provides services with compassion and understanding.	
We will work with Sandwell Children's Trust to improve the quality of children's social care.	
We will be a good Corporate Parent for the children in our care, ensuring that those children are fully a part of our 'family', and promoting fostering and adoption.	
We will work with partners to ensure early help is available to children and young people at the earliest opportunity depending on their need.	
We will ensure that children and young people with SEND can access high quality local services when they need them, by working with partners to ensure there is a comprehensive local offer available to children and families	
We will ensure that emotional health and wellbeing support is in place for children and young people.	
People Live Well and Age Well	Commentary from Conversations
Rebuilding	
We will work with the Council's Equalities Commission to ensure that no one is left behind. In particular, we will identify and tackle health inequalities that have been widened by the Covid pandemic, including inequalities emerging across ethnic groups.	<p>Voluntary Sector Engagement:</p> <p>The impact of Covid is understated as the impact of the pandemic has been massive in every aspect of people's lives. Need to address recovery and living with on-going threat. This should feature strongly in plan.</p> <p>There are some unknown and hidden things around Covid and these will start to emerge and require resources, the voluntary sector is not equipped to deal with these. There will need to be a joint council and partnership approach to this.</p>
We will increase investment of public health funds into community, voluntary and faith sector grants to support Covid resilience and recovery.	
We will continue to respond to the pandemic and play our part in the vaccination roll out.	
We will work with our partners, including the community and voluntary sector, to reduce social isolation and ensure people are connected within their local communities and beyond.	

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	<p>Need to tackle health inequalities, as made obvious by the pandemic but were there before, particularly those affecting BME communities who are being left out of responses and engagement and have lost trust</p> <p>Diagnosis of disease and illnesses missed during pandemic and there will be snowballing effect for services. Need to work jointly with CCG and build this into the action plan</p>
Healthy Lives	
We recognise our responsibility to invest in our community to promote wellbeing and help people live healthy lives. We will increase the role of local people in initiating, designing and delivering health improvement initiatives.	<p>School Engagement: Mental health and wellbeing services need to be signposted and advertised widely, the need for these services is greater than ever.</p> <p>Member Engagement: Pressures have built up due to lockdown and Covid. Mental Health and addiction is a big concern and will continue to grow as we come out of Covid. In Sandwell we already have poor health outcomes in relation to respiratory and heart conditions, we have to step up our health offer.</p>
We will create lots more community-based opportunities with local people, working across our partnerships, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, and we will commission a range of services that make the most of Sandwell's assets (including leisure centres, libraries, parks, community centres, youth centres, museums, canals and Sandwell Valley).	
We will develop a strength-based approach to further develop a Stronger Sandwell, by working with our public-sector partners and voluntary and community organisations.	
We will support people through easily accessible information, advice and guidance.	
We will continue to support access to food through food banks and opportunities for children in school holidays.	
We will ensure that we have sufficient mental health provision and we will promote good mental health through a range of initiatives, ensuring equitable access to mental health support.	
We will contribute to better air quality and climate change through raising public awareness, increasing active travel and supporting organisations to reduce carbon emissions.	

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We will ensure new investment into health and wellbeing services including drugs and alcohol, adult obesity and smoking cessation.	
Choice and Independence	
We will help people make everyday choices around not just how they are supported, but also how they choose to live their lives.	Voluntary Sector Engagement: How are we ensuring that the corporate plan aligns with Integrated Care System and partnerships?
We will promote access to employment opportunities for people with learning disabilities and those with mental ill health.	
We will review access to day care provisions to ensure that people have access to community resources to improve independence and choice.	
We will ensure our safeguarding processes are effective. We are committed to continuous learning to keep vulnerable adults safe from harm.	
We will ensure the right provision to enable people to stay independent for longer.	
We will work with our partners to ensure that everyone who needs it receives the good, personalised care they should be able to expect at the end of their life.	
We will ensure that all carers in Sandwell are offered support in a timely way and that they have access to the information, guidance and advice that they need.	
Joined up Health and Social Care	
We will develop a workforce strategy with partners	
We will work with partners to develop prevention pathways	
We will establish and develop governance around the Integrated Care System at both the local and Black County levels	
We will continue to develop health and social care integration plans and models.	
Strong Resilient Communities	Commentary from Conversations
Vibrant Community	
We will ensure our grant funding of community/voluntary sector activity supports the priorities we're outlining in this plan.	Voluntary Sector Engagement: Need to understand and recognise that civic participation started from the voluntary sector. Accessing resources is not the issue
We will deliver the Towns Investment Plans in West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis, secured through £64.5m of Town Deal funding.	

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Through working with the SHAPE Forum, we will make sure that our towns become welcoming places for young people and that they have jobs, activities and facilities to give them a part in the local community.	rather a lack of co-operation, relationship issues and mechanics with the voluntary sector.
We will put the needs of our residents at the heart of what we do, establishing processes to engage with them to ensure that our residents guide and influence our services.	Member Engagement: There needs to be an emphasis on improving town centres.
We will strive to maintain Green Flag status, whilst also working to enhance our existing green and open spaces, create new places to play and committing to plant a tree for every child starting school in Sandwell up to 2030.	Member Engagement: Need more emphasis on High Streets. Should tap into the High Street Innovation Fund.
Culture	
We will develop and deliver a libraries strategy that works together with the community. We will start to roll out the Open+ model which represents a different way of working for public libraries.	
We will deliver the operational requirements to ensure the smooth running of the Commonwealth Games and ensure a lasting legacy for Sandwell	
We will showcase local, regional, national and international talent in an engaging and inspiring programme	
We will explore and develop a Sandwell Valley phased investment programme over the next five years – towards the Valley becoming a key Visitor and Destination Gateway into Sandwell.	
Green	
We will work with partners to deliver initiatives that will help up to achieve our climate change strategy and the target of being a carbon neutral borough by 2041.	School Engagement: Climate change is an issue for all generations, so let's tackle this together with more green initiatives such as electric cars which help reduce pollution.
We will embed climate change considerations into our decision making to enable us to become a carbon neutral council by 2030.	
We will invest in our buildings and fleet, so both are low carbon and compatible with 2030. Working with our partners, we will make refuse collection and street cleansing greener with the rollout of electric street cleansing vehicles and participation in pilot projects to test other green vehicles.	Member Engagement: To support a greener Sandwell, we need to talk to diverse communities and educate our communities on what they can do.

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<p>We will work to make our own housing stock greener by implementing minimum energy performance standards for existing and new build council homes and exemplar schemes for modern methods of construction.</p>	<p>Member Engagement: Planning Policy is important, and we need to have greener housing measures which are integrated in our policy and strategy documents.</p>
<p>Clean</p>	
<p>We will recover, improve and transform our street maintenance programmes post Covid.</p> <p>We will harness community spirit and action by working with communities to address litter and to improve the environment; including establishing community based clean schemes.</p>	<p>Member Engagement: Need to get the basics right around litter, bins and grass cutting; as these are what matters to people, what they from their homes.</p> <p>Member Engagement: People without cars cannot get to the 'tip' and we should be looking at providing community skips.</p>
<p>We will increase recycling rates and encourage cultural change.</p>	
<p>Safe</p>	
<p>The Safer Sandwell Partnership Police and Crime Board is working with the other statutory Boards and wider partnership to tackle crime and ASB and promote community safety in Sandwell. Sandwell's Community Safety Strategy will be reviewed and priorities will include ongoing work around prevention of violence and exploitation, reducing offending reoffending and serious organised crime and supporting victims.</p> <p>We will develop a revised Domestic Abuse strategy in line with the requirements the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the new statutory duty on local authorities</p>	<p>Voluntary Sector Engagement: include modern day slavery and vulnerability to organised crime.</p> <p>School Engagement: More green spaces that are safe for young people and more police on the ground to make young people feel safe in parks and green spaces.</p>
<p>We will continue to work with partners and agencies to ensure that there is a joined up and effective approach to hate crime.</p>	
<p>We will strengthen our approach to supporting victims of modern slavery, developing an understanding of the threat, risk and harm modern slavery and human trafficking poses and target resources to the best effect.</p> <p>We will raise awareness across partner agencies, businesses and communities, to address modern slavery and work collaboratively to target perpetrators and victims.</p>	

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We will strengthen our multi-agency Tasking processes steps to foster resilience, shared understanding, support networks and cross-community working	
We will deliver more responsive, robust and co-ordinated enforcement across the council. To do this we will establish an Enforcement Co-ordination Board that will bring together intelligence and expertise from across the council to tackle issues by theme or by geographical area.	
Quality Homes	Commentary from Conversations
Building New Homes	
<p>We will deliver much needed new homes across the borough, especially affordable homes, on our own land and other viable sites in order to help meet the demand for affordable housing in our communities</p> <p>We will help keyworkers to access affordable housing in order that Sandwell can attract and retain a strong local health and social care workforce for the benefit of our communities.</p> <p>We will aim to keep people independent in their own homes as long as possible which includes incorporating lifetime homes adaptable standards in to as many new homes as possible.</p>	<p>Voluntary Sector Engagement: Housing in Sandwell is fit for purpose and affordable. There are houses which suit the needs of different people e.g. young people and large families.</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Engagement: Housing is done to communities not with. There needs to be a focus on community housing.</p>
We will focus more of our ambitious house building programme on the needs of our children and young people who have complex needs and those who have been in care, so we have a good housing offer for them in Sandwell when they become adults.	
We will focus more of our council house building on the needs of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs.	
We will develop the second Council House Build Programme.	
We will incorporate more renewable energy measures into existing and the design of new-build Council homes, including modern methods of construction and heating.	
We will work to identify the needs of the most vulnerable people in Sandwell and work upstream to prevent homelessness where ever possible.	

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We will work to prevent and end rough sleeping.	
We will increase our engagement with tenants, including tenants in high rise blocks.	
We will explore all options for housing delivery, including community-led schemes and self-builds.	
Regeneration and Resources	
We will introduce town centre living in appropriate locations ensuring council developments maintain excellent standards in urban design.	
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. <i>Editor's note: cross ref to stronger communities & Strong inclusive economy.</i>	
We will take a proactive approach to accessing national funding for Sandwell that benefits our tenants and people who are homeless or in housing need. <i>Editor's note: cross ref & Strong inclusive economy.</i>	
Existing Estate	
We will modernise our tenancy and estate management offer, delivering a more proactive service, early identification and intervention to mitigate risks to tenancy sustainment and a new neighbourhood management working in partnership with communities to address their priorities.	School Engagement: Housing in Sandwell is fit for purpose and affordable. There are houses which suit the needs of different people e.g. young people and large families.
We will work to ensure our tenants live in safe and thriving neighbourhoods and that social housing is a tenure to be proud of.	
We will ensure that council homes are safe places to live by fully complying with fire and building safety requirements and regularly reviewing compliance. We will support people in the private rented sector to ensure their landlords comply with safety standards too.	
We will deliver a rolling programme of upgrades to our stock that improves energy efficiency and plan for the installation of alternative heating systems.	
We will aim to be a Borough of Sanctuary, offering a safe place for asylum-seekers and refugees to live, while recognising our leadership role in promoting integration and community cohesion.	

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Strong Inclusive Economy	Commentary from Conversations
Spend our money and invest locally	
We will lead our partners in Sandwell to make the most of all our assets, spend local wherever possible and make long-term investment decisions that benefit our borough.	
We will spend more money directly with suppliers in Sandwell. We will do this by developing better intelligence and improving our knowledge of local supply chains, as well as working with major contractors to encourage spending and sub-contracting with local suppliers.	
We will develop and commit to delivering a Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan which ensures sustainable economic, wellbeing and cultural benefits of the Games for our communities.	
We will work proactively with our partners at the Local Enterprise Partnership, West Midlands Combined Authority and in central government to take maximum advantage of funding opportunities to secure additional funding for Sandwell regeneration projects.	
We will work with our health partners to deliver the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital and to maximise the significant regeneration benefits to the wider surrounding area, including training, traineeships, apprenticeships and employment opportunities.	
We will deliver the agreed Town Deals in collaboration with our partners across Rowley Regis, Smethwick and West Bromwich	
We will work with the Department for Education to deliver a facility for a new school aligned to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra	
We will work with local providers to ensure local spend also has green outcomes	
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.	
Working with businesses	

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<p>We will work more closely with strategic businesses to develop shared opportunities</p> <p>We will strengthen our business sector so that local people can benefit from quality jobs that are stable and well paid through our work with Stronger and Inclusive Economy Board</p> <p>We will develop and implement an economic recovery strategy to support businesses and deliver economic growth in Sandwell following the impact of Brexit and Covid</p> <p>We will work with our partners to support the development and growth of business start-ups in Sandwell</p> <p>We will support local businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and work towards carbon zero targets</p> <p>We will establish more business networking and support events utilising Sandwell's Business Ambassadors</p>	<p>Member Engagement: Need to have more emphasis on supporting local people to becoming SME's. Support to groups and individuals to set up businesses seems to be diminishing over the years from LA and voluntary sector.</p>
Jobs and Training	
<p>We will ensure that local people have the skills and knowledge to fill any vacancies by reduce the number of residents with no/low qualifications and offering local training and skills development opportunities via the Adult Education Budget.</p> <p>We will work with our partners and voluntary sector to improve and develop digital skills in the community to minimise digital exclusion and maximise employment and training opportunities.</p> <p>We will work to ensure our young people to have access to good jobs and we will work with all education institutions to guide young people to the pathways that enable them to meet their aspirations. We will do this through the provision of independent advice and guidance.</p> <p>We will support people into employment through the delivery of the Skills Strategy with our strategic partners in the Employment and Skills Partnership.</p> <p>We will offer quality work experience placements within the council.</p>	<p>Member Engagement: There is a need to work more closely with schools so that young people can develop skills to match those required in the local economy.</p> <p>School Engagement: "You [the council] should pop into schools more often – talk about jobs, inspire us and also ask us about local issues"</p>

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We will continue to deliver the Apprenticeship Levy and increase the take up of apprenticeships, particularly within small businesses in Sandwell through transferring some of the Apprenticeship Levy to that sector.	
A Connected and Accessible Sandwell	Commentary from Conversations
We will work with the WMCA to ensure that our residents can access employment opportunities across the region, particularly by public transport.	Voluntary Sector Engagement: Need to rebuild confidence to use public transport and make it safe for users.
We will continue to work with partners to deliver the Midlands Metro extension connecting Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and the SPRINT scheme.	Member Engagement: Communities suffering poverty have limited mobility. We need to give access to sustainable public transport system that provides affordable connectivity.
We will ensure improvements to the highway network are facilitated to support the local economy and the movement of goods and people across the borough.	
We will ensure that the responsibilities of the Local Highways Authority are delivered and continue to maintain standards in relation to highway condition.	
We will deliver accelerated funding projects relating to connectivity as part of the Town Deal.	Member Engagement: Transport needs to be given a higher priority as it has an impact on and is integral to all the other priorities; it enables access to everything.
Clean & Green	
We will enable people to get around in a healthy and sustainable way, supporting our health and wellbeing and our climate change strategies.	Voluntary Sector Engagement: Cycle routes all over the place but not used much yet.
We will continue to implement Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and deliver a programme of infrastructure improvements across the borough.	
We will ensure that all public transport options available locally are as green as possible, including lobbying for clean green buses for our borough.	
Partnerships	
We will maximise government funding opportunities for infrastructure through working with our partner organisations including the Black Country Transport Team and Transport for West Midlands.	
We will develop and maintain relationships with Midlands Connect to profile major transport interventions in Sandwell.	
We will continue our partnership work with the Canal and River Trust to enable us to make the best use of our waterways.	

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We will work with the Environment Agency in our role as Lead Local Flood Authority to adopt a Flood Risk Management Plan for 2021 to 2027.	
Key infrastructure projects	
We will continue to deliver our key transport infrastructure projects, namely the major upgrade of Birchley Island, metro corridor walking and cycling programme, and Blackheath interchange	
We will continue to develop and deliver projects that reduce barriers to the use of public transport and sustainable travel choices including working with Transport for West Midlands in relation to bus and metro provision and the Rail Alliance.	
We will ensure Sandwell is well placed to support the move towards electric vehicles by delivering key infrastructure requirements.	
Digital	
We will ensure that Digital Inclusion matters when designing services and making key council decisions	School Engagement - Lack of WIFI for school pupils in some homes due to parents working and having to work from grandparents' house.
We will work with WM5G to ensure Sandwell maximises opportunities for 5G infrastructure	<p>Member Engagement; Digital exclusion and accessing services for those who need face to face services big issue. Particularly difficulties around non digital access and lack of access to services locally which disadvantages already disadvantaged groups and people. Getting through to the council can be difficult.</p> <p>Member Engagement: We're constantly pushed towards digital, pulled away from contact with people. This has to be a gradual process, need to do it in a supported way. Locals provide a lot of good support.</p>

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	<p>Voluntary Sector Engagement: Up to 30% of people in Sandwell have a lack of digital skills/money to buy equipment</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Engagement: To enable the roll out of a digital by default there needs to be much more focus, commitment and resources to address the lack of skills in the community and the lack of resources and equipment.</p> <p>Voluntary Sector Engagement: Digital exclusion leads to economic and social exclusion.</p>
One Team One Council	Commentary from Conversations
Council Organisational Structure	
We will create a modern, outstanding council, one where our organisational structure, business systems, process and people and cultural working practices are fully aligned to deliver our strategic outcomes.	Member Engagement: The senior management restructure needs to be embedded.
We will complete a review of all directorate and departmental structures to ensure they are aligned to supporting the successful delivery of the Corporate Plan.	
We will build a One Council: One Team ethos, breaking down departmental barriers and building collaborative team working.	
We will implement new operating models for the delivery of services in a safe way, and ensure that staff are supported to work in the most appropriate location.	
Access to services/council	
We will design a corporate approach to improve both the accessibility of Council services and the quality of service we deliver; to make sure that Sandwell people get a good quality, consistent level of service, however they choose to contact the council.	
We will ensure that adequate support is in place where people need support to access services digitally.	

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We will invest in digital platforms to enable better access for our residents and other service users and to build on the benefits of increased digitalisation of our services	
We will exploit the potential of new technology and 5G to deliver services more effectively and efficiently across the organisation	
Organisational Development	
We will invest in a range of opportunities, qualifications and experiences for our workforce. We will do this through workforce development plans to ensure our workforce is an enabler for current and future service delivery.	
We will continue the roll-out of our leadership development programmes to create Sandwell's leaders of the future.	
We will enable all our staff to fulfil their full potential and have opportunities to progress within the organisation regardless of their protected characteristics by understanding the barriers faced by employees, establishing stakeholder staff groups and implementing the approved workforce action plan .	
We will continue to build on existing workforce mental health and wellbeing resources, by proactively responding to emerging challenges and trends, enabling our employees to effectively support their own, and their colleague's, positive mental health and wellbeing.	
We will develop and embed excellent people management practices, by effectively leading, supporting and improving our workforce, fostering a workforce that is engaged and productive	
We will promote our successful work experience, apprenticeship, intern and graduate programmes to local people.	
Systems and Governance / Review of corporate policies, strategies, systems and processes	
We will build robust and effective systems which improve transparency and co-ordination around decision making and service delivery.	

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We will review all governance arrangements including a Constitution refresh, completion of the scrutiny review and refresh of the council's decision-making and performance management arrangements.	
We will deliver the Equalities Commission and implement its recommendations in order to ensure we meet our specific equalities duties and drive the equalities agenda at the heart of our organisation.	
We will develop the social value policy and implementing the social value portal	
We will review and refresh of the organisations digital strategy and digital platforms	
We will embed the newly designed Communications and Corporate Affairs Strategy to ensure we are communicating effectively with both our internal workforce and external stakeholders.	
Listening, Learning and Accountable	
We will embed co-design and collaboration as the standard approach for designing our services and developing our future priorities.	Member Engagement: Engagement and comms with residents needs to improve considerably. We need to let people know what we are planning and doing around corporate plan and in their areas; more importantly listen to them.
We will listen to and work alongside Sandwell residents and partners to make sure that everything we do is focused on achieving the best outcomes.	
We will make sure that vulnerable groups who find it difficult to make their voices heard, influence and shape all of our plans and decisions and those of our partners.	
We will review how we manage complaints and customer feedback within the council to make sure that when things don't go to plan, we put them right and learn from what has happened.	Member Engagement: Need to look at how we communicate with our residents, need to use all means and push communication more. Need to look at how communication is structured and whether we use online rather than just push out press releases.
	Member Engagement: Need to improve our PR telling the residents the good things we do in Sandwell that people do not know about.
	Member Engagement: We need to make sure everyone in the communities knows about the plan. There needs to be

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	a communications plan to let people know what our actions will be, show outcomes and show benefits on the ground.
Making the Most of Our Resources	
We will set a sustainable and balanced budget each year	Member Engagement: Procurement should be used to uplift communities.
We will update the Medium Term Financial Strategy in line with the 2021 Spending Review, Settlement and longer-term impact of COVID-19	
We will ensure all our services provide value for money and are run as efficiently as possible.	
<i>Editor's note: spending locally included under Strong & Inclusive Economy – need to cross reference to that action here</i>	
We will implement a new Corporate Asset Management system to ensure the Council has sufficient, comprehensive information to make best use of its assets and assist with timely and accurate completion of annual accounts.	