

Report to Cabinet

23 March 2022

Subject:	Corporate Plan Achievements 2021
Cabinet Member:	The Leader of the Council Councillor Kerrie Carmichael
Director:	Kim Bromley-Derry Interim Chief Executive
Key Decision:	No
Contact Officer:	Sarah Sprung, Senior Lead Officer sarah_sprung@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations



- 1.1 That Cabinet consider the progress made in delivering the Corporate Plan during 2021.
- 1.2 That Cabinet consider the directorate actions, contained in Appendix 1, that will support delivery of the Corporate Plan on our journey ahead.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To offer assurance of progress in delivering the Corporate Plan and to set out the proposed delivery vehicle for the strategic outcomes contained in the plan going forward.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		The Corporate Plan “Sandwell Plan – Big Plans for a Great Place” sets out the strategic priorities for Sandwell Council that will enable us to contribute the achievement of Vision 2030. This report sets out a summary of progress that has been made against each of the strategic priorities during 2021.
		
		

4 Context and Key Issues

Background

- 4.1 Our refreshed Corporate Plan – Big Plans for a Great Place, sets out what the Council will do to deliver Vision 2030, and Sandwell’s 10 ambitions, over the period 2021 to 2025. The Corporate Plan Refresh was approved by Council on 21 October 2021.
- 4.2 The refreshed plan is based on analysis of the impact that the pandemic has had on our community, the local economy and our own organisation.

Achievements

- 4.3 Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we’ve been forging ahead in delivering the Corporate Plan during 2021. Some of our key achievements this year include:
 - 4.4 **Best Start in life for children and young people**
 - Youth Service supported vulnerable young people and families, providing over 600+ food packs and 100+ welfare calls, delivering 1,588 youth work sessions and reaching 18,663 young people, meanwhile training 14 young people and staff as vaccine advocates.
 - Successful application to, and engagement in, DfE’s LINK programme to support joint working between community mental health professionals, schools and the voluntary sector.



4.5 People Live Well Age Well

- Resilience team led Operation Eagle planning and operation of mass Covid testing in Tipton and Smethwick to identify any new variants of concern in a target area.
- Creative use of Covid emergency funding to develop a £1.1 million programme, designed to meet increasing emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people by expanding capacity in voluntary sector.
- As part of Joined up Health and Social Care approach, Discharge to Assess Local Government Association peer review completed, and action plan developed to deliver improved performance.
- Sandwell has won two national awards for its drug and alcohol: the Royal Society of public Health Award and the Guardian Public Services Award ([LINK](#))
- Sandwell has the lowest rate of drug related deaths in the region and is in the lowest ten rates in the country ([LINK](#))
- Sandwell also achieved the highest proportion of children meeting physical activity guidelines. It has the highest rate in the region and the fourth highest in the country
- Other recent achievements include rates of smoking quitters and new birth visits with 14 days that are significantly higher than the national average

4.6 Strong Resilient Communities

- Significant progress in the delivery of full business cases for £67.5 million [Towns Fund](#) allocation.
- Progress on a variety of Carbon reduction initiatives, including securing resources from the Public-Sector Decarbonisation Fund.
- Two pilot schemes incorporating Air Source Heat Pumps on a district system and to other to individual properties and further work on other options is ongoing.
- Secured £165,000 from the OPCC Community Safety Fund and successfully delivered 12 projects to support the Safer Sandwell Partnership Police & Crime Board priorities.
- Recognised by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Dame Sara Thornton, as an example of national good practice for our partnership work around modern day slavery, in particular the establishment of an Anti-Slavery Strategic Partnership and a Slavery and Human Trafficking Operational Partnership.



4.7 Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods

- Conversion of office block Applewood Grove completed, providing 21 high quality temporary accommodation units to homeless households and avoiding need for higher cost spot purchased units.
- Housing Partnerships achieved 111 completions in 2021/22 including the Extra Care scheme in Rowley Regis, with total completions in programme 1 to 465 units. There are 92 units in progress and a further 126 units due to start 2022/23.
- Work to refurbish high-rise block Alfred Gunn House undertaken (42 of our 54 high rises now upgraded).
- External improvements to 3,500 properties completed, including insulating with external wall insulation or cavity wall insulation to reduce fuel costs and aid decarbonisation.
- Helped raise £8.7 million in Q2 (Year-end forecast £18 million) in welfare benefits for people in hardship/on low income.
- Neighbourhood Teams began delivering home-checks to identify vulnerable tenants and completed 213 checks (to November 2021 with rollout planned across all our estates).

4.8 A Strong Inclusive Economy

- Delivery of the Sandwell Aquatics Centre for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in 2022 is on track.
- Delivered a redeveloped outdoor market during lockdown which incorporated innovative glass photovoltaic roof panels, being listed as a finalist for The Energy Awards 2021 and shortlisted for the RTPI West Midlands 2021 Awards for Planning Excellence.
- Currently relocating Wednesbury outdoor market as part of the Wednesbury Heritage Action Zone project, anticipating relocation by end of 2022. This will also incorporate new market stalls with glass photovoltaic roof panels that will provide all lighting and power requirements for the markets from solar energy.
- Employment and Skills team led a Black Country-wide partnership to successfully secure Community Renewal funding for an innovative pilot tackling employment and skills support for the over-50s.



4.9 A Connected and Accessible Sandwell

- Secured funding from Government for the first on-street public electric vehicle charge points.
- A Masterplan for West Bromwich Town Centre drafted and consulted on and is due for endorsement by Cabinet early 2022.
- Working in conjunction with Birmingham City Council, a strategy for the future of the corridor between Birmingham and Smethwick developed, which includes a detailed masterplan for the Grove Lane area of Smethwick.
- Progressing the £30 million Birchley Island transport scheme

4.10 One Council, one team

- As part of Digital Transformation, My Sandwell adoption and take-up: 154 processes now available, 219,000 MySandwell accounts with 60% activity rate, 1.5 million transactions across the platform – 80% by customers in some £115 m of payments where they gave average customer satisfaction rating 4.3/5 stars.
- Redeployment of key staff at the beginning of pandemic to ensure dynamic council response, including Food Hub, Winter Grants, Vaccine Programme, Track & Trace.
- Working from home implemented with minimal impact on service delivery.
- Permanent appointments to the Director roles in the new leadership structure.
- Local elections delivered successfully during Covid.
- Co-production of refreshed corporate plan which sets direction for the council through engagement with wide range of stakeholders.
- We were the lead Authority that successfully established, managed and operated a regional mortuary at Birmingham Airport in response to the pandemic on behalf of seven other councils.

4.11 We have delivered these key achievements at the same time as supporting our community through the pandemic. Sandwell has been nationally recognised for our community-based response: -

- Sandwell's response to COVID has included data analytics, outbreak response, contact tracing, vaccination outreach and



communications. The overall response was identified as an example of best practice by the Department of Health and Social Care ([LINK](#)).

- Sandwell as one of the first area in the UK to develop contact tracing at a local level. The service links directly into the national test and trace system and significantly improved successful engagement rates. Information on the service is in an LGA case study here ([LINK](#)). The Sandwell service pioneered local contact tracing services with almost all UK local authorities subsequently setting up a similar service. It also pioneered the use of s-gene data to aid the early identification of cases of new variants ([LINK](#))
- Our care home COVID response was a finalist in the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) award for outstanding contribution to infection prevention and control. There were hundreds of teams nominated and we were one of only seven finalists. The COVID-19 death rate in care homes remains significantly lower than the Black Country and national averages.
- Sandwell was named 'Public Health Team of 2021' by the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) for its work on reducing the health inequalities from the pandemic through the COVID Vaccination Champions project. The Council joined forces with the NHS, voluntary and faith sector organisations to support vaccination uptake in the Borough, with a particular focus on black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, which traditionally have lower vaccination uptake rates. Other council teams in the UK came to Sandwell to learn how to deliver the programme in their areas. ([LINK](#))

Looking forward

- 4.12 Looking ahead to 2022 and beyond, each directorate has identified key actions that they will deliver that will directly support the delivery of the strategic outcomes in the Corporate Plan. Appendix 1 details the directorate actions in full.
- 4.13 To ensure that we have the right breadth of commitments to deliver our Corporate Plan we have undertaken a mapping exercise to ensure we do not have any gaps in coverage.
- 4.13 The actions contained in Appendix 1 will form part of directorate business plans which will be presented to Cabinet for approval later in the year, alongside proposals for the adoption of a performance management framework. This suite of intelligence will allow us to track and monitor



our progress in delivering on the commitments contained in the Corporate Plan.

5 Implications

Resources:	The Corporate Plan sets out the strategic priorities for the council as a whole and informs how the council's resources are used to achieve them.
Legal and Governance:	The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by 11 March each year prior to the start of the relevant financial year. The agreement of the refreshed Corporate Plan up to 2025, aligned to the needs of the borough and the organisation, will inform the development of the council's medium-term financial strategy and support the delivery of a balanced budget within the required timescale.
Risk:	Risk implications have been considered by services during the development of the refreshed priority actions. Further detailed work on managing risks will be carried out through directorate business planning.
Equality:	<p>The work carried out during 2020 to understand the impact of the pandemic on our communities was used as evidence to inform the refresh of the Corporate Plan, this together with the conversations that took place over Summer 2021 provided an excellent evidence base for the refresh of the Plan.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the Corporate Plan Refresh and presented to Council in October 2021.</p>
Health and Wellbeing:	This information is contained within the main body of the report and the Corporate Plan.
Social Value	Embedding the Fairer Sandwell Principles in all council activity will ensure that social value will be delivered. Within the One Council, One Team strategic outcome, a key action will be to develop a Social Value Policy. By embedding the Fairer Sandwell Principles in this policy, we are providing



	clarity for all our suppliers on what additional social value we expect to be achieved through our spend.
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6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Plan Delivery Actions

7. Background Papers

Report to Council October 2021 – Corporate Plan Refresh 2021

