

Minutes of Cabinet

**Wednesday 22 June at 3.30pm
at Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House**

Present: Councillor Carmichael (Chair);
Councillors Piper, Ahmed, Hartwell, Hughes, Padda
and Rollins.

In attendance: Councillors Fenton, E M Giles and Shackleton.

Also present: Kim Bromley-Derry (Managing Director Commissioner),
Simone Hines (Director of Finance), Surjit Tour
(Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring
Officer), Alice Davey (Director of Borough Economy),
Tony McGovern (Director of Regeneration and
Growth), Gillian Douglas (Director of Housing),
Lisa McNally (Director of Public Health),
Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy),
Matthew Huggins (Interim Service Manager Parks and
Grounds), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services
Manager).

118/22 **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader made reference to the matters to be considered at the meeting of the Cabinet and the impact to the residents of Sandwell:-

- the Covid Recovery Fund used Fairer Sandwell Principles to provide support where it was most required; the Drug Strategy Grant built on the Council's excellent work by allocating an additional £0.5m on top of current services; the Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, which supported people in making healthy choices and help keep Sandwell air

clean; the Green Spaces Strategy; and how the Council would provide its leisure services.

- the Towns Fund Programme proposed £63.6m of investment across the borough and bids for round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund as part of investing in Sandwell;
- the Black Country Plan; new council homes in Smethwick, West Bromwich and Rowley Regis; more new homes with the LHC Framework Alliance in West Bromwich, Rowley Regis and Tipton; and looking into the future with the Council House build programme;
- underpinning this, Cabinet would be making decisions on print services and planning contract to ensure best value for money and resources were used efficiently;
- preparation for the Commonwealth Games.

119/22 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hackett, E M Giles, Millard and Moore.

120/22 **Declarations of Interest**

The Chair declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No.141/22 (Management Options Appraisal – Leisure).

121/22 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 May and 1 June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

122/22 **Additional Items of Business**

There were no additional items of business.

New Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Approval was sought for the refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board asked whether it was anticipated that Sandwell Council would provide more of this type of accommodation in other parts of the borough and if tenants received support and guidance about employment and financial issues.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Housing stated that Sandwell would continue to maximise the use of its own stock for the provision of temporary accommodation, but the ambition was to reduce the use of temporary accommodation by increasing sustainable housing options, this included the development of new Council properties, single property acquisitions and appropriation/conversion of unused Council assets into the council stock. Incentives and support was also offered to private landlords to increase the availability of affordable good quality private rented accommodation.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board enquired about the key performance indicators in place to monitor the effectiveness of the strategy and to ensure regular contact with service users.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Housing stated that there were a range of prevention tools and measures both in place and in development, this included:-

- Communication and education – inform the residents of Sandwell of the help that was available to them should they be struggling to pay their rent or mortgage and the importance of approaching us for support as early as possible. This would include access to advice on income maximisation, including pathways to work and / benefit entitlement.

- Homelessness prevention fund – resource available to help prevent homelessness which could be used in a variety of ways including but not limited to helping people with short term rent arrears, or helping people secure a new home by paying for deposit and other set up costs.
- Better partnerships with private rented sector landlords – “Call Before You Serve” was a project that supported landlords who were considering evicting their tenants. Sandwell would help landlords work with their tenants to sustain their tenancies. Work was also underway with landlords to incentivise them in offering affordable properties to homeless households, increasing the range of housing options available.
- Support for people with mental health and drug and alcohol related issues – the Council had secured funding to provide a mental health and drug and alcohol support worker specifically to support homeless clients who present with these complex issues.
- Improved partnership working with internal and external partners – Sandwell were working with partners to ensure that they contact us when they were working with households whose are at risk of becoming homelessness now or in the future.

Reason for Decision

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities to produce a homelessness review and a homelessness strategy, on a maximum five-year cycle, that set out the strategic direction that the local authority would take to tackle homelessness. The Council last adopted a homelessness strategy in April 2018 and in partnership with Sandwell’s Homelessness Partnership, officers had produced a revised and refreshed strategy to provide this strategic direction from 2022-2027.

Alternative Options Considered

There were no alternative options. The Council was obliged under law to have a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy.

Agreed:-

- (1) that details of the progress made to date in reviewing the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy be received;
- (2) that the refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022, be approved.

124/22 **COVID Recovery Fund**

Approval was sought for use of the remaining COVID-19 funding to deliver COVID recovery related projects based on our Fairer Sandwell principles, subject to ensuring £2m of funding was retained for a COVID resilience fund in the event of further COVID restrictions.

Approval was also sought to the use of £8m of COVID funding during 2022/23 to 2024/25 to deliver the proposals and a £1m COVID Community Fund to which the voluntary and community sector can bid for funding to deliver their own COVID recovery projects.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board asked whether it was possible to be kept updated on the outcomes of the Covid Recovery Fund.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources stated that progress reports would be brought back to Cabinet on the COVID Recovery Fund and Leadership Team were also exploring other priorities where COVID funding may be appropriate, linked to the Corporate Plan and Fairer Sandwell Principles.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board also enquired about the gym/play equipment in local parks that required replacing or repairing. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources stated that there was a separate item on the agenda on the Council's Green Spaces Strategy which set out the Council's priorities and funding strategy for this service.

The Local Community Fund was also a way for Councillors to seek funding for specific projects.

Reason for Decision

During the COVID pandemic, all local authorities were given additional funding from central government to mitigate the spend pressures and loss of income caused by COVID restrictions, and to support the Public Health activities needed to contain the spread of the virus.

The Council was required to report on how it was spent and the COVID pressures that the funding was used for. Given the improved level of COVID infection and impact nationally, it was recommended that the remaining funding was used towards a COVID Recovery Strategy to focus on services where there was either a backlog of work due to the impact of the pandemic or where residents/businesses required extra support to recover from the longer-term impact of COVID. It was also suggested that a proportion was set aside as a contingency for any further restrictions should a new variant emerge.

Alternative Options Considered

The alternative options were to approve the proposals or to ask for amended proposals to be presented at a future Cabinet meeting.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to the use of the remaining COVID-19 funding to deliver COVID recovery related projects based on our Fairer Sandwell principles, subject to ensuring £2m of funding is retained for a COVID resilience fund in the event of further COVID restrictions;
- (2) that approval be given to the use of £8m of COVID funding during 2022/23 to 2024/25 to deliver the proposals set out in Appendix A, as now submitted;

- (3) that approval be given to a £1m COVID Community Fund to which the voluntary and community sector can bid for funding to deliver their own COVID recovery projects;
- (4) that subject to Resolution (3) above, the Director of Business Strategy and Change, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to implement the COVID Community Fund scheme;
- (5) that the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to agree further spend proposals from the COVID Recovery earmarked reserve.

125/22 **Towns Fund – Inclusion in Capital Programme and Assurance Framework**

Approval was sought for the sum of £63.6m for the Towns Fund Programme to be included in the Capital Programme across 2022-2026 with £26.8m being included for 2022/23.

It was also proposed to approve the Towns Fund Assurance Framework to enable the Accountable Body to deliver the programme successfully.

Reasons for Decision

Sandwell Council was the Accountable Body for the Towns Fund Programme and as such, was responsible for discharging its responsibilities in the management of the programme.

Alternative Options

Failure to have key processes and procedures for the Towns Fund Programme could impact on future funding allocations being released.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to the Towns Fund Programme of £63.6m to be included in the Capital Programme across 2022-2026 with £26.8m being included for 2022/23;
- (2) that details of the roles and responsibilities of the Section 151 Officer and Accountable Body in managing the Towns Fund Programme be received;
- (3) that approval be given to the Towns Fund Assurance Framework to enable the Accountable Body to deliver the programme successfully;
- (4) that in connection with Resolution (3) above, the Towns Fund Programme Manager, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration & Growth, Section 151 Officer and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, be authorised to make any amendments to the Framework subject to updated government guidance or council procedures.

126/22

Draft Black Country Plan: Consultation on Additional Housing Sites and amendment to the Local Development Scheme

Approval was sought for Regulation 18 consultation on the additional sites identified in Walsall for the Black Country Plan (BCP) and to seek approval for the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) and timeline 2022.

Reasons for Decision

Authorisation was sought to consult on those additional suitable housing sites in Walsall for the Draft Plan version of the Black Country Plan.

The next stage was the production of a Regulation 19 plan. By including the sites in the Regulation 19 BC Plan, officers would be closer to meeting the housing need of the Black Country for the period up to 2039. This gave a more robust and sound Plan.

Whilst the additional sites only lay in Walsall, similar reports were being taken to the respective Cabinets meetings of Dudley, Walsall and City of Wolverhampton.

For these reasons it was recommended that approval to consult on the additional sites identified in Walsall be accepted.

Alternative Options Considered

If a consultation was not conducted on the additional Walsall sites, the BCP could be found unsound at Examination In Public by the Planning Inspector.

Preparation of a LDS was a requirement of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. As such there was no alternative to its preparation.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to an additional Regulation 18 consultation to include in the Black Country Plan the additional Walsall sites;
- (2) that approval be given to the approach to the consultation as set out in Appendix B and the Sustainability Appraisal Report as now submitted;
- (3) that approval be given to update the Sandwell Local Development Scheme 2021 and updated timeline set out in Appendices C & D;
- (4) that the Director for Regeneration and Growth be authorised to make any necessary minor amendments to the Draft Plan and other consultation documents prior to the

commencement of the Regulation 18 consultation process;

- (5) that the Director for Regeneration and Growth be authorised to make minor changes to the Local Development Scheme that may be required prior to making it available to the public, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Growth.

127/22 **Award of Corporate Hybrid Print and Mail Contract**

Approval was sought for the Director of Business Strategy and Change, in consultation with the Director of Finance – Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to award a contract for corporate Hybrid Print and Mail Services, via the ESPO Framework Agreement RM6017-19 Postal Goods, Services and Solutions for a 5 year period commencing on 1 September 2022 with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years.

Reasons for Decision

The report sought approval to award a contract for corporate Hybrid Print and Mail Services following a compliant procurement process.

Implementation of a Hybrid Print and Mail solution would deliver a number of benefits to the Council:

- Fully supports and enables the Council's Workplace Vision Programme and Smart Working Policy
- Reduces storage requirements (paper, envelopes etc)
- Achieves contractual savings (Multi-Functional Devices, Central Print, peripherals)
- Achieves financial savings through reduced mail charges as providers prepare the mail to a high standard which removes several of the preparation stages normally carried out by Royal Mail
- Improves document quality and consistency – control letterheads, stationery and attachments and achieve high quality and consistent production of documents

- Can control and restrict the use of expensive print and mail options such as colour printing and first-class mail
- Production of detailed management information about what we print which can be used to identify opportunities for on-line notifications, reducing postage costs further.

The estimated cashable savings that would be achieved upon successful implementation of Hybrid Print and Mail were over £220,000 per annum. Savings would increase further as we use the intelligence about what was printed to identify opportunities for online/digital notifications.

Alternative Options Considered

The Council could continue with the current printing arrangements where most of the printing and dispatch is done from Council Offices. This option would not realise any of the benefits outlined. The Council would also incur additional expense in the future as machinery in the Central Print Unit would need to be replaced.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Director of Business Strategy and Change and the Director of Finance - Section 151 Officer, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, be authorised to award a contract for corporate Hybrid Print and Mail Services, via the ESPO Framework Agreement RM6017-19 Postal Goods, Services and Solutions for a 5 year period commencing on 1 September 2022 with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years;
- (2) that the Director Law and Governance – Monitoring Officer be authorised to execute any documentation necessary to enable the action referred to in Resolution (1) above.

Drug Strategy Grant: Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant

Approval was sought for the Director of Public Health to distribute the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) as required by Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) grant conditions.

Approval was also sought for the Director of Public Health to be authorised to have final sign off on the distribution of the funds over the grant period covering the following financial

Reasons for Recommendations

Sandwell's allocated SSMTRG amount for the 2022/23 period was £532,036.

The funding must be spent on interventions that aimed to achieve the Drug Strategy ambition to reduce drug and alcohol related deaths and harms. The Strategy therefore required that local areas rebuild and reinvest into local support systems towards "a world class drug treatment and recovery system". Monies could only be spent on provisions that fit within OHIDs menu of interventions.

Cabinet approval had already been secured to vary the existing Cranstoun contract to accommodate SSMTRG provisions up to a maximum value of £280,066 and to procure future treatment services including use of SSMTRG within those future contract provisions (given the current Cranstoun contract would expire on 31 January 2023 therefore ending before the SSMTRG grant term period).

Therefore, it was proposed to secure approval to use the remaining and any future SSMTRG (the monies not already covered by previous Cabinet approvals) as required by Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) grant conditions.

Alternative Options

The alternative option was to not approve distribution of the SSMTRG as required by OHID and not utilise the additional funding but simply return the monies to government.

This would mean that the local treatment population would not benefit from the potential quality and capacity improvements that the monies could afford.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Director of Public Health be authorised to distribute the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) as required by Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) grant conditions;
- (2) that the Director of Public Health be authorised to have final sign off on the distribution of the funds over the grant period covering the following financial years: 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

129/22

Permission to consult on the Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Approval was sought for the public consultation of the Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board asked whether Councillors were involved in the consultations relating to the Plan, particularly in the ward and towns they represented.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth gave assurance that all ward members would be consulted along with the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board going forward,

Reasons for Decision

The West Midlands Combined Authority had developed a LCWIP that identified and enabled a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout the West Midlands up to 2028. Subsequently, Sandwell developed an LCWIP that identified and enabled a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout Sandwell up to 2030.

The West Midlands had secured £1.05bn funding to expand the regions tram, train, bus, walking and cycle networks and drive a green transport revolution. The funding came from the government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), which would kickstart a wide range of projects including walking and cycling Infrastructure in a move to decarbonise the region's transport system, create new jobs and opportunities for local people and bolster the fight against climate change.

Alternative Options Considered

For each scheme within the BCLCWIP, the options considered and the reasons for the recommended option would be set out in the individual approval reports as they are submitted to the Cabinet Member for Environment.

Agreed that approval be given to the public consultation of the Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

130/22 **Disposal of Grafton Lodge, Grafton Road, Oldbury**

Approval was sought to declare Grafton Lodge, Grafton Road, Oldbury, the former Adult Services led care home, surplus to all Council use.

It was proposed that the site should be advertised on the open market for sale including to all the Registered Providers who are active or interested in being active in Sandwell.

The proposal to redevelop the site for residential purposes would be subject to a selection criterion with percentage weighting to price, tenure mix, and any other required factors. It may also be necessary to consider managing the development outputs via a restrictive covenant.

An external valuation has been undertaken by Lambert Smith Hampton dated 6 January 2022. If the site were sold for re-use as a care home the value would be in the region of £630k. If the site was sold and redeveloped for housing, then the current market value would be in the region of £600k.

Both valuations were approximately in line with the council's current holding value as at the 31 March 2020 of £644k.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board questioned whether the option to lease out to a private provider was explored and if the option of building Council housing on the site was considered.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth stated he would undertake to provide a response to this query and would report back to the member.

Reasons for decision

Disposal of the property is sought to provide much needed housing within Sandwell. Disposal and subsequent redevelopment would also remove the ongoing management costs associated with an empty building.

The former care home and current site have been declared surplus to both Adult Services requirements and wider council service provision.

Alternative options considered

To retain the asset in the General Fund. The building was currently surplus to General Fund needs. There was an opportunity to make better use of this asset and remove ongoing revenue and maintenance costs.

Subject to no realistic bids being received or bids not meeting the set criterion, via the open market exercise, the asset could be considered for appropriation into the Housing Revenue Account. It would then support housing development, possibly modular build to deliver 100% affordable housing on the site. These homes would be part of SMBC stock. This option had been considered initially. However, by considering disposal on the open market for a developer or registered landlord to deliver the scheme the council would look to obtain a sizable capital receipt whilst still providing affordable housing helping to meet housing targets for the area. In the event of no suitable bids being received this option can be reconsidered.

Agreed:-

- (1) that Grafton Lodge, Grafton Road, Oldbury B68 8BJ, the former Adult Services led care home, as shown on site plan SAM/20100/007, be declared surplus to all council use;
- (2) that the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to dispose of the site, on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration & Growth, in consultation with the Director of Housing and Director of Finance;
- (3) that subject to Resolution (1) above, the Director of Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Director of Housing and the Director of Finance, be authorised to prepare sale particulars and subsequently dispose, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations, the site to a Developer or a Registered Provider to develop, a suitable housing scheme; to enter into or execute under seal any financial or conditional agreement in relation to the delivery of a suitable scheme on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance;
- (4) that subject to Resolution (2) above, the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to the disposal and/or development agreement, licence, undertaking, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the scheme and any other agreements with the procured developer(s) or Registered Provider(s) as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the site with a housing scheme on terms and conditions

to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Growth;

- (5) to agree that the property referred to in Resolution (1) above, may be sold at below market value to secure a higher level of affordable housing, if in the opinion of officers, the most advantageous bid received is on this basis.

131/22 **Council new build homes on land at West End Avenue, Smethwick**

Approval was sought to develop land at West End Avenue, Smethwick with new council housing for affordable rent, subject to planning permission.

Reasons for recommendations

The site was located within the West Smethwick area on land off West End Avenue, Smethwick, approximately 1km to the North West of Smethwick town centre.

The Council was able to develop this site with circa 11 homes, subject to planning permission, as part of the new strategic approach to provide more and better housing in the borough.

Alternative options considered

Option A – Dispose of the site on the open market.

Option B – Work in partnership with a Registered Provider Partner with the assistance of Homes England to build new affordable home for rent.

Option C – Leave the site undeveloped.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to develop approximately 3002.3 m2 of land at West End Avenue Smethwick with new council housing for affordable rent, subject to planning permission, as shown for identification purposes only at Appendix E as now submitted;

- (2) that the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account to deliver the scheme and to utilise grant funding offered by Homes England, under the extended Homes England Strategic Partnership 1 Programme 2016 to 2021 to assist with the delivery of the project;
- (3) that in connection with Resolution (1) and (2) above, approval be given to authorise the necessary steps for the delivery of the proposed project, including:
 - (a) the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and subsequently procure, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations;
 - (b) execute any requirements in accordance with the Homes England Delivery Partner Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework including appointing a contractor(s) to develop, on behalf of the Council, the proposed housing scheme; to enter into or execute under seal any financial agreement in relation to the Homes England grant on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance;
 - (c) that any necessary exemptions are made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to b above to proceed;
 - (d) subject to a, b and c above, the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in

relation to award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, Homes England developer status, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the scheme and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s) and with the Homes England, as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the site with a housing scheme as described in below on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Growth;

- (e) the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Housing and the Director of Finance be authorised to accept a tender of up to 10% above the approved estimated costs as a contingency to mitigate uncertain market conditions and inflationary cost uplifts.
- (f) subject to the practical completion of each property, the Director of Housing be authorised to manage and let the properties built in accordance with the Council's housing allocation policy.
- (g) that the following action points identified within the financial appraisal of the funding application by Strategic Finance, be implemented to reduce the risk to the Council:
 - that Cabinet consider the alternatives and are satisfied that the proposal to construct the new build homes will meet the Council's objectives in the most appropriate manner.
 - that a process is developed to prioritise the development of sites against pre-determined criteria and

alternative options for achieving the Council's housing objectives within each locality.

132/22 **Council new build homes on land at Whitgreave Street, West Bromwich**

Approval was sought to develop land at Whitgreave Street, West Bromwich with new council housing for affordable rent, subject to planning permission.

Reasons for Recommendations

The site was located within the Greets Green area on land off Whitgreave Street, approximately 2km to the West of West Bromwich town centre.

The Council was able to develop this site with circa 6 homes, subject to planning permission, as part of the new strategic approach to provide more and better housing in the borough.

Alternative options considered

Option A – Dispose of the site on the open market.

Option B – Work in partnership with a Registered Provider Partner with the assistance of Home England to build new affordable homes for rent.

Option C – Leave the site undeveloped.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to develop approximately 2355 m² of land at Whitgreave Street, West Bromwich with new council housing for affordable rent, subject to planning permission, as shown for identification purposes only at Appendix F, as now submitted;
- (2) that the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account to deliver the scheme and to utilise grant funding offered by Homes England, under the extended Homes England

Strategic Partnership 1 Programme 2016 to 2021 to assist with the delivery of the project;

- (3) that in connection with Resolution (1) and (2) above, approval be given to authorise the necessary steps for the delivery of the proposed project, including:
 - (a) the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and subsequently procure, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations;
 - (b) execute any requirements in accordance with the Homes England Delivery Partner Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework including appointing a contractor(s) to develop, on behalf of the Council, the proposed housing scheme; to enter into or execute under seal any financial agreement in relation to the Homes England grant on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance;
 - (c) that any necessary exemptions are made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to b above to proceed;
 - (d) subject to a, b and c above, the Director – Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, Homes England developer status, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of

the scheme and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s) and with the Homes England, as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the site with a housing scheme as described in below on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Growth;

- (e) the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Housing and the Director of Finance be authorised to accept a tender of up to 10% above the approved estimated costs as a contingency to mitigate uncertain market conditions and inflationary cost uplifts.
- (f) subject to the practical completion of each property, the Director of Housing be authorised to manage and let the properties built in accordance with the Council's housing allocation policy;
- (g) that the following action points identified within the financial appraisal of the funding application by Strategic Finance, be implemented to reduce the risk to the Council:
 - that Cabinet consider the alternatives and are satisfied that the proposal to construct the new build homes will meet the Council's objectives in the most appropriate manner.
 - that a process is developed to prioritise the development of sites against pre-determined criteria and alternative options for achieving the Council's housing objectives within each locality.
 - that the planned use of Right to Buy receipts is reviewed prior to the submission of a 'firm scheme' to

Homes England to ensure that the project secures the most appropriate and financially advantageous source of funding.

- That the relocation of the electricity sub-station and related lease are completed as a matter of urgency to ensure no delays to project timescales.

133/22 **Proposed West Bromwich Definitive Map and Statement for Public Rights of Way**

Approval was sought to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Growth and the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer to make representations to the Secretary of State requesting formal abandonment of the West Bromwich Draft Map under Section 55 (1)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and take the necessary steps, under this legislation, to create the West Bromwich Definitive Map and Statement.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Council proposed to abandon the draft map and statement under the 1949 Act and commence the creation of a new Definitive Map & Statement under the 1981 Act. To do this, the Council was required to make an application to the Secretary of State seeking a direction to abandon the survey carried out under the 1949 Act in relation to West Bromwich in its entirety. If the Secretary of State approved the abandonment under section 55, the Council would be required to prepare a new draft map and statement for the West Bromwich area in accordance with the 1981 Act.

The abandonment process and subsequent creation of the definitive map and statement for the West Bromwich area would allow the Council to comply with its statutory duty of having a Definitive Map and Statement and keeping it up-to-date and under continuous review as required by the 1981 Act. Furthermore, once the West Bromwich Definitive Map and Statement was confirmed, the Council could consolidate

the nine separate maps into a single Sandwell Definitive Map and Statement.

The Definitive Map and Statement would also give much greater certainty for property search enquiries in the West Bromwich area. The map would also allow a more robust method of managing the public right of way network, particularly where issues were raised in relation to lack of maintenance or obstructed routes. The Definitive Map would also allow formal map modification to remove routes that had been legally stopped up or diverted. Current legislation did not allow formal modification of a draft map.

Alternative options considered

In September 2016, members were briefed on the West Bromwich draft map and statement situation.

In November 2016, advice was sought from a leading PRow Barrister on this alternative approach and how best to proceed. The advice from the Barrister stated that the principal risk of the alternative approach was the significant delay in preparing the Definitive Map for West Bromwich. This was because the Council would continue to be in breach of its statutory duty as it would be neither completing the process of preparing its Definitive Map under the 1949 Act, nor would it be abandoning that process and proceeding to prepare a Definitive Map under the 1981 Act. Instead, pursuing the extinguishment/diversion of obstructed highways was undertaken using legislation entirely separate from that of preparing the Definitive Map. Consequently, whilst pursuing the stopping up and diversion orders, the Council would not be actively preparing its Definitive Map and so would continue to be in breach of its statutory duty, with no real defence against judicial review.

In addition, the advice identified that stopping up and diversion of highway must be held in the public domain, with newspaper advertising and site notices (with plans) inviting comments. Therefore, the issue of property blight could be raised by the public at any time for any stopping up or diversion application. This risk was heightened by the number of individual routes to be stopped up.

Until the Council formally abandoned the survey undertaken under the 1949 Act, it was under a statutory duty to either complete the process of preparing the Definitive Map, or to abandon the survey and create a new Definitive Map under the 1981 Act – and to do so as soon as reasonably practicable.

Agreed:

- (1) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth and the Director Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer be authorised to make representations to the Secretary of State requesting formal abandonment of the West Bromwich Draft Map under section 55 (1)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- (2) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth and the Director Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer be authorised to take the necessary steps under section 55 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to create the West Bromwich Definitive Map and Statement;
- (3) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth be authorised to procure external support to carry out this work as required.

134/22

Council new build homes on land at Higham's Close, Rowley Regis

Approval was sought to appropriate land at Higham's Close, Rowley Regis from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account for housing purposes with the accounts being adjusted accordingly and to develop the site with circa 6 new affordable rent council houses, subject to planning permission.

Reasons for Recommendations

The site was historically an area of mineworking for coal within the vicinity of Scotwell Colliery to the North-West. The Colliery became disused and was replaced with residential development.

The Council was able to develop this site with circa 6 homes, subject to planning permission as part of the new strategic approach to provide more and better housing in the borough.

Alternative options considered

Option A – Dispose of the site on the open market

Option B – Work in partnership with a Registered Provider Partner with the assistance of Homes England to build new affordable homes for rent.

Option C – Leave the site undeveloped.

Agreed:

- (1) that approval be given to appropriate approximately 1961.7 m² of land at Higham's Close, Rowley Regis from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account for housing purposes with the accounts being adjusted accordingly and to develop the site with circa 6 new affordable rent council houses, subject to planning permission, as shown for identification purposes only at Appendix G, as now submitted;
- (2) that the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account and the Right to Buy one for one receipts to deliver the scheme;
- (3) that in connection with Resolution (1) and (2) above, approval be given to authorise the necessary steps for the delivery of the proposed project, including:
 - (a) the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance

and the Director of Housing be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and subsequently procure, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations;

- (b) execute any requirements in accordance with the Homes England Delivery Partner Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework including appointing a contractor(s) to develop, on behalf of the Council, the proposed housing scheme; to enter into or execute under seal any financial agreement in relation to the Homes England grant on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance;
- (c) that any necessary exemptions are made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to b above to proceed;
- (d) subject to a, b and c above, the Director – Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, Homes England developer status, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the scheme and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s) and with the Homes England, as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the site with a housing scheme as described in below on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Growth;

- (e) the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Housing and the Director of Finance be authorised to accept a tender of up to 10% above the approved estimated costs as a contingency to mitigate uncertain market conditions and inflationary cost uplifts;
- (f) subject to the practical completion of each property, the Director of Housing be authorised to manage and let the properties built in accordance with the Council's housing allocation policy;
- (g) that the following action points identified within the financial appraisal of the funding application by Strategic Finance, be implemented to reduce the risk to the Council:
- that Cabinet consider the alternatives and are satisfied that the proposal to construct the new build homes will meet the Council's objectives in the most appropriate manner.
 - that a process is developed to prioritise the development of sites against pre-determined criteria and alternative options for achieving the Council's housing objectives within each locality.
 - that the site is appropriated from the Council's General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account and the corresponding adjustment to the Capital Financing Requirement made to reflect the appropriation.

Planning, Building Consultancy, Land Charges and Associated Computer Systems Contract Renewal

Approval was sought to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Growth to enter into a contract with Idox Software Limited for the provision of a Hosted Managed Service for the provision of a Planning, Building Consultancy and Local Land Charges Database, Document Management System and a Public Access module ICT system, for a 5 year period from 6 October 2022 to 5 October 2027 at a cost of £133,000 (ex VAT) per annum.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board questioned whether safeguards had been put in place to ensure that procurement exercises were conducted in future.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth stated that this was not the only contract that would have experienced this due to staffing issues over the last few years, however comments would be taken on board.

Reasons for Recommendations

A new contract with Idox Software Limited was preferred on the basis that:

- the new 5-year proposal from Idox at £132,283 per annum is very much close to the existing yearly contract value of £129,000.
- any alternative proposal to migrate will incur yet unidentified additional costs and require additional staff resources with potential service disruption.
- continued provision of the existing hosted service to ensure service delivery under legislative guidelines for Planning, Building Consultancy and Local Land Charges.

Alternative options considered

Go out to full OJEU tender which would involve extending the existing contract to cover the time to tender, award and implement any alternative system. It was anticipated that a procurement exercise in line with OJEU legislation would take around 12 – 18 months from the invitation to tender to the implementation of a new system.

Agreed that the Director of Regeneration and Growth be authorised to enter into a contract with Idox Software Limited for the provision of a Hosted Managed Service for the provision of a Planning, Building Consultancy and Local Land Charges Database, Document Management System and a Public Access module ICT system, for a 5 year period 6 October 2022 to 5 October 2027 at a cost of £133,000 (ex VAT) per annum.

136/22 **Birmingham Commonwealth Games Act 2020**

Approval was sought to authorise the Director of Borough Economy to exercise the statutory provisions of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Act 2020 and to revise the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (executive side).

Reasons for Recommendations

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Act provided temporary measures to make provisions for the delivery of the Commonwealth Games and ensure no unauthorised association with the Games. This also meant that only those individuals, businesses or organisations that had been authorised by the Organising Committee could associate themselves and their brand with the Games.

The Birmingham Games Act 2020 was new legislation and authorisation would be needed to carry out responsibilities as a host authority during the Commonwealth Games period.

The local authority can authorise officers to act in order that the Council could be compliant with any provisions of the Act.

Alternative options considered

None. The Council was required to appoint in accordance with the legislation.

Agreed:

- (1) that the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to exercise the statutory provisions of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Act 2020;
- (2) that the Director of Law and Governance be authorised to revise the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (executive side) in the Council's Constitution with the inclusion of the following within the Director of Borough Economy: -

The Birmingham Commonwealth Games Act 2020

To act and authorise others to act on his/her behalf under the Council's functions under the provisions of the Commonwealth Games Act 2020.

137/22 **Council house new build programme – approval of sites and amendment to funding sources**

Approval was sought to approve the allocation of sites for the Council New Build programme for the provision of new Council affordable rent housing accommodation in order to meet the external funding requirements for Homes England grant and Right to Buy 1-4-1 replacement generated from the sale of HRA dwellings under Right to Buy.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth highlighted that the report was one of five reports on the agenda on social housing and commended officers for moving forward with this issue.

Reasons for Recommendations

The proposals would realign the Council's short term new build programme in order to meet the council's contractual requirements with Homes England and also contribute to ensuring Right to Buy 1-4-1 receipts are utilised within the required time periods. The Council would continue to complete feasibility works on any future new build

opportunities as part of a pipeline programme to ensure availability of sites for future Right to Buy 1-4-1 receipts and other funding opportunities. If any sites encountered issues that would prevent delivery within the designated timescale other sites will be substituted, if available. This would be monitored to ensure the most appropriate use of funding for each scheme.

Alternative options considered

Option A – Dispose of the sites on the open market or to Registered Provider

Option B – Develop the sites utilising other funding sources

Both Option A and Option B had the potential of having a long term detrimental effect on the Council being able to access Homes England Grant funding as a Developer Partner should the contracted timescales of the Strategic Partnerships 1 programme not be met. For this reason, both of these options have been discounted.

138/22

Green Spaces Strategy – Implementation and Business Plan 2022/23

Approval was sought to approve the Green Spaces Strategy Implementation and Business Plan 2022-25.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board questioned whether repair of playground equipment would be a priority of the Strategy.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism gave assurance that the focus of 2022/23 would be on those priority works to resolve current health and safety or significant community impacts in parks and playgrounds.

The Chair of Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board asked whether funding would be available to the nature reserves that were not well known in the borough.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism stated that officers were currently reviewing the designation of nature reserves, therefore this would ensure that the sites mentioned would be captured within the Strategy.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board commended officers responsible for the greenery added to roundabouts around Sandwell. However, concerns with the continual change of officers who were responsible for green spaces in Sandwell. In response, the Cabinet Member stated that there were some vacancies in the Parks team which were currently being recruited to. It was advised that all issues should be reported via the Portal to ensure the correct team were aware of it.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism for the report and noted the number of green flag park in the borough. It was also highlighted that there were lots of green spaces that were underdeveloped, often in deprived areas, therefore this should form part of the public health strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth commended officers for the work undertaken forming the Green Spaces Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendations

The Green Spaces Strategy Implementation and Business Plan set out a clear programme of activity and direction for the service for the next three years. Specifically, the completion of the following objectives (detailed outputs within the Green Spaces Strategy).

Alternative options considered

An alternative option would be to not approve the Green Spaces Strategy Implementation and Business Plan 2022-25, which would, however, be detrimental in terms of lack of improvement programme for green spaces in Sandwell for the next 3 years.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to the Green Spaces Strategy Implementation and Business Plan 2022-25 as now submitted;
- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, approval be given to the planned programme of works for 2022/23 as now submitted;
- (3) that approval be given to pilot income generation initiatives in green spaces, as specified within the Green Spaces Strategy;
- (4) that approval be given to the Governance Arrangements, as set out within the Green Spaces Strategy;
- (5) that approval be given to the proposed new ways of working with Friends Groups, and the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism be authorised to approve the final agreement with Friends Groups following consultation;
- (6) that the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to develop additional programme of works for green spaces in-year (2022/23), if funding becomes available for additional works, in consultation with the Cabinet Member;
- (7) that the Director of Borough Economy authorise – through the Service Manager – emergency works for green spaces, as required for health and safety reasons.

139/22 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to:-

Minute No 139/22, 140/22 and 141/22 - any individual or information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual and;

141/22 - information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

140/22 **Provision of new council homes on 3 sites to be delivered via LHC Framework Alliance Contract**

Approval was sought to the development of three sites across Sandwell with new affordable rent council housing, subject to planning permission being obtained.

Reasons for recommendations

This project would design/deliver circa 30 new Council-owned affordable rented properties on a maximum of three council-owned sites which subject to design and planning requirements could include houses, bungalows and apartments.

Alternative options considered

Option A – deliver the schemes through the in-house design team and procure a development contractor through the traditional route

Option B – Develop the sites utilising other funding sources

Both Option A and Option B had the potential of having a long term detrimental effect on the Council being able to access Homes England Grant funding as a Developer Partner should the contracted timescales not be met.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to design and develop three sites across Sandwell with new affordable rent council housing, subject to planning permission being obtained, at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis, Coppice Street, West Bromwich and Railway Street, Tipton;
- (2) that the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account, subject to being satisfied that the proposal provides value for money, to deliver the scheme designs and enable the agreed Homes England delivery programme to be met utilising grant funding offered under the extended Homes England Strategic Partnership 1 Programme 2016 to 2021;
- (3) that approval be given to authorise the steps necessary for the delivery of the proposed projects, including:
 - (a) subject to (2) above, the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and subsequently procure, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations to use the LHC Framework Alliance procurement route to undertake the Design and development documents to RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 4 level;

- (b) subject to a) above, the Director – Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract for the Design RIBA stage 4 of three sites and/or development/partnership agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the schemes and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s), as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the sites with housing schemes to RIBA stage 4;
- (c) that subject to receiving the necessary Strategic Investment Unit appraisal approval mark of 65 or above for each individual site, the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to accept the Financial closure offer for the construction of Council new build properties, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's the Director – Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract for the development of each of the individual sites and/or development/partnership agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the schemes and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s), as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the sites with housing schemes on terms and conditions to be agreed and implemented by the Director of Regeneration and Growth.

141/22

Approval of bids from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council to Round 2 of Levelling Up Fund

Approval was sought for the four priority bids for submission into Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund.

Authorisation was also sought to establish an Assurance Panel for the purposes of assuring Levelling Up Fund bid proposals.

The Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board stated that members of the Board were briefed on the proposals for the Youth Facility in West Bromwich and welcomed the proposals. The Chair highlighted that all Councillors were not engaged in the consultation process and scrutiny was denied an opportunity to discuss Sandwell's youth offer. It was asked whether further consultation in relation to youth services would involve members in future.

In response, the Cabinet Member of Regeneration and Growth stated that the timescales for officers for the business cases were extremely tight. Various projects were brought to the Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board. Furthermore, prior to submission, project information was provided at a town level. Despite this, officers were working to improve the consultation process.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board questioned why consultation took place after projects were formed and whether projects would reflect residents' views. In response, it was reported that that officers had attended all town meetings. Timescales meant that officers had four months to put together the priorities and business cases. Further to this, another challenge was reconciling MP's views with Councillor's views to agree on the priority. While there would be a significant amount of opportunity to engage with Councillors in shaping the details of the proposals, it was accepted that the consultation process could be improved in the future. The process set by Government entailed MP's signing off the bids which made it difficult for officers to engage in a consultation process. Going forward, Sandwell needed to be ahead of

timescales for the next round of bids to ensure the full process could be conducted.

Reasons for recommendations

The Levelling Up Fund Guidance stated that bid submissions were to be compliant with the HM Treasury Green Book (2020), which entailed projects having a Full Business Case (FBC) which address five cases; Strategic, Economic, Commercial, Financial and Management.

Under the proposed LUF Assurance Panel model, the Strategic Investment Unit would undertake a review of the financial case of each bid, on the basis that the Full Business Cases had been prepared by a specialist consultant. That specialist consultant would be required to present the Full Businesses Cases to the Assurance Panel for consideration. Should the panel accept the proposal, they would then have delegated authority from Cabinet to submit those bid proposals.

Alternative options considered

The alternative option would be to keep the existing assurance arrangements contained within the Financial Regulations, but this would create a risk that the submission deadline of noon 6 July 2022 would not be achieved. The LUF investments were critical to addressing a range of issues and delivering real improvements in the Borough.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to the following four priority bids for submission into Round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund:
 - Tipton Town Centre, Tipton (West Bromwich West)
 - Haden Hill Leisure Centre, Rowley Regis (Halesowen & Rowley Regis)
 - Grove Lane, Smethwick (Warley)
 - Youth Provision Facility, West Bromwich (West Bromwich East;

- (2) that the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account, subject to being satisfied that the proposal provides value for money, to deliver the scheme designs and enable the agreed Homes England delivery programme to be met utilising grant funding offered under the extended Homes England Strategic Partnership 1 Programme 2016 to 2021;
- (3) that the Director of Finance be authorised to sign and submit the Levelling Up funding applications and any necessary ancillary documentation for the maximum value of £80m;
- (4) that approval be given to make an exemption from the Council's Financial Regulations to enable Resolution (1) and (2) above;
- (5) that the Director of Finance be authorised to identify the minimum 10% match funding contribution to the Levelling Up Fund programme up to the maximum value of £8,000,000 through a combination of funding sources, including Council-owned assets and Prudential Borrowing;
- (6) that the Director of Law & Governance be authorised to enter into or execute under seal funding agreements or necessary ancillary documentation for the receipt of the funding, on terms to be agreed in collaboration with the Director of Regeneration & Growth and the Director of Finance;
- (7) that the Director of Finance in consultation with the Director of Housing and the Director of Regeneration & Growth be authorised to appropriate assets from the HRA to the General Fund, or vice versa, that fall within the scope of the bids in order to meet the match funding

contribution for the Levelling Up Fund and adjust the accounts accordingly.

[Councillor Carmichael left the room at this point. Councillor Piper subsequently took the Chair]

142/22 **Management Options Appraisal – Leisure**

Consideration was given to management options for the provision of leisure facilities in Sandwell.

In response to a question raised by the Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism stated contract management and performance would be a priority. Furthermore, the vision was not only to compete with other local authorities, but also with the private sector.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources that the Council's role was not only to monitor the performance of the contract with performance indicators as part of the contract, but the Council also sought to offer a holistic leisure facility.

Reasons for recommendations

The recommendation sought to implement a sustainable management solution in the long term based on the detailed appraisal of the management options, and to provide a solid evidence basis to enable the Council to make a well-informed decision with the benefit of a clear audit trail.

The recommendation supported an appropriate sports and leisure facility management solution able to support and to address the holistic leisure needs of Sandwell residents.

Alternative options considered

Option 1 - In House Leisure Services for the future operation of this portfolio of the Council's leisure facilities;

Option 2 - Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) for the future operation of this portfolio of the Council's leisure facilities;

Option 3 - External Provision for the future operation of this portfolio of the Council's leisure facilities.

Having considered all three options, it was deemed that option 2 should be progressed.

Agreed that the Director of Borough Economy be authorised to undertake detailed preparation in liaison with the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism to progress Option 2: 'Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) for the future operation of this portfolio of the Council's leisure facilities.

Meeting ended at 5.01pm.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk