

Appendix 7

Progress against the Fairer Sandwell Principles



The Fairer Sandwell principles were established in the refreshed corporate plan to ensure we are addressing equality in everything we do. These principles drive how we do things as a council and run through all the activities in the plan. The quarter 1 monitoring information has been summarised against the four Fairer Sandwell principles below:

Local Investment

Much of the council's activity, and particularly regeneration activity, contributes to building local investment. Good progress has been made in drawing funding into Sandwell.

- The Town Fund Investment Plans in West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis are complete, securing £67.5m towns deal funding. All 16 Towns Fund projects have commenced the delivery stage, with one project – the Digital Den in Carters Green, West Bromwich, due to be completed in August 2022.

- In addition, the council have also submitted four bids totalling circa £88m to the Government Levelling Up Fund. It is anticipated that a decision from Government will be received during the autumn and if successful, Sandwell will receive funds to build a new Leisure Centre for Haden Hill; build a new Youth Hub in West Bromwich Town Centre, build new homes in Tipton Town Centre, and new homes in the Grove Lane area of Smethwick.
- West Bromwich Towns Fund bid is a major step forward in bringing more residential development into the town centre and other progress has been made in acquiring a significant land asset in the town centre for mixed residential development
- Additional funding has been secured for housing need– securing £500,000 to support people in transition to the area through the refugee and asylum process and £250,000 from the Rough Sleeper Initiative to prevent rough sleeping
- Sandwell's Inclusive Recovery Action plan for businesses was endorsed by Cabinet and additional resources are being sought through UKSPF to support delivery of the action plan
- The budget has been secured for more business engagement events and Enterprise officer is being recruited to support development and growth of business start ups
- Progress has been constrained to deliver the £16m capital programme of improvements to the highway network (amber risk) due to recruitment difficulties and the recent priority for the Commonwealth Games
- Highway infrastructure repairs prioritised in red risk condition is itself a red risk due to forecasted budget pressures associated with inflation and escalating red risk condition therefore overspend will be necessary to meet responsibilities of the Local Highway Authority
- Key infrastructure projects are at various stages of delivery (to be reported in more detail in Q2)– Birchley Island is at the Detailed Design Stage. Funding secured and route from Dudley Port Railway Station to Great Bridge at Detailed Design Stage and Blackheath Interchange at Detailed Design Stage
- In terms of securing more local spend, funding has been secured for three years for the Anchor Network coordinator and this is out for recruitment. The Anchor Network continues to make good progress on its identified priorities

- The review of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules is on track, aiming to make it easier for suppliers to do business with the Council.

Doing things with the community

The Council is committed to engaging with and listening to residents in a more meaningful way because we know that better decisions and better services will result if we do things together with the community. The council has made some progress but recognises this a key area for development and more progress is needed.

- Increasing our engagement with tenants through the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group which is fully operational and training is being rolled out to tenant volunteers
- Working with partners, including the community/voluntary sectors to reduce social isolation and ensure people are connected
- 1428 activities have been delivered across libraries and museums
- Developed programme of cultural and event activities alongside the Commonwealth Games to maximise community engagement
- Increasing investment of public health funds into community voluntary and faith sector grants. Healthy Sandwell advice and referral service up and running. Some minor slippage on investment of community mental health programmes in that some projects will finish later than June 22.
- Vaccination roll out and contact tracing complete, showing great success in working with and engaging community and faith groups.

Green in everything we do

The Council is making progress in building green considerations into its business and addressing the enormous task of carbon reduction.

- Climate Change Programme Board established of senior officers across the council and climate change considerations are to be included on Cabinet report templates
- Carbon literacy training on track to commence after summer period – provider in place and first cohort of trainees identified

- Various projects have been initiated to reduce carbon emissions both in the council's estate and wider borough – including solar panels and heat pumps in council buildings, electrification of our fleet vehicles and working with community groups to fund climate related projects
- Capital funding still to be secured to replace 4000 street lanterns with low energy LED lighting and computer management, therefore an amber risk
- Rolling programme of upgrades to our housing stock to improve energy efficiency is on track. The 30 year HRA Business Plan is under development. A series of programmes have taken place using LAD2 and Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme funding for retrofitting Council owned homes. A review of 6-7,000 properties is planned to assess their condition.
- Review of Social Value Policy as part of contract procedure rules is on track – this will incorporate sustainability considerations into the contract process.
- Funding applied for Circular Economy Officer to identify how businesses can work better together to reduce waste and carbon footprint. Funding is also being sought for Green Peer Business Programme Officer to provide business decarbonisation training and plans for business. Funding has not been approved therefore an amber risk.
- Walking and cycling infrastructure are in various stages of delivery throughout the borough and overall progress is on track
- West Midlands Metro extension Phase 1 Wednesbury to Dudley under construction and Sprint Phase 1 A34 is at Detailed Design Stage
- 37 on-street residential charge points for delivery in 2022 with funding secured
- Towns Fund secured for Canal Rivers Trust project in Rowley Regis with the aim of making the best use of our waterways. Currently working on Dudley no.2 Canal, Birmingham Old Line Canal and MMUH canal towpath and access improvements

No one is left behind

Many of the council's activities aim to support the most vulnerable or in need in Sandwell's community. This is a snapshot of how services

across the council are addressing inequality in delivering the corporate plan.

- Black Country Early Years Outcomes Group specifically focussing on communication and language and on track, working with National Literacy Trust to launch First Words Together across the Black Country, targeting children up to 2 years old
- Barnardo's now operating Children's Centres and the transition has been successful. Majority of existing volunteers have been transferred across.
- Working to identify SEND early by working with health visiting service, children's centres and private day nurseries
- To promote the importance of communication and language, Babbling Babies programme has been delivered as part of Changes programme to expectant and new parents.
- Wellcomm screening of children from 18 months now included in speech language and communication pathway
- First Words Together is being evaluated so that lessons can be learnt before roll out across the borough.
- Children's Centre teachers have delivered borough-wide training for library staff on Play, Talk, Read programme delivered in children's centres
- Increase of 3% in the proportion of primary schools and academies rate good or better by Ofsted (Dec 21-July 22). Proportion of secondary schools and special schools/PRU have stayed the same.
- Work experience placements have recommenced following the covid pandemic
- Early Help strategy has been launched
- Options appraisal for remodelling mental health and day care services to be considered by Leadership Team August/September 22, therefore some slippage and an amber risk
- In house learning disability day offer is operational and recruitment to new community navigator service is underway
- Willow Gardens fully open operationally and filling current voids
- Walker Grange plan to upgrade and develop dementia offer showing some slippage in developing options paper for leadership team

- Harvest View (New Integrated Health and Care site) – planned start of the service from 1 November with phased implementation after that
- Carers' Strategy and Delivery Plan approved by Health and Wellbeing Board and implementation on track
- Bid for new purpose-built youth facility in West Bromwich been submitted to Levelling Up Fund and Youth Service offer being reviewed
- Implementation of new model of library delivery (Library +) on track
- ASB multi agency response pilot being development – professional witnessing service internally to deal swiftly with ASB (11 cases referred)
- Domestic Abuse Strategy 21-24 adopted and Implementation Plan being monitored via DASP – Q1 – 2037 domestic abuse crimes/non crimes recorded, 238 cases in MARAC, 66% repeat rate
- New Homelessness Strategy adopted with a focus on increasing prevention, early intervention and rapid rehousing
- Services commissioned to deliver resettlement support to asylum seekers and refugees from Afghanistan
- Services commissioned to deliver resettlement support to refugees from Ukraine in Q1
- Total monetary value of benefits awarded assisted by Welfare Rights Service £3,817,802. Monetary gains are below target level as the service has been instrumental in supporting residents with energy grant payment and enquiries (amounting to only £150, whereas benefit related gains can go into thousands per household. For this reason, total number of people assisted is above target at 3,162.
- Funding and activity in place to support up to 200 businesses with membership to business growth organisations. Proposals in place to support to 50 businesses to trade in new markets
- Work continues to ensure young people have access to good jobs and guidance in education institutions.