



Equality Impact Assessments Toolkit EqIA Template











You must consider the <u>Equality Impact Assessment Guidance</u> when completing this template.

The EDI team can provide help and advice on undertaking an EqIA and also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EqIA documents.

EDI team contact email: edi team@sandwell.gov.uk

Quality Control	
Title of proposal	Council Plan
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Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EqIA	James Mclaughlin
Date EqIA considered by Cabinet	17 July 2024
Where the EqIA is Published	Link to be inserted when papers are published.
(please include a link to the EqIA and send a copy of the final EqIA to the EDI team)	

Section 1.

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required

The proposal is for the approval of the Council Plan 2024-2027 by Cabinet

Prior to March 2024 the council had been under statutory intervention and the council's Corporate Plan was primarily focused on improving standards and address concerns identified by the government appointed commissioners and of external reviews undertaken. The council came out government intervention on 22 March 2022.

In view of the sustained improvement that the Council has demonstrated it was felt that the time was right to refocus the councils efforts and develop a new Council Plan that would take us forward from being brilliant at the basics to being an outstanding Council.

The new council plan outlines our strategic themes, sets out our vision for the future, and details the actionable steps we will take to achieve our goals. Through innovative leadership, collaborative efforts, and a deep understanding of our resident's needs, we will ensure that Sandwell Council not only meets but exceeds the expectations of those we are here to support.

Performance measures have been aligned against the outcomes under each strategic theme which, along with the updates to the business plan actions, will allow the Council to understand if we are delivering against the Council Plan (reported on a quarterly and annual basis). It is proposed that there is a two-tier approach to performance measures: -

- 1. Council measures that are within the gift of the Council and that we can set a meaningful and ambitious target for.
- Contextual measures that are important for the Council to monitor but are not solely influenced by the Council and that we would not set a target for.

Section 2.

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data

The strategic themes, our vision for the future, the actionable steps we will take to achieve our goals and the performance measures out lined in the Council Plan 2024-27, have been informed by a number of sources of data and information; including demographic data and consultation and engagement carried out by the council. Each of the strategic themes identifies "what the evidence tells us", which is a summary of the issues identified from the data and other information we have available to us.

Overview of Sandwell and demographics

Sandwell is a local government administrative area created in 1974 following successive local government reorganisations that brought together six boroughs: Oldbury, Rowley Regis and Smethwick in the south, and Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich in the north.

In an area of low incomes, some 28,600 homes are still managed by the council in 2019 accounting for 21.6% of the borough housing stock. International migration has been a major driver of change, first from the Commonwealth then from Europe and globally, including asylum seekers and refugees. From 2002-20, some 58,000 national insurance registrations were given in Sandwell to overseas nationals from 136 countries, although many have not remained.

It is now increasingly ethnically diverse, with an estimated 37% Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority population in 2019, when 37% of births also were to women not UK-born. This contributes to a young age profile, with 40% of people under 30 in 2019, although some neighbourhoods are rapidly ageing. Sandwell remains the eighth most deprived English district. This reflects place-based issues but most seriously, people-based outcomes: low skills and educational attainment leading to labour market exclusion; child and family poverty; and poor health and life expectancy.

The Census 2021 found that Sandwell's population is 341,835 with an increase of 11% since 2011, this is the highest growth across the Black Country at 6.4%, West Midlands 6.7% and England and Wales 6.3%.

Age

Sandwell has a much younger population than England overall, with:

- a larger proportion of the population aged under 20 The number of under 20s has been steadily rising since 2001, with a 13.1% increase between 2011 and 2021.
- Residents aged 30 to 49 is also much larger compared to England.
- The proportion of the population aged 50 and over in England is much larger than in Sandwell, particularly in the 65-69 and 70-74 age groups.

Health, Disability and Unpaid Care

- Life Expectancy at birth in Sandwell is 76.1 years for males and 80.7 years for females compared to 79.4 years for males and 83.1 for females in England (Fingertips PHE, 2018/20)
- In Sandwell, 20% of residents were disabled under the Equality Act, compared with 17.8% in England and Wales.
- 9.9% of Sandwell residents were disabled and said their disability limits their day-to-day activities a lot.
- 4% of Sandwell households included 1 disabled person (25.6% in England and Wales), whilst 8.3% of households contained 2 or more disabled people (6.7% in England and Wales).
- In Sandwell almost 30,000 residents aged 5 years and over provided unpaid care in 2021.
- 5% of residents aged 5 years and over provided 50 or more hours unpaid care a week.
- In Sandwell, 40.8% of people reported very good health, compared with 47.5% in England and Wales.
- 8% reported bad or very bad health (5.4% in England and Wales).

Ethnic Groups

- In 2021, 57.3% (195,620) of residents in Sandwell identified their ethnic group within the "White" category, compared with 81.7% in England and Wales. Sandwell has seen a decrease from 69.9% in the 2011 Census.
- As part of the "White" ethnic group, 52.1% (177,930) of the total population in Sandwell identified their ethnic group as "English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British" (compared with 74.4% in England & Wales), this is a continued decrease from 65.8% in 2011, and from 78.0% who identified this way in 2001.
- The next most common high-level ethnic group was "Asian or Asian British" accounting for 25.8% (88,020) of the overall population, this ethnic group also saw the largest percentage point. increase from 2011, up from 19.2% (59,260 people).
- Across the 19 ethnic groups, large changes were seen in the numbers of people identifying their ethnic group as "Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group" (3.4%, 11,710 in 2021, up from 1.3%, 3,880 in 2011), and "

- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African: African' (3.7%, 12,670 in 2021, up from 1.4%, 4,400).
- In Sandwell, 10.6% (13,840) of households consisted of members identifying with two or more different ethnic groups, an increase from 9.1% (11,035) in 2011.
- The Census 2021 reported 324 (0.1%) residents as from a Gypsy and Traveller background which is similar to the Gypsy and Traveller community, regionally and nationally.
- Where respondents selected, they identified as one of the "other" ethnic groups within each broad category, they were able to write in their ethnicity. In Sandwell, the largest of these groups in 2021 are "Sikh", accounting for 2.3% of the population, and "Polish" (1.7%).

Language

• The Census 2021 stated that 83.6% (274, 710) of Sandwell residents, aged three years and over, had English as a main language, compared with 91.1% in England and Wales. The Sandwell figure is down from 88.0% in 2011.

Gender Identity

The question on gender identity was new for Census 2021. **The question asked**, "Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?".

- Nationally, 45.7 million (94.0% of the population aged 16 years and over) answered the question. In Sandwell, this fell to 92.6% (meaning 7.4% did not answer the question).
- In total, 244,450 (91.9%) of Sandwell residents answered "Yes" and 1,970 (0.7%) answered "No".

Economic Activity and Travel to Work

- At Census Day, 21 March 2021, 155,190 residents aged 16 years and over in Sandwell were economically active (58.4% compared with 60.6% in England and Wales), while 110,830 (41.7%) were economically inactive (compared with 39.4% nationally).
- Among residents aged 16 years and over, almost half were employees (46.3%, 123,000, compared with 47.6% nationally),
- Almost 1 in 15 were self-employed (6.8%, 18,070) and a further 5.3% (14,125) were unemployed but looking for work. This compares with 9.6% and 3.4% nationally.
- 4% of residents aged 16 years and over were economically inactive because of retirement (compared with 21.6% In England and Wales).
- Census 2021 estimates that 26,350 (18.7%) residents aged 16 years and over in employment in Sandwell worked mainly at or from home in the

- week before Census Day, 21 March 2021. This compares with 31.2% nationally.
- Almost 115,000 residents aged 16 years and over in employment (81.3%) gave a method other than "at or from home".
- The most selected mode of travel to work was driving a car or a van (52.9%, 74,590 of all usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment).

Religion

- The religion question is voluntary; 94.6% of Sandwell's residents answered the question in 2021, an increase from 93.9% in 2011.
- For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population (46.2%) described themselves as "Christian", a 13.1 % decrease from 59.3% in 2011.
- This pattern was mirrored in Sandwell, where 39.9% (136,350) residents described themselves as "Christian" in 2021, compared with 55.2% (170,075) in 2011. Despite this decrease, "Christian" remained the most common response to the religion question.
- "No religion" was the second most common response in Sandwell, increasing by 7.4% to 26.1% (89,100) from 18.7% (57,720) in 2011.
- There were increases in the number of people who described themselves as "Muslim" (45,760, 13.4% in 2021, up from 25,250, 8.2% in 2011) and "Sikh" (39,250, 11.5% in 2021, up from 26,930, 8.7% in 2011).

Sex

 Of the 341,900 residents in Sandwell in 2021, 168,200 (49.2%) are male and 173,600 (50.8%) are female. There are now 130,200 households in Sandwell, compared to 121,500 in 2011 - a rise of 7.2%.

Sexual Orientation

The census question on sexual orientation was a voluntary question asked of those aged 16 years and over.

- Nationally, 44.9 million people (92.5% of the population aged 16 years and over) answered the question. In Sandwell this fell to 91.6% (meaning 8.4% did not answer the question).
- In Sandwell, 237,540 people (89.3%) identified as straight or heterosexual.
- Around 6,100 people (2.3%) identified with an LGB+ orientation ("Gay or Lesbian", "Bisexual" or "Other sexual orientation").

Education

There were 75,640 schoolchildren and full-time students (23.7%) in 2021 across Sandwell, higher than the England and Wales figure of 20.4%. More than 1 in 5 (22.7%) Sandwell residents aged 16 years and over had Level 4 or above qualifications (for example, Higher National Certificate, Higher

National Diploma, Bachelor's degree and post-graduate qualifications). This compares with 33.8% in England and Wales.

In 2021, almost 30% of Sandwell residents aged 16 and over (28.9%, 76,840), reported having no qualifications. This is much higher than the England and Wales figure of 18.2%.

Across Sandwell, apprenticeships were the highest qualification for 4.8% of people (12,760).

Industry and Occupation

The largest number of Sandwell residents aged 16 years and over in employment the week before Census Day, 21 March 2021, worked within the broad wholesale, retail and motor trade industry (17.4%, 24,550 out of 141,070 in employment, compared with 15.0% in England and Wales).

Employment in the manufacturing industry decreased by 3.1% (11.5%, 16,280 in 2021, compared with 14.6%, 18,740 in 2011), whereas employment in health and social work activities increased by 2.7%s (15.8%, 22,320 in 2021, compared with 13.1%, 16,810 in 2011).

In Sandwell, more people were employed in elementary occupations compared with any other broad occupation categories (15.6%, 21,980 people). Nationally the category which employs the largest number of people is professional occupations (20.2%).

The most common socio-economic classification in Sandwell was routine occupations (18.1% of residents aged 16 years and over, 48,140). In England and Wales, the most common was lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations (19.9%).

As a Council we are committed to listening to the views and perceptions of residents to ensure that we understand the impact of our services across the Borough and the lived experiences of all residents, including our children and young people.

The Council Plan integrates insights from a variety of surveys and consultations conducted over recent years, ensuring that our plans are reflective of, and responsive to, the needs of our community. The points below summarise findings from some of the key pieces of intelligence used: -

Residents' Survey 2022 and 2023

These annual surveys capture a broad spectrum of residents' opinions on council services, community well-being, and priority areas for improvement. These surveys are carried out to ensure that the respondents are representative of the Sandwell residents and demographics

Key Findings:

- Increased demand for enhanced public safety measures.
- Strong desire for improved local healthcare services.
- Support for more community-based activities and green spaces.

Budget Consultations 2022 and 2023

These consultations provide insights into residents' priorities for public spending and areas where they feel more investment is needed. The budget consultation is carried out in such a way as to ensure that the respondents are representative of the Sandwell residents and demographics

Key Findings:

- Residents prioritise spending on education and youth services.
- o Strong advocacy for maintaining and improving public infrastructure.
- o Calls for more efficient allocation of resources to social services.

DLUC Survey of Sandwell 2023

Conducted by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, this survey provides comprehensive data on socio-economic conditions and resident satisfaction.

Key Findings:

- Recognition of improvements in local transport but need for further enhancements.
- Mixed feedback on housing availability and affordability.
- High levels of satisfaction with recent urban regeneration projects.

Shape Surveys (2015 – 2022)

These surveys track long-term trends in satisfaction of children and young people living in Sandwell.

Key Findings:

- children and young people are finding life challenging with the pressures of schoolwork, exams and fitting into society in an environment of increasing crime and substance misuse.
- Children and young people want to be listened to, so they can be supported adequately, and their needs can be met, particularly to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Housing Strategy Consultation 2023

This consultation gathers input on housing policies and future development plans.

Key Findings:

- Demand for more affordable housing options.
- o Importance of sustainable and eco-friendly building practices.
- Need for diverse housing solutions to cater to varying community needs.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023

This survey measures the satisfaction levels of tenants living in council properties.

Key Findings:

- Overall satisfaction with council housing management has improved.
- Areas for improvement include communication with tenants and responsiveness to issues.
- Positive feedback on recent renovations and upgrades to housing units.

This information together with intelligence from our quarterly performance monitoring provided the platform for the development of the Council Plan. Officers used this intelligence to develop the strategic themes as the broad areas of focus in the Plan: -

- Growing up in Sandwell
- Living in Sandwell
- Healthy in Sandwell
- Thriving Economy in Sandwell

All underpinned by One Council One Team

In addition to the above the following has also been used/has informed the development of the council plan and the performance measures that have been identified that will support the delivery of outcomes:

- Sandwell Trends
- Staffing data
- Equality monitoring reports
- Town profiles

Public Sector Equality Duty Service Users Report
Section 3.
Consultation
The majority of evidence used to inform and develop the council plan, as outlined in section 2 above, has been as an outcome of engagement and consultation. This
consultation has identified the key concerns and issues for Sandwell residents,
which has been used to develop the actions and performance measures in the
council plan. The council will continue to undertake consultation and engagement with the residents and key stakeholders in Sandwell, which will enable it to
confirm whether the priorities and actions identified are still relevant to residents

and key stakeholders. In addition, the council plan will be a public document.

There has been ongoing internal consultation with managers in the council, including the wider leadership team, on developing the plan and the outcome measures; as well as conversations with cabinet members.

Consultation undertaken with key stakeholders when discussing how to improve on the previous Corporate Plan and develop a new council plan indicated that they wanted to see a more streamlined approach with fewer themes and a focus on fewer priorities. This has been adopted and was the approach taken by the leadership team when discussing the various iterations of the Council Plan.

Section 4.

Summary assessment of the analysis at section 4a and the likely impact on each of the protected characteristics (if any)

It is assessed that the proposals in this report will have no adverse impact on groups with protected characteristics. The Council Plan and the four strategic themes, performance measures aligned against the outcomes under each strategic theme and the plans that will be developed to deliver them, including alignment of budgets, should have a positive impact on the residents and visitors to Sandwell; including those with protected characteristics.

The plan outlines our strategic themes, sets out our vision for the future, and details the actionable steps we will take to achieve our goals. Through innovative leadership, collaborative efforts, and a deep understanding of our resident's needs, we will ensure that Sandwell Council not only meets but exceeds the expectations of those we are here to support. This plan is more than a roadmap; it is a pledge to our community—a promise of transparency, efficiency, and progress in all our endeavours.

The Council Plan is structured simply, focusing on evidence, outcomes and measures that will allow us to monitor and track our progress.	
measures that will allow us to monitor and track our progress.	

Section 4a - What are the potential/actual impacts of the proposal on the protected characteristics?

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Age	P	There will be a positive impact on this protected characteristic through the strategic themes "Healthy Sandwell" and "Growing Up in Sandwell". For younger people there are specific outcomes and measures in the plan including: • Achieve UNICEF UK Child Friendly status • Ensure the Council maintains a safeguarding oversight of all Children and Young People. • Ensure that every child in Sandwell has access to a place in a good or outstanding school.		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		 Maintain the continued and sustained improvement of SEND Travel Assistant to improve the offer, whilst reducing the overall cost, with a focus on home to school transport. Support schools to Improve school attendance and reduce persistent absence. 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. Work alongside community partners to ensure that all parents and carers in Sandwell are offered support in a timely way relating to 		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		their queries and that they have access to the information, guidance and advice that they need to help support their child. • Work with all professionals who have contact with our CYP to help them understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma. We will be a workforce that provides services with compassion and understanding.		
		For older people and those with care and support needs actions include: • Commission a new supported housing service to maximise value for money and to		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		 address complex housing needs and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. Deliver the Transformation Programme for Adult Social Care. Keep people safe and supported to enable them to live independently in the community. 		
Disability	P	There will be a positive impact on this protected characteristic through the strategic theme "Healthy Sandwell". There are plans to: • improve choice and independence for those with care and support needs and to improve services through		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		joined up health and social care • keeping people safe and supported to enable them to live independently in the community • providing access to a range of council services locally • Health outcomes for Sandwell's most vulnerable groups are improved and health inequalities are reduced		
Gender Reassignment	Ne	The Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, it is assessed should have no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		identified as being negative will be addressed.		
Marriage and civil partnership	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact people with the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership. It is therefore assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Pregnancy and maternity	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact people with the protected characteristic of Pregnancy and Maternity. It is therefore assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		
Race	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact negatively on people with the protected characteristic of Race. It		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		is therefore assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		
Religion or belief	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact people with the protected characteristic of Religion or Belief. It is therefore assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		
Sex	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact negatively on people with the protected characteristic of Sex. It is therefore assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Sexual Orientation	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact negatively on people with the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation. It is therefore assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		
Could other soci	o-economic gr	oups be affected?		
Carer Low income groups Veterans/Armed Forces Community	Ne	There are no specific commitments or actions in the Council Plan's four strategic themes, together with the outcomes identified, that will impact negatively on other socio-economic		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Other		groups. It is therefore felt that assessed there should be no direct impact on this protected characteristic. Monitoring will be undertaken via the accompanying Performance management framework to the Council Plan and any impact that is identified as being negative will be addressed.		

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then please move to Sections 6.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

There are no anticipated adverse impacts. The Council Plan is a high level plan with four strategic themes. The council plan is underpinned by Assistant Director Plans, which will be the vehicle by which the strategic themes will be delivered and specific actions identified. It is expected that individual EIA's will be undertaken on specific changes to policy or service delivery around the actions in Assistant Director Plans that will help to identify any likely adverse impact and these will require either Leadership Team, Cabinet Member or Cabinet approval.

There are robust oversight structures in place that should pick up issues on adverse impact and issues on equality and diversity. In addition to the quarterly and annual monitoring that will be reported to Leadership Team and Cabinet, there are also Scrutiny Boards who have the power to call in reports they have concerns about and look at specific issues, including around equality and diversity.

The council also have an Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Commission. The EDI Commission has been established to help promote and embed equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the operations and activities of Sandwell Council. The Commission serves to help ensure that the council complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and that all residents of Sandwell are treated equitably. The EDI Commission will have a critical role in both being a critical friend and challenging the council on issues around EDI, including the Council Plan

6. Section 6: Decision or actions proposed

The decision proposed is to go ahead with the recommendation to Cabinet to approve the Council Plan.

7. Monitoring arrangements
Performance measures have been aligned against the outcomes under each strategic theme which, along with the updates to the business plan actions, will allow the Council to understand if we are delivering against the Council Plan. The performance measures will be reported on a quarterly and annual basis. The council will also annually publish the outcomes against specific performance measures so that Sandwell residents can see our progress.
The council have also given a commitment to progress and drive our equality performance through the Equality Framework for Local Government and utilise Council resources to support our equalities agenda. We will achieve excellence against the EFLG framework by 2029.

Section 8 Action planning (if required)

Question no. (ref)	Action required	Lead officer/ person responsible	Target date	Progress

If you have any suggestions for improving this process, please contact EDI_Team@Sandwell.gov.uk