

## Cabinet

<b>Report Title</b>	Directorate Business Plans 2026 to 2027
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 11 March 2026
<b>Report Author</b>	Kayleigh Walker, Senior Lead Officer – Corporate Performance Management  Jack Whitehouse, Lead Officer – Service Improvement
<b>Lead Officer</b>	James McLaughlin, Assistant Chief Executive
<b>Lead Cabinet Member(s)</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Why is this a key decision?</b>	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Identify exempt information and exemption category</b>	Open
<b>Is the report urgent?</b>	No
<b>Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)</b>	NA
<b>Appendices (if any)</b>	Appendix 1 - Directorate Plans on a Page 2026 – 2027

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To approve Directorate Business Plans for 2026/2027.
- 1.2 As part of council's strategic framework, this report sets out the directorate Business Plan 'Plans on a Page' for 2026 to 2027 as delivery vehicles for the

Council Plan 2024 – 2027. Business plans feed into the council’s corporate Performance Management Framework and have been developed based on intelligence from resident engagement, performance data and local outcomes.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Approve the directorate Business Plans on a Page for 2026/2027 as set out in Appendix 1.

## **3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations**

- 3.1 Sandwell Council’s Council Plan 2024-2027 was adopted in summer 2024, setting out the organisation’s strategic priorities for the medium-term based on analysis of the needs of the borough and feedback from residents. The Council’s business planning framework identifies the actions to be taken at directorate level to deliver the priorities in the Council Plan, which then inform the actions required at service, team and individual levels. The directorate level business plans set out the key actions required to deliver the priorities in the Council Plan, together with timescales and lead responsible officers. ‘Plans on a Page’ provide a high level, easy to read summary of the key actions across each directorate that align to delivery of the Council Plan.
- 3.2 The approach for business planning 2026/27 was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) in July 2025, with approval for the Service Improvement team to facilitate half day business planning workshops for each directorate as well as a wider session for Service Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service in the Assistant Chief Executive’s directorate.
- 3.3 This session took place in October 2025. During this meeting, the approach and timeline was presented, and Strategic Lead Officers from across the organisation were invited to highlight corporate priorities, share their intelligence and set out specific requirements for business plans. The intention was to ensure that officers incorporated these insights into their business planning actions. Evidence bundles were created at this time and shared with Directorate Leadership and Management Teams to inform the approach.
- 3.4 During November and early December 2025, officers from Service Improvement facilitated half day business planning workshops for each directorate. The workshops covered achievements and lessons learned, evidence and insight, defining priority actions and defining success factors, and were also tailored to suit each directorates needs.
- 3.5 Following the workshops, the Directorate Business Plans for 2026/27 were drafted and shared with Executive Directors and their Directorate Leadership Teams during January 2026 for feedback and their subsequent refinement. It

was at this point that the 'Plan on a Page' versions were created (please see Appendix 1). Plan on a Page versions were initially introduced and approved by Cabinet in July 2025. These versions provide a high-level overview of the directorate and serve as a useful communication tool for residents, Elected Members, and employees.

3.6 To drive accountability, all directorates have agreed to the recommendation that officers from Service Improvement will attend quarterly Directorate Leadership Team meetings throughout 2026/2027 to ensure business plans are a regular item on the agenda so that progress on business plan actions can be managed and challenged.

3.7 Each business plan sets out the following information:

- Council Plan outcome
- Priority Action
- Timescales for completion (quarter and month)
- Success factors to be achieved by March 2027
- Associated Corporate Performance Indicators
- Attached Medium Term Financial Strategy savings
- If the action reduces or links to strategic risk register
- Service Area
- Key Policies, Strategies and Action Plans
- Responsible Lead Officer
- Cabinet Member – where there is a joint Cabinet Member, this has been noted.

3.8 In total 132 Priority Actions have been set. Progress against these will be reported on as part of the Corporate Performance Report that is presented to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

3.9 It is expected that Plans on Pages will be built into both the internal and external Communications Forward Plans. In addition, these plans should be referred to during the Annual Review cycle and regularly during check-ins so that each employee is clear on the collective priorities the council expects to achieve, their contribution, and how performance and progress will be measured and managed.

## **4 Alternative Options Considered**

4.1 **Not publishing the 'Plans on a Page' for each Directorate.** The Directorate Business Plans demonstrate our values of being Accountable and Ambitions. These plans set out how the council will deliver the strategic outcomes set out

in the Council Plan. By publishing these plans, the council is being open and transparent about its ambitions and how its resources are allocated toward achieving the priorities that have been informed by the public. If these plans were not published, it would be difficult for Elected Members and residents to be informed about the council's plans and to hold it to account for performance.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 Directorate Business Plans have been developed based on intelligence from resident engagement and performance data. Where business plans identify changes to policies or services, appropriate consultation activity will be conducted.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications for this report. The council's Budget sets out the resources allocated to services to deliver the Council Plan and statutory services. These Business Plans provide details of the activity that will use the resources allocated. The financial position of the council is monitored throughout the year and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

## **7. Legal and Governance Implications**

- 7.1 The approach set out will ensure that Directorate Business Plans are aligned with the Council Plan strategic priorities and outcomes. This provides the golden thread that runs down to individual employee goals and accountability for achievement as part of the Annual Review process. Business Plans are an integral part of our performance management framework serving as mechanisms for measurement of progress and holding to account.
- 7.2 These are characteristics of a well functioning authority and demonstrate council's approach to continuous improvement, ensuring delivery of services with view to efficiency, economy and effectiveness in order to fulfil the Best Value Duty (Local Authority Act 1999) Under the duty, the council must "secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of efficiency, effectiveness and economy". The corporate performance management framework supports the Council to do this through tracking the effectiveness of its activities on improving the outcomes in the Council Plan, as well as identifying where improvement action is required. Through regular monitoring of progress against published Business Plans and performance measures, the council can hold itself to account and be more transparent about its performance to the public.

## **8. Risks**

- 8.1 The risk of not having an effective business planning approach in place is that the council does not achieve the commitments set out in the Council Plan. There is also a risk that the council cannot demonstrate its approach to

continuous improvement or demonstrate that the improvements made whilst under government intervention have been sustained. The approach set out in the report incorporates and embeds risk into the business planning process.

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)**

9.1 Equality measures and Business Planning Actions are included in the Performance Management Framework, under the One Council One Team Strategic Theme.

## **10. Other Relevant Implications**

10.1 Subject experts from the following services presented requirements from their respective areas and offered support to directorates in ensuring that areas are aligned and that any implications are considered as part of the development of Directorate Business Plans:

- Audit and Risk Management
- Child Friendly Sandwell
- Communications
- Corporate Parenting
- Corporate Performance
- Energy and Climate Change
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Health Determinants Research Collaboration
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- ICT
- Residents Survey
- Sandwell Aspirations
- Social Value

## **11. Background Documents**

11.1 Business Plans and Corporate PI Set 2025/26. Cabinet, 30 July 2025  
<https://sandwell.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s27924/Business%20Plans%20and%20Corporate%20PI%20Set%20202526.pdf>

11.2 Council Plan 2024 – 2027. Council, 23 July 2024  
<https://sandwell.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s22505/09%20-%20Council%20Plan%202024-2027.pdf>

## **12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?**

This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Themes:-

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

- One Council One Team Approach.

12.1 Developing business plans and subsequent plans for services sets out how the council will achieve the delivery of strategic themes, key priorities and outcomes outlined in the Council Plan 2024 – 2027.

12.2 Business planning contributes to the One Council One Team outcome to provide Clear and transparent decision making and effective governance.

