

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the Regeneration and Growth magazine - Insite

This edition will be released whilst we are in lockdown 2. The impact of the lockdown on our local businesses, the economy, and our communities should not be underestimated, and the Regeneration and Growth Directorate continues to work to mitigate the impacts locally. The government has announced a new business grant regime to support those businesses who are forced to close, and the Additional Restrictions Grant will enable the council to provide discretionary business grants to those businesses that are not eligible for other types of support but have been severely impacted by COVID-19. The council is driving forward its work on developing a more Inclusive Economy where the benefits of regeneration and investment are realised locally to the advantage of our SMEs and communities. Promoting the opportunities and success of the regeneration and economic development activities across the borough is part of this process and this magazine sets out some of the work the Regeneration and Growth Directorate have been undertaking in recent months.

Staff have recently celebrated National Customer Service week and whilst they recognised that the customer experience in 2020 has been like no other and the impact of events affecting the world today has changed the way in which they engage with their customers they were still able to do some online activities and five staff members within UDBS were nominated as Staff Stars for providing outstanding customer service. One staff member was also highlighted for the wellbeing support that she has offered her colleagues during these difficult times.

This issue includes; an update on the Town Funds and what it will mean for West Bromwich, Rowley Regis and Smethwick, details about the virtual exhibition highlighting the proposed Birchley Island M5 Junction 2 improvement scheme plus updates on the integrated social care health centre in Harvest Road and Moor Lane Extra Care Home, both in Rowley Regis and the demolition of the Bull Street car park, which is a catalyst to the regeneration of West Bromwich.

Are you thinking of having work carried out at your premises? Do you need advice on planning and building control services? Then read on to find out how changes to the planning portal website have made this easier.

The steel framework and roof trusses are emerging from the ground at the Sandwell Aquatic Centre in Smethwick. The building is starting to take shape and the scale of the new centre and the facilities within can really be appreciated. Over the next few months, work will start on the walls and roof of the building and installation of the dive tower will start before Christmas.

The Business Growth team has been nominated, via the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, for a Business Heroes award for going above and beyond during these unprecedented times.

The Demolition and Geotechnical teams are taking positive steps to help build a future pipeline of new business by launching a campaign to raise the profile of their specialist services, which are available to commission for funded projects that are based outside of the council.

The UDBS team had a virtual surveillance visit with the external assessor from CfA for their ISO 9001 accreditation and I am pleased to say that they retained it for another year. Well done to everyone in the team!

Tammy Stokes
Director of Regeneration & Growth



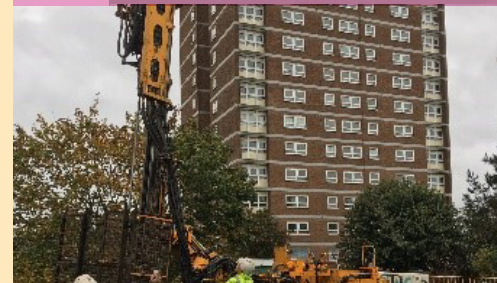
Page
2

Towns Fund



Page
5

Harvest Road



Page
7

Business Opportunities

**BLACK COUNTRY
CHAMBER
AWARDS
2020**

Page
11

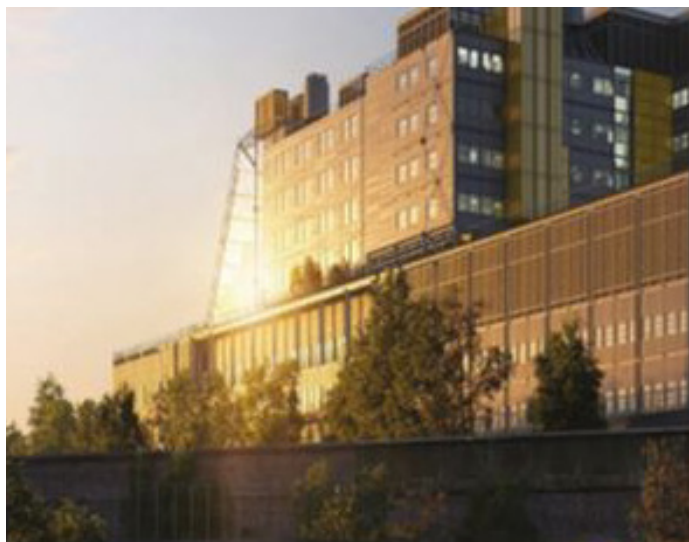
Business Heroes Awards



Page
12

Moor Lane

Towns Fund



Towns Fund could boost Sandwell by up to £75m

In September 2019 the government announced funding of £3.6bn in 101 towns across the UK, including West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis. The amount of funding for each town, the “Town Deal” will be agreed with government, up to a maximum of £25m per town.

The Towns Fund prospectus (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/towns-fund-prospectus>) shows, the objective of the scheme is to drive economic regeneration to deliver long-term growth through:

- Urban regeneration
- Building skills and enterprise
- Increasing connectivity

A ‘Superboard’ is coordinating three local boards in our borough, each of which will include a wide range of people from the community, businesses, voluntary, public sector and faith organisations. The Superboard initially is chaired by Jude Thompson, President of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.

Local Boards are being chaired by Chris Hinson (SIPS Education) for West Bromwich, Alan Taylor (MiGlass) for Smethwick and Adrian Eggington (Black Country Housing Group) for Rowley Regis. The aim of each board is to put together a Town Investment Plan to be

submitted to government to determine the level of funding each town will ultimately receive. All three Plans have now been submitted to Government on 30th October 2020.

Accelerated Funding:

In addition to the main funding, government announced ‘Accelerated Funding’ to support projects that will make an immediate impact in the 101 towns this financial year. Sandwell’s towns have been offered £750,000 each which can be used to enable:

- Improvements to or new parks and green spaces and sustainable transport links
- Improvements to town centres including repurposing empty commercial properties
- Demolition or site remediation where this will have an immediate benefit.

Proposals for projects using this Accelerated Funding were submitted by 14 August 2020 with funding to be spent by 31 March 2021. All three Towns have now had confirmation that they will receive £750,000 each to progress the schemes submitted in August.

To find out more, go to Sandwell Council’s Towns Fund page <http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/townsfund>.

town_deal@sandwell.gov.uk

West Bromwich Multi-Storey Car Park

Sandwell Council, in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority, has commenced works to demolish the Bull Street multi-storey car park, a long-standing eyesore site in West Bromwich.

The car park, erected in the 1970s, was shut in 2019 due to the buildings poor state of repair and ongoing deterioration. Since then it has sat vacant, occupying a key town centre regeneration site. Demolition of the car park will unlock much needed land for high-quality town centre homes and improvements to the local area, including increased greenery and community spaces.

On site works, undertaken by the council's contractor, Colemans, are proceeding as planned and are scheduled to be finished by early 2021. The separation of the car park from the Queen Square Shopping Centre has been completed and enabling works are in progress which will see the commencement of the mechanical demolition of the car park structure in the coming weeks.

The site is located within the WMCA's Town Centre Programme area and, as such, Sandwell Council have proactively sought

funding for this work. West Bromwich has also recently been selected to bid for up to £25m through the Towns Fund, which will also focus on the comprehensive regeneration of this area of the town, in addition to improving skills and connectivity. The demolition of the car park represents a step change in the council's ambitious regeneration plans for the town. Further consultation and engagement with local residents and business owners is planned in the coming months.

'It is an exciting step forward to see the demolition work starting on the car park, which is a site that local people are very interested in. Sandwell Council and the WMCA are committed to transforming this area of West Bromwich, which has become dated and hit hard by the challenges facing our town centres. This area of West Bromwich is home to some of the towns best known cultural and economic assets in the form of the markets and we understand how important these are to our communities. Improving the area and bringing people into the town will not only help those places to survive in a changing high street but will also make the area safer and more attractive for people to live, work and spend leisure time in West Bromwich.'

For further information please contact:
UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk



Birchley Island

Birchley Island M5 Junction 2 Improvement Scheme

The Strategic Case

Birchley Island is a crucial node in the Black Country transport network, important to commuters, businesses and the region's economic growth. The junction suffers from significant levels of congestion not only at peak hours, but throughout the day, impacting the competitiveness of local business and journey time reliability.

There is a poor accident record and no dedicated pedestrian or cycling facilities.

This scheme will provide significant capacity improvement, including lane widening, signal improvements and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Objectives of the Scheme are:

- To reduce delays and congestion;
- To improve bus service reliability, supporting a modal shift by enhancing the attractiveness of public transport;
- Provision of safer pedestrian and cycle links;
- Provision of improved junction control, lane markings reducing the potential for accidents.

The Benefits of the Scheme are:

Accessibility and Connectivity

- Improved connectivity across the region allowing better social inclusion;
- Improved and safer junction for all road users;

Housing

- The scheme will link new developments to the local, regional and national network;
- The scheme creates a safer environment for people living in planned new housing developments;

Local economy

- Improved access for current and future employees and employers;
- Improved access of goods to and from the market locally, regionally and nationally;
- Improved access for visitors, tourism and business throughout the Black Country;

Value for Money

Overall the scheme has been assessed as having a Benefit/Cost Ratio of 4:1 based on an assessment of potential accident saving and assumptions about growth cut off.

Programme Governance

A Programme Board and Project Board has been set up to oversee delivery, with representation from local authorities, Highways England and private sector stakeholders.

A new virtual exhibition has been created to showcase these proposals and you can view the virtual exhibition at:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/birchleyisland.

david_skeet@sandwell.gov.uk

Lead Authority - Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Partners



Highways

Autumn 2020

Planning Portal



What is the Planning Portal?

It's a website for information and services available relating to Planning and Building Control for both professional bodies and individuals who may be thinking about having work carried out to their properties.

What will I find on the site?

It offers information on whether planning or building regulation permission may be required. It also provides the ability to make an online application.

The online submission is step by step and enables you to pay online for planning applications but not building regulations but we are happy to discuss fees directly with you.

The site holds a wide range of other information: -

- Interactive guides - interactive house, guides on extensions, porches, outbuildings;
- Planning - how to apply, start a planning application, appeals, find a builder;
- Fee calculator – works out how much the planning application will cost you;
- Building Control - how to get approval, start an application;
- News - latest news, blogs;
- Services and information - Professional portal, FAQs.

Tell me more about the interactive guides

The interactive guides are simple to use and prove very useful, giving visual guidance on common questions like “do I need approval for a porch?”.

Access to reference material, design guidance and personal account

The professional Portal gives businesses access to guidance and legislation, toolkits, contacts to trade professionals, planning consultants and a media hub.

Anyone can create an account whereby you can submit, revisit and track your applications prior to submitting to any local authority signed up to the Planning Portal for both Planning and Building Regulation applications. Your account stores your submissions in one area no matter which geographical local authority your submission goes to giving you a one stop shop for all your submissions with an historic reference library of your applications.

The Planning Portal is there to guide and assist but if you are unsure it is advisable to contact your local authority.

support@planningportal.co.uk

Class D
The erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwelling house.

Summary
Erection of a porch
Adding a porch to any external door of your house is considered to be permitted development, not requiring an application for planning permission, provided the following limits and conditions are met:

1. Ground area of the porch, measured externally, not to exceed three square metres.
2. Highest part of the porch not to exceed three metres.
3. No part of the porch to be within two metres of any boundary that fronts a highway.

Important note
The permitted development allowances described here apply to houses, not flats, maisonettes or other buildings. You should check with your Local Planning Authority whether permitted development rights apply – they may have been removed by what are known as Article 4 directions. Other consents may be required if your house is listed or in a designated area.

When planning work you should read all the advice on the Planning Portal under 'Your responsibilities' – Other considerations before you start work'.

As well as other important information you will find guidance here on the permitted development regime.

Wales
This guidance relates to the planning regime for England. Policy in Wales may differ. Contact your local planning authority for further information.

Building Regulations
Building a porch at ground level and under 30 square metres in floor area is normally exempt from building regulations provided they meet a number of conditions. [For more information read Planning Portal online guidance.](#)

Installation, alteration or replacement of a chimney, flue or soil and vent pipe
[Read guidance on the permitted development regime under Class G.](#)

Disclaimer
Users should note that this is an introductory guide and is not a definitive source of legal information. [Read the full disclaimer.](#)

Definitions of terms used in this guide:
'Original house' - The term 'original house' means the house as it was first built or as it stood on 1 July 1948 (if it was built before that date). Although you may not have built an extension to the house, a previous owner may have done so.
'Designated land' - Designated land includes national parks and the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, conservation areas and World Heritage Sites.

This guide is sponsored by: [Explore our advertising options and commercial services...](#)

© Planning Portal 2019
PortalPlanQuest

Harvest Road



New Integrated Social Care and Health Centre at Harvest Road, Rowley Regis

Contractor Willmott Dixon is preparing to mobilise on site to begin the first phase of work and construction for the borough's new 80-bedroom en-suite integrated social care scheme designed by the in-house design team.

The scheme was very much led by the existing site constraints, namely two existing mineshafts to the north western portion of the site – which will now house a purpose designed garden with a 'wandering loop'.

The façade hopes to create a homely environment for its short-term visitors both internally and externally. As well as providing something enjoyable for passers-by to interact with. A public seating area with

trees will be added to the corner of where Dudhill and Harvest Roads meet, along with a wildflower meadow to the boundary verge of Harvest Road.

Internally the project focuses on the reablement of the residents as well as re-socialisation. With communal areas on each floor focusing on mixed usage of: dining, activity and down time, carefully designed to provide adequate separation with the allowance of good surveillance by staff.

Both the construction and completed project will see new jobs created within the borough as apprenticeships will be created for local individuals for the development and the building will be staffed and maintained by Sandwell Council.

For further information please contact:
UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk

Business Growth Team: adapting our support



In 'normal' times, the Business Growth Team is responsible for supporting businesses to access grant funding and information to help them grow.

Since the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, we have been working with all delivery partners to adapt the support we give to businesses.

Our role has included supporting firms to access grant funding for their resilience and stability, and helping them diversify from their usual production to aid NHS and key workers on the front line.

The Business Growth Team has worked closely with the Business Rates Team, identifying the processes that businesses

had to follow to apply for the Small Business Grants Fund and Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant Fund and – later on – Sandwell Council's Discretionary Business Grant Fund.

Once the council knows more about the Tier 2 Grants we will update our pages.

We continue to help field and respond to a high number of enquiries relating to grants and council support.

Moving forward, we are working with partners and directorates to identify what future support will need to be offered to businesses as they, and the economy, begin to recover. We are currently discussing this and it will be an ongoing process.

think_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk

Business Opportunities

During these difficult times it is good to know there are some positive steps being taken to help to build a future pipeline of new business for the Urban Design and Building Services team, based at Sandwell Council.

The Demolition and Geotechnical teams have launched a campaign to raise the profile of their specialist services, which are available to commission for funded projects that are based outside of the council.

Alison Coughlan, Senior Lead Strategic Manager who is co-ordinating the campaign

said, “Our professionally qualified experts have so much experience in their specialist fields and we have a flexible, collaborative approach and a commitment to our Customer Charter. Urban Design and Building Services is an ideal partner for any public funded contracts, particularly within the West Midlands area.”

Enquiries are being encouraged through a range of promotional activities and the team will be identifying potential opportunities and following these up over the coming weeks and months.

For further information please contact:
udbs_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk

New Business Opportunities for Demolition and Geotechnical Design Service



Think Sandwell's COVID-19 Business Support



**Local business support
during the global
coronavirus crisis**



In March, when it became apparent that the COVID-19 outbreak would affect every area of people's lives, we wanted to ensure Sandwell's business community had one-stop access to the latest information – and only from credible sources.

Our 'coronavirus support for Sandwell businesses' on www.thinksandwell.com began as a single page and evolved into a suite of resources, covering every topic from emergency funding to mental health.

Creating and updating these pages means processing huge amounts of rapidly changing information, from dozens of sources, and condensing it into meaningful signposts. A 'last updated' note is added on each page to give users confidence that they have the latest information and government guidance.

While coronavirus remains an ongoing threat to global health, we are liaising closely with Sandwell Council's Communications team to ensure messages being conveyed to Sandwell residents are disseminated in a

business-friendly way too.

During this difficult time, we have learned so much about the support available to businesses beyond the West Midlands. We now intend to continue managing our regular business support pages with a similar fervour and frequency to our coronavirus pages, in fact we have set up a 'Brexit: Business Toolkit' section to ensure you are as prepared as possible.

As we adjust to a 'new normal' it is reassuring to see the emphasis moving from crisis response towards continuity and recovery. We have a specific 'Recovery for Sandwell' page, listing business resources, impact research and environmental programmes in the hope our borough can emerge stronger than before.

If you have news or updates relating to the COVID-19 pandemic or how your business is preparing for Brexit that you'd like to feature on Think Sandwell, email:

think_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk

Quality Management

Urban Design and Building Services recently underwent their annual surveillance visit by Centre For Assessment virtually, and successfully retained ISO 9001: 2015 Quality Management registration for all their areas of activity.

The assessor commented: “It is evident that the system is working well and everyone had a clear understanding with regard to the relevant processes.”

The continuation of the ISO 9001 registration for Urban Design and Building



Services recognises their commitment to quality, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement the service area strives for.

For further information please contact:
UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk.

Urban Design and Building Services successfully retain ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management registration



Business Heroes Awards

The finalists in the Black Country Business Heroes Awards have been announced, with five Sandwell companies in the running for an award.

Chemical manufacturers Robinson Brothers, based on Phoenix Street in West Bromwich, has been shortlisted for two awards – Large Business Hero of the Year and Family Business Hero of the Year – and managing director Adrian Hanrahan is in the running for Business Hero of the Year.

SIPS Education, which is based on Cronehills Way in West Bromwich and offers specialist support services to schools, is another finalist in the Large Business Hero of the Year category. It has also been shortlisted for the Adaptability & Innovation award.

Oldbury-based building services firm Lord Combustion Services is up for three awards – Small Business Hero of the Year, Family Business Hero of the Year and Exceptional Employee or Team. It'll be competing in the latter category against the fuel cleaning team at West Bromwich power company IPU Group.

Another West Bromwich business, truck manufacturer and supplier Keltruck, has made the shortlist for International Trade Hero of the Year.

Jude Thompson, president of the Black Country Chamber, said, "I would like to thank everyone that has entered the Black Country Chamber Business Heroes Awards. We have genuinely been overwhelmed by the ingenuity, determination and resilience of the local business community in meeting the challenges of 2020. We received an exceptional number of extremely high-quality entries in every category and the judges found the shortlisting process extremely difficult. I would like to offer very many congratulations to all the finalists."

The shortlisted businesses will now go forward to the final – an exciting, high-energy digital event that will be live-streamed to the world. It takes place from 3.45pm to 5pm on Friday 13 November and you can register for a free viewing ticket on the Chamber website. Alternatively, you can buy a £30 ticket, which includes a gift package of drinks and nibbles delivered to your home or office, and a donation to the Black Country Chamber President's Charities, Teenage Cancer Trust and Parkinson's UK.

Think Sandwell's Business Growth Team wishes all the borough's finalists the best of luck and will be following the awards with baited breath.

think_sandwell@sandwell.gov.uk

**BLACK COUNTRY
CHAMBER
AWARDS
2020**

Sandwell Aquatics Centre

This month marks a huge milestone at the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Smethwick.

A lot has changed on site over the summer months with work progressing quickly. All three swimming pools, including the 50m competition pool, are now complete and installation of the structural steelwork has started with the first three roof trusses now in place and the main frame erected. The building is starting to take shape and the scale of the new centre and the facilities within can really be appreciated.

Over the next few months work will start on the walls and roof of the building and installation of the dive tower will start before Christmas.

In-house officers from Sandwell's Regeneration and Growth Team are undertaking numerous key roles on the project. These include: construction project management, commercial and financial management, stakeholder management, CDM regulations reviews, architectural and structural, mechanical and electrical engineering design reviews, construction quality inspections, and building control inspections and sign off.

These officers have been working closely with construction partner Wates Construction Limited to ensure work continued on site during the national lockdown earlier this year, while still adhering to government guidelines on social distancing and other health and safety

measures which were put in place to protect employees.

The state-of-the-art facility will create a lasting legacy for community health and wellbeing with its 50m Olympic-sized swimming pool as well as a 25m diving pool, community swimming pool and seats for up to 1,000 spectators.

Other facilities at the aquatics centre will include three activity studios, two 4-court sports halls, a 108-station fitness suite with a 25-station ladies-only gym, dry diving facilities, an indoor cycling studio, a new football pitch, a café, and changing facilities including a sauna and steam room. Externally, a new urban park will feature a children's play area.

Councillor Maria Crompton, Deputy Leader of Sandwell Council, said: "It is just amazing seeing the new aquatics centre come to life. The steel truss and frame has really added a sense of scale and you can visualise just how great this centre will be as a facility for local people"

"I want to thank everyone who has been working tirelessly to make sure we remain on track to deliver this world-class centre for our residents."

The £73m project is set to open to the public in the spring of 2023.

Find out more information at www.sandwell.gov.uk/aquaticscentre

Major milestone reached on the Sandwell Aquatics Centre site



Moor Lane



Progress continuing on Moor Lane Extra Care Home

Works are continuing to progress on the Willow Gardens Development, the new 90 apartment Extra Care scheme located at the Junction of Harvest Road and Moor Lane in Rowley Regis.

Works started back in the summer of 2019, with more detailed additional ground investigations being undertaken prior to the main building works commencing a few weeks later.

Although progress on site has been delayed because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the construction works are now progressing rapidly again, the modern construction methods used allow for works to be progressed internally whilst the external façade of the building is still being installed.

The development itself will accommodate a mixture of one and two bed roomed apartments providing housing for those aged 55 and older who need additional support to live in their own

homes, it will be staffed 24 hours a day to provide support for residents.

A large communal lounge and dining area will be provided on the ground floor with a fully operational catering kitchen and hairdressing salon, providing much needed social space which will be accessible to the wider community throughout the day.

Residents will also have access to their own private lounge area located on the second floor.

This £15million scheme has been designed and is being project managed by Urban Design and constructed by Speller Metcalfe (Midlands) Ltd and is due for completion in the spring of 2021.

For further information about this development please contact:

UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk





Useful contacts:

Strategic Assets and Land - david_harris@sandwell.gov.uk

Spatial Planning - simon_hall@sandwell.gov.uk

Development Management - john_baker@sandwell.gov.uk

Highways - robin_weare@sandwell.gov.uk