



Welcome to the first edition of the Regeneration and Growth magazine - Insite

I'm delighted to be launching Sandwell Council's first issue of Insite, the Regeneration and Growth magazine, which updates our business and industry colleagues on the great work we are doing across the borough.

This will be a regular circular which will update on the progress, opportunities and successes of the regeneration and economic development activity in the borough, we are launching this communication at a critical time as the borough enters a significant period of investment and strategic positioning around the inclusive economy and community wealth.

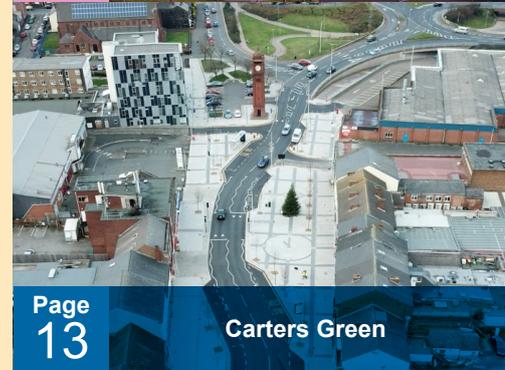
We are a large metropolitan area with a population of almost 330,000 people, with a £6.3bn economy we are the third largest in the West Midlands, which is the largest Combined Authority Region outside of London, what does this mean? It means we have scale on scale and ambition to match.

Strategically we are less than 10 minutes by public transport to Birmingham, our borders are without boundary as are our economies, we are the largest economy and the employment centre of the Black Country, Sandwell sees almost double the amount of labour travel into Sandwell from the wider Black Country and why is this important? It's important because it's the type of trend you would expect to see for the statically economic area of a region.

So what are we doing to capitalise on our scale and strategic location, we have key investments at all levels? We are moving on all fronts, from our major highways investments to our sponsor role for the delivery of the £449m metro extension which links Wednesbury – West Bromwich through to Birmingham and Dudley, we are taking the major opportunity to bid for up to £75m of Towns Fund leveraged as part of a wider investment programme as we continue at pace to deliver the Sandwell Aquatics Centre bringing the Commonwealth Games to Sandwell.

Beyond the scale of our major capital programme slick operational efficiency is vital, as one of the best performing authorities in the West Midlands on highways satisfaction we are proud to keep Sandwell Moving, whilst our track record on sports ground safety has been recognised nationally and we have one of the largest Council house build programmes in the country which is just another example of our commitment to delivery excellence and an outcomes focused approach for our communities.

*Amy Harhoff
Director of Regeneration & Growth*



Darley House

A feasibility scheme has started to refurbish an 18 storey block containing 108 flats with external cladding, new entrances, enclosed balconies and new pitched roofs.

The scheme is also to consider the refurbishment of Selby House, a 2 storey block for accommodation of young single

mothers, together with refurbishment of two 3 storey housing blocks and two 2 storey housing blocks.

It will also include extensive remodelling of external works and access roadway.

The value is anticipated at £10 million but will be fully determined when the feasibility scheme is finalised.

For further information please contact:

UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk

Proposed refurbishment of Darley House in Oldbury



Street Manager



Road works are a major cause of delay and disruption for road users in Sandwell, resulting in significant costs to the local economy and society. It is estimated that the cost of congestion resulting from street works in the UK is £4.3 billion a year.

Sandwell have already taken steps to ensure effective management and coordination of road works, the most recent being the adoption of our Permit Scheme in Summer last year, which is a means of requesting road space to carry out work on the highway.

Street Manager is a new digital service that improves the communication and visibility of street and road works both within Sandwell and throughout the UK.

Why do we need Street Manager?

- Congestion from road works costs the economy, leads to poor air quality and reduced safety.
- Demand on our road network continues to increase.
- Digital transport needs reliable and more visible data. Street Manager will be an enabler for innovations such as the autonomous connected vehicles of the future.

- Public expectations for personalised, up-to-date and accurate data are increasing. It is expected that Street Manager will enable future development and economic growth by the likes of sat-nav companies.

Street Manager goes live on **31st March 2020**.

We are on track with our implementation plans and, with two months remaining, we have:

- activated our sandbox and production accounts;
- worked with WPD (Western Power) to test the end to end process of raising and granting permits;
- plans to use an API (Application Programme Interface) and we are in regular contact with our supplier, Symology.

Adoption of Street Manager will modernise how we manage and communicate street and road works. It will impact all promoters of street works, including those internal to Sandwell.

More information to follow, so please lookout for further updates.

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

Smethwick Council House



Sandwell Heritage and Urban design teams have worked together to develop a scheme for the restoration of Smethwick Council House which has won a prestigious Conservation award from the Victorian Society.

Surveying and Conservation Officers assessed the historic civic building using specialist skills to select the right materials, techniques and contractors to develop and deliver the project, leading to the restoration of the building's baroque brick and terracotta exterior, the refurbishment of the clock tower and careful renovation of the historic interior.

The Victorian Society described it as “an altogether successful and magnificent restoration project”.



For further information please contact:
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Spotlight on Property Services



Property Services sits within the Strategic Assets and Land area of Regeneration and Growth and is primarily responsible for managing the Council's industrial and commercial portfolio to support the Council's revenue stream.

The team provides a clearing house service for surplus land and property assets that are put to the market to realise a capital receipt. They partner with a Birmingham property auctioneer to dispose of some assets whilst advertising others inhouse for disposal on the open market.

The team comprises 10 members of staff who deal with property matters including disposals of assets, new lettings, lease renewals, rent reviews, assignments, landlords consents for alterations, 15 day land disposals, easements, wayleaves, Assets of Community Value listings, extensions/disposals under the Leasehold Reform Act and running a business from a council house. The team can be contacted on 0121 569 3923 which is widely advertised on our industrial estate signage, To Let and For Sale boards. For marketing particulars follow link:

http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200183/land_and_property

Property Services can offer small office premises and start up industrial space to encourage inward investment and grow existent business tenancies to support the Council's Inclusive Economy strategy in helping regenerate the local economy within the Borough.

The team provide professional advice on landlord and tenant matters to all themes of the Council along with professional surveying advice as part of multi-disciplinary teams to deliver development projects across the Borough on both commercial and residential schemes. The team are currently progressing a number of delivery projects with one of the most high-profile being located in West Bromwich Town Centre. Together with the Town Centre Manager and Planning colleagues, they are looking to explore the opportunity to introduce a modern mixed-use town centre development that will remodel the existing indoor market. The redevelopment is an innovative regeneration project with a redesigned and remodelled market facility at its core with modern workspace and residential accommodation above.

For further information please contact:
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Sports Ground Safety

Sandwell Council is one of only 11 authorities in the country to be awarded maximum points by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA). This is a major achievement, we have the responsibility for the safety of spectators at sports grounds.

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 places a responsibility on all local authorities to issue a safety certificate to designated sports grounds and enforce its conditions to ensure the reasonable safety of all persons present.



In Sandwell this duty is carried out by the Authority's Building Consultancy team, our designated sports ground is West Bromwich Albion. Previously we were reviewed biennially by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority and this was based on a self-assessment completed by ourselves.

This year it changed and SGSA carried out an inspection led assessment to ensure we are discharging our duty effectively.

The inspection process covers 11 key areas of the local authority's performance, including our engagement with and progress towards implementing the 'wider understanding' issues that came from the SGSA 2017 review of the term 'safety' taking account the higher risks that we face from potential terrorist threat,

expanding our responsibility outside the stadium into 'Zone EX'.

Each key area is scored reflecting the current level of performance of the authority for a total of 140 points.

During the Summer 2019, the SGSA scored our initial attempt at 129 which was a very good score, however, there were 9 areas where we could improve.

In Winter 2019 the SGSA reviewed our progress on those 9 items and we scored the maximum of 140 points.

This is thanks to all the work carried out by Sandwell MBC staff on a voluntary basis and fitted around normal day jobs. They undertake a minimum of 4 match day inspections per season which can take up to 6 hours, pre-season inspections, checking structural stability and the mass of certificates produced by the club regarding all aspects of safety.

These staff chair the West Bromwich Albion Safety Advisory Group and host the West Midlands Safety Advisory Group.

They are responsible for the safety of 26,000 people and check that the staff and stewards are performing their roles effectively, they cannot stop a match but can, in extreme cases, prevent spectators from attending.

The legislation came in as a response to the tragedies that have occurred at football stadia over the years, including Rangers Ibrox Park (66 fatalities), Bradford City's Valley Parade (265 injured, 56 fatalities), Hillsborough (96 fatalities) and is not a job to be taken lightly.

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Climate Change: Heat Networks

What are heat networks?

A heat network is a system of pipes that takes heat from one or more central sources and delivers it to several buildings.

Where possible, the heat will be created from renewable energy sources. As part of these schemes there may also be an opportunity to include what is called 'private wire' electricity, where electricity is generated and used locally.

Why are heat networks important to Sandwell?

This work is obviously very topical, with climate change a pressing international concern. Here in Sandwell a public consultation around climate change and air quality is currently in progress:

www.sandwell.gov.uk/climatechange

Construction of one or more heat networks in Sandwell could help our borough by:

- Creating employment opportunities
- Contributing towards the Inclusive Economy
- Lowering energy bills for those that connect

- Reducing carbon emissions
- Helping to alleviate fuel poverty
- Attracting new businesses into the borough.

How is the project being funded?

The council has recently been offered up to £291,000 from the government's Heat Networks Delivery Unit (HNDU) towards the latest phase of work, which involves Detailed Project Development. A report is set to go to Cabinet soon which recommends acceptance of this funding.

What will happen next?

Detailed Project Development will include an options appraisal process to consider the degree of council involvement, ownership and investment necessary to deliver the schemes, as well as identifying further government finance available through the national Heat Network's Investment Project (HNIP) funding programme.

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



Customer Excellence



Urban Design and Building Services have proved we put the customer at the heart of everything we do by retaining a coveted National Customer Service Excellence Standard for the sixth year running.

We are delighted to confirm that we have not only retained the Customer Service Excellence standard for another 12 months but achieved Compliance Plus in criterion 1: Customer Insight.

This means the assessor feels that we have gone above and beyond what would normally be expected; by engaging and involving a wide range of customers and service users of the Harvest Road Integrated Health and Social Care Centre, to ensure that we understand their needs and preferences.

Thank you to those of you who met with the Customer Excellence assessor and gave your valuable input into the sessions.

Quote from Assessor:

“It was very clear from the opening meeting today, that Urban Design and Building Services continue to seek out improvements and developments to enhance the already quality customer journey.

This was confirmed by all those who attended the various sessions arranged particularly the customer evidence.

Staff and Partners gave some recent clear examples of the importance of providing a quality service to customers through working together, communicating and engaging, ensuring a professional service is given to all their customers.

A key element of the assessment today was the determination of staff and partners to work together in providing a quality service to all customers.”

If you are a customer of UDBS and are interested in being part of our Customer Focus Group, contact Alison Coughlan at

UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk

If you are thinking about undertaking **Customer Service Excellence** and want to know more about our journey, please contact the customer email address above.



RICS Award

The recently completed refurbishment work to three high rise blocks on the Lion Farm Estate has been shortlisted in the prestigious West Midlands RICS Awards, Residential Category.

The three 13 storey blocks have received fire-resistant insulated rainscreen cladding, pitched roofs, new balconies and windows and landscape works. All works were carried out whilst the blocks were occupied.

The RICS Awards criteria concentrated on five categories, Human Impact, Environmental Impact, Innovation, Social Impact and Collaboration.

The £10 million scheme will be judged at the RICS Awards event to be held on 30th April 2020.

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

**RICS Social
Impact Awards**

2020

Shortlisted



Moor Lane



Works on site have now commenced for the new 90 Apartment Extra Care Home located at the Junction of Moor Lane and Harvest Road in Rowley Regis.

The 2/3 storey facility will provide housing to those aged 55 and older who need additional support to live in their own homes, along with 24-hour around the clock support staff based on site.

The development will contain a mixture of 1 and 2 bedroom properties and also provides lounge and dining for both the residents and the wider community, with the intention of creating a community hub for local people to drop in and use for social interaction, as well as meals or just a cup of tea.

A hairdressing salon is also included as part of this development for use by the residents and wider community.

The new building is set back from the road, has a secure boundary of low wall and railings, with tree and shrub planting creating a green outlook. Within the landscape scheme two car parks provide ample on-site parking for residents, staff and visitors.

The building layout has been designed to create an enclosed courtyard garden which will be landscaped for the residents to safely enjoy the benefits of being outdoors.

There is direct access from the communal lounge to an external dining and seating area, circular footpaths with a central shelter/meeting place and opportunities for communal gardening.

The ground floor internal facing flats will open out on to a semi-private patio space.

Midlands-based Speller Metcalfe commenced the £15 million pounds project on site in summer 2019 and completion is scheduled for Spring 2021.

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Council Houses



The current Council House Build Programme is to deliver 635 properties by Spring 2021.

The current Council House Build Programme in the borough is to deliver 635 Properties by Spring 2021.

To date:

- 250 properties are complete and occupied.
- 200 are currently in progress with 104 of these due to complete Summer 2020.
- A further 68 properties are due to start and the remainder are in various stages of feasibility.

Sandwell Council has the second largest council house build programme in the West Midlands and is eighth in the country.

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Think Sandwell

If you're doing business in Sandwell, we want to hear about it – so we can tell the world.

Every working day throughout March, Think Sandwell will be bragging about something that is **#madeinsandwell**, spreading the word about the fantastic people, products and organisations in our borough.

So now's the time to let us know about you and your business. No matter how big or small your company, product or customer base, we want to hear about it.

We're also keen to celebrate all the organisations and services that don't make

a physical product, but whose success is **#madeinsandwell**. From the fabulously famous to the niche and unknown, and everything in between – let us shine a light on the work you do and the benefits it brings to the region, the UK or even the world.

From Monday 2nd March, use the **#madeinsandwell** hashtag to shout about what you do, and find out what other weird and wonderful things are **#madeinsandwell**.

Go to our contact form to get in touch and share your stories.

<http://www.thinksandwell.com/contact/>

nicy_morgan@sandwell.gov.uk

The screenshot shows the Think Sandwell website. The header is dark blue with the 'thinkSandwell' logo on the left, a search icon in the center, and the European Union logo and 'CONTACT US' link on the right. Below the header is a dark navigation bar with menu items: 'Think Sandwell', 'Business services', 'Property & Planning', 'Events and News', 'Contact', and 'Top 50 Index'. There are also social media icons for Twitter and LinkedIn. The main hero section features a background image of a modern building at dusk. A green call-to-action box on the right says 'Ready to start or grow your business in Sandwell? Think Sandwell will help >'. The main headline reads 'Think Sandwell supports businesses on their way to success'.

TOP 50 INDEX
Top 50 Fastest Growing Companies
Index 2019

#madeinsandwell Monday



Welcome to #madeinsandwell Monday!

We publish a profile of a different Sandwell organisation almost every Monday, giving readers an engaging overview of what it does and where its products or services are used.

#madeinsandwell Monday is a celebration of the talent and diversity of businesses and organisations in our borough. You don't need to actually 'make' things – we just want to know about

all the success that's made in Sandwell.

Each profile is shared through [Twitter](#), so taking part would be a great way to promote your business.

All we need you to do is complete our [#madeinsandwell Monday questionnaire](#) and email it back to us with a few high-quality images. We'll let you know if you've been successful.

Carters Green

Work on a major improvement scheme in Carters Green has now been completed. This has resulted in the provision of new paving, seating, street lighting along with trees and the creation of a new public square.

This highly successful £1.1million regeneration and safety scheme was undertaken by Sandwell Highways Services along with the principal contractor, Fitzgerald Contractors Limited.

Local residents and businesses played a major part in the shaping of the scheme.

During the consultation period residents told us that they wanted a pedestrian friendly, well-lit and inviting environment. Local businesses called for more on-street parking, open spaces for market stalls and quality pavements to match the rest of West Bromwich.

We have been able to integrate both into the final design.

A new road alignment incorporating traffic calming measures and a centralised controlled pedestrian crossing has reduced vehicle speeds. The provision of on-street car parking has increased by 50% and improvements have been made to the access to the YMCA car park.

A new energy efficiency LED lighting scheme has given the area a much lighter and inviting environment in the evenings.

The streetscene gives way to wider pavements with a large public events/ outdoor market area.

As part of the scheme we have planted 29 trees of 5 different species to give great

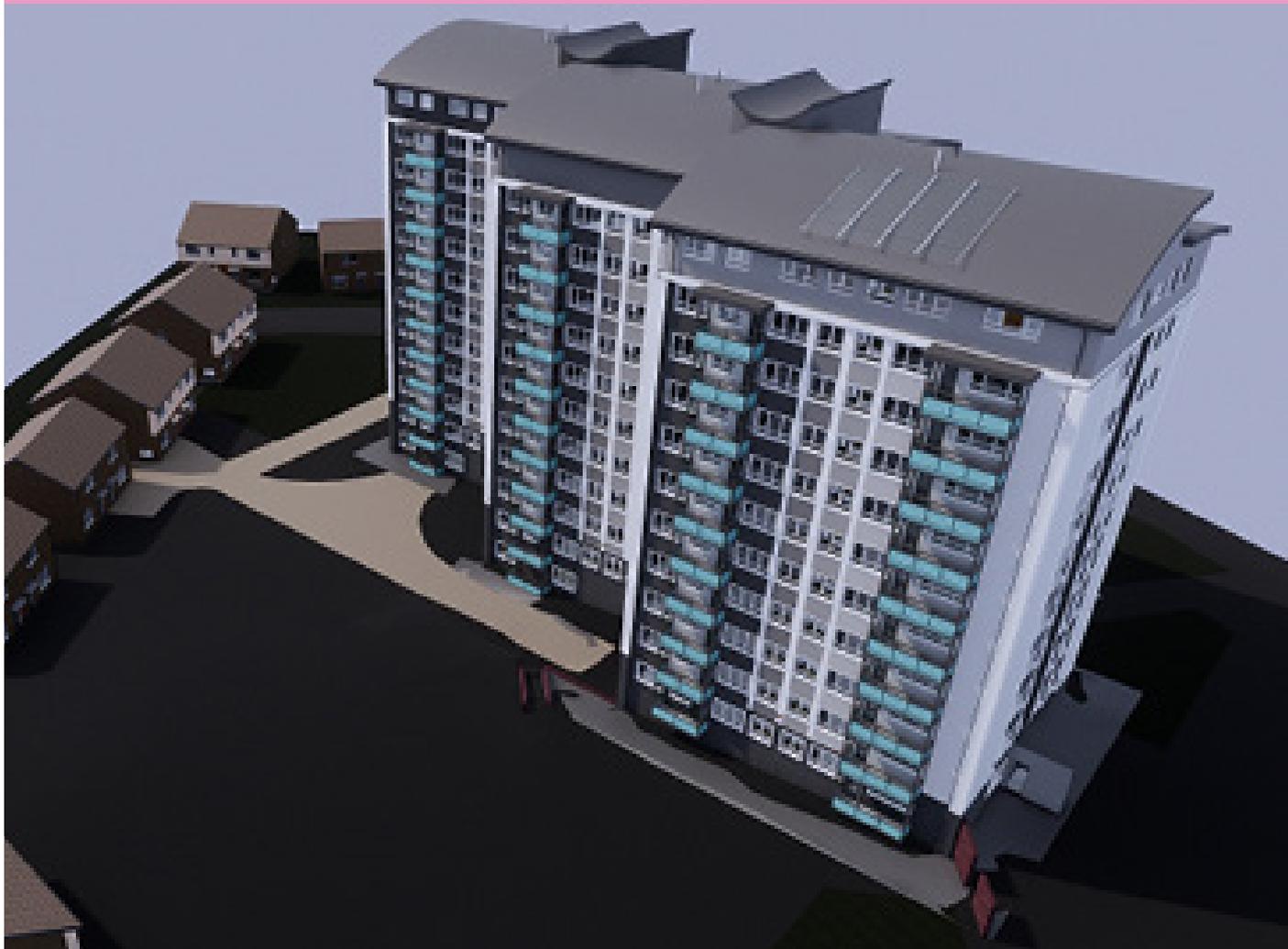


visual impact through the four seasons.

The pavements have been provided with new seating areas, cycle racks and litter bins.

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

Alfred Gunn House



Refurbishment of Alfred Gunn House, Thompson Road, Oldbury.

The scheme is to refurbish the blocks containing 120 flats with new pitched roofs, rainscreen cladding, internal alterations to convert 57 three bed flats to two beds, ten new flats built over the existing flat roofs and five new flats at basement level.

Extensive external remodelling works to form new access road to the rear of the blocks and increased car parking.

Sixteen new houses, eight 2 bed and eight 4 bed houses to be constructed on land at the rear of the blocks.

The contractor has now been appointed and work is due to start on site in Spring 2020.

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



Town Fund



One hundred English towns are to receive a share of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund for 'innovative' town centre regeneration. Three of them – West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis – are in Sandwell.

The resulting 'Town Deals' are expected to improve connectivity for each of the successful towns, providing vital social and cultural infrastructure and boosting growth – with communities having a say on how the money is spent.

How will the Town Deals help Sandwell?

Regeneration support officers told industry magazine 'The Planner' all about Sandwell Council's approach to ensuring the Town Deals in Sandwell bring as many benefits as possible to the borough.

"We're second only to Cornwall in the number of towns that will receive a share of the Towns Fund. Towns are expected to focus on transport, broadband connectivity, skills and culture, and the deals will be worth up to £25 million.

We sent the initial analyses to government in early December outlining the challenges that the towns are facing. Each has different characteristics. For example, West Bromwich is our main strategic centre, where the focus is on town centre regeneration. Rowley Regis doesn't really have a single centre, but there are different places that people gravitate towards.

The Town Deals that come out of the three areas will be very different, but they'll all sit within our Vision 2030 Corporate Strategy and reflect our Inclusive Economy Deal. The aim of this is to drive economic growth while ensuring that it's spread throughout Sandwell and that residents genuinely benefit from it.

The idea is to have a co-design approach and so far we've surveyed residents and businesses to find out how they view Sandwell and what changes they'd like to see. We see regeneration as more than just physical and we're thinking about how we can complement improvements in the built environment by upskilling residents and opening up greater access to opportunities. We're working with businesses to ensure they understand what they are going to get out of this, but also what opportunities they're able to offer residents.

It's really important that residents and businesses feel that they have a voice and they are able to drive projects, because they're the ones that will be experiencing the changes that we hope the Town Deals will bring."

What are the next stages?

Sandwell Council awaits government feedback from their 'readiness checklist' which was submitted in December. Meanwhile, Town Deal Boards are being set up to act as a conduit between government and local communities. These will comprise representatives from community groups, businesses and other local stakeholders. Town Deal Boards will be responsible for creating a Town Investment Plan which will subsequently be submitted to central government to determine the levels of funding. These plans need to be in place by summer 2020.

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

Demolition



Demolition of Queen's Square multi-storey car park in Bull Street, West Bromwich.

More than £250m of investment is being used to help revitalise West Midlands town and city centres and kick-start their wider transformation.

The money is being channelled by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), working with local councils, to unlock sites for redevelopment and support different schemes that can regenerate centres and help reverse the fortunes of struggling high streets.

West Bromwich town centre is the latest to benefit from the investment with Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street and Councillor Yvonne Davies, Leader of Sandwell Council, announcing a funding deal for the demolition of the disused Queen's Square multi-storey car park in Bull Street.

Councillor Davies said: "Sandwell Council is committed to driving prosperity across the borough. By demolishing a car park which is almost 50 years old and well past its prime, we're creating new space for exciting developments.

"These will support a significant regeneration programme for West Bromwich town centre creating new opportunities for Sandwell.

The 1970s-built structure will be demolished this summer after Sandwell Council and the WMCA agreed an investment package that will act as a catalyst for wider plans to further revitalise the town.

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

M5 Oldbury Viaduct

This £200 million project to carry out repairs on the crumbling Oldbury viaduct has been the largest concrete repair project, by value, ever carried out in Britain.

After nearly 3 years (it was originally planned to take 18 months), these works are now complete and the restricted width lanes have now been fully removed.

You may have noticed that the temporary speed limit of 50mph has remained in place. This speed restriction has been retained in order to test the six new gantries and communication cables linking these signs to the West Midlands Regional Operational Centre in Quinton.

This testing is planned to be completed very soon, after which the 50mph speed restriction will be lifted.

However, as one initiative completes, others are planned to begin. From April speed limits on the M5 will be reduced to 60mph as part of a drive to improve air quality, and major work will begin soon to replace two bridges on the M6 Junction 10 between Wolverhampton and Walsall.

As road users we all share the frustration at the delays and inconvenience works of this nature cause. However, as Highway Engineers, we also recognise how important these essential maintenance works are if we are to secure the viability of our highway infrastructure for years to come.

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



Strathmore Road



The first houses on the 'Strathmore Road' housing development are now being handed over.

The Strathmore Road housing development scheme comprises 63 new 2, 3 and 4 bedroom council houses for rent.

The development is constructed around the existing road layouts using 'secured by design' principles and provides excellent connections to the local schools, shops and bus routes.

The homes are designed to be low maintenance and energy efficient. They exceed the current building regulations requirements by approximately 10%, using a 'fabric first' approach.

The 'Strathmore Road' development occupies 3 parcels of brownfield land. Two of these have lain vacant since the

demolition of Glebefield House in 2012 and Swancroft House in 2006.

As with many sites in Sandwell there were particular challenges in the ground. These included a mine shaft (which had to be grouted and capped), obstructions from old foundations (which had to be removed) and chemical contamination (which was dug out and replaced with clean soil).

Joint working involving specialist contractors and numerous teams within Sandwell MBC, have overcome all of the challenges the site presented and resulted in the timely provision of much needed new council housing.

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PayByPhone App

Drivers in Sandwell are now able to pay to park in council car parks using a cashless parking app.

Working with mobile parking provider PayByPhone, we are now able to offer a cashless alternative to pay for parking in the council's 50 car parks and 55 on-street bays.

The PayByPhone app allows people to pay for their parking using their mobile devices. Users can opt to receive text message reminders when their parking session is about to expire and the app's "Extend-From-Anywhere" feature can be used to extend a parking session without returning to the vehicle.

The council's car parks and parking bays still have the traditional parking ticket machines that accept coins and the addition of PayByPhone's cashless parking does not affect anyone who already pays for a monthly or annual parking permit.

Sandwell Council's Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport, Councillor Jackie Taylor, said: *"We are really pleased to be working with PayByPhone and to be able to offer people this cashless alternative for paying to park in our car parks and on-street bays."*

"Lots of people prefer to pay for parking online. It's convenient, you don't need the right change to pay for your ticket or worry about running back to your car to extend your parking session."

"It's a really hassle-free way of paying to park and I'd ask anyone who uses our car parks regularly to download the app."

In addition to the cashless payment and Extend-From-Anywhere benefits, PayByPhone users will be able to also use the recently-launched Maps and the Nearby Parking features.

The Maps feature allows drivers to locate parking before they leave for their destination and pin their vehicle location onto the map once they have parked. The Nearby Parking feature instantly provides drivers with the closest PayByPhone parking location number once parked.

The PayByPhone app can be downloaded any time from the App Store, Google Play Store, or by visiting the PayByPhone website paybyphone.co.uk

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

Park & Pay in Sandwell with PayByPhone.

No need for coins, park simply with just a few taps and if you need more time; extend from anywhere using your phone.



www.paybyphone.co.uk/sandwell

 paybyphone

Winter Maintenance



We have a statutory duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, we maintain our highways in a safe condition.

Potholes - How do Potholes form?

It's easy to assume that potholes are the result of roads being poorly maintained, but that is not usually the case.

Evidence suggests that there are three main factors that contribute to pothole formation:

1. the presence of water,
2. freezing temperatures and
3. road traffic.

If we can stop water penetrating the road surface and/or understand the number of freeze-thaw events that occur in any winter period, then we can work to both minimise the number of and impact from potholes.

That's why we record the number of freeze-thaw events that we have every winter.

So far this winter we have observed relatively few freeze-thaw events. In fact we are on course to see fewer than at any time in the last 10 years for which we have data.

We have a statutory duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, we maintain our highways in a safe condition. In order to fulfil this duty, we have a team of Engineers who monitor the winter forecast from November to

early April to determine whether and when to send out our gritting fleet.

This team is supported by data from weather stations and a number of road sensors which all help to provide real-time information on air temperature, dew point, and most importantly road surface temperatures.

We interpret all this data to determine whether our roads should be treated to reduce the risks to road users from the formation of frost, snow and ice.

As an authority we're well known for having a good winter service plan. Now it looks as if our reputation has extended as far as Canada. The TfWM Key Route Network Manager has recently met with counterparts in Calgary, who were rather taken with one of our recently named gritters 'Ctrl+Salt+Delete' and are considering using this name for a piece of their kit in the future. We'll be sure to share pictures of our twin Gritter in due course.

Our Gritters have been deployed just 23 times so far this winter, which is great for our Winter Maintenance budgets.

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

West Midlands 5G Test Bed

West Midlands 5G Ltd (WM5G) is a new organisation set up to accelerate the benefits of 5G across the region.

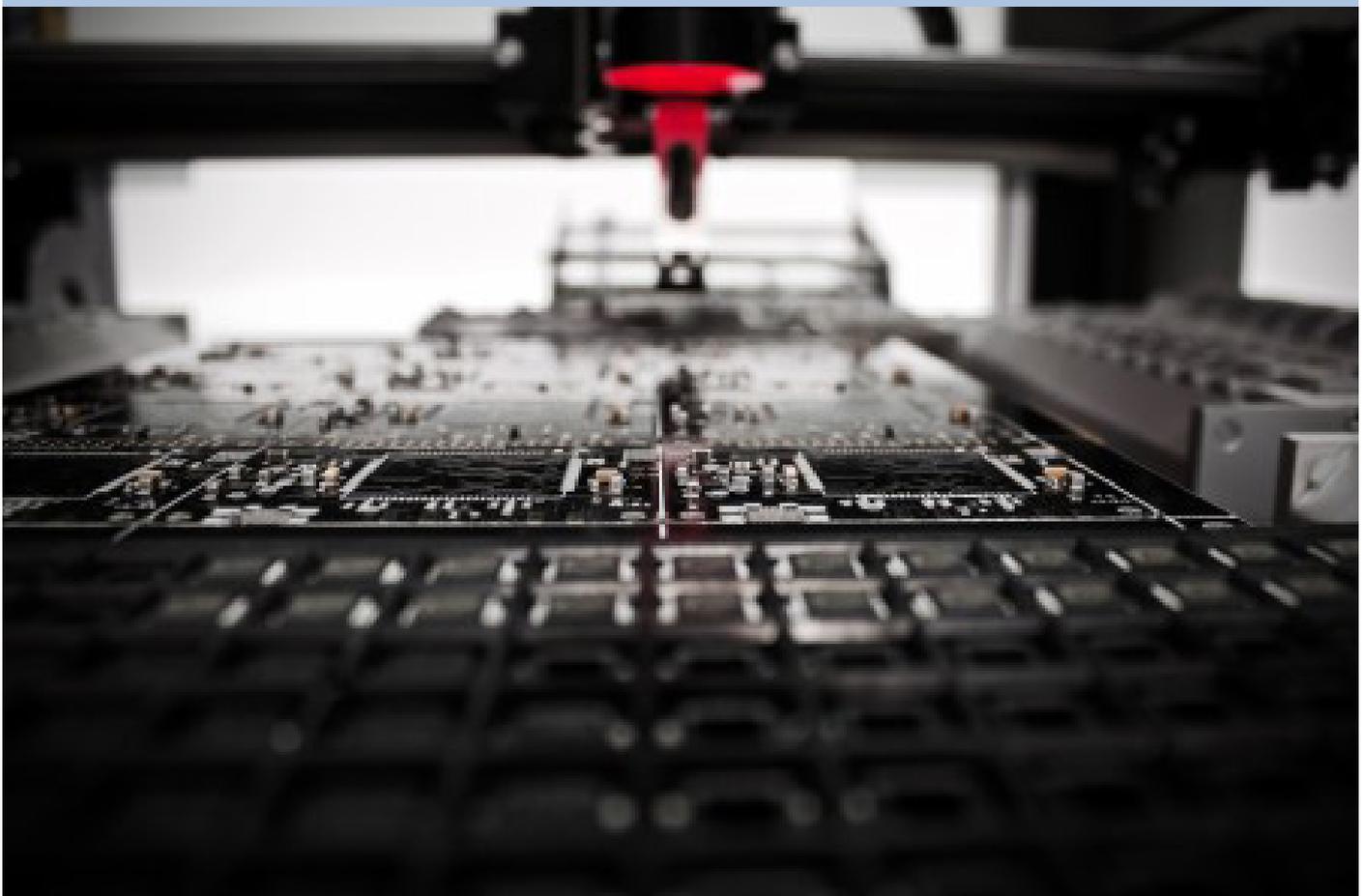
WM5G has been testing new 5G services, for local people, businesses and public services. In December WM5G held an 'Imagine' session at Sandwell Council House, to share the benefits of 5G and, specifically, look at how Sandwell Council can use it to solve issues unique to the public sector.

Attendees were excited by its potential applications, with ideas that ranged from tourism, virtual classrooms and training to transportation, highways, social care and tackling crime.

Amy Harhoff, Director of Regeneration and Growth at Sandwell Council, described it as;

"A great day of joint working across Sandwell Council in partnership with the WM5G team, putting a complex subject into practical projects for businesses and residents."

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



Sandwell Aquatics Centre



Regeneration & Growth has 16 staff from Urban Design and Building Services, Highways, Building Control and Planners currently providing the following services to support the Sandwell Aquatics Project Team in the delivery of the new aquatics centre:

- Construction project and contract management;
- Construction quality supervision and control;
- Design verification;
- Construction finance and certification of payments;
- Statutory Consultee on planning application;
- Highway design/implementation;
- Sustainable drainage advice;
- Guidance on improving and integrating public transport links.
- Providing Planning urban design guidance on the emerging proposals prior to Planning Application submission.
- Preparation of Planning and Design Statement.
- Arranging initial marketing and buyers event.
- Providing guidance to seek to secure social value and employment and skills opportunities.
- Liaison with decision makers to identify opportunities for the local supply chain.
- Compliance with Building Regulations including; inspections of all aspects of the construction work, checking and relevant certificates and product for compliance and fire safety checks.

Staff are also working closely with the following partner organisations to ensure that the centre is delivered on time and within budget:

- Birmingham 2022 organising committee,
- Department of Culture Media and Sport,
- Sport England, and
- Sandwell Leisure Trust

Staff have been involved with the project since the Council first considered building a 50m swimming pool back in 2018 and will continue until the legacy building is finally opened to the public in Spring 2023.

For further information on the project visit:
www.sandwell.gov.uk/aquaticscentre

Inclusive Economy Deal

Sandwell's Inclusive Economy Deal is the first of its kind in the country, the Deal is about everyone – the council, wider public sector, VCS, businesses and residents across Sandwell's six towns – playing their part in our future success.

This a new approach, a step-change in the way the council engages and delivers in collaboration with our key stakeholders. The development of our deal-based approach guarantees that it is developed and owned by our communities, businesses, anchor institutions, the voluntary and community sector as well as the Council.

It has been developed via a comprehensive engagement programme including online surveys, business and VCS workshops, interviews and community fridge events in each of the six towns during the last 12 months.



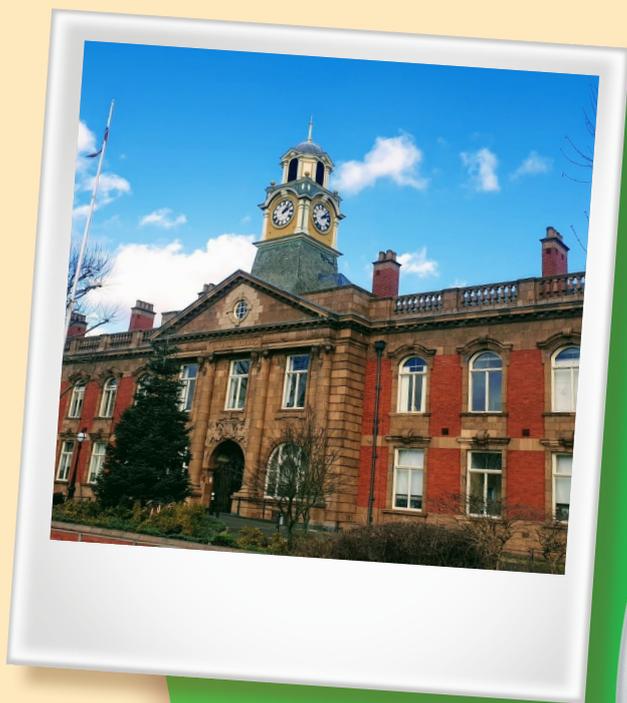
The development of a state of the borough report has pulled together evidence on Sandwell across many areas including demographics, health & wellbeing, skills and employment across the lifecycle of people in Sandwell. This has been used to identify challenges, but more importantly opportunities to make a difference to people's lives and to make Sandwell a better place through the deal. Together, the engagement and the evidence have identified the real priorities that we need to deliver.

It sets out in detail what the 'ask' is of each player. The Deal has a clear focus on the economy of Sandwell by developing joint interventions which will have a positive impact on the local economy and ensuring wealth creation is kept and shared within the borough.

Measuring the success of the Deal is through a set of clear goals for 2030, which aim to close the gap between Sandwell and the West Midlands average on areas including healthy life expectancy, unemployment, productivity and skills.

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