

Understanding Sandwell's LAA





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Director of Sandwell Partnership

Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a very important tool for change in Sandwell. By bringing together different organisations, groups and people, all with a shared interest in the future of Sandwell, our LAA will help us drive change over the next three years.

We have put this guide together primarily for people who work in Sandwell's public and voluntary sector organisations; shaping and delivering services to the people of Sandwell. Don't worry if you don't think you're one of these people; if you have an interest in the future of Sandwell, perhaps as a local resident or as someone who works in the borough then its important that you too know about the LAA, and you should find this guide helpful. We hope you'll learn about LAA and get answers to some of the questions you may be asking. Most of all we hope that, after reading this brief guide, you'll be able to see more clearly the contribution you can make to a successful Sandwell LAA.

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1. Who are we, and why have we produced a guide to LAA?

We are the Sandwell Partnership; the Local Strategic Partnership for Sandwell. Our Partnership brings together organisations, groups and communities who all have a stake in the future of the borough. Our membership includes local public sector bodies like [Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council](#)¹, private sector organisations like the [Black Country Chamber of Commerce](#)², and not-for-profit third sector groups like [Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations](#)³. Government also takes a close interest in Sandwell and works with the Sandwell Partnership through the [Government Office for the West Midlands](#)⁴.

Working together in partnership enables partners to do three important things;

- we are able to share our information to **identify** issues,
- we are able to share our knowledge and resources to **address** those issues, and
- we are able to **review** and celebrate our shared progress: learning what works and how to achieve more together in the future

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a very important tool for Sandwell and for the Sandwell Partnership as it brings each of these three elements of partnership working together in a neat and easy-to-understand action plan. If you have a stake in the future of Sandwell; as someone who lives, works or volunteers in the borough, or goes to school here or spends your leisure time here; then its important that you know about the Sandwell LAA and how you can work with Sandwell Partnership to make the LAA a success.

2. What is the LAA?

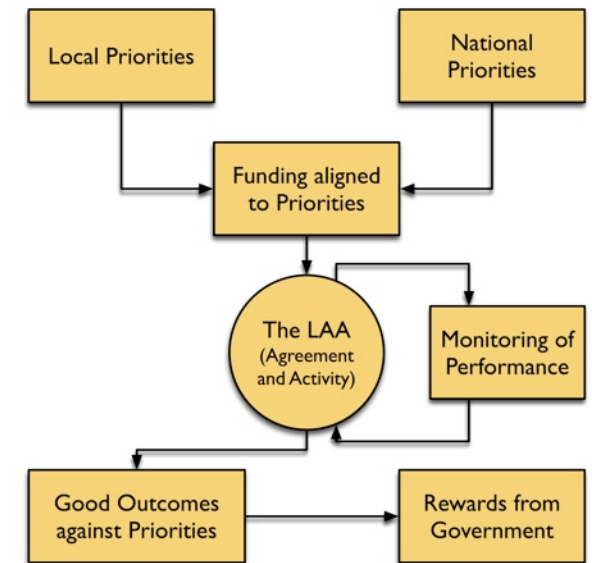
LAA stands for “Local Area Agreement”. The LAA is an agreement drawn up between a local area and national government. Though the LAA local partners, in consultation with the public, identify a range of priority issues for that area. The local partners then, in negotiation with their regional Government Office, choose indicators and set targets for improvement against each of the priorities they have identified. Every the local authority areas in England must prepare an LAA in this way.

Each LAA lasts for three years, with progress towards the targets being checked regularly throughout that period, both by local partners and by government through the regional Government Office. This means that, as well as being an important tool for local priority setting, the LAA is also an important tool for national government to check and reward the performance of local areas. In this sense, the LAA can be thought of as a contract between national government and a local area. Through the agreement the local area undertakes to achieve certain targets in return either for financial rewards or in return for the freedom to do new things (eg. levy a new charge). The more effectively an area meets its LAA targets, the bigger the reward from government.

With the three year LAA mechanism in place, government has also taken the opportunity to rationalise a range of previously separate funding streams and consolidate them into a single three year ‘Area Based Grant’. At local level a number of public bodies have been empowered to pool or align their own funds with the LAA priorities. At the same time the

funding settlement received by local government and a number of other local partners has been extended from an annually negotiated settlement to a three-year settlement. With such an unprecedented alignment between priority setting and funding its little wonder that the Department for Communities and Local Government has characterised LAA as “*...the most significant change in local public service funding since World War II.*”⁵

The diagram below sketches out the relationship between priorities, funding, LAA and its outcomes.



You can find more about LAA from the websites of the [IDeA](#)⁶, the [Department for Communities and Local Government](#)⁷ and the [Local Government Association](#)⁸.



3. What sort of things does the LAA cover?

A few of the targets (16) within the Local Area Agreement are fixed by government and reflect national priorities - these targets all concern the educational attainment of school-age children. The rest of the targets within an LAA (up to a maximum of 35) are set locally in line with locally identified priorities - these might include targets concerning domestic violence reduction or the number of visits to local museums and galleries. To help local areas set targets the government provides a [list of 198 nationally comparable indicators](#)⁹ from which the 35 local indicators can be drawn. Localities are free to develop indicators and set targets outside this list of 198 but government will not consider performance against such locally developed targets for financial rewards or new freedoms.

4. Who's responsible for the LAA?

Local Councils have a legal duty to draw up an LAA for their area, as set out in the [Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007](#)¹⁰. In drawing up the LAA, Councils are also required by law to cooperate with a range of partners including the local NHS Primary Care Trust, the local Police force and the Regional Development Agency. To ensure that the priorities and targets within the LAA *really* reflect local needs and priorities it is also important that local people and the local community and local voluntary sector are involved with the LAA process. The official [guidance note](#)¹¹ associated with the 2007 Act says more about the way local Councils should involve their

partners in the LAA. The body that the local Council usually uses to bring together all of these partners and manage their cooperation is called the Local Strategic Partnership. In Sandwell the Local Strategic Partnership is **the Sandwell Partnership**.

5. LAA, CAA, Place-shaping... Where's the link?

If you work in the local partnership environment (for the Council, the PCT, the Police or in the third sector) and you've already heard of LAA, then you will probably also have heard about CAA (the Comprehensive Area Assessment) and "Place-shaping". LAA, CAA and Place-shaping are closely linked and it's useful to understand how.

"Place-shaping" is a term that emerged from [Sir Michael Lyons' 2007 Inquiry into the future of Local Government](#)¹². The term was used by Lyons to describe the future role of local government. Whereas local government had traditionally been in the business of directly providing *things* for people (like swimming baths and street lighting), Sir Michael suggested that its future lay less in directly providing, and more in leading and facilitating local network to bringing people and groups together to make good local outcomes a reality. So the old leisure department which provided the swimming baths would become - through partnership with other departments and external organisations - the team which promoted healthy, active lifestyles and delivered increased life expectancy. The swimming baths might be an important component in this new mission, but it's certainly not the whole story. This [interesting research](#)

[report](#)¹³, published at the same time as the Lyons Inquiry, examines what place-shaping might mean across a range of established areas of public service; from adult social care to waste and recycling.

The [Audit Commission](#)¹⁴ is the body which monitors local government effectiveness in England through a regime of reviews and inspections. Looking at the LAA as *the* future partnership mechanism for getting things done, and the implications of the vision that Lyons sketched out, the Audit Commission concluded that this new environment would also require a new set of tools to assess the performance and effectiveness of local government and its partners. This is where CAA - the Comprehensive Area Assessment comes in.

In the past the Audit Commission has assessed local government performance in a fairly narrow way; emphasizing the importance of internal processes like the effectiveness of council tax collection. Whilst this model of assessment is not without value, it can only paint a very limited picture of the effectiveness with which the local authority *makes life better* for the people who live, and work, and play within its boundaries. This model of assessment also has very little to say on the quality of the local council's relations with its local partners, and what that relationship delivers for the people of the area. CAA is set to change this.

In designing the Comprehensive Area Assessment, the Audit Commission has worked with a wide range of other regulatory bodies; from OFSTED (the Office for Standards in Education) to HMIC (HM Inspectorate of Constabulary) with the aim of providing "[the first holistic independent assessment of the prospects for](#)



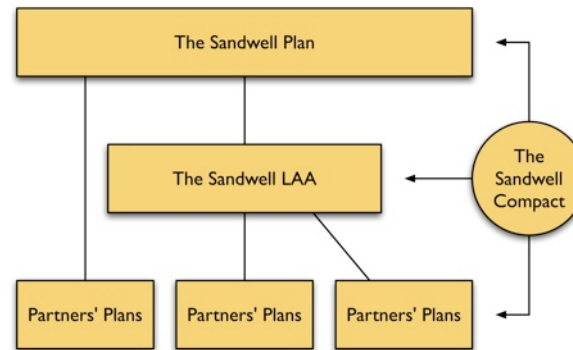
[local areas and the quality of life for people living there](#)¹⁵

The first round of CAA inspections, which will take place in spring 2009, will focus on a number of domains of local performance:

- The satisfaction of local people with local services, assessed through a [new place survey](#)¹⁶
- Performance against LAA priorities within the LAA
- Performance against a [list of 198 nationally comparable indicators](#)⁹
- Whether those services represent value for money,
- Performance against locally identified priorities outside the LAA.

6. How does the LAA fit with Sandwell's other plans and strategies?

With so many plans and strategies and partnerships and groups it can be difficult to make sense of how these things fit together. To understand how the LAA is developed and how it is a useful tool for getting things done it's helpful to understand the hierarchy of plans that it fits within. The diagram below shows the hierarchy of plans in Sandwell.



In Sandwell the hierarchy of plans is dominated by the Sandwell Plan. The Sandwell Plan is what the government calls the “Sustainable Community Strategy”. The Plan covers a ten to fifteen-year period and is a broad statement of aspirations about the sort of place which we want Sandwell to be and the sort of opportunities we want Sandwell people to enjoy. Sandwell Partnership has been consulting extensively over the past few months and has recently released a [new version of the Plan](#)¹⁷ to run to 2020.

Sandwell's LAA fits into the hierarchy of plans immediately below the Sandwell Plan. As a three-year agreement, the LAA aims to look in detail at a small number of take a limited portion of the aspirations within the Sandwell Plan (remember the Sandwell Plan is a ten to fifteen year vision) and make them a reality. You can think of the LAA as a the three-year 'business plan' to help Sandwell achieve the vision captured within the Sandwell Plan.

Below the LAA is the planning and 'doing' activity of the Partners within the Sandwell Partnership. This might

range from the business plan of a large organisation like Sandwell MBC (the Council), to a Town Charter, right down to the personal development plan of an individual working for an organisation like SCVO. The idea is that all of this activity becomes aligned so that it contributes either directly or indirectly to achieving the vision contained within the Sandwell Plan.

The Sandwell Compact (which, like the Sandwell Plan and the LAA, has recently been rewritten) is a statement of principles and undertakings governing the way that the statutory members of the Sandwell Partnership (like the Council and the Primary Care Trust) and voluntary sector members of the Sandwell Partnership (represented by SCVO) will work together. The Compact sits alongside the Sandwell Plan, the LAA and the planning and processes of individual Partners.

7. What's in Sandwell's LAA?

The 2008-11 Sandwell LAA contains **nine priorities** for the borough, developed through [analysis of evidence](#)¹⁸ and exhaustive consultation with people and groups in Sandwell. The nine priorities are:

1. **More and better homes**
2. **Improving health**
3. **Supporting independence**
4. **Reducing high volume crime**
5. **Children having a good start in life**
6. **Successful young people**
7. **Cleaner, safer, active communities**
8. **More people in employment**
9. **Educational attainment**



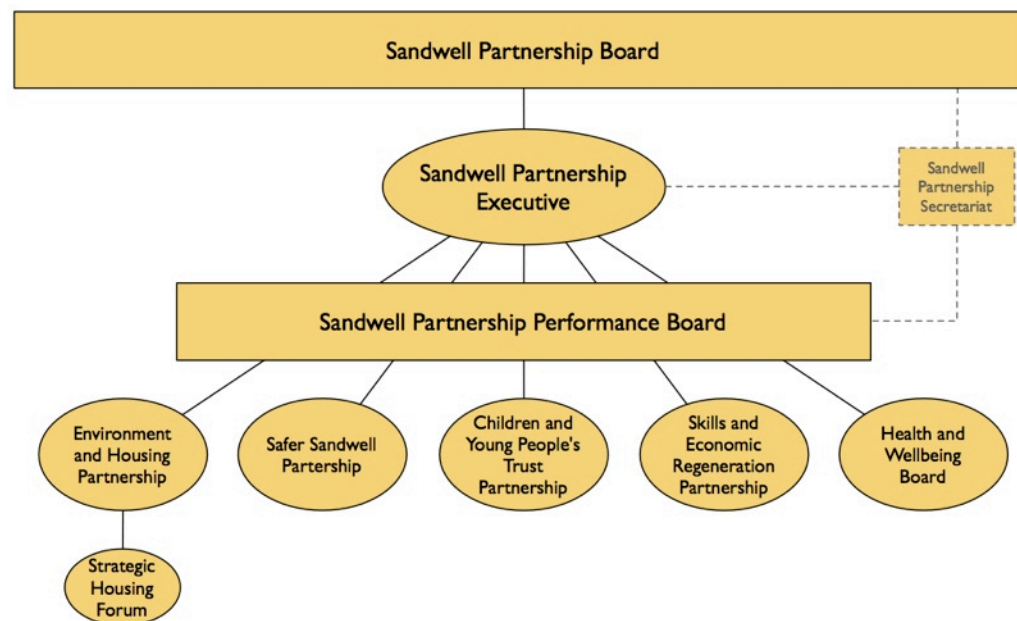
Each of these priorities has a number of indicators and targets associated with it. In the second part of this document, from page 7 onwards, you can read a brief 'business case' for each of the priorities and learn more about the detail that lies behind them.

We know that you will be more interested in some priorities than in others, but do take the time to look at all nine priorities and consider the ways in which your work could contribute to priorities outside of your immediate area of interest.

8. How will we deliver, monitor and manage Sandwell's LAA?

To understand how the LAA will be monitored, managed and delivered in Sandwell you first need to understand how the Sandwell Partnership is structured. The large diagram on this page shows this.

The role of the Sandwell Partnership's five 'thematic partnerships' is critical to the delivery of the LAA. The thematic partnerships (shown at the bottom of the diagram) bring together the key people and organisations within their respective field; from housing to health. It is the thematic partnerships who 'own' the LAA targets. The themes, and any subgroups they establish, are responsible for identifying and coordinating key activities which will contribute towards the LAA targets and priorities. These activities will come from organisation right across the Sandwell Partnership and will span public, private and third sectors boundaries. Having identified key activities, the themes then develop implementation plans for the



targets they own; assessing risks associated with delivery of activities and putting in place management processes to ensure that delivery proceeds in an effective, efficient and timely way.

The five thematic partnerships report their progress upwards to the Sandwell Partnership Performance Board. The Performance Board exists to monitor performance, but also to promote joined-up working between themes and to tackle blockages that hamper joining-up. The Performance Board reports upwards to the Sandwell Partnership Executive.

The Executive brings together the senior executives officers from all of the organisations within the

Sandwell Partnership. The role of the Executive is to ensure that the programme of activities across different themes which are 'wrapped up' within the LAA is coherent and coordinated.

Above the Executive is the Sandwell Partnership Board. The Board is comprised of leaders from Sandwell's organisations and representatives of its diverse communities, including local councillors. The Board acts as the 'guardian' of the Sandwell Plan; Sandwell's Sustainable Community Strategy. The role of the Board with respect to LAA is to ensure that the LAA closely reflects and furthers vision and objectives within the Sandwell Plan.



Sandwell's LAA Priorities, 2008-2011



Priority 1: More and better homes

A good home provides the base that people rely on for many other aspects of their life. Although Sandwell has a legacy of old housing, we know that 70% of the borough's current housing stock will still be in existence in 20 years time. The condition of much of this housing stock is poor, but it is improving. More improvement is needed if Sandwell people are to enjoy the quality of housing that they deserve.

Following a sustained decline during the 1980's and 1990's the population of Sandwell is now growing again. This is good news for the borough but it also presents some challenges. Sandwell will need to build between 900 and 1,000 new homes each year to keep up with its growing population. With average household sizes becoming smaller (a trend which is UK-wide and not limited to Sandwell) Sandwell's housing requirement is likely to increase to 1,400 dwellings per year by 2026. This would be the equivalent of developing an area three-times the size of the Smethwick Cape Hill Brewery site every year for the next 20 years.

In meeting Sandwell's housing challenges we need to provide a mix of housing opportunities; with affordable housing and homes for first time buyers, but also with housing which can attract and retain higher earners. We also need to be able to provide housing choices to support vulnerable people to live independently (see Priority 3). Above all we want to ensure that decisions that we make in housing make an active contribution to Sandwell's development as a cohesive and sustainable community.

To address Sandwell's housing challenges over the next three years we will:

- Implement the Sandwell Housing Strategy
- Complete the Decent Homes programme.
- Ensure supply of land for new housing meets Regional Spatial Strategy targets.
- Make best use of existing housing by freeing up under occupied three bedroom homes.
- Develop the level of support provided for vulnerable people.
- Further strengthen the role of Strategic Housing Partnership.

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following four LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 154	Net additional homes provided	▲
NI 155	Net number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	▲
NI 158	Percentage of decent council homes	▲
NI 187	Percentage of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating	▼

Lead Thematic Partnership: Sandwell Strategic Housing Forum

Thematic Partnership Chair: Cllr. Simon Hackett

Lead Officer: Steve Gregory
Sandwell MBC Executive Director for Urban Regeneration



Priority 2: Improving Health

We know from statistics, as well as from our conversations with Sandwell people and with health professionals working in the borough that Sandwell faces some very serious health challenges. Efforts to improve the health of Sandwell's population over the past few years have resulted in marked improvement, but with male life expectancy 2.5 years less than English average and female life expectancy 1.7 years less there is still more important work to be done.

The majority of deaths in Sandwell - over 38 per cent - are caused by cardiovascular diseases including coronary heart disease and stroke. A further 14 per cent of deaths in Sandwell are attributable to respiratory diseases, and 2 per cent of deaths are alcohol-related. By working in partnership across agencies we want to encourage Sandwell people to make positive lifestyle choices which will help to reduce the incidence of these diseases and allow them to lead more active and fulfilling lives

To address Sandwell's health challenges over the next three years we will:

- Target priority wards where rates of cardiovascular diseases and cancer are highest.
- Work with Environmental Health & Trading Standards colleagues to control the availability of tobacco and alcohol.
- Increase awareness and accessibility of smoking cessation services; targeting these services to higher risk groups.
- Work with the Children & Young People Partnership to encourage breast feeding.
- Increase awareness and accessibility of drug and alcohol support initiatives such as ANCHOR and Aquarius.
- Promote and increase physical activity in Sandwell to reduce obesity
- Promote primary interventions such as the Sandwell Cardiovascular Disease Risk Programme and Statin therapies.
- Work more closely with Warmzone, Supporting People, Housing Market Renewal Area and Housing colleagues, bring all homes (both public and private sector) up to an acceptable standard of warmth and general amenities.
- Form a new partnership Physical Activity Board chaired by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure.

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following four LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 121	Mortality rate from a circulatory diseases at ages under 75	▼
NI 8	Adult participation in sport and active recreation	▲
Local Indicator	Alcohol interventions	▲
Local Indicator	Smoking quitters	▲

Lead Thematic Partnership: Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board

Thematic Partnership Chair: Richard Nugent

Lead Officers: Dr. John Middleton & John Garrett
Sandwell Director of Public Health & Sandwell MBC
Executive Director of Adult and Community Services



Priority 3: Supporting Independence

Sandwell's population is ageing and its needs and aspirations are changing. Currently Sandwell has almost 15,000 residents aged over 65 who are unable to perform basic self-care activities (such as showering or dressing) on their own, and over 7,000 people who are unable to perform basic mobility activities (such as getting out of bed) unaided. Both of these figures are set to rise into the future.

Whilst we want to use this LAA to improve the health of Sandwell people in the long-term, we also need to ensure that Sandwell's vulnerable and older people can enjoy a good quality of life and are supported to live safe, healthy and independent lives today. We want to bring social care closer to home and increase the number of vulnerable adults and older people who can be supported to live at home. For those with long-term illnesses, we want to provide support programmes for them and their carers that enable them to manage their conditions.

To address Sandwell's social care challenges over the next three years we will:

- Drive forward personalisation agenda in relation to direct payments and individualised budgets, underpinned by work on Advocacy, self directed care and public information.
- Progress service modernisation plans for people with long-term conditions, vulnerable adults and older people, alongside other key developments in the 2010 programme.
- Develop more Extra Care Housing.
- Place greater emphasis on rehabilitation and developing a wider range of preventative services.
- Encourage unemployed people back to work, either through increased training, or even considering reductions in benefits for long-term unemployed, increasing support offered to vulnerable groups, such as older people and those with learning difficulties.
- Develop joint approach that will enable those with complex needs achieve greater stability.

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following six LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 142	Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	▲
NI 124	People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition	▲
NI 130	Social care clients receiving Self Directed Support (Direct Payments and Individual Budgets)	▲
Local Indicator	Older people (aged 65 or over) helped to live at home per 1000 of population	▲
Local Indicator	Households (aged 65 or over) receiving intensive home care per 1000 of population	▲
Local Indicator	Number of people aged 65 and over admitted permanently to nursing or residential home care	▼

Lead Thematic Partnership: Sandwell Health and Wellbeing Board

Thematic Partnership Chair: Richard Nugent

Lead Officer: John Garrett
Sandwell MBC Executive Director of Adult and Community Services



Priority 4: Reducing high-volume crime

Sandwell is a safe place to live and work, and thanks to the work of the Safer Sandwell Partnership it has been getting safer over the past few years. Between 2003 and 2007 total crime fell by 28 per cent.

Despite the generally positive trend, there have been some increases in a number of different types of crime. Between April and December 2007, violent crimes - including domestic violence and serious wounding - accounted for 24 per cent of all recorded crime. This rate is slightly above average when compared with similar local authority areas. In the same period (April-December 2007) there was also a 34 per cent jump in domestic burglary when compared with the same period the previous year.

We know that community safety issues are a prime concern for Sandwell residents, and that fear of crime is a particular problem. Nearly 50% of respondents to an anti-social behavior survey in September 2007 reported feeling unsafe when walking alone in their neighbourhood. A further 30% of respondents told us that they don't go out alone when it is dark. We know that fear of crime is more likely to be fed by concern at young people hanging about the street, but we also know that there is no statistical link between young people hanging about the street and a higher incidence of crime; this suggests there is work to be done to build understanding and reshape perceptions between the young and older members of our communities.

To address Sandwell's community safety challenges over the next three years we will:

- Robustly supervise and manage prolific, persistent and other priority offenders
- Encourage ever close working between the Police, Probation Service and Community Safety staff
- Develop interventions to address alcohol misuse and its link to violent crime
- Provide effective and accessible drug and alcohol services
- Provide support to high risk victims of domestic violence
- Provide effective youth offending services
- Provide positive activities for young people

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following five LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 15	Serious violent crime rate	▼
NI 16	Serious acquisitive crime rate	▼
NI 19	Rate of proven re-offending by young offenders	▼
NI 30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offender	▼
Local Indicator	Young offenders into education, training and employment	▲

Lead Thematic Partnership: Safer Sandwell Partnership

Thematic Partnership Chair: Dr. Allison Fraser

Lead Officers: Ch. Supt. Steve Dugmore & John Garrett
West Midlands Police K1 OCU Commander & Sandwell
MBC Executive Director of Adult and Community Services



Priority 5: Children having a good start to life

By ensuring that Sandwell’s children get a good start to life we can ‘stack the odds in their favour’ and make it more likely that they will enjoy good health, good education and good opportunities later on. We will use the LAA, alongside our Children & Young People’s Plan to tackle a number of key issues which Sandwell children face.

Breast feeding gives babies the best possible start to life as well as providing a range of health benefits for mothers. Figures suggest that rates of breast feeding in Sandwell are 10 per cent below the regional average and more than 15 per cent below the national average

Obesity is problem for children in Sandwell just as it is a problem for the adult population. With more than 19 per cent of Year 6 children having Body Mass Index measurements over 30, the future social, economic and health implications if this trend is left unchecked would be severe.

Exclusion from school is a serious matter and an effective predictor unemployment, low income and involvement in crime later in life. Sandwell’s rates of exclusion from school have fluctuated in recent years falling briefly in 2004/05 but rising subsequently to a high point in 2006/07. More work is needed to secure a consistent and declining trend in exclusions.

To address Sandwell’s children’s challenges over the next three years we will:

- Improve the health of new born babies and mothers
- Increase the uptake of breast feeding to reduce infant mortality
- Raise the level of physical activity amongst children
- Reduce the number of teenage pregnancies
- Ensure the Children’s Centre roll out continues on timescale.
- Deliver the Child Care Guarantee.

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following eight LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 53	Prevalence of breast feeding at 6-8 weeks from birth	▲
NI 56	Obesity among primary school age children in year 6	▼
NI 112	Under 18 conception rate	▼
NI 114	Rate of permanent exclusions from school	▼
NI 116	Proportion of children in poverty	▼
Local Indicator	Percentage of 5-16 year olds participating in a minimum of 2 hours of PE per week	▲
Local Indicator	Percentage of 5-16 year olds participating in a minimum of 4 hours of PE per week	▲
Local Indicator	Percentage of Sandwell schools achieving National Healthy Schools status	▲

Lead Thematic Partnership: Children and Young People’s Trust Partnership

Thematic Partnership Chair: Professor Edward Peck

Lead Officer: Roger Crouch
Sandwell MBC Executive Director of Children and Young People’s Services



Priority 6: Successful young people

Sandwell's young people are its future. We want and need our young people to be successful, to enjoy fulfilling lives and to be positively engaged and active in their communities.

At the moment Sandwell faces some serious challenges around the engagement of young people in learning and work. This lack of engagement is reflected in the higher than average levels of teenage pregnancy and youth offending. We want to use the LAA to tackle some of these problems.

To address Sandwell's young people's challenges over the next three years we will:

- Increase progression of young people into further/higher education and employment.
- Increasing young people's participation and engagement in education and training, and positive activities.
- Establish achievement of NVQ level 2 or equivalent as a minimum achievement at age 19.
- Deliver the integrated and targeted youth support services.
- Deliver the Corporate Parenting Strategy

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following eight LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment	▼
NI 106	Young people from low income backgrounds progressing to higher education	▲
NI 111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17	▼

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
Local Indicator	Percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5+ GCSEs (inc. English and Maths)	▲
Local Indicator	Percentage of Foundation Stage pupils attaining SC6 or above in communication, language and literacy	▲
Local Indicator	Percentage of people in Sandwell with learning difficulties and disabilities aged 16-19 not in education, employment or training	▼
Local Indicator	Number of care leavers aged 19 not in education, employment or training	▼
Local Indicator	Percentage of young offenders in Sandwell aged 10-17 engaged in education, employment or training at the end of their community-based order	▲

Lead Thematic Partnership: Children and Young People's Trust Partnership

Thematic Partnership Chair: Professor Edward Peck

Lead Officer: Roger Crouch
Sandwell MBC Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services



Priority 7: Cleaner, safer, active communities

Everyone in Sandwell wants their neighbourhood to be safe and clean; we know this because the people of the borough tell us consistently that these are the two most important issues for them. We also know from our anti-social behavior surveys that, although crime in Sandwell is low, the fear of crime within our neighbourhoods is higher than it should be.

We want to use the LAA to deliver:

- Cleaner and safer streets and public spaces
- Targeted approach to neighbourhoods and hotspot areas
- Improved general street cleanliness
- Increased recycling rates and reduced amounts of waste sent to landfill
- Co-ordinated action to tackle litter and fly-tipping “hot spots”

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following fourteen LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 1	Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	▲
NI 4	Percentage of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality	▲
NI 5	Overall general satisfaction with the local area	▲
NI 21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behavior and crime by the local council and police	▲
NI 35	Building resilience to violent extremism	▲

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 167	Average journey time per mile during the morning peak	▼
NI 186	Per capita reduction in CO ₂ in the local authority area	▲
NI 192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	▲
NI 195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness	▲
Local Indicator	Satisfaction with local area as a place to live	▲
Local Indicator	Satisfaction with Council keeping land clear of litter and refuse	▲
Local Indicator	Accidental dwelling fires, arson fires in non-dwellings, deliberate fires in vehicles	▼
Local Indicator	Number of Green Flag awards, awarded to Sandwell parks	▲
Local Indicator	Percentage satisfied with Council, Police and other organisations efforts to tackle antisocial behavior	▲

Lead Thematic Partnerships: Safer Sandwell Partnership & Environment Partnership

Thematic Partnership Chairs: Dr. Allison Fraser & Peter Shirley

Lead Officers: John Garrett & Steve Gregory
Sandwell MBC Executive Director of Adult and Community Services, and Executive Director for Urban Regeneration



Priority 8: More people in employment

Being able to find and stay in a good job is the quickest ticket to a better quality of life. At the moment too many people in Sandwell are in need of employment and economically dependent on benefit payments. We want to ensure that they have the basic literacy and numeracy skills that they need to enter the job market, and the more advanced skills they will need to remain in it and to prosper.

Unemployment in Sandwell has been falling since early 2007 however the unemployment rate remains stubbornly and significantly higher than the national, regional and Black Country averages. In May 2007 over 37,000 people in Sandwell were in receipt of workless related benefits, some 40 per cent of this total were in receipt of Incapacity Benefit. In November 2007 4.1 per cent of Sandwell's working-age population were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance; the national average is 2.1 per cent.

The proportion of the working-age population of Sandwell with no qualifications is falling, but again the rate of change is failing to keep pace with national and regional trends. In the future Sandwell's people will find that they need more higher level skills to compete effectively in the labour market. We need to ensure that ensure that the proportion of the population with these higher level skills at NVQ levels 2, 3 and 4, rises quickly enough to keep pace with labour market demand.

Enterprise generation and growth is key to Sandwell's future prosperity. As economic realities reflect ever less favorably on Sandwell's traditional industries, the productivity gap between Sandwell and the rest of the country has widened. As traditional industries continue to recede, the future of our economy will rest in a larger number of small, high value adding businesses. To help businesses like this to develop we will need more initiatives like [Find it in Sandwell](#)¹⁹ to help to generate and retain more money within the local economy.

We will monitor our performance in this area against the following nine LAA indicators:

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 152	Working age people on out of work benefits	▼
NI 161	Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy	▲
NI 164	Proportion of the working age population qualified to at least NVQ level 3 or higher	▲
NI 170	Previously developed land vacant and derelict for more than five years	▼
NI 171	New business registration rate	▲
Local Indicator	Number of unemployed people aged 17-64 from BME groups in priority wards helped into work (at least 16 hours per week for 13 weeks or more)	▲
Local Indicator	Number of unemployed people aged 50-64 in priority wards helped into work (at least 16 hours per week for 13 weeks or more)	▲
Local Indicator	Number of working-age people in Sandwell qualified at NVQ level 2 or equivalent	▲
Local Indicator	Number of Sandwell residents in employment achieving a Skills for Life qualifications at levels 3,2 or 1	▲

Lead Thematic Partnership: Skills and Economic Regeneration Partnership

Thematic Partnership Chair: Frank Mills

Lead Officer: Steve Gregory & Gary Eggington
*Sandwell MBC Executive Director for Urban Regeneration,
 & District External Relations Manager, Job Centre Plus*



Priority 9: Educational attainment

Sandwell's progress in raising educational attainment over recent years has been impressive. By working toward ambitious targets against each of these sixteen mandatory LAA indicators we will ensure that that positive track record is maintained between 2008 and 2011

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy	▼
NI 73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2	▲
NI 74	Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3	▲
NI 75	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	▲
NI 83	Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3	▲
NI 87	Secondary school persistent absence rate	▼
NI 92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20 per cent in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	▲
NI 93	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	▲

National Indicator Reference	Indicator	Desired Direction of Travel
NI 94	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	▲
NI 95	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	▲
NI 96	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3	▲
NI 97	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	▲
NI 98	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4	▲
NI 99	Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2	▲
NI 100	Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2	▲
NI 101	Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths)	▲

Lead Thematic Partnership: Children and Young People's Trust Partnership

Thematic Partnership Chair: Professor Edward Peck

Lead Officer: Roger Crouch
Sandwell MBC Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services



Appendix One: Directory of Hyperlinks

If you are reading this document as a printed copy you will notice a several blue, underlined portions in the text followed by a small number. These underlined portions are links to online resources and the small number next to the text corresponds to the numbers in the first column of the table below. To access these resources you will need to type the relevant web address into the address bar of your internet browser.

No.	Resource	Web address
1	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council website	http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/
2	Black Country Chamber of Commerce website	http://www.blackcountrychamber.co.uk
3	Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations website	http://www.scvo.info/
4	Government Office for the West Midlands website	http://www.go-wm.gov.uk/
5	National Audit Office Report	http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/06-07/NAO_Local_Area_Agreements.pdf
6	LAA pages on the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency website	http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=1174195
7	LAA pages on the Department for communities and Local Government website	http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/performanceframeworkpartnerships/localareaagreements/
8	LAA pages on the Local Government Association website	http://www.lga.gov.uk/OurWork.asp?lsection=59&ccat=1315
9	The New Performance Framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships	http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/505713
10	Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007	http://opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070028_en.pdf



No.	Resource	Web address
11	Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Explanatory Note	http://opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/en/ukpgaen_20070028_en.pdf
12	The Lyons Inquiry into the future of Local Government, Final Report	http://www.webarchive.org.uk/pan/15454/20070428/www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk/index.html
13	The Lyons Inquiry into the future of Local Government, Perspectives on place-shaping and service delivery	http://www.webarchive.org.uk/pan/15454/20070428/www.lyonsinquiry.org.uk/docs/070321-casestudies.pdf
14	Audit Commission website	http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/localgovernment/
15	Audit Commission CAA Consultation document	http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/Products/NATIONAL-REPORT/127A6321-4FA8-40ba-BCE2-CF1023A3DDB9/CAAConsultation22Nov07REP.pdf
16	Department for Communities and Local Government, New Place Survey Consultation	http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/612732.pdf
17	The Sandwell Plan 2008	http://www.sandwellpartnership.co.uk/admin-section/uploads/files/Sandwell%20Plan%202008.pdf
18	Research Sandwell LAA Evidence Appendix	http://www.researchsandwell.org.uk/research/downloads/LAA_Evidence_Appendix_3.1.pdf
19	Find it in Sandwell website	http://www.finditinsandwell.co.uk/



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