

STATE OF SANDWELL 2002

INTRODUCTION

These 22 high-level indicators focus on the five component areas of the Sandwell Vision: *People, Environment, Economy, Community and External Relationships*. The indicators provide the 'big picture'. When collected over time they will track changes in the Borough, though they are not intended to explain why those changes have occurred. Each indicator should be read and understood as part of the Vision Component it supports and as part of the wider picture across components.

Within the document, each Vision Component is introduced by an exploratory overview outlining the baseline established in the first *State of Sandwell* Report in 2001. This is followed by a summary of trends from 2001 to 2002 for each measure. Further details of each measure are then given in greater depth. These measures are the product of considerable discussion within the Partnership and have been designed to meet all of the following criteria.

They must:

- relate to the strategic objectives of the Sandwell Plan
- be objective
- be limited
- be fully and clearly specified
- be available from national data sources or local sources which are collected on a standardised basis (e.g. recorded crime data)
- be updateable on a regular basis
- not to be used to generate a store























The development process has been underpinned by an acceptance that all indicators have limitations, cannot be value free and may open to alternative interpretations. This set of headline indicators is designed to provide an immediate snapshot of the area and not to be a collection of all available data. It will provide a means of identifying change in Sandwell over time and support the evaluation of the Sandwell Plan at both national and local levels.

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STATE OF SANDWELL 2002 REPORT

Summary of Progress by Indicator

Vision Component	Indicator	Sandwell Performance to 2002
<i>ONE:</i> PEOPLE	Infant Mortality Rate	
	Standardised Mortality Ratios	
	Perceptions Of Health	
	Literacy & Numeracy	
	GCSE Grades	
	NVQ Level 3	
<i>TWO:</i> ENVIRONMENT	Number Of Outward Migrants	
	Recorded Crimes	
	Air Pollution	
	Perceptions Of Street Cleanliness	
	Housing Unfitness	
<i>THREE:</i> ECONOMY	Income Support & Job-Seeker's Allowance	
	Manufacturing: Service Job Ratio	
	Number Of Jobs In Economy	
	Percentage Unemployment	
	Gross Value Added Per Head In Manufacturing	
<i>FOUR:</i> COMMUNITY	Voter Turnout	
	Perceptions Of Sandwell	
<i>FIVE:</i> EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS	Inward Migration	
	Domestic Property Values	
	Average Retail Property Value	
	Average Commercial Property Value	

 = Improved
  = Remained the Same
  = Worsened

STATE OF SANDWELL 2002 REPORT**SUMMARY**

The annual State of Sandwell Report is prepared in order to track changes in the Borough towards the achievement of the 2020 Sandwell Vision. It provides the Sandwell Partnership with an overview of trends in Sandwell against which to judge the success or otherwise of its Strategy to achieve that Vision.

THE VISION FOR SANDWELL 2020

“The Sandwell of 2020 will be a thriving, sustainable, optimistic and forward looking community”.

Sandwell residents will live in a transformed and safe living environment, will enjoy excellent health, rewarding work, experience choice in their lives and have a positive view of life in Sandwell. Sandwell will have a positive role in a revitalised West Midlands. It will continue to be a diverse, but harmonious mix of industrial/commercial activity and of urban living, in which traditional environmental conflicts will have been minimised and the principles of sustainable development applied.

This is the second year of publication of the State of Sandwell Report. The 2001 Report provided the Partnership with a baseline of trends in 22 ‘Headline Indicators’ with respect of the five components of the Sandwell Vision – People, Environment, Economy, Community, External Relationships.

One year is insufficient time in which to make judgements about trends and the robustness of the Sandwell Vision. It is useful though in reinforcing our knowledge of the key issues facing the partners and whether there are signs of positive change.

VISION COMPONENT 1: PEOPLE

Sandwell people will be healthier, better educated and will have positive aspirations. They will be equipped with necessary skills to obtain and maintain employment and to pursue their own personal development and happiness.

2001 Report indicated that there are signs that Sandwell people are becoming better educated, but that the gap between them and the rest of the country is not narrowing.

2002 Report: Health is a major issue in Sandwell with markedly poorer overall health experience of Sandwell people compared with the region and the country as a whole. Trends are mixed. There continues to be no change in Infant Mortality Rate in Sandwell, though it is falling in England & Wales. On the other hand the gap between Sandwell's Standardised Mortality Rate and the Conurbation as a whole has narrowed considerably, though Sandwell people continue to have some of the poorest health in the country. Recent surveys of health in four of Sandwell's Six Towns found that between 20% and 30% of respondents in each town felt that their health had deteriorated in the last year, mainly due to specific illness, old age, lack of exercise and stress.

The trends in educational attainment continue to be one of improvement in Sandwell which mirrors that at the national level. There is evidence in some areas that the gap between Sandwell and national performance overall is beginning to narrow. Within Sandwell considerable differences in performance remain in terms of different wards, gender and ethnic groups. Generally girls and Indian pupils perform best up to GCSE level. The significant gap between Sandwell and the region and national levels of the key skills level of NVQ Level 3 remains considerable.

Overall the issues with regard to Sandwell people's health and education remain – we start from a poor base and but there are signs of improvement (in some instances significant improvement) with the gap between Sandwell people and the rest of the country beginning to narrow in some areas. However, the poorest performing communities remain as such.

VISION COMPONENT 2: ENVIRONMENT

Sandwell will have a quality living environment which is safe and sustainable, providing variety and a choice of homes, work, shopping, leisure and transport, the activities of which will co-exist positively and potential conflicts between them will be minimised.

2001 Report: *Sandwell does not at present provide an environment capable of retaining and attracting residents – a key aim of the Sandwell Vision. Most trends do not indicate an improvement.*

2002 Report: The position remains the same with poor perception of Sandwell in terms of crime and street cleanliness, continuing net out-migration and high levels of housing unfitness. More data will be available for next year's report.

New information shows that, of our neighbours, only Birmingham has a higher outward migration rate than Sandwell, with Dudley having the lowest. Overall recorded crime remains considerably (30%) above the rate for England and Wales. Although, overall crime levels in Sandwell have not increased in the past year and the gap with England and Wales has narrowed, people's perception is that there is more crime in the borough. However, the perceived threat of vehicle crime has fallen off, in line with a reduced number of reportings of such crimes.

Sandwell's air quality overall meets Government standards. Monitoring of the Council's Performance Plan shows an improvement in the state of cleanliness of Sandwell's 798km of highways, but, as with crime, residents' surveys show an increased level of dissatisfaction with street cleanliness. With regard to housing unfitness, Sandwell has, with its partner Birmingham, secured a major breakthrough in negotiating Housing Market Renewal Area status for a large part of Smethwick and West Bromwich.

VISION COMPONENT 3: THE ECONOMY

Sandwell will continue to be a location where, within a framework of sustainable development, wealth is generated and jobs created for the benefit of local people and the West Midlands economy. Its industrial and commercial activity will have become not only more internationally competitive, but also greener and cleaner, through the adaptation of its existing industrial and commercial activities and the development of new economic activities.

2001 Report: *Economic trends in Sandwell appear to be positive with declining unemployment, growth in service sector employment and increasing productivity in manufacturing. However, this masks considerable underlying weakness. The local economy has one of the highest manufacturing to service job ratios in the UK; manufacturing job losses exceed growth in the service sector and unemployment remains significantly higher than the national rate.*

2002 Report: More recent information confirms the underlying weakness of Sandwell's economy, particularly in its inability to create wealth for local residents to live on a reasonable income.

On the positive side, the decline in the numbers of males in full time employment has been reversed with Sandwell now showing a growth between 1991 and 2001, and the proportion in long term unemployment has fallen. However, at plus 3.8% male full time employment is growing considerably more slowly than the Region (+ 13.7%) and Great Britain (+15.8%). This is coupled with a much lower proportion of females in full time employment in Sandwell compared to the region and Britain. Across the nation, almost as many females are in full time employment as males (96%), whereby in Sandwell the proportion is only 70%.

This means Sandwell's household incomes are much more dependent on male incomes. This source of income is traditionally from manufacturing where not only are the number of jobs declining but Gross Value Added per Employee is low and the gap with the rest of the region and country appears to be widening.

Sandwell's economy remains intensively manufacturing-oriented. Indeed, Sandwell has the second highest proportion of manufacturing jobs of all unitary authorities in England and Wales. The rate of change in Sandwell

towards a more service-sector based economy has lagged behind that of the West Midlands region and the nation. Finance and insurance sectors are particularly under-represented. This situation causes a major disadvantage for local people because manufacturing jobs are highly exposed to the pressures of globally driven competition.

The negative impact of this combination of economic and social trends is reflected in the data for the number of Recipients of Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance. Between 1994 and 1998 this was declining in the Borough, then the trend flattened out. Data for November 2001 now shows a reversal with numbers of claimants rising to 37,150, (13% of the population). While more people are in jobs, the income from these jobs appears to be less able to sustain a basic quality of life.

However, progress has been made in the development of strategic programmes which should impact favourably on these trends - agreement on the South Black Country and West Birmingham Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan; agreement to the establishment of a Sandwell Urban Regeneration Company; and progress on the re-invigoration of West Bromwich Town Centre.

VISION COMPONENT 4: COMMUNITY

Sandwell residents and workers will regard Sandwell as a place of opportunity, variety, quality of life, and racial harmony.

2001 Report: *Residents do not express dissatisfaction with the quality of life in Sandwell, although African-Caribbean residents are the least satisfied and most likely to think that conditions will deteriorate by 2020. Sandwell's voter turnout is amongst the lowest in the United Kingdom.*

2002 Report: The only new data is for Local Elections. This rose significantly from the low point in 2000 of 22.9%, to 29.3% in 2002. It remains less than the national figure of 32.8%, though the gap has narrowed.

In 2002 the Council and the Sandwell Partnership have adopted a forward-looking Neighbourhood Strategy to not only improve community life and conditions in our most deprived neighbourhoods (our priority), but also in all the Borough's neighbourhoods through the adoption of neighbourhood management principles.

VISION COMPONENT 5: EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sandwell will be recognised as a successful part of the West Midlands Conurbation and is a place in which it is worthwhile to work, live and invest.

2001 Report: *This a measure of where the Borough is, in relation to elsewhere. Whilst the Borough has consistently attracted about 8,000 people a year to come and live here, this is always outweighed by those who leave.*

Residential, retail and commercial properties in Sandwell are considerably lower than elsewhere. There are signs of change. Higher value housing development is taking place and demand for suitable commercial property remains strong.

2002 Report: In 2000 there was an increase in the number of people coming to live in Sandwell to 9,100, but even more people continued to leave the Borough. House prices have increased, but at a level slightly lower than the national rate of increase, widening the gap between Sandwell and the rest of the nation. Affordability for young people buying houses is however better than England on average, with Sandwell buyers in their early twenties having to commit only 5.3 times their salary to afford a 95% mortgage, compared to a national average of 8.5.

A recent survey of high income earners (£60,000+) living in English parliamentary constituencies, revealed the current inability of Sandwell to attract high income earners, with two of the three constituencies entirely within Sandwell falling within the 7 English constituencies with the lowest proportion of high income earners (West Bromwich West & Warley).

Vision Statement - People

Sandwell people will be healthier, better educated and will have positive aspirations. They will be equipped with necessary skills to obtain and maintain employment and to pursue their own personal development and happiness.

BASELINE OVERVIEW- 2001

Sandwell shows considerable room for improvement on these measures. Infant mortality has fallen over the last fifteen years but shows little change over the last few years, remaining higher than across the UK. Sandwell's Standardised Mortality Ratio is high compared to both the region and UK, with the incidence of heart disease and cancer both causing particular concern.

Educational attainment in Sandwell has been the cause for concern for some time. At Key Stage 1 Level 2 (b) the gap between local and national attainment has widened, but at Key Stage 2 (10/11 years) there is now evidence of improvement. The number of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs is improving, but only at a similar rate to that nationally. Similarly, adult performance at NVQ level 3 is below that of the Region and Great Britain, putting residents at a considerable disadvantage in the labour market.

TRENDS IN 2002

- Infant mortality rate under one year per 1000 live births (three year moving average).



The mortality rate for infants remains the same, despite a national trend for reduced infant deaths.

- Standardised mortality ratios 15-64 years.



Sandwell has made a 5% improvement in the last four years, but remains far behind the UK.

- Perceptions of health.



No long-term data exist on this indicator, but at least half of Sandwell residents describe their health as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

- Improved basic literacy and numeracy at KS1 level 2B at 7 years.



Key Stage 1 figures are improving in line with national figures, but some worrying differences are apparent across particular ethnic groups.

- Sandwell pupils achieving 5 plus GCSE grades A to C at 16 years.



Performance is steadily improving with Sandwell closing the gap with the national average by 3.5% over the last three years.

- Percentage of adults with a NVQ Level 3 qualification.



The level of NVQ qualifications has remained roughly constant between 2000 and 2001, but with a gradually increasing trend since 1998.

VISION COMPONENT ONE:

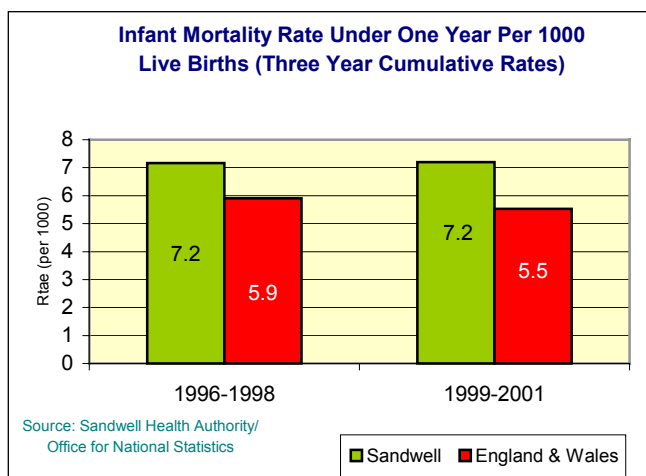
PEOPLE

INDICATOR 1

INFANT MORTALITY RATE UNDER ONE YEAR PER 1000 LIVE BIRTHS

Infant mortality rates reflect antenatal influences to some extent, but are primarily an important indicator of influences in a child's environment. There has been a downward long-term trend in Sandwell since 1985, in common with the West Midland region and England and Wales.

Historically the infant mortality rate (IMR) in Sandwell has tended to be much higher than that of England and Wales, and slightly higher than that of the West Midland region. During the 1990s, IMR in Sandwell was only once below that of the region. Sandwell also has the second highest perinatal mortality rate of districts within the region at 8.6 per 1,000 births (ONS, 2001). The infant



mortality rate in 2001 was 6.8 per 1000 births, a fall of 3.4 from 1989-1991, although the average has remained relatively static since the mid-1990s despite a continuing national reduction in infant mortality rates.

Although district level data is not yet available relating to ethnic differences in IMR, the country of birth of the mother is put on the birth notification and can be used as a proxy for ethnic origin. Analysis of this information suggests that parental mortality rates are higher in babies of Asian origin. Data for 1996 (Sandwell Health Authority) shows Bangladeshi babies to have the highest perinatal mortality rates at 29.1 and Pakistani babies 21.8.

Further evidence of Sandwell's position in relation to infant health is provided by figures for the proportion of births under 2500 grams. In 2001, Sandwell experienced an increase of 3.1% in these underweight births to 11% of all births (ONS, 2002). The regional and national increases were around 0.5%, bringing them to 9% and 7.9% of all births, respectively. Sandwell performs badly on this measure, which is closely associated with high levels of deprivation.

Sources

- ONS, 2001, Vital Statistics, Fertility and Mortality Rates/Ratios (Series VS no. 27, PP1 no.23), Office for National Statistics, London.
- ONS, 2002, VS Circular No 3a 2002, Office for National Statistics, London.
- Sandwell Health Authority, date unknown, Life and Death in Sandwell.

VISION COMPONENT ONE:

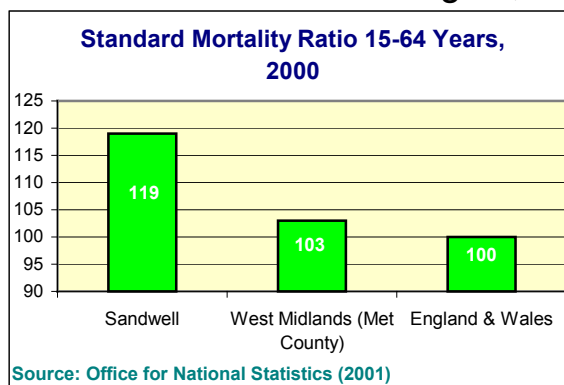
PEOPLE

INDICATOR 2

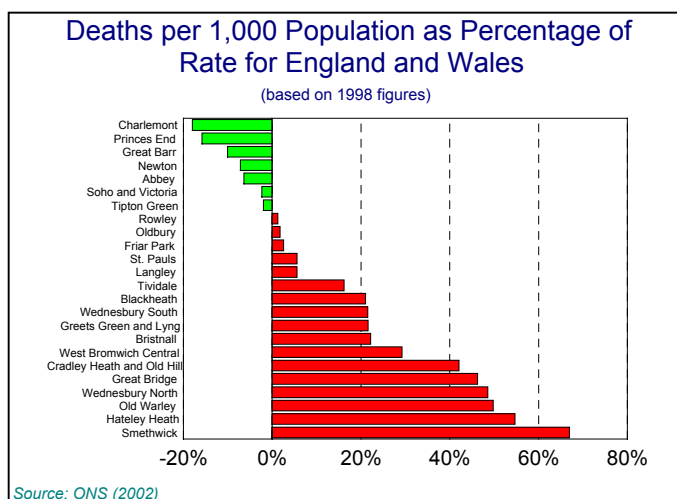
STANDARDISED MORTALITY RATIOS (SMR)

This measure illustrates an important problem in the Borough, with local residents exhibiting short lives and a high incidence of long-term illness compared to their counterparts in other parts of the UK. Currently the Borough has the worst score on this measure in the West Midland region, but as discussed below, this comparison is improving.

The SMR figures adjacent represent an outcome reflecting a high level of poor health generally. The mortality ratio (119) compares poorly with SMR figures for the region and with national figures (ONS, 2001). This said, it has improved 4.9% since 1997, despite a small regional trend towards deterioration (the West Midlands experienced a 1% increase).



As the SMR is calculated using national figures as the norm, England and Wales has not changed over this period. Although progress has been made in Sandwell over the last four years, the death rate is still significantly higher than the national average.



Although progress has been made in Sandwell over the last four years, the death rate is still significantly higher than the national average.

The 1991 Census showed that 15.1% of Sandwell's population had a limiting long-term illness, the highest figure in the West Midlands (SCP, 2000). Cancers and heart disease are particularly prevalent. Between 1997 and 1999, Sandwell residents had a lung cancer mortality rate of 46.38 per 100,000 of the population under the age of 75. This is the highest figure among English health authorities. Residents under the age of 65 have the third highest age SMR for cardiovascular disease in England and Wales at 66.85 per 100,000 of the population. This is three times higher for men than for women. Sandwell residents under the age of 65 have also been shown to have the third highest stroke rate in England and Wales with the SMR for men aged 35 to 64 years at 148 compared to the West Midlands score of 112 (SCP, 2000).

Between 1997 and 1999, Sandwell residents had a lung cancer mortality rate of 46.38 per 100,000 of the population under the age of 75. This is the highest figure among English health authorities. Residents under the age of 65 have the third highest age SMR for cardiovascular disease in England and Wales at 66.85 per 100,000 of the population. This is three times higher for men than for women. Sandwell residents under the age of 65 have also been shown to have the third highest stroke rate in England and Wales with the SMR for men aged 35 to 64 years at 148 compared to the West Midlands score of 112 (SCP, 2000).

Sources

- ONS, 2001, Vital Statistics, Fertility and Mortality Rates/Ratios (Series VS no. 27, PP1 no.23), Office for National Statistics, London.
- Sandwell Health Authority, 2001, Neighbourhood Health (13th Annual Public Health Report).
- SCP, 2000, Transforming Sandwell - Revised Action Plan, Sandwell Civic Partnership.

**VISION COMPONENT ONE:
INDICATOR 3**

**PEOPLE
PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTH**

Clues as to how local residents perceive their health exist in the results of the 1998 Sandwell Residents survey, in which four out of five residents described their health as good or very good. Only one in seven thought their health to be poor. Predictably, groups saying they suffer from particularly poor health include those with a disability, those in older age groups, those in rented accommodation and those without paid work.

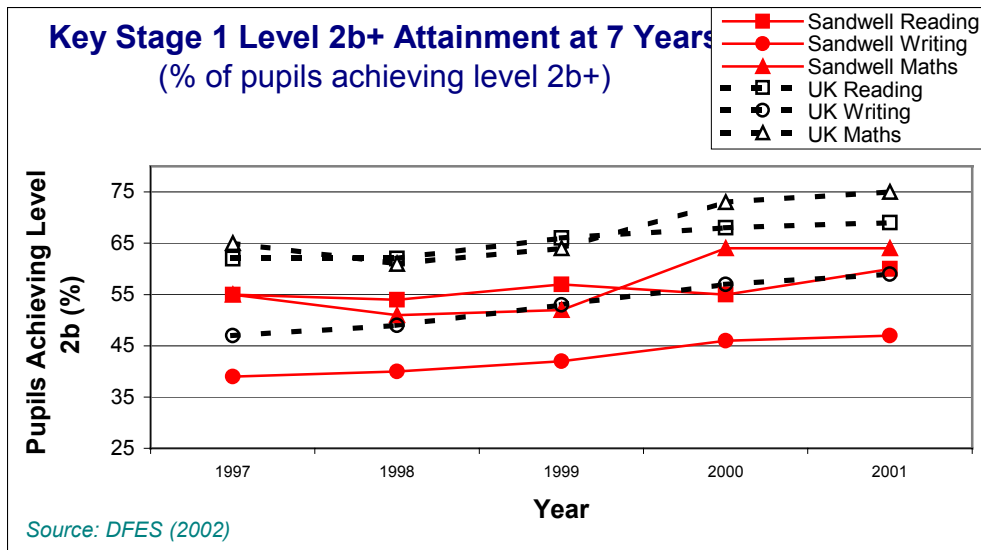
More comprehensive data is becoming available through town profiles produced by Sandwell Health Authority (2002) who have, to date, completed profiles for four of the six Sandwell towns (Wednesbury, Rowley Regis, Oldbury and West Bromwich). These are based on surveys carried out during 2000/2001 aimed to measure the quality of life using a number of community health measures. A summary of the findings regarding the perceptions of health is as follows:

- Over half of respondents described their health as 'good' or 'very good';
- As many as 60% of some towns described some form of long-term illness;
- Up to 30% of respondents felt that their health had deteriorated in the past year (Wednesbury);
- The main reasons for deterioration of health were due to a specific illness, old age, lack of exercise and stress;
- Primary stressors were quality of housing, employment/ financial worries and fear of crime;
- the main priorities for change were seen to be reduction of waiting times, better information-giving, more care staff, more money for NHS, and doctors to be 'more understanding' and were similar across all areas.

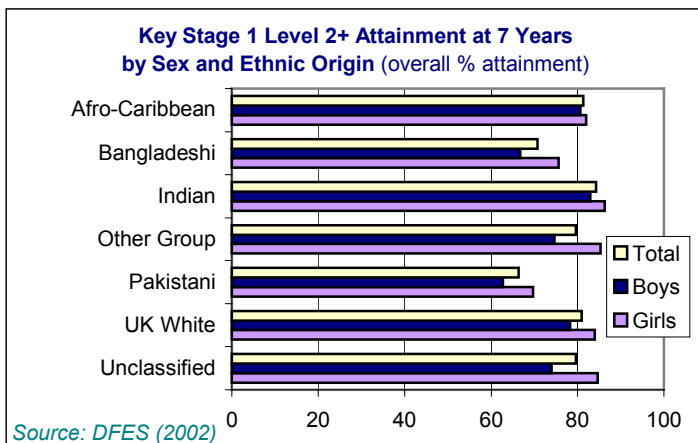
Source:

- SMBC, 1998, Sandwell Residents Survey, Sandwell MBC Research Unit.
- Sandwell Health Authority, 2002, Oldbury: A Community Health Profile, Sandwell Health Authority/Sandwell Regeneration Partnership.

**IMPROVED BASIC LITERACY AND
NUMERACY AT KS1 LEVEL 2B AT 7 YEARS**



Sandwell’s current attainment at Key Stage 1 is poor. This stage is important because a majority of seven year olds (year 2) undergo this statutory assessment that captures linguistic and mathematical proficiency. Those achieving Level 2b at Key Stage 1 are attaining the national average. A significant attainment gap exists between Sandwell and the national score on all three component dimensions.



Sandwell’s Data Mapping 2000 Report (2001) highlights significant variations in attainment between boys and girls and between ethnic groups. Attainment of Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils and white boys on free school meals is particularly low at Key Stages 1 and 2. The Education Authority has also noted that Afro-

Caribbean children achieve high scores at an early stage but that this falls away later towards GCSE. Children from Indian backgrounds tend to score well throughout with girls tending to progressively improve as they get older.

Sources:

- Sandwell MBC Education & Lifelong Learning, 2000, Data Mapping 2000, School Performance Review Unit.
- Department for Education and Skills (2002): National Curriculum Assessments of 7, 11 and 14 year olds in England by Local Education Authority - 2001 (Final Data).

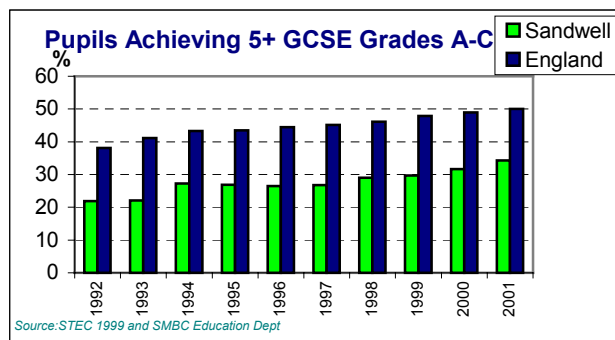
VISION COMPONENT ONE:

PEOPLE

INDICATOR 5

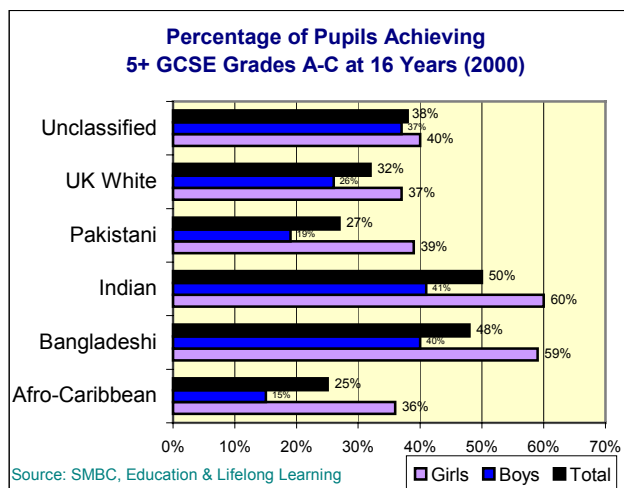
SANDWELL PUPILS ACHIEVING FIVE PLUS GCSE GRADES A TO C AT 16 YEARS

Sandwell has one of the lowest levels of educational attainment in the region and country with figures for the year 2001 ranking Sandwell 140th out of 150 local education authorities (Guardian, 22nd November, 2001). However, improvements are taking place, and two of the 100 most improved schools of 2001 are based in Sandwell (Shireland Language College and Wood Green High School College of Sport).



The change in the percentage achieving five plus GCSEs between 1998 and 2001 is 4.6% (Sandwell) and 2.1% (England). Although attainment nationally continues to exceed that of Sandwell by a considerable margin, Sandwell is closing the gap.

Attainment levels in Sandwell vary considerably by ethnic group. In 2000, Indian pupils were twice as likely to achieve 5 or more passes at A to C compared to African-Caribbean pupils. However, for the latter group, 25% was a considerable improvement on 20% just 2 years earlier.



There is also considerable variance by sex with girls of all ethnic groups achieving more passes than boys.

The effects of a continued low level of attainment will be far reaching. In future we can continue to expect the borough to be characterised by a comparatively low proportion of school leavers entering higher level training or education. This will reduce the quality and number of training and employment opportunities open to local people at future stages of their career, putting them at a significant disadvantage in the wider labour market.

Sources

- Russel, 2000, New Commitment to Regeneration, Phase One Pathfinders National Evaluation, Socio-Economic Baseline Guidance Note 2, Hutchins M. and Russel H, European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool John Moores University.
- STEC, 1999, DfEE School Performance Tables, published in an Economic and Labour Market Assessment 1999-2000, STEC.
- SMBC, 2001, Data Mapping 2000, Sandwell MBC Education & Lifelong Learning, School Performance Review Unit.

VISION COMPONENT ONE:

PEOPLE

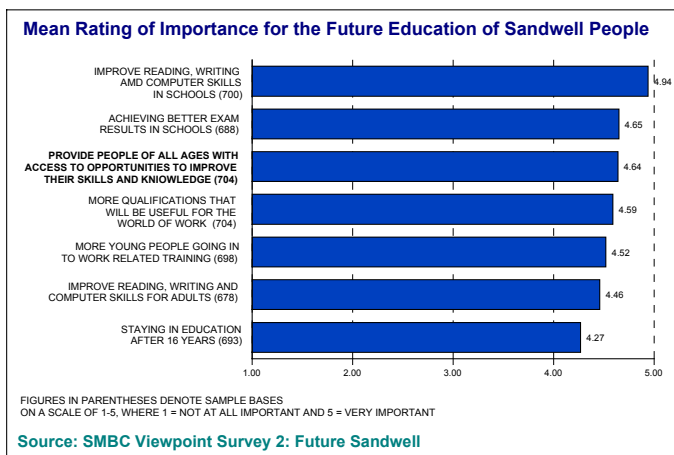
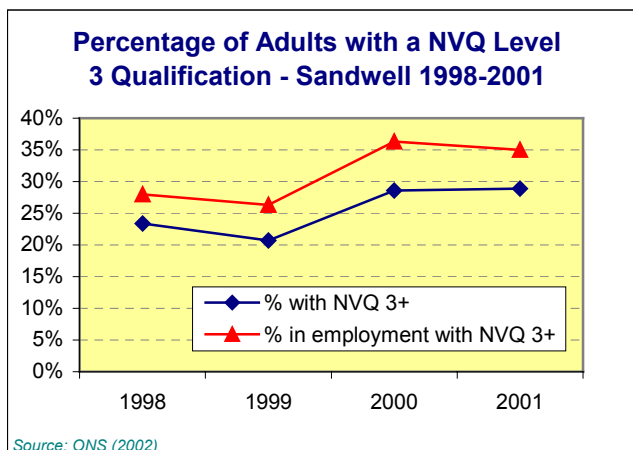
INDICATOR 6

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WITH AN NVQ LEVEL THREE QUALIFICATION

Sandwell's achievement at NVQ level 3, an important indicator of skills for work, is poor and is reflected in the Borough's progress towards the National Learning Adult Targets. Success against this measure will help better equip the local labour force to meet the challenges presented by economic change and global competition. National data suggests that around 80% of all new jobs between 1999 and 2002 will require NVQ 3 (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2001).

The Labour Force Survey (June/August 1998) shows only 40,000 residents (23.4% of the working age population) to have had an NVQ Level 3 qualification compared to 50,000 in 2000, a 20% increase over two years. The following year saw another, smaller, rise. A national target of 52% has been set by the Learning and Skills Council for working adults by 2004. The target for the Black Country has been set at 41%. Despite recent improvement, Sandwell has more ground to make up than both the region and Great Britain.

This is not to say that local people do not value education. Sandwell Council's Viewpoint Survey (1999) has shown a strong perception among residents that improving reading, writing and computer skills in schools will be the most important aspect of education for residents in future. The Viewpoint survey found local residents keen to see access to further education open to all age groups to improve their skills and knowledge. However, residents were not only interested in vocational education but also in courses teaching social skills and subjects developing an understanding of other customs and cultures.



Sources

- GOWM, 2000, Central Intelligence Unit, Government Office for the West Midlands, Birmingham¹.
- STEC, 2000, Sandwell Business Survey, Public and Corporate Economic Consultants for Sandwell Training and Enterprise Council.
- Leeds Metropolitan University, 2001, Skills in England 2001, Leeds.

¹ The data is taken from LFS quarterly survey June to August 2000 using those of working age as the denominator.

Vision Statement - Environment

Sandwell will have a quality living environment which is safe and sustainable, providing variety and a choice of homes, work, shopping, leisure and transport, the activities of which will co-exist positively and potential conflicts between them will be minimised.

BASELINE OVERVIEW- 2001

Sandwell has some way to go in terms of Vision Component Two. An overall outward migration continued throughout the 1990s suggesting that the Borough does not yet provide an environment capable of retaining or attracting residents. In common with the wider region, crime represents an increasing problem when compared to national figures with violence against the person and vehicle theft causing particular concern. Despite its position at the centre of an industrial conurbation and major road network, Sandwell's level of air pollution meets current government standards. However, cleanliness at street level is unsatisfactory for almost half of residents. Housing unfitness is an important issue locally with a high proportion of Sandwell's housing stock being old and in need of repair. This is particularly true of privately owned property and those inhabited by disadvantaged members of the community. Providing the necessary level of resources to improve the situation represents a major challenge for the Borough over the next few years.

TRENDS IN 2002

- Number of outward migrants.



Sandwell's population continues to drop, with a net outflow of around 1,400 people per year.

- Total recorded crimes per thousand.



The gap between Sandwell and England as a whole has closed slightly this year, but this may be down to changes in reporting procedure. Sandwell still suffers 30% more crime than the national average. Citizens' perception is that crime has increased in the Borough.

- Air pollution.



The levels of air pollution in the region remain constant, but at a level comfortably within government guidelines.

- Perceptions of street cleanliness.

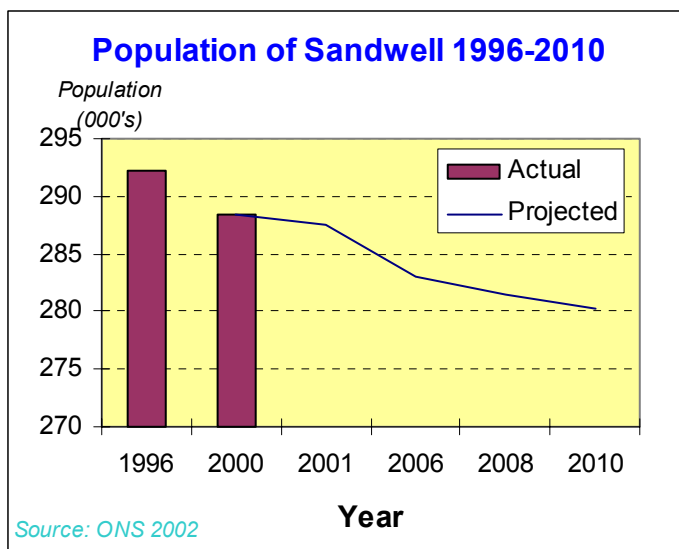


Less than half of residents are satisfied with street cleanliness. The proportion of those expressing dissatisfaction has risen 8% over the past year.

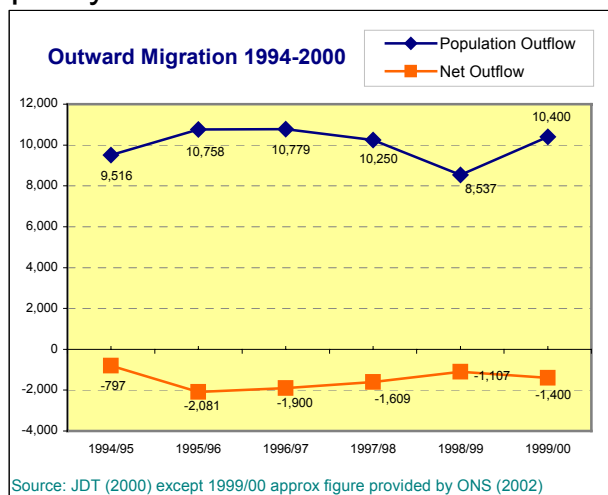
- Number of public and private sector dwellings judged to be unfit.



Since 2000, Sandwell has improved its proportion of total dwellings unfit from 17.4% to 16.4%. But, it is still a long way behind the West Midlands(9.7%) and the UK (6.4%).



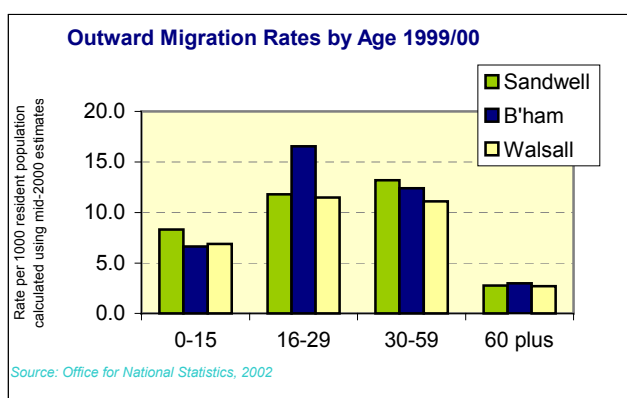
The trend has been towards a loss of population for some time now and this is expected to continue (see above graph). Outward migration is an important quality of life indicator as its behaviour is strongly influenced by the level of economic opportunity in a locality and the area's ability to satisfy the housing aspirations of residents.



Many Sandwell residents who move leave the Borough for destinations in other parts of the conurbation. Data from the ONS for 2000 show that the net outward migration rate in Sandwell (4.8%) is lower than that from Birmingham (7.8%), but is higher than

most other neighbouring authorities, of which Dudley has the lowest (1.3%). This suggests that the Borough is less likely to satisfy the economic and housing aspirations of residents than its other Black Country neighbours.

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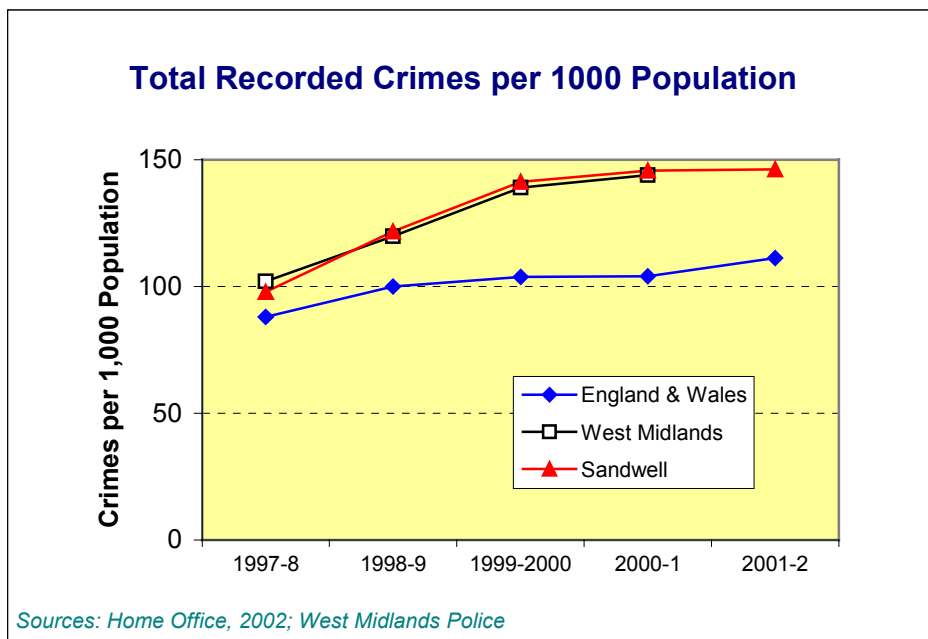


Sources

- JDT, 2000, Joint Data Team, Birmingham.
- ONS, 2002, Migration (Series VS no. 28, PP1 no.24), Office for National Statistics, www.statistics.gov.uk

INDICATOR 8 TOTAL RECORDED CRIMES PER 1000 POPULATION

Statistics show crime to be a greater problem in Sandwell and the West Midlands generally than for England and Wales as a whole. Although crime appears to have levelled off in this year, compared to the figures for England, part of this change is due to alterations to



procedure in recording crimes. The underlying national increase is estimated to be around 2%. Recent increases in crime in the Sandwell area could be due to improvements in local reporting and recording of crime, and the flattening out of this trend may represent a ceiling effect of this process. However, overall crime is still around 30% higher in Sandwell than in England & Wales, and several specific categories are significantly higher still.

CRIMES PER THOUSAND POPULATION BY CATEGORY (2000-01)

Crime Category	England & Wales	West Midlands	Sandwell
Robbery	1.6	3.8	3.3
Domestic burglary	22.2	35.8	32.7
Violence against person	11.4	16.2	16.5
Theft of vehicle	7.3	12.7	16.1
Total Crime	103.8	139.0	141.0

Source: Home Office

The Sandwell Crime Survey (2001) found that 87% of respondents thought that crime affected their quality of life in some degree. Domestic burglary and mugging were the cause of most concern to residents. The latter category showed that women (78%) were considerably more concerned about being mugged and robbed than men (57%). The single biggest perceived cause of crime was that of “teenagers hanging around on the street”, with over half of residents citing it as the main problem. In sum, 64% of those questioned believed that there was more crime in their area than a year ago (an increase of 9% compared to the previous year).

Sources:

- Home Office (2002): Crime in England and Wales 2001/2002. Jon Simmons *et al.*
- Sandwell Crime Audit, (2001/2002)

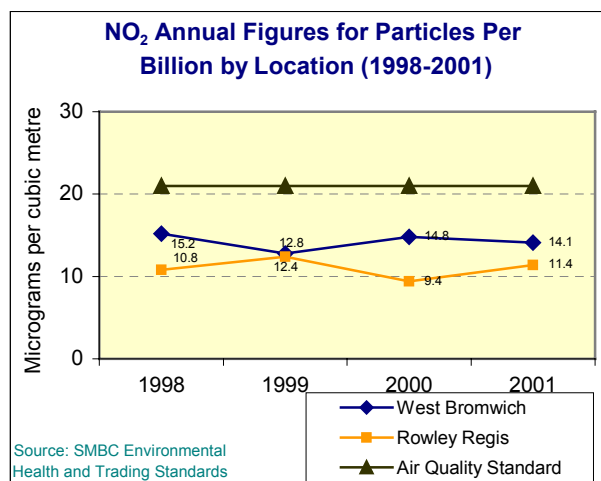
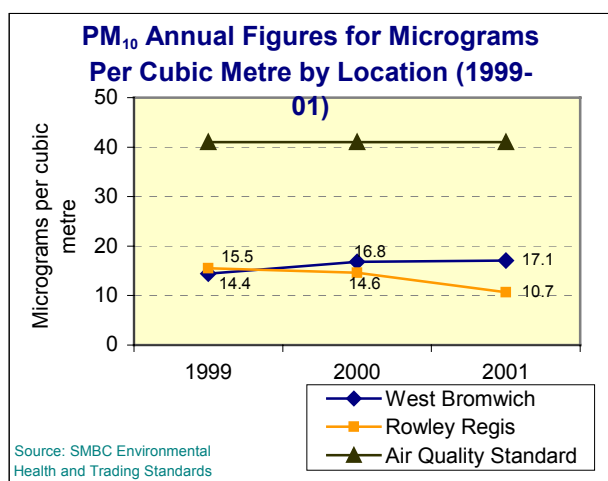
**VISION COMPONENT TWO:
INDICATOR 9**

**ENVIRONMENT
AIR POLLUTION**

Situated in the centre of a highly industrialised conurbation, it seems reasonable to expect air pollution in Sandwell to be a major problem. Although the Government uses several air pollutants as measures, two are considered to be the most significant pollutants:

- PM₁₀ (particles less than 10 microns in diameter) and
- NO₂ (nitrogen dioxide)

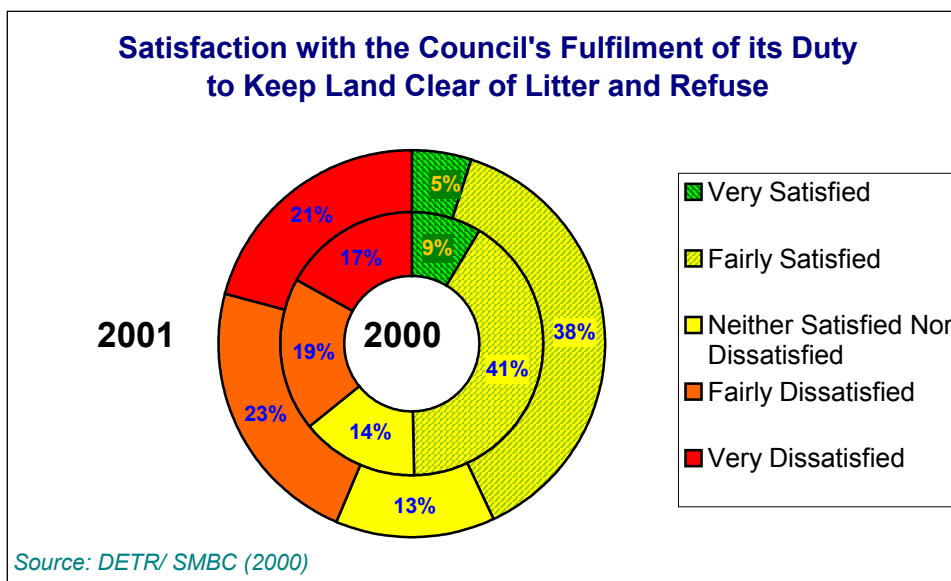
Specific sources of these pollutants in Sandwell are emissions from motor vehicles, industrial combustion plants, commercial combustion plants and long-range transport of secondary particles. Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC, 1999) has recently conducted a review and assessment of local air quality and concluded that levels meet current Government standards in most areas apart from those close to major roads and motorways. Monitoring has continued on an annual basis. The air quality standard for PM₁₀ is 41 pcm (per cubic metre), while NO₂ is 21 pbb (particles per billion) as an annual mean.



The measurement of these pollutants is made at background (ambient) locations and indicates that the standards will not be breached for the target date of 2005. For roadside locations further work is being carried out and it may be necessary to declare Air Quality Management Areas to determine actions necessary to meet the Air Quality objectives for these areas by 2005.

Source

- SMBC (1999) Review and Assessment of Air Quality in Sandwell, Sandwell Environmental Health and Trading Standards.



Street cleanliness represents an important component of life quality and has a significant effect on the way people perceive the Borough. Consequently, Sandwell Council adheres to the Tidy Britain Code of Practice. As shown by the chart above, public perception of street cleanliness has fallen over the last year, with a 6.4% drop in respondents who said they were satisfied, and an 8.1% increase in those who expressed dissatisfaction. However, a gap appears to currently exist between resident perception of street cleanliness and surveys of the actual amount of litter on the streets. The last Viewpoint tri-annual survey of satisfaction with local services (Sandwell/DETR, October 2001) has found less than half (48%) of local residents to be satisfied with *“the way the Council has fulfilled its duty to keep land such as streets and pavements clear of litter and refuse”*.

The Council’s Performance Plan (2002) contains data tracking the percentage of highways that have a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness. In contrast to the poor perception of residents, it was found that 89% of the 798 km of highway were found to have a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness. This is an improvement from 84% in 2000-1. This has been helped by the Litter Hit Squad and through the introduction of two new Enforcement Officers who issue on-the-spot fines to litter louts. The Council has also responded to resident’s requests to install more steel litterbins across the Borough.

Sources

- DETR, 2000, Sandwell Best Value and Audit Commission User Satisfaction Survey, Sandwell MBC Research Unit.
- Sandwell MBC, 2001, Council Performance Plan, Sandwell MBC.

**VISION COMPONENT TWO:
INDICATOR 11**

**ENVIRONMENT
HOUSING UNFITNESS**

The nature of Sandwell’s housing stock ensures that unfitness continues to be a major issue for both the public and private sectors. The problem is worst in the private sector and appears to be worse in Sandwell than across the region or England. The rate of improvement for Sandwell between 2000-1 almost matches the rate of improvement for England as a whole, however.

Modernisation looks set to remain an issue for council tenants as one third of houses were constructed before 1945. Within the next five years, the cost of tackling disrepair is estimated at £308 million and within the next 30 years at £671 million. This greatly exceeds the current annual budget for planned maintenance at £17 million.

Housing Unfitness by Sector	Public Sector	Registered Social Landlord	Private Sector	Total Dwellings	% of Total Dwellings Unfit	% of Total Dwellings Unfit (2000)
Sandwell	7900 (21.0%)	0 (0%)	12032 (15.2%)	121861	16.4	17.4
West Midlands Region	155303 (19.7%)	778 (0.4%)	151925 (8.8%)	2234708	9.7	9.2
England	151968 (5.3%)	21658 (1.5%)	1195353 (7.0%)	21360647	6.4	6.7

Source: DTLR, Survey of English Housing

The large number of privately-owned dwellings currently in an unfit state mirrors the findings of a survey undertaken in 1991 by the Council’s Housing Department. This found that an absence of standard amenities had ceased to be an issue in all but 6 percent of privately-owned dwellings. However, almost half were judged to be unfit in terms of repair, particularly bad internal arrangements and dampness. A new survey has recently been carried out though the results are not due to be made available until November 2002.

The 1991 survey noted that a disproportionately large number of certain household types were found to occupy unfit dwellings. These were; households of Asian origin, one pensioner households, households whose head was unemployed, households with disabled persons and those with tenants. Those occupied by Asian, one pensioner and disabled persons were found to have particularly poor levels of maintenance, both internally and externally.

Sources

- DTLR, 2001, Housing Strategy (HIP Submission) Returns 2001
- Sandwell MBC, 1992, Private Sector Housing Survey 1991, Sandwell MBC Housing Department

Vision Statement – The Economy

Sandwell will continue to be a location where, within a framework of sustainable development, wealth is generated and jobs are created for the benefit of local people and the West Midlands economy. Its industrial and commercial activity will have become not only more internationally competitive, but also greener and cleaner, through adaptation of its existing industrial and commercial activities and the development of new economic activities.

BASELINE OVERVIEW- 2001

Sandwell's manufacturing-oriented economy is poorly positioned to cope with the intensely competitive and globally driven pressures currently being experienced. Its ratio of manufacturing to service jobs is among the highest in the UK, with full time manufacturing vacancies continuing to decline but not being fully replaced by alternatives such as service sector jobs. A high level of unemployment (particularly among males) has resulted in a high level of income deprivation and reliance on transfer benefits such as Income Support. Although unemployment has fallen significantly in recent years, Sandwell's rate when compared to the national figure remains high and of considerable concern. A high proportion of Sandwell companies are small and positioned at the lower end of the supply chain. This reduces the level of control companies have over their development, ability to innovate and has delivered a low level of added value compared to regional and national figures.

TRENDS IN 2002

- Number of recipients of income support and job seekers allowance.



The number of benefits claimants continues to rise in Sandwell, with approximately 27% of the population dependent on income support and Jobseekers Allowance.

- Ratio of manufacturing to service jobs.



Sandwell has the second highest proportion of manufacturing jobs in England and Wales and the gap between Sandwell and the UK is growing.

VISION COMPONENT THREE:

ECONOMY

- Number of full time jobs in the local economy.



The number of jobs in the local economy continues to rise, but at a very slow rate compared to the region and to the nation.

- Percentage unemployment (Claimant Count / ILO measure).



Unemployment is gradually decreasing, but only at a rate comparable to the UK average. Some wards have unemployment levels four times that of the national average.

- Gross value added per head in manufacturing.



Sandwell is in decline compared to the rest of the UK and the West Midlands. Average annual growth in Sandwell is almost two percentage points behind the UK rate.

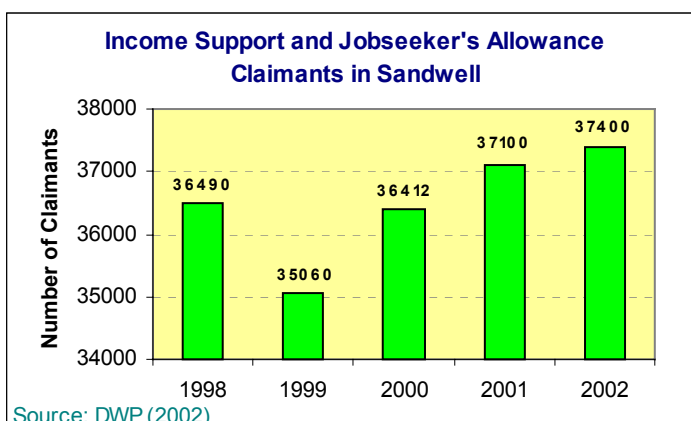
Change against this measure over time is a powerful indicator of changing levels of poverty within the Borough. (Regional Planning Guidance Monitoring Report 2000, page 20). Data for May 2002 shows an increase in the number of claimants, with a total of 37,400 recipients of Income Support and Job seekers Allowance in Sandwell (approximately 13% of the population). When dependants are included, 27% of the population of Sandwell relies on benefits.

Recipients of Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance as a Proportion of Total Population (May 2002)

	Sandwell	West Midlands Region	England Scotland & Wales
Total Population (000s)²	288.4	5,335.4	58057.9
Income Support	10.0%	4.4%	6.8%
Job Seekers Allowance	2.9%	1.2%	1.6%

Source: DWP, 2002; Benefits Agency, 2000

Sandwell's high proportion of residents dependent on Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance relative to the West Midland Region and Great Britain is confirmed in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 (IMD) which ranks Sandwell as the ninth most deprived district in England on the Income scale. Income represents Sandwell's worst performance on any of the district level indices. Data for 2001 (Sandwell Trends 2002) also shows Sandwell to have an unemployment rate higher than the UK average in all but two of its wards.



There are considerable variations in the intensity of receipt of Income Support by ward across the Borough and different valid measures deliver a similar picture. The IMD shows that areas with high levels of benefits claimants are also amongst the most deprived. The Child Poverty Index, a sub scale of the IMD, shows a particularly strong match between wards with high levels of income support and child poverty.

Sources

- ONS, 1998, Population Estimates England and Wales, Office for National Statistics, London.
- Benefits Agency, 2000, MR351, West Midlands Area Directorate, Redditch.

² Population figures, other than that for Sandwell, are mid-1998 estimates.

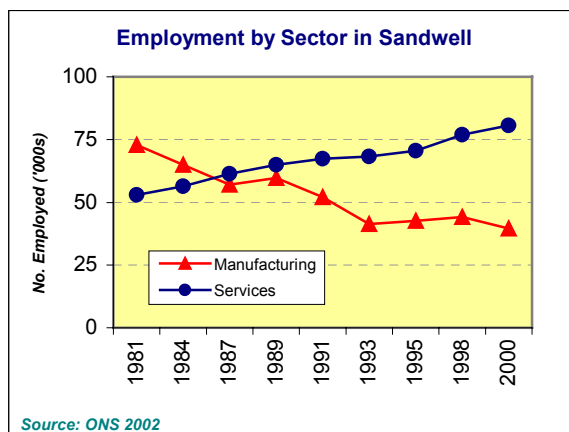
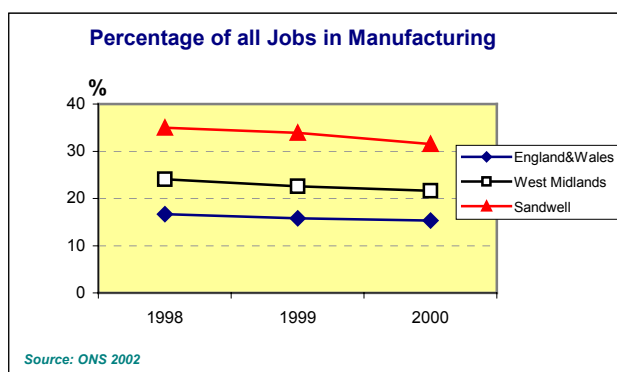
Sandwell's economy remains intensively manufacturing-oriented. Indeed, Sandwell has the second highest proportion of manufacturing jobs of all unitary authorities in England and Wales. Employment in the service sector accounts for 66% of total employment (ONS, 2002), well below the national level of 80%. Whilst the ratio of service to manufacturing jobs has increased to just over 2:1 in 2000, the rate of change has lagged behind that of the West Midlands region and the nation. Finance and insurance sectors are particularly under-represented. This situation causes a major disadvantage for local people because manufacturing jobs are highly exposed to the pressures of globally driven competition.

A further difficulty lies in the position of many local manufacturing jobs at the lower end of the value chain. This can cause difficulties in generating the profits necessary to support new investment in capital stock and employees. Although the trend has been away from manufacturing towards service-based employment in most major western economies for many years now, Sandwell's move into service sector employment has been less than that experienced by many other labour markets. Manufacturing still accounts for more than double the proportion of jobs nationally, highlighting the need for a reduced dependence on metal goods and vehicle manufacturing towards a more diverse economy. This is vital if the locality is to generate the higher skill, value added jobs that are likely to create wealth in the future.

A study of the labour market undertaken for Sandwell Training and Enterprise Council (STEC, 1998) predicts contraction in the manufacturing and non-marketed service sectors such as teaching. Manufacturing losses alone are expected to offset gains made in all other sectors. This delivers a zero growth rate that contrasts sharply with the region and UK, both of which expected to see an increase in total output of approximately 3.5% between 2001 and 2006.

Sources

- ONS (2002): Annual Labour Force Survey. HMSO. (www.nomisweb.co.uk)
- STEC (1998) Sandwell's Position and Prospects: An Economic and Labour Market Assessment 1999-2000.



VISION COMPONENT THREE:

ECONOMY

INDICATOR 14

THE NUMBER OF FULL TIME JOBS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Sandwell's labour market is characterised by a high proportion of male full time employees working in manufacturing. Over recent years, male full time jobs in Sandwell have not expanded at a rate comparable to the regional or national averages. Female full time employment in Sandwell is at 70% of the level of male employment, in contrast to the West Midland region (89%) and Great Britain (96%).

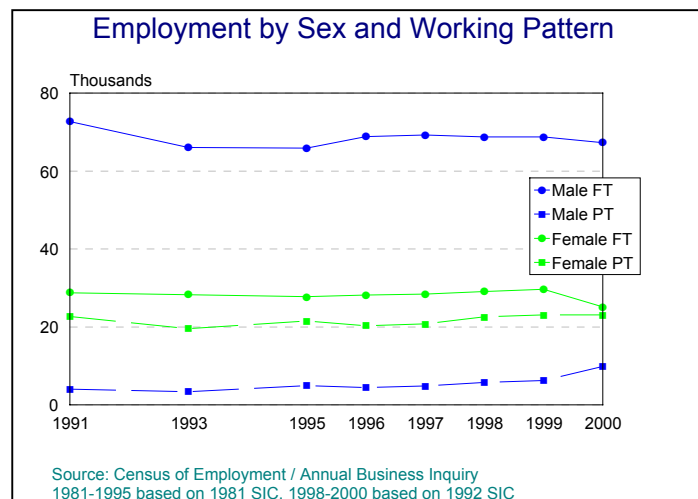
Male Full-Time Employment (AES/ONS)

	1991	1996	2001
Sandwell	72,716	68,842 (-5.3%)	75,100 (+9.1%)
West Midlands	1,003,551	993,005 (-1.1%)	1,141,300 (+14.9%)
Great Britain	10,192,223	9,885,437 (-3.0%)	11,801,200 (+19.4%)

Opportunities for males are important as male unemployment is a powerful determinant of household income and poverty. Data for August 2002 shows Sandwell with 1,241 males unemployed for 12 months or more compared to 279 females.

Sandwell men are less likely than women to consider alternatives to full time employment such as part time work or further education and training.

Older age groups are also likely to suffer disproportionately due to their observed preference for full time employment. This section of the local labour force is least likely to possess the qualifications and skills increasingly demanded by employers, exacerbating the impact age and gender have on the local economy. As a result, the level of long-term unemployment tends to increase with age and gender.



The trend away from full time jobs in the local economy need not be perceived negatively but as an indication of labour market flexibility and the local economy's ability to respond to changing need. Indeed there appears to be considerable demand for arrangements other than for full time work from the labour force itself. The Black Country Household Survey 2000 showed that 17% of the sample group were employed part time. Of those, 81% did not wish to work full time and only 12% wanted full-time employment.

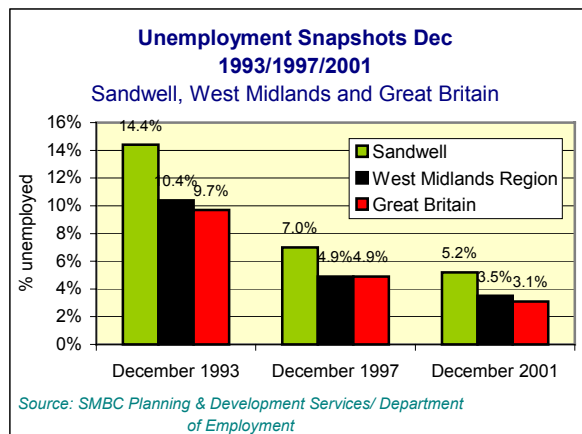
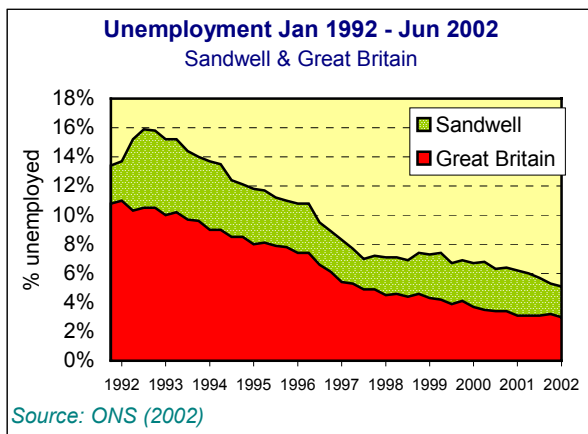
Sources

- BCS (2000) Black Country Household Survey, Sub –Regional Report (Draft), Beevers Consulting and Spilsbury Research.

**VISION COMPONENT THREE:
INDICATOR 15**

**ECONOMY
PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED**

As shown, Sandwell's unemployment rate remains significantly above the national and regional rates. This has been a feature of the Borough's economy over the last decade with unemployment peaking during 1992 and falling for most of the period since. The trend towards lower unemployment now appears to have flattened out. This is partly due to the economic cycle and to the effects of competition on demand for manufactured goods, which form the mainstay of the local economy.



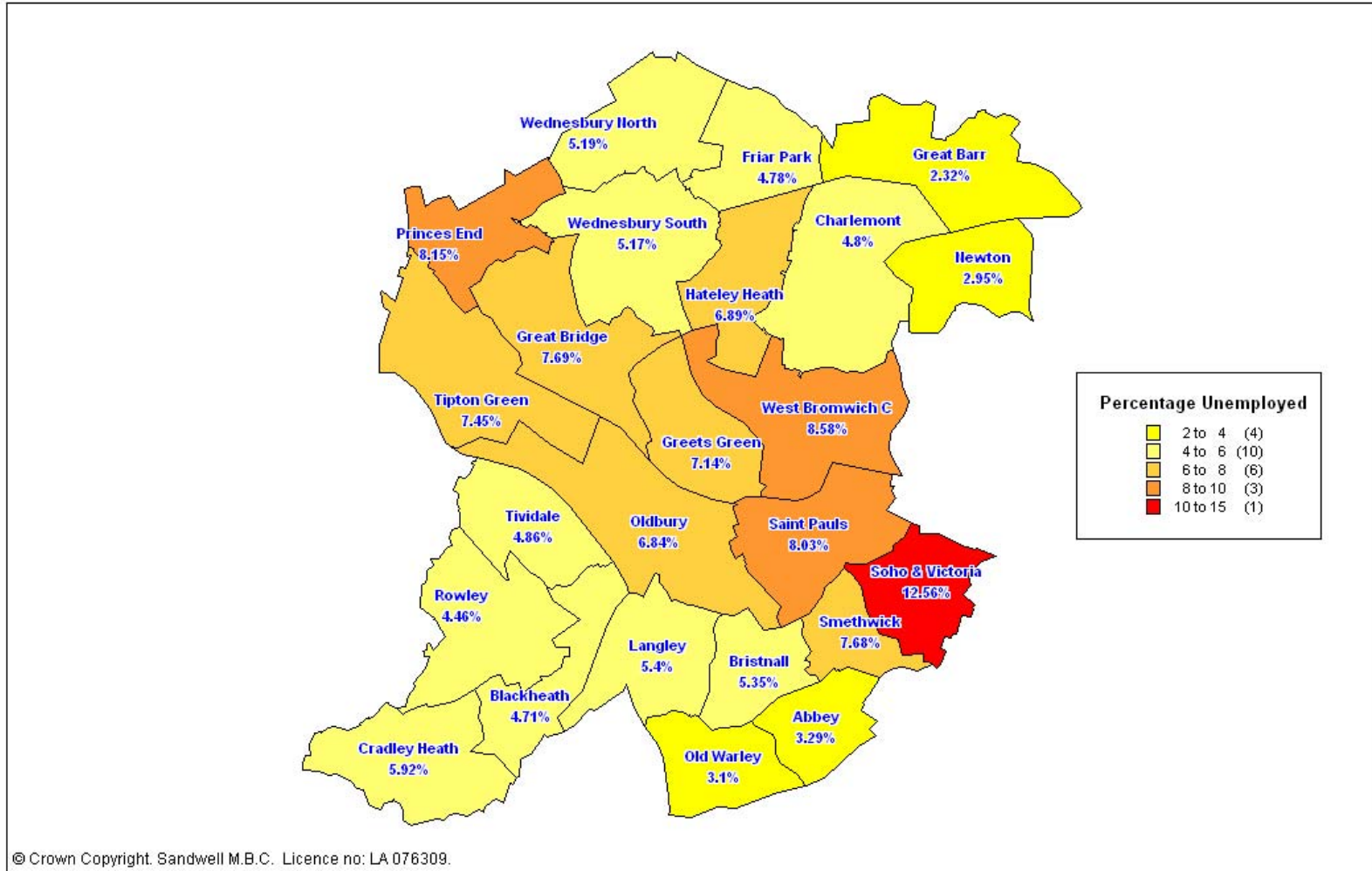
There are large variations in the level of unemployment experienced by Sandwell's twenty-four wards. Data for June 2002 show that large variations in the claimant count rate of unemployment continue to occur in different wards in Sandwell. Large variations between geographical areas such as Soho & Victoria and Great Barr are striking (see map, opposite). This figure clearly illustrates how pockets of considerable unemployment can exist in close proximity to areas of affluence.

In 1996, Sandwell had the third highest level of long-term unemployment of the 36 metropolitan districts. Although long-term unemployment remains a serious problem for many residents, there has recently been a substantial reduction in long-term employment. In July 1997, 40.5% of those on the Claimant Count had been out of work for over 12 months. By July 2002, the number had fallen to 19.8%. This change is comparable to the rate of change for England & Wales, which went from 33.7% to 16.1% in the same period.

Source

- ONS (2002): Online Labour Market Statistics, <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Estimated Unemployment in Sandwell by Ward

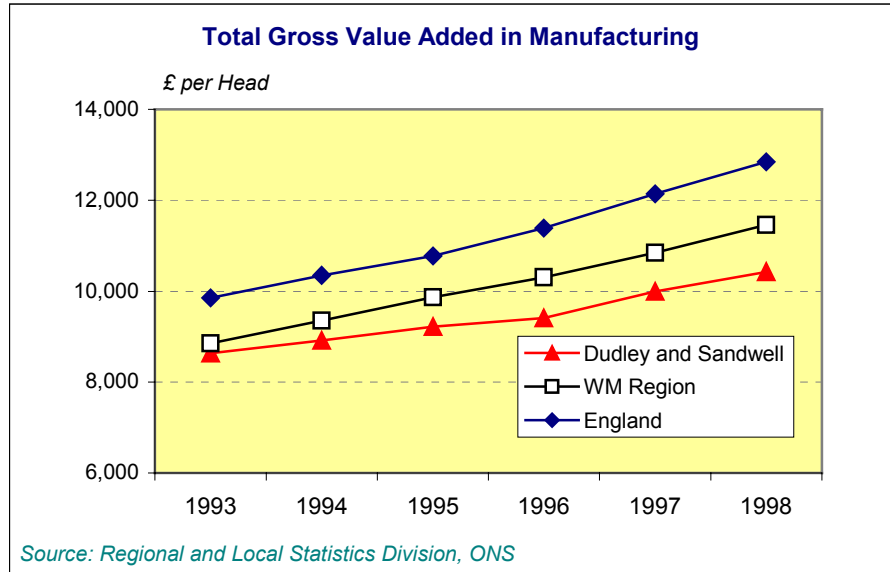


Please note: Whilst the data used to calculate unemployment figures are accurate as of June 2002, the denominator used to calculate percentages comes from 1991 census figures, and may therefore be slightly inaccurate.

INDICATOR 16

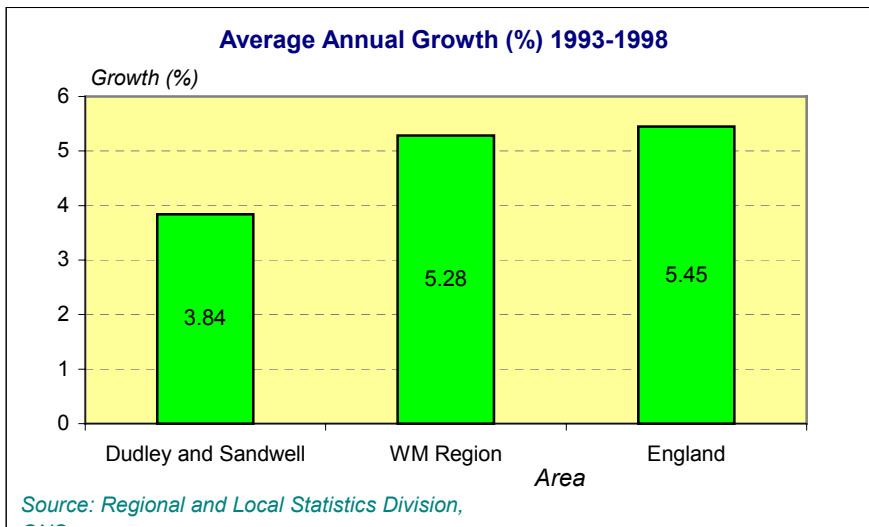
G.V.A. PER EMPLOYEE (MANUFACTURING)

The difference between the input value of a manufacturing plant and the value of its output is known as the Gross Value Added (GVA). This statistic is only available by NUTS3³ area, in which figures for Sandwell and Dudley are combined. In common with its



neighbours, the value added by each employee in manufacturing in Sandwell is low compared to national and regional measures.

Local economies that are characterised by high productivity and income are in the best position to provide a basis for prosperity for those living and working there. Sandwell and its neighbours have a long way to go in reaching the UK position. Average rates for the period 1993-1998 are much lower in Sandwell and Dudley than both the West Midlands area and England as a whole. This



slower rate of growth suggests that local companies are in decline, and that the gap between the UK and Sandwell, shown in the graph above, will continue to widen in the future.

It should be noted that GVA data is only available in relation to

manufacturing output. This means that local economies with a high service element can appear to be creating less wealth than they actually are. However, the picture represented by districts such as Sandwell that have a particularly large manufacturing sector are, therefore, best represented by GVA data.

³ Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units- Standard European Statistical Areas.

Vision Statement - Community

Sandwell residents and workers will regard Sandwell as a place of opportunity, variety, quality of life, and racial harmony.

BASELINE OVERVIEW- 2001

Existing evidence suggests that residents are not dissatisfied with the quality of life they experience in Sandwell and only a minority think it will deteriorate in the future. Afro-Caribbean residents are least likely to feel satisfied with their environment and older residents are most likely to feel that conditions will deteriorate in the years to come. An individual's level of social engagement within the local community may however be low. A key indicator, voter participation in local elections performs badly in Sandwell even though three quarters of residents say that their vote makes a difference. The Borough's turnout is consistently low compared to both the UK and other West Midland metropolitan districts. There was, however, a slight improvement in the latest local election (May 2002) though there remains a large variation in turnout between wards.

TRENDS IN 2002

- Voter turnout in local elections.



Sandwell turnout increased by 7% between the 1998 and 2002 local elections. The national increase was 4.6%.

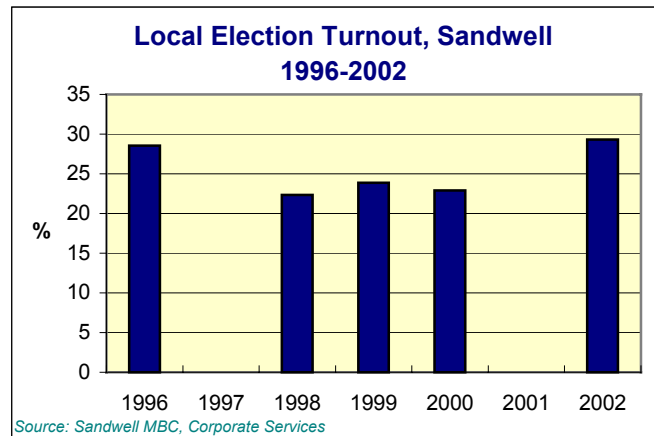
- Perceptions of Sandwell as a place to live and work.



75% of Sandwell residents express satisfaction with their neighbourhood. No comparable data is available for previous years.

Voter turnout is important because it indicates the extent to which local people feel empowered and able to understand/ influence the political process. Voting is probably the most fundamental way in which an individual can impact upon the quality of life in the local community.

Sandwell’s voter turnout for 2002 has increased for this year’s elections to 29.3%. Turnout between wards varied considerably with St Pauls and Tipton Green having the highest at 37.3% and 37% and Friar Park and Hateley Heath having the lowest at 20.6 % and 22.6%, respectively.



Previous to this, the 1998 turnout in the local elections in the English Metropolitan Boroughs was the lowest recorded since the reorganisation in 1974 (SMBC, 1999). Sandwell had the lowest turnout among the seven Metropolitan Authorities in the West Midlands in 1995 and 1996. National turnout for the 2002 local elections was 32.8% (a figure for metropolitan authorities alone is not yet available). This was an increase from 28.2% (26% for metropolitan authorities) in 2000.

The Sandwell Residents survey (1998) shows that homeowners attach more importance to voting than tenants. This may go some way to providing a clue as to the significant differences in turnout by ward. Ethnic minority groups appear to attach more importance to voting in local elections than the white sub-group. The survey found 75% of the Indian sub group saying they think voting is important and fewer than 60% of the Afro-Caribbean sub group. The white sub-group scored less. A Viewpoint survey (July 2000) asked whether ‘a vote in a local election makes a difference’. Almost three quarters of respondents say yes with little difference between Black and White sub-groups.

Sources

- SMBC, 1998, Sandwell Residents Survey.
- SMBC, 1999, Sandwell Trends, Sandwell MBC Research Unit.
- SMBC, 2002, unpublished election turnout results, Sandwell MBC Elections Office.
- SMBC, July 2000, Viewpoint Survey, Sandwell MBC Research Unit.

**VISION COMPONENT FOUR:
INDICATOR 18**

**COMMUNITY
PERCEPTIONS OF SANDWELL**

Residents are not noticeably dissatisfied with the quality of their life in Sandwell. During 1998 the Residents Survey asked how satisfied local people were with their neighbourhood as a place to live. A large majority (75%) said they were satisfied but with some exceptions. A majority of Afro-Caribbean residents expressed dissatisfaction. Older residents in the 45 to 64 year old age group also feel that their neighbourhood has deteriorated. In general, the Indian and Bangladeshi groups express a higher opinion of the way their environment is changing. Child behaviour is cited as the single most negative influence and 'nice neighbours' as the most positive influence on local life.

Local people are not generally pessimistic about the way life in the Borough will change in the future. The Viewpoint survey (SMBC, 1999) has found only 23% of respondents saying that they think the quality of life in the Borough will have deteriorated by the year 2020. It should be noted however that the largest respondent group (44%) say they do not think the Borough will change for either the better or worse.

The most valued aspects of the local area are the nature areas, shopping facilities and the public transport system (SMBC, 1999). A recent survey (SMBC, 2000) shows over 67% of residents to be satisfied with the local bus service.

There are some differences in the importance men and women place on specific factors that will determine their life quality. Females attach more importance to improved income than males and males value health more (SMBC, 2000). This may reflect gender concerns relating to the effects of poverty and deprivation plus the need to compete in the labour market for work.

Sources:

- SMBC, 1999, Viewpoint Survey, Sandwell MBC Research Unit
- SMBC, 2000, Viewpoint Survey, Sandwell MBC Research Unit

Vision Statement – External Relations

Sandwell will be recognised as a successful part of the West Midlands Conurbation and is a worthwhile place in which to work, live and invest.

BASELINE OVERVIEW- 2001

Sandwell has yet to achieve many characteristics of areas that are widely recognised as an attractive place to live and work. Net outward migration persists, suggesting that the area may be unable to meet the needs and aspirations of many current and potential residents. Domestic property values are considerably lower than elsewhere with one of the highest proportions of Band A properties in the country (less than £40,000). Approximately one quarter of properties date from before the First World War. Retail property values in Sandwell are considerably lower than those in neighbouring areas, with local retailers suffering from intense competition from shopping facilities beyond the borough boundary. Commercial property values are also considerably lower than elsewhere in the Region (particularly Birmingham), which has itself suffered recently from a slower rate of growth than that experienced elsewhere in the country.

TRENDS IN 2002

- Number of inward migrants.



Sandwell is not attracting residents. Despite a surge in inward migration over the last year, it has not experienced positive net inflow for many years.

- Average domestic property values.



Property values are increasing slowly in Sandwell (an increase of 28.3% over the past three years). The gap with the nation is widening, as the latter grew 36.1% over the same period.

- Average retail property value.



Although retail property values are not increasing at the rate of areas such as Merry Hill, West Bromwich retail property values are increasing relative to other West Midlands areas.

- Average commercial property value.



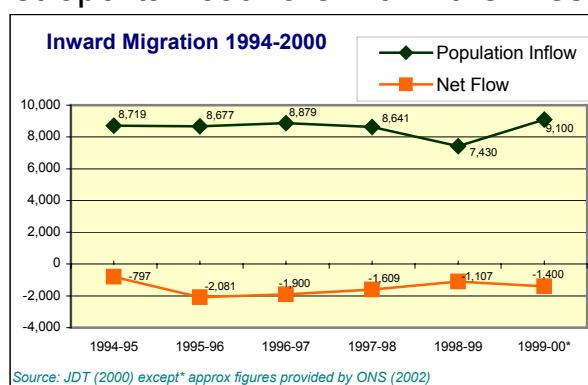
Rents for commercial premises in the Sandwell area are falling, despite a trend elsewhere in the region for increases.

**VISION COMPONENT FIVE:
INDICATOR 19**

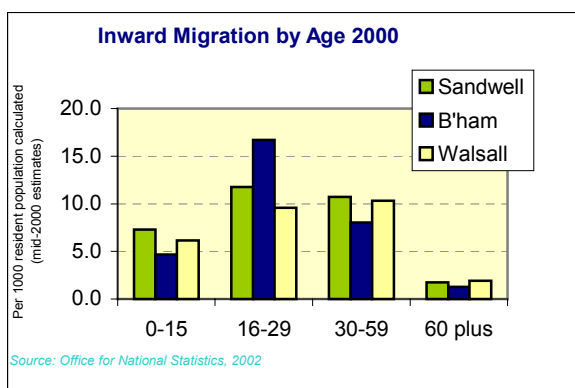
**EXTERNAL RELATIONS
NUMBER OF INWARD MIGRANTS**

This measure provides a clue as to the Borough's ability to retain existing residents and attract new ones. A stable or growing population is a positive indicator of the continuing vitality of an area. It also tells us about the suitability of residential accommodation and the quality of the local environment. In common with its Black Country neighbours, Sandwell has not experienced a positive net inflow for some time. The inflow recorded by ONS for 2000 rose to approximately 9,100, although there continued to be a net outflow of people (1400). This pattern is expected to continue at least until 2010 and reflects national trends of population migration from urban to rural areas (for example, Walsall has the smallest actual inflow but has a net outflow similar to Sandwell at 1100). All metropolitan councils within the West Midlands have declining populations: only district councils are growing.

Apart from the possibility that it reflects an inability to meet the needs and aspirations of residents and potential residents, the continued lack of a significant net inward migration is likely to have a negative impact on the nature of the local labour force. Population projections already suggest that between 2000 and 2011 there will be a substantial decline in the number of adults aged 25 to 34, which are prime years in terms of economic productivity. Although this is largely due to variations in the birth rate, efforts to improve



the attractiveness of Sandwell could augment inward migration and help improve the prognosis for the local economy.



A recent incomes survey (Barclays Private Clients, 2002) has shown that Sandwell is one of the least attractive areas for affluent people to live. Two of the three Parliamentary constituencies

wholly within Sandwell have extremely low proportions of high-earning individuals. Whilst 5% of areas such as Stratford-upon-Avon and Edgbaston are populated by these "affluentials", Warley and West Bromwich West have less than 0.5%, and are in the bottom seven constituencies in Britain.

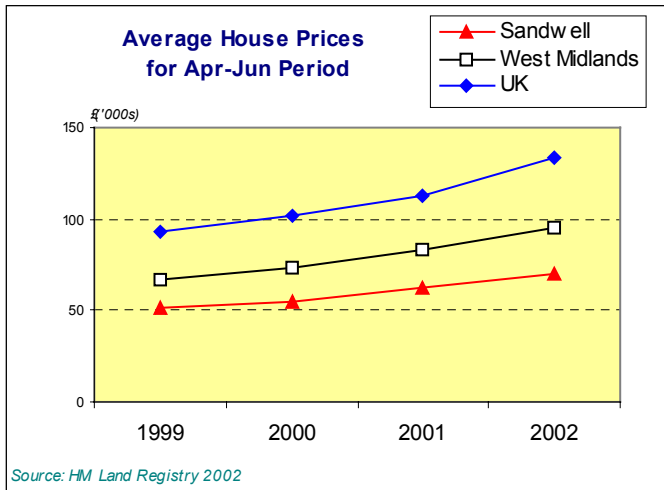
Sources

- ONS, 2002, Migration (Series VS no. 28, PPI no. 240), Office for National Statistics, London.
- Barclays Private Clients (2002): Where the affluentials live. <http://www.newsroom.barclays.co.uk/news/data/754.html>

**VISION COMPONENT FIVE:
INDICATOR 20**

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS
AVERAGE DOMESTIC PROPERTY VALUE**

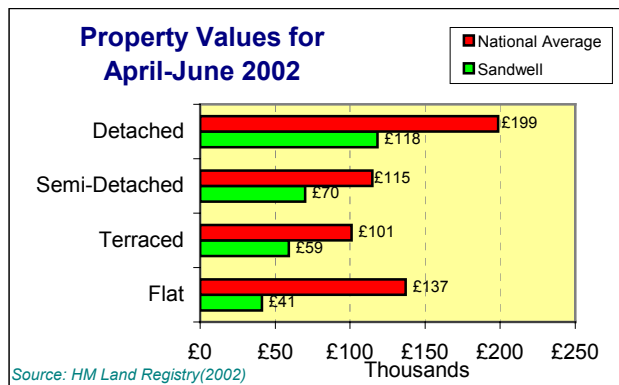
The graph below shows the considerable differences between Sandwell and national house prices apparent during the quarter April-June 2002. Sandwell prices are rising at a slower rate than the UK, suggesting that this gap will continue to widen in the future. Council Tax data show that almost half of all dwellings in the Borough are in Band A (worth less than £40,000). However,



whilst this represents one of the highest proportions in the country, the figure is slowly reducing as higher value new dwellings replace demolished lower value dwellings. In 1999 almost 95 percent of Sandwell dwellings fell within the lowest three bands compared with less than 80 percent in the West Midlands County and 54 percent in England as a whole.

Comparisons between ward boundaries indicate considerable differences between house values in the Borough. The Council Tax bands of 1999 indicated that the ward with the highest proportion of properties in Band A is Soho and Victoria (88%), followed by Greets Green (77%), Smethwick (72%) and St Pauls (72%). More than half the dwellings in these wards were built before 1919 (SMBC, 1999). Wards with higher average house prices include Abbey, Newton, Great Barr, and Rowley.

A different perspective is offered if one chooses to look at the income multiplier figure as a measure of affordability of housing. In this measure, the average cost of a house is compared to average earnings, and shows that in England, the average 21-24 year old must commit around 8.5 times his salary to afford a 95% mortgage. In Sandwell, however, despite low average earnings, this figure falls to 5.3, suggesting much better value for money. In fact, there are only two boroughs in the West Midlands which offer more affordable housing (Coventry and Stoke on Trent).



Sources

- HM Land Registry, 2002, data taken from www.statistics.gov.uk, April 2002
- SMBC,1999, Sandwell Trends, Sandwell MBC Research Unit.

**VISION COMPONENT FIVE:
INDICATOR 21**

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS
AVERAGE RETAIL PROPERTY RENTAL VALUE**

Zone A Retail Rental Values Reported by District Valuers 2000-1

LOCATION	PROPERTY TYPE 1 ⁴		PROPERTY TYPE 2 ⁵		COMMERCIAL YIELD
	2000	2001	2000	2001	2001
Birmingham	2850	2850	1250	1250	5.0
Merry Hill	2000	2400	1700	2000	5.0
Walsall	1300	1300	700	700	6
West Bromwich	650	700	375	375	7.5
Wolverhampton	1325	1325	475	475	5.5

Source: Valuation Office (Property Market Report Spring 2001)

Note: The table indicates rental value on full repairing terms reported by District Valuers for two types of accommodation. Each value is £ per square meter, annually.

Retail rental values in Sandwell itself are considerably lower than those in the neighbouring main shopping centres which attract Sandwell residents. Situated within a large urban area with a complex and dynamic hierarchy of shopping facilities, Sandwell's residents have access to a wide range of options both inside and outside the Borough when it comes to shopping. During the 1990s most shopping centres across the West Midlands lost importance due to the development of large alternative centres such as Merry Hill and The Fort in Birmingham. The share of clothing trade taken by stores outside Sandwell increased rapidly from 37 percent in 1986 to 56 percent in 1995, with West Bromwich feeling the effect most (SMBC, 1995).

The commercial yield of a property is a key indicator of the vitality of town centres. Yield is the ratio of rental income to capital value. The lower the yield ratio, the higher the rental income. This indicates that a town is considered more attractive to developers and likely to attract investment than a town with high yield ratios. Whilst Birmingham and Merry Hill perform best, Rowley Regis (12.5) and Smethwick-Bearwood (10) are amongst the worst in the West Midlands (Valuation Office, 2002).

The increase in usage of centres outside Sandwell for food shopping has been reduced recently due to improved facilities within the Borough. Viewpoint Three (January 2000) shows that West Bromwich is the main centre used for food shopping (20.2%) followed by Oldbury (15%). Altogether, 13% used centres outside the Borough.

Sources

- SMBC (1995) Sandwell Shopping Survey, Sandwell MBC Department of Environment and Development Services.
- Valuation Office (2001): Property Market Spring Report.

⁴ Denotes prime position in principal shopping centre with shop frontage of 20ft in zones A and B.

⁵ Denotes good secondary off peak position in principal shopping centre. [from UDP doc]

**VISION COMPONENT FIVE:
INDICATOR 22**

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS
AVERAGE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY VALUE**

Commercial property values in Sandwell are very low. GVA Grimley (Spring 2001) state that the entire West Midlands region is experiencing a comparatively slow rate of growth, an indication of a lower level of future demand for property. Indeed, in West Bromwich, the rental market appears to be shrinking (see table). However, the Sandwell Inward Investment Bureau suggest that the statistics can present a misleading picture as local demand is strong and land prices have risen significantly during 2000. The Bureau's view is that property values are held back by a lack of suitability whilst most of the major development sites have now been secured by large developers. The Bureau reports that several opportunities have been lost due to the unavailability of suitable sites and property.

Rental Value of Commercial Premises 2000-1

LOCATION	TYPE 1 ⁶		TYPE 2 ⁷	
	2000	2001	2000	2001
Birmingham	240	240	275	275
Merry Hill	105	110	110	115
West Bromwich	60	55	75	75
Wolverhampton	90	95	90	95

Source: Valuation Office (Property Market Report Spring 2001)

Note: The table indicates rental value on full repairing terms reported by District Valuers for two types of accommodation. Each value is £ per square meter, annually.

Sources:

- GVA Grimley (Spring 2001) Economic and Property Market Review, GVA Grimley International Property Advisers, Birmingham.
- Valuation Office (2001): Property Market Spring Report.

⁶ Type 1 is a town centre located, self-contained suite over 1,000 square metres in an office block erected within the last 10 years. There is a good standard of finish with a lift and good quality fittings to common parts. Limited car parking is available.

⁷ Type 2 is as Type 1 but suite size in range of 150 square metres - 400 square metres. The higher cost of renting Type 2 accommodation, compared to Type 1 is due to economies of scale.