LGC Awards2026 30th ANNIVERSARY
Most Improved Council

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Head of Strategy, Performance and Partnerships

Candidate Pack



www.**sandwell**.gov.uk

MEET OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JAMES MCLAUGHLIN



Thank you for your interest in joining Sandwell as our new Head of Strategy, Performance and Partnerships.

This is an exciting time to join the Council. Being named the LGC's Most Improved Council in 2026 was an important recognition of the progress we have made. We are proud of that achievement, but we are equally clear that improvement is not a destination. Our focus now is on sustaining that momentum and translating it into better outcomes for the people and communities of Sandwell.

We have now adopted our new Council Plan 2027–2030, setting out our ambitions and priorities for the years ahead. The challenge, and the opportunity, is to turn those ambitions into action, ensure that we understand the difference we are making, and work effectively with our partners to tackle the issues that no organisation can address alone.

That is why the Head of Strategy, Performance and Partnerships is such an important role for us.

You will be at the heart of connecting our Council Plan to delivery. You will help ensure that strategy, evidence, insight and performance inform the choices we make, strengthen how we understand and demonstrate our impact, and develop the partnerships needed to deliver our ambitions for Sandwell.

We are looking for someone who combines strategic perspective with a relentless focus on outcomes. You will need to be comfortable working across organisational boundaries, building trusted relationships with elected members, senior leaders and partners, constructively challenging our thinking, and bringing clarity to complex issues.

Just as importantly, we want someone who understands that strategy and performance are not simply corporate processes. Done well, they create a clear line of sight between the ambitions we set as a Council, the decisions we make, the services we deliver and the experiences of our residents.



There is real momentum in Sandwell. The recognition we received in 2026 reflects how far the Council has come. Our new Council Plan gives us a clear platform for the next stage of that journey, and this role provides a significant opportunity to help shape how successfully we deliver it.

If you bring strategic insight, sound judgement, curiosity, a collaborative approach and a genuine commitment to excellent public service, I hope you will be excited by the opportunity to join us.

Thank you again for your interest. I look forward to receiving your application.



Strategy, Performance & Partnerships - Overview

From Most Improved to Outstanding
Sandwell is entering the next phase of its improvement journey.

Recognition as the LGC's Most Improved Council in 2026 marked an important point in our progress. But for us, improvement is not a destination. Our ambition is to build on that progress and become an outstanding council, consistently delivering better lives and better futures for the people of Sandwell.

Our Council Plan 2027–2030 gives us the strategic framework for that next stage. It puts outcomes at the heart of the organisation, with a clear line of sight from our ambitions and strategic outcomes through to the programmes, services and measures that will deliver them.

That creates an exciting opportunity for our new Head of Strategy, Performance and Partnerships.

Turning ambition into outcomes

We want to make continuous improvement part of how Sandwell works.

That means being clear about the outcomes we are trying to achieve, understanding what our evidence tells us about progress and being prepared to act when something isn't working.

It means moving beyond reporting performance to using performance and insight to drive improvement.



It means connecting strategy to delivery; bringing together data, insight and resident experience; identifying opportunities to improve services; and ensuring that transformation produces demonstrable benefits. Our Council Plan establishes an approach in which performance against outcomes is reviewed, evidence is examined when progress is not as expected, and the Council adapts its approach accordingly.

And it means looking at services through the eyes of the people who use them, focusing on whole customer journeys and outcomes rather than allowing existing organisational structures and processes to define the way services work.

Building an organisation that improves itself

Our ambition goes beyond running a series of improvement projects.

We want to develop the capability, culture and disciplines that enable the organisation to continuously improve itself.

Our High Performing Organisation work provides a complementary focus on strengthening organisational performance, accountability, leadership, workforce
capacity, employee experience and organisational effectiveness, with a clear line of sight through to better outcomes for Sandwell residents.

For Strategy, Performance and Partnerships, this means creating the conditions in which services can improve: providing clarity, evidence, insight, constructive challenge and improvement expertise while ensuring that ownership of improvement remains embedded across the organisation.



More about the role

As Head of Strategy, Performance and Partnerships, you will be at the centre of this next chapter.

We want you to help us:

- Set direction, creating a strong golden thread from the Council Plan through to service delivery and outcomes.
- Know how we are doing, bringing together performance, evidence, insight and resident experience to create a clear picture of progress.
- Turn insight into action, identifying where improvement is needed and helping the organisation respond.
- Strengthen collaboration, using our partnerships to help deliver outcomes that the Council cannot achieve alone.
- Build improvement capability, helping create an organisation in which continuous improvement becomes everyone's business.

The challenge is not simply to demonstrate that Sandwell has improved. It is to help us turn that improvement into sustained excellence.



Structure Chart

Head of Strategy, Performance & Partnerships

- Policy & Partnerships Manager
- Senior Lead - Corporate Performance
- Senior Lead - Service Improvement
- Senior Lead - Voluntary Sector Grants
- Support Officer



You can find out more about our achievements, plans, and culture, from our CEO, Shokat Lal, in this video



Our **Values** and **Behaviours**

One **team**

United and working together with a shared purpose of achieving great results

- Actively role model and create trust
- Enable honest and open communication
- Visible and approachable
- Engage in regular communication
- Recognise contributions and success
- Display a coaching leadership style and inspire others
- Encourage best practice and cross team collaboration
- Drive a healthy work-life balance
- Develop and grow future talent

Customer **focus**

We care about providing the best possible public service

- Manage customer's expectations
- Ensure the service works to the best outcome for the customer
- Create accessible channels for customer communication
- Encourage customers to lead in service provision
- Take a holistic view of services
- Be accessible to residents, service users, customers and employees
- Engage with customers, seek feedback and enable continuous improvement

Inclusive

Treating each other with respect and knowing our diversity is our strength

- Create an inclusive environment to encourage a voice for everyone
- Create opportunities and champions diversity and inclusivity
- Seek feedback from all audiences to facilitate co-production
- Seek to understand our diverse communities
- Actively challenge barriers to inclusion
- Encourage diversity of thought and perspectives to overcome challenges

Our Values and Behaviours

Ambitious

Striving for excellence, always looking to get better and making sure everyone can take pride in our borough

- Promote a growth mindset
- Communicate the organisation's ambitions and desired outcomes
- Lead, manage and communicate change
- Encourage and inspire creativity and innovation within boundaries
- Seek and encourage everyone to be the best in class
- Create channels for giving and receiving feedback
- Tackle under-performance early and challenge unacceptable behaviour with courage
- Grow personal credibility
- Communicate with passion and integrity to maintain and elevate the reputation of the service and the council

Accountable

Deliver what we say we will

- Create a clear vision and strategy
- Consider external and internal factors
- Encourage learning from feedback and complaints
- Promote resilience and adaptability
- Set clear expectations and standards for self and others
- Provide resources for service provision
- Empower others to solve problems and take ownership
- Give support to strengthen team and personal resilience
- Make timely and well-judged decisions



A NEW STORY FOR SANDWELL

Made 50 years ago from six proud towns, Sandwell is a place built on making things happen. It’s where industry met innovation, and where strong communities still shape the future.

The Sandwell Story is a campaign and programme of work to celebrate the people, places and partnerships that make this borough a great place to live, work, learn and visit. Find out more at the Sandwell Story website.

Watch the New Story for Sandwell video







PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB DESCRIPTION



LOCATION



Sandwell is a metropolitan borough in the Black Country, which is made up of six towns - Oldbury, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich.

Located in the West Midlands, Sandwell borders Birmingham city, Dudley borough, Walsall borough and Wolverhampton city.

The borough has excellent access to the national motorway network with five junctions feeding in to the M5 and M6 motorways serving the South West, South East and North West regions of the UK.

Sandwell also benefits from a mainline train station - Sandwell and Dudley and the Midland Metro.



OUR OFFER TO YOU

Join the largest employer in Sandwell, where over 3,500 of our diverse employees thrive in hundreds of unique roles.

To support you to develop your career with us, we offer:

- A competitive pay progression structure and leave allowance
- Hybrid working arrangements and a flexitime system (subject to needs of the role)
- Supportive staff networks including Culture Champions, helping to fulfil our organisational culture aspirations and make us a fully inclusive employer
- A confidential counselling service (BACP approved) and a mediation service is available on managerial referral
- Talent initiatives including apprenticeship programmes at all levels, and the prestigious National Graduate Development Programme.
- Learning and development including management development training, employee wellbeing workshops and job role specific training.
- A professional coaching and mentoring offer
- Employee performance and development processes with regular check-ins and an annual review to help you be your best
- Recognition for your hard work through our ‘We our Sandwell’ award scheme and colleague appreciation schemes
- Work that makes a real difference to our customers and residents, continually improving our boroughs.
- Access to trade unions



Our aim is to be an outstanding Council and we recognise that part of that is providing the best employee experience possible. At Sandwell we care about our people and commit to keeping our colleagues safe and well at work.

To make sure everyone can be their best and feel like they count, our support offer includes:

- Our employee assistance programme with free, confidential, 24/7 helpline service staffed by professional counsellors
- Access to occupational health services
- Wellbeing champions network
- Supportive carers and parental policies
- Generous maternity, paternity and adoption leave
- Disability passport scheme
- To help you make the most of your money we offer:
- Membership of West Midlands Pension Fund with generous employer contributions
- Staff deals though our employee benefits scheme

HOW TO APPLY

To help us understand how you might be a fit for our organisation, please submit an up to date CV along with a supporting statement, no longer than 2 sides of A4, detailing how your skills and experience align with our requirements for the role. Please help us to understand more about:

- Your people management and leadership style, approach and skills
- Your depth of technical expertise in the service area that you are applying for
- Your strategic view of the service that you are applying for and what insights you can bring to improve ways of working and delivery for our residents and communities

If you have any questions about the role or process, please reach out to our talent team for an informal discussion. If you require any reasonable adjustments as part of your application journey please also let us know how we can support you.

Your contact for this recruitment is Sukhy Lall, our Talent Acquisition Lead. You can connect with her on LinkedIn or email her on Sukhy_lall@sandwell.gov.uk and applications are to be sent to her.


www.sandwell.gov.uk