

Agenda

Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

Thursday, 2 September 2021 at 5.45 pm
At Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

This agenda gives notice of items to be considered in private as required by Regulations 5 (4) and (5) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

- 1 **Apologies for Absence**
- 2 **Minutes** 7 - 18
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2021.
- 3 **Declarations of Interest**
Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.
- 4 **Additional Items of Business**
To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.
- 5 **Review of Property Age Designations** 19 - 30
To consider and comment on the information presented on the review of the Council's Age Designated Stock and the plans to take forward the review.



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| 6 | Work Programme
To consider the items on the work programme for upcoming Board meetings. | 31 - 32 |
| 7 | Cabinet Forward plan
To consider the Cabinet Forward Plan. | 33 - 58 |

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Minutes of Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**1 April 2021 at 5:45pm
Online Virtual Meeting**

Present: Councillor Moore (Chair)
Councillors Bostan, Bawa;
Mr Cash (Co-opted member).

Also present: Councillor Allcock (Cabinet Member for Homes).

Officers: Manny Sehmbi (Business Manager – Community Partnerships); Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager – Housing Management); Chris Jones (Project Director) and Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager).

12/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Edwards, P Hughes and Sandars.

13/21 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chair requested that information in relation to Oldbury library be circulated to members of the Board.



14/21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interests made at the meeting.

14/21 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no additional items of business to be considered at the meeting.

15/21 **Tenant Engagement and Participation**

The Service Manager for Housing Management reported that Government had recently introduced the Charter for Social Housing White Paper to improve regulation around consumer standards. This White Paper was part of the government's ongoing response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the Hackett review. The white paper sets out seven key promises to tenants in Social Housing:

- To be safe in your home
- To know how your landlord is performing and hold it to account
- To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
- To be treated with respect
- To have your voice heard by your landlord
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
- To be supported to take a first step to ownership

The Council had been engaging with Tpas as critical friend to provide guidance on best practice for tenant engagement.

The Business Manager for Community Partnerships outlined the current structures to support tenants' voice, including the Tenants Complaints Panel, Sandwell Community Information & Participation Services (SCIPS) and the Tenant Review Panel (TRP). It was explained that the TRP scrutinised housing services to support services improvement and a member of the TRP, Mr Cash, sat as a member of this scrutiny board.



Further to Minute Number 2/20, a working group which consisted of council officers, residents' associations, SCIPS and member from the TRP, had been established to codesign different engagement models. The officer had worked with Tpas and the working group to draft a circular model on Resident and Leaseholder Proposed Involvement. Consideration was now given to the proposed model which was still subject to further consultation. The model included a new Resident and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel under the Director of Housing. This panel would include a Councillor Representative to provide political advocacy and collaboration between the Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Consideration was given to the draft terms of reference for the Scrutiny Panel. It outlined the role, purpose and potential membership of the group, a possible recruitment process to encourage diversity and broader representation, as well as a learning and development programme and priority areas for the work plan which would be agreed by members of the group.

From the comments and questions raised by members of the Scrutiny Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted: -

- Tenant recruitment processes were set to be codesigned with partners and tenants to ensure that tenants were empowered and the panel had broad representation. The engagement work for the process was underway and would continue.
- The Tenant Audit programme on the proposed engagement model acknowledged the Tenant Inspectors Programme, Mr Cash and other tenants had expressed support for Tenant Inspectors.
- The directorate had an ambition to create a welcoming environment for tenants to be engaged for a 3-year tenure on the Panel as well as opportunities for tenants to engage with single issues.



- The role of the co-opted member from the TRP from the Board was valuable and would be continued. The proposed change would include councillor representation on the panel but would not remove the co-opted member from this scrutiny board.

Agreed that the dissolution of the current Tenant and Resident Panel and the proposed new model be supported and considered by the Cabinet.

16/21

Question and Answer Session with the Cabinet Member for Homes

The Scrutiny Board received a presentation from the Cabinet Member for Homes, Cllr Allcock, on his portfolio and the work he would be focussing on in the future.

On the topic of Tenant Engagement and Participation, the Cabinet Member referred to previous item noting that the importance of the work was underpinned by regulatory changes, but it was also crucial to put residents at the heart of council and ensure that the tenants voice was heard.

The Cabinet Member for Homes explained that the pandemic had accelerated work that was already in progress to improve the council's digital offer, including increased options for service users on when and how they access council services. Project work had been across all teams in Housing Management: Home Ownership; Housing Solutions; Income Management; Locals; ASB; Rent Accounting. Face to face Safe checks would be maintained to ensure residents were safe and secure in their properties.

On preventing and reducing homelessness, the Cabinet Member stated that the council was a leading authority in the region. Temporary accommodation numbers were down to approximately 40, 18 months prior they were at a high of 120+.



The average time spent in temporary accommodation was also down from 53 days the start of 2020 to 39 in December 2020.

The Council had taken part in the WMCA Housing First scheme, at the start of the pilot the Council were deemed to be failing in their support for rough sleepers. Through this scheme, 44 rough sleepers had been housed in secure accommodation for a period of 6 months or longer. The council had improved partnerships with private landlords via the Secure and Sustain programme to enable private renters to take on rough sleepers, the programme provided assurances such legal fees to private renters, electric checks and gas safety checks to ensure that the properties were fit for purpose. Council had also been working with St. Basils on the accommodation near Sandwell General Hospital. The Council were also involved in WMCA Change Into Action Programme where residents can donate via the website to local charities that support rough sleepers.

Due to the pandemic, building operations had suspended, the Council had refocused on acquiring properties. 68 properties had been purchased to use as Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock, which was an investment of £9.3M investment. The Council had a further 145 potential properties to purchase and were interested in pursuing properties that addressed residents acute and specific needs.

The Council had an annual gas servicing rate of 99.56%, 132,000 repairs had been delivered since March 2020, with the average time taken to respond to complaints at 6 days, this was maintained throughout the pandemic. A building safety board had been established to implement the recommendations of the Hackett Review and ensure compliance with building safety Regulations.

The Board noted an update on the Council's asset management and maintenance throughout the pandemic. Where required, the works carried out included: roofs, windows, front and rear doors, new fascia and rainwater goods, external decorations and environmental works.



Work had continued on the Council House New Build Programme – over 354 new units completed, with another 235 units approved and in progress, as well as a new programme being developed to achieve in excess of 600 units in the coming 4/5 years. Information had been pulled together on small sites across the borough that could be developed into new housing sites.

On Private Sector Housing, the Cabinet Member for Homes reported that he had had minimal involvement with the works, however explained that the Council operated a Triage system to ensure a duty officer was available every working day during office hours to deal with requests that are received. The requests came from the contact centre, inhouse or online referrals. The Council received 800 enquiries annually. Inspections were carried out using the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) where properties were risk assessed against the 29 hazards criteria. A large number of enquires and requests for assistance related to inadequate heating, damp and mould growth. Licensing was mandatory for all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) which were occupied by 5 or more people in 2 or more households. 160 licenses had been issued. Where the local authority received disrepair notifications which could result in legal proceedings regarding the council's housing stock, the housing team carried out inspections, prepared finding reports and would defend the local authority at court if required. There were 120 cases dealt with annually.

The Cabinet Member for Homes also explained the future planned works for the Council, which included:

- Face to face home checks to sustain tenancies and support building safety requirements.
- Improved security and CCTV to High Rise Blocks. Consultations were set to commence in the summer of 2021.
- A review of New Tenancy Conditions had been completed, with a roll out planned for 2022 next year due to the pandemic
- In commitment to the Housing Allocation Review Cabinet Report (26/2/20) The Housing team were considering Age Designations to improve access to affordable housing for younger people, including care leavers. Consultations were set to commence in the summer of 2021.



- Amendments to the Tenancy Sustainment Programme. This was on hold due to the statutory notice that has to be served to change the conditions, which was not considered appropriate during the pandemic.
- Remodelled services to ensure resources match demand in a post COVID world.
- Asset management and maintenance including High Rise External Improvements, External Improvements and Cyclical Maintenance.
- Neighbourhood Improvements including External refurbishment (including 2-year programme to replace all wooden doors with composite doors).
- External Adaptations to Low Rise Flats.
- Disabled Adaptations.
- Installing carbon neutral heat pumps, thermal insulations etc. to meeting the Councils aim of zero carbon homes.
- Modular Housing and modern methods of construction were being considered.
- Considering delivery options for major council sites – currently in master planning process.
- New housing delivery vehicle options were being developed – this would allow the Council to have the flexibility to build other forms of tenure.
- Negotiating options to purchase new build property off plan directly from developers.
- Bidding for the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme 2021/26.
- Undertaking partnership working with the Housing Solutions team to deliver the Secure and Sustain and Call Before You Serve projects.
- Inspection of all licenced HMOs.
- Implementation of Selective /Additional Licensing (Following Consultation analysis).
- Expanding enforcement of Civil Penalties where landlords fail to comply with statutory notices served.
- New initiatives to assist tackling empty properties.



From the comments and questions raised by members of the Scrutiny Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted: -

- Further information on the allocated affordable homes within the Council's property portfolio would be brought to a future meeting.
- Sandwell was a leading authority in the WMCA for supporting rough sleepers and the Council were considering further collaborative working with WMCA and funding from the Government to provide further support after the pandemic. As a Council there was funding available to continue supporting rough sleepers in the short-term.
- A Council owned property development company was being scoped with Savills, the Cabinet Member for Homes referenced the Bird report and noted that social housing could be socially engineered and would allow the Council to control the market, creating affordable homes. This scheme would be brought back to Cabinet in late summer/early autumn 2021.
- There were 1300 empty properties across the borough, at present Council policy dictates that those purchasing empty properties must pay council tax increases dependent on the length of the time the property has been vacant e.g.
 - o Any property which has been empty and unfurnished for **two years or more** will be charged an additional 100% on its Council Tax bill. This will mean that you will be liable for **double** the normal Council Tax amount.
 - o Any property empty and unfurnished for **five years or more** will be charged an additional 200% on its Council Tax bill. This means that you will be liable for **three times** the normal Council Tax amount.
 - o From April 2021, any property empty and unfurnished for **ten years or more** will be charged an additional 300% on its Council Tax bill.



This means that you will be liable for **four times** the normal Council Tax amount.

The current policy also meant that leaseholds could allow for properties to get into a state of disrepair, with the Council having to pay for works to ensure that the property was liveable. The Cabinet Member for Homes noted that a review of this policy needed and must be tackled in a more affirmative way.

- Rogue Landlords were being tackled by selective licensing and enforcements. When COVID restrictions were lifted the Council aimed to work with Landlords to educate and promote improvement. The Cabinet Member for Homes was in support of enforcement against Rogue Landlords and need to be considered further in the future
- The Age Destination policy was under review and would be brought back to this scrutiny board in the future.
- The council had encountered problems with developers, the plan to build 600 homes was ambitious and the team hadn't been able to fulfil all properties. The scale of production and costs associated with more modern methods of constructions such as modular housing were an issue. Build time could be as little as 72 hours, however due to the high costs associated there had been resistance. Other authorities had noted a reduction of snagging costs at £8million, however this saving would not go back into the pockets of residents but the housing developers. The Council were in discussion with Hadley Industries for a pilot scheme and development project which would allow for the Council further understand modular construction methods including how to maintain and develop the properties. The Cabinet Member for Homes also noted that residents would have to learn how to maintain and internally update homes due to the methods and materials used.



Update on Sandwell Aquatics Centre

The Project Director for the Sandwell aquatics centre introduced the item and shared drone footage as well as images to show the progress on the project. This Scrutiny Board last received an update on the Aquatics Centre in November 2020 (Minute No. 28/20). Although there had been inclement weather (high winds and freezing temperatures) in the period since the last report, work had continued positively on the Aquatics Centre project and it remained on target to be handed over to the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee on time.

The Project Director explained that since the last update, the following had been started/completed:

- All pool tanks had been measured and pressure tested to ensure that the dimensions were correct and that there were no leaks – all three pools had passed these tests;
- The dive tower and associated springboard plinths had been installed;
- The primary steel frame for the building had been completed;
- The cladding to the front section of the building and the eastern elevation was complete and had also progressed well on the western elevation;
- Work had commenced on the roof for the building and the roof liner sheets are 75% complete;
- Curtain walling was complete on the front section of the building, with some glazing in place, and was progressing well on the western elevation;
- Masonry work had commenced and was progressing well internal to the building; and
- First fix M&E works had commenced and were progressing well.

Work had also been completed on phase one of the highways works required to support the delivery of the Aquatics Centre. The focus of all highways works associated with the project was to support sustainable and active travel, and to maintain traffic flow in the area. The works which had now been completed were as follows:



- Dog Kennel Lane and Bristnall Hall Road – two new zebra crossings;
- Manor Road / Holly Lane – traffic island to signalised junction with pedestrian crossings and advance stop areas for cyclists;
- Manor Road / Londonderry Lane - traffic island to signalised junction with pedestrian crossings and advance stop areas for cyclists;
- Holly Lane / St Pauls Road – give way junction to signalised junction with pedestrian crossings and advance stop areas for cyclists; and
- Londonderry Lane – puffin crossing upgrade to toucan crossing and associated cycle path.

Final designs were being developed for highways works phase two which would include improvements to Queens Road / Londonderry Lane Island and also environmental improvements to Londonderry Road. These designs would be finalised in April 2021 prior to being consulted on shortly after the Games.

From the comments and questions raised by members of the Scrutiny Board, the following responses were made, and issues highlighted: -

- Delays in Birmingham had been well publicised, however from a Sandwell the perspective, the project was on target to passed on the Organising Committee on time. Other main capital projects were also on track to be completed in time and the Games would be going ahead as planned. The Project Officer noted the challenges faced by COVID and weather conditions and highlighted the achievements of all authorities working on the Games
- Progress had been made on developing legacy outcomes to make most of the opportunity. A set of outcomes had been drafted by the authority to cover a legacy physical activity, wellbeing and sport, as well as voluntary and third sector engagement in the borough. A working group set up with a view to launch a legacy plan at the one year to go mark, ahead of the Games.



The Council had been working with Swim England to ensure a sustained legacy of diving in Sandwell and the West Midlands. Swim England had appointed a Diving Development Officer for the midlands, a draft Diving Strategy had been drafted and the Council were working with Sports England, the Department for Culture Media and Sport and OCS to ensure that the Aquatics Centre of the strategy.

Agreed that the Director of Regeneration provide a further report to the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board on the Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

Meeting ended at 7:48pm

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Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk



Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

02 September 2021

Subject:	Review of Property Age Designations
Director:	Gillian Douglas - Director for Housing
Contact Officer:	Neville Rowe Housing Strategy & Research Manager, neville_rowe@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Scrutiny Committee be briefed on the progress made to date in reviewing the age designations that currently apply to the Council's housing stock.
- 1.2 That the Scrutiny Committee be briefed on the proposals to take the current review forward.
- 1.3 That the Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the information presented on the review of the Council's Age Designated Stock and the plans to take forward the review.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The current volume of age designated properties acts as a disproportionate barrier for many seeking to access affordable housing and impedes the Council's ability to carry out its statutory functions, in particular regarding Care Experienced Young People, those who fall within the requirements set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and those seeking to move on from supported housing provision.
- 2.2 Removing the 25 years plus age designations from the properties set out in Appendix 1 will help in part to address the above issue, regarding one-bedroom properties where currently around 60% (3,018/4,883) are excluded from anyone below the age of 25.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people Increasing housing stock access to both young people and households with children will improve the life chances of those affected. A decent affordable home is a central component from which to build a stable life and to participate more readily in all forms of daily life.</p>
	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods Increasing housing stock access to both young people and households with children will improve access to quality homes.</p>

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Strategic overview

One of the commitments made by Cabinet on 26 February 2020 (Housing Allocations Policy Review) was to instruct officers to commence a review of the age designations currently applied to approximately half of the Council’s flatted accommodation. This in part was triggered by responses to the Housing Allocations Policy Review survey, where 74% of housing applicants who completed the survey (630 in total) either strongly agreed or agreed that more flats should be available to people under the age of 40.

4.2 Following a trend that is replicated nationally, as a social housing landlord the Council over many years has steadily accumulated a significant number of properties affected by age designations that now excludes a disproportionate number of the customer base purely on age grounds. Locally two neighbouring authorities have recently concluded a review of their age designations, with Dudley removing them from all their low-rise stock and Wolverhampton removing them from all their general needs stock.

4.3 Excluding properties with a 50 plus age designation, in Sandwell just over half of the Council’s stock portfolio of one and two-bedroom flats is affected by either a 25 plus, a 35 plus or a 40 plus age designation. Set against the customer base of applicants where 70% are below the age of 40, this situation does not support the principles of inclusion and leaves a significant imbalance between the supply and the demand for social housing.



4.4 **Current situation – stock base**

Excluding flatted units with a 50 plus designation, collectively around half of one and two bed roomed flats (4,586 / 8,828 units) have an age restriction. These restrictions are applied with three specific minimum ages of 25 (844 units), 35 (246 units) and 40 (3,496 units).

4.5 These restrictions mean that persons aged below 25 are excluded from 52% of the stock (4,586 units), below 35 from 42% (3,742 units) and below 40 from 40% (3,496 units). Furthermore:

- the spatial distribution of the age restricted stock is very uneven across the borough, ranging from just 2% of one bedroom units being designation free in Rowley, to a like figure of 58% in West Bromwich.
- Around three quarters of age restricted stock is in the low to medium rise stock base.
- 62% of one bedroom flats (3,018/4,883) are excluded from anyone below the age of 25 - this includes 548 flats whose age designation is 25 plus.

4.6 Focussing on units with a 25 plus age designation, when drilling down to individual blocks, the average age of the head of household rarely dips below 40, and typically lies in the 45 to 55 age range. Many blocks with a 25-plus age designation have a wide age variance, the following age profiles of three low-rise blocks in the borough are typical:

Property	Age of Head of Household								
	29	33	37	51	77	-	-	-	-
A	29	33	37	51	77	-	-	-	-
B	26	27	32	44	52	53	73	74	80
C	21x2	24x2	28	37x2	40	47	48	56	60

4.7 **Current situation – applicant base**

On 27 July from a register of 6,216 applicant households, 1,356 (22%) had a head of household aged 25 or under, 3,030 (49%) were aged between 26 and 40, and 1,403 (23%) were aged between 41 and 59. The remaining 6% are aged 60 plus.



4.8 With around 70% (4,386/6,094) of the housing register applicant base being below the age of 40, by default when a property with a 40 plus age designation becomes available for let, in effect it is only available to 30% of the applicant base. This supply and demand imbalance is highlighted by the sharp differences between the lower demand for age designated stock set against general needs stock with no age designation. Bidding week 21 commencing 21 July is typical, where none of the 40 plus units achieved more than 15 bids and with two-thirds not achieving more than five. This contrasts with the 25 to 65 bid range for properties without an age designation all of which will be let given the volume of bids:

Week commencing 21 July – Bids received for flats:

No. of bids	25 plus properties	40 plus properties	General Needs, no age designation
No bids	-	4	-
1 to 5	-	9	-
6 to 15	-	4	-
25 to 65	1	-	10
Total	1	17	10

4.9 **Proposed process for the Age Designation Review**

Due to the number of units involved in the review in May approval was given to adopt a two-phase approach to the review with Stage One focusing on units with a 25-plus restriction, and Stage Two focusing on those with a 35 and 40 plus restriction.

4.10 Stage One update

4.11 In June officers began exploring the review of the 25 plus age designations. By reducing the age restriction to applicants who are 18 years plus on these units, this would return 827 (531 one bed/296 two bed) flats back into general needs and would increase the one-bedroom unit stock access for the 18 to 25 age group from 38% to 49%. Because of the already wide age variance of many of these blocks the impact of bringing them into general needs would not have a significant impact on the overall average age of head of household.



- 4.12 On 21 July, consultation notices (copy enclosed as Appendix 2) were sent to 827 properties seeking views and opinions on the proposal to remove the 25-plus age restriction from their block. The consultation closed on 12 August 2021. In total 41 responses were received, representing a 5% response rate.
- 4.13 38 of the 41 responses opposed the removal of the age designation, all based on the concern/perception that removing the restriction would lead to increased incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) together with community cohesion strains brought about by a clash of lifestyles. Sample data indicates that in reality, there is no significant difference in incidents in that for age restricted blocks over a two-year period (2019/20 and 2020/21) there was an average of 0.45 ASB reports per unit per year compared to a like figure of 0.54 reports per unit per year for general needs.
- 4.14 If the removal of the age designations goes ahead, once removed any issues will be monitored and managed sensitively. To achieve this and in line with current policy to facilitate tenancy sustainability all applicants are now assessed for any support needs required to maintain their tenancy. Options include the provision of floating support together with support from the Welfare Rights Team if required. It should be noted that the age profile of tenants in flats will only change gradually as it is dependent on voids becoming available in the blocks.
- 4.15 Post tenancy checks are also completed and scheduled based on a risk assessment, with a scheduled programme of regular visits to new tenants planned throughout the year and each tenant having a named neighbourhood officer to refer to. Where officers feel it is prudent to do so the option also exists to apply the Sensitive Lettings criteria as set out in Section E/10 of the Housing Allocations Policy.
- 4.16 Once Stage One is completed, Stage Two of the review can then commence supported by the learning gained from Stage One.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 There are no alternative options other than to retain the current level of age restricted properties.



6 Implications

<p>Resources:</p>	<p>This report has no adverse financial implications for the Housing Revenue Account. There is a likelihood that removing or changing age designations will make flats in some blocks easier to let, which will increase occupation rates and therefore increase rental income.</p> <p>In addition, reducing age restrictions will expand the housing options for persons in temporary accommodation who would otherwise be excluded and will reduce associated costs.</p>
<p>Legal and Governance:</p>	<p>Each age designation is in effect a Local Lettings Plan (LLP) that deviates away from the mainstream housing allocations policy. Section 166A(6)(b) of the 1996 Housing Act enables LLPs, whereby housing authorities can allocate geographically specific properties to people of a specific description, provided that overall the authority can demonstrate that the LLP does not adversely discriminate or prevent the authority's ability to house persons who qualify under the statutory reasonable preference groups.</p> <p>Section E/9 of the current Housing Allocations Policy caters for Local Lettings Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where necessary and where they can be clearly justified, the Council will use Local Lettings Plans (LLPs). LLP's may be used to address a wide range of issues, including housing management and wider policy concerns. LLP's must not dominate a housing allocations scheme at the expense of the statutory reasonable preference categories and if used their nature and scope must be published alongside the relevant allocations policy. <p>It is proposed that the LLP's applicable to the properties outlined in Appendix One are removed at the local level to take effect three months after notice has been served. Officers from both the Legal Service and Democratic Services have confirmed that this approach would be complicit with policy.</p>



Risk:	Changes to age designation can be an emotive subject. Officers recognise that once implemented there is a potential risk for increased neighbour disputes if younger people move into flats previously occupied by older people and such a transition will therefore need to be managed sensitively and effectively. However, sample data indicates that there is a minimal difference in the number of ASB Reports for age restricted blocks against general needs blocks as identified in paragraph 4.14. Mitigations are also set out in Sections 4.15 and 4.16.
Equality:	Previous impact assessments have concluded that the current level of age designated properties set against the housing register profile has exposed age inclusion issues as the age designations currently apply. This review will address this issue.
Health and Wellbeing:	The health benefits of living in a decent sustainable home are well documented in improving a wide range of both physical and mental health determinants. Removing age designations will have a positive impact regarding Young People currently excluded from those properties affected by age designations.
Social Value	As set out above in this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Properties in Stage One review and served with consultation notice

Appendix 2 - Copy of notice served on properties outlined in Appendix One

8. Background Papers

None



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APPENDIX ONE: Properties in Stage One review and served with consultation notice

Block Name	Block Type	Town area	Number of Bedrooms
65-96 Horton Street	High Rise Flats	Great Bridge	1 bed
Birch Street	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	1 beds
Howl Place	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	1 beds
Queen Street	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	1 beds
Waterloo Street	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	1 beds
65-96 Horton Street	High Rise Flats	Great Bridge	2 beds
Brindley Court	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	2 beds
Downes Court	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	2 beds
Horseshoe Walk	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	2 beds
New Cross Street	Low Rise Flats	Tipton Green	2 beds
Chartley Road	Low Rise	West Bromwich	2 beds
Grafton Road	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Bridge Street	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Collins Street	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Hamblets Road	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Hanbury Road	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Harwood Street	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Lime Close	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Piercy Street	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Richard Street	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Vernon Street	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Lyndon	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Bennitt Close	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Dawes Avenue	Low Rise	West Bromwich	1 beds
Corngreaves Walk	Low Rise	Cradley Heath	1 beds
Victoria Road	Low Rise	Cradley Heath	1 beds
Birchley House	Low Rise	Oakham/Tividale	1 beds
Alston House	Medium Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Beech Road	Low Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Century House	Low Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Pine Road	Low Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Radnall House	Medium Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Regent Close	Low Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Regent Road	Low Rise	Oakham/Tividale	2 beds
Beeches Road	Low Rise	Bristnall	1 beds

Kenelm Road (2,5,6,7,8)	Low Rise	Oldbury	2 beds
Sunrise Walk	Low Rise	Bristnall	1 beds
Dynes Walk	Low Rise	Smethwick	1 beds
Lee Gardens	Low Rise	Smethwick	2 beds
Margaret Gardens	Low Rise	Smethwick	2 beds
Queens Close	Low Rise	Smethwick	1 beds
Stanhope Road	Low Rise	Smethwick	1 beds
Ashcroft	High Rise	Soho and Vic	1 beds
Ashcroft	High Rise	Soho and Vic	2 beds
Birchcroft	High Rise	Soho and Vic	1 beds
Birchcroft	High Rise	Soho and Vic	2 beds
Brook Street	Low Rise	Soho and Vic	1 beds
Chamberlain Walk	Low Rise	Soho and Vic	1 beds
Coopers Lane (27-37)	Medium Rise	Soho and Vic	1 beds
Curtis Close	Low Rise	Soho and Vic	2 beds
206-211 Windmill Lane	Low Rise	Soho and Vic	1 beds
Melbourne Road	Low Rise	St Pauls	1 beds

APPENDIX TWO: Copy of notice served on properties outlined in Appendix One.



Date: 21 July 2021

Dear Resident,

Consultation on Local Lettings Policies

We are writing to give you the opportunity to express any views you may have about the lettings of vacant flats in your block.

Currently, many of our blocks have age restrictions, mostly for people aged 25 or over, or 40 and over. You currently live in a block with a 25 and over age restriction, which means that anyone below the age of 25 cannot be considered for a vacant property in your block.

Housing law requires that we review these local rules from time to time to ensure that we do not disadvantage any age group by making it more difficult for them to acquire a home. As part of this review we are currently considering removing the 25+ plus age restriction that operates in the block you live in.

Overall, around half of our flats are designated for people aged 25 or above or 40 or above, making it difficult for younger people to rent our properties. Currently around a third of people on our housing register needing a flat are aged 25 or below and over three quarters are aged 40 or below.

Please note that if any of the age rules change this does not mean that any existing tenants must move out – it would just mean that when any vacancies occur we would have a wider group of applicants from which to select a suitable tenant.

If you have any views or suggestions we would like to hear from you, either by:



- e-mailing us at: housing_strategy@sandwell.gov.uk

OR

- by completing the enclosed feedback form below and returning it to the following address:

Consultation on Local Lettings Policies,
Sandwell Council,
Operations and Development Centre,
Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES

The closing date for you to get back to us about the proposed changes is
Thursday 12 August 2021

**Were you previously aware that your block had a 25+ age restriction:
YES/NO**

**Do you agree with the proposed changes to remove the age restriction?
YES/NO**

**Do you have any views/suggestions? If so please complete in the box
below:**

Your details

Name:

Address:



Work Programme Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

September to December 2021

Meeting Date	Item	Links with Strategic Aims	Notes
2 September 2021	Housing Age Designations Review	 	Director of Housing (Gillian Douglas)
25 November 2021	CCTV Block Expansion	 	Director of Housing (Gillian Douglas)
	Discussion with representatives of the Safer Sandwell Partnership	 	Chief Supt Ian Green (potential invite relevant Cabinet Member)
	Tenant Engagement and Involvement Model	 	Director of Housing (Gillian Douglas)

Item to be determined

Digitisation and Customer Journey (Nicky Denston)



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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
1	<p>Sandwell Children’s Trust Annual Review 2020/21 and Improvement Plan</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mandip Chahal</p>	Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)	1 September 2021	Scrutiny Board will meet with Sandwell Children’s Trust on 23 August 2021	<p>Report</p> <p>Annual Review 2020/21 Report</p> <p>Improvement Plan</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
2	<p>Sandwell Children’s Invest to Save Proposal</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mandip Chahal</p>	<p>Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)</p>	<p>1 September 2021</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Report</p> <p>Invest to Save Proposal from Sandwell Children’s Trust</p>
3	<p>Contract for the Supply of Liquid Fuels – Appointment of Contractor</p> <p>Contact Officer: Neil Whitehouse</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Connected and Accessible Sandwell (Cllr Taylor)</p>	<p>1 September 2021</p>		



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
4	<p>Q1 Budget Monitoring 2021/22</p> <p>Contact Officer: Charlie Davey</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines - Director of Finance</p>	<p>Finance, Council Sustainability & Transformation (Cllr Ali)</p>	<p>1 September 2021</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Report</p>
5	<p>Use of Local Council Tax Support Grant 2021/22</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sue Knowles</p> <p>Director: Simone Hines - Director of Finance</p>	<p>Finance, Council Sustainability & Transformation (Cllr Ali)</p>	<p>1 September 2021</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Report</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
6	<p>Consultation on the Future of Walker Grange</p> <p>Contact Officer: Helen Green/Colin Marsh</p> <p>Director: Rashpal Bishop – Director of Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Living and Ageing Well (Cllr Hartwell)</p>	<p>1 September 2021</p>		
7	<p>Schools Capital Programme</p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts</p>	<p>Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)</p>	<p>1 September 2021</p>		<p>Report to Cabinet Appraisal Report</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
8	Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy Contact Officer: Oliver Ford	Connected and Accessible Sandwell (Cllr Taylor)	1 September 2021		Black Country ULEV Strategy
9	West Midlands E Scooter trials – West Bromwich Trial Zone Contact Officer: Oliver Ford	Connected and Accessible Sandwell (Cllr Taylor)	1 September 2021		



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
10	Premises 106/107/108 High Street, West Bromwich Contact Officer: Stefan Hemming	Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	1 September 2021		
11	Award of a Framework Agreement for the Provision of Tree Maintenance & Arboricultural Services Contact Officer: Jayne Weaver Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy	Strong and Resilient Communities (Cllr Crompton)	1 September 2021	No	Report



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
12	<p>B2022 Commonwealth Games Live Site</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jane Lillystone/Chris Jones</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Strong and Resilient Communities (Cllr Crompton)</p>	<p>29 September 2021</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Cabinet Report</p>
13	<p>Extension of contract for a non-executive director of Sandwell Children’s Trust Board</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mandip Chahal</p>	<p>Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)</p>	<p>29 September 2021</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Report</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
14	SEND Transport – Future Arrangements Contact Officer: Sue Moore	Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)	29 September 2021	Scrutiny Review	
15	Street Naming, Remaining and Property Numbering Policy Contact Officer: Robin Weare/ Barry Ridgway Director: Nicholas Austin – Interim Director of Borough Economy	Connected and Accessible Sandwell (Cllr Taylor)	29 September 2021		



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
16	<p>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 1</p> <p>Tranche 1 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bromwich Digital Den • West Bromwich Mechanical Engineering Centre <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p>	Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	29 September 2021 (Private Item)		<p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
17	Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Top Up Grants Contact Officer: Jenna Langford	Strong & Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	29 September 2021	N/A	Cabinet Report and Additional Restrictions Grant Policy
18	Refurbishment of Low Rise Blocks of Flats – The Lakes, Lion Farm Contact Officer: J Rawlings Director: Gillian Douglas	Quality Homes and Thriving Neighbourhoods (Cllr Ahmed)	29 September 2021		



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
19	Roofing Repairs Contact Officer: J Rawlins Director: Director – Housing and Communities	Quality Homes and Thriving Neighbourhoods (Cllr Ahmed)	29 September 2021		Report
20	Appropriation of 34/36 Bridge Street West Bromwich – B70 9HN from General Fund into Housing Revenue Account. Contact Officer: Chris Hilton/Lee Constable	Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	29 September 2021		



Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
21	Local Development Scheme Contact Officer: Samantha Holder	Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	29 September 2021		
22	Smethwick to Birmingham Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan Revision Contact Officer: Hayley Insley	Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	29 September 2021		Area Framework and Grove Lane Masterplan



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
23	<p>Review of Parking Charges Policy</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robin Weare</p> <p>Director: Nicholas Austin, Interim Director of Borough Economy.</p>	<p>Connected and Accessible Sandwell (Cllr Taylor)</p>	<p>29 September 2021</p>		<p>Report</p>
24	<p>Corporate Plan Refresh</p> <p>Contact Officer: Kate Ashley/Sarah Sprung</p> <p>Director: Neil Cox</p>	<p>The Leader</p>	<p>29 September 2021</p>	<p>Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board 8 September</p>	<p>Corporate Plan</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
25	<p>Designation of the whole of Sandwell as a smoke control area</p> <p>Contact Officer: Elizabeth Stephens</p> <p>Director: Lisa McNally – Director of Public Health</p>	<p>Living and Ageing Well (Cllr Hartwell)</p>	<p>20 October 2021</p>		
26	<p>School Organisation Plan 2021/2022</p> <p>Contact Officer: Martyn Roberts</p>	<p>Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)</p>	<p>20 October 2021</p>		<p>School Organisation Plan 2021/22</p>



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
27	Childcare Sufficiency Report 2020 - 2021 Contact Officer: Sara Baber/Sally Dowie	Best Start in Life (Cllr Simms)	20 October 2021	Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board	Childcare Sufficiency Report 2021
28	Sandwell and Community Caring Trust Contract Contact Officer: Hannah Soetendal Director: Rashpal Bishop – Director of Adult Social Care	Living and Ageing Well (Cllr Hartwell)	20 October 2021		



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
29	Supply of Domestic Ironmongery Contact Officer: Steve Piddock Director: Gillian Douglas	Quality Homes and Thriving Neighbourhoods (Cllr Ahmed)	20 October 2021		Report



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
30	<p>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 2</p> <p>Tranche 2 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bromwich Urban Greening • West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis Cycle and Walking Transport Schemes • Rowley Regis Canal Connectivity • Smethwick Ron Davis Centre Expansion <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p>	Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)	October 2021/ November 2021 (Private Item)		<p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>



Title/Subject		Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
31	<p>Hire of Scaffold & Portable Towers</p> <p>Contact Officer: Steve Piddock</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas</p>	Quality Homes and Thriving Neighbourhoods (Cllr Ahmed)	18 December 2021		Report
32	<p>Retro-fitting of Sprinklers in high-rise flats</p> <p>Contact Officer: J Rawlins</p> <p>Director: Director – Housing and Communities</p>	Quality Homes and Thriving Neighbourhoods (Cllr Ahmed)	January 2022		Report



<p>33</p>	<p>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 3</p> <p>Tranche 3 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bromwich Retail Diversification Programme • West Bromwich Town Hall Quarter • Smethwick Midland Met Learning Campus • Smethwick Grove Lane Regeneration • Smethwick Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration • Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub • Rowley Regis Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Improvements • Rowley Regis Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm • Smethwick Albion Family in the Park <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p>	<p>Strong and Inclusive Economy (Cllr I Padda)</p>	<p>January 2022 February 2022 (Private Item)</p>		<p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>
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Annual Programme Reminder (these items are not added automatically)

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
Review of Fees and Charges		January		
Determination of Admission Priorities for Sandwell’s Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools		January/February		
Schools Funding		December/January		
Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring		February		
Council Finances		February		
Financial Regulations		February		
Business Plans		February		
Highways Asset Management Plan		March		
Local Transport Settlement		March		



Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
Schools Capital Programme		April to June		
Financial Outturn		May		
Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules		July		
Review of Fees and Charges Sandwell Residential Education Services Centre Charges		May – July		
Childcare Sufficiency Report		July - September		
Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring		August		
Model Schools Pay Policy		October/ November		
Winter Service Operational Plan		October/November		
Road Safety Plan		November		
Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring		November		
Council Tax Base Calculation		December		



	Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
	Business Rates Retention Estimates		December		
	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		December		



The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in private session:-

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Private Item – Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered
<p>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 1</p> <p>Tranche 1 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bromwich Digital Den • West Bromwich Mechanical Engineering Centre • Smethwick Ron Davis Centre Expansion <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p> <p>Director: Tammy Stokes – Interim Director for Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Inclusive Economic Growth</p>	<p>September 2021</p>	<p>Commercial Sensitivity</p>	<p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>



Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Private Item – Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered
<p>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 2</p> <p>Tranche 2 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bromwich Urban Greening • West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis Cycle and Walking Transport Schemes • Rowley Regis Canal Connectivity • Smethwick Albion Family in the Park <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p> <p>Director: Tammy Stokes – Interim Director for Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Inclusive Economic Growth</p>	<p>October 2021 November 2021</p>	<p>Commercial Sensitivity</p>	<p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>



Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Private Item – Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered
<p>Towns Fund Programme: Approval of Full Business Cases for Towns Fund Projects Tranche 3</p> <p>Tranche 3 Projects: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Bromwich Retail Diversification Programme • West Bromwich Town Hall Quarter • Smethwick Midland Met Learning Campus • Smethwick Grove Lane Regeneration • Smethwick Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration • Rowley Regis Satellite Education Hub • Rowley Regis Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Improvements 	<p>Inclusive Economic Growth</p>	<p>January 2022 February 2022</p>	<p>Commercial Sensitivity</p>	<p>Towns Fund Heads of Terms Agreements with Government</p> <p>Full Business Case Document</p> <p>Capital Appraisal outcome</p>



Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Private Item – Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rowley Regis Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm <p>Contact Officer: Rebecca Jenkins</p> <p>Director: Tammy Stokes – Interim Director for Regeneration and Growth</p>				

