

# Agenda

## Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 5.45 pm**  
**In the Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

Members to declare any interests and party whips in relation to matters to be discussed at the meeting.

**3 Additional Items of Business**

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

**4 Draft Housing Strategy 2023-28**

7 - 26

To consider and comment upon the draft Housing Strategy 2023-28.



5	<b>Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing 2023-24</b>	27 - 46
	To consider and comment upon the Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing 2023-24.	
6	<b>Report of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group - Housing Hub Review</b>	47 - 76
	To receive and comment on the outcomes and recommendations following a review of the “Housing Hub Pilot” undertaken by the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group.	
7	<b>Charging principles and concessions for the Local Authority Trading Company and Sandwell Aquatics Centre</b>	77 - 82
	To receive, consider and provide recommendations upon the principles and concessions to inform a subsequent charging policy for the Local Authority Trading Company and Sandwell Aquatics Centre.	
8	<b>Update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group</b>	83 - 86
	To receive an update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group.	
9	<b>Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan</b>	87 - 98
	To note and review the Boards Work Programme 2022/23 and the Cabinet Forward Plan.	

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## Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Draft Housing Strategy 2023-28
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Housing, Gillian Douglas
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Housing Policy and Strategy Lead Officer, Louis Bebb louis_bebb@sandwell.gov.uk




### 1 Recommendations

1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the draft Housing Strategy 2023-28.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

To gain the Scrutiny Board's input as part of consultation on the draft Strategy before it is finalised and presented to Cabinet in March 2023.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people Good quality and suitable housing are essential to delivering this objective.
	People live well and age well The housing needs of people at different life stages, including older people, are referred to in the Strategy.
	Strong resilient communities Housing and the quality of the neighbourhood contribute to delivery of this objective.





## Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods

The Strategy links directly to this priority in the Corporate Plan and expands on how we will deliver many of the commitments set out in the Plan.

### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Housing Strategy is an important document in setting out the council's priorities and objectives for meeting the housing needs of our communities.
- 4.2 Although not a statutory document like the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy, it is nevertheless a key strategy in articulating what actions we will take to address diverse housing needs in Sandwell.
- 4.3 This 2023-28 Strategy will replace the 2012 Housing Strategy Statement which set out 4 priorities that remain highly relevant today, namely :
- Making better use of existing housing
  - Improving the quality of housing available
  - Encouraging the building of new homes
  - Protecting and promoting health, safety and wellbeing
- 4.4 The new draft Strategy is based on the Housing Needs Assessment 2022 which was presented to the Scrutiny Board on 30<sup>Th</sup> September 2022. This Assessment provides the evidence base on which the refreshed strategic priorities are based.
- 4.5 The refreshed priorities are :
1. Ensure we make best use of all housing stock across the borough in order to deliver the right homes based on housing need.
  2. Increase the supply of affordable housing through regeneration schemes, council housing development and wider housing partnerships.
  3. Ensuring current and future homes positively contribute to health, wellbeing, independence and quality of life outcomes.
  4. Raise Standards in all rented housing, including the private rented sector (PRS) and the council's own stock.
  5. Strive to make sure that current and future housing stock plays a significant role in achieving net zero carbon.
- 4.6 The draft strategy is structured around these priorities and sets out how we aim to deliver against each of them.





4.6 Following the Board's comments on the Strategy it will go out to public consultation before being finalised and approved by Cabinet in March 2023.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Delivery of the Strategy will be through existing resources including the Housing Revenue Account but is also based on being able to attract funding from external sources such as Homes England and West Midlands Combined Authority as well as Government funding towards retrofit of homes.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	None at this stage.
<b>Risk:</b>	None at this stage.
<b>Equality:</b>	The Housing Strategy is key to reducing housing related and wider inequalities and addressing the diverse housing needs of our communities. For example, we know that there is a need for more dementia friendly housing and housing that is accessible to people with physical disabilities including wheelchair users. We know that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people are more likely to live in poor quality housing and for some groups there is likely to be more households that are overcrowded. The strategy aims to reflect these issues and set out actions to address them. But we also need to improve the collection of equalities data in some areas in order identify areas for action.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Good quality housing and quality neighbourhoods are essential to health and wellbeing and the council has major responsibilities in this area. This is in relation to our own stock and the requirement to meet the Decent Homes Standard but also in relation to our wider responsibilities around standards in rented housing and in relation to owner occupiers who need our help e.g. through the Disabled Facilities Grant.
<b>Social Value:</b>	In procuring works to council housing and in the delivery of new build social value considerations are built in to the tendering process to maximise use of



	local labour, offer apprenticeships to local people and reduce climate change impacts.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	The draft strategy links to the council's Climate Change Strategy and priority 5 is based on the need to accelerate our journey to net zero carbon and more energy efficient homes that will mitigate fuel poverty.

## 6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy 2023-28

## 7. Background Papers

Housing Needs Assessment 2022

Housing Strategy Statement 2012-22



**Draft**

# **Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028**



**Sandwell**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

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## **1: Introduction**

This strategy sets out how we intend to address the key housing challenges and needs affecting our communities over the next 5 years. It sets out the Council's priorities and objectives for meeting housing need and working with tenants and residents to build sustainable and cohesive communities across the borough. Access to good quality housing is essential to the health, wellbeing and life chances of our residents and as such we will integrate housing in to wider strategies and plans.

The provision of good quality, affordable housing is essential for the health, wellbeing and life chances of people in Sandwell. By achieving the strategic housing objectives set out in this strategy we will support delivery of the commitments in the Corporate Plan 2021-25, specifically on the theme of 'Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods'. Under this theme there are a number of housing objectives: to make best use of affordable housing provision, to deliver new affordable homes that meet local needs and to make our own housing stock greener. The Housing Strategy supports the Council Plan by setting out more detailed plans for how these housing-related priorities will be achieved.

The draft Strategy has been developed in response to the Housing Needs Assessment produced in 2022 which sets out the data and evidence of housing needs in Sandwell. But data and intelligence have to be coupled with the voice of our residents and we will be consulting widely on this draft before finalising the strategy for adoption in 2023.

The strategy begins by outlining some of the national changes to housing, welfare and planning policy that have taken place in recent years at a national, regional and local level. The Housing Strategy is supported by and links to the Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Housing Revenue Account 30 year Business Plan, Empty Homes Strategy, Asset Management Strategy and Regeneration Strategy but also other emerging strategies and plans where housing has a part to play in meeting the needs and aspirations of our communities.

The strategy identifies 5 priorities that are fundamental to delivering Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods :

1. Ensure we make best use of all housing stock across the borough to deliver the right homes based on housing need.
2. Increase the supply of affordable housing through regeneration schemes, council housing development and wider housing partnerships.
3. Ensuring current and future homes positively contribute to health, wellbeing, independence and quality of life outcomes.
4. Raise standards in all rented housing, including the private rented sector (PRS) and the council's own stock.
5. Work to ensure that current and future housing stock plays a significant role in achieving net zero carbon.

## **2: Sandwell's Key Achievements**

There have been a number of achievements as a result of the previous housing strategy. Included in the progress made is the delivery of new affordable homes, improving existing homes, mitigating Climate Change and contributing to health and wellbeing outcomes. Our key housing achievements over the course of our 2012 to 2022 Housing Strategy Statement include:

- Between April 2012 and March 2022, we have delivered a council new build and acquisitions programme to offset loss of stock through Right to Buy and deliver the types of homes our communities need.
- Working with developers and partners to address the housing challenges Sandwell faces. Including the completion of major projects such as Woods Lane in Cradley Heath and Harvills Hawthorn in West Bromwich, adding 152 affordable homes to the borough.
- A home improvement and housebuilding programme in the heart of Smethwick has raised the quality of existing houses, developed neighbourhood amenities and built 228 new homes (including 93 affordable homes).
- The development of new extra care schemes such as Willow Gardens in Rowley Regis, providing 90 extra Council owned and managed extra care housing apartments available for affordable rent.
- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) work carried out in housing stock across the borough. Adaptations across tenures included 3,064 council owned, 1,811 owner-occupied, 197 registered provider and 98 private rented properties.
- Awarded 552 grants for heating or boiler repairs and 101 grants to tackle urgent disrepair.
- Reviewed and produced Sandwell's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for the period 2022 to 2025. This will be actively monitored throughout the period.
- Continuing to strengthen our strategic partnership work across the Black Country through contributing to regional documents such as the Black Country Housing Market Assessment and Black Country Tenancy Strategy.
- Contributing Section 106 funding to the repurposing of empty apartment blocks in West Bromwich to provide 54 flats for young people under St Basil's Live and Work Scheme in partnership with Sandwell and West Bromwich Hospitals Trust.

### 3: Changing Context – Legislation and Strategy

Legislation and policies at a national, regional and local level all have an impact on the content and delivery of the Housing Strategy. There have been considerable changes to the national policy framework for housing and planning since the last housing strategy document was produced in 2012. The key legislation and policies that relate to this document are listed below:

<b>National</b>
Welfare Reform Act 2012
The Care Act 2014
Housing and Planning Act 2016
Welfare Reform Act 2016
The Housing White Paper 2017: “Fixing our broken housing market”
The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
The National Planning Policy Framework 2021
The Social Housing Green Paper 2018
The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018
The Social Housing White Paper 2020
People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform White Paper 2021
Levelling Up White Paper 2022
Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022
<b>Regional</b>
The Black Country Housing Market Assessment 2021
Black Country Tenancy Strategy 2021
<b>Local</b>
Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2022 - 2025
Sandwell Regeneration Strategy 2022 – 2027
Sandwell 2030 Vision: Corporate Plan 2021 - 2025
Housing Allocations Policy 2021
Sandwell Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2020
Empty Homes Strategy 2022 (draft)
Sandwell MBC Local Development Scheme 2022
Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan 2023-2053 (draft)

## **4: Housing Strategy Priorities**

**Priority 1 : Ensure we make best use of all housing stock across the borough to deliver the right homes based on housing need.**

### **Background**

Sandwell has a diverse and growing population with differing housing needs. In order to address the housing requirements of our residents we recognise the need to shape the distribution and allocation of housing and get more empty homes in to use.

This means helping more people to move to more suitable homes at key points in their life, termed 'rightsizing'. Our data shows that there are many people in our council housing who have spare bedrooms, many of whom are subject to the under-occupation charge. If we can improve the supply of suitable and accessible smaller homes in neighbourhoods where older people in particular feel safe and connected we may be able to help some people move to more suitable housing.

Conversely, there are many families in our stock who are overcrowded and are waiting for larger family homes. If we can help with downsizing we can release more of these homes for families in housing need, many of whom have been waiting for extended periods on our housing register.

Addressing the undersupply of suitable accommodation in Sandwell will also require support from the private rented sector because social housing alone cannot meet demand. As is the national picture, the majority of private rented housing is supplied at an unaffordable cost for many within the borough. This tenure is often not attainable to those on a low income and therefore consumer choices for households seeking accommodation in Sandwell are limited. We are also seeing some private landlords exiting the market because of increasing costs and requirements and we need to support private landlords to sustain tenancies, particularly for households where we rely on this tenure e.g. asylum-seekers and refugees.

The Council has identified empty properties as one of its key priority areas in relation to bringing housing in to use and making best use of housing in the borough. With around 3,500 empty properties currently there is considerable potential to increase availability and bring homes in to use. Empty properties are a waste of scarce resources and can detract from neighbourhoods by not being in use and deteriorating. By working with the owners of these homes and exercising our statutory powers where necessary we can address the most problematic empty properties and help free up additional homes to meet the housing needs of local people.

We also need to look at how we can minimise the time we take to turn around our own voids, in the council stock, while balancing up the need to achieve the Decent Homes Standard and ensure new tenancies get off to a positive start.

### **Objectives**



1. Plan and deliver new interventions and incentives to help council tenants who are under-occupying move within the stock and make best use of social housing for those in greatest need.
2. Take a more proactive approach to bringing empty homes in to use through implementation of a clear strategy for education, support, incentivisation and enforcement.
3. Undertake a review of our voids process in order to identify efficiencies and deliver better outcomes for tenants with diverse needs.
4. Work with private landlords to maintain supply and access to private rented homes, particularly for residents on low income and from vulnerable groups.

### **How will we achieve this?**

#### **Plan and deliver new interventions and incentives to help council tenants who are under-occupying move within the stock and make best use of social housing for those in greatest need.**

- Use housing benefit and discretionary housing payment data to identify households affected by the under-occupation charge (bedroom tax) and offer customised support to consider other housing options.
- Develop support packages and incentives to help tenants who wish to downsize to do so, in every case where an extra bedroom would be released.
- Review the Allocations Policy and Tenancy Policy to optimise prioritisation for social housing and make appropriate use of introductory tenancies.
- Work with Adult Social Care and Health to market housing options such as extra care housing at older people who could benefit from this provision.

#### **Take a more proactive approach to bringing empty homes in to use through implementation of a clear strategy for education, support, incentivisation and enforcement.**

- Monitor the level of empty residential properties across the borough and the length of time they have been empty – using council tax data and by encouraging residents to report empty homes in their neighbourhood.
- Where empty homes are identified, support the property owner to bring it back into use and/or take appropriate action making use of the Council's legal powers where needed.
- Over the next 5 years, bring back into use a minimum of 200 long-term empty properties.

- Develop a policy for offering grants where investment is needed to bring a property in to use which will then be let at affordable rent to a household in need.

**Undertake a review of our voids process in order to improve the efficiency and deliver better outcomes for tenants with diverse needs.**

- Review the end to end process, involving frontline staff and tenants to identify what works.
- Review high cost voids and how these can be reduced through planned programmes and intervention before a tenancy ends.
- Reduce void turnaround times.
- Clarify and revise the letting standard (including gardens) to offer flexibility and a positive start to the tenancy.

**Work with private landlords to maintain supply and access to private rented homes, particularly for residents on low income and from vulnerable groups.**

- Review private sector leasing and the potential for setting up a leasing scheme.
- Offer advice to PRS landlords around what is involved in being a landlord, including managing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Encourage more landlords to engage with the council to offer homes asylum-seekers and refugees who are resettling in Sandwell.

**Priority 2 : Increase the supply of affordable housing through regeneration schemes, council housing development and wider housing partnerships.**

**Background**

Housing development is an important factor in allowing demand to be met across all tenures and improve market flexibility. It is important that we achieve maximum benefit from any additional housing stock in the borough, by ensuring it provides the homes that people really need. Whilst the government's focus on home ownership will help some residents in Sandwell join the home ownership ladder through the First Homes scheme and shared ownership, there is also a substantial need for social and affordable rented properties for those that cannot afford to own their own home.

Close co-operation with Adult Social Care and Health, Homes England, West Midlands Combined Authority, registered providers and developers will help to ensure we are making informed evidence-based decisions to address housing needs in the borough, particularly relating to housing size and type, while also addressing the challenges of viability and site availability.

The housing market also needs to demonstrate flexibility to meet the accommodation needs of vulnerable groups. This includes building accommodation for specialist and supported housing to meet the needs of physically disabled adults, adults with

learning difficulties, autistic people and people with long term mental ill health in order to support them to live as independently as possible. In addition, meeting the needs of specific groups including families, care experienced young people, older people, Black, Asian and minority ethnic households and asylum seekers and refugees.

## **Objectives**

1. Increase the delivery of new build council homes to 100-150 per annum.
2. Deliver a balanced mix of affordable housing size and type based on demand, particularly a greater number of accessible one and two-bedroom properties in order to address demand from the housing waiting list but also larger family homes where needed.
3. Improve the housing offer for other specific household groups, including people from diverse equalities groups, people who need accessible properties and Gypsies and Travellers.

## **How will we do this?**

### **Increase the delivery of new build council homes to 100-150 per annum.**

- Focus on larger strategic sites where volume is higher and unit cost makes the development of affordable housing more viable.
- Use the Housing Revenue Account to purchase land for development and build this in to the HRA 30 Year Business Plan.

### **Deliver a balanced mix of affordable housing size and type based on demand, particularly a greater number of accessible one and two-bedroom properties in order to address demand from the housing waiting list but also larger family homes where needed.**

- Engage proactively with Homes England, registered providers and developers early in the planning process to ensure that new affordable homes respond to evidenced need and gaps in the existing stock with regard to size and tenure options.
- Work with partners to deliver a greater number of one and two-bedroom properties in the borough to reflect demand from the housing waiting list.
- Make sure our plans link in with overarching development priorities such as Sandwell's 2030 Vision.
- Deliver on schemes within the Regeneration pipeline such as West Bromwich town centre – the comprehensive regeneration of the town centre, an ambitious scheme to remodel the retail core for new housing, modern and dynamic retail, and new workspaces and public realm. This will unlock land for over 1,000 homes.
- Explore collaborations between the council and developers to prepare sites for development, using council acquisitions to drive development where appropriate.

**Improve the housing offer for other specific household groups, including those from diverse equalities groups and people who need accessible properties.**

- Explore options for making site allocations for specialist housing within the Borough.
- Around 50 units need to be provided per annum for adults with learning disabilities and autism – either provided from council stock or arrangements with trusted social landlords and housing associations over the next few years.
- Engage with partners in Health and Social Care to maintain an up-to-date picture of need and explore opportunities to address this through the development of the Housing Transformation Plan led by Adult Social Care.
- Work on Sandwell’s new Local Plan to reflect housing needs and develop policies that support delivery of accessible and specialist housing

**Priority 3 : Ensure current and future homes positively contribute to health, wellbeing, independence and quality of life outcomes.**

**Background**

It is essential that homes across all tenures provide a healthy living environment that enables Sandwell’s residents to thrive.

The population growth among adults with disabilities is projected to grow significantly over the next two decades. Sandwell will see increasing numbers of physically disabled adults, adults with learning difficulties, autistic people and people with long term mental ill health who require specialist accommodation to support them to live as independently as possible<sup>1</sup>. This includes general, extra care and supported housing schemes.

With this in mind, Sandwell will continue to support independent living, helping disabled and vulnerable people to remain in their own homes where possible. Facilitating adaptations through the Council’s programme, including the Disabled Facilities Grant, will allow residents to remain in their own home for longer, relieving pressure on local health and social care services. Improving and adapting existing properties also allows for better use of stock to reduce pressures for new development.

Where new stock is required, there is a pressing need to focus on prevention, futureproofing properties and securing sustainable homes for residents. Wherever possible, adaptability of new housing development should be maximised, through requirements for enhanced accessibility standards in Building Regulations. This will provide occupants with a home that they can modify relatively easily in the future should their personal circumstances change.

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<sup>1</sup> Sandwell Housing Needs Assessment 2022 (HNA)

We also have major responsibilities around the health and safety of our residents, both in our own stock and in other rented housing. We are mindful that the cost of living crisis increases the risk of many residents being cold in their homes and of homes being damp as a result. The impact of climate change means temperatures can be higher and we therefore need to ensure homes can be kept cool in summer through ventilation and other measures. This issue is expected to be covered in the revised Decent Homes Standard once finalised.

In the wake of the pandemic more people are experiencing social isolation and mental ill health and it is important our services and initiatives identify people in need and offer support services to keep people well at home.

### **Objectives**

1. Deliver appropriate adaptations to current homes, in order to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.
2. Incorporate better futureproofing and design standards to meet the needs of adults with physical disabilities and other disabilities.
3. Take a proactive approach to enforcement of the Health and Housing Safety Rating System in the private rented sector.

### **How will we do this?**

#### **Deliver appropriate adaptations to current homes, in order to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.**

- Review and revise the Housing Assistance (Adaptations) Policy 2012 to provide more flexibility in the help we can offer to more people through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
- Respond to new DFG guidance (issued March 2022) to help more disabled residents via technology in the home and measures to improve the warmth of their living space.

#### **Incorporate better futureproofing and design standards to meet the needs of adults with physical disabilities and other disabilities.**

- Consider access standards and the potential for supplementary planning guidance in the development of Sandwell's new Local Plan.
- Work with Disabled People's organisations and residents to identify what works and how council and other homes can be improved through adaptations but also how needs can be met through major works and new build.

## **Take a proactive approach to enforcement of the Health and Housing Safety Rating System in the private rented sector.**

- Work with private sector landlords and representative groups such as the National Residential Landlords Association to raise awareness and support compliance.
- Take enforcement action in cases where the landlord is not responding to early intervention.

## **Priority 4: Raise standards in all rented housing, including the private rented sector and the council's own stock.**

### **Background**

The proportion of the Borough's housing stock that is private rented continues to grow and has overtaken social housing as a percentage of tenure at an estimated 26%. This growth, accompanied by the decline of social rented stock due to the Right to Buy policy, has resulted in the private rented sector becoming one of the leading tenures for addressing housing need across the country. We are committed to working with landlords and tenants to ensure private rented housing is accessible, secure, affordable and good quality.

Recent consultation by Government indicates that Decent Homes Standards will be introduced for the PRS in a further drive to improve quality in the sector. This is likely to give the council additional powers to act in cases where PRS housing falls below standard.

In terms of energy efficiency, it is recognised that a proportion of the private sector housing stock in Sandwell is of poor quality. This includes pre-1930s terraced homes with solid walls which have suffered from lack of investment as rented accommodation. We also know that a significant number of households experience fuel poverty and that cold is the major contributory factor because of the poor condition of these properties.

But we cannot be complacent about the quality of our own stock and the need to comply with the current and future Decent Homes Standard. Social housing campaigners and journalists have exposed examples of poor quality and dangerous social housing across the country. There has been a rise in disrepair claims with tenants accessing legal support to challenge the quality of their homes and seek compensation where the social landlord is found to be liable. Many of these claims relate to mould and damp.

We are also aware of the risks associated with some exempt accommodation where unscrupulous providers claim high rent levels through housing benefit, without offering the level of support to vulnerable residents that should be offered.

### **Objectives**

1. Raise standards in the private rented sector through education and awareness and enforcement action where necessary.
2. Review the condition of the council stock through a major programme of stock conditions surveys and plan remedial action.
3. Monitor exempt accommodation in the borough and implement actions to raise standards where necessary.

### **How will we achieve this?**

#### **Raise standards in the private rented sector through education and awareness and enforcement action where necessary.**

- Grow and embed the Private Rented Sector Secure and Sustain model.
- Explore the feasibility of a Social Lettings Agency model.
- Gather intelligence through tenant contacts, intelligence from the public and HMO licensing schemes to target interventions at poor quality housing.
- Ensure compliance with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations.
- Review the evidence base for additional and selective licensing, building on our experience in West Bromwich.

#### **Review the condition of the council stock through a major programme of stock condition surveys and plan remedial action.**

- Gain a comprehensive picture of the quality of the stock in order to inform repairs and programmes of work to upgrade and refurbish the stock.
- Achieve EPC C as minimum in all council homes by 2030.
- Develop an Asset Management Strategy to detail how we plan to improve the stock over the next 10 years.
- Act on disrepair claims by inspecting properties and taking timely remedial action.
- Involve tenants and leaseholders and their representative bodies in plans to improve the stock and identify actions related to housing quality in the tenant satisfaction survey.

#### **Monitor exempt accommodation in the borough and implement actions to raise standards where necessary.**

- Monitor the quality of commissioned exempt (supported) accommodation and work with providers to address any issues.
- Use housing benefit data to monitor other exempt accommodation in the borough and seek resident feedback on their experiences and the quality of the housing and support offered.

#### **Priority 5 : Work to ensure that current and future housing stock plays a significant role in achieving net zero carbon.**

In 2020 the Council declared a climate emergency and published its Climate Change Strategy. Housing plays a key role in this document due to its strong environmental impact, in particular through energy consumption:

- In the case of domestic energy costs, the annual spend on energy is significantly higher than elsewhere because of the poor overall quality of domestic buildings.
- Fuel poverty is a significant issue in many areas (this is largely driven by the quality of existing housing and the income of residents). However, Sandwell is amongst the worst 10% of UK local authorities for incidence of fuel poverty.

Sandwell's industrial heritage has left it with a densely populated built environment; a complicated mixture of domestic properties, commercial activities and the public estate. This Strategy interlinks with a number of other plans towards an outcome where everyone has a home that is safe, secure, affordable, accessible and suitable and is able to make a positive contribution to climate change.

For some years Sandwell has been carrying out energy efficiency improvements to the Council's own stock, including double glazing, loft insulation and cavity wall insulation. In addition, Sandwell has recently undertaken a Warm Homes funded project for the replacement of outmoded electric storage heaters with more efficient gas wet central heating systems.

We estimate that up to 50% of the council stock is below EPC C. However, EPC is only part of the shift towards net zero carbon and we estimate that £600m of capital investment is needed to fully retrofit the stock. We have accessed funding through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, but much more external funding will be needed if we are to fully transform the stock.

Our new build programme has delivered on average 70 council homes per annum over the last few years with the majority being built to EPC B standard and all being above C rating.

An ambitious approach is needed, to achieve enhanced energy standards for new homes, and encourage widespread use of technologies needed to decarbonise Sandwell's housing stock. As part of this, new council housing needs to incorporate more renewable energy measures and use modern methods of construction, within financial constraints.

Our tenants directly experience the impacts of climate change e.g. greater fluctuations in air temperature, poor air quality and extreme weather. The neighbourhood as well as the housing itself needs to be looked at in order to mitigate climate change and improve life expectancy and quality of life.

### **Objectives**

1. Improve the energy efficiency of existing council housing stock and reduce the carbon footprint of Housing services.



2. Contribute to reduced carbon emissions within future housing developments and refurbishment programmes, ensuring higher levels of energy efficiency and making use of alternative technologies to decarbonise housing across the borough.
3. Access external funding to upgrade the existing stock and help home owners improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
4. Implement initiatives to support tenants and residents with the shift to net zero carbon.

### **How will we achieve this?**

#### **Improve the energy efficiency of existing council housing stock and reduce the carbon footprint of Housing services.**

- Continue the retrofit programme using HRA investment and by drawing down external funds to support this.
- Fast track homes for improvement where there is a disabled, older person or vulnerable person in the home.
- Plan the replacement of diesel vehicles in Housing through installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points and a phasing in of EVs.

#### **Reduce carbon emissions within future housing developments and refurbishment programmes, ensuring higher levels of energy efficiency and making use of alternative technologies to decarbonise housing across the borough.**

- Follow guidance from the WMCA Housing and Health design principles and WMCA Design Charter within future housing developments.
- Ensure planning policies, building regulations and partnership working with registered providers and developers deliver a broad range of housing, supporting the council's climate goals, and meeting local needs.
- Deliver refurbishment of Darley House which includes heat source pumps, replacing existing heating systems.

#### **Access external funding to upgrade the existing stock and help home owners improve the energy efficiency of their homes.**

- Submit bid to retrofit 600 more council homes under SHDF wave 2.
- Access regional project to prioritise and help a number of homeowners to access retrofit funding and works.

#### **Implement initiatives to support tenants and residents with the shift to net zero carbon.**

- Implement measures such as promoting active travel in new and existing housing developments and integrating EV charging points.
- Improve access to recycling facilities for tenants, particularly those in high rise flats where only 40% of blocks have such facilities.

- Work with tenants' and residents' groups and the voluntary and community sector to identify impacts of climate change and plan mitigations.
- Preserve green space wherever possible on our estates.
- Measure tenant satisfaction with their neighbourhoods and set actions for improvement.

## Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**24 November 2022**

<b>Subject:</b>	Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing 2023-24
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Housing Gillian Douglas
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Alex Goddard, Democratic Services Officer <a href="mailto:alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk">alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk</a>


### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing 2023-24.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet is due to consider proposals relating to the Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing 2023-24 at its meeting on 7 December 2022. By considering the proposals in advance of this, the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board has an opportunity to submit any observations, comments or recommendations to Cabinet alongside the report on the Programme.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	The proposals set out in the report to Cabinet attached as Appendix 1 contribute to a number of objectives, most directly to Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods. Further details are included in Appendix 1.
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## 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Further details are set out in the report to Cabinet (Appendix 1).

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The implications of the proposals are detailed in the report to Cabinet (Appendix 1),
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	
<b>Risk:</b>	
<b>Equality:</b>	
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	
<b>Social Value:</b>	
<b>Climate Change:</b>	

## 6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report to Cabinet

## 7. Background Papers

None



# Report to Cabinet

7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing 2023-24
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Charn Singh Padda
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Housing Gillian Douglas
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes/No Above £1m threshold.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Dean Epton – Interim Assistant Director - Housing <a href="mailto:Dean_epton@sandwell.gov.uk">Dean_epton@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Jonathan Rawlins – Business Manager – Asset Management and Improvement <a href="mailto:Jonathan_rawlins@sandwell.gov.uk">Jonathan_rawlins@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and to procure contractors, in accordance with The Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, to work on behalf of the Council, to deliver the refurbishment and maintenance works detailed below: -

Contract	Value
Internal Improvement Programme 2023 - 2027	£6,000,000
Refurbishment of Moorlands Court	£19,788,000

Lift Maintenance Services 2024 - 2028	£3,180,000
Electrical Services 2023 - 2027	£3,600,000
Day to Day Repairs to Housing 2024 – 2027	£2,400,000
Supply of Domestic Electrical Items 2023 - 2027	£2,300,000
Supply of Plumbing Parts 2023 – 2027	£6,000,000
Supply of Building Materials 2023 - 2027	£1,600,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£44,868,000</b>

- 1.2 That the Director of Housing be authorised to award the contracts, as referred to in 1.1 above, to the successful contractor(s).
- 1.3 That the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to the award of the contracts.
- 1.4 That any necessary exemption be made to the Council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in 1.1 above to proceed.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 This report seeks approval to procure, award and enter into contract with the successful contractors to deliver the various contracts as detailed within the report to continue the substantial investment in the Council’s Housing Stock.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?



Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods. These contracts are required to allow Sandwell MBC to continue to maintain and upgrade its housing stock as and when required, in line with the Decent Homes Standard and regulatory requirements










The delivery of these contracts will both improve the energy efficiency, the appearance, the security and fire safety of the housing stock.

*Ambition 2 - Sandwell is a place where we live healthy lives and live them for longer, and where those of us who are vulnerable feel respected and cared for.*

Improved energy-efficiency of homes will reduce energy bills and help to address fuel poverty, allowing vulnerable residents to enjoy more comfortable lives.

The provision of these services provides vital adaptations and improvements to people's homes which enable them to maintain their independence in their communities.

*Ambition 3 – Our workforce and young people are skilled and talented, geared up to respond to changing business needs and to win rewarding jobs in a growing economy*

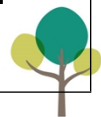
The delivery of these contracts will support investing in businesses, people and jobs that will create wealth and tackle poverty. It will also actively promote Think Sandwell with the inclusion of apprenticeships and training opportunities within the contractual arrangements.

*Ambition 5: Our communities are built on mutual respect and taking care of each other, supported by all the agencies that ensure we feel safe and protected in our homes and local neighbourhoods.*

The delivery of these contracts will support Sandwell's approach towards reducing crime and anti-social behaviour levels.

*Ambition 8 – Our distinctive towns and neighbourhoods are successful centres of community life, leisure and entertainment where people increasingly choose to bring up their families.*

The delivery of these contracts will deliver improvements to our housing stock and the surrounding areas in which they are located, to promote families choosing to move into and stay in Sandwell and being proud of the town and area in which they live.



## 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The Council is seeking to procure, award and appoint contractors to undertake the following refurbishment and maintenance works: -

- Internal Improvement Programme 2023 – 2027
- Refurbishment of St Giles/Moorlands Courts, Rowley Regis
- Lift Maintenance Services 2024 – 2028
- Electrical Services 2023 - 2027
- Day to Day Repairs to Housing 2024 – 2027
- Supply of Domestic Electrical Items 2023 - 2027
- Supply of Plumbing Parts 2023 - 2027
- Supply and Delivery of Building Materials 2023 - 2027

4.2 All wards within Sandwell will be affected.

4.3 On 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Cabinet approved the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Housing Investment Programme report. The report set out a refreshed 10-year HRA investment plan to enable the delivery of new build projects and to continue investment into existing stock and communal spaces in our neighbourhoods.

4.4 One of the key aspects to the report was to maintain and where necessary upgrade our existing stock.

4.5 In order to ensure the plan remains fit for purpose a review of the HRA investment programme has been undertaken.

4.6 By reviewing the HRA every 3 – 5 years we can ensure it is continuing to deliver the aims and objectives of the council in the short term, make recommendations for adjustment to address new and emerging priorities, and ensure the investment programme remains affordable for the duration of the plan.

4.7 The revised HRA funded Housing Investment Programme is designed to respond to these and other emerging priorities and will deliver our ambitions for housing by:





- Maintaining our existing stock to the Sandwell Standard
- Ensuring our properties are energy efficient
- Remodelling our properties to suit changing needs
- Protecting our residents and assets.

4.8 We have made sure the proposed financial plans are affordable in the long term and will help support us in meeting the needs of the residents of we serve.

4.9 We will continue to invest in current stock to make sure it meets the needs of existing and new tenants and supports tenants to avoid fuel poverty through energy efficiency interventions. We will also remodel some of our houses to meet the needs of vulnerable families and individuals.

#### 4.10 Internal Improvement Programme 2023 - 2027

4.10.1 This report seeks the approval to procure and enter into contract with one Contractor to carry out internal improvements to Council Housing Stock across the Borough, excluding high rise, for a contract period of four years, from May 2023 to April 2027.

4.10.2 The contracts will be a continuation of an existing programme of internal improvement works delivered since May 2019, which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

4.10.3 The current contracts expire in May 2023.

4.10.4 The Contract is seeking to procure a contractor to deliver internal improvements where identified for replacement throughout the Council Owned Housing Stock across the Borough. Internal improvements include kitchens, bathrooms, plastering, rewiring improvements and energy efficiency measures.

4.10.5 Across the Council's Housing Stock the previous capital investment programme did not replace all kitchens and bathrooms in every property. Consequently, not every element within each property was therefore replaced. These elements will fail over time and this contract proposes to



provide contract arrangements for these works and other internal improvements to be undertaken.

4.10.6 The identification of works will be demand driven with each property inspected and assessed to identify if repair or replacement is required.

4.10.7 The annual value of works contained within the contract will be £1.5 million per annum with one contractor delivering works over a four-year contract period.

4.10.8 Sandwell is an area with high levels of deprivation by comparison with other areas of the country and as a result many residents face the challenge of fuel poverty, spending a significant amount of money paying fuel bills, with some residents having to choose which household bills they can afford to pay. Through the delivery of this Contract a review of existing insulation levels will be undertaken throughout the individual properties and blocks to assess any opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of properties.

4.10.9 If the Council's ambitious climate change target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2041 is to be met, this type of intervention is necessary. This project will also help families who may be suffering from fuel poverty as they are currently living in some of the least energy-efficient houses in the Council's stock.

4.10.10 Energy efficiency measures will be incorporated into the internal improvement programme and can help demonstrate a firm commitment towards achieving carbon reduction targets and climate change initiatives.

#### 4.11 Refurbishment of St Giles and Moorlands Court

4.11.1 This report seeks the approval to procure and appoint a contractor to carry out the refurbishment of St Giles and Moorlands Court, Reservoir Road, Rowley Regis, B65 9PB.

4.11.2 The contract will be a continuation of an existing programme of external improvement works to our high-rise stock, which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017.



4.11.3 The Council has delivered a programme of improvements to High Rise Blocks of flats across the Borough generally including improvements to the external fabric such as new windows, surface treatment such as render and cladding and roofing works together with improvements to the communal areas such as new entrances, fire retardant paintwork and fire doors.

4.11.4 The high-rise refurbishment projects have been a highly visible sign of the significant investment Sandwell has made in its stock and has proved popular with residents and visitors alike.

4.11.5 Including these 2 blocks, there are 10 blocks managed by the council which have yet to be improved externally, with Darley House currently on site and Allen House currently being procured.

4.11.6 St Giles and Moorlands Court are 15-storey blocks, built in 1966 in the Blackheath Ward of Rowley Regis. They each contain 85 units, comprising 71 two bed and 14 three bed flats.

4.11.7 The following works are now deemed required to bring the block up to the current standard of all other high-rise refurbishment projects and to enhance the life expectancy of the building to thirty years whilst improving the standards for the current residents.

- Undertaking Identified Structural repairs
- Over cladding of the blocks with mineral wool insulation and rainscreen cladding to improve the thermal efficiency
- Replacement of single glazed windows with double glazed tilt and turn aluminium/timber composite windows
- New balcony doors and balcony upgrade to create a winter garden
- New insulated pitched roofs to cover the existing flat roofs
- Installation of fire resistant doors and screens to the communal areas on all floor levels.
- Complete redecoration of all communal areas along with new flooring installed at each level.
- New Entrance doors to all flats.
- Installation of new Sprinkler system to complement the existing fire detection already installed within the flats as part of the Decent Homes Scheme



- New rear entrance lobby with secure key fob door entry system to match front Porch installed previously
- Refuse Chute Replacement
- Upgrade of street lighting to improve ASB issues locally
- Minimal Landscape works involve resurfacing both the road and all footpaths around the block, replacement of Kerbs and edgings and the reduction of grassed areas to eliminate current maintenance issues.
- New Incoming mains landlord's electricity supply and distribution.
- Improved communal/emergency lighting.
- Individual Flat mechanical extract and positive input ventilation.
- Automatic smoke ventilation to communal escape routes.
- 9-wire communal aerial upgrade, so external satellite dishes can be removed.
- Upgraded stand-alone CCTV installation, if existing cameras are sited on blocks.
- Lightning protection.

4.11.8 The value of the contract is estimated to be in the region of £19.8 million and will be on site for a period of approximately twenty months, commencing September 2023.

#### 4.12 Lift Maintenance Services 2024 – 2028

4.12.1 The Council is seeking to procure and appoint three contractors to undertake lift maintenance services to various tenure for a contract period of four years, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2028.

4.12.2 The anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £3.18 million (£795,000 per annum) for a period of four years.

4.12.3 The award of this contract will enable the Council to fulfil its duties to both residents and personnel by providing a complete 365 days, 24 hours emergency breakdown service. This will include weekends and bank holidays to all its lifts and lift equipment. It will additionally provide for the regular maintenance of the same to ensure compliance with all regulatory health and safety requirements.

4.12.4 The current contract was awarded in February 2020 and expires 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.



4.12.5 This tender has been divided into the following lots:

- Lot 1 – High Rise
- Lot 2 – Public Buildings and Schools
- Lot 3 – Residential

4.12.6 Lot 1 includes the cyclical servicing, maintenance, breakdowns, repairs to all traction and hydraulic passenger/goods lifts in accordance with the installations as detailed within tender document and service and maintenance schedule. Lot 1 comprises 98 lifts and equipment to the high-rise flats sited within the six towns of the borough of Sandwell.

4.12.7 Lot 2 includes carrying out regular maintenance, service, breakdowns, repairs to passenger/ goods lifts, stair lifts platform lifts and other lifting aids sited within Public Buildings and Schools to be undertaken upon each installation on a monthly/Quarterly/Annual or six-monthly basis. Lot 2 comprises 162 lifts and equipment.

4.12.8 Lot 3 includes carrying out service, repair, maintenance, removal and reinstatement of powered lifting aids sited within council/private residential properties. Lot 3 comprises 1,506 powered lifts and equipment.

#### 4.13 Electrical Services 2023 – 2027

4.13.1 The Council is seeking to procure and appoint four contractors to undertake electrical services to housing for a contract period of four years, from 1st November 2023 to 31st October 2027.

4.13.2 The anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £3.6 million (£900,000 per annum) for a period of four years.

4.13.3 The award of this contract will enable Sandwell Council to fulfil its landlord duties and ensure all properties are electrically compliant in accordance with the 18th Edition IET Wiring Regulations (BS 7671:2018).

4.13.4 The current contract was awarded in August 2019 and expires 31st October 2023.

4.13.5 This tender has been divided into the following lots:



- Lot 1 Electrical Repair and Maintenance
- Lot 2 Electrical Periodic Inspection and Reporting to both domestic dwellings and communal areas
- Lot 3 Periodic Inspection and Reporting of Fire Alarms

4.13.6 Lot 1 comprises electrical services to supplement the electrical teams in Sandwell Council's Response Repairs, Planned and Cyclical, Aids and Adaption's and Void sections. The project is to provide repair/maintenance to domestic council owned housing properties throughout the Borough of Sandwell. The tender is therefore seeking to appoint one contractor to cover the whole of the Borough.

4.13.7 Lot 2 comprises an electrical inspection and testing in the form of a Domestic Electrical Installation Condition Report (DEICR) to each of our council owned housing properties, carried out every 5 years, at change of tenancy or sooner, should the testing engineer recommend so. It also includes an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) on the fixed wiring (lighting and power) within our high, medium and low-rise flats' communal areas, over a 5-year cycle. As part of this contract there is cyclical inspection, servicing and maintenance to emergency lighting, fire alarms, smoke alarms (in all electric properties) and roof fans.

4.13.8 For the delivery of the works identified in Lot 2 we are seeking to appoint two Contractors, one to serve the North of the Borough and one in the South with the most economically advantageous tender awarded the North area and the second most economically advantageous tender awarded the South area.

4.13.9 Across the Borough we have 24 premises that are managed by Housing and Communities that are fitted with a commercial fire alarm system. These are serviced on a 6-monthly basis. Testing of these systems on a weekly basis is split between Council staff at 7 of the sites whilst the other 18 sites are tested by an external contractor. The contract covers the ongoing regular test, servicing and maintenance regime.

4.13.10 Due to the specialist nature of these systems we are seeking to appoint one contractor to cover the works within Lot 3.



#### 4.14 Day to Day Repairs to Housing 2024 – 2027

4.14.1 The Council is seeking to procure and appoint up to six contractors to undertake day to day repairs to housing for a contract period of four years, from 1st January 2024 to 31st December 2027.

4.14.2 The anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £2.4 million (£600,000 per annum) for a period of four years.

4.14.3 The current contract was awarded in December 2021 and expires 31st December 2023.

4.14.4 Further to re-commencing non-urgent repairs in April 2021, the number of jobs received over the past 18 months has been well above average and has resulted in a backlog of work orders requiring attention.

4.14.5 Current in-house provision and external contractor support does not have the capacity to maintain the pace of demand for delivering the required repairs to Council properties and therefore support from external contractors is required.

4.14.6 The most economically advantageous tender will be appointed to West Bromwich. The 2nd most economically advantageous tender will be appointed to Tipton. The 3rd most economically advantageous tender will be appointed to Wednesbury. The 4th most economically advantageous tender will be appointed to Rowley Regis. The 5th most economically advantageous tender will be appointed to Oldbury. The 6th most economically advantageous tender will be appointed to Smethwick.

#### 4.15 Supply of Domestic Electrical Items 2023 - 2027

4.15.1 The Council is seeking to procure and appoint one supplier to supply domestic electrical items to Roway Lane Supplies Section for a contract period of four years, from 1st May 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2027.

4.15.2 The anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £2.3 million (£575,000 per annum) for a period of four years.



4.15.3 The current contract expires on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and there is still the requirement to purchase plumbing parts in order for the Council to continue to maintain its current housing stock.

4.15.4 The award of this contract will enable Sandwell MBC to quickly repair its properties and keep the residents safe.

#### 4.16 Supply of Plumbing Parts 2023 – 2027

4.16.1 The Council is seeking to procure and appoint one supplier to supply plumbing parts to Roway Lane Supplies Section for a contract period of four years, from 1st December 2023 to 30th November 2027.

4.16.2 The anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £6 million (£1.5 million per annum) for a period of four years.

4.16.3 The current contract expires on the 30th November 2023 and there is still the requirement to purchase plumbing parts for the Council to continue to maintain its current housing stock.

4.16.4 The continued purchase of plumbing parts will enable our customers to feel safe within their homes, and have the feeling that properties are being maintained.

#### 4.17 Supply of Building Materials 2023 - 2027

4.17.1 The Council is seeking to procure and appoint one supplier to supply the bulk materials to facilitate repairs to Sandwell MBC properties for a contract period of four years, from 1st June 2023 to 31st May 2027.

4.17.2 The anticipated value of the contract is in the region of £1.6 million (£400,000 per annum) for a period of four years.

4.17.3 This contract is used to supply sand, cement and the larger building materials to both Roway Lane Supplies Section and when required direct to site to reduce material handling.

4.17.4 The current contract expires on the 31st May 2023.





4.17.5 The award of this contract will enable Sandwell MBC to quickly repair our properties.

## 5 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative is to not invest in our Council Housing Stock which in turn may lead to dissatisfaction from existing and potential new tenants as well as disrepair and additional burden on the Housing Revenue Account.

5.2 Current in-house provision does not have the capacity to maintain the pace of demand for delivering the required repairs to Council properties with regards to the electrical services and day to day repairs contracts and therefore support from external contractors is required.

5.3 For supplies contracts under points 4.15, 4.16, 4.17 above, there are no alternative options available, Sandwell MBC's Asset Management and Maintenance teams require the items supplied on these tenders to undertake repairs to its housing stock.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	<p>The proposed budgets for the following contracts: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Internal Improvement Works 2023 – 2027 - £6m</li><li>• Refurbishment of St Giles/Moorlands Court, Rowley Regis - £19.788m</li></ul> <p><b>Total - £25.788m</b></p> <p>are contained within the currently approved HRA Capital Programme, and it is anticipated that expenditure will be profiled as detailed in Appendix 1.</p> <p>The proposed budget of £3.18m (£795,000 per annum) for provision of Lift Maintenance Services is included within the following: -</p> <p>Lot 1 High Rise – approved Housing Revenue Account Lot 2 Public Buildings and Schools – the Council's annual building maintenance budget</p>
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	<p>Lot 3 Residential – the Better Care Fund and the Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>The proposed contract values of £3.6m (£0.9m per annum) for electrical services, £2.4m (£600k per annum) for day to day repairs, £2.3m (£575k per annum) for the supply of electrical items, £6m (£1.5m per annum) for the supply of plumbing parts and £1.6m (£400k per annum) for the supply of building materials) are included within the approved revenue budgets for the ongoing repairs and maintenance of Housing Revenue Account owned properties.</p> <p>and it is anticipated that expenditure will be profiled as detailed in Appendix 1.</p> <p>Due to the contracts being an ongoing requirement to provide the service, the budget is maintained at this level each year to ensure the appropriate works can be carried out.</p> <p>The Council is currently undertaking a fundamental review of the HRA financial strategy and developing a comprehensive 30-year Business Plan. This will review the capacity within the HRA and the affordability of the investment programme in the longer term. However, the Capital Programme for 2023/24 approved by Cabinet and Council includes provision for the investment requirements set out in this report.</p>
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The contracts will all be procured and awarded in accordance with the Council’s Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and Public Contract Regulations 2015.
<b>Risk:</b>	No risks
<b>Equality:</b>	Works will be undertaken to all properties where required and as such an assessment has not been undertaken.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>The work will ensure the buildings remain wind and weather tight as well as improving the thermal efficiency. Works will also enable the Asset Management and Maintenance Teams to quickly repair Sandwell MBC properties.</p> <p>The principles of Secured by Design and the environmental improvements to communal space on estates will help to protect the community.</p>



	<p>The award of the Lift Services contract will enable the Council to fulfil its duties to both residents and personnel by providing a complete 365 days, 24 hours emergency breakdown service. This will include weekends and bank holidays to all its lifts and lift equipment. It will additionally provide for the regular maintenance of the same to ensure compliance with all regulatory health and safety requirements.</p>
<p><b>Social Value</b></p>	<p>Social Value will be achieved through the inclusion of an Employment and Skills Plan (ESP) contained within the formal contracts with the successful contractors. The plan will include contractual performance indicators such as work experience placements, apprenticeships in addition to school engagement and community activities.</p> <p>The proposals contained in this report are entirely commensurate with the Council's climate change priorities and will help to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced carbon and greenhouse gas emissions</li> <li>• A reduction in fuel poverty</li> <li>• Improved health and wellbeing</li> <li>• Inclusive economic growth – reduced fuel bills should allow more money to be spent locally</li> </ul>
<p><b>Climate Change:</b></p>	<p>Improved energy-efficiency of homes will reduce energy bills and help to address fuel poverty, allowing vulnerable residents to enjoy more comfortable lives.</p> <p>Energy efficiency measures will be incorporated into the internal improvement programme/refurbishment of St Giles/Moorlands Courts and can help demonstrate a firm commitment towards achieving carbon reduction targets and climate change initiatives.</p> <p>If the Council's ambitious climate change target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2041 is to be met, this type of intervention is necessary. The internal improvement programme/refurbishment of St Giles/Moorlands Courts projects will also help families who may be suffering from fuel poverty as they are currently living in some of the least energy-efficient houses in the Council's stock.</p>



## 7. Background Papers

Cabinet Report 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (Min 167/17)  
Cabinet Report 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 (Min 60/18)

## 8. Appendices



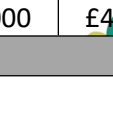
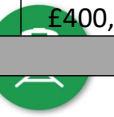
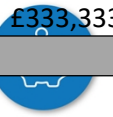
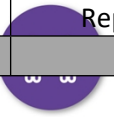
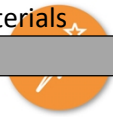
## Appendix 1 Budget Profile

### HRA Capital Funded Programme: -

Contract	Budget Line	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
Internal Improvement Works	Housing Improvement	£1,375,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£125,000	£6,000,000
Refurbishment of St Giles/Moorlands Courts	High Rise	£6,925,800	£11,872,800	£989,400			£19,788,000
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>£25,788,000</b>

### HRA Revenue Funded: -

Contract	Budget Line	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	TOTAL
Lift Maintenance Services	Void Repairs	£0	£795,000	£795,000	£795,000	£795,000	£3,180,000
Electrical Services	North/South Responsive	£375,000	£900,000	£900,000	£900,000	£525,000	£3,600,000
Day to Day Repairs to Housing	North/South Responsive	£150,000	£600,000	£600,000	£600,000	£450,000	£2,400,000
Supply of Domestic Electrical Items	North/South Responsive/Void Repairs	£527,000	£575,000	£575,000	£575,000	£48,000	£2,300,000
Supply of Plumbing Parts	North/South Responsive/Void Repairs	£500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000	£1,000,000	£6,000,000
Supply of Building Materials	North/South Responsive/Void Repairs	£333,333	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000	£66,666	£1,600,000
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>£19,080,000</b>



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## Report to Safer and Active Communities Committee

24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group – Housing Hub Review
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Housing Director Gillian Douglas
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Housing Services Manager, Nigel Collumbell <a href="mailto:Nigel_collumbell@sandwell.gov.uk">Nigel_collumbell@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To receive and comment on the outcomes and recommendations following a review of the “Housing Hub Pilot” undertaken by the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group






### 2 Background

- 2.1 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group was established in 2021 as part of the Tenant & Leaseholder Engagement Framework, which provides a variety of opportunities for customers to get involved in and to ensure our customers voice is heard and acted on when developing and delivering our housing services.
- 2.3 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group have developed their own work plan, identifying areas of service delivery that they wish to scrutinise. The first area of work selected for scrutiny was housing services pilot of a new approach to handling customer service requests received by telephone.

2.4



### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities Through strengthening tenant engagement and participation, it will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stronger relationships between the council and tenants</li> <li>○ Enhanced information and communication</li> <li>○ An opportunity for tenants to develop skills</li> <li>○ Develop a greater sense of place within the community</li> </ul>
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods By involving tenants in housing services through a more coproduced approach will enable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improvement to services for tenants</li> <li>○ Better value for money</li> <li>○ Improved customer experience and satisfaction</li> <li>○ Better customer loyalty</li> </ul>
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

### 5 Housing Hub Review

5.1 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group determined the scope of their review, which included testing the customer experience of accessing housing services by telephone, checking the ease of navigation and whether tenants service requests were resolved in a timely, sensitive and professional manner.

5.2 The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group deployed a number of methods with the support of council officers to complete their review.

This included conducting some mystery shopping, staff interviews and analysis of data and reports relating to the housing hub pilot.





5.3. The Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group report is attached at Appendix 1, which set out the groups key findings, conclusions and recommendations, along with details of the group's Mystery Shopper exercise and Staff Interviews. These documents were used to inform discussion with senior managers and are attached to demonstrate the level of tenants and leaseholder knowledge, research abilities, competency and time committed by the group in completing the work.

5.4 The findings of the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group were discussed in detail with the relevant senior managers from Housing Services to reach a consensus on actions required to address areas of concern and opportunities for improvement identified during the review.

5.5 The recommendations from the group that will be taken forward to enhance future service delivery include the following:

- To have one telephone number for customers to call to access all housing services, that is well advertised and accessible to everyone
- Introduce a customer satisfaction survey to measure the quality of the service outcomes from a customer's perspective
- Ensure similar focus on customer quality is given to all housing service requests, not just housing management calls, which are not currently in the remit of the "housing hub"
- Further review of translation services and their accessibility for officers and customers
- Regular reporting on first contact resolution and customer satisfaction alongside other metrics on service costs and call handling to ensure the focus on performance drives the best outcomes for customers.

## 6 Next Steps:

6.1 Housing Management have agreed to implement the recommendations set out above and will report back to the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on progress.

## 7 Alternative Options

7.1 The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard mandates that social housing providers must ensure tenants are given a wide range of

opportunities to influence and be involved in the scrutiny of their landlord. Our Tenant Engagement Framework provides these opportunities. The quality of work undertaken by the volunteers who form the Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group adds significant value and benefit to the housing service.

## 8. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Financial, staffing, land/building implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no specific resource implications arising from this report. The work of the Tenant &amp; Leaseholder Scrutiny Group is met from existing resources in the Housing Revenue Account</li> </ul>
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	Legal implications including regulations/law under which proposals are required/permitted and constitutional provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Housing Regulatory Standards can be found at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards">https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Risk:</b>	Risk implications, including any mitigating measures planned/taken, health and safety, insurance implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality:</b>	Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The recommendations made by the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on access to the telephony service, especially for residents whose first language is not English will improve equality of service delivery when implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no specific health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Value</b>	Implications for social value and how the proposals are meeting this (for e.g. employment of local traders, young people) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no specific social value implications arising from this report.</li> </ul>



## 9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Tenant & Leaseholder Final Report, Mystery Shopping Exercise and Staff Interviews

## 10. Background Papers

- Regulatory Standards - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-standards>



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# **Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre**

## **1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group (TLSG) wanted to test and scrutinise the customer experience of accessing the housing service via the telephone.
- 1.2 They wanted to ensure the ease of navigation and to get through to the call centre irrespective of disability, language barriers, or accessibility issues.
- 1.3 They wanted to ensure the service resolved housing queries for tenants in a timely, sensitive and professional manner.

## **2. Background & Context**

- 2.1 The telephone service is delivered in 2 ways. The corporate call centre deals with all council enquiries including those relating to the housing service. In October 2021 a Housing Hub pilot was established so housing enquiries could be dealt with at the first point of contact.
- 2.2 The Housing Hub deals with around 15% of general housing calls and operates daily between 9 am and 1 pm Monday- Friday. It does not cover Repairs enquiries, these are still being dealt with by the corporate call centre.
- 2.3 The TLSG felt the pilot provided an opportunity to examine a new service which aimed to improve call times and provide a right-first-time service. Right first time aims, where possible, to resolve all the customer queries in one interaction.

# Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

## 3. Methodology

The group chose a variety of methods to test and scrutinise the service including.

- 3.1 Mystery Shopping – members of the group agreed to test the two main published numbers for the service of 569-6000 and 368-1166. Seven scrutiny group members called the service numbers and were tasked with listening for instructions on specific elements of the service e.g. finding a home, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence etc. The calls were made during office hours and at different times from 6<sup>th</sup>- 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The group were recording their observations, opinions and suggestions on a pre-agreed form to see how the service works in practice for customers.
- 3.2 Staff Interviews – The group constructed a questionnaire and then used it to interview the Housing Hub Supervisor and a Manager to establish how the pilot is measuring success, how it deals with complaints and how it is being reviewed
- 3.3 Desk Top Evidence – the group received a detailed presentation on the service, how it is delivered and how it is measured and monitored. They then requested key documents and evidence to enable them to assess and evaluate the service.

This included:

- The rationale for establishing the pilot
- The cost of the pilot
- The measures used to test customer satisfaction and right first time
- Service improvements because of the pilot

# Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Mystery Shopping

- a) The group rang both numbers available to tenants to access the housing service – 569 6000 and 368 1166.
- b) The findings for the 569 6000 number were that the answer message and repair options were clear and understandable. However, half the group did not manage to note down the number to ring for all other housing enquiries.
- c) The findings for the 368 1166 number were that the range of options was satisfactory and clear to understand, although there wasn't 'another' option for all other enquiries. There was a mixed view on whether the waiting time for the option was reasonable, for example, the Domestic Violence option explanation went on for far too long. The tenancy Advice option was quite confusing with lots of options that were repeated in different wording.
- d) The group identified findings that related to both numbers. There was no option/s/information to support residents with language barriers, partially deaf or other. The present system does not offer an option to speak to a person.

### 4.2 Interviewing Staff

- a) Existing Housing Neighbourhood Management Staff are only working for the pilot between 9 am -1 pm Monday to Friday. For the rest of the day, these staffs are conducting other Housing work. Information provided from managers is that these staff are all experienced front-line housing staff that have the knowledge of dealing with customers. All calls are dealt with by a named officer who will follow through with the query until it has been resolved or referred to the appropriate department.  
For the other part of the day, all Housing Neighbourhood calls are routed back to the Corporate call centre for the councils, who also deal with all the repairs calls throughout the day, with no experience with the Housing Neighbourhood Management calls.

## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

- b) There is no quantifiable external evidence of measuring the success of calls, such as any surveys carried out to customers on the pilot service. There is some anecdotal evidence from staff that customers seem satisfied as they have told staff that they are happy that they can speak to a named housing officer who has the knowledge to deal with their enquiries or can pass them onto someone that can help.
- c) Anecdotal evidence from the supervisor and Manager suggests that Staff seem to enjoy working on this pilot and get a lot of job satisfaction in this work. But, once again, no staff surveys have been carried out to back this up.

### 4.3 Desktop Evidence Review

- a) The rationale for Pilot Inception

The group wanted to review evidence which demonstrated the rationale for the development of the Housing Hub Pilot. The following statement was provided

*'We analysed one week of housing enquiries (282) received by the corporate contact centre. We found they were only able to resolve 13 of these enquiries (9.3%) and believed that if these calls had been answered by a team of housing experts e.g. the Housing Hub, they would have been able to resolve 140 (49.7%). The Housing Hub is not designed to resolve all the calls received*

The TLSG was informed that the rationale for the Pilot was to deal with simple calls. More complex calls will still need intervention from the local area officers, and some specialist calls will still be needed to be handed over to a specialist team '

- b) Cost of the Pilot & Roll-Out

The group requested information on the cost of the pilot. Unfortunately, there are no figures given on the total cost of the pilot. The only information given was that staff numbers working on the pilot is 12, and, if the Pilot was rolling out as a service, that staff numbers would be doubled. TLSG was informed that there would be



## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

other costs that would need to be taken on, such as equipment, that have not been worked out.

### c) Customer Satisfaction 'Right First Time'

The group wanted to examine the information around customer satisfaction and the right-first-time concept. At present, there has been no Customer Satisfaction surveys carried out from the start of the pilot in October 2021. The council have procured a software solution to support gathering customer satisfaction called Snap Survey, which is managed and held in a section of housing. Once this section gives the staff access and training to use the software, customer surveys for the Pilot Contact Centre Housing Hub will be carried out. There are other tools to aid the measurement of benchmarking such as Callcentrehelper.com, but, to date, no evidence on this has been supplied.

### d) Improvements in the Service

The group wanted to examine evidence that showed improvements to the service because of the Pilot. Statistical figures were provided for the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 demonstrate that:

**Corporate calls** - Analysing all the figures given, it seems that overall corporate call is being answered at a quicker rate, with the abandonment level of calls reducing, as well as waiting times coming down.

**Pilot Housing Hub Contact calls** – an average of 14% of the total calls made from the corporate centre have been dealt with by the Pilot, with the abandonment rate reduced.

#### **Information provided by a Housing Manager:**

*The average call length for the Housing Hub in May was 9.5 minutes. We expect our calls to last longer than those to repairs as we are trying to resolve the enquiry at the first point of contact, but we do not envisage significantly long call durations – enquiries that require a significant amount of time are most likely to be complex cases that need intervention from the local or specialist team. E.g. Housing Hub officers would offer general advice around emergency support in domestic abuse cases but would refer the case for the local officer to*

## **Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre**

*undertake the intensive work such as finding alternative accommodation etc.*

### 5.1 Mystery shopper – Grp telephone exercise

#### Conclusions

- a) As there are 2 telephone numbers to deal with Housing queries it becomes a little confusing. Most people are aware of the 569-6000, as this number has been used the longest, the second number is a number that many tenants are aware of, which is the number 368-1166, of the Pilot Housing Hub centre calls.
- b) There will always be other enquiries that don't fall into the options listed, and, as there is no option, for 'any other queries' many customers will not want on the line either for a long time, which can be costly, or decide to hang up, with the problem unresolved. Some who are more vulnerable might get stressed and anxious.
- c) The fact that there is no option to speak to 'a person' who cannot choose one of the options, will leave customers frustrated.
- d) The recorded option message suggests you go to the councils' online service MySandwell as an option. It doesn't explain that, to do this, you need that you need a valid email to register.
- e) Calls can be expensive – Housing informed the group that most calls are at a local rate, but some packages can charge. One of the longest calls waiting times was 54 minutes which to someone's personal phone contract could equate to: BT £10.80, EE £18.90 for 54 minutes
- f) There is a problem in that this pilot does not look at the other part of housing calls, namely Housing repairs, and repairs will continue to be dealt with the corporate call centre, where a cost to the Housing department is still needed to be paid into. There does need to be some exploration as to whether Housing, comes together as one department, as on 'one service'.

## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

### 5.2 Staff Interviews

#### Conclusions

- 1)
  - a) There is no proper customer satisfaction evidence or measurement that customers are receiving a good quality of service.
  - b) There is no proper staff satisfaction evidence or measurement that staff are receiving job satisfaction, therefore, it is not possible to conclude that this is the case.
  - c) It is disappointing that there are only some anecdotal positive comments from both staff and tenants to prove some satisfaction that cannot be viewed as robust evidence.
- 2) Staff Training slides were the only evidence of staff training, which concentrated only on the processes that need to be adopted, but no materials to the training about the use of interpersonal skills and customer service.
- 3) There was no information about any provision for customers who might need extra support.
- 4) No information was mentioned about any concerns about data protection if using family and friends to support the customer.
- 5) There was concern about how to update the information that staff have on the customers' personal information, e.g., support links, family and friends' contact details.

### 5.3 Desktop Evidence

#### Conclusions

- 1) Rationale – It seems that we have received little evidence around statistics, and customer satisfaction surveys and where there is some evidence, such as a week's data of analysis prior to the start of the pilot in October 2021, it is subjective in terms of saying 'we believe,' with no hard-objective evidence to back it up. This makes it difficult for the group to have a view on whether the justification for the pilot was robust enough.

## **Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre**

Initially we were informed that the Pilot was to deal with most Housing issues, as a 'one point of contact'. Recently information given suggests it is for simpler housing issues. There does need to be some clarity on the exact nature of this potential service so that customers are clear about what can be expected.

2) Cost of service – There was limited information given on current pilot costs and estimated costs for the roll-out. This makes it difficult to understand the financial implications., and, therefore TLSG is not able to pass any comments in this area.

3) Customer Satisfaction – Right First Time

Tools have been purchased as aids to measure Customer Satisfaction, but there is a delay in gathering this evidence, due to some practical issues, such as waiting for the packages to be shared with staff to carry out the surveys.

It has been nearly 10 months, from the start of the pilot, where there has been an opportunity missed to really showcase any evidence to substantiate the pilot.

It would have been useful to see how the department has used Callcentrehelper.com as a benchmarking tool, but to date has not been informed about the use.

4) Improvements in Service

It has been difficult to reach any conclusion on, whether this pilot has made a positive difference to customers receiving a better and quicker service, as there have been no Customer Satisfaction Surveys carried out to date. There is some evidence that does show some improvement in reduced waiting times, and some anecdotal evidence, that services are better for customers.

Therefore, it is difficult to make any judgement on how well the service has improved.

## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

### 6.1 Mystery shopper – Grp telephone exercise

#### Recommendations

1)

There are 2 ways around the confusion with numbers which are either

- a) 2 choices to deal with confusion: either: advertise only one of the 2 numbers, and once you get through, then split the call to either the choice to 569-6000 to 368-1166 OR Advertise both numbers well – efficiently and extensively.
- b) Whichever of choice in the above, – advertising all Council numbers via Sandwell Herald – with a handy cut-out advertising new numbers of all Council services or producing a Fridge magnet to stick on Fridge for all essential Council numbers.
- c) Create another option on the options for all other Housing queries so that customers are to speak to an officer to be directed to the appropriate place.
- d) If possible, in terms of the cost, offer a call-back facility for more vulnerable tenants.
- e) Add into the message about the MySandwell option, the information about requiring a valid email address to register for an account.
- f) Explore the option of bringing the Housing Management telephone Queries and the Repairs queries to look at a co-ordinated approach to Housing, as well as a cost-benefit analysis, as to saving money by not paying into the corporate call centre service.

### 6.2 Staff Interviews

#### Recommendations

- 1) Gather evidence of satisfaction levels – the quality of service
- 2) Staff, managers, and all departments involved need to come together and be aware of this area of work – of the scrutinising of the Pilot Contact Centre Housing Hub and coordinate robust, understandable evidence and measurements.

## **Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre**

- 3) Explore the opportunity for SMBC to add a translator for all common languages in MySandwell. There is the facility to do this through Translator Broker.  
Sandwell MBC to provide a secure translator service that can translate back into English
- 4) Sandwell Council to check the policy on keeping data and ensuring it is updated.

### 6.3 Desktop Evidence

#### Recommendations – Oct 21

##### 1) Rationale

More Robust quantifiable information needs to be provided to support the justification of a roll-out of this service.

##### 2) Cost of the Service

To make any judgement on both the pilot and the potential roll-out, a desktop costing exercise needs to be undertaken and analysed. At this point, some conclusions on the costings can be drawn up to access whether to continue with the pilot for more evidence or to proceed with the roll-out of the service.

##### 3) Customer Satisfaction 'Right First Time'

Once again, some robust evidence via Customer Satisfaction Surveys needs to be undertaken as soon as possible to support the justification of this service.

##### 4) Improvements in the Service

As stated previous, gather robust evidence to demonstrate that services have improved before making any decision on the roll-out.

**Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre**

**Scrutiny Group Questionnaire for meeting with Housing Hub Customer Service Officer and other staff**

**Duration of Interview:** 1 hour

**Date of Interview:** Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 1-4pm

**Scrutiny Members interviewing:** Apologies from Shefa

**Support Officer:** Marianne Monro

**Interviewees:** Jas Bangor and Tom Hogan

- 1) Are you responsible for managing/supervising the Assistant Customer Services Officer Housing Staff? YES/NO

Yes, 2 Customer Services Officers share the role on top of our other Job roles of Housing Officers.

If No, who is responsible for them?

- 2) Can you explain the difference in roles of the Assistant Customer Service Officer (ACSO) and the Customer Services Officers (CSO)?

The CSO's Supervise and manage the ACSO when they are on duty in the mornings from 9-1pm. We are all then managed by substantive managers for our other work.

- 3) How do you measure the quality of calls?

At present we do not measure the quality of calls

- 4) a) Do you have any quality standard measurements for calls, and, if so what are they?

b) How often do you check calls?

## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

We do not check calls as such but are in constantly in contact with the VASCO to see if they have any issues.

c) What do those measurements show?

We have anecdotal evidence that customers are generally happy, as to how they are dealt with as we will deal with them enquires straight away, either by answering them quickly, or asking them to hold for a short while we get the answer. We do not allow the customer to wait if we can't answer. We will take their number and ring them back on that day with the answer. They will be called back by the same officer that dealt with them initially. Customers are happy that there is generally someone who is named that will see the query all the way through to resolution.

Once we get the survey package for measuring Customers satisfaction, we will use it. We will be doing a similar thing for our staff.

Staff have reported that they are satisfied with this type of work as they are seeing through the queries, generally from start to finish, and are getting job satisfaction from this role.

4) Can you give us some examples of any practices that have changed because of checking how staff deal with the calls?

Our practices have not changed. What has changed is that we are constantly receiving updates of information on service change that we use to ensure the customers are given accurate information.

6)a) Do you have any figures/percentages of calls that staff have referred to other departments/sections?

No figures/data

b) Where have you referred people to?

Most common referral are for departments with things such as, planning applications, bin information, hardly any for external agencies.



## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

c) How have people been referred e.g. given an email/website/telephone number?

Customers are given choices, as to what works best for them of websites/emails/telephone numbers

7) a) Do you carry out regular staff training, sessions, and, how often?

b) What is the focus of the training?

All staff starting on the pilot had initial training

c) Is it reviewed, and the frequency?

They are all updated with any regular housing/council information that helps them do their job with accuracy. E.g. changes in the Homelessness Process/contacts

8) What provision, or actions do you take, if you have tenants and residents who's:

As staff are speaking to the tenant, they will call up their tenancy details that will show all their personal information to support them in understanding their needs. Normally people who ring up are existing tenants

a) English is not their first language

If they ring up, they have already sorted out a family member/friend who can speak on their behalf.

b) Have a hearing impairment

We will normally have their impairment details to be able to deal with them

c) Have a learning disability, memory or understanding information impairment?

We will normally have their impairment details to be able to deal with them

**Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre**

9) Do you have any additional comments/thoughts/ideas that you would like to add:

All staff working on the pilot are experienced Housing Officer (Supervisors) or Assistant Housing Officers that have worked on the front-line receptions that are familiar with enquires, and where to go to get information. We have an 'open housing' System application that allows them to message other expert staff to get answers while on the calls.

# Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

## Summary of Feedback from Housing Group Telephone Calls Made by TLS Group members

### **Purpose:**

The group wanted to check through their own research to look out how tenants and leaseholders would manage the call answer machine service for Repairs and any other Housing Management query by using both the 569-6000 Repairs number and the 368- 1166 Housing & Neighbourhoods other number.

### **Methodology**

It was agreed for all members to ring the Repairs general 569-600 number, but to allocate the 5 service areas options between all the group so that all options were listened to together so that they could be evaluated.

The 5 areas were:

Option 1 -Finding a new Home

Option 2 - Advice & Assistance on Tenancy

Option 3 -Easy ways to pay rent & Leaseholder Charge

Option 4 -Anti-social behaviour

Option 5 -Help with Domestic Violence

All calls were rung between the hours of 9-1pm where the Housing Hub Pilot contact centre was used. The call was rung on different days between Monday 6<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

### **Findings**

#### Repair Line -569-6000

Most of the group thought the answer message was clear and understandable.

A number was offered for all other housing enquiries where, just over 50% managed to make a note of the other number.

Most understood the options given for repairs.

Is it still necessary to cover the Corvid message, when it is no longer law to report?

#### All other Housing Queries – 368-1166

All options were clear to understand

Most people thought the options offered were satisfactory.

There was a mixed view on whether the waiting time for the option was reasonable. On the Domestic Violence option, it was felt that the definition of Domestic Violence was far too long.

The tenancy Advice option was quite confusing with lots of options that were repeated in a different wording, that could confuse people,.

#### Findings to both lines

There were no options about other language facilities, so a person whose first language isn't English would struggle.

The present system does not offer an option to speak to a person.

## Scrutiny Group Report on Sandwell Council's Pilot Housing Hub & Contact Centre

### Recommendations for Repairs Line 569-6000

- To offer an emergency repairs number with the times the service is available
- To offer another option 'for any other query press option?
- To add on where the message asks you to register My Sandwell account, that you need to have a valid email address. Also, the possibility of having a short u tube video proceed to explain how to register and use initially use MySandwell.
- To repeat the other Housing Service number of 368- 1166 so the caller can make a note of it and offer a facility to press another number to directly be transferred, as opposed to hang up and re-dial.

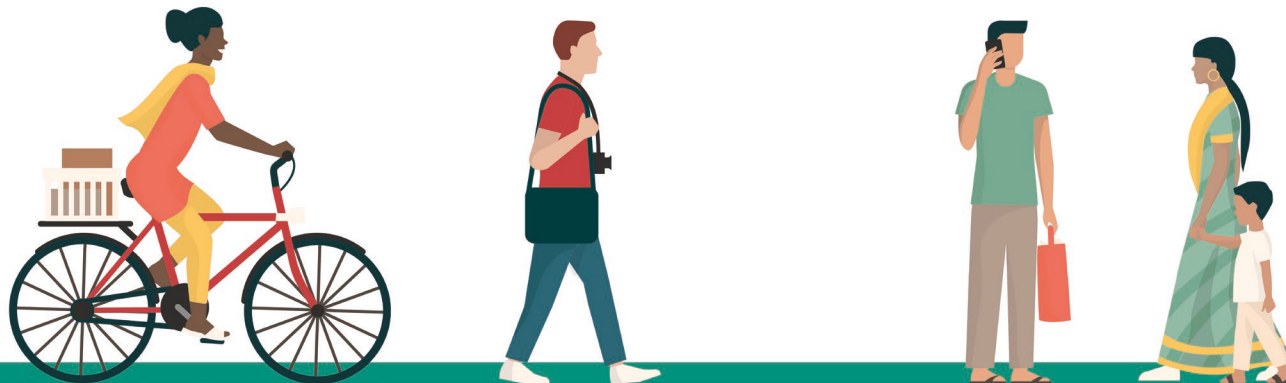
### Recommendations for other Housing Service Line of 368-1166

- To offer another option for Domestic Violence to signposting people to Women's Aid, maybe through pressing another button to get through directly.
- A facility to put you through to an operator to assist you would help people whose English is not their first language, people with learning disabilities, dementia and other disabilities.
- There does need to be an option to speak to an operator, as opposed to only offering the MySandwell website, that leaves people stuck with nowhere to go to resolve their issue.
- To send a text message for Direct Debit payments after calling, as well as ensuring that people know they need their rent account number, explaining what that is and where to find it.
- To review all the options, that have other options within the, to check whether there are ways to amalgamate some, as it is quite a lot for someone to take them all in, remember and know that you need to choose one.
- To shorten the initial messages, given before you get into the options, for example, what is acceptable/unacceptable behaviour. This is too long, especially if people are limited with time, with paying for calls and who have a small concentration span.

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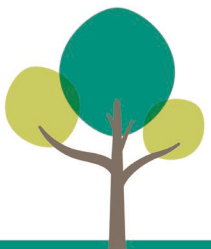
# Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager – Housing Management)  
Phillippe Brown (Chair of Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny Group)



# Housing Hub Pilot - Review

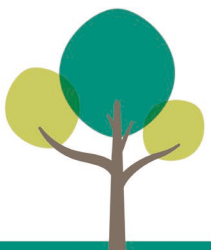
- “Housing Hub” is part of the Corporate Contact Centre
- Pilot – set up a new “skill set” to divert customer calls to officers from local housing teams
- Purpose - to address increasing demand post pandemic for access to housing services via the telephone
  - Reduce waiting times
  - Reduce abandonment rates
  - Increase First Contact Resolution





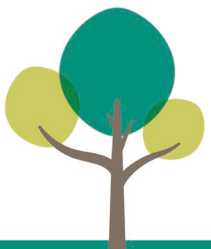
# Scope of Tenant & Leaseholder Scrutiny

- The Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group (TLSG) wanted to test and scrutinise the customer experience of accessing the housing service via the telephone.
- They wanted to ensure the ease of navigation and to get through to the call centre irrespective of disability, language barriers, or accessibility issues.
- They wanted to ensure the service resolved housing queries for tenants in a timely, sensitive and professional manner.



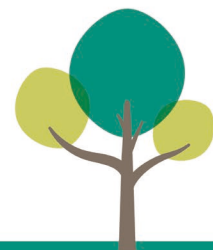
# Method

- **Mystery Shopping**
  - 7 Members of the group made calls
  - Contact made to both advertised numbers (569-6000 / 368-1166)
  - Recorded observations
- **Staff Interviews**
  - Questionnaire developed by the group
  - Completed with Manager and Supervisor of the Housing Hub
  - Explored measures of success and complaint handling
- **Desktop Review**
  - Group received a detailed presentation on the service
  - Requested and received key documents / evidence to evaluate the service



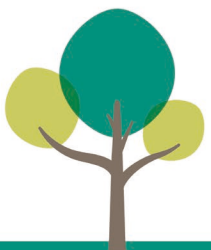
# Findings

- Having two published numbers is confusing
- Improvements could be made to the telephony IVR menus to help customers better navigate to the correct service
- No measures of successful resolution of calls from the customer perspective
- Some evidence that call waiting times had reduced and first contact resolution had improved but a small sample size that didn't provide overall assurance
- Lack of details on cost of the operating model
- Arrangements in place for translation services not widely known or understood by customers or officers



# Recommendations

- One number for all calls to housing services
- Introduce Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Improvement to the Housing Hub Performance Management Framework with focus on quality of service to customers
- Regular reports on First Contact Resolutions and Customer Satisfaction
- Further review of translation needs and service offer



## Report to the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

24 November 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Charging principles and concessions for the Local Authority Trading Company and Sandwell Aquatics Centre
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Borough Economy – Alice Davey
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ben Percival – Assistant Director – Contracts, Projects, Strategy & Policy

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon on the following principles that will be used to inform a subsequent charging policy:
  - 1.2 A commercial approach to competitive price setting to seek to optimise trading income by attracting a mass market.
  - 1.3 The review of concessionary pricing towards more focused target groups as outlined in 4.6
  - 1.4 Agreeing a select number of core priced for key products, with delegated discretion for other pricing.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations






- 2.1 2023 will see a once in a generation transformation of sport and leisure provision in Sandwell with the opening of Sandwell Aquatics Centre (SAC) and the establishment of the new Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) to operate the borough’s public facilities. At the same time Council resources continue to be stretched and inflationary pressures – notably utility costs – will place particular cost pressures on leisure provision.
- 2.2 To rise to the opportunity and challenge presented, it is critical that a balance is achieved between optimising trading income and widening



access to spread benefits across all residents. It is therefore essential that a deliberate and considered charging policy is adopted and maintained.

2.3 The fundamental purpose of a well-functioning concessionary scheme should be **to encourage and support access from those groups who would otherwise not attend / attend less frequently**. Therefore, income from those who the concessionary scheme encourages to attend, who wouldn't otherwise attend, is a net commercial benefit.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people</b> A targeted concessionary scheme will help ensure access to the leisure centres from all Sandwell children and help foster the habit of lifelong activity and participation.</p>
	<p><b>People live well and age well</b> Encouraging active lifestyles is critical to improving the health and wellbeing of Sandwell residents.</p>
	<p><b>Strong resilient communities</b> A functioning concessionary scheme should substantially increase participation from all the community.</p>
	<p><b>A strong and inclusive economy</b> Effective pricing is fundamental to ensuring a sustainable leisure service for residents. Physical activity is integral to supporting a healthy workforce.</p>
	<p><b>A connected and accessible Sandwell</b> There is potential to expand the charging narrative to encompass a range of activities within and beyond the leisure centres – potentially including open spaces and active travel.</p>

### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Encouraging active lifestyles is critical to improving the health and wellbeing of Sandwell residents. Whilst there are a broad range of opportunities to be active across Sandwell, research indicates that activities delivered from leisure centres – in particular swimming and indoor fitness – are key services that will keep Sandwell residents active and encourage them to be more active.



- 4.2 Concessionary “passport to leisure” schemes are standard features of most public leisure provision. They are often considered a drag on business performance, giving away products and hampering the achievement of challenging income targets. As such they tend to be generic schemes infrequently refreshed and rarely promoted.
- 4.3 The above perception missed the fundamental purpose of a well-functioning concessionary scheme – which should be **to encourage and support access from those groups who would otherwise not attend / attend less frequently**.
- 4.4 A properly functioning concessionary scheme should deliver positive commercial outcomes. Leisure facilities are rarely full – especially when delivered on the scale available in Sandwell – and the cost of each additional user is negligible. Therefore, income from those who the concessionary scheme encourages to attend who wouldn’t otherwise attend, is a net commercial benefit.
- 4.5 Walsall Council relaunched their concessionary scheme in 2015. The scheme was a compelling offer – a 50% discount on all activities with very few restrictions but was carefully targeted at low-income households. The scheme was extremely successful delivering:
- A ten-fold increase in registrations from targeted groups
  - More than £150k increase in income
  - 75% of discounted users became regular users (1 visit / month)
- <https://go.walsall.gov.uk/leisure/Sport-and-Leisure/Price-list#moveit>
- 4.6 Based on good practice examples elsewhere, the baseline concessionary price target groups are proposed as follows:
1. In receipt of universal credit or any national or local scheme that may supersede this;
  2. Have a disability (those with long term conditions should be referred through the GP/Social Prescribing schemes)
  3. Looked After Children under the Local Authority;
  4. Registered carers; and
  5. Military service veterans.

These categories will be sense-checked with colleagues – especially Public Health and Children’s & Adults’ Services.



4.7 The current free-swimming scheme would – with support from Children’s Services, Adult Services and Public Health colleagues – evolve into a more targeted and potentially more comprehensive scheme with the potential to include:

- Children in receipt of free school meals accessing free swimming lessons.
- Free swimming for over 75s – with the emphasis on addressing social isolation (free hot drink etc)
- Evolving the universal free offer into a limited swim for £1 offer – to start to re-establish the value of the product and the expectation that this is a paid-for service.

4.8 The recent marketing and promotion review conducted by Prominent TLS identified a range of opportunities to improve the structure of pricing and memberships. Both SAC and the LATC present the opportunity to refresh pricing for leisure services.

4.9 There is however also a need to maintain operational stability. Good relations with existing users need to be maintained and care should be taken not to unnecessarily disrupt the loyal membership base.

4.10 Key principles for pricing include:

- SAC being a separate product, running in parallel with the rest of the facilities. It is proposed it would not be part of the One Card offer (with the possible exception of those users transferring from Langley & Smethwick).
- SAC pricing to be differentiated from the other facilities – differentiating the scale and quality of SAC, whilst ensuring target groups are not excluded.
- The LATC to have increased charging flexibility, particularly for limited-time price promotions.
- To set a specified and limited number of products where pricing is a reserved matter for SMBC. Such products may include:
  - Child’s swim
  - Concession pricing
  - Concession categories
  - Health-related activities (cardiac rehab etc)

## 5 Implications





<b>Resources:</b>	No immediate resource implications. Fees & Charges will form part of the updated business plans for LATC & SAC.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	None
<b>Risk:</b>	Business risk and mitigation is part of the business planning for LATC and SAC. Greater pricing discretion for the LATC will allow greater responsiveness to business conditions.
<b>Equality:</b>	The full fees and charges review will be subject to an equality impact assessment
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Careful targeting on concessions will encourage access from those who would benefit most from increased physical activity.
<b>Social Value:</b>	None
<b>Climate Change:</b>	None

## 6 Appendices

None

## 7. Background Papers

None



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## Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities

24 November 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Democratic Services Officer, Alexander Goddard <a href="mailto:Alexander.Goddard@sandwell.gov.uk">Alexander.Goddard@sandwell.gov.uk</a>


### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To receive an update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

For the Board to receive regular updates of the work of the Tenants' and Leaseholder's Scrutiny Group.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
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### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group (TLS) was formed in December 2021 with a specific remit of scrutinising the Council's housing services function.



- 4.2 The Group conducts regular engagement with housing management, contractors and tenants to ensure that the Council's housing stock meets consistent and appropriate standards. There is also an opportunity for the Group to conduct reviews into specific governance areas relating to housing, strategy and policy development and service delivery.
- 4.3 The Scrutiny Group's Membership consists of Council tenants and leaseholders. In addition, the Group holds a co-opted position for the Chair of the SNAC Board which is reciprocated by the Board Membership in respect of the Chair of the TLS Group.
- 4.4 The Board has the opportunity to invite the Chair of TLS Group to present an update of the works of the TLS Group.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no specific resource implications
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The Board has a responsibility to scrutinise all matters as appropriate in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Housing Policy</li> <li>• Social Housing</li> <li>• Private Rented Sector Accommodation.</li> </ul>
<b>Risk:</b>	There are no risk implications.
<b>Equality:</b>	There are no equality implications
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	There are no health and wellbeing implications.
<b>Social Value</b>	Engagement with the TLS Group allows engagement with the Board and an opportunity to participate in service improvement and development.
<b>Climate Change</b>	There are no climate change implications

## 6 Appendices

There are no appendices.

## 7. Background Papers

There are no background papers.





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# Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2022/23



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## Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities

### Standing Items:-

- Tracking and Monitoring of Recommendations to the Executive
- Work Programme (including Cabinet Forward Plan)

Meeting Date	Item	Presented by
02 August 2022	Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group Work Programme 2022/23	Manny Sehmbi (Business Manager Community Partnerships and Support Services)
	Housing Tenants' Annual Report 2021/22	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management)
30 August 2022  Additional Meeting	Council House New Builds Programme	Tony McGovern (Director of Regeneration and Growth)
	The Appropriation of Various Disused Former Garages in the Borough	Tony McGovern (Possible input from Gillian Douglas)
30 September 2022	Housing Needs Assessment	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management)
	Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Review	Gillian Douglas (Director of Housing)
	Rents and Service Charges	Gillian Douglas (Director of Housing)



Agenda Item 9

01 November 2022	Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis	Lisa McNally (Director of Public Health). SCIPS. SCVO.
Additional Meeting	Review of Voids Process	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management)
	Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Plan	Gillian Douglas (Director of Housing)
	Empty Homes Strategy	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management)
24 November 2022	Housing Strategy	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management) Louis Bebb.
	Report of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group - Housing Hub Review	Manny Sehmbi (Business Manager Community Partnerships and Support Services)
	Fees & Charges (inc concessions) for LATC / Sandwell Aquatic Centre	Alice Davey/ Ben Percival
	2023-24 Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing	Jonathan Rawlins/ Gillian Douglas
10 January 2023	Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Plan Update	Gillian Douglas
Additional Meeting		
26 January 2023	Nature Reserves Funding	Matthew Huggins ((Interim) Service Manager Parks, Grounds, Sandwell Valley & Events)
	Council House New Builds Programme Update	Tony McGovern (Director of Regeneration and Growth)
	Possible Update of Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis. HOLD.	Lisa McNally (Director of Public Health). SCIPS. SCVO.





	Launch plan of Sandwell Aquatic Centre	Alice Davey/ Ben Percival
23 February 2023.  Additional meeting at Sandwell Valley.	Green Spaces Strategy	Matt Huggins Asst. Director Parks, Grounds Maint. & Events
	Heritage and Cultural Strategy	Dawn Winter Asst. Director Libraries, Archives & Heritage
	Future Provision of Leisure Services Update	Ben Percival Asst. Director Contracts & Projects
	Sandwell Valley Masterplan	Alice Davey (Director of Borough Economy)
	Enforcement activity in relation to housing, particularly ASB	Nigel Collumbell/ Gillian Douglas
	Reports of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group - Home Checks Review	Manny Sehmbi/ Marianne Munro
23 March 2023	Homelessness Strategy (Implementation)	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management)
	Commonwealth Games Legacy Plan	Alice Davey/ Ben Percival
	Neighbourhood Management Model	Manny Sehmbi (Business Manager Community Partnerships and Support Services)
	Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022-26 One Year On	Chief Supt Maria Fox (Chair of Safer Sandwell Partnership)

### To be Scheduled

Reports of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on:-

- Building Safety Review

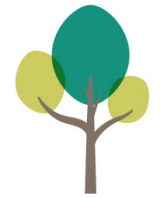


• Responsive Repairs & Customer Satisfaction Review  
Built Facilities Strategy – For Municipal year 23/24 – Alice Davey/ Ben Percival PROPOSED  
Playing Pitch Strategy – For Municipal year 23/24 – Alice Davey/ Ben Percival PROPOSED

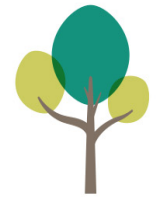


The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

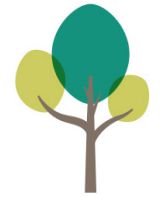
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
1	<p><b>Grant funding for advice services 2023/24 – 2025/26</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Heather Chinner</p> <p>Directors: Director of Housing - Gillian Douglas, Director of Public Health - Lisa McNally - Director of Children’s Services and Education - Michael Jarrett</p>	<p><b>Cabinet –</b> Adults Social Care &amp; Health (Cllr Hartwell)/ Children &amp; Education (Cllr Hackett)/ Communities (Cllr Millard)/ Housing (Cllr Padda)</p>	7 December 2022		Cabinet report



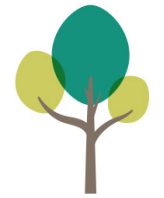
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
6	<p><b>Community Hubs</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Director of Business Strategy – Neil Cox and Director of Housing – Gillian Douglas</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Communities</b> (Cllr Millard)</p>	<p>7 December 2022</p>		



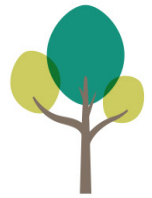
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
9	<p><b>Annual Tenant Rent Review</b></p> <p>Contact Officer – Nigel Collumbell</p> <p>Director – Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet – Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>7 December 2022</p>		<p>Appendix 1 Impact of on Average Weekly Rents</p> <p>Appendix 2 Impact on customers on partial benefits</p> <p>Appendix 3 Rental from service charges and Impact on weekly charges</p> <p>Appendix 4 Rental Increase and Impact on Budgets</p> <p>Appendix 5 Briefing note - Hardship interventions to supporting tenants in rent arrears</p>



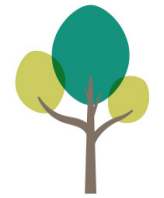
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
10	<p><b>2023-24 Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: J Rawlins</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>7 December 2022</p>		
11	<p><b>Empty Homes Strategy</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Richard Hawkins</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>7 December 2022</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
14	<p><b>Chance Glasswork Trust Memorandum of Understanding</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern</p>	<p><b>Cabinet -</b> Regeneration &amp; Growth (Cllr Hughes)</p>	7 December 2022		
20	<p><b>Adoption of Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Gillian Douglas</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet –</b> Housing (Cllr Padda)</p>	8 February 2023		



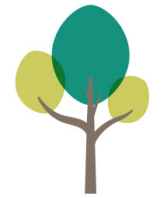
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
21	<p><b>Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Louis Bebb</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet – Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>15 March 2023</p>	<p>SNAC 24 November 2022</p>	<p>Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028</p>





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

Title/Subject	Cabinet Portfolio Area	Decision Date	Reason for Exemption	List of documents to be considered
<p><b>Update on Streamlining Black Country Ways Of Working – Black Country Consortium Ltd</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Hywel Ruddick, Black Country Consortium</p>	<p><b>Cabinet -</b> Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)</p>	<p>7 December 2022 (private item)</p>	<p>Financial or business affairs of any individual</p>	



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