

# Agenda

## Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**Tuesday, 1 November 2022 at 5.15 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 Minutes**

5 - 12

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2022.

**4 Additional Items of Business**

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

**5 Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis**

13 - 36



To consider and comment upon the reports relating to Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to tackle the cost of living crisis.

**6 Voids Property Review 37 - 40**

To receive, comment and provide recommendations on the scope of the review of the void property process and standards.

**7 Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan 41 - 74**

That the Board considers and comments on the draft Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan.

**8 Empty Property Strategy 2023- 2028 75 - 106**

To receive and comment on the Draft Empty Property Strategy 2023 - 2028, including the introduction of empty property loans and the use of Planning Act enforcement powers by the Empty Property Officer.

**9 Update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group**

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

**10 Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan 107 - 118**

To note and review the Cabinet Forward Plan and the Board's work programme 2022/23.

**Kim Bromley-Derry CBE DL**  
**Managing Director Commissioner**  
Sandwell Council House  
Freeth Street  
Oldbury  
West Midlands

## **Distribution**

Councillor Fenton (Chair)

Councillors Akhtar, Ashman, Fisher, H Bhullar, Jalil, Kaur, Lewis, Mayo, Shaeen, J Webb and Brown (Co -Opted Member)

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## Minutes of Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**30 September 2022 at 5.45pm**  
**In Committee Room 1 - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillors Fenton (Chair), Akhtar (Vice Chair), Ashman, Bhullar, Jalil, Lewis and Shaeen. Phillippe Brown (Co- opted Member and Chair - Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group).

**Also present:** Councillor Padda (Cabinet Member for Housing); Gillian Douglas (Director – Housing), Lisa McNally (Director – Public Health), Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager – Housing), Louis Bebb (Housing Policy and Strategy Lead Officer), Alexander Goddard (Democratic Services Officer), John Swann (Democratic Services Officer)

### **25/22 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fisher and Kaur.

### **26/22 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

### **27/22 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meetings held on 2 August 2022 and 30 August 2022 be confirmed as correct records.

### **28/22 Urgent Additional Items of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business to consider.

## Update on Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants

The Board received the report on the **Update on Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants** and an overview of progress regarding the re- alignment of funding streams with the Corporate Plan.

The Director for Housing advised the Board that the Council currently spent 6.3m per annum in grants with 55 organisations in receipt of long-term reoccurring funds. The review identified that in the view of commissioning officers 91% of groups added value to the communities.

It was reported that the target saving across all directorates was 10%, for Housing this represented £630,000, however it was important that savings were proportionate and did not impact negatively upon communities. The Board was informed about plans to digitise the grants system, thus enabling online monitoring.

The Board was briefed about the small grants process which Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations administered on behalf of the Council. This process totalled £150,000 per annum, with groups being eligible to bid for up to £5,000 while being required to evidence that the community would benefit.

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

- The current process favoured established organisations and an open and transparent process may benefit new and emerging groups.
- That there was no plan for a competitive grants process at present but that long- term this could be explored.
- A competitive process might encourage innovation within the third sector and would be fairer in principle.
- Robust service-level agreements and performance monitoring of the service delivered by Council-funded organisations worked well and mitigated the need for a contract to be in place.

- Multiple Council funding streams made up the £6.3m annual expenditure, with differing governance arrangements depending on the stream. It was noted that the sector was not wholly reliant upon the Council to fund its activities.
- Services were audited to ensure that communities received high quality provision and it was noted that all concerns should be passed to the council to investigate.

**Resolved that:-**

- (1) the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board supports the development and introduction of an open and transparent Council funding process;
- (2) the Director of Housing consider the above as part of any redesign of grant making processes.

**30/22**

**Housing Needs Assessment 2022**

The Board received a presentation and summary of the **Housing Needs Assessment 2022**.

The purpose of this report was to create an understanding of the borough's demographics and demand for social housing to inform the Councils strategy moving forward. It was identified that the Council owned 21% of all residential units in the borough and of these 51% were houses, 41% were flats and 8% were bungalows and maisonettes.

The Council recognised that issues including the Right to Buy scheme was exacerbating the housing shortage in Sandwell. The Board noted that 457 properties had been purchased through the Scheme over a three- year period.

In addition, there were a significant number of privately-owned properties across the borough that were unoccupied; according to Council Tax records around 3,500 were unoccupied.

The Directorate of Housing also recognised that there are specific groups including asylum seekers, those with mobility

issues and adults with learning disabilities that needed to be considered within future housing developments.

Key findings of the Housing Needs Assessment 2022 included:

- Sandwell had a higher proportion of social housing stock (26%) compared to the national average of 17%.
- Sandwell's older population had grown slower than expected, instead the borough's younger population had seen the biggest growth.
- 3- bed properties were the highest proportion of the Council's stock, despite a greater demand for 1 and 2 bed properties on the housing waiting list.
- Re- let numbers were decreasing annually and has done so since 2017.

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

- That Sandwell was a densely populated area, higher than the West Midlands and national average, meaning availability of suitable land to build on was limited.
- Neighbourhood planning, in addition to house building took into account factors including access to green spaces and air quality.
- Compulsory purchase orders for long- term empty dwellings were being considered and the Director of Housing undertook to bring a draft strategy to a future meeting of the Board.
- Council homes void turnaround typically took a month depending on the nature of works required to bring it back to a lettable standard.
- Council house tenants experienced barriers whilst re-locating or downsizing due to property availability.
- The Council cannot currently build more properties than those lost via the right to buy scheme meaning that a collaborative approach with the private sector and registered social landlords was crucial.

Councillor Jalil left the meeting during consideration of this item.

## Options for rent and service charge increases review 2023/24

The Board received a report on the Options for rent and service charge increases review 2023/24. The Board heard that proposals for 2%, 5% and 9% increases of the service charge for residents were currently being considered; all of which were below the current rate of inflation – the consumer price index (CPI) which is currently set at 10.1%.

The rent and service charge increases were being considered as the Council had been required to reduce rent charges by 1% per year for 4 years, from 2017- 2020. This had placed pressure on the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

Benchmarking exercises had been conducted against other local authorities suggested that 5-6% was a reasonable increase.

The Director for Housing outlined that inflationary cost pressures and the impact upon business had contributed to the discussions. It was also noted that due to caps on price increases the Council could not increase charges later in the municipal year.

The Board also heard plans to move away from the current system of tenants paying rent in arrears to paying upfront, this was to be articulated to residents and introduced gradually to ensure residents were not impacted financially.

The Board was further advised that the number of tenants paying at least one service charge was 10,437, representing 38.9% of council house tenants.

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

- Whilst increasing charges was not a desirable option, it was accepted that it was a necessity in order to adequately provide housing services and complete property repairs and improvements.

- The reasons for increasing charges needed to be well communicated to tenants, as the country was in a cost of living crisis.
- The Cabinet Member for Housing outlined that in order to maintain the current service price increases were required.
- The Council has low rates of eviction and utilises systems to identify those tenants who were arrears so support could be provided.
- Inflation within the construction sector was currently 20% which further impacted repairs and improvements to housing stock.
- It was noted that housing benefit would cover increases.
- Housing Associations were lobbying for a 7% increase; the Board felt that this was an acceptable and understandable level of increase.

**32/22**

### **Update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group**

The Board received an **Update from the Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group**. The Board heard that the Service Manager for Housing had attended a meeting of the group and had formulated how reports would be presented in the future.

The Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group outlined that the Group would be undertaking reviews on the following key areas and reporting back to the Board with any recommendations arising:

- Housing Hub
- Home Checks
- Building Safety
- Responsive repairs and customer satisfaction

The Board noted that the Chair and Vice- Chair of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group were due to attend the Tenant and Resident Conference in early October.

**Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Board noted its Work Programme for 2022/23 and received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

The Board discussed the cost of living crisis and noted that this was scheduled to be brought to its next meeting in November 2022. The approach of the council and third sector groups was discussed, including the establishment of Warm Banks and communications to residents.

The Director of Public Health advised the Board that a coordinated and rapid approach needed to be taken and engagement with the Voluntary and Community sector, as well as faith groups would be important when considering Winter Preparations. This mirrored the successful and nationally-recognise approach that had been utilised in Sandwell during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Board's input into the Council's corporate response to the cost of living crisis was both needed and valued. It was therefore agreed that a Working Group be established to advise the leadership team on relevant matters.

**Resolved** that a Working Group comprised of the members of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board be established to support and review the Council's approach to the cost of living crisis.

Meeting ended at 7.33pm

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## Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**1 November 2022**

<b>Subject:</b>	Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Public health Lisa McNally Director of Housing Gillian Douglas Director of Finance Simone Hines
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Democratic Services Officer, Alexander Goddard <a href="mailto:Alexander_Goddard@sandwell.gov.uk">Alexander_Goddard@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Democratic Services Officer, John Swann <a href="mailto:John_Swann@sandwell.gov.uk">John_Swann@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon reports relating to working with the Voluntary and community sector to tackle the cost of living crisis.
- 1.2 That the board comments on:-
  - a) The findings and actions arising from the reports
  - b) The approach taken by the council and voluntary and community sector organisations in the borough of Sandwell




### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

The Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board has a key role to play in commenting upon the approach and shaping future



thinking around the Council's and voluntary and community sector group's response to the cost of living crisis.

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

	<p>Best start in life for children and young people</p> <p>Young people must be taken into account when working with the voluntary and community sector to deliver against this priority.</p>
	<p>People live well and age well</p> <p>Elderly people may be disproportionately impacted by increasing costs as they get older and their needs change and increase. The approach taken by Sandwell therefore needs to deliver against this priority.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities</p> <p>The cost of living crisis is projected to have adverse impacts upon the borough, Sandwell has higher rates of deprivation than the national average and therefore may be less equipped to absorb higher costs without support. It is therefore important that an appropriate and wide- reaching response takes place to support our population.</p>

### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The voluntary and community sector in Sandwell is crucial in supporting residents across our six towns, with the demand for advice, resources and financial support increase exponentially.

Inflation in the United Kingdom as of 19 October 2022 is at 10.1%, with certain sectors (food and drink) higher at 15%

As the cost of living crisis continues to evolve it is important that the input of members and scrutiny is received to steer and develop council policy. Communications to residents, community resources and locations where support can be obtained must actively be shaped by members to ensure the service offer from the council is effective.



## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Significant financial costs are expected to be associated with this project to provide a high level service offer to the communities.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The Board has a responsibility to scrutinise all matter as appropriate in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary and Community sector support</li> <li>• Partnership working to strengthen the third sector in Sandwell</li> <li>• Community development</li> </ul>
<b>Risk:</b>	There are no direct risk implications as a result of his report.
<b>Equality:</b>	There are no direct equality implications associated with this report.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Implications on health and wellbeing of our communities will be set out in further detail in the appendixes.
<b>Social Value:</b>	Engagement with the Board allows an opportunity to participate in service improvement and development.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report.

## 6 Appendices

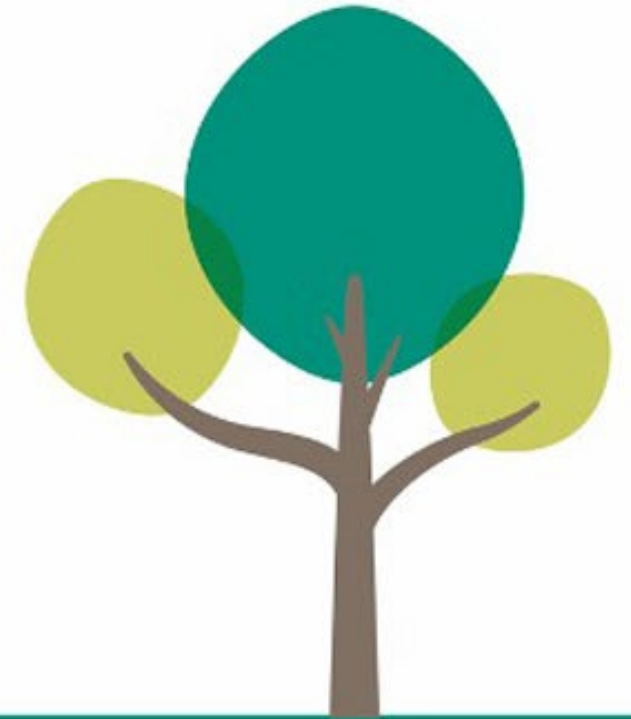
Appendix 1 – Submission from the Directorate of Public Health  
Appendix 2 - Submission from the Directorate of Housing



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# Cost of Living Support to Residents and Businesses

Cabinet Workshop - 26 October 2022 (TBC)





# Agenda

Page 18

- Overview of local data
- Framework for action
- Interventions (current and *potential*)
- Review decisions and actions





# Sandwell's Cost of Living Vulnerability

Out of 333 LAs, Sandwell is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> across all indices of deprivation (IMD), 2<sup>nd</sup> specifically on **Income Deprivation and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest Cost of Living Vulnerability Index.**

Of 135,000 households, 23% get help with paying Council Tax, 21% of households experienced **fuel poverty** (last data 2020) and 24% report **food insecurity** (2021 - highest in WM)

39% of people in Sandwell report **low confidence in managing money** and 37% report **low financial knowledge (FCA)** Over **35,000 people supported by Sandwell Advice Providers Network** in 2021/22 on benefits, housing, debt, employment and immigration

Out of XXX Council tenants, 50% pay no rent, 20% pay something and 30% pay full rent (not eligible for DHP)

Struggles with low income, food or fuel poverty etc are strongly linked to **social isolation, poor mental health and suicide.**

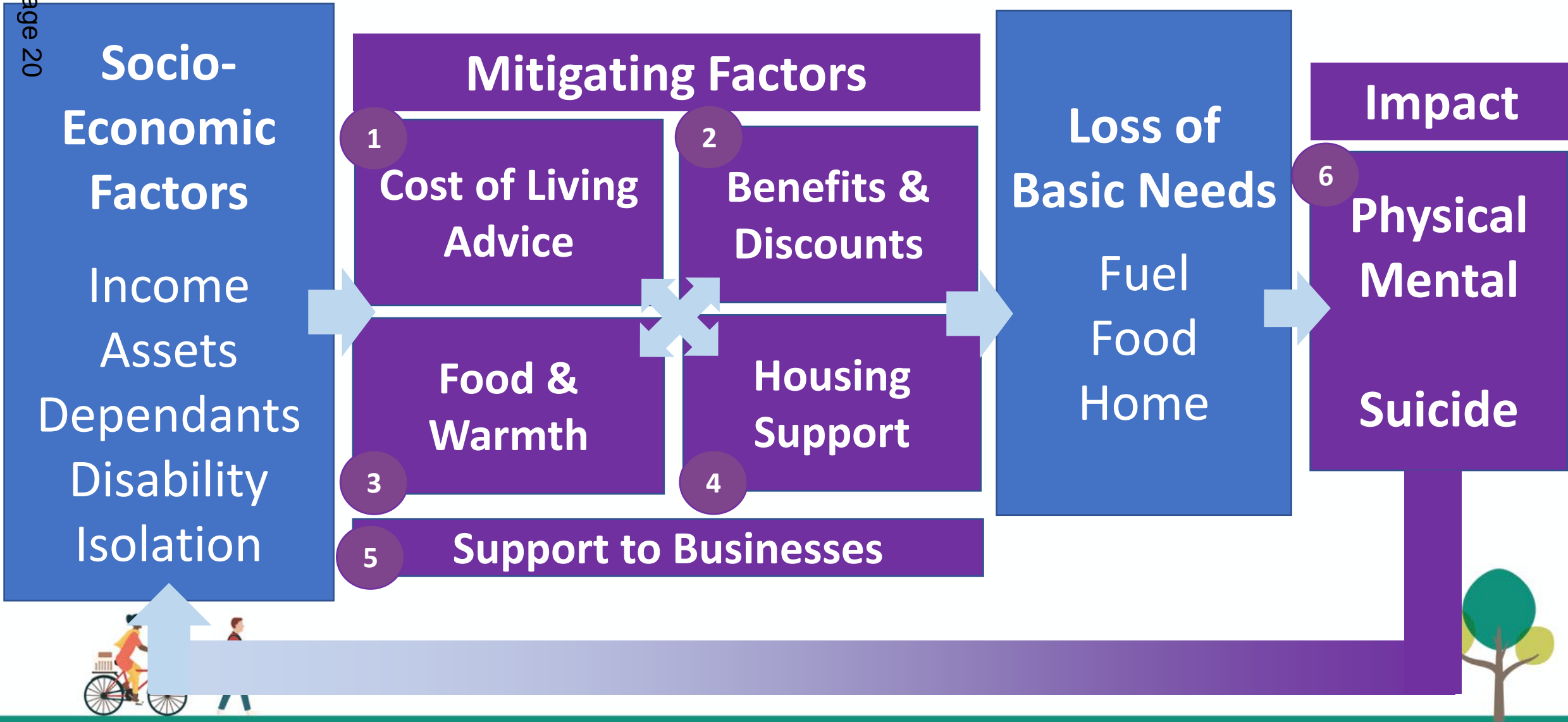
Sandwell residents identified cost of living as their **highest concern** (Resident Wellbeing & Perception Survey 2022)





# Cost of Living Vulnerability

Page 20





# Cost of Living Advice

Page 2

**Cost of Living Champions – training by VCS and Faith Leaders to provide advice & referral – using format of Community Vaccination Leaders Programme**

**Welfare Rights Team and Sandwell Advice Providers Network**

**Revamped Cost of Living Website and Social Media Campaign.**

**STEPS Centre – advice and support on applications for housing, travel assistance, Free School Meals, Disability Living Allowance**



# Cost of Living Advice (potential)

***Complex Case Review – single view of debt and plan for repayment?***

***Cost of Living Advice Training to Health Professionals (Health Visitors, School Nurses, Substance Misuse & Sexual Health staff)***

***Youth Services: budgeting, cooking and domestic skills for young people***

***Free Digital Dens to improve IT skills and access to services?***

***Routinely refer bereaved partners/families to Healthy Sandwell and Welfare Rights?***



**Local Council Tax Support – 100% discount for lowest income households**

**Council Tax Hardship Policy – £500k so far in 2022/23**

**Discretionary Housing Payments – govt allocation of £700k, £1m HRA top up.**

**Household Support Fund – £6.8m paid out since Oct 2021**

**Energy Rebate Payments - £150 to 127,000 households; additional funding approved for Band E-H and CTR households**



Page 24  
**Assistance with buying school uniform**

**Youth Service – free transport to youth centres**

**Free or reduced price activities and access (eg: free swimming, bike hire, events etc)**

**Bulky waste – free collection for 60+**

**Sandwell Funeral Service, low cost burials and memorials**



***Household Support Fund Round 3 - £3.4m from October 2022?***

***Identify trusts / foundations to fund residential education visits***

***6 Towns Credit Union – work improve viability to offer low cost loans?***

***Offer longer-term payment plans for large expenditures, e.g. funerals?***

***Debt write off – review threshold to get people out of debt sooner?***



Page 26 Council Warm Spaces (libraries and other buildings)

**CVS & Faith Warm Spaces (supported with £240k PH funding for small grants)**

**Mattress toppers to improve warmth**

**Extra support to food banks (£100k)**

**Holiday Activity Fund**



## Food & Warmth Provision (potential)

Page 27

*Food vouchers for use in markets?*

*Winter Warmth gift packs distributed to selected groups?*

*Food parcel to every resident under 11 and 65+ ?*

*Food parcel/gifts for families in temporary accommodation?*



Page 28  
Discretionary Housing Payment - £1m HRA top up of £700k budget

Early warning system – reaching out to tenants

Welfare Rights and money advice – referral and engagement

Rent on Time creates a safety buffer





## 4 Housing Support (potential)

Page 29 *Hardship Fund for non-DHP qualifying tenants?*

*Pre-tenancy support?*

*No eviction policy?*

*Drive to get homeless families into stable accommodation in time for Christmas?*



Promoting webinars and government advice on energy bills for businesses – articles, newsletters and social media

*Development of West Bromwich Indoor Market to improve facilities for small businesses and increase footfall*

*Hardship Scheme for small businesses*

*Vouchers to most vulnerable residents for use in market stalls?*



## Health, Well-being & Suicide Prevention

**Winter Wellbeing booklet: Advice on vaccination, warmth, eating on a budget, finance and benefits, falls prevention, NHS services, free activities**

**Extra capacity into frontline PH services (Healthy Sandwell and PH Development Officers)**

**Extra investment into substance misuse prevention and treatment**

**Sandwell Health Inequalities Programme (SHIP) focused on BAME groups**

**Multi-agency Suicide Prevention Programme**



***Extension of Period Poverty Programme?***

***Social Isolation Programme: Mapping and New Social Prescribing Network?***

***Gambling Addiction Programme***

***New investment (via SH&CP) into children's mental health support***

***Extension of Better Mental Health Programme (community projects)***





# Call for Cost of Living Emergency

Sandwell as vulnerable to Cost of Living as it was to COVID-19 – do we treat them the same?

Establish governance framework – cross council/partners working closely together to support our residents, businesses and staff





# What else do we need to understand?

## Energy Blackouts – Potential Implications

- Understand the potential impact energy blackouts may have on vulnerable families in relation to health and safety, e.g. nursing/residential homes, equipment at home, medication delivery/dispensary, community alarms
- Review our contingency plans for support most vulnerable in the communities during for energy blackouts

## Financial Vulnerability Needs Assessment

- Understand the needs in more detail to better target support
- Production of data report on key indicators including deprivation, debt and social isolation (November)



## **Supporting Residents During the Cost of Living Crisis – Warm Spaces**

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

To inform the Scrutiny Board about arrangements for providing warm spaces across the borough this winter.

### **2. Definition of Warm Space**

A warm space is a communal, public and safe space that residents can go to this winter. The call for warm spaces (sometimes called warm hubs or warm banks) originally came from campaigners to mitigate the cost of living crisis. The call for such spaces has been responded to by many local authorities. Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Southend, Sheffield, Bristol and councils in Nottinghamshire are just a few of those setting up warm spaces.

The cost of living crisis was exacerbated in October when energy bills were expected to reach up to £3,500 per year on average per household. The Government then announced a £2,500 pa cap over the next 2 years. The cap has subsequently been changed to run until March 2023. The net result of high rates of inflation and rising costs means many households are and will experience significant hardship, especially those on low incomes.

Warm spaces are existing spaces, generally in council ownership or run by voluntary and community sector partners, where people can go during set opening times, be welcomed and able to stay for up to a few hours. The purpose is to enable people to stay warm. The spaces have staff on site and a warm drink is on offer. Staff will be able to signpost to sources of help e.g. welfare rights service, foodbanks and Adult Social Care for safeguarding concerns. It may be possible to arrange foodbank distribution to some spaces.

The target group is people who are struggling to keep warm in their own home and are likely to be vulnerable e.g. due to isolation, lack of a family/friendship network, disability or being an older person.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has pointed out that warm spaces should not be a substitute for helping people access any resources that enable them to heat their own home. We will continue to provide welfare rights advice as will partner advice agencies in Sandwell to ensure people are able to access their benefit entitlements. The Cost of Living and Resilient Residents pages on the council website publicise the wider range of services and financial assistance available to people. However, it is widely acknowledged that even with these sources of help many of our residents will struggle to keep their home at the minimum temperature of 18 degrees celsius necessary to maintain health.

### **3. Sandwell's Warm Spaces**

Sandwell's warm spaces 'charter' states :

- You will receive a warm welcome every time you come to our Warm Space
- You will be treated fairly and with dignity and respect at our Warm Space
- You will be in a safe space and we will adhere to safeguarding policies at our Warm Space
- We will not tell anyone about your need for a Warm Space, but we are here to listen to any of your concerns
- Every Warm Space will be a non-judgemental place.

A warm space offers :

- Free, hot drinks
- Staff able to advise on basic queries
- Wifi/digital access in some settings
- Other positive activities where possible

The warm spaces that have been launched are:

- 19 libraries (3 of which are in community centres) – various opening hours
- 3 community centres – various opening hours
- 7 leisure centres – Sundays only

In addition to these 29 warm spaces Public Health is working with the voluntary and community sector and faith organisations to support many to become warm spaces. There is a strong commitment from SCVO and the sector, with many organisations already offering welfare based services. Public Health have identified a grants budget to support groups to open their doors.

#### **4. Preparation for Launch**

Publicity went out week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> October to let the public know about the 29 warm spaces. Detailed information is included in the Sandwell Herald which will be delivered to homes in early November.

Staff working in warm spaces have been provided with a briefing document and Frequently Asked Questions to ensure they are equipped with a wide range of helpful information and signposting links.

Basic monitoring will be carried out by staff to measure uptake and the type of help that residents are seeking.



## Report to Safer and Active Communities Committee

**1st November 2022**

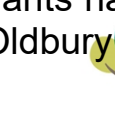
<b>Subject:</b>	Voids Property Review
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Housing Director Gillian Douglas
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Housing Services Manager, Nigel Collumbell <a href="mailto:Nigel_collumbell@sandwell.gov.uk">Nigel_collumbell@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To receive comment & recommendation on the scope of the review of the void property process and standards.







### 2 Background

- 2.1 An end-to-end review of the void process for managing and bringing back into use empty council (housing revenue account) properties has commenced to address increasing turn around times and trends arising from customer complaints about the condition of properties at re-let.
- 2.2 As at the end of September the average turnaround times for voids had increased to 37 days, with an average rent loss of £451 per property. Since the pandemic performance has been adversely affected by the availability of materials and labour, at the end of 2019/2020 the average turnaround time was just 24 days, with an average rent loss of £295 per property.
- 2.3 As at the end of September 434 council properties were empty. This includes 76 properties decommissioned as extra care schemes in Smethwick and West Bromwich which are being re-purposed for use as temporary accommodation and 149 properties where tenants have been decanted to complete major refurbishment schemes in Oldbury. A small



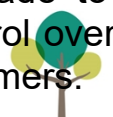
number of other properties are been held and not re-let because of structural defects pending decision on their long-term viability.

### 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
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Empty council homes need to be bought back into use as quickly as possible to mitigate the loss of income to the Housing Revenue Account and to address housing need.</li> </ul>
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

### 3 Aims and Objectives of the review

- 3.1 The review will consider action that needs to be taken to reduce the turnaround times for void properties so that rental income is maximised.
- 3.2 The review will consider how the customer journey can be simplified, to reduce the incidences of customers needing to chase progress on void work or seek clarification on the process for letting and moving into the property.
- 3.3 The “void standard” has not been the subject of review or revision for sometime. In refreshing the standard the aim will be to develop a new flexible empty homes standard that meets the needs and expectations of the diverse needs of our customers whilst also representing value for money.
- 3.4 The review will also consider changes that need to be made to our performance management framework, to ensure quality control over the new standards and drive a culture of “right first time” for customers.



3.5 Changes to void process and standards will be captured in an overarching void policy that will set out the strategic objectives for the management of empty properties which in turn will ensure best use of stock and efficient asset management.

**4 Next Steps:**

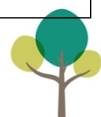
4.1 The review commenced in September and will be completed by April 2023.

**5 Alternative Options**

5.1 We have chosen to undertake this review to address adverse performance, it would not be appropriate to take no action but the scope of the review could be amended to include or exclude some elements set out in section 3. We have chosen to conduct the review making use of internal resources, we could alternatively bring in external support to carry out or assist with the review but this would be at an additional cost and we are confident we have the skills and resources to deliver this within existing resources.

**7. Implications**

<b>Resources:</b>	Financial, staffing, land/building implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The review and any recommended changes will be delivered within existing resources from 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>There are regulatory standards that must be met when reletting a property. These are set out in the Decent Homes Standard and Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</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 risks from conducting the review. Any changes to process will be subject to risk assessments.</li> </ul>



<b>Equality:</b>	<p>Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no equality matters arising from this report</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient void management reduces the time homeless households may spend in temporary accommodation which will have positive impact on their health and wellbeing.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Value</b>	<p>Implications for social value and how the proposals are meeting this (for e.g. employment of local traders, young people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no social value implications arising from this report</li> </ul>

## 8. Appendices

## 9. Background Papers



## Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

1<sup>st</sup> November 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Housing, Gillian Douglas
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<a href="mailto:gillian_douglas@sandwell.gov.uk">gillian_douglas@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations




1.1 That the Board considers and comments on the draft Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations




The Business Plan is a key strategic document that will be considered and adopted by Cabinet in February 2023. The Scrutiny Board is asked to comment on the Plan before the final version is presented to Cabinet.

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

Good quality, safe and suitable housing underpins all objectives with the Plan.

	Best start in life for children and young people
	People live well and age well
	Strong resilient communities



	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods The Business Plan sets out how the Housing Revenue Account budgets will be used over the short, medium and long term in order to manage, maintain and improve the stock and ensure that tenants enjoy decent, safe and suitable housing in good quality neighbourhoods.
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced income and expenditure account for council housing and sits separately to the council's other budgets. The income comes from the rents and service charges that tenants pay. The expenditure relates to the operational costs of management, maintenance, repairs and debt costs (interest and repayments). The HRA is also used for new build and major refurbishments through its capital programme.
- 4.2 It is important that we have a 30 year Business Plan in place to ensure the sustainability of the HRA and to set out how we will deliver council housing services in Sandwell. The Plan links to the council's Housing Strategy which is being revised and redeveloped in response to the Housing Needs Assessment 2022. The Plan also refers to the Housing Asset Management Strategy which is due for renewal and will be developed in the next 12 months, showing our plans for maintenance and investment as well as safety compliance and the delivery of energy efficiency improvements to homes.
- 4.3 There are still a number of factors that need to be taken in to account in formulating the final plan and in reviewing it in future years including :
- The rent increase that will apply in 2023/24. The results of the government's consultation on capping the increase at 3%, 5% or 7% closed in October and the results are expected in November. If the rent increase is too low this will limit investment plans now and over the long term.



- The results of the stock condition surveys that we are about to procure in order to build a more accurate picture of the quality of the stock. This data will inform future investment plans.
- Our aspirations for new build council housing delivery and what investment will need to be made to achieve this, taking account of site availability and potential external funding.
- The cost of ensuring compliance with new building safety legislation, including the Building Safety Act enacted in 2022 and being phased in from 2023.

4.4 Consultation on the draft Plan is being undertaken with key stakeholders including Sandwell Community Information and Participation Service (SCIPs), the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group and the Tenant Management Organisations.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	HRA income is of the order of £130m pa. The plan also profiles a capital programme over the life of the plan. It is important to have a 30 year plan that sets out how we will manage income and expenditure and what the priorities are for the HRA.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	Local Government and Housing legislation applies to the HRA, ensuring it is a ring-fenced account.
<b>Risk:</b>	Oversight and management of the HRA is essential to ensuring the sustainability of the budget and value for money.
<b>Equality:</b>	HRA funded services and improvements must respond to the diversity of our tenants and residents and reduce inequalities.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Decent homes are essential to the health and wellbeing of our tenants and residents.
<b>Social Value</b>	Social value considerations are built in to HRA tendering processes.

## 6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan





## 7. Background Papers

None





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# Appendix 1 : Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

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Draft for Scrutiny Board  
October 2022

## Contents

1.	Executive Summary	3
2.	Introduction	4
3.	About our Vision for Housing	7
4.	Current Key Risks & Opportunities	12
5.	Housing Services	16
6.	Housing Asset Management Strategy	18
7.	Future Development & Acquisitions	19
8.	HRA Financial Projections	20
9.	Appendices	6

## 1. Executive Summary

This Business Plan sets out our strategic plan for managing and maintaining our social housing homes. It sets out in detail our short to medium term plans and priorities for the housing and asset management services (9 years) and provides a commentary that will influence our longer term (30 year) plans for financial planning and investment into our existing council housing and for the provision of new homes.

Over the last decade the social housing sector has seen significant challenges: the impact of rent cuts imposed by central government, the focus on increased fire and building safety following the Grenfell fire, and a recent surge in operational cost inflation accompanied by a shortage of skilled labour which also affects the standard of living of our tenants. On the other hand, the abolition of the previous borrowing cap allows investment to address some of these challenges and for us to help deliver our housing plans.

Within this plan, we consider the current investment needs of our stock, recognising the plans we have to enhance the stock data we currently have, including developing and acquiring affordable homes, set against new borrowing limits that we need to set ourselves. To put this into context our previous borrowing cap was £508 million but borrowing could potentially be increased within our own provisional limits over the next 9 years.

Therefore, this business plan document will see significant development in the coming months and years as more factors that influence the plan arise: future rent policies, cost inflationary pressures, improved information about our stock investment requirements and treasury management.

It is important to note that, at this stage, expenditure on areas such as achieving net zero carbon have not been included; we will continually review our plan in terms of identifying potential sources of funding that may become available, alternative routes for raising additional income or reassessing our expenditure priorities. We also have to consider forthcoming changes arising from the revisit of the Government's Decent Homes Standard and other implications arising from the passage of the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill currently going through Parliament.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Our Business Plan

The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) records the income and expenditure of running its owned housing stock and closely related services or facilities, which is provided primarily for the benefit of its tenants.

It is not a separate fund but rather a ring-fenced account within the Council's own accounts but with defined transactions relating specifically for the provision of landlord related services.

The HRA Business Plan sets out our strategic plan for managing and maintaining the Borough's council and social housing stock. It sets out in detail the Council's short to medium term plans and priorities for its housing and asset management services (9 years) and provides a provisional estimate for long term (30 year) forecast on stock investment and financial planning.

It builds upon our previous financial planning and takes account of significant challenges including: reductions to rents charged (where rents should have continued to increase marginally above inflation), the Covid pandemic, Brexit and the war in Ukraine, all of which have caused pressures on expenditure. We have at the same time seen more opportunities arising through the abolition of the debt cap, which previously restricted us from any further borrowing.

We own over 28,200 properties for rent (950 of which are within the PFI scheme at Harvills Hawthorn, managed externally) and the freehold on over 1,252 leasehold flats across the borough in addition to over 2,700 garages and other buildings. These properties are managed through our own Housing Services.

Since the introduction in 2012 of Housing Revenue Account Self-Financing (which resulted in a loan settlement for us of £504million, taking on additional debt of over £25million) the council has had a greater degree of control over the use and management of the HRA. Self-financing allowed decision making at a local level to drive planning for investment in housing stock and set spending priorities in line with local demand.

We continue to consider:

- Analysing our stock and the services we provide so that we can base our future plans on a robust and sustainable basis. To this end 14,000 stock conditions surveys are being procured.
- Working up a range of plans for potential future investment in new homes which better match the needs of our communities.
- Thinking through how the new future for council housing can help the borough as a whole to deliver our overall objectives.

The Social Housing Green Paper “A new deal for social housing” was issued in 2018 presenting a new set of challenges for the HRA, in respect of community engagement/ consultation, increased building safety and compliance responsibilities and accountability for buildings from design and throughout occupation. This was followed up by the White Paper ‘The Charter for Social Housing Residents’ which was issued in 2020 reinforcing this through regulatory changes. We embrace these changes and our business plan sets out how we will meet these as the legislation arising from these papers passes through Parliament.

Nationally, attention has returned to the country’s severe housing shortage and government has signalled a renewed support for councils seeking to develop new homes. A further step towards this was the lifting of the cap on borrowing in October 2018 to help councils to develop new housing and we have been working towards identifying investment rules (prudential indicators) to ensure that whatever borrowing is undertaken is affordable and sensible.

This business plan sets out our ambitions for the HRA to deliver our existing programme of 321 new homes by 2025. We have considered the opportunities for expansion of this programme to include further land acquisition in order to deliver more council new build homes in the future through bigger and hence more viable schemes.

There is also greater attention than ever on the impact of climate change. We have been investing in homes to make them more energy efficient, and to reduce carbon emissions from materials and heat loss.

This Business Plan identifies how services are delivered as well as:

- What it costs and how we think the finances will develop in the future.
- Showing that our plans are laid on firm foundations, are sustainable and viable.
- What additional resources we might have for investment and how we can leverage in external funding, where opportunities arise.
- What our priorities are for investment.
- A summary assessment of the key risks in the delivery of the business plan with actions to mitigate these risks.

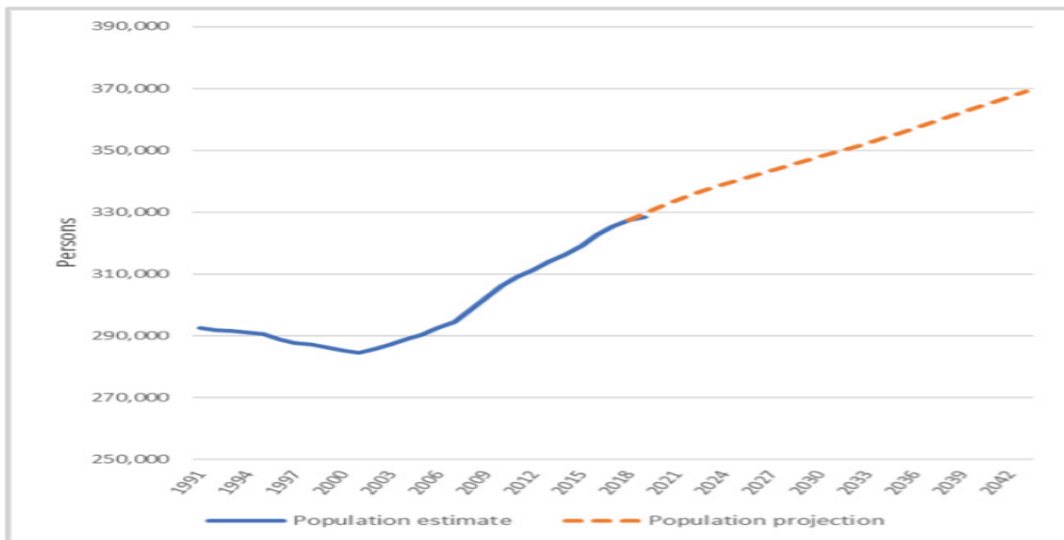
## 2.2. About Sandwell Metropolitan Borough

Sandwell is a local government administrative area created in 1974 following successive local government reorganisations that brought together six boroughs: Oldbury, Rowley Regis and Smethwick in the south, and Tipton, Wednesbury and West Bromwich in the north.

The Sandwell area covers many historically disparate towns and urbanised villages at the core of the Birmingham-Black Country conurbation; places with distinctive identities that flourished along with their many world class firms.

Our current housing stock of c28,200 accounts for about 21% of the overall homes within the borough set against significant new housing of over 4,700 from 2012. The remaining homes are 5% owned by Registered Providers and the balance of 74% in private ownership. Approximately 26% of the private ownership properties are rented privately with expectations that this will grow.

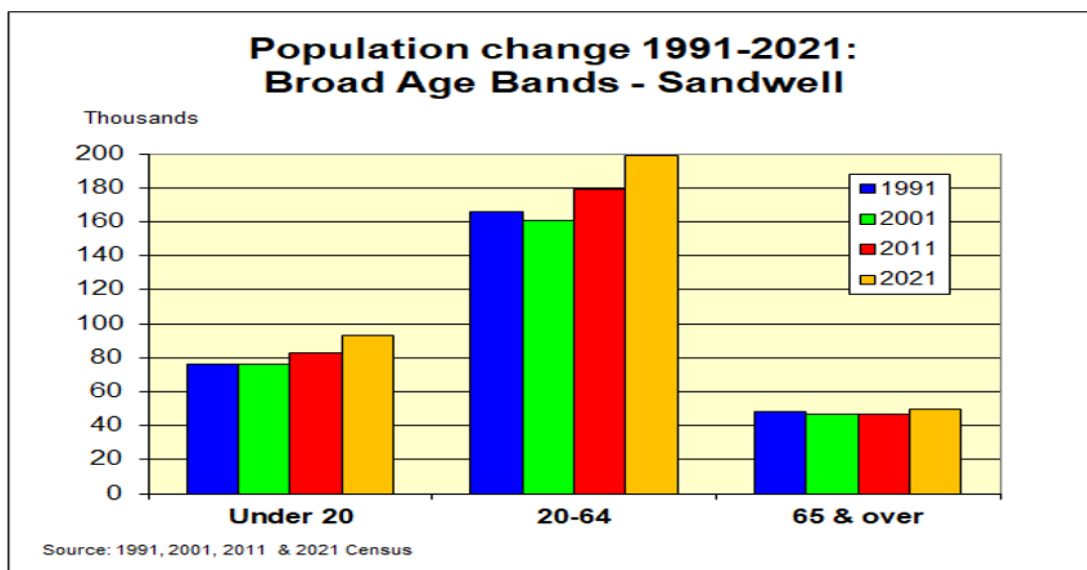
It had been previously forecast that the population numbers in Sandwell would decline in future years, but this trend is now reversed as depicted in the following graph with a forecast population increase of 11% - greater than the national average of 6.6%:



Source: *Population estimates and projections – Local Authority based via NOMIS*

Its current population of 341,900, according to the 2021 census, is the 27<sup>th</sup> largest out of 309 local authorities in England.

The change in age groups is depicted in the chart below:



In terms of employment and its economy Sandwell is ranked as the 8<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority (based on the multiple deprivation indices 2019) with 75% of working age people in employment compared to the national average of 79%. This is due to higher rates of long-term sickness and caring for family and home.

Sandwell’s housing market has changed significantly over the last decade and continues to evolve. In recent years the private rental market has expanded greatly whilst the local authority sector, once the numerically highest sector, continues to decline in number. Property values remain low compared to the wider West Midlands region but remain outside the reach for purchase for many households living locally.

According to Rightmove the average price of a home in Sandwell was £197,854 over the last year set against the national average of £281,161 according to the UK house price index for April 2022.

### 3. About our Vision for Housing

#### 3.1. The Councils Vision and Values

In 2021 we launched our corporate plan ‘Big Plans for a Great Place: The Sandwell Plan’ which is fundamentally about making sure Sandwell residents have the essentials for living a good life – feeling safe – a clean neighbourhood, a decent, warm home, good schools, jobs that pay a decent wage and a pride in living and working in Sandwell.

The plan sets out 10 ambitions with a vision to deliver these over the next 5 years workings to deliver the Vision 2030 and six strategic outcomes being:

- The best start in life for children and young people
- People live well and age well
- Strong, resilient communities

- Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods
- A strong and inclusive economy
- A connected and accessible Sandwell.

Housing will play an essential part in delivering the vision with a key strategic outcome, Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods, focusing on this.

The first aim is to deliver 8,000 more homes in the Borough through a mix of affordable housing through the council and registered providers, and through the private sector.

The second core aim is to improve the quality of existing homes in terms of making them safe and comply with fire and building safety requirements and that they are energy efficient. The recent Building Safety Act rightly sets a high bar for health and safety. As a Council we want residents to inform service delivery and help to shape our services, this is no different in housing. We want to ensure that our tenants can participate in activity that helps to develop our offer.

Our strategic outcomes are:

A home for everyone	
H1	We will deliver much needed new homes across the borough, especially affordable homes, on our own land and other viable sites in order to help meet the demand for affordable housing in our communities
H2	We will help keyworkers to access affordable housing in order that Sandwell can attract and retain a strong local health and social care workforce for the benefit of our communities.
H3	We will aim to keep people independent in their own homes as long as possible which includes incorporating lifetime homes adaptable standards in to as many new homes as possible.
H4	We will focus more of our ambitious house building programme on the needs of our children and young people who have complex needs and those who have been in care, so we have a good housing offer for them in Sandwell when they become adults.
H5	We will focus more of our council house building on the needs of people with learning disabilities, autism and mental health needs.
H6	We will develop the second Council House Build Programme.
H7	We will incorporate more renewable energy measures into the design of new-build Council homes, including modern methods of construction and heating.
H8	We will work to identify the needs of the most vulnerable people in Sandwell and work upstream to prevent homelessness where ever possible.
H9	We will work to prevent and end rough sleeping.
H10	We will explore all options for housing delivery, including community-led schemes.
H11	We will raise the standard of homes in the private rented sector and bring more empty homes back into use.
Regeneration and resources	
H12	We will introduce town centre living in appropriate locations ensuring council developments maintain excellent standards in urban design.
H13	We will continue to progress the review of the Black Country Plan to ensure the policy base is robust and meet the needs of Sandwell and the Black Country.
H14	We will take a proactive approach to accessing national funding for Sandwell that benefits our tenants and people who are homeless or in housing need.



Existing estate	
H15	We will modernise our tenancy and estate management offer, delivering a more proactive service, early identification and intervention to mitigate risks to tenancy sustainment and a new neighbourhood management working in partnership with communities to address their priorities.
H16	We will work to ensure our tenants live in safe and thriving neighbourhoods and that social housing is a tenure to be proud of.
H17	We will ensure that council homes are safe places to live by fully complying with fire and building safety requirements and regularly reviewing compliance. We will support people in the private rented sector to ensure their landlords comply with safety standards too.
H18	We will deliver a rolling programme of upgrades to our stock that improves energy efficiency and plan for the installation of alternative heating systems.
H19	We will aim to be a Borough of Sanctuary, offering a safe place for asylum-seekers and refugees to live, while recognising our leadership role in promoting integration and community cohesion.
H20	We will increase our engagement with tenants, including tenants in high rise blocks.

Our Housing Services and HRA will play a key role in assisting in delivery with our aims. This HRA business plan aims to provide and identify the resources required to deliver the relevant outcomes above.

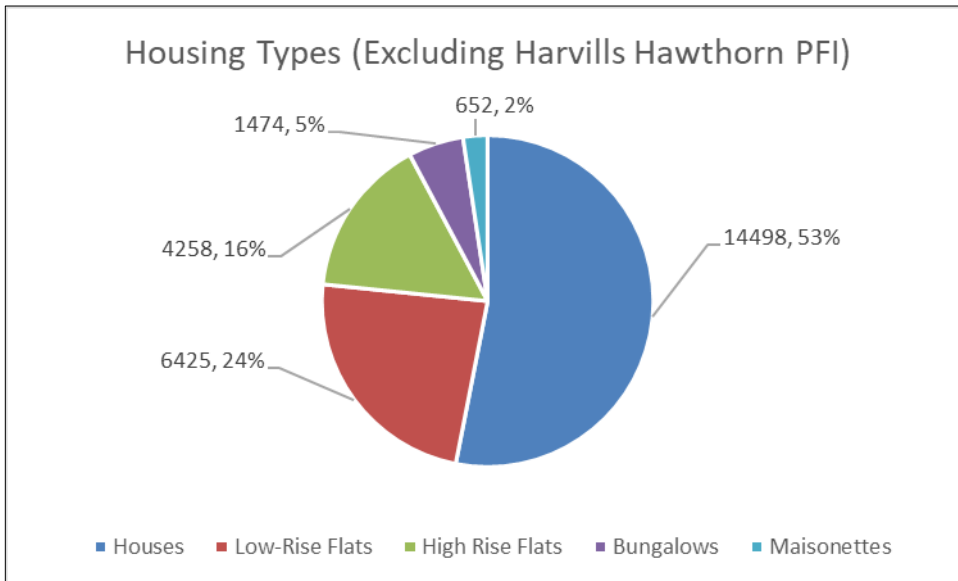
A new, updated, housing strategy will be developed incorporating the above outcomes but building upon the existing 2012-22 strategy document. It will set out the Council’s ambitions for housing and will put in place objectives, targets and policies and explain how it will play a leading role to:

- 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

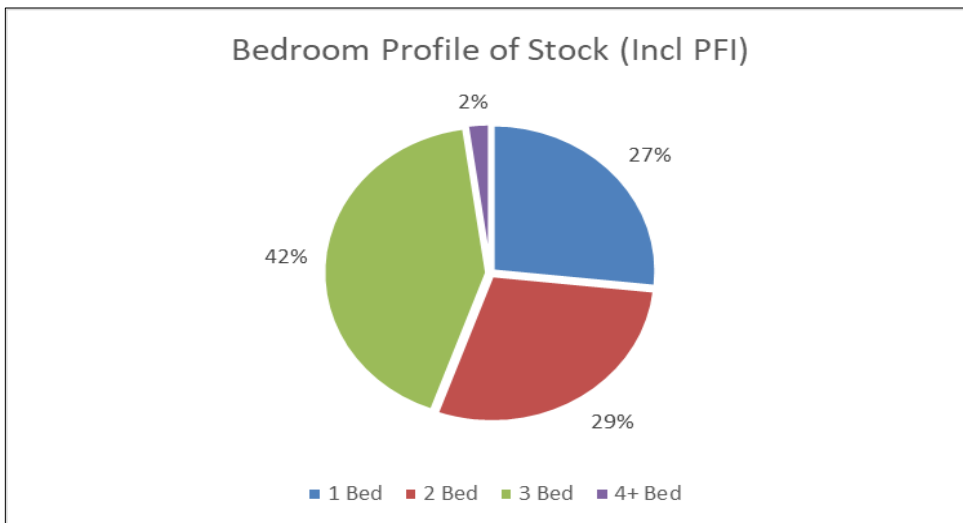
Much progress has been made in delivering the original priorities. Included in the progress made is the delivery of new affordable homes, investment in energy efficiency and other programmes, keeping homes safe and improvements to reporting repairs.

### 3.2. Stock Information

The following chart shows the split of the total number of our housing stock as at March 2022.



Our housing stock is divided over the following bedsizes:



56% of our stock consists of 1 and 2 bedroom homes, with 42% 3 bedroom and the balance of 4 or more bedrooms. This split has implications for both existing tenants but also demand from our waiting list and identified below.

It is estimated that around a third of the Council housing stock is affected by under-occupation, set against 12% being classified under the Bedroom Standard as overcrowded as demonstrated in the following table:

Age of Head of Household	Under-Occupied	Severely Under-Occupied	Over-Crowded	Severely Over-Crowded
--------------------------	----------------	-------------------------	--------------	-----------------------

<b>16 – 25</b>	228	7	74	3
<b>26 – 40</b>	1,552	82	799	92
<b>41 – 59</b>	2,434	417	1,430	488
<b>60 – 74</b>	1,813	900	350	115
<b>75+</b>	1,068	961	102	20
<b>Not stated</b>	274	100	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,369</b>	<b>2,467</b>	<b>2,755</b>	<b>718</b>
	<b>9,836</b>		<b>3,473</b>	

The average length of tenancy is currently 12.6 years.

### 3.3. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

In 2022 the Council published its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25, linking with the objectives of the Corporate Plan. The key priorities for the strategy are:

- Preventing homelessness
- Improving communication, education and engagement
- Enhancing housing options
- Improving partnership, collaboration and whole system
- Eliminating rough sleeping
- Making best use of resources

The Council will seek to deliver the right type of accommodation through its HRA in order to tackle these issues and we have detailed in section 6 how we plan to do so.

The refreshed strategy will build on achievements of the current strategy, which has:

- Reduced the use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast – despite the impact of Covid-19 and ending of the freeze on private rented sector evictions – the number in temporary accommodation has reduced by half from its peak
- Significantly increased access to the private rented sector to relieve homelessness
- Reduced rough sleeping over the last two years by supporting 100 rough sleepers, many of whom now have their own tenancies.

## 4. Current Key Risks & Opportunities

### 4.1. Government Rent Policy

The implications of the reduction in rents between 2016 and 2020 and the associated challenges on the HRA have already been referenced. Council rents have been low in comparison to the sector and were due to reach the Government's target rent levels (set under a previous rent policy) by 2015/16. This was changed significantly by Government policy of rent reduction by 1% for 4 years to end in 2019/20 and thereafter change to CPI+1% for a period, currently 5 years to cover rent increases up to and including April 2024. The impact of rent cuts and the reinvigoration of right of buy has seen our finances significantly impacted since the self-financing settlement of 2012.

From April 2020 all local authorities have to adhere to the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard. Whilst our rents are below the target rent for each property, in the majority of cases the Rent Standard controls rent increases to CPI+1% to 2025.

Recent large increases in CPI might suggest that rent increases at CPI+1% would be unsustainable for many tenants. Government is also keen to be seen to provide measures to address the cost of living crisis. Therefore, the government is currently in a period of consultation, in which a directive may cap rent increases applied to existing tenants at a range of 3% to 7% with the likely outcome being 5%. This is likely to impact the long-term viability of our business plan when compared to the inflationary cost pressures that are affecting our service expenditure.

Following the Government consultation, and taking in to account the outcome when announced, we will review our current rent policy. It is uncertain if we will see a continuation of increases allowable above CPI, a period of reconvergence and if so over what period.

The financial projections within this business plan are prudent and generated so that they are likely to comply with the Rent Standard moving forward.

### 4.2. Climate Change & Energy Efficiency

In 2020 the Council declared a climate emergency and published its Climate Change Strategy 2020-2041.

As part of this strategy the second element of our action plan, new council housing, will incorporate more renewable energy measures and more modern methods of construction. It outlines the need to improve the (and gain a better understanding of) the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) performance for our homes.

Our improvement programme traditionally focussed on window replacement utilising double-glazing and installing more modern and efficient gas boilers.

At March 2022 around 50% of our homes had an EPC rating of C or above. This has been achieved by improving the heating of our homes, installing roof and external wall insulation and the cyclical replacement of windows and doors, with a programme to improve 402 properties during this year.

In the Clean Growth Strategy, the Government has set a target for all social housing providers to attain a C rating on EPCs by 2035 or 2030 for 'fuel poor' households. Therefore, our focus, and financial planning, is designed to deliver this for the benefit of our tenants.

The move towards a full zero carbon stock will take much assessment, financial planning and dependent on methods of delivery, the future availability of sources of fundings and Government financial support.

### 4.3. Right to Buy

The right to buy (RTB) policy was introduced in the 1980s, but due to dwindling sale volumes and the then Government wishing to increase the numbers of home ownership it was reinvigorated in 2012 to incentivise tenants to purchase their homes by increasing the maximum discount that can be applied to the property's value and the time in residency to qualify.

The reinvigorated Right to Buy scheme is both a risk and an opportunity. However, under the government's 'One for One Replacement' Scheme, which the Council signed up to in 2012, we have the opportunity to retain a large proportion of right to buy receipts, which we can use to support the delivery of new affordable homes. The terms of the scheme mean that if the receipts are not spent within five years they are returned to government. The receipts can be used to fund a revised maximum of 40% of new development costs. The balance (60%) must come from other sources; e.g. borrowing and/or working with external partners. The rules should allow us to keep and then reinvest all our receipts, but affordability and land availability remain the main barrier to developing more social housing.

However, we have seen a significant rise in the number of right to buy sales with an average of 260 per year since the reinvigoration of the policy which has resulted in a net of loss homes when set against our completed and ongoing new build programme providing an average of 56 per year.

New measures have also been introduced to reduce the number of properties that we could acquire from the open market in order to replace homes that have been sold, the aim to focus on the building of new homes.

### 4.4. Welfare Reform

Welfare reform continues to be a risk to the Council and the sustainability of the HRA, as large numbers of current and future claimants struggle to manage financially, particularly currently with the impact of inflation in food, energy and living costs. There are implications for arrears, bad debts and a potential increased demand for temporary accommodation and council housing as more households lose private rented accommodation on affordability grounds.

Housing Services provide professional support to vulnerable residents by assisting them with applications supported by welfare benefit specialists who provide one to one advice. The housing service continues to provide help with applying for Discretionary Housing Payments for those with the greatest hardship and the cost of living crisis has promoted us to look at further ways in which we can help tenants on low incomes, including the 30% of households that are not in receipt of housing benefit or universal credit.

## 4.5. Demand for Housing

The Council holds a housing register of people needing social housing assessed into categories of need to assist with allocating homes, including those within the HRA. The past year has seen steady growth in applications.

As of July 2022, the register stood at around 10,500 household and of note:

- Over a third of the register (38%) is made up of existing tenants.
- Around half of the register have a degree of priority within the Allocations Policy – mostly qualifying for Band Three (such as overcrowded by 1 bedroom, under-occupying a flat by one or more bedrooms, with children in flats above the first floor, service tenants due to terminate within 6 months and prevention of homeless-where likely a full duty would be owned): (60%).
- Over half of households registered contain children aged 16 or under.

Typically, the demand is split 75% for 1 to 2 bedroom properties and the balance require 3 or more bedrooms – this differs from our current stock profile.

In 2021 the Black Country Housing Market Assessment was finalised. Based on a series of socio-economic determinants specific to Sandwell the table predicts the size of new Social Rent/Affordable Rent accommodation required in Sandwell over the next 18 years.

<b>Size and Number of New Social (or Affordable) Rented Properties required in Sandwell in the Next 18 Years</b>				
Size of Home	Base Size Profile 2020	Size Profile 2038	Change Required	% Change Required
1 Bedroom	9,988	11,044	1,056	31.7%
2 Bedroom	10,583	11,075	492	14.7%
3 Bedroom	13,920	14,377	457	13.7%
4 or More Bedrooms	947	2,279	1,330	39.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,4438</b>	<b>38,772</b>	<b>3,334</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## 4.6. Fire Safety

The Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 and thereafter the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022, with the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill now progressing through Parliament have further highlighted safety issues that remain in the affordable housing sector.

We have factored in such compliance works and building safety needs such as fire safety. This will include ongoing electrical inspections, recommended actions from fire risk assessments and fire door inspections.

The exact total funding requirements for the building safety works has yet to be determined. Further work is required to determine the additional fire safety measures following more intrusive Fire Risk Assessments. The Building Safety Act 2022 also imposes additional duties on Sandwell which have implications for the staffing structure and resourcing. We have already made some provisions within our plan to deliver safety related works including a programme for new sprinkler systems in our high-rise blocks (agreed by Cabinet in May 2022).

### 4.7. Implications of the changing regulatory landscape

As referenced earlier, in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower Block Fire the Government consulted on the regulation, standards and delivery of social housing in England.

Key proposals which will impact on the HRA include:

- New Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Proactive regulation via inspections every 4 years
- Update to the Consumer Standards
- Focus on tenant empowerment and consultation/influence

The 4, short, outcomes-based Consumer Standards currently comprise:

- **Home:** Keep homes safe, decent and in a good state of repair
- **Tenancy:** Let homes and manage tenancies in a fair, transparent and efficient way
- **Neighbourhood and Community:** Keep the wider area clean and safe, help to tackle anti-social behaviour and promote community well-being
- **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment:** Understand and respond to the diverse needs of tenants, provide choice and opportunities for involvement, resolve complaints fairly and promptly

## 5. Housing Services

### 5.1. Housing Operations

The Council's Housing Service provides the overall management for the tenants and leaseholders for the Sandwell housing stock, with the exception of 1,001 homes, managed via the PFI contract with Riverside Housing. This contract will conclude in 2031.

The range of services includes:

- Tenancy and temporary accommodation management
- Rents and service charge collection
- Allocations and lettings
- Leasehold management
- Housing options and advice
- Floating support
- Welfare Rights Advice
- Neighbourhood management
- Repairs and maintenance including disabled adaptations and energy efficiency
- Resident Engagement

Sandwell has a Cabinet member with Housing as their portfolio and the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board receives policy reports and performance information.

### 5.2. Performance

During 2021/22 following the unprecedented challenges for the Covid 19 pandemic our front line repairs teams continued to deliver core services including more than 3,000 emergency repairs per month. Key performance statistics for our repairs service are:

- 94.7% satisfaction with the completed repair
- 97.9% emergency and urgent repairs completed on time

Current demand for repairs is c9,000 per month and there is still a backlog resulting from the pandemic but also challenges with staffing internally and with our contractors.

In terms of home safety our statistics show:

- 99.7% have been checked for gas safety (where applicable)
- 76.8% of homes have a valid 5-year safety inspection report – an area that we immediately working on
- 100% of purpose built flats have an up-to date fire safety risk assessment
- 100% of blocks of flats have an up-to-date re-inspection for asbestos containing materials
- 100% of relevant sites have up-to-date water hygiene and legionella prevention risk assessments
- 99.4% of passenger lifts have a valid safety inspection report – and moved on since to 100% compliant.

### 5.3. Leaseholder Services

Housing Services are responsible for providing the leaseholder service information and collection of service charges to over 1,252 homeowners.

Some of our leaseholders are impacted on by our major programme and we have reviewed and revised out policy on recharges to leaseholders for major works.

### 5.4. Housing for Older People

This is another important service that we provide to ensure that independence, security and peace of mind for is enabled for older people, generally over the age of 60.

We also have 2 extra care schemes where on-site care is provided.

Within Sandwell, it is anticipated that the population who are aged 65 years and over will grow by 20% by 2033 and will lead to an increase in requirement for specialist housing options. According to the Black Country Housing Market Assessment (2021), to meet local demand rates in 2039, modelling identifies a requirement for 1,666 additional units of sheltered housing for older people and 54 extra-care units in Sandwell.



We are using the Disabled Facilities Grant to help keep people independent in their own home for as long as possible and our new build programme has delivered a number of bungalows to ensure accessibility for older people. This is something we aspire to do more of.

### 5.5. Anti-Social Behaviour

Everybody has a right to enjoy their life in their own way, provided they do not upset the people living near them. In 2021/22 the 3 highest categories of anti-social behaviour consisted of 96 cases of verbal abuse, 82 cases of noise nuisance and 63 cases of criminal activity.

Our anti-social behaviour (ASB) team uses a prevention and early intervention approach to resolve ASB cases as quickly as possible using the most appropriate solutions for individual cases.

Early interventions can include: verbal and written warnings, mediation, referrals to partnership agencies and good neighbour agreements. Our Community Trigger gives communities and the victims of ASB to request a review of their case, in instances of an unsatisfactory response.

### 5.6. Resident Engagement

We are rolling out a programme of proactive home visits (with the aim of at least 1 visit every 3 years), and additional visits where required.

We are developing more opportunities to obtain feedback from our residents with invitations to join our Task and Finish Groups to facilitate co-designed solutions in order to improve our services.

Our new Tenant and Leasehold Scrutiny Group will allow for our services to be reviewed and scrutinised by our residents and Tenant Auditors Team to assist in resolving complaints and provide direct feedback on the experiences of tenants.

We also value the partnership working and 'critical friend' role played by Sandwell Community Information and Participation Service (SCIPS) and provide an annual grant to help resource their activities.

We have launched our new annual tenant satisfaction survey and are currently processing the results.

In 2022 we published an annual report for tenants in order to feedback on our performance and explain how we spend the income collected through rents and service charges.

## 6. Housing Asset Management Strategy

### 6.1. Introduction and Current Status

The most recent version of the strategy covers 2017 to 2020 and sits alongside a 10 year capital programme detailing the levels of investment within our existing homes.

We will publish an updated Asset Management Strategy in the coming year which will incorporate:

## HRA Business Plan

- The results of new stock conditions survey carried out externally – as these become available.
- Details of how we will approach building safety works.
- Revised profiles for expenditure on energy efficiency.
- Revised profiling of the capital programme as required.

### 6.2. The Purpose

The updated housing Asset Management Strategy will contribute to the delivery of our business plan. It structures our ability to deliver our strategic asset management objectives of the properties we own:

1. Are appropriately maintained in accordance with an agreed standard on an agreed programme cycle;
2. Meet all regulatory standards (including building safety compliance and adherence to latest legislation) and Landlord Obligations, including the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Homes Standard;
3. Are located in well managed and attractive environments that feel secure and welcoming;
4. Are healthy and safe places to live (free from Category 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards);
5. Are viable and deliver a positive yield over the business planning period (ideally with an improving Net Present Value (NPV) and high levels of demand);
6. Meet the needs and aspirations of both current and future residents, contributing to high levels of satisfaction (with both the property and the neighbourhood);
7. Continue to improve and modernise available housing for older people;
8. Encourage green technologies and innovative solutions to the climate emergency;
9. Enable Community Development which positively supports the local community
10. Deliver an environmental and sustainability strategy which addresses the impacts of climate change, delivers the housing stock to net zero carbon by or before 2050. Using green technology and innovation to deliver these objectives.

### 6.3. Performance of our Stock

To be added.

### 6.4. Sheltered/Specialised Stock

Add details as to any differentiation of stock investment or scheme remodelling options e.g. the Granges.

### 6.5. Future Costs to be identified and included

The Council currently has a 10-year spend profile, as detailed in the section below, commencing in 2021.22. With the external review and update of future investment costs this will inevitably change the projected position within the plan.

It should be recognised that the following will need to be added to existing investment costs modelled within this business plan as to when outline programmes can be devised with accurate costings and utilising any available external funding sources which may be available:

- **Zero Carbon:** We need to develop an understanding of the technical solutions available, and their cost. We will seek funding to support delivery and take in to account the financial viability of properties. Current estimates are between £84million and £100million (exclusive of fees). Assumed that zero carbon excluded. Whilst we have identified £87million in our expenditure requirements, a much reduced provision of £2million has been included within this plan until we can be more certain as to the funding arrangements.
- **Decent Homes 2 & Building Safety.** At the same time as reviewing our own investment standard we will respond to any revised government guidance on the decent homes standard, as well as any additional costs from expected increases in consumer regulation and building safety requirements over and above the values already included within our costs identified in the section below.

## 7. Future Development & Acquisitions

### 7.1. The need for Additional Homes

A continual message within this plan is the need for additional affordable housing, set against the backdrop of losing stock through right to buy in Sandwell.

Through a number of options, we will seek to acquire and develop new homes. However, we are restricted in respect of land opportunities that we own and much of our past housing development has utilised suitable developable sites such as disused garage areas and infills.

We will continue to explore the options in respect of acquiring land and properties from the open market.

### 7.2. Existing Development Programme

Our existing programme that completes in 2024/ 25 provides :

- A total of 321 homes
- A cost of £26.266million

These will be funded by a mixture of borrowing, grant from Homes England and right to buy receipts.

### 7.3. Future Programme

Moving forward, there will be a continual evaluation for the acquisition of homes from the open market. However, we will be constrained in respect of the use of right to buy receipts, given that new rules limit acquisitions to 20 per year plus a percentage of the new build figure.

We will continue to seek land opportunities in order to continue our own development and to supplement the affordable homes that are being delivered by our partner registered providers.

For the purposes of the plan we have continued to use the £10million per annum identified within the 2021/22 capital programme, funded, in part (25%), by right to buy receipts. This provision would be used to part fund new build schemes and is dependent on land availability, scheme viability and external funding being available.

## 8. HRA Financial Projections

### 8.1. How HRA finances have evolved over the last 10 years

The HRA is a ring-fenced account relating to the council's landlord function. The self-financing system introduced in 2012 for the HRA removed the uncertainty caused by the old annual subsidy announcements and has allowed for better longer term financial planning for the ring-fenced account. The ability for tenants to exercise their right to buy was reinvigorated allowing discounted rates with a result of a higher number of sales that has an adverse impact on the finances for the HRA.

The core constituents of the account are rent income; both capital and revenue maintenance of the housing stock; management costs; and debt repayments. As the account has been carrying a fairly high balance, the Council has also been making revenue contributions (i.e. from rent income directly) to fund capital expenditure for identified projects as well.

### 8.2. Use of a financial model

We have maintained an HRA business plan model for a number of years which has assisted us with both short and long-term planning but within the restriction of the debt cap imposed in conjunction with the 2012 self-financing system which offered very little in the way of borrowing headroom.

We have engaged Savills to support us with the modelling, bringing their experience of working with a large number of authorities and sense checking our assumptions.

The model provided the basis for the financial elements of this business plan and is launched from April 2022 with the assumptions behind the forecasts contained in Appendix 9.1.

### 8.3. Treasury Management

HRA debt is measured by the HRA Capital Financing Requirement (HRACFR) and was £484.886million in April 2022. In order to finance the debt, the Council has a number of loans that have been taken out over a series of years. Some of these loans have been directly attributed to the HRA, totalling £336.868million, which results in a balance of £148.018million which is "internally financed" from the Councils General Fund.

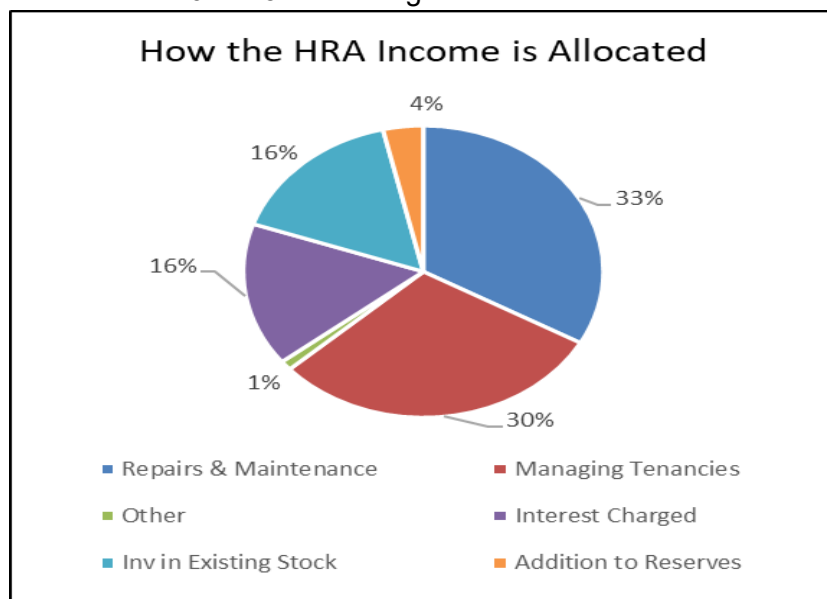
The Council borrows and invests in accordance with its Treasury Management Strategy and plans any consideration of borrowing closely through the financial strategy, and ten-year corporate Capital Programme.

The Council is required to set its own prudential borrowing framework with limits on borrowing which could be based on a series of indicators, as used by other authorities and the Registered Provider sector, to ensure existing and forecast borrowing is both affordable, appropriate and allows a degree of contingency to address unforeseen factors.

These levels of new prudential limits have not been factored into our modelling and plan as these are yet to be established. We need to establish what it is affordable in terms of levels of borrowing but also what additional costs, be it new development, investment in energy efficiency, increased levels of improvements to existing properties or combination of them all could be delivered.

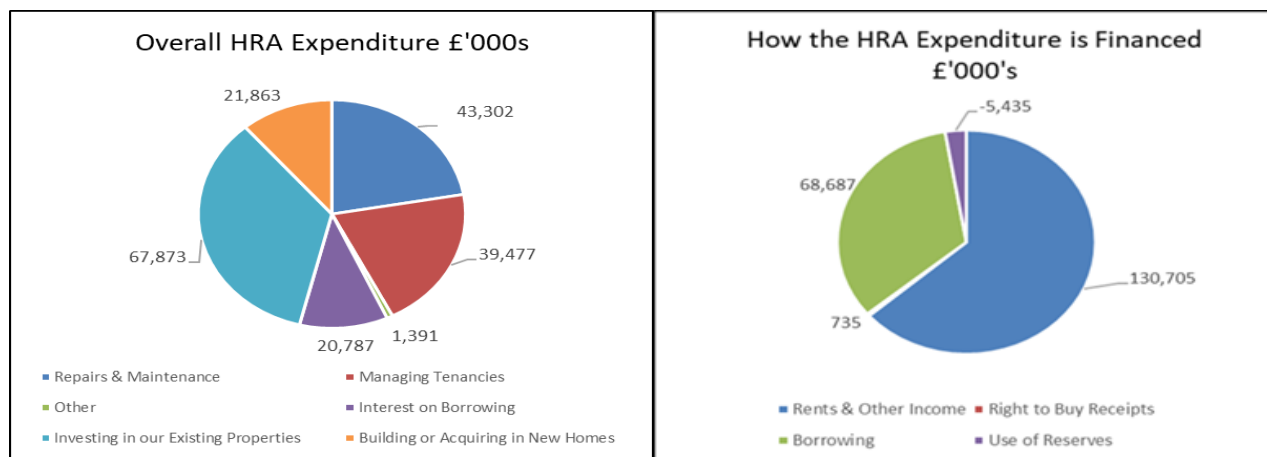
### 8.4. How the rent is spent

The following chart shows how our rental income, service charges and other income is spent based on our forecast 2022.23 HRA budget:



This chart shows that the HRA makes a 4% surplus from its rents which is either used to finance additional capital works or retained to be utilised in future years.

In terms of our overall HRA expenditure, both capital and revenue, we have demonstrated below how this is split, but also financed.



## 8.5. Long-term capital expenditure forecasts

As previously stated the HRA has a 10-year capital programme has been identified for the next 10 years from 2021.22 (excluding new build development). The following base costs have been factored into the draft plan:

£'m	2022.23	2023.24	2024.25	2025.26	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	2030.31
High-Rise Flats	28.026	20.368	11.545	7.841	5.869	10.100	6.000	6.000	6.000
Disabled Adaptations	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000
Boiler Replacements	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000
Refurbishments	15.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	20.000
Sprinklers	7.500	7.500							
Composite Doors	10.000	5.000							
CCTV Expansions	0.750	0.500							
CO2 & Smoke Detectors	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270					
ECO Projects	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Street Lighting	2.000								
Adjustments	-2.673								
<b>Total</b>	<b>67.873</b>	<b>60.638</b>	<b>38.815</b>	<b>35.111</b>	<b>32.869</b>	<b>37.100</b>	<b>33.000</b>	<b>33.000</b>	<b>33.000</b>

The above results in total expenditure of £371.406million over the next 9 years. We have applied inflation from year 2023.24 to reflect anticipated increases in costs which results in revised expenditure over the period of £433.758million.

Further to this is the inclusion of £106.266million provisional expenditure for this period for homes through new build or acquisition.

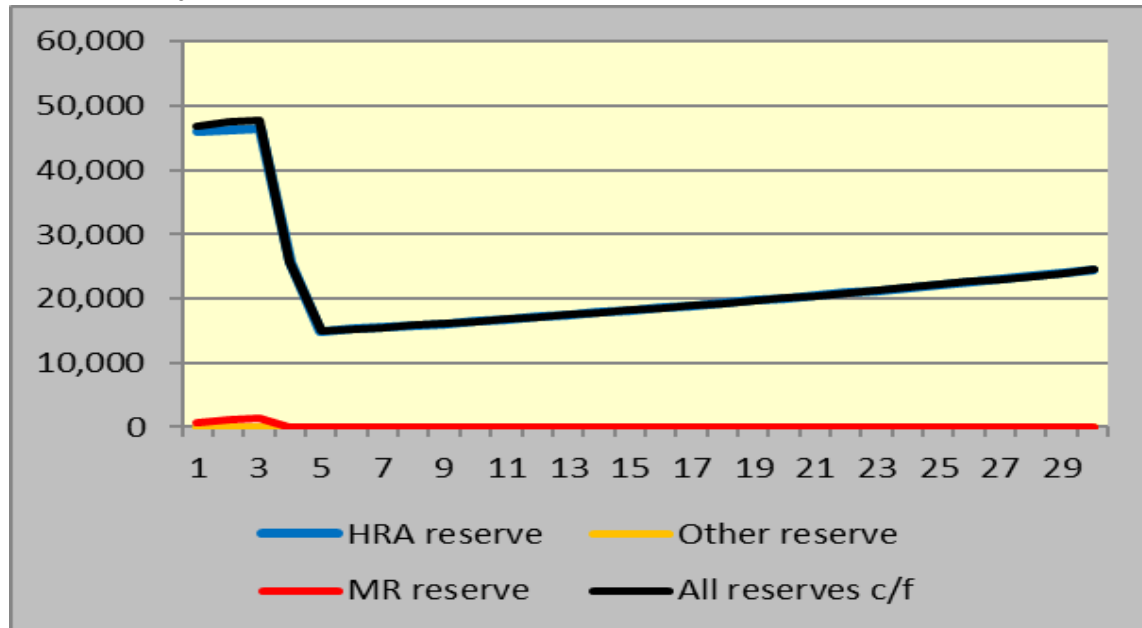
In order to form an indicative view of potential capital expenditure for the following 21 years of investment in the existing stock we have applied similar levels of expenditure for the balance of the plan, whilst seeking to provide an average investment of c£37,000 per property over the 30-year period.

It is important to note that both the existing 9 year capital programme and indicative expenditure will require updating following the results of stock condition surveys, carried out externally, that will inform actual requirements.

**8.6. Long-term expenditure forecasts**

The following graphs are excerpts from our HRA business plan model for both revenue and capital.

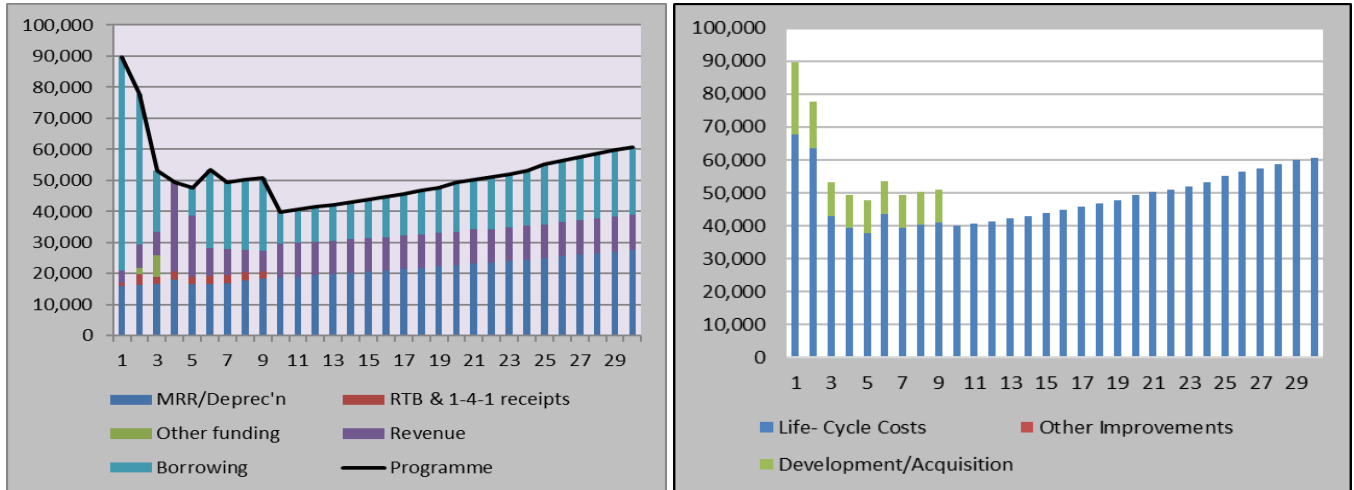
Revenue Projections



*\*Note: The HRA reserve is the revenue reserve available to fund both revenue expenditure but also contribute towards capital expenditure. The MR reserve is the Major Repairs Reserve which can only be used to fund capital expenditure or facilitate debt repayment.*

The black line demonstrates the combined balances of the HRA and Major Repairs Reserve over the duration of 30 years. It is planned to use some of the current high level of reserves on specific projects within the capital programme gradually over the next 5 years. From this point the HRA will retain a minimum balance of c£13million, with inflation applied, ensuring that surpluses above this are invested in capital expenditure as below.

**8.7. Long-term expenditure forecasts**

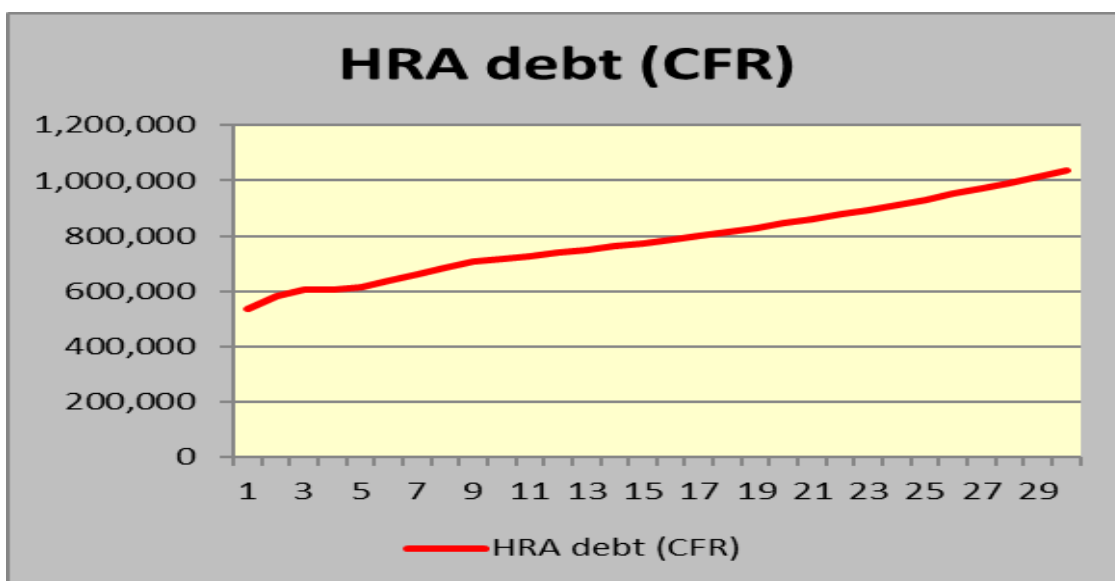


The left hand graph demonstrates the total projected capital expenditure by way of the horizontal black line and supplemented by how it is financed within the HRA through reserves, other forms of funding and borrowing.

The right hand graph differentiates the overall spending between new build and on existing stock.

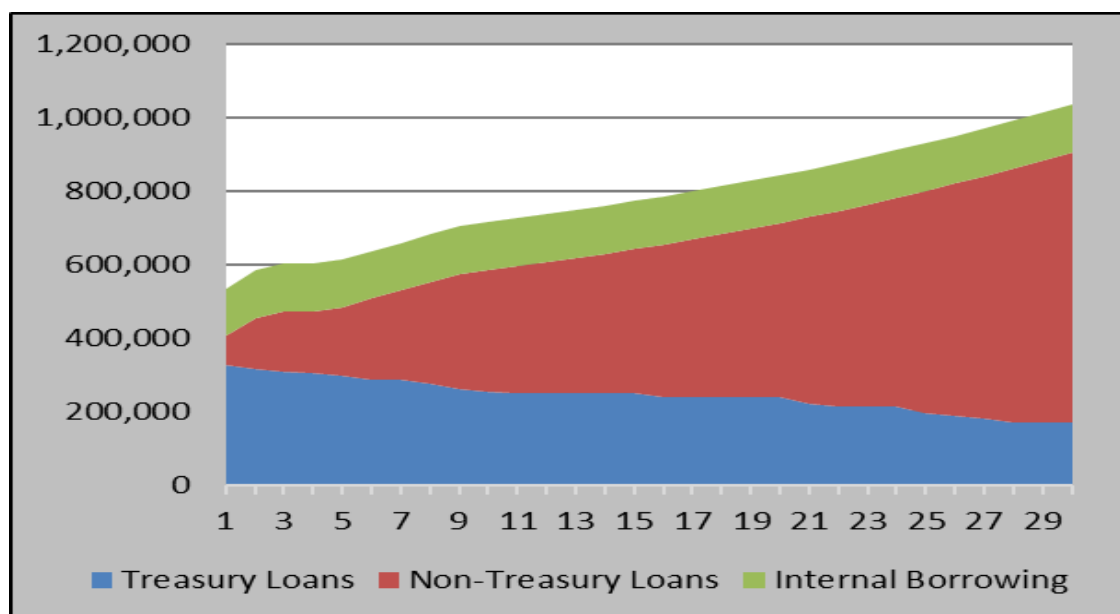
**8.8. Long-Term financing position & capacity**

The following graph shows the borrowing position for the HRA over the next 30 years, whilst fully funding the above provisional capital expenditure.





The provisional levels of capital expenditure modelled require a steady stream of borrowing despite surpluses within the HRA being made available to fund these works. It is estimated that total borrowing could reach £1.036billion after 30 years, which is deemed to be sustainable providing net rent income increases to allow levels of debt to be covered.



The initial loan portfolio of existing facilities of £336.868million reduces to £170.774million through various maturity dates. However, due to the need for continual borrowing the existing loans require refinancing. The current level of “internal borrowing” remains static for the period of the plan.

### 8.9. Impact of opportunities

Given the current borrowing forecast and that prudential limits are yet to be agreed, there is no confirmed capacity for borrowing, although the 10-year capital programme makes assumptions as to levels of borrowing

As previously stated we are undertaking a stock condition survey to determine the levels of expenditure that that should be modelled to provide a sounder base on which to base future financial planning decisions.

Therefore, we will continually review our investment strategy both for our existing stock, development and acquisition opportunities to ensure that we maximise on our delivery through ensuring a thorough prioritisation of our investment strategy. As part of this we will seek all opportunities for external funding to fund works to ensure our stock meets zero carbon and other alternative funding strategies.

### 8.10. Financial impact of key risks

We have modelled the impacts to the plan when considering both adverse but also advantageous scenarios that in some instances will be outside of the control of Sandwell.

Scenario	HRA Bal at Year 30 £'m	Debt at Year 30 £m
<b>Base</b>	<b>24.464</b>	<b>1,035.533</b>
Rents Increase at 2% (in place of 5% Years 2 & 3)	(16.885)	1,315.383
Repairs and Management Inflation 5% Years 2 & 3)	24.464	829.201
Rents CPI + 0.5% for 5 Years (Years 3-8)	37.457	681.955
Repairs +5% Year 3	24.464	1,183.110
Capital Exp +5% Year 3	24.464	1,307.619
Voids & Bad Debts +1% each	14.912	1,219,861
Interest Rate +1% new borrowing	0.984	1,228,469
CPI -0.5%	21.221	1,058.976
CPI +1%	32.446	988.794

The plan is sensitive to a wide range of impacts.

Any divergence from the rent increases assumed as the basis for this business plan (5% in April 2023 & 2024 respectively) show that future HRA balances are at severe risk of being in deficit, whilst substantially increases debt, due to the current inability to catch up to relevant levels.

These sensitivities also demonstrate that if management and repair cost inflation in 2023.24 and 2024.25 could match rent increases (rather than increasing above) then it significantly reduces future borrowing requirements.

## 9. Appendices

### 9.1. Financial Business Plan assumptions

Description	Short to Medium term	Long term (30 years)
Financing	Opening debt at £484.886m– Planned Borrowing £238.603m (9 Years)	Future Borrowing - £329.801m – No prudential borrowing rules approved
Property changes over the plan	28,212 properties 1/4/2022 with 250 RTB per annum (reducing by 5% per annum)	Reducing per 5% per annum – Total RTBs 3,927 (14% of stock)
Economic – inflation and interest rates	5% core (CPI) inflation years 2 & 3, then CPI 2%, interest rates start at 3.5% for new borrowing, rising to 4.25% Internal Borrowing at 2.5%	2% core inflation, interest rates stable at 4.25% long term except for existing borrowing and internal borrowing at 2.5%
Rents and Service Charge Inflation	Capped at 5% for 2023.24 and 2024.25 then CPI only	CPI only
Arrears and bad debts	2.0% of rents voids, 0.64% Bad Debts	2.0% of rents voids, 0.64% Bad Debts
Management costs	2022/2023 provisional budget rising at CPI + 2% (years 2 & 3) then CPI	Inflation long term at CPI
Repairs costs	2022/2023 provisional budget rising at CPI + 2% (years 2 & 3) then CPI	Inflation long term at CPI – adjusted for stock numbers
Capital profile	As per existing capital programme to year 9 – CPI inflation	Estimated values – adjusted for stock numbers – inflated by CPI

Use of capital resources (RTB receipts etc) and explanation for basis	RTB receipts to General Fund with exception of new build 1-4-1 receipts	RTB receipts to General Fund
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*Note: Current actual CPI rates are forecast at 9.9% for 2022 Q3 and 9.5% 2023 Q3, according to the August 2022 Monetary Policy Committee report, to which rent inflation is based. The CPI inflation factors used within the model for 2023.24 and 2024.25 have been set at 5%, the same level as forecast rent increases, with further adjustments to management and maintenance costs to bring these closer to forecast CPI rates. The CPI forecasts were made prior to Government announcements in terms of energy price capping and will be subject to change.*

# HRA Business Plan



## 9.2. Financial Business Forecasts

Sandwell MBC HRA Business Plan 2022/23+  
Base Version  
HRA and Capital Summary

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
Financial Year	2022.23	2023.24	2024.25	2025.26	2026.27	2027.28	2028.29	2029.30	2030.31	2031.32	2032.33	2033.34	2034.35	2035.36	2036.37	
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	
<b>HRA 30 YEAR SUMMARY</b>																
Dwelling rents	121,895	127,728	134,508	137,509	139,902	142,374	144,924	147,554	150,265	153,057	155,614	158,243	160,944	163,717	166,564	
Non-dwelling rents	200	210	221	225	229	234	239	243	248	253	258	264	269	274	280	
Service charge income	2,814	2,954	3,102	3,164	3,227	3,292	3,358	3,425	3,493	3,563	3,634	3,707	3,781	3,857	3,934	
Other income and contributions	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	5,713	
<b>Total income</b>	<b>130,622</b>	<b>136,605</b>	<b>143,544</b>	<b>146,611</b>	<b>149,072</b>	<b>151,613</b>	<b>154,233</b>	<b>156,935</b>	<b>159,719</b>	<b>156,873</b>	<b>159,507</b>	<b>162,214</b>	<b>164,994</b>	<b>167,848</b>	<b>170,777</b>	
Repairs & maintenance	43,302	46,212	49,324	50,192	51,081	51,991	52,922	53,876	54,852	56,801	57,842	58,907	59,995	61,109	62,247	
Management (incl RRT)	40,050	42,668	45,460	46,370	47,297	48,243	49,208	50,192	51,196	52,238	53,314	54,410	55,528	56,668	57,842	
Bad debts	799	837	879	898	913	929	945	962	979	997	1,013	1,030	1,048	1,066	1,085	
Depreciation	16,876	16,876	16,689	16,585	16,487	16,723	16,968	17,908	18,267	18,632	19,005	19,385	19,772	20,168	20,571	
Debt management	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>101,045</b>	<b>106,593</b>	<b>112,353</b>	<b>114,044</b>	<b>115,777</b>	<b>117,885</b>	<b>120,043</b>	<b>122,938</b>	<b>125,293</b>	<b>117,028</b>	<b>119,270</b>	<b>121,560</b>	<b>123,898</b>	<b>126,287</b>	<b>128,726</b>	
<b>Net income from services</b>	<b>29,577</b>	<b>30,012</b>	<b>31,191</b>	<b>32,567</b>	<b>33,295</b>	<b>33,728</b>	<b>34,191</b>	<b>33,997</b>	<b>34,426</b>	<b>39,845</b>	<b>40,237</b>	<b>40,654</b>	<b>41,095</b>	<b>41,561</b>	<b>42,052</b>	
Interest payable	-20,787	-22,446	-23,969	-24,742	-24,544	-24,713	-25,629	-26,552	-27,566	-28,553	-29,555	-29,553	-30,027	-30,520	-31,031	
Interest income	83	235	358	353	256	149	152	155	161	165	168	171	175	178		
<b>Net income/expenditure before appropriations</b>	<b>8,873</b>	<b>7,801</b>	<b>7,580</b>	<b>8,178</b>	<b>9,007</b>	<b>9,164</b>	<b>8,714</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>7,019</b>	<b>11,453</b>	<b>11,347</b>	<b>11,269</b>	<b>11,240</b>	<b>11,216</b>	<b>11,199</b>	
Set aside for debt repayment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Revenue contributions to capital	-4,154	-7,500	-7,500	-28,925	-19,733	-8,866	-8,410	-7,290	-6,702	-11,131	-11,018	-10,934	-10,897	-10,866	-10,843	
<b>Net HRA Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>4,719</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-20,747</b>	<b>-10,726</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>356</b>	
<b>HRA Balance brought forward</b>	<b>41,285</b>	<b>46,004</b>	<b>46,305</b>	<b>46,385</b>	<b>25,637</b>	<b>14,912</b>	<b>15,210</b>	<b>15,514</b>	<b>15,824</b>	<b>16,141</b>	<b>16,464</b>	<b>16,793</b>	<b>17,129</b>	<b>17,471</b>	<b>17,821</b>	
HRA surplus/(deficit)	4,719	301	80	-20,747	-10,726	298	304	310	316	323	329	336	343	349	356	
<b>HRA Balance carried forward</b>	<b>46,004</b>	<b>46,305</b>	<b>46,385</b>	<b>25,637</b>	<b>14,912</b>	<b>15,210</b>	<b>15,514</b>	<b>15,824</b>	<b>16,141</b>	<b>16,464</b>	<b>16,793</b>	<b>17,129</b>	<b>17,471</b>	<b>17,821</b>	<b>18,177</b>	
<b>HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>																
Stock capital investment	67,873	63,670	42,794	39,484	37,702	43,406	39,382	40,169	40,973	39,873	40,620	41,426	42,242	43,010	43,796	
Development/acquisition	21,863	14,138	10,265	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Capital programme</b>	<b>89,736</b>	<b>77,808</b>	<b>53,059</b>	<b>49,484</b>	<b>47,702</b>	<b>53,406</b>	<b>49,382</b>	<b>50,169</b>	<b>50,973</b>	<b>39,873</b>	<b>40,620</b>	<b>41,426</b>	<b>42,242</b>	<b>43,010</b>	<b>43,796</b>	
<b>Scheduled Loan Repayment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<i>Financed by...</i>																
Major Repairs Reserve	-16,160	-16,321	-16,485	-18,059	-16,487	-16,723	-16,968	-17,908	-18,267	-18,632	-19,005	-19,385	-19,772	-20,168	-20,571	
1-4-1 receipts	-735	-3,377	-2,357	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other receipts and grants	0	-2,190	-7,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Revenue contributions	-4,154	-7,500	-7,500	-28,925	-19,733	-8,866	-8,410	-7,290	-6,702	-11,131	-11,018	-10,934	-10,897	-10,866	-10,843	
HRA borrowing	-68,687	-48,420	-19,717	0	-8,982	-25,318	-21,504	-22,471	-23,504	-10,110	-10,598	-11,108	-11,572	-11,976	-12,383	
<b>Capital financing</b>	<b>-89,736</b>	<b>-77,808</b>	<b>-53,059</b>	<b>-49,484</b>	<b>-47,702</b>	<b>-53,406</b>	<b>-49,382</b>	<b>-50,169</b>	<b>-50,973</b>	<b>-39,873</b>	<b>-40,620</b>	<b>-41,426</b>	<b>-42,242</b>	<b>-43,010</b>	<b>-43,796</b>	
<b>Net balance on capital programme</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Major Repairs Reserve b/fwd</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,474</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
HRA depreciation (net)	16,876	16,876	16,689	16,585	16,487	16,723	16,968	17,908	18,267	18,632	19,005	19,385	19,772	20,168	20,571	
Financing for capital programme	-16,160	-16,321	-16,485	-18,059	-16,487	-16,723	-16,968	-17,908	-18,267	-18,632	-19,005	-19,385	-19,772	-20,168	-20,571	
Debt Repayment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Major Repairs Reserve c/fwd</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>1,270</b>	<b>1,474</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

## HRA Business Plan



Sandwell MBC HRA Business Plan 2022/23+  
Base Version  
HRA and Capital Summary

Year Financial Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
	2037_38	2038_39	2039_40	2040_41	2041_42	2042_43	2043_44	2044_45	2045_46	2046_47	2047_48	2048_49	2049_50	2050_51	2051_52	
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's	
<b>HRA 30 YEAR SUMMARY</b>																
Dwelling rents	169,485	172,481	175,554	178,704	181,933	185,240	188,628	192,097	195,649	199,285	203,006	206,813	210,708	214,692	218,767	
Non-dwelling rents	285	291	297	303	309	315	321	328	334	341	348	355	362	369	376	
Service charge income	4,013	4,093	4,175	4,258	4,343	4,430	4,519	4,609	4,701	4,795	4,891	4,989	5,089	5,191	5,295	
Other income and contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total income</b>	<b>173,783</b>	<b>176,865</b>	<b>180,026</b>	<b>183,265</b>	<b>186,585</b>	<b>189,985</b>	<b>193,468</b>	<b>197,034</b>	<b>200,685</b>	<b>204,421</b>	<b>208,245</b>	<b>212,157</b>	<b>216,159</b>	<b>220,252</b>	<b>224,438</b>	
Repairs & maintenance	63,410	64,599	65,815	67,057	68,327	69,624	70,949	72,302	73,685	75,097	76,540	78,013	79,518	81,054	82,623	
Management (incl RRT)	45,720	46,634	47,567	48,518	49,489	50,478	51,488	52,518	53,568	54,639	55,732	56,847	57,984	59,143	60,326	
Bad debts	1,104	1,123	1,143	1,164	1,185	1,206	1,228	1,251	1,274	1,298	1,322	1,347	1,372	1,398	1,425	
Depreciation	20,983	21,402	21,830	22,267	22,712	23,166	23,630	24,102	24,584	25,076	25,578	26,089	26,611	27,143	27,686	
Debt management	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>131,216</b>	<b>133,759</b>	<b>136,355</b>	<b>139,006</b>	<b>141,712</b>	<b>144,475</b>	<b>147,295</b>	<b>150,173</b>	<b>153,112</b>	<b>156,111</b>	<b>159,172</b>	<b>162,296</b>	<b>165,485</b>	<b>168,739</b>	<b>172,060</b>	
<b>Net income from services</b>	<b>42,566</b>	<b>43,106</b>	<b>43,670</b>	<b>44,259</b>	<b>44,873</b>	<b>45,510</b>	<b>46,173</b>	<b>46,861</b>	<b>47,573</b>	<b>48,311</b>	<b>49,073</b>	<b>49,861</b>	<b>50,674</b>	<b>51,513</b>	<b>52,378</b>	
Interest payable	-31,558	-32,087	-32,662	-33,261	-33,884	-34,519	-35,165	-35,876	-36,609	-37,299	-37,904	-38,632	-39,345	-40,041	-40,955	
Interest income	182	185	189	193	197	201	205	209	213	217	222	226	231	235	240	
<b>Net income/expenditure before appropriations</b>	<b>11,190</b>	<b>11,204</b>	<b>11,198</b>	<b>11,191</b>	<b>11,186</b>	<b>11,552</b>	<b>11,213</b>	<b>11,194</b>	<b>11,178</b>	<b>11,228</b>	<b>11,391</b>	<b>11,455</b>	<b>11,559</b>	<b>11,707</b>	<b>11,663</b>	
Set aside for debt repayment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Revenue contributions to capital	-10,827	-10,833	-10,819	-10,806	-10,792	-11,151	-10,804	-10,776	-10,752	-10,794	-10,948	-11,003	-11,098	-11,237	-11,183	
<b>Net HRA Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>480</b>	
<b>HRA Balance brought forward</b>	<b>18,177</b>	<b>18,541</b>	<b>18,911</b>	<b>19,290</b>	<b>19,675</b>	<b>20,069</b>	<b>20,470</b>	<b>20,880</b>	<b>21,297</b>	<b>21,723</b>	<b>22,158</b>	<b>22,601</b>	<b>23,053</b>	<b>23,514</b>	<b>23,984</b>	
HRA surplus/(deficit)	364	371	378	386	394	401	409	418	426	434	443	452	461	470	480	
<b>HRA Balance carried forward</b>	<b>18,541</b>	<b>18,911</b>	<b>19,290</b>	<b>19,675</b>	<b>20,069</b>	<b>20,470</b>	<b>20,880</b>	<b>21,297</b>	<b>21,723</b>	<b>22,158</b>	<b>22,601</b>	<b>23,053</b>	<b>23,514</b>	<b>23,984</b>	<b>24,464</b>	
<b>HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>																
Stock capital investment	44,702	45,693	46,691	47,608	49,290	50,204	51,121	52,064	53,063	55,231	56,337	57,521	58,718	59,849	60,644	
Development/acquisition	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Capital programme</b>	<b>44,702</b>	<b>45,693</b>	<b>46,691</b>	<b>47,608</b>	<b>49,290</b>	<b>50,204</b>	<b>51,121</b>	<b>52,064</b>	<b>53,063</b>	<b>55,231</b>	<b>56,337</b>	<b>57,521</b>	<b>58,718</b>	<b>59,849</b>	<b>60,644</b>	
Scheduled Loan Repayment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Financed by...</i>																
Major Repairs Reserve	-20,983	-21,402	-21,830	-22,267	-22,712	-23,166	-23,630	-24,102	-24,584	-25,076	-25,578	-26,089	-26,611	-27,143	-27,686	
1-4-1 receipts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other receipts and grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Revenue contributions	-10,827	-10,833	-10,819	-10,806	-10,792	-11,151	-10,804	-10,776	-10,752	-10,794	-10,948	-11,003	-11,098	-11,237	-11,183	
HRA borrowing	-12,893	-13,458	-14,042	-14,536	-15,786	-15,887	-16,687	-17,186	-17,726	-19,360	-19,811	-20,430	-21,008	-21,469	-21,774	
<b>Capital financing</b>	<b>-44,702</b>	<b>-45,693</b>	<b>-46,691</b>	<b>-47,608</b>	<b>-49,290</b>	<b>-50,204</b>	<b>-51,121</b>	<b>-52,064</b>	<b>-53,063</b>	<b>-55,231</b>	<b>-56,337</b>	<b>-57,521</b>	<b>-58,718</b>	<b>-59,849</b>	<b>-60,644</b>	
<b>Net balance on capital programme</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Major Repairs Reserve b/fwd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
HRA depreciation (net)	20,983	21,402	21,830	22,267	22,712	23,166	23,630	24,102	24,584	25,076	25,578	26,089	26,611	27,143	27,686	
Financing for capital programme	-20,983	-21,402	-21,830	-22,267	-22,712	-23,166	-23,630	-24,102	-24,584	-25,076	-25,578	-26,089	-26,611	-27,143	-27,686	
Debt Repayment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<b>Major Repairs Reserve c/fwd</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

## Report to Safer and Active Communities Committee

1st November 2022

<b>Subject:</b>	Empty Property Strategy 2023-2028
<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> Richard Hawkins Citizen & Consumer Protection (Accommodation) Team Manger <a href="mailto:Richard_Hawkings@sandwell.gov.uk">Richard_Hawkings@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To receive and comment on the Draft Empty Property Strategy 2023 - 2028, including the introduction of empty property loans and the use of Planning Act enforcement powers by the Empty Property Officer







### 2 Background

- 2.1 Our Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) identified the private sector housing represents 74% of the overall stock within Sandwell. The HNA further identified overall increasing demand for accommodation within the Borough with a 51% shortfall annually on the number of homes needed to meet need.
- 2.2 Empty and unmanaged homes can blight communities whilst also removing good quality homes from the market. Taking positive actions to reduce the number of empty privately owned properties is a key priority which will support the objective of delivering quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods.



- 2.3 Sandwell has had some success in bringing private empty properties back into use through advice and persuasion as well as some limited enforcement. However, there are a considerable number of empty property owners who are unreceptive to the impact they are causing and are not addressing long-standing dilapidated properties that have remained empty for many years and that are causing a disproportionately negative impact in communities in the borough.
- 2.4 The intended purpose of this strategy is to develop more pro-active solutions to empty properties that are negatively impacting on communities across our borough and to utilise a wasted resource to meet housing need.

### 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
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Empty private sector homes are a wasted resource that when brought back into use will contribute to addressing housing need</li> </ul>
	A strong and inclusive economy
	A connected and accessible Sandwell

### 3 Aims and Objectives of the Draft Empty Homes Strategy

- 3.1 The aim of the strategy is to bring a minimum of 200 empty homes back into use from the private sector over a period of 5 years.
- 3.2 It is important that the council focuses its resources on bringing back the right types of empty housing. Priority will be given to family homes as they are currently viewed as most in demand, and where needs change, so will the focus to seek properties to fit the ever-changing needs of the borough.



## 4 Utilising assistance and enforcement

### Off the Starting Block Loans

- 4.1 The council plans to develop a loan scheme offering some empty home owners financial assistance that will encourage and support renovations to bring properties back into use. The loans will be repayable upon sale or occupation.
- 4.2 The loans will be limited and subject to council discretion on a case-by-case basis against the merits of each individual situation. Loans will be subject to a legally binding agreement to bring the property back into use.
- 4.3 Loans will be aimed at empty owners who perhaps inherited a poorly maintained property and do not have the means to manage a second home. They will be able to enter an agreement with the council to carry out works and sell or let their property when agreed works are completed. Often buyers cannot get a mortgage on dilapidated properties, restricting who the owner can sell to.
- 4.4 The development of the loan scheme will be part of the wider development of a Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy. The development of the empty homes element of the policy as well as the development of the terms and conditions will form part of the early work of the newly created Empty Property Officer post.
- 4.5 The budget for loans over the five years has been set at £750,000 and will be financed from unallocated capital funds for home improvements held within Housing Directorate budgets.

### Enforcement Powers

- 4.6 Where encouragement and assistance fail, robust and wide-reaching enforcement powers will be used as well as housing standards enforcement and the use of wide-ranging enforcement powers.



- 4.7 Traditional empty property enforcement powers will be used along with new approaches utilising different powers to focus on empty properties with disrepair and untidy appearances as well as broader powers to help bring properties back into use.
- 4.8 The Empty Property Officer will have powers to make owners carry out repairs to remove hazards from empty properties to ensure they are managed and safe to live in. Civil Penalty powers will be used to charge owners for non-compliance with such notices. Revenue from such penalties will be recycled back into housing standards work.
- 4.9 Planning enforcement powers will be shared between the Empty Property Officer and Planning Enforcement Team to enable Empty Property Officers to take their own direct enforcement action against untidy and overgrown empty dwellings.

## 5 Next Steps:

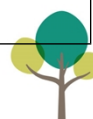
- 5.1 The draft strategy will be presented to Cabinet for approval in December 2022 with an implementation date of April 2023.

## 6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 We could choose not to have an empty homes strategy and / or continue to provide a reactive service to complaints about empty properties in addition to applying increased council tax charges.

## 7. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Financial, staffing, land/building implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposals in the strategy will be delivered within existing resources with an expectation of increased income through civil penalties</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>There is no legal requirement to have an empty homes strategy. The enabling legislation to implement the strategy is set out in the draft strategy.</li> </ul>



<b>Risk:</b>	<p>Risk implications, including any mitigating measures planned/taken, health and safety, insurance implications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial risks associated with issuing loans will be mitigated by a review of the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2002.</li> </ul>
<b>Equality:</b>	<p>Implications for equality (all aspects and characteristics) including how meeting Equality Duty, equality impact assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement action will be monitored to ensure there are no unintended consequences against any protected characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>Implications of the proposals on health and wellbeing of our communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empty properties are a blight on our neighbourhood, which can have detrimental impact on communities</li> </ul>
<b>Social Value</b>	<p>Implications for social value and how the proposals are meeting this (for e.g. employment of local traders, young people)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no social value impact arising from this report</li> </ul>

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1. Draft Empty Property Strategy 2023 - 2028

## 9. Background Papers



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# Empty Homes Strategy 2023 – 2028

DRAFT

~ Review/Revision 7 ~ 11 October 2022





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## 1. Introduction



### 1.1 The nature and extent of the problem

1.11 Empty properties are a waste of scarce resources, whilst also contributing to urban decline. They are linked with, and contribute to, a range of associated problems such as:

- A reduction in capital value of the empty property, and neighbouring properties,
- An increased rate of deterioration and decline in the fabric of the building,
- An increased vulnerability to vandalism, squatting and anti-social behaviour, and Neighbourhood blight.

1.12 Empty properties are therefore directly detrimental to both public and individual finances, and to the day-to-day conditions in the neighbourhoods in which we live. In bringing empty properties back into use there are benefits to:

- Individuals - prospective purchasers and tenants - by increasing housing availability and choice – addressing housing need and preventing homelessness by making more housing available.
- The community, by improving the local environment.
- Owners and landlords, by improving the condition of the property and turning it into a productive asset.

### 1.2 The National Picture

1.21 There are currently around 124,000 empty dwellings receiving an empty dwelling premium or reduced council tax rate in England, compared to 122,000 in 2020 [1]. This is a year on year increase following a decline in empty properties of this type from 2017 – 2019 [1].

1.22 The number of empties has reduced dramatically since 2013, when councils were given powers to charge a 50% premium on Council Tax bills. The vast majority of councils currently apply a 50% premium on long-term empty homes [2].





### 1.3 The Local Picture



1.31 There are currently 3359 known long-term privately owned empty properties in Sandwell as of March 2022.

1.32 Sandwell has had success in bringing many empty properties back into use through advice and persuasion. However; there are a considerable number of empty property owners who are unreceptive to this that have been empty for many years and that are in a dilapidated condition where the advice and persuasion approach has failed.

1.33 The intended purpose of this strategy is to develop more pro-active solutions to empty properties across our borough to utilise a wasted resource and reduce the impact of empty homes on surrounding communities.

#### Definition of a long-term empty property

1.34 An empty property that has been empty for six months or longer is considered to be a long-term empty. Any property that has been empty for two years or longer may be subject to automatic sanctions, such as elevated council tax charges.



## 2 Aims and Objectives of the Empty Property Strategy

### The '200 homes' plan



### Bringing 200 family homes back into use in 5 years

2.1 The Council has identified empty properties as one of its key priority areas in relation to Private Rented and Owner-Occupied housing. The priority to be given to Empty Properties is reflected in the following performance indicators that have been established by the government as a means of assessing and bench marking the progress made by council's in dealing with empty homes.

2.2 Over the course of the strategy the council intends to bring back into use 200 long-term empty domestic properties that can be used for housing families in Sandwell.

2.3 As part of our monitoring of the homes brought back into use, the number of bed spaces from these homes will also be counted.

<b>Year 1 – 20 homes brought back into use.</b>
<b>Year 2 – 30 homes brought back into use.</b>
<b>Year 3 – 50 homes brought back into use.</b>
<b>Year 4 – 50 homes brought back into use.</b>
<b>Year 5 – 50 homes brought back into use.</b>



### Achieving the '200 homes' plan

Identified Need	Action	Outcomes
<b>Ensuring resources are in place to achieve targets.</b>	Recruitment of an Empty Property Officer, creation of new strategy and financing for loans and enforcement action made available.	A dedicated officer who can engage with empty property owners, assess cases to plan and action the most appropriate interventions.
<b>Finding suitable long-term empty homes.</b>  Identification the empty homes that are right for intervention.	Work with council tax records, on site staff and members of the public reporting empty homes. Identify cases from records and cases from previous intervention.	A database of suitable long-term empty homes that can be effectively targeted to bring back into use.
<b>Making empty homes available for families in Sandwell.</b>  Ensuring a robust strategy to bring empty homes back into use.	Ongoing case work to ensure KPIs are achieved utilising encouragement and enforcement strategies.	Targets  22/23 – 20 properties back into use  23/24 – 30 properties back into use  24/25 – 50 properties back into use  25/26 – 50 properties back into use  26/27 – 50 properties back into use  We will also report on the number of bed spaces made available.



<p><b>Getting the word out.</b></p> <p>Greater knowledge to be made available around empty property powers and council strategy to bring empty homes back into use.</p>	<p>Awareness raising within SMBC.</p> <p>Awareness raising externally.</p>	<p>Increased knowledge and agreed referral procedure with other teams.</p> <p>Engage with planning and Environmental Enforcement on use of their powers.</p> <p>Presentation to other teams in team meetings.</p> <p>Increased knowledge within external agencies.</p> <p>Posters.</p> <p>Work with Communications Team.</p>
<p><b>Ensuring people can reach us.</b></p> <p>Improved options for reporting of empty properties.</p>	<p>Update SMBC and Housing Strategy web site with EPS and simplified contract forms.</p>	<p>High quality information on web site and social media with simple contact forms.</p>
<p><b>Better options for empty property owners.</b></p> <p>More detailed and supportive advice and guidance for empty property owners.</p>	<p>Develop advice / information package for owners</p> <p>Work with Educate and Engage teams to assist landlords to reuse empty properties through CBL.</p>	<p>Investigate and prepare draft quality information package</p> <p>Printing and distribution</p> <p>Lease scheme</p>



<p><b>Using enforcement powers effectively for maximum impact.</b></p> <p>Ensuring that resources are used for their greatest impact.</p>	<p>Triaging cases effectively and utilising powers and enforcement resources to target the most troublesome empty properties that have the least likelihood of resolving without enforcement action being taken.</p> <p>Council tax elevated charged are levied against empty properties that have been empty for two years or longer.</p>	<p>The removal of long-term empty properties back into use where long case histories and well documented impact has been established.</p>
<p><b>Targeting the big issues.</b></p> <p>Progression of long standing empty property cases.</p>	<p>Utilising funding and enforcement powers to offer empty property owners opportunities as well as ensuring compliance through enforcement powers.</p>	<p>Successful homes brought back into use through advice, negotiation, loans and where needed enforcement action pursued utilising Housing Act enforcement powers and civil penalties where appropriate.</p>
	<p>Attendance and active engagement in Regional Empty Property Officers Forum</p>	<p>Sharing best practice</p>
<p><b>Staying relevant and at the forefront.</b></p> <p>Ensuring Sandwell is involved regionally with other authorities to learn and collaborate on new ways to bring empty homes back into use.</p>	<p>Attendance and active engagement in Regional Empty Property Officers Forum</p>	<p>Sharing best practice and collaboration at a regional level.</p>



<p><b>Feedback and communication on empty property work.</b></p> <p>Greater awareness of council achievements.</p>	<p>Maintain, update and continually improve Empty Property database.</p> <p>Ensuring timely and relevant press releases and media/website posts.</p>	<p>Accurate reports for performance monitoring and continuous improvement.</p>
	<p>Quarterly and biannual performance reports</p>	<p>Better reporting of empty property work and achievements made.</p>





### 3 Empty Property Enforcement Powers

#### Ensuring that empty properties are tackled effectively in Sandwell



#### How we use our powers

Empty property power	When we may use this power	Risks associated with this power	Opportunity associated with this power	Outcome
<p><b>Elevated Council Tax Charges</b></p> <p>Removal of financial advantages of leaving homes empty.</p>	<p>Empty properties that are empty for longer than two years.</p> <p>Elevation of council tax is considered on a case by case basis by the council tax team and may be changed by the valuation office.</p>	<p>Some empty property owners are not traceable and so debts build on properties anyway. Other owners are happy to pay the elevated charges.</p>	<p>This is an effective tool that encourages owners to bring properties back into use and where properties remain empty, the cost of managing them through public services can be financially compensated by elevated charges.</p>	<p>Less properties are left empty and where they are, there is a compensation for the extra costs involved in managing their impact.</p>
<p><b>Notification and negotiation</b></p>	<p>This is the first step in any empty property case. The council will engage with the owner to discuss options, notify them of the impact that</p>	<p>The property owner might be non-responsive, or may better manage the property, but not bring the property back into use.</p>	<p>Negotiating with the owner allows the opportunity to get a problem solved at low resource cost and without a greater cost to the owner.</p>	<p>Some properties will be better managed, some may become occupied sooner. Not all owners will be responsive and so cases will be triaged for</p>



	<p>the property is having and work with them to better manage the property and hopefully bring the property back into use.</p>	<p>The council will need to balance the resources it has against the urgency of each case. Properties that are unmanaged and causing the greatest impact will be prioritised.</p> <p>Sometimes a genuine reason can prevent a property becoming occupied that can stall a case for a long time. It is sometimes difficult to be able to explain the situation effectively to third-parties due to GDPR.</p>		<p>more formal action where owners do not cooperate.</p>
<b>Grants and loans</b>	<p>Where the council identifies an empty property owner who seems to be willing to bring a property back into use but has genuine financial issues in doing so may be able to utilise grants and loans provided by the council to assist with bringing the property back into use.</p> <p>Owners would repay the loans from rent or sale of the property.</p>	<p>The owner may utilise the loan and not succeed in making the property fully habitable.</p> <p>Contractors may not complete the work within the required budget.</p>	<p>The money can be recycled to other owners when repaid, creating a cycle of positive intervention that is sustainable and effective.</p>	<p>Owners of empty properties enabled to get works completed to enable letting or selling a property with the money returning to the council to recycle for other owners.</p>
<b>Enforcement against untidy land and buildings</b>	<p>Where domestic empty properties are left to deteriorate with untidy land and buildings, the</p>	<p>The owner may be difficult to trace or may tidy the land and building but leave the property empty.</p>	<p>Many empty property complaints are caused by the appearance of empty homes. The use of this power gives</p>	<p>Better managed empty homes.</p>





	council will take action against owners using planning enforcement powers shared between the Planning Enforcement Team and the Empty Property Team to serve notice and prosecute.		communities a short-term win in seeing an empty building cleaned up, allowing the council to work long-term on getting it brought back into use.	
<p><b>Compulsory purchase orders (CPOs)</b></p> <p>The council purchases the property with or without the consent of the owner in order to bring the property back into use.</p>	Where there is no traceable or cooperative owner and no other viable option to bring the property back into use.	The process is very long and expensive. It can drain general resources and prevent other empty property work.	The property will be brought into council ownership guaranteeing it being brought back into use.	Property will most likely to sold to a developer with a caveat on how and when the property will be renovated and occupied.
<p><b>Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)</b></p> <p>The council takes control of the empty property for 7 years, renovating and letting it, then returning to the owner after the order period ends.</p>	Where there is known ASB and significant works are required to bring the property back into use where the owner is unable or unwilling to.	The council will not ever own the property and may lose money on the cost of renovation as the lease period is restricted to 7 years. Any profit must be passed back to the owner. There is no guarantee the owner will keep the property occupied after the lease ends. Tenants would need to vacate after the 7 years if the owner wishes.	The property is under council control for 7 years giving a resource for homeless cases. The property will be in a lettable state when it returns to the owner, increasing the chances they will choose to let or sell it.	The property will be renovated to a liveable standard. The council should regain most of the costs from the rent. The property is then in a liveable condition for the owner to sell or let when the order period ends.
<p><b>Housing Act 2004 HHSRS enforcement.</b></p>	If the owner of an empty property is known and there	The owner may carry out the works and still not reoccupy the property or sell it.	Ensuring that the property is in a fit and habitable state, this vastly increases	The empty property will be in a condition that it can be



<p>The council can make the owner of an empty property carry out renovation work to make a property safe to live in within a certain time period. The council can serve penalty notices if the owner fails to carry out the work.</p>	<p>are a number of works that need to be completed to bring the property back into use.</p> <p>This will be considered to be used where considered appropriate and where available resources allow.</p>		<p>the likelihood that the owner will then better manage the property as they have invested time and money into making it safe.</p>	<p>immediately let or sold. This vastly increases the chances that the owner will bring the property back into use.</p>
<p><b>Enforced sales procedures</b></p> <p>This power enables the enforced sale of a property to recoup debt charges.</p>	<p>Where there are debts on the property by way of charges from the council (such as council tax debt).</p> <p>This will be considered to be used where considered appropriate and where available resources allow.</p>	<p>The debts are rarely large enough to be able to justify to a court or judge that an order is the correct avenue to bring an empty property back into use.</p> <p>The property would be sold at auction with the council never owning it so would not be able to control who bought it or what they then chose to do with it, or not do with it.</p>	<p>The sale of the property is likely to spur renovation and occupation by the new owner.</p>	<p>Usually the sale of a property would mean a developer or new occupier who would bring the property back into use and better manage it. It is rare that someone buys a home and does nothing with it.</p>
<p><b>Dangerous structures</b></p> <p>A power to manage structures that have become dangerous.</p>	<p>Where an empty property has become structurally dangerous, a repair or demolish notice can be served and acted upon.</p> <p>This will be considered to be used where considered appropriate and</p>	<p>The powers are limited to making the building safe and may mean removing parts that make the building less likely to be occupied again.</p>	<p>If the building is removed, the land can become more valuable for a developer and removes the issues related to the current empty dwelling.</p>	<p>Either a cleared strip of land or a partly demolished structure. If the latter has happened, a CPO may be considered.</p>



	where available resources allow.			
<p><b>Power of Entry</b></p> <p>Power to enter empty properties</p>	<p>Where needed, the council can gain entry to empty properties for examination or to make the property safe.</p> <p>This will be considered to be used where considered appropriate and where available resources allow.</p>	<p>Such action can upset owners and break down relationships. The council should always seek to work with an empty property owner first.</p>	<p>Examination of the building allows the council to value the property and assess its condition to ensure they make the right decision in how they will work to bring the property back into use.</p>	<p>The council will be in a better position to make an assessment on how best to address the issues and barriers preventing the occupation of the empty property.</p>
<p><b>Unsecured properties</b></p> <p>Securing compromised ground floor openings.</p>	<p>Where an empty property is open to the highway, so that a person could walk into the building from the street without having to climb over gates or fencing, or open a door or window, the council can require the building is secured and take action if the owner fails to do so. It may also be used to fix a dangerous element such as a flood or leak etc.</p> <p>This will be considered to be used where considered appropriate and</p>	<p>The power is more of a management tool than a power to bring empty properties back into use.</p>	<p>The power assists in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and encourages the owner to take more responsibility of their building.</p>	<p>The empty property will be secured against unauthorised access and/or prevented from being dangerous to the public.</p>



	where available resources allow.			
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## The legislative detail



### 3.1 Compulsory purchase orders (CPOs)

3.11 Under the Housing 1985 Section 17, where there appears to be no chance of a domestic property being brought back into use, a local authority can take action to make compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) on empty properties.

3.12 Before a CPO can be made, the council will first attempt to trace owner/s and work with them to encourage the property to be brought back into use.

3.13 The council will need to show that our reasons for making a CPO justify interfering with the human rights of anyone with an interest in the property.

### 3.2 Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs)

3.21 An Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) allows councils to take over management of an empty property and use it for housing tenants.

3.22 Councils can make EDMOs on a domestic building where it has been empty for at least six months. There are two types of EDMOs; an interim order and a final order. An interim order lasts for 12 months; however, a final order can be between 7 and 21 years.

### 3.3 Housing Act 2004 HHSRS enforcement

3.31 The Housing Act 2004 Part 1 gives councils the power and responsibility to ensure domestic properties in their borough are safe and suitable to live in. These powers apply to occupied and empty properties. Councils can use these powers to enforce works to make properties habitable and safe to live in. Failure to comply with notices under this legislation can result in the council carrying out works and placing a charge on the property, prosecuting the property owner/s, or serving a civil penalty on the owner/s.



### 3.4 Enforced sales procedures

3.41 Where councils have made a charge against a property, they have the same legal rights as a mortgage lender under the Law and Property Act 1925 to reclaim that debt charge.

3.42 Charges include council tax debt and works in default.

### 3.5 Dangerous structures

3.51 Under the Building Act 1984, sections 77 and 78, the council can order property owners to make their property safe or allow the council to take emergency action to make it safe.

### 3.6 Power of Entry

3.61 The Housing Act 2004 allows councils to seek a warrant (S240) to access a property in order to assess the condition of the building and carry out any necessary action to ensure that the property is safe for occupation under the same act.

3.62 The council will always give at least 24 hours' notice to require access to a property (more if it is not an urgent matter).

### 3.7 Statutory nuisance

3.71 Councils can take action under the Environmental Protection Act, 1990, Section 80 as well as the Building Act 1984, Section 76 where disrepair is affecting others enjoyment of their land or causing a health concern. The council can serve notices to ensure that the owners makes their property safe. We can also carry out works in default to make the building safe.

### 3.8 Unsecured properties

3.81 Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Section 29, where empty properties are left open to access, councils can serve notice to require owners to secure the building within 48 hours. Councils can secure the building and place a charge on the property.

### 3.9 Clearing untidy land and buildings

3.9.1 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 215, where land is in such a condition that it affects the amenity of the area, the authority has the power to serve notice requiring land and buildings to be cleaned, repaired, maintained so as to be fitting with the area. Councils can carry out work and charge the owner or prosecute the owner for non-compliance.





## 4 Strategy for Tackling Nuisance Empty Properties

### Ensuring a clear and consistent approach to tackling empty properties in Sandwell



4.1 The council will take a positive and proactive approach to dealing with empty properties. All complaints will be dealt with as follows:

#### 1. Investigation and engagement

4.2 Officers will trace owners, gather evidence on the length of time the property has been empty, its condition and its impact on the surrounding area.

#### 2. Triage

4.3 Each case will be triaged according to its severity and available resources to take action. Each case will be assessed against an agreed matrix that will weight towards council housing priorities at that time as well as available resources. An example matrix can be viewed in chapter 7. The matrix will be subject to change depending on perceived needs in the housing sector.

#### 3. Engagement

4.4 Officers will contact owners and engage with them to encourage them to renovate and occupy empty properties.

4.5 Council tax rates on long-term empty properties will be raised each year, up to 400% of the full rate for an occupied dwelling.

#### 3. Update

4.6 Officers will keep complainants updated on progress within the confines of the Date Protection Act 2018.

#### 4. Renovation enforcement

4.7 Where encouragement fails, officers will utilise powers to enforce repairs, with cost recovery from the owners where possible for surveying and serving notices as well as for any works in default.



## 5. Occupation enforcement

4.8 Where properties are renovated to a standard for occupation, and owners have failed to bring the property back into use, the council will seek to take action to take control of the dwelling in order to bring the property back into use via an Empty Dwelling Management Order, Compulsory Purchase Order, Enforced Sale or other empty property power available to the council.

4.9 As this is a heavily cost burdensome action, cases will be triaged to ensure that the highest priority cases are tackled first with the resources available to the council. This may result in some properties becoming less of a priority where they are being managed but not occupied.





## 5. Enforcement Policy



### Fairness, consistency and transparency

#### The Regulators Compliance Code

5.1 In compliance with the spirit of the Enforcement Concordat the Regulators Compliance Code and the Environmental Enforcement policy our approach will be fair, equitable and incremental. The primary function of central and local government enforcement work is to protect the public, the environment and various other groups such as consumers. There is a need to carry out enforcement functions in a consistent, practical and equitable manner, which in turn will help to promote a thriving local and national economy.

#### Engagement before enforcement

5.2 Before progressing from one of the following procedures to another, we will ensure that owners are fully advised and given an opportunity and sufficient time to take measures of their own to bring properties back into use.

#### Correct and consistent use of resources

5.3 Where enforcement action is used, the council will firstly fully appraise the situation and utilise a transparent scoring system to prioritise cases with the resources available. Higher scoring cases will be prioritised, as well as properties that are more suitable family homes.



## 6 Grants and low-cost loans

### 'Off the starting block' loans.

**Giving empty property owners a step in the right direction where finance is a barrier to bringing homes back into use.**



6.1 The council plans to offer empty property owners loans in certain circumstances where financial difficulties are preventing them from being able to make their empty property safe to live in again.

6.2 The loans will be limited and subject to council discretion on a case-by-case basis against the merits of each individual situation. Loans will be subject to a legally binding agreement to bring the property back into use.

6.3 Successful applicants will be offered the chance to enter into an agreement with the council to accept a short-term loan with conditions that enables them to get their empty property back into use within an agreed time.

6.4 Loans aimed at empty owners who perhaps inherited a poorly maintained property and do not have the means to manage a second home will be able to enter an agreement with the council to carry out works and sell or let their property at the end. Often buyers cannot get a mortgage on damaged properties, restricting who the owner can sell to.

6.5 Loans will be paid back in agreed segments once the property is occupied. The owner will be required to carry out works within an agreed timeframe.



6.6 The loans are designed to be an ‘off the starting block’ assistance to certain owners who lack the financial strength to carry out key works to get a property occupied.

6.7 The loans will be specifically aimed at properties that are in a reasonable condition, but need works to tip them back into a lettable or sellable condition to ensure that they are occupied in the near future.

6.8 Where loans are not properly used or a property remains empty after works are completed, the council may consider legal action or the use of empty property enforcement powers to ensure that the property becomes occupied. Loans will be placed as a charge against the property and as such properties may be at risk if repayments are not made due to a breach of the agreement.

6.9 Development of the application process of the loans will be carried out by the Empty Property officer in year 1 of the Empty Property Strategy in conjunction with the wider directorate in establishing a joined-up strategy for the delivery of loans for the purposes of improving housing in Sandwell. Loans should be available by year 2 of the strategy.

6.10 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 provides local housing authorities with a general permissive power to assist property owners with improving housing conditions. The local housing authority can only exercise these powers if it has adopted a Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy. The Empty Property officer and Operations Manager will work with other services to ensure a robust Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy is put into place to allow loans to be developed and issues as part of this five-year strategy with a view to offer loans by Q4 of the first financial year of the strategy.

6.11 The appointment of an Empty Property Officer by March 2023 will enable the development and implementation of the loans.



## 7 Triage Matrix

### Example Empty Homes Priority Matrix

This Matrix is an example of the type of considerations officers might use to prioritise cases depending on what current priorities and resources the council has at that time.

Categories may change depending on circumstances and priorities, for example, severity of disrepair might be a priority where CPO money is available, however timescale to bring back into use might be the priority in a different area where housing need is higher.

The matrix also allows for affordability calculations when considering formal action that requires financial investment, such as a CPO or EDMO.

<b>Address</b>	
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<b>Environmental Factors – circle score</b>				
<b>Location of Property</b>				
	<b>Unobtrusive</b>	<b>Visible</b>	<b>Highly Visible</b>	<b>Gateway Location</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Period of Inactivity</b>	<b>6+ Months</b>	<b>18+ Months</b>	<b>5+ Years</b>	<b>10+ Years</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Vulnerability of Property</b>	<b>Secure &amp; Maintained</b>	<b>Secure &amp; Non-Maintained</b>	<b>Insecure</b>	<b>Serious Anti-Social Behaviour</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Condition of Property</b>	<b>Clean &amp; Tidy</b>	<b>Attracting Rubbish</b>	<b>Minor Disrepair</b>	<b>Vandalism</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Housing Need</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Severe</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>



<b>Score for Property</b>

<b>Housing Affordability Factors – circle score</b>				
<b>House Type</b>	<b>Detached</b>	<b>Bungalow</b>	<b>Terraced</b>	<b>Semi-Detached</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>4+</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Estimated Market Value of Property</b>	<b>£300,000 +</b>	<b>£250,00 - £299,999</b>	<b>Under £150,000</b>	<b>£150,000 - £250,000</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Estimated Refurbishment Cost</b>	<b>Under £12,000</b>	<b>£12,000 - £34,999</b>	<b>£35,000 - £49,999</b>	<b>£50,000 +</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>

<b>Score for affordability</b>

<b>Total Score for Property</b>



[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/council-taxbase-2021-in-england>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-boosts-councils-powers-to-help-bring-empty-homes-back-into-use>

[3] Image at '1.3 The Local Picture' [geograph.org.uk/photo/6815212](https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/6815212)



# Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2022/23



Page 107

## 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 10



01 November 2022  Additional Meeting	Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis	Lisa McNally (Director of Public Health). SCIPS. SCVO.
	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)
	Nature Reserves Funding	Matthew Huggins ((Interim) Service Manager Parks, Grounds, Sandwell Valley & Events)
	2023-24 Asset Management Investment Programme for Housing	Jonathan Rawlins/ Gillian Douglas
26 January 2023	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.
	Green Spaces Strategy	Matt Huggins Asst. Director Parks, Grounds Maint. & Events
23 February 2023.	Heritage and Cultural Strategy	Dawn Winter Asst. Director Libraries, Archives & Heritage
	Future Provision of Leisure Services Update	Ben Percival Asst. Director Contracts & Projects





Additional meeting at Sandwell Valley.	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
	Homelessness Strategy (Implementation)	Nigel Collumbell (Service Manager Housing Management)
23 March 2023	Sandwell Community Safety Strategy 2022-26 One Year On	Chief Supt Maria Fox (Chair of Safer Sandwell Partnership)
	Neighbourhood Management Model	Manny Sehmbi (Business Manager Community Partnerships and Support Services)

### To be Scheduled

Reports of the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group on:-

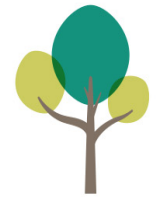
- Building Safety Review
- Responsive Repairs & Customer Satisfaction Review



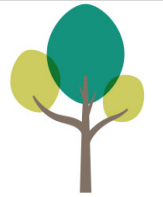
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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive in public session:-

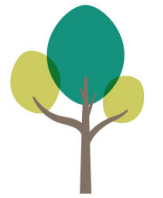
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
16	<p><b>Gas Safety Inspections 2022-25 – West Bromwich, Smethwick and Oldbury</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Jonathan Rawlins</p> <p>Director of Housing: Gillian Douglas</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>16 November 2022</p>		



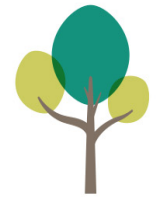
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
17	<p><b>Council new build homes on land at Garratts Lane, Cradley Heath</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Alan Martin</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director – Regeneration and Growth/ Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>16 November 2022</p>		
18	<p><b>Council new build homes on land at Stanhope Road, Smethwick</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Alan Martin</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director – Regeneration and Growth/ Gillian Douglas – Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>16 November 2022</p>		



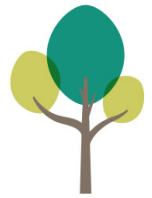
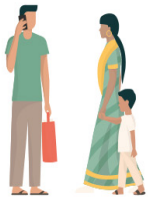
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
19	<p><b>Proposed new Sandwell Archives Centre - (on Council land behind Smethwick Council House)</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Dawn Winter</p> <p>Director of Borough Economy – Alice Davey</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Leisure &amp; Tourism</b> (Cllr Rollins)</p>	<p>16 November 2022</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Cabinet Report and appendices</p>
21	<p><b>Asset Management Strategy</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Chris Hilton</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Regeneration &amp; Growth</b> (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>16 November 2022 (private item)</p>	<p>tbc</p>	<p>Report</p> <p>Surplus Assets List (to be annexed to Cabinet paper)</p>



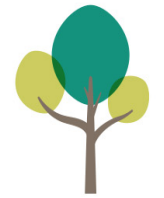
Title/Subject		Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
31	<p><b>Community Hubs</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Director of Business Strategy – Neil Cox and Director of Housing – Gillian Douglas</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Communities</b> (Cllr Millard)</p>	7 December 2022		
32	<p><b>Trees Strategy and Policy</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Matthew Huggins</p> <p>Director – Borough Economy, Alice Davey</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Environment Service</b> (Cllr Ahmed)</p> <p>Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Rollins)</p>	7 December 2022		



	<b>Title/Subject</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>	<b>Decision Date</b>	<b>Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)</b>	<b>List of documents to be considered</b>
34	<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>		
38	<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 – Housing</b> (Cllr Padda)</p>	<p>8 February 2023</p>		



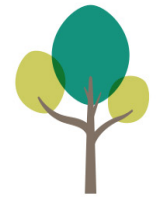
	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Decision Date	Pre-decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
39	<p><b>Housing Strategy 2023 - 2028</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Louis Bebb</p> <p>Director: Gillian Douglas, Director of Housing</p>	<p><b>Cabinet – Housing</b> (Cllr 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>Asset Management Strategy</b></p> <p>Contact Officer: Chris Hilton</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p><b>Cabinet - Regeneration &amp; Growth</b> (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>16 November 2022 (private item)</p>	<p>tbc</p>	<p>Report</p> <p>Surplus Assets List (to be annexed to Cabinet paper)</p> <p>Review of the Council's Surplus Property Assets (to form part of the cabinet paper)</p>



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