

Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

24th November 2022

Subject:	Draft Housing Strategy 2023-28
Director:	Director of Housing, Gillian Douglas
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1 Recommendations

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

2 Reasons for Recommendations

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

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

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





Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods

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

4 Context and Key Issues

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



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

5 Implications

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



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

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Strategy 2023-28

7. Background Papers

Housing Needs Assessment 2022

Housing Strategy Statement 2012-22

