

Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel Meeting

Thursday, 22 July 2021

Dear Councillor

VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE CITY SCRUTINY PANEL - THURSDAY, 22ND JULY, 2021

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Thursday, 22nd July, 2021 meeting of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel, the following presentation reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
------------------	-------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5 | <u>Housing Allocations Policy - Update on roll out of new policy (Pages 3 - 8)</u> |
|---|---|

[To receive an update on the roll out of the new Housing Allocations Policy].

- | | |
|---|--|
| 6 | <u>Housing Strategy - Update on Delivery of Current Priorities (Pages 9 - 18)</u> |
|---|--|

[To receive an update on the delivery of the current Housing Strategy priorities].

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Scrutiny Team:

Contact Martin Stevens

Tel 01902 550947

Email martin.stevens@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Address Scrutiny Office, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Encs

This page is intentionally left blank



CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON

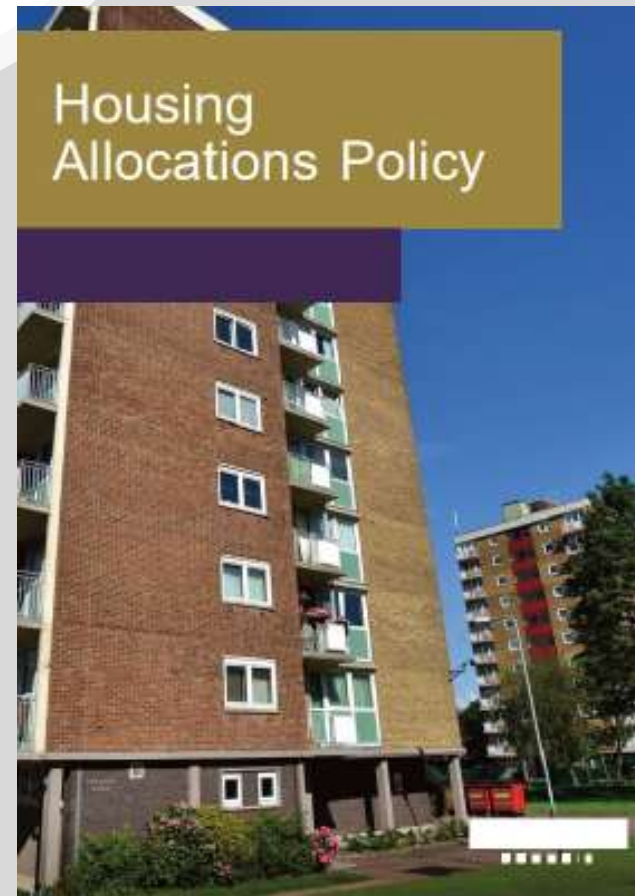


Housing Allocations Policy 2020



- Adopted by Cabinet in February 2020
- Council Policy
- Applications for housing taken by Homes in the City / Wolverhampton Homes

Page 4



Applying the New Policy

Page 5

Phased Rollout

Development of a New IT System

Full Implementation of the Policy – 28 September 2021

SERVICE DISRUPTION

17 June HiTC will go down, meaning no new applications can be submitted, no adverts or bidding for 2 weeks to allow for IT system re-build

Applications made before 2 August will need to re-apply

Applications made from 2 August will be under the new policy and not made *live* until 28 September

Emergency and homeless applications will continue to be assessed during this time.

Applying the New Policy & Supporting Customers

- Information emailed to all applicants
- Information on HiTC, CWC websites & social media
- Applicants invited to re-apply between August & the end of September
- New applications will be made online
- Anyone unable to re-apply online can receive support over the phone to complete the application
- HiTC equipped with *read aloud* for people with language or accessibility needs

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Homes in the City

[Homeless](#) [Housing Options](#) [Are you ready?](#) [Look for a property](#) [Go](#)

The way we let council homes is changing

The council has made key changes to its housing allocations policy to ensure council homes in Wolverhampton are let to those who need them most. If you have a current application, we will send you a letter in the post with details of what you need to do.

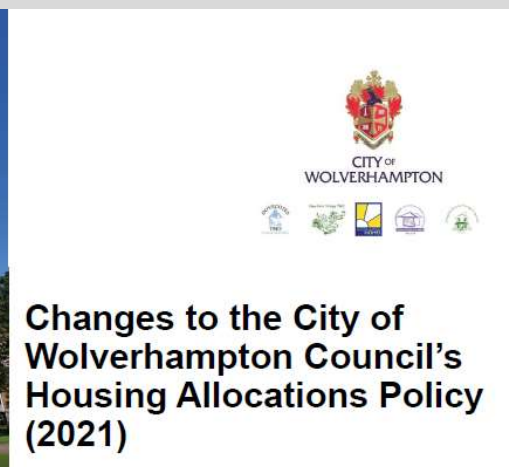
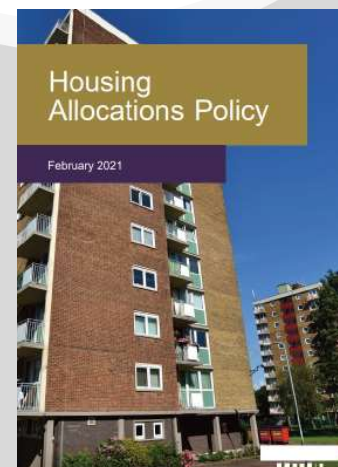
[Learn more in the news section.](#)

[Homes in the City](#)

[Homes in the city explained](#) [Frequently Asked Questions](#) [Latest news](#) [Need some help?](#)

Understanding the Changes . . .

- Letter to Councillors and MPs with information and FAQs
- Information on the Members area of the website and available through the MEU
- Training slides available and online through OD
- All Councillors and MPs have been invited to workshops
- Housing would welcome contact from any further interested Councillors to arrange a workshop.



This page is intentionally left blank

Housing Strategy

Better Homes for All

Page 9

wolverhampton.gov.uk

Agenda Item No: 6



- Development:
 - Independent evidence base
 - Extensive partner consultation
 - Councillor workshops
 - Equality Impact Assessment
 - 6 week public consultation
 - Scrutiny

- Adopted October 2019



The council's vision for 2030 is that:

Wolverhampton will be a place where people come from far and wide to work, shop, study and enjoy our vibrant city

Good quality housing plays a fundamental role in developing Wolverhampton's identity and economic function on the regional, UK and international stage.

It is vital we continue to provide enough good quality homes in our city. We understand the importance of providing greater housing choice and demand high-quality housing design and property management standards.

This strategy delivers plans to accelerate housing development that will support inclusive economic growth. It also focuses on people, our plans to support our residents and create better homes and communities as we are committed to enhancing the health and well-being of the people who live and work here.

This is a housing strategy that recognises our achievements, acknowledges our challenges but most importantly looks to the future. It is underpinned by leadership but works in partnership to deliver its objectives and encourages innovative approaches to some complex housing problems.

We are flexible in how we tackle issues and we have greater financial flexibility now that the Housing Revenue Account caps have been lifted. We are a committed authority within the Black Country and West Midlands Combined Authority and our strategy clearly sets out how much we value and invest in these partnerships.



Objectives:

1. Deliver more and better homes
2. Ensure safe and healthy Homes
3. Provide access to a secure home

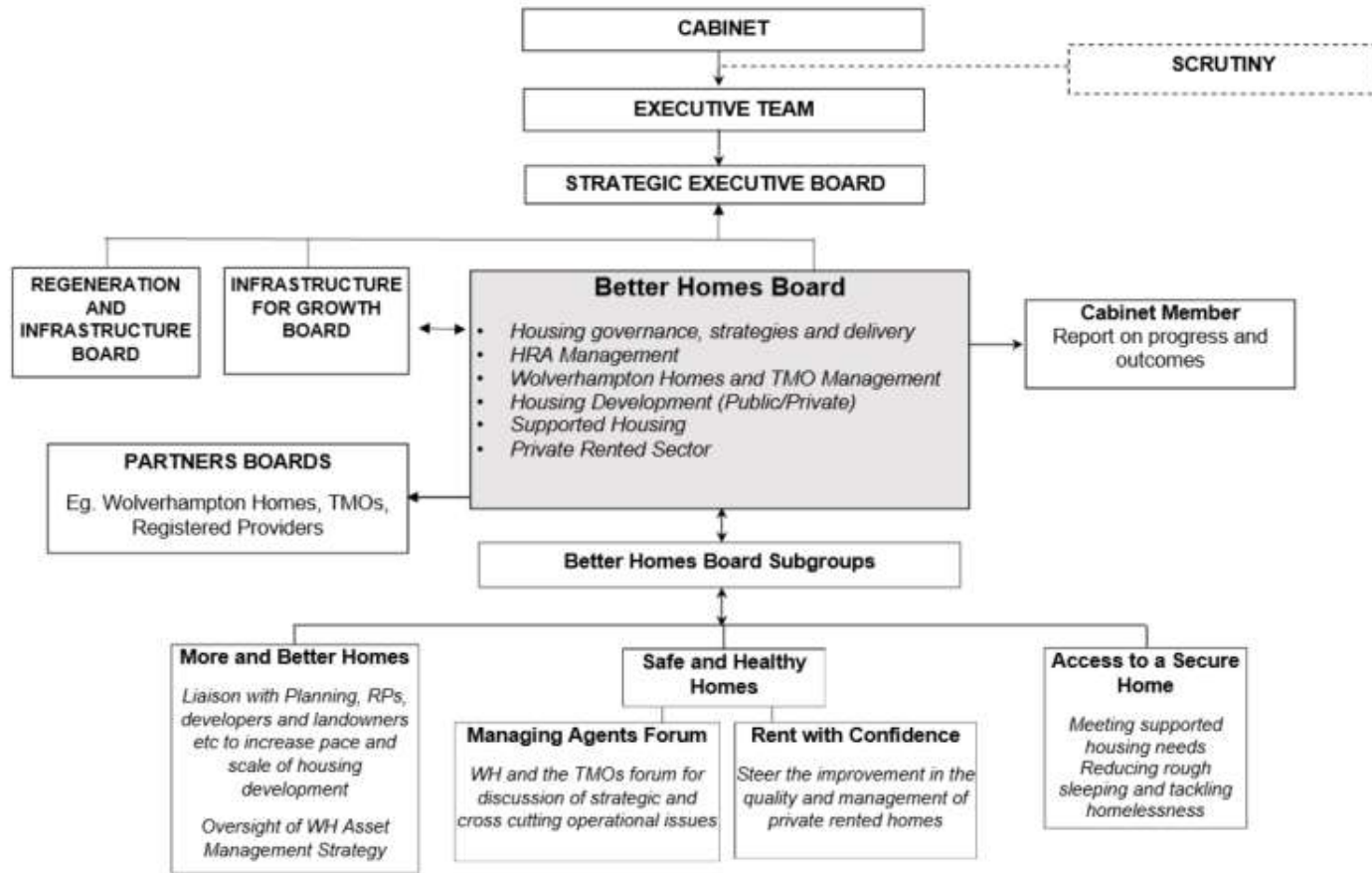


Monitoring:

1. Delivery Plan
2. Better Homes Board
3. Subgroups
4. Performance dashboards



Governance Framework



Progress:

- Monitored by objective
- Lead officers monitoring the strand:
 - Housing
 - Regulation
 - Public Health
- Dashboards under development



1. More and better homes

Building High Quality Homes for the Future

- Market delivery (private sector housing developers)
- WV Living; market sale, help to buy, shared ownership. Ambitious plans; 1000+ units 2017-23
- New Homes Bonus (government incentive for housing growth) £1,614,137 in 2020-21

Affordable Homes

- Affordable housing Conversion programme; RTB first refusals and open market purchase
- S106 funding – 2 properties purchased in Tettenhall Wightwick and phase 5 of the HRA small sites prog
- HRA small sites programme ongoing and led by Wolverhampton Homes
- Community Led Development; Bushbury Hill – 11 units in 21/22, Black Country Make – 6 units in Heath Town
- Additional Social Housing budget for 2021-22 increased to £4.5m from £2.5m in 2020-21

Partnerships

- Partnerships with registered housing providers; making the best use of housing development through updated Nominations agreements and information sharing.
- Housing - liaison with Planning Authority on planning applications and S106 requirements.
- Development meetings and site assessments with Regeneration and WV Living
- Planning - working with private developers and landowners to bring forward a supply of new homes to meet our needs e.g. Royal Hospital.

Providing Choice

- Home ownership options for first time buyers, e.g. Help to Own on the Marches
- Partnership CWC & WVL - shared ownership on Peascroft, Sweet Briary and The Marches
- Homes for older people; WHG 38 units *well-being scheme* on the Royal Hospital Site

Strategic Growth Corridors

- Supporting Strategic Economic Plan 2019-24 Future City priority – City Living & Housing.
- Developing delivery strategies for key regeneration areas and working with Government and WMCA to secure funding for key infrastructure and site remediation funding
- Walsall to Wolverhampton Corridor – funding opportunities to deliver new housing

Making the Best use of Stock

- Bringing empty homes back into use is still a significant challenge;
- 52 properties brought back into use in 2020-21, 2 successful CPOs

2. Safe and healthy homes

Safe & well maintained Council Homes

- High rise improvement programmes underway; installation of sprinklers, electrical infrastructure improvements to high rise is underway and lift refurbishments.
- Fire safety improvements to medium and low rise blocks; fire door programme due to start in 2021.
- City wide roofing programme underway.
- Proactive approach to damp and mould
- Consumer Standards Review – high levels of compliance across ‘big 6 risks’
- Heath Town regen; deck access blocks due to be completed Dec 2021. Work on the tower blocks has started.
- and New Park Village regeneration. Non traditional stock – investment programme and renewal
- Asset management strategy under development

Improved Private Rented Sector

- New proactive Private Sector Housing Team, increased use of regulatory expertise
- Tackling rogue landlords; injunctions under the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to stop illegal eviction.
- Partnering with Trading Standards to stop a landlords aggressive practices under the Enterprise Act 2002
- HMO licensing, moved online.

Safety and Raising Standards

- Programme of inspection, support and enforcement in privately owned high rise - all inspected
- Reduce instances of damp and mould in private homes – working with the University on a research project to improve the health outcomes of residents

Supporting People with Disabilities

- Housing Assistance Policy reviewed and adopted to offer a greater range of adaptations and financial support to residents
- Home Improvement Agency restructured - holistic end-to-end support to applicants

Making Homes Warm

- Publish a Statement of Intent to enable resident to access Eco Flex funding
- Developed EcoFlex administration, up to the current Eco3 programme

3. Access to a secure home

Supporting the most Vulnerable

- Accommodation needs assessments are underway, led by Public Health
- Care Leaver accommodation pathway developed. Children's Services and Housing working together to deliver the House Project
- Implementing changes under the new Domestic Abuse Bill and the £650k of funding to develop the offer, including extensions to the Sanctuary Scheme.
- Housing and partners are part of the Veterans Pledge to collaborate to relive and prevent homelessness
- The ex-offender accommodation pathway is under review with housing providers and probation to increase sustainability and reduce re-offending.

Preventing Homelessness

- Temporary Accommodation action plan adopted by Cabinet in March 2021 to improve prevention, accommodation and support. A budget was also approved to increase the direct supply of TA by the Council, where CWC can ensure affordability and quality.
- TA standards and commitments introduced.
- Delivery of *Everyone In* during the first lockdown; 150 people accommodated and moved on.
- Homelessness assessment centre and accommodation to be developed at Bond House.

Supporting Rough Sleepers

- Successfully delivering the Housing First Programme; housing 44 former rough sleepers, assisting them sustain tenancies, access reemployment, rehab and reconnect with their families.
- Incredible work by partners has resulted in a significant reduction of RS – current count **4**
- Rough sleeper operational group created: Monitors the reduction in people sleeping rough across the City, monitors service delivery of services, share best practice, highlight and address gaps in service provision

New Communities

- New Comms & Migration Forum established to provide targeted and coordinated responses
- Community Champions project established and funding awarded.
- Funding for a gypsy traveller link worker secured
- Active conversations with the Home Office & SERCO to mitigate against the impact of dispersal

The new Allocations Policy 2020 will assist in providing the people in the greatest housing need with the greatest opportunity to access housing.