

# Report to Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board

**6 February 2025**

<b>Subject:</b>	Housing Improvement and Transformation Plan Update
<b>Director:</b>	Executive Director - Place Alan Lunt
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Assistant Director, Housing Management Nigel Collumbell nigel_collumbell@sandwell.gov.uk Assistant Director, Asset Management & Improvement Sarah Ager Sarah_ager@sandwell.gov.uk

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon the Housing Improvement and Transformation Update.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 During October 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) issued a 'C3' Regulatory Judgement (RJ) to the council indicating that there are serious failings in the landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards and significant improvement is needed. Specifically, 4 areas were of concern to the Regulator.
- Asbestos management surveys or re-inspections had been carried out on only around 2% of relevant buildings.
  - Although electrical safety inspections had been completed for 96% of its homes, the council is unable to monitor or report on the completion of remedial actions arising from those inspections.

- The council reported more than 14,000 overdue repairs, with over 90% of these yet to be assigned for completion.
- The Safety and Quality Standard requires the council to have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informs their provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for our tenants. The council reported that while it intended to carry out a comprehensive (100%) stock condition evaluation of its housing stock, only 5% of surveys were at the time completed.

2.2 Since October, the council’s housing service has engaged in regular meetings with the RSH to discuss any emerging/ additional issues, progress towards compliance with the Regulatory Standard and to provide clarity on the governance arrangements employed within the council to ensure there is robust and comprehensive oversight of the journey towards compliance. Part of the process is the presentation of a progress update to this Scrutiny Board on a quarterly basis.

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

Living in Sandwell	The provision of high quality, safe and well repaired homes that are available at social rents will ensure that those unable to afford open market housing can access accommodation that meets their needs and achieves the ‘decent homes’ standard in terms of its state of repair and general condition.
--------------------	--

### 4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 As well as striving to achieve the Regulatory Standards as swiftly as possible, the council is seeking to transform its housing service into one which provides excellent service and performance when compared to similar housing providers. Therefore, the Housing Improvement and Transformation Plan (HITP) has been developed not only to consider progress towards compliance but to identify the actions required to strive to achieve excellence.

4.2 The HITP contains ten key projects each with numerous workstreams below, which are in the process of being completed, implemented or are awaiting delivery. The focus in terms of priorities is on ensuring compliance with the Regulatory Framework and building safety. Progress is monitored monthly via a Housing Transformation and Improvement Board, chaired by the Executive Director Place, which is responsible for reporting on progress, identifying blockages and barriers and

determining how problems can be resolved. The Board reports by exception to the council's Leadership Team and to Cabinet member / Cabinet monthly. This is in addition to the quarterly oversight provided by Scrutiny Board and consideration of any 'limited assurance' internal audit reports that are reported to the council's Audit and Risk Committee.

- 4.3 The presentation appended to this report will be presented by officers and identifies by 'exception', those workstreams where progress has not achieved expected milestones and to set out the remedial action to be taken to return the workstream to the required path of achievement.

## 5 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The HITP is being delivered within the budgetary envelop established for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), staffing, land/building implications
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The Regulator of Social Housing intervenes where there are serious failings in the landlord delivering the outcomes of the consumer standards regulatory framework and significant improvement is needed. The council also must comply with the statutory and regulatory frameworks established for social landlords.
<b>Risk:</b>	A risk registers specifically relating to the obligations to achieve the requirements of the regulatory framework for social housing has been developed and is monitored monthly.
<b>Equality:</b>	There are no equality implications as a result of this report
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Achieving the requirements of the relevant regulatory standards will ensure the fitness, safety and security of the council's homes for use as social housing and in doing so ensure the wellbeing of our tenants.
<b>Social Value:</b>	There are no social value implications as a result of this report
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no climate change implications as a result of this report
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	There are no corporate parenting implications as a result of this report

## 6 Appendices

Appendix One - Housing Improvement and Transformation Plan: Exception Report.

## 7. **Background Papers**

None.