

# Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 Action Plan





# Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028 Action Plan

**Key:**

- Short term = within the next 12 months
- Medium term = within 1 to 2 years
- Long term = 3 to 5 years

## Priority 1 – Providing more affordable homes

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Focus on larger strategic sites where volume is higher and unit cost makes the development of affordable housing more viable.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
Use the Housing Revenue Account to purchase land for development and build this in to the HRA 30 Year Business Plan.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>

**1.2: Work with RPs, private investors and community-led housing groups to increase the amount and diversity of affordable housing in the borough**

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Work closely to support the RPs operational in the Sandwell Borough on local needs and identifying site opportunities for development	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Registered providers</li> </ul>
Consider how disposal of small sites could be applied in line with the WMCA Public Land Charter.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• WMCA</li> </ul>
Identify opportunities for inward investment into affordable and specialist housing on regeneration sites such as the West Bromwich town centre and other strategic sites.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> </ul>
Explore collaborations between the council and developers to prepare sites for development, using council acquisitions to drive development where appropriate.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Property developers</li> </ul>
Work with local communities and specialist organisations such as the West Midlands Urban Community Homes hub to support opportunities for community-led schemes.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• West Midlands Urban Community Homes</li> </ul>

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Engage proactively with Homes England, registered providers and developers early in the planning process to ensure that new affordable homes respond to evidenced need and gaps in the existing stock with regard to size and tenure options.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Registered providers</li> <li>• Property developers</li> <li>• Homes England</li> </ul>
Work with partners to deliver a greater number of one and two-bedroom properties in the borough to reflect demand from the housing waiting list.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Registered providers</li> <li>• Property developers</li> </ul>



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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Engage with partners in Health and Social Care to maintain an up-to-date picture of need and explore opportunities to address this through the development of homes led by Adult Social Care.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Prevention Reablement and Direct Services</li> <li>• Commissioning and Integration</li> </ul>
Explore options for making site allocations for housing suitable for older persons within the borough.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Registered providers</li> <li>• Property developers</li> </ul>
Undertake further analysis of the key areas where we need larger family homes and ensure we include provision in site opportunities. Consider the purchase of larger market homes for urgent housing register needs if alternative provision cannot be found.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Prevention Reablement and Direct Services</li> <li>• Commissioning and Integration</li> </ul>
Ensure that as many affordable homes as possible achieve at least Building Regulations standards for adaptable and accessible dwellings.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Development Planning and Building Consultancy</li> </ul>
Work on Sandwell's new Local Plan to reflect housing needs and develop policies that support the delivery of accessible and specialist housing	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
Undertake further research into the use of private rented sector accommodation for young people and other people with support needs coupled with appropriate financial and practical support	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Policy</li> <li>• Housing Allocations</li> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Children's Services</li> </ul>
Work with the planning policy team to identify suitable sites for gypsy and travellers and travelling show people.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
We will monitor and manage our performance of improving the housing offer for any protected characteristics through compliance with anti-discrimination publications such as the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2021.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>

**1.5: Improve access to affordable housing for essential keyworkers.**

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Work with health and social care departments and other employers providing essential services, to identify the housing needs of their workers and consider changes to the housing allocation system to give keyworkers some priority for affordable housing.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>

**How we will monitor progress through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- The number of affordable homes delivered
- The number of new homes delivered
- Housing delivery (number and type) trajectory and targets met
- Dwelling completions compared to housing trajectory
- Applicants on Self-build Register
- Delivery of housing for people with specialist needs
- Sites for gypsy and travellers and travelling show people delivered
- The number of homes built to at least Building Regulations standards for adaptable and accessible dwellings



## Priority 2 – Making the best use of the homes we have

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Use housing benefit and discretionary housing payment data to identify households affected by the under-occupation charge (bedroom tax) and offer customised support to consider other housing options.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenues and Benefits</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
Work with the adaptations team to identify older people who may wish to move rather than install adaptations into what still may be an unsuitable home.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Home Improvement Agency</li> </ul>
Work with partner agencies and older people to develop support packages and incentives to help tenants who wish to downsize to do so.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
Review the Allocations Policy and Tenancy Policy to optimise prioritisation for social housing and make appropriate use of introductory tenancies.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
To obtain data and explore options for ethnic minority groups in relation to overcrowding in properties across the borough.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
Continue to seek opportunities for the development of new high-quality housing for older people.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention Reablement and Direct Services</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Commissioning and Integration</li> </ul>
Work with Adult Social Care and Health to market housing options such as extra care housing at older people who could benefit from this provision.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention Reablement and Direct Services</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> <li>• Commissioning and Integration</li> </ul>

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Implement the Sandwell Empty Homes Policy including recruiting an Empty Homes Officer who can engage with empty homeowners to implement the most appropriate action.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> </ul>
Promote opportunities for offering grants and loans where investment is needed to bring a property in to use which will then be let at affordable rent to a household in need.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Policy</li> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>

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

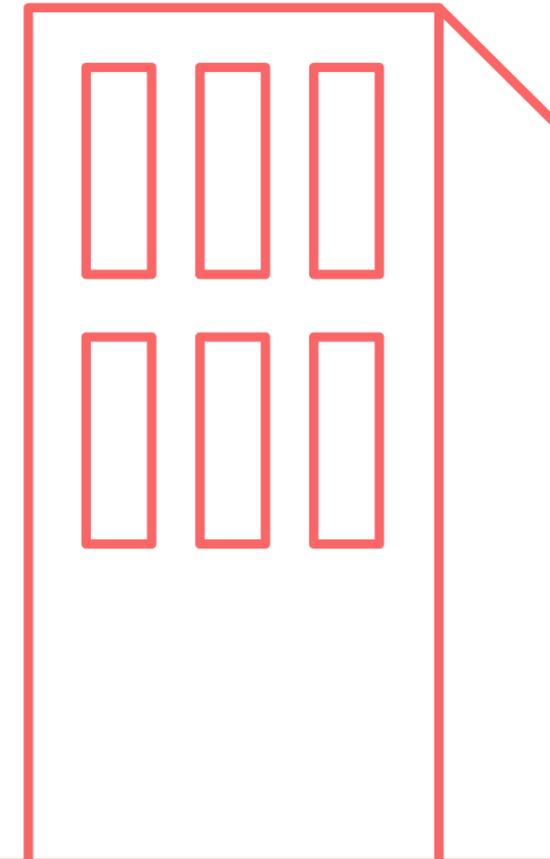
Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Continue to improve our advice and support to landlords around what is involved in being a landlord, including managing Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>
Review private sector leasing and the feasibility for setting up a leasing scheme.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>
Encourage more landlords to engage with the council to offer homes to asylum-seekers and refugees who are resettling in Sandwell, through tenancy support initiatives.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Review the end to end process to reduce void turnaround times, involving frontline staff and tenants to identify what works best.	Short	• Tenancy Management
Review high cost voids and how these can be reduced through planned programmes and intervention before a tenancy ends.	Short	• Tenancy Management
Clarify and revise the letting standard (including gardens) to offer flexibility and a positive start to the tenancy.	Short	• Tenancy Management

**How we will monitor progress through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- The number of affordable homes delivered
- The number of new homes delivered
- Housing delivery (number and type) trajectory and targets met
- Dwelling completions compared to housing trajectory
- Applicants on Self-build Register
- Delivery of housing for people with specialist needs
- Sites for gypsy and travellers and travelling show people delivered
- The number of homes built to at least Building Regulations standards for adaptable and accessible dwellings



### Priority 3 – Quality housing for all

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Embed and grow the Private Rented Sector Secure and Sustain model.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>
Gather intelligence through tenant contacts, intelligence from the public and HMO licensing schemes to target interventions at poor quality housing.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>
Ensure compliance with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations.	Long	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> </ul>
Review the evidence base for additional licensing in other parts of the borough, building on our experience in West Bromwich.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> </ul>
Explore the feasibility of a Social Leasing Agency model.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>

#### 3.2: Improve the quality of council homes and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Gain a comprehensive picture of the quality of the stock in order to inform repairs and programmes of work to upgrade and refurbish the stock.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul>
Update the Asset Management Strategy in line with the HRA business plan to detail how we plan to improve the stock over the next 10 years.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul>
Act on disrepair claims by inspecting properties and taking timely remedial action.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul>
Involve tenants and leaseholders and their representative bodies in plans to improve the stock and identify actions related to housing quality in the tenant satisfaction survey.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> </ul>
Engage tenants in estate management, identifying community partnerships to improve services and opportunities in the local area.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Tenancy and Estate Management</li> </ul>

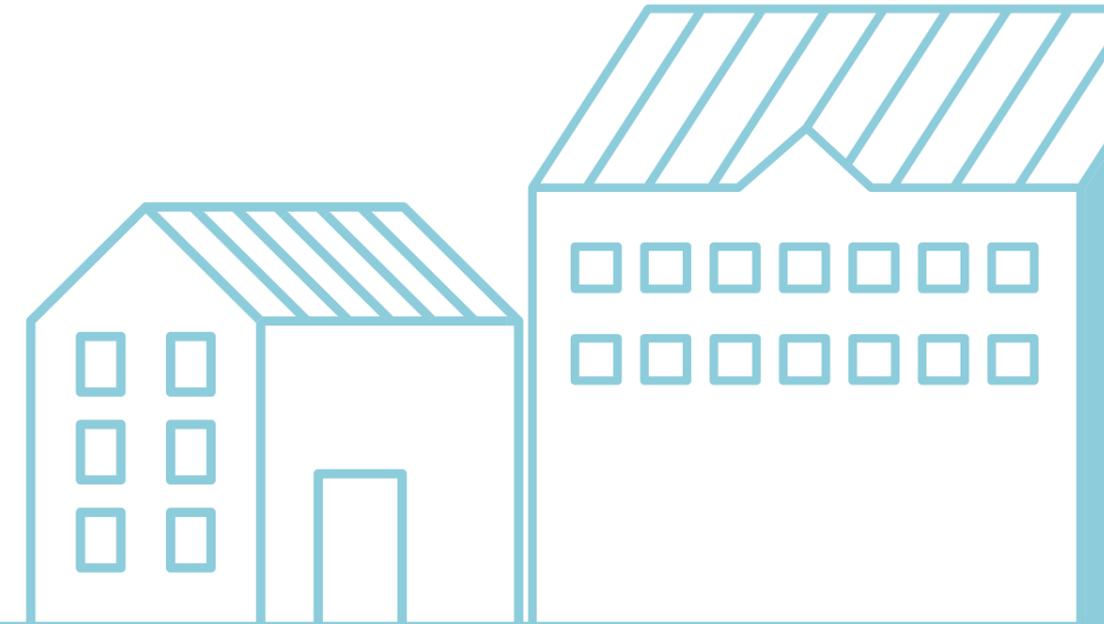
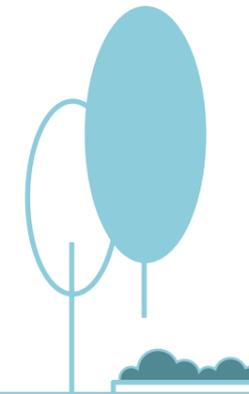
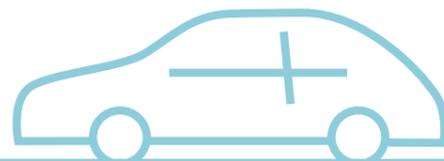


**3.3: Contribute to the Regeneration Strategy to ensure that opportunities for new housing link into the wider economic and wellbeing benefits.**

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Work with the regeneration strategy team to identify how inward investment can be of maximum benefit to existing residents through the improvement of facilities and services and opportunities for employment, training and cultural opportunities.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Tenancy and Estate Management</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Learning and Development</li> </ul>
Monitor exempt accommodation in the borough and implement actions to raise standards where necessary.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioning and Integration</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>
Monitor the quality of commissioned exempt (supported) accommodation and work with providers to address any issues.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing solutions</li> <li>• Commissioning and Integration</li> </ul>
Use housing benefit data to monitor other exempt accommodation in the borough and seek resident feedback on their experiences and the quality of the housing and support offered.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenues and Benefits</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> </ul>

**How we will monitor progress through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- Homelessness prevention and relief
- The number of council home repairs completed
- The number of council homes refurbished
- The number of private rented sector homes complying with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations
- The number of disrepair claims acted upon



## Priority 4 – Supporting people’s health through housing

### 4.1: Deliver appropriate adaptations to current homes, to maintain and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Support the new Policy on Adaptations for Disabled Tenants in Council Housing to ensure there is a fair, consistent, and transparent operation in accordance with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance. As a result, this will benefit disabled residents via technology in the home, improve the warmth of their living space and support reducing social isolation.	Long	• Home Improvement Agency



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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Consider accessibility standards and the feasibility for supplementary planning guidance on this in the development of Sandwell’s new Local Plan.	Medium	• Spatial Planning and Growth
Work with Disabled People’s organisations and residents to identify what works and how council and other homes can be improved through adaptations but also how needs can be met through major works and new build.	Medium	• Spatial Planning and Growth • Prevention Reablement and Direct Services • Commissioning and Integration • Home Improvement Agency • Community Partnerships

### 4.3: Review the councils stock against the new Decent Homes Standard when published.

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Incorporate the new Decent Homes Standard once they are reviewed as part of stock conditions and asset management plans.	Medium	• Asset Management

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Work with private sector landlords and representative groups such as the National Residential Landlords Association to raise awareness and support compliance.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>
Continue to take enforcement action in cases where the landlord is not responding to early intervention.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Private Sector Housing &amp; Home Improvements</li> <li>• Housing Solutions</li> </ul>

**How we will monitor progress through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

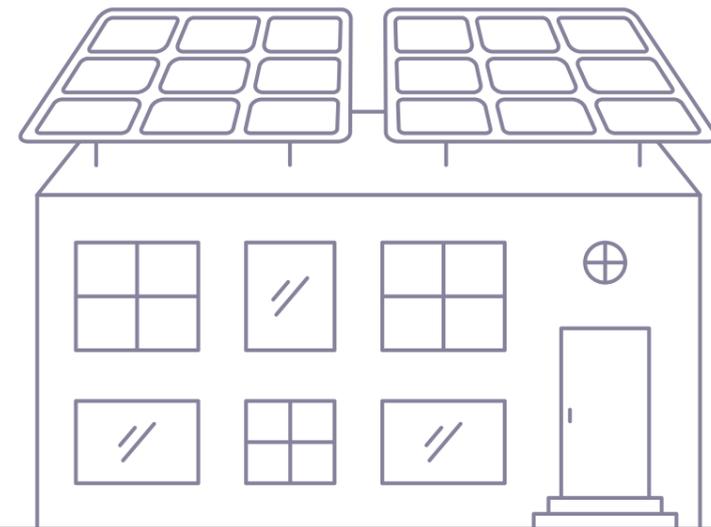
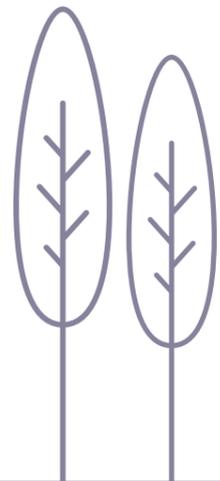
- The number of homes adapted through the use of Disabled Facilities Grants and Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
- The number of successful enforcement cases addressing private landlords and housing conditions
- The number of homes built to at least Building Regulations standards for adaptable and accessible dwellings
- The number of council homes compliant with the new Decent Homes Standard once published



## Priority 5 – Addressing climate change and fuel poverty

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Support the delivery of the new Asset Management Strategy in order to further outline our approach to the retrofit programme using HRA investment and by drawing down external funds to support this.	Long	• Asset Management
Fast track homes for improvement where there is a disabled, older person or vulnerable person in the home.	Long	• Asset Management • Home Improvement Agency
Plan the replacement of diesel vehicles in Housing Services through installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points and a phasing in of EVs.	Medium	• Asset Management • Housing Management • Fleet Services



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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Follow guidance from the WMCA Housing and Health design principles and WMCA Design Charter within future housing developments.	Medium	• Spatial Planning and Growth
Ensure planning policies, building regulations, procurement and partnership working with registered providers and developers deliver a broad range of housing, supporting the council's climate goals, and meeting local needs.	Long	• Spatial Planning and Growth • Housing Management • Asset Management
Deliver refurbishment of Darley House which includes heat source pumps, replacing existing heating systems.	Medium	• Spatial Planning and Growth • Housing Management • Asset Management

### 5.3: Access external funding to upgrade the existing stock and help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

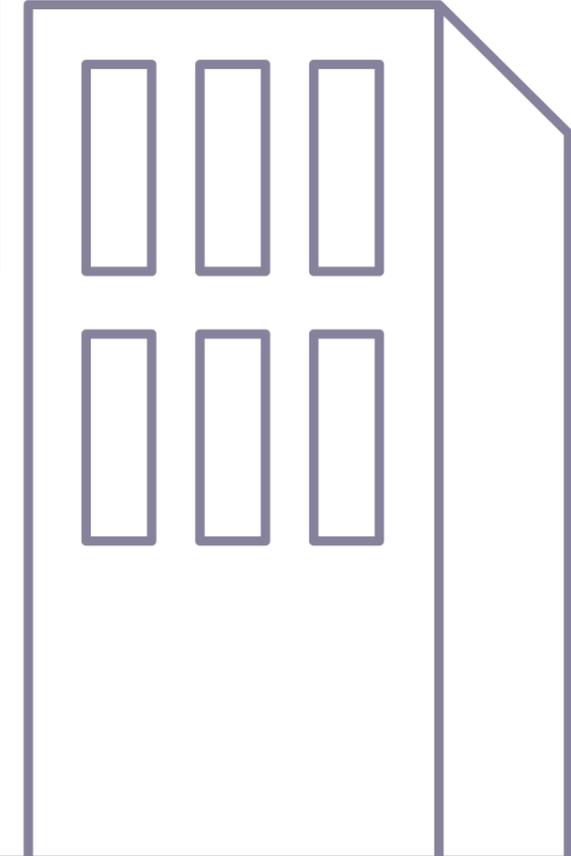
Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Deliver retrofit of up to 1,600 more council homes under SHDF Wave 2.1.	Short	• Asset Management
Access regional projects to prioritise and help homeowners to access retrofit funding and works.	Medium	• Spatial Planning and Growth • Housing Management

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

Action	Short, medium or long term	Lead
Implement measures such as promoting active travel in new and existing housing developments and integrating EV charging points.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Asset Management</li> </ul>
Improve access to recycling facilities for tenants, particularly those in high rise flats where only 40% of blocks have such facilities.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borough Economy</li> <li>• Tenancy and Estate Management</li> </ul>
Work with tenants' and residents' groups and the voluntary and community sector to identify impacts of climate change and plan mitigations.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> </ul>
Preserve green space wherever possible on our estates.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spatial Planning and Growth</li> <li>• Housing Management</li> </ul>
Measure tenant satisfaction with their neighbourhoods and set actions for improvement.	Short	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> </ul>

**How we will monitor progress through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

- The number of diesel vehicles in Housing Services replaced with EVs
- The number of electric vehicle (EV) charging points installed for Housing Services
- The number of heat source pumps installed
- The number of owner-occupied households accessing funding to retrofit their homes
- Tenant satisfaction measures and identifying areas of improvement
- EPC ratings across all tenures
- The number of renewable energy measures in new-build Council homes





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