

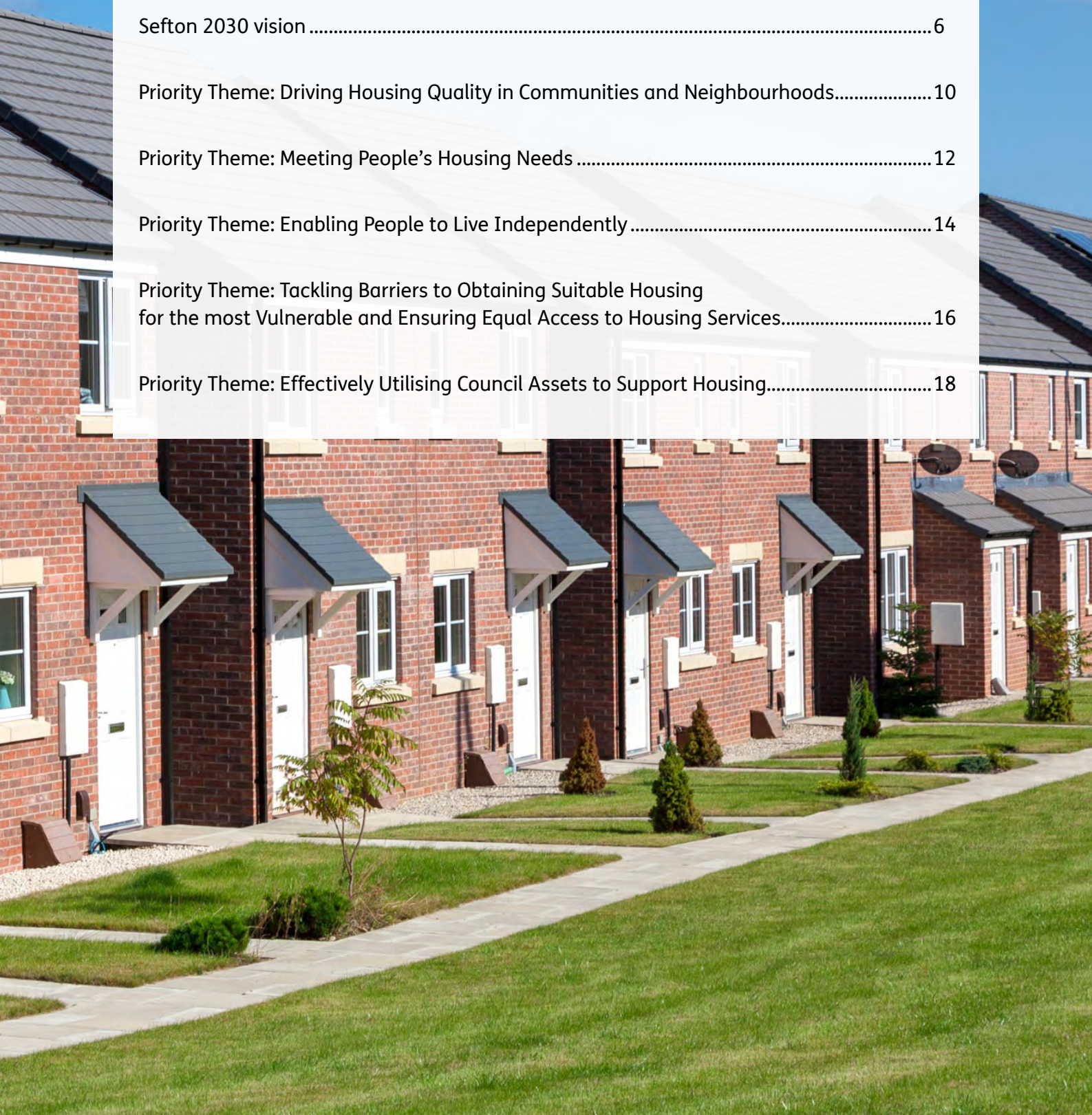
Sefton Housing Strategy 2022 - 2027





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Reflections on the previous Housing Strategy

Sefton's previous Housing Strategy 2016 -2021 included a diverse range of housing priorities that were identified to help address the significant local and national housing challenges that Sefton's residents have faced over the previous 5-years.

Some of these housing priorities have been directly and successfully addressed, including; Driving Housing Quality in Communities and Neighbourhoods through the introduction of successful Landlord licensing schemes in the privately rented sector or working with Housing Associations to improve and implement estate regeneration projects. Alongside this, we have removed 3,780 hazards from residential properties that could have caused serious health & safety issues to occupiers or visitors and brought 11 unfit properties back into use through the use of Enforced Sales procedures.

There have been almost 3,300 additional new homes developed over the past 5 years across a range of housing tenures, to *meet people's housing needs*. Alongside this, we are *enabling people to live independently for longer* through the implementation of an Extra Care prospectus to help secure developments to meet the needs of older residents.

We have also tackled barriers to obtaining suitable housing for the most vulnerable and ensuring equal access to housing services by; effectively implementing a range of measures brought about through the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2017, to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping across the Borough.

Finally, Sefton Council has effectively utilised its assets to support new housing developments by setting up: Sandway Homes, to directly build and market new homes across the Borough. These outcomes highlight just a few of the successful housing outcomes of the 2016-21 strategy.



A new focus on Housing 2022-27



Councillor Trish Hardy
Cabinet Member for
Communities and Housing

However, Sefton Council fully acknowledges that; Some housing priorities can only be addressed over a longer timeframe. In 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and we recognise that housing is one of the main producers of greenhouse gases so we have made long-term resolutions to tackle our climate emergency head on by working with private property owners and registered providers of social housing to help retrofit housing stock across Sefton to reduce carbon emissions. We have also taken positive action to meet the challenge of providing sufficient social housing for local people by developing and managing Council houses for the first time since 2006 over the period of this strategy. Each of these new or additional housing priorities will be included within this document. These matters have become more urgent over the past few years, as a direct consequence of our national and local housing crises or as a positive reaction to help tackle the climate emergency.

Additionally, legislative changes introduced by HM Government, societal changes brought about through the Covid-19 pandemic, and a reflection on the Grenfell Tower tragedy, mean that a robust and renewed Housing Strategy is outlined in this document

I would like to thank all those that have been involved in shaping the new Housing Strategy;

including tenants and residents, officers, partners and stakeholders. We look forward to delivering on the objectives set out in this strategy over the next 5 years.

Cllr Trish Hardy

Cabinet Member Communities and Housing – Sefton Council
April 2022



DEVELOPING THE VISION FOR HOUSING IN SEFTON

Sefton
2030

The vision for housing in Sefton to 2027 and beyond encompasses: –

“ Building upon the successful impacts of the previous Housing Strategies to ensure that Sefton remains a great place to live, by providing opportunities to allow residents to access the highest quality housing appropriate for their needs”.

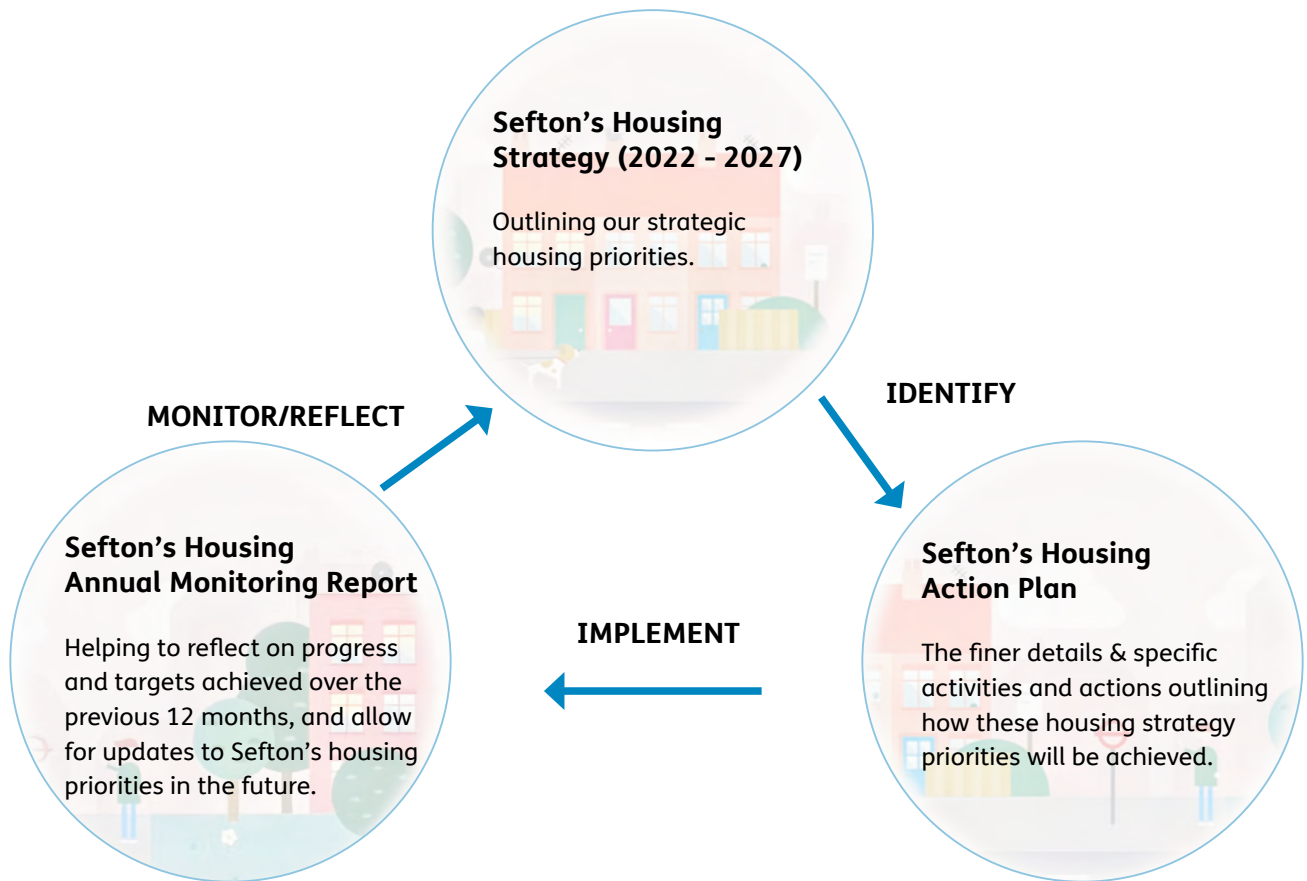


Key Themes and Housing Priorities

The key themes and housing priorities from Sefton’s outgoing Housing Strategy have been reviewed and continue to remain relevant in this strategy refresh. This ensures a measure of continuity in delivery and helps to build upon our past successful outcomes. Over the period of this strategy our housing priorities will be:

- *Driving housing quality in communities and neighbourhoods;*
- *Meeting people’s housing needs;*
- *Enabling people to live independently;*
- *Tackling barriers to obtaining suitable housing for the most vulnerable and ensuring equal access to housing services;*
- *Effectively utilising Council assets to support housing delivery.*

This Housing Strategy does not sit in isolation; therefore, it references and supports numerous national, Liverpool City Region and Sefton-wide higher-level strategies, goals and the Council's Core Purpose. This strategy comprises of three separate documents to; i) outline the strategic housing priorities; ii) provide details and methods of how these priorities will be achieved in an Action Plan; and iii) monitor and evaluate progress against targets set out in the action plan, in an Annual Monitoring Report.



It is also important that this strategy does not solely focus upon the provision of new housing, but also concerns itself with how housing policies can improve the local environment and quality of life for the benefit of all residents. Therefore, this strategy recognises that housing activities must support the Council's key high-level strategies including: Sefton's Vision 2030, Local Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Climate Emergency Strategy. All of which ensures that we:

Protect the most vulnerable

Meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care.

Facilitate confident and resilient communities

The places where we live will make it easy to be healthy and happy, with opportunities for better health and wellbeing on our doorstep

Commission, broker and provide core services

Ensuring that the right housing choices are available and housing services are commissioned or provided in the most appropriate way.

Place - leadership and influencer

Ensuring homes and neighbourhoods are developed in a way that people enjoy being part of, and take pride living in.

Drivers of change and reform

Incorporating new technologies and materials to build better homes or retrofit existing homes with new technologies and improve energy efficiency utilising the most sustainable methods.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity

Supporting housing delivery throughout Sefton leads to a range of direct economic benefits including: Local employment opportunities and workforce development in construction. The development of aspirational homes also attracts and retains economically active people within the Borough and will help to rebalance our demographic profile.

Greater income for social investment

Utilising a range of public and private housing investment funding streams to enable development of the highest quality homes in the borough in the most appropriate locations.

Cleaner Greener

Leading a range of improvement initiatives and encouraging others across all types and tenures of homes to; raise housing standards, address energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and decrease the number of poor-quality houses.



PRIORITY THEME: DRIVING HOUSING QUALITY IN COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

Continuing to improve Sefton's current housing stock is a key priority of this strategic theme. Higher quality & more energy efficient homes bring direct benefits to individual households, neighbourhoods, and the wider community. Climate change also represents a significant threat to our future, and this priority will help improve the quality of housing and is a key part of addressing this emergency. The Council will lead on a range of improvement initiatives and encourage others across all types and tenures of homes to; raise housing standards, address energy efficiency, reduce fuel poverty and decrease the number of poor-quality houses. This strategic priority also helps to tackle the number of empty homes in the Borough, reducing negative impacts on neighbourhoods and help increase the number of available homes.

Our priorities include:

- Raise housing standards across all tenures and reduce the number of non-decent homes with particular focus on the worst conditions including;
- Improving the quality of privately rented sector (PRS) homes and;
- Regulating and improving Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- Working closely with Social Housing providers ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes and have access to redress when things go wrong
- Focus intervention activity to help reduce the number of long-term privately owned empty properties across the borough.

We will achieve this priority over the next five years by:

- Working closely with private sector landlords to support and encourage them to invest in Sefton & provide high quality homes and management services;
- Re-designation of current Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes in Bootle, Waterloo and Southport for a further five years (2023 - 2028);
- Raise housing standards across all tenures and reduce the number of poor-quality homes with a particular focus on those with the worst conditions;
- Provide support and guidance to owner-occupiers to help them improve their housing standards, particularly the most vulnerable in the worst housing conditions;
- Using evidence to monitor the quality of existing housing stock within the Borough across all tenures to assess where stock improvements can be implemented;



- Working in partnership with Sefton’s Housing Associations to ensure that they successfully implement the Charter for Social Housing Residents by providing the best quantity, type and quality of housing, together with the most appropriate support services;
- Decarbonisation of privately-owned and social housing to address Sefton’s Climate Emergency Strategy by targeting and retrofitting the most energy inefficient homes;
- Helping empty property owners to bring their properties back into use through advice and assistance, including early intervention and preventative measures. Additionally, where necessary utilising the full range of enforcement powers to target and bring problematic properties back into use.

PRIORITY THEME: MEETING PEOPLE'S HOUSING NEEDS

This priority looks at how we can increase the supply, mix and quality of new market homes, low cost homes as well as affordable social housing. This increase in overall housing supply will encourage a greater choice of homes that meet the needs of existing and future residents. Additional housing is an important factor in allowing demand to be met across all tenures and improve market flexibility, and importantly help to develop more mixed and sustainable communities. The Council also aspires to directly oversee the development of high-quality new homes in areas where people want to live.

Our priorities include:

- Securing the development of appropriate housing and attracting housing investment in the Borough;
- Attracting and encouraging effective working relationships with appropriate housing development partners to continue to provide new homes across a range of tenures;
- Working with partners who can help those working-age residents own their own homes and to remain in the borough by providing aspirational housing in areas where they wish to live.
- Directly owning and managing social homes and also continuing to work with a range of partners to develop affordable housing;

We will achieve this priority over the next five years by:

- Working with and supporting housing developers to deliver exceptional homes and neighbourhoods;
- Identifying and utilising different grant funding or finance opportunities to help secure development;
- Working in partnership with developers who can provide housing products and services that help aspiring householders to access home ownership;
- Exploring supplementary housing tenures and affordable home ownership to ensure that working-age people can aspire to own their homes in locations they desire.
- Working directly and also in partnership with housing associations to identify appropriate locations and develop a greater quantum and range of social housing;
- Utilising appropriate Planning policies to ensure homes are delivered throughout the Borough and Affordable Homes are built for those residents who are in greatest need.



PRIORITY THEME: ENABLING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

This priority will help Sefton to provide an effective response to the longer-term demographic changes that will affect the borough including significant increases in older populations and a decrease in the working age population. This housing priority addresses how appropriate housing can be provided to support the future needs of specific groups within the local population, through the provision of specialist housing or adaptations to existing homes such as; more integrated and wider implementation of assistive technologies and Technology Enabled Care Solutions (TECS). Ensuring that people can continue to live independent, self-sufficient, and healthy lives.

Our priorities include:

- Responding to long-term demographic changes - A significant increase in older populations often with more complex needs;
- Implementing a robust Housing Pathway, to enable all residents to access supported living and housing provision in the most suitable way;
- Providing appropriate housing to support future population needs;
- Reducing health inequalities through improved specialist housing;
- Meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care;
- Using innovative and adaptive technologies as a tool to help support people to manage their own health and enabling better coordination and personalisation of care.

We will achieve this priority over the next five years by:

- Delivery of Extra Care Accommodation throughout the Borough alongside the adoption of a robust Extra Care Housing Allocations Policy
- Improved integrated working with health and social care partners to identify the appropriate housing and housing investment required
- Introducing a housing pathway to set out new processes for streamlining access to supported living, in addition to housing provision for all cohorts of vulnerable people including older persons and those with disabilities, for example those with learning disability and/or Autism, physical impairment and mental health.
- Implementing the priorities as set out in the Technology Enabled Care Solutions (TECS) Strategy 2021-2024. Ensuring that the provision of TECS for individuals to live in an accessible and safe “home” environment, enabling them to retain independence;



- Working with partners to provide new housing and improved accommodation for older populations, care leavers and the most vulnerable groups, in the most appropriate and accessible locations for local services and facilities;
- Working with landlords and support service agencies to provide a range of supported living accommodation for our most vulnerable.

PRIORITY THEME: TACKLING BARRIERS TO OBTAINING SUITABLE HOUSING FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE AND ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO HOUSING SERVICES

This priority will meet the needs of more diverse communities within Sefton, supporting the needs of populations or groups who are not able to be appropriately represented through the conventional housing market. This priority requires all areas of the Council to work in partnership with a range of external agencies and charities, to ensure that: The very best housing outcomes are achieved for Sefton's most vulnerable groups, such as those with mental health issues, learning and physical disabilities or those leaving care. This priority also recognises how housing can be used to help provide a level of protection for victims of domestic abuse and help to prevent offending behaviours.

Our priorities include:

- Tackling all forms of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Providing more effective housing related support and advice services;
- Meeting the needs of more diverse and vulnerable communities;
- Providing greater access to affordable housing through improvements to the Choice-based letting scheme (Property Pool Plus);
- Providing additional housing opportunities; by registering as a social landlord to develop, own and manage housing stock (links to Priority Theme: Effectively Utilising Council Assets to Support Housing)
- Understand and act upon the duties placed on the Council, with regards to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

We will achieve this priority over the next five years by:

- Refreshing Sefton's Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy and implementation of the new Homeless Strategy action plan;
- Assessing the current and future housing requirements for vulnerable groups including: Care Leavers, those providing Foster Care and people with a disability;
- Implementing the refreshed allocations policy for the Choice Based Letting Scheme (Property Pool Plus). Including where improvements to customer access can be made to assist those in need;
- Development of a business plan, to assess how Council Housing can address the needs of the most vulnerable;
- Providing accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation.



PRIORITY THEME: EFFECTIVELY UTILISING COUNCIL ASSETS TO SUPPORT HOUSING

This theme continues the work of the previous housing strategy by addressing how Sefton can maximise the use of its existing asset base, including its land and property portfolio to support the delivery of additional homes. The priority looks to enhance and grow properties being provided by Sandway Homes (Sefton Council's housing development company), over the lifetime of this strategy. Additionally, the Local Authority is once again registered as a Provider of Social Housing enabling the Council to act as a housing provider, stock owner and social landlord. Finally, the Council must work closely with national and sub-regional agencies to maximise the value of available funding for housing investment. This funding and investment will directly lead to the creation of new homes whilst bringing redundant or previously developed land back into use.

Our priorities include:

- Reviewing and prioritising land and assets the Council owns/manages to help deliver housing and regeneration priorities;
- Providing additional housing opportunities; by registering as a social landlord to develop, own and manage housing stock (links to Priority Theme: Tackling Barriers to Obtaining Suitable Housing for the Most Vulnerable and Ensuring Equal Access to Housing Services);
- Growth of Sandway Homes to deliver new homes & making best use of council owned assets;
- Maximising housing investment funding from external partners, to enable additional housing development in the Borough.

We will achieve this priority over the next five years by:

- Reviewing/facilitating the disposal of Council-owned regeneration assets to deliver housing or other regeneration priorities. Supporting the Council's Growth and Investment programme;
- Developing a Council Housing Business Plan to outline detailed governance arrangements and to meet regulatory requirements;
- Progressing the acquisition of Council Housing to meet housing needs;
- Development of Sandway Homes future pipeline sites throughout Sefton to provide additional quality family homes;
- Working directly with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority partners, to attract appropriate funding sources, to help implement a range of housing developments;
- Working with Homes England and Housing Associations, to maximise housing investment in the Borough, through the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026 funding.



