



An independent newsletter for Sandwell Council Tenants and Leaseholders

## SOME OF YOUR QUESTIONS ...AND THE COUNCIL'S ANSWERS

As hundreds of survey forms have arrived at DWA's offices, we have gone through them all and made a list of your most Frequently Asked Questions about the future of the housing service in Sandwell.

### Q1. Why does the Council want to close Sandwell Homes early?

In a nutshell, because the Government has changed the way council housing is funded. The Government has stopped additional funding for Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) like Sandwell Homes. It has also given local councils more freedom to invest in local housing and housing services. By running services itself, the Council believes it can save money which can be reinvested into frontline services and housing improvements.

### Q2. Won't services suffer if you take them back in-house?

No, services won't suffer. Wherever possible frontline services will be protected and maintained, while those services that can be improved will be improved.

### Q3. What about those homes that still haven't been improved or brought up to the Decent Homes Standard?

The Council is currently reviewing its investment programme and will as a priority continue to improve council homes across Sandwell making sure that everyone has a safe, warm and well maintained home. Councillors will be making decisions about the programme by August.

### Q4. Sandwell Homes is a 3-star organisation and I am happy with the standards of service I receive. How will the council maintain standards?

The same staff will continue to provide the same services - if Sandwell Homes closes, staff will become council employees but continue to provide an excellent service to tenants. Work will continue to improve services, building upon what has already been achieved.

### Q5. Sandwell Homes has lots of ways tenants can get involved and influence things. Will that all end if we go back to the Council?

Not at all. Tenant and community involvement has and always will be important to the Council. The Council wants to continue to work closely with its tenants and leaseholders and consider how they could be involved in future.

### Q6. The Board of Sandwell Homes has offered to carry on running the housing service after 2014. Why hasn't the Council accepted this offer?

The contract with Sandwell Homes was always going to end in 2014. The Council is very pleased with what Sandwell Homes has achieved but, now that extra Government money for ALMOs like Sandwell Homes has stopped, the Council believes the time is right to run housing services itself as it can save money to reinvest in services and housing improvements.

**Are you a leaseholder?**  
The Council wants to hear your views too  
**FREEPHONE 0800 0855 492**



## Bulletin Board

**COME AND HAVE YOUR SAY**  
Meet the Council and Sandwell Homes

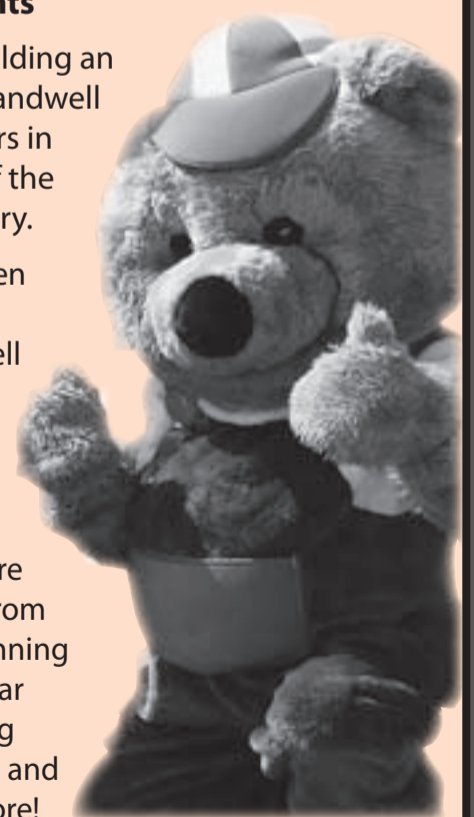
**Saturday 7th July 2012**  
**Drop-in anytime between 2pm - 5pm**  
**The Council House, Oldbury**

- ✓ Find out the results of the survey
- ✓ Ask questions
- ✓ Children come and meet Bertie the bear
- ✓ Meet the Council and Sandwell Homes
- ✓ Free refreshments

On July 7th **DWA** are holding an afternoon drop-in for Sandwell tenants and leaseholders in the Council Chamber of the Council House in Oldbury.

Drop-in any time between 2pm and 5pm and meet senior staff from Sandwell Council and Sandwell Homes. Talk to DWA about the survey results.

For children there will be a visit from the award winning Bertie The Bear plus colouring competitions and prizes and more!



**FREEPHONE 0800 0855 492**  
**for more details**

