

Housing Needs Assessment Consultation Report



Aims of the Consultation

It is important that we hear from as many people as possible who live in Sandwell every day when developing our housing strategies. This consultation was designed to gather feedback from residents, tenants, employees, and councillors on the draft **Housing Needs Assessment**.

The feedback collected will help ensure that the Assessment accurately reflects local housing needs and can guide future housing decisions in Sandwell.

Approach to the Consultation

The analysis in this report is based solely on survey feedback received during the public consultation.

Online consultation:

The online consultation opened on 5th August 2025 and ran for eight weeks, closing on 31st October 2025, via Citizenspace. The survey included both quantitative and qualitative questions, giving respondents the opportunity to comment on:

- Whether the Assessment reflects the housing situation in their community
- How easy it is to read and understand the document
- Any gaps or missing information

Feedback received was reviewed carefully, and insights will inform the final version of the Housing Needs Assessment, which will be used to support future housing planning and decisions in Sandwell.

Engagement with Stakeholders

Throughout the drafting of the Housing Needs Assessment, Sandwell Council carried out a range of engagement activities to capture as many perspectives as possible:

- **Collaboration Across Housing Teams and Partners:** The Assessment was developed in consultation with housing management teams, domestic abuse services, community partnerships, and other relevant services to ensure a comprehensive understanding of housing needs.

- **Resident Engagement Groups:** Draft versions of the Assessment were shared with resident groups, including the Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Group (TLSG), to gather feedback and improve clarity.
- **Policy Engagement Session:** On 12th September 2025, a session was held with residents to discuss the draft Assessment and provide feedback on local housing challenges. Residents were given the opportunity to review the document in paper form and provide feedback either online or via postal survey.

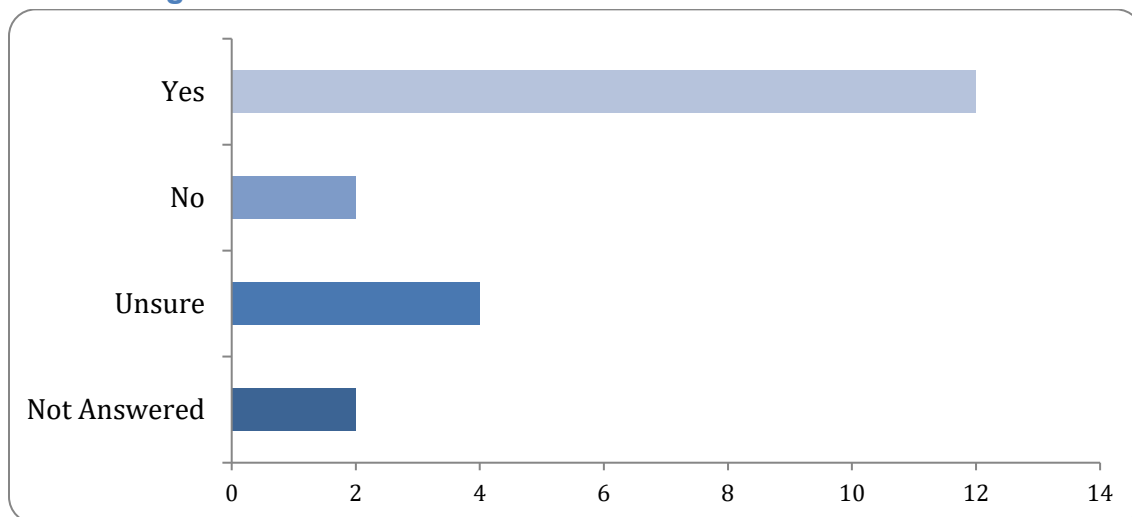
These engagement activities helped ensure that the Assessment reflects the experiences and needs of Sandwell residents and provides a strong foundation for housing planning and decision-making across the Borough.

Online Consultation – Questions and Responses

<https://consultationhub.sandwell.gov.uk/housing/housing-needs-assessment-2025>

Responses to this survey: **20**

1: Does the Housing Needs Assessment clearly show the current demands for housing in Sandwell?

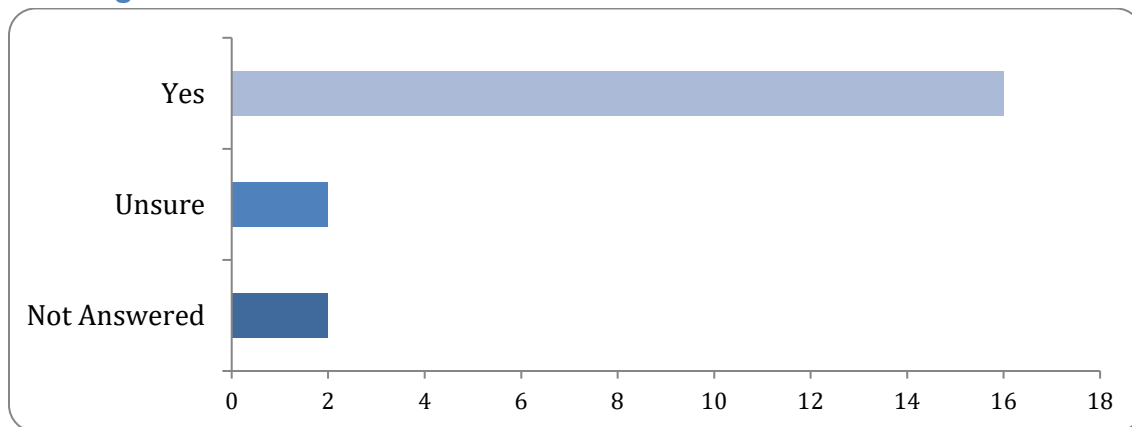


Most respondents (60%) felt that the Housing Needs Assessment clearly shows the current demand for housing in Sandwell. A smaller number (10%) said it does not, while 20% were unsure, suggesting that some found parts of the information less clear or detailed. One respondent did not provide an answer. Overall, the findings indicate that the majority understand and trust the assessment, but there is still room to improve clarity and accessibility for all readers.

2: Please tell us more about your answer.

Respondents felt the information about housing need and waiting lists was clear, showing how many people are waiting and how long it can take to get a home. Some liked that the figures include different groups, such as disabled people and young families. Others said hidden homelessness isn't fully covered, meaning some people in need might not be shown in the data. One respondent shared a personal experience of overcrowding and long waiting times, saying it causes stress and affects family wellbeing. Overall, respondents think the information is clear and realistic, but that more needs to be done to recognise hidden housing problems.

3: Does the Housing Needs Assessment clearly show the supply of housing available in Sandwell?



The majority of respondents (80%) felt that the Housing Needs Assessment clearly shows the supply of housing available in Sandwell. No respondents said it does not, while 10% were unsure, suggesting only a small number found the information unclear. One respondent did not provide an answer. Overall, the results show a strong level of confidence in how housing supply is presented, indicating that this section of the assessment is well understood and effectively communicated.

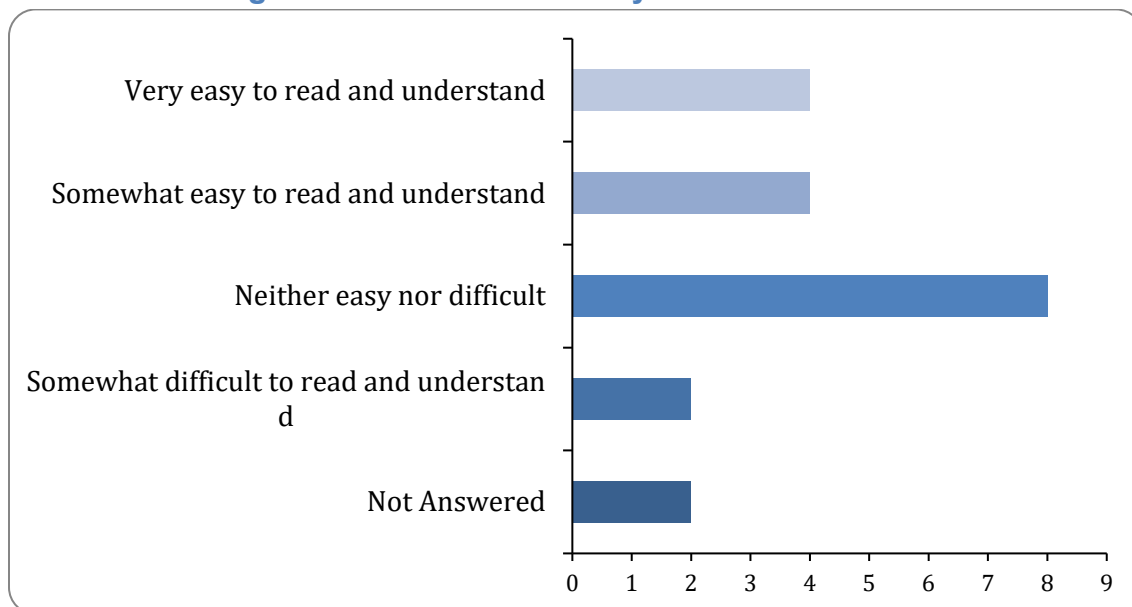
4: Please tell us more about your answer.

Respondents said the charts and graphs clearly show the types of homes available, such as houses and flats. However, some raised concerns about empty properties that remain vacant for long periods, saying this can make the Council appear ineffective in managing its housing stock. Overall, respondents found the information clear and easy to understand but felt the issue of long-term empty homes needs more focus.

5: Is there any important information that you would like to see added to the Housing Needs Assessment?

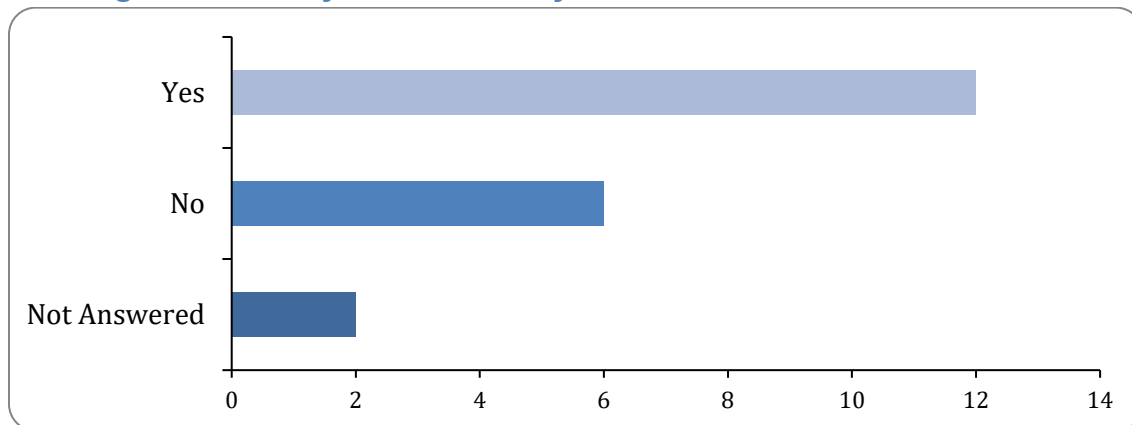
Respondents shared mixed views on whether the housing information covers everything needed. Some felt it was well explained and easy to understand, especially the Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) Summary, and noted that hard copies should be available for those not online. Others said hidden homelessness, such as sofa surfing, needs more attention, and called for clearer explanations of how banding decisions are made, as the meaning of each band can be confusing. One respondent shared a personal experience of overcrowding and difficulties finding suitable housing, suggesting that the bidding and property swap system could be improved to make better use of available homes. Overall, respondents found the information helpful and mostly clear, but identified gaps in how specific housing situations and allocation rules are explained.

6: Is the Housing Needs Assessment easy to read and understand?



Most respondents found the Housing Needs Assessment neither easy nor difficult to read and understand, suggesting that while the document is generally accessible, it may benefit from clearer language or simpler presentation. A smaller number found it very easy or somewhat easy to understand, indicating that parts of it are well written. A few respondents found it somewhat difficult, and one did not answer. Overall, the results show that readability is generally acceptable, but there is room to make the assessment more engaging and straightforward for all readers.

7: Do you think that the data in the Housing Needs Assessment reflects the housing situation in your community?



Most respondents felt that the Housing Needs Assessment reflects the housing situation in their community, suggesting that the data is generally seen as relevant and accurate. A smaller number of respondents felt that it does not reflect their community, indicating that some local experiences may not be fully captured. When considering readability, most respondents found the Assessment neither easy nor difficult to read and understand, suggesting that while the document is generally accessible, it may benefit from clearer language or simpler presentation. A few respondents found it very easy or somewhat easy to understand, showing that certain sections are well written, while a small number found it somewhat difficult. Overall, the results indicate that the Assessment is broadly understandable and relevant, but there is room to make it clearer and more engaging for all readers.

8: Please tell us more about your answer

Some respondents who found the Assessment somewhat easy to read noted that certain groups, such as sofa surfers and families experiencing overcrowding, are not fully captured in the data.

Those who found it neither easy nor difficult to read shared concerns about the Council's understanding of residents in large apartment blocks, mentioning issues like subletting and frequent tenant turnover that may not be reflected in the Assessment.

A respondent who found it somewhat difficult to read highlighted that hidden homelessness is not adequately addressed, suggesting that the real housing need may be underrepresented.

Overall, these comments suggest that while the Assessment is generally understandable, it may not fully capture the experiences of all residents, particularly those in less visible or complex housing situations.

9: How do you think the information from the Housing Needs Assessment should be used in future housing decisions?

A few residents provided suggestions on how the information in the Housing Needs Assessment could guide future housing decisions:

- Some residents suggested making it easier for people to be housed where needed, including facilitating swaps between empty properties and households that need to upsize or downsize. They also recommended checking on single elderly residents living in larger properties they may not fully use, freeing up space for those in greater need.
- Another resident suggested using the Assessment to review the use of current housing stock and encourage movement within it, such as through mutual exchanges between tenants.

Overall, residents see the Assessment as a tool to improve how housing is allocated and ensure properties are better matched to household needs, though only a few responses were received on this question.

Resident Engagement Session – Housing Needs Assessment

On Friday 11th April 2025, Sandwell Council hosted an engagement session with residents to discuss the draft Housing Needs Assessment, led by our Community Partnerships Team. These sessions are part of our ongoing efforts to better understand housing needs across the Borough and to shape future housing decisions.

Residents, along with Housing Management staff, tenants, and leaseholders, contributed valuable insights during these discussions. Below is a summary of the key comments received and Sandwell Council's responses, including planned actions and timescales.

Topic	What Respondents Told Us	Our Response	Relevant Actions	Timescale
Representation of Housing Needs	Respondents indicated that the Assessment does not fully capture hidden homelessness, sofa surfers, and families experiencing overcrowding, including those over 22 who may not be on the housing register.	We acknowledge that these groups are often underrepresented and will consider alternative data sources to better capture these needs.	Review data sources and methods to ensure the Assessment reflects hidden homelessness and overcrowding.	December 2025
Readability	Residents said the Assessment is generally understandable, but some sections are complex and could benefit from simpler language and clearer explanations.	We recognise that some sections may be complex. Efforts will be made to simplify language and improve clarity.	Revise text for clarity, add summaries, and provide visual aids (charts/infographics) to make key findings more accessible.	December 2025
Relevance of Data	Some respondents felt that the data does not fully reflect the experiences of residents in large apartment blocks, including issues	We agree that more granular, locally specific data could improve accuracy.	Conduct further analysis of tenancy patterns, subletting, and mobility in multi-unit buildings.	2026 and ongoing

	such as subletting, frequent tenant turnover, and underutilised units.			
Use of Assessment	Respondents suggested that the Assessment should guide property allocation, mutual exchanges, and support for residents needing to upsize or downsize. They also highlighted the importance of prioritising households in greatest need.	We will use the Assessment to inform housing planning, allocation, and initiatives to better match households to suitable homes.	Incorporate recommendations into housing allocation strategies and future planning decisions.	2026 and ongoing
Accessibility	Residents highlighted that the Assessment should be available in multiple languages and accessible formats to ensure all residents can understand it.	We recognise this need and will explore options to improve accessibility.	Review online and paper formats for language support; provide translated versions where needed.	2026 and ongoing
Follow-up & Engagement	Respondents emphasised the importance of ongoing engagement to ensure the Assessment remains accurate and up-to-date with changing community housing needs.	We will continue to engage residents and stakeholders to validate and update the Assessment periodically.	Schedule annual review and engagement sessions to update data and reflect changing housing needs.	2026 and ongoing