

Briefing Paper – O & S Board - Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)

Large Scale Voluntary Transfer

A Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) was a key part of the Governments housing policy at the time. A key motivation was to facilitate investment in improving council housing stock without increasing public sector borrowing. Councils were under strict financial borrowing restrictions and unable to access private finance to meet the 'decent homes' standard of the time.

It involved the council transferring ownership of its homes with the agreement of its tenants to a new or existing Registered Provider (RP). The key feature of a LSVT mainly related to the stock investment programme that can be funding through private finance.

Following a stock options appraisal Bromsgrove District Council undertook a ballot of Council tenants in June 2003 and it was agreed by both the tenants and the Council to a LSVT of its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) stock and land and this was completed in March 2004 and the Council's HRA was closed the following year. The housing stock was transferred to the newly created Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). The number of properties is shown below including the price per property and total received by Bromsgrove District Council.

Date of transfer	No. of properties	Price per property (£) (tenanted market value)	Total Received (£m)
29 March 2004	3,096	5,218	16.50

BDHT is a Registered Provider and company limited by guarantee and a registered charity with its principal activities of the development and management of affordable housing in Bromsgrove and Redditch and the surrounding areas. It is governed through a Board. The BDHT Board has ultimate responsibility for governance and the organisation and at least two board members have had experience of being a tenant, leaseholder or shared owner of social/affordable housing. BDHT develops new affordable housing both with and without grant from Homes England.

Regulator of Social Housing

As a Registered Provider of social housing, they are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. This regulation provides several standards they are required to meet set into two elements as below.

Consumer standards

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neighbourhood-and-community-standard>

Safety and Quality Standard <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safety-and-quality-standard>

Tenancy Standard <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tenancy-standard>

Transparency, Influence and Accountability (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/transparency-influence-and-accountability-including-tenant-satisfaction-measures>

Consumer standards Code of Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consumer-standards-code-of-practice>

Economic standards

Governance and Financial Viability Standard and Code of Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-and-financial-viability-standard>

Rent Standard and Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/rent-standard-and-guidance>

Value for Money Standard and Code of Practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/value-for-money-standard>

They are required to submit Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey results on a yearly basis. The below link shows their 2024/25 results

<https://www.bdht.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TSMs-October-2025.pdf>

The following link is the Regulatory judgment on Viability and Governance completed this year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-judgement-bromsgrove-district-housing-trust-limited/bromsgrove-district-housing-trust-limited-lh4415-regulatory-judgement-30-july-2025#:~:text=We%20assess%20the%20performance%20of,than%201%2C000%20social%20housing%20homes.>

Housing Ombudsman

They are also required by the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) to be a member of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

A requirement of being a member is that they must have a complaints standard that meets the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code and this has to be reviewed annually and they submit an annual complaints performance and

improvement report. Relevant documents can be seen in the following link.

<https://www.bdht.co.uk/complaints/>

As Councillors an effective way to support customers is to support them to make a complaint or raise the complaint yourself if it does not contain personal data relating to a customer. Details of how to complain can be found in the link above. You will note a tenant can appoint a representative to deal with their complaint on their behalf.

Housing Options Contract

The Council has contracted out its statutory functions in relation to housing advice and homelessness (Housing Options Service). BDHT has been providing this service since 2004 and won the latest tender with the contract running from 1 April 2023 and finishes on 31 March 2028.

The purpose of the service is to:

- Provide and manage a Housing Options Service and ensure excellent customer service that will provide a housing pathway for all client groups.
- Deliver comprehensive housing options advice.
- Manage the expectations of customers who are unlikely to be successful in obtaining social housing and assist people to access other housing options i.e. in the Private Rented Sector.
- Undertake homelessness assessments and investigations to discharge the Council's statutory duties.
- Deliver the Council's Prevention Duty by providing a person-centred approach that considers all the reasons and causes of homelessness when developing Personal Housing Plans.
- Deliver the Council's Relief Duty and help to secure accommodation in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Work proactively with customers at an early stage to promote and encourage engagement with specialist services.
- Reduce homelessness from the social and private rented sectors.
- Strive to reduce the number of homeless applications with an emphasis placed on prevention of homelessness.
- Ensure that households accepted as homeless are rehoused into suitable, affordable accommodation in accordance with relevant legislation.

- Ensure as far as is practicable, that no household is accepted as homeless more than once during a two-year period.
- Work with Public Authorities who refer to the Council's Provider any person(s) who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Provide temporary accommodation and services to homeless households including having access to a range of temporary accommodation, for example for families, young people or single homeless applicants where appropriate with a dedicated officer to manage and provide advice and assistance.
- Support the provision of safe temporary accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and No First Night Out/No Second Night Out for rough sleepers or those likely to rough sleep.
- To ensure that time spent in temporary accommodation is kept to an absolute minimum and within legally defined limits where applicable.
- Be a point of access for referrals into supported accommodation services and to ensure that referral pathways into accommodation are implemented efficiently and are fit for purpose.
- Work in partnership with supported accommodation providers to ensure successful move on from the schemes and ensure the pathway for move on from the accommodation is implemented successfully.
- Develop excellent relationships with partner organisations.
- Manage the Council's Housing Register.
- Implement the Council's Allocations Policy and revisions to the Policy within the contract period.
- Administer the Council's Choice Based Lettings (CBL) service or any subsequent allocations system.
- Where required nominate customers for vacancies that arise within Registered Provider (RP) stock in the district, in accordance with new and existing nomination arrangements.
- Ensure the service is accessible to all residents of Bromsgrove District.
- Provide comprehensive information that people can act upon.
- Have a person-centred approach and treat customers with empathy, dignity and respect.
- Complete appropriate monitoring including, but not solely limited to, HCLIC returns.

- Provide an out of hours homelessness service as part of the contract; this will need to be provided in accordance with the relevant legislation and the Code of Guidance.
- Provide information in the response to freedom of information requests.

The Team at BDHT offers housing options interviews for people in housing need and assessment of entitlement to housing for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Temporary and permanent accommodation may be provided in line with homelessness legislation. The team also offers general housing advice and assesses applications for 'Home Choice Plus, the scheme is used to allocate housing association properties in the district.

The Housing Options Team provides a range of services across 4 elements:

- Housing Register,
- Allocations and nominations,
- Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention Service,
- Statutory Homelessness Service

The Team also maintain links with and understand the local private rented sector market. Liaising and negotiating with private landlords and households to access the sector and help sustain tenancies. They also work with and identify support needs of:

- 16 - 25 year olds
- Mental Health Issues
- Domestic Abuse
- Care Leavers
- Substance Misuse
- Armed Forces
- Older Persons
- Those with financial difficulties

There is a historical agreement between BDHT and BDC that guarantees the availability of up to 39 units of temporary accommodation up until 2033 and a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 7 units of Static Temporary Accommodation units that replaced the former homelessness hostel. Officers are currently working with BDHT to provide an additional 4 units of temporary accommodation under a SLA.

As part of the transfer agreement Bromsgrove District Council has 75% of nominations to the transferred stock. A nomination is where the Council puts forward

an applicant from the Councils housing register to be housed in a vacant RP property.

Officers have a good working relationship with BDHT staff, and we undertake a contract monitoring meeting quarterly and a monthly performance monitoring meeting in relation to the contracted services and temporary accommodation.

Housing Options Interviews held 24/25	
Period	Number
Quarter 1	160
Quarter 2	114
Quarter 3	116
Quarter 4	166
Total	556

Number of Homelessness Approaches 24/25	
Period	Number
Quarter 1	114
Quarter 2	89
Quarter 3	80
Quarter 4	93
Total	376

Nominations to BDHT properties	
Period	Total 77.5%
QTR 1	74%
QTR 2	78%
QTR 3	83%
QTR 4	75%

It is proposed that an all-Member workshop on Homelessness will be held in the New Year to provide Councillors with a broad understanding of the legislation and processes. This will facilitate support to residents.

Affordable Housing Development

BDHT started with just over 3000 homes and currently owns and manages around 4300 homes. The Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer agreement governing the transfer of the former Council housing stock to BDHT back in 2004 required BDHT not to dispose of any part of the LSVT properties within 30 years without (Clause 3.2):

- 1) Giving the Council 14 days' notice in writing of its intention to make a disposal, and
- 2) Accounting for and giving the Council a claw back sum which is calculated as 50% of the price received from the disposal, less some specified amounts

which included what they originally paid the Council for the property and disposal fees etc.

The Transfer Agreement sets out in Schedule 2 a list of 14 specific circumstances where this obligation would not apply, called 'Exempt Disposals'. This list includes circumstance like the tenants Right To Acquire (a separate claw back applied for a specific period now ended), where compulsory purchase orders apply, where land is needed for highways or utility services and in cases where special consent is received because there is an express direction of a Security Trustee or Mortgagee for the RSL to dispose of a dwelling or where the Council has agreed to a disposal to enable the RSL to trade out of any materially adverse financial difficulty.

It also includes where it can be demonstrated that the net proceeds are to be entirely invested in a specific Social Housing development that meets the needs identified within the Council's approved housing strategy from time to time and the Council gives its approval which shall not be unreasonably withheld in the event that the application is supported by evidence that would have qualified the project for Local Authority Social Housing Grant had such grant still been available.

The Council approved that it would support BDHT's development plans agreeing to the disposal of up to 30 properties or the total income value from the sale up to £4 million. BDHT have disposed of 24 dwellings, and this agreement is now complete. Since 2012 614 new affordable homes have been added to BDHT's stock in Bromsgrove District.