

# LOCALITIES

CASE STUDIES 2025/26



# OVERVIEW

Locality working and tailored, localised communications, are central elements of our corporate plan, Tenants at Heart. The first pilot, which operated in Birmingham’s Handsworth, was designed to test three strategic objectives:

- Embedding the Midland Heart Mindset through proactive and joined-up ways of working
- Strengthening neighbourhood management, and;
- Introducing more localised, consistent and transparent communication.

The localised approach is structured around a core offer, which provides consistent practices across all localities, and a locality plus element, which is tailored to tenant insight gathered through surveys and community engagement.

The Handsworth Ward pilot launched in July 2025, with Drakelow in Derbyshire as the second area, beginning six months later in December.

Both pilot areas deliberately contrast with one another in five key areas:

- 
  - They feature our oldest stock vs our newest stock
- 
  - Handsworth is an urban area, whilst Drakelow is rural
- 
  - The ethnicity make up is 78% non-white British, vs 82% white British
- 
  - 0% LCHO vs 32% LCHO



# OUR OBJECTIVES

Our core objective with locality working is to improve overall tenant satisfaction - with a focus on keeping tenants informed, and around our contribution to neighbourhoods.

Our second objective focused on the cultural shift in the behaviour of colleagues and tenants, moving away from reactive practice towards a more proactive, problem-solving footing.



# LOCALITIES – OUR CORE OFFER

Our core localities offer is designed to provide a consistent framework that can be applied across all neighbourhoods. It brings together a more structured approach to neighbourhood management with clearer, more visible communications, ensuring that tenants understand our role and see the value of our contribution. Organised walkabouts form part of this core offer, to aid the shift to a proactive service and increase our visibility in communities.



# LOCALITIES PLUS OFFER

Our Localities Plus offer focusses on local interventions based entirely on tenant feedback from a baseline survey we conducted, creating local action plans for each locality area. Colleague engagement also forms part of this offer, with a focus on areas with high service demand.

From tenant feedback in Handsworth, our baseline survey highlighted they had four key concerns:

- **91%** were concerned about high levels of rubbish and litter
- **64%** raised concerns around homelessness and rough sleeping
- **61%** mentioned anti-social behaviour as being a key concern, and;
- **36%** of homes are overcrowded, whilst 22% are under occupied.



The baseline survey in Drakelow highlighted slightly differing issues to Handsworth. Tenants key concerns here are:

- 26%** have concerns around ASB & disruptive behaviour
- 20%** felt abandoned vehicles were an issue
- 17%** raised concerns around teenagers and other people hanging around and loitering.

# OUR ACTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

Aside from the baseline survey in Handsworth & Drakelow, we have also taken the following actions:

## TENANT CENSUS

As part of a Midland Heart-wide project, we have gathered a variety of household data which is assisting with a variety of insights. The localities pilot is targeting gaps in the census data.

## PROGRAMMED WALKABOUTS

Our surveys showed that 54% tenants in Handsworth felt we were visible within their neighbourhoods, with Drakelow at 34%. To increase our visibility and engagement with tenants we have programmed fortnightly walkabouts in each locality, enabling us to respond to local priorities and have meaningful conversations with our tenants. Through these walkabouts 747 “you said, we did” flyers have been hand delivered to tenants homes.

Our walkabouts bring colleagues together from across the business, including those from repairs, tenancy services and estates, with other stakeholders such as community safety officers and local police, to address issues in the area such as repairs, untidy gardens, poor lighting and fly-tipping.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

We have also held four key community events in the Handsworth Ward:

- Shaping Birmingham’s Future Together (SBFT)– we attended the Handsworth Marketplace in July 2025, and we are working with Birmingham City Council and the voluntary sector organisations to plan engagement events for 2026.
- We held a Talk and Tidy event in September 2025 as rubbish and litter is tenant’s biggest concern. We gave advice about how to responsibly dispose of waste and how to escalate issues such as fly tipping and illegal parking with the council.
- Welford Primary School requested our help at their weekly Coffee Morning, from October we have been attending monthly and engaging with tenants. We have provided advice and support on repairs, overcrowding and domestic abuse.
- We hosted a mutual exchange match up event in February 2026 with internal and external stakeholders to provide advice on moving home, repairs and community safety.



## LOCALISED COMMS

As part of our online content, we launched a series of bespoke webpages to introduce local officers to the communicate, with live feed of our contribution to tenants’ neighbourhoods.

The most requested communication preferences for Handsworth and Drakelow were email communication monthly so in March 2026 we are launching local newsletters to keep tenants informed and provide monthly updates.

# OUR RESULTS

## Walkabouts have covered 29 roads containing 608 tenants' homes between Handsworth and Drakelow.

They have highlighted missed refuse collections at 3 main sites in Handsworth – Copper Beech Gardens, Pike Close and Grove Lane, with Birmingham City Council clearing excess waste and providing additional bins at no extra charge.

38 additional Homechecker surveys have been completed as part of walkabouts and door knocking.

The pilot has highlighted that community events have seen low numbers of tenants, with the maximum being 10 at the mutual exchange event in February. Walkabouts including door knocking and targeting areas with higher caseloads, has proven more successful in meeting tenants needs and protecting our assets.

150+ additional face-to-face interactions with tenants in their community, increasing our visibility through meaningful engagement. Tenants feedback has been positive. Key themes have been unreported repairs and untidy gardens.

Increasing our presence in these neighbourhoods has surfaced issues that would have remain unmanaged, such as, 17 waste concerns, 2 subletting cases, 1 abandoned property, 10 guttering repairs and 7 mutual exchange opportunities.

Through 5,000+ text messages, we also kept tenants informed about community walkabouts, events, the locations of mobile waste centres, and our distribution of Winter Warm Packs.

We have improved partnerships across both localities by:

- Joint walkabouts in Drakelow with Derbyshire Police and the Local Councillor, responding to tenants concerns about safety, ensuring they are signed up to Derbyshire alert.
- Close working practices with BCC Community Safety Team, a point of contact to escalate issues around rough sleeping, disruptive behaviour and sex work.
- Working closely with South Derbyshire District Council to refresh the local lettings plan to rebalance the community, tackle ASB and create community cohesion.
- Improved links to voluntary sector organisations in Handsworth to support tenants. SBFT brings together voluntary sector organisations and statutory services from the local authority, such as their early intervention and prevention service for adult social care, Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme.
- Internally we have a working group for each locality. This brings together colleagues from across the business who are upskilling each other on their specialities, in order to be able to provide tenants prompt answers to their questions from ASB to advice on solar panels.

Our midpoint survey goes live in Handsworth in March 2026 to measure the impact of the pilot so far, and allow changes to our approach if required.





[www.midlandheart.org.uk](http://www.midlandheart.org.uk)



20 Bath Row, Birmingham, B15 1LZ



0345 60 20 540

