

Solihull Social Housing Market

This paper provides an overview of Solihull's social rented housing market in the period to April 2011.

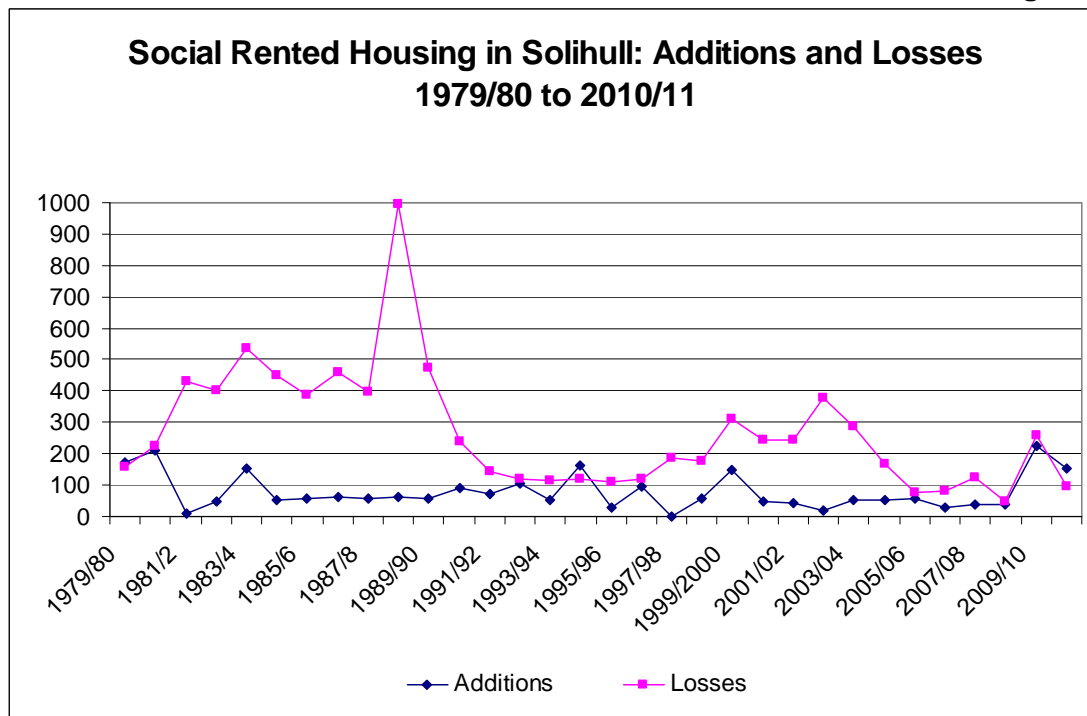
1. Property

1.1 The Social Rented Stock

The social rented sector in Solihull comprises 15% of dwellings in the Borough (12,898 homes of which 80% are owned by the local authority and 20% are owned by housing associations). In England as a whole 18% of dwellings are social housing.

Over the period since 1981 there has been a significant reduction of the total number of social rented homes in Solihull, caused largely by the Right to Buy (RTB). Between April 1981 and March 2011 RTB sales have totalled 7,544 and a further 997 properties have been demolished. Only 28% of these have been replaced by acquisition and new build of social rented homes (Council and housing associations) in the same period.

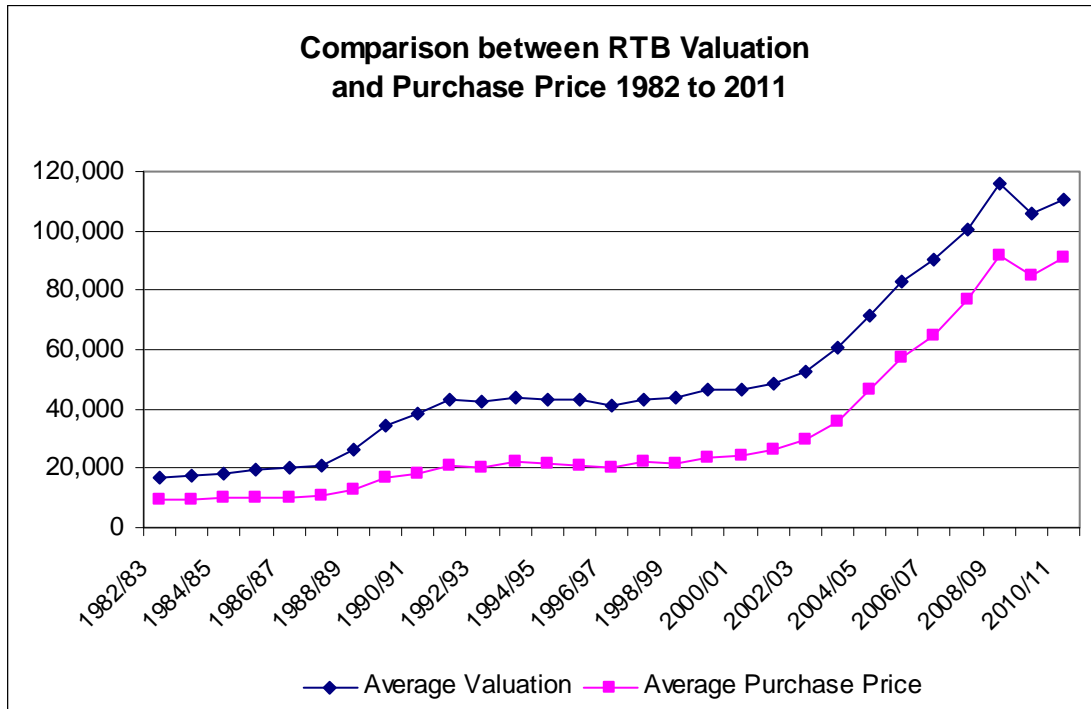
Figure 1



Source: Solihull Council Supply and Demand Statistics

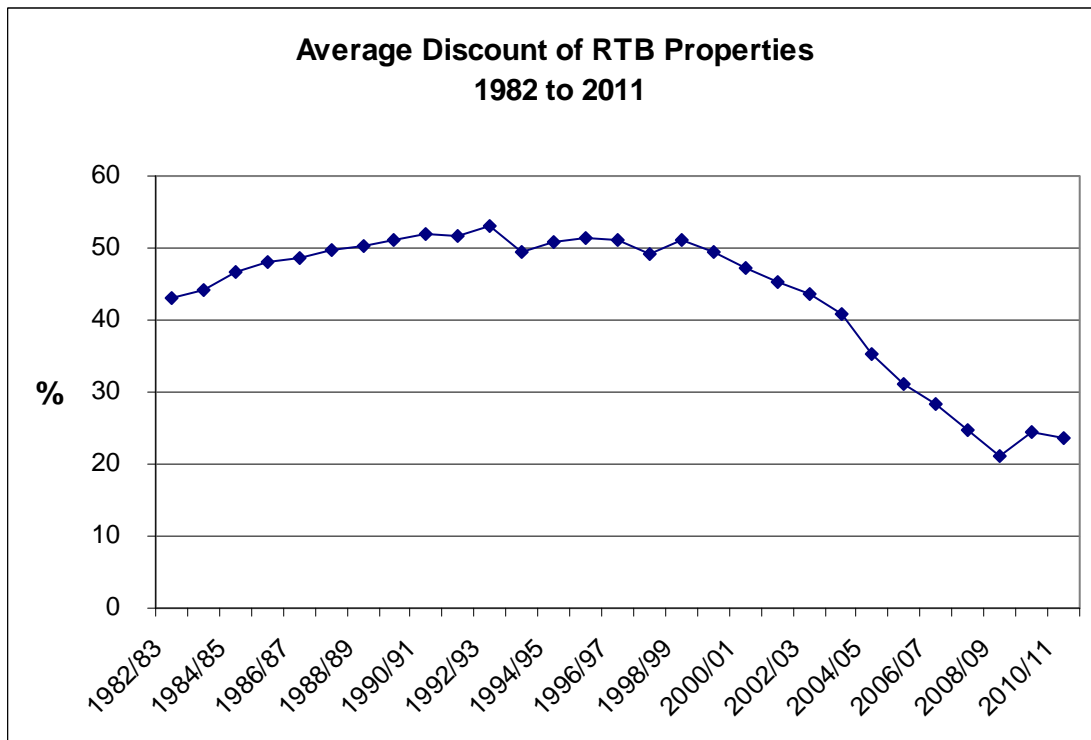
Over the past 7 years (2004-2011) the average valuation of a RTB property has risen from £71,600 to £110,500. The average discount in the period has declined from 35% in 2004/05 to 24% in 2010/11. This has acted to significantly reduce the affordability of RTB for qualifying Council tenants. Only 7 Council properties were sold under the RTB in 2010/11.

Figure 2



Source: Solihull Council RTB Tables

Figure 3



Source: Solihull Council RTB Tables

Aside from the numerical fact, it is also significant to note that the effect of RTB, together with a low replacement rate, has been to leave Solihull with a high overall proportion of flats (50%) and smaller sized (bedsit, one and two bedroom) properties (70%). This is shown in Table 1 below.

Council Housing Stock April 2011

Table 1

		Number of Beds				
		0-1	2	3	4+	
Property Type	Bungalow	1691	67	2	0	1,760
	House	0	621	2520	252	3,393
	Low-Rise Flat	1625	1145	334	0	3,104
	Multi-Storey Flat	881	1203	7	0	2,091
	grand total	4,197	3,036	2,863	252	10,348

Source: Solihull Council housing stock tables, April 2011

Housing Association Stock April 2011

Table 2

		Number of Beds				
		0-1	2	3	4+	
Property Type	Bungalow	0	50	0	0	50
	House	3	348	574	52	977
	Low-Rise Flat	1,030	482	11	0	1,523
	grand total	1,033	880	585	52	2,550

Source: Housing Association stock tables, April 2011

All Council housing and housing association properties will meet the 'Decent Homes Standard' by the end of 2011.

1.2 North Solihull

The distribution of social rented housing shows that 65% is in North Solihull. This, alongside the low levels of social rented and other affordable housing in South Solihull is a challenge to meeting housing need across the borough and achieving the wider objective of mixed and sustainable communities.

The North Solihull Regeneration Programme has been established to comprehensively regenerate the three ward areas of Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Fordbridge and Smiths Wood. Further details about the Programme are available at www.northsolihull.co.uk/. One of the main housing objective is to improve the balance of owner occupation and tenanted homes and provide wider tenure and home types.

In the period to April 2011, 474 social homes had been demolished and 318 new ones built. This has helped improve the balance between flats and houses and

increase the number of three and four bedroom houses for rent. The detail of this is shown in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Social Housing Demolished in North Solihull 2007-2011

Table 3

Property Type/Bed Size	0-1	2	3	4	Total
Flat	114	182	32	0	328
Bungalow	102	0	0	0	102
House	0	0	37	7	44
Total	216	182	69	7	474

New Social Housing in North Solihull 2007-2011

Table 4

Property Type/Bed Size	0-1	2	3	4	Total
Flat	11	68	18	0	97
Bungalow	0	12	0	0	12
House	0	82	102	25	209
Total	11	162	120	25	318

1.3 Rents

The average weekly rents of social housing properties are shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Council Rent Levels, April 2011

Table 5

No. of Bedrooms	Average Rent
1 bed	£62.68
2 bed	£67.13
3 bed	£77.66
4 bed	£83.64
Average	£68.63

*Source: Solihull Council housing stock tables, April 2011
(52 week rounded average)*

Housing Association Rent Levels, April 2011

Table 6

No. of Bedrooms	Average Rent
1 bed	£73.62
2 bed	£81.36
3 bed	£89.49
4 bed	£101.92
Average	£83.62

Source: Tenant Services Authority 2011

2. Residence and Housing Need

2.1 Length of Residence

The average length of time that current Solihull Council tenants have been social tenants is summarised in Table 7.

Current Residents Length of Tenure at April 2011

Table 7

Number of years	Solihull (%)
< 1 year	9
> 1 year & < 3 years	16
> 3 years & < 5 years	12
> 5 years & < 10 years	21
> 10 years & < 20 years	22
Over 20 years	20

Source: Solihull Council Allocations Tables, April 2011

Of the people who gave up their tenancy in 2010/11, the average length of time that they had been a Council tenant is summarised in Table 8.

Former Residents Length of Tenure at April 2011

Table 8

Number of years	Solihull (%)
< 1 year	11
> 1 year & < 3 years	21
> 3 years & < 5 years	18
> 5 years & < 10 years	21
> 10 years & < 20 years	15
Over 20 years	12

Source: Solihull Council Allocations Tables, April 2011

2.2 Reason for Leaving

The main known reasons for leaving Council accommodation are shown in Table 9 below.

Reason for Vacating Social Housing 2010/11

Table 9

Reason for Vacation	Council (%)	Housing Association (%)
Transfer to another social rented dwelling	32	28
Other reasons	21	0
Deceased	14	3
Move to Private Rented sector/ Private lodgings	10	59 (Note 1)
Regeneration Decant	8	0
Move to residential/ nursing home	5	0
Evicted	4	7
Absconded	4	4
Private Purchase (including Right to Buy)	1	0 (Note 1)

Source: Solihull Council Allocations Tables, April 2011 & 'Core' data

Note 1: Housing association 'Core' data does not distinguish between these categories

2.3 Housing Register

There is a high need for social housing compared to the available supply. The Council is working with partners to do all it can to provide more social housing.

At 1 April 2011 there were 15,887 households on the Housing Register. The distribution of this need is shown in Table 10.

Housing Register, April 2011

Table 10

Bedroom Requirement	Existing Solihull Council Tenant	Applicant	Total	Total by bed size as %
Bedsit/One Bed	1,102 (43%)	8,021 (60%)	9,123	57%
Two Bed	922 (36%)	3,385 (25%)	4,307	27%
Three Bed	434 (17%)	1,558 (12%)	1,992	13%
Four or more	119 (5%)	346 (3%)	465	3%
Total	2,577	13,310	15,887	100%

Data from Academy Tables (April 2011)

It is noteworthy that the size requirement among applicants is smaller than for existing tenants. This reflects the point that applicants are more likely to be newly forming (or reforming) households whereas existing tenants needing to transfer are more likely to be growing households. This is significant with regard to the potential of existing tenants to move up through the social rented sector and in terms of

projected need for new affordable homes. While it is true that most need is for smaller properties, longer-term need is for larger ones.

Table 11 shows the Housing Register by how long households have been waiting. This shows that the longest waiting time is in the two, three and four bed queues. This underlines the point that while demand is greatest for one bedroom accommodation, the supply of bedsit and one bedroom accommodation through relet is also greater.

Table 11

Average number of weeks households have been on Housing Register

April 2011	Bedroom size						Average No. of weeks
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
In urgent housing need	56	28	21	28	63	6	43
In housing need	111	135	152	140	163	35	121
In need but no local connection	148	215	141	181	121	200	165
No housing need	176	224	218	262	84	0	199

Data from Academy Tables (April 2011)

2.4 Social Housing Allocation

Social rented housing is allocated to households in need through 'Solihull Home Options'. Further detail on this scheme is available at <http://www.solihullhomeoptions.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/30.aspx>

The availability of social housing in a given period depends mainly on the number of relets of vacated homes. The number of new homes becoming available is much lower.

During 2010/11 a total of 893 Council and 208 housing association homes were let. Table 12 shows social housing availability during the last year in more detail and compares this to the demand from the Housing Register.

Social Housing 2010/11 – Supply and Demand

Table 12

Supply by bedroom size	Council (Note 1)	Housing Association	Total Social Lettings	Ratio of supply to demand (Note 1)
1	425	58	483	1:19
2	319	102	421	1:10
3	139	39	178	1:11
4 or more	10	9	19	1:24
TOTAL	893	208	1,101	1:14

Note 1: This column compares social housing availability with the demand from the Housing Register at 31.3.2011

The pattern of Council housing allocations is shown in Table 13

Social Housing Lettings 2010/11

Table 13

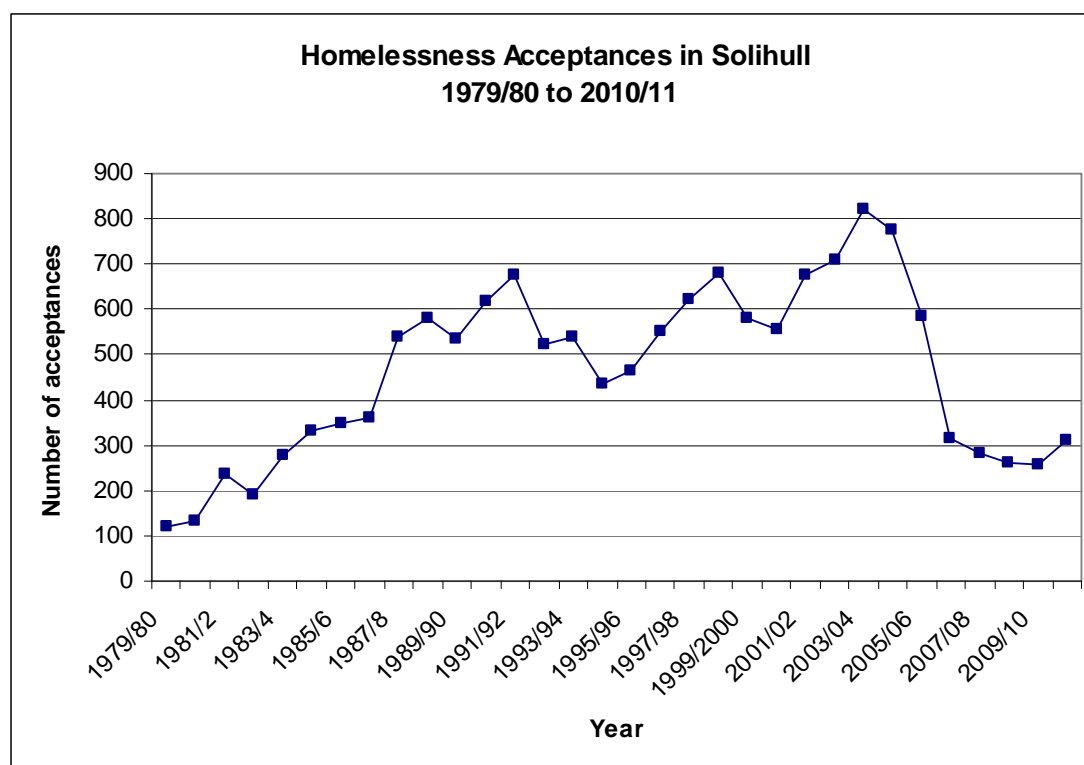
Reason	Council	Housing Association
Transfers	29%	40%
Homeless	20%	13%
Applicants	51%	47%

Sources: Solihull Council Allocations Tables, April 2011

2.5 Homelessness

The Council has important statutory duties with regard to homeless households. In recent years Solihull Council and Solihull Community Housing have worked hard to introduce a range of initiatives to more effectively tackle and prevent homelessness and assist vulnerable persons. Homelessness ‘acceptances’ fell between 2003/04 (820 cases) and 2009/10 (256 cases). However reflecting the difficult external environment following the economic downturn, levels of homelessness rose in 2010/11 to 311 cases.

Figure 4



Source: Solihull Council ‘P1E’ returns made to central government each quarter (2010)

The Council and Solihull Community Housing are working with a wide range of partners to tackle homelessness and prevent it wherever possible. It is also important that housing work integrates effectively with other important issues and initiatives, in particular health and education, skills and training. The Council will be developing this work further during 2011-12 and later years to help deliver the objective of the Solihull Partnership, ‘One Borough: an equal chance for all’.