



### SUMMARY

SCIPS has been a key voluntary sector organisation in Sandwell supporting and developing residents and communities for over 25 years. We have supported our communities to understand and embrace new legislation and different ways of working. We have secured much needed additional funding and resources to support resident engagement and community development in Sandwell. We work in partnership with a range of different organisations to maximise opportunities and impact.

As a resident led company we provide a strong independent voice for communities across Sandwell

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**“PROUDLY WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP”**



# Sandwell Community Information and Participation Service Limited



## Business Plan

2021– 2026

*All information contained in this plan is the most up to date and accurate available at the time of publishing*

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## WHAT OUR MEMBERS VALUE

SCIPS most recent member survey gave us an insight into how much our members appreciate us, this is a selection of comments received.

*They have been with us through thick and thin*

*Their honesty*

*We love the support from staff.*

*They help and support us with funding applications*

*We have a place to go for advice and information on new legislation*

## OUR FUTURE PLANS

- Continue to support residents and communities to work together to improve their homes and communities.
- Support residents build skills and confidence to enable them to fully utilise digital technology.
- Ensure residents are able to engage in opportunities offered through new legislation such as the Charter for Social Housing Residents
- Continue to provide a strong independent voice for the tenants and residents of Sandwell.

## SCIPS TRACK RECORD



**Hateley Cross Big Local** – SCIPS were appointed by the Hateley Cross Big Local Partnership to support the development of a £1 million area-based regeneration programme. Since 2013 we have provided the Locally Trusted Organisation role holding the funding on behalf of residents. In addition, we have provided significant community development support to assist the partnership deliver its vision.



This has included developing several green spaces in the area, a young voices project, and a training and employment programme.



**DIGI-COMM** is 3-year project funded by the Big Lottery Reaching Communities programme in May 2020. The project aims to improve the digital skills of some of the most vulnerable in our communities, as well as support existing groups to make the most of digital to connect with their local neighbourhoods. Digi-Comm will help to improve their confidence and self esteem when using digital, to engage in the services and communities they choose to access. We are working in partnership with St Albans and are now in year two of the project.



**Developing and Supporting TRA's** – On behalf of Sandwell Council SCIPS provide all the frontline support for tenants and residents associations in Sandwell. We provide advice, support and training in all aspects of managing a group. We operate a registration system to ensure Groups comply with a minimum set of rules and assist groups access funding.



**Training** – SCIPS design and deliver high quality training to the sector on a wide range of topics. In addition to skills building on issue such as fundraising and running a group we provide training on new legislation such as safeguarding, GDPR and the Housing White Paper.

## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

SCIPS Board of 15 volunteer Directors/Trustees are elected by the membership, in rotation, every 3 years. The Board Officer positions of Chair, Vice chair, Treasurer and Secretary to the board are newly elected every year at the AGM. I am proud to have been SCIPS elected Chair for the last ten years.

SCIPS have been proactively responding to the needs and aspirations of the communities within Sandwell for nearly 30 years with some of Sandwell's most committed individuals on our Board. We have delivered many innovative projects and been in receipt of grants from various funders in our time. For a number of years local communities have been encouraged to engage in the decision-making process of the Local Council, and SCIPS are proud and thankful to have been in receipt of a core grant from Sandwell MBC to facilitate this engagement for its entire history. We respond to new and emerging government housing related legislation ensuring that our diverse membership are empowered and engaged.

Myra Harris



### Our Guiding Lights



Ros Taylor

As an independent organisation the Board have responsibility for SCIPS financial security. SCIPS board meet every month with the Manager and Company Secretary to manage the day to day running of the charity and hold long-term planning days so that the Board are able to respond quickly to any challenges that could be a risk to the company. SCIPS would not be able to provide the high level of service delivery without our dedicated staff. The Board work closely with the staff and are always looking for ways to support and develop the skills and expertise of both the Board and Staff.

The company has now entered a new phase of its history, having been based in Oldbury for nearly 30 years we relocated to West Bromwich this year. It is a credit to the Board and Staff that service delivery was not affected during this transition.

This new Business Plan will ensure that we continue to support, empower and provide services to the communities of Sandwell while adapting our services and skills to the ever-changing environment.



*Ann Marie Docker*

Chair of SCIPS Board of Trustees



## SCIPS MISSION STATEMENT

*“SCIPS is an independent charitable organisation led by the people of Sandwell. We offer skills and expertise to provide a range of high quality services and a link for all communities on local issues. SCIPS works in partnership across the third sector to facilitate an effective exchange of views and opinions, enabling communities to influence local services.”*

## COMPANY ETHOS AND CORE VALUES

Sandwell Community Information and Participation Service is a community-led organisation guided by principles of empowerment, democracy and inclusion. These principles form the fundamental ethos of the company, and are enshrined in our Mission Statement and expanded upon in our Core Values.

Our core values are the basis upon which our services are delivered, projects developed, and the overall vision of SCIPS realised.



EMPOWERMENT



EQUALITY



INDEPENDENCE



PARTNERSHIPS



INTEGRITY

## SCIPS History and Background

Whilst in the process of producing this business plan we were involved in celebrating the 1919 Addison Act representing 100 years of Council Housing. For over 29 years we have proudly supported, represented, and worked in partnership with Council Tenants from across Sandwell. Looking back here are some of the highlights: -

**1994** - Secured independent funding and in 1995 became a limited company

**1996** - Estate Renewal Challenge Fund (ERCF) – SCIPS were employed by SMBC to provide independent advice around the ERCF proposal for in Sandwell. Tenants ultimately rejected the proposals due to concerns around security of tenure.

**1999** - Secured funding from the Institute of Housing to establish a tenant led inspection scheme which ran successfully for 18 years

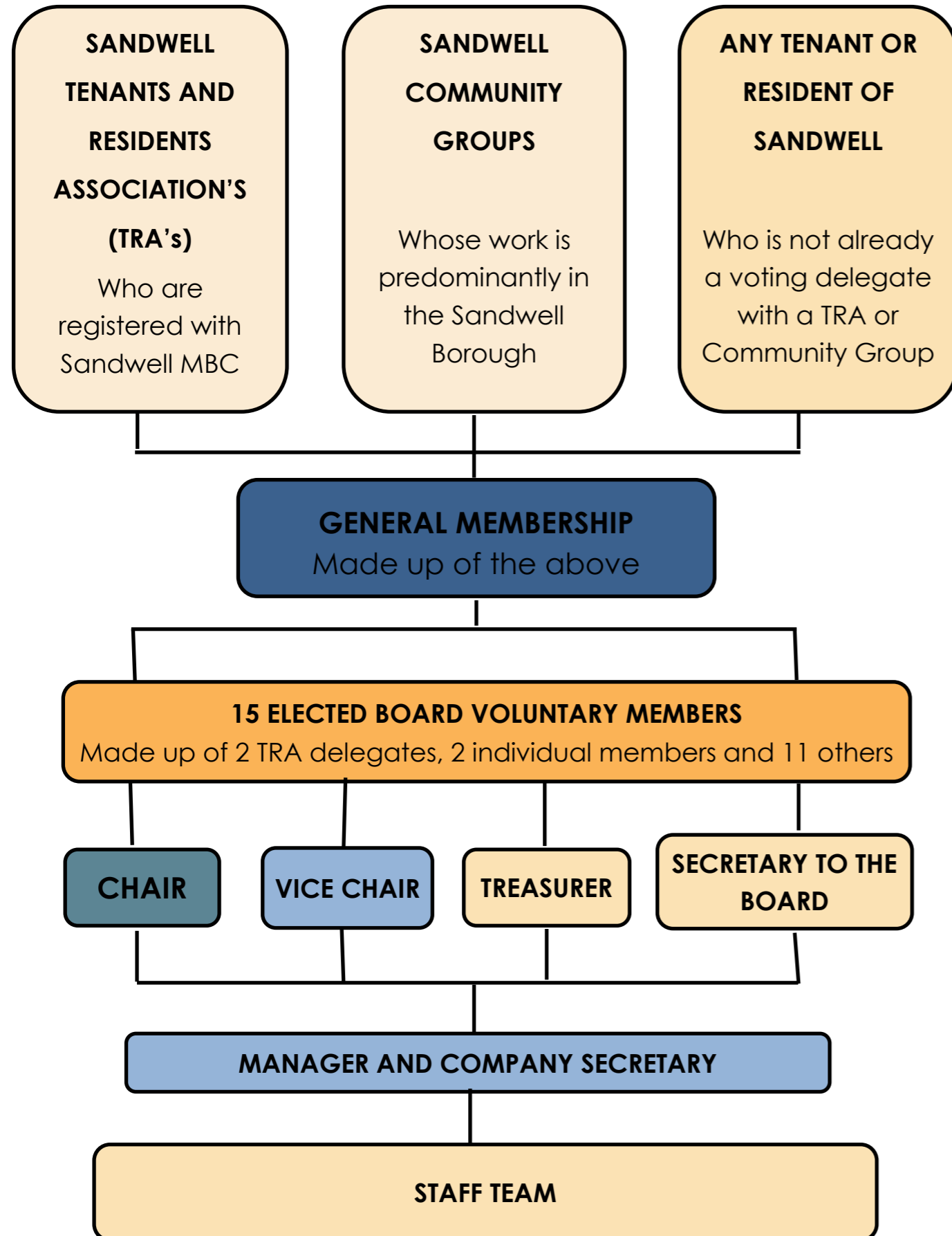
**2000** - Secured funding from Greets Green New Deal for Communities. We were funding over £800k over 6 years to provide a home maintenance scheme for owner occupiers and to install over 400 burglar alarms for vulnerable residents

**2004** - SCIPS provided independent support to residents around the options for the future of council housings. Residents and elected members examined a range of options and agreed to the establishment of Sandwell Homes, an ALMO which accessed over £325 million to deliver decent homes

**2011**- Provided a tenant friend role and undertook consultation around a £1 million development of a Gypsy and Traveller site in the Borough.

<p>We have worked on projects that have secured over £328 million funding into Sandwell</p>	<p>Since becoming a company we have held over 300 Board Meetings</p>
<p><b>SCIPS in 4 Facts</b></p>	
<p>We have distributed over 60,000 newsletters to groups in the Borough</p>	<p>Over 7,000 hours of volunteer time has been spent in managing the company</p>

## OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



## DEMOCRACY

SCIPS is a community led company and registered charity which is directly accountable to community groups in Sandwell. This has always and still remains a fundamental principle of the organisation.

Membership is free and open to any individual who lives in Sandwell, or to constituted Community Groups whose main area of benefit is this borough.

Members are shareholders of the company. SCIPS holds quarterly General Meetings which are designed to consult members enabling them to influence the organisation's service delivery. Members also receive monthly newsletters containing information on projects and initiatives. The monthly newsletter is also an opportunity for partner organisations to distribute information and advertise events and opportunities.

## Our Membership Categories

Any person who lives in Sandwell or community group who predominantly works in Sandwell can become a member of SCIPS.

**Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA's)** who are registered with Sandwell MBC.

**Community Groups** who are either based in or benefit Sandwell.

**Individual Members**—who are Sandwell residents.

## Our Board

At every AGM at least 5 of our 15 strong board stand down to give all members an opportunity to stand for election.



## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

### FINANCIAL STRATEGY

SCIPS is committed to providing good quality services and value for money. We have robust monitoring and finance procedures to ensure all our projects are delivered responsibly and within budget.

The company also undertake long to medium term financial planning and regularly explore the pressures and implications of time limited funding. This enables the company to plan its fundraising requirements well in advance.

We produce monthly management accounts and report regularly to the Board and relevant Sub Committees.

In addition to this, we subscribe to a range of publications and online databases which provide current information on funding available. This ensures we are up to date with legislation that affects our business, and enables the organisation to maximise its opportunities of attracting new external funding.

The work SCIPS has been commissioned to deliver has brought in resources from a variety of sources.

We are committed to assisting the local economy by using local suppliers and services where possible.



We have gradually developed a mixed funding portfolio with sizeable income drawn from a range of different sources. We have been contracted to Sandwell MBC to deliver services for tenants since we were first established in 1994, which provides SCIPS with some security of income.

We will continue to develop this approach to ensure there is a spread of different funding streams in order to provide a reduced level of risk for the organisation.

## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT cont'd

### RISK ASSESSMENT

Over the years one of the key factors in our continued success has been our ability to keep abreast of new developments, within a constantly evolving and ever changing sector whilst remaining relevant to the needs and aspirations of local communities. As an organisation SCIPS has highly developed planning skills which include a pro-active approach to risk assessment.



SCIPS Board continuously examine and assess risks to the company in all areas of work and develop practical solutions and measures to ensure we can minimise any potential negative effect on the company

### REGULATION

SCIPS are a Charity registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales and as such conduct our affairs in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP).



**CHARITY COMMISSION**  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES



SCIPS are also a registered company limited by guarantee and conduct our affairs in accordance with the Companies Act. Our Company number is 3071683.

Our Annual Financial statements are Independently examined in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission and Companies House.

We are committed to equal opportunities and will not discriminate within the meaning and scope of the Equality Act 2010 or any other legislation relating to the provisions services or employment. We comply in all respects with the provision of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and any applicable national legislation implementing or supplementing the GDPR.