

Why were council houses built in Wolverhampton in the 1950s?

Read the following sources and try to find as many reasons as you can as to why council houses were built in the 1950s in Wolverhampton. What is the main reason why council houses were built in Wolverhampton in the 1950s.

Bradley moves in protest against slum clearances

Disgruntled Bradley residents publicly tackled their ward councillors on Monday night concerning the alleged slowness of the Town Council in giving them decent houses to live in.

Men and women almost tumbled over one another in their eagerness to tell of the miserable conditions they were having to endure-tumbledown, buildings, shambles, noise and filth.

Bilston and Wilenhall Times 18th June 1955

Wolverhampton of the Future LS/L71 Wolverhampton Archives

Undoubtedly, the most urgent and pressing of the post-war problems will be the provision of houses.....

Having considered the number of houses likely to be involved in connection with slum clearance and the abatement of overcrowding, the number of houses necessary to make good the deficiency due to the suspension of building operations during the period of the war, and the number of applicants now awaiting houses, the Corporation estimate that it will be necessary to build a minimum of 6,700 houses as quickly as possible during the post-war period. The target aimed at is 1000 houses per year.....

A History of Housing in Wolverhampton 1750 to 1975 by George Barnsby

Analysis of the housing list at March 1948 showed the following:

Accommodation Required No. of Applicants

2 bedrooms 2736

3 bedrooms 527

4 bedrooms 79

6 bedrooms 18

Double bungalow for Old People 44

Single bungalow for Old People 67

1 bedroomed flats (single person, childless couples) 1266

An Express and Star reporter visited Hatton Street in June 1955 He reported that '27 occupants of one yard had to share two toilets (both leaked badly) and one tap.

The 14 children in the year play among the debris of a house which collapsed a few weeks ago. The one surviving washhouse has two walls completely torn out. They collapsed during a recent thunderstorm.

Now women do their washing standing on bricks because the floor is inches deep in mud. There is not one bath or wash basin among the 21 houses.

"We all pay 6s a week to live in hell," said one tenant. The houses are privately owned, have been condemned for years.

The people read by gaslight and cook over gas rings. Many houses have every pane of glass out in their back bedrooms.

One bedroom is shared by six children.

**Express and Star Tuesday June 14 1955
Wolverhampton archives**

Representations of Insanitary Areas Under Section 25 of the Housing Act 1936
Wolverhampton Archives

I, Desmond Alcorn Smyth, Medical Officer of Health to the Borough of Bilston, herewith make an official representation that the dwelling houses in the Areas defined in the Schedule hereunder written (namely, Temple Street Clearance Area 48, 49, 50, 51 and 52, Chapel Street Clearance Area 53, Bradley Street Clearance Area 54, Oxford Street Clearance Area 55, Lester Street Clearance Area 56, Gozzard Street Clearance Area 57, Duck Lane Clearance area 58, Salop Street Clearance Area 59 and 60, Lord Street Clearance Area 61, Hatton Street Clearance Area 62, 63 and 64) are, so far defective in respect of matters specified in Section 9 of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, as not to be reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition, or are, by reason of their bad arrangement, or the narrowness of the bad arrangements of the streets, dangerous or injurious in the health of the inhabitants.

In my opinion, the most satisfactory method of dealing with the conditions in the Areas is by the demolition of all the buildings in the Areas, and I submit this representation for your consideration and necessary action under the Housing Act.

I am,
Mr Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

D. A Smith
Medical Officer of Health
16th April, 1956.

Public Health Department
23 Wellington Road
Bilston

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The Government's immediate post-war housing programme consists of two parts, namely permanent and temporary accommodation. A considerable amount of research and experimental work in connection with post war housing has been undertaken by various Government Departments, and private industrial interests, and much valuable information has been published, notably the report of the Burt Committee on "Housing Construction," and the report of the Special Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Dudley on "The design of Dwellings."

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Works have prepared jointly and recently published the "Housing Manual 1944" which deals comprehensively with the design, planning, layout, standard of construction, and equipment of dwellings and embodies as Government policy many of the recommendations contained in the above reports, the adoption of which will inevitably result in a considerable improvement in the standard of living.