

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 4 April 2023  
**Subject:** Housing and Communities Portfolio  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Holly Whitbread

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Homelessness prevention and relief**

The team took a total of 50 applications in the month of February and the reduction can probably be attributed to half term (we usually average approximately 95 approaches per month). We assisted a total of 4 households in to privately rented accommodation which is a brilliant achievement given the challenging market and current demand.

## **Job Coach**

Embedded within the homelessness team since October 2022 has been a Job Coach employed by Open Road. The job coach takes referrals from the homelessness team from customers with both a housing and employment need and/or desire. As of this month, there have been a total of 21 referrals made to the job coach. There are five clients actively engaging, several others at varying levels of engagement and two individuals who have secured long-term employment. The job coach works with customers to enhance their CVs, prepare them for interviews and support them into meaningful employment or apprenticeships. It's a brilliant partnership which is already demonstrating such value.

## **Neighbourhoods**

### **Dealing with misuse of tenancies**

We have had a closure order obtained on a property at Copperfield. We also we won a case last week relating to fraud and obtained an outright order on a property in Epping. These two cases represent a huge amount of work done by the team with assistance across the Council.

## **Housing Development Update**

### **Local Authority Housing Fund**

I am pleased to report that the Council has been successful in obtaining funding from Government from the Local Authority Housing Fund. This funding allows us to refurbish existing empty council properties with government funding. Using this funding enables us to spread our own housing resources further. It also enables us to re-house Ukrainian families who are homeless in the district. We will be putting 6 homes through the scheme and will receive up to £1,186,322 to deliver the improvements.

## **Independent Living Service**

### **Start date for the new Independent Living Service**

We have extended the date by which the new service (replacing our Sheltered Housing Service) will be in operation to the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 to ensure that full consultation is carried out with staff.

## **Assets**

### **Lime Farm Estate Regeneration Project**

Work the Limes Farm Estate blocks has begun in earnest, with scaffolding erected on both the Yellow and Green Blocks which and key preliminary works underway. The pilot window installs began last week with all relevant parties present to ensure the standard can be agreed.

### **Social Housing Decarbonisation Funding (SHDF)**

I am pleased to report that EFDC has been awarded funding from BEIS for decarbonisation works on 130 properties which will benefit from reduced energy bills and improved thermal efficiencies. Funding from the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (formerly known as BEIS) will award a grant of up to £1,648,426.43. EFDC is liable to match fund this 100% bringing the total project value to circa £3.3m.