

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: September 2023
Subject: Housing and Communities Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Holly Whitbread

Recommending:

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

1. Housing

Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)

The TSM's are a set of key satisfaction measures for HRA housing and property services delivered by EFDC. We have commissioned a specialist provider; Acuity, to deliver these on our behalf. They will be conducting surveys at varying points during 2023/2024 ahead of us reporting final, combined results to the Regulator of Social Housing in April 2024.

Older Peoples Strategy

A commitment of the EFDC Housing Strategy 2023-27 was for us develop an Older People Strategy during 2023. Work on this is progressing well with Denise Peglar, Team Manager, Older Peoples Services and Keith Bowman, Interim Housing Strategy Manager leading on this work. Our aim is to have this work completed for December 2023.

Consumer Standards

Within the Regulatory Standards set out by the RSH are Consumer Standards. These are outlined below:

- [Home Standard](#) – quality of accommodation and repairs and maintenance
- [Tenancy Standard](#) – how properties are allocated/exchanged and terms around tenure
- [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#) – issues around neighbourhood and communal areas and anti-social behaviour
- [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard](#) – customer service and complaints, tenant rights and involvement
- [Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard](#) – reporting against the TSMs, which cover information on areas such as repairs, safety checks and complaints (applies from 1 April 2023).

Social housing providers such as EFDC are duty bound to operate within the standards set out by the RSH. Through our Interim Housing Strategy Manager Keith Bowman, we are currently assessing our position in relation to delivery against the standards. This work includes liaison with the EFDC Tenant and Leaseholder Panel.

Independent Living - Digital Switchover 2025

A Portfolio Holder report was presented in 2022 outlining the need to upgrade the alarm system due to the analogue telephone signal being discontinued in December 2025 and, the alarm monitoring contract coming to an end in November 2024.

Work to move this forward had unfortunately been delayed following challenges with the appointed contractor at the time (Everon) not progressing as planned. This workstream has since been re-started and a revised feasibility/transition report from the TAS, the industry and advisory body for telecare enabled care (TEC) is due late September 2023. This report will inform our revised plan of action and work moving forward. ~Project costs will be re-evaluated in view of the requirement for a new contractor.

Temporary Accommodation - Demand

Epping Forest District Council, in common with other local authorities, is experiencing an increase in demand for temporary accommodation. Figures show a 9% increase in comparison with the same period last year. The Council continues to liaise with neighbouring authorities to share best practice and experience.

Housing Allocations Scheme – Year one review

The Housing Teams have been busy working on a review of the Housing Allocations Scheme after a year of the new scheme being in operation. The draft report/findings were discussed with the tenant & leaseholder panel on the 5th of September 2023. The report is due for presentation to the Communities Scrutiny Meeting on the 26th of September.

2. Housing Development Update

Pentlow Way, Buckhurst Hill - 7 units; 6 x 1B2P Flats, 1 x 2B4P flat

Works are moving forward following difficulties due to design and material changes to the scheme. Our contractor has requested a TIME EXTENSION AND NEGOTIATIONS ARE ONGOING. However, work to the superstructure is well underway. Handover is forecasted for February 2024.



Woollard Street, Waltham Abbey - 8 units; 7 x 1B2P & 1 x 2B4P

Works are progressing on site with the superstructure weathertight and the internals in progress. An Extension of time has been requested from the contractor, to which our EA has reviewed and responded to, and continue to negotiate on. There have been design variations to the contract with some confirmed and others being negotiated. Handover is expected January 2024.



Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Project

Work is well underway on the LAHF project, and our first refurbished property will be ready by the end of September. The allocation to the property will be confirmed in due course. We have a further 5 homes which are being worked on, and these will follow on with delivery. We are working with, and supporting local businesses with this project, and it has been a great success so far.

Planning

Planning application submissions have been submitted for schemes within phase 5, these will be monitored through the process and, those determined as committed schemes will then be tendered and progressed through to contract.

We are working to get both Ladyfields and Chequers B tendered and in contract by the end of the financial year. These schemes will deliver our first passivhaus developments and we look forward to sharing their progress with members.

Our second audit done by Homes England was passed with no recommendations. This was acknowledged by our portfolio holder.

Our completed schemes have all entered their first year in defects and all first-year end of defects inspections have been done with works completed by the relevant contractors. We have also been able to successfully draw older schemes to a close with final accounting being completed and schemes formally handed over to Qualis management.

Strategic Partnership

B3 living are delivering 18 units (14 SO and 4 AR) which have all gone to residents either working or living in the district. An opening event will be held on the 6th October with our portfolio holder to formally open the scheme. Some of the units are already occupied and it is good to hear that these have been positively received within the community.

Network homes will also be delivering two sites totalling 85 units and completion of these units begins from January 2024 onwards. We look forward to the completion of these and allocating these homes to more families within the district.

3. Assets

Energy Efficiency Retrofit

We are currently carrying out retrofit assessments at the 103 homes included in our energy efficiency retrofit project part funded by the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). The homes are some of our least energy efficient and, will benefit from improved insulation, heating systems and photovoltaic panels as appropriate. The work will ensure the homes achieve a minimum energy efficiency performance of EPC band C. Subject to contract, the work will be delivered by E.ON. We expect to start work on the first homes before the end of the calendar year and for the project to complete by the end of the funding period, March 2025.

The Broadway

We are progressing a major works project at The Broadway. The scheme will replace the life expired roof, windows, doors and asphalt walkways to give the two blocks on either side of The Broadway a new lease of life. We will work closely with the residential and commercial leaseholders in relation to their contributions in accordance with their respective leases. We expect works to start in summer/autumn 2024 and expected to be completed in approximately 18 months.

Stock Condition Survey (SCS)

Ridge and Partners have completed a stock condition survey of EFDC housing stock. The survey comprised 3,290 dwellings (51%) and 399 blocks (87%). It is usual to survey a sample and extrapolate the findings. In EFDC's case, the findings include:

- The majority of our housing stock was built between 1930 and 1975. Very little of our housing stock is less than 40 years old.
- We should expect to spend £329million over the next 30-years to replace life expired components. This equates to £1,711 per dwelling per year.
- Work will be prioritised to ensure all Council properties meet the minimum 'Decent Homes' standard.

Asset Management Strategy (AMS)

The results from the stock condition survey will inform our asset management strategy. We are currently evaluating tenders from specialist consultants to help us develop the AMS. We expect to appoint a specialist consultant in September 2023 and, we aim to have an asset management strategy in place for December 23/January 24.