

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date 5 November 2019

Subject: Housing & Property Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Whitbread

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing & Property Portfolio Holder be noted.

Property Maintenance

The refurbishment of Oakwood Hill depot is continuing. Phase 1 is well underway and the new mezzanine structure is being constructed in MOT bay 4. The internal steel frame has been installed and the fire separating walls and floors are being constructed. Externally new security fencing and gates have been installed. The ground floor area of the mezzanine structure will be a new store for the Housing Repairs team with the upper floor being utilised by Fleet Operations.

Specifications for the proposed sprinkler systems at Norway House and Hemnall House are currently being finalised with Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's design consultant. Once complete, quotations will be sought together with listed building consent for the works required at Norway House.

The Housing Repairs team have been working closely with colleagues in the operational assets team to complete some external redecoration works at our small shopping parade in Lower Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill. They are also currently working on fence repairs and redecoration at Alfred Road General Improvement Area also in Buckhurst Hill where recently some resurfacing works have also been completed

At another of the Council's commercial assets, Limes Avenue shops in Chigwell, the external lighting has been upgraded with the opportunity taken to improve the layout and to install extra emergency light fittings for additional safety.

Norway House Homelessness Pods – Visit by Housing Minister

Last month Norway House and more particularly the 'pods' that were installed in the summer to provide shelter for single homeless people were the subject of a snap visit by Housing Minister Luke Hall. It was testament to teamwork that the minister was so impressed by the facilities and services he saw.

Following his visit, the minister Tweeted: "Very grateful to Epping Forest for taking time to discuss temporary accommodation and what more we can do to prevent homelessness. Inspirational to meet such a passionate team." Norway House offers forty-eight rooms including single and double rooms in the main building and five chalets in the grounds for families, couples and individuals who find themselves homeless. Resident's length of stay at the Hostel depends on their individual circumstances and can be as short as 6 months but can be up to two years.

Council House-building

Design and Build tenders have been received for the sites making up the next phase of the house-building programme. The sites are at Chequers Road, Bushfields and Chester Road in Loughton, Bushfields, Loughton, along with Queensway and Millfields in Ongar. These tenders, once evaluated, are due to be considered by the Council House-building Cabinet Committee in December. Work will then start on site in around March 2020.