

**Committee: Housing Board**

**Agenda Item**

**Date: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

**6**

**Title: Housing Development Update**

**Portfolio Holder: Doug Malins – Housing Development Manager**

Item for information

### **Summary**

1. This report provides the Housing Board with a brief update of all current and pipeline Council housing development projects.

### **Recommendation**

2. That the Housing Board notes the content of this report.

### **Financial Implications**

3. Financial provision for the development of new Council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account.

### **Background Papers**

4. None Applicable.

### **Impact**

5.

Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Town and Parish Councils and external agencies
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	All development projects are carried out with full compliance to Health and Safety Legislation.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	All local tenants and residents are consulted on individual projects to take account of their concerns and representations.
Sustainability	All development will provide thermally efficient homes that actively help to remedy the issue of fuel poverty.
Ward-specific impacts	District wide

## Situation

6. The following provides a brief update on all of the current and pipeline development projects:

7. **Mead Court, Stansted Mountfitchet**

This project started on site in January 2014. This scheme involves the redevelopment of a bedsit sheltered scheme, with associated garage block and parking courts to provide 29 new affordable rented homes. The dwellings are to be a mixture of houses, bungalows and apartments, including 4 temporary accommodation flats. The project is being carried out in 2 phases, with final completion programmed for November 2015.

The first phase of the development (14 dwellings) was due to hand over in November 2014. However, the project has suffered some considerable delays. These delays have included asbestos being found in the ground, and UK Power Networks delaying the diversion of a high voltage cable by 6 weeks. However, the biggest delay was caused by Affinity Water, who could not find their water main when they arrived on site to connect up the properties. This caused a delay of over 3 months.

The first phase of 14 dwellings has now handed over, and the quality of the build is excellent.

However, this delay has caused another problem, in that nesting birds are now present in areas of the sheltered housing block that is to be demolished. The law protects nesting birds and therefore, there will be a further delay before demolition can commence. UDC development staff and our consultants are meeting with the contractor (Willmott Dixon) to assess how this delay will further affect the final completion date.

8. **Catons Lane, Saffron Walden**

This project is a development of 6 affordable rented homes, consisting of 4 two bedroom houses and 2 one bedroom houses. The site is a Council owned garage site which is in poor condition and where the majority of garages are void.

Following the procurement process, the Council has appointed Court Homes as the building contractor. They started on site on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015. The early stages of the work include demolition of the garages, breaking out of the hardstanding and forming a wider entrance to the site by utilising part of the garden of 14 Catons Lane.

Whilst at an early stage, the project is progressing well, which anticipated hand over of all dwellings in February 2016. This scheme is being funded through the Housing Revenue Account and Right to Buy receipts.

9. **Reynolds Court, Newport**

This project involves the redevelopment of an existing Council owned sheltered scheme. Reynolds Court was constructed in 1975 and consists of 31 sheltered housing flats and associated communal facilities. Of these, 22 of the flats provide small bedsit accommodation. There are also no lifts within the current scheme which affects

accessibility. The Sheltered Housing Asset Review identified the scheme as not fit for purpose, and a priority for investment.

Following extensive consultation with the existing tenants, it was agreed that the best solution would involve demolition and redevelopment. The proposed new sheltered scheme received detailed planning permission in March 2015 and consists of a development of 41 purpose built apartments (1 and 2 bedroom) along with all associated communal facilities constructed to meet modern day living standards.

The contractor procurement process is well under way, with the shortlisted contractors submitting their first stage tender return on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015. These returns will be assessed on both price and quality. All shortlisted contractors will be interviewed, before a preferred contractor is chosen to move forward to the second stage tender. The latest estimated build cost is £6.7 mill. Subject to agreeing an acceptable fixed price with the preferred contractor, it is anticipated that demolition and construction works will commence in November 2015.

The scheme is to be developed in two phases in order to enable existing tenants to remain on site. The project is anticipated to take 22 months, with the first phase completed in 12 months.

#### **10. Hatherley Court, Saffron Walden**

This project involves the remodelling and refurbishment of a Council owned sheltered scheme that was constructed in 1991. The scheme consists of 26 one bedroom flats. Of these, 18 of the flats have very small bedrooms, and all of the flats have small and inadequate kitchen facilities. The scheme has other poor attributes, such as the common room is located on the second floor with very poor natural light, no reception area, no identifiable entrance point and no scooter store/charging point.

The existing tenants have all been extensively consulted on the proposed remodelling/refurbishment programme of works. The proposed programme of work, which received planning permission in November 2014 includes, forming a new entrance lobby with canopy, providing a ground floor communal lounge, constructing an extension to provide two new apartments and remodelling all existing flats to increase the living space with the inclusion of Juliette balconies. All communal areas will be redecorated throughout.

The contractor procurement process is well underway, with the first stage tender going out to the shortlisted contractors in July 2015. It is anticipated that works will commence on site in January 2016.

#### **11. Other Pipeline Development Projects**

- Garage site redevelopments – 2 sites in Saffron Walden have already been identified, with all garage sites across the District also to be assessed for development potential.
- St. Johns Close, Saffron Walden – potential development of rear gardens. This depends on the Council successfully buying back two Right to Buy properties.
- Walden Place, Saffron Walden – potential remodelling of this sheltered scheme to separate the Listed Building from the 1980's sheltered block, providing new accommodation and communal facilities.
- Park Side, Saffron Walden – predominantly bedsit sheltered scheme in need of development assessment.

- Alexia House, Great Dunmow - predominantly bedsit sheltered scheme in need of development assessment.
- Frambury Lane, Newport – potential to sell this disused garage site with outline planning permission.
- Station Road, Wendens Ambo – potential to sell this garden plot with outline planning permission.
- Garden reduction sites – sites to be assessed for development potential

## Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Not achieving planning permission	1 Planners supportive	4 Development not possible	Pre-planning discussions with planners
Tenants not supportive	1 Tenants fully engaged in all projects	3 Tenants not satisfied	Continuous engagement.
Finance not available	1 Finance team engaged in budget planning	3 Development not possible for a period of time	Development sites to be programmed in conjunction with Finance Team

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.