



Uttlesford District Council

Chief Executive: Dawn French

Housing Board

Date: Thursday, 21st September, 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Committee Room - Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER

Chairman: Councillor M Felton

Members: Councillors A Dean, T Farthing, J Freeman, A Gerard, P Lees, J Loughlin, A Mills, V Ranger and J Redfern

AGENDA PART 1

- 1 **Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest**

- 2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** 1 - 10

- 3 **Affordable Housing update - Quarter 2 2017-18** 11 - 14

- 4 **Development Update - Walden Place** 15 - 20

- 5 **Development Update - Reynolds Court (verbal report)**

- 6 **Homelessness Update** 21 - 24

7 HRA Business Plan Action Plan

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8 Allocations Policy (verbal report)

9 Universal Credit (verbal report)

10 Tenant Regulatory Panel (TRP) update (verbal report)

11 Date of next meeting - 7 December 2017

For information about this meeting please contact Democratic Services

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Agenda Item 2

HOUSING BOARD held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 10am on 7 MARCH 2017

Present: Councillor M Felton (Chairman)
Councillors J Loughlin, A Mills, S Morris, V Ranger, J Redfern and H Ryles.

Also present: Mrs Angela Hutton and Mrs Carole Mandy (Tenant Forum Representatives)

Officers in attendance: A Bochel (Democratic Services Officer), F Butler (Senior Health Improvement Officer), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer), D Malins (Housing Development Manager), Rebecca Dobson (Principal Democratic Services Officer), J Snares (Housing and Communities Manager) and M Watts (Principal Environmental Health Officer).

HB30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Asker, Dean and Farthing and from the Assistant Director Housing and Environmental Services.

HB31 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2016 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Housing and Communities Manager said Essex had withdrawn Supporting People funding from April, so officers were looking at the impact this change would have. Initial calculations had been calculated, and implications for the service and for tenants had been carried out.

In order to ensure there was a universal service, it was proposed to return to a system of offering only one level of service, so everyone had to have a minimum level, from which they could then opt out. A consultation had taken place on how to help people, and how they would pay, and she was pleased to report that the outcome for people was much better than had been initially thought.

Councillor Foley said this was a great result. He referred to Minute HB26, the Housing Strategy Plan update, and asked what the plan was now that Suzanna Wood had left.

The Housing and Communities Manager said there was now an opportunity to look at the options for planning policy management, and it had been agreed the post should move back from Planning to the Housing service. There had been a restructure within Housing, including creation of a Communities team. The

Housing and Communities Manager would be taking on housing strategy from April 2017. More information about the restructure would be circulated to members. The Housing and Communities Manager reassured members that resources had not been reduced for these services, but had simply been restructured.

HB32

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Housing Development Manager gave a verbal update.

Mead Court, Stansted

Works had been completed and tenants had moved back in. The improvements had been well-received. Accounts had now been signed off, with only £4,000 overspent, which was a pleasing result.

Catons Lane, Saffron Walden

Work to remedy defects was now drawing to a close, with inspection due to take place in June 2017.

Reynolds Court, Newport

Work was progressing, the roof had been installed and work to make it watertight was now progressing. Plastering would start in July 2017, and a meeting had taken place with the interior designers regarding communal areas.

The Housing Development Manager tabled a report from the suppliers of the proposed Sedum “green” roof. He said the plants had been grown and would be planted on the roof in June, as turf. It would be important to ensure careful maintenance and drainage. The roof contractor would maintain the roof for the first year, and thereafter it would be necessary for maintenance to be carried out by officers once a quarter.

Councillor Redfern asked how the turf would be applied, and expressed some concern that examples of Sedum roofs elsewhere had an unsatisfactory brown colour.

The Housing Development Manager said the waterproofing and integrity of the roof would be supported by a 20 year guarantee. The plants would take a little while to “bed in”. The issue was that it was a planning stipulation to have a green roof, and the second issue was that Newport had had problems with water run-off. This was a bigger building than before, but Anglia Water had

been satisfied with the proposed size of the rook, because Sedum retained water.

Councillor Mills said this was the third green roof with which he had been involved, and the previous ones had failed as the plants had died. It was essential to look at the irrigation system, and to arrange for a caretaker to ensure the watering worked properly, so that ultimately the roof could become self-sustaining.

The Housing Development Manager agreed maintenance was key.

Angela Hutton asked why a green roof had been chosen for this location and whether heavy rain would affect it.

The Housing Development Manager said a green roof was seen to be a sustainable method of containing run-off, particularly for large buildings. Planners had been satisfied that the building should be the proposed size, subject to appropriate camouflage. Without Sedum there would be water run-off, which would have cost implications for the water run-off for the rest of Newport.

Hatherley Court, Saffron Walden

The Housing Development Manager said the aim was for works to start in May. Initially the proposal had been for a three-phase development, but now a two-phase programme was planned, as there were more empty properties at the site

Sheds Lane, Saffron Walden

Planning permission had been obtained, and the work was currently out to tender.

Frambury Lane, Newport

The application for planning permission was to be considered on 5 May 2017.

Newton Green, Dunmow

The pre-application was being considered by the planning department.

The Moors, Little Dunmow

Eight of 12 bungalows were empty; the architect was working on a scheme to progress the scheme, as the other four dwellings became empty in due course. The horticultural team were dealing with an infestation of Japanese Knotweed.

Station Road, Wendens Ambo

Following marketing, the Council had received three offers for this single plot, and others were anticipated. The revenue expected would represent income for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

4 Hill Top Lane, Saffron Walden

The development was at pre-application stage. The intention was to obtain outline permission for homes to be built and then to sell.

The Elms Bungalow, Duton Hill

The location was remote and therefore not ideal. Officers were considering securing outline planning permission for a detached two-storey house, and to sell for income for the HRA.

St John's Close, Saffron Walden

Work would be finished this month, following which advertising for the property to be re-let would be arranged.

HB33

DRAFT HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2017-2022

The Senior Health Improvement Officer presented the Health and Wellbeing strategy for 2017-2022. She referred the Board to the introduction to the Strategy, given by Councillor Wells, as Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, and to the priorities set out in the document. There were five key areas, of reducing overweight and obesity; increasing physical activity for all; enabling people to age well; combating rural and social isolation; and combating winter pressures and fuel poverty. The Senior Health Improvement Officer said the strategy recognised underlying principles, such as tackling inequalities, and drew to members' attention the actions to be taken. Work would be undertaken with colleagues within West Essex to seek funding for different projects, including a link between Essex County Council and a practitioner at Uttlesford. Funding for 2016-17 had been made available.

Angela Hutton asked whether budget cuts in other areas, such as social care, would be relevant.

The Senior Health Improvement Officer said there had been many recent cuts to social care, and these would be identified and addressed where possible.

Angela Hutton asked whether match funding would be made available. The Housing and Communities Manager said match funding might not be available, but funding could be sourced elsewhere.

Angela Hutton asked whether user input would be sought. The Housing and Communities Manager said that decision would depend on circumstances. The Senior Health Improvement Officer said the intention was to avoid duplication of existing work.

HB34

DRAFT PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY

Members considered a report presented by the Principal Environmental Health Officer on the draft private sector housing strategy. The report summarised the findings of the Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy (PSHS) consultation and outlined the Council's plans to meet people's housing needs by maintaining and improving the existing private housing stock in the district.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said the strategy linked housing and wellbeing to the Local Plan, and would be included in the Environmental and Environmental Health service plan.

It was AGREED that the Housing Board note the amendments to the draft Private Sector Housing Strategy following consultation with key stakeholders and recommends the adoption of the strategy to Cabinet.

HB35

DRAFT HOME REPAIRS ASSISTANCE POLICY

The Principal Environmental Health Officer presented a report on revisions to the existing Home Repairs Assistance Policy. The Policy had first been published in 2003 and had later been amended in 2008 to take into consideration thermal insulation and energy efficiency measures in mobile homes.

He said this policy had been revised to increase the range of offers and to change the focus of assistance from grants to loan products. The revised policy would provide the Council with greater flexibility to address poor housing conditions for the most vulnerable in society. There was a need to update the policy, following a consultation. Furthermore, from the end of March 2017,

services provided by Papworth Trust would be streamlined, and Uttlesford would aim to take control of the funding from this source.

In reply to a question from Councillor Redfern regarding the implications of the change to the Papworth Trust funding, the Principal Environmental Health Officer said Uttlesford had the lowest budget for disability facilities grants of all the local councils. If people could stay in their homes longer, there was a cost saving. There had been an increase of funds from Essex County Council, but ECC had decided to reduce funding. Papworth had concluded that disability adaptation funding was not viable, which would mean that although the Council intended to retain these services in-house, it would not have some of the elements such as handyman services.

Angela Hutton said Papworth Trust had charged £15 per hour for handyman services.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said whilst the service from Papworth Trust would be withdrawn, more disability grant funding would be made available, and for wider purposes. Officers would be studying how the budget was being spent.

Councillor Ryles asked whether Uttlesford relied upon the voluntary sector for provision of such services.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said there was an issue with linking external options with the Council's services, but that options would always be considered. The involvement of voluntary groups was such an option which would be explored.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer invited members to comment on the proposals and assured members that parish councils would be invited to comment.

Councillor Mills suggested linking up with the Uttlesford Transport Forum, which supported the involvement of volunteer drivers.

The Housing and Communities Manager said links for voluntary organisations were maintained by the CVSU.

Angela Hutton asked whether the service would be for tenants.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said in response to a question from Angela Hutton as to whether the service would be for tenants, that it was for private residents.

Angela Hutton said some aspects of repairs were not the responsibility of the Council, such as fencing. As a tenant she had had to seek funding from Papworth Trust. Provision of such services could work well for tenants as well as the private sector.

Councillor Ryles said a skills database could be maintained for those willing to help offer such services.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said the proposals included much to consider, such as the extension of services to all households, provided individuals met the eligibility criteria.

Councillor Redfern asked whether the Contract Services team could extend the services to tenants who did not meet the criteria, and recharge for work.

The Housing and Communities Manager said certain repairs were carried out by the council, subject to re-charge, and that tenants had the option to use another service provider in such cases.

It was AGREED to endorse the revised home repairs assistance policy and consent to a period of consultation to take account of the views and opinions of interested stakeholders.

HB32

TRAILBLAZER HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION BILL

The Housing and Communities Manager brought to members' attention the Essex Countywide Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Bid and the Homelessness Reduction Bill. She said Essex County Council with the support of the District Authorities had put in a bid for this money and had been awarded approximately 900K over two years. The projects target client group would include those who might not be owed a statutory homeless duty at the moment but who might be already known to existing agencies such as health or criminal justice. The money would be used to fund 10 specialist support case workers who would work across all districts in Essex. They would take on individual cases, working across various agencies to help resolve not only housing problems but the issues that may have led to homelessness or the threat of homelessness or that will make sustaining a tenancy difficult. This could mean that Uttlesford would share a case-worker.

Specialist workers would look at difficult cases and steer the authority once the bill came into force. Implications from London Boroughs were a "ripple" effect, for example, Southwark had no housing. However, Uttlesford was an

expensive area, so it might be passed by. However, the impact on other areas from London's housing needs could then also impact on Uttlesford. The intention of this report was therefore simply to raise members' awareness at present. There would be potentially greatly increased workload and demands on the housing options service.

Councillor Ranger said the prospect was ominous, and that Uttlesford would see little of the caseworkers. There could be an increase in wilful homelessness, and the housing service would feel the brunt of the work. There was a need to look seriously at how this issue would be tackled.

The Housing and Communities Manager said she hoped there would be only a gradual, rather than a sudden increase in housing need. She would monitor the implications and report further to Housing Board as necessary.

In response to a question from Angela Hutton as to which age groups tended to be in need of housing, the Housing and Communities Manager said those affected were from 16 years plus.

Angela Hutton asked where multiple occupancy solutions would be considered.

The Housing and Communities Manager said multiple occupancy would be considered in any event in some cases.

Councillor Ryles asked a question regarding empty but privately owned properties.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer said Uttlesford had some of the lowest levels of empty properties in the county. Following a referral, officers would apply pressure to owners to bring the property back into use. Unfortunately there was little that could be done regarding second homes.

Councillor Mills asked whether new homes bonus was obtained once a property was brought back into use.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer confirmed that New Homes Bonus was obtained in these circumstances.

HB32

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates would be circulated shortly.

Councillor Ranger asked whether the action points from the last meeting had been considered.

Regarding HB23 PROPOSED RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES 2017-18, Councillor Redfern confirmed that all such charges proposals were in hand. Dwelling rates would be checked and the information provided to members.

Regarding HB24, HRA BUSINESS PLAN – ACTION PLAN UPDATE, The Housing and Communities Manager said following on from the Council's budget-setting meetings, an update would be provided to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.40am.

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Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 21 September 2017

3

Title: Development Programme Update (2017/18)

Author: Stephanie Baxter – Housing Enabling
Officer Ext 633

Item for information

Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to update the members of the Housing Board on the delivery of Affordable Housing in the district.
2. This report sets out the following
 - The number of affordable homes delivered at quarter 2 of the 2017/18 affordable housing programme by size and tenure
 - Update on Affordable Housing Programme (2017/18)
 - Update on the Community Led Housing Fund Steering Group

Recommendations

3. This report is for information only

Financial Implications

4. None

Background Papers

5. None

Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Parish/town councils
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None

Sustainability	Affordable housing supports the long term sustainability of
Ward-specific impacts	Delivers much needed affordable homes to residents unable to meet their need through the market within the District
Workforce/Workplace	Housing Strategy

Situation

7. The number of affordable homes delivered between 1st July, 2017 and 30th September 2017 amounts to 13 affordable homes. 7 as affordable rent and 6 as shared ownership.
8. The Affordable Housing Programme 2017/18 is progressing well and expected to reach the target set for the year of 100 homes.
9. This programme is delivered by Registered Providers on S106 schemes.

Affordable Housing Programme Update

10. There are currently 2 Rural Exception Schemes in progress, both by Hastoe Housing Association. The first is in Little Hallingbury amounting to 16 affordable homes, 12 affordable rent and 4 shared ownership. These are expected to be completed by January, 2018
11. The second scheme is in Newport. This amounts to 34 homes, 28 for affordable rent and 6 shared ownership. Completion is expected to be January, 2018.
12. There are 9 additional schemes currently on site in the parishes of Great Dunmow, Elsenham, Felsted, Flitch Green, High Roding, Radwinter and Saffron Walden. The programme is expected to deliver 170 homes by the end of March 2018, assuming good weather conditions remain.

Community Led Housing Fund

13. The Council was awarded monies from the DCLG's Community Led Housing Fund¹. (2016/17). This Fund was awarded to local authorities who have housing affordability issues due to second holiday homes.
14. The Council was awarded £34,224 from DCLG from the Community Led Housing Fund programme 2016/17. This Fund has been used to support a joint working project with Epping DC and East Herts DC, (the Steering Group) who were also awarded monies from this Fund. In total it amounts to £102,672.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/60-million-boost-for-communities-affected-by-second-homeownership>

15. The terms of the Fund is to provide technical support for community groups who wish to deliver affordable housing schemes in their area through the Co-operative, Cohousing or Community Land Trust model. The Fund is designed to enable community groups to reach legal incorporation rather than capital development. Once community groups have reached legal incorporation, further funding from other sources is available to support scheme delivery.
16. The Council has used the Fund, in conjunction with the Steering Group, to work with PLEione Consultants who will be delivering a series of information and networking events for various members of the community to ascertain appetite for the project and to offer support to 'fledging' groups who wish to reach legal incorporation.
17. Community and information events will take place during the autumn and winter of 2017/18.
18. A further update will be given to Members at the next Housing Board.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Not enough affordable homes delivered to meet high demand across the District	2. Some risk due to external delays	2. Increase in the numbers of households on UDC housing waiting list	Will continue to work closely with developers and Parish Councils to ensure we meet our target of 100 affordable homes per annum

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.

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Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 21 September 2017

4

Title: Walden Place, Saffron Walden

Author: Judith Snares, Housing Strategy and
Operations Manager

Key decision: **Yes**

Doug Malins, Housing Development
Manager

Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with detail relating to the proposed redevelopment of the existing sheltered housing scheme at Walden Place, Saffron Walden.
2. This report will detail the preferred mechanism for undertaking this redevelopment to meet current and future needs, as well maximising the return to the Council from this valuable asset.

Recommendations

3. That the Housing Board:
 - a. Recommends to Cabinet that the marketing strategy for this redevelopment project is progressed in partnership with Savills in order to ascertain the preferred disposal and development strategy for the scheme.

Financial Implications

4. Financial provision for the development of new Council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account. The development partner will also contribute considerably to the cost of this redevelopment, as detailed in the report. The extent of this contribution has been estimated by Savills.
5. The Indicative cost for the scheme has been calculated by our consultant Quantity Surveyor having regard to site constraints and the prevailing market conditions. These indicative costs should be regarded as an estimate at this stage, and could be subject to change as further survey work is carried out, and the detailed designs are finalised. The final cost will only be known following the tender process for the selection of a building contractor.

Background Papers

6. None

7.

Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Town Council and external agencies
Community Safety	Appropriate precautions would be taken during works
Equalities	Equality and diversity is a key issue for the Council with regards to older persons housing provision
Health and Safety	During the management of the project all risks will be constantly reviewed, revised and managed
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal team have been consulted
Sustainability	An opportunity to construct new thermally efficient homes, and communal facilities for older people.
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

Situation

8. The Walden Place sheltered housing scheme consists of a four storey Grade II listed Georgian town house that currently contains 3 sheltered flats and communal facilities. Attached to this house is a court of 26 purpose-built sheltered housing flats that were constructed in the 1980's.
9. The Georgian town house element of this sheltered scheme currently provides reasonable communal facilities, although not to modern standards or specification. Furthermore, this building is a considerable financial burden on the Housing Revenue Account due to high ongoing maintenance costs – in excess of £23,000 per annum. Also, with the building being Grade II Listed, this can cause delay and extra cost when needing to undertake larger maintenance works.
10. Attached to this report are the concept designs for the redevelopment of this scheme. The thrust of this proposal is to separate the Georgian house from the 1980's sheltered scheme, to construct a new purpose built communal facility, three new sheltered flats/bungalows and associated plant room. Parking and landscaping will also form an important part of this project, in order to meet the needs of the sheltered scheme and any future use of the Georgian house.

11. Apart from the re-provision of as much sheltered housing accommodation as possible, the other key driver for this redevelopment project is to provide a modern, fit for purpose communal facility.
12. The size of the facility that can be achieved will be determined through the planning process. Walden Place is located in the Conservation Area, so scale, design and materials will be of key importance to both Development Control and the Conservation Officer. The Conservation Officer is supportive of the general principal, as there is a desire to see the Georgian House separated from the 1980's sheltered scheme. Partnership working with both the Conservation Officer and the Planning Team is therefore key to maximising the outcomes for this proposal.
13. The current concept design has been well received by the Conservation Officer.
14. The concept designs have been considered by our Cost Consultant, who has estimated the build costs to be in the region of £1.7 million.
15. The key element to the financial viability of the whole project is to maximise the future value of the Georgian house. Savills have considered this element on behalf of the Council. They do not believe that there will be a market for it to be converted into a single residential dwelling, given its size compared to the grounds that can be offered, its proximity to the sheltered housing scheme and the right of way from Myddleton Place to Park Lane.
16. They believe that the most optimum utilisation of the floor space would be to convert the building into six apartments, of two and three bedrooms. In light of the unique nature and central location of the building, combined with a high specification of refurbishment, Savills would expect values and demand to easily exceed those currently being achieved in Saffron Walden. They have estimated that they would expect a sale to achieve £1.1 million, or above.
17. In terms of a disposal strategy, there are really two preferred options. The first being a Joint Venture (JV), and second being a straight disposal on a subject to planning basis.
18. Under a JV arrangement, our partner developer would obtain detailed planning permission and undertake the entire redevelopment project. The benefit of this approach would be that the delivery of the replacement accommodation, plant room and communal facility would be efficiently managed by one party throughout the construction period. The JV partner would however expect vacant possession of the Georgian house from the outset, so that the works to the sheltered scheme and also the refurbishment of the Georgian house can run concurrently. This would leave the sheltered scheme without a communal facility for a period of time, and will also require the last remaining tenant to be re-housed. Savills believe that whilst this refurbishment opportunity is of a specialised nature, there are a number of developers who have an appetite and experience of these types of projects.

19. The alternative option would be to dispose of the Georgian house, on a subject to obtaining detailed planning basis, in isolation to the works to the adjacent sheltered housing scheme. The benefit of this option is that a sale of a 100% private scheme may attract a premium from the market due to the more straight forward conversion opportunity on offer, thereby potentially appealing to a wider range of developers. The other benefit is that UDC will have total control of the planning process associated with the sheltered housing scheme, and depending on the timing of the sale, it could enable the continued provision of a communal facility, along with minimising tenant decants. On the downside, it will require the Council to find budget for the construction works (estimated at £1.7 million on the current scheme) before any return from the sale is forthcoming. If the sale were to happen concurrently with the construction works, it would require a careful development management strategy, so as not to restrict the developer's flexibility and control over their own development programme.
20. Savills are aware of a number of local and regional developers that are looking for redevelopment and conversion opportunities within the East of England – Saffron Walden being a particularly attractive area. Savills are proposing that the property is initially introduced to a shortlist of developers who have the appetite, experience and expertise for an opportunity of this nature, so that the profitability of the project can be optimised. This will allow us to receive expressions of interest and gauge the appetite for both the Joint Venture approach, or sale of the Listed house in isolation.
21. Once the outcome of this market research is known, a detailed disposal strategy, with timeline can be developed and progressed. This will set out in detail, the bidding process, timescales, guide price, sales details including Joint Venture terms (if this is the disposal route) and viewing opportunities. There will be an opportunity to interview the top three bidders if so desired, and then Savills will issue a report with recommendations once all offers have been assessed.

Risk Analysis

22.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Insufficient budget to take forward the scheme	1 - there are sufficient identified resources in the HRA to meet the estimated cost of a JV scheme	3 – significant risk to project	Carry out research to ascertain the most cost effective disposal and development strategy for the scheme
Not achieving planning permission	1 Planners supportive	4 separation of house and development	Pre-planning discussions with planners

		not possible	
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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.

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Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 21 September 2017

6

Title: Homelessness Update

Author: Judith Snares – Housing Strategy and Operations Manager Ext 671

Item for information

Summary

1. This report places before the Housing Board the latest homelessness figures and updates the Board on the latest developments regarding the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Recommendations

2. This report is for information only.

Financial Implications

3. N/A.

Impact

- 4.

Communication/Consultation	Members,
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	N/A
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

5. The table below details the homelessness statistics for the past 2 years, including a comparison between the first quarters of the last 2 years

Homelessness stats	2015/2016	2016/2017	2016/2017 Quarter 1	2017/2018 Quarter 1
No of people presenting as homeless	116	98	25	27
No of homeless applications accepted for the full housing duty	53	52	10	12
No in temporary accommodation (snapshot figure)	22	14	21	9
No of weeks families in an emergency were accommodated in Bed and Breakfast	2.4	1.59	2.6	0
No of cases where homelessness was prevented	48	55	14	11
No of days taken to process homelessness applications	35.5	48.7	27.1	48

6. It can be seen that the figures have been quite stable over the last two years following a period that saw a large increase in numbers. The emphasis continues to be on prevention work, although this remains challenging in an area of high housing costs.
7. The time taken to make homelessness decisions has increased and is above the guidance figure of 33 days. This is due to the complexity of the homelessness cases we have been seeing. When you are dealing with people with chaotic and complicated lives, trying to unravel the facts of their case can be very time consuming. Also there can be delays where you have to go back to other agencies or third parties to clarify information.
8. The Essex wide Trailblazer Project, details of which were provided at an earlier housing board meeting, is now in full operation. We have access to one of the project mentors who is working with the housing options team and tenancy sustainment officer to carry out homelessness prevention work, particularly with clients who need more intensive homelessness prevention work.

9. The Homelessness Reduction Act received Royal Assent earlier this year and it has recently been confirmed that the Act's implementation date will be the 1st April 2018, by which time a new statutory code guidance document will have been published by Government.
10. The key measures in the Act in brief are:-
- An extension of the period during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days
 - A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness. This extends the help available to people not in priority need, with local authorities supporting them to either stay in their accommodation or help them find somewhere to live. The duty requires all homeless applicants to be given a personalised plan detailing what the local authority will do and what they themselves need to do to try to prevent them becoming homeless
 - A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants regardless of priority need, this help could be, for example the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. The local authority will still only have a duty to provide temporary accommodation whilst they try to carry out this duty to those in priority need
 - A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless
11. The Act will increase the workload of the housing options team, as although we already offer advice and assistance to everyone who seeks it, the Act requires an individualised plan to be given to every homeless applicant. The plan must outline the steps that the council will take to prevent or relieve the client's homelessness. This has to be agreed by the client and if they are not happy with it they can ask for it to be reviewed. They also have a right to review every decision at every stage of the prevention duty. This has the potential to give rise to a large increase in the number of homelessness reviews that need to be carried out by a more senior and different officer than the one who made the original decision.
12. As we are a small team with a limited number of senior officers within it, this is an area of the workload that will need careful monitoring.
13. There will be money coming from Government to assist councils with the increased administrative burden that the new Act places on councils but we would not anticipate that Uttlesford's share of this pot will be particularly large. Our understanding is that it will be based on homelessness numbers and relatively speaking ours would be considered low.
14. The housing options team do have access to funds that we received from Government when they ended the temporary accommodation subsidy.

Something we did not use as we mainly make use of our own temporary accommodation for homeless households. This pot is being used to fund homelessness prevention work.

15. In readiness for the Act staff have been on a preliminary round of training courses and once the new guidance document is published further training opportunities will be made available.

Risk Analysis

16.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The council fails to have sufficient resources in place to meet its duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act if it becomes law later this year	2 – Until the council can fully understand the demands that this legislation may put on services it is difficult to judge the resources that may be required	3 – The council will be open to legal challenge if it does not fulfil its duties under homelessness legislation	The housing department will work to understand the demands that may be placed upon it by this legislation and put bids forward for the required resources as they are identified. All staff will receive training on the new Act

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.

HRA BUSINESS PLAN – PRIORITIES FOR ACTION 2016 – 2021

Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
1. Operate a sound and viable housing business in a professional and cost effective manner				
Continue to develop business plan financial model to inform investment and service planning	Ongoing	Within existing resources	HRA that continues to be managed on sound business principles	<p>Government housing policy changes have affected the HRA Business Plan, both in the short term and in future years. The imposition of a 1% annual rent cut for four years from 1st April 2016 has had a significant effect on available resources over the life of the plan</p> <p>The HRA Business plan and financial model has been updated and shows that there will be pressures on the HRA from 2020 if the current level of expenditure on stock and new build continues as modelled.</p> <p>The HRA Business Plan allows the Council to have flexibility as to when loans are repaid and consideration will need to be given to refinancing the loans in order to both meet investment opportunities, and to balance the gap in the financial plan that is a result of the effect of these changes in housing policy</p>
Prepare for supporting people funding	Mar-17	Within existing resources	Options identified to enable key services to continue to be delivered	New delivery model for sheltered housing in place. Tenants have been

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
reductions				<p>written to and new charges explained. All costs are now fully recoverable from tenants since the ending of support grant funding from county</p> <p>Introduced new Intensive Housing Management (IHM) charge – this can be included in Housing Benefit claim to reduce impact on residents receiving this service</p>
Improve performance management systems in housing services	Mar-17	Within existing resources	PI targets based on a combination of performance of peer LA's in HouseMark benchmarking group and historic UDC performance data	All PIs and targets reviewed. PI's continually monitored through new Housing Performance Management process
Maximise income to the HRA by achieving high collection rates for rents, service charges, sewage charges, garage rents and miscellaneous invoices	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rent arrears action taken at an earlier stage to prevent arrears from escalating. Providing debt support and signposting to tenants/leaseholders who are struggling. Corporate approach to rent collection to ensure join-up with individual cases	Income collection has been separated from the debt support work resulting in a significant reduction in rent arrears
Implement re-chargeable repairs policy	Apr-16	Within existing resources	Improve recovery of costs of repairs which are tenants' responsibility	Complete. New re-charge policy in place and working well
Evaluate the alternative options available for the delivery of housing	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Options identified for step change improvement in value for money	Evaluating options for expanding the repairs service currently provided to UDC tenants to other housing providers

Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
services through strategic and /or operational partnerships				through Aspire Property Services
Review the arrangements for the management of non-housing assets	Oct-16	Within existing resources	Rationalisation of management responsibilities and clarification of development potential	Complete. New structure in place
Ensure the void turnaround figures do not exceed targets to minimise rent losses	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Rent loss through voids minimalised	Further review of the void processes carried out in August 2017 following recommendations from the Tenant Regulatory Panel (TRP). Review shows that new processes that have been implemented are working well
2. Ensure that all the council's tenants live in a decent home in settled communities for as long as needed, consistent with the council's Tenant Strategy				
Review tenant strategy to ensure that local housing need is met and assets are used effectively, utilising all available flexibilities	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Updated strategy	Complete. Strategy has been reviewed. No change to policy recommended at this time
Create a tenancy sustainment team	Aug-16	Within existing resources	Increased support for vulnerable tenants. A failed tenancy costs the Council several thousands of pounds so the success of this team will	Complete. Team in place. Successful Tenancy Sustainment Programme implemented. We have been able to prevent evictions, organise sustainable

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
			ultimately save money for re-investment in the housing stock	repayment programmes and tenancies, and help individuals who have been previously unable to engage with us and many other support organisations. The service has been nominated for a Partnership Working Award in this year's You Make the Difference in Essex Awards
Improve the information on the housing stock	Apr-17	Within existing resources	Accessible up to date stock data	Complete. New stock data management system (SAM) has been implemented. Work is progressing on collecting stock data - it is anticipated that a 100% stock condition survey will be achieved on a rolling 5 year basis
Continue to manage and maintain the housing stock effectively and efficiently ensuring that properties meet, as a minimum, the decent homes standard	Ongoing	Within identified resources - approximately £5.3m pa	Well maintained homes and assets to minimum decent homes standard	Planned works programmes are progressing well. The authority is continuing to deliver a significant programme of investment in the stock. A robust monthly budget monitoring process has been implemented to ensure that projects are delivered on budget
Deliver an improved repairs and maintenance service through: 1. Enhancement of	Aug-16	£120k	Homes well maintained Improved tenant satisfaction More efficient and responsive deployment of personnel	Complete. Project plan to deliver IT improvements implemented 1. Mobile technology has been rolled out to all Surveyors and Operatives who can now raise and receive

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
mobile technology for repairs and voids teams; 2. Electronic van stocking of operatives' vehicles 3. Online reporting of repairs				works orders/job tickets electronically 2. Decision made not to implement new electronic stock system following unsuccessful trials 3. Schedule Board being used by Repairs Planners to enable on-line scheduling of repairs jobs
Improve average energy efficiency for council properties	Apr-17	£530k	Reduced fuel costs for residents	Complete. All works identified in Phase I, II and III now complete and included: air source heat pumps/external wall cladding/solar panels Further properties identified for improvement works and budgets being prepared for works to be carried out in 2018/19. Potential project identified to install solar panels on all remaining council houses and flats
Continue to fund disabled adaptations for tenants and improve the delivery process	Ongoing	£260k pa	Reduction in the time people have to wait for adaptations	Disabled adaptations continue at a high demand – currently able to meet all requests within a reasonable timescale
Undertake fundamental review of policies and procedures to ensure service is 'Fit for Purpose'	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Policies in place that reflect best practice/current legislation	All policies and procedures regularly reviewed. Changes identified are brought to the tenant forum and housing board for approval

Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
3. Help tenants and leaseholders get involved with decisions about their housing				
Continue to develop Housing Regulatory Panel to scrutinise the performance of the Housing Service and to undertake service reviews	Ongoing	5k pa - training for members	A Housing Regulatory Panel that deliver in-depth challenging inspections - achieving improvements that really matter to tenants	The TRP have carried out a review of the sheltered housing service following their successful review of the Void process. Report has been presented to officers and progress with implementing the recommendations will be reported to the TRP and Housing Board
Review the approach to gathering tenant feedback and satisfaction	Mar-17	Within existing resources	Refreshed approach to assessing tenant satisfaction to inform service improvement planning	Complete. Online satisfaction survey has been designed so that tenants can feed back immediately after repair is carried out New STAR tenant satisfaction/feedback survey sent to all tenants in March 2017. Results have been analysed and show an overall improvement in satisfaction with housing services
Link tenant participation with opportunities for skill development	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Skilled Tenant Forum and Tenant Regulatory Panel members	Training programme in place
Publish annual tenants report	Ongoing	£3k pa	Annual report published	Annual report last published in November 2016. Currently in process of collecting data to be included in this year's report to be published in November 2017

Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
Benchmark service with other landlords through HouseMark	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Core benchmarking data uploaded to HouseMark for full organisational review	Latest core benchmarking data has been submitted – performance data and comparison with other authorities reviewed by officers at section heads meeting
4. Regenerate the stock/estates and build new affordable rented council housing in an efficient and effective manner				
Deliver the new homes programme	Mar-21	£6.898m	New homes to replace those lost through RTB sales - approximately 6 -10 per year	<p>Development programme on track:</p> <p>Holloway Crescent Phase I & II - 13 properties Mead Court Phase I & II – 29 properties Catons Lane – 6 properties 48 properties completed to date</p> <p>Planning permission obtained for development of garage sites in Sheds Lane – 3 properties (due to complete July 2018) 3 properties</p> <p>Also investigating possibility of UDC becoming delivery partner on some S106 sites - subject to RTB receipts</p>
Deliver Sheltered scheme re-development programme	Mar-18	£11.5m	Fit for purpose accommodation for the elderly	<p>Development programme on track:</p> <p>Reynolds Court Phase I – 14 properties 14 properties completed to date</p>

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
				Reynolds Court Phase II – 27 properties (due to complete August 2018) 27 properties Hatherley Court – remodelling (26 properties) and new build (1 property) – (due to complete August 2018)
Review housing asset management strategy	Apr-18	Within existing resources	Established a clear policy on the use of HRA assets, regeneration and development	Strategy is being reviewed and will be presented to the Housing Board for comment at Housing Board meeting in December 2017
Develop and implement initiatives for improving estates	Ongoing	Within existing resources	Delivery of new estate improvement/ regeneration initiatives as part of the housing asset management strategy. Delivery of resident led improvements	Regular trailer events being held with more agencies offering to attend / estate inspection; projects identified for estate regeneration
Carry out development appraisals of identified sites and review business plan capacity to develop	Apr-17	Revenue cost of £50k pa for surveyor to co-ordinate works	Established housing development programme	Proposals/plans being drawn up for sites at The Moors, Little Dunmow (16 properties); Newton Grove, Great Dunmow (4 properties – planning permission gained September 2017); Frambury Lane, Newport (5 properties) Total: 25 properties A number of garage and infill sites and excess garden land are being assessed for development viability, or for the

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Action	Timescale	Resources	Outcome	Update September 2017
				opportunity to sell in order to cross-subsidise the development programme Total: 20 properties

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