

## **Councillor Arthur Coote – Portfolio Holder for Housing**

### **Report to Council:**

#### **General Summary**

##### **Repairs and Maintenance**

Firstly, in asset management, UDC have been continuing to work with UNSL to agree the capital works programme for this year and next. We have made significant progress over the last four weeks as our property services client team have been driving this forward, but we are still in a position where we are waiting for data from UNSL to be able to fully recommend the programme for sign-off.

UDC have directly procured damp and mould contractors to complete the mould washes on severe and moderate cases identified by the stock condition surveys undertaken at the start of the year. We expect to complete these by mid-January. We have requested reports from UNSL on how quickly that are able to deliver any additional works and are reviewing that on a weekly basis. The KPI related to damp and mould relates to new cases of damp and mould reported to UNSL, who are responsible for scheduling an inspection and mould wash. We are working with them to improve the current level of performance, which is below what we would expect.

All other areas of compliance are currently in hand, we are at 98.75% on our gas servicing, our 5-year electrical programme is at 92% and our 10-year electrical testing programme is at 99.86%. Asbestos, Legionella and LOLER all remain at 100%.

Void turnaround times have reduced to 30 days, which is still under the industry standard but significant progress from an average of 55 days has been made.

The boilers at Reynolds Court were identified as not functioning correctly on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. On investigation, heat exchanges had been damaged, resulting in a loss of hot water to residents. This was remediated by installing new boilers on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The issues caused an inconvenience to residents', but Mark Dyer, Judith Snares, Fergus Simmonds and Heather Duncan all made sure that residents were kept updated and also ensured contractors remained on track. All residents now have hot water re-instated. We will continue to monitor the system and Lovells will do a final commission of the system w/c 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The boiler manufacturer will also attend to check that the boilers are operating correctly and confirm warranty.

Further to the media attention in relation to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), UDC surveyors have completed an assessment of UDC properties and have referred one for specialist assessment.

Negotiation of the service level agreement with UNSL and Norse is progressing and will be updated to Housing Board on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and subsequently to Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

## **Housing Management**

The Tenant Satisfaction Measure Survey results for 2023-2024 have been received and I am pleased to report that our overall score for satisfaction, **'taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Uttlesford DC'** has risen by 5% year on year to place UDC firmly in the upper quartile at 81%. 77% of respondents were either fairly or very satisfied with the service that they receive. This is extremely positive and testament to the hard work and commitment of the Housing and Client Services Teams. When broken down further, our sheltered scheme residents were 91% satisfied.

The housing management team continues to work extremely hard to respond to urgent safeguarding and complex needs whilst also maintaining their business-as-usual activities.

## **Housing Options**

A Housing Options Duty Officer will be available on site in Saffron Walden, daily during working hours. This re-instates our pre-covid levels of service and underlines our commitment to assist those in need of help and support.

## **Housing Development**

Works have commenced to build a four bedroom property on a garden reduction site in Tye Green, Wimbish and we are hoping to complete this property before September 2024.

We have also started a two bed fully wheelchair user adapted bungalow in The Mead at Thaxted.

We are completing a scrutiny exercise on our Walden Place development further to a complaint that was brought before the last Cabinet. The development is progressing extremely positively, and we are continuing to engage with our residents.

We have been engaging with Parish Councillors to highlight the role that Rural Exception Sites and Community Land Trusts can make to delivering much-needed affordable housing to meet locally identified need. We have been supported by the Rural Housing and Community Led Housing Enabler from the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) for the series of presentations to the Parish Council Forums.

10 more properties from Phase 2 of Great Dunmow Grange development, in collaboration with Barratts, are due for handover in March 2024. This development comprises of 9 one bedroom flats and 1 two bed roomed flat.