

**HOUSING BOARD held at COMMITTEE ROOM - COUNCIL OFFICES,
LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY,
22 MARCH 2018 at 10.00 am**

Present: Councillor M Felton (Chairman)
Councillors A Dean, T Farthing, A Gerard, P Lees, A Mills,
V Ranger and J Redfern

Officers in attendance: B Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer), R Millership
(Assistant Director - Housing, Health and Communities) and
J Snares (Housing Strategy and Operations Manager)

HB22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Loughlin.

HB23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2017 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

HB24 HOUSING ENABLING UPDATE Q3 2017-18

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager presented her Housing Enabling update report for Quarter 3 2017-18.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said the Affordable Housing programme for 2017/18 had been progressing well and the Council were expected to exceed the target of delivering 100 homes for 2017/18. She said seventeen affordable homes had been delivered between 1st October 2017 and 31st December 2017.

Members discussed the new developments in Newport and Little Hallingbury and agreed that the feedback had been extremely positive.

In response to a Member question, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said she estimated that 170 affordable homes would be delivered in 2017/18, weather permitting, but a definitive figure would be published in April.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said there was still a significant amount of Section 106 money to be allocated and the housing team were discussing how the money could be spent. The situation was complicated by the time pressures in which an authority had to spend 'buy-back receipts' before having to send the money to central government. She said a report would be brought to the next meeting setting out the options.

In response to a Member question regarding the Community Led Housing Fund, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said the steering group were looking at the report provided by PLEione Consultants in the wider context of the Local Plan process.

HB25 **HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE Q3 2017-18**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager presented the Housing Strategy Update report for Quarter 3 2017/18.

In response to a question from the Chairman relating to the independent living scheme with the Home Farm Trust, the Housing Strategy and Operations Manager said discussions were still ongoing but no suitable sites had yet been identified.

The Assistant Director – Housing & Environmental Services said no funding was required from the Housing Revenue Account for the insulation works carried out on council properties, as the scheme had been funded through grants. She said a solar panel scheme had been dropped as it was not good value for money.

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager gave details related to the Independent Living scheme which was on target for completion in October. She said a learning difficulties housing scheme would be run by Family Mosaic, who would find and support tenants in those properties.

HB26 **DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (VERBAL)**

The Housing Strategy and Operations Manager left the meeting.

The Housing Strategy Manager provided a verbal update on ongoing developments across the district.

Reynolds Court

Phase one had been completed in July last year; phase two was progressing well and the developer had not lost much time delivering the 26 units considering the adverse weather conditions. He said the brickwork was almost finished and the roof work would begin next week. The development was due to be completed in October 2018.

Hatherly Court

There were issues with the development, such as uneven floors and the diversion of the mains water, but phase one was due to be completed by the end of April. Costs had risen due to structural problems with the building and an update would be provided following the completion of the first phase.

Walden Place

A specialist developer was required due to the complicated nature of the development and tenders were currently in process. The Housing Strategy Manager said this would go to Members before a decision on a developer was made.

Sheds Lane

Time had been lost onsite due to inactivity caused by the adverse weather conditions since December. The Board would be updated with a schedule of works in due course.

Walden Road, Radwinter

Eight dwellings had been procured with S106 money. The final two flats were due to be completed in April 2018.

Frambury Lane, Newport

Only two contractors had responded when the site had gone out for tender but both options were unsuitable. The site was problematic, primarily due to access, and therefore unattractive to potential developers.

In response to a Member question, the Housing Strategy manager said whilst the site was problematic, it was one of the better sites the council had left and he was reluctant to sell it. He said building on this garage site could make good use of right to buy receipts which would be lost if not spent within a specific timeframe.

The Assistant Director - Housing & Environmental Services said the site was still good value for money.

The Moors, Little Dunmow

The site, which currently consisted of twelve bungalows, would be redesigned with a mixed number of dwellings but would retain the current layout. The Japanese knotweed which had been identified onsite had now been removed.

HB27

HRA BUSINESS PLAN ACTION PLAN UPDATE Q3 2017-18

The Assistant Director – Housing & Environmental Services updated Members on the HRA business plan action plan for Quarter 3 2017/18.

Members discussed the available neighbourhood initiatives for improving existing estates in the district, such as the Pride of Place scheme, with a particular focus on Stansted Mountfitchet.

The Assistant Director – Housing & Environmental Services said trailer events were touring the district to promote neighbourhood initiatives and a programme of improvement had been implemented on an estate in Leaden Roding.

Carole Mandy said the Tenants' Forum held events which encouraged tenants to form action groups that would develop schemes to maintain and improve their own estates. She said a three day event had been organised in Thaxted and she would bring back any relevant feedback to the Board at its next meeting.

HB28 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Assistant Director – Housing & Environmental Services proposed that three Housing Board meetings, instead of four, be held in 2018/19. She said if there was any urgent business to attend which could not be accommodated in the three scheduled meetings, an extraordinary meeting would be called.

The 28th June at 10.00am was proposed as the date of the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.25am.