

Committee: Council

Date:

Title: Report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing

Tuesday, 4
December 2018

Report Author: Councillor Julie Redfern, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Summary

1. This report summarises the Portfolio Holder for Housing's activities on behalf of the Council.

Recommendations

2. None.

Financial Implications

3. None.

Background Papers

4. None.

Situation

5. **Housing Strategy and Enabling**

- In the process of reviewing and updating Housing Strategy in line with the Local Plan. The new strategy will be an important element of the Council's Local Plan that proposes new garden communities.
- The Homelessness Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy have been reviewed and updated to take account of new Homelessness Reduction Act which was implemented in April 2018.
- Bid prepared for additional Housing Revenue Account borrowing headroom to fund an increase in the Council's Housebuilding Programme – Government has since announced plans to remove the debt cap.
- 157 affordable homes delivered in 2017/18. The number of affordable homes delivered this year up to 31/10/2018 is 165, consisting of 116 affordable rented and 49 shared ownership.
- Working with registered provider and ECC for the successful delivery of district's first Independent Living Scheme in Saffron Walden. The scheme will provide 71 units of accommodation and is due for completion in February 2019.

- Working with registered provider and ECC for the successful delivery of new learning disabilities scheme in Saffron Walden. The scheme completed in November 2018 and is ready for occupation. Residents will be moving in over the next month.
- Two council owned houses have been converted into shared houses for people with learning difficulties. The properties have now been leased to Family Mosaic who will be providing the support.
- Criteria and application process approved for Community Housing Fund Small Grant Allocations.

6. **Housing Options and Homelessness**

- The Housing Options Team has been fully trained in how to deliver the requirements of the new Homelessness Reduction Act and the Homelessness Strategy and Allocations Policy have been reviewed and updated. New systems in place to record all homelessness prevention work and generate personalised housing plans as well as provide direct H-Click data to government
- Homelessness Partnership meetings held quarterly to enable cross organisational homelessness prevention work to be carried out in the district
- Received a visit from a MHCLG specialist advisor who expressed satisfaction with how the authority was working within the new Act, particularly impressed by commitment shown by members of The Homelessness Partnership
- Another Syrian Refugee family accommodated by council
- Essex Trailblazer homelessness reduction project working well with some successes recorded in preventing homelessness within Uttlesford
- Council Housing Development Programme
- The councils own housing development programme has now delivered a total of 100 properties to date
- Reynolds Court was completed ahead of schedule in September 2018 delivering a total of 41 new high quality supported homes and communal areas. From the outset this has been a collaborative project. Planners, architects, the Parish Council, Homes England, the community and other key stakeholders have helped shape this stunning building
- The re-modelling of Hatherley Court in Saffron Walden commenced in May 2017 and is taking shape. The scheme is being modernised to a high standard

and when complete will provide 26 spacious flats suitable for modern living. There will also be two new one-bed flats added to the scheme, a new ground-floor day room with a conservatory overlooking the Common, and a new entrance area. The first phase of works is due to complete in December 2018, with the second phase due to be completed by August 2019

- Options for Walden Place in Saffron Walden have been explored and have been reported to Housing Board and Cabinet for a decision on the way forward. Planning drawings are being progressed, along with associated surveys and reports
- A new build development at Sheds Lane in Saffron Walden completed on time and on budget in July 2018. 2 x 2 bed houses and 1 x 3 bed bungalow. Officers worked with Occupational Therapy professionals to ensure that the bungalow would meet the needs of a local family
- Planning approval gained for 2 x 2 bed houses and 2 x 1 bed flats and provision of new parking court for adjacent Council owned flats at Newton Grove in Great Dunmow. The scheme has been out to tender, contractor appointed and work on the construction has started on site
- Planning approval gained for 4 x 2 bed houses, and associated parking at Frambury Lane in Newport. The scheme has been out to tender, contractor appointed and work on the construction has started on site
- A pre-application submission for 16 properties at The Moors in Little Dunmow has been made, and planners' responses received. Surveys have been undertaken and the Parish Council and local residents have been consulted. Planning drawings are being finalised so that an application can be submitted in Autumn 2018

7. Private Sector Housing

- Both the Private Sector Housing Strategy and Homes Repairs Assistance Policy were approved by Cabinet last year. Work has now commenced to deliver on the key priorities of the strategy as outlined within the action plan and working with partners to target assistance to those in greatest need
- A Well Homes initiative is being developed to improve housing conditions and the health and wellbeing of residents living in private properties. Vulnerable groups in poor housing are to be targeted for help using stock profiling data
- The Council are now in complete control of the DFG process since the previous long-term arrangements with The Papworth Trust Home Improvement Agency ended in April 2017. Since bringing the services in

house processes have been streamlined which has already shown a significant improvement in response times. An information pack has also been developed to aid customers with the process. Reductions in waiting times will reduce further complications and ongoing care costs.

- Developed and implemented a new civil penalty policy for Housing Act offences
- Developed and implemented a new fee structure and council guidance for amenity standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that require Mandatory Licensing under new HMO regulations