



Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Housing Action Plan update
Date:	15 th June 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A –Housing Programme Update
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide an overview the continuous improvement taking place within the Housing

	Service through the development and delivery of the Housing Action Plan, outlining why it was developed, how it is developing, what it includes and how through its delivery it will improve the lives of Dacorum residents.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. To note the contents and provide any feedback on the work to date.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1 Introduction/Background:

As the council emerged from the pandemic and restrictions were being lifted during Spring 2021, the focus upon delivering the best possible services for our residents continued to be at the core of everything we did. Our approach to continually improve the services and outcomes provided was underpinned by the development of a range of activities which ensured that residents remained at the centre of everything we did and thereby ensured that as we developed services further throughout 2021, in difficult circumstances, they were at the centre of all of our thinking and improvement actions.

Giving residents a key role in the way in which we delivered and developed services has been a key factor in our approach to improving services and we are and have been undertaking a range of activities which ensures that our services develop at a rate of change that ensures we are able to deliver the right services, in the right place and at the right time.

This has meant that we have sought to ensure continuous improvement takes place across a range of areas; within our customer approach to residents, in the way in which we deliver our operations, in our technology which seeks to make life simpler for residents if they chose to access our services digitally and in the way our organisation is shaped, so again we are able to work closely with our communities and engage in such a manner that we are able to put them first.

In the Spring of 2021, we developed our Housing Action plan which was designed to improve the way in which our services work for and with residents and took an approach which had them at its centre. Through its development, it is apparent that that there were opportunities to not only move faster on improvement opportunities for them, there were also opportunities to transform how our services are delivered and what this means for residents by having them at its focus, from front door to back door.

As a result of our developing thinking, the theme and underpinning approach of our continuous improvement activity is that we are able to and are delivering services and outcomes that are focused upon actions that improve the lives of residents, in all of our communities. This means meeting their aspirations in terms of not only their immediate housing needs, but also in fully involving them in the development of the type of services they require in the future, including the environment in which they live, the space, look and feel of their properties, knowing that our residents are all different and have different needs based upon their background and lifestyle aspiration.

With this in mind, our planning and actions continue to be shaped around ensuring that we are able to deliver homes that our residents are proud to live in and we are able to offer them services which mean they feel safe,

that their homes are designed to be the best they possibly can be and that they live in communities that can grow and prosper together. We have developed a programme of work which will ensure that our housing services not only focus upon the best possible outcomes for residents, but also that by looking across council we are able to make sure that all of the services which need to be linked together are so, thus ensuring that no one falls through the cracks whether it be in a service provided by the council or through our partners in other Local Authorities, in Health or Voluntary Service settings.

2. Issue/Proposal

In order to continue to make progress on behalf of our residents, there is some significant activity underway to provide the council with a programme of work which will deliver change at a pace that is safe, easily embedded across the services (Housing and other dependent services) and sustainable. This means too, that we will deliver outcomes that continue to be both safe and legal going forward.

Building upon the theme of a front door to back door approach for residents when they engage with the council there has been some key activities identified which when delivered will help to provide excellent outcomes for all of our residents and the communities within which they live:

We have identified six key areas that we want to work with our residents jointly. These are

- Strategic Housing.
- Housing Operations
- Resident Services
- Finance, Technology and Performance
- Commissioning
- People and Culture

In terms of what the above will deliver, the programme of work, over the next two years will work with residents, across council and with partners and providers to develop a range of services and activities that:

- Investigates and delivers the types of homes our residents really want to live in and agree that they improve their lives, are where they spend time with their families and friends in communities in which they feel safe, are secure and know are sustainable. The homes that our residents live in in the future are built with materials that are environmentally friendly, meet all of their needs for now and in the future and are as efficient as they possibly can be.
- Proactive and responsive to the needs of our residents. This means that when they, for example report a need for a repair -or want to find out how they might make an adaptation to their home, they are able to raise their enquiry simply, digitally, or personally and then know when it will be resolved, by who and how they can keep track of progress.
- Throughout the programme of work, as well as there being strongly focused controls internally to ensure progress and outcomes, there will be continuous resident engagement to ensure that there genuinely is the resident at the focus of our work. This will take place through a range of activities and engagement, in communities, in resident settings and at times which mean that we are able to maximise our ability to hear our residents' voices and then be clearly show how this is reflected in our subsequent actions – “you said, we did”.
- We will develop our services in a way that our residents only need to tell their story once and can then have confidence that their requirements will be met in a manner that is as straightforward as possible. This means that when we shape our services going forward that they are not passed from pillar to post,

are signposted correctly to services that can deliver the outcomes they want, as quickly as possible. This means that for our residents, when they contact us, digitally or by other means we will be able to help them within one or two conversations or connections. Internally, this means that our technology will develop to make customer interaction as simple as possible, our performance will only measure the most important of outputs and outcomes and in using our finances sensibly and efficiently, we will ensure that through our continuous improvement programme we deliver the best value we can, where value though doesn't only mean financial value.

- The way in which we buy services from the marketplace will also develop and we will make absolutely certain that through a range of resident opportunities we will ensure that we buy in a manner that guarantees best value for our communities. This applies to all products and services, whether they directly or indirectly have an impact. Best Value means not just the financial spend involved – it means what does it change for our residents positively, that we buy in a manner which means quality is affordable, sustainable and doesn't in the medium to longer term end up costing the council and citizen more. Through the Improvement and Transformational activity we will take, this means we will absolutely know what is available to us, from where and through conversation will ensure that the market develops services and products that improve the lives of our residents and for that matter future residents.
- The way in which we will engage and deliver outcomes for our residents means that we will continuously improve the way in which we work and develop our services. This means that internally we will continue to develop our people to gain the skills needed to maintain and deliver excellent outcomes for residents. This means too that we will look to attract and retain the best talent we possibly can, providing all of our people with an environment that encourages them to go the extra mile for our communities and people who live within them. We will continue to develop a workforce that is talented, is focused upon the best of services for residents, operates in a manner that is safe and legal, whilst at the same time is innovative in thinking and providing the homes of the future that our residents will be proud to call home.
- As a part of developing our people and the way in which they work, the programme of activity also considers how we meaningfully engage with our residents. The approach is designed to make best use of existing forums, whilst at the same time, ensuring that as the need arises additional events are able to take place on a regular basis. The Improvement and transformation will only work effectively if there are real opportunities for a conversation to take place on a regular basis. With this in mind the programme will develop a range of interactions with customers that encourage conversation, whether this is in person, digitally or through correspondence. The activities undertaken will, as is appropriate explicitly have the voice of the resident throughout and at its core.

In order to deliver all of the above in a manner that “joins the dots”, confidence will be offered internally and externally through internal processes and controls, as well as a clear plan of activities, outputs and outcomes that are visible and transparent to all stakeholders.

3. Options

The programme of continuous improvement is shaping through a range of activities that consider both Improvement and Transformation. There have been a range of activities which will present options and opportunities around the development of the best outcomes for residents through the way the council works, and how internally it is shaped so that the customer only has to tell their story once. The “front door to back door” experience should mean that for residents they tell their story and from there know exactly what will happen, by when and delivered by who.

Options and opportunities once developed will be tested by internal stakeholders as a core part of the approach. This will essentially be through workshops, formal and informal conversations and in an environment of openness

and trust. It is vital that we get this right, so as ideas are developed it will be essential that they are tested, adapted, and agreed – at pace.

4. Consultation

Resident engagement is a key component of each of the workstreams and of the programme as a whole. The way in which services are delivered will be tested and explored with residents, across communities as widely as possible. As with internal approaches, the voice of the resident will be identifiable across outputs and outcomes from the continuous improvement journey. The programme will adopt a “you said, we did” approach across all of the six-core programme work areas as identified earlier.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

As the programme of work associated with the action plan is agreed, further updates will be provided to Members on the associated cost implications. It is expected that any costs associated with this work will be funded in full from Housing Revenue Account resources.

6 Legal Implications

The programme of work will be developed and reviewed to ensure that the council has an appropriate compliance framework in place to meet all relevant health and safety requirements.

7 Risk implications:

The programme risks are being outlined as the programme moves into delivery. All risks will be managed and mitigated through the council’s existing system in phase and alongside the strategic and operational risk registers.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

Community Impact Assessment will be undertaken as the delivery of the programme is underway.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

Sustainability implications will be identified as the delivery of the programme is underway.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

This is a corporate programme of work with Health and Safety, Human Resources, Finance and Legal services all included in the delivery and continued oversight of the work.

11 Conclusions:

Next steps are:

- Finalise the ways of working activity – outputs by Mid/late May
- Develop ways of working options and opportunities -June
- Revisit the ways of working thinking based upon internal feedback and from residents – June, July

- Develop ways of working and engagement amongst services that underpin resident services e.g., IT mid-May- late June
- Design Stakeholder management approach May
- Design our Communications and Engagement approach and plan May
- Agree the programme of work at the Housing Transformation and Improvement Programme Board – 11th May (then rolling month)
- Agree who is responsible for the delivery of the six core themes and the work required to enable delivery
- Develop our thinking and activities further –will lead into further engagement (internal and Resident) planning in June/July
- Indicative financial envelope May early June
- Finalise the scope of continuous improvement across all of the programme activity– May
- Review existing business and resident processes and strategies to align to programme activities – May, June
- Commence activity that checks our understanding of how existing ways of working operate – then undertake activity to consider the options and opportunities going forward – May- July
- Resident engagement and influencing opportunities– Use existing and developing a range of actions that use a variety of media enabling the continuous improvement to work with a wide range of residents across Dacorum, based upon location, demographics, age, and circumstance. – June/July initially
- Undertake a review of the way we work across housing - May, early June – informs the way in which we need to change and deliver services for our residents.
- Develop the approach to effective communications and engagement – internally and with residents, including Partners, the Voluntary sector, providers, and suppliers.