



Council Briefing Note 17th July 2024

HOUSING & PROPERTY PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR SIMY DHYANI

Housing Operations

- Verification of all Universal Credit (UC) rent changes from April 24 are completed.
- As the year continues, more tenants will be migrated from the legacy benefits over to UC, which will mean arrears figures will fall slightly out of trend for a short period, working with Revenue & Benefits to minimise impact and aid smooth transition.
- Tenancy Strategy scrutinised at HC&OSC, pending Cabinet approval in July.
- Randalls ride development- on track with all allocations including direct matching to adapted units.
- Completion of nominations for Hightown's new build development in Maylands and Watford Community Housing Trust development in Wood View.
- GIS mapping of HRA green space, trees and hard landscape complete – data analysis and testing underway to inform future grounds maintenance delivery model.
- Tenancy Management & Mutual Exchange Policies – updated and published
- [Pet Policy](#) – updated re. 'Banned Dog Breeds' (section 2.3) and published.
- Supported 476 tenants/applicants to sustain their tenancy
- Undertaken a review of all hoarding cases to inform a refresh of the hoarding multi-agency protocol.

Safe Communities

- Emergency Prohibition Order served on House in Multiple Occupation (Old Town) due to Fire Hazard.
- 2x Civil penalty notices served in Nash Mills totalling £9000 due to Housing Act 2004 regulatory breaches
- Successful ASB/nuisance action morning held @The Marlowes, leading to number of investigations & follow up actions.
- New ASB & Community Safety leaflet developed to support engagement with tenants and residents.
- ASB collaborative partnership neighbourhood engagement meetings held in Grovehill & School End Crescent.
- 6 asylum dispersal properties now live in the borough & numbers accommodated in contingency sites has reduced.
- Numbers of households approaching the council for housing assistance has continued to increase, 260 households occupying temporary accommodation. Partnership engagement to establish new prevention initiatives underway.

Property

- We continue to focus on the older repairs and expect to have reduced this backlog of work by August 2024. This will reduce the number of complaints and help us to undertake new repairs faster.
- We are increasing capacity to undertake disrepair work to speed up our response to complex works and increase capacity.
- Planned fire safety upgrade works at Phyllis Courtnage House, Church Street and Townsend made good progress in May
- The rooftop garden remediation works at Kylna Court near completion and are on track to be open to residents again in June
- FRA works at two large blocks of flats in Eastwick Row were completed in May with decorating and new flooring to follow
- Communal hybrid heating system replacements have commenced at two supported housing schemes. These projects will introduce renewable heating technologies to help us tackle climate change.

- The SHDF Wave 2 retrofit project continues to make good progress. 8 properties in Blackwell Road have been completed and we are currently on site delivering external wall insulation and installing solar PV panels at Curtis Way.
- Updates on the procurement of the repairs, maintenance and capital delivery contract:
 - Following on from the stakeholder workshop held in March, the Council have identified 4 lots which means the Council will be looking to procure a minimum of 4 contracts. These include responsive repairs (including voids), capital delivery, M&E and Lifts. Contractors will be able to tender for multiple lots.
 - Stakeholder engagement was carried out in May with internal officers to inform them of the process and to identify their needs and concerns for the next contract. The stakeholders will now move into working groups which will support the development of the procurement documentation, and the procurement and mobilisation process.
 - A Pre-Market Dialogue notice has been published to the market for the contract, to identify suitable companies the Council would like to meet with to discuss the contract requirements, prior to commencing the formal process. This will help the team test our requirements against the market as well as raising awareness to ensure there is a good response to the contract opportunity.
 - The project plan currently has the formal procurement process commencing in October 24.
- The Interim Contract Strategy is nearly complete. We have 2 contracts left to formalise and should have a solution for these at the end of June.

Strategic Housing & Delivery

Investment & Delivery

- The main contractor for development scheme at Paradise Depot which included the new Hub building for charity DENS, went into administration at the end of April and as such all construction works ceased on the 29th April. Officers are working hard to secure a new contractor to take over the build and complete the project. A report will come to Cabinet in due course.
- The next housing scheme to complete will be at Randall's Ride where 30no. 1 and 2 bed flats will be handed over at social rent levels including 3 fully adapted wheelchair flats. The flats have all been allocated and the handover date is due 17th July.
- The Council held its second Registered Provider Forum on the 11th June with the topic of Housing for an Ageing Population as its theme. The event was well attended and there was a good deal of productive discussion around the challenges and practicalities of delivering homes suitable for older people and for people's changing needs.
- This year's Inside Housing Awards shortlist have been announced and Dacorum Borough Council have been shortlisted in 5 categories: -
 - Best Development Team (Urban)
 - Best Development over 4 storeys – Mountbatten View (Paradise Fields)
 - Best Partnership with Bugler Developments Limited for Marchmont Fields
 - Best Affordable Development under £5m – Wilstone development (Barton Close)
 - Best Affordable Development under £10m – Randall's Ride.
 The winners will be announced on the 27th September.

Strategy, Quality & Assurance

- The Inspection of our services delivered to our HRA tenants was held on the 22nd and 23rd May by the Regulator. We await the final outcome and their observations which will be worked into an improvement plan. This plan will then feed into the ongoing HTIP (Housing Transformation Implementation Plan) work.
- Our Resident Engagement platform CX-Feedback is now operational. We have set up transactional surveys for repairs, complaints and Anti-Social Behaviour, and will be using it to deliver our TSMs (Tenant Satisfaction Measures) later this year.