



Council Briefing Note 19th February 2025

HOUSING & PROPERTY SERVICES PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR SIMY DHYANI

Property

- The average time for Cardo to complete non-urgent repairs has returned to within the target of 14 days, following the work to reduce the number of open repair orders
- Appointments by Cardo made and kept has been consistently over 98% since August 24.
- The number of open damp and mould cases has been reduced to 292, compared to 564 in December 2023.
- The number of stage 2 complaints for Asset Management in Q3 dropped to 10, from 15 the previous quarter as we continue the focus on making sure we are keeping our commitments.
- The Procurement of the Repairs, Maintenance and Capital contract has now gone live, with the first stage commencing on the 9th January 25.
- We ended 2024 with 100% compliance on domestic gas safety checks. To consistently achieve this level of performance in the first year of the Sureserve Compliance (formerly Aaron Services) contract demonstrates the focus on this key compliance area.
- The Heating and Ventilation Contract is nearing the end of its first year, with the current focus on setting the KPIs for year two to drive continued improvements in service delivery.
- The Commercial Housing Contracts Team are working with Heads of Service in Housing and Property Services to finalise the procurement forward plan for 2025-26. This includes incorporating changes required by the new Procurement Regulations, which take effect in February 2025.
- In January 2025 we were able evidence 100% compliance on domestic electrical testing. This is a significant achievement, especially as we out perform statutory requirements and service our properties every five years, instead of 10. This approach has resulted in Dacorum being sector leaders in this area
- All other areas of compliance continue to perform well with fire risk assessments, asbestos re-inspections, lift servicing and water hygiene risk assessments all within target
- In December we began an inspection programme to review the operational effectiveness of window restrictors in five high rise buildings. If any restrictors are found to be faulty or missing, we are replacing them at the time of inspection. This project will be completed by then end of this financial year.

Strategy, Quality and Assurance

- Regulatory Action Plan to respond to the areas for improvement within the Regulatory Judgement drafted with external objective support, and reviewed with key stakeholders, including the Regulator for Social Housing. Final version to be submitted through DBC flight-path for approval.
- Housing Open Day held on 13th December 2024 with 16 DBC teams represented including Responsive Repairs (inc. CARDO), Tenancy Management and Housing Needs, as well as 7 external organisations including Hertfordshire Police, Citizens Advice Bureau and Sunnyside Rural Trust. Over 350 attendees came to the Open Day, and we received extremely positive feedback on the event.

Housing Operations

- At the end of the calendar year, the housing income team had maintained the level of rent arrears reported at this point the previous year, despite significant challenges such as the migration from legacy benefits to Universal Credit, and the ongoing financial challenges faced by many of our tenants.
- Supported Housing strategy has now been approved, which will provide strategic direction for the service for the lifespan of the strategy. The strategy was developed alongside tenants and will involve involvement of key internal and external stakeholders.
- Temporary Accommodation project group has been established to respond to the significant increase in demand on the service. The group, made up of key officers from across the organisations, will focus on all areas relating to Temporary Accommodation as well as supporting the ongoing work carried out by the Homeless prevention team.
- The team have significantly increased the number of estate inspections completed each month, the next stage is to include tenants in developing the approach and maximising benefits for the local community.

Strategic Housing & Delivery

- The newly completed Randalls Ride project hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony in November to celebrate the completion of 400 new homes.
- Homes England conducted an annual audit for projects receiving their funding. The process ensures that providers of affordable housing receiving grant funding have complied with Homes England's requirements and funding conditions. The Council were selected for an audit and have achieved a positive GREEN rating.
- Paradise Depot construction is due to recommence on site at the beginning of March.
- Paradise Fields and St Margaret's Way housing development projects are both close to completion which will mark the 500th new home.

Safe Communities

- In collaboration with the police a successful bid for Operation Hotspot funding has been made, enabling provision of 6x deployable cameras in the following hotspot areas for anti-social behaviour and crime:
 - Marlowes Junction with Queensway
 - Marlowes opposite West Herts College
 - Marlowes Junction Midland Road
 - X2 King Harry Street
 - Waterhouse Street in area of Watergardens North Carpark
- The CCTV cameras will be monitored by the 24/7 control room will assist in the timely deployment of police officers and accredited persons to address any crimes and ASB.
- DBC have been allocated £1,758,034.00 Homeless Prevention Grant for 2025/26 - this funding will enable the extension of Rough Sleeper Initiatives in the borough, support the Temporary Accommodation Project and prevention of homelessness activity.
- A draft Preventing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed with stakeholder engagement, including service users with lived experience – this strategy will be presented to committee for scrutiny in March.
- Private Sector Housing Team secured a successful conviction against a private sector landlord (King) who pleaded guilty in December and was sentenced on 30 January with a Community Order, fined £1500 and costs of £1300 were awarded.
- 1 Civil Penalty notice and fine £2500 served on PRS landlord for failing to licence HMO.