

Date: Monday 10 May 2021

Report Of: Councillor David Harvey

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Housing

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1 Summary

As per the new agreed Cabinet Member report structure, this update provides highlights on my City for All priorities which drive the medium-term objectives of the portfolio, plus areas of current focus in the housing portfolio and pertinent performance information. Since the last Communities, Regeneration and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Committee, I have formally approved the following key decisions:

- Issue of the Annual Review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Rent and Associated HRA Charges 2021/22.

2 City for All – Housing Priorities

Cleaner and Greener

2.1 Leverage Energy Efficiency Measures in Housing

Further grant funding of £270k has been secured. This is in addition to the £145k of grant funding secured for E rated properties to benefit from internal wall insulation and heating upgrades. Work to reduce consumption/decarbonise the stock includes enhanced insulation and replacing traditional boilers with air source heat pumps. Options to off-set consumption include photovoltaic panels. The various technologies are planned to be trialled over the next 18 months so that the impact can be better modelled.

Vibrant Communities

2.2 Develop A New Approach For Major Works In Our Buildings

The major works delivery process is under review and will result in a reduction of the process and improvements in the accuracy of indicative leaseholder bills. This year a programme management approach has been put in place to oversee delivery of the capital investment programme. A new format is being developed for monthly project updates beginning at the start of the project. This will standardise performance management across projects as they move through milestones and will be included on the project webpages for residents.

2.3 Supporting Vulnerable Residents

Reviews of the floating support contract and support arrangements for care leavers are underway to ensure that service users get the help they need to sustain their tenancies. The housing service is working with partners to establish a multi-agency framework to deal with mental health issues. A new approach involving residents in resolving anti-social behaviour (ASB) through a case review panel is being developed and will be piloted later this year. Work towards DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation is progressing. This is an in-depth piece of work expected to take a year to complete.

2.4 Redesign of Service Model Through Shared Space and Maximising the Use of Public Buildings

The housing service is designing a project to improve wellbeing and community engagement in ensuring community assets are used to their full potential. The project will deliver a series of interventions to residents of Churchill Gardens in partnership with other services to create a more engaged, resilient community. The pilot will seek to strengthen partnerships, co-ordinate council and community services with better use of local assets. The project has commenced with a survey of residents at Churchill Gardens and will include feedback on use of the community hall and outdoor spaces.

2.5 Resident Engagement

A consultation pack for residents on proposals for changes to involvement arrangements has been designed with input from key stakeholders. The formal consultation will take place between 26 April and 21 May 2021. To maximise participation, we will write to all residents and offer a range of opportunities (post, online, phone and webinars) for them to provide their feedback.

Smart Cities

2.6 Trial Smart Homes Technologies

The housing service is exploring the use of technology in homes and on estates with the intention to test a range of technology through small pilots to determine the benefits that may be delivered by roll-out across the city. Trialling of a range of sensors to detect water leaks is due to commence in May 2021.

2.7 Facilitating Broadband Connections

The project is in delivery phase and the target to achieve 80% of homes with access to full fibre has been achieved.

3 Areas of Focus

3.1 Major Works Update

Further to the recent Government announcements, our Partners have reviewed their COVID-19 processes and procedures to ensure that they are in line with the latest version of the Construction Leadership Councils – site operating procedures. The delivery of Major Works is progressing well and in particular at Little Venice Towers,

where the External Wall Insulation to all the 6 blocks is now completed. We have reviewed our 5-year capital programme, which has received confirmation and discussions are taking place with our contractors.

3.2 ASB on Housing Estates

In January 2021 we implemented a new approach to ASB enforcement. The first change is to make more use of Notices of Seeking Possession where there has been a breach of tenancy agreement. The second change is to make more use of Community Protection Notices to tackle persistent ASB. The ASB team have received additional training in relation to the agreed referral pathways. The ASB team have made three referrals to Public Protection and Licencing to serve CPN warnings and two referrals to the Police to serve CPN warnings.

3.3 Housing Contact Centre

Our new digital system 8x8 has been very successful since it's full implementation in March. New customer channels such as webchat/SMS/Social have recently been included, as well as speech analytics and the ability to take direct payments.

3.4 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

In 2021 we have received **1519** homelessness applications to date in comparison to 2050 over the same period in 2019/20. Reasons for the lower figures include the freeze on evictions from private landlords. As of March 2021, there are **2,716 households** in Temporary Accommodation and there are no families in non-self-contained accommodation. We continue to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic particularly in responding to the need of Rough Sleepers. In line with new government funding and priorities we will be looking into opportunities focused on the needs of the supported accommodation pathway.

4 Performance Updates

Housing Contact Centre

- 4.1 A total of **16,826** calls were received in February with **67%** of calls resolved on the first contact. **90%** of residents were satisfied with their call handling. Both targets are exceeding the minimum standards for the service.

Satisfaction with Repairs Service

- 4.2 Overall tenant satisfaction with repairs has remained steady at **79%** for February 2021. **76%** of repairs in this period were completed on the first visit.

Overall Satisfaction of Housing Services

- 4.3 Tenant satisfaction that WCC provides a safe and secure home remains steady at **73%** for tenants and **75%** for leaseholders in February.
- 4.4 Satisfaction with cleaning of communal areas is at **84%** for tenants and **71%** for leaseholders, while satisfaction with grounds maintenance is above target at **86%** for tenants and **85%** for leaseholders.