

ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR HOUSING (LANDLORD SERVICES) – FOR INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report was originally prepared for consultation with Members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 18th March, however, due to the coronavirus lock-down this meeting was cancelled. Given the need to progress measures within the report, a portfolio-holder decision was taken on the 2nd April to approve the Asset Management Housing Strategy.
- 1.2 This information report therefore sets out the background to the decision and steps to the Council's approach to the management of its housing stock, through a new Housing Asset Management Strategy, attached as Appendix 1.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council owns and manages over 5,000 homes across all areas of the District, as well as providing a management service to 119 leasehold properties.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to providing an effective asset management service in order to comply with its statutory responsibilities, including but not limited to the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (as amended) and the Housing Act 2004 and to ensure high levels of resident satisfaction and to protect the value of its housing stock.
- 2.3 The Council continues to invest heavily in looking after its existing housing stock and has implemented a suite of new maintenance policies and raised standards to ensure tenants obtain the very best service from the Council.
- 2.4 The safety of the Council's tenants is of paramount importance and the Council has comprehensive regimes in place to ensure that all of its homes are legally and regulatorily compliant.

3. CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The overall condition of Council properties is good. The Council invests around £6 million per year on planned capital improvement work to tenants' homes, modernising kitchens and bathrooms and ensuring the external envelope of homes are well roofed, with energy efficient double-glazed windows and fire-resistant doors.
- 3.2 The Council offers tenants an in-house responsive repairs service which also ensures that properties that become vacant are prepared for re-letting as quickly as possible. An efficient and value for money maintenance service is one of the biggest drivers of customer satisfaction. All void properties are now re-let with freshly painted walls, which is an improvement on previous standards.
- 3.3 The largest share of Council housing properties (2,246 - 40%) were constructed in the post-war period between 1945 and 1964. 29% were constructed between 1965 -

1974, whilst 23% of the stock is relatively recent, being constructed from between 1975 to 2020. Just 8% of stock was constructed Pre-1945.

- 3.4 92% of Council properties are purpose-built houses, flats and bungalows of traditional construction. 407 properties (8%) are of non-traditional construction, including Airey, BISF, Reema and some timber frame houses built during the 1970s.
- 3.5 A thorough review of the Council's approach to asset management has been undertaken by the Housing Maintenance Section, which has resulted in a new Asset Management Housing Strategy (Landlord Services).

This Strategy sits alongside a suite of other recently adopted new policies as set out below: -

- Electrical Safety;
- Fire Safety;
- Gas Safety;
- Legionella;
- Lifts and Lifting Equipment;
- Maintenance and Repairs;
- Playgrounds and Play Equipment; and
- Void and Mutual Exchange.

4. ASSET MANAGEMENT HOUSING STRATEGY

- 4.1 The Asset Management Strategy explains how, through sound planning, the Council will put in place a range of flexible, dynamic approaches to maintaining, improving and developing its Council housing assets over the short, medium and longer term. It sets out the priorities for the physical care and improvement of the housing properties and surrounding environment. In this way, over the life of the Strategy and beyond, both the quality and quantity of Council owned homes can be increased throughout the District.
- 4.2 The Strategy clearly sets out our main goals over the four-year life of the Strategy, and beyond.

The new Strategy's salient points are as follows:

Four Main Aims: -

- a) To raise the standard of Council homes to make sure they are fit for purpose for modern living.
- b) To optimise the value and impact of the Council's repair, maintenance and capital investment expenditure.
- c) To improve the living conditions, health and well-being of tenants through environmental and estate-based works to properties, schemes and neighbourhoods.
- d) To maximise the use of the housing assets to help deliver the Council's Housing Strategy.

Four Strategic Priorities: -

- a) Achieving high standards in the maintenance and repair of Council stock.
- b) Achieving high levels of energy efficiency in Council homes.

- c) Delivering value for money across capital investment, responsive repairs and re-letting of empty properties.
- d) Delivering a modern customer model, empowering tenants to self-serve.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The new Asset Management Strategy sets out the framework for how the Council will make decisions on developing, repairing, maintaining, refurbishing or replacing its housing properties. It will ensure effective, efficient and economic approaches to securing the Council's vision of enhancing the quality of lives for all.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An annual budget funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is required to implement and support this Strategy and this will be agreed as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Asset Management Housing Strategy (Appendix 1), be noted.

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Background Papers:

Public documents