

## Housing Business Centre Plan 2022/23 (Housing, Andy Vincent)

### Synopsis of report:

The Housing Business Centre Plan 2022/23 identifies the improvement activity planned by the service for the new financial year. The work streams include: -

- Work to develop and deliver phase 1 of the Council House new build programme.
- A commitment to updating the Housing Committee on the progress against the actions contained within the Housing Strategy documents (Older People, Financial Wellbeing, Tenant Engagement etc.)
- The need to prepare the service for new legislation/initiatives such as the Building Safety Bill and the introduction of First Homes.
- Proposals to implement enhancements to Surrey Towers (door replacements and procurement of a contractor to undertake roof replacement work).
- Preparation for the commencement of the new Repairs, Maintenance and Voids contract.
- A commitment to undertake a survey of tenants and residents (a STAR survey).
- A proposal to update the Housing Committee on progress in delivering the Housing carbon reduction targets.

### Recommendation:

- i. That members approve the content of the Housing Business Centre Plan for 2022/23; recognising that reports for approval will be brought to Committee prior to the implementation of any new initiative.

## 1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 The annual business planning cycle first involves the Senior Leadership Team meeting as a group to share their challenges and opportunities for the forthcoming year as well as their intended activity highlights above and beyond business as usual. The process is also used for members of the Senior Leadership Team to advise other business units where their support will be needed for this to then be factored into other Business Unit Plans.
- 1.2 In a typical year, non-corporate Business Unit Plans go to their relevant service Committee for approval. Final approval is then sought from Corporate Management Committee approving the Corporate Action Plan (which is an amalgamation of all the plans for the year).

- 1.3 However, due to the development of the Corporate Business Plan for 2022-2026, formal service area business planning across the business units is postponed pending the release of the new plan and associated strategies. Housing continues to require a business unit plan to demonstrate delivery to the Social Housing Regulator and residents of Council-owned housing stock and therefore a business plan for 2022/23 has been produced for approval.
- 1.4 A standard corporate template is provided to ensure each Business Unit Plan consistently sets out the: key drivers/influences, objectives, performance/activity indicators, and the associated risks.

## 2. **Report**

- 2.1 The full Housing Business Centre Plan can be found in Appendix A. A summary of the planned work is contained below: -

### 2.2 **Purpose of the Business Unit**

The primary purpose of the Housing Business Unit is to provide a comprehensive housing service incorporating:

- The management, maintenance, and improvement of the Housing Revenue Account social housing stock
- The development of new Council properties.
- Allocation of council owned stock and Registered Provider properties to which the Council has nomination rights
- Housing advice and explanation of housing options
- Discharge of the Council's statutory duty under homelessness legislation
- Encouraging and enabling the provision of new affordable housing
- Magna Carta Lettings, our in-house agency to incentivise landlords to offer tenancies at affordable (within LHA) rent.
- Delivery of disabled adaptations to both Council owned and privately owned properties
- Provision of statistical information and returns to Government

### 2.3 **Key achievements in 2021/22 (to date)**

- 2.3.1 The key achievements in 2021/22 to date by the Business Unit are: -
- Production of the Housing Strategy Statement 2021-2026
  - Preparation of the Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan 2021-2051
  - Publication of the Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026
  - Publication of a Housing Development Strategy and Older People Strategy
  - Development activity – completion of site in Addlestone to provide 9 new 2-bedroom Council flats
  - Nomination to 34 Affordable Rent properties with a partner Registered Provider at the Egham Gateway

- Development/review of the following policies: -
  - Adaptations Policy
  - Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
  - Asbestos Policy
  - Decant Policy
  - Fire Risk Management Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Housing Allocations Scheme
  - Rent Setting Policy
  - Repairs Policy
  - Recharge Policy
  - Tenancy Policy
- The year-end projection 99% approx. of rent due collected April – January 2022 (current, HRA tenants)
- 99.31% of gas safety certificates in place – including performance exceeding 99.5% every month this financial year.
- Only 20 placements in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation April 2021 – February 2022
- A reduction in outstanding high risk fire risk assessment actions from 281 to 34 February 2022.
- Improvements in relet times from 162 days to 86 days in January 2022
- 99.7% of electric safety checks in place February 2022
- The Housing Solutions Team bid successfully for **£488,607** grant funding during 2021/22. These funds have been used to appoint a Housing Navigator to specifically focus on ending rough sleeping in Runnymede. Funding to enable homeless people and ex-offenders into private rented sector properties. Funding to introduce a housing led scheme, which provides accommodation and a focus on providing holistic wrap around support to enable individuals to successfully manage their home.
- Of this grant funding, a successful bid to Homes England, DLUHC and Surrey County Council has enabled the Council to purchase 3 one-bedroom properties for the general fund. One property has completed and the other two are on schedule to complete before the end of March. These three properties will enable us to accommodate the small cohort of individuals with extreme, complex, multiple needs and deprivations that otherwise fall through gaps in service provision. The Housing Navigator role will support individuals and the housing led model will wrap support around them too.

## 2.4 Key drivers/influences

2.4.1 The key drivers/influences impacting on the Business Unit in 2021/22 are:

- Housing Strategy statement
- Regulator of Social Housing – Regulatory Standards
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Stock condition and Asset Management Plan

- Tenancy Strategy
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Older Persons Strategy
- Financial Wellbeing Strategy
- Customer Engagement – Tenant Engagement Strategy (current in draft)
- Tenancy conditions
- Quality Management system

## 2.5 Key new areas of work in 2022/23

2.5.1 The key new areas of work for the Housing Service in 2022/23 are as follows:-

- Refurbishment work to Surrey Towers – fire doors and procurement of a specialist roofing contractor
- Development of a Council housing new build programme
- Roll out of the ISO 9001 Quality Management System to the rest of the Housing Service
- Mobilisation of the new Repairs, Maintenance and Voids contractor
- Annual updates on the action plans contained within the Housing Strategy documents (Tenant Engagement, Older People, Financial Wellbeing, Asset Management Plan etc.)
- The need to prepare the service for new legislation/initiatives such as the Building Safety Bill and the introduction of First Homes.
- Introduction of a mobile caretaking service (including tenant service charges)
- Review of Magna Carta Lettings
- Introduction of a tree management plan
- A commitment to undertake a survey of tenants and residents (a STAR survey).
- Delivery of phase II of the Housing IT system upgrade
- A proposal to update the Housing Committee on progress in delivering the Housing carbon reduction targets

## 3. Policy framework implications

3.1 This Plan supports the achievement of the following themes in the emerging Corporate Business Plan:

- ***Improving Health and Wellbeing***, by: -
  - *Delivering good quality homes in well managed neighbourhoods*
  - *Providing good quality specialist supported accommodation for older people*
  - *Identifying the support vulnerable people need to assist them to manage their tenancy successfully.*
- ***Tackling Climate Change***; by: -
  - *Delivering reductions in the carbon emissions of our existing housing stock and ensure new homes are highly energy efficient*
  - *Improving the management of waste from Council owned homes to improve recycling levels*

- **Prosperous Economy; through:** -
  - *Investment in new council owned homes,*
  - *Utilising local contractors to deliver significant improvement work*
  - *Maximising the income of our tenants by developing a Financial Wellbeing Strategy*
- **Empowering Communities, by:** -
  - *Increasing our levels of resident engagement, giving tenants choice where possible in how services are delivered*

#### 4. **Resource implications**

- 4.1 This Business Centre Plan does not make any specific requests for growth.
- 4.2 A business case for growth items will be presented to the Housing Committee if required.

#### 5. **Legal implications**

- 5.1 There are a number of areas within the plan, including Fire door installation and preparation for the implementation of the Building Safety Bill, which address issues of compliance with Regulations.
- 5.2 The plan also seeks to strengthen the evidence base that can demonstrate the service complies with the regulatory standards: -

##### **The Economic Standards**

- [Rent Standard](#) (The one that applies to local authority registered providers)s

##### **The Consumer Standards:**

- [Home Standard](#)
- [Tenancy Standard](#)
- [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#)
- [Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.](#)

- 5.3 Advice will be sought from Legal Services on initiatives as indicated on the 'Services Area Plan 2022/23' and further as required.

#### 6. **Equality implications**

- 6.1 Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for projects impacting on tenants/residents being delivered as part of this plan.
- 6.2 This will ensure that any equality implications are identified and addressed before new initiatives are introduced.

#### 7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

- 7.1 The Housing Service has published a series of environmental commitments: -
  - Ensure all Council owned social homes meet a minimum of a C energy efficiency rating by 2030

- Ensure all Council new build properties achieve an A energy efficiency rating
- Support tenants to reduce the waste they produce and maximise recycling rates

7.2 These commitments drive much of the work of the service – and will permeate through actions contained within the Business Centre Plan

8. **Other implications (where applicable)**

8.1 None

9. **Conclusions**

9.1 This plan is being recommended to Housing Committee Members as the key deliverables for the service in 2022/23.

9.2 They seek to maintain the improvement momentum built up in 2021/22 and seek to continue to strengthen the delivery of housing services by Runnymede Borough Council, the engagement with tenants and improvement in performance.

9.3 A considerable number of other improvements are being delivered by the service – via Team Plans and individual appraisals. These are smaller in scale and therefore are not recorded in the Business Centre Plan, which is reserved for larger more strategic actions.

**(To resolve)**

**Background papers**

None