

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: November 2020

Subject: Housing and Community Services Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Whitbread

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing and Community Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Executive Summary

The following report provides an update on progress in the following areas:

Older People's Services

The Older People's Service continue to support our older and vulnerable tenants while in lockdown. We have continued with our decision to keep the communal areas closed to support our residents with social distancing.

Plans are currently underway to convert 2 lounges (where schemes have an extra lounge) into habitable accommodation. This will bring 2 much needed accessible units to our housing stock.

Officers are in the early stages of planning a refurbishment for one of our older persons scheme. Further information will be provided to select committee later.

Income Recovery

The team continue to work in challenging conditions in terms of trying to collect rent in a difficult climate. Approval has recently been given to purchase 'Rent Sense' this is an analytical tool which will help the team to identify changes in payment behaviour. This will enable the team to provide tailored support to those people, who are beginning to struggle. Furthermore, the tools will help offices to priorities those people with higher debt levels who are struggling.

Estate and Land Team

The estate and land team have embarked on several projects to improve the environment and create places where people want to live.

Following the approval by Cabinet, in December, the team are now developing the bin storage replacement programme. The team are working closely with the Asset team to pick up any capital project which could be interlinked with our other project to add additional value to our estates.

Asset Management

Preparations are beginning to shape our Limes estate refurbishment programme. This follows our first block, stock condition survey which was carried out late last year. The programme will include new flooring, internal and external decorations. In addition, the team will be linking with the Estate and Land team to consider what tenant led improvements can be made using our 'It's more than bricks and mortar.'

Cleaning Service

Following feedback from our tenants, we have invested £8K in new cleaning equipment. This will enable us to embark on regular deep cleans in our blocks. Officers have also redesigned the uniform to give staff a fresh and professional look when on our estates.

Development

Our recent application to be a Home's England Investment Partner has been successful. In anticipation of this officers submitted an application for funding to support our phase 4.2 project which consists of 22 units. Officers are pleased to report that this bid was successful, and we have been awarded £1.3M in funding.