

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 29 April 2021
Subject: Housing and Community Services
Portfolio Holder: Councillor H Whitbread

Recommending:

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

Creating Places where people want to live (its more than bricks and mortar)

The Housing and Property directorate have started to Scope out the project plan for regenerating our estates across the district. This is a collaborative approach which has several teams working together to form a project group, including asset management, neighbourhoods, general needs housing, older persons housing, council house building and the community culture and wellbeing. The team have already identified five estates across the district which require large scale works to improve both the asset and the community. This approach fits with the Governments White Paper on social housing. Our first estate identified is the Limes estate, the team are currently scoping out the works which are required and a report will be submitted to stronger place in the near future.

Council House Building

Officers have had an initial meeting with the Planning department to discussed phase 5 of the programme, the meeting was very positive, and resulted in some collaborative thinking, around developments which will help towards our aim of creating great places where people want to live. The development team have also achieved Partnership Status with Homes England, this means that EFDC can apply for grant funding as a way of part funding our council house development programme.

Further positive news on the disposal of Right to Buy Receipts was received last week. This included the change from 30% of capital receipts to 40% of capital receipts, which can be used to cross subsidise council house building. In addition to this Right to Buy Receipts can now be used to fund shared ownership properties. This will be extremely beneficial for EFDC as it may allow us in the future to have the capacity to build some housing for social rent as well as continuing building for affordable rent.

End of year performance

The income recovery team have had an excellent end of year result with the arrears finishing it 1.62% against the target of 1.8%. This has been during a difficult year in

which resource has had to be deployed, to ensure the maximum amount of support is given to those people who have been impacted by COVID-19.

One of the consequences of lockdown has been more people working from home and children being home schooled. The neighbourhood team has worked hard to minimise the impact of ASB on our estates. Furthermore, the neighbourhood team have also worked hard during these difficult times to keep up with the gas safety inspections, I'm pleased to report at the end of year figure was 100% compliance.