

Draft Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-00?-2023/24

Date of meeting:



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing and Strategic Health Partnerships (Cllr Holly Whitbread)

Subject: Update on the Housing Asset Management Strategy

Responsible Officer: Surjit Balu, Interim Director for Housing
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Democratic Services Officer: V Messenger (democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

To note the following update on the housing asset management strategy.

Executive Summary:

In October 2023 the Council appointed Ark Consultancy to assist us with the development of our housing asset management strategy.

The deliverables of the project are:

- A **Position Statement** setting out the strengths, weaknesses and areas of focus for the management of EFDC's housing assets
- A **Strategy Document** that sets out the position we aim to achieve by the end of the five-year strategy period and what we need to do to get from our current position to our target position.
- An **Action Plan** with timescales to deliver the asset management strategy.
- **12 Monthly Reviews** of our progress for the duration of the asset management strategy and updates to the action planned as required.

The Position Statement is based on research including:

- A stock tour to provide Ark with a general understanding of the characteristics and issues of EFDC's housing stock
- A survey of tenants on their priorities
- Focus group sessions with staff in the Asset Management team, internal customers within EFDC (Peers) and staff at Qualis Property Services
- Benchmarking of EFDC's asset management data
- One-to-one interviews with EFDC officers on their specialist areas

Ark Consultancy have drafted a draft outline asset management strategy which is attached to this paper. They are still to complete the detailed asset management strategy and action plan.

Report:

The draft outline asset management strategy is attached to this report. The strategy is aligned to the Corporate Plan and the Housing Strategy. The proposed priorities for the housing asset management strategy are:

- Stronger voices.
- Better data and decision-making.
- Better repair and maintenance.
- Better homes.
- Better places.
- Better value for money.
- Stronger teams, partnerships, and resources.

Each priority is described in more detail in the attached outline strategy.

Scrutiny Comments

*****Add comments from Communities Scrutiny Committee*****

Resource Implications:

Strategy development - Stakeholders attended workshops, completed surveys and other activities to develop a co-created strategy. This was provided within existing resources.

The final draft of the strategy will recommend the resource requirements for its implementation and for maintaining services to the levels required.

Legal and Governance Implications:

It is good practice to have a strategy, and the Regulator of Social Housing is likely to view favourably housing providers with a sound asset management strategy. However, there are no legal or governance requirements for EFDC to have a housing asset management strategy.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Safe and clean environments, together with energy efficient homes, will be key objectives in ensuring the homes we provide are places where people want to live and want to stay.

Consultation / Scrutiny Undertaken:

There has been consultation of tenants and staff in the development of the strategy so far.

The final draft of the housing asset management strategy will be reviewed by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Communities Scrutiny Committee prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval.

Background Papers:

None.

Risk Management:

The major risk is that the strategy is ineffective in enabling us to make the changes needed to ensure EFDC's housing stock performs at the best possible level. This has been mitigated through detailed briefing, thorough section process to appoint a consultant with a meticulous approach and excellent track record and project management of the strategy development process. The co-

creative approach to the strategy development has enabled ownership by staff, increasing the likelihood of successful implementation.

Equality:

An Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out prior to the adoption of the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

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