

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICE UPDATE FOR OSP

27 August 2019

SERVICE WIDE

1. The Council's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy is being reviewed and updated (this is being led by CBC in conjunction with the other three local authorities within the proposed North Northamptonshire unitary area) and will be submitted for approval in November 2019.
2. The Council has leading on the creation of a Rough Sleeper Strategy Delivery Group (CBC, statutory agencies, CCG, NCC, volunteer groups, faith groups) to ensure partners are collaborating and coordinating their rough sleeper activities, with the first meeting of the Group held on 25 June 2019 – a meeting in September is planned.
3. The Council has successfully bid for funding from the Cold Weather Fund and Rough Sleeper Initiative Fund:
 - a. Cold Weather Fund: following a period of severe weather, where CBC accommodates rough sleepers regardless of priority need, the Council can apply for a refund of up to £4,000 in respect of the expenses it has occurred.
 - b. Rough Sleeper Initiative funding (RSIF): this was an application based on the "Housing First" model. This model aims to accommodate rough sleepers, with support following on from that, rather than attempt to resolve social issues whilst rough sleepers are "on the street". The funding will be used as follows:

| | Description | Amount awarded |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | Professional support (e.g. consultancy) for the set up and running of a new 24/7 shelter in Corby to provide emergency first stop housing for rough sleepers. | £50k |
| 2 | Operational delivery of the Housing First Model through outreach support and co-ordination of housing resources. a) 1x post Outreach Worker (to enable more rough sleeper engagement with the Council) – hosted by Housing Options b) 1x post Move-On Coordinator (housing support role facilitating moves into permanent accommodation) – hosted by 3rd party | £65k |

4. In June 2018, OCPC agreed to the conversion of Dorking House, a former Safe Haven temporary accommodation property on the Kingswood estate that had become vacant into a 16 person night shelter and two self-contained flats. Conversion works are ongoing and on target to be complete for opening on 31 October 2019. Expressions of interest to manage the shelter have been received and the successful applicant will be announced soon.
5. The whole Service attended "Service Away Days" in June, mixed groups of colleagues coming together for two-hour sessions based around service updates and customer service themes (slides appended).

Policy Update

1. Fire Safety Policy – to OCPC September 2019
2. Electrical Safety Policy – to OCPC September 2019
3. Domestic Abuse Policy – to OCPC September 2019

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

There have been several staff changes with the Community Engagement & Business Support Officer, and Community Safety Officer going on maternity leave with both posts recruited to for 1 year fixed term. The other Community Safety Officer has taken up a role in the shared service which gave us the opportunity to trial a Senior Neighbourhood Warden post for 1yr fixed term, which has been recruited to and a start date of 02 October 2019 is expected. We also have a CCTV Team Supervisor to oversee the control room.

A 2 week work experience placement for a student at Uppingham Community College was supported and Police Officer trainees also spent 2 days with the team and supporting departments in May as part of their induction.

ASB, Community Safety & CCTV

1. There have been 7 Community Protection Warnings issued since March 2019 and 1 Community Protection Notice in relation to anti-social behaviour.
2. The Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) has been used to challenge breaches and since May 2019 there have been 7 incidents of alcohol being confiscated and 8 incidents where the person was compliant and handed over the alcohol for disposal.
3. We supported delivery of awareness sessions from the Police on Modern Slavery, serious Organised Crime and Gangs for front line staff from multi-agencies.
4. Reports presented to Crime & Disorder Committee.
5. Arrests attributable to the CCTV system for the year so far (January – July) is 82 (131 for January – December 2018)
6. On 15 August 2019 the team, alongside Repairs and Maintenance colleagues and the Neighbourhood Policing Team, worked together on an operation to tackle off road/illegal bikes. A number of void garages owned by CBC were searched for signs of bikes being stored. One vehicle was seized for being used in crime and during the course of the Day of Action a wanted Male was taken to Custody.

Events & Community Engagement

1. A week long anti-litter programme in support of Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean. 15 clean-up events were held collecting 229 bags of waste. In addition, 14 school sessions at 7 schools was delivered.
2. CBC, Corby Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Fire Service delivered road safety activity in support of BRAKE's Kids Walk campaign. The aim of the initiative is to promote safer road environments, safer driving behaviour and develop greater understanding of road safety measures implemented within the community. 2 schools participated with approximately 200 children taking part.
3. A trial scheme was delivered in St Patrick's Primary School with consideration to potentially roll-out to other schools next year. This aims to develop skills and understanding around money management principles and highlights the potential risks of loan sharking. 3 workshops were delivered to year 6 by CBC, Citizens Advice Bureau and Clockwise Credit Union.
4. Five schools took part in the walk to school week with approximately 1000 children in total participating across the entire week via organised Park & Stride Schemes. In addition 5 school assemblies were delivered to approximately 1200 children promoting the health, social and environmental benefits of walking/scooting/cycling to school. The campaign also assists with tackling school parking, raised as a consistent local priority, and reducing inconsiderate/illegal parking in school vicinities.
5. Rural Pride developed an alcohol awareness workshop session which was delivered with the Neighbourhood Warden Team, in response to a request from Lodge Park Academy for some sessional work to their Year 8 group. 150 students participated. The workshops provided a light touch on the wider health and social impact of alcohol, and information/guidance around making safe choices in situations where alcohol is present.
6. Working alongside the Fire Service for the National Drowning Prevention Week campaign in June. 7 assemblies were delivered to approximately 1000 children at 7 primary schools across rural and urban areas.
7. Attended the Gretton Community Fun Day event with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams on 14 July.
8. Co-ordinated programme delivery to support the national BEEPBEER road safety campaign, scheduled during weeks of 15 and 22 July.
9. Update to the Neighbourhood Association Chairs meeting provided on 14.03.19 on Modern Slavery & 13.06.19 for activity delivered for the Great British Spring Clean.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

1. Apprenticeships:

The Clancy Group have recruited a number of plumbing apprentices with a view to expanding their in-house capabilities, allowing them to more effectively deliver works on behalf of the Anglian Water Authority.

The Council's Repairs & Maintenance team have agreed to host work experience for the apprentice plumbers in partnership with the Clancy Group by facilitating their works programmes.

These will be managed within the R&M planned maintenance schemes and works to void properties, allowing apprentices to demonstrate and evidence the skills required for their NVQ qualifications.

In addition, R&M intend to recruit another apprentice within the Aids & Adaptations team for wet room installation works and other adaptations for disabled customers.

2. Dorking House Project:

The R&M Planned Maintenance team have been instructed to undertake conversion works to the Dorking House project on the Kingswood estate, in support of Council's homelessness initiative. Works commenced in July this year and are expected to be completed by November.

The works include electrical rewires, kitchen, bathroom and gas installations. There are also external clearances, tree removals and drainage repairs to be undertaken to ensure the property is fit for purpose.

3. Fleet:

Since approval was granted in 2018 to replace the Housing vehicle fleet, the first batch of 15 vehicles have been delivered and are currently operational. The remaining vehicles including 43 Vans and 13 EV's are being procured this financial year.

4. Compliance:

Recruitment is still an ongoing issue within the Compliance team with regards to senior, technical positions. Despite this the asbestos team is now fully resourced and the electrical functions have now been reviewed. The review will give the R&M team an opportunity to consult with and expand the remit of electrical operatives, which is already in progress.

HOUSING OPTIONS AND STRATEGY

1. The waiting list as at 1st July 2019 is 1489 – this has seen an increase of 152 Applicants from the same month in 2018. The waiting list seems to have settled around the c1450 - 1500 mark and has stayed around this number since October 2018 so there remains a steady demand for social and affordable housing which is reflective of the high costs within the private sector housing and the changes in housing benefits.
2. We currently have 7 homeless households in B&B (7.8.19) and 2 Homeless at Home, one has an offer currently planned for CBC Temporary accommodation, and the others are awaiting resources to become available.
3. The team are working diligently with landlords to open access to the private sector through loans, grants and bonds. However, this is proving difficult and take up of deposit bonds is decreasing, in this financial year there have been 2 but in the same period for last year there were 7
4. Rough Sleepers – the Council's Housing Options Teams and Neighbourhood Wardens continue to engage with rough sleepers. They very successfully assisted with the closure of the winter night shelter and found homes for 19 of the residents there and continue to assist those that will engage. Currently there are 16 rough sleepers around several locations in Corby, including a small encampment of around 6 behind the swimming pool.
5. Rough Sleeper Outreach worker – this post is currently being recruited to and has had an excellent response to the advertised post, interviews are taking place over the 12th and 13th August and we hope to have someone in place by the end of September.

6. Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding – CBC won £115,000 of this funding to deliver initiatives to reduce and resolve rough sleeping in its area. The funding is being put towards resources that will create a Housing First pathway for rough sleepers which will support the delivery of a permanent shelter, supported housing and move on into permanent housing for rough sleepers who will engage with the project.
7. Rough Sleepers Strategy – CBC are leading on the production and implementation of the first North Northants collaborative strategy to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy is expected to be submitted to OCPC in November 2019 ready for the winter season and it will promote and support the Housing First and Collaborative Working approaches to resolving homelessness by creating housing pathways that have support resources tailored to the individual need.

LANDLORD SERVICES

Tenancy & Income Management

- 1) Income and Tenancy management Teams: Resource issues due to sickness levels have had an impact
- 2) Housing Caretakers:
 - a. Of the 3 posts, one post filled with 2 others awaiting a start date – expectation would be for the new service to begin in September 2019.
 - b. We are trailing a longer visit once every 4 weeks (rather than fortnightly) with 3 caretakers (rather than 2) with the aim of improving the service.
 - c. In addition an inspection and general caretaking service will be undertaken in non-serviced blocks of flats.
- 3) We have a full complement of admin staff with Carly (Clerical Apprentice) joining us in January 2019 and Maddy (Housing Assistant) in March 19.
- 4) Part time Housing Debt Recovery officer – Gillian will join us in September to fill the current vacant post
- 5) Vacant Post – Housing Officer – Interviews in August, likely to be offered to the successful candidate
- 6) Four new Private Sector Leasing (PSL) properties have come under CBC management since Jan 19 and another due in August
- 7) 10 units of temporary accommodation are now being managed on behalf of the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW)
- 8) Plans to recruit a Senior Housing Officer (Special projects) to assist with PSL's, BCW temporary accommodation, Asra properties and to undertake other special projects incl DDA Option Appraisal Refusals/Direct Lets

Current Arrears at the end of Aug 19

- 1) £ 748K – includes all current account debt.
- 2) Over all cases in arrears is 1896.

All arrears cases are being audited by the Income Team Manager, and individual action plans for each Housing Officer are being managed.

Voids

- 1) Turnaround time: 17.4 days in July 2019 - cumulative performance 19.9 days (target is 24 days).
- 2) Void Numbers: as at end of July 2019 = 27

Supported Housing Team

- 1) Staffing:
 - a) Julie Smith has been appointed as the permanent Housing Support Services Manager
 - b) Part time control operative vacant post – being short listed this week

- 2) Electric Vehicles x 3 - to be purchased to replace ageing current vehicles used by the support workers in their day to day role and the out of hours service in 2019/20.
- 3) Traveller site – new gates have been installed in consultation with the residents. The amenity blocks are being assessed to see if improvement works are needed.

DEVELOPMENT

New Build Projects

1. **Former Kingswood and Beanfield School Sites.**

24 x 2 bed houses and 26 x 2 bed bungalows on former school sites now called Kings Park and Fairfields.

Kings Park - All 24 houses completed March 2018.

Fairfields - All 26 bungalows completed June 2018.

2. **Kings Park and Fairfields Additional homes**

All 12 additional homes at Kings Park and Fairfields completed and handed over by July 2019.

3. **Wilby Close**

4 x 1 bed new build modular block of flats on a former garage site. Modular units delivered June 2019. Exterior brickwork and landscaping to be completed by November 2019.

4. **Neville House**

12 x 2 bed maisonettes. Major refurbishment project of prominent town centre building. Site acquired from PA Housing in November 2018. Contractor commenced work in December 2018. Estimated completion by November 2019.

5. **Barnard Close - Kingswood Garage Conversions**

8 x flats to be created by converting garages beneath existing blocks of flats. Tender awarded to Woodland Property Services Ltd. Start on site July 2019 with estimated completion January 2020.

6. **Cheltenham Road – Oakley Vale former railway halt**

18 x new build homes proposed. Licence to remove newts granted by Natural England. Site should be clear by September 2019. Tender for building contractor to go out in August 2019.

7. **Cannock Road**

Proposal to convert former commercial premises into 5 residential units. One of the units will be designed for special needs occupant.

Negotiations are taking place with Orbit Homes to acquire a site which has planning permission for 32 new houses.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT

1. The team welcomed the addition of the Housing Finance team to their ranks in May of this year. The Housing Finance team are now located on the 1st floor of Deene House.
 - a. The Housing Systems Officer post has been filled by Beth Coull.
 - b. The Housing Finance Officer P/T post has been filled by Olena Gostieva.

2. **Benchmarking**

The team have completed the MHCLG LAHS (Local Authority Housing Statistics) return for this year and are currently finalising the Housemark submission which includes a detailed submission in relation to Repairs & Maintenance. The Housemark report shall be available in October 2019.

3. **Housing Systems**

Aareon QL

We are now one year since go live and we are continuing to embed the system and evolve our processes and procedures.

In the first year there were a total of 96,735 contacts logged on the system. The top three contact reasons are:

45,384 contacts linked to rent

33,914 contacts linked to maintenance

6,242 contacts linked to tenancy management

Our Gas contractor now utilises our contractor portal to live update jobs on QL this reduces our administration burden and also ensures that the system has accurate up to date information.

Documotive

This is our electronic document management system which is currently integrated to QL for tenancy and property and we are in the process of building two further repositories for our Clients and Complaints documents.

Kirona DRS

This is our dynamic scheduling service which is currently being upgraded to a version to enable all of our repairs operatives to be scheduled through. This shall provide consistency of approach as well as enhanced reporting functionality.

1st Touch

This is our mobile working solution which is currently deployed to all tradesmen for repairs and we have our inspections module due for deployment in October.

We shall then plan deployment of the tenancy management modules.