

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICE UPDATE FOR OSP February 2020

SERVICE WIDE

1. Future Northants – Service colleagues have been representing CBC at a range of workshops and Programme Board meetings as assessments of Housing functions have taken place. These meetings will continue and are being approached positively by all parties.
2. “Service Away Days” have been held, 4 sessions in the Council Chamber, taking all colleagues out of the day job for two hours to work on scenarios, share experience and be provided with Service Area Updates.
3. Compliance and Health and Safety – this has continued to be an area of considerable focus for the Service, led by the Repairs and Maintenance Team. It has included Sheltered Schemes, Fire Risk, Water Hygiene, Asbestos Management, and Gas Management and has included new processes, data management and reporting.

Policy Update

1. Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy – OCPC approval January 2020
2. Fire Safety Policy – OCPC approval September 2019
3. Electrical Safety Policy – OCPC approval September 2019
4. Domestic Abuse Policy – OCPC approval September 2019

SAFER CORBY

Staffing:

- a) The team has been realigned to reflect the Safer Corby Strategy – Engagement & Enforcement strands.
- b) A Community Safety Officer vacant post has been converted to a Senior Warden post and is being trialled for 1 year.
- c) A vacant Neighbourhood Caretaker post has been converted into an additional Partnerships & Business Support Officer to aid with engagement work and office support.
- d) CCTV Supervisor in post.
- e) Casual CCTV Operative recruitment in progress for added resilience.

Enforcement (ASB, Community Safety & CCTV)

1. There have been 3 Community Protection Warning's issued since July 2019 in relation to anti-social behaviour.
2. The Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) has been used to challenge breaches and since August 2019 there have been 7 incidents of alcohol being confiscated and all incidents the person was compliant and handed over the alcohol for disposal.
3. The Corby & Kettering Cuckooing meeting still meets monthly and numbers of referrals are steadily increasing
4. CBC void garage inspections with the local Police Neighbourhood Teams targeting motor cycle nuisance.
5. Police Officer trainees spent 2 days with the team and supporting departments (26.11.19) as part of their induction.
6. ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) e-learning package rolled out to all CBC staff.
7. Crime & Disorder Committee providing updates on the Community Safety Partnership performance and CCTV.

8. Arrests attributable to the CCTV system for 2019 (January – December) is 148 (131 for January – December 2018)
9. CCTV Consultancy report delivered which identified prioritisation of additional capital spend to system additions and upgrades are aligned.

Engagement (Events, school sessions & Community delivery)

1. Attended National Play Day at West Glebe Park (07.08.19) to promote safety messages and complete engagement questionnaire.
2. Support of Keeping Britain Tidy campaign 'Big Pic' with week-long activity (23.09.19) 135 bags of waste were collected via various local clean-ups, dog fouling patrols were undertaken, the coffee cup sticker scheme was re-visited to encourage people to dispose of their take-out cups responsibly and approximately 1200 children participated during the school education programme.
3. Project Edward a road safety activity to reducing road deaths to zero across Europe was supported encouraging the public to make a pledge to promise to change one aspect of their driving behaviour. The campaign also included a partner sign-up by Corby Borough Council, Fire Service and Neighbourhood Policing representatives.
4. We supported the annual Fresher Fayre at Tresham College, 19.09.19 along with the Neighbourhood Policing Team engaging with students and giving advice on personal safety. The team promoted a safety app 'Hollie guard' which enables young people to send alerts to friends/family for help, if they're in an unsafe situation.
5. The National Hate Crime Awareness campaign which aims to raise awareness of the impact of hate, develop wider public awareness and support individuals/communities who have been affected by hate crime was supported. Class sessions were delivered to 540 pupils and two assemblies to 1000 were delivered. In addition 29 sessions across the borough were booked for delivery up until January 2020.
6. An additional day of alcohol awareness workshop session was delivered at Lodge Park Academy in October to Year 8, as a follow-up to a successful trial activity back in July. 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. A practical first aid activity was also delivered.
7. Support of National Road Safety week with sessions delivered in schools, free winter tyre checks,
8. 16 days of activism (targeting Domestic abuse) display in the Cube reception for the duration of the 16 days. All public convenience doors were refreshed with new posters advising how you can get support if you are suffering with domestic violence.
9. Anti-bullying week was supported with 12 sessions delivered across 3 schools to approximately 800 pupils.
10. Promotion of anti-burglary advice with a 'Keep Christmas wrapped up' leaflet distributed by the Police Cadets to supermarkets and also on the town centre in the run up to Christmas.
11. ASB pillars refreshed with national CAP posters on the topic of underage alcohol sales.
12. Working alongside Corby Pubwatch funding was obtained from the OFPCC to deliver a 'Safer Nights out' scheme building on Ask Angela to reduce alcohol related crime and disorder in Corby Old Village.
13. Nominated to receive an award at the National CAP (Community Alcohol Partnership) event on 29.01.20 at the House of Lords for work delivered around tackling underage drinking.
14. We have undertaken 212 Survey Monkey interactions between September & December 2019 and Corby CSP twitter has 2,062 following and 2,878 likes.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

1. Aids & Adaptations:

The Aids & Adaptations team was recently reviewed with a view to improving efficiencies, which has proven to be very successful. The review involved all members of the team and incorporated some

development opportunities for operatives and staff. In addition, the team are also recruiting an apprentice operative who will be trained in all aspects of adaptation works.

The review also took into consideration the sourcing and procurement of materials, which helped to significantly reduce the cost of installations. A 12 month monitoring system in the form of an internal warranty ensures that the team learn from issues that may arise, which is also helping to improve customer satisfaction.

2. Dorking House Project:

The R&M Planned Maintenance team undertook the conversion works to the Dorking House project on the Kingswood estate, in support of the Council's homelessness initiative. Works commenced in July this year and were completed by the November deadline.

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

3. Fleet:

Since approval was granted to replace the Housing vehicle fleet, all vehicles with the exception of 13 EV's have been procured. We are expecting a further 33 vans in the coming weeks. Most of the delivered vehicles have now been racked out for trade materials and tools and are currently operational. Trackers are fitted on receipt and the older vehicles are being auctioned as and when replaced

4. Asbestos:

The R&M team recently and successfully embarked on a trial asbestos removal project, involving qualified members of the trades' team. The aim was to address a number of removal works that would normally be issued to licenced contractors, which are often very costly.

An enhanced rate for these works was applied for the duration of the programme, which has since been reviewed. It was found that even with the enhanced rate, the project experienced a significant reduction in removal costs compared to those of the contractors. As a result, R&M now intend to continue with developing this operation within the planned function.

HOUSING OPTIONS AND STRATEGY

1. The waiting list as at 1st January 2020 is 1571 – this has seen an increase of 88 Applicants from the same month in 2019. Since August 2019 the waiting list has shown a consistent increase every month, through to January 2020. There seems to be no real pattern to it but does show that there is a steadily increasing 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 2 homeless households in B&B (20.1.20) and 3 Homeless at Home, this is a considerable reduction since the July 2019 report.
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 6 but in the same period for last year there were 16.
4. The Housing Options and Strategy Team have gone through a small restructure with full time staff moving to part time roles and part time staff moving to full time roles. This has created an opportunity for a new part time post and the successful achievement of grant funding has allowed for another new, fixed term, post. The two new posts are the Rough Sleeper Outreach Worker (RSOW) a fixed term post which came into place September 2019 and the Housing Strategy Administrator post came into place December 2019. These post and the other posts that have changed has given the team the opportunity to realign and refocus moving forward into the next year, prior to merging into the upcoming new authority.
5. Rough Sleepers (RS) – since the introduction of the new RSOW there has been a considerable drop in RS numbers. This is due to the consistent and intense one to one engagement that having this post allows. They have not only very effectively helped to house 8 people who were sleeping rough,

and has helped to temporarily accommodate 7 people over the Christmas period as a temporary measure until the shelter opens. They also continue to be a hands on resource assisting with getting the shelter ready for occupation.

6. Annual RS Count - November is the month where the Government require an annual rough sleeper count, this can be estimated if the Authority feels that their numbers are below 10. CBC had to hold a physical count in November 2019 as the previous year's count was estimated to be 28. This was the first physical count done in over a decade and resulted in 17 RS's being found to be sleeping out. Not only is this a dramatic drop on the previous year's count but CBC were commended on the way in which the count was organised and conducted. MHCLG will take our processes forward to other authorities as good practice examples.
7. Dorking House refurbishment was completed on 5.12.19 and the Management Organisation, East Northants Community Services, took over on that same day. Through November, December and the beginning of January 2020, they have been preparing the shelter for opening by furnishing it, setting up processes and recruiting staff and volunteers. The shelter opened on 22.1.2020 and will be closely monitored and supported in its early days to establish this resource.
8. North Northants Homeless & Rough Sleepers Strategy – CBC led on the production and implementation of the first North Northants collaborative strategy to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping. The strategy will promote and support the work of the Housing Options and Strategy Team to resolve homelessness and rough sleeping.

LANDLORD SERVICES

Tenancy & Income Management

1. Income and Tenancy management Teams: Resource issues due to sickness levels have had an impact
2. Housing Caretakers: 3 new posts filled. General all round improvements are being made. In addition a health and safety visit and inspection is now being undertaken in non serviced blocks of flats.
3. We have a full complement of Housing Officers and Financial Inclusion & Support Officers – New employee Leisha Murphy – DWP and work coach background
4. 2 new Private Sector Leased (PSL) properties added to portfolio
5. Borough Council of Wellingborough Temporary Accommodation – 10 properties now being managed with another 3 having works undertaken to bring them up to a lettable standard
6. Plans to recruit a Senior Housing Officer (Special Projects) to assist with PSL's, Wellingborough, Asra properties and to undertake other special projects including DDA Option Appraisal Refusals/Direct Lets – still being recruited to

Current Arrears at the end of Dec 31st 2019

1. £ 730,400 – includes all current account debt i.e. the tenancy balance.
2. For comparison

Month / Year	Amount
Dec 2017/18	£674,000
Dec 2018/19	£784,400
Dec 2019/20	£730,400

3. Over all cases in arrears is 1744
 - a. 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: 23.6 days in Dec 2019 - cumulative performance 18.8 days (target is 24 days).
2. Void Numbers: as at end of Dec 2019 = 25 (target is 25 or less)

Supported Housing Team

1. Staffing:
 - a. Julie Smith has been appointed as the permanent Housing Support Services Manager – been with us for 6 months now
 - b. 3 x Part time control operative vacant posts – being recruited to
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- awaiting delivery date
3. Traveller site – new gates have been installed in consultation with the residents.

DEVELOPMENT

New Build Projects

1. **Wilby Close**
4 x 1 bed new build modular block of flats on a former garage site. Scheme completed end of December 2019 and new tenants moved in January 2020.
2. **Neville House**
12 x 2 bed maisonettes. Major refurbishment project of prominent town centre building. Site acquired from PA Housing in November 2018. Extra works to lift shaft underway. Completion February 2020.
3. **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. Started on site July 2019 with estimated completion March 2020.
4. **Cheltenham Road – Oakley Vale former railway halt**
18 x new build homes proposed. Licence to remove newts granted by Natural England. Site cleared October 2019. Tenders for construction returned January 2020. Seeking some clarifications before appointing contractor.
5. **Cannock Road**
Proposal to convert former commercial premises into 5 residential units. Planning application submitted. Going to Planning Committee March 2020.

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT

1. **Staffing**
The Senior Housing Finance Officer post has been filled by Donna Harrison.
2. **Benchmarking**
We have completed our annual benchmarking exercise with Housemark and have received the report. We are also inputting the quarterly performance figures providing benchmarking opportunities throughout the year.
3. **Housing Systems**
Aareon QL
We are continuing to develop processes and procedures with the recent completion of processes for Section 20, Right to Buy (RTB) and Temporary Accommodation aiding the service to continuously improve and effectively utilise the systems at our disposal.

Trades Scheduling (DRS) and Infosuite

We have upgraded our DRS system to the latest 5.7 version and have launched our enhanced reporting service for trades Infosuite.

1st Touch

We have recently launched our 'Cause for Concern' form which provides our trades operatives with a simple mechanism to report Safeguarding, Property and Behaviour issues.