

## HOUSING TASK GROUP UPDATE

### Executive Summary

Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Housing Task Group, provided an update from the Housing Task Group:

“The Housing Task Group met on 25 July and discussed a wide range of matters:

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018 had resulted in significant additional caseload and process management. The number of homelessness assessments had shot up from 21 in the 1st quarter of 2017 to 148 in the same quarter this year due to the changes in the way potential homelessness has to be handled.

A review of the housing register had resulted in 986 people being taken off the list as they no longer qualified, leaving 1,049 on the register. Notably, 852 of the applicants were in need of 1 or 2 bedroom units.

The Canalside Selective Licensing policy had gone live at the end of April and 80% of the possible applications had been received leaving around 200 landlords who have yet to apply. Licences would be backdated to 1 April.

The Council’s Housing management IT system was due to be replaced due to the current version being outdated and unable to be upgraded.

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Council’s intended programme on affordable housing. This information was subsequently noted at the last meeting of Overview and Scrutiny.

The Task Group discussed a number of matters on the Transformation agenda including:-

- A new web-based system ‘Entitledto’ which allows officers to assess affordability for housing clients.
- Investigations into a relocation service for private owners who wished to downsize, possibly involving Thamesway.
- WBC’s handyman service would be taking on Spelthorne’s service from September.
- 4 boroughs were looking to take on a ‘home from hospital’ scheme funded by NWS CCG, the main purpose of which would be to provide various levels care and assistance to hospital leavers for 6 weeks following discharge.
- Surrey CC were consulting on the vision of residents for 2030.
- The rebranded scheme to encourage private sector landlords to rent to social tenants has resulted in 21 new tenancies and a reduction of £50,000 in the cost of B&B.
- The introduction of Universal Credit to new claimants from October could present challenges on rents and stronger links with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who were now based at the Council offices would be helpful in managing the new situation.

The work programme would include a review of the Empty Homes Strategy at the next Task Group meeting in November.”

**Recommendations**

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE That** the update be noted

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| The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above. |
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**Background Papers:** None.

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