

HOUSING TASK GROUP UPDATE

Executive Summary

Councillor Ian Johnson, Chairman of the Housing Task Group, provided an update from the last meeting of the Task Group that was held on 17 November 2020:

Housing Strategy.

The group reviewed a draft of the Housing Strategy to cover the period to 2026 and made a number of observations:-

- 1 Timeframes should be attached to objectives to enable measurement of performance
- 2 With increasing use of technology we need to be aware of the support needed for residents who were not IT savvy or had no access to systems
- 3 Care leavers should be specifically mentioned within objectives
- 4 As properties are designed to be more environmentally-friendly, any kit installed ought to be easy understand and use by occupiers and
- 5 The importance of linkages with the health and well-being agenda and engaging with residents including those supported by the York Road Project.

Housing Management and Repairs.

The performance of New Vision Homes and Breyer Group was discussed. Void property turnaround had reduced from 50 days and targeted to fall to 25 days by the year end. Repairs were taking longer than in 2019 albeit 96% -99% of emergency work was carried out within set timeframes. A key concern was a drop in rental receipts due to arrears which were projected to be between £1.4m and £1.7m at the end of 2021, depending on further lockdowns, Christmas, and employment losses. Some timing differences would arise from delays in payments following initial claims for Universal Credit.

Other matters

- The task group was pleased to note the successful bid for funding under the government's Next Steps Accommodation programme and congratulated colleagues for their work
- An independent consultant had been engaged to review the 20+ contracts of NVH in anticipation of migration of the housing management service to WBC in 2022.
- Covid had impacted on inspection of properties within the Selective Licensing scheme. Nevertheless, a number of properties had been visited and improvements made. Questionnaires to tenants were being issued to better assess performance of the scheme.

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- The terms of reference of the task group were due for update. A draft was reviewed and it was agreed that subject to a few points it would be passed to CMG and then on to O/S in accordance with the usual procedure.”

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

RESOLVE That the update be noted.

Background Papers: None.

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