

Housing & Communities

Our Directorate Work Plan – 2022/23

Housing and Communities Key Achievements 21-22

Replaced our choice-based lettings system and our mutual exchange system and launched the new software to our customers

Reviewed our Safeguarding Policy and provided refresher training for staff

Set up two Community Pantry schemes to provide access to quality food to those in need

Reviewed allocation of Voluntary and Community sector grants to meet local priorities and gained approval through Full Council

Good success on our Homemoves Plus initiative – helping 33 households to downsize, helping move 49 people into more appropriate accommodation and freeing up 83 bedspaces in much needed larger units.

Strategy, Development and Regeneration

Key Achievements 21-22

Started to build 47 more new homes in North Taunton

Produced a regeneration plan for Wordsworth Drive and Coleridge Crescent flats

Completed the affordable housing demand study

Completed the garage site review

Supported the creation of the Homeless Reduction Board which has been set up to ensure better future support for vulnerable customers

Produced a delivery plan for single homeless accommodation and successfully attracted in excess of £1m grant funding for new accommodation

Housing Property Key Achievements 21-22

Reduced the non-emergency responsive repairs backlog following Covid lockdowns, and achieved 100% of emergency responsive repairs completed on time

Implemented a new Assets database which holds component condition data for all of our properties

Set up a Damp and Mould 'task and finish' group with involved residents

Implemented third party audit inspections to support and provide further assurance on the delivery of key property compliance activity for electrical and gas safety checks and replacement installations

Completion of a successful NICEIC audit of our in-house electrical team

Housing Performance, Finance and ICT Key Achievements 21-22

Reviewed and stress tested our housing business plan with independent advice

Trained our staff to write good complaints responses to our customers, appointed Senior Case Manager to

begin work to understand route cause of complaints and capture learning

Provided refresher training to our staff to ensure that we keep customer care our priority

Started closer liaison with our customer services team to improve our customer journey

Undertook extensive work to build our Open Housing software which will go live during 2022/3

Supported the creation of sub groups to support the work of our Tenants' Strategic Group and Tenants' Act

Group e.g. damp and mould working group.

Completed successful third party audit of rent policy, calculation and implementation.

Our Customers

White Paper Action Plan

Complete the self-assessment of SWT Housing against the white paper requirements, producing an action plan to support the assessment.

Customer Experience

Improve our customer experience by improved call handling, customer journeys, service responsiveness and complaints processing in order to increase satisfaction and reduce complaints.

Deliver Single Homeless Accommodation Solutions

Deliver new supply solutions to support the single homeless accommodation strategy and help a successful decanting of Canonsgrove. The solution will include 18 units of RSAP funded Housing First accommodation.

CCTV Improvement Plan

Deliver an improvement plan for CCTV which rationalises our offer, improves quality and value for money.

Community Pantries

Increase the number of Community Pantries available across the district to at least 4.

How we work

HRA Policy Consolidation

Review, rationalise and consolidate HRA policy documentation to develop a suite of policies and procedures that comply with Housing regulatory requirements and meet recognised best practice.

Open Housing Software Go Live

Go live with new Open Housing software across SWT Housing ensuring all staff on one software platform.

Our Homes

Asset Management Strategy

Review, update and implement Housing Property Asset Management Strategy, including strategic land review to ensure delivery of required capital receipts.

Responsive Repairs Review

Review responsive repairs service delivery process, produce Improvement Action Plan and implement agreed actions.

Building Safety Bill

Review proposed Housing Property related requirements contained within the Building Safety Bill and implement.

Retrofit Funding, Strategy and Delivery

Propose to Full council a low carbon HRA retrofit strategy and delivery plan, March 2023 .Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund wave one delivery and wave two substantial bid Summer 2022.

New Homes and Regeneration

New Homes in North Taunton

Deliver new homes to support the regeneration of North Taunton, 47 new completes to practical completion by spring 2022 and phase completion by 2023 (on P1 list). Enter contract to deliver phase B and Ci for 51 new homes.

New Homes at Seaward Way

Progress construction of 54 new council owned zero carbon homes at Seaward Way, Minehead. Completion Autumn 2023

Regeneration at Wordsworth Drive and Coleridge Crescent

Successfully decant and demolish 15 HRA properties at Wordsworth Drive and Coleridge Crescent by Summer 2023

Maximising income

Service Charge Review

Undertake service charge and subsidy review of HRA rented and leased accommodation to ensure charges are transparent and work on a full cost recovery basis where appropriate and to ensure our subsidies are affordable to the business. Develop and deliver resultant action plan.

Supply Chain Review

Review supply chain for responsive and void repairs service within Housing Property and implement agreed actions

Phosphate Credit Investment

Generate phosphate credit through investment in HRA assets (subject to the HRA approach being a recognised mitigation strategy)

Maximise HRA Income

Maximise current income to the HRA through strong performance of void properties, rent arrears and garage lets. Generate new income from grant subsidy, and commercialisation opportunities.

Open Contractor Financial Process

Implement improved Open Contractor financial process

Housing Revenue Account – Financial Strategy.

Implement financial strategy to deliver HRA savings requirements built into 22/23 and 23/24 budget to improve financial resilience and sustainability of business plan to include undertaking further scenario planning and risk mitigation planning for business plan.

Our People

Directorate People Plan

Deliver people plan outcomes deliverable during the year with emphasis on wellbeing, training development and talent management.

Preparation for Unitary Authority

Housing Revenue Account tasks in preparation for Unitary authority, tasks include Single 30-year Business Plan, Policy regularisation e.g., Rent Policy. To include closer working with Homes in Sedgemoor.

Full participation in Non HRA related service alignment workstream activity to deliver agreed product list.

Safe handover of statutory and compliance related responsibilities e.g. General Fund landlord compliance.