

**HOUSING PORTFOLIO  
COUNCILLOR M RADULOVIC MBE****Portfolio Report to Council – 12 October 2022****Resident Involvement**

Receiving feedback on our services and offering opportunities for people to share their views is very important to the housing service. Officers have been attending events over the summer to engage with tenants, leaseholders and applicants, in locations that are local to them and to try and make engagement with the service as easy as possible.

For the first time this year, the Housing Engagement team arranged sixteen 'Pop-up' events within areas where the Council own the majority of the housing. Employees such as Neighbourhood Coordinators and Financial Inclusion Officers were available to discuss any issues or ideas for improving our neighbourhoods. We have received very positive feedback and will organise similar events next summer. Rather than hold our Resident Involvement Meetings at the Council offices we have begun to hold them in the evening at different locations in the borough. The latest meeting was held at Glebe Housing in Eastwood, and was attended by 25 tenants who provided their views on current projects and complaints.

The team have also attended events organised by other organisations, such as the Hope Café, Stapleford Job Fair and Leisure Play Days. These events have enabled the team to engage with 205 residents, who we would not usually hear from, who received information about housing services and advice on housing related matters. More events are planned for the remainder of the year, including the 'Money Sorted Drop In' at Eastwood Library and Kimberley Job Fair.

**Independent Living**

In October the housing department have arranged four Open Days at some of our Independent Living schemes: Gutersloh Court, Cloverlands Court, Templar Lodge and Southfields Court. Schemes where we currently have properties available have been chosen.

Applicants and their family and friends can meet with tenants and the Independent Living team to find out more about the properties and service. Guided tours are available showing available properties, the guest rooms and communal facilities. Visitors will also be able to participate in a selection of activities, to demonstrate the services on offer. The Lettings team also provide advice on how to apply.

**Income Management**

The Income Team are continuing their hard work to ensure that tenants are feeling supported with the cost of living crisis. Our Financial Inclusion Officer continues to process applications for the Housing Support Fund, which is being delivered in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council. A second Financial Inclusion Officer will be starting work with the team in November to increase the level of support the team can provide.

The team have also worked to ensure that all tenants claiming Universal Credit have had their rent increase verified, so that the payment of their housing entitlement is correct. This is key to ensuring that tenants claiming Universal Credit do not build up arrears on their rent account. Only 1.67% of tenants claiming Universal Credit have over 8 weeks of arrears.

So far this financial year our performance each month has been better than in 2021. The arrears outstanding have been lower each month when comparing the amount outstanding to the same months in 2021. The percentage of rent collected has also been higher each month, which given that rent levels are higher this year than last year, shows that the team are actually collecting more rental income this year than they did last year. As at 18 September, the arrears were £287,128.

### Homelessness and Allocations

The Housing Options Team have had a challenging period with a rise in the number of landlords serving notices on their tenants, which has led to more approaches to the team from people at risk of homelessness. The number of households in temporary accommodation has fallen recently, which is positive, and a trend we hope to continue for the rest of the year.

Rough sleeping numbers in the borough continue to be among the best in the County, there were 2 at the last count. It has been a challenging period in terms of staffing, but recent improved numbers within the team have led to a reduction in cases being managed within the team by around a third, to around 122 at end of August.

The Lettings Team have been working hard to reduce the number of difficult to let properties and proactively manage the customers waiting for housing. This in turn has reduced both measures considerably. The number of properties classed as Difficult to Let is below 20, with many historically hard to let schemes attracting new tenants. The waiting list has reduced by around 700 applicants in the year to date, to around 1800. Regular reviews of our waiting list ensure that we have a true picture of the level of housing need in the borough.

### Housing Delivery

Planning Applications have been approved for the following Chilwell garage sites:

- 4x2 bed houses & 2x1 bed flats at Felton Close, Chilwell,
- 2x3 bed houses at Gayrigg Court, Chilwell,
- 2x2 bed houses & 1x3 bed house at Selside Court, Chilwell,

These schemes are in the Housing Capital Programme for 2022-2024 and the building works will be tendered later this year. Homes England funding will also be applied for in the Autumn. It is anticipated that these 3 sites will start Spring 2023 with completion a year later.

Planning Applications have also been submitted for the following Watnall garage sites:

- 2x3 bed houses at Chilton Drive/Spring Close, Watnall,
- 2x2 bed houses at Chilton Drive Watnall,

These schemes are in the Housing Capital Programme for 2022-2024 and the building works will be tendered early next year. Homes England funding will also be applied for in the Autumn. It is anticipated that these 2 sites will start after April 2023 with completion a year later.

On New Build opportunities on section 106 sites, the Council is working with two house builders to build circa 77 new rented homes and shared ownership units on 2 allocated housing sites west of Coventry Lane, Bramcote (35 x 1/2/3/4 bed houses for rent and 17 x 2/3 bed houses for shared ownership) and at Field Farm, Stapleford (22 x 2/3 bed houses for rent and 4 x 2/3 bed houses for shared ownership). The proposed acquisition of the affordable housing on these 2 sites has been subject to several committee/cabinet approvals in 2021/22 and all the required contracts are expected to be entered into later this year with the first phase of handovers in 2024. These schemes are in the Housing Capital Programme for 2022-2026.

The Council bought the Inham Nook pub in 2022. The pub building has been demolished and the planning application for the 15 new homes (12 x 2/3 bed houses and 3 x 1 bed flats) was approved at the September planning committee. These new homes are in the Housing Capital Programme for 2022-2024 and the building works will be tendered in the Winter subject to the section 106 agreement being signed. It is anticipated that the work will be on site in late Spring 2023 with completion a year later.

This is part of the ongoing work to meet the Council's commitment to build 230 new social homes over the next 10 years.

A summary of pipeline schemes is as follows:

Scheme	Tenure	Completion date
Fishpond Cottage (5 houses/flats)	To be reviewed	To be reviewed
3 Chilwell garage sites ( 9 houses/flats)	All for Affordable rent	Winter 2024
2 Watnall garage sites (4 houses)	All for Affordable rent	Spring 2024
Inham Nook Pub site and Barn Croft garage site – (15 houses & flats)	All for Affordable rent	Spring 2024
Crematorium site, Bramcote – 34 rented houses/flats & 17 Shared ownership units	Affordable rent and shared ownership	Estimated March 2024 to March 2026
Field Farm Site, Stapleford – 22 rented & 4 shared ownership houses	Affordable rent and shared ownership	August 2023 to August 2025

### Repairs

The Housing Repairs Team is undergoing a period of change to improve productivity and service delivery. This is an ongoing process taking place over the next six months.

Within the general repairs area, the team continue to be busy. To illustrate:

Jobs completed, (not including Gas or Electrical servicing)

1 June 2022 – 27 September 2022 – 3780 (including 589 completed by Contractors)

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 – 14234 (including 1945 completed by Contractors)

Received per month on average - 945 jobs

Tasks waiting to be carried out - 915 Contractor jobs (includes other jobs contracted not previously counted)

Tasks waiting to be carried out - 263 DLO jobs (weekly)

Tasks booked in with an allocated future date - 189

With regard to Void repairs as at 27 September the picture is summarised as follows:

From 1 April 72 void properties have been returned for re-letting. Currently there are 70 voids on the books for repair.

The Capital Works team are continuing to roll out improvements to the housing stock to satisfy the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard and our asset management plans. The work plans include some or all of the following, structural remedial repairs, external repairs and repainting, fire risk assessment improvements, asbestos surveys & remedial work, heating and energy efficiency measures including government funded plans, modernisations to kitchens & bathrooms, replacement doors and windows, electrical testing and repair, external paths & paving, garage replacements and disabled adaptations to improve independent living for residents which can include extensions.

The team also works with other stake holders to deliver improvements and renewals within the Council's commercial building portfolio. For example, the building of the new public toilets in The Square, and improvements to both Bramcote Leisure Centre and Bramcote Crematorium.

### Private Sector Housing

#### Grants

We are continuing to process a range of grant applications, some of which involving complex projects for disabled facilities. The Warm Homes on Prescription Scheme has now strengthened links with organisations to identify potential recipients.

#### HIMO Licensing.

We are continuing to inspect Houses in Multiple Occupation that require licensing.

Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards

We have just received some funding to do enforcement work in private rented properties to improve minimum energy efficiency standards in this sector.