

<b>Committee:</b> Housing Committee	<b>Date:</b> 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs Update	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
	<b>For Information</b>

### **Housing Service Officer Appointments**

Members will be aware of the recent Tier 3 restructure under the OneTeam Transformation programme and the subsequent recruitment process for the vacant Director roles. In order to maintain Housing Services, until a permanent Director is appointed an Interim Director will be recruited with effect from the middle of September.

In addition, following a restructure in Housing Services the senior Officer level has been increased from two to three including a Corporate Manager responsible for repairs and maintenance with effect from the 1st of September 2022.

### **Fire Risk assessment capital programme**

**Drake House** - Phase 2 of Drake House is now underway to install a sprinkler system throughout the block which has been approved by the Fire Service. The specification/design with pre-tender estimates have now been completed and Axis have now issued the tender pack and are awaiting the tender returns.

**Chichester House** – As with Drake House, a sprinkler system installation has been recommended for this block which has been approved by the Fire Service. A full design of the of the sprinkler system has now been commissioned to provide a revised specification of works.

**St Georges Court/Elizabeth House** – The flat entrance fire door replacement programme has now been agreed following negotiation with Axis to use an alternative manufacturer who can manufacture and install their own door-sets to avoid delays in lead time for doors that had previously been experienced in Phase 1 of the FRA (Fire Risk Assessment) project. Currently the programme of works is being prepared by Axis.

**Scooter Stores – Sheltered Schemes** – Following the implementation of the Mobility Scooter Policy, and in consultation with the Council's Fire engineer to construct scooter stores within five of the sheltered blocks across the borough the Council's FRA technical Consultant has been commissioned to provide the design/specification together with pre-tender estimates for this work to be carried out in the next financial year.

### **Commercial Heating Major refurbishment works Capital Programme**

**St Georges Court - Works** are progressing well, however, there were some key design specification issues identified due to the surface pipework which was proposed

to be installed within individual flats was not aesthetically acceptable for residents. Following a resident consultation exercise this issue was resolved Axis have been instructed to re-design the specification to all for the pipework to be concealed within the individual properties.

**Victoria Court** – Works are progressing well, the boiler house roof replacement is scheduled to be undertaken by Axis in April 2023, however this will not cause a delay to the overall project completion.

### **Kitchen & Bathroom Capital Replacement Programme**

The Council's Kitchen and bathroom programme commenced on the 11 April 2022 of 195 properties, initial observations and feedback from residents are that the standard and quality of installation is good and resident satisfaction is high. Axis is now planning a run rate of 5-6 replacements per week.

### **Service issues**

#### **Gibraltar House Lift failure**

Following a routine inspection by Zurich of the lifts on the Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022 it was identified that due to defects found it had been necessary for the lifts to be taken out of service until remedial works could be undertaken. In response to this notification, we arranged for Housing Officers to be on site to notify residents of issue and to ensure that residents could raise any individual concerns. Whilst we have a 'Stay Safe Policy' in place we also notified Essex Fire Brigade of the issue. Subsequently the lift was back in full operation the following Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> August.

#### **Drake House – Hot water failure**

Following an emergency callout over the weekend of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> August to attend to a leak on the hot water system, Axis had advised that due to the location of the leak major works would need to be undertaken in the plant room to allow access to the parts required that had failed. Following an estimate that residents would not have a hot water supply until Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> August we arranged for Housing Officers to be on site to notify residents of the issue and to apologise for the inconvenience caused. The hot water supply was subsequently restored on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> August.

#### **Masefield Court – Roof leak**

Following the severe rainfall overnight 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> August we were notified of a roof leak at Masefield Court which had caused water ingress to 6 properties. It has been identified that the potential cause of the leak is due to water ingress into the outlet. Further investigations are currently being undertaken to confirm the cause and to arrange remedial works to rectify the issue. All affected tenants were visited by Housing Officers to ascertain the cause of the damage and to discuss any concerns or needs. In the short term the electricity supply to the kitchen area was isolated until the properties had dried out, but there was no immediate requirement for any tenants

to be decanted and no tenants had requested alternative accommodation. The tenants were advised that they could be reimbursed for any additional costs incurred whilst they did not have any cooking facilities available for them.

### **Housing Needs update**

The Housing options team have faced multiple challenges in the last quarter, some of which no-one could have predicted a year ago. With Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the government's subsequent visa sponsorship schemes the team have worked hard to familiarise themselves with changing legislation. A rise in complex cases and hospital discharges has also been a large pressure on staff resources however through collaborative planning and a strengthened working partnership with the NHS we have maintained a high level of service. Severe weather and repair issues have also led to an increase in the need for decant accommodation which creates an added pressure on temporary accommodation stock.