

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
<b>Subject:</b> Housing Chairs Update	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Garry White	
<b>Report of:</b> Angela Abbott – Corporate Manager – Housing Needs and Nicola Marsh – Corporate Manager – Housing Estates	<b>For Information</b>

**National Award Winners:** *Strategic Housing Delivery Partnership (SHDP)*

Congratulations to the SHDP team who have won the iESE Public Sector Transformation awards in the Community Focus category for our Affordable Homes Programme. Our Affordable Housing Development Programme delivers new homes on Council owned land, all of which are aimed at Zero Carbon standard and offer a range of high-quality and energy efficient buildings to meet the needs and circumstances of residents, both now and in the future.

Brentwood Borough Council has developed an exemplar zero-carbon housing scheme in partnership with the Norse Group & Hamson Barron Smith and supported by the Community Engagement Team from Barton Willmore [now Stantec].

The programme will see measurable social impact of Brookfield Zero Carbon in use new homes, in terms of unlocking potential local skills, qualifications and apprenticeships in this technology; driving positive health and wellbeing outcomes and GP intervention savings and easing debt and fuel poverty.

For more information on the iESE Awards, visit <https://iese.org.uk/public-sector-transformation-awards-2023>

**Essex Awards Winners:** Housing Options Team

Congratulations to the Housing Options Team who were part of a team that won an award at the Essex Housing Awards 2022 in November for their partnership working with the Mid Essex Rough Sleepers Initiative Outreach service which includes Essex County Council, Essex Partnership Foundation and nine District Councils, including Brentwood, Braintree, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow, Rochford, Tendring and Uttlesford District Councils.

The aim and objective of the Partnership is to solve rough sleeping and single homelessness within its boundaries, providing interventions that build positive relationships with new and entrenched rough sleepers and hand hold them off the streets and into sustained accommodation. The service also links rough sleepers to support services and provides employment and training support.

## **Resident Engagement – Resident Living Rooms**

In December, Housing opened Brentwood's first 'Resident Living Room' in the newly renovated community room at Gibraltar House. Created not just for Tenants and Leaseholders but available to any resident of the borough, the aim is to provide a warm, welcoming, and safe space for residents to talk.

Working with external partners, officers are looking to introduce workshops on a variety of prevalent topics as well as being able to invite Tenants and Leaseholders into complete income and expenditure forms, discuss their Tenancy or simply request help where needed.

Currently open Wednesday's 10am until 4pm, it is hoped to increase these hours over the next few months as officers have more of a presence on estates.

The time on site has allowed officers to identify and rectify any fly tip or health and safety issues in the building and residents have welcomed the presence of officers with more than one, coming to speak with us weekly just for a coffee and a chat.

Through their engagement in the Living room, officers have been able to build numbers for the new Resident Engagement Panels and build rapport with residents.

Councillors are welcome to come and visit the Living Room and I, along with what I understand to be several other members have already had used them as venues for for meeting with officers.

## **Landlord Gas Safety inspections**

The Council has a statutory duty, as a landlord, to check any gas appliance in properties owned by them to ensure these are safe for tenants and their families to use. On 14 February, the Repairs team completed the annual gas service to the one outstanding property where access could not be gained.

This means Brentwood Council is fully compliant for its gas safety duty.

The effort to achieve, and stay, at 100% is not to be underestimated and I would like to congratulate the Repairs team for this significant achievement and commitment to keeping our tenants safe in their homes.

## **Keeping residents and members informed**

Housing have reported to Committee and other members in some wards when various major service issues have occurred during the year – this has included water failures, Tunstall equipment failures and boiler malfunctions.

Timely communications and engagement with residents is particularly important in these circumstances, including the presence of onsite staff where necessary and the identification of anyone with vulnerabilities that may be affected.

Officers have been quick to ensure that residents, ward members and the Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Committee are kept updated with efforts to rectify the issues when they occur – regardless of the time of day, or night, that these this has occurred.

### **Committee update**

The Housing Committee met on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023 with updates on the Policy Review Schedule which ensures that the Housing Department has the relevant Strategies and Policies in place in order to provide a clear framework of its responsibilities.

A report set out the energy efficiency approach that is being adopted by Brentwood Council for its social housing assets and the measures being implemented further to previous Ordinary Council discussion.

Members approved the “Landlord Offer” to residents affected by the Councils housing regeneration activity and approved the commencement of the decanting of residents at Harewood Regeneration under the terms specified in the “Landlords Offer”.