

Extraordinary Meeting of the Council – 17th April, 2023

Report of the Director of Housing and Communities

Housing Data and Performance

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Council Members on potential data quality issues identified in the Housing Directorate, and the proposed action plan to identify and remedy these.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended:-
 - That Council Members note the contents of this report
 - That the Director of Housing and Communities provide a further report to Council once data has been validated

Background

- 3.1 Within housing services a number of potential issues with data quality and performance reporting have been identified relating to property checks and efficiency data.
- 3.2 A Property Health Check report, requested by the current Cabinet Member for Housing led to a wider internal check on performance data which has in turn identified potential issues with the quality and accessibility of information relating to property checks and efficiency data. Initial indications are that these data quality issues appear to have existed for up to a decade – a more detailed review is taking place to determine when these issues may have started and the cause of them.

- 3.3 The issues we are concerned about do not indicate that our homes are inherently unsafe, this is more around the quality of our data evidence – such as documents not being readily available on document management systems.
- 3.4 We have pulled together a robust plan to validate our data, which will include a root cause analysis to identify how long these issues may have existed and what has caused them. The review will also ensure we have the right target operating model, reporting and governance arrangements in place to ensure this does not happen in the future.
- 3.5 We have already commissioned a Stock Condition Survey (SCS) programme of 100% of our housing stock to inform our response to damp and mould issues following the death of a child in a housing association home last year. Savills, an industry expert, have been appointed to undertake the SCS through the Places for People Procurement Hub “Strategic Asset Management Services Framework”, and the work will be starting in the next couple of weeks.
- 3.6 Due to the data concerns identified we have widened the SCS work out to give us a complete, up to date and robust picture of every home. This will include stock condition, a damp and mould assessment, new EPC certificate and an assessment against the current Decent Homes Standard. Aside from providing assurance as to property condition and the data we hold about that home, it will also enable us to review and reset our 5, 10 and 30 year investment priorities.

Finance

4. There are no financial costs directly associated with the data review. The cost of the SCS programme will cost £3.25m and the outcome of the programme will inform the short, medium and long term investment needed in our homes. A further report on future investment will be presented as the SCS data is gathered.

Law

5. There are no direct legal implications associated with this report, although the SCS programme will help ensure the Council’s compliance with statutory duties associated with property condition and compliance and will help to demonstrate compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s regulatory standards.

Risk Management

6. Risks associated with property condition and compliance are recorded and managed through both the Corporate Risk Register and the Directorate Risk Register.

Equality Impact

7. There are no equality impact implications arising directly from this report. However, there may be differential impacts on individuals, families, and communities in respect of any issues identified through the SCS programme, and these will be managed on an individual basis as required.
8. Any works completed on our homes as a result of the SCS programme will have a positive effect on children and young people living in our homes.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

9. This report does not have any organisational development/HR or transformational implications.

Commercial/Procurement

10. There are no commercial or procurement implications arising directly from this report.

Environment/Climate Change

11. There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Council Priorities and Projects

12. The SCS programme and data validation plan will support the following key priority areas with the Council Plan:
 - Dudley the Safe and Healthy Borough - Residents live in safe communities where safeguarding of vulnerable people of all ages protects them from harm and supports the prevention of crime and exploitation
 - Dudley Borough the Destination of Choice - A place of healthy, resilient, safe communities where people have high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future

K. Jones

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Appendices

None

List of Background Documents

None