

Homes Policy Development Group

Chairmans Annual Report

Looking back on the year of work that our group has discussed and made recommendations on it is clear that as ever we have had a busy time over the last 12 months.

As well as our usual workload of policy revisions, performance and risk and budget reports we have looked in great detail on many aspects of Housing that affect all providers in the sector.

There are ongoing challenges that we face continually not least those of working within tight budget constraints yet still providing a top class service to all of our tenants, something which must be paramount in all our undertakings .

Once again this year our housing team have met the challenge of maintaining the very high standards that all our tenants should and do expect, our portfolio of accommodation is challenging , not least because we are a rural authority and travel time and costs are ever rising, often by things that are beyond our control especially on fuel costs for vehicles.

Our housing service works on a very tight timescale of voids turnarounds and it may be that we have driven the times down as low as realistically can be achieved, but this timescale is important to enable us to work within our budgets.

As a group we have studied policies that change to meet the ongoing legislation laid upon us as a housing provider, and in the ongoing fallout from the Grenfell tower fire we have strengthened our Neighbourhood Management Policy to prevent any such event happening in our area.

In October we met as a group to consider our response to the green paper on social housing and worked through all of the 48 questions and gave strong responses.

Our Tenant Involvement Group has worked well again and this has been recognised by them being shortlisted for awards again at the 2019 TPAS awards. We are fortunate that our tenant group work so diligently and closely with our housing officers and I hope their involvement goes from strength to strength.

We must congratulate all those involved in our ongoing council house building programme, whilst we still face the challenge of Right To Buy it is comforting to know that we are forging ahead in trying to increase our housing stock, I know our Cabinet Member will robustly discuss the problems of Right To Buy with Government Ministers at the earliest opportunity.

On behalf of our group I would like to thank all the staff that make up our housing service, once again this past year they have risen and met the substantial challenges before them to provide a service that as members we can be proud of.

I must also take this chance to record the thanks of all the group to all the officers who have attended our meetings and especially our Clerk Sarah Lees who keeps us up to date with things and is as ever so helpful to me as Chairman.

In May we will see a new Council formed, some of us will come back to this group and no doubt we will see some new faces at our meetings, I know they will be welcomed and supported by the more experienced members as we start a new year.

John Daw

Chairman