

Chairman's Report 2016

As I sit down to write this report I look back over a very busy and interesting year for the PDG which has seen a number of new Councillors joining us following the May elections, I hope they have enjoyed their time spent in PDG meetings and that it has helped to inform them both of the work of our housing service and of the need to have strong policies in place to regulate how the service is run to provide a fair and worthwhile system to deal with all aspects of our housing provision.

As a committee we have met every 2 months and have had a great deal of work in updating and recommending for approval a great number of policies and strategies including anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, hoarding, pets and animals, car park and garages as well as our main tenancy policy all of which have to be reviewed on a regular basis to take into account changing regulations and needs.

One of the main subjects we have spent a lot of time on this year has been spent looking at the criteria of applicants who are registered on the Devon Home Choice system and if we should retain those who are given a band E Rating. This has resulted in our officers carrying out a still ongoing review of the band E applicants and has removed a lot of dead wood from the system which has reduced our housing waiting list, this work will continue for some time and our PDG will receive regular updates.

We have seen the completion of our housing scheme in St Andrews street along with the starting of a new housing site at Palmerston Park which will provide 14 new affordable houses to let. Our recent build of 6 new houses in Willand came runner up in Devon's Best Rural Development Competition.

Financial monitoring as ever has featured regularly in our agendas and in these still uncertain times good management of our finances are paramount in sustaining the service we provide in a very challenging budget situation which will continue for some time to come, I am grateful to Andrew Jarrett and his team for keeping us very aware of the constraints we have to work within and a special thanks must go to Roderick Hewson for the clear and understandable way he presents his reports to us.

We have this year had reports from our Tenants Together team who have looked at various aspects of our housing service from a tenants point of view, I have attended some of their meetings whenever I can and I thank them for their warm welcome and for the excellent reports they have given us.

Our housing team led by Nick Sanderson have worked hard not only to provide us with reports and policy amendments but on a day to day basis continue to see that our tenants receive a first class service in all aspects of our housing service especially in repairs and prompt response to achieve customer satisfaction when very occasionally our service falls below the high standards we seek to achieve. I think our quick action on those occasions stand us in good stead as a first class housing provider.

I would like to thank our cabinet member Ray Stanley for his continued regular attendance at our meetings and for his wide knowledge base which from time to time proves invaluable, with his hand firmly on the tiller we will steer a straight course though the choppy waters of the economic situation we all find ourselves in and we will emerge the other end stronger and in a good position press forward will plans to see our housing department thrive and be one that other authorities benchmark from.

Finally my thanks must go to Sarah Lees for all her hard work and dedication both within committee and at all times when as Chairman i need a bit of advice or something finding, thank you Sarah I would be lost without you.

Peter Heal