

Committee: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 22 February 2022

Subject: Clarion Housing Association Update

Lead member: Councillor Martin Whelton, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Climate Emergency

Recommendations:

- A. No decision will be required as the report is for information only.
 - B.
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Clarion Housing association manage over 8,800 Homes across the London Borough of Merton.
- 1.2. Lead officers at Clarion attended the Council's Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the 1st November 2021 to provide an update on operational activities and initiatives across their housing stock.
- 1.3. At the request of members this report provides an update and progress report against these initiatives. The updates have been broken down into a number of individual work streams:-
 - Merton Customer Engagement Strategy
 - Regeneration
 - Waste Management
 - Repairs and Maintenance
 - Priority Estates – Eastfields, Sadler Close
 - Planned Investment

2 WORK STREAMS

- 2.1 **Merton Customer Engagement Strategy** – Members have been updated at previous Committee meetings of the intention to launch a wide ranging strategy to engage local residents and stakeholders across its homes in the London Borough of Merton. The overall aim of the strategy is to identify the key challenges and issues faced by residents in their home and draw up targeted local action plans to deliver improvements in resident satisfaction and their neighbourhood.
- 2.2. Progress and milestones achieved to date are summarised below:-
 - Completion of draft strategy and overriding principles and objectives
 - Clarion Group Board Sign off

- Successful recruitment to three Resident Liaison Officer positions - These roles will be pivotal in delivering the engagement days and monitoring follow up actions to a conclusion
- Initial scoping of priority estates, download of data, statistical information paired with local knowledge culminating in the formation of the draft priority programme
- Sign off by the Merton Community Panel on 24 January on the principles of the Resident Engagement Strategy and the panel's role in its co-creation and ongoing supervision
- Completion of physical inspections and stock condition surveys at 25% of our homes across five priority estates by our external consultants
- Successful recruitment of a data analysis post to support data gathering work and tracking of actions arising from the estate engagement days

2.3. Next steps and milestones:-

- Sadlers estate agreed with Merton Community Panel as the location for the first engagement day to be held on 25 and 26 February
- Baseline satisfaction survey of residents on Sadlers estate w/c 14 February
- Analysis of feedback from the engagement day, delivery on repairs and other actions arising from the event
- 'Plan on a page' currently being prepared to be distributed to all Merton residents. More detailed plan to be circulated to councillors and other stakeholders once ready
- Continuing recruitment to admin positions to support the prioritisation, scheduling and delivery of actions arising from estate engagement days

2.4 **Merton Regeneration** – Work continues on the three Regeneration sites across the London Borough of Merton of Eastfields, High Path and Ravensbury:-

Eastfields Phase 1

- S.73 application in process to adjust the maximum parameters of development. Some elements of the design have increased by a storey whilst some others have reduced by a storey, as well as some other amendments to form. The tallest element of development, a nine-storey residential block overlooking the new linear park, has been increased to 10 storeys, in order to accommodate the maximum number of resident decants whilst also accommodating the additional plant space requirements for the sustainable and net zero carbon compatible energy strategy. Determination due at February 2022 planning committee.

- Reserved Matters application was submitted in December 2021 for the 201 replacement and affordable homes which comprise Phase 1. This application also includes significant areas of public realm and the energy centre which will feed the entirety of the estate once the regeneration of Eastfields is completed. Determination due at the March or April 2022 planning committee.

High Path

- Phase 1 construction will be complete in mid-February 2022, providing 134 Replacement Homes (for resident homeowners who have chosen to stay) and social rented homes for existing High Path tenants;
- Phase 3 Reserved Matters application to be submitted in Q3 2022 for the first open-market element of the regeneration at High Path. This phase is likely to provide between 350 and 380 homes depending on the final design along with ground floor retail / commercial space. The energy centre for High Path is delivered as part of Phase 3, with Phases 1 and 2 being connected to this net zero compatible energy source upon completion of Phase 3 (circa 2027);
- Revised Outline Planning Application to be submitted in Q2 2022, this application being for the additional density of affordable and open-market tenures at High Path;
- LBM Members were invited to attend a site visit on 28 January, and a second site visit with the Merton Community Panel was held on 3 February.

Ravensbury

- All phases have approved Reserved Matters
- Phases 2 and 3 continue on-site
- Final site perimeter hoarding adaptations shall take place in February, with additional visuals and community artwork installation

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) Activity

- Information gathering began with Section 16 notices being posted and hand-delivered to all households affected by the following phases of the regeneration:
 - Eastfields Phase 1;
 - High Path Phases 2, and
 - Ravensbury Phases 3 and 4.
- These notices require householders to confirm who has an interest in the property, and
- A good response has been received, with a polite reminder sent to addresses where responses have not yet been received. These reminders are open in terms of a time to respond.

2.5 Waste Management

We are working with Veolia to assess how we can improve the storage and collection of waste. Where collections are missed, these are being reported to Veolia via the Local Authority by our Estate Services team. We hope that through this continued interaction progress can be made towards reducing the

overall number of missed collections currently being experienced. In the interim we have had to manage the volume of refuse locally as issues arise.

2.6 Additional resources have been introduced to assist with:-

- Skimming overflowing bins (Clearing the overflow to allow residents to continue using the refuse facilities until the bins are cleared)
- Delivering additional bins to cope with the volume of refuse
- Utilising our internal bulk collection team to completely empty bins where we know the refuse collection is not due.
- Rotation of bins on certain sites where we have a sufficient amount to replace full bins with empty bins. Storing the full bins in a secure location on site until collection date

2.7 In addition to the above, we also run a weekend and an evening bulk service where we can identify refuse issues and address them accordingly. These services are part of the Merton promises from the stock transfer.

We are currently exploring introducing dedicated vehicles and teams that could focus on some of our more problematic estates that need an enhanced service in regards to bulk refuse collection.

2.8 **Repairs and Maintenance** – The interim WIP target of 1,200 jobs has been met and we continue to keep this under review and amend the target to drive future reduction.

2.9 We continue to see a steady demand for the service with simple repairs completed effectively. Our bigger challenge is repairs that are more complex; in some cases COVID was affecting access and impacting the workforce however this appears to be reducing. The introduction of the planned reactive team is also supporting the work around more complex repairs.

2.10 Quality of Materials - Whilst public procurement rules and regulations are prescriptive and limit how we can specify materials, we do specify that materials used in any of our contracts are compliant with any and all regulatory and industry quality standards in relation to their use, design and manufacture. We also expect all works completed to be delivered with a 12 month warranty for materials and workmanship. Any repairs required in this period would be at the contractor's costs and therefore at their financial risk further discouraging the use of cheap or sub-standard materials. We monitor properties for repeat repairs that would indicate any trends in failure such as materials used or tenant abuse. We also engage with the wider supply chain for known issues and manufacturers recalls for products where appropriate so that we can replace products that we know have been identified as problematic.

2.11 **Priority Estates – Eastfields Update** – All outstanding repairs following the estate day have now been concluded. Our RLO's have kept in touch with residents and are following up on the last of the completions to ensure they are satisfied with the repairs. RLO's are also picking up any new complex repairs to monitor through to resolution.

- 2.12 A Planned Works programme is continuing covering kitchens bathrooms and rewires. This programme comprises of 31 properties in total and is now nearing completion with the following progress: -
- 25 properties are fully complete
 - 1 property with work in progress
 - 3 properties with start dates agreed
 - 1 property to be surveyed
 - 1 property with access issues
- 2.13 Roof Upgrade – The evaluation of the roof upgrade options is now complete and an order has been placed with the contractor to proceed. Due to the continuous roof construction at Eastfields, the effectiveness of the proposed upgrade work requires the support of all Leaseholder and Freeholders. To this end, it is proposed that this roofing upgrade work will be undertaken to all properties and at no cost to Leaseholders and Freeholders. Mobilisation of sub-contractors and associated resources is now underway with a prospective start date anticipated during March. Letters will be issued to residents w/c 14 February.
- 2.14 Eastfields Office – The portakabin has now been delivered. UK Power Networks are due to complete their works w/c 21 February - we are still awaiting connection details from Thames Water. After that, the cabin will then need to be kitted out.
- 2.15 Eastfields Estate Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) - Eastfields estate is on a cyclical programme of FRAs, and at present all are in date. Clarion have completed a comprehensive survey of the blocks and identified some fire safety works to be completed. Works identified are flat entrance doors, communal doors, fire stopping in communal areas and emergency lights. These works commenced in November 2021 and are due to be completed by April 2022. In line with government advice Clarion also has a program of external wall inspections being taken across all multi occupancy blocks, with blocks being prioritised by risk. Eastfields will be completed during the financial year 2022/23.
- 2.16 **Priority Estates – Sadler Close Update** - The work within dwellings is now well underway within Gladstone with the first system nearing completion. HSS have created routes for the first complete system by installing 80% of the fire rated duck work to the dwellings and communal areas. Once this system is complete the Clarion and HSS teams will use the completed system to utilise lessons learnt for the rest of the estate. Early indication continues to be that work within residents' homes is less invasive and disruptive than previously anticipated. The on-site resident liaison continues to make excellent progress with accessing all the dwellings in relation to organising surveys for the impending work. Current access rate for the surveys sits at 98%.
- 2.17 The project to replace the door entry systems at the Sadler Close (Chart House, Fountain House and Gladstone House) was completed in December 2021. The commissioning of new handset-devices remains outstanding in some dwellings due to access difficulties. Outstanding work is being followed up with residents to ensure access is arranged as soon as possible.
- 2.18 **Planned Investment – Wider Merton Area** – The component renewal programme in Merton is progressing well with a number of kitchens and bathrooms successfully completed across the Borough. This work stream is

nearing completion with the programme for 2022/23 already well advanced. Our partnering contractor United Living, is also focusing upon ongoing investment in external component renewal work to complete the roof and window programmes by the end of the financial year (31 March 2022).

2.19 Planned Investment projects - Works at South View, Wimbledon are progressing well with the roofing works due to commence shortly. We are in the final snagging stage of these works prior to sign-off at both the 4 Acres Estate, Harlands Estate and the Ravensbury estate. A £550k programme of communal decorating works is currently in progress and progressing well at the High Path estate.

2.20 Several new projects are due to start between now and March 2022, including works to replace the roof and windows at 4 Lingfield Road, Wimbledon, together with internal and external decorations/repairs. Works at two blocks on London Road, Mitcham will also soon be commencing:

- 263-265 London Road: window replacements and communal decorating
- 376-386 London Road: roof repairs, external coatings, communal decorations and door entry replacement.

Works are also commencing to replace the lateral and rising electrical mains at Ricards Road, Wimbledon, together with communal decorations.

Phase 2 of the works at Glebe Estate will also be commencing at Glebe Square with replacement of roofs and windows, together with communal decorations.

2.21 Validation of Future Work - Two consultants; FFT and Savills, have been engaged and instructed to undertake approximately 800 stock condition surveys on eight estates at Eastfields; High Path, Ravensbury, Phipps Bridge, Cherry Trees, Sadlers, Laburnum and Watermeads. This survey work remains ongoing and is due to be completed by February 2022. We will then undertake an analysis of the findings to shape the required investment in the short, medium, long-term across the various estates.

2.22 Planned Investment Spend 2010 – 2022 – Please find below breakdown of spend on our planned investment programme. This only includes planned investment spend and not day to day revenue spend which would include repairs and fencing. It does not include any expenditure on the regeneration works. The 2020-21 data is still being validated and is therefore subject to change as final accounts are submitted.

- 2010-15 - £71m
- 2015-16 - £18m
- 2016-17 - £16.5m
- 2017-18 - £14.1m
- 2018-19 - £9.7m
- 2019-20 - £10.7m
- 2020-21 - £9m
- **Total spend - £149m**

- 3** **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**
- 3.1. None
- 4** **TIMETABLE**
- 4.1. None
- 5** **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**
- 5.1. None
- 6** **LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**
- 6.1. None
- 7** **HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
- 7.1. None
- 8** **CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**
- 8.1. None
- 9** **RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1. None
- 10** **APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**
- None
- 11** **BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 11.1. None

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