
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES STATEMENT

New Build Council Housing

I am pleased to provide an update on the current position regarding the council's new build housing programme. As Members will know, we have set the Housing Development team a huge target of building 1,000 new homes by May 2022 and delivering at least 2,000 new homes in the longer term. We can't underestimate this task – it currently represents the largest and most ambitious council housing build programme in Wales!

Good progress has been made to date and we will achieve a total of just over 70 new homes completed and handed over to us by 31st March 2019, with another 208 new homes currently being built on site. Our programme indicates that our projected completions total for the 2019/20 financial year is 288 new homes, resulting in a projected cumulative total by of 371 new homes by 31st March 2020.

Cardiff Living, with our partner developer Wates, continues to deliver in volume and at pace with one scheme completed and handed over. A further six schemes are currently on site and six schemes with planning consent have been secured. We are achieving a high level of quality and tenants are reportedly very happy in their new homes.

Through our development programme we are delivering accessible ground floor accommodation and helping to offer flexible, accessible homes to tenants who need a home which can be adapted around their changing needs. A show flat will be completed by the end of March 2019, which we will use to demonstrate this type of accommodation and to help encourage existing tenants to downsize into new homes that are more suitable to their house need, thereby releasing a family home to those on our waiting list who need them. I am pleased to advise that the Housing Development team will shortly circulate an invitation to Members to visit the show flat and see first-hand the type of accessible properties we are delivering.

Our future developments include new purpose-built older person housing schemes that will be built to a 'care-ready' specification, which will offer flexible accommodation that reduces the need for future adaptations and include attractive, accessible communal space open to the local older persons' community – helping to tackle social isolation in the wider community.

Our innovative housing developments include two temporary accommodation schemes to help tackle homelessness which involve the use of recycled shipping containers, both of which are now on site and will be completed later in the year.

There is also our first pilot modular housing development at Croft Street in Plasnewydd. The modular housing proposal has the potential to offer quality, highly energy efficient homes that are quicker to build and are more cost-effective than traditional build. All of these schemes have been awarded Innovative Housing Grant funding from the Welsh Government.

Homelessness

Over the past month, the work undertaken by the Council to remove abandoned tents in the city centre has resulted in the removal of 19 abandoned tents from the streets, leaving just 15 tents in the area. I want to reiterate that the Council is only removing tents that have been left empty for at least 24 hours. There are still 7 tents in green spaces and these are proving the hardest to remove due to difficulties with engaging with the occupiers. However, we are still working on removing these tents and enforcement action is being considered. So far this month, 23 rough sleepers have been assisted into accommodation.

Rent Smart Wales

Rent Smart Wales is working with the Council and Welsh Government to explore options to improve the energy efficiency in F and G rated privately rented properties. We believe that this will lead to a combination of approaches being used, which will include marketing, financial incentives and enforcement activity where required.

Warm Welcome Pilot Scheme

As part of our Rough Sleeper Strategy, we are looking specifically at setting up diversionary activities around the city to help people out of homelessness and rough sleeping. We have started a small pilot scheme called Warm Welcome, where we invite people who are homeless or sleeping rough to join officers for a cup of tea and a chat. This service is available six days a week and details are provided on the digital advertising boards around the city. Whilst we've been running these coffee mornings, on average, between 6 and 15 people attend, most of whom are rough sleepers or homeless. Our aim is to expand these coffee mornings over the next few months.

Maelfa Regeneration Scheme

I am pleased to report that the new Maelfa shopping parade has now been completed and traders have been moving into their new units. The new parade on Llanedeyrn Drive, which has been developed in association with Cardiff Community Housing Association, consists of nine new shops on the ground-floor, with one and two bed residential apartments above, as well as a 50-space car park.

Over the past couple of weeks, traders from the old shopping centre have been relocating and settling into their new shops, to welcome customers old and new to the fantastic new centre. In the next phase of the redevelopment, the remainder of the old shopping centre will be demolished and 16 new townhouses will be built in its place.

The Maelfa Flats, which overlook the development site, have also benefitted from a face-lift, with new windows and balconies installed, brick-work cleaned, the ground-floor remodelled to provide community spaces, and access routes linking to the new shops. There has been positive feedback from tenants on the refurbishment.

The multi-million pound investment in the Maelfa reflects the commitment of this Administration to transform local communities into attractive, safe and welcoming areas to live and work.

Cardiff Central Library – Harry Potter Night

On 7th February 2019, the Central Library Hub hosted its annual Harry Potter Night celebrating the fictional world created by J.K. Rowling. This year's event was a sell-out with 75 participating children and was based around the topic of 'Hogwarts'. Each child was sorted into a Hogwarts House and then directed to their House Captain before being taken to their first of four lessons. Lessons of the day included:

- Herbology (making Mandrakes)
- Charm making (craft/wand making)
- A quiz, filmed and edited by staff and shown on the big screen in the backdrop of Honeydukes Sweet Shop and the children were given sweets
- Divination (the children took mock fortune telling lessons)

Classes were awarded house points by their teachers and the winner, Ravenclaw, won the House Cup.

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
22 March 2019