

COUNCIL: 22 OCTOBER 2020

HOUSING & COMMUNITIES STATEMENT

Homelessness

I am pleased to note that the first of our longer-term homelessness schemes has opened. Ty Casnewydd on Newport Road offers 42 units of good quality accommodation for single homeless people. The opening of this project has allowed the closure of the facility at the OYO Hotel in Riverside, which is no longer being used by the Council. Work is also progressing to deliver the Homeless Assessment Centre, with work on the accommodation units due to start this month.

Pressure on homelessness services continues, particularly with regard to single people. New rough sleepers are being identified regularly by our Outreach Team and are accommodated as soon as possible. The team also continues to work with more entrenched individuals to encourage them into accommodation.

In order to provide further support, the multi-disciplinary team has been expanded and now includes an additional counsellor, substance misuse worker and therapeutic worker. An occupational therapist with a specialism in mental health is also due to join the team shortly. Psychology and psychiatry input has been agreed with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, and the best way of delivering this is currently under discussion. South Wales Police and the Probation Service are also represented on the team. The development of the team really highlights the commitment of all the statutory partners in Cardiff to addressing this difficult issue.

From time to time, positive case studies are shared on the Council's social media channels about individuals who were homeless, but have come into accommodation and received the support they need from our services to get their lives back on track. The posts about how we're helping to achieve real change in people's lives and are a great way to showcase our excellent services and I'd like to ask members to show their support and help raise awareness of services by sharing these success stories on their own social media channels.

Hubs

Cardiff North Hubs at Whitchurch and Rhydypennau re-opened in September 2020 following refurbishment. The Hubs will operate on an appointment-only basis (except for emergencies or to collect recycling bags), providing click & collect library services, general council enquiries and access to PCs. The Money Advice and Job Club services will commence from November 2020. Appointments can be made via the Adviceline on 029 2087 1071 or by email AdviceHub@cardiff.gov.uk. The Hubs have already seen an increase in the number of pre-booked appointments.

I am also delighted to announce that a brand new Community Hub Events website (<http://www.cardiffhubs.co.uk/>) will be launching later this month. The website will focus on a wide range of online activities, ranging from rhyme time, story time, coffee and chats, low-impact fitness training and Goldie's Cymru singing sessions. The website is easy to navigate with lots of content for all ages, including adult learning courses and our popular online Wellbeing Wednesday. Customers will also be able to access into work information, along with money advice and information on our current library services. A customer 'contact us page' has also been added for any additional queries. The site is bright and welcoming and I look forward to the launch on 26 October 2020.

Housing Development Programme Update

Our housing development programme continues to deliver new council homes built to high standards, with 909 new homes coming through our development process to date:

- 381 new properties have been completed and handed over to tenants;
- 178 new homes are currently being built on site;
- 101 properties are out to tender for a contractor;
- 145 new homes have planning approval; and
- Proposals for 104 new homes are awaiting planning approval.

On top of this, we have a development pipeline that will deliver a further 1,824 new homes, which forms part of an overall development programme that is capable of delivering just over 2,700 new council homes across 59 development sites in Cardiff. We have also bid successfully for five Welsh Government Innovative Housing Grants, attracting over £8.7 million in funding to support the delivery of innovative and low-carbon housing schemes.

Although the 2019/20 year-end was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to deliver 230 new affordable homes in comparison to a total of 226 new affordable units delivered by our partner RSLs in the year. We have also made progress on some substantial land acquisitions, including completion of the former Gasworks site in Grangetown, which is capable of delivering 500 new homes.

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
15 October 2020