
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES STATEMENT

Aspect Place Housing Development

Although the construction market remains difficult for new development and we have suffered with contractors going into administration, our new build programme continues to deliver new high-quality, innovative homes across the city. Last month, the Lord Mayor officially accepted handover of 42 Passivhaus compliant homes at the Aspect Place development on the former Highfields site in Heath. Not only does this scheme provide 36 much-needed council houses and flats for rent, but it also provides six houses for sale through our First Homes Cardiff scheme, which is aimed at first-time buyers who would otherwise be priced out of home ownership.

The site itself was very constrained making development difficult, but through excellent site management and quality control, the site team managed to ensure that all the properties achieved full Passivhaus certification. This is the 'gold standard' for new energy-efficient homes and will help to keep utility bills low for our tenants, as well as achieving our One Planet Cardiff objectives. I am very proud that our house building programme focuses on repurposing previously developed brownfield sites for innovative low carbon developments.

Families were able to move into the 12 two-bed homes within the new development in time to settle in before Christmas. I was able to visit the site and meet some of the families who were moving into the properties, and it was clear that the properties are such a high standard and testament to the amazing work that has been achieved through partnership working with Wates Residential.

House Building Programme

In spite of the difficulties that the construction industry has faced over the last few years, which has impacted on our own council house building programme and resulted in delays in tendering for contractors and completing schemes, I am pleased to confirm that, by December 2022, the Council had delivered 822 new council homes in the city.

In addition, we have a further 385 new build properties currently in construction and a further two community living schemes in Riverside and Butetown (which will deliver 86 new properties for older people) where contractors have been appointed and are due to start on site within the next few months. Our new housing developments at Wakehurst Place in St Mellons and the former Iorwerth Jones site in Llanishen are also progressing well and will provide a further 33 new family homes later this year.

The Cardiff Living programme with Wates Residential has been recognised with awards from Constructing Excellence Wales and What House, both for sustainability and new homes that have recently been handed over at the former Rumney High School site. Our first Community Living scheme for older people will be completed and handed over in August 2023 and our programme will deliver a further nine such schemes in the years ahead. This is part of the Council's investment of over £150 million in delivering new older person's housing in Cardiff. More recently, the Cabinet approved the proposal to implement a second housing partnership to enable us to deliver our pipeline of new developments at scale and pace. This exciting programme will see us remain at the forefront of collaboration and innovation and will ensure that Cardiff continues to lead the way in Wales in developing new council housing.

Christmas in Hostels and Supported Accommodation

Teams worked hard throughout the Christmas period to ensure that those using hostel services were able to enjoy the festive period as much as possible. On Christmas Day, residents of Ty Countisbury engaged in cooking Christmas dinner for themselves and other hostel residents. All staff and residents were offered a home-cooked Christmas dinner as a celebration of the day.

At the Greenfarm family hostel, staff worked hard to ensure that the families who live there enjoyed their Christmas, with one resident dressing up as Father Christmas and all the children receiving 'Santa Post,' a handwritten response from Santa. The residents and staff joined together to have a Christmas party and Christmas dinner and all families received gifts on the day. Other families were also treated to a Christmas Party, where the children played pin the nose on Rudolph, musical statues and the whole family could join in with Christmas bingo. Residents were extremely grateful, and I am proud that we were able to provide some festive activities to homeless households over the Christmas period.

Emergency Food Provision at Christmas

The Money Advice and Hub Teams once again partnered with Cardiff Foodbank at Christmas to ensure that residents who were struggling over the Christmas period were able to access food when the Foodbank distribution centres were closed. Sixty Foodbank parcels were given out and five parcels were also provided to Meals on Wheels who delivered them to those that contacted the service during the bank holiday period or were unable to attend a Hub. Talks are now in progress with Cardiff Foodbank to consider the possibility of some Hubs having access to food parcels more regularly in order to help deal with emergency cases.

Completion of Adams Court

I am pleased to announce that the works to transform Adams Court in Adamsdown into a new supported accommodation unit for people with complex needs have now been completed. In partnership with United Welsh Housing Association, the Council has worked hard to complete the works and the accommodation is now able to offer 103 self-contained one-bed flats for people with complex needs. In addition to the flats, work has been undertaken to provide medical facilities, spaces for diversionary activities, multi-purpose rooms and a counselling room at Adams Court.

Community Living Schemes

The Council's Community Living schemes support older residents to live independently and age well. With over 350 tenants living in community living schemes, in the month of December, more than 1,600 welfare calls were made to check on the health and wellbeing of our residents. Extra support has been provided in the form of shopping, prescriptions, arranging medical appointments, rubbish removal, and laundry throughout December to ensure the residents were able to enjoy the Christmas period. With the cost-of-living crisis, energy prices rising, loneliness and social isolation taking a toll on older persons, all communal lounges of Community Living schemes were offering warm welcoming spaces, providing refreshments and a variety of events and activities. In total, 77 events took place across the schemes with 573 attendees. In addition to this, older persons hubs at two schemes, Brentwood Court in Llanishen and Clos Y Nant in Fairwater, are now inviting non-residents who are aged over 60 years and live within the community, in council accommodation, to attend events.

Damp and Mould Issues in Council Housing

Housing teams have been working hard to review how damp and mould cases in Council properties are dealt with and how this can be improved further. A new comprehensive action plan has been developed and teams have been able to make immediate changes including directing additional resource to inspect issues and complete the necessary remedial works. A new dedicated coordinator is also being introduced to ensure complete oversight of all cases. Changes have also been implemented to improve the speed of resolution. Recent tragic events have brought this into the spotlight; however, this work has always been a priority, with the Housing and Management Maintenance Board and dedicated operational groups overseeing and dealing with issues and ensuring a constant focus on this issue.

New ways to provide advice and assistance to tenants in preventing damp and mould in their homes are also being created. A video is being developed on ways to prevent these issues which will be available in community languages will be available on social media sites as well as our new Housing website when it is launched shortly. New leaflets with advice on condensation prevention have been created and are now being issued to all tenants at the point of a new tenancy and when a damp inspection take place in the home. Robust referral routes are also being developed for operatives following a damp inspection into our Welfare Liaison Team which can support tenants to ensure they are accessing all grants, benefits and discounts they are entitled to, if due to cost-of-living issues tenants are finding it difficult to heat their home.

Rhiwbina Hub

Rhiwbina Community Wellbeing Hub welcomed customers back to the former library building on 16 January 2023 following the remodelling of the facility to enable the delivery of additional and enhanced services for the community. The building has been transformed into a fit-for-purpose community facility that will support the co-location of library services with new advice, health and wellbeing, housing and social care services, which will be delivered in the new community rooms, meetings rooms and interview areas. Visitors to the Hub will also benefit from a new computer suite, a bright and inviting children's area, new library shelving and new toilet facilities, including a

hands-free accessible 'wash and dry' toilet. Externally, the rear garden area has been landscaped to provide an attractive space with a seating area. The modifications have ensured a fully accessible service that can be fully used by everyone in the community. Plans are underway to develop activities and events programming with our partners within Rhiwbina Hub. This will include the delivery of advice services tailored to the needs of the local community. Targeted information and support will also be made available in collaboration with Independent Living Services.

Bereavement Grief Hub Sessions

Grief affects us all in different ways and bereavement for some can lead to negative life outcomes, such as poor mental health, substance abuse and homelessness. The Council is working in collaboration with the bereavement charity, Cruse, to launch a new Grief Hub at STAR Community Hub where support will be available to help people through one of the most painful times in life. Community members struggling with bereavement issues will be able to access the help that they need through weekly sessions which will take place every Wednesday from 10am to 1pm. Cruse have been training Hub staff through Compassionate Communities workshops that provide the team with the tools to better support members of the community at a difficult time. Cruse's trained counsellors are also on hand to help, comfort and advise during the sessions. A grief focused book collection has been developed in collaboration with Cruse and made available in the Hub so that support literature is also available onsite.

Warm Welcome Spaces

Volunteers have been successfully recruited to support the Warm Welcome Spaces in our Community Hubs across the city. The spaces are proving to be heavily utilised this winter in response to the cost-of-living crisis. Since 10 October 2022, 5,431 people have accessed our Warm Spaces. Staff and volunteers have helped to provide a comfortable environment where visitors have been encouraged to relax with refreshments, have a chat and make new friends. To supplement the Warm Welcome Spaces, a tailored events programme has been developed, including Warm Space with Crocheting at Central Library Hub, Warm Space with Board Games at Ely and Caerau Hub and Warm Space, and Crochet and Knitting at Whitchurch Hub.

Community Safety

Street Based Lifestyles Update

- **Tudor Street**

Following an increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) and drug related issues in the Tudor Street area of Riverside, South Wales Police have recently completed an operation resulting in a number of arrests. Although this has helped to calm some problems, underlying issues remain. In response, a partnership task & finish group has been set up within the governance of the Street Based Lifestyles & Complex Needs priority area to take forward long-term actions that will embed security improvements, deter exploitation within supported accommodation and review CCTV in the immediate area.

- Substance Misuse and Harm Reduction Strategy 2022-2025**
 South Wales Police published their Substance Misuse and Harm Reduction Strategy in October 2022, which has three key aims: Early Intervention and Prevention, Tackling Supplies, and Breaking the Cycle of Addiction. South Wales Police are committed to working in partnership and will be supported by the Police & Crime Commissioner's Office in holding a series of workshops in 2023 to develop an action plan with partners.
- Tents in City Centre**
 Following the recent Tent Protocol refresh, a small number of tents appeared within the city centre over the holiday period. All occupiers of these tents were engaged with successfully and are currently being supported in sustainably moving away from street-based lifestyles. A follow-up partnership meeting was due to be held on 19 January 2023 to review existing work and make further improvements where necessary.
- Reporting Drug Litter in Butetown**
 Partners met on 17 January 2023 to agree a procedure for residents to report drug litter on public land not maintained by the Council, namely around Callaghan Square; Lloyd George Avenue and Bute Street, which all fall under the Private Finance Agreement or PFI with Welsh Government. After making a number of complaints and suggestions to the Council, residents will shortly be able to report issues via the Council's website, CardiffGov app and C2C, and the Council will then liaise with Welsh Government officials to arrange the removal of drug-related litter as soon as possible.

Problem Solving Group Update

- St Mellons**
 We are currently on a 5-month consecutive run of no recorded incidents of Youth ASB/Disorder within the geographic area of focus in our community project following interventions by the Problem Solving Group. We are currently transitioning into a monitoring phase within the area and will pay close attention to the area over the next two months. The following key actions are due for completion before the project is closed:
 - ensuring Hub and Police monitoring abilities are operational for the recently extended CCTV provision covering the MUGA and skate park.
 - improving lighting in the area by reinstating a damaged floodlighting panel.
 - amending the roofed shelter in the area with our plans dependent on Youth Service-led youth engagement. We hope to at least remove the roof from the shelter and make it safe for use.
- Other Active Projects**
 - Cowbridge Road East – stakeholder engagement is ongoing prior to interventions that will take place over the next 3-6 months. This project is due to run until the end of summer 2023 to assess the impact of interventions unless they are realised and minimal levels of ASB are sustained beforehand.

- Clifton Street – member engagement is strong and comparative police statistics of Public Order, Harassment, ASB and Theft incidents have all decreased dramatically from previous years. Further work has been identified to encourage an increase in community cohesion, explore increased youth provision and align perceptions of safety to those of reports.
- Off-Road Bikes – awaiting further information from South Wales Police in order to progress this project.
- Werngoch Road – exploring options with officers from Planning, Highways, Civil Parking Enforcement, and CCTV partners to tackle community safety concerns of drug dealing and general ASB in the area, with a geographical focus on the cut through between Werngoch Road and Glenwood.
- Lydstep Park & Flats – sustained reduction in Youth ASB levels in and around the park and flats following just over a year of Problem Solving Group focus in the area. This will now move to a monitoring phase for the next two months and we are hopeful of funding youth diversionary initiatives to encourage ownership and pride within the area.

Violence Prevention Group

Statutory guidance has recently been published on the Serious Violence Duty. A task & finish group has been created bringing together statutory partners to deliver the requirements. A Violence Profile (crime statistics) and Strategic Needs Assessment (what is needed to address the issue) is being drafted with assistance from South Wales Police, Public Health and other key partners by March 2023. This work will be considered by the Violence Prevention Group in order to create a Local Delivery Plan by December 2023.

It is proposed that the mechanism to deliver the requirements of the Duty will be the Community Safety Partnership due to the significant governance arrangements that we already have in place, with the Cardiff Public Services Board (PSB) being the overarching partnership body. This is expected to be confirmed at the next PSB meeting on 15 February 2023. This will then be relayed to the South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner and Home Office, as per the requirements of the Duty, to confirm the process that we have in place.

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
20 January 2023