

# Housing and City Development Scrutiny Committee

## 20 January 2025

### Decent Neighbourhoods Programme

#### Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

#### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To scrutinise how the Decent Neighbourhoods Programme is being managed and delivered as part of improving Nottingham's estates and neighbourhoods to create homes and places in the city where Council tenants want to live.

#### **2 Action required**

- 2.1 The Committee is asked:

- 1) to make any comments or recommendations in response to the Executive Member for Housing and Planning's report on the development and delivery of the Decent Neighbourhoods Programme; and
- 2) to consider whether any further scrutiny of the issue is required (and, if so, to identify the focus and timescales).

#### **3 Background information**

- 3.1 The Decent Neighbourhoods Programme is intended to deliver a planned scheme of capital investment to develop the neighbourhoods that Council tenants live in. The key Programme priorities are linked with other investments and funding with a focus on improving access to green spaces, tenant and resident health and wellbeing, links with other key investments and funding, biodiversity and environmental sustainability, and ownership and pride in neighbourhoods.
- 3.2 The Programme is funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at £1 million each year. To comply with the requirements of the HRA, an individual scheme must generally be provided for the principal benefit of the Council's tenants and leaseholders (rather than the wider community), and it must be on HRA land. Any unused funding is rolled over into the next financial year, so unspent money is not lost and can be used as part of future schemes within the Programme. There are currently 134 schemes logged, with only 13 having been rejected – with the main reasons for rejection being that a scheme is either not on HRA property and/or is not primarily for the benefit of Council tenants specifically.
- 3.3 The funding is split across the Council's wards in proportion to number of Council properties in each ward area. Referrals by councillors make up the bulk of the requests for improvements, so the budget is being targeted directly at

projects that councillors feel will have the greatest impact in their wards. The Decent Neighbourhoods Programme aims to deliver the following outcomes:

- tackling ward priorities and addressing concerns about issues such as anti-social behaviour and parking;
- better security;
- greater tenant satisfaction;
- a reduction in the cost of future maintenance;
- encouraging residents to take pride and ownership in the area where they live; and blending new builds with improvements to older properties.

3.4 A Housing Project Liaison Officer works alongside the Council's contract partners to ensure that processes and procedures are in place to capture pre- and post-works satisfaction, and are a point for escalation for complaints. There is a new Project Delivery team dedicated to the Decent Neighbourhoods Programme, and improving the process and measuring outputs from schemes is a priority for this team. Case studies have been drawn up to document the challenges, goals and output from the Decent Neighbourhoods schemes. The feedback from the Tenant Satisfaction Surveys is also reviewed, with a particular emphasis on Neighbourhood Management and anti-social behaviour statistics and commentary.

3.5 The main focus of the Programme going forward is to proactively suggest opportunities to councillors and other key stakeholders to ensure that environmental budgets are maximised for the benefit of Council tenants, and that they have promotional material and visuals to be able to discuss opportunities for investment with real case studies from across the city with tenants.

3.6 This item is directly relevant to the delivery of the 'Living Well in Our Communities', 'Better Housing' and 'Serving People Well' outcomes of the Strategic Council Plan and, in the context of the Council Improvement Plan, has impacts on all three aims to ensure a Council that delivers for Nottingham with a clear direction and purpose; is financially sustainable; and is well run with effective people, processes and systems.

#### **4 List of attached information**

4.1 Report: Decent Neighbourhoods Programme  
Appendices 1-3: Case Studies  
Appendix 4: Approval Process Map

#### **5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

5.1 None

#### **6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

6.1 None

## **7 Wards affected**

7.1 All

## **8 Contact information**

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