

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS, HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**COUNCILLOR Jan Virmani**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING DIRECTOR: SAYYED OSMAN**

**DATE: 30 August 2012**

**NEW HOUSING**

**Griffin Area Regeneration:** There are 20 properties remaining to be purchased in the clearance area. 80 properties have already been demolished with a further 31 properties (19-51 Coleridge St and 45-73 Hancock St) planned for demolition in the summer.

**Orchard Grove:** The development of 95 new homes in Darwen. 16 families have now moved into their new homes on phase 1 and the remainder are being offered for sale. A further 17 properties have been reserved off plan for shared ownership purchase on phase 2 and phase 3. Phase 2 is on site and scheduled for completion in March 2013.

**Willow Gardens (Tower View, Union St Darwen):** This 50 unit development will provide much needed independent living homes for older people in central Darwen. Due for completion in spring 2013.

**Drakes Edge (Tewkesbury Street, Blackburn):** This scheme of 28 new family homes is being developed by Twin Valley Homes is due to complete in December 2012. The development will offer 17 homes for open market sale and 11 for shared ownership.

**Lincoln Road:** The development of seven 3 bed homes and two 5 bed homes by Great Places Group is now complete and occupied.

**MULTI AGENCY RESPONSE TO HOUSE IN MUTIPLE OCCUPTION (HMOs)**

Members will be aware of issues in the borough around houses in multiple occupation. I have recently asked Council officers to establish a working group with other agencies and to develop an action plan by way of response. The multi-agency group aims to address a range of issues at the high risk HMOs, however more needs to be done in particular reviewing housing benefit claims, and more collaboration with the Police, Probation, Health and other services. As Chair of the Local Public Service Board I will be raising these issues.

**COMMUNITY LEARNING TRUST (CLT) PILOT - SUCCESSFUL BID**

We are one of just 15 pilots who have been selected nationally. with pilot status providing an exciting opportunity for us to demonstrate how, locally-based community learning offer – supported by the effective targeting of public money and income generated from other sources – can positively and measurably impact on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

**HOUSING NEEDS & HOMELESSNESS**

Mortgage repossessions and evictions continue to be a concern for us. During the previous 12 months we have assisted 79 households with mortgage difficulties, 134 households with rent arrears and 143 households given notice by private landlords.

**SELECTIVE LICENSING OF PRIVATE LANDLORDS**

The consultation period for the proposed designation area in Griffin / Mill Hill was extended to 23 July. A report will go to Executive Board in the Autumn.

**ADVICE SERVICES**

The review of the Council's Advice Service has now been completed. The next stage of the process is to engage with the Voluntary Sector to discuss their provision of services, and future options for a joint delivery model.

**SOCIAL FUND**

The project team for the Localisation of the Social Fund has continued to consider the design and delivery of the scheme from April 2013 when the Council becomes responsible.