Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting 24 April 2025

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Website Re-design – Housing Pages

Report summary:

This report sets out our ongoing plans to review and improve the Housing section of the EDDC website to better meet the needs of council tenants and residents of East Devon.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget   Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework   Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

1. That members note the report

Reason for recommendation:

This report is for information only

Officer**:** Tim Laurence-Othen, Housing Projects Officer

Portfolio(s) (check which apply)**:**
☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
☐ Coast, Country and Environment
☐ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
☐ Communications and Democracy
☐ Economy
☐ Finance and Assets
☐ Strategic Planning
☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities
☐ Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Medium Impact

One of the main drivers behind the website project is to improve the accessibility of our webpages. We will be completing an EIA with residents both at the start and end of the process as one way to measure our progress in this area.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; N/A

Links to background information N/A

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

☒ A supported and engaged community
☐ Carbon neutrality and ecological recovery
☐ Resilient economy that supports local business
☒ Financially secure and improving quality of services

Report in full

1. Background

1.1 We have recently carried out an exercise within the housing service to review all of our webpages to ensure that the information contained within them is accurate and reflects current practice.

1.2 Our communities team have also taken steps to make their pages more accessible to tenants, through better page design and use of language to ensure that the information contained within those pages is clear and easy to understand. You can see an example of this on their pages (https://eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-and-homelessness/existing-council-tenants/community-development/).

1.3 We have also created a more streamlined homepage for our section, making it easier for people to access information relevant to them, and have trained more staff to become web authors so that each team has at least one person who is able to edit webpages directly.

1.4 This report sets out our next steps to redesign our whole section of the EDDC website to improve accessibility and streamline our pages to make navigating our site easier and quicker for tenants and residents.

1.5 EIA will follow; engaging with resident groups to complete comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment as part of the consultation and engagement process.

2. Website improvement plan

2.1 The Housing and Homelessness webpages are split into 5 distinct areas;

    i. Existing Council Tenants
    ii. Homelessness
    iii. Find a Home
    iv. Private Sector Housing
    v. Resettlement

2.2 We have decided to focus on our Existing Council Tenants section initially. We are prioritising this section as we have an obligation as a Social Landlord to make access to both information and services easily accessible to our tenants, and our website is a key tool for delivering this.

2.3   A project team has been set up to develop and deliver our improvement plan, and we intend to work with tenants and staff throughout the project. With that in mind, we will be inviting members of HRB to participate as part of this.

2.4   We are intending to completely redesign our pages with the user in mind; why are tenants visiting our website; how easy can we make it for them to get the information they need; are we providing content that our tenants want and need to see?

2.5   We will be looking to run a series of tests on our current website, replicating the user's journey through our website in a number of hypothetical scenarios to establish how easy it is to navigate our site to find information and whether there are any gaps/omissions. This work will not only inform how we develop the new website design, but also serve as an audit on our current site so that interim improvements can be made right away.

2.6   At the same time, we will be talking with tenants and frontline staff to establish what the most common reasons for accessing our website are, and what the user experience currently is for tenants so that we can ensure our improved site reflects the needs of customers.

2.7   As the new site develops, we will be engaging further with tenants by asking them to review initial designs, and assist us in testing the new site for useability, amongst other things. We also intend to keep HRB informed of progress, both as part of the regular meeting schedule and through direct communication updates via email.

2.8   We are still at the early stages of this project; this report is to inform members that this work is beginning and we will keep members informed of our progress over the coming months.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implication arising from this report

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications